



2022-2023 Jobs & Skills (Phase 2) Advertising Campaign Creative Testing

Executive Summary

Submitted to:

Employment and Social Development Canada

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Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français.

Submitted by:

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Canada 

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Prepared for Employment and Social Development Canada

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March 2022

This public opinion research report presents the results of online focus groups conducted by Narrative Research on behalf of Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). The main objective of this research was to gather feedback on three ideas for an advertising campaign and identify which one is most likely to resonate with its intended target audience and meet its objectives. From February 22-24, 2022, a total of eight online Netfocus discussion groups were conducted in four regions: Eastern Canada; Ontario; Prairies/Western Canada; and Quebec. In each region, one group was conducted with youth 18 to 24 years old and one group with adults 35 to 54 years old.

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Note: Quantitative research presented under separate cover

Background

Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) is in the process of developing and evaluating the Jobs and Skills campaign, a two-phase advertising campaign, over the course of the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 fiscal years. In 2021-2022, Phase I will focus on promoting jobs to help job seekers and unemployed Canadians find work opportunities during (and after) the pandemic, as well as support employers by encouraging them to publish job offers and review job-related resources available on the Job Bank job search platform. In 2022-2023, Phase II will focus on the importance of skills development and continuing education. This phase will inform Canadians on the various programs available to help them gain the skills they need to prepare for today's labour market and the financial support that is available.

As part of the campaign development, ESDC was required to test creative concepts and evaluate the campaign effectiveness, through the use of a multi-phased research approach that includes both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. This requirement applies to advertising campaigns with a media buy of over \$1 million. The quantitative research component utilized the Government of Canada's Advertising Campaign Evaluation Tool (ACET) to evaluate the campaign before and after it is run in the media, for each phase of the campaign. Quantitative research is presented under separate cover. Qualitative research was used to examine creative concepts for the development of the Phase II material. This summary presents the findings from the qualitative focus groups that were conducted to review proposed creative concepts for the 2022-2023 campaign. Three creative concepts were evaluated to determine the potential for effectiveness and the resonance of messages and concepts with the target audiences. Testing included assessing the concept and message clarity, the extent to which the concepts grabbed people's attention and an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of each proposed approach.



Research Methodology

Two audiences were included in the study: youth 18 to 24 years old starting to work for the first time or looking to improve their current career, and adults 35 to 54 years old looking to change career or improve their current career. A series of 8 online focus groups were conducted from February 22-24, 2022, with one group with each audience in each of four markets: Atlantic Canada, Ontario, Prairies/Western Canada and Quebec. Each focus group included a mix of locations (within regions), gender, age (within age range), education, ethnic background and household income. Focus groups in Quebec were conducted in French, while the discussion was held in English in all other locations. Each session lasted approximately 90 minutes and participants each received a cash incentive of \$100 in appreciation for their time. From 80 recruited individuals (10 per focus group), 70 took part across all sessions.

Qualitative discussions are intended as moderator-directed, informal, non-threatening discussions with participants whose characteristics, habits and attitudes are considered relevant to the topic of discussion. They are used in marketing research as a means of developing insight and direction, rather than collecting quantitatively precise data or absolute measures. As such, results are directional only and cannot be projected to the overall population under study.

Key Findings and Conclusions

The following summarizes the key findings and conclusions from the focus groups conducted for the **2022-2023 Jobs & Skills (Phase 2) Advertising Campaign Creative Testing**. During the sessions, three campaign concepts were examined, each consisting of one social media advertisement, in addition to three taglines and three statements referring to the website content that were included with each concept. Finally, two layouts for a website landing page were briefly examined. All concept materials were presented in a randomized order across focus groups to avoid any presentation biases.

The three campaign concepts tested were:

Concept A: Your Growing Collage / Votre collage en pleine croissance

Concept B: Ready When You Are / Prêt quand vous l'êtes

Concept C: Employee of the Future / Employé du futur

While both concepts “Your Growing Collage” and “Ready When You Are” were preferred, “Your Growing Collage” elicited slightly more consistent positive reactions across groups, while opinions of “Ready When You Are” were more divided. “Your Growing Collage” was felt to be more memorable and motivating and particularly for young adults, being more inspirational.



The message was felt to be clearer, in that the concept image combined with the text communicates the idea of professional development, and that a career can align with personal interests either for a first career, or when considering reorientation. Further, this message was supported by the tagline “Let What Drives You Drive Your Career/Laissez vos aspirations vous guider vers une carrière passionnante” which was felt to be meaningful, engaging and inspirational.

Based on the findings, the “Your Growing Collage” concept and the “Let What Drives You Drive Your Career/Laissez vos aspirations vous guider vers une carrière passionnante” tagline should be further developed for the 2022-2023 Jobs & Skills Campaign, with some modifications. While the message of the “Your Growing Collage” was felt to appeal to anyone, the visual and tagline pointed to perhaps a younger audience, one that is still exploring their career options and those looking to determine a career path. In the adult groups, the visual elicited a strong association with music, which was not necessarily seen as a strong career choice by all participants, while in the youth sessions, the image created an association with school work.

As such, while the visual was only somewhat meaningful in communicating the message, it should be slightly edited to make a stronger connection to professional development and avoid any confusion with school curriculum activities being illustrated. The visual should be edited to make a stronger connection to professional development and while still referring to various interests, avoid confusion with school curriculum activities and too strong a connection with one area of interest (as in with the music in the adult version). Further, consideration should be paid to incorporating diversity in people and type of work shown across campaign components, to increase the personal appeal and relevance of the message. At the same time, being specific about who qualifies/or narrowing the target audience would help avoid unnecessary investigation on the website, which could cause frustration for those who are not eligible for assistance.

While often selected as the preferred concept, “Ready When You Are” elicited mixed and more divided reactions, notably in terms of its design, personal relevance and message clarity. The design was either seen as clean, simple, and colourful, or bland, generic, vague and lacking relevance. The concept message was felt to be that if you want to change career path, there are resources available to help. Further, the tagline, “Reshape Your Tomorrow” inspired some, while it was considered generic and overused by others. The concept was considered as targeting people who are looking to switch careers, rather than those who wish to



advance professionally. That said, it was not that the concept generated a lot of negatives, it was just more of a neutral reaction overall.

The “Employee of the Future” concept performed weakest in comparison, for being too generic and vague and offering little to capture attention other than its bright colours. While the message spoke of people being empowered to change their career path with support from the government, the manner in which it is communicated was felt to be vague and lacking in inspiration. Similar impressions were expressed with respect to the tagline “Own Your Future / Prenez votre avenir en main”, with some finding the statement clear, concise, empowering and inspirational, while others finding it too generic and overused, thus lacking in meaning and relevance.

A number of reactions were consistently expressed across all three concepts and should be considered in the development of the final creative. Given the generally short attention paid to advertisements on social media, the image and the tagline play a critical role in communicating the message and capturing interest, and thus both should be meaningful and effective at conveying the campaign’s intent on their own. In addition, more prominently featuring the Canada wordmark adds to the campaign’s credibility, and more focus on the “Learn More” icon may help support the call to action.

The addition of the line “Funding and Resources Available” is helpful when no other highlighted information is included on the social media ad, but considered redundant when there was already a similar line in the concept. However, it is a key piece of information that encourages interested viewers to click through to the website, and as such, it should be prominently featured.

Incorporating this statement in the final social media publication, to reflect what type of information can be found on the website was considered useful. While all three statements proposed are considered as effectively reflecting what information can be found on the website, the version “Programs, Resources & Financial Support / Programmes, ressources & aide financière” was felt to be a little more comprehensive.

Findings suggest that while both website concepts elicited positive reactions and each was preferred for different reasons, the comprehensive website landing page layout (website Concept 1 based on the “Ready When You Are” concept) should be considered for further development. The provision of detailed information on this landing page was considered an important consideration to facilitate website navigation. Nonetheless, those who preferred



the more condensed website landing page (website Concept 2 based on the “Own Your Future” concept) liked its visual simplicity and being able to quickly identify broad topics prior to delving deeper into the website content.

Regardless of the website concept preference, the menu labels were considered clear and meaningful, perhaps with the exception of the “Discover Your Ideal Career Path / À la découverte de votre parcours professionnel idéal” which was felt to be a little broad, though still associated with tools and resources to identify the best career path.

Political Neutrality Certificate

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Signed

Margaret Brigley, CEO & Partner | Narrative Research

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