

## WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THE HUGH MCFADYEN ADS?

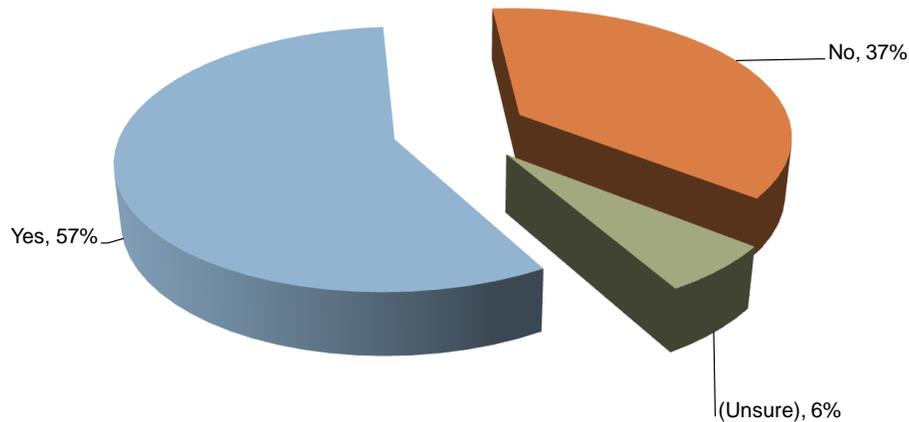
### *NDP's Anti-McFadyen Ads Backfired As Voters Warm To The PC Party*

**Winnipeg** – Political parties broadcast television ads which criticize their opponents because they are seen to be effective. But a Probe Research survey of 1,001 Manitobans conducted for the *Winnipeg Free Press* suggests that the first salvo fired by the NDP against Progressive Conservative leader Hugh McFadyen may have backfired on the New Democrats, as those who recall the NDP's "Know Hugh" ad campaign are more likely to have a better opinion of the Progressive Conservatives than those who did not see these ads.

Voters were asked if they had recently seen, read or heard any advertisements about Progressive Conservative leader Hugh McFadyen. Slightly more than one-half (57%) said they had seen these ads, which were broadcast on local television stations and on the Internet as well as complemented by direct mail and social media campaigns. More than one-third (37%) had not seen the ads and an additional six percent were unsure whether they had seen them or not. None of these survey respondents had been exposed to the more recent ads by the Progressive Conservatives that feature Hugh McFadyen rebutting NDP criticisms of his previous policy statements.

## Awareness of Critical NDP Ads

8. "Do you recall seeing, reading or hearing an advertisement about Progressive Conservative leader Hugh McFadyen in the past two months?" (n=1,001)



Base: All respondents

Those who were most likely to have been exposed to these ads include:

- Residents of Winnipeg (62%, versus 51% of those living outside the provincial capital).
- Older respondents (73% of those aged 55 years and over, versus 60% of those aged 35-54 years and 42% of those aged 18-34 years).
- Voters with higher levels of education (63% of university and college graduates, versus 47% of those with a Grade 12 diploma or less).

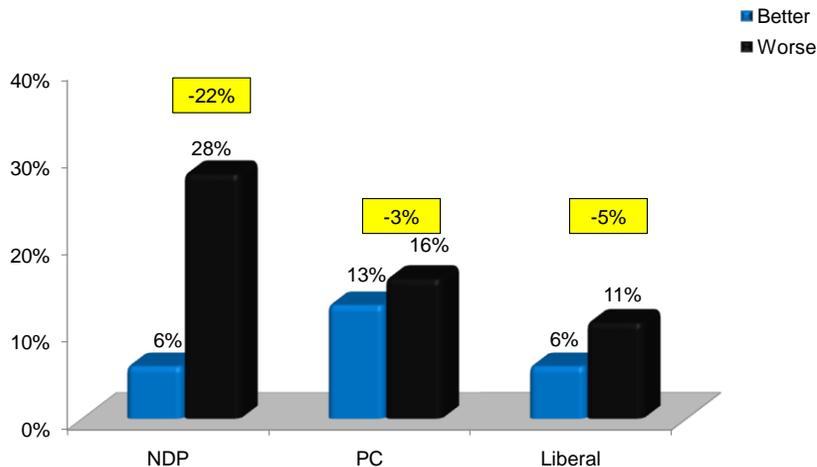
## *Momentum on the Progressive Conservative Side*

Probe Research also asked Manitobans to indicate whether their views of the three parties represented in the Manitoba Legislature have improved, worsened or stayed about the same during the past two months.

**NDP:** Overall, Manitobans are more likely to say their view of the NDP has become worse during the past two months, with nearly three-in-ten (28%) saying their opinion of this party has *worsened* compared to only six percent who indicate their opinion of the party has *improved*. The majority of those surveyed (57%) suggest there has been *no change* in their perception of the NDP, while nine percent had *no opinion*.

### PRBE RESEARCH INC. Shifts in Party Momentum

6. "Still thinking about provincial politics for a moment, has your opinion of the following political parties improved, stayed the same, or gotten worse in the past two months?" (n=1,001)



Base: All respondents

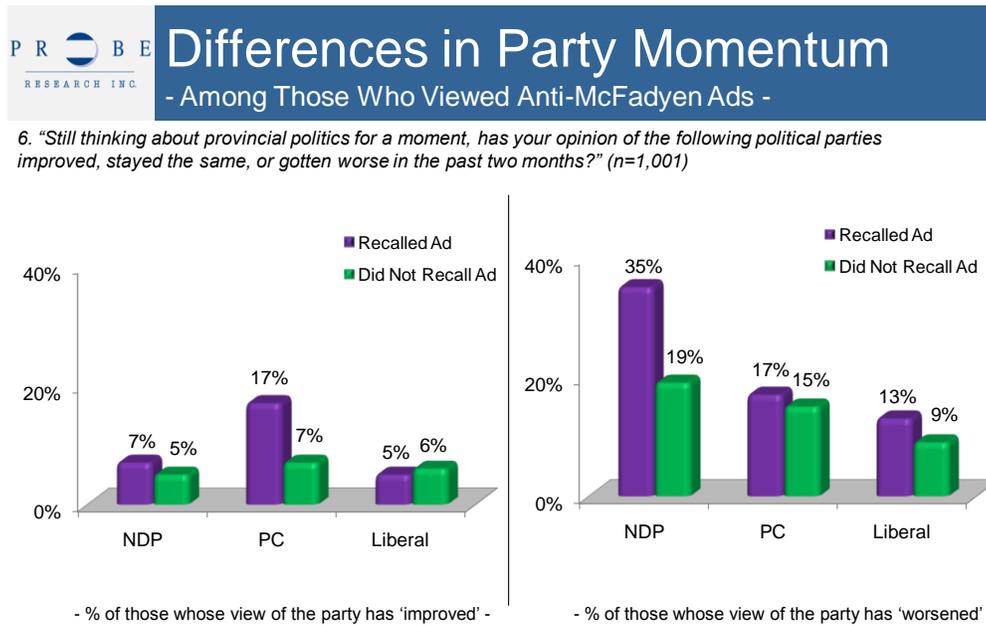
**Progressive Conservatives:** Manitobans are about as likely to think less of the Progressive Conservatives today as they were to feel better about this party (16%, versus 13% respectively). Fully six-in-ten (60%) said their perception of this party has not changed, while 11 percent were unsure or did not respond.

**Liberals:** The largest proportion of Manitoba adults (71%) said their view of the Manitoba Liberals has stayed the same during the past year. About one-in-ten (11%) reported their opinion of this party has worsened, while six percent indicated they now think more highly of this party (12% of those surveyed did not offer an opinion).

***Anti-McFadyen Messages Fail To Halt PC Momentum***

Interestingly, those who recalled these advertisements critical of PC leader Hugh McFadyen were more likely to have a *higher* opinion of the Progressive Conservative party today than those who did not recall these ads (17%, versus 7% respectively). There is virtually no difference in the proportion of voters who say their view of the PCs has declined when looking at those familiar and unfamiliar with the anti-McFadyen ads (17%, versus 15% respectively).

As the graph below also illustrates, those who were aware of the ad were more likely to have a more-negative impression of the NDP today than those who did not see the ad (35%, versus 19% respectively).



Base: All respondents

“Conventional political wisdom suggests that parties release so-called ‘attack ads’ critical of their opponents because they believe they work. The belief is that they allow a party to define its opponents before they can define themselves,” Probe Research president Scott MacKay said. “In many instances, that may be true, but these results certainly suggest that the NDP’s pre-emptive strike on Hugh McFadyen may have caused more damage to their own name than that of their opponents.”

MacKay also noted that respondents were asked if they recalled these advertisements after they had been asked to provide their current opinion of the three main provincial parties. This sequencing occurred so that any mention of these ads would not potentially bias how respondents perceive each of the parties.

*This province-wide Omnibus survey was designed and conducted by Probe Research Inc. via telephone interviews conducted between November 25<sup>th</sup> and December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010 among a random and representative sampling of 1,001 Manitoba adults. With a sample of 1,001, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results are within +/- 3.1 percentage points of what they would have been if the entire adult population of Manitoba had been interviewed. The margin-of-error is higher within each of the survey’s population sub-groups. Modified random-digit dialing was used to ensure that all Manitoba adults would have an equal opportunity to participate in this Probe Research survey. Minor statistical weighting has been applied to this sample to ensure that the age and gender balance correspond with the province as a whole.*

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