The Bill Blackwood
Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas

===============

Motivation and Satisfaction of the Modem Day Police Officer:
Is There One Correct Answer?

===============

An Administrative Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Institute

===============

by

W.J. Sala

Memorial Villages Police Department
Houston, Texas
November, 2002

Abstract

Motivating the modem day police officer, especially in a small agency setting, poses many questions and problems for the administrator in striving to strike a balance between overall happiness of the employee(s) and meeting the goals of the department, and begs the question, "Is there one right way?"

Three motivational methods: (1) pay and benefits, (2) job rotation and (3) a needs based method of management, are examined with a brief look at the strengths and weaknesses of each. An analysis of published research and a small survey of officers from small, medium and large police agencies, reveals that many personal considerations need to be taken into account, and not all of them are financial.

Common to agencies of any size, employees need to have both extrinsic and intrinsic needs met by the employer. Job rotation may be a very viable motivational consideration for employees of medium to large sized departments, but has very limited applicability to the employee base of a small agency. Pay and benefits are obviously. important, but do not address the intrinsic needs of the employee. Needs based management strategies, while addressing the intrinsic needs of the individual employee, do nothing to address the extrinsic issues involved.

It is finally concluded that no single method, standing alone, is capable of motivating every employee every time, and that a combination of two or more motivational tools must be utilized to effectively create and retain a well motivated employee. A careful examination of all three available options should help any department, regardless of size, accomplish that goal.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The problem of attaining and retaining employee satisfaction and commitment is not a new problem to the police manager. It is increasingly becoming a big concern specifically for the smaller police department. Several ideas for increasing overall employee satisfaction have been touted repeatedly: 1) financial (pay and/or benefits); 2) career rotation; and 3) a needs-based management strategy. The merits and deficits of each of these methods will be discussed individually.

Increased financial benefits to the individual are becoming harder to implement. Expenses for day to day operations, training, equipment, supplies and a variety of other considerations compete for ever increasing amounts of an agency's budget. It is a given that the financial benefits package must be at least moderately attractive. However, research by Maslow and others has indicated that once this basic need is met by the employer, there are subsequent levels of employee self-actualization that must be met (Maslow, 1970). Basic common sense dictates that a reasonable, livable wage and decent fringe benefits are of great importance, but law enforcement just cannot compete with the private sector when it comes to extrinsic rewards such as pay and benefits (Van Brocklin, 2001). Based upon the salary level of most law enforcement professionals, it seems obvious that financial remuneration is not the primary reason for embracing law enforcement as a life-long career.

Likewise, there appears to be a sufficient number of negatives involved with the concept of career rotation. Available research indicates that in order for a career rotation program to work, the agency must have several specialized departments and/or divisions. Additionally, some minimum number of personnel must be shifted to effectively establish anything approaching a rotation. Lastly, the period of time necessary to establish any kind of effective rotation causes

numerous hardships. A combination of these factors seem to indicate that career rotation is not a viable option, especially to small agencies that simply do not have large numbers of personnel, multiple divisions, greatly expanded geographical areas and other service commitments that are required of a large agency.

It would then appear on the surface that the only feasible option to officer retention is to incorporate a needs based management system into the department operational philosophy. A needs based management system, in the simplest terms, addresses the intrinsic needs of the employee such as self-esteem, satisfaction and a legitimate feeling of participation, to mention but a few. Needs based management is reliant upon properly educated management personnel. Managers must possess specific traits, skills and knowledge. This knowledge includes a thorough understanding of employee needs and how to effectively address them. Unfortunately, knowledge is not tree, and not all managers possess the skills or personality required to effectively perform this task.

It is hypothesized that of the three motivational methods presented, no single method provides a concise and workable answer to retention and satisfaction. Satisfaction and commitment are the net result of both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards; neither, standing alone, will produce a satisfied/committed employee. Rather, a delicate balance of the two is required to increase and maintain employee satisfaction and motivation (Beer & Spector, et al, 1985). An additional important consideration is that motivation factors may vary from employee to employee or even, over time, for a single employee based on individualistic needs (Haasen, 1997).

Research methods utilized consist of a combination of available research in books, periodicals and other written text. Additionally, a survey was conducted of officers from small,

medium and large agencies relating to their personal motivational desires. Finally, information from personal observation and interviews will be utilized.

This information can be used as a guide for small, and possibly medium sized, police departments in assessing the motivational requirements of their employees. A thorough individualized assessment should significantly assist departments of all sizes to find key ways to effectively motivate retainable employees for the long term.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bearing in mind that all police officers are well aware of what their salary is going to be when hired, it is a basic expectation that this salary will increase over time. Increases are expected by way of cost of living raises, incentive pay, and possibly some form of merit raise based on an evaluation system. What many forget when considering what they are paid is the total bottom line concept of pay and benefits added together and tend to view pay as financial motivation. They only consider the amount of money that they are able to bank at the end of the month, with no consideration of what further amounts of money the employer is responsible for as a total benefits package.

Added to the base salary figure are items like health insurance, the employer's contribution to a retirement plan and, in many cases, social security; all of which take a considerable amount of an agency's budget resource. In most cases payroll amounts to as much as eighty-five percent of an agency's budget (Brye, personal communication, March 15, 2002), therefore there is precious little room for movement in a budget to cover the remaining portion of a department's cost of doing business. Obvious facts for consideration in developing a budget are facilities expenses, fleet vehicle expenses and regular maintenance expenses for the fleet,

office expense, uniform expense and the list goes on. While trying to work within ever

tightening budget restrictions, other costs invariably come into play, sometimes unexpectedly.

As an example, Memorial Villages Police Department preparing for fiscal year 2002 - based on

preliminary information provided by the insurance industry indicating that insurance costs would

be increasing sixteen to eighteen percent - budgeted extra funds to cover the projected increase

in insurance premiums. According to Brye (personal communication, March 15, 2002) when all

was said and done, the actual increase in insurance premiums was thirty-two percent. Add to

that figure the increased cost of gasoline and other expendables, and it is easy to see where a

carefully planned and thought out budget can fall far short of expectations, and subsequently

leave no room for increase of employee salaries. In the event money for raises does become

available, other stumbling blocks may arise. For example, what criteria is applied to provide

raises to employee salaries other than some sort of cost of living adjustment?

A large number of companies rely on some form of job evaluation system to reduce

actual and perceived salary inequities. Several types of evaluation systems have been and are in

use, including point system, ranking, job classification, and factor comparison, among others.

Cited as one large problem in any kind of system is the degree to which the individual employee

believes evaluation is equitable, and additionally the amount of trust managers have in the

system or believe it is valid. A manager's distrust of the system or belief that it is invalid will

result in them finding ways to get around it, increasing distrust and lead them to finding ways to

circumvent the system altogether (Beer & Spector, et al, 1985) If equity and a sense of fair play

to all cannot be established, there is quite simply no way to obtain the employee trust and

cooperation necessary to conduct business in a satisfactory manner. One other factor that may be

considered here, though it would not normally affect a small agency and is of value only for

comparison purposes, is that in many instances salary increases may be legally limited, as is the case with civil service agencies.

The base importance of salary and fringe benefits appears to have changed over the years. A survey of a cross section of the workforce by the National Opinion Research Corporation, conducted in 1959, in answer to the question "What is important to you about your job" received the top three responses of salary, job security and fringe benefits. When the same question was asked twenty years later, the top three responses were replaced by self-expression, self-fulfillment and personal growth. The former top three answers had dropped to 15th, 16th, and 17th place. Of particular interest was the fact that although there was virtually no difference in the responses of law enforcement personnel and civilian employees, those in law enforcement did rate job security above fringe benefits (post, 1992). Finally, the salary and benefits do nothing to satisfy the intrinsic needs of the employee. A well paid, bored employee is still a bored employee with no sense of job satisfaction, increase of self-esteem or feeling of greater worth to the organization.

Another method used to improve motivation and commitment in law enforcement has been career rotation. Career rotation can take any number of forms, for example, patrol to criminal investigations (and vice-versa), patrol to DARE units, K-9 units, etc. At first glance, the basic philosophy of career rotation is sound and presents many positives. Career rotation, in theory, would expand the knowledge base of the department through the employees' development of new skills in different areas, quite possibly decrease complacency (retired on duty attitude), and increase morale. Civilian companies have used career rotation within the organization for many years for simple staffing, preventing job boredom, training and career development (Cheraskin, 1996). There are general principles involved in job rotation that may

lead to improvement, such as presenting new and exciting challenges to the individual employee that extend to acquisition and development of better professional skills (Thibault, 1998). It would appear that rotating employee jobs helps both the employee and the organization as a whole by expanding the knowledge base of the department, decreasing burnout and producing more motivated employees (Kiker, 1998). This seems to be a good management tool for larger departments that have a large number of personnel, a sufficient number of required specialized tasks and large geographical areas to cover, but it presents several apparently insurmountable problems for the small department.

First and foremost, the principle implies that an agency must have sufficient alternative postings available in specialized units for personnel to rotate in and out of on a regular basis. This is extremely difficult in a small (less than fifty man department); there are just not enough specialty areas for individuals to participate in. Common specialty areas that are available, K-9 divisions and DARE assignments, as an example, require a lot of investment in time, equipment and training. Larger departments lend themselves to specialization much more readily than smaller departments, due to the amount of manpower available, geographical area covered and assignments/services they are responsible for, thereby increasing efficiency. Personnel in smaller departments, in order to accomplish departmental goals and better serve the public, are better assigned as generalists (Sheehan, 1995).

Understandably, rotation relates heavily to training. A change in position requires that an employee must not only learn and develop new skills, but also learn to apply them in an appropriate and efficient manner in the new position. This task requires time and effort on the part of the employee. In the workplace, and in life, training should be continual (McNutt & Wright, 1995). It is a given that training in the law enforcement field must be continual.

However, training for the specialized units that are available to the smaller department, using the common examples ofK-9, DARE and GREAT, are labor and cost intensive. The investment that the department makes in officer training, handler/dog training, and equipment is quite large. These assignments require a great deal of training, continuing education, and personal commitment on the part of the assigned employee and do not easily lend themselves to any kind of reasonably frequent rotation, and it is quite possible that other personnel within a department are not interested in the positions in the first place. In this example, the cost, both in personnel and financial considerations, is not easily, recoverable or justified by the agency. The observed tendency is that when a large investment in both time and money have been made in an officer to perform a specialized task, the managerial position becomes one of leaving that officer in place on a permanent basis and not considering rotating another person into that position. This same time-money investment becomes a concern on the part of the individual officer, who now is understandably highly reluctant to rotate out of a position that he has worked hard to earn, become proficient in, and maintain.

Organizations must have a reward system in place because they are seeking both loyalty and commitment from the employee. In exchange, employees seek extrinsic rewards in the form of pay and benefits, but also seek intrinsic rewards such as achievement, responsibility, meaningful contribution and others (Beer & Spector, et al, 1985). In its simplest form, as used above, rewards may be translated as needs, both on the part of the organization and the employee. Beginning with Abraham Maslow a hierarchy of needs theory ordering human needs from physical through security, social, ego and self-actualization was developed. According to this theory, as each need was met, beginning with the physical at the bottom, the individual was motivated to move up and satisfy the next need in order. (Maslow, 1970). The

needs hierarchy theory has been applied to the workplace by Herzberg and others, who concluded that for the most part employees no longer feared for physical and security needs, but that social and higher order needs was the motivating factor for modem workers. The recommendation to managers was that the workplace and work itself should be structured so that the higher order needs of the employee could be satisfied (Herzberg, 1968).

Intrinsic rewards are more fully explained and explored in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1970). Maslow's theory identified five need levels: physiological, security, social, esteem, and self-actualization. In the workplace, the physiological and security levels are addressed by pay and benefits, but provide no final answer as again, the intrinsic reward question is not addressed. Intrinsic needs must be successfully addressed to produce a motivated employee. Organizations may dictate policies to address the social, esteem and self-actualization levels, but those policies must be implemented to have a real life effect. Commitment cannot be ordered, it must be cultivated. The social and esteem issues that must be addressed in order to develop a motivated employee can be complex, and vary from person to person. No one thing motivates every person every time (Vail, 1993). Motivation is highly subjective and each person has their own view of what reward motivates them (Beer & Spector, et al, 1985).

It is incumbent therefore, in order to effectively and successfully cultivate motivated employees, to have and utilize an educated, highly skilled and professional management! supervisory staff Successful supervisors are necessary to both meet the goals of the organization and motivate other employees. Although experience is a good teacher, the basic principles of supervision should be learned through a formal training program that should be taught to supervisors in a timely fashion once they are promoted (Vail, 1993). Supervisors are in contact with their subordinates on an almost daily basis, which mayor may not be the case with

senior staff. Accordingly, the individual supervisors, when properly trained, should become aware of what motivates each individual under their command and thus be able to help that individual meet their own personal needs, while at the same time satisfying the needs of the organization. Even if one does not subscribe strictly to a needs based management strategy, studies have shown that job security, high pay and good benefits are not major factors in motivating people. The same studies have proven that other job factors such as treating people with respect, providing challenges, recognition and a chance to develop personal skills are major motivating factors (Vail, 1993).

Educating supervisors is not free, but a very justifiable and necessary cost of doing business. Many venues are now available to train supervisors to accomplish the all important task of employee motivation. Properly trained supervisors will properly motivate their subordinates, thereby accomplishing the goals of the organization and satisfying personal needs of the workforce, resulting in a win-win situation.

METHODOLOGY

Motivation of the modem day police officer: Is there one right answer? The question refers to three commonly utilized motivational methods of pay and benefits, job rotation, and a needs based management theory. Initially asked based upon the needs and available resources of a small police department, it is felt that the question is equally applicable to all departments, regardless of size, because it is a basic human resource question and problem. Based on the methods discussed, it is hypothesized that there is not, but a needed combination of two or more methods to obtain motivational results.

Research consisted of a review of literature related directly to law enforcement, as well as writings obtained directly from the human resources venue. Personal observation, experience and discussions with other parties were also considered and included as resource materials.

A survey of the author's LEMIT Module I class was conducted as an additional means of research. The survey was designed to measure department size, availability of career rotational opportunities and the personal primary motivation of each of the respondents. For purposes of this survey, department size was delineated as small (less than fifty), medium (fifty to two hundred), and large (over two hundred). (See Figure 1).
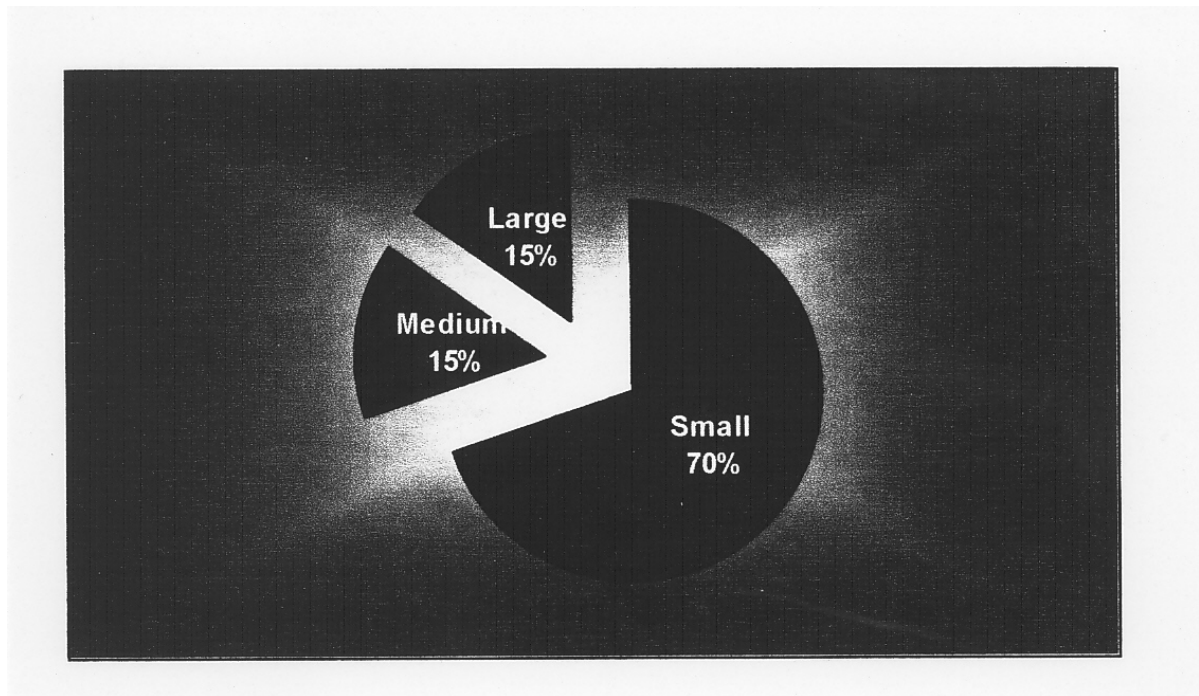
Twenty-six questionnaires were disbursed, and all twenty-six were returned. The answers will be presented in graph form to visually reflect the primary motivation of the respondents.

FINDINGS

       Employee motivation is a complex, subjective, emotional and very individualized issue. The human animal has many needs, perhaps best described by Maslow in his hierarchy of needs theory (Maslow, 1970). Whether or not one chooses to subscribe to a strict interpretation of Maslow's theory in its entirety, it cannot be denied that each individual's personal needs must be addressed in order for that person to be happy, successful and motivated.

       Early human resource studies placed great importance on job security, salary and fringe benefits. More recent studies indicate that employees now rate self-expression, self-fulfillment, and personal growth as the most important motivating aspect of their jobs (post, 1992).

       Law enforcement officers as a group realize that the profession does not, and cannot, offer the monetary benefits of employment in the private business sector. One study has indicated that municipal employees of all grades found their greatest satisfaction in their work (Seberhagen, 1970). Closely corresponding with this idea is a newer study reflecting that, on the whole, public sector employees are more satisfied with their pay and benefits than civilian business employees and are more concerned with self-actualization needs (Newstrom, et al, 1976). Lastly, a highly paid, unhappy, unmotivated employee remains just that, unhappy and unmotivated.

       Career rotation in the field of law enforcement has many drawbacks, making it of very little use as a motivator in a small department setting. The resources necessary to implement a rotation program are expensive in terms of both finances and personnel. Also, community need, or perceived need, of service places severe restrictions on the value of the concept. The community expectation of service for a small department requires that the serving officer be the epitome of the jack of all trades, able to perform any and all required law enforcement tasks at

any given time (Brye, 2002). At best, a very limited number of employees could be utilized in a rotation from patrol or investigative functions, a DARE position being one plausible example.

After salary/benefit needs are successfully addressed, management has as its best motivational tool carefully trained and selected supervisory personnel. A properly trained supervisor has both the time and contact with individual employees to learn exactly what their personal needs are. Officers want an increasingly greater say in how department policies affect the job and individual, and how the department perceives the individual employee (Olson, 1971). The modem officer also expects his intrinsic needs to be satisfied and performance rewarded (Beer, Spector, et al, 1985). All, or most, of the individual's various needs can be most easily observed and dealt with by supervisory personnel who have frequent contact with the individual.

When officers, as all people, are properly rewarded, it induces positive motivational results. A needs based management style for all intents and purposes appears to be an ideal motivator, with the understanding that financial security needs have to be met.

Overall results of the survey (Appendix) presented to the author's LEMIT Module I class indicated by a small majority that intrinsic needs being met was the individual respondent's primary motivation in the workplace. Small department personnel indicated by a very small majority that salary and benefits was the individual's primary motivation. Medium size department representatives were evenly divided between salary/benefits and intrinsic rewards, while large department respondents unanimously indicated that intrinsic rewards were their primary motivating factor (See Figure 2).
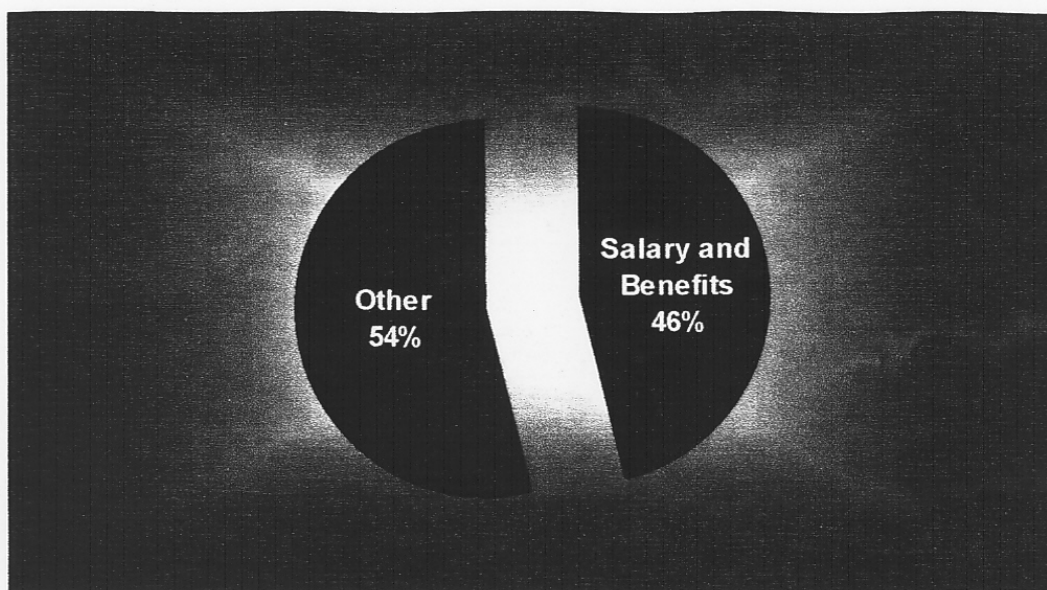
Figure 2

The survey was limited in scope, and did not take into account time served with an agency, amount of time served as a law enforcement officer, salary survey, promotional opportunities for their respective agencies, and other items that may have well changed the outlook of small department personnel regarding salary and benefits as a primary motivation factor

The overall trend of the survey results, by however small a margin, did seem to support other research literature by indicating that intrinsic needs satisfaction is more important to the individual than salary and benefits. The findings support a personal belief that no single method listed is capable, on its own merits, of motivating individual employees. It appears, based on the needs and restrictions of a small department setting, that career rotation as a motivator is not a viable solution. Salary and benefits, while a likely primary motivator when first obtaining employment does not guarantee continued motivated behavior on the part of individual employees, and must be combined with the only other practical motivator presented: a needs based management style.

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS

The problem discussed in this research project was: Management of the modem day police officer: is there one correct answer? The purpose of the research was to investigate whether or not one single method could be successfully used to motivate employees in the long term. Personal observation and experience indicates that, when taken at core value, three basic motivational methods are available to law enforcement agencies: (1) salary and benefits; (2) career rotation, and (3) a needs based management strategy. While this research was undertaken with the small law enforcement agency in mind, it appears from research that consideration of these same three basic motivational tools is also valid for medium and large departments. The hypothesis stated is of the three methods presented, no one on its own merits, was capable of providing long term motivational results but must be combined with at least one other method to meet an agency's goal of long term employee retention and satisfaction.

Research findings have shown that, in fact, there is no one correct answer to motivate the modem day police officer. Career rotation, for the small department is not a practical solution. Salary and benefits must, of course, be taken into consideration and included in initial primary motivation to satisfy a very basic need, but this alone cannot continue to motivate an employee. Over the long term, a needs based management style must be included to keep the individual employee motivated, maintain interest, and hopefully create the end result of having a satisfied, well motivated employee. It is obvious at this point that a combination of salary and management styles are necessary to produce the long term desired results, thus supporting the original hypothesis of this research project. Perhaps the hypothesis is most concisely stated by the paraphrased old axiom, "Man does not live by bread alone".

While researching this topic, it became readily apparent that while the material used for research was not terribly outdated, there is a tremendous amount of newer research in print, but not readily available on a no payment required basis. Harvard Business Review and several other periodicals are excellent resources, but are expensive to access and not easily available in a public forum. Additionally, available research material that is on point is very seldom written expressly with law enforcement as the focal point of the study, and is written from a human resource perspective in the business world.

The last point becomes very relevant to law enforcement as the craft strives to gain credibility as an actual profession. The field of law enforcement is currently experiencing a rapid rate of change on an almost daily basis. With change comes growth and newer perspectives. As we grow away from the traditional paramilitary type organizations, it is necessary to learn operational methods that have long been studied, polished, tested and proven by the business community. Employee motivation and retention certainly falls into that category. Any agency, of any size, can only benefit by examining motivational factors and tailoring them to the respective agency need to accomplish the desired goal of obtaining happy, productive and well-motivated employees to be retained for the long term.

REFERENCES

Beer, M., Spector, B., Lawrence, P. R., Mills, D. Q. and Walton, R. E. (1985). Human resource management: A general manager's perspective. New York, NY: The Free Press.

Cheraskin, L., & Champion, M. A. (1996). Eight points you need to consider about job rotation. Personnel Journal, 36 (11), 31-35.

Haasen, A. (1997). A better place to work: now a new understanding of motivation leads to higher productivity. New York, NY: American Management Association.

Herzberg, F. (1968). One more time: How do you motivate employees? Harvard Business Review, 46 (1),53-62.

Kiker, D. E. (1998). Career development: Job rotation in police agencies. Administrative Research Paper, Blackwood Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas.

Maslow, A. H. (1970). Motivation and personality. Second Edition. New York, NY: Harper and Row.

McNutt, R. & Wright, P. C. (1995). Coaching your employees: Applying sports analogies to business. Executive Development, 1995,42-45.

Newsfrom, J. W., Reif, W. E. & Monczka, R. M. (1976). Motivating the public employee: Fact vs. fiction. Public Personnel Management, 5 (1), 67-72.

Olson, B. T. (1971). Police opinions of work: An exploratory study. The Police Chief, 38 (7), 67-72.

Post, G. M. (1992). Police recruits: Training tomorrow's workforce. FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin, 61 (3), 19-24.

Seberhagen, L. W. (1970). What motivates civil service employees? <u>Public Personnel Review, 31</u> (1), 48-50.

Sheehan, R. & Cordner, G. W. (1995). <u>Police Administration. Third Edition</u>. Cincinnati, OH: Anderson Publishing Company.

Thibault, E. A., Lynch, L. M. & McBride, R. B. (1998). <u>Proactive Police Management</u>. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Vail, C. (1993). Supervision requires 'more' in policing. <u>Law and Order, 41</u> (5), 47-50.

Van Brocklin, V. (2001). Reawakening the spirit of policing. <u>Police Chief, 68</u> (8), 78 81.

APPENDIX

Survey

Please answer the following questions to the best of your personal knowledge.

I. How many sworn personnel does your department employ?

☐ Less than fifty

☐ 50 to 200

☐ Over 200

2. Are career rotation opportunities available in your department?

☐ Yes

☐ No

3. What do you consider to be **your personal** primary motivation in the workplace?
   Please select **only one**.

☐ Salary and benefits

☐ Recognition (to include awards, letters, verbal praise, etc.)

☐ Input in the decision making and planning process

☐ Other (please specify): _____

Thank you for your participation in this survey, the results of which will be used as part of an administrative research project for the Bill Blackwood Law Enforcement Institute, Leadership Command College. Please return this form to:

Sgt. W.J. Sala
Memorial Villages Police Department