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INTERNAL MARKETING IN VOLUNTEER'S MANAGEMENT. A QUANTITATIVE STUDY IN ROMANIAN NON-PROFIT SECTOR

Case
Study

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Volunteer's satisfaction,
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JEL Classification

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Abstract

Volunteering for a social cause is a leisure activity that gains more and more interest in the last years in Romania. Most social non-profit organizations involve volunteers in activities of short-term which they cannot pay. The lack of monetary rewards makes room for the need for internal marketing procedures such as: communicating a vision that would attract volunteers, instruction for the people involved and a performance-based rewarding system. Internal marketing procedures are poorly adopted in Romanian non-profit sector. A philosophy, strategies, and tactics of internal marketing could offer suitable solutions for non-profit organizations managers in maintaining volunteers, impacting positively volunteer's satisfaction and organizational commitment according to previous studies. This research analyses the measure that internal marketing procedures are adopted in Romanian non-profit sector. A questionnaire was applied to a sample of 300 volunteers from 144 social non-profit organizations. The results show that the performance-based rewarding systems were the most poorly adapted.

INTRODUCTION

Volunteer's management is a complex one, given the certain specificity of voluntary activities. The lack of monetary reward in attracting this category of human resources, internal marketing procedures are more and more needed in volunteers retention (Mitchell and Taylor, 2004; Bennett and Barjensko, 2005; Coita, 2008)

Internal marketing is a marketing orientation that requires the appliance of communication, development and rewarding strategies (Csordas, 2012) strategies that are vital for maintaining volunteers in non-profit organizations.

Volunteer retention is an issue that enjoys a great attention in non-profit organizations, given the fact that most of them depend on volunteers in maintaining their own activity, sustainability, and continuity (Mitchell & Taylor 2004, Csordas 2012). Private non-profit organization in the form of today began to develop in Romania after 1990 when a law that was accepted in 1924 "Legea Mârzescu" was reactivated right after the fail of the communist political system. Non-profit organizations development depends on the adoption of the American and Western Europe models. Resource attractions: material, financial, human or informational they all represent a great challenge for Romanian non-profit organizations. In 2015 there were 90984 registered non-profit organizations (Lambriu and Vameşu, 2010). According to the study of Dima et al., (2013) a percentage of 88% non-profit organizations working in the social domain, involve volunteers in their activity. The average number of volunteers active during a year is 17 volunteers in each organization. Volunteers spend an average of 8 hours a month in a social non-profit organization from the same study. A large number of social non-profit organizations depend on volunteers' activity in sustainable service delivery.

This study aims to present and evaluate the internal marketing procedures adoption in non-profit organization activating in the social domain from Romania regarding volunteer's management and retention.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Volunteering had more definitions along the time, some authors see it as a way to spend leisure time (Andreassen and Kotler, 2003) and others see it as a form of work (Tilly and Tilly, 1994). There are few commonalities of volunteering, they are all defined as unpaid activities, benefiting organizations and society at large, and mostly altruistic motivated. Tilly and Tilly (1994) define volunteer work as "unpaid work provided to parties to whom the

worker owes no contractual, familial, or friendship obligations". According to Valastro (2012) volunteer involvement "is a personal choice not only related to certain ethical and religious choices – which are supported and strengthened through volunteerism itself – but it is also based on inner drives orienting the individual towards an extra-individual commitment."

Volunteers represent a valuable resource for non-profit organizations activity, but volunteer management demands efficient strategies and procedures in assuring volunteers retention.

Internal marketing procedures implementation are more needed especially in the organizations that are involved in social areas, in this organization's volunteers are having their activities most of the time in direct contact with the beneficiaries and orientation towards beneficiary satisfaction has to be a goal for each volunteer involved. (Bennett and Barkensjo, 2005).

Csordas (2012) underlines that the main role of the internal marketing in volunteers' management is the one of information dissemination regarding the tasks, performance and positive results. On the other side, Piercy and Morgan (1991) present internal marketing having the same components as classic marketing, the mix of internal marketing having also, four elements similar to classic marketing mix: product, price, promotion, and placement. Money and Foreman (1996) propose another model of measuring internal marketing performance. The model has three dimensions: vision communication, instruction, and performance-based rewarding.

Vision communication: presents the manner the vision is transmitted, organization investment in communication and managerial effort in transmitting volunteers their importance in delivering their service. Csordas (2012) emphasize the importance of constant information dissemination between the employees and volunteers; information regarding their tasks, program but also information between management and volunteers, the announcement of a new grant, announcement of new projects, or new projects, but the most important, information regarding the long-term strategies in fulfilling the vision. Bennett and Barkensjo (2005) sustain that information can be distributed in the organization formally but also informally. Formally information transmission is made during the: meeting printed announcements or newsletter. On the other side informal communication is more often generated between the employee, volunteers, managers, or other categories of participants at the organizational activity on subjects as the announcement of future projects, or for better accomplishing different tasks.

Instruction is explained by Money and Foreman (1996) as an investment and not as a cost in the knowledge and abilities of the human resource that brings in the and gains for the organization. Authors also indicate that effective instruction is a continuous instruction. Good management of human resources demands to transmit a good understanding not only of the vision but also on the manner of proper execution of the tasks. Bennett and Barkensjo (2005) underline in their study that volunteers benefit not only of classes of training but they receive a full instruction regarding the service they deliver and the management is also, flexible regarding their needs.

Training programs management include proper classes selection. Information can be delivered using presentations, practical exercises, group talks, training at the workplace, simulations, case studies or through e-learning. The last step in developing a strategic program of instruction requires the evaluation of the training program for being assured that volunteers have achieved the knowledge, abilities and the needed resources for a proper service delivery (Kummerfeldt, 2011).

Performance-based rewarding demands gather information regarding the activity and the obtained results. Money and Foreman (1996) underline the importance of information collecting for the efficiency of task accomplishment and of the organizational strategy. Also, authors underline the need of the performance measurement and of rewarding based on the significance of the value added to the organization and to the delivered service.

Levinson (2007) sustains that organizations must find different significant ways to reward volunteers. Csordas (2012) sustains that a continuous circuit of information between volunteers and employees is needed in internal marketing management of cultural non-profit organizations. According to the same author, this circuit can be supported by diverse distribution canals such as e-mails, announcement places or volunteers website. Data can be collected using registrations of current data, reports or interviews.

Murk and Stephan (1991) underline that recognition and rewards motivate positive volunteers, and efficient volunteer management is oriented on rewarding often their volunteers. Events organized with the purpose of offering recognition and rewarding are a good way to value volunteers. Csordas (2012) sustain that rewarding must be based on the results of volunteers.

Bennett and Barkensjo (2005) conclude that volunteers respond differently to internal marketing programs. For some of them the measures implemented by the managers are significant, but for some, they have no importance. On the other side, Csordas (2012) emphasize that internal

marketing program adapted to volunteers helps the organization develop and also creates a positive climate for the new volunteers empowering the leading volunteers in implementing the projects.

Bennett and Barkensjo (2005) and Amin and Mahasan (2013) test the influence of internal marketing programs and procedures on volunteers satisfaction and organizational commitment. Both studies conclude that internal marketing has a positive and significant influence on the two variables which predict volunteers long-term intention to participate in organizations activities.

METHODOLOGY DESIGN

Literature review reveals the importance of internal marketing in volunteer's satisfaction and organizational commitment that lead to long-term intention to be involved in the organization. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the adoption of internal marketing procedures in volunteer's retention in non-profit organizations from Romania.

This study is part of a larger research on influential factors on volunteer's satisfaction and organizational commitment in Romanian social non-profit organizations.

The data collecting method used was the survey and the research tool the 15 items scale of Money and Foreman (1996) questionnaire that was priority applied by Bennett and Barkensjo (2005) in the study of volunteer activity.

The questionnaire was applied online and face to face, through non - profit organizations management, from 12.12.2015 - 27.06.2016.

The target population in the present research are volunteers from the social domain non-profit organizations. A number of 144 organizations participated in the study

The organizations were selected out of Romanian Non-profit Organizations Register (Ministerul Finanțelor, 2016). A number of 710 organizations were contacted with only 144 approving to participate in the study. The sampling used was the non-randomized group sampling, each organization manager distributing a questionnaire to the supervised volunteers. The final sample consists of 300 active volunteers.

Data were processed using descriptive analysis: frequencies conducted with IMB SPSS21 program. The method was used to offer a preliminary general image regarding the adoption of internal marketing procedures in participant organizations.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Results of the frequencies descriptive analysis were presented in table 1, 2 and 3, and are grouped based on the three dimensions of the internal marketing identified by Money and Foreman (1996) vision communication, instruction and measurement of performance and rewarding.

Vision communication

An important dimension of internal marketing in volunteers management is communication (Bennett and Barkensjo, 2005). An effective communication is double oriented from organization to volunteers but also from volunteers to the organization.

The organization management transmits the vision, long-term strategy, projects, and tasks. The results presenting communication in the analyzed non-profit organizations are presented in Table 1. A percent of 80% of volunteers agree that the organization communicates the vision (item 1) and 77% consider that the vision is clearly transmitted (item 2).

Investment in communication is a priority for the most of the participant organizations but presents a lower score compared to vision communication. A percentage of 64% volunteers agree and totally agree that the organizational management invest in communication (item 10).

Data collection is a procedure that helps manager monitor volunteers activity and is a procedure adopted by most of the participant organizations according to volunteers responses (66.7%, item 13).

A percentage of 73.4% of volunteers agree and totally agree that the organization communicates the importance of their role in the organization.

Development and Instruction of volunteers

Results on instruction as a dimension of internal marketing program reveal that a high percentage of analyzed organizations have a positive approach regarding volunteers instruction based on volunteers response presented in Table 2. On the other side, the proper instruction and the complete training for a professional service delivery still represent a problem for some organizations.

A percentage of 75.7% of volunteers agree that volunteers are instructed by organization employees (item 3). A large majority of the respondents of 74.7% agree that organization leadership sees that development of the knowledge and abilities of volunteers as an investment, not as a cost (item 4).

In the most of the analyzed organizations respondent volunteers (76 %) consider that the leadership sees the development of human resource as a continuous process within the organization (item 5). Also, **volunteers** are instructed on how to accomplish their tasks and not only on what they

have to do, according to 76% of the respondents (item 6). A majority of 71% of volunteers agree that organization is flexible in adapting itself to the different needs of the volunteers (item 9).

Almost a half of the volunteers (51.7%) agree that organizational management offers more than training, but a full instruction (item 7). A percent of 44% do partially agree or disagree that they benefit from a proper training in delivering the service they volunteer for (item 8).

Performance-based rewarding

The results for the analysis of responses regarding the performance-based rewarding were presented in Table 3. A majority of respondents agree and totally agree regarding performance-based rewarding in the organizations where they activate. A percentage of 59% of respondents agree and totally agree that organizational management measures the performance and rewards the volunteers that add the most value to the accomplishment of the vision (item 12) and perform through cooperation to the other volunteers and employees (item 11).

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Romanian social non-profit sector is still lacking resources and effective marketing programs, but functions and achieve to respond to many social disadvantaged categories given to volunteers involvement (Lamburu and Vameşu, 2010). Volunteers are often attracted by social causes, but many managers fail in maintaining their long-term interest. Internal marketing has an important role in volunteers retention (Bennett and Barkensjo, 2005).

Study results show a high adoption of different internal marketing procedures at the level of participant organization, according to volunteers response, but noticeable differences were present between the variables of the same dimension. In the analyze of vision communication, almost all volunteers agree that vision is communicated clear by organization management. The scores for investment in communication and data collecting were more reduce.

The instruction was also adopted in a large majority of the participant organizations. A large number of the volunteers agreed they received support from the employees, they received continuously instruction and they are explained how to accomplish the task. The score for receiving training classes and for full instruction was smaller, indicating that fewer organizations are able to prepare properly, and deliver high-quality services through the involvement of volunteers.

According to the results, performance-based rewarding dimensions has procedures that are more

poorly adopted comparative to communication procedures. Not all organizations have an efficient rewarding strategy for volunteers who add value to organization vision or deliver services with no payment. The lack of orientation towards volunteers leads to lack of motivation and intention to leave the organization. A sustainable orientation in volunteer's management demands an equal development and approach for performance-based rewarding, instruction as for vision communication. Volunteers with longer experience will promote and supervise the novice volunteers, becoming an important part of the organization in the long term.

Research limitation

This research is based on a quantitative study of internal marketing procedures adoption in the non-profit organization from volunteers perspective. The study lacks detailed information regarding how internal marketing philosophy, strategies, tactics and procedures are understood and operationally adopted by non-profit organizations management. A complementary qualitative research from a managerial perspective would offer valuable information in measuring the adoption of internal marketing procedures in Romanian non-profit sector.

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Tables

Table No. 1.

Answers regarding Communication as a part of Internal Marketing procedures

	Vision communication (item 1)	The clarity of transmitting the vision (item 2)	Communication Investment (item 10)	Information Management (item 13)	Volunteers importance communication (item 14)
	Average	5,9700	5,9233	5,5667	5,6522
Responses	Totally disapprove	2,7	1,7	3,0	2,3
	Disapprove	2,7	4,0	3,7	3,0
	Partial disapprove	,3	2,0	5,0	2,0
	Indifferent	6,0	4,0	7,7	9,3
	Partial agree	8,3	11,3	16,7	16,3
	Agree	37,7	35,0	30,7	36,7
	Totally agree	42,3	42,0	33,3	30,0
	Missing values	-	-	-	0,3
	Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Source: Autors results using frequencies analysis with IBM SPSS21 program.

Table No. 2.

Answers regarding Instruction as a part of Internal Marketing procedures

	Development in tasks execution (item 3)	Development as an investment (item 4)	Development a continuous process (item 5)	Development by explaining why and not just how (item 6)	Complete instruction (item 7)	Classes of instruction (item 8)	Organizational flexibility in instruction (item 9)
	Average	5,8595	5,8833	5,9233	5,8200	5,1572	5,1171
Responses	Totally disapprove	2,3	1,3	1,0	1,3	4,0	3,7
	Disapprove	1,7	1,3	2,0	3,3	6,7	8,3
	Partial disapprove	2,7	2,3	2,3	2,0	6,0	6,3
	Indifferent	7,0	9,0	7,7	6,3	10,0	9,7
	Partial agree	10,3	11,3	11,0	11,3	21,3	19,7
	Agree	39,0	38,0	37,3	43,7	29,7	30,3
	Totally agree	36,7	36,7	38,7	32,0	22,0	21,7
	Total	99,7	100,0	100,0	100,0	99,7	99,7
	Missing values	0,3				0,3	0,3

Source: Autors results using frequencies analysis using IBM SPSS21 program.

Table No. 3.

Answers regarding Performance Based Rewarding as a part of Internal Marketing procedures

		Measuring and rewarding orientation to cooperation (item 11)	Measuring and rewarding the accomplishment of the vision (item 12)	Measuring and rewarding the service quality (item 15)
	Average	5,3600	4,9133	5,0569
Responses	Totally disapprove	3,3	3,3	4,7
	Disapprove	6,3	6,3	8,0
	Partial disapprove	4,0	4,0	6,7
	Indifferent	11,0	11,0	12,0
	Partial agree	16,3	16,3	17,7
	Agree	30,7	30,7	27,7
	Totally agree	28,3	28,3	23,0
	Total	-	-	0,3
	Missing values	100,0	100,0	99,7

Source: Authors results using frequencies analysis with IBM SPSS21 program.