

EXPECTATIONS IN THE MILITARY ENVIRONMENT REGARDING THE APPROACH OF PERSONNEL STRATEGIES ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF E-MARKETING

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Abstract: *The recruitment of personnel for the needs of the military is an issue of great interest today in the theory and practice of human resources management in defense, given the new security environment havin taken shape after the end of the Cold War and the revision of national defense issues. Human resources represent one of the most important investments of an organization, the results of which become increasingly evident over time. From this perspective, the analysis and redesign of the candidates' recruitment and selection for the military profession, according to the principles of e-marketing, is a priority step in the succession of necessary stages towards a human resources reform in the Romanian Armed Forces.*

Keywords: *marketing, management, performance, company*

1. INTRODUCTION

Motto: *“The army is made for war and all its special studies must consider warfare and almost only warfare. Warfare manifests at a material level through a multiple series of operations, starting with the gathering of the elements constituting a force and up to the final act, the battle. All these operations have as essential elements: the PERSONNEL, the materiel, the land”. Marshall Alexandru Averescu*

The more important the human resource is for an organization (numerically and qualitatively), the more obvious and necessary it is to approach the recruitment activity as a marketing campaign, at the center of all marketing efforts being the promotion of the military profession.

Although the military institution is highly appreciated by the Romanian population (as the opinion polls conducted at national level show), the military profession remains listed at an average level in a hierarchy of preferences.

The promotion is considered the set of marketing techniques or practices, or marketing action, or form of communication that aims to exceed a level of sales by capturing the attention and attracting potential buyers, by points of sale, information, persuasion, training and maintaining a customer attracted by the product and the manufacturing company.

2. ONLINE APPROACH TO HUMAN RESOURCE MARKETING

When every day is a challenge to attract the best, the employer brand weighs a lot. 64% of respondents who recently participated in an eJobs survey said that a company's reputation is one of the most important criteria according to which they decide to submit their CV for employment.

According to the study “Relevance of brands. What really matters to consumers”, the favorite sources of information for Romanians are TV and social networks, followed by news sites, company sites, family, friends or colleagues (word of mouth).

The presence in the online environment therefore becomes a *must have*, and a well-trained marketing team, through marketing courses, can work wonders. And yes, it can actively make a simple site, launched, but not synchronized with what the public likes. And as recruiting people is not as simple as a few years ago when by displaying an ad they expressed their desire to participate in the contest, hundreds of candidates, now, more than ever are needed, principles, tools and notions of marketing to attract the best!

What Does Marketing Mean and How Can HR Help?

Marketing means creating positive and compelling experiences for the public. The first step is to identify a target audience and create a strategy to entice them to buy products or services. The same thing is wanted in recruitment - reaching the right candidates and having the right strategy to persuade them to join the organization. For this, one can be inspired by the language of marketing people, by their creative campaigns made for clients (potential employees), which can be adapted for candidates.

Why Do We Need Employer Branding?

Marketers are responsible for building a strong brand for the organization's products or services. Unfortunately, it will not convince anyone to work or stay in it. The same branding strategy must be implemented when it comes to communicating the values and culture of the institution. An employer brand means the organization's reputation as a job, as well as employees' perceptions of it. The more it is invested in the employer brand, the easier it is to attract and retain talent. *86% of candidates would not apply to an organization that has a bad reputation in relation to the former employees or to the public. (Randstad USA study)*

Organizational Culture Is Important for a Good Mix Between HR and Marketing

The first step in building an employer branding strategy is to encourage collaboration between departments, to create common workspaces where specialized HR staff can work closely with marketers. Basically, it is no longer about the success or results of a single team, but about how we learn to think like the colleagues from other structures and about the exchange of skills. Thus, there are more chances to create campaigns to the liking of the public.

Harvard Business Review BB writes that success in HR depends on marketing, HR professionals should at least think like marketers.

Here's why it's important for an HR person to think like a marketer:

Dona Scarola, head of digital strategy for talent development at Johnson & Johnson, says that HR has a lot to learn from marketers when it comes to communicating with employees and creating a pleasant work environment.

One of the biggest problems is that HR does not take the human factor into account when communicating with employees, and language is not of impact.

The Importance of Natural Language, Borrowed from Marketing

To attract candidates more easily you need a simple, natural language. *Dona Scarola* gives the example of the clothing brand Outdoor Voices whose slogan is quite vague: *Doing Things*. One should make sure that the message gets the attention of the candidates. Communication can be simplified by the use of meaningful words and images.

What Should Be Borrowed from Marketing Strategy in Employer Branding

In order to attract talent, you need a solid employer brand. Attracting talent is no different from attracting customers and here marketers play a key role in building brand awareness and attracting leaders.

The 4P

- **The products** are the jobs of the institution. Job responsibilities, benefits, salary help shape this product.
- **The price:** it is a bit abstract when it comes to jobs, but one can think about the prestige of the job. How coveted is it? How many candidates do one usually gather?
- **Promotion:** as in marketing, promotion refers to the methods and channels one uses to promote professions.
- **Place:** Let's think about where professions are "offered" - career sites, social media, recruitment company sites, employee recommendations, etc. Each job has its own specifics and fits a certain channel.

SWOT Analysis

One of the most important aspects of a good employer brand is authenticity. No one wants new employees to come in the door with certain expectations and not leave after a long time because they have been misled. A SWOT analysis, just like in marketing, provides a clear picture of the aspects that need to be highlighted for potential employees.

Strengths: Why is the institution a pleasant place to work? One should find that Employer Value Proposition (EVP) that sets him apart from competitors.

Weaknesses: It is important to know them, to mention them (maybe the job requires overtime hours), but to specify what you offer in return.

Opportunities: are those directions in which one wants to develop.

Threats: are external factors, that cannot be controlled, but which endanger the recruitment process. If you know what problems you may face, you can make a defensive strategy.

Positioning: just like in Marketing

Just as other brands are positioned according to quality or price, so are employer brands positioned according to benefits, work environment, culture, development opportunities. It's a good exercise to know what strengths to highlight in messages.

Make Friends with Influencers

Nowadays, candidates have become much more selective with information. They like to receive information from personalities they trust. Why not use personalities in the recruitment process as well? All that matters is to choose them carefully, to be related to what the institution does, to identify with it.

The line between the consumer brand and the employer brand, between customers and candidates is becoming shorter and shorter. And it's good news that they are supporting each other, but that requires joint efforts from the HR team and the marketing team.

3. THE MILITARY- A BRAND THAT ATTRACKS

Motto: "A brand is not what we tell consumers it is - it's what consumers tell each other it is". (Scott Cook)

It is well known that the Ministry of National Defense is one of the most important employers in Romania and from this perspective it must act according to the principles of marketing on the labor market, to be a recognized brand, with a trademark and a distinct visual identity.

According to the American Marketing Association (AMA), a trademark is a "name, term, sign, symbol or design or a combination thereof, intended to identify the goods and services of a seller or group of sellers and differentiate them from those of other sellers."

Although the trademark and the brand are considered to be one and the same, in reality, the trademark is a symbol (name, logo, slogan, etc.), and the brand is more than that, it is the image, prestige, value, influence of the trademark among the public (clients).

As proof, we can register as many visual symbols (graphics and / or text) at the State Office for Inventions and Trademarks (Romanian OSIM), but if they are not recognized, if no one knows what and who they represent, they are not associated with a product or a quality service; it is nothing to those who see them.

In other words, the trademark indicates the source of the product or service, the supplier, and the brand represents the reputation associated with the trademark, by the public (customers). Therefore, the creation of a brand (or branding) aims to determine the target audience to see in the product or service offered the best solution to their problem. A brand is a set of distinctive perceptions, ideas and feelings that people have about the company / product / service offered, which differentiates them from alternatives.

To create a strong brand, it is necessary to understand the needs and desires of the target audience. A brand is not only a symbolic representation, but also the image and the impression that consumers have towards that product, service or organization.

The brand is very important in marketing communication, and the definition of the brand is very important in the process of building the brand, which involves time, creativity, promotion and, last but not least, offering a product or service of consistently superior quality.

Branding is the process of forming the perceptions that consumers have about the company / product or service provided.

The first people who carry the company's image in the world and send messages on its behalf are its employees and loyal customers, those who have become brand ambassadors.

Things are no different when it comes to the military institution or the military profession. A favorable image and a good reputation mean more support and respect from the population and more candidates for military training programs.

It is indisputable that when under arms, the military personnel is proud of its membership in the brand called the Romanian Army and contributes, in one form or another, to increasing its reputation, but few of them, once they no longer have this quality, resort paradoxically, to criticisms and denigrations of the system from which they left, launched mainly in the online environment that ensures their anonymity.

These negative reactions, probably generated by personal frustrations or professional failures of former employees, have existed in any organization / institution and probably will exist, but we must be aware that, now, in the age of the Internet, information circulates very quickly and remains posted over time against the background of the lack of a strategy of continuous brand consolidation.

Young people like the brands they can identify with, be those institutions, professions or people.

Everyone knows what the Romanian Army does, but few really know how diverse the activities and occupations specific to this institution are, for example.

A system of elements such as: logo with design by colors, text, symbol, slogan, clothing (uniforms), personalized documents (diaries, folders, pens, letterheads), newsletter, vehicles, buildings and other visual elements that have as The main role is the recognition of an organization or a brand and is also an essential part of the communication strategy. Visual identity can convey a lot in a very short time, which is why it must be given maximum attention.

A well-made, original logo will enter the public memory and, being recognized, will become familiar and immediately associated with the army, will inspire confidence whenever it appears on a product to promote the military profession.

In order to achieve its goal, the recruitment logo must contain, not only the drawing itself, but also words, but not initials.

Along with the logo, through the message it focuses, the slogan can serve very well the objectives of promoting the military profession, especially those aimed at ensuring a sufficient number of suitable and motivated candidates for military career.

For this, the slogan must be memorable, incorporate / suggest a feature or keyword for the brand, be easily used in promotional campaigns, on any medium, be clear, credible, induce positive feelings and, not lastly, to be original.

In summary, we can say that a slogan must meet the following requirements: to be memorable, to recall the brand name, to include a key advantage / quality, to differentiate the brand, to arouse positive feelings towards the brand, to reflect the brand personality, to be strategic, be usable in promotional campaigns, be competitive, original, simple, clear, credible and help the brand.

Here are some examples of the many possible slogans that were analyzed in 2015, when the current slogan of recruitment in the Romanian Army was chosen:

1. THE ARMY – A WAY OF LIFE!
2. STRENGTH AND PROFESSIONALISM!
3. ORDER YOUR FUTURE
4. MORE THAN YOU THINK!
5. TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT. TRY THE ARMY!
6. KEEP UP!
7. FOR THOSE WHO WANT MORE!
8. EXCEED YOUR LIMITS!
9. AIM UP, BE THE BEST!
10. EXPLORE, ACT, SIGN UP!
11. TOGETHER, BETTER!
12. IT'S TIME FOR PROFESSIONALS!

Finally, most of the votes of the communication and recruitment specialists, who were involved in the process of “(re) branding” the military recruitment process, also went to the old slogan, used between 2002 and 2006, “AIM UP, BE THE BEST! ”

Both the slogan and the logo are registered trademarks, owned by the Ministry of National Defense.

The brand has a vital role in gaining the respect of the public, because it means promise. For example, the current brand of recruitment suggests the idea of career, of evolution, the fact that those who join the army are among the best, the best of their generation.

But for attracting people who aspire to work in the army, for attracting talent, just an inspired brand is not enough. We have to work hard, sustained, by constantly sharing best practices, culture, perspectives of personal and professional evolution, through all possible channels of communication. Only through this serious and constant effort can trust, loyalty and respect be built.

It would be a big mistake to rely only on the very good reputation of the army. It has been proven (including through sociological research conducted by the army in the last 20 years) that the army is a brand, and the military profession, another brand, even if it feeds on the notoriety of the former. Everyone loves and respects the military institution, what it symbolizes, but not everyone would like to embrace the military profession, although it is a profession respected by most.

Every military man can and must support the building of public confidence in the army, in the human and professional quality of the military, in the uniqueness and solidity of any brand that belongs to the army. And recruitment must become a brand of trust, as respected as the Romanian Army.

3. PROMOTING AND RECRUITING CANDIDATES ONLINE, OPPORTUNITY OR NECESSITY

Technology plays an essential role in the life of the current generation of young people, among the most important, because it is an integral part of them, as well as other generations were books, television or radio. This generation does not know life without the internet and without technology.

The differences between the generations are due to the different realities in which they have reached maturity. Today's children have more freedom of expression. They are highly influenced by marketing and advertising campaigns and become the targets of campaigns that try to sell their products.

These marketing strategies take advantage of young people's concern for image and social comparisons and can draw their attention and cause them to spend their time and money on irrelevant things.

What does this mean for recruiters? That they will have to come up with innovative ways to attract and retain them. Because they are the generation that before "buying" anything, will turn to the "holy internet" for opinions, just as it does before buying something online. And this means that the institution will have to pay more attention to the image in the online environment. Equally important for recruiters is that the tools used keep up with the moment and the technology. From applications to social platforms, they will have to tailor their own custom recipe to recruit and attract this generation.

Recruiters must have the ability to easily adapt, be able to predict, identify and adopt trends, given that in the digital age we live in, what is on the wave today may not be in a few months. so attractive. The closest example is the popularity of social platforms.

First it was fashionable Facebook, then Instagram, then Snapchat, but the reign of the latter will not be long because this generation gets bored quickly.

At international level, employers have already started to react at the moment, to go after young people instead of waiting for them to come to the company, because they have realized that the second option will not happen. This led to the use of Snapchat for recruitment.

Here are some of the results of a study conducted by the SmartDreamers Recruitment Marketing platform in Romania. Almost 44% of the survey respondents are active on social networks between 1 and 3 hours a day. The next category belongs to those who spend less than an hour a day on Facebook, Instagram or LinkedIn - over 22%. It is followed by young people who are online between 3-6 hours a day (by 21.5%) and those who have a presence on Social Media of more than 6 hours a day, by 12.4 percents. As for the environment in which young people want to know about new jobs, Social Media is in an open battle with the classic job sites. 44.6% of those who participated in the study want to know about new jobs on alternative recruitment channels, such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube or the online communities they frequent. The recruitment process will have to keep pace with technological developments. It will have to contain fewer words and bureaucratic components and more applications, video content and virtual reality.

No one doubts today about the need to promote products. The more flexible and innovative the promotional activity, the greater its impact on a market saturated with advertising messages.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The success of an institution is determined both by the quality of human resources and by the procedures used to attract and retain the most suitable people to perform the most difficult tasks with the same enthusiasm as the light ones.

Providing human resources involves analyzing the interference between recruitment and the marketing mix in this area.

The main components of the mix that the institution can use are the candidate, the offer, the promotion of the offer (hereinafter referred to as promotion) and the selection. These components are means that the institution can use profitably to achieve its objectives, depending on the characteristics of the microenvironment and the macroenvironment in which it operates.

The complexity of the relationships between recruitment and the components of the marketing mix is amplified by the inter-relationships between those components. The marketing mix emphasizes the association of its structural elements, on the multiplier effect of the harmony between the components.

The components of the marketing mix do not only interact with each other, but also with other variables, such as: financing promotion and recruitment activities, training recruiters, etc.

The Relationships between Recruitment and Offer

The interconditioning between the offer and the recruitment is apparently limited to the design of the recruitment process depending on the type of products offered by the institution.

The particularities of the offer influence, for example, the type of means used, the duration, the recruitment and selection criteria, etc.

Also, the characteristics of the offer indicate the way in which the selection will be made later and the other training needs of the recruited candidates.

The Relationships between Recruitment and Candidate

Recruitment of candidates can be done from internal sources, ie from existing staff or from external sources. The decision on the sources of candidates must be taken early in the recruitment process. Despite the priority given to internal sources of recruitment, it must be borne in mind that an exclusive or even predominant recruitment policy within the institution may also have disadvantages.

Institutions must also pay special attention to the conditions offered to future employees, as candidates, in turn, select professions / jobs. The staff is not only attracted by a high salary. There are other methods of motivation that must be considered, in addition to the monetary reward, and that can bring a sufficient quantity and quality of candidates.

The Relationships between Recruitment and Promotion

Another component of the marketing mix, which involves the collaboration of recruiters and marketers, is promotion. Collaborative relationships must be permanent throughout the process.

At first glance, recruitment and promotion are two completely different areas of the institution's activity. While one includes, among others, the preparation of the candidate file and the verification of the fulfillment of the job requirements, the other aims at cognitive, affective and behavioral objectives at the level of current and potential candidates, stimulating the demand, creating and developing the institution's image and offer. In the recruitment stages, as well as their predecessors, the most important component of the marketing mix is promotion.

The Relationships between Recruitment and Selection

Along with the candidate, offer and promotion, selection is a major component of the marketing mix. Once the offer of candidates obtained following the recruitment process is available, the institution makes their selection by choosing, according to certain criteria, those that best correspond to the requirements for which the recruitment was made.

Institutions are generally concerned with making the best possible selection of staff, as this activity can become very costly when hiring people who prove to be inadequate to the requirements of the job.

The selection requires an objective analysis of the concordance between the professional characteristics of a position and the physical, mental and informational possibilities that the candidates present. At the same time, it is designed based on the diversity of the candidates' offer and distribution.

Also, a certain relationship between recruitment and selection is that of succession, the selection following as a natural continuation of the first.

In these circumstances, it can be argued that *recruitment does not guarantee that the best candidates will be selected, however it provides candidates from where the best employees can be selected.*

The capacity of the institution to have as many eligible candidates as possible depends on the functionality of the recruitment and selection system.

It can be said that the improvement of the cooperation between recruitment and marketing is not conditioned by an organizational restructuring. The harmonization between recruitment and marketing is also facilitated by the advances in the field of information technology, by the possibility of specialists from different functional areas to share in common the information system of the institution. However, the development of cooperation is not long as long as recruitment managers and marketing managers do not have a strategic vision on their own activity.

In conclusion, the objectives and directions of action for providing human resources are inextricably linked to those of recruitment and marketing in terms of meeting the needs and expectations of the institution.

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