

Date: 12/15/96

To: Gary Orren

From: Vladimir Petit Medina-MC-mpa

Subject: Persuasion-Major paper

- *How to make the military service attractive ?*

How to persuade young Venezuelans to have interest in serving?

- *The cause*



Persuasion-Major Paper
How to make the military service attractive ?



Military Conscription in Venezuela

Context:

- 65% of under-18-year-old people refuse to serve
- Deficit of troops (39%), causing dislocation in the defense system
- More than 25.71% of serving soldiers were discharged and dishonored as a result of their participation in coup attempts.
- Unemployment of young people represents nearly 59% of total

Military Service Characteristics:

- Constitutional duty and a prior obligation for every 18-year-old citizen
- Fundamental to preserve the defense system..
- Every State must meet the number of contingents assigned
- Coercitive
- Wage: \$80 per month minus the cost of uniform and boots.
- 2-year service.
- Reduced social-benefits (relatives excluded)



Persuasion -Major Paper
How to make the military service attractive ?



Military Conscription in Venezuela

O Hour

- People upset: -Coercitive measures
Cops earned Bs.500 for each conscript
-Collateral problems: quality
brutality
- Number of contingents was insufficient
- Increasing presence of Colombian guerrillas in the frontier.

- New Terms- The Reform

-Conscripts serve near home
(extrapayment for service on the frontier)

-National minimum wage for volunteers
(\$300 with no discounts and inflation)

-Severance packages
(bonus, prizes)

-Private insurance for conscripts and close relatives

-Special training service
(dental and automobile)

- *Audiences:* 18-year-old Venezuelans (potential servants), their parents and spouses

I analyzed recent polls(In this case Conciencia 21-Konrad Adenauer Stiftung-carried out in July 1996- 2000 samples) trying to connect my own knowledge with the outcome of the survey. These are my impressions about the audiences:

Spouses:

- They think the man is supposed to maintain the whole family
- They do not like to be far away from their partners
- Economical aspiration: to own houses and cars
- Objectives: stability and good economical situations
- Desired coverage by a private insurance company
- TV (soap operas)
- They love to enjoy life and tourism
- Intense social mobility aspirations
- Poorly informed

18-year-old- people venezuelans

- Service is not an alternative to analyze
- Disappointment and sadness caused by the unemployment and the experience as a requirement
- Pessimism
- Open to almost any new source of employment
- Willing to settle down and establishing a family
- They admire heroism
- Low educational levels
- Economical aspirations based on the richness of our country and the oil myth: they want to own a house and a car as signs of prosperity
- Low ethical standards and great ethical aspirations at the same time
- High Ambitions
- They want to support the family and do not want their spouses to work, maybe influenced by the macho theory.
- They rather watch TV (sports &TVSeries) -Intense feeling of exclusion
- Poorly informed

Parents:

- They love traveling a lot
- They think they deserve a vacation and a good retirement
- They want their sons to afford some family expenses and they want them to feel happy
- Wishes for a positive and morally right job for their sons
- Afraid of the possibility of their sons becoming thieves
- Image of social ascend: their sons holding the degree they did not have
- They do not want be far away from their sons
- Willing to give some protection
- High ethical standards
- Great aspirations
- They read newspaper every day/TV-news
- Most of them were able to buy a car and they want their sons to have the same opportunity
- Intense anxiety

So, the whole campaign is designed to take advantage of this information. The fact that I have analyzed the most recent polls proves my conviction in the sense that they are very good elements to be taken into account in order to reinforce our intuitive knowledge and good ways to measure the acceptance of the new models of thinking.

- **Persuasion Channels:** Television, newspapers ads, stickers, posters and street signs.
- **Characteristic of the campaign:** 1) Messages of quality to be aired many times a day; 2) Focusing on the salience; 3) Directing and calling attention ; 4) Insisting on the positive aspects; 5) Variables of the same theme , three different strategies for three different audiences: the potential server, their spouses and mothers; 6) To massive and political elites as well .
- **Strategic timing:** 1) An intense two-month TV Campaign with a variety of messages and the repetition of the same slogan; 2) Using posters and street signs from the very beginning of the TV campaign to three months later; 3) Newspapers Ads, after the first months of the TV campaign and using the names and characters of the testimonials; 4) Stickers since the very beginning of the campaign.
- **THE CENTRAL SLOGAN**



Tasks: 1) Changing the attitude toward military service of potential servants:

Most people and specially potential servants have had the idea that the armed forces represented a consistent threat to their tranquility and considered themselves potential victims of their regular aggressions. But I plan to change this situation. The campaign aims to get the least change necessary : I am not trying to convert potential servants from one extremist position to another , but to convert them to a neutral one in which emotions, benefits and feelings can work more easily. Potential servants exclude themselves due to previous beliefs and prejudices, also fear. So, as long as they do not want to listen anything from the military service the first step is to bring the people out from the victimized circle and, then, call their attention to take them to a neutral point. A second step is to sell the image of a career and not only the idea of a military career. Just a career as many others, as good or bad as many others. And this is an important element because of the current high rate of unemployment. So, in times of distress and necessity, a real career which is not a threat anymore, emerged as a serious possibility to analyze; **2) Activating:** in terms of drawing and directing attention to the topic by touching the old patriotic feeling and crafting an effective media campaign. Attention is the currency of persuasion and it is essential to get a real change of attitude. Polls show that one of the topic that deserves more attention from Venezuelans is Patriotism itself . Venezuela is a Country in which Patriotism and Nationalism represent a heritage from our Liberator Simon Bolivar. In the, Schools people learn the intense feeling and the pride of being descendants of the glorious

Bolívar, the most important southamerican of the history. Also, Patriotism is a feeling associated with professional soldiers but not with the military service. Therefore, mixing both choices is a way of preserving an alternative and drawing a complete attention . Appealing to those feelings has two main purposes: to draw attention and emotion, and establishing a clear association with the most respected sector in our country: professional soldiers; **3)Deactivating:** defusing the negative point of view by showing a new image of the service. Most people used to have the idea that military service was the hell and the new image can surprise them a lot. That is the reason why some TV ads include an open invitation to see how different is the service; **4)Reinforcing:** strengthening an existing opinion.." being a professional soldier implies some status and a way of living that most people respect". In fact, this is the most common idea about the military career but it did not work for the service attractive. Why? Because most Venezuelans thought that military service was not a career and they did not know there was a connection and a possibility to continue further military career after serving. Then, identifying both alternatives and reinforcing the primary idea represent a clear way to succeed ; **5)Conversion:** changing the existing reserves about the service that mothers (" the service is like losing my son" ..) and wives (" the service is like hell for him and for us") have. The way of doing it is: a- selling the new advantages of the service which are specifically related to them; b- giving them the sense of stability which is the highest aspiration of most relatives;and, c-convincing them that they will be enjoying those benefits at the

time the right thing is being done. Also, the campaign focuses on those people because they strongly oppose the military service. In fact, they are more radical than potential servants. According to the polls, 71 % of spouses and parents have a negative idea of the service, because of previous experiences and negative socio-economical implications that directly affected them. I want to turn them into new advocates who will try to convince the potential servant to join the armed forces. In taking them from one extremist position to another one, I am defusing the most powerful exogenous influence on potential servants which usually drives them to reject the military service. Succeeding represents the setting of the most influential network of advocates to lead the best human resources to the service by gaining the best allies.

Strategy: 1) **To draw attention to a new model of military service** : no coercive measures, respect to the citizen and the possibility of a whole new career as profesionalized as any other. 2) **To point out the new collateral and concrete benefits of the military service itself:** not only for potential servants but for their whole family, like private insurance, severance packages, new bonus, etc. In few words, selling the benefits to potential allies who are in current search for them; 3) **To focus on the salience of the issue as a way of looking for an opinion shift to the center.** This is an emotional campaign designed to make the audiences feel instead rather than think. It is crucial to capture the attention and emotions by working on the salience the less resistant part of a position will be attacked . However, it requires a high quality of the messages ,a

professional timing and a previous research (analysis of polls,etc) ; **4)To implement a dynamic,attractive and complete media campaign:** propaganda and advertising. The propaganda stuff will be considered a message of a certain and concrete group and the clear objective is to reinforce the pride, prestige and stability attached to the military world and sell them as new components of the military service. The advertising itself is designed to appeal to every single member of the said audiences, in pursuit of the conversion, activation and deactivation; **5) To use empathy and assertiveness as instruments to appeal to normative principles** (ethical standards and nationalism as right things). So, people should feel the message and after a while , accept it as trustworthy and logically and ethically sound; **6) To assess weaknesses and strengths:** many people respond to military service in position issue terms and in performance terms and I want them to respond in valence terms trying to get some identification with those that are attached to the service itself: respect, pride, dignity and economic and social stability (as the first step of prosperity). That is why I want to mix the service and the career itself; **7) To avoid reception gaps** by anticipating those indirect and opposing messages most TV stations are unaware of and by trying to cancel them before being aired, specially those messages in the dialogues of soap operas (implementing the designated driver strategy) and some expressions in the Prime Time News.

Weapons: **1)Social Proof**, exploiting similarity, using many testimonials of normal people with common interests in order to establish the military service as the right thing to do for those who are eligible. I will also use the sense of “ wave” or general

movement in one sense that attracts many people to follow it (at the end of every ad many people appeared on the screen, like an implicit massive approval and collective desire). Similarity is indeed very important and so I intend to make the members of the corresponding audience feel that those on the screen are people just like them : a-“People like you”: it is an essential message of the campaign which is intended to close the gap between the successful people on the screen and the audience. Mothers like you, young people like you, spouses like you. It is not that you are like them but they are just like you are . So, “I am like them” is the final implicit conclusion.b-the TV campaign also uses the most common patterns of those groups: people looking for economical stability, status, a permanent job, pride, enjoyment as well as the possibility to settle down and buy a house, ,etc. That is the reason why I decided to use testimonials as the key element of the campaign;

2)Authority: by using respected models “ of well-known military leaders who became famous or who seem to have succeeded in life. One TV ad is designed as the message of the most famous living general of my country who is a currently retired. I decided to use him as model because Italo del Valle Alliegro is famous thanks to his military expertise, real knowledge , bravery ,reputation of honest public servant, and credibility (according to the polls). I also used a physician in another ad because most Venezuelans trust medical doctors and believe they have a valuable knowledge. By the way polls show that the most important signs of authority for most Venezuelans are both the military and medical uniforms. Alliegro is not allowed to wear the green uniform anymore but the camera is supposed to look at some pictures of his military career on his side table and the physician must wear the traditional medical robe ; **3) Credibility:** mixing conviction and mistakes recognition to build it. I think it is essential to give a sense of sincerity by recognizing

that many mistakes were made in previous years but not to comment them extensively or specifically. Since the campaign is intended to work on the salience and appeal to emotions and feelings it should avoid the discussion about the content and specific negative facts. In one of the TV Ads, an officer in one military Parade says...."we made many mistakes in trying to meet the required number of contingents in previous years. That is true. And we all are very sorry. Now we reassumed the traditional way of serving and recruiting: voluntarily....." ..;

4)Personalization by making the campaign intimate and by using real names and real families in the ads. Also, by letting the audience share in some private knowledge of personal lives of the characters, and so, letting people get into their lives. In some of the testimonials the main characters personalize the message to the audience by referring to their fathers, mothers, spouses and family using their real names ; **5)Scarcity**: no room for all, the sense of an elite and the conviction that everybody want to serve but there is no room for all ;**6) Storytelling**: Sharing stories of real lives and using the testimonial style is the best way to engage the audiences. Then, using all the stories as a compendium of facts is like setting a rule.

7) Repetition: " Do the right thing" and "Be your own hero" are used throughout the whole campaign. This weapon makes the audience identify with and remember the message. Also it is important the intensity: whenever members of the audience are watching TV or reading the newspaper or walking down the streets or in a traffic jam, the logo of the campaign shall be present. Repetition will turn the logo into an automatic recall and will give a sense of general approval and recognition. **8)**

Association: Throughout the campaign the service is associated with: -the sense of a career,-the prestige of the armed forces, - the reputation of the military professionals,-the best values of our citizenship. Those popular aspects are present

in every single ad of the campaign. I want to connect the audience approval to those aspects with the military service by showing the association with positive values and right performance. **9) Taking advantage of a catch 22:** Most young people do not find job because experience is required and they have no opportunity to get it. This is a real catch 22 and represents one of the most common situations in our labor market which led to a shrinkage of young people employment. This real factor must be taken into consideration by showing that experience is not a requirement to join the armed forces which is a career and a serious job. In one of the TV Ads, the main character says....."And nobody asked me about my experience". **10) Simplicity and clarity of the Message:** Working to get a continuous recall in the mind of the audiences, familiar situations that are easy to understand and retain (as " These people are like you " or "Do the right thing") provide important elements that keep the audience interested. The message is so simple that no great effort is to be made in order to get it completely. **11) Humor:** just as an additional component to reinforce the positive salience of the message and to appeal to the best feeling. In some TV ads, it is attached to gestures of kids and proud mothers.

Appendix

TV CAMPAIGN:

Commercial # 1:

A young man is at home, with his family (two kids and spouse). Then he is playing baseball with his kids. Captions on the screen indicate that he is Captain (Army) Jose Rodriguez. His voice is listened while his images in action are on the screen: " I was unemployed and desperate.. I was so young and employers were looking for people with experience. How could I get experience without a job? Then I read in the newspapers that there was a drastic change in the military service. I went to their office and discovered a new world of opportunities..... And nobody asked me about my experience.

Images of the captain at his work in the Army:

Now my family is covered by one of the best insurance programs, I could buy my house and life is much better for me. Also, I hold a technical degree....

Again the camera is looking at him:

And this uniform gives me the status and the incentive every single Venezuelan desires ...And I am ready to continue improving".

Images of some privates saluting the captain.

Voice in OFF:

He is just like you.

But he decided to be his own hero.

Do the right thing.

Join the armed forces.

Commercial #2

An old woman with expressive eyes is sitting down in a chair by the stairs of her house. Middle class house.

.....I wanted Jesus to work but he did not find any job. He was very disappointed .I am a single woman who raised her two children with much sacrifice....So, I began looking for something for my son. A friend suggested the military service. I refused to. When he decided to serve I got shocked.....That was two years ago. I am very proud. (the camera looks at some photographs on a side table) ...Now everybody respects him and he loves his job. Thanks to it I could buy my house, with a special credit. And today we are leaving on a vacation trip to the Island of Margarita, which is one of the benefits of his career.

Door bells sound.

I gotta go. Remember that soldiers are always on time.

The mom gives a candid salute to the camera. She is yelling on her way to the door and opened it with a smile

I am on my way!!!!

Voice in OFF:

Do the right thing.

For you and your family.

Join the armed forces.

Commercial #3:

A beautiful woman is in a supermarket. she is grabbing a cart and two beautiful kids are in there. She looks at the camera.

That was terrible. We got married. No place to live together and no money to settle down. No job. For years we have to move around.... I thought it was the end of the world.

She continues taking products....

Then one day he told me about joining the armed forces. I lost the consciousness for a while. The day he came to say Good Bye I did not want to see him...He just said; You gonna see it. I am doing the right thing. I know it". A friend told me :.....It is not the military service anymore. Now It is a career. Just be patient"We have two beautiful kids and our own house.. Also, I am going to the school again.... And We are proud.

The kids salute with a banana

Voice in OFF:

Do the right thing.

For you and your family.

Join the armed forces.

Commercial #4

A sergeant

Many people say that military service is a duty of patriotism. In my case, I decided to serve because I did not have a job. ..Now I got a degree and many benefits.... I feel that I owe my country a lot and it is worthy to give my best in gratitude. Because the Nation gave me an opportunity to be all I can be.

He says bye to his wife and kids and gets his military hat on.

Voice in OFF:

Do the right thing.

For you and your family.

Join the armed forces.

Commercial #5

Few images of the subversive riots headed by professionals agitators in 1990. An image of the then Minister, Italo del valle Alliegro who led the country back to stability. He became a famous man. Now in retirement, in his house:

Many people remember me due to the fact that I was the defense Minister in that terrible time. Now, after my retirement, people still give me their respect in the streets, but they

are not looking at me as an individual, but what I still represent: the armed forces....I am proud of being associated with stability and protection. But I am also proud of being associated with the most respected institution in the country.\

Voice in OFF:

This man is like you.

He just decided to be his own hero.

Do the right thing.

Join the armed forces.

Commercial #6

A general is supervising a rehearsal of a military parade. Jets passing through,tanks and music.

We made many mistakes in trying to meet the contingents in previous years. That is true. And we are all sorry. Now we want to reassume the traditional way of serving: voluntarily, and the traditional way of winning: giving our best....Now everything is new. Come to see it.

Voice in OFF:

Do the right thing.

Join the armed forces.

Commercial # 7

A military physician is healing someone at the Military Hospital .He wears the medical uniform(servants and their families). Then he looks at the camera:

I am a soldier. And a physician. This is not the hell . Indeed, for these people this hospital is heaven itself and we are trying to give them the best medical attention...We work hard giving back the people what we are receiving from them: commitment.

We are not a threat. We are a hopeOur ambition is to serve . Our aspiration is to dignify, every single day of our lives, the profession of our liberator, Simon Bolivar.

Voice in OFF:

This is a man is like you.

But he decided to be his own hero.

Do the right thing.

Join the armed forces.

Commercial #8

A civilian dentist assistant is working attending someone.

I am a reservist. I decided to become a reservist after serving for two years in the armed forces. I learned dental techniques and it became my profession.....I decided to live as a civilian again. But I learned to love the armed forces and I want to be as close as possible.....I owe them a lot. And my country can count on me.

Voice in OFF:

Do the right thing.

Join the armed forces

Commercial #9

A face . At the back one can see a beautiful landscape. Captions indicate that it is the Battle field of Carabobo.

Here is where our freedom was gained. ...A small army just raising the inspiration of the ideals as flags was able to beat one of the most powerful armies in the world...Now we have a great army, but many international threats are surrounding us. Thereforeee, there are new battle fields. Are we as brave as those guys were? I think the answer is yes. And that is why I am here for.

A new and broader image shows the man putting his military hat and riding a white horse across the battle field.

Voice in OFF:

This man is like you.

But he decided to be his own hero.

Do the right thing.

Join the armed forces.

Commercial #10

Captions indicate that we are back to 1996.An old woman is at the telephone.

Mr. Senator, my son was in the movies last night and the draft came and arrested him. As a criminal. Can you believe it?. That is why I am calling you: Please get my son out of the military service. I do not want him to be in hell....

Voice in OFF:many mistakes were made in order to meet the demanding requirements of the defense system. So, changes were implemented and the new way of serving is drawing everybody's attention. severance packages, special incentives, status,etc. turned the situation into a new condition.

The current situation.....Another old woman.

Mr. Representative, I have a son who is eighteen and he is so proud of his country. Do you think you can help him find a room in the armed forces?..Yes, he is very patriotic and he really wants to serve but he has to line up for a long time to find some opportunity. It seems to me everybody wants to serve....

Voice in OFF:

Do the right thing.

Join the armed forces

Commercial#11

My name is Luis Rodriguez. My father was a well -known lieutenant and when he died, the armed forces took care of all. Today, his name has been assigned to this new military hospital and my son, who decided to be a soldier is here with us.

He takes a look at the sign with the hospital's name.

Dad would be very proud.

And we, common Venezuelans, like you all, have found ourselves in the road of happiness, prosperity and values.

Thanks Dad.

Wherever you are now.

The young soldier pushes his father's wheelchair surrounded by many young soldiers wearing their uniforms.

Voice in OFF:

Do the right thing.

For you and your family.

Join the armed forces.

- Newspaper ads....

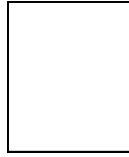
A new story about Venezuelans....



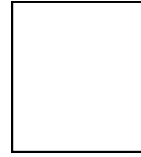
Cap.Lus Rodriguez



Dental Assistant xxx



Sargeant XXX



Automobile technician



These people are just like you

They were looking for a way of improving their lives

They found it

And they also
found a career.

**Now they are their
own heroes!!!!**

Do the right thing.

Be your own hero !

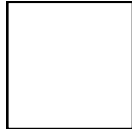
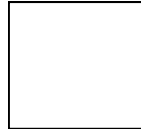
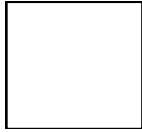


Join the Armed Forces.

A new story about Venezuelans....



Miss XXXXXXXXXX
wife of sargeant xxx
or mother of Sargeant..



Uncertainty is just far away.

Their lives have a common
sense and a new path

Now, as a family, they have
a hope and a clear
commitment

Happiness and pride....

Do the right thing.

For you and your family



Join the Armed Forces.

Car's Stickers

Proud military Dad

Do the right thing.

I have my own hero

Do the right thing.

I did the right thing

Do the right thing.

For spouses

For Parents

For old servants
or Reservists

