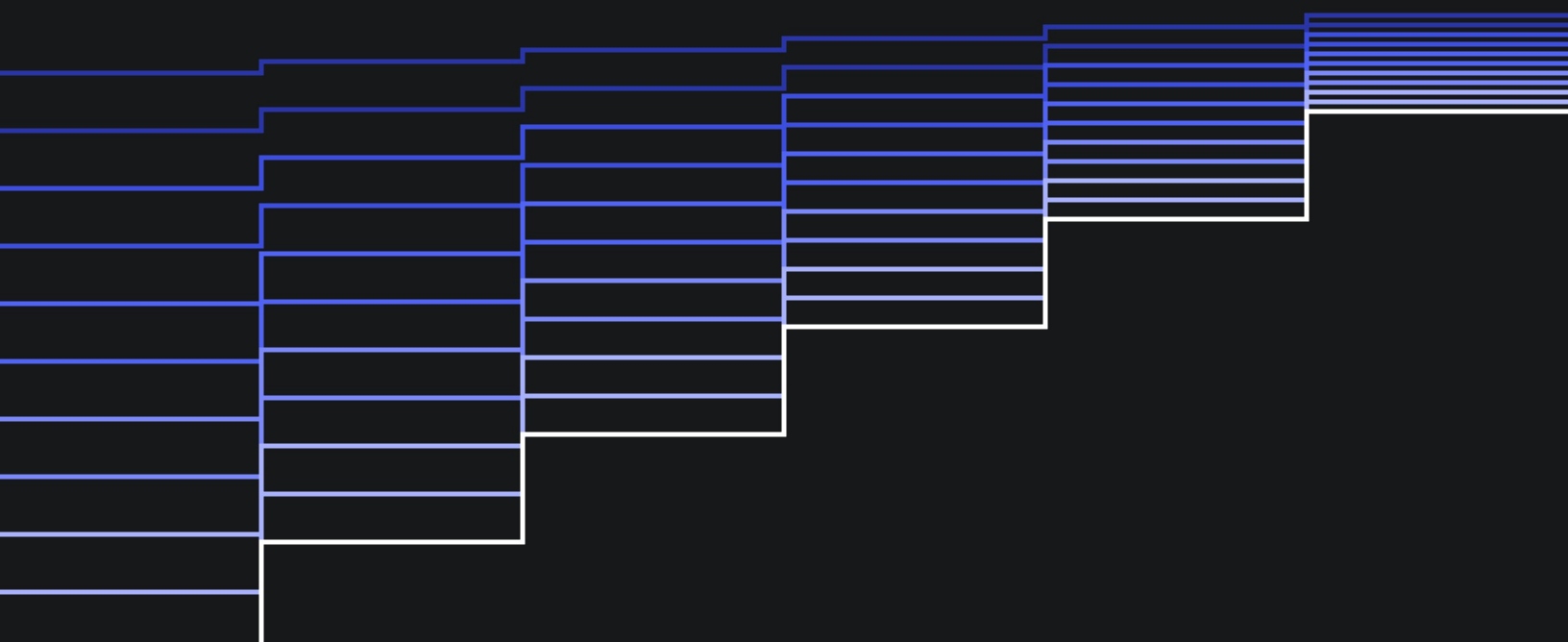
CredScape Research

Where continuing education competes

How 300 institutions advertise continuing education in Canada and the United States.



Contents

Key findings	3
Who advertises	4
A few schools run most of the ads	5
Where in the two countries	6
Crowded fields	7
Which platforms	8
What they sell	9
What the ads say	10
Brand	11
Example ads	12
Always on	13
What it takes to compete	14
How we did this	15
Appendix tables	16–18

How to read this report

What we measured

Ads in the public Google, LinkedIn and Meta ad libraries from 300 institutions (universities and colleges). The figures come from records of ads that ran. We did not use a survey.

What counts as a CE-unit ad

An ad from an advertiser account that belongs to the institution's continuing education unit, confirmed from the unit's own web page.

What the numbers cannot tell you

Ad libraries show which ads ran. They do not show budgets or results such as clicks and enrolments. Each platform keeps a different time window, so across platforms we compare shares of institutions and keep ad totals within one platform or one country. Google counts are floors.

HOW TO CITE

CredScape. (2026). *Where continuing education competes: continuing education advertising at 300 institutions in Canada and the United States* CredScape Research, October 2026.

INTERACTIVE VERSION

Every chart in this report is live on CredScape. Scan to explore the data, or go to credscape.io/research/ce-advertising.

COLOUR KEY

- Canada
- United States
- Other ads, for comparison

Five findings

162,369 ads from 300 institutions in Canada and the United States, collected October 2026.

5.9%

CE is a small share of what institutions advertise.

At the median institution with 20 or more ads, 5.9% of its ads come from its CE unit in Canada and 2.5% in the US. 191 of 299 institutions with an ad account ran at least one CE-unit ad.

7

A few institutions run half the ads.

7 of Canada's 85 CE advertisers run half of its CE-unit ads. In the US, 11 of 106 do. MIT alone runs 26% of US Data & AI ads.

29

Business is the most crowded field in every region.

29 institutions in the US South advertise Business programs, 15 in Ontario. Indigenous Knowledge has 7 advertisers across both countries.

38 of 39

Always-on advertisers in Canada run brand ads.

The units that never go quiet run brand ads alongside program ads: 38 of 39 in Canada, 52 of 66 in the US. 30 Canadian and 38 US institutions keep a brand ad running every month.

62%

Most CE advertisers are visible every month.

62% of US and 46% of Canadian CE advertisers had ads running in every month of the past year. The median CE-unit Google ad ran 372 days.

FINDING 1 · WHO ADVERTISES

CE is a small share of what institutions advertise.

191 of the 299 institutions with a verified ad account ran at least one ad from their continuing education unit. For most, that unit is a minor advertiser next to the rest of the institution.

At the median institution, CE-unit ads are a small share of its advertising.

Median share of an institution's ads that come from its CE unit · institutions with 20 or more ads · n = 94 Canada, 144 United States

5.9%

Canada · median institution

2.5%

United States · median institution

Institutions with 20 or more ads that ran no CE-unit ads at all



Source: CredScape ad collection, October 2026. Institutions with a verified account on Google, LinkedIn or Meta.

Your CE unit competes first inside its own institution's advertising. About a quarter of institutions with 20 or more ads ran none for CE. At the median, CE is one ad in seventeen in Canada and one in forty in the US.

FINDING 2 · CONCENTRATION

A few institutions run half the ads.

Of the 85 Canadian institutions that ran CE-unit ads, 7 ran half of Canada's total. In the US, 11 of 106 ran half. Concentration holds inside subjects too.

Ten institutions run 63% of Canada's CE-unit ads and 49% of America's.

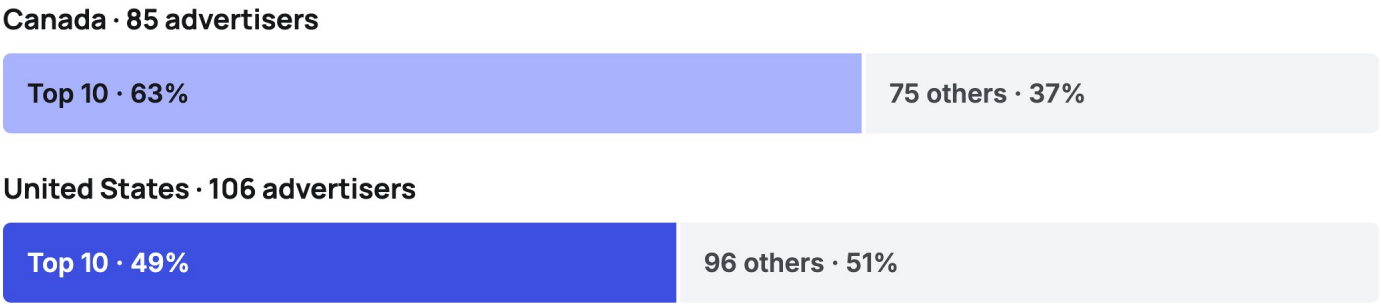
Share of CE-unit ads by advertiser rank · n = 4,313 Canada (85 advertisers), 12,604 United States (106 advertisers)

7

Canadian institutions run half of Canada's CE-unit ads

11

US institutions run half of America's



Source: CredScape ad collection, October 2026. Ads from CE-unit accounts on Google, LinkedIn and Meta.

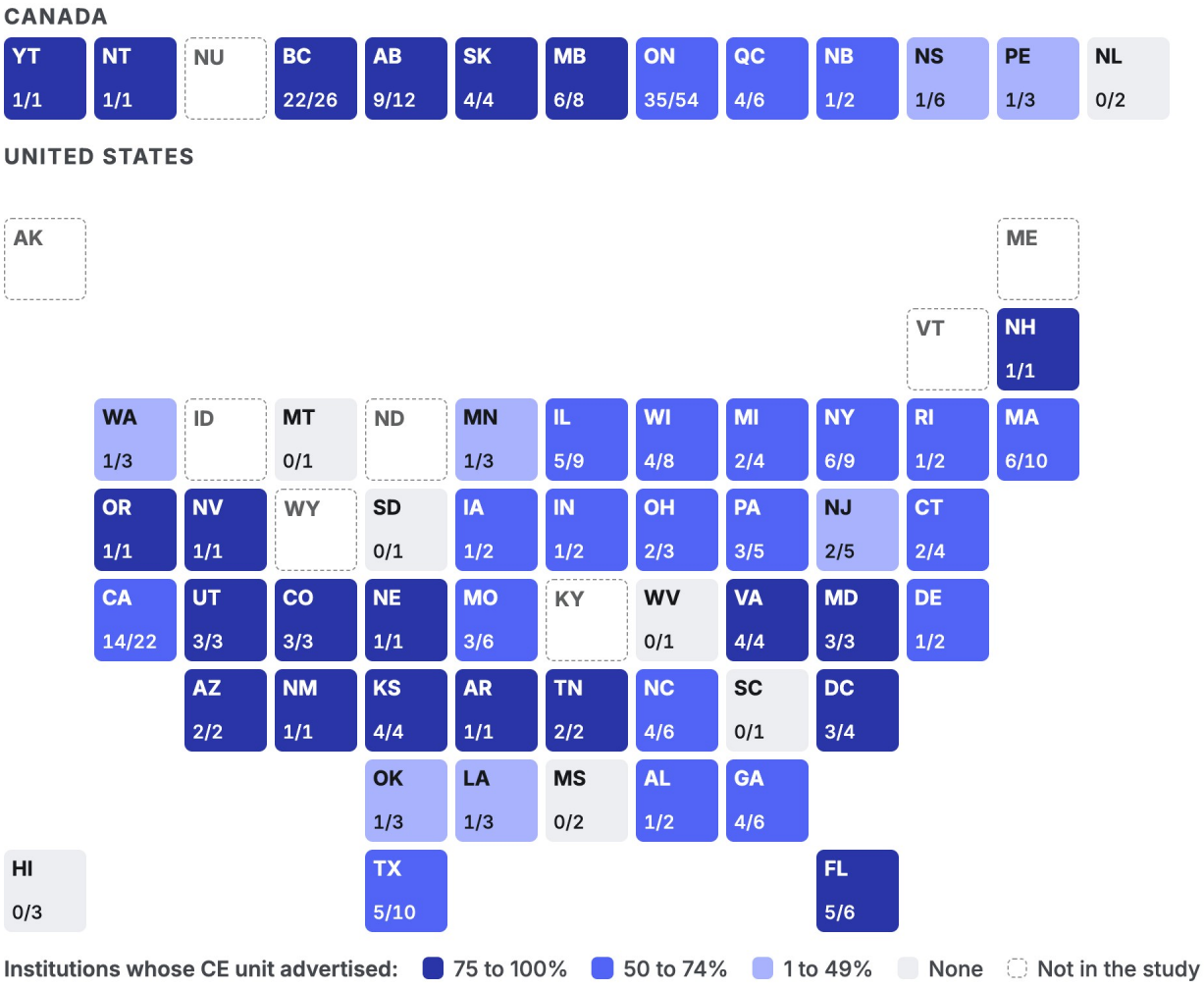
If you compete with one of these schools for the same learners, you face a steady stream of ads. MIT alone runs 26% of US Data & AI CE-unit ads. UBC Vancouver runs about 30% of Canada's Data & AI, IT and Leadership ads. The top-ten lists are in Table A3.

FINDING 3 · GEOGRAPHY

Western Canada advertises most.

Western Canada advertises most. US regions are even.

Share of institutions whose CE unit ran at least one ad · n = 300 institutions, 191 advertising



Western Canada advertises most; the US is even. 41 of 50 institutions in BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba advertise their CE unit (82%), Ontario 35 of 54 (65%), Atlantic Canada 3 of 13 (23%). In every US Census region, 56 to 65% do. Volume concentrates in the Northeast: 21% of US institutions, 32% of US CE-unit ads. Region tables in A1 and A2.

Source: CredScape ad collection, October 2026. Each tile: institutions whose CE unit ran at least one ad / institutions in the study. US regions follow the Census Bureau.

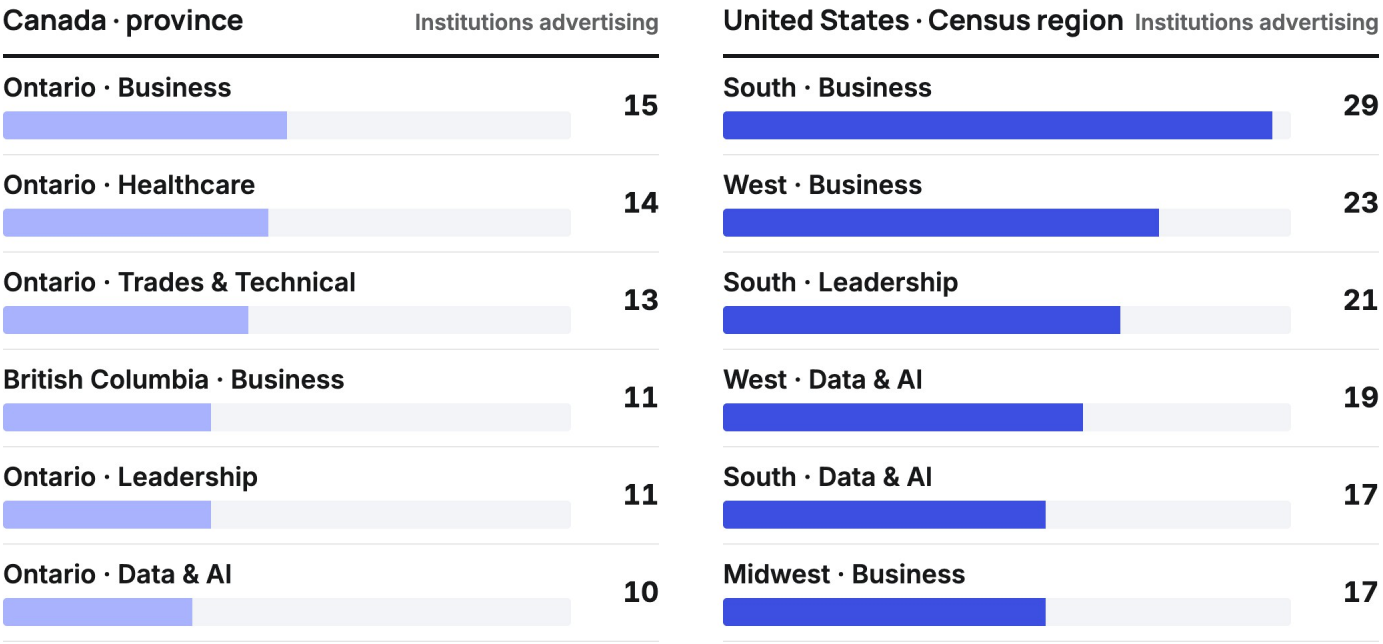
FINDING 4 · CROWDED FIELDS

Business is the most crowded field in every region.

Counting the institutions whose CE unit advertised each subject in each region: 29 in the US South run Business ads, 23 in the West. In Ontario, 15 of the province's 35 CE advertisers do.

Business and Data & AI are the crowded fields. Ontario and the US South are the crowded regions.

Institutions whose CE unit ran at least one ad in the subject, by the institution's home region · n = 85 Canadian and 106 US CE advertisers · brand ads excluded



Source: CredScape ad collection, October 2026. Subject from the ad's classification. Canadian rows are provinces; US rows are Census regions.

The quiet fields are as telling as the crowded ones. Indigenous Knowledge and Culture has 22 ads from 7 institutions across both countries. Dalhousie is Nova Scotia's only CE advertiser, and all 83 of its ads are brand ads. Region is the institution's home, not where the ad was shown.

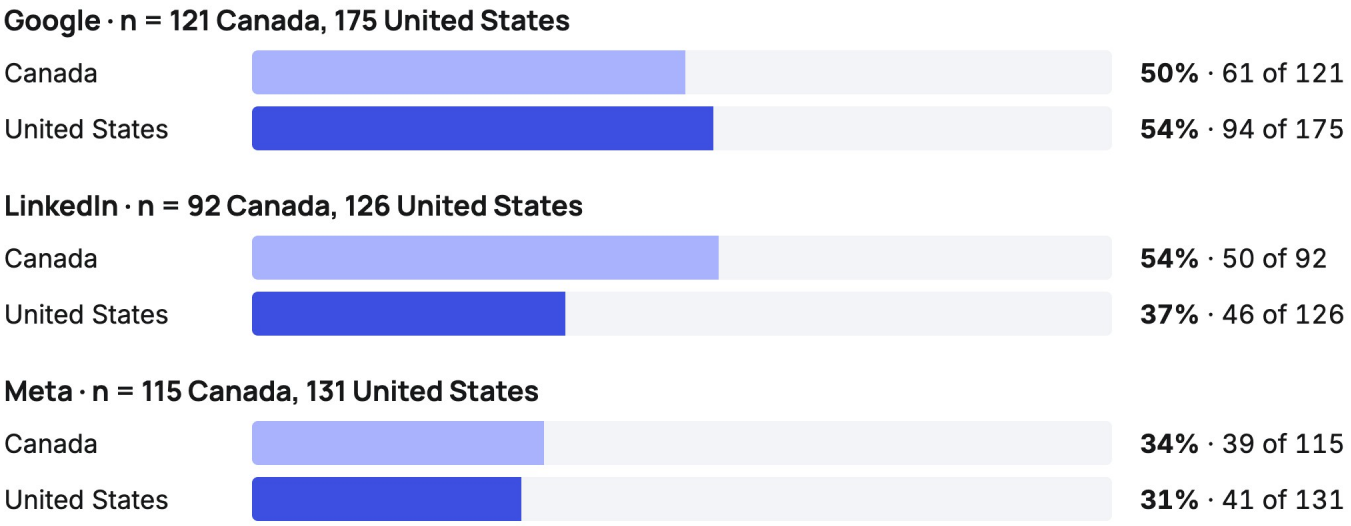
FINDING 5 · PLATFORMS

Canadian CE units use LinkedIn more.

Institutions use Google at about the same rate in both countries. LinkedIn differs: 54% of Canadian institutions with an account ran CE-unit ads there, against 37% in the US.

Canadian CE units use LinkedIn more. Google use is even.

Institutions whose CE unit advertised on the platform, as a share of institutions with an account there



Source: CredScape ad collection, October 2026. Video shares are Canada only; the US LinkedIn collection holds no video. Video by platform in the interactive version.

LinkedIn is where CE units sell the unit, not the program. Brand ads are 28.5% of LinkedIn CE-unit ads, against 16% on Google and 12% on Meta. CE units rarely use video: on LinkedIn in Canada, 4.3% of CE-unit ads are video, against 23% of the institutions' other ads. 24 of 85 Canadian CE advertisers run no Google CE ads at all.

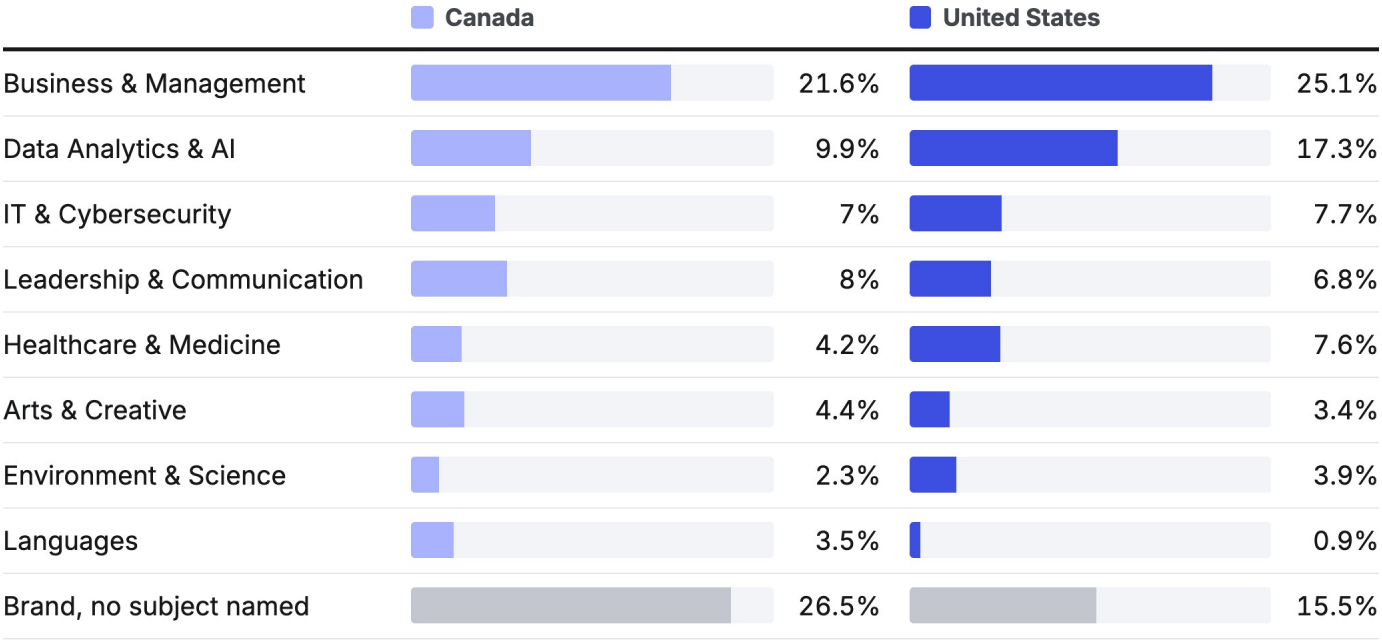
FINDING 6 · WHAT THEY SELL

Business is the largest subject. Data and AI is bigger in the US.

Data Analytics & AI is 17% of US CE-unit ads against 10% in Canada. Canadian CE units devote more of their ads to the unit itself: 26.5% promote the CE brand without naming a subject, against 15.5% in the US.

Business leads in both countries. Data and AI is a bigger share in the US.

Share of CE-unit ads by subject · n = 4,313 Canada, 12,604 United States



Source: CredScape ad collection, October 2026. Brand = ads for the CE unit that name no subject. Subjects below 3% in both countries are omitted here and shown in the interactive version.

Brand advertising is a choice, and schools make it differently. Among the top ten advertisers, brand ads are 61% of Harvard's CE-unit ads and 51% of Toronto Metropolitan's, but 3% of MIT's and none of Johns Hopkins'. The by-school table is A4.

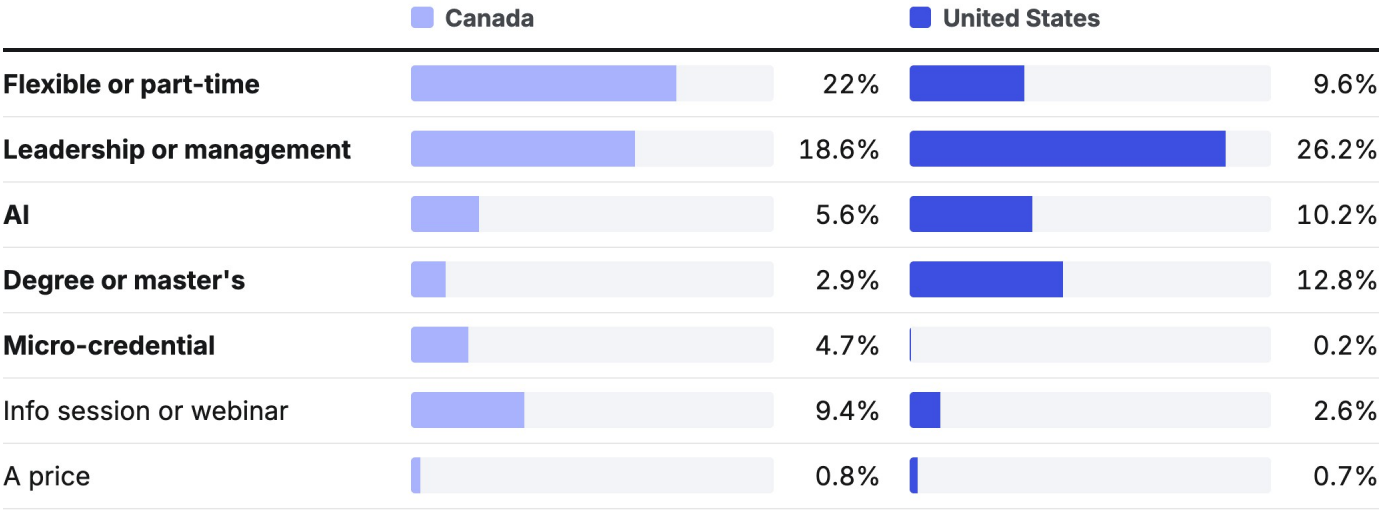
FINDING 7 · WHAT THE ADS SAY

Canada says micro-credential. The US says degree.

"Micro-credential" appears in 4.7% of Canadian CE-unit ads with text and 0.2% of American ones: 123 ads against 12. Degrees and master's programs run the other way, 13% in the US against 3%. Canadian ads also sell flexibility, American ads AI and leadership.

Canada sells micro-credentials and flexibility. The US sells degrees, AI and leadership.

Share of CE-unit ads with readable text that mention each theme · n = 2,630 Canada, 5,278 United States



Source: CredScape ad collection, October 2026. CE-unit ads with readable text (47% of all CE-unit ads). Word matching on headline, body and image text. All twelve themes in the interactive version.

Nobody names a rival, and almost nobody names a price. None of the 7,908 ads mentions another provider. 60 show a price, 1 in 132; another 59 show a scholarship or discount amount. Flexible or part-time study appears in 22% of Canadian ads against 10% in the US; AI in 10% of American ads against 6%. Info-session ads are mostly one institution: Simon Fraser runs 158 of Canada's 248.

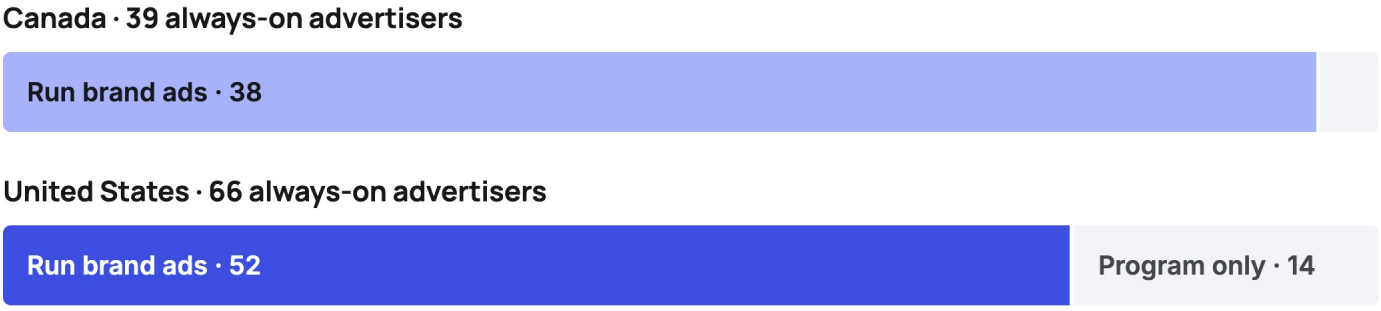
FINDING 8 · BRAND

Always-on advertisers run brand ads alongside program ads.

58 of Canada's 85 CE advertisers and 69 of America's 106 run brand ads: ads for the CE unit that name no subject or program. 30 Canadian and 38 US institutions keep one running every month.

Nearly all always-on advertisers in Canada run brand ads; four in five in the US.

CE advertisers with ads covering every month of the past year, by whether any of those ads are brand ads · n = 39 Canada, 66 United States



Brand is a bigger share of Canadian CE advertising.

Median share of a CE unit's ads that are brand ads · advertisers with 20 or more CE-unit ads · n = 35 Canada, 60 United States

24%

Canada · median brand share of a CE unit's ads

10%

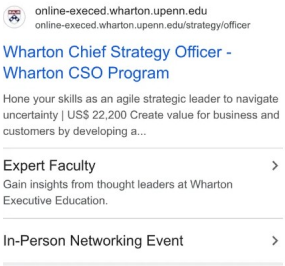
United States · median brand share

Source: CredScape ad collection, October 2026. Brand = ads for the CE unit that name no subject or program. "Every month" = the ad's first-to-last date range covers the month.

Does anyone know your unit exists between intakes? The advertisers that never go quiet run brand ads alongside program ads: 38 of 39 in Canada, 52 of 66 in the US. Brand ads are shorter-lived than program ads on Google (220 against 500 days median in Canada, 267 against 377 in the US), so staying visible means renewing them.

What the ads look like

Three ads from the public ad libraries, each showing one finding in this report.



PARTNER AD

Wharton Chief Strategy Officer program · Google

Advertiser: Emeritus Institute of Management, for the University of Pennsylvania. Running since September 2023 on a wharton.upenn.edu address. A partner runs the ad and quotes the price: US$22,200.



FINDING 7

University of Alberta, Privacy Compliance Training · Google

"Flexible Part-Time Courses" and "Earn microcredentials" in one ad. Both phrases are far more common in Canadian ads than American ones.



FINDING 6

Toronto Metropolitan, The Chang School · Google

August 2026. "Browse 75 Certificate Programs": a brand ad that promotes the school through its range of programs. Brand ads are 51% of Toronto Metropolitan's CE-unit ads.

Not every ad is finished. 544 Meta CE-unit ads from 31 institutions ran with the unrendered headline , a quarter of all Meta CE-unit ads. 74 ads at seven US institutions and Western University share identical copy and the same four course pages.

Images from the Google Ads Transparency Center and LinkedIn Ad Library, reproduced for commentary and research. Rights remain with the advertisers; contact research@credscape.io to remove one.

FINDING 9 · ALWAYS ON

Most CE advertisers are visible every month.

Many of these ads run for years. 1,891 CE-unit ads from 65 institutions were still running in October 2026 after starting about two years earlier or more. The oldest, from UC San Diego and UC Berkeley, have run since at least October 2021.

Most CE advertisers had ads running in every month of the past year.

CE advertisers with a CE-unit ad whose first-to-last date range covers every month · n = 85 Canada, 106 United States

46%

Canada · 39 of 85 CE advertisers

62%

United States · 66 of 106 CE advertisers

Median days a CE-unit ad ran, by platform



Source: CredScape ad collection, October 2026. Libraries do not show every day an ad ran. Google dates begin October 2021; Meta lists only ads active at collection, which shortens its durations. Duration buckets in A4.

If you advertise only at intake, your competitors are visible between your campaigns. 92% of Johns Hopkins' 306 running ads started two or more years ago. At the other end, 31 of 191 CE advertisers had nothing running in the 30 days before collection. Half of Google CE-unit ads run longer than a year; a quarter of Meta ads run a week or less.

Three decisions for CE teams

What the findings change about how a continuing education unit plans its advertising.

1 Map who advertises your subject in your region.

Business has 29 advertisers in the US South and 15 in Ontario. Some subjects have one advertiser in a province. Your competition is a short, knowable list.

2 Decide what runs between intakes.

62% of US and 46% of Canadian CE advertisers are visible every month. 30 Canadian and 38 US institutions keep a brand ad running all year. A campaign that stops at intake leaves the months in between to them.

3 Decide whether your unit exists between intakes.

A brand ad is the one that can run when no program is open. 30 Canadian and 38 US CE units keep one up every month, and nearly every always-on advertiser runs them. If your advertising stops when a program closes, nothing carries your name until the next one opens.

How we did this

Sources	We collected ads from three public libraries in October 2026: the Google Ads Transparency Center, the LinkedIn Ad Library and the Meta Ad Library.
Sample	The sample holds 162,369 unique ads from 300 institutions, 125 in Canada and 175 in the US. We removed duplicates by platform and ad ID.
CE units	We identified 292 continuing education units at these institutions. For 230 of them, a quote on the unit's own web page confirmed it. We matched each unit to its advertiser accounts. In all, 16,917 ads came from CE-unit accounts.
Classification	Language models labelled each ad. Before they did, they had to reach a precision of at least 0.90 and a recall of at least 0.75 on a test set of 253 ads.
Denominators	Institution shares count institutions. Ad shares count ads. The median CE share uses only institutions with 20 or more ads. Text measures use only ads with readable text, which is 47% of CE-unit ads. Each chart states its own denominator.
What each platform shows	Google lists ads shown in the last 12 months, and its dates begin in October 2021. Meta lists only ads that were active when we collected. We searched LinkedIn once a month over the past year. "Running in a month" means an ad's first-to-last date range covers that month; the libraries do not show every day an ad ran.
Coverage	Our Google collection by domain reached 72 of 165 US institution domains, so Google counts are lower bounds. The US LinkedIn collection holds no video ads, so video shares cover Canada only. An ad counts as long-running if it was first seen on or before 1 November 2024, about two years before collection, and was still running when we collected.
Not measured	We did not measure spend, impressions, clicks or enrolments. The ad libraries do not publish them.

The next edition, in early 2027, adds more US institutions and repeats the count.

TABLE A1

Canada: CE-unit advertising by province

Province or territory	Institutions	With CE ads	Share
Ontario	54	35	65%
British Columbia	26	22	85%
Alberta	12	9	75%
Manitoba	8	6	75%
Nova Scotia	6	1	17%
Quebec	6	4	67%
Saskatchewan	4	4	100%
Prince Edward Island	3	1	33%
New Brunswick	2	1	50%
Newfoundland and Labrador	2	0	0%
Yukon	1	1	100%
Northwest Territories	1	1	100%
Canada	**125**	**85**	**68%**

Institutions (universities and colleges) in the study, October 2026. With CE ads = the CE unit ran at least one ad. Small provinces have few institutions; read them as counts. Five Montréal institutions without a province on record are counted in Quebec. Nunavut has no institution in the study.

TABLE A2

United States: CE-unit advertising by region and state

Region or state	Institutions	With CE ads	Share
Northeast	36	21	58%
South	56	35	63%
Midwest	43	24	56%
West	40	26	65%
States with five or more institutions			
California	22	14	64%
Texas	10	5	50%
Massachusetts	10	6	60%
New York	9	6	67%
Illinois	9	5	56%
Wisconsin	8	4	50%
Florida	6	5	83%
Georgia	6	4	67%
Missouri	6	3	50%
North Carolina	6	4	67%
New Jersey	5	2	40%
Pennsylvania	5	3	60%
United States	**175**	**106**	**61%**

Institutions in the study, October 2026. With CE ads = the CE unit ran at least one ad. Census regions first, then states with five or more institutions in the study. Seven states have no institution in the study (AK, ID, KY, ME, ND, VT, WY).

TABLE A3

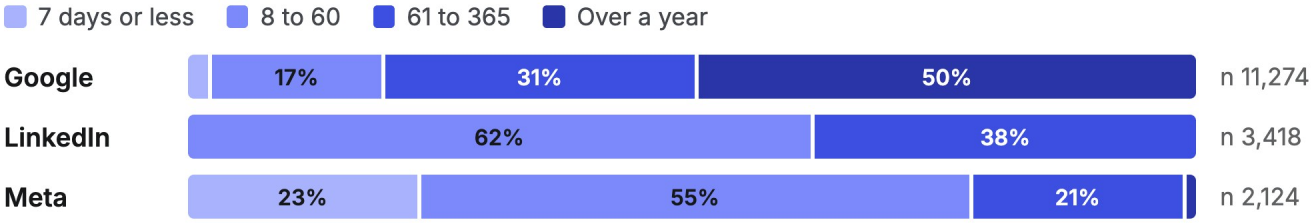
Top ten CE-unit advertisers

Canada · top ten = 63% of ads		CE-unit ads
1	UBC Vancouver	512
2	York	340
3	Toronto Metropolitan	321
4	Simon Fraser	293
5	McMaster	276
6	McGill	255
7	NAIT	239
8	Waterloo	183
9	Western	161
10	Université de Montréal	147

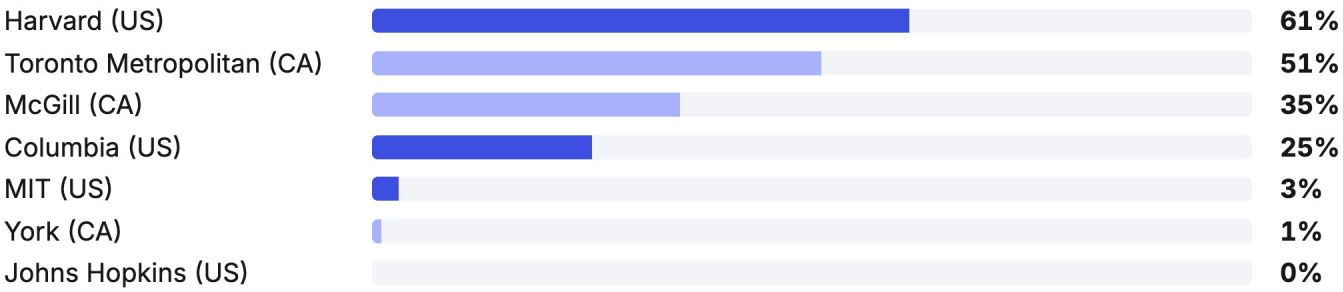
United States · top ten = 49%		CE-unit ads
1	MIT	1,110
2	Northwestern	876
3	Harvard	768
4	Columbia	669
5	Georgetown	590
6	Johns Hopkins	529
7	Kennesaw State	506
8	Cornell	493
9	San Diego State	336
10	University of Chicago	318

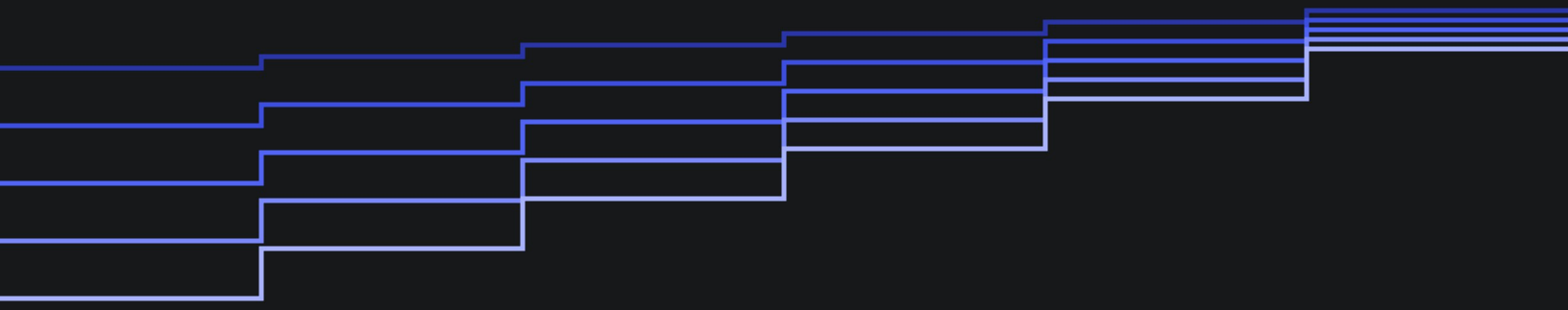
TABLE A4

Ad duration by platform; brand share by institution



Brand ads as a share of each institution's CE-unit ads, institutions among the top ten advertisers





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