

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

A STRATEGIC SYSTEMS MODEL FOR EFFECTIVE RECRUITING

by

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ABSTRACT

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Demographic, economic, and sociological changes continue to challenge Air Force recruiting. Since the Air Force contributes significantly to our national defense, it must maintain an effective, efficient recruiting process. Without the right quantity, quality, and diversity of candidates, the Air Force cannot remain a quality force, capable of sustaining mission requirements. Past methods for redressing recruiting shortfalls may place our nation's security at risk; such methods addressed former problems. We have no assurance that they will now work effectively. After introducing a model for effective and efficient recruiting, this Strategic Research Project describes the Air Force recruiting organizational structure, management processes and practices, and mission effectiveness. It provides examples of best practices, both military recruiting structure, processes, and practices and private industry strategic human resource models. It describes how the environment influences recruiting and concludes with recommendations for Air Force Recruiting Service.

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A STRATEGIC SYSTEMS MODEL FOR EFFECTIVE RECRUITING

The U.S. Air Force is incessantly challenged to recruit quality young men and women--we are in a "war for talent."¹ The recruiting challenges of the late 1990s "reinvigorated interest by the Department of Defense in the determinants of the propensity of American youth to enlist in the U.S. military."² However, a number of factors, including a declining youth interest to join the military, an increased diversity in our society, a decreasing number of veterans in our country, a continued shrinking of a military presence in our communities, a larger number of college-bound youths, an amplified civil-military gap, a competitive civilian employment market, and our all-volunteer force military service program have adversely affected the recruiting environment. All indicate a pressing need for Air Force recruiting reform.

The Air Force mission is to defend our nation and protect its interests through aerospace power. To perform this mission, the Air Force must continuously replenish its personnel resources. The mission of the Air Force Recruiting Service (AFRS) is to recruit a high-quality force from a cross section of America to meet the personnel requirements of the Air Force.³ Does AFRS need to improve its recruiting practices to achieve its mission goals? This Strategic Research Project (SRP) argues that the Air Force can improve its recruiting mission. Although the Air Force has met most of its annual recruiting requirements in recent years, it continues to rely on increased resources for recruiting. The Air Force is spending more money for advertising, marketing, and enlistment bonuses, and assigning more people to meet its recruiting goals. Even with this increased spending and additional personnel, the Air Force continues to struggle to attract high-quality youths for its enlisted force, has difficulty attracting several officer specialties, and does not reflect the demographic patterns of our society.

The Air Force relies on a complex human resource management system to recruit, train, assign, and evaluate its personnel.⁴ This paper focuses on one pillar of the Air Force's human resource management system--recruiting. After providing a preferred model for Air Force recruiting, it reviews the current Air Force recruiting organizational structure, management processes and practices, and mission effectiveness. It illustrates how the environment influences recruiting and, following, provides military and industry best practices. It concludes with recommended improvements for Air Force recruiting. These recommended solutions will aid the Air Force in recruiting high-quality young men and women. Most important, these recommendations will assist the Air Force in meeting its personnel requirements. These improvements will help sustain our nation's security.

A RECRUITING ORGANIZATION SYSTEMS MODEL

A model recruiting agency has structure, superior management practices, and strict accountability. It also continuously improves, using feedback, and adjusts to environmental influences. A sound recruiting organizational structure helps ensure recruiters meet mission requirements. For example, it recruits the right people for the right places; it promotes organizations to distribute strengths and offset weaknesses. It keeps doing a better job. It considers demographic factors and the individual strengths of candidates. It combines centralized and decentralized control of recruiter management. While most recruiters should be in the field, some should be at the headquarters assisting with administrative functions.⁵

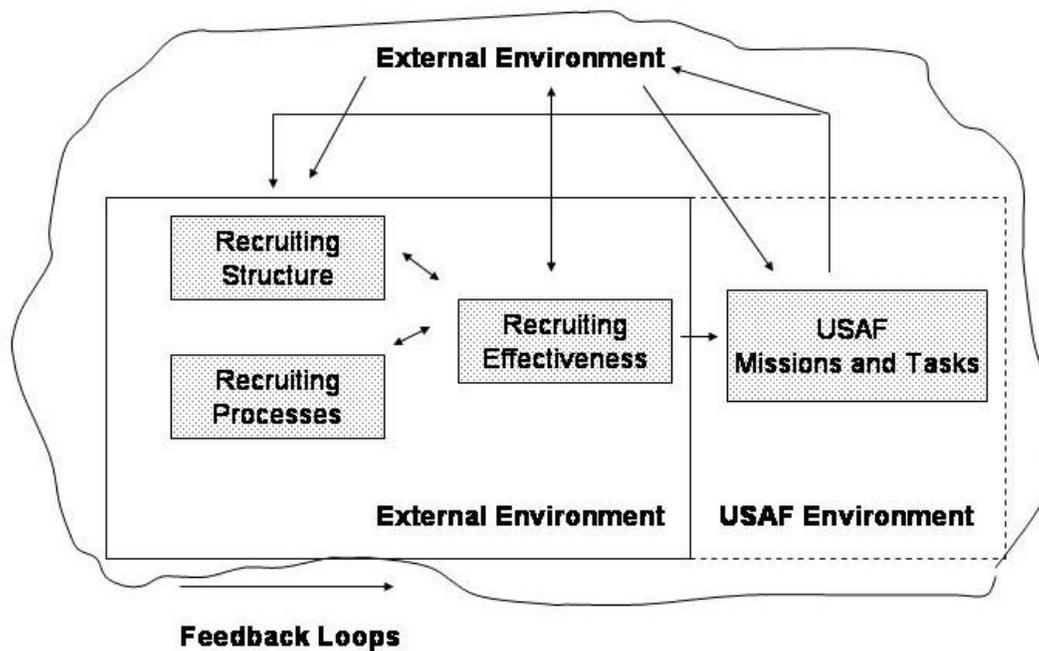


FIGURE 1. A STRATEGIC SYSTEMS MODEL FOR EFFECTIVE RECRUITING
Sources: Numerous.

STRUCTURE

Personnel managers must consider business costs when structuring its organization. Outsourcing and contracting recruiters and administrative support are viable cost-effective

options. For example, if the average cost of an engineer is \$100,000 a year, it may not be cost effective to have an engineer recruit other engineers. Also, it may be less expensive to use contracted personnel rather than in-house subject matter experts to carry out administrative functions.⁶

PROCESSES

Recruiting organizations must strive to continuously improve its recruiting processes. Primary focus should be on human and organizational processes, concerning the synchronization of people and organizations. This includes organizational and personnel performance management, training, and career development.⁷ For processes to succeed, the entire organization must embrace them.⁸

Recruiting processes use information sharing to see what others are doing. It leverages technology to improve the hiring process by expediting the screening and interviewing of applicants. It collects and analysis data, starting with identifying organizational goals. After goals have been identified, agencies need to evaluate their systems and determine which resources will be dedicated to specific goals. Ways and means for achieving goals are needed in each level of the organization--strategic, operational, and tactical.⁹ Strategic goals establish an organization's overall focus. Operational goals refine strategic ones and tactical goals provide field recruiters with guidelines for doing their day-to-day mission.

EFFECTIVENESS

Recruiting organizations must have measurements of how well they are doing. These determine the effectiveness and efficiency of resources and costs; they reveal whether an organization is investing its dollars in the best areas. For example, job fairs, the Internet, advertising, marketing, and prospecting should all be continuously assessed. The Internet has proven a useful tool in recruiting, but its costs should be measured against other recruiting media, such as newspaper advertising and highway billboards.¹⁰

Measuring an organization's marketing success can be difficult. Advertising extends a product or service in the market place. Dollars are spent on numerous mediums to create public awareness of opportunities and to attract new people. Advertising, rarely, directly makes people take a certain action. However, its effects can be viewed hierarchically: Advertising brings awareness and this becomes knowledge. In turn, knowledge develops preferences, then intentions--this leads to sales.¹¹

ENVIRONMENT

The environment impacts the structure, processes, practices, resources, and the effectiveness of an organization. This includes both the external and internal environment. Organizations must be able to respond to environmental influences. Doing so may require restructuring, new organizational processes, and new methods to improve mission effectiveness.

Change is an ongoing, emergent process. The external environment is volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. As such, organizations must have agile structures ready to continuously adapt to change, and not just react when things go bad. Reactionary change will not keep pace with the environmental conditions; however, experimentation and close monitoring of the environment at all organizational levels will permit organizational learning to occur.¹²

The internal environment of an organization will affect change, too. Its people, subordinate agencies, information reporting, and resources, are effected by, and effect the external environment.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND FEEDBACK

Recruiting is a dynamic and continuously evolving activity. Recruiting is an iterative process so organizations must seek on-going improvement. Recruiting organizations should also tend closely to comparable organizations' best practices.¹³

Continuous organizational feedback helps improve its mission success. This must be done at all levels of an organization, from sub- to headquarters systems. Doing so establishes a climate for continuous improvement, a salient element for successful organizations.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

AFRS is a subordinate unit of Air Education and Training Command; it is headquartered at Randolph Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas. AFRS directs recruiting requirements over four groups and 28 squadrons, managing approximately 3,500 active duty military and 350 civilians,¹⁴ approximately 1,500 enlisted recruiters, and 300 officer recruiters.¹⁵ Recruiters are supported by approximately 1,700 staff and administrative support personnel. Subordinate to AFRS headquarters are 4 groups and 28 squadrons. Each squadron has six to eight enlisted recruiting flights and one or two officer recruiting flights. Enlisted recruiter flights have five to eleven recruiters while officer recruiting flights have fourteen to twenty four recruiters.

SUBORDINATE ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN

A typical Air Force recruiting squadron has one or two noncommissioned personnel specialists, one finance noncommissioned officer, one or two logisticians, two or three trainers, a marketing noncommissioned officer, a public affairs noncommissioned officer, a team of four to six operations noncommissioned officers, a superintendent, a first sergeant, a medical flight commander, an operations flight commander, a support flight commander, and two to four liaison noncommissioned officers that work in Military Entrance Processing Stations (MEPS).

The personnel, finance, public affairs, and flight commander positions are special duty assignments, requiring no previous recruiting experience. Many of the personnel assigned to these positions have limited, if any, experience in Air Force recruiting. The other positions are filled by the AFRS career progression system, but these personnel may also have minimal experience in recruiting, having performed recruiting core duties for only three to four years.

MANAGEMENT CULTURE

AFRS is centrally managed and controlled. Top-down information flow often comes from AFRS headquarters to each of the recruiting squadrons, bypassing the group. Each recruiting group is headed by a colonel, staffed with a lieutenant colonel deputy and chief master sergeant superintendent. Group staff includes personnel specialists, administrative specialists, logisticians, trainers, financial specialists, operations specialists, and medical group managers, very similarly structured like each squadron and not unlike the headquarters.

A typical Air Force flying wing has four groups. In these wings, the Operations Group manages the day-to-day flying activities and production while the Medical Group focuses on medical care, treatment, and maintaining a fit and ready force. The Maintenance Group manages aircraft and associated support equipment, and the Mission Support Group manages supply, personnel, contracting, and base infrastructure support. Each has clearly defined functional goals and tasks.¹⁶

A typical Air Force headquarters has subordinate numbered air forces, wings, groups, and squadrons in that order. Numbered air forces are commanded by general officers, as are most wings. By contrast, AFRS is an anomaly as far as Air Force organizational structuring is concerned. Although AFRS is a major subordinate command headquarters organization in the Air Force, it aligns more closely to an air force wing, in function, size, and design. Traditional groups are led by colonels, but this is where similarity with AFRS ends.

Most Air Force groups centrally manage squadrons and their warfighting missions. Each group--whether operations, medical, maintenance, or mission support--has direct mission

responsibilities as well as support and administrative duties. AFRS groups function primarily as an administrative support organization and exercise only minimal mission authority and control. However, groups do serve as a conduit of communication flow from subordinate squadrons. Required by rules and regulations, squadrons forward numerous reports to groups for review. Many are monthly while others annual requirements. However, the utility of these reports is dubious, since many of these documents are not used.

AFRS recruiting groups have minimal control in production matters. Although AFRS allows each group to adjust squadron recruiting quota allocations, groups can make only small adjustments. This latitude is so trivial that it provides no significant managerial capability. It is regarded as not being worth anyone's time.

COMPARITIVE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT CULTURE

The Army has more than 6,000 field recruiters, a supporting staff of more than 2,000 people, and nearly 10,000 assigned to their recruiting mission.¹⁷ Its command's organizational structure is similar to the Air Force, comprising six brigades and 41 battalions. However, a key difference is their Training Support Brigade. This robust unit, manned by several dozen personnel, performs several of the marketing functions that are accomplished by AFRS headquarters marketing division. The Army Training Support Brigade manages promotional items and coordinates special performance organizations such as the Golden Knights.

Below Army brigades are 41 battalions, each commanded by a Lieutenant Colonel. Typically, an Army Recruiting Battalion has more than 200 personnel and maintains five to seven companies that manage approximately seven stations or recruiting offices.

Army recruiting battalion commanders may lead a team of more than a dozen officers, unlike Air Force commanders, who supervise only three officers. Serving on the Army battalion staff is a major, an executive officer, as well as numerous captains responsible for personnel, operations, and reserve enlisted recruiting. Also, each Army company has a captain in charge of several recruiting stations. Unlike the Air Force, the Army employs many civilians in key support positions. Besides maintaining administrative specialists for each company and support offices, the Army employs several civilians in their marketing and public affairs, education, family support, budget and finance, personnel, facilities, and operations offices.

Unlike the Air Force, which maintains a medical recruiting flight in every recruiting squadron, the Army Medical Corps has its own separate recruiting battalion with numerous fielded detachments. Most Army recruiting battalions recruit only enlisted personnel, although

they perform enlisted recruiting for both active and reserve component forces. On the other hand, the Air Force Reserve component recruits its own members.

Army recruiters are identified quite differently from Air Force recruiters. For years, the Air Force has depended on volunteers to fill recruiting billets. Today, the Air Force selects a small number of non-volunteers to fill certain positions. The Army does not have a large pool of volunteers and must assign most of its recruiters from the field. Service cultures account for this difference: Army soldiers join the Army to be warriors; they want to be in the fight and do not want to perform in support or administrative duties such as recruiting. Air Force culture is not so focused.

After Army recruiters complete with their three-year assignments, most return to their previous primary duty of assignment. However, a few remain in recruiting and elect recruiting as a career specialty. Unlike in the Air Force, Army recruiters do not progress from enlisted to officer duties.¹⁸

AFRS' organizational structure needs improvement. Compared to AFRS, the Army's recruiting structure seems to be more related to recruiting effectiveness than the Air Force's. It offers more staff personnel depth, credence to its officer recruiting program, and ensures that all of its recruiting departments are adequately operated. AFRS can learn from the Army's recruiting structure.

RECRUITING PROCESSES

The Air Force strives to recruit men and women who are mentally, morally, and physically capable of maintaining the sophisticated systems and equipment of today's aerospace force.¹⁹ AFRS is responsible for recruiting enlisted personnel, chaplains, physicians, dentists, nurses, health care administrators, and Officer Training School (OTS) candidates.²⁰

JOINING THE AIR FORCE

Joining the Air Force involves a three-step process: Pre-qualifying, screening, and MEPS processing. Pre-qualifying involves reviewing candidates' documents such as driver's license, social security card, birth certificate, and proof of high school graduation. Next, recruits are physically, morally, and academically screened. Recruiters review an applicant's medical history; involvements with the law and drug use are documented. If applicants have not taken the Armed Services Vocational, Aptitude, Battery (ASVAB) exam, they will be administered a preliminary test, the Entrance Screening Test, to determine if minimum standards are met. Screened candidates then report to one of the joint military's 65 MEPS to be medically evaluated, to have a pre-enlistment interview, and to take an Oath of Enlistment.²¹ Qualified

applicants will take an initial oath of office, sign a preliminary contract, and enter into the Delayed Entry Program (DEP) waiting, up to one year, to enter in active duty. Applicants awaiting active duty while enrolled in the DEP are trained and prepared for basic training. They are not paid by the Air Force during this time, yet they are expected to prepare for their military duties. Prior to entering active duty, candidates are re-screened, medically evaluated again, and take another oath of office at the MEPS, before assuming active duty status. All military services use the same process.

RECRUITER DUTY

Typically, Air Force enlisted accessions recruiters are assigned monthly goals, while officer recruiters are given quarterly quotas to meet. Goals are based on a detailed market analysis of recruiters' assigned areas. Analyses are conducted by each squadron's operations section each year and forwarded to AFRS headquarters. In turn, each squadron is assigned a twelve-month quota requirement. Then each squadron headquarters distributes monthly quotas to each flight, and flights assign individual monthly goals to recruiters. Recruiters who meet or exceed goals are recognized, while those who fail to achieve goals are evaluated to determine reasons for shortfalls. Recruiters are not automatically reassigned from recruiting duty for not meeting production goals. Additional training is much preferred over reassignment for recruiters who do not meet their quotas. Evaluation of recruiters' performance focuses on processes, not necessarily on end results. Recruiter supervisors outline weekly duty requirements for most of their recruiters; such requirements specify a minimum number of phone calls, high school visits and presentations, and recruiter-generated-mail. A recruiter's supervisor uses regression analysis, typically on a quarterly basis, to determine if the recruiter's process is serving to meet the requirement for contracting recruits. Some recruiting zones are difficult recruiting areas and may not always yield desired recruiting numbers. Hence, the Air Force focuses on the recruiting process, not strictly on end results in evaluating recruiter mission success.²²

RECRUITING, TRAINING, AND ADVANCING RECRUITERS

Most Air Force recruiters are volunteers. However, others are nominated and selected from among the best in their career fields. Recruiter candidates receive formal training at the Air Force Recruiting School in San Antonio, Texas.

AFRS tries to assign recruiters in their area of geographical preference; however, this cannot be guaranteed.²³ Unlike the Army, the Air Force does not consider a recruiters' ethnicity for geographic assignment, a recent Air Force personnel change that may be adversely affecting recruiting. Just as military members bond through their association with military

culture, so too do ethnic groups bond. Historical data confirms that assigning recruiters based on their ethnicity yields increased mission results in certain geographic locations, both short- and long-term.²⁴

The Air Force recruits recruiters and reviews records and backgrounds of both volunteers and selectees. Until two years ago, the Air Force had no need to select recruiters; however, they have recently found themselves short of volunteers. If there are no suitable volunteers for some of the recruiting vacancies, the most eligible candidate is selected from an Air Force unit.

AFRS screens all applications for recruiting duty. It then selects only the most qualified candidates, from a variety of career fields, for recruiting duty. Candidates must have less than 16 years of military service, an outgoing personality, and a solid military record. Unlike other military services, Air Force applicants are psychologically screened to determine if they have the skills and capabilities for recruiting duty.²⁵ Almost 70 percent of potential recruiter applicants are personally interviewed by AFRS headquarters experts, while the remainders are interviewed by field experts.²⁶

Air Force recruiters attend formal initial training. However, most follow-on training is informally conducted by recruiting squadrons. Quarterly training is offered opportunistically, conducted during other required meetings when the entire unit is together. Conducted the first quarter of the fiscal year and usually in conjunction with the squadron's annual awards banquet, annual training is facilitated by AFRS headquarters and group training subject matter experts. It, too, is only informal training.

Officer recruiters are reassigned enlisted accessions recruiters. This transfer is considered career advancement. However, officer recruiting job skill tasks are essentially the same as in enlisted accessions recruiting. Officer recruiters administratively process applicants much like enlisted accessions. This is especially true for the large number of OTS applicants that are recruited. In fact, OTS recruiting may be more routine than enlisted accessions recruiting. Many of these recruiting specialists spend a majority of their time screening and processing, and not actually recruiting or using sales skills as needed in enlisted accessions recruiting.

PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENT PRACTICES

Through 2001, AFRS managed all recruiting personnel actions and assignments. It placed recruiters based on experience and other performance factors. In reality, many viewed these transfers as a "good old boy" system. The Air Force Personnel Center currently manages

recruiter placement and just like other Air Force personnel assignments. This change, however, has been subject to “growing pains.”

One of the troubled areas is follow-on or internal recruiting career progression moves. As first-term recruiters approach the end of their tours, squadron commanders make recommendations to group commanders for their future assignments. However, recommendations for career progression are mostly generic. So the Air Force is not always positioning the most qualified, or even minimally qualified, people into the right job.

MANAGEMENT EMPHASIS

The primary focus in Air Force recruiting has been on enlisted recruiting. This simply makes sense: Approximately 90 percent of an Air Force recruiting squadron’s total number of annual recruiting requirements is enlisted accessions. As a result, more attention is given to enlisted recruiting. For the most part, OTS applicants are abundant. However, technically qualified applicants, engineers in particular, are scarce. Recruiting professionals, such as doctors, dentists, and other health-related professions is also difficult. Because the recruiting requirement quotas are much less in the officer divisions than in the enlisted, AFRS has not focused as much on meeting officer recruiting goals as they have on enlisted accessions. Many officer recruiting programs have suffered for years: They have not attained their annual quotas and not given the same supervisory attention as enlisted accessions.

Compared to the Air Force, the Army places greater emphasis on its public affairs and marketing duties, as well as on their medical recruiting. The Air Force’s single squadron public affairs non-commissioned officer and its only marketing non-commissioned officer, who is also a recruiter, would appreciate the Army’s approach. For its medical recruiting, Army officers with medical backgrounds perform recruiting duties. The Air Force uses enlisted recruiters with no specific Air Force career background to recruit medical personnel.

Because of recruiter shortages, the Air Force adopted a new assignment process for selecting, placing, and career progressing recruiters--it has had “growing pains.” Processes need continual assessment so they can improve. This will lead to better efficiencies and effectiveness. Also, all stakeholders should have voices in this continual change process. This will require a less hierarchical structure and perhaps a more networked-style organization.

RECRUITING EFFECTIVENESS

The Air Force has just recently recovered from the massive Cold War draw down, which produced a shortfall of both recruits and recruiters.²⁷ In 1999, the Air Force did not meet its annual recruiting goal for the first time in 20 years,²⁸ despite lower quotas than in past years.²⁹

Air Force recruiting struggles in the 1990s could be attributed to their low recruiting budget. In 1999, the Air Force spent just over \$5,000 per recruit, much less than the Army's \$11,000. Other factors contributing to the Air Forces' recruiting problem in the late 1990s include a strong economy, a relatively low unemployment rate (4.3 percent), a 13 percent pay gap between the military and equivalent civilian jobs, a reduction in military retirement pay from 50 percent to 40 percent of base salary, and an erosion of service benefits.³⁰

MORE MONEY

To offset the decreased recruiting production in the late 1990s, AFRS received more funds for advertising, increased enlistment bonuses, and added additional recruiters.³¹ Likewise, the Air Force provided its recruiters better offices and better equipment. This includes improved office locations and new office furniture, vehicles, computers, and equipment.³² This seems like a smart business investment: A candidate's first impression has a lasting impact. However, the Air Force has not measured the success of such initiatives.

For the first time since 1999, the Air Force and Army met their goals in 2001. Advocates credit this success to increased advertising, more recruiters, improved Internet sites, and numerous other incentives.³³ It should be no surprise that more people and money improved Air Force recruiting. Although increased resources have proven effective in attaining quotas, have these initiatives been truly cost effective? Research has shown that even though the Air Force is spending more for recruiting, there has been a decline in the quality of its recruits.³⁴

In 1999, the Air Force allocated \$78 million, up from \$22 million in 1998, to purchase AFRS advertising.³⁵ In 2000, \$65 million was "earmarked to advertise during prime time shows on syndicated and cable channels, print ads, web marketing and more."³⁶ But the effectiveness and efficiency of Air Force advertising is questionable. Why should the Air Force spend this incredible amount of taxpayer money--is there payback? A recent study contends advertising does not play a significant role in whether an individual applies for military service.³⁷

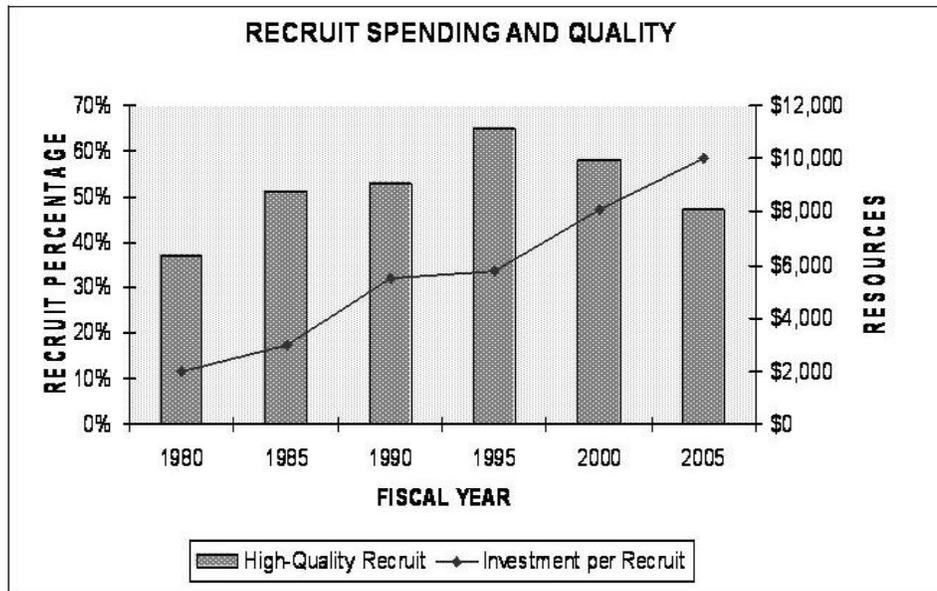


FIGURE 2. RECRUIT SPENDING AND QUALITY

Note: Resources include investments in recruiters, support, advertising, and education benefits. Source: Office of Accession on Policy, U.S. DOD.

MORE PEOPLE

Late 1999, the Air Force intensively analyzed recruiting to determine how many recruiters were needed. Their plan was to nearly double the force. In the 1990's, the Air Force used approximately 900 recruiters. Today's Air Force recruiter authorization is 1,650.³⁸ To date, the Air Force fields nearly 1,500 enlisted accessions recruiters. Even so, Air Force recruiters are still considerably outnumbered by sister services: "Even though Air Force recruiters are outnumbered, they still bring in about twice as many people per recruiter than other services."³⁹ An Army recruiter average 13 to 17 applicants each year while an Air Force recruiter's annual production average is 30 applicants a year.⁴⁰ Although it may not have improved efficiency, this personnel action increased the quality-of-life of recruiters and monthly quotas were lowered. Ironically, there is a decrease in recruiter retention since the fielding of more recruiters. Recruiter retention began to decrease when AFRS implemented its new personnel policies.

INTERNAL MARKETING FOR RECRUITERS

Along with the plus-up of recruiters came several new personnel policies for AFRS. Filling all recruiter vacancies is not easy. It was not a surprise that the Air Force found itself short of

volunteers in 2000. Accordingly, the Air Force instituted a special selection process to increase their recruiter end strength. This represented a complete shift in AFRS methods to fill recruiter positions as well as the beginning of a transformation of the Air Force enlisted career path progression. "While the all-volunteer system served us well in a less competitive environment with fewer recruiters, it can't sustain the number of recruiters with the necessary skills we need to meet our future requirements," declared former/then Air Force Chief of Staff General Michael E. Ryan.⁴¹ The Air Force now plans to have a majority of recruiters do a tour in recruiting, then return to their original career field. As former/then Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, Jim Finch believes, "Recruiting, like other special duty, provides a much broader perspective of the Air Force, and to the men and women who actually go and perform that duty, they learn things about the Air Force that certainly help them when they become senior noncommissioned officers."⁴² Recruiter duty assignments, like other special duty assignments, are becoming an integral part of the Air Force's entire enlisted career path. Although this program has been effective so far, no formal personnel process supports this new enlisted career system option.

EXTERNAL MARKETING FOR RECRUITS

Two years ago, the Air Force invested in a National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) race car. This marketing initiative targets mechanically oriented men and women, like the many fans of NASCAR.⁴³ Although the Air Force spends millions of dollars advertising on a contracted NASCAR race car, provides aircraft flyovers for most NASCAR races, has a designated marketing team that joins local recruiters at NASCAR races across the country, sends a general officer to attend these races, the return-on-investment data for this recruiting initiative is not available. Perhaps the millions of dollars spent on this initiative could be better spent in additional television or Internet advertising. But the Air Force does not know.

In December 2000, the Air Force opened new joint offices in high-volume shopping malls where young people congregate.⁴⁴ These new stations are at more than 30 locations. They are equipped with private recruiter offices, conference rooms, and exercise areas with equipment, kiosks, Internet, and contracted civilian administrators.⁴⁵ They reach out to highly populated areas and enhance recruiting efforts.⁴⁶ "Since the end of the Cold War, military presence in the U.S. is down...these new stations are another means of reducing the civil-military gap, introducing people to the military and letting them see that we are hiring."⁴⁷ Again, is the Air Force getting its money's worth? Even if these new offices are producing the required number of recruits, there is no specific analysis on the quality of candidates recruited from them.

Beginning in 2000, AFRS invested in two mobile recruiting offices, called Air Force Experiences, traveling country-wide. These customized 18-wheelers house eight F-16 fighter aircraft simulators, an outdoor movie system, and an F-16 display airplane.⁴⁸ Similarly, the Air Force purchased four new Recruiter Outreach Vehicles, nicknamed ROVers. These specially outfitted recreational vehicles are designed to reach 5,000 visitors a month.⁴⁹ The primary goal of these vehicles is to re-connect the Air Force with the American public. They have indeed served that purpose.⁵⁰ These recruiting tools are most often used at large community activities and malls. They enable recruiters to spend a great deal of time meeting with young children and adults who visit these scenes, but little time with the targeted recruiting population. Although demographic data is collected from these ventures and may be available to recruiters to process potential leads, there is no standardized process or system to deliver this information to recruiters. Also, there is no long-term analysis determining this program's efficiency or effectiveness.

In October 2002, the Air Force began fielding additional vehicles like the ROVers, but smaller, more agile, and multipurpose vehicles. These Raptors, the Air Force's newest tool for Air Force recruiters, consist of a sport utility vehicle loaded with a high-tech sound and video system, a data collection system, and a pull-behind interactive trailer. These units serve as mobile recruiting offices and house a scaled down model of the FA-22 Raptor fighter aircraft. One Raptor is assigned to each of the Air Force's 28 recruiting squadrons.⁵¹ While these vehicles may enhance Air Force community relations, there is no process to determine their return-on-investment in recruiting. Some Air Force recruiting experts have argued it is more advantageous for recruiters to spend their time in high schools rather than spending their time driving and managing these vehicles.

In 2002, the Air Force allocated \$133 million for enlistment bonuses. This was more than double the annual average from 1997 to 2001.⁵² Currently, the Air Force offers six-year enlistment bonuses ranging from \$2,000 up to \$12,000, and four year bonuses from \$1,000 to \$3,000. Before 1998, only four skill specialties were eligible for enlistment bonuses. Today, 27 of 200 specialty skills are offered a six-year bonus.

Recruiting organizations must have measurements of how well they are doing. These determine the effectiveness and efficiency of resources and costs; they reveal whether an organization is investing its dollars in the best areas. Combating its struggles to meet recruiting demands, the Air Force invested in more money, people, and new marketing initiatives. However, because of inadequate measurements, the effectiveness of these solutions is questionable.

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

Accessing quality airman, the shrinking pool of available applicants, increased occupationalism, the widening civil-military gap, the declining youth interest to join the military, increased college aspirations and enrollments, and society's changing demographics are fundamental constraints that continue to challenge our military recruiting efforts.

ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE

In 1969, President Nixon appointed Thomas S. Gates, a former Secretary of Defense, to investigate the possibility of ending the military draft. The Gates Commission issued its report in February 1970 recommending an all-volunteer military force. The report began with the following assertion:

“A return to an all-volunteer force will strengthen our freedoms, remove an inequality now imposed on the expression of the patriotism that has never been lacking among our youth, promote the efficiency of the armed forces, and enhance their dignity. It is the system for maintaining forces that minimizes government interference with the freedom of the individual to determine his own life in accord with his values.”⁵³

An important consideration for their recommendation was the changing demographics in our nation. For example, in 1965 the number of men between 17 and 20 year olds was estimated at 6.5 million. The Gates Commission believed maintaining a two-million personnel force was achievable if incentives such as pay commensurate with industry were introduced with this change.⁵⁴ In 1973, the draft ended. But in 1980, the available recruit candidate pool had dwindled to nearly two million.⁵⁵

HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS

In 2001, more than 500,000 American youths dropped out of high school. By law, no more than ten percent of annual recruits can enlist in each service using a General Education Development (GED) certificate. The Air Force is more restrictive and allows only one percent per year. Data analysis from 1988-1994 illustrates the attrition rate for enlistees with GEDs, vice high school diplomas, was much higher. Twenty-nine percent of recruits with high school diplomas failed basic training, got discharged, or otherwise left the service before their initial tour. For enlistees with GEDs, the attrition rate was 49 percent.⁵⁶

SUPPLY OF POTENTIAL ENLISTEES

For more than 30 years, our military has relied on an all-volunteer force. The unemployment rate among 16 to 19-year-olds was 13.7 percent in 1972, and rose to 20 percent

in 1974.⁵⁷ It was not until 1989 that this rate dropped below its 1973 rate for this demographic group. Today's rate is twelve percent. Likewise, the pool of eligible recruits over the past 30 years has continued to shrink. Nationally, we have approximately 14 million high school graduates ages 17 to 21.⁵⁸

College remains a primary goal for most high school graduates. In the early 1970s, less than 50 percent of high school graduates went on to college. In 1990, college enrollment rates approached 65 percent. Today, approximately 70 percent of this peer group attends college, reducing the available pool of potential recruits to 4 million. College attendance could be as high as 80 percent by 2005.⁵⁹

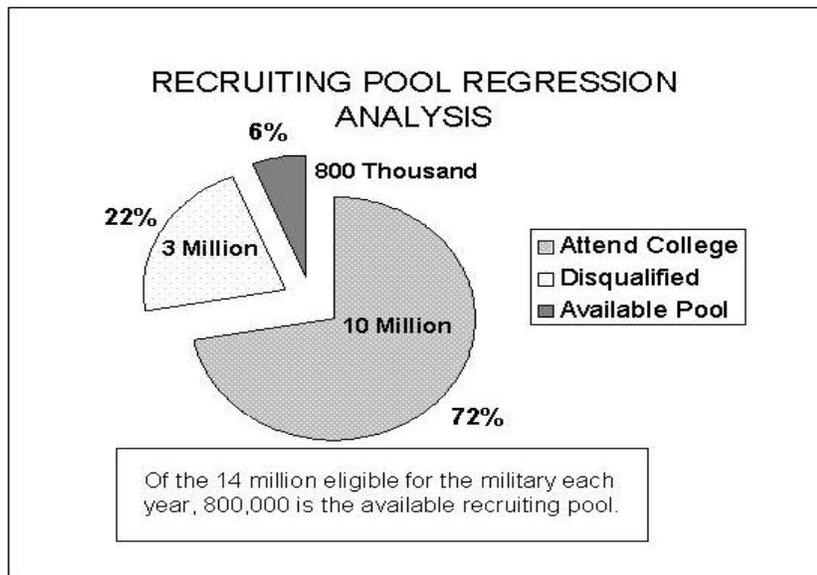


FIGURE 3. RECRUITING POOL REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Source: Numerous.

Less than one-quarter of the reduced pool are physically, morally, or academically qualified, reducing the pool to 800,000.⁶⁰ With an annual total military service goal of approximately 280,000 a year, recruiters need to attract one in three of the available pool of candidates while competing with the private and public sector, as well as with other service recruiting.⁶¹ Regression analysis shows it will be challenging for the Air Force, as well as all military services, to contract required applicants.

OCCUPTIONALISM CREEP

With more sophisticated equipment to operate, the need for more technically capable recruits grew. The military adjusted its recruiting strategies and focused on skill specialty requirements. Incentives began to drive recruiting; many enlistees joined for self-interest, rather than for their citizenship obligation.⁶²

As our military transitioned to the all-volunteer force “occupationalism” edged into the military’s profession. Occupationalists emphasize their job specialty over membership in an organization. Military recruits prefer special training to just wanting to serve their country.⁶³ In the past, military members served a calling, held values and norms that surpassed self-interests. Even despite initial patriotic enthusiasm, six months after the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, youth interests began its slide back to typical levels.⁶⁴

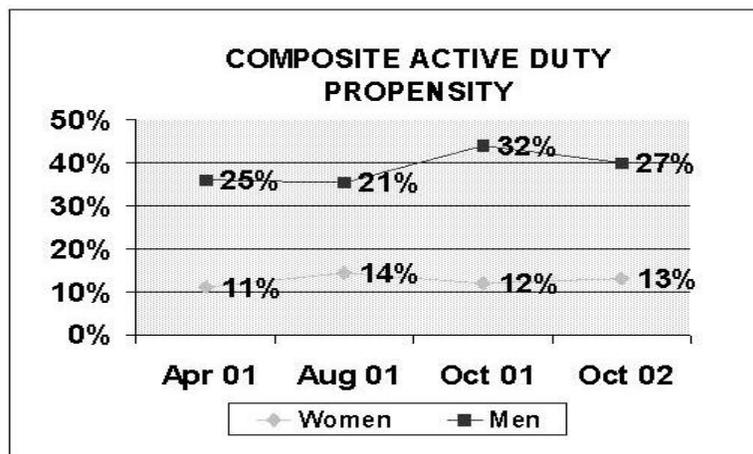


FIGURE 4. COMPOSITE ACTIVE DUTY PROPENSITY

Source: 14 March 2003 Defense Market Research Study.

Supply and demand governs occupational choices. Today, many recruiting incentives and bonuses are encouraging enlistments. Experts theorize we are buying a workforce instead of attracting patriots.⁶⁵

CIVIL-MILITARY GAP

Our military services rely on former military members as influencers (advocates of military service) as part of the recruiting effort. Research indicates the greater the percent of the adult

population that are veterans, the higher the enlistment rate.⁶⁶ Fewer of our public officials are veterans. Similarly, parents with military experience continue to decline.⁶⁷ In 1990, there were 20 million veterans under age 65. By 2005, there will be one-third less. In 1984, the veteran population under age 65 comprised 10 percent of our national census. In 1990, it declined to eight percent and continues to decline.⁶⁸ This societal trend increases recruiting challenges for our military services. Values are passed from one generation to the next. Fewer young people are passed values concerning military service.

The threat to our national security has changed. In the past decade, our military has focused on defense on the homeland, multinational peace-keeping operations, and humanitarian missions. Military operations other than war have increased stresses on military members as the “operations tempo” has increased.⁶⁹ These missions attract lower levels of public attention than combat. While military service has become more demanding and stressful, public awareness and appreciation of this arduous service has declined.⁷⁰

DECLINING INTEREST IN THE MILITARY

There has been a declining interest among the American public in the military. As Senator John McCain, a member of the Armed Services Committee noted, “Most Americans don’t care that much about national security and defense issues any more.” Elected officials likewise ignore the declining interest in military service.⁷¹ Recent studies reveal teenagers view the military as a last resort for a job.⁷² Youth values and attitudes have changed over the past three decades. Most teens do not want to make commitments to national service. According to United States youth surveys from 1980 to 1999, the number saying they definitely would not serve in the military increased from 40 to 63 percent.⁷³ These changing youth values make recruiting even more demanding.

Today, there are fewer high schools that offer the ASVAB exam and fewer students are taking them at schools that do offer the exam. Historically, these test results provided one of the most useful tools for recruiters to obtain leads from high schools. High schools remain the best market for recruiters.⁷⁴ Although recruiters may have access to most high schools, there is a trend for schools to limit direct student contact and group presentations, eliminating quality time with students. As a result, recruiters have increased their pursuit of high school graduates, a more accessible market.⁷⁵

ECONOMY

A strong U.S. economy contributes to military recruiting challenges. The civilian unemployment rate in 2000 was the lowest since 1969 and has exasperated military recruiting efforts.⁷⁶ It is no surprise that recruiting high school and college graduates is increasingly demanding as many civilian companies offer better pay and benefit packages than the military today.⁷⁷

SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

While the Air Force appeals to a small percentage of our population, most viable candidates come from lower-income backgrounds.⁷⁸ Children of parents with post-high-school education are less likely to enlist.⁷⁹ Critics believe young men and women, from our wealthier social classes, should be willing to join the service to gain public support for combat operations.⁸⁰ Charles Moskos, a military sociologist at Northwestern University, echoes this concern: "The long-term problem [of military recruiting] remains--how are you going to [attract] the middle class?"⁸¹ Ideally, our military's demographic representation should mirror the whole society. With a comparative slice of society's demographics, our military leaders better understand cultural differences of subordinates, enabling them to better build and lead teams. The Army uses short-term enlistment contracts and battalion-level marketing initiatives to attract all demographic groups. They have been very successful: Twenty-one percent of its 2001 enlistees have post-high school education. The Air Force has yet to target this group in its field-level recruiting campaigns.

Prior to 1973, only ten percent of new enlistees were married. Over the past 30 years, there is a steady increase of married enlistees. Today, more than 30 percent are married, a threefold increase in three decades. There is a trend of spouses not taking part in traditional military social functions. Many spouses have employment outside the home.⁸² This trend illustrates military member changes in values and norms, a further drive towards more occupationalism in our military services.

Since 1970, females entering the Air Force increased by more than four-fold, from six percent to 26 percent today.⁸³ Although this is nearly double that of other military services, the Air Force is still not accessing a proportionate number of females from our society and does not target this group in its recruiting.⁸⁴

The Asian populace across the continent accounts for four percent of the American population, and the Asian population has doubled since 1980.⁸⁵ However, today's Asian representation in the Air Force is just two percent, well below our society's average.⁸⁶ In 1980,

the Hispanic population accounted for six percent of the national census and rose to 12 percent in 2000. From 1990 to 2000, the Hispanic population grew by 58 percent, increasing the overall U.S. Hispanic population by 13 percent.⁸⁷ Today, only five percent of Air Force members are Hispanic.⁸⁸ Estimates reveal that by early in the 21st Century, nearly 25 percent of the nation's population will be Hispanic.⁸⁹ In the recent years, the Army has placed emphasis on the Hispanic recruiting market. For example, the Army strategically assigns Hispanic recruiters in Hispanic-populated regions. Also, the Army targets Hispanic communities when recruiting. The Air Force does not have such a strategy to recruit more Hispanics; the Air Force has no ethnic-based recruiting plan for their enlisted ranks at the field level.

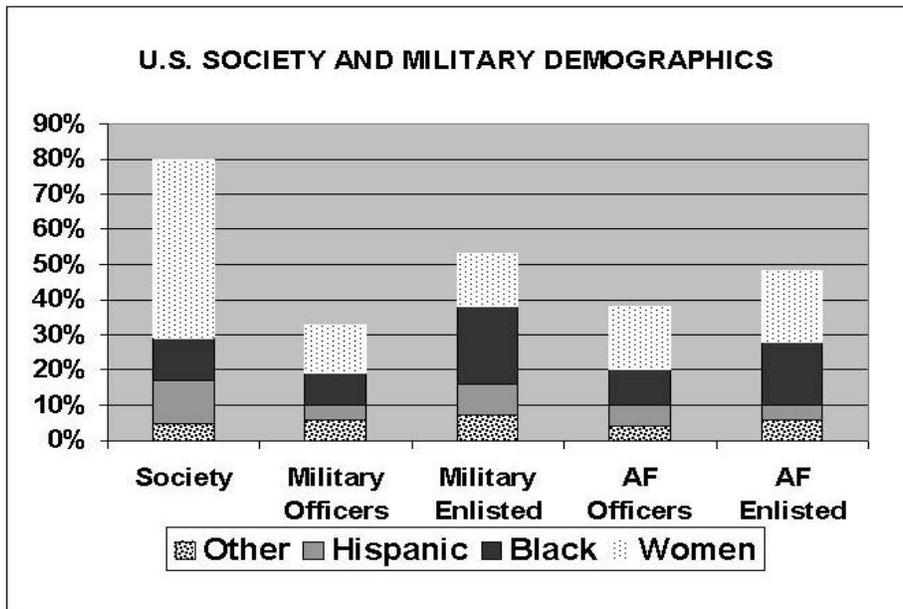


FIGURE 5. 2001 SOCIETY AND MILITARY DEMOGRAPHICS
Sources: Numerous.

Nationwide, African-Americans account for nearly 13 percent of the population, a three percent increase over the past 40 years.⁹⁰ Today, the African-American population in the Air Force is 16 percent, slightly higher than the national average.⁹¹ While experts advance various reasons for this successful recruiting accomplishment, past Air Force recruiting personnel management practices may account for its success. But the Air Force no longer uses race as a determiner for placing its recruiters in particular locations.

Seventy-two percent of AFRS recruiting force is white and 19 percent African-American, while only six percent are Hispanic and one percent Asian. Except for a two percent decrease in white recruiters, there have been no changes to these demographics of more than one percent in other ethnic categories, including female numbers, in the past seven years.⁹² Unlike the Army, the Air Force does not select recruiters based on race, gender, or ethnic background. Nor does the Air Force assign selected recruiters using these factors. Until two years ago, the Air Force considered an individual's ethnic background when assigning recruiters to particular locations. Because not considering an individual's ethnic background in geographic assignment is a recent change, it should be two or more years before its impact can be measured.

Descriptive Characteristic And Eras [overlapping Presidential terms]	1973-76 Ford Post Vietnam	1976-80 Carter Cuts	1980-83 Reagan Buildup	1983-87 Reagan Build Up	1987-90 Bush I Iraq Cold War End	1990-97 Clinton Cuts	1997-03 Bush II More Money for Recruiting
Entry-Level Pay	Rising	Falling	Rising	Falling	Stable	Stable	Rising
Recruiting Resources	Rising	Falling	Rising	Rising	Falling	Falling	Rising
Educational Benefits	Rising	Falling	Rising	Rising	Rising	Stable	Rising
Recruiting Environment	Good	Poor	Good	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor
Recruit Quality	Falling	Falling	Rising	Rising	Stable	Falling	Poor

TABLE 1. CHARACTERISTICS OF MILITARY RECRUITING TRENDS
Sources: Numerous.

AFRS must be able to respond to the environment. It impacts recruiting structure, processes, practices, resources, and effectiveness. AFRS must have agile infrastructures ready to continuously adapt to environmental changes, and not just capriciously. If not, their reactionary changes will not keep pace with the environment. Doing so may require restructuring, new organizational processes, and new methods to improve mission effectiveness.

BEST PRACTICES FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Organizations must continuously improve and adapt to requirements of the ever-changing needs of our society. Using other organizations successful practices is an outstanding method for improving ones' organization. The following are military and industry "benchmarks" that can be used to improve Air Force recruiting in its processes, practices, and methodologies, and its organizational structure and design.

MILITARY

Last year, the Army allocated more than \$170 million to hire civilian contract recruiters. These civilian contractors recruit both active duty Army and reserve component candidates. They help reduce paperwork requirements for active duty military recruiters. Like green-suit recruiters, Army contract recruiters make sales presentations at high schools and colleges and are actively involved in local communities.⁹³ Outsourcing military recruiting seems inevitable for all services. It makes economic sense: The military can save overhead personnel organizational costs, benefit expenses, and management oversight obligations by using contract recruiting.

According to Dr. Charles Moskos, the primary market competition for recruiters is with colleges and university enrollment.⁹⁴ He believes long enlistment contracts are the biggest reason college youths will not join the service. The Army has successfully used short-term enlistment contract options for years to attract college youths. In 2002, 21 percent of their applicants had some college background. The Air Force has claimed short-term contracts are not a financially sound investment for all of their occupational specialties. The Air Force contends short-term enlistment contracts are expensive and offer poor return-on-investment for candidates requiring extensive job training. However, in early 2003, the Department of Defense announced all military services will be offering short-term enlistment contracts. So for the first time the Air Force will be forced to offer this option.⁹⁵ Proponents believe this contract option attracts more college-bound youths.⁹⁶ The Air Force plans to implement short-term contract options this year.

In May 2001, the Army teamed with Halliburton Company in an initiative to provide priority hiring to qualified soldiers participating in the Partnership for Youth Success Program (PaYS). Halliburton is the tenth company to join the PaYS program since its inception in June 2000. According to Army officials, this corporate partnership with the Army helps the Army recruit. It is too soon to determine the effectiveness of this program, but it appears to attract today's youths. Candidates sign a letter of intent with the company to potentially work for them upon completion

of the term of service.⁹⁷ For the Air Force, this initiative could attract, in particular, technically capable applicants who have teamed with the appropriate civilian agency. For example, the Air Force's teaming with an airline company could attract mechanically inclined youths into their harder-to-fill positions.

Since many high school students attend college immediately after graduation, the Air Force can partner with colleges to aid in its recruiting efforts. This may be a very desirable endeavor for the Air Force because delaying college is not attractive to youths.⁹⁸ The Army has launched a program of "College First," offering college-bound youths the chance to attend college first and then serve in the Army.⁹⁹ While a new-start for the Army, this initiative's effectiveness is yet to be determined. If the Air Force adopted a similar program, it could attract higher quality enlistees to fill their technically demanding positions.

The Army initiated their "Army University Access Online" in 2001. This is a distance learning education opportunity, a viable attraction for recruiting candidates. Partnering with more than 20 universities, this program allows Army soldiers to earn college course credit online, "anytime, anywhere, anyplace, while they serve."¹⁰⁰ Although the Air Force has a similar program in place, implementing more education opportunity benefits and programs, like the Army's, should be even more attractive to youths as educational opportunities continue to be an important recruiting tool.

The Army has teamed with several new high schools military academies. The Army provides uniforms, textbooks, materials and equipment, and pays for part of the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps instructor salaries.¹⁰¹ These schools teach students discipline and leadership. There are few such high schools in the country--Oakland Military Institute in California opened this year and Chicago has two schools.¹⁰² These schools develop future military members wanting to serve their nation not just for a job or benefits the military can offer, but to serve their country.¹⁰³

INDUSTRY

Over the past decade, we have seen a shift in human resource management. These changes include increased outsourcing of organizational support functions and an increased use of the Internet and web sites. Personnel, technology, and cost reductions have driven these changes.¹⁰⁴

Alternative sourcing methods, using contracted specialists for clerical-type duties, have evolved as an alternative to administrative and data processing positions in civilian organizations. It saves money. For military recruiting, this could also mean a multi-service

recruiting process, managed by a lead military or Department of Defense organization. This “single umbrella” military recruiting process has not been endorsed by military services; it is not viewed as the most effective methodology in the current competitive recruiting environment. Service parochialisms are the main blockades to this paradigm-breaking concept. Even so, centralized recruiting would reduce overhead costs, reduce manning requirements, and streamline recruiting efforts.

AFRS should consider some of the pitfalls of centralizing military recruiting. Two years ago, telecommunications giant Nortel Networks, a telecommunications giant, stock was worth more than 87 dollars a share. Doing business with more than 150 countries across the globe, Nortel Networks’ products are used in telephone, wireless and Internet networks. Due to the companies over expansion and large debt base, a year later shares were valued at less than a dollar. The Canadian-based company laid off two thirds of its once 94,500 personnel force over the past year and a half. Today, their new human resources management strategy is based on simplifying or streamlining their organization’s structure, a move to more decentralized control, linking their operations more directly to customers.¹⁰⁵

Decentralized control in production reduces manning requirements, streamlines operations, and places greater responsibility on the lower echelons or the work force. It further empowers workers and increases organizational commitment among its employees. For example, the ConocoPhillips petroleum refinery site in New York City is centrally controlled by thousands of headquarters staff personnel. Under Tosco’s management, the former owner of this refinery, the plant had only 15 headquarters personnel and was financially very successful. Previous to Tosco, Exxon managed this industry giant for nearly 20 years, losing an estimated 20 to 80 million dollars a year. They were centrally controlled under Exxon like they are today.¹⁰⁶ This is an example of how a flatter organizational structure offers a more effective and efficient model for Air Force recruiting.

Although AFRS competes for recruits, it can learn from other services’ recruiting methodologies, initiatives, and practices that seem to work. Likewise, AFRS can learn from and cooperate creatively with private corporate human resource management.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Change is an ongoing, emergent process. The external environment is volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous. As such, organizations must have agile structures ready to continuously adapt to change, and not just react when things go bad. Reactionary change will not keep pace with the environmental conditions; however, experimentation and close

monitoring of the environment at all organizational levels will permit organizational learning to occur. The first step for organizational learning is to conduct continuous systems viability assessments, such as the one conducted in this paper. Organizations must determine if they have the best structure, processes, and performance measurements if they are to continuously adapt to change.

The following are recommendations to AFRS. While these recommendations result from this research's direct findings, AFRS must ensure it has a systems model that enables them to adapt to change and continuously improve. Just making changes from the following recommendations is not enough. AFRS must ensure its structure and processes are able to keep pace with the environment. It must continue to assess its effectiveness and make improvements.

STRUCTURE

First, research the possibility of "single umbrella," multi-service recruiting, using trial-runs in several areas in the country. This requires staffing and efforts by all services, but could reduce recruiting costs and manpower requirements. Second, add additional manning positions to squadron support staffs. For example, consider adding civilian or contract positions to the public affairs, marketing, and logistics sections. This will improve long-term program continuity and productivity improvements. Third, restructure AFRS headquarters staff and group responsibilities and tasks. In particular, give groups more control over squadron mission responsibilities or eliminate the groups. Fourth, add civilian recruiting positions to officer accessions. Adding contracted recruiters or government administrative supporting positions are two alternatives. The Air Force is driven to place, and keep, warfighter specialist in the field and not putting them in support or administrative positions. This approach should assist. Fifth, formalize Air Force enlisted and officer career progression for recruiting service tours. The Air Force is on track requiring enlisted soldiers to successfully complete a special duty tour in order to progress in their careers. Recruiting should be a special duty option, and the special duty requirement should be formalized. Also, consider the same for officers; this will bring increased leadership attention to the significance of the recruiting business as those officers become senior officers.

PROCESS

First, recruit officer accessions recruiters, both officers and enlisted, from medical career fields and place them directly into officer accession recruiting positions after completing recruiting school. Second, improve career progression management of recruiters. For

example, do not move a three-year enlisted accessions recruiter directly to a marketing position. In the past, AFRS smartly managed the recruiting career field; effective management must be restored.

EFFECTIVENESS

First, continue emphasis on marketing initiatives. High schools and community colleges are preferred recruiting marketing venues, the bread-and-butter for enlisted accessions recruiting. Second, like the Army, implement industry partnerships with recruiting. Focus on industries and companies providing the harder-to-fill Air Force occupational specialties. For example, recruit aircraft mechanics into our military and industry's populace. Third, develop a college partnering program specifically focused at community colleges. Community college attendees and graduates offer an attractive pool of applicants. Fourth, establish public high school military academies with robust Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training School programs. These schools should be located in the harder-to-recruit regions, lacking in military presence. Fifth, develop performance metrics to assess advertising and marketing's return-on-investment. Air Force recruiting has initiated new advertising and marketing campaigns, but their effectiveness, efficiency, and costs must be assessed.

ENVIRONMENT

First, design a recruiting plan to ensure the Air Force has a recruiter demographic representation that more closely mirrors society. As with demographic recruiter placement, recruiting towards specific cultures may pay recruiting dividends and enhance demographic representation. Second, review short-term contract options for certain specialties. For example, consider a two-year active duty tour followed by a two-year reserve tour enlistment contract. This will require a joint active-duty and reserve initiative, but may pay long-term dividends. Third, maintain the Air Force's current policy of a one percent only GED accession rate. Although GED applicants may be plentiful, the long-term investment in these candidates has proven to be poor. Fourth, increase the emphasis on enlisted accessions recruiting in colleges and universities. Increasing technological requirements, to operate and sustain our Air Force equipment, requires smarter and better-educated Air Force team members. Additionally, as the available high school market of recruits shrinks, the college group should prove a credible option.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Require recruiting headquarters, groups, and squadrons develop strategies and visions. This will assist in implementing game plans for Air Force recruiters and provide an increased focus on the more difficult tasks. While AFRS headquarters may have strategies and visions, these can only be achieved if lower echelons of the organization have knowledge of and understand them. More important, these strategies and visions should be developed by the entire organization, not top-down driven. To succeed, the entire organization must embrace them. As Frances Hesselbein describes in her book, The Leader of the Future, "Only when your vision and implementation strategies are aligned can you get to the upper right-hand corner and be considered an 'ultimate' organization, in which people can be empowered." This is all about "turning your organizational pyramid upside down."¹⁰⁷

		Army			Air Force		
ISSUE/RATING	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	
Advertising	X				X		
Offices		X			X		
Equipment		X			X		
Bonuses	X				X		
Education Benefits	X				X		
Recruiter Force	X				X		
Demographic Recruiting	X					X	
Contracted Recruiting		X				X	
Short-Term Enlistment Contracts	X					X	
Industry Teaming	X					X	
College Partnering		X				X	
High School Military Academies		X				X	
Ethnic Placement of Recruiters	X					X	
Medical Specialists for Medical Recruiting	X					X	
College Recruiting		X				X	

TABLE 2. ARMY AND AIR FORCE RECRUITING COMPARISON

Sources: Numerous.

CONCLUSION

A model recruiting agency has structure, superior management practices, and strict accountability. It continuously improves and adjusts to environmental influences. A sound recruiting organizational structure helps ensure recruiters meet mission requirements. It considers demographic factors and the individual strengths of its people. Successful recruiting

organizations measures its effectiveness; it keeps doing a better job. It uses others best practices to improve. The Air Force can learn from this model.

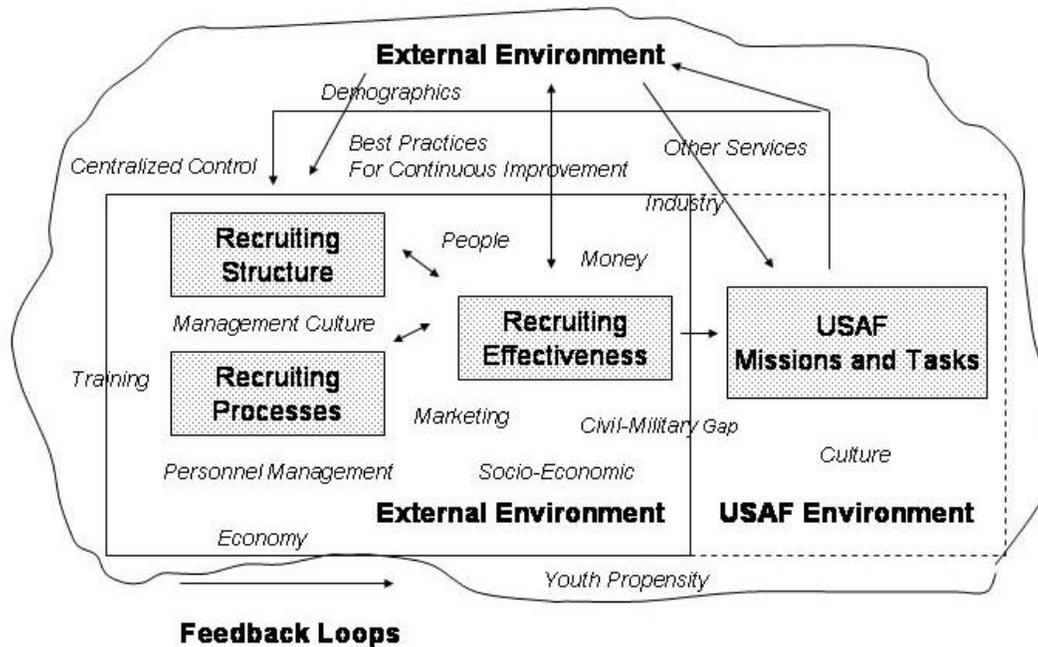


FIGURE 6. A STRATEGIC SYSTEMS MODEL FOR EFFECTIVE RECRUITING
Sources: Numerous.

This research has shown that AFRS' organizational structure needs improvement. Compared to AFRS, the Army's recruiting structure seems to be more related to recruiting effectiveness than the Air Force. The Army offers more staff personnel depth, credence to its officer recruiting program, and ensures that all of its recruiting departments are adequately operated. AFRS can learn from the Army's recruiting structure.

Because of recruiter shortages, the Air Force adopted a new assignment process for selecting, placing, and career progressing recruiters--it has had "growing pains." This process needs continual assessment so it can improve. All stakeholders should have voices in this continual change process. This requires a less hierarchical structure and perhaps a more networked-style organization. Doing so will bring better efficiencies and effectiveness for AFRS.

Recruiting organizations must have measurements of how well they are doing. These determine the effectiveness and efficiency of resources and costs; they reveal whether an organization is investing its dollars in the best areas. Combating its struggles to meet recruiting demands, the Air Force invested in more money, people, and new marketing initiatives. However, because of inadequate measurements, the effectiveness of these solutions is questionable and needs further review.

AFRS must be able to respond to the environment. The environment impacts recruiting structure, processes, practices, resources, and effectiveness. AFRS must have agile infrastructures ready to continuously adapt to environmental changes, and not just capriciously. If not, their reactionary changes will not keep pace with the environment. Doing so may require restructuring, new organizational processes, and new methods to improve mission effectiveness.

Recruiting is a dynamic and continuously evolving activity. It is an iterative process and must continuously improve. It “benchmarks” from other organizations. Although AFRS competes for recruits, it can learn from other services’ recruiting methodologies, initiatives, and practices that seem to work. Also, AFRS can learn from and cooperate creatively with private corporate human resource management.

Demographic, economic, and sociological changes continue to challenge Air Force recruiting. Since the Air Force contributes significantly to our national defense, it must maintain an effective, efficient recruiting process. Past methods for redressing recruiting shortfalls may place our nation’s security at risk; such methods addressed former problems. We have no assurance that they will now work effectively. Our entire Department of Defense is transforming to adapt to changing and uncertain future requirements. So to must AFRS. Without the right quantity, quality, and diversity of recruits, the Air Force cannot remain a quality force, capable of sustaining mission requirements and defending our nation.

WORD COUNT = 9,658

ENDNOTES

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