Recommendations for Combatting Voluntary Turnover in Small City Police Departments

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Recommendations for Combatting Voluntary Turnover in Small City Police Departments

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By Jason King
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Acknowledgments

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Abstract

Recommendations for Combatting Turnover in Small City Police Departments

Jason E. King

Under the Supervision of Dr. Patrick Solar

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, police agencies nationwide have experienced increasing levels of staff turnover. This has a rippling effect upon the department and community as turnover has a negative impact upon crime control efforts and costs agencies exorbitant amounts of money. The problem is more prevalent in small police departments.

This research paper will offer evidence of the turnover problem, identify the unique challenges smaller law enforcement agencies face, list known causes for turnover, and offer up recommendations leading experts agree combat turnover.

Research Methodology

Information for this study came from a qualitative review of secondary sources from the past twenty years. These sources include accredited journals, textbooks, agency websites, and government reports.
Anticipated Outcomes

One can expect this research paper to: (1) Prove smaller policing agencies are faced with unique challenges that affect their ability to recruit and retain law enforcement officers; (2) Prove turnover adversely affects law enforcement agencies; (3) Identify primary contributing factors to turnover; and, (4) Conclude implementing best practices in both hiring and retention strategies will lower turnover rates.
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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

In recent years, police agencies nationwide have experienced increasing levels of staff turnover. This has a rippling effect upon the department and community as turnover has a negative impact upon crime control efforts and costs agencies exorbitant amounts of money (Yongbeom, 2013). Turnover is especially prevalent in small municipal police departments, often considered training grounds where recent academy graduates hire on for lower pay, receive basic training, and get valuable experience before moving on to larger departments (Wareham, Smith, & Lambert, 2013). In fact, the separation rate from small municipal police forces in the United States is four times the rate of large agencies, and most of those separations are voluntary (U.S. Department of Justice, 2011).

Research suggests the type and size of law enforcement agencies appear to be associated with different forms of turnover. Municipal policing agencies in rural areas, with fewer sworn officers, reported higher levels of voluntary resignation than did their suburban, urban, county, and state counterparts (Wareham, et al., 2013). In fact, the smaller the agency, the more turnover it experienced.

In a 2008 report released by the U.S. Department of Justice, police departments with fewer than ten officers experienced a 20% separation rate. This compared to a separation rate of 11% in agencies with 10 to 24 officers, 7% in agencies with 25 to 499 officers, and only 5% in agencies with over 500 officers. Voluntary turnover, meaning resignations, accounted for nearly twice the percentage of separations in agencies with fewer than 10 officers (71%) as agencies with 500 or more officers (37%). Furthermore, two-thirds of those leaving smaller agencies do so with less
than five years of service, compared to just one-third of those at larger agencies (Hoffman, 1993). In summary, small police departments are experiencing a greater challenge than their large counterparts when it comes to retaining officers.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It is generally understood turnover can have both positive and negative effects upon a police department. Positive effects may include ridding an agency of poor performing police officers for instance. Negative effects include loss of experienced staff and money. This paper will focus on negative effects.

When it comes to finances, direct costs associated with turnover involves recruitment, screening, and training costs of replacement hires (Evans, Christopher, & Stoffel, 2000; Weisberg & Kirschenbaum, 1991). Recruiting and hiring costs tend to be much higher for police agencies than for many other types of organizations because police selection procedures include background investigations, medical examinations, interviews, psychological assessments, drug screening, physical agility tests, and department-specific training (Wilson, Dalton, Scheer, and Grammich, 2010).

While not as quantifiable as direct costs, the indirect costs associated with turnover are, perhaps, the most detrimental to policing agencies and are often overlooked by those making budget decisions. The predominant indirect financial loss is that of human capital, which can best be described as all the knowledge, talents, skills, abilities, experience, intelligence, training,
judgment, and wisdom possessed by individual officers within the police organization (Becker, 1993). The loss of human capital is concerning and the higher levels of turnover experienced in small agencies may potentially trigger turnover among the remaining employees, making matters worse.

Turnover creates lower productivity of new hires as they are trained. Even after college and the academy, there remains a significant learning curve for new officers trying to assimilate into their new-found profession, which means remaining officers must pick up the slack (Wareham, et al., 2013). This, combined with decreased social networks and contacts, increased use of inexperienced and/or tired staff, insufficient staffing, and decreased morale may result in decreased job satisfaction (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000). This is critical because as job satisfaction decreases, turnover increases (Hom and Griffeth, 1994; Tett and Meyer, 2006).

In sum, as outlined in Figure 1, turnover is very costly to law enforcement agencies over the long run due to rehiring expenses and the loss of human capital (Wareham, et al., 2013). A reduction in turnover could save law enforcement agencies substantial expenditures over the long run. In fact, one effort to quantify the costs of officer turnover suggests replacing an experienced officer, one with at least three years of experience for example, costs agencies more than twice the officer’s annual salary (Orrick, 2002).
**Figure 1. Direct versus Indirect Costs of Turnover**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct Costs</th>
<th>Indirect Costs</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Recruitment and selection costs invested in hiring the officer who leaves</strong></td>
<td>Loss of morale in agency</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Training invested in the officer</strong></td>
<td>Damage to agency reputation if the issue is wide-spread</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Academy</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>• Specialized</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Administrative costs to process the officer’s separation</strong></td>
<td>Loss of intellectual capital and experience base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disbursement of benefits to separating officer</strong></td>
<td>Loss of relationships with staff</td>
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<td><strong>Lost productivity</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Overtime associated with increased workload for remaining staff</strong></td>
<td>Lower productivity of new hires</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Recruitment and selection cost of replacement</strong></td>
<td>Decreased job satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advertising</td>
<td>• Social networks harmed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recruitment staff &amp; activities</td>
<td>• Increased use of inexperienced or tired staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Testing costs (interview, background, physical agility, CVSA, and medical</td>
<td>• Insufficient staffing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; psychological screening)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Administrative cost of processing a new employee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training for replacement</strong></td>
<td>Risk of more turnover</td>
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While the financial burden is commonly cited as being the most obvious effect of turnover, one must not forget community safety can be compromised when substantial experience and training is lost through staff turnover and vacancy (McKeever & Kranda, 2000). This is especially true in small police departments where they are inclined to reduce services while recruiting and training new officers (Harris & Baldwin, 1999). This may result in less police coverage in the community and decreased quality of services (Harris & Baldwin, 1999; Lynch & Tuckey, 2008; Wood, 2000).
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This research paper will argue the voluntary turnover rate in small policing agencies is greater than that of their large city counterparts. It will further argue voluntary turnover has a negative effect upon police departments and the communities they serve, to include monetary loss (Wilson, et al., 2010), loss of human capital (Becker, 1993), and reduction in public safety (McKeever & Kranda, 2000). Lastly, it will argue retention efforts are improved when agencies implement best practices to combat it.

The issue of turnover in small law enforcement agencies is worthy of further research when considering three quarters of the nation’s police departments are considered small, with less than 25 employees. There are numerous reports and studies on the subject matter that offer countless ideas on how to combat the problem.

SECTION II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review is divided into three sections. The first section explores unique challenges small law enforcement agencies face that predispose them to turnover. It is important for leaders of small law enforcement agencies to understand turnover will be inherently greater in their departments. There may be very little these leaders can do to combat the inevitable turnover that is characteristic of small agencies. That is not to say they should not endeavor to learn the best practices to combat turnover as sections two and three will explain. Sections two and three explore internal and external factors contributing to turnover. Leaders must become familiar with the antecedents of job dissatisfaction if they wish to combat turnover.
SPECIFIC CHALLENGES FOR SMALL DEPARTMENTS

As one ponders over the main reasons for voluntary turnover in law enforcement agencies, one must first acknowledge small police departments face an uphill battle to begin with when it comes to attrition. Limited budgets, lack of formal recognition programs, lack of career advancement opportunities, and a lack of highly trained leaders in smaller agencies all but predestine them to higher rates of turnover. We will examine this further in this section.

In 2015, the challenges small police departments face became a main focal point of the White House Task Force on 21st Century Policing. "So many problems of organizational quality control are made worse by the tiny size of most local police agencies," University of Maryland criminologist Lawrence Sherman told the taskforce. Smaller agencies, the White House panel concluded, "often lack the resources for training and equipment accessible to larger departments" (Johnson, 2015).

While the “lack of resources” mentioned by the White House was unspecified, many would argue the resource most lacking in small departments is money, and they would be right. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the larger the department, the more financial resources they have. In fact, large metropolitan departments invest nearly 60% more in their operations – $391 per resident – than their small city counterparts – less than $234 (BJS, 2015).
The BJS report reveals the reality small city police departments may not be able to afford to address measures that improve job satisfaction, the main antecedent to turnover (Hom and Griffeth, 1994; Tett and Meyer, 2006). Many of the reasons for turnover require a financial commitment from organizational leaders. Indeed, career development programs, recognition programs, equipment purchases, and adequate pay and benefits all come at a cost. Unfortunately, if officials responsible for police budgets in small communities are not willing to increase operational spending, it will take a great leader to overcome the remaining antecedents to turnover. One must question, given the lack of financial resources, whether small agencies can afford such leaders.

Understanding and addressing the complex issues facing small city police departments requires an educated police leader. In addition to an advanced degree, many hiring agencies are looking for candidates who have completed a major law enforcement management training program like the FBI National Academy, Northwestern Center for Public Safety’s School of Police Management and Command, the Southern Police Institute’s Administrative Officers Course, the Police Executive Research Forum’s Senior Management Institute for Police, or the IACP’s Leadership in Police Organizations course (Brown, 2008). However, as previously pointed out, with limited funds, small city police departments will find it difficult to entice such candidates as they are unable to offer pay and benefits commensurate with their qualifications. Therefore, it is possible some small city police departments are led by chiefs who, while very experienced and capable, lack the requisite knowledge to combat turnover.
Lastly, when considering unique challenges faced by small agencies, one cannot overlook the connection between young officers, small agencies, and disproportionate turnover. Research distinguishes among those who exit the police profession and it suggests that young persons and new officers leave policing in disproportionate numbers, regardless of the size of the agency (Wilson et al., 2010; Riley, et al., 2005; Yearwood and Freeman, 2004; Lynch and Tuckey, 2008). Unfortunately for small departments, new or young officers often start out there because they understand they can gain valuable experience that will make them a more attractive candidate to larger departments. This means small departments are faced with the added risk of hiring those who belong to a subcategory of officers known to exit the police profession in disproportionate numbers.

EXTERNAL FACTORS FOR TURNOVER

Law enforcement attrition is a complex and complicated issue to manage. There are many factors at play, both internally and externally, making it difficult for agencies to address the issue. In this section, we’ll discuss external factors influencing turnover in law enforcement agencies.

The single greatest external influence on turnover has been the nation’s growing economy (Orrick, 2008). In fact, the United States currently enjoys the lowest unemployment rate it has in 16 years (BLS, 2017). Many states enjoy an unemployment rate of less than 4%, which the Federal Reserve reports is below what is considered a normal rate of unemployment (Federal Reserve, 2017). Job growth is driving all of this. Since the recession of 2008 ended, employers
in the United States have added an average of 190,000 jobs per month (CBG, 2017). The result is an economy that has more jobs than workers.

In this environment, employers in both the public and private sector have sweetened the pot to attract qualified applicants and keep them. More attractive and appealing work environments are luring officers from one agency to the next, or from the public sector to the private sector, and officers are all too happy to leave simply because they can (Orrick, 2008).

INTERNAL FACTORS FOR TURNOVER

Research suggests officer decisions to leave often take place over a considerable period and do not result from one decisive event (Cooper & Ingram, 2004). Research further suggests job satisfaction and organizational commitment are major contributing factors when it comes to turnover (Hom and Griffeth, 1994; Tett and Meyer, 2006). Therefore, it is essential for police leaders to recognize the internal conditions that push the officer to look for better opportunities and address them to the best of their ability (Orrick, 2008). In this section, we will explore the explanations for turnover identified in these four separate pieces of literature surrounding police retention:

(1) Hiring and Retention Issues in Police Agencies: Readings on the Determinants of Police Strength, Hiring and Retention of Officers, and the Federal COPS Program. By the Urban Institute Justice Police Center. In this report to the National Institute of Justice, authors Koper, Macguire, Moore, and Huffer provide information for police practitioners and scholars following
their examination of recent experiences of police agencies nationwide in hiring and retaining sworn officers. The NIJ study, conducted by the Urban Institute, looked at, amongst other things, the amount of time it takes to hire, train, and deploy officers and the problems encountered in doing so; as well as officers’ length of service at an agency and reasons for leaving.

(2) Recruitment and Retention Best Practices Update of 2006. By the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training. This report addresses the rapidly changing environment in which law enforcement leaders find themselves today. It acknowledges more leadership attention in workforce management is needed if executives are to successfully recruit and retain staff. This report provides information and resources on best practices to assist law enforcement in addressing recruitment and retention issues.

(3) Best Practices Guide: Recruitment, Retention, and Turnover of Law Enforcement Personnel. By the International Association of Chiefs of Police. In this guide, author W. Wayne Orrick provides an overview of the issues that impact an agencies ability to recruit and retain qualified persons who are a good fit for police agencies. Orrick endeavors to identify processes for developing a high retention environment.

(4) Police Recruitment and Retention for the New Millennium: The State of Knowledge. By the RAND Center on Quality Policing. This report
summarizes for police professionals lessons on recruiting and retaining diverse, effective workforces based upon what has been tried elsewhere and what might be applicable in their own communities. It is a comprehensive analysis of issues confronting policing agencies and how these have developed over time.

Here are the explanations identified in the literature review, in no order.

**Salary** – The most frequently cited reason by law enforcement leaders of why officers leave is compensation (Orrick, 2008; Yearwood & Freeman, 2006). Compensation includes salary and benefits but also perceptions by officers that the agency they are with will afford a good life (Wilson et al., 2010). Agency leaders must beware, though, as pay may just be a symptom of other things not going well. To be more specific, an officer may simply think they do not get paid enough to put up with other internal factors, like poor leadership. It is possible leaders cite compensation most frequently because they do not know or do not want to admit the real reasons for turnover. In fact, some studies found poor management to be the top reason employees leave (Lee, 2006).

While not specific to law enforcement, a 2006 study conducted by C. Lee is worth consideration. In that study, of 20,000 workers from 18 industries surveyed, between 80 and 90 percent of them resigned for reasons other than salary. Consequently, the remainder of this section will explore factors aside from salary.
Poor Supervisors or Leadership – The number one internal factor affecting an employee’s decision to stay or leave a job is the relationship he or she has with his or her immediate supervisor. Among supervisor behaviors that contribute to officer attrition are setting poor examples, indecisiveness, unfairness, being overly critical or not sharing credit for work, and poor communication (Orrick, 2008). The reality is that many of the reasons employees leave discussed in this section are tied to factors within leadership control (Hickman, 2000).

Poor Job Fit – Even though an officer has the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the job, it is possible they do not like the work or fit within the agency. It is not uncommon to hear officers comment on how the job is not what they thought it would be (Orrick, 2008). Policing is not just about crime detection and law enforcement any more. Indeed, it is more about problem solving and social services. This misunderstanding of what the job entails may lend itself to more turnover as new officers realize the job is not the right fit for them (DuPont, 2003).

Higher Ordered Needs – In recent years, the police profession has placed an emphasis on professionalism and has spent enormous efforts attracting better educated, well-rounded individuals. Today’s officers are less concerned with having their basic needs met and more interested in satisfying higher-ordered needs like sense of belongingness, self-esteem, and self-actualization. They seek challenging work environments and problem-solving opportunities. When these needs go unmet, it causes internal conflict for the
officer who, in return, may soon look for work environments that offer those opportunities and conditions (Orrick, 2008; Brand, 1999; M. Fischer, 2006; McCafferty, 2003).

Dysfunctional Organizational Cultures – Many agencies are still characterized as having centralized management styles, hierarchical organizational structures with a dependence on strict operational procedures. However, officers today are seeking more motivating work environments with leaders who engage their minds and hearts. Officers yearn to take ownership of the various projects in which they are assigned to participate (Orrick, 2008). Centralized management styles are not conducive to this, though, which is why agency leaders must consider decentralized management styles whereby officers are given the freedom and discretion they need to make their own decisions and accomplish organization goals (Stojkovic, Kalinich, and Klofas, 2015).

Generational Differences – The ‘personality’ of each generation is unique unto itself and developed by the events occurring in society during the formative years. Simply put, times change because of changes in values and perspectives. Each generation is different with its own strengths and weaknesses. One is not better than the other. Leaders who fail to recognize this may fail to respect perspectives of younger officers thereby adding to attrition. Police leaders must be aware of these differences, adapt, and reach out to officers at their current level of development (Orrick, 2008). Indeed, younger generations lack the ability to succeed in the “silo,” the paramilitary organizational
environment centralized management styles emulate (Edwards, 2007). Others suggest that such a structure prevents police organizations from fulfilling career needs of younger generations (Brand, 1999; M. Fischer, 2006; McCafferty, 2003).

*Lack of Career Growth or Better Opportunities* – Officers often cite limited opportunities to grow or ‘move up’ as a reason for leaving their current position. This is particularly challenging for small city police departments as larger agencies have successfully used more opportunities in their organization to poach exceptional officers from smaller ones (Orrick, 2008).

*Inadequate Feedback or Recognition* – Providing frequent feedback is critical because employees want to know how they are performing and are anxious to improve. Supervisors who do not provide frequent feedback allow poor work habits to form that result in citizen complaints and managerial problems (Orrick, 2008). When police leaders fail to provide feedback to officers, it can lead to serious mistakes, which can degrade confidence, morale, and job satisfaction. This is not to say officers, necessarily, need more critiquing. Instead, positive reinforcement or recognition can improve performance and increase job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Wilson et al., 2010).

*Inadequate Training* – Law enforcement is constantly changing and providing new challenges. Training is critical for providing officers with the skills they need to meet
these changes and to achieve their personal career goals. Officers desire sufficient training because they know, without it, they make more mistakes, lose cases, and feel less confident, all of which leads to more lawsuits, negative publicity, and poorer organizational performance (Orrick, 2008). Today’s officers view training as an opportunity to improve and become more effective. Agencies that ignore this are ignoring the officer’s personal career development goals, and in so doing, risk losing the officer to agencies that listen.

**Equipment** – Officers consider the type of equipment they receive as a reflection of their value to the community. Agencies that prioritize the acquisition of the latest technology and equipment display a level of professionalism and capability officers of today desire. For instance, agencies that regularly update computers, police cars, weapons, and other tools of the trade are more likely to be viewed as attractive employers (Orrick, 2008).

### SECTION III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In 1959, Frederick Irving Herzberg, an American psychologist, developed the Motivator-Hygiene theory, also known as the two-factor theory of job satisfaction. Herzberg propounded individuals are not content at work with the simple satisfaction of lower-order needs such as salary levels or working conditions. Instead, employees desire satisfaction in higher-level needs at work relative to achievement, recognition, responsibility, advancement, and the nature of the work itself. In some ways, Herzberg’s theory parallels Maslow's theory of a need hierarchy;
however, Herzberg added a second dimension to his theory by proposing a two-factor model of motivation (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959).

Herzberg believed the presence of one set of job characteristics or incentives leads to worker satisfaction at work, while another and separate set of job characteristics leads to dissatisfaction at work. In other words, Herzberg believed job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are independent phenomena as opposed to being on a continuum with one increasing as the other diminishes. Herzberg’s two-factor theory suggests employers must recognize and address both the factors that increase satisfaction and the factors that lead to dissatisfaction if they wish to improve job attitudes and productivity, which, in return, may reduce turnover (Herzberg et al., 1959).

Herzberg’s two-factor theory was put to the test in 1964 when he collected data from interviews with 203 engineers and accountants. Here is what Herzberg had to say regarding the collection process:

“Briefly, we asked our respondents to describe periods in their lives when they were exceedingly happy and unhappy with their jobs. Each respondent gave as many "sequences of events" as he could that met certain criteria—including a marked change in feeling, a beginning and an end, and contained some substantive description other than feelings and interpretations...

The proposed hypothesis appears verified. The factors on the right that led to satisfaction (achievement, intrinsic interest in the work, responsibility, and advancement) are mostly unipolar; that is, they contribute very little to job dissatisfaction. Conversely, the dis-satisfiers
From analyzing these interviews, Herzberg concluded job characteristics related to what an individual does for a living apparently have the capacity to gratify such needs as achievement, competency, status, personal worth, and self-realization, thus making one happy and satisfied. Oddly, though, the absence of such gratifying job characteristics does not appear to lead to unhappiness and dissatisfaction. Instead, dissatisfaction results from unfavorable perceptions of such job-related factors as company policies, supervision, technical problems, salary, interpersonal relations on the job, and working conditions (Herzberg et al., 1959).

If leaders wish to increase satisfaction on the job, they should be concerned with the nature of the work itself — the opportunities it presents for gaining status, assuming responsibility, and for achieving self-realization. If, on the other hand, leaders wish to reduce dissatisfaction, then they must focus on the job environment — policies, procedures, supervision, and working conditions. If leaders are equally concerned with both, as they should be, then they must address both sets of job factors. Herzberg classified these job factors into two separate categories he called hygiene and motivational factors (Herzberg et al., 1959).
Hygiene factors are those job factors that are essential for existence of motivation in the workplace. Hygiene factors do not necessarily lead to positive satisfaction for long-term, but the absence of these factors give rise to dissatisfaction. Hygiene factors are considered basic to the workforce and serve to fulfill physiological needs, those needs each individual employee expects to be fulfilled simply to survive. Hygiene factors include:

- Pay - The pay or salary structure of the employees should be fair.
- Administrative policies – Organization’s policies should be fair and clear.
- Fringe benefits - The employees should get many fringe benefits.
- Working conditions – organization should provide safe, clean and hygienic working conditions.
- Status - The employees’ status within the organization should be retained.
- Interpersonal Relations - The relationship of the employees with his peers, superiors, and subordinates should be appropriate and acceptable.
- Job Security - The organization must provide job security to the employees. (Herzberg et al., 1959).

According to Herzberg, the hygiene factors are basic and cannot be regarded as motivators. On the other hand, motivational factors provide positive satisfaction and motivate employees to perform well and exceed expectations. To put it in other terms, these factors are called satisfiers. Employees find these factors intrinsically rewarding since they serve to fulfill the employee’s psychological needs. Motivational factors include:

- Recognition – The work of the employees should be appreciated by managers.
- Achievement - The employees must have a sense of achievement.
• Growth and promotional opportunities – Employees are concerned with organizational goals and their personal growth.

• Responsibility – Responsibility is to be given to the employees for fulfilment of the mission of the organization.

• Work itself - The work itself should be meaningful, interesting and challenging. (Herzberg et al., 1959).

To remove dissatisfaction in a work environment, hygiene factors must be eliminated. There are several ways this can be done but some of the most important ways to decrease dissatisfaction would be to pay reasonable wages, ensure employees job security, and to create a positive culture in the workplace. Herzberg considered the following hygiene factors from highest to lowest importance: company policy, supervision, employee's relationship with their boss, work conditions, salary, and relationships with peers (NetMBA Business Knowledge Center, 2014).

Eliminating dissatisfaction is only half the task of the two-factor theory, though. The other half would be to increase satisfaction in the workplace. This can be done by improving on motivating factors. Motivation factors are needed to motivate an employee to higher performance. Herzberg thought it was important to eliminate job dissatisfaction before going onto creating conditions for job satisfaction because one may work against the other.

There are four possible combinations of the two-factor theory as outlined in Figure 2.
Herzberg posited internal job factors are most important in motivating employees. His theory supported the increase of job enrichment programs and philosophies for employees. Herzberg believed employees should take part in planning, performing, and evaluating their own work. He suggested to do this by: (1) Decentralizing management over employees and increasing the accountability and responsibility they have over their own work, which would in return enfranchise them; (2) Creating complete and natural work units where employees design a whole unit or section instead of only allowing them to design part of it; (3) Having personal contact with employees on a regular basis to let them know how they are doing; (4) Enhancing job satisfaction by encouraging employees to take on new and challenging tasks and master them (Harvard Business Review, 2008). Employees' job satisfaction (for example, measured by...
Herzberg’s theory) is important for retention, which is critical in professions, like law enforcement, that experience shortages.

In 1999, Herzberg’s two-factor theory was affirmed in a book released by Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman. The book, “First, Break all the Rules: What the World’s Greatest Managers Do Differently,” was based on in-depth interviews with over 80,000 managers in over 400 companies. The interviews were conducted by the world-renowned Gallup Organization and the study is considered the largest of its kind. Herzberg and his theories were not specifically named in this book, but Gallup’s findings align squarely with Herzberg’s theory. Buckingham and Coffman’s recommendations will be discussed further in Section IV of this paper.

**SECTION IV: RECOMMENDATIONS**

In this section, we will further explore the common causes of police turnover and offer recommendations on methods to improve retention. Unfortunately, empirical evidence on effective retention strategies in law enforcement is lacking. Nevertheless, this paper endeavors to offer sound advice based upon commonalities in the literature review, Herzberg’s two-factor theory, and analysis provided by Gallup’s Buckingham and Coffman.

Before delving any further into this section, it is important to point out these recommendations do not address every negative influence small police departments face. The reality is there are some factors, like constrained budgets, police leaders may have no influence over. This section
does, however, offer recommendations on those internal factors police leaders do have influence over that directly impact hygiene and motivational needs.

In review, common explanations for turnover in law enforcement were identified in Section II. In Section III, readers learned from Herzberg that job dissatisfaction, the main antecedent to turnover, is a result of failing to meet employee needs on both hygiene and motivational levels. Therefore, one could conclude if police leaders wish to retain their officers, they must endeavor to meet their officers’ needs on both hygiene and motivational levels. We will discuss that notion further in this section.

ADDRESSING HYGIENE FACTORS

Herzberg identified hygiene factors as job dissatisfiers. These included such variables as policies, relationships with bosses and peers, supervisory issues, work conditions, and salary. Incidentally, the literature review identified many of these variables as attributing to turnover in law enforcement agencies. Of the ten variables identified in Section II, six of them would be considered hygiene factors by Herzberg: Salary, Poor Supervision, Poor Job Fit, Dysfunctional Organizational Culture, Generational Differences, and Equipment. Of these six variables, only one was identified in all four pieces of literature in Section II, and that was Salary. Poor Leadership, Poor Job Fit, and Dysfunctional Organizational Culture were identified in three of the four pieces of literature. Generational Differences and Equipment were cited in only two of the pieces.
Since Herzberg felt it was prudent to address hygiene issues first, this section will do the same. Leaders must first address the dissatisfiers within their agencies if they ever wish for their employees to reach their fullest potential. Here is what the literature had to say on addressing job dissatisfiers.

Compensation – Not surprisingly, Gallup discovered questions dealing with pay and benefits all but vanished during their analysis. This was not because they were unimportant, but because they were considered basic. Every employee, no matter who they are, expects their employer to provide a fair market pay and benefits package. Gallup found that fair pay and benefits did not motivate employees. However, the absence of fair pay and benefits caused dissatisfaction, which can lead to turnover. Gallup’s findings supported Herzberg’s belief that hygiene factors, like pay and benefits, do not give higher job satisfaction or lead to higher motivation (Buckingham & Coffman, 2009).

Departments must provide competitive salaries that match or exceed the market average. Police leaders must realize, however, compensation encompasses more than just pay; it includes the entire salary and benefits package. Compensation packages should be defined broadly and include benefits other than salary including health insurance, retirement, leave, flexible schedules, and good equipment (Orrick, 2008).

Covering the basics of compensation packages may not be enough, though. Officers might compare such benefits across agencies and could transfer to those with better
compensation packages. Consequently, police leaders must think outside the box and determine whether they can sweeten the pot in some way. For instance, higher or well-timed salary adjustments, moving allowances, housing allowances, take-home cars, on-site child care, health club memberships, educational incentives, anniversary bonuses, and job flexibility are some of the benefits that can help improve retention. Although there are direct costs to such compensation packages, as pointed out earlier, their benefits likely outweigh the costs of turnover (Wilson et al., 2010).

For agencies that may not be able to afford glamorous benefits packages, police leaders may wish to consider at least abandoning the one-size-fits-all approach to compensating employees. As an example, police leaders should be able to use their discretion to hire above the minimum and give raises and bonuses for good performance and longevity (Wilson et al., 2010). Take, for instance, the officer who transfers from one agency to another after five years of service. Departments must consider whether it is fair to start the experienced officer at a probationary pay level or take into consideration their prior years of experience. Many people believe fairness, rather than level of compensation, is more important for retention (Edwards, 2007).

Police Departments would also be well-served to consider a flexible compensation package, one that meets the needs of each individual officer. Rather than having a hardline rule that all officers shall receive the same salary and benefits package, agencies should consider not all officers are the same. As officers mature, the priority of different
benefits changes. In other words, a 22-year-old police officer may find great value in an educational payback benefit while a 52-year-old officer would likely find greater value in benefits related to retirement. Agencies should consider the success of private-sector companies, some of which have responded to this with benefit flexibility, or a cafeteria-style approach to compensation packages, allowing options while keeping costs down (Edwards, 2007).

*Poor Supervision* – With poor relationships between officers and their immediate supervisors being identified as a leading cause for officer turnover, we will spend more time reflecting on improving those relationships than any other recommendation in this section. Orrick (2008) points out it is critical for leaders to make supervisor selection and development a priority. When possible, supervisory training should be provided prior to one’s appointment to a supervisory position and new supervisors should be partnered with seasoned supervisors to learn how to apply their new skills. Police Chiefs should adopt comprehensive performance standards for supervisors and those who fail to meet the established standards should be given a reasonable period to correct their behavior or be replaced (Orrick, 2008).

While Orrick’s advice is prudent, many small agencies do not have the resources to send their supervisors to supervisory training in advance of their new assignment. Furthermore, many small agencies operate with only one supervisor aside from the Police Chief, so partnering them with a more experienced supervisor may not be practical. This
does not mean, however, there are no other options. For instance, Chiefs and supervisors can take the time to learn more about implementing contemporary best leadership practices by referencing online resources or by simply reading best practices guides, like the ones discussed in this paper. After all, if police leaders do not take the time to learn what causes dissatisfaction and turnover, the likelihood of mitigating against it is low.

Orrick (2008a) submits many law-enforcement agencies are characterized by “silo management styles.” This means agencies subscribe to centralized managements styles that are tall, rank heavy, and hierarchical in nature. Such organizational structures require compliance with policies, procedures, rules, and regulation enforcement. Leaders within these police agencies are focused on processes rather than outcomes, which is exactly what Buckingham and Coffman (2009) warn against. These rigid, paramilitary leadership styles are known to hinder growth (Auten, 1981; Fry and Berkes, 1983) and produce frustrations that reduce retention, especially among younger officers (Orrick, 2008a). In fact, Edwards (2007) suggests that younger generations lack the ability to succeed in the “silo,” and others suggest that such a structure prevents police organizations from fulfilling career needs of younger generations (Brand, 1999; M. Fischer, 2006; McCafferty, 2003).

Since new or young officers often start out at small policing agencies, leaders in such agencies must be especially aware of the need to distance themselves from the traditional paramilitary leadership style and consider embracing private sector leadership styles, like
those highlighted by Buckingham and Coffman (2009), which align squarely with Herzberg’s theory. To that end, we’ll discuss their findings next.

The Gallup Organization, of which Buckingham and Coffman (2009) are affiliated, has interviewed more than one million employees on every conceivable aspect of the workplace. After running a hundred million questions through their prism and conducting a meta-analysis of performance data from over 2,500 business units and opinion data of over 105,000 employees, Gallup discovered measuring the strength of a workplace can be simplified to only twelve important questions, all of which are influenced by supervisors. These questions measure the core elements needed to attract, focus, and retain the most talented employees. The questions are listed here:

1. Do I know what is expected of me at work?
2. Do I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right?
3. At work, am I given the opportunity to do what I do best every day?
4. In the last seven days, have I received recognition or praise for doing good work?
5. Does my supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about me as a person?
6. Is there someone at work who encourages my development?
7. At work, do my opinions seem to count?
8. Does the mission/purpose of my company make me feel my job is important?
9. Are my co-workers committed to doing quality work?
10. Do I have a best friend at work?

11. In the last six months, has someone at work talked to me about my progress?

12. This last year, have I had opportunities at work to learn and grow?

(Buckingham & Coffman, 2009)

To help better understand the twelve questions as they relate to managing employees, Buckingham and Coffman invited their readers to use a mountain climber analogy and consider the twelve questions to be parts of the climber’s stages from Base Camp to summit. For instance, Base Camp is where one starts the climb and has relatively basic needs. At this stage, one is asking what they get. Questions one and two fundamentally measure Base Camp:

1. Do I know what is expected of me at work?
2. Do I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right?

(Buckingham & Coffman, 2009)

As the climb continues, perspectives change as do the questions one asks themselves about their venture. At this stage, one questions what they give. Questions three through six measure Camp 1:

3. At work, am I given the opportunity to do what I do best every day?
4. In the last seven days, have I received recognition or praise for doing good work?
5. Does my supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about me as a person?
6. Is there someone at work who encourages my development?
   
   (Buckingham & Coffman, 2009)

Moving onward to Camp 2, one questions their sense of belongingness. Questions seven through 10 measure Camp 2:

7. At work, do my opinions seem to count?
8. Does the mission/purpose of my company make me feel my job is important?
9. Are my co-workers committed to doing quality work?
10. Do I have a best friend at work?
    
    (Buckingham & Coffman, 2009)

Advancing toward Camp 3 is one of the most advanced stages of the climb where one questions how the group can grow together. The final two questions measure Camp 3:

11. In the last six months, has someone at work talked to me about my progress?
12. This last year, have I had opportunities at work to learn and grow?
    
    (Buckingham & Coffman, 2009)
When one can answer positively to all twelve questions, they have reached the summit. They have become a world-class climber. Their perspective is clear, and they have reached their goal. It is important to understand, though, one cannot realize the satisfaction of climbing to the summit without first getting their questions answered at all the camps below. Similarly, supervisors cannot expect to develop and retain world-class employees unless they help them answer each question along the way. In other words, the key to building a strong, vibrant workforce lies in supervisors meeting employees’ needs at Base Camp and Camp 1. Supervisors must focus efforts here to meet their employees’ lower-level needs before venturing upward to meet the higher-level needs (Buckingham & Coffman, 2009).

Gallup’s research did not end with the discovery of the twelve questions identified above. To their credit, Gallup delved further into the data and discovered questions 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7 had links to retention:

1. Do I know what is expected of me at work?
2. Do I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right?
3. At work, am I given the opportunity to do what I do best every day?
4. Does my supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about me as a person?
5. At work, do my opinions seem to count?

Gallup pointed out these five questions are most directly influenced by the employee’s immediate supervisor. Consequently, supervisors who seek to build a strong and
productive workplace – one with a lower turnover rate – should endeavor to secure the highest score possible to these questions in an employee survey. In fact, Gallup found employers they researched who scored high in these categories retained one thousand more employees per year than those that scored low (Buckingham & Coffman, 2009). To this end, we will discuss what great supervisors do well next.

Great supervisors do four activities very well. They select a person, set expectations, motivate the person, and develop the person. Incidentally, these four activities are the most important responsibilities supervisors undertake because they provide employees with answers to the questions we have discussed up to this point (Buckingham & Coffman, 2009). In this section we will explore how to answer these questions.

*Do I know what is expected of me at work? Do I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right?* Strong leaders can help their subordinates answer yes to these questions by setting accurate performance expectations and helping the employee focus on daily performance, as opposed to worrying about what is on the horizon. Supervisors must make clear to their employees when they are expected to conform and when they are encouraged to exercise their own initiative and style. Supervisors should clearly state expected outcomes and give their employees the knowledge and equipment to make it happen. Good supervisors know they only need to define the right outcomes, not the right steps, so, even though it is tempting, good supervisors refrain from trying to control their people (Buckingham & Coffman, 2009).
At work, am I given the opportunity to do what I do best every day? Supervisors who wish to receive a yes answer to this question need foresight, because this can only be achieved by picking the right people for the job. Untalented people will never be trusted to fulfill agency goals, which means they will never feel that they are being permitted to do what they think they do best. So, picking talented people – those who exhibit recurring patterns of behavior that fit the role – during the hiring process is a must rather than simply focusing on experience, intelligence, or determination alone. Leaders can teach their employees skills and knowledge, but they cannot teach talent like personal drive, thought processes, or the ability to build relationships (Buckingham & Coffman, 2009).

In the last seven days, have I received recognition or praise for doing good work? Does my supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about me as a person? “Yes” answers to these questions rely heavily on a supervisor’s ability to motivate. Since supervisors are busy people with numerous subordinates, time management is important. Supervisors must question whether they are going to spend all their time focused on fixing weaknesses or celebrating strengths. Good supervisors know the answer is to focus on strengths. Buckingham and Coffman point out people don’t change that much, so time should not be wasted trying to put in what was left out. Instead, leaders should try to draw out what was left in by helping them to become more of who they already are. Good supervisors know people inherently have many more nontalents than they do
talents, but most of them are irrelevant and can be ignored (Buckingham & Coffman, 2009).

Does my supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about me as a person? Is there someone at work who encourages my development? In great part, the answers to these questions depend on whether supervisors know how to develop their employees. Buckingham and Coffman encourage leaders to create heroes in every role so they always feel cared about and utilized. All employees inevitably want to move up the ladder of success; however, there will never be enough rungs on the ladder to meet everyone’s goals. This means there will be a lot of disappointed employees. To combat this, good supervisors make every role, performed at excellence, a respected profession that comes with money and prestige. Of course, there will always be employees who will still endeavor to climb the ladder, but guided by proper incentives, many employees will redirect their attention toward growth in their current role (Buckingham & Coffman, 2009).

Poor Job Fit - Successful retention begins before the officer is selected. Too often departments trying to attract recruits focus their attention on the glamorous or exciting aspects of law enforcement. To ensure an effective employee-job fit, though, departments should provide a realistic understanding of what it is like to be a police officer. Realistic job previews may be provided in several formats, including online, through video, or by requiring a ride-along. Regardless of the approach used, both the
agency and the prospective employee should have an accurate perception of what will be required of the individual to include a preview of the good, the bad, and the ugly (Orrick, 2008).

As part of their quest to pick the right candidate for the right job, departments should consider using a two-part selection process. In the first stage, preliminary interviews, basic skills exams, physical ability tests, and background investigations are conducted to make certain the prospective employee meets traditional minimum standards. Perhaps more importantly, in the second phase, qualified personnel are evaluated to identify whether they’re the right fit for the agency (Orrick, 2008). This is important because every department has its own personality or organizational culture and, as Buckingham and Coffman (2009) pointed out, choosing the right talent and the right fit is more important than simply looking for the most intelligent or most credentialed candidate. When departments remain focused on traditional qualifications, they limit their ability to attract those persons who are for the right fit for their agency.

Behaviorally-based interviews are considered a useful technique in identifying whether a candidate identifies well with an agency. These interviews seek to learn more about the candidate’s past performance to see whether their responses are consistent with the agency’s mission and values. Individuals are asked to describe how they responded to past incidents relative to police work. For instance, if an agency demands all persons are treated with dignity and respect, a prospective employee may be asked to “Describe a
situation in which you had to interact with a person in a work-related situation who you felt was acting in an unreasonable manner. How did you respond to this person? What did you learn from that situation?” (Orrick, 2008).

Agencies should avoid the use of canned questions such as “Where do you see yourself five years from now?” or other common questions that allow the individual to provide a rehearsed response. Behaviorally-based questions require the prospective candidate to explain how they’ve responded in the past and what they may have learned from the experience. Canned questions can simply be researched online and rehearsed in advance of interviews making it less likely managers will find the right fit for their department (Orrick, 2008).

_Dysfunctional Organizational Cultures_ – Organizational cultures are highly influenced by supervisors and managers. To that end, we discussed what supervisors should be doing differently earlier in this section. In short, supervisors must endeavor to decentralize their management styles and involve their officers in more meaningful ways. Supervisors should also look at how their policies and procedures affect a police officer’s attitudes, behaviors, and feelings toward organization and self (Frost, 2006; Kappeler, Sluder, and Alpert, 1994). Some researchers purport employees will be happier with decisions if they perceive the processes used for making them to be fair (Frost, 2006; Thibaut and Walker, 1975). Fairness in the processes that resolve disputes and allocate resources has been linked to organizational commitment (Folger and Konovsky, 1989),
job satisfaction, and loyalty (Frost, 2006). Law enforcement agencies can create a satisfied and committed workforce with minimal cost by establishing procedurally fair policies – ones that the officers themselves had a say in creating. This is especially true for younger officers who perceive organizational fairness and distributive justice to be of utmost importance (Brand, 1999; Frost, 2006). Officers of today will become less satisfied and committed to organizations that are less open and transparent and do not allow for input and feedback (Lambert, 2003).

**Generational Differences** – We have discussed in earlier sections of this paper the fact younger generations do not function well with the militaristic nature of police work. With its emphasis on hierarchy and formality, and the sacrifices that officers must make, from maintaining certain appearances (e.g., no beards or tattoos) to erratic schedules and long shifts, to placing themselves in harm’s way, less than half of American youths consider a police department a desirable or acceptable place to work (Sackett and Mavor, 2003).

Some researchers fear these career expectations cannot be met in law enforcement. However, police leaders must try, or they may face the same fate as the military, which has seen a decline in service since the 1980s as realities of military structure conflict with differing youth attitudes about the nature of work. Those entering the workforce today expect more than previous generations. Police leaders will have to find ways to offer flexible scheduling, more-rapid advancement opportunities, and to have a better balance
between work and family. The youngest generation of workers has shown marked preferences toward extrinsic work values, such as prestige, changing tasks, social and cognitive aspects of work, and flexibility (Wilson et al., 2010).

*Equipment* – Orrick (2008) purports officers consider the type of equipment they receive as a reflection of their value to the community. In other words, agencies with old equipment and outdated technology risk sending a message to their officers they are not worthy of anything better, which may result in dissatisfaction. Agencies should prioritize the acquisition of the latest technology and equipment thereby displaying a level of professionalism and capability officers of today desire. For instance, agencies that regularly update computers, police cars, weapons, and other tools of the trade are more likely to be viewed as attractive employers (Orrick, 2008). Furthermore, to reduce the temptation to transfer to other agencies, managers should routinely compare their officer’s equipment/uniform allowances with others to make certain they are comparable.

**ADDRESSING MOTIVATION FACTORS**

Up to this point in Section IV, we covered recommendations to address hygiene factors identified in the readings, which included six of the ten causes identified in Section II. Next, this paper will explore motivational factors – the remaining four variables identified as being common in the readings. They include Lack of Career Growth, which was identified in all four readings, as well as Inadequate Feedback, Inadequate Recognition, and Inadequate Training, which were identified in three of the four readings.
**Lack of Career Growth** – Historically in law enforcement agencies, the only way to move up was to assume a traditional supervisory position. Unfortunately, in many smaller agencies these vacancies are rare. Law enforcement today is much more challenging than ever before, and it is fair to say officers who are otherwise great may not have the personal attributes to be, or interest in becoming a supervisor. This does not, however, mean they are unimportant or should be overlooked for alternative career opportunities within the organization. Agencies should find ways to maximize officers’ importance to the organization. This could include simple distinctions like differentiating a ten-year veteran from a one-year rookie by providing increased salaries along with increases in rank designation, such as private, private first class, or Officer I or Officer II (Orrick, 2008).

Another way of demonstrating to officers they are valued would be to appoint them to work on committees and task forces. This process also provides officers with a valuable opportunity to work with others, develop networking skills, build community partnerships, and learn new techniques to perform their jobs. Task forces and committees may be internal to the agency, state-wide in focus, or anything in between and offer officers opportunities to learn and grow in the profession as well as gain new perspectives (Orrick, 2008).

Teaching opportunities offer officers who develop an interest or expertise in an area a chance to share their knowledge with other officers or the community. For instance, an
officer with a natural affinity to physical fitness may make a great defense and arrest tactics instructor for the department; or, an officer with a passion for the elderly may make a great presenter on scams or other issues facing senior citizens in the community. This instruction helps to solidify their knowledge base and establish them as recognized experts (Orrick, 2008).

Feedback – Providing feedback is critical, especially for younger-generation workers (Wilson et al., 2010). For feedback to be meaningful, it must be timely and specific. In other words, do not wait to address concerns or provide praise until the next traditional performance evaluation comes around. After all, traditional officer evaluations have proven ineffective. Samuel Walker (2006) found that performance evaluation procedures in policing have been criticized, and a 1977 Police Foundation study found that performance evaluations did not adequately reflect police work and generally provided inflated assessments of officer performance (Wilson, et al., 2010). The director of the symphony does not wait until the end of the season to correct the violinist’s performance. A coach does not wait until the end of the game to bench a player who is not performing well. Instead, these leaders correct the problem immediately, so it does not adversely affect the individual or the entire operation. The same is true for the best police managers. By immediately providing feedback, supervisors make sure their officers are working at peak performance, building their self-confidence, and anchoring them to the department (Orrick, 2008).
Police leaders should consider implementing a 360-degree evaluation, whereby officers are evaluated by managers, colleagues, subordinates, and community members. This has shown promise in integrating employee feedback in meaningful ways in the private sector. Several studies suggest the use of 360-degree evaluation helps improve performance by maximizing the use of feedback for promotions, advancement, and compensation (Wilson et al., 2010).

Employees want to know how they are performing, and providing frequent feedback, no matter how it is done, is crucial to a contented and high-performing department (Orrick, 2008). Lack of feedback can result in officers making mistakes, which can degrade confidence, morale, and job satisfaction. As such, it behooves police leaders to provide feedback to improve performance and increase job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Wilson et al., 2010).

**Recognition** – Feeling valued is a basic human need so police leaders must seek out opportunities to recognize good behavior. Small agencies may not have formal commendation or awards programs, but that does not mean they cannot be every bit as effective as their large counterparts in recognizing the efforts of their officers. There are so many opportunities to do this including through personal contact, regular meetings, letters of commendation, achievement, recognition, and thank you notes (Orrick, 2008). Unfortunately, good performance often goes unrewarded, while considerable time and energy is spent critiquing poor performance. Building morale or pride meetings provide
opportunities for social interaction to improve communication and trust among officers. During these meetings, supervisors can announce officers who achieved advanced certifications, are being promoted in the career ladder, or performed well in various instances. These meetings also provide a good opportunity to highlight creative or innovative procedures to address a problem. The entire focus of these meetings is on the positive activities being completed by officers and the department (Orrick, 2008).

*Training* – Today’s employees view training as a highly regarded benefit, an issue of career development, and a way to feel valued by their employer. With a wider variety of training techniques available today than ever before, including computer-based programs, roll-call training, classroom lectures and discussions, self-paced programs, practical exercises, webinars, micro training, and scenario-based exercises, there is no excuse for departments not to bombard their officers with training (Orrick, 2008). Officers liken a training investment in them to an official statement or indication that they are accepted or regarded favorably by their employer – a way of saying they find value in them and consider them worthy of investment. This can go a long way toward improving morale and motivating officers.

Police leaders should endeavor to methodically determine the specific training and work experiences officers need rather than go about the process haphazardly. Orrick (2008) suggests agencies should use assessment tools. There are several processes available for organizations to complete these assessments, including paper and pencil assessments,
360-degree evaluations, assessment centers, and mentoring programs. Results from such exams can be used by leaders and officers to create a personalized development plan, which may include work experiences, training, formal education, and the need to prepare for short and long-term assignments. This plan should include benchmarks for evaluating progress along with responsibility assignments for the officer and the department (Orrick, 2008).

SECTION V: CONCLUSION

The subject of turnover in small police departments is of nationwide relevance as evidenced by the statistics shared in Section I. However, empirical evidence on effective retention strategies in law enforcement is lacking. This leaves small city police chiefs with fewer tools to combat the problem than they would like. It does not, however, mean police chiefs are without assistance on the subject matter. As evidenced by this paper, there is ample information, in both the police and private sector, on the issue of turnover. All one needs to do is take the time to read some of the literature on the subject and begin implementing some of the ideas brought forth.

This paper endeavored to compile a list of the most common causes and effects of turnover in small policing agencies as found in four major pieces of literature. It further sought to offer readers a list of recommendations to retain officers. When one takes the time to consider those recommendations, it becomes clear much of the problem can be traced back to agency leaders, sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly, and sometimes without the leaders even realizing it. This is important for police supervisors and managers to consider. In some ways, every one
of the causes for turnover and each recommendation for retention are the responsibility of agency leaders to correct and implement.

While there is no single formula for success as it pertains to retention, one common theme identified in all the readings was the fact most younger officers, and future generations of officers, do not find the rigid, militaristic-style of policing agencies desirable. It would be prudent for police leaders to be sensitive to this generational difference. This does not mean police leaders need to completely abandon top-down management styles, but it does mean they should consider the more preferred decentralized management styles that involve all levels of the department in the decision-making process and make all officers feel valued. This may mean police leaders need to turn to the private sector a bit more to consider its successes, of which Buckingham and Coffman (2009) so capably outlined in their book.

In closing, it is worth mentioning most of the recommendations in Section IV are both affordable and attainable for small agencies. Changes in management style, giving timely feedback and positive praise, providing as much training as the budget can tolerate, helping officers fit in, and meeting officers’ higher order needs takes more initiative and inclination than it does money. Chiefs who realize this and accept the fact they – themselves – can be the catalyst for change will be better positioned to hire and retain officers in the future.
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