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Organizers' Manual

(A compendium of helpful hints, ideas on publicity and planning to supplement your own ingenuity and creativity.)

Team Up! **for a Stronger Marketplace**

Consumers • Business • Government

NATIONAL CONSUMER WEEK



Consumer and
Corporate Affairs Canada

Consommation
et Corporations Canada

Canada

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Consumers, Business, Government :
Team up for a Stronger Marketplace
NATIONAL CONSUMER WEEK

Organizers' Manual

**(A compendium of helpful hints, ideas on publicity and
planning to supplement your own ingenuity and creativity)**

Acknowledgement is gratefully given to the National Consumer Council of the United Kingdom and the United States Office of Consumer Affairs for sharing the ideas and information contained in their guides for organizing a Consumer Week.

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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

The last full week of April will now be known as **National Consumer Week**. This year the dates are April 23-29, 1990.

National Consumer Week is an opportunity to encourage a higher level of consumer awareness, education and participation in the marketplace by consumers, business and government. The goal of the week is to emphasize the marketplace partnership among these groups.

Your federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments encourage business, consumer groups, schools, community organizations, trade and professional associations and media to become involved in **National Consumer Week**. Activities, big and small, that demonstrate and support the partnership in the marketplace among consumers, business and government are encouraged. Events and activities can be held in your town or your community to promote a better marketplace for consumers.

The success of **National Consumer Week** depends upon your involvement.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Harvie Andre". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "H" and "A".

Harvie Andre

INTRODUCTION

Six A.M.

The clock radio sounds in your darkened room.

From the first instant of waking consciousness you are participating in the marketplace. You are not alone; your marketplace partners are there with you. Business has supplied the electricity, government has certified the electric meter measuring consumption, and you have counted on the designers, manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers and retailers of the alarm clock to get you off the mark--running for the busy day ahead.

Every moment of every waking hour, Canadians consume and purchase energy, are involved in transactions, use goods and services... a gigantic pyramid of economic, legal, ethical and personal interrelationships. Such is the marketplace. You, the consumer, and your partners, business and government, each has a role to play. We are all part of the team.

National Consumer Week is an opportunity to make this team stronger and the marketplace better for consumers and for business.

The purpose behind National Consumer Week is to involve as many sectors of the marketplace--educators, business people, all levels of government, media and, of course, consumers--as we possibly can, to make them all more aware of the marketplace team. The method is to plan, organize and participate in a series of community activities, contests, games, programs and events that highlight the marketplace partnership. The activities can last a week, a weekend or a day. The involvement of the business sector is critical. The National Consumer Week activities that you organize are restricted only by your ingenuity and the resources of your group.

THE ELEMENTS OF NATIONAL CONSUMER WEEK

Timing

Your federal, provincial and territorial governments are actively involved in National Consumer Week. The Week will be held during the last full week of April at the same time as a similar event held in the United States. Consumers, businesses and government are encouraged to organize National Consumer Week activities ranging from week-long events to weekend or day-long events. Everyone has a reason for getting involved, everyone has something to gain.

Targets

We all have a vested interest in fostering awareness of consumer issues, nurturing the consumer-business-government partnership, and making the marketplace more responsive. It is therefore critical to involve as many people and businesses as possible. Involve people of all ages and from all walks of life, in exciting and fun-filled, mass-participation events during the Week. The federal government, in conjunction with provincial and territorial governments, urges every sector of the marketplace to get involved in National Consumer Week activities.

Venues

As a truly "grassroots" event, National Consumer Week can take place virtually anywhere. A most appropriate setting is in shopping malls, where people gather as consumers and retailers. Community centres, businesses, offices... all of these and many others can be effective locations for your activity.

**TEN SOLID REASONS TO PARTICIPATE
IN NATIONAL CONSUMER WEEK**

...as an individual:

- . to get involved in your community;
- . to be part of a fascinating learning experience;
- . to meet people of all ages, from all walks of life;
- . to expand your knowledge of products and services;
- . to exchange ideas with others about the changing marketplace;

...as a member of an association, business or group:

- . to generate awareness of your organization;
- . to help simplify choices in a complex marketplace;
- . to invest a little bit of time and energy in order to make a difference for consumers;
- . to help consumers, business and government learn about the marketplace partnership;
- . to create an exciting event for your community.

IDEAS TO INSPIRE

National Consumer Week is about the marketplace partnership among consumers, business and government. The kinds of events that go on will be as varied as the people involved. Here are a few dozen possible projects:

Educators

- . Use the National Consumer Week slogan in your activities.
- . Do interviews with parents and grandparents to compare how consumers' lives have changed over the years in terms of consumer protection available, product quality, cost and choice, etc.
- . Discuss how products and services may change in the future.
- . Conduct taste tests on products such as soft drinks, snack foods, breakfast cereals, candy, etc. Compare name brands with generic "no-name" bulk foods.
- . Organize a consumer trivia true-false game. Questions can be read over the public address system and, one day later, answers provided. Or the test can be given out at a consumer display or published in a newsletter. Perhaps prizes can be awarded to winners.
- . Develop skits on consumer subjects such as how to complain effectively, how to ask the right questions before a purchase and where to get information.
- . Ask students to identify poorly designed products and services that they commonly use and have them write letters to the manufacturers to express their ideas for improvements.
- . Conduct price comparisons on such products as blue jeans, running shoes, snack foods and beverages and portable cassette players. Publish the results in a bulletin or newsletter.
- . Produce advertisements on existing products or services, or imaginary ones to learn about marketing techniques.
- . Discuss consumer topics such as how to buy food, clothing, bicycles, sports equipment, and entertainment products.

- . Conduct surveys on student spending patterns. Examine sources of income, average income, types of goods and services purchased, percentage of income spent on various categories of goods and services, amount of money saved, etc.
- . Compare consumer behaviour in different parts of Canada and with other countries: spending patterns on various types of goods and services, degree of consumer protection available, and differences in cost, quality, variety of products and services.
- . Tape a series of bulletins on how to purchase specific consumer products and broadcast them over the public address system.
- . Develop a handbook of consumer tips on products commonly purchased by students.
- . Start a class investment club to teach students about financial planning.
- . Organize an essay contest on why it is important to be a wise consumer.
- . Have a guest speaker in from a local business or a consumer group to discuss product safety, product labelling, misleading advertising and other consumer topics.
- . Arrange tours of local businesses to see how goods and services are produced and packaged. Check out how businesses ensure consumer satisfaction.

Community and Citizen's Groups

- . Use the National Consumer Week slogan in your activities.
- . Have a speaker from a local business or a consumer group come to speak to your members.
- . Meet with consumer representatives of local businesses or chambers of commerce to discuss their roles and responsibilities in the marketplace.
- . Arrange a "Meet Your Legislators" day where elected representatives can outline what has been done to foster a better marketplace for consumers and business.
- . Publish a consumer quiz in your newsletter or magazine.

- . Sponsor a consumer education activity in your community with the help of local business.
- . Using the National Consumer Week slogan, ask radio and television stations to broadcast public service announcements aimed at consumers and business.
- . Sponsor car care clinics. Invite mechanics, auto supply dealers, members of auto clubs and car dealers to talk about their interest in cars.

Trade and Professional Associations

- . Use the National Consumer Week slogan in your activities.
- . Publicize your National Consumer Week events in association newsletters and magazines.
- . Using the National Consumer Week slogan, produce public service announcements for radio and TV.
- . Encourage your members to be sensitive to consumers with special needs such as the hearing impaired, blind, or mobility disabled.
- . Produce a supplement for your newsletter highlighting National Consumer Week and have your president write an article describing the importance of consumers to your industry.
- . Publish consumer tips and other educational material about your industry, product or services.
- . Arrange exhibits or demonstrations of your products or services and customer relations activities in shopping malls.
- . Offer speakers for school and community events to talk about your industry or profession from the consumer's perspective.

Business

- . Use the National Consumer Week slogan in your activities.
- . Ask your president or chief executive officer to write a letter to all employees announcing National Consumer Week and encouraging them to emphasize customer satisfaction.
- . Sponsor a consumer or community organization to carry out a National Consumer Week project.
- . Publicize National Consumer Week events and topics in company newsletters and magazines.
- . Organize an open house to introduce your consumer representatives, senior managers and other employees to the public.
- . Put consumer information stuffers in bills sent to your customers.
- . Set up a suggestion box program for customers and employees as part of an effort to improve your products and services.
- . Organize seminars to inform customers about your products or services.
- . Conduct employee training seminars to improve customer service and satisfaction. Consider having employees recite a "commitment to service" pledge.
- . Present awards to employees who have an outstanding record in ensuring customer satisfaction.
- . Institute more effective complaint-handling procedures.
- . Establish and/or publicize a 1-800 number.
- . Publicize existing customer relations programs.
- . Conduct a customer survey to find out how you're doing, and how you might improve your products and services.
- . Rewrite warranties, product information booklets, or instructions in "plain language".

- . Set up advisory panels in which customers may participate.
- . Congratulate employees for good service to customers.
- . Offer consumer education tips on saving money or shopping wisely.
- . Arrange exhibits or demonstrations of your products, services and customer relations activities in shopping malls or other public areas.
- . Prepare a display of your best advertising or arrange for a screening of the year's best ads.

Consumer Groups

- . Use the National Consumer Week slogan in your activities.
- . Publicize National Consumer Week events and topics in newsletters and magazines and highlight the marketplace partnership among consumers, business and government.
- . Give a consumer award to recognize the contributions of an individual who has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to promoting the consumer interest. Have an awards ceremony and reception to highlight the event.
- . Give a business award to recognize a company with an exemplary record in consumer satisfaction. Have an awards ceremony and reception to highlight the event.
- . Help public libraries set up and publicize a "Consumer Corner".
- . Establish a local speakers' bureau to address community groups, schools, offices and civic organizations.
- . Suggest articles on consumer issues to the press. Suggest interviews to television and radio stations. Take part in open-line programs.
- . Organize public seminars or workshops in schools, community colleges, or community centres on topics such as how to use products, read product labels, protect your credit card, plan for retirement, etc.
- . Encourage local radio and television stations and newspapers to emphasize a variety of consumer subjects.
- . Produce and distribute consumer tips and warning bulletins through local businesses.

Municipal Officials

- . Use the National Consumer Week slogan in your activities.
- . Ask the Mayor or Reeve to proclaim National Consumer Week in your municipality or town, and to write a letter to all municipal employees informing them of it (see page 23 for sample Mayoral Proclamation).
- . Encourage consumer and community groups and businesses to use municipal facilities for their National Consumer Week activities.
- . Encourage local businesses to get involved in National Consumer Week.

THE MECHANICS OF GETTING THINGS DONE

You've decided to devote your talents, energies and creativity to organizing an event or a program of activities during National Consumer Week. Are you hesitating to get started? Take heart. With a little organization, you can do it. First things first. You need to get organized and to keep things simple, under control and on course.

1. Setting Goals and Objectives

It is essential that you define clearly what you want to do during National Consumer Week. Whether it's a single event or many, a clear, brief statement describing what you want to achieve will provide a frame of reference and prevent misunderstandings. Something to bear in mind, if you're part of an already-established organization, is the necessity of obtaining approval from your management or executive officials.

2. Getting Your Team Together

This part is relatively easy. All you have to do is find a few individuals who will commit themselves to the organization of an event or several activities. The first thing to do is to have an information session to present the outline of your project. Elect a chairperson, a vice-chairperson (who acts in the absence of the chair), and a secretary.

3. Who Does What

You have decided what you're going to do. Now the question is: who will do what? A good starting place is to list the tasks that need to be carried out, along with a timetable for their completion. Find out who wants to do what, and then divide up the remaining tasks equitably. Regular meetings help to monitor progress and solve problems as they arise. Make sure that decisions are reached and recorded. Be sure that people know their responsibilities.

4. The Nitty-Gritty

The details of your event or program occupy the next stage in planning. Items such as the precise length (from a few hours to several days), the most appropriate time of day, likely participants or audience and their schedules will all influence your choices here. A preliminary budget, if you haven't already developed one, is very important.

5. Delegate Tasks

Delegating various tasks is a necessity. Whether your project is big enough to require various working committees, or simply requires one person to handle each specific area, it is essential that these responsibilities be clearly identified with an individual or group. Distribute a contact list, with names and telephone numbers of everyone actively involved and their area of responsibility.

6. Charting Your Course

Draw up a master calendar of what should happen and when. How far you should plan in advance depends on the nature and scope of the event, and the expertise of your volunteers and team members. Good planning leads to good events. Planning will make it easy for you to devise a budget. This will tell you how much money you will need, and when you will need it. Remember though, you don't need a lot of money to have a successful event.

7. Structuring Your Activities

The many tasks that have to be carried out to conduct your activity or event require an organizational structure. The "committee" structure has long been the most popular and practical. It's up to you to determine which structure is best for organizing your activity. The following is a list of tasks that should help you determine if you need a simple committee structure or one that is more elaborate. Please note that the list is by no means exhaustive.

List of Organizing Tasks

1. Prepare a critical path for the organization of the activity.
2. Approach groups that can join in organizing the event.
3. Schedule activities.
4. Contact speakers, celebrities (the mayor) and confirm their attendance. Make sure that the equipment required is available. Check other details.
5. Plan the opening ceremonies; prepare and deliver invitations.
6. The big moment arrives: hold the event.
7. Do an evaluation and follow-up (e.g. write thank you letters) after the event.
8. Make a summary of your activities available to Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada for its report on National Consumer Week.

Finance and Budget

1. Based on the type of event(s) planned, determine how much money, if any, will be required.
2. Consider all potential costs including office supplies, printing, transportation, rentals, photocopies, speakers, licenses and permits.
3. Identify all potential sources of funding and sponsorship and develop a list of potential sponsors.
4. Coordinate fundraising; approach sponsors.
5. Open a bank account and keep an eye on finances.
6. Thank sponsors.

Publicity

1. Identify community organizations which will publish announcements free of charge in their flyers, brochures or other publications.
2. Write, design and print publications (leaflets, guides, brochures, programs, etc.); someone's home computer could do the job.
3. Write news releases.
4. Distribute publications.
5. Have T-shirts, posters and buttons made to promote your event, if your budget allows.
6. Solicit free airtime to publicize National Consumer Week activities; encourage disc jockeys to "talk it up"--feed daily updates of activities to media outlets (don't forget community stations or cable channels).
7. Solicit media interest and make sure that they always have access to your spokesperson.
8. Brief media representatives prior to the event and provide all the background information needed.
9. Plan a press conference to launch your activities and maintain contact with journalists. A photo session could also be organized.
10. Keep a file of media coverage (news articles, photos, videos, etc.) for post-event evaluation.

Logistics

1. Reserve any space required, considering accessibility for disabled persons, parking, public transit, etc.
2. Rent or borrow necessary equipment such as audio-visual equipment, chairs and tables, podium, microphones, etc.
3. Ensure that equipment and facilities are satisfactory.
4. Find out if first aid, security or insurance is needed.
5. Make meal or refreshment arrangements.
6. Make signs, if needed, to indicate washrooms, site activities, etc.
7. Decorate site.
8. Arrange set up, take down and clean up of site.

Human Resources

1. Determine volunteer and staffing requirements.
2. Recruit volunteers.
3. Assign and schedule volunteers for specific tasks.
4. Express appreciation for volunteers through thank you letters and/or invite them to a small reception.

HOW TO ATTRACT ATTENTION

Yours can be the best-organized, best-run consumer event...but if nobody shows up, or if nobody hears about it, then you've missed out on the primary objective of National Consumer Week. Remember, the goal is to emphasize the marketplace partnership among consumers, government and business.

Publicity, as much of it as you can handle, is needed. The best and least expensive method of obtaining publicity is still through the media: television, radio, newspapers, posters, community calendars and the like. It is worth remembering that the media are interested in the kind of activities that you are organizing.

The media need to be told about these events, well in advance, and they need to be reminded and updated periodically so they can allocate staff to cover the event. Ideally, ongoing coverage of preparations for National Consumer Week will start at least a week in advance, and daily reports and schedules of activities will run throughout the week.

Media Relations

Develop a strategy for dealing with the media. In many instances, particularly with the major networks, there will already be some form of consumer show or regular spot on the local news that deals with consumer issues. Find out if there are producers, reporters or freelancers who regularly handle a consumer beat in your community.

Designate one person in your group as the media contact, both to stimulate interest, and to respond to inquiries. Prior to the event, this person will provide background information and press releases. Since most National Consumer Week activities will be considered 'soft' news, it may be useful to propose various story angles and ideas prior to the Week and see how the media responds.

It is important that the media contact be well-informed and up-to-date on all aspects of the planned event. During the event, he or she will be providing spokespeople for interviews and helping reporters put together their news stories.

Your dealings with the media should be concise, articulate, consistent and cordial. In general, you can probably anticipate what most of their questions will be beforehand. If you are taken by surprise, be sure that you can refer the reporter to somebody who can answer his or her questions. It is frequently helpful to provide real life examples to illustrate your points.

Media Releases

One month before your activity, issue a media notice outlining your planned activities, sponsors, organizers, dates, and places.

One week before your event, issue another media release with greater detail on the same items. Include the name of your media contact person, with phone numbers to call (see page 24 for sample Media Release).

Send your releases to the following people:

- public affairs producers for all media;
- editors in chief of daily and weekly newspapers, radio and television stations;
- news directors of cable companies;
- editors of city or regional magazines;
- community or civic organization newspapers or newsletters.

Plugging In

Existing 'talk show' or 'open line' programs can often be tapped into. Contact the show's producer and sell him or her the idea, using the best (true) consumer and business anecdotes you can find to illustrate the importance and impact of National Consumer Week.

Proclamations

Mayors, Reeves, town and city councils and boards of education frequently issue official proclamations and can pass resolutions in recognition of Consumer Week. Contact your local representative to these organizations (see page 23 for sample Mayoral Proclamation).

Community Calendars

Most newspapers, cable services, radio and television stations provide free listings or public service announcements for upcoming community events. Contact the public affairs director for copy deadlines.

Posters and Pamphlets

These can be as elaborate as you can afford, or as simple as a single-sheet notice set up on a home computer. You can seek the help of school boards, churches, supermarkets, stores, voluntary organizations and local businesses for printing and distribution.

Publicity After the Fact

A follow-up release after the main event can give you some "follow-up" publicity. If you ran a contest, the prizes might be awarded later. A "before and after" survey could be released. A report on your event could be covered in a consumer group publication or a business or trade magazine.

ZEST AND ZEAL

Much of the success of your event will depend on attracting the interest of the general public and the media. Beyond the substance of your event, there should be some zest and zeal to add excitement and colour. You might see it as the icing on the cake to make people enjoy your event a little more. Here are some useful ideas:

A Little Music Please

Have a band perform live music, get one that will volunteer its services or provide them at cost. Music always attracts attention and an up-and-coming band may appreciate the opportunity to play for an audience.

A Commanding Performance

Recruit a group of performers like jugglers, acrobats, clowns, etc. to keep the crowds interested. Again, up-and-coming talent may work for free.

A Banner Year

Hang a large banner across a main street. Determine whether you have sufficient money to produce the banner, get permission from local authorities. Make sure it is weather-proof.

Party Time

Give out hats, or posters or other items. Many can be provided free of charge from local companies--of course, the company logo will be on them.

Sprinkle some Stardust

Invite a local media or sports personality, celebrity or politician to visit some of the events or to officially open the Week's activities. Arrange for a photographer to take pictures of the opening and highlights of the events.

Add some Pomp

Arrange for an official launch ceremony for National Consumer Week by the mayor or other government official. As with any special visitor, make sure there is someone to greet VIPs, introduce them to others involved, and take them around the exhibit or event. Encourage your local Member of Parliament to get involved too!

SOME DO'S AND DON'TS

- . Do make sure that your aims and objectives are clear, and that all collaborating organizations understand them well.
- . Don't do everything at the last minute. Allow plenty of time to plan and implement the various tasks.
- . Do try to get good media coverage. The more coverage you get, the greater chance your event or activity will be well-attended and successful.
- . Don't forget to enlist the support and participation of other organizations who can bring in their members and help distribute material, such as leaflets.
- . Do follow the crowds, that is, hold your events where people tend to congregate such as shopping centres, office areas, or community centres. The more people get involved, the better.
- . Don't be shy about adding a little excitement and glitz to your event--if resources permit.
- . Do conduct an on-site review of the proposed location of your event to see if everything fits into your plans.
- . Don't forget to invite speakers or celebrities well in advance. The popular ones always get booked up very quickly.
- . Do have several planning meetings to review the status of event logistics. Remember Murphy's Law: "If anything can go wrong, it will".
- . It's always nice to think big but be mindful of your financial and human resources. It's better to do a smaller event very well than to do a big event poorly. You can always expand next time.

SAMPLE MAYORAL PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, the federal, provincial and territorial governments have proclaimed the last full week of April as "National Consumer Week"; and

WHEREAS, the promotion of fairness, safety and efficiency in the marketplace is beneficial for consumers, business and government; and

WHEREAS, a true partnership exists in the marketplace among consumers, business and government; and

WHEREAS, the consumer interest can best be advanced in the marketplace where there is adequate choice, information and recourse, where a strong sense of responsibility and partnership exists among consumers, educators, media, business, government and community groups; and

WHEREAS, National Consumer Week will bring about a higher level of consumer awareness and education and encourage consumers, educators, business, government, media and community groups to participate actively in a spirit of cooperation in promoting the consumer interest in Canada;

NOW, THEREFORE, I _____ Mayor of _____,
do hereby proclaim the last week of April in the city of _____,
as NATIONAL CONSUMER WEEK

DATE _____ MAYOR _____

A SAMPLE MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

_____ ANNOUNCES THE LAUNCH OF
(Your community's name)
NATIONAL CONSUMER WEEK

Yourtown: Monday, April 23 to Sunday, April 29, 1990 in Yourtown is National Consumer Week, a time to raise awareness about a fair marketplace and the partnership among consumers, business and government. A kick-off event will launch a series of activities to celebrate the Week.

On Monday April 23, at 11:00 a.m. Mayor, _____ invites all residents to kick off National Consumer Week with Opening Ceremonies at City Hall followed by a consumer exhibit in the lobby of City Hall. The theme of the exhibit will be _____.

National Consumer Week will be taking place in many communities across Canada to encourage greater awareness and participation among consumers, business and government.

For more information on Yourtown's participation, please contact Ms/Mr. _____ at 123-456-7890.

- * When writing a media release remember to:
 - 1) state the 5 W's; Who/What/Where/When/Why, and
 - 2) use a reverse pyramid structure stating the most important information first.

THE ROLE OF CONSUMER AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS CANADA

CCAC is helping to make National Consumer Week the success it deserves to be by providing the following assistance:

- * A national media event will be promoted and coordinated to coincide with the launch of National Consumer Week.
- * Copies of the Consumer Week Organizer's Manual are available.
- * A National Consumer Week logo and slogan have been devised and a poster is available.
- * Media kits and information about National Consumer Week will be provided to major national and regional media.
- * Further ideas and suggestions are available through CCAC regional and national offices - just give us a call:

CCAC Offices

ATLANTIC

1489 Hollis Street
Suite 1500
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3M5
Phone (902) 426-8358
FAX (902) 426-6094

QUEBEC

Guy Favreau Complex
East Tower, Suite 502
200 René-Lévesque Blvd. West
Montreal, Quebec
H2Z 1X4
Phone (514) 283-3905
FAX (514) 283-3096

PACIFIC

1400 - 800 Burrard Street
Vancouver, British Columbia
V6Z 2H8
Phone (604) 666-5019/666-4820
FAX (604) 666-7981

ONTARIO

Federal Building
6th Floor
4900 Yonge Street
Willowdale, Ontario
M2N 6B8
Phone (416) 224-3054
FAX (416) 224-4032

PRAIRIE

201 - 260 St. Mary Ave
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 0M6
Phone (204) 983-2826
FAX (204) 983-2366

HEADQUARTERS

Place du Portage - I
50 Victoria Street
Hull, Quebec
K1A 0C9
Phone (819) 997-4440
FAX (819) 997-2721

THE ROLE OF PARTICIPATING GROUPS

- . Setting up an organizing committee to run National Consumer Week.
- . Mobilizing community groups and agencies, businesses, voluntary associations to promote National Consumer Week and to arrange activities during the Week.
- . Promoting National Consumer Week to all citizens to encourage everyone to participate.
- . Talking to us, whenever you need help or guidance or just to bounce ideas around.

DROP US A LINE AND LET US KNOW

We'd like to know how you celebrated National Consumer Week. A report on National Consumer Week will be compiled by Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada and we want to include your activities and events. Please complete the form below and send it to us along with any photos (captioned if possible), before July 30th.

SPONSORING ORGANIZATION(S): _____

ADDRESS: _____

CONTACT PERSON: _____

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY OR EVENT: _____

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE REACHED BY YOUR ACTIVITY: _____

LOCATION OF ACTIVITY (include city): _____

Return form to:

National Consumer Week
Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada
Place du Portage, Phase I
50 Victoria Street, 16th Floor
Hull, Quebec K1A 0C9

QUEEN HC 120 .C6 T4 1990
Canada, Consumer and Corpora
Team up for a stronger marke

INDUSTRY CANADA/INDUSTRIE CANADA



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