

## **INTERNAL MARKETING FOR VOLUNTEERS - A LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Nemțeanu (Sana) Marcela Sefora, PhD Student<sup>154</sup>**

**Tarcza Mihaela Teodora, PhD, University Assistant<sup>155</sup>**

---

**Abstract:** *Non-profit organizations have known a great growth in last two decades. With the growth of non-profit sector, the need of volunteers increased also. Two challenging duties of non-profit management are the attracting and retaining volunteers, given to the fact that many non-profit organization depend in continuing their activity of volunteers. The solution we propose in this article is adopting internal marketing orientation from services companies in non-profit organizations. Internal marketing mix has to be adapted to volunteer behaviour, with its specificity in order that long term commitment to be achieved.*

**Key words:** *Internal Marketing, Volunteering, Nonprofit Organization.*

---

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Volunteers play a critical role for the majority of non-profit organizations non-profit. More studies underline the importance of this resource for non-profit organizations activity continuity [16], [4] More than that many organizations are limited in their services placement by the number of the volunteers organization has [3].

Non-profit sector gained a larger and larger interest in last decades [4]. Wymer and Starnes [16] sustain that with the increasing of non-profit organizations number, the demand for volunteers grow too. This leads to the fact that non-profit managers find themselves in a high competition for skilled and motivated volunteers. More than recruiting volunteer retention constitutes a real challenge for non-profit managers. Coita [4] attracts the attention about the lack of engagement of volunteers to non-profit organization and considers internal marketing as a necessary perspective in maintaining this valuable human resource.

Mitchell and Taylor [10] sustains that internal marketing is mandatory for non-profit organization given to the fact that recruiting costs organization more times than maintaining active volunteers. Bennett and Barkensjo [2] analyze an internal marketing program influence on intention to remain and intention to provide a better service of the volunteers. The results of the authors show that internal marketing influences positive volunteer's retention.

### **2. VOLUNTEERING. CONCEPTUAL DELIMITATION**

There are different definitions given to volunteerism in research. According to Cuskelly et al. [5] p. 143 "Volunteering is unpaid, freely chosen involvement undertaken through an organization or agency and performed for the benefit of others or the environment as well as

---

<sup>154</sup> Babeş Bolyai University, Str. Teodor Mihali, Nr.58-60 400591, Cluj Napoca, Romania

<sup>155</sup> Oradea University, Faculty of Economic Science Strada Universităţii nr.1, Oradea, Bihor, România

oneself". Tilly and Tilly [15] define of volunteering as including the multiple informal ways of helping, representing activities that should also be treated as productive. The statistics of John Hopkins University show that volunteer work equivalents to 140 employees full time work per year.

<b>Volunteers versus Employees</b>	
Expect no monetary reward Motivated mainly by intangible rewards	Expect monetary rewards Motivated by tangible and no tangible rewards
Do not have mandatory obligations	Have obligations based on the work contract
Most of the time have a flexible schedule Leave before they experiment a very low level of satisfaction	Most of the times have a fix schedule Remain in the company even if they experiment a very low level of satisfaction
Mainly motivated by benefits brought to others	Mainly motivated by individual benefits

Table 1: Different features between volunteers versus employees

There are differences between volunteering and employment is emphasized through volunteering definitions. As table 1 shows volunteer work is unpaid comparative to the employment that requires malarial pays. Also the main motivation in volunteering is no tangible. All these differences make volunteer retention behind achieved adapting employment retention tools considering the specificities. Internal marketing is an organizational orientation that has significant positive influence on organizational commitment and negative influence on intention to leave the organization (Ladelski, 2014).

### **3. INTERNAL MARKETING ADAPTED TO VOLUNTEERING**

Internal marketing is a concept adopted in services marketing and has a significant role in non-profit. According to Dosen [6] internal marketing represents implementation of marketing philosophy and proactive in internal market of the company for employing and maintaining the most prepared persons for a certain post and for motivating employees in the most efficient way. Coita [4] sustains that the role of internal marketing is the influence of the human resources for auctioning qualitative and in unity towards the clients of the organization.

Kotler, Bowen and Makens [7] consider internal marketing is necessary in the company given to the following reasons:

- Negative experiences have most of the times, a higher impact than positive experiences;
- Marketing orientation have to be adopted of all the employees in order to achieve success for the company;

An organization can differentiate the quality of the service through the personnel.

Internal marketing orientation places the personnel as a category of consumers of organizational offer. Similar to marketing extern, internal marketing according to Piercy and Morgan [12] the structure of the program can be presented in the four elements of the marketing mix: product (managerial plan of marketing of company), price, placements and promotion.

Randle and Dolnicar [13] sustain volunteers behaviour is similar to the consumers, and the non-profit organization encounters a highly competition for reduced resources. According to Andreasen and Kotler [1] factors that influence consumer behaviour influence volunteers, these are: benefits, cost, other and self-efficacy.

Each mix part of the internal marketing strategy program has to be oriented on an influential factor as shown in figure 1. Product strategy means identifying and defining the benefits organizations offers to volunteers. Price strategy assumes volunteer cost evaluation and establish of benefits cost report in the favour of the volunteer, as a long term retention perspective. Communication strategy is oriented on the influence of others on volunteers, this include formal (organized) communication and informal communication [2]. Also placement strategy represents the channel used in transmitting the product. These may be meetings, trainings, or other form of displaying information to the volunteers. The result of a good information transition leads to self efficacy. Mitchell and Taylor [10] sustain that placement in what concerns internal marketing placement represents all the effort organization make to facilitate volunteer activity. This efforts have a direct result self efficiency perceive of the volunteers.



**Nemțeanu (Sana) Marcela Sefora** is a PhD student at Babeş Bolyai University at Faculty of Economics Sciences and Business Administration, working at the research with the title: "The Volunteer Satisfaction and Commitment. The Influence Factors" with the purpose of identifying main determinants of volunteer retention in social non-profit organizations. More than 150 nonprofit organizations participated to the research until this moment, whose management approved the importance of the thematic for non-profit sector realities.

She graduated the Faculty of Economic Sciences – University of Oradea, International Economic Relationships specialty (2011) and later the Master Program of Marketing and Business Communication (2013). Worked in a call center, in an local advertising company and a private university as marketing specialist and economical secretary on European Projects.

Today she is working in an it company as a marketing strategist and is member in two non-profit organizations, one in marketing field and one in social domain.

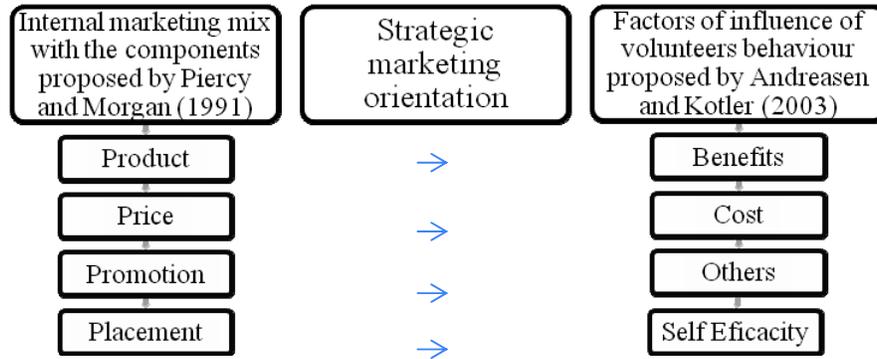


Figure 1: Internal marketing strategic mix orientation for volunteers

Product from an internal marketing perspective is according to Piercy and Morgan [12] constituted of marketing plan that the company has to sell to their employees. In the case of volunteering Mitchell and Taylor (2004) define the product as being the volunteer experience itself.

The role of the product is to satisfy the needs of the volunteer, benefits of volunteering experience being classified in two categories [7]: private and public. Private or individual benefits are for instance: social opportunities, gain of experience and prepare for a carrier, spending free time in a proactive activity, enhancement of self-esteem. Public benefits represent the good volunteer brings to a cause, to community, to organization or to beneficiaries.

Chainman and Wandersman cited by Andreasen and Kotler [1] offers another classification of the volunteers benefits: materials (tangible rewards associated with monetary values); solidars (social rewards); and tide to fulfilling a purpose (identification with the organization, and the cause it sustains). Authors underline that importance of each category of benefits differs according to organization mission, but one the most common benefit mentioned by authors are the social ones.

Price is the element of internal marketing which is constitute of what organizations ask internal consumers to pay when they buy the marketing plan according to Piercy and Morgan [12]. With other words prices strategy consist giving up to values, practices or project, the change of the way tasks are fulfilled in exchange of marketing plan adoption in order to achieve a successful result. According to Mitchell and Taylor [8] price for the volunteer totals monetary and nonmonetary costs that he supports in order to carry volunteer activities. A total cost volunteers may spend in their activities contains the following [7]: costs with the transportation, donations, cost opportunity (time and resources that could be invested in other activities that produce venues) and other kind of costs.

Communication strategy represents the most tangible aspect of internal marketing. Media informing and encouragement methods of employees made with the purpose of working with key personnel attitudes. Communication strategies implementation includes written materials as reports or resumes of the plan but also verbal messages transmitted in the front of the employees by a manager or to different groups of personnel important for marketing plan implementation [12]. In their study Bennett and Barjensko [2] analyzed an internal marketing implementation results in a charitable non-profit organization. There were different

instruments used in communicating the plan to the volunteers too: materials and also verbally messages.

Placement is derogated through distribution channels for information in the case of internal marketing. These channels include physical element and places of meeting where the organization delivers the produced and communication regarding the product: meetings, session of trainee for managers and supervisors, seminars, reports, informal communication and others [12]. According to Mitchell and Taylor [10] placement has the role of facilitate the work of volunteers . Nonprofit organizations for which volunteers play an essential role in activity continuity, have to remove obstacles that make them believe that they cannot accomplish with success the volunteer activity. The study of Bennett and Barkensjo [2] take into consideration as ways of information distribution the instruction sessions after the program and in week-end that involved bidirectional and interactive communication. Supervisors were instructed to treat volunteers as an important human resource, to offer them opportunities to express their opinions and to offer them as much autonomy as possible in delivering the tasks. Volunteers' contribution was recognized at social appreciation events, through thanks tasks and through mentioning them in organization newsletter.

#### **4. INTERNAL MARKETING PROGRAM AND VOLUNTEER RETENTION**

According to Money and Foreman [11] internal marketing implementation has three directions: vision communication, personnel instruction and the rewards. The model was applied with success in services marketing plan implementation [14].

The process of internal marketing implementation in non-profit organizations has four steps [8]: development of a service culture, development of a marketing approach in human resource management, marketing information dissemination to the personnel and



**Tarca Teodora Mihaela** graduated the Faculty of Economic Sciences – University of Oradea, International Economic Relationships specialty (2006) and later the Master Program Marketing and Business Communication (2008). She got her Phd title (2015) after a period of 4 years of research regarding “The profile and the behavior of traditional food products consumer in Romania” at the Babes Boliay University in Cluj Napoca, Romania. Other research preoccupations are oriented to traditional food products, educational marketing and, nevertheless volunteer marketing.

She has experience as a teacher, researcher and practitioner in the marketing area. After graduation she worked for more than five years in companies from Oradea in areas such as advertising, customer relationship management, public relations. Meanwhile, she was a member of the Management Marketing Department, University of Oradea, teaching students the Basis of Marketing, Services Marketing, Selling Techniques, Strategic Management, Business communication and negotiation.

implementations of a reward system to recognize the performance. A service culture represents an organizational culture that supports the qualitative service to the client through a number of procedures, reward system and performance recognition and other kind of actions. The culture of the service is an integrated part of organizational culture, and it represents the sum of the values and beliefs shared by organizational members that give a common purpose and a set of rules that guide the behaviour inside the organization. A weak organizational culture assumes values and low number of norms that are shared by organizational members or are not shared at all, employees that are not sure of their roles and lack of empowerment. The same rules apply to volunteering.

Wymer and Starnes [17] underline the negative impact of difference between expectations of the tasks nature of the volunteers and the real tasks they have to perform. Another aspect that influences negative volunteer's retention is the indifferent attitude of the management [17] towards volunteers, lack of trust and empowerment. Bennett and Barkensjo [2] underline the important role of volunteer's motivation through the vision. Also Mitchell and Taylor [10] sustain the importance of the relationship between organizational culture and internal marketing in volunteer retention.

Development of a marketing approach in human resource management is necessary the creation of posts and tasks that are attractive for employees and stress reduce through team work. Initial instructions programs play an essential role in continue instruction of the personnel. Another method of instruction is that employees have to exchange their posts. This activity help employees understand the interrelationship between departments, each department importance, and how the depend of each other in order to deliver a good service to the consumer [8].

According to Bennett and Bakensjo [2] instruction and trainings of volunteers must have continuity and not be restricted at short class or ad-hoc seminars. The study made by the two researchers analysed only volunteers in direct contact with the beneficiaries. The trending for these volunteers consisted of formal instruction programs of half of day, followed by a pacified program in practice under the instruction of a mentor (an employee or a volunteer that was a long period involved in organization). The authors emphasize that in internal marketing implementation internal communication and extensive distribution of information is needed, but in both directions: from the volunteers to organization and from the organization to the volunteers. Volunteers have to be familiar to organizational strategies, with the purposes and activities and tides between their individual duties and others work. Also according to Wymer and Starnes [17] good communication to the volunteers in recruiting and among their activity helps at reducing the differences between the initial expectations and the reality of the tasks.

Mitchell and Taylor [8] propose seven steps of internal marketing implementation in volunteer retention: organizational culture analysis, identification of the benefits volunteers expect from the volunteering activity, recruiting volunteers that share organizational values, prepare of a program that would promote organizational culture, and pacification of an informal socializing process among employees and volunteers for promoting organizational culture. Also it is important to give a structure to the ceremonial activities for organizational culture empowerment, for maintaining a communication mechanism in both directions between volunteers and organization management.

Bennette and Barkensjo [2] identify other components aspects of the internal marketing program as work in the team, good reporting, employees empowerment and performance recognition. Helping volunteers to work as a team, to adapt to the main problems and to solve them beyond their individual tasks is the main purpose of the internal marketing program. Authors underline that volunteers may be ignorant to the internal marketing program. Managers assume many times those volunteers want to receive more information, in detail regarding each of the organizational strategy and that volunteers want their contribution to be recognized. Some volunteers may not consider these aspects important, and they will react different at internal marketing strategy. In consequence internal marketing program has different results for each volunteer job satisfaction, intention to remain in organization and intention to offer a qualitative service. Given to the many factors that may influence the response of the volunteers to internal marketing program, the authors propose a direction of research of evaluation a single element: communication in the two directions from the organization to the volunteer and from the volunteer to organization. Also organization leadership has to evaluate the way it improved the communication with the volunteers, thing that may be appreciated by some volunteers and ignored by others.

## **RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS**

Internal marketing is important in volunteer retention as an organizational orientation as much as it is in employee retention. In order to implement internal marketing for volunteers main specificities of this activity have to be taken into consideration. Volunteer activity is not played and not motivated by material rewards, is motivated by intrinsic motivation, is derogated as long as the volunteer is satisfied with the activity, is flexible and is not mandatory or obligatory.

Internal marketing is differently adapted, the mix of product, price, placement and promotion (communication) being adapted to influential factors of volunteer behaviour: benefits, costs, others and self efficacy. More research is needed in evaluating the empirical impact on each internal marketing mix influence on volunteer behaviour factors.

## **References**

- [1] Andreasen A., Kotler P., (2003), Strategic Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations, Pearson Education , Inc., ISBN 0-13-122792
- [2] Bennett R., Barkensjo A., Internal Marketing, Negative Experiences, and Volunteers' Commitment to Providing High-Quality Services in a UK Helping and Caring Charitable Organization *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Non-profit Organizations* Vol. 16, No. 3, September 2005 (C\_ 2005) DOI: 10.1007/s11266-005-7724-0
- [3] Burns, D. J., Reid, J. S., Toncar, M., Fawcett, J., și Anderson, C. (2006). Motivations to volunteer: The role of altruism. *International Review on Public și Non Profit Marketing*, 3,79-91.
- [4] Coita, D., C., (2008), Marketingul organizațiilor nonprofit, Editura Academiei Române, București, ISBN 978-973-27-1750.
- [5] Cuskelly, G., Taylor T., Hoyer R. and Darcy S. (2006) Volunteer Management Practices and Volunteer Retention: A Human Resource Management Approach *Sport Management Review*, 2006,9, 141-163 © 2006 SMAANZ
- [6] Dosen, Đ. O., & Prebezac, D. (2000). Interni Marketing u Usluznim Poduzecima - Primjer Zrakoplovnih Kompanija/Internal Marketing in Service Companies - Airline Companies

- Example. *Acta Turistica*, 12(1), 18-36.  
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/1352780365?accountid=15533>.
- [7] Handy F.; Cnaan R., A.; Brudney L., J.; Ascoli, U.; Maijs, L., C., M., P.; Ranade, (2000)S. Public Perception of "Who is a volunteer": An Examination of the Net-Cost Approach From a Cross Cultural Perspective, *Voluntas: International Journal of Nonprofit Organization*, Vol. 11 No.1.
- [8] Kotler, Bowen and Makens (2006),*Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism* Pearson Education Inc
- [9] Ladelsky L.K. coord. Catană, A. G., (2014) Cauzele și condițiile care influențează intențiile de plecare voluntară ale angajaților: O abordare de marketing intern – Cazul angajaților din companiile Hi-Tech din Israel, Teza de Doctorat Universitatea „Babeș-Bolyai”, Cluj-Napoca Facultatea de Științe Economice și Gestiunea Afacerilor Departamentul de Marketing.
- [10] Mitchell, M. A., Taylor, S. (2004). Internal Marketing: Key to Successful Volunteer Programs. *Nonprofit World*, 22, 25-26. Articol accesat din baza de date ProQuest Central, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/221327614?accountid=15533>.
- [11] Money, A., Foreman, S. (1996). The measurement of internal marketing: A confirmatory case study. *Journal of Marketing Management* 11(8), 755–766.
- [12] Piercy N., Morgan N. (1991), "Internal Marketing – The Missing Half of the Marketing Program" *Long Range Planning*, Vol. 24, No. 2, p. 84
- [13] Randle, M., and Dolnicar, S. (2009). Not just any volunteers: Segmenting the market to attract the high contributors. *Journal of Non-profit and Public Sector Marketing*, 21(3): 271.
- [14] Ružić E., Benazić D., Dolenc S., (2013), *Application of the internal marketing concept in the Croatian financial sector*, *Ekonomski Pregled*, 64 (3) 241-255.
- [15] Tilly, C., Tilly. C. (1994) "Capitalist Work și Labor Markets," Pp. 283–313 in *Handbook of Economic Sociology*, edited by N. Smelser și R. Swedberg. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- [16] Wymer, W., W. (1996) Formal Volunteering as a Function of Values, Self-Esteem, Empathy și Facilitation, Teză de doctorat, UMI Microform 9635049.
- [17] Wymer W. W. and Starnes B. J. (2001) "Conceptual Foundations and Practical Guidelines for Recruiting Volunteers to Serve in Local Nonprofit Organizations: Part I." *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing* (Best Business Books, an imprint of The Haworth Press, Inc.) Vol. 9, No. 1/2, 2001, pp. 63-96.