



Veterans Affairs
Canada

Anciens Combattants
Canada

Remembrance Campaign 2021: Concept Testing

Executive Summary

Prepared for Veterans Affairs Canada

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Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français.

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This public opinion research report presents the results of a set of virtual focus groups conducted by Phoenix SPI on behalf of Veterans Affairs Canada.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) commissioned Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc. (Phoenix SPI) to conduct public opinion research to gauge the effectiveness of creative concepts for the 2021 Remembrance campaign.

1. Research Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the qualitative research was to gauge the effectiveness of the creative concepts for the 2021 Remembrance campaign. The objectives were to assess the extent to which the specific creative concepts capture one's attention, convey a message that is clear and easy to understand, are appropriate in tone, and motivate in terms of the call to action.

2. Methodology

To meet the objectives, a set of 10 virtual focus groups was conducted, with two groups in each of the following regions: Atlantic Canada (English), Ontario (English), Prairies (English), British Columbia (English), and Quebec (French). One group in each location was held with Canadians aged 18 to 34 and the other with Canadians aged 35 to 54. Groups were mixed by age (within each segment), education, household income, gender, and ethnic background. The fieldwork took place between July 19 and 26, 2021.

3. Key Findings

- Most participants expressed at least moderate agreement that each of the three concepts grabbed their attention, provided a clear message, and elicited an emotion. That being said, concepts A (38 million) and B (Unforgettable) were more likely to elicit agreement on these points.
- When asked to compare the three concepts in terms of these criteria, concept B (Unforgettable) emerged as the overall favourite for each criterion. Younger Canadians (18-34) tended to be divided in their preferences between concepts A and B, with Eastern, Atlantic, and French-speaking youth preferring B and Prairies and some youth from British Columbia preferring A. For their part, Canadians aged 35 and older were much more likely to prefer concept B to A.
- Reasons for preferring concept B (Unforgettable) included the following:
 - The approach, in general, tends to be novel.
 - The concept grabs and sustains attention through its pace and focus on action.
 - The message/narration is simple and clear.
 - The concept shows various dimensions of life in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF).
 - It is easy to relate to because it touches on common experiences, but it is also thought-provoking to the extent that it makes people think about how different the daily lives of soldiers are from theirs.
 - It takes viewers on an emotional trip, covering a range of emotions, and the juxtaposition of emotions is powerful.
 - The call to action (i.e., remember Canada's Veterans) is stronger than in the other ads.

- While concept B (Unforgettable) was the overall favourite, participants suggested improvements, including the following: changing the most ‘unforgettable day’, using clearer pictures (e.g., participants were not certain how the photo chosen for the scariest day of the year reflected the ‘scariest day’), slowing down the pace (i.e., some found it too frenetic), focusing more on individuals than on CAF, and adding the element/theme of sacrifice from concept A (38 million).
- General points related to the three concepts:
 - All three concepts tended to be judged positively in terms of coverage/inclusivity, historically in terms of CAF activities and in terms of gender representation.
 - All three concepts tended to be judged critically in terms of calls to action. The call to action was not viewed as strong in any of the concepts.
 - To strengthen the concepts, participants suggested 1) the inclusion of context when possible—for example, information about the photos, such as where and when they were taken, and; 2) greater use of storytelling with a focus on real individuals (e.g., testimonials), something which was viewed as important for Canadians with no direct connection to Veterans.

4. Limitations and use of the findings

The results from the virtual focus groups are not statistically projectable, but they offer detailed opinions about the issues explored through this research. The results of this research will be used by the Government of Canada to guide the messaging and creative development of the 2021 Remembrance campaign.

5. Political neutrality certification

I hereby certify as a Senior Officer of Phoenix Strategic Perspectives that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the Policy on Communications and Federal Identity of the Government of Canada and Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research. Specifically, the deliverables do not contain any reference to electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate, or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leader.



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6. Contact value

The contract value was \$47,187.88 (including HST).