



Advertising Public Opinion Research – Education and Skills Adult Campaign (Phase 1: Creative Testing)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Supplier Name: Corporate Research Associates Inc.
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phase II (quantitative \$48,878.15) of
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Executive Summary

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Contract Award Date: July 20, 2018

Background and Objectives

In order to ensure the 2018 Education and Skills – *Helping Working Adults Upgrade Their Skills* campaign resonates with its target audience and meets its objectives, ESDC commissioned a series of eight Netfocus groups (simultaneous online and telephone discussions in real-time) with Canadian adults 35 to 55 years old (including both employed and non-employed, and indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences). Of those, six groups were conducted in English with participants from various locations across Canada, while two groups were conducted in French with Quebec residents. Group discussions were conducted from July 31st to August 2nd, 2018. Each focus group lasted approximately ninety minutes and a \$75 token of appreciation was provided to each participant, as per standard market research practice. A total of 55 participants took part across groups.

The research assessed public opinion regarding continuing education and skills development. Caution must be exercised when interpreting the results from this study, as qualitative research is directional only. Results cannot be attributed to the overall population under study, with any degree of statistical confidence. The actual cost of the qualitative phase of the research was \$26,154.73 (excluding taxes).

Political Neutrality Certification

I hereby certify as a Representative of Corporate Research Associates Inc. that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada 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.

Signed _____



Margaret Brigley, President & COO | Corporate Research Associates
Date: August 14, 2018



Key Findings

Findings from the **Education and Skills Adult Campaign Public Opinion Research Study** suggest that as ESDC moves forward with its final campaign development, no one campaign is best suited as presented, without modifications. More so, findings suggest any campaign should effectively portray a clear benefit or outcome of furthering education and enhancing skills.

In a review of a variety of terms related to education and skills enhancement, findings show that most terms are perceived to appropriately define the concept of getting the education, skills and experience you need to stay relevant in the labour market. Two terms were deemed less effective including 'upskilling' and 'personal development/ développement personnel'. This provides ESDC with some latitude in positioning its concept going forward.

When considering the three presented advertising campaigns [*Midlife*, *Invested in You*, and *Breathe In, Breathe Out*], participant preference was split between the *Midlife* and *Breathe In, Breathe Out* concepts. Both concepts were considered clear, simple, and encouraging and displayed the end result of augmenting one's education or skills – something that is evidently important in this respect.

More specifically, the ***Midlife*** campaign was well liked for presenting a single storyline with an optimistic outcome. The message of this campaign clearly suggested that changing careers midlife is possible, although the term 'midlife' was perceived as derogatory and negative by many English participants, and across languages, narrow in its implied target audience. Participants also felt there was a disconnect between this concept's video and its social media ad design. Findings suggest that ESDC would be best served by avoiding use of the terms 'midlife' and 'breakthrough' in its campaign given the potential risks associated with the terms.

The ***Breathe In, Breathe Out*** campaign clearly communicated that there are education and skills training resources available for anyone looking for change and that you can better yourself. This concept was well liked for the diversity presented in its characters, the professions / scenarios included, and in its wider target audience. That said, participants were confused by the video's multiple storylines that did not have a clear relationship between each other, questioning what was happening and what the proposed outcomes were. Further, there was some concern that the video and social media ad were inconsistent in terms of tone and message.

The ***Invested in You*** concept received mixed reactions and was most criticized among English participants. Although many participants commented positively on how the campaign positions skills enhancement as a manageable endeavor, criticism toward the campaign was common. Notably, participants disliked how the results of the characters' hard work were not displayed, which was found to be discouraging.

Participants were shown the landing page of the Skills Boost current website and offered mixed reactions towards the page. While the white background and chosen images / icons were noted as visually appealing, participants found the page too cluttered. Further, the title 'Skills Boost' was considered misleading in both English and French, as participants believed it did not accurately represent the information presented.



Among the three different website concepts shown, participants indicated a clear preference for the Breathe In, Breathe Out campaign website design for its simplicity, clean design, and clear buttons. Participants appreciated the site's single page design and colour palette, although the font was considered small to some.

Regardless of concept preference, findings suggest an overall preference for a website that is simple and clear with direct navigation. Webpages are well liked with visuals perceived as clean and uncluttered and section headers that clearly outline what information they can expect to find.

Finally, when considering site navigation, results suggest that participants are far more likely to use a desktop or laptop computer when accessing information online concerning continuing education or skill development. That said, a smartphone was often mentioned as a tool for an initial, high level search to identify resources. These findings highlight the importance for site designs to be compliant across multiple modes of access.

