

SPECIFIC ELEMENTS OF MARKETING IN THE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF HUMAN RESOURCES PROCESS IN ROMANIAN ARMY

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ABSTRACT

The issue of recruiting a quality human resource appears to be, more or less, a universal one, and it is not just an issue for the United States of America but also for Europe, as the modern armies are confronting with difficulties in recruiting and retaining military personnel. The reasons are generated by the changes of the values in civil society, as well as by the fact that the interest and motivation of joining the army are declining, especially among young people. The competition between the private labor market and the military organization is increasing due to the high level of education of the younger generation and the unemployment rate. Increasing the confidence of the population towards the army and emphasizing the its role of employer determine the connection with the young people, especially for stimulating the desire and attracting them to the military profession.

KEYWORDS:

Organization, marketing strategy, human resources, recruiting, selection

1. Introduction

The Army, as an organization with extensive powers in the field of national defense and security and not only, receives from the society material, human, financial and informational resources that are required to be used efficiently and in accordance with the goals and objectives set for this state institution.

Human resources are part of the resources available to the army by the

society in which the military organization is established, so that it can carry out its constitutionally legally entrusted tasks.

In their turn, they have a specific management that "... represents a complex of interdisciplinary measures, concerning the recruitment of personnel, selection, employment, use through ergonomic organization of work, material and moral stimulation, until the termination of the employment agreement" (Burloiu, 2001, p. 41).

The issue of marketing recruitment and selection of human resources in the army acquires a special significance, both because of the significant and rapid changes in the Romanian society, as well as of the structural and content transformations of the military institution.

Harmonization of changes in the military environment with those generated in the field of human resources marketing is a permanent and difficult task for those with responsibilities in this field of activity. In addition, the impact of technical progress and the revolution of information joined to the military reform on human resources in the army must also be taken into account in the conduct of recruitment, selection, training, development and employment of military and civilian personnel.

At the same time, Romania's accession to NATO and to European Union exert a significant, systematic and constant influence on defense resources in general and on human resources in the army, in particular. That is why the whole approach of those with responsibilities in the field of human resources management in the army will always take into account the requirements formulated by the two organizations. In the field of human resources, the strategy expresses, in the opinion of many specialists, first of all, that the personnel function adopts a broader perspective and a dynamic view on human resources, ensuring its full integration with the other functions of the organization.

Secondly, human resources strategies appoint all the long-term objectives of human resources, the main ways to achieve them, and the resources needed or allocated to ensure that the structure, values and culture of the organization, as well as the personnel employment, will contribute to achieving the organization's overall goals. Also, the human resources strategy designates the direction of company management orientation in substantiating all activities related to the planning, recruitment,

improvement, evaluation and remuneration of personnel, as well as its protection and health. As in any competition or conflict, strategy, tactics (policies), battle plan (marketing plan), knowledge and analysis of the situation, the land, the environment (market research) are absolutely necessary conditions for achieving the ultimate goal.

2. Specific strategies of human resources area

According to many authors, such as Michael Armstrong, personnel strategies define the organization's intentions regarding the directions of human resource development as well as the needs or requirements to be met in this area to facilitate the achievement of organizational goals.

According to George T. Milkovich and John Boudreau, an organization's human resources strategies refer to its fundamental concept of its employees; reflects the type of decisions in the field of human resources, decisions that are directly related to organizational and environmental conditions.

As the same authors point out, the above definition brings to the fore three important issues:

- managers' decisions on employment relationships;
- the environmental effects towards the organization and human resources;
- the link between organizational conditions and managerial decisions regarding the human resources – a very important link, studied with priority by many specialists in the field, such as Miles and Shaw.

Therefore, human resources strategies should start from both organizational and human resources management objectives and use an appropriate investigation methodology to ensure a rational direction of efforts in this area of activity.

Also, according to the literature (Armstrong, 1996, p. 171), key issues that can have a major impact on human resources strategies include:

- intentions of increase, integration, diversification or concentration, as well as market/production development;
- proposals to increase organizational competitiveness or efficiency;
- the need to develop a more positive, performance oriented culture;
- other cultural imperatives of management, associated with changes in the organization's philosophy in areas such as: engaging or training, communications, teamwork, “developing a climate of success” etc.;
- other external environmental factors (opportunities or threats) that may have an impact on the organization, such as government interventions, European legislation, competition or economic pressures.

At the same time, Galbraith and Nathanson, well-known specialists in the explicit approach of human resources strategies, looking at the role of human resources in implementing the organizational strategy, highlighted the following fundamental areas of the HRM, where appropriate strategies (Ferris & Bucklez, 1996, p. 9), can be developed:

- personnel selection;
- performance evaluation;
- rewarding employees;
- employee development.

Regardless of the areas where personnel strategies can be developed, the vast majority of specialists mention an important issue, to give a general sense to personnel objectives by developing human resources strategies in line with the needs of the organization and its employees.

Some long-term strategic objectives within the personnel area are mentioned, for example, by G. A. Cole (2000, pp. 14-15):

- meeting the organization's human resources requirement for the next five years, both in terms of number of employees and categories;
- keeping remunerations at a level that is large enough to recruit, retain and motivate employees;

- establishing harmonious relations between managers and those who are acting under their liability;
- providing the means and facilities needed to maintain and improve the knowledge and skills of the workforce;
- ensuring a proper communication system;
- providing the necessary mechanisms to enable the organization to cope with the human consequences of change.

Personnel strategies are established after the organization's global strategy is known, taking into account competitive conditions or contextual developments. These are derived as partial strategies, developed for specific areas of the organization, and provide appropriate and less resources compared to those involved in the global strategy. This means that personnel strategies refer only to certain activities within the organization, in fact to those that belong to the human resources function. Personnel strategies are usually materialized in human resources policies and programs, and the objectives, strategic options and resources to be employed have reduced dimensions.

Also, personnel strategies, as partial strategies, have the same components and involve a methodological approach to development, similar to global strategies.

3. Marketing mix in recruiting and selection of military personnel

3.1. The structure of military marketing mix

Immediately after the establishment of new information structures – recruitment and selection, the first questions to be answered were: Who is recruiting? Where from? When? How many? By what methods? What are they communicated to? By what means? What is the expected answer? How much does it cost? How to measure efficiency?

In order to answer these questions and many others it was concluded that the

objectives can be achieved by designing a mix of military marketing whose structure is presented below.

In terms of marketing, the product can be defined as the good offered on the market in order to capture interest, acquisition, use or consumption and that can meet a need or desire; it includes physical (tangible) objects, services, persons, places, organizations or ideas.

In terms of military marketing, products are actually military services. The product specifications of service marketing also apply to military services as follows:

- there are intangible;
- there are unstable;
- does not create material value;
- adds value to people through their training and experience.

Military services can be classified according to different criteria, as follows:

- by purpose: defense of the territory, collective defense;
- by their nature (categories of armed forces): terrestrial, aviation, naval;
- considering the weapon: infantry, artillery, machine guns, logistics, pilots etc.;
- by categories of personnel: officers, non-commissioned officers, military foremen, civil servant, contracted civil personnel.

The product must be considered in the light of the benefits the consumer wishes to obtain in the process of consuming or using it. These advantages are in fact the concrete expression of some functions the product can offer.

When two or more similar products provide the same basic function (for example, a profession which has as the basic function getting a salary or a job), the buyer will choose a particular product, taking into account several criteria, such as: destination, model, performance, quality, design, public image, guarantees, etc.

The set of benefits or utilities offered by a product is called a set of functions. The function or attribute represents the basic aspect of utility that the consumer expects from the product.

Each function of the product generates a certain level of satisfaction for the consumer. The consumer will choose the products and brands on the market considering the possible satisfactions that can be obtained by consuming or using the product.

Products of the same kind differ from one another by the differences that exist between their set of functions. Different consumers will look for certain aspects of utility, some desired benefits. For different consumers, it is therefore natural to have sets of different attributes (functions).

On the market of professional offers and educational services, functions the principle of demand and supply. So, the military profession is approached according to the principles of marketing. All those who want to hire personnel share the same external sources (target groups), the same recruitment environments, the only difference is represented by the values and philosophy of the organization, the criteria and the methods of recruitment.

The transition from the mandatory military service to the voluntary military service require repositioning of the military profession on the labor market, especially related to the competition represented by the other similar state institutions.

The advantages and benefits (product attributes) offered by the military profession are:

- provides training and professional development during the career depending on the individual's choice and professional performance.
- a clear perspective on the professional future;
- career development is based on transparency criteria and the principle of equal chances;
- safety, prestige, affirmation, decent income;
- reducing employee by restructuring do not affect the young ones;
- specialized assistance and retraining program is provided at the termination.

Although the military institution is highly appreciated by the population of Romania (as shown by national opinion polls), the military profession is quoted at an average level in a hierarchy of preferences.

3.2. Price politics in military marketing

The price is a market instrument and an indicator of economic and social reality. Because of its main function of correlating demand with supply, it acquires a complex character, which is amplified in the context of the current economic and social dynamism, both by the characteristics of the market on which it manifests itself, as well as by the legislative framework regulating the formation of prices, itself perfectible.

In the context of an economic and social environment, the price has many forms of manifestation along with the price of goods and the tariff of services. These forms include: interest on a loan, housing rent, physician fees, road tax, insurance premium, labor salary, etc.

It should also be noted that the price is a very flexible element of the mix, which can be changed very quickly, as opposed to the characteristics of a product/service and the distribution activity.

It can be said that the price produces effects much faster than the other variables of the marketing mix. Price determination must be correlated with the choice of other marketing mix variables.

According to the military marketing, the price is the amount of money (wage or salary) payable to the employee (officer, non-commissioner, military master, volunteer soldier, civil servant or civilian contract staff) in return for fulfilling the contractual obligations assumed, specific to each military function.

The contractual obligations assumed and imposed by the army are related to:

- professional competency;
- self-refinement capacity;
- loyalty;

- fairness;
- discipline;
- physical and mental strength;
- the ability to take risks.

Labor salary in the army is determined for each military function in accordance with the regulations and legal provisions specific to the Ministry of National Defense approved by the Romanian state institutions.

3.3. Distribution policy specific to the recruitment of professional military personnel

Decisions and processes related to the distribution activities are among the most important elements of the marketing mix, so they will determine the extent to which customers, in Army's case, future employees will have access to the army product – the military profession and will show how effective is the used distribution system.

The distribution term represents all the means and operations ensuring that the goods and services provided by the producers are made available to users or end-users. In other words, distribution is the process by which goods and services are made available to consumers by providing them with facilities of place, size, quantity, quality and price, according to the requirements they have on the market.

Distribution refers to the physical and economic circuit of the product / service, to the system of relationships that intervene on the market, to the activities of a large and heterogeneous mass of units, belonging to several economic profiles.

The concept of distribution takes into consideration a complex set of activities that begin when the product is ready for release on the market and ends once consumed by the final consumer.

In the case of military marketing, the distribution takes into account the whole range of activities that begin with the necessity of filling certain vacant positions in the army and ending with the signing of the individual labor agreement by both parties –

the employee (the client or the buyer) and the employer – Ministry of Defense through legally appointed representatives.

The recruitment and selection system operates through specialized territorial structures as follows:

- recruitment information offices (county and Bucharest);
- zonal selection and guidance centers.

The mission of information and recruitment offices is to identify, inform, attract, advise and guide graduates of civilian educational institutions (men and women) towards military training officers, military and non-commissioned officers, as well as military contracted personnel, military institutions that form non-commissioned officers.

The mission of the selection and orientation centers consists in the selection and professional guidance of the candidates towards the military profession in accordance with their psycho-functional potential, the formative requirements of the educational process and the demands of the first job.

The existing recruitment and selection system is compatible with the similar systems existing in the North Atlantic Alliance countries, effectively responding to the current and prospective interests of the military institution.

The selection procedure includes:

- psychological testing, during which the intellectual potential (intelligence tests), the potential for adaptation to the conditions specific to the military activities (personality questionnaires) and the leadership skills potential (situational tests) are assessed;
- Physical Skills Testing, aiming to determine the level of development of the basic motor skills and to highlight the degree of their manifestation under utilitarian-applicative conditions;
- the evaluation interview, which seeks to clarify some aspects found during the selection tests, the communication capacity and the motivation for the military career.

After verifying the fulfillment of the recruitment criteria and the process selection (aptitude check), the next step of the military career candidate is to support the exam (generally a knowledge test) in the military educational institution for which he accessed.

The information / recruitment offices / offices are the structures that implement recruitment marketing policies.

That is why, when they were set up, two basic principles were taken into account:

- the headquarters in which they operate are visible, positioned centrally, with direct access to the civilian daily program from Monday to Friday (in some periods, even during the weekend), between 8.00 and 20.00;
- the military personnel who work in these offices must be selected on the basis of quality criteria related to the level of human studies and qualities, as well as the ability to communicate, negotiate, relate, adapt quickly to diverse situations, the ability to work with young people and to interact very well with the civilian environment.

The information / recruitment offices / offices have become, locally, recognized structures in the field of school and professional guidance.

As a matter of fact, these structures represent, in the area of responsibility (action), the only authorized source of complete and correct information on military education, military profession and career. On the other hand, the openness and transparency of the information-recruitment offices have placed, since their establishment, a favorable light on the military institution, its values have been promoted directly or indirectly through all the activities carried out.

The elimination of all forms of discrimination and equal opportunities are principles underlying the recruitment of candidates for the military career.

In practice, the distribution process is accomplished by the distribution channel.

Different from one category to another, the distribution channel is customized by its three dimensions: length, width, depth.

Hereinafter are defined the generic names of the *employer*, for the employment military structure and *employee*, the human resource that access the military profession.

In the case of military marketing, channel length refers to the number of intermediate links through which the military profession (product) passes from the employer (military unit with hiring needs) to the employee. The width of the channel is determined by the number of units by which the distribution of the military profession is ensured within each phase of the distribution route.

The depth of the channel expresses the extent to which the distributor approaches the military units benefiting from human resources (employers).

4. Conclusions

Marketing studies and research are used to obtain detailed information about the volume, structure and characteristics of the target population, but also about the attraction of the military profession.

The Army is an organization with a specific culture and strict rules, it shares, together with civil institutions and companies, the same labor market (external

sources of recruitment), especially when it comes to educated and potential workforce as the recruitment of officers.

Potential candidates are increasingly well informed, more pragmatic, willing to choose, are at the age when non-conformism prevails over traditional values imposed by the rules of the army.

As a result, recruitment methods and tools are constantly diversifying and improving, and marketing plans are becoming more complex and flexible to keep up with market developments.

That is why the army can not stay out of these realities and trends, it must develop a recruitment marketing strategy that is able to place and represent the military profession on the professional offers market as an attractive and well defined brand.

For the last years, the recruitment and selection system of professional military personnel has been radically modified to meet the requirements of human resources reform in the Romanian Armed Forces and integration into NATO structures.

The creation of this system represented the passage of the army from mandatory military service to volunteer military service, based on limited contracts and careers of different lengths, being perfectly in line with the requirements imposed by the organization of a professional army.

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