

## RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND RETENTION OF MILITARY PERSONNEL – A PSYCHOSOCIAL PERSPECTIVE –

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DOI: 10.55535/RMT.2023.4.22

*The article addresses, in an integrated way, three of the most pressing issues of the military body, which concern human resources: recruitment, training and retention of personnel and, after a psychological analysis of the three elements, concrete solutions are proposed for their development.*

*In addressing these issues, we started with the description of the psychosocial profile of the military organisation and from the hypothesis that the optimal efficiency of the operation of the military organisation is given by a series of three interconnected processes: recruitment, training and retention of personnel.*

*In this sense, based on exhaustive research, the factors influencing the reference processes from a psychological and social point of view were evaluated and realistic, pragmatic and specific solutions to improve recruitment, training and retention were sought.*

*Therefore, the article reveals both the biggest problems and the solutions of recruitment, training and personal retention.*

*Keywords: recruitment; training; retention; psychology; personnel;*

## INTRODUCTION

It is appreciated, axiomatically, that the human resource represents the most valuable asset of an organisation, and even more so of the military organisation. And so it is. This fact has been demonstrated by countless real-life examples, empirically. Thus, it can be seen that, no matter how well-technological an organisation is, if it does not have people capable of using that technology to its maximum capacity, its results will be mediocre, at best. That is probably why “*talent hunting*” is a primary priority of high-performing organisations.

Obviously, the process is continued by the training of recruited people and the development of schemes to retain them in the system. Therefore, the recruitment, training and retention of personnel represent some of the most important objectives of the military organisation, because it is based on people, and the quality of the human resource is an undoubted guarantee for the fulfilment of the entrusted missions. In general, the recruitment, training and retention of staff are most often associated with human resource structures, but the reality of recent years has shown that the success of these efforts should be based on psychological structures, which develop a better deep and scientific understanding on human nature and can measure a series of “*parameters*” of future candidates to know if they are suitable for one job or another.

Sometimes human resource management structures are content to operate hires just to reach their staffing targets, leaving time to prove to what extent the human resource hired was or was not suitable for the respective positions. In the military system, such an approach can be toxic both to the military body and to the fulfilment of the mission entrusted to the forces. Toxicity can be explained psychologically, through elements such as: the lowering of employment standards, concessions in staff training, the lack of a retention policy, the promotion of uncertainty in the system, the development of mentalities such as “*that’s how it goes*”, the creation of cracks in the organisational culture, poor retention of staff, low morale, etc.

Psychologists can instead evaluate potential candidates and develop scientific, long-term forecasts based on a whole panoply of psychological techniques and methods. When good cooperation is achieved between the final beneficiaries of the human resource, the human resource management structures and those

of psychology, it can be said that the recruited human resource meets the best criteria to function optimally, over a long period of time in the organisation of reference.

Next, we will review the most relevant psychological aspects, which concern the recruitment, training and retention of personnel in a military organisation.

## STUDY METHOD

Research into the psychosocial aspects that bring more efficiency to a military organisation was carried out based on an extensive opinion survey involving more than 10,000 subjects.

This study started from the hypothesis that, among the multitude of factors that influence the operation of an organisation, those related to human resources have a special significance. Thus, after the statistical analysis of the data, three factors emerged that really matter: recruitment, training and staff retention. They will be described throughout this article, from a qualitative perspective.

## THE PSYCHOSOCIAL PROFILE OF MILITARY ORGANISATIONS

The psychosocial profile of military organisations can vary significantly depending on many factors, such as: the category of forces, the tactical, operational or strategic level of the unit, the mission of the unit, the relationship of the unit with other structures, traditions and combat experience, the organisational culture of the military structure etc. However, some *common characteristics* can describe military organisations, as follows:

- **Strict hierarchy:** Military organisations have a very clear hierarchical structure, with degrees and ranks indicating the authority and responsibility of each member;
- **Firm enforcement of military discipline:** Discipline is essential in military structures and is strictly enforced to maintain order and efficiency. Often, military rules of discipline are much stricter than in civilian life and mandatory, and non-compliance can attract punishment;
- **Armament and military equipment management:** Military organisations have access to advanced military equipment and weapons of war, to fulfil their missions;
- **Execution of specific missions:** Military organisations are created to perform specific missions, such as defending the country, attacking the enemy or maintaining peace;

- **Existence of military uniform:** The military wear distinctive uniforms that symbolise their membership in the organisation. On these uniforms, one can read their military rank and experience (decoration bars);
- **Enforcing of military doctrines:** Military organisations have well-defined doctrines and strategies to achieve their objectives and missions. These are not encountered in civilian life;
- **Continuous Training:** Continuous training and skill development is essential to maintain the effectiveness of the military organisation. Thus, career courses, specialisation courses, etc. can be described.
- **Rapid Mobilisation:** The military must be prepared and mobilise quickly in emergency situations. The departure of each soldier from the garrison is strictly monitored by the organisation;
- **Guided by strict orders and rules:** Military organisations are strictly guided by strict orders and rules that cover almost every field. These are also reflected in the behaviour and actions of the members;
- **Promotion of specific values:** Military organisations promote, through all their actions, the traditional cultural values of the nation, such as: patriotism, courage, loyalty, supreme sacrifice, determination, resilience, honesty, honour, dignity, enduring the hardships and privations of the military service, respecting the culture of intelligence etc.
- **Secrecy:** Sensitive information is kept secret, to protect national security, and staff are trained in this regard;
- **Flexibility:** Military organisations must be flexible and adapt to changes in the area of military theatres of operations.
- **Leadership:** Military leaders are trained to act, both in peacetime, but also in war or deep crisis situations. This asset allows them to find the best solutions for crisis situations.
- **Continuous training and development:** Continuous training and skill development are essential in a military organisation. Psychologists contribute to the development of training programs and performance evaluations to ensure that members are mission-ready.
- **Adaptability and Resilience:** Military organisations must be adaptable and resilient to adapt to changes in the environment and to meet security, technological, economic and other challenges. Psychologists work on developing the organisation's ability to adapt and respond optimally to new situations.

- **Information capacity.** The military organisation, in order to fulfil its mission, must be constantly informed about the potential enemy. In this sense, a wide range of sensors, both human and technical, are used.

It is important to note that the psychosocial profile of military organisations is complex and dynamic. Implicitly, the personnel who give life to these organisations must share their values, and their organisational culture and possess certain psycho-professional and social characteristics. Starting from these characteristics, the recruitment, training and retention of personnel in military organisations will be addressed in turn.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF PERSONNEL RECRUITMENT

As I have already stated, the recruitment of personnel for the military organisation is one of the most complex actions, because it involves a lot of bureaucratic aspects (determining the personnel to be involved in the recruitment process, analysing and clarifying the vacant positions in the organisation, establishing the needs of employment, configuring the psycho-professional and moral profile of the candidate for each category of positions, determining the priorities for employment, configuring the rights and obligations of future employees, formulating the minimum requirements for occupying the position, designing an appropriate promotion of the positions to be put out to competition, organising contests/interviews/psycho-physical and medical tests, specifying the conditions for contesting employment decisions, communicating the results, determining the training/preparation/education needs of those admitted, establishing the recruitment pool, specifying the recruitment methods used, choosing a recruitment agency or recruitment by your own HR staff in collaboration with other structures, etc.). The more complex the job requirements, the more important the process of recruiting future candidates (Cable, Judge, 2018).

As can be seen, recruitment is not limited to a *“hic et nunc”* type of present (here and now) but has a strong component of future orientation and career forecasting of those who will be employed in the organisation (Chatman, 2019). This aspect is essential for military organisations, which can ensure personnel a long career. So, in the following, we will refer, especially to a series of psychological aspects that military organisations should take into account for the *success of the recruitment process*, as follows:

❖ **Clear definition of the positions put out to competition.** The more clearly defined the job requirements, the more likely they are to be accessed by potential candidates. In defining them, it is important to specify, among others, the following elements: job description, advantages offered by the job to the employee (salary,

career, related rights, social status, etc.), education and experience requirements necessary for registration, technical data regarding registration and participation in the contest, etc. These elements produce a cognitive clarification regarding the reference post;

❖ **Promotion of the competition for the occupation of certain positions through an extensive media campaign.** Obviously, this campaign must take into account the characteristics of the targeted public to apply, on the one hand, and their access to certain media channels (internet, posters in the city, messages on social networks, newspapers, etc.). Thus, candidates can find out in advance the intention of the military organisation to recruit personnel, on the one hand, and they can thoroughly prepare to face the competition tests, on the other hand;

❖ **Creation of an easy-to-access application for uploading enrolment documents.** Such a friendly application with potential candidates gives them a good picture of the organisation and helps them save time and resources compared to a classic application (building the track file, submitting it in person at the company/institution headquarters etc.);

❖ **Development of the organisation’s brand.** Candidates must really want to become members of that military institution, not just take a temporary job out of desperation. Creating motivation for employment is a really important psychological argument;

❖ **Informing candidates about the psycho-physical requirements imposed by the organisation.** Thus, it is recommended that the websites of the recruitment structures contain all the necessary information for a candidate to make an informed decision about his future in a military organisation. In this way, scales for physical tests and even a psychological test can be posted, so that the interested person can preliminarily evaluate himself concerning his personality traits and possibly about his intellectual performances.

❖ **Searching for candidates actively by the organisation.** A military organisation that really wants to recruit quality personnel draws up a *“recruitment plan”*, based on which it can organise meetings with graduates from different educational institutions or select people of interest from different backgrounds and formulate them over the phone or by e-mail/mail an invitation to participate in a prospective interview. When the potential candidates are selected from certain educational institutions or certain environments of interest, it is assumed that they already have the background desired by the institution/company and implicitly a set of skills and psychological characteristics useful for the position put up for competition. In this context, it is also recommended to analyse your employees, especially if it is about promotions;

❖ **Carrying out preliminary checks:** Checking CVs, educational documents, references, recommendations, records, psychiatric antecedents, previous professional experience, etc. – is a mandatory step for accepting a person in a military organisation. This approach allows the selection of the best candidates and allows the extraction of useful information, which can be evaluated superiorly, both during psychological and human resources interviews;

❖ **Maintaining an open communication channel, available to candidates.** This fact is useful for clarification by the candidates or by the organisation of some aspects related to the position to be filled. Open, jovial and informative communication is a psychological factor, which helps the candidate a lot in deciding to apply and participate in the selection process;

❖ **Designing unified messages that the organisation's representatives will convey to the candidates.** In this sense, a team must be selected that will take care of recruitment (and communication) and that will be properly trained to achieve the objective that the military organisation has proposed. Consistency in the messages coming from the representatives of the organisation is very important, from a psychological point of view, for the candidates. They should be clear (as in wording and informative content), short (without unnecessary details) and precise (refer, punctually, to a particular matter of interest);

❖ **Organisation of a transparent and legal competition.** The competition for filling the position must have all technical aspects clarified (date, time, duration, topic, bibliography, participation rules, evaluation criteria/scores, marking/scoring method, structure of the management project, appeal, etc.) and take place under legal conditions. Thus, possible suspicions of fraud or favouritism of any candidate will be significantly reduced. Psychologically, candidates must experience a sense of justice and fairness.

Considering the elements described above can make the difference between a successful recruitment (well-trained and motivated people for the position, several candidates for a position, etc.) and a routine recruitment (lack of candidates or candidates presenting to the competition mediocre, poorly motivated for the position or accepted without competition).

### PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF STAFF TRAINING

Normally, after staff are recruited and placed on the job, they have to go through a training process. No matter how well prepared he is, it is appreciated that his training is necessary, to optimally adapt to the demands of the organisation (Aguinis, Kraiger, 2009). The training process can be customised according to the job

family that received new staff. Training can be of several forms and durations and can take place at different stages of the employee's career and in different military educational institutions (military academies, mm and non-commissioned officer schools, application schools, training centres, etc.). Empowered structures should configure these forms of training, to respond as best as possible to the organisation's requirements (Kanfer, Chen, 2016).

Some forms of staff training can be carried out at the local level, through the organisation's own structures (e.g.: ad hoc courses – held by staff with experience in a certain field, courses in the organisation's accredited institutions etc.) or through structures external to the organisation (e.g.: postgraduate training, qualification courses etc.).

The issue of staff training also refers to staff with seniority in the organisation. Periodically (it is recommended at least once every 4 years), each employee should take part in some form of training (Klein, Koslowski, 2013). These forms of training allow employees in military organisations to get in touch with new developments in the field, develop their skills and knowledge, become more productive, adapt much better to changes, increase their level of job satisfaction, improve their self-confidence, reduce errors and incidents and implicitly the risks at the level of the organisation, to develop in their career, to become more creative and, last but not least, to improve their interpersonal relationships, on the line of communication and cooperation (Saks, Haccoun, 2018).

So, below will be presented **a series of ways to train employees**, with psychological relevance, that organisations should consider, as follows:

- **Classroom training sessions.** Thus, short-term classical courses can be organised in a classroom, where teachers/instructors will be invited to teach a series of lessons, according to a predetermined plan;
- **Online training sessions.** The use of online learning platforms allows the training of employees from several cities/countries, through modular lessons, which can be accessed either simultaneously or sequentially by employees;
- **Organisation of workshops and seminars.** These should be interactive forms of training, where employees can work together and learn new things;
- **Lectures and presentations.** Within these forms of training, experts from a certain field can be invited, from whom employees can learn new and useful things, including through question and answer sessions;



- **Games and simulations.** This type of training reinforces the practical skills of employees very well because it involves repeating some scenarios, several times, until learning;
- **Mentoring and coaching.** Pairing new hires with experienced mentors gives new hires the chance to learn continuously, over an unlimited period of time (Phillips, Phillips, 2016);
- **Presentation of podcasts and videos.** This form of training deals with specific matters, which employees must know very well. By listening/watching these posts useful technical knowledge can be imparted quickly and well-targeted;
- **Job rotation.** Through this operation, employees can learn new things from several fields/areas of interest and use their acquired knowledge creatively;
- **The use of virtual and augmented reality in the training process.** Through this form of training, employees can practice certain scenarios, until they perfect their work skills at a very high level;
- **Participation in conferences and technical-scientific events.** This form of training allows employees access to the latest in the field, as well as to the development of a network of professional relationships. Some of the projects/ideas noted during the conferences can also be implemented in the organisations of origin (Kraiger, Ford, 2019). This form of training requires the issuance of an official act, certifying the skills acquired by the employee;
- **Professional training of employees through individual study.** Some organisations offer employees access to: physical and virtual libraries, databases, tutorials, etc. and ask them to document a certain period of time, before a possible evaluation or taking over a new position or integrating a new process/equipment in the organisation;
- **Training through feedback.** In this case, employees receive detailed and ongoing feedback on how tasks are performed. Thus, they can correct their possible errors and permanently improve their efficiency at work;
- **Training by accessing some forms of accredited, postgraduate or post-high school training.** In this case, employees are encouraged to pursue master's programs, graduate courses, and doctoral and post-doctoral programs, in order to improve their performance at work. These forms of training take place according to accredited and nationally/internationally recognised analytical programs. Some military organisations may cover some of the costs of this type of training;

- **Training through employee evaluation.** This form of employee training can be periodic (e.g. once a year). On this occasion, employees will try to present themselves as well as possible at the evaluation and will implicitly prepare ahead of time, in order to obtain good results. Sometimes the scores obtained in these assessments can be used as career promotion criteria;
- **Discussion groups/experts.** Within this form of training, specialists from a certain field or several fields can meet and discuss finding solutions to certain problems of interest to the organisation. Creative problem-solving methods can be used in these sessions.
- **Military exercises and applications.** Within this form of training, different skills and competencies are integrated so that, at the end of the exercise/application, the staff can act together and practice all their previously acquired competencies.
- **Employee certification.** A special form of training is represented by the official certification/attestation/accreditation of employees as specialists in a certain field. It can thus be seen that many forms of training can be used by the military organisation to train its personnel on a case-by-case basis.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF STAFF RETENTION

In this way, candidates are recruited who have the right psychological skills for the work they are hired for, are open to improvement and professional development, and remain loyal to the organisation in the long term, thus having the chance to go through all the career steps offered by the respective organisation and, last but not least, they can offer their experience to the newest, for the good and success of the military organisation.

When discussing, however, personnel who are to be part of military organisations, things are even deeper, because these recruited and trained persons must dedicate their entire active life to the country and people to which they belong. Obviously, there are some short-lived careers, but these are exceptions in most military organisations. Although considerable efforts are made to identify such candidates, in reality, systems have significant losses, sometimes difficult to predict.

**The causes of this phenomenon**, known as “*retention capacity of the organisation*”, can be multiple. Just to illustrate, we will list only a few of these causes that decrease the ability to maintain high-performing people in the organisation:

❖ **Lack of adaptation of the organisation to changing social imperatives.**

In the past, people were loyal to the organisation because they were emotionally, patriotically, and even ideologically attached to it. Gradually, societies began to prioritise

money and success as measured by financial rewards. In this way, people began to look for what is best valued in society – money, thus becoming much more mercantile (Salas et al, 2012);

❖ **The lack of proper valorisation of employees.** People began to realise their intrinsic value. Some organisations strive to hire valuable individuals with great potential for development. Moreover, these organisations develop multiple training programs for their own staff to make them even more efficient. At some point, these people realise that they are valuable, not only to the reference organisation, but also to themselves, and that they have seen a significant increase in their “market share” in recent years. With military organisations invoking all sorts of rigid and bureaucratic rules about rewarding their work, those people are thinking of selling their professional success on the open market and joining other organisations that pay better (Allen, Bryant, Vardaman, 2010).

❖ **Hiring over-qualified people.** In certain situations, it happens that people are hired for certain positions who have a level of academic training clearly higher than the requirements of the position (for example, they have one or two faculties and are only rank-and-file soldiers or non-commissioned officers). These people will be eternally dissatisfied with what they do (Becker, Gerhart, 1996), and their level of aspirations will tend to another category of personnel, which will create professional frustrations and disappointments and will cause them to leave the military system;

❖ **Lack of organisational projects.** In this case, we refer to the need to involve employees in various projects of the organisation. People, par excellence, need social recognition, and the organisation can also provide them with this by involving them in various initiatives. Thus, staff can express opinions, participate in decision-making, bring creative elements, bond emotionally with the organisation through the reference project, etc. In the absence of these elements, the employee’s connection with the organisation is strictly limited to the formal and mercantile aspects, a fact that will negatively affect retention;

❖ **The existence of a negative mood in the organisation.** People value the mood in the organisation more than financial or other rewards. Our statistics have highlighted the fact that more and more people are ready to accept specific deprivations imposed by a certain organisation and even a limitation of income, just because they feel good in that organisation: there is good communication on vertical and horizontal, bosses are authentic leaders, initiative is encouraged, there is good moral support in the organisation, responsibilities are clear and successes predictable. Obviously, if things are like this and the morale in that organisation collapses, the staff will look to leave it as quickly as possible;

❖ **Lack of ethics in the organisation.** Regardless of the position a person occupies in the military organisation, he automatically becomes a good observer of what is happening in that structure. Thus, each person is attentive to the system of rewards and punishments, to the evaluation and recognition of the work done, to the promotion, to the assignment of tasks, to the boss-subordinate interactions, and the motivation system - in general. When employees’ perceptions are built around organisational injustices or even illegalities, they tend to leave the corrupt organisation and look for a more ethical one (Martocchio, 2017);

❖ **Insufficient staff.** In some military organisations, the lack of personnel is easily visible. Although the state of the organisation provides for a certain number of positions, in reality, they are not filled and, implicitly, the remaining employees will have to work more to make up for the lack of staff. The degree of bear ability to take on additional work is limited, from person to person (Mathis, Jackson, 2019). Some organisations try to increase the retention of the remaining staff by offering them management positions, with all kinds of increments, but without ensuring the optimal number of subordinates. Up to a point, things might work, but then psychological phenomena such as: stress, burnout, chronic fatigue, anxiety, depression, restlessness, insomnia and more can appear – which, over time, definitely affect performance employees, no matter how resilient they are;

❖ **Lack of promotion prospects.** Most people, as they gain experience and seniority in the military organisation want to be promoted. The military is also trained in this regard. The lack of promotion opportunities dampens their enthusiasm and gives them a persistent feeling of being stifled and the organisation disinterested in their work. In many situations, the respective persons seriously consider leaving the respective organisation and some actually do so, thus reducing the retention capacity of the institution (Pfeffer, 2015);

❖ **Absence of a functional motivational system.** Beyond the financial and promotional rights, the staff motivation system can convince the employees to work continuously and efficiently for the organisation. As a rule, the organisational and operating regulations of organisations provide for rewards and punishments, with a motivational purpose. So, the motivational system can be oriented towards either positive or negative motivation and used depending on the situations that arise. For example, some forms of employee motivation will be listed: offering access to health programs, offering free access to the gym, free/reduced meals, company car, company phones, offering medals, decorations, plaques, badges, recognition diplomas, representative pennants, symbolic gifts with the logo of the organisation, appreciation of the employee in front of the collective, granting

of credits/professional points, granting of certifications, promotions, appointing the employee as a mentor for newcomers, sanctions for violating the rules of the organisation, etc.;

❖ **Inadequate training within the organisation.** As previously stated, the training/education of personnel is essential to the smooth running of the military organisation. Regardless of the type of organisation, it is statistically estimated that once every 4-5 years new technologies/methodologies/working techniques, new machines and new approaches to the business/institutional/international/security environment appear (Phillips, 2016). In this context, any responsible military organisation is concerned with the training of employees, either by organising courses in their own institutions (for example, military organisations are structured as universities, academies, schools, etc.), or by calling on experts from the free market (companies specialised in coaching, academic or school institutions, etc.). The non-existence of these stages of preparation or their elimination due to financial considerations/lack of staff/disinterest/etc. it can generate employees' perception that the organisation is not concerned with their professional training and implicitly with their promotion. In this context, it is only a step until the staff leaves the respective institution/company and looks for another opportunity in the labour market;

❖ **The imbalance between time spent at work and free time.** Although some commanders/bosses tend to value employees who stay overtime very well, in reality, psychological studies have shown that this criterion of appreciation is a false and perverse one because employee overtime can be caused by both willingness to work and affirmation above average, but, most of the time, it is generated by their inability to solve the tasks in the legally allocated working time, by the overloading with tasks of the staff, by the bad management of working time, the lack of authentic leadership, the desire of some employees to "check off" in the eyes of the bosses, etc. Slowly, slowly, what seemed like enthusiasm will turn into dissatisfaction, revolt and then the decision to leave the organisation, because the bosses cannot reward all those who stay behind schedule, and the fatigue accumulates, drop by drop, day by day, disrupting the personal life of employees, sometimes irreparably;

❖ **Toxic leadership style.** This aspect has a devastating role in the functioning of military organisations, regardless of their structure. The leadership/management style directly affects the employees and the performance of the organisation. An inadequate (even toxic) leader for a given organisation can do more harm than all the previously mentioned factors, cumulatively. That is why organisations must appoint valuable people to leadership positions, who, by vocation, possess

leadership qualities and who can lead the organisation now and in the future. Otherwise, the affirmation of a harmful leader/manager can represent not only a brake in the development of the organisation, but also a trigger/facilitating factor for reducing staff retention;

❖ **Lack of communication in the organisation.** Communication in the organisation helps par excellence, to solve its problems and to diffuse tensions when they arise. If there is real communication in the official vertical and horizontal channels (transmitting clear tasks and feedback from management to employees, solving employee grievances, openly discussing the organisation's problems, sending motivational messages to employees and explaining sensitive situations, etc.), employees no longer have reasons to create parallel communication networks, which, as a rule, focus on their dissatisfaction with the organisation's management/leadership. Therefore, the lack of real official communication within the organisation can create hostile communication networks towards its management, a fact that has a high chance of crystallising employee dissatisfaction and implicitly them leaving the organisation (Schneider, Smith, 2004).

❖ **Increasing competition in the free market.** The pursuit of successful people is continuous and, more often than not, knows no limits in achieving goals. Thus, all kinds of methods are being developed to attract valuable personnel, not only those without a job, but especially those who have demonstrated at their current workplace that they are performing. In this whirlwind of jobs, in which it is found that trained people are less and less, compared to job needs, there are: atypical phenomena of unfair competition – in which state organisations attract personnel from other state organisations, phenomena of public humiliation between different organisations – to convince people to leave the respective system, phenomena of "hypnotising candidates" with offers that cannot be refused, etc. All these elements reduce staff retention and create a real effervescence in the labour market, in which each person is looking for a more attractive job, without striving to provide, over time, the expected results in his current job.

❖ **The incompatibility between the personality of the subject and the psychosocial profile of the organisation.** Sometimes it is found that some candidates and subsequently employees do not have a suitable personality profile to work in the military organisation (Barrick, Ryan 2003). This aspect significantly affects both their job satisfaction and their organisational effectiveness. These people will be eternally dissatisfied, frustrated, negative, and refractory to everything new. They will be focused only on the salary received, most of the time (Bauer, Erdogan, 2012). Although other factors influence staff retention, we summarise the ones

presented, considering that they have attracted the attention of the reader long enough.

Next, we consider it necessary to expose some *methods of staff retention* in an organisation. Each of the described methods has a significant psychological component.

- **Developing a positive and supportive work environment.** In such a working environment, staff can develop and demonstrate their true worth. In military organisations, such a work environment is fundamental to developing a sense of camaraderie and loyalty to the institution, commanders, and colleagues.
- **Implementation of professional development and promotion programs within the organisation.** These programs allow employees to seek to constantly improve themselves and to be up to date with the latest elements in their professional area (Noe et al, 2019).
- **Offering competitive benefits and compensation packages, with a motivational role.** People can devote their whole being to a job, for limited periods of time, because routine habits are established (Aguinis, 2020). So, in order to stimulate them and make them squeeze other personal resources for the current work, the staff must be rewarded, periodically, according to the merits, established based on clear performance standards.
- **Creating a balance between the professional and personal lives of employees.** Although employees are important at work, it must also be considered that they have a family and a psycho-physiological need for rest. Working overtime and commuting long distances are the main obstacles, which can disrupt the reference balance.
- **Recognising and rewarding employee performance.** The basic principle is that high performers should be rewarded. Thus, they will become even more effective for the military organisation, and others will follow their example.
- **Establishing clear and achievable objectives for each employee.** For people to feel comfortable at work it is important that the goals per person and per sub-organisation are realistic and achievable. The loading of tasks beyond the employee's strength will generate a state of deep dissatisfaction, which will cause him to leave the respective unit (Ployhart, 2014).
- **Providing opportunities for advancement and internal promotion.** The military promotion system is considered to be an optimal one for the career promotion of personnel. Obviously, those who consistently stand out positively can be promoted more quickly.

- **Encouraging communication and collaboration between employees.** Good official communication must be augmented by an informal, positive and constructive one. This way, staff can express their opinion openly and without fear when faced with a problem. At the same time, such informal communication helps soldiers develop a sense of camaraderie and belonging to the reference unit.
- **Implementation of an ethical and realistic feedback and performance evaluation system.** Evaluation is essential in any management process and even more so in the military organisation, which is governed by multiple professional or international standards (for example, NATO's STANAG system).
- **The organisation of team building activities and social events for employees.** Such activities are important for getting to know the employees informally and increasing the informal ties between them.
- **Ensuring a safe and healthy work environment.** In this case, the provision of security and safety measures at work is considered. Although the military environment is a dangerous one, by its nature, it is dominated by very clear functional rules, aimed at ensuring the health of the personnel.
- **Providing support and assistance for the development of employee's skills and competencies.** Personnel in the military organisation are recruited to be open to new and continuous training, therefore, they must be constantly stimulated (Ployhart, Moliterno, 2011). This must be followed, with consistency, by the competent structures and promoted among employees.
- **Implementation of policies to recognise the achievements and contributions of employees.** To function optimally, people need recognition for their work, efforts and more. Thus, staff retention is ensured.
- **Providing flexibility in the work schedule and the location of the activity.** Although the working schedule seems strict, in certain situations exceptions can be made, and these exceptions, properly understood by the respective employees, but also by the collective, can guarantee a good retention of the staff on the job.
- **Creating relationships of trust and respect between employees and management.** Every person wants to be respected as a person and as a professional. Ultimately, everyone is important in their position, and the efficient, joint work of everyone ensures the success of the unit's mission. In this equation, mutual respect and trust are very important, because they create a work environment conducive to retention.



- **Development of a personalised success plan for each employee.** Fortunately, we are different! This aspect allows us to find different solutions to the same problem, to cover the entire range of needs of a military unit and more. So, if professional management solutions are found for each employee, the success of the military organisation is guaranteed, and people will not want to leave it because they feel that they are successful.
- **Promoting balance between routine work and interesting and challenging projects.** This is especially true for creative people or those who have been doing the same type of activity for a long time. Sometimes breaking the routine and involving staff in an adjacent project keeps their alertness awake and their sense of value high.
- **Implementation of mentoring and coaching for employees.** Such an approach is especially useful for those new to the organisation. The approach will help them adapt much faster and show their true value, as quickly as possible. They, in turn, will feel compelled to mentor the younger/new arrivals in the military organisation, which is to the benefit of both the people and the organisation.
- **Carrying out employee opinion surveys and using the feedback to improve the work environment.** Practice has shown that employees need to communicate, through opinion polls, all kinds of problems to senior management. In turn, the management can find out through the opinion polls, what is the perception of the employees regarding a multitude of surveyed aspects and obtain the most realistic feedback. It is important that after these opinion polls, the staff is informed about the results obtained and measures are taken to correct some of the problems reported by them. Thus, in the following surveys, staff will participate openly, without prejudice.

The list presented above is only a set of suggestions, which can be significantly improved by each organisation.

## CONCLUSIONS

Effective recruitment, training and retention of personnel are three interconnected and essential components for the success and development of a military organisation. These aspects can have a significant impact on organisational performance, institution/firm/company culture and long-term goals.

Here are some key points about each of these.

**Regarding the efficient recruitment of personnel,** the data analysis allowed the identification of a set of main directions of action, aimed at the following components:

- **Identifying the needs of the organisation in terms of the human resource to be recruited** begins before this process and involves clearly defining the organisational needs so that only those candidates who best match the job requirements are sought.
- **Promoting the organisation** means, par excellence, communicating the culture and values of the organisation in recruitment materials so that potential candidates understand the environment in which they would be working.
- **Selecting the right candidates** involves choosing those people who not only have the skills and knowledge required for the job but also the values and aptitudes that match the organisational culture of the military body in general and the recruiting unit in particular (Schneider, Barbera, 2014).
- **Effective use of the selection interview** is both about assessing the technical and behavioural skills of the candidates and observing the candidates' perception of the military organisation, their readiness to engage in specific military missions, and their level of expectations.

### Effective staff training:

- **Training planning and design** consider the development of well-structured training programs that meet organisational needs and provide employees with the necessary skills to perform tasks from entry to exit from the military structure.
- **The use of an optimal diversity of training methods** envisages the use of interactive training procedures and techniques, adapted to, at least: the level of training, the specialty in which the personnel is being trained and the category of military personnel (officers, non-commissioned officers/mm, soldiers-professional ranks).
- **Feedback and assessment** are provided constantly throughout training programs to monitor employee progress and ensure they understand and apply new knowledge and skills.
- **Continuous development is an imperative of training,** which does not stop with the initial period, but continues throughout the military career, including for the ranks of general.

### Effective staff retention:

- **The transfer of organisational culture to new employees is achieved** through open communication, based on mutual respect and support.

- *The correct recognition of merits and the ethical use of rewards* presupposes the existence of a fair and objective evaluation system, associated with a set of just rewards and punishments and with a high motivational value.
- *Providing opportunities for advancement* is a strong element of personnel retention because people need recognition of their value and their work alike, associated with a goal of further service in the military organisation.
- *Achieving a balance between personal and professional life*, by respecting working hours and holidays, is highly valued by employees.
- *Professional development stimulates employees* and requires the organisation to invest in their professional training by offering them learning and training opportunities that motivate them to stay in the institution.
- *Fostering open communication* keeps the lines of dialogue open between employees and management to identify issues and address concerns promptly.

Overall, the success of an organisation largely depends on how it manages the recruitment, training and retention processes of staff. Effectively addressing these issues can contribute to the development of a talented, motivated and committed team, capable of meeting organisational objectives.

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