Executive Leadership

Succession Planning – for the City of Stuart, Florida

More Than Technical Skills and Education

Lori M. Sunderman

City of Stuart Fire Rescue, Florida

Stuart, Florida

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Abstract

The City of Stuart Fire Rescue requirements for officer promotions fail to adequately address the core leadership dimensions required for the development of successful leaders. The action research methodology answered: a) What are the core dimensions required in the fire service, private sector, and military to assist an individual with improving their leadership ability?, b) How can these core dimensions be obtained and/or enhanced through education or skills based training?, and c) What should be the composition of a Stuart Fire Rescue personal leadership plan? The procedures included literature review and interviews identifying leadership core dimensions. The results provided guidelines for developing a succession plan. The recommendation was to develop a succession plan that included education, assignments, mentoring and evaluations.
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More Than Technical Skills and Education

Introduction

The City of Stuart Fire Rescue requires a base of technical skills and educational framework to achieve promotion into officer positions. However, the framework fails to adequately address the core leadership dimensions required for the development of successful leaders. The purpose of this research is to identify core leadership dimensions and develop a leadership plan for Stuart Fire Rescue personnel that will enhance the ability to become a successful leader.

The action research methodology will be used to answer the following: a) What are the core dimensions required in the fire service, private sector, and military, to assist an individual with improving their leadership ability?, b) How can these core dimensions be obtained and/or enhanced through education or skills based training?, and c) What should be the composition of a Stuart Fire Rescue personal leadership plan? This data will be used to develop a suggested guideline for employees to strengthen their ability to become a successful leader within the City of Stuart Fire Rescue.

Background and Significance

The City of Stuart Fire Rescue responds to approximately 4500 emergency calls annually. Approximately 85% of these calls are emergency medical calls. The department responds to Advanced Life Support (ALS) calls with both a transport ambulance and a non-transport ALS engine. The State of Florida requires an ALS unit to be staffed with a minimum of one paramedic, along with a required minimum amount of equipment and medications. In the past history of the department, there were few officers paramedic certified. There were no
officers assigned to an ambulance until October 2006. Although most calls are medical in nature, the collective bargaining unit believes that the department’s fire and rescue needs should remain separate, and that paramedic skills are not necessary in becoming an officer.

The City of Stuart Fire Rescue department employs a staff of 40, the majority of which are operations/shift personnel. The department operates out of two (2) stations, with a total minimum manning of eight (8) personnel on duty each day. The normal manning is one (1) battalion chief, three (3) lieutenants, three (3) paramedics, and the remainder of the shift makeup is firefighters with either an emergency medical technician (EMT) or paramedic certification. The total administrative staff consists of one (1) fire rescue chief, one (1) assistant chief, one (1) executive secretary, one (1) fire inspector/lieutenant, and one (1) fire support specialist. The operations staff consists of three (3) shift battalion chiefs, and twelve (12) lieutenants, who have various qualifications, depending on the vehicle to which they are assigned.

In order to become qualified to be promoted from one position to the next higher level, the department requires varying educational and time-in-grade requirements. An employee begins employment with the minimum requirements of a Florida EMT and Firefighter certification. New employees are required to sign an agreement that they will become Florida Paramedic certified within the first three (3) years of employment. During their first four (4) weeks of employment they are trained on equipment, policies, procedures, and employee benefits provided by the City of Stuart. The employees are then assigned to a shift for more detailed training. The employees work in crews and operate under the direct supervision of a Lieutenant. The employee has a one (1) year probationary period to complete all basic equipment, vehicles, streets, fire evolutions, EMT check-offs, and driver training. They are then
given a written test and if they pass, continue with hands-on testing. Completion of all testing allows them removal from the probationary status.

As the employee continues to train daily and becomes more proficient in their performance they continually gather more skills. The employee is expected to attend classes to become further educated in the fire rescue service and their education is financially supported by the City of Stuart.

Throughout the history of the department the officer qualifications have varied. Management has made officer requirements more stringent and the collective bargaining unit has tried to negotiate to have some of the requirements removed. Although the City of Stuart Fire Rescue basically follows the IAFC Officer Development Handbook for educational requirements, it is clear that they end up short on quality leaders. It is the goal of this researcher to find out where the fire rescue fails in making successful leaders. The Executive Leadership class offered at the National Fire Academy suggests that the fire service deploy stronger convictions to making successful leaders for the future. This research will propose guidelines to assist the City of Stuart employees to increase the ability of becoming future successful leaders. This research will comply with the requirements in the Executive fire officer program – Applied research project guidelines (2005), by guiding future leaders “to respond appropriately in a timely manner to emerging issues” (p. II-2).

Literature Review

The City of Stuart Fire Rescue currently promotes officers by a compilation of exam results. The exams consist of a written exam, a skills assessment center, and an oral review board. The skills assessment center is comprised of several short scenarios such as: a writing assessment, in-basket assessment, commanding a scene, and a disciplinary scenario. Tenure
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points are always awarded to each candidate. These scores are summed and the candidates are
placed on an eligibility list in order of score rankings. Past experience has shown that this
compilation of exams is not enough to make a successful leader. It is the job of this researcher to
gather more information to guide the future officers to successful leadership.

As stated by Evans (2007), “Our profession is about to take the next step in preparing the
work force of the future to manage and lead “ (¶ 1). This is seen all over the fire and EMS
industry and we as leaders need to find the most appropriate ways to train our employees to
become strong leaders. We in the Fire and EMS industry commonly promote “good technicians
to supervisory roles only to have them fail miserably because they lack the humanities-based
skills or knowledge required for leadership and dealing with people” (Evans, 2007, ¶ 2).

The first question to be evaluated is: What are the core dimensions required in the fire
service, private sector, and military to assist an individual with improving their leadership
ability? Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2002) state that there are four main domains of
Emotional Intelligence (EI): “self awareness, self-management, social awareness, and
relationship management — with eighteen competencies” (p. 38). These authors believe that
emotional intelligence can be learned and that successful leaders create resonance. (Goleman et.
al., 2002, p. 38)

Robert King, Fire Chief of Kissimmee Fire Department, names a few core dimensions
that fire officers must possess as: communication, compassion, great listening ability, situational
awareness, and passion for the people and the profession. (R. King, personal communication,
November 29, 2007)

Curtis found in his research that many psychologists believe we are born with our
leadership traits and that we can build on them through experiences. (Curtis, 2007) Other
researchers, such as Ogunyemi (2007) state, “...empathy, emotional intelligence, self-control, tolerance, and trustworthiness become more important in the repertoire of skills necessary for effective organizational functioning” (p. 3). Ogunyemi also states that leaders and managers cannot be effective with technical skills alone. They must build relationships through influence and conversation with peers rather than through command and control. Supervisors must know about fringe benefits, wages, and the goals of the organization to support their employees. “To provide this support, it is imperative that senior managers, as change agents, understand human’s emotion, and how they influence employee behavior and attitudes towards their job and their organization” (Ogunyemi, 2007, p. 3).

According to Mayer and Salovey (1997) “EI is described as one’s ability to accurately identify, appraise, and discriminate among emotions in oneself and others, understand emotions, assimilate emotions in thought and to regulate both positive and negative emotions in self and others” (Ogunyemi, 2007, p. 4). Managers must be equipped with people skills so they can positively influence the employees through the organization’s goals, stressors, and low morale. Researchers have found that people perform better when combining their thinking brain with their emotional brain. (Ogunyemi, 2007, p. 5).

Bossi completed research on educational leaders determining that their success is not by their knowledge but by their ability to lead. This is true with many professions in today’s world. Employees are expected to work harder, under more stress, and with greater accountability than in past history. Educational leadership is being supported through coaching “designed to provide the bridge between the knowledge gained in training and the successful adaptation and implementation of that knowledge on the school site” (Bossi, 2007).
Employees are challenged with different types of leadership qualities depending on the business they are employed in. Bernthal and Wellins (2006) found when surveying business leaders that the leading trait for success was when they are achieving their financial and organizational goals. They found that executive leaders believed lower traits for achievement were making tough decisions, creating a vision, and having interpersonal skills. Human resource directors in those same organizations placed interpersonal skills higher on the list than the professionals in their field. Bernthal and Wellins (2006) survey also confirmed, “…human competencies such as self-awareness, empathy, and social skills play a major role in determining leader success” (p. 3). Leaders gain respect from subordinates by making tough decisions, having empathy and passion for their work and employees. (Bernthal & Wellins, 2006, p.3)

In Howard’s (2005) article Leadership: Four Styles, he believes, like most others that, “Leadership is the process of communication (verbal & non-verbal) that involves coaching, motivating/inspiring, directing/guiding, and supporting/counseling others” (p. 1). The responsibility of the leader is to communicate the goals and objectives of the organization. They also must generate trust, action, encouragement and safety to their subordinates. However, Howard also states that there are four different leadership styles with varying traits, such as: comfortable with people, data processors, facts, artistic, flexible, imaginative, spontaneous, feelings, emotions, empathy, intuition, interpersonal relationships, inflexible, unimaginative, and lack spontaneity. It is important to note that each leadership style should be used depending upon the business, circumstances of the project, and the people being led. The most critical issue being that the leader must know what traits to use, and when to use them, to be a successful leader. (Howard, 2005)
A book on military leadership, written by Taylor and Rosenbach, (2000) quote, “Effective leadership is a delicate combination of integrity, perseverance, technical knowledge, mission, awareness, a sense of fairness, and genuine concern for one’s soldiers. – Sergeant Major Sweeny (source unknown)” (p. ix). A leader can not be successful by knowledge and experience alone due to the changing technology and the demands of society. “A leader’s success depends upon self-knowledge, self-confidence, and commitment to lifelong education and training” (Taylor & Rosenbach, 2000, p. ix)

An interview with K. Wise (personal communication, November 28, 2007), Human Resources Consultant, and former vice-president of Tech-Data Corporation, a Fortune 200 corporation, states that the key components to successful leaders are behavioral, such as: judgment, decision making, adaptability, readiness, fairness, getting things done through others, and being able to make the call.

Through all of the research a common set of dimensions have been gathered with a general consensus of the following: character — which accounts for self-awareness, loyalty, empathy, moral courage, self-control, and intuition to name a few; courage – the strength to stand up for your own personal beliefs and the goals and objects of the organization, to stand up for your people, to have self-control; and competence – the technical knowledge and skills it takes to get the job done.

To assist the researcher in development of a succession plan the second question must be answered: How can these core dimensions be obtained and/or enhanced through education or skills based training? Researchers have differing theories with some believing that leadership dimensions can be learned and others believing that one must be born a leader and the traits can only be enhanced by leadership development programs. Ogunyemi (2007) performed research to
determine if emotional intelligence could only be learned by an emotional mastery training program or if it could be learned by brainstorming. The results proved that “emotional mastery has significant gains in improving executive personnel EI skills over and above the brainstorming technique” (Ogunyemi, 2007, pp. 11 & 12).

While interviewing King, he is of the opinion that mentoring or coaching, and special assignments such as having the ability where personnel are allowed to ride-up, or act out of grade to learn some of these core dimensions is a necessity to enhancing leadership behaviors. (R. King, personal communication, November 29, 2007)

Bernthal and Wellins (2006) found that, “Training and other forms of formalized instruction will always play a critical role in building skills and knowledge, but we can no longer ignore that leaders benefit from many other types of development experiences” (p. 9). People learn by experiences, making mistakes, and trying new roles. Organizations that use mentors or coaches minimize the risk of costly and/or fatal mistakes.

In the article Leaders Developing Leaders, by Maxwell (2006), it is suggested that business leaders look to outside sources, increase business knowledge, increase skill-development opportunities and use the current leaders to train the future leaders. He performed a seven year study using these methods to develop stronger leaders in Cartus (business name) and found that they paid off. Here are the guidelines he suggests to other businesses that want to develop internal leaders:

1. Identify a human resource champion;
2. Secure and develop C-suite leaders as facilitators;
3. Vary the forum format to include role playing, games, videos, individual and team exercises;
4. Develop the leader guides from within your organization to ensure that they are aligned to your business;
5. Use the article format; and
6. Start small to hard-wire the rigor and discipline of the learning methodology.

(Maxwell, 2006)

As suggested in article *Back to School*, a blend of using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, and self-directed professional growth and development. He also suggested that future leaders should be taught communication skill, time management, team-building skills, leadership styles, legal aspects of the job, employee evaluations and the disciplinary process. (Hawkins, 2000)

Walker suggests that regular executive meetings be held to discuss organizational issues, such as values, objectives, and principles. He also suggests that the business outline exactly what they are looking for in future leaders. Are they looking for leaders to expand, produce, or market the business? Do they want to stay local or global? What are their needs for attrition, internal movement, diversity in management, etc.? “Are development plans in place to build needed capabilities and to provide the job experiences, education, and other learning experiences individuals need?” (Walker, 1998).

Bernthal & Wellins (2006) suggest that “Leaders need the stimulation offered by development so they do not lose their motivation, become complacent, or seek more interesting challenges outside the organization” (p. 4). Leaders that are still growing are more likely to keep motivated, keep engaged and remain effective. “We know that leaders gain more of their professional knowledge by observing others and through trial and error in the workplace” (Bernthal & Wellins, 2006, p. 4). Special projects were rated as one of the highest values to
keeping employees motivated, while formal training was rated lower. However, there must
remain a balance to both formal training and special projects to keep employee interest and
organizational improvement.

Mentoring is considered a highly successful way of training future leaders. Mentoring or
coaching should be used with a leadership or management program to gain successful results. It
has been found that although leadership programs may be expensive, they are less expensive
than hiring from outside the organization. “Research consistently has shown that employees
leave organizations largely because of the lack of developmental and growth opportunities.
Organizations can address that issue by providing a strong succession management program that
creates opportunities for employees and encourages talented individuals to rise to the top”
(Bernthal & Wellins, 2006, p. 6).

K. Wise believes you can train leaders because you can open their eyes to awareness of
behaviors. She states that there are three components to successful leaders: technical skills,
education and behavior. Obviously the technical skills and education can be learned and there is
controversy over whether the behavior can be learned. Wise believes that people can be
mentored into massaging their behavioral skills. People learn by observation and can pick up
many sound traits from a successful leader. (K. Wise, personal communication, November 28,
2007)

Taylor and Rosenbach strongly support General Sir Archibald P. Wavell’s concept that
leaders are born and not learned. The three characters of a strong leader are character, courage,
and competence. A military leader needs self-discipline, self-control, willingness to sacrifice,
physical and moral courage, and to be able to command through opposition to orders. (Taylor &
Rosenbach, 2000, pp. 6-10)
P. Nicoletti, retired Army General, revealed that he agrees with the Army’s opinion that leadership can be learned. The Army revised their leadership development program after the Gulf War. He stated that there are three basic officer leadership courses. The first is an education course that is self motivated and is classroom material. The second is a practical scenario where the officer will be promoted to work in field training and will have a special project during this work period. If the officer is successful through this period he will be promoted to stage three of the program. Stage three is a military occupational specialty where education, mentoring, and practical experience come into play. Nicoletti states that the Army’s adage is, “Successful leaders are more likely to mentor future leaders to become successful leaders” (P. Nicoletti, personal communication, November 27, 2007).

The common thread through all the research showed that leadership skills could be enhanced through coaching and mentoring, more than through formal leadership classes, although self-assessment is a key role in development. “There’s no way that a firefighter can pick up what needs to be learned without putting forth some effort” (McCormack, 2003, p. 2).

The last question the research must ask is: *What should be the composition of a Stuart Fire Rescue personal leadership plan?* Bernthal and Wellins (2006) suggest that,

Having a clear plan for development gives all employees the opportunity to advance their careers and realize their potential. Findings clearly show that leaders consider growth and development opportunities as a primary driver of retention and engagement, and the same is true for front line employees. It can be time-consuming and expensive to offer every employee the opportunity for individual assessment and development planning; however, organizations that take the time to identify and nurture potential early on will likely find a much larger pool of leaders in their future. (Bernthal & Wellins, 2006, p. 8)
The organization should evaluate the whole person for skills, talents, and personal dynamics and assist them by coaching and mentoring through their weaknesses.

Having a plan in place is not enough. The organization must implement the plan from the top on down with involvement by all management personnel. Research has shown that classroom training is the least effective when relating to leadership development. “Activities like coaching, mentoring, action learning, and 360-degree feedback are increasingly key elements of leadership development initiatives” (Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004, p. 1). It is important for organizations to nurture leadership development by understanding the needs and implementing effective leadership programs. (Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004)

There are no surefire methods of developing leadership. No seminar, workshop, training school, or short course can turn individuals into leaders. We believe that accurate self-knowledge is the only way a person can prepare for the challenge. The discovery of one’s own strengths and weaknesses enhances self-confidence. Taking risks and learning from failures are critical to leadership development. The more we learn about ourselves, the more effective we can be in the roles of leader and follower. (Taylor & Rosenbach, 2000, p. ix).

As stated by Hawkins (2000) *Back to School* article, it is often wondered why officers are poor or mediocre when they have passed the assessment center and have been promoted. These situations happen because chiefs fail to take the next step in the promotional process: mandating training for newly promoted company officers. In fact, training often isn’t required of any officers charged with managing any part of the organization. There seems to be a belief that if you earned the gold, you’ll be a successful manager of people and resources” (Hawkins, 2000, ¶ 3).
“The company officer is responsible for creating and maintaining a positive training attitude among company members. It’s not enough to remain motivated as an individual; the company officer is in the position to have the most impact on the attitudes that firefighters hold toward training. (McCormack, 2003, p. 3)

As the researcher has shown formal education, self-assessment, mentoring and coaching will be used to develop a suggested guideline for employees to strengthen their ability to become a successful leader within the City of Stuart Fire Rescue. As stated in the IAFC Officer Development Handbook, “This practice of on-the-job training, rather than systematic skills building and preparation, is in direct contrast to the methodologies employed by virtually any other profession” (IAFC Officer Development Handbook, 2003, p. 2).

K. Wise (personal communication, November 28, 2007) states a succession plan should involve technical skills, education and mentoring leadership behaviors. The employers should do everything in their power to retain employees that display leadership traits such as: sound judgment, decision making, adaptability, fairness, and making the right call. A leader should have the competency of strong interpersonal skills. A successful leader should lead people, develop strong teams, and foster commitment and engagement.

P. Nicoletti (personal communication, November 27, 2007) states, the military has proven that assignments, mentoring and education all play key roles in the development of successful leaders.

When asked of R. King (personal communication, November 29, 2007) what should be the composition of a Stuart Fire Rescue personal leadership plan? King responded, “A combination of education, practical experience, coaching and/or mentoring, and a strong evaluation process.”
Procedures:

To accomplish this research study and to develop an action plan, and guidelines for a succession plan for the future leaders of the City of Stuart Fire Rescue, information was gathered from several research sources. Research about leadership for businesses, education, fire rescue and the military was reviewed.

To answer the question of, *What are the core dimensions required in the fire service, private sector, and military to assist an individual with improving their leadership ability?*, the researcher started by evaluating information from the book, *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of the Emotional Intelligence* by Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee (2002). These authors suggest that there are core emotional intelligence leadership dimensions. Another overview of basic leadership styles was discovered in W. C. Howard’s (2005) article titled, *Leadership: Four styles*. The researcher conducted a telephone interview with K. Wise to get an opinion from a human resources consultant about leadership traits for corporate leaders. Also an interview with R. King was conducted to ascertain the opinion from a Fire Chief point of view.

Along with the information a search was done to discover the personality traits that the fire rescue service believed to be leadership dimensions. A search for fire rescue beliefs lead the researcher to articles in *Fire Chief Magazine* where leadership personality traits were written in the article, *Personality Puzzle* by author Timothy S. Curtis (2007, Aug.). The researcher located an article by Mike Bossi (2007, May/June) on *Revolutionary Leadership* in the education system. This article elaborated on the need for coaching and mentoring teachers to become educational leaders. A look at the development of business leaders was discovered in the researcher A. O. Ogunyemi (2007) in his article titled, *Nurturing Leaders’ Emotional Intelligence Through*

To evaluate the second question the researcher posed, How can these core dimensions be obtained and/or enhanced through education or skills based training?, research was reviewed by a variety of authors. Hawkins (2000) and McCormack (2003) wrote articles in Fire Chief Magazine proposing that it takes more than formal training to accomplish the success of future leaders in the fire service. Ogunyemi (2007) researched that brainstorming is effective although not as effective as emotional mastery training programs when developing successful leaders. Bernthal and Wellins (2006) researched trends in leader development and succession and drew conclusions to successful development planning. Maxwell (2006) suggests that although outside knowledge may benefit an organization, the additional cost of developing future leaders is worth the investment. Large businesses look for new ideas for succession planning. Walker (2002) suggests that internal talent should be developed through mentoring and education.

An interview with P. Nicoletti, retired General with the US Army, was conducted on November 27, 2007, at the City of Stuart Attorney’s Office. Nicoletti was asked to describe in detail the military’s succession plan. He was asked to describe which methods the Army uses to develop successful leaders: assignments, education, and/or mentoring.

An interview with K. Wise advised the researcher of the succession planning details that some corporations use for leadership development, along with an interview with R. King to determine the opinion of the fire service.
The development of an action plan was used by answering the last question, \textit{What should be the composition of a Stuart Fire Rescue personal leadership plan?}, by using suggestions through many researchers. All the research found about leadership, whether business, education, military and the fire service suggest that succession planning involves both formal education and a mentoring or coaching process for future leaders. The research was gathered through Bernthal and Wellins (2006), Hernez-Broome and Hughes (2004), Taylor and Rosenbach (2000), Hawkins (2000), McCormack (2003) and the International Association of Fire Chiefs Officer Development Handbook (2003).

Interviews were done with K. Wise and P. Nicoletti to ascertain what makes up the composition of a leadership development plan for corporations and the military. An interview with R. King suggests that mentoring, coaching and extensive evaluations of the process be conducted to obtain a successful program.

\textit{Definition of Terms}

- \textit{coaching} — Provides leaders with an individualized diagnosis of needs, feedback, development planning, one-on-one training, and tracking of results. (Bernthal & Wellins, 2006)

- \textit{empathy} — Showing unconditional positive regard to workers and customers. (Ogunyemi, 2007)

- \textit{executive} — Head of the organization or senior staff. (Evans, 2007)

- \textit{manager} — Manages more than one crew or supervisors. (Evans, 2007)

- \textit{mentor} — Trusted counselor or guide. (IAFC, 2003)

- \textit{self-awareness} — A deep understanding of one’s emotions, as well as one’s strengths and limitations and one’s values and motives. (Goleman, et. al., 2002)
• *self-management* — The focused drive that all leaders need to achieve their goals.
  
  (Goleman, et. al., 2002)

• *self-motivation* — A strong drive to achieve and high levels of organizational commitment. (Ogunyemi, 2007)

• *social skills* — Expertise in building and leading teams. (Ogunyemi, 2007)

• *supervisor* — A crew chief or leader of a single unit or crew. (Evans, 2007)

• *technology* — The practical application of knowledge especially in a particular area; manner of accomplishing a task especially using technical processes, methods or knowledge. (IAFC, 2003)

*Limitations and Assumptions*

More extensive research could have been gathered through the use of surveys and more interviews with fire rescue departments and large businesses. There is an enormous amount of books on leadership traits and how to achieve them. If time was allowed any researcher could actually review materials for literally years on the theories of leadership development.

Firefighters believe that due to minimum staffing and funding in many fire rescue departments they are limited in proper succession planning. Normally there are not enough personnel to staff vehicles in an effort to allow the future officer to be properly mentored. Many departments do not financially support the educational needs of the department. Also, many firefighters do not use their personal time to attend classes because they are working second jobs. It is difficult for firefighters to attend the standard formal classes due to shift scheduling.

Typically fire officers who have served in team roles with their subordinates prior to promotion find it difficult to lead their subordinates after promotion. Many officers believe it is
not their role to mentor, but for their superior officers to provide the appropriate training and education.

The military clearly segregates between officers and enlisted personnel through training, development, and leadership. The fire service brings a firefighter up through the ranks to executive officers; therefore, it is difficult for the new officer to become the leader and disciplinary enforcer of the crew he formally was a part of.

Results

A review of the literature and interviews illustrate the results of the first question: What are the core dimensions required in the fire service, private sector, and military to assist an individual with improving their leadership ability? The researcher located literature along with conducting an interview from an expert from each of the following areas: fire service, private sector and military on the core dimensions of successful leaders.

Research on the four leadership styles by Howard (2005) states that communication, trust, action, encouragement and safety are important traits a leader must possess. Goleman, et. al. (2002) write that: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management are the keys to Primal Leadership. According to Mayer and Salovey (1997) core dimensions are when one has the ability to accurately identify, appraise, and discriminate emotions in oneself and others.

Evans (2007) and Hawkins (2000) believe that the fire service is lacking core dimensions such as humanities-based skills. Chief King of Kissimmee Fire Department believes that fire officer core dimensions are: communication, compassion, great listening ability, situational awareness, and passion for the people and the profession. (R. King, personal communication, November 29, 2007)
Large businesses have been using the concept of succession planning for many years. Successful leaders prove to produce bigger profits. Researchers have found that many core dimensions vary little when it comes to strong leaders. Ogunyemi (2007) states the core dimensions for a successful leader are empathy, emotional intelligence, self-control, tolerance, and trustworthiness. He also believes managers must be able to positively influence others. (p. 5). Surveys with business owners proved that leaders must have organizational goals, make tough decisions, create a vision, and have interpersonal skills such as self-awareness, empathy, and social skills. (Bernthal & Wellins, 2006) Wise states that business leaders must portray: judgment, decision making, adaptability, readiness, fairness, getting things done through others, and being able to make the call. (K. Wise, personal communication, November 28, 2007).

Military leaders believe that one must have integrity, perseverance, confidence, technical knowledge, a mission, fairness, and compassion. (Taylor & Rosenbach, 2000, p. ix)

In answering question two: How can these core dimensions be obtained and/or enhanced through education or skills based training, the researcher reviewed literature and conducted interviews. Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002) believe that leadership can be taught. They have written the book Primal Leadership describing how all different types of leaders can excel by connecting with others using their emotional intelligence.

Several articles about the fire rescue service proposed that it takes more than formal training to develop successful leaders. (Hawkins, 2000 and McCormack, 2003) An interview with Chief King suggests that leaders can enhance their core dimensions through mentoring, coaching. However, to make the leader successful, an extensive evaluation process must be conducted to give feedback to the individual and the success of the program.
Literature about private industry proposed brainstorming as effective toward the development of leaders, yet not as effective as emotional mastery training programs. (Ogunyemi, 2007) Bernthal and Wellins (2006) researched trends in leader development and succession and drew conclusions to successful development planning. Maxwell (2006), Walker (2002) and an interview with K. Wise suggest the use of mentoring and education in the development of successful leaders.

Some believe that leadership can not be learned, but one must be born with the traits of a leader. (Taylor & Rosenbach, 2000, pp. 6-10) An interview with P. Nicoletti, retired General with the US Army, believes that leaders can be taught to enhance their traits. He states that the Army has an officer leadership development program that does provide the skills and enhance the traits of a strong leader. The Army has a three step plan in development. The first step is education; the second is practical field training; and the third is a military occupational specialty. During all of this training the officer is educated, mentored, and uses practical experience in which they are evaluated. The process takes many years to complete and if an officer is not successful at any time throughout the process they are dropped from the program. (P. Nicoletti, personal communication, November 27, 2007)

The third and last question researched: What should be the composition of a Stuart Fire Rescue personal leadership plan?, resulted in the development of succession planning guidelines as attached in Appendix “A”. The literature found that although leaders can be found by soliciting outside of the organization, the benefits outweigh the cost of developing potential internal candidates for leadership. The organization should evaluate the whole person for skills, talents, and personal dynamics, and assist them by coaching and mentoring through their weaknesses. (Bernthal & Wellins, 2006) The succession plans should include activities,
assignments, coaching, mentoring and feedback. (Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004, p. 1). It is important for organizations to nurture leadership development by understanding the needs and implementing effective leadership programs. (Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004) Along with the assignments, coaching and mentoring, the potential officer must be prepared for the challenge. (Taylor & Rosenbach, 2000, p. ix).

Fire officers believe that education, assignments, mentoring, coaching and evaluation are keys to the success of a leadership development program. (Hawkins, 2000; McCormack, 2003; IAFC Officer Development Handbook, 2003; R. King, personal communication, November 29, 2007)

K. Wise (personal communication, November 28, 2007) states a succession plan should involve technical skills, education and mentoring leadership behaviors. The employers should do everything in their power to retain employees that display leadership traits such as: sound judgment, decision making, adaptability, fairness, and making the right call. A leader should have the competency of strong interpersonal skills. A successful leader should lead people, develop strong teams, and foster commitment and engagement.

P. Nicoletti (personal communication, November 27, 2007) states, the military has proven that assignments, mentoring, and education all play key roles in the development of a successful leader.

As literature and interviews have proven, formal education, self-assessment, mentoring and coaching will be used to develop a suggested guideline for employees to strengthen their ability to become a successful leader within the City of Stuart Fire Rescue.
Discussion/Implications

Through the literature process and personal communications with R. King, K. Wise, and P. Nicoletti, it was found that the following actions could be used to develop a succession plan for officer development for the City of Stuart Fire Rescue, Florida:

- Identify core dimensions that make up successful leaders to be implemented for future fire rescue officers. (Howard, 2005; Goleman, et. al., 2002; Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Evans, 2007; Hawkins, 2000; Ogunyemi, 2007; Bernthal & Wellins, 2006; Taylor & Rosenbach, 2000)

- Some literature states that there is an ability to learn and/or enhance leadership abilities through the use of education, assignments, mentoring and evaluation. (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee, 2002; Hawkins, 2000; McCormack, 2003; Ogunyemi, 2007; Bernthal and Wellins, 2006; Maxwell, 2006, and Walker, 2002) The personal communications with R. King, K. Wise, and P. Nicoletti all relayed the fact that they believed core dimensions could be learned through the mentoring process. They believe strong leaders are made by enhancing the education with assignments, mentoring, and then further evaluating the individual and the process.

- Bernthal & Wellins (2006) believe that the succession plan must address the personal dynamics of an individual through mentoring. However, other researchers and personal interviews with R. King, K. Wise, and P. Nicoletti also believe that it should involve education, mentoring, coaching, and an evaluation or feed-back process (Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004; Hawkins, 2000; McCormack, 2003; IAFC Officer Development Handbook, 2003)
The research proved to be effective to develop a succession plan to assist individuals in the guidance for officer development with the City of Stuart Fire Rescue, Florida. The information gathered was extremely helpful in identifying the need for such a policy; however, it also confirmed the massive amount of resources and time it takes to develop a successful leader. It also must be stated that some researchers believe that some people may not ever succeed in leadership because they were not born with the capabilities. (Taylor & Rosenbach, 2000)

The positive side of the research is that an action plan was developed and a policy put in place. From this point forward, the City will have vital information to assist employees with their own personal development in becoming a successful officer within the City of Stuart Fire Rescue. This is just the starting point of change in leadership style. It is now up to each individual to be self-motivated to take action in becoming a strong leader. (Bernthal & Wellins, 2006; Curtis, 2007; Evans, 2007; Hawkins, 2000; Goleman, et. al., 2002; Mayer & Salovey, 1997; McCormack, 2003; Ogunyemi, 2007; and Taylor & Rosenbach, 2000)

Recommendations

Several recommendations have been identified as a result of this research. Although the City has financially supported education with very few restrictions in past years, it currently has begun to tighten the purse strings due to tax reform. Future years may even further limit the officer pool of candidates due to a lack of education. It is the recommendation of the Department to request financial support for continued education of all fire rescue employees in the need to develop future leaders.

The City of Stuart Fire Rescue should develop a mentoring program that would enhance the leadership capabilities of future officers. The mentoring program at present would be very difficult due to a lack of staffing capabilities. The department currently runs short many days of
the year and a mentoring program usually requires additional staffing or the placement of
appropriate staffing in required areas. The problem is that with staffing restrictions due to
qualified personnel, it is difficult to move personnel to other vehicles or stations to mentor a
potential officer candidate. The City must re-evaluate the staffing placement and mentoring
capabilities to develop a scheduling policy that would allow formal mentoring or coaching.

The City of Stuart Fire Rescue currently has two evaluation processes. There is a form
that is used to evaluate a new employee by a superior officer on a daily basis. This report can
also be used when evaluating an employee through a new process, such as a paramedic
internship. The Department also has an annual personnel evaluation process. The employee is
graded by their superior officers, and financial gain is tied to the evaluation outcome. The
succession planning process should use the daily evaluation form for all employees going
through the mentoring or coaching process. The program itself should also be evaluated
quarterly to determine if there is a positive outcome from the newly developed process.

In conclusion, it is recommended that the City of Stuart Fire Rescue begin to use the
Succession Planning Guidelines and to evaluate the ongoing process in an effort to improve
officer leadership within the department.
References:


Appendix A

**Succession Planning**

**More than Technical and Educational Requirements**

Most starting employees begin with the basic requirements of a Firefighter or FireMedic as described below in sections 1 and 2. The City of Stuart has eliminated the Fire Lieutenant (3) position and upgraded it to a Fire Rescue Lieutenant (4) as of 2007.

To increase the knowledge and ability to become a successful leader within the fire rescue service, one must obtain the requirements as they excel through each position as outlined below:

1. **Firefighter Requirements**: Job Description updates: 1997, 2000, 2001 (City of Stuart, 2001b)
   - 1.1 High School Diploma or GED
   - 1.2 Florida certified Firefighter
   - 1.3 Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)
   - 1.4 Basic Life Support CPR Certification
   - 1.5 Valid State of Florida Driver License, Class E
   - 1.6 Emergency Vehicle Operators Course (EVOC)

2. **FireMedic Requirements**: Job Description updates: 1997, 1999, 2001 (City of Stuart, 2001c)
   - 2.1 Section 1 requirements
   - 2.2 Florida Paramedic Certified
   - 2.3 Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) certification

   - 3.1 Time Requirements: (as required in 2006 job description)
     - 3.1.1 Thirty-six (36) months of progressively responsible continuous experience as a firefighter or Firemedic with the City of Stuart
   - 3.2 Education Requirements: (as required in the 2006 job description)
     - 3.2.1 Section 1 requirements
     - 3.2.2 EMT or Paramedic
     - 3.2.3 Company Officer I certification
   - 3.3 Special Assignment Examples:
     - 3.3.1 Performs emergency functions
     - 3.3.2 Performs non-emergency functions in the community
     - 3.3.3 Participates in training new hires
     - 3.3.4 Leads training sessions
     - 3.3.5 Suggests policy/procedure changes
     - 3.3.6 Suggests equipment changes and additions
       - 3.3.6.1 Research, purchasing, procedures
3.4 Mentoring Examples:
3.4.1 Mentors subordinates in daily operations
3.4.2 Leads subordinates through training
3.4.3 Coaches subordinates through conflict issues

(City of Stuart, 2007b)

4.1 Time Requirements: (as required in the 2007 job description)  
4.1.1 Sixty (60) months progressively responsible continuous experience  
as a Firefighter or Firemedic with the City of Stuart

4.2 Education (as required in the 2007 job description)  
4.2.1 Section 2 requirements  
4.2.2 Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) Certification  
4.2.3 Company Officer I certification

4.3 Additional Education Requirements (as suggested in the 2003, IAFC  
Officer Development Handbook)  
4.3.1 Incident Safety Officer  
4.3.2 Instructor I  
4.3.3 Inspector I  
4.3.4 Haz Mat: Operations Level  
4.3.5 Ethics and legal issues  
4.3.6 AS or AA Degree in Fire Science and/or EMS

4.4 Special Assignment Examples:  
4.4.1 Participates in training new hires  
4.4.2 Leads training sessions  
4.4.3 Paramedic Intern preceptor  
4.4.4 Suggests policy changes  
4.4.5 Suggests equipment changes and additions  
   4.4.5.1 Research, purchasing, procedures  
4.4.6 Participate in mass casualty training, exercises and incidents  
4.4.7 Supervises health and wellness program

4.5 Mentoring/Coaching:  
4.5.1 Peer coaching  
4.5.2 Leads subordinates through training  
4.5.3 Assists subordinates through issues
   (City of Stuart, 2007a)

   5.1 **Time Requirements**: (as required in the 2007 job description)
      5.1.1 Seventy-two (72) months progressively responsible continuous experience as a Firefighter or Firemedic
      5.1.2 Thirty-six (36) months of the experience must be in the rank of Fire Rescue Lieutenant or higher

   5.2 **Education Requirements**: (as required in the 2007 job description)
      5.2.1 Section 4 requirements
      5.2.2 Hazardous Materials Technician
      5.2.3 AS or AA Degree in Fire Science and/or EMS

   5.3 **Additional Education Requirements**: (as suggested in the 2003, IAFC Officer Development Handbook)
      5.3.1 Company Officer II
      5.3.2 Multi-Company Incident Management
      5.3.3 Public Information Officer
      5.3.4 Fire Investigator I
      5.3.5 Public Educator I
      5.3.6 Leadership Development Series (National Fire Academy)
      5.3.7 Bachelor’s degree in Public Administration, Business Administration, Fire Science, Emergency Medical Services, or equivalent

   5.3 **Special Assignment Examples**:
      5.3.1 Develops and supervises new hire training program
      5.3.2 Participates in policy development
      5.3.3 Leads various meetings
      5.3.4 Participates in developing apparatus specifications
         5.3.4.1 Research, purchasing, procedures
      5.3.5 Input in budgeting process
      5.3.6 Participates in performance evaluation process

   5.4 **Mentoring/Coaching**:
      5.4.1 Guides subordinates
      5.4.2 Leads subordinates through training
      5.4.3 Assists subordinates through disciplinary issues
      5.4.4 Coaches Lieutenants’ performances
      5.4.5 Evaluates Lieutenants on a daily basis
      5.4.6 Coaching/Counseling – Interpersonal dynamics
6 \textbf{Assistant Fire Chief}: Job Description updates: 2004, 2006 \\
(City of Stuart, 2006)

6.1 Time Requirements:
   6.1.1 Twelve (12) years of progressively responsible experience in fire service
   6.1.2 Five (5) years at an administrative supervisory level as a Chief officer

6.2 Education: (as required in the 2004 job description)
   6.2.1 Section 5 requirements
   6.2.2 Bachelor’s Degree preferable or Associate’s Degree minimum from an accredited college or university with major course work in management, public administration, or fire science/emergency medical services
   6.2.3 Preferably a graduate of the National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer Program

6.3 Additional Education Requirements: (as suggested in the 2003, IAFC Officer Development Handbook)
   6.3.1 Fire Officer II
   6.3.2 Instructor II

6.4 Special Assignment Examples:
   6.4.1 Development of policies, procedures, and guidelines
   6.4.2 Implementation of EMS protocol changes and quality improvement practices
   6.4.3 Involvement with local and state Advisory Committees
   6.4.4 Leads various committees
   6.4.5 Develops, assesses and monitors emergency response procedures
   6.4.6 Budget preparation
   6.4.7 Develop resource deployment plan
   6.4.8 Develop, manage and evaluate a departmental health and safety program
   6.4.9 Begin the Chief Fire Officer Development process
   6.4.10 Public presentations

6.5 Mentoring/Coaching:
   6.5.1 Coaching/Mentoring Battalion Chiefs
   6.5.2 Leads Battalion Chiefs through forms and procedures
   6.5.3 Coaches Battalion Chiefs performance
   6.5.4 Coaches Battalion Chiefs through disciplinary issues
   6.5.5 Evaluates Battalion Chiefs monthly

7.1 Time Requirements:
   7.1.1 Fifteen (15) years of progressively responsible experience in fire service
   7.1.2 Five (5) years at an administrative supervisory level as a Chief officer

7.2 Education: (as required in the 2004 job description)
   7.2.1 Section 6

7.3 Additional Education Requirements: (as suggested in the 2003, IAFC Officer Development Handbook)
   7.3.1 Executive Fire Officer Graduate
   7.3.2 Chief Fire Officer Certification
   7.3.3 Masters degree in Public Administration, Business Administration, Fire Science, Emergency Medical Services, or equivalent

7.4 Special Assignment Examples:
   7.4.1 Research and development of life safety improvements
   7.4.2 Research and development of staffing improvements
   7.4.3 Research and development of risk and target analysis
   7.4.4 Research and development of emergency plan
   7.4.5 Research and development of increased revenues
   7.4.6 Research and development of improved services
   7.4.7 Involvement in local and state advisory meetings
   7.4.8 Represent the agency
   7.4.9 Interagency relations
   7.4.10 Labor/management negotiations

7.5 Mentoring/Coaching:
   7.5.1 Mentors/Coaches Assistant Chief
   7.5.2 Mentors Assistant Chief through budget process
   7.5.3 Coaches Assistant Chief through policy changes
   7.5.4 Coaches Assistant Chief with incident command
   7.5.5 Coaches Assistant Chief with emergency preparedness