Identifying Professional Development for the Cortland Fire Department
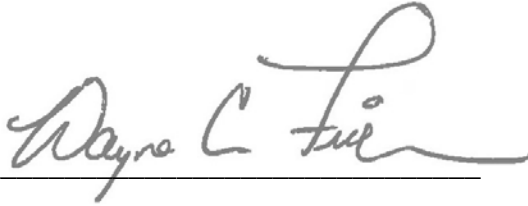
Wayne C. Friedman

City of Cortland Fire Department

Cortland, New York

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I hereby certify that my responses on this submission constitutes my own product, that where the

language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given

where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

Signed:_____

Signed: Wayne C. Friedman

Date: January 23, 2017

Abstract

The problem is The Cortland Fire Department has no plan to professionally develop company officers. The lack of a formal plan regarding professional development has not provided the company level officers of the Cortland Fire Department the adequate knowledge and abilities to manage staff effectively. The purpose of this research is to identify specific criteria for a professional development plan for the Cortland Fire Department. A descriptive research method was utilized to answer the following questions: (a) What are the nationally recognized standards regarding company officer professional development? (b) What do other departments of similar size and makeup currently do for company officer professional development? (c) What types of professional development do company officers partake in on their own? (d) What other types of professional development, outside of the fire service, would be applicable to the company officers within the department? (e) What operational restrictions could limit the success of company officer development? The procedures required for this research project included surveys of firefighter and company officers of the Cortland Fire Department and Fire Chiefs throughout New York State, face-to-face interviews of department officers and literature review of national, state and local information regarding professional development and company level officer training. Literature review was also utilized to ascertain information regarding professional development standards outside of the fire service. The results of this research indicated the Cortland Fire Department lacked an effective professional development program. Standards and documentation indicated there were a number of resources available to assist in development. Recommendations include instituting an officer development committee to develop and institute a professional development program. Addressing the development of officers now will allow for an effective process in the future.

Table of Contents

Developing a Professional Development Program for the Cortland Fire Department

Introduction

The fire service has seen many changes in the last two decades. An increase in the expectations of the fire officer has required a new attitude toward further education. This should not be misconstrued as additional technical training, but actual higher level education. Many fire departments are recognizing the importance of academic experiences in addition to actual fire-ground experiences. The importance of the fire officer to manage the department administratively is as important as operationally.

The problem is there is no professional development for the company officers within the Cortland Fire Department. This has allowed the department to become stagnant in its operations and firefighter motivation and limit the true fulfillment of each individual as an officer as well as the department. A sense of entitlement and acquisition of rank being based upon time in service to the department is the common theme within the organization.

The purpose of this applied research project is to identify the components that are needed to develop a professional develop program for the company officers within the Cortland Fire Department. The author of this research project developed five specific questions to assist in determining the true problem and identify criteria needed for the development of the corrective plan. A descriptive research model was used in determining answers to the following questions:

1. What are the nationally recognized standards regarding company officer professional development?
2. What do other departments of similar size and makeup currently do for company officer professional development
3. What types of professional development do company officers partake in on their own?

4. What other types of professional development, outside of the fire service, would be applicable to the company officers within the department?

5. What operational restrictions could limit the success of company officer development?

Background and Significance

The Cortland Fire Department does not have a professional development plan for its company officers. Officers are selected based primarily on satisfactory grading of a civil service examination. The results of the examination provide the department with a list of eligible candidates. Unfortunately the list is limited to three eligible candidates. This limits selection of the best qualified persons for the promotion to company officer. Once promoted, little or no emphasis is given to continuing education or professional development.

The Cortland Fire Department has seen the overall negative results of this lack of development. A common mindset of security after promotion to the line officer position has allowed the department to have times of little progress, limited comradery and decreased morale. Basic functions of the department continue, but overall efficiency and improvement wane. Internal improvements may be evident at various times but it is on a short term basis completely dependent on an individual's desire for improvement. Overall success on individual shifts and at individual stations is often dependent on company officer attitude, desire to better the shift and intent to carry out the department mission. The success is often limited by an overall feeling of individual need or resistance to change on the part of the company officer. In turn this displays negatively to subordinate personnel and inspires a low morale. This negative environment is often attributed to lack of continuing development and understanding of personnel.

Any professional development is strictly voluntary and entirely self-commencing. There are currently no guidelines for continued improvement, professional development or training

beyond basic officer training. The desire to seek further development is not guided by administration but also is not dismissed. Firefighters aspiring to become company officers may seek additional training prior to appointment, but do not typically continue on after that appointment.

Understanding the true problem regarding professional development is imperative to the survival of the department. Changes in service delivery and the expectations of the community will drive the mission of the department. Without continued development at the company officer level, a continued stagnant and unorganized progression into the future will occur. In a time when departments nationwide are under great scrutiny regarding management, leadership and efficiency, the continued development of company officers is imperative to success.

One of the goals of the National Fire Academy Executive Development Course clearly state that executives need to "lead effectively and efficiently within a dynamic and complex organization by enhancing the development of teams and the application of research" (Executive Development, 2016). Instituting research to determine answers to the problem of professional development within the Cortland Fire Department aligns with the goals of the Executive Development Course and specifically focuses on the need for team development. This is crucial in the area of company officer development.

The author's research for this document also supports one of the United States Fire Administration's (USFA) Strategic Goals: Advance the Professional Development of Fire Service Personnel and of Other People Engaged in Fire Prevention and Control Activities (USFA Strategic Goals, 2010). The importance of Professional Development is recognized by the USFA, in its strategic plan. As a leader in fire service education, the correlation of this strategic

goal of the USFA to the problem recognized within the Cortland Fire Department only reinforces the need to investigate and determine answers to the problem presented.

Literature Review

To adequately research the problem of the lack of a professional development program for company officers in the Cortland Fire Department, extensive review of various literature and documents was initiated. Researching information to find credible sources, fire service support and peer-reviewed articles to help with this specific applied research project was imperative to its success.

Literature research of documents for this project was an established need by the writer to answer specific questions pertinent to the problem statement. Looking at various national standards and documents that discuss company officer professional development was required to evaluate potential criteria for a program. The National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) document NFPA 1021, *Standard for Officer Development* distinguishes the various knowledge skills and abilities for all levels of fire officer (I-IV). This is a nationally recognized standard that is the basis for many departments officer development. Similar in context and intent is the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) Officer Development Handbook. It built on the foundations of NFPA 1021, but placed more emphasis on mentoring, experience, and education. The United States Fire Administration (USFA) continued on with more development recommendations in the National Professional Development Matrix. Recognizing the importance of higher level formal education, the matrix identifies various requirements needed to have a broader development path for a fire officer, whatever the level.

Other literature and information included magazine articles, fire service books and writings used for various educational classes and non-fire service related literature that looked at

professional development and the aspects various authors had relating to the topic. The writer has extensively the web based information and articles which touch on various components of this topic. Only the cited documents that were of the greatest benefit and applicability to this project were used. However, the vast exposures of other literature, in various types, were considered for the research.

Results of surveys and interview questions were helpful in the research for this project. The interviews conducted within the department sought information regarding the importance of professional development, the limitations and other questions that assisted in gaining an accurate understanding from the company officers of the department. Written survey results sent to other department staff and New York State Fire Chiefs revealed additional information specific to other department programs, self-pursuit of education and the importance to them individually. It also indicated why other programs have not worked. Internal face-to-face interviews, and external surveys gave the writer information to compare with other literature findings and assumptions to assist in determining the need for and criteria to be included in a professional development program for the Cortland Fire Department.

The breadth of literature available for this topic reaffirms the importance and understanding of professional development topic in the fire service. The various literature, documents and surveys reviewed and researched provided the writer of this applied research project with the needed information to answer the questions and establish the criteria needed for a professional development plan. Compiling standards in place and documents that show other needs for development in the fire service supported the research for this project.

Procedures

The purpose of this applied research project was to identify specific criteria for a professional development plan for the Cortland Fire Department. The writer used a descriptive research methodology to solicit answers to the research questions that were generated from the problem statement. The use of surveys, literature review, questionnaires and key-informant face-to-face interviews assisted the writer of this applied research project in determining answers to the research questions. From the information gathered, criteria was developed to assist in potential development of a professional development plan.

The process initially began with research into national standards and documents that address company officer professional development. Literature review and specific document review identified various potential resources for company officer development and standards. The International Association of Fire Chiefs, the National Fire Protection Association and the United States Fire Administration provided information about professional development for company officers. Information from each was reviewed and applied to the Cortland Fire Department to determine potential effectiveness.

The next phase of the process required investigating similar sized departments in New York State that may have a company officer professional development program. A written questionnaire with pre-determined questions was sent to Fire Chiefs of career and combination Fire Departments in New York. Surveys were used to determine what, if any departments have a formal professional development program and its effectiveness. The survey was sent electronically, utilizing purposive sampling, through an email group specific to career fire chiefs within New York State. A review of the responses to the questions within the survey were analyzed and compared to operations within the Cortland Fire Department.

After reviewing National Standards and New York State programs regarding officer professional development, the writer of this applied research project solicited information from within the Cortland Fire Department. A written research survey was again sent out electronically to the career staff of the Cortland Fire Department. Questions regarding the importance of professional development and what, if any, types of professional development members take on their own was asked in the survey. Responses were correlated to determine common themes from within the department.

The next area of research involved investigation into professional development outside of the fire service. Many corporate entities require employees to continue professional education and receive various levels of professional development as part of career advancement. A review of other emergency services identified similarities and differences to what the fire service promotes for education and development. Evaluation of various external areas was compared to the findings within fire service professional development as well as within the Cortland Fire Department.

Finally, investigation into potential operational restrictions for professional development within the department was studied. The potential for logistical constraints in administration providing personnel with professional development was present. Research and key informant interviews of current officers utilizing a specific written questionnaire were implemented and findings and results reviewed. The responses were analyzed regarding the overall extent of the problem and used to determine needs for future development.

Results

National standards and recommendations were found that guided officer development. The National Fire Protection Association establishes various standards which are nationally

recognized guides for fire service delivery and performance benchmarks. NFPA 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications*, specifically highlights four distinct levels of officer qualifications:

- Fire Officer I
- Fire Officer II
- Fire Officer III
- Fire Officer IV

An emphasis on minimum job performance requirements (JPR's) is provided for each progressive level. These are minimum requirements not intended to be limiting by the authority having jurisdiction. An emphasis not specific to this NFPA Standard but, common amongst all of the NFPA standards is an organization can and should excel beyond the minimum standard as indicated. "The fire officer at all levels of progression shall remain current with general requirements of fire officers, human resource management, community and government relations, administration, inspections and investigations, emergency service delivery and health and safety" (National Fire Protection Agency, 2014). Specific to company level officers, which is described in the Fire Officer I section of the document, explanation of each JPR and also the requisite knowledge and skills needed to perform each individual JPR is indicated. An example of this is found under section 4.3 of the Standard: Community and Government Relations. Section 4.3.2 states "Initiate action to a citizen's concern, given policies and procedures, so the concern is answered or referred to the correct individual for action and all policies and procedures are complied with" (National Fire Protection Agency, 2014). To meet this part of the standard, requisite knowledge is identified that would be needed to fulfill this. "Written and oral communication skills" (National Fire Protection Agency, 2014) are indicated to be the requisite

knowledge and requisite skills would include "familiarity with public relations and the ability to communicate verbally" (National Fire Protection Agency, 2014).

This nationally recognized standard clearly states that current familiarity with the key components of the standard and general requirements of being an officer are needed for success. The basis for company officer competencies is indicated and as progression in rank occurs, additional competencies are clearly presented to assist the potential officer.

Another nationally recognized document is the Officer Development Handbook developed by the International Association of Fire Chiefs. In this document it clearly states that professional development is key to success of an individual and organization. This document states, "professional development takes place in three general ways: through experience, mentoring, and education" (IAFC Officer Development Handbook; 2nd edition, 2010). The need for improvement in professional development can be found as far back as 1966 when the first Wingspread Conference convened. The fire service leaders at that time met and identified insufficient professional development and leader preparation. Improvements have been made but as future conferences would indicate, there is still a concern and need for continued efforts. The Fire Officer's Handbook acknowledges the shortcomings and looks at an overall global approach to professional development citing the same concerns presented by various leaders over time.

The NFPA 1021 standard was used as part of the development of recommendations found in the Officer Development Handbook. Again, the NFPA 1021 is geared more to a competency-based proficiency. The Officer Development Handbook places more importance on documented experiences and the mentoring process. Training and education are also important, and should not be diminished. However, the form of education and the true scope is imperative

to success. Technical training and certification is vital to success as an entry level firefighter. But the additional education, specifically formal education, becomes more important as individuals take on upper level roles within the organization.

The handbook identifies four specific areas that should be considered regarding professional development:

- Education

- Learning

- Experience

- Self-Development

The four areas define a well-rounded officer and the requirements to achieve this.

Information was also found through the United States Fire Administration (USFA). The USFA created the Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education Initiative (FESHE). The intent with the initiative was to, "Establish an organization of post-secondary institutions to promote higher education and to enhance the recognition of the fire and emergency services as a profession to reduce loss of life and property from fire and other hazards" (About the Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education Initiative, 2016).   Acknowledgement of the importance of professional development and the need for clearer distinct guidelines led to the development of the National Professional Development Model (Appendix D). This model shows the broader approach to officer development reaching beyond training and basic education but encompassing the other attributes that are indicative of a successful officer.

The USFA also created the National Professional Development Matrix (Appendix E). This matrix gives guidance for states, training organizations, higher education entities and fire service groups regarding fire service professional development. The matrix identifies in depth key components related to the National Professional Development Model including competencies and professional designations, education and training, and professional development. The matrix clearly delineates coursework and other specific areas that will assist in mapping not only professional development but a career path for an individual. Reference is made to each level of Fire Officer, from I-IV. Of note is the emphasis on the specific areas of officer delineation, not the levels that have been recognized or the classification in the past. These are specifically Supervising Officer; Fire Officer I, Managing Fire Officer; Fire Officer II, Administrative Fire Officer; Fire Officer III, and Executive Fire Officer; Fire Officer IV.

Research and a review of other departments of similar size and make up to the Cortland Fire Department was conducted utilizing purposive sampling. This was specific to departments in New York State that were either fully career or partially career in some aspect. An email group written for the Career Chiefs of New York State was used to send out an electronic written survey. (Appendix A) A survey of 10 questions was sent out to approximately 36 fire department chiefs. 17 responses were generated. Of the responding participants, 47% indicated they were a combination (volunteer/career) fire department. Of the return responses, 29% had response areas similar in size to the City of Cortland which was less than five spare miles. Of the 17 department chiefs that responded, 41% indicated they had no professional development program, 23% have considered it and 35% have an informal program.

Included in the survey were specific promotional requirements of the department. An astounding 76% of respondents indicate that time in rank is the only requirement to qualifying

for the Civil Service Exam. One department indicated that prior college coursework was a requirement prior to promotion. After promotion to company officer, 35% of the responding chiefs indicated they have no annual professional development. An equal number of departments responding require internal training as do those who require completion of New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control training classes at 29%, respectively. This would typically be found in the First Line Supervisor Training (FLIPS) offered by the Fire Department of New York (FDNY) that all company officers attend after promotion in New York State.

When asked what could be done to improve the plan for professional development within the sampled department chiefs, "actual implementation" was the response that was a concern for 41% of the departments. Departments were also asked why they did not have a professional development plan in place. Limited staffing was the primary concern at 57% followed by fiscal limitations at nearly 43%.

An understanding of professional development from officers and firefighters within the Cortland Fire Department was accomplished through an on-line survey with pre-determined questions written by this author. The survey was sent to all career firefighters and Captains of the CFD (Appendix B). Of the 22 firefighters and 10 Captains canvassed, a response from 21 was received. This represented nearly 66% participation in the survey. The intent of the survey was to gain knowledge of how many fire service personnel took part in professional development training, their thoughts on the importance of professional development and what types of courses may have been taken on their own, without a formal professional development program in place.

Of the 32 initial respondents, 52% were firefighters, 28% were Captains, 9% were probationary firefighters and 9% were assigned to the code office. 95% of those surveyed indicate they have been involved in some sort of professional development. 76% of those who

have taken professional development indicate that they have taken it voluntarily, 15% only if

required, and 9% only if compensated. 23% of those responding indicated that professional

development was somewhat important while the remaining 76% felt that it was very important.

The survey asked the respondents to indicate what types of development were important to them

and what they have participated in. Half of the respondents, (50%), indicated firefighting skills

were important to them followed by officer development (40%) and Code Enforcement training

(22%) being third.

　　　According to the survey results, 76% of respondents did not feel the Cortland Fire

Department placed enough emphasis on professional development. 14% believed there was

enough emphasis on development and 9% did not indicate either way. The graph below shows

the results from the respective survey question.

8. Do you feel the Cortland Fire Department puts enough emphasis on Professional development?

Answered: 21   Skipped: 0

Yes	14.29%	3
No	76.19%	16
I'm not sure	9.52%	2
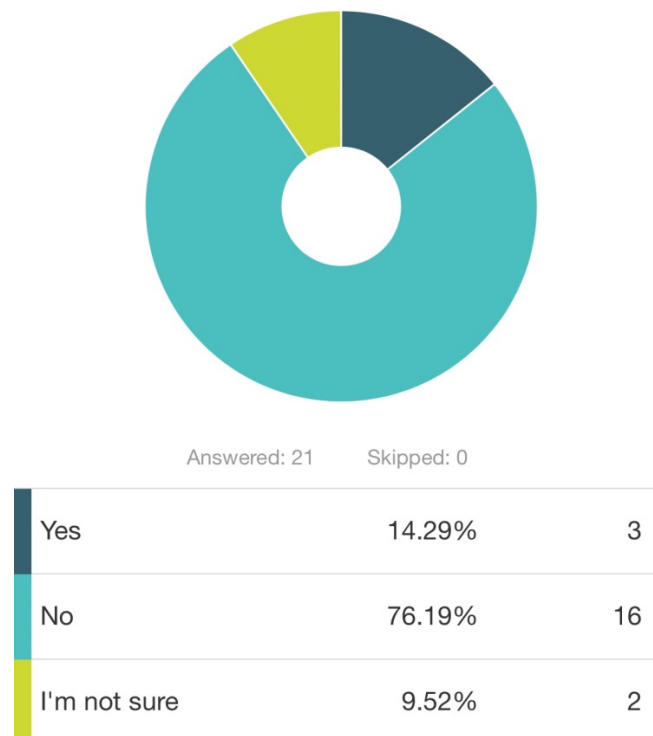
Interestingly, 85% of those surveyed felt that individual professional development should be considered when administration considers personnel for promotion, despite the Cortland Fire Department has no current formal plan in place. The graph below shows the results from the respective survey question.

10. Do you believe that professional development should be considered in promotional opportunities?
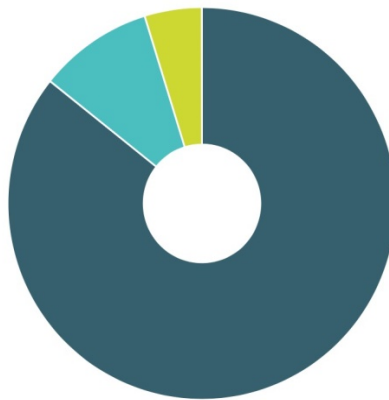
Answered: 21   Skipped: 0

Yes	85.71%	18
No	9.52%	2
No Opinion	4.76%	1

Professional development is not exclusive to the fire service or emergency services. Research in other areas other than the fire service was necessary. Extensive research was conducted with varying results. Web inquiry produced results for marketing companies that would provide professional development training for a fee. The extent and specifics of actual components were not readily made available without purchasing a product or service. Information was found from the nationally recognized empire of Disney. Disney has various

levels and training that address leadership development and corporate growth. (Disney Institute, 2016) The Disney website shows that employees have many opportunities to attend seminars and workshops to improve themselves. The requirements placed on an individual for career advancement was not clearly stated.

Recognizing the somewhat limited information available regarding professional development in other areas, information was researched from within the City of Cortland. The Cortland City Police Department reported they have no specific professional development plan. Basic training on a technical level is required, but continued education or development is on an individual basis. "If an officer expresses an interest in continuing their education or developing themselves, we wholeheartedly support them" (Catalano, 2016). The police chief indicates that as promotional opportunities become available, those individuals are strongly considered for advancement. Specific professional development, as individuals become leaders, is not required. Any additional training is more technically based depending on the position they hold.

Considering other limited information and to attempt a broader understanding of development, input was solicited from the City of Cortland Mayor. An understanding of the view as the City Executive on development of all departments and the importance of continued education was requested. "It's a balancing act, taking into account the needs of each individual department, and the overall needs of the city" (Tobin, 2016). The Mayor recognized the importance of developing those key individuals that will continue to move the city forward. Although there is no plan for development city wide, he encouraged individual departments to establish programs to provide for development of the future leaders of the city.

To ascertain if any internal limitations regarding professional development were present, a questionnaire was developed and a focus group was selected to research. The questionnaire was implemented to 10 career fire captains within the Cortland Fire Department (Appendix C). Each Captain had a face-to-face meeting with the writer of this applied research project. This group represents all the career supervisory officers within the department. The questionnaire consisted of six questions:

1. Do you feel there are restrictions to company officer development in the Cortland Fire Department?

2. What is the single most challenge?

3. Of the challenge you have identified, how do you see the department overcoming it?

4. What else should administration do to assist in professional development?

5. If a new professional development program for company officers was to be introduced, what would be a feasible timeline for development and implementation?

6. If implemented do you believe there would be a positive change within the department?

The responses to the first question indicated that all of the captains believed that there were not specifically any restrictions to company officer development. Three of the captains cited that there was limited encouragement to continue on with any professional development. Two others also indicated that there was no guidance on what was expected of them in regards to professional development so they in turn did not know what to pursue. Two other Captains believed there were budget restrictions that impeded officer development.

When asked what was most challenging to company officer development, a wide variety of responses were received. Challenges revealed were fiscal restraints, cost to send officers or firefighters outside of the department, and the personnel costs associated with assignment away for training. Four of the ten officers indicated there was no direction from administration on what was expected of them after promotion or what they should do to continue to further develop. Two officers indicated the culture of the fire department did not inspire personnel, officers and firefighters alike, to seek continued education. Administration did not make it a priority so they assumed it was not.

The solution to the challenges posed in question # 2 of the survey also varied. Four of the ten Captains indicated finding additional fiscal resources would allow additional training to occur. Two captains indicated a change in culture from the Chief down was necessary. Emphasizing the importance of professional development would be a possible solution. The four remaining officers indicated to the need for clear, distinct guidance for a program from administration. Setting goals, expressing the goals and holding officers accountable to the expectations was, in their view, needed.

Question #4 solicited information from the Captains as to what they felt administration could do to assist in professional development. This was answered in part, by question #3. A common theme was administration providing a plan and encouraging it. Communication of administration's goals for the department and empowering individuals to develop goals for themselves and a career path was a common thread among the responses from the Fire Captains within the department. Four of the ten captains felt administration needed to assure fiscal commitments were present and confirmed for development of the future leaders of the department.

Additional survey questions as to a timeline of development and implementation of a professional development program. Seven of the Captains indicated a full year would be needed to research, develop goals, and implement a program. Two officers felt less than six months would be an aggressive but feasible timeframe. One captain suggested 18 to 24 months would be a more realistic time frame taking into consideration all that must be done to prepare, institute and evaluate a plan. Time commitments of participating individuals involved in development was a concern, as many work alternate shifts. The general consensus was if specific time benchmarks were established, then a quality product would be the result.

The final question posed to the officers was if a program was implemented, would there be a positive result for the department. All ten Captains believed that a program would bring an improvement to the department. Captains also felt that department morale was down and any mandatory implementation by administration could potentially not result in the desired outcome. Five of the Captains strongly believed that a clear plan with goals and objectives would be needed to improve the attitude within the department. The other five captains believe that an improvement will occur when there is a continued review of the program and increased participation through various support measures. Active encouragement and participation from all levels of administration is also imperative according to responses from the line officers.

Discussion

The results of the research in this applied research project replicate the information found in various literature sources available to the writer. The importance of continued education and development of company officers is clearly identified in the written standards. The documents reviewed indicate the importance of a broader set of knowledge, skills and abilities with an

elevated emphasis on human resource management, administration, health and safety and emergency service delivery. "From an officer standpoint, though, the fire ground is a small percentage of what our officers deal with" (Rhoades, 2016). Higher education is imperative to the success of the up and coming officer. The National Professional Development Matrix indicates the need for higher education at the company officer level. An associate's degree or progress towards this is emphasized. "Besides meeting the established requirements for higher education, attaining a degree also produces soft skills that are just as- if not more-important than the degree itself"(Rhoades, 2016). Survey findings and research indicated that there was an importance of professional development in the fire service. "Several national-level initiatives have been created to advance professional development throughout the U.S. fire and emergency services" (Jennings, 2012). In key informant, face-to-face interviews, and survey results, members of the Cortland Fire Department as well as New York State Chiefs, recognize the need for making professional development the priority for a successful organization in the future.

During the interview process, a common theme specifically from the Company Officers was established. Mentoring for upcoming officers, of any level, is imperative to success of individual candidates and ultimately the department as a whole. "Formal mentoring programs can be developed to assist firefighters, from the time they first enter the department, by assigning properly trained mentors who demonstrate the positive qualities sought by the organization for its employees" (Jennings, 2012). The wide variety of literature reviewed reinforces the findings of the research.

Although there was limited information regarding other areas and pecific professional development programs, confirmation of another opinion by members of the Cortland Fire Department was clearly substantiated. Members of the department spoke of the importance of a

mission and to develop goals and values that are specific to the department. From this, development of personnel can occur, inspiring the overall desires of administration. This was indicated also in David Marquet's book, *Turn the Ship Around!*. "Specifying goals, not methods, is a mechanism for competence" (Marquet, 2012). The Disney Institute identified this as important in the operation of their national corporation. "Great leaders align their own values and vision with those of their business and help operationalize them for the future" (Disney Institute, 2016).

The author of this applied research project analyzed all the information gathered from the surveys, literature review, interviews and supporting documentation. It is clear the importance of a formal professional development program is essential and supported. The evidence comes from national and international organizations, other documentation from fire service professionals, and other leaders in various non-fire service areas. Successful programs have promoted individual growth and the positive progress of their respective departments. The increase in service demands, technology changes, public scrutiny and safety have placed even more responsibilities on the company officer. Having a well-rounded, broad portfolio will assure the success of the company officer. Professional development is the road map and continuum for this.

As was stated earlier, the Cortland Fire Department does not currently have a professional development plan. After reviewing all the research and the literature components, it is quite evident the Cortland Fire Department would benefit from a formal program. The positive success is shown in other departments and areas. A number of the officers and firefighters of the department recognize the importance of a professional development program to the future of the organization. When developed properly, a program will address a number of other issues that are crippling the department.

Recommendations

The Cortland Fire Department has no plan to professionally develop company officers. The purpose of this applied research project is to identify specific criteria for a professional development plan for the Cortland Fire Department. After review and research it is evident there are a number of potential resources available to assist in developing a program. Nationally recognized standards from the NFPA clearly indicate what knowledge skills and abilities are needed for a successful officer. The advancement to all levels of officers are recognized in this document and what should be considered. The IAFC's *Fire Officers Guidebook* build upon the foundation of the NFPA 1021 and expands it looking at other key components such as higher education, mentorship, experiences and other key areas in an effort to encourage goal driven officers. Other resources of information come from the United States Fire Administration's document *National Professional Development Matrix*. This document looks at many of the same items in IAFC document and NFPA 1021, but gives reference and guidance to specific upper level coursework found at secondary institutions. The intent of these documents are a broader approach to overall development.

Taking into consideration the literature review and research components of this applied research project, the following recommendations should be instituted:

1. Create an Officer Development Committee to determine the various objectives of a professional development program including goals, requirements, timeline, benchmarks, evaluation and modification.

    This will include citing information in the nationally recognized standards and literature found in this research. This writer will utilize the NFA National Professional

Development Matrix (Appendix B) to establish specific requirements in the program that cover the findings in the research including:

    a. Competencies

    b. Education

    c. Training

    d. Self-development/experiences

2. Establish a timeline for various stages of the program that are realistic and achievable.

3. Seek input from all those involved, through guided direction, to assure information and concerns are expressed for the betterment of the program. This will help with overall support and positive participation in the program.

4. Provide a review component to establish effectiveness of the program and manage modifications if needed.

The research used for this project was analyzed from various resources, current literature, and findings at the time of the applied research project. Future readers will have the ability to perform similar research regarding professional development within their own organization. Changes will occur in national standards and other literature. Future readers will find the most current information readily available as our means of communication and research is vast and will only continue to improve. Professional development will, by all indications, continue to be an important issue for the fire service. Future readers will have the opportunity to become even more involved and produce great programs based on advances in the field.

The Fire Service has a long history of tradition and yet embodies the full magnitude of technology and futuristic ideas. The company officer is the foundation of this. A successful professional development program, encompassing nationally recognized standards, supporting

literature and documentation, and views of fire service leaders can assist in a program coming to fruition. "If we continue to do things the same way, we will never change" (Glover, 2016). The Cortland Fire Department has many great opportunities ahead that will continue to provide an outstanding service to the community and provide mechanisms for development of the employees. A successful professional development program will continue to promote the mission and goals of the department.

References

About the Fire and Emergency Services Higher Education Initiative. (2016, December 29). Retrieved from United States Fire Fire Adminsitration: http://www.usfa.fema.gov

Catalano, M. (2016, December 6). Chief of Police; City of Cortland. (W. Friedman, Interviewer)

Disney Institute. (2016, November 15). Retrieved from Disney Core Competancies: https://disneyinstitute.com/about/our-core-competencies/culture/

Executive Development. (2016). Emmitsburg: USFA.

Glover, C. (2016, October 2). Fire Chief. (W. Friedman, Interviewer)

IAFC Officer Development Handbook; 2nd edition. (2010, August). Farifax, Virginia, United States: International Association of Fire Chiefs.

Jennings, A. k. (2012). *Managing Fire and Emergency Services.* Washington, D.C : InternationalCity/County Management Association.

Marquet, D. (2012). *Turn the ship around! A true story of turning followers into leaders.* New York, NY: Penquin Group.

National Fire Protection Agency. (2014). NFPA 1021: Standard for Fire Officer Qualifications. Quincy, MA: NFPA.

Rhoades, J. (2016, November). Building an Officer Development Program. *Firehouse Magazine*, pp. 52-59.

Tobin, B. (2016, Novemebr 16). Mayor; City of Cortland. (W. Friedman, Interviewer)

USFA Strategic Goals. (2010). Retrieved from United States Fire Adminsitration: www.usfa.fema.gov

Appendix

Appendix A - NFA National Professional Development Model
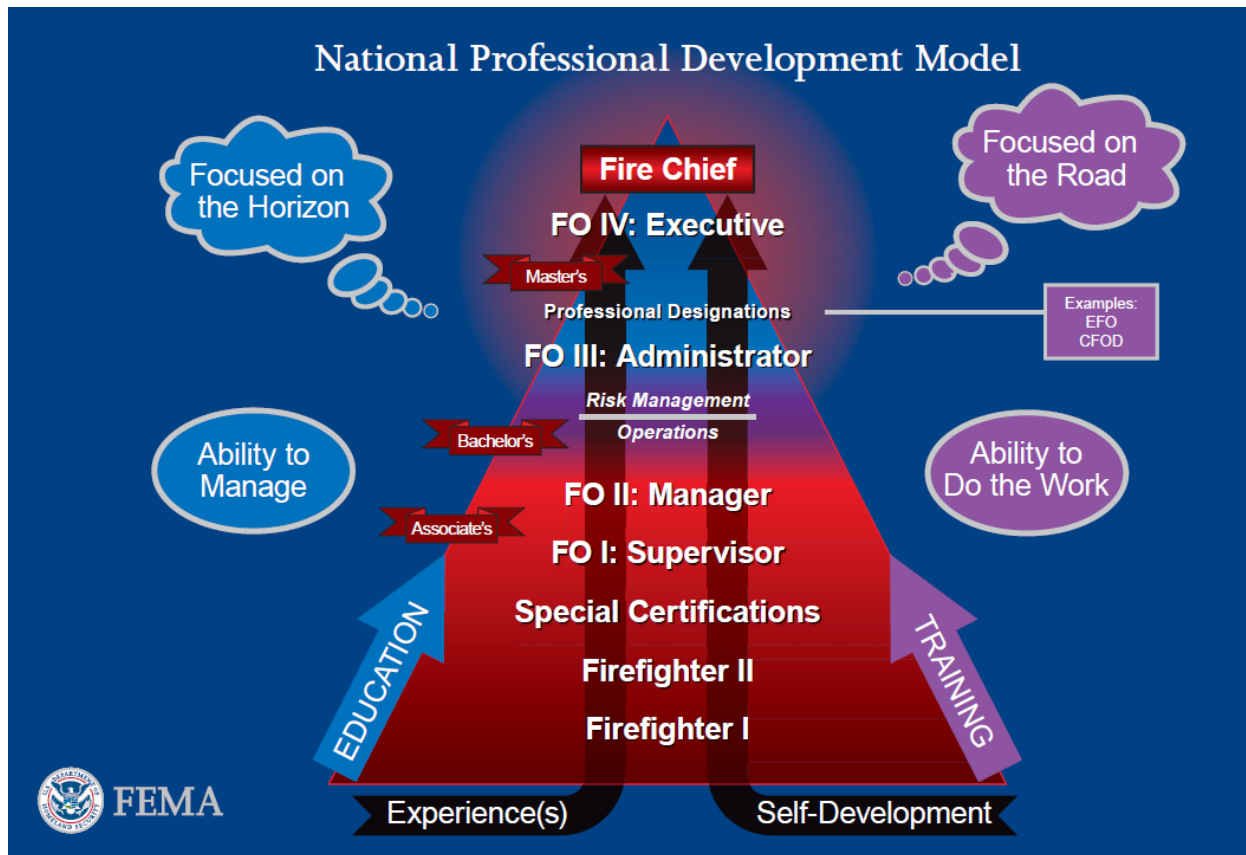
Appendix B - NFA National Professional Development Matrix

National Professional Development Matrix

Supervisory Fire Officer (FO I)

Competencies and Professional Designations			Education		Training	Professional Development
Fire Officer Competencies	Correlating NFPA JPRs/Standards	** Correlating CPSE Competencies	NFA Courses - ACE Recommendations	*College Courses	State & Local Courses	Self Development & Experiences
SFO-01 Ability to write detailed prose.	4.2.1 NFPA 1021 5.2.1 NFPA 1031 5.1.2 NFPA 1035 5.2.1 NFPA 1037	Basic Skill Set	CESS (R107)	English Composition (A)		
SFO-02 Understanding and using basic interpersonal, group and public communication skills.	4.7.2 NFPA 1033 5.4.3 NFPA 1035 5.2.1 NFPA 1037 5.6.4 NFPA 1037 4.4.3 NFPA 1041	Basic Skill Set	CESS (R107)	Public Speaking or Oral Communications (A)		

SFO-03 Ability to write accurate and clear letters, memos, technical reports and business communications.	4.2.1 NFPA 1021 5.2.1 NFPA 1031 4.7.1 NFPA 1033 5.2.2 NFPA 1035 5.2.1 NFPA 1037 5.7.2 NFPA 1037 5.7.3 NFPA 1037 5.7.4 NFPA 1037	Basic Skill Set	CESS (R107)	Business or Written Communications (A)		
SFO-04 Understanding about ecosystem construction and destruction, energy production and use and waste generation and disposal.	10.5.1 NFPA 1051	No Correlation		Biology or Physical Science (A)		

SFO-05 Understanding basic principles of general chemistry including the metric system theory and structure.	4.2.6 NFPA 1033 5.2.1 NFPA 1037	Fire Officer Technical Competency #6 - Codes, Inspections and Preplanning Fire Officer Technical Competency #7 - Origin and Cause	ALSRHM (R247), CER (R233)	Chemistry (A)		
SFO-06 Understanding basic principles of areas of psychology: physiology, cognition, motivation, learning, intelligence, personality, and mental health.	4.2.4 NFPA 1021 6.1.1 NFPA 1035 5.2.2 NFPA 1037	Fire Officer Technical Competency #8 - Public Education Relations and Communications		General Psychology I (A)		
SFO-07 Understanding basic principles of social groups, forces, structures, processes, institutions, and events.	5.2.3 NFPA 1031 5.2.2 NFPA 1037	Fire Officer Technical Competency #6 - Codes, Inspections and Preplanning Fire Officer Technical Competency #7 - Origin and Cause		Introduction to Sociology (A), Community Risk Reduction for the Fire and Emergency Services (FBC)		

SFO-08 Understanding and using the basics of mathematical models; elementary concepts of probability and simulation; emphasis on business applications.	6.4.1 NFPA 1035 5.2.3 NFPA 1037	Basic Skill Set		Beginning and Intermediate Algebra (A)		
SFO-09 Understanding basic principles of information technology and business computer systems for effective daily use.	5.2.11 NFPA 1031	Fire Officer Technical Competency #3 - Administration and Reporting		Basic Computer Applications (A)		
SFO-10 Understanding and implementing the basic principles of health, fitness and wellness.	4.7.3 NFPA 1021 5.2.2 NFPA 1037	Fire Officer Technical Competency #5 - Health and Safety		Personal Health and Wellness (A)		
SFO-11 Understanding the basic concepts of government at the federal, State, and local levels.	5.1.1 NFPA 1021 5.1.2 NFPA 1021	Fire Officer Technical Competency #2 - Department Administration		American Government (A) Political and Legal Foundations of Fire Protection (FBC)		

SFO-12 Understanding functional areas of human resource management and laws; job analysis, testing; performing interviewing, selection, training and performance evaluation.	4.2.5 NFPA 1021 5.2.1 NFPA 1021 6.2.1 NFPA 1021 6.2.2 NFAP 1021	Fire Officer Technical Competecny #1 - Human Resources Mgmt Fire Officer Technical Competency #4 - Human Resources Employee Relations	ED (R123), EL (R125), TPM (R342),	Human Resource Management (A) Personnel Management for the Fire and Emergency Services (FBC)		CLTO (R815)
SFO-13 Understanding basic theories and fundamentals of how and why fires start, spread and are controlled.	4.2.3 NFPA 1033 4.2.6 NFPA 1033 5.1.1 NFPA 1035	Fire Officer Technical Competecny #7 - Origin and Cause		Fire Behavior & Combustion (FAC) Fire Dynamics (FBC) Fire Investigation & Analysis (FBC)		

|					
SFO-14 Understanding the components of building construction related to fire and life safety; including inspections, pre-incident planning and emergency operations.	4.5.1 NFPA 1021 4.5.2 NFPA 1021 4.6.1 NFPA 1021 4.6.2 NFPA 1021 5.3.5 NFPA 1031 4.2.8 NFPA 1033 5.1.1 NFPA 1035 5.5.2 NFPA 1037 5.5.3 NFPA 1037 5.5.4 NFPA 1037 5.5.5 NFPA 1037 5.5.6 NFPA 1037 5.5.8 NFPA 1037 5.5.9 NFPA 1037 5.5.10 NFPA 1037 5.5.11	Fire Officer Technical Competency #6 - Codes, Inspections and Prefire Planning Fire Officer Technical Competency #7 - Origin and Cause		Building Construction for Fire Protection (FAC)	(R831) (R312)

NFPA
1037

FO-15 Understanding and performing basic responsibilities of company officers including supervision, delegation, problem solving, decision-making, communications and leadership.	4.2.1 NFPA 1021 4.2.2 NFPA 1021 4.2.6 NFPA 1021 4.4.2 NFPA 1021	Fire Officer Technical Competency #2 Departmental Administration Fire Officer Technical Competency #3 - Administration and Reporting Fire Officer Technical Competency #9 - Training and Development Fire Officer Technical Competency #10 - Company Operations and Deployment Fire Officer Technical Competency #11- Emergency Medical ServicesFire Officer Technical	CCDM (R297) CCNM (R308)	Introduction to Fire and Emergency Services Administration (FAC) Fire and Emergency Services Administration (FBC)		CCIO (R831) CCIO(R312)

		Competency #12 - Emergency Communications Was Not Addressed			

Appendix C - Survey Monkey Analysis of Career Chiefs of New York State

1. Is your department a combination fire department?
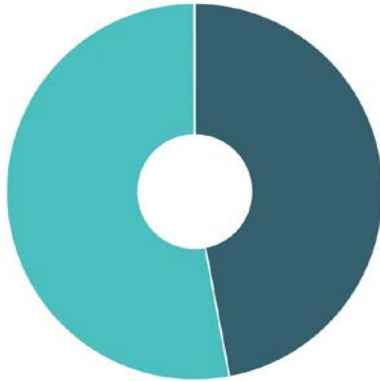
Answered: 17   Skipped: 0

Yes	47.06%	8
No	52.94%	9
Other (please specify)	0%	0

2. What is the total response area for the department?

Answered: 17   Skipped: 0

Less than 5 square miles	29.41%	5
Between 6-10 square miles	47.06%	8
Between 11-20 square miles	11.76%	2

3. How many career personnel and/or volunteers are in your department?

Answered: 17   Skipped: 0

1-15 Career personnel	11.76%	2
1-15 Volunteers	23.53%	4
16-30 Career personnel	35.29%	6
16-30 Volunteers	5.88%	1
31-45 Career personnel	23.53%	4
31-45 Volunteers	0%	0
46-75 Career personnel	29.41%	5
46-75 Volunteers	0%	0
More than 76 Career personnel	5.88%	1
More than 76 Volunteers	5.88%	1
No Volunteers	0%	0

4. Does your department have a professional development program/plan for Officers?

Answered: 17   Skipped: 0

No	41.18%	7
No, but we have considered it	23.53%	4
Yes, but it is informal	35.29%	6
Yes, we have a written program/plan	0%	0

5. What other requirements are required prior to promotion?
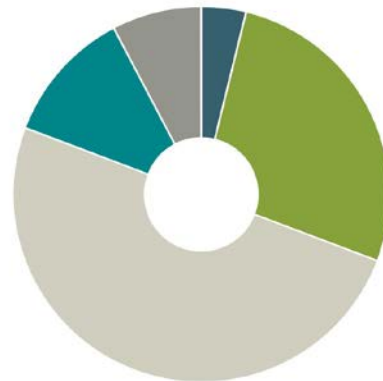
Answered: 17   Skipped: 0

College Coursework	5.88%	1
Associates Degree	0%	0
Bachelors Degree	0%	0
New York State OFPC Training	41.18%	7

6. After promotion, what type of annual professional development training are officers required to complete?

Answered: 17   Skipped: 0

Department training	29.41%	5
State OFPC Training	29.41%	5
Conferences/Workshops	5.88%	1
College Coursework	0%	0

|		
Time in Rank	76.47%	13
None	17.65%	3
All of the above	0%	0
Other (please specify)	11.76%	2

7. What is the primary improvement you have seen in your department with the implementation of the professional development plan?

8. If you could choose one area of the plan to improve upon what would it be?

Answered: 17   Skipped: 0

Our department does not have a professional development plan	64.71%	11
Improved morale	5.88%	1
Improved efficiency	17.65%	3
Improved safety	11.76%	2
Officer career path development	11.76%	2
Other (please specify)	17.65%	3
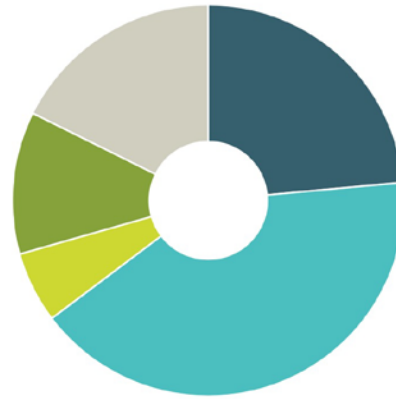
Answered: 17   Skipped: 0

Communication	23.53%	4
Implementation	41.18%	7
Individual support	5.88%	1
Officer support	11.76%	2

9. If you do not have a professional development plan, what is the reason?

Answered: 14   Skipped: 3

Not important	14.29%	2
Funding restrictions	42.86%	6
Limited Staffing to allow leave for training	57.14%	8
Other	14.29%	2

10. Would you be willing to share your professional development plan with me?

Answered: 17   Skipped: 0

Yes	52.94%	9
No	17.65%	3
I'm not sure	29.41%	5

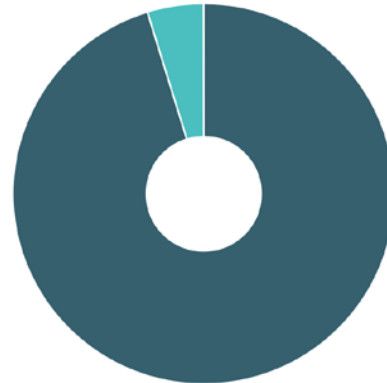**Appendix D - Survey Monkey Analysis of Firefighters and Captains of the Cortland Fire Department**

1. Please select your job title

Answered: 21   Skipped: 0

Probationary Firefighter	9.52%	2
Firefighter	52.38%	11
Fire Captain	28.57%	6
Other (please specify)	9.52%	2

2. Have you participated in any professional development training?

Answered: 21   Skipped: 0

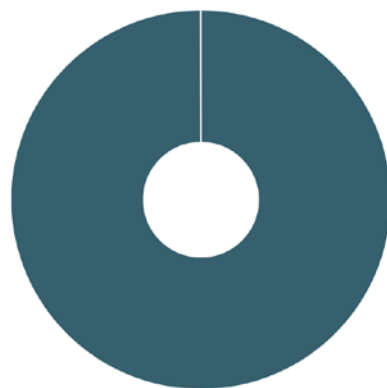| Yes | 95.24% | 20 |
| No | 4.76% | 1 |

3. If you participate in professional development, do you:

Answered: 21   Skipped: 0

Do it only if compensated	9.52%	2
Do it only if required	14.29%	3
Do it voluntarily	76.19%	16
See no need to at all	0%	0

4. On a scale of 1-3 with 1 being not important and 3 being very important, please rank how important professional development is to you.

Row Total

Answered: 21   Skipped: 0

	Row Total	1-not importa
Importance of professional development	21	0	0

5. Please rate the importance of specific areas of professional development in order of importance to you.

Row Total

Answered: 21   Skipped: 0

	Row Total	Primary choice	
Firefighting skills	20	10	50%
Special Operations/Haz-Mat/Rescue	12	2	16.67%
Officer training	15	6	40%
Codes	9	2	22.22%
Documentation	3	0	0%
EMS skills	14	1	7.14%
Truck skills	4	0	0%
Engine skills	7	0	0%

6. Please select all areas of strength

Answered: 21   Skipped: 0

Firefighting	85.71%	18
Special Operations/ Haz-Mat/Rescue	61.9%	13
Codes	33.33%	7
Leadership	66.67%	14
Truck Operations	38.1%	8
Engine Operations	66.67%	14
EMS	47.62%	10
Line Officer	38.1%	8
Other (please specify)	4.76%	1

7. Please select all areas where you would like to gain more knowledge and skills.

Answered: 21   Skipped: 0

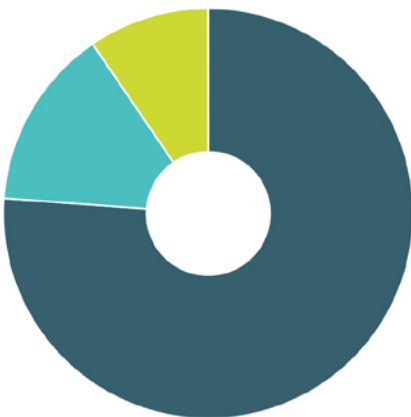| Firefighting	42.86%	9
Hazmat	61.9%	13
Codes	33.33%	7
Documentation	47.62%	10

8. Do you feel the Cortland Fire Department puts enough emphasis on Professional development?

Answered: 21   Skipped: 0

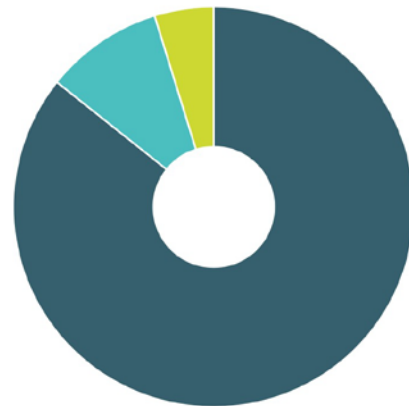| Yes	14.29%	3
No	76.19%	16
I'm not sure	9.52%	2

9. Do you feel there should be different professional development topics depending on an individual's rank within the department

Answered: 21   Skipped: 0

Yes	76.19%	16
No	14.29%	3
No opinion either way	9.52%	2

10. Do you believe that professional development should be considered in promotional opportunities?

Answered: 21   Skipped: 0

Yes	85.71%	18
No	9.52%	2
No Opinion	4.76%	1

Appendix E - Key-Informant, Face-to-Face Interview Questionnaire for Cortland Fire Department Captains

Officer Interviewed:_____

Date:_____

1- Do you feel there are restrictions to company officer development in the CFD?

2- What is the single most challenge?

3- Of the challenge you have identified, how do you see the department overcoming it?

4- What else should administration do to assist in professional development?

5- If a new professional development program for company officers was to be introduced, what would be a feasible timeline for development and implementation?

6- If implemented do you believe there would be a positive change within the department? If not, Why?