

So you're posted to CASG – Part III

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Welcome once again back on the rollercoaster! This blog is Part III following the previous blogs Part I ([Turnbull, 2023a](#)) and Part II ([Turnbull, 2023b](#)).

Continuing from where Part II left us on a cliff-hanger, I argued that Capabilities Acquisition and Sustainment Group's (CASG) image problem exposed in Part I was why the majority of our high-flying aviators from squadron-land are not banging on the door of Brindabella Park 1(BP1) to join AIR1234, WHEVEVR-SPO¹ in delivering beer and Skittles. I alluded that marketing was the cure for these ails, so let's dig into this notion a little bit deeper.

Selling sand in the Sahara

Marketing is the activity, institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value, or in simple terms, getting people interested in your stuff. Now marketing as a general process is often viewed with a bit of cynicism: we have all seen the ads for negative-ion, weightless 'astronaut position' massage chairs with free steak knives and a magic folding ladder—amazing! And yes, CASG could turn on the snake-oil sales charm and entice interest in the organisation with over-the-top assurances of water parks on every rooftop and fluffy bunnies roaming the corridors. Still, the people CASG are looking to engage with probably do not own massage chairs or magic ladders and are not likely to buy into gimmicky promises, no matter how cute those bunnies are. Fundamentally, there are two critical components to marketing, and they are not (1) free steak knives or (2) fluffy bunnies.

The first cab off the marketing rank is understanding and communicating the **value**² that an organisation offers. For CASG, their value is providing to war fighters the very best beer and Skittles we can afford—all day, every day—and this is the clear message that needs to be on every marketing billboard and recruiting poster. In the air domain context, 'We Get Air Power Capability', remember—raison d'être to acquire it, sustain it, project manage it, asset manage it, enable it and understand it! Fundamentally, acquiring and sustaining the Defence equipment our war fighters need so they can confidently undertake their roles and responsibilities is the sole purpose of CASG, and this **value** needs to be communicated and promoted at every opportunity (without the steak knives, though).

The second key marketing component is knowing and understanding your target audience—whom do you want to be interested in your stuff? In the context of CASG, two distinct audiences need attention: internal and external. The internal audience is those already in the CASG fold who need to feel loved via a strong Employee Value Proposition (EVP): the set of attributes that employees perceive as the value they gain through employment with an organisation. The external audience is those who utilise the beer and Skittles CASG provides to protect and/or break stuff with and who need to feel loved via a strong sense of trust in CASG's ability to efficiently acquire and effectively sustain the capabilities they need on the

¹ AIR1234, WHEVEVR-SPO is an example of a project description. Projects are categorised into Air, Land, Sea and Joint, followed by alphanumeric characters identifying the project and phase. WHEVEVR-SPO refers to the assigned Systems Program Office responsible for efficient and effective acquisition and in-service support.

² The regard that something is held to deserve; the importance, worth, or usefulness of something.

frontline.

Coming back to CASG's image and recruitment issue, the emphasis of where CASG needs to apply some marketing effort can, luckily, be described mathematically thus:

$$\mathbf{EVP} \mathbf{a} + \mathbf{T} \mathbf{b} = \mathbf{V}, \quad (1)$$

where, **EVP**: Employee Value Proposition; **T**: Trust; **V**: Value

In Equation (1), **a** is the numerical indicator of value felt by internal CASG personnel, and **b** is the trust felt external to CASG. Utilising this formula, we can demonstrate that positive indicators will positively affect the overall value of CASG, and negative indicators will have adverse effects. Pretty simple so far. This formula only delves into the value of CASG, though, so to tell the whole story of CASG's image problem and issues attracting high-flying aviators, we need to utilise another fantastic maths formula:

$$\mathbf{V} \mathbf{c} = \mathbf{I} + \mathbf{A}, \quad (2)$$

where, **V**: Value; **I**: Image; **A**: Attraction

In Equation (2), **c** is the numerical indicator of CASG value. This fun little formula demonstrates that positive indicators will mean positive value, which will equal a positive image and attractiveness. Again, negative indicators will have a corresponding detrimental effect on CASG's image and attractiveness. From here, you can probably guess where this leads to—putting the two formulas together, positive **EVPs** and trust generate a positive image and attractiveness; negative **EVPs** and trust generate a negative image and attractiveness.

The so what of this maths lesson is that generating positive numerical indicators is where CASG needs to spend their marketing money to influence its overall image and attractiveness. So what must CASG do to ensure the numbers remain positive? Regarding the marketing angle, two themes need to be addressed in the context of internal and external audiences: purpose and belonging—both of which we'll cover in the final Part IV instalment of this nail-biting series!

References

Turnbull, D. (2023a) So you're posted to CASG – Part I, Air/Space 2, bp33316077. Retrieved from <https://airpower.airforce.gov.au/blog/so-youre-posted-casg-part-1>

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