

# So you're posted to CASG – Part IV

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Stick with me now—we are nearly there! For those of you still with me, welcome back. This blog is Part IV following the previous blogs Part I ([Turnbull, 2023a](#)), Part II ([Turnbull, 2023b](#)) and Part III ([Turnbull, 2023c](#)).

Continuing from where [Part III](#) concluded, I argued that targeted marketing to both internal and external audiences was where Capability Acquisition and Sustainment Group (CASG) needed to apply some effort, with this articulated by a couple of formulas<sup>1, 2</sup> demonstrating that positive Employee Value Propositions (EVPs) and trust generate a positive image and attractiveness for CASG. However, negative EVPs and distrust generate a negative image and attractiveness. From this, I suggested that there are two themes that CASG need to address in the context of internal and external audiences: purpose and belonging. So let's get this done!

## What's the purpose of all this?

For the internal audience, being connected to what CASG does and delivers is central to their perception of value (EVP positive indicators). People's sense of 'service' is enhanced when they feel connected to their purpose (i.e. they feel like what they do matters). When people feel like their purpose is meaningful, they are more motivated. When people can speak to their purpose in terms of their contribution, they better understand the 'why' behind their work. The counter to this is when people do not know how they contribute and do not understand the 'why', they often lack drive and become demotivated (these are negative EVP indicators), (S. Weaver, personal communication, 2023 February 23).

For the external audience, trusting that CASG will provide their beer and Skittles when and where required is central to their perception of value (trust indicators). When people connect with an organisation's purpose, their trust is enhanced. When people feel the organisation's purpose is meaningful, they are more motivated to engage with it. When people can speak to an organisation's purpose regarding what it contributes and achieves, they understand the 'why' behind the organisation. The counter to this is when people do not know the purpose of an organisation or what it contributes; they often lack trust and are reluctant to engage with it.

## It feels good to belong

For the internal audience, a sense of identity and belonging (being happy and comfortable somewhere) underpins their perception of value (EVP positive indicators). When people know

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<sup>1</sup>  $EVP\mathbf{a} + T\mathbf{b} = V$ , EVP: Employee Value Proposition; T: Trust; V: Value;  $\mathbf{a}$  is the numerical indicator of value felt by internal CASG personnel;  $\mathbf{b}$  is the trust felt external to CASG.

<sup>2</sup>  $V\mathbf{c} = I + A$ , V: Value; I: Image; A: Attraction;  $\mathbf{c}$  is the numerical indicator of CASG value.

who they are **in** the organisation (beyond rank and position), they work **on** the organisation (making it better) and vice just **for** the organisation. When people feel they belong to a reputable organisation, they become proud to serve it and follow organisational values. When people feel safe in their environment and team, their productivity increases. The counter to this is when people feel isolated and don't know who they are in the organisation or what 'tribe' they belong to, they can quickly become disenfranchised and feel less valued (S. Weaver, personal communication, 2023 February 23).

For the external audience, a sense that CASG belongs as a critical contributor to Defence underpins their perception of value (trust positive indicators). When people fundamentally know an organisation's role and purpose, their trust improves. When people believe an organisation is a valuable contributor to a good cause, they are more motivated to engage. When people believe an organisation is meeting their needs, they identify it as working with them, not against them. The counter to this is when people feel isolated from an organisation and need to know whom it serves or where it belongs; they can quickly become disengaged and less trustworthy of the organisation. Don't believe me? Try this test with CIOG or SEG.

## The value of being valued

Back to the crux of this tirade, remember from Part III that the first essential marketing component is understanding and communicating value.

For the internal audience, a sense of worth (the level at which someone or something deserves to be valued or rated) underpins their perception of value. People who feel they contribute to an organisation serve it with distinction and pride. When people feel like an organisation values their service, they want to stay and continue to contribute. The counter to this is that when people do not feel valued, they start looking over the fence for greener pastures (i.e. better value) (S. Weaver, personal communication, 2023 February 23).

For the external audience, a sense of reputation (the general belief or opinion about an organisation) underpins their perception of value. When people feel like an organisation delivers against their requirements, they assign a high level of standing. When people feel like an organisation has a high level of standing, they are happy to be—or actively seek to be—employed within that organisation. The counter to this is when people assign an organisation a low level of standing, they are less inclined to want to work there and actively avoid it.

## The good, the bad and the unattractive

Going back to our maths formulae  $Vc = I + A$ , the overall aggregate of the value of CASG as determined by both internal and external audiences directly affects its image and attractiveness, which nicely segues us back to the original problem identified in Part I, CASG has an image problem, and most aviators don't want any part of it. I have belaboured the point that marketing both internally and externally is something that CASG needs to get on board with, specifically through promoting a solid EVP for people within CASG in concert with external marketing to build a solid reputation and pull interest to CASG—get them banging on our door as if we were Google and had slippery-dips in the office foyer.<sup>3</sup> I'll point out here, however, that CASG cannot stick their heads in the sand and make out that we are the funniest place to work outside of Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory: it's not all beer and Skittles in CASG-land regardless of the steak knives, ladders, bunnies and theme parks I am suggesting exist at this point. From one of Air Domain's brightest young minds:

*I think the perception that SPO postings [are] a second preference to [squadron] SQN postings in terms of career fulfilment is unavoidable. There's no way around the*

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<sup>3</sup> I'm currently ordering a 20 foot slide for BP1!

*office/corporate nature of the job which I think is a big part of why people want to avoid it. I think the type of person who joins Defence generally wants to seek out the more unique settings that the SQN offers. If we wanted 'office jobs,' we could just be contractors and get paid a lot more. In this sense, marketing the importance of the work that CASG delivers might not be enough to overcome the reality that you would be working in an office, without much travel, and possibly without the vibrant team environment that is a hallmark of a SQN.* (M-K. Vu, personal communication, 2023 February 24)

While it's hard to argue against the above, there are countering aspects that CASG need to focus on in the chase for a better image and high-flying cubicle owners. Marketing the stability of a CASG nine-to-five gig will attract those aviators (and their families) suffering burnout from one too many B-Shifts and back-to-back-to-back exercises in crappy locations. Likewise, the civility of a CASG cubicle for those undertaking part-time *Uni*<sup>4</sup> is attractive compared to running a laptop out of a tent whilst deployed to an undisclosed location with WiFi from 1923, not 2023 (i.e. none). There is a long list of benefits to working at CASG, and these are the areas that need marketing internally and externally to bolster CASG's image and attractiveness.

By admitting the bad, applying makeup to the unattractive and promoting the good, CASG will be well on the way to being the place that our high-flyers want to join, stay in, and return to throughout their careers. My perfect world scenario has every high-flying aviator lining up for their CASG tour instead of being dragged kicking and screaming to their AIR1234 WHTEVR-SPO<sup>5</sup> cubicle. However, deep down, I know that this is an unlikely reality. However, we can achieve selling the actual value of CASG in delivering air and space power capabilities and effects, which will entice more than enough of the SQN's best and brightest into the workforce. Oh, and if that doesn't work—free unicorns for all!

## References

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<sup>4</sup> University study

<sup>5</sup> AIR1234, WHTEVR-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. WHTEVR-SPO refers to the assigned Systems Program Office responsible for efficient and effective acquisition and in-service support.