

OPTIONS FOR DEVELOPING CHIEF OFFICERS WITHIN SRFD

Executive Development

Options for Developing Chief Officers within the

Santa Rosa Fire Department

William R. Shubin

Santa Rosa Fire Department, Santa Rosa, California

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CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I hereby certify that this paper 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: _____

Abstract

The problem was that all Santa Rosa Fire Department (SRFD) chief officers will retire by 2012, thus leading to the possibility of discontinuity of the department's mission. The purpose of this research was to identify ways to increase the pool of chief officer candidates within SRFD.

Through descriptive research, chief officer standards and guidelines were identified, other fire departments were surveyed about this issue, and essential components SRFD should consider were identified, along with the internal promotional interest of company officers.

The research was accomplished through literature review and surveys. The results showed the importance of developing a chief officer employee development program. Recommendations included the design, implementation and evaluation process for a chief officer's employee development program.

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Introduction

Leadership demands on executives and managers are growing exponentially. This has challenged many companies and left them searching for not only executive leadership, but mid level managers as well. Gates (2007) references a recent study which identified the top ten issues of highest concern for human resource departments. Leadership development was listed second of the highest concerns with succession planning ranked sixth.

California fire departments are losing a record number of personnel due to early retirements. The majority of these retirements are due to increased retirement benefits negotiated throughout the state. This is evident as departments struggle to keep up with the increasing number of vacancies at all ranks, most notably the chief officer ranks. Departments up and down the state that proactively prepared their workforce for career advancement are finding a larger pool of qualified chief officer candidates when vacancies occur. Montez (2005) discusses how 25% of Salinas Fire Department's workforce is eligible for retirement due to increased retirement benefits. If all personnel who are eligible to retire take advantage of the increased retirement benefits it would reduce their average years of fire service experience from 15 ½ years down to 8. Promotions are anticipated at all levels of their organization

The problem is all Santa Rosa Fire Department (SRFD) chief officers will retire by 2012 and there are limited number of qualified personnel to fill these management positions, thereby leading to the possible discontinuity of the department's mission; to save life and property.

The purpose of this research is to identify how SRFD can increase their qualified pool of chief officer candidates. Descriptive methodology will be utilized to answer the following questions: a) what standards or guidelines are available to establish chief officer competencies?, b) what are other fire departments doing to increase their internal candidate pool for chief officer positions?, c) what are the essential components SRFD should consider when developing personnel for chief officer positions?, and d) what is the level of interest within SRFD fire captains regarding promotion?

Background and Significance

The City of Santa Rosa Fire Department is located approximately 40 miles north of San Francisco in middle of the Sonoma County wine country. It is an all-risk fire department with a total population of approximately 163,095 within 43 square miles. SRFD has an annual budget \$26.2 million and is the largest fire department between San Francisco and Portland, Oregon. In 2006, SRFD responded to 18,558 requests for service.

Unfortunately, the City of Santa Rosa resides on top of the Rogers Creek earthquake fault line which on April 18, 1906 caused over 100 deaths and the highest structural damage per capita for any city in California, including San Francisco.

City limits for Santa Rosa were established in 1984. Soon after, City Ordinance #115 was passed creating the City's first paid fire department. By 1900, SRFD was serving a population of 5,500 out of one fire station with only one officer, the fire chief. Today SRFD is staffed with 150 sworn and twelve non-sworn personnel. The organization structure operates within three bureaus; Administration, Operation and Prevention. The Administration bureau consists of the fire chief and nine non-sworn administrative personnel.

The Operation Bureau has 140 sworn personnel managed by one deputy chief, one division chief, three battalion chiefs and 43 captains. It provides all-risk service to the citizens of Santa Rosa with the delivery of emergency medical services, fire prevention and suppression, hazardous material mitigation, public education and technical rescue. These services are provided out of ten fire stations staffed which house one battalion, ten advance life support fire engines and two basic life support truck companies. Also included is a hazardous material unit, technical rescue unit, water tender and two wildland patrol units which are crossed staffed a various stations.

The Prevention Bureau operates with ten sworn and three non-sworn personnel who perform building plan checks, code enforcement, fire prevention activities, as well as hazardous material compliance, neighborhood rehabilitation and public education programs.

SRFD is faced with significant changes at the executive and mid-management levels of the organization. All seven chief officers are soon to be eligible for retirement and there is a lack of qualified chief officer candidates to take their places. Currently there are no guidelines within the department to prepare company officers for management positions, thus leading to the possibility of discontinuity of the department's mission which reads, "The mission of the Santa Rosa Fire Department is to minimize the loss of life and damage to property and the environment resulting from fires, medical emergencies, complex rescues, and disasters through prevention, education, fire suppression, medical services, and other related emergency and non-emergency activities.

We will actively participate in our community, serve as role models, and strive to effectively and efficiently utilize all of the resources at our command to provide a service deemed excellent by our citizens” (SRFD strategic plan, 2005, p. 6).

The significance of this applied research project (ARP) relates to the organizational culture and change curriculum discussed in the Executive Development course (NFA 2006). This ARP relates to the United States Fire Administration (USFA) Operational Objective: “To respond appropriately in a time manner to emerging issues” (USFA 2003). This ARP will examine ways company officers can prepare themselves to become chief officers, thereby increasing the pool of qualified chief officer candidates within SRFD.

Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to research components which help identify how SRFD can increase its qualified pool of chief officer candidates. The literature review collected data from both private and public sectors relative to the topic. Research primarily consisted of gathering information at: a) Learning Resource Center (LRC), b) Sonoma County, California public library system, c) California State Fire Marshals Office, d) International Association of Fire Chiefs, and e) Santa Rosa Fire Department Training Division. The Internet was also used to gather pertinent subject matter.

Healthcare organizations are not placing enough emphasis on developing personnel to become future leaders. Succession planning is defined as “any process that is designed to ensure a continued pool of qualified candidates, thereby providing provisions to continue effective organizational performance” (Collins 2007, p. 17). Succession

planning differs from replacement planning in that it focuses on operational needs. It is not based on a reaction due to an unexpected event; it is a proactive process which secures the human resource needs to ensure success in an organization.

Johnson (2004) states succession planning is hard work for any organization. It is a difficult process which requires open communication and commitment from the entire organization. The organizational culture needs to embrace change, and management of the entire process is a must. Johnson (2004) has broken down succession planning into four components or steps: a) Identify existing competencies relating to leadership needs as well as to the needs of your department and the community it serves, b) Evaluate members of your department and how they fit with the mission, vision, and values, c) Implement coaching, mentoring, recruitment and training requirements that are consistent with the department's operational needs and its mission, vision and values, and d) develop a plan (p. 2). A well developed succession plan will ensure consistency in leadership while obtaining organizational goals.

The need to develop and promote managers through chief officer programs is essential in order to facilitate competencies in the workforce. Management competencies are described by Robins, S. & DeCenzo, D. (2004) as attitudes, knowledge, and skills as they relate to effective management performance. They describe managers as individuals who should be able to initiate and implement change in order to improvement in service, products and systems. Managers are expected to have the ability to recruit and select personnel in order to develop teams, individuals, and work towards enhancing performance. They must also have the ability to secure resource allocations in order to

support activities and projects, as well as solve problems and make decisions. They have an obligation to continually evaluate work carried out by teams and individuals.

The fire service is in the process of changing leadership at all chief officer ranks. Cochran (2007) states that within the next six years one-third of the fire service leaders are expected to retire, this is due to an estimated 50% of fire service leaders being eligible for retirement to date. He further states that with these alarming statistics the fire service, predecessors and successors must develop and implement a plan to in order to fill these forecasted vacancies.

Technical mentoring programs have been in the fire service for hundreds of years. Gates (2003) states most fire service organizations lack mentoring programs at the executive fire officer [EFO] level, and that EFO mentoring differs from technical mentoring in that the organizational leader has a specific intent of creating a future leader. An EFO mentor transfers organizational knowledge and experience to up and coming leaders. This type of program bridges the gap between skills needed for a management role and knowledge required for management activities. Gates (2003) states the benefits to an EFO mentoring program are: a) succession planning, b) institutional knowledge transfer, c) improved management skills and capabilities, and d) increased job satisfaction (p.104).

Managers who are in charge are not necessarily leaders. Coleman (2004), states “that leadership is not a position, it’s a behavior”. With over 40 years in the fire service Coleman (2004) has placed leadership into these three categories: a) leadership, b) Leadership, and c) LEADERSHIP. In his opinion, the best attributes come from the lower case leadership. He found that these types of leaders have personal attributes to persuade

other people to commit to their cause and has the ability to influence. Lower case leaders vision a new idea and effect change consistent with their goals. When those leaders develop support from others it moves them into Leaders. Some leaders move on to have successes that reach local and national recognition. That is when they find LEADERSHIP.

International Fire Service Training Association (2004) describes leadership as a leader who is able to utilize his/her personal behavioral traits and personality characteristics to motivate employees to successfully accomplish organizational goals. These six traits were identified for effective leadership: a) supervisory ability, b) decisiveness, c) intelligence, d) self-assurance, e) initiative, f) desire for professional success. Several additional traits further assist with leadership. They are: a) integrity, b) personal security, c) sense of priority, d) vision, e) industriousness, f) interpersonal skills, g) empowerment, h) innovation and creativity, i) consistency, j) preparedness, and k) living in the future.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 1021, Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications, are standards that help prepare firefighters to become chief officers. It has four levels of achievement starting from fire officer I and ending with fire officer IV (NFPA 1021, 2003, chap. 3-7). As these fire service leaders move through this series they are expected to navigate training through several disciplines which include: a) public administration, b) psychology, c) local, state, and national government, c) the law, d) and communication skills for both in and outside the fire service. NFPA 1021 has been integrated into the International Association of Fire

Chiefs curriculum of their Officer Development Handbook which was developed to educate future fire service leaders (IAFC, 2003).

The National Fire Academy (NFA) provides an Executive Fire Officers Program (EFOP) at the NFA in Emmitsburg, Maryland for fire officers. There are a record number of applicants applying for the EFOP this year. This four-year program provides education in these areas: a) executive development, b) leading community risk reduction, c) executive analysis of fire service operations in emergency management, and d) executive leadership. Subsequent to each of these four courses, the student is required to write an applied research project that will assist with the reduction of life and economic loss due to fire and related emergencies. Cade (2007) states that starting in fiscal year 2010 the academic prerequisite for EFOP will be increased from an associates degree to a baccalaureate from a regionally accredited institution of higher learning.

Dargan (2006), Office of the California State Fire Marshal, State Fire Training, developed standards for chief officers. These are provided through a training certification tract that educates firefighters in the following areas: a) command tactics at major fires, b) management of major hazardous materials incidents, c) high-rise fire fighting tactics, d) planning for large scale disasters, e) wildland fire fighting tactics, f) organizational development and human relations, g) fire service financial management, h) personnel and labor relations, i) master planning, j) contemporary issues and concepts, and k) incident command system 400. Along with formal education, this series of courses academically prepares those firefighters who promote to fill leadership roles in the fire service.

Walker (2007) states the City of Santa Rosa, Human Resource Department (HR), encourages the development of employees in their current and potential positions within

the City. HR provides on-the-job development programs that: a) promote successful job performance, b) maintain effective operation of City-wide or departmental programs, c) improve job performance, d) prepare employees for assuming increased responsibilities, and e) provide employees an opportunity for self-development. The goal of this policy is to provide employees with additional skills, knowledge, ability and attitude necessary to accommodate changing policies, technology, equipment and assignments. It maintains employees specialized proficiencies and keeps them abreast of the ever changing processes. It also provides employees the needed skills to transfer to other jobs within the City or promotional opportunities.

In 2000, SRFD began a Company Officer's Academy. The following disciplines were taught to first line company officers: a) leadership and the challenges ahead, b) media relations and informing the public, c) incident command and emergency simulations, d) preparing for Major Incidents, the I-Zone and the role of the emergency operations center (EOC), e) ethics and supervision, and f) Interest based problem solving. Additional courses to be added to this curriculum include: a) the budget and purchasing/procurement procedures, b) engine company command, c) truck company command, d) command of multi-casualty incidents, e) command of hazardous materials incidents, f) command of rescue incidents, g) incident safety officer, and H) mid-rise/high rise incidents. These courses were developed to increase the competencies of company officers. It is a good beginning to succession planning for vacancies in the chief officer positions.

Procedures

The purpose of this research project was to gather and analyze information to assist SRFD with developing personnel for chief officer positions. The author started obtaining information through the LRC at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland. Periodicals, journals and published books on leadership, employee development and succession planning were obtained with regards to developing future leaders. Also included were applied researched projects that were completed by other EFO candidates.

A descriptive research methodology was utilized to answer the following questions: a) what standards or guidelines are available to establish chief officer competencies?, b) what are other fire departments doing to increase their internal candidate pool for chief officer positions?, c) what are the essential components SRFD should consider when developing personnel for chief officer positions?, and d) what is the level of interest within SRFD fire captains regarding promotion? This Applied Research Project (ARP) was formatted through the guidelines published in the American Psychological Association (APA) manual.

Two survey instruments were developed to gather specific information regarding the development of chief officers within the SRFD (See Appendixes A, B, D and E). The Intra-Departmental Developing Chief Officers survey is found in Appendix A and B and was distributed by way of www.surveymonkey.com to 43 fire captains within the SRFD. Appendix A is a memorandum preceding the survey that states the purpose of the Intra-Departmental Developing Chief Officers survey, gives instructions and provides a reasonable completion due date. The survey itself is found in Appendix B. This was sent

to the 43 fire captains to discover the pool of qualified candidates and to gather their views on what requirements might be needed for future chief officers within SRFD. Upon expiration of the survey return date, a total of 30 surveys were completed which equaled a return rate of 70%.

The second survey was a Chief Officer Development Ten Comparable Cities survey. Appendix D states a clear purpose for the survey and gives instructions on how to take the survey and again provides a reasonable due date for its completion. Appendix E was the Chief Officer Development Ten Comparable Cities survey. This survey gathers input from like cities with regards to employee development programs pertaining to increasing chief officer candidate pool. These cities were selected from the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Santa Rosa and the Santa Rosa Firefighters, Local 1401. These ten comparable cities (See Appendix G) were used during the contract negotiations. Upon expiration of the survey return date, a total of six surveys were completed which equaled a return rate of 60%.

Assumptions and limitations

It was assumed that the intra-departmental survey participants had some knowledge in employee development, leadership and succession planning, and that they would answer the questions objectively. Responses from the ten comparable cities survey were assumed to be from chief officers who had experience in employee development programs and would answer the questions through the knowledge of those past experiences. It was also assumed that both surveys would have an element of subjectivity from the participants. Some limitations identified were the number of survey cities for this topic and the results should be viewed with that in mind. The questions contained in

both surveys were developed by the author based on the literature review and were not validated by outside means, thus this can be viewed as a limitation to this research. The research was also limited to the amount of time the author had available.

Definitions of terms

EFO – Executive fire officer

LRC – Learning resource center

SRFD - Santa Rosa Fire Department

Chief Officer – Both middle and executive level positions in the fire department

Captain – 42 field suppression fire captains and one forty hour training captain

Succession Planning – A systematic and well organized approach to ensure employees are capable, competent and willing to assume leadership roles in the organization.

Results

The results of this applied research project were obtained from the literature review and through two surveys. The results of the survey can be review in Appendixes C and F.

Research question 1: What standards or guidelines are available to establish chief officer competencies?

Research has identified the following as the most common standards or guidelines that are available to assist with establishing chief officer competencies: a) National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 1021, Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications, b) National Fire Academy's, Executive Fire Officers Program (EFOP), c) International Association of Fire Chief's, Officers Development Handbook, d) Office of the California State Fire Marshal, Chief Officer's accreditation, e) human resource

departments, f) sustained formal education, and g) formal and informal mentoring programs.

Research question 2: What are other fire departments doing to increase their internal candidate pool for chief officer positions?

A survey instrument was used to gather the information needed in order to ascertain how other departments are increasing their internal candidate pool for chief officer positions.

Survey participants were asked their rank. There was one assistant chief, one deputy chief, three battalion chiefs and one fire captain. Four of the ten cities did not respond to this survey.

Participants were then asked if their departments had a chief officer development program. Two (40%) indicated that they did and three (60%) stated they did not, one participant chose not to respond to the question.

The participants who answered “yes” to the previous questions were then asked what type of curriculum and/or criteria is used for their department’s chief officer development program. The following were the results: a) intermittent officer development lectures, b) career development classes which must be complete for chief officer promotional eligibility, c) fire command training, d) in-house developed acting BC program, e) city and department policy review, f) 4 years as a fire captain, g) AA/AS required, h) bachelor’s degree desired, and i) State Fire Marshal Chief Officer’s certification.

Participants were asked the level of education required for chief officer positions within their department. There were two (33.3%) participants who stated high

school/GED, one (16.7%) had some colleges courses, two (33.3%) required associate's degrees and one (16.7%) a bachelor's degree. No participants stated that a master's degree was required to become a chief officer.

The next question asked of the participants was whether they felt their departments had an adequate number of qualified internal candidates for chief officer positions. This was a split response from the participants. Three (50%) stated they had and three (50%) said they had not.

Participants were asked if their department utilized NFPA 1021 as a guide for management training. One (16.7%) department utilized this standard and five (83.3%) did not.

As a follow up question, the participants were asked if their department requires a State Fire Marshal Chief Officer certificate for chief officer exams. Three (50%) stated that their departments did require this certificate and three (50%) did not.

The participants were asked whether members of their department take advantage of training and/or educational opportunities outside the department to better their chances of becoming a chief officer. All six (100%) participants stated that their department members did take advantage of this type of training for that purpose.

Participants were asked if their department utilized formal coaching or mentoring programs for chief officer development. One (16.7%) did utilize these types of programs and the other five (83.3%) did not.

The final question posed to the participants whether their department has a succession plan in place for chief officer positions. One (16.7%) department stated they did have a chief officer succession plan in place and five (83.3%) did not.

Research question 3: What are the essential components SRFD should consider when developing personnel for chief officer positions?

Fire service organizations throughout the nation are participating in formal and informal mentoring programs. Formal programs are sometimes prerequisites for promotion into the chief officer ranks. Mentoring or coaching programs have proven to be beneficial with the preparation of future fire service leaders. Gates (2003) states the benefits to an executive fire officer (EFO) mentoring program are: a) succession planning, b) institutional knowledge transfer, c) improved management skills and capabilities, and d) increased job satisfaction.

The National Fire Academy's EFOP is another excellent tool for developing personnel for a transition into chief officer positions. The EFOP is nationally recognized for developing chief officers. These disciplines are taught over four years: a) executive development, b) leading community risk reduction, c) executive analysis of fire service operations in emergency management, and d) executive leadership.

Most California fire departments strongly encourage, if not require, a State Fire Marshal Chief Officers certification. This certification encompasses these eleven courses:

a) command tactics at major fires, b) management of major hazardous materials incidents, c) high-rise fire fighting tactics, d) planning for large scale disasters, e) wildland fire fighting tactics, f) organizational development and human relations, g) fire service financial management, h) personnel and labor relations, i) master planning, j) contemporary issues and concepts, and k) incident command system 400.

Formal education has always been an important part of developing future chief officers. Fire departments throughout the nation place a high priority on formal

education, especially when considering personnel for chief officer positions.

Undergraduate degrees are quickly becoming the minimum standard for mid-management chief officer positions in California.

Departments should encourage personnel to participate in citywide committees and projects. This enables future leaders to broaden their views and obtain an understanding of how other city departments function and what they consider to be important.

On the job training is yet another exceptional way to develop chief officers. This can be accomplished by working out of class for a shift or several months as an interim chief officer. Employee development through these means provides an excellent opportunity to develop future leaders.

Research question 4: What is the level of interest of the SRFD fire captains regarding promotion?

Another survey instrument was used to gather the information needed in order to ascertain the level of interest within SRFD fire captains regarding promotion. The survey was sent via email to 43 fire captains, 30 (70%) of whom answered the survey questions.

Each participant was asked how many years of service they had with SRFD. Seven (23.3%) responded 6-10 years, three (10.0%) 11-15 years, eight (26.7%) 16-20 years, six (20.0%) 21-25 years, and six (20.0%) stated 25-30+ years.

The follow up question asked how many years they had been a fire captain. Out of the 30 responses, nine (30.0%) stated 0-5 years, eight (26.7%) 6-10 years, eight (26.7%) 11-15 years, three (10.0%) 16-20 years, and two (6.7%) 21-25 years.

Participants were then asked about their level of education. Of the responses ten (33.3%) had some college, nine (30.0%) had an associate's degree, nine (30.0%) a bachelor's degree, and two (6.7%) had a master's degree.

They were then asked what they thought should be the level of education for a chief officer. Five (17.2%) stated "some college", five (17.2%) associates degree and nineteen (65.5%) stated that chief officers should have a bachelors degree. One participant did not answer this question.

Participants were asked if they were currently eligible to participate in a chief officer's exam. Eighteen (64.3%) responded "yes" and ten (35.7%) replied "no", and one participant opted to not respond to the question. The participants were then asked if they would participate in a chief officer's exam if eligible. Nine (30.0%) stated they would and twenty-one (70.0%) said they would not.

In the next question, participants were asked if they were currently taking courses to complete their State Fire Marshal Chief Officer certification. Twelve (40.0%) stated they were and eighteen (60.0%) responded they were not.

Participants were then asked if they would take advantage of training and/or educational opportunities outside SRFD to improve their chances of becoming a chief officer. Nineteen (63.3%) responded that they would take advantage of such training or education and eleven (36.7%) stated they would not.

The next question asked how beneficial would an employee development program for chief officer would be to each individual participant. Seven (23.3%) stated no benefit, twelve (40.0%) thought there would be some benefit, and eleven (36.7%) said there would be extreme benefits to them as an individual.

The follow up question asked the participants if they believed an employee development program for chief officer would be beneficial to the department. One (3.3%) stated no benefit, five (16.7%) believed there to be some benefit, and twenty-four (80.0%) thought that it would be extremely beneficial to the department to have such a program.

Discussion

When comparing the literature review with the results of the intra-departmental and external fire department surveys for this applied research project, similar patterns were identified to provide SRFD information to assist with developing future leaders within the organization to succeed retiring chief officers. (Collins, 2007, p. 16) states “healthcare organizations are not placing enough emphasis on the cultivation the next generation of leaders that will be required to sustain competitive advantage and business continuity”. (Collins, 2007) goes on to say that healthcare organizations must carefully calculate the selection of leaders who will champion organizational initiatives. Placing the wrong person in a leadership role can have devastating effects on the organization and may result in strong public scrutiny.

All SRFD chief officers (fire chief, two deputy chiefs, a division chief and three battalion chiefs) will retire by 2012. Cochran (2007) states that within the next six years, one-third of the fire service leaders are expected to retired. This is due to an estimated 50% of fire service leaders being eligible for retirement. He further states that with these alarming statistics the fire service, soon-to-be predecessors and successors must develop and implement a plan to in order to develop future fire service leaders.

The author agrees that NFPA 1021, Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications, is good for employee development and often widely used throughout the nation's fire service, although the author discovered through the external fire department survey that only 17% utilize this standard as a guideline for management training. NFPA 1021 has also been integrated into the International Association of Fire Chiefs curriculum of their Officer Development Handbook which was developed assist with the development of future fire service leaders. (IAFC, 2003).

The survey went on to reveal that 50% of the external fire departments required a State Fire Marshal Chief Officer certification to be eligible for chief officer promotional opportunities. Dargan (2006) puts forth the chief fire officer certification track which includes five management courses, five command courses and one advance incident command system (ICS) course. This certification track is quickly becoming the industry norm for California chief officer promotional exams.

Future leaders within SRFD need to develop chief officer competencies in order to successfully promote to managers. Robins, S. & DeCenzo, D.(2004) described management competencies as attitudes, knowledge and skills related to effective management performance. Attitudes will dictate how people perceive your ability to manage. Knowledge is accomplished through formal education and on the job training, and skill sets are a must in order to succeed as a competent manager.

The researcher found that technical mentoring programs have been in the fire service for hundreds of years, although the fire service is lacking executive mentoring programs. Gates (2003) found this to be true throughout most fire service organizations. Executive fire officer (EFO) mentoring differs from technical mentoring in that it transfer

organizational knowledge and experience to future fire service leaders. The intent of an EFO mentoring program is to develop future fire service leaders. These programs give chief officer candidates the skills needed for a management role and knowledge required for management activities. Gates (2003) went on to state that the benefits to these types of mentoring programs are: a) they provide for a successful succession plan, b) obtain institutional knowledge transfer, c) greatly improves the candidates management skills, and d) increases job satisfaction.

When surveying external fire departments, it was discovered that 17% did utilize EFO coaching and mentoring programs and 83% did not.

When developing future chief officers, SRFD should consider the needs of the department. Johnson (2004) states that an organization should identify existing competencies relating to leadership needs as well as to the needs of your department and evaluate members of your department and how they fit with the mission, vision and values. Departments should implement coaching, mentoring, recruitment and training requirements that are consistent with the department's operational needs and its mission. Lastly, departments must develop a plan for implementation.

Furthering formal education is important to SRFD and it appears to be widely accepted among potential chief officer candidates within the department. In order to be eligible for deputy chief, one must obtain a bachelors degree. It is anticipated that will be the level of formal education needed for all chief officer ranks in the near future. Within SRFD, 30% of all intra-departmental survey participants have obtained this level of formal education and 30% have obtained an associates degree. Sixty-five percent of participants said that a bachelor's degree should be the minimum level of education for

chief officer positions. Cade (2007) states the National Fire Academy, Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP) will move to a baccalaureate from a regionally accredited institution of higher learning as a prerequisite for entrance into the program in fiscal year 2010.

Through research and surveys the author has discovered that SRFD is slightly behind where it should be with having a substantial number of qualified chief officer candidates to fill looming vacancies. The intra-department survey was sent to all 43 fire captains, 30 of which participated. The survey revealed that 64% of the surveyed fire captains were eligible to take a chief officer's promotional exam, but only 30% stated they would. There were 63% who stated, they would be interested in taking advantage of training and/or educational opportunities outside SRFD in order to better their chances of becoming a chief officer. Currently, 40% are enrolled in the State Fire Marshal Chief Officers training program. When asked how beneficial a chief officers development program would be for the department (no benefit, some benefit or extremely beneficial), 80% stated extremely beneficial.

There would be a cost with associated training and development programs for company officers. The City of Santa Rosa is currently under budgetary restraints due to the housing market and sales tax shortfalls. Many of these programs prove unfeasible at this time due to the current budgetary restraints. One might argue that there is also a cost associated with not implementing training and employee development programs.

The author found through the literature review and surveys that there are better ways to develop SRFD chief officer candidates than what is currently taking place. Although there is not a standardized approach for employee development, there are many

components and characteristics that should be considered when developing these programs. The information gathered will assist the author and SRFD with increasing the pool of qualified candidates for chief officer positions within SRFD.

The SRFD has a unique opportunity to create an employee development program in order to avoid the possibility of not having qualified internal chief office candidates. While timing of such a program is of the utmost importance, it will also provide guidance and a standardized approach for future leaders of SRFD to follow in order to obtain chief officer promotional opportunities.

Recommendations

The problem, as previously stated, was that all SRFD chief officers will retire by 2012 and there are limited numbers of qualified personnel to fill these management positions, thereby leading to the possible discontinuity of the department's mission: to protect life and property. The purpose of this applied research project was to research and identify how SRFD can increase their qualified pool of chief officer candidates.

The findings in this study demonstrate the need for a formal chief officer employee development program within SRFD. If this comprehensive program is not developed to assist the department with the transition of the entire management staff, the current administration will fail to increase and develop the pool of qualified chief officer candidates.

Based on information gathered in the literature review and the analysis of the results the following recommendations are suggested to assist SRFD with the development of a formal chief officer development program: a) obtain support from labor, management and human resources, b) form a committee to develop a chief

officer's development program, c) develop short term and long term goals of the program, d) review SRFD's mission statement for alignment with the program, e) develop an evaluation tool to gauge the efficiency of the program, f) implement the program as soon as possible, and g) conduct on-going evaluations of the program in order to ensure it stays on track with the department's mission.

Development of a chief officer's employment development program should become a high priority of today's managers. Collins (2007) states that this type of planning is not based on a reaction due to an unexpected event; it is a proactive process which secures the human resource needs to secure success in an organization.

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Appendix A

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 26, 2008
TO: Fire Department Captains
FROM: Bill Shubin, Fire Captain
SUBJECT: Development of Chief Officers

Last spring I completed the Executive Development class at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland. This is the first of four classes of the Executive Fire Officer Program. As part of this course, I am required to complete a research paper that pertains to the course work. I have chosen to research options for developing chief officers within the Santa Rosa Fire Department.

This type of succession planning is a systematic approach to assist our department with filling vacancies at the chief officer level. It will ensure that personnel are capable, competent and willing to occupy these leadership roles.

As part of this research I am asking each of you to fill out the attached survey by October 28, 2007.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=gstnnq6gBb4LRlzx8ZWtGQ_3d_3d

All survey results are confidential.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Appendix B

**Developing Chief Officers
Intra-Departmental
Survey**

This survey was sent via surveymonkey.com to 43 fire captains within the Santa Rosa Fire Department.

1. How many years have you worked for Santa Rosa Fire Department?

- a) 1-5 years
- b) 6-10 years
- c) 11-15 years
- d) 16-20 years
- e) 21-25 years
- f) 26-30+ years

2. How many years have you been a fire captain?

- a) 0-5 years
- b) 6-10 years
- c) 11-15 years
- d) 16-20 years
- e) 21-25 years

3. What is your highest level of education?

- a) High School/GED
- b) Some College
- c) Associates Degree
- d) Bachelors Degree
- e) Masters Degree
- f) Doctorate

4. What should the level of education be for a chief officer?

- a) High School/GED
- b) Some College
- c) Associates Degree
- d) Bachelors Degree
- e) Masters Degree

5. Are you currently eligible to participant in a chief officer's exam?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

6. Would you participate in a chief officer's exam if you were eligible?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

7. Are you currently taking courses to complete your State Fire Marshal Chief Officer certification?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

8. Would you take advantage of training and/or educational opportunities outside the Santa Rosa Fire Department to better your chances of becoming a chief officer?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

9. How beneficial would an employee development program for chief officer be to you as an individual?
 - a) No benefit
 - b) Some benefit
 - c) Extremely beneficial

10. How beneficial do you believe and employee development program for chief officer would be to the department?
 - a) No benefit
 - a) Some benefit
 - b) Extremely beneficial

Appendix C

**Developing Chief Officers
Intra-Departmental
Survey Results**

This survey was sent via surveymonkey.com to 43 fire captains within the Santa Rosa Fire Department.

1. How many years have you worked for Santa Rosa Fire Department?

- a) 1-5 years (0)
- b) 6-10 years (7) 23.3%
- c) 11-15 years (3) 10.0%
- d) 16-20 years (8) 26.7%
- e) 21-25 years (6) 20.0%
- f) 26-30+ years (6) 20.0%

2. How many years have you been a fire captain?

- a) 0-5 years (9) 30.0%
- b) 6-10 years (8) 26.7%
- c) 11-15 years (8) 26.7%
- d) 16-20 years (3) 10.0%
- e) 21-25 years (2) 6.7%

3. What is your highest level of education?

- a) High School/GED (0)
- b) Some College (10) 33.3 %
- c) Associates Degree (9) 30.0%
- d) Bachelors Degree (9) 30.0%
- e) Masters Degree (2) 6.7%
- f) Doctorate (0)

4. What should the level of education be for a chief officer?

- a) High School/GED (0)
- b) Some College (5) 17.2%
- c) Associates Degree (5) 17.2%
- d) Bachelors Degree (19) 65.5%
- e) Masters Degree (0)

5. Are you currently eligible to participant in a chief officer's exam?
 - a) Yes (18) 64.3%
 - b) No (10) 35.7%

6. Would you participate in a chief officer's exam if you were eligible?
 - a) Yes (9) 30.0%
 - b) No (21) 70.0%

7. Are you currently taking courses to complete your State Fire Marshal Chief Officer certification?
 - a) Yes (12) 40.0%
 - b) No (18) 60.0%

8. Would you take advantage of training and/or educational opportunities outside the Santa Rosa Fire Department to better your chances of becoming a chief officer?
 - a) Yes (19) 63.3%
 - b) No (11) 36.7%

9. How beneficial would an employee development program for chief officer be to you as an individual?
 - a) No benefit (7) 23.3%
 - b) Some benefit (12) 40.0%
 - c) Extremely beneficial (11) 36.7%

10. How beneficial do you believe and employee development program for chief officer would be to the department?
 - a) No benefit (1) 3.3%
 - b) Some benefit (5) 16.7%
 - c) Extremely beneficial (24) 80.0%

Appendix D

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 26, 2008
TO: Bay Area Comparable Cities
FROM: Bill Shubin, EMS Manager
SUBJECT: Development of Chief Officers

Last spring I completed the Executive Development class at the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland. This is the first of four classes of the Executive Fire Officer Program. As part of this course, I am required to complete a research paper that pertains to the course work. I have chosen to research options for developing chief officers within the Santa Rosa Fire Department.

This type of succession planning is a systematic approach to assist our department with filling vacancies at the chief officer level. It will ensure that personnel are capable, competent and willing to occupy these leadership roles.

As part of this research I am asking each of you to fill out the attached survey by October 28, 2007.

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=DiI93C7k60OkON0PovJh_2bA_3d_3d

All survey results are confidential.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Appendix E

**Chief Officer Development
10 Comparable Cities
Survey**

This survey was sent via surveymonkey.com to the 10 City of Santa Rosa comparable cities.

1. What is the respondent's rank in the organization?

2. Does your department have a chief officer development program?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
3. If yes to question #2, what type of curriculum and/or criteria is used?

Comment box
4. What is the level of education required for a chief officer in your department?
 - a) High School/GED
 - c) Some College
 - d) Associates Degree
 - e) Bachelors Degree
 - f) Masters Degree
5. Does your department currently have an adequate number of qualified internal candidates for chief officer positions?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
6. Does your department utilize NFPA 1021 as a guide for management training?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

7. Does your department require State Fire Marshal Chief Officer certificate for chief officer exams?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

8. Do members of your department take advantage of training and/or educational opportunities outside the department to better their chances of becoming a chief officer?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

9. Does your department utilize a formal coaching or mentoring programs for chief officer development?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

10. Does your department have a succession plan in place for chief officer positions?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

Appendix F

**Chief Officer Development
10 Comparable Cities
Survey Results**

This survey was sent via surveymonkey.com to the 10 City of Santa Rosa comparable cities.

1. What is the respondent's rank in the organization?

- Assistant Fire Chief (1)
- Deputy Chief (1)
- Battalion Chief (3)
- Fire Captain (1)

2. Does your department have a chief officer development program?

- a) Yes (2) 40%
- b) No (3) 60%
- c) Skipped (1)

3. If yes to question #2, what type of curriculum and/or criteria is used?

- Intermittent officer development lectures
- Career development classes which must be complete for chief officer promotional eligibility
- Command training
- In-house developed acting BC program
- City & Department policies reviewed
- 4 years as a fire captain
- AA/AS required
- Bachelors desired
- Chief Officer Certification (California)

4. What is the level of education required for a chief officer in your department?

- a) High School/GED (2) 33.3%
- g) Some College (1) 16.7%
- h) Associates Degree (2) 33.3%
- i) Bachelors Degree (1) 16.7%
- j) Masters Degree (0)

5. Does your department currently have an adequate number of qualified internal candidates for chief officer positions?
 - a) Yes (3) 50%
 - b) No (3) 50%

6. Does your department utilize NFPA 1021 as a guide for management training?
 - a) Yes (1) 16.7%
 - b) No (5) 83.3%

7. Does your department require State Fire Marshal Chief Officer certificate for chief officer exams?
 - a) Yes (3) 50%
 - b) No (3) 50%

8. Do members of your department take advantage of training and/or educational opportunities outside the department to better their chances of becoming a chief officer?
 - a) Yes (6) 100%
 - b) No (0)

9. Does your department utilize a formal coaching or mentoring programs for chief officer development?
 - a) Yes (1) 16.7%
 - b) No (5) 83.3%

10. Does your department have a succession plan in place for chief officer positions?
 - a) Yes (1) 16.7%
 - b) No (5) 83.3%

Appendix G

**Chief Officer Development
10 Comparable Cities**

The 10 City of Santa Rosa comparable cities were gathered from the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the City of Santa Rosa and the Santa Rosa Firefighters, Local 1401. These cities were used as comparable cities for the purpose of contract negotiations.

Below are the 10 comparable cities:

Novato Fire Protection District

Hayward Fire Department

Salinas Fire Department

Petaluma Fire Department

San Mateo Fire Department

Richmond Fire Department

Vallejo Fire Department

Santa Clara Fire Department

Modesto Fire Department

Fremont Fire Department