

RECOGNITION OF MILITARY ADVERTISING SLOGANS AMONG AMERICAN YOUTH

Wayne Hintze
Westat, Inc.

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Jerry Lehnus
Defense Manpower Data Center

Introduction

The military Services rely on two primary recruiting tools to reach American youth and attract them into the U.S. Armed Forces. One is the military recruiters themselves, who are usually the "cream of the crop" in their respective Services; the other is military advertising. The objective of military advertising is to create awareness and to present a professional image of each Service. The Youth Attitude Tracking Study (YATS) survey contains several questions about military advertising which may inform the Services about the impact of their advertising campaigns.

As part of their advertising campaigns, the Services have one or more slogans that appear as primary elements in their advertising campaigns. Recognition of those slogans can provide a measure of the impact of an advertising campaign. This report presents trends in slogan recognition among young men and women between the ages of 16 and 21 from the 1987-1995 YATS. These respondents have no more than two years of postsecondary education and live in the contiguous United States. Because of these demographics, these youth are considered a prime target of military advertisers. This report examines trends in slogan recognition among males and females who were interviewed. Additionally, patterns among incorrect responses are also presented because results provide additional information.

Trends in Slogan Recognition

Actual Service slogans were read to respondents and the youth were asked to identify the Service which used it. If the name of the Service was included in the slogan, the Service name was replaced with the word "Blank." Table 1 presents the percentage of young males who correctly identified the military advertising slogans which were asked between 1987 and 1995. Data that appear in this report reflect weighted percentages and are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table 1 and Figure 1 show the Army slogan *Be All You Can Be* and the Air Force slogan *Aim High* have the highest levels of recognition. Both of these slogans have been used in advertising campaigns since 1980, however, trends in recognition of the two slogans differ. Recognition of *Be All You Can Be* increased over the 1987-1995 period (from 82 to 91 percent), while recognition of the Air Force slogan *Aim High* decreased (90 to 82 percent). The Marine Corps slogan *The Few. The Proud* had the next highest level of recognition among males. Recognition of this Marine Corps slogan, like that of the Air Force slogan, decreased over the years, dropping from 80 percent in 1987 to 71 percent in 1995.

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A second cluster of slogans includes the second Army slogan *Get an Edge on Life*, the second Marine Corps slogan *We're Looking For a Few Good Men*, and the Navy slogan *You and the Navy Full Speed Ahead*. Of all slogans analyzed, the Navy slogan *You and the Navy. Full Speed Ahead* shows the largest increase in recognition from 41 percent in 1990 to 54 percent in 1995.

Table 1.	Slogan recognition: Percentage of males correctly identifying advertising slogans									
Slogan	Service	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
<i>Be All You Can Be.</i>	Army	82	81	85	88	89	89	88	90	91
<i>Get an Edge on Life.</i>	Army				62	59	69	54	58	61
<i>It's Not just a job. It's an Adventure!</i>	Navy	31	25	23	14	13	11	14	14	18
<i>You and the _____. Full Speed Ahead</i>	Navy				41	46	46	48	53	54
<i>The Few. The Proud.</i>	Marine Corps	80	79	76	81	78	77	73	72	71
<i>We're Looking For a Few Good Men</i>	Marine Corps	66	69	69	73	67			57	59
<i>Aim High.</i>	Air Force	90	89	89	90	89	87	86	84	82
<i>Be Part of the Action.</i>	Coast Guard			10	5	6	6	2	3	3

Recognition of the Coast Guard slogan *Be Part of the Action* is very low compared to the four DoD Services. Only 1 of every 10 males correctly identified the Coast Guard slogan in 1989, and its recognition level decreased to 3 percent in 1995. In addition to the slogans presented here, there are also other military slogans which have been used over the years. Recognition levels for Joint Service slogans were generally higher than those for the Coast Guard slogan, while slogans used by the Air Force Reserve and National Guard were recognized by less than 2 percent of the young men and women.



Figure 1. Percentage of males correctly identifying advertising slogans, 1987-1995

Table 2 and Figure 2 present information on slogan recognition for females similar to that just presented for males. Recognition levels among females were generally lower than those found for males. Trends in recognition that are similar among males and females include:

The rank order of slogans based on correct recognition are similar for males and females.

Recognition of the Army slogan *Be All You Can Be* has increased over the 9-year period, but recognition of the Air Force slogan *Aim High* has decreased. These are the two slogans most recognized by youth.

Recognition of the Marine Corps slogan *The Few. The Proud* dropped from 80 to 71 percent of males, and from 65 to 39 percent of females during 1987-1995. This drop was the largest for any slogan among females.

Correct recognition of the Marine Corps slogan *We're Looking For a Few Good Men* peaked in 1990 and then declined significantly after that.

The largest increase in slogan recognition occurred for the Navy slogan *You and the Navy. Full Speed Ahead*. Correct recognition increased from 41 to 54 percent of males and from 22 to 39 percent of females during 1990-1995.

Correct identification of the Navy slogan *It's Not Just a Job. It's an Adventure* was highest in 1987 (31 percent, males; 21 percent, females) when it was first asked in YATS. Following this peak, recognition dropped over the next 5-6 years before rising again.

Recognition of the Coast Guard slogan *Be Part of the Action* was highest when it first appeared in YATS in 1989 (10 percent-males, 7 percent-females) and has shown a downward trend ever since.

In general, correct recognition of the primary Army and Navy slogans (*Be All You Can Be* and *You and the Navy. Full Speed Ahead*) increased from 1987-1995, and recognition of the primary Marine Corps and Air Force slogans (*The Few. The Proud* and *Aim High*) decreased.

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Table 2.	Slogan recognition: Percentage of females correctly identifying advertising									
Slogan	Service	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
<i>Be All You Can Be.</i>	Army	77	81	83	88	88	91	87	86	88
<i>Get an Edge on Life.</i>	Army				51	52	63	51	53	55
<i>It's Not just a job. It's an Adventure!</i>	Navy	21	18	13	9	10	11	8	12	13
<i>You and the Full Speed Ahead</i>	Navy				22	37	32	31	37	39
<i>The Few. The Proud.</i>	Marine Corps	65	62	60	60	58	48	47	42	39
<i>We're Looking For a Few Good Men</i>	Marine Corps	38	41	43	47	46			33	30
<i>Aim High.</i>	Air Force	77	75	75	72	70	67	67	64	62
<i>Be Part of the Action.</i>	Coast Guard			7	4	3	5	1	2	2



Figure 2. Percentage of females correctly identifying advertising slogans, 1987-1995
Incorrect Slogan Recognition

To this point in the report, discussion has focused on correct slogan identification, but there are also notable findings among incorrect responses. Table 3 (males) and Table 4 (females) present the percentage of youth who identified certain Services for each slogan, correct and incorrect, along with the percentage who answered "Don't Know." Correct responses (Services) are shaded in the tables.

All of the incorrect identifications favor the Army, with two exceptions. The Joint Service slogan *Stand Up. Stand Out* was most often attributed to the Marine Corps by both genders, although a majority of the females said they did not know when asked. Male respondents also incorrectly identified the National Guard slogan *Americans at Their Best* as being a Marine Corps slogan most often.

Incorrect slogan identification might be affected by several factors. First, respondents tended to guess at the identification of a slogan rather than say they didn't know. More females admitted to not knowing a response than males. This is not surprising since females receive less exposure to military advertising than males because the Services focus more on males as a primary target in their advertising campaigns. In guessing, youth may have tended to guess the Services with which they were most familiar, or for which they recalled military advertising. The Army may also benefit from a tendency of the public to refer to the U.S. military as "the Army."

Incorrect slogan identifications may also be due to individual associations between perceptions of a given Service and the images which are projected by an advertising slogan. For example, *Americans at Their Best* may be identified with the Marine Corps because they maintain an image of being an elite force. In any case, Army and Marine Corps awareness seems to benefit from these misperceptions.

Table 3.		Slogan recognition (incorrect responses): Percentage of males who incorrectly identified advertising slogans									
Slogan	Service	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	
<i>It's Not just a job. It's an Adventure!</i>	Navy*	31	25	23	14	13	11	14	14	18	
	Army	36	41	40	51	48	48	42	39	42	
	Don't Know	7	7	9	9	11	12	19	22	23	
<i>Be Part of the Action.</i>	Coast Guard*			10	5	6	6	2	3	3	
	Army			20	20	21	18	18	16	24	
	Marine Corps			11	20	21	20	18	14	8	
	Don't Know			37	32	29	36	44	43	43	
<i>It's a Great Place to Start</i>	Joint Service*		15	15	12	13	12	9			
	Army		41	44	43	36	30	25			
	Navy		14	13	12	13	15	16			
	Don't Know		12	12	13	18	20	27			
<i>Opportunity is Waiting for You.</i>	Joint Service*				13	17	17	13			
	Army				21	23	23	23			
	Navy				16	17	17	15			
	Don't Know				24	26	24	30			

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<i>Stand Up. Stand Out.</i>	Joint Service*					7	8	6			
	Marine Corps					26	28	26			
	Army					12	11	11			
	Don't Know					42	38	43			
<i>It's a Great Way to Serve.</i>	AF Reserve*								0	0	0
	Army								25	21	16
	Marine Corps								10	11	14
	Don't Know								42	41	45
<i>Americans at Their Best.</i>	Army/Air NG*								1	2	2
	Marine Corps								24	23	21
	Army								18	17	14
	Don't Know								44	42	44

Note: * indicates correct response

Summary and Conclusions

Youth who participated in YATS were asked to identify slogans used by the Services in their advertising campaigns as a means of measuring advertising awareness. Trends in slogan recognition from 1987 to 1995 show that there were gender differences in levels of recognition -- more males than females correctly identified Service slogans. Although recognition levels were different between males and females, there were many trends and patterns that were very similar for males and females.

In general, correct recognition of the primary slogans used by the Army and Navy increased from 1987-1995, and recognition of Marine Corps and Air Force slogans decreased. The Army slogan *Be All You Can Be* and the Air Force slogan *Aim High* were the two slogans most recognized by youth. The Navy slogan *You and the Navy. Full Speed Ahead* experienced the largest increase in correct recognition of any slogan for males and females. Slogans used by the Coast Guard, Joint Services, Air Force Reserve, and National Guard were seldom identified correctly by youth.

Findings were also presented on incorrect responses. Most of the incorrect responses favored the Army, although two slogans were attributed to the Marine Corps -- *Stand Up, Stand Out* (Joint Service) and *Americans at Their Best* (National Guard). Females were also more likely to say that they did not know the correct response to a slogan than males, which may not be surprising since females receive less exposure to military advertising.

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Table 4.		Slogan recognition (incorrect responses): Percentage of females who incorrectly identified advertising slogans									
Slogan	Service	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	
<i>It's Not Just a Job. It's an Adventure!</i>	Navy*	21	18	13	9	10	11	8	12	13	
	Army	36	36	35	41	39	35	26	27	28	
	Don't Know	11	12	18	20	21	27	44	38	41	
<i>Be Part of the Action.</i>	Coast Guard*			7	4	3	5	1	2	2	
	Army			21	19	20	16	16	17	27	
	Marine Corps			12	13	16	14	11	10	6	
	Don't Know			41	41	40	42	57	54	49	
<i>It's a Great Place to Start.</i>	Joint Service*	11	12	10	11	11	8				
	Army	36	35	33	27	23	21				
	Navy	13	14	12	10	9	12				
	Don't Know	19	19	24	34	38	38				
<i>Opportunity is Waiting for You.</i>	Joint Service*			15	17	16	14				
	Army			21	21	21	21				
	Don't Know			29	37	36	38				
<i>Stand Up. Stand Out.</i>	Joint Service*				7	8	7				
	Marine Corps				16	16	16				
	Army				11	12	11				
	Don't Know				53	53	51				
<i>It's a Great Way to Serve.</i>	AF Reserve*								0	0	0
	Army								20	20	18
	Marine Corps								7	8	11
	Don't Know								55	51	51
<i>Americans at Their Best.</i>	Army/Air NG*								1	1	1
	Army								15	16	14
	Marine Corps								14	13	13
	Don't Know								59	54	54

Note: * indicates correct response

With an increase in recruiting goals over the next several years, the Services must continue to sharpen their recruiting efforts to remain successful. As in the past, military advertising will play a vital role in the success of military recruiting. It is hoped that this information will provide feedback on advertising awareness that will be helpful in

meeting these future recruiting goals.

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