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Canada This Month:

BC Election Ad Test

Public Opinion Research
Release Date: October 23rd, 2026
Field Dates: October 15th to October 19th, 2026

BC Election Campaign Ad Testing

This report presents results from ad testing of party ads from the 2026 BC election campaign. The data for this ad testing was collected on INNOVATIVE's post-debate online survey, in field from October 15-19, 2026.

What is ad testing?

Political parties, advocacy organizations, and brands all test advertisements during the creative process to ensure they are effective. At INNOVATIVE, our approach to ad testing usually begins by testing high-level concepts qualitatively, typically through focus groups or in-depth interviews, to understand audience reaction, uncover what resonates and identify potential barriers or areas of confusion. Based on the findings from the qualitative exploration, refined concepts, storyboards, or even a rough cut will be tested in a representative online survey to provide a quantitative test of the advertisements impacts on key campaign outcomes.

This report provides an example of the second step, applied to campaign ads from the 2026 BC election.

Step 1: Qualitative Exploration

Understanding the why

What we do

- Test early ad concepts through focus groups or in-depth interviews
- Explore immediate reactions, interpretations and emotional responses
- Identify which issues, themes and messages that resonates with voters and why

Step 2: Quantitative Testing

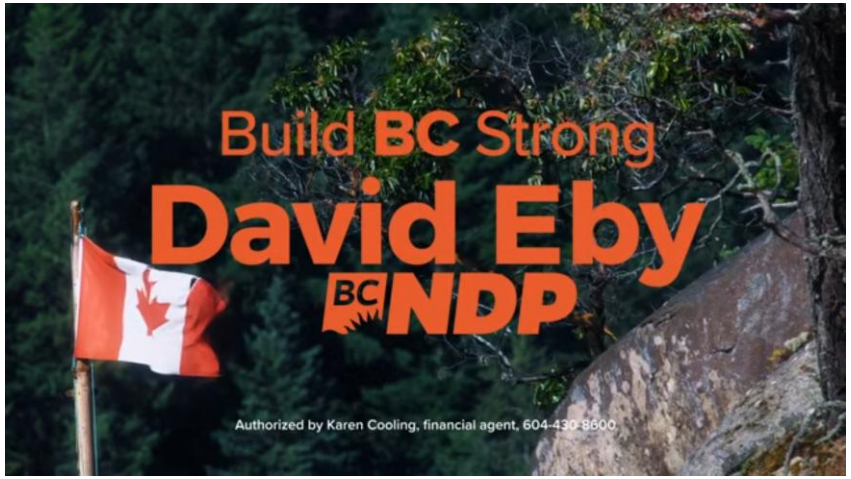
Quantify and validate

What we do

- Test ad concepts with a broader audience online
- Measure key indicators such as comprehension, credibility, appeal and persuasiveness
- Compare responses across concepts or audience groups where relevant
- Identify potential areas for improvement and fine-tuning

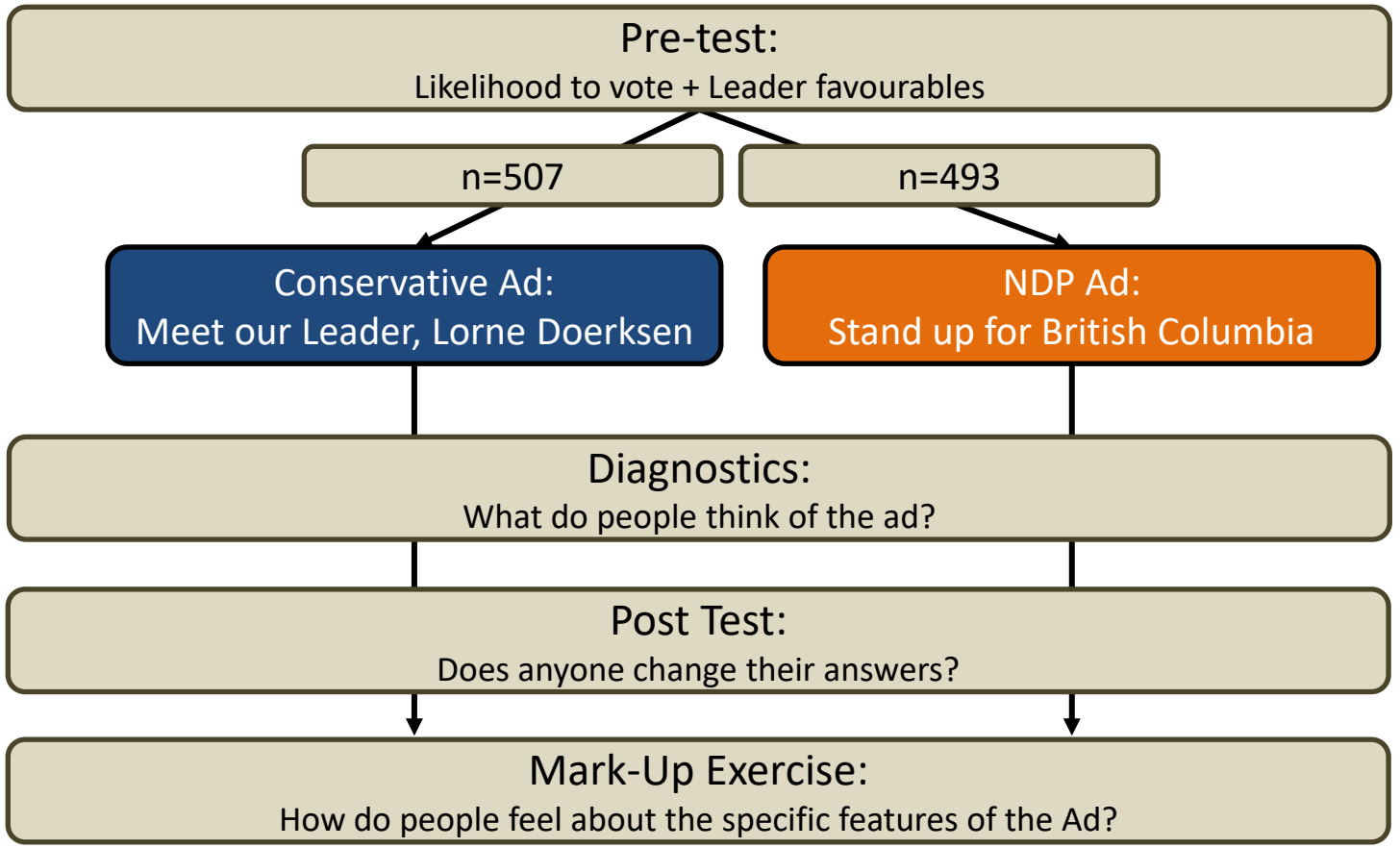
Online Ad Testing Design

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YYXMNxVugFY



Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-KJXsai9UO4

Ad testing overview



Approach to Online Ad Testing

This quantitative, online ad test is designed to answer three key research questions. First, did the ad move the overall numbers? Second, did the ad move the audiences that matter most? Lastly, why did the ad work or not work?

1. CORE PRE/POST TEST – DID THE AD MOVE THE OVERALL NUMBERS?

The pre/post test measures changes in key campaign outcomes before and after ad exposure to assess the overall effectiveness of the campaign. In this study, INNOVATIVE assessed whether exposure to the ad influenced respondents' likelihood to vote for each major party and the leader favourables for Eby and Doerksen.

2. TARGET AUDIENCE ANALYSIS – DID THE AD MOVE THE AUDIENCES THAT MATTER MOST?

We also examine results among priority audiences, such as swing voters, to determine whether the ad influenced the groups the campaign most needed to reach.

3. AD DIAGNOSTICS AND MARKUP – WHY DID THE AD WORK OR NOT WORK?

Using diagnostic questions, open-ended comments, and a structured mark-up exercise we identify what resonated, captured attention or created barriers. Negative ratings should be interpreted in context, as they may signal genuine concerns or reflect content that successfully captures attention and sparks an intended reaction (e.g. in an attack ad).

Overall Results

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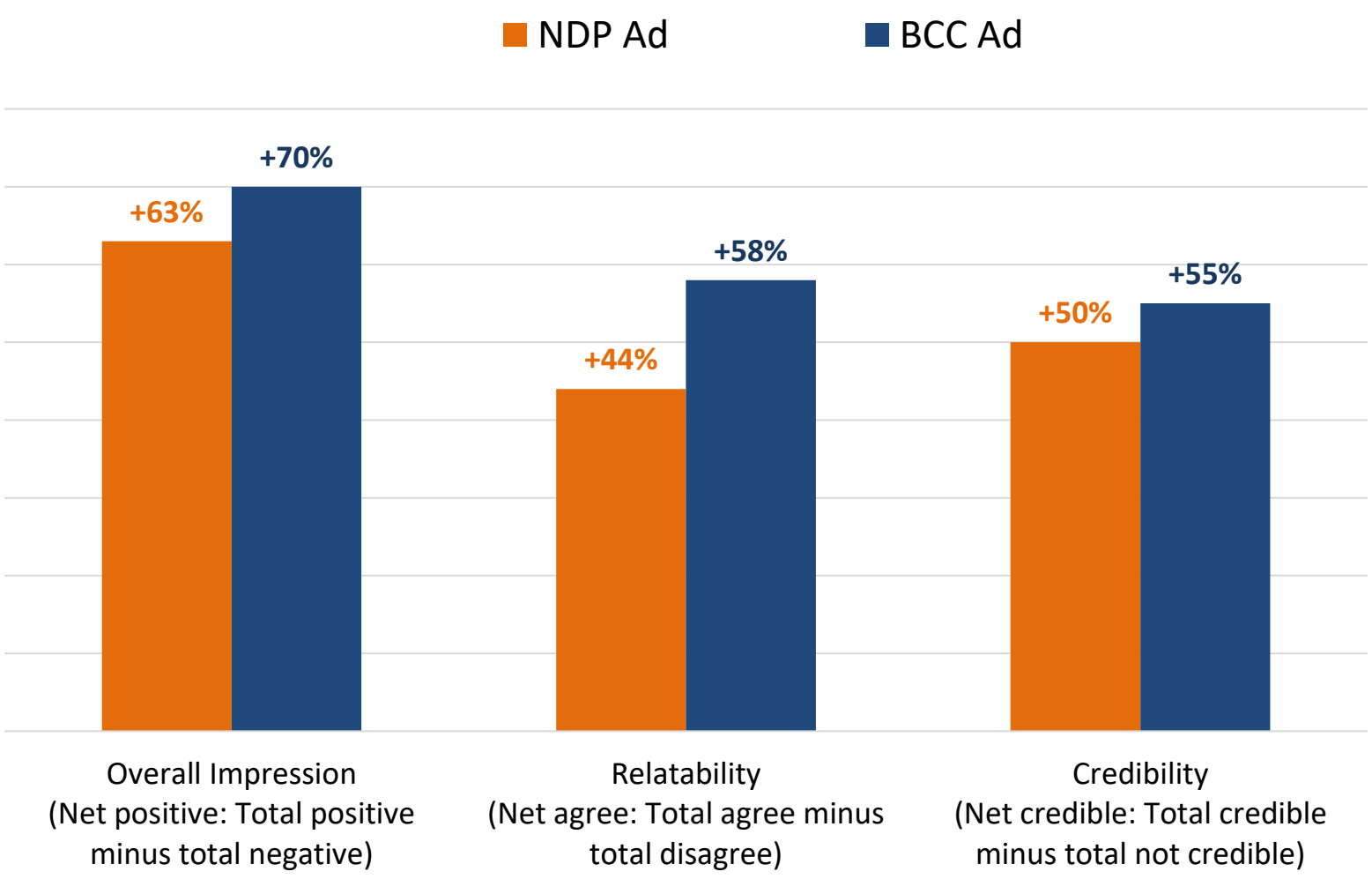
Ad Testing Diagnostics Explained

Among accessible voters for the respective parties…



After respondents watched one of the ads, we asked three diagnostics questions:

- **Overall impression**: Whether they had an overall positive or negative impression of the ad.
- **Relatability**: Whether they agree or disagree that the ad was "meant for someone like me".
- **Credibility**: To what extent they rate the ad as credible.

When evaluating advertising, we often place significant emphasis on relatability. Evidence suggests that it is a critical factor in driving both initial attention to an ad, as well as lasting recall and impact over time.

Diagnostics Results Summary: Both ads were well regarded, but the BC Conservative ad was more relatable to accessible voters

Meet our Leader, Lorne Doerksen

All voters

- Overall impression **+41%**
- Relatable **+28%**
- Credible **+25%**

Accessible

- Overall impression **+70%**
- Relatable **+58%**
- Credible **+55%**

Quotes from BCC-NDP Swing voters

"I want the cost down and he mentioned that"

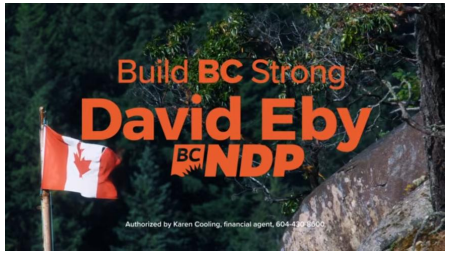
"Wants costs to go down"

"Change may be better than more of the same"

"Economics is a big concern but nothing else is addressed"

"Didn't really specify what he'd do to get us back on track"

"What he is saying is true - life does cost more, but would he be able to fix that or is it a global problem."



Stand up for British Columbia

All voters

- Overall impression **+35%**
- Relatable **+20%**
- Credible **+19%**

Accessible

- Overall impression **+63%**
- Relatable **+44%**
- Credible **+50%**

Quotes from BCC-NDP Swing voters

"Does not smear the opposition but points to NDP successes"

"I like how unifying the message is"

"It paints him in a good light"

"Eby appeared strong and in tune with the people"

"It makes me feel united"

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Pre-Post: Do the ads move the numbers? The Conservative ad shifted vote intention, while the NDP ad only moved leader brands but not vote

Pre-Post Impacts: Changes from pre-test to post-test in key outcomes

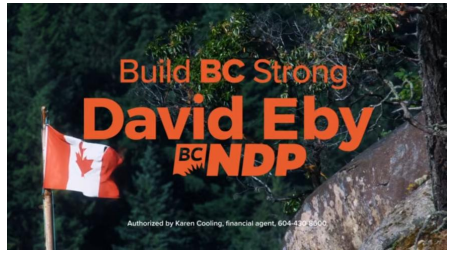
Meet our Leader, Lorne Doerksen

All voters

Likely to vote BCC	Doerksen Favourables
+6%	+4%
Likely to vote NDP	**Eby Favourables**
+2%	-2%

Accessible BCC voters

Likely to vote BCC	Doerksen Favourables
+6%	+3%
Likely to vote NDP	**Eby Favourables**
+2%	-3%



Stand up for British Columbia

All voters

Likely to vote BCC	Doerksen Favourables
-2%	-5%
Likely to vote NDP	**Eby Favourables**
+3%	+7%

Accessible NDP voters

Likely to vote BCC	Doerksen Favourables
-2%	-8%
Likely to vote NDP	**Eby Favourables**
+2%	+8%

Note: Changes in net scores (net likelihood, net favourable) from pre-test to post-test are shown. Underlined scores are statistically significant at a 90% confidence level.

Impacts by “Time for a change”

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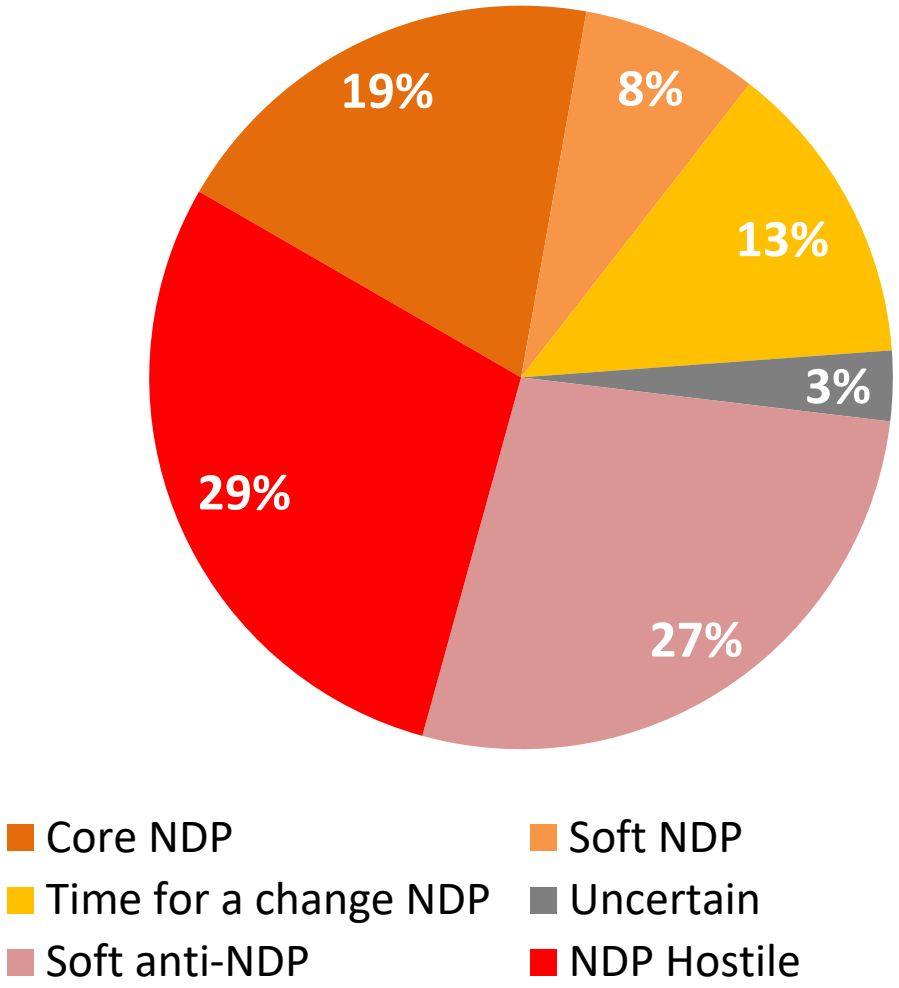
Segmentation Analysis: “Time for a change” segments

Time-for-a-change Segments



- Breaking out ad testing results across key audience segments provides additional insights about that ads potential impacts
- In this study, we found important differences across our “Time-for-a-change” segments:
  - **Core/soft NDP**: Voters who don’t think it is time for a change and agree the NDP are still the best option to form government
  - **“Time-for-change” NDP**: Voters who are conflicted. They agree it is time for a change, but they also agree the NDP are still the best option to form government. ***This is a critical swing segment for the NDP to grow and win votes from.***
  - **Soft anti-NDP/NDP Hostile:** Voters who think it is time for a change and disagree that the NDP are the best option to form government.

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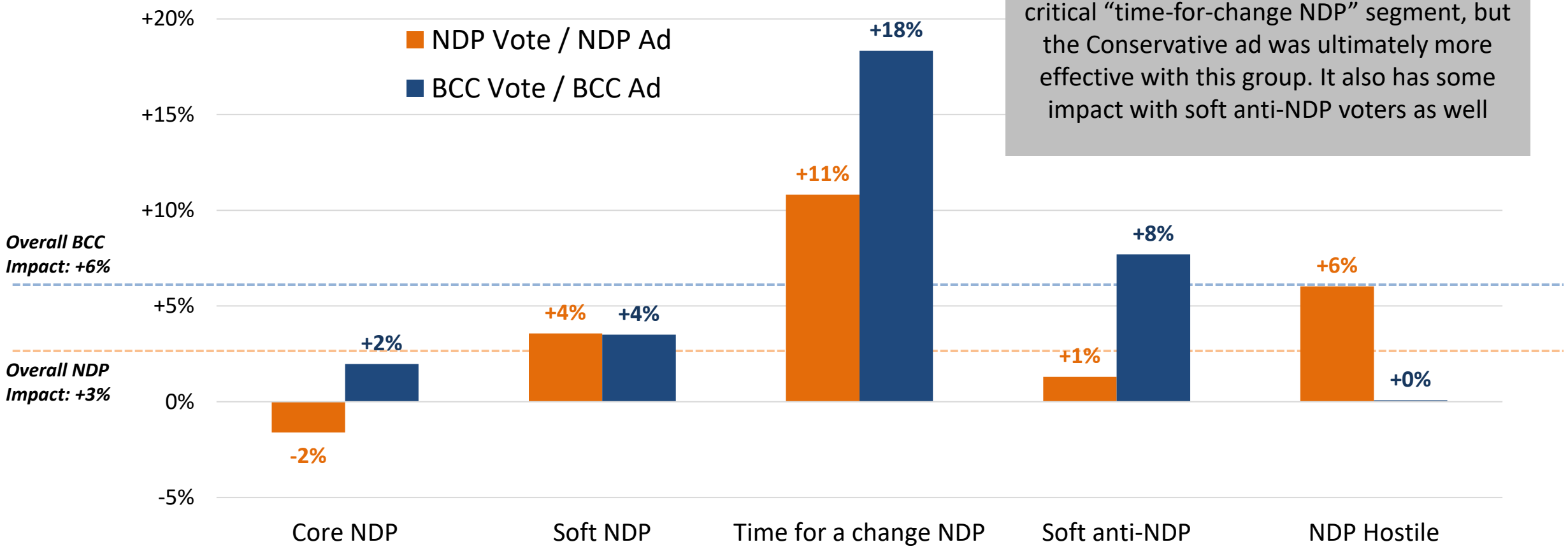
Pre-Post: Vote Impacts by Time-for-change segments

Net vote likelihood pre-post change BY time-for-change segments



Both ads had their biggest impacts with the critical "time-for-change NDP" segment, but the Conservative ad was ultimately more effective with this group. It also has some impact with soft anti-NDP voters as well

***Note:** Uncertain segment (3%) not shown due to small n-size*

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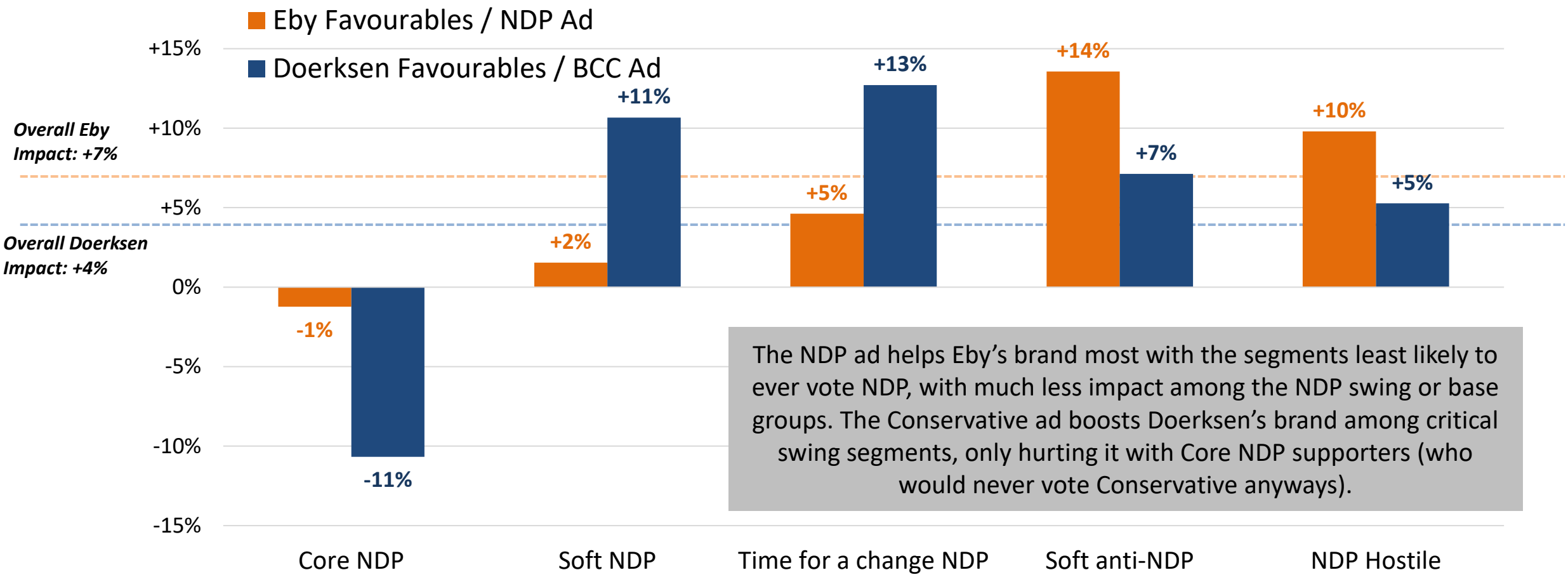
Pre-Post: Leader Impacts by Time-for-change segments

Net leader favourability impacts by time-for-change segments



The NDP ad helps Eby's brand most with the segments least likely to ever vote NDP, with much less impact among the NDP swing or base groups. The Conservative ad boosts Doerksen's brand among critical swing segments, only hurting it with Core NDP supporters (who would never vote Conservative anyways).

***Note:** Uncertain segment (3%) not shown due to small n-size*

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Example Markup results

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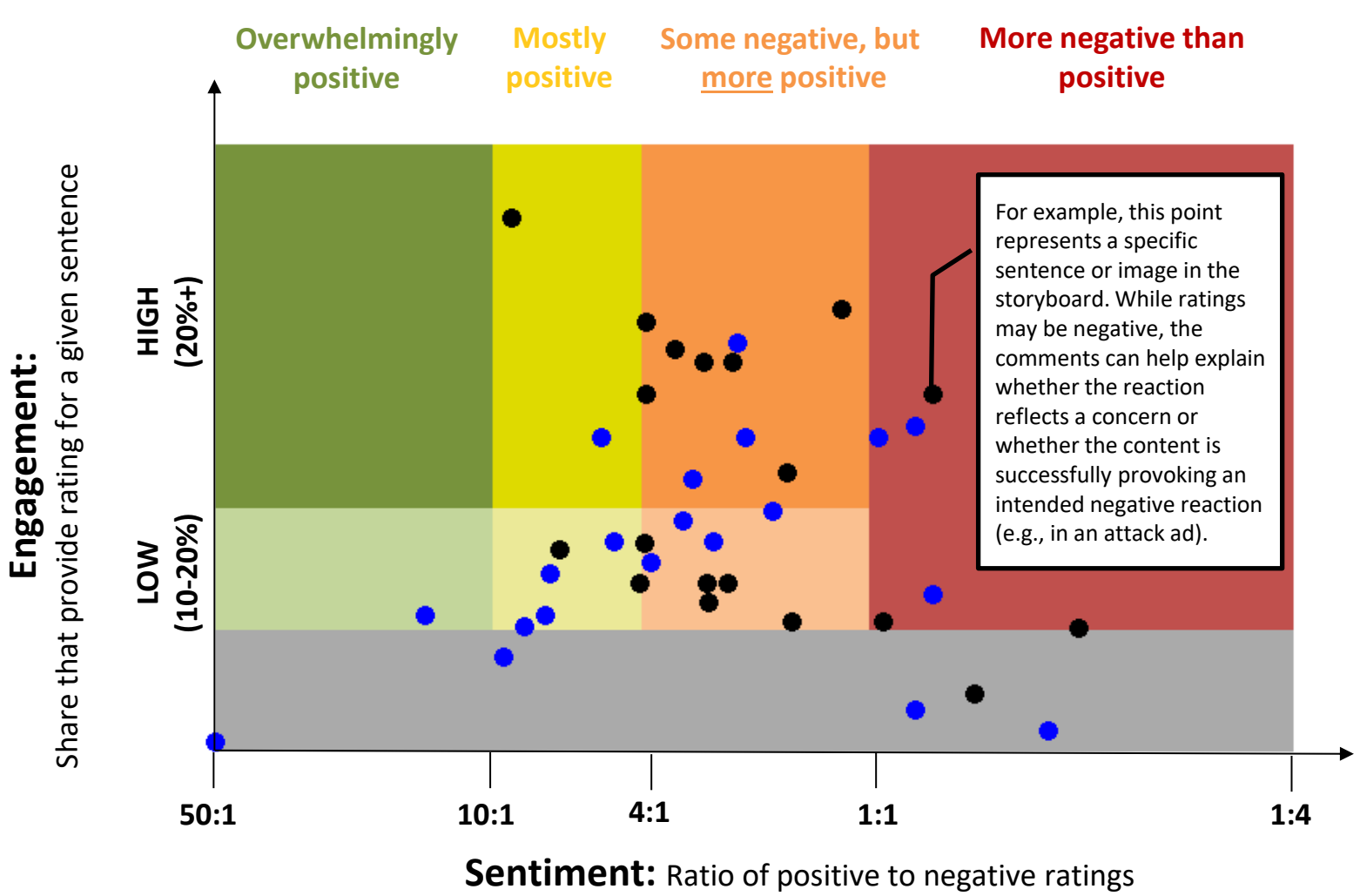
Mark-up Exercise: Gathering specific feedback

In the storyboard mark-up exercise, respondents see an interactive version of the storyboard where they can rate each sentence or image with a positive or negative reaction. They can also leave comments to explain their ratings. The chart below shows the overall summary of ratings. Each dot represents a single sentence or image from the storyboard. The markup data is based on accessible voters only, excluding those who say they would never vote for the ad's sponsor.



All positive reaction [Strong]

All positive reaction [Mild]

Mostly positive reaction [Strong]

Mostly positive reaction [Mild]

Mixed reaction [Strong]

Mixed reaction [Mild]

Negative reaction

Low engagement

● Stand up for British Columbia

● Meet our Leader, Lorne Doerksen

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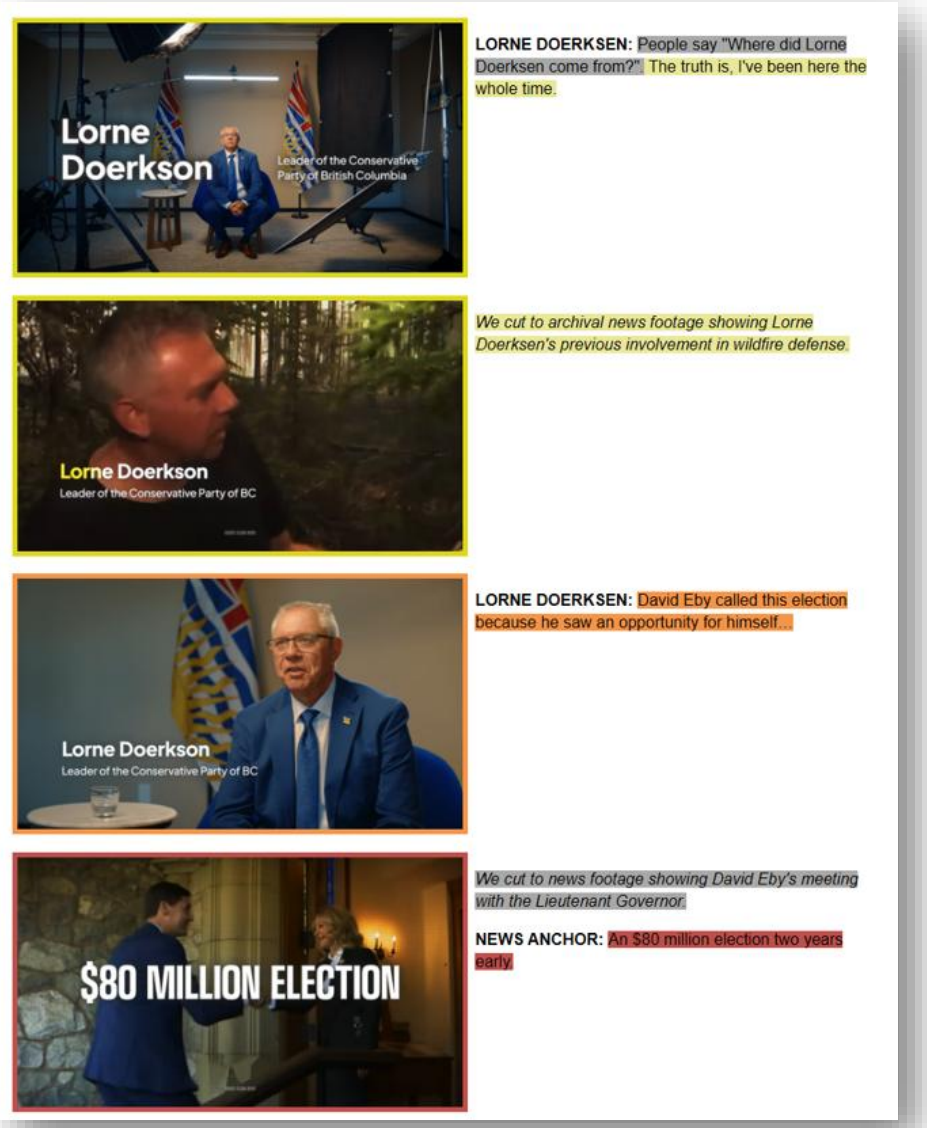
Markup: Respondents provide line-by-line feedback



- In our ad testing methodology, the markup exercise provides a final opportunity to understand each ad's impact
- Respondents can rate their reaction (positive or negative) to each line and each image in the ad.
- They can also provide comments to explain their ratings.
- Heatmaps show both how often each element is rated (engagement) and the ratio of positive to negative scores (sentiment)
- This section provides two examples of how those results can uncover deeper insights from the ad testing results.

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For example: Why is the Trump frame not as persuasive?

This argument clearly has some appeal

"Trump can go to hell"

"This is why it is exceptionally dangerous to elect Conservatives right now"

"I have not heard strong messaging from the Conservatives around how they would tackle the U.S. issue."

But not everyone buys it as an attack

"It's one dummy who said that idiotic statement"

"Too easy to cherry pick one statement from twitter of all places"

"Can't tell if this quote is being taken out of context"

"As much as I dislike conservatives, I highly doubt they said Eby should comply with Trump's demands"

ANNOUNCER: United against a storm that could hurt BC more than anywhere.

ANNOUNCER: Yet BC Conservatives say BC should just comply with Trump's demands. That's not leadership.

And ultimately, many voters just don't see it as the key ballot question

"We don't need to discuss Trump in the BC election"

"No worse than any other province."

"Not sure why BC would be hardest hit"

"Too much US related"

"Partially true but Ontario has the auto market. I think most provinces are being hurt by the stupid Tariffs."

"Sensationalist fearmongering, even if there is truth to this statement."

"Focusing on the other party doesn't make me more likely to vote for this party"

For example: What is most effective about the Conservative ad?

The strongest reactions to the Conservative ad are to the arguments about the election call

"It's true and it's frustrating to waste our dollars on this. A cheap win when the opposition needed a new leader, and annoying to have 2 elections at the same time"

"Thought the choice to call an election was irresponsible"

"There's no reason Eby should have called an election at this time. He should just run the course of his term."

"Feeds on my hatred of Eby being an opportunist at the expense of average people."

LORNE DOERKSEN: David Eby called this election because he saw an opportunity for himself...

We cut to news footage showing David Eby's meeting with the Lieutenant Governor.

NEWS ANCHOR: An $80 million election two years early.

And the emphasis on cost specifically resonated

"That's a huge expenditure."

"Waste of money"

"Must be nice to throw 80 million around."

"Valid point on an expensive and unnecessary election when we are already in debt"

"$80 million dollars on the backs of hard-working taxpayers. That money could have been used for something useful."

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Ad testing: Lessons learned

The NDP ad was effective at moving leader brands, but ultimately did not impact vote intention.

1. It's biggest impact - on Eby's personal brand - was among voters unlikely to switch their votes to the NDP
2. Anger about Trump is real, but not motivating as a provincial ballot question
3. As an attack on the Conservatives, it was not credible to enough voters

The Conservative ad had its largest impacts among the most important swing voter segments.

1. Compared to the NDP ad, it was seen as more relatable
2. It does a decent job of introducing Doerksen, but it's largest impact may simply be reinforcing anger over the early election call

Methodology

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Survey Methodology

These are the results of an online survey conducted between October 15 and October 19, 2026.

Method: This online survey was conducted with respondents from Lucid, a leading provider of online samples. Each survey is administered to a series of randomly selected samples from the panel and weighted to ensure that the overall sample's composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data to provide results that are intended to approximate a probability sample.

Sample Size: n=1,153 British Columbian citizens, 18 years or older. The results are BC weighted to n=1,000 based on Census data from Statistics Canada.

Field Dates: October 15 to October 19, 2026

Weighting: Results for Canada are weighted by age, gender, region, education, and self-reported federal past vote to ensure that the overall sample's composition reflects that of the actual population according to Census data, in order to provide results that are intended to approximate a probability sample. Weighted and unweighted frequencies are reported in the table.

Margin of Error: This is a representative sample. However, since the online survey was not a random probability-based sample, a margin of error cannot be calculated. Statements about margins of sampling error or population estimates do not apply to most online panels.

Note: Graphs may not always total 100% due to rounding values rather than any error in data. Sums are added before rounding numbers.

	Unweighted (n)	Unweighted (%)	Weighted (n)	Weighted (%)
Men 18-34	93	8.1%	123	12.4%
Men 35-54	205	17.9%	158	15.9%
Men 55+	270	23.5%	198	19.9%
Women 18-34	125	10.9%	130	13.1%
Women 35-54	185	16.1%	165	16.6%
Women 55+	270	23.5%	219	22.0%
Lower Mainland North/Central	389	33.7%	292	29.2%
Lower Mainland South/East	314	27.2%	303	30.3%
Island/Sunshine Coast	210	18.2%	187	18.7%
Interior/North	240	20.8%	218	21.8%

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