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DEAR MILLENNIALS – YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU

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Exercise Solo Flight

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EXERCISE *SOLO FLIGHT* – EXERCICE *SOLO FLIGHT***DEAR MILLENNIALS - YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU**

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DEAR MILLENNIALS-YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU

INTRODUCTION

Personnel have been identified as the most valuable component of national defence, and the key capability in defence mission success.¹ In order to carry out its assigned missions effectively, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) needs appropriate numbers of personnel, both Regular Force (Reg F) and Reserve Force (P Res), with the requisite skills needed for all three environments. To ensure appropriate numbers of trained personnel are available, the CAF must continually attract, select, and train thousands of new recruits each year to not only account for attrition, but also, as identified in Canada's new defence policy Strong, Secure, Engaged (SSE), grow the force.

SSE has identified growth targets for both the Reg F and P Res. The Reg F is to grow by 3,500 to 71,500, the P Res is to grow by 1,500 to 30,000, however, the CAF is struggling to

¹ Canada. Department of National Defence. B-GL-005-100/FP-001, CFJP 1.0 - Military Personnel Management Doctrine. Ottawa, ON: Chief of the Defence Staff, June 2008. Pg 1-1.

account for attrition, let alone accommodate these identified targets.² The current recruitment challenges the CAF is experiencing are not unique to the defence sector, the CAF like other employers have a workforce comprised of Baby Boomers Generation (born between 1946-1964) who continue to retire, Generation X members (born between 1965–1979), now occupying a comparably small number of leadership positions, leaving the Millennial's (born between 1980 to 2000) as the largest workforce group. Currently the Millennial Generation (MG) comprise over 27.5 percent of the Canadian population and so will continue to be the largest target audience for current CAF recruiting endeavours.³

Currently, the Canadian government has 768 social media channels (platforms) focused primarily on recruitment.⁴ Of those social media channels, we know the MG uses Facebook and Instagram more than any other social network.⁵ The CAF has a dedicated recruitment Facebook channel, as well as Instagram accounts separated by geographic region.⁶ Both and acts as a key portals to contact recruiters.⁷ By effectively adopting social media, the CAF has a proven robust infrastructure to deliver its messaging to a broad audience, and by focusing its use of different channels, based on known target audiences of different social media platforms, it can focus specific messaging to different generational groups.⁸ Each generational group has established

² National Defence, "Strong, Secure, Engaged, Canada's Defence Policy". Last accessed 1 April 2019. <http://dgpaapp.forces.gc.ca/en/canada-defence-policy/docs/canada-defence-policy-report.pdf>

³ Nielsen, "Millennials by the Numbers: Quick Facts". Last accessed 23 April 2019. <https://www.nielsen.com/ca/en/insights/news/2018/millennials-by-the-numbers-quick-facts.html>

⁴ Tamara Spitzer, "Using Social Media to Tackle Recruiting Shortages in the Armed Forces", CDA Institute, 7 Mar 2019. Last accessed 18 Mar 2019. <https://cdainstitute.ca/using-social-media-to-tackle-the-recruiting-shortages-in-the-armed-forces/>

⁵ Business Insider, "Teens aren't using Facebook as much as millennials and Gen Xers — here's the social platform each generation uses the most", 30 August 2018. Last accessed 18 May 2019. <https://www.businessinsider.com/top-social-media-platform-by-age-group-2018-8>

⁶ Forces Jobs Facebook page, 18 May 2019. <https://www.facebook.com/ForcesJobs.ForcesEmplois.CA/>

⁷ Canadian Armed Forces P&N Instagram page, 18 May 2019. <https://www.instagram.com/cafreuitingwest/?hl=en>

⁸ David Akin, "Canada's Armed Forces, struggling to hit diversity goals, turns to new digital recruiting tools", Global News 14 September 2018. Last accessed 24 April 2019. <https://globalnews.ca/news/4450927/canada-armed-forces-diversity-goals-digital-recruiting/>

distinct characteristics; specific messaging can therefore be designed to appeal to a specific generational group.⁹

However, despite the CAF's improved use of social media, the organization is not as appealing to the MG and therefore the CAF continues to fail to meet recruiting targets from this the largest of the potential recruit populations. An analysis of the British Army, "Your Army Needs You" campaign shows that the CAF recruiting message has failed to resonate with its intended target population. For the CAF to be considered an employer of choice, recruitment messaging needs to highlight key organizationally compatible MG characteristics, characteristics closely aligned with established CAF Principles, Values and Expected Behaviours, the characteristics of *ethical behaviour*, *willingness to embracing diversity*, *enthusiasm for learning*, and *team orientation*.¹⁰ An analysis of the British campaign also shows that the CAF recruiting materials have missed an opportunity to highlight what are considered organizationally incompatible MG characteristics as a recruitment opportunity rather than barrier, perceived MG negative characteristics of *over confidence*, *lack of resiliency*, *hesitancy to take risks*, and *a desire to stay close to parents*.¹¹ The CAF's failure to fully embrace key messaging relevant to MG characteristics means that current efforts will not be successful in making the CAF an employer of choice to this generational group.

MILLENNIAL GENERATION CHARACTERISTICS

⁹ Dima Ghawi, "Main Characteristics Per Generation", Thrive Global, 16 July 2018. Last accessed 20 May 2019. <https://thriveglobal.com/stories/main-characteristics-per-generation/>

¹⁰ Leesa Tanner, "Who are the Millennials?", Defence R%D Canada, Centre of Operational Research & Analysis. Last accessed 1 April 2019. Pg 30. http://cradpdf.drdc-rddc.gc.ca/PDFS/unc104/p534334_A1b.pdf

¹¹ Leesa Tanner, "Who are the Millennials?", Defence R%D Canada, Centre of Operational Research & Analysis. Last accessed 1 April 2019. Pg 30-40. http://cradpdf.drdc-rddc.gc.ca/PDFS/unc104/p534334_A1b.pdf

An individual's membership in a cohort of individuals who were born at a similar time and a similar place has an important impact on who they are not only as individuals but also as a group.¹² Generational groups embody different characteristics, these characteristics are defined by shared social, economic and political environments and experiences growing up. These experiences shape the generations view of the world around them and so their expectations. If we compare individuals in the MG to previous generational groups, common recognized characteristics include individuals that are optimistic, value ethical behaviour, enthusiastic for learning, multi-taskers, team orientated, and embracing towards diversity.¹³ The DND and CAF Code of Values and Ethics outlines organizational principles, specific values, and expected behaviours that closely align with four of these MG characteristics, those of *ethical behaviour*, *willingness to embracing diversity*, *enthusiasm for learning*, and *team orientation*. The DND and CAF Ethical Principle of "Respect the Dignity of all Persons" and "Obey and Support Lawful Authority" directly links to the MG characteristics of *ethical behaviour* and *willingness to embracing diversity*. The DND and CAF Specific Values of "Excellence", directly links to the MG characteristics of *enthusiasm for learning*, and *team orientation*.¹⁴ These MG characteristics are therefore organizationally compatible.

However, other aspects of the military as a way of life we know are not as compatible or a natural fit with the MG. The characteristics often bemoaned by previous generations make employment in a large organization where discipline is paramount and the primary focus on operations requires individuals to put aside their own needs for their mission makes the CAF less

¹² Kirsten Bialik and Richard Fly, "Millennial life: How young adulthood today compares with prior generations", Pew Research Centre 14 October 2019, Last accessed 18 May 2019. <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/essay/millennial-life-how-young-adulthood-today-compares-with-prior-generations/>

¹³ Leesa Tanner, "Who are the Millennials?", Defence R%D Canada, Centre of Operational Research & Analysis. Last accessed 1 April 2019. Pg 30. http://cradpdf.drdc-rddc.gc.ca/PDFS/unc104/p534334_A1b.pdf

¹⁴ National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, "The DND and CF Code of Values and Ethics". Last accessed 19 May 2109. Table 1-2. <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/about/code-of-values-and-ethics.page>

attractive. Known organizationally incompatible MG characteristics include a perceived *over confidence, lack of resiliency, hesitancy to take risks, and a desire to stay close to parents.*¹⁵

KEY ELEMENTS OF A MG RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

Organizations have clear objectives when designing recruitment campaigns. Campaigns may be targeted towards increasing or maintaining the profile of an organization, filling a wide range personnel vacancy's, or focused on a small number of skilled candidate vacancies.

Whatever the intent of the campaign, modern military recruitment campaigns require an organization to advertise both internally and externally using a wide range of media techniques encompassing traditional print, video, as well as extensive use of social media.¹⁶ Traditional military recruitment campaigns often relied on dramatic scenes designed to grab the audience's attention, often of military hardware and personnel in challenging environments. As exciting as these scenes are, modern audiences are not easily impressed.¹⁷ For the prospective MG employee to take the next step, to look beyond the initial "hook" and to seek further information about a potential employer, the message needs to resonate.¹⁸ For a message to resonate it must connect with an audience on a personal level, talk to audiences' motivations and desires. An accepted way to make a message resonate is to tailor the message to a known group's characteristics.¹⁹

¹⁵ Leesa Tanner, "Who are the Millennials?", Defence R&D Canada, Centre of Operational Research & Analysis. Last accessed 1 April 2019. Pg 30-40. http://cradpdf.drdc-rddc.gc.ca/PDFS/unc104/p534334_A1b.pdf

¹⁶ NATO, "Recruiting and Retention of Military Personnel", RTO Technical Report, October 2007. Pg 2B-5. Last accessed 20 May 2019. https://www.nato.int/issues/women_nato/Recruiting%20&%20Retention%20of%20Mil%20Personnel.pdf

¹⁷ Adam Linehan, "The US Army's New Recruiting Commercial Is So Bad It's Great", Task & Purpose, 19 October 2018. Last accessed 22 May 2019. <https://taskandpurpose.com/armys-new-recruiting-commercial>

¹⁸ Marketing 360, "What's Your Marketing Hook?", 9 May 2018. Last accessed 20 May 2019. <https://www.marketing360.com/general-marketing-tips/whats-your-digital-marketing-hook/>

¹⁹ Karrie Lucero, "Generation Marketing: How To Reach Consumers at Every Age", Watermark, 4 October 2017. Last accessed 20 May 2019. <https://blog.watermarkadvertising.net/generation-marketing>

A comparison between the current CAF recruitment campaign titled “Dare to be Extraordinary”, rolled out in 2017, and the British Army “Your Army Needs You” campaign rolled out in 2019, demonstrates both similarities and differences in how the different campaigns have tackled the need to create a message that resonates. But how successful have both campaigns been to highlight both institutionally compatible MG characteristics whilst using perceived institutionally incompatible MG characteristics as an opportunity to generate excitement and interest?

“DARE TO BE EXTRAORDINARY”, THE CAF CAMPAIGN

The “Dare to be Extraordinary” recruitment campaign was designed from the outset to appeal to the MG, its main goal to ensure greater awareness and a better understanding of diverse career opportunities available in the CAF in both full-time and part-time employment. The campaign continues to this day in the form of the “Priority Occupations campaign”. Its objective is to recruit to in-demand positions in the CAF as quickly as possible to maintain CAF operational capability.²⁰ Key messaging of the campaign has been to showcase individuals in civilian settings and then those same individuals in extraordinary settings in different military occupations.²¹ The theme of the campaign is shared through a variety of digital formats, the most important being the main [Canada.ca/forces-jobs](https://www.canada.ca/forces-jobs) e-recruiting website.²² The CAF campaign is targeted towards the 18 to 34 age group, with a focus on of all races, genders and backgrounds.

²⁰ John Aldo, “Marketing and Advertising RFP Issued by Department of National Defense”, 24 January 2018. Everything-PR, Last accessed 18 May 2019. <https://everything-pr.com/marketing-advertising-rfp-issued-department-national-defense/>

²¹ Mishall Rehman, “Government of Canada launches new CAF recruiting campaign”, Canadian Military Family Magazine, 21 June 2017. Last accessed 21 May 2019. https://www.cmfmag.ca/duty_calls/government-of-canada-launches-new-caf-recruiting-campaign/

²² Government of Canada, “The Future Awaits Within The Canadian Forces”. Last accessed 20 May 2019. https://forces.ca/en/?utm_medium=google&utm_source=cpc&utm_campaign=GC/DND-MDN%20-%20ADV%201920-0090-IT-02%20-%20Awareness%20Campaign:%20SEM%202019-2020%20-%20Search&utm_term=canadian%20forces%20jobs&utm_content=350152310312

²³ However, how effective has it been in resonating with the MG, and specifically appeal to both known organizationally compatible and incompatible MG characteristics?

If we consider the organizationally compatible MG characteristic of *ethical behaviour*, the videos and commentary speak of pride in serving, of wearing the uniform, and demonstrated in roles such as the medic serving to treat the ill and injured. The organizationally compatible MG characteristic of *willingness to embracing diversity* is clearly portrayed with a broad variety of ethnic backgrounds portrayed in the personnel profiled, as well as specific content provided on the main recruiting website regarding women, Indigenous Peoples and ethnic minorities.²⁴ The organizationally compatible MG characteristic of *enthusiasm for learning* is portrayed with images and information referencing both classroom, field training and paid education.²⁵ The organizationally compatible MG characteristic of *team orientation* is showcased at every opportunity, the importance of team teams working together to be successful is a overarching theme.

If we consider known organizationally incompatible MG characteristics, the campaign provides narrative referencing how the individual CAF members showcased overcame the challenges of training and a *perceived lack of resiliency*, highlighted by the example of the infantier who took initial failures in the training environment into a successful career.²⁶ The organizationally incompatible MG of *hesitancy to take risks* is referenced, the profiled CAF members speaking of their determination to be successful by taking risks and overcoming

²³ John Aldo, "Marketing and Advertising RFP Issued by Department of National Defense", 24 January 2018. Everything-PR, Last accessed 18 May 2019. <https://everything-pr.com/marketing-advertising-rfp-issued-department-national-defense/>

²⁴ Government of Canada, "Canadian Forces Aboriginal Entry Program". Last accessed 24 May 2019. <https://forces.ca/en/programs-for-indigenous-peoples/#cfaept>

²⁵ Government of Canada, "Why Choose Paid education with the Canadian Armed Forces?". Last accessed 23 May 2019. <https://forces.ca/en/paid-education/>

²⁶ Government of Canada, "Your Future Awaits Within the Canadian Forces". Last accessed 23 May 2019. <https://forces.ca/en/>

challenges. The organizationally incompatible MG characteristic of *a desire to stay close to parent's* was cleverly but subtly referenced. The recommendation to join the CAF coming from one of the profiled CAF members parent, suggesting permission given and therefore approval provided.

Overall the “Dare to be Extraordinary” recruitment campaign successfully used the tried and tested formula of presenting dramatic scenes with military hardware in action as the hook, however, its forms a reference point only, the focus is certainly on the individual's and the job opportunities in the CAF. Overall, when considering organizationally compatible MG characteristics, the campaign effectively resonates. However, when referencing organizationally incompatible MG characteristics the difference between the CAF campaign and the British Army campaign become very evident. It's not that the CAF campaign doesn't talk to incompatible MG characteristics, its just the references made in the campaign are very subtle, and although supported by adequate information on the website, the messaging lacks the provocative and controversial approach of the British Army campaign.

“YOUR ARMY NEEDS YOU”, THE BRITISH ARMY CAMPAIGN

The British Army “Your Army Needs You” recruitment campaign, rolled out in 2019 is the third and final phase of the ongoing recruitment campaign all focused around “belonging”. Previous phases have been the “This is Belonging” campaign of 2018, and the “Finding a Place” campaign of 2017.²⁷ In a similar theme to the CAF campaign, key messaging is focused around individuals in normal civilian settings and then those same individuals in a military setting.

²⁷ Meghann Myers, “The British army says its recruiting campaign targeting 'snowflakes' is working, and the US Army is taking notice”, Business Insider, 29 March 2019. Last accessed 20 May 2109. <https://www.businessinsider.com/british-army-success-with-snowflakes-millennial-recruiting-campaign-2019-3>

Besides video and radio advertisements, a variety of digital formats including Facebook, Instagram, posters, and the Army Be the Best recruiting website are used.²⁸ The posters, on display across the UK consisted of six images based upon a modernisation of the infamous Lord Kitchener ‘Your Country Needs You’ posters but contains an image of a modern soldier with different phrases including ‘Binge Gamers’, ‘Class Clowns’, ‘Snow Flakes’, and ‘Selfie Addicts’ etc.²⁹ The goals of the campaign is to present the British Army as an organization that see’s the best in people, giving individuals with a drive to succeed and a job where they can do something meaningful.³⁰

The recruitment campaign goals were to reverse years of missed recruiting targets with an estimated total shortfall of about 21% to 45%.³¹ However, how effective has the campaign been in resonating with the MG and specifically appeal to both known organizationally compatible and incompatible MG characteristics? If we consider the organizationally compatible MG characteristics of *ethical behaviour*, multiple references are made in the video’s, the most recognizable being a video with of soldiers assisting with a humanitarian disaster response.³² Appealing to the organizationally compatible MG characteristic of *willingness to embracing diversity*, every element of the campaign shows a diverse group of young soldiers are profiled from various ethnic backgrounds, this diversity being especially evident in the recruitment

²⁸ British Army, “Your Army Needs You”, Last accessed 22 May 2019. <https://apply.army.mod.uk/>

²⁹ Gerald Wright, “British Army launches this year’s recruitment campaign”, *ukdj Impartial Current*. 4 January 2019. Last accessed 20 May 2019. <https://ukdefencejournal.org.uk/british-army-launches-this-years-recruitment-campaign/>

³⁰ Lewis Dormer, “Campaign of the week: Gamble pays off for the British Army’s snowflake recruitment campaign”, *Smart Insights*, 12 April 2019. Last accessed 20 May 2019. <https://www.smartinsights.com/digital-marketing-strategy/british-army-snowflake-recruitment-campaign/>

³¹ National Audit office, “Investigation into the British Army Recruiting Partnering Project”, Report Ministry of Defence 14 December 2018. Last accessed 20 May 2019. <https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Investigation-into-the-British-Army-Recruiting-Partnering-Project-Summary.pdf>

³² Campaign, “British Army “Your Army needs you” by Karmarama”. Last accessed 23 May 2019. <https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/british-army-your-army-needs-you-karmarama/1521968>

posters.³³ The organizationally compatible MG characteristic of *enthusiasm for learning* is referenced throughout the campaign, with military and technical training highlighted, including earning military and civilian qualifications.³⁴ Finally, the organizationally compatible MG characteristic of *team orientation* is highlighted, with images of soldiers working together at every opportunity and in a variety of challenging situations.

It is when we consider how the campaign deals with organizationally incompatible MG characteristics the differences really stand out between the campaigns. Rather than just reference these within the campaign materials as the CAF campaign has, the British Army campaign has highlighted these organizationally incompatible MG characteristics in dramatic fashion by use of the Lord Kitchener styled ‘Your Country Needs You’ campaign posters. This has highlighted MG perceived weaknesses as strengths valued by the organization. Examples include referencing the organizationally incompatible MG characteristic of *over confidence*, the moniker on a poster labeled “class clown”, however, rather than being as a negative characteristic, it is touted as a positive in the form of “spirit”.³⁵ The incompatible MG characteristic of *lack of resiliency* is referenced by a young soldier profiled as a “Binge Gamer”, touted as “Drive”.³⁶ The incompatible MG characteristic of *hesitancy to take risks* is highlighted with the moniker “Selfie Addicts”, a negative stereotype turned into a positive characteristic, stating the British Army needs individuals with “confidence”.³⁷ Lastly, the organizationally incompatible MG

³³ Claire Sadler, “Your Army Needs You: Army Unveils Latest Recruitment Campaign”, Forces Network, 3 January 2019. Last accessed 23 May 2019. <https://www.forces.net/news/your-army-needs-you-army-unveils-latest-recruitment-campaign>

³⁴ British Army, “Reservist Benefits”, Last accessed 22 May 2019. <https://apply.army.mod.uk/what-we-offer/reserve-soldier/army-reserve-benefits>

³⁵ Claire Sadler, “Your Army Needs You: Army Unveils Latest Recruitment Campaign”, Forces Network, 3 January 2019. Last accessed 23 May 2019. <https://www.forces.net/news/your-army-needs-you-army-unveils-latest-recruitment-campaign>

³⁶ Wesley Yin-Poole, “The British Army needs ‘binge gamers’, ‘snow flakes’ and ‘me me me millennials’”, Eurogamer, 3 January 2019. Last accessed 23 May 2019. <https://www.eurogamer.net/articles/2019-01-03-the-british-army-needs-binge-gamers-snow-flakes-and-me-me-me-millennials>

³⁷ ABC News, “British Army recruitment posters target millennial ‘phone zombies’ and ‘selfie addicts’”, 3 January 2019. Last accessed 23 May 2019. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-01-04/the-british-army-was-millennial-snowflakes-and-selfie-addicts/10685194>

characteristic of *a desire to stay close to parents* is referenced, however, rather than simply a mention made in a video as with the CAF campaign, the concept of a military family has been the central focus of British Army campaign series through the “This is Belonging” and the “Finding a Place” phases.

Overall the British Army “Your Army Needs You” recruitment campaign successfully used the tried and tested formula of presenting dramatic scenes with military hardware in action as the hook, however, just as with the CAF campaign, it forms a reference point only, the focus is certainly on the individual’s and the job opportunities available. The campaign certainly resonates with careful and effective reference made to both organizationally compatible and incompatible MG characteristics. However, the campaign really stands out as unique is the way in which negative MG stereotypes are so effectively used to resonate with the target audience. MG prospective employees, tired of the stereotypes, now have an employer that values them for the characteristics that make them unique.

CONCLUSION

Despite launching in a flurry of controversy, the British Army “Your Army Needs You” campaign has seen a two-fold increase in recruit applications.³⁸ Unlike the CAF’s “Dare to be Extraordinary” campaign, the risky move of highlighting organizationally incompatible MG

³⁸ Rebecca Stewart, “Those British Army ‘Snowflake’ ads have encouraged the most new recruits in years”, *The Drum*, 20 March 2019. Last accessed 23 May 2019. <https://www.thedrum.com/news/2019/03/20/those-british-army-snowflake-ads-have-encouraged-the-most-new-recruits-years>

characteristics has been a rallying call to the targeted groups.³⁹ The lesson learned for the CAF, be bold, create a message that resonates by crafting a message the MG can't ignore!

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³⁹ Henry Jones, "14,000 apply to join British Army after new adverts", Ukdj. Last accessed 23 May 2019. <https://ukdefencejournal.org.uk/14000-apply-to-join-british-army-after-new-adverts/>