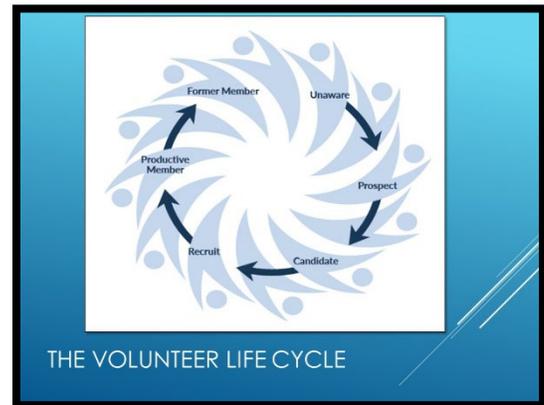


RECRUITING FOR THE LONG TERM: Identifying PSM-Public Service Motivators

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Catch-and-release recruiting has been the bane of our existence in the volunteer fire service for decades. Back when the recruitment pipeline was full, we could afford to bring people in and quickly cut them loose if we deemed that they weren't the perfect fit for our operations or environment. Most volunteer fire departments are notoriously better at recruiting new people than we are at keeping the members we already have. But as the pipeline slows to a trickle, we need to implement positive strategies for recruiting and retaining for the long term.

Identifying and addressing the public service motivators of our prospective and existing members can create a platform for sustaining success and maximizing the volunteer life cycle.



LONG TERM RECRUITMENT	SHORT TERM RECRUITMENT
Focused on finding members who will remain with your department for 20+ years	Focused on finding members who will remain with your department for 5 years or less
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Succession Planning • Public Service Motivation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy Making <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Compassion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Civic Duty <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Self-Sacrifice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live-In Programs • Junior/Cadet Programs • Higher Short-Lived Participation Rates • Higher Turnover

Dr. James Perry developed a model for studying public service motivation (PSM) using the theoretical framework that motivation of individuals to serve stems from the four main areas listed above.

This form of motivation originates from the beliefs and motives that are found within individuals who serve in the public domain. Perry concluded that an individual's PSM develops over time and incorporates a wide variety of experiences. (Perry, 1997). He further breaks down these motivators into sub-attitudes with varying viewpoints as shared below:

Policy Making:

- PSM1: Politics is a dirty word.
- PSM2: The give and take of public policy making appeals to me.

Civic Duty:

- PSM5: I consider public service my civic duty.
- PSM7: I would prefer seeing public officials do what is best for the whole community even if it harmed my interest.

Compassion:

- PSM 8: It is difficult for me to contain my feelings when I see people in distress.
- PSM 9: I am often reminded by daily events how dependent we are on one another.
- PSM12: I often think about the welfare of people I don't know personally.

Self-Sacrifice:

- PSM14: Serving other citizens would give me a good feeling even if no one paid me for it.
- PSM 18: I am one of those rare people who would risk personal loss to help someone else.

INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES



Asking the right questions in an interview can identify a candidate's values and internal motivators, including do they possess public safety motivators and what are they?

Ask open ended questions that spur conversation, like:

- Why do you want to join our organization?
- What are your short-term and long-term goals?
- How can you give back to the community?
- What motivates you to be successful in job performance?
- How do you maintain your personal level of motivation?

Do the answers provided reflect a drive to serve the community, a desire to be a productive community servant, a sense of compassion for people that need assistance along with a willingness to provide aid when called?

If you can answer yes to most or all those questions, they're likely a good candidate for your volunteer organization, if not, you may want to dig deeper and/or consider letting them know you don't think they are the right fit for your organization. Pay particular attention to answers that reflect motivational traits that are intrinsic and to those that display extrinsic values, such as money or status.

Identifying PSMs through effective interview techniques and other less formal interactions is just one part of an overall recruitment and retention strategy.

Other elements of an effective recruitment and retention strategy can include:

- SWOT-Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats Analysis
- Department Needs Assessment
- Membership Morale Survey
- Marketing Plan
- Long Term Retention Plan
- Timeline for implementation and maintenance



Once we understand their motivation, their 'why', we can more accurately place them in the right area of our emergency and non-emergency operations where they will work within but can stretch beyond their comfort zone and primary areas of interest. Identifying and playing to the public service motivators of our prospective and existing members creates the opportunity to maximize their job satisfaction and thus their volunteer life cycle.

Building a recruitment & retention plan that places an emphasis on long term retention (20+ years into the future) is key to the survival of our volunteer fire service.

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Bonus Content: "Maximizing the Volunteer Life Cycle"
<https://www.firstarriving.com/maximizing-volunteer-life-cycle/>