As the past calendar year came to a close, the US Army faced a daunting reality that had been slowly manifesting for years. The 2018 recruiting class was 6,500 troops short, missing the year's target mark for the first time since the height of the Iraq War 13 years ago.

With this sudden decline in recruitment, it became shockingly clear that old techniques were no longer sufficient in maintaining the Army's workforce objectives. Considering these shortcomings, how can the Army and similar agencies working to provide critical capabilities, proceed in gaining a fresh perspective on modern solutions for improving their recruitment process?

At the current conversion rate, for the Army to reach its goal of 76,500 recruits, they need to have over 14 million conversations with candidates.

The challenges agencies are facing around the recruitment of younger generations are far-reaching. Currently, our economy is thriving with an exceptionally low unemployment rate and a multitude of jobs available in the private sector. This unique ease of employment makes recruitment efforts more difficult, as young adults are presented with a wide range of career choices.

In addition, there has been a large shift in the interests and capabilities of younger generations. Today, more than two-thirds of millennials don't meet the most basic military qualification standards because of poor physical fitness or illicit drug use. This can likely be traced back to today's more sedentary lifestyle, with higher interests in online activities, such as video games and social media. Matched with potentially archaic qualification standards for modern-day society, younger generations simply are not qualifying for the basic standards outlined by the Army.

Finally, most Department of Defense (DoD) agencies struggle with extremely outdated technology. Modern-day systems can improve the recruitment process so that agencies can work more efficiently. Though it's impossible to control certain trends such as economic stability or generational interests, there are a number of initiatives that agencies can undertake to supercharge their technological capabilities and create a more streamlined and effective recruitment process.

> "Many of the soldiers who enlist or become Officer candidates today will eventually become Officers that are the backbone of the Army. Therefore, missing recruiting targets two or three years in a row can significantly impact the future operational readiness of the Army."
>
> Dominick Chelli, Director
> Acumen Solutions

Unified Technology to Forge a Path from Canidate to Recruit

Today, more than ever before, the recruiting processes need to be efficient and adaptable. Recruiting teams need technology that runs at their pace, helps to streamline data entry, and can adapt based on the context of the situation. With siloed systems for enrollment, processing, and training,

the accessions process requires a multitude of repetitive and disconnected procedures. Streamlining this process to maintain a cohesive candidate profile requires addressing the disparate systems currently used by the Armed Forces and many government agencies.

With the implementation of a unified platform, recruitment processes will become collectively integrated and holistic, funneling candidates through a clear portal towards recruitment. This is essential in maintaining the speed and efficiency that recruitment teams need to meet their goals.

Mobile Capabilities for On-the-Go Recruiting Strategies

For several years, we have witnessed the massive shift of technology towards mobile integration. Our society is now constantly on the move, carrying devices that allow for uninterrupted connectivity. As this behavioral shift has taken form, however, the recruitment process for federal agencies has been slow to adopt technology with better in-the-field capabilities.

Despite the fact that recruiters are constantly outside of their offices (e.g. visiting high schools, colleges, and county fairs), the process for recording candidate profiles remains immobile. Facing this reality, recruiters have been expected to internalize information and make updates hours or even days after initial interactions with candidates. This method is undoubtedly prone to data loss and user error, costing possible recruits along the way. By mobilizing the process to feature technology capable of making updates in real-time, recruiters can eliminate mistakes and drastically expand their efficiency.

Using Data-Backed Insights

Currently, most recruitment procedures focus on hard-hitting, aggressive exposure. They market to vast audiences, focusing on widespread communications and highly variable populations. Though this method can be powerful in gaining large exposure, it can be transformed with an emphasis on data analytics.

Currently, little data-backed analysis goes into understanding prospective candidate demographics or geography. What if recruiters could understand the data points that lead to better recruits that are prone to longer tenures? By procuring an analysis on candidate tendencies, recruiters could utilize more intelligent rubrics, rather than focusing on pure manpower, to allocate their recruiting resources with more efficiency.

How to Better Recruit at Scale

For the Army, given a 0.54% retention rate for each prospective candidate, there must be 14 million face-to-face interactions for every 75,000 enlistments. The sheer scale of the issue means that adopting new strategies is critical. By implementing a unified technology platform, developing in-the-field resources, and using advanced analytics to gauge candidate quality, recruiters can work smarter, not harder.

Agencies in the Armed Forces and beyond are ready for a massive overhaul of their recruiting capabilities that can both streamline processes for candidates, as well as accelerate methods for recruiters. With the implementation of more effective cloud-computing solutions, the Army can reverse the damage of the past year and once again become competitive in recruiting top talent.

Acumen Solutions works with federal agencies to solve problems that can't be fixed by technology alone. Our solutions enable agencies to improve efficiencies that are mission-critical, such as recruiting for the Armed Forces. To learn more, contact us today at contact@acumensolutions.com.

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Clients choose Acumen Solutions for one simple reason: our experience delivers success. Joining forces with our clients, our teams of strategists, subject matter experts, and engineers solve problems that can't be fixed by technology alone. As a Salesforce Global Strategic Alliance Partner, the Fortune 500 trust us to build solutions that grow revenue and strengthen customer relationships.

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