

Maintaining Motivated Firefighters
A Continuing Challenge for the Volunteer Fire Service

Executive Development

BY: Mark R. Sweeney
Brookline Volunteer Fire Company
Havertown, Pennsylvania

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Abstract

The problem is that there has been a perceptible lack of motivation recently in the Brookline Volunteer Fire Company (BVFC). This perceived lack of motivation has a negative effect on basic fireground operations and efficiency, as well as decreased participation for non-emergency events and training exercises.

The purpose of this applied research project is to investigate the factors that impact motivation among volunteer firefighters and to seek ways to improve motivation and, in turn, improve the efficiency of the officers and firefighters of the Brookline Volunteer Fire Company. This will be an action research project and will answer the following research questions:

1. Is motivation a problem among other volunteer fire companies in the region?
2. What factors affect the motivation of volunteer firefighters?
3. Are motivational problems related to generational differences?
4. What techniques can be used to motivate volunteer firefighters and what techniques are used by other volunteer fire companies in the region?

The procedures included a convenience sampling. The Chiefs from the five volunteer fire companies within Haverford Township and the Chiefs from selected fire companies in the surrounding counties were surveyed. The population for the Chief's survey was 36. In addition, the members of the five fire companies within Haverford Township and an additional fire company that borders Haverford Township were surveyed. The population for the member's survey was 233.

The results were as follows: 11 of the Chiefs and 35 of the members reported that motivation is or has been a problem in their fire company. The Chiefs surveyed saw the increased response to automatic fire alarms as the leading factor that negatively affects motivation. Conversely, 50%

of the members surveyed found that the lack of emergency incidents was the factor having the most negative affect on motivation.

Additionally, both the Chiefs and Members surveyed thought that generational differences and attitudes had an affect on motivation.

The most common and popular programs used to increase motivation are the fire companies providing members with the following: award dinners, social activities, and low or no-cost clothing emblazoned with the fire company's logo.

The recommendations, based on this study, encourages the Brookline Volunteer Fire Company to continue the programs of providing members with an annual awards dinner, social events for the members and their families, and no-cost fire company clothing. In addition, there should be an increase in live fire and smoke training. This recommendation is the result of surveyed members reporting that the lack of emergency incidents has the most negative affect on motivation.

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Introduction

The problem is that there has been a perceptible lack of motivation recently in the Brookline Volunteer Fire Company (BVFC). This perceived lack of motivation has a negative effect on basic fireground operations and efficiency, as well as decreased participation for non-emergency events and training exercises. The purpose of this applied research project is to investigate the factors that impact motivation among volunteer firefighters and to seek ways to improve motivation and, in turn, improve the efficiency of the officers and firefighters of the BVFC. This is an action research project. A survey of volunteer fire companies in the region will be conducted to identify common issues surrounding the topic of motivation and identify ways that other fire companies have addressed motivational problems. In addition, research will be conducted to determine if the theory of generational differences has an effect on the motivation of volunteer firefighters.

The following research questions will be addressed:

1. Is motivation a problem among other volunteer fire companies in the region?
2. What factors affect the motivation of volunteer firefighters?
3. Are motivational problems related to generational differences?
4. What techniques can be used to motivate volunteer firefighters and what techniques are used by other volunteer fire companies in the region?

Background and Significance

The Brookline Volunteer Fire Company is one of five volunteer fire companies that comprise the Haverford Township Bureau of Fire. Haverford Township is located in

southeastern Pennsylvania and is a suburban community of 48,498 residents (D. LaSorsa, personal communication, January 8, 2003).

Presently, the BVFC is looking for ways to improve and maintain the motivation of its' firefighters and officers. Over the past 2 to 3 years, there has been a general perception that the motivation of the members of the BVFC was declining. The lack of motivation was most noticeable in several areas of the Fire Company's operation. The two areas of primary concern to the Chief and the other officers of the Fire Company were 1) the low response to dispatched incidents and training exercises. These incidents included automatic fire alarm systems, carbon monoxide detectors, and mutual aid calls within Haverford Township. However, at times, incidents that were dispatched with enough information to lead firefighters to believe there was an actual fire or an unusual incident, such as a small plane crash, were met with a significantly higher response of firefighters; and 2) there was also a decline in attendance and enthusiastic participation at weekly training exercises. Firefighters attending weekly training exercises, at times, seemed to be uninterested and some firefighting training evolutions were carried out without any sense of urgency. In addition to fire related activities, there was also poor participation in non-fire related Fire Company activities. These activities included fund raising events, building and apparatus work details, and even some social events. Should this perceived lack of participation and motivation continue, it could have a serious future impact on the BVFC. The potential exists for a decline in new membership, retention of current members, poor fireground efficiency and the possibility of increased injuries or loss of life to firefighters.

The following Applied Research Project (ARP) relates to one of the United States Fire Administration's (USFA) operational objectives to "Reduce the loss of life from fire of

firefighters” (NFA, 2002, p. II –2). This objective would be achieved by a successful research project that could provide information on maintaining motivated volunteer firefighters.

Motivated firefighters would remain interested in weekly training exercises that provide some of the necessary knowledge and practice to operate safely and efficiently at emergency incidents.

This ARP also relates to the Executive Development course of the National Fire Academy’s Executive Fire Officer Program. One of the courses of study pursued by students in Executive Development relates to Service Quality/Marketing. In Unit 10 of the Executive Development’s Student Manual, the Terminal Objective of this section is “Given a conceptual understanding of Total Quality Management (TQM) and service quality principles, the students will be able to evaluate services provided by their organization and develop strategies to improve organizational quality and service standards” (NFA, 1998c, p. SM 10-2). Improving motivation will be a key element in improving the organizational quality of the (BVFC).

Literature Review

A literature review was conducted to provide the groundwork for this ARP. Literature sources from both fire service orientated publications and private sector publications were reviewed. Some of the public sector publications deal with motivating paid employees in large corporations. However, these publications were still relevant to the concept of motivating volunteer firefighters. “Most people don’t work just for money. In fact, money is seldom the top motivator” (Buckman, 1998).

Four questions will be addressed within this literature review. First, is motivation a problem among other volunteer fire companies in the region? This question will be answered in the Discussion section of this ARP.

Second, what factors affect the motivation of volunteer firefighters? There are many factors that affect the motivation of volunteer firefighters and many are similar to those that affect the motivation of any private sector employee. Listed below are some of the factors:

Dr. Harry Carter in an article in "The Voice" stated, "Since fire officers must get people to work, it is essential that they master the art of motivating people." (Carter, 1990,p22) Dr. Carter discussed the importance of fire officers creating an environment where people feel that they are part of something good. As a starting point and in order to create this environment, they must understand the basic needs of people. He reviewed Dr. Abraham Maslow's five levels of basic human needs. Those basic human needs are: basic physiological needs, safety and security, belonging and social activity, esteem and status, and self-realization and fulfillment (as cited in Carter, 1990). Dr. Carter stated that this management theory and others could have a great impact on someone's success as a fire officer if time is taken to study the theories and commit them to memory.

Recognition and praise are strongly desired by people belonging to organizations. As John Buckman wrote" Everyone wants to be appreciated-fire chiefs, deputies, assistants, and firefighters, as well as children and parents, coaches, and players. We never outgrow this need. No matter how independent and self-sufficient we may be, the fact is that we need others to help us feel valued" (Buckman, 1998). In Bernier's "Maximizing Volunteers" article, recognition and praise are major reasons that people join volunteer organizations. "The thrill of the lights and sirens may fade, but we all like to hear that we've done a good job" (Bernier, 1995, p.42). Both Buckman and Bernier related that recognition could be as simple as a pat on the back.

Cohesiveness is a concept that may affect the motivation of volunteer fire firefighters. In the report *Recruitment and Retention in the Volunteer Fire Service – Problems and Solutions* (U.S. Fire Administration, 1998), “Cohesiveness is one of the essential ingredients that makes a fire department successful.” “It is important not only to work as a team but, to feel like a team.” Feeling like a team fulfills a person’s need for a sense of belonging to something important. This Report sites the need of belonging to something important as one leading reason for becoming a Fire or EMS Volunteer (U.S. Fire Administration, 1998, p.47).

Poor leadership is another factor that may affect the motivation of volunteer firefighters. The Report cites several leadership areas such as poor leadership and lack of coordination, authoritative management style, and failure to manage change. Poor leadership and lack of coordination include not providing direction to members and, perhaps most importantly to new members. This can cause frustration resulting in members leaving the Fire Company. Authoritative management style occurs when management dictates every action around the fire station. Volunteers often resent this type of management style, feeling they are given enough orders in their full time employment. Participative management styles are more attractive to volunteers. Failure to manage change can be upsetting to a Fire Company if not managed properly. Change is inevitable, but must be managed carefully. Good communication is an essential ingredient to assist with change. Change not properly managed may result not only in poor motivation but also in a loss of membership (U.S. Fire Administration, 1998, p. 11).

Facilitating feedback can also be a factor that affects a volunteer firefighter’s motivation. Rodney Nordstrom and R. Vance Hall in the *Building Officials and Code Administrators* magazine discuss feedback as the key to motivation (Nordstrom and Hall, 1985, p.17).

The article asks the reader to think about the most ineffective manager they know. The “ineffective” manager is one that never has contact with the employees unless something is going wrong, or stops to ridicule the employee in front of other co-workers and isn’t clear about what is expected of employees. Nordstrom and Hall contrast this manager by describing an “effective” manager that gives immediate and specific feedback about job performance, listens and acts on employee suggestions, and sets clear expectations for performance. The authors site six aspects of proper feedback. First, feedback should be “immediate”. The closer in time feedback follows performance the greater the likelihood it will have an effect on performance. Without immediate feedback that is given on a daily or weekly basis, semi-annual or annual performance appraisals often fall short of being the training or motivational tool they are meant to be. Second, feedback should be “positive”. Positive accomplishments of the workers are recognized often. Effective managers “catch their workers being good”. Third, feedback should also be “visual”. Visual feedback relates to visually displaying performance; modeling and communicating clear goals on what needs to be measured and improved. For example, a fire service related idea could be the graphing of firefighter’s responses to alarms. This could provide visual feedback on what aspects are positive or what needs to be improved. Fourth, feedback should also be “individualized”. Individualized feedback is related to recognizing individual performance rather than relying only on group feedback. By using only group feedback, poor individual performance cannot be addressed. Another of the final two aspects of proper feedback includes allowing the employee’s involvement in setting their targeted performance. Feedback cannot change or enhance performance when unrealistic goals are set. The final aspect of feedback relates to goals and standards. Employees like having their

supervisors set fair and realistic goals. Goal setting will help motivate employee performance. As Nordstrom and Hall stated, “by the systematic application of positive, meaningful and timely feedback, many positive benefits will result” (Nordstrom and Hall, 1985, p.19). Dr. Harry Carter also commented on feedback by saying, ” None of your study and interest in motivation will do you any good if you fail to listen to what your troops are telling you.” The importance of feedback and our reaction to it cannot be over-emphasized”. (Carter, 1990, p.23)

There are several other factors that could be seen as directly affecting the motivation of volunteer firefighters and would not be seen as common to the private sector employee. The report *Recruitment and Retention in the Volunteer Fire Service – Problems and Solutions* (U.S. Fire Administration, 1998), mentioned many factors including the following: Time demands for response to emergency incidents, training, meetings, work details on buildings and apparatus, equipment maintenance and fund raising. Many volunteer firefighters have problems meeting the time demands of the Fire Company because of the need for families to have two-incomes. The report stated that spare time is becoming an “anomaly today”. Time spent at work, work on maintaining homes, and time requirements for children limit the time available to volunteer. The initial training for new volunteers has increased over the last 25 years. In the mid-1960’s firefighters received approximately 30 hours of initial training. People who joined volunteer fire companies were often permitted to ride the apparatus on the same night. The fire company relied heavily on the concept of “on the job” training. Currently, many basic firefighting courses require time commitments of between 100 and 150 hours. Volunteer fire companies often require more time than people can provide.

Increased call volume may also affect the motivation of volunteers. The Report cites a statistic from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), which indicates a 60 percent increase in the volume of emergency calls to volunteer fire companies between 1983 and 1996. These statistics also include EMS calls. Many fire companies operate as first responders on emergency medical calls. Response to automatic fire alarm activations in commercial buildings and private residences have increased due to the rise in the numbers of systems and to accidental activations or system malfunctions. In addition to increase response to automatic fire alarm systems, The Report mentions a greater reliance on the fire companies by the public. This reliance is related to the public's expectation for a wider range of services from the fire companies due to an increased perception that firefighters are more knowledgeable and professional. Some common examples were cited: a citizen calling emergency medical services or fire company first responders for treatment of a broken arm. This differs from years past where a neighbor may have transported the patient for treatment. Another example is a homeowner with an electrical problem calling the fire company for an initial assessment rather than an electrician (U.S. Fire Administration, 1998).

In a 1992 JEMS article titled "Wants, Motivation, Values", the author, John M. Becknell, mentions the desire for responders to get the "good calls". Good calls are ones in which the responder is truly needed and where something exciting and challenging happens. The responders are able to use their skills to help someone. The perception of this idea to the general public may sound morbid but, "people in this business universally understand the relationship between going on good calls and feeling positive about their work." (Becknell, 1992, p.33)

“Simply stated people want to do what they like to do. The converse is true; people like to do what they want to do.” (Gerspach, 1998, p.16)

Third, are motivational problems related to generational differences? In the book *Managing Generation X – How to Bring Out the Best in Young Talent*, the question of motivational problems being related to generational differences and many perceived generational differences are addressed. The author, Bruce Tulgan, considers many of the negative views towards Generation X as misconceptions of a generation that grew up in very different and technically advanced historical times. These negative views are common, as seen in a study of print media conducted by students at the University of Rochester, under the direction of media consultant Nancy Woodhull, which concluded that a vast majority of the portrayals of Generation X were negative (as cited in Tulgan, 2000). Many of the people observing and pointing out generational differences and motivational problems in Generation X are from the previous generation known as “Baby Boomers”. Baby Boomers expect Generation X to follow their believe and value systems. Tulgan found that most Baby Boomers grew up in households with two parents. In most cases, one parent was home for the children after school. Employees often made a work career at one or two companies. This is in contrast to Generation X, people in Generation X commonly grew up in households led by one parent or returned home from school by themselves because a parent or parents were out working. Parents changed jobs more frequently because of changing economic conditions affecting business. Loyal employees often saw companies that did not return the same loyalty to them. Generation X grew up seeing technologies changing at “ a dizzying pace”. Because of these many changes in their early lives, Generation X learned to be very adaptable to change and learned an independence from being on

their own. With these root changes in society differing greatly from what the Baby Boomers experienced as children, Generation X has a different outlook on life and employment.

According to Tulgan, Generation X is often perceived as disloyal, cynical, arrogant, and unwilling to pay their dues, and have short attention spans. Tulgan refutes each one of these misconceptions. Loyalty has a different meaning to Generation X. They will be loyal when an organization proves they view Generation X as having valuable contributions to make. In addition, when Generation X is taken seriously by an organization and allowed to make their presence known, they will show a fierce loyalty to the organization. Organizations that provide short-term rewards remind Generation X they are not being taken for granted. Should the organization not meet the needs of Generation X, they will without regret seek a new organization that will meet their needs. Because of these ideals, they also have no preconceived expectation of loyalty from the organization. The misconception of being cynical is in reality Generation X taking a cautious approach to institutions and they use their adaptability, learned early on, to facilitate the scrutiny of institutions where they can belong. This takes place because of the inability of today's institutions to form lasting relationships and allegiance to employees. Arrogance is misconceived, according to Tulgan, as Generation X's fierce individualism and entrepreneurial style. This individualism stems from the ability of Generation X to " fend for themselves", as they had to do coming home to empty houses after school while growing up. Many managers of Generation X see them as unwilling to pay their dues. Although, Tulgan points out that this is true to some extent. His research showed that Generation X is impatient for rewards and other indications that their hard work is appreciated. This attitude was developed because Generation X doesn't see the promise of job security for "paying their dues". Employers

often fail to keep up their side of the bargain by providing job security. Generation X is seen as having short attention spans. Tulgan describes Generation X as “learning machines”. The information revolution has shaped the way Generation X thinks causing them to develop a “rapid fire style of interacting with information”. The information revolution and the rapid-fire style of interacting with information provides Generation X a different perspective on issues often conflicting with their Baby Boomer managers. Bruce Tulgan provides managers with information on how to motivate Generation X and get them to “go the extra mile”. Generation X is motivated by managers who are willing to support the employee during good times and not abandon them in times of trouble. They are more motivated and committed to a team management style where their opinions are welcomed. Growing up in an age that relies so heavily on information and technology, Generation X needs to be provided with all the information required to complete the assigned task. Finally, Generation X is more motivated to spend time at work when it is fun.

Fourth, what techniques can be used to motivate volunteer firefighters and what techniques are used by other volunteer companies in the region? There are many and varied techniques and programs that can be used to motivate volunteer firefighters. Some of the motivational techniques that will be mentioned are from private sector employers and some that specifically focus on the fire service. The book *How to Run Successful Incentive Schemes – A Manager’s Guide* provides a quote from Bernard Weiner reminding managers that “An axiom of virtually all theories of motivation is that the organization strive to increase pleasure and decrease pain” (as cited in Fisher, 2000, p. 26). However, the author also reminds the reader “Motivation techniques need to be applied with a sensitivity to the corporate or social

environment and any other factors peculiar to the individual or group. In broad terms you need to understand “the big picture” before proposing solutions (Fisher, 2000, p. 30). Celebrations are used as motivational technique. “I have always found celebrations were a great way to energize an organization.” “Even the smallest victories should be celebrated” (Welch, 2001,p.386). Jack Welch further mentions that a manager’s job is to make sure the team is having fun-while they are being productive. Welch wanted business to be fun. He found that too many people saw business as “just a job”. He also reminded his employees that celebrations don’t have to as extravagant as handing out new Mercedes automobiles, it can be as simple a keg of beer, a dinner for two, or a group of employees celebrating with a pizza. The report Recruitment and Retention in the Volunteer Fire Service – Problems and Solutions mentions several types of celebration activities for volunteer firefighters called “the fun factor”. They do caution fire service managers to avoid activities that include drinking. The Report states that drinking could damage the image of the fire company should some type of unfortunate incident occur. In addition, there is the possibility, as people loosen up while drinking, insensitive remarks could be made that may hurt members of today’s diversified fire service. Activities in “the fun factor” include having annual picnics and dinners. The suggestion is made that some of these events are held away from the fire station so that members can concentrate on the party and not on the possibility of having to respond to an alarm. Also, taking group trips to theater or sporting events. There are a numbers of activities that can include the firefighter’s family also. Fire companies can hold a spouses’ breakfast, rent a skating facility for family skates, or hold a Santa day at the fire station for the member’s children (U.S. Fire Administration, 1998, p. 98).

Recognition and praise is a source of motivation for firefighters. “ For whatever reason, people don’t like to say good things about others. I have never been able to understand why human beings will only say “good job” when someone retires” (Buckman, 1991, p.10).

Recognition and praise can take many forms. The most basic form is a personal “thank you” from the Chief. John Buckman also states, “one of the simplest ways to motivate the workers is to thank them and show that you need their continued support and efforts” (Buckman, 1991, p.10).

Community newsletters, newspaper press releases, and news pictures can provide a platform for recognition by mentioning the successes of a member in completing training, receiving awards, or years of service. Community and peer recognition to honor those who have performed heroic acts in the line of duty can provide a special reward and motivation to firefighters.

Incentive programs can help to boost and maintain motivation among firefighters. The report *Recruitment and Retention in the Volunteer Fire Service – Problems and Solutions* (U.S. Fire Administration, 1998) cites several different types programs: “Direct monetary incentives” that include life insurance, pay-per-call, length of service rewards and tax breaks. “Indirect monetary incentives are programs providing passes to beaches, amusement parks, golf courses, and fitness centers; Having food during station activities, stand-bys, or training exercises; providing trips to training seminars or conferences; a fire company could supply a member with a vehicle that can be taken home and used for official as well as personal business; and finally, length of service pins or similar identifying features that denote a member’s time in the fire service. (U.S. Fire Administration, 1998, p.85-91)

One author provided the idea of “rolling out the red carpet” for members. Evariste Bernier uses the word “Carpet” as an acronym for communication, accommodation, respect, praise, education, and team building. The author suggests open and multiple lines of communications for volunteers. Because volunteers may be away from the station for days at a time it is essential that they be kept informed about activities within the organization. This can be accomplished by message boards in the station, a calendar of events provided to members, or messages broadcast over the organization’s radio system.

Another method is to accommodate volunteers by devising ways to save the member’s time. The examples provided are serving dinner before meetings, so that the members don’t have to worry about cooking. Allowing family members to attend Company functions so they can gain an insight into the volunteer’s work. Training sessions should be well organized and interesting with substitute plans in the event of a scheduling glitch that would prohibit the originally scheduled session from taking place. Showing respect for members is important because this act overlaps all other sections of this “Carpet” theory. Additionally, volunteers are like all other members of society and like to be shown respect. One suggestion was to greet each member by name. This not only opens lines of communication but also show respect for that person.

As mentioned earlier in this Literature Review, praise is paramount to maintaining motivated volunteer firefighters. Bernier includes this concept in the “Carpet” theory.

“Education means fulfillment” (Bernier, 1995, p.43). By advancing a person’s skills, it not only provides the organization with a more competent person, but it also gives the person more skills to be proud of. In communities with a small number of calls, additional education and drill can provide a substitute for the lack activity.

Team Building can give an organization a healthy team spirit that may help to “eliminate much of the bickering and discontentment that, if left uncontrolled, can devastate a volunteer organization” (Bernier, 1995). Team building can be accomplished in many ways. Bernier suggests social outlets such as meals and parties or polishing parties for the apparatus and equipment. With this theory of “Rolling out the red carpet” Bernier states, “A healthy team spirit means a healthy organization” (Bernier, 1995).

Procedures

The topic of maintaining motivated volunteer firefighters for this ARP was decided on after a discussion with the Chief of the BVFC. Because there has been a perceptible lack of motivation recently in the BVFC, Chief Viola and the author were interested in determining the following information: First, is motivation a problem in other Fire Companies in the region? Second, what factors affect the motivation of volunteer fire fighters? Third, are motivational problems related to generational differences? Fourth, what techniques can be used to motivate volunteer firefighters and what techniques are used by other volunteer fire companies in the region? (J. Viola, personnel communication, August 12, 2002).

The first phase of research began by conducting a literature review on the topics of motivating volunteer fire fighters, motivating public and private sector employees, generational differences, and the techniques used by other fire companies to motivate their firefighters. This information was gathered by electronic reviews of library card catalogues including the National Fire Academy’s Learning Resource Center and several college libraries in the Philadelphia area. The research materials used in the ARP were obtained through the

Haverford College Magill Library inter-library loan service. In addition, electronic searches of the Fire Engineering and Firehouse Magazine web sites were conducted.

While conducting the literature review, it was decided to distribute a feedback form to selected volunteer fire companies in the region as research questions 1) is motivation a problem among other volunteer fire companies in the region and 4) what techniques can be used to motivate volunteer firefighters and what techniques are used by other volunteer companies in the region? require a survey to gather the necessary data.

Feedback Form

Two feedback forms were developed by the author to obtain data from fire company Chiefs (Appendix 1) and fire company members (Appendix 2) on motivation. The following questions were addressed: a) motivation of members in my company has been or is currently a problem, b) what factors do you see negatively affecting the motivation of volunteer firefighters c) do you see generational differences and attitudes affecting the motivation of members, d) what motivates you to participate as a member of your Fire Company, e) what type of programs does your Fire Company use to motivate its' members? The forms differ only in the manner that the Chief's feedback form does not ask for years of service or question 4 of the member's feedback form (what motivates you to participate as a member of your Fire Company?). However, it does ask for contact information. Each of the chief's feedback forms was sent with cover letter (Appendix 3) and postage paid return envelope. The feedback forms were reviewed by two Executive Fire Officer Program graduates for the clarity of the questions and directions. A suggestion to include the definition of the word "motivate" was accepted and included to the feedback forms.

Population

The population used for convenience sampling were the members of the five volunteer fire companies within Haverford Township and one additional fire company that adjoins Haverford Township. The total population for the member's survey was 233. In addition, the Chiefs of the five volunteer fire companies within Haverford Township and Chiefs from two of the adjoining counties having townships with two or more companies were also surveyed. Furthermore, Chiefs from three adjoining townships with single fire companies were also surveyed. The total population for the Chiefs surveyed was 36.

Statistical Analysis

The results received from these feedback forms were evaluated and presented using action research methods. The Chief's feed back data is compiled on an individual bar chart as it compares to each question on the feedback form. Question 2 (what factors do you see negatively affecting the motivation of volunteer firefighters?) provided six factors that could affect motivation. These factors affecting motivation and recruitment and retention were taken from various sections of the report on Recruitment and Retention in the Volunteer Fire Service – Problems and Solutions (U.S. Fire Administration, 1998). The Chiefs were asked to rate the six factors in order of significance with the number 1 being the most significant. These results were also placed on an individual bar chart after adding the numbers for each of the six factors. In addition, question 4 (what types of programs does your Fire Company use to motivate its' members?) allowed the listing of the Fire Company's motivational programs. These programs were combined into general headings. After adding the numbers of responses for each general heading, the results were placed on a bar chart.

The member's feedback data was compiled and displayed in a similar fashion to the Chief's feedback data using bar charts. Question 4 (what motivates you to participate as a member of your Fire Company?) and Question 5 (what types of programs does your Fire Company use to motivate its' members?) allows members to list what motivates them to participate in their organization and what motivational programs are used in their fire companies. These programs were also combined into general headings. After adding the number of responses for each general heading, the results were placed on a bar chart. However, the member's feedback data was banded by years of service (0-5, 5-10, 10-15, 15-20, 20-25, 25-30, > 30). This additional step was taken to see if trends existed in answers and whether they were influenced by years of service.

Limitations and Assumptions

There were several limitations to the feedback form and the survey in general. On both feedback forms, question 2 (what factors do you see negatively affecting the motivation of volunteer firefighters?) allowed the respondent to rate six factors in order of significance with 1 being the most significant factor. The directions on how to answer this question were either not clear or not followed properly. A number of forms were returned with improper responses to the question. The improper responses included check marks and several factors were rated with the same number. The author distributed the member's feedback forms directly to the Chief or Assistant Chief from each company asking that they be completed after a weekly training exercise. It was assumed that the forms could be filled out by a "captive audience" after the exercise. Several companies allowed the members to take the forms from the fire station and return them in the following weeks. In some cases the return of completed feedback forms was

low. Due to the time constraints of the ARP, the author did not contact the surveyed Chiefs or fire companies conducting member's surveys in attempts to increase the percentage of respondents. In addition, it was assumed that the respondents did answer the questions honestly and without reservation.

Definition of Terms

Generation X – are considered to be those persons born between the years 1963 and 1977.

Fire Company Members – for this ARP, they are considered all officers and firefighters starting with the first position below Chief of the Fire Company.

Baby Boomers – are considered to be those persons born between the years 1946 and 1963.

Results

A total of 18 (50% response rate) of the Chief's feedback forms were returned.

A total of 18 Chiefs answered the question; "Motivation of members in my company has been or is currently a problem?" Eleven (61%) of the Chiefs responded that motivation has been or is currently a problem within their Fire Companies. Seven (39%) of the Chiefs did not feel motivation was or is a problem within their Fire Companies (Figure 1).

Responding to the question of "What factors do you see affecting the motivation of volunteer firefighters?" The Chiefs saw the increased responses to automatic fire alarms as the primary factor affecting the motivation of firefighters. Increased response to non-emergency incidents was the second leading factor affecting motivation. The third factor was the time demands imposed by the fire company. The fourth factor was promotional opportunities for firefighters within their fire company. The fifth factor affecting motivation was the lack of

emergency incidents. The sixth factor affecting motivation was the poor leadership and coordination (Figure 2).

The question of “Do you see generational differences and attitudes affecting the motivation of members of your Fire Company?” was answered by Chiefs in the following manner. Ten (58%) of the Chiefs thought that motivation was affected by generational differences and attitudes. Seven (42%) of the Chiefs surveyed did not see generational differences as affecting motivation (Figure 3).

The final question “What types of programs does your Fire Company use to motivate its’ members?” was answered by listing the actual programs. The most common program listed was the use of an annual awards dinner. The second most common program was social gatherings. Examples included picnics, holiday parties, attending sports events. The third program listed was providing clothing to the members. Providing low cost or free fire company hats, shirts, or jackets. There were two programs that ranked fourth. The programs include using length of service awards; awarding members at certain intervals plaques, certificates, pins, or other gifts for years of service to the Fire Company. The other program was the use of financial incentives. These incentives include an annual stipend and pay-per-call plans. Providing life insurance was the fifth most common program. There were also two programs ranked sixth. The use of educational opportunities by providing members with advanced specialty training or allowing them to attend national training conferences. The other program at this ranking was the use of citations. Providing members with uniform ribbons or certificates for acts of bravery, outstanding fireground performance, or training accomplishments (Figure 4).

A total of 69 (29.6 %) members' feedback forms were returned. Question 1 ("Motivation of members of my Company has been or is currently a problem?") was responded to by 35 (52.2%) members believing that motivation was or currently is a problem within their Companies. Conversely, 32 (47.7%) of the members surveyed did not see motivation as a problem within their companies. The majority of the group with 0-5 years service did not see motivation as a problem in their Fire Companies (Figure 5). Question 2 ("What factors do you see negatively affecting the motivation of volunteer firefighters?") allowed the members surveyed to rate six factors that negatively affect their motivation. The results for the members surveyed will be reported by using the years of service groups and listing the factors from those having the most affect to the least.

Those with 0-5 years of service rate the factors in this manner: lack of emergency incidents, increased response to non-emergency incidents, increased response to automatic fire alarm systems, time demands of the fire company, poor leadership and coordination, and promotional opportunities.

Those with 5-10 years of service rate the factors as follows: lack of emergency incidents, time demands of the fire company, increased response to non-emergency incidents; poor leadership and coordination and increased response to automatic fire alarm systems were equally rated, promotional opportunities were seen as having the least affect on motivation.

Those with 10-15 years of service rate the factors as follows: time demands by the fire company, lack of emergency incidents, increased response to automatic fire alarm systems, poor leadership and coordination; increased response to non-emergency incidents and promotional opportunities were both seen as having the least affect.

Those with 15-20 years of service rate the factors as follows: increased response to automatic fire alarm systems, promotional opportunities, increased response to non-emergency incidents and lack of emergency incidents received equal ratings, time demands by the fire company and poor leadership and coordination have the least affect.

Those with 20-25 years of service rate the factors as follows: time demands by the fire company, lack of emergency incidents, increased response to automatic fire alarm systems, increased response to non-emergency incidents, poor leadership and coordination, and promotional opportunities.

Those with 25-30 years of service rate the factors as follows: lack of emergency incidents, time demands by the fire company, increased response to non-emergency incidents, increased response to automatic fire alarm systems, promotional opportunities, and poor leadership and coordination.

And finally, those with >30 years of service rate the factors as follows: time demands by the fire company, lack of emergency incidents, poor leadership and coordination, promotional opportunities, increased response to non-emergency incidents, and increased response to automatic fire alarm systems (Figure 6).

Question 3 (“Do you see generational differences and attitudes affecting the motivation of members?”) found that 34 (50.7%) of the members thought that generational differences and attitudes did affect motivation, while 33 (49.2%) of the members surveyed did not see this having any affect (Figure 7).

Question 4 (“What motivates you to participate as a member of your Fire Company?”) and Question 5 (“What types of programs does your Fire Company use to motivate it’s

members?") were combined for tabulation purposes because both provide motivational incentives. The results will be reported by using the member's years of service grouping and by listing the programs and personal motivations from those being the most common to the least common.

Those members with 0-5 years of service listed and rated the programs and motivations as follows: helping the community, award dinners, and social activities were rated equally as the most popular. Clothing, financial incentives, recognition, family tradition, personal challenge, and fun were all rated equally as the second most popular. Educational opportunities were seen as the least popular.

Those members with 5-10 years of service listed and rated the following: award dinners and helping the community were rated equally followed by social activities. Financial incentives, recognition, personal challenge, and educational opportunities were rated equally but the least popular.

Those members with 10-15 years of service listed and rated the following: clothing, financial incentives, recognition and fun were rated equally. Award dinners received the second highest rating, followed third by helping the community.

Those members with 15-20 years of service listed and rated the following: clothing, helping the community, and recognition were rated equally as the most popular. Award dinners was second, followed by family tradition and social activities.

Those members with 20-25 years of service listed and rated the following: award dinners, clothing, helping the community, and social activities rated equally.

Those members with 25-30 years of service listed and rated the following: award dinners, clothing, helping the community, recognition, and educational opportunities were rated equally followed by family tradition and social activities.

Those members with > 30 years of service listed and rated the following: clothing, helping the community, and personal challenge were rated equally followed by award dinners, recognition, educational opportunities, and social activities (Figure 8).

Discussion

The results of the feedback forms indicate that both chiefs (61%) and fire company members (52.2%) have found that motivation is currently or has been a problem within their organizations. However, the majority of the members surveyed with 0-5 years of service did not see motivation as a problem. This may be a result of the members being new to the organization and unfamiliar with any past motivational problems that may have occurred. In addition, this person was motivated enough to join the organization and, provided with the proper motivational atmosphere will have the desire to learn and participate. This was the only group of members not to see motivational problems.

Motivational problems begin being recognized by members in the 5-10 years of service grouping and continuing through to the group with 25-30 years of service. These groups begin to recognize motivational problems because of their familiarity with their organization. These members had enough years of service to sample both the positive and the negative experiences of the organization.

The members with greater than 30 years of service were equally divided on this subject. However, there were not enough respondents to provide the data required to determine if a trend existed within this specific group.

Regarding the question of “What factors do you see negatively affecting the motivation of volunteer firefighters?” the choice of factors varied between the Chiefs and members. The discussion of this question will be conducted by addressing each negative factor affecting motivation and how it affects both the Chiefs and the members surveyed.

Increased response to automatic fire alarm systems was seen as the most negative factor affecting motivation by the Chiefs surveyed and the members surveyed with 15-20 years of service. The members with 0-5, 10-15, and 20-25 years of service also saw this factor as one of the more common negative factors affecting motivation. A report from the USFA cites a statistic from the NFPA which indicates a 60 percent increase in the volume of emergency calls to volunteer fire companies between 1983 and 1996 (U.S. Fire Administration, 1998). Communities everywhere have seen an increase in the installation of automatic fire alarm systems. With the increased number of alarm systems have come an increased number of alarm responses. Many of these alarm system responses are caused by malfunctions in the system or accidental activations by the owner/occupant. “Many volunteers are growing tired of time demands associated with responding to these false alarms” (U.S. Fire Administration, 1998, p.10).

The Chiefs surveyed, reported that increase responses to non-emergency incidents was the second most significant factor affecting motivation. While members with 0-5, 5-10, 15-20, and 25-30 years of service also saw this factor as one of the more common negative factors affecting motivation. “The public has not only grown to expect a wider range of services from

the fire department, but has also grown to rely more heavily on the fire department” (U.S. Fire Administration, 1998, p.8). “The public is also aware of the greater knowledge and professionalism of firefighters”. “As a result, they may call the fire department to check an electrical concern instead of an electrician”. (U.S. Fire Administration, 1998, p.8).

Chiefs saw time demands by the fire company as the third most significant factor with a negative affect on motivation. Conversely, members with 10-15, 20-25, and > 30 years of service saw this factor as leading cause affecting motivation. Members with 5-10 years of service rated this factor as the second most common cause. There are many reasons for those members surveyed to rate time demands by the fire company as one of the leading factors affecting motivation. Fire companies can require large blocks of time to attend emergency incidents, meetings, work details on the fire station, maintenance of apparatus and equipment, and training. The Report Recruitment and Retention in the Volunteer Fire Service – Problems and Solutions (U.S. Fire Administration, 1998) relates that volunteers in the mid-1960’s received as little as 30 hours of initial training. In addition, it was not uncommon for new recruits to join a fire company and be allowed to ride the apparatus the same day. Because fire companies rely less on the concept of “on the job training”, members are required to spent substantial amounts of time attending training sessions. The report mentions the fact that today’s new recruits are often required to attend initial training sessions with durations of between 100 and 150 hours. Many volunteer firefighters have problems meeting these time demands because of the need for families to have two incomes. Because of time spent at work, time requirements for children, and the time to maintain homes, members have limited time to volunteer. As the report states, spare time is becoming an “anomaly today”.

Promotional opportunities within the organization was cited by the Chiefs as the fourth most significant factor with a negative affect on motivation. Conversely, members with 15-20 years of service saw this factor as having a more significant affect on motivation. The Report *Recruitment and Retention in the Volunteer Fire Service – Problems and Solutions* (U.S. Fire Administration, 1998) mentions a list of the basic needs of volunteers. Within that list is mentioned the opportunity for volunteers to grow. “Challenge members with new jobs, larger tasks, and an opportunity to influence decisions” (U.S. Fire Administration, 1998 p.43). In addition, the report discusses the steps that fire departments use to choose and retain officers. Some fire departments use elections, where officers could be re-elected after a term of a specific number of years. This allows other members of the department to have a chance at a promotion. It also provides department members with the opportunity to remove those officers that do not have the necessary people management skills or technical ability.

Surprisingly, the Chiefs surveyed found the lack of emergency incidents as the fourth and one of the least important factors affecting motivation. To the contrary, members with 0-5, 5-10, and 25-30 years of service saw this factor as the primary factor affecting motivation. Members with 10-15 and 20-25 years of service saw this as the second leading factor affecting motivation. The respondent members see this factor affecting motivation because they have the desire to respond to the “good calls”. Good calls are explained by John M. Becknell, in a JEMS article, as calls at which the responder is truly needed and where something challenging and exciting happens. The responders are able to use their skills and education to help someone. Becknell explained, “people in this business universally understand the relationship between going on good

calls and feeling positive about their work” (Becknell 1992, p. 33). However, this desire to demonstrate the responder’s skills may not be perceived by the general public in a positive light.

Finally, the respondent Chiefs viewed poor leadership and coordination as the factor having the least affect on motivation. The members with 0-5, 15-20, 25-30 years of service agreed with the Chiefs on the choice of this factor. However, the members with > 30 years of service disagreed and found it to be the leading factor affecting motivation. As cited in the Report Recruitment and Retention in the Volunteer Fire Service – Problems and Solutions (U.S. Fire Administration, 1998), poor leadership and coordination can encompass many areas of management. The leadership style of the officers may have an affect on the member’s motivation. Authoritative management styles cause resentment in volunteers. This resentment is caused by volunteers feeling they receive enough orders in their full time employment and they do not want the same atmosphere in the fire station. Rodney Nordstrom and R. Vance Hall in the Building Officials and Codes Administrators magazine discuss ineffective and effective managers. The “ineffective” manager is one that never has contact with the employees unless something is going wrong, or stops to ridicule the employee in front of other co-workers and isn’t clear about what is expected of employees. Nordstrom and Hall contrasts this manager by describing an “effective” manager that gives immediate and specific feedback about job performance, listens and acts on employee suggestions, and sets clear expectations for performance. This manager often times ”catches their workers being good” (Nordstrom and Hall, 1985, p. 17). This manager will also supply immediate and positive feedback which will boost the workers motivation. Motivation can also be negatively affected by a lack of coordination, which is caused by not providing members with proper direction. This is especially true when it

comes to the training of new members. According to the report *Recruitment and Retention in the Volunteer Fire Service – Problems and Solutions* (U.S. Fire Administration, 1998), without proper direction, new members will become frustrated and quit. This report also cites the failure to manage change as a part of poor leadership. If not properly managed, change can be upsetting to a fire company and will usually cause a loss of membership and degrade motivation. Good communication among members is an essential ingredient to facilitate change. “Change is inevitable in any fire department, and it can be painful if not properly managed” (U.S. Fire Administration, 1998, p. 11).

In response to the question “Do you see generational differences and attitudes affecting the motivation of members?” the Chiefs and members surveyed agreed on the answer. Ten (58%) of the Chiefs surveyed believed that they saw generational differences and attitudes affecting the motivation of the members of their companies. Seven (42%) of the Chiefs surveyed disagreed and said they did not see these differences and attitudes affecting motivation.

Thirty-four (50.7%) of the members surveyed said they believed that generational differences had an affect on motivation. Thirty-three (49.2%) of the members surveyed did not see generation differences having an affect on motivation. When this question is broken down by years of services, members with 0-5 and 5-10 years of service did not see a relationship between generational differences and motivation. However, the remaining member groups (10-15 through < 30 years of service) all saw motivation being affected by generational differences. In both the Chiefs’ and members’ feedback forms there were many negative comments about generational differences. As suggested by Bruce Tulgan in his book, *Managing Generation X – How to Bring Out the Best in Young Talent*, many of the negative views towards Generation X

are misconceptions of a generation that grew up in very different and technically advanced historical times. Many of those pointing out the generational differences in Generation X are from the previous generation known as “Baby Boomers”. Tulgan points out that Baby Boomers expect Generation X to accept and follow their believe and value systems. Because Baby Boomers and Generation X grew up in different times and faced different challenges it is hard for them to accept each other’s believe and value systems. Tulgan cites one example of how the times differed between the two groups. Baby Boomers, for the most part, grew up in a two-parent households. When they arrived home from school, there was usually one parent at home waiting for them. In addition, their parents were usually employed by only one or two companies during their entire work career. They worked for companies that were loyal to their employees and provided job security. In contrast, those in Generation X often came home to an empty house because both parents worked. The parents of Generation X children were often employed by several companies during their work careers. The practice of employers being loyal to their employees and providing job security was ended because of changing economic times.

In addition, Generation X children were also more likely to grow up in a single parent household. These early life experiences gives each group a different prospective on life and causes them to react differently to the situations they encounter. Generation X is often perceived as disloyal, cynical, arrogant, unwilling to pay their dues, and having short attention spans. Several of the feedback forms from both survey groups, in the additional comments section, reflected these exact perceptions. To the statement that Generation X is unwilling to pay their dues, Tulgan’s research finds this is true to some extent. Generation X believes if they pay their dues, the employer will not keep their side of the bargain by providing loyalty and job security.

“Managers must offer a new system of rewards and security” (Tulgan, 2000, p.59). In addition, managers must “support Generation X’s quest for self-based career security” (Tulgan, 2000, p.258). Tulgan explains disloyalty as Generation X’s fear that the organization will not take them seriously or allow them to make their presence known within the organization. Provided with the opportunity to be taken seriously and by allowing them to make their presence known, Generation X will show a fierce loyalty to the organization.

The misperception of being cynical is Generation X taking a cautious approach to an organization. Generation X will scrutinize an organization to find one where they can belong. This takes place because of the inability of today’s institutions to form a lasting allegiance and relationship with employees. Organizations are advised to “build cultures that value the individual” (Tulgan, 2000, p.258).

Arrogance is often mistaken for Generation X’s individualism. Many in Generation X had to come home from school to empty houses and fend for themselves. This individualism and ability to fend for themselves is sometimes seen as a rebellion against authority. It is in fact, according to Tulgan, Generation X’s self-definition “allowing them to navigate in a seemingly dangerous world” (Tulgan, 2000).

Generation X is seen as having short attention spans. Bruce Tulgan refutes this perception and explains that those in Generation X are “learning machines”. Because Generation X grew up in the information revolution they are use to a “rapid fire style of interacting with information” (Tulgan, 2000). Tulgan recommends in a “Memo to Managers of Generation X” that managers “provide Generation X with as much information as possible” and “keep lines of communication open” (Tulgan, 2000, p.258).

Because of the differences in life experiences between Baby Boomers and Generation X, fire service officers should understand the attitudes and beliefs of Generation X. This understanding will allow better management and motivation of this generation. If not properly managed, this very independent group will leave an organization to seek one where they can belong and excel.

In response to question 4 (“What motivates you to participate as a member of your fire company?”) and question 5 (“What types of programs does your fire company use to motivate its’ members?”) both provide information on motivational programs and techniques used to keep members motivated to participate in their fire company. Before developing motivational programs, Bernard Weiner reminds managers “ An axiom of virtually all theories of motivation is that the organization strive to increase pleasure and decrease pain” (as cited in Fisher, 2000, p.26). In addition, John Fisher advises managers “ Motivational techniques need to be applied with sensitivity to the corporate or social environment and any other factors peculiar to the group. In broad terms you need to understand “ the big picture” before proposing solutions” (Fisher, 2000, p.29).

The Chiefs and members with 5-10, 20-25, 25-30 years of service saw award dinners as the most popular motivational program. Members with 0-5 and < 30 years of service rated this one of the second most popular programs. Jack Welch, the former CEO of General Electric, states, “I have always found celebrations were a great way to energize an organization”. “Even the smallest victories should be celebrated” (Welch, 2000, p.386). Award dinners not only bring people closer together for a social gathering but, they are used to provide recognition and praise to the members of the fire company. Recognition and praise is a source of motivation to

firefighters. As John Buckman states “one of the simplest ways to motivate the workers is to thank them and show that you need their continued support” (Buckman, 1991, p.10). These events also provide the opportunity to say something good about the organization and most importantly, the people within the organization. Recognition and praise should not only be given at award dinners but at other times during the year. As Buckman states, “for whatever reason, people don’t like to say good things about others. I have never been able to understand why human beings will only say “good job” when someone retires” (Buckman, 1991, p.10).

Finally, Jack Welch reminds us that celebrations don’t have to be as extravagant “as handing out new Mercedes automobiles; it can be as simple as a keg of beer or a dinner for two” (Welch, 2000, p.387).

Social activities were rated by the Chiefs as the second most popular program used to motivate volunteers. Members with 0-5 years of service also agreed. The other member groups rated it lower. However, social activities such as: annual picnics, family skates at a skating facility, trips to amusement parks or sporting events help to build a cohesiveness among the members. These events bring members together and help to build a bond within the organization. “Cohesiveness is one of the essential ingredients that makes a fire department successful.” “It is important not only to work as a team but, to feel like a team.” (U.S. Fire Administration, 1998, p.47)

Providing free or low cost fire company related clothing was seen as the third most popular motivational program used by the Chiefs. Members with 10-15, 15-20, 20-25, 25-30, and < 30 years of service all rated this as the highest rated program to build motivation. By providing members with hats, shirts, and jackets emblazoned with the fire company logo, helps to provide a

sense of pride and belonging to the organization. The Report on Recruitment and Retention in the Volunteer Fire Service – Problems and Solutions (U.S. Fire Administration, 1998), reminds fire service managers that feeling like a team fulfills a person's need for a sense of belonging to something important. The Report cites the need of belonging to something important as one leading reason for becoming a Fire or EMS Volunteer. In addition, a sense of belonging is one of five basic human needs as stated in Dr. Abraham Maslow's text on Personality and Motivation (as cited in Carter, 1990). "People need to belong to a group as well as a need to give and receive affection, both at home and at work" (Carter, 1990, p.22).

Financial incentives were rated by the Chiefs as the fourth most popular motivational program. It is interesting to note, members with 0-5, 5-10, and 10-15 years of service saw financial incentives as important to their motivation. These programs include: tax breaks, life insurance, pay-per-call stipends, length of services rewards and passes to a beach, amusement park, or fitness center. These types of programs may be more important to the motivation of the member groups with 15 years of service or less because many families require two incomes to survive. Financial incentives may help members to participate in other social activities outside the fire company because of the slight financial cushion they provide. As an additional note, the Chiefs rated insurance as one of the least popular motivational programs.

Length of service awards was also rated fourth as a motivational program. This program includes providing members with plaques, certificates, wristwatches, or other items that recognize the member's years of service to the organization. Some fire companies have established gift programs for years of service awards, where other fire companies provided a monetary limit that allows a member to choose their own gift.

The Chiefs rated both educational opportunities and citations as the least popular motivational programs. Members with 0-5 and 5-10 years of service rated educational opportunities as one of the least appealing motivational programs. In contrast, members with 25-30 and < 30 years of service saw this educational opportunities as a highly rated program. Education opportunities include providing members with advanced and specialty training or the opportunity to attend fire related seminars or conventions. "Education means fulfillment". " By advancing a person's skills, it not only provides the organization with a more competent person, but it also gives the person more skills to be proud of" (Bernier, 1995).

Citations provide recognition to members who perform heroic acts, outstanding fire ground operations, or complete educational programs. These citations can include certificates or ribbons worn on dress uniforms. "The thrill of the lights and sirens may fade, but we all like to hear that we've done a good job" (Bernier, 1995).

Maintaining motivated volunteers is a continuing challenging for the volunteer fire service. As Dr. Harry Carter states " It would be my caution to you that motivating such a wide range of personalities might call for the fine direction of a concert master and the hard style of a pusher (car loader) on the Tokyo subway" (Carter, 1990, p.22).

Recommendations

As a result of this study, the BVFC should continue its' current use of motivational programs. Currently, these programs include: an awards dinner, no-cost fire company clothing, minor financial incentives, and social activities that include a "Lunch with Santa" for the member's children and the practice of providing food after Fire Company meetings and other activities. However, with the exception of the awards dinner, some of the financial incentives,

and “Lunch with Santa”, a majority of these programs are more “custom” rather than established programs to maintain motivation. An established program should be developed and implemented by the BVFC to address the concept of motivating the membership. A Fire Company line officer and the Crew Association President should be part of a committee to address the motivation of the members and to refine programs that are currently implemented by custom or the Chief’s goodwill. In addition, this committee should be charged with the responsibility to develop new programs to assist in maintaining a higher level of motivation within the BVFC. As required by action research, a Standard Operating Procedure was developed and will be implemented to carry out this task.

In addition, the feedback forms also provided information that members with 0-5, 5-10, and 25-30 years of service all reported that the lack of emergency incidents was a factor that most affects motivation. To provide a substitute for the lack of emergency incidents, live fire and smoke training should be increased in the Company’s training program. In addition to using the Haverford Township Bureau of Fire’s burn facility monthly; the BVFC should consider using the Delaware County Board of Fire and Life Safety’s burn facility to provide members with the opportunity to experience different scenarios in a different setting.

Generational differences were seen by a majority of the groups surveyed. The misunderstanding of generational differences will not only cause a misinterpretation of what appear to be motivational problems, but may also affect the retention of members. Fire officers often receive fire and specialty training but rarely receive management training. With generational differences and other basic management issues that could have a large impact on the motivation and retention of members, the Officers of the BVFC should receive management training as part of their standard training program.

Because the topic of motivation is such a large and varied course of management study, those interested should conduct further investigation beyond this minor exploration of the problems and solutions of maintaining motivated volunteers.

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(Appendix 1)

Applied Research Project
National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program

Project Title: Maintaining Motivated Firefighters-A Continuing Challenge for the Volunteer Fire Service.

Motivation – defined as causative factor; incentive; drive

1. Motivation of members in my Company has been or is currently a problem.
Yes _____ No _____

2. What factors do you see affecting the motivation of volunteer firefighters?
(Number answer in order of significance 1 to 6 – with 1 being the highest)
 ___ Lack of emergency incidents ___ Poor leadership of coordination
 ___ Time demands by the Fire Company ___ Increased response to automatic alarms
 ___ Increased response to non-emergency incidents ___ Promotional opportunities
 Other factors –(please list and number) ___ _____
 ___ _____

3. Do you see generational differences and attitudes affecting the motivation of members in your Fire Company? Yes _____ No _____
(If yes, please explain continue on back of paper if necessary) _____

4. What type of programs does your Fire Company use to motivate its' members?
(examples – award dinners, clothing, financial incentives, gifts)

5. List additional comments related to motivating volunteer firefighters not covered by this survey.

Name: _____ Fire Company _____

Contact Phone Number: _____

(Appendix 2)

Applied Research Project
National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program

Project Title: Maintaining Motivated Firefighters-A Continuing Challenge for the Volunteer Fire Service.

Fire Company _____ Years of Service _____

Motivation – defined as causative factor; incentive; drive

1. Motivation of members in my Company has been or is currently a problem.

Yes _____ No _____

2. What factors do you see negatively affecting the motivation of volunteer firefighters?
(Number answer in order of significance 1 to 6 - with 1 being the highest)

- ___ Lack of emergency incidents ___ Poor leadership of coordination
- ___ Time demands by the Fire Company ___ Increased response to automatic alarms
- ___ Increased response to non-emergency incidents ___ Promotional opportunities
- Other factors –(please list and number) ___ _____

3. Do you see generational differences and attitudes affecting the motivation of members in your Fire Company? Yes _____ No _____

(If yes, please explain) _____

4. What motivates you to participate as a member of your Fire Company?
(example – helping the community, personal challenge, recognition, family tradition)

5. What type of programs does your Fire Company use to motivate its' members?
(examples – awards dinners, clothing, financial incentives)

Thank you for your time and participation

(Appendix 3)

BROOKLINE VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY

1315 Darby Road

Havertown, PA 19083

610-446-9955

610-449-4567

November 13, 2002

Chief John F. Viola
Brookline Volunteer Fire Company
1315 Darby Rd.
Havertown, Pa. 19083

Dear Chief Viola,

I am currently enrolled in the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program. This Program requires each student to submit an applied research paper after each of the four program courses. My applied research paper is titled "Maintaining Motivated Firefighters – A Continuing Challenge for the Volunteer Fire Service".

Enclosed is a survey form that asks questions about motivational problems and programs to overcome these types of problems. Could you please take a few minutes and complete the survey? Enclosed is a stamped pre-addressed envelope for the return of the completed survey. I will not mention specific Fire Companies in my paper without your permission. In addition, I would be happy to provide you a copy of the survey results or a copy of the research paper. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact me at (610) 446-9955.

I greatly appreciate your help. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Mark R. Sweeney
Deputy Chief

(Appendix 4)

BROOKLINE FIRE COMPANY

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR OFFICER ASSIGNMENTS

SOP # 02-04

JOHN F. VIOLA, CHIEF

I. Purpose: To establish assignments and duties for Officers of the Brookline Fire Co.

II. Scope: This policy applies to all Officers.

III. Positions:

- A. Chief
 - Acts as Incident Commander at all emergency and non-emergency incidents.
 - Oversees the operations of the Fire Company's operating committees including, but not limited to, apparatus engineering, fire prevention, purchasing and training.
 - Acts as the Fire Company's representative to the Haverford Township Bureau of Fire
- B. Deputy Chief
 - Act as Incident Commander at all emergency and non-emergency incidents in the absence of the Chief.
 - Develops and implements Standard Operating Procedures.
 - Acts as the Fire Company's alternate representative to the Haverford Township Bureau of Fire.
 - **Oversees the development, refinement and implementation of programs to maintain officer and firefighter motivation within the Fire Company.**
- C. Assistant Chief
 - Act as Incident Commander at all emergency and non-emergency incidents in the absence of the Chief.
 - Oversees various operations at emergency and non-emergency incidents.
 - Coordinates all training activities
- D. Assistant Chief
 - Act as Incident Commander at all emergency and non-emergency incidents in the absence of the Chief.
 - Oversees various operations at emergency and non-emergency incidents.
 - Conducts all purchasing for firefighting equipment and supplies.
- E. Captain
 - Oversees training and operations of the Ladder Company.
 - Assists with training activities
 - Supervises various operations at emergency and non-emergency incidents.

(2)

- F. Captain
- Oversees training and operations of the Engine Company.
 - Assists with company training activities
 - Supervises various operations at emergency and non-emergency incidents.
- G. Lieutenant
- Assists with training and operations of the Ladder Company.
 - Supervises various operations at emergency and non-emergency incidents.
 - Assists with company training activities.
- H. Lieutenant
- Assists with training and operations of the Engine Company.
 - Supervises various operations at emergency and non-emergency incidents.
 - Maintains and populates fire report database.
- I. Chief Engineer
- Monitors and coordinates apparatus and equipment repair and testing.
 - Conducts driver training program.

Figure 1
Chiefs - Is Motivation a Problem?

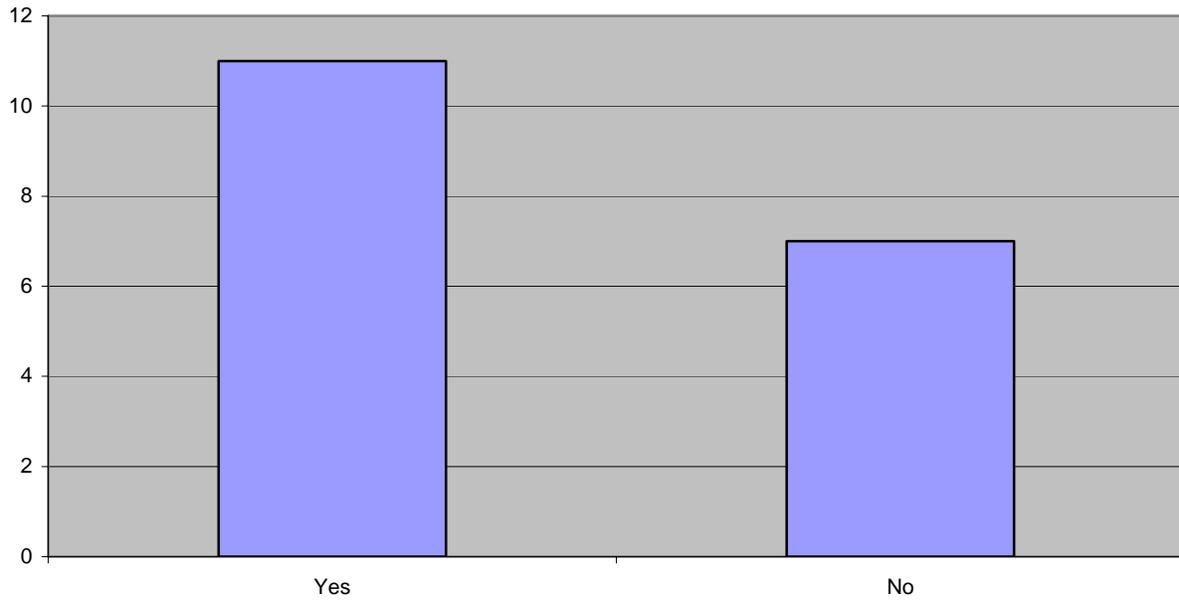


Figure 2
Chiefs - Factors Affecting Motivation

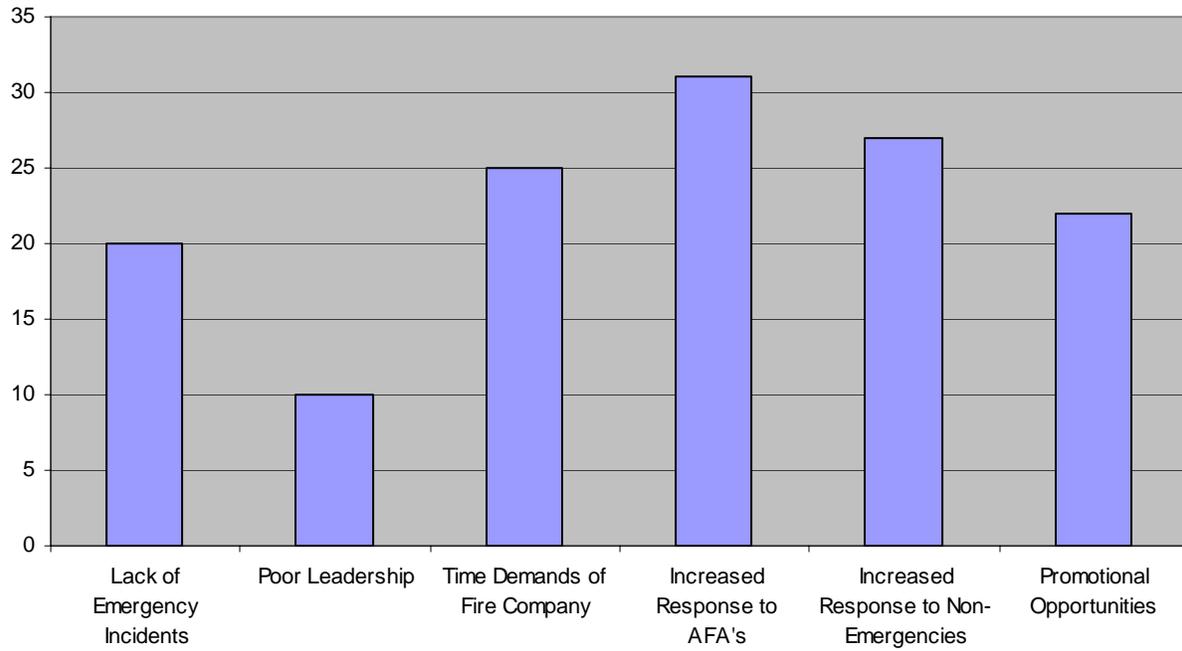


Figure 3
Chiefs - Generational Differences?

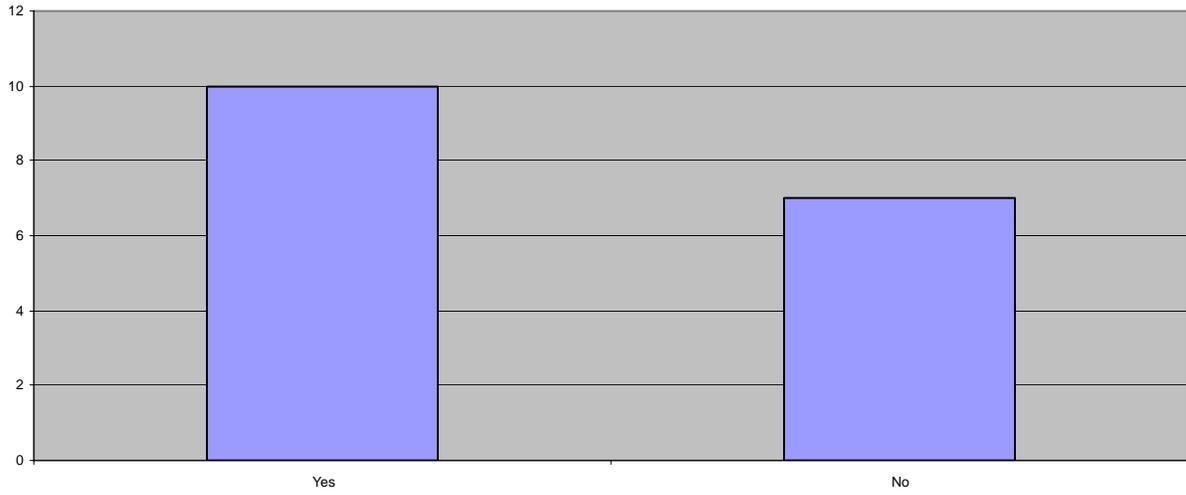


Figure 4
Chiefs - Motivational Programs

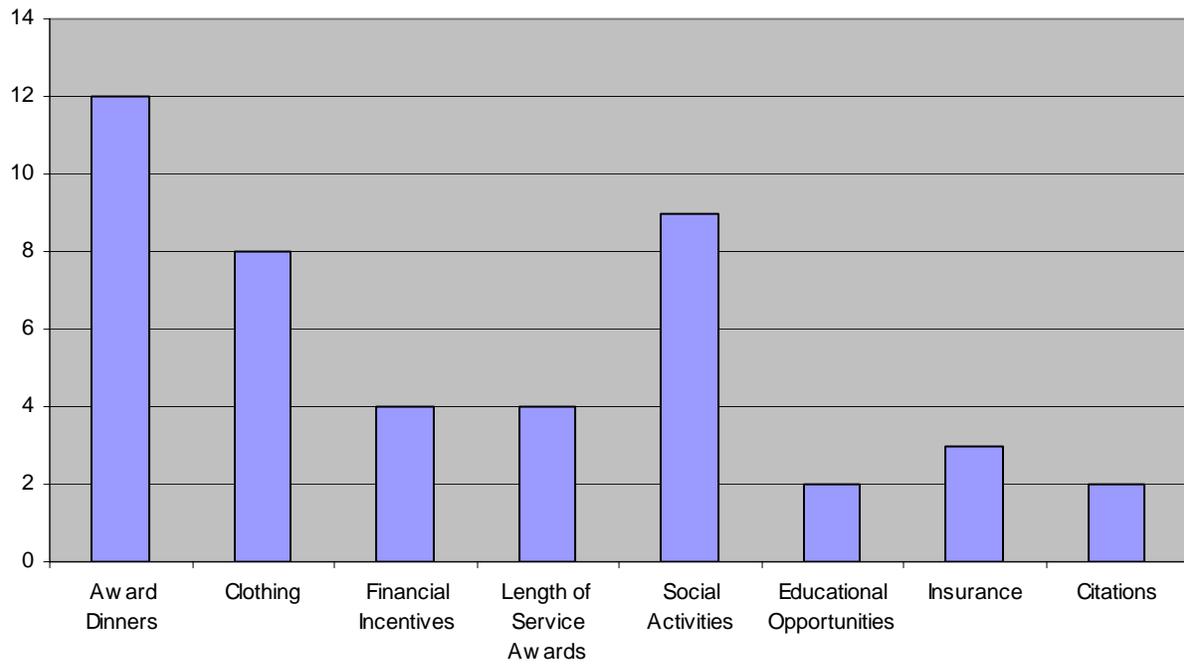


Figure 5
Members - Is Motivation a Problem

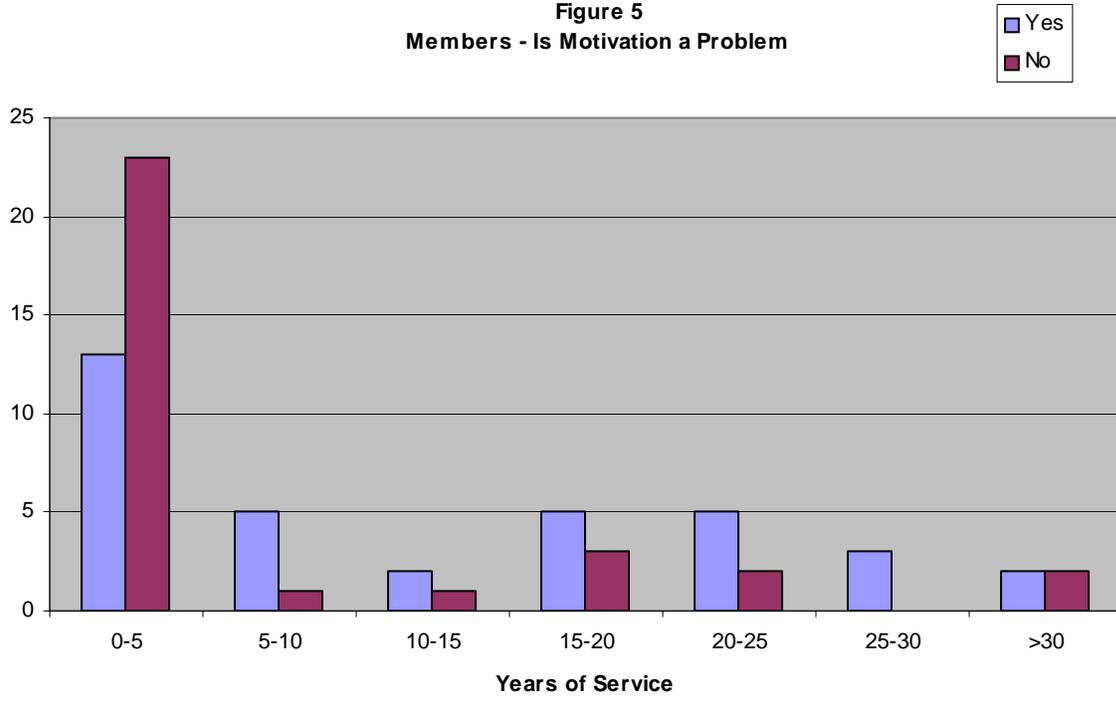


Figure 6
Members - Factors Affecting Motivation

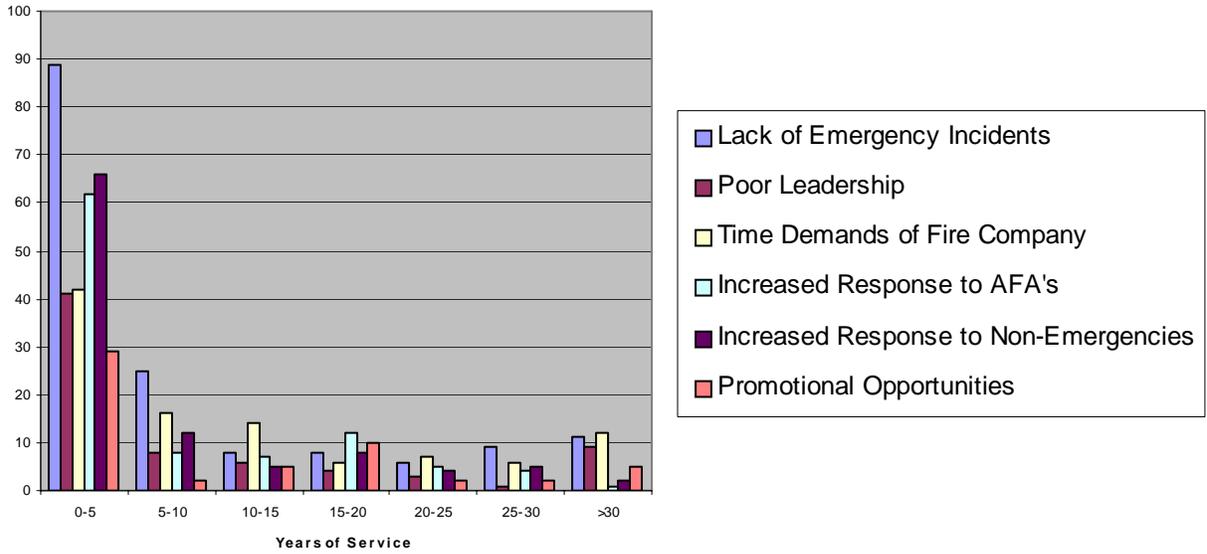


Figure 7
Members - Generational Differences

Yes
No

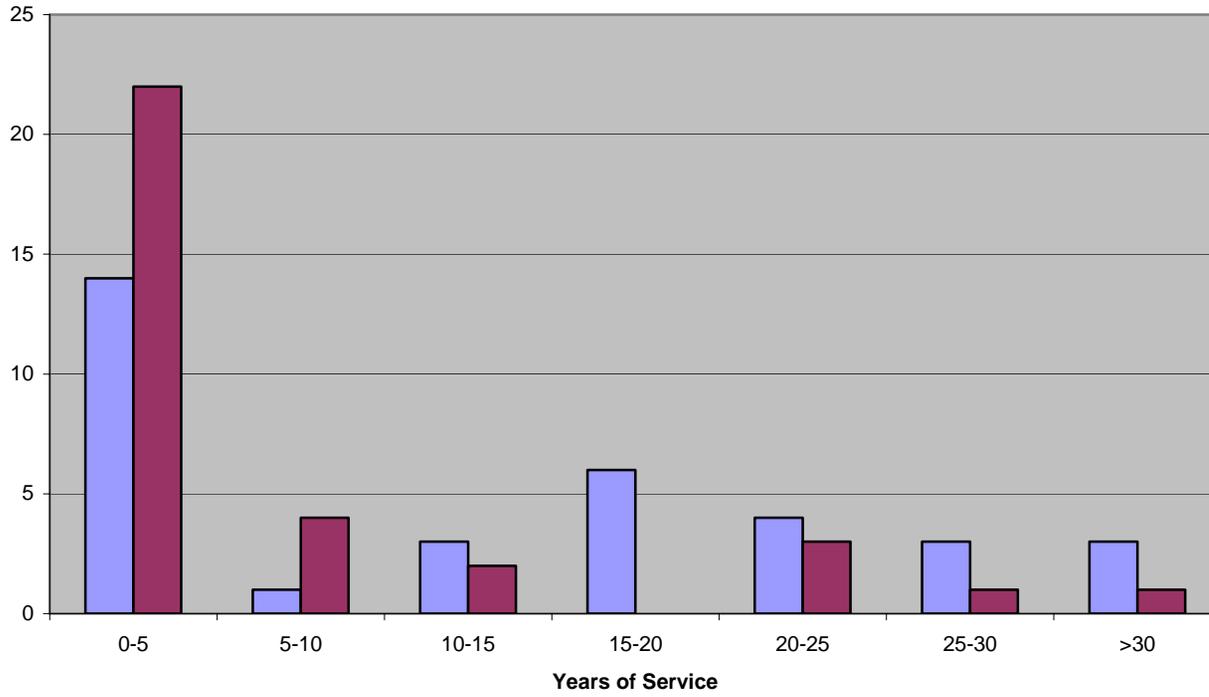
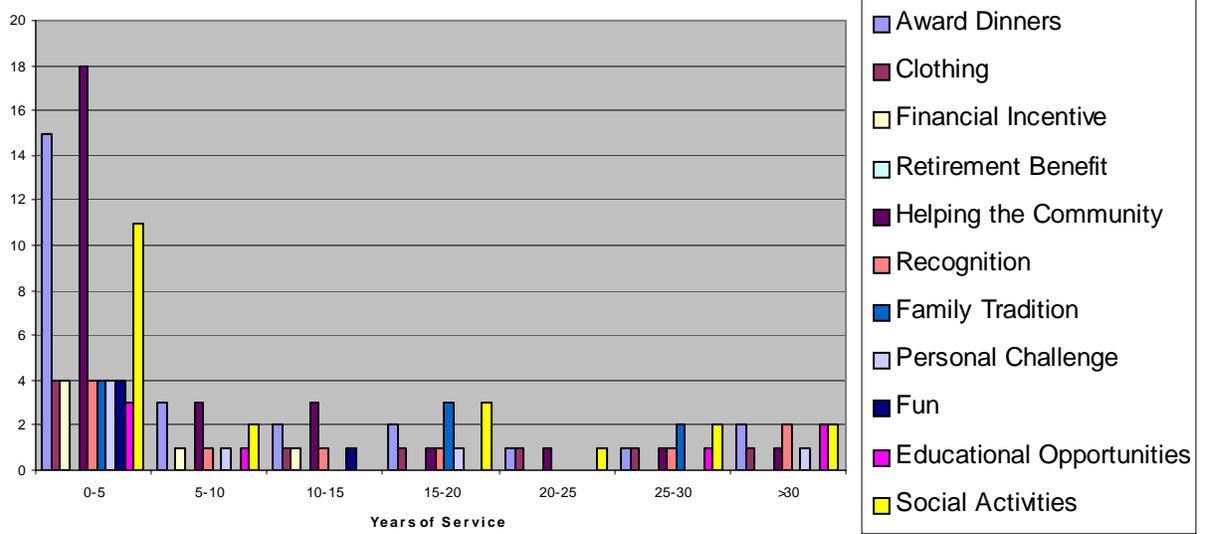


Figure 8
Members - What Motivates You?



Chiefs Survey

Is Motivation a Problem?

Yes	11
No	7

Factors Affecting Motivation

Lack of Emergency Incidents	20
Poor Leadership	10
Time Demands of Fire Company	25
Increased Response to AFA's	31
Increased Response to Non-Emergencies	27
Promotional Opportunities	22

Generational Differences

Yes	10
No	7

Motivational Programs

Award Dinners	12
Clothing	8
Financial Incentives	4
Length of Service Awards	4
Social Activities	9
Educational Opportunities	2
Insurance	3
Citations	2

Members Survey

Is Motivation a Problem?

	Yes	No
0-5	13	23
5-10	5	1
10-15	2	1
15-20	5	3
20-25	5	2
25-30	3	
>30	2	2

Factors Affecting Motivation

	0-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-25	25-30	>30
Lack of Emergency Incidents	89	25	8	8	6	9	11
Poor Leadership	41	8	6	4	3	1	9
Time Demands of Fire Company	42	16	14	6	7	6	12
Increased Response to AFA's	62	8	7	12	5	4	1
Increased Response to Non-Emergencies	66	12	5	8	4	5	2
Promotional Opportunities	29	2	5	10	2	2	5

Generational Differences

	0-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-25	25-30	>30
Yes	14	1	3	6	4	3	3
No	22	4	2		3	1	1

What Motivates You?

	0-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-25	25-30	>30
Award Dinners	15	3	2	2	1	1	2
Clothing	4		1	1	1	1	1
Financial Incentive	4	1	1				
Retirement Benefit							
Helping the Community	18	3	3	1	1	1	1
Recognition	4	1	1	1			
Family Tradition	4			3		2	
Personal Challenge	4	1		1			
Fun	4		1				
Educational Opportunities	3	1				1	2
Social Activities	11	2		3	1	2	2