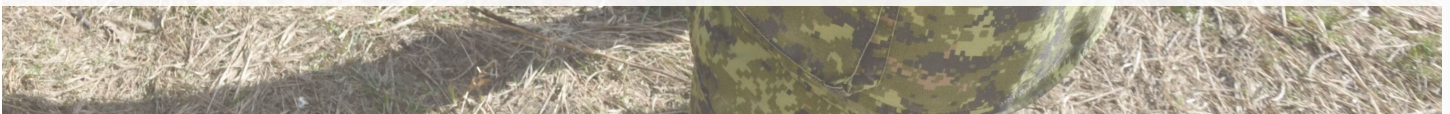


BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS PROJECT:

INCREASING RECRUITMENT OF WOMEN INTO THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

Innovation Hub — Privy Council Office



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Innovation Hub would like to thank all the Canadian Armed Forces members (including, Military Personnel Generation and the Canadian Forces Recruitment Group) the Department of National Defence Marketing team, as well as the Director General of Military Personnel Research and Analysis for their assistance with this research.

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Status of Women, Policy and External Relations, Gender-based Analysis

Sex and Gender Designation Policy Exploration Project

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In November 2015, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) approached the Privy Council Office's Innovation Hub (the Hub) for consultation on how to increase the number of women in the CAF. The Chief of the Defence Staff has set a target to increase the percentage of women in the CAF from the current 15 % to at least 25.1 % by 2026. A research project was designed by the Hub to support this important goal using behavioural insights (BI), a multidisciplinary approach that applies knowledge and tools from the behavioural sciences, including behavioural economics, psychology, and social marketing, to encourage positive changes in behaviour.

This report provides an overview of the research project, including the research methods, selected findings, and recommendations. The research focused on three main areas in which BI can help increase the number of women in the CAF:

- The recruitment process;
- Recruitment marketing and communications;
- And policies and guidelines within the CAF.

To identify possible barriers to the recruitment of women, the Hub examined qualitative and quantitative data from numerous primary and secondary sources through a BI lens. For example, we examined data from surveys conducted with CAF members, conducted jurisdictional analyses, and consulted with experts. Members of the Hub also went through the CAF application process and documented their experiences. Based on these findings, and barriers identified, approximately twenty recommendations were identified, including:

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- Make revisions to the online application incorporating BI principles.
- Mandate gender disclosure on the application form and include a third gender option with the wording to be determined based on the recommendation of the Sex and Gender Designation Policy Exploration Project.
- Use gender-neutral job titles for all occupations.
- Update correspondence sent to applicants.
- Run randomized controlled trials (RCT) to test applications of behavioural insights to applicant correspondence and identify the most effective message format.
- Use RCT methodology to test applications of behavioural insights to recruitment marketing and identify the most effective messages.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- Build research on possible barriers in five key CAF policy areas: deployments and relocation; leave without pay; childcare support; long-term commitment/ability to resign; and culture/diversity.
- Continue to explore and develop new enrollment support initiatives such as 'try-before-you-buy' and mentorship programs.

Many of the findings and recommendations apply to all CAF applicants, regardless of gender, and offer broader applications that can help promote diversity in organizations.

INTRODUCTION

All occupations in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), including combat roles, are open to women, but currently women account for only 15% of CAF members. The Chief of the Defence Staff has set a target to increase the percentage of women in the CAF Regular and/or Reserve Forces to at least 25.1% by 2026. Recognizing this challenge, the CAF approached the Privy Council Office's Innovation Hub (the Hub) in November 2015 for consultation on how to leverage behavioural insights (BI) principles (see below and Glossary) to support its employment equity targets. This report provides an overview of the Hub research project, including research methodologies, findings, and recommendations

APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The research focused on three main areas in which BI can help increase the number of women in the CAF: the recruitment process; recruitment marketing and communications; and policies and guidelines within the CAF.

To identify possible barriers to the recruitment of women in the CAF, we examined qualitative and quantitative data from numerous primary and secondary sources through a BI lens. First, we examined data from surveys and focus groups conducted with CAF members, as well as data from the Canadian Forces Recruitment Group (CFRG) and the Director General Military Personnel Research and Analysis (DGMPPRA). We also reviewed other relevant documents including the CAF policies and guidelines and research done in support of CAF recruitment marketing (focus groups and surveys). Then, we conducted a jurisdictional review examining strategies and policy changes designed to support the recruitment and retention of women in the Armed Forces in other countries including, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Singapore, Norway and the United States. We also reviewed relevant academic research from a variety of disciplines including psychology, organizational behaviour, marketing, and economics, and consulted with a number of external experts from government and academic institutions.

To develop a deeper understanding of the experiences of women who are prospective applicants, current applicants, or existing members of the CAF, we used a number of qualitative research techniques. For example, members of the Hub went through the initial application process, documented their own experiences using an autoethnographic methodology, and provided recommendations based on BI principles. We analyzed the correspondence sent to applicants during the recruitment process, conducted interviews with a number of female CAF members, and visited CAF recruitment centers in Ottawa, Toronto, and Borden. The research methods used are summarized in Appendix B.

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Based on the experience of completing a CAF application (autoethnography), we recommend nine BI-informed changes to the CAF application to make it easier to understand and to ensure that the information obtained accurately reflects applicants' abilities. These changes include:

- Mandate gender disclosure on the application form and include a third gender option with the wording to be determined based on the recommendation of the Sex and Gender Designation Policy Exploration Project.
- Provide a checklist/graphic of the information needed to fill out the application and the application process. (BI tools: grouping, cognitive ease)
- Use gender-neutral job titles for all occupations.
- Include a progress bar to enable applicants to understand where they are in the application and encourage them to follow through with the application. (BI tool: providing feedback)
- Use expandable menus to make the process easier to follow, and to make the options easier to read, understand, and select. (BI tool: cognitive ease)
- Define key terms to assist applicants who may not be familiar with the CAF terminology. For example, the difference between an officer and non-commissioned CAF member.

Visits to CAF recruitment centers and reviews of data provided by CFRG indicated that some applicants fail to arrive for scheduled recruitment appointments and do not follow

through with the recruitment procedures. Based on a thorough review and analysis of the e-mails sent to applicants throughout the recruitment process, the Hub proposes the following BI-informed changes to improve appointment attendance and recruitment follow-through:

- Personalizing communication. Stating the name of the sender and/or receiver on the correspondence makes the message more relevant and relatable.
- Sending reminders and setting deadlines. Sending reminders and establishing and promoting a deadline encourages individuals to respond/act.
- Simplification. Simplifying what the applicant needs to do makes the process easier for applicants to complete.

In collaboration with the CFRG, the Hub is planning a randomized controlled trial (RCT) to test the effectiveness of these recommendations. This RCT will provide evidence identifying which types of messages are most effective at encouraging candidates, particularly women, to complete the recruitment process. Results are expected in early 2018.

RECRUITMENT MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Hub reviewed the CAF's present marketing concepts designed to raise awareness about the large number of career options that are available at the CAF. Based on the present research, the Hub suggested additional messaging techniques. For example, an analysis of interviews and focus groups showed that many women do not believe that they'll be able to complete CAF basic training. However, an analysis of DGMPRA data reveals that an equal percentage of women and men successfully complete basic training. Thus, the CAF should consider promoting this important fact.

In collaboration with the Department of National Defence Marketing and Advertising team and academic experts, the Hub is planning an RCT to test the effectiveness of a number of advertising messages in generating interest on social media and online platforms. Results are expected by the end of 2017.

POLICIES, GUIDELINES AND PROGRAMS

Evidence from focus groups, interviews, literature reviews, jurisdictional scans, and academic consultations suggests that there are five broad areas that can affect women's willingness to pursue a career in the CAF. These are:

1. Deployments and relocation;
2. Leave without pay;
3. Childcare support;
4. Long-term commitment/ ability to resign; and
5. Culture/diversity.

We conducted a preliminary review of CAF policies in each of these areas. This research identified a number of misperceptions, suggesting that prospective applicants may not have a clear understanding of CAF policies. For example, prospective applicants thought that a career with the CAF entails being 'locked-in' and were not aware that the CAF allows its members to take leave for a variety of reasons (e.g., sick leave, maternity/parental leave, and leave without pay and allowances) to enhance their quality of life.

It is important to clearly communicate current policies in the CAF in the five key areas identified to provide prospective applicants with realistic expectations of potential careers. We also recommend conducting internal in-depth reviews of policies concerning the key areas identified on an ongoing basis. These reviews should identify whether there are any barriers to the application of these policies.

Consideration should also be given to the following enrolment support programs as possible areas of further research and/or program pilot:

- "Try-before-you-buy" programs, in which prospective applicants can experience what it is like to be in the CAF before joining.
- Mentorship programs for new recruits, pairing recruits with same-gender mentors to maximize program benefits.
- Encouraging part-time employment with the CAF, or Reserve-first recruitment, as a way to experience what it is like to be a member of the CAF before making a long-term commitment and/or committing to deployments and postings.

Importantly, while being particularly useful for the recruitment of women, such programs should be open to all applicants – regardless of gender – to ensure that they are perceived as fair and equitable by prospective and current CAF members. There is extensive research showing that well-intentioned employment equity measures, such as preferential selection of candidates from designated employment equity groups, can backfire if people see them as unfair and as undermining merit. Notably, this research shows that both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries tend to view such preferential measures negatively. Therefore, we recommend closely monitoring the impact of programs that are designed to attract women to the CAF to ensure that they are implemented in a fair manner and that they are not causing adverse effects in the organization – for both men and women – in ways that can undermine retention initiatives.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

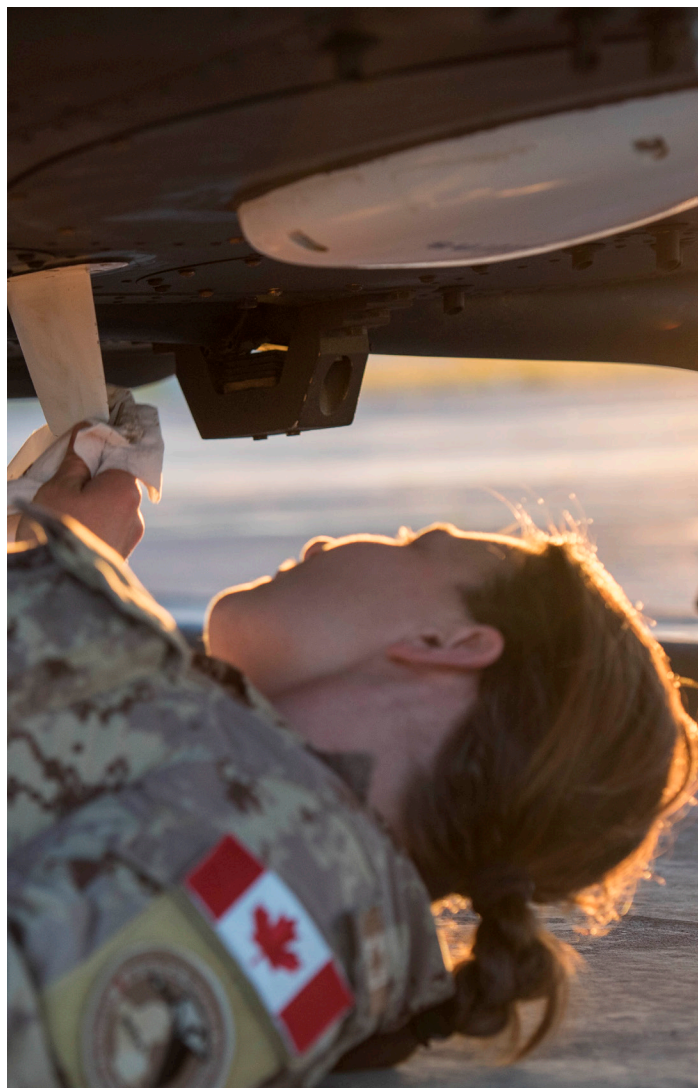
Based on this research, we make approximately 20 recommendations designed to increase the recruitment of women into the CAF. Recommendations range from simple, low-cost improvements, to longer-term comprehensive policy and program reviews.

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE

- Make revisions to the online application incorporating BI principles.
- Revise the correspondence sent to applicants.
- Run randomized controlled trials (RCT) to test applications of behavioural insights to applicant correspondence and identify the most effective message format.
- Use RCT methodology to test applications of behavioural insights to recruitment marketing and identify the most effective messages.

LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE

- Build research on CAF policies focusing on the five key areas identified—deployments and relocation; childcare support; leave without pay; long-term commitment/ability to resign; and culture/diversity.
- Continue to explore and develop new enrollment support initiatives, such as ‘try-before-you-buy’ and mentorship programs.



CONCLUSION

Through this behavioural insights project, the Hub set out to identify barriers and to support the target of increasing the number of women in the CAF to 25% by 2026. The current research provides numerous recommendations, using the principles of behavioural insights, to encourage more women to both apply to join the CAF and to complete the recruitment process. The research also identified two key areas in which RCT methodology can be used to test the effectiveness of CAF messaging techniques targeting current and potential applicants. Finally, it is important to note that although this project focused on female recruitment into the CAF, many of the findings and recommendations could enhance the overall ease, effectiveness and success of the CAF's recruitment process. Work on this project is ongoing, with further results expected in early 2018.



APPENDIX A GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Term	Definition
Autoethnography	A qualitative research method in which the researcher personally goes through the particular situation that they are studying, while systematically documenting his/her own personal experiences and connecting them to the broader research context.
Behavioural Insights (BI)	A multidisciplinary approach that uses the principles and tools of behavioural economics, psychology, and social marketing to influence behavioural change in a positive way.
Grouping	The easier information is to process, the more likely people are to act on it.
Cognitive Ease	The easier something is to do, the more likely people are to do it.
Employment Equity	Ensuring that all Canadians have equal access to employment opportunities by achieving the full representation of various groups, including women and visible minorities, within organizations.
Feedback	Giving feedback keeps people engaged and increases transparency.
Implementation Intentions	Encouraging people to form a plan to carry out their intentions has been shown to increase the attainment of desired goals in a variety of domains.
Personalized Language	We are influenced by messages and information that seems more relevant to us.
Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT)	A research method that tests the effectiveness of implementing different types of interventions. By randomly assigning different groups of people to receive different interventions (or no intervention) and comparing these groups, this method provides clear evidence indicating which intervention(s) result(s) in superior outcomes.

APPENDIX B SUMMARY OF RESEARCH APPROACH AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Research Methodology

Primary Research

- Site visits (Borden, Toronto Recruitment Centre, Ottawa Recruitment Centre)
- Consultations with senior and junior staff of the CAF
- Individual interviews with female CAF officers
- Observations at recruitment events specifically for women
- Autoethnography examining the online recruitment process
- Consultation with academic experts

Secondary Research

- Data from the Director General Military Personnel Research and Analysis (DGMPPRA)
- Data from MILPERSGEN
- Data from CFRG
- Marketing focus groups and research reports
- Jurisdictional review (Australia, the United Kingdom, etc.)
- Literature review (Psychology, Economics, Sociology, etc.)
- Documentation review (e.g., policies, marketing and promotional material, correspondence, etc.)

Sample Recommendations (out of approximately 20 in total)

Short Term

- Make revisions to the online application incorporating behavioural insights principles
- Use gender-neutral job titles for all occupations
- Update correspondence sent to applicants
- Run randomized controlled trials (RCT) to test applications of behavioural insights to applicant correspondence and identify the most effective message format
- Use RCT methodology to test applications of behavioural insights to recruitment marketing and identify the most effective messages

Long Term

- Build research on possible barriers, and BI-informed solutions, in the five key CAF policy areas: deployments and relocation; leave without pay; childcare support ; long-term commitment/ability to resign without repercussion; and culture/diversity climate
- Continue to explore and develop new enrolment support initiatives, such as 'try-before-you-buy' and mentorship programs. Further exploration around piloting new programs, such as 'try-before-you-buy' and mentorship programs