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Quantico, Virginia 22134-5068*

MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

Title:

***The Applicant Based Training Model
Setting Conditions for Recruiting Success***

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abstract (maximum 200 words) <i>This paper examines current business practices in an attempt to apply any consistent trends to the Marine Corps recruiting force, specifically in the development of a strategic vision for sales training as well as the definition of individual training requirements for critical billets at the Recruiting Station (RS) and Recruiting Sub-Station (RSS.) One trend, or practice, that can be directly applied deals with developing a “customer” based approach to optimize the key interactions that occur between a customer and company’s representatives. By breaking down these key interactions, one can help increase the level of service by understanding where the interactions are strong and where they are weak. This process can be applied to the Marine Corps recruiting service simply by replacing the “customer” with a Marine Corps prospect, or “applicant.” The applicant based training model this paper develops can be used to enhance training by ensuring proper focus an balance is applied to each critical billet at the RS and RSS. The model can also be used to help define an overarching strategic vision for training, one that is concerned with meeting and exceeding the applicant’s expectation throughout their enlistment.</i>			
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FOREGOING STATEMENT.**

Executive Summary

Title: The Applicant based Training Model; Setting Conditions for Future Recruiting success

Author: Major Thomas P. Martin

Thesis: Current business practices can be used to analyze and validate the Marine Corps recruiting training posture in terms of outcomes and methods. The research question for this paper was “What is the strategic vision of the training program for the Marine Corps Recruiting Command, and can this vision be validated by current business practices?”

Discussion: This paper examined the strategic focus for training and the development of training requirements for the critical recruiting billets at the Recruiting Station (RS) and Recruiting Sub-Station (RSS.) This examination was conducted with the goal of determining if there are any current business practices with applicability to the Marine Corps Recruiting Command. Since a Recruiting Station shares many of the same characteristics of a civilian sales organization, the analysis and possible application of these current practices could be useful to optimize the performance of the Marine Corps’ “sales force.” Based on the research conducted, combined with the authors first hand knowledge in a wide range sales training methods, three common trends emerged in each method. One of these trends, or practices, revolves around building sales processes based on key interactions between the customer and the company representatives, with the focus on meeting and exceeding customer expectations. Upon further examination, this “customer based” approach reveals that several methods have been created to ensure this optimization between the customer and sales force occurs. These processes can be adapted and used by the Marine Corps by replacing the “customer” with the Marine Corps prospects or “applicants,” the result being the development of the applicant based training model. The applicant based training model was then created and analyzed to provide several conclusions and recommendations

Conclusion: Current business practices can and should be used to optimize the performance of the Marine Corps recruiting forces, especially at the RS and RSS levels. The applicant based training model outlined in this paper is just one example. This training model can be used to help develop a strategic vision for training as well as providing clarity for the definition of individual training requirements for specific billets.

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The fact is, that without recruiting, there is no Marine Corps --- and we don't have an all-volunteer force. We have an "all-recruited" force.

LtGen J.W. Klimp, CG MCRC
Opening Remarks, 12th Marine Corps District
Career Recruiter Training Conference, 8 Oct 1997

Among the military services, the Marine Corps is unique in that it identifies its character as an organization with the individual Marines who serve in it. Marines are the Lifeblood of the corps, and as such, has come to signify the nature of the whole institution. The very ethos of the Marine Corps--tough, elite warriors who possess the core values of honor, courage, and commitment—are individual characteristics templated onto an entire force. Recruiting an adequate number of quality individuals, therefore, is critical to ensuring the Marine Corps remains a premier war fighting organization.

Marine Corps recruiting is often misunderstood as simply a collection of some "slick" techniques to "trick" young men and women into joining the service. In truth, the recruiting command is a professional, sophisticated organization. Recruiting is a unique and crucial function within the armed forces. Despite this cruciality and the sophisticated nature of the recruiting organization, it happens that the majority of the Marines assigned to do it are not Career Recruiters. The proper training of these individuals who serve short but intense periods on recruiting duty is, therefore, of critical importance for the future of the Corps. Realizing that a Recruiting Station (RS) shares many of the same characteristics as a sales organization in the private sector, a comparison of civilian business practices may prove useful in determining future training requirements for the recruiting command. Training requirements for the critical billets at two key levels-- the

Recruiting-Substation and the Recruiting Station--have not been optimized by organizations in the private sector. This paper seeks to do just that.

More specifically, it seeks to examine the optimal training program for Marines serving on recruiting duty in the following Recruiting Station (RS) billets: Canvassing Recruiter; Noncommissioned Officer In Charge, Recruiting sub-station; RS Commanding Officer; RS Executive Officer; RS Operations Officer; Recruiter Instructor; RS Sergeant Major. This paper is a study of the methods by which one could help develop determine what the training requirements are for Marines in these critical billets. It focuses on enlisted recruitment rather than officer procurement, which is a more specialized and much smaller portion of the effort. A first step is briefly to outline the development of systematic recruiting. A second step will be to then develop and analyze another approach to determining training requirements based on current business practices. A third step will be to review current methods for the analysis and development of training programs for similar-type “sales” organizations. This process-based approach will lead to a section, in which detailed recommendations for each billet are described and evaluated. Finally, using all of this information, the paper will develop a process to determine training requirements and will finally outline specific programs tailored for each billet examined.

What This Paper Is Not

This monograph will not attempt to provide a completely new way to recruit. The system developed in the mid 1970’s, although technologically outdated in terms of methods used for keeping and tracking information (i.e. card files are used to track lead

information vice computer databases,) is conceptually sound. This paper has not sought to change the nature of recruiting, but simply to look at the current process in a different light- that is, from the perspective of the applicant. Additionally, this paper does not attempt to replace current doctrine or the training and requirements manual, which already outlines specific training requirements. This paper primarily addresses the proportionality of training for each key billet at the Recruiting station. In other words, in the “recipe” we call training, the paper will attempt to determine how much of each ingredient is needed to get the “mix” right for each billet. Additionally, this paper will not examine training requirements for many of the non-recruiting type functions that are important, but not as critical in terms of impact on accomplishment of the recruiting mission. These areas are primarily related to support functions such as administration, logistics, and public affairs.

Lastly, this paper is not a “quick fix” solution. It is based on the premise that any meaningful change in any sales organization takes time and persistence, and most importantly, vision. If fully appreciated, the dictum that “trying to change the sales force is like trying to build a skyscraper out of Jell-O.”¹ The paper will not, therefore try to build the skyscraper, but only to begin a dialogue concerning the vision of what that skyscraper should look like, and what foundation it should rest on.

Development of Systematic Recruiting

The current method the Marine Corps uses to recruit is referred to as “systematic recruiting” or simply “the system.” The system was created by BGen MacMillian in the

¹ Rackham, Neil Rethinking the Sales Force (McGraw-Hill, New York 1998) 251

early 1970s and was outlined in reference manuals known as the Guidebooks for Recruiting, Volumes I, II, III, IV. Volume I was designed to provide a framework for recruiting as the lowest level, the Recruiting Sub-Station (RSS.) Thus, this Volume guides the actions of the Recruiters their immediate supervisors, the Non-Commissioned Officers in Charge (NCOICs.) The next Guidebook, Volume II, deals with officer procurement, and as indicated will not be discussed in this paper. The third Guidebook, Volume III, is the instruction manual for the Recruiting Station (RS) operations. Volume III provides detailed, step-by-step “how to” guidance for the members of the RS Command Group, which consists of the Commanding Officer, Executive Officer, Operations Officer, Sergeant Major, and the Recruiter Instructor (RI) and Assistant Recruiter Instructor (ARI.) Volume IV provides guidance on reserve recruiting, is largely outdated, and will not be used for the purposes of this study.

In recent years, the Recruiting Command drafted and published a fifth Guidebook, Volume V, which provides some basic information concerning District operations. Volume V outlines the basic framework for the district operations section, to include the section organization and billet descriptions for district command group members as well as key individuals in the operations section. This volume also gives some guidance on training requirements at each level from the recruiting sub-station to the recruiting command. Although these requirements are described in a systematic fashion and each Recruiting Command Commanding General prescribes his own commanders intent, there is no long-term strategic vision to serve as an overall philosophy to guide specific procedures and techniques. Additionally, the recruiting command has also published a

Training and Readiness (T&R) Manual, which outlines specific training requirements for each billet at the RSS and the Command Group members at the RS.

Another integral part of recruiting training involves the “sales” aspect of recruiting. The Marine Corps has leveraged many successful practices from the civilian sector through the strategic relationship the command has with the company Achieve Global. Achieve Global, a company that was formerly known as Learning International, is an industry leader in sales training, as well as a variety of other business management functions. Achieve Global provides training packages for professional selling skills, sales applications, coaching, interpersonal relationship skills, and training techniques. Because of its prominence in the field of training, much of the research conducted for this paper involves practices developed and refined by Achieve Global studies.

Current Business Practices

Alice: “Would you tell me please, which way I ought to go from here?”
“That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” said the cat.
“I don’t much care where-,” said Alice.
“Then it doesn’t matter which way you go.” said the cat.

Alice in Wonderland

Clearly, if you don’t know where you’re going, any road will take you there. Current business practices relating to training sales organizations can provide a fresh approach to helping us determine where we want to go with training the Marine Corps recruiting force, and thereby putting us on the road to continued success and, more importantly, ongoing process improvement. In conducting an analysis of current practices, several important concepts seem to consistently recur, with a common thread being “the quality

and durability of the relationship between the organizations and their customers” as the key to long-term success.² These concepts will be outlined and then woven together to create a different approach to determining training requirements.

Training- The Key Component

As a result of a number of factors related to an ever-changing market, relevant, timely training has become an integral part of every sales organization. These factors include generational shifts, a technological revolution in terms of information availability, and an ever-increasingly interdependent global economy. Customers today have higher expectations and more information than ever before, and any sales organization that fails to recognize this shift is soon rendered irrelevant. In order to meet and exceed customer expectations, sales organizations have implemented extensive training programs. Indeed, “the failure to train people effectively can create ripple effects within organizations,”³ and lead to failure or irrelevance.

Training not only ensures success, but in fact is the key to ongoing improvement. In a particularly useful work called High Performance Sales Organizations, Dr. Darlene Coker and Dr. Edward Del Gaizo explain the importance of training throughout the book, highlighting that training is a systematic, continuous process, focused on achieving specific objectives.⁴ Additionally, the training program of any sales organization must have a strategic vision, and this vision must be clearly linked to training programs by providing direction and focus.⁵ Given that training based on a strategic vision is a

² Coker and Del Gaizo High Performance Sales Organization (McGraw-Hill New York, 1995) 19

³ Jolles, Robert L, Customer Centered Selling (Simon and Schuster, New York 1998) 64

⁴ Coker and Del Gaizo, 151

⁵ Ibid

requirement in any successful sales organization, the next question one might ask is:

What should our strategic vision be?

The Marine Corps has embraced the value of continuous, systematic recruiting training. This part of a strategic vision is already in place within the command. All critical billet holders at the Recruiting Station and Recruiting Substation level receive formal “entry level” in a variety of areas. They also receive refresher and reinforcement training, which serves as follow-up for the formal courses they attend. Additionally, recruiting personnel attend periodic training sessions and conferences that deal with emerging issues as well as recurring events. For example, each year, as a new school year begins, recruiting personnel normally conduct a series training workshops at all levels, revolving around the High School/Community College Program. This serves to reorient the force at a critical time during the recruiting year

Seeing Through The Customers Eyes

“To appraise any account situation, you begin by thinking with the customer’s but is a useful concept when translated from a “customer” to an “applicant,” realizing that the young men and women to be recruited are, to the recruiting force at the Recruiting Substation and Recruiting Station level, the “customers.” Knowledge of the customer’s situation allows a sales force to identify and meet the customer’s needs.⁶ Indeed, getting and holding the customers in today’s market place is the greatest challenge sales organizations face. Similarly, from the Marine Corps perspective, prospecting, selling,

⁶ Miller and Heiman, 115

enlisting, and shipping applicants is no less challenging. In this respect, comparisons between the civilian business practices can easily be related to the functions involved in recruiting. Numerous civilian business practices have been developed in recent years to determine the customers' situation. Most of these involve collecting data about the customer and distilling the data into a process that allows the sales force to evaluate how they relate to the customer.⁷

In a second seminal work regarding the sales process, The New Strategic Selling, Stephen Heiman and Diane Sanchez reveal a step by step approach to developing a strategic vision, or as they call it, an "Account Strategy." The first step is to collect customer data in order to "analyze your current position with regard to your account and with regard to your specific objective."⁸ Obviously, this strategy, like all of the others reviewed during the research for this paper, involves looking closely at the relationship between the customers and the sales force during each and every interaction. An underlying principle throughout this process is that a sales force will enjoy more success if its people sell through relationships vice pressure. The strategic vision, then, could be stated as one that holds that training programs should be designed around what is needed to meet and exceed the customers, or applicant, expectations. In other words, they should be customer/applicant focused.

An Achieve Global study, Superior Sales Performance, provides another compelling argument regarding customer focused strategic vision: "Clearly, an emphasis on customer relationships is fundamental to a successful strategic focus. Having a

⁷ Ibid, 110

⁸Hieman, Stephen and Sanchez, Diane The New Strategic Selling (Warner Books, New York 1998) 50-53

customer-centered focus influences many of the strategic decisions that must be made in order to realize the organization's vision."⁹ It is one thing to promote a strategic vision that is primarily customer focused, it is quite another thing to develop an approach or process that takes an organization to the goal of realizing this vision. Indeed, the bridge between a concept and action is often refined from developing a process or system and then using this process to identify areas where there is a breakdown or significant friction. Once these areas are identified and analyzed, corrective action can be taken, leading to an aspect of ongoing improvement. An examination of several of these processes currently used in business today will help shape an understanding for their application to Marine Corps recruiting training.

Customer Focused Buying Processes

Customer focused training begins with determining the typical buying process the customer moves through in relation to the sales force. Neil Rackham, in his book Rethinking the Sales Force states, "The idea of breaking the buying process down into stages is a useful one."¹⁰

The typical process from the customer's perspective would follow this basic model:

Recognition of needs-

Evaluation of options-

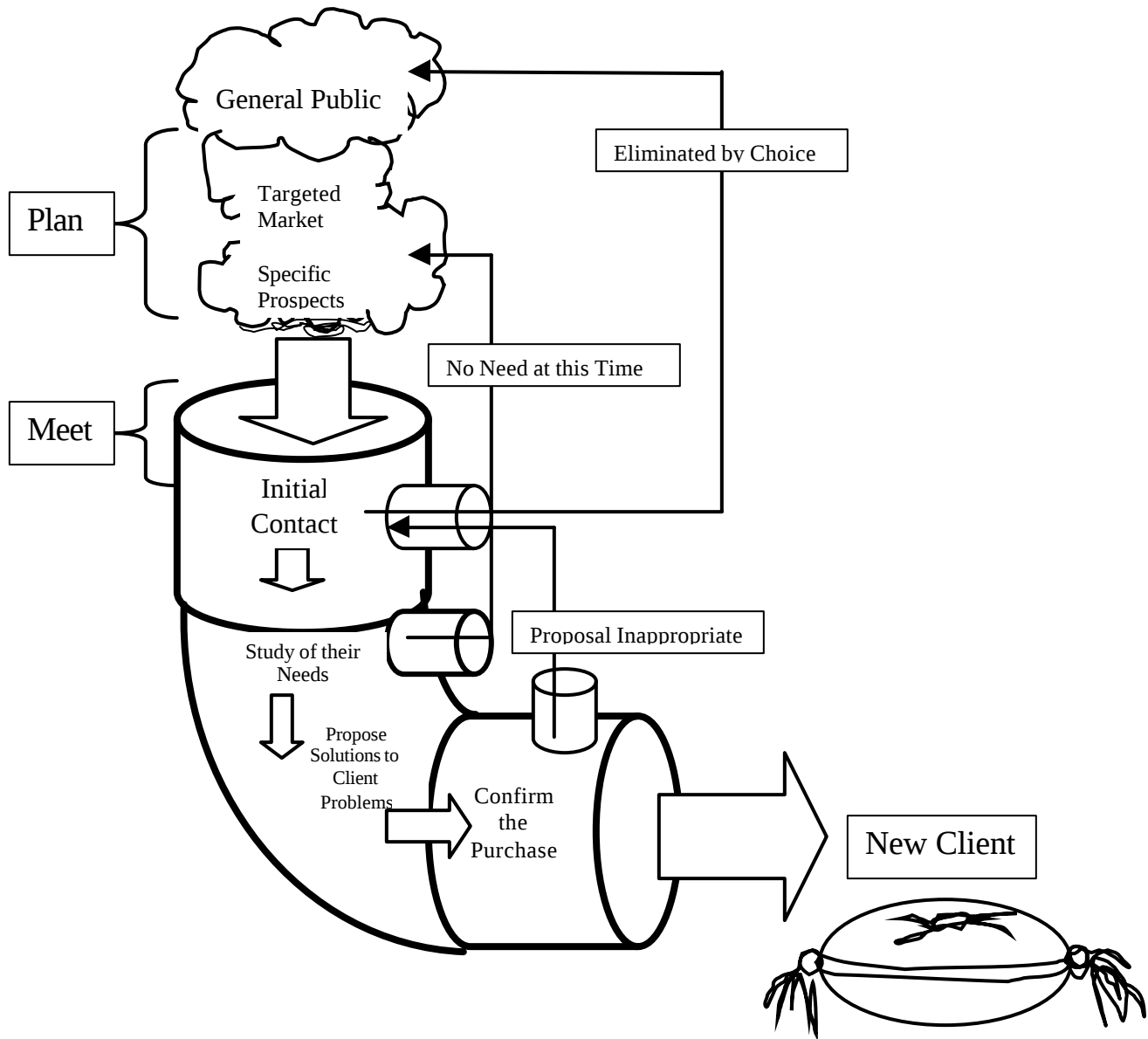
Resolution of concerns-

Purchase

⁹ Achieve Global, Superior Sales Performance 5

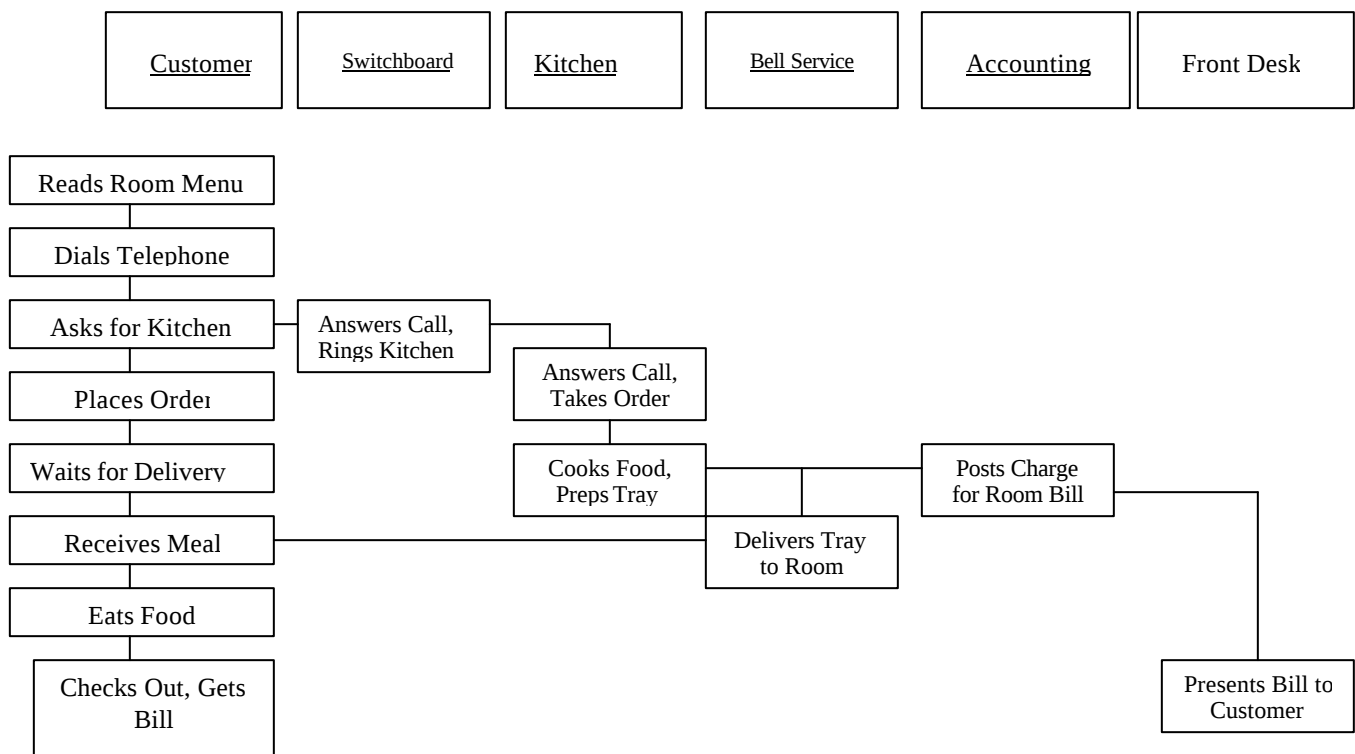
¹⁰ Rackham, 70

This buying process has also been visually displayed as “The Sales Pipeline.”



* Relationship Selling, 14

Another way to examine the process that the customer goes through has been outlined in Karl Albrecht and Ron Zemkes, Service America in the New Economy. The writers contend that service systems can be blueprinted, using a diagram to display the service process, which includes the customer and the participants who service the customer.¹¹ For example, the following figure would show a typical service blueprint for room service order for a hotel:

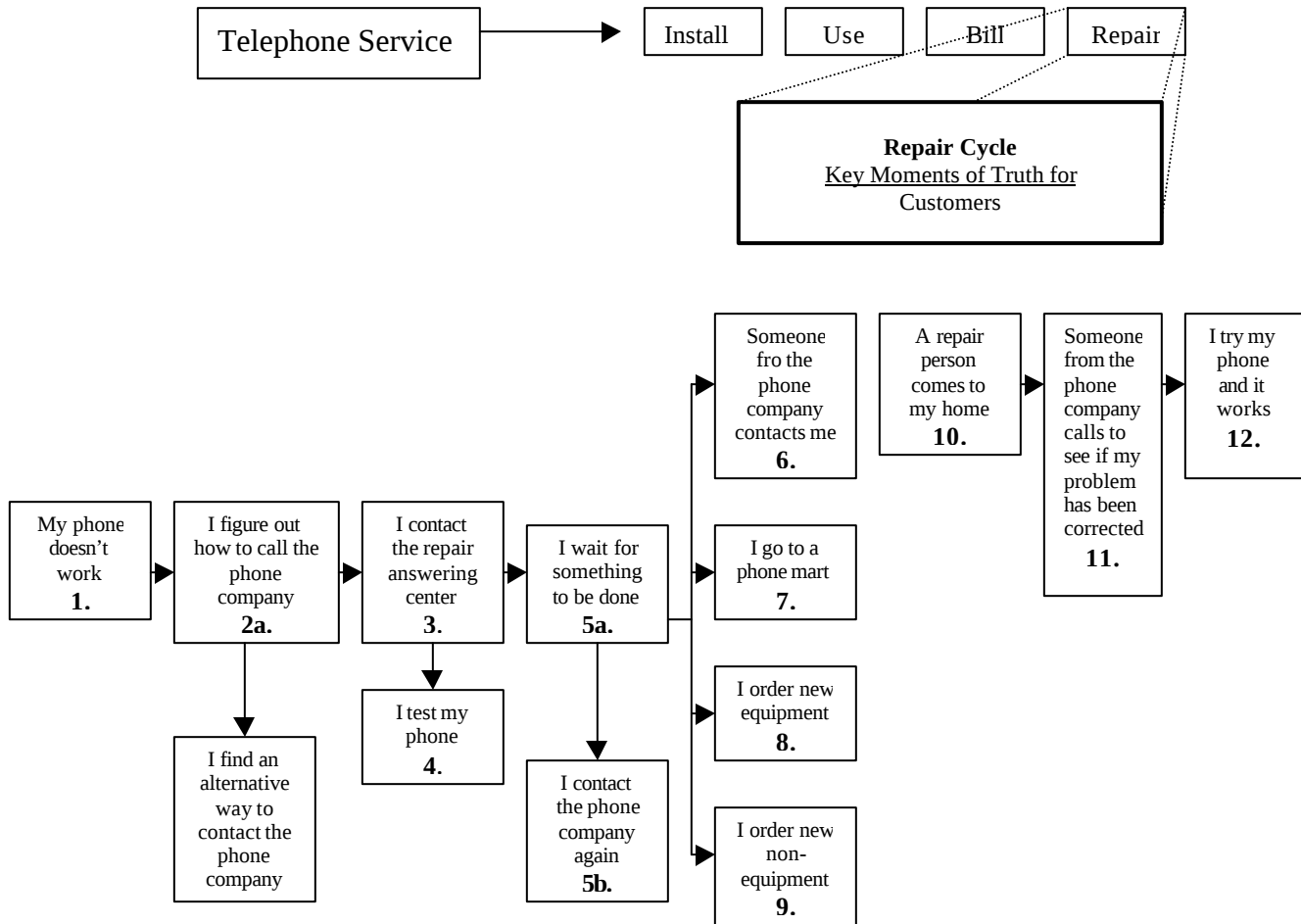


Albrecht and Zenkes explain the service blueprint as one that allows the organization providing the service to fully see the “moments of truth” the customer experiences, and the collection of these moments or interactions make up the complete cycle of service.”¹²

¹¹ Albrecht Karl and Zemke, Ron Service America in the New Economy (Mcgraw-Hill, New York, 2002) 130

¹² Ibid, 131

“Service blueprinting... helps in isolating points in the process where a current service is weak or prone to failure.”¹³ The following figure shows a sample cycle of service:



*Service America in a New Economy 133

The most important concept in understanding the “cycle of service” process, according to Albrecht and Zemke is: “This cycle of service is reported from the customer’s viewpoint and not the organization’s...In any cycle of service, there are different types of customer/organization contact. Sometimes it is repetitive and

¹³ Albrecht and Zemke 131

institutionalized; it may also be intermittent or occasional. As the full cycle unfolds, the customer may come in contact with a variety of people and with different pieces of the organization. To the customer, each encounter with the company is part of a single cycle, beginning with a particular need, and ending with fulfillment...In the customer's mind, the cycle is a single "event"... To unbundled the cycle... into their component pieces, is an essential task if one is to discover what one does well- and keep doing- and what one needs to fix."¹⁴

Yet, in the Darlene Coker and Edward Del Gaizo work cited earlier, these writers found another valuable explanation of a customer focused process evaluation in high performance sales organizations. Their method for examining an organizations training process from the point of view of the customer is called the "Customer Relationship Process." They define this process as "The sequence of activities performed by the people who are in direct contact with customers that enable the supplier organization to meet or exceed customer requirements and ensure customer loyalty."¹⁵ The Customer Relationship Process is a powerful model in that it combines elements of the buying process, or sales pipeline with the service cycle discussed earlier. Indeed, whether or not they realize it, nearly every organization that interacts with customers has a process they use to service customers. "Most organizations, however, have never defined it or analyze it; and because they don't isolate it and critique it, they cannot manage it or improve it."¹⁶

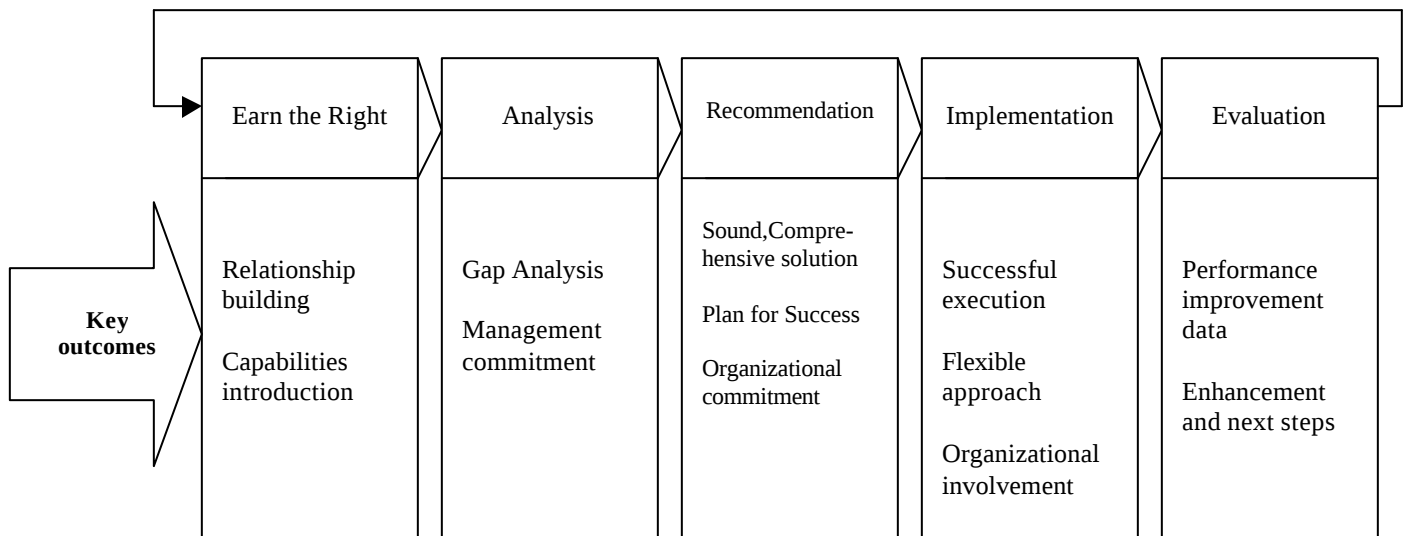
¹⁴ Albrechet and Zemke, 132

¹⁵ Coker and Del Gaizo, 38

¹⁶ Coker and Del Gaizo, 38

There are numerous advantages to using a method such as the Customer Relationship Process, one of which is that it helps determine the roles individuals play during each interaction, which activities are the most important ones, and which competencies are required for optimization of each interaction.¹⁷ The Customer Relationship Process is a way a sales organization can evaluate training requirements and priorities, blending these into a cohesive strategic training plan.

The Customer Relationship Process



* High Performance Sales Organizations, 49,

A Fresh Approach

All of the concepts previously listed can be combined to develop a new approach to training the Marine Corp recruiting force. Recognizing the fact that the Recruiting Station and corresponding Recruiting Substations reflect many of the characteristics of

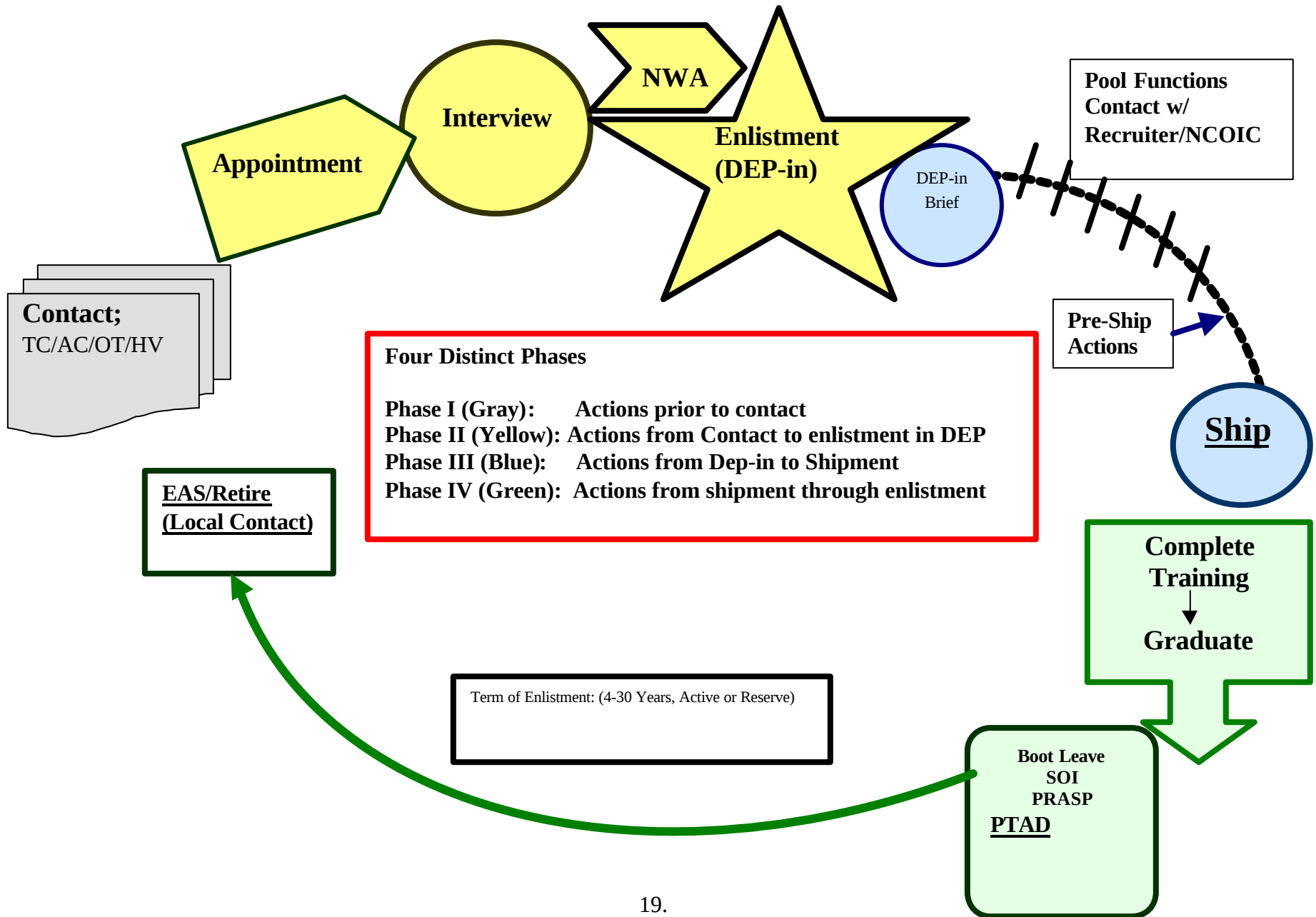
¹⁷ Corker and Del Gaizo, 39

a sales force, current business practices are easily applied from the civilian sector to a recruiting model. Clearly, the business world has taken a “customer based” approach in recent years to training its sales forces, and this approach fits very well into the recruiting enlistment life cycle. This cycle is depicted on page 16, and visually describes the natural cycle most applicants go through as they come into contact with, join, and subsequently serve as U.S. Marines. This lifecycle corresponds to any number of business relationships established and developed in the private sector.

Understanding the enlistment lifecycle is a key concept for applicant-based training. The ability to analyze, from the applicant’s point of view, where that individual is in the decision cycle, allows the recruiting force to help them move through the process to a decision, and provide support and guidance as they complete their enlistment.

The cycle begins with the individual applicant being exposed to advertising and having their name and directory information provided to the recruiting service. This directory information is collected as part of a “lead database” for any given area. The applicant, typically a male high school senior, is then contacted by a Marine and are pre-screened, that is, asked several questions to determine basic eligibility for enlistment. If the applicant is found basically qualified, he is asked for an appointment with a recruiter. This appointment, if the applicant is found mentally and morally qualified, turns into an interview once the recruiter gives him a sales presentation and the applicant and recruiter agree to an action plan. If the applicant agrees to enlist, that individual becomes a new working applicant and is scheduled for processing at the Military Entrance Processing Site (MEPS.) Once processing is completed this and other applicants become part of the

The Enlistment Lifecycle



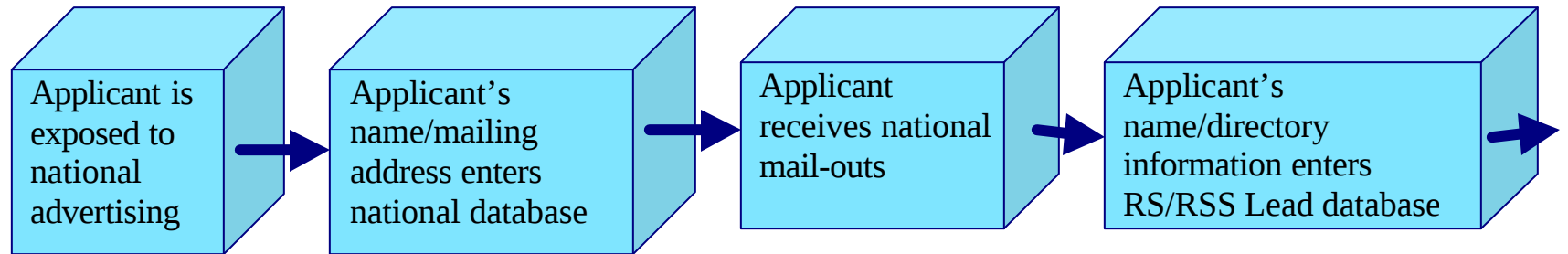
delayed entry pool (DEP.) These delayed entry “poolees” prepare for shipping to recruit training by attending periodic pool functions and working closely with their recruiters, and their immediate supervisor, the NCOICs. The poolee then ships to boot camp, completes training, graduates, and returns home for ten days of “boot-leave.” Prior to or following additional training at the School of Infantry, the new Marine may participate in several additional recruiting programs as part of the command recruiting program. The Marine then completes their enlistment, however long it is, and either EAS’s or retires. If the now former Marine returns home, they may become a local contact for the recruiter currently servicing the area they reside, thus completing the cycle.

A strategic training vision can be based on this enlistment cycle. In developing a strategic vision, “a good place to start is with some fundamental judgments about the nature of your customer.”¹⁸ A vision can be set, then, based on an understanding of the customer, or in the recruiter’s case, the applicant and the recruiting forces relationship to their situation. Once this understanding is obtained, the recruiting force can work to optimize each step where the force interacts with the applicant. This concept is the essence of the applicant-based training model.

This model represents a series of interconnected events viewed from the perspective of the individual applicant, broken down and grouped into four distinct phases. Once the phases are broken down and described, the key billets at the Recruiting Sub-Station and Recruiting Station are listed with each phase. Their specific actions are explained for each billet, step-by-step, for each phase. Thus a very clear picture of “who does what and when” is visually depicted over the next few pages.

¹⁸ Rackham, 257

Phase I Actions



Recruiter

Collect Junior/Senior Lists-forward to NCOIC/RS

NCOIC

Train recruiters on HS/CC Program, Monitor list attainment for each Recruiter, Ensure all lists are attained and forwarded to RS

Construct RSS Lead database, Manage PPC "Coming of Age" leads

CO

XO

Train NCOICs/ Command Group on HS/CC Program, National Advertising Program, collect lists- forward to District, Manage RS lead Database, ensure RS/RSS structures are sound

OpsO

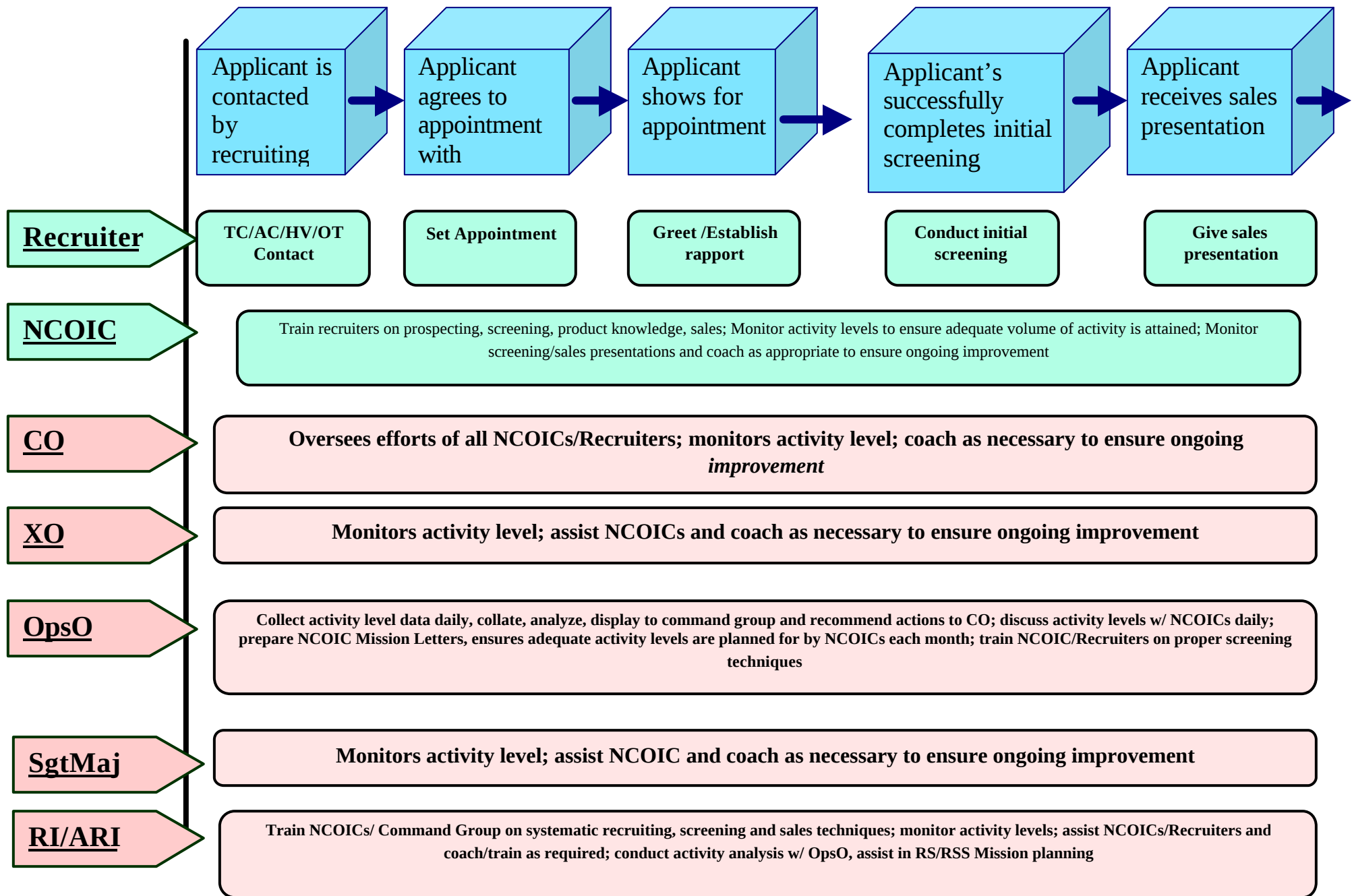
Train NCOICs/ Command Group on Priority Prospect Card (PPC) Program

SgtMaj

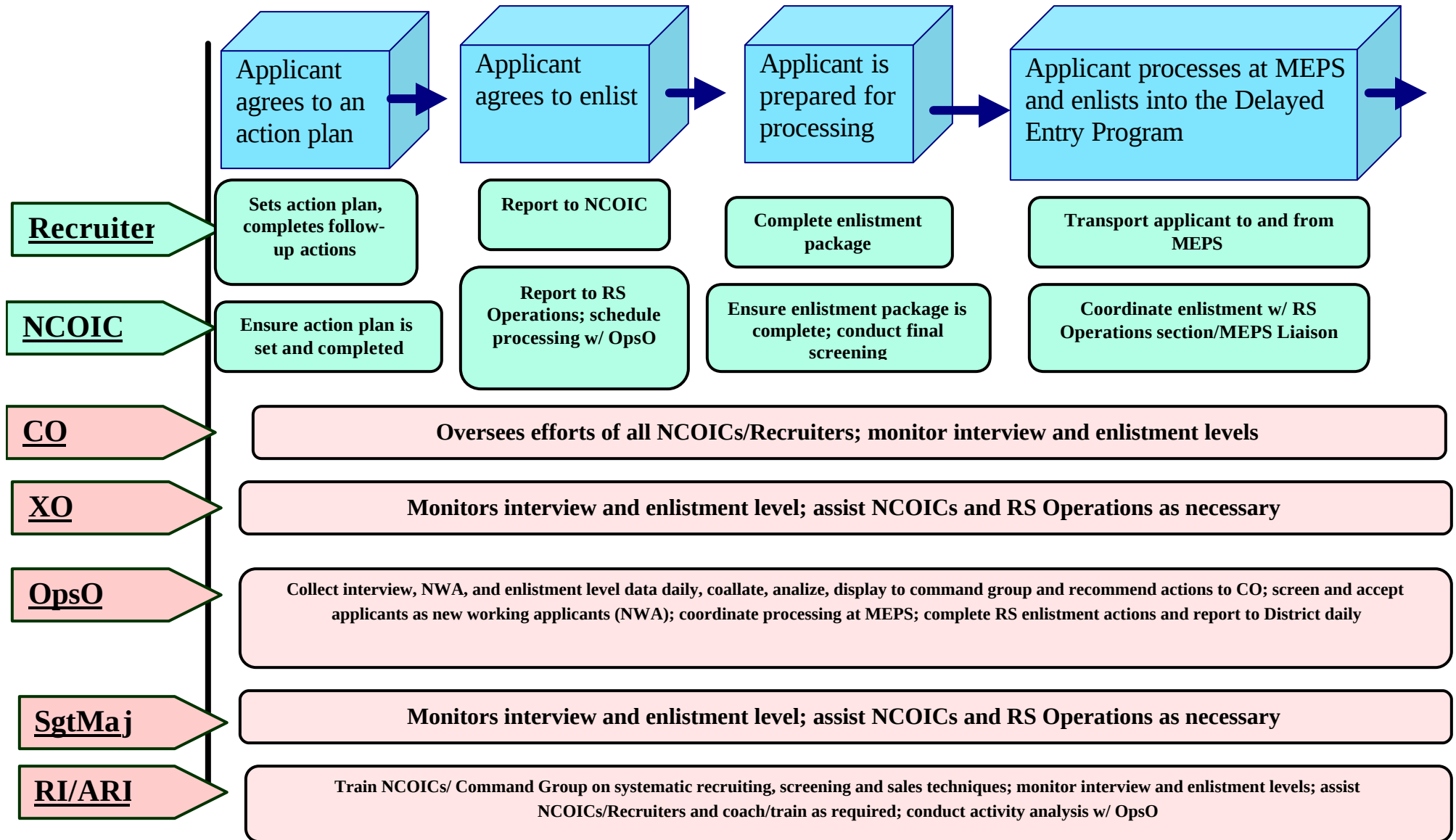
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Train NCOICs/ Command Group on HS/CC, PPC Program

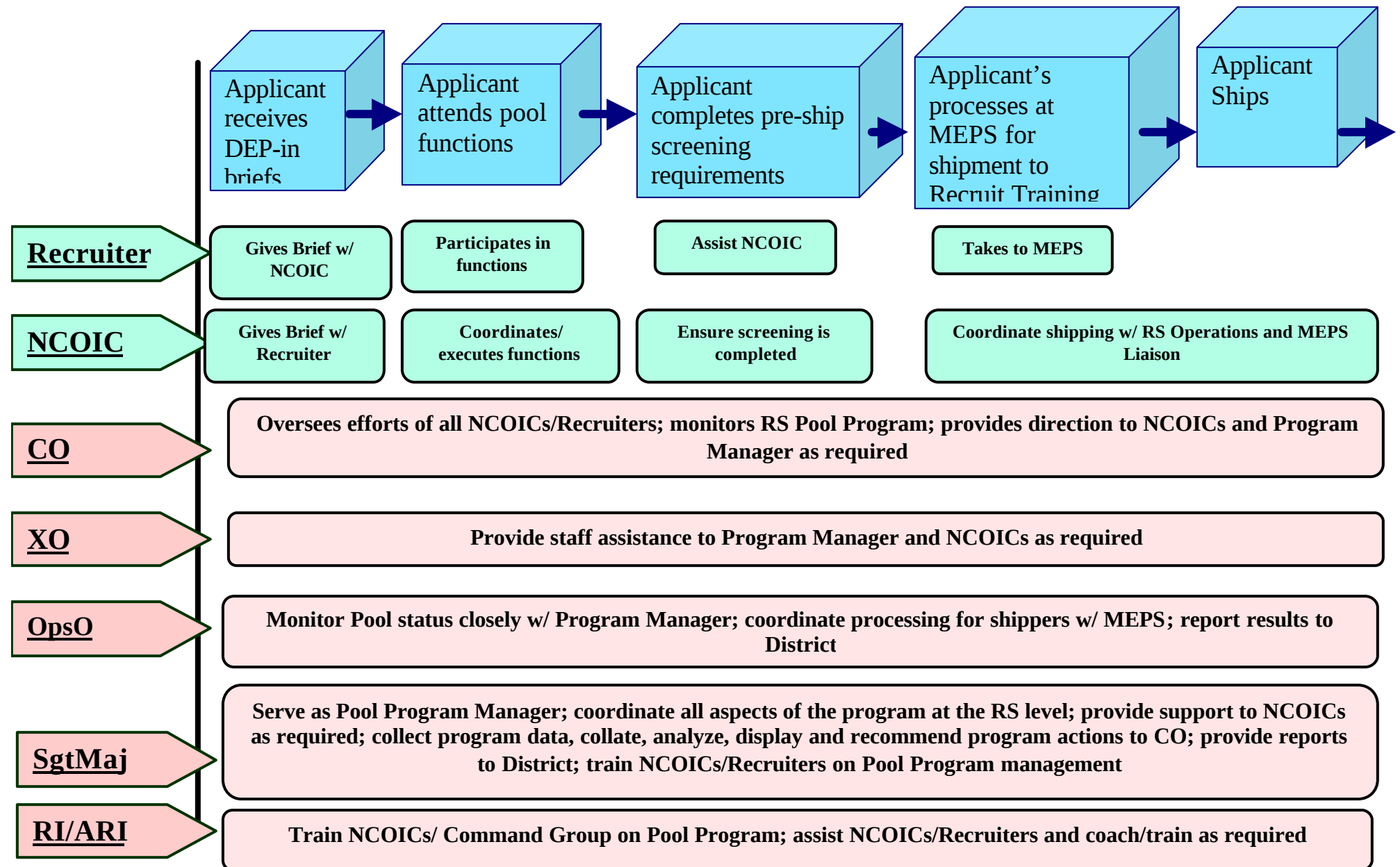
Phase II Actions



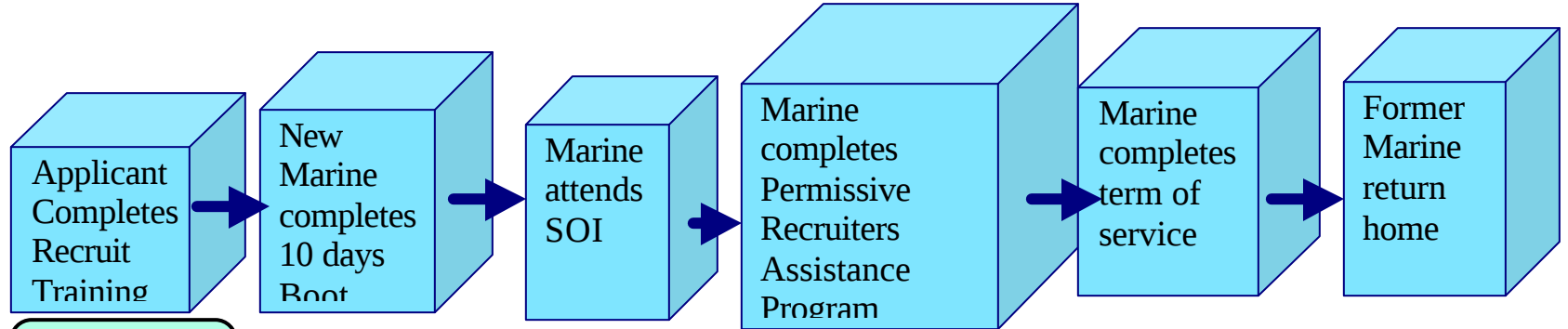
Phase II Actions (cont)



Phase III Actions



Phase IV Actions



Recruiter

Write letters/Contact family

Write letters; work with at RSS; continue to contact family;

NCOIC

Monitors status

Trains and coordinates actions

Ensure contact is maintained w/ recruiter; monitor and coordinate RSS Command Recruiting Program; ensure select former Marines are listed as local contacts in RSS system

CO

Oversees efforts of all NCOICs/Recruiters; monitors RS Command Recruiting Program; provides direction to NCOICs and Program Manager as required

XO

Provide staff assistance to Program Manager and NCOICs as required

OpsO

Monitor MCRD attrition; assist Program Manager as required

SgtMaj

Serve as Pool Program Manager; coordinate all aspects of the program at the RS level; provide support to NCOICs as required; collect program data, collate, analyze, display and recommend program actions to CO; provide reports to District; train NCOICs/Recruiters on Command Recruiting Program management

RI/ARI

Train NCOICs/ Command Group on Command recruiting Program; assist NCOICs/Recruiters and coach/train as required

Analyzing recruiting from the point of view of the customer/applicant is the genesis for developing the applicant based training model. Optimizing each interaction with each applicant is the key to success, not only in terms of mission attainment, but also in terms of creating an atmosphere of ongoing improvement within each RSS and the RS as a whole. “One starting point for thinking about the different ways that sales forces can create value for customers is to look at the different points in the buying process where a sales force can potentially add value.”¹⁹

Individual recruiters of the RSS’s operating under RS’s can be trained and evaluated in terms of the four phases of applicant based training model. Once the force understands the phases and has determined their action to make the process happen, they can then be trained to the specific skills required.

An analysis of the actions required by the key billet holders listed in the model is useful for several reasons. First, the analysis will help define the proper proportion of training each individual billet needs. For example, not every billet holder will require the same level of knowledge and proficiency for selling skills, RS operations, or the command recruiting program. Everyone needs to understand the entire process, of course, but certain billets demand special emphasis in specific phases. Next, an analysis will help determine recommendations for change, based on current training practices and training requirements. The last two sections of this paper, therefore, will provide this analysis and corresponding conclusions and recommendations.

¹⁹ Rackham, 67

The Recruiter

The recruiter's role in the process spans the entire lifecycle of the enlistment but is more focused in Phases I and II. This focus validates the current recruiter's primary responsibility, as described in Volume I, of prospecting and selling. In phase I, the recruiter performs the vital function of working within the RSS High School/Community College program to establish and maintain a productive relationship with school administrators and educators. By developing this rapport, the recruiter serves to help build the foundation for the remaining phases, namely construction of the RSS lead database. The lead database, comprising the names and directory information of all juniors and seniors in their respective high schools, as well as select individuals attending community colleges, is critical to optimizing Phase II actions. Simply put, the recruiter obtains the lists of students in his schools as early in the process as possible, and the remainder of the process flows from these actions.

During Phase II, the recruiter attempts to contact each student from the lead data base, screens them and attempts to set appointments with each basically screened student. Students who show for these appointments are further screened and given a sales presentation, after which an action plan is set, hopefully leading to the applicant's enlistment. Obviously, the focus for training requirements in this phase are centered on interpersonal communications skills, selling skills, and knowledge of the product (the Marine Corps), as well as an understanding of the enlistment process and criteria for qualification in various programs. Additionally, recruiters must possess the ability to

create rapport-- very quickly in many cases-- with the variety of people they come into contact with on a daily basis. This skill could be seen as something different from interpersonal communication and selling skills, in that rapport is essential to developing and maintaining relationships across the entire spectrum of the recruiting process, and is in fact more important than the other two skill sets. Rapport skills serve then, as the enabler to selling skills.

Training requirements for recruiters in Phases III and IV should be based on actions they take during Phase II. Specifically, recruiters who are capable of optimizing actions in Phase II normally will find Phases III and IV actions naturally flow from the relationship built during previous phases. In other words, if recruiters are doing everything right in Phase II, Phases' III and IV are relatively easy to accomplish and optimize. Training the individual recruiters must focus on communications skills as outlined above, combined with requisite knowledge of the Marine Corps and enlistment criteria.

The NCOIC

Individually, the NCOIC is the most important billet in the Recruiting Station. In relation to the model, this billet performs a number of critical functions that prove this statement. First, the NCOIC is responsible for direct supervision of the recruiters who are actually in contact with the applicants. As such, the NCOICs assign missions, train, and coordinate the recruiter's actions primarily during Phases I and II. During Phases III and IV, the NCOIC, using the RSS system, controls both phases to a greater degree than

any other member of the RS. The model, as a whole, demonstrates that NCOICs are involved in-depth during each phase, and within the phases in nearly every step. When evaluated against the model, it is clear that this billet has greater impact in optimizing each key interaction between the applicants and the recruiting force personnel than any other billet. They control the enlistment life cycle within their respective RSS and are in fact responsible for the mission attained of their recruiters. Indeed, the recruiting system centers on the RSS system, as controlled by the NCOIC.

Given the importance of the role of the NCOIC as outlined above, the most striking thing from the analysis of the training requirements based on the applicant model when compared to actual training requirements is this: it is a paradox that the most important billet in the Recruiting Station actually receives the least amount of formal training. An argument could be made that since all NCOICs have been recruiters, they in fact have received 5 weeks of training at the Basic Recruiters Course in addition to their formal NCOIC training. Formal recruiter training, while complementary, is not a substitute for less extensive NCOIC training. The focus is different for each course because the training is designed for two distinct billets. That is to say, NCOICs are not simply enhanced canvassing recruiters, but are individuals who are required to perform a set of tasks not trained to at the Basic Recruiters Course. The level of responsibility required of NCOICs in terms of leadership abilities is also significantly different from a canvassing recruiter. Whereas a recruiter is responsible for their own actions in terms of recruiting activities, NCOICs are responsible for ensuring the actions of all the recruiters assigned to them, with respect to activity and mission attainment will, collectively, lead to mission

attainment for the RSS as a whole. Therefore, when evaluating the amount of training required vs. the amount they currently receive, it becomes evident that NCOICs are literally "at the short end of the stick." The following figure illustrates this point:

<u>Billet</u>	<u>Required Formal Training Courses</u>	<u>Course Length</u>	<u>Course Focus</u>
Recruiter	Basic Recruiter Course	5 Weeks	Prospecting, Sales, Product Knowledge
NCOIC	District NCOIC Course	1 Week	RSS System, Coaching, Program Management RSS Structure Recruiter Training
Career Recruiter	Career Recruiter Course	5 Weeks	RSS Operations RS Operations Enhanced Training Time Management Advanced Sales Trng
Command Group (excluding RI/ARI)	Recruiting Leaders Course	2 Weeks	RSS System RS Operations Program Management Billet Specific Trng
RI/ARI	Recruiter Instructors Course	2 Weeks	Advanced Trng Techniques RS Operations

As shown above, NCOICs are currently required to attend a one-week training course conducted by the six recruiting districts. The Marine directs the course material

Corps Recruiting Command training section, but each district runs their courses in different manners. Several of the districts run a ten-day course, and each district, based on the uniqueness of each command, have customized some of the course material. Given the amount of information and skills the NCOICs are required to master in order to perform the wide variety of duties expected of them, it would be difficult for one to say that the NCOICs do not need any additional formal training on top of the current 1 week course. Accordingly, adequate formal training for the NCOICs is the critical shortfall in the current recruiting system in light of the applicant based model. In order to optimize each action within each phase, NCOICs need more formal training, with the emphasis being on the RSS system, systematic recruiting, training and coaching recruiters.

The RS Commanding Officer

With respect to the training model, the CO oversees and directs the efforts of the command group and NCOICs. Like other members of the command group, the CO must understand the recruiting process in terms of the RSS system and RS level operations, as well as program management. The CO must also possess strong interpersonal relationship and creative problem solving skills in order to coordinate and control the efforts of the people they work with.

The RS CO, along with the other command group members, must also have an understanding of the district level operations. At the recruiting districts there are functions performed that help guide and support the billet holders at the RSSs and RSs in the performance of their duties. For example, the district operations section develops the annual plan for mission requirements each year and subsequently monitors mission

attainment in each RS as the year unfolds. Obviously, the CO needs to have an appreciation of this process. All of the districts provide this type of training through district orientation courses.

The Executive Officer

The single most important actions the XO performs within the applicant process fall into Phase I. As the manager of the High School/Community College Program, the XO provides supervision over all Phase I actions. The XO provides direction to the NCOICs regarding these areas and also coordinates support for the NCOICs, both internally and externally with the district staff. As Phase I actions literally build the foundation for optimizing Phases II, III, and IV, the XO's single most important responsibilities in the Recruiting Station revolve around actions taken during Phase I.

Within the management of the High School/Community College Program resides the responsibility to guide and track attainment of prospecting data, namely lists of high school and community college students containing their directory information. This information serves as the "lead database," which is literally a collection of names and corresponding addresses or phone numbers. This database provides recruiters with lists of potential applicants to prospect (see Phase II actions.) The database also serves as the foundation for the direct mail-out advertising program. The lists of names are submitted from the RS to the district, and eventually become part of a national lead database. Prospecting mail-outs are then sent to each name in the database throughout the years at certain intervals. The understanding of this process by the RS XO is another critical

function that falls into the scope of their responsibility and requires specific training in marketing and advertising.

During Phases II, III and IV, the XO, along with other command group members, monitors activities and provides assistance and support to the NCOICs and other command group members as required. The XO also has numerous responsibilities in other critical areas at the RS, such as oversight of the RS budget, administration and supply sections. These other duties, while important, should be seen as secondary in nature when compared to overall management of the High School/ Community College Program and more specifically the creation and management of the RS lead database.

Training requirements for the XO, therefore, should be two fold. First and foremost, detailed training on the High School/Community College Program, list attainment procedures, and the recruiting advertising programs are vitally important to the RS as a whole, and should be the primary focus of training for this billet. Secondly, training of the entire system at the RSS level, in conjunction with an understanding of the applicant based training model presented in this paper are also necessary to ensure the XO can assist NCOICs as a “full service” command group member. These training requirements should take priority; initially, over all other training in the XO’s other functional responsibilities. Additionally, XOs need well developed rapport and interpersonal relationship skills, as they come into contact with school officials and educators to a greater extent than other command group members.

One more consideration must be discussed, namely timing for the XO’s training. In many situations at most RSs, the XOs are “fleeted” up from the Operation Officer billet

after roughly a 12-18 month period. Given this situation, the new XOs must receive a training package centering on Phase I actions either just prior to, or just after assuming the duties of the XO. Sometimes this training is viewed as not necessary because the XOs believe they have adequate knowledge and are capable of functioning as a program manager, or the training is presented to all of the XOs at a yearly billet training workshop. While both of these considerations is to a degree accurate, in order to fully optimize each action with this process with each applicant, detailed, formal, individualized training programs will certainly enhance the XO's performance during Phase I.

The Operations Officer

The Operations Officer's (or OpsO's) duties primarily involve Phase II actions, namely coordinating the actions from applicant contact to enlistment into the delayed entry program. The OpsO is also involved in Phase III, in as much as responsibilities for coordination the shipping of the pool to recruit training. Since Phase II is the largest and most complex phase, training requirements for the OpsO will certainly take longer, and the OpsO will require more training than other command group members. Phase II actions involve the collection and analysis a large amount of data at the command group level, therefore, analysis skills are vitally important to the OpsO billet. Additionally, most of the metrics used to measure effectiveness of the recruiting effort are found in Phase II, requiring the OpsO to understand the linkage between activities and how one action within the phase relates to all other actions.

Not only do the OpsOs require the ability to coordinate each action, they also need

interpersonal relationship skills to communicate effectively with NCOICs, command group members, and district staff personnel. Indeed, they are at the “hub” of all information, and will spend a great deal of time “on the phone” either collecting information or disseminating it out to the field or district staff.

As the coordinator of information, OpsOs also need the understanding of the other phases, and specifically of Phase III. Phase III involves actions of the applicant while in the delayed entry program up to and including shipping to recruit training. In this respect, coordination within this phase requires close contact with the pool program manager, the RS Sergeant Major and their primary assistant, the program specialist.

The Sergeant Major

The most important command group members for two of the four phases, Phase III and IV, are the RS SgtsMaj. As the program manager for the Pool and the Command Recruiting Program, their actions are critically important to optimizing the success from Phases I and II. Their responsibilities require detailed knowledge of both programs and an understanding of the process as a whole. Indeed, the SgtsMaj role in Phases III and IV are just as important as the XOs role in Phase I and the OpsOs role in Phase II.

The SgtsMaj, like the XOs, also perform duties associated with non-recruiting issues, mainly those issues revolving on their responsibility as the senior enlisted Marines in the RS. These duties, while important, are also secondary in nature when compared to the actions required to optimize Phase III and IV. The SgtsMaj have an assistant to help coordinate both of these programs, the Programs Specialist. The Programs Specialist’s duties are outlined in Volume III, and are centered on the collection of data for the

SgtsMaj and providing assistance to the NCOICs. The Programs Specialists are neither command group members, nor do they assist with the other programs. Their focus are the Pool and Command Recruiting Programs. While the assistance they provide is valuable, their functions compliment the SgtsMaj actions, without replacing them. The danger in having a dedicated assistant performing in this capacity (note the other program managers, the XO and OpsO do not have dedicated program assistants) is that SgtsMaj may be less involved in their programs as a result. In other words, running the programs that are vital to Phases III and IV cannot be left up to a non-command group member. Training for the SgtsMaj, therefore, must initially focus on recruiting basics and, in a more detailed manner, the Pool and Command Recruiting Programs.

The Recruiter Instructor/Assistant Recruiter Instructor

The RI/ARI serve as the primary trainers at the RS level. They train both NCOICs and command group members on all aspects of recruiting. Obviously, the over-all success of the recruiting station can be directly attributable to the quality of training provided by the RI/ARI within the framework of the applicant based training model. They are required to be experts on each action, in each phase and must be capable of training recruiters, NCOICs and command group members to standard. They must be masters of the recruiting system and masters of the variety of interpersonal relationship and selling skills at the recruiter, RSS and RS level.

Since the RIs/ARIs are not burdened with the responsibilities of the program managers or, like the XOs and SgtsMaj, have significant non-recruiting type duties, they are free to focus exclusively on the recruiting process and therefore serve to oversee all

aspects of recruiting at the RS and RSS level. Clearly then, they can be seen as the “glue” that holds the entire process together at each level, and their importance can not be overstated.

RI/ARIs need to be the most highly trained members of the command group, and in most instances they are. The RI and ARI are usually among the best, if not the best career recruiters in the RS. As such they have had the most formal training (Basic Recruiters Course, NCOIC Course, Career Recruiters Course) of any command group member. This is both appropriate and necessary.

In relation to the process described, the RI/ARI are primarily trainers, advisors and troubleshooters rather than an accountability tool wielded by the command group. Moreover, the RI/ARI would not be used in the capacity of the “hammer,” but would provide the RS with a wide range of other “tools” to help facilitate success of each RSS. In this respect, the RIs/ARIs must be fluent in a variety of the skills packages provided by Achieved Global, and more importantly must believe in their validity.

Conclusions/Recommendations

The Applicant- Based Training Model represents a different but highly effective method one can use to evaluate and prioritize training requirements for key members of RSSs and RS. The following paragraphs offer general conclusions and recommendations for each billet.

Canvassing Recruiters:

Recruiter training must be focused primarily in the areas of communications and selling skills, along with product knowledge and enlistment criteria knowledge.

Recruiters School should provide a solid foundation in these critical areas, but the training they receive must be followed-up by reinforcement and application training at the RS and RSS. Training packages that facilitate this follow-up and that can be trained to by the command group members would be of great use for the recruiting force. At the RS level, recruiters currently receive Proficiency and Review (PAR) training soon after they arrive at their RSS. This training is critical in providing a basic review of recruiters school information; conducting it well is of utmost importance to the RS command group. Additionally, new recruiters also already receive sales application training, provided in modules by the RI/ARI. Other modules could be developed for areas such as advanced rapport techniques, or optimization of actions taken by recruiters while they are working with applicants in the Pool and Command Recruiting Program. Overall, the applicant based training model validates training for recruiters. Due to the geographical dispersion of the RSSs, distance learning initiatives could help support this type of training effort. Canvassing recruiter's should have an understanding and an appreciation for the customer based approach outlined above.

NCOICs:

An analysis of the applicant based training model indicates that NCOICs might need an expanded formal training course. If the goal of the force is to optimize the process with each applicant by making each interaction between the recruiting force and the applicant positive and productive, the required training NCOIC now receive is somewhat

inadequate. As described earlier, NCOIC are the key to process and are involved in-depth during each step of the enlistment cycle, serving in effect, as the “sales supervisors.”

“Mediocre sales supervisors can hurt an other wise good sales force...Therefore, efforts to improve the performance of the sales force are likely to be ineffective unless first-line supervisors are an integral part.”²⁰ The first steps to realizing the benefits of this training model begin with a commitment to better train the NCOIC’s through a more extensive formal course.

Command Group Members:

All command group members must possess a working knowledge of the entire process first, only then should they receive more specific, focused training in their required functional areas. Additionally, command group members must collectively and individually have well trained analytical and problem solving skills, as they will continuously serve as “trouble shooters” for the RSS’s. Therefore, all command group members’ would need a similar training package that would serve as the foundation for further, tailored packages. Following this initial training command group members would be broken out into separate groups and receive billet specific training as follows:

CO:

The CO’s billet, owing to the unique nature of military recruiting, more closely resembles that of general manager vice a “sales.” Therefore, the focus of training should include leadership case studies, an enhanced coaching package, organizational management training. In short, executive-level type training packages. Planning skills are

²⁰ Rackham, 21

also essential, as the COs develop their own annual plans. A modified version of the Marine Corps Planning Process (MCP) might be useful and serve this purpose.

XO:

Phase I actions require the XO to have thorough knowledge of the High School/Community College Program and procedures for processing lists and creation of the RS and RSS lead databases. XOs also need a similar training package that provides information on advertising, from the national level all the way down to actions at the RSS. The XOs functions in Phase I require a solid working knowledge of marketing and advertising.

OpsO:

Phase II actions require the OpsO receive advanced training in data management and analysis, as well enlistment criteria and procedures. As OpsOs fleet-up to serve as XOs, the training packages described above should be required to prepare them for responsibilities regarding the High School/Community College Program and the advertising planning.

SgtMaj:

Phase III and IV actions require the SgtMaj to receive an extensive training package for both the Pool and Command Recruiting Programs. The SgtMaj should also be trained with respect to the duties of the program specialist.

RI/ARI:

Both RI/ARI must continue to receive advanced training across the entire spectrum of the process.

SUMMARY

The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country.

Abraham Lincoln
Annual Message to Congress, 1 Dec 1862

The critical nature of recruiting requires equally critical analysis and a certain amount of “thinking outside the box.” Civilian business practices have value, and can be used to help build processes for the recruiting service, realizing that all sales forces share similar characteristics. The current focus on meeting and exceeding customers expectations is a concept that can be directly applied to help craft a strategic vision for training within the Marine Corps Recruiting Command. The applicant based training model developed in this paper is an attempt to make this connection.

Numerous conclusions can be drawn from the analysis of this model, some of which are outlined above. Other conclusions will surface over time with more analysis and refinement of the model. The scope of this paper was not to provide a panacea for recruiting training, but simply to begin a dialogue regarding how one might determine training requirements and their proportionality.

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