

Pat Lynch's Process for Identifying Your Agency's True Value

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The purposes of identifying and communicating the specific value that your agency provides to the community include justifying resource requests, educating employees and stakeholders, providing options to decision-makers for resource allocation, increasing morale and productivity, and informing internal processes such as promotions, risk management, succession planning, and strategy development. There are two effective ways to identify your agency's true value: (1) calculate its economic impact and (2) articulate clearly how its activities help to create a safe, healthy, economically viable community.

Calculate the economic impact of:

Saving lives

Example: outcomes of fire and rescue activities

Protecting property and the environment

Example: costs avoided due to fire suppression and prevention activities

Fostering economic growth

Example: revenue generated by businesses that open as scheduled due to timely fire inspection activities

Articulate clearly how activities help create a safe, healthy, economically viable community

1. List the agency's programs, processes, services, and positions; for each position, list the major tasks or responsibilities
2. Triage each item on the list as follows:
 - A. **Critical:** if not provided, the agency cannot perform its mission
 - B. **Very important:** if not provided, the agency can perform its mission but there would be a significant negative impact
 - C. **Important:** if not provided, the agency can achieve its mission but with a diminished level of performance (i.e., quality)

Note: if an item is not at least important, it has no impact on achieving the mission so cannot contribute to your agency's true value

3. "Connect the dots" between the value the agency provides and the level of public safety.
4. Utilize the results to improve organizational effectiveness and increase public safety.

Categorization Process

An effective way to help employees articulate your agency's value is to ask them to imagine the impact on its mission if existing programs/processes/services/functions/tasks are removed or diminished. For each item listed in step #1 above, ask the person(s) responsible to answer the following questions, provide SPECIFIC examples to illustrate their responses, and then categorize the impact using the triage options provided (below). As an example, we will use the task of repairing and filling oxygen bottles on a fire and rescue agency's rescue vehicles.

Questions:

- How does the task of repairing and filling oxygen bottles on rescue vehicles support, or contribute to, the agency's mission of saving lives, protecting property and the environment, and fostering economic growth? *Please provide specific examples to explain your answer.*
- What would be the impact on the agency's mission if this task was *eliminated entirely*?
- What would be the impact on the agency's mission if this task was *delayed*?
- What would be the impact on the agency's mission if this task was *partially fulfilled*?
- What would be the impact on the agency's mission if *the standards/expectations for completing the task were reduced*?

Triage options:

- 1=Agency could not fulfill its mission
- 2=Agency could fulfill mission but there would be serious negative impact
- 3=Agency could fulfill mission but with diminished level of performance (e.g., quality)
- 4=There would be no impact on the ability to fulfill the mission

The results of engaging in this process of identifying your agency's true value can be used for a myriad of purposes both internally, to improve organizational effectiveness, and externally, to increase the level of public safety in your community. ➔

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