

## EXTENDED MARKETING MIX (7PS) AND HRM RECRUITING. HOW TO SELL A JOB

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**ABSTRACT.** The need to merge marketing and human resource management gained momentum in the last two decades. The paper addresses the extended marketing mix, or the 7Ps of marketing, identifies and operationalize specific HRM components that fit this framework. Employment marketing mix (EMM) offers a framework on which, in a social constructionist manner, real and useful tools can be developed.

**Key words:** human resource management, marketing, employee branding, marketing mix, extended marketing mix, employment marketing mix.

**JEL classification:** M51, M31

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## Introduction

Companies should look at the social, political, economic, cultural and technological trends that are shaping the markets and try to position themselves accordingly (Chartered Institute of Marketing, 2009). This kind of marketing strategy started to permeate the HR recruiting strategy because of the challenges posed by recruiting the Y generation, a generation that is described by Eisner (2005, p.5) in laudatory terms, as “the most technically literate, educated, and ethnically diverse generation in the history”. In this context, companies that need valuable human resources cannot afford to wait for the candidates to come to them but they need to proactively identify them (segment the market in great detail), design a job that fits their profile (just like designing a product or services), persuade them to apply for the job (advertising), select and hire them (close the deal and make the sale) and engage them continuously (post sales and support activities). The need to merge marketing and human resource management gained momentum in the last two decades.

The relation between human resource management and marketing is not a new story, now is almost 22 years in to the marriage. Ambler and Barrow (1996) launched the connection between marketing and human resource management coining the term “*employer branding*” “...the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company” (Ambler and Barrow, 1996, p.187), a concept that infused pretty quick not only the academic environment but also the HRM practices. (Dell and Ainspan, 2001). Gradually it became generally accepted that “The labour market... has at last become a true market: wide open, uncontrolled by individual companies, and unconstrained by geography. And executives need to start treating it like a market. No longer can recruiting be viewed as a reactive, largely clerical function buried in the human resources department. It needs to be refashioned to look much more like the marketing function itself. The hiring process, after all, has become nearly indistinguishable

from the marketing process. Job candidates today need to be approached in much the same way as prospective customers: carefully identified and targeted, attracted to the company and its brand, and then sold on the job.” (Cappelli, 2001, p. 141). Reasons behind the investment in the employer branding is the fact that a good image create an inertia for the recruiting process, a continuum hands free recruiting campaign, responsible for generating candidates for the specific jobs but also spontaneous or unsolicited candidates, representing a good indicator for the power of the brand. The companies, especially on this rapid changing labour market realized the importance of proactive recruiting attitude, especially in the face of the powerful influence the generational shift exert over the demographic landscape of the labour market.

The paper addresses the extended marketing mix, or the 7Ps of marketing - identifies and starts the process of operationalizing specific HRM components that fit this framework, building on previous literature and connecting practice with literature. According to Constantinides (2006, p.407), marketing scholars should focus their efforts in formulating the conceptual foundations and marketing methodologies that better address the needs of today’s and tomorrow’s marketer. The same need applies to the specific intersection between HRM and marketing practices. The long term purpose of the paper is to develop coherent tools helpful in human resources sourcing in a more structured, efficient and sustainable manner.

## **Literature review**

The link between marketing and recruiting is quite general, covering various marketing concepts but not addressing the marketing mix. Marketing concepts were used to recruit: sports club members (McKnight et al., 2014), army employees (Dertouzos and Garber, 2006), students for doctoral programs (Holdford and Straton, 2000, Davis and

McCarthy, 2005), graduate engineers (Maurer et al., 1992). Articles that address the *specific link between marketing mix and recruitment* are hard to find. Mitchel and Taylor (2004) and Katherine et al. (2008) recommend using the theoretical framework of marketing mix (4Ps) for volunteer recruiting. Extended marketing mix (7Ps) is used by Galli et al. (2014) to facilitate people recruiting for trials in pharmaceutical industry and by Ivy (2008) in order to help recruiting MBA students in a highly competitive market.

O'Donohue & Hanson (2008), Wickham & O'Donohue (2009) seem to be the first ones that started building a sound interdisciplinary bridge between the extended marketing mix and human resource management - employee relationship. In doing so they developed a conceptual infrastructure, showing how a central tool from marketing theory and practice (extended marketing-mix or the 7P's of marketing) can be translated in to the HR practice (the management of the employment relationship). In order to reach the target of being the *employer of choice or EOC* (strategy of positioning on the labour market on a poll position, in order to attract high-quality employees) and to offer a real *employment value proposition (EVP)* or EVP (unique, specific traits embedded in to the employer brand identity, meant to set the organization apart from competitors in some meaningful way), an organization should align in a cohesive manner the extended marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion, process, people and physical evidence) with the employment practices in what authors coined, *employment marketing mix (EMM)*. This mix should be able in a more coherent way to attract, retain and motivate the targeted candidates/employees. They reframe the employment relationship as a product/service, destined to be consumed on the labour market by potential clients, and paid with their labour/skills. Reframing things like this offers a clearer view over this fuzzy domain, solves the implementation issues associated with translation of the marketing concepts in to the practice of HR and opens a canvas for useful tools development.

Marketing Mix (MM) is considered as one of the “*most important conceptual breakthroughs*” in marketing (Sheth et al. 1988) and represents the core theory of this paper. The original format of the MM was developed from McCarthy (1964) as 4 elements: Product, Price, Promotion and Place. The concept was further established by Kotler (1967) which designed a mathematical model allowing the optimal allocation of the marketing effort based on these four dimensions. Due to its simplicity and practical utility, and in spite of various critics from the academic area, the model was quickly embraced by practitioners (Constantinides, 2006). Marketing mix was extended few years later by Booms and Bittner (1980) from four to seven by adding 3 components suitable for services industry: People, Process and Physical Evidence and according to Rafiq and Ahmed (1995) accentuate the importance of this 3 new dimensions especially in the service marketing area due to the level of social interaction ignored in the previous model. So, the Extended Marketing Mix (EMM) gets 7Ps: Product, Price, Promotion, Place, People, Process and Physical Evidence.

Constantinides (2006) warns about two *major limitation of the classic Marketing Mix (4Ps): internal orientation and lack of interactivity*. Internal orientation means that the 4Ps lacks monitoring the external environment (competition) with specific attention to the frequently changing consumer behaviour and needs (trends). It is a process of innovation and adaptation necessary to respond to these challenges. Lack of personalization is based in the significant shifts in the consumer behaviour (individualization, diminishing brand preference, value orientation, increased sophistication, etc.). Technology not only reduces transaction and switching costs but also offers customers more choices, global access to products and services and new possibilities in addressing individual specific needs. The quality of the personal relationship between seller and customer and successful customer retention are becoming central. The academic contesters of the model identified a series of gaps and proposed new elements or substitute the existing one (Constantinides, 2006). Because of the multiple areas/orientations marketing developed in (consumer marketing, relationship

marketing, service marketing, e-marketing, internal marketing, etc.), the marketing mix dimensions/variables became myriad and hyper-specialized.

One such area adding new insight into the Marketing Mix is *Consumers Marketing* and the main concern is the changing nature of consumer's needs, nature and behaviour. The variables added from this area are: • political power and public opinion (encapsulating customers, environment and competition); • services and staff; • customer, competition, and corporation; • value, viability, variety, volume, and virtue; • product-performance, price-penalty, promotion-perceptions, and place-process (Kotler (1984), Doyle (1994), Ohmae (1982), Bennett (1997), Yudelson (1999) as cited by Constantinides (2006)).

Another area contributing to the Marketing Mix is *Relationship Marketing* – developed on the importance of building customer loyalty through meaningful relations. The variables added from this area are: • customer orientation 4Cs: customer needs, convenience, cost for customer and communication; • Retention Marketing Mix: product extras, reinforcing promotions, sales-force connections, specialized distributions, post-purchase communication; • dynamics of relationships, networks and interaction; • pursuit of personalization: personalization, personnel, physical assets, procedures; • information-intensive strategies: communication, customization, collaboration, and clairvoyance; • Marketing Relationship trilogy: relationship, neo-relationship marketing and networks (Lauterborn (1990), Rozenberg and Czepiel (1992), Gummesson (1994, 1997), Goldsmith (1999), Petterson and Ward (2000), Haley (2001) as cited by Constantinides (2006)).

The third area contributing to the Marketing Mix is *Services Marketing* and deals with the differences between tangibles and intangibles. Services can be seen as separated by products but also as an augmented product dimensions that helps with the differentiation. The variables added from this area are: • participants, physical evidence and process; • elements for services: concept, cost, channels, and communication; • traits needed to be considered in Marketing Mix: intangibility, inseparability,

perishability and variability; • differentiation based on market segmentation and positioning, customer contact and unique vision on quality; • critical factor is the customer experience: actors, audience, setting, performance; • price, brand, packaging, relationship (Booms and Bitner (1981), Brunner (1989), Ruston and Carson (1989), Fryar (1991), Grove et al., (2000), Backwith (2001), as cited by Constantinides (2006)).

The fourth area contributing to the Marketing Mix is *E-Marketing* and deals with the greater engagement of the businesses in online activities. The variables added from this area are: • changes that communication capabilities will bring in the Internet era: product – co-design and production, price – more transparency, place – direct contacts with customer, promotion – more control of the customer, interaction; • E-Marketing the 5W's: who – target audience, market, what – content, when – timing and updating, where – findability, why – unique selling proposition; • principles of building a website: web planning – defining mission and goals, web access – how to get web entry, site design and implementation – content, site promotion management and evaluation – commercial and managerial aspects; • Internet based marketing: Potential audience, integration, marketing support, brand migration, strategic partnerships, organizational structure and budget; • five new P's: paradox, perspective, paradigm, persuasion and passion; • online marketing as: community building, original event programming, convenience and connectivity; • end consumer controls the market, network systems should define the orientation, a new triad needs to be taken in to account – marketer, employee and customer; • 4S model: scope (strategic issues), site (operational issues), synergy (organizational issues) and system (technological issues) (Peattie (1997), Mosley-Matchett (1997), Evans and King (1999), Chaffey et al. (2000), Lawrence (2000), Kambil and Nunes (2000), Schultz (2001), Constantinides (2002), as cited by Constantinides (2006)).

The fifth area contributing to the Marketing Mix is *Internal Marketing* and this area deals with the strategy for developing relationships between staff across internal organizational boundaries

(Ballantyne, 2002) in order to enhance market performance. The 4Ps are turned inward toward staff. Employees are seen as internal customers or internal products based on the assumption that staff satisfaction is directly linked to the client satisfaction. Ahmed and Rafiq (1995) propose a multistage schema built around 4Ps with three levels (direction, path and action). For Internal marketing the 4Ps have a clear HRM connotation. The product is considered the “attractive job” a firm must sell to the employee in order to attract the best people; the price refers to the “unattractiveness of a job when an employee has to deal with (aggressive and unpleasant customers); the place refers to the job-living area proximity and promotion refers to the communication taking place within organization (Flipo, 1986). Rafiq and Ahmed (1992) stressed the importance of the extended marketing mix for the internal marketing (product, price, place, promotion, people/participants, process and physical evidence).

## **Material and method**

The paper aims to provide a better alignment between the employment marketing mix (EMM), with the marketing extended-mix (MEM or 7P’s of marketing). This alignment can be achieved by pinpointing the specific HR employment practices that can be included under the umbrella of Employment Marketing Mix (EMM) and by operationalizing these practices to the level of acceptable measurability.

At the basis of the theoretical model the classical marketing mix model is used (Kotler, 1967, 2017) followed by the extended marketing model (Booms and Bittner, 1980). An extra layer of complexity in some cases is added by addressing more elements of marketing mix generated by the debate covering various branches of marketing: consumer marketing, relationship marketing, service marketing, e-marketing (Constantinides, 2006) and internal marketing (Ahmed and Rafiq, 1995).



The Employment Marketing Mix (EMM) components mirroring the Marketing Extended Mix (MEM) discussed below are: The job (EMM1) as product or service; knowledge/attitude/skills offered by the candidate

(EMM2) as price; place (EMM3) as place; recruiting (EMM4) as promotion; process of employment (EMM5) as process; recruiters or talent scouts (EMM6) as people; and realistic preview (EMM7) as physical evidence.

For each EMM component we tried to identify or propose observable and in some cases measurable dimensions that allow organization to build tools for evaluation or implementation of HRM strategies based on the marketing principles.

## **Results and discussions**

### **The job to be sold (EMM1)**

The job represents the product/service sold to the candidate and is the first component of the employment marketing mix. In order to develop a marketable job, according to HR practices, you need to analyse it, design it and state the technical specifications (job description) in an attractive manner for the candidate.

*Job analysis* (EMM.1.1) is the process of collecting data about a job from various information sources or stakeholders, using various methods to collect information, in order to understand it 360°. So the *diversity of the stakeholders* involved in job analysis (EMM.1.1.1), like supervisors, subordinates, colleagues, experts, clients, family, etc. offers social and professional legitimacy. The *diversity of the job analysis methods* (EMM.1.1.2.), like document analysis, interview, focus-group, questionnaire, employee's journal, experiment, observation, etc. offers methodological legitimacy.

*Job design* (EMM.1.2) is the process of playing with the core aspects of the job identified during the job analysis in order to augment the job and make it more marketable for the candidates or employee's needs. For this purpose the first recommended step is the labour market segmentation. *The recruiting sources segmentation* (EMM.1.2.1) identifies: geographical segmentation, demographic segmentation, lifestyle segmentation, behaviouristic segmentation, segmentation by perceived benefits, appropriate sales techniques and price segmentation. *Job design strategy* (EMM.1.2.2.) takes in to account the four layers of design: design for performance (industrial engineering – structuring the job in order to maximize efficiency), design for motivation (traveling in foreign countries, training, leadership opportunities, salary, mentoring, work/life balance, etc.), design for security and health (ergonomics of the workplace, safety laws and regulations embedded in to the job) design for CSR (responsibility for community, environment, and economic help for disadvantaged social classes) (Hollenbeck and Wright, 2011, p. 142).

*Job description* (EMM.1.3) is the output document of the job analysis and it details the core technical specifications of the actual job. The *job purpose* (EMM.1.3.1) is clear in the organizational context (job title, department, supervisors, subordinates, clients, objectives, etc.). The *working environment* (EMM.1.3.2) is well mapped - working schedule, annual leave, pay, physical and social conditions, resources at disposal, travel, authority limits, etc. The *duties* (EMM.1.3.3) and specific activities associated with the job are clearly described and have qualitative and quantitative performance standards attached. The *personnel specifications* (EMM.1.3.4.) identify the essential and desirable traits of the employees occupying the job - education, certificates, experience, knowledge, skills, personality traits, physical traits, etc.

### **Knowledge/attitudes/skills to be offered by the candidate (EMM2)**

EEM 2 is the equivalent of the price in MEM and represents the experience, knowledge, attitudes, skills, etc. that the candidates are ready to pay/ exchange in return to the job they will occupy. In this regards it is important to have a balanced contract, understand how the market condition influence the pricing and have a sound price positioning strategy.

*Balanced “contract”* (EMM.2.1), considering both sides: the candidate’s side and the employer’s side. What employers ask and what candidates offer needs to be in the concession/acceptance range of the both parties. The opportunity cost is taken in to account from both perspectives (employer and candidate). *Employers perceive the price as fair* (EMM.2.1.1), allowing them to make a profit. *Candidates perceive the price as fair* (EMM.2.1.2), allowing them to make a living. The terms in which the *contract can be modified* (EMM.2.1.3) are clear and established by common agreement. The *market conditions influence over the price of the job* (EMM.2.1.4) is acknowledged. The market is favourable for the candidates and influences the price of the job by pulling it down. The market is favourable for the employers and influences the price of the job by pulling it up.

*Price positioning strategy* (EMM.2.2) is done in terms of balance between the quality of the job and the price. Both parties agree on the *quality of the product* (EMM.2.2.1.) (low quality, medium quality, high quality). Both parties agree on the *fairness of the price* (EMM.2.2.2) (low price, medium price and high price). *Positioning according to Kotler price positioning strategy* (EMM.2.2.3 – see Matrix 1): economy (low price & low quality); false economy (medium price & low quality); rip-off or skimming (high price & low quality); good value (low price & medium quality); average (medium price & medium quality); over charging (high

price & medium quality); superb value or penetration (low price & high quality); high value (medium price & high quality); premium (high price & high quality) (Kotler, 1988). *Positioning according to Higgs model* (EMM.2.2.4 – see Matrix 2) – advantage in segmenting the market and positioning strategically in one the following: *employer of churn* (low rewards and low culture); *employer of cash* (high rewards and low culture); *employer of values* (low reward and high culture); *employer of choice* (high reward and high culture). (Higgs, 2004)

price	+	High price & Low quality RIP-OFF or SKIMMING	High price & Medium quality OVER CHARGING	High price & High Quality PREMIUM
		Medium price & Low quality FALSE ECONOMY	Medium price & Medium quality AVERAGE	Medium price & High quality HIGH VALUE
	-	Low price & Low quality ECONOMY	Low price & Medium quality GOOD VALUE	Low price & High quality SUPERB VALUE or PENETRATION
		-	quality	+

**Matrix 1. Kotler price positioning strategy – Kotler model**

Source: Kotler (1988)

rewards + -	<b>EMPLOYER OF CASH</b> Low commitment High-control, autocratic Excessive hours Large pay pack Buy acceptance (sales)	<b>EMPLOYER OF CHOICE</b> Excellent reputation Well treated employees Large pay pack 100 companies to work for (professional and financial sectors)
	<b>EMPLOYER OF CHURN</b> Lousy treatment and pay High turnover rate Difficult in tight markets Tendency to recruit overseas (low skills industries)	<b>EMPLOYER OF VALUES</b> Poor pay – below the market Meaningful work Security Compensate with well-being (public & voluntary sector)
	-	+
	culture	

**Matrix 2. Labour market positioning – Higgs model**

Source: Higgs (2004) cited by (Taylor, 2011)

Considering the use of 7Ps in recruiting, price is the most difficult concept to equalize or to transfer. A certain discussion is needed here on the nature of the price due to the fact that the price in this case is difficult to monetize and the meaning might depend on the perspective: customer perspective – what customer needs to pay for the product/service (Kotler, 1988) or company perspective – how the company positions the job offer on the labour market (Higgs, 2004).

In marketing there are three major pricing strategies: a) value-based pricing (user perception of value is the key element – difficult to measure but important), b) cost-based pricing (production, distributing and selling costs, represent the key element – important to keep a close eye on fixed & variables costs), c) competition-based pricing (competition strategies, costs and market offering represents the key element) (Kotler, 2017). In this theoretical framework value-based pricing might refer in

HR as the value the users (current or ex-employees) or the potential users (candidates) attribute to the job independent of the evidence. Cost-based pricing might refer in HR to the fact that the on top of the salary total costs, the employee skills need to generate an added value or a profit. In this case making sure that the performance standards are met, assure that the company makes a profit. Competition-based price might refer in HR to the fact that the labour market sometime inflate or deflate the price regardless of the organizations pricing strategies.

### **Place where transaction takes place (EMM3)**

The place represents the real or virtual space where the company promotes the job and potential employees decide to follow the job offer. It is the place where those two actors make contact in the real or the virtual world.

*Physical locations* (EMM 3.1) where the company promotes the job and potential employees decide to follow the job offer. These are the places where the two make the initial contact. *Organizational space* (EMM 3.1.1), following an internal recruiting strategy (e.g. skills review) or external recruiting strategy (e.g. open days, internships) *Potential candidate territory* (EMM 3.1.2), following an external recruiting strategy (e.g. recruiting agent goes to university campuses, headhunting approaches potential candidates directly). *Neutral space or "the third place"* (EMM 3.1.3), following an external recruiting strategy (e.g. job fairs, conferences, etc.) (Rosenbaum et al. 2017)

*Virtual location* (EMM 3.2) where the company promotes the job and potential employees decides to follow the job offer. *Social networks* (EMM 3.2.1) the majority of organizations use for recruiting. *Recruiting websites* (EMM 3.2.2), specialized in intermediating candidates on the labour

market or matchmaking between organizations and candidates. “*Glocalities*” (EMM 3.2.3) are virtual spaces that transcend tangible locales - chat rooms, online gaming centers, open online courses, online communities, etc. (Rosenbaum et al. 2017).

*Place attachment* (EMM 3.3) represent the emotional bond the job candidate has for a certain place where the company promotes the job and potential employees decides to follow the job offer. A continuum can be developed, ranging from utilitarian role of the place (transactional role) to a higher sense of a place, the “lived experience” (relational, social and restorative resources leading to well-being) (Rosenbaum et al. 2017). *Place utility* (EMM 3.3.1) means the perceived value of the utilitarian role of the place in terms of transaction between the company job offer and the candidate needs. *Place “lived experience”* (EMM 3.3.2) represents the qualitative component of the place that ads a certain relational, social and emotional layer and contributes to the well-being of the candidate.

### **Recruiting strategy (EMM4)**

Recruiting is the equivalent of promotion in MEM and in human resource management represents the „process of continuously (identifying) attracting enough people, with the right qualification, and encouraging them to apply for a job within organization”. (Mondy and Noe, 1987, p. 190; Hollenback and Wright, 2011)

*Recruiting strategy design* (EMM 4.1) sources, methods, channels and messages are on the same frequency. *Recruiting sources diversity* (EMM.4.1.1.) - fresh graduated students, competition’s employees, ex-employees, employee’s social network, etc. *Recruiting methods diversity* (EMM.4.1.2) - recruiting agent, job fairs, scholarships, internships, contests, etc. *Recruiting channels diversity* (EMM 4.1.3) formal: newsletters, company’s

website, informal: quality circles, teamwork, lunchtime, unofficial. *Recruiting messages* (EMM.4.1.4) is targeted, attractive, viral and action oriented, etc.

*Reactive vs. proactive* (EMM 3.3) deals with the positioning in time. *Reactive recruiting* (EMM 3.3.1) waits for the need of human resources or the problem of recruiting to get real and then starts the process of recruiting. There is a certain delay between the opening and filling. *Proactive or continuous recruiting* (EMM 3.3.2) does not wait for the human resources shortage to appear, the recruiting strategy anticipates and recruits in advance. There is a short delay between the opening and filling.

### **Process coherence (EMM5)**

The process represents a broad, interconnected perspective over the employment process: pre-purchase phase (job analysis & design and recruiting) closing the deal phase (selection) and post-sales & support phase (induction and probation). It is somehow the big picture. The process is candidate/customer centred, reduces the effort of the user, avoids bureaucracy, provides specific information and keeps the candidate/customer happy.

*Pre-purchase phase* (EMM 5.1) represents the arrangements that are made with the client to purchase a product. *Preparing stage* (EMM 5.1.1) represents job analysis, job design, and job description. *Job marketing stage* (EMM 5.1.2) represents the recruiting.

*Closing the deal phase* (EMM 5.2) or purchase stage represents selection and is the process of filtering the candidates attracted in the recruiting stage by using a series of methods destined to identify the degree of match with the job and the organization.



*Post-sale activities & support phase* (EMM 5.3) deals with induction, probation period and career management and needs to be consistent with the promises made during recruiting and selection. The candidate/employee, doesn't feel like the job was oversold and is treated with the same care and respect.

### **Recruiters or talent scouts (EMM6)**

Recruiter or talent scouts mirrors the people MEM component and represent the *multi-layered human interface* connecting the potential candidate (the customer), the job (the product) and the organization. Staff and supervisors in the HR department are the first layer; functional staff, line senior management and peers outside the HR department but still inside the organization are the second layer and external contractors are the third layer. Their knowledge, skills, representativeness, number and engagement are important.

The *degree of knowledge* (EMM.6.1.1) about the job (core/actual/augmented) and organizational culture (artefacts, exposed values and assumptions and beliefs) the people involved in the recruiting have. The *degree of marketing and sales skills* (EMM.6.1.2) the people involved in the recruiting have. The degree of *representativeness* (EMM.6.1.3) for the company or for the industry the people involved in the recruiting have. The recruiters mirror the profile of the people they are looking for. The *number of internal players* (EMM.6.1.4) involved in the recruiting. The second layer of players (functional staff, line senior management and peers) is turned in to talent scouts in order to reach an internal synergy. The *number of external players* (EMM.6.1.5) involved in the recruiting. The third layer of players or the external contractors and consultants used to externalize recruiting or to amplify the organizational effort. *The*

*balance of process ownership* (EMM.6.1.6), or the degree of externalization or outsourcing of the HR functions. The locus of control is internal (in house design of the recruiting) or external (outsourcing of the recruiting and selection).

### **Realistic preview (EMM7)**

Realistic preview mirrors the physical evidence component of MEM and is meant to alleviate the risk the buyers perceive because of the intangible character of the job. A certain experience of the job and insight in to the organizational culture should be provided prior to the employment. The realistic preview covers the specific pros and cons of the job but also the extended environment of the organization, or the culture.

*Realistic job preview* (EMM.7.1) means to reach a high level of transparency in communication (print/online/phone/face-to-face) between organization and the potential employees by providing enough in-depth and balanced information (the strong points and the weak points) about the *specific job*, allowing them to experience it in a form or another, before taking an informed “buying” decision. *Proactive approach in describing the job* (EMM.7.1.1) in a transparent and balanced manner. High quality, balanced information about the job description, case studies, pros and cons, etc. is provided in a *written form* (EMM.7.1.2), paper based or electronic. High quality and balanced information about the job (job description, case studies, pros and cons, etc.) is provided in a *multimedia format* (EMM.7.1.3) like video testimonials from the employees and ex-employees, testimonials from the clients, etc. High quality and balanced information about the job is provided in a *direct, unmediated form* (EMM.7.1.4) like group realistic job preview; structured observation; meetings with current employees and customers; social media interaction with current and ex-employees.

*Realistic organizational culture preview* (EMM.7.2) means to reach a high level of transparency in communication (print, online, phone, face-to-face) between organization and the potential employees by providing enough in-depth and balanced information (the strong points and the weak points) about the environment or the organizational culture (artefacts, exposed values and assumptions and beliefs), allowing them to experience it in a form or another, before taking an informed “buying” decision.

*Proactive approach in describing the culture* (EMM.7.1.1) in a transparent and balanced manner. Direct access to the organizational *artefacts* (EMM.7.2.2) like objects, uniforms, office spaces, procedures, rules and regulations, etc. Direct access to the organizational *exposed values* (EMM.7.2.3) like strategies, goals, vision, etc. Direct access to the organizational *assumptions and beliefs* (EMM.7.2.4) like unconscious beliefs, perceptions, feelings, the main sources for action, etc. *Realistic leadership preview* (EMM.7.2.5) in terms of style, employee involvement, conflict management, team development for direct supervisor and for top management team.

## **Conclusions**

Although we are aware of the classical critique aimed at the marketing mix and the prescriptive character attached to it rather than evidence based research (Constantinides, 2006), we appreciate the unifying potential that it brings when translated into human resources practices. Employment marketing mix (EMM) offers a framework on which, in a social constructionist manner, real and useful tools can be developed.

The paper opens a promising endeavour in advancing the merging of MEM and EMM. The opportunities that lie ahead are just tip of an iceberg with large amount of challenges to be solved. Each EMM component can represent a research area in its own right. Of added concern is the fact that the marketing landscape is frequently changing the rules and modifies the critical factors affecting the marketing process, so basically it is a never ending story of adaptive and evolutionary process.

The next chapter of this research will aim at developing and testing an instrument capable to measure the degree of fusion between marketing mix and human resource recruiting practices across various industries.

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