

Tim Hortons: Always Canadian, Finally Weird Enough

5-post social content case study across TikTok, Instagram, Twitter/X, and reactive opportunities

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THE STRATEGIC BRIEF

Tim Hortons is Canada's most culturally embedded brand — and its biggest challenge. Everyone knows Tims. Nobody thinks of it as interesting. The brand occupies a strange middle ground: too familiar to be exciting, too Canadian to be ignored. The opportunity is to lean into the absurdity of that position rather than fight it. Canada's collective relationship with Tims is not admiration — it's dependency, nostalgia, and mild embarrassment all at once. That tension is the creative territory. The goal is not to make Tims cool. The goal is to make Tims self-aware enough that people want to talk about it again.

BRAND VOICE TARGET

Dry. Understated. Aware of exactly what it is. Never tries too hard. Comfortable being a little weird because it has earned that right.

PRIMARY AUDIENCE

Canadians aged 18-34. They grew up on Tims. They would never admit it's their favourite. They would share a post about it at 11pm.

CULTURE INSIGHT

Gen Z and Millennials are obsessed with "main character" energy and hyper-specific comfort content. Tims is the ultimate comfort brand hiding in plain sight.

CONTENT OBJECTIVE

Drive organic shares and comments. Own Canadian cultural moments before anyone else does. Build a social presence that feels alive, not managed.

THE CONTENT — 5 POSTS ACROSS 5 FORMATS

POST 01 OF 05

TikTok

The "Canadian Comfort Tier List" — Original TikTok Concept

VIDEO CONCEPT

A 30-second POV video from "someone who has never left Canada." The creator ranks comfort items in a tier list: poutine, hockey, Canadian Tire, a Tim Hortons medium double-double. Everything ends up in S-tier. The twist: the double-double is in its own tier above S-tier labelled "it's complicated."

CAPTION COPY

we don't talk about why it's complicated. we just get back in line.

TRENDING AUDIO DIRECTION

Use a trending "core memory unlocked" audio or a dry, deadpan voiceover sound. The humour lives in the understatement — no one is explaining the joke.

STRATEGIC RATIONALE

The "it's complicated" positioning captures exactly how Canadians actually feel about Tims — not unconditional love, but unavoidable loyalty. That specific tension is shareable because it's true for almost everyone. The dry caption rewards people who get it without explaining it to people who don't.

POST 02 OF 05

Reactive Comment Opportunity

The "First Coffee of Winter" Reactive Play

TRIGGER MOMENT

Every year, the first major snowfall in a Canadian city produces a wave of "I can't believe it's snowing already" posts. This is a predictable, annual, real-time culture moment Tims can own before anyone else does.

COMMENT / REPLY COPY (ON A VIRAL SNOW POST)

you already know where you're going.

STANDALONE POST VERSION (SAME MOMENT)

*the snow is back.
you know what to do.*

STRATEGIC RATIONALE

This concept works because it doesn't overclaim. Tims doesn't need to say "come get a coffee" — that's implied. The brevity is the brand voice. Canadian social users have seen enough brand accounts trying to be relatable; this one earns the moment by saying less than anyone expects.

POST 03 OF 05

TikTok / Reels — Trending Audio

"This Is Not a Phase" Audio Hook

AUDIO TREND IDENTIFIED

Trend: videos using "this is not a phase, mom" audio to reclaim things people are embarrassed to love. Format is massive with 18-34s who grew up being told their tastes were basic.

VISUAL CONCEPT

Text on screen transitions over a slow zoom into a double-double. Text reads: "double-double" then "since 2003" then "and it never will be."

CAPTION COPY

some of us have been in this phase for 20 years and we're fine with that.

STRATEGIC RATIONALE

Tims has a loyalty base that started young and never left. This concept turns that into a badge rather than a confession. The "fine with that" ending lands in the brand's dry register without tipping into saccharine. It's shareable because it gives people a way to defend something they already love without being earnest about it.

POST 04 OF 05

Instagram Carousel

"The Canadian Morning Diagnosis" — 6-Slide Carousel

CAPTION COPY (BEFORE SWIPE)

what your morning order says about you. (we did the research.)

Slide 1

medium double double

Slide 2

you peaked in grade 10 and you've made peace with it

Slide 3

large black coffee

Slide 4

you have opinions about things nobody asked about

Slide 5

iced capp

Slide 6

you are 19 and you will be okay

STRATEGIC RATIONALE

Carousel content on Instagram rewards saves and shares — the two metrics that extend organic reach most effectively. The "personality diagnosis by order" format is endlessly repeatable and highly shareable because it invites people to tag whoever ordered the large black coffee. The humour is affectionate rather than roasting — it celebrates the audience rather than mocking them.

POST 05 OF 05

Twitter / X

The Understated Brand Moment Play

CONTEXT

Twitter/X rewards brevity and specificity. The Tims voice on this platform should never explain itself, never use exclamation points, and never sound like a brand trying to be on Twitter. It should sound like the brand's driest employee accidentally got access to the account and nobody stopped them.

POST OPTION A — MONDAY MORNING

it's monday.

*you know what to do.
we'll be here.*

POST OPTION B — DURING A MAJOR CANADIAN SPORTS MOMENT

*we're not saying anything.
we're just open.*

POST OPTION C — REACTIVE TO STARBUCKS SEASONAL LAUNCH

*respect the pumpkin spice season.
we'll be here when it's over.*

STRATEGIC RATIONALE

Option C is the highest-risk and highest-reward play. It acknowledges a competitor without naming them, positions Tims as the stable, unpretentious alternative, and invites quote-tweets from people who want to debate it. The key is that it is never mean — it is confident. There is a meaningful difference between a brand that punches down and a brand that simply knows what it is.