IDENTIFYING THE CORE VALUES OF THE CITY OF MARKHAM FIRE DEPARTMENT

EXECUTIVE PLANNING

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ABSTRACT

The strategic plan has become the road map for an organization's day-to-day operation. Most organizations perform some sort of strategic or executive planning. The critical starting point in any planning process is an audit of the core values of the organization's stakeholders. A values audit is both the key to an organization's identity and the first practical step in the planning process. The problem this project examined was the lack of a workable strategic plan in the City of Markham Fire Department. The project would answer one question: What are the core values of the City of Markham Fire Department?

This project was the first step in the department's upcoming strategic planning process. It involved conducting a core values audit of the members of the City of Markham Fire Department. The results would be the formal starting point for the strategic plan. The project used the descriptive method to identify the City of Markham Fire Department's values through survey instruments. The literature review and shift interviews augmented the surveys.

Three different survey tools were used as part of the research procedures: (a) *The Rokeach Values Survey*, (b) *The Mitchell Value Instrument*, and (c) a values scan. Surveys were used because they were the appropriate instruments for assessing the firefighters' thoughts and feelings on values.

The core values of the City of Markham Fire Department were defined as honesty and compassion. They were supported by a strong belief in being helpful, humane, and vigorous. These values were based in the importance placed on family security and self respect while being able to live a life with opportunities for good times. These core values now need to be shared with all stakeholders in the department as the strategic planning process continues into the next stage.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Three down, one to go. The only thing I can imagine that will sound better is four and out. I don't know if these projects are becoming easier (somehow I doubt it) or if I am just becoming more disciplined, because this paper is going to be submitted 3 weeks early. Regardless, there were some people who gave me support, encouragement, and correction on this my third Applied Research Project. Without them, I would still be wondering what my topic should be.

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INTRODUCTION

The strategic planning processes and the resulting plans have become the road maps for an organization's day-to-day operation criteria. Most organizations perform some sort of strategic, long term, or executive planning. In fact the modern formal strategic planning process has been in use for over 30 years (Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer, 1993, p. 1 and Bryson, 1995, pp. 3-4). Whether planners and planning teams use a six, ten, or even twelve step model, the process involves following strict criteria to match organizational mission, direction, and purpose(s) or target(s). But, the critical starting point in any planning process has to be an audit of the core values of both the organization as a whole and its stakeholders (Bryson, 1995, pp. 26-27).

In defining the targets of an organization's mission statement and strategic plan, planning team members must successfully identify and define that organization's core values (Steiner, 1997, p. 10). While this philosophy applies to the public, profit, and nonprofit sectors, it is most difficult for public sector organizations. Public sector organizations are not profit driven, keying in on a single bottom line. Instead, the public sector has many "bottom lines" and stakeholders to appease (Bryson, 1995, pp. 26-28). A values audit is both the key to an organization's identity and the first practical step in the executive planning process.

The City of Markham Fire Department has a problem. It does not have a practical and applicable strategic plan. It does not have a mission statement based on its core values identity. It does not have a truly defined and workable sense of self purpose as part of today's fire service. In fact, the City of Markham Fire Department does not have any concept of what its core values are; it does not have a true, value-based identity. This project was the first step in the department's upcoming strategic planning process. It involved conducting a core values audit of the members of the City of Markham Fire Department. The research delved into the values of each individual member to discover the department's true organizational identity. These results will be the formal starting point for the creation of a new mission statement and a strategic plan.

The project used the descriptive method as identified by the National Fire Academy (1997, chap. 3, p. 25) to identify the City of Markham Fire Department's values through multiple survey instruments. Descriptive research was selected because one of its stated purposes is to "clarify and report the way things are at the present time" by assessing attitudes or opinions (National Fire Academy, 1997, chap. 3, p. 26). Both open and closed question instruments were used. By using multiple survey instruments, an accurate and valid list of the department's true core values was assured.

After the values were identified, duty crews were interviewed and asked to give concrete examples of how these values were or were not followed. A literature review was conducted to validate both the need for a formal strategic planning process and the importance of a values audit as a first step. The research would answer just one question: What are the core values of the City of Markham Fire Department?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Background

In 1995 the City of Markham Fire Department attempted to write its first formal strategic plan. The plan was to be based on the existing mission statement (Appendix A). The planning process was cumbersome and unsuccessful. While some long term goals were created, there was no comprehensive and effective plan to follow. Part of the problem was the planning team's not attempting to discover the department's identity. This was a simple step which could have been completed with a core values audit. An audit would have given planners a set of values which they could have used to either validate the existing mission statement or develop a new one. Then, armed with this information, a formal planning process could be more easily conducted.

Significance

The Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP) is a 4-year educational process at the National Fire Academy (NFA) for senior fire officers. It develops management and leadership skills through class lectures, team building exercises, presentations, and applied research projects. The third course in the series, taken as an elective by the author, is *Executive Planning*. The goal of this course is to "prepare executive-level managers for planning within their departments through the step-by-step process for planning..." (National Fire Academy, 1999, p. VII). The first action step in strategic planning as taught at the NFA is to conduct a values audit. "Values shape the ethical quality of the department. Understanding the department's values ...is an important step in developing the strategic plan" (chap. 4, p. 18).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Strategic Planning

There are many facets to executive leadership, management, and administration in the fire service. These range from day-to-day operations to personnel issues to capital improvement issues. Some of them are independent, such as a fireground decision, and some of them are interwoven, such as blending personnel assignments with a new engine purchase. But the one inextricable and interwoven function is planning, most specifically strategic planning (Bryson, 1995, p. 3; Carter & Rausch, 1989, pp. 6-7 and p. 298; Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer, 1993, p. 1; Grant & Hoover, 1994, p. 324; Steiner, 1997, p. 1 and p. 215).

Planning is an administrative process that has become increasingly prominent as a sign of good management. An organization that does not plan is thought to be reactive, shortsighted, and rudderless. Planning has become a ceremony that an organization must conduct periodically to maintain its legitimacy. A plan is a badge of honor that organizations wear conspicuously and with considerable pride (Bolman & Deal, 1984, pp. 176-77).

Strategic planning is essentially a long-range planning effort and the resultant plan. In the 1960s no one really thought of themselves as strategic planners. Rather, they were visionaries who knew that today's decisions decided the organization's future (Pynes, 1997, p. 23 and Steiner, 1997, pp. 14-15). There are numerous models for strategic planning, each with varying numbers of steps. In his book *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations*, John Bryson (1995) recommends a ten-step strategy planning cycle (pp. 22-23). But Leonard D. Goodstein, Timothy Nolan, and William Pfeiffer (1993) advocate a nine-step plan in *Applied Strategic Planning* (p. 9). In his book *Strategic Planning: What Every Manager Must Know* (1997), George Steiner describes numerous systems, admitting that "the variations of strategies for planning are indeed numerous" (p. 33).

Regardless of the plan or model chosen there are some basic, common components in each. These include having a set process, products or services offered, target markets, alternative approaches, and accurate information (Brown, Jr., 1996, p. 5; Carter & Rausch, 1989, p. 39; Grant & Hoover, 1994, p. 326; National Fire Academy, 1999, chap. 4, p. 20; Steiner, 1997, p. 53). Human resource expert Joan E. Pynes (1997) goes beyond identifying commonalities in the various types of strategic plan models. She suggests that, regardless of the plan or model used, plans and planners must ask and answer the following six questions: "(a) Why does the organization exist, (b) What contribution does it make, (c) Who are the customers/clients now and who will they be in the future, (d) How would the current operations of the agency be characterized, (e) What are the key assumptions supporting current operations, and (f) What are the organization's core competencies and how can they be maximized?" (p. 20).

The one area all that seems to be a truly common thread in all strategic plan models is the need to assess the organization's identity through a values scan or audit (Bryson, 1995, p. 27; Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p. 260; National Fire Academy, 1999, chap. 4, p. 20; Reedy Creek Emergency Services, 1996, p. 11; Sharp, 1998, p. 2; Shelley, 1999, p. 26; Steiner, 1979, p. 119). "Strategic plans that do not take values into account will be in trouble and may even fail" (Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfieffer, 1993, p. 144).

Values

Elizabeth Kiss, the director of the Kenan Ethics Program at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, states that values are "something worthy of admiration and esteem" (Sudo, 1999, p. 2). But there are many different definitions of values. This can create a problem because some people and organizations tend to interchange the words values, morals, and ethics (Brown, 1990, p. 6 and p. 21; Frick & Spears, 1996, p. 167; Lewis, 1991, p. xvi; Lundgren & McMakin, 1998, p. 62; Rokeach, 1979, p. 16; Troth, 1993, p. 1). Generally speaking, values are the components of an ethics set which drive behavior (Carroll, 1996, p. 132 and Troth, 1993, p. 1).

Anthropologists believe that values are primally based, arising from the human need to live and survive in groups (Sudo, 1999, p. 2). Values are used as a decision-making foundation. They are not only the means to achieve a desired end or result, but they also guide the process (Steiner, 1979, p. 119). There has even been correlational research to distinguish between causative and developmental interrelationships that might exist between a person's life values

and personality traits (Mitchell, 1984, p. 13). Mitchell's research indicated strong ties between values and personality.

Values...are the individual's [or organization's] concepts of the relative worth, utility, or importance of certain ideas. Values reflect what the individual considers important in the larger scheme of things. One's values, therefore, shape one's ethics (Carroll, 1996, pp. 133-34).

Personal Values

In discussing personal values, Milton Rokeach (1973) defines them as an enduring belief that is either a personally or socially acceptable mode of conduct (p. 5). Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer (1993) use the following example to describe how important personal values can be to an organization:

An individual for whom risk taking is an important personal value will envision a very different organizational future than will a person who holds security as a high personal value. Likewise, the goals and dreams of an individual who holds professional reputation as a value and is less interested in power will be different from those of a person with opposite priorities (p. 13).

Rokeach (1973) divided personal values into two sets: means and ends (p. 5). The means values can best be described as here-and-now beliefs about how things are accomplished. The ends values refer to the future and what the individual aspires to attain (Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer, 1993, p. 213).

Organizational Values

Organizational values seem to be among the current buzz-words in business. They certainly are popular concepts. A recent Internet search in *Yahoo!* came up with 11,840 Web pages dedicated to organizational values (*Core Values*, 2000, p. 1).

Planning experts and authors equate an organization's core values with its identity or personality (Brown, 1990, p. 148; Bryson 1995, pp. 76-77; Goodstein Nolan, & Pfeiffer, 1993, p. 153; Gordon, 1991, p. 31; Murphy, 1991, p. 8; Reedy Creek Emergency Services, 1996, p. 11; Rokeach, 1979, p. 4 and p. 72; Steiner, 1979, p. 119). Archie Carroll (1996) calls these the norms which employees or organization members adopt as they become a part of the organization (p. 136). He continues that these norms shape the business or organization. "These values form the central motif of organizational activity and direction" (p. 136). Tim Holman (1995) writes that values are the "very foundation of your organization" (p. 12). A strong sense of organizational values also extends outwards to other and smaller segments or subcultures of that organization (Lynch, 1998, p. 22).

The values challenge for organizations is to try to have a match between the individual's values and the organization's values, and a common understanding or definition of those values. This is extremely important because organizational values become the very essence of the organization's future behavior and plan success (Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer, 1993, p. 14). This is also a difficult task. "The existence of universal values does not mean everyone agrees on their interpretation" (Sudo, 1999, p. 2). Maggie Gallagher, a columnist and Affiliate Scholar at the Institute for American Values believes that "we're no longer sure that the values we care most are shared by other people" (Gallagher & Tuch, 1999, p. 6).

Everyone has a value system, a method by which they evaluate and choose between alternatives in a given situation. Often, our values are so deeply ingrained that it is difficult to recognize them for what they are. It is even more difficult to recognize that these value systems differ from the value systems of others. It seems to be a very human tendency to think that everyone else sees things the same way we do (Lundgren & McMakin, 1998, p. 48).

Values Audits

For the purposes of strategic planning, a values audit is simply an examination of the values of the members of an organization (Bryson, 1995, p. 27; Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer, 1993, p. 13; Steiner, 1979, p. 119). The values audit is vitally important for numerous reasons. For one, the audit will assure that the individual identity of the internal stakeholders becomes an active part of the corporate identity. It will also bring all department members into the planning process, an important consideration in successful strategic planning: "members of the department should have as much participation in [the] plan as possible" (National Fire Academy, 1999, chap. 4, p. 18).

Sometimes an individual's value system is subordinated by the organization's values. The end result is that a person becomes part of the organization's overall identity. This is because "the individual learns rather quickly that, to survive and to succeed, certain norms must be perpetuated and revered (Carroll, 1996, p. 136). A values audit, especially when conducted as an anonymous study, will eliminate or at least lessen the impact of this occurrence.

Another important aspect of the values audit is sharing it with the department's external stakeholders, especially elected and appointed officials (Lawrence, 1996, p. 79). This critical component "allows those external to the organization...to understand and render support" (Burkell, 1987, p. 21).

Literature Review Summary

The strategic plan is an important part of the fire department's operational behavior and future direction. It is a process involving both internal and external stakeholders. It incorporates the vision of the department with its operations and services provided. The first action step of the planning process is a values scan or audit of the fire department members. These values can then be incorporated into the direction of the strategic plan.

PROCEDURES

Survey Instruments

Three different survey tools were used as part of this research: (a) *The Rokeach Values Survey*, (b) *The Mitchell Value Instrument*, and (c) a values scan. Surveys were chosen as the appropriate instruments as a valid means of assessing the thoughts and feelings of the firefighters on values (Kraut, 1996, p. 150 and Sudman, Bradburn, & Schwartz, 1996, p. 7). The surveys were administered anonymously to the 15 full-time members of the City of Markham Fire Department duty crews.

The Rokeach and Mitchell surveys were selected with the assistance of Assistant Professor Matthew Liao-Troth, Ph.D., of the Public Services Graduate Program at DePaul University. The values scan and followup interviews were designed by the author with the assistance of Doctor Burton Clark, of the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program.

The Rokeach survey (Appendix B) was developed by Professor Milton Rokeach, Professor of Sociology and Psychology at Washington State University. Dr. Rokeach is considered to be the innovative expert on human values (Troth, 1993, p. 2). He divided values into two categories: terminal and instrumental. Terminal values represent those goals in life which are important as end-states of existence. Instrumental values are the beliefs, which guide conduct in every day life (Rokeach, 1979, p. 48). Starting with a list of 555 instrumental values or traits, Dr. Rokeach used a research-based process of elimination to come up with the 18 variables listed in his instrumental values instrument. He used the same technique to develop the 18 terminal values variables. Survey respondents are asked to rank each of the sets of values in order of importance, as the value they prize the most, in ascending order from 1 to 18. The Rokeach Values Survey was validated during the 1960s at Michigan State University (Troth, 1993, p. 4).

The Mitchell survey (Appendix C) also measures terminal and instrumental values, but uses a Likert scale for responses. The Likert scale is a scaled response mechanism, using a point rating scale in which the attitude of the respondent is measured on a continuum from highly favorable to highly unfavorable, with an equal number of positive and negative response possibilities (Rea & Parker, 1997, pp. 59-60). Developed by Doctor James V. Mitchell, Jr., Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln, this instrument examined the hypothesis that there is a relationship between values and personalities (Mitchell, 1984, p. 1 and Troth, 1993, pp. 4-5).

The values scan (Appendix D) was a list survey divided into three, five question sections: (a) values held in personal life, (b) values held in work life, and (c) values held at work when providing services to the public. These distinctions were important to this research because individuals can hold different sets of values in different aspects of their lives (Brown, 1990, pp. 160-61). "The most direct and effective technique for surfacing personal values is to ask each member...to complete a simple values questionnaire" (Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer, 1993, p. 149).

Data Compilation

The data from the Mitchell and Rokeach instruments were compiled using a computer-based statistical package, $SPSS^{\text{@}}$ 8.0. The numerical values were entered as ordinal measures. The ordinal level of measurement provides information about the ordering of categories but does not indicate the magnitude of differences between the categories (Rea & Parker, 1997, p. 53 and SPSS Inc., 1998, p. 23). The results were tabulated using the mean value (numerical average) of the response data. The mean serves as the single most preferred average for quantitative data because it describes the balance point of any distribution (Witte & Witte, 1997, p. 68).

The values survey data were recorded as single word answers and then counted for frequency of similar response. The responses were recorded in table form. The top three responses from each survey section were used as the basis for the interviews (Cummings & Worley, 1997, p. 123).

Interviews

Three interviews were conducted as part of this project: one each with the duty crews from the black shift, red shift, and gold shift. The interviews were a part of the values scan survey. Because the City of Markham Fire Department uses a 24 hour on-duty followed by 48 hours off-duty shift schedule, all the department's firefighters were interviewed during their respective shifts.

Each duty crew was given the results of the three survey instruments. They were assigned a specific section of the survey and allowed 30 minutes to discuss the values and examples among themselves. Then they were asked to give an anonymous example of how they have witnessed these values being both practiced and not practiced. This step was used to help validate the use of a set list as the core values of the fire department. By using examples and analogies, the author was able to ensure that individual values would carry the same weight or meaning across the board with all personnel.

The sharing of these feelings [values] and an exploration of the underlying reasons for them will demonstrate that all management decisions [in the strategic planning process] are, in fact, values based (Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer, 1993, p. 14).

Black Shift Interview

The members of the black shift were asked to give examples of the top three personal values held in life from the values scan instrument: honesty, compassion, and family. The example of honesty being practiced came from a firefighter relating how she shared her overtime pay figures with her husband instead of trying to hide the extra income for herself. Another firefighter related that he never shared his overtime or holiday pay with his wife because he felt that this pay was his and not part of the family pot. Shift members jumped on this issue,

agreeing that sharing the knowledge of the earnings, if not the earnings themselves was a great example of honesty and hiding them was being dishonest.

The subject of compassion as a personal value practice involved everyday household chores, such as dishwashing and taking out the garbage. A firefighter remembered how he came home after working a double shift and realized that it was garbage day. That meant the household garbage had to be collected and all the cans taken to the curbside. However, when he got home he discovered his wife had taken the garbage out because she knew he would be tired after working 48 hours straight on shift. The same firefighter admitted that he did not show compassion for his wife over the Christmas holiday when his family was over for dinner. His wife did the shopping and cooking for 12 people. Rather than help her with the dishes, he watched the tape of an earlier football game with other family members, sticking his wife alone in the kitchen with the chore. Shift members were quick to point out that she had other family members who could have helped. The compassion discussion was terminated here, before it became a lengthy debate.

The family value was examined from the issue of the sworn oath of the firefighters and their duty to the City of Markham as opposed to their own families. The lines were fairly evenly drawn on this topic. Half the shift felt that they were held to a higher standard by their oath of office as emergency service providers and that their family would come second because of that oath in times of municipal crises. The other half emphatically believed that their families came first, regardless. One firefighter even related that he would leave shift if a community disaster endangered his family.

Red Shift Interview

The members of the red shift were asked to give examples of the values from work life: honesty, compassion, and promptness and competency (which tied for third most selected value). The honesty discussion from the red shift took an unusual turn. The shift members started to discuss this project and the research involved. Everyone, including the author, agreed that good work-related examples of honesty could be tied into the Applied Research Project survey process. A dishonest person would fake survey research rather than taking the time to schedule and administer the surveys. An honest person would do all the work and keep the copies of all the surveys, even if the findings did not agree with pre-conceived ideas or the desired directions for the project.

The value of compassion was examined from a last minute shift exchange perspective. A firefighter related how he was having some marital problems last year and needed a shift covered at the last minute. This was against rules and regulations. But, because of the circumstances, his shift officer approved the exchange and offered to "take the heat" for the infraction if questioned. Another firefighter related an example of how she believed compassion was not practiced during her first month on shift. She got a flat tire on her way to work and was half an hour late. Rather than covering for her, the off-going shift reported her late and she was disciplined. One of the firefighters joked that she was too new on the department to have gotten a break and that they

(the firefighters) would show compassion for her now and cover her slot until she reported for duty.

Promptness was discussed solely as it related to reporting for duty on time. The consensus of the red shift members was that being prompt is a greatly appreciated value when a firefighter is waiting for relief at the end of a tour of duty. A firefighter reporting 10 to 15 minutes early for shift, and thus available for swing calls (those calls which coincide with the change of a duty shift) was considered as a prime example of promptness. Conversely, the firefighter who was always 1 or 2 minutes late was considered to be someone who did not value promptness.

Competency was perhaps the only value discussed by shift members in quantitative terms. Because there are state certified levels of firefighter certification based on written test scores, this value was easily defined. The firefighter who passes the state exam was thought to at least minimally demonstrate competency, while the firefighter who failed the state certification exam was thought to be less than competent. Shift members also discussed the firefighters who went beyond basic certification and improved their level of certification to be examples of individuals placing a very high value on competency.

Gold Shift Interview

The members of the gold shift were given the top three values from the serving the public section of the instrument: honesty, compassion, and helpfulness. The honesty value was described as being practiced every time a firefighter enters a building during a fire call. Because the building owners or occupants are generally outside during a call response, there is an unspoken assumption that the firefighters are honest and will not steal. One firefighter gave a specific example of how she found two hundred dollars lying on a bedroom dresser during a smoke investigation response at a home. She called her shift officer on the radio and the homeowner was brought inside to retrieve the money. An example of not being honest, stealing from building owners was discussed as an unthinkable act by the members of this shift.

Shift members believe that they practice compassion by the little things they do during house fires, such as covering up personal belongings with plastic sheets to reduce or eliminate water damage. One firefighter explained how he believed he demonstrated compassion by giving a family member privacy while she was crying after a fire destroyed her house. An example of not being compassionate was throwing household items out through a window during the overhaul phase of a fire response in view of the homeowners and occupants. While removing these items is sometimes a necessary step, firefighters agreed that there were more compassionate methods of performing this step. One example was using a container to remove smoldering clothing.

Being helpful when serving the public brought out the example of giving a ride to motorists who are stranded on the interstate after a car fire. Firefighters on the gold shift routinely provide such rides to a local service station or the city hall for motorists who might otherwise be stranded on the expressway while waiting for a friend or family member. One

firefighter used the expression wearing blinders to explain how a firefighter could not be helpful. He explained that his car broke down on a main road this winter and a fire engine from another town drove by, ignoring his repeated attempts to get them to stop. The firefighter felt that the public should always be able to count on firefighters for help at any time.

Survey Instrument Limitations

Associate Professor Joseph R. Ferrari, Ph.D., of the Department of Psychology at DePaul University, pointed out a potential bias in the surveys. Because there were three separate instruments in the survey process, Professor Ferrari felt that it was possible for the survey respondents to experience order effect (J. R. Ferrari, personal communication, February 8, 2000). This occurs when different groups are given multiple surveys, but compete them in the same order (i.e., Rokeach, Mitchell, and values). This might result in the respondents experiencing survey fatigue or being primed for choosing multiple values by rote in the second and third instrument (Cozby, 1985, pp. 68-69).

A second limitation might occur if the survey respondents answered the questions based on their own perceptions of what values are socially acceptable and important as opposed to their own true feelings and beliefs (B. Clark, personal communication, December 15, 1999). Hopefully this issue was overcome by the anonymity of the instruments and their instructions.

Value Research Limitations

There are four major concerns with values research: (a) Values can take many forms, but all of these are unobservable, (b) Existing theoretical traditions provide little guidance for understanding how values shape behavior, (c) Postulating values in behavioral explanations is unconvincing when the processes that generate them are unknown, and (d) Measurement problems abound (Troth, 1993, p. 6). This is based on the assumption that values actually exist at all. Some would argue that the existence of values is circumvented by the differences between personal preference of likes and dislikes compared to the preferable, or oughts and shoulds (Troth, 1993, p. 7). However, a 1991 publication of a study by Mueller and Laquerre establishes that measuring the concept of human values is both valid and consistent (Troth, 1993, p. 8).

RESULTS

Overview

The results as reported include a description of the top three values or answers for each of the survey instruments only. In each case these items were the most significantly outstanding in their respective category. The total results are available in the appendices, as indicated in the survey instrument discussion subsections.

Survey Instruments: Values Scan

There were 31 different values (Appendix E) identified in the personal life or first section of the values scan instrument. These values ranked in order from 1 through 15, based on their frequency of response. The top three values were chosen by six or more department members (see Table 1). The personal value held in life by the most department members was honesty. It was identified by 13 (86.66 percent) members. Six (39.99 percent) members identified compassion as the second most held value. The third value most identified was family, listed by five (33.33 percent) members.

Table 1
Personal Life Results

Value Rank	Value	Chosen By	Percentage
1	Honesty	13/15	86.66
2	Compassion	6/15	39.99
3	Family	5/15	33.33

Note. Table by author.

Department members identified 35 different values (Appendix E) which they held in their work life, the second section of the values scan survey. These values ranked in order from 1 through 17, based on their frequency of response. The top three values were chosen by five or more department members (see Table 2). The most identified value held in work life was honesty, listed by 10 (66.66 percent) members. Compassion was the second most identified value in this section. It was listed by seven (46.66 percent) members. Two values tied as the third most identified value, listed by five (33.33 percent) members. Those values were promptness and competency.

Table 2
Work Life Results

Value Rank	Value	Chosen By	Percentage
1	Honesty	10/15	66.66
2	Compassion	7/15	46.66
3	Promptness	5/15	33.33
	Competency	5/15	33.33

Note. Table by author.

There were 34 values (Appendix E) identified in the third section of the survey: values held when serving the public. These values ranked in order from 1 through 14, based on their frequency of response. The top three values were chosen by five or more department members (see Table 3). The value identified the most was honesty. It was listed by 11 (73.33 percent) members. Compassion, the second most identified value, was chosen by eight (53.33 percent) members. The third most identified value, listed by five (33.33 percent) members was helpfulness.

Table 3
Serving the Public Results

Value Rank	Value	Chosen By	Percentage
1	Honesty	11/15	73.33
2	Compassion	8/15	53.33
3	Helpfulness	5/15	33.33

Note. Table by author.

Survey Instruments: Rokeach Values Survey

The 18 terminal values in the Rokeach instrument ranged from a high mean of 3.86 to a low of 13.20 (Appendix F). The three highest held terminal values had mean scores ranging from 3.86 to 7.00 (see Table 4). The most desirable terminal value held by the members of the department was family security. It ranked first with a mean score of 3.86. The second most desirable terminal value, self-respect, had a 4.46 mean score. Freedom, the third highest ranked terminal value, had a mean score of 7.00.

Table 4
The Rokeach Values Survey Results
Terminal Values

Rank	Mean	Var # ^a	Value
1	3.86	2	family security (taking care of loved ones)
2	4.46	5	self respect (self-esteem)
3	7.00	3	freedom (independence, free choice)

Note. Table by author.

^aVar # means variable number.

The 18 instrumental values in the Rokeach instrument ranged from a mean high of 3.73 to a low of 14.20 (Appendix F). The three highest instrumental values ranged from mean scores of 3.73 to 6.93. Being honest was the highest identified instrumental value, with a mean score of 3.73. It was followed by being ambitious as the second highest held instrumental value, with a 6.20 mean score. Department members identified being polite as their third highest instrumental value with a mean score of 6.93 (see Table 5).

Table 5
The Rokeach Values Survey Results
Instrumental Values

Rank	Mean	Var #a	Value
1	3.73	9	honest (sincere, truthful)
2	6.20	1	ambitious (hard-working, aspiring)
3	6.93	16	polite (courteous, well-mannered)

Note. Table by author.

Survey Instruments: Mitchell Value Instrument

The department members ranked all five of the way of life choices in the first section of the Mitchell survey as likes, scoring from a high of 7.33 for a strong like to a 5.13 for a slight like (Appendix G). Two of the top three values were strong likes, the third was a moderate like (see Table 6). Living a life that has lots of opportunities for good times ranked the highest, as a strongly like, with a mean score of 7.33. The second highest value, striving for influential leadership positions, scored a mean of 6.60, for moderately like. The third highest ranked value, being an activist for a strongly felt about issue, was also listed as a moderately like, but with a mean score of 6.13.

Table 6
Mitchell Value Instrument Results
First Section

Rank	Mean	Key	# ^a	Value
1	7.33	strongly like	1	Living a life that has lots of opportunities for good times
2	6.60	moderately like	3	Striving for leadership positions which allow me to influence the behaviors and thoughts of others
3	6.13	moderately like	2	Being an activist for an issue I feel strongly about

Note. Table by author.

^aVar # means variable number.

^a# means survey item number.

The department members ranked the 17 items in the second section of the Mitchell survey as being little valued, with a score of 5.53, up to highly valued, with a score of 7.26 (Appendix G). All three of the top values were scored as highly valued (see Table 7). The highest ranked value, being nice to people, had a mean score of 7.26. Being humane, the second highest held value, had a mean score of 7.13. The third highest held value was being vigorous, with a mean score of 7.06.

Table 7
Mitchell Value Instrument Results
Second Section

Rank	Mean	Key	#ª	Value
1	7.26	highly	1	Nice to people
2	7.13	highly	11	Humane
3	7.06	highly	10	Vigorous

Note. Table by author.

Results Summary

According to the values scan instrument, the two highest held values by the members of the fire department are honesty and compassion. More than 75 percent of the members held honesty as their highest value in all three sections of the values survey and almost half of them identified compassion as their second highest held value. Family security and self-respect are the highest held terminal values. Honesty appears again, this time as the highest held instrumental value. Department members also hold living a life with opportunities for good times as a strongly liked value. They believe that it is highly important to be nice to people, to be humane, and to be vigorous (see Table 8).

^a# means survey item number.

Table 8 Highest Held Values

Value Rank	Value Type or Instrument	Value	Percentage or Mean Score	Lichert Scale Score Key
1	Values scan	Honesty	75.55%	
2	Values Scan	Compassion	46.66%	
1	Terminal	Family security	3.86	
2	Terminal	Self respect	4.46	
1	Instrumental	Honest	3.73	
1	Mitchell, Sect. 1	Good Times	7.33	Strongly like
1	Mitchell, Sect. 2	Nice to people	7.26	Highly
2	Mitchell, Sect. 2	Humane	7.13	Highly
3	Mitchell, Sect. 2	Vigorous	7.06	Highly

Note. Table by author.

DISCUSSION

There seems to be no doubt that strategic planning is a vital part of an organization's existence and survival. This is backed up by strategic planning experts such as John Bryson (1995, p. 3), Leonard Goodstein (1993, p. 1), and George Steiner (1997, p. 1), in their texts, articles, and practices as strategic planners. Fire service authorities credit strategic planning as being an essential part of a fire department's operational life and visionary path (Carter & Rausch, 1989, pp. 6-7 and p. 298 and Grant & Hoover, 1994, p. 324).

Strategic plans come in all sizes and shapes. Different models have varying numbers of steps, templates, and flowcharts (Bryson, 1995, pp. 22-3; Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer, 1993, p. 9; Steiner, 1979, p. 33). But all these different plans have common threads, including using a set process, targeting both products or services offered and customers, and relying on accurate information. These commonalities are specifically identified by strategic planning authorities and authors for the fire service (Carter & Rausch, 1989, p. 39; Grant & Hoover, 1994, p. 326; National Fire Academy, 1999, chap. 4, p. 20).

Without exception every source on strategic planning and strategic planning models started with the need to conduct an audit of the organization's values as the first step. These sources included planning experts such as John Bryson (1995, p. 27), fire departments such as Reedy Creek in Orlando, Florida (1996, p. 11), Executive Fire Officer Program participant Gary Sharp (1998, p. 2), and the National Fire Academy (1999, chap. 4, p. 20).

Whether values are counted as a primally based and intrinsic component of human nature (Sudo, 1999, p. 2) or a result of an individual's personality (Mitchell, 1984, p. 13), values are those beliefs which guide both individual and organizational behavior (Carroll, 1996, p. 132 and Troth, 1993, p. 1). Personal values guide daily behavior and the end path of a future vision (Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer, 1993, p. 213), but they also play a large part in the total make-up of an organization's culture (Brown, 1990, p. 148; Gordon, 1991, p. 31; Murphy, 1991, p. 8; Reedy Creek Emergency Services, 1996, p. 11). According to fire service author Tim Holman (1995), values are the foundation of fire departments (p. 22).

Organizations must take care not to assume that everyone uses the same definition for the same values (Sudo, 1999, p. 2). The values audit process is an easy and direct method of discovering what the individual values of an organization's members are for planning purposes (Bryson, 1995, p. 27; Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer, 1993, p. 13; Steiner, 1979, p. 119). The values audit has an added benefit of gaining early buy-in from both the internal and external stakeholders for the planning process (Burkell, 1987, p. 21; Lawrence, 1996, p. 79; National Fire Academy, 1999, chap. 4, p. 18).

The overall interpretation of the literature review confirmed the lessons of the *Executive Planning* course at the National Fire Academy: Strategic planning is an essential component of the fire department organization and values are an essential component of the strategic plan. Regardless of the plan model or process used, the values of the fire department's members makeup the culture and identity of the fire department. Without a proper and complete scan of these values, a strategic plan is doomed from the start. There will be no buy-in from either the internal or external stakeholders (Bryson 1995, p. 28; Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer, 1993, p. 213; Steiner, 1979, p. 10).

The members of the City of Markham Fire Department were in general agreement about the importance of two values, honesty and compassion. This is supported by high number of members selecting honesty (13 in section one, 10 in section two, and 11 in section three) as the number one value on all three sections of the values scan and compassion (6 in section one, 7 in section two, and 8 in section three) as the second highest held value. These two values can be considered as core values of the fire department itself, as identified by its most internal stakeholders, the firefighters. Honesty was also selected by department members as the most important instrumental value in the Mitchell survey.

Department members placed a high value on being humane and nice to people. They also valued being vigorous and living lives that have opportunities for good times. These values stood out in the Mitchell survey. The Rokeach survey demonstrated that the department members felt family security and self respect were important.

Because the 1995 strategic plan of the City of Markham Fire Department did not examine the department's values and instead simply used the existing mission statement as a starting point, the plan has no applicable value to the fire department. It is in essence a perfect example of a failed strategic planning effort. There was no buy-in by the rank and file members because they had no input. The implications of this fact, which are clearly supported by this project's research, make a definitive statement. The values of the individual members of the fire department are indicative of the organization's culture and identity. These values must be used as the starting action point for the upcoming strategic planning effort.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This project was simply the first step of the City of Markham Fire Department's formal strategic planning process. The final list of core values needs to be shared with all stakeholders in the department. This includes department members as well as the city's administrative and elected officials. This step will ensure two things. First, the stakeholders will be encouraged to have buy-in to the entire process. They will feel a sense of internal ownership because virtually every department member has contributed to the core values audit and the resulting list. Second, sharing the list of values with the elected and appointed officials demonstrates the department's unity and commitment to a successful strategic planning process. Bringing the officials in during the initial steps will also help earn their support during the planning process and with the final document plan.

The entire set of survey results, especially from the Rokeach instrument, needs to be identified as the general make-up of the core value system of the fire department as an organization. Special emphasis as core values should be placed on honesty, compassion, and helpfulness, as identified by the values scan. The members of the planning team need to be very cognizant of the results of the Mitchell instrument because these collectively show the cultural identity of the department. Members of the strategic planning team need to keep in mind that the department members value self respect and family security. These two items could be the key to how well a plan with new directions might be accepted.

It is also important to keep the planning process going. A selection of a planning model needs to be made and then the planning team must be assembled. It will take time to educate planning members on the strategic planning process. Then, the most vital step is to match the core values against the existing mission statement. If they do not agree, the first action step will be to write a new mission statement, one based on the department's list of core values. The department also needs to adopt the list of core values formally. This can be as simple as a department-wide memo or as formal as a published resolution. It is important that the values be posted in the duty and administrative stations as a working example of the City of Markham Fire Department's identity.

Readers of this work wishing to write a strategic plan should adopt a model or process such as the ones proscribed by John Bryson (1995) or George Steiner (1979). The planning model used is not critical to the process. All of the plans follow a basic format and include the main components. The values audit is an indispensable part of the planning effort and must not be ignored or attempted half-heartedly. This project is not a guide to writing a strategic plan. Rather it is a research based method of conducting the most vital part of a strategic plan, the core values audit.

Research Question

The research question, as stated in this project's introduction, is: What are the core values of the City of Markham Fire Department? Those values are honesty and compassion. They are supported by a strong belief in being helpful, humane, and vigorous. These values are based in the importance placed on family security and self respect while being able to live a life with opportunities for good times.

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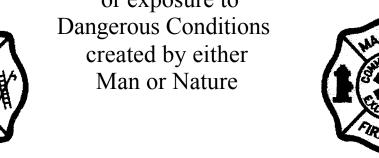
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Appendix A

The Mission of the City of Markham Fire Department

to provide a range of programs
designed to protect
the
Lives and Property
of the inhabitants of the
City of Markham
from the adverse effects of
Fires
Sudden Medical Emergencies
or exposure to
Dangerous Conditions
created by either
Man or Nature



Appendix B The Rokeach Values Survey Terminal Values

Terminal values are the goals in life that you think are most important and that you feel are most desirable. Read each of the following terminal values all the way through. Then number one in the order of which you value most. The value you prize the most becomes number one, etc.

TERMINAL VALUES
a world at peace (free of war and conflict)
family security (taking care of loved ones)
freedom (independence, free choice)
equality (brotherhood, equal opportunity for all)
self respect (self-esteem)
happiness (contentedness)
wisdom (a mature understanding of life)
national security (protection from attack)
salvation (saved, eternal life)
true friendship (close companionship)
a sense of accomplishment (a lasting contribution)
inner harmony (freedom from inner conflict)
a comfortable life (a prosperous life)
mature love (sexual and spiritual intimacy)
a world of beauty (beauty of nature and the arts)
pleasure (an enjoyable leisurely life)
social recognition (respect, admiration)
an exciting life (a stimulating active life)

over

Appendix B (continued) Instrumental Values

Instrumental values are basically the kind of personal characteristics that we think highly of. Read each of the following instrumental values all the way through. Then number one in the order of which you value most. The value you prize the most becomes number one, etc.

Instrumental Values	
	ambitious (hard-working, aspiring)
	broadminded (open-minded)
	capable (competent, effective)
	cheerful (lighthearted, joyful)
	clean (neat, tidy)
	courageous (standing up for your beliefs)
	forgiving (willing to pardon others)
	helpful (working for the welfare of others)
	honest (sincere, truthful)
	imaginative (daring, creative)
	independent (self-reliant, self sufficient)
	intellectual (intelligent, reflective)
	logical (consistent, rational)
	loving (affectionate, tender)
	obedient (dutiful, respectful)
	polite (courteous, well-mannered)
	responsible (dependable, reliable)
	self-controlled (restrained, self discipline)

Appendix C The Mitchell Value Instrument

For the following five items please indicate if the way of life indicated is one that you like or dislike, and the strength of this feeling using the following scale:

1 extremel dislike	5	3 moderately dislike	4 slightly dislike	sligh	5 ntly ke	modei lik	2	7 stron lik		extrei lil	8 nely ke
1.	Living a life that has lo for good times.	ots of opportunities	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2.	Striving for leadership positions which allow me to influence the behaviors and thoughts of others			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3.	Being an activist for an strongly about	issue I feel		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
4.	Being materialistic abo	ut possessions		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
5.	Seeking excitement and good times			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

For the following seventeen items please indicate which measure is most applicable for you in the statement: "I would value being ______ as a part of my own life and personality."

objection	1 nably	2 not at all	3 very little	4 little	5 some	what	6 moder	rately	7 highl	y	very	8 highly
1.	Nice to	people			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2.	Noncon	forming			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3.	Imbued	with work ethic	values		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
4.	Нарру-	-go-lucky			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
5.	Quiet a	nd introverted			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
6.	Intellect	tual			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
7.	Loving	and affectionate	;		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
8.	Religiou	ıs			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9.	Socially	charming and p	poised		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
10.	Vigorou	us, enthusiastic,	and strongly motiv	vated	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
11.	Humane	e			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
12.	Influent	tial and assertive	2		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
13.	Socially	conscious and	committed		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
14.	Worldly	y and sophistica	ted		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
15.	Tough-1	minded and shre	ewd		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
16.	Political	lly liberal and bi	road-minded		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
17.	Emotion	nal			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

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Appendix D Values Scan

Ethics and values are intimately related. We refer to ethics as the rightness or wrongness of behavior, the set of values which drive behavior. Values are your own personal concepts of the relative worth, utility, or importance of certain ideas. Examples of values include honesty, integrity, promptness, fairness.

Using the above description of values, please complete the following sections. You may

1.	Please list five personal values you hold in your life, in rank order of importance.
	1
	2
	3
	4
	5
2.	Please list five values you hold in your work life at the fire department, in rank order o importance.
	1
	2
	3
	4
	5
3.	Please list five values you hold when you are serving the public as a firefighter, in rank order of importance.
	1
	2
	3
	4
	5

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Appendix E Values Scan Results Personal Values Held In Life

Value Rank	Value	Chosen By	Percentage
1	honesty	13	86.66
2	compassion	6	39.99
2	family	6	39.99
4	integrity	5	33.33
5	fairness	4	26.66
5	friends	4	26.66
5	wealth	4	26.66
8	responsibility	3	19.99
9	reliable	2	13.33
9	loving	2	13.33
9	hard working	2	13.33
9	giving attitude	2	13.33
9	health	2	13.33
9	enjoy life	2	13.33
15	ambition	1	6.66
15	motivation	1	6.66
15	salvation	1	6.66
15	trust	1	6.66
15	self respect	1	6.66
15	self control	1	6.66
15	friendliness	1	6.66
15	courage	1	6.66
15	forgiveness	1	6.66

(table continues)

Appendix E (continued)

(continued)

Value Rank	Value	Chosen By	Percentage
15	politeness	1	6.66
15	strength	1	6.66
15	cleanliness	1	6.66
15	independent	1	6.66
15	prayer	1	6.66
15	loyalty	1	6.66
15	promptness	1	6.66
15	the dog	1	6.66

Appendix E (continued) Personal Values Held In Work Life

Value Rank	Value	Chosen By	Percentage
1	honesty	10	66.66
2	compassion	7	46.66
3	promptness	5	33.33
3	competency	5	33.33
5	responsibility	4	26.66
6	safety	3	19.99
6	fairness	3	19.99
6	public image	3	19.99
9	trust	2	13.66
9	harmony	2	13.66
9	integrity	2	13.66
9	reliable	2	13.66
9	courage	2	13.66
9	following orders	2	13.66
9	team work	2	13.66
9	appearance	2	13.66
17	honor	1	6.66
17	salvation	1	6.66
17	self respect	1	6.66
17	caring	1	6.66
17	self confidence	1	6.66
17	independence	1	6.66
17	polite	1	6.66

(table continues)

Appendix E (continued)

(continued)

Value Rank	Value	Chosen By	Percentage
17	understanding	1	6.66
17	clean	1	6.66
17	hard working	1	6.66
17	being nice	1	6.66
17	commitment	1	6.66
17	knowledge	1	6.66
17	community	1	6.66
17	learning	1	6.66
17	motivation	1	6.66
17	protecting property	1	6.66
17	equality	1	6.66
17	determination	1	6.66

Appendix E (continued) Values Held When Serving The Public In Life

Value Rank	Value	Chosen By	Percentage
1	honesty	11	73.33
2	compassion	8	53.33
3	helpfulness	5	33.33
4	fairness	4	26.66
4	integrity	4	26.66
4	safety	4	26.66
7	politeness	3	19.99
8	friendliness	2	13.33
8	knowledgeable	2	13.33
8	loyalty	2	13.33
8	responsible	2	13.33
8	respect	2	13.33
8	promptness	2	13.33
14	saving lives	1	6.66
14	protecting property	1	6.66
14	helpful	1	6.66
14	determination	1	6.66
14	trust	1	6.66
14	motivation	1	6.66
14	salvation	1	6.66
14	self respect	1	6.66
14	capable	1	6.66
14	self confidence	1	6.66

(table continues)

Appendix E (continued)

(continued)

Value Rank	Value	Chosen By	Percentage
14	understanding	1	6.66
14	cheerful	1	6.66
14	clean	1	6.66
14	commitment	1	6.66
14	competency	1	6.66
14	problem solving	1	6.66
14	comfort in our presence	1	6.66
14	aggressiveness	1	6.66
14	reliability	1	6.66
14	professional	1	6.66
14	community	1	6.66

Appendix F The Rokeach Values Survey Results Terminal Values

Rank	Mean	Var#	
1	3.86	2	family security (taking care of loved ones)
2	4.46	5	self respect (self-esteem)
3	7.00	3	freedom (independence, free choice)
4	7.46	12	inner harmony (freedom from inner conflict)
5	7.53	6	happiness (contentedness)
6	8.53	7	wisdom (a mature understanding of life)
7	9.26	1	a world at peace (free of war and conflict)
8	9.33	10	true friendship (close companionship)
9	9.53	4	equality (brotherhood, equal opportunity for all)
10	10.20	9	salvation (saved, eternal life)
10	10.20	14	mature love (sexual and spiritual intimacy)
12	10.27	13	a comfortable life (a prosperous life)
13	10.33	16	pleasure (an enjoyable leisurely life)
14	11.40	8	national security (protection from attack)
15	11.73	11	a sense of accomplishment (a lasting contribution)
16	12.27	18	an exciting life (a stimulating active life)
17	13.13	15	a world of beauty (beauty of nature and the arts)
18	13.20	17	social recognition (respect, admiration)

Note. Table by author.

^aVar # means variable number.

Appendix F (continued) Instrumental Values

Rank	Mean	Var#		
1	3.73	9	honest (sincere, truthful)	
2	6.20	1	ambitious (hard-working, aspiring)	
3	6.93	16	polite (courteous, well-mannered)	
4	7.13	17	responsible (dependable, reliable)	
5	8.47	6	courageous (standing up for your beliefs)	
6	9.27	18	self-controlled (restrained, self discipline)	
7	9.60	5	clean (neat, tidy)	
8	9.80	13	logical (consistent, rational)	
9	9.93	3	capable (competent, effective)	
10	9.93	7	forgiving (willing to pardon others)	
11	10.00	14	loving (affectionate, tender)	
12	10.07	8	helpful (working for the welfare of others)	
13	10.33	11	independent (self-reliant, self-sufficient)	
14	10.47	4	cheerful (lighthearted, joyful)	
15	10.87	15	obedient (dutiful, respectful)	
16	11.27	12	intellectual (intelligent, reflective)	
17	11.60	2	broadminded (open-minded)	
18	14.20	10	imaginative (daring, creative)	

^aVar # means variable number.

Appendix G Mitchell Value Instrument Results First Section

Rank	Mean	Key	#	Value
1	7.33	strongly like	1	Living a life that has lots of opportunities for good times
2	6.60	moderately like	3	Striving for leadership positions which allow me to influence the behaviors and thoughts of others
3	6.13	moderately like	2	Being an activist for an issue I feel strongly about
4	5.33	slightly like	5	Seeking excitement and good times
5	5.13	slightly like	4	Being materialistic about possessions

^aVar # means variable number.

Appendix G (continued) Second Section

Rank	Mean	Key	#	Value
1	7.26	highly	1	Nice to people
2	7.13	highly	11	Humane
3	7.06	highly	10	Vigorous
4	6.80	moderately	7	Loving and affectionate
5	6.26	moderately	12	Influential
6	6.20	moderately	9	Socially charming
7	6.20	moderately	6	Intellectual
8	6.20	moderately	13	Socially conscious
9	6.13	moderately	16	Politically liberal
10	6.13	moderately	3	Imbued with work ethic values
11	6.06	moderately	17	Emotional
12	6.06	moderately	8	Religious
13	5.86	somewhat	14	Worldly and sophisticated
14	5.73	somewhat	4	Happy-go-lucky
15	5.20	somewhat	15	Tough-minded
16	4.73	little	2	Nonconforming
17	4.53	little	5	Quiet and Introverted

Note. Table by author.

^aVar # means variable number.