Recruitment in Modern Times

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Abstract

The purpose of this research paper was to determine the best recruiting methods currently being utilized nationwide in light of the unprecedented scrutiny of our chosen career field and the negative media coverage. The hope was to find innovative and fresh ideas to recruit the newer generations. Overall, this is a topic that has been heavily researched throughout the years and many of the previous challenges remain unchanged. However, I was able to pinpoint some newer tactics that mainly revolved around the internet, and every member of the agency becoming a recruiter as powerful tools in modern recruitment that will hopefully assist the St. Petersburg Police Department in this endeavor.

Introduction

Recruitment has historically been an issue for law enforcement agencies. Many studies have been conducted on the topic along with retention, and the diversifying of agencies' work forces. I feel like in modern times, post nationwide protests for racial justice, recruiting for law enforcement officers is at an unprecedented level. The challenge for law enforcement agencies is that the pool of eligible candidates keeps getting smaller. It has always been that there's a small amount of the population that is interested in even exploring a career in law enforcement, and then that number greatly reduces with the ones that can actually qualify after going through the vigorous application process.

With the constant media attention law enforcement receives, and the implementation of body worn cameras, this profession has never been more scrutinized and vilified. Many of the potential prospects have completely lost interest because of this. A common reason being given from the officers that leave police work early is family concerns, because of all the negativity portrayed on television as well as in social media. With so much talk in recent times concerning "de-fund the police", many would be applicants are under the impression that police departments aren't currently hiring.

Those that are still interested in a law enforcement career have different motivators and it seems that it mostly has to do with instant gratification. Many agencies have had to scale back or relax their rules pertaining to tattoos, beards, and past drug usage. While salary is still a good motivator it seems that morale, support, and treatment are nearing the top of the charts with new recruits. Other factors that motivate the younger generation seem to be available specialty units, availability for promotion, and the speed of the application process.

For today's generation, what is the biggest motivator(s) in joining a police force? What current changes were the most vital in persuading you to apply? Did you need to obtain "buy-in" from family and if so what was the most efficient way in obtaining it? How did you know that your agency was currently hiring? These are the questions that this study is seeking to answer from those that have joined a police force, particularly my agency, in the last three years.

Literature Review

Unprecedented challenges continue to face all agencies in the country. The generation joining the work force is more interested in what an agency offers them. This generation has a greater probability of having criminal records which reduces the amount of eligible recruits. The effect of Hollywood on the new recruits' expectations of law enforcement is misleading. Starting out your career as a detective or the things shown in the forensic side of things are just unrealistic, and can hurt morale. The law enforcement career continues to evolve; current employees are retiring at a younger age than before. A newer challenge is todays generation's willingness to move from agency to agency or to leave law enforcement all together. While there are differing opinions about the future of law enforcement, one that just about everyone agrees to is the increased training for police officers. A lot of emphasis has been placed on training, but it is just as important to place a big emphasis in recruiting so that there will actually be officers to train. (Smith, 2016)

Recruiting has always been a challenge and will continue to be as the applicant pool decreases and every agency is seeking the best candidates for themselves. The military isn't what it used to be for law enforcement when it comes to recruiting. With PTSD and the scrutiny law enforcement faces in use of force scenarios, the standard by which mental health professionals screen applicants has increased. Building relationships and hiring within your own community seems to be a long term solution for recruiting. This has placed an increased importance on officers being role models, despite all the negativity, in order to inspire young people into a career in law enforcement in the future. (Smith, 2016).

Criticizing use of force and general police reform recently has hurt widespread recruiting for law enforcement agencies. Lack of recruitment has the potential to increase department budgets because of burnout and overtime needs. Some agencies are unable to hire as many officers as needed due to recent budget cuts despite multiple agencies indicating that they had plenty of applicants but were unable to hire due to limited budgets or freezes in hiring. (Greenlee, 2021)

Murder rates are currently at historical highs while police departments are struggling more than ever with recruiting. The level of scrutiny on police is at an all-time high, and agencies are not only having a hard time recruiting but also retaining their current staff. Many agencies are dealing with morale issues within, early retirements and resignations. This comes at a time when violent crime has surged in most cities across the nation. During a time when the nation was demanding more training for police officers, a pandemic struck which all but stopped the majority of training for a long period of time. The "defunding the police" has had a major impact in recruiting, specifically in major cities.

Higher salaries, and monetary incentives seem to be what most agencies are trying in order to make themselves more appealing to new recruits. (Malbin, 2021)

After several high profile incidents involving police use of force, protests, and a pandemic there is a crisis in recruitment and retention. Some police agencies are seeing numbers as high as 45 percent for retirements with resignations around 18 percent. Many of these cities are also having a hard time attracting new applicants. Agencies have been forced to cut down or eliminate specialty units in order to meet their response obligation. Many believe that police retention has suffered due to being asked to do too much outside of the scope of enforcing laws. The roll out of body cameras for many is a factor on top of the fact that just about everyone has a cell phone that they use to record officer interactions. Agencies struggling to attract applicants have resorted to waiving application fees, and sponsoring applicants through the police academy. Some agencies are scaling back on their requirements such as applicants needing less college credits, or have become less stringent on drug usage. (MacFarquhar, 2021)

Most law enforcement agencies realize that recruitment is a consistent issue that they must deal with. It is recommended that all agencies have a full-time recruitment unit. While there are no easy solutions to this crisis, there are always innovative ways that need and should be considered. The first step should be for leaders to evaluate their own agencies for any deficiencies that could deter a potential candidate from applying. They should also do a comparative evaluation of surrounding agencies and agencies similar in size to ensure they are competitive. Proactive recruitment is paramount and never more important than in modern times. Agencies must not lose their focus in recruiting diverse populations such as minorities, women, and even those that are still in high school. Going as far as reaching out to high school students is important in ensuring the agency's long-term goal of continuous recruiting. It also reaches out to the students before they make a commitment to a career. The agency can assist with this by having an internship program among other programs that would give students more insight into a police profession. It is still important to continue targeting colleges, universities, and even trade schools. Recruiters should attend events held at these campuses to develop relationship with the staff and students. They should give the students an opportunity to see police officers as human beings as opposed to what they see in the media. (Cain, 2019)

It's imperative that police forces mirror the communities that they serve. When there is diversity in a police force, it has a better understanding of the community from within, as well as it assists with the public perception, community relationship building, and trust. A diverse force helps in having the ability to efficiently perform the agency's missions. In order to achieve this, the agency's recruiters themselves should be diverse and they should develop diverse officers within the agency to assist with recruiting efforts. Agencies shouldn't rely on historical methods of recruiting such as colleges and military when recruiting minorities. They should instead work with church's and civic groups, and attend community events within the minority community to reach out to potential candidates. Police agencies also continue to have a small percentage of women officers. This also needs to be addressed proactively and strategically. Benefits that relate more to women are important, as well as outreach programs such as mentorships should be in place. The mentorship would require qualified female police officers to establish it. (Cain, 2019)

Imagination and budget are the biggest barriers to recruiting. Minor things like facial hair and tattoos didn't seem to have an impact. Most agencies are not at full staff and that may be something that agencies will need to get used to. Everyone in the agency should be a recruiter both in-house and when dealing with the public, and should have a clear understanding of what the hiring message is. When recruiting you should stay focused on the great things your agency does, the things that will inspire individuals and make them think about joining. Recruiting information posted or provided by your agency shouldn't be lengthy. It should be easy to read, and captivating. (Cobb, 2020)

Keeping track of your successes in recruiting is very important, and you have to look at the data in order to terminate any of the things that aren't successful. Colleges and military bases are still areas that produce a good amount of applicants. Your recruiting budget should match the agencies commitment to recruiting. The agency needs to stay up to date with the most current trends in recruiting. Recruiters need to do a good job at getting to know potential applicants and then have the knowledge in their agency to explain to them how and why the agency is a great fit for them. Recruiters need to make sure they know who their audience will be prior to any presentation and tailor the presentation to that specific group. Most of the recruiting success doesn't come from career fairs, which most agencies are heavily into, it comes from interactions with current police officers and doing ride-along' s. Agencies need to be more pro-active in their everyday recruiting by reaching out to individuals who may be a very good recruit who isn't currently interested in a law enforcement career and having conversations with them. (Cobb, 2020).

The pandemic forced a local police academy to close, but the resulting first class to join afterwards was the not only the biggest but also the most diverse to date even though it's mostly white male cadets. Some of the cadets had actually registered to attend the academy prior to the George Floyd incident which resulted in demands to "defund the police", but all are still in attendance. Some of the others in class signed up because of those demands and are aware of the conditions in which policing is currently at. The police academy states that instead of a decrease they have obtained an overwhelming increase in applications. However; some of the evidence from around the nation does not support this and show police departments unable to fill positions. Agencies are also having officers quitting at unprecedented levels. St. Petersburg Police Chief Anthony Holloway stated that as a 35-year law enforcement officer he had never questioned staying in the force as he did in 2020. His vision is that of Police Officers being more like Firefighters that respond to help and not be the bad guys. (DeGregory, 2021)

The good guys versus bad guys' rhetoric continues to dominate the police academy in 2021. The new recruits will not only police their respective communities but police each other as a measure of accountability. Some cadets are still missing their families "buy in". Most see what's going on in the nation and want to be the change from inside. They're still inspired to be police officers. (DeGregory, 2021)

Generational differences play a key role in recruiting now that the years of recruiting baby boomers come to a close. Baby boomers were well qualified for careers in law enforcement, but they are now retiring and being replaced by members of generation X and millennials. Agencies looking to recruit millennials need to understand their differences and expectations. Agency leaders have to find a balance between agency needs and new applicant needs. Millennials enjoy time away from work, and

family time. They also like to be more involved and valued. Agency leaders should seek their input and let them have a say when making decisions to get their buy in into policies and procedures. Highlighting the time off accrued during the recruitment process with millennials as well as considering the adaptation of things like comp time would assist in recruiting them. (Langham, 2017)

Since a majority of police officers join due to having friends or family members already in the profession, it is important that agencies ensure all officers are capable of being recruiters. That they have the information needed to provide to those they know may be interested in a career in law enforcement. They should also have contact information to provide the potential applicants and be able to steer them in the right directions to either get further information or apply. Agencies should have a way of capturing and rewarding officers who bring in recruits. The reward could be monetary or it could be extra time off which is a reward desired by millennials. (Langham, 2017)

Recruiting means such as billboards and internet are still important and reaches out to large number of people. Agencies should make sure the information provided is precise and provides good and accurate information. When using the internet to advertise it is also important to ensure the proper audience is being targeted. Agencies recruiting within their own communities must understand the community and advertise based on what's important to them which in most cases is the community outreach portion. Recruiting units need to make sure they follow up with applicants and keep them up to date. Agencies should consider having open enrollment to keep the applications coming in, and look for ways to streamline the application process. Although mostly out of the control of agency leaders, salary is an important aspect of recruiting. Agencies need to stay competitive with surrounding agencies. If salary can't be improved in a timely manner than the agency should look to increase incentives. It is also very important, especially in modern times, to have a good working relationship with media outlets. It provides the transparency that so many communities demand, and it may give an opportunity to highlight some of the positive things the agency does. (Langham, 2017).

There is a strong link between first line supervisors and retention of police officers. It is a relationship that needs both the supervisor and the officer to participate in, but the supervisor is responsible for initiating it. Supervisors need to get to know their subordinates at work as well as information pertaining to personal life. It is important for supervisors to build trust with their subordinates and give them a sense that they care. Showing care for the subordinate's personal life leads the way in them being able to steer them appropriately in the work setting. Supervisors should lead the way in implementing the organizational culture, interacting with their officers to model the culture and to witness it. (Kirkland, 2019)

In order to keep the officers engaged, the supervisor should help them with their career goals. By getting to know them and know what those aspirations are, the supervisor can tailor the training they receive to help them achieve their goal. Once the officer knows their supervisor is taking care of them they are in turn loyal to their supervisor and the agency. Supervisors should include their officers when making some decisions that affect all, or might even consider delegating some decisions to them. When the officers feel more engaged it benefits everyone and the agency. (Kirkland, 2019)

Even with all of the issues surrounding recruiting and retention in modern times, agencies shouldn't deviate from having high hiring standards. While doing so diminishes the amount of applications, it still protects the agency from hiring the wrong person that is going to make the agency look bad. In the meantime, it may be necessary to re-assign some personnel from specialty units even if just temporarily to assist with the work load. Agencies may need to also look at whether some desk jobs filled by sworn positions could be done by a civilian employee. The main core hiring standard values should never be altered. (Cottier, 2020)

Methods

The purpose of this research was to identify the biggest motivators for those starting a career in law enforcement, specifically with the St. Petersburg Police Department, within the last three years.

Data was gathered through surveys given to new recruits, probationary officers, and police officers with a tenure of less than three years. This was a diverse group of 114 recruits/officers that ranged from those currently in the police academy to those out in the work field as solo officers. Survey questions were designed to determine the best recruiting practices currently utilized, and attempted to identify those not utilized that should be due to their efficiency. Participants were also asked if they had joined us from another law enforcement agency, and if so, the reason for leaving.

Data regarding gender and race/ethnicity was requested in an effort to identify the most successful recruiting techniques and importance of benefits for recruiting and retaining minorities.

The survey was confidential and conducted anonymously to encourage truthfulness and willingness to participate. A weakness in the survey was that, although no names were collected for the anonymous purpose, it did narrow it down to officers with three years of service or less.

Results

The survey was sent to 114 police officers and police cadets at various stages in their early careers that had been with the St. Petersburg Police Department for 3 years or less. I received 41 responses, for a response rate of 36 %. All 41 respondents answered all the questions with the exception of the one question which asked the respondents to skip if a certain criteria wasn't met.

The first question on the survey asked recipients what their biggest motivator was in joining our police force on a scale of 1 through 5 with 1 being the biggest: Salary, Morale, Specialty Units, Promotion Ability, Speed of Application Process, or other.

Twenty respondents (49%) ranked Speed of Application Process as the biggest, followed by eleven respondents (27%) ranked Morale as the second. Third was Promotion Ability with thirteen respondents (32%). Tied for fourth were Morale and Specialty Units with 11 respondents each (27%). Tied for fifth were Salary and Specialty Units with 10 respondents each (24%), and Other was the least big motivator with 6

respondents (15%) which all fell from within the listed motivators except one that listed "Advancement to Federal Level Police".

It should be noted that all respondents answered this question. The percentages of the responses however, does not equal 100% based on the fact that it is in a scale format. Table 2 will show that each category did receive a combined percentage of 100%.
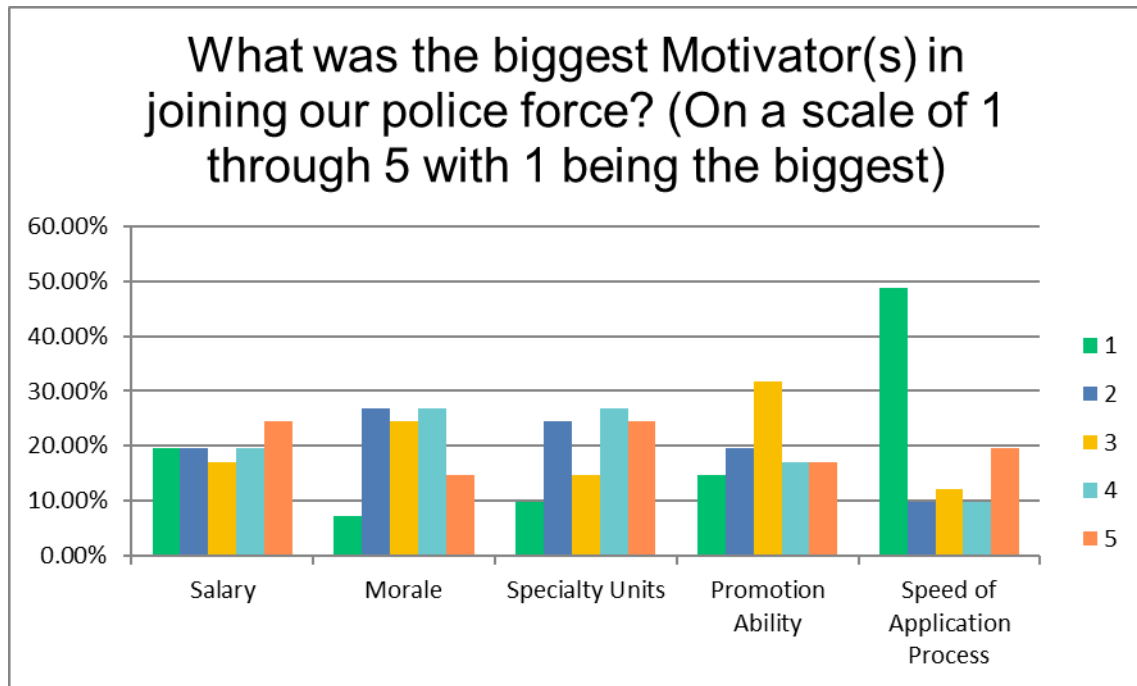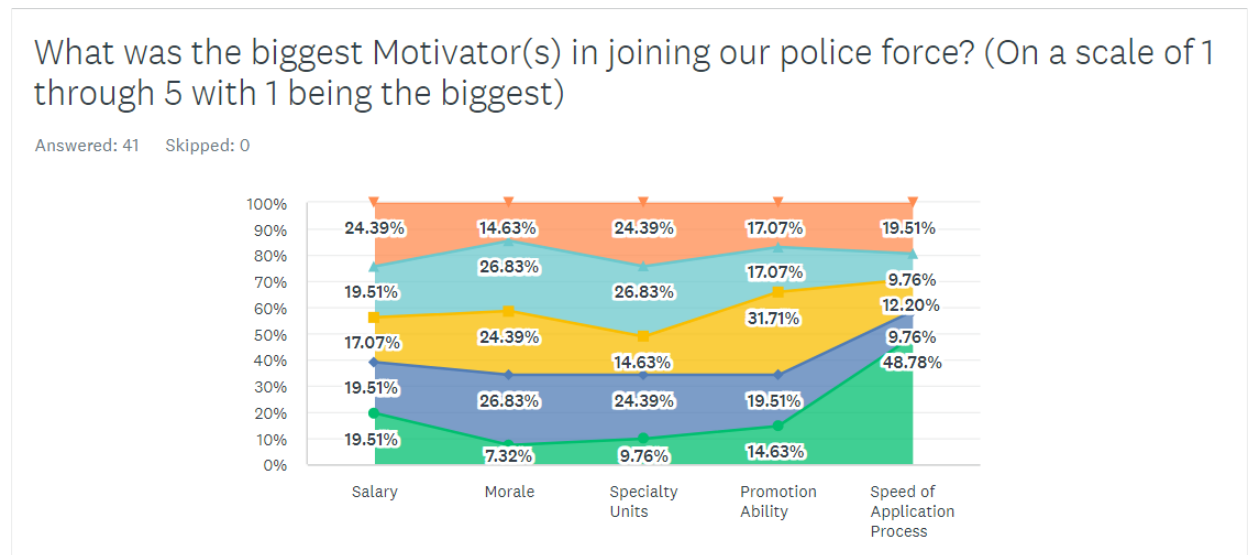
TABLE 1: Motivators of Respondents:

TABLE 2: Motivators of Respondents by category.

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The second question asked respondents if the needed to obtain "buy-in" from their family and if they did then what was the most effective way of doing so. All 41 participants responded. Thirty-nine (95%) advised that they did not, and two (5%) advised that they either had to explain or inform family of the benefits.

The third question asked respondents about how they knew that our agency was in the process of hiring. Out of all the 41 respondents, twenty-two (54%) advised that they heard through some other mean than anything we are currently utilizing. That consisted of mainly using the internet to search or going directly to our website and a handful of referrals by current police officers. This was followed by 10 respondents (24%) that advised it was by a friend, 8 respondents (19%) that advised it was by social media, and only 1 respondent (2 %) by a recruiting event.

TABLE 3: Recruiting Efforts
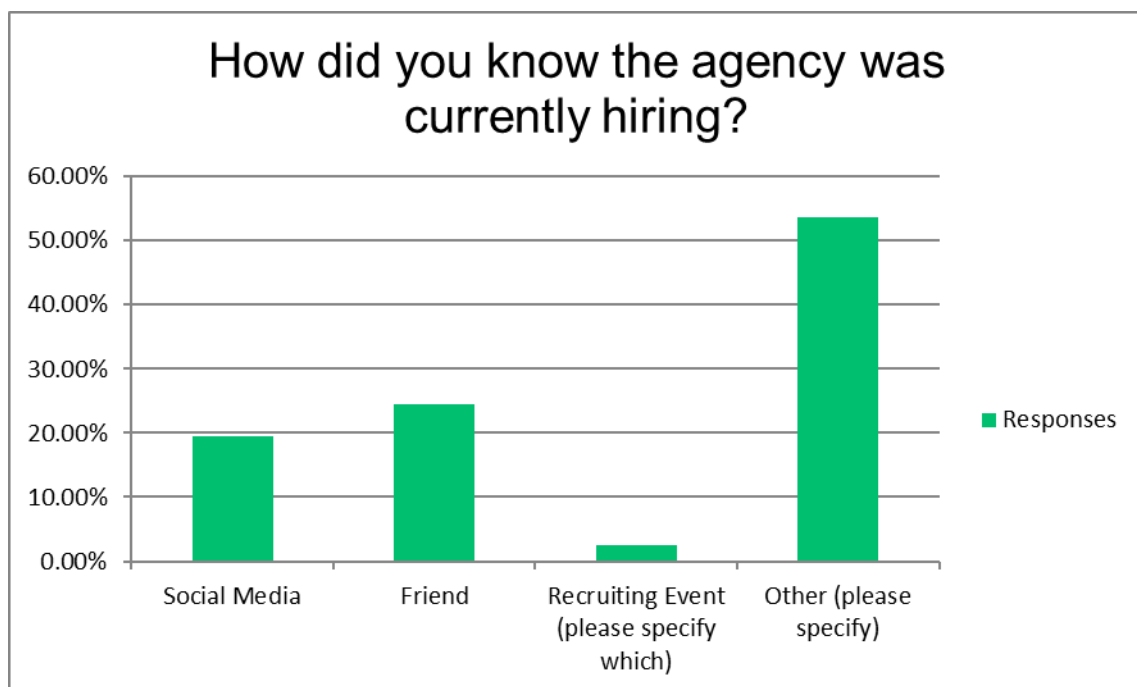
The fourth question was a yes or no question inquiring about whether any of our current recruiting efforts were successful in the participants' decision to apply. Twenty-one respondents (51%) advised that they did not while twenty respondents (49%) advised that they did.

The fifth question asked respondents if they planned on making a career out of law enforcement which was also a yes or no question. All 41 respondents (100%) advised that they indeed planned on it.

The sixth question inquired as to how extensively the respondents researched the St. Petersburg Police Department prior to deciding on whether to apply or not. Their response options were Very Much, Some or None. Twenty-five respondents (61%) advised that they had very much. Fifteen respondents (37%) advised that some, and one respondent (2%) advised that none.
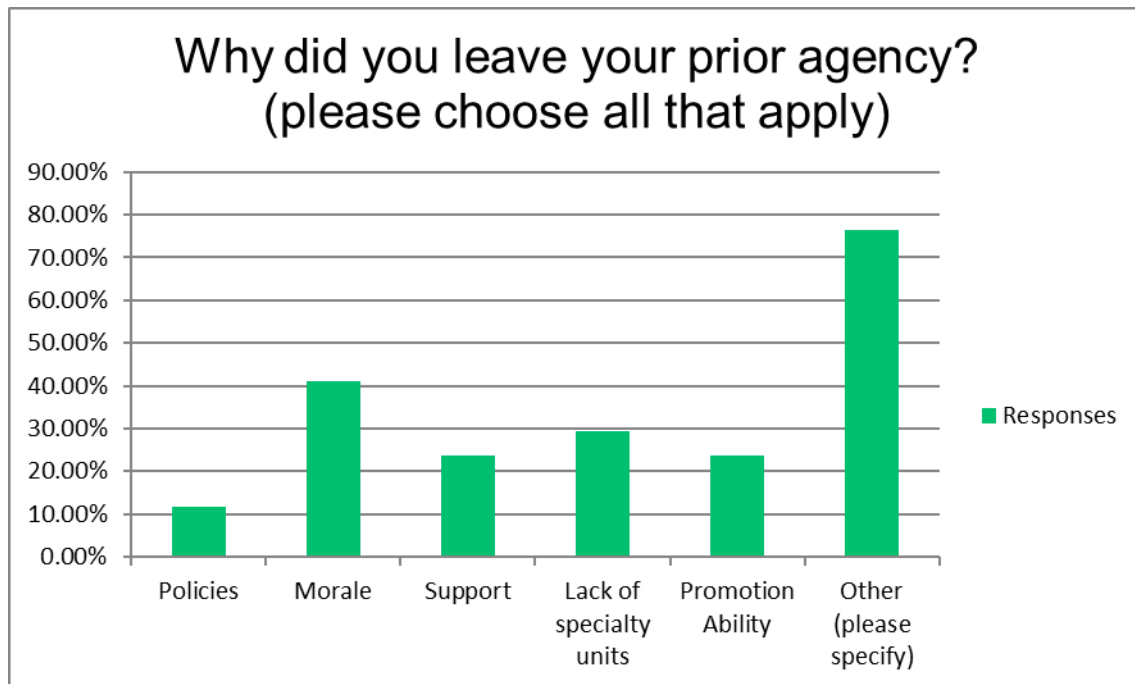
TABLE 4: How much did they research our agency before applying?

How extensively did you research the St. Petersburg Police Department prior to applying?
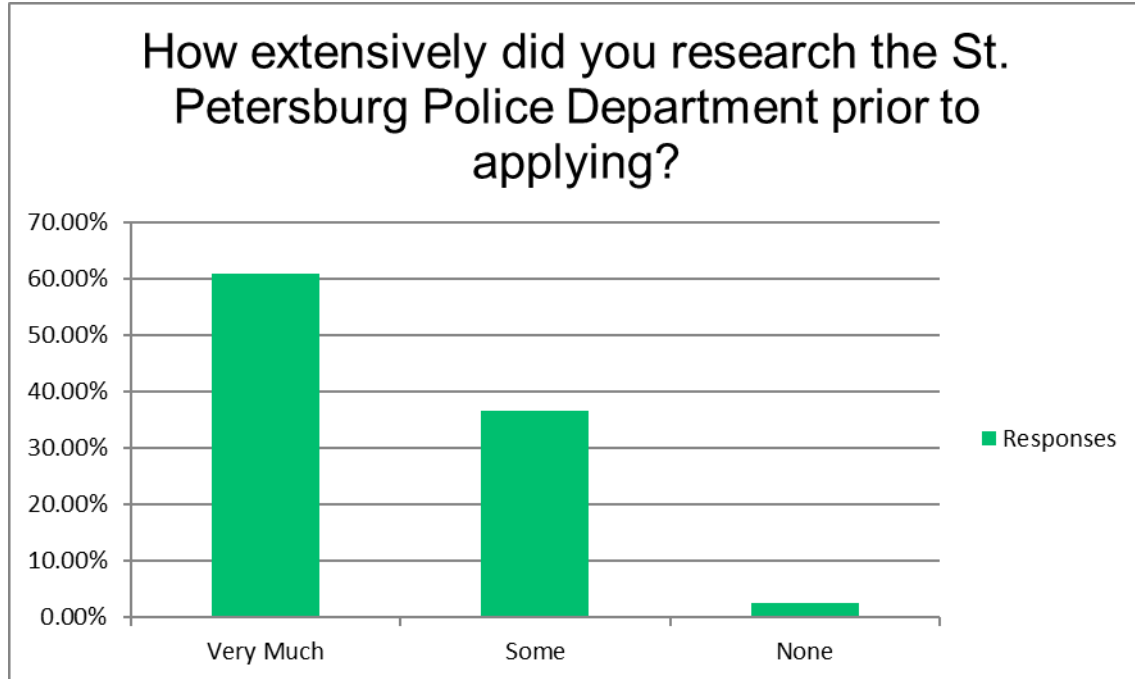
The seventh question was a yes or no question and it asked respondents if they had prior law enforcement experience. Additionally, if they're answer was no then they were asked to skip question 8 and continue on question 9. Twenty-four respondents (59%) advised that they did not while seventeen respondents (41%) advised that they did.

The eight question inquired as to why they left their prior agency which was a multi-faceted question asking that they choose all that apply between: Policies, Morale, Support, Lack of Specialty Units, Promotion Ability, and Other. Twenty Four respondents skipped this question as instructed since they did not have prior experience. Seventeen respondents answered. Thirteen respondents (76%) stated that it was Other which consisted of an even split of Salary and Family Member/Spouse moving into the area. Seven respondents (41%) advised that it was because of Morale, and five respondents (29%) advised that it was a Lack of Specialty Units. Split evenly was Support and Promotion Ability which each got 4 respondents (24%), and the last one was Policies in with 2 respondents (12%).

TABLE 5: Officers Who Came from Other Agencies

Why did you leave your prior agency? (please choose all that apply)

A bar chart with the y-axis showing percentages from 0.00% to 90.00% in 10% increments, and the x-axis showing categories. Bars (labeled "Responses" in green):
- Policies: ~11%
- Morale: ~41%
- Support: ~24%
- Lack of specialty units: ~29%
- Promotion Ability: ~24%
- Other (please specify): ~76%

The ninth question inquired as to whether the speed of the application process was a key factor. All respondents answered the yes or no question. Twenty-Four respondents (59%) advised that it did not, while 17 respondents (41%) advised that it did.

Question ten asked the respondents if they would have still joined our department without our current sponsorship program or salary incentive. Twenty-five respondents (61%) answered no, while sixteen respondents (39%) answered yes. All respondents answered this question.

Question eleven inquired as to whether the respondents were considering a career out of law enforcement. All respondents answered. Twenty-Seven respondents (66%) answered yes, and fourteen respondents (34%) answered no.

The twelfth question asked the respondents for their gender. Their response options were Male, Female, Neither, or Prefer not to answer. Twenty-Eight respondents (68.3%) answered as Male, twelve respondents (29.3%) answered as female, and one respondent (2.4%) answered as Neither. All respondents answered this question and no one chose the Prefer not to answer option.

TABLE 6: What is your Gender?
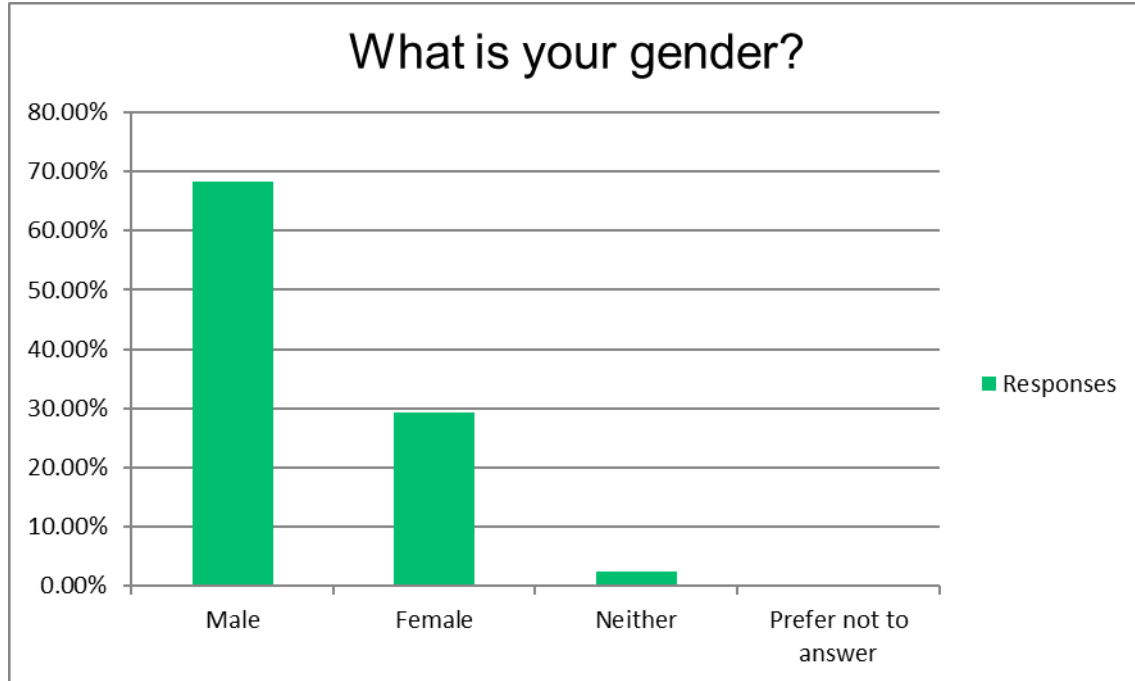
The last question, which was question thirteen, asked the respondents their race/ethnicity. Their response options were White Non-Hispanic, African American, Hispanic or Latino, Asian or Asian American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Prefer not to answer, or Other. Twenty-Eight respondents (68.3%) answered as White Non-Hispanic, six respondents (14.6%) answered as African American, four respondents (9.8%) answered as Hispanic or Latino, and one respondent each (2.44%) answered as Asian or Asian American, Prefer not to answer, or Other. All respondents answered this question.

Discussion

The results of the survey were revealing and exposed some loopholes in the St. Petersburg Police Department's recruiting practices. Some of the things were expected, many were not. I believe this survey, and further research is beneficial in helping to improve and modernize our recruitment efforts in order to obtain better results in terms of quality as opposed to just focusing on quantity.

From the research I understood that, especially in modern and very competitive times, speed of application process and prompt follow up by the agency was an important factor. However, I was still surprised by the fact that it was the overwhelming biggest motivator in joining our police force with 48.8% of all respondents. Again, based on some of the research I fully expected specialty units, or promotion ability to be at the top.

We recently had some tenured members of the department resign, largely unprecedentedly, due to family pressure during the current political climate. I thought it

would be important to ask these new recruits/officers whether they had to obtain "buy-in" from their families prior to joining. This question was answered with an over-whelming response of no at 95% which wasn't expected. I definitely thought there would be a higher percentage seeking that approval prior to joining historically but even more so in the modern times with so much focus on police conduct.

I was also very curious in comparing our current recruiting strategies to how the new recruits had in fact heard about the agency and more importantly that we were currently hiring. Our own website and/or a Google search were by far the most effective way of reaching our current recruits/officers by a combined 74%. Our agency has recently updated our recruiting video to showcase very modern things that appeal to the younger generation among all applicants, and have advertised via social media which is evidently very effective.

Another part of the research focused on making sure all officers in the department are knowledgeable enough about the agency to be recruiters. Our agency has also done this very well with extra incentives to those that recruit, such as extra vacation time. During the survey, this tactic was a distant but effective second answer by respondents with 24% advising that this was how they knew about the agency and that it was currently hiring. However, our agency does spend significant resources in recruiting events and all that it is associated with it but only 2% of respondents advised of this being their reason for knowing about the agency hiring. It was also notable that any and all of our recruiting efforts only accounted for 49% effectiveness in getting these recruits/officers to apply. It leaves substantial room for improvement.

In modern times we not only compete against surrounding agencies but more and more against nationwide agencies, so we may forget that we are also competing against the private sector and all of the benefits/compensations that they offer. I thought it was important to know if those that had already joined our agency were planning to at least make a career out of law enforcement with a solid response of 100% advising that they would. This is a good indicator that once we have recruited, hired and trained the recruits they at the very least have aspirations of completing their career in this field.

Another focus was whether these recruits/officers were blindly applying to agencies, seeing one thing they liked prior to applying, or were they actually putting in the effort to extensively research all aspects of an agency first. The overwhelming response was 61% stating they very much researched our department, and with 37% doing some research as compared to just 2% not doing any research at all.

A different factor that many agencies are facing today is younger officers leaving at early stages in their careers to join other agencies. I posted the question of whether or not they have prior law enforcement experience. 59% of the respondents did not have prior experience while 41% did which was as expected. In modern times, more than usual, we have a large influx of applicants from out of state which is probably based on the current state of affairs. The key factor then becomes retention of these new recruits.

The previous factor then goes hand in hand with asking these new recruits/officers why they left their prior agency in an effort to not make the same possible mistakes. 76% of the 24 respondents advised they left their prior agency, vast majority, due to salary and family. Surprisingly, but maybe it shouldn't be, was Morale at 41% which should not be undermined. The rest of the options were pretty even among Lack of Specialty Units, Promotion Ability, Support, and Policies.

I reiterated the speed of the application process, as the St. Petersburg Police Department has recently streamlined the process, and seemed to be an important factor during the research. 59% of the respondents did not feel that this was a key factor for them while 41% did, yet this was the biggest motivator in joining our police force when given a handful of choices as to why which was interesting.

The St. Petersburg Police Department also offers both a sponsorship program for applicants needing to attend the academy, and a salary incentive for those with prior experience among reimbursement to those that have no experience but already completed the academy. I inquired if the respondents would have joined the department even if these two incentives weren't provided. 61% answered they would not, while 39% answered that they still would. I believe it would benefit us, at least for the time being, to continue to offer these incentives.

As previously stated, law enforcement agencies don't just compete against each other for the small percentage of qualified candidates but also have to contend with the private sector. I then inquired if the respondents also considered a career outside of law enforcement. The results were 66% did consider it, while 34% did not. In contrast to those already hired planning to make a career of law enforcement, this highlights the need for additional incentives to stay competitive with the private sector.

In order to also focus on diversity while recruiting officers, I inquired as to what gender the respondents were. The responses were 68.3% Male, 29.3% Female, and 2.4% Neither. Also, I inquired about the respondents' race/ethnicity. The responses were 68.3% White-Non Hispanic, 14.6% African American, 9.8% Hispanic or Latino, 2.4% Asian or Asian American, 2.4% Preferred Not to Answer, and 2.4% answered as Other. Progress has definitely been made in this difficult field of diversity recruiting, but this shows that there is still plenty of room for improvement.

Recommendations

Overall, based on the current practices of the St. Petersburg Police Department and the results of the study, I believe it would benefit us greatly to frequently survey the pool of recruits we tend to have and gain a better understanding of what is drawing these candidates in. We should also realize that certain things we continue to do such as Recruiting Events ought to be greatly reduced and/or concentrated on a very local level as other local agencies continue to pursue this. Everyone in the department as a recruiter, or as much as possible, seems to be the way of the future. We currently provide paid time off for this endeavor, but if we cut back on some of the other time and money consuming strategies that are no longer effective, perhaps a monetary compensation could also be offered.

The new recruiting video which highlights some of our high technology devices being utilized, diverse group of officers/staff, gorgeous weather coupled with a marine unit, sponsorship and salary incentive, a very competitive salary, plus the many other specialized units and benefits does a great job of recruiting and is evident on the survey.

The amount of applications received, which in 2021 were the highest in recent history, demonstrates that we are doing a great job of recruiting but there is always room for improvement. Since our recruiting numbers continue to be strong we ought to stick to

the mindset of deciding on who we offer career opportunities to the best of the best. Although our recruiting numbers are strong, we are still a very young agency in terms of officer tenure, and retirements of the senior officers continues to be an issue.

Currently, we are still approximately 100 positions short of being fully staffed. As many of the studies suggest, recruitment in our law enforcement field is a historical issue, but there are also modern nuisances to contend with. Studies further suggest anything older than three years old, in terms of recruiting, is too old. I believe our agency could benefit from developing, as we do with many other issues, continual improvements to our recruitment efforts and also to our retention efforts.

In regards to our retention efforts, the department does not have its own exit interview or questionnaire to offer those that resign. I attempted at utilizing the current City archived exit interview questionnaires but I was unable to due to the fact that there was only a very small percentage submitted, and they were most not all fully answered. We rely on data gathered through the use of exit interview questionnaires conducted by the City of officers who resign. It is a lengthy and antiquated questionnaire that the City utilizes for all city employees. I would recommend that if we really, as an agency, would like to fully understand not only the recruiting needs but our retention needs, we should incorporate a modern and short exit interview questionnaire relevant to just police work.

Lieutenant Gabiel Lopez joined the St. Petersburg Police Department in 1999, where he began his career as a patrol officer. He worked different assignments to include Community Policing, SWAT, Recruiter, Crime Prevention, and Public Information assisting with the Spanish speaking networks. As a Sergeant he supervised a variety of squads on patrol and the Community Service Unit. In 2020, he was promoted to Lieutenant as the Training Commander, and is currently a patrol Watch Commander. Lieutenant Lopez received an Associates Degree from Pasco Hernando State College and a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Criminal Justice from Saint Leo University.

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Appendix A

Dear Participant, I'm currently enrolled in the Senior Leadership Program through the Florida Criminal Justice Executive Institute. A part of the program is conducting a research project that includes a survey. My topic for the research project is Recruiting in Modern Times. I'm inviting you to participate in this research study by completing the survey. It's a brief survey, all multiple choice, that shouldn't take much of your time. It is confidential and voluntary. I want to thank you ahead of time for your participation. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me.
Thank you,

Gabiel Lopez, Lieutenant
Uniform Services Bureau, District III
St. Petersburg Police Department
727-893-4055

Survey Monkey Questions:

1. What was the biggest Motivator(s) in joining our police force?
   (On a scale of 1 through 5 with 1 being the biggest)

   - Salary
   - Morale
   - Specialty Units
   - Promotion Ability
   - Speed of Application Process
   - Other (please specify)

2. Did you need to obtain "buy-in" from family and if so what was the most efficient way in obtaining it?

   - Yes (please specify)
   - No

3. How did you know the agency was currently hiring?

   - Social Media
   - Friend
   - Recruiting Event (please specify which)
   - Other (please specify)

4. Were any of our recruiting efforts effective in making your decision to apply?
   - Yes
   - No

5. Do you plan on making a career out of law enforcement?
    - Yes
    - No

6. How extensively did you research the St. Petersburg Police Department prior to applying?
    - None
    - Some
    - Very Much

7. Do you have prior law enforcement experience? (If No, please skip to question 9)
    - Yes
    - No

8. Why did you leave your prior agency? (please choose all that apply)
    - Policies
    - Morale
    - Support
    - Lack of specialty units
    - Promotion Ability
    - Other (Please specify)

9. Was the speed of the application process a key factor for you?
    - Yes
    - No

10. Would you still have joined without the sponsorship program or salary incentive?
    - Yes
    - No

11. Were you also considering a career out of law enforcement?
    - Yes
    - No

12. What is your gender?
    - Male
    - Female
    - Neither
    - Prefer not to answer

13. What is your race/ethnicity?
    - White non-Hispanic
    - African American
    - Hispanic

- Native American
- Asian
- Other (Please specify)
- Prefer not to answer