

## Reducing Police Agency Stress with New Techniques for Recruiting and Retaining Officers

**Richard H Martin\***

*Leadership Studies, Mercer University, USA*

**\*Corresponding Author:** Richard H Martin, Leadership Studies, Mercer University, USA.

**Received:** May 10, 2021; **Published:** May 27, 2021

Constant recruiting can be stressful on police officers and the agency. By the time a new recruit is ready to patrol, there is potential burnout of officers carrying the extra load as well as depletion of resources. Some employees leave the job because of the supervisor, not because of the job. Direct supervisors have the most control over the agency culture and environment. It is the working relationships between employees and supervisors that play a substantial role in employee retention [1]. There are several features agencies can implement for recruits toward becoming career law enforcement officers (LEOs). Characteristics of a community that attract citizens also attract LEOs to the community. For example, a good economy, schools, health care, recreational opportunities, low crime rates are attractive to both citizens and police. In addition to a decent salary, there are other important factors to consider for retention of officers. A higher starting salary is not enough to retain officers. Training must also be relevant and targeted toward the interests of the officers [2].

Some elements LEOs want in addition to salary and a good community include:

- (a) value and recognition. Because policing can be a thankless job, leader appreciation is important to officers. Leaders can recognize a job well done, encourage peer recognition, and reward LEOs an awards banquet. Even an extra day off or a privileged parking space are inexpensive awards.
- (b) Training and equipment. These two elements increase employee morale and productivity, and a feeling of belonging. They also want relevant training geared toward a LEOs interests. Once trained, make sure LEOs have good equipment that is serviceable.
- (c) Uniforms and vehicles. Consider upgrading the look your agency's uniform. Take advantage of moisture wicking materials. Consider take home or assigned cars. Take-home cars and allowing use while not on duty is an attractive incentive.
- (d) Professional growth and career advancement programs are attractive to LEOs. Specialized units and training allow employees to be knowledgeable law enforcement professionals.

Recognize LEOs specialized experience with a unit patch or pin. Help your officers to see what their future with your agency can look like. Reward seniority with promotions or merit pay. And provide a fair, set of promotion requirements for competitive to merit sergeant, lieutenant and above [3]. Additional hiring initiatives may include: offer hiring bonus, create a police recruit position, allow lateral transfers, attend college and military career fairs, use recruiting videos, host agency Police Explorer Programs and offer additional training [3].

## Bibliography

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**Volume 10 Issue 6 June 2021**

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