

The Young and Old:
Generational Differences within The Union Township Fire Department

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CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I hereby certify that the following statements are true:

1. This paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

2. I have affirmed the use of proper spelling and grammar in this document by using the spell and grammar check functions of a word processing software program and correcting the errors as suggested by the program.

Signed:



Printed Name: Jeff Jackson

ABSTRACT

The Union Township Fire Department was established in 1990. Two private career departments in the township combined to create a public fire department, hence Union Township Fire Department. During the years following, the department grew rapidly with significant hiring and creation of policies, procedures and promotions. These factors created a very diverse workforce of different age groups, backgrounds and philosophies.

This research paper was created due to the discord caused by the varying degree of values, commitment, and dedication among the employees within the department. The purpose of the study was to assist management in better understanding and addressing these differences and to improve productivity, morale, communications, and performance levels.

With the aforementioned problem statement and purpose of the study the following three research questions were created as the basis for the study:

1. What are the age, attitude, and motivational differences within the Union Township Fire Department?
2. How do the age, attitude, and motivational differences impact the personnel management practice?
3. What are other factors that may be impacting the performance of individuals within the department?

The research method chosen for the study was descriptive utilizing a survey sent to employees of Union Township Fire Department, Yuma Arizona Fire Department and West Allis

Wisconsin Fire Department. One hundred fifty surveys were sent and one hundred twenty five were returned.

The procedures used were based on survey data obtained compared to the literature review to determine if the two had a correlation. The data were compiled via Survey Monkey and analyzed to determine the best course of action to obtain the desired improvement and solutions to the problem.

The results of the survey and literature review correlated uniquely and provided an excellent base of information to propose recommendations to the fire department.

The researcher recommended that the department complete four steps to assist in resolving the problem. These steps include dropping generational barriers, relaying to employees a unified purpose, education and sharing of the research document in its entirety to all.

All members of the department need to work together to accomplish this change in paradigm to create success and be more efficient.

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INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Union Township is one of the fastest growing communities in the State of Ohio. This growth includes capital growth and population. The Union Township Fire Department has been expanding to meet the level of service necessary to meet the growth township wide. The fire department has been experiencing a changing workforce over the past five years. The need to hire additional staffing to meet the growth needs of the township has resulted in the department experiencing an influx of employees of varying age groups.

The problem this study will address is the discord caused by the varying degree of values, commitment, and dedication among the employees within the department. These issues create motivational, communication, and morale issues with the fire department based on each generational group and their views on these topics. Examples of these issues include lack of respect for authority, lack of understanding of the leadership process, poor compliance with direction given, and a lack of understanding that everyone must answer to someone.

The research method chosen for the study will be descriptive. A survey will be conducted utilizing Union Township employees and other fire department employees from across the country.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to assist management in better understanding and addressing these differences and to improve productivity, morale, communications, and performance levels. The study is intended to provide understanding and possible solutions to the stated issues

addressed in the problem statement. The results will be presented to the administrative staff to address policy and practices, for improving performance of Union Township Fire Personnel.

Research Questions

The research questions this study will investigate are:

1. What are the age, attitude, and motivational differences within the Union Township Fire Department?
2. How do the age, attitude, and motivational differences impact the personnel management practice?
3. What are other factors that may be impacting the performance of individuals within the department?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

The Union Township Fire Department was established on September 5, 1990. Prior to this date Union Township contracted fire protection from two private fire departments, The North Union Fire Department and The Withamsville Fire Department. The two private fire departments provided service to the township for approximately forty five years. In late 1989, Union Township Officials began exploring the options for creating one township fire department. A decision was made in early 1990 to consolidate the two private fire departments into one publically owned fire department, hence The Union Township Fire Department originated.

A very comprehensive hiring process was completed with many of the members of the North Union Fire Department not being hired by the Township and the majority of the members of the Withamsville Fire Department being retained by the Township. On September 5, 1990 the Township took ownership of three fire facilities and equipment that was once owned by the private companies. Two of the stations were immediately staffed with the remaining full time staff from the two private companies and the third station remained unstaffed for approximately two years. A tax levy was passed in the mid 1990's and personnel were hired and the third station opened. A need for new fire equipment, additional personnel, and facilities became apparent in early 2000. A strategic plan was developed and two additional stations and personnel were forecast in the plan. In the fall of 2002, a Safety Services Levy was approved by the voters of Union Township. This levy set the stage for the strategic plan to evolve. The finalized plan called for two new fire stations and twenty nine new employees. This plan has been acted upon and as of May 2008 the department has five fire stations and seventy employees; the twenty nine new employees proposed in the strategic plan have been hired.

The addition of the new employees and stations has been very positive for Union Township, but has also created problems as well. The employees that remained when the township assumed control of the private fire departments are now in upper management positions with only two of those employees still remaining in the rank and file. There are seven employees presently in upper management. The influx of the twenty nine new employees, as well as, a half dozen replacement employees over the course of eighteen years has created a large generation gap in the department. The new and replacement employees are from a newer generation, while the employees that have been with the department since 1990, are from an earlier generation. According to (Jerrard, 2002) many emergency services managers are experiencing varying levels of difficulty adjusting to their changing workforces, given that each generation brings a unique set of norms to the workplace that may not be understood by their employers. This analogy is also assumed at Union Township and is creating many communication, morale, and productivity issues within the organization. The perceived completely different set of values, beliefs, and motivations between the generations is dramatic and very complex in terms of a workable solution that fits all employees. According to (Gayk, 2008) generally speaking the employees born between 1976 and 2000 are considered the Y Generation. This generation of employees brings a completely different set of values to the workplace. The Generation Y employees expect to be paid more, have flexible hours, and be promoted within a year. In contrast, the older generation (Baby Boomers and beyond) expect to work hard for the salary provided and gain experience over the years before considering a promotion. These are just a few of the generational issues within the Union Township Fire Department that will be examined during this research study.

The potential impact this study could have on the Union Township Fire Department is twofold. First, so that the best techniques can be found to meet the goal of continuously improving the service provided to the community through the work of the employees. Secondly, so that the leadership tools necessary to produce a high level of service amongst the employees can be identified, and a mutually beneficial work environment can be developed for the employees and the citizens they serve. This research project will identify the techniques available to influence the employees of both generations to assist in improving motivation, morale, work ethic, and overall productivity of the Union Township Fire Department. Describing the different generational groups and the influencing techniques most appropriate for each, will provide the Department with an understanding of the differences among each group and provide insight on how to capitalize on the strengths of each. This will provide the Union Township Fire Department with an opportunity to enhance the delivery of fire protection and emergency services to Union Township.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In an article by Carter (2008) he stated we are worried that our fire service is losing the many fine hues and tones that have made it a colorful and productive part of American culture for the past three and one half centuries. I have to stress that I am making reference to every aspect of the fire service where giving and participative spirit is needed. He also references the struggle the volunteer fire service is experiencing recruiting members to participate and the philosophy the new generation of career firefighter's possess. The new generation sees the fire service as just a job and is interested in putting in their required time and then getting away from the job until their next tour. Many of the younger generation fail to see the depth and range of requirements for being active members of service organizations.

According to (Martin, 2002) there are four main generations found in the workforce today. They are the Veteran Generation, sometimes known as the Traditionalists, the Baby Boomer Generation, Generation X, and Generation Y, also referred to as the Millennials or Nexters.

The Veteran generation emerged between 1925 and 1945 and some of the later members would still be found in today's workforce. This generation ranges in age from 60 to 80 years old and were influenced by the Great Depression and World War II. This generation is a very loyal generation and a generation willing to make sacrifices for the good of the organization.

The Baby Boomer Generation has an estimated seventy five million members and was born between 1946 and 1964. The major events that shaped the Baby Boomers included the Vietnam War, Watergate, television, and contraceptives. Boomers are idealistic, optimistic, prideful, and loyal. This generation believes in long work hours and values their social standing.

The Generation Xer's were born between 1965-1981. Events that shaped this generation included corporate downsizing, right sizing and reengineering, and the affect the events had on the careers and loyalty of their parents. As a result of what this generation saw through their parents, this generation displays less loyalty to their employers, expects more open communications throughout organizations, and is more likely to challenge authority. This generation is generally hard working, but also insists on a balance between work and personal time.

The Millennials, born between 1982 and 2001 are the last generation to enter the work force. This generation is described as self confident, full of self esteem, educated, openly tolerant of diversity, and socially conscious. The greatest influence on this generation has been the technology revolution. This generation has been exposed to almost daily advances in computer technology and is very focused on short term and immediate results.

According to (King, 1998), the fire service is not immune to the effects of the changing generational workforce, and its leaders must be cognizant that leadership techniques must be adapted to the new generation of firefighters entering the service. The leaders of today's fire service must adapt to the changing workforce to achieve organizational effectiveness.

In an article by (Gayk, 2008), he suggested that many factors are influencing today's workforce. The technology age has instilled the concept of instant gratification and satisfaction in today's workers. The use of text messaging and instant messaging has had a negative effect on the employee's ability to directly communicate with their supervisor, as well as a negative effect on the supervisor's ability to communicate with the employee. In his article, he wrote specifically concerning childhood sports and the changes in the reward system. As many of the baby boomers played sports during their youthful years they were only rewarded for excellent

performance; winning the season or championship. In today's generation everyone receives a reward for just playing, therefore fostering an attitude of poor performance is acceptable and reward able. This type of reward system progresses to the workplace environment as a perceived poor work ethic. Hence a conflict arises between the manager and employee who have two drastically different sets of values concerning rewarding employees and what is an acceptable work ethic and what is not.

Today's generation of employees are known as the idea generation. The younger employees have ideas on how to make the traditional task and concepts easier and less time consuming. While this may be productive for the organization in one sense the older generation is instilled in tradition. To be told a new way to mop the floor by the new kid typically creates conflict between the two, therefore generating a problem for the supervisor to resolve. The big question for the supervisor is not who is correct, but how do I approach this without creating a negative impact on either the new or seasoned employee?

While the fire station is not corporate America, we cannot change how we conduct business to accommodate the different generations. The fire service must find a middle ground and be willing to make the necessary adjustments to make things work. The next generation will surely have different values and standards and the fire service must be ready to deal with them in order to be successful.

In an article by, (David M. Williams, 2008) the author discussed multiple topics. Below is a summary of these topics.

The "Baby Boomers" were born at a time of war and matured in a period of engagement in the Korean and Vietnam conflicts and the arms race. At the same time, they were present for great change that included the civil rights movement, women's liberation, and the space race.

The Boomers were the first group to have “plays well with others” on their report cards. Unlike their parents, they approached the world as filled with opportunities. The next generation was the “Generation X’ers”, born after the introduction of birth control and women beginning to share the role of bread winner. This generation was much smaller and included many single child families. Significant shapers included being one of the first generations to experience high divorce rates and being raised as “latchkey” kids. Generation X’ers lived through a time where trust in government was in question, an energy crisis, and an economic bust. The most recent generation making its way into the workplace, Nexters or Millennials, is larger than the one before, but just as unique. Raised by Baby Boomers, who were largely more involved than their own parents, these kids had more at their disposal than any before. Their parents were multi-taskers, shuffling the kids from one event to the next. The Millennials have grown up watching television and using computers, and have lead very scheduled and stressful childhoods. These kids were the first to fear violence in schools. The generation’s specific needs and work style are just beginning to impact the workplace. A clear understanding of these “shapers” of each generation will assist the manager in appreciating what is best for the individual, as well as the workplace.

Each generation entered the workforce with a unique set of values. Unfortunately, many of these values are construed to foster a poor work ethic and a lack of loyalty to the employer. In reality, each generation comes to work with a set of values that dictates their motivation and work behavior, and it’s not as much the presence or absence of work ethics or values, but how congruent they are with the management culture in which they work that determines success.

The Boomers value hard work and possess a strong focus on achievement, but also have a need to be recognized. The X’ers created a major paradigm shift in the workplace. A much

smaller generation, they were accustomed to functioning independently. With an edgy and pessimistic outlook in having watched their parents work long hours, X'ers have a deep appreciation for life balance and a more casual and enjoyable work environment. In addition, the significance of their work is important and if they don't understand the "whys" behind what they are doing, they struggle to commit. When connected with their work, they are highly independent and driven. The Millennials entering the workforce are very different. Having grown up with involved parents and scheduled lives, they value strong leadership to guide them in their work. A full understanding of this group is still being researched and a full understanding is ongoing.

Each generation comes to the workplace with a strong set of values. It is important not to look at one generation as better than the other, but rather as different. If you manage to see what's important with each generation, their values can complement each other and strengthen the organization.

In conclusion, managers of today need to be conscious of the implications of a cross-generational workforce. Applying a one size fits all management approach is a path to frustration and failure. Managers must take the time to learn what each generation needs and attempt to manage everyone equitably.

In an article by (Dylan, 2006) the author suggested a few guidelines to follow to help with bridging the gap between generations. The author discusses the young employees who attempted to breakdown some of the myths associated with this generation, the Millennials.

Laziness: Don't mistake the lack of enthusiasm for laziness. The young worker is not afraid to work hard; it's just that their goals have shifted. They seek personal fulfillment beyond career success (or, sometimes at the cost of it). The younger workers' energy goes to becoming

better racquetball players, writers or volunteers and the job they go to each day is viewed as a bill paying mechanism. The offer of flexible schedules will many times create an acceptable balance between work and life for these employees.

Lack of loyalty: The younger employees all know at least one person of their own age group that has been laid off due to downsizing. They also watched corporate scandals like Enron leaving workers with nothing. They don't expect to keep one job their entire life, and usually that is not the norm. They feel very strongly that loyalty goes both ways. These employees also enjoy flexibility. If they want to use flex hours to work in the morning, play a game of racquetball in the afternoon and finish the day with a late afternoon of work what is the harm? As long as the employee is producing good work, the only effect to the company is that they will have happier employees less likely to job-hop any time soon.

Unrealistic Aspirations: The "Be All You Can Be" message worked. The young employee aspires to be the mega-rich superstar, and they want it now. A new attorney just out of law school believes that becoming a partner in the firm within the first five years a realistic expectation. While many of the senior members of the firm laugh, is this really an unrealistic goal? The answer is no, take this employee under the wing of a seasoned veteran and explain the realistic time frame to climb the ladder, but continue to encourage and give the employee the attention necessary and that employee will thrive.

Constant Need for Feedback: The younger generation of workers (The Millennials), have a need for constant feedback concerning their performance. This generation is all about me, me, me. Give them the feedback they need, either positive or negative, and the young employee will thrive.

In conclusion, the author stated "Show your rising stars that you are willing to work with

them, and you'll be able to one day retire in the comfortable hands of the Next Generation".

In the book, "Generations at Work" (Zemke, 1996, Pages 12-16) the author stated that each generation was shaped by defining events that occurred in their lifetime. He further concluded that multiple types of events including wars, political uprisings, assassinations, social events, both current and past Presidents have had and continue to have an impact on shaping the generations. These events occurred from the 1930's thru the 1900's and encompassed many shaping events for each generation. A detailed table of these defining events is included in Appendix 1.

In the book, "Generation Me" (Twenge, 2006) the author references what she describes as "Generation Me", they are today's young people born between 1970's and 1990's. Dr. Twenge also refers to this generation as the "Entitlement Generation", and states they are storming schools, colleges, and businesses all across the country. This generation is described by Dr. Twenge as the generation with sky-high expectations and a need for constant praise and fulfillment. Dr. Twenge is a member of this generation and explores why her generation is tolerant, confident, open minded, and ambitious, but also cynical, depressed, lonely, and anxious.

Using findings from the largest intergenerational study ever conducted, with data from 1.3 million respondents spanning six decades, Dr. Twenge revealed in the book how different today's young adults are and she makes controversial predictions about what the future holds for them and society as a whole.

Dr. Twenge demonstrates in her research that today's young people have been raised to aim for the stars at a time when it is more difficult than ever to get into college, find a good job, and afford a house even with two incomes. Generation Me's expectations have been raised just as the world is becoming more competitive, creating an enormous clash between expectations

and reality.

According to (Lancaster, 2002) she suggest that generational diversity can bring new perspectives into the workplace. On the personal front when employees discuss their generational differences openly, it can lead to gaps being bridged and, ultimately, to a more united workforce. On the professional front, companies that understand generational differences and adjust their recruitment and retention strategies accordingly will reap bottom-line rewards in terms of an increased success rate with job candidates and higher overall job satisfaction.

The literature review was the focus of the procedures used to determine the type of questions asked in the survey. Based on the literature the survey was broken into five sections, employee demographics, work ethics, team dynamics, motivation, and dedication. All of these factors were discussed by at least one of the authors and in many cases by multiple authors that were researched. These five sections provided a framework for the questions and comparisons made during the evaluation of the returned surveys.

PROCEDURES

The procedure used to obtain data for this research topic was a survey as a data source. The survey was distributed to three fire departments including Union Township. The survey categories and questions were designed based on the literature review. The survey instrument utilized was “Survey Monkey”, an internet based survey tool that permits the survey to be sent to multiple sources and the return of information to remain anonymous. This method provided the best possible net return as well as, the ability to provide an easy to complete survey on a medium that most all are familiar with, the internet. One hundred and fifty surveys were sent out with a return of one hundred twenty five (83.3% return). The draft survey was pilot tested by Chief Officers from all three agencies which provided positive results concerning readability, understandability and ease of use as well as a one hundred percent return. The survey was sent to all Union Township Fire Department employees through an in house e-mail system. Surveys were also sent to the West Allis Wisconsin Fire Department and the City of Yuma Arizona Fire Department. The use of the two out of state departments provided a non-bias group of individuals without any ties to the researcher or the researchers department. The researcher felt the use of local departments would create an atmosphere for a bias due to personal knowledge of the researcher. Approval was obtained from these two agencies Administrative Staffs to send the survey link whereas they will also distribute the survey thru internal e-mail. A letter of intent was sent to Union Township employees, as well as West Allis and Yuma Administrative Staff to be distributed with the e-mail link for the survey. The audience completing the survey encompassed one hundred and fifty individuals from these departments across all generations. The survey provided data concerning employee demographics, work ethics, team dynamics, motivation, and dedication, all of which are Union Township Fire Departments core values. From these core

values each question was developed based on the five categories of values. The results of the survey are compiled by the Survey Monkey tool and were analyzed by the researcher for results thus generating recommendations for improvement.

RESULTS

The results of this research were obtained by way of surveys. The survey instrument examined five areas including employee demographics, work ethics, team dynamics, motivation and dedication. The survey topics were designed to obtain the necessary data to address the three research questions and provide the researcher the necessary data to address the problem that was defined in the problem statement.

The data received from the demographic section of the survey indicated that sixty-two percent of the respondents were from “Generation X” (born between 1965-1981) as evidenced in appendix 2. The number of years the respondents have been employed in the fire service is evenly distributed between 1 year and over 20 years as described in appendix 3. The respondents were predominantly line firefighters (63.6%) with line officers being the second and third highest percentage of respondents (Appendix 4).

Section two of the survey collected data concerning the employees work ethic. The vast majority of the respondents complete extra work that is not assigned to them (Appendix 5). Concerning the employees arriving to work on time 87.2% of the respondents frequently arrive for work early and 87.2% feel it is their responsibility to arrive early and that they should not be compensated for early arrival(Appendix 6). The respondents felt their work ethic affects the moral of their co-workers. Of those respondents 78.6% felt their work ethic was being perceived by their fellow employees as positive.

Section three of the survey instrument examined team dynamics. Eighty-six percent of the respondents responded that team work was essential and 87.9% of those respondents felt they were part of the team at their place of employment (Appendix 7 & 8). The response to question

three in the team dynamics section concerned who the employee asks if they have a work related question. Forty percent of the respondents indicated they ask their supervisor with 52.4% indicating they ask a fellow employee, see appendix 9. Sixty-six point four percent of the employees indicated that it was important for others to ask their opinion at work but these same individuals indicated they were not discouraged if they were not asked (Appendix 10).

Section four of the survey instrument examined motivation. Forty five point two percent of the respondents indicated that positive feedback from co-workers was their most important motivator at work, 26.2% indicated positive feedback from fire department administration was important, 19% indicated money was their most important motivator and 9.5% indicated public recognition was the most important motivator(Appendix 11). Morale and labor management issues were the leading factors that would cause the respondents to look for employment elsewhere(Appendix 12). , but with that being the case, 72.7% indicated they plan on retiring from their current place of employment(Appendix 13). Sixty point nine percent of the respondents indicated that their compensation was appropriate. Fifty-one point nine percent of the respondents indicated that they get more personal satisfaction off the job rather than on the job.

The fifth and final section of the survey instrument examined dedication. Question one of this section asks the respondents to identify what is most important to them concerning their job. The respondents replied that being part of the team was the most important factor concerning their job and getting a promotion was the least (Appendix 14). The respondents were asked what they enjoyed most about their job, emergency response overwhelmingly lead in this question with public education and fire prevention obtaining the least responses (Appendix 15). The respondents indicated they are willing to cancel plans and commitments to fill an open shift or

respond back on a recall; with that being indicated there was not an overwhelming commitment to give up prior plans and commitments (Appendix 16). Seventy four point three percent indicated that they desired to be promoted with the majority aspiring to obtain a middle management/line officer position. The survey respondents overwhelmingly felt (78.9%) they were viewed by their supervisor as a dedicated and committed employee.

The survey instrument was developed in conjunction with the research questions. The five categories of the survey instrument employee demographics, work ethics, team dynamics, motivation, and dedication directly correlate to the questions and provide specific validation in the responses provided by the respondents.

DISCUSSION

The survey instrument(Appendix 17) provided an interesting prospective and valuable data to assist in assessing the generational issues within Union Township Fire Department. The data revealed that there was not the huge separation between the generations during the emergency operations but a difference in opinion in the importance of the non-emergency events.

The data concerning employee demographics indicated that the information was obtained from employees of all generations and age groups. The data was obtained from employees that had one year or less of experience and up to 20+ years of seniority. The majority of the respondents (63.6%) were line firefighters and the next highest participants were Lieutenants. This mix of employees gives an accurate representation of the daily staffing one would find in an average fire station.

The data obtained concerning the employees work ethic provided an unexpected result. The data obtained overwhelmingly supported that there is not a separation between the generations as indicated by the literature. The data indicated that all employees arrive early for work, try to do above and beyond what is expected of them and feel it is their responsibility to arrive early for work and not be compensated for the early arrival. All employees also felt strongly that their work ethic has a profound effect on other employees.

The data obtained from the Team Dynamics section of the survey also revealed a lack of separation between the generations. A vast majority of the respondents indicated that team work is an essential and required part of the job in all functions, emergency or non-emergency. Eighty eight percent of the respondents indicated that they felt they were part of the team at their place of employment. The younger generation did indicated a need to express their opinion but with

that being the case this group also strongly indicated they were not discouraged if their opinion was not solicited.

The data obtained in reference to motivation did show some minor generational differences. Concerning question one; the younger generation was more concerned with obtaining positive feedback from their co-workers versus the older generation (Boomers) were more concerned with positive feedback from their supervisors. Concerning question two; the two top issues that would cause the workers to look for employment elsewhere were morale issues and labor management issues. As indicated by the literature money was a top motivator for the younger generation, this was not indicated in this research as money had the lowest percentage of influence. The vast majority of the workers of all age groups surveyed intend to retire from their current place of employment again questioning the literature that indicated the younger generation (Xer's) were upwardly mobile.

The final section of the survey examined dedication. In this section of the survey variations of responses were recognized by generation. The first question examined what was most important concerning your job; all generations felt being part of the team was a high priority, followed by being recognized by the public. The next two questions addressed what you enjoy at work and how willing are you to cancel prior plans to fill a shift or respond to a recall. A separation in generations was evident here; the younger generation was not as enthusiastic about canceling plans and did not enjoy fire prevention and public education. The older generation took a more global approach and enjoyed all aspects of the job and were willing to cancel plans to meet the needs of the company. The variations are in line with the information found in past literature. The final questions addressed being promoted and to what level. The younger generation had a desire to be promoted but only to a level that would leave them in a line

position, Captain or Battalion Chief, while the older generation had a desire to promote to the Chief level.

The data clearly indicated a deviation from the norm in the workforce concerning generational issues. In the fire service the workforce is very action oriented and come into the profession due to a long family history in the service or a genuine desire to assist their fellow man. This type of commitment places the fire service in a unique situation compared to other occupations. The desire to obtain a position in the fire service is many times said to have been in the employees "blood" for years and with that being stated many of the generational issues discussed in the literature do not apply to the fire service workforce. Once an employee obtains a position the desire to move to another fire service organization is low due to the family type atmosphere that grows within each organization as well as the desire to be part of that family. With these factors being stated, the survey data indicated the issues concerning generational differences and the problems encountered are created by the generations methods of addressing problems, gaining knowledge and the processes utilized to complete task. The fire service for generations has been engrained in tradition therefore creating a bias concerning change. The change that is brought into the occupation by the younger generation is not negative as many times perceived by the older generation but in reality a positive new perspective on how to accomplish the mission in a different setting or way. Conversely, the younger generation must also understand that change is difficult for the older generation. One example of this is the older generation was brought up as a rookie in the service to do as told and don't ask questions, where the younger generation is full of questions and different methods to make the task easier. This example would seem to be a small issue that can be easily resolved but in reality it creates an enormous amount of generational separation and discontent. Tradition is difficult to overcome as

well as the young zealous employee being hard to swallow for the old timer, to resolve these issues a middle ground approach must be explored.

Recommendations

The problem stated by the study is the discord caused by the varying degree of values, commitment, and dedication among the employees within the department and the purpose of the study is to assist management in better understanding and addressing these differences and to improve productivity, morale, communications, and performance levels.

The data and literature both indicate a global misunderstanding of each generation and dropping the preconceived barriers is an excellent starting point to a better working understanding and relationship. Both of these sources indicate that a single generation is not at fault that each must make adjustments and adapt if a resolution is accomplished.

The first step to resolve the generational differences is for all employees to agree and understand that there are differences in thinking, formulating solutions and solving problems by generation. The data obtained through the survey strongly suggest that the majority of the literature reviewed does not apply to the employees of the fire service. The data suggest that all employees of the fire service are dedicated, professional, motivated and loyal employees with each generation displaying different attributes applying these behaviors. The researcher recommends that this research paper be made available to all employees of Union Township Fire Department for their review. The review of this paper will assist with a better understanding and assist in clearing up many of the misconceptions concerning the generations.

Secondly, the data and personal experience indicate that there is not a generation issue on the emergency scene; the issue presents itself in the social atmosphere within the fire station. On the emergency scene the line fire fighters do not question or rebut what the officer in charge directs, they do what they are told. The line firefighters do the task assigned to the best of their ability and perform as directed by the incident commander. Within the confines of the fire station the urgency to react and perform is not present and the younger generation in the quest for knowledge will ask why and question alternate methods to complete the task. The recommendation to address this issue is to listen to each other. While this may seem a simple solution it is quite complex. The older generation is quick to snap back “do as your told” and then the younger generation is quick to form a negative/defensive attitude. Each generation should work diligently toward listening and hearing what the other party has to suggest or why the question is being asked in the manner it is presented; the key is hearing and processing what the individuals goal is and not making a snap remark/decision based on just the listening component.

Lastly, the Union Township Fire Department should consider an educational component to assist with the understanding of the generational issues involved. As described throughout the literature and this research paper these generational issues are extremely complex and a thorough understanding of the motivations, traits and reasoning for the actions of each generation are critical. A consult with the department’s community college or occupational medicine specialist should net a listing of qualified professionals that can provide the education necessary to better understand the generations and also provide the framework for a resolution to occur.

In conclusion, all parties involved (generations) must be willing to make a behavioral change for the betterment of the organization. This process is not going to occur overnight and

will take a substantial commitment by all to be successful. The process of changing an organizations culture is difficult but the process of changing an individual's behavior is a daunting task. This task must be completed in a team environment and include all members of the team from the Chief all the way to the newest member. The department administration must support this effort and enforce the importance of such for the process to be successful. Once the department obtains a margin of success it is only the beginning of the ongoing process. The learning and mentoring process must continue and become a portion of the departments Continual Quality Improvement Process.

In conclusion, these recommendations will require hard work at all levels of the organization. From the Fire Chief to the newest member, all must be willing to adapt and participate in the transformation of the organizational culture. All members of the organization must remove the "Us vs. Them" concept and work together as a cohesive team. As aforementioned this will not occur overnight or by next month but the commitment made will net an excellent return.

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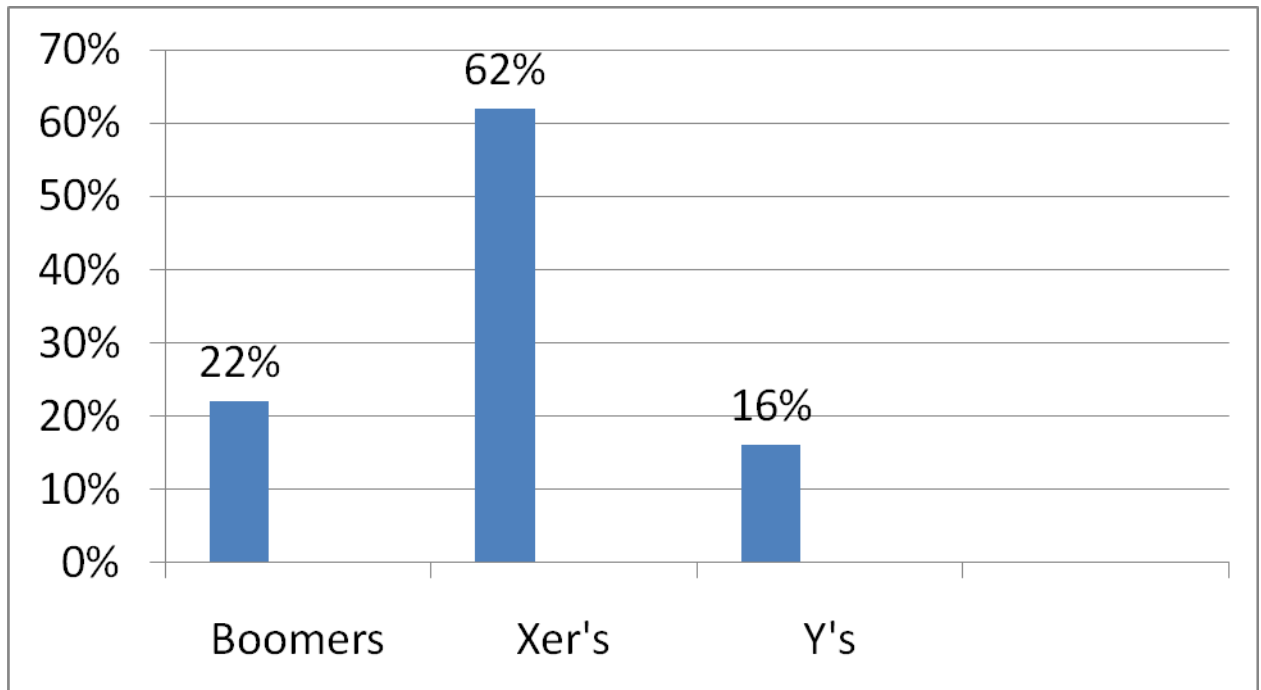
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APPENDIX 1 – DEFINING EVENTS

1930's	Election of FDR
	Great Depression
1940's	Pearl Harbor
	D-Day
	Death of FDR
	VE Day and VJ Day
	Hiroshima- Nagasaki
1950's	Korean War
	TV in every home
	McCarthy HCUAA Hearings
	Rock "n" Roll
	Salk Polio Vaccine Introduced
1960's	Vietnam
	Kennedy Elected
	Civil Rights movement
	Kennedy/King Assassinations
	Moon Landing
	Woodstock
1970's	Oil embargo
	Nixon resigns

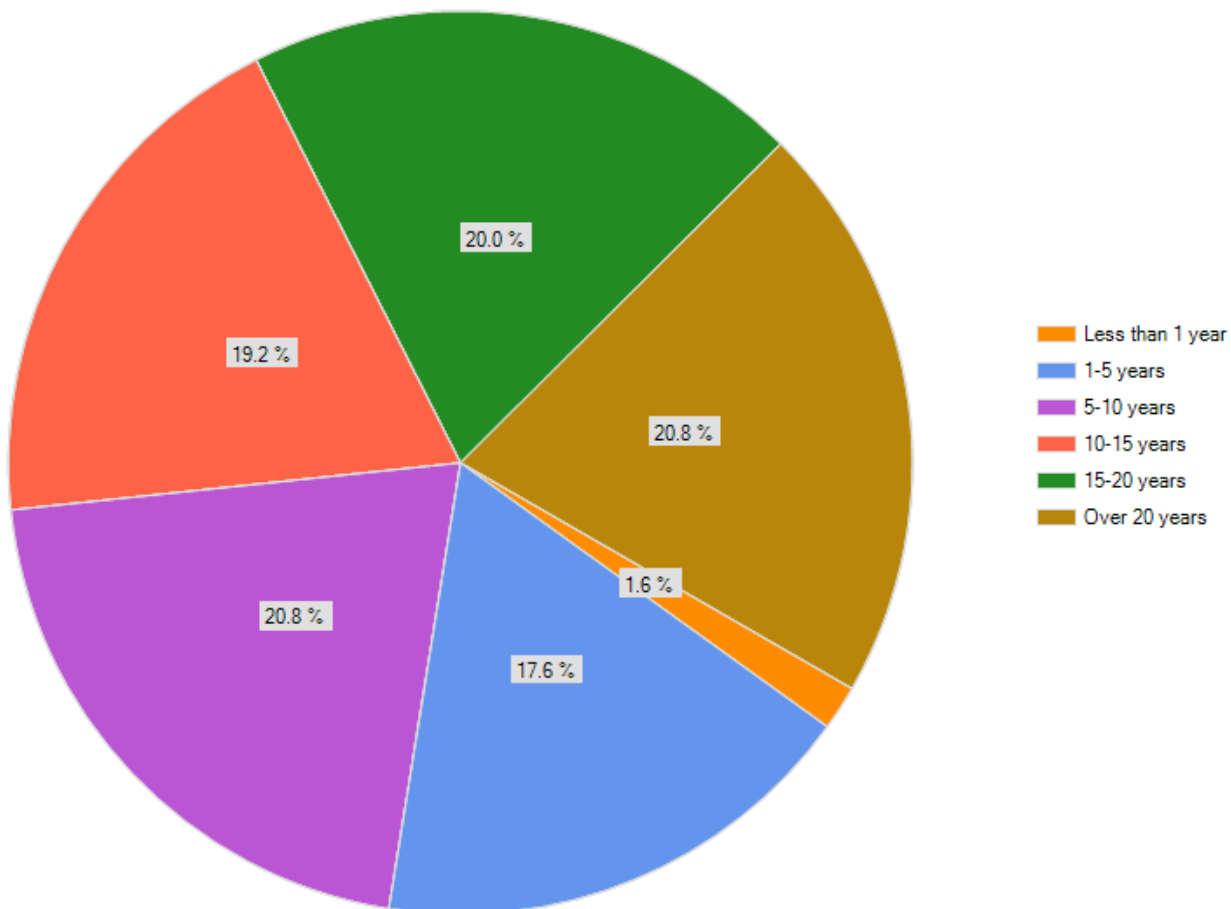
	First PC's
	Women's Rights movement
1980's	Challenger explosion
	Fall of Berlin Wall
	John Lennon shot
	Reagan elected
1990's	Dessert Storm
	Oklahoma City bombing
	Death of Princess Diana
	Clinton scandals

APPENDIX 2 – SURVEY RESULTS BY GENERATION

APPENDIX 3 – SURVEY DATA- DEMOGRAPHICS

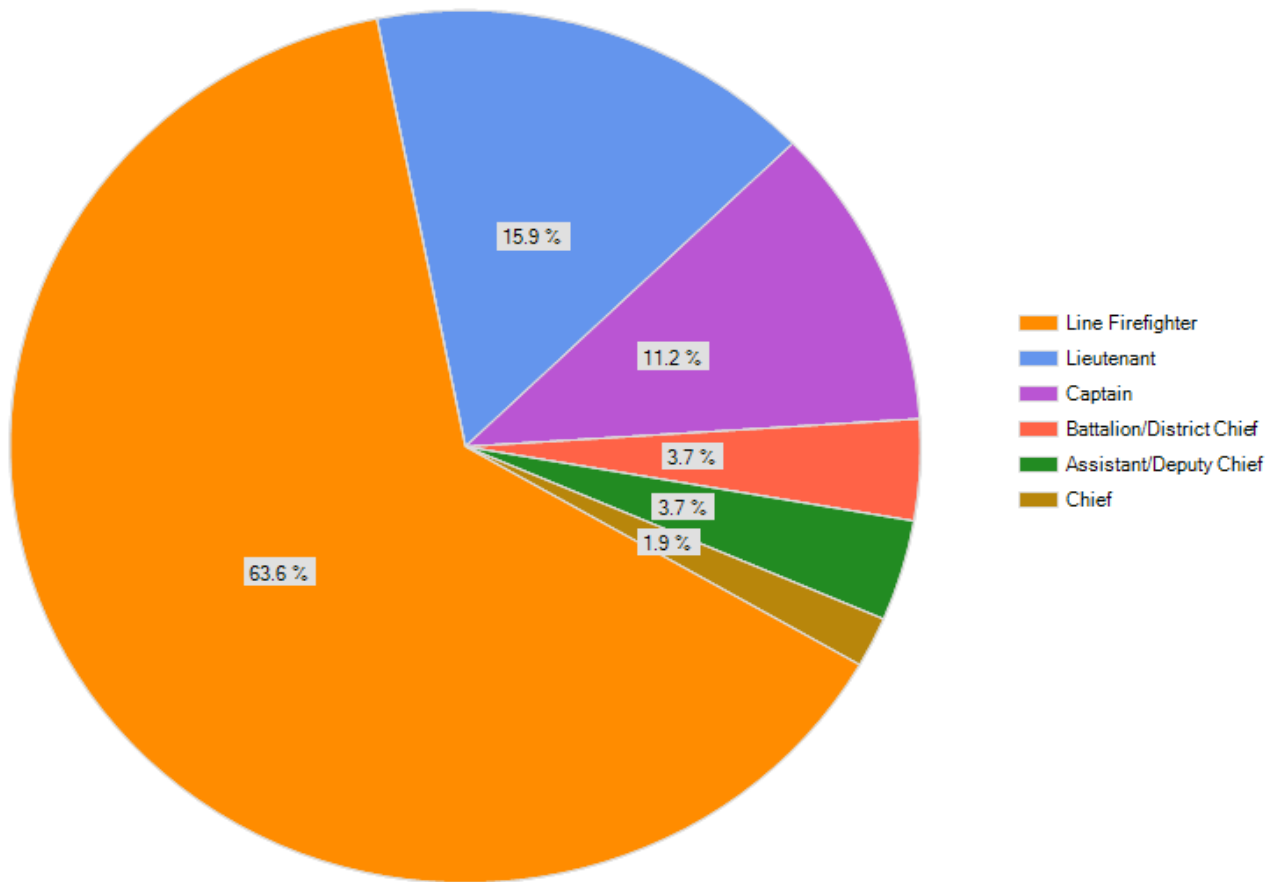
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How many years have you been employed in the fire service?



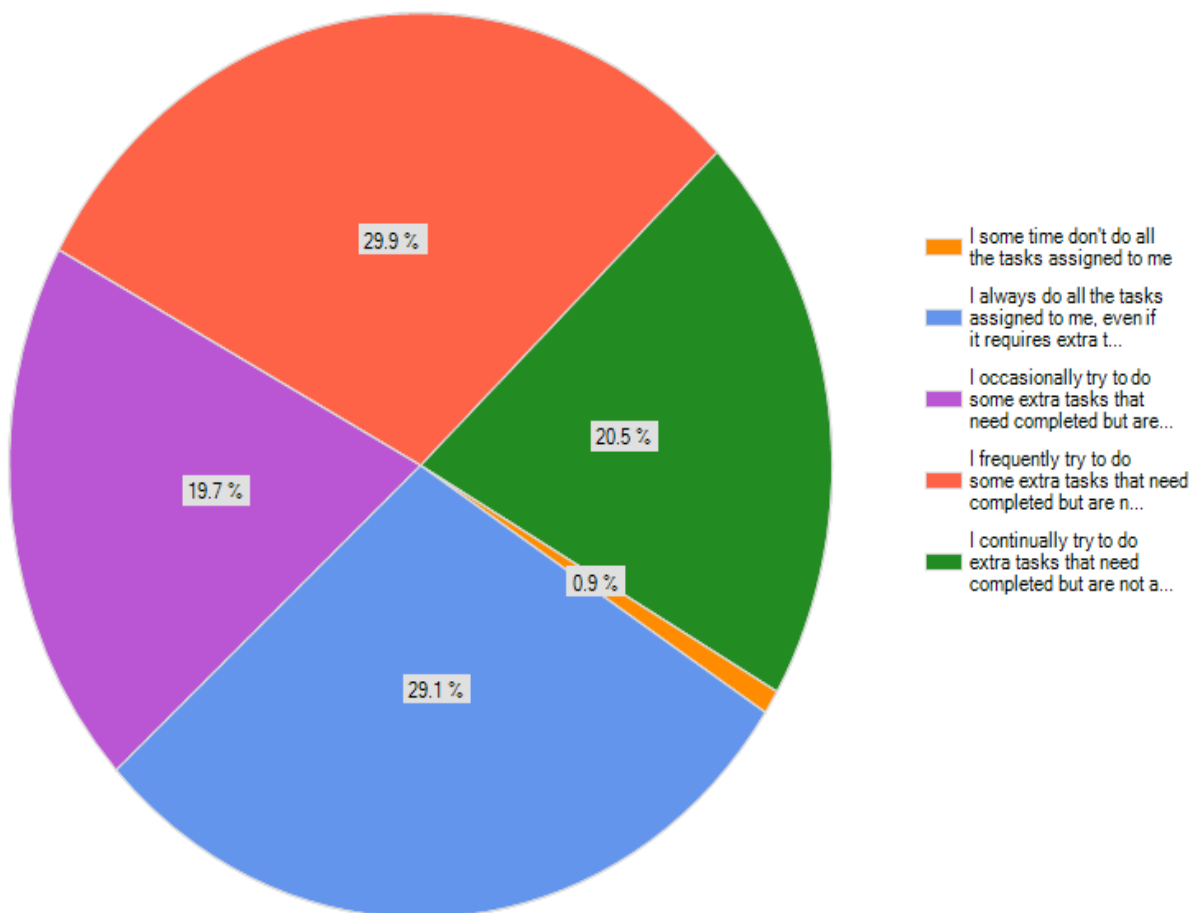
APPENDIX 4 – SURVEY DATA- DEMOGRAPHICS

What is your present rank?



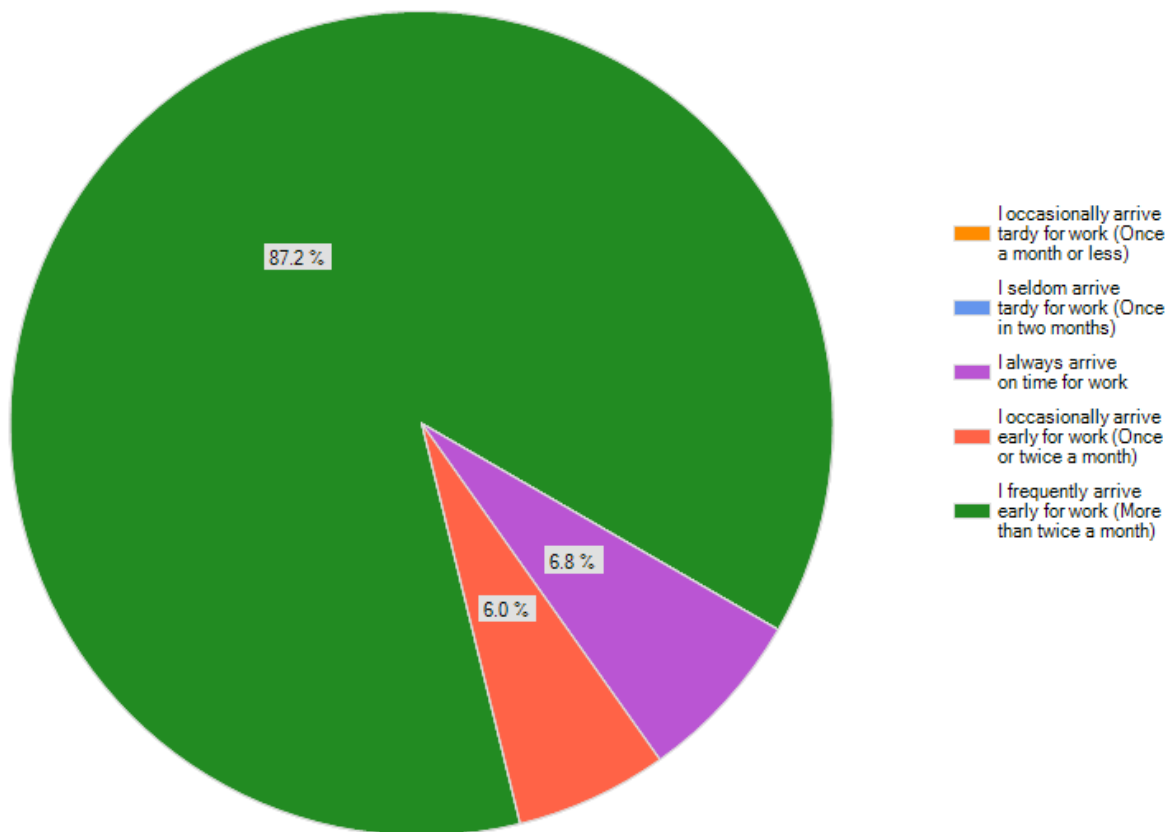
APPENDIX 5 – SURVEY DATA- WORK ETHIC

Please select the choice below that best describes your personal work ethic.



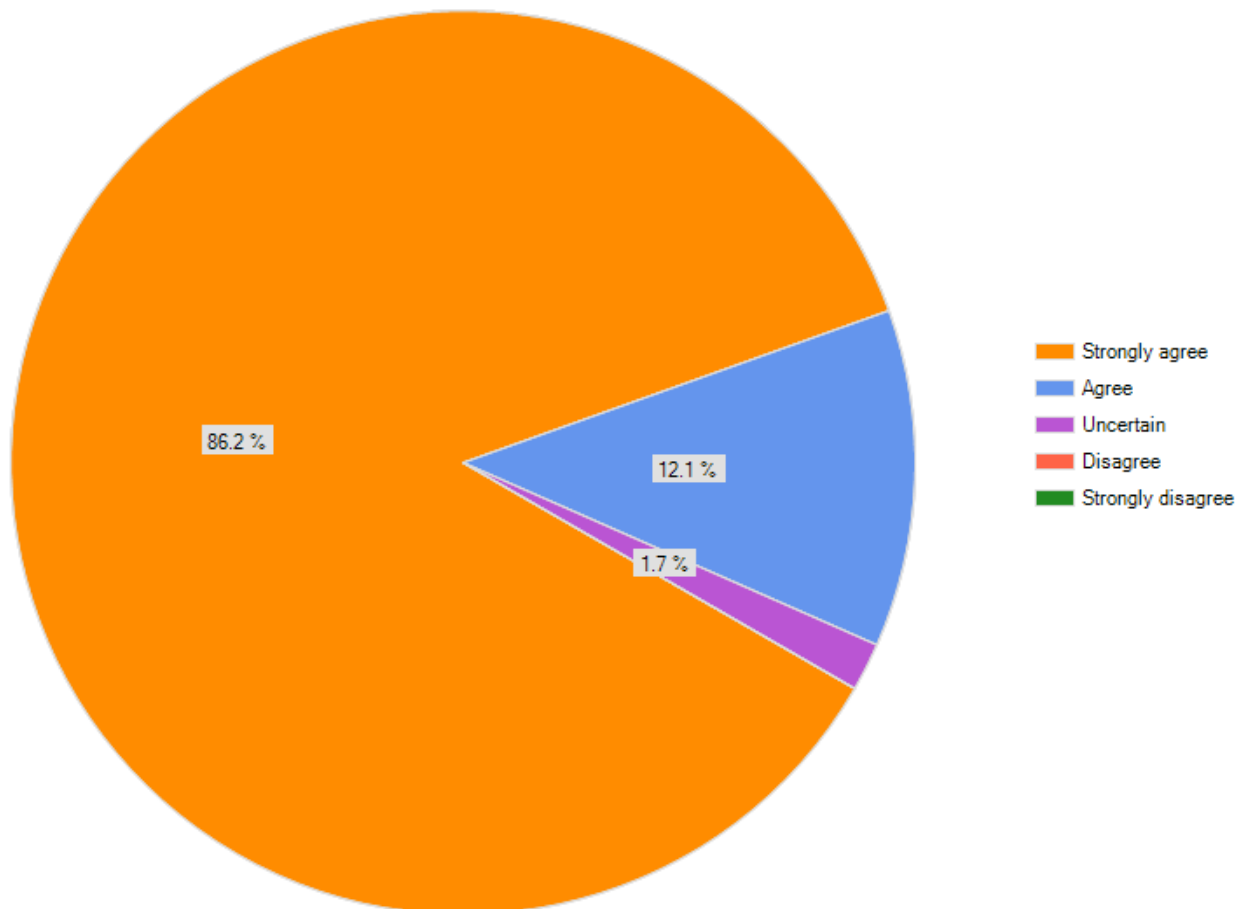
APPENDIX 6 – SURVEY DATA- WORK ETHIC

In reference to your scheduled starting time(start of your shift) when do you arrive for your shift?



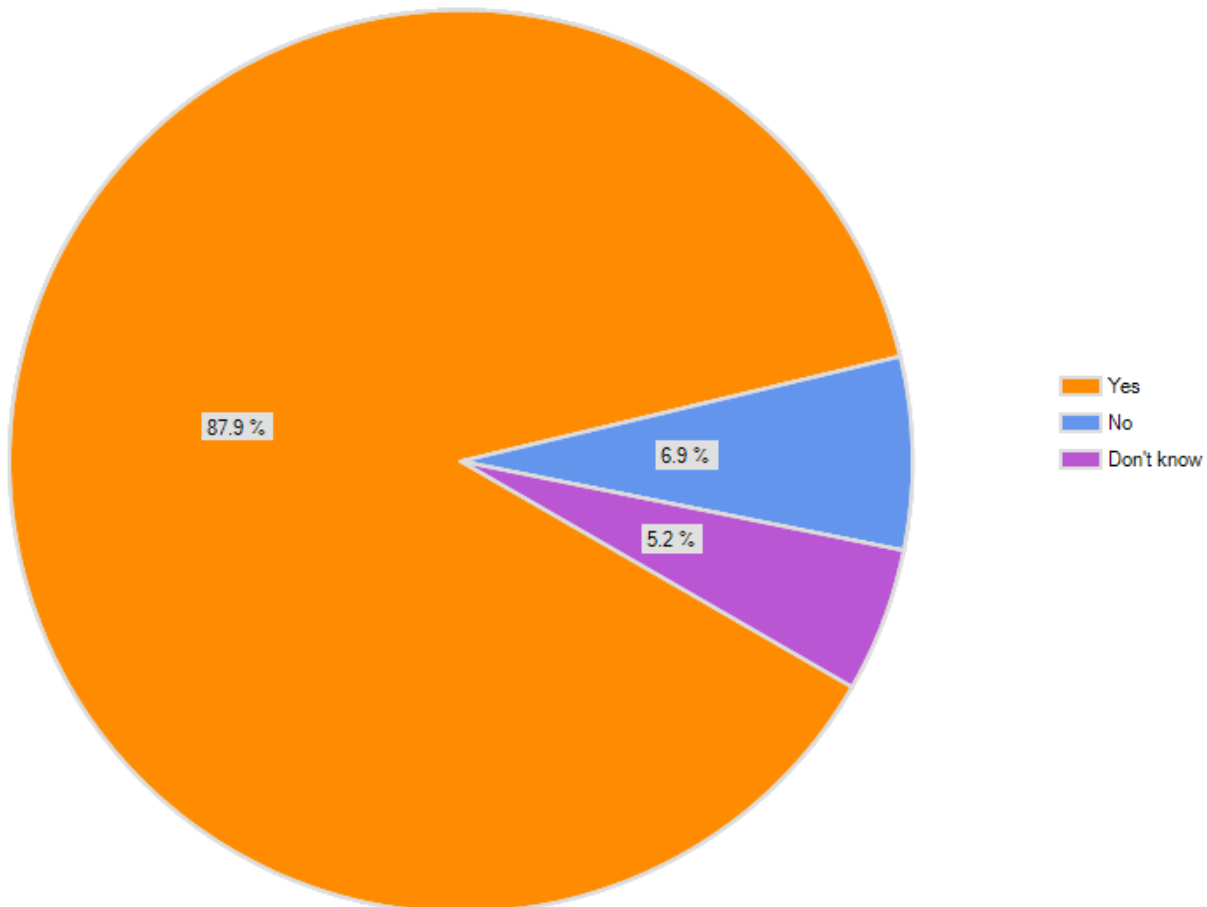
APPENDIX 7 – SURVEY DATA- TEAM DYNAMICS

Team work is essential in all aspects of the fire service.



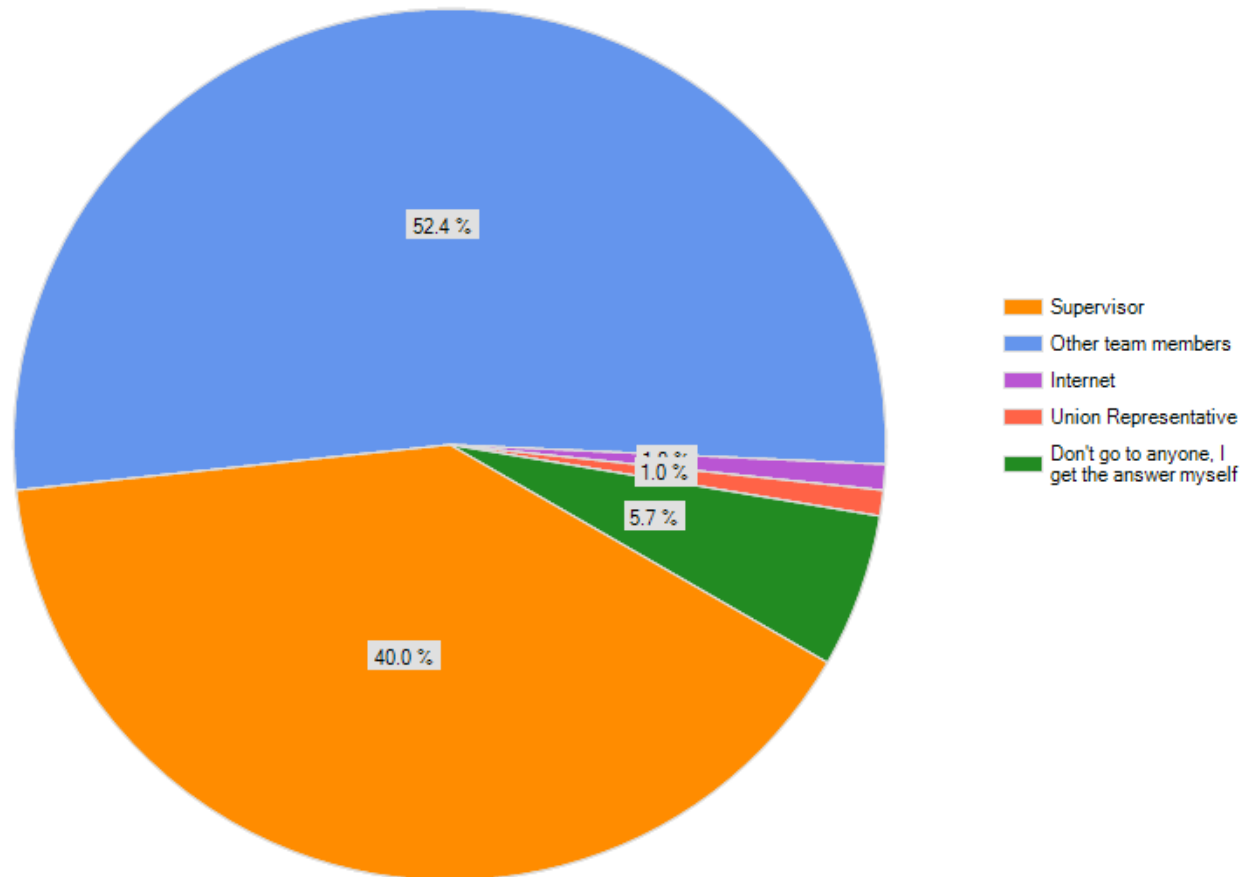
APPENDIX 8 – SURVEY DATA- TEAM DYNAMICS

Do you feel you are part of the team at your job?



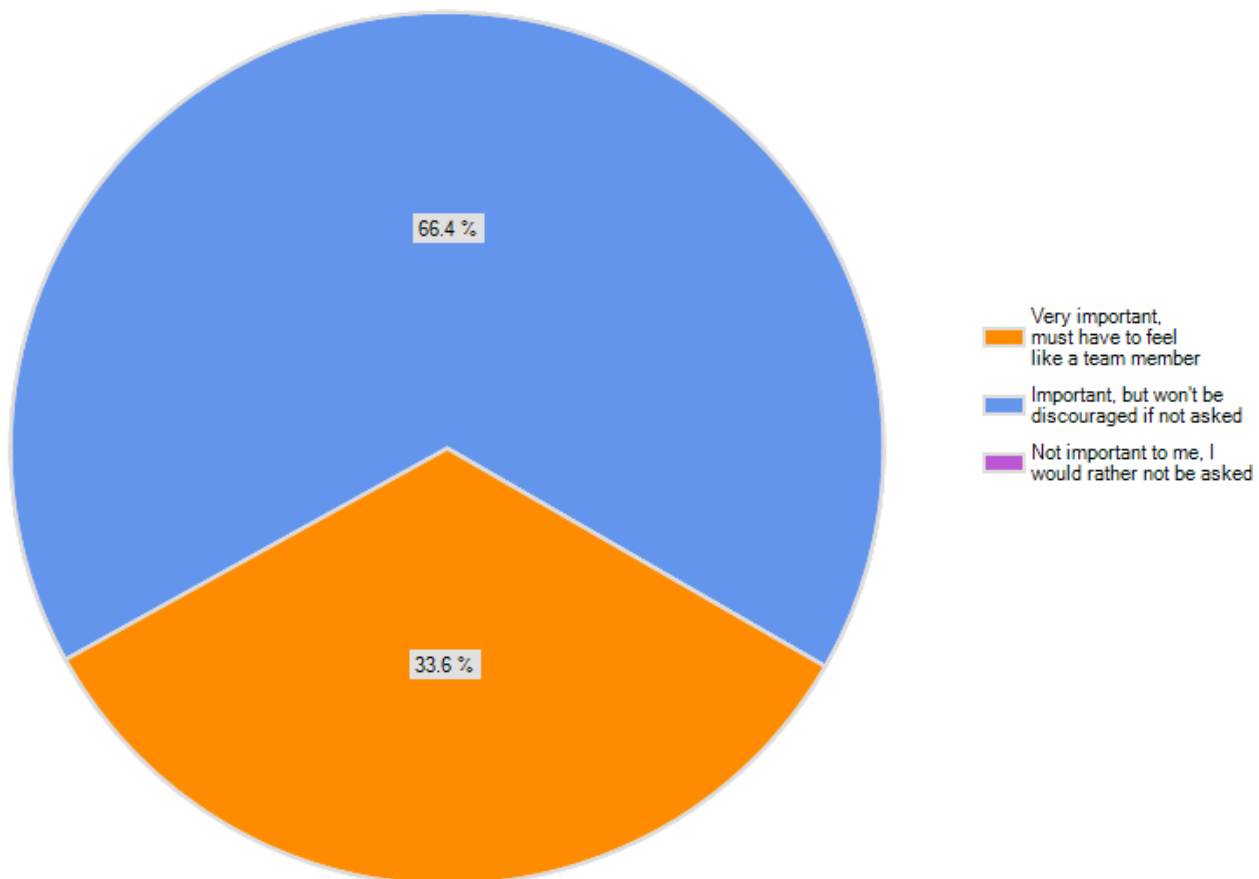
APPENDIX 9 – SURVEY DATA- TEAM DYNAMICS

If you have a non-emergency work related question who do you go to get the answer?



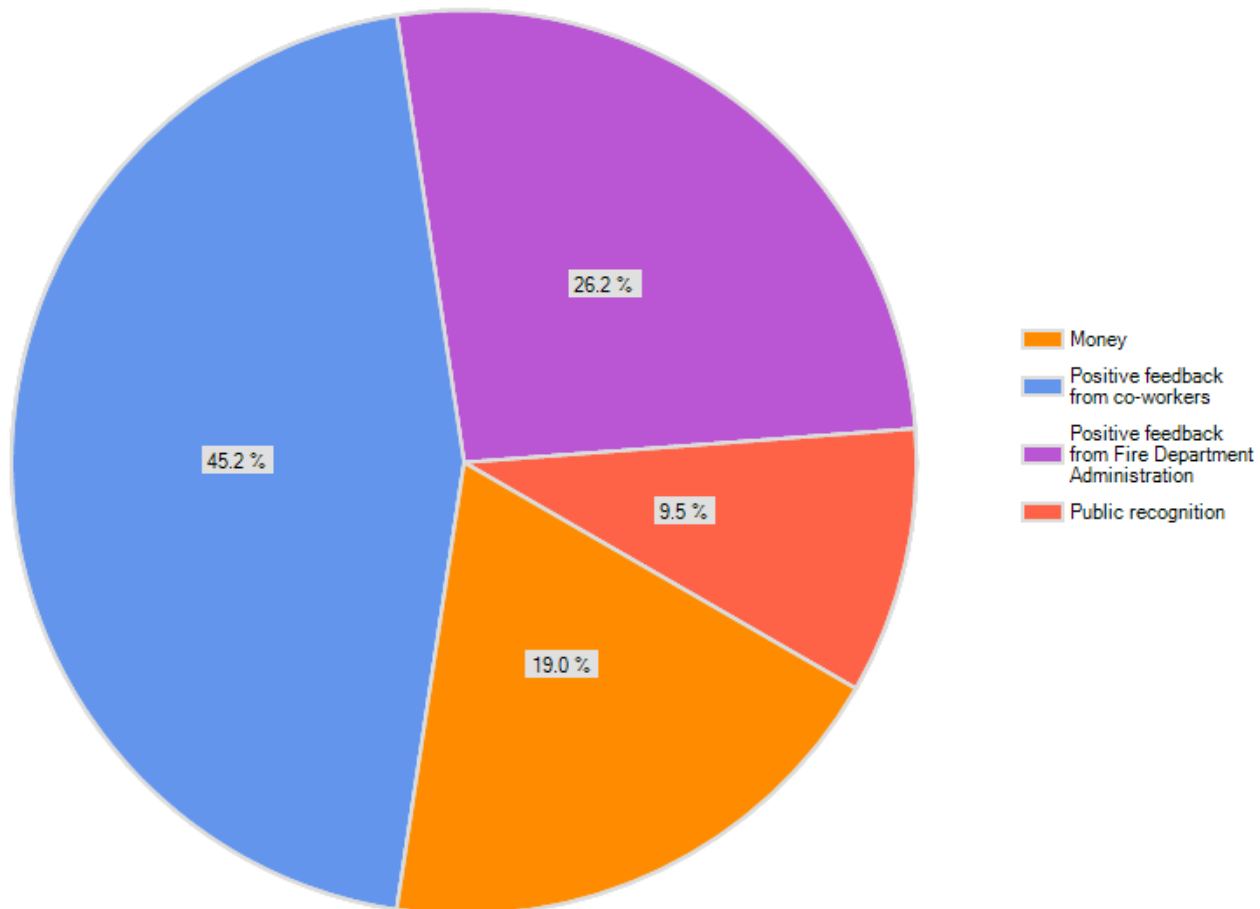
APPENDIX 10 – SURVEY DATA- TEAM DYNAMICS

Please indicate the significance of others at work asking your opinion.



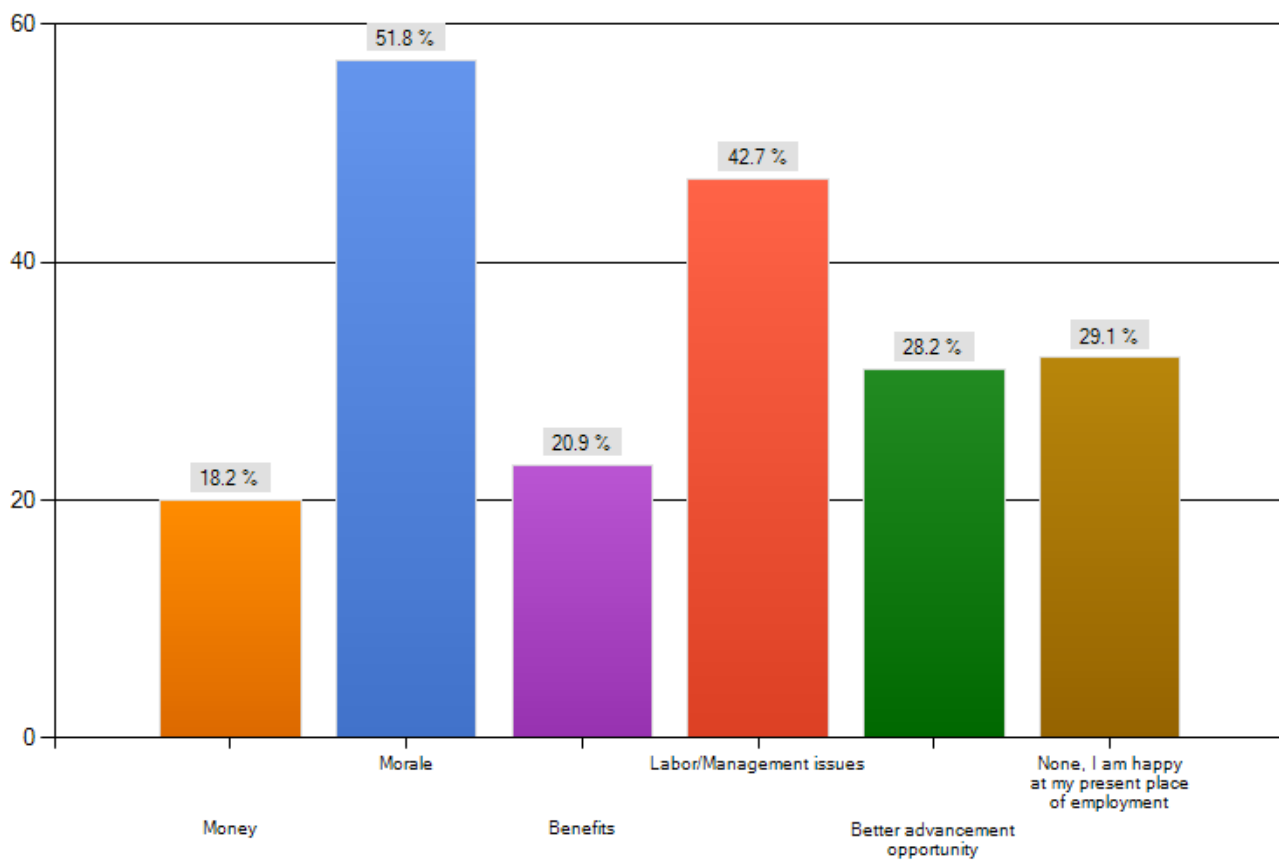
APPENDIX 11 – SURVEY DATA- MOTIVATION

What is the most important motivator for you on the job?



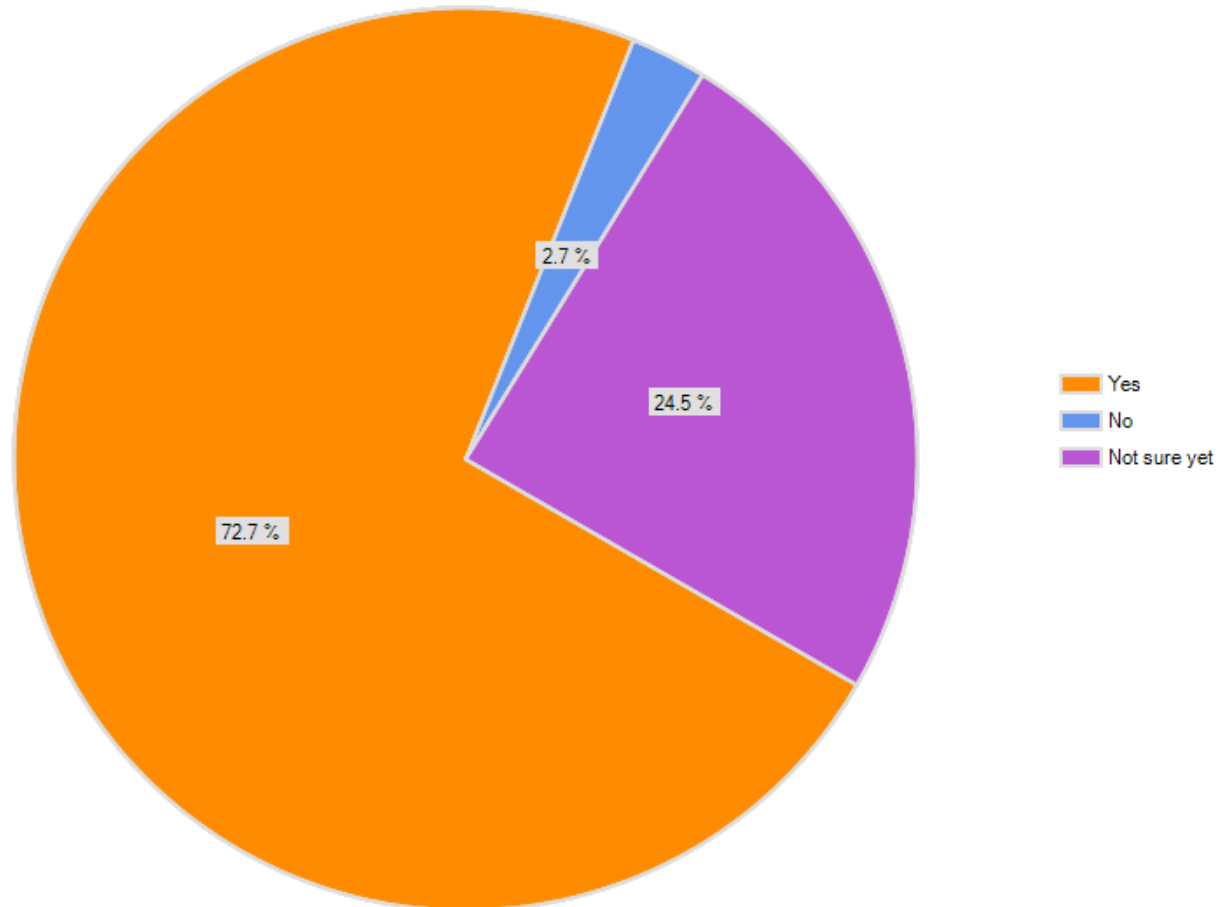
APPENDIX 12 – SURVEY DATA- MOTIVATION

What factors at your present workplace might cause you to look elsewhere for employment? Choose all that apply.



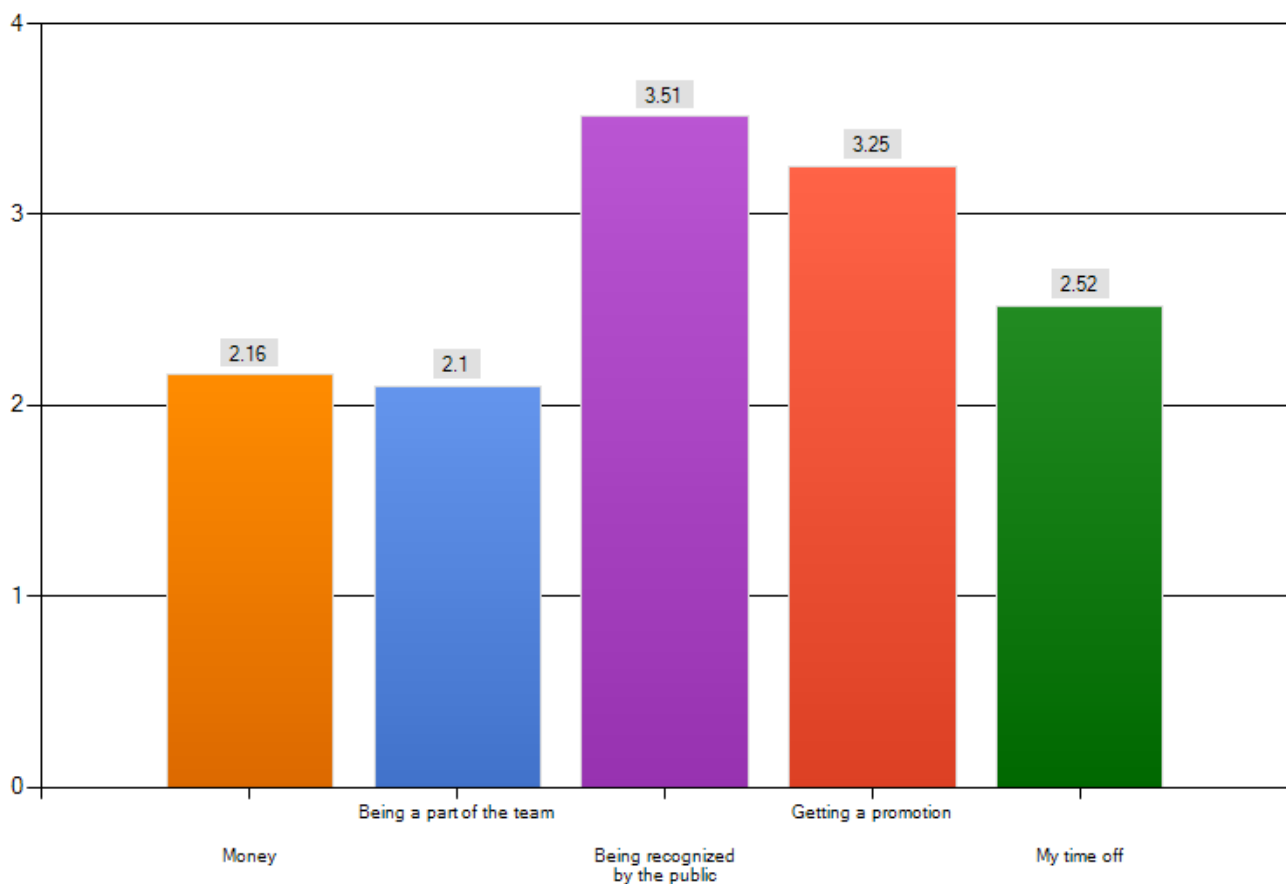
APPENDIX 13 – SURVEY DATA- MOTIVATION

Do you plan to retire from your current place of employment?



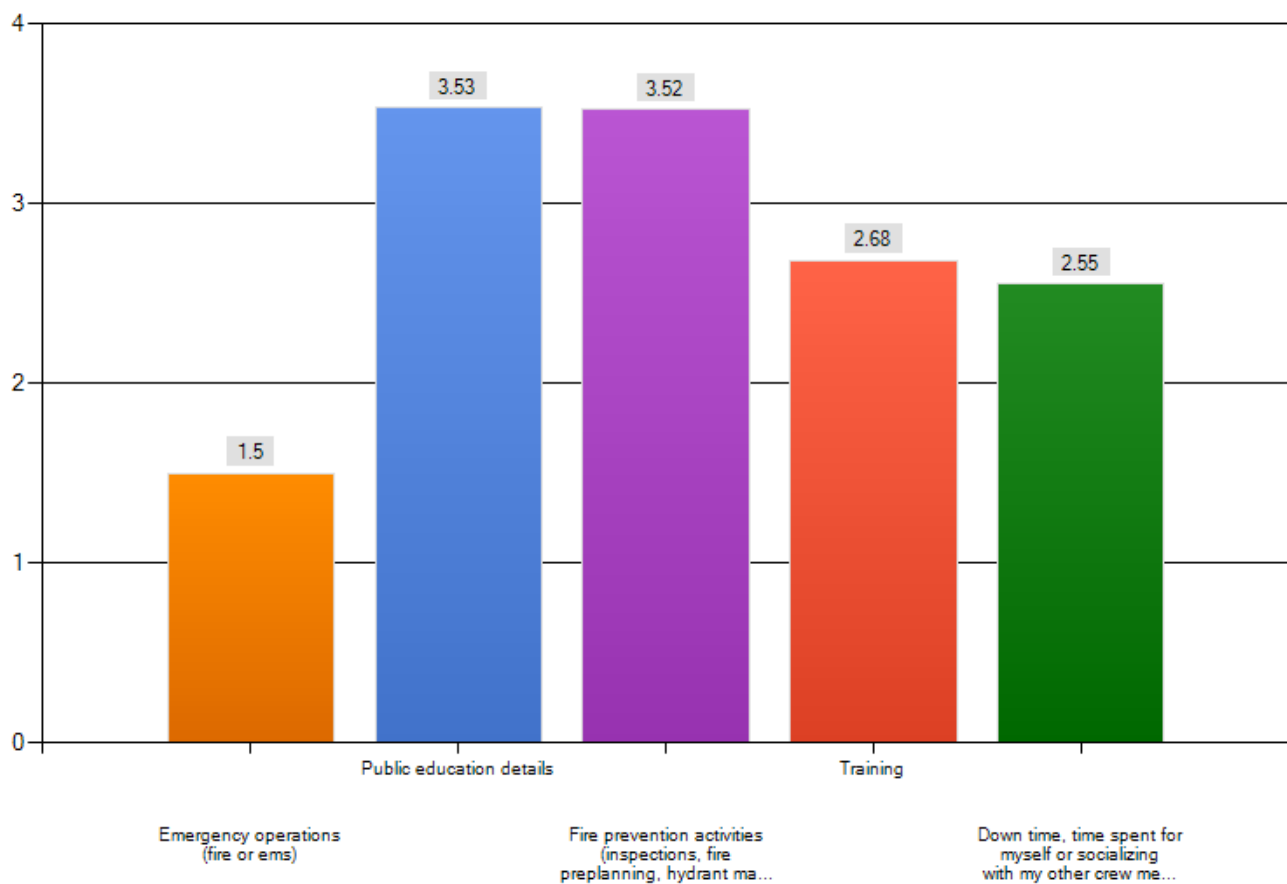
APPENDIX 14 – SURVEY DATA- DEDICATION

In order of importance, 1 being most important and 5 being least important please rate your answer to the following question. What is most important to you concerning your job?



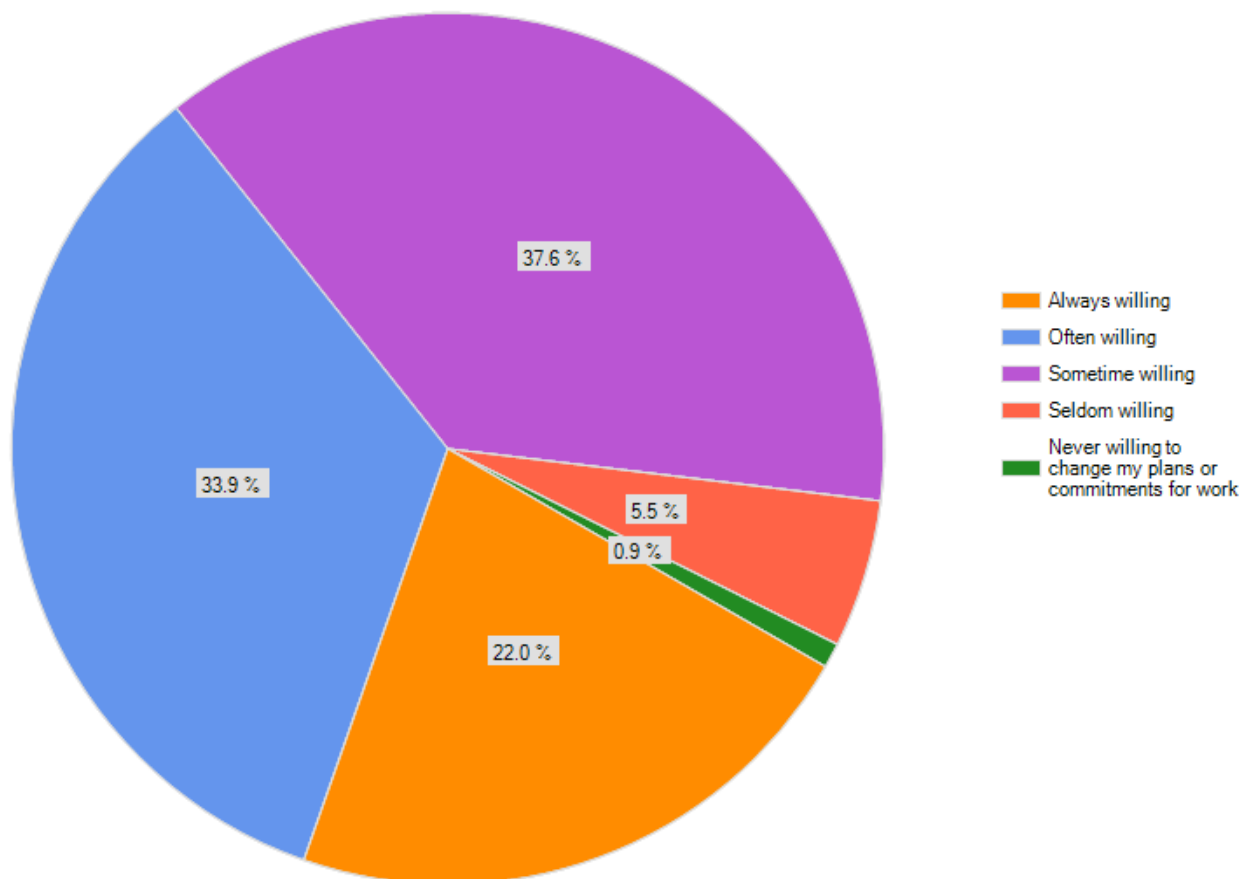
APPENDIX 15 – SURVEY DATA- DEDICATION

Please rate the following responses in order of enjoyment to you concerning what you enjoy the most at work. 1 being the most enjoyed and 5 being the least enjoyed.



APPENDIX 16 – SURVEY DATA- DEDICATION

How willing are you to cancel prior plans and commitments to cover an open shift or respond to a recall?



APPENDIX 17 – SURVEY QUESTIONS

See proceeding pages for Survey Questions

