

INVICTUS GAMES 2017 COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Executive Summary

We are pleased to present the following communications plan for Invictus Games 2017, covering the period of Feb. 6, 2017 to March 31, 2017.

Ninety-six per cent of Canadians recognize that post-traumatic stress injury is a problem for the military, and 75 per cent believe the Invictus Games have the power to transform how people think about mental illness (maru/vcr&c research, June 2016).

Invictus Games 2017 has been successful in generating a discussion regarding mental illness leading up to the Games. During the team-themed month (February) and adaptive sport-themed month (March), we would like to focus on the Games and how training and participation in them have supported athletes' recovery from mental and physical injuries. We will also be creating content leading up to the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge in April and posting it on social media, which we hope will engage the youth audience and educate them on Canada's military history. We believe this content will generate excitement for the sporting events and watching the athletes compete, which will lead to an increase in ticket sales.

Based on a briefing session with Michael Burns, Stephanie D'Lima and Barry Waite on November 28, 2016, and a thorough review of the Invictus Games 2017 website and November 2016 presentation deck, we understand both your business and communications priorities for the next two months. We understand your success factors to be:

1. Increased interest and engagement in Invictus Games 2017, which will lead to an increase in ticket and merchandise sales.
2. Increased exposure for Invictus Games, which will attract and empower people to become donors, volunteers, advocates and ambassadors for current and future Games.
3. Increased awareness of the rehabilitative power of sport in overcoming mental and physical injury, which will lead to an increase in funding for research and treatment programs that help injured military members and veterans.

Research Summary

The Invictus Games is a multi-sport event open to service members who have been injured, mentally and/or physically, as a result of their service. Prince Harry was inspired to create the Invictus Games after attending the Warrior Games in the United States. The 2017 Invictus Games will take place in Toronto, Canada from Sept. 23-30, 2017. The Invictus Games 2017 will involve 1,500 volunteers and 550 competitors from 17 nations competing across 12 sports.

Media Coverage

Media coverage for the Invictus Games 2017 has been positive, however, fairly sparse. The majority of media mentions of the Invictus Games have been in relation to Prince Harry and most recently, his relationship with Meghan Markle, who films in Toronto.

News releases: news releases are distributed on the Canadian News Wire and published on the “news” section of the Invictus Games 2017 website.

Social Media

Currently, the Invictus Games 2017 is active on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. Posts with the most engagement on all social media platforms tend to include photos or videos, particularly those involving Prince Harry. During past Invictus Games, the most engagement with social media platforms has occurred during the duration of the Games. Hashtags used: #IG2017, #InvictusGames, #IAM, #JeuxInvictus

Invictus Games 2017 content

Blog posts: The Invictus Games 2017 website includes blog posts related to major news announcements for Invictus Games 2017, such as funding for an independent study on the impact of adaptive sporting events, and stories highlighting the experiences of service members and military families.

Podcast: The Invictus Games 2017 launched a podcast, Invictus Games Radio, in December 2016. The podcast, which is released two times per month, features interviews with those impacted by injuries during their service

Newsletters: Monthly newsletters recap each month’s top Invictus Games 2017 stories and upcoming events. Users can sign up for the newsletter on the Invictus Games 2017 website. Additionally, the Invictus Games 2017 has a monthly newsletter that is sent to everyone who has registered as a volunteer. The volunteer newsletter contains updates regarding when interviews will be held and frequently asked questions.

Internal factors:

The Invictus Games 2017 communications department has outlined monthly themes for content and communications strategies:

- February: team focus
- March: adaptive sport
- April: 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge

Communications Strategy

Invictus Games 2017 Vision

“Transforming empathy into empowerment”

The Invictus Games 2017 strives to empower Canadians to support service members and military families through donations, ongoing advocacy and research. The Games also capitalizes on the power of sport to inspire recovery and support rehabilitation of service members.

Invictus Games 2017 Goals

1. To sell tickets and Invictus Games 2017 merchandise, which will benefit the True Patriot Love Foundation.
2. To attract new donors, volunteers, advocates and ambassadors for the Invictus Games.
3. To further the profile and promote the legacy of the Invictus Games along with the rehabilitative power of adaptive sport.

Invictus Games 2017 Priorities

1. By releasing the schedule of the Invictus Games 2017 in May 2017, in order to excite and engage audiences about the Games and purchasing tickets.
2. By beginning to sell tickets 100 days (mid-June) before the Invictus Games start to give audiences ample time to purchase tickets and get excited about the event.
3. By selling merchandise online to make it easy for Canadians across the country and international fans to purchase Invictus Games 2017 gear.
4. By commissioning a study on the rehabilitative benefits of sport on PTSD to be released in September 2017.

Target Audiences

Toronto Youth	People with connections to the military	Sports fans	Southern Ontario residents	Baby Boomers
Invictus Games 2017 is an opportunity to engage youth audiences and tell them about Canada’s military history and the sacrifices the Canadian military makes.	Families of military members or people with connections to the military will be most empathetic to their struggles and situation and want to support them.	This is an international sporting competition, so one of the main groups of people to engage are sports fans who are likely to buy tickets to the Games.	They will be the most likely to purchase tickets for the Games because they won’t have to travel a significant distance to attend and there are a lot of military bases in this area.	They have a more disposable income, so they are more likely to buy tickets. They are also highly empathetic and educated on military history.

Communications Objectives

1. To increase media coverage and interest in the Invictus Games 2017 as measured by increased traditional and social media mentions and increase in merchandise sales.
2. To raise awareness and create a discussion about the rehabilitative power of sport in helping veterans overcome physical and mental injuries such as PTSD as measured by donations and traditional and social media mentions.
3. To empower Canadians to support their service members and military families as measured by increase in donations and advocacy.

Strategic Communications Priorities

1. By developing a robust social media campaign involving and educating youth about military history, past and present, particularly Vimy Ridge, that will promote interest and dialogue.
2. By writing a blog series on the adaptive sports and countries participating in the Invictus Games 2017 and promote them on social media.
3. By sending out an omnibus survey asking Canadians if they’ve used sports to help them recover from a mental or physical injury and create a media campaign based off the results.

Communications priorities

<p>By developing a robust social media campaign involving and educating youth about military history, past and present, particularly Vimy Ridge, that will promote interest and dialogue.</p>	<p>By writing a blog series on the adaptive sports and countries participating in Invictus Games 2017 and promote them on social media.</p>	<p>By sending out an omnibus survey asking Canadians if they've used sports to help them recover from a mental or physical injury and create a media campaign based off the results.</p>
<p>Tactics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an editorial calendar of social media content for each channel • Create Snapchat account for Invictus Games 2017 • Promote Invictus Games 2017 Snapchat account on social media and website • 'Past to present' stories profiling Vimy veterans (and today's military) • Research Canadian military history to share facts with audience • Use the mascot Vimy to engage young people (particularly on Snapchat) and emphasize April 9 Vimy Ridge centenary • Post content on Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter according to editorial calendar • Monitor social media engagement 	<p>Tactics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an editorial calendar for the blog posts • Research the participating countries and the adaptive sports • Write blog posts • Edit blog posts • Submit blog posts for approval • Publish the blog posts on the Invictus Games 2017 website • Promote the blog posts on the Invictus Games 2017 social media accounts • Monitor engagement with the blog posts on social media and the Invictus Games 2017 website 	<p>Tactics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design the poll questions about mental and physical injuries and the recovery process • Conduct omnibus poll • Develop a media list • Get survey results back and choose statistics to highlight in the news release • Write news release • Edit news release • Send out news release to media list • Post news release on Invictus Games 2017 blog and Canadian News Wire • Interview follow-up and coordination • Media monitoring

Overriding Strategy/Campaign:

The strategy of our campaign is to educate our target audiences, with particular attention to Canadian youth, about Canadian military history and the rehabilitative power of sport. Our campaign also aims to create a lasting legacy for the Invictus Games in Canada that will elicit donations and ongoing advocacy on behalf of Canadian military members and military families.

Key Messages:

Rehabilitative power of adaptive sport

Why? The effects of participating in military services have drastic consequences for the physical and mental health of those returning from combat. Many veterans experience episodes of short or sustained poor mental health as a result of their time spent in the military. This is especially the case for those who have suffered from an injury. It is important to use this sporting event as an opportunity to inform a wider audience.

- 96 per cent of Canadians are aware that PTSD is a problem for the military
- 75 per cent of Canadians believe the Invictus Games have the power to transform how people think about mental illness

What? The Invictus Games will present the chance for a broader discussion regarding rehabilitative power of adaptive sport.

How? The Invictus Games uses the power of sport to inspire recovery, support rehabilitation and generate a wider understanding and respect for the wounded, injured and sick servicemen and women. Through the sharing of personal stories, anecdotes and development of a broader community, the Invictus Games recognizes and celebrates the efforts of service men and women in a positive and encouraging manner. For more information please visit: <https://invictusgamesfoundation.org>

Battle of Vimy Ridge anniversary

Why? By connecting past stories to present, young people can learn about Canada's history while recognizing the sacrifices made by today's veterans and their families. Whether visiting Vimy Ridge through government sponsorship, independent school trips or through educational initiatives here at home, Invictus Games can benefit from highlighting stories, connections and similarities to the present day.

What? The Battle of Vimy Ridge is recognized as a defining moment in Canadian history and national identity. April 9, 2017 marks the 100th anniversary of the Battle, which will be commemorated on both sides of the Atlantic, with a particular outreach to youth.

- The 100,000 Canadians who fought there suffered approximately 11,000 casualties, nearly 3,600 of them fatal.

How? There will be a delegation travelling to the Canadian National Vimy Memorial in France, as well as events commemorating the battle across Canada.

Communications Operational Plan

Priority	Tactics	Timing	Evaluation and measures of success	Desired behaviour/outcome	Costs and how to be funded	Issues/risk management
By developing a robust social media campaign involving and educating youth about military history, past and present, particularly Vimy Ridge, that will promote interest and dialogue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop editorial calendar of social media content for each channel • Create Snapchat account for Invictus Games 2017 • Promote Invictus Games 2017 Snapchat account on social media and website • ‘Past to present’ stories profiling Vimy veterans (and today’s military) • Research Canadian military history to share facts with audience • Use the mascot Vimy to engage young people (particularly on Snapchat) and emphasize April 9 Vimy Ridge centenary • Post content on Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter according to editorial calendar • Monitor social media engagement 	<p>Feb. week 2</p> <p>Feb. week 2</p> <p>Feb. week 3-4</p> <p>March - one post per week</p> <p>Ongoing, starting Feb. week 3</p> <p>Ongoing - March</p> <p>Ongoing- March</p> <p>Ongoing - March</p>	<p>Increased followers on Snapchat</p> <p>100 likes and 50 comments or shares on each post</p>	<p>People will follow Invictus Games 2017 on Snapchat</p> <p>People will share their own Vimy/military stories</p>	<p>No cost; work to be done by Centennial College students free of charge</p>	<p>Labour intensive for potentially low return in views</p>

Priority	Tactics	Timing	Evaluation and measures of success	Desired behaviour/outcome	Costs and how to be funded	Issues/risk management
By writing a blog series on the adaptive sports and countries participating in Invictus Games 2017 and promote them on social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an editorial calendar for the blog posts • Research the participating countries and the adaptive sports • Write blog posts • Edit blog posts • Submit blog posts for approval • Publish the blog posts on the Invictus Games 2017 website • Promote the blog posts on the Invictus Games 2017 social media accounts • Monitor engagement with the blog posts on social media and the Invictus Games 2017 website 	<p>Feb. week 2</p> <p>Ongoing, starting Feb. week 3</p> <p>Ongoing in Feb. and March</p> <p>Ongoing, February for country profiles; March for sport</p> <p>Ongoing throughout February and March</p> <p>Ongoing throughout February and March</p>	<p>Measuring social media channels. Success will be over 100 likes/shares and over 50 comments on each channel</p>	<p>People are excited about the sports and will buy tickets when they go on sale. Post will also generate an awareness of the rehabilitative power of sport.</p>	<p>No cost; work to be done by Centennial College students free of charge</p>	<p>People may be annoyed they can't buy tickets sooner. Potential for negative comments online.</p>

Priority	Tactics	Timing	Evaluation and measures of success	Desired behaviour/outcome	Costs and how to be funded	Issues/risk management
By sending out an omnibus survey asking Canadians if they've used sports to help them recover from a mental or physical injury and create a media campaign based off the results.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design the poll questions about mental and physical injuries and the recovery process • Conduct omnibus poll • Develop a media list • Get survey results back and choose statistics to highlight in the news release • Write news release • Edit news release • Send out news release to media list • Post news release on Invictus Games 2017 blog and Canadian News Wire • Interview follow-up and coordination • Media monitoring 	<p>Feb. week 2</p> <p>Feb. week 2/3 Feb. week 2</p> <p>Feb. week 3</p> <p>Feb. week 3 Feb. week 4</p> <p>Feb. week 4</p> <p>Feb. week 4</p> <p>Feb. week 4, March week 1 Ongoing throughout March</p>	<p>Measure the number of articles about Invictus Games</p>	<p>Desired outcome is positive coverage for Invictus Games and sport recovery for mental and physical injuries</p>	<p>No cost; work to be done by Centennial College students free of charge</p>	<p>Lack of interest in media pitch</p>

Conclusion

At the heart of the Invictus Games Foundation is a strong desire to celebrate, support and encourage all service men and women to come together through the power of sport. The Invictus Games 2017 strives to empower Canadians to feel a stronger connection to their service members and military families in order to secure a lasting legacy of support through donations and advocacy.

We are confident this communications plan will help the Invictus Games 2017 reach its business objectives. The campaign will garner attention for the Invictus Games 2017, the competing nations and its teams, as well as educate Canadians on the rehabilitative power of adaptive sport and Canadian military history. The increased attention will result in interest in the Invictus Games 2017 leading to ticket and merchandise sales.

Next steps

Our next steps will be to assign tasks and gather research to be used in our blog series and social media campaign. We will also be creating our editorial calendar for the blog series and social media campaign, which we will share with you by Feb. 9, as well as a more detailed workback schedule.

Working together

We will be providing weekly summaries of our progress, along with a reminder of what we will be working on in the week ahead. We will also send content - or in the case of Snapchat, content storyboards - for approval before posting to any social media channels. All content posted on the Invictus Games 2017 website will be sent to the communications team for final approval and posting.

We look forward to working with the Invictus Games 2017 and finalizing the details of our communications plan, which we believe will help meet the Games' goals and embody the Invictus spirit.

Appendix A: Invictus Games 2017 SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Toronto already has the venues from the 2015 Pan Am Games ● Prince Harry is very recognizable and can attract a lot of media coverage ● Canadians have a strong sense of empathy for those impacted by war ● Awareness of the Invictus Games has skyrocketed in Canada and Toronto since the announcement that Toronto would be the next location of the Games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Association with war ● Unknown athletes/countries ● Latent empathy towards those impacted by war; most citizens only think about soldiers on Remembrance Day ● Don't want to look like it's exploiting sympathy for families impacted by war ● News outlets from around the world; journalists may not speak English ● After the Pan Am Games and World Cup of Hockey, people might not be interested in another big sporting event in Toronto
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create an engaging discussion about mental health and adaptive sport ● Create discussion about the impact of war on military families ● Awaken feelings of empathy for those impacted by war among Canadians ● Showcase important research being done by rehabilitative teams to help improve PTSI symptoms ● Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) will have just finished when the Games arrive; visitors can be harnessed in terms of becoming potential donors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Perception that the event glorifies war ● Public is often suspicious of how city money is being spent when there are big events like the Invictus Games ● People may not know what Invictus Games is beyond the name and association with Prince Harry ● Content about soldiers injuries may be triggering ● Potential for racism towards competitors from other nations ● Potential for contempt towards mental illness and physical limitations ● Prince Harry's extensive media coverage for his romance with Meghan Markle ● Unpredictable North American political climate means other causes such as equality, women's issues and immigration rights, to name a few, may attract heavy media attention and public concern, potentially diverting audience attention