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Shared Services Canada's "Employer of Choice" Strategy

Final Report

Prepared for Shared Service Canada

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Supplier name: Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc.
March 2022

This public opinion research report presents the results of a set of eight online focus groups conducted with post-secondary students. The focus groups took place between March 15 and 23, 2022.

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Executive Summary

Shared Services Canada (SSC) commissioned Phoenix Strategic Perspectives (Phoenix SPI) to conduct qualitative public opinion research (POR) to assess the effectiveness of creative concepts in promoting SSC as a career choice for information technology (IT) students and members of underrepresented groups.

1. Research purpose and objectives

The purpose of this qualitative research was to assess the effectiveness of creative concepts, imagery, taglines, messages, and products in promoting SSC as a career choice for IT students and members of underrepresented groups. The objectives of this research were to gauge participants' reaction to recruitment products and messages and to assess the attractiveness and persuasiveness of the materials and messaging in presenting SSC as a viable career choice. The products tested included creative concepts and taglines, social media content, SSC's career home page, a document with messaging to be used for recruitment purposes, and a short video about SSC.

2. Methodology

Eight virtual focus group sessions were conducted between March 15 and 23, 2022 with post-secondary students studying at Canadian institutions in the following types of programs: 1) computer science, computer engineering, software engineering, mathematics and/or statistics (the primary audience); and public or business administration, public policy, or finance (the secondary audience). Five groups were conducted with members of the primary audience, two groups with members of the secondary audience, and one group with a mix of participants from both audiences. Three groups were conducted in French and five groups were conducted in English. Participants were paid an honorarium of \$125.

3. Limitations and Use of the Research Results

This research was qualitative. Qualitative research is designed to reveal a rich range of opinions and interpretations rather than to measure what percentage of the target population holds a given opinion. As such, the results indicate post-secondary students' views about the issues explored, but they cannot be generalized to the full population of students studying in the targeted fields. With the foregoing in mind, the results of this research will be used by SSC to refine its "Employer of Choice" recruitment materials designed to help attract the knowledge workers necessary to continue developing and maintaining digital technologies supporting modern services that Canadians increasingly expect and demand.

4. Highlights

Career Views and Aspirations

Most participants have considered a career in the public service, offered suggestions for how best to promote government as an employer, and use a variety of methods to seek and receive information about potential career choices.

Most participants said they have considered a career in the public service and pointed to the following reasons to explain why: job security, salary, work conditions, and benefits. Reasons for not considering public service included career pursuits not aligned with government work (e.g., wanting to own a business), as well as perceptions that government work tends to be bureaucratic, boring, and hierarchical.

When asked what a strategy designed to recruit talent to government departments should focus on, participants pointed to the following: competitive compensation packages; the work environment, including flexible work arrangements, available technology and budgets for research; the nature of the work at the department (i.e., cutting-edge, challenging); and the availability of growth opportunities.

Preferred methods for seeking and receiving career-related information include word of mouth (friends, family, alumni), job fairs, institutional career planning centers, social media, as well as various job search websites.

Awareness and Impressions of SSC

Limited awareness of Shared Services Canada.

Awareness of SSC is very low. In most groups, no one had heard of the agency, and in the others, no more than a few participants had heard of SSC. In addition, those who claimed to have heard of SSC knew nothing or virtually nothing about it, describing it as the IT sector for the federal government and as an agency involved in 'networking' and 'information sharing'. As a result, none of the participants had any well-formed, or well-grounded, impressions of SSC.

Review of Recruitment Materials

Feedback on the recruitment materials was influenced by the amount and/or type of information provided about SSC.

Positive feedback on recruitment materials (i.e., concepts and taglines, handout, video) was often based on the inclusion of information about SSC and what it offers in terms of career options, while neutral and critical feedback was often based on the absence of such information.

Overall reaction to creative concepts and taglines tended to range from neutral/indifferent to critical. Concept C emerged as the favourite in terms of being most effective at increasing awareness of SSC as an employer and motivating participants to visit SSC's website for more information.

Reaction to the three creative concepts and their accompanying taglines typically ranged from indifferent/neutral to critical. Such reactions were routinely based on the perceived absence or vagueness of messaging as it pertains to what SSC does and what it offers by way of career opportunities. While the graphics were often described as 'attractive' or 'eye catching', and the taglines sometimes described as 'catchy' or 'attention-grabbing', the messaging was routinely characterized as too general or generic.

Comparatively speaking, concept C ('Not your average government job') emerged as the favourite in terms of being most effective at increasing awareness of SSC as an employer and motivating participants to visit SSC's website for more information. Reasons provided included the eye-

catching nature of the graphics, curiosity about the tagline, and the targeting of a young audience. The focus on inclusiveness/diversity was also identified as a reason for preferring concept C, though some participants suggested there is too much of an emphasis on this in the social media versions of the ads.

While concept C was selected most often as the preferred concept when participants were asked which concept would do the best job raising awareness of SSC and encouraging them to visit the agency's website, it was not viewed as a particularly strong concept. That is, of the three concepts tested, concept C was viewed as better than the concepts A and B, but not necessarily as a strong option on its own.

Designs of the SSC website's career home page tended to elicit positive reactions as did the document with information on recruitment at SSC. The video with messaging about SSC, however, elicited mixed reactions.

Reaction to the two designs of the SSC website's career home page tended to be positive, though it was more likely to be moderately than strongly so. Those who were not positive were more likely to be neutral than critical, sometimes adding that the designs are typical of government websites. Participants routinely indicated that both versions looked well structured and organized and that it would be easy for them to find information of interest or relevance to them.

They were most likely to identify concept 1 as their preferred version, though only slightly more likely to do so, with some saying they had no preference because the two versions were not significantly different. Characteristics underlying participants' preference for concept 1 included the 'Students and graduates' link, the 'Tools' section, and the impression that the overall look was lighter and less text heavy.

Participants tended to react positively to the one-page document. Many described it as clear, easy to follow, visually appealing, and well organized in terms of layout. In terms of content, participants tended to like the information about what SSC does and offers (in-demand skills), and the appeals to potential recruits ('We're hiring!', 'Are you ready to power-up your career by joining SSC?', 'Be part of the Government of Canada's digital backbone and help deliver programs and services to Canadians', and the link to careers at SSC). Information about diversity, accessibility, and inclusiveness ('Our differences make us better'), on the other hand, elicited mixed reactions. While some reacted positively to this, some did not, suggesting that there was too much emphasis/stress on this.

Reaction to the video tended to be mixed. While participants generally liked the content because it provided information about what SSC does, they tended to react critically to the voiceovers (both English and French) which were routinely described as monotone. Positive reaction to content was more likely to be the case among members of the primary IT audience than members of the secondary non-IT audience.

Overall, the materials have a limited impact on participants' perceptions of a career in the public service.

As a result of seeing the materials presented to them, most members of the primary audience were not noticeably more likely to consider a career in the public service (nor were they less likely to). To the extent that they were more likely to consider this, it tended to be because of specific

references to IT-related positions in the materials, as well as general curiosity about what SSC, an organization they did not know about before, has to offer in terms of career possibilities.

Among members of the secondary audience, the materials and messaging were not particularly effective in presenting SSC as a viable career choice/option for them for two reasons: the concepts and taglines tended to be too vague and general about the types of career options available at SSC, while the materials that did provide such information (i.e., the one-pager and the video) focused on careers in IT. That being said, some members of the secondary non-IT audience indicated that would consult the SSC website out of curiosity.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Most participants in this study said they have considered a career in the public service. Among those who have not, some said they simply have never thought about this, while others said they have not considered it because of their preconceptions about a career in government. Such preconceptions were rarely so ingrained as to categorically exclude any consideration of working for government. In short, participants were receptive to the idea of a career in the public service, and the right recruitment products and messages *could* encourage students, in particular IT students, to consider SSC as a career choice.

The current set of draft recruitment products and messages, however, were not particularly effective in presenting SSC as a viable career choice. This was not because they failed to depict work at SSC as attractive. To the contrary, based on the materials presented to them, participants easily identified advantages of a career with SSC. These included job security as well as good working conditions. Both were identified by participants as important factors when considering their careers, as well as reasons why they have considered a career in the public service. Rather, the materials tended to be ineffective because they did not convey the message that SSC offers opportunities in participants' chosen field. Put succinctly, the extent to which participants were not interested in SSC was routinely a reaction to the impression that SSC is not interested in them. This was especially the impression among members of the secondary (non-IT) audience, but also among some members of the primary (IT) audience.

To connect more effectively with students, the research findings suggest that recruitment materials need to communicate who SSC is and what SSC offers. Although concept C emerged as the favourite concept, comparatively-speaking, it was no more effective than the others in communicating these two key messages. Indeed, a commonly offered suggestion to improve each of the concepts was to describe who SSC is and what it offers. Providing information about SSC is all the more important because the agency has virtually no name recognition among research participants. With a focus on both these perceived deficiencies, either one of the three concepts could be effective in encouraging students to consider SSC as a career possibility.

Based on the research findings, additional considerations for finalizing the recruitment products and messages include the following:

- Provide a call to action that is clear and easy to find (URL, QR code, etc.). Don't make them work to find the information.
- Advertise where students are – online and on social media. Consider short videos for YouTube, such as 'a day in the life of a computer engineer at SSC' or 'how a student of

business administration can find meaningful work at SSC'. Given the importance of institutional career planning centers as a source of career-related information, consideration also should be given to advertising through online institutional resources.

- Consider the use of traditional information sessions or Question and Answer (Q&A) sessions but delivered online in the form of a webinar or video presentation. In this regard, it is important to remember that among the things that would motivate or encourage participants to consider a career with SSC were the opportunity to speak with someone in human resources at SSC, and SSC reaching out by hosting events.
- Emphasize/highlight the unique benefits of working for the public sector – job security, competitive compensation, etc., as these resonate with students.
- Acknowledge SSC's commitment to diversity and inclusiveness without overemphasizing it. A diverse and inclusive workplace is clearly something that resonates with students and an important consideration when it comes to their careers. At the same time, there was a recurring impression that too much emphasis or attention was being devoted to this theme in the recruitment materials.

5. Contract Value

The contract value was \$49,966.41 (including applicable tax).

6. Statement of Political Neutrality

I hereby certify as a Senior Officer of Phoenix Strategic Perspectives that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the *Communications Policy* of the Government of Canada and Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research. Specifically, the deliverables do not contain any reference to electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate, or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leader.



Alethea Woods
President
Phoenix Strategic Perspectives Inc.

Introduction

Phoenix Strategic Perspectives (Phoenix SPI) was commissioned by Shared Services Canada (SSC) to conduct qualitative public opinion research (POR) to assess the effectiveness of creative concepts in promoting SSC as a career choice for information technology (IT) students and members of underrepresented groups.

Background and Objectives

Using a government-wide approach, SSC delivers reliable and secure IT operations, IT infrastructure and communication, as well as workplace technology services that support and enable government-wide programs and digital services for the Public Service. In order to deliver the services needed, SSC requires the ongoing recruitment of top-notch talent in a competitive IT labour market.

As a federal institution, SSC needs to identify such talent in a multitude of communities to help ensure its labour force reflects the diversity of Canada's population. As a result, to support recruitment, the Department has developed a promotion strategy that seeks to effectively connect with and attract upcoming IT talent to careers at SSC.

Public opinion research was conducted to assess the effectiveness of creative concepts, imagery, taglines, messages, and products in promoting SSC as a career choice for IT students and members of underrepresented groups. Specifically, the research was designed to determine the effectiveness of the products and messaging and (as needed) how to best modify the materials for maximum resonance with target audiences by:

1. Gauging participants' reception of the products and messages within their preferred means of obtaining information about potential career choices;
2. Juxtaposing their initial perceptions about SSC as a career choice with their feelings following presentation of the proposed products and messages; and
3. Engaging in dialogue with participants to assess the attractiveness and persuasiveness of the materials and messaging in presenting SSC as a viable career choice.

The products tested included creative concepts and taglines, social media content, SSC's career home page, a document with messaging to be used for recruitment purposes, and a short video about SSC.

Methodology

A qualitative research approach was used to meet the objectives. A set of eight online focus groups was conducted between March 15 and 23, 2022. Groups were segmented by region of the country to accommodate different time zones, with each group lasting up to two hours. There were two target audiences:

- The primary audience was post-secondary students studying in Canada in the following programs: computer science, computer engineering, software engineering, mathematics and/or statistics.
- The secondary audience was post-secondary students studying in Canada in the following programs: business and public administration, public policy, and finance.

Participants were recruited through an online panel using a recruitment screening questionnaire. The short online questionnaire took no more than 5 minutes to complete. Groups included a mix of participants by gender and age¹, type of post-secondary institution, program of study (within each of the two audiences), type of degree or diploma and anticipated year of graduation, as well as region of the country. In addition, groups included members of traditionally underrepresented groups, including Indigenous students, visible minorities, and students with disabilities.

Twelve participants were recruited for each group for seven to eight to attend each focus group session. In total, 58 students participated in the research; each group was attended by four to 10 students. Groups were conducted in the evening, and participants received an honorarium of \$125 in appreciation of their time.

Notes to readers

- This research was qualitative in nature, not quantitative. As such, the results provide an indication of participants' views about the issues explored but cannot be generalized to the full population of post-secondary students studying in these fields.
- Findings from the groups with post-secondary students studying computer science, computer engineering, software engineering, mathematics and/or statistics (the primary audience) and students studying business and public administration, public policy, and finance (the secondary audience) are reported together, with differences by type of audience noted throughout the report.
- Appended to this report are the following materials: the online screening questionnaire, the moderator's guide, and the creative materials tested.

¹ Just over half the participants were between the ages of 18 and 24 years; the rest were aged 25 or older.

Detailed Findings

1. Career Views and Aspirations

This section of the report focuses on career-related issues. Issues explored with participants included their career aspirations, influences on their career expectations and preferences, work experience in their field of study, preferred sources of information about potential career choices, and whether they have ever considered a career in the public service.

Participants aspire to various types of careers

Not surprisingly, participants identified various types of employment they are aspiring to after graduating from their field of study.² Among members of the primary audience, this included working in the following areas/sectors:

- conducting or managing research and development,
- product design and management,
- robotics, building computers, software engineering,
- data science and data analysis,
- business analytics/intelligence,
- statistical analysis,
- project management in the IT sector,
- digital marketing, and
- teaching.

Among members of the secondary audience, this included working in finance/banking, human resources, public health, accounting, and public affairs/public policy.

Several participants, including a few members of the primary audience, stated explicitly at this point that they only want to work in one sector, i.e., only the public or only the private sector. Reasons for wanting to work in the public sector included job security, work-related conditions (e.g., leave provisions, employee rights) and compensation. Reasons for wanting to work in the private sector included wanting to own a business and wanting to be an entrepreneur.

Various things identified as attractive, appealing, interesting aspects of career choice

Participants had no difficulty identifying things that interest them about the career paths they have chosen. Routinely identified things mentioned by members of both audiences included the following:

- Job opportunities and/or job security.
- Opportunities for advancement.
- Remuneration/salary scale.

² In response to this question, a number of participants identified things they are looking for in a job or career instead of the specific type of job or work they are aspiring to. In the subsequent question, participants were asked specifically what attracts or interests them in the career path they have chosen. In order to avoid repetition, all feedback related to this issue will be reported under the heading devoted to this issue.

- Balance between work and family/private life.
- Flexible/hybrid work arrangements (e.g., the ability to work from home, flexible work hours).
- A collegial work environment where there is mutual respect between employees, and employees are respected by employers.

Things mentioned less frequently, but in most groups, included the following:

- A diverse/inclusive workplace.
- Work that is satisfying/fulfilling, e.g., provides a sense of pride/accomplishment.
- Work that involves personal growth.
- Work with practical implications e.g., building useful things, teaching young people, benefiting people, influencing public affairs, solving problems.

Things identified by members of both audiences, but *more* likely to be mentioned or emphasized by members of the primary audience included the following:

- Opportunities for continuous learning, professional development.
- Working in a cutting edge/emerging field that involves innovation.
- A work environment that involves co-operative work/teamwork/group projects.
- Challenging work.
- Variety/multi-faceted work, e.g., work that is not routine.
- Opportunities to display creativity/initiative.

Few perceived obstacles/barriers to finding the kind of employment they want

Most participants did not identify any obstacles or barriers that will make it difficult for them to find the kind of employment/career that they want. Perceived obstacles or barriers that were identified included the following, none of which was identified by more than a few participants:

- A competitive job market.
- Hiring decisions being influenced by an institution's reputation in the field/sector (i.e., candidates from some institutions being given more consideration than others).
- The ability to accommodate remote/tele-work, identified by participants living outside urban centers who would prefer to remain in those locations.
- Challenging job interviews.
- Work-related challenges, including ...
 - a steep learning curve.
 - the amount of work and time needed to get ahead/get to where one wants to be.
 - skills not being up-to-par in certain areas, e.g., coding.
 - a preference to work independently in a field that involves a lot of teamwork (e.g., engineering).
 - passing/getting good grades on certification exams in one's field.
- Age-related issues, including ...
 - being perceived as too young to manage/supervise older members of the personnel.
 - being older/competing against younger candidates.
- Not being a Canadian citizen.

- Having numerical dyslexia.
- Family situation, specifically having young children which might restrict work possibilities.
- Potential prejudicial treatment based on ...
 - being a member of a visible minority group.
 - being a woman in a male-dominated profession (e.g., software engineering).

None of the francophone participants identified language-related barriers or obstacles that will make it difficult for them to find the kind of employment/career that they want.

Various factors considered important when considering career/career options

Participants assigned importance to various factors when considering their careers and career options. Typically, they re-iterated or re-emphasized factors previously identified when discussing their career aspirations. Indeed, feedback in this area was virtually identical to feedback provided when discussing what interests them in, or attracts them to, their career choice. These factors included the following, with those more likely to be identified by members of the primary audience preceded by an asterisk (*).

- Job security/stability.
- Pension/benefits.
- Salary/remuneration.
- Work environment (e.g., collegiality, a supportive/collaborative workplace).
- Work/family balance.
- Opportunities for advancement and continuous learning, professional development.
- Flexible work arrangements.
- Work that is enjoyable and provides a sense of fulfillment/accomplishment.
- A diverse/inclusive workplace, e.g., non-racist, non-sexist.
- *Training/professional development opportunities.
- *Impactful work/work of consequence.
- *Opportunities to display creativity/initiative.
- *Working in a cutting edge/emerging field.
- *A work environment that involves co-operative work/teamwork/group projects.

Things sought for in an employer reflect things viewed as important in terms of one's career

Perhaps not surprisingly, things participants are looking for in a potential employer/workplace tended to echo things that are important to them in terms of their own careers. This included the following, with characteristics identified primarily or exclusively by members of the primary audience preceded by an asterisk (*):

- One that is solid/stable/established.
- One that provides benefits to employees.
- One that offers opportunities for advancement.
- One that is respectful towards employees/treats employees well.
- One with a collegial/collaborative workplace.
- One that encourages/fosters activities outside work/social activities.
- One committed to diversity and inclusion.

- One that offers services for employees, e.g., a cafeteria, a gym.
- *One that is dynamic/non-static, e.g., committed to growth/development.
- *One that is not bureaucratic, i.e., not governmental.
- *One that encourages initiative and is open to new ideas.
- *One on the cutting edge/innovative.
- *One with a mission that resonates/inspires.

A few participants said they wanted to work for a small or medium-sized firm or organization, associating the things they consider important with firms of this size, e.g., openness to ideas, collegiality/cooperation.

Specific individuals often mentioned as key career influencers

Asked who or what has shaped or influenced their career expectations and preferences and how, participants routinely identified specific individuals, almost always with a focus on how these individuals influenced career choice as opposed to career-related expectations.

- Parents: The influence of parents was described in the following ways:
 - Providing support/encouragement: Parental support and encouragement of a chosen career path was described as helping to confirm or validate these choices as legitimate options.
 - Career expectations: Parental expectations also influenced chosen career paths. This included coming from a family of professionals in which there are high expectations regarding the kind of career one should pursue, or expectations about carrying on a family tradition by following a specific career path.
 - Views of success: Parental assumptions about what constitutes career success, particularly income/salary level, were identified as an influence on career expectations.
- Professors: The influence of professors on career choice included the following:
 - Helping to develop or deepen interest in a specific area to the point where this interest developed into a career choice.
 - Helping confirm a career choice as a result of a professor's own work experience in areas related to the field of study.
 - Helping develop a career choice or preference as a result of being taught/educated as to the practical possibilities/potential benefits resulting from the field of study in question, e.g., helping people, solving problems.
- Career/guidance counsellors: The influence of orientation counsellors included confirming career choices or helping to narrow down career options through their knowledge/awareness of the job market, e.g., growth areas, skills in demand.
- Friends and classmates: The influence of friends and classmates was described as a kind of motivator to wanting to succeed. Specifically, friends and classmates were described as ambitious and high achievers, something that generates competitiveness, i.e., wanting to be as (or more) successful career-wise.
- Work experience in field of study (see details below).

The only influence beyond that of specific individuals was stereotypical assumptions about the possibilities of success and wealth in the IT sector, described as the dream of Silicon Valley.

Most have work experience in their field of study

Most participants, half or more in all but one group, said that they have experience working in their field of study. Things that participants liked about this experience included the following:

- Seeing the possibilities and practical applications that arise from their field of study, e.g., acquiring practical experience, seeing how the theory applies in practice.
- Helping to confirm their chosen field of study as something they want to pursue as a career (see details below).
- Working as part of a team, e.g., brainstorming, trying to resolve problems.
- Building confidence through actual work experience.
- The variety/multi-faceted nature of the work.
- Acquiring/honing work-related skills, e.g., teamwork skills, communications skills.
- Enhancing one's marketability, i.e., including this experience in one's CV.

Only a small number of participants identified things they did not like about this experience. This included long workdays, not working with people of the same age, a toxic work environment resulting from poor management, and having to work exclusively online because of the pandemic.

As noted above, some participants said they enjoyed their work experience in their field of study because it helped to confirm their chosen field of study as something they want to pursue as a career. This same impression was echoed by many other participants when they were asked explicitly if the experience in any way shaped their career interests or expectations. Other ways in which the experience shaped career interests or expectations included reassurance/confirmation that they are studying in an area in which there are job opportunities, and increased marketability because of practical experience. No one identified any negative impacts on career interests or expectations resulting from their work experience in their field of study.

Most have considered a career in the public service

Most participants, half or more in every group, said that they have considered a career in the public service. Reasons for so doing routinely included job security, job stability, compensation, including salary and benefits, such as a pension, working conditions, such as hours of work and workspace layout, as well as work environment, which tended to refer to workplace culture. Reasons mentioned less frequently included the following:

- A unionized workplace.
- A good work-life balance.
- Possibilities of advancement.
- The possibility of working in and for the community.

- Possibilities aligned with career interests, e.g., working for the Canadian Space Agency, the National Research Council.

Reasons for not considering a career in the public service included the following:

- Career pursuits not aligned with government work, including wanting to own a business, being an entrepreneur, not wanting to work for someone else, wanting to build things, and wanting to teach.
- Perceptions that salaries in the public sector tend to be lower than those in the private sector.
- Perceptions that government work tends to be rigid and bureaucratic, routine and boring, and hierarchical.
- Perceptions that the private sector is more likely to offer work in a cutting edge/emerging field.
- Potential irreconcilable ideological differences with the government in power.

Variety of methods used to seek and receive information about potential career choices

Participants collectively identified a variety of preferred methods of seeking and receiving information about potential career choices. These included the following:

- Word of mouth: This includes friends, family members, alumni, and others with direct experience in the career path in question. The latter point (direct experience in the field) was the reason for liking this source.
- Job fairs: Reasons for liking this method included the variety of possibilities/options (i.e., many potential employers/recruiters gathered in one place), the possibility of engaging in discussions or asking specific questions and networking possibilities.
- Institutional career planning centers: Reasons for liking this method included connections between such centers and businesses, potential internship opportunities, and credible career planning orientation/guidance.
- Social media, including LinkedIn, Twitter, Reddit, TikTok and YouTube: Reasons for liking social media tended to be platform specific (e.g., TikTok and YouTube offer video content, while LinkedIn allows employers/recruiters to contact potential recruits), but the common feature is that social media content can be tailored and directed at users based on their preferences (i.e., while they can search for content of interest, the platforms also direct content to users). Additional observations specific to selected platforms included the following:
 - Some participants noted that YouTube is not just a place to seek entertainment, but that the platform also provides valuable information that can be used for career planning—for example, information about career options in specific fields, the credentials required for careers, or the day-to-day experience of working in a field or at a company (e.g., 'a day in the work life').
 - Sources such as Reddit and TikTok offer first person accounts of experiences with employers, which is viewed as useful information because it is seen as authentic and credible (i.e., more honest, or trustworthy opinions of careers or employers as opposed to information that is filtered by an organization to present it in the best possible way).

- **Emploi-Québec:** This method was identified only among francophone participants. Reasons for liking this method included that it is well known, it provides access to many opportunities, and it is reputable.
- **Job search websites, including Indeed, Job Skills, and Glass Door:** These were liked because they are user-friendly, provide access to many employment opportunities, provide information about salaries, and (for students in Quebec) include opportunities outside of the province of Quebec should they be interested in work options outside the province.
- **Going directly to specific companies/firms:** This method was liked because it allows one to focus directly on potential opportunities in places one would like or prefer to work.

2. Awareness and Impressions of SSC

This brief section reports on participants' awareness and impressions of SSC.

Limited awareness of SSC

Awareness of SSC is very low/limited among members of both audiences. In five of the eight groups, no one had heard of the agency, and in the other three groups no more than a few participants had heard of SSC. In addition, those who said they have heard of SSC knew nothing or virtually nothing about it. It was described as the IT sector for the federal government and as an agency involved in 'networking' and 'information sharing'. As a result, none of the participants had any well-formed, or well-grounded, impressions of SSC.

Description of SSC elicits mixed responses

After being queried in an unprompted manner about their awareness and impressions of SSC, participants were provided the following brief description of the agency:

SSC is an agency of the Government of Canada responsible for digitally enabling government programs and services by providing IT services in the domains of networks and network security, data centers and Cloud offerings, and digital communications as well as providing IT tools that the public service needs to do its job.

On the basis of this description, participants were asked what they think SSC does—that is what kind of products and services it offers and to whom. Responses included impressions that SSC is a central agency that provides government-wide IT-related services (including their development, maintenance, and security), that it is responsible for the digitization of government programs and services, that it is responsible for managing government websites, and that it stores, protects, and manages the transmission of government data.

Asked if this sounds like the kind of work that might interest them, participants from the primary audience were much more likely to answer in the affirmative, mainly because the work sounded like it is in their area of study or related to their career interests, e.g., IT services and tools, cloud computing, data centers. Other reasons provided by members of the primary audience to explain their potential interest included the impression that SSC provides a vast array of work possibilities, that the work sounds important, and that it sounds like it is impactful/consequential, i.e., it allows the public service to do its job.

Members of the primary audience who said that this does not sound like the kind of work that would interest them explained that it seems unrelated to their field of study or their career interests (e.g., engineering, building things, robotics), and that they are not interested in working for government. For their part, participants from the secondary audience were much more likely to say that the work does not sound like it is related to their field of study or career interests, or to say that they are unsure and need more information about SSC.

3. Review of Recruitment Materials

This section reports on participants' reactions to, and impressions of, draft advertising materials designed to promote SSC as a career choice. Materials shown to participants included the following:

- A set of creative concepts and taglines designed to promote SSC as a career choice.
- Design options for the SSC website's career home page.
- A one-page document with information on recruitment at SSC.
- A short video about SSC.

Participants were informed that these materials were not final.

Perceptions on where to focus to recruit talent to government departments/agencies

In advance of presenting the materials, members of the primary audience were asked what a promotion strategy should focus on to recruit talent in the IT sector to government departments or agencies. In response, participants studying in computer science and engineering identified the following:

- Competitive compensation packages, including salary and salary scales, signing bonuses, student loan repayment assistance and pension benefits.
- Work environment, including flexible work arrangements, technology and equipment, and budgets for research.
- The nature of the work (i.e., cutting-edge, challenging).
- The impact of the work (e.g., helping people, solving problems, working in the public interest).
- Growth opportunities.
- Lifestyle (i.e., a balance between work and family/private life).

General overview of findings

Reaction to the recruitment materials varied. Overall reaction to the creative concepts and taglines tended to range from neutral or indifferent to critical. Feedback on the designs of the career home page, the one-page document, and the video was mixed, but more likely to be positive than feedback on the creative concepts and taglines.

A key factor informing feedback on the recruitment materials was participants' lack of awareness of SSC and knowledge of what the agency does. As noted in the previous section, very few had heard of SSC prior to this research. As a result, and perhaps not surprisingly, feedback on materials was routinely influenced by the amount and/or type of information provided about SSC. Positive feedback was often based on the inclusion of information about SSC and what it offers in terms of career options, while neutral and critical feedback was often based on the absence of such information in the recruitment materials.

3.1 Creative concepts, taglines and social media posts

This sub-section reports on findings related to the creative concepts and taglines designed to promote SSC as a career choice. Participants were shown three versions of creative concepts with accompanying taglines, identified as follows for the purpose of presentation:

- **Concept A – Invest in your career**
- **Concept B – Your next move is here**
- **Concept C – Not your average government job**

Participants were informed that the ads would appear on SSC's social media, specifically its Twitter account and LinkedIn page. When presenting each concept, participants were first shown the approach (i.e., concept and tagline), followed by versions showing what the approach might look like as a Twitter and LinkedIn post. The order of presentation of the concepts was rotated across the groups.

Overview

Overall, reaction to the three creative concepts and taglines tended to range from neutral or indifferent to critical. Such reactions tended to be based on the absence or vagueness of the message as it pertains to what SSC does and what it offers by way of career opportunities. While the graphics were often described as 'attractive' or 'eye catching', and the taglines sometimes described as 'catchy' or 'attention-grabbing', the messaging was routinely characterized as too general or generic. Participants felt that the messaging could apply to a number of organizations, from banks to telecommunications companies.

Social media versions of the concepts referencing what SSC offers by way of career opportunities tended to elicit more positive reactions, but the extent to which the ads were likely to be noticed was based as much on the appeal of the graphics as the allure of the messaging (i.e., feeling targeted by the ad). As a result, the social media treatments were relatively limited in their ability to encourage or motivate people to visit the SSC website and consider SSC as a viable career option.

To the extent that they were effective in this regard, it was much more likely to be among members of the primary audience because of references to positions in IT. To the extent that they were effective among members of the secondary audience, it was more likely to be the result of curiosity about SSC than any sense that the social media posts speak directly to them because of their career aspirations. Suggestions to make the social media posts more effective in this regard routinely included clarifying who SSC is and providing examples of the range of career possibilities.

Concept C ('Not your average government job') emerged as the favourite in terms of being most effective at increasing awareness of SSC as an employer and motivating participants to visit SSC's website for more information. Reasons provided included the eye-catching nature of the graphics, curiosity about the tagline, and the targeting of a young audience. The focus on inclusiveness and diversity was also identified as a reason for preferring concept C, though some participants suggested there is too much of an emphasis on this in the social media versions of the ads. While

concept C was viewed as better than the concepts A and B, it was not necessarily viewed as a strong option on its own.

3.1.1 Concept A



Overall impressions of concept

Overall reaction to this concept tended to be neutral/indifferent, based mainly on the impression that the approach is generic and that the images and tagline communicate nothing specific about SSC. Both could be used to promote any type of organization. By way of example, participants in various groups said that the concept reminds them of ads promoting a bank or financial institution. Adding to the perceived vagueness or indefiniteness of the concept was the absence of information about SSC. Participants' initial reaction to this concept was often to ask: 'what is SSC?' or to note the concept does not say anything about SSC or even provide the full name of the agency in the tagline. For some participants, the vagueness of the ad elicited curiosity about SSC rather than interest in it as a potential employer.

Specific things participants liked about the concept, or that drew their attention in a positive way, included the following:

- The SSC logo (described as attractive or eye-catching).
- Depiction of older/mature people, which conveys an impression of professionalism and a sense of being established/stable in terms of one's career.
- Depiction of what appears to be a work-at-home environment, which suggests flexible work arrangements.
- Depictions of men and women, which suggests an inclusive work environment.
- The fact that people are smiling, suggesting that the work environment is pleasant.
- The tagline, while general, is a call-to-action, to the extent that it invites people to invest in their career.

When it came to things participants did not like, the emphasis was on the perceived vagueness of the approach, with a focus on the following:

- There is no indication of what/who SSC is or the kind of work it does.
- The pictures look like stock photos and communicate nothing specific about working at SSC.
- The depiction of people on their phones communicates nothing meaningful.
- There is nothing in the concept that suggests that SSC offers work in the IT sector.

- The tagline, 'Invest in your career', is too vague/generic. To several participants, it suggested training courses.
- The approach seems bland and somewhat dated, and unlikely to resonate with young people.

Message(s) communicated by ad

While it was clear to participants that SSC is the sponsor of the ad, it was routinely noted that it is not clear who SSC is, or what it does. Despite that, participants did identify messages or elements of messaging in the concept. Although the tagline 'Invest in your career at SSC' was routinely described as generic, it was also seen as conveying the following messages:

- There are career opportunities at SSC.
- There are opportunities for advancement and professional development at SSC.
- SSC wants to help people achieve their career aspirations.

Messages seen to be conveyed by the images included the idea that SSC is inclusive, that it offers flexible work arrangements, and that it is a pleasant place to work. Finally, for some, the combination of the tagline and images conveyed the message that SSC offers employment in the financial/banking sector.

Social media ads

The effectiveness of the social media versions of this concept in terms of motivating participants to visit the SSC website or make them think of SSC as a viable career choice/option, varied. The most commonly given reason to explain the limited effectiveness of the social media ads was the vagueness and/or generality of the ads, and lack of information about SSC and what it offers in terms of career options. Among participants from the secondary audience in particular, there was a widespread assumption that SSC does not offer jobs in their career area because of specific references to 'computer systems' and 'IT'. Those who said they would visit the website and/or think of SSC as a viable career choice/option were mainly members of the primary audience who typically indicated that it was because of specific references in the posts to 'IT' and 'computer systems'. Some members of the primary audience said they would be motivated to visit the website by the job-related link in these ads.

The emphasis on diversity (i.e., #Autism and learning/social disorders) in one of the social media posts had a mixed impact. Some said this would motivate them to visit the website or consider SSC as a career option. On the other hand, some said it would dissuade them (or at least not motivate them) because it sounds like SSC is targeting people with autism or who identify as having learning or social disorders. As a result, they do not feel addressed by the ad. The reference to 'five available positions' in the same ad had a similarly mixed impact: some said they were motivated to visit the website as a result of it, while others said they were dissuaded to do so because only five positions suggests limited opportunities.

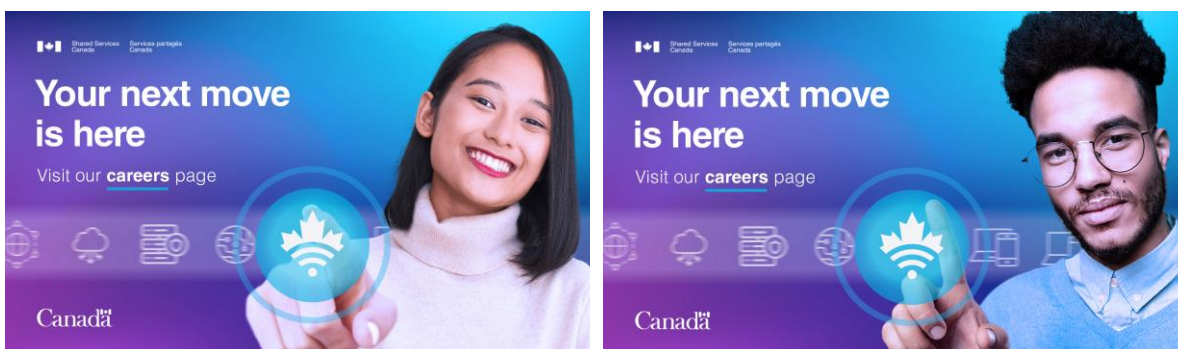
Suggestions for improving concept

Suggestions for making this ad more effective included the following:

- Include the agency's name in full instead of only providing the acronym.
- Include a description of who/what SSC is.

- Provide examples of the types of work available at SSC.
- Identify some advantages of working at SSC.
- Adapt/change pictures to give a better impression of the kind of career options available at SSC.
- Remove phones from the pictures, as they convey nothing meaningful.
- Remove the reference to people with autism and learning/social disorders or reword the text to emphasize diversity without suggesting that SSC is targeting specific people.
- Include a mix of younger and older people in the ad.
- Give the ad a fresher/less 'stock-like' look and feel to attract/appeal to younger people.

3.1.2 Concept B



Overall impressions of concept

Overall impressions of this concept also tended to be neutral/indifferent, based primarily on the vagueness of the ad and lack of information about SSC. By way of example, a few participants' initial reaction to the tagline 'Your next move is here' was to ask: 'where is here?'. Initial reactions, however, often included positive impressions of the visual presentation in general and the use of icons in particular. Regarding the icons, it was routinely observed that they indicate or point to the kind of career opportunities available at SSC. In this regard, the concept was often compared favourably to concept A.

Specific things participants liked about the ad, or that drew their attention in a positive way, included the following:

- The overall visual presentation, with a focus on the colour scheme, routinely described as vibrant and attractive.
- The targeting of young people/students by depicting young/younger people who look happy and optimistic.
- The use of icons that suggest/indicate a range of positions in IT-related sectors (mentioned by members of the primary audience).
- The SSC logo (described as attractive or eye-catching).
- Depictions of both men and women, which suggests an inclusive work environment.
- Positive messaging in the tagline (see below under 'Message(s) communicated by ad').

Elements participants did not like or commented on critically included the following:

- The tagline, which was viewed as vague and unclear because of the absence of a referent, i.e., there is no mention of the sponsor.
- The lack of explanation/indication of why one's next move is with SSC.
- The tagline gives the impression that anyone can work at SSC, that it is easy to get a job there and therefore perhaps not a competitive/highly skilled work environment.
- The smile on the young woman's face looks strained/exaggerated.
- There is no clear call to action.

Message(s) communicated by ad

It was not evident to many participants that SSC is the sponsor of the ad because SSC is not identified in the tagline. That said, participants did detect messages or elements of messaging in the concept. While the tagline 'Your next move is here' was often described as vague or general, it was seen as conveying the following messages:

- There are career opportunities at SSC.
- SSC offers employment opportunities in cutting edge areas.
- Working for SSC provides security/stability.
- SSC is open to everyone, i.e., the tagline conveys the message: 'come work for us'.

A message seen to be conveyed specifically by the icons was that SSC offers a range of opportunities in IT-related sectors, while a message seen to be conveyed by the tagline and the pictures was that SSC is looking to hire recent graduates. In the case of the tagline this was based on the impression that 'next move' means next move after graduating.

Social media ads

As was the case with concept A, the effectiveness of the social media versions of this ad in motivating participants to visit the SSC website or making them think of SSC as a viable career choice/option varied. The ads were most likely to be described as at least somewhat effective among members of the primary audience because of the focus on IT-related jobs in the text and through the icons.

On the other hand, some members of this audience described the ads as ineffective in this regard for the same reason, i.e., their career path does not lie in the IT sector. This impression was much more widespread among members of the secondary audience, i.e., the assumption that SSC does not offer jobs in their career area because of the emphasis given to IT-related work through the icons and the text/script in the media posts.

Over and above the focus on IT-related jobs in the text and through the icons, additional motivating factors included the following:

- The graphics/visual aspects would make this ad noticeable and draw one to the website. This included the use of vibrant colours, and the appeal to/targeting of young people.
- The focus on progress/advancement, conveyed by the expression 'next move' in the tagline.
- The inviting nature of the tagline (i.e., SSC wants you).
- The job-related link.

- The reference to diversity and inclusion.

Regarding the latter, emphasis on diversity and inclusion did not dissuade anyone from visiting the website or considering SSC as a viable career choice, as was the case with concept A. That said, some participants thought that too much emphasis was placed on it, observing that diversity and equity policies are standard practice in government. In other words, there is nothing unique about SSC's commitment to them and consequently no need to over-emphasize them.

Suggestions for improving concept

Suggestions for making this concept more effective included the following:

- Include reference to SSC in the tagline, i.e. 'Your next move is at/with SSC'.
- Change the logo to: Are you looking for a career? If so, your next move is with SSC'.
- Including a description of who/what SSC is.
- Provide examples of the types of work available at SSC, to help clarify the meaning of the icons.
- Identify advantages of working at SSC.
- Include a mix of older and younger people in the visuals.
- Make the icons more visible/distinct.

3.1.3 Concept C



Overall impressions of concept

Overall reaction this concept ranged from moderately positive to neutral/indifferent, to critical. In addition, feedback was sometimes mixed, in the sense that the same features elicited both positive and critical reactions. For example, positive impressions were based mainly on the tagline, and the visual aspects, but these also elicited critical comment. Initial reactions to this concept often focused on the tagline, which was often the first thing to attract participants' attention.

Specific things participants liked about the concept, or that drew their attention in a positive way, included the following:

- The colour scheme, which was routinely described as vibrant and eye-catching.
- The depiction of young people/students.

- The emphasis on inclusiveness, depicted by the individual in the wheelchair.
- The use of icons depicting a variety of positions in IT-related sectors (mentioned by members of the primary audience).
- The tagline, which was described as unconventional and attention grabbing.

Things that elicited critical reactions included the following:

- Lack of information or clear indication of the sponsor of the ad.
- The tagline, to the extent that it casts a negative light on other government jobs.
- There is no suggestion in the pictures that this has to do with work in the IT-sector. In fact, the young people depicted look more like they are studying than working.
- The cloud images, which were characterized as 'distracting' and 'childish'.
- The exclusive focus on/depiction of young people, because it gives the impression that SSC offers primarily entry-level positions.
- The absence of a call to action.

Message(s) communicated by ad

As was the case with concept B, it was not clear to some participants that SSC is the sponsor of the ad because there is no prominent/visible reference to it. When it came to messaging, the focus was on the tagline 'Not your average government job'. This was routinely seen as suggesting that work at SSC is exciting, stimulating, varied, and unconventional (by way of comparison with other government jobs). A few suggested specifically that the message is designed to burst the traditional image of, or stereotypical assumption about, government work as routine.

Focusing on the latter point, a few participants suggested that precisely by alluding to this stereotype, the tagline brings it to mind, focusing attention on the idea that government work in general is unstimulating. In other words, there was a sense that the ad might actually reinforce a prejudice about government work by trying to combat it. Related to this, a few participants felt that the message conveyed in this ad was negative (i.e., conveying a negative impression other government jobs), or meaningless (i.e., making a general comparison to other government jobs instead of saying something specific about work at SSC).

Social media ads

The perceived effectiveness of the social media versions of this ad in motivating participants to visit the SSC website or making them think of SSC as a viable career choice/option varied by audience but also among members of the primary audience. Members of the primary audience aspiring to careers in IT related fields tended to describe it as at least somewhat effective in this regard, precisely because of the focus on this area.

However, other members of this audience described it as ineffective or not very effective for two reasons: one was the assumption that SSC does not offer jobs in their career area because of the focus on cloud computing technology. The other was lack of interest in working for government, despite the tagline's suggestion that SSC is not typical government work. For their part, members of the secondary audience tended to describe the ad as ineffective because SSC does not seem to

offer careers in their area. Over and above the focus on IT-related jobs in the text, additional motivating factors among members of the primary audience included the following:

- The focus on IT-related jobs conveyed through the icons.
- References to cutting edge/new technology, i.e., 'latest and greatest ...', 'latest and best ...'
- The job-related link.
- The tagline because of the curiosity it generates about SSC.

Suggestions for improving concept

Suggestions for making this ad more effective included the following:

- Include a clear reference to SSC/indication that the ad is sponsored by SSC.
- Include a description of who/what SSC is.
- Provide examples of types of work available at SSC and/or depict the people in the ad engaged in IT-related work.
- Identify advantages of working at SSC.
- Include fewer people in the ad.
- Include older people in the ad.
- Remove the images of clouds.
- Add a call to action.
- Remove the abbreviated forms of 'Did you know' in both languages, as these are not commonly known and tend to distract.
- In the French version, change the expression 'boulot' to 'travail' as the former expression tends to suggest menial work.

Comparison of ads

Concept C emerged as the favourite in terms of being most effective at increasing awareness of SSC as an employer and motivating participants to visit SSC's website for more information. Reasons provided included the eye-catching nature of the graphics, curiosity about the tagline, the fact that the tagline challenges a stereotypical impression of government work, and the targeting of a young audience. The emphasis in the photo on inclusiveness/diversity was also identified as a reason for preferring concept C. While concept C was selected most often as the preferred concept, it was not viewed as a particularly strong option on its own.

3.2 Career home page


This sub-section reports on findings related to designs of the SSC website's career home page. Participants were shown two different design options of the career home page, labelled concept 1 and concept 2. The order of presentation of the options was rotated across the groups.

Overview

Reaction to the two designs of the SSC website's career home page tended to be positive, though it was more likely to be moderately than strongly so. Those who were not positive were more likely to be neutral than critical, sometimes adding that the designs are typical of government websites. Participants routinely indicated that both versions looked well structured and organized and that it would be easy for them to find information of interest or relevance to them. They were most likely to identify version 1 as their preferred version, though only slightly more likely to

do so, with some saying they had no preference because the two versions were not significantly different. Characteristics underlying participants' preference for version 1 included the 'Students and graduates' link, the 'Tools' section, and the impression that the overall look was lighter and less text heavy.

3.2.1 Concept 1



Government of Canada
Gouvernement du Canada

[Français](#)

MENU


[Canada.ca](#) > [Shared Services Canada](#)

Jobs at SSC




Apply now

Job opportunities at SSC



Career events

Every time a Canadian crosses the border, checks the weather forecast or applies for federal benefits, Shared Services Canada (SSC) is working behind the scenes to enable more than 140 federal organizations to meet the needs of




Career development

SSC invests in its employees by offering many career development, language training and continuing education options.

An inclusive and diverse team

At SSC, our diversity is our strength! We turn our words into actions by committing to the highest standards of equality and non-discrimination, anti-racism, inclusion, dignity and respect.



IT Jobs for Veterans

Learn about how we support our veterans and the career opportunities we offer them.

Stay connected

Follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#) to stay up to date on the latest job opportunities.

Create your GC Jobs account

To find out about new job postings, [create a GC Jobs account](#) and subscribe to job alerts by email.

Tools

- [Build a professional resumé](#)
- [Prepare for a job interview](#)
- [Video: Cracking the Code - YouTube](#)
- [Prepare for unsupervised online tests](#)
- [Take self-assessment tests to learn your second official language profile](#)
- [Self-declare your Employment Equity group](#)
- [Learn more about pay for the Public Service](#)

Overall impressions of web page design

Overall impressions of this career home page tended to be positive, and those who were not positive were indifferent or neutral rather than critical, sometimes describing it as a typical government site or what they would expect from a government site. Participants routinely described the overall look of the page as well organized or structured. Specific aspects of the site that participants liked or that elicited positive feedback included the following:

- The display/disposition of information, including a good use of space.
- The lightness of the text/impression that it is not text heavy.
- The 'Students and graduates' link and 'Tools' section.

While nothing elicited strongly critical feedback, a few did not agree with the general impression about the use of space, suggesting that the page looked a little crowded or cramped.


Impressions regarding ease of use

In commenting on the design, no one suggested that they would have any difficulty finding information of interest or relevance to them, either because of the organization of the page or unclear language.

Suggestions for improving the design

Very few suggestions were made to improve the design. Those that were made included providing examples of jobs offered at SSC and information about salaries and benefits, aligning the pictures associated with 'Career development' and 'An inclusive and diverse team', removing the 'Stay connected section', adding a Facebook page to the 'Stay connected section' and changing 'Offres d'emplois' to 'Offres de carrières'. While it was not suggested that the 'IT jobs for veterans' link be removed, it was suggested that it was not relevant to students.

3.2.2 Option 2



Government of Canada
Gouvernement du Canada

[Français](#)


MENU

[Canada.ca](#) > [Shared Services Canada](#)

Careers at SSC



Work at SSC



Career events

Shared Services Canada (SSC) modernizes and secures the Government of Canada's IT infrastructure by delivering the digital backbone. Our work includes network IT, cybersecurity, telecommunications, cloud services, data storage and more. Every time Canadians cross the border, check the weather, or apply for federal benefits, SSC is there working behind the scenes, enabling more than 140 federal organizations to meet Canadians' needs.


Apply Now!

At SSC, our mission is to power world-class technology for the Government of Canada. Alongside that mission, we are building an environment that offers more than just jobs, but valuable and rewarding long-term careers. We are dedicated to meeting the highest standards of equality and non-discrimination, anti-racism, inclusion, dignity and respect.

Benefits of working with us:

- Flexible work arrangements
- Positive work-life balance
- Supportive and collaborative workplaces
- Commitments to employee wellness, including health and pension benefits for you and your family
- Dedication to diversity, equality and inclusion in the workplace
- Exposure to complex and exciting IT initiatives
- Access to training and professional development


[Search for positions at SSC](#)



Career events

Come and meet us! Attend our upcoming events to learn more about employment at SSC and how you can become a part of the team.

[Upcoming recruitment events](#)





IT jobs for veterans


Are you a veteran or a releasing Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) member looking for full-time or part-time job opportunities?

If so, we encourage you to learn more about how we are [supporting our veterans](#) and what career opportunities we have to offer.

Stay connected


Twitter


LinkedIn

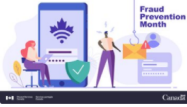

Youtube

Tweets by @SSC_CA

Shared Services Canada @SSC_CA


It's #FraudPreventionMonth! Following #CyberSecurity best practices is important to keep yourself safe from fraudulent scams. Stay secure by:

- ☒ Using strong passwords and passphrases
- ☒ Updating your devices
- ☒ Enabling multi-factor authentication



- [Official LinkedIn page](#)
- [LinkedIn Life](#)

Working at SSC - Our



Overall impressions of web page design

As was the case with version 1, impressions of version 2 of the SSC career home page tended to be positive, with those who were not positive being indifferent or neutral rather than critical. Participants once again routinely described the overall look of the page as well organized or structured. Specific aspects of the site that participants liked or that elicited positive feedback included the following:

- The display/disposition of information, particularly the 'box-like' design.
- The inclusion of relevant information.
- The use of bulleted points in the 'Apply now' section
- The description of SSC at the top of the page.

Once again, nothing elicited strongly critical feedback, and critical feedback that was provided focused on the following: the impression that there is too much text, particularly in the 'Apply now' section, the absence of 'Students and graduates' link and 'Tools' section, and the 'Apply now' label. Regarding the latter, it was suggested that the label should be changed because 'Apply now' gives the impression of hastiness, moving quickly, or following an order, when the emphasis should be more on inviting people to take time exploring what is available in terms of career possibilities at SSC.

Impressions regarding ease of use

As with version 1 of the career home page, no one suggested that they would have any difficulty finding information of interest or relevance to them because of the organization of the page or unclear language.

Suggestions for improving the design

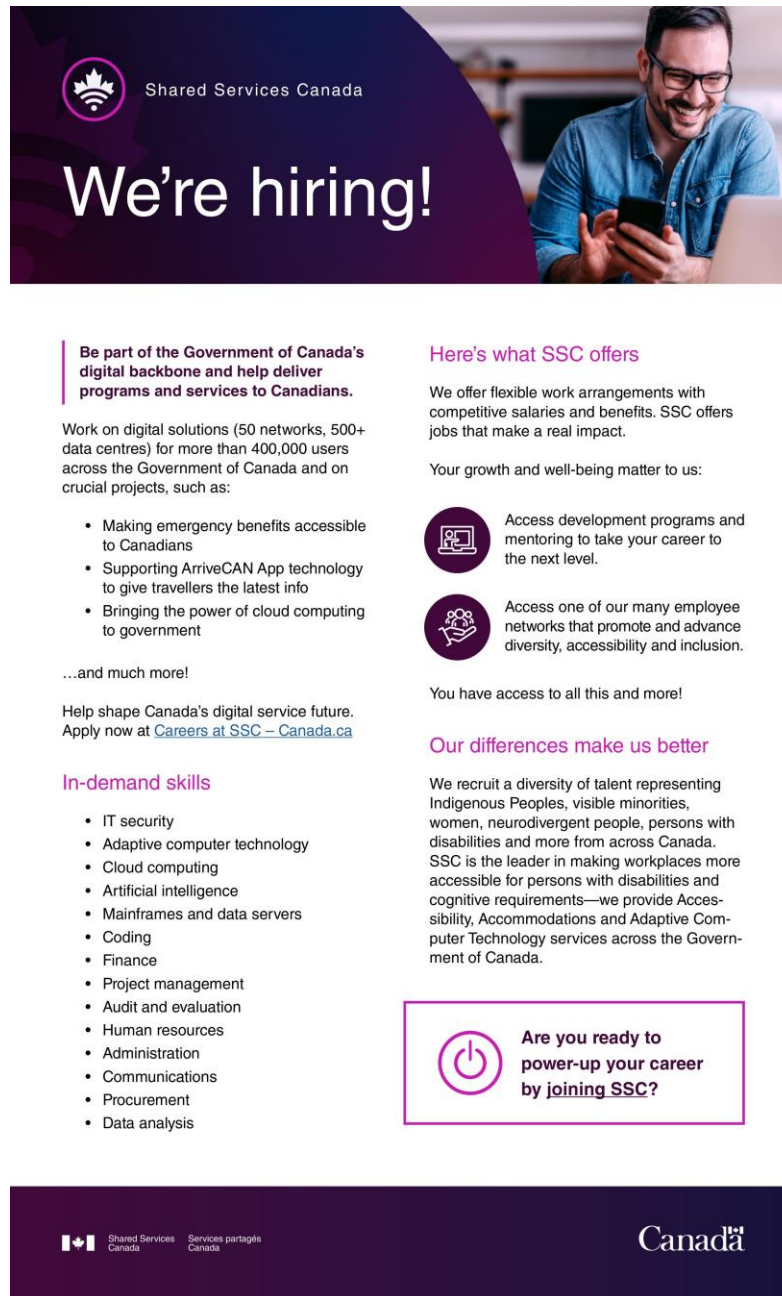
Very few suggestions were made to improve the design. Those that were made included adding a 'Students and graduates' and 'Tools' link, cutting text in the 'Apply now' section, changing the name of the 'Apply now' section, and removing the social media links. Here as well it was suggested that the 'IT jobs for veterans' link would not be relevant to students.

3.2.3 Comparison of versions

Asked which of these two designs they prefer, participants were most likely to identify version 1 as their preferred version, though they were only slightly more likely to do so, with some saying they had no preference because the two versions were not significantly different. Characteristics underlying participants' preference for version 1 included the 'Students and graduates' link, the 'Tools' section, and the impression that the overall look was lighter and less text heavy. Some suggested a hybrid model, based on using the content of concept 1 and the style of concept 2. More specifically, they explained that they would like a version with the 'box-like' format of concept 2 that includes the 'Students and graduates' link and the 'Tools' section from concept 1.

3.3 Careers Document

This sub-section reports on findings related to the one-page document with information on recruitment at SSC.



Shared Services Canada

We're hiring!

Be part of the Government of Canada's digital backbone and help deliver programs and services to Canadians.

Work on digital solutions (50 networks, 500+ data centres) for more than 400,000 users across the Government of Canada and on crucial projects, such as:

- Making emergency benefits accessible to Canadians
- Supporting ArriveCAN App technology to give travellers the latest info
- Bringing the power of cloud computing to government

...and much more!

Help shape Canada's digital service future. Apply now at [Careers at SSC – Canada.ca](https://careers.ssc.gc.ca)



In-demand skills

- IT security
- Adaptive computer technology
- Cloud computing
- Artificial intelligence
- Mainframes and data servers
- Coding
- Finance
- Project management
- Audit and evaluation
- Human resources
- Administration
- Communications
- Procurement
- Data analysis

Here's what SSC offers

We offer flexible work arrangements with competitive salaries and benefits. SSC offers jobs that make a real impact.


Your growth and well-being matter to us:


-  Access development programs and mentoring to take your career to the next level.
-  Access one of our many employee networks that promote and advance diversity, accessibility and inclusion.

You have access to all this and more!

Our differences make us better

We recruit a diversity of talent representing Indigenous Peoples, visible minorities, women, neurodivergent people, persons with disabilities and more from across Canada. SSC is the leader in making workplaces more accessible for persons with disabilities and cognitive requirements—we provide Accessibility, Accommodations and Adaptive Computer Technology services across the Government of Canada.

 **Are you ready to power-up your career by joining SSC?**

 Shared Services Canada / Services partagés Canada

Canada

Participants from both audiences tended to react positively to the document with information on recruitment at SSC. Many described it as clear, easy to follow, visually appealing, and well organized in terms of layout. In terms of content, participants tended to react positively to information about what SSC does and offers (in-demand skills), and to appeals/reaching out to potential recruits ('We're hiring!', 'Are you ready to power-up your career by joining SSC?', 'Be part of the Government of Canada's digital backbone and help deliver programs and services to

Canadians', and the link to careers at SSC). In commenting on information about what SSC does and offers, some participants suggested that this was the kind of information missing in the concepts.

Information about diversity, accessibility, and inclusiveness ('Our differences make us better') elicited mixed reactions. While some reacted positively to this, some did not, suggesting that there was too much emphasis/stress on this.

3.4 Video

This sub-section reports on findings related to the short video about SSC.

Overall mixed impressions

Reaction to the short video tended to be mixed. Participants were most likely to react positively to the content, which was described as informative because it describes what SSC does. Positive reaction to content, however, was more likely to be the case among members of the primary audience than members of the secondary audience. While the latter liked the fact that the video provides information about SSC, it was routinely observed that the emphasis is on careers in IT, and since they are not interested in such a career, the video does not resonate with them. This point was also made by some members of the primary audience who did not feel targeted or addressed by what the video focuses on, including cloud computing and supporting communications satellites.

Over and above the content, a number of participants also liked the style of presentation, describing it as sharp, crisp, to the point, and making good use of colours and images. That said, one aspect of the presentation that was roundly criticized was the voiceover. This was the case across audiences and language groups. Specifically, the voiceovers were routinely described as monotone, boring, and robotic. The voiceover in the French version was also described as sounding like an anglophone speaking French. Other aspects of the video that were criticized, though infrequently, included the following:

- The reference to 'ArriveCan', because of problems with the technology.
- The use of voiceover and descriptive text in the video, which has described as distracting.
- The implication/suggestion that other government jobs are 'average'.
- The 'outer space like' atmosphere evoked by the music, images, and colours.
- The lack of balance-specifically, that there was more emphasis/time devoted to promoting SSC than on what it has to offer potential employees.

Effectiveness of video in sustaining attention and drawing to SSC website

The perceived effectiveness of the video in attracting and sustaining participants' attention was based mainly on its content, i.e., the information about what SSC does and what it has to offer. Members of the primary audience with a career interest in IT-related sectors were most likely to describe the video as effective in this regard. Conversely, members of the secondary audience and members of the primary audience with career interests not focused specifically on IT tended to describe the video as ineffective in this regard. While many among the latter liked the fact that the video provides information about SSC, it was routinely observed that the emphasis is on

careers in IT, and since they are not interested in a career in this field, the video does not really resonate with them.

In short, the key factor underlying the perceived effectiveness of the video in attracting and sustaining participants' attention was the extent to which it spoke to their career aspirations. Beyond this, the only thing adversely affecting the likelihood that participants would watch the video from start to finish, including ones who felt targeted by the message, was the voiceover.

The key factor underlying the extent to which the video would motivate participants to visit SCC's website for more information about a possible career with the department was also the extent to which it spoke to their career aspirations.

4. Overall Reaction to Products Promoting SSC as a Career Choice

This section reports on participants' overall reactions to the materials presented to them.

Several perceived benefits or advantages of a career with SSC identified by participants

Based on the materials presented to them, participants identified the following as the main perceived advantages of a career with SSC.

- The variety of IT-related positions.
- Good working conditions/work environment.
- Job security/stability.
- Opportunities to work in a cutting-edge area/field.
- Opportunities for teamwork.

Materials are not particularly effective in presenting SSC as a viable career choice/option

As a result of seeing the materials presented to them, most members of the primary audience were not noticeably more likely to consider a career in the public service (nor were they less likely to). To the extent that they were more likely to consider this, it tended to be because of specific emphasis on/references to IT-related positions in the materials, as well as general curiosity about what SSC, an organization they did not know about before, has to offer in terms of career possibilities.

Among members of the secondary audience, the materials and messaging were not particularly effective in presenting SSC as a viable career choice/option for them. The reason for this was twofold: the concepts and taglines tended to be too vague and too general about the types of career options available at SSC, while the materials that did provide such information (i.e., the one-pager and the video) focused on careers in IT. Some members of the secondary audience, however, did indicate that would consult the SSC website, but that they would do this out of curiosity rather than interest necessarily in exploring career opportunities.

Motivation/encouragement to consider a career with SSC

By way of conclusion, participants were asked what would motivate or encourage them to consider a career with SSC. Beyond some indication that SSC offers opportunities in their chosen field, participants identified the following:

- Information/details about salaries/salary levels.
- The opportunity to speak with someone in human resources at SSC.
- SSC offering internship opportunities.
- SSC reaching out by hosting events or participating in job fairs.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Most participants in this study said they have considered a career in the public service. Among those who have not, some said they simply have never thought about this, while others said they have not considered it because of their preconceptions about a career in government. Such preconceptions were rarely so ingrained as to categorically exclude any consideration of working for government. In short, participants were receptive to the idea of a career in the public service, and the right recruitment products and messages *could* encourage students, in particular IT students, to consider SSC as a career choice.

The current set of draft recruitment products and messages, however, were not particularly effective in presenting SSC as a viable career choice. This was not because they failed to depict work at SSC as attractive. To the contrary, based on the materials presented to them, participants easily identified advantages of a career with SSC. These included job security as well as good working conditions. Both were identified by participants as important factors when considering their careers, as well as reasons why they have considered a career in the public service. Rather, the materials tended to be ineffective because they did not convey the message that SSC offers opportunities in participants' chosen field. Put succinctly, the extent to which participants were not interested in SSC was routinely a reaction to the impression that SSC is not interested in them. This was especially the impression among members of the secondary (non-IT) audience, but also among some members of the primary (IT) audience.

To connect more effectively with students, the research findings suggest that recruitment materials need to communicate who SSC is and what SSC offers. Although concept C emerged as the favourite concept, comparatively-speaking, it was no more effective than the others in communicating these two key messages. Indeed, a commonly offered suggestion to improve each of the concepts was to describe who SSC is and what it offers. Providing information about SSC is all the more important because the agency has virtually no name recognition among research participants. With a focus on both these perceived deficiencies, either one of the three concepts could be effective in encouraging students to consider SSC as a career possibility.

Based on the research findings, additional considerations for finalizing the recruitment products and messages include the following:

- Provide a call to action that is clear and easy to find (URL, QR code, etc.). Don't make them work to find the information.
- Advertise where students are – online and on social media. Consider short videos for YouTube, such as 'a day in the life of a computer engineer at SSC' or 'how a student of business administration can find meaningful work at SSC'. Given the importance of institutional career planning centers as a source of career-related information, consideration also should be given to advertising through online institutional resources.
- Consider the use of traditional information sessions or Question and Answer (Q&A) sessions but delivered online in the form of a webinar or video presentation. In this regard, it is important to remember that among the things that would motivate or encourage participants to consider a career with SSC were the opportunity to speak with someone in human resources at SSC, and SSC reaching out by hosting events.

- Emphasize/highlight the unique benefits of working for the public sector – job security, competitive compensation, etc., as these resonate with students.
- Acknowledge SSC's commitment to diversity and inclusiveness without overemphasizing it. A diverse and inclusive workplace is clearly something that resonates with students and an important consideration when it comes to their careers. At the same time, there was a recurring impression that too much emphasis or attention was being devoted to this theme in the recruitment materials.

Appendix

Recruitment Screener

Landing Page

Thank you for your interest in this research study. This short online questionnaire will take no more than 5 minutes to complete. The purpose of the online questionnaire is to confirm the eligibility of individuals interested in participating in this research study.

Background information

- This research study is being conducted by Phoenix Strategic Perspectives (Phoenix SPI), a Canadian public opinion research firm, on behalf of the Government of Canada.
- The research is designed to assess the effectiveness of job recruitment campaigns.
- We are interested in hearing your opinions; no attempt will be made to sell you anything or change your point of view.

About the research study

- Participants will be asked to take part in an online focus group.
- Each online focus group will last up to **2 hours**.
- The online focus groups will be held from **March 1-11, 2022**.
- People who take part will receive **\$125** to thank them for their time.

How does the online questionnaire work?

- Your decision to complete the questionnaire is completely voluntary and confidential.
- Your decision whether or not to participate in the research will not affect any dealings you may have with the Government of Canada, now or in future.

What about your personal information?

- Your personal information will be collected by Phoenix SPI in accordance with the applicable provincial privacy legislation or the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA).
- Phoenix SPI supports and strictly adheres to the Standards for the Conduct of Government of Canada Public Opinion Research, industry standards and guidelines for Internet and other types of research. To view Phoenix SPI's privacy policy, please [click here](#).

Need to contact us?

For more information about this research, contact Phoenix SPI by email at research@phoenixspi.ca or by telephone at 1-844-960-1700.

Phoenix SPI
1678 Bank Street, Ste. 2
Ottawa, ON K1V 7Y6
www.phoenixspi.ca

Eligibility Screener

1. Are you a Canadian citizen or permanent resident at least 18 years of age or older?

- | | |
|---------|-----------------|
| 01. No | THANK/TERMINATE |
| 02. Yes | CONTINUE |

[TERMINATION MESSAGE - AGE: Thank you for your interest. To be eligible for this research study you must be 18 years of age or older and a Canadian citizen and permanent resident.]

2. In which of the following age categories do you belong? [RECRUIT A MIX]

- 01. 18 to 24
- 02. 25 to 29
- 03. 30 to 34
- 04. 35 to 39
- 05. 40 or older

3. Do you, or a member of your household or immediate family, work in any of the following fields?

- a. Marketing research, public relations firm, or advertising agency
- b. The media (i.e., radio, television, newspapers, magazines, etc.)

- | | |
|---------|-----------------|
| 01. Yes | THANK/TERMINATE |
| 02. No | CONTINUE |

[TERMINATION MESSAGE – INDUSTRY: Thank you for your interest. Unfortunately, you are not eligible to participate in this study.]

4. Are you currently enrolled in a program of study at a Canadian post-secondary institution? [RECRUIT A MIX]

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| 01. Yes, at a university | CONTINUE |
| 02. Yes, at a college, institute, cegep or polytechnic | CONTINUE |
| 03. No | THANK/TERMINATE |

[TERMINATION MESSAGE – PSE: Thank you for your interest. We are currently looking for participants who are enrolled in a program of study at a Canadian post-secondary institution.]

5. Are you currently enrolled in any of the following types of programs?

Select all that apply

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| 01. Computer Science | [COMPUTER SCIENCE] |
| 02. Computer Engineering | [COMPUTER SCIENCE] |
| 03. Software Engineering | [COMPUTER SCIENCE] |
| 04. Information or Data Science | [COMPUTER SCIENCE] |

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 05. Network or Computing Communications | [COMPUTER SCIENCE] |
| 06. Information Technology (IT) Security | [COMPUTER SCIENCE] |
| 07. Cloud Computing | [COMPUTER SCIENCE] |
| 08. Mathematics (not including Economics) | [COMPUTER SCIENCE] |
| 09. Statistics (not including Economics) | [COMPUTER SCIENCE] |
| 10. Public Administration | [BUSINESS/PUBLIC ADMIN.] |
| 11. Business Administration | [BUSINESS/PUBLIC ADMIN.] |
| 12. Public Policy | [BUSINESS/PUBLIC ADMIN.] |
| 13. Finance | [BUSINESS/PUBLIC ADMIN.] |
| 14. None of the above | THANK/TERMINATE |

[TERMINATION MESSAGE – PSE_2: Thank you for your interest. Unfortunately, you are not eligible to participate in this study.]

6. When do you expect to complete your program? [RECRUIT A MIX]

- 01. This year, 2022
- 02. Next year, 2023
- 03. 2024
- 04. 2025
- 05. I don't know

7. What is the name of the post-secondary institution you are studying at?

- 01. OPEN BOX
- 02. Prefer not to say

8. What type of degree or certificate will you receive when you complete your program?
[RECRUIT A MIX]

- 01. Non-degree certificate or certification
- 02. Diploma of College Studies
- 03. Undergraduate bachelor's degree
- 04. Master's degree
- 05. PhD/Doctoral degree
- 06. Prefer not to say

9. When you complete your program, what are your plans? [RECRUIT A MIX]

- 01. Find employment
- 02. Continue with my studies (i.e., another degree or certificate)
- 03. I don't know

10. Do you identify as...?

Select all that apply

- 01. ... Indigenous (First Nations, Métis or Inuit)?

SKIP TO Q12

- 02. ...a person with a disability?
- 03. ...a visible minority?
- 04. None of the above

CONTINUE
SKIP TO Q12
SKIP TO Q12

11. [IF Q10=03] What is the nature of your disability? Do you have...

Select all that apply

- 01. ...a physical disability that is long-term or causes limitation in daily activities
- 02. ...a cognitive disability that is long-term or causes limitation in daily activities
- 03. ...a mental health condition that is long-term or causes limitation in daily activities
- 04. Other [please specify]:

12. In which province or territory do you live?

- 01. British Columbia
- 02. Alberta
- 03. Saskatchewan
- 04. Manitoba
- 05. Ontario
- 06. Quebec
- 07. New Brunswick
- 08. Nova Scotia
- 09. Prince Edward Island
- 10. Newfoundland and Labrador
- 11. Yukon
- 12. Northwest Territories
- 13. Nunavut
- 14. Prefer not to say

13. What language do you speak most often at home?

Select all that apply

- 01. English
- 02. French
- 03. Other
- 04. I prefer not to say

14. How do you identify your gender? [RECRUIT A MIX] This refers to current gender which may be different from sex assigned at birth and may be different from what is indicated on legal documents.

- 01. Man
- 02. Woman
- 03. Non-Binary

- 04. I identify as another gender
- 05. Prefer not to say

15. Finally, in which official language would you like to participate in the online focus group?

- 01. English
- 02. French

Industry Screening

16. Have you ever attended a focus group or taken part in an interview on any topic that was arranged in advance and for which you received money for your participation?

- | | |
|---------|---------------|
| 01. Yes | CONTINUE |
| 02. No | GO TO CONSENT |

17. When did you last attend one of these focus groups or interviews?

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| 01. Within the last 6 months | THANK/TERMINATE |
| 02. 6 months to under 2 years | CONTINUE |
| 03. 2 or more years | GO TO CONSENT |

18. How many focus groups have you attended in the past 5 years?

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 01. Fewer than 5 | GO TO CONSENT |
| 02. 5 or more | THANK/TERMINATE |

[TERMINATION MESSAGE – INDUSTRY_2: Thank you for your cooperation. We already have enough participants who have a similar profile to yours, so we are unable to invite you to participate.]

Consent

We have a few final questions for you.

19. The online focus group will be recorded. The recordings will be used only by the research team to assist in preparing a report on the findings and they will be destroyed once the report is final. Do you consent to be recording for research purposes only?

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 01. Yes | CONTINUE |
| 02. No | THANK/TERMINATE |
| 03. I prefer not to say | THANK/TERMINATE |

20. How comfortable are you expressing your views in a group setting, including reading and commenting on written materials in [English/Français]?

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 01. Very comfortable | |
| 02. Somewhat comfortable | |
| 03. Not very comfortable | THANK/TERMINATE |

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| 04. Not at all comfortable | THANK/TERMINATE |
| 05. I prefer not to say | THANK/TERMINATE |

21. The online focus group will be conducted using the Zoom platform. People invited to participate will need access to an internet-enabled device (i.e., computer, smartphone, or tablet). Do you have access to an internet-enabled device?

- | | |
|---------|-----------------|
| 01. Yes | CONTINUE |
| 02. No | THANK/TERMINATE |

22. How comfortable are you participating in an online discussion through typing and use of a webcam?

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| 01. Very comfortable | |
| 02. Somewhat comfortable | |
| 03. Not very comfortable | THANK/TERMINATE |
| 04. Not at all comfortable | THANK/TERMINATE |
| 05. I prefer not to say | THANK/TERMINATE |

23. Representatives from the Government of Canada may observe the online focus group. Observers will only hear first names of participants. Do you consent to representatives from the Government of Canada observing the discussion?

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 01. Yes | CONTINUE |
| 02. No | THANK/TERMINATE |
| 03. I prefer not to say | THANK/TERMINATE |

[TERMINATION MESSAGE: Thank you for your cooperation. We already have enough participants who have a similar profile to yours, so we are unable to invite you to participate.]

Invitation to Participate

We would like to invite you to attend the online focus group session where you will exchange your opinions in a moderated video session with others. The discussion will be led by a researcher from the public opinion research firm, Phoenix Strategic Perspectives. The group will last up to two hours. Information regarding how to participate will be sent to you by email in the coming days. You will be asked to log into the online session 15 minutes prior to the start time. People who participate will receive \$125 to thank them for their time.

24. Are you willing to participate?

- | | |
|---------|-----------------|
| 01. Yes | CONTINUE |
| 02. No | THANK/TERMINATE |

25. May I have your contact information so that we can send you information related to the online focus group?

01. First name:

- 02. Last Name:
- 03. Telephone number:
- 04. Email:

EXIT MESSAGE: Thank you very much for your time and willingness to participate in this research.

EXIT LINK: <https://www.canada.ca/en.html> or <https://www.canada.ca/fr.html>

Moderator's Guide

INTRODUCTION: 5 minutes

→ Introduce moderator/firm and welcome participants to the focus group.

TECHNICAL CHECK; CONFIRM SOUND AND VIDEO QUALITY.

- Thank you for attending/value your being here.
- Tonight, we're conducting research on behalf of a department of the Government of Canada.
- I'll be asking for your opinions on materials designed to promote the department in question as a career choice.
- The discussion will last up to 2 hours.

→ Describe focus group.

- This is a "virtual round table" discussion.
- My job is to facilitate the discussion, keeping us on topic and on time.
- Your job is to offer your opinions. There are no right or wrong answers.
- I'd like to hear from everyone, so we have a range of opinions.
- I'll try to call on you, but feel free to wave if you want to contribute.

→ Explanations.

- Comments treated in confidence.
 - Anything you say during these groups will be held in confidence.
 - Our report summarizes the findings but does not mention anyone by name.
- The session is being video recorded.
 - Recording is for report writing purposes/verify feedback.
- There are people from the agency involved in this project who will be observing tonight's online session.
 - Purpose: oversee the research process and see your reactions first-hand.

→ Any questions?

→ Roundtable introduction: Let's start with everyone introducing themselves?

Before I show you the materials, I'd like to ask you about your career plans/aspirations

CAREER VIEWS AND ASPIRATIONS: 25 minutes

What you have in common, and the reason you are here this evening, is that you are post-secondary students in one of the following types of programs [INSERT AS APPROPRIATE]:

- computer science, computer engineering, software engineering, mathematics and/or statistics
- public of business administration, public policy, or finance.

1. What are your career aspirations after graduating in your chosen program/field of study? [IF CONTEMPLATING FURTHER STUDIES, ASK THEM TO FOCUS ON CAREER ASPIRATIONS FOLLOWING THAT]

Probe: - type of employment they are aspiring to [BE ATTENTIVE TO EMPHASIS ON PRIVATE VS PUBLIC SECTOR ASPIRATIONS].

2. Thinking about the career for which you are training/in which you are interested, what are the main things that interest you in it? In other words, what is it about this type of career that you like or find attractive? Anything else?

Probe:

- job opportunities/job security
- salary/remuneration
- lifestyle (e.g., work/family balance)
- exciting/cutting edge work/initiatives
- training/professional development
- diversity / inclusiveness
- prestige/status
- impactful work/important public purpose (e.g., benefits to Canadians)

3. Cut

4. Are there any obstacles or barriers that will make it difficult for you to find the kind of employment/career that you want? If so, what? [BE ATTENTIVE TO OBSTACLES/BARRIERS RELATED TO LANGUAGE AMONG FRANCOPHONES OR IDENTIFIED BY MEMBERS OF UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS].

Probe:

- lack of job opportunities/job security
- too much competition
- application process / worth the effort

5. People assign importance to various factors when considering their careers and career options. What are the most important considerations for you when it comes to your career?

Probe:

- job security
- salary/remuneration
- work environment (e.g., collegiality, supportive/collaborative workplace)
- lifestyle (e.g., work/family balance)
- flexible work arrangements
- interest/fulfillment
- diversity/equality/inclusion
- training/professional development
- pension/post-retirement benefits
- prestige/status
- impactful work/important public purpose (e.g., benefits to Canadians)

6. [IF NOT ANSWERED BY RESPONSES TO PREVIOUS QUESTION] What are you looking for in a potential employer? What is most important to you when considering where you might be working?

Various things can shape or influence someone's views regarding their career, including where they would like to work and where they would not like to work.

7. What are the key influences and/or influencers when it comes to your own career? Whose opinions, for example, have shaped or influenced your career expectations and preferences and in what way? [BE ATTENTIVE TO NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS REGARDING A CAREER IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE.]
8. [ADJUST WORDING AS NEEDED BASED ON RESPONSES TO Q7] Have you had experience working in your field of study, for example as a summer job, in a part-time capacity while going to school, or as part of a co-op placement? [HAND COUNT]

IF YES:

- a. What did you like about this experience, and what, if anything did you dislike about it?
 - b. [ADJUST WORDING AS NEEDED BASED ON RESPONSES TO Q7] Did this experience in any way shape your career interests or expectations? If so, how?
9. What is your preferred method of seeking and receiving information about potential career choices and why?

Probe: - parents, peers, siblings, spouse/partner, school/institution

10. Cut

11. Have you ever considered a career in the public service? By that I mean a career with a government department or agency [HAND COUNT]. Why/why not?

Probe: - benefits/advantages
- drawbacks/disadvantages

RECALL OF RECRUITMENT TOOLS: 10 minutes

Organizations often use promotional materials to publicize career opportunities with them.

12. Cut

ASK MEMBERS OF PRIMARY AUDIENCE:

Let's say a government department or agency were trying to recruit talent in a competitive IT labour market,

13. In your opinion, what would a promotion strategy that seeks to effectively connect with and attract such talent need to focus on? [DON'T LINGER; WANT TOP-OF-MIND RESPONSES].

AWARENESS AND IMPRESSIONS OF SHARED SERVICES CANADA (SSC): 10 minutes

14. Has anyone heard of a government agency called Shared Services Canada or SSC? [HAND COUNT]

IF AWARE OF SSC:

- a. In what context have you heard of SSC? And, what have you heard or do you know about SCC? [DO NOT CORRECT; WANT TO TOP OF MIND KNOWLEDGE].
- b. What's your overall impression of SSC? Why do you say that?

Probe: -positive/negative
-reasons for impression

[INTRODUCE SSC AS SPONSOR OF THE FOCUS GROUP: READ AND PRESENT SLIDE FOR PARTICIPANTS TO REVIEW]

SSC is an agency of the Government of Canada responsible for digitally enabling government programs and services by providing IT services in the domains of networks and network security, data centers and Cloud offerings, and digital communications as well as providing IT tools that the public service needs to do its job.

[MODERATOR: IF A PARTICIPANT REFERS TO SERVICE CANADA INSTEAD OF SSC, CORRECT: SSC is not Service Canada who do tv and digital ad campaigns – Service Canada is the federal government's single point of access to a range of government services and benefits like Employment Insurance and Canada Pension Plan.]

15. I realize that this is a brief description. But when you hear this, what kinds of things do you think SCC does? What kind of products and services do you think they offer? To whom does SCC offer products and services?

16. Cut

17. Does this sound like the kind of work that might interest you in terms of your career? Why/why not? [BE ATTENTIVE TO DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AUDIENCES].

REVIEW OF RECRUITMENT MATERIALS: 60 minutes

In order to deliver its services, SSC requires the ongoing recruitment of top-notch talent in a competitive labour market.

This session is not a recruitment drive for SSC. We would like to gather your feedback on some advertising materials being considered to assess their effectiveness in promoting SSC as a career choice. Please keep in mind that the materials we will be asking you to review are not final and will change, in part because of the feedback we will receive from focus groups like this one.

I. CREATIVE CONCEPTS, TAGLINES + SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS [30 minutes]

The first thing I want to show you are some creative concepts and taglines designed to promote SCC as a career choice. I will show you three versions. The ads would appear on SSC's social media—specifically their Twitter account and LinkedIn page. Let's start with the first version which I'll call concept... [A, B, C]. Take a minute to review it but please keep your reaction to yourself until we discuss it as a group. [ROTATE PRESENTATION ACROSS GROUPS AS WELL AS VERSIONS DEPICTING MALE/FEMALE INDIVIDUALS.]

- **Concept A – Invest in your career**
- **Concept B – Your next move is here**
- **Concept C – Not your average government job**

18. What is your overall impression of this concept? Why do you say that?

- Probe:
- positive/neutral/negative
 - likes/dislikes and reasons why
 - anything inappropriate/offensive

19. Is it clear and easy to understand? If not, why not?

- Probe:
- is it clear that SSC is sponsor of ad?

20. What message does the concept communicate about a career with SSC? Anything else? Does it communicate the message(s) effectively? Why/why not?

- Probe:
- one message vs. many?
 - impressions of the tagline: Effective? Relevant?

21. Do the words and images work well together? If not, why not?

22. Cut

23. Does this concept address any preconceptions or assumptions you have about a career in the public service? If so, how?

Here's what this approach might look like as a **social media post**.

[SHOW TREATMENTS: TWITTER, LINKEDIN]

24. Would you notice this ad? That is, would it attract your attention? Why/why not?

- Probe:
- do you feel this ad addresses you/speaks to you?
 - Is it appealing? Is it memorable?
 - Who is this ad aimed at?
 - Is the call to action clear?

25. Does this ad encourage or motivate you to visit the SSC website to find out more about a possible career? [HAND COUNT] Why/why not?

26. Does this ad make you think that working at SSC is a viable career choice/option for you? Why/why not?

27. Do you have any suggestions on how this ad concept could be improved to make it more effective in terms of encouraging people like you to consider a career with SSC?

Probe: - missing information
- change emphasis/focus

PRESENT NEXT CONCEPT THEN REPEAT QUESTIONS 18-27. ONCE ALL THREE CONCEPTS HAVE BEEN TESTED, ASK:

Now that you've reviewed the three concepts, I'm going to ask you to compare them. Let's have another look at each of them. [SHOW CONCEPTS ONE AFTER THE OTHER, REVERSING THE ORIGINAL ORDER OF PRESENTATION].

28. Which of these concepts do you think would be most effective in terms of increasing awareness of government/SCC as an employer? [HAND COUNT] Why did you select _____?

29. Which of these concepts do you think would be most effective in terms of motivating you to visit SCC's website for more information? [HAND COUNT]. Why did you select _____?

II. CAREER HOME PAGE [15 minutes]

I am now going to show you different designs of the SCC website's career home page. We'll look at them one at a time. Here's the first one. [ROTATE ORDER: OLD DESIGN = VERSION 'A' AND NEW DESIGN = VERSION 'B']

30. What's your overall impression of this design for the career home page? Why?

Probe: - positive/neutral/negative impressions
- likes/dislikes and reasons why

Here's the second one.

31. What's your overall impression of this design for the career home page? Why? [ACKNOWLEDGE COMPARISONS IF VOLUNTEERED BUT KEEP DISCUSSION ON THE VERSION BEING PRESENTED UNTIL THEN NEXT QUESTIONS].

32. Now, let's consider both designs...If you were applying for a job at SSC, do you think you would find the type of information you would need on these pages? If not, why?

Probe: - which one does a better job and why
- anything missing

33. What do you think about the structure or organization of these pages? Do you think it would be easy for you to use to find information of interest or relevance to you?

Probe: - which one does a better job and why

34. Let's look at the language used in each design....Is it appropriate? Is it easy to understand? Is there anything confusing?

Probe: - which one does a better job and why

IF NOT CLEAR FROM THE DISCUSSION:

35. Which of these two designs do you prefer and why?
36. Do you have any (other) suggestions to improve [INSERT PREFERRED VERSION] to make it as useful and easy to use as possible?

III. DOCUMENT WITH MESSAGING FOR RECRUITMENT PURPOSES [5 minutes]

I am now going to ask you to read a one-page document with information on recruitment at SCC. Please take a moment to read it in silence and then we'll discuss it as a group.

37. What do you like about this document?
38. What if anything do you not like about it?

IV. VIDEO WITH MESSAGING FOR RECRUITMENT PURPOSES [10 minutes]

The last thing I am going to show you is a short video about Shared Services Canada. I will play it and then ask you a few questions about it. PLAY VIDEO, THEN CONTINUE

39. What is your overall impression of this video? Why do you say that?

Probe: - positive/neutral/negative impressions
- likes/dislikes and reasons why

40. What message is this video trying to communicate? Does it do this clearly? Why/why not?
41. How effective is it in terms of attracting and sustaining your attention, in the sense that you would watch it from start to finish?
42. Would it motivate you to visit SCC's website for more information about a possible career with the department? If not, why not?

OVERALL REACTION TO PRODUCTS PROMOTING SSC AS A CAREER CHOICE: 10 minutes

Now that you have seen these materials,

43. What do you think are the main benefits or advantages of a career with SSC?
44. And what do you think are the main drawbacks or disadvantages of a career with SSC?

45. How effective are these materials and messaging in presenting SSC as a viable career choice/option for you? Why?

Probe: - more/less confident that they could have a viable career with SSC?

ASK MEMBERS OF PRIMARY AUDIENCE:

46. At the beginning of the session, I asked if anyone had ever considered a career in the public service. Has anyone's attitude changed in any way after seeing these materials? [HAND COUNT] If so, in what way(s)?

Probe: - more/less likely to consider public service [HAND COUNT]

47. What, if anything, would motivate or encourage you to consider a career with SSC?

FINAL WORD

We've covered a lot tonight and I really appreciate you taking the time to share your opinions. The honorarium will be available via e-transfer or cheque; we'll contact you tomorrow to determine your preference. On behalf of Shared Services Canada, I would like to thank you for your time and participation today.

You can all log out now. Have a great evening!

Materials Tested