



<sup>^</sup>  
*Many young people are attracted to the Cadet Program because of its military characteristics, including the uniform—right down to the boots.*

# The Ipsos-Reid Survey—now what?

How well does our youth program imprint on the minds of Canadian youth and their parents?

This is what the Department of National Defence and Ipsos-Reid Corporation set out to discover through a survey last year of cadets and parents of cadets, as well as youth and parents of youth within the general public. The idea was to probe their minds on various issues regarding the Cadet Program. Who is aware of the program? What are their impressions? What are the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the program? What are their views on training? These questions are all critically important to the Cadet Program.

- The top source of information about the program among parents and youth in the general public is word of mouth from family and friends.
- The top reason cadets give for deciding to join is that they have family and friends in the program.
- The top reason parents give for enrolling their child is that the child wanted to join.

**Our Challenge:** Making the Cadet Program more widely known, especially directly to potential participants.

---

A significant proportion of cadets identify time management concerns and particularly, the extent to which the program may conflict with schoolwork

---

Here are some results of that survey and the challenges we face because of them.

## FAMILIARITY AND IMPRESSION OF THE CADET PROGRAM

The Cadet Program enjoys an extraordinary amount of good will among its participants and their parents, as well as among members of the general public, despite their unfamiliarity with the program.

Alternative marketing, such as an organized word-of-mouth campaign, could be investigated. Word-of-mouth marketing is far and away the most powerful force in the marketplace and, according to the survey, the Cadet Program seems more influenced by word of mouth than anything else! In word-of-mouth marketing, 'champions' (die-hard fans of the program) can be enlisted to spread the word through their existing social networks. Word-of-mouth is unlimited. In theory, if you tell the right champion the right message, that champion would tell 10, who would tell 10, who would tell 10, who would tell 10, who would tell 10, who would tell 10, who would tell 10, who would tell 10, who would tell 10. That's 100 million hits!

## DRAWBACKS OF THE PROGRAM

A significant proportion of cadets identify time management concerns and particularly, the extent to which the program may conflict with schoolwork. This is not surprising given that nearly two in three cadets say they also participate in extracurricular activities other than the Cadet Program.

Other significant turn-offs among members of the general public are that the program is too militaristic, requires too much discipline or they don't like the uniform.

---

Marksmanship, bush craft and leadership are the elements of local training with which cadets express the highest satisfaction.

---

The general public appears to perceive the Cadet Program as more militaristic than it really is, prompting respondents to mention survival and technical skills as the key benefits of the program. On the other hand, cadets—who are more aware of the reality—mentioned leadership and unique experiences as the key benefits.

Downplaying the program's military affiliation, however, would be unwise since many cadets are attracted to the program *because* of its military characteristics.

**Our challenge:** To ensure that communications and marketing efforts convey the value of the program as an important part of youths' busy schedules.

*Continued on page 36*

# Survey highlights

## Familiarity and impression of the Cadet Program

- Only 5% of the population is very familiar with the Cadet Program
- 11% were once members
- Most have learned about Cadets through word of mouth or school
- The majority of people who are aware of the Cadet Program have a positive opinion about it
- Cadets joined Cadets because their family members were/are cadets, friends are in it, it is fun and to get new experiences
- 94% would recommend that friends, family or other young people join cadets
- Once we get cadets, most (70%) stay on

## Benefits and drawbacks of the Cadet Program

### Main Benefits

- Leadership
- Experiences you can't get anywhere else
- Developing self-discipline
- Confidence
- Meeting new friends

### Main Drawbacks

- Conflicts with schoolwork
- Time-consuming (50%)
- Repetitive programs

## Attitudes towards the Cadet Program

- 90% of cadets are proud to be cadets
- 74% of cadets enjoy wearing the uniform
- Only half of the people surveyed feel that Cadets prepares you for the military
- Very few (8%) cadets feel that the program is too militaristic

## Most popular activities

- Marksmanship
- Bush craft
- Leadership
- Drill
- Sports/physical fitness



^  
*Sports/physical fitness is one of the most popular Cadet Program activities.*

Value is one's perception of the worth, excellence, usefulness, and/or importance that they will receive if they become involved. Value addresses the question, 'What can this person or organization do for me?' We need to communicate how the Cadet Program can facilitate and enhance scholastic achievements, rather than how busy the Cadet Program can keep them.

We need to ensure that communications and marketing efforts underline the fact that the Cadet Program offers unique experiences and teaches youths real-world skills that are relevant beyond the military context.

#### BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAM

- Marksmanship, bush craft and leadership are the elements of local training with which cadets express the highest satisfaction.
- No significant problems or factors lead to dissatisfaction with the program.
- That said, enthusiasm for the program and the sense that there is still more to learn decline with age.

**Our challenge:** To make the program as relevant and exciting to older participants as it is to younger ones.

Opportunities exist for us to realign our marketing tactics. The Cadet Program is a great organization that fosters positive views and attitudes. As indicated by the survey results, we are on the right track, but still remain one of the world's best-kept secrets. \*

*Lt(N) Harris is with Chief Reserves and Cadets Public Affairs.*

## Can we "categorize" our cadets?

As part of the survey, Ipsos-Reid Corporation grouped cadets according to common attitudes. They were found to be a heterogeneous group that fall within five basic categories.

### Busy enthusiasts (32%)

Along with gung-ho cadets, these participants are the most positive towards the program. However, they are less enamoured by the military trappings and are also kept busy by schoolwork and other extra-curricular activities.

### Gung-ho cadets (30%)

These cadets have the least experience with the program and are the most attracted by the uniform and other military aspects of the program. The fervour that they feel today may fade as they progress in the program.

### Moving on and ageing out (15%)

These cadets have been in the program longest, and while they express a high degree of good will, they are ready for new experiences and ready to consign Cadets to the status of fond and fruitful memory.

### Sociable reformers (16%)

These cadets are most attracted by the social opportunities the program offers and are highly positive towards the program overall. However, they are not as enthusiastic as others and do not take as much enjoyment from local training activities as others. They want to get as much out of the program as they can, but do not see enough in the program as it is now to stimulate greater enthusiasm.

### Non-conformists (7%)

These cadets are the least positive towards the program and are particularly negative with respect to the militaristic aspects of participation, particularly the uniform. These cadets are more likely to say they are there because their parents want them to be and are least likely to say they will continue in the program after this year.