



worth**Keeping**

Global Perspectives on Best Practice
in Missionary Retention

Causes of Preventable Attrition

ReMAP II Areas Covered



- Education
- Selection
- Prep Time
- Orientation
- Spiritual life
- Personal Care
- Member Care
- Organisational Values
- Leadership
- Staff Development
- Ministry
- Ministry Outcome
- Finances
- Home Office

Selection

OSC	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ● ● ● ● ●
NSC	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ● ● ● ● ●



Q. No.	Factor	OSC Importance for Selection		NSC Importance for Selection	
			✓		✓
11	Expresses a clear calling to missionary service	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ●	✓	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	
12	Agrees with the agency's doctrinal statement	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ●	✓	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ● ●	
13	Knows and is committed to the agency's principles and practices	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ●	✓	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ● ●	✓
14	Demonstrates mature Christian character and discipline	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ●	✓	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ●	✓
15	Has good character references	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ●	✓	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ● ●	
16	Has committed endorsement from his/her pastor/local church for missionary service	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ●	✓	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ●	✓
17	Has the blessing of their family	○ ○ ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●		○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ● ● ● ● ●	✓

Selection (2)



18	Has ministry experience in a local church	○○○○○○○○●●●●	✓	○○○○●●●●●●●●	✓
19	Has had previous cross-cultural experience	●●●●●●●●●●		●●●●●●●●●●	
20	Has demonstrated ability to cope well with stress & negative events	○○○○○○●●●●●●		○○○○●●●●●●●●	
21	Meets health criteria determined by a physical examination	○○○○○○○○●●●●	✓	○○○○○○○○●●●●	✓
22	Meets health criteria determined through a psychological assessment	○○○○○○●●●●●●	✓	○○○●●●●●●●●●	✓
23	Exhibits contentment with present marital status (single, married)	○○○○○○○○○○●●	✓	○○○○○○○○○○●●	✓
24	Has good potential for financial support	○●●●●●●●●●●		○○●●●●●●●●●●	✓
25	Has firm/stable prayer support	○○○○●●●●●●●●	✓	○○○○●●●●●●●●	
84	Pre-field screening prevents unsuitable persons proceeding to the field	○○○○○○○○○○●●	✓	○○○○○○●●●●●●	✓

Selection – Key Findings



- Retention is highly correlated with candidate selection in general.
- The first six selection criteria (Calling, Q11; Doctrinal statement, Q12; Agency principles, Q13; Mature Christian character, Q14; Character references, Q15; Endorsement by pastor, Q16) were rated as being very important in all sub-categories of OSC and NSC, but especially by high retaining OSC and NSC.
- Calling (Q11), Doctrinal statement (Q12), Agency principles (Q13), Mature Christian character (Q14), Character references (Q15), and Committed endorsement by pastor/home church (Q16) were correlated with retention in OSC (and NSC, but some factors received a very high rating for performance and significance by mission executives in low retaining NSC agencies too, limiting the statistical significance).

Selection – Key Findings (2)



- Ministry experience in the home church (Q18) was correlated with retention in OSC, but in NSC to a lower extent.
- Family blessing (Q17) received a high rating in NSC and was correlated with retention in NSC, but not in OSC.
- Physical health examination (Q21), Psychological testing (Q22), and Contentment with present family status (Q23) were correlated with retention in OSC and NSC; Potential for financial support (Q24) also Psychological testing (Q22) correlated in NSC (an unexpected result) and Firm prayer support of candidates (Q25) in OSC.
- The low rating of Cross-cultural experience (Q19) and Stress cope capabilities (Q20) and the absence of their significant correlation with retention was unexpected.

Selection Health and Psych Assessment



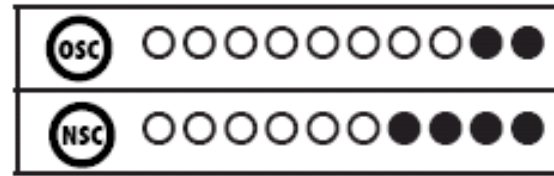
Q. No.	Factor	OSC Importance for Selection		NSC Importance for Selection	
			✓		✓
21	Meets health criteria determined by a physical examination	○○○○○○○○●●●	✓	○○○○○○○○●●●●	✓
22	Meets health criteria determined through a psychological assessment	○○○○○●●●●●	✓	○○○●●●●●●●	✓

Selection Health and Psych Assessment



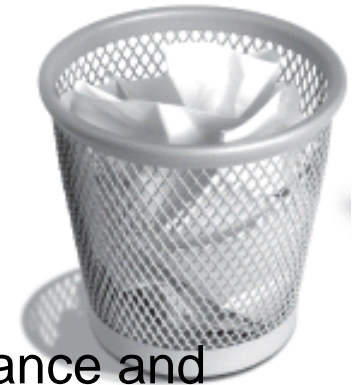
- Rating of physical health exams (Q21) was highly correlated with high retention in NSC and OSC.
- Psychological testing (Q22) was rated significantly lower than health exams (Q21) and proved to be correlated with retention, especially in NSC.

Selection Calling and Tested Call in Previous Ministry



Q. No.	Factor	OSC Importance for Selection		NSC Importance for Selection	
			✓		✓
11	Expresses a clear calling to missionary service	○○○○○○○○○○●	✓	○○○○○○○○○○○○	
15	Has good character references	○○○○○○○○○○●	✓	○○○○○○○○○○●●	
16	Has committed endorsement from his or her pastor/local church for missionary service	○○○○○○○○○○●	✓	○○○○○○○○○○●	✓
18	Has ministry experience in a local church	○○○○○○○○●●●	✓	○○○○●●●●●●●	✓
19	Has had previous cross-cultural experience	●●●●●●●●●●		●●●●●●●●●●	

Selection Calling and Tested Call in Previous Ministry – Key Findings



- Calling (Q11) received an extremely high rating for significance and performance in OSC and NSC.
- Mission executives from high retaining agencies gave even higher rating of calling (Q11) in OSC (NSC not significant because three Indian agencies with very high retention gave extremely low rating of calling which dragged the average down and increased the standard error of the sample—otherwise we would have found a positive correlation in NSC too).
- Ministry experience in a local church (Q18) was rated significantly lower than calling (Q11).
- NSC agencies gave much lower rating of ministry experience in a local church than OSC (young people not given so much opportunity to exercise their gifting in NSC churches with strong leadership?).
- Rating of church experience was correlated strongly with retention in OSC and moderately in NSC.

Preparation Time



Q. No.	Factor	OSC Health Indicator		NSC Health Indicator	
			✓		✓
32	Bible school or seminary training	○○○○●●●●●●●●	✓	○○●●●●●●●●●●	✓
33	Formal academic missiological training	○○●●●●●●●●●●	✓	○●●●●●●●●●●●	✓
34	Practical pre-field missionary training	○○○●●●●●●●●●		○●●●●●●●●●●●	
35	Structured cross-cultural missionary internship or apprenticeship	●●●●●●●●●●●●		○○○●●●●●●●●●	✓
36	Mission agency's own orientation	○○●●●●●●●●●●		○○○○○●●●●●●●	

Preparation Time – Key Findings



- This group of questions asked the agencies for their minimal requirements of training prior to service with the agency. Their actual training standards may be much higher.
- The total duration of pre-field training time is highly correlated with total retention in OSC and NSC.
- High retaining agencies expect three times more missiological training (Q33) than low retaining agencies.
- High retaining agencies (for total attrition) expect twice as much theological training (Q32) as low retaining agencies, although there is no correlation to preventable attrition (RRP).
- Missiological training (Q33) appears to be more beneficial than theological training, as also shown in ReMAP I.
- Practical missionary training (Q34) and cross-cultural internships (Q35) are still too rarely required to obtain statistical evidence of their effectiveness.

Orientation and Continuous Training

OSC	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ● ● ● ●
NSC	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ● ● ● ●



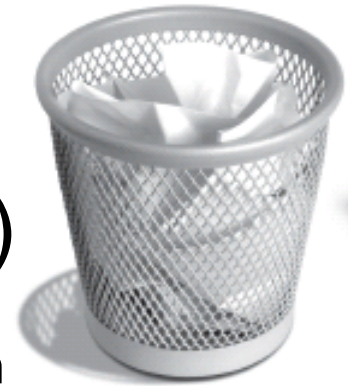
Q. No.	Factor	OSC Health Indicator		NSC Health Indicator	
			✓		✓
52	Effective on-field orientation is in place for new missionaries	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ● ● ● ●	✓	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ● ● ● ●	✓
53	Language learning arrangements are provided that enable new missionaries to learn the local language well	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ● ● ● ●	✓	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	
54	Ongoing language and culture training are actively encouraged	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ● ● ● ●	✓	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ● ● ● ● ●	
55	Missionaries are provided with opportunities for continuous training and development of gifts and skills	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ● ● ● ● ●	✓	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ● ● ● ● ●	✓
85	Pre-field orientation prepares missionaries for adjustment to cross-cultural life and ministry	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ● ● ● ●		○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ● ● ● ● ●	

Orientation and Continuous Training – Key Findings



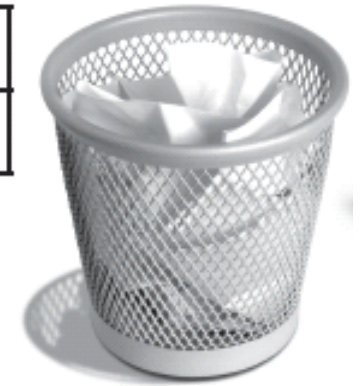
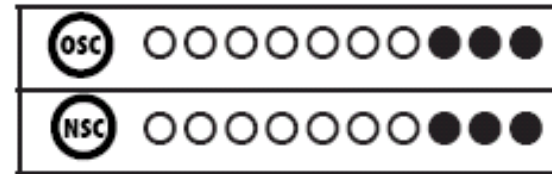
- On-field orientation of new missionaries (Q52) was positively correlated with retention in OSC and NSC, yet the correlation was not as strong as expected (usually considered extremely important).
- Initial language and cultural learning (Q53) was rated even higher than orientation
- (Q52) in OSC for performance and significance and clearly correlated with high retention (for preventative attrition RRP—yet not so much for total attrition, RRT).
- NSC mission executives gave a much lower rating to Initial language and cultural learning (Q53) than OSC, probably as many NSC agencies are working in near cultures where language learning is not so relevant.

Orientation and Continuous Training – Key Findings (2)



- In NSC, Initial language and cultural learning (Q53) is even negatively correlated with retention (it is assumed that NSC agencies are working in a near culture, where language learning is not so relevant, have higher retention rates than those working truly cross-culturally)
- In OSC, Ongoing language and cultural studies (Q54) received the highest rating in this block of questions and it was highly correlated with retention for preventable attrition.
- In NSC, Ongoing language and cultural studies (Q54) again was negatively correlated with retention (as many agencies are working in near cultures)
- Continuous training and development of new gifts and skills (Q55) received high rating and proved to be correlated with retention, especially in OSC, and particularly regarding preventable attrition RRP in OSC.

Spiritual Life



Q. No.	Factor	OSC Health Indicator		NSC Health Indicator	
			✓		✓
14	Demonstrates mature Christian character and discipline (prayer & devotional life)	○○○○○○○○○○●	✓	○○○○○○○○○○●	✓
25	Has firm/stable prayer support	○○○○●●●●●●	✓	○○○○●●●●●●	
46	A culture of prayer is actively promoted within the agency	○○○○○○○○●●●	✓	○○○○○○○○●●●	
47	Most leaders are a good example of the agency's beliefs and values	○○○○○○○○○○●	✓	○○○○○○○○○○●	

Spiritual Life (2)



58	Missionaries know how to handle spiritual warfare	○○○○○○●●●●●	✓	○○○○○○○○●●●●	✓
74	Emphasis is placed on the maintenance and growth of personal spiritual life	○○○○○○○○○●●●	✓	○○○○○○○○○○○●●	✓
86	Staff in the home office pray regularly for the missionaries	○○○○○○○○○○○●●	✓	○○○○○○○○○○○○○●	

Spiritual Life – Key Findings



- Issues of spiritual life received the highest rating of all question groups in OSC and NSC.
- In OSC, strong spiritual life was highly correlated with retention. In NSC, they received a very high rating for performance and significance even in low retaining agencies so that no correlation was found.
- Culture of prayer throughout the agency (Q46) was rated very high for performance and significance by mission executives and is highly correlated with retention in OSC; in NSC, this question received a high rating by all agencies.
- High emphasis on maintenance and growth of personal spiritual life of missionary (Q74) received a very high rating and correlated with retention.

Spiritual Life – Key Findings (2)



- Testing of mature spiritual life of candidates (Q14) was rated very high and highly correlated with retention in OSC and NSC.
- Experience with spiritual warfare (Q58) had average rating and was moderately
- correlated with high retention.
- People in host culture are becoming followers of Christ (Q67) was rated very high in NSC and correlated with high retention.
- Home office staff prays for their missionaries (Q86) received very high ratings
- even in low retaining agencies (in OSC exceptionally high and correlated with retention).



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A final thought...















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Moral of the story

If you always do
what you've always done,

You'll get
what you've always got!

