

Should I stay or should I go:

A study of New Zealand NGO
social service managers' job satisfaction, job
dissatisfaction and the implications for retention

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Karlene Marie Lee

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Abstract

The NGO sector is a major provider of social services and is increasingly funded by Government to take on additional roles in the management and delivery of services. It is crucial that the NGO sector attract and retain a skilled and knowledgeable workforce for fitting service provision. This study draws on narratives of job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction and how these relate to retention from the in-depth interviews of fifteen social service managers within the NGO sector. It aims to increase understanding of manager value alignment, and the tensions that exist between the 'new era' of managerialism and an identity committed to care and social justice issues. Results demonstrate that conflict regarding managerialist practices viewed as divergent from NGO manager's own 'best practice' contributes to a concerning degree of dissatisfaction and employee turnover. This study also reports on gaps in management pathways and training to be addressed by training and professional institutions; information for supervisors wishing to support their manager supervisees; key retention strategies for organisations; and proposals for setting up mentoring support networks. Overall this study seeks to build understanding of factors affecting the retention of managers in the current NGO sector context and how to enhance their capacity to achieve innovative positive social change in the new era.

Keywords: Manager, New Zealand, NGO Sector, retention, (global) job satisfaction, job dissatisfaction, managerialism, management pathways

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Chapter One: Topic Selection and Structure of the Thesis

Introduction:

The purpose of this research project is to understand the factors influencing social service manager career pathways, choice of sector, and retention as managers are crucial to attracting and providing a skilled and knowledgeable workforce to provide service provision within the NGO sector. Investigation was undertaken as to whether managers make deliberate choices to enter the NGO Sector and whether predictors found in other research contributing to workforce satisfaction compare to those of social service managers in New Zealand. This project aims to assess the degree of importance that managers indicate dimensions of satisfaction comprise for them and those that override feelings of satisfaction.

There are a number of terms for the non-profit sector in New Zealand. The most frequently used are non-profit, not for profit, voluntary, community, non-governmental, third sector and independent sector. For the purpose of this study I have termed it the Non Government Organisation (NGO) sector. The Aotearoa New Zealand NGO Sector's 97,000 organisations have developed from a rich history of philanthropic and grassroots community identified needs comprising a rich and diverse source of avenues to assist with all aspects of people's lives, often working with the most vulnerable of society providing health, social, economic, and educational support.

The study seeks to enhance the depth and richness of the understanding of the topic of job (dis)satisfaction and retention that cannot be elicited from the structured studies that rely on very large numbers of respondents. Satisfaction via a self-report questionnaire cannot discover the intricacies of thinking and feeling in relation to such a multi-dimensional topic because the measure does not allow an understanding of the respondent's motivation for answering questions a certain way on a given day. It also does not allow the respondent to provide additional opinions to capture the depth, context and complexity of this topic.

The results of this project will highlight the importance of understanding the workforce in order to illustrate the practices that are already working, and help to determine what areas of training and support are required in order to grow and retain the workforce. This is important because currently non-profit organisations face challenges in retaining skilled staff purportedly due to competition with the better working conditions offered by Government organisations (Pallot, 2003; Sanders, O'Brien, Tennant, Sokolowski, & Salamon, 2008). This is significant in two ways, firstly because a skill set is lost, and secondly when social service managers leave the sector they take with them the expertise needed to implement the 'people centred' 'local approach to local needs' philosophy that operates within the NGO sector.

Reflecting human service job satisfaction dimensions

Literature richly defines what an effective manager requires to be successful. Literature does not however satisfactorily identify what a manager requires to sustain job satisfaction and remain committed to their team and organisation. Spector (1985) comments that by 1972 over 4,500 articles had been written on the topic of job satisfaction of employees however relatively few could be found about the human service employee (as little as 20 studies) and most of these related to nurses. During the late 1970s interest in human service workers increased somewhat. Studies are readily available from 1985 through to 2012 however there are still relatively few relating to human service employees and even less regarding managers.

Furthermore in 1985 Spector suggested that norms for existing job satisfaction scales developed for industrial organisations did not reflect human service job satisfaction dimensions. This provided the impetus for his study to develop a job satisfaction survey with a nine-subscale measure specific to the human service employee setting. The nine variables were developed from extensive research and were pay, promotion, supervision, benefits, contingent rewards, procedures, co-workers, work, and communication. It measured an attitudinal response to job satisfaction. He then assessed the validity of his survey by comparing the findings with those from existing instruments. He demonstrated how these showed good comparability to other job satisfaction instrument measures on

the same employee providing the reader with confidence that findings from these studies could be utilized successfully in the workplace.

Structure of the thesis

In Chapter one the purpose of the research is introduced, which is to understand the factors influencing social service manager career pathways, choice of sector, and retention, as managers are crucial to attracting and providing a skilled and knowledgeable workforce. The chapter continues with a brief clarification for the choice of the term NGO sector for this study, the use of Spector's job satisfaction facets as a measure for the study, and a brief outline of the structure of the thesis.

Chapter two presents a literature review introducing a brief timeline of the New Zealand NGO sector. A description of the type of work NGOs engage in is provided including understanding the link between the origins of the sector and the way it tends to work currently. The concept of social service manager pathways are introduced including the lack of research found in response to this. Management practices are then discussed in which the respect for the client is central drawing on people centred practices inextricably linked to issues of equity, access, participation, empowerment, social justice and human rights. An introduction to the main concepts relating to motivation, satisfaction, dissatisfaction and retention is then provided producing evidence of the best researched predictors of each.

Chapter Three presents information on the methodology for the study and the research process. It begins by positioning the researcher's history, observations, context and worldview. It explains why the snowballing approach was initiated when low take up rates to an email invitation eventuated, how the pilot was conducted, the data collected via semi-structured interviews, how the interview was structured and the data analysed using a coded system linked to themes, issues, topics, concepts and propositions. Finally the section concludes with information on the strengths and limitations of the study.

Chapter Four provides respondent's demographics and then introduces the concept of management pathways. These are considered later in careers and often not through 'self-promotion'. Professional competencies need to be re-thought on successful tenure. How training was obtained before and after management is explored as a vital ingredient to successful management. The role of the manager is clarified by respondents, producing the first glimpse into the tension that exists between sector values and managerialist practices. The role is then explored including whether it is perceived as valued by others searching for factors that contribute to managers feeling successful and satisfied.

Chapter Five is directed towards understanding why respondents chose to work in the NGO sector and if they intend on remaining, searching for unique points of difference linked to the sector's value base that might assist with satisfaction and retention. Changes in the sector were noted by respondents. This brings to light some disquieting dissatisfaction factors and leads to the final exploration of the reasons that four respondents said had induced them to leave the sector.

Chapter Six considers dimensions of job satisfaction and finds evidence for satisfaction under four main headings: appropriate rewards, the influence of "others", the importance of the nature of the work, and the impact of the organisational context. These are linked with the respondent's professional backgrounds and perceived sector values.

Chapter Seven focuses on job dissatisfaction emphasising that conflict has arisen between meeting service provision objectives and impinging managerialist principles. The chapter has four main headings: pay, progression and training discrepancies, the significance of conflict in relationships, the change in the nature of the work, and the impact of the organisational context. This will include reference to hectic and fragmented workloads, sensing jobs are never finished well and challenges to creativity and autonomy.

Chapter Eight reveals the combination of factors most attributed to retention and decisions about staying or leaving. General retention factors, and those attributed to job satisfaction are discussed. The chapter then highlights general termination factors, and

those attributed to job dissatisfaction. Finally, overall or global feelings of job satisfaction are explored.

Chapter Nine brings the study together with implications and conclusions from the findings offering ideas for training, retention strategies, and supervision of managers. It ultimately provides a deeper understanding of the NGO sector and the motivations of managers in this context.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction to the current New Zealand non-government sector

Tennant et al (2006) remind us the emergence of social support in Aotearoa New Zealand has its roots in pre-colonial and colonial society. Maori had their own associated forms or “social engines”, based on extended family groups, wider family groups and tribes. Pakeha organisations were first represented by missionary societies, groups wishing to establish order and respectable codes of conduct, friendly societies, craft unions and benevolent societies. These emerged as need increased, becoming more numerous and more complex to meet the population base and specific community need. They were firmly embedded in local communities drawing inspiration from broader social justice movements, often linked to a unique set of ideological values and priorities (Tennant, Sanders, O'Brien, & Castle, 2006).

New Zealand has undergone significant changes in the social service sector: the decades from the 1940s to the 1960s were dominated by the welfare state. From the late 1960's social change and economic instability begin to place pressure on the NGO sector which found itself assuming responsibility for activities previously considered the Government sphere. In the last few decades there has been population change with an increase in ethnically diverse people, de-institution of mental health services towards community service provision, re-structuring of the public service sector, and devolution of planning and funding to local regions with increased drawing on Government funding (Mental Health Workforce Development Programme, 2006; Tennant, et al., 2006; Willie, 2006). Client services are purchased through contracts (Tennant, et al., 2006) and funding for employees, including managers, is based on the FTE (full time equivalent) model. Evidence of effective and efficient use of these funds ushers in a new era of managerialist practices comprising accountability, audit, assessment and performance review exercises (Dixon, Kouzmin, & Korac-Kakabadse, 1998; Pallot, 2003; Roberts, Jones I I I, & Fröhling, 2005; Shore, 2008). Limitations on funding impact on “the capacity of non-profit organisations to recruit and retain highly skilled and creative personnel” (Sanders, et al., 2008, p. 36). The PricewaterhouseCoopers Report (2006, p.30) identified that the

“quality of candidates for specialist positions within their field is very limited, mainly as specialists reside within the DHB’s” (District Health Boards). This study is focused on the implications of sector changes, which amongst others, is increasing competition between NGO providers for staff (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2006), competition for resources (Sanders, et al., 2008), and increasing tension between divergent management practices (Hjörne, Juhila, & Van Nijnatten, 2010; Shore, 2008).

The social service manager

Social service managers are engaged in a diverse range of NGOs ranging from small local initiatives to large national organisations. They are significant providers of health, welfare, sport, recreation, art, culture, religion, employment and economic development (Tennant, et al., 2006). However, there seems to be little research about how people become managers, perhaps because the term ‘manager’ alludes to a business model perspective in which employees customarily rose through the ranks of their organisation. Although management has been around in some form for centuries serious interest in the study of management did not emerge until the twentieth century when business size began to increase providing a ‘stimulus and laboratory’ (George & Jones, 2006). This study will seek to explore the reasons respondents entered their employment position to understand if there are specific satisfaction dimensions which ultimately will highlight retention factors.

NGO Social Service managers generally operate within a value-driven and people-centred ideological climate (Healy, 2002; Wimpfheimer, 2004). They tend to work in a way in which the respect for the client is central drawing on practices which ideally include: culturally appropriate services; collaborative relationships outside of the organisation; and understanding of systems, empowerment, social justice equity, human dignity, advocacy and the promotion of rights (Healy, 2002; Mental Health Workforce Development Programme, 2006; Patti, 2003; Sanders, et al., 2008; Wimpfheimer, 2004). They predominantly engage in practices requiring a high level of interpersonal skills drawing on professional values to inform decision-making (Healy, 2002). Over the decades and throughout political changes these practices have not always been prized.

Sanders et al (2008, p. 40) suggest there is “some evidence of a re-emergence of recognition that the non-profit sector have unique goals, values, and objectives that make them valuable in their own right”. This study seeks to examine current discourse to support or refute this and to examine tensions between best practice being firmly embedded in either the value-driven NGO sector or the ‘value for money’ rhetoric of the business model (Pallot, 2003).

In addition to the requirement of a strong position to understand the philosophy that underpins social service organisations, born out of their history and evolution from private philanthropic, social movements and charitable effort the contemporary manager is expected to have mastered roles of job analysis, recruitment, appraisals, training, policy issues, marketing, strategic planning, advances in computer technology, and fiscal oversight (Healy, 2002; Menefee & Thompson, 1994; Sisley, 2004; Tennant, et al., 2006; Wimpfheimer, 2004). They must also have an awareness of new and developing theories in sector knowledge and utilise evidence to improve practice (Mental Health Workforce Development Programme, 2006). A manager’s practice competency and person responsive practice combine to support a high calibre NGO workforce. Management high performance work practice has a direct relationship to organisation performance and competitive advantage due in part to manager influence on motivation of employees (Delaney & Huselid, 1996; Huselid, 1995). In order for organisations to maintain a competitive advantage the social service manager should be viewed as a vital resource. This study aims to develop an understanding of the opportunities and threats posed for professionals in NGO organisations, to understanding their related management competencies and skills and to provide insight into gaps and training needs.

Introduction to motivation, satisfaction, dissatisfaction and retention

Motivation

Maslow (1954) was the first theorist to link satisfaction to motivation. His theory suggested that “motivation is the willingness to expend effort toward a goal while meeting some personal need or needs. What motivates one person may not motivate another” (Inkson & Kolb, 2002, p. 273). The attainment of the goal leads to satisfaction. Maslow’s theory describes a hierarchy of meeting basic needs from safety and belonging and self-esteem - deficiency motives activated by lack - towards self-actualization at the top of the ordering system - “a positive, life-enhancing force for personal growth” (Coon, 1995, p. 317). It is argued that individual’s have these needs all of the time, but they emerge to motivate or drive us in particular order as the preceding need is satisfied (Hall et al., 2001). There is little on-going support for a fixed hierarchy of needs approach (Locke, 1976).

Arising from this has been the understanding of two motivations. Firstly, that of intrinsic motivation where in employment terms it is seen as an activity as an end in itself. It bears direct relation to the nature of the job tasks and is undertaken for enjoyment, to demonstrate competence, gain skill, the desire to obtain social esteem, self-respect or the good opinion of others, or for autonomy or variety (Coffey, Dugdill, & Tattersall, 2004; Kreps, 2001). The factors that promote intrinsic motivation are challenge, curiosity, control, fantasy, competition, cooperation, and recognition. Secondly, as extrinsic motivation stemming from external factors such as pay, rewards, status, working conditions, and supervisors (Coon, 1995; Hall, et al., 2001; Spector, 1997). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivators are not two separate entities there is interplay between the two. “What is called intrinsic motivation may be, at least in part, the workers response to fuzzy extrinsic motivators, such as fear of discharge, [or] censure by fellow employees” (Kreps, 2001, p. 361).

Prior to Maslow’s theory there was a traditional model of management that had precise procedures, standard methods of training, a focus on productivity, and financial

incentives tied to performance (Daft & Marcic, 2001). The perception of workers in this traditional model is that they would work harder for higher pay. Maslow then presented the human relations model asserting employees were motivated by many factors not only money and included the need for achievement and meaningful work. He continues to be widely influential in management text books however post-modern approaches suggest that a focus on motivation traits alone has limited relevance (Mensinga, 2009).

The needs driven approach has been less emphasized since the 1980's with researchers tending to 'focus on cognitive processes' and the theoretical position that "job satisfaction represents an affective or attitudinal reaction to a job" (Spector, 1985, p. 694). This implies that people tend to remain in a satisfying job and leave a dissatisfying one. This study will adopt an attitudinal perspective to identify which specific aspects produce satisfaction and dissatisfaction for managers.

Job satisfaction factors

Job satisfaction is recognised as a multifaceted concept but put simply is "how people feel about their jobs and different aspects of their jobs" (Spector, 1997, p. 2). There have been many characteristics or dimensions researched as the best predictors of workforce job satisfaction. The main predictors include alignment with the organisation's mission statement and organisational values (Brown & Yoshioka, 2003); skill variety, role clarity, and remuneration (Boxall, Macky, & Rasmussen, 2003; Dickinson & Perry, 2002; Mak & Sockel, 2001; Terry, 1998); job tasks, characteristics of the organisation, and characteristics of the workers including disposition, age, and tenure (Brown & Yoshioka, 2003; Glisson & Durick, 1988); leadership behaviour that demonstrates clearly that it is 'people oriented' (Jaskyte, 2004); appreciation, recognition, and work conditions (Spector, 1985); receiving fair treatment by employers (Griffeth, Hom, & Gsertner, 2000); addressing training needs (Jaskyte, 2004; The Werry Centre, 2008); receiving support from peers and supervisors (Dickinson & Perry, 2002); work specialization and autonomy (Backman, 2000); opportunities for personal and professional growth (Brown & Yoshioka, 2003); and providing interesting work (Boxall, et al., 2003).

Spector's (1985) study and extensive research on this topic provides an efficacious instrument to measure social service employee satisfaction (Spector, 1987, 1997). Spector's development of the job satisfaction survey with his nine variables relating to job satisfaction (pay, promotion, supervision, benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures, co-workers, nature of work, communication) will be a useful standard for comparison to this study's data analysis.

Additionally and specific to managers The Werry Centre in Whakamarama te Huarahi (Willie, 2006) identified that managers require investment in continuing development, appropriate salary remuneration, release time for research and training (clinical/specialist and management), high quality supervision, access to collegial support, flexible employment options and promotion of career pathways in order to retain their services and provide a high calibre workforce.

This study also aims to assess narratives using a values approach to explore if NGO managers are more psychologically invested in their workplace. This would link to EA Locke (1976), also a widely cited researcher on job satisfaction. Locke (1976) found that it is "the individual's values that are the most direct determinants of his emotional reactions to the job" (Locke, 1976, p. 1314). Brown's (2003) study also supports this, identifying that one of the reasons individuals remain (in employment) is "belief in the mission and the desire to help people" (Brown & Yoshioka, 2003, p. 13). Both are likely to have salience in the value driven NGO sector and merit further exploration.

Moderators for findings will also need to be explored such as Diane Vinokur-Kaplan's (1996) study emphasising that employees already in mid career may be strongly vested-socially, psychologically, and through pension funds-to their current positions. Additionally Brown and Yoshioka's (2003, p.5) study suggested retention of current professionals should not be taken for granted, finding that alignment to "mission [values] might be salient in attracting employees but less effective in retaining them".

Job satisfaction can also be considered as a global feeling about the job and various facets of the job. Spector (1997) comments that studies have sometimes used a summing of facet scores presuming all facets assessed make an equal contribution to global satisfaction. He highlights that it “seems unlikely that each facet has the same importance to each individual. Thus, the sum is an approximation” (Spector, 1997, p. 19). The limitation of the conceptual definition of overall job satisfaction as a linear combination or summation of attitudinal aspects is that it only reveals an average importance to the individual. What is equally important is the distinction between satisfaction with a particular facet of one’s job and overall satisfaction impacting on attitude (Locke, 1969). What this study seeks to demonstrate is the value placed on individual satisfaction or dissatisfaction dimensions and whether a particular job aspect is important enough to an employee to override an overall sense of job satisfaction resulting in them leaving. This study will be used to gather more comprehensive information from an interview to allow respondents to elaborate on areas of job satisfaction unique to them as managers in this sector. The results of this study will extend beyond concerns for the well-being of the manager and their retention. The study implications provide a flow on effect to organisational function, reaping a competitive advantage, and quality service provision to those supported in the NGO sector.

Job dissatisfaction factors

Conversely job dissatisfaction contributes towards burnout, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization towards clients, and diminished personal accomplishment (Dickinson & Perry, 2002; Leiter, 1991); low morale and functioning (Corey-Lisle, 1999); absenteeism, and employee conflicts (Misener, Haddock, Gleaton, Abu, & Abdul, 1996) and ultimately staff turnover (Glisson & Durick, 1988; Jaskyte, 2004) .

Negative contributors include frustration with management, the organisation not run well, the organisation not reflecting the mission (Brown & Yoshioka, 2003); conflict between the assumptions of a role and the realities of the workplace (Leiter, 1991); excessive workload and perceived stress (Corey-Lisle, 1999), lack of job protection and advancement (Blosser, Cadet, & Downs Jr, 2010); negative reaction to change (Corey-

Lisle, 1999; Jaskyte, 2004) a shock or jarring event (Lee, Mitchel, Holtom, McDaniel, & Hill, 1999); dissatisfaction with pay (Brown & Yoshioka, 2003), job stress such as family work life balance, not feeling valued at work, excessive demands made by the job (Boxall, et al., 2003); increased accountability and a focus on outcomes, lack of autonomy (Blosser, et al., 2010); and workers being overwhelmed and unprepared (Blosser, et al., 2010; The Werry Centre, 2008). This study seeks to identify specific facets of job dissatisfaction in relation to management and the NGO sector searching for key retention strategies for organisations to utilise.

Retention

Staffing shortages in the contemporary social service sector are identified in the literature across countries (Coffey, et al., 2004; Evans & Huxley, 2009) and are anecdotally identifiable in the Southland geographic context. A recent meta-analysis of antecedents and correlations of employee turnover unequivocally states that work satisfaction displays the highest relationship to turnover (Griffeth, et al., 2000). It is important to consider this topic as 'quit intentions' remain the best predictors of employee voluntary turnover and is initiated by job dissatisfaction (Griffeth, et al., 2000).

Understanding the factors surrounding job satisfaction and retention of managers within the NGO social services sector is a key priority because job satisfaction can be positively affected through organisational interventions (Spector, 1997, p. 73). "However currently preventative activities are comparatively rare" (Coffey, et al., 2004, p. 736) and there is a tendency to apply strategies focusing on a single 'problem' rather than multiple intervention strategies (Coffey 2004). Pertinent research questions become "what personal and organisational characteristics are associated with intention to leave", and "what initiatives or incentives might mediate that effect?" (Evans & Huxley, 2009, p. 255). Additionally is there weight to be found for Evans and Huxley's (2009) uncomplicated argument that in order to retain staff "good employers need to monitor morale on a regular basis, listen to and act on what their staff are saying" and "award their staff the same kind of 'duty of care' as they do their consumers" (Evans & Huxley, 2009, p. 264)? As the title of this study suggests there is a decision to be made between

staying and leaving. This study will consider retention in light of the meaning that managers make to provide a broader construct for organisations interested in developing strategies to motivate employees to stay whilst ensuring they work towards the goals of the organisation and sector.

Chapter Three: Methodology and Research Process

Methodology

To begin this chapter, I reflect on my engagement with the NGO sector and position myself as a researcher. As part of this I will outline the professional and ethical codes in which my work is grounded. I then continue by discussing the worldview with which I come to this study. I then articulate my particular ontology, epistemology and methodology. These frameworks will ultimately determine the way of gathering and representing the data in this study.

Positioning of researcher

I am a qualified social worker having worked in the NGO sector with children, young people and their families over the past nine years; and as a manager for three of those years. I did not initially choose to work in the NGO sector but obtained employment as I worked towards completion of my qualifications. I entered management in the NGO sector able to manage people and understand its people centred philosophy but ill-prepared to understand market and financial features; employed because my qualifications fitted current contractual requirements. Over time I developed a belief that my qualifications were desirable and useful to a sector largely underfunded and under-represented by practitioners. I could be resourceful and flexible to individuals I worked with. People could access NGO services at any time in their journey when need arose. This was in contrast to the Government sector, which in my interactions, I observed and storied as professionally hierarchical, in which Social Workers were not highly esteemed. Individuals had to meet strict criteria, often needing severe concerns and diminished day-to-day functioning before being eligible for services.

Over the past nine years I observed managers within the NGO sector come and go with an ever increasing frequency. I was personally impacted on by the loss of relationships and their expertise. I was confused by the dominant discourse that managers operate in the NGO sector for altruistic reasons but puzzlingly leave for better rates of pay and working conditions. I wondered, and doubted, if it was that simple; suggesting that if the

NGO sector paid more money managers would stay. And conversely I also wondered if the NGO sector really pursued a value-based philosophy focusing on responsive service provision, thinking creatively and innovatively, and attracting and retaining workers whose values aligned to these. I therefore wished to pay attention to explanations and perspectives of managers who worked in the NGO sector, and why they leave or stay in order to look for solutions to maintain managers and foster a culture that emphasised satisfaction and commitment.

As a social worker I believe in the centrality of a comprehensive assessment and a participatory approach to understand the complexities of people's lives whilst avoiding blaming or pathologising by considering the 'social' context of individuals (Leong & Austin, 1996; Milner & O'Byrne, 2002). I favour consideration of how a person's cultural and social background contributes to their perceptions of problems. I believe interventions are best when focused not just on the individual but the larger social system as well. This will be evidenced in the explanations and results of this study when not only the individual is considered but also the context of the organisation, the sector itself, and the association with Government.

Social justice

The fundamental purpose of social work is the pursuit of justice and equality which seeks to "promote human wellbeing and to redress human suffering and injustice" (O'Connor, Wilson, & Setterlund, 2003, p. 2). In this study the outcome for the manager is inextricably linked to the outcomes for their clientele. Human service practice exists in a context; because the client is the focus of the context of the work of the manager this study will necessarily locate the principles of social justice within its explanations and outcomes.

Ethical considerations

In undertaking this research it was important to me that I remain accountable to the participants in the study, my Supervisor, and the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW). Ethical committee approval was also applied for and obtained from Otago University's human ethics committee (appendix 3).

To address the importance of ethical consideration a contract and protocol was provided and written consent obtained so that participants were fully aware of the purpose of the research, understood their rights, understood confidentiality (e.g. use of direct quotes) and my commitment to providing anonymity. Anonymity was addressed when I felt unable to utilise narratives which described personal characteristics such as a specific reference to disability - precluding use of the quote. An identification number and code were assigned to all transcripts and names kept separate from interview responses; storing these separately in a secure cabinet. Names of respondents, identifying characteristics such as names of or sizes of organisations were deleted or changed in the reporting of the research to protect identities.

Interpretive/constructivist paradigm

The purpose of the interpretive/constructivist paradigm is to understand the interviewee's assumptions about a problem and the special meaning they assign to it, insisting that reality is a mental creation of the interviewee (Zastrow, 2003). Participants were encouraged to tell their own "stories" whilst I used attentive conversation and respectful inquiry to allow for new interpretations to emerge as information and awareness of subjects changed (Leong & Austin, 1996). According to constructivist theory "as people try to make sense of their lives, they develop stories that provide them with a sense of continuity and meaning...the stories we shape ourselves then shape our lives" (Zastrow, 2003, p. 195). The explanations and outcomes of this study reflect the principle that understanding the story then becomes primary to reshaping it and assisting to redirect lives in more positive directions (Zastrow, 2003).

Multiple realities

Multiple realities and multiple truths are a fundamental component of the interpretive/constructivist paradigm in which people create meaning in their lives through conversation with others. Behaviour is believed to be intentional and creative and able to be explained (D'Cruz & Jones, 2004). People shape their own reality and place meaning on the events that occur in their lives. Hence I will be seeking to discover meaning rather than the 'facts' (D'Cruz & Jones, 2004). One of my interests at the outset of this study was toward the dominant discourse within the NGO sector of it being a value-laden or value-driven sector. I was particularly interested in the narratives ascribing 'value' attributes to it. In order that I not apply any of my assumptions – and because I was somewhat doubtful about the discourse - I did not create any open-ended questions in the interview guide directed towards discovery of whether people perceived values to be apparent. Therefore, I merely wished to listen to narratives to see if values were described in the storytelling and how people made meaning of these.

Narrative inquiry

One of the goals of my study was to gain “a more holistic appreciation of the various agendas that people navigate to realize their personal ambition” (Mensinga, 2009, p. 199). I wanted to discern the meaning-making process employed by managers in relation to the complex interplay of personal, social, and professional agendas for job satisfaction, job dissatisfaction and retention to add to the growing body of research (Mensinga, 2009). Given that I am interested in the 'meaning-making' process I was concerned that I portray personal accounts of manager's experience in the belief that all knowledge is partial and experiences are constructed in the telling of stories of those experiences (Bell, 2005). I wanted to understand the dominant discourse as a way to understand how people make meaning of their lives. A narrative method of gathering and analysing data builds on an interpretive/constructivist paradigm to discover the multiple truths and ways of knowing; therefore this was highly congruent with the aims of my study. A trusting relationship was required for the participant to reveal feelings and intimate information necessitating me to engage the skills I have developed as a social worker.

One of the ways this is demonstrated is the participant sharing a power base via them structuring the conversation. Storytelling is a natural way of understanding experiences; people have a history for use of this method. This format is regularly used by management consultants presenting examples of practice to be emulated or avoided by others (Bell, 2005). It seems fitting to utilise narratives as a valuable source of data for research purposes. One of the difficulties I found is that respondents sometimes head in a direction other than the topic. Although this was generally interesting it was time consuming. Additionally it was quite challenging to structure the data into a form presenting a clear beginning middle and end as negotiated by both of us storytellers. However doing so has allowed the participants to tell their stories, attribute their meaning and additionally allows the reader insight into a multi-faceted situation. As the researcher I found myself investigating emerging topics such as the impact of audit, impinging managerialist practices, privatizing social work, and new models of NGO sector collaboration.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a constant component to this research. Information was gathered from participants which was fed back to them at the time of the interview and via offering member checking for verification of accuracy. Reflexivity was also used to bring the context and meaning of the participants lives to the forefront through continually asking myself about how my values, experiences, attention and interpretation were influencing their storying. Additionally the presentation of rich description and abundance of direct quotes allows the reader to formulate their own interpretation of the results (Leong & Austin, 1996).

Strengths and resiliency

Following on from narrative enquiry I value discovering client strengths and resources focusing on creating solutions in the present and the future. I also use a strengths approach believing that people have the capacity to grow and change and improve situations. This becomes evident in the outcomes presented in the final chapter assuming that individual's and the sector have the capacity and resources for change.

Feminist principles

In conducting this research it was important to me that both the stories of women are provided and that I consider how power is exercised in the process of gathering information and making knowledge. Women are over-represented in management in the NGO sector in a traditionally male dominated role. The underlying feminist analysis would acknowledge that conflict and unequal power relations exist between men and women (Nash & Munford, 1994) and accordingly there is no exception in this 'care' sector. Emphasis is on individual experience and individuals as experts on their own lives. Narrative methods highlight women's experience to assist in the production of knowledge of the issues affecting a woman-lead sector. From this perspective, storytelling fits with feminist notions, as is utilising a collaborative and participatory approach. Secondly, power imbalance is addressed between the roles of researcher and participant. The nature of social work, being participatory and having anti-oppressive values, holds a belief in genuine partnership between practitioner and those whom it serves. This provides guiding principles for my social work research (D'Cruz & Jones, 2004). Social work training teaches that working with people should be a process of collaboration and so I remained actively aware reflecting on my influence in the co-creation of meanings.

Summary

The methodologies used for this research project have a similar vein of collaboration and participation, seek after meaning, and require reflection on the part of the researcher. Research occurs in social context, through lived experience, grounded in conversation and in the participant's preferred setting. Having situated this research, in the next section I will relate the methods taken in conducting the research.

Sampling

A computer group email service with 150 social service providers registered on the network used at the District Health Board to email non-Government-organisations information of upcoming events was initially employed. The group email covering the Otago Southland District (Invercargill, Gore, Queenstown, and Dunedin) provided a brief of the study inviting participants to contact me or the coordinator of the email service (due to increased comfort around familiarity) for more information.

The email approach was largely unsuccessful with only one response. When I inquired later once respondents had been located, feedback suggested that the busy managers had been interested in the study but did not find time to reply. I then implemented Healey's (2002) strategy of generating a sample through a snow-balling technique. Healy (2002) produced a qualitative study of thirty four managers in the NGO sector in Australia through successfully using a snow-balling method after the initial sample group were recruited in which at the conclusion of each interview respondents were asked to identify other potential respondents. The pilot group in my study were very enthusiastic about the research and identified nearly twenty people they thought would be interested in participating.

One of the most difficult criteria to fulfil for respondent eligibility was the length of time as a manager. I determined from experience and anecdotally from other managers that generally two years was required to know the job well and to understand the sector in which they worked. Unfortunately a number of managers in Southland had just moved into their position in the sector making them ineligible. I also found it challenging answering subsequent questions from the interested and very supportive pilot group who wanted to know who I had contacted or interviewed. Answering would have severely compromised the anonymity of further participants, but equally I was encouraged by their support. I simply commented that the identified person was a good suggestion but it needed to remain confidential. As the snow-balling process continued after each interview, the same names arose as from the original list, confirming that this was indeed a small pool from which to recruit. Fifteen social service managers in the non-

government sector were interviewed using the purposive non-probability sampling method.

Representativeness

Using the snow-balling method respondents were only located in the Southland district. They included a broad range of experience, gender, ages, settings, and length of time as a manager so many narratives could be heard. The sample used in this study is less likely to be representative of whole populations since the study seeks to provide a narrative understanding of the phenomena of managers job satisfaction, job dissatisfaction and retention with an emphasis on exploring meaning rather than discovering truth. The aim was to enhance the depth and richness of the understanding of this topic that is missing from the structured studies that rely on very large numbers of respondents (D'Cruz & Jones, 2004). The small sample size and regional locality allowed achievement of the study in the two year time period and with the financial resources available. The research did not seek to generalise to populations but instead looked for 'thicker' descriptions of manager's stories.

Pilot

A pilot was undertaken to provide constructive feedback on the intended semi-structured interview questions. This consisted of two managers who were colleagues who had worked together for a significant period of time. They had a background similar to those of the intended sample and were comfortable discussing personal information together and providing constructive feedback. The pilot was arranged for a convenient day time appointment at their office, allowing a two hour time slot. I provided a copy of the consent form and information for participants prior to the interview. I checked in about these at the start of the pilot and was advised these had not been read. The respondent's explained that they trusted me and were keen to help. This also became the general pattern for successive interviews. I explained the information sheet and process and the pilot respondents signed the consent form. Having turned the recorder on and checked the distance it would record, I then asked the participants to complete a demographic sheet and reiterated I would appreciate feedback. This design was unintentional but I

noted that in the five to ten minutes it took to complete the sheet valuable information was gathered. Clarification was sought over title names and the beginning of a dominant narrative emerged. Initially I thought it was my choice of titles that was prompting confusion but as interviews progressed it became an emerging theme and I was pleased I had noted it and began recording all interviews this way. When reading through the demographics I reiterated that participants could pass on any questions. At the end of the process I realised I hadn't included whether people thought they were a line, middle, or senior manager on the form after it generated plenty of discussion so included this. Additionally I recognized I had not asked for a professional background and/or qualifications and so included this too. However these additions also served to decrease my level of confidence amid already feeling extremely nervous. To combat this I felt the need to justify all demographics and the purpose of my study. I noticed this because I am usually confident in an interview setting. Using reflective practice I realised that the pilot participants were interested in the study and would respond best if I was more confident.

I moved onto the open-ended questions whose development had been a fairly lengthy process with support from other students, lecturers and role plays at university. My original initial question was "have you considered leaving the NGO sector" but it didn't sound right so I asked for immediate feedback. Feedback indicated that it set a tone for searching for dissatisfaction and a negative frame rather than an unbiased position. Additionally they commented that it was unlikely that a relationship had been established that would induce people to answer openly. I removed this question altogether and began the interview - and all subsequent ones - with the second question "please tell me the story of how you came to be a manager". The interview conversation flowed well from there; participants appeared comfortable, with no further need for changes to the planned open ended questions. The pilot interview took an hour so I surmised that succeeding interviews would be concluded within this time frame – this was true except for one in which the respondent represented the NGO sector at a national level generating additional discussion. No further modifications were made.

Data collection

A qualitative semi-structured interview process involving questioning and discussing issues relating to social service management pathways, job satisfaction, dissatisfaction and retention was employed. Interviewing was a useful technique for collecting data that would probably not be accessible using other techniques such as questionnaires. Most literature available regarding job satisfaction utilizes research via self-report questionnaires which cannot discover the intricacies of thinking and feeling in relation to such a multi-dimensional topic. Questionnaires do not allow an understanding of the respondent's meaning in answering questions a certain way on a given day nor do they permit the respondent to provide additional opinions to capture the depth and complexity of this topic. What also cannot be demonstrated through questionnaires is the value placed on a numerical satisfaction or dissatisfaction score and whether a particular job aspect is important enough to a manager to remain in or leave their employment.

What has also not been demonstrated in research so far is whether the dimensions of workforce job satisfaction can be generalised to social service managers. Although, as stated this study will not provide the ability to generalise it may offer an understanding of the facets of satisfaction and retention in this context which can be compared to existing studies.

The interview

Once someone had been identified by a previous interviewee I made initial contact via telephone. I found on every occasion that they had an understanding of the project as they had been contacted by and provided a description of the experience from the person putting their name forward. Respondents were then provided with an information sheet comprising a brief outline of the topic, the purpose of the study, and details of how the research would be conducted including the amount of time required for the interview (maximum 1 hour). A time was then made to contact them again at which eligibility criteria were confirmed and a time was made for the interview. On two occasions respondents contacted me after receiving the paperwork to discuss eligibility criteria. One did not supervise staff, and the other was in private practice, therefore they were not

interviewed. Eligible respondents generally tended to book their interview either for the same day or within a very short time period. This was the first indicator that these were very busy people. I was generally requested to interview at their personal office and during the day. At the time of booking the respondents were asked to think about the activities they carried out daily, weekly, and monthly that contribute to job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. One person asked for the semi-structured questions so they would be prepared, however when we started the interview they said they hadn't had time to read through any of their information including the questions.

Interviews comprised just the two of us, they were not rushed by the respondent and there was only one interruption when a phone rang during the interview. The respondent left the phone and apologised for the interruption. Generally, respondents had not read through the information and I learnt to take a second set of paperwork to be completed at the interview. Participants were also asked to complete a demographic information sheet at the start of the interview – at which time the digital recorder was switched on - in order to complete age grouping, how long they have worked in the social service sector, how long they have been a manager (in ten year groupings), gender, ethnicity, professional background if existing, and which specific field they worked, in case these important aspects were missed in the interview process.

Some participants were known to me and so special care was taken to explain that they were welcome to pass on any questions thought to reveal vulnerability – no one ever did. Open ended questions were used, eliciting stories and identifying points of interest as recognised by the participant, with the participant being in charge of the direction of inquiry. An interview guide of semi-structured questions had been developed (appendix 1) to give direction so that the content focused on the research issues. The issues were how the interviewee came to be a manager, came to work in the sector, what they described as their role, whether that role was perceived as valuable, the dimensions of job (dis)satisfaction they experienced, and what would retain them on tough days. Respondents also added general themes to be explored such as management pathways related to progression, discomfort with self-promotion, lack of feedback from employers

and conflict with impinging managerialist tasks. Two people had undergone a recent restructure which clearly impacted on their ability to see potential satisfaction factors as evidenced by frequently returning to the subject of re-structure and articulating its dislocating impact. One way to avoid this was to use an intensity approach (Locke 1976) asking respondents to indicate the degree to which each activity affected overall job attitude.

The opportunity was provided to explore the participant's perceptions in relation to why they stay or why they would leave their employment, with respondents generally feeling comfortable to do so. I believe that this level of comfort was developed due to my insider-outsider status. This provided the ability to empathise with the respondent and foster an atmosphere in which to share their experiences. Throughout the interview I was aware of my own assumptions about why people leave, my uncertainty that the NGO sector was indeed value driven, and my understanding of factors comprising (dis)satisfaction. These were prompts on the semi-structured interview questionnaire but which I quickly found weren't needed if I was to develop depth of information and meaning for participants. Instead, I enquired further about statements respondent's made, sometimes going on a tangent but generally always with new and relevant information emerging. When I came later to transcribe the interviews and realised the depth of new information I was pleased that this had been foremost in my mind.

At the conclusion of the interview or the following day I wrote a thank you card and presented respondents with a small box of local chocolates or coffee voucher. All were surprised and commented they were pleased to have participated. Two refused the gifts. Three people accepted an offer for further information at the completion of the study asking for the findings to be emailed.

Data analysis

Data was transcribed after each interview. In transcribing data myself I became familiar with emerging themes and categories. Each transcript was read in detail several times and a code attributed in the margin next to sentences and paragraphs which represented a theme or idea providing a sense of reality for managers, describing what they feel, perceive, and how they behave (Burns, 2000). After the first five interviews a series of memo cards were developed with descriptions of meaning highlighting issues, “topics, concepts and propositions” (Burns, 2000, p. 432). Successive transcripts demonstrated comparative regularities and recurring ideas. These were again noted in the margins, as were emerging ideas developing depth to each heading and constant comparative analysis. When ten interviews were complete I noted the emerging categories, headings and sub-headings of the study. These linked to broad research aims relating to manager, sector, job satisfaction, job dissatisfaction, retention and emerging information. Notes were also made in the margins as to how decisions had been reached additionally noting links that had been formed to other categories. I then copied and pasted the data relating to category headings onto separate word documents finding that text segments could be coded into more than one category. These were again searched for themes and contradictions such as whether pay was a determining factor for retention, again noting decisions and links in the margins. These became the headings and subheadings for the study. I was aware of Spector’s (1985) nine job satisfaction variables but these were not used for predetermining codes as initially I wanted to promote understanding of respondent’s perceptions. What unexpectedly emerged were narratives rich in value-laden comments which became headings. Additionally, respondents had been asked to think back over a day or a month for satisfaction/dissatisfaction factors. The relative frequency with which the various dimensions of (dis)satisfaction were mentioned also became determinants for headings. Occasional reference to dimensions, one off references and contradictions were also discussed to provide richness. Results were tested against existing research and theory to provide credibility and trustworthiness. At the completion of transcribing all interviews I further researched articles and studies on the emerging information increasing my understanding on managerialist perspectives and the non-self promoting kiwi culture. I also re-read text segments that had not been assigned

any category, due to not having relevance to the research objectives, to check for contradictory points or new insights. None were found, often finding instead narratives relating to private experience I felt were too personal to be used, information which would directly decrease anonymity (such as in chapter eight a quote supporting work-home balance), or information not relevant to this study. Appropriate quotes were then selected directly from narratives relating to a theme or category. Thus, data analysis was determined both by the research objectives, numerous readings on the subject, and interpretation and findings of the raw data.

Participants were advised that they could be provided with a copy of their transcript. Three participants requested this. Quotes that were likely to be used were highlighted and the respondents were asked to feedback any comments, corrections or changes. None did so, however in a subsequent informal conversation one noted that were surprised at how much information was contained.

Strengths and limitations of the study

As a social worker I am familiar with conducting interviews as the main way I gain information in my workplace. This strength allowed me to explore the meaning of questions and answers and to check out my understanding through reflecting and paraphrasing since language is subjective and I didn't want to misinterpret what was said. The respondents often used language appropriate to them rather than trying to understand the concepts I wished to explore. Semi structured interviews allowed for the respondent's perspective rather than my perspective being imposed because they had the opportunity to direct the conversation. The dialogue entered into provided revelation and a window of opportunity (Burns, 2000) as opposed to applying an often-used survey structure to confirm what was known.

The strength of the content analysis used was that it was conducted after the interview; coding took place after transcribing each interview as patterns become evident in the data. In this way I was not setting out to prove my point by gathering facts that support my position but instead I had the flexibility to identify "alternative

conceptualisations...connections and processes (Burns, 2000, p. 434). To combat reading between the lines and inserting my own perception I looked for disconfirming and negative instances and accessed additional articles on emerging data.

Another strength of the study was that as a researcher I was also an “insider” and managers welcomed the opportunity to discuss their pragmatic concerns with someone who understood their situation. I was also aware that I needed to be mindful that I wasn’t confirming my own assumptions and so constantly clarified responses and explored contradictions. I also asked for brief feedback at the end of the interview and offered the opportunity for participants to check their transcripts – which three did.

Perhaps both a strength and limitation to the understanding of job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction for managers in this study is the uncompromising nature of it being firmly imbedded in the current NGO context. Whilst this offered a window into contemporary thinking about the changes being experienced in the sector it might also have precluded insights outside of this arena had the semi-structured questions not provided links to the sector. The findings in this study may be interpreted cautiously because the individual’s responses are in the context of restructuring and change, strongly influencing thoughts.

The limitations to attitudinal response assessment to job satisfaction include two possible moderators. One is that people who tend to do their jobs well tend to have higher job satisfaction and might also be explained by the satisfaction from rewards given to individuals who perform well (Caldwell and O’Reilly, 1990: in Spector, 1997). And as Weitz (1952: in Spector, 1997) hypothesises people with positive affective tendencies have a general tendency to be satisfied in life. It is likely that using a snowballing method respondent’s chose others who they thought to be successful, likeable, and motivated as managers - these are important factors to consider as generally those interviewed expressed a general sense of satisfaction about their role and no one interviewed said they disliked being a manager.

A limitation to the study was the small numbers of respondents located specifically in the Southland area. The responses received were in-depth and pertinent to that person and may not be representative of all managers in the NGO sector. However with the consistency of answers it appears that this is a significant NGO manager issue making the ability to transfer to other populations outside of Southland likely. There was also a broad range of ages, size of organisations, levels of management, and years of service represented and although I cannot presume to represent all in my constituent group it is anticipated that the study's findings will add to the knowledge base of this important topic.

Summary

In this chapter we have looked at the paradigms and methods used and their relevance to this study. The main theme has been the connection between the different ways of knowing and assumptions about knowledge. These have been linked to the positioning of the researcher and the methods chosen. What is woven amongst these is an interpretive/constructivist view that events can be explained and their meaning for people uncovered through empathic conversation emphasising there are multiple truths and ways of knowing (D'Cruz & Jones, 2004). Put simply, the many and varied 'stories' of this study add to the richness of understanding for the multi-faceted topic of job satisfaction, job dissatisfaction and retention.

Chapter Four: Management Pathways, Training, Role Interpretation and Perceived Success Factors

“One management scholar, Mary Parker Follett, described management as “the art of getting things done through people”...managers give direction to their organizations, provide leadership, and decide how to use organizational resources to accomplish goals...in an effective and efficient manner through planning, organizing, leading and controlling organizational resources” (Daft & Marcic, 2001, p. 5).

Introduction

As Mary Follett reminds us managers fulfil a vital role within the organisations they choose to tender their talents. In the transaction they are indicating they possess the necessary skills to attain the organisation’s goals for service delivery. It seems fitting therefore to begin this study with the exploration of narratives discussing how people come to be managers, what they view as their roles, and how they view success in those roles.

In this chapter I will explore the contextual factors in the pathway towards the career of manager developing an understanding of what draws this group of people to the position. As this study will indicate, only a small number of respondents chose management as an initial career path, many in fact finding themselves in management due to opportunity. The challenges both obstructive and beneficial that go along with progression and opportunity are therefore elaborated on. This will assist to see if there is disconnect between career aspirations and job satisfaction resulting in disengagement. I will comment on training to further hone skills either before or after the commencement of their position. This aids understanding of whether any lack of management training is a contributing factor relating to turnover, particularly as it may result in feelings of inadequacy in leadership skills or competency to achieve organizational goals.

The Chapter will also focus on the uncertainty expressed by respondents' over their role. The factors perceived by respondents as leading to success as a manager will be explored to understand how prepared and confident they feel about their ability to address the challenges of human service work and working with subordinates. The final section explores whether the respondents describe their role and success factors as valued by others and discusses whether concepts of recognition and acknowledgement impact on retention. As this thesis will indicate respondents decision on staying or going may be located somewhere between understanding about and feeling valued in their role and perceptions of the current direction of the NGO sector.

Respondent demographics

Fifteen people were interviewed, thirteen female and two male; ages ranged from 30-70 with six being aged 50-60; they had worked in the NGO sector from 3-20+ years with six having worked 5-10 years; they had been a manager for 3-20+ years with seven working 5-10 years; they had been in their current positions from 1-20+ years with seven being in their current positions for 5-10 years; they oversaw from 5-40+ staff with the largest distribution between 8-20 staff; seven managed a regional service, seven were team leaders or service coordinators, and one was a line manager.

It is also useful to this study at this point to briefly explore the background professional qualifications of the respondents: Social Work 10, Mental Health Diploma 2, Health Sciences 1 and no professional qualifications 2. One respondent makes an interesting personal observation of the professional makeup of her management peers saying "my own experience is that social work people have got into the management position...where there has been managers brought in from other areas...I have often wondered how that affects the focus of the work and the client". This point and the background professions of this group of respondents remain salient throughout the study.

Pathways into management

This study identifies respondents' pathways into management to begin to develop an understanding of the context to their decisions. Only two of the fifteen respondents indicate that when they began their careers they had identified that they would pursue management goals. Others indicate an opportunity presented itself or it was a natural progression, someone else recognised qualities in them prompting application, they thought they could do better than what was being done, or they grew up with a management influence in the family. These will be explored further in the following accounts.

Chance or progression

Literature suggests that the attainment to management position is often viewed as job progression that is a natural step up the 'rung' of the employment ladder. Some of the respondents explain that opportunities presented themselves, sometimes at a time of re-structure or vacancy left by a previous manager and offered a stepping stone and career opportunity that might otherwise have been overlooked:

Jan: When they started to do a restructure... that was the opportunity to have two coordinators in our branch... that was probably the stepping stone to where I am now.

Theresa: I really have worked in social services all my working life and there probably has been a natural progression to that. I had an interest I suppose as a senior practitioner in management and the opportunity arose within the agency, basically...

Four respondents viewed their management employment as a chance happening or as a natural progression adding that it was accidental or they were in the right place at the right time and not where they saw themselves at the beginning of their careers; providing the notion that progression was not attributed to their own qualities:

Debbie: In the first place I was working under somebody else and that person left so I was left carrying the baby I suppose you could say and so it was accidentally falling into that position for a start off. They decided that there was no reason to get somebody else because I was doing the job perfectly okay so that is how it started.

Vivian: I think I arrived there by good luck. I never attributed anything to my own skills or my own development; I have been in the right place at the right time.

Recognition by others

Recognition is an intrinsic motivator in which people feel satisfied when others recognise and appreciate their talents and accomplishments and respondents identified they would be willing to try new ventures because of it. Following on from the notion that respondents were not promoting their own competencies five other respondents identified that their management progression was because others recognised qualities in them. It is important to identify that this fits with the New Zealand cultural script that allows people to state they have skills and qualities without having to say that it is their own view. The fear for many New Zealanders' is 'the tall poppy syndrome' and that someone will 'cut them down to size' if they aspire to a perceived status role. Respondents explain that someone approached them, they were put in charge of a department, or someone suggested they apply – all taking the focus off the individual and planting this external to them:

Mathew: Not really, I never thought I would be a manager; my interest is working directly with a client not as a manager kind of thing. I don't know, but wherever I have gone and wherever I have worked I have been in charge of some department, so I don't know maybe the people who interviewed me thought I might have had some managerial skills in me.

Rachel: My supervisor/ team leader/ manager was called a 'Senior Social Worker' he was leaving and just asked me whether I would be interested in taking

his position. I said that I didn't feel that I had the experience or knowledge. He said that I did, he felt that he had confidence in me to be able to do it. That gave me the impetus to do it.

Vivian: The corporate services manager at that time must have seen potential in me and they decided to train me, so they trained me in the management of corporate services... they trained me up unbelievably well and gave me incredible skills. I went to some good training along the way as well. But it had never been; I never had a dream to be a manager. I hadn't seen myself in that way.

I could do better

Management amongst other things is the attainment of organizational goals through other people through planning, organizing, controlling and leading. Three respondents indicate their management pathway was as a direct result of seeing a gap in the performance of another. Again, attainment is represented in terms of an opportunity presenting itself, moving into a role and remaining in it or a spur of the moment thought, it is not attributed to desiring a status role or identifying qualities within oneself:

Marjorie: Well it was accidental really, the previous manager to me wasn't really doing that well and I had requested a change of hours... The person who had been doing my role put their notice in and [names regional manager] said would you fill in for a bit not really knowing me but just thinking it would be a way to fill my hours and I said yes.

Carol: I could see that there could be some positive changes to be made but when you are just a staff member sometimes you don't have that influence so I guess, then I thought I needed to be in a position where I could make some changes...I guess it is just through working and I could see well if I was in charge I would have done this and this and so when it came the opportunity.

Sam: It was actually not something that was even on my radar... I don't know, something clicked and I just walked into the boss's office and said that I wanted to apply and could I have a pack; and it just went from there. But in my head I wasn't actually at that point yet, it just happened, so I applied and was successful...I could do that better I think... it was a spur of the moment thing that actually panned out really good.

Family influence

Whether the skills, competencies and qualities needed to be an effective manager are part of who we are as a person or whether they can be learned was not explored in this research however two respondents attribute their pathways to family influence and living in an environment of management practice of efficiency, accuracy and leading others:

Jan: I guess that in my case even if I go back to my own father who was a manager. I grew up in that environment of dotting the i's and crossing the t's and some of that has rubbed off on me. So some of it is environment and around your family connections that do flow over into a work environment as well.

Kate: I have always, right from as long as I can remember; my Dad was a manager and I grew up watching him not just in his manager's role but in his personal life helping people, he always helped people that was his thing ... from a personal side it sort of influenced my other side.

Challenges faced by progression: Re-thinking professional competencies

Thirteen respondents articulated that they had not made a definitive decision about management pathways early in their careers and having found themselves in a new role emphasized that progression or evolution up the management ladder required some re-thinking. Participants explained how they felt difficulty leaving behind some of the skills and favoured activities and professional competencies they had trained for in favour of the new role competencies and often still preferred working with clients:

Jan: I have filled in a few times over the years as an acting manager but my preference is still to be working face to face [with clients.]

Some respondents who came from a professional qualification focusing on working with clients face to face mentioned an initial period of grieving for this loss of client contact noting that they transferred this onto supervising staff and the teams they worked in:

Rachel: A practitioner is what I wanted to be definitely. I wasn't interested in a career path or anything - that was not my thing. I just wanted to do social work that was what I wanted to do. I guess for a wee while I probably, well I wouldn't [quite] say grieved for the loss of client contact...I was fortunate that I was co-working to a degree with new social workers so I was probably getting that social work content that contact that fulfilled my need for client contact by the coaching and teaching role. I guess my love for teaching social workers sort of took over then and that became my fulfilment.

Increased challenge as a draw factor

The scope of the job gets bigger as you move through progression and there is a change of skills needed. Management requires skills for motivating and influencing people, making decisions, and seeking, receiving, and forwarding information. People are motivated when working towards personally meaningful goals with a level of difficulty and challenge. Respondents acknowledged how exciting it was to have the opportunity to be a bigger part of a team growing the service and themselves with frequent reference to the exciting challenges presented:

Genna: The opportunity came up here for a part-time job four hours a day and I thought that it could be quite exciting and another challenge...so it was an opportunity to be part of a team and to have a little more challenging position.

Steff: I had a really good cruisey job...and I loved it...then they started sending me some [challenging stuff] and it didn't faze me...then the coordinators job came up here... and yeah it has just grown from there.

Kate: I love the Sector I love the social policy stuff I love the challenge in that. I guess that it is the challenges and again fighting for the little people and knowing what works and what doesn't work.

Training before and after management employment

The lack of research around management pathways and the above responses pose interesting questions for the recruitment and retention process but also have significant interest for and impact on training. It can be supposed that because a large number of the respondents were not considering management pathways at the time of professional training they were not absorbing any information on management skills presented in their qualification programmes. Leadership development programmes often encompass education on: defining management, understanding the environment, organizing and planning, identifying your leadership strengths and style; decision making and communication, understanding and managing effective workplace relationships; developing team effectiveness; and understanding change and development (George & Jones, 2006; NZIM, 2008).

Having explored that managers are often drawn unexpectedly into their positions, this chapter will focus on discovering how thirteen of the fifteen respondents who had no management training before commencing their positions honed their skills. It will be revealed that they draw on the knowledge of their professional backgrounds, model themselves on those they wish to emulate, and seek out courses to supplement learning.

Training before management position

Training offers the opportunity to gain knowledge of management and leaderships skills and competencies in order to lead a team to achieve an organisation's goals. Only two respondents had management training before entering management positions, one

through NZIM (New Zealand Institute of Management) and another through an internal company process. When asked how the other respondents came to hone their skills seven acknowledged that they learnt on the job picking up skills along the way through ‘lower level’ management work:

Steffie: No not when I started, no way, none. Scary eh, none, it was learn on the job; now it's different they have a lot of in-house training. They have got some really good training for everybody now.

Theresa: I was a team leader prior to applying for the manager's position so that is that kind of lower level of management type work, so that was a bit of a training ground. But I have not done any specific management training; no it has been more on the job and some workshops around HR issues.

Participants also suggest that training is a new innovation, one respondent suggested they had another dimension for effective management, the personality traits needed for the position:

Sam: There was no sort of, you didn't have to be formally trained [when this respondent began in the NGO Sector] and you didn't have to do any university papers it was just if you had a nice way about you or you were a kind person or you wanted to help well then that was where you kind of ended up.

Drawing on the knowledge of their professional background

Many recognised that they frequently drew on the knowledge and values associated with their professional background or specialist field typically emphasizing understanding human behaviour and demonstrating what is commonly referred to as people skills.

These responses are indicative of the answers to the question “how did you know how to be successful in this role; did you have management training”:

Lisa: I think there is personality and social work training...I am just thinking that a lot of my practice comes from what I learnt as a social worker and it comes through. So the reflection and all that stuff certainly didn't come from any management training, it came from social work training. It may have been enhanced by some of the management training but a lot of your people skills are certainly not in your management training.

Michelle: I found my training [qualification] has helped me be the coordinator I am, it has helped me to not only work alongside staff, families, children and the community, it has also helped me to develop resources and create forms and acknowledge when things aren't necessarily right and look outside that box I suppose.

Role models

For many people over their working lives they experience managers who have brought the best out of them - three respondents indicated that they use the template of a past role model to emulate and inform their management practice. They reflect on qualities such as wanting the best for others, finding win/win solutions, acknowledging and thanking others for doing a good job, collaborating with staff and valuing their input, achieving valuable outcomes in the organisation, and developing strong teams:

Carol: Yes I admired her I think and I just tried to model myself on the way she delivered things and thought about it, always wanting the best for everybody and she always liked to have a win/win situation.... And often even now I might find myself in a situation and I'll think how would [names person] cope with this.

Genna: I guess I can identify really good managers I have had in the past, and not so good ones so I guess you tend to model your behaviour and strategies around who you perceived as being a good manager – and what they have achieved within an organisation and have had really strong teams. That is important.

Training for those since taking up their positions

Most respondents had a professional qualification informing their practice in the area of human relationships and behaviour. It is therefore understandable that they appear to understand the staff or Human Resource component of the role. Respondents acknowledge how understanding people impacts on their feeling of proficiency however comments reflect that they appear inadequately prepared to understand and negotiate their organisational terrain. Many comment that they have sought training outside of their professional background qualifications to further understand human resource components and to develop understanding of organisational skills such as documentation, risk management, administration processes, and organisational structure:

Bill: Since I've been here I have had some opportunities [for management training] like through NZIM and also through Otago University. I've done some human relationship training as well. The organisation itself has provided training on human relationship type processes – how to manage people in the best possible way. So there is a lot of support as far as that sort of area is concerned but I trained as a social worker – basically – and that is where I stand... I don't understand a lot of the administration processes at all and it's all quite steep learning as far as that is concerned.

Carol: I have a certificate in management but a lot of it I have just picked up and it has been my values and beliefs that really I have applied... it [training] just reinforced some of the stuff I was doing but it does, you know, probably clarified some of the actual structure part.

The conclusion drawn from this research is that training was seldom completed before management positions were entered, but respondents identified earlier roles, their professional backgrounds, in-service training and role models as important sources of management expertise.

The role of a manager

Having briefly explored the subject of training attention now moves towards how respondents define their role. In this section rich narratives emerge beginning with the need to clarify title names underlining uncertainty in the name 'manager'; the acknowledgement of this as a unique role; and the divergence between what is described as existing practices versus emergent managerialist philosophies unfamiliar to many respondents.

Clarification of title names

One of the emergent discourses was the need to clarify what the title 'manager' inferred and then again equally what tasks were assigned to that. This difficulty presented itself at the inception of my study when clarifying who was to be interviewed. In this case all of the terms currently in circulation were used including: service manager/supervisor/coordinator/team leader/ and line manager however this did not alleviate uncertainty. The need for clarification often began when respondents were contacted to confirm an interview time or at the beginning of the interview and continued through the interview. There appeared a need to differentiate between being a leader and being 'labelled' as a manager. The following comment was customary as was assuring me that respondents didn't think of themselves being in management:

Bill: Do you call a Team Leader a manager? I have just recently had my role changed from Team Leader to Service Manager with the same job description.

Debbie: I had taken over managing the service but it wasn't called a manager...I quite enjoyed the managing but I didn't really think of myself as a manager at that stage.

Leading, equipping and building teams for responsive service provision

Being a manager encompasses working with people to bring out their strengths and communicating and working as part of a team to achieve goals. One of the functions of a manager is to create shared vision and direction for employees to support and believe in.

Respondents acknowledged that management was a unique role with many specific competencies and skills and tasks to be achieved:

Vivian: Well I have always viewed that management is about leading, coordinating, organising, and engaging or valuing staff to get key performance and leading in terms of direction, setting the pace or way that we are going, the direction, setting that coordinating all of the work that needs to move you in that direction, being really clear, and engaging with staff, those kind of areas then lead you to be able to be responsive to what your goal is and what you are attempting to achieve. So if that is your service delivery or whether it is an internal focus around the administration teams I need to support staff in order for them to be able to do their work.

Many comments focused on one of the principal roles of being in charge of a team and the team being able to accomplish something significant, with being responsive to service users at the heart:

Debbie: it is the building the team together, it is the satisfaction of seeing the team working really well together, so it is like a power thing but it is not a power thing. It is having all those people running a smooth machine and being able to do that and keep it all together.

Respondents frequently comment that they sought to employ good calibre staff to provide a smooth running team in which they knew their team strengths and weaknesses:

Mathew: I think a successful manager is a person who knows their team well who knows the members very well; they have to know the positive and negatives of each staff... So I think a successful manager is a person who knows the team well and knows how human behaviour works in a team.

Managers saw themselves as teachers providing tools, equipping others and leading by example with one participant commenting that a manager needed to be comfortable within themselves to be okay to take the reins. Many reported that teams and clients came first and they wouldn't ask staff to do what they weren't prepared to do themselves, feeling empathy for staff who frequently worked in isolation and being prepared to work alongside them being flexible in working hours. This is the unique component of their role that they not only sit in an office but they are involved with clients and the community:

Sam: On my team we are having some issues because sometimes we come across some really dangerous people, or just unpredictable – and I would jump at it to go out with them. I will go with them or if there were any really sticky situations, I mean I wouldn't expect my team to do anything that I wouldn't do.

Others commented on the component of their role which necessitated them being seen as approachable and open to discussions and that this might involve those above or below them addressing challenges and difficulties. The impact of the role was that their scope of practice became broader contributing to feelings of responsibility, variety and autonomy. This is discussed further in the chapter on job satisfaction.

Conflict between existing practices and emergent managerialist roles

Respondents also acknowledge that part of their role is to provide accountability, transparency, and evidence of outcomes. Some acknowledge weakness in the area of completing paperwork and whilst recognising the importance of it many assert it was not one of the things they enjoyed or felt was most important:

Jan: And it's the stats like reporting back, or it could be audit but that's only one form of being a successful manager. That's just what's done on paper. To me what I think is important is the relationship that you have with people, regardless of whether it is staff or a client.

Debbie: I have to get things done right and you have got to be accountable. I have never been very good at paperwork it is my real weakness, real weakness. And so I'm having to make sure that I write stuff down and have track of it... and it is so important because if it is not written down then how do you prove that it has happened. And so that is something that I am having to really stretch myself on. It is probably about the hardest thing about managing for me is that paper trail.

Respondents had a good understanding of social service work and their sector goals however many suggested that they were not aware of or conversant on the more specific business type managerial skills with some purposefully trying to develop these to provide a more comprehensive skill base. Some conflict appeared to emerge in the narratives between specialist or professional roles and managerialist roles. Discourse placed emphasis on relationship, rapport, and growth compartmentalizing management into two camps that of managing people as a way of evidencing outcomes, and the increasing statistical reporting, paperwork, audits and accountability system:

Rachel: I know that I have to work within a budget and I know that I have to fill in all this data and record all that, and I think I do it well but I don't particularly have great satisfaction providing that because I know that what I do is competent and I know that this agency or any agency or family is getting worth from what I do, so I have the confidence in what I provide and my work or what I supervise my workers to do. So I don't have an issue with any of that. I guess for me I resist having to qualify that or quantify it ... I think a person is who they are and should be respected, but I appreciate that we are not like that. Life's not like that and there are people in the industry who don't provide a good service and so why should Government be giving out contracts when they are not coming up with the goods and providing the service. So I understand all that but from my point of view from the value base that I come from. My focus is on providing that service...that is the key for me – to always be able to focus on the client's needs.

Those skills and those values don't easily transfer into the business model of management.

Perhaps some of the initial uncertainty and need to clarify title names mirrors a current change in the NGO Sector where the language surrounding the title manager is changing from a description of grassroots support for staff achieving service delivery towards generic management knowledge and practices. It could be postulated that respondent's vacillation might be due to a philosophical divergence in which the changing ambitions of the organisation are not always compatible with the demands and needs of their clients. Moreover the nature of social service work is less definable when clients are people with social outcomes and not easily transferred into market speak of unitary calculable and quantifiable units:

Lisa: The supervisor is perhaps not necessarily so KPI driven it's more about getting the best out of the people that you supervise so you're doing lots of that reflective stuff and responsive stuff whereas perhaps a strict manager and not in an NGO is going to be much more I have 20,000 cans out the door or something...it's a bit more fluffy, it's not quite so clearly defined and yet we probably do have some outcome driven response in terms of meeting a budget and in terms of audit requirements met.

Factors perceived as defining a successful manager

In business, success is the distinction between inputs and outputs, efficiency and value, and profit and loss sheets. This is rarely the case in the NGO sector as the overall mission of the organisation is more than making money. So how is success measured for the manager of a social organisation who most often has to rely on people who are underpaid, have few professional qualifications, and can put their own needs aside to meet those of an often marginalised or stigmatised population? This section explores the factors managers define as successful. Success is significant because it not only provides affirmation for the individual it also supplies direction and stimulates creativity and confidence for future planning.

Tall poppy syndrome and ambiguity

To add to the richness of the meaning given by respondents they were asked how they define being a successful manager. Surprisingly nearly half of respondents expressed perplexity over being asked to define their success and were tentative and reluctant to suggest that they were successful. The New Zealand NGO manager continues to be somewhat reticent to assert their capabilities preferring instead to leave that to the dialogue and affirmation of others:

Jan: I don't know, I guess for me I'm not one to sing my own praises so I am finding that question very difficult to answer. I would prefer you to go out there and talk to the other staff.

Responses typically embody humour which is an acceptable “kiwi” mechanism when embarrassed or put on the spot. However beneath the humour and modesty also lay an uncertainty about whether their work could be viewed as successful if using outcomes and finished workloads was utilized to determine attainment:

Sam: No complaints - well I don't know actually.

Lisa: That you survived the day at least that's how it feels. I don't believe it's just this place after talking to other people out there I don't believe that managers ever finish their workload. I think there are deadlines we have to meet, that you do, but there is a whole lot of other stuff that sits, that just keeps moving around...I wonder if you would get a different response... if you went into some of the statutory or perhaps some of the more structured management, like Fonterra or something, it would be very clear what a successful manager is because they would come under deadlines, they would come under budget, they would have all their KPI's lined up their ducks would be in a row – it would be lovely.

How did the respondents define success?

When pressed for more specifics on how they would know if they were successful the themes of team and service provision emerge. I venture that the reliance on others to determine success does not just have its roots in modesty but this is where the context for which the NGO social service manager lies – in relationships:

Rachel: From my point of view, my measure of success is my workers. If I feel that if they are contented and that I can have a relationship with them that they feel supported and that they feel they can work to the best of their ability, then I am a successful manager, that's how I see it.

This group of people is courageous enough to let their work speak for itself and did not suggest that staff appraisals, outcomes reporting, strategic direction or other forms of paperwork would be the source of this. Respondents typically indicate that being a good advocate for clients and staff; being organised and able to prioritise workloads; involving, empowering and bringing the potential out in others; demonstrating empathy; and being a trustworthy person were all demarcations of success. Being able to motivate a team and then promote an environment to achieve organisational goals was viewed as success:

Bill: I think to be a successful manager you have to be able to engage with your staff and the team – and have a team focus and team direction. You let them get on with what they want to do. I believe you can't get too involved with what they are doing unless they are doing something completely wrong. They need to learn by their own mistakes and to be supported and to be able to feel like they have some sort of ownership with what they are doing but also part of the team and the group of people doing things as well.

The relationship with staff that is referred to and fostered is not just viewed as beneficial and conducive to a supportive environment it is also strategic to being responsive to service users and a tool for transparency and learning:

Genna: If I have a wee niggle about something and I need to discuss this or this could blow up then there would be dialogue around that. We have that relationship now that if they are unsure about something or not feeling too good about something they will pick up the phone and talk to me and we will go through a process of “where will we go from here, what do you think”.

One respondent cautions against the measure of relationships in the workplace as the sole indicator of success suggesting that a peaceful smooth running workplace can have external impacts not able to be mitigated by a manager, such as staff clashing with others:

Kate: It is building up relationships...some say you could judge it [success] by how happy a place is, well you can't do that because at times no matter how good a manager you are you will strike somebody that comes onto your staff that may be a little different from everybody else and personalities can clash.

Once pressed to define success respondents typically locate this within the themes of relationship, team and service provision. Particularly they specify advocacy, prioritizing and empowering skills, and also being viewed as supportive and trustworthy as essential. Respondents often use their two main roles of team performance and responsive service provision as measures to evaluate whether they are successful in their role. Given that many of the respondents had backgrounds in social work we might expect these managers to place more emphasis on leadership and motivation of employees toward service delivery objectives to quantify achievement.

Are success factors perceived as valued by others?

Recognition can be a powerful motivator. For some respondents this was the catalyst propelling them toward management positions. Even more significantly “the extent to which employees feel that their contributions are valued by their employing organisations and that their employers care for their wellbeing is inversely related to turnover. Perceived organisational support mediates any observed impact of supervisory behaviour related to employee wellbeing”(Boxall, et al., 2003, p. 197).

Following are reports from respondents relating to whether they know they are appreciated for their accomplishments of the perceived two main roles of team performance and responsive service provision (access, equity, participation, bringing out potential and empowerment). Generally managers indicate they are certain that leadership to staff and service to clients is valued as evidenced by smooth running services attaining organisational goals, honest and constructive feedback and positive work relationships:

Sam: But I do think that I tend to have success within my team. Like I guess I feel that they trust me and I trust them. I find that they are probably bringing things to me that they may not take to other team leaders.

On the other hand respondents were less certain that superiors valued their efforts, postulating that remaining employed after restructuring, unhindered access to superiors and receiving the odd smile and affirming email conveyed value. What is demonstrated when respondent's opinion is sought and their attributes recognised is respect. This is an essential feature to feeling valued and more esteemed to respondents as self-managers than empty praise:

Bill: Well currently I am still here and I wasn't chewed in the restructuring so maybe that says something...and part of that with the whole of the restructuring if I wanted to talk to the CEO ... all I had to do was text and all of a sudden I would get a phone call. So there was never any hesitation or delay and always there's been a sense that there was a level of respect.

Debbie: It is important to them [superiors] that they are successful. They look at success as the way people comment and about the service itself keeping on an even keel. When we get busy they see it as success and for some reason they will credit it to me, which isn't entirely right it should be the whole team... whenever things are going good you get the smiles from the upper team and the senior managers. And the odd nice word thrown in which kind of takes you by surprise

because you don't expect it, but every so often it comes and you think, okay I must be doing something right.

In response to whether respondents felt valued for their contributions this was again determined in light of relationships. Staff and clients were viewed as affirming however it seems concerning that this group of respondents could not readily identify their supervisory relationships as positive and supportive.

Summary

This study demonstrates that the pathway into management was usually via specialist work as part of progression, when an opportunity arose or because others recognised qualities but was not often a decision at the time of qualifications for their profession. It was not the intention of this study to only interview those with a social work specialist/professional background but it is probable that their human relationship expertise attracts them to the nature of the role seeming to make them the most appropriate person to manage “others”. Progression necessitated re-thinking of some of their preferred activities but the NGO sector’s need for strong leadership can be found amongst this group of people. This can be evidenced from their descriptions of success with their people-centred values, ability to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of staff and services, develop staff competencies, and direct service outcomes with the two main themes emerging as development of team and comprehensive service provision.

Given respondents’ backgrounds they appeared prepared and confident about their ability to address the challenges of human resources in human service work, however successful management involves a skill set that is quite extensive and complex. This study reveals many respondents have sometimes received formal management training, but most times they have not. Many of these participants were fortunate to have good role models with which to map and guide their management aptitudes. However in many instances they were expected to know what to do with very little training, support and encouraging feedback.

Additionally it seems likely that respondents' need to clarify title names signals unease about the gradual shift towards more managerialist competencies. Given the recent changes towards favouring managerialist competencies it would seem crucial for managers to develop understanding of the latest thinking in order to navigate changes and articulate direction for their sector. A question is raised as to whether more favour will be shown to employees with formal management and economic qualifications in the future who are "overseeing complex financial arrangements, marketing, risk management and human resource management" (Healy, 2002, p. 529). In support of Wimpfheimer's (2004) findings, it remains essential that managers challenge themselves to fill their gaps in knowledge or it is likely that over a long term when coupled with changes in reporting and accountability requirements managers in social services work may feel some sense of inadequacy resulting in termination of employment.

On a final note, the fact that the question on success and knowing if a respondent was successful triggered a need to analyse and scrutinise subordinate relationships and could not be readily identify either by oral or written means from superiors is concerning. Value was again determined and viewed in terms of relationship, this emerges as pivotal to understanding the social service manager. If recognition and acknowledgement play such a prominent part in job satisfaction and therefore retention it appears that employing agencies have room for improvement and alternatively opportunity for significant impact for their contributions.

Chapter Five: Sector Choice, Comparisons, Current Changes

Introduction

Having shed some light in the previous chapter on pathways into management, and respondents' descriptions and perceptions of success we turn now to explore the choice of Sector. This chapter focuses on why respondents chose to work in or remain in the NGO sector and what they perceive as the current changes. This provides further understanding of the motivators which impact on decisions around retention.

Half of the people interviewed said that they specifically chose the NGO sector to work in. The other half were unaware of the NGO sector or simply responding to a job opportunity. When asked, all fifteen respondents said they would remain in the sector even if they hadn't originally chosen it although this is contradicted by four respondents later in the interview - perhaps due to trust being built in order to reveal this.

The chapter begins with an exploration of the reasons for choosing this sector. The reasons are: a perceived philosophical base being value-driven and people-centred; an ideological climate in which respect for the client is central; to escape red tape and bureaucracy; and work-life balance. Various services overlap with the state, public and private sector so respondents' reasons for choosing the NGO sector will be further explored. This will highlight that offering choice, flexibility, creativity, autonomy, advocacy, fighting against disadvantage, meeting grassroots needs, belonging and pride in the sectors' unique independence and escaping the red tape and bureaucracy perceived in other sectors as central to this decision.

Current changes in the NGO sector were noted by managers and so the middle section begins by exploring the changes: reporting, auditing and accountability; increased scrutiny; funding concerns with no more 'fat' in the sector; a change of focus and losing flavour; and moves to regionalize organisations with a focus on a business model. Four respondents said they were considering leaving the sector with the rationale given being low pay, change towards a standardized or one size fits all approach and a move towards

a business model. These will be discussed in the final section as it appears from responses that in the main managers are not moving towards something when they terminate employment as much as moving away from recent NGO sector changes and a decrease in independence and autonomy impacted on by those organisations which respond to Government funding to provide certain services.

Choosing to work in the NGO sector

Half of those interviewed commented that they chose the NGO sector within which to tender their skills. This section explores their value-laden narratives describing the sector standing up for the marginalised and opposing a one size fits all approach. Managers chose to respond to local and individual need and revelled in belonging to an independently thinking body. They discuss adapting to their current work environment, identifying and filling gaps in service delivery and modifying rules and policies to accommodate need. Comments were also made about enjoyment of working with like minded people who believe in achieving results for families and finding alternative solutions, finding a sense of belonging and pride in their sector's unique points of difference: people, beliefs and values held. Thus, this section outlines the major 'pull' factors of the sector, including self-determination and empowerment, the client as central, flexibility, creativity, autonomy, advocacy, and meeting grassroots need.

The sector offers choice

Ultimately managers wish to make a difference in the lives of the people they work with. They particularly value working within a climate that regards choice as essential on the part of the client, empowering people to make life long changes to challenges that face them. Choice is significant to this group of respondents believing it to be the catalyst to a positive working relationship yielding significant constructive results to difficult life challenges and producing ongoing ripples impacting on other individuals and family members towards effectively managing the next challenge:

Rachel: I think that's why families come to NGOs it is that they want change or assistance or help in some way and you are more able to have a positive result if

they have approached you and are happy working with you. But if the NGO Social Worker goes into a family and says, I am here because [whatever reason] and they say well I don't really want to see you, well you've got no right to be there. And that is the reality. You know that this is the individual person's right to engage with who they want to.

Michelle: It is about those long lasting changes as well, and I believe that we may only be working with one individual but it is that domino effect... and I understand that people put their blinkers on and can only see that one person but I can see that ripple effect that it has. If we can teach a young person appropriate ways of managing their feelings and dealing with situations then there is a lot of other kids or people that may not get hurt in the process. Then they have got that ripple effect, it is that each individual counts, they matter and they matter now and also what they do impacts the future. It is just really important.

The client is central

One manager highlights the client as central by contrasting Government and NGO sector responses to individuals based on their felt needs asserting this as the reason for commitment to the NGO sector. This respondent also alludes to the role of funding and meeting criteria which is tightly intertwined and which will be discussed further in this section:

Rachel: In Statutory your funding came and the accountability, KPI's and all that type of thing that was the focus. The NGO wasn't like that, in the NGO it was back to the work the focus was the client and the needs of the client. So that for me is the key, if an NGO can function like that and have the client and money – the funding being available somewhere there in the background from a grant type situation and you can just get out there and work for the client. That is brilliant.

Flexibility and creativity is offered

Although organisational procedures provide guidelines and specifications for service delivery there is an understanding that these are also negotiable and adaptable to individuals. Managers recognize that client situations are too complex to be dealt with entirely according to rules and procedures. Respondents appear to view flexibility and creativity as a means to offer a client-centred approach that takes into account individual wants and needs within the safety of organisation protocol and a relatively transparent decision making process. Managers currently have considerable discretion in carrying out their work. They reflect on an ability to provide a unique approach engaging with those seeking assistance meeting them with freedom and innovation and ability to develop practice encompassed in and appreciating the culture of the individual. This is contrasted with prescribed or standardised processes:

Mathew: I think when you are working in a Government organisation or a DHB there are strict rules and regulations...but in an NGO you have got rules and regulations [but] it is easy to talk with your line manager and see what is suitable; and you can make new rules and regulations. But I think when you are in DHB's and the Government services I think it will be more difficult, you may see something new that has to be done but it may take one or two years to get approval from the CEO but in an NGO because it is small with limited numbers it is easy to get approval and change it ...NGO's can work pretty fast to change rules and regulations.

Carol: I think NGO's have the chance or opportunity to change things the way that they want to get the best done and I think that you think on your feet. You have a very minimum amount of money and you are very creative with what you do with it...even the hours I am totally flexible in because families don't have problems between eight and five.

Jan: We've got that ability to be there for families and to work in quite a different way and it is not pushed into that box, it's not prescribed and I guess that's one of the differences.

Fighting against disadvantage

Non-profit organisations often find their resources are thinly spread to meet the key imperatives shaping the NGO sector which are equity, access, fairness, autonomy and participation. Local knowledge and local networks culminate in achieving local results and there is satisfaction in guarding the rights of children, elderly, the marginalised and the poor. Respondents have an eagerness to eradicate or eliminate social injustice and address the widening gap between those that have and those that do not.

Lisa: I have said to [colleague named] a few times there are areas and things bubbling out the background that I don't agree with so I think I will stay for the fight – because of the clients. There are people we work with who aren't able or don't have anyone else to support them. There are decisions perhaps that are made that will disadvantage them and so I go "I don't agree with that" so maybe I will just hang around for a bit longer because it is going to be very easy to put in someone who will agree.

Managers are in a unique position to listen to the struggles of individuals and families to access services or to have opportunities to live a 'normal life'. When managers identify decisions causing increased disadvantage they will take up a cause recognising that they can exercise their influence to pressure for change. This is done within the context of advocating for just one person at a time if needed, to collectively engage with other organisations or confront social issues at Government level:

Genna: I identify and empathise with the struggle that some service users and families have had just to get some service. You listen to people and they have had a huge struggle. So if I can do a little bit to support a service user to achieve

something important to them in their life and independence and to live a normal life with the same ups and downs and consequences – a real life.

Vivian: You are working with a group of like minded people. Some of my stuff about this particular role is that it also fights for social justice at not only an individual level, but at a community level and a societal level. So it puts in those submissions at those levels and writes letters to organisations to get change, it advocates for people you know just one person at a time if it has to. And the whole organisation will be geared up to do that; you know your regional manager will take up that cause and so would your CEO if you needed to. I like that and this can only happen in the NGO sector.

The autonomy and independence to advocate

Problems are not always viewed as located within the individual's power to make change and due to the sectors' relative independence managers feel free to advocate for change at other levels of authority. Its ability to advocate for clients and respond specifically to local needs is provided in the independence of the NGO sector. Respondents articulate the capacity to be an independent body, and view it as a fundamental characteristic. They view it as worth protecting as it provides a means to stand in the gap against initiatives impacting on individual rights.

Vivian: In other places I worked they will lobby Government for changes that impact directly on them but I have never seen them lobby one size fits all...they probably seek the status quo not change. I still think that the NGO sector came from grass roots or gaps so their role around social justice is part of the NGO psyche almost.

Steffie: Do you know the good stuff about NGOs is that we are not bullied by the Government -and we are not. You know your funding you can't control but you know if they[the Government] put a directive out then actually the NGOs will advocate and will go to an avenue they want to...if they said okay everyone is

going back to the institutions now well could you imagine it, no, the NGOs would not let that happen. And that is good.

Any changes to funding that will detract from this ability to advocate are viewed suspiciously:

Vivian: The more that NGOs seek to be fully funded by funders we lose our leeway even further, I believe if we become fully funded by funders then we will even lose our leeway to advocate because you are advocating against the people that fund you. Currently I can say to any funder you know in a way well thank you very much but if I don't agree or things don't work then I am going to go into my unfunded role and I'm going to advocate for something different.

The ability to meet grassroots needs

The principle role of the manager is to interpret and achieve the aspirations of the organisations they work for. The NGO Sector emerged as needs were identified and is firmly embedded in communities. In order to operate effectively, connections and networks exist amongst the NGO sector and considerable community development knowledge and experience is held within these communities. Managers articulate that they meet issues, problems and social dilemmas head-on with a capacity to learn from encounters and develop further activities and initiatives to meet specific need. In the past, national organisations have had differing organisational imperatives in each region to meet the specific 'flavour' of their community. This is unique to the NGO sector and respondents endorse this principle regarding being linked to their community as crucial. Respondents suggest reciprocity to the relationship articulating a personal value in involvement in community with organisational community responsiveness; and may also be alluding to the considerable funding that is available in the community to organisations that are seen to be involved in these networks:

Rachel: I think for me, the basic coming back down to why am I here, why am I working for this Sector, it is really that I believe ultimately that I want to help

families here. Ultimately if I can go home and I feel that something I have done today has assisted a family in my community then that's wonderful.

Steffie: You can do more. I also think the community is more open to supporting you to achieve something when you are an NGO I really do.

Michelle: As an NGO and as an organisation within our community we should be involved as well. So it is that getting out there, being involved outside of those working hours.

Belonging and pride in the sector's unique points of difference

Managers consistently mention a commitment to working above and beyond what their organisation requires. This commitment does not originate from being paid for it but because of the people, values and belief that there is difference in the work being done in this sector of society.

Jan: I think you hear so often NGOs hourly rate is not as good as what it is in statutory organisations is well known. But if you talk to someone working in a statutory organisation who want to get out but the dollars keep them in their job. You cannot say working in an NGO that you are there for the money. You are there because of the people and the beliefs and the values that you believe in. And to me that is one of the differences.

These values are also echoed by this story of personal support representative of a sector that evidences these values returning them to its employees in times of need:

Jan: I had a health scare last year ...and I said I was prepared to hand in my resignation, but the Branch Manager said no you won't and all of the staff came around and took turns at picking me up every day and dropping me home. That's the stuff that I don't take for granted. What I do acknowledge is that if I worked somewhere else those systems may not have been in place. It is more hard-nosed.

I think the thing about this is that family does come first – within reason, the family and your own needs come first. That is something I truly value.

One respondent also articulated reciprocity to the relationship between employee and the sector in the area of professional growth and development:

Theresa: I worked two and a half years with [names Government organisation] and thought this was not for me. I saw lived out what a bureaucracy was really and didn't feel that as a professional there was a lot of growth for myself and for my practice and working with people.

One of the significant differences in values is working in collaborative ways looking at strengths as evidenced by local responses to local needs. This is due to the sector not being under the same legislation as Government colleagues with more freedom to think outside the square. This was specifically evidenced by these respondents saying that the employees were not different in the NGO sector but the difference was in the use of power. This is demonstrated in services not imposed as a one size fits all service:

Theresa: it is not because of the people that work in the NGO or work for Government it is not that but you have a different focus...but there is just a bit more freedom really...[services] have not been imposed by Government a significant number are what we identified as needs in our community and we responded to those needs and that is the freedom that we have.

Carol: There is no such thing as one size fits all. We know that the regions have their own ideas and their own culture and you have to adapt to that and they know their area best, they know what their needs are like I wouldn't dream of going and saying well you need this and you need that. I would sit down and say what would you as a region identify as the gaps that you need and where is the service going and where is the client need.

This respondent articulates what is at the very core of work done by the NGO sector, it is planned, it is not reactionary, it is demand driven, and its priority is people's need. This is contrasted with work they were involved in when in a Government organisation:

Bill: There was this it had to be done yesterday sort of thing, you had to jump to every demand of other people. It had to be done right now, meet KPI's and the traffic light demands of Government. Whereas here it's about putting a priority list in process and running with it as best you can. It is not a reactionary process it is a process that is planned, it's a process that is demand driven...the priority is around people's needs.

Further comparison and contrasting of sectors

Contrasts are inevitably made in an attempt to refute negative stereotypes and validate positions. This group of respondents were no exception typically focusing on the difference between the professionals working within each sector, bureaucratic requirements and the discourse around the need to make profits:

Mathew: I think if a professional is working in a Government organisation they think they have better qualities than a health professional working in an NGO...that is the feedback I am hearing. I am not sure if there are any differences, but work wise there is because in the hospital sector you work more one on one with the client and you are more responsible for each client, whereas in the NGO most professionals have a management job also, so I think there is a big difference.

Bill: Although this organisation has a large bureaucratic system behind it, they are not as imposing as the Government based one. The standards that the NGO organisation meets is what is requirement by law but the Government department is based on the MP's at the time and the Governments of the day change so dramatically. The NGO sector is affected but it isn't as dramatic, and a bit more relaxed than the high stress demand type situation.

Steff: I have worked in the profit sector and not for profit, not for profits are much easier. They really do care, it is not the money. Even though we do have to be running like a business we don't have to make that profit. So that's the difference.

Escaping red tape and bureaucracy

Many respondents perceived the Government sector as being bound by bureaucracies with processes and hierarchies of people responding as much to the processes as to their client base and unwieldy to change. The NGO sector is storied as being more responsive to meet local and individual need and managers speak of being able to think outside the square and not being tied into levels of reporting and accountability. Responsive service provision will also be elaborated in the next section of this chapter but typical responses for choice of sector often include reference to knowing colleagues in the Government sector who are restricted in their approach to and solutions for clients:

Jan: I have always worked in the NGO; I just find it more attractive for me. I just find that there not so much red tape as you get being in a statutory organisation. [Researcher: red tape?] I guess we don't have mandatory reporting. I think there is a lot of things we can do with our families that if you are in a statutory organisation the boundaries are defined quite differently, and you can go outside the square to find some solutions that otherwise might not be happening.

Michelle: I think just seeing and hearing and knowing people within the community that are in Government organisations that aren't necessarily happy that feel that they are bounded by particular processes and you know they see a need and they can't necessarily just go and deal with that because they have to do it this way. I am sure NGOs are like that to a point, don't get me wrong. But I think that it is different.

Carol: I think that staff have heard rumours about what it is like to work for a Government organisation...the control and that you do it this way and people

have great ideas but end up having to follow a way because this is the way we do it and so they get stagnated and even ones with great ideas end up just part of the bunch.

One respondent elaborates even further suggesting that managers in the Government sector are in a rut trapped by the money and not doing anything more than they have to:

Bill: I wouldn't go back there to be a manager, they have got themselves into a situation where they only do what they think they have to do, they don't do anything beyond what they think they have to do. They are quite structured and rigid about what they're doing and they don't cross the line or do anything more than they have to. They've got themselves into a rut situation, they have got into the money trap and to get out of their situation means to that fiscally they will be disadvantaged so they need to hang in there.

Work-life balance

Increasingly work–life balance is commented on in other studies and appears important to attain. Working extra hours was frequently commented on by respondents but work–life balance was not a major feature of discussions of those interviewed in this group or more specifically that the extra work hours impacted on retention decisions. It emerged in fact that it was believed that the NGO Sector did regularly expect managers to work more than 40 hours a week but the work-load was viewed as balanced:

Steffie: I think there is an expectation that you do more than your 40[hours per week]. The expectation is fifty plus sometimes.

Vivian: I was working so many hours I decided that maybe NGOs were able to be more responsive ...I did deliberately choose that knowing that they seemed to be more responsive and more balanced in how they worked and their workload.

Additionally there was status in being able to work above and beyond expectations. It appears this group of people is motivated towards the ideological climate of the sector viewing the workload as generally fair with their commitment to the sector not detracted from by work impinging on home hours:

Sam: The agency expected that you would do above and beyond. There would be no financial gain or anything like that or recompense. It has changed now hours are kept on time in lieu sheets, our agency particularly does; there is this sense of fairness if someone is doing more. It used to be about capacity, if you had the capacity to do something extra then you did it and actually in my mind that would give me more status because I was able to do that stuff and that would reinforce that actually I am okay at doing this and it is absolutely fine and I am doing it well whereas I am finding now that particularly some of our ground staff everything is about this fairness – they're not doing it so why should I - but I would have absolutely jumped in and said look I'll do it I don't mind and that is starting to disappear.

Therefore, the main factors identified for choice to work in or remain in the NGO sector are choice, the client as central, flexibility, creativity, autonomy, independence, fighting against disadvantage, meeting grassroots need, having work-life balance and escaping red tape and bureaucracy.

Current sector changes

Respondents' views describe the impact of market reforms on social service organisations which challenge their social justice value framework. Respondents repeatedly remarked on contrasts between sectors. Government contracts with social services were reported to focus primarily on financial, auditing and reporting requirements, finding that these were not always compatible with the demands and needs of their clients. The increasingly narrow focus of funding agreements created tension between different principles and practices increasingly finding that responsiveness was being eroded by standardisation. It was widely agreed that the new business model contributed to less scope for flexibility

causing negative change in client-centred work in an attempt to treat all clients according to rules and regulations. This section will discuss these issues further making specific reference to increased reporting, auditing and accountability; increased worry over funding changes; the recognised competition for personnel; and the negative views discussed around current moves to regionalize organisations.

Reporting, auditing and accountability

The non-profit sector is moving into a different era with efficiency and productivity the new catch-cry; respondents note that much of the change is generated by Government and affects client contact, creativity and perceptions of control. The NGO sector has received a clear message from Government Ministers that the world's ongoing financial stress puts all spending under review, meaning that reporting, auditing and accountability increase in order to provide evidence, verification and validation of effective management of services:

Theresa: There are changes, what I have seen over the years is that there is a higher compliance requirement and a higher degree of accountability. Money is tight and we are living in recession times and that is very noticeable on our contracting...it is quite clear though that there is a higher degree or a greater degree of compliance that we have.

Increased audit and accountability

Many of the NGO managers question whether the narrowing focus on outcomes is even auditable. In the new era of accountability effectiveness is monitored by endless auditing procedures and layers of accountability impacting on face to face contact:

Lisa: I think that it's changed over time. I think that when I first came there was a lot of difference...between the NGO and the Government in terms of reporting, but gradually as we have picked up more and more Government contracts our level of reporting has gone up and our audit requirements have gone up.

Sam: I think that because there is cuts here and cuts there that the NGO sector is being asked to do a heck of a lot more than what we should be doing really...We are the preventative agency we are trying to stop it from getting to that other stage but I think it would just be about time, just not having to have so many time frames and allow the creativity to come back into the role because that is kind of disappearing really fast. The focus has become more on the paperwork rather than the actual face to face contact with the people.

No funding for monitoring

However while the Government sector may fund the newly required accountability positions with regulators and experts, NGOs are not in the financial position to increase the hierarchal structures of control needed to govern and monitor nor are they in a position to attract the personnel with appropriate abilities and skills. Therefore managers continue to be responsible for an increasing level of paperwork diverting them from other tasks towards face to face contact with computers and substantial increase in workloads.

Vivian: With all the Government accountability there is no funding that allows you to do all of that, there is no extra positions created. I used to be fascinated when I worked in the Government sector and there would be new positions arise to manage this...we would be measuring health and safety so there would be a new health and safety officer. In Government new positions are created to manage new levels of accountability that in turn are required by their funder – there is no additional funding that ever goes with that, nothing, just layer after layer after layer.

Flow on to administration staff

Reporting changes have a flow on effect to administration of staff, with increasing employment law changes comes the need for increasing practice change on induction and training. This again requires a huge pull on resources to implement on an already overworked workforce but also leaves managers feeling pressure to make paperwork perfect whilst acknowledging that the business of managing people does not lend itself to

neat accountability processes. Managers feel increasingly like they are losing control of the focus of their work and the relaxed approach they used to take with their staff and clientele:

Bill: At the start it was [more relaxed] but I think now it's not, the demands on people like me and people who are in this position fluctuate quite dramatically. Sometimes it can be quite nice and you can actually have some control but after a while you lose control, you can lose control quite quickly...The demands at the moment have been quite a bit of employment law changes and the huge change and impact it has on this sort of organisation. Because now you have to do so much and provide such and such information and so much like their induction and the legalities of employment. That is very time consuming and takes huge effort on administration staff, and huge pull on resources, particularly financially.

Increased scrutiny, prosecution and perfectionism

Managers also reflect that increased reporting and accountability coupled with the increased complexity of cases amplified levels of responsibility and scrutiny. The result has been the need to get everything 'perfect':

Steff: In the NGO sector we are not health professionals, we do more than we should and we are covering ourselves. We think about sitting in a Coroner's Court thinking "have you done everything physically possible according to your policies and procedures and duty of care."

Debbie: It has started to change in the fact that the paperwork and everything else has to be absolutely spot on even more so that it used to be I think. We are about to go through a big audit that everything has got to be really, really perfect. We have got to show that all our paperwork is completely up to scratch; that our referral systems and our assessment systems, everything has got to be just about perfect. Our files have got to have everything exactly right; they have all got to have the right letterheads on them all they have all got to have the right footers on

them. If they haven't got them then we are not allowed them. It is really fussy and I think it didn't used to be that fussy...I think it is actually a good thing because it keeps us honest, it keeps us accountable. We are getting funded from other people so they have got a right to know what is being done with that money.

One respondent reflects on the need for 'immediate perfection' and acquisition of necessary skills contrasted with the value base of a sector which appreciates nurture and support. It is a sad reflection on a consequence of adopting a more managerialist approach:

Sam: I can remember when I first started, because you do make mistakes, and you do say the wrong things at times, or write something not as good, and you might find something and think that was a close shave and no one needs to know about that or whatever but no that doesn't happen now I don't think, you are being scrutinised with everything that you are doing and there is no room to sort of develop in a way.

One respondent commented on the amount of audit and jumping through hoops that occurs, questioning whether Government departments are actually able to comply with these demands themselves:

Carol: I do believe in the NGO sector that we are audited to death some days and I think you have to jump through hoops and back again whereas I can see the Government departments especially in the DHB and you know things aren't always so squeaky clean but they put that out and impose those conditions on us.

Funding concerns

Respondents identified funding and financial worries as critical issues for all parts of the sector. They comment that unfortunately while alleviating the issue of financial sustainability through accepting Government contracted services a new issue of lack of autonomy and independence is created as organisations seek to provide required

prescriptive approaches and Government goals and priorities (evidence of outcomes, outputs and accountability). The resultant loss of distinctiveness through eroding the value base of its mission and objectives results in worries and uncertainty and managers questioning if they are competent for their positions.

An element of risk

NGOs are used to working on tight budgets, they have received shoe-string funding from boards and grants for many years and managers are used to rolling their sleeves up and finding ways to “get out there and work for the client” a very Kiwi ‘number eight wire’ creative ethic of work. The sector has also been reliant in the past, and still remains so, on its community to boost funds which has always provided an element of ‘risk’ and uncertainty. In the current climate managers understand that at its core funding has a political motivation which also raises concerns of risk. This group of managers feels the weight of these concerns in their day to day delivery of services:

Jan: Compared to a statutory organisation who might be 100% funded we are not and therefore we are reliant on our community trust, licencing trust etc to help boost up the funds to best deliver services. And so with that is the element of risk and you are not quite sure where your funding is from one year to the next.

Genna: There is always risk in funding which is political; it can change just like that with every election. So that always kind of concerns me a bit as to where to from here and how will that affect this sector. That is very risky... It can be a bit frightening.

Change of focus

One of the main concerns regarding accepting Government funding is the perceived change in focus of the work towards systems which drive practice moving them away from the needs of the client towards the needs of the funder. The long term focus of much of the work of the NGO sector is also placed under scrutiny causing concern and

fears due to the difficulty demonstrating impact of services when effects may not be apparent for years.

Rachel: In reality...when an organisation grows – for whatever reason – then you’ve got to look for funding from elsewhere. The minute you start getting into Government funding you’ve got accountability. And the minute you’ve got accountability you’ve got to have the systems. The minute you have the systems then – the issue for me is –they start driving practice and the whole thing becomes different. Your focus then moves from the need of the client unfortunately to meeting the needs of the funder...I believe the Government has responsibilities for care and protection to be dealing with themselves, not the NGOs. That is a big area of stuff there.

One of the respondents’ questions the very nature of the priorities of Government as funder imposing more and more statutory obligations for care and protection investigations onto the NGO sector instead of the low risk preventative type support work that the NGO sector has always been responsible for:

Sam: When I first started I would have seen myself as a family whanau worker just support that was quite low key. I can remember my first Child Youth and Family contracts, we had to be so specific on what I was there for and actually my role wasn’t monitoring because that was what Child Youth and Family’s role was, mine was to do some specific tasks with the family.

Managers regularly make decisions to work above and beyond funding limits and prescribed ways of working and question a business model which focuses on budgets instead of people’s need, linking firmly with the values embedded within the NGO sector:

Bill: Sometimes in NGO organisations a manager comes in who has been a business manager they can be quite black and white and primarily financially

focused and I have yet to figure out whether that is a good thing. Budgets are fine but there is also a need to meet the needs of your clients. So do you stop meeting with someone once you have reached a certain level of spending, do you just cut and say we have no more money, do you just stop. My response to that is that actually you don't because it is someone else's problem; we just need to help these families.

Satisfying funders – losing flavour

The need to satisfy and appease funders, within an obvious power imbalance, causes respondents to moderate their responses with understanding for sound management practice:

Vivian: We spend far more time with layers of accountability for every single person. I am not saying that is a bad thing – because I think it provides much more individual attention and information but we have even less funding now than what we did under a capacity contract. And the funding that we get doesn't cover our costs so they are kind of interesting ways of working.

Respondents continue to query the tensions and conflict between differing principles, aims and structures in the new business model which don't allow creativity with clients, focuses on paperwork and sometimes changes the focus of work from preventative to attaining Government priorities:

Theresa: We are the preventative agency, we are trying to stop things from getting to that other stage. I think it would be about time, just not having to have so many time frames and allow the creativity to come back into the role because that is disappearing really fast and the focus has become the paperwork rather than the actual face to face contact with the people.

Managers question if they are losing sight of what they need to be doing with clients, tenuously balancing understanding some improvement of service provision with whether

they want to be more like the Government sector, and losing their distinctive flavour and stretching their precious dollar even further:

Sam: I think it is getting more and more like the state sector. I think the checks and balances just over shadow everything and there is so much more involvement with audits and funding and all of that sort of stuff and everyone has got to be accountable not that I think that is a bad thing because I actually think that is a good thing. But I think that there needs to be another way of doing it. I think that we have got ourselves into a bit of a corner where we are too busy appeasing the Government or the funders and we are losing sight of what we need to be doing with the clients. And it is a time thing that has taken that time to be creative out of it. And I think it is getting back into one size fits all and a box ticking exercise.

No more fat

With funding comes scrutiny of the use of that funding resulting in increased cost-saving measures and trimming all fat from the organisation. When all the fat has been trimmed from the agency budget few choices remain for cost cutting and saving measures, this validates the rhetoric of standardisation as a means of budget controls. These are practices far more familiar with the private sector but what remains is the dilemma for social service organisations on how to provide care for people when faced with the dominant discourse of decreasing costs and standardization again calling into question what is being asked of them:

Carol: sometimes it is hard we have trimmed things down so much there is no more excess fat without losing some of what you do. So you look at that. We changed our phone provider because it would be cheaper and cell phones have gone elsewhere trying to save money...but there is no new money, it is just re-allocating what we have got.

Sam: There are cuts here and cuts there. The NGO sector is being asked to do a heck of a lot more than we should be doing really.

Rhetoric of collaboration

Some of the current rhetoric around funding needing to be monitored more strictly is the assertion that NGOs are not collaborating amongst themselves with overlap of services and duplication. Some of this ‘spotlight’ on collaboration resulted from the significant earthquakes in Christchurch City in 2011 and the collaborative response by all providers of services. Respondents question the current competitive nature of contracting for funding – highlighting this did not occur in the aftermath of the earthquakes as money was sourced from a variety of funders and readily available. They reflect on other ways of funding collaborative NGO sector relationships:

Vivian: Government has asked NGOs to collaborate. I think that came from when Government saw how organisations worked after the Christchurch earthquake so I think that has been the development of a model. Some of that is exciting; at times we think we do work well. I think the funding has made the NGO sector competitive and I do wonder sometimes if funding was devolved down to a local level to places like the Community Trust that facilitated and managed that funding to see that there wasn't an overlap

Mathew: I am not saying that NGOs should be given more money but some primary care can be done by NGOs better than the hospital. The resources are available and if we get more funding we can diversify into more areas...we can do things in a better way if funds were given not on a client basis.

Competition for personnel

Respondents remembered a time when staff were employed because they had life skills and personal qualities making them ideal for the position, commenting that this has changed a good deal in today’s workplace market:

Kate: When we first contracted for [names a service program] we took on good people who had wonderful life skills and who had some good basic training in maybe CPS or something like that there was no qualification required but we

can't afford to do that now as an agency we have to be professionally responsible.

Given the change in competencies and qualification needed for employment an inevitable impact is the capacity of non-profit organisations to attract and retain highly skilled personnel given the competition with private and state sectors offering higher rates of pay and other benefits within a small pool of experienced staff:

Genna: We lose staff to [names NGO organisation] and district health board. So I did a national ring around of salary rates and we have now committed ourselves to getting ourselves up there so I was able to employ someone from district health board. So that is one of the things you have got to be really on top of – yes Invercargill is different – people up North say they don't pay the bigger wages but we can't get away with that any longer because some organisations are.

However many organisations rely on the dedication of staff to sector values and ways of working in order to recruit and retain experienced staff:

Carol: You are sometimes working on a real shoe string budget, even on the amount of staff you can employ, and the down side of that is you can't compete financially with what you can offer staff in wages as opposed to a Government organisation. And I guess we are very lucky with [names organisation] that I have had staff that are really dedicated and we don't have a big staff turnover.

Not only does the NGO sector face fierce competition for its skilled labour force there has also been change to contracting requirements with staff having to evidence competency to their associations and register to governing bodies, all of which must be paid for within an ever tightening budgetary climate:

Theresa: Different requirements around qualifications and also the social workers registration legislation have had an impact because that is filtering

through into contracts. As well where there are requirements for particular positions for people to be a registered social worker that has real impact obviously on who you can employ.

This respondent comments that although the sector is requiring qualifications this does not necessarily translate into remuneration or recognition for managers:

Lisa: I remember working for a Government organisation and it certainly made a difference when you came in, so you came in with a qualification and started 'here' and had some sort of progression until you got to the 'bar' but here there isn't even that. So it doesn't matter if you get another qualification along the way, it doesn't help, so unless you moved up it may make a difference if you got to the top of where you were and you wanted to be a supervisor or team leader...

Regionalising

Regionalising has been used as a management tool to make certain that needs unique to an area are met. Some respondents raised concerns describing something they called 'regionalising' in the current context being critical that national organisations were standardizing policy and practice for local branches and flexibility and autonomy were being negatively impacted on. Promoting efficiency is espoused as the prime goal to which all should subscribe and few could argue convincingly against. However aspects relating to not being able to be individually and locally responsive surfaced and there was particular concern as these are some of the attracting features of the NGO sector. The traditional strength of the NGO sector is the very nature that it is embedded within local communities and local pool of expertise and knowledge:

Lisa: The bigger you get or the more regionalised you get the less autonomy in terms of flexibility you appear to have. That was one of the things that I guess attracts you to an NGO seeing that it is a small NGO that you do have a lot of flexibility. So over time for me that is what I have seen eroding as we have gone to a more national structure. It is the local needs versus the national ...there is no

ability to move and no local focus and flexibility – you now have a national contract.

Theresa: Right now we have a governance team that sits within the branch but if you move that out regionally then they move it nationally, then no it doesn't sit well with me because an NGO has a local focus.

Leaving the sector

Although initially suggesting they would remain in the NGO sector four respondents commented that they were moving towards leaving it. These respondents and others described reasons such as low pay, moves towards 'regionalising' and standardizing, the emerging focus on the business model and the flow on effect towards rationalising entry criteria as prompts for considering termination.

Pay

It is no secret that the NGO sector is underfunded and this flows into remuneration. With the increased workload and change in focus to the way managers work this inevitably leads to questioning issues of pay:

Vivian: Push pull factor would certainly be around pay. I dropped pay every time I went out of the Government sector, unbelievably [gives specific amount] to come to the NGO sector.

Regionalising

This respondent describes regionalising being at odds with their value base and a catalyst to leaving:

Lisa: I would probably go if the agency took on a national focus. If its values continue to be at odds with mine; I think at some point it will happen if we continue this way [standardizing], then there would be a point where I won't stay.

Focus on the business model

Managers in the non-profit sector are viewed by respondents as having a unique focus on individuals and their community, they are viewed as creative and solution focused. However the managerialist focus on spending and budgets has raised an alarm for one respondent who questions whether “best practice” should be determined from their professional background standards and service to clients, or the business model of efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Clearly the two are polar opposites to this respondent who upon being unable to reconcile them raises issues of retention

Vivian: And if we continue to go down a really strong business model I am not sure I want to work that way. I think there has to be an element, I mean you can't run an NGO withdrawing from your reserves or you won't have any reserves in the end and you will become bankrupt so there has to be a sense of that. But it is how far that infiltrates into everything we do. So it is whether best practice comes from a professional practice view point focussing around best practice around people and the people we are here to serve, what is the best way to work, versus what would be best practice in a business model which is the most efficient, the mostly lean, now they don't always work together.

Rationalising services

Inevitably competition for funding and best financial practice results in eligibility criteria being rationalised; sometimes concentrating on responding to the most promising clients and refusing to take on complex or time consuming ones. One respondent finds divergence in values when eligibility criteria are set at criminal activity level to access services. Intervening post-problem has caused them to consider entering into private practice to circumvent this:

Michelle: It is really difficult when you are getting phone calls and there is nowhere that I can send these families until a criminal act has happened...well for me what it has made me do is [think about] working collaboratively and going into my own business.

Summary

Understanding the development of the NGO sector is important to understanding its future. It is essential to remember many respondents choose to remain in a sector that is underpinned with people responsive practices: culturally appropriate services; a client-centred approach; which understands systems, empowerment, social justice, advocacy and the promotion of rights and these do not easily transfer into the new era of Government and the kinds of services and priorities which are important to it. The language of managerialism has crept into everyday use in the NGO sector with few being able to argue against practices promoting transparency and cost efficiency for clients. Efficiency, effectiveness, social justice, and legitimacy concerns are inherent to both sectors however the proposed initiatives threaten the fundamental structure and values of the NGO sector envisaging it not too dissimilar from the private sector.

Nonetheless Government NGO partnerships are increasing as they seek to establish working and contractual arrangements, however while they might achieve state objectives it appears difficult for the non-profit organisation to achieve its desired outcomes of providing flexible community needs driven service provision. There are fears of reprisal and retribution for those not subscribing to the new funding regimes with pressure brought to bear on those seen as being inefficient or wasteful and not providing a quality service. Respondents have provided a clear message that as the state increasingly contracts with sector organisations to deliver services the tensions between Government interest and the sectors' become more apparent as does the discourse of the NGO manager on whether to stay or whether to go. Additionally lower rates of pay and an increasing focus on standardization makes retention in the sector more challenging, with alternatives being considered. A challenge for the future is to move away from centrally driven, prescriptive approaches that seek to convert clients into calculable units toward negotiated models that aim to achieve more collaborative working relationships while at the same time preserving the independent value of the sector to determine their own priorities and culture.

In conclusion the decisions to work in any chosen sector are varied however this study highlights that some are unique to the NGO sector. Respondents view the ability to advocate, provide flexibility, creativity, and client focus and choice as the opposite to the perceived red tape and bureaucracy of the Government sector. They were able to identify that they were willing to work above and beyond regular working hours to achieve sector and community goals. Proposed reforms will be accompanied by an increased pressure on social justice frameworks, service goals and reporting and some respondents have clearly indicated they will consider leaving the sector if these are pursued. Respondents provided evidence that managers understand how important visionary and innovative responses are to meet these challenges connecting it to the conventionally held belief that the nonprofit sector is more responsive and innovative than the public sector. The passion and strength of conviction that this group of respondents holds towards pursuing the sector's ideological philosophy and independence should not be underestimated. The future of service delivery to local communities may become even more fragmented if managers choose to go into private practice in order to control choice over how they respond to that local need. With the increased concerns amongst those working in the sector that sector values are being eroded it seems important in the following chapter to explore the other contributors to job satisfaction retaining managers in their positions.

Chapter Six: Job Satisfaction

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the activities that hold an appeal to the New Zealand Social Service Manager. Studies, and themes that emerged in the analysis of this data, highlight groupings that are common major contributors. The chapter therefore comprises four main categories of job satisfaction: appropriate rewards including contingent rewards, fringe benefits and pay; the influence of other people comprising clients, co-workers and supervisors; the importance of the nature of the work; and the impact of the organisational context.

Each section will describe information specific to being a manager and will discuss levels of pay and the need for other ways of valuing, the significance of positive relationships and carrying a client caseload, the need for challenge and autonomy and achieving goals through team and others, the ability to network with other organisations, and the influence of organisational mission and culture. The chapter concludes with a discussion of findings in each of the four categories, consideration of moderators, and embeds this complex topic firmly within a management and NGO sector context.

Job satisfaction is multi-motivated but simply defined “is the balance between work stressors and work rewards” (Corey-Lisle, 1999, p. 27) and “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences” (Locke, 1976, p. 1300). Job satisfaction is a very personal experience incorporating diverse individualized components. Some are outside the scope of this study such as personality factors and professional aspiration variances. To understand the meaning made by respondents they were asked to think over the last week or month and discuss the activities they enjoyed, clarifying if these activities contribute to a feeling of job satisfaction. Respondents produced conflicting stories as to whether rewards and pay were important, but frequently replied that either staff, supervisors or clients contributed significantly. Respondents also linked these to dimensions such as variety, autonomy, job challenge, work-load balance and service provision. It was verified that job

satisfaction occurred when the dimensions presented within an organisational setting reflected sector values and vision. Their replies, which form the basis of this chapter, clearly support the existing findings on job satisfaction but also articulate some distinguishing features which can be attributed as specific to social service managers and the NGO context.

Factors attributed to job satisfaction in the NGO context

Overall managers liked and felt satisfied with their jobs; some aspects were indicated as being fulfilling that have not been highlighted in other studies. These dimensions include: appropriate rewards; an intense dedication to other people including balancing management tasks with a carrying a client caseload; assisting staff professional and personal development within a positive working relationship; building and leading a team; and networking with other organisations.

Appropriate rewards

Rewards are thought to have a positive reinforcing effect promoting a desired behaviour. Rewards include praise for achievement and credit for work done, promotion, fringe benefits such as vehicles, and pay. What is interesting in the following responses is the context of these being tightly bound by sector commitment and dedication.

Remuneration and pay

Respondents recounted conflicting stories of pay conditions as a significant satisfaction dimension. What was often noted by respondents was they were not there for the money but received rewards via acknowledgement from peers and superiors and the opportunities given for responsibility. Some thought that their value as employees was reflected in their pay; others reiterated the rhetoric of the NGO sector as underfunded including remuneration and excused low pay rates:

Steffie: I notice by the organisation that they have reflected that [employee value] in my pay; I actually get paid really not too bad considering it is an NGO. And I

do get nice emails saying hey thanks...and every now and then they'll say something nice.

Mathew: People working in the NGO sector generally are underpaid compared to the public sector. So in that sense it is not there but there are certainly other rewards. There is acknowledgement by your peers; there is acknowledgement by other opportunities of being on working parties and being involved in other groups, and internally there is acknowledgement really.

Respondents regularly comment that they were not so concerned about the level of pay; one remarked that it was more about fairness of pay with people in similar jobs:

Rachel: I believe that social workers in the statutory should get paid because the work is not nice... NGOs can't compete and can't match that so I haven't got a problem with that, but just don't ask me to do the same work they do

Others commented that it wasn't about the money but about making a difference in the lives of others and working for long term effects that constituted the remuneration. They were changing their environment as well as people's lives and ultimately felt like they would be 'winners' in the long run. They would be able to look back over their working lives and wouldn't see financial gain or commodities but that their heart had been in their work and they had assisted to make individual lives and the world a better place:

Mathew: Money is one side definitely but sometimes you have to think about more than money. Where your heart is, what you want to do with what you have learned. I have always believed if you look at the money only, ultimately you will be a loser because ten years on you will look back at your life and say I have a new Porsche car but I have not done anything to change anything in this environment. So I always believe do what your heart tells you to do not what your brain tells you to do.

Theresa: You need to feel valued, and if it isn't monetarily then it needs to be some sense of achievement and value in other ways. And a sense maybe that is the achievement that you have to see that what you do does make a difference.

Respondents were not martyrs with unattainable values; they recognised that pay was linked to feeling valued. They were aware that the NGO sector was underfunded and asserted that value should therefore to be demonstrated via other avenues such as perks and feedback, but that empty or patronising praise would not suffice:

*Marjorie: I feel valued in terms of the feedback I get but I don't feel valued in terms of being rewarded for it...maybe give me a perk like give me a car...I have had recognition in terms of having nice letters saying you have set up an amazing system and that is a credit to you and that is great and I appreciate things like that but I am not someone that needs smoke blown up my *** everyday.*

Another expanded the idea further saying she wasn't necessarily motivated by recognition and acknowledgement alone viewing it as somewhat patronizing as a competent self-reflecting manager:

Steffie: See I don't even need to be recognised, that's the stupid thing... I know when I am doing okay and when I'm not... I self manage myself I need to self-manage and I don't like a boss continually in at me.

The concept of being self-reflective and able to assess personal and professional development and success is a salient point. Respondents often recount a dedication and commitment to organisations that contribute to their personal growth and provide autonomy to align with sector values. One respondent includes her organisation as part of her family acknowledging the opportunity given to her to develop into the worker she is today:

Michelle: I do feel they [the organisation] are part of my family and they probably always will be a big part of who I am because they gave me the opportunity and I have been able to grow and I've been able to learn and they have given me that professional development as well so I feel very privileged because at the end of the day that's made me who I am or helped to be who I am as a worker.

Dedication to other people

Respondents frequently comment that other people play a large role in job satisfaction. More specifically it is the relationships fostered regardless of whether that is with co-workers, supervisors or superiors, the staff they oversee in their teams; or the clients they work alongside. Several factors were found in this study to relate to other people as a significant predictor of job satisfaction: client achievements and making a difference in people's lives; staff personal and professional growth contributes to the ability to teach others, keep them on track, and watch them achieve; co-workers are viewed as the glue that holds respondents in on hard days, specifically the ability to form relationships with peers where work related problems are discussed; and leadership behaviour when it is respectful and supportive.

Client achievement and making a difference

It is worth highlighting the intense dedication that social service managers feel towards clients and how unique this is to current study data. Respondents' perceptions of positive organizational values towards clients directly match their job satisfaction describing the key for them is to be focused on client need. They value witnessing milestones being reached, listening or offering information and providing education. Evidence is provided that this links to their professional backgrounds and is a reason for their motivation to work:

Rachel: That is the key for me – to always be able to focus on the client's needs – and that's the social worker in me – helping the client, working with the client.

Jan: But really it is the clients that I work with – if I take it away from the staff. I really enjoy the family work that I do and it's just so neat to see those milestones that could be happening, and that's what holds me here. Or when you get a kid phoning up saying guess what; I got the principal's award today. That's the sort of stuff that makes me think this is what my job is all about.

Carol: I just like making a difference in people's lives it is just satisfying to know that you can make a difference to someone whether it is just listening or whether it is offering information or education.

Carrying a client caseload

Many managers felt so committed to working with clients and making a difference in the lives of others, also attributing this to a sense of variety, nurturing professional expertise, and keeping them in touch with what is happening, that they often enthusiastically relayed a need for a caseload as a component of their work tasks and a balance to their management responsibilities:

Jan: I have a case load and to me I've got a neat balance. I can do the coordinators position here and I can also go out and become very frustrated or quite delighted with whatever is happening for families, and that's what holds me. It's just having that balance and variety.

Debbie: Yes, it is like I have the best of both worlds at the moment and ...I would always keep my finger in a little bit as far as wanted to, and I quite enjoy supervising staff which is part of my job.

Kate: the family support worker will take out their goal sheet to each visit with them and so the issues are continually being updated, their goals, their steps to achieving those goals all come back through me. I don't have to but I do and I continue to do it because that keeps me in touch with what is going on, it keeps my hand in if you like.

Staff development and building positive relationships

The NGO manager appears to be immensely satisfied when assisting staff to develop via building positive working relationships with them. This is a central theme for understanding job satisfaction for the social service manager. Respondents indicate they have plenty of experience and learned knowledge from years of practice they can draw on wishing to coach and support staff towards becoming proficient and competent workers:

Rachel: I love my workers, my getting up and coming to work is my workers because if I can see them happy in their work and see them growing in their work then I know that I have done what I am here for...I am here to support and coach them and to help them to be proficient social workers. And if I can see that happen then that is my job satisfaction.

Jan: but it is also neat to hear what staff are doing and what they have achieved. And then when you look at the wider picture of going back 18 months with a staff person and just see how they have grown in their professional development and their own personal development. That's what it's all about.

Respondents frequently comment on their supervisory role and the ability to teach others, keep them on track, watch them achieve, and contribute to personal and professional growth as components of satisfaction. Respondents talk of enjoying passing on knowledge, reflecting on learning, and giving and receiving feedback. They tend to monitor the success of this through staff willingly providing work when it is asked for or seeking them out via an open door policy. This provides evidence for the manager that their work is successful, that they are proficient workers and coaches and that they are developing and growing themselves:

Vivian: There has probably been some supervision, some points with staff when you've done some work with staff and they have seen things in a different way or that they have been able to go out more armed to do their work, I find that really

valuable and really helpful. So if we have been able to make improvements or been able to support staff in their roles then that has been great.

Kate: here if the coordinator of [names a program] is not here and one of the girls has a problem they will come to me, if they want to talk something through. They are always told that they don't take a problem home and if they can't get hold of [names two coordinators] they ring me and so I get that all of the time...it contributes to my job satisfaction.

Jan: another thing I would like to make reference to is that I could go and talk to any of the workers and say I need such and such information and it is never too much trouble and the information just comes back.

One respondent mentions feeling satisfied when contributing to staff feeling autonomy in their work and field of expertise:

Bill: I tend to tell staff that if you come in here as a worker, obviously this is your area, these are the things that you have to achieve and how you go about it is entirely up to you...All I want you to do is make sure you do it to the best of your ability. Then I would say, these are the resources you need to do your work...get yourself familiar with the place and then start picking up some work with families.

Along similar lines one respondent speaks of empowering staff to make decisions, viewing management as a supportive experience and wishing to provide an environment in which the staff member can grow, not one in which staff feel persecuted or fearful of developing as a worker:

Genna: I have found that staff are really quite empowered and they're okay about making decisions as they should without being frightened that management might chop them up into cat's meat. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't

and that is okay. We look at why it didn't work, it's not about hunting people down and being negative about it, empowerment is really important.

Co-workers – forming supportive peer relationships

The responses in this study support other studies on job satisfaction, showing that co-workers are integral systems of support, and are resources to draw on offering the ability to off-load in tough times. Respondents find significant value in these relationships and often remain in employment because of the friendships formed:

Genna: You do have tough days but you do get through them and I think it is about not panicking and thinking a little clearer and just getting through it when it does get difficult; in saying that I do have colleagues to talk to... There are a couple of managers out there that if I look a bit jaded will go come and sit down and have a chat... my relationship with my colleagues is pretty important.

Debbie: On tough days sometimes I might have to disappear, my colleague that I had I used to drag her off for a coffee and sound off to her. I miss her I have to say because that was something that helped me heaps...if I am having a hard time I like to leave the office and go to somewhere safe and actually just sound off, and then I am okay

Sam: Probably the support from everybody else, you can always find somebody that you can sit down and offload to and know that is as far as it will go.

Respectful and supportive supervisors

Also demonstrating consistency with other research is the vital role superiors play in the job satisfaction and retention of staff. Respondents value a supervisor who can provide a relaxed and friendly work relationship in which their opinion is respected and they can bounce ideas around. One of the keys to this relationship is open communication demonstrating worth and respect. In particular, respondents report the ability to rely on their supervisory relationships for support and consultation for problem solving,

participation in decision making on matters that affect them, communicating regularly and honestly, and being concerned with them as persons as significant contributors. The role of manager can be a lonely one in which certain levels of management can feel like the meat in the sandwich, which will be discussed later in the chapter on job dissatisfaction, however the supervisory relationship can mitigate and offset this, providing experience to draw on, mentoring and affirmation:

Marjorie: I had a really good relationship with my manager who has taken on another role... and even though they were my line manager I guess we bounced off each other... because we had a really good working relationship and I respected their opinion immensely... so, I guess I had that comfort where I felt supported in my role immensely where previous to that I didn't really have that.

Bill: These supports are practice advisors and other managers who are been available to support us and working with them when you needed to have a sounding board. I needed to be able to talk to people that had the experience and felt confident with as well about options or ideas or direction and ask them about what they think would work and not work and be able to empathise with the fact of where you are. They could turn around and say look when I was in that situation I did this type of stuff.

Thus we can see that other people play a large role in job satisfaction for respondents. More specifically it is the relationships fostered regardless of whether that is with co-workers, supervisors or superiors, the staff they oversee in their teams; or the clients they work alongside.

The importance of the nature of the work

Threaded through narratives were many remarks describing job satisfaction directed towards job challenge, variety, flexibility, autonomy – being involved in determining what work is to be done and how it is to be performed, and achieving goals through others.

Challenge and variety

One of the major contributors to job satisfaction is challenge and diversity. This was often found in no two days ever really being the same providing variety and stimulation:

Marjorie: I like that my day is not ever the same. I mean obviously there are elements that are the same but I like that my workload changes, I like that there is a certain amount of flexibility in that.

Debbie: I like being here I am enjoying the challenge. The challenge is getting bigger, and I think I need to be challenged perhaps if the challenge wasn't there that could be something that would make me think am I in the right position. But because there is continued challenges because my role keeps changing over the challenges I think that keeps me alive it keeps me going.

One respondent likened their work to being on a roller coaster ride enjoying the challenge, growing, exploring grey areas of work, and being prodded out of their comfort zone:

Theresa: it is sometimes a bit like a roller coaster ride but you do you just have to ride with it. That is probably why we are in this line of work really because for a lot of us it is not about the black or white it is about the grey area [Researcher: the challenges?] the challenges and there is growth in that. It is not about change for the sake of change but if you never get a poke and a prod, you have to get out of your comfort zone.

Flexibility and self-management

Respondents clearly identify they feel satisfaction in the flexible nature of their role and the ability to self-manage. One respondent links this to retention but also highlights an area of dissatisfaction frequently referred to as being micro-managed:

Steffie: I need to self-manage and I don't like a boss continually in at me. [But] when I'm applying for jobs I keep thinking I am going to lose my flexibility.

One respondent comments further that self-management and the nature of the work means she needs to be well organised and maintain good systems. She identifies this as an area of growth which contributes significantly to satisfaction:

Steff: Maintaining a good system, being organised and knowing exactly where I am meant to be and what I am meant to be doing is really important. Some people who have worked with me in the past would be astonished instead of the piles of stuff I used to have. I have matured.

Re-framing managerialist tasks

Managerial tasks were frequently commented on as those which did not contribute to job satisfaction and will be explored further in the next chapter. What is notable are comments highlighting the need to re-framing these to off-set these tasks looking for where these might involve the perceived 'real' focus of work and therefore job satisfaction:

Jan: In some ways I hate doing the stats, but it is good to be able to reflect on those as it shows what we are doing with clients, and that's a reflection on the staff as well.

Carol: no reason to be scared about auditing, just embrace it and think it is just an opportunity to improve service.

Vivian: being connected to staff, being connected to the service delivery and being connected to services that you are providing, people...if I didn't have glimpses of that then I'm not sure how long I would like to be behind doors in front of a computer and all that paperwork.

Team – achieving goals through others

A significant role of and source of job satisfaction for these respondents and echoing their choice of profession was that of achieving goals through others. Enough respondents commented on it making it crucial to highlight in its own right. Respondents frequently commented on the satisfaction obtained by supporting workers to support clients linked to a sense of success in delivery of outcomes and feeling a sense of pride:

Rachel: Now it may not be something I have done directly, hands on, but it could be something through supporting a worker to do. So each day I think if I have achieved that, somebody is a little bit happier today through something that I have helped in some little way then surely that is good.

Marjorie: I like the fact that ultimately I'm not directly supporting people but I am supporting the people who support people and that has a huge influence on how they are supporting people and the outcomes that are delivered. And I guess by making people accountable for those outcomes it is helping the clients be more successful. So I kind of feel some responsibility and a bit of pride in that I guess.

Again autonomy, control and freedom to make decisions about work and input into the organisation's decision making processes were highlighted as job satisfaction factors. In this instance it is the autonomy to employ the staff respondents choose to meet organisational and team objectives that provides a sense of satisfaction; coupled with being able to facilitate this further through the successful orientation of the new staff member:

Theresa: One of the things that I quite enjoy is interviewing people for vacancies. I really like that whole process.

Bill: I have been able to employ new staff, to bring new staff on. I have been part of the whole process of advertising and interviewing and getting them on board, bringing them here, starting them off, and doing their induction process and then getting them out into the field and doing their work.

Respondents speak specifically of building and leading a team, enjoying the ability to communicate well, build interpersonal relationships, and develop teams into functional organisms. There is a reciprocal nature to the relationship with both caring and supporting each other providing a sense of belonging and pride in the team. Staff are seen as rewarding managers through being loyal, hardworking, and happy in their work:

Mathew: And the thing is I know my staff, they know me also, like when I am feeling really bad they sort that out and come and have a chat and ask me what is bothering me. So it is like you feel like you belong to the place; and belonging gives you pride because you know that they know and care for you and I think that is what a good team and a good organisation needs.

Debbie: I think I am really lucky that I have a really good team which helps immensely because I think if I had a team that always moaned and everything was too hard for them I don't know if I would enjoy managing so much. What I enjoy about managing is the team.

Steff: I guess because I have seen teams grow I love building teams...it is because you can look at a team that was quite dysfunctional and arguing, you can see the effect that it has on the people that they are supporting, to the point that they can sit and be respectful and discuss things as a professional.

Further significance for the team is highlighted in one respondent's comment that they work alone quite often and the team environment provides the ability to work collaboratively with others:

Michelle: Being creative, the successes, and working with the team is really satisfying to me. I do a lot of things individually but I work collaboratively with my team and I love that stuff I just absolutely love it.

The ability to network with other organisations

Networking with other organisations is often viewed as core business in social service organisations, as a way of sharing knowledge and support within the sector. Respondents frequently comment that they would be willing to share policies and documentation amongst networks if it advanced sector values:

Carol: It is the sharing and receiving of information I think. Because they are some things I think that each pocket or NGO does that is unique to them and you think oh why didn't I think of that, and I wouldn't be afraid to say look would you be willing to share that information or could we adopt that policy. I think it is especially about; well why would you want to keep everything to yourself?

Networks between organisations also provide consistency of approach for “shared clients” and contribute to making sure no one is falling through the cracks between services:

Genna: Retaining those networks with other organisations is really important. I am working with [names organisation] and we are sharing a client at the moment and we talk and email and keep everything going. Everyone knows what is happening and this person won't fall through the cracks because information wasn't passed on.

Unfortunately though, another respondent highlights that networking is often the area that is dropped off when workloads become strained and time constraints result in cutting back on meetings. The significant risk that is raised is that community collaboration will be lost as will opportunities to link together for the improvement of all:

Michelle: I had to prioritise what I was going to do. Nobody took that place of going to this meeting or that meeting and actually I think that was a big downfall for [names organisation] because I understand that hours are precious because we have limited hours but I don't think that they comprehend the importance of

that community collaboration. When you are attending those types of meetings there are always opportunities ...somebody from a different organisation will say we are looking at doing this and I will say hey what can I do to help and before you know it [names organisation] is part of that.

The importance of the nature of the work in job satisfaction directed towards job challenge, variety, flexibility, autonomy and achieving goals through others should not be overlooked as contributing components.

The impact of the organisational context

Operating conditions include communication of the shared vision, the rules and policies, reward systems, care for its people, emphasis on professional standards, economic responsibilities, and leadership and decision making processes. The values that are adopted within the organisation are also important and influence the organisational context and culture. Respondents' comment that job satisfaction was impacted on by how well the organisation reflected mission and sector vision and values:

Theresa: It is actually people as well and it is believing in the vision that we have as an agency.

Respondents note that it was satisfying to work in an organisation that had good systems and processes in place, which had a flow-on effect to service delivery:

Bill: The organisation itself has really good systems in place, the process and how the organisation runs and how we support families and our client base line is very clear and very collaborative in the sense that people can feel comfortable about coming here and being part of what we do.

Managers appreciate the opportunity to be involved in decision making, projects, research work and quality development:

Carol: I think quality is not a destination it is a journey and we are continually improving. Whatever I do, or when making or designing a policy I am quite chuffed at times when I think I am happy with that. It can be quite tough at times but I always keep chipping away and working towards quality.

Conditions like pleasant physical surroundings were not discussed in this study however job security linked to the sector was mentioned by one respondent proposing that the NGO sector is quite volatile at present due to uncertainty around funding and contracts:

Marjorie: I see it as a very volatile sector to be honest. I feel very safe in my role, and I feel safe in what I am doing but I would be very hesitant looking for work because you just don't know with the funding and the contracts, how things are going to go.

Summary

As expected, respondents attribute a range of factors corresponding with other studies to dimensions for job satisfaction. These were concurrent with Spector's nine variables and others: the opportunities for variety and autonomy, relationships with and support from co-workers and supervisors who communicate honestly and provide a supportive workplace in which to find challenge and growth. What was not anticipated from reading current literature was the emphasis on the intense dedication towards clients, achieving goals through others, providing service delivery in line with NGO sector values, the significance of developing and growing staff and teams, and the opportunity to collaborate and network with other organisations. These all anchor into the NGO sector and the strong people responsive values of its manager. The themes that relate to job satisfaction will now be discussed focussing on appropriate rewards, the influence of other people, the important of the nature of the work, the impact of the organisational context and moderators of these factors.

Appropriate rewards

In this research such factors as pay appeared to result in little impact on job satisfaction. Most respondents commented on valuing being acknowledged for their work by supervisors, staff or colleagues. Acknowledgement and praise provide feedback concerning the competence of job performance and increases satisfaction ratings however responses were tempered by the need for autonomy and sincerity. Findings highlight that although respondents appreciate the good opinion of their supervisors and appreciate higher rates of pay they do not obtain social esteem from them but find that in the freedom to self-manage.

Secondly respondents tended to view their contribution to sector values for responsive service provision as more significant than pay, and this was felt amongst both genders interviewed. Money which is often viewed as a symbol of achievement, a source of recognition or of affording leisure and hobby interests outside of work was not a consistent inducer of satisfaction. One respondent felt that pay was used as a status symbol by those in Government fields of practice. For most respondents they were more concerned about equitable pay and fairness with social workers in other fields of practice and were happy that statutory workers were paid more. They also recognised that NGOs would likely use pay to compete for skilled workers with changes to worker registration requirements. This suggests that status may also be found in obtaining employment in an NGO agency in the future.

A small number of respondents were from a large organisation but most were managers of smaller organisations; both were attracted by work variety, interpersonal relationships and achieving sector values more than monetary considerations. This does not concur with Brown's (2003) findings, being the opposite in fact, highlighting that this group of NGO employees are more psychologically committed to their organisations, remaining if salary was not always seen as equal to work.

The influence of other people

Over half of the respondents were from a social work professional background and the impact of this is the prominence of factors of satisfaction attributed to activities relating to people. In addition to this they enjoy “keeping their hand in” finding an invigorating satisfaction balancing professional competencies and clinical roles. Carrying a caseload and achieving goals through others was a distinctive finding and will be discussed further in the chapter on emerging information. Add to this interaction with others a roller coaster ride of challenge and opportunity for growth and they feel like they have the best of all worlds.

Findings were consistent with other studies that supervisors, colleagues, and subordinates contribute significantly to overall satisfaction. The manager’s interviewed were at varying levels of the management hierarchy structure but comments were collectively similar. Supervisory traits and taking a personal interest in individuals rated highly as did achieving organisational goals through shared sector values. It is logical to assume that feelings about the work place would arise from interpersonal interactions given the professional backgrounds and the emerging link between this and the chosen sector of the respondents.

The importance of the nature of the work

The strength of comments and frequency highlights the satisfaction gained from providing a responsive service with appropriate outcomes related to identified need, making a difference, and facilitating change. Most respondents commented that if their jobs were to provide even more job satisfaction this would include being able to help more people and their families. It is clearly important not to underestimate the role of the nature of the work in the decisions to enter into and remain in the sector and in determining job satisfaction. Organisations were viewed positively in determining the nature of the work tasks, the work load, training and promotional opportunity through policies and culture and if this is coupled with responsive service delivery it provides this group of people significant job satisfaction.

The literature on job satisfaction alerted me to the potential salience between autonomy, variety and job satisfaction and once this was analysed the theme that emerged was that for this group of people it directly related to self-management, developing high performing teams, control of who they employed and networking and sharing with others. Being a manager creates an opportunity for challenge, new learning, being responsible for decisions, being creative, solving problems, reaching standards of competence and achieving success. These result in stimulating autonomy and variety making it easier for the manager to feel they can make a difference.

The impact of the organisational context

Physical working conditions were not mentioned as contributing to satisfaction in this study however the emotional ‘tone’ of the workplace was regarded as significant and discussed in the next chapter. Locke (1976) suggests that unless work conditions are extremely good or bad they are taken for granted by most employees and is not prominent in understanding satisfaction.

Respondents valued quality development, projects, research work, being able to plan well, and an appropriate workload balance. These concur with Spector’s (1985) and The Werry Centre’s (2008) characteristics and dimensions researched as predictors of workforce job satisfaction. The Werry Centre’s (2008) findings were more congruent with this study on dimensions such as appropriate salary, high quality supervision, access to collegial support, and flexible employment options. One respondent mentioned opportunities for research and another of professional development as contributing to positive assessment of job satisfaction. Career pathways and progression were mentioned but not elaborated on in this chapter.

Moderators

The available literature discussed the influence of gender, tenure, personality traits, and age of respondents (Brown & Yoshioka, 2003; Spector, 1997; Vinokur-Kaplan, 1996; D. Vinokur-Kaplan, Jayaratne, & Chess, 1994). It is likely that the individuals who became managers possessed more of certain traits making them more satisfied with their positions

suggesting that those who are more competent in their job aspects will feel more satisfaction overall (Spector, 1997). It is also likely that given the age of most respondents 40-70 years that this group is at least mid career and therefore more strongly vested-socially, psychologically, and through accumulation of leave and fringe benefits to their current positions (Evans & Huxley, 2009; Vinokur-Kaplan, 1996). Many respondents have reached levels of management hierarchy precluding further promotional opportunity therefore the personal ambition of these individuals becomes directed towards passing on knowledge and achieving status in providing a high quality service.

I examined the stories narrated by the two men interviewed and did not identify any gender specific differences emerging. What becomes more salient is the volume of information from women, as the NGO sector is largely represented by this gender which is unique in itself. Generally management at the level of almost half of these managers, that of regional or service manager, in business management remains commonly a male role. The stories represented here are valuable providing a more complete picture of management job satisfaction. As expected they concur with literature as the dimensions are not gender specific due to the nature of the tasks required to achieve success and therefore satisfaction. What is frequently commented on though is the importance of collaboration, negotiation and teamwork which using a feminist perspective would be viewed as women's ideals. It is likely that women are over-represented in this field as the social services are viewed as a 'caring profession' and women have traditionally fulfilled this role and therefore also ascended the ranks.

Threaded through respondent's descriptions in this chapter is the dominant narrative, that being the need to make a difference and invest in the lives of others whether they be clients, co-workers, or staff, the significance of which will remain salient throughout this study. In the following chapter this will again be linked amongst other factors relating to job dissatisfaction.

Chapter Seven: Job Dissatisfaction

Introduction

This study explored aspects of job dissatisfaction specific to the NGO social service manager and whether these could override any overarching sense of satisfaction. Respondents were asked to think back over the last week or month and relate activities [or parts] of their job that contributed to feelings of job dissatisfaction or those really tough days. They were then asked if these activities would override general feelings of job satisfaction and make them consider evaluating whether to stay. This was posed to gauge intensity of dissatisfaction. Findings highlighted dissatisfaction groupings with major contributing themes not too dissimilar to those of job satisfaction. This chapter therefore has four sections, each will describe information specific to being a manager. The first, relating to pay, progression and training discrepancies highlights the lack of advancement, limited recognition for training, and low remuneration. The second section discusses the significance of conflict in relationships comprising negative supervisory, team and collegial traits and actions. The third reflects the change in the nature of the work including excessive demands and workloads, frustration with frequent interruptions resulting in fragmented work days, and work requests that aren't seen as making a difference to service provision. And finally the fourth section discusses the impact of the organisational context and disenchantment towards moves encouraging 'regionalization', the organisation not reflecting its local mission, discontent with impinging managerialism, increased accountability, a focus on outcomes, and resultant lack of autonomy, and disappointment with changes to funding and contracts.

Pay, progression and training discrepancies

Respondent's narratives become ambivalent when discussing issues of pay. On one hand low pay was often mentioned but frequently described as compensated for by feelings of purpose and achievement in their field. Respondents assert they are undertaking meaningful work and prepared to receive more or less reasonable pay for this. Conversely respondents emphasised that the money received did not reflect the

responsibility and extra roles that were required in the position. This was coupled with infrequent pay increases, no advancement opportunities and little acknowledgement of sought after qualifications. This led one respondent to question feelings of loyalty and dedication to their chosen field of employment and another to be torn between wanting to be paid for the job done and altruistic motives:

Marjorie: I still don't believe the money reflects the responsibility and the extra roles I take on. Outside the NGO Sector I could be earning a hell of a lot more, but I guess that is the push pull factor for me I obviously need to be in an industry where I feel like I am doing something positive – like it is impacting on people maybe.

Lisa: It is not about the money but there is no progression, there is nothing, you're lucky if you get a cost of living adjustment – there is no advancement, there is no scale, there is nothing. In the ten years I have been here I have had a cost of living adjustment but there's no progression... I remember working for a Government organisation and it certainly made a difference when you came in, you came in with a qualification and had some sort of progression until you got to the 'bar' but here there isn't even that. So it doesn't matter if you get another qualification along the way, it doesn't help...so on a down day you could think is it worthwhile staying.

If the frustration of not being fairly compensated was also coupled with a lack of resources such as not having access to a work vehicle this increased stress and also dissatisfaction:

Marjorie: The car thing bugs me because I am expected to attend meetings and catch up with staff but the tools are not there; and I am not using my own vehicle I have done that for long enough.

The lack of recognition of additional training and poorly organised training programmes are also factors for dissatisfaction in the NGO sector. The NGO sector requires the services of qualified and competent workers, and often does not pay a great deal more for these employees than ‘unqualified’ staff. It also applies a blanket approach to training programmes expecting all employees to attend, from support worker level through to highly qualified expert, without recognition of prior learning or the need of the individual:

Jan: I don't believe that extra qualifications are going to give you any more dollars. They want us registered to our governing bodies because of our contracts but that still doesn't mean that we get any extra for having that...Probably the other thing for me is training. At the moment there seems to be regional training; but it doesn't seem to matter how much training you have done in that particular area – you go again – perhaps they are not recognising the training needs for that particular individual.

The significance of conflict in relationship

Respondents report they prize a management structure which nurtures expertise and values autonomy. Managers confidently describe that their results and expertise confirm their competence to others. In return they value supportive supervisory, collegial and subordinate relationships.

Supervisor practices, acknowledgement and traits

Respondents often describe a lack of understanding from superiors and mixed messages about what they are in control of. There is disconnect between their perceived work role, the outcomes they are being asked to deliver, and the information they are being asked to report on. The resultant conflicts between authority and autonomy have left some respondents feeling like they are wedged in the middle of their organisations ‘ticking boxes’, delivering administrative decrees, and increasingly feeling like a cog in a bureaucratic machine. Participants specifically comment on the frustration they feel

when superiors want additional information with very little notice or acknowledgement when completed and little idea of the time commitment involved:

Jan: I guess like me it is when you get an email from national office, regional manager whoever it may be wanting information and expecting it to be done that day when you know in actual fact there are many hours involved and they have no idea of the work or time commitment to get that result for them.

Lisa: You know you are feeding into a layer above you that then takes that information and it just disappears and there is often no acknowledgement of that...It is an unusual layer to sit in because a [Regional Manager] will present the information to the national management team but you have provided the information. So they may be thanked for the regions report ...but it won't be [colleague named], and I and [administrator named] thanked.

The frequently associated contributors to dissatisfaction from respondents also included frustration with supervisory traits and practices which included lack of communication and differing styles of management not compatible with their own way of working:

Marjorie: I go home and I really like my job but I did struggle with a [previous] manager... I think it has been a reflection in different management styles ... doesn't matter how good or bad you are if someone's style is completely different and there are things you can't agree on more often than not, and you are thinking I don't understand what you are doing, then it is very hard. And it does impact on whether you have job satisfaction hugely.

The work team – co-workers, staff and conflict

Much of the work performed in NGOs is conducted within a team environment; manager's being participants in multiple teams. Dissatisfaction with work colleagues in relation to the integrated efforts of a work team should not be overlooked. Co-workers were mentioned by one respondent who commented that they could set the atmosphere of

the work environment. If co-workers were not working as part of the organisational team it could affect the feeling of the environment and the day:

Marjorie: I think your team can impact on your job satisfaction; I think I am a friendly stable person so my mood is quite even and I will always walk in and say good morning and smile but you get people that come in here and are quite obviously moody about things or have a really unfriendly tone and I find that really obnoxious and it affects the whole feeling of the environment for the day.

Respondents also participate in a team that achieves goals through their staff, when this works smoothly and evidence for results can be produced this generates satisfaction. However managers are judged and evaluated by their subordinates' performance and when those team members do not meet standards complaints and conflicts arise. Respondents discussed feeling frustration at staff that 'don't get it' even after extensive support and training:

Marjorie: The things I find that are not satisfying are the repetitiveness if you are dealing with staff that are choosing not to or not taking on something very well that was introduced years ago and they are still not doing properly. You might run through it in training and you might run through it in a meeting and you might go through it at your one on one meetings and they are still not getting it right. That is when I feel quite dissatisfied because I can't do someone's job for them.

Mathew: Sometimes it is the small things which the staff unknowingly do which can irritate you. They don't do big things it can be small, small things but it can irritate you like when they don't do their job properly because if the staff don't do their job properly then it doesn't help me to do my job properly because everything is related.

Although the background of these respondents is generally people based a surprising number commented on their intense dissatisfaction if having to deal with conflicts and confrontational situations:

Bill: I don't particularly like having to get involved too much in confrontational situations. I know we have confrontation no matter what but I don't enjoy it.

The change in the nature of the work

Excessive workloads precluding reaching excellence in completion of tasks, never feeling like work is finished, fragmented work days with frequent interruptions, and high volumes of work that never come to light were the most commonly reported and frequently discussed components of job dissatisfaction for this group of respondents.

Acceptable standards only

Respondents' workloads are fast-paced and require plenty of energy. The principle stressors were frequency of hectic workdays and interruptions resulting in fragmented allocation of tasks, and never feeling like a job was finished or when it was, feeling like it was rushed and not highly executed. One of the troubling comments was respondents noting that they felt they were finishing tasks to an acceptable standard but there was no time to finish to a high standard. This resulted in an ever-increasing sense of dissatisfaction that the role was not being performed as competently as they would have liked:

Vivian: Probably one of the biggest things that I have noticed in my time here in the NGO is the change that has occurred that you never seem to get time now to finish anything to a high standard. You are able to finish to an acceptable standard, or you get it to this part, and then it can take you quite an age to get it to a final part. So there is an increasing feeling of dissatisfaction around a sense of what am I actually achieving in this role and to what degree.

Hectic and fragmented days

Respondents discussed having planned days with demanding work schedules frequently interrupted by either requests from superiors for additional information and reports or interruptions from subordinates seeking clarification and assistance. The piecemeal approach to the day's events are expected given that crises are often interspersed with day to day events but respondents not achieving full accomplishment of tasks led to decreased feelings of competency and aptitude.

Sam: A tough day for me would probably be something coming out of left field and it is probably more to do with the time factor rather than anything else.

Because our days are pretty structured; I have got seven supervisions to do in a week plus I have an open door policy not to mention the stats, the paperwork, I don't have any down time. I haven't had morning and afternoon teas for years.

Another cause of respondent dissatisfaction is staff vacancies and the impact for a busy agency when a staff member resigns. Respondents discussed difficulty with increased workloads to cover, reallocating existing staff that already have full case loads, and the time needed to orientate new staff members while service provision pressures continue:

Theresa: We are a busy agency and when one staff member drops off it actually has a significant impact on the ability of the agency to cope with its workload.

You have to cover; you have existing clients that need to be reallocated to people who already have a full case load themselves and it always takes time when a new staff member starts even if they are fully qualified and experienced, a lot of people just can't hit the ground running.

Work that doesn't make a difference

The realities of the workplace and the nature of social service work is that of dealing with challenging situations and assisting people who are often traversing major life events. Respondents did not recount dissatisfaction with this challenge but focused on high volumes of work when very little of it resulted in assisting in service provision or

making a difference in people's lives. It was proposed that they were feeding information up to superiors that often was not seen again or did not come to fruition. Hectic days and fragmented workloads means the social service manager can experience stress and emotional tiredness. Not surprisingly respondents were left questioning the volume of work to be completed, what they had done all day and their own personal and professional expertise.

Lisa: A lot of work you are doing is around the hidden level, you are doing a whole lot of work that may never see the light of day. You know you are doing it for the regional or national management team...there is lots of stuff that you are feeding into that no one is ever going to know about. It may come to fruition or it may not, but people think you have done nothing.

In addition to increased expectations from regional management and hectic workdays there is a perceived instability of employment in the NGO sector at present also resulting in respondents beginning to question their commitment to their work:

Jan: At the back of your thinking is how "long is this position going to be there"... I am doing all of this, more and more expectations are coming from regional management to do this, this, and this, but is it worth it.

The impact of the organisational context

The work environment does not stand still. Changes are expected and welcomed as they provide a stimulating context and an opportunity to show competence. However it can take years to develop a niche within the social service sector with much time and effort expended. Respondents report that when limitations to participate in organizational decisions are placed on managers and structures are introduced that discourage resourcefulness and the ability to meet local need this results in dissatisfaction.

Regionalising and other governance concerns

Moves towards regionalising were described in most accounts and were eyed suspicious with concerns that there would be less flexibility in the delivery of services to meet local need. It was believed that national branches, in their efforts to cut costs, dispensed unequal distribution of resources with fewer flowing to smaller or outlying branches. Additionally it was felt they demonstrated a lack of understanding of community dynamics when standardized policies were introduced, which is at the heart of NGO sector goals, being concerned that what worked in cities would not work for clients in smaller regions:

Jan: At the moment there seems to be this belief that what will work in Auckland will work in Invercargill. We know that is not quite the way it works. But there seems to be reluctance from national management or perhaps being more idealistic about what needs to be on offer at each individual branch.

Additional concern was expressed that changed governance structures focusing on bigger cities would have a trickle effect to retaining high calibre staff:

Jan: You've only got to look at the suggested new governance structure and what impact that could have on families and right across the board. When you start having a regional leadership committee and the meeting is going to be held in Dunedin and you think who is going to be able to take a day off work to travel up to Dunedin for a meeting. Teleconferences are not the same and you will start to lose a good calibre of people.

Many organisations in the NGO sector are governed by Boards of Trustees and respondents also commented on strained relationships due to the blurring of lines between management and governance. Frustration and disappointment can be heard in the responses around these governance issues:

Kate: One thing I hear from managers all the time is the difficulty they have with their Boards... most of it hinges around the difference or the knowledge or the knowing of the line between management and governance...and you see that all the time. If any manager in my experience is having major issues it is normally hinging around the fudging of governance and management.

Discontent with impinging managerialism

The current changes in the NGO sector of increased competition and performance management have been borrowed from the business world, tending to impact on downsizing or standardizing, increased accountability and a focus on outcomes. Respondents state clearly that much of this is viewed as the imposition of a bureaucratic model of working with impinging managerialist expectations:

Steff: What have I had enough of? The bureaucracy, and the continual paperwork and expecting our staff to complete things that there is no way they should have to do that... and it is just bureaucracy, absolute bureaucracy and higher up expecting far too much from people, they just can't do it.

Performance management or managerial accountability is all about auditing, contracts, targets and timetables with feedback systems, assessment and review systems, and information and communication technologies. In the new era accountability and effectiveness are generally monitored by and provided via auditing. However one respondent finds the process of auditing people inhuman and unachievable finding this to be an extreme measure within which to gauge and measure performance:

Steff: Actually that is the stuff I hate, it is auditing it is inhuman and it's unachievable. It is paperwork, it is not the person, it is tick boxes, dot the i's cross the t's...but they are not boxes. I understand quality assurance you know you have got to have that but then there is that extreme.

A frequently discussed topic was increased accountability infiltrating into everything being done with extra checks and balances and decreased creativity due to contracting and funding demands. Respondents struggled to comprehend that many of the requirements would produce improved service delivery sometimes having to cancel client visits to complete paperwork and questioned if they were instead box ticking exercises:

Rachel: I worked for six years for an accountant before I had my real life...I haven't got a problem about seeing figures on paper and things being tidy I like things to be organised...So I haven't a problem with any of that, none of that frightens me, it is just the box ticking exercises and the recording. I am less tolerant with those box ticking type contractual obligations.

Participants often view changes as an intrusion into their 'real work with people' and are resentful of the extensive demands made by management often via technology with respondents reporting spending more time in front of computers than in face to face contact providing continual paperwork, using more and more business model language and needing to respond instantly to demands for information:

Vivian: Other people I have talked to have all talked about spending more time in front of computers, it has changed the way that we need to respond because we now need to be instantly available so information can flow. I sometimes wonder if we had to write our letters to all the garbage that comes from emails would we actually do that.

Training and professional development have built expectations of the workplace as the opportunity to use skills and abilities. Managers assume that they will exercise these with creativity, variety, and autonomy embracing challenge as a means of job enrichment. The increase in bureaucratic systems of work results in decreased control and autonomy and one respondent states the imposition of rules, processes and accountability to imply he was somehow breaking the law instead of feeling like a competent, self-managing employee:

Bill: It is a big organisation, it has been in place for a long time and with those sorts of organisations comes bureaucratic systems that get imposed – we have manuals to breakfast time and processes in place for this that and the next thing. We get audited to heck so that's another thing that gets imposed on us and you get a sense that you are "breaking the law sometimes" when people want to come and check on everything that you are doing and make sure it is all kosher and we're not ripping anybody off.

Disappointment with changes to contracts and funding

Frustration was also expressed about the increased workload not being able to be recorded against the restrictive funding headings which employers increasingly request to be allocated against as evidence for outcomes when in fact client work was being cancelled in order to provide evidence in the form of monitoring and reporting:

Jan: You can look at your diary sometimes and think "what have I done". You've been at your desk and just typing or collating but when it comes to putting it down on your timesheet where does it fit. I haven't been out doing client work and I have had to cancel visits because 'this' has been required.

Disappointment with restrictive funding criteria to enter services was also discussed as was feeling disheartened when demand for programs outstripped funding availability and people had to be turned away questioning whether running a good service was about evidencing financial acumen or actually providing that service to clients:

Michelle: And now I have no funding. I am still receiving emails regarding the programme. Even last week I had three phone calls, but I have no funding for that programme...And when you can't find the money and you see the need it is really disheartening...of course I understand that to run a good service you need to understand the money and budgets but actually to run a good service you

need the clients and the people. So they come first otherwise you are not actually going to need the money to run it.

Worry was expressed about tightening contracts and increased competition amongst the sector and discussion from Government about loss of contracts for some organisations:

Jan: The tough days can be when you start talking about contracts, when someone says we had x number of dollars coming through this contract and next year there could be a significant drop.

Summary

Remuneration retains an important role in job dissatisfaction particularly when coupled with infrequent pay increases, almost no progression, lack of recognition for additional training, blanket training programs without recognition for prior learning and increased expectations and responsibilities not viewed as aligning to NGO sector values.

These managers generally appear to be highly organised approaching their workdays with planning and efficiency. The sudden changes and emergencies experienced during the day; additional paperwork, reporting, and statistical information; and responding to staff can in fact be exhilarating. Findings indicate that the hectic workloads and fragmented days referred to by the respondents resulting in dissatisfaction are in fact the aversive work conditions brought about by the erosion of a focus on service provision and accompanying additional accountability. Their excessive workloads often result in working well above and beyond forty hour work weeks which are generally not recompensed. Dissatisfaction therefore becomes the “last straw” syndrome of which the smallest or next request becomes insurmountable such as filling vacancies and orientating staff.

Findings indicate that respondents feel immense dissatisfaction with perceptions of ticking boxes by attending management meetings where opinions are not valued, reporting to ever increasing layers of hierarchies when the information is never seen or

heard about again, and completing contract funding and statistical information that doesn't relate to service provision. There is also reference to the language of business creeping in with a focus on paperwork rather than face to face contact with people and additional decline in autonomy, with creativity viewed as disappearing. Not surprisingly employees who perceive high levels of constraint tend to be discontented with their jobs and the increase in accountability and a focus on outcomes with the resultant lack of autonomy are catalyst to job dissatisfaction and thoughts of termination.

Respondents acknowledged that the NGO sector is facing changes and increasingly required to evidence outcomes in shorter time periods with organisations increasing in size as expertise and more contracts are sought to be financially viable. However when this results in increased hierarchical structures and bureaucratic operations, issues of control and dissatisfaction are raised. Autonomy issues are at the core of introducing bureaucratic processes into the social service arena, feeding into the layers above which in turn absorb it with little or no feedback and acknowledgement, coupled with strained supervisory or collegial relationships result in dissatisfaction for respondents.

An important development in dimensions of dissatisfaction has been the use of the computer for communication and documentation. Although the practice is essential for recording, quality assurance and planning findings indicate technology has become time cumbersome impacting significantly on face to face contact with staff and clients.

These and other workplace difficulties such as frustration with management when the organisation isn't run well and not reflecting mission goals to meet local need led respondents to consider their options for employment. Ten of these respondents have been a manager for five years or more with eight of them being in their current position for a similar length of time. These respondents are well versed in the trends of the NGO sector. It should therefore raise concern when this group of people question their professional and personal expertise feeling an increasing sense of disappointment and stress.

The NGO sector has been requested by Government to increase inter-sector collaboration. If this results in increased variety and autonomy this will mitigate some of the impacts of job dissatisfaction. However if this enhances negative consequences such as restraining costs and cost-cutting, maximising caseloads and decreasing staffing levels, with increased monitoring and emphasis on efficiency it will fall in line as dissatisfaction.

In the following chapter I will continue to illustrate the interrelationship of job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. These will be demonstrated as distinct from overall satisfaction and linked to the motivation to stay or go.

Chapter Eight: Should I Stay or Should I Go?

Introduction

A combination of factors is attributed to managers' thoughts about job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction and these are sometimes interrelated. In this chapter the factors contributing to this process are explored further to discover what respondents indicate would specifically lead them to terminate employment. A discussion follows about what motivates respondents to either change their sector or to remain with it, the 'push pull' factors for employee retention.

To approach the subject of retention participants were asked what would hold them in on the tough days. They were also asked what had been most helpful so far to get through the tough experiences, searching for specific clarification and opportunity for deeper reflection. Their responses clearly support the evidence of research relating to the significance of other people. In this instance, clients, staff, colleagues and superiors was noted. Most people cited genuinely caring about the sector, its values and people they were intertwined with and for many respondents was the primary attraction to remaining. What was highlighted in relation to people was: focussing on client need, being able to make a difference in individual lives, positive and supportive supervisory, collegial and subordinate relationships and working as part of a team. Respondents also indicated that positive outcomes for social justice and advocacy, personal alignment to mission goals and sector values, balance between case work and management tasks, a work-home life balance, job security, and a sense of achievement were also impacting factors.

To approach the subject of termination I asked respondents whether their stated aspects of job dissatisfaction would override feelings of job satisfaction and make them consider leaving. The majority of respondents were prepared to suggest that there was potential for reviewing employment, generally focusing around governance structure impacts and the background of changes to the NGO sector. They discussed issues of 'regionalization', a move towards implementing further aspects of business model theory and not being able to meet the needs of individuals or communities as a major contributor

of dissatisfaction. Respondents also cited pay, progression, work-home balance, best fit of values, and being the ‘meat in the sandwich’ as reasons for considering termination. Four managers specified they were considering leaving, three pushed away from the sector for the above reasons with two of these also citing supervisory conflict, and one drawn away for new challenges. These will be discussed further in the middle section of this chapter.

Finally, issues of overall job satisfaction are examined. I report that the final decision to leave comes from a culmination of different dimensions but that a sense of overall job satisfaction can be overridden by two main contributors. One is when an individual’s value base is impinged upon with goals no longer fitting with that of their employing organisation. This is significant for the NGO sector as it purports to have a value-driven people-focused philosophy. Ideally, this would provide organisations and employers the mandate and opportunity to revise divergence between their stated vision and the actual effects of change in the sector. And secondly for three of the four respondents who indicated they would leave this additionally occurred within the context of poor supervisory relationships. Supervisors and employers may need to consider that they may not afford their workers the same ‘duty of care’ as their clientele.

General retention factors

To clarify the reasons for which respondents remain in the sector I asked what they considered as the push pull factors affecting decisions about where they preferred to work. Those viewed as fundamental were: focusing on meeting client need through response service provision, making a difference to individuals and communities through advocacy and social justice, keeping links to clients and sector issues through a case load, seeing results related to client progress, good alignment between personal and organisational values and visions, and having good work and home balance.

Focus on the client – making a difference

The most frequently mentioned area in respondents’ discussion, which threads throughout this study were service provision and making a difference. Typically respondents

identified satisfaction when focus is on the client and their needs and they have the ability to work in flexible and creative ways to meet those needs. Ultimately respondents find meaning in being part of positive outcomes for the people they support, and helping families and the community to have quality of life:

Rachel: I think for me, the basic coming back down to why am I here, why am I working for this sector, it is really that I believe ultimately that I want to help families here. Ultimately if I can go home and I feel that something I have done today has assisted a family in my community then that's wonderful... I mean I don't come to work for a job, sure I need the money, but I have a love for it; you've got to have a love for the work.

Bill: The reason I stay in the NGO sector is purely because it is the one area to be in that you can achieve some of those nice things for people, particularly for families and have some really good outcomes as well.

Marjorie: I just feel like I am making a difference, I am not out there working with clients, but ultimately I feel like I am have a positive impact a) on the staff that report to me and b) on the clients that they support...so I really actually at the end of the day genuinely care what happens to these people, to the staff but mostly to the clients. I want to; I genuinely want people to have some sort of recovery or quality of life.

Advocacy and social justice issues

Wrapped up in the ability to find positive outcomes are issues of social justice, and advocating for the social grouping their clientele represents. This is one way of contributing to the world, producing immense satisfaction and commitment to their organisation and to the sector.

Vivian: I think the things that have held me here have been...the advocacy roles...so my sense of social justice and my sense that we contribute something to

this community and this world, play a part in what keeps me here even at the times when I just don't want to be here or the work really is not satisfying in any way shape or form.

Linked to personal values

Respondents link personal values and ways of working to organisational mission goals and sector values in their responses. This is where many respondents connect who they are with what they do. It is likely that these values link with their professional background principles. What draws many of these social workers towards management positions is a value-driven people-focused philosophy:

Jan: You cannot say working in an NGO that you are there for the money. You are there because of the people and the beliefs and the values that you believe in...and I guess if I was considering leaving it would be around my set of values as to what the fit was.

Theresa: It is believing in the vision that we have as an agency, and that might sound old fashioned but in the nicest sense of the word I am a do-gooder but I am hopefully a sensible do-gooder...actually I never did find anything else, this is what I do, it is almost what I am really.

Caseload-management and work-life balance

Some discussed that the caseload-management balance provides an opportunity to maintain professional skills balanced with the flexibility and variety of management tasks:

Jan: I have a case load and to me I've got a neat balance. I can do the manager's position here and I can also go out and become very frustrated or quite delighted with whatever is happening for families – and that's what holds me. It's just having that balance and variety.

Additionally work-life balance can be a reason to remain in the sector, although for some work-life balance is also contested as a factor relating to job dissatisfaction that would result in some considering leaving:

Lisa: There is certainly a better work life balance and maybe it is this NGO, maybe I am generalising but that is certainly something that keeps you in this job.

The above were major overall factors influencing retention. I will now turn to those factors specifically related to job satisfaction.

Retention factors attributed to job satisfaction

The main aspects of job satisfaction included rewards and pay, clients, relationship with staff, co-workers and supervisors, the nature of the work, and the organisational context of achieving goals through others. This section will discuss which of these components participants most link to retention. In response to the question “what holds you in on the tough days” this group of respondent’s overwhelmingly attribute this to staff, colleagues, superiors, and being part of a team.

Supportive colleagues and superiors

The literature on motivation for retention frequently highlights colleagues and supervisors as dimensions and these respondents are no exception. What attracts them and encourages them to remain offering them a supportive and encouraging environment is “others”. Many of the respondents indicate that they commenced positions of management because of the encouragement from others (chapter four) and it would seem natural to assume that the support and opinion of others continue to have relevance.

Genna: The benefits [draw factors for where you work] are job satisfaction and the relationships you have with other people. I love that and could not work in a position that couldn’t give me that opportunity...and I guess having the ability to share any issues with colleagues and my manager.

Jan: To me what I think is important is the relationship that you have with people, regardless of whether it is staff or a client. That's the stuff I think of when I'm down.

Being part of a team

Comments indicate that leading a team encourages respondents to draw on the knowledge of their backgrounds, provides variety and challenge, and requires flexibility and creativity. Being involved with staff and being happy with the team which they lead and the one they work in is a key component to retention:

Mathew: My colleagues have been very supportive, my line managers and those who work alongside me have been really good, and I think the reason for me staying is definitely the team. I think if the team wasn't good then I would have left this job.

Jan: What is the important thing for me is the staff. If it wasn't for staff I wouldn't be here. At times I don't agree with what may be coming from our national office and I say it is the staff that keep me here...just seeing how they have grown in their professional and their own personal development. That's what it's all about.

Job security and long service leave

Other factors mentioned that retained respondents on tough days when they might consider leaving were job security and long service leave. Length of time plays a part in retention as did flexibility to this respondent struggling with their supervisor's style:

Marjorie: I go home and I really like my job but I did struggle with a manager... I think it [retention] has been a reflection in different management styles maybe...if you are thinking I don't understand what you are doing, then it is very hard...it was for me for a long time and I looked for other work and I was successful...but I

didn't because I wanted some job security...and things like long service leave coming up, I have got a little bit of flexibility, and I am happy with the money.

Flexibility and a sense of achievement

Ideally respondents desire the flexibility to achieve success and make a difference in the lives of those they work with, ultimately endorsing this value when pay is low:

Theresa: I am not sure job satisfaction is as much internal...you still need to feel valued, and if it isn't monetarily then it needs to be some sense of achievement and value in other ways. And a sense maybe that you have to see that what you do does make a difference.

Jan: I guess if it was my dream job I would really like to be a branch and be able to offer people what they are asking for.

General termination factors

What then prompts these respondents to seek alternative employment? Four respondents indicate they were moving towards leaving the sector. They cited feeling that they were experiencing loss of control over providing a local expression to the value-driven ideological climate of the sector. The two main categories in this section relate to decisions to move towards both regionalising and introducing more standardized forms of service delivery and a shift towards more of a business focus imposing more reporting, auditing, accountability, funding concerns, competition for personnel, competition for resources, red tape and bureaucracy. These impact on individual's deeply held values and their intense dedication to clients and reiterate the conflict felt to meet the requirement to implement policies that run counter to their perceptions of desirable programs. It impacts on their own sense of professional competence and appropriate practice standards when performing their work.

Regionalising

The move towards standardizing organisational processes across nationally held contracts with national Government bodies is met with disdain. Many respondents assert that standardization dilutes responsiveness and the client-centred approach to individuals the sector claims to espouse. What is impacted on is the belief system of the respondent that local communities should determine local need and focus compatible with the demands and wants of the community; not having limits placed on discretion and autonomy to carry out work via external priorities:

Lisa: Some of the governance model stuff, right now we have a governance team that sits within the branch but if you move that out regionally then they move it nationally, then no it doesn't sit well with me because an NGO has a local focus...I would probably go if the agency took on a national focus, if its values continue to be at odds with mine...there would be a point where I won't stay.

A business model focus

Some respondents recounted difficulties with and felt particular distress by changes in service provision conflicting with personal values and best fit, additionally because they experienced restricted autonomy, variety, and flexibility. Almost all respondents who said they were going to leave attributed their decision, at least in part to sector changes and thought that the problems experienced resulted from the requests to increasingly employ a business model:

Jan: If you get someone from a business background for example, I am not sure how I would fit into that because our value bases would be different – that person would be busy focusing on dollars...I guess if I was considering leaving it would be around my set of values as to what the fit was

The imposed new business model frequently led to challenges to balance increased workloads and hectic and fragmented work days; the use of technology instead of face to face contact; increased accountability, reporting, and box ticking contractual obligations;

and applied an increasingly restrictive entry and eligibility criteria for clients. When the respondent was unable to maintain their concept of alignment with personal and professional values and experienced a sense of loss of purpose they began the decision making process to disengage:

Vivian: Sadly I seem to be spending more time sitting behind a computer than I could have believed was possible...I think that should things get much harder or tougher...and if we continue to go down a really strong business model I am not sure I want to work that way...somehow there has got to be an okay medium to find and I am not so sure we are able to do that.

Debbie: ...you could see people who could use the service but there was no way in for them and that broke my heart. I couldn't stand it and I think perhaps contributed to me leaving...and I thought time for a change.

Termination factors attributed to job dissatisfaction

All respondents experienced difficulties in some aspect of their workplace that adversely affected their satisfaction. Dimensions relating to retention were distributed evenly. This study concurred with past studies highlighting dissatisfaction dimensions such as negative supervisory and collegial traits and actions resulting in not feeling valued at work; poor work-home balance; lack of advancement, recognition for training; and low remuneration.

Negative supervisory relationships

Unhappiness with immediate supervisors is well documented as a reason for termination and participants acknowledge that getting on well with their immediate supervisor and the quality of their relationship as an important factor in retaining them.

Jan: It is also the managers, I have had really great managers...If you can't work alongside that manager then that would be a reason that I would need to evaluate.

Steff: I need to self-manage and I don't like a boss continually in at me and that is actually when I start applying for jobs.

Middle management issues

Respondents also mention dissatisfaction being in middle management feeling like the meat in the sandwich with excessive demands made by superiors, hassled from above and below and feeling quite vulnerable at times:

Sam: I find it difficult because being middle management you are the meat in the sandwich, you are getting instructed from the top...and I wanted someone who had my back.

Progression and pay

Other studies indicate that training, learning, and opportunities for individual and professional growth are important to managers (The Werry Centre, 2008), however these were only mentioned in passing by respondents in this study. What was highlighted is that the impact of low pay remains a contested issue however progression is important and both appear salient matters when coupled with extra work demands with no noticeable rewards:

Lisa: It adds to it I think that is some of the retention stuff [more and more expectations coming from regional management] because there isn't progression, there isn't anything...and what happens when you are at the top of the pay scale.

Jan: I think if anything would draw me away it would be the pay packet. At the moment we have two pay packets coming in so it is not an issue. But if I was living alone I may need to consider that.

Marjorie: time will tell but if you continue to step well above your role and there is no reward for that then that could potentially be a push pull as well.

Overall feelings of job satisfaction

While some staff turnover is inevitable, it is costly to the organisation and to service provision. As a significant number of respondents had a social work professional background it is not unexpected that this study would highlight the difficulties experienced with professional role expectations conflicting with organisational practice leading them to seriously re-consider their employment options. Three respondents' explicitly state that value conflicts had arisen leading to consideration of termination suggesting that the individual's values and goals no longer fitted with that of their employing organisation. The deeply held beliefs and values of respondents towards a people industry providing outcomes for clients of equity, access and participation; advocating against marginalisation, discrimination, and stigma whilst also valuing the relationships of the people working in those organisations appears to be at the heart. When those values and ways of working are impacted on by contracts and governance issues calling for decrease in access or flexibility and autonomy in working this will override an overall sense of job satisfaction. Respondent's described feeling like they had lost leeway in their independence and were being asked to implement another philosophy of 'best practice' running contrary to theirs. This was usually coupled with poor supervisory relationships and their response was to consider termination.

Summary

Employment provides intellectual, emotional, and financial benefits to employees. There are multidimensional facets elicited when asking individuals to discuss issues of motivation to stay or leave a job. No one factor will explain retention, however the data from this study highlights that there are several factors linked with job satisfaction: focusing on the client; working to bring philosophies of social justice to fruition; good fit with personal values; a good balance of work duties within the work environment; and a good balance between work hours and home hours. These are intertwined with wanting to make a difference in individual lives and within communities; desiring to be valued and treated with respect by supervisors; having positive relationships with other colleagues and an atmosphere of teamwork; to be supported with opportunities for autonomy, creativity, flexibility; to be paid fairly or remunerated in other ways; and

having personal and professional values align with their organisation. These findings are consistent with other studies arguing that workers respond to conditions encouraging interesting work, job security, and personal growth whilst also seeking due recognition of that growth (Bloxall, 2003). Studies also endorse being happy with co-workers, everyone getting along well together with pleasant interaction - and having a good relationship with supervisors (Locke, 1976; Spector, 1985) as retention factors.

There are two main themes in respondents' responses regarding leaving. The first offers the opportunity to explore the undertones of dissatisfaction, the murmuring that may give rise to leaving; and the second to examine the explicit reasons of the four people who indicated they were leaving.

From the first group, several respondents commented on sources of stress which included excessive workloads, fragmented days, and concerns about progression and being compensated fairly in remuneration comparable with other workers. However there was often ambivalence in the comments made: respondents enjoyed busy workloads, but not hectic or fragmented ones which could be very subjective to define for an organisation; some said there was good work-home balance and others said they would consider leaving if work continued to impinge on providing the best for their family; and although this study showed consistency with research that remuneration and benefits are a factor in retention, overall pay is clearly not the most important issue in employee retention, but it is possible to interpret these findings as supporting other research that employees would leave for better pay.

The second group indicate they had begun the disengagement process. Three attributed this to the changes in the sector coupled with supervisory conflict. The changes referred to directly related to people-responsive values being challenged by the new doctrine of business model theory, cost-cutting, changes to entry criteria, and standardized procedures which promote a one size fits all philosophy.

Contrary to literature no one expressed a sense of professional burnout (Leiter, 1991) and this could be attributed to the fact that NGO change is just beginning to impact. I expect that as the economy continues to experience tightening this will further impact on service provision and flexibility and increase the possibility of managers burning out and considering their tenure.

Some research discusses a relationship between age and turnover with younger people tending to leave positions (Boxall, et al., 2003). However this study highlights that for some of this group of respondents aged 30-70 years they are considering issues relating to termination. Length of service could be linked to retention as in this study those not considering termination have worked in their current position for 10 years or longer and commented on job security and long service leave.

A key question perhaps is why this group of people entered into and remain in this sector and their organisations; this is where understanding might be provided. We cannot discount that for many respondents they entered employment because others recognised abilities in them. It seems likely therefore that relationship remains a significant determinant to retention. Respondents also link personal identity with choice of employment; wanting to make a difference in the lives of people and their communities. It is important to remember that the NGO sector is underpinned with a perception of people responsive practices and a social justice framework. One of the measures for success for social service organisations is based on the extent to which clients benefit from its services. Many respondents cited their 'duty of care' towards their clients as a primary consideration for remaining, thus linking job satisfaction with organisational commitment which is a debated topic in research and a proposition that deserves further study.

Global job satisfaction, based on this study's particular form of questioning, was not the best predictor of retention as it appeared that although most participants reported feeling an overall sense of job satisfaction there were distinct aspects such as work-life balance, negative supervisor, collegial or team traits, lack of autonomy, and market reforms with

potential to override this. Other factors contributing to this included loss of distinctiveness to the NGO sector, loss of an individual client focus, and a one size fits all approach all of which override satisfaction and could initiate termination. The findings suggest this group of respondents will work above and beyond what is required of their job as long as they have autonomy, challenge, positive relationships with “others”, and a focus on person-responsive service delivery. These issues will be explored further in the following chapter on emerging information and implications from this study.

Chapter Nine: Emerging Implications and Conclusions

Introduction

The primary focus of this study is on understanding the factors surrounding the job (dis)satisfaction and retention of managers within the NGO social services sector because it is “likely that job satisfaction can be positively affected through organisational interventions” (Spector, 1997, p. 73). The implications of the study are important for organisations in this sector which have struggled to attract and retain skilled staff. The results will extend past the welfare of managers to a benefit in terms of organisational performance and market competitive edge. Furthermore as the study is firmly embedded in the NGO social service context it provides insight into the contemporary pressures of market reforms.

This chapter will begin with a focus on the manager as a vital ingredient to organisational and NGO sector performance commencing with a discussion on management pathways. The conflict and uncertainty respondents expressed in the role of manager is discussed, purporting it to be an attempt to clarify and define the difference between what the respondents view as best practice verses the current trend to implement a set of management practices with an emphasis on market reforms. Additionally this highlights an emergent preference for certain roles and lack of interest in mastering ‘impinging’ managerialist practices. Training will also be discussed as a component of understanding the organisational terrain for respondents, and a response for training institutions and professions will be proposed. Finally the section will focus on proposals for a mentoring and collaborative peer support program to satisfy a preferred format of support.

The second section will focus on the NGO sector and the choice that most participants make to remain in its employ, due to a sense of belonging and asserting it to have a unique identity. This distinctiveness is linked with sector principles fostering a value-driven and people-centred ideological climate of social justice and human rights. Next will be a focus on the changing climate and new era bringing conflict for the value base amid a threatened identity to respond to issues of social justice. The threats come from

calls for collaboration which increase competition, standardizing policies and procedures to the detriment of outlying areas, and competition for funding producing a 'poverty trap' mentality and competition for staff. Finally the shift in the distinct flavour of the sector is highlighted with a clear message from respondents that consultation and planning is required or managers may opt for private practice as a way to meet their belief for client centred responsive service.

The third part of this chapter will turn towards job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. The section begins with a comparison of the findings of this study against other studies with the addition of emerging points of difference. The immense satisfaction in positive interactions with others is reiterated, including the need for positive feedback; this, combined with positive supervisory traits, can mitigate decisions to leave providing a fundamental retention strategy. Finally additional links between job satisfaction and sector values aligning with personal and professional ideals are discussed in the light of Locke's (1976) findings. The section then moves towards dissatisfaction, providing evidence that conflict has arisen between meeting service provision objectives and providing accountability, monitoring and evidence of outcomes. These hallmarks of the new era usher in a culture of norms and values which run counter to those emphasised as providing satisfaction for respondents. Finally this section concludes with a caution in respect to overall or global job satisfaction, highlighting that there are facets of dissatisfaction that will override this for many respondents. Organisations are reminded that they determine the nature of their work and have significant opportunity to influence retention. Retention may be achieved by enlisting the creative capacity of respondents and the sector to find an alternative plan for change.

Finally the chapter concludes with a discussion on retention beginning with a focus on the quit intentions of the four respondents who indicated they were going to terminate employment. In an attempt to understand their motivations, the discussion will highlight the link between sector values and retention. Focus is then paid to the positive organisational changes that can be taken to mitigate 'intention to quit' intertwined with respondents' commonly discussed themes and common phrases expunging the

assumption that employees leave for higher paying jobs. This section concludes with an assurance that respondents do not wish to be obstructive and have big dreams for their jobs and the sector.

Focus on the manager

One of the central implications of the study emphasises that managers are a vital ingredient to a stable workplace and merit time and energy to appreciate the facets which encourage their satisfaction and commitment. The high performance of management work practice has a direct association to organisational performance and competitive advantage (Delaney & Huselid, 1996; Huselid, 1995). This study asserts that high-quality management practice is not just about implementing a range of techniques to foster productivity and ensure others carry out their jobs but that these respondents inspire teamwork, foster and improve the skill base of individuals, and care for others' physical, emotional and mental safety. Ultimately these have significant positive impact on service delivery. When an organisation loses a manager to turnover it not only loses productivity and continuity but loses a motivating and relational focal point, a perhaps overlooked competitive advantage, and one that managers may well find obsolete with the new era of market reforms.

A large number of respondents had a social work background and in their pathway to management found they were well positioned to understand and respond to the human resource and organisational objectives of NGOs. The findings indicate that NGO managers are often promoted into positions due to their human relationship capabilities and generally not through self-promotion. The study demonstrates an emergent preference for certain roles and for some, a lack of interest for mastering new policy, fiscal, marketing and strategic planning developments. These are often eyed suspiciously and linked to impinging managerialist practices. This study highlights that in addition to understanding the philosophy that underpins social service organisations and competence in person-responsive practice there also needs to be an awareness of developing sector knowledge. This knowledge will provide the manager the ability to navigate the route

they wish to take as the sector moves into a new era. If not there is likely to be a sense of inadequacy for them in the new market resulting in termination of employment.

The generalization of the findings may be limited by the small sample size and the respondent's subjective interpretations, however it is opportune to recognize that there are demands in the new environment with a number of gaps identified in the preparation of professionals to enter management roles and to be fully conversant with the new language and skills of managerialist practice for existing managers. Healy's (2002, p. 539) study concurs with identification of gaps in the development of management approaches but insists this be done "without sacrificing the humanitarian value base and knowledge of the complexities inherent in professional practice that social workers can bring to management".

The uncertainty expressed by respondents about the title of and role of a manager could in fact be a process of resistance to the new era through differentiation between the terms leadership and management. Ultimately what was brought into question was whose 'best practice' was being taken into account in the new era, that is, whose interests were being supported and served? Is it those of the market ethos and funders which seem to care less about people, believe in efficiency and a one size fits all approach, or those of the social services professional attempting to make responsive service the heart of work? Whether consciously or not respondents use language to differentiate work principles, beginning with reframing managerialist tasks as in chapter six. It is likely as Marston and McDonald (2012, p.1034) found that workers "have learned to become 'bi-lingual', strategically using managerial language when communicating with funding bodies or senior managers to secure funding and other resources, while using a more explicit social justice discourse when connecting with ordinary citizens and their struggles".

Additionally there was no consistent approach for the training and development for this group of managers. It was noticeable that only two people in the study entered management as a direct result of undertaking business studies. From this group of respondents it did not appear that they anticipated making a career into management

when students. Therefore the design of programmes to help students prepare for management at the time of qualification seems unlikely to be beneficial. This has considerable implications for institutions and professions to respond to the growing gaps and current challenges and offer programmes to organisations in the NGO sector for those already in management. Employers also need to take heed of this as training in management competencies is essential to reflect management practices and expectations for innovative responses in order to remain competitive in the NGO sector. Furthermore this could offer a collaborative opportunity to include partnerships between training providers and the NGO sector including facilitating management placements.

A number of respondents commented that they learnt their skills through role modelling others they wished to emulate. Additionally one respondent reported increased satisfaction when a group of peers assisted with planned support during a restructure. This would emphasize that mentoring makes a significant contribution to both learning and support. It would concur with The Werry Centre (2008) who conducted research which sparked their mentoring program offered by experienced leaders within the mental health sector to emerging leaders. A mentoring program could include self-care as a manager, having an organisational plan to deal with staff difficulty and conflict issues, receiving constructive feedback for incidents, and encouraging reflection and seeking explanation around divergence in values when efficiency and effectiveness are promoted over care and justice. Additionally collaborative manager peer mentoring groups across NGO sector organisations similar to a multi-disciplinary team approach in the Health Sector could assist with both expanding professional knowledge for support of clients and collaborative use of resources. A memorandum of understanding could be developed for confidentiality matters.

Focus on the sector

Understanding the development of the NGO sector is important. Respondents clearly identified that their intention to remain in this sector directly corresponds to worker value alignment with the sector's history and philosophy of grassroots community development operating in a people-centred ideological climate. Respondents found a sense of belonging and pride in the sector, whose unique points of difference and tenets valued reciprocity, collaboration, self-determination, empowerment, the client as central, flexibility, creativity, advocacy, autonomy, independence, and meeting grassroots need, whilst escaping red tape and bureaucracy. What is clear from this study is that in the main managers are not moving towards something when they terminate employment in an NGO, as much as moving away from recent NGO sector changes and an impinging business model threatening an identity committed to care and social justice issues.

The non-profit sector has moved into a different era, the Government who decides who and what it spends its money on is indicating a change to the kinds of services and priorities which are important, and in turn deciding what and who to fund. The Government is calling for greater co-ordination between all providers, delivery of integrated services, and more collaborative planned service coordination. The impact is being significantly felt in the NGOs as the major providers of community based care working with the most vulnerable populations.

What cannot be overlooked is the context of the change that managers find themselves in, that of an often marginalised sector not privy to planning and development discussions or communication at higher levels, offered little coordination or collaboration with Government organisations, entwined in competitive funding models, constrained by onerous compliance practices, and lacking investment in resources. In many settings it was noted that a standard response from organisations was to 'regionalise' or standardize policies and procedures often focusing resources on larger city branches within a region to the detriment of responsive service in smaller outlying areas. Additionally there is a concerning decrease in independence and autonomy impacted on by those organisations which respond to Government funding to provide certain services. Spector (1997),

comments that there is a significant relationship between levels of constraint and job satisfaction. The constraint is demonstrated, at least in part, when the leeway to promote human rights is severely hampered when advocating against the very people funding the service. A way forward needs to be found that can achieve the outcomes for Government without risk to the shape of the NGO sector and conflict with a value base that wishes to determine success as measured by sector values promoting responsive service provision. Aimers & Walker (2009) offer three new models of organisational practice (dual accountability, third party accountability, and self funding) to shift the imbalance of power relationship between Government and NGOs and re-claim community direction settings. With Government demanding results and outcomes the current NGO manager finds themselves in a position either experiencing challenge to their autonomy and organisational auspice or girding up to show leadership, develop solutions and demonstrate strengths.

Additionally it was felt that the fat from the sector had gone with organisations finding themselves in a 'poverty trap', with insufficient money to allow for innovation and just enough to meet running requirements. Respondents explained about constantly watching pennies, turning off lights and cutting back on everything other than absolute necessities with no funding for monitoring or increased audit and accountability. There was also a flow on to administration staff, as employment law changes require a huge drain on already stretched resources. Shoe string budgets present an ever-increasing element of risk and uncertainty as to how long an organisation can remain operating. Additionally the competition for funding, dwindling resources, and demanding contractual requirements including changes to professionals being qualified and registered, percolates amongst an increased competition for personnel from within a small pool of experienced staff, culminating in being unable to offer "top dollar" for services.

Above all one of the major concerns was the shift of focus away from the needs of the client towards the needs of the funder. This was viewed as the cause of the loss of the distinct flavour of the NGO sector. It was believed that the drive to cost-cut was not a desire for better services, but cast doubt on the knowledge and actions of the not-for-

profit sector and its ability to reduce and respond to social problems. This was seen as a threat to its aim to address inequalities and promote human rights in favour of adoption of the New Public Management emphasising technical and managerial discourses (Marston & McDonald, 2012). In this new era what is deemed as effective is not determined by the sector but by Government, however the sector believes Government underestimate and oversimplify the nature of the problems faced (ibid). The independence of the sector to advocate for its client base is threatened, as the needs of its funders are promoted as surpassing the needs of the user. Arguably it is the sector and worker's responsibility to become more informed, conversant and able to articulate a challenge to this misconception, in order to resist the formulaic responses demanded as outcomes and to the market language being communicated. Manning (1997) challenges social workers to take action about ethical dilemmas citing the worker as responsible to determine right and good behaviours, 'resisting phenomena that are harmful'. She argues that social workers have the power to intervene in individual lives carrying with it the responsibility to the ethics related to the use and abuse of power and speaking out to make these visible. Marston and McDonald (2012) in their attempt to reconceptualise political agency agree that social workers can exercise varying degrees of professional discretion acting as an 'interpreter and mediator' for government policy, continuing to emphasise issues of inequality and mal-distribution of resources, challenging stereotypes and refusing to speak market language when referring to clients. Additionally, they remind us we are not working alone as 'heroic agents' but playing our part in political action "to make hegemonic truths appear as neither inevitable nor natural, so that other possibilities might emerge" (Marston & McDonald, 2012, p. 1035).

Respondents have provided a clear message that without planning discussions on how the NGO sector will work with the Government on negotiated models that aim to achieve Government aims while at the same time preserving the independent value of the NGO sector to determine their own priorities and culture, the apparent discourse of the NGO manager is that they will leave and consider private practice. This will produce an even more fragmented approach to service delivery for Government but offers control and choice for private practitioners to meet needs driven service.

Job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction

Evidence has been provided that Spector's (1985) stated predictors for workforce satisfaction correlate to social service manager satisfaction in New Zealand relating to pay, benefits, co-workers, supervision, communication and the nature of the work itself and is associated with the degree of challenge, variety, flexibility, autonomy and responsibility that is consistently represented in employment. However in this study there was emergence of points specific to satisfaction as a manager, such as facilitating personal growth of employees, developing and leading teams, and keeping up professional competencies through carrying a caseload. Intertwined with these are how well the organisational context and culture responded to these, and sector values, in its service delivery. Again and again respondents reiterate that job satisfaction isn't about the money it is about making a difference in the lives of others, as well as being highly motivated by their unique role as teachers, equippers, leaders, and planners accomplishing goals through others.

Additionally there was consensus with The Werry Centre's (2008) research in Whakamarama te Huarahi agreeing that appropriate salary remuneration, high quality supervision, access to collegial support, flexible employment options, and promotion of career pathways were identified as important to retaining employment. However, unlike The Werry Centre (2008) findings, continuing development and release time for research and training were barely mentioned. This warrants further exploration as to the reasons for divergence. Perhaps this links to frustration regarding NGO practice for blanket training programs irrespective of prior learning and little opportunity for pay increase or promotion.

It is worth reiterating that the group of respondents overwhelmingly found satisfaction in interaction with others. They viewed client achievement and making a difference in the lives of others as integral. Given the social work background of many of the respondents it is not surprising they typically experienced feelings of success through positive advocacy for clients and staff, developing positive and supportive working relationships, carrying a small case load themselves, involving, empowering and bringing the potential

out in others, being able to build high performing teams, liaising with other organisations and being viewed as approachable and trustworthy people. This appeared to be a competent and motivated group of respondents making it likely as Spector (1997, p. 56) reminds us “people who are better able to do their jobs well and perform well tend to have higher job satisfaction”.

It seems likely that job satisfaction is rooted in job performance and job performance is likely to be influenced by the perception and feedback of others (Spector, 1997). As highlighted by other studies (Bryant, 2007; Dickinson & Perry, 2002; Evans & Huxley, 2009; Spector, 1985) and the respondents, recognition, affirmation and honest and regular communication were motivators and essential for job satisfaction. Value and success was often viewed in terms of relationship which is pivotal for employers to understand. One of the ways of finding value expressed by respondents is through positive supervisory relationships and the feedback received. Unfortunately the feedback reported on was generally from staff and clients, there appeared to be very little feedback from superiors. Findings suggest that “others” are a motivator and can play a significant role in determining whether to stay or to go. Supervisory traits which promote positive interactions have a mitigating effect on decisions to leave and are an area of significance for employers to focus attention towards. It appears that respondents reward their employers by working above and beyond their regular hours with recognisably less pay. There also needs to be a note of caution for employers in this changing era not to exploit this good will but to find other avenues of reward and valuing.

Additionally respondents clearly indicate they experience job satisfaction via perceived sector and organisational values for responsive service delivery. These values provide a sense of belonging and anchor them into the sector. This concurs with EA Locke (1976) and Brown & Yoshioka (2003) findings that values are direct determinants of satisfaction. However Brown & Yoshioka (2003) found that insufficient pay tended to override employee’s mission attachment whereas these respondents view their contribution to sector values and alignment with their own professional and personal values as more significant than pay. Respondents wish to make a contribution to their

community and world that cannot be bought. What is concerning given this finding is how they will describe being successful when the origins of the NGO sector as a grass roots entity able to identify and meet gaps is hampered in a new era of efficiency and productivity.

In regards to dissatisfaction it was emphasised that conflict has arisen between meeting service provision objectives and impinging managerialist principles of providing accountability, monitoring and evidence of outcomes. The new era ushering in a culture of norms and values which are performance oriented and results driven are not the values underpinning the NGO sector and respondents stated they found dissatisfaction in implementing a set of management practices with an emphasis on market values and an ever expanding vertical and structural base of monitoring and control. It is argued that taxpayers have the right to know what their money is being spent on and the Government, taxpayer and consumers are entitled to monitor performance (Munro, 2004). However respondents did not find good 'fit' for a directly applied philosophy and body of knowledge to the NGO sector of better management leading to better economic transactions, not wanting to become conduits of Government policy, interests and bureaucratic systems of work (Dixon, et al., 1998). This was viewed as contributing, amongst other things, to increasingly hectic and fragmented workloads for compliance, a feeling of never finishing a job well, and challenging the creativity, variety and autonomy of the very fibre of their work. When this was coupled with infrequent pay increases, no advancement opportunities, poor relationships with "others", little acknowledge of sought after qualifications, lack of recognition for existing and poorly organised additional training, increasingly restrictive funding and eligibility to service criteria, and standardized approaches to service delivery this could call into question feelings of loyalty and dedication to staying.

In respect to overall job satisfaction it appears that each dimension of job satisfaction does not make an equal contribution to global satisfaction and retention. For the social service manager the largest contributing dimensions are positive relationships with all levels of "others" and making a difference in the lives of those others, their communities

and their world. This is intertwined with both their organisation's ability to meet and respond to sector values and their own ability to feel challenged, achieve goals through others and be autonomous. It therefore appears that NGO managers are psychologically invested in their workplace and the organisational and sector values that underpin it. A facet of the job overriding this and important enough for managers to consider quitting appears to be encroaching managerialist perspectives. These are perceived as eroding responsive service provision. This can be viewed positively since organisations determine the nature of the work and tasks. Additionally, in respect to "positive relationships" organisations also have considerable influence in employment, supervisory requirements, and systems of support. Organisations could encourage utilization of external supervision for managers and this study would provide information to supervisors for suitable areas of support. Thus they have significant opportunity to influence retention.

Retention

Although it seems an obvious statement this study concurs that 'quit intentions' remain the best predictor of voluntary turnover (Griffeth, et al., 2000) meaning that although there was a degree of dissatisfaction due to the uncertainty of sector changes amongst all respondents, only four had begun a formal process of exploring and applying for another position and it was these four that were terminating employment. Focusing further on these four it would appear that there was a composite of reasons for termination however without wanting to simplify this experience what was ultimately impacted on was a sense of achievement. Lack of 'achievement' for these respondents was related to: not being able to focus on the client and their needs; inability to work in flexible and creative ways; infringement of advocacy and social justice opportunities; impinging managerialist perspectives; increasingly poor work-life balance; poor supervisor support or supervisory relationships; and lack of progression and rewards. Exploring the value of rewards and pay is beneficial to highlight the widely held assumption that employees leave for higher paying jobs when in fact the results of this study indicate this is not accurate for social service managers in the NGO sector. The reality is more complex. If managers are going to work for less compensation, which is universally recognised, they need to perceive that

the organisation's values and NGO mission for local need are met and they are valued for that by their superiors. More attention will also need to be paid to other dimensions of satisfaction when looking for solutions for retention such as having control, independence, self-determination, challenge, variety, a balance between case work and management tasks, rewards, supportive and encouraging work environment, a work-home life balance, and positive relationships, all of which have been indicated translate into job satisfaction and retention.

There is need for caution for the employer in respect to the benefits and costs in moving towards emphasising efficiency through increased monitoring and competition to a group of people who already have hectic and fragmented work days. I aimed this survey at employee perceptions of satisfaction in their roles but an important area for future research, as one respondent mentioned, is how the abilities and competencies that managers possess can mitigate some of the negatives they perceive to the recent changes in the NGO sector and the divergent interests represented. Further study on the impact of managerialist practices and procedures on organisation efficiency and productivity is needed.

Some of the strategies for retention can be found when respondents were asked about what would make a dream workplace, universally they wanted bigger and better services with long term effects rippling through families. They don't want to stagnate or for the sector not to produce results but overwhelmingly they are not willing to sacrifice their grassroots community development origins to achieve this. What needs to occur is for planned conversations to begin at all levels as to how to make the much needed changes to New Zealand's poor social outcomes whilst balancing this with retention issues.

Conclusions

Spector (1985) provides an efficacious instrument to measure social service job satisfaction. What has been demonstrated by this study is that by using an interview format a richer understanding of the value of satisfaction or dissatisfaction for particular dimensions specific to the New Zealand NGO social service manager is provided. What

has been discovered is that low pay is not a motivating force for this group of respondents to terminate employment however a sense of disillusionment with where the NGO sector is currently heading combined with low pay is such a motivator.

A typical day for most managers is almost entirely dedicated to interacting with others and contributing to sector values for responsive service provision, and herein lies the understanding for and context of the social service manager. Structural change and impinging managerialist practices are not enhancing important elements of satisfaction for managers. Their dominant narrative is the need to make a difference and invest in the lives of others whether they are clients, co-workers, or subordinates, their communities and their world. This is achieved through aligned sector, professional and personal values where meaning is determined by the client and not counted as a production output through standardised treatments seeking efficiency. The once flexible and autonomous reflexive practitioner who was willing to work long hours, experienced exhilaration at hectic work days, and creatively supported some of the most vulnerable people in society is in danger of being transformed into a tool for resource coordination and accountability whilst implementing reforms that run counter to their values and beliefs. However managers are recognized for their competencies both professionally and in delivering sector objectives and are in an ideal position to creatively identify responses to carry the sector forward with an alternative plan for change. Any perceived opportunity for growth, increased autonomy and sense of achievement and challenge both personally and for the sector will have a positive impact on job satisfaction and retention.

Secondly findings indicate there is a cost to staff taking on the extra work load for the impinging practice of monitoring and accountability taking energy, time and resources, whilst working in an arena of hectic and fragmented work days. Additionally there is stress and worry about never being able to finish work or projects to a high standard. This comes on the back of low pay and trading on the good will of this group with very little recognition of their qualifications, blanket training programs and infrequent opportunities for promotion. This is a recipe for disappointment, disillusionment and dissatisfaction ultimately resulting in questioning whether to stay or to go with four

people opting to leave. There is a concerning degree of employee turnover, nearly a third of respondents said they were currently making moves to leave their position and does not bode well for estimates of staffing shortages in the future.

From the perspective of employers who wish to address employee retention, the study suggests some key implications: a supportive organisational environment, positive supervisory behaviour, challenge, autonomy and variety; and constructive feedback all lead to greater job satisfaction. Major worthwhile investments would be high quality supervision; access to collegial support; and feedback systems, as weight can be found for Evans and Huxley's (2009) uncomplicated argument that good employers need to monitor morale on a regular basis and listen to and act on what their staff are saying. Other worthwhile developments would be employee involvement in determining what work is to be done and how it is to be performed; in the design of systems of management training; and the implementation of management mentoring programs. This also necessitates a response from training institutions offering appropriate programs and collaborative work placements.

Finally it is hoped that this study makes a contribution to a conversation about the purpose and identity of the NGO sector. It is a value-based sector in which its managers are not there for the big pay or the "fame and fortune" but for these respondents they are there because their heart is there. They believe in the work they are doing and the changes they are making. They like to work "outside the box" and value the importance of relationship believing relationship and valuing the uniqueness of each individual to be the vehicle for change and for eliciting the best from others. Ultimately they want to respond effectively and appropriately to the social concerns around them. I propose that a planned approach towards integrating Government goals and sector distinctiveness can be achieved by including this unique resource, the NGO social service manager, because their job satisfaction is inextricably linked to planning, organising, motivating and leading others to achieve innovative positive social change goals for people in New Zealand.

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Appendix 1: Semi- structured Interview Questions

Demographics: Is the NZ NGO sector experiencing retention of social service manager difficulties?

How long have you/or did you work in the NGO sector?

How long have you worked as a manager?

Would you consider you were/are you a line/middle/senior manager?

How many staff do/did you oversee?

How long have you been with your current organisation?

What are the job satisfaction dimensions amongst NZ NGO social service managers?

Please tell me the story of how you came to be a manager?

What led you to work in the NGO sector?

What helps you to remain in the NGO sector?

Do you have management training?

How did you know how to be successful in this role?

Do you think this is valued (or was valued) by your employer? How did you know?

What kinds of things helped you feel satisfied in this role?

Think over a week or month in the manager role. What are the activities in your job you like?

(four areas: rewards, other people, nature of the work, and organizational context and are both intrinsic and extrinsic AND nine variables: pay, promotion, supervision, benefits, contingent rewards, procedures, co-workers, work, and communication)

Does/did this contribute to a feeling of job satisfaction?

Would it retain you in your position on the really tough days?

What are the job dissatisfaction determinants amongst NZ NGO social service managers?

Think over that week or month again. What activities contribute to feelings of job dissatisfaction or those really tough days?

Would these activities override your general feeling of job satisfaction and make you consider evaluating whether to stay?

What do you feel has been most helpful so far to get you through the tough experiences? When did you last have supervision or mentoring – do either of these assist?

For you, what do you think are the ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors affecting your decisions about where you prefer to work?

(Personal, professional, sector, organisational, cultural, social values and agendas)

Suppose your workplace was your dream position – what would be different?

Thank you for your time. Is there anything that you think relates to job satisfaction, job dissatisfaction and retention in the NGO sector that I haven’t asked but you believe has an impact?