



**Canadian  
Association of  
Broadcasters**

**L'Association  
canadienne des  
radiodiffuseurs**

June 30th, 2005

Ms. Diane Rhéaume  
Secretary General  
Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications  
Commission  
1 Promenade du Portage  
Gatineau, Québec  
K1A 0N2

Dear Ms. Rhéaume:

**Re: CAB Action Plan to examine issues concerning the presence, portrayal and participation of persons with disabilities in television programming – Broadcasting Public Notice CRTC 2004 - 2**

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In Broadcasting Public Notice CRTC 2004-2 - *Introduction to Broadcasting Decisions CRTC 2004-6 to 2004-27 renewing the licences of 22 specialty services* (PN CRTC 2004-2), the Commission called on the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) to develop and file a plan outlining the process it would propose be followed to examine the issues surrounding the presence, portrayal, and participation of persons with disabilities in television programming. The CAB filed its Action Plan on August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2004 and undertook to provide a report on its research initiatives in July 2005.

Regrettably, the CAB will not be in a position to file its report within that suggested timeframe. The CAB requires additional time to complete its research studies and develop its final report which will identify deliverables and initiatives that will be undertaken by private broadcasters to advance the presence, participation and portrayal of persons with disabilities within the industry. Accordingly, the CAB requests that the Commission grant an extension for filing the report to September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

In the interim, the CAB is pleased to provide the Commission with a progress report on its research initiatives.

In January a sub-committee of the CAB's Joint Societal Issues Committee, entitled the *CAB Steering Committee on the Presence, Portrayal and Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Television* was struck to oversee the implementation of

the CAB's Action Plan. This Steering Committee is chaired by Sarah Crawford, Vice-President, Public Affairs, CHUM Limited.

In March, the Steering Committee issued a request for proposals and selected CONNECTUS Consulting Inc. to undertake the research identified in the CAB's Action Plan and prepare the CAB's report to the CRTC.

#### *Best Practices Review*

To date, CONNECTUS has completed a full review of international Best Practices research and reports, including the U.K., Europe, Australia and the U.S. and has identified a number of initiatives in the U.K. and California that will make significant contributions to the CAB's study.

A full review of Canadian Best Practices research and reports, including broadcasters and other federally regulated sectors such as the chartered banks has also been completed.

#### *Consultations*

CONNECTUS has completed approximately 35 consultations with disability groups, broadcasters, related industry organizations and government and expects to conduct approximately 10 more consultations prior to the Stakeholder Forum in Toronto on July 15<sup>th</sup>. Issues, barriers and strategic solutions identified through one-on-one consultations will be examined in greater detail during the Stakeholder Forum

#### *Stakeholder Forum*

The Stakeholder Forum, scheduled to take place on July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2005 in Toronto, will bring key opinion leaders and grassroots advocates from various disability communities, experts in the field of disability issues, and broadcasters and related industry representatives together in a solutions-focused forum of discussion

As noted above, the Stakeholder Forum will involve a day-long discussion of issues, barriers and strategic solutions identified through one-on-one consultations and Best Practices research the CAB has conducted to date. This will include an examination of toolkit solutions that could be adopted to advance the presence, participation, and portrayal of persons with disabilities in television programming, and the identification of possible measurement tools private broadcasters could use to evaluate progress.

The CAB would be pleased to have a representative from the Commission attend the Stakeholder Forum as an observer and will be following up with Martine Vallée, Director, Discretionary Services & Social Policy in this regard.

*CAB Outreach Committee*

The CAB is in the process of establishing an Outreach Committee that will include representatives from the independent production sector, industry guilds and/or trade associations, representatives from national disability organizations and others with expertise in issues related to disability and the media. This committee will be asked to provide feedback on various proposals put forward by the CAB to advance the presence, portrayal and participation of persons with disabilities within the industry. The CAB expects to confirm the composition of the Outreach Committee by July 8<sup>th</sup> and would be pleased to provide the Commission with a list of its members at that time.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the project, please do not hesitate to contact Susan Wheeler, Senior Director, Policy and Regulatory Affairs at 613 233 4035 ext. 320.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wayne Charman".

Wayne Charman  
Senior Vice-President, Television, Specialty & Pay Services  
and New Technologies

c.c. Martine Vallée, Director, Discretionary Services & Social Policy, CRTC