

Executive Summary

QUALITATIVE ADVERTISING PRETEST SUMMER 2018

Prepared for the Department of National Defence

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Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français.

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Qualitative Advertising Pre-Test Summer 2018

Final Report

Prepared for the Department of National Defence

Supplier Name: Léger

August 2018

This public opinion research report presents the results of focus groups conducted by Léger on behalf of the Department of National Defence. The research was conducted with Canadians aged 17 – 25 in July and August 2018.

Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français sous le titre : Pré-test qualitatif de concepts publicitaires été 2018.

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1. Executive Summary

Leger is pleased to present the Department of National Defence (DND) with this report on findings from a series of focus groups dedicated to pretesting advertising concepts for a potential Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) recruitment campaign.

This report was prepared by Leger who was commissioned by DND (contract number W8484-181013/001/CY awarded July 16, 2018).

1.1 Background and Objectives

The Department of National Defence (DND) commissioned Leger to conduct an advertising pre-test study. DND, in collaboration with the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), will potentially launch a recruitment campaign targeting Canadians 17 to 25 years of age. Notably, young women will be a primary target population.

The objective was to evaluate the efficacy of the advertising in attracting the attention of the intended audience and identify images and/or features that provoke particularly strong reactions, either positive or negative. This qualitative study yields information on perceptions of new advertising messages, the subject's job search behaviours, their career goals, and their general attitudes towards the CAF.

Specifically, the project aimed to capture the extent to which:

- the sponsor (i.e. the CAF) and objective are clear;
- the advertising captures the attention of participants;
- the advertising is perceived as realistic and credible;
- the key messages convey the intended information;
- the advertising is perceived as disturbing or offensive;
- the advertising encourages the target audience to seek information about the CAF;
- the types of information the target audience wants/needs/uses; and
- where the target audience gets their information (social media, website, face-to-face).

In addition to the advertising pre-test portion of the focus group sessions, DND also wanted to explore which types of information the target audience wants to use when it comes to job searches, as well as which platforms are preferred for seeking out this information. The research also sought to gain insights into the target audience's perceptions of the CAF as an employer.

Copies of the moderator's guide used in the focus group sessions can be found in Appendix C.

1.2 Qualitative Methodology

Leger organized a series of eight focus groups in the summer of 2018. Four (4) groups were held in person and four (4) groups were held online. Groups consisted of Canadian participants 17 to 25 years of age with a good mix of genders, education levels, occupation, and ethno-cultural background for two (2) groups, and female participants 17 to 25 years of age for the other two (2) groups. The reader is directed to Appendix B for a copy of the recruitment screener. Leger conducted a series of two (2) online focus groups with members of the general population 17 to 25 and two (2) groups 17 to 25 with various ethno-cultural backgrounds on August 1 and 2, 2018. All four sessions were held online via the ITracks video chat platform with participants from different regions of Canada. The following table is a summary of the locations, date, profile and number of participants for all the discussion groups.

GROUP	Location	Group profile	Language	Participants	Dates and Time (Eastern time)	Type
GR01	Montreal	General population	FR	10	July 31st, 2018 5:30 PM	In-person
GR02	Montreal	Female Group	FR	8	July 31st, 2018 7:30 PM	In-person
GR03	Toronto	General population	EN	8	July 30th, 2018 5:30 PM	In-person
GR04	Toronto	Female Group	EN	6	July 30th, 2018 7:30 PM	In-person
GR05	Toronto, Montreal*, Edmonton and Vancouver	General population	EN	7	August 1st, 2018 5:30 PM	Online
GR06	Toronto, Montreal*, Edmonton and Vancouver	General population	EN	7	August 1st, 2018 7:30 PM	Online
GR07	Across Canada*	Diversity	EN	7	August 2 nd , 2018 5:30 PM	Online
GR08	Across Canada*	Diversity	EN	8	August 2 nd , 2018 7:30 PM	Online

1.3 Overview of Qualitative Findings

1.3.1 Advertising Concept Evaluations

In these focus groups, we presented three advertising concepts in the form of animatics to participants. Each advertising concept was presented to the participants twice before they conducted an evaluation of the concept. Once the two screenings were completed, a group discussion was initiated about each of the concepts individually. Participants were fully briefed on the limitations of showing an animatic as opposed to a finished product and to be forgiving on elements such as pace, sense of timing and the fact that the storyboards were static in nature and did not contain real-life characters or settings. They were instructed to focus on the direction and message of the concept, not execution. We also sought their views on the strengths and weaknesses of each concept.

After viewing a concept twice, participants were asked to answer a quick questionnaire, in order to form their individual opinions prior to group discussion. Each concept was then discussed individually. The objective of the groups was not to rank the different concepts but to obtain initial reactions and comments on each of them. The groups also wanted to gauge to what extent each concept was changing their perspective on the Canadian Armed Forces.

Three concepts were presented in randomized order for each group:

1. Attention
2. I am Military Grade
3. This is my Uniform

While the purpose of the groups was not to rank the concepts, overall Uniform and Attention were the most preferred concepts out of the three that were shown.

The “This is my Uniform” concept was one of the favorite concepts regardless of location, gender or language. From the outset, participants considered this concept to be simple and clear to understand. The scenes presented in Uniform showed scenes from real life with everyday day young Canadians, which pleased the participants. Some said they would have wanted to see the real ad if it existed, and that they would watch it to the end. The concept also shows a diversity of people performing various activities. Presenting different individual profiles in advertising was positively rated by participants.

Some of the positive imagery that participants spontaneously associated with the concept was related to power, achievement, striving to better yourself, and success.

Many felt that the concept was climactic in nature with the young female reaching the summit (her goals) as the chorus of the inspiring song was coming in. It is a concept that brings positive feelings to the audience. This is what makes this concept very attractive. Participants appeared to appreciate the more linear format of the storyline.

Overall, the participants also liked the “Attention” concept. However, many participants felt that the positive elements and main message of “Attention” were also found in “Uniform”, but had less of the inspirational nature of “Uniform.”

The idea behind this concept was generally well appreciated and some participants found it surprising. The idea of presenting different types of people in their everyday lives “getting their calling” was seen as excellent. It shows a diversity of profiles and people who can join the Armed Forces which helps to promote an inclusive image of CAF according. Participants interpreted this as the notion that an individual can remain himself or herself while pursuing their dreams in the Forces. Seeing people in civilian clothing as well as in uniform was seen as a positive.

Overall, the “I am Military Grade” concept ended up being the least appreciated concept out of the three. Generally speaking, this concept tended to generate more negative comments. It tended to be more confusing, while not having the aspirational nature of Uniform, nor the openness to diversity of Attention. Participants largely felt it did not contain a clear message and rather aimed at saying that the CAF were “nice, helpful people”. The storyline they understood was that the main characters were off-duty officers just being kind. The use of the expression “of military grade” did not generate any discussion about its possible meaning.

This concept caused considerable confusion among participants. They could not really make the connection between this concept and a recruitment campaign for the CAF. It should be noted that with the exception of the first execution with the female character (in military uniform), participants said that they had no way of really knowing that it was a CAF advertisement other than the final signature.

Both stories were considered too “staged”, particularly the portion with the navy officer carving a wooden boat for a child on the dock. This scene was not considered credible, as it would “never happen in real life”.

1.3.2 A Note on All Concepts

In general, participants appreciated the fact that concepts talked about a career and life in the forces while mostly using characters in civilian clothing. It provided them with

newer images of the CAF that they can relate to. They believed the concepts were novel because they stayed away from “what they have always” been shown.

Participants also believed the concepts were current and pertinent as they felt the ad was targeting millennials and used the appropriate language and tone to appeal to them. Although they warned us against “trying too hard” to appeal to youth, they believed the overall tone of the ads was largely appropriate (except for Military Grade).

Participants also felt that “too much” attention was paid to physical prowess in the ad concepts, as it almost suggests that being fit and strong is a prerequisite to join, and not that the CAF would make them stronger and better.

1.3.3 The Taglines

Each concept was accompanied by a different tagline, which was also evaluated and discussed:

1. **Attention: *Get the best training for your true calling***
Participants failed to relate the word “training” to the ad concept and to look at training beyond physical “basic training”, which they felt was the only example of training provided.
2. **I Am Military Grade: *Develop what you're made of in the Canadian Armed Forces***
Participants believed the tagline was more generic compared to the other two and did not focus on the word “develop”, but rather that it was a statement about the Forces and not about them personally.
3. **This is my Uniform: *Find the career that fits you in the Canadian Armed Forces***
This was the favorite tagline of the three. Participants felt the tagline gave them a positive message about themselves and not “only” about the CAF. The “that fits you” component of the tagline was a clear winner.

1.4 Note on Interpretation of Research Findings

This report was compiled by Leger, based on the research conducted specifically for this project. The analysis presented represents what Leger believes were the most salient points during the focus group sessions.

Findings from this qualitative research (i.e. focus groups) should be considered directional only and results should not be projected as representative of the entire Canadian population aged 17 to 25 and who match the profile of the group participants. It is intended to provide deeper insights into the underlying reasons for opinions or lack thereof.

1.5 Report

This report includes a detailed analysis of the focus group findings in Section Two (2). Details of the research methodology, the recruitment guide, and moderator's guide are included in the appendices.

1.6 Intended Use of the Results

The findings of this research will help officials of the Department of National Defense, the Canadian Armed Forces, and the Government of Canada in making a decision on the advertising concept to be chosen.

1.7 Political Neutrality Statement and Contact Information

I hereby certify as Senior Officer of Leger that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada's political neutrality requirements outlined in the Directive on the Management of Communications.

Specifically, the deliverables do not include information on electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate, or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leaders.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Christian Bourque". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Christian" and last name "Bourque" clearly visible.

Christian Bourque
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