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# Assessment of the 2016-2017 CRA Advertising Campaign

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Submitted to:

Canada Revenue Agency  
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**EKOS RESEARCH ASSOCIATES INC.**

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Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Background

In 2017 the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) undertook two advertising campaigns aimed at:

- Preventing tax cheating of all kinds: offshore tax evasion and avoidance, use of schemes to illegitimately reduce taxable income (referred to as promoter schemes), and participation in the underground economy. The offshore tax evasion and avoidance and the tax promoter advertising served two purposes: to warn those who are participating in tax cheating that there are new processes and initiatives to prevent cheating, they will get caught and there are serious consequences from financial penalties to jail; and to highlight to Canadians who are paying what they owe that those who are cheating will get caught. The Underground Economy advertising served to inform individuals purchasing home renovation services on the risks of paying cash to avoid paying for taxes.
  
- Improving service to Canadians by:
  - Improving and enhancing its online services;
  - Informing all taxpayers (including new Canadians, low income taxpayers, and Indigenous peoples) about the benefits and credits they could be receiving if they file their taxes, and offering help to complete returns of some clients (e.g., those with modest income and simple financial situations);
  - Warning taxpayers about various tax scams.

The ad campaigns were primarily digital, with print, social media and radio advertising, and ran from February to March 2017. Target audiences for these campaigns included all Canadians, including new Canadians, low income individuals, high income individuals, Indigenous peoples, seniors, and the self-employed.

The CRA commissioned Ekos Research Associates to conduct research to test possible creative approaches, as well as to assist in evaluating the effectiveness of these advertising campaigns.

## Objectives

The evaluation involved three research components:

- Concept testing using online surveys to test various creative approaches for these campaigns. Objectives included testing the concepts in terms of the effectiveness of the messages, preferred approaches, and ability to gain attention;

- A pre-campaign evaluation using the standardized Advertising Campaign Evaluation Tool (ACET) Pre-Campaign Baseline online survey, testing pre-campaign awareness of the subject matter; and
- A post-campaign evaluation using the standardized ACET Post-Campaign online survey testing post-campaign awareness of the subject matter.
  - Specific objectives of the Pre- and Post- Campaign ACET research included:
    - Measuring Canadians' aided and unaided awareness of the 2017 service advertising campaign (via Internet, social media, and radio ads);
    - Gauging the level of understanding of the key campaign messages;
    - Verify that the creative approach for the service campaign gained the attention of Canadian adults and relevant target audiences.

## **Methodology**

The Concept testing was conducted between December 15 and 19, 2016 using an online survey of 567 members of the general public (including quotas for high income individuals, low income individuals, Indigenous peoples, the self-employed, seniors, and immigrants to Canada).

The Pre-Campaign Baseline survey was conducted between January 10 and 19, 2017 with 2,044 members of the general public (including quotas for low income individuals, and the self-employed).

The Post Campaign online survey was conducted between April 6 and 20, 2017 with 2,097 members of the general public (with quotas for low income individuals, Indigenous peoples, and parents of children under 18 years of age).

## **Use of Findings**

The findings from the research were used to assist in the determination of which creative approaches and messages to proceed with, as well as to assist in evaluating the effectiveness of the campaigns.

## **Expenditure**

The contract amount for this project was **\$54,240.00** (including HST).

I hereby certify as Senior Officer of EKOS Research Associates 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 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 black ink, appearing to read 'D. Jansen', written in a cursive style.

Derek Jansen  
Vice President  
EKOS Research