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Advertising Concept Testing

2022-23 National Campaign

Qualitative Research

Prepared for Parks Canada

Submitted by: Probe Research Inc.

Contact Number: CW2230210

Award Date: July 27, 2022

Delivery Date: October 17, 2022

Contract value: \$54,452.16 (including tax)

Registration Number: POR 020-22

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Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français

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Supplier Name: Probe Research Inc.
October 2022

This report presents the findings of advertising concept testing (ACT) focus groups with Canadian adults to support a new Parks Canada marketing and communications campaign that will launch in early 2023.

Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français sous le titre : Prétest de concepts publicitaires : Campagne nationale 2022-23.

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Catalogue Number: R62-586/2022E-PDF

International Standard Book Number (ISBN): 978-0-660-45229-6

Related publications (registration number POR 020-22):

Catalogue Number (Final Report, French): R62-586/2022F-PDF

International Standard Book Number (ISBN) (French): 978-0-660-45230-2

Executive Summary

Parks Canada and its partner advertising agency developed three potential advertising concepts that will be used for a new national advertising campaign to launch in early 2023. Parks Canada commissioned focus groups to measure how well each of these three concepts resonated with Canadians and to identify which one might encourage visitation to national parks and historic sites. The findings from these focus group sessions will help Parks Canada select and further develop the creative concept for the upcoming advertising campaign.

A total of seven focus groups were held with urban Canadian adults in the following markets: Toronto, Ottawa-Gatineau, Montreal, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver. A scheduled focus group in Halifax was cancelled due to Hurricane Fiona. The focus group sessions were held online via Zoom with adults from the general population who indicated they are somewhat or very interested in being outdoors, in parks or participating in other cultural activities. Each focus group lasted approximately 90 to 95 minutes. A total of eight participants from diverse demographic and social backgrounds were recruited for each session (56 total), with seven to eight participants present in each session. Altogether, 53 participants took part in these seven sessions.

The main insights emerging from these focus groups include:

- Two of the three concepts (Carvings/Water and Stories) were received quite favourably by participants across the seven sessions. These concepts evoked a strong emotional response from participants and were most likely to encourage people to learn more or plan a visit. The Fortress/Beach concept resonated much less, in part because participants did not connect with the tone and approach of the Fortress storyboard in particular.
- The two taglines that included the phrase “450,000 km²” were the most evocative for participants. They felt the tagline conjures the vastness of Canada’s parks and historic sites. Generally, participants favoured “450,000 km² of Inspiration” because it was all encompassing of the kinds of experiences visitors could have. But “450,000 km² of Stories” was also well-received as it spoke to the idea of learning Canada’s stories but also creating memories of one’s own.
- Participants were keenly aware of ad concepts that featured people of colour, Indigenous content and people of diverse abilities. Participants were looking for ads that approach Indigenous culture in a sensitive way. They were also watching for ads that feature new Canadians and people of colour in a prominent and genuinely inclusive way.
- Given the current war in Ukraine and the ongoing reckoning with Canada’s colonial history, some participants reacted negatively to imagery showing historic battles, cannons and soldiers at national historic sites. It may be prudent to avoid including images that make overt reference to war or conflict in the final version of the advertisement.
- Imagery showing outdoor experiences (mountains, beaches, fishing, camping, etc.) immediately and deeply captured the attention of those who are currently outdoor enthusiasts. They felt these images reminded them of great times spent outdoors and inspired a desire for the next adventure.
- Some participants noted there was not a clear call to action in the ads, and it was not apparent what they may wish to do if they saw these ads. Some felt it would be helpful to identify specific locations shown in the ads so they can more easily seek out more information.
- A multi-channel approach is critical to reach a diverse spectrum of Canadians, with social media (particularly Instagram) most likely to reach younger adults and Facebook and television more likely to reach older adults.

The results of the focus groups are directional in nature. Qualitative research is designed to reveal a range of opinions and interpretations rather than to measure what percentage of the target population holds a given opinion. These results must not be used to estimate the numeric proportion or number of individuals in the population who hold a particular opinion because they are not statistically projectable.

The total cost of this research is \$54,452.16 (including tax).

Political Neutrality Statement and Contact Information

I hereby certify as a Senior Officer of Probe Research Inc. that the 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 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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