



**GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING
A RECRUITMENT PLAN FOR
PRESS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS
OFFICERS**



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AUTHOR:

This document was prepared by:

SIMONA-MIRELA MICULESCU

Senior Consultant

Social Safety Net and Pension Reform

BearingPoint

USAID-Funded Economic Governance II Project

Baghdad, Iraq

Tel: +964 7901 919 479

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1. Introduction

Recruiting is based upon the principles of marketing that should be standard training for all managers, irrespective of the type of organization (non-governmental or governmental). A recruitment plan will not only clearly define key messages, but will also lead to greater job-matching success.

The goal of any recruitment plan should be the identification of three key elements: Motivation, Message(s) and Medium.

One of the best definitions for *Recruitment* is “a set of planned activities designed to positively influence the perceptions and choices of individuals and organizations”. Developing a recruitment plan should be a team effort. Senior team members and co-workers need to be invited to share their insights and ideas in the development of a recruitment plan.

Two words in the definition that need to be noted – “planned activities”. A successful and effective recruitment effort will not happen by accident. Work is involved.

A recruitment plan should be developed because it is one of the most important tools managers can develop.

2. The Outline of a Recruitment Plan

When faced with the constraints of unavoidable bureaucracy, we have to find inspiration in the words of Helen Shulman – “Every situation, properly perceived, becomes an opportunity”.

Recruitment is steeped in the principles for marketing, which do not differ greatly whether you are affiliated with a nonprofit, government agency, or private business.

The basic tenet a manager follows when developing a recruitment plan can best be summed up in the age old adage: “Plan the work and work the plan”.

A recruitment plan encompasses five major sections:

1. Executive Summary
2. Situation Analysis
3. Recruitment Strategy
4. Financials
5. Controls

A recruitment plan with its planned activities provides a manager with a road map to ensure a greater opportunity for success. Environmental factors and influencers are constantly in a state of change.

A recruitment plan should be continuously reviewed, updated and revised according to the current situation or community.

3. Situation Analysis Competition

The second section of a recruitment plan contains information on the current state of the community in which the ministry operates.

A situation analysis can include:

1. Profile Summary
2. S.W.O.T. Analysis
3. Services
4. Keys to Success
5. Critical Issues

The Profile Summary summarizes information on the demographics, needs, trends and growth of the ministry staff. The focus is on the present and near future. A recruitment plan differs from a strategic plan with a shorter “use by” date.

S.W.O.T. stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Strengths and weaknesses are internal factors impacting a ministry, while opportunities and threats are external factors.

4. Developing a Recruitment Plan

For the purpose of developing a recruitment plan I would recommend that the financial section should focus only on expense forecast including a projected budget. Do not be afraid to address financials when developing a recruitment plan. Being knowledgeable on projected financial considerations will shed a new light of respect on both the plan and yourself.

The last section of a recruitment plan identifies factors that control the plan. Controls ensure the implementation of the plan proceeds and its course can be corrected when needed. A timeline or implementation milestones must be identified. When developing a timeline do not forget to include for every activity: start and end dates, budget considerations and assigned party responsible.

Contingency Planning identifies difficulties, risks and worse case scenarios that may develop or occur during the plan's implementation. This section provides the "back door" option should the plan need to be changed.

Evaluating a recruitment plan should be an ongoing activity with a thorough debriefing occurring no later than two weeks following the last implementation milestone.

A recruitment strategy section can include:

1. Mission Statement
2. Recruitment Objectives
3. Financial Objectives
4. Target Audiences
5. Promotion Mix
6. Research

The mission statement pertains to the one of the ministry. Recruitment objects are the desired outcomes of the plan – be specific and quantifiable. Financial objectives come into play when funding is required to support a specific program (materials, supplies...). Target Audiences ensure the plan will not succumb to the common pitfall of trying to be everything to everyone. Recruitment efforts need to be focused, specific and targeted. The Promotion Mix refers to mediums (presentations, Internet...) that will support the plan.

Research methodology will also need to be clearly defined.

Recruitment activities provide target audiences the opportunity to match their needs and priorities with the needs and priorities of the organization. Job-matching needs to be flexible to adapt to the changing interests and needs of the staff and priorities of the organization.

A recruitment plan will be successful only if the staff and organization are prepared and receptive to welcoming press and public affairs officers. It is the actions and behavior of staff members that will keep the doors open.

Recruitment materials are an extension of the programs and organizations. First impressions do count. Regional, governorate and national offices are valuable resources. Recruitment and promotion materials must adhere to all production and design guidelines. Colleagues need to advise and review content and design of promotion materials.

5. Samples of Job Descriptions

The following would be suggestions of job descriptions for the main positions in the Press and Public Affairs area within MOLSA:

Public Affairs Officer

Responsibilities

Within limits of delegated authority, the Public Affairs Officer may be responsible for the following duties: Take the lead in strategic planning, development and implementation of large, complex communications campaigns; Work with other

components of the ministry to develop ways to implement information campaigns; Provide advice and expertise to senior ministry staff and other public information staff on a range of public affairs issues, methods, and approaches; Anticipate and resolve communications/public relations issues/problems; Develop strategic partnerships with key constituencies to elicit support for and maximize impact of promotional objectives; Serve as a liaison to media organizations, other governmental bodies, national groups, private sector organizations, educational organizations, international organizations, etc. Prepare or oversee preparation of a diverse range of information communications products in support of major campaign initiatives; Draft or oversee the drafting of written communications prepared by junior officers; Evaluate results and impact of communications activities; report on developments, trends and attitudes regarding MOLSA; Represent the ministry in meetings and conferences; Organize media coverage and arrange for media contacts, briefings, interviews; Organize seminars, lectures, conferences, public events on major issues and events concerning MOLSA; Build information networks; Plan and develop outreach activities; Manage publications programs; Produce materials for Press and Public Affairs Department to include participating in coordination of substantive and administrative activities of the unit, interpreting and disseminating policy, providing procedural advice, improving reporting systems, handling operational and administrative queries; May coordinate and direct a team of public affairs staff and/or mentor and supervise the work of junior officers on specific projects.

Competencies

Professionalism - State-of-the-art knowledge in the field of communications and public affairs and ability to address a range of issues related to MOLSA information requirements, including taking the lead on major public information campaigns; substantial and diverse experience in all facets of communications and public affairs, and proven ability to conceptualize, design and implement major campaigns; in-depth knowledge of political trends, public attitudes, local conditions and developments, and ability to assess effectively, the climate for successfully achieving agreed objectives; in-depth understanding of MOLSA, organization and interrelationships; strong communications research and analytical skills, and ability to rapidly analyze and integrate diverse information from varied sources; ability to copy edit; highly developed communication (spoken, written, public speaking and presentational) skills, including ability to present sensitive issues/positions;

demonstrated ability in pro-active media relations; technology awareness - fully proficient computer skills and use of relevant software and other applications, e.g. word processing, PowerPoint or equivalent, graphics software, internal databases, Internet, etc. ; communication - highly developed communication (spoken, written, public speaking and presentational) skills, including ability to present sensitive issues/positions; demonstrated ability in pro-active media relations; teamwork - excellent interpersonal skills and ability to establish and maintain effective working relations in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic environment with sensitivity and respect for diversity.

Qualifications

Education

Advanced university degree in communications, journalism, public relations or other related field, or equivalent.

Work Experience

Minimum of five years of progressively responsible professional experience in journalism, communications or public relations.

Languages

Fluency in written and spoken English is an advantage.

Spokesperson/Senior Press Advisor to the Minister

Responsibilities

The incumbent acts as the Spokesperson for MOLSA, assisting the minister for labor and social affairs with all media relations and policies, including development of media strategy; Analyzes developments in-house and internationally in relation to the work of the minister; Establishes and manages media operation in MOLSA; Drafts press releases, statements, news summaries and speeches; Reviews all relevant media coverage nationally and internationally and ensures information flow within MOLSA; Conducts regular briefings to the press and other groups; Evaluates and recommends interviews to the minister; Evaluates press policies in light of security requirements and makes recommendations to the minister; Liaises and assists the Press and Public Affairs Department of MOLSA on issues of common interest and maintains and improves contacts with the media.

Competencies

- **Professionalism** - State-of-the-art knowledge in the field of communications and public affairs and ability to address a range of issues related to MOLSA information requirements, including taking the lead on major public information campaigns; substantial and diverse experience in all facets of communications and public affairs, and proven ability to conceptualize, design and implement public relations efforts; in-depth knowledge of political trends, public attitudes, local conditions and developments in the country, region and internationally, and ability to assess effectively, the climate for successfully achieving agreed objectives; in-depth understanding of the MOLSA system, organization and interrelationships; strong communication research and analytical skills, and ability to rapidly analyze and integrate diverse information from varied sources; seasoned ability to develop communication products for local, regional and national audiences; ability to copy edit.
- **Judgment** - Discretion and sound judgment in applying expertise to complex and/or sensitive issues, which are typically broad in scope.
- **Leadership** - Strong negotiating skills and ability to influence others to reach agreement; ability to supervise, coach, mentor and develop staff.
- **Planning and organizing** - Demonstrates planning and organizational skills and ability to coordinate the work of others, work to tight deadlines and handle multiple concurrent projects/activities.
- **Technology Awareness** — Fully proficient computer skills and use of relevant software and other applications, e.g. word processing, PowerPoint or equivalent, graphics software, internal databases, Internet, etc.
- **Communication** — Highly developed communication (spoken, written, public speaking and presentational) skills, including ability to present sensitive issues/positions; demonstrates ability in pro-active media relations.
- **Teamwork** — Excellent interpersonal skills and ability to establish and maintain effective working relations in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic environment with sensitivity and respect for diversity.

Qualifications

Education

Advanced university degree in communications, journalism, public relations or other related field, or equivalent combination of education and experience.

Work Experience

Minimum of 10 years of progressively responsible professional experience in journalism, communications or public relations.

Languages

Fluency in written and spoken English can be an advantage.

Director General, Press and Public Affairs Department

Responsibilities

Within the delegated authority, the Director General of the Press and Public Affairs Department will be responsible for: Formulating and implementing the substantive work program of the department, overseeing the management of activities undertaken by the department, ensuring that programmed activities are carried out in a timely fashion that ensures the success of the operational and strategic goals of MOLSA; coordinating work in the different areas both within the department, with the ministry as a whole, and with other organizations of the social system, as appropriate; Leading, supervising and carrying out the work program of the department; Ensuring that the outputs produced maintain high-quality standards; that reports are clear, objective and based on comprehensive data; ensuring that all outputs produced by the department meet required standards before completion to ensure they comply with the relevant mandates; Managing, guiding, developing and training staff under his/her supervision; Fostering teamwork and communication among staff in the department and across organizational boundaries; Leading and supervising the organization of meetings, seminars, etc., on substantive-related issues; Managing the substantive preparation and organization of such meetings or seminars; Conceptualizing, designing and executing the ministry's public information strategy, program and activities in relation to different phases of the social reform process and to the operational and strategic goals of the ministry; Coordinating MOLSA's internal and external information activities in collaboration with all the senior personnel; Overseeing the department's interactions with government, nonprofit agencies, local and international media, international organizations; Maintaining working-level liaison with the Government Communication Directorate (GCD); Acting as focal point for MOLSA system-wide information activities; Supervising the work of the staff in the Press and Public Affairs Department.

Competencies

- **Professionalism:** Ability to advise on and effectively manage high profile and sensitive communications challenges where inappropriate handling creates serious risk to the institution's reputation; ability to develop and manage a sizeable public information program, and to direct others in the execution of the total program; in-depth knowledge of political trends, public attitudes, local conditions and developments, and ability to build an effective communications strategy and program based on an assessment of different communications environments and the changing strategic and operational goals of the ministry, and to adapt media campaigns with excellent promotional and publicity techniques; highly developed communication (spoken, written, public speaking and presentational) skills, including ability to present and defend difficult positions to senior officials.
- **Managing, Planning and Organizing -** Extensive experience and skill in managing high level communications with the media, NGO's, government officials, international institutions, business groups, etc.; discretion and sound judgment in applying expertise to highly complex and/or sensitive issues, which are typically broad in scope; strong negotiating skills and ability to influence others to reach agreement; proven record of building and managing teams and creating an enabling work environment, including ability to effectively lead, supervise, mentor, develop and evaluate groups of staff and design training/skills enhancement initiatives to ensure effective transfer of knowledge/skills.
- **Gender mainstreaming and Teamwork:** Ability to provide leadership and take responsibility for incorporating gender perspectives into substantive work; commitment to the goal of achieving gender balance in staffing. Excellent interpersonal skills and ability to establish and maintain effective working relations in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic environment with sensitivity and respect for diversity. Ability to lead and gain assistance of others in a team endeavour.
- **Judgment/Decision-making:** Mature judgment and initiative, imagination and resourcefulness, energy and tact; proven ability to provide strategic direction, to plan and establish priorities, and to ensure an effective work structure to maximize productivity and achieve goals.
- **Leadership:** Proven track record of excellent management and technical leadership skills and ability to delegate appropriate responsibility, accountability and decision-making environment, including the ability to effectively lead, supervise, mentor, develop and evaluate staff and design training/skills enhancement initiatives to ensure effective transfer of knowledge/skills in several aspects of communications,

including development of communication campaigns, television and radio production, website, press relations, other forms of community outreach.

Qualifications

Education

Advanced university degree (Master's or equivalent) in one or more of the following: communications, public relations or relevant disciplines such as social sciences, business administration or management. A relevant combination of academic and professional experience in the relevant discipline may be accepted in lieu of an advanced university degree.

Work Experience

At least 15 years of progressively responsible experience in public information, communication, human resource management in governmental institutions.

Languages

Fluency in oral and written English can be an advantage.

6. Recruitment Principles

There should be, within the organizational culture of MOLSA, some general principles upon which recruitments are made, such as:

- Employment of staff of the highest ability, efficiency and integrity.
- Selection on the basis of qualifications and competence.
- Under the equal opportunities international standards, MOLSA should be aiming to achieve parity in the number of women and men in each category and grade.

Actually, MOLSA should welcome applications from all suitably-qualified candidates, irrespective of gender, disability, marital or parental status, racial, ethnic or social origin, colour, religion, or belief.

Having some core values constantly promoted by the Ministry, including from the point of view of the Human Resources, would be fundamental. As an example, the United Nations Core Values are: *Integrity, Professionalism, Respect for Diversity*. A good example to follow!