

# Irish Defence Forces

*A campaign less ordinary.*

## INTRODUCTION

The following case study is as pure an example of advertising effectiveness as is possible. It demonstrates how advertising had an immediate and significant impact on applications to join the Irish Defence Forces and on that organisation's public image. Already the campaign has created a +99% application rate in general service recruitment and +80% in specialist recruitment areas (ie medical, engineers) and it has hugely impacted on measurable image variables of the organisation. It is envisaged that this contribution will have a dramatic effect on the operational ability of the Irish Defence Forces for years to come.

## CAMPAIGN DEVELOPMENT & EXECUTION

### THE CONTEXT

To fulfil its obligations to the Irish state, The Irish Defence Forces needs to maintain a full time force of 10,600 able bodied men and women. These personnel are deployed across a wide spectrum of skill areas. The Irish Defence Forces therefore needs to continually recruit personnel to fulfil general service roles and highly specialist roles within the more technical and specialised parts of the forces.

Within a macro environment of high employment, low awareness of the organisation and a relatively poor image rating experienced prior to this campaign, The Irish Defence Forces had had difficulty in recruiting and maintaining the required numbers.

### THE BRIEF/OBJECTIVE

The Objectives were:

- Recruitment – In order to fulfil its statutory responsibilities The Irish Defence Forces needs to maintain a force of 10,600 able bodied men and women. They had been encountering increasing difficulty in recruiting and maintaining those numbers.
- Image & Awareness - Unlike the United States or the United Kingdom, Ireland does not have a strong 'military' history. Therefore relative to "militarised countries" there is low awareness of the role and activities undertaken by the organisation. Furthermore, some recent events have contributed to The Irish Defence Forces having a less positive image. The advertising campaign therefore needed to increase awareness levels of The Irish Defence Forces and positively enhance its image. These awareness and image objectives were seen as crucial to achieving the recruitment objectives.

### ADVERTISING STRATEGY

#### a) Strategic Planning

The Agency undertook an extensive research and information gathering programme. We reviewed and took the learning from similar campaigns in overseas markets. We received detailed briefings by senior Defence Forces personnel and were exposed to various orientation and induction programmes.

In particular, we conducted focus groups with existing Defence Forces personnel, recruits in training and members of the general public who were within the recruitment target audience.

#### b) Creative Briefing

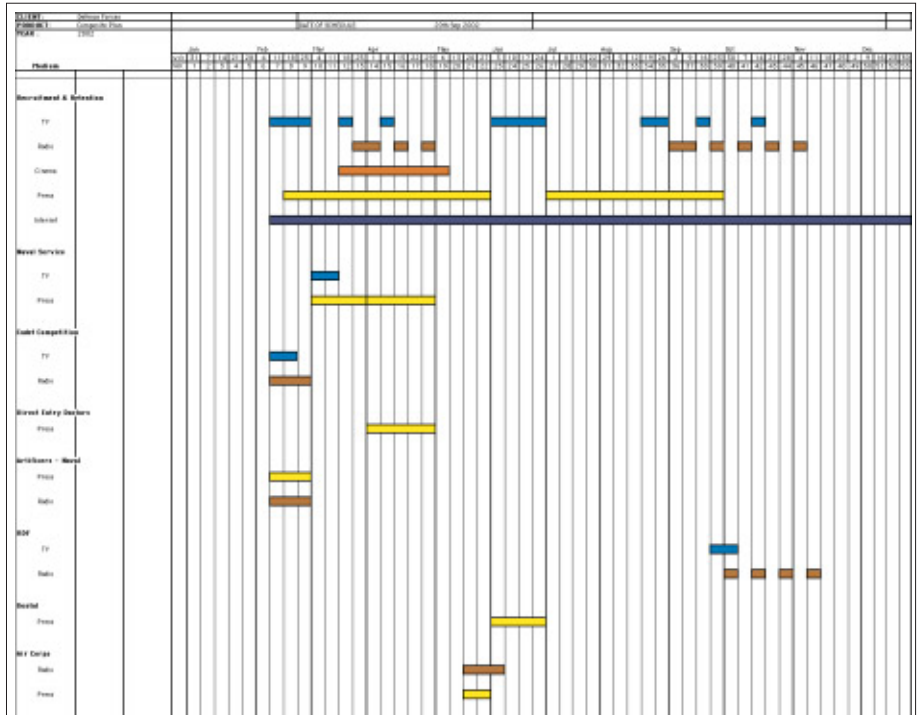
The information gained in the



*Client:  
The Irish Defence  
Forces*

*Agency:  
Cawley Nea*

*Team:  
Chris Cawley  
Brian Swords  
Jimmy Murphy*



*Defence Forces: Media Plan.*

planning phase facilitated us to engage in creative workshops to seek insights which would empower the creative process. During this phase we concluded that The Irish Defence Forces provided a career environment where there was “a sense of ordinary people experiencing extraordinary things”. Further examination of this insight brought us to the realisation that “how individuals personally experienced extraordinary situations and doing extraordinary things was a more powerful and motivating emotion than the situations themselves”.

c) The Creative Idea

This led to the thought that The Irish Defence Forces is “A Life Less Ordinary” because it enabled ordinary people to do extraordinary things in their lives across a spectrum.

We realised that if we could

capture this thinking creatively, the resulting advertising had the potential to engage possible new recruits and involve them in discussions about The Irish Defence Forces as a career opportunity. Such a creative strategy also had the advantage of communicating positively with existing Defence Forces personnel and with parents, guardians and peers who would be in a position to influence their career choice.

**CREATIVE WORK**

This thinking led to the development of a multi-faceted advertising campaign that re-energised the Defence Forces image. This included a 60 second TV and Cinema commercial, two 30 second TV commercials, two 20 second direct response TV commercials, general press ads, specialist press ads and a new identity for The Defence Forces which was rendered in print, direct

marketing, internet and display.

The creative work featured real Defence Forces personnel in scenarios they come across in the course of their work. It gave the work the required credibility with both internal and external target audiences.

**CAMPAIGN ROLLOUT (MEDIA)**

The campaign was designed to target the following audiences:

- 17-27 year olds male/female.
- Gatekeepers
- Specialist audiences

Such a diverse group of audiences required a “tiered” media plan.

The campaign was lead by television featuring key programmes which were particularly engaging for the target audiences.

In conjunction with the brand led television spots, a number of direct response media activities were planned in shorter length TV commercials, radio, general press, specialists press, exhibitions and trade fairs, online and inter-organisational communication (An Cosantoir The Defence Forces magazine).

**RESULTS**

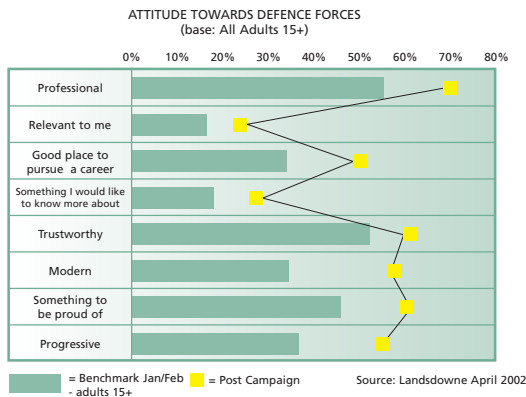
The results of the campaign have been an unprecedented success for the

Domain	Jan - June 2001	Jan - June 2002	%+ On 2001
General Service recruits	904	1801	+99%
General Service recruits	117	211	+80%
Officer Cadets	770	1100	+43%

Irish Defence Forces:

The organisation had not engaged in any significant advertising for in

excess of 20 years. The campaign which Cawley Nea were commissioned to develop and produce commenced in February 2002 and will continue for a 2 year period. In the 6 month period between commencement and the writing of this case study, the advertising effect has been dramatic. Furthermore, this effect has been achieved against a backdrop of no



significant change in any of the other variables which could have contributed to these results.

**END VARIABLES**

*General recruitment +99%.* The Irish Defence Forces experienced an incredible 99% increase in applications for general service positions during the period in which the campaign ran. This contrasts to no positive increase in recruitment applications in the 10 years prior to the campaign running.

*Specialist Positions +80%.* During the period of the campaign the organisation experienced an average increase of 80% in applications for specialist positions across a broad spectrum of areas (e.g. Medical Personnel, Engineers etc). There was in contrast no significant deviations in the previous 10 years

*Cadets +43%.* Within three weeks

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of the campaign commencing The Irish Defence Forces experienced a 43% increase in the number of applications for Cadet positions versus the same application number the previous year.

### **INTERMEDIARY VARIABLES**

The Irish Defence Forces commissioned Lansdowne Marketing Research (independent of Cawley Nea Advertising) to conduct a 'pre and post' advertising campaign analysis across a range of 8 awareness and imagery variables. Across the eight variables the average positive increase was 15% within 11 weeks of the campaign commencing. Richard Waring of Lansdowne Marketing Research commented, *"this level of improvement is unprecedented in this timescale"*.

By May of 2002 (four months into the campaign) the campaign had won two significant advertising industry awards. Firstly, An Excellence in Recruitment Advertising Award as presented by Gavin O'Reilly, Managing Director, Independent Newspapers. Secondly, the campaign won a Gold Award for a radio commercial 'Drive', as presented by The Institute of Creative Advertising and Design. This was the only gold award presented at the 2002 Institute of Creative Advertising & Design ceremony.

The campaign has also been publicly applauded throughout the

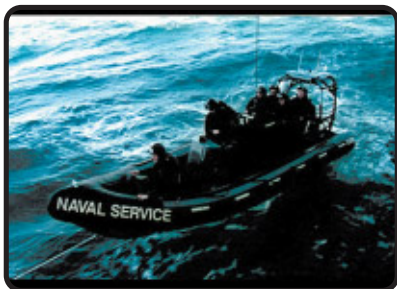
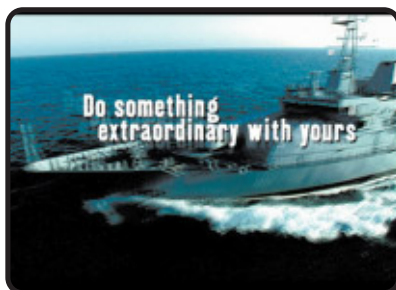
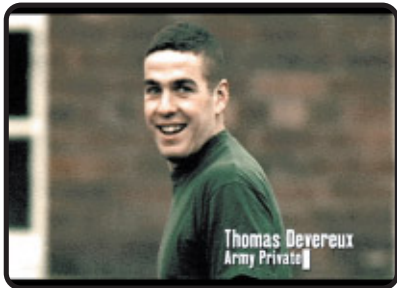
media (including prime time news) by the Chief of Staff of The Irish Defence Forces and by the Department of Defence.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Given the absence of any other variables which could have impacted on the advertising objectives and the fact that all the other variables (eg. Employment levels) which could have impacted on the advertising objectives remained constant during the period which the case study refers to, this campaign is a strong and compelling example illustrating the effect advertising can have.

The senior client contact in the Irish Defence forces Lt Cmdr Jerry Buckley commented: *"This advertising campaign needed to work very hard in achieving the objectives which we in the Irish Defence Forces set. We are very satisfied with the results. We are in no doubt that the advertising campaign has been very effective in how it has impacted on the organisation"*.

The campaign has achieved far beyond initial expectations. It was received very positively by the general media, the internal Defence Forces audience and the desired external target audiences. It represents an outstanding case for the impact of advertising.





**Could you operate under these conditions?**

**DOCTORS-MEDICAL CORPS.** As a doctor in the Irish Defence Forces, you'll be operational in the most extreme conditions of war.

As a doctor in the Irish Defence Forces, you'll be operational in the most extreme conditions of war. You'll be on the front line, in the most extreme conditions of war. You'll be on the front line, in the most extreme conditions of war. You'll be on the front line, in the most extreme conditions of war.

**A life less ordinary**

**THE DEFENCE FORCES**



**We are economists, historians, soldiers, strategists, physical trainers, pilots, navigators, psychologists, mariners, weapons instructors, tacticians, human resource managers.**

**Above all we are leaders.**

**2002 Cadetship Competition.**

**Army Officer, Air Corps Officer (Pilot), Naval Service Officer and Army Signaller Officer.**

**As an Officer in the Irish Defence Forces, you will be trained to lead in every way. But the true test of leadership is in the toughest situations and toughest jobs. There comes a point when you are challenged and you will need to perform to the highest standard in a variety of roles. What's more, you need to perform to these standards, from the very outset.**

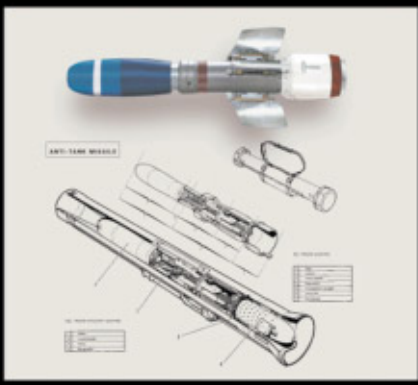
**To bear such responsibility, you will be selected through a rigorous selection and testing process. If you are selected, you will get what it takes, you will take up the challenge and stand up to a career that is far from the ordinary.**

**For application forms and further information contact: Defence Forces Recruitment, Personnel Section, 2700, Malpas Street, Dublin 6. Tel: 011 494194, 494204 Fax: 011 494193.**

**A life less ordinary**

**THE DEFENCE FORCES**





**ANTI-TANK MISSILE**

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Engineering or Science Graduates, to purchase either a Bachelor's Degree or a Master's Degree or to enter the Army or the Royal Air Force or the Royal Naval School of Maritime Operations, you should be of an age to be eligible for entry into the Army, the Royal Air Force or the Royal Naval School of Maritime Operations. You should also be a resident of the United Kingdom and be a member of the British Commonwealth or the Commonwealth of Independent States. You should also be a resident of the United Kingdom and be a member of the British Commonwealth or the Commonwealth of Independent States.

For a full range of information, visit our website at [www.defenceforces.gov.uk](http://www.defenceforces.gov.uk)

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For application forms and further information contact: Defence Forces Recruitment, Personnel Centre, 100, Parnell Street, Dublin 2, D02 R226. 01-454 4444. 0800 123 4567. Email: [recruitment@defenceforces.gov.uk](mailto:recruitment@defenceforces.gov.uk)

**A life less ordinary**

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