SUCCESSION PLANNING IN CHESTERFIELD FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

BY: Robert P. Avsec
Chesterfield Fire and
Emergency Medical Services
Chesterfield, Virginia

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ABSTRACT

Chesterfield Fire and Emergency Medical Services, located in Chesterfield County, Virginia, faces a tremendous challenge to its ability to provide competent leadership for the organization. Over the next five to seven years the department can expect to lose approximately ninety career members to length-of-service retirements, the first large scale turnover for an organization that has only had a few such retirements to date. Many of these retirees will be officers throughout the ranks, many who have been with the department since its formative years. In addition, the department has five additional fire stations that are to be built over that same period bringing ninety new employees into the organization.

The purpose of this research project was to identify factors associated with good succession planning and to recommend how Chesterfield Fire Department can use succession planning to successfully respond to its future need for competent leadership at all levels of the organization.

This study used the historical, evaluative, and action research methods to answer the following questions:

1. How do the current personnel in leadership roles within Chesterfield Fire and EMS assess the current preparation, selection, and evaluation processes when promoted or selected for a job?
2. What is Chesterfield Fire and EMS currently doing to develop personnel for leadership roles?
3. What are the critical components of an effective succession plan for an organization?

4. How can an effective succession plan enable Chesterfield Fire and Emergency Medical Services to meet the demand for future leaders?

This research used a survey to assess the attitudes of officers and division heads within the Department regarding the current preparation, selection, and evaluation processes when promoted or selected for a job. The survey was distributed to 104 officers and civilian division heads within the Department.

The study findings revealed that a slight majority of respondents have a favorable view of job expectations and their training and development prior to placement. Those findings seem to be at odds with the organization's lack of formal job descriptions, position competency statements, and development programs, especially for senior ranks. The respondents had higher levels of dissatisfaction when queried about their views regarding the selection and evaluation processes.

The recommendations of the research were for the Executive Leadership of Chesterfield Fire and EMS to: (a) make a formal commitment to succession planning for leadership development, (b) develop a written succession plan and a succession planning process, and (c) use the National Fire Academy's *Change Management Model* to strategically manage the introduction of succession planning into the organization.

INTRODUCTION

Rothwell (1994) wrote that the world is facing a leadership crisis. He points out that respected management and leadership authors such as Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus have written that there is a pervasive incapacity of organizations to cope with the expectations of their people. Rothwell provides the following evidence of this trend:

> Citizens are losing faith in their elected officials to address problems at the national, regional, and local levels; many among the religious are losing faith in church leaders, because of those high-profile leaders who have been stricken with sensationalized scandals; and consumers are losing faith in business leaders to act responsible and ethical. (p. xiii)

This same lack of confidence is also widespread inside organizations. In the private sector, employees wonder whether they can hold on to their jobs when downsizing has become the norm rather than the exception. Rothwell (1994) wrote, “Employee loyalty is an often cited casualty of this crisis. Employee morale, influenced by the perception that top managers cannot effectively cope with the external challenges confronting their organizations, has suffered” (p. xiii)

Public sector organizations are not immune from the adverse affects of this lack of organizational leadership, especially local government. Taxpayers in America, beginning with Proposition 13 in California and Proposition 2 ½ in Massachusetts in the 1970's, started to question the need for the continuing escalation of tax rates. As local governments had to face the reality of slashed tax revenues, or reduced increases, those governments had to learn how to make more efficient use of their revenue sources.

Those agencies within local government that did not respond to the call for improved efficiency increasing saw the services that they provided turned over to the private sector. Privatization of public services began to include everything from sanitation services to public safety. Today private companies are even managing correction facilities and schools, two functions that many people never would have thought to be subject to privatization.

For public sector organizations to be responsive to their customers, the citizens they serve, those organizations must be effective and cost efficient. In order to do, that the leaders of those organizations must ensure that competent leadership exists in the organization today and that those leaders are preparing the leaders for tomorrow within the organization. This mission can be more difficult in the public sector because of the impact that civil rules and seniority have on advancement within the organization. Promotional policies that reward seniority and do not require continued development of the individual play an especially significant role in upward mobility of personnel within the fire service.

The problem examined in this Applied Research Project is that Chesterfield Fire and Emergency Medical Services (CFEMS) has no strategic succession plan. CFEMS will lose significant numbers of leaders in the executive, middle manager, and first-line supervisor levels in the next two to seven years because of length of service retirements. Over roughly the same period, the organization will also build and staff an additional five stations that will result in an additional 15 first-line supervisor levels positions. The lack of a strategic succession plan for the replacement of retiring leaders, and the addition of new leaders, in a manner that will ensure organizational success, could prove detrimental to an organization that has been undergoing significant change.

The purpose of this applied research project is to show how a succession plan for the organization can help it meet its need for future leadership using the information presented in the *Executive Leadership* course. This study used the historical, evaluative, and action research methods to answer the following questions:

1. How do the current personnel in leadership roles within Chesterfield Fire and EMS assess the current preparation, selection, and evaluation processes when promoted or selected for a job?
2. What is Chesterfield Fire and EMS currently doing to develop personnel for leadership roles?
3. What are the critical components of an effective succession plan for an organization?
4. How can an effective succession plan enable Chesterfield Fire and Emergency Medical Services to meet the demand for future leaders?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Chesterfield County, Virginia

Chesterfield County is a suburban county that borders Virginia's capital city, Richmond, to the south. The county encompasses 446 square miles and has an estimated population of 260,000 residents. The governing body is a five-member Board of Supervisors with each member representing one of five magisterial districts. A county administrator, appointed by the Board, manages the daily operations of the County.

Chesterfield Fire and Emergency Medical Services

Chesterfield Fire and Emergency Medical Services provides emergency and non-emergency services to the public using a combination system. The department provides a full range of emergency responses services to county citizens including: fire suppression, emergency medical services, hazardous materials response, water rescue, and technical rescues. In addition, the department also provides non-emergency services such as injury prevention education, fire safety inspections, building code reviews, and fire brigade training to local industry.

The department uses a career staff of 370 officers and firefighters and a volunteer staff of 200 officers and firefighters to operate 17 engine companies and five truck companies from 17 fire stations. Six stations are staffed entirely by career personnel, and one by volunteer personnel; the remaining ten stations are operated by a combination of career and volunteer staff. Each career platoon has 86 firefighters and company officers assigned for fire station staffing. The deputy chief of operations provides management and leadership to a three-platoon system that has a senior battalion chief responsible for each of the three platoons.

Each senior battalion chief has two battalion chiefs (2nd and 3rd Battalions) and a senior captain that make up their battalion staff for daily operations of the platoon. The senior battalion chief also has battalion level responsibilities for the 1st Battalion, the smallest of the three battalions with three stations.

The deputy chief of support services is responsible for management of the following divisions: Training and Safety, Fire and Life Safety, and Maintenance and Logistics. The deputy chief of administrative services manages the Information Services, and the Administrative Services Divisions.

Organizational Challenges

Chesterfield Fire and Emergency Medical Services is an organization that is in the midst of significant change. In July 1996 it experienced the retirement of its first career fire chief after a term of twenty-nine years in that position. The fire chief position was next filled by the elevation of the deputy fire chief to the chief's position. Two years later, in March 1998, the current chief was promoted from within the ranks after a nationwide search was conducted for a successor.

One of the new chief's first initiatives was to begin a strategic planning process for the department, an effort that continues to date. The fire chief deemed that process, the first in the organization's history, to be necessary for the department to continue providing a high quality of customer service in a rapidly changing organizational environment. Some of those changes included the first significant number of length-of-service retirements in the department's history, integration of volunteer and career staffs, and increased demands for service delivery without a corresponding increase in resources. Avsec (1999) examined the change readiness of the organization's officer in an Applied Research Project, *Analysis of the Change Readiness of Chesterfield Fire Department Officers*.

Kriegel & Brandt (1996) provided a survey instrument, *The Change-Ready Profile©,* that was a key component of that analysis. Avsec (1999) reported that sixty-nine of 102 officers and civilian division heads (67.6%) returned the survey that measured passion, resourcefulness, adventurousness, optimism, confidence, and tolerance for ambiguity.

> The study findings revealed that the respondent population's average scores for passion and resourcefulness were in the optimal range of the survey (See Figure 1). Scores for the other four change readiness traits, however, were below the optimal range. (p. 3)

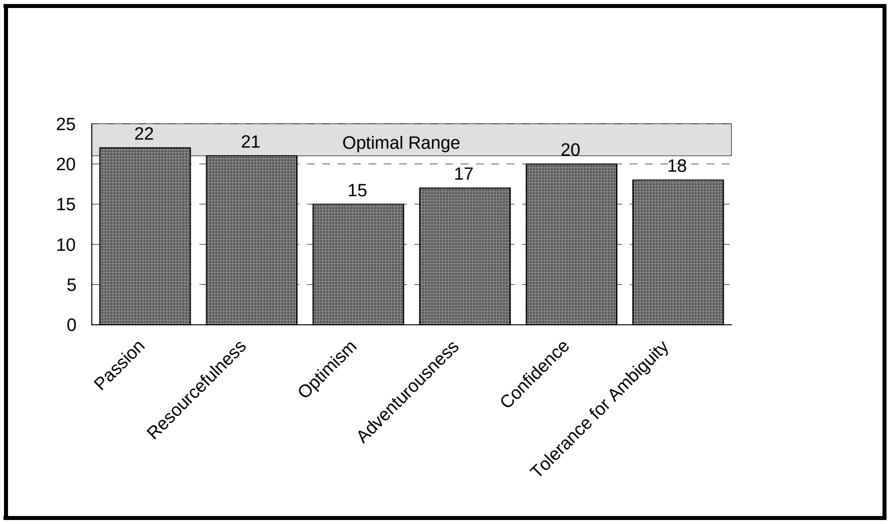

Figure 1. Average Change Readiness scores of Chesterfield Fire Department Officers and Division Heads (*The Change-Ready Profile* © 1996, David Brandt, Ph. D and Robert Kriegel, Ph. D)

Using the *Change Management Model*, Avsec (1999) made the following recommendations:

1. The department should take full advantage of the quality improvement training contained in Chesterfield County's TQI University. All officers should complete the core competency courses. All officers above the rank of captain should complete the courses contained in the TQI Electives.
2. The department should make completion of the Officer Development Program Level I curriculum a prerequisite for promotion to the rank of lieutenant. The department should provide additional company officer specific training to all firefighters who earn a position on the lieutenant's promotion list. That training should include course material dealing with mentoring, facilitating of teams, the importance of the company officer in communicating organizational information to members of their team, and their role in organizational change readiness.

3. The department should make completion of the Officer Development Program Level II curriculum a prerequisite for promotion to the rank of captain. The department should provide additional training specific to the roles and responsibilities of captain to all lieutenants who earn a position on the captain's promotion list.
4. The department should continue to present systems thinking training to the senior officers in the organization. The emphasis on the training should move beyond the theoretical and begin to use training sessions as a forum to address real problems and issues in the department.
5. The department should develop leadership training partnerships with other fire departments, public sector organizations, and private sector organizations to learn how other leaders and managers are using people and information more effectively.
6. The department should also develop a program of study for the ranks of Captain and above that makes greater use of the programs presented at the National Fire Academy.
7. The department should emphasize the importance of formal education for senior managers in the organization. The department should adopt a phase-in program that would require an Associates Degree for promotion to the rank of battalion chief and Bachelor's Degree for promotion to the rank of deputy chief or fire chief.
8. The department should develop mentoring programs for newly promoted officers at all ranks of the department.

9. The department should complete the Wide Area Network (WAN) linking all fire stations and divisions of the Fire Department. The present Wide Area Network (WAN) should be expanded to include all rescue squad stations as well. This would facilitate communication to those career firefighters assigned to those stations Monday through Friday, 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. It would also help facilitate communication that will be critical to the integration of the fire department and volunteer rescue squads.
10. The department should develop a strategic plan for information management in the organization. Such a plan should include what application programs the department will use, how the programs will be used, and adequate training for all personnel who will use the programs.
11. The department should develop a plan for making the transition to the use of electronic media as the primary method for conducting its daily business.
12. The department should develop a communications plan that delineates the appropriate methodologies, e.g., voice-mail, e-mail, or hard copy correspondence, for communicating information within the organization.

    It should also explore the use of intranet technologies and the Internet to create departmental websites within the department to enhance the timeliness of communication.

13. The department should organize the semiannual Open Forums into semiannual Stakeholder Meetings. Such a meeting would have a published agenda that would include items such as the following: the fire chief's report on accomplishments of the organization during the last six months, a report of ongoing activities or projects, a review of the financial report for the department, and an open question and answer session. Such a meeting would be a useful tool for improving communication to keep all members of the organization informed about change in the department.

14. The department should produce a weekly report from the fire chief to be broadcast on the county's Public Safety Television (PSTV). This program could have a very positive impact on the communication of change as the department continues the strategic planning process. It would also give the fire chief the ability potentially to reach every member of the department regularly, thus building rapport and organizational trust through communication. (pp. 90-92)

As of November 2000, only recommendations 2, 3, and 9 had been completed. Effective in 2005 the promotional requirements for the ranks of lieutenant and captain (recommendations two and three) will include mandatory completion of ODP I and II respectively, and completion of an associates degree in a related field. However, there are no current plans to provice training to all candidates who make the promotion lists. Recommendation eleven has been studied by a Communications Process Action Team and recommendations were made to the fire chief. A second group is now working on developing an implementation plan for those recommendations.

Chesterfield Fire and Emergency Medical Services needs to be further along in the implementation of the remaining recommendations. The author's research indicated that officer development would be critical for organization's continued success, especially with the impending retirement of a significant number of experienced officers throughout the ranks. Figure 2 provides a view of the scope of the organization's retirement liability in 2000 when 90% of the potential retirees could be officers.

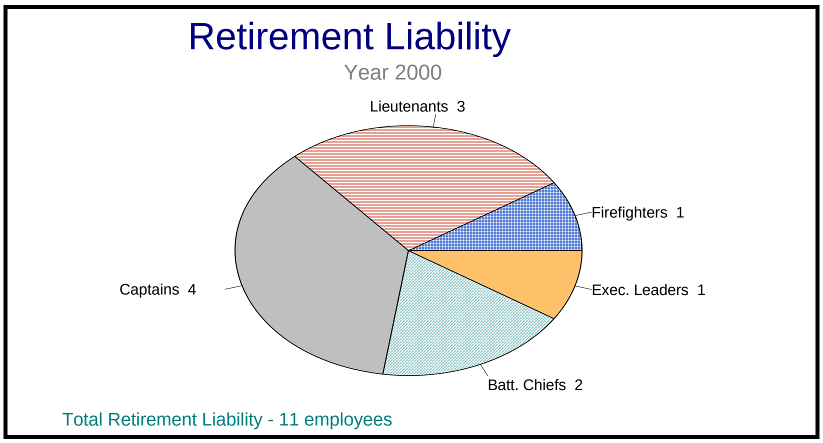

Figure 2. Retirement Liability, Calendar Year 2000

Sixty-nine percent of the potential retirees could come from the officer ranks in 2003 (Figure 3).

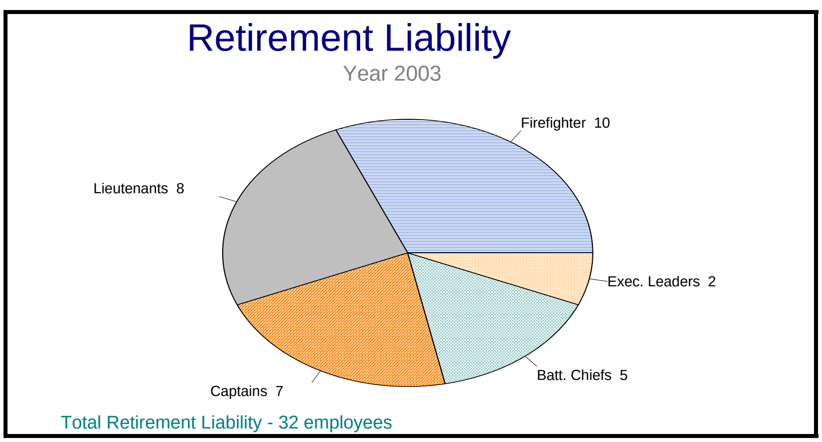

Figure 3. Retirement Liability, Calendar Year 2003.

Fifty-eight percent of the potential retirees could come from the officer ranks in 2007 (Figure 4).

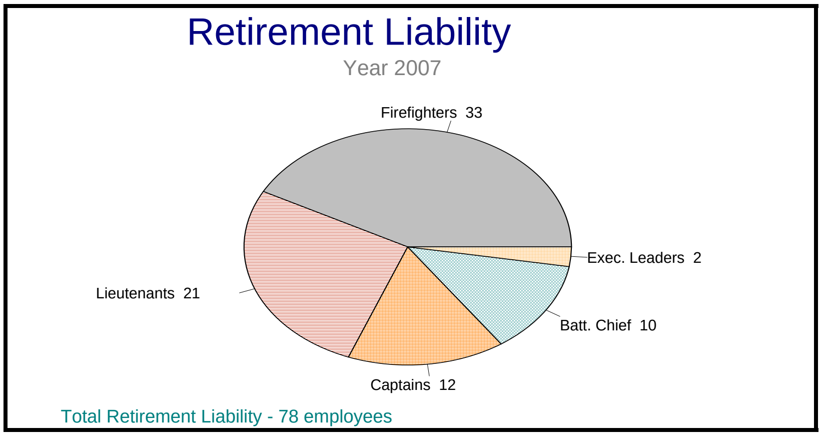

Figure 4. Retirement Liability, Calendar Year 2007.

These retirement liability projections are based on the number of eligible retirements each year. The projected figures, and the liability they represent, become compounded when members do not retire in the first year that they are eligible. Those employees carry over to the next year and increase that year's liability. As an example, in calendar year 2000 11 employees are eligible to retire by December 31; to date only four have announced their intentions to retire. In the worst case scenario, if no employees retired until 2007 the organization's liability would be 78 employees.

These pending retirements represent a significant loss of organizational knowledge and experience, particularly in the officer ranks.

Only a small group of our executive leaders, primarily the Deputy Chiefs, has any significant exposure to county politics, county politicians, and county staff. We need to develop more of our middle managers in these types of areas so that they understand how and where the fire department fits into the county picture.

> They need to understand how politicians think, what they feel is important, the different constituencies that they must satisfy, etc. (S.A. Elswick, personal communication, August 7, 2000).

In the assessment of the change readiness of the department's officers the recommended actions were focused on two major areas of concern: officer development training and improved organizational communications. Those recommendations took more of a tactical approach to the change readiness issue.

> The need for a more systematic development process poses a significant challenge to many organizations today. The problem is that most of the development that occurs in organizations takes the form of on-the-job training coupled with an informal mentoring system. Thus, both blue collar workers and managers tend to be insufficiently trained to perform their jobs and achieve corporate objectives. (Devanna, 1990, p.227)

Currently, there is an Officer Development Program, Level I that focuses on requisite knowledge for the firefighter seeking promotion to the rank of lieutenant. Officer Development Program, Level II, just implemented in 1999, provides knowledge training for those lieutenants seeking promotion to captain. Those two programs consist solely of training classes in subject areas that meet the consensus training standards contained in the National Fire Protection Association's, *Standards for Fire Department Officers*. At present there is no development program for chief officers within the department. For all ranks the majority of learning and development still occurs after appointment to the position– on-the-job training.

> Organizational development needs to include more that just taking classes. It also needs to incorporate gaining experience working with other departments and people in county government, and people and organizations outside county government. It also needs to encompass working with the business community. For example, a couple of days ago I attended a meeting where the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, Deputy County Administrator, and I met with a local businessman over a matter where the businessman had an issue with something the fire department was requiring of his business. It did not go well. But, I came back and shared that experience with my deputies and helped them "gain the experience" without the "scars" (S.A. Elswick, personal communication, August 7, 2000).

Information presented in the *Executive Leadership* class shed new light on this critical issue of preparing others for leadership roles in the organization. The Succession Planning section of that course focused on a more holistic approach to succession planning. "Succession planning is a critical element of organizational strategy. Organizations with well-developed employee development and planning methods are more competitive. Public safety organizations achieve excellence through a well-trained and competitive workforce" (FEMA, 2000, SM 6-3).

The Executive Leadership course presented information concerning critical components of a succession plan for a Fire and EMS organization based on organizational development. Those components include: (a) defining a need for executive development, (b) conducting an Organizational Capability Assessment, (c) determining competencies for key positions in the organization, (d) assessing the competencies of individuals in key positions, and (e) creating individual development plans to bridge the gap between defined competencies and the assessed competencies of individuals. (FEMA, 2000, SM 6-22)

The challenge for Chesterfield Fire and EMS is to continually develop sufficient numbers of personnel who are prepared for leadership roles within the department at a time when the organization is facing many changes. The organization is in the midst of implementing the first strategic plan in its history, integrating four separate volunteer rescue squads with its career staff, and struggling to meet continuing demands for service without a corresponding increase in personnel levels.

Any one of these issues would be a challenge to any organization; collectively they create a work environment that requires leaders who have the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities to operate in changing times. Devanna (1990) in a discussion of the role that human resource management plays in today's organizations, wrote that many organizations are not satisfied with the success of their succession plans during stable times. "Most are confounded by today's challenge–developing people whose skills are significantly different from those of its current executives. Yet, we frequently hear of the need for more risk taking, more entrepreneurial behavior, more willingness to make decisions"(p.229). Chesterfield Fire and EMS will need significant numbers of such leaders–those who have skills different from their predecessors-- in the near future to meet the wide array of challenges and change facing the organization. A well developed and defined succession plan will be critical if the organization is to be successful in producing qualified candidates for leadership roles in the future.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Succession Planning-Yesterday and Today

Succession planning has been a part of the business and leadership worlds for as long there have been the worlds of business and leadership–it just went by another name--“grooming.” Beeson (2000) provides a prototypical view of what succession planning has looked like, and probably still looks like, in many organizations.

> First, a younger member of the organization was identified as “having the right stuff” by organizational elders. The “chosen one,” or protegee, would then be placed under the guiding eye of a mentor, “the wise one,” who’s duty it would be to prepare the protegee for the day when he (the typical protegee would be male) would be ready to assume their position in the hierarchy of the organization. The mentor would be a trusted member of the organization who not only knew the technical aspects of the job, but was also well-versed in the informal aspects of the organization: office politics, unwritten rules, organizational values, rewards systems, etc. (p. 38)

Rothwell (1994) published a significant work on the subject of succession planning entitled, *Effective Succession Planning: Ensuring Leadership Continuity and Building Talent from Within.* Rothwell wrote that succession planning is “any effort designed to ensure the continued effective performance of an organization, division, department, or work group by making provision for the development and replacement of key people over time” (p. 5) He provided further definition to the term:

> A means of identifying critical management positions, starting at the levels of project manager and supervisor and extending up to the highest position in the organization. Succession planning also describes management positions to provide maximum flexibility in lateral management moves to ensure that as individuals achieve greater seniority, their management skills will broaden and become more generalized in relation to total organizational objectives rather than to purely departmental objectives. (Rothwell, 1994, p. 6)

For many years any formalized succession plan in an organization, particularly a family owned and operated business, was usually done as preventive measure to minimize conflicts between heirs when the owner or CEO died and needed replacement. FEMA (2000) uses a case study of succession in a family owned business to very effectively make the case for succession planning for all organizations. "Succession planning is not just for family businesses; the continuing success of all endeavors depends on succession planning" (Leichtling, 2000, p. 44A). Leichtling also wrote that succession planning, " . . . is especially important in industries in which good people often change positions and companies" (p. 44A).

Byham (1999) wrote, "For decades organizations have used succession planning to find their next generation of leaders. Succession planning focused on defining successors for specific jobs" (p. 46). The author makes the case that in today's rapidly changing work environment such rigid planning is not practical, whereas it may have been when jobs were more static and employees, who typically stayed with the organization for their entire career, moved along defined career paths. Byham uses the phrase "succession management" to highlight the need for organizations to create pools of talented personnel from which it can fill specific leadership positions.

"Whereas succession planning focuses on identifying an individual for a specific job, 'succession management' focuses on creating and stocking pools of candidates with high leadership potential" (Byham, 1999, p. 46).

High performance companies in today's business world direct their efforts toward not just being able to replace the CEO, but having enough in-house talent to replace any leader at any level.

> Companies such as General Electric, with the greatest long-term success in filling positions at the apex of the organization, concentrate not only on CEO succession but on building bench strength and a pipeline of talent throughout the managerial ranks. (Beeson, 1998, p. 61)

FEMA (2000) wrote that one of the more critical components of an organization's strategy for continued success is the ability to continually provide new leaders for the organization from within. "Succession planning is an organized and systematic way to ensure that employees in a particular organization are capable, competent, and willing to replace and/or succeed to strategic roles within the organization" (p. SM 6-3). Buckner & Slavenski (2000) in a discussion of succession planning wrote about the need for changing organizations to have the right people working in the right places at the right time. The authors further stated that for that combination of events to take place, the organization must have a plan. "Based on its research into executive development, the Center for Creative Leadership in Greensboro, North Carolina, recommends planning structured activities that enable executives to acquire leadership skills naturally as part of their professional growth" (p. 79).

Reasons for Succession Planning

Rothwell (1994) wrote that succession planning was one of many requirements that must be satisfied if an organization is to remain competitive. “One key requirement is that replacements must be available to assume critically important leadership positions as they become vacant” (p. 7).

He cited numerous surveys that had been done over the years on the subject of succession planning. One in particular emphasized the importance of the process:

> A survey by Korn/Ferry International of corporate board member policies and practices asked chairpersons to assess the importance of issues facing their companies in the next five years. Those typically seen as trend setters–the billion-dollar companies–rated *management succession as the third most important issue*, on the heels of financial results and strategic planning. (Rothwell, 1994, p. 7)

Rothwell completed his own survey in 1993 to answer the question, “Why should an organization support a systematic succession planning program?” He mailed the survey randomly to 350 members of the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD). The survey respondents who indicated that their organizations operate systematic succession plans listed the following as the reasons for why they do so.

1. To identify “replacement needs” as a means of targeting necessary training, employee education, and employee development.
2. To increase opportunities for “high-potential” workers.
3. To increase the talent pool of promotable employees.
4. To contribute to implementing the organization’s strategic business plans.
5. To help individuals realize their career plans within the organization.
6. To encourage the advancement of diverse groups.
7. To improve employees’ ability to respond to changing environmental demands.

8. To improve employee morale.

9. To cope with the effects of downsizing.

10. To cope with the effects of voluntary separation programs.

11. To reduce head counts to essential employees only.

12. To decide which workers can be terminated without damage to the organization. (pp. 11-18)

Coleman (2000) wrote of the need for officer development training in the fire service that prepares the officer for future challenges.

> Even though we've improved on opportunities to obtain advanced degrees in the fire service, they're too few and far between to help everyone who needs the assistance. In-service training programs are almost completely inadequate sources of information for an upwardly mobile person. . . . Granted, some agencies have created what are called "career development guides," which are very useful in providing some structure to the preparation process. Unfortunately, they're often myopic and oriented toward past practices instead of presenting new expectations to prepare the chief officer. (p.116)

Byham (1999) wrote that if organizations learned anything from the Y2K computer "crisis," it's that they should have learned the value of early planning. The author presents information that there is another crisis that coincides with the millennium: a critical shortage of leaders in middle and upper management positions. "A significant number of companies– specifically large, older organizations– will see 40 percent to 50 percent of their executives leave in the next five years– and there are not enough people prepared to replace them" (p. 46).

Boyatzis (1985) authored an essay on the effective use of managerial talent. He wrote that succession planning is a crucial element in an integrated model of management.

Leichtling (2000) wrote that succession planning needs to be an important part of an organization's leadership strategy.

> Passing on company culture and "soft skills" is always hardest to quantify, but is the most crucial element for success. Especially in changing environments, "who you are" counts more than the best laid "how to do's." Even the best captured knowledge is only useful in the hand of high-quality people. (p. 44A).

Buckner & Slavenski (2000) wrote that organizational leaders are using succession planning to solve real business problems.

> Who will move into this key financial position when Ron retires? Pat could move into any of three positions, but if we place her in one, who will fill the other two? Why aren't more women and minorities in the executive suite? Henry isn't quite ready for this assignment, but if we hire externally, will we lose him? (p. 79)

The authors maintain that if the leaders of any organization are asking themselves those types of questions, and they have no ready answers, then development and implementation of a succession planning process is probably needed.

Byham (2000) wrote of the need for organizations to develop their "bench strength,", i.e., identify employees who possess potential for leadership and then develop that potential. Byham felt this is critical for several reasons:

> First, the raw number of management candidates is declining. Between 2000 and 2015, there will be 15 percent fewer 35-to-44 year-olds to groom. . . . Second, and just as important, leadership positions are more demanding than ever. . . . the competencies required for success at senior levels demand individuals who can shape and articulate vision and mission; build business relationships and partnerships; serve as effective

change agents; develop and articulate new business strategies–and guide their execution; and grasp technology. . . .(Byham, 2000, p.34)

Byham (2000) continued to say that rather than using outmoded succession systems that rely on predesignated positional replacements being “groomed,” organizations would be better served to use “acceleration pools.” An acceleration pool helps ensure that the organization has qualified candidates for leadership positions by selecting individuals for their basic skills and then developing them through training and job experience to increase their potential contributions to the organization as a whole, not just a specific position. “The acceleration pool works much like a championship athletic team that first finds the best available athletes, then determines where to fit them into the lineup” (p.35). He further outlined characteristics unique to acceleration pools:

1. The system rests on the premise that while everyone gets developed, only a company’s best and brightest qualify for accelerated development.
2. Acceleration-pool candidates are prepared for assignments with measurement systems, coaching, and clear job and learning accountabilities.
3. Movement in the acceleration pool is based on performance and achieved development.
4. The acceleration pool offers no presumption of upward mobility or implicit guarantee of promotion–as was typically the case with succession planning and traditional talent pools.

5. At regular intervals–say every six or twelve months– individuals in the pool are reviewed relative to their career-development needs at that moment, personal interests, and the company's management needs.

6. Individuals can be in the acceleration pool from one to 16 years, depending on when they enter, their performance, and the urgency of the organization's needs; also the door is always open for late bloomers. (p.36)

Byham (1999), writing of the need for leadership development in the new millennium, quoted David Whitwam, CEO of Whirlpool Corp., who said,

> The thing that wakes me up in the middle of the night is not what may happen to economy or what our competitors may do next. What wakes me up is worrying about whether we have the leadership capability and talent. (p.51)

What Succession Planning is not

"Succession planning is proactive and should not be confused with more limited-scope and reactive replacement planning, which is a form of risk management" (Rothwell, 1994, p. 28).

Succession planning is not another term for "management training," "officer development," or "employee development." In an article published in *Training* magazine, Murphy (1997) wrote of the incongruence between most management training and results in the business world. "Researcher Morgan McCall of the Center for Creative Leadership in Greensboro, NC, found that executives attribute only 5 percent of what they know about management to classroom instruction" (p. 60).

> We've got it all backwards. When we try to change people first, then send them out looking for ways to use their new skill, we're putting the cart before the horse....What raises the bar for us today is that managers are working flat out, struggling with huge new

> responsibilities, leaner staffs, and more demanding bosses and customers. They are learning new ropes at the same time that they are stretching for better and faster results. They are no longer willing to divert their time to academic courses or “change” programs, which they have come to recognize as irrelevant “drills.” (Murphy, 1997, p. 58)

Murphy (1997) further wrote that management training–a component of good succession planning– must be Results Based Development (RBD). “People learn when they have to–when they have to produce results they don’t know how to achieve. People learn from experience–when the experience simultaneously produces results and new skills” (p. 60). Murphy quoted noted management philosopher Peter Drucker to add emphasis to those axioms.

> This is not a revolutionary idea. Peter Drucker, the man who literally wrote the book on results, made the point 25 years ago: “If you want to know, What development do I need? ask first, What results are expected of me?”[sic] (Murphy, 1997, p. 61)

See Appendix A for a case study involving the use of RBD.

Barley (2000) in a presentation to Chesterfield County managers in September 2000 spoke of the importance of Results Driven Learning (RDL) in the development of a Corporate University setting. (Chesterfield County is in the process of developing such an institution for its employees.) In her presentation she stated that, “Results Driven Learning (RDL) is a crucial component of the Corporate University. The organization must be able to measure and evaluate its Return On Investment (ROI).” Barley also touched on elements that differentiate the learning that takes place in a corporate university setting from that which occurs in traditional training. Those elements are congruent with the learning requirements of a succession planning program.

The corporate university model has shifted the focus of training beyond the individual employee to an organization developing its capacity to learn. Learning opportunities are specifically linked to the organization's mission and goals of its strategic plan. Senior managers, as instructors, teach and model concepts they use daily in their business life. (Barley, 2000).

Succession planning involves more than just additional training for personnel. Succession planning takes a holistic approach that includes:

1. Determining the extent of an organization's pending leadership shortage.
2. Identifying needed executive competencies based on the organization's future business needs.
3. Identifying high-potential individuals for inclusion in a pool.
4. Assessing these individuals to identify strengths and skill gaps and to determine who will be in the high-potential pool.
5. Establishing an individually tailored development program for each high-potential individual that includes training, job rotation, special assignments and mentoring by older senior executives.
6. Selecting and placing people into senior jobs based on their job performance, their experience and assessment of their potential for a specific job.
7. Continuous monitoring of the system and top management support. (Byham, 1999, p. 47)

For most organizations that engage in leadership training, e.g., Total Quality Management training, supervisor training, Officer Development programs, etc., the emphasis has traditionally been on knowledge and skill acquisition. The third part of the learning troika, the ability to apply the new knowledge and skills, usually takes place back in the workplace with no supervision or support, if it takes place at all. Beeson (1998) wrote that modern succession plans are designed to use real world experience in the development of future leaders:

> Previous generations of succession planners focused on slates of replacement candidates and helping individuals gain "blocks" of company experience. Now, however, more attention is being paid to identifying specific positions that provide especially potent developmental experience. Staffing for these kinds of positions - highly visible assignments with profit-and-loss responsibility; leadership of start-ups, key cross-functional teams, or acquisition integration projects - is carefully planned at senior levels. Best-practice firms identify and screen highly developmental positions so that “blockers” are removed to positions where continuity is useful. They are also willing to take risks on high-potential people by putting them into "stretch" assignments to accelerate their development. (p. 44)

Components of Effective Succession Planning

Coleman (2000) wrote on the subjects of fire service organizations doing a better job of preparing their future leadership and the individual preparing for advancement. His advice for fire chiefs was the following:

> Just like the coach of a winning team, a fire chief can't get by on luck or talent alone. He or she needs a game plan. This need for a game plan leads to an element of career planning that's not discussed as often as the issues of education and experience: the evaluation of a candidate's personal strengths and weaknesses. This isn't the testing process, but it's the preparation process. (p.118)

For the individual who wants to succeed and assume more leadership responsibility in a fire service organization, Coleman (2000) offered the following:

> The best way to prepare for the next job in the hierarchy is to be competent in the current position. Every level of the fire service is built upon the knowledge of the previous level, but there's often no connection between the knowledge, skills, and abilities required at the higher level and those of the one you just left. Every job in the hierarchy has aspects that are never revealed until you get the task of dealing with them. There is no place where anyone can go to learn everything needed to deal with increased responsibility. You can't learn all the jobs in the hierarchy at one time. Each has a different set of variables. (p. 116)

Beeson (2000) wrote of leading edge practices in the arena of succession planning. His work, included analysis of succession planning in such high profile companies as General Electric, Dell Computer, Colgate-Palmolive and Eli Lilly. Examples of emerging succession practices that he listed are as follows: (a) simplicity, (b) focus, (c) open communications, (d) line driven, (e) executive involvement, (f) leadership success profiles, (g) rigorous assessment, (h) talent pools, (I) individual development planning, (j) creating linkages, and (k) measurements. (p. 39)

FEMA (2000), Beeson (1998), Byham (1999) all indicated that one of the key components of succession planning is the development of competencies for key positions within organization. Boyatzis (1985) defined a job competency as “an underlying characteristic of a person which results in effective and/or superior performance in a job” (p. 415). In his work he conducted research involving more than 2000 managers, covering 41 different management jobs, in 12 organizations that developed a model of 13 management competencies. (See Figure 5)

Cluster	**Competency**	**Threshold Competency**	**No Support Found**
Goal and action management cluster	• Efficiency orientation (skill, motive, social role) • Proactivity (skill, trait, social role) • Concern with impact (skill, motive)		
Leadership cluster	• Self-confidence (skill, social role) • Use of oral presentations (skill, social role) • Conceptualization (skill)	Logical thought (skill, social role)	
Human resource management cluster	• Use of socialized power (skill, social role) • Managing group process (skill, social role)	• Accurate self-assessment (skill) • Positive regard (skill)	
Directing subordinates cluster	• Developing others (skill, social role)	• Spontaneity (skill) Use of unilateral power (skill, social role)	
Focus on others cluster	• Perceptual objectivity (skill) • Self-control (trait)		• Concern with close relationships (skill, motive, social role) ·Self-control (skill) • Stamina and adaptability (skill)
Specialized knowledge		• Specialized knowledge (social role)	

Figure 5. Summary of Competency Results (Boyatzis, 1985, p. 416)

Sargent (1985) summarized several of the methodologies for developing a model of competency based management. (See Figure 6)

I. Critical Incident Method (utilized by Richard Boyatzis and McBer)
    A. Identify high performers
    B. Interviewer probes them for behaviors
    C. Do a content analysis of behaviors
II. Subordinate Ratings (utilized by Richard Boyatzis and McBer and Warner Burke and NASA)
    A. Identify high performers. Establish criteria.
    B. Subordinates rate these managers on numerous competencies and practices; analyze statistically to determine which practices are more closely identified with superior performers.
III. Multi-level Data– boss, subordinate, self (utilized by Warner Burke, Columbia University for the NASA competencies)
    A. Bosses interviewed
    B. The managers for study interviewed using critical incident method
    C. Subordinates rate managers on practices in questionnaire this is derived from interviews with bosses and managers.
    D. Final set of practices comes from being identified by three levels or at least from two of the three.
IV. Organization Development
    A. Set up a task force to oversee competency development
    B. Utilize line managers to develop the model; possible at an off-site; engage managers in defining managerial effectiveness.
    C. Through a series of iterations of the models developed by these groups, test them out in training programs at staff meetings throughout the organization. The goal is as much ownership and validation as it is a particular product.

Figure 6. Methodology for Building a Competency Model: From Critical Incidents to Organization Development. (Sargent, 1985, p. 145)

For a detailed explanation of Organization Development that looks at the Senior Executive Program at NASA, see Appendix B.

Beeson (2000) wrote of the need for position competencies in succession planning when developing leadership success profiles.

> Companies such as Sabre, Inc., Eli Lilly, and Dell have devoted time to defining leadership values and behaviors required for success within their companies. To that end, Dell researched the characteristics of its most successful managers, as well as the factors that cause people to “derail” at Dell. Its research yielded a list of critical management competencies, including priority setting, customer focus, problem solving, drive for results, and building effective teams. Derailers included difficulty “learning on the fly” and problems dealing with ambiguity. (Beeson, 2000, p. 39)

Byham (1999) in writing about competencies said that competencies are defined by the organization’s critical success factors and values, and the challenges that it faces in the future. “For instance, young organizations will need leaders to manage their growth; mid-sized companies will need executives to explore new opportunities while maintaining profitability; and mature companies need leaders to help reinvent themselves” (p. 45).

Coleman (1998) wrote an article about the efforts of the Office of the State Fire Marshal to develop a Fire Chief Certification program in California beginning in the early 1990's. The Career Development Guide (CDG) for that program lists 38 separate task identifiers or competencies. (See Appendix C) “Our research indicated that this is the first definitive document that describes what a fire chief’s job is all about” (p. 76).

The Commission of Fire Accreditation International (2000) has published criteria designed to assist fire and emergency service personnel in their professional development through participation in a Professional Designation Program. The commission’s work, a product of a taskforce established by the International Association of Fire Chiefs, sought to develop a program of professional development and continuing education for chief fire officers.

“The professional designation program components for a chief fire officer include: (a) education, (b) professional development, (c) professional contributions, (d) active association membership, (e) community involvement, (f) technical competence, and (g) experience”(Commission of Fire Accreditation International, 2000, p. 2).

Gordon (1999) published an article on succession planning that described a process consisting of three phases: redefining leadership needs, accelerating development trajectory, and engaging the strategic agenda. Gordon reviewed the research done by the Corporate Leadership Council on "The Next Generation: Accelerating the Development of Rising Leaders." Four major companies served as the models of current practice in the research: General Electric, Mobil, Aramark, and Anheuser-Busch.

> Phase I: Redefining Leadership - Needs Leadership gap analysis is the key practice in this phase. A strategy-driven forecast identifies the leadership competencies and "bench strength" necessary to meet future corporate goals. Important factors in this phase are an organizational capabilities assessment to isolate critical skill investment areas and the incorporation of leadership competencies into the performance management system and individual development plans.
>
> Phase II: Accelerating Development Trajectory - Two practices support this phase. First, the CEO-led talent audit consists of an annual audit of leadership in individual SBUS. The audit is intended to accelerate the development of the next generation and cross-calibrate performance and potential across the corporation. The objective is to break down traditional "chimneys": geographic, functional, staff and line, and cultural.

> Second, the appointment of cross-divisional development advisors allows each member of the company's executive committee to develop a portfolio of employees outside his or her own division to cross-calibrate performance and potential assessments. A 360 [degrees] leadership assessment is often incorporated into these performance/potential reviews.
>
> Phase III: Engaging the Strategic Agenda - Again, two practices implement this phase. First, CEO challenge initiatives consist of high-profile developmental assignments intended to provide maximum learning to high-potential leaders. The company benefits from the assignments, and the CEO uses results as key input in deciding on high-level executive appointments. Second, a "shadow cabinet" is established. A standing group of high-potential employees convenes regularly to consider "live" issues on the agenda of the firm's executive committee. This practice is useful for developing the instincts of members of the shadow cabinet as well as for enhancing the perspective of the executive committee in actual deliberations. (Gordon, 1999, p. 16)

Beeson (1998) wrote on the subject of succession planning with a comparison between ineffective practices and emerging best practices. His writings described that typical obstacles to effective succession planning included:

> (a) ineffective executive reviews, (b) poor follow-up on development plans, (c) inadequate input from employees and feedback to managers, (d) narrow points of view in assessing potential, (e) an internal frame of reference, (f) overemphasis on replacement planning, (g) identifying talent relatively late in people’s career, and (h) failure to ensure linkage with the reward system. (p. 62)

Beeson's review of best practices regarding succession planning found the following:

> (a) "deep-cut" succession planning and early identification of talent, (b) aggressive management of "high leverage" development assignments, (c) meaningful executive reviews and mechanisms to ensure follow-up on development plans, (d) leadership competency models and 360-degree feedback, (e) multiple points of view in assessment, and (f) external talent benchmarking and leveraging external search firms. (p. 64)

Rothwell (1994) spoke on the numerous approaches to succession planning. He outlined those approaches as:

1. Direction (top-down, bottom-up, or combination).
2. Timing (fitfully, periodically, or continuous)
3. Planning (the need for a program to be systematic)
4. Scope (how many–and what kinds–of people in the organization are covered by the plan)
5. Degree of dissemination (how many people participate in the succession planning process; how many people are informed of its existence)
6. Amount of individual discretion (how much say do individuals have in assessing their current job performance and their future advancement potential). (pp. 19-21)

FEMA (2000), in the class *Executive Leadership*, outlined the components of a succession planning program for a public safety organization. The development of a successful plan should start with an Organizational Capability Assessment (OCA).

> The OCA is a way to view the organization from 30,000 feet and determine its overall strengths and deficiencies. It is also a way to shape the organization for the future and specifically detail the type of skills and competencies needed by the workforce to achieve a future state. (p. SM 6-3)

The OCA seeks to identify those skills and competencies that the organization needs to continue to accomplish its mission, serve its constituencies, and receive adequate support for that mission. The following matrix can be a useful tool in assessing each capability in terms of criticality and performance. (See Figure 7)

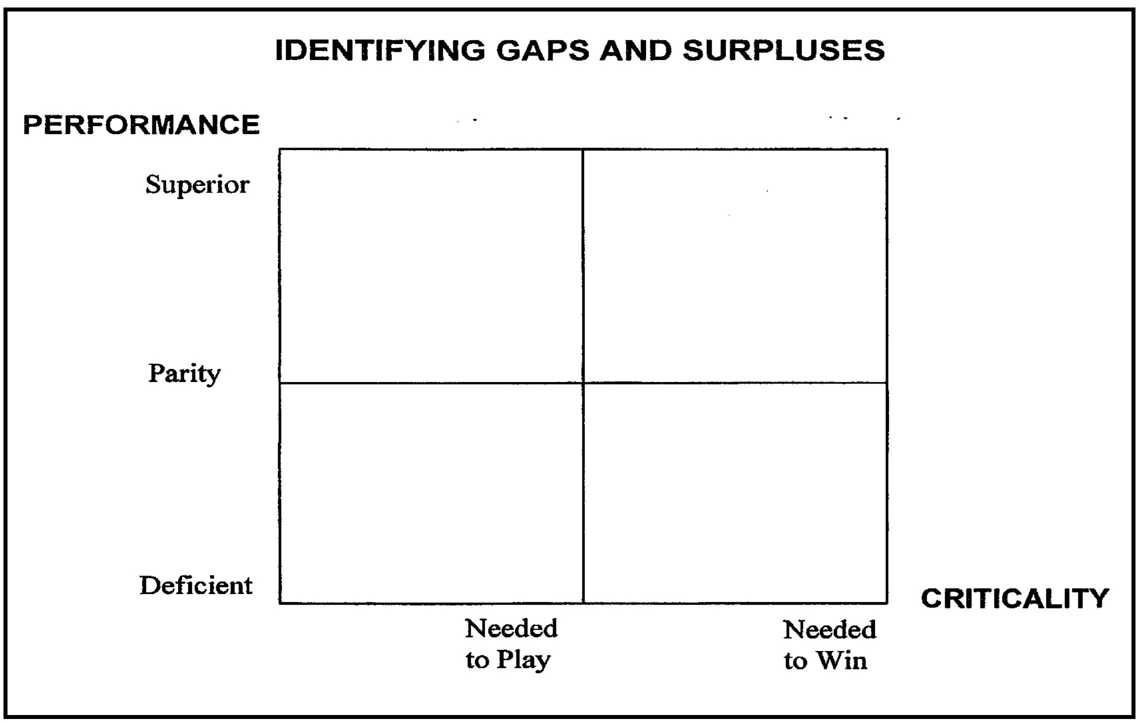

Figure 7. Organizational Capability Assessment Matrix. (FEMA, 2000, p. SM 6-4)

To better understand the use of the matrix, a few definitions of terms are useful.

> "Needed to win" must be viewed from the future. "Needed to win" answers the question: Is the capability worth doing to add value for community service now and in the future? "Needed to play" represents the basics or fundamental capabilities just to be in the game, such as what is necessary for public support, for meeting community needs, and for performing at a consistent, acceptable level. "Needed to play" often represents mediocrity.
>
> A public safety organization does not necessarily have competitors; however, it does compete for public funds. Consequently, a public safety organization needs to exceed standards of performance if it is to continue to attract public funds for its growth. "Parity" would refer to meeting the basic standards of performance as expected by the community."Deficient" would indicate those capabilities that draw the most complaints or criticism from the community. This activity should be completed within a department by representatives from each level of the organization as well as by community leaders. (FEMA, 2000, p. SM 6-4)

Figure 8 below offers two approaches to identifying key gaps in organizational capability using the matrix.

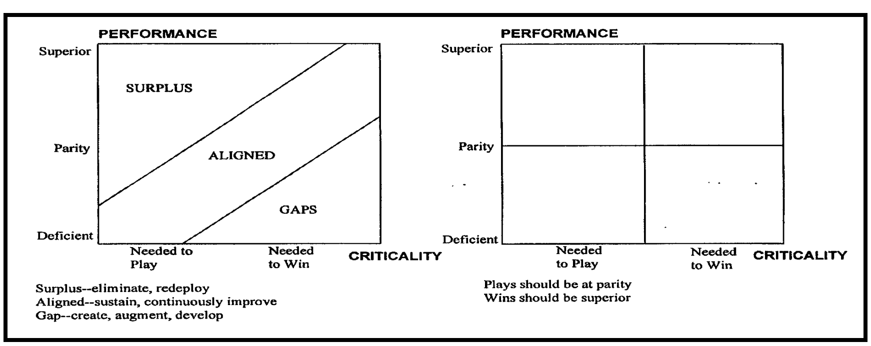

Figure 8. Interpreting OCA Matrix Results. (FEMA, 2000, p. SM 6-5)

The second phase of the succession plan addresses development of an organization's workforce to meet the organization's capability needs. The process involves using another matrix and associated terms to help executive leaders systematically construct development strategies. (See Figure 9 below)

Staff Member	RP	RS	RT	RP	RJ

Figure 9. Applying the Staffing Formula. (FEMA, 2000, p. SM 6-7)

Right Person (RP) - refers to the individual's values, beliefs, interests, and motivations. (Is he or she right for the job?)

Right Skills (RS) - refers to the individual's capability to perform in the job. (Does he or she possess the right skills to do the job in a superior way?)

Right Time (RT) - refers to the individual's performing the role at the right time in the development of the department's strategic position. (Is the individual's value timely in terms of what is needed to meet community needs?)

Right Place (RP) - refers to the location of the individual in terms of his/her maximum impact on the community. (Is he or she strategically positioned physically to interface best with others both internal and external to the department?)

Right Job (RJ) - refers to the question of whether the particular job or role the individual performs is the right one for him/her. (FEMA, 2000, p. SM 6-7)

FEMA (2000) listed several methodologies that would be useful for a holistic approach to individual development to help meet the capability needs of the organization: (a) training, (b) development, (c) learning, (d), deployment, and (e) assessments.

Job competencies were listed by several authors in the literature review as being a critical component of a succession plan. “Competencies are underlying characteristics of an individual: a behavior, skill, interest, value, motivational pattern that is related causally to superior performance in a specific role” (FEMA, 2000, p. SM 6-8).

> Six basic types of competencies exist at varying levels of consciousness in humans: (a) skills--tasks that a person does well, (b) knowledge--depth of understanding, (c) social role--image projected to others, (d) self-image--how a person views self, (e) traits--enduring characteristic of self, and (f) motives--thoughts and preferences that drive a person’s behavior. (p. SM 6-9)

FEMA (2000) used a visual image (Figure 10 next page) to illustrate the relationship of the six types of competencies. “The upper levels of the iceberg are visible and easy to see, but they rarely predict or determine superior performance. . . . The deeper levels of the iceberg determine whether or not a person is well matched for a particular role or not” (p. SM 6-9).

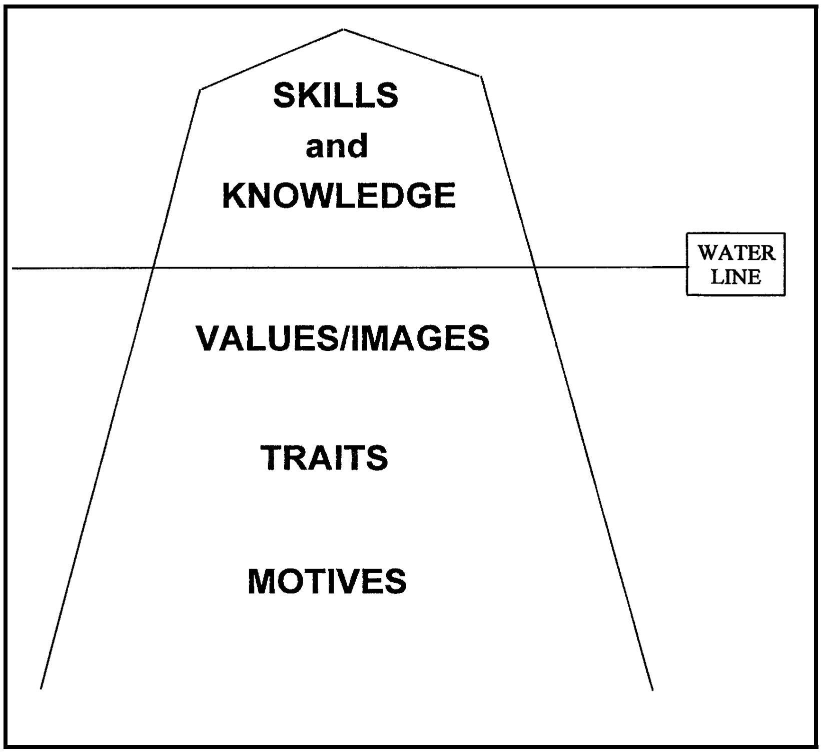

Figure 10. Competencies. (FEMA, 2000, p. SM 6-9)

FEMA (2000) described a process for constructing competency statements for positions within an organization. “Competency statements clearly articulate what behaviors are critical for superior performance. Once these statements are documented and communicated, the workforce receives a clear picture of what is expected and needed” (p. SM 6-10).

Austerman (1999) completed an applied research project on the subject of value statements for the direction of present leaders and the development of future leaders within an organization. Austerman was a battalion chief with the Glendale (AZ) Fire Department, an organization that was on the cusp of experiencing significant officer turnover due to retirements and new fire station construction. He wrote that:

> Effective value statements will provide another tool to assist in the socialization and expectation process that is vital in the leadership development of members who are aspiring to positions of greater responsibility and authority. Value statements can be extensively utilized in training courses and promotional selection processes for fire captains and chief officers. This is particularly significant for the position of chief officer because the scope of decision making and widespread impact on the entire organization. (Austerman, 1999, p. 13)

Austerman went on to say that the development of effective value statements can provide the solid foundation for succession planning within an organization, particularly when used in combination with competency statements.

Boyatzis (1985) wrote on the subject of developing competency models within organizations. He spoke of the need to develop competency models that are more than just a "job description" in the classic sense, and that are a part of a human resource system.

> Because the competencies are related to effective performance of a particular job within a specific organizational environment, models must be developed and tested on many, and eventually all, of the jobs and job families (that is, sets of jobs with similar job demands) within an organization. Identification of tasks and functions (that is, job demands) is needed, but is not sufficient. (p. 431)

Acquiring the necessary competencies for a job is critical for development of the individual as an organizational resource. Competency development requires more than just training. Boyatzis (1985) listed six stages of the competency acquisition process:

1. Recognition of the competency
2. Understanding of the competency and how it relates to managerial effectiveness

3. Self-assessment of instrumented feedback on the competency
4. Experimentation with demonstrating the competency, or demonstrating it at a higher level of effectiveness
5. Practice using the competency
6. Application of the competency in job situations and in the context of other characteristics. (Boyatzis, 1985, p. 434)

FEMA (2000) presented a methodology for preparing competency statements using facilitated panels. The authors stated that such a work group, with prior preparation, should be able to meet and develop a set of positional competencies within a five to six hour work session. (See Appendix D)

Boyatzis (1985), FEMA (2000), Beeson (1999), and Byham (1999) all identified performance appraisals as another critical component of a succession plan. “Performance appraisals should include two components: (a) assessment of recent performance, and (b) assessment of development needs” (Boyatzis, 1985, p. 432). “Employees need feedback to validate what they are doing and the value they create. Feedback provides important information that gives guidance and direction” (FEMA, 2000, p. SM 6-11). “The feedback loop should address the individual’s work performance and development needs using the job competencies of their position as the objective criteria” (Byham, 1999, p. 49). All of the authors spoke of the need for “360 degree” performance appraisals, i.e., appraisals completed by direct reports, and superiors of the person being evaluated. (See Appendix E)

Using positional competencies and feedback from performance appraisals, organizational leaders can then create individual development plans to assist employees with their future development.

FEMA (2000) presented a concise model of how the development plan relates to the other components of the succession plan from the Organization Capability Assessment on down to the individual Development Plan. (See Figure 11)

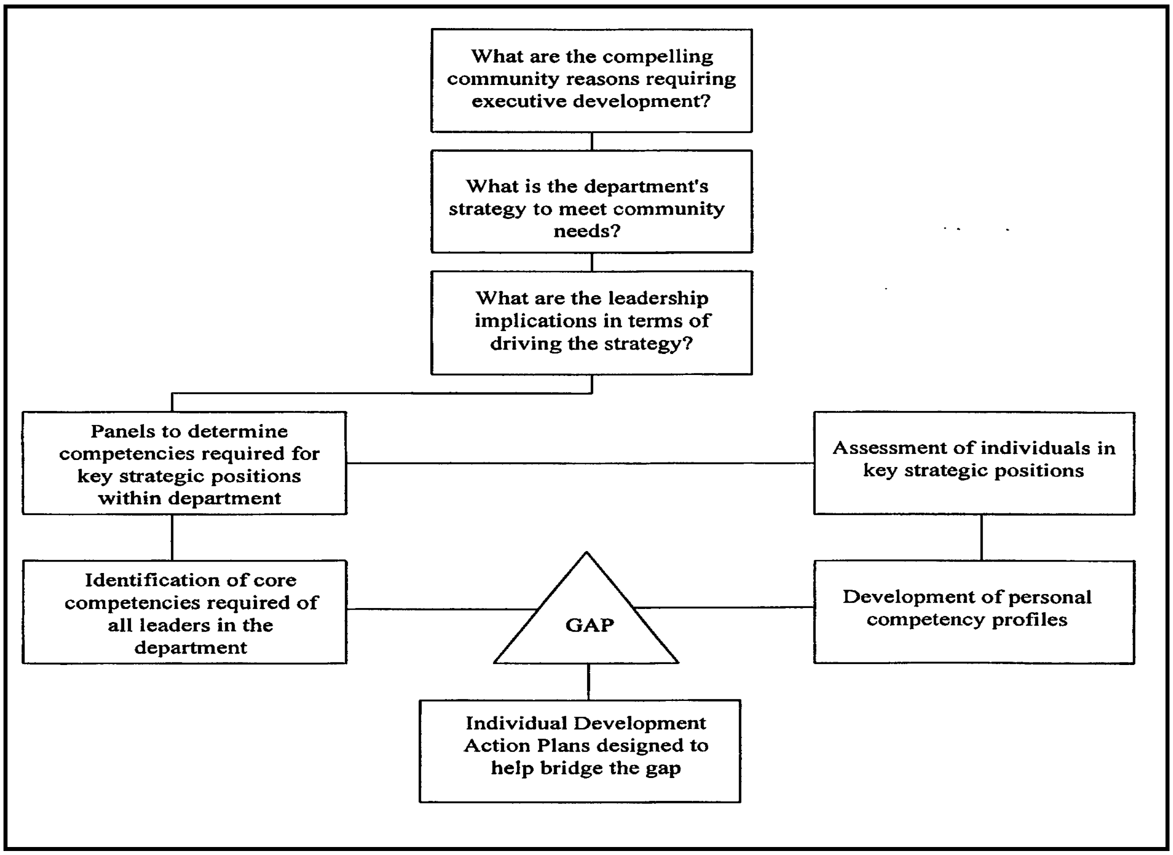

Figure 11. Creating a Development Plan - Overview (FEMA, 2000, p. SM 6-22)

Appendix F contains a sample Individual Development Plan.

FEMA (2000) listed coaching as the final component of a succession plan. Coaching is a third-party objective viewpoint from one person to another that helps generate possibilities. FEMA further stated about coaching:

> Coaching is an activity designed to assess an individual's current level of performance, identify areas of growth, and create and implement a developmental plan. Coaching is becoming a standard in performance improvement technology....Coaching is different from mentoring in that it is short term and applied as needed. (FEMA, 2000, p. SM 6-29)

Rothwell (1994), in his book, *Effective Succession Planning: Ensuring Leadership Continuity and Building Talent from Within*, provides a comprehensive package for the organization looking to construct a systematic succession planning process. He presents the information necessary for an organization to conduct the necessary analysis, planning, implementation, and evaluation for a succession planning process.

Succession Planning in Fire Service Organizations

The review of the literature found four Executive Fire Officer Program Applied Research Projects on the subject of succession planning. Baker (1995), an assistant fire chief with the Fairfax City (VA) Fire Department wrote:

> The research presented in this paper supports the findings, from literature review, that identifies a gap between fire officer training needed and that available in respective departments. Additionally, this research shows a critical weakness in providing formalized succession planning felt necessary to meet current and future fire service demands. Present classes and courses are, for the most part, theoretical in nature. Fire officer candidates are taught management theory, if such courses are even available, but theory application is often ignored, or at best, briefly touched upon . . .

> . . .It is apparent that the fire service is much better at technical training, e.g., ladder, hose, and fireground techniques, than in the critical skills identified in this research paper such as judgement, leadership, decision making, and oral communication. (Baker, 1995, p. 19)

Baker was unable to identify any fire service organizations that had a functioning succession plan.

Rohr (2000), an officer with the Fairfax County (VA) Fire and Rescue Department completed an Applied Research Project on the subject of succession planning for senior staff positions within that organization. Rohr wrote of the challenges facing his department that formed the premise for his ARP:

> The Washington Metropolitan Area experienced tremendous growth during the early 1970s. The Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department's career work force grew equally to meet the increased service needs. The department hired 260 firefighters from 1970 to 1979. Today 110 of those personnel are eligible to retire (Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, 2000a). These employees eligible to retire include the Fire Chief, both assistant chiefs, four of seven deputy chiefs, and 10 of the department's 24 battalion chiefs. (p.5)

Rohr wrote that a well-planned rotation policy would provide an organizational overview, bring fresh viewpoints to otherwise stagnant sections of the organization, and promote flexibility. However, he also wrote that there are several significant obstacles for officers working staff positions within the organization:

> The research also indicates that public sector employees were often times very reluctant to voluntarily take on staff assignments. The literature indicates that a change in

> organizational culture must take place. Operations oriented personnel feel a lack of support from upper management when moved into staff positions.
>
> Personnel forced into staff positions due to vacancies failed to perform at their previous levels. Research indicates that scheduling issues and lack of incentives in some cases would be limitations to implementing successful strategies. (Rohr, 2000, p. 21)

His recommendations included:

1. Five percent (5%) pay step increase on base salary amounts
2. Take home vehicle if position is subject to after hours recall to duty.
3. Compressed workweek or flexible scheduling.
4. Training and travel opportunities.
5. Priority overtime consideration for Operations work to fill vacancies.
6. Laptop computer issue during tour of duty. (p. 36)

Spence (1996) completed an ARP on *Succession Planning for the Emergency Response Department* in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. His work evaluated the successes and failures of a succession plan in that organization. Sample found that while a succession plan was implemented in 1988, on the recommendation of the Fire Chief, there was never any formal documentation of the plan.

> After reviewing several internal memos and notices, it appears the ERD plan consisted largely of identifying potential candidates, assessing those candidates psychologically and identifying their strengths and weaknesses, providing a list of methods to strengthen individual weaknesses and providing opportunities for the candidates to work on “special projects” to hone skills and learn the inside “culture” of the organization’s management team.

> Unfortunately, it became obvious during the research that the lack of formal documentation of the succession planning process likely meant most members of the department were not fully aware of the program or its goals. (Spence, 1996, p. 9)

Spence made the following recommendations to improve the succession plan in the ERD:

> (a) include all job classifications beginning with entry level positions, (b) conduct a job profile analysis for each position to identify required skills and competencies necessary to effectively fulfill the duties of the targeted positions, (c) construct assessment and evaluation criteria based on the competencies identified, (d) develop methodology to assess the existence of competencies in potential candidates, (e) develop a plan for administration of the succession plan, (f) conduct an assessment of candidates, (g) provide feedback to the candidates based on the results of the assessment for development of improvement plans, (h) monitor and evaluate the progress of development plans. (p. 37)

Spence further stated that the succession plan should include: (a) mentoring and job exchange opportunities for participants, (b) psychological assessment with professional interpretation and feedback, and (c) identification of those individuals with the shortest development curves. Spence's last recommendation was made in light of the short term need for the ERD to have officer replacements to fill vacancies in the department.

> Unfortunately, our department currently has a shortage of leaders. As a result, Edmonton has recently been forced to hire four such people from outside of the organization. This was necessitated by the failure of the internal succession planning process. While there are many examples of external recruiting in the United States, there are very few in

> Canada. To recruit four “outsiders” in less than two years in quite simply unheard of. (p. 36)

Summary of Literature Review

Competent leadership for today and tomorrow is a high priority for many organizations in both the public and private sectors. The review of the literature revealed that many authors are writing of the importance of good succession planning to: (a) ensure achievement of strategic business plans, (b) ensure continued profitability or sound management of fiscal resources, (c) develop adequate talent pools for the replacement of individuals in leadership positions, (d) assist individuals with career planning, (e) increase diversity in the organization’s leadership, (f) retain qualified and motivated employees, and (g) improve employee morale.

Many of the authors made a key distinction between replacement planning and succession planning. While many organizations in the past have engaged in replacement planning, i.e., identifying potential replacements for key positions and “grooming” them for eventual promotion, this practice has demonstrated a propensity to adversely affect the morale and retention rates among those employees not selected as potential replacements. Secrecies about such plans and lack of any formal structure were other deficiencies noted by authors.

The review of the literature indicated that a successful succession planning process has several key characteristics. Among those characteristics are: (a) the process supports the organization’s strategic planning process, (b) the process is developed and supported by line management, (c) use of “high leverage” work assignments for development, (d) early identification of individuals with leadership potential, (e) development of positional competencies necessary for success, (f) managerial involvement in the development of improvement plans, (g) meaningful performance reviews from multiple points of view, and (h) the process is well documented and communicated to everyone in the organization.

The key component for a succession planning process that meets the needs of the organization, as identified by several authors, is the involvement of senior management in the development, application, and maintenance of the program. Programs that are developed by "outside" entities, e.g., a Human Resources department, contract consultants, etc., are doomed to failure. Likewise, those constructed by junior officers or officials with no involvement or support from "the top" will not be successful.

The components of a successful succession planning process include: (a) assessment of the organization's leadership needs, (b) assessment of the organizations capabilities, (c) determination of which positions are part of the succession planning process, (d) identification of core competencies required for key strategic positions, (e) assessment of individuals to determine mastery of the competencies, (f) development of personal competency profiles, and (g) development of individual development plans. In support of the plan components, an organization must identify the necessary training, education, and work assignments that will enable individuals to improve their mastery of the core competencies.

The key component, and the primary reason why a succession plan can work where an officer development plan will not, is the use of work assignments to improve an individual's level of competency. This is particularly true with "stretch" assignments, i.e., placing an individual into an assignment or assigning them a task that is "out of their comfort zone" and requires them to gain additional knowledge and skills as they work through the assignment.

PROCEDURES

The research procedures for this project began with a review of the available literature on the subject of succession planning. This search took several forms. First was an electronic review of the On-line Card Catalog at the National Fire Academy's Learning Resource Center (LRC) via the Internet, *www.lrc.fema.gov*. The initial search on the subject "succession planning" yielded no results. A second search for "succession planning" using the free-text search field produced four records, including three Applied Research Projects that Executive Fire Officer Program students had completed on the subject. A third search on the subject "organizational development" produced 129 records. A fourth search on the term "officer development" produced 162 records. After reviewing the card catalog entries for those sources that appeared to have relevance to the research, the author requested those materials for review from the LRC through the use of the Inter-Library Loan program with materials sent to the Chesterfield County Library, Meadowdale Branch.

The author conducted a search of the literature at the Meadowdale Branch of the Chesterfield County Library system, and the Learning Resource Center of John Tyler Community College. At John Tyler Community College the author was able to access the General BusinessFile ASAP database via the Internet. This database proved to be a significant source of information from business publications and journals. A search of the term "succession planning" yielded 519 records that the author was able to reduce to 120 by using the sub-topic indexing feature of the database search engine. The database then allowed the author to view the entire text of the article for review prior to printing.

The author conducted a survey of other Fire and EMS agencies to ascertain how they are approaching the subject of succession planning in their organizations. Using the Microsoft Outlook Express software, the author sent a short survey and request for information regarding succession planning and officer development in their respective departments to 50 former Executive Fire Officer Program classmates across the country (See Appendix L). Respondents were asked to reply to the survey questions by electronic mail. The author requested that any additional information, e.g., policies, procedures, or training programs, be sent via electronic mail using the WordPerfect of Microsoft Word file format, or through the postal system.

The author developed a survey to assess the perceptions of Chesterfield Fire and EMS officers and civilian division heads regarding succession planning and development issues (See Appendix G). The author distributed the surveys to 104 members of the Chesterfield Fire and EMS's leadership staff via the county's GroupWise electronic mail system on August 17, 2000 and requested that respondents return a printed copy of their completed survey to the author by September 15, 2000. The survey population consisted of 63 Company Officers (first-line supervisors, Lieutenants and Captains, in fire companies), and 12 Battalion Staff officers (Captains, Senior Captains and Battalion Chiefs) in the Emergency Operations Division. The survey also included all uniformed officers from the rank of Lieutenant through Chief of the Department in staff positions (EMS, Fire and Life Safety, Maintenance and Logistics, Training and Safety, and Emergency Communications). Besides the uniformed officers, the civilian Chief of Administrative Services, the civilian division heads of the Information Services, Administrative Services and Emergency Services Division were included as were the civilian supervisors of the Human Resources, Finance, and Administrative Services units.

A total of 58 surveys (55.7%) were returned to the author. The author entered the data from the individual surveys into a computerized spreadsheet (Microsoft Excel) for analysis. The data was then used to answer the research questions.

The author conducted a personal interview with Fire Chief S.A. Elswick on August 7, 2000 to discuss his views concerning the leadership replacement issue and what he as organizational needs required to meet that challenge. The author also drew material from the "A" Shift Company Officers Meeting of September 28, 2000 where the Chief Elswick engaged in dialogue with that shift's officers concerning the controversial issue of personnel being appointed to long-term acting positions.

Limitations

The primary limitation to the research for this project was the fact that the survey population works a variety of work schedules. The Company Officers and Battalion Staff members work 56-hour work weeks (twenty-four hours on duty, forty-eight hours off duty) and the staff members and division heads work 40-hour work weeks. The timing of the survey coincided with a time period when several members of the survey population were on extended vacation leave or attending courses at the National Fire Academy. These two factors presented some challenges in distributing the survey and getting them returned for tabulation. Several voice-mail messages were required as follow up to get the surveys returned in sufficient numbers for the survey to be valid.

Another limitation of the survey was the apparent apathy on the part of a large number of officers in the survey population. The survey population responded in the following numbers: Lieutenants 28 of 52 (53.8%), Captains 16 of 31 (51.6%), Battalion Chiefs 7 of 11 (63.6%), Executive Leaders three of four (75.0%), and Civilians four of six (66.0%).

RESULTS

Research Question #1 - How do the current personnel in leadership roles within Chesterfield Fire and EMS assess the current preparation, selection, and evaluation processes when promoted or selected for a job?

A total of fifty-eight (55.7%) of the surveys sent to fire officers and civilian division heads and supervisors were returned to the author. The Lieutenants constituted the largest percentage of respondents to the survey (See Figure 12).

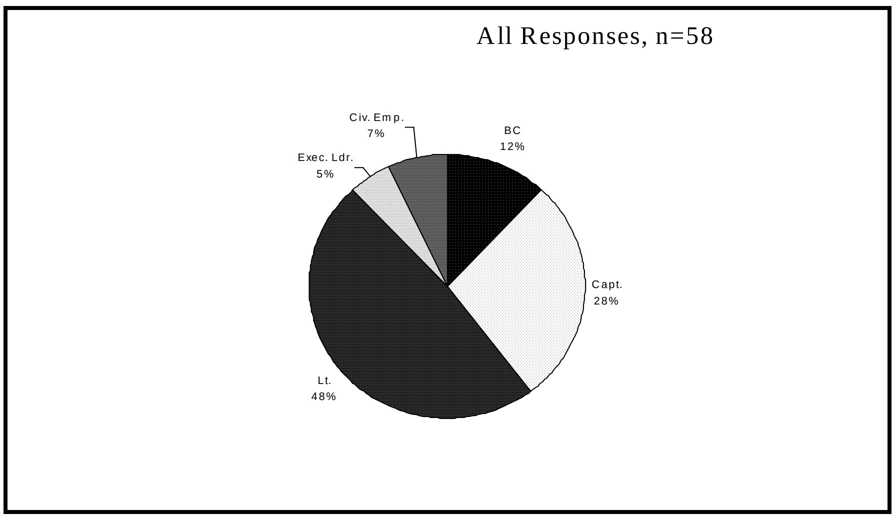

Figure 12. Percentage of respondents to CFEMS survey.

The following figures show the results of further analysis of the data from the survey using a computerized Excel spreadsheet. These charts show the distribution of the scoring for each question into three categories: Unfavorable (scores of one or two), Neutral (score of three), and Favorable (scores of four or five). Each question has three associated charts: one showing the statistical breakout for the entire population, one showing the breakout for the Lieutenants, and one showing the breakout for all other respondents.

The author chose to break out the scores of the Lieutenants for comparison for two reasons: (a) they constituted the largest number of respondents by number and percentage, and (b) this group constitutes a segment of the officer population that has had the most exposure to the department's Officer Development Program, Level I.

Survey Question #1 - Before promotion (or selection for civilian employees) to my current position I clearly understood the duties, responsibilities, and expectations of the position. This question sought information relative to how well the organization was preparing individuals for promotion through clear expectations. The overall respondent population scored this question as follows: unfavorable 19 (33.0%), neutral 2 (3.0%), and favorable 37 (64.0%). See Figure 13.

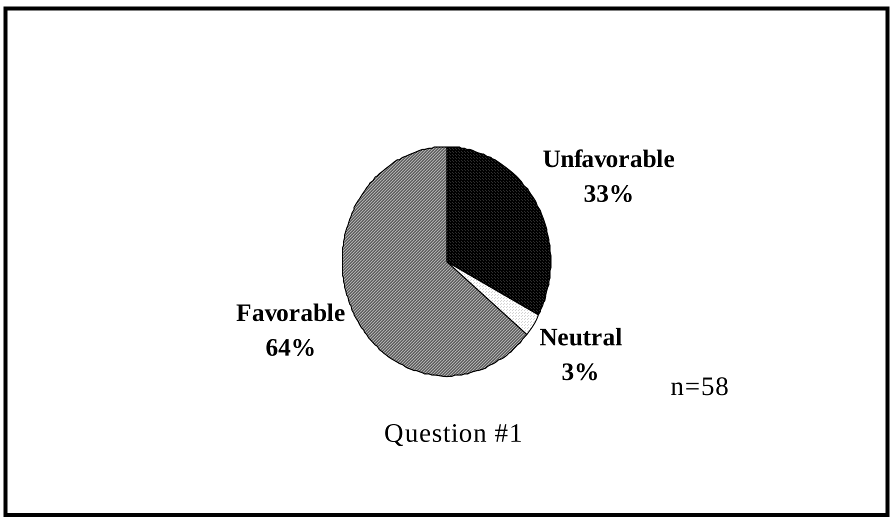

Figure 13. All responses to Survey Question #1.

The Lieutenants who responded to the survey question had responses of: unfavorable 7 (25.0%), neutral 1 (4.0%), and favorable 20 (71.0%). See Figure 14.

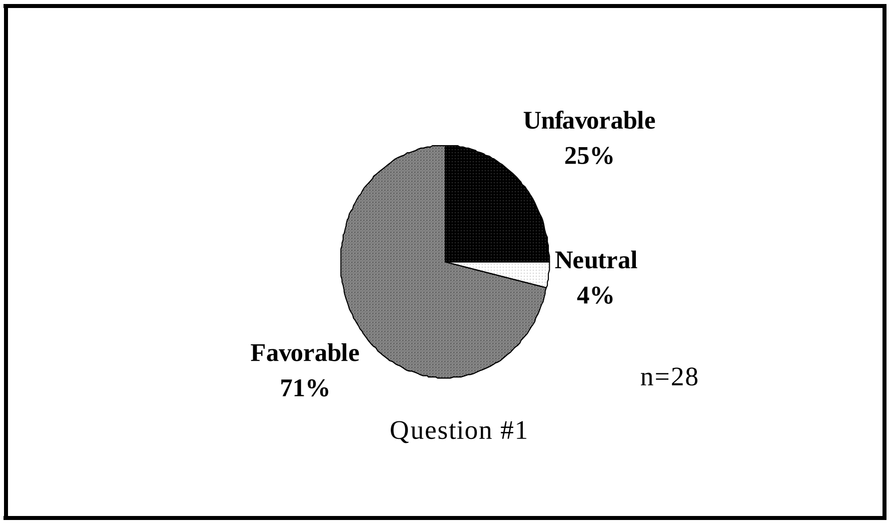

Figure 14. Lieutenants' response to Survey Question #1.

The score breakouts of all other respondents to the survey question were: unfavorable 11 (40.0%), neutral 1 (3.0%), and favorable 17 (37.0%). See Figure 15.

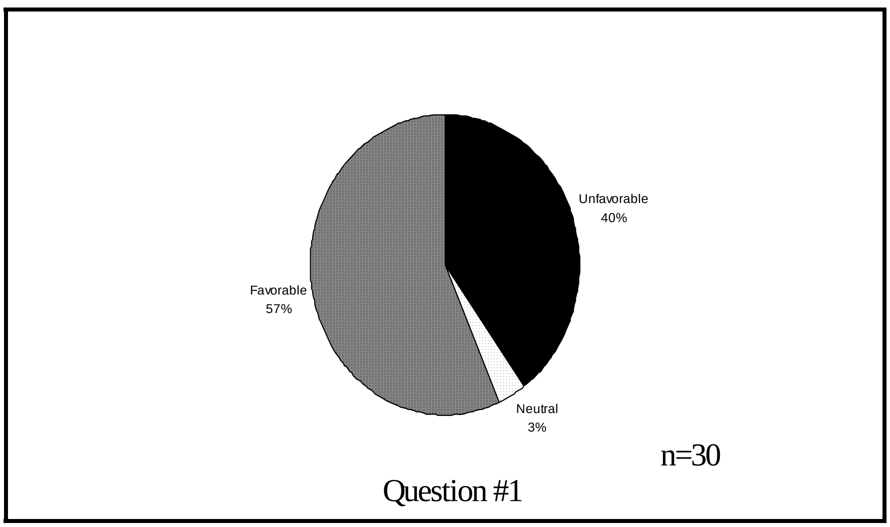

Figure 15. Responses of all others to Survey Question #1.

Survey Question #2 - Before promotion (or selection for civilian employees) to my current position I clearly knew what competencies were necessary to be successful in the position.

This question was designed to elicit a response from the individual concerning: (a) their knowledge of what a competency is in general, and (b) did they know what competencies were required in their new position prior to promotion or selection. The overall response to this question was: unfavorable 19 (33.0%), neutral 10 (17.0%), and favorable 29 (50.0%). (See Figure 16).

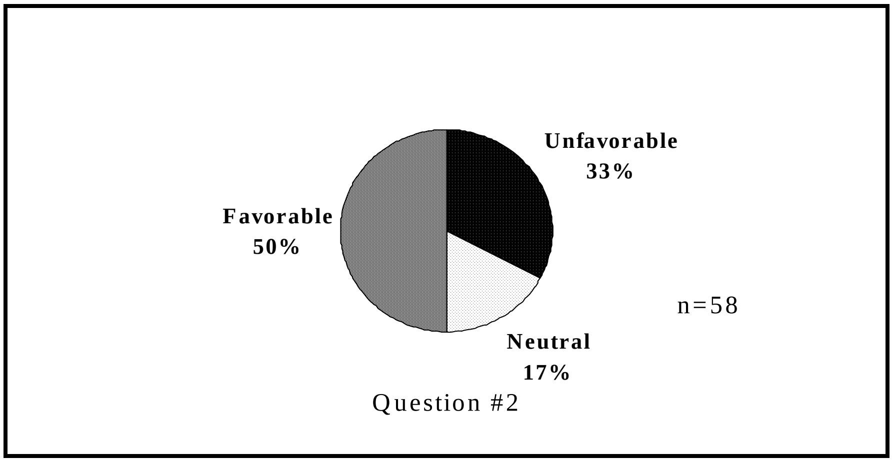

Figure 16. All responses to Survey Question #2.

The Lieutenants who responded to the survey question had responses of: unfavorable 9 (32.0%), neutral 5 (18.0%), and favorable 14 (50.0%). (See Figure 17.)

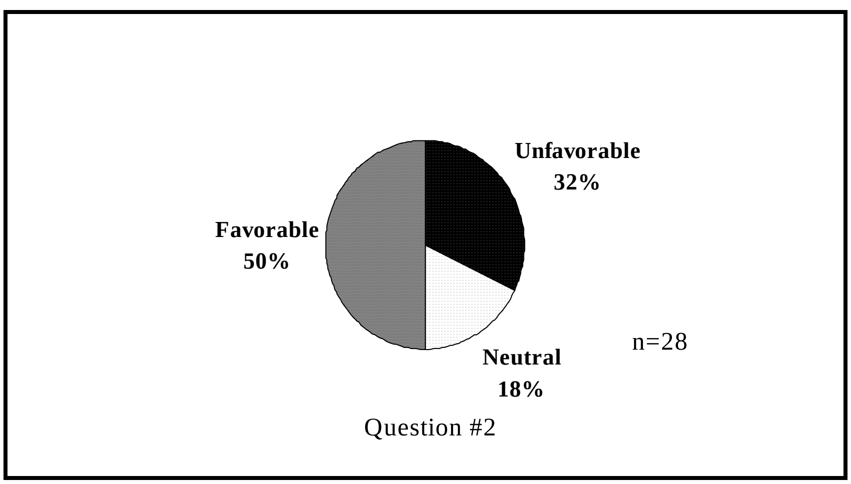

Figure 17. Lieutenants' responses to Survey Question #2.

The score breakouts of all other respondents to the survey question were: unfavorable 10 (33.0%), neutral 5 (17.0%), and favorable 15 (50.0%). See Figure 18.

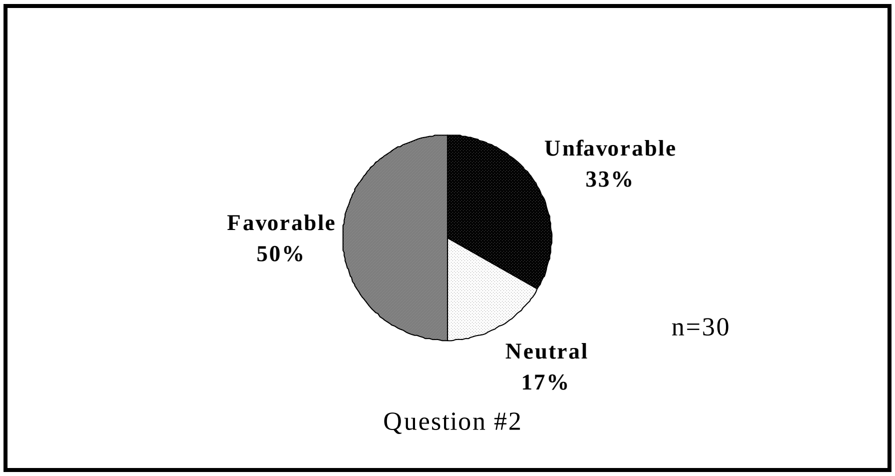

Figure 18. All other responses to Survey Question #2.

Survey Question #3 - Before promotion (or selection for civilian employees) to my current position I received sufficient training and development to be successful in the position.

The overall responses for this question were: unfavorable 28 (49%), neutral 2 (17%), and favorable 20 (34%). (See Figure 19).

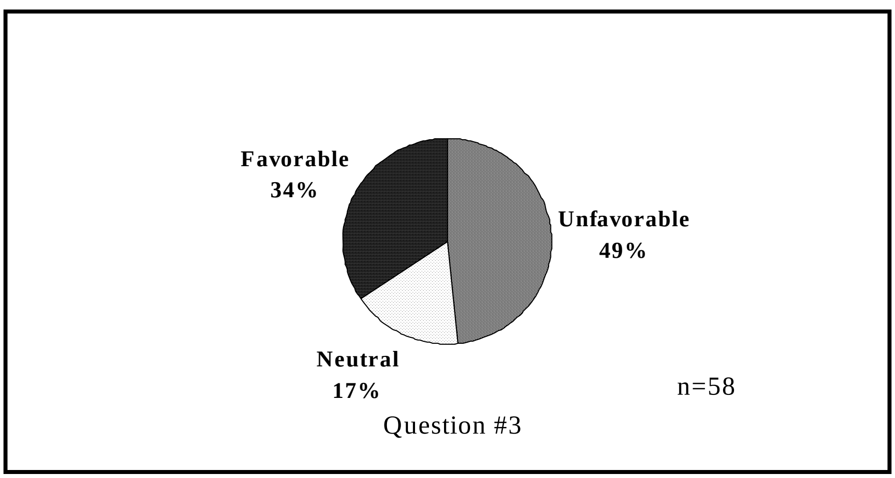

Figure 19. All responses to Survey Question #3.

The Lieutenants’ responses to the survey question were: unfavorable 14 (50%), neutral 8 (29%), and favorable 6 (21%). (See Figure 20).

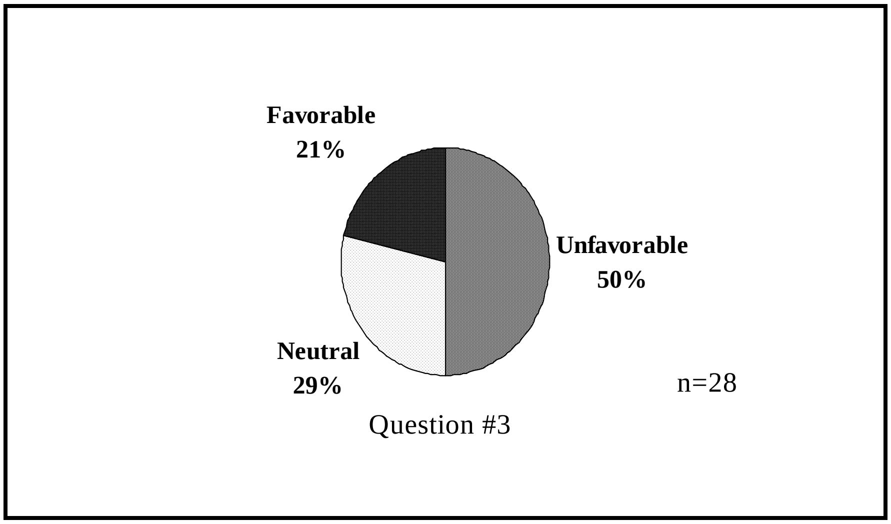

Figure 20. Lieutenants' responses to Survey Question #3.

The responses of all others to the question were: unfavorable 14 (46%), neutral 2 (7%), and favorable 14 (47%). (See Figure 21).

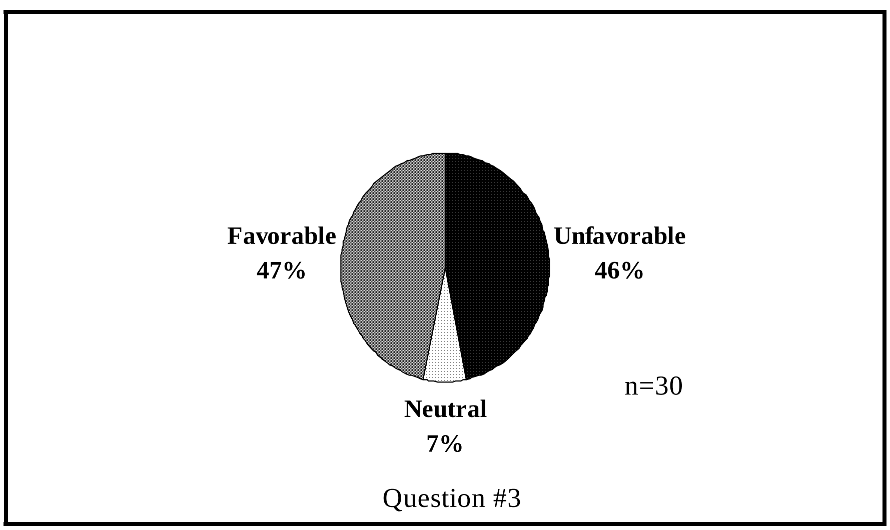

Figure 21. All other responses to Question #3.

Survey Question #4 - Following the promotion (or selection for civilian employees) process I received meaningful feedback on my strengths and weaknesses identified during the process for me to use in self-development.

The overall responses for this question were: unfavorable 36 (62%), neutral 10 (17%), and favorable 12 (21%). (See Figure 22).

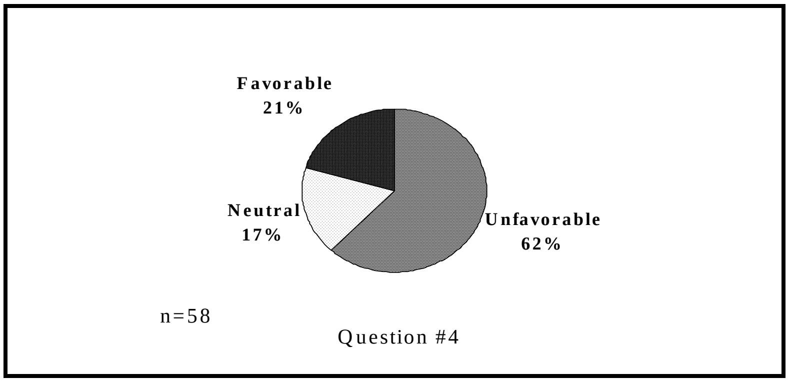

Figure 22. All responses to Survey Question #4.

The Lieutenants' responses for this question were: unfavorable 18 (64%), neutral 3 (11%), and favorable 7 (25%). (See Figure 23).

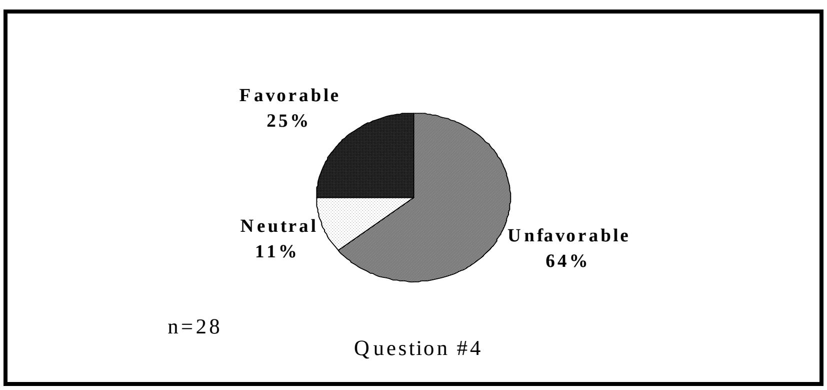

Figure 23. Lieutenants' responses to Survey Question #4.

The responses of all others to the survey question were: unfavorable 18 (60%), neutral 7 (23%), and favorable 5 (17%). (See Figure 24).

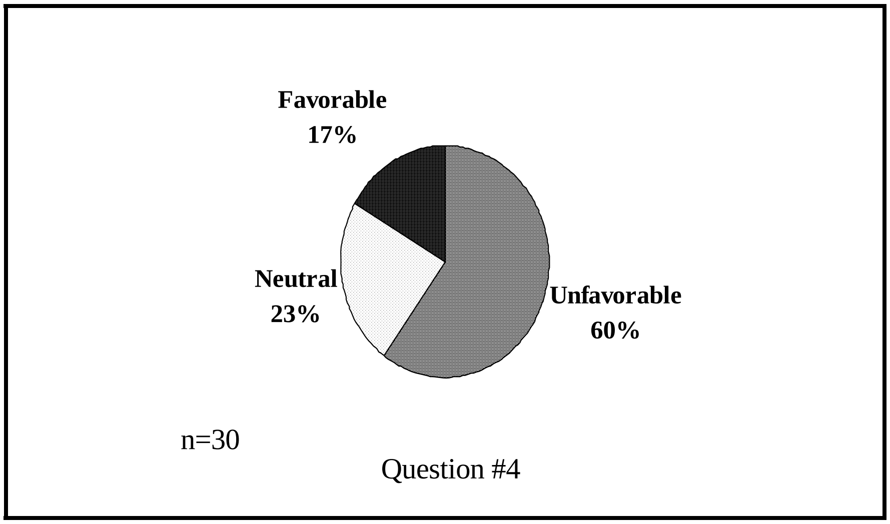

Figure 24. All other responses to Survey Question #4.

Survey Question #5 - I receive meaningful evaluations and feedback from my supervisor on my strengths and weaknesses for me to use in self-development.

The overall responses to this question were: unfavorable 17 (29%), neutral 10 (17%), and favorable 31 (54%). (See Figure 25).

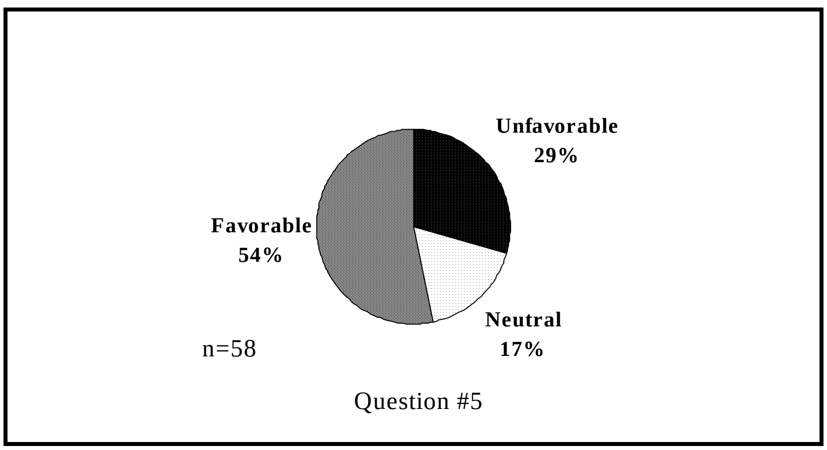

Figure 25. All responses to Survey Question #5.

The Lieutenants' responses were: unfavorable 11 (39%), neutral 3 (11%), and favorable 14 (50%). (See Figure 26).

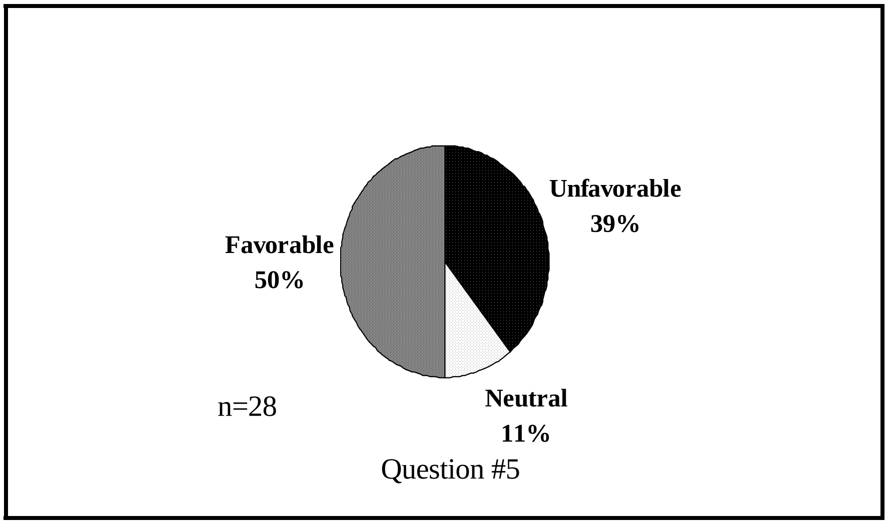

Figure 26. Lieutenants' responses to Survey Question #5.

The responses of all others to the survey question were: unfavorable 6 (20%), neutral 7 (23%), and favorable 17 (57%). (See Figure 27).

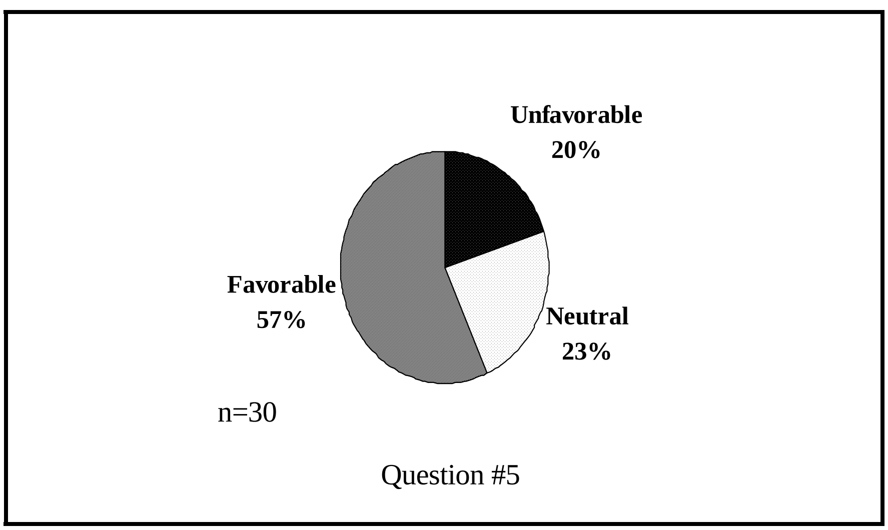

Figure 27. All other responses to Survey Question #5.

Research Question #2 - What is Chesterfield Fire and EMS currently doing to develop personnel for leadership roles?

Currently, the Department has an Officer Development Program Level I designed to educate those firefighters who are motivated to become Lieutenants. The Department provides this training through the Department's Training and Safety Division to those individuals who want the training. The member pursues that training on their off-duty time, or they can take annual leave time to attend the classes if the class falls on a duty day. Completion of the program can gain the individual up to 7.75 points on the Lieutenant's promotional exam. (See Appendix H) The department does not currently require that individuals seeking promotion complete the program, and it is not a prerequisite for promotion.

In 1998, after several years of development, the Chesterfield Fire Department launched its Officer Development Program, Level II. This program is designed to provide training for the Lieutenant who aspires to the rank of Captain. After running a year-long pilot program where the curriculum was presented to incumbents for review and modification, the department began full delivery in 1999. (See Appendix I) This training is voluntary, as is the Officer Development Program Level I. Completion of the training is not a prerequisite for promotion to Captain.

As this project was being completed, changes were being made in the promotional process for the ranks of lieutenant and captain. Those changes will require that by 2005 candidates for promotion to lieutenant must have completed the ODP Level I curriculum and that they possess an associates degree in a field related to fire and emergency services.

Also by 2005, candidates for promotion to captain must have completed ODP Level II and must possess an associates degree in a field related to fire and emergency services.

Chesterfield County's Human Resource Management Department (HRM) provides training that supports the County's Total Quality Improvement (TQI) Program. TQI University, created in partnership with John Tyler Community College (a two-year institution) provides employees with TQI "tools" in such areas as process management, statistical process control, systems thinking, and creating a quality culture. There are a variety of levels to this training: entry level training for all employees, supervisory training, and upper level training for managers and supervisors through the County's TQI University. (See Appendix J) After the introductory training provided to all new employees, the pursuit of the additional courses in the TQI University curriculum is voluntary, though several of those courses are part of the Officer Development Program Level I and II curricula.

The department has supported its officers as they attend courses at the National Fire Academy, primarily by granting training leave for those individuals attending class and paying for the two-week meal ticket. Officers are encouraged to attend the two-week programs, though there is no systematic approach or "path" that an officer is expected to follow.

The department has a Career Development Program that provides salary supplements as incentive for firefighters to obtain certifications in specialized areas of emergency response. Positions are funded with a five percent supplement to the employee's salary that they receive as long as they maintain the requisite certifications.

The Career Development Program covers the following positions: Firefighter Specialist, Hazardous Incident Team (HazMat) member, Technical Rescue Team member, SCUBA Team member. In addition to those positions, firefighters, lieutenants, and captains who are assigned to a position in a Support Services division, or the EMS Division, receive a five percent salary supplement while assigned to those positions. (These are positions where the employee works a 40-hour per week schedule consisting of day shifts.)

Research Question #3 - What are the critical components of an effective succession plan for an organization?

There are several critical components and key behaviors associated with an effective succession plan for an organization. The review of the literature found much common ground among a significant number of sources on this topic.

1. The plan must be supported by the top leaders of the organization in a very visible way. The top leaders in many cases not only support the process, but are actively involved in the process.
2. The process must be Line Management owned and operated. The process is not a package prepared by human resources professionals, consultants, or a training department. The line managers and supervisors are actively involved in the mechanics of the process; staff or consultants provide support for the process.
3. The succession planning process must be based on a top to bottom assessment of the organization's leadership needs.
4. The succession planning process must be part of the organization's strategic business plan.

5. The plan should identify those positions within the organization that are part of the succession planning process. The necessary job competencies for success in a given should be identified for each position.
6. Selection of individuals for inclusion in the succession plan should be based on an objective evaluation process. One of the best formal methods for assessing employee promotability or potential is the use of assessment centers.
7. Good succession plans are balanced with employee input about career aspirations, career interests, willingness to take new assignments, assume new positions, engage in personal development, etc.
8. Succession planning involves the use of development assignments. Besides selection and evaluation and training, good succession planning involves putting people into roles with responsibilities that force them to grow. Many organizations refer to these as “stretch assignments”.
9. Ongoing evaluations are critical to the success of succession planning. Those evaluations typically involve input from both superiors and subordinates. Information from the evaluation process is used to provide direction to employee development.

Research Question #4 - How can an effective succession plan enable Chesterfield Fire and Emergency Medical Services to meet the demand for future leaders?

The development of an effective succession plan would provide several benefits to all members of the Chesterfield Fire and EMS.

For the Executive Leaders of the organization (Fire Chief and Deputy Chiefs) a succession plan would be an enormous aid in their quest to ensure that the organization has effective and efficient leadership for the future by identifying potential leaders early in their careers. A succession plan would also reduce a great deal of the “guess work” that frequently accompanies selection of officers to fill roles at the Middle Manager (Captain and Battalion Chief) level of the organization. A succession plan would enable superior officers throughout the organization to take a more pro-active role in the development of subordinates for future leadership roles in the organization.

A succession plan that is well designed and well documented would also be of tremendous value to the Executive Leaders as they work to ensure that the organization has the proper level of support from county government. Chesterfield Fire and EMS relies on strong working relationships between the Executive Leaders and their colleagues in County Administration, the Budget and Management Department, and the Human Resource Management Department to obtain the necessary people, equipment, and financial resources needed for it to accomplish its mission. These other public service professionals are accustomed to working with well-developed plans, plans that are documented, and plans that connect with the county’s strategic goals. (Note: The county’s goals are as follows: (a) to provide world-class customer service, (b) to be acknowledged for its extraordinary quality of life, (c) to be the safest and most secure community of its size in the USA, (d) to be a unifying leader of local government in the region and state, (e) to be the employer of choice, (f) to be the model for excellence in government, (g) to be the "First Choice" business community.)

The development of a succession plan would clearly demonstrate to those other interested parties in county government, particularly the County Administrator, that CFEMS has a structured plan for how it is preparing itself to manage significant turnover in its leadership now and in the future.

CFEMS has seven strategic goals for the organization that support one or more of the county's goals; CFEMS Goal #4 is, "To recruit, develop, and support our people." Objective 4.2 under that goal is, "Within three years, devise and implement a development and training program for all members of the organization." Development of a succession plan for leadership positions throughout the organization would address Objective 4.2.

A succession plan would be beneficial to the members of the organization in that from the very beginning of their career an employee could see what career development options were available to them. In addition to knowing what was available, a succession plan would also show what were the duties and responsibilities, necessary competencies for success, and needed training and education for each position. The plan would also describe how participation in "stretch assignments", i.e., working in assignments outside their comfort zone, would be an organizational expectation that "counts" the same as attainment of training and education when it's time to fill an available position.

A succession plan would help develop trust and cooperation within the organization. A succession plan would create a clear set of guidelines and expectations for the benefit of everyone in the organization. It would do much to reduce the secrecy involved in the development of personnel for leadership positions. Employees and managers alike would know what the organization's leadership needs are, how people participate in the plan, what people need to know to be successful in a new position, and how people are selected.

By reducing the current subjectiveness of such issues, and adding a greater degree of objectivity that a succession plan can provide, all members from the fire chief to the newest recruit firefighter would know how the process works.

Lastly, a succession plan would provide an efficient and effective process for the development of new leaders for the organization. In the county's Total Quality Improvement (TQI) Program course, *Process Management*, the course material describes the need for a documented process when there is, " . . . a process that is done repetitively, done by different people, and there is a need to have consistent outcomes." In the coming years, CFEMS will be replacing leaders up and down the organizational management ladder as members retire and new personnel are added through the staffing of new fire stations. There will be a tremendous need to have the best process possible in place to meet those demands; few CFEMS processes will be done more repetitively, by more different people, and have the need consistent outcomes. The development of a succession plan will ensure that there are adequate numbers of trained and developed leaders to fill those positions.

DISCUSSION

Organizations throughout the public and private sectors are struggling with the challenge of how to ensure competent leadership for continued organizational success. For many organizations, in today's fast-paced, technology driven, and customer service oriented work environment, the continued success of all endeavors depends upon succession planning.

> Whatever your circumstances, the needs are the same: How can you bring transferred and new employees on board most efficiently and effectively and how can your present crew welcome the new staff they will have to depend on?

> If you're rowing too fast to plan or train, then you're too inefficient to succeed. Throwing people in to sink or swim means too much drowning or continually reinventing the wheel and too little aligned and focused effort. (Leichtling, 2000, p. 44A)

The survey of CFEMS officers and civilian supervisors was designed to obtain a "snapshot" assessment of that population's views on some of the key components of a succession plan–components that are not in use at the time of this project. The survey questions were written to evaluate their views on: (a) how well are roles and responsibilities for positions in the organization defined, (b) did they understand the competencies for success for a position, (c) how well they were trained for a position, (d) receiving meaningful feedback from the promotional process, and (e) how they felt about the quality of evaluation feedback that they get from their supervisor.

In analyzing the results of the survey of CFEMS officers and civilian supervisors it is interesting to note how the scores for the lieutenants compared to those of all other respondents. In survey question #1, 71% of lieutenants said they clearly understood the duties, responsibilities, and expectations for their position prior to appointment and only 25% rated the question unfavorably. In CFEMS much of the focus, past and present, has been on officer development at the first-line supervisor (lieutenant) level of the organization. Individuals gaining promotion above that level have historically had to learn a position for which there was no "book." While the organization has published lists of duties and responsibilities for those other positions, e.g., captain and battalion chief, the "unwritten" rules, roles, and expectations frequently carry more weight in how an individual's performance is measured. The scores of the remaining respondents, where the favorable score dropped to 57% and the unfavorable score rose to 40%, seems to reflect that.

Spence (1996) wrote of the necessity to identify not only the duties and responsibilities for job positions when putting together a succession plan, but also to identify the expectations for the position. Spence made reference in his work to the Phoenix (AZ) Fire Department Career Handbook; he was not able to obtain a copy in time to do extensive review of the manual before completion of his project.

This author obtained a copy and it is an impressive work that holds benefits for all members of their organization. The manual, which every probationary firefighter receives in the recruit academy, clearly outlines all of the career opportunities, both horizontal and vertical, available right up the Fire Chief. More impressively, each job position includes a complete job description, prerequisite requirements, preparation activities, e.g., education and work experience, and the promotional process, if applicable, for that position. For the educational section the manual lists applicable college courses that would provide useful knowledge and skills to the individual either prior to them filling the position or while they work in the position. The work experience section describes how prior work assignments or project work can provide useful background for the position. (Phoenix Fire Department, 1997)

Survey question #2, which asked respondents if they clearly understood what competencies were necessary for success prior to promotion or appointment, provided some interesting insight about both populations of the survey group. The literature review for this project suggests that effective succession planning involves clearly defining the requirements and requisite competencies for key positions and then identifying which employees should be developed to fill these positions in the future.

Effective succession-planning systems are based on well-defined competencies and reliable information about the current performance and potential of employees (National Academy of Public Administration, 1992). Buckner & Slavenski (1994) wrote of the need for competencies:

> To begin, key positions should be identified, and the requirements for those positions should be defined; job analysis can be used to identify competencies for key positions in highly technical and stable organizations; in flexible organizations, more general competencies should be established. (p. 565)

Rothwell (1994) wrote that competency assessments for key positions can also be obtained using a variety of methods, for example, merging a list of generic management leadership competencies along with organization-specific competencies to create an “executive success profile.

Both the lieutenants and all other respondents gave a 50% favorable rating to the question; equally significant is the combined 50% score for the neutral and unfavorable categories. These scores are significant in that CFEMS has never identified the necessary competencies for success for any position within the organization.

In survey question #3, only 21% of the responding lieutenants gave a favorable rating to the question asking whether they had received the training and development to be successful in their position prior to promotion. More interesting is that more than three quarters of the respondents felt that they lacked that training and development (29% neutral and 50% unfavorable). These responses are ironic in that the majority of formal leadership training and development currently provided by the organization takes place at the lieutenant level.

The Officer Development Program Level I (target audience-firefighters preparing for promotion to lieutenant) is the longest running officer training program in the organization. All other respondents were almost evenly split between favorable (47%) and unfavorable (46%).

Another aspect of good succession planning is an evaluation process that is multi-functional. "One function should be to provide objective and job-relevant assessment data to help effectively identify succession candidates. Another should be to provide essential information back to the candidate regarding their individual developmental needs" (Hinrichs & Hollenbeck, 1990, p. 246). Both survey population groups responded very unfavorably to Survey Question #4 that asked them if they received meaningful feedback from the promotion/selection process to use for self-development. The lieutenants responded with ratings of 64% unfavorable and 11% neutral; the other respondents rated the question 60% unfavorable and 23% neutral. Overall only 21% of the survey respondents felt they received meaningful feedback.

This is not surprising in light of current promotional practices. The promotional panels for the ranks of lieutenant and captain still consist primarily of answering technical knowledge questions or providing answers to scenarios presented to the candidate by a panel of officers from within the organization. In the last few years the organization has started to incorporate a few scenarios into the process that have the appearance of assessment center type scenarios. However, the process still lacks a high degree of objectivity; the answers and actions of the candidate are still rated through the subjective evaluation of panel members, panel members who are also members of the organization and who, in many cases, know the candidate.

There is no formal feedback process that shows the candidate what their strengths were in the process and where they have areas that need improvement. Such a feedback system would be difficult to manage with the current promotional process because the panel is looking for specific answers to the questions that they pose to the candidate. The only feedback that is available is how did the candidate's answers compare to the correct answers.

The promotion process for ranks above captain, e.g., battalion chief and deputy chief, still consists of a subjective interview process. Some attempt has been made to present some scenarios during the interview process, but they lack objectivity for several reasons. The scenarios are not based on job analysis, there are no behavior dimensions constructed to rate the candidate (and to provide feedback for development of the candidate), the evaluators are superior officers within the organization, and the evaluators are not trained in how to evaluate based on the behavioral dimensions. These deficiencies allow CFEMS to be vulnerable to the same pitfalls as other organizations.

> In many organizations subjective and anecdotal assessments of candidates prevail in the succession-planning process; as a result, management often fails to identify all the best candidates, and those considered for advancement or developmental placements are simply those who have become most visible to senior management; furthermore, when relying on subjective assessments, top executives tend to choose successors similar to themselves rather than to identify managers with skills and experiences needed to succeed in the future. (National Academy of Public Administration, 1992, p. 68)

The organization could make significant improvements to the promotional processes for all ranks, and develop the missing feedback loop to participants by replacing the processes it has historically used with assessment centers. This would be especially beneficial for an organization like CFEMS that must manage significant turnover in its leadership at all levels.

> Assessment centers help define specific individual development needs as they help organizations estimate how far and fast candidates will progress; they also offer a clear advantage because they look beyond resumes and current performance into individuals' potential to help companies meet future objectives. Moreover, assessment centers can fairly and accurately compare the potential of employees in corporate location around the world, allowing organizations to fully tap all of their talents. . . . Perhaps most important, assessment centers allow participants to "try on" senior roles, accountabilities, and activities in a relatively risk-free, simulated environment. Participants usually find these "stretch" experiences deliver important self-insights and give them realistic job previews. (Byham, 2000, p. 37)

The use of an assessment center, when properly designed and administered, would definitely provide all participants with useful feedback about their abilities to do the job for which they aspire whether they obtain the promotion or not. "One of the best formal methods for assessing employee promotability or potential is the use of an assessment center, because they have a high degree of predictability of success, especially at more senior levels" (Bucker & Slavenski, 1994, p. 570). CFEMS has an upcoming promotional panel to fill one battalion chief position scheduled for December 2000, and 14 captains have applied to meet the panel. Only one of those 14 captains is going to get promoted from that panel.

However, it is a safe assumption that when the next battalion chief's promotional panel is announced that those 13 captains will be among the applicants. With the current process, and its lack of feedback, those 13 captains will not be any better prepared for the next panel than they were for the current one. And even the one captain who received the promotion really has no feedback that lets them know what their strengths are and what the process identified as areas that need improvement.

The final survey question asked respondents how they rated the evaluations that they received from their supervisor. All supervisors in CFEMS are evaluated using the same form and criteria–Chesterfield County's Employee Development Plan (EDP). This form was developed by the county's Human Resource Management Department and is used for supervisory employees throughout county government. Most supervisors that the author has spoken with, in his role as an officer in CFEMS, are not satisfied with the form, either when they use it for subordinates or when they are evaluated by their superior. Their discontent stems from the generic nature of the form and the difficulty in evaluating activity specific to CFEMS.

The responses of the lieutenants indicated that 50% of the lieutenants felt they received meaningful feedback from their evaluation that was useful in self-development. The responses from all others in the survey indicated that 57% felt favorably about the evaluation process as a useful instrument for receiving feedback for their individual development. Examination of the EDP form (See Appendix J) reveals a form that is difficult to use for providing self-development feedback to an employee because of its generic nature.

For those employees who felt they are getting favorable feedback, the author feels there are two possible explanations: (a) their supervisor is going above and beyond what's required by the EDP (and the supervisory training provided on how to complete the EDP), or (b) the evaluated employee does not know what meaningful feedback for self-development really looks like. Based on the fact that CFEMS has not established competencies for each position evaluated, it is probably more a case of the later rather than the former.

Organizations with good succession planning use the evaluation process not just for the evaluation of performance, but also for the development of the employee for the future benefit of the organization. By using assessment results, such as performance appraisal and 360-degree feedback, employees can work together with their supervisor to create an individual development plan that is tailored to their particular development needs and career goals. (McCauley, Eastman, & Ohlott, 1995)

Based on the findings of the literature review, Chesterfield Fire and EMS has no succession planning process, and its current efforts to develop future leadership will be inadequate for the future challenges that the organization faces. The only components of a succession plan that are currently in place–and they are very minimal–are the Officer Development Programs, Level I and II.   These efforts focus on the first-line supervisor and are solely classroom presentation in nature–there is no application of learning to ensure development of the newly acquired knowledge or skill. There is certainly no expectation that the new knowledge or skill will be put to the test in a job or project assignment; the programs were not designed with that end in mind.

Job rotation of officers is very informal and applies primarily to those officers at the rank of battalion chief and above. Since the current fire chief took office in 1997, there has been more officer rotation than in previous administrations.

The fire chief refers to such job rotation as “executive development” that is designed to broaden the organizational perspective of the individual. This philosophy fits in with job rotation as a component of succession planning; the process needs to be formalized. Such formalization needs to include: (a) identification of what jobs fall into the job rotation category, (b) a database containing job assignments officers have had and projects that they have managed, (c) what job assignments they need to continue their development, and (d) development of an information system to aid in the management of the job rotation. Currently, there is no information system in CFEMS that can readily provide such information about the officer corps.

A recent development in the battalion chief promotional process illustrates this lack of information about the officer corps. Captains who want to meet the battalion chief interview panel must prepare a resume that contains information relative to the battalion chief position: (a) what job assignments they have had in their career, (b) education and training, and (c) special projects and assignments. This is not congruent with good succession planning. The organization should already be in possession of this information; it is the foundation for the development of potential leadership. Organizations with good succession planning conduct periodic human resource review meetings. These review meetings provide the forum for identifying succession candidates and planning for their development. (Buckner & Slavenski, 1994)

Chesterfield Fire and EMS is not unique among fire service organizations in its lack of succession planning. In an electronic mail survey of fire departments across the country the author sought information about succession planning practices from former classmates in the Executive Fire Officer Program. The survey was sent to 58 fire officers across the country and

23 responses (39.7%) were received by the author.

Not one of the responding officers worked for an organization that had a succession plan. Eight of the departments had written officer development programs; all addressed the company officer. Of the 23 responding departments, 12 had hired officers from outside the organization in the past due to a lack of qualified candidates within the organization; all were chief officers, predominantly the fire chief.

Chesterfield Fire and EMS has a critical need to develop a succession plan to ensure adequate numbers of future leaders. The organization is facing many challenges from both within and outside the department and competent leadership will be critical for its continued success. There will be a significant number of officers who will retire in the next three to seven years, including the present fire chief. The department as a whole can experience the retirement of approximately 80 employees by the year 2007–this will be the first wave of retirements for an organization that hired its first firefighters in 1969. In addition to this turnover, there are five fire stations waiting to be built from the most recent bond referendum–each station represents the addition of 15 firefighters and three company officers to the workforce.

Even as this research project was being completed, the staff was growing from the addition of more firefighters. The provision of EMS in the county has been a combined effort of the fire department and four volunteer rescue squads (transport ambulance organizations). Recent years have seen a decline in available EMS volunteers in those rescue squads and the fire department has been called upon to provide staffing support. This support comes in the form of daytime staffing of their ambulances and fire units “dropping” a firefighter/paramedic at the scene of a call to ride to the hospital on the ambulance as the provider-in-charge.

Dropping that firefighter to assist the ambulance causes the fire unit to be short staffed (officer and one firefighter) until the ambulance returns the firefighter to the station. In an effort to increase staffing on fire units to four persons (officer and three firefighters) to enable the units to stay at a minimum of three when this happens, the County Board of Supervisors approved the hiring of 18 additional firefighters. This will likely only be the first installment of an increased staffing plan; the fire chief told the Board that it will require 60 firefighters to maintain four firefighters on each unit.

Introduction of succession planning, while much needed, will not be easy in an organization that has many cultural barriers to one of the fundamental concepts of contemporary succession planning: identify and grow leadership talent within the organization so that there are always well-qualified personnel available for leadership vacancies. CFEMS is probably no different from most public sector organizations in general, and fire departments in particular, in that members of the organization have some very deeply entrenched beliefs concerning promotions. Some members feel that seniority should count more than other factors, e.g., education, work experience and assignments, or training in promotional policies and practices within the organization. Other members, on the other hand, believe that individuals who have pursued specialized technical training, e.g., hazardous materials or technical rescue training, or have worked the “undesirable” staff assignments (leaving the 24-hour shift of Emergency Operations for the 40-hour work week of staff) should receive more consideration at promotion time. Still others believe that completion of the Officer Development Programs and formal education, e.g., associates and bachelor degrees, are the key elements of promotability.

Combined with these individually held beliefs, are promotional practices that are still very rigid in writing and practice within the organization, and perhaps even moreso in the minds of the membership. Prior to the current fire chief's promotion three years ago, yearly promotional lists for the ranks of lieutenant and captain were established after candidates met the promotion panel and those lists were in rank order with the individual's score posted next to their name. Officer promotions to vacant positions were made from those lists following the rank order. Promotions to the rank of battalion chief had no process; the fire chief made an announcement of whom he had promoted to battalion chief.

The current fire chief has started to change some of these practices. Promotion lists for lieutenant and captain are in rank order, but scores are not posted. When a vacancy occurs, the fire chief interviews the next three candidates on the list and makes his selection. For the next vacancy the two candidates not previously selected are joined by the next person on the list to form a pool of three for the next interview. For the rank of battalion chief, no list is published from the promotional panel; the panel gives the fire chief the names of its top three candidates and the chief conducts his interview.

These changes in how personnel are selected for promotion, and the promotional processes themselves, are significant changes for the organization and as such have been met with equal amounts of criticism and support from the members. Another significant change has been the use of acting officers for "executive development" (the chief's term)–personnel from current promotional lists being placed in long term acting positions (some organizations refer to this as "acting-out-of-class," or grade).

Most of these officer positions, at all ranks, are in Emergency Operations and have opened up because the position has been transferred to another division within the department, e.g., Maintenance/Logistics, Fire and Life Safety, Emergency Communications, to deal with the increased workload in those divisions, divisions that are very understaffed. The position in Emergency Operations cannot be filled with a promotion because no county employee position number exists–the numbered position is the one that was transferred to the other division.

The issue of acting officers is a source of serious debate within the organization. Employees who were appointed to acting positions off of a new promotion list, e.g., a firefighter from the lieutenant’s list, served in that capacity for the year that the list was in affect, then were placed back into a firefighter’s position when the list expired and they did not finish high enough on the new list to continue in the acting position. Those members who are on the side of the debate that disagrees with the fire chief’s are saying, “The individual has been in the position for a year. They’ve shown that they can do the job. They should stay in the acting position until a promotion comes along. Even if a new list comes out.” (Personal communication, “A” Shift Company Officer’s Meeting, September 28, 2000)

This debate in particular underscores how difficult it will be to implement a succession plan where one of the key elements is moving personnel through a series of predetermined job assignments designed to develop their competencies for the future. For a succession plan to work effectively, personnel have to know, understand, and accept that such activities do not come with any guarantee of promotion, only opportunity.

For its first step in the succession planning journey, CFEMS needs to make a commitment to systematic succession planning and the development of a succession planning program. "To some extent, this first step represents a leap of faith in the value of planned over unplanned approaches to succession planning" (Rothwell, 1994, p.58) The development of such a systematic approach will be an organizational "stretch" assignment for CFEMS, an organization this does not have a strong history of planning. The organization has only in recent years begun to use the National Fire Academy's *Change Management Model* in an effort to improve that organizational deficiency. To date, however, only a few officers have been through the Academy's *Strategic Management of Change* (SMOC) course and have any real background in its use.

Rothwell (1994) provides an excellent resource manual for the development of systematic succession planning and the development of a program in his textbook, *Effective Succession Planning: Ensuring Leadership Continuity and Building Talent from* Within. The author of this project sees tremendous opportunity to use Rothwell's text in concert with the *Change Management Model* for the development of a succession plan and program for CFEMS. The *Change Management Model* would provide the tool to strategically manage this significant change in the organization; Rothwell's text would provide the tool to develop the change, i.e., the succession planning program.

The massive influx of new employees, coupled with present employees moving upward into future officer vacancies will require good leaders and managers at all levels of the organization. These leaders will need to have more than just classroom instruction and "book sense" if they are to have individual success, and the organization is to grow and prosper.

Every employee should know what their career options are so that they can prepare themselves with the knowledge, skills, and abilities prior to competing for a position. Firefighters and officers alike should know what competencies are needed to be successful in a position. Firefighters and officers should know what the assessment process looks like and gain useful feedback for future development whether they get the promotion or not.

The department should know what its organizational leadership needs are and what the talent pool looks like. The department should know that it has the ability to identify talent within the organization, develop that talent, and have several qualified candidates for any leadership position that becomes vacant. The organization should always be able to appoint the fire chief's successor from within the ranks. The organization needs succession planning now.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations from this study are as follows:

1. The Executive Leadership of Chesterfield Fire and Emergency Medical Services (CFEMS) should make a written commitment to develop a succession plan and succession planning process for the continued development of competent leadership from within the organization.
2. The Project Manager assigned to lead the project team to develop a succession plan and succession planning process should use the textbook, *Effective Succession Planning: Ensuring Leadership Continuity and Building Talent from Within* by William J. Rothwell as a resource manual for their team during analysis, planning, implementation, and evaluation phases of creating a succession plan. Every team member should be issued a copy of the textbook and a copy of this Applied Research Paper 30 days prior to the

beginning of the project for preparatory work.

3. The succession planning activities should include the following:

3.1 Conduct an Organizational Capability Assessment to determine what leadership capabilities the organization currently possesses, and what it needs to fulfil its mission to the community.

3.2 Designate job positions that should be included in the plan.

3.3 Develop a set of core competency statements for all job positions that are covered in the plan.

3.4 Develop processes for the initial assessment of individuals to identify candidates for inclusion in the succession planning process.

3.5 Develop personal competency profiles for each individual identified for inclusion in the planning process.

3.6 Identify the necessary training, education, and work assignments that will enable individuals to improve their mastery of positional competencies.

3.7 Develop a systematic approach to the use of job assignments for employee development purposes, especially "stretch assignments", i.e., those assignments that take an individual out of their "comfort zone" and require them to gain additional knowledge and skills as they work through the assignment.

3.8 Develop a strategic approach to project management within the organization so that the assignment of individuals to project participation is integrated into the employee development process.

3.9 Develop 360 degree evaluations for all job positions covered under the plan.

3.10 Develop assessment center evaluations for promotions at all ranks within the organization.

4. The Executive Leadership should make a commitment to the use of the National Fire Academy's *Change Management Model* to strategically manage the organizational change of implementing the succession planning program developed in Recommendation #1.

5. The Executive Leadership should clearly communicate the written plan to all members of the organization. Further, it should take action to institutionalize the program by publishing, and issuing to every member, a *Chesterfield Fire and EMS Career Handbook* that contains the written succession plan.

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Appendix A - A Results Based Development Case Study: Northeast Utilities

What does results-based development look like in practice? Consider Northeast Utilities of Berlin, CT, a major power company that found itself in a free fall from one of the most highly rated nuclear operations in the country to one of the worst.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission rates all nuclear power plants in the country for factors such as safety and effective operation. Northeast had long enjoyed a position near the top of the N-RC's list, but by the early '90s it ranked near the bottom.

So many HR initiatives had been thrown at the perceived causes of the problem that the organization was awash in problem-driven OD solutions: competency modeling, team-building, communications training, and multi-rater feedback systems. Not only had these cures failed to improve performance, they had demotivated the overextended operating managers who were forced to play each new game. Bob Busch, president of the company's power-generation division, finally admitted that even he was no longer clear about the relationship among the programs or how they were supposed to improve performance.

In 1995, as the company's director of leaming and development, I suggested to Busch that instead of switching to yet another problem-driven remedy, he consider a different approach: Work from his two or three most urgent business goals back to management actions that would create immediate progress. He asked our training group to work with one reactor unit team to try a results-first approach.

The unit director, Mike Brothers, knew exactly what it would take to meet the competitive cost targets of his nuclear plant: He had to reduce regular shutdowns for refueling by a certain number of days, and he had to increase up-time productivity by raising the plant's wattage output.

Brothers was accountable for three operating results that he knew would directly affect both of those cost-reduction factors. First, improve "schedule adherence" (performing daily safety, maintenance and other checks at specific times) by 30 percent. Second, reduce to zero the number of times the plant operators must leave their nuclear control panel station to perform a support task another functional team is supposed to perform for them. Third, complete the planning phase for scheduled refueling shutdowns in three months instead of the typical 15.

It was August 1995, the three operating results were due Dec. 31, and it appeared the plant wasn't going to achieve them. Brothers was resigned to closing the gap the same way he had always done it: by forcing, threatening, and doing a lot of the work himself. He understood that these were exactly the practices that were causing the long-term deterioration of performance, and he allowed that there wasn't much mileage left in them anyway. He was more than ready to try a new approach.

From August to December, the results-based development effort in the reactor unit followed this methodology:

1. We established in the beginning that our primary commitment was to help achieve the three operating goals. Development of the managers involved, while clearly essential to meeting the goals, was in second place. We also agreed that there were no silver bullets. The premise was that the team members already knew most of what it would take to accelerate progress toward the goals. The skills involved boiled down to management fundamentals, and "development" would consist of challenging the teams to put those fundamentals to work in a single-minded pursuit of the operating results.

2. To achieve the results, we followed a very ordinary work-planning sequence: do a situation analysis; define expected results; identify key measures; identify gaps or problems standing in the way; involve key players who are not under the managers' control; develop simple action plans, with immediate and frequent result milestones; hold frequent status meetings (covering both results and leamings) with the two other teams and the unit director.

Planning models like this are taught in management training programs every day. But Northeast managers didn't just learn about the planning process; they depended on it to accomplish a stretch goal for which they were personally accountable.

3. Since the"achievement produces development" cycle is always iterative (A [right arrow] D [right arrow] A [right arrow] D, etc.), development was not just an outcome of achieving the three results. Some learning was a prerequisite of the teams' ability to undertake the project in the first place. We responded by asking in our first team meeting:

* What, if anything, most worries you about achieving this result?

* If the results are not achieved by year-end, what is likely to be the cause?

* What don't you know that could lead to this shortfall?

* What would it take to bring you up to speed?

* How much do you need to learn before we start?

* How much can we learn simply through the project and by achieving the results?

During the project, the teams were responsible for pinpointing what they needed to learn and for suggesting ad hoc ways to accomplish that. At the beginning, for instance, the teams had to settle some confusion about the actual results expected of them and the measures of those results; at this point, learning meant pushing for clarification. They also determined that an industry standard they had been using did not really apply to this kind of plant; here, "learning" meant coming up with a more realistic benchmark. During the project, progress bogged down due to lack of cooperation from a key support unit. In this situation, "learning" meant using a well-known human-performance troubleshooting sequence developed by consultant Geary Rummler.

As these examples suggest, most of the learning "content" in RBD would come as no surprise to experienced management trainers. The power does not spring from any marvelous new management practices taught. It comes from exploiting the need to learn by applying things that "everybody already knows" to a personally urgent goal.

The power of results-first shines brightest at these moments. When you see firsthand the spontaneous combustion that occurs when personal accountability for critical near-term results runs headlong into a serious gap in skills or knowledge, you feel that the secret of human development has suddenly been revealed to you. Normally indifferent classroom "attendees" are transformed into hungry, creative finders and exploiters of learning.

The conclusion is inescapable: What makes all the difference is whether training precedes or follows the leamer's accountability for a vital result.

4. While achievement leads to leaming in a fairly natural way, the retention and exploitation of what is learned in these projects does require some structure. New skills are shaped by new experiences and results, but they are made explicit in the disciplined work-planning process in Step 2. At individual team meetings, and in project postmortems with all teams, leamings are shared, documented, and added to the methodology for improving results.

The unit met its three operating goals by early December 1995. Brothers extended the use of RBD the following year and began urging his peers to do the same. "It puts into words and a methodology something I have always known in my gut but couldn't articulate," he said. "We could never have done this by going to a standard classroom course, and then coming back to figure out how to apply the knowledge. We had to have a stake in the result first." - John Murphy

Appendix B - Organizational Development - Senior Executive Program, NASA

Managing Tasks

Structuring
1. You emphasize getting the work of the organization accomplished.
2. You have the technical knowledge required for your position.

Managing Resources
3.You are concerned about controlling project/operating costs.
4.You are able to accure, through negotiation and influence, the resources required to accomplish a project.
5. You are effective in the establishment of priorities, i.e., determining where limited resources and staff effort will be used.
6. You understand and make effective use of the budget process.

Influence Management

Managing up
7. If you feel your employees are right you definitely go to bat fo them with you supervisor.
8. You are sensitive to and usually act in support of your supervisors interests.
9. You have the ability to present bad news in a strategic way.
10. You establish good relationships with upper level executives.

Managing external relations
11. You resolve conflicts with contractors/outside agencies in a collaborative manner.
12. You appropriately involve other managers and centers in your planning process.

Team Management

Building the team
13. You select well-qualified and capable people for the job to be done.
14. When making assignments, you tr to make the best use of your employee’s skills and abilities.

Maintaining the team
15. In work group meetings you make sure that there is a frank and open exchange of ideas.
16. You emphasize a team approach in accomplishing work.
17. You face up to and attempt to resolve/work out conflicts constructively between those who directly report to you.

Promoting involvement
18. You communicate in a frank and open manner.
19. Your goals, objectives, and responsibilities are clearly defined and shared with your employees.
20. You solicit appropriate information from your employees– facts, opinions, and concerns about their work.

Managing People

Managing personal relations
21. You build supportive relationships with your employees, rather than remaining distant and impersonal.
22. You establish trust and mutual respect in relating with your employees.
23. You take a personal interest in your employees.

Managing group relations
24. You emphasize cooperation as opposed to competitiveness among your employees.
25. You understand other people’s point of view.
26. You pay close attention and seek to understand your employees when you are talking to them.

Managing performance problems
27. Your employees can be completely open with you in telling you about their mistakes.
28. You face up to and take appropriate action regarding poor performance on the part of those who report to you.

Flexibility

Adapting Approach
29. You modify your management style or practices so that different situations can be handled in the most effective manner.
30. You admit when you have made a mistake.

Soliciting reactions
31. You give your employees an opportunity to openly express their disagreement or to voice objections to your proposed actions/decisions.
32. You are open to and will listen to your employees suggestions as to how you might improve your performance.

Encouraging innovation
33. You encourage your employees to submit new ideas and suggestions for improvement.
34. You usually give your employees full credit for their ideas.

Leadership

Projecting self
35. You perceive yourself as a leader based on your employee’s observations of your actions and statements.

Providing clarity
36. Your employees get clear cut decisions from you.
37. You establish organizational work group goals.
38. Accomplishing high quality work within established time limits is important to you.

Perceiving issues
39. You demonstrate awareness of unspoken and significant issues (hidden agenda) in your relationships with others.
40. You have an ability to anticipate controversial issues and political questions and deal with them effectively.

Appendix C - What it takes to be an Exemplary Fire Chief: The 38 Core Competencies

1) Provide general policies to guide the agency.
2) Establish an administrative structure for achievement of the agency's mission.
3) Define and document characteristics of the community.
4) Assess the nature and magnitude of fire hazards within a jurisdiction.
5) Assess the nature and magnitude of other hazards and risks within a jurisdiction.
6) Create a "strategic" or other form of long-term (three to five years in the future) planning process.
7) Develop a written philosophy, general goals, and specific objectives.
8) Develop a process to implement goals and objectives.
9) Develop a mission statement that defines the agency's distinctive nature to the community.
10) Assess, measure and evaluate the attainment of specific objectives and overall system performance.
11) Develop a financial planning and resource allocation plan.
12) Provide budget, controls, proper recording, reporting and auditing procedures.
13) Allocate resources to support organizational mission.
14) Develop fire suppression program.
15) Develop fire prevention program that encompasses life safety, risk reduction, and investigation of fire cause and origin.
16) Develop a public education program.
17) Develop a hazardous materials program.
18) Develop an emergency medical services program.
19) Develop a disaster-preparedness program plan.
20) Provide a program for the identification and maintenance of fixed facility resources.
21) Provide a program for the specification and acquisition of fire apparatus.
22) Develop a program of inspection, testing, preventive maintenance, replacement schedule, and emergency repair of all apparatus.
23) Develop a program for the acquisition and maintenance of tools and equipment.
24) Develop a program for the acquisition and maintenance of safety equipment.
25) Develop general personnel administration practices consistent with local, state, and federal statutory and regulatory requirements.
26) Develop a plan that attracts and retains qualified personnel.
27) Develop personnel policies and procedures guiding both administrative and personnel behavior.
28) Create a program that ensures the development and utilization of human resources.
29) Establish practices that provide for a system of employer/employee relations.
30) Develop a risk management program.
31) Develop a training and education program.
32) Develop training and education resources, including staffing, facilities, equipment, and training aids.
33) Develop a program that ensures and maintains a water supply system for all areas of the jurisdiction.
34) Develop a program that ensures and maintains an emergency communications system.
35) Develop a program that ensures and maintains an administrative support services component of the organization.
36) Develop the agency's master or strategic plan such that it encompasses external agency operational systems.
37) Develop a program that ensures a functioning automatic and/or mutual aid sysstem.
38) Develop external agreements with respect to operational and cost considerations of all functional mission responsibilities. (Coleman, 1998, p. 76)

Appendix D - Competency Development Group (Model Template)

COMPETENCY LEVEL	QUESTIONS TO ASK	SAMPLE DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS
KNOWLEDGE	Does the person know enough about the task to act?	Course work, reading, observation.
SKILL	Does the person have the capacity and ability to act? Can he/she act effectively?	Training courses focused specifically on skill development.
SOCIAL ROLE/ VALUES	Is the person at all aware of the pait he/she plays, and does he/she see it as appropriate? Is he/she able to do the right thing in various situations?	Coaching to alter their perceptions and way of being. Examination of the context of the situation to assess what is right and appropriate.
SELF-IMAGE	How does the person see him/herself? What is the conversation about the person when they are not present? Is the role reflective of who he/she is? Is the role important for him/her in life's work?	Coaching to assess priorities and reviewing career to date to determine strengths and barriers.
TRAITS	Does the person represent enduring and reliable patterns of behavior that support the role?	Practicing appropriate trait behaviors and unlearning inappropriate behaviors. Strong coaching and support to achieve new level of functioning.
MOTIVES	Is there interest and enjoyment or passion for the role?	Long-term coaching or mentoring relationships to achieve confirmation of underlying motives.

Appendix H - Chesterfield Fire Department Officer Development Program Level I

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

2-1 General
Required Classes -2
1. CFD - Orientation and Duties of Fire Officers (and)
2. VDFP- Instructor I Course (or)
NFA -Instructor Techniques for Company Officer* (R-113)
Community College - Method of Fire Service Instruction (FIR-135)*

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

2-2 Safety Practices
Required Classes - 1
1. NFA - Firefighter Safety and Survival: Company Officers Responsibility

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

2-3 Leadership and Management
Required Classes - 3
1. NFA - Fire Service Supervision:
"Increasing Team Effectiveness" (or)
Community College - Principles of Supervision (Bus-111) (or)
Community College - Emergency Services Supervision (FIR-237) (and)
2. HRM - Workforce Diversity

3. CFD - Leadership Course - 4 modules

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

2-4 Emergency Services Delivery
Required Classes - (Career 1, 2, 3, 4) (Volunteer 1, 2, 3, 4, 1*, 2*)
1. CFD - Strategy and Tactics (or)
Community College - Fire Suppression Operations/Tactics and Strategy Course (FIR-105) (or)
Community College - Fire Suppression Methods and Operations (FIR-106) (and) (or)
NFA - Managing Company Tactical Operations: A) Decision making Module
B) Tactics Module
C) Preparation Module
D) Initial Company Tactical Operations Module
2. CFD - Incident Command System I (and)
3. CFD - EMS Supervision (and)
4. CFD - Mass Casualty Plan

* Specific Volunteer Officer Requirement
Required Class -2
*1. CFD - Incident Command System II (and)
*2. CFD - Incident Command System III

(These are available through Officer Development Level II delivery)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

2-5 Fire Arson Investigation
Required Classes - 1

1. CFD - Fire Arson Investigation Course (or)
   NFA - Fire/Arson Investigation Course (R-205)(or)
   Community College - Investigative Procedures (FIR-230)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

2-6 Building Construction
Required classes - 2

1. NFA - Building Construction for Fire Suppression Forces: “Principles of Wood and Ordinary Construction” (and)

2. NFA - Building Construction for Fire Suppression Forces: “Principles of Non-Combustive and Fire Resistive Construction” (or)
   Community College - Building Construction for the Fire Service (FIR-220)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

2-7 Fire Protection System
Required Classes - 1

1. CFD - Fire Protection Systems Course (or)

2. Community College - Fire Protection Systems Course (FIR-215)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

2-8 Fire Prevention, Hazards, Causes, Codes and Ordinances
Required Classes - 1

1. CFD - Fire Inspection Practices Course (or)
   NFA - Fire Prevention Specialist I (R-221)(or)
   Community College - Fundamentals of Fire Prevention (FIR-115) (or)
   VDFP - Fire Prevention, Hazards and Causes, Codes and Ordinances, VDFP Officer I

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

2-9 Report Writing and Electronic Information
Required Classes - 3

1. CFD - Technical Writing: Reports (or)
   Community College - Technical Writing (ENG-115) (or)
   Community College - English Composition (ENG-101) (and)

2. CFD - Introduction to the Budget (and)

3. CFD - Introduction to Computer Concepts

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

2-10 Community Awareness and Public Relations
Required Classes - 1
1. CFD - Community Programs

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

*2-11 Human Resource Management (This section is specific career officer requirements)
Required Classes - 6

*1. CFD - Basic TDF Training (and)
*2. HRM - Performance Development Program for Supervisors (and)
*3. HRM - Sexual Harassment Training: (Supervisory) (and)
*4. HRM - Basics in Communication (and)
*5. HRM - Nuts and Bolts of Supervision (Parts I and II)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

*2-12 Total Quality Initiative (This section is specific career officer requirements)
Required Classes - 2

*1. TQI - Introduction to Total Quality Improvement (and)
*2. TQI - Process Management

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

*2-13 Chief Officer (This section is specific volunteer officer requirements)
Required Classes - 1
*1. Responsibilities of District Chiefs

CHESTERFIELD FIRE DEPARTMENT
OFFICER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM LEVEL I
PROMOTION PROCEDURE INTERFACE

Successful completion of the requirements for each objective will yield the following points. These points are to be applied to the final promotion score.

Program Section		Promotional Points
2-1	General Orientation of Fire Officers and Instructor I	.50

2-2	Safety Practices	.50
2-3	Leadership	.75
2-4	Emergency Services Delivery	1.25
2-5	Fire Investigation	.50
2-6	Building Construction	.50
2-7	Fire Protection Systems	.50
2-8	Fire Prevention	.50
2-9	Report Writing	.50
2-10	Community Awareness	.25
2-11	Human Resource Management	.50
2-12	TQI	50
PROGRAM SECTION POINTS		**6.75**
POINTS AWARDED FOR COMPLETED CHESTERFIELD FIRE DEPARTMENT ODP LEVEL I		**1.00**
TOTAL POINTS AVAILABLE FROM ODP 1		**7.75**

Appendix I - Officer Development Program Level II

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Objective 2-1: General
Required classes - 1

1. Department of Fire Programs: Instructor III (or)
   National Fire Academy: Fire Service Instructional Methodology (R-113) (or)
   Community College: Methods of Instruction (FIR-135)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Objective 2-2: Government Structure and Budget
Required classes - 2

1. Chesterfield Fire Department: Administration and Ethics (and)

2. Chesterfield Fire Department: Organization and Budget (or)
   National Fire Academy: Fire Service Financial Management (R-333) (or)
   Community College: Fire Service Administration (FIR-125)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Objective 2-3: Communications
Required classes - 4

1. Chesterfield Fire Department: Graphic Presentations; Principles and Practices (and)

2. Chesterfield Fire Department: Communications Skills (and)

3. Chesterfield County Human Resource Management: Public Speaking (or)
   Community College: Oral Communication (SPD-105) (and)

4. Chesterfield Fire Department: Writing in the Workplace (or)
   Community College: College Composition (Eng. 112) (or)
   National Fire Academy: Fire Service Communication (R-107)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Objective 2-4: Electronic Information Management
Required classes - 1

1. Chesterfield Fire Department: Advanced Computer Processes (or)
   Community College: Computer Applications in Protective Services Administration (CIS-147)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Objective 2-5: Human Resources Management
Required classes - 2

1. Chesterfield Fire Department: Advanced TDF Training (and)

2. Chesterfield County Human Resources: Creating a Quality Culture (or)
   Community College: Human Resource Management (BUS-205) (or)
   National Fire Academy: Interpersonal Dynamics in Fire Service Organizations (R-332) (or)
   Community College: Sociology II (SOG-202)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Objective 2-6: Community Awareness and Public Relations
Required classes -1

1. Chesterfield Fire Department: Media Marketing and Community Programs

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Objective 2-7: Inspection, Investigation and Public Education
Required classes - 3:

1. Chesterfield Fire Department: Understanding the Impact of Arson (or)
   National Fire Academy: Management for Arson Prevention and Control (R207) (or)
   Community College: Investigation Procedures (FIR 230) (and)

2. Chesterfield Fire Department: Automatic Fire Protection Systems (or)
   National Fire Academy: Fire Prevention Specialist II (R-222 (or)
   Community College: Industrial Fire Protection (FIR 117) (and)

3. Chesterfield Fire Department: Managing the Fire Prevention and Building Codes

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Objective 2-8: Emergency Services Delivery
Required classes - 4

1. Chesterfield Fire Department: Incident Command System II & III (or)
   Community College: Fire Emergency Management (FIR-235) (or)
   National Fire Academy: Command and Control of Fire Department Operations at Multi-alarm Incidents (R-304) (and)

2. Chesterfield Fire Department: Emergency Services; Emergency Operations Plan, Emergency Operations Center, Haz-Mat Emergency Plan (or)
   National Fire Academy: Command and Control of Fire Department Operations at Natural and Man-Made Disasters (R-308) (and)

3. Chesterfield Fire Department: Advanced Strategy and Tactics (or)
   National Fire Academy: Command and Control of Fire Department Operations at Target

Hazards (R-314)

4. Chesterfield Fire Department: Management of the Emergency Medical Service (or)
National Fire Academy: Management of Emergency Medical Services (R-150)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Objective 2-9: Safety
Required classes - 2

1. Chesterfield Fire Department: Incident Scene Safety Officer (or)
National Fire Academy: Incident Safety Officer (ISO-F719) (and)

2. Chesterfield Fire Department: Safety Management

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Objective 2-10: Leadership and Management
Required classes - 2

1. Chesterfield Fire Department: Concepts of Leadership (and)

2. Chesterfield County Human Resources: Roadmap to Continuous Improvement
Community College: Principles of Management (BUS 150) (or)
National Fire Academy: Organizational Theory in Practice (R331)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Objective 2-11: Planning
Required classes -1

1. Chesterfield Fire Department: Departmental Practicum; Development of a Theory or a Practical Application, for use by the Fire Department, in one of the participating divisions. (or)
Community College: Urban Fire Risk Analysis (FIR-245)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Objective 2-12: Total Quality Initiative
Required classes -3

1. Chesterfield County Human Resources: TQI - Process Management (and)

2. Chesterfield County Human Resources: TQI - Data Collection

3. Chesterfield County Human Resources: Group Dynamics

CHESTERFIELD FIRE DEPARTMENT
OFFICER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM LEVEL II

PROMOTION PROCEDURE INTERFACE

Successful completion of the requirements for each objective will yield the following points. These points are to be applied to the final promotion score.

Program Section		Promotional Points
2-1	Instructor III	.50
2-2	Government Structure and Budget	.50
2-3	Communications	.75
2-4	Electronic Information Management	.50
2-5	Human Resource Management	.50
2-6	Community Awareness and Public Relations	.25
2-7	Inspection, Investigation, and Public Education	.50
2-8	Emergency Services Delivery	1.25
2-9	Safety	.50
2-10	Leadership and Management	.50
2-11	Planning	.50
2-12	Total Quality Initiative	.50
PROGRAM SECTION POINTS		6.75
POINTS AWARDED FOR COMPLETED CHESTERFIELD FIRE DEPARTMENT OFFICER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM LEVEL II		1.00
EDUCATION POINTS AWARDED FOR A FOUR YEAR DEGREE OR HIGHER IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, OR FIRE SCIENCE		3.25
TOTAL POINTS AVAILABLE		**11.00**

Appendix J - Chesterfield County TQI University Curriculum

Course Descriptions

Core Competencies

Course #101 - Introduction to Total Quality Improvement
This workshop provides employees with an overview of Total Quality Improvement (TQI) with special attention to organizational awareness and changing the work culture. Participants will understand their role in a continuous improvement environment and be introduced to the Roadmap for Continuous Improvement and the Chesterfield County Strategic Plan. This is a prerequisite for all TQI University courses.

Course #102 - Process Management
Participants will be introduced to process management and begin to understand the interrelationships between the various tasks that we perform and ultimately how the customer is affected by what we do. A variety of flowcharts will be introduced and practiced.

Course #103 - Road Map for Continuous Improvement
This workshop will provide an overview of the phases and steps to be followed in our process improvement model. Special emphasis will be placed on writing effective problem statements and charters. Other topics include: tips for effective presentations, development of implementation plans and team documentation.

Course #104 - Data Collection
This workshop provides an understanding of customer requirements and performance measures. Participants will be introduced to the Customer-Supplier Matrix and Cause and Effect Diagram prior to discussing and reviewing a well-thought-out data collection plan. Types of measures include workload, efficiency, effectiveness, productivity and outcome.

Course #105 - Statistical Process Control Workshop
This workshop provides employees with the technical skills to construct and interpret the most commonly used TQI charts: run charts, control charts, histograms, check sheets and Pareto charts. Appropriate responses to system variation will be discussed.

Course #106 - Customer Service
This workshop will help employees identify who their customers are and how to meet their needs. Participants in the class will be introduced to the “customer/supplier chain” and how an employee’s actions can directly impact a customer’s impression of Chesterfield County. Participants will learn and practice techniques to assist customers in identifying their needs and solving problems.Course #107 - Group Dynamics
This workshop will introduce participants to the language of group process, stages of group development, and task and maintenance functions. Time will be spent observing the group process and determining when and where to intervene when problems arise.

Course #108 - Effective Meeting Management
This workshop provides participants with guidelines for conducting effective meetings. It includes techniques for effectively starting, conducting, and closing a meeting. Team roles, including leader, scribe, time keeper, note taker, and advisor will be defined.

Course #109 - Just Do It-Advisor Practicum
This final TQI core competency workshop provides an opportunity for practical application of Chesterfield County's problem-solving model. Participants will work in teams to identify and analyze a problem, make recommendations, develop a final presentation and implement a plan.

TQI Electives

Course #201 - Internal Services-Beauty is Only Skin Deep
Providing wonderful services to our external customers relies upon the beauty of the design of our internal processes. This workshop will examine customer/supplier relationships as we work to break down barriers between divisions and departments. Examining the needs of our internal customers will allow for better internal working relationship, more efficient processes, and ultimately resulting in providing "seamless" services for our external customers.

Course #202 - The Bridge Over Troubled Waters--Exceptional "People" Skills
As providers of government services, we are often challenged with providing assistance to individual at some of the most difficult times in their lives. Maintaining a respectful relationship with all of our customers is our goal. This workshop will provide participants with the opportunity to explore and practice skills that will bridge the gap between our customer's frustrations and our provision of the best possible service.

Course #301-Surveys, Interviews and Focus Groups
This workshop will provide participants with techniques useful in gathering qualitative data. Qualitative data refers to a customer's perceptions or experiences in areas such as courtesy, accessability, communication, credibility, responsiveness, and understanding. Participants will learn the basics of developing and conducting questionnaires, surveys, interviews, and focus groups.

Course #302 - Benchmarking
Benchmarking is the search for and implementation of best practices to raise the performance of an organization's product, services, and processes. Participants will learn what can be benchmarked, and the differences between four types of benchmarking. A 10-step benchmarking model will be use. Helpful "How to" tips and templates will be provided to assist participant in identifying benchmarking partners, and conducting benchmarking studies.
Course #303 - Creating a Quality Culture
This course, designed for supervisors and managers, focuses on the new managerial skills required to create a quality environment where employees are valued and empowered. Participants will discover the elements of a TQI environment and determine what actions they can take to create an environment that fosters creativity and problem solving. An overview of the seven "criteria for excellence" of the Malcom Baldridge National Quality Award will be presented.

Appendix K - Chesterfield County Employee Development Program
11/97 - EDP -1

CHESTERFIELD COUNTY
EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Name(Last, First, MI)	Social Security No.	Job Title	Merit Date

Supervisor Name	Department	☐ Annual Review ☐ Probationary Review	Evaluation Period ---

I. BUSINESS RESULTS	Highly Developed ☐	Fulfills Expectations ☐	Needs Development ☐
- Contributes to County's missions, strategic goals, and objectives. - Meets performance expectations of position. - Provides quality service.	COMMENTS		

II. RELATIONS WITH EXTERNAL CUSTOMERS	Highly Developed ☐	Fulfills Expectations ☐	Needs Development ☐
-Projects a positive image of Chesterfield County while interacting with external customers. -Appropriately responds to inquiries and complaints from external customers. -Develops and maintains effective working relationships outside the department which will benefit the department and organization.	COMMENTS		

III. TEAM WORK AND RELATIONS WITH INTERNAL CUSTOMERS	Highly Developed ☐	Fulfills Expectations ☐	Needs Development ☐
-Establishes and maintains effective working relationships with County employees. -Promotes teamwork among departmental and County staff. -Respects diverse experiences, abilities, cultures and backgrounds. -Demonstrates positive attitude in the workplace.	COMMENTS		

IV. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT	Highly Developed ☐	Fulfills Expectations ☐	Needs Development ☐
-Improves citizen and customer satisfaction. -Uses TQI tools for continuous improvement. -Initiates changes to improve job efficiency and reduce costs. -Develops and encourages original, creative and successful approaches to issues.	COMMENTS		

V. KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND CONDUCT	Highly Developed ☐	Fulfills Expectations ☐	Needs Development ☐
-Knows and applies appropriate County and departmental policies, procedures, processes and safety rules. -Knows and applies federal, state and local laws. -Possesses and applies the technical knowledge, skills and experience to do job effectively. -Continually develops expertise and competency. -Adheres to ethical standards.	COMMENTS		
VI. LEADERSHIP (for supervisory personnel)	Highly Developed ☐	Fulfills Expectations ☐	Needs Development ☐
-Confronts performance issues in a timely and effective manner. -Delegates, empowers and rewards others. -Makes effective decisions. -Ensures goals are established and standards are clear. -Values the diverse ideas and perceptions staff bring to the workplace. -Encourages development of staff.	COMMENTS		
VII. SAFETY & HEALTH	Highly Developed ☐	Fulfills Expectations ☐	Needs Development ☐
-Uses appropriate infection control measures. -Operates apparatus safely. -Performs safely at incidents. -Performs all daily activities and training in a safe manner. -Actively participates in fitness program.	COMMENTS		

SUMMARIZE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES DURING CURRENT APPRAISAL PERIOD:

DEVELOPMENT/IMPROVEMENT PLAN: (Include future training and development opportunities)

SUPERVISOR COMMENTS:

EMPLOYEE COMMENTS:

EMPLOYEE IS ELIGIBLE FOR A FULL MERIT INCREASE? ☐ YES ☐ NO IF NO, PERCENT ELIGIBLE ______.

______________________________ ______________________________

Supervisor Signature Date **Employee Signature Date**

Appendix L - Survey of Former Executive Fire Officer Program classmates regarding succession planning practices

Dear EFO Classmate:

I am conducting my research for my *Executive Leadership* Applied Research Project. My topic is, “Succession Planning in Chesterfield Fire and Emergency Medical Services.” I am interested in what your department is or is not doing relative to this topic. You will help enhance the quality of my research by responding to the questions of this e-mail survey.

Please respond back via e-mail as another thing I am interested in, besides the succession planning information, is what degree of response I would get from an e-mail survey as opposed to the hard copy surveys I have done in the past.

Question #1 - Does your department have a succession plan? Yes? No?

Question # 2 - If you answered Question #1 in the affirmative, what officer ranks does your succession plan address?

Question #3 - If your department does not have a succession plan, do you have some type of officer or career development program? Yes? No?

Question #4 - If you answered Question #3 in the affirmative, what officer ranks does your officer or career development program address?

Question #5 - Has your organization ever had to go outside the organization to hire officers, of any rank, because there were not any qualified candidates within the organization? If yes, can you recall specific ranks and the number of times it’s happened?

Thank you very much for your responses. If you have any written programs, policies, or procedures regarding your succession plan or officer development programs, I would greatly appreciate a copy for research. I can receive documents by e-mail in either the WordPerfect or Word format (I’m “bi-lingual”!)

Sincerely,

Robert P. Avsec
Battalion Chief
Chesterfield Fire and EMS
<avsecr@co.chesterfield.va.us>