

**DEVELOPING THE POTENTIAL FUTURE LEADERS OF THE BIRMINGHAM FIRE
DEPARTMENT**

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

The Birmingham Fire Department will, within three years, have all three executive officers and seven of the nine line officers eligible for retirement. Without an ongoing effort to prepare for regime changes, the Birmingham Fire Department is putting their organizational stability and long-term growth potential at risk. The problem statement is the Birmingham Fire Department does not have any form of a staff officer replacement or secession plan.

The purpose of this research was to look at what others are doing and saying about replacement and/or succession planning and to determine what efforts the Birmingham Fire Department should implement to prepare their potential future leaders of the organization.

Descriptive research was used to answer the following questions:

1. What succession methods are currently being used by other fire departments?
2. What competencies should be included in developing future staff officers for the Birmingham Fire Department?
3. How will the Birmingham Fire Department implement a succession plan?
4. What methods will be used to evaluate the success of the program?

The procedures used in research include a literature review, interviews, and a survey of Oakland county fire organizations.

The results of the research indicated that a succession planning program would address the needs of the organization by providing a formal program to develop and enhance the future potential of personnel. The research also indicated the private sector and law enforcement agencies have developed specialized succession planning program that provide the desired outcomes. Within Oakland County, Michigan, very few succession planning programs have been implemented in the fire service agency and none in a career based organization.

The recommendation of the research is to phase-in a customized succession planning program for the Birmingham Fire Department.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1988, after graduating from the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program, then Birmingham Fire Chief Gary Whitener attempted to start a staff officer succession plan. The first and only step, implemented was requiring officers promoted to the rank of Lieutenant to achieve a Fire Science certificate, within one year of promotion. Captains were required to achieve an Associate Degree, in Fire Science or related field, within two years of promotion. The Chief believed that preparation for the future leaders had to start at this level. This belief was fostered from the collective bargaining unit's promotional process. Chief Whitener's plan, while never formalized, started and ended at this point.

The problem statement of this research is that the Birmingham Fire Department will, within three years, have all three executive officers and seven of the nine line officers eligible for retirement. Without an ongoing effort to prepare for regime changes, the Birmingham Fire Department is putting their organizational stability and long-term growth potential at risk. A common complaint from newly promoted officers is that they were inadequately prepared for the transition. The Birmingham Fire Department does not have any form of a staff officer replacement or secession plan.

The purpose of this research was to look at what others are doing and saying about replacement and/or succession planning and to determine what efforts the Birmingham Fire Department should implement to prepare their potential future leaders for the organization.

Descriptive research was used to answer the following questions:

1. What succession methods are currently being used by other fire departments?
2. What competencies should be included in developing future staff officers for the Birmingham Fire Department?
3. How will the Birmingham Fire Department implement a succession plan?
4. What methods will be used to evaluate the success of the program?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

The City of Birmingham is located in the southeast corner of the State of Michigan. It is approximately six miles northwest of the City of Detroit. The City is an upper-class residential community with a traditional downtown district and a light industrial district.

The Birmingham Fire Department has 40 members and two stations. The staff positions consist of a fire chief and two assistant fire chiefs, prevention and operations. A single secretary supports the staff positions. The line positions consist of three captains, six lieutenants, three shift inspectors, one shift emergency medical service coordinator, and 25 firefighter/paramedics.

Each of the two stations is staffed with a minimum of one officer. Adams Station is the Birmingham Fire Department's headquarters. This station's full staffing would be one captain, one lieutenant, one inspector, and six firefighter/paramedics. The second station is referred to as the Chesterfield Station. This station maintains a constant staffing of one lieutenant and two firefighter/paramedics.

The Birmingham Fire Department provides fire suppression, fire prevention, public fire education, advance life support emergency medical services, and hazardous material response. In 2002, the Birmingham Fire Department responded to 1775 alarms. Approximately 68% were medical responses, 18% fire related responses, and 11% service calls (Birmingham Fire Department, 2003).

In 1988, Fire Chief Gary Whitener graduated from the National Fire Academy's (NFA) Executive Fire Officer Program. That same year, he was instrumental in establishing educational requirements for the positions of lieutenant and captain. "Fire officers today rely on experience, but in the future they will require formal education to meet tomorrow" (G. Whitener, personal communication, November 1, 1988).

The promotional process is regulated through a collective bargaining agreement between the City and IAFF Local 911. Lieutenants are required to complete a fire science

certificate within one year of promotion. Captains are required to complete an Associate in Fire Science within two years of promotion. Failure to complete these educational requirements constitutes immediate demotion. These educational enhancements were added to the collective bargaining agreement.

There are currently three testable positions: emergency medical services coordinator, lieutenant, and captain. The position of emergency medical service coordinator position is not recognized as a part of the command structure, having only administrative responsibilities. The positions of paramedic and inspector are considered assignments and not promotions, under the current labor agreement. Upon completion of the promotion process, an active eligibility list is maintained for twelve months (City of Birmingham, 1998).

The promotional process includes three steps, written exam, oral board, and points awarded for seniority and annual personnel evaluation. The first step in the Birmingham Fire Department's promotional testing is the written exam. Prior to 1988, much less than half of the candidates passed the written exam for any promotional position. The first promotional process, after the introduction of the educational requirement, was for a lieutenant's position, in 1990. Well over fifty percent of the candidates passed the written exam. This trend continues today (E. Weber, memorandum, April 16, 1990; E. Weber, memorandum, April 26, 1991; D. Edginton, memorandum, Feb. 23, 1998; D. Schulte, memorandum, May 29, 2003).

The only exception to this trend was for the position of captain. Prior to 1985, less than fifty percent of the candidates passed the written exam. During the period between 1990 and 1995, the written exam for the position of captain was given only once. Four of the six candidates passed the exam.

In 1997, the captain position was given increased administrative responsibilities, mirroring more of a staff role. The subsequent written promotional examinations reflected these added responsibilities. In 1998, the next captain's promotional exam was given with two of six candidates passing the written test (E. Weber, memorandum, April 16, 1990; D. Edginton,

memorandum, Feb. 23, 1998). A worse result was seen in 2003 when only one candidate passed the exam. The test was studied and reviewed by the City's Human Resource Department and IAFF Local 911 and found to be valid to the current job analysis of captain (D. Schulte, memorandum, May 29, 2003).

The staff positions are non-union, so they are not part of the labor agreement and are promoted by appointment. Since a single attempt to fill a staff position from the outside failed, these positions have traditionally come from the officer ranks within the organization. In 1997, the City promoted the fire departments EMS coordinator to the position of Assistant Fire Chief/Operations. In selecting this individual, all current lieutenants and captains were passed over. In a response to a letter from IAFF Local 911, the City justified this appointment, "In summation, the position of Assistant Fire Chief of Operations requires a strong practitioner of modern business and public administration methods that is absent in others that applied" (D. Schulte, memorandum, February 26, 1997).

In 1995, through collective bargaining agreement, a retirement vesting penalty was instituted. This penalty was designed to keep qualified officers they were developing. With the pending retirement of the Fire Chief, in 1997, the City increased the staff officer's pension benefits, in an attempt to entice the current Assistant Fire Chief to remain. Assistant Fire Chief David Edginton was promoted, but after 30 years of service retired in June 2003. The City again has increased the staff officer's pension multiplier and maximum retirement percentage to entice the current assistant fire chief, with 29 years of service, to stay (D. Edginton, personal communication, May 22, 2003).

The Fire Chief, who retired in June of 2003, was asked whether there was a qualified person to take his place. He responded, "Yes." When asked if there was an adequately prepared person to take his successors place, he did not answer. When asked to explain his needed development to become a staff officer he stated it took him two to three years, once promoted, until he was comfortable (D. Edginton, personal communication, May 22, 2003).

The National Fire Academy's Executive Leadership (EL) course teaches that the ability of an agency to respond to a situation is based on many factors, but none so decisive as executive leadership. This course was designed to assist the executive leader of a fire service agency in building individual and organizational capabilities. Better stated by NFA instructor John Gallis, "A view from the balcony" (personal communication April 7, 2003).

Succession planning is a critical element of organizational strategy. Organizations with well-developed employee development and planning methods are competitive. Public safety organizations achieve excellence through a well-trained and competitive workforce. There needs to be a clear way by which employees can predict the future, and there is a strong need for bench strength in a public safety organization (FEMA, 2000, sm 6-3).

The research for this project was based on the principles and methods learned in the National Fire Academy program, Executive Leadership.

The researcher for this project is an administrator for the Oakland Fire Training Institute (OFTI). Consulting and assisting area fire administrators in understanding and coordinating change is a major function of the administrative staff at OFTI. While serving in that capacity, the researcher is also a member of the Birmingham Fire Department. This researcher has a vested interest in the advancement of the Birmingham Fire Department.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the book *Systematic Succession Planning*, Rebecca Luhn Wolfe, Ph.D (1996), explains the circle of leadership. An organization is only as good as its employees. Employees at every level are the greatest asset a company can have. These employees are only as good as the leaders that direct, guide, focus, and develop them. The commitment to leadership should be a continuous process for every organization. The true definition of succession planning is: "A defined program that an organization systemizes to ensure leadership continuity for all positions by developing activates that will build personnel talent from within" (p. 4).

Robert S. Fleming (2002), in his article in Fire Chief Magazine, believes that there is a leadership gap that exists in many fire departments. "The greatest barrier to an effective transition from line officer to chief officer is failing to recognize the changes in roles and responsibilities accompanying advancement to chief officer position" (p.38). Future leaders require realistic preview of the roles and responsibilities of the position, as well as practical suggestions regarding preparation for and making a successful transition (Fleming, 2002).

What Succession Methods are Currently being used by Other Fire Departments?

Research of the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Applied Research Projects indicates there is a number of fire service agencies interested in some form of succession planning, while an analysis of current literature reveals little into established succession plans for staff officers positions.

The opposite is true for entry level and line officers. Many cities across the nation have instituted a formal replacement plan for the entry level employee. Many of these plans include educational requirements, certification in the fields of fire fighting and/or emergency medical training, and possession of a current driver's license. Some fire service organizations have adopted the IAFF Candidates Physical Agility Test (CPAT), as a requirement for pre-employment. CPAT requires that every candidate receive a booklet that details the exam and the necessary physical skills and abilities necessary to successfully complete the process.

In 1998, Chief Rocco S. Forte (2003), of the Minneapolis Fire Department, redesigned their line promotional process to mimic the guidelines of a succession plan. The department first revised the job description and revealed the subjects to be covered in the exam. "In short, everyone in a position to take a promotional examination knew what poll of knowledge was necessary. There were no secrets to success shared only with the chosen few" (p. 33). Their next step was developing educational process which included college or professional based material in a classroom or clinical setting. Throughout the process education was encouraged but not required.

The true focus of the Minneapolis Fire Department's process was to level the playing field, in an attempt to acquire a more diverse work force. The successful results of this program allowed the department to appoint 15 members to staff since 1998. "The appointments were made up of a very diverse group of highly skilled employees" (Forte, 2003, p.33). The article did not specifically address success planning for these staff members, but the methods institutionalized mirror those expressed in any succession plan: understanding of the organizational mission, competency identification, value clarification, employee ownership, and senior management driven. While these are all identified in the article, they are the foundation to any executive succession plan (Rothwell, 2001).

A review of all the current IAFF associated collective bargaining agreements, within the State of Michigan, found two themes fundamental in the promotional process. The first being promotion by strict seniority and the second based on a promotional process. Within the strict seniority systems, the basis for promotion is time on the department. A majority of the promotional process systems have either college or professional based educational requirements. Most of the educational requirements must be met prior to being eligible to compete in the promotional process, while others are required after being promoted (Michigan Professional Fire Fighters, 2002).

The promotional processes were designed for line officers. Only a very few of the review documents included staff positions in their collective bargaining agreements. The rare exceptions were clauses that gave management the right to select current senior line officers to fill vacancies in staff positions on a temporary basis.

Another method of replacing staff positions, when they become vacant, is to open the position to interior and exterior candidates. The corporate raiding of leadership from other organizations is common within the public and private sectors. Much of the literature indicates that this method is a quick and easy solution. This tactic is not without its pitfalls.

According to a Harvard Business Review study by Ciampa and Watkins, of 35 organizations, in 1992, that chose an outsider for Chief Operating Officer (the most likely successor candidate), only 25 percent of the candidates became Chief Executive Officer within the next five years. Hence, a 75 percent failure rate (Cheloha, 2000, p.7). Supporting research through The Center for Creative Leadership showed 66% of the senior managers hired from the outside usually fail within the first 18 months (Caudron, 1999).

Bob Weitzner of Sagemark Consulting believes hiring an executive from the outside is many times a result of lack of planning by the organization. They have not forecasted their future needs, so they are required to react rather than simple replace with qualified candidates. "The result of improper planning or lack of planning could be a recipe for disaster for a business, its owners and employees" (Genn, 2001, p. 25).

What Competencies Should be Included in Developing Future Staff Officers for the Birmingham Fire Department?

Arthur Anderson and Schoonover Associates surveyed 300 organizations from all major sectors and found that 67 percent of the organizations do not actively use competency based initiatives when filling executive vacancies. Yet, of the companies that do develop and use competency measures, "80 to 90 percent said they have seen measurable results" (Evangelista, 2003, p. 18).

In an article for *Contingency Planning & Management Magazine*, Elio Evabgelista (2003) believes that develop of competency profiles for each management position is the backbone of any succession planning initiative. "The competencies serve as a roadmap for building successful individuals for each job, which in turn builds the organization as a whole" (p. 19).

Competencies are used in replacement and succession planning to link and align the organization's core strategic strengths to job competencies. They are used to define and clarify exactly what present and future competencies are essential to success in the organization and in its various jobs. Competencies establish clear work expectations for performance among all

workers. "The greatest barrier to an effective transition from line officer to chief officer is failing to recognize the changes in roles and responsibilities accompanying advancement" (Fleming, 2002, p. 38).

Much of the fire service based literature centers on leadership qualities when discussing fire officer potential. Succession planning is not the same as leadership development (Cheloha, 2000). Chief Ronald Coleman has been writing on this subject for years. Long ago, Ron Coleman (1988) suggested that future organizational leaders must be exposed to all aspects of the job, throughout their career. This allows them to develop and understand the administrative skills necessary. Unfortunately, many companies and fire service organizations assume they are the same.

However, private sector literature references described progressive companies that have realized strong leadership development becomes the launching pad for succession planning. They believe that effective leadership development does not happen overnight or through good fortune. In the private and public sectors, developing leadership must be designed to support the organizational culture. All leadership programs should embrace the cultural character of the organization. "Failure to define leadership (as it relates to the organization) leads to confusion, ambiguity and, eventually, an acceptance of mediocre leaders" (Cheloha, 2000, p.11).

From author to author, whether referencing private or public sector, leadership has been defined many different ways. A person that develops a following, which in turns, holds back or negatively impacts an organization is an unproductive leader, but never the less is still a leader. Leadership, in reference to one's ability to lead an organization is looked upon a little differently. Thomas McLane is the vice chairman of The Directorship Search Group, a consulting firm that advises Fortune 1000 companies about succession planning, executive search and more. McLane points out that CEO's must have managerial talents, but should be leaders. McLane defines his beliefs this way, "A leader has followers and can rally others to perform beyond expectations, while a manager can get people to get things done" (Genn, 2001, p. 25).

The early fire service literature focused on the enhancement of the existing leadership skills and abilities to develop potential organization leaders. The knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA's) focused around the incident management decision making process, while operating in a paramilitary system. The types of decisions being made centered on the technical skills involved, with an enhanced understanding of the specific tasks and proficiency in performing them. Over the years, increasing influence has been placed on human skills involving the ability to work with others, teamwork.

More recent literature broadened this focus to include empowerment of mid management to assist in the organizational decision making process and, in turn, becoming a part of the organizational management culture. In 1998, Orange County Fire Authority, California, instituted a 112 hour Leadership Institute. This program was designed to develop leaders, with a focus on the organizational culture. The curriculum focused in four concepts:

1. Personal and professional growth is an outcome of a partnership between the individual and the organization.
2. The institute does not limit the focus on those of rank, but rather supports the concept that leaders are found throughout an organization.
3. To change an organization, you must change one person at a time and through that individual acting in a leadership manner, the organization will grow and prosper.
4. To succeed as an organization, a deep personal level of commitment is required from its members.

Of the 48 graduates, 15 have been promoted to captain, battalion chief and other senior staff positions (Martin, 2001).

In recent years, the literature has taken a more business approach to addressing the KSA's needed to be proficient at the chief level. Previously, professional experiences that correspond with the role and responsibility of the chief position were all that was required.

"Frequently those promoted to chief officer positions have extensive technical skills, but lack

human or conceptual skills” (Fleming, 2002, p. 40). The current literatures focus in on a combination of academic knowledge and professional experience. “The importance of combining an appropriate knowledge and skills set based on education and experience can’t be overstated” (Fleming, 2002, p. 40). Academic education is needed to development the skills involved to comprehend the big picture and understand the organization and the environment in which it operates. Traditional fire service training must be supplemented by developing conceptual skills and changing generational human skills in management and leadership.

The Commission on Chief Fire Officers Designation has followed the formula of academic education and professional experience. To apply for the Chief Fire Officers Designation (CFOD), a qualifying candidate must meet one of the criteria below:

- 5 years as a Fire Chief with a Masters Degree
- 10 years as a Fire Chief with a Bachelors Degree
- 15 years as a Fire Chief with an endorsement from supervisor
- 10 years as a Chief Fire Officer with a Masters Degree
- 15 years as a Chief Fire Officer with a Bachelors Degree
- 20 years as a Chief Fire Officer with an enforcement from a supervisor
- Chief of an accredited agency (candidate must have been Chief during the accreditation process). (CFOD, 2003)

The addition of a formal academic education enhances a leader’s ability to react and adjust to a changing environment. Examples of this were documented in the downsizing of IBM and AT&T. Managers who succeeded under the old conditions based on professional experience were, “... suddenly outmoded and were even unfit to counsel a new generation about what it would take for them to succeed” (Rothwell, 2001, p. 200). Formal education motivates an individual to learn new skills and understand change.

A study conducted by Accountemps of more than 1,400 CFO's asked them to prioritize the skills and abilities necessary to climb the corporate ladder. The manager's ability to easily change was rated first. Their motivation to learn new skills was next, followed by strong interpersonal skills, which included a tolerance for diverse views, was third. The traditional manager qualities of welcoming increased responsibilities and willingness to work long hours were next (Wood, 2002).

Much of the literature established that the Chief Financial Officer has different leadership needs than a Chief Operating Officer. The same is true for the Chief Executive Officer. The authors all seem to agree that successful organizations have either high performance expectations or vital performance expectations "are led by technically, conceptually, and interpersonally skilled individuals who have the ability to empower and guide employee behavior" (Pernick, 2002).

How will the Birmingham Fire Department Implement a Succession Plan?

Much of the literature recognizes that each organization has differing needs and operating cultures, which in turn, have a direct effect on the development and selection of executive officers. For this reason, each organization needs to establish and focus on a mission statement, when developing future talent. Birmingham Fire Department has a long standing mission statement:

The mission of the Birmingham Fire Department is to protect the lives and property of residents and visitors through;

- Public education in fire safety and hazard recognition
- Aggressive fire suppression
- Effective training to Insure safety and survival
- A safe and healthy work environment
- Professional emergency treatment and care of the sick and injured

- Efficient pre-incident planning and emergency management
- Hazardous material control and mitigation (Birmingham Fire Department, 2003)

Once the mission statement is identified, the next recommended steps are to develop written policies and procedures, address the legal framework, and identify target groups. (Rothwell, 2001). In the private sector, this set requires executive management support and employee buy-in. In an agency shop or union setting, the union must be in agreement with any procedure or policies that enhances or limits selected employees within their representation. The Birmingham Fire Department is an agency shop (City of Birmingham, 1998).

The Minneapolis Fire Department was able to develop and implement their program, with cooperation of the local union. With this program there were no “secrets to success,” and allowed all who desired to be involved participation (Forte, 2003, p. 33). The Orange County Fire Department program also operated within a collective bargaining system, which allowed for open application to the program, but limited enrollment. Selection into the program was performed “by an outside panel of leadership development experts” (Martin, 2001). In either case both programs operated with cooperation of the local union members.

Both programs also targeted groups, within their own organizations, to enhance and develop. Minneapolis focused on diversifying the organization, but in doing so they were able to develop standards. “The standards were never lowered. The standards were, in fact, defined for the first time, and that focus made the department reflective of the community it serves and led to a highly qualified and very diverse work force” (Forte, 2003, p.34). This program was open to everyone and allowed for the enhancement of the technical, conceptual, and interpersonal skills needed to lead this organization. The implementation process was through employee education to the entire process and removal of any impediments, whether formal or informal, to any candidates participation. Participation was focused on college based education and professional development (Forte, 2003).

The Orange County Fire Department's Leadership Academy was specifically designed to address two separate deficiencies; a significant number of personnel would be retiring in five to seven years and a deficiency in leadership within the organization. The implementation process was to hold an academy, train the personnel, and then enhance each student's technical, conceptual, and interpersonal skills through involvement in developing new or assisting in existing organizational management initiatives (Martin, 2001).

Currently there is no formal process to prepare a successor to a staff officer position within the Birmingham Fire Department. Traditionally, the first promotion to the staff level is at the Assistant Fire Chief/Fire Marshal position. The next promotions have been done in progression of Assistant Fire Chief/Operations and then Fire Chief. Over the past twenty years, there have been five promotions to Fire Marshal. The methods used in replacing the Fire Marshal position have been different each time, but they all have the basic same two components, length of service and time in grade.

Qualifications to apply for the position of Fire Marshal have varied each time. The most recent qualification to apply was a current line officer within the organization. The previous qualification has been a combination of experience at the positions of inspector and line officer. At another time, the requirement was experience in either position of inspector or line officer. College educational requirements have never been required for either Assistant Fire Chief or Fire Chief position. The posting does allow for the City to substitute formal educational in exchange for experience.

The City responsible for all leadership decisions. "Ultimately, the assessment of leadership potential and readiness remains a line-management responsibility. The succession planning process must be directed by the organization's leaders, not the human resource staff, though staff may administer the plan under the line's direction" (Pernick, 2002, p.16). The literature that references private sector succession planning and leadership development

believe in line management control. In the public sector, and specifically the fire service, the responsibility has always fallen within the organization.

In the book *Creative Human Resource Planning & Applications: A Strategic Approach*, Elmer H. Burack (1988, p. XIV) believes, "Strategic thinking is a responsibility of all managers at all levels." He advocates that organizational forecasting is required to create its own future and reap the benefits of the best utilization of their resources, capabilities, and opportunities. This approach is critical as the heart of any organization's future leadership. When managers are involved, they will be appropriately prepared.

What Methods will be used to Evaluate the Success of the Program?

The literature tends to surmise the meaning of evaluations as placing value or determining the worth of a program or individual. The evaluation has to be directed and not generic in design. The authors discuss a well planned evaluation minimizes the burden by building in practical and unobtrusive ways of gathering data. The intent of the evaluation process is to measure not only the direct effects the program has on the organization, but the flexibility to withstand changes in the organizational environment. To achieve the intended effects, evaluation begins at the very beginning of the program design, not at the end (Burns-Martin, 2002).

To direct the focus of an evaluation at the targeted program, it must be developed with clear goals in mind. In doing so, the following questions should be clearly defined:

1. Who will use the results?
2. How will the results be used?
3. What is expected from the program?
4. Who is carrying out the evaluation?

The first question seeks to identify the audience. The second question seeks to clarify what decisions will be made based on evaluation results. The third question grounds evaluation in expectations and program objectives. Finally, the fourth

question provides clues about appropriate evaluation techniques based on the expertise of the chosen evaluators. (Rothwell, 2001, p. 272).

Once these questions are addressed, then it is time to refine the evaluation to each step in the process. From clear goals, we can derive the potential for evaluating the leadership development program on five levels: reaction, knowledge and skills transfer, on-site behavioral change, organizational impact, and monetary return on investment. Generally, each succeeding level of evaluation increases in rigor and cost. It is financially prudent, therefore, to consider the program's success criteria. If the success of the program is measured by satisfied participants who assert their intention to apply what they have learned, a reaction evaluation will suffice. Conversely, if the program must prove a positive return on investment, a highly detailed and formally structured evaluation of the entire program will be needed. However the evaluation process is established, the evaluation should be dynamic, given the expense and importance of leadership developed. Each level supports and builds on the previous level. Collecting information on participants' reactions, knowledge and skills acquired, onsite applications, and organizational impact helps understand and explain any monetary return on investment (Pernick, 2002).

A professional evaluation process can be time consuming and costly. Additional methods of evaluation can be used to assist in measuring the effects of the program. A common method is evaluating employee conflict. This method assumes the leaders have been formally trained in how to diffuse conflict. After training, an analysis is performed of labor grievances and the effect they have had on the organization. The analysis measures the average cost of a grievance award, the labor cost of in processing the claim, plus external legal fees, to arrive at the unit cost of one grievance. Then calculate the before and after change in the number of grievances filed. This cost is calculated against the expense incurred in training the leaders (Pernick, 2002).

The use of job sharing or acting positions can be used to evaluate the effects of the training received. The Orange County program assigned their graduates to management roles in committees or programs (Martin, 2001). "The use of acting positions can be instrumental in allowing the candidate and other members of the fire department to access readiness for promotion to chief officer rank" (Fleming, 2002, p. 40).

Throughout the literature, the intangible benefits of training were emphasized. The benefits are important indicators that do not directly tie to monetary outcomes. Topics discussed were increased job satisfaction, improved communication skills, enhanced teamwork, and fewer complaints. Over time, many of these positive effects can be measured, but initially they may be difficult.

PROCEDURES

This research project employed the descriptive methodology. The problem statement was validated to its clarity and comprehensiveness. The purpose of this research was to determine what actions may be required in preparing the future leaders of the Birmingham Fire Department.

Research Methodology

A comprehensive literature review of both private and public sector leadership replacement planning and succession planning was performed. Trade journals, magazines, internet search and textbooks containing information on the subject were examined. Internal documents were reviewed as well as City of Birmingham documents and manuals. A single survey, directed at the top fire service administrator, was performed to determine local existence of any formal or informal succession planning or leadership development programs, within the 43 Oakland County Fire service agencies. Follow up phone interviews were conducted to all respondents that acknowledged having a form of executive development programs.

Survey

A single survey instrument was used to assist in determining the existence of leadership development and/or succession planning programs, within the 43 fire agencies that operate in the County of Oakland, Michigan (See Appendix A).

The surveys were pre-printed with the fire service agencies name and top administrators. The survey sought to identify if the organization had a succession plan for the executive officers rank. The positions targeted were Fire Marshal, Assistant Fire Chief, and Fire Chief.

The instrument was distributed at the Oakland County Fire Chiefs Association's meeting of May 21, 2003. Any agency that was not in attendance was mailed a survey, with a return posted envelope. Of the 43 fire agencies targeted, 41 responded to the survey.

Interview

An interview was conducted with Fire Chief David Edginton on May 22, 2003, prior to his retirement. The focus of this interview was to clarify and confirm the problem and purpose of this research.

The second set of interviews was performed by phone. Any respondent that indicated the existence of a leadership development or succession plan on their survey was contacted. A list of questions was asked (See Appendix B). Some respondents were asked follow up questions that were not on the original list, but these questions were used to clarify and not expand the respondent's answers.

An interview was conducted with Assistant City Manager Dan Schulte on May 22, 2003. The focus of this interview was to clarify the skills, knowledge, and abilities that will be needed in promoting the next Fire Chief.

Assumption and Limitations

The procedures used throughout this project were based on several assumptions. First, the researcher assumes the authors referenced in the literature review were objective and

unbiased. Second, the survey respondents were objective in their answers. Finally, those interviewed were fair and objective in their responses.

There were several limitations in completing this project. First, the six month deadline to submit the research project limits the scope of the project. Second, a limited amount of fire based organizational information was available on the subject researched, while the private sector information was overwhelming. Finally, this research project was written using APA fourth edition format.

Definition of Terms

City – Reference to the City of Birmingham.

Collective Bargaining Agreement – A binding contract between the City and the Local Union representing shift employees.

IAFF – International Association of Fire Fighters, the national Professional Fire Fighter's Union.

KSA – Acronym for Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities.

Public Safety – An organization that cross-trains employees to perform both police and fire fighter tasks. Each employee is a certified police officer and certified fire fighter.

Staff Officer - Position within a fire agency that has executive level responsibilities. (i.e.: Fire Chief, Assistant Fire Chief, Deputy Chief, and Fire Marshal)

Succession Planning – A defined program that an organization systemizes to ensure leadership continuity for all positions by developing activities and/or training that will build personal talent from within (Wolfe, 1996).

RESULTS

What Succession Methods are Currently being used by Other Fire Departments?

This research found two existing programs, used to develop internal candidates for advancement. The first was in Minneapolis Fire Department. This program was designed to diversify the fire service, to reflect the population they protect. This program followed many of the suggested guidelines for a succession planning program. In the final analysis, this program

developed and promoted 15 members of a “very diverse group of highly skilled employees,” to the staff level (Forte, 2003, p. 33).

The second program was developed by the Orange County Fire Department, California. This program was a formal leadership program. This Leadership Institute’s formal 112 hour focus was to select the top candidates, from within the organization, and develop their leadership abilities within the Orange County Fire department’s culture. This was used effectively to develop their future leaders.

Within Oakland County, Michigan, there are five formal Leadership Development and/or Succession Planning programs currently in use. This was determined by a survey distributed to all 43 fire service organizations, with 41 respondents (See Appendix A).

A total of five respondents did answer yes to question one in the survey. The same five agencies responded to the second question with the answer of all line officers were the targeted group. The positive responses came from Bloomfield Hills, Farmington, Berkley, Beverly Hills, and Oak Park. All five of the respondents are public safety organizations.

Follow up phone interviews were performed with the leaders of all five organizations (See Appendix B). The phone interviews indicated that all of the public safety organizations follow a similar format in their succession planning and leadership development. Each of them requires prior formal education such as:

- Bachelors Degree in Administration.
- Certification at the Fire Officer II level
- Formal training in decision making, handling difficult employees, and leadership.

It was indicated by Deputy Director Art Smith, of Beverly Hills Department of Public Safety, that many police agencies in the area have formal succession planning programs. Each of these programs was patterned off a consultants recommendations commissioned by Oak Park Public Safety, in the late 1980’s. The public safety organizations add the formal fire officer training to the program (A. Smith, personal communication, August 11, 2003).

This program is available to all qualified employees. Qualified employees are based on either seniority or a combination of seniority and performance evaluations. All of those interviewed, indicated that the program worked well in developing administrative, leadership, and political skills necessary for a successful director of public safety.

The only weakness in this program is team building. Four of the five communities interviewed indicated that police work does not require or focus on team building. Much of the daily tasks performed by police officers are self directed, independent work. Fire operations tasks require a team focus. Since 90 percent of the work load is police oriented, the team building KSA's are missing. This problem has been enhanced with the recent mandated accountability requirements. Shift Commander Howard Smith, of the Bloomfield Hills Department of Public Safety explains the differing roles of police and fire officers. "Police officers manage incidents, while fire officers lead" (H. Smith, personal communication, August 6, 2003).

One fire department, Bloomfield Township, responded positively when asked if there exists an informal succession planning or leadership development program that is used to groom future leaders of their organizations. Fire Chief Leo Chartier uses a combination of formal education and administrative assignments to develop his internal personnel. This program is informal and encompasses only the twelve line officers. He annually hand picks one officer to attend a formal education program through Eastern Michigan University, Fire Staff and Command School. This ten month course, divided into ten-one week sessions, covers a vast array of subjects. The curriculum ranges from public administration, to public and council presentation, formal grant proposal writing, legalities in the fire service, and mentoring/leadership development. This program requires a term paper that is due at end of the eighth month. Upon completion of this program, additional administrative duties are assigned in graduated levels of task. All this is done to measure the preparedness level and future capabilities of the officer for consideration in a future advancement. This method used by

Chief Chartier is flexible and arbitrary by design. (L. Chartier, personal communication, August 11, 2003).

A review of the literature directly and indirectly related to the subject indicated succession and replacement planning programs exist for entry level positions, but are almost non-existent within fire based organizations for top staff positions. A review of the Applied Research projects for the NFA Executive Fire Officer Program indicates a need for just such a program, but none that are currently in place.

What Competencies should be included in Developing Future Staff Officers for the Birmingham Fire Department?

Competency based training is the best form of training. In developing future potential in an individual, competencies are used as benchmarks to measure development. The competencies needed in developing a staff officer are broad. The private sector literature focuses on most of the KSA's that have been used to describe leadership in the fire service. In her book *Systematic Succession Planning*, Rebecca Luhn Wolfe (1996) lists 50 essential character qualities needed for a leadership position (p. 60). The first ten on the list are general manager qualities, followed by 20 describing interpersonal dynamics, and 20 more qualities that are used throughout the fire service literature to describe leadership.

Fire Chief Dave Edginton believed that formal preparation for the role of staff officer is unnecessary, within the Birmingham Fire Department. "We have the best trained firefighters in the county." This statement was made in reference to survey results provided by the Oakland County Fire Training Committee. Chief Edginton believes that experience is the best teacher for a staff position. Any training necessary to prepare a future staff officer was been done at the firefighter level (personal communication, May 22, 2003).

In referencing the results of the Oakland County Fire Training Survey, the Birmingham Fire Department line officers ranked lowest among the nine career based communities. "We train our firefighters to highest standards, which prepares them to be officers. The need for

additional training is not necessary for most officers” (D. Edginton, personal communication, May 22, 2003).

The training received by a line officer is in compliance with the educational requirement in the labor agreement. The Birmingham Fire Department references enhancement or additional or training received by all their personnel. A review of the last ten years of annual reports indicated that only one training session was attended by an officer. According to Chief Edginton, no training funding was used by an officer during his regime.

In response to questions relating to his preparation for a staff position, Chief Edginton stated, “...the biggest challenge was City Hall. All their rules and paperwork. It would have been nice to have a crystal ball, but nothing can prepare you. You just have to live it” (personal communication, May 22, 2003). Chief’s Edginton crystal ball could have given him insight to role of the fire chief. He believed his position to be that of a leader, but most of his time was spent as a manager and administrator. This was a role he never became accustomed to and caused the greatest conflict between the City’s administrators and the fire department. This conflict was consistent throughout his five years as fire chief, but he believes it’s just the “nature of the beast.”

For many years, Leadership has been recognized as a necessary competency, within the fire service. Leadership development does not happen overnight or through good fortune. The literary review indicated that leadership development is needed within every organization and should be individualized. It needs to be tailored to support the organizational culture. Orange County Fire Department designed a formal Leadership Institute to address their needs in this area.

Leadership development was present in each of the succession planning programs operating within the five public safety departments. The education and development is achieved through outside formal educational institutions. Little internal development is done.

The only weakness mentioned by each organization was related to leadership and team building.

The trait predominately studied, in developing leaders within fire service organizations, has been leadership. In recent years, the literature has taken a more business approach to addressing the KSA's needed to be proficient at the chief level. Previously, professional experiences that corresponded with the role and responsibility of the chief position were all that was required. "Frequently those promoted to chief officer positions have extensive technical skills, but lack human or conceptual skills" (Fleming, 2002, p. 40). The current literatures focus in on a combination of academic knowledge and professional experience. "The importance of combining an appropriate knowledge and skills set based on education and experience can't be overstated" (Fleming, 2002, p. 40). Academic education is needed to develop the skills involved to comprehend the big picture and understand the organization and the environment in which it operates. This belief is echoed throughout the requirements established by The Commission on Chief Fire Officer Designation (CFOD, 2003).

Birmingham's Assistant City Manager and Personnel Director Dan Schulte was asked to explain the skills, knowledge, and abilities that would be required for the next fire chief and an explanation for his beliefs.

It has been my experience that fire officers are prolific leaders, long before they become chief. They are not timid nor are they lacking self confidence...What I do find is that they are lacking the administrative skills and experience necessary. They do not understand and are sometimes reluctant to develop the management skills necessary to manage the fire department, and fully interact with all other city departments...I have seen the lack of administrative skills neutralize their strong leadership qualities, because the rules of the game have changed and they don't understand the rules...Every other department head has the necessary administrative skills prior to taking the position. We have to train them to be leaders, not just managers. The opposite is very evident in the fire

department...I would like to find an experienced fire officer that has proven administrative skills...a bachelor degree in something other than fire science carries a lot of weight with me. A degree in fire science is nothing more than technical training in a formal setting. What is needed is professional education and preparation that a business degree will give you...A minimum of a bachelor degree is required for every other department head. It provides an understanding of the concepts and role of an administrator... A department head should not require a extensive training to get them up to speed, but that has been the case in the fire department...The largest concern is the reluctance I face in attempting to get them up to speed (personal communication, May 22, 2003).

How will the Birmingham Fire Department Implement a Succession Plan?

The literature indicated that the implementation of any plan should be designed around the organizational culture and the organization's mission statement. The Birmingham Fire department has an established mission statement that can be used to support the implementation of a new program of this type.

The literature indicated two basic methods for implementing a program of this nature. The first was an all inclusive method. The Minneapolis Fire Department used this method. The program's foundation is openness. There are no secrets to success in this program. Every employee has availability to the program, as it relates to their current level. Information about future advancement within the program is readily available to all employees. The formal educational requirements and KSA' necessary to advance to the next step within the organization are clearly defined and available to all interested personnel. The organization supported all interested employees in achieving the formal educational requirements. No door was closed to qualified personnel (Forte, 2003).

The second method utilized was the target group. This method was used in the selection of participants in the Orange County Fire Department Leadership Institute. The

literature indicated that private industry frequently uses this method. The design of this method is to select candidates to participate in the program. These candidates can be from those that have voiced an interest or can be chosen by management from employees that demonstrated potential for growth within the organization. Using either method, management selects the participants in the program. The use of this method, while operating within a collective bargaining agreement, may require the support of the local union. Just such an agreement was achieved within the Orange County Fire Department (Martin, 2001).

Conversely, Bloomfield Township Fire Department has a collective bargaining agreement, but Fire Chief Leo Chartier has not approached the union for their support of the program currently being used within the organization. This program utilizes the target group method in selecting participants for the program.

The programs being used in the five Oakland County public safety organizations have union support in the area of formal education and is open to all employees at all levels. The method used in selecting participants for additional or advance training varies. The target group is existing officers.

“Succession Planning would help us in the fire department, but the culture is so traditional,” stated Dan Schulte, Assistant City Manager and Personnel Director for the City of Birmingham (personal communication, May 22, 2003). He believes that a formal program would greatly add to the abilities of future officers. In contrast, the traditions that encompass the fire service covet experiential learning in contrast to formal education. Experiential learning covers vast number of years. Most fire chiefs do not work long enough to develop the necessary administrative skills and are reluctant to go back to school.

What Methods will be used to Evaluate the Success of the Program?

The literature defines the evaluation process and clarifies the available techniques that can be used to measure the effectiveness of a program. There are five levels of measuring the effectiveness of a program. They are listed in the ascending order from the elementary to

complex evaluation: reaction, knowledge and skill transferred on-site behavioral change, organizational impact, and monetary return on investment (Pernick, 2002). With an increase in complexity comes increased cost associated in the evaluation process.

Frequent evaluations are needed at the beginning of a new program and these are usually at a more elementary level. An annual evaluation should be completed once the program has proven beneficial during the earlier evaluation process. The annual evaluation should increase in complexity from the early evaluation process. Monetary evaluation may be required, but are difficult to truly measure in an emergency service provider (Rothwell, 2001).

The use of job sharing or acting positions can be used to evaluate the training received. This is done for two reasons. The first is evaluating the candidate's abilities while actually filling the position. The second reason, working the position allows the candidate to experience the role from a day to day perspective. Ronald Coleman (2001) and other authors have stated that the lack of exposure to total role of a fire administrator has greatly contributed to the short coming experienced by many recently promoted, as well as, some senior staff officers. The Orange County program assigned their graduates to management roles in committees or programs as an evaluation tool (Martin, 2001).

A method used in the private sector is to establish a control group that has not participated in the program. This group's performance is compared to a group that has received the training, when given identical or similar assignments. The assignments reflect the training received in the program and are directly organizational specific.

The interviews performed, relating to the survey responses, indicated that no form of formal evaluation has been performed for any formal or informal established leadership development or succession planning program. Each agency stated that a review of post-training administrative work performance was measured as apart of the employee's annual review, but the work was not compared to prior work.

DISCUSSION

The Birmingham Fire Department has no formal or informal process to develop leadership potential from within their personnel. The research indicates they allocate most of the available resources to development of the technical aspects of the job. The training budget is focused at developing the technical skills of their fire fighters, while almost completely ignoring the officers. In the interview with Fire Chief David Edginton, he believed that experience was the best and proper teacher, while admitting short falls in his KSA's to perform the job of fire chief. Chief Edginton's beliefs mirror the focus of the fire service literature of the 1970's, and early 1980's, but fall far short of the expectations expressed in recent literature.

After a review of the literature, the concept of a formal organizational program to develop and prepare staff officer replacement was only new to this researcher. The literature clarified leadership development and succession planning. Leadership development is a necessary component of succession planning. They are not the same, but both are necessary for successful development of organizational leaders.

The understanding of leadership development is not new to the fire service, but the method of formally training and nurturing this process is not common throughout Oakland County, Michigan. The tradition in the fire service is to advance those that exemplify leadership to our next organizational leaders. The experiential learning that dominates the fire service has its focus on technical skills that are necessary to save lives. These skills are refined with the knowledge to coordinate team efforts on incidents and culminate with the ability to lead personnel into hazardous condition. This is a current example of the experiential learning process in the fire service.

Leadership is organizationally unique. There will be negative leaders within every organization. For this reason organizational leadership programs should embrace the cultural character of the organization. Failure to define leadership within an organization leads to confusion, ambiguity and, eventually, an acceptance of mediocre leaders (Cheloha, 2001).

Leadership, in itself, does not match the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to administrate today's fire organization. Following the experiential learning process, Ronald Coleman (1988) suggested that future organizational leaders must be exposed to all aspects of the job, throughout their career. Over time, this allows them to develop and understand the administrative skills necessary for the advancing positions.

Further review of the literature and interviews indicated that organizational leaders require leadership, but this is not the only attribute necessary. What is required to truly prepare the next generation of leaders is succession planning. Succession planning is well documented in the private sector, but appears to have been only suggested in the fire service. Succession planning requires a commitment from the head administrator of a city, down through the staff positions within the fire department. Succession planning must be customized for the individual organization. Failure to address the unique characteristics of the organization will lead to short comings, which proved evident in the public safety organization succession planning programs throughout Oakland County, Michigan.

The need for commitment to a succession plan is evident in the two contrasting interviews of Fire Chief David Edginton and Assistant City Manager Dan Schulte. David Edginton expresses a view that is seen from the "trenches", while Dan Schulte has a "view from the balcony." A view from the trenches sees a few bumps in the road, while a view from the balcony sees an antiquated system in need of major repair.

In the book *Effective Succession Planning*, it lists the seven most significant stumbling blocks preventing succession planning from becoming a reality in many organizations:

- lack of management support
- corporate politics
- quick fix attitudes
- low visibility or perceived need

- the rapid pace of organizational change
- too much paperwork and too many meetings

(Rothwell, 2001).

Many of these same stumbling blocks have appeared in the two interviews with the Fire Chief and the Assistant City Manager. It appears the top management sees the need for a succession planning program, but the primary stumbling blocks are the perceived need of such a program from the fire department administration and the rapid pace of organizational change.

The longevity of public service leaders to carry forward ideas and concepts is impaired. Garry Briese, Executive Director of the International Fire Chief Association, stated during a public address at the National Fire Academy that the average fire chief longevity is less than three years (personal communication, April 9, 2003). "The public sector has more short-term leaders than institution builders...the importance of sustained innovation, essentially keeping change alive is an increasing challenge for public agencies" (Schall, 1997). A fire chief may perceive that he has limited time to see the project through and implement a quick fix until the next chief can carry on. This was done by Fire Chief Gary Whitner, in 1988. He believed that he started a process that would expand over time, but it did not. Formalizing the process, by making it apart of the organizational culture, is the only method to assure the growth and expansion of succession planning.

Minneapolis Fire Department was able to institutionalize their program over a four years period. They followed a succession planning format by clearly defining the positions affected and detailing the skills, knowledge, and abilities needed in each role. Then, they educated all employees to the focus and intent of the program. "There were no secrets to success shared only with the chosen few" (Forte, 2003, p.33). The program involved all interested parties, from the top to the bottom. Fire Chief Rocco S. Forte expressed the evaluation of his program this way, "the results were dramatic" (Forte, 2003, p.33).

The organizational politics are cultural and represent a challenge. The labor union must be involved from the beginning. The Minneapolis Fire Department's example, cited throughout this research, indicates that a partnership between labor and management can be achieved. It requires clear understanding of the purpose and direction of the program that must involve clearly defined objectives that are easily available to all employees.

The research indicates that a succession planning process is a massive undertaking. The City of Birmingham has indicated an interest in developing a succession planning program within its fire department. This is not a job for a single individual, but will require all interested parties to come together. The positive implications from such a program are numerous. Done properly, the department will realize a greater continuity of operations and enhanced job performance.

Winston Churchill said, "Let our advance worrying become advance thinking and planning" (Wolfe, 1996, p.1). It is critical to plan for the future. This issue will not go away, but will expand in its intensity. The responsibility for preparing the leaders of the Birmingham Fire Department is clear, therefore the following recommendations are suggested.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the use of a succession planning program would be beneficial in developing the future leaders of the Birmingham Fire Department. The formalizing of the process will enhance the organization's ability to address the anticipated leadership loss, by preparing prospective command officers and administrators with the expanded knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to better serve the department and the community.

The formalizing of a succession planning program requires support from all levels within the City of Birmingham. To achieve this, it is recommended that a focus group be initiated to assist with the implementation of the program. This group could forecast and address the specifics of a comprehensive succession planning program.

The purpose and intent of the Succession planning program will be to develop and enhance prospective staff officers. To educate them to the vastly differing knowledge base needed to operate at a staff position, to expose prospective personnel to the demands of the position, by assigning tasks and leadership roles that they would not otherwise obtain. All the while, evaluating their potential and abilities to meet the new challenges as they relate to the mission of the Birmingham Fire Department.

This project should not be designed in a quick fix manor. A four-year program is suggested by the researcher. The phase-in process will have four steps, strengthening the foundation, environmental scanning, formal education, and mentoring.

Strengthening the Foundation

The first step in any development of a common mission or culture is a true understanding of the history of the organization. The Birmingham Fire Department was founded in 1910 and hired its first career personnel in 1918. The Birmingham Fire Department has lost three of its members to the dangers associated with performing the duties of the job. Within every organization there have been individuals or events that have shaped the culture, policies, and leadership of that organization. The unwritten history of the organization should be documented and passed along to the next generation. Tradition is not necessarily the way of doing something as much as it is the why of doing something. We need to preserve our traditions, and we need to know what those traditions mean. History forgotten is history repeated.

Retired Fire Chief David Edginton explained in his interview, Birmingham firefighters are the best trained in Oakland County. The next suggestion would be to continue the same level of expectation by training the line officers. The line officer should be certified at the Michigan Fire Officer I & II curriculum, which is compliant with the National Fire Protection Association Standard 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualification 1997 Edition*. This would strengthen the foundation by building command and leadership skills.

Environmental Scanning

The initial step should be to introduce potential command officers to the other city administration groups. No City organization survives in a vacuum. The first step in positive interaction is understanding. Potential candidates should be temporarily assigned to City department heads. This will allow for a clearer understanding of the “how’s and why’s” when interacting with each organization, in the future. This will also provide each department with a better understanding of the interactive role the fire service plays with their organization. Clear understanding opens communication lines, which in a local disaster will enhance the performance of all organization to react to the immediate needs of the community.

Formal Education

The development of administrative skills should be embraced and encouraged. The most recognized method of expanding administrative KSA’s is completion of a bachelor’s degree in administration. A college education will instruct a student in the methods and concepts that will be universal within the managerial environment. These programs are designed to provide a “professional education and preparation that a business degree will give you” (D. Schulte, personnel communication, May 22, 2003).

Completion of a formal administrative degree will serve more than one function. Within the culture of the fire service, an individual’s personal reputation provides the respect and recognition needed to succeed. Within the City administrative environment the degree you hold out weighs any other credential an individual may have. Currently, all department heads within the City hold a minimum of a bachelor’s degree, with exception of fire chief.

Mentoring

The final phase of a comprehensive succession planning process should include a formal mentoring of all line officers. This process should begin at the first line officer, the lieutenant. Lieutenants would be mentored by Captains, and Captains would be mentored by Assistant Fire Chiefs and up the line of succession.

The focus of the mentoring process is to evaluate the knowledge and skills learned during the first three phases of the program, while enhancing their abilities. The evaluation would measure the effectiveness of the previous training and the individual's ability to apply the knowledge gained through staff level assignments and tasks.

The most obvious aspect of mentoring under the guidance of a senior officer is to allow the junior officer to command incidents and supervisory situations to gain the necessary experience. Examples of the situation range from multiple alarms incidents, representing the organization at a community event, administrative duties, and grievance or disciplinary situations. This is all done under the watchful eye of the senior officer, which allows for immediate feedback and background surrounding the possible anticipated or unanticipated outcomes of any decision.

Every organization has those who desire to lead, but not manage. There are also those aspiring to become a staff officer, with the ability to lead the organization. Both of these groups should be included in the succession planning program. It is recognized that not all those who aspire to an administrative role will reach it. But strong, supportive leaders at all levels do enhance the organization's ability to be flexible, creative, and enthusiastic.

The research has laid the groundwork for the implementation of a program to develop the future leadership of the Birmingham Fire Department.

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APPENDIX A
SURVEY

Fire Chief: _____ Fire Organization: _____

I am asking for your help in a research project I am writing for the National Fire Academy's Executive Officer Program. Please read and complete this survey. If the survey was mailed to you, place it in the enclosed envelope and mail. I appreciate your assistance.

SURVEY

The survey questions are directed at succession planning and/or leadership development programs for the chief officer positions within your organization. Specifically, Fire Marshal, Assistant Fire Chief and Fire Chief. Please answer the following questions:

- (1) Does your organization have a written or formal succession plan or executive development program for preparing future staff officers?

YES

NO

- (2) If yes to question 1, which employees is the plan available too?

ALL EMPLOYEES

ALL LINE OFFICERS

SENIOR LINE OFFICERS

- (3) If no, does there exist an informal success plan or leadership development program that is used to "groom" future leaders of the organization?

YES

NO

Thank you for your time!

APPENDIX B
PHONE INTERVIEW

Phone Interview

FOLLOW UP SURVEY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- (1) Is the succession plan in written form?
- (2) What are the key components of the program: education, experience, KSA's?
- (3) How is it managed and administered?
- (4) Who participates in the program and how are they selected?
- (5) How are the program and its participants evaluated?
- (6) Was the program used in your advancement?
- (7) In your opinion, is the program effective?