

# Toronto-Based Social Enterprise Pioneers Ad-Funded Model to Distribute Free Hygiene Products in Canada

*Strong & Free launches a new model that merges advertising with community distribution to offer free hygiene products to Canadians.*

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA, June 16, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In a move that challenges conventional approaches to hygiene access and social enterprise, a new Canadian initiative is distributing personal care products free of charge through an advertising-supported model. [Strong & Free](#), a Toronto-based startup, has developed a logistics and delivery system powered not by retail sales or donations, but by paid advertisements featured directly on the packaging of its hygiene products.

The company's mission is to bridge the gap between essential needs and sustainable infrastructure, introducing a model where corporate ad dollars fund free public access to goods like menstrual products, diapers, and personal hygiene items. Rather than operating as a charity or traditional retailer, Strong & Free functions as a market-based social enterprise, one that integrates product distribution with purpose-driven marketing.

"Our model is not about charity," said Chanel Kutlesa, the founder of Strong & Free. "It's about creating a repeatable system where businesses can support public access through their ad spend, while communities receive the essentials they need, free and without stigma."

## An Alternative to Donation-Driven Access

The hygiene industry has long seen charitable campaigns emerge during times of crisis. However, these efforts often lack consistency and leave many vulnerable populations reliant on an unpredictable supply. Strong & Free was designed to offer a structurally different solution, one where impact is not reliant on surplus, generosity, or awareness campaigns.





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Instead, the startup introduces a permanent solution by embedding its distribution strategy within the broader framework of brand advertising. Corporations and advertisers pay for sponsored space on product packaging, allowing Strong & Free to cover manufacturing, logistics, and delivery costs. In exchange, advertisers gain high-visibility impressions in physical, in-home environments, offering a new avenue for socially aligned brand outreach.

“It’s not a one-time donation,” Chanel Kutlesa explained. “It’s a system designed to function at scale; the more brands that participate, the more communities we can reach.”

### Tackling Access Inequity in Canada

Canada is not immune to hygiene insecurity. National data from shelters, food banks, and public health programs highlight persistent shortages of essentials like period products, baby diapers, and personal sanitation supplies, especially among low-income individuals, newcomers, and parents in housing-insecure situations.

Strong & Free was launched in response to these patterns. The company began operations in Toronto and has started distributing hygiene products through local partnerships with community organizations, including women’s shelters, youth outreach centers, and immigrant support networks.

The key innovation lies not in the products themselves, but in the way they are funded and distributed. No application or financial verification is required; recipients can simply access what they need. This model helps reduce stigma and administrative barriers, removing a common deterrent to accessing social support.

“Strong & Free doesn’t ask who you are or what you earn,” said one community partner. “It’s about dignity, and letting people access basics without needing to explain themselves.”

### Merging Public Good with Private Capital

The ad-funded packaging model reflects a broader shift in how some companies are seeking to use marketing budgets for measurable social return. Rather than solely funding awareness campaigns or social media outreach, Strong & Free gives brands the opportunity to reach their audience in practical, high-touch settings, in bathrooms, homes, community centers, and schools.

Each product’s packaging includes discreet, relevant advertising content, and all sponsor messaging is reviewed to ensure alignment with Strong & Free’s values. The organization does not publicly disclose sponsor names unless approved in advance, a safeguard designed to

maintain trust with recipients and neutrality of service.

The company views this approach as a form of infrastructure-building, not promotion.

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#### Pilot Launch and Early Feedback

Strong & Free is launching its pilot distribution in Fall 2025 in Toronto’s underserved neighborhoods, focusing on areas with high rates of hygiene insecurity. The company’s initial rollout will specifically address period poverty, aiming to improve access to menstrual care products for those most affected.

Early feedback from community members has highlighted the quality and thoughtful design of the packaging, which is intentionally made to resemble store-bought products. This conscious design decision helps eliminate the common association of “free” with poor quality or social stigma, reinforcing the organization’s dignity-first approach.

#### A New Blueprint for Social Enterprise

Strong & Free’s business model places it within a growing field of impact-driven companies that seek to balance financial sustainability with structural reform. While many organizations aim to support social goals, few have integrated those goals into a delivery system funded entirely through private capital.

The company’s approach has drawn interest from both public health analysts and private sector marketers. By combining behavioral insight, logistics strategy, and commercial funding, Strong & Free presents a new way for businesses to conceptualize and contribute to public well-being.

It positions itself not as a charity, but as a platform for values-aligned spending, a model that transforms traditional advertising into a tool for public infrastructure.

“This isn’t about guilt or charity,” said Chanel Kutlesa. “It’s about recognizing that infrastructure can reflect our values. That it’s possible to fund wellness the way we fund entertainment, packaging, or logistics.”

#### Women Entrepreneurs at the Helm of Innovation

While the organization does not center individual identity in its messaging, the emergence of Strong & Free adds to a growing body of Canadian innovation being led by women. In sectors ranging from fintech to public health, Canadian women entrepreneurs are designing solutions that reframe old systems.

Chanel Kutlesa, who has a background in public design and brand strategy, is part of that movement, though she’s quick to point out that the model matters more than its leadership.

"I'm not the story here," she said. "The model is. And if it works, it can be replicated by anyone, anywhere."

### Scaling, Strategy, and Future Impact

Strong & Free's short-term goal is to expand its operations into additional Canadian cities, including Vancouver, Calgary, and Halifax. The company is currently establishing regional partnerships with nonprofit distribution hubs and evaluating supply chain vendors that can accommodate localized packaging with advertiser customizations.

In parallel, the company is developing a metrics dashboard for partners, allowing advertisers to track both reach and social impact of their campaigns. This may include estimated audience impressions, community data (e.g., region, need index), and qualitative recipient feedback, turning social ROI into a measurable asset.

Discussions are also underway to explore integrations with municipal wellness programs, though the company has not accepted public funding to date.

While Strong & Free is in early-stage development, its leadership says it has received strong interest from brands in personal care, finance, and public health. The next product categories under consideration include toothbrushes, soap bars, and pain relief items, expanding beyond hygiene to overall wellness.

### External Recognition and Awards

Strong & Free has been nominated for several impact entrepreneurship awards for 2025. Though the company has not confirmed any wins at the time of publication, its leadership has expressed interest in third-party recognitions as a way to build trust with future stakeholders.

If successful, the company may qualify to use superlatives like "Top Social Impact Brand" in future press materials. For now, however, it remains focused on distribution logistics and deepening its operational footprint.

"We're not trying to sell a story," Chanel Kutlesa emphasized. "We're trying to build a system."

### About Strong & Free

Strong & Free is a Canadian social enterprise that distributes free hygiene products through an ad-funded model. Founded in Toronto, the company operates on the principle that essential goods can be delivered sustainably without cost to recipients. By aligning product packaging with impact advertising, Strong & Free connects corporate marketing budgets with public access needs, offering a new infrastructure model for community wellness and dignity.

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