

LEGISLATIVE ISSUES OF PROMOTING ROMANIAN MILITARY CAREER

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Abstract: *The lack of a strategy regarding the promotion of national career offer, and of certain adequate recruitment programs, entails not only the loss of competitive candidates, but also the waste of financial resources. Furthermore, what seems to be worse, is that it may lead to altering the image of the organization as such. The present paper briefly highlights the principles that lay at the basis of promoting the military career according to Romania's assumed obligations as a NATO state member and to the legislative efforts made by military structures with responsibilities in this field.*

Keywords: *strategy, promotion, military career, recruitment, selection, legislative framework..*

1. INTRODUCTION

Romania's security interests and objectives, the army missions in the actual geopolitical context and the country's assumed obligations as a NATO state member, have imposed the continuation of quantitative and qualitative restructuring of human resource and have determined taking the decision to give up the compulsory military service in favor of one based on volunteering, starting with 01.01.2007.

The first strategy of promoting the military career was conceived in 1999, by Human Resources Management Department, once with the application of a new recruitment and selection concept and with the establishment of new specialized structures in voluntary recruitment. The implementation of this strategy has been accomplished with the help of Public Relations Directorate. The two promoting campaigns (one of them explicitly addressed to women), carried out between 1999-2001, were built around the slogan *Military Career – Your Best Choice* and of a specific logo.

The military profession was represented in a realistic favorable manner, emphasizing the advantages offered during training and exercising the military profession, as

compared to the existent offers on the civilian labor market. The first campaigns have brought an increase of over 7 times the number of candidates for the military career and the local recognition of information-recruitment offices as liaison structures between the army and the civil environment, with an important role in young people professional orientation. Therefore, the military profession has become more visible on the labor market, and the position gained by new set structures – information-recruitment offices, at the local level, contributed to the strengthening of the image of the military institution, in general. These results were the consequence of direct promoting activities and of public relations. Promotion and informative materials (diverse folders, posters, CDs, video tapes) have been handed out and a website with specific information was created. But the conventional means of advertising– television, radio, newspapers, magazines, were used only sporadically and for free.

For the years 2002 and 2003, neither the conceiving of promoting campaigns at the central level nor the printing in a unique conception of necessary promotion materials (posters, folders, etc.) were possible, due to the lack of necessary funds for these activities. Therefore, the concentration of all efforts was

made at the local level. The initiatives and experience of specialized recruitment personnel were capitalized and also the image capital accomplished by information-recruitment offices in the previous years. Starting with the fall of 2003, up to 2006, Human Resource Management Department restarted, designed and monitored the annual promoting campaigns, under a new slogan (*Above targets – Be the best*), in a new graphic conception and with new promoting materials in large circulation: folders, posters, calendars, notebooks. The absolute novelty was re[represented by promotional objects, very welcomed by young people and not only. The posters and folders have brought the attention the man, the serviceman and diverse postures of life as a soldier.

These campaigns, without being, neither this time, at the level required by amplitude and social importance of recruiting professional military personnel, revived the military career promotion and supported the activities developed by recruiters in target groups areas of origin. Although rather insufficient and incomplete, the promotion campaigns were welcome. The transition from army based on compulsory military service to the one based on volunteering, imposes the repositioning of military profession on the labor market, especially versus the competition represented by the other similar state institutions. Even if the military institutions very appreciated by the Romanian population (as shown by national polls), the military profession remains at a medium level in a hierarchy of preferences.

Given the professionalization of soldiers and NCOs corpus, it may be possible that the assuring of a relatively great number of candidates for this category of personnel, in a relatively short period of time, to lead to a temporary decrease of their quality. Thus, either the existent situation within inside and outside military organism framework, or the experience of armies with tradition in the field of promoting military profession and recruiting on volunteer basis shouldn't be ignored. There is a series of factors that can have a negative influence on reaching the

recruiting objectives of military personnel, as follows:

- Civil market of educational and professional offers has diversified very much, new border specializations appeared, that confer professional flexibility and jobs in competitive environments, with rapid possibilities of promotion and motivating salaries.

- The natural population decrease and aging, and the external migration of workforce, which reached its top after the adherence to the European Union, are phenomena that lead to the increase of internal completion and to the considerable decrease of the selection for the military career.

- The impact that the army restructuring measures have on the image of military profession is hard to counteract through mass-media articles and explanatory-soothing discourses, or through popularization of success recorded by Romanian military personnel in the theatres of operations, through the appreciations received from the North Atlantic Alliance officials, on the occasion of the engagement into different missions. The myth of the stable workplace and of a foreseeable career evolution (for example the relatively sure accession to the rank of colonel, the retention until the retirement age etc.) is about to fail.

- The redundant military personnel or those, whose contracts are no longer extended, due to several reasons, often feel frustrated. Thus, being conscious or not, through the expression of some negative and subjective opinions regarding the army, within the civil environment they bring disadvantages to the recruitment efforts.

- Romania's NATO adherence, even if it is a political success and a guarantee for national security, can also be a double-edged weapon, from the promotion of military career point of view. To be a NATO member does not mean only to have rights but also duties. To this, risks resulted from the new Romanian military obligations are added, inclusively those assumed within antiterrorist coalitions, outside NATO. A poll made by Metro Media Transylvania shows that 44% of young people

aging between 14 and 29 consider that the integration into NATO means taking risks.

- The military career is not one of the most attractive professions, due to its nature. Its main advantages are providing a job immediately after going through the training period, free education and a certain social protection. Instead, the independence is reduced, there are many regulations, constraints, obligations, discipline is stricter, bureaucracy more pronounced, and the environment can sometimes be, demanding and risky. For many, the balance seems not in their favor.

- Although the national patriotic feeling hasn't disappeared yet, the patriotic message has lost its credibility and force. Young people from 2000 onward are hard to convince only with simple patriotic slogans. They are more farsighted and informed when it comes to the world they live in. Their system of values, mentalities, aspirations are different from those belonging to the generations the present military leaders are part of. Firstly, they wish to reach, as soon as possible, the highest standard of living or, at least, one superior to that of their families of origin. Consequently, they will look for a workplace or profession that can provide such things.

- Following what happens in the NATO state member armies, it is noticed that the social-economic development does nothing else but to reduce the military profession attractiveness, versus other professions, to estrange the young from the military career. Tens of millions of dollars, Euros or pounds annually spent, to candidates' attraction and retention, prove that the interest is, first of all, that of the state military institution, and that the military profession is not one of the most wanted, when there is the possibility to choose.

- The large quantity of offers and the daily "bombardment" with advertising products made the modality of presentation to be extremely important, often decisive for the success of a product, service, organization or person. The military profession makes no exemption to this rule. But, if the advertised image proves to be false and distorted, creates

false expectations and is not supported by changes within the military organization, the effect is just that of losing the interest and credibility on long-term.

Taking into account the previous mentioned aspects, the speeding and revitalization of the young interest for the military career should be imposed. This interest oscillates according to general economic situation, to the perception existent at a certain moment regarding the military organization, but also to the marketing strategies of other institutions, for which the recruitment-selection process is much shorter, less demanding and less expensive, and that offers independence and a greater professional mobility. Outsourcing the advertising component (ads.) of promoting the military profession is a necessity. Although the army holds a Press Trust, a cinematographic studio and a Publishing House with long-term experience and outstanding accomplishments, that can support the military career promotion campaigns, it has no structures specialized in advertising. On the other hand, giving up conformism and conservatism traditionally associated with the image of military organization, the classical modalities to approach the military environment, will come as a pleasant surprise and will particularly draw the attention of the young. They will perceive this change as a proof of the proper changes made in the army.

2. PROMOTION / MEANS OF INFORMATION AND ATTRACTION FOR POTENTIAL BUYERS

The promotion, seen as one of the most empirical fields of marketing actions, is characterized by "the assembly of actions and means of informing and attracting potential buyers towards the selling points, in order to satisfy their needs and wishes and, implicitly, to increase the economic efficiency of the producing enterprise activity" (Patriche, 1994:215).

2.1 Content and necessity. The amplification of the promoting phenomenon has the following explanation: "the concurrency acceleration, the markets'

congestion, consumer's saturation towards the excessive number of advertising communications, the minimizing of products and trademarks, the preference for short-term results, the demanding requirements of new distribution forms etc." (Dubois, Jolibert, 1994:233), that makes the products continuous promotion to become a major requirement, an indispensable factor of every selling process, whatever the nature of goods.

As means of communication used to inform, convince or remind the public about certain goods, services, image, involvement in the community of a person or organization, the promotion often has the decisive role in the process of accomplishing the established objectives. In modern market economy, the fact that products are of high quality doesn't matter now if the potential consumers are not aware of them and there is less probable to sell them. Traditionally speaking, the promotion had as purpose the attraction of new customers. Nowadays, it is at least as important, too, if not even more, to remind customers the advantages offered by own products, as compared to of the competitors' and to convince them in this respect, guiding them to satisfy their needs by buying your products. Thus, modern promotion will stimulate, develop and guide consumers' needs. Today, nobody doubts of the necessity to promote products, fact also reflected in the pattern of marketing mix, whose important variable is promotion (one out of four 4 considered as classical). The more flexible and innovating the promotion is, the greater the impact will be on a saturated of advertising messages market.

Promotion, as expression of actions, means and methods used to guide, inform, attract and convince customers to buy the product with the purpose of satisfying their needs, but also of assuring the usefulness of the product enterprise, is a necessity to accomplish strategic and tactical objectives of the enterprise, to revive the product life cycle, and also to annihilate the effects of the actions that lead to the sales decrease.

In literature, we encounter a double acknowledgement given to promotion that is further on explained by P. Lasségne (1972:73).

Thus, broadly speaking, promotion is synonym with "commercial dynamics" and designates all the research that may train the increase in selling. The Anglo-Saxon term "promotion" means the broad sense of promotion that is one of those 4 marketing mix components (product, price, place, promotion). In a more restrictive approach, promotion is the expression of specific techniques whose common characteristics are displayed below and which differentiate it from advertising.

The essential features of promotion are:

- its concrete, immediate and straight character;
- the existence of an advantage, supplement, etc,
- ephemeral character;
- uncommon and exceptional character;
- its relation with a definite product;
- its origin (producer, distributor, professional organization) and its targets (consumers etc.) variants;
- its link with the marketing mix as a whole.

The main elements of these characteristics are found in Y. Castagnol's paper that defines promotion as "a practice of marketing which consists in the temporary adding of a supplementary value to the product or service, which provides a specific advantage to targeted buyers according to an precise measurable objective" (Castagnol, 1972). F. Guilbert (1986) adds two elements to these features, that specifies that promotion leads to a (temporary) change in the main offer and to getting a definite behavior "that cannot be only a buying behavior".

In conclusion, in the modern sense, promotion represents a complex concept because:

- it is a means of communication that concentrates on promotional mix, with a wider spread than advertising;
- it aims at an immediate and direct change of demand (acceleration, increase, adjustment),
- it aims at an immediate change of customer's/ deliverer behavior, etc.;
- it aims at a positive and temporary change of consumers' offer, of the intervention terms of deliverers, etc.;

- the promotion effect is direct, when it directly aims at consumers and indirectly, when it comes to intermediaries.

Promotion, considered the set of techniques or practices of marketing, or marketing action, or form of communication, aims at overcoming a sale level through drawing attention and attracting potential buyers by outlets, by informing, convincing, forming and maintaining of customers that are attracted by the product and by the producing company. It develops into two main directions:

1. product promotion – through all the means and methods used for orientation, information of potential clients on new or improved products, starting from the idea of new product and ending with its market launching, in order to develop a new positive attitude towards the product.

2. sales promotion – through the set of actions and means of getting the potential buyers' attention by outlets in order to boost sales. It is accomplished by more types of actions, called promotional means or forms, such as: advertising, direct promotion, public relations, merchandising, sales promotion, other.

If we consider the manner of promotional actions development, we may distinguish:

- promotional actions realized through mass-media (e.g. advertising);

- promotional actions realized at the point of sale (e.g. direct promotion).

More, if we consider the initiator of promotional activities, we may distinguish:

- active promotion – when the producer assumes the responsibilities of promotion, which he directly exercises among final consumers, in order to create and stimulate a certain preference for a product.

- passive promotion – when the distributor/intermediary assumes the responsibility as to the latter methods and techniques he uses in the field of promotion. The manager with responsibilities in the field is the one who will decide on forms, methods and techniques to be used, when and to what extent.

2.2 Promotion objectives and roles.

Lately, especially during the last decade, an emphasis on actions in the field of product promotion and especially of sales is remarked.

This has led to enhancing the promotion role within marketing activities and thus it leads to a diversity of promotional products. The promotion role lies in the complex content of promotion concept, that emphasizes the fact that the general purpose is influencing people behavior, so as to increase the goods sales volume of a certain producer. Therefore, promotion meets a series of socio-economical malfunctions that highlight its use, such as:

- providing information both to the buyer and seller;

- neutralizing detrimental information that spread especially through rumors;

- stimulating market demand is the direct and immediate purpose;

- attenuation of demand fluctuations, especially in the case of seasonal products;

- products differentiation, especially of brands;

- reminding the products advantages in order to remain loyal customers;

- counter rivals;

- influencing people with decision-making at governmental level;

- influencing public behavior;

- forming an image;

- justifying the price of goods and services;

- making the public aware of new created products and services.

Based on this wide range of functions that the promotion activity can accomplish each company sets its short-term objectives, but also long-term ones, general and specific objectives, objectives for sellers, deliverers and consumers. Among the promotion general objectives the most frequent are:

- changing flow demand, directly – when the demand behavior changes, and indirectly - when the circuit distribution agent's behavior changes;

- the acceleration growth in demand for short-term assets;

- demand regulation.

- consumer loyalty.

Martin Bell (1972) synthesizes seven main objectives of promotional strategy, as follows:

1. sales increase;

2. maintain or improve market share;

3. creating or improving the recognition, acceptance or maintaining brand.

4. creating a favorable climate for future sales.

5. informing and educating the market.

6. creating a competitive difference.

7. improving promotional effectiveness.

Depending on how you focus on an object, you can create a promotional mix. It is also important to note that the use of promotion in marketing mix is favored, according to Bell, by:

- a favorable trend in demand;
- a strong product differentiation;
- the hidden qualities of the product;
- emotional reasons influence a purchase
- adequate funds are available.

Each of these key-issues influences, in his own way, the promoting efficiency.

As, within the marketing activity, the 4P interact, the promotion objectives cannot be isolated from the other 3P and therefore, objectives are established in relation to pricing, distribution and product. From many targets and the effects they may promote, Y. Castagnol highlighted some of the objectives that enterprises currently propose. Thus, as main objectives, there are mentioned:

- making attempts;
- cause of first purchase;
- stimulating the unconcerned;
- developing a new use;
- enhancing a point of the brand image;
- creating an event.

As secondary objectives, the following appear:

- obtaining the distribution trademark;
- the dissemination increase;
- the increase of brand availability;
- achieving an "advertising presence" at the point of sale.

3. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The constant decline, year after year, of the number of candidates for military educational institutions, up to an alarm, imposed in the late '90s, assessing the situation, analyzing the causes and consequences of the short, medium and long-term, not only for military education, which is not an end in itself, but especially for future professional human resource of defense. For example, if in 1977 there were almost four candidates for a place in military academies in

1999 the number of candidates / seat for career officer had already decreased up to 2. The cause of this steady decline was the inadequacy of the existing recruitment system at that time, to the economic and social conditions, to the changes in the labor market that was becoming more and more dynamic.

In the first marketing strategy, designed in 1999, the military profession was represented in a realistic, positive manner, emphasizing the benefits during school and the military occupation was compared with the existing offerings on civilian labor market. As a result,

the military profession has become more visible in the labor market and gained the position of newly established structures - information-recruitment offices, and locally, it contributed to strengthening the image of the military in general. The promotion campaigns, without being at the required level of scale and social importance of recruiting military personnel, have revitalized the military profession in the labor market and supported the activities of recruiters in the backgrounds of target groups. Although insufficient and incomplete, campaigns have been welcome. The more the human resource is more important for an organization (quantitative and qualitative), the more obvious and necessary is the approach to business recruitment as a marketing campaign. And, in the center of all marketing efforts lies the promoting of **the military profession**.

The legal framework that underpins the promotion of the military profession in Romania is presented below:

Laws:

➤ Law no. 346/2006 on the organization and functioning of the Ministry of Defense;

➤ Law no. 395/2005 on suspension of peacetime military service in the army and moving to voluntary military service;

➤ Law no. 48/2002 on Act approving the Government Ordinance no. 137/2000 on Preventing and Punishing All Forms of Discrimination;

➤ Law no. 389/2001 on approving the amendment to the Emergency Government no.

14/2001 Law no. 544/2001 on free access to public information;

➤ Law no. 84/1998 on trademarks and geographical indications;

Decision of the Supreme Defense Council:

➤ No. S-26/2006 approving the "Strategy of the Romanian Army's transformation"

Minister of Defense orders and approvals:

➤ no. M-25/2006 approving the "concept of the promotion system of the military profession, military personnel recruitment and selection";

➤ Minister's approval, the resolution on the report of the Director of Human Resources Management Directorate no. C 7456/17.10.2005 approving the "concept of modernizing human resources management in the Romanian Army";

➤ no. M.S.-107/2005 on approval of the "professionalization of Romanian Army Concept";

➤ no. M-134/2002 on approval of "R.P.-1, Instructions for organizing and conducting public relations activities in the army";

➤ no. M-32/1999 on approval of "Rules of organization and operation of information-recruitment offices";

➤ no. M-100/1998 on approval of the "Concept of promoting the military profession, recruitment and selection of candidates for military career";

➤ no. 49/1995 on the conditions under which military personnel may present public information in military activity.

Chief of Staff General provisions:

➤ no. S/L1/426/1996 on the organizing the "Open Doors Day" within units of the Ministry of National Defense.

Secretary General of Ministry of Defense provision:

➤ no. S.G. 1/2005 on "Organizing, planning, deployment and management of transformation activities of military education system"

The provisions of the Human Resources Management Director:

➤ no. C-10240/2001 approving the "Instructions on the organization of recruitment and selection of candidates for

admission to the military educational institutions;

➤ no. D.M.R.U.-13/2004 approving I.M.-2/6, Criteria for candidate recruitment and the content file for admission to military schools".

4. CONCLUSIONS

In all fields, the struggles for human resource earn goes in terms of fierce competition, being in a continuous growth. While for some organizations, such as the military, the amount is important, when it comes to competition, especially the quality is of concern. On a market that offers professional and educational services, the operating principle of supply and demand functions. Therefore, recruitment is addressed by the principles of marketing. All those wishing to hire foreign sources share much the same (groups - target), the same average recruitment, what differs being the values and philosophy specific for organizations, the criteria and recruitment methods. Since the staff is a strategic resource of any organization, one that depends on its success, human resource recruitment is critical to achieve the organization's mission and strategic objectives. Professional competence, skills and degree of motivation depend on the objectives and organization development.

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