Preface:

The Public Arena and Strategic Human Resource Management

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# PL 1: Public sector motivation

Recruiters have been encouraged to recognize a ‘public service motivation’ or a unique predisposition that energizes and directs the people who are attracted to public service organizations.[[1]](#endnote-1) It has been described as a ‘motivational dimension that induces people to perform meaningful public service,’[[2]](#endnote-2) and ‘an altruistic motivation to serve the interests of a community of people, a state, a nation, or humanity.’[[3]](#endnote-3) It has been defined by five core dimensions: attraction to public policy making, commitment to public interest, social justice, civic duty and compassion.[[4]](#endnote-4)

**Quiz 1: Assess your public service motivation**

What are you like? How important to you are the following factors in being motivated at work? To help define on your motivation, rate each the following on a scale of 1 to7, where 1 is very low agreement and 7 is high agreement.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Attraction to public policy: I have a high degree of respect for people in the public arena who takes go ideas and implement them in policies and laws.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Commitment to the public interest: I want to contribute to my community in a meaningful way.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Social Justice: I am willing to take on public causes that I think are worth fighting for.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Civic Duty: Duty, responsibility and giving back to the community are important to me.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Compassion: I often think of the welfare of people who are less fortunate than I am.

The above scale provides a general description of motivational characteristics of people who might illustrate a public sector motivation. You might wish to complete an instrument[[5]](#endnote-5) developed by J. L. Perry that more completely describes public service motivation.

In reviewing the items above or the full *Public Sector Motivation* scale, you might ask yourself:

* Are you high or low of public sector motivation?
* Which motivational dimensions are more important to you?
* Why might these motivational dimensions be important?

# References

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2. Brewer, G. A., & Selden, S. C. (1998) Whistle blowers in federal civil service: New evidence of the public service ethic. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 8: 417, 413–439. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Rainey, H. G. & Steinbauer, P. (1999) Galloping elephants: Developing elements of a theory of effective government organizations. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 9: 23, 1–32. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Perry, J.L. (1996) Measuring public service motivation: An assessment of construct reliability and validity. Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, 6, 5-22; It is also been defined by four dimensions: attraction to public policy making, commitment to public interest, compassion, and self-sacrifice. See: Waldner, C. (2012) Do public and private recruiters look for different employees? The role of public service motivation. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 35: 70-79 [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Perry, J.L. (1996) Measuring public service motivation: An assessment of construct reliability and validity. Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, 6, 5-22; It is also been defined by four dimensions: attraction to public policy making, commitment to public interest, compassion, and self-sacrifice. See: Waldner, C. (2012) Do public and private recruiters look for different employees? The role of public service motivation. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 35: 70-79 [↑](#endnote-ref-5)