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## RESEARCH UP-DATE

### Ipsos-Reid's: *"Reconnecting with Youth 2007", and Views on Policing 2007 (HR Diagnostic)*

#### OVERVIEW

The Police Sector Council has been working with Ipsos-Reid in the past few years to better understand the youth (18-30 year old) cohort - their attitudes, behaviours and perspectives on policing.

- in the Spring of 2005 Ipsos-Reid conducted research ***Reconnecting with Youth 2005*** - a national telephone survey of young Canadians (over 2000) aged 12 to 30 years.
- in the Summer of 2006, continued research - ***Reconnecting with Youth*** - a national telephone survey of young Canadians (2012) aged 12 to 30 years
- in the Spring of 2007 directed research - ***Views on Policing*** - as part of a broader HR diagnostic, an on-line survey (1251) to properly situate policing within the current labour market reality; identify the attitudes and expectations among Canadian youth (18 to 30 years of age), including data concerning career aspirations and the implications for policing. Also two focus groups were conducted in Toronto with youth 18 to 30 years of age in order to test findings and survey results - each group included 10 participants the first group youth aged 18 to 24 and the second aged 25 to 30. Each focus group session was 2 hours in length.
- in the Summer of 2007 continued research - ***Reconnecting with Youth*** - on-line (2,418) and by phone (2,015) - on a broad range of topics related to careers in the public service sector and were able to reach the younger (12-17 year old) cohort.

These studies provide general information on youth values, concerns, and labour market. More importantly this research should be the catalyst for a process to change the opinions of young Canadians and those who influence career choices through a far-reaching marketing campaign about careers in policing.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

The following are some key data points to highlight consistencies and differences in the survey findings - both the quantitative and qualitative research. Specifically, the data references the commonalities, differences and trends identified through the youth cohort recruitment "lens."

The most telling part of the analysis compares a career in policing to 12 other careers fields - education, health, skilled trades, high tech(internet), federal government, retail, provincial government, the non-for-profit sector, NGOs in poorer countries, and the military.

The comparative results indicate that Canada's youth appear uninterested in pursuing a career in policing, and the responses trended downwards:

- **which field provides the most employment opportunities -** 3% (2005); 2% (2007) said policing
- **which field would you be most interested in a career -** 5% (2005); 4% (2007) said policing

If Canada's youth are disinterested in a policing career, then the sector could be in jeopardy.

## 2007 DETAILED FINDINGS BY THEME

The following data highlight the results on **three** of the key themes from the survey of interest to the policing sector.

- **Career Interest** - fields youth are **most interested in pursuing** - (in 2005 policing was at 5% and ranked 6<sup>th</sup>) :

1. Education such as teachers and counselors	17%	(18% in 2005)
2. Health care such as doctors and nurses	14%	(17% in 2005)
3. Skilled trades - electricians and carpenters	14%	(18% in 2005)
4. Internet and high technology	13%	(13% in 2005)
5. Banks and other financial institutions	8%	(18% in 2005)
6. The federal government	8%	(6% in 2005)
7. Retail	6%	(4% in 2005)
8. The provincial government	4%	(3% in 2005)
<b>9. Policing</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>(5% in 2005)</b>
10. Non-profit sector	4%	(2% in 2005)
11. NGO, working in poor countries	3%	(3% in 2005)
12. The military	2%	(4% in 2005)

- those who are most interested in pursuing a career in policing include: **8% of those aged 12-17**, as compared to 3% of those aged 18-24, and 3% of the 25-30 age group;
- also, **7%** respondents with less than a **high school education**, as compared to respondents with a university or post-secondary (3%) or a technical school or community college (3%) education
- note also differences for men and women - 4% of men and 3% of women in 2007, compared to 7% and 3% in 2005 interested in policing

- **Employment Opportunities** - career fields considered to have **the most employment opportunities** - (in 2005 policing was at 3% and ranked 7<sup>th</sup> above governments, non-profit sector and NGO in poor countries):

1. Skilled trades - electricians and carpenters	18%	(23% in 2005)
2. Internet and high technology	13%	(13% in 2005)
3. Health care such as doctors and nurses	12%	(15% in 2005)
4. Retail	12%	(11% in 2005)
5. Education such as teachers and counselors	12%	(14% in 2005)
6. Banks and other financial institutions	8%	(4% in 2005)
7. The federal government	6%	(3% in 2005)
8. The provincial government	4%	(3% in 2005)
9. Non-profit sector	3%	(1% in 2005)
10. The military	3%	(6% in 2005)
11. NGO, working in poor countries	2%	(2% in 2005)
<b>12. Policing</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>(3% in 2005)</b>

- those who believe policing offers the most opportunity include 4% aged 12-17, as compared to 2% aged 25-30
- note also differences for men and women - 2% of men and 2% of women in 2007, compared to 3% and 2% in 2005 who considered policing to have the most opportunities

■ **Employment factors** (a first time survey question) - “**what are the primary factors you would consider when contemplating future employment prospects**” -

Work life balance was clearly identified as a key factor for youth in their career choices - almost half of respondents (44%) choosing it as being either their first, second, or third most important factor. Interesting work was also a key consideration, 38 percent identifying this as one of their top three factors. Pay/compensation was identified by 37 percent, and Job security by 32 percent of respondents.

Percentage indicating the first most important factor (second most important in brackets)

- 19% - work-life balance (14%) = 33%
- 18% - opportunities to do interesting work (11%) = 29%
- 12% - pay or other forms of monetary compensation such as bonus opportunities (13%) = 25%
- 11% - job security (11%) = 22%
- 10% - work related to your field of study (7%) = 17%
- 6% - a job that contributes to the betterment of society (6%) = 12%**
- 5% - opportunities for advancement (8%) = 13%
- 3% - opportunities to work on your own (4%) = 7%
- 3% - opportunities for professional development/training (4%) = 7%
- 3% - an organization with a wide variety of career options (0%) = 3%
- 2% - a pension plan (4%) = 6%**
- 2% - vacation time (4%) = 6%
- 2% - opportunities to work with others (3%) = 5%
- 2% - an organization with a good reputation (3%) = 5%
- 1% - employment I enjoy(0%) = 1%
- 1% - opportunities to travel (4%) = 5%

Those who chose work-life balance as their first choice factor include:

- residents of Alberta (26%), as compared to Ontario (17%), and Quebec (16%);
- those aged 25-30 (22%) and aged 18-24 (19%), as compared to 16-17 (7%); and
- respondents with a university or post-secondary (22%), a technical school or community college (19%), or a high-school (22%) education as compared to those with less than a high school education (9%)

■ **Policing as a Career Option** - policing more likely to offer a job to be proud of, a good salary, and opportunities for advancement

- 25% - believed that policing would very likely offer them a career of which they would be **proud** - above average response on this factor - (25% in 2005)
- 20% - believed that policing would very likely offer **opportunities for advancement** - comparatively above average response - (21% in 2005)
- 14% - of respondents believed that policing would very likely offer them **interesting work** - above average response - (24% in 2005)
- 13% - believed that policing would very likely offer them a **good salary** - above average - (17% in 2005)
- 13% - believed that policing was very likely to offer them a **wide variety of career options**; the only characteristic where policing scored **below average**,



## OTHER KEY FINDINGS ON YOUTH

- **Youth Priorities** - youth continue to identify drugs as the most important problem facing them today - less than 6% (mostly younger) identified crime or violence about equal to the environment/ pollution
- **Priorities for Government** - reducing youth crime has fallen off their top 5 priority list, youth now believe government should be paying attention to protecting the environment, health care, poverty, and international conflicts
- **Engagement with Government** - youth still have cynicism towards politicians and government. Although a small majority are interested in politics, they continue to place a high value on civic involvement, protests or special interest groups. 7 in 10 have visited a government website
- **Workforce Entry** - majority are still planning to further their education, and career possibilities and planning are important issues. Most believe that they will need education beyond high school and are confident that they possess the knowledge/skills necessary to move easily in today's job market.
- **Expectations** - youth now rank "work-life balance" as their key consideration when choosing a career, and continue to follow traditional gender lines in their career outlook . While money is not the key career determinant, they believe that health care offers them the highest salary and question whether government would offer them interesting work
- **Quality of Life** - most considered Health the key determinant in their quality of life; having a job ranks second, being involved in the community and volunteering rank low. One in four youth believe that happiness is a key factor to a good standard of living. 99% think Canada is a good place to live and 17% attribute that to a safe and secure place with low violent crime
- **Internet** - youth have increasing high level of engagement with the Internet, participating in various online activities at least once a week - social participation is predominant , followed by gathering information about products or services, as well as downloading music files. They are skeptical about the accuracy of information found in online forums/blogs, and employ a variety of techniques - consulting alternative sources - to verify information. A quarter have created their own webpage
- **Volunteering** - unpaid work with community groups/voluntary organizations is less common - only two in five have volunteered time. Although they seem to embrace the values that engender volunteerism, but they don't seem to have, or make, the time
- **Values** - youth see freedom, keeping their word, and helping others worse off than themselves as being their most important values, and are proud of their country and its culture. They are somewhat less worried about the perceptions of those living in foreign countries, less optimistic about the future of Canadian democracy, and much less worried about Can/US relations. Youth have greater pride in the assistance Canada provides to poor countries than in our military contributions
- **Culture** - Most think that respecting cultural differences is an important aspect of being Canadian - that having two official languages both enriches the country and helps to define what it means to be Canadian. French respondents are more likely to read and/or speak English than English respondents are likely to read and/or speak French
- **Communicating with youth** - they spend more time using the Internet than engaging in any other recreational activity, and own or use any of several popular digital devices - cameras, cellular phones, MP3 players and video gaming consoles. Youth prefer communicating with the Government via the Internet, with in-person discussions as a strong second choice. Television advertising remains the most effective means of reaching youth, with web advertising as an additional viable option



## SUMMARY

In all the surveys, general perceptions and attitudes about policing are positive with about one in four respondents who say that they might consider a career in policing.

Respondents indicate that the police play a positive role in society as a whole, although many feel that the police should play a more active role in their community.

Most indicate that police officers have an obligation to be role models for others and that any given police force should reflect the diversity of the community it serves. They do recognize that some cultural communities do not view policing as a positive career choice.

Attitudes toward the police force as a career are positive overall - most would encourage others to join the police forces and feel that they would be supported by those around them if they chose a career in policing. Most agree that a career in policing comes with good pay, a wide variety of career options, though more limited opportunities for career advancement. The most appealing aspects of a career relate to a sense of benevolence. Likely candidates rate helping people and serving the community far ahead of job security and pension.

It is also interesting to note that many respondents cannot, or choose not to, identify any positive aspects of a career in policing. This may indicate a lack of general knowledge of specific aspects of a career in policing.

Overall, the negative aspects of policing tend to relate to health related issues like stress, safety and work/life balance. The least appealing aspect of a career in policing is that it is dangerous or unsafe.

**These results, and trends over the past 3 years, are cause for concern in recruitment policies/processes for attracting and selecting quality future police officer candidates.**

**The police sector is already facing significant human resource challenges: a diminishing youth cohort, an aging work force, forecasted high attrition rates, increasingly complex and demanding work environments, enhanced and changing skill/knowledge requirements, etc. Also getting-in to policing is burdensome in time/process/cost when other career fields are highly competitive for the same youth co-hort. A police service application comes with a rigorous and thorough screening/selection process - a large applicant pool is necessary to ensure the sustainability of the sector and the continued delivery of quality police services.**

**The survey results, can provide a catalyst for a national marketing approach and inform the development of a targeted recruitment strategy designed to generate interest in police work.**

**The police sector needs to continue detail and understand the dynamics of our labour market segment, actively address its vulnerability, and ensure the continued delivery of quality police services to the Canadian population.**