DEVELOPING A SUCCESSION PLANNING MODEL
FOR
THE WEST HARTFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

The West Hartford Fire Department is faced with a leadership crisis in the immediate future. In January 2003, 16 personnel will be taking an early retirement incentive to reduce the size of the department. Already faced with a young and relatively inexperienced leadership pool due to a reorganization in 1998, one fifth of the organization, most of which are company and command level officers, will be departing. Personnel promoting into the vacant positions have received little formal training in the job responsibilities in the positions they will be filling. Succession is based on seniority, written and oral examination and annual performance evaluation.

The purpose of this Applied Research Project (ARP) was to examine Succession Planning and how it can be implemented in fire service organizations, and to develop a model for Succession Planning with the West Hartford Fire Department. An appropriate Succession Plan will assist the West Hartford Fire Department with insuring continuity in leadership in the future while continuing to meet the Mission, Goals and Objectives of the organization. In the development of the Succession Planning Model, descriptive and action research was conducted to answer the following research questions:

1. What is succession planning and some of its concepts?
2. What constitutes successful succession planning?
3. What succession planning programs are currently in use in fire departments?
4. What components would be in succession-planning model for the West Hartford Fire Department?

The procedures utilized in this research included a literature review, interview with Connecticut Career Fire Chiefs, a personal interview with the West Hartford Fire Department
Fire Chief and an internal survey of Battalion Chiefs, Captains and Lieutenants.

Organizationally, the results of the data replicate the concern of the private sector and government for Succession Planning. Internally, the survey information collected provides a basis for a model Succession Plan for the West Hartford Fire Department.

The recommendations from the research project called for the executive staff to review the ARP. Dedicate the time and resources necessary, and in the appropriate forum, to discuss the findings. When consensus is achieved among the executive staff, implement a plan for the initiation of the Succession Plan Model to keep pace with organizational growth, diversity and attrition forecasts.
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INTRODUCTION

The world is facing a great leadership crisis. In 1994, W.J. Rothwell cites the writings of respected management and leadership authors Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus in that there is a pervasive incapacity of organizations to cope with the expectations of their people. According to Rothwell, the following trend is evident.

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

This has never been more evident than during the last 18 months with the scandals in the Catholic Church, the collapsing of corporate giants like Enron and World Com. During this period, the nation experienced the tragedy of September 11, 2001 where companies in the World Trade Center lost much of their top management. Closer to the topic of this ARP and the focus of the fire service, the Fire Department of New York (FDNY) lost much of its top leaders, including the Fire Chief, and 343 Officers and Firefighters. A loss that very few organizations could recover from.

Following September 11, 2001 leaders in many organizations, both in the public and private sectors, we called to active military duty for the Operation Enduring Freedom, adding to an already taxed leadership pool. Some of these military personnel are still serving on active duty while their organizations move on with the deficits of their leadership.

To add to an already prevalent leadership crisis, the “baby boomer” era is approaching retirement age, and are leaving their jobs at unprecedented rates. With their departure, they leave
with skills, knowledge, political acumen, and life’s experience, leaving a vacuum of critical positions to fill. Every level of public, private and governmental organization is equally threatened by the failure of this generation to ensure their successors.

Continuity is becoming a watchword in many organizations, especially public service. The concern of leadership loss is becoming more noticeable as younger employees are elevated in organizations to assume leadership roles due to many of the previous noted organizational and world crises. Many organizations are scrambling to shore up their leadership foundations.

Compounding the concerns over leadership loss is the shrinking of the existing leadership pool. Throughout industry and the private sector, doing more with less has become the trend. Organizations are constantly “flattening” the structure of management. With less to offer in the leadership pool, employees may tend to rise faster on the ladder. This loss of leadership provides two significant problems; they leave less information about what they accomplished, and they have less information about what they should accomplish. As employees change jobs and organizations more frequently than ever, a greater focus on organizational continuity is needed.

Public sector organizations are not immune from the adverse affects of this lack of organizational leadership, especially local government. Taxpayers in America, beginning with Proposition 13 in California and Proposition 2 ½ in Massachusetts in the 1970’s, started to question the need for the continuing escalation of tax rates. As local governments had to face the reality of slashed tax revenues, or reduced increases, those governments had to learn how to make more efficient use of their revenue resources. It is clear that taxpayers want tax relief, and this is in the forefront of every newly elected official. Social Security is endangered along with Homeland Security, and resources are being re-directed to support these essential infra-structure programs. Those issues, amplified by the current state of the stock market, oil prices, global
unrest, the environment and the economy, are having major impact on revenue sharing, grants and other commonly accessed resources, which permits governments to function.

In the face of declining resources and escalating costs, governments are becoming more accepting to reducing line-level positions for sub-contractors, part-time employees, and in some situations, a reduction in non-essential services. During the past 5 years, the State of Connecticut has been progressively reducing the aid to municipalities for essential services. In November 2002, the governor announced that 3000 state employees would be laid off to offset a five hundred million dollar budget deficit. Many state workers that can retire have been encouraged to do so. This will decrease the number of layoffs, however, the loss of the upper management leaders through out the state agencies will leave an enormous gap in the state leadership pool.

In some municipalities, with capital reserves now expended, significant layoffs, downsizing and early retirement packages are becoming the norm. In Connecticut, when state funding is reduced, the public safety entities feel the greatest burden. Municipal budgets are generally divided into two operational categories; the Board of Education in one category, and all other municipal services in the remaining category. It is important to note that Connecticut is a very strong collective bargaining state.

The culture and values of well-managed organizations within municipalities who have yet to be impacted must be preserved; both the organization, and the community they serve. We must be proactive in insuring the continuity of leadership. One of the most proactive and positive ways of ensuring continuity of leadership is understanding and implementing succession planning.

Changing the culture of the organization from the traditional replacement-planning mode to a succession-planning mode will be the focus. Dr. Rebecca Luhn Wolfe wrote; Succession
Planning effort works towards continued leadership and talent building so that the organization can continue with planned wisdom and foresight (1996). In the words of John F. Kennedy; “The time to repair the roof is when the sun is shining” (n.d.).

**Problem Statement**

The West Hartford Fire Department will lose nearly one fifth of its line personnel including 2 of 4 Battalion Chiefs, 3 of 5 Captains, and 6 of 18 Lieutenants, on January 1, 2003 due to early retirement incentives. The vast majority of the retirements are in the leadership ranks. This represents decades of knowledge, skill and experience that will take years to replace. The West Hartford Fire Department does not have a formal succession plan to insure leadership continuity.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this Applied Research Project is to examine succession planning in private, public and governmental organizations, and to develop a model plan that will provide for continuity of leadership in the West Hartford Fire Department. Descriptive and Action research will be employed to answer the following questions:

1. What is succession planning and some of its concepts?
2. What constitutes successful succession planning?
3. What succession planning programs are currently in use in fire departments?
4. What components would be in succession-planning model for the West Hartford Fire Department?

**BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE**

The West Hartford Fire Department, established in 1936, was a consolidation of three volunteer fire departments that provided fire protection. The department serves a New England
community of 61,500 people, of which approximately 28% are elderly. The department covers 21.7 square miles. The fire department’s budget for fiscal year 2002-2003 exceeds $10.5 million dollars. Salaries accounted for approximately ninety-five cents of every dollar in the operating budget. The department operates out of five fire stations with 3 engine companies, 2 quint companies, a special hazards response unit and an on duty battalion chief. In July of 2002, the department closed a ladder company staffed by an officer and an apparatus operator. The current minimum staffing is 23 personnel per shift with a 25 personnel maximum, working a four group, three-10 hour days and three-14 nights rotation, with three days off between day-night rotations. Minimum staffing on an apparatus is 4 assigned to engine and quint companies. The average response time anywhere in town is 3.5 minutes.

Due to recent contract negotiations and an unprecedented proposal by the labor union, a reduction in staffing will become effective January 1, 2003. Apparatus response configuration will also change to support the staffing modifications. The department minimum staffing will be reduced to 21 per shift with no additional personnel for overtime coverage, operating with 3 quints, 2 engines, a special hazards response unit and a Battalion Chief. This constitutes the loss of 17 personnel to an early retirement incentive. The department will lose one fifth of its line personnel including 2 of 4 Battalion Chiefs, 3 of 5 Captains, and 6 of 18 Lieutenants.

Supervision and management in the West Hartford Fire Department consists of Lieutenants and Captains as company officers, with the Captains responsible for the stations. Battalion Chiefs are the top unionized manager within the department and responsible for the shift activity. Three Assistant Chiefs are responsible for operations, planning and fire prevention respectively, with the Fire Chief being the CEO.
During the last 20 years, three different Chiefs have led the department. Two were hired for outside the department and one from within. In 1999, an Assistant Chief was hired from the outside to assume the planning and training functions, while in 2001, a second Assistant Chief was hired from outside the organization to assume the fire marshal/fire prevention functions.

Geographically, the town is bordered to the east by the capital city of Hartford, which has a career fire department of 440 members. Communities to the north, west and south provide fire service delivery with volunteer fire departments. In the State of Connecticut, there are 325 separate fire departments delivering service to 169 towns. Each community provides the traditional delivery of services, and each has its own communications system, purchasing system, and incident command system.

The New England Fire Service is deeply entrenched in tradition, which supports those that fear change. Labor is the greatest advocate of maintaining the status quo.

This research project utilizes the concepts identified by the National Fire Academy Executive Leadership Course. Information presented in Unit 6 discusses the approach to succession planning. “Succession planning is a critical element of organizational strategy. Organizations with well-developed employee development and planning methods are more competitive. Public safety organizations achieve excellence through a well-trained and competitive workforce” (FEMA, 2000, SM 6-3)
LITERATURE REVIEW

**What is succession planning and some of its concepts?**

The Hagberg Consulting Group (1998) defines succession planning as, “..dynamic, ongoing process to systematically identifying, assessing, and developing leadership talent for future strategic tasks” (http://www.succession-planning.com/key-lessons.html). In the *Executive Leadership text*, the National Fire Academy defines succession planning as, “an organized and systematic way to ensure that employees in a particular organization are capable, competent and willing to replace and/or succeed to strategic roles within the organization (NFA Executive Leadership). Succession planning is more an art than a science and it should be dynamic and alive. (Cheloha, 2000)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

High performance companies in today's business world direct their efforts toward not just being able to replace the CEO, but having enough in-house talent to replace any leader at any level. Companies such as General Electric, with the greatest long-term success in filling positions at the apex of the organization, concentrate not only on CEO succession but also on building bench strength and a pipeline of talent throughout the managerial ranks. (Beeson, 1998, p. 61)

FEMA (2000) wrote that one of the more critical components of an organization's strategy for continued success is the ability to continually provide new leaders for the organization from within. "Succession planning is an organized and systematic way to ensure that employees in a particular organization are capable, competent, and willing to replace and/or succeed to strategic roles within the organization" (p. SM 6-3).

Buckner & Slavenski (2000) in a discussion of succession planning wrote about the need for changing organizations to have the right people working in the right places at the right time. The authors further stated that for that combination of events to take place, the organization must have a plan.

"Succession planning is proactive and should not be confused with more limited-scope and reactive replacement planning, which is a form of risk management" (Rothwell, 1994, p. 28).
Succession planning is not another term for "management training," "officer development," or "employee development." In an article published in *Training* magazine, Murphy (1997) wrote of the incongruence between most management training and results in the business world.

We've got it all backwards. When we try to change people first, then send them out looking for ways to use their new skill, we're putting the cart before the horse. What raises the bar for us today is that managers are working flat out, struggling with huge new responsibilities, leaner staffs, and more demanding bosses and customers. They are learning new ropes at the same time that they are stretching for better and faster results. They are no longer willing to divert their time to academic courses or "change" programs, which they have come to recognize as irrelevant "drills." (Murphy, 1997, p. 58)

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

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

7. Continuous monitoring of the system and top management support. (Byham, 1999, p.47)

**What constitutes successful succession planning?**

Dutton (1996) casts succession planning into four basic categories: simple replacement, full replacement, talent pool, and extended talent pool. Simple replacement identifies two or three people who could step into the next higher slot on an organizational chart. Full replacement takes simple replacement several steps lower on the organizational chart. A talent pool simply identifies internal and external candidates who are farthest along in career development. An extended talent pool includes internal and external candidates, defines what is expected of them, and identifies a structured path they will be required to follow as part of an extended talent pool.

Crockett (1999) found diversity a vital aspect of succession planning. In examining the succession planning that Allstate Corporation practices, she found that it not only insures diversity at all levels in the company, it has also helped profits. Allstate contends that diversity in the workplace has nothing to do with political mandates and everything to do with unlocking the potential of everyone in the organization. They also feel that an organization's people should mirror the market that they serve. Because all employees receive career counseling in development opportunities, Allstate's employees spend in excess of 540,000 hours annually in a classroom setting. Allstate has been ranked by Fortune Magazine as one of the 50 best companies for Asians, Blacks, and Hispanics. 40 percent of the executives at Allstate are women and 21 percent are minorities, due in large part to an ongoing commitment of leadership development that starts upon employment.
Beeson (2000) studied the results of seminars on succession planning strategies that were held by companies like General Electric, Dell Computer, Colgate-Palmolive, and Eli Lilly. He found a common theme identifying a clear link between succession planning and retention of top talent in the senior management ranks. All the companies placed a high priority on retaining top talent, and to do so, they have made succession planning flexible and action oriented. They identify people for future advancement and place them in assignments that force them outside their comfort zones. Doing so builds skills and abilities that prepare them for more responsibility. Open communication about career development and executive involvement in the process is also cited as critical components to successful succession planning. A list of competencies were identified that included priority setting, customer focus, problem solving, drive for results, and team building. Also identified were characteristics that prevented people from being successful. These included an inability to juggle multiple assignments and an inability to deal with ambiguity.

Byham (2000) found that traditional succession planning has failed because it focuses on simply identifying future leaders, rather than developing them. It takes money and energy to develop future leaders. He recommends taking those already identified as talented and placing them in an acceleration pool to fulfill future unmet needs. He encourages companies to give these people stretch assignments where they are forced to work outside their normal work environment. He recommends a formal mentoring program and senior management review of a candidate's progress. Key competencies were identified that included change leadership, strategic direction, entrepreneurial insight, and the ability to build business partnerships. He also noted that one of the hardest parts of program implementation was keeping senior managers focused on their assigned responsibilities of guiding the acceleration pool process.
Caudron (1996), who views succession planning as an ongoing process that focuses on leadership development, not executive replacement, advocates maintaining a pool of leaders that can meet an organization's needs, regardless of what that need might be. Leadership continuity was identified as the most important component of a succession planning process. Good succession planning involves identifying gaps in current and future capabilities, analyzing skills that may be needed in the future, and maximizing and diversifying the pool of executive candidates. Caudron emphasizes that succession planning is not a one-time event, but an ongoing process that should become part of an organization's corporate culture.

Coleman (1992) talks specifically about planning for the succession of a fire chief from within the ranks. He insists that subordinates be challenged, be involved in key decision making processes, and practice what he calls the one push rule. Challenging subordinates by forcing them outside their comfort zone and getting them to think outside the box are ways to develop leadership skills. Involving them in decision-making processes helps develop upper level management skills and allows them to see first hand the rationale behind important decisions. This also strengthens their support for that decision. The one push rule that Coleman ascribes to is the same as helping a child learn to ride a bicycle. At some point they are ready. One push and off they go, ready to succeed, or not. The same holds true for officers with the knowledge, skill, ability, and potential to accept greater responsibility, give them a project and allow them to succeed or fail. Coleman suggests this may happen over and over as people develop the skills needed to become leaders, ultimately accepting greater responsibilities.

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

Toth (1998) wrote a series of articles that looks at the role of a fire officer as he or she moves through the ranks to a chief officer's position and the affect this has on succession planning. In the first article he focused on the significance of the trumpets that most officers wear on their collars as a symbol of rank. The first trumpet signifies leadership, and is exemplified by those who are willing to take charge and lead from the front. The second trumpet signifies management. He talks about allocating scarce resources and managing personnel effectively to achieve productivity. The third trumpet signifies role modeling, the importance of competency in technical areas, and consistency in interpersonal relations with others. The fourth trumpet signifies mentoring. Guiding others as they come up through the ranks is one of the most important aspects of a chief officer's job. The fifth trumpet signifies an agent of change. Toth feels this is the most challenging because people resist change. Toth reminds us that the trumpet may be an outdated part of fire service history, but what it signifies should never be forgotten.

Toth (1999a) continues his series by discussing the fire officer's role as a manager. He talks specifically about the ability to weigh strategic factors and understand the objectives of the organization in order to make the right decisions. He feels that the complexity of the modern fire service demands that people move through the ranks in order to absorb all the skills necessary to be effective in any fire service organization.

Toth (1999b), concluding his series by writing about the importance of mastering supervisory skills at each level before advancing, feels there are three skills that need to be mastered: technical, human, and conceptual. Technical skills are learned early in a fire officer's career. Then, as the person moves up, human and conceptual skills become more important.
Toth's premise throughout the series is that succession planning is an ongoing process that starts as soon as a person comes into the fire service.

Boyatzis (1985), FEMA (2000), Beeson (1999), and Byham (1999) all identified performance appraisals as another critical component of a succession plan. "Performance appraisals should include two components: (a) assessment of recent performance, and (b) assessment of development needs" (Boyatzis, 1985, p. 432). "Employees need feedback to validate what they are doing and the value they create. Feedback provides important information that gives guidance and direction" (FEMA, 2000, p. SM 6-11). "The feedback loop should address the individual's work performance and development needs using the job competencies of their position as the objective criteria" (Byham, 1999, p. 49).

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

FEMA (2000) listed coaching as a component of a succession plan. FEMA further stated about coaching:

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

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

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

"The professional designation program components for a chief fire officer include: (a) education, (b) professional development, (c) professional contributions, (d) active association membership, (e) community involvement, (f) technical competence, and (g) experience"


**What succession planning programs are currently in use in fire departments?**

Research of the Executive Fire Officer Paper cache at the National Fire Academy indicates there are a number of fire departments interested in some form of succession planning, but an analysis of current literature reveals little in the fire service. As an exception, Chief Ron Coleman appears to be one of the more prolific writers in this topic area. Beginning in 1988, Chief Coleman suggested five elements of a succession plan to include;

- A career development guide
- A performance evaluation system
- A challenging environment
- An opportunity to achieve
- The exposure of a prospective candidate to all aspects of the job, throughout their career.

(Coleman, 1988)
Twelve years later, Coleman addressed the issue of transition management, one of the elements of succession planning, by admonishing the reader to "keep your subordinates adequately informed and share information on an open basis," (Coleman 2000). Chief Coleman posited a new concern, which closely echoes the current downward trend in executive pools being experienced in private industry. "I've seen hard evidence that fewer and fewer people want to move up in the hierarchy. This directly contradicts the huge hiring pool at the fire service's entry level ". Coleman continues, "Many of these highly motivated, extremely energetic and fiercely competitive people go professionally dormant." (Coleman 2001)

Faced with such a dire warning and cognizant of potential consequences, further research into parallel issues are appropriate. Schall, in her article Public sector succession: a strategic approach to sustaining, innovation, contrasted private sector versus public sector succession, positing that the organizational makeup of private sector succession planning has distinct advantages over public sector, especially in terms of longevity and sustained innovation, The longevity of public service leaders to carry forward ideas and concepts is impaired, "Because the public sector has more short-term leaders than institution builders, (Schall, 1997c) "Indeed, the importance of sustained innovation" - essentially keeping change alive - is an increasing challenge for public agencies". (Schall, 1997d)

A number of agencies including the National Fire Academy and the National Fire Protection Association are engaged in multiple initiatives designed to enhance and assist an individual with advancement preparation. The current Executive Fire Officer Program is one example.
The review of the literature found three fire service specific Executive Fire Officer Program Applied Research Projects on the subject of succession planning where the authors appeared to have some experience with succession planning and the process.

Baker (1995), an assistant fire chief with the Fairfax City (VA) Fire Department wrote: This research shows a critical weakness in providing formalized succession planning felt necessary to meet current and future fire service demands. Present classes and courses are, for the most part, theoretical in nature. Fire officer candidates are taught management theory, if such courses are even available, but theory application is often ignored, or at best, briefly touched upon. It is apparent that the fire service is much better at technical training, e.g., ladder, hose, and fireground techniques, than in the critical skills identified in this research paper such as judgment, leadership, decision-making, and oral communication. (Baker, 1995, p. 19)

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

During a personal interview with the Fire Chief of the West Hartford Fire Department, William H. Austin (2002), he was asked his view of a functional rotation assignment schedule. He, in fact, stated that in his previous job as Fire Chief in Tampa, Florida, this was a program he fostered to help develop his people to be whatever they wanted to be. In October 2002, a functional rotation occurred in the West Hartford Fire Department where the Operations Chief and the Planning Chief rotated. These personnel have served in the pre-rotation positions since 1999. In July 2003, the Loss Prevention Chief will rotate with the Planning Chief. The term of the rotation is set to be 2 years. Austin stated “the primary job of the fire chief is leadership and its his responsibility to develop his people to be tomorrow’s leaders.
Rohr (2000), an officer with the Fairfax County (VA) Fire and Rescue Department completed an Applied Research Project on the subject of succession planning for senior staff positions within that organization. Rohr wrote of the challenges facing his department that formed the premise for his ARP:

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

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

The research also indicates that public sector employees were often times very reluctant to voluntarily take on staff assignments. The literature indicates that a change in organizational culture must take place. Operations oriented personnel feel a lack of support from upper management when moved into staff positions. Personnel forced into staff positions due to vacancies failed to perform at their previous levels. Research indicates that scheduling issues and lack of incentives in some cases would be limitations to implementing successful strategies. (Rohr, 2000, p. 21)

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

Sample (1996) completed an ARP on *Succession Planning for the Emergency Response Department* in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. His work evaluated the successes and failures of a succession plan in that organization. Sample found that while a succession plan was implemented in 1988, on the recommendation of the Fire Chief, there was never any formal documentation of the plan. It became obvious during the research that the lack of formal documentation of the succession planning process likely meant most members of the department were not fully aware of the program or its goals. (Sample, 1996, p. 9)

Sample made the following recommendations to improve the succession plan in the ERD: (a) include all job classifications beginning with entry level positions, (b) conduct a job profile analysis for each position to identify required skills and competencies necessary to effectively fulfill the duties of the targeted positions, (c) construct assessment and evaluation criteria based on the competencies identified, (d) develop methodology to assess the existence of competencies in potential candidates, (e) develop a plan for administration of the succession plan, (f) conduct an assessment of candidates, (g) provide feedback to the candidates based on the results of the assessment for development of improvement plans, (h) monitor and evaluate the progress of development plans. (p. 37)
Sample further stated that the succession plan should include: (a) mentoring and job exchange opportunities for participants, (b) psychological assessment with professional interpretation and feedback, and (c) identification of those individuals with the shortest development curves. Sample's last recommendation was made in light of the short term need for the ERD to have officer replacements to fill vacancies in the department.

Unfortunately, our department currently has a shortage of leaders. As a result, Edmonton has recently been forced to hire four such people from outside of the organization. This was necessitated by the failure of the internal succession planning process. While there are many examples of external recruiting in the United States, there are very few in Canada. To recruit four "outsiders" in less than two years is quite simply unheard of. (p. 36)

**Literature Review Summary**

The purpose of this Applied Research Project was to evaluate succession planning to determine whether the West Hartford Fire Department would benefit from a formal succession plan. The literature review examined what succession planning is and what its components are, the results of poor or no succession planning, and what constitutes successful succession planning. Much of the literature reviewed was beneficial and had a positive influence on this project.

A common theme emphasizing professional development of personnel and ongoing succession planning as a key component of a healthy organization was found in the literature. A clear correlation was found between poor or no succession planning and problems within an organization. The findings show that a pro-active approach to leadership development is an essential aspect of good leadership within an organization. Succession planning is a critical component of retaining and promoting top talent as more and more people reach retirement age.
The key component, and the primary reason why a succession plan can work where an officer development plan will not, is the use of work assignments to improve an individual's level of competency. This is particularly true with "stretch" assignments, i.e., placing an individual into an assignment or assigning them a task that is "out of their comfort zone" and requires them to gain additional knowledge and skills as they work through the assignment.

There are, however, no simple solutions, and, numerous hurdles for those charged with developing a succession plan. Factors to consider are:

- A reduction of personnel in the labor pool
- A reduction of personnel willing to become leaders
- The questionable support of top officials, including politicians, to invest the significant resources to develop succession plans
- The transient nature of government officials
- Reluctance of labor officials to depart from the status quo

**PROCEDURES**

Descriptive and action research was used to gather information for the development of a program of Succession Planning in the West Hartford Fire Department. Information was gathered from several different sources including:

- The West Hartford Public Library was queried for information related to current Succession Planning initiatives in the public and private sector.
- The Learning Resource Center at the National Fire Academy was visited for access to Executive Fire Officer papers, trade publications, journals, and articles on subjects related to Succession Planning which included: Mentoring, career development, education, and promotion.
• Searches on the World Wide Web for professional journals and related web sites.
• A query of Connecticut career fire department Succession Plans through telephone contact for survey fulfillment.
• A Personal interview with the Fire Chief/CEO of the organization.

Assumptions and Limitations

The procedure employed during this ARP were based on several fundamental assumptions. It is assumed that all authors referenced in the literature review performed objective and unbiased research. It is also assumed that the target audience for written and telephone surveys answered with unbiased responses within the scope of the questions.

Significant limitations were encountered during the compilation of data. Available information on the topic was most related to family business leadership, probate issues, and estate heir planning. This limitation was evident in both library queries and searches on the World Wide Web. Unlike the replication factor inherent in the hard sciences, it is felt in this social science, the individual needs will be specific to the department, yet the global need of succession planning will remain universal to the departments.

RESULTS

Research Question #1 - What is succession planning and some of its concepts?

"Succession planning is an organized and systematic way to ensure that employees in a particular organization are capable, competent, and willing to replace and/or succeed to strategic roles within the organization" (p. SM 6-3).

Buckner & Slavenski (2000) in a discussion of succession planning wrote about the need for changing organizations to have the right people working in the right places at the right time. The authors further stated that for that combination of events to take place, the organization must
have a plan. "Based on its research into executive development, the Center for Creative Leadership in Greensboro, North Carolina, recommends planning structured activities that enable executives to acquire leadership skills naturally as part of their professional growth" (p. 79).

"Succession planning is proactive and should not be confused with more limited-scope and reactive replacement planning, which is a form of risk management" (Rothwell, 1994, p. 28). Succession planning is not another term for "management training," "officer development," or "employee development." In an article published in *Training* magazine, Murphy (1997) wrote of the incongruence between most management training and results in the business world.

"Researcher Morgan McCall of the Center for Creative Leadership in Greensboro, NC, found that executives attribute only 5 percent of what they know about management to classroom instruction" (p. 60).

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

1. Determining the extent of an organization's pending leadership shortage.

2. Identifying needed executive competencies based on the organization's future business needs.

3. Identifying high-potential individuals for inclusion in a pool.

4. Assessing these individuals to identify strengths and skill gaps and to determine who will be in the high-potential pool.

5. Establishing an individually tailored development program for each high-potential individual that includes training, job rotation, special assignments and mentoring by older senior executives.

6. Selecting and placing people into senior jobs based on their job performance, their
experience, and assessment of their potential for a specific job.

7. Continuous monitoring of the system and top management support. (Byham, 1999, p.47)

The practice of Succession Planning involves extensive effort of top management to address the development of a leadership pool by coaching, mentoring, sharing of responsibility, challenging the comfort level of leaders and program evaluation. It is no longer enough to identify one individual to consider for replacement, especially in light of our highly transient society, but to invest our employee’s development in creating continuity in leadership with a pool of qualified personnel.

It is clear that Succession Planning in the richest sense is a significant draw on company resources, including the individual resources of leaders and mentors. It is not a plan or outline extracted from a manual. It is a comprehensive doctrine of planning, achievement and constant evaluation that must be customized to the needs of the organization and environment rather than the industry.

**Research Question #2 - What constitutes successful succession planning?**

The research provided many styles of Succession Planning. The styles included from simple to complex in scope. It is the organizations responsibility to identify what its needs are and what components it will need for a successful Succession Plan. Traditional Succession Planning was found to be deficient by each of the author’s because the focus is on identifying future leaders versus developing a pool of leaders or potential leaders.

Byham (2000) found that traditional succession planning has failed because it focuses on simply identifying future leaders, rather than developing them. He recommends taking those already identified as talented and placing them in an acceleration pool to fulfill future unmet
needs. He encourages companies to give these people stretch assignments where they are forced to work outside their normal work environment. He recommends a formal mentoring program and senior management review of a candidate's progress. Key competencies were identified that included change leadership, strategic direction, entrepreneurial insight, and the ability to build business partnerships. He also noted that one of the hardest parts of program implementation was keeping senior managers focused on their assigned responsibilities of guiding the acceleration pool process.

Caudron (1996) views succession planning as an ongoing process and that focuses on leadership development, not executive replacement, advocates maintaining a pool of leaders that can meet an organization's needs, regardless of what that need might be. Leadership continuity was identified as the most important component of a succession planning process. Good succession planning involves identifying gaps in current and future capabilities, analyzing skills that may be needed in the future, and maximizing and diversifying the pool of executive candidates. Caudron emphasizes that succession planning is not a one-time event, but an ongoing process that should become part of an organization's corporate culture.

Chief Ronny Coleman wrote specifically about planning for the succession of a fire chief from within the ranks. He insists that subordinates be challenged, be involved in key decision making processes, and practice what he calls the one push rule. Challenging subordinates by forcing them outside their comfort zone and getting them to think outside the box are ways to develop leadership skills. Involving them in decision-making processes helps develop upper level management skills and allows them to see first hand the rationale behind important decisions. This also strengthens their support for that decision. The one push rule that Coleman ascribes to is the same as helping a child learn to ride a bicycle. At some point they are ready.
One push and off they go, ready to succeed, or not. The same holds true for officers with the knowledge, skill, ability, and potential to accept greater responsibility, give them a project and allow them to succeed or fail. Coleman suggests this may happen over and over as people develop the skills needed to become leaders, ultimately accepting greater responsibilities. (1992)

Toth (1998, 1999a, 1999b) wrote a series of articles that looks at the role of a fire officer as he or she moves through the ranks to a chief officer's position and the affect this has on succession planning. In his writings, he focused on the significance of the trumpets that most officers wear on their collars as a symbol of rank. The first trumpet signifies leadership, and is exemplified by those who are willing to take charge and lead from the front. The second trumpet signifies management. He talks about allocating scarce resources and managing personnel effectively to achieve productivity. The third trumpet signifies role modeling, the importance of competency in technical areas, and consistency in interpersonal relations with others. The fourth trumpet signifies mentoring. Guiding others as they come up through the ranks is one of the most important aspects of a chief officer's job. The fifth trumpet signifies an agent of change. Toth feels this is the most challenging because people resist change. Toth reminds us that the trumpet may be an outdated part of fire service history, but what it signifies should never be forgotten. He feels that the complexity of the modern fire service demands that people move through the ranks in order to absorb all the skills necessary to be effective in any fire service organization.

Toth continues with the importance of mastering supervisory skills at each level before advancing, feels there are three skills that need to be mastered: technical, human, and conceptual. Technical skills are learned early in a fire officer's career. Then, as the person moves up, human and conceptual skills become more important. Toth's premise throughout the series is that
succession planning is an ongoing process that starts as soon as a person comes into the fire service.

The writing of both Coleman and Toth are specific to the fire service. Both seem to agree that as part of developing leaders, we must move those in the pool outside of the comfort zone and give them the opportunity to advance. This process should begin the first day of their career.

**Research Question # 3 - What succession planning programs are currently in use in fire departments?**

In Connecticut, there are no formal Succession Planning programs currently in use in the fire service. A telephone survey of concluded that there was not a good understanding of the concept of Succession Planning (Appendix A). Twenty-two departments were surveyed and no formal programs were found. Most agencies responses were focused on replacement of personnel when vacancies occurred. Preparation of personnel for the most part was the onus of the candidate on a promotional list. Any departmental preparation was focused on the day-to-day tasks of firefighting and not the strategic, human and conceptual skills to support leadership continuity of the organization. Notably, many responses corroborated this authors experience that labor does not understand, nor support succession planning, especially in departments with overtime by classification. It was found that little flexibility exists to operate outside the collective bargaining agreement, which in many cases uses job descriptions as a benchmark.

From the research, it appeared that one fire service organization had a Succession Plan that was implemented in 1988. Deputy Chief Spence Sample (1996) completed an ARP on *Succession Planning for the Emergency Response Department* in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. His work evaluated the successes and failures of a succession plan in that organization. Sample found that while a succession plan was implemented in 1988, on the recommendation of the Fire
Chief, there was never any formal documentation of the plan. It became obvious during the research that the lack of formal documentation a succession planning process likely meant most members of the department were not fully aware of the program or its goals. (p. 9)

**Research Question # 4 - What components would be in a succession-planning model for the West Hartford Fire Department?**

A survey was prepared and distributed to Battalion Chiefs and company officers, which comprise Captains and Lieutenant. A personal interview was also conducted with Fire Chief William H. Austin. The survey results are as follows:

**Battalion Chief Survey**

**Question 1.** How long have you been a Battalion Chief? 4 respondents

3 respondents with 3 years and 1 with 10 years.

**Question 2.** How did you prepare to become a Battalion Chief?

All 4 respondents stated Connecticut Fire Academy, College, and Self-study.

**Question 3.** At the assumption of your duties as Battalion Chief, what was your preparation level in accomplishing the following duties? Personnel Management, training, counseling, discipline, incident command, budgeting, fire inspection, politics, health and safety and documentation skill. (Responses: Very prepared, Reasonably prepared, Not very prepared)

All respondents responded they were reasonably to very prepared. The only responses for “not very prepared” were for the counseling, discipline and politics categories.
**Question 4.** What do you see as the 3 greatest challenges your successor will face?

Collectively, the responses reflected:

- Time management
- Confusing signals of upper management
- Curriculum development
- Inexperience of subordinates
- Maintaining a balance in the transition from company officer to management while being in the bargaining unit.

**Question 5.** If you could prepare your successor before your departure, what would you do with them?

Collectively, spending more time with them to help them understand the job. Focus on attention to detail and “outside of the box” thinking. Seeing the big picture.

**Question 6.** Has anyone actively mentored you in your role a Battalion Chief?

3 respondents stated no. 1 respondent stated yes, his superior in the West Hartford Fire Department. Additional comments that “suggestions were made on how to proceed, but none of the those making the suggestions had been in the shift commander role”.

**Captain Survey**

**Question 1.** How long have you been a Captain? 3 respondents

1 respondent with 7 years, 1 with 2 years and 1 with 18 years.

**Question 2.** How did you prepare to become a Captain?
2 respondents stated Connecticut Fire Academy, College, Self-study.
1 respondent stated department training, self study.

Question 3. At the assumption of your duties as Captain, what was your preparation level in accomplishing the following duties?

Personnel Management, training, counseling, discipline, incident command, budgeting, fire inspection, politics, health and safety and documentation skill. (responses: Very prepared, Reasonably prepared, Not very prepared)

All respondents responded they were reasonably to very prepared in the personnel management, training, counseling, and health & safety categories. The remainder of the categories received a “not very prepared” rating.

Question 4. What do you see as the 3 greatest challenges your successor will face?

Collectively, the responses reflected

- Having supervisory authority over Lieutenants in the station
- A fire chief interested in eliminating the Captain level
- Lack of time to handle task load.

Question 5. If you could prepare your successor before your departure, what would you do with them?

Collectively, create a mentoring and job share program for Captain activities.

Question 6. Has anyone actively mentored you in your role a Captain?

All 3 respondents stated: No.
Lieutenant Survey

**Question 1.** *How long have you been a Lieutenant?*  
9 respondents  
Average of respondents 7 years

**Question 2.** *How did you prepare to become a Lieutenant?*

All 9 respondents stated Connecticut Fire Academy, College, Department training, Self-study.

**Question 3.** *At the assumption of your duties as Lieutenant, what was your preparation level in accomplishing the following duties?*

*Personnel Management, training, counseling, discipline, incident command, budgeting, fire inspection, politics, health and safety and documentation skill.* (responses: Very prepared, Reasonably prepared, Not very prepared)

All respondents responded they were reasonably to very prepared in the training, incident command, fire inspection, health & safety and documentation skills. The remaining categories received “not very prepared” ratings.

**Question 4.** *What do you see as the 3 greatest challenges your successor will face?*

Collectively, the responses reflected

- Balancing diversity  
- Personnel management  
- Time management  
- Motivation in a changing fire service environment
**Question 5.** *If you could prepare your successor before your departure, what would you do with them?*

Collectively, honing skills in mentoring, counseling and motivating people. Encouraging them to be fair and consistent. Enjoy the job and treat everyone with respect, no matter what the situation.

**Question 6.** *Has anyone actively mentored you in your role a Lieutenant?*

The responses ranged from no to fathers, members of other fire departments. 1 response reflected superior officers in the West Hartford Fire Department.

Fire Chief William H. Austin supported the findings of David Rohr in his ARP titled *Succession Planning for Staff Officers* (2000), that the rotation practice is acceptable, achievable and measurable as a personnel development tool. In fact, rotations of Battalion Chiefs occurred in July 2002 and Assistant Chief in October 2002.

**DISCUSSION**

The purpose of this research was to determine what Succession Planning is what it takes to be successful in an organization. The topic is well researched in the private sector, however, as prevalent in the private sector as it is, there appears still to be issues of how successful it is. Succession Planning to the fire service is an exotic concept. The fire service is entrenched in tradition and the idea of change is threatening to a culture that is stimulated by reactivity vs. pro-activity.

The National Fire Academy defines succession planning as, “an organized and systematic way to ensure that employees in a particular organization are capable, competent and willing to
replace and/or succeed to strategic roles within the organization (NFA Executive Leadership).

Succession planning is more an art than a science and that it should be dynamic and alive.
(Cheloha, 2000)

Byham (2000) found that traditional succession planning has failed because it focuses on simply identifying future leaders, rather than developing them. This is indicative of the results of the telephone and internal surveys conducted as part of this ARP. "Succession planning is proactive and should not be confused with more limited-scope and reactive replacement planning, which is a form of risk management" (Rothwell, 1994, p. 28). Succession planning is not another term for "management training," "officer development," or "employee development."

The fire service as a whole practices the art of reactionary replacement planning.

Caudron (1996) views succession planning as an ongoing process that focuses on leadership development, not executive replacement, advocates maintaining a pool of leaders that can meet an organization's needs, regardless of what that need might be. Leadership continuity was identified as the most important component of a succession planning process. Good succession planning involves identifying gaps in current and future capabilities, analyzing skills that may be needed in the future, and maximizing and diversifying the pool of executive candidates. Caudron emphasizes that succession planning is not a one-time event, but an ongoing process that should become part of an organization's corporate culture.

Toth's (1999b) premise is that succession planning is an ongoing process that starts as soon as a person comes into the fire service. This is a cultural shift in that career development usually begins after the employee has met the years of service prerequisite. Toth advocates career development begins at the beginning of the career.
With the large number of leadership personnel retiring January 1, 2003, the obvious realization is that Succession Planning would have averted the vacuum that now faces the organization. With an organization that is reduced by one-fifth of its workforce, senior personnel with less than 20 years of service, and executive leadership with an average of 5 years of executive experience, it is a priority that Succession Planning become a priority for continuity of leadership within this 66-year young organization. Fortunately, the Fire Chief has instilled in the executive staff the importance of diversity and career development. The challenge is to institutionalize the concept throughout the entire culture of the organization. The key is to transition from the current reactionary replacement mode to a more proactive and progressive ideology employing some of the components inherent to Succession Planning.

The greatest obstacle to succession planning and its components for success is the conceptual understanding of the bargaining unit. None of the research data addresses the role of unions, especially mandatory collective bargaining. However, through education, negotiation and partnering, this should not be insurmountable.

In the words of Executive Leadership Instructor John Gallis (2002), “if you do what you always did, you get what you always got”. From the literature reviewed, the survey results that corroborate the literature and the compilation of the data, this researcher does not know how the fire service continues to exist with the lack of process and development of our leaders.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations of this proposal are intended to guide the executive staff in formulating a model to identify the necessary components of a comprehensive Succession Plan for the West Hartford Fire Department. From the research reviewed, it is important to recognize that there is no one model for Succession Planning. Consensus building within the ranks of the
executive staff is critical. The executive staff must read and understand the research findings of this report and agree that improvement of the current reactive method of personnel replacement planning should be transitioned to a proactive Succession Planning Model.

Once consensus is achieved within the executive staff, the Succession Planning process would proceed with the development of detailed implementation strategies.

The Succession Plan Model process (See Appendix C) contains a set of considerations to be “brainstormed” by the executive staff. The contents of this proposal is multi-dimensional, a compilation of suggestions made after the review of information contained in the literature review.

The primary objective is to make participation in the succession planning as inclusive as possible. The ideal plan would be for all personnel within the West Hartford Fire Department, from the Fire Chief to the recruit firefighter, have a role in the process. It is not being suggested that planned replacement be inclusive of all ranks, however, what is being suggested is that everyone in organization has all the written objectives, including educational, and prerequisite information describing every career development opportunity with the fire department.

The identification of key positions facing replacement in the short term through attrition is next consideration for the model. Rationale behind this being once the development and implementation for these key positions have been successfully completed, the program can be incrementally expanded to include other ranks within the organization.

After target positions have been identified, predicting future needs including projections for attrition over the long term should be made. Typically for an organization with similar size and demographics consistent with that of the West Hartford Fire Department, employees in
management positions will retire at a specific rate. Contract cycles can be an accurate indicator for projection.

Once the model is completed, overview presentation to all department members with the opportunity for feedback will be conducted. All personnel will be encouraged to understand and provide input to help solidify acceptance. Periodic program evaluation and revision will ensure ongoing successful succession planning.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A
TELEPHONE SURVEY

My name is Gary Allyn and I am an Assistant Chief in the West Hartford Fire
Department. I have just completed the Executive Leadership Course at the National Fire
Academy as part of the Executive Fire Officer Program. I writing a research paper on
Succession Planning for the Fire Department and I would like your assistance in my research. If
you would like a copy of this document on it completion, I will be more than happy to share it
with you and your organization.

Do you have a formal Succession Plan for your department? Yes No
Do you have a mentoring program for new personnel? Yes No
Do you rotate personnel different functional assignments, and if so how often? Yes No
   Duration___
Does your collective bargaining agreement limit you flexibility with job-share, mentoring and
rotation of duties? Yes No

May I have a copy of you Succession Plan to assist us in developing our plan. If it is not
in writing, can you describe its components?

Survey Departments in Connecticut

Bradley Fire-    East Hartford FD    Greenwich FD    Mohegan Sun FD    Norwich FD
   Rescue             Enfield FD        Groton City FD   Naugatuck FD          UCONN-
   Branford FD        Fairfield Fire-    Hartford FD     New Britain FD    Farmington
                   Rescue                  Glastonbury FD    New London FD     Waterbury FD
Danbury FD        Hartford FD     Meriden FD     New London FD     Willimantic FD

SUCCESSION PLANNING SURVEY

BATTALION CHIEF

As a member of the West Hartford Fire Department, you may aspire to higher positions within the organization. As part of your aspirations, your subordinates have the similar goals. To accomplish this succession cycle, identifying critical factors to structure a succession plan model is necessary. This survey is an anonymous questionnaire to glean information to complete a research project at the National Fire Academy. Recommendations from the project will be used in developing a succession plan model for the West Hartford Fire Department.

Thank you in advance for your valuable input and for completing this survey. Please complete and return to Asst. Chief Allyn by December 29, 2002.

1. How long have you been a Battalion Chief? ________

2. How did you prepare to become a Battalion Chief?

3. At the outset of your promotion to Battalion Chief, what is your preparation level in accomplishing the following duties?
   a. Personnel Management 1 2 3
   b. Training 1 2 3
   c. Counseling 1 2 3
   d. Discipline 1 2 3
   e. Incident Command 1 2 3
   f. Budgeting 1 2 3
   g. Fire Prevention & Investigation 1 2 3
   h. Politics: internal & interdepartmental 1 2 3
   i. Health and Safety 1 2 3
   j. Documentation Skills 1 2 3

   1-Very Prepared
   2-Reasonably Prepared
   3-Not Very Prepared
4. What do you see as the 3 greatest challenges your successor will face?
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 

5. If you could prepare your successor before your departure, what would you do with them?

6. Has anyone actively mentored you in your role as Battalion Chief?
SUCCESSION PLANNING SURVEY

CAPTAIN

As a member of the West Hartford Fire Department, you may aspire to higher positions within the organization. As part of your aspirations, your subordinates have the similar goals. To accomplish this succession cycle, identifying critical factors to structure a succession plan model is necessary. This survey is an anonymous questionnaire to glean information to complete a research project at the National Fire Academy. Recommendations from the project will be used in developing a succession plan model for the West Hartford Fire Department.

Thank you in advance for your valuable input and for completing this survey. Please complete and return to Asst. Chief Allyn by December 29, 2002.

1. How long have you been a Captain? ________

2. How did you prepare to become a Captain?

3. At the assumption of your duties as Captain, what was your preparation level in accomplishing the following duties?
   a. Personnel Management 1 2 3
   b. Training 1 2 3
   c. Counseling 1 2 3
   d. Discipline 1 2 3
   e. Incident Command 1 2 3
   f. Budgeting 1 2 3
   g. Fire Inspection 1 2 3
   h. Politics: internal & interdepartmental 1 2 3
   i. Health and Safety 1 2 3
   j. Documentation Skills 1 2 3

   1-Very Prepared
   2-Reasonably Prepared
   3-Not Very Prepared
4. What do you see as the 3 greatest challenges your successor will face?
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 

5. If you could prepare your successor before your departure, what would you do with them?

6. Has anyone actively mentored you in your role as Captain?
SUCCESION PLANNING SURVEY

LIEUTENANT

As a member of the West Hartford Fire Department, you may aspire to higher positions within the organization. As part of your aspirations, your subordinates have the similar goals. To accomplish this succession cycle, identifying critical factors to structure a succession plan model is necessary. This survey is an anonymous questionnaire to glean information to complete a research project at the National Fire Academy. Recommendations from the project will be used in developing a succession plan model for the West Hartford Fire Department.

Thank you in advance for your valuable input and for completing this survey. Please complete and return to Asst. Chief Allyn by December 29, 2002.

1. How long have you been a Lieutenant? ________

2. How did you prepare to become a Lieutenant?

3. At the assumption of your duties as Lieutenant, what was your preparation level in accomplishing the following duties?
   a. Personnel Management 1 2 3
   b. Training 1 2 3
   c. Counseling 1 2 3
   d. Discipline 1 2 3
   e. Incident Command 1 2 3
   f. Budgeting 1 2 3
   g. Fire Inspection 1 2 3
   h. Politics: internal & interdepartmental 1 2 3
   i. Health and Safety 1 2 3
   j. Documentation Skills 1 2 3

1-Very Prepared
2-Reasonably Prepared
3-Not Very Prepared
4. What do you see as the 3 greatest challenges your successor will face?
   a. 
   b. 
   c. 

5. If you could prepare your successor before your departure, what would you do with them?

6. Has anyone actively mentored you in your role as Lieutenant?
APPENDIX C
SUCCESSION PLANNING MODEL

1. Department Mission, Vision Goals and Objectives.

2. Develop a terminal and enabling objectives for a Succession Planning program.

3. Align goals and objectives of the Employee Services Department with those of the fire department.

4. Align job descriptions to reflect concepts for continuity and development.

5. Invite the bargaining unit to assist with the development.

6. Align collective bargaining agreement to reflect concept for continuity and development.

7. Develop the written policy, which is inclusive of all positions within the fire department.

8. Define key target positions within the department.

9. Forecast attrition for the next contract cycle and plan accordingly.

10. Present program overview to members of the department and encourage them to support and embrace process.

11. Periodic program evaluation and revision as necessary. (define term in program)