

National Defence 2022-2023 Success Check – Awareness 2023 Recruitment Advertising Campaign

Department of National Defence

Executive Summary

January 2023

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Cette publication est aussi disponible en français sous le titre : Évaluation de la réussite de la Défense nationale en 2022-2023 – Campagne publicitaire de sensibilisation et de recrutement 2023

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Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Nadeau", is centered within a white rectangular box with a light gray border.

December 22, 2022
Rick Nadeau, President
Quorus Consulting Group Inc.

Executive summary

Background and research objectives

Every year, the CAF needs to enrol Regular Force (full-time) and Reserve Force (part-time) members to fulfill the Strategic Intake Plan of the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group (CFRG). The CAF competes with other Canadian employers for top quality applicants, and a highly competitive job market has posed significant challenges for the CAF recruitment initiatives.

Promoting the CAF as a first-class, professional employer is complex given that the decision to enroll in the military requires extended personal evaluation, both emotional and rational. The CAF awareness component is the main pillar of the recruitment campaign and to ensure its impact it must connect with Canadians.

The objective of this campaign is to raise a greater level of awareness among Canadians between the ages of 18 and 34 about CAF employment opportunities, how the CAF is an employer of choice, highlighting training and travel opportunities, and how a career in the CAF can take various forms and fit various lifestyles, while addressing key barriers. Moreover, promoting the challenge, purpose, empowerment, fulfillment and mastery involved in CAF careers, while addressing barriers related to freedom and flexibility.

DND completed a success check of campaign creatives prior to launching the campaign in order to ensure the creatives resonated well with the target audience and to identify any potential issues with the creative before they launch. The advertising pre-testing explored how the primary target audience (Canadians between the ages of 18 and 34 years of age) responded to the creatives for the campaign.

This qualitative study will provide information on perceptions of the two video scenarios prior to the soft launch in the weeks leading up to International Women's Day in March 2023, with a full launch anticipated in April/May 2023. Tactics are still to be confirmed but could include television, radio, digital and social tactics as well as out-of-home tactics.

Methodology

This report is based on eight online focus groups that Quorus completed between December 5 and December 8, 2022. Focus groups were composed of men and women 18 to 24 years old ("Job seekers"), and with men and women 25 to 34 years old ("Job changers"). One online focus group

with each of these segments was held with participants located in the following regions: Ontario, Western Canada, Atlantic Canada and Quebec (French). Each session lasted approximately 90 minutes. All participants were informed the research was for the Government of Canada and each received \$125 for participating. A total of 56 individuals participated in this study.

Research results

Two Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) video advertisements and three static advertisement concepts were shared with participants. The first video was 30-seconds long while the second video was a 15-second clip.

Video Advertisement Evaluation

Participants were shown a sample of an advertising campaign featuring a 30-second video and a 15-second video and asked to provide feedback on the campaign.

Overall reactions to the campaign were quite positive, with most participants having rated the campaign an 8 out of 10 (with a rating of 10 representing the most positive rating). Reactions were consistent across the groups.

The campaign was mainly praised for the following reasons:

- The visual appeal was good, with most participants enjoying the concept and special effects of the CAF uniform “growing” onto the characters. The ad was also seen as professionally done from a visual standpoint.
- Showing characters doing “regular things” such as fixing a car or playing soccer was said to be inclusive. Participants felt that they did not need to be doing extraordinary things to be able to join the CAF.
- Participants liked that the ad focused on helping others, teamwork and camaraderie.
- The voiceover, soundtrack and tagline used were compelling to participants.
- Several participants felt that the second person point of view used in the voiceover made the ad more personal and grabbed their attention.
- A few discussed the diversity shown in the ad and explained that the voiceover implied that anyone could join.

In addition to the positive feedback, some participants offered suggestions on what could be improved:

- A few felt that the campaign was a bit vague. They commented that it does not offer insights into what kinds of jobs are actually available in the CAF and thought it would have been better to show how the everyday tasks translated into working in the CAF.
- Some felt that the 15-second ad was a bit abrupt and fast-paced. It also reminded some of a commercial for jeeps. That said, participants agreed that if they often saw the 30-second version, the shorter 15-second version would make more sense.

Participants felt the main message was that anyone could fit into the CAF, and that skills used in daily life could apply to their role. Some also felt that the main message was that a life in the CAF was more than just combat and war.

Regarding the call to action, participants thought that the campaign was encouraging viewers to think about how they could fit into a career at the CAF.

Participants thought that the campaign was targeting average people, particularly people who were younger and not settled into a career yet. Elements of the videos as well as participants' impressions of the CAF led them to believe that the ad may be geared mostly towards people who are young, active, patriotic, and have a certain level of discipline.

Across all groups, no participants considered the campaign disturbing or offensive.

Static Advertisement Concept Evaluation

Overall, the static advertisement concepts received mainly positive feedback.

Those who liked the images shared the following reasons:

- The images had very good visual appeal, with participants appreciating the blurred background and high definition of the person in the foreground.
 - Several felt that these ads would be eye-catching if they were to see them, especially in a public space such as a bus station.
- Some also explained that having the people facing away helped them to imagine themselves in their position.

- Many however did prefer the position of the woman in the first image (representing the Air Force), as there is a bit of eye contact.
- Many appreciated that there was not too much text shown in the ads.
- Although participants were told that these static images were part of the same campaign, some felt that they were also great as stand-alone ads and incorporated the same visual concept in a different way.

Some aspects of the images received mixed feedback:

- The message “we’re hiring” was praised by many although a few were not fond of this approach.
- Similarly, the approach of mentioning specific jobs received mixed feedback, with some explaining that they would not know what these jobs were but would be very interested in looking them up online.
- Others felt that the job titles may be intimidating especially as it is unclear whether the CAF would provide training or if the applicant would be required to have specific education or experience in the field already.
 - These participants felt that “become a” followed by the job titles may be more welcoming and more clearly convey the fact that the CAF would train them.

Other suggestions included the following:

- Several felt that although they enjoyed the ad, if they saw the ad in public (rather than online) they would likely not think of it after the fact and thus would not look for more information. Some suggested including a QR code on physical versions of the ad, so that those who view the ad could scan the code and instantly get more information, or save the webpage for later.

Participants felt that the bolded text in these static ads made the call to action very clear – to encourage individuals to apply for certain positions in the CAF.

In terms of where DND should advertise, most participants agreed that social media was where they would be most likely to see this type of advertising. Additionally, some mentioned that the static images would be effective around public transportation as well as around school campuses.

Qualitative research disclaimer

Qualitative research seeks to develop insight and direction rather than quantitatively projectable measures. The purpose is not to generate “statistics” but to hear the full range of opinions on a topic, understand the language participants use, gauge degrees of passion and engagement and to leverage the power of the group to inspire ideas. Participants are encouraged to voice their opinions, irrespective of whether or not that view is shared by others.

Due to the sample size, the special recruitment methods used, and the study objectives themselves, it is clearly understood that the work under discussion is exploratory in nature. The findings are not, nor were they intended to be, projectable to a larger population.

Specifically, it is inappropriate to suggest or to infer that few (or many) real world users would behave in one way simply because few (or many) participants behaved in this way during the sessions. This kind of projection is strictly the prerogative of quantitative research.

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