



# Creative Testing and Advertising Campaign Evaluation Tool (ACET) for the Services for Seniors Advertising Campaign

## *Executive Summary*

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*Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français*

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# SUMMARY

As part of its mandate to build a stronger and more competitive Canada and support Canadians in leading productive and rewarding lives, the Government of Canada (GC) offers many programs and services to help older Canadians prepare for and live in retirement. In an effort to support Canadians in leading productive and rewarding lives, the GC is working to make Canadians aware of the programs and services offered by Employment and Social Development (ESDC) and other departments to support those retired or planning to retire. To address this objective, the GC launched a Services for Seniors campaign to make older Canadians aware of the programs and services offered by Employment and Social Development (ESDC) and other departments. Canadians who are 55 or older, preparing for or living in retirement are the primary target for the campaign. Veterans and vulnerable populations 55 or older, who are Indigenous, have a low income, and/or are living with a disability or chronic illness are a secondary target audience of the campaign.

In accordance with the Policy on Communications and Federal Identity, all advertising campaigns that have a media buy over \$1 million require pre-testing and evaluation using the Advertising Campaign Evaluation Tool (ACET) issued by the Communications and Consultations Secretariat of PCO. ESDC commissioned two phases of research: first to test proposed concepts providing communication material aimed at making older Canadians aware of the programs and services available; and second, to test advertising recall from the campaign, as well as measuring impact on related perceptions and behaviours, using the ACET.

## ***Concept Testing (Focus Groups)***

The study involved a series of focus groups (4 in person and 12 online) with older Canadians to garner feedback on three creative concepts, gathering reactions to animatic television ad mock ups, print ads and potential webpage layouts. The focus groups were conducted between September 25<sup>th</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019

Participants indicate they have searched for information to support their retirement online, in person at Service Canada offices, or through an employer. Some have felt that there was no need to look for information. Many are unaware of what resources there are from the Government of Canada, for those retired or planning to retire, beyond financial support programs such as the Canada Pension Plan.

Research findings revealed some general considerations based on feedback of participants. Across concepts, many participants noted confusion on the target audience of the communication material or the website; these participants pointed out the different needs of those retired and those planning to retire. Participants would like the intent of the ad (to go to a website for information for help with retirement) to be clearer in print ads and presented earlier in the television ads. Participants would also like to have the option of calling a 1-800 number for information rather than relying exclusively on a website.

Some wording preferences were identified. Participants felt that “seniors” is an appropriate term in the context of these concepts, along with “older Canadians”. “Later years” is also an acceptable term to some, but “Golden Years” imparted negative reactions. Participants would like material to read in plain language, avoiding euphemisms and government-speak.

Of the three concepts tested, ‘We Know a Lot’ proved to be the most highly rated concept, with participants commending the positive and respectful tone toward older Canadians. The two concepts relying on humour to catch attention were not as well received. ‘Silver Squad’ was rated second overall with participants appreciating the images of seniors taking action during their retirement. The ‘Prepare Right’ concept conjured strong negative reactions for many participants, with the humour interpreted as being condescending towards seniors. More details regarding reactions to these concepts can be found within the report.

Three website layouts were presented to participants during the study. Overall, most participants supported a layout that was clean and uncluttered. The use of contrasting colours was preferred by many as a way to highlight and distinguish between the categories of programs and services presented in the website. Participants were divided on the need for a description of the categories on the home page of the website, as the additional wording, while intended to be informative, can take away from the clear navigability of the ideal web layout. Most participants would look at the website through their desktop or laptop computer, while some anticipate they would access through a tablet or smartphone.

### ***Advertising Campaign Evaluation Tool (ACET) (Online Survey)***

The Services for Seniors campaign was launched in late 2018, continuing throughout 2019, including multimedia advertising. In accordance with the Policy on Communications and Federal Identity, all advertising campaigns that have a media buy over \$1 million require pre-testing and evaluation using the Advertising Campaign Evaluation Tool (ACET) issued by the Communications and Consultations Secretariat of PCO. The ACET was conducted in two phases; a baseline phase prior to the campaign, and a post-campaign phase. Data collection to evaluate the advertising campaign supports the goal of effectively gauging older Canadians (55 years and older), with regard to their awareness of programs for them, and in determining the effectiveness of this

campaign in influencing older Canadians' knowledge and behaviour. Information gathered from this process will provide ESDC with concrete data that will assist in developing/adjusting future media strategies.

## **Research Purpose**

Specifically, the purpose of the ACET surveys was to jointly evaluate the Services for Seniors Campaign and to gauge:

- Unaided and aided recall of the campaign and of key messages;
- Awareness/knowledge of the campaign as seen on television, web and social media;
- Understanding of the messaging and performance in increasing awareness of the programs and services available, as well as driving traffic to the website for more information;
- Campaign effectiveness in promoting personal relevance among Canadians;
- Whether the advertisements were:
  - ◇ Attention catching
  - ◇ Relevant
  - ◇ Difficult to follow
  - ◇ About an important topic
  - ◇ Provide new information
  - ◇ Effective in promoting the call to action

Information obtained through this research can be extrapolated to the wider population of Canadians 55 or older who access the Internet, as the sample was provided from a randomly recruited survey panel of Canadians who are online. This allows ESDC to determine the impact of its advertising campaign and provide direction on areas where the campaign can be adjusted to reach Canadians 55 or older. The findings provide useful information to improve future campaigns which are better targeted, more informative and better geared to the target population and Canadians who are 55 years of age or older.

## **Sample design**

National online surveys were conducted: one in November 2018 as a baseline, in advance of the campaign, and one in June 2019 to measure change in awareness and to assess impact of the campaign. The baseline included 2,036 Canadians 55 years of age or older, while the post campaign sample included 2,010 Canadians, also 55 years of age or older. In each sample, just

over 600 cases were completed among Veterans and vulnerable populations, including those who are Indigenous, have a low income, and/or are living with a disability or chronic illness. Each survey instrument was based on the Advertising Campaign Evaluation Tool (ACET) issued by the Communications and Consultations Secretariat of PCO. Questions testing the impact on knowledge, perceptions and behaviour targeted through the campaign were also added. Each survey instrument included a sample of randomly selected respondents from all provinces and territories. Each survey sample relied on EKOS' *Probit* panel, which is assembled using a random digit dial process for sampling from a blended land-line cell-phone frame, and provides full coverage of Canadians with telephone access. The distribution of the recruitment process (for the panel) is meant to mirror the actual population in Canada (as defined by Statistics Canada). As such, our more than 90,000 member panel can be considered representative of the general public in Canada (meaning that the incidence of a given target population within our panel closely resembles the public at large) and margins of error can be applied. The baseline and post-campaign surveys were sampled from the portion of the *Probit* panel who access the Internet, and therefore results do not represent those Canadians 55 or older who do not access the Internet.