

MARINE CORP

-Public Relations Campaign

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Client History

The United States Marine Corps was founded in Philadelphia, Pa., November 10, 1775. By the end of the 1800s, there were 523 enlisted men. Today, there are more than 182,945 enlisted Marines. (Marines.com)

The Marine Corps have changed their branding a few times over the years. From 1779 to the 1970's the Marine Corp tagline was, "*A few Good Men.*" This message was simple; Captain William Jones was looking for a few good men to make up the ships' company of Marines on board the Continental Ship Providence. (Zeliff, Web. Charm 2007)

In the 1970's the Marine Corps realized that the message, "*A few Good Men,*" did not appeal to female Marine's. The advertising agency of J. Walter Thompson came up with, "*The Few. The Proud. The Marines.*" Along with this campaign message the Marine Corp's main communication efforts were to paint a picture of the transformation from a civilian to a Marine.

In 2012, the Marine Corps launched a new multi-faced advertising campaign, "*Toward the Sounds of Chaos.*" This campaign also comes with a relaunch of Marines.com. The purpose of the proposed campaign is to build on current advertising efforts with public relations strategies that specifically target Millennial's.

SWOT Analysis

Strength

The Marine Corps is well-known and respected brand. It has recently been updated with the, "*Toward the Sounds of Chaos,*" advertising and with the re-launch of Marines.com. This revamped website is interactive with the user. Also, the new website gives provides information on any and all opportunities about what being a Marine is like.

Weakness

According to research conducted for this proposal, people do not know much about what being a Marine is like. However, they do recognize that Marines are first for combat. People also are not aware of the other opportunities that Marine Corps provide. The new website and new branding efforts by the Marine Corps is not yet familiar to the public. Additionally, according to the research, people respect the Marine Corps as a military branch, but they associated individual Marines with being egotistical.

Opportunities

The Marine Corps is in a great position to use a Public Relations campaign to bring awareness to the Millennials. By using a Public Relation campaign to bring awareness to the Northeast, West Coast and major urban areas; this will raise recruitment for those regions of the United States. Plus, bringing awareness to these areas will help counter the negative opinions people have about the Marine Corps.

Threats

The major threats to the Marine Corps are other branches of military. The Marine Corps is known to have the highest drop-out rates and low recruitment. Another threat to the Marine Corps are other non-military options and college enrollment.

Research

Focus Group

In a Strategic Communications Research Methods course at a large Midwestern university, focus group and survey research was conducted to get information about branding, marketing and overall appeal/knowledge of the Marine Corp's.

The focus group had eight participants that met client's requested demographics. The group consisted of males and females between the ages of 18-34, currently living in Tulsa, Okla., or surrounding area. Some had children, everyone worked outside of the home and one participant was in the military. Everyone who participated had common knowledge of all military branches of the United States.

The focus group moderator asked a series of questions to get a feel and to understand what knowledge the group had about the Marine Corp's as a brand. The participants viewed the brand as honorable and distinguished. When they thought about a Marine, the participants pictured males, right out of high school with no other options, except to join the a military branch. They viewed the brand as egotistical. Although most did not agree with the politics surrounding the Marines, they still respected them.

Some of the factors that would keep requirement down according to the focus group would be that the Marines are first to battle and training is more difficult than other military branch. The Marine Corps have a high drop-out rate and there are fewer women in the Marines than any other branch of the military.

The overall perception of the new advertising campaign, "*Towards the Sounds of Chaos*," is that a person would need to be brave and tough to join the Marine's. The humanitarian aid reinforced an overall positive opinion of the new advertising campaign. This did not appeal to the women in the focus group.

The participants were asked about what they envision the difference between the Marine Corp's, versus other military branches to be. They said that to be a Marine you have to be the best of the best. That the Marines are elite warriors that go through the toughest training, so more expected of them.

The focus group answered questions about how they would go about researching the Marine Corps and what questions were not answered by the current ad commercial, "*Towards the Sounds of Chaos*." The participants said that they would turn to family and friends that have served in the military to get first-hand information. All of the participants said that they do not trust recruiters. If they were to research joining the Marines, the internet would be the place that they would look to answer questions about military service.

The summary for the focus group is that there is not enough primary information provided by the Marine Corps to the target markets. Thus, participants did not have much knowledge about the brand, besides that the Marines are combat soldiers.

Survey

An online survey was posted on surveymonkey.com. The survey was sent to friends and associates of the researchers via email, text, and Facebook posts. There were a total of 39 questions and 110 people completed it. The ages ranged from 18 to 34-years-old. The respondents came from all over the United States, but mostly from researchers' home state.

The data collected in the survey was very helpful in finding out how people use their time during the week to get their news, entertainment and what they know about the U.S. military and/or Marine Corps. The information collected from the survey will help the Marine Corps spend their monies in appropriate areas so that they will sustain awareness and better reach a diverse target audience in the Northeast, West Coast and major urban areas.

Most of participants spent 12 or more hours a week on the internet, using it as a media source. People used TV and Radio on an average of four hours a week. Newspapers and Magazines were used on an average of one hour a week.

The media sources that people have seen advertisement for the Marine Corps follow:

- TV – 41%
- Outdoor and Internet – 17%
- Print Ads – 19%
- Direct Mail – 4%

Facebook was the social media site used most by our participants. With an average of 79 percent of them using that versus twitter or other social media sites. Social media sites, such as Facebook, are a fast and financially free way to reach the target audience of those major cities.

Video games were not played by many people who completed this survey. However, the ones that do play, play on average of an hour a week. They like to play strategy games and role playing games.

A question that was asked on the survey was, “Have you heard any recent stories about the Marine Corps.?” If respondents answered “yes,” they were asked to attribute the source. The following information may help the Marine Corps place feature stories about their brand and recruitment.

- TV – 26%
- Radio – 10%
- Internet News Site – 23%
- Other – 7%
- Social Media – 12%

The “*Towards the Sounds of Chaos*” advertisement also was inserted into the survey. The ad received a good rating. It was deemed to be ethnically diverse, visually excellent, and to have good verbal content. The overall feeling for the ad made people respect the Marine Corps.

The last question that was asked in the survey, dealt with persuasive appeal for a Strategic Communication campaign. The participants stated that the campaign needs to appeal to a sense of adventure, fun and travel. The campaign needs to have logical appeal; people want a reason to join. The campaign needs to have emotional appeal; pull on the heartstrings of potential Marines. Also, one of the most important aspects of a campaign, according to this survey, is that it needs to appeal to people who want to be a part of a team, inclusion.

The summary for all of this data collected is that the Marine Corps should continue to focus communication efforts on the internet, television, outdoor signage and through social media sites. When asked for to list one word to describe the Marine Corps, the following came to mind: strength, respect, tough and honor. The Marines should continue portraying these values in a Strategic Communications campaign

Target Audience (Ages 18 – 34)

The Marine Corps is targeting men and women 18 to 34-years-old. According to the research, this age group in the United States makes up about 23 percent of the population. The Marines are trying to branch out to the Northeast versus the West and Midwest of the United States. The usage characteristics of 18 to 34-years-old, is internet especially social media sites and television. Using these two avenues to spread awareness about the Marine Corps will help in requirement efforts.

Objectives

Information

- To increase and sustain awareness to the target audience about the Marine Corps combat, humanitarian aid, scholarship opportunities and career in the military.

Attitude

- To change the attitudes of the Millennials living in the Northeast, West Cost and major urban areas those Marines. To show them that the Marines are not just “egotistical, jarheads.” That there is much more to being a Marine than just being the first in combat. To show that they are also the first to be there for humanitarian aid. The Marines set people up to succeed in life in the military or after the military.

Behavioral

- To encourage Millennials to visit the new website and to increase the knowledge people have about the Marine Corps and military as a whole.

Public Relations Strategy

The Marine Corp will benefit from an aggressive Public Relations approach. According to the research, when someone thinks of a Marine they think of a white, brave, egotistical male in combat. They see Marines as first in-line to combat. Yes, the brand is tough and brave in combat. However, they are also tough and brave in their career, humanitarian aid, school, etc.

The first and most important approach in this campaign is to change the public’s negative attitudes towards Marines. This could be accomplished by putting together an ethnically diverse group of Marines to lead a Public Relations team to inform the target audience of what a Marine is beside a combat soldier. This team will need raise awareness through the media and internet.

This Public Relations team will also, be the face of the communications efforts that need to be put in place. By having a Marines Public Relations team, this will give faces to the brand, instead of just a feeling. The target audience will be more inclined to visit the new website and get information about recruiting.

Also, the Marine Corps need to concentrate campaign communications in these target markets to attract future Marines. By using this diverse Public Relations team to enhance advertising efforts, the Marines will start to see results.

Public Relations Tactics

The Marines Public Relations team is a great way to promote awareness and recruit potential Marines. The team will appear on national morning shows. This campaign will start in January and run through the following year. The team will discuss the different opportunities that the Marines have to offer besides being a combat soldier. The team will promote the new website, talk about the different social media and talk about what they are going to be doing all over the country with the target audience.

After going to national morning shows, the team will travel to different target markets and appear on their local television morning shows, to discuss opportunities that a career as Marine offers versus going straight into the work force or college. Then the team will go to the local high schools to have a kind of track and field day of different physical activities that a day in the life of a Marine would do. These activities will include talks about physical fitness, team work, adventure, travel, humanitarian aid, etc.

Advertising efforts should include outdoor, television commercials, you tube commercials, public transit, bike racks, bus stops, etc. Ideally, these advertisements will have the Marines Public Relations team on them. These advertisements need to express what it's like to be a Marine not only, as a combat soldier, but, most importantly, the other jobs that the Marines offers. Millennials are very much into environmental efforts, like recycling, alternative energy and helping other countries in need. If the PR team can express this message, this will change the overall perception of Marines.

Evaluation

This campaign is to not change the way people think about the Marine Corp, but to bring forth knowledge and bring more of a positive outlook on what you think of when you picture a Marine. This campaign also will bring awareness to the target markets and audience about the humanitarian aid, scholarship opportunities and a career in the military. This campaign is designed to bring people information so that they venture past the Marines PR team and people will do their own research by going to the new website.

Future Recommendations

- Get celebrities or sport figures that were a Marine to endorse the brand.
- Conduct surveys at high schools and colleges to find out what the target audience plans to do with their careers.
- Place advertisements in combat genre video games.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 1, 2013

Media Advisory

Marines Host "Day in Our Life" Event at Area High Schools

What: The United States Marine Corp Public Relations team will host "Day in Our Life" Event at area high schools and colleges. The Marine's PR team will be coming to your high school or college to host a track & field day with students and faculty. This event is a hands-on physical day of fun, team building and learning.

Who: The United States Marine Corp's Public Relations team will be coming to high schools and colleges in major urban areas, to discuss different career options to the students. They will be talking about combat, but more importantly, they will be discussing all of the different elements that a Marine life can offer.

Where: Local high school and college

When: January 2013 through January 2014

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For More Information:
Marines Public Relations Team
www.marines.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 1, 2013

PHOTO RELEASE



Members of the Marine's Public Relations team arrive first to offer humanitarian aid. These soldiers are not just first to combat; they are also first-responders to communities all over the world. These men and women are members of a community and know how important it is to have that helping hand in a time of need.

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