

Public Abstract

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Since the U.S. Air Force's inception in 1946, even after 60 years of air superiority and dominance, the Air Force struggles to find a recognizable image and identity among the five services, to include the U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. The AF dominates air, space and cyberspace, yet its "brand" has never reached audiences as well as the Marine Corps or Army.

According to multiple studies<sup>1</sup>, the Marine Corps has the most recognizable marketing slogan with "The Few, the Proud, the Marines." These studies, cited in the literature review, demonstrate the American public failing to recognize the core capabilities of the AF. That's not a failure on their part, but on the part of AF communicators to tell the AF story.

Continued publicity struggles follow what the researcher believes to be a major flaw with Air Force Public Affairs: failure to develop into a brand. As an AF public affairs officer, the purpose of this thesis is to examine the messages portrayed in the marketing campaign "Above All" and determine if the central AF themes were showcased, then propose a slogan and test it through qualitative analysis via semi-structured interviews and survey. This is intended as an exploratory study to better understand how to brand the AF.

Results will show the Air Force first has to develop its organizational identity and stick with an integrated marketing campaign for the long-term. Priority for AF communicators should be to tell the AF story to people in the AF.

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<sup>1</sup> United States Air Force (d) Air Force Symbol, Slogan & Ads, (2007); United States Air Force (g) Awareness of Air Force Advertising, (2007); United States Air Force (j) Influencer Views of the Services, (2007); United States Air Force (n), Slogans, Airman's Creed, Warrior Ethos, (2007).