Leveraging Public Service Motivations to Retain the Best Gen X, Y, and Millennials

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Public Service Motivation

Shows a commitment to serve the public. Ensures that actions meet public needs; aligns organizational objectives and practices with public interests.
Sources of Public Service Motivations

- Personal values
- Work itself
- Work group and organizational cultures
- Leadership
First Principles

- Intentionally select based on public service motivations
- Pay competitively
- Avoid crowding out intrinsic motivations
Socialize Newcomers: Why?

Socialization to public service values communicates values that are critical to organizational identity and how they are translated into acceptable behavior.
Socialize Newcomers: What?

- History, mission, goals, and norms
- Formal trainings, orientations, social events, and readings
- Formal mentoring programs and informal social interactions
Socialize Newcomers: Examples

- World Bank matches young professionals with a peer who has a year’s tenure and with a more senior mentor.

- Military socialization is carried out by instructors whose performance is evaluated on their recruits’ knowledge of military values.
Incorporate Public Service into Performance Management: What?

- Embed public service values in the appraisal system
- Monitor behaviors that reflect and encourage public service motivation
Incorporate Public Service into Performance Management: Examples

- USMC performance ratings: technical proficiency and ‘the adoption of core values in his/her life’

- High performing Navy work units focus on developing performance appraisals that include principled goals such as commitment to the customer and stewardship of resources

- Flemish core values of collaboration and client orientation
Promote Social Significance of the Job: What?

- Change three critical dimensions of jobs
  - social/task significance of work
  - goal clarity
  - feedback
Promote Social Significance of the Job: Why?

- Emphasize the impact employees are having on beneficiaries
- Structure tasks in ways that allow employees to interact with beneficiaries
- Contacts between employees and beneficiaries may lead to higher affective commitment by increasing identification with beneficiaries and enhancing employees’ empathy
Promote Social Significance of the Job: Examples

- World Bank Grassroots Immersion Program--young professionals observe the everyday lives of the poor

- Sharing stories that convey the social significance of the work may also positively impact employee’s attitudes and behaviors
Appeal to Public Service

Values: What?

- Public interest
- Causes greater than self
- Justice
- Social equity
Appeal to Public Service Values: Why?

- Individuals select organizations that reflect a mix of motives that are suited to their predispositions.
- Individuals who highly value public service will look for situations in which they can enact such values.
- Values are important to employee identity and self-concept, which drive effort expended.
Appeal to Public Service Values: Examples

- Managers help *translate* functional and work unit routines into public service values.

- Nuclear scientists *reframe* their controversial profession by emphasizing how their work enhances rather than threatens world peace so goals are consistent with personal values.
Promote and Model Value-Based Leadership: What?

Processes by which leaders communicate values that raise followers’ consciousness about idealized goals and then get followers to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of larger goals.
Promote and Model Value-Based Leadership: Why?

- Employees follow leader example and ethical standards
- Maintenance and enhancement of follower identity and self-esteem
- Increase task meaningfulness
Promote and Model Value-Based Leadership: Examples

- Leaders at Rocky Flats Nuclear Weapons Plant used visual images and renditions of their closed plant to motivate employees around the goal of safe closure of the nuclear facility.
SUMMARY

- Socialize Newcomers
- Incorporate Public Service into Performance Management
- Promote Social Significance of the Job
- Appeal to Public Service Values
- Promote and Model Value-Based Leadership
Additional Reading


http://www.oup.com/uk/catalogue/?ci=9780199234035#authors