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Formative Research for Recruitment Marketing and Advertising 2019 Executive Summary

Prepared for the Department of National Defence

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March 2019

This executive summary presents the results of the online survey conducted by Earncliffe Strategy Group on behalf of Department of National Defence. The research was conducted in March 2019.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Earnscliffe Strategy Group (Earnscliffe) is pleased to present this report to the Department of National Defence (DND) summarizing the results of quantitative research to inform the recruitment marketing and advertising strategies of the Canadian Armed Forces.

The Department of National Defence is focused on ensuring the diversity of Canadian society is reflected in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). The CAF wanted to better understand how to reach potential recruits with messages that resonate. Past research efforts have not been specific to this target demographic: potential recruits, aged 17-23. One of the primary objectives of the research was to create psychographic profiles of potential recruits. This analysis could be used to inform recruitment efforts by exploring lifestyle values, preferences, attitudes, motivations, behaviours, and barriers to joining. Further, the research set out to determine information sources, influencers, and how to best resonate with visible minorities, Indigenous groups, and women. The total cost to conduct this research was \$74,263.60 including HST.

Earnscliffe used a quantitative approach to meet these objectives. We conducted an online survey of 2,031 Canadians. The survey was conducted with respondents aged 17 to 23, half self-identified as visible minority or Indigenous and the other half self-identified as neither visible minority nor Indigenous. The research was conducted using our data collection partner, Léger's, proprietary online panel. The surveys were conducted online from March 5 to 24, 2019 and averaged 14 minutes. The data was weighted to reflect the demographic composition of the Canadian population aged 17 to 23.

The key findings from the research are presented below.

- The elements that the most respondents seek in a career are good pay (51%), work-life balance (28%), a positive work environment (24%), job security (22%) and benefits (22%).
- Many of the things respondents look for in a career are reflected in the importance they place on certain life goals. For example, well over two-thirds (69%) rate having good work-life balance as very important to them. Over half of respondents also prioritize goals related to job security and pay, including having a full-time job (63%) and being financially successful (61%).
 - Over 40% are very confident they will have a career that offers them intellectual and physical challenges, training, competition, respect, and opportunities for advancement and to get jobs in their field.
 - About a third are very confident that they will find a career that provides many of the elements they seek in a career, including a positive work environment (36%), benefits (34%), job security (31%) and good pay (31%). Fewer (25%) are very confident they will find work-life balance.
 - The aspects of a career that matter least are physical challenge (40%), prestige (34%) and a competitive environment (25%).
- A fulfilling career (42%), having a family (33%) and being happy (25%) are the top three things respondents want to achieve in life, followed by financial stability (19%) and travel (18%).
- Under half (40%) are familiar with the CAF, but their opinion of the CAF is mostly favourable (68%).
 - Overall, respondents who are visible minorities, Indigenous, male or from Atlantic Canada are more familiar with the CAF.

- Those who have a very favourable view of the CAF hold this view out of respect for the sacrifices its members make (26%), the protection the CAF offers our country (25%), the CAF’s reputation (11%) and its members’ service to our country (11%).
- Those with a very negative impression tend to associate the CAF with war or violence (28%).
- Fewer respondents (53%) have a favourable opinion of the CAF as an employer than do in general, but the lower rating could stem from unfamiliarity with the CAF in this context, as 26% do not offer an opinion on the subject.
- Under a third (28%) are knowledgeable of career opportunities within the CAF, and fewer (23%) are knowledgeable with opportunities within the Reserve Force.
- One-in-five are either very likely (4%) or somewhat likely (16%) to consider a career in the CAF.
 - Interest in joining the Reserves is higher (45%).
 - Few (17%) of those who are unlikely to consider a career in the CAF have thought about it before.
- Likelihood of considering joining the CAF rises to 52% when respondents are told they could have a career in one of their preferred fields. The possibility of a career in a field that interests them appears compelling even to those who were less interested in joining the CAF to begin with. Among those who initially said they would not be very likely to consider a career in the CAF, over half would be very or somewhat likely to consider it if it meant working in a field that interests them.
- Significantly fewer agree (28%) than disagree (65%) that they could see themselves joining the CAF. This pattern extends to the Royal Canadian Navy (20% agree, 72% disagree), the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) (22% agree, 70% disagree) and the Canadian Army (25% agree, 67% disagree).
 - Though they are not enthusiastic about joining, more would be proud to serve (59%) than would not (27%).
- More agree than disagree with a number of positive aspects of a career in the CAF including that it offers a wide variety of professions (66% agree, 17% disagree), opens doors to work outside the CAF (56% agree, 23% disagree), and that the work environment is respectful of all cultures (54% agree, 28% disagree) and women (47% agree, 32% disagree).
 - Opinion is more evenly split over whether one’s family (43% agree, 47% disagree) or friends (45% agree, 43% disagree) would encourage them to join.
- Respondents feel the most compelling reasons to consider a career in the CAF are paid education (37% place it in the top three), salary/benefits (35%) and helping others (30%).
 - Exposure to danger (38%), being away from home and family (34%), and the possibility of combat (33%) are the greatest deterrents to joining the CAF.
 - Those who are likely to join the CAF believe serving the country is a more compelling argument (26%), along with training (18%) than those who are less interested in serving.
- Half (52%) agree that “physically challenging” describes a career in the CAF very well. The plurality of respondents believe “offers training” (42%) is an apt description. Respect (35%) and the offer of adventure (31%) follow as the most accurate terms to describe a military career.
 - Fewer believe a positive work environment (9%), freedom/flexibility (8%), not having to move (8%) and work/life balance (6%) describe a career in the CAF very well.

- Both the Navy and Army videos elicit similar reactions. Over half say the videos are appealing to watch and are compelling. Over half also agree that they made them at least a little more interested in a career in the CAF and that the videos seemed in some way meant for them.
 - The videos had an impact on those who said they are not very likely to consider a career in the CAF. In both cases, large majorities said that they made them at least a little more likely to consider a career in the CAF.

Research Firm:

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I hereby certify as a Representative of Earnscliffe Strategy Group that the final deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the Communications Policy of the Government of Canada and Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research. 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.

Signed: 

Date: March 31, 2019

Doug Anderson
Principal, Earnscliffe