



# 'Army of One' Didn't Do It? Perhaps \$45K in Cash Will

U.S. Army considers new incentive plan to lure recruits. **BY TODD WASSERMAN**

**UNCLE SAM** wants you so badly he may be willing to fork over \$45,000 to buy a house or start a business.

That's the plan under consideration by the U.S. Army, which is facing lower recruitment levels thanks to the war in Iraq and competition from private enterprise. The idea, called the U.S. Army Home Ownership Fund, will likely become a reality this summer. Under the plan, those who put in four to six years in the Army get up to \$45,000 towards a new house or startup costs for a new business, a program called the Army Business Fund. That maximum figure would go to those who put in six years. The money, which would be given directly to a lending institution, would be prorated based the length of service.

The incentive is the first for the Army since 1985, when it went all-volunteer and introduced the Army College Fund. Lt. Col. Jeff Sterling, chief of the analysis and studies branch for Dept. COS for Army G-1 in the Pentagon said the war in Iraq is a "challenge," but so is private enterprise. "A year or so ago, we in the Army recognized that we need to regain the competitive advantage that the College Fund had given us in the late '80s," he said. "We realized we're slipping in the market because so many companies offer money for college. It's become ordinary."

To research the issue, Sterling worked with Chadwick Martin Bailey, Boston, to run a "discrete choice analysis" with potential recruits. That type of analysis is said to mirror real choices better by lumping several pros and cons together into packages.

Amy Modini, project manager at CMB, said the analysis consisted of a series of screens where there would be four packages including various incentives like salary, bonus and terms of service. Sterling said that by using the research, the Army was able to weed out

what it thought would be attractive incentive ideas.

"We found several initiatives we thought would be a home run didn't work," he said. One was an income tax refund. "That didn't register," he said. Sterling was somewhat surprised that the idea of a stipend towards home ownership was so popular. Other ideas, like money for a new car, were also popular, he said, but home ownership and seed money for starting a business better fit the image that the Army wants to promote.



**In the rear view:** The Army gave the boot to Burnett's ads last year.

The effort comes as the U.S. Army has had faced difficulties getting new recruits. The Army fell short of its internal goal of 80,000 new recruits (for a force of about 500,000) for fiscal

2005 despite adding 3,000 recruiters, boosting enlistment cash bonuses to \$20,000 and putting \$200 million behind an ad campaign themed, "An Army of One." The Army dropped that tagline last year and moved its account from Leo Burnett, Chicago, which developed that campaign in 2000, to McCann Erickson, New York, which hasn't yet taken the wraps off its new campaign, which is expected to break this summer. Sterling said the Army's primary target is 18-24 year-olds coming from homes with household incomes in the \$45,000 range.

Sterling said he was unable to say how much media support the Home Ownership Fund will get since the idea must still be approved by Secretary of the Army Francis Harvey and then by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. Recognizing the Army's challenges, Congress last month authorized the Army to raise the enlistment age to 39 from 34 and to "fast track" up to four initiatives for a test period of three years without having to seek congressional approval.

The Army rolled out its last major incentive program, the New GI Bill Plus New Army College Fund, in 1985. That program offered up to \$25,200 in federal college aid when it launched and was promoted with an \$8 million TV campaign.

NewsWire

**HILTON PUSHES RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS**

BEVERLY HILLS, CALIF.—**HILTON HOTELS** this week bows "Be hospitable," its first-ever umbrella campaign for the company's nine brands. One TV spot, via Foote Cone & Belding's Irvine, Calif., and Chicago shops, show people providing and receiving random acts of kindness. Print and outdoor continue the theme with text like "Charm is disarming" and "Arm yourself with humor." "Be hospitable" also is the foundation of an internal program to equip employees to engage with guests and make their world a happier place.

**ATARI, GLU TUNE UP FOR MOBILE GAME MOSH**

NEW YORK—**ATARI** and San Mateo, Calif.-based **GLU MOBILE** are hoping to find the next big thing in videogaming by teaming with Parsons The New School for Design for the second annual Mobile Game Mosh, a 24-hour game design jam slated for March 11 in New York. Teams from New York-area colleges and universities will compete to design multiplayer mobile cell phone games. Entries will be judged in the categories of top overall game, most innovative game design, best sound, and best visuals, with winners considered for production by Atari and Glu. Phones will be provided by **NOKIA**, cell phone service by **CINGULAR WIRELESS**, and software by **ADOBE SYSTEMS**.

**ONE SIZE DOESN'T FIT ALL**

NEW YORK—Marketers and merchandisers should think twice before rolling out new "one size fits all" campaigns. That's the finding in a report titled, "U.S. Regional Trends: Demographics, Attitudes and Consumer Behavior" from market research firm Packaged Facts. The results show that consumers' regional tastes are about as dissimilar as the regional landscapes in which they live. The study looks at trends and consumer behavior in six U.S. geographical regions and 13 demographic and product categories.

**ETC.**

Leading Mexican brewer Grupo Modelo is showcasing its **CORONA EXTRA** flagship with twin billboards in the center of Times Square, marking the first time a Mexican brand has occupied the hallowed spot in the Crossroads of the World... **FOR THE RECORD:** In a news story (*Brandweek*, Feb. 27), the location of LocaModa was incorrect. LocaModa is based in Somerville, Mass., not Phoenix.