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Police Administrators Should Begin Preparing Their Departments for the Millennials

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ABSTRACT

The Millennial generation is coming to police departments all over the country. There are approximately 102 million people in the millennial generation, those born between 1982 and 2002 have yet to make their full impact on the on the law enforcement workplace (Henchey, 2005). Today all recruits meeting the minimum age requirement are millennials. Police Administrators need to start strategizing on how to meet the needs of the agency by changing the way hiring and training is currently done at the different levels of management within the agency. Successfully recruiting and retaining law enforcement officers has to be emphasized in order to maintain the leadership required to properly command and control a police agency.

The up and coming new generation will need to be trained to replace the aging officers currently in command and control of today's law enforcement agencies around the county. With the implementation of new recruiting and retention strategies success will occur although it may seem slow at first. This will take some thinking outside the box because the millennials are a different breed of officer than we have seen in the past. This is due to several factors but probably the most important two factors being the technology they grew up with and the protected environments they grew up in.

Research gathered to obtain this information through a variety of sources regarding millennials. Those sources include reports, articles, journals, and online articles. Articles were also utilized to establish counter positions that explained the needs associated with why it is important to understand the Millennial generation.

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INTRODUCTION

Millennials are headed to the workplace that is why police administrators should begin preparing their departments for the Millennials. Millennials are a generation defined as individuals born between 1982 and 2002 (Picket, 2014). Characteristics of Millennials are that many had parents that were often supportive and protective of them. Millennials are the generation that was constantly reminded of how special they were. This resulted in the Millennial generation developing a high self-esteem. The negative aspect for Millennials because of all the kudos received growing up for effects over accomplishments have caused this generation to have difficulty accepting constructive criticism. The Millennial generation tend to take things personally when they take constructive criticism as a personal attack rather than a lesson to improve performance in the future. On a positive note Millennials work and learn well in groups, thus making for good team players (Henchey, 2015).

This generation has the now mentality thanks to technology such as the internet, smartphones, and social media. This technology has become their lifeline and without it, they would be lost. The way of doing business smart and quickly is their preference, and technology is key for them to achieve this. The Millennial mentality needs to be addressed in the law enforcement profession to aid in the recruitment and retention of Millennial officers.

Millennials possess traits that current first line police supervisors have not previously had to deal with until recently. The West Midland Family Center has done extensive research on Millennials (Fallon, 2009). Detailed information on their findings is located in the Appendix. The research the West Midland Family Center has gathered

provides police administrators an understanding of the new recruits that will be filling the vacancies in their police departments around the country. It also provides the first line supervisor with techniques that will be needed to effectively communicate with the millennial officers.

POSITION

Baby Boomers are out and Millennials are in. Police administrators need to embrace and understand Millennials and what makes them up as a person. Police administrators need to know how to manage them, and understanding what drives them is essential. Police administrators need to change their recruiting strategies to reach out to the vast majority of qualified Millennial applicants. This can be done by using several recruiting techniques such as Social Media, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram that will allow the departments to make a real-time presence to the Millennials (Jensen & Graves, 2013). Entering their world in the social media highway is key to becoming a name brand and the place they seek out to for employment.

Police administrators must understand and target two groups of Millennial officers. They are the entry-level applicants and the officers that wishes to make a lateral move from other police agencies (Skinner, 2010). To assist with the training of the entry-level applicant, technology is key for the attraction of the Millennial applicant. It is important to incorporate the latest technology into their everyday tasks, such as writing a ticket and completing crash reports. The new applicant will embrace the training of writing a citation on an electronic device more quickly as opposed to the old ticket books and being able to complete the crash reports on a computer versus the old way of using a crash template to draw the crash diagram. The benefit of being able to

attract an officer that applies for a lateral transfer is that the training cycle is shorter than that of an entry-level applicant and the training time before the officer can hit the street is shorter. This benefits the department because training cost is considerably lower than that of hiring an entry-level applicant.

Police administrators would also need to vet out their current state of practices to attract the masses of the Millennials. The benefit package and the pay structures are important to every employee, but restructure is necessary to take into consideration what is important to the Millennials as they will be the new generation to occupy the current workforce over the longest period now the baby boomer generation is starting to retire. Specific areas to start the evaluation for police administrators in conjunction with human resources are areas such as pay structure, vacation, overtime versus comp time, technology, and the mentoring program.

Since the Millennials are the now generation then the pay structure should reflect parity amongst the entire department within the demographics. By having parity in the pay scale will not only help attract new applicant, but it will also help retain experienced officer who would possibly apply elsewhere to get more pay in the future. Having this parity present will assist the police agency with Millennial employee retention. The only non-controlling factor would be demographics and the environment the police officers patrol (Berger, 2009).

Vacation is an important part to a work/life balance for everyone. Time away from work is paid time off to recharge, avoid burn out and to spend time with family. Although vacation is normally a standard accrual dependent on hours worked, taking into consideration years of service. Police administrations can make a more attractive

vacation package by providing options such as letting employees purchase an extra week of vacation or by implementing a buyback program for vacation that has not been utilized. The buyback program may be an attractive option for potential recruits as this is typically done at the end of the year, which will result in Christmas money for many. This can be a very enticing option. Millennials love their "me time" and giving them vacation options can be an attractive feature to new recruits.

Overtime versus comp time is a big issue with some departments. Most departments do not give the officer the options of getting overtime pay, which in some cases would alleviate the need for an officer to have to work a side job for extra income to be able to make ends meet. Instead most departments make the officer accrue comp time up until a certain number of hours are accrued then the first line supervisor will instruct the officer to take some time off before the department must pay time and half. Different departments have different standards and guidelines that deal with how much comp time is allowed to be banked into the officer's account before they have to pay overtime; however, the administration will be watching to assure that no overtime is paid due to the overtime hours being paid out is not a budgeted expense.

Millennials are technology driven and, therefore, they require it to survive. With Millennials having been raised with smart phones, smart televisions, the internet, and iPads, it is essential that departments keep up with technology. In the computer age, there are programs that allow officers to enter their reports, run wanted suspects, issue traffic citations, complete crash reports, and other varies departmental forms from mobile data terminals mounted in the patrol vehicles. Millennials love this aspect of the job because that is what they are used to and if feels more like a game than a job for

them. Most departments have moved to this technology in the last few years; however, if the department is lacking technology then the Millennial officer for sure will be looking elsewhere for employment with a department that offers up to date technology. Larger police departments with a larger budget are showing signs of embracing technology and the Millennials as their mobile data terminals in the police car are starting to install smart tablets.

According to Henchey (2005), police administrators will have to establish a mentoring program within their departments so that Millennial leaders can be developed so leadership roles will be covered as the Baby Boomers start to retire. Mentoring starts in field training programs and must continue throughout the Millennial officer's career so boredom does not set in causing the Millennial officer to look elsewhere for a more rewarding employment opportunity. Mentoring and challenging the Millennial officer would be to make them the best deputy and challenge them to work up to the next promotional position in their department. With the Generation Xers (those born between 1962 and 1981) beginning to reach the retirement eligibility within the next 5 to 10 years, it is imperative for the leaders within the department to mentor the Millennial officer (Miller, Hodge, Brandt, & Schneider, 2013). This will ensure that they will be prepared to accept and succeed when they are promoted so that the agencies traditions do not die as the generation Xers begin turning over command and control to the Millennial generation. History has shown that law enforcement leadership is a process of individual interest and chance (Henchey, 2005).   This way of thinking and leading has created a crisis in today's leadership in law enforcement. This will continue if the police administrators fail to recognize and keep the pattern from moving forward to

affect future police leaders. Howe and Strauss (1991) indicate, "When history loses urgency, people tend to live at the expense of the future despite their better judgement" (p. 38). We need to educate police administrators so that we can prepare for what is coming and prevent what will happen if we do not take the steps necessary to recruit and retain the future leaders of the Millennial generation.

COUNTER POSITION

Police traditions have been in place with departments for years and years. Some generation Xers will argue that there is no reason why traditions and the way things are done with an agency should be changed or relaxed just to attract the Millennial generation. Making the law enforcement profession as a rewarding career choice versus a calling. This argument has been challenged throughout history and will continue as each generation characteristics change. Tradition has shown that development and tenure in a dedicated officer is rewarded with promotional advancements as opposed to the Millennial generation that has an expectation of being rewarded now with the constant need of acknowledgement and praise.

Some agencies believe Millennials are a waste of time and budget. According to Olson and Wasilewski (2014), Millennial officers were looked down for not participating within the department culture but rather choosing to hang out with nonpolice friends and family members outside the department. Millennials were viewed as treating police work as a job instead of a career by not sacrificing to work overtime or applying for specialty units within the department.

Police administrators need to implement strategies to educate both their staff and themselves so they learn the characteristics of the Millennial officer. This will

strengthen the ranks within the department once the Millennials are embraced and provided a mentor that has been educated in the characteristics of the millennial officer. Then the generational gap can be bridged resulting in the hiring of highly educated and qualified police officer that can meet the challenges of the law enforcement profession.

Police administrators realize that change is coming and the workforce is getting younger. According to Werth and Werth (n.d.), the crisis facing police departments are a large number of Baby Boomers employed is decreasing leaving more and more positions being filled by Millennial officers. Police administrators are having to implement strategies to effectively integrate the Millennials into various work environments while preparing them for future leadership roles within the department. This is a major issue that almost every law enforcement agency around the country will be facing in the very near future if strategies are not adapted to address the issues of recruitment and retention. There will be a lack of experienced supervision within police agencies if not addressed.

RECOMMENDATION

The position of the researcher is that police administrators should begin to prepare their departments for the Millennials. It is in every department's best interest to make the investment today and began training the current staff and first line supervisors for the Millennial generation. There is no way around it; the Millennials are already here and soon will be part of the team that protect and serve the communities that we live in.

Recruiting will have to change so that the departments can go to where the Millennials are. This all starts with strategizing using ways that attract the Millennials to the law enforcement profession. The new way of recruiting Millennial officers will have

to be technology based in the future so that the attention of Millennial officers can be captured. Social media will be an important tool to use to reach out and attract the Millennial talent. Examples of this would be having a department Facebook page, Instagram, and create an app that contains the highlights of the department in a positive way. Efforts must be made to reach out to the Millennial applicants that are getting out of the military. These applicants are highly trained, mature, and are mission oriented. The military Millennial has used high tech equipment such as robots to search for bombs in various environments, have used drones to conduct reconnaissance, logistic support, and combat. Once the Millennial officer is attracted to the agency efforts must be made to hold the Millennial's attention while holding them accountable for their actions within the process.

Police departments will have to be better at mentoring Millennials within a structured environment so that each qualified applicate will understand not only the structure of a paramilitary organization but what is required of future law enforcement leaders.   This must be implemented and money must be set aside to pay for programs that make the mentoring programs a success.   First line supervisors will have to be sent to such a program because they will have the most interaction with the Millennial officers.   By being familiar with the characteristics of the Millennial generation and how to communicate effectively with them, the mentoring program will be a success.   With the success of the implementation of such a program, the results will benefit the police agencies because of the retention of qualified Millennial officers in the future.

The most important things that the field training officers and first line supervisors will have to learn before they can train/mentor the Millennial officers are how to relate to

the Millennial officer, what motives the Millennial officer, and what drives the Millennial

officer with generational gap training. All this is done so that the characteristics and

traits of the Millennial generation can be learned before the field training officers and the

first line supervisors meet the Millennial officer. This will help protect the department's

most valuable resource the police officers.

Retention of experienced officers will be the long-term benefit the department will

receive by being prepared for the millennials. Since Millennials are also referred to the

now generation it is important to have mentors that can effectively communicate with

millennials during their field training program. Once they are released on their own,

then they need to be mentored in a positive way by first line supervisors. Part of the

mentoring process should cover everything from patrolling to promotions. That way the

millennial officer knows what is expected for success as well as the reward for tenure

and hard work.

Now that police administrators know and recognize the issues facing law

enforcement now. It is every agencies responsibility to adapt a plan. Failure is not an

option, and believe it or not, there will be Millennial officers that will take the challenges

that the law enforcement profession has to offer, passing it with flying colors because

they will be mentored by one of the finest generations before them. If the Millennials

are welcomed with open arms and mentored by confident leaders, there is no reason

why when the generation Xers retire the profession will not have been left in good

hands.

Millennials will succeed in the law enforcement profession of today because of

forward thinking police administrators that have recognized the need for these changes

to make the transition of command and control from the generation Xers to the Millennials in the next few years. Those that do not began to make the transition will cause their departments to fail and become a training ground for other departments.

Carlson (2005) states that every generation has their stereotypes that pertains to the entire generation but it does not mean everybody born within those dates are the same (as cited in Werth and Werth, n.d.). Millennials are the educated generation and have the resources to look things up on the internet and learn the history and traditions of our past. Millennials will succeed because they will adapt in order to take on the responsibilities that they will assume in the law enforcement profession.

A prime example of how Millennials have served this country speaks for itself when one looks at the war on terrorism. The Millennial soldiers have served with honor and distinction in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001. They have represented the United States of America very well in foreign lands and there is no reason why that if they are mentored properly this generation will continue to do the same on this soil serving as law enforcement professionals.

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APPENDIX

Millennials Chart - www.wmfc.org/uploads/generationdifferenceschart.pdf

Drivers	Attributes
Influencers	Digital Media, child focused world, school shootings, terrorist attacks, AIDS, 9/11 terrorist attacks. Typically grew up as children of divorce they hope to be the next great generation & to turn around all the "wrong" they see in the world today. They grew up more sheltered than any other generation as parents strived to protect them from the evils of the world. Came of age in a period of economic expansion. Kept busy as kids First generation of children with schedules.
Core Values	Achievement Avid Consumers Civic Dusty Confidence Diversity Extreme fun High morals Highly tolerant Hotly competitive Like personal attention Self-Confident Social ability Most educated generation Extremely Techno savvy Now! Optimism Realism Street smart
Attributes	Ambitious but not entirely focused. Look to the workplace for direction and to help them achieve their goals. At ease in teams Attached to their gadgets & parents Best Educated-Confident High speed stimulus junkies Strong sense of entitlement

	Seek responsibility early on in their roles Very patriotic (shaped by 9/11)
Workplace View on Respect for Authority	Will test authority but often seek out authority figures when looking for guidance.
Workplace View on Time at Work	Effective worker but gone @5PM on the dot. View work as a "gig" or something that fills the between the weekends.
View on Work/Life Balance	Not only with work and life, but balance with work, life and community involvement and self-development. Flex time, job sharing, and sabbaticals will be requested more by this generation.
What They Are Looking For In a Job	Want to be evaluated on output not input on the work product itself. They expect to be paid well. Because of being a product of the "drop down and click menu", they may need to be given a list of options.
Work Assets	Consumer Mentality Goal oriented Highly educated Multitask Fast Tenacious
Work Liabilities	Distaste for menial work (they are brain smart) Inexperienced Need supervision Need structure Lack discipline High expectations Lack skills to deal with difficult people Respond poorly to those who act in an authoritarian manner and/or who expect to be respected due to higher rank alone
Keys to Working With	Like a team oriented workplace Take time to learn about their personal goals They expect to be treated respectfully Provide variety Provide a work environment that that rewards extra effort and excellence Raised to feel valued and very positive about themselves; they see as a sign of disrespect a requirement to do things just because this is the way it has always been done or to pay one's dues.
Communication	Polite Use positive, respectful, motivational, electronic

	communication style. (Cell phones, email, IM,, text)>these are "fun" Don't talk down-they will resent it Be careful about the words you use and the way you say it(they are not good at personal communication because of the technical ways of communicating) Prefer to learn in networks, teams using multi-media while being entertained and excited
Mentoring	Be flexible Challenge them Respect them Raise the bar on self as they have high expectations Goals-in steps and actions Honor their optimism and welcome and nurture them

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