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How to recruit competent leadership personnel and how to bind internal top performer to the CAF?

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SERVICE PAPER - ÉTUDE MILITAIRE

**How to recruit competent leadership personnel and how to bind
internal top performer to the CAF?**

LCol Marcus Pein

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How to recruit competent leadership personnel and how to bind internal top performer to the CAF?

AIM

1. The aim of this paper is to identify appropriate measures to improve the recruitment of young talents and to strengthen the bond with the CAF so that talents can be convinced to stay in the forces.

INTRODUCTION

2. Attracting young people is one of the biggest challenges¹ that the Canadian Forces (CAF) has to face, a challenge not unique to the CAF. Not so long ago, it was easy for recruitment offices to pick the right recruit from a variety of candidates when recruiting leaders. This not only applied to the recruitment of new personnel², but also to the filling of key positions³, such as those required for the implementation of the defense policy at the middle and upper management levels. Personnel measures, incentives and supporting factors that help to find highly qualified candidates for high-profile positions and later tie them to the CAF in the long term have always existed. However, the importance of these measures in the recruitment of officers, as well as the retention of highly qualified officers was never emphasized. But then

¹ Gustafson, Kathrine. “Why and How to Attract and Retain Young Talent”, (Canada, Mountain View: Intuit, Quickbooks, 2017), accessed 31.01.2018 at <https://www.intuit.com/company/contact/>

² Smalley, Kristen. “The biggest challenges is facing human resources in 2017”, in randstad, 02.05.2017 (Canada, Brampton: 2017), accessed 29.01.2018 at <https://www.randstad.ca/job-seeker/locations/>

³ Manciangli, Dana. “5 strategies for filling key positions quickly (and still hiring the right person)”, American Business Journals 26.11.2014, (USA, NC, Charlotte: 2014), accessed 29.01.2018 at <https://www.bizjournals.com/bizjournals/how-to/human-resources/2014/11/5-strategies-for-filling-key-jobs-quickly-and.html>

there have been social developments that necessitate a reevaluation of existing standard personnel policies⁴, including, but not limited to:

- a. The demographic change⁵, which is not unique Canada, has intensified the competition for young skilled and talented people,
- b. The smaller but important group of young potentials (YP) has literally erupted into a "war for talent". The CAF is competing with civilian companies in the fight for future leaders,⁶
- c. Loyalty to the employer is slowing, especially among YP. They use the flexibility in the job market and are more willing to change than just a few years ago.⁷ This is diametrically opposed to a hierarchical personnel structure, as is customary in the CAF,
- d. Material reasons are not always decisive for the choice of job. Young people increasingly pay attention to the fact that the corporate culture and corporate philosophy are in line with their own values and convictions; and
- e. Talent management is gaining in social relevance, so that elite promotion and performance thinking continue to come to the forefront. Civilian companies in

⁴ Canada. Chief of Forces Development. National Defence Headquarter, "The future security environment, 2008 – 2030, Part1 , Current and Emerging Trends." (Ottawa, 2009), p. 31, accessed 29.01.2018 at http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2011/dn-nd/D4-8-1-2010-eng.pdf

⁵ Canada. Government of Canada. "The changing demographic structure.", (Ottawa: 29.09.2017); accessed 31.01.2018 at <http://www.horizons.gc.ca/en/content/changing-demographic-structure>.

⁶ Rogers, Jason, "Top ten problems facing modern day recruiters" (Myanmar: work.com.mm 01.10.2015); accessed at 29.01.2018 at <https://www.work.com.mm/en/job-journal/recruitment-toolkit/top-10-problems-facing-recruiters/>

⁷ Horn, Doug, "The Reasons Why Workplace Loyalty is Declining" (USA, NY, recruitifi, 21.01.2015) accessed at 29.01.2018 at <http://blog.recruitifi.com/the-reasons-why-workplace-loyalty-is-declining>

particular have recognized this and are pursuing aggressive talent management⁸, aimed at the small group of YP, in order to bind them even better and more closely than before.

3. Therefore, the CAF must operate effective talent management, which already begins in the recruitment of junior leadership personnel. The CAF should not recognize human resources development as an end in itself, to make individual officers and superiors happy - the goal must be to foster those talents which contribute significantly to the positive development and effectiveness of the CAF. This paper intends to describe possible strategies, in order to attract competent young people with leadership skills and to bind those YP in the long term. The paper attempts to find answers to the question of what measures must be taken in order to identify and recruit future leaders early on, and to bind them to the CAF in the long term.

DISCUSSION

4. Personnel development in the CAF must be strategically considered. Personnel development must not always be seen as a “vicarious agent” in order to complete day-to-day operations. "To fill the posts in this staff, we need personnel in a few months - so let's start looking for possible candidates and fill in the gaps" - this strategy should be replaced by a more strategic approach. The CAF must establish the identification and development of personnel as a common strategic task and they must work with tools to analyze what is

⁸ Niedzwieka, Katarzyna, “Talent Management as a Key Aspect of Human Resources Management Strategy in Contemporary Enterprise” in Knowledge Society, (Lublin, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, 2016), S. 807, accessed 29.01.2018 at <http://www.toknowpress.net/ISBN/978-961-6914-16-1/papers/ML16-153.pdf>

needed in the field of human resources, not just tomorrow but also the day after tomorrow.⁹ Among other things, demographic and socio-social developments play a prominent role here. In addition, international security trends, technological progress, future economic developments and political interests are of crucial strategic importance for the future needs of leadership personnel.¹⁰ The insights gained from this analysis must be constantly reviewed in the sense of a repetitive process, further developed and adapted to social and societal changes. The following instruments for the implementation of a strategic policy have to be further considered:

- a. Development of a model for the precise analysis and characterization of the necessary traits of future leadership personnel;¹¹
- b. Development of a control mechanism to review and adapt strategic human resources development in the CAF as measured by social and societal challenges;¹² and
- c. Creation of a catalog of ambitions, priorities and capabilities for the implementation of strategic personnel development beginning with the

⁹ American Management Association, “Strategic Talent Management” (Toronto, Canadian Management Center, 12.04.2007), accessed 29.01.2018 at <http://www.amanet.org/training/articles/strategic-talent-management.aspx>

¹⁰ Canada. Chief of Forces Development. National Defense Headquarter, “The future security environment, 2008 – 2030, Part1, Current and Emerging Trends.” (Ottawa, 2009), p. 33, accessed 29.01.2018 at http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2011/dn-nd/D4-8-1-2010-eng.pdf

¹¹ American Management Association, “Strategic Talent Management” (Toronto, Canadian Management Center, 12.04.2007), accessed 29.01.2018 at <http://www.amanet.org/training/articles/strategic-talent-management.aspx>

¹² Canada. Government of Canada. Canadian Forces Joint Publication 1.0; B-GL-005-100/FP-001 “Military Personnel Management Doctrine.” (Ottawa, 2009), p. 1-1

recruitment, here main emphasis, and continuously adapted over the different phases of a military career.¹³

5. On this basis, a personnel management policy can be set up that emphasizes the long-term development of the future CAF leadership. CAF and human resource development are therefore strategically coordinated.
6. Special attention should be dedicated to identifying target groups accurately and to promoting them individually; however, within the framework of personnel development, the mistake of confining oneself to pampering the YP with special offers must be avoided. A more intelligent approach is to differentiate the measures of personnel development and selection. First of all, it is a good idea to identify different target groups in order to define specific offers based on them; thus promoting their special talents, in a manner congruent with the strategic personnel development in the CAF.¹⁴ In doing so, the candidates should have a full appreciation with respect to their development prognosis.¹⁵ In addition, a "switch" between the target groups should be made possible. However, this type of personnel management always comprises two aspects: first, measures to systematically identify, promote, and retain the internal YP; and secondly, competitive measures to convince high potentials from outside organizations to join CAF.
7. The first aspect could be addressed as follows. The internal group receives special offers and mentoring programs that enable them to make an above-average contribution to the

¹³ Kempova, Lena, "The Creating of Personnel Strategy and its Implementation to Organization XYZ" in journal *acta academica karviniensia*, (Czech, Karniva: Silesian University, 2012), accessed 29.01.2018 at <http://aak.cms.opf.slu.cz/pdf/2013/2/Kempova.pdf>

¹⁴ Finney, Marta I., "Building High-performance People and Organizations. The New Employer – Employee Relationship", (London: Library of Congress, 2008) P. 145 - 147

¹⁵ Fernandez-Araoz, Claudio, Groysberg, Boris and Nohria Nitin. "How to Hang On to Your High Potentials." in *Haward Business Review*, (Boston: Haward Business School Publishing, October 2011), accessed 29.01.2018 at <https://hbr.org/2011/10/how-to-hang-on-to-your-high-potentials>

success of the CAF. Here, the factor binding to the CAF must be given the highest priority. In the case of the middle performer group, strengths should be targeted and weak points should be tackled. They should be specifically appointed to positions where they can learn from top performers. Such a symbiosis strengthens the sense of community and the identification with the CAF. The low performer group should be divided into two groups, those who are to be held in the CAF and those who are to be released from the CAF. In the first group, basic knowledge has to be gradually built up so that it could later be used in subordinate positions. The other group should be offered measures to facilitate the transition from military to civilian life.

8. The second aspect is much more difficult to counteract, since armed forces usually have a closed personnel structure, therefore making it difficult to accept personnel from "outside". Nonetheless, various measures can be taken to address this problem. For example, with consideration to former officers, when and under which certain conditions would it be possible to re-enter the CAF. Additionally, civilian experts could be addressed in a targeted way to take on specific tasks based on contracts of limited duration.¹⁶ Such personnel could be leveraged to create a special reserve pool, which is available if necessary. In addition, legal regulations should be determined which make it easier to switch between civilian and military appointments in the course of a working life without having to accept personal disadvantages. The closed personnel structure of the CAF ought to be more open to personnel from "outside". The following aspects of this target group analysis should be consistently considered:

¹⁶ Smalley, Kristen. "The biggest challenges is facing human resources in 2017", in randstad, 02.05.2017 (Canada, Brampton: 2017), accessed 29.01.2018 at <https://www.randstad.ca/job-seeker/locations/>

- a. Development of a selection process for the identification and classification in corresponding “performer groups”. In this case, the usual assessment (PER) as an assessment tool should either be further developed or rethought in order to increase the differentiability;
 - b. Determination of a catalog of measures for the long-term retention of YP to the CAF;
 - c. Development of a training and education program for middle performers to strengthen competencies and close gaps to top performers, adapted to the current needs of the CAF;
 - d. Further development of a catalog of measures for low performers to support the transition from military to civilian environment;
 - e. Establish the legal basis for opening up the personnel structure of the CAF in order to allow more flexibility in access from "outside" without detriment to those affected; and
 - f. Determination of specific posts or a pool of posts, which can be filled either externally or internally, without disturbing the internal structure of the CAF and to endanger the operational readiness.
9. Human resource management in the CAF should be as differentiated and individualized as possible.¹⁷ However, the greatest importance should be attached to the people in the CAF and their needs should be the focus. Excessive-demand, but also under-demand

¹⁷ Canada. Government of Canada. Canadian Forces Joint Publication 1.0; B-GL-005-100/FP-001 “Military Personnel Management Doctrine.” (Ottawa, 2009)

should be excluded by skillful analysis.¹⁸ In addition, the development of top performers should be afforded a disproportionate amount of effort and time, because they are critical for the CAF future. An opening of the CAF for personnel from "outside" is without alternative.

10. One of the most important aspects of winning YP and tying them to the CAF is working with them to develop individual career plans. Especially high potentials should be consistently updated which perspectives open up for them in the CAF. High potentials want to know in advance which individual training opportunities may be available, which promotion prospects are upcoming and under what conditions they can capitalize upon them.¹⁹ The compatibility of family and service plays an increasingly important role and should not be ignored.²⁰ Specific career development programs help high potentials to unfold vertically through promotions and horizontally by gaining experience at various levels and in different areas in which they serve. Education measures such as leadership seminars, advanced trainings and international exchange programs must not be awarded according to the "watering can principle", but must be tailored to the respective individual.²¹ In addition to job rotation measures and international exchange programs, these tailor-made development plans could also include cross-rotations within various government departments in order to support a "whole government approach" early on

¹⁸ Fernandez-Araoz, Claudio, Groysberg, Boris and Nohria Nitin. "How to Hang On to Your High Potentials." in *Haward Business Review*, (Boston: Haward Business School Publishing, October 2011), accessed 29.01.2018 at <https://hbr.org/2011/10/how-to-hang-on-to-your-high-potentials>.

¹⁹ Zenger, Jack. "Who to promote? 10 Keys To Identifying People With High Potential." (USA, Washington D.C., *Forbes Magazine* online, 2014), accessed 29.01.2018 at <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jackzenger/2014/09/18/who-to-promote-10-keys-to-identifying-people-with-high-potential/#12383f3ce554>

²⁰ Smalley, Kristen. "The biggest challenges is facing human resources in 2017", in *randstad*, 02.05.2017 (Canada, Brampton: 2017), accessed 29.01.2018 at <https://www.randstad.ca/job-seeker/locations/>

²¹ Fernandez-Araoz, Claudio, Groysberg, Boris and Nohria Nitin. "How to Hang On to Your High Potentials." in *Haward Business Review*, (Boston: Haward Business School Publishing, October 2011), accessed 29.01.2018 at <https://hbr.org/2011/10/how-to-hang-on-to-your-high-potentials>

through the exchange of leadership personnel. The following aspects for binding YP should be thought through consistently:

- a. Early personalization of career plans in close consultation with the officer concerned, taking into account a work – life – balance;²²
 - b. Strengthening the possibilities of reconciling work and family, the career must be flexible adaptable at developments in the family, without significant disadvantages for the officer concerned;
 - c. Further development and refinement of the central training and course catalog for individual promotion of high potentials with a focus on targeted individual measures not on general collective training; and
 - d. Creation of suitable rotation posts²³ in consultation with other governmental departments to be able to temporarily exchange leadership personnel on a political-strategic level in order to achieve a diffusion of experience.
11. In the CAF in particular, reconciling family and service is a difficult undertaking, as postings, courses, trainings or deployments are part of the officer's job description. In today's society, YP again attach more importance to the family, they want to make a career, but at the same time lead a decent family life. The CAF must notice this desire to reconcile family and service and must find solutions to help to achieve a "work - life - balance". The above-mentioned measures are not to be understood as individual

²² Gustafson, Kathrine. "Why and How to Attract and Retain Young Talent", (Canada, Mountain View: Intuit, Quickbooks, 2017), accessed 31.01.2018 at <https://www.intuit.com/company/contact/>

²³ Fernandez-Araoz, Claudio, Groysberg, Boris and Nohria Nitin. "How to Hang On to Your High Potentials." in Harvard Business Review, (Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing, October 2011), accessed 29.01.2018 at <https://hbr.org/2011/10/how-to-hang-on-to-your-high-potentials>

measures. Their optimal effect unfolds only in the context of a targeted combination and in coordination with the respective officer.

12. Another important tool for internal development of leadership personnel could be an "acceleration pool" for top performers. In the so-called acceleration pool those officers are included, which wants to prepare the CAF specifically to take on once greater responsibility. These people should therefore receive a preferential promotion. It makes sense that matched to the personal life situation; the pool can also be abandoned by losing the speed but not the perspective. In addition, the preparation and promotion must not be geared towards a special post; these officers should be so talented that the most holistic possible training enables them to take responsibility at the various levels of leadership. This only applies to a small group of officers and needs to be well considered who will be included in this pool.²⁴ It is one of the most difficult tasks to pinpoint for whom this type of talent management comes into question, tools such as a "talent potential check" or "competence analysis" could provide support. Also important is an in-depth talent scouting or the creation of a "Talent Task Force", which regularly checks whether officers from the "second row" do not have talents that have been left unused, have not yet been recognized or due to changing conditions now to be required This prevents good officers from prematurely leaving CAF. This process must be permanently maintained and should not be based solely on PER's analysis but should go deeper. To implement these ideas, the following aspects should be further considered:

²⁴ Fernandez-Araoz, Claudio, Groysberg, Boris and Nohria Nitin. "How to Hang On to Your High Potentials." in *Haward Business Review*, (Boston: Haward Business School Publishing, October 2011), accessed 29.01.2018 at <https://hbr.org/2011/10/how-to-hang-on-to-your-high-potentials>

- a. Creation of an "acceleration pool" for top performers,²⁵ in which one can be admitted or taken out depending on the circumstances of life, if necessary with loss of the speed of promotion but not the career perspectives;
 - b. As far as possible, holistic training and support for high potentials without concentration on specific positions, with the aim of being able to take responsibility at various levels of leadership;
 - c. Introduction of an in-force talent scouting from the first day in the CAF, supported by measures to analyze competencies of potential leaders;²⁶ and
 - d. Creation of an additional analysis tool, which is independent of the respective direct superior and goes beyond the statements of the PER.
13. The CAF cannot afford not to exploit existing potential; in addition, this potential must be recognized and developed. It is therefore imperative to develop instruments that promote existing potential that has already been identified in a targeted and rapid manner, bring unrecognized potential to light and bring those to a tailor-made education and training process. This will require new effective tools that need to be developed and exploited quickly, as the battle for the best talents will increase significantly in the future due to the factors already mentioned above.

²⁵ Yarnall, Jane. "Strategic Career Management. Developing Your Talent." (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2008), p. 105 - 107

²⁶ Gustafson, Kathrine. "Why and How to Attract and Retain Young Talent", (Canada, Mountain View: Intuit, Quickbooks, 2017), accessed 31.01.2018 at <https://www.intuit.com/company/contact/>

CONCLUSION

14. To conclude, it is indisputable that the CAF must increasingly emphasize and communicate the recruitment and retention of YP. "Promote talents and talk about it" - that should be the motto to attract excellent young people to join the CAF. The CAF must offensively communicate their talent management in order to attract young people. The CAF must work to build a modern employer image in which the talents of young leaders play a central role. Moreover, the YP are not "attracted" solely by economic indicators - the credible indication of value-oriented leadership in the armed forces is apt to exert a pull on those people for whom ethical-moral orientation is just as important as the existence of a career development plan. Basically, top performers like to stay in the CAF, if value is placed on leadership, coaching and personnel development.

RECOMMENDATION

15. Therefore, it is recommended to review all existing human resource regulations, acts and publications in order to prove the relevance of the above mentioned improvements and if necessary to adapt them in order to achieve an improvement. Improved individual development and career plans, on-the-job training, the offensive-active effort to keep highly trained officers, an improved "work-life balance", the consideration of intangibles - all this increases the likelihood that one or the other dollar more or less no longer plays a significant role in the salary slip.

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