

DEVELOPING THE LEADERS OF TOMORROW

Developing the Leaders of Tomorrow

for the

Bristol Fire Department

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Certification Statement

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

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Abstract

The Bristol Fire Department is a small combination department located in central New Hampshire. The department responds to approximately 900 calls for service per year out of one fire station. The department has a training program in place that's primary focus is on the technical skills needed for department operation. A deficiency that has been identified in the department's current training program is the lack of professional development for the members of the department. The department does not have a plan in place to address the future leadership needs of the department. The purpose of this paper was to develop a professional development guide for the members of the department. This guide would be used to map out career objectives and goals for the department members. An action method of research was used to collect information via a literature review, surveys, and a meeting of the members of the department. The results revealed that this is an adaptive challenge for the department. A complete change in the culture and attitude of the department is required so that the members of the department understand that professional development is part of an overall training process for the department. The results revealed that there is limited professional development courses offered through the New Hampshire Fire Academy. Recommendations include a complete re-evaluation of the current training program and incorporation of the Professional Development Guide developed from this research, review and rewrite the department job descriptions to include requirements for professional development, and to require department members to seek outside professional development such as attendance to the National Fire Academy, college level classes, or non-fire service related development programs.

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Introduction

The future of the fire service is at this moment in the hands of the new recruit firefighter that has just started his/her fire service journey. This new recruit does not know where his/her fire service career is going to take them. Typically, they are just worried about the next classroom or practical exam. The development of these new firefighters into the future leaders of the fire service is the responsibility of the current leaders in the fire service. If the current leaders in the fire service do not take the time to guide these new recruits, who will? We cannot take for granted that the future of the fire service is predetermined or leave the future of the fire service to chance. Current fire service leaders must help guide the careers and map out the future of the new firefighter. We must take the time to motivate, mentor, and educate these future leaders, we cannot leave them to find their own way. But, do we have the ability to develop future fire service leaders or are the future fire service leaders already predetermined. Bennis and Nanus (1985) write:

Leadership skills were once thought a matter of birth. Leaders were born, not made, summoned to their calling through some unfathomable process. This might be called the 'Great Man' theory of leadership. It saw power as being vested in a very limited number of people whose inheritance and destiny made them leaders. Those of the right breed could lead: all others must be led. Either you had it or you didn't. No amount of learning or yearning could change your fate. (p. 5)

What makes a person a leader; is it the collar brass that they wear, or the position that they hold? The current leaders in the fire service did not begin their careers as fire chiefs and leaders of the organization; they had to learn the skills to become great leaders. Somewhere in the career of the current leaders in the fire service they were motivated, mentored and educated to fill the roles they currently hold. It is more important now, than ever before, that we begin developing the future leaders of the fire service. "Leadership can be learned" (van de Broeck, 1989, p. 1). Every person in a position to exercise leadership within their organization has all started at the same place. So how did the current leaders in the fire service get to their positions? They all had to have a plan or career road map some sort of idea where they wanted their career to go. Sendelbach (2011) writes, "Establish a road map of professional development that provides a balanced focus on higher education and career diversity" (p. 12). Are we doing a good enough job in assisting with the career development of the future leaders? Nichols (2008) states, "The American fire service has done a marginal job in preparing its young leaders to manage the demands that come with making relatively benign personnel decisions, much less coping with major catastrophes" (p. 38).

The problem is that the Bristol Fire Department does not have a program in place to develop the future leadership of the department. The Bristol Fire Department has a training program that has its primary focus on the technical aspects of the fire service. Most of the members of the department believe that the training program is sufficient for the technical operation of the department. The adaptive challenge is to change the culture of the department so that they will be able to understand that having a professional development program will enhance the overall performance of the department. Without a program to develop the members professionally, they will never fully reach their potential and neither will the department.

The purpose of this applied research paper is to develop a professional development program that would be used to provide the guidance needed to develop the future leadership for the Bristol Fire Department.

The research method to be used will be action. The research questions are a) what are the requirements of a professional development program, b) what types of professional development programs are used in the fire service both locally and nationally, c) what are the advantages for the department in having a professional development program, d) what would prevent the department from having a professional development program.

Background and Significance

Training and education has always been the cornerstone of the American fire service. All departments have some kind of training program in place to teach firefighting skills to its members. We pride ourselves on the amount of certifications we achieve and constantly strive to become better at our jobs. Departments train on everything from fighting fires, hazardous materials, emergency medical responses, to swift water rescue skills, just to name a few. The fire service has continually taken on more roles to serve the public and protect them from hazards. However, there is one glaring part of the training process that is lacking and that is in the education and training of personnel in the art of leadership. Leaders are not born into their roles. Leadership is a skill that is acquired through education and training. Goldbach (1995) writes:

Leadership is both a science and an art. Leadership is a science because it is a learnable, teachable body of knowledge. Leadership is an art because this body of knowledge has to be applied to “real life” with skill and deftness. (p. 229)

As departments execute their training programs, primarily focusing on the technical aspects of the profession, most times they do not realize how important the lack of professional

development training is for the career growth of their personnel. Departments have to be able to look at their training system from a different perspective. Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009) state it best when they wrote, “We use the metaphor of ‘getting on the balcony’ above the ‘dance floor’ to depict what it means to gain the distanced perspective you need to see what is really happening” (p. 7). In the case of professional development, departments have to look at their overall training program and identify the actual needs of the personnel of the department.

The Bristol Fire Department is no different than any other small combination fire department in the United States. The department has a training program in place that solely focuses on the technical skill sets needed for the job. The current training program leaves a gap by not providing opportunities for professional growth of its members. There is a lack of effective leadership skills within the department; this was evident by the hiring of a fire chief from the outside of the organization. Without an effective professional development plan, no member of the department will be prepared to take over the leadership of the department when the opportunity is presented. The department has promoted a member to the rank of Captain recently, but the evaluation process was based mainly on operation and technical merits (Bristol Fire Department, 2011). This is of great concern to the administration of the department; we are not doing an effective job in the professional development of our members. Without developing our personnel in technical, personnel management, wellness, higher education, and leadership, we are not permitting the department to reach its full potential. Because we are not developing our members professionally, they are not fully realizing their full potential. If our membership is not reaching their full potential, then the community quite possibly is not receiving the best service that we can provide.

The Town of Bristol is located in central New Hampshire within Grafton County. The town has 17 square miles of land area and five square miles of inland water on the Newfound Lake. According to Sperling's BestPlaces (2011), the total population is 5,422 people, this is an 8.7% growth since 2000. The town has a large summer time population growth due to homes and cottages around Newfound Lake. Summer time population grows to approximately 8,000 people during the week with more on the weekend. The town has long been the economic and commercial hub for the Newfound Lake region. Many of the businesses are located in a compact downtown area. The town has two banks, a major automobile part manufacturing plant, three schools, and several other businesses.

The Town of Bristol is protected by a combination fire department, with six full time shift personnel and a full time chief. The department also has a paid-on-call staff of 25 personnel. The training levels of the full time staff include two firefighter paramedics, and the remaining four personnel are firefighter emergency medical technician intermediates. The fire chief is also an emergency medical technician intermediate. Most of the paid-on-call staff is either emergency medical technician basics or first responders. All full-time employees are certified to the New Hampshire Firefighter 2 level. Currently, 90% of the call staff is a minimum of New Hampshire Firefighter Level 1 certification. The department runs two advanced life support ambulances that service the Town of Bristol and three other contracted communities. The department's equipment also includes a 1500 gallon per minute engine, a 2500 gallon tanker with a 1250 gallon per minute pump, a 75' quint with a 2000 gallon per minute pump, a light duty rescue truck, a 14' zodiac boat, a 22' boat, a forestry truck, a command vehicle and an emergency management trailer. The department operates within the Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid radio and

dispatching systems along with 37 other agencies. The department averages 900 calls for service per year and has an operating budget of \$875,000 for calendar year 2011.

The fire department is a member of the Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid system. The area covered by the mutual aid system is approximately 1,500 square miles and all the departments within that area are available for mutual aid use, if needed. According to Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid Association website (2011), the resources that are available include 92 engines, 11 ladders, 22 rescue units, 21 forestry units, 17 utilities, 15 tankers, four towers, 39 ambulances, and 25 fire boats. The mutual aid system also has a training division that delivers training to the member departments. This training consists of basic firefighting, technical rescue classes, and driver operator programs. The training division does not offer any leadership or management courses at this time.

National Fire Academy R125 Executive Leadership course is the final class of the Executive Fire Officer Program. This course studies the use of adaptive leadership principles in solving adaptive challenges within an organization by using the 2x2 Diagnosis Framework. The framework consists of diagnosis of the organization/system, action of the organization/system, diagnosis of self, and action of self. This research will provide an adaptive leadership solution to a problem that exists within the training culture of the Bristol Fire Department.

This paper meets the United States Fire Administration Operational Objective of responding appropriately in a timely manner to emerging issues. The development of the future leaders of the Bristol Fire Department is an emerging issue.

Literature Review

The fire service is an emergency response agency, reacting to situations or calls for service. Training for incidents or events takes place on a daily basis. Most of the training is

related to the types of calls we anticipate going on or have already encountered. Sometimes the training is spurred by a current trend in the fire service or a mandate. An example of mandated training is the training in the National Incident Management System. Almost all the training is technical or hands on training. Technical training addresses the response oriented nature of the fire service. But is technical training enough to professionally develop the members of an organization? The fire service strives to be recognized as a professional organization. We consider ourselves professionals, but are we really? Poulin (2009) writes:

Perhaps the question isn't whether fire service members are professionals, but rather if others view the fire service as such. If government officials or the general public don't think so, the fire service will never be fully integrated into the decision-making levels of government. (p. 42)

How do we become fire service professionals? The answer is quite simple, education and professional standards. Education is what sets the professional labor force such as lawyers, doctors, and engineers apart from the trade group such as carpenters, barbers, electricians, and plumbers. Do not be confused with training and education, they are not the same. "Training is not education" (Poulin, 2009, p. 42). When a firefighter desires to advance to a position of authority or leadership, the most common method of preparing is to study technical books on the required subjects. Usually there is a list of requirements either through a job description or a job posting. This person studies and if they are lucky enough they are promoted, and magically they have now become the leader of the group instead of a follower. Does the pinning on of collar brass come with the secret code to becoming a leader? Dale (2001) writes, "The days of promoting our firefighters to Company Officers, handing them a badge and waving the 'Officer wand' over their heads are gone" (p. 1). We must now development our members more

completely to prepare them for the future challenges that they will face. The leaders of the fire service in the future will need the skills of a business manager to survive. It is no longer about pulling hose and putting the wet stuff on the red stuff. It is now about budgets, personnel management, human resources, and all types of issues that were mainly thought of not being part of the fire service. Gates (2003) says:

The EFO (Executive Fire Officer) of today's fire service is required to use business acumen far more than fireground command skills, spending most of the time in nonfirefighting activities, but the bulk of the training received as he climbed up the ladder was geared to emergency response. (p. 104)

At this very moment within our organizations, the next chief of the department is there. But will he be ready when the time comes? That is the current leadership's responsibility to make him ready. "There are readers, future chiefs of department, who are deciding how they're going to be ready when their time comes" (Coleman, 2000, p. 115). Are we doing a successful job in preparing these people? Some believe that our training and education practices are not getting the job done. Coleman (2000) writes:

Granted, some agencies have created what are called "career development guides," which are very useful in providing some structure to the preparation process. Unfortunately, they're often myopic and oriented toward past practices instead of presenting new expectations to prepare the chief officer. (p. 116)

How does the fire service receive the creditability of being recognized as a professional profession if we are still using antiquated systems in preparing our future leaders? Technical training and formal education need to be blended together to really develop personnel to their full capacity. But, how is this accomplished? "It requires a change in the culture within the Fire

and Rescue Service, so that leadership development and people management is seen as a vital part of overall progression” (Hopgood, 2008, p. 36).

The International Association of Fire Chiefs Officer Development Handbook (2003) states, “Professional development is the planned, progressive life-long process of education, training, self-development and experience” (p.4). These four elements make up the basis for a professional development program. It also identifies that it is a life-long process.

The first element to examine is education. The fire service in the past has not really embraced the need for education in its hiring practices. Many departments still only require a GED or high school diploma for new hires. Does this requirement provide a good foundation for the leaders of the future fire service? Poulin (2009) writes:

To join, most fire departments require applicants be at least 18 years old and have a high-school education or GED, a valid driver’s license, good physical health and no felony convictions. While these requirements have served the fire service well in the past, it may be time to set the bar higher. (p. 46)

Departments are now starting to recognize that having higher education requirements increases the pool of higher caliber employees. Poulin (2009) continues, “Fire departments should consider some college-level education, if only to show that the applicant is prepared to learn at higher levels in the future” (p. 46). Having a degree does not mean that the member will be the future leader but it does show the person has the discipline to complete a task such as obtaining a degree. The Wingspread V conference (2006) identified the following statement of national significance for the fire service:

Universal acceptance and use of a credentialing system will help in professional development, but the availability of degree programs in fire science and fire department

management are necessary to reach the level of competence needed for firefighters and fire executives. Each state should have at least one two-year degree program available in the community college system, to provide basic knowledge and skills. Bachelor degree programs should also be available to firefighters who wish to pursue them, at reasonable cost. (p. 8)

Maybe it is time to raise the bar. If the entry level positions were filled by people with a minimum of an associate's degree, then the member may be better prepared for future leadership roles within the organization.

The second element to examine is training. Do not confuse training with education. Sendelbach (2011) writes, "We need to challenge them to improve their performance by developing a training program that demands continued improvement in their mental and psychical abilities" (p. 12). Training refers to the basic skill sets such as Firefighter 1, Firefighter 2, Driver/Operator, and other technical oriented skills. These would include specialties such as hazmat, rope rescue, and water rescue training. This type of training has a cognitive element but is mainly hands on training to teach a skill or evolution. The baseline standards for these skill sets have been established by the National Fire Protection Agency. The International Association of Fire Chiefs (2003) states, "...understand that professional development is not solely about certifications and degrees" (p. 7). Having many degrees and training certificates does not automatically make that person a professional. The learning experience is extremely important in the education and training process. Training in the basic core competencies of firefighting and emergency medical services will always be required and are truly the basis for all that we do.

The third element is experience; sometimes the best education is by just doing it. There is no replacement for years on the job to gain insight to what the job is about. However, one of the tools that the fire service could use to assist with the third element of experience is mentoring. The fire service has been slow in embracing the use of mentoring. Gates (2003) writes, “Mentoring, the process by which organizational knowledge and the experiences of senior executives are transferred to others in the organization, is a valuable learning mechanism widely employed in the private sector but is almost nonexistent in the fire service” (p. 104). A form of mentoring does take place in the fire station mainly based on the technical aspects of the job. It could be in the form of a senior firefighter telling stories about the past or taking a new member under their wing. The issue with informal mentoring is that the good habits will be taught along with the bad ones. Gates (2003) continues:

So why hasn't mentoring taken hold long ago? There are several valid reasons for this.

The fire service has been viewed by many as a horse of a different color. It has taken quite a while for us to get the recognition from the outside world, reshape our own paradigm, and view ourselves as a business entity, with professional management teams, fantastic employee teams, and customers whom we serve with pride. (p.104)

You don't have to be in a position of authority to be a mentor or leader. Mentoring can take place at all levels within an organization. If you are in a position to influence someone, then you are a potential mentor for that person. Tracy (2004) writes:

Anyone who influences others, motivating them to action or influencing their thinking or decision making, is a leader. It is not a function of position; it is a role. Leaders fit every level in the chain of command. Even at the lowest level, you are a leader of leaders. (p. 124)

Mentoring alone will not completely provide for the development of the future leaders within a department but, used with education and training, it could lay a solid foundation. The use of mentoring leads into the fourth element and that is self-development.

Self-development is reflecting on who you are. The International Association of Fire Chiefs (2003) writes, "It deals with your awareness, personal attributes and attitudes, which are individually developed and refined" (p. 8). One method of self-development is by creating a life plan to map out your future. Truly looking at yourself and really reflecting on who you are and where you would like to be can be a real eye opening experience. In the Executive Leadership (2011) course of the Executive Fire Officer Program, one of the course assignments is a Personal Analysis and Development Plan. This assignment is very powerful in identifying one's self and in helping you develop a road map not only for your professional career but also in your personal life. Culp (2008) writes, "A career map should be viewed as a recipe for development" (p. 41). Another useful tool is to take a personality profile test to see what type of personality you have. This is a good self-development tool because it helps you to better understand why you do the things that you do. It also helps you in identifying your default responses and how you will react in certain situations. It is important to understand yourself before you can understand other people.

Taking these four elements and incorporating them into a viable program is a complex situation. The Houston Fire Department has achieved a good balance between the four elements in its development program. The approach the Houston Fire Department has taken is to break down the professional development into two divisions. The two divisions that they have identified are workforce development and career development. "The goal of the Workforce Development Program is to enhance the department's overall operations by ensuring complete

Fire and EMS training of qualified entry-level personnel” (HFD Professional Development, 2011, p. 1). The career development division is responsible for the ongoing education of the members of the department. This is done by encouraging enrollment in a college level degree program, attendance to the National Fire Academy, and by supporting the continuing education needs of the members of the department.

Another useful tool in career development is the use of an Individual Development Plan (IDP). “The IDP is a personal action plan, jointly agreed to by you and your supervisor, that identifies your short and long-term career goals” (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2011, p. 1). This tool allows the employee to map out their goals for the future of their career. The supervisor can then assist the employee in achieving those goals. It is a win-win for both the employee and the organization. By promoting career growth in the individual, the overall performance of the organization will increase. The IDP is also useful in giving the employee a framework to document training and education that has already been obtained. By documenting this training and education, it permits the supervisor to examine where the employee needs additional training or education to achieve the desired goal.

The purpose of the IDP is twofold. First, it ensures that the employee maintains the current level of job proficiency through continued training and developmental activities.

Secondly, the employee charts a career path by identifying new knowledge, skills and abilities to pursue, as well as learning activities needed to reach the established goals.

(Department of Defense, 2011, p.1)

If the members of your organization do not have a plan or roadmap for their career, then they could become disgruntled and may leave your organization for one that can allow them to achieve their goals. Having a plan will allow the members of any organization to meet their

professional goals. Having a written well thought out plan will serve as a motivational tool to have the members strive for excellence. “I don’t know a single firefighter who seeks to achieve mediocrity or chooses to join an organization that prides itself on being second-best” (Sendelbach, 2011, p. 12).

Procedures

Information for this applied research project began with a literature review of books, periodicals, and past applied research projects at the National Fire Academy Learning Resource Center. Literature reviews were conducted of the Bristol Fire Department Training Program, New Hampshire Fire Academy, the Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid Training Program, the National Fire Protection Agency firefighter and fire officer standards, New Hampshire firefighter and fire officer requirements, and finally, the Lakes Region Community College Fire Science Program requirements.

The initial research began with the development of a survey that was distributed to Executive Fire Officer Graduates and students. The distribution list was obtained from National Society of Executive Fire Officers database. The survey was developed and distributed using the web based survey system www.surveymonkey.com. The nationwide survey was used to obtain a baseline at a national level of the use of Professional Development Programs. The survey was published on August 15, 2011 and the survey was closed on September 16, 2011 and received 143 responses. The survey consisted of the following questions (a) what type of department, (b) how many members in your department, (c) does your department have a professional development program, (d) please check all areas that are included in your professional development program; formal education, fitness/wellness, technical training classes, conferences, NFA classes, state/local fire academy, other, (e) is participation in the professional development

program mandatory, (f) does your department offer tuition reimbursement for college level classes, (g) what is your department's annual training budget, (h) have you noticed an increase in overall department performance because of the professional development program, (i) have there been any roadblocks in implementing the professional development program, if so what were they. These questions were chosen for the purpose of identifying the use of professional development at the national level.

A second survey was developed and distributed to New Hampshire fire departments and the Lakes Region Fire Mutual Aid System, using www.surveymonkey.com. The distribution list used was the e-mail server lists from the New Hampshire Career Fire Chief's Association and the Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid. The survey was published on September 23, 2011 and the survey was closed on October 14, 2011 and received 46 responses. The survey consisted of the following questions (a) does your department have a professional development program, (b) if your department has a professional development program do you feel that it has had a positive impact on your department, (c) does your department offer tuition reimbursement, (d) does your department offer incentives for continuing education and professional development, (e) are you interested in developing a professional development program if you do not have one. The questions were chosen to identify the use of professional development at the state and local level.

Interviews were conducted with the full time members of the Bristol Fire Department from August 19, 2011 through September 12, 2011. The interview consisted of the following questions (a) what is your understanding of professional development, (b) do you feel the department's current training program is adequate in meeting your overall professional development needs, (c) what do you feel our current program is lacking, (d) are you interested in

any of the following: attending the NFA, attending out of town conferences, college level education, fire officer designation, executive fire officer program. These questions were chosen to get a clear understanding of the individual needs of the full time members of the department and what their perceptions of professional development were.

In Addition, review of the Town of Bristol's personnel manual, the town's tuition reimbursement program and the Bristol Fire Department budget was done and information was gathered on the area's local college course availability and costs.

Results

1. What are the requirements of a professional development program?

The research revealed that there is really no set standard or guideline for a professional development program for firefighters. The National Fire Protection Agency standard 1001 addresses firefighter professional qualifications. However, the requirements of this standard mainly address the technical aspects of the job of firefighting. There are no requirements addressed for leadership skills at the firefighter level. The National Fire Protection Agency Fire Officer standard 1021 does have some leadership requirements at all its levels. These requirements are mainly focused on human resources. The research also revealed that there are four key elements identified as being part of a professional development program as stated in The International Association of Fire Chiefs Officer Development Handbook (2003), "Professional development is the planned, progressive life-long process of education, training, self-development and experience" (p.4). Research of different professional development programs has shown that the program will need to be unique for each department and for each department member. The main core concepts that are addressed by the International Association of Fire Chiefs should be

the guiding basis for any program that is developed.

2. What types of professional development programs are used in the fire service both locally and nationally?

The national survey that was distributed revealed that nationally 82.3% of the departments that responded have a professional development program. However at the state level only 19.6% of the departments have a professional development program. The results of the survey also indicate that formal education is the most prevalent part of a professional development program with 82% of all departments having formal education as the basis for the program. The least used part of a professional development program at 39% is wellness/fitness. The survey results also indicated that tuition reimbursement is available both at the national level and the state level in a majority of the departments. Once again as from the last question there is no clear cut type of program in use. Most, if not all, programs are individual plans tailored to the individual and their career goals.

3. What are the advantages for the department in having a professional development program?

The advantage of a professional development program is that it provides for the growth of the members of the department in a well structured and thought out plan. The use of an Individual Development Plan provides a road map for a member's career and assists them in achieving their goals. With a plan clearly laid out and developed by the member and leadership, a person's career goals will be known by the individual and department leadership. This plan would provide a direction for the members overall growth in all aspects of the job from the technical skills, cognitive skills, and leadership skills that are necessary to survive in today's fire service. The results of the national survey have

revealed that 80% of the responses have seen an increase in overall performance of the department that is directly related to the professional development program. In the state survey, 20% of the responses feel the professional development program has a positive impact on their department. To qualify this statistic only 19.6% of the departments in the state have a professional development program. However, 70% of the departments are interested in developing a program.

4. What would prevent the department from having a professional development program?

The research revealed that the biggest obstacle in the department having a professional development program is the current culture in the fire service. The research revealed that the members of the department understand what a professional development program is, but really do not understand the concept of overall development. A majority of the department interviewed do not see the benefit in developing their careers in more than just the technical areas of the job. The general feeling is that there is limited room for advancement in the department; therefore there is no need for any type of professional development. The employee interviews revealed that all the members of the department feel that the current training program is not adequate in addressing the professional needs of the members; however no department member has taken any courses outside of what has been offered in the department through the current training program. All members interviewed indicated that they would be interested in attending the National Fire Academy for professional training but none have. All members were given the NFA catalog and encouraged to attend a class, to date no one has registered. It has been identified that this is truly an adaptive problem for the department.

Discussion

The Bristol Fire Department has only been a combination fire department since 2000, so not much thought has ever gone into the development of the future leadership of the department. To date there have only been two full time fire chiefs in the organization. Prior to that, the fire chief was appointed by a fire commission. So the thought of professional development was not relevant to the department leadership. The department has always had a training program, but until recently it was not well structured. The department training program is heavily into the technical functions of the job. The move towards a better rounded program is the current adaptive challenge of the department.

The national survey was distributed via www.surveymonkey.com and received 146 responses. The survey results are attached as Appendix A. The results of the national survey indicated that 82.3% of the departments that responded have a professional development program, and that 80% of the responding departments have seen a positive impact from the program. This is a very good indication that the return on the investment of personnel development is worth the cost. Another interesting statistic revealed in the national survey was that 78.4% of the departments that responded indicated that the professional development program was not mandatory. This would indicate that the members of the departments also see a benefit in having a program in place.

The local survey was distributed via www.surveymonkey.com and received 46 responses. The survey results are attached as Appendix B. The results of the local survey indicated that only 19.6% of the department that responded had a professional development program. Only 2.2% of the departments that responded found that the professional development program did not increase the overall performance in their department. I believe that the lack of a professional

development programs in the State of New Hampshire fire service is directly connected to the lack of leadership programs offered at the state level. The New Hampshire Fire Academy October 7, 2011 course schedule has 43 classes offered or available and only 1 class is a leadership/professional development course. The Lakes Region Fire Mutual Aid System also offers training programs, but according to their course catalog there is no leadership/management classes offered.

The department interview consisted of the following questions, (a) what is your understanding of professional development, (b) do you feel the department's current training program is adequate in meeting your overall development needs, (c) what do you feel our current program is lacking, (d) are you interested in any of the following: attending the NFA (non-state weekend), attending out of town conferences, college level education, fire officer designation, EFO program. All personnel interviewed answered that they knew the concept of professional development and that it was to allow career growth of the individual not only in the technical side of the job but overall development. All interviewees responded that they did not feel our current program was adequate in addressing the overall growth of the members. It was viewed as being one dimensional and only addressed technical skills. All personnel interviewed felt that the training program did not meet their needs for career growth. This is a true adaptive problem for the department. The goal of this research is to develop a professional development program that can be used to guide the members in their career growth. It is going to take a rethinking and possibly a revamping of the department's current training program. This will mean a drastic change in the focus of the department training. The new training program will have to balance technical skill training along with leadership/management training. The individual development program for the department is attached as Appendix C. This program will be used as a guide for

the members of the department. The program is going to be voluntary for all personnel, but the department administration will highly recommend that all members complete a development plan. The department is also going to review its current training program to incorporate this development guide.

Recommendations

1. The Bristol Fire Department needs to reevaluate the department's current training program and redevelop the program to incorporate the Professional Development Guide included in Appendix C.
2. Review and rewrite the department job descriptions to include requirements for professional development and continuing education.
3. Require department members to seek outside professional development such as attendance to the National Fire Academy, college level classes, or non-fire serviced related development programs.

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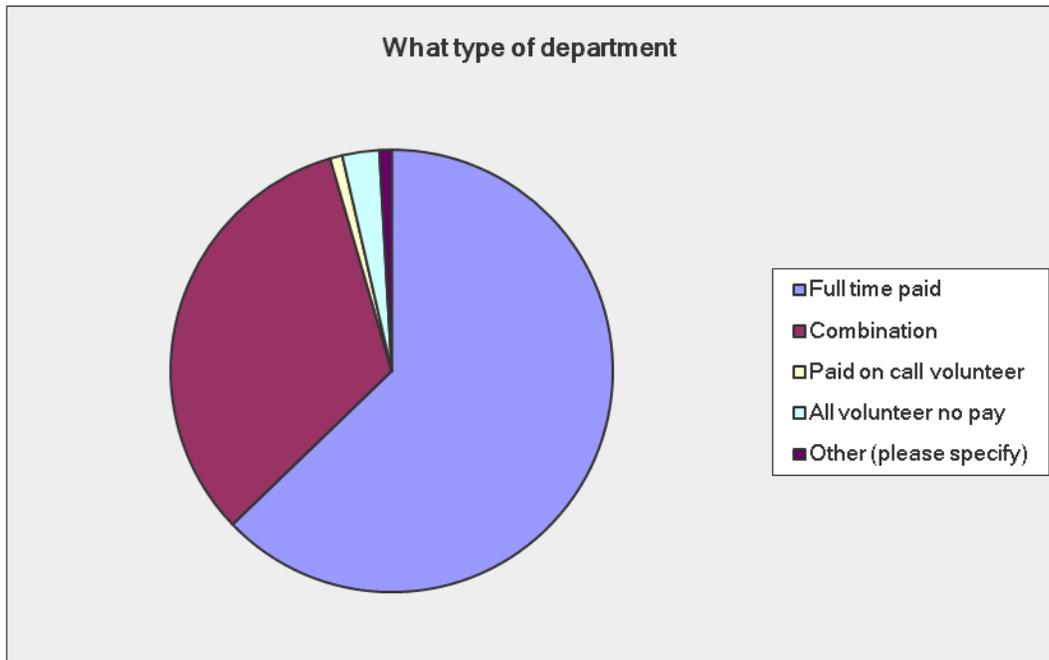
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Appendix A

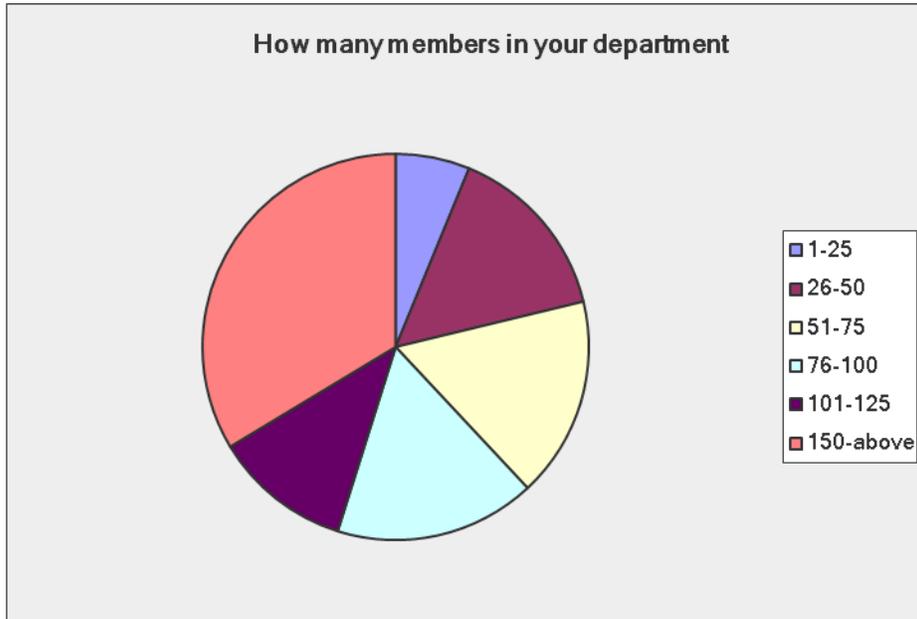
Professional Development Program

| What type of department | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Full time paid | 62.8% | 71 |
| Combination | 32.7% | 37 |
| Paid on call volunteer | 0.9% | 1 |
| All volunteer no pay | 2.7% | 3 |
| Other (please specify) | 0.9% | 1 |
| answered question | | 113 |
| skipped question | | 33 |



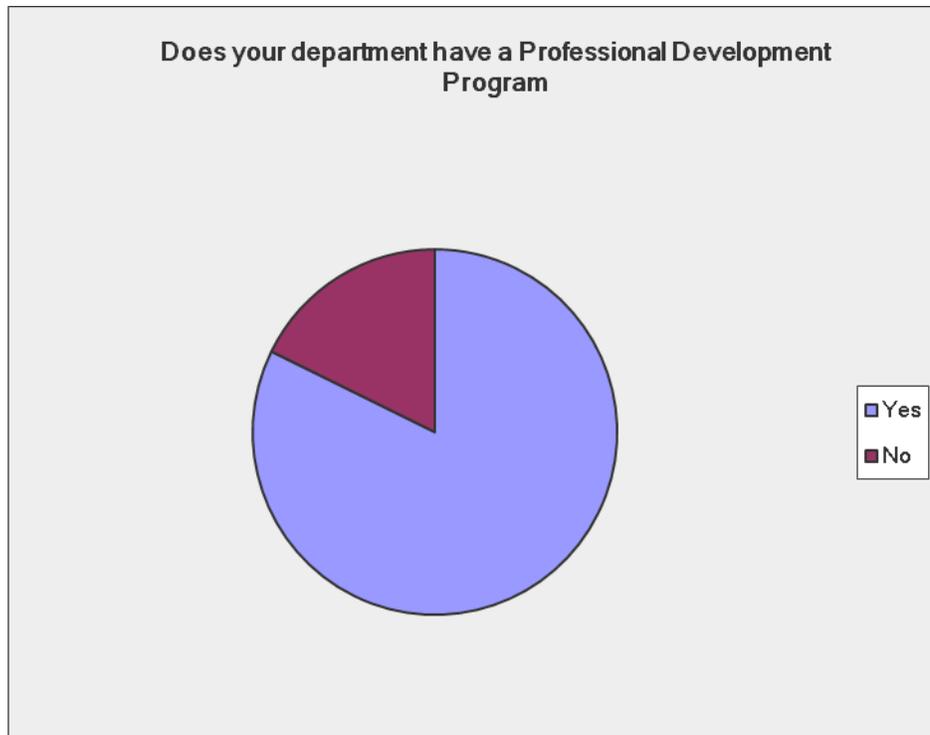
Professional Development Program

| How many members in your department | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| 1-25 | 6.2% | 7 |
| 26-50 | 15.0% | 17 |
| 51-75 | 16.8% | 19 |
| 76-100 | 16.8% | 19 |
| 101-125 | 11.5% | 13 |
| 150-above | 33.6% | 38 |
| answered question | | 113 |
| skipped question | | 33 |



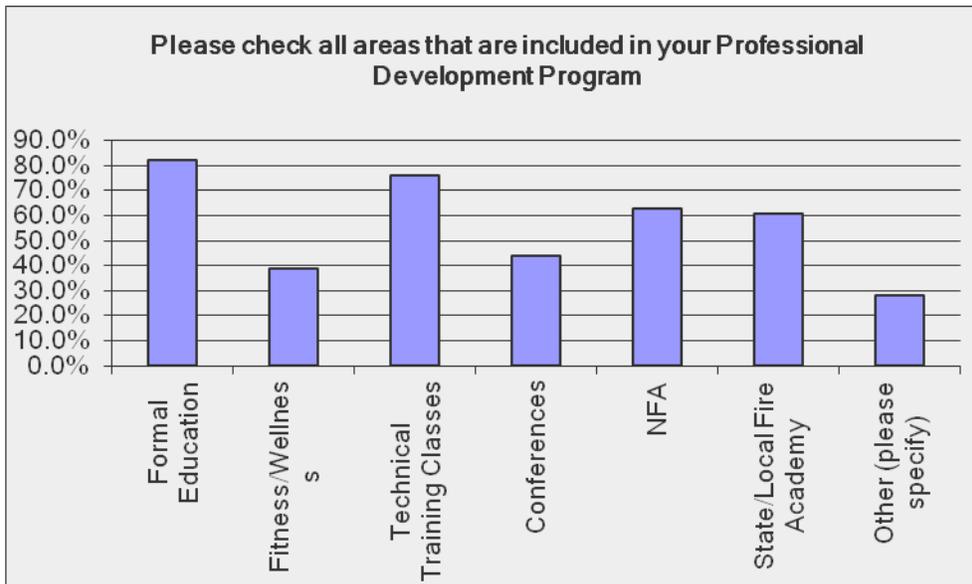
Professional Development Program

| Does your department have a Professional Development Program | | |
|--|------------------|----------------|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Yes | 82.3% | 93 |
| No | 17.7% | 20 |
| answered question | | 113 |
| skipped question | | 33 |



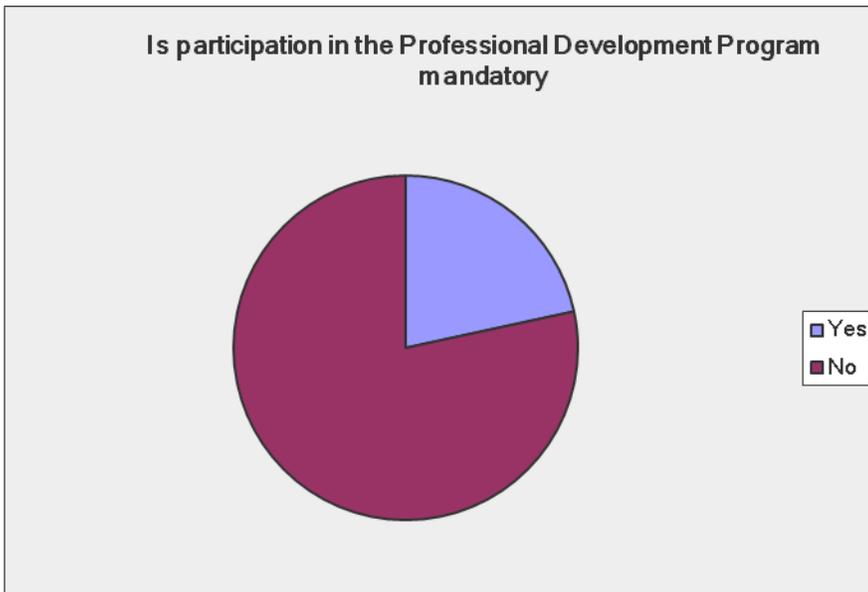
Professional Development Program

| Please check all areas that are included in your Professional Development Program | | |
|---|------------------|----------------|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Formal Education | 82.0% | 82 |
| Fitness/Wellness | 39.0% | 39 |
| Technical Training Classes | 76.0% | 76 |
| Conferences | 44.0% | 44 |
| NFA | 63.0% | 63 |
| State/Local Fire Academy | 61.0% | 61 |
| Other (please specify) | 28.0% | 28 |
| answered question | | 100 |
| skipped question | | 46 |



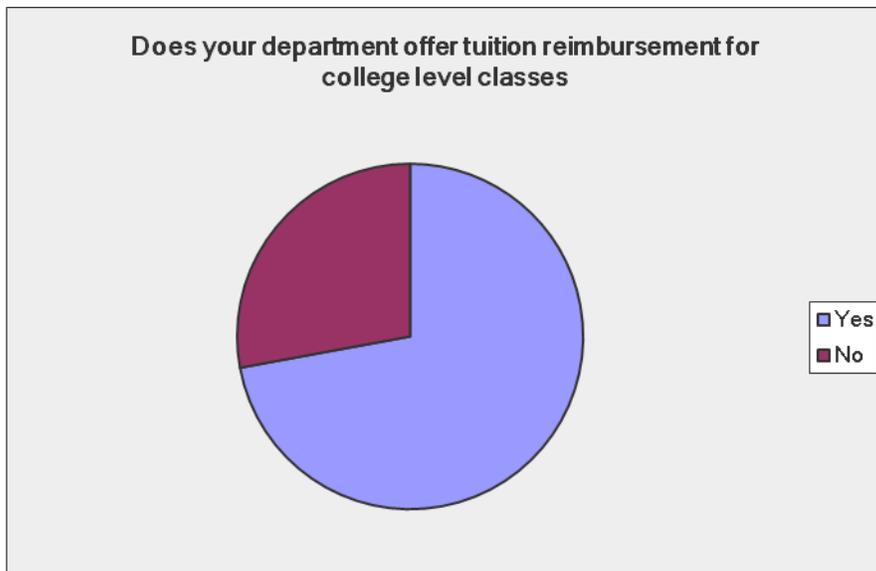
Professional Development Program

| Is participation in the Professional Development Program mandatory | | |
|--|------------------|----------------|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Yes | 21.6% | 22 |
| No | 78.4% | 80 |
| answered question | | 102 |
| skipped question | | 44 |



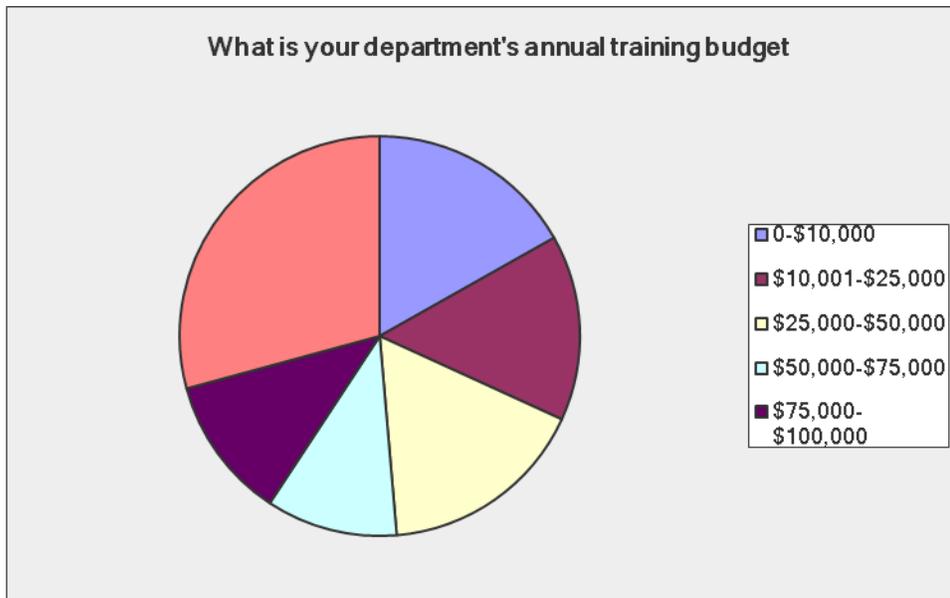
Professional Development Program

| Does your department offer tuition reimbursement for college level classes | | |
|--|------------------|----------------|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Yes | 72.1% | 80 |
| No | 27.9% | 31 |
| answered question | | 111 |
| skipped question | | 35 |



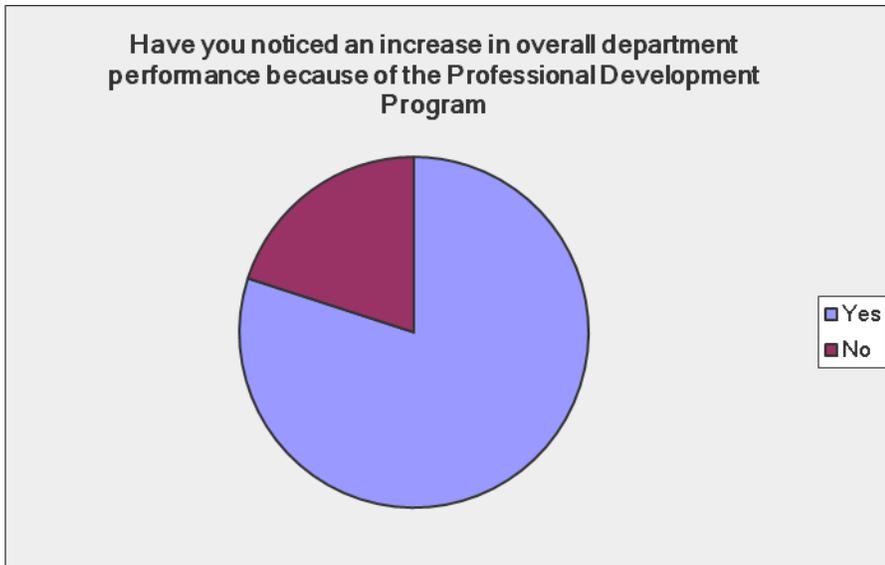
Professional Development Program

| What is your department's annual training budget | | |
|--|------------------|----------------|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| 0-\$10,000 | 16.8% | 19 |
| \$10,001-\$25,000 | 15.0% | 17 |
| \$25,000-\$50,000 | 16.8% | 19 |
| \$50,000-\$75,000 | 10.6% | 12 |
| \$75,000-\$100,000 | 11.5% | 13 |
| over \$100,000 | 29.2% | 33 |
| answered question | | 113 |
| skipped question | | 33 |



Professional Development Program

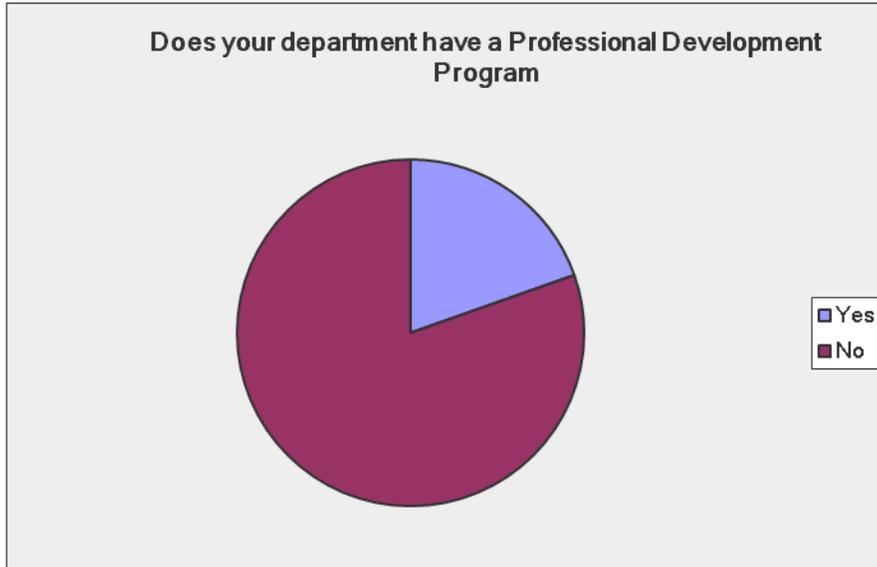
| Have you noticed an increase in overall department performance because of the Professional Development Program | | |
|--|------------------|----------------|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Yes | 80.0% | 84 |
| No | 20.0% | 21 |
| answered question | | 105 |
| skipped question | | 41 |



Appendix B

NH Professional Development

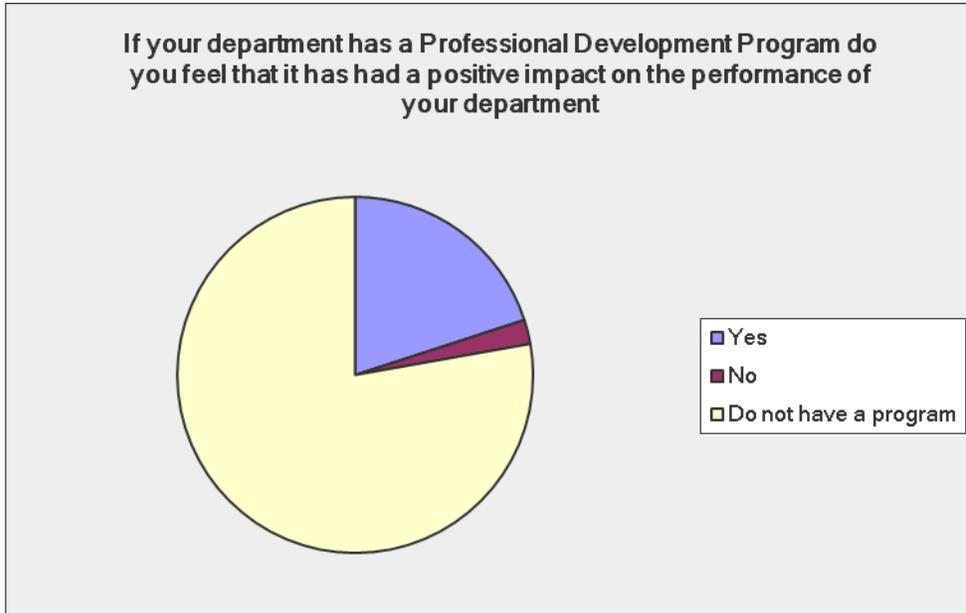
| Does your department have a Professional Development Program | | |
|--|------------------|----------------|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Yes | 19.6% | 9 |
| No | 80.4% | 37 |
| answered question | | 46 |
| skipped question | | 0 |



NH Professional Development

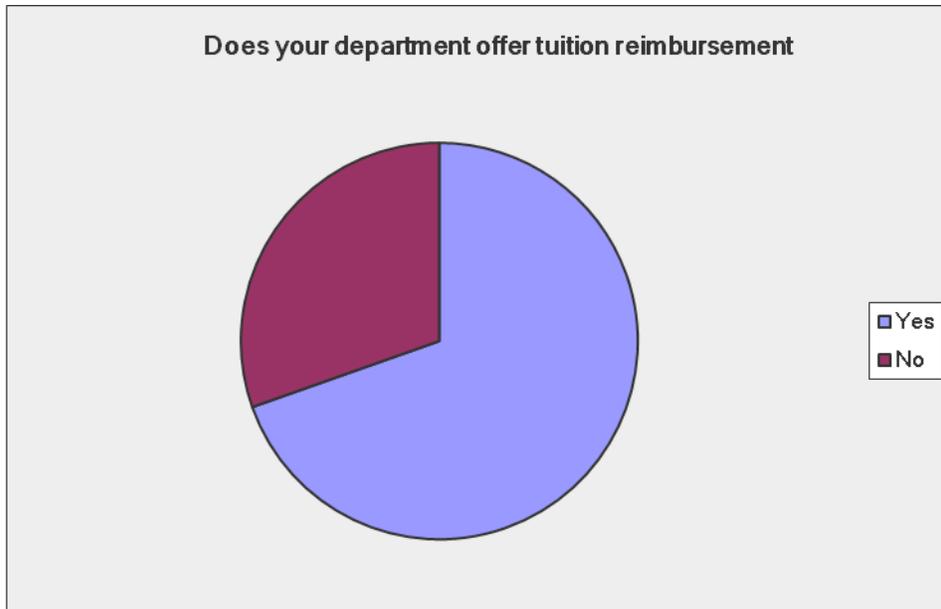
If your department has a Professional Development Program do you feel that it has had a positive impact on the performance of your department

| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
|--------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Yes | 20.0% | 9 |
| No | 2.2% | 1 |
| Do not have a program | 77.8% | 35 |
| answered question | | 45 |
| skipped question | | 1 |



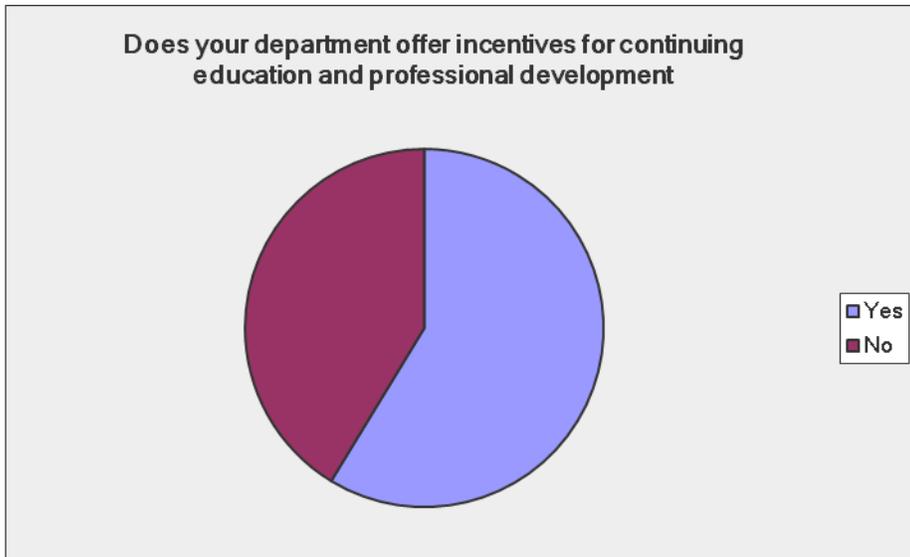
NH Professional Development

| Does your department offer tuition reimbursement | | |
|--|------------------|----------------|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Yes | 69.6% | 32 |
| No | 30.4% | 14 |
| answered question | | 46 |
| skipped question | | 0 |



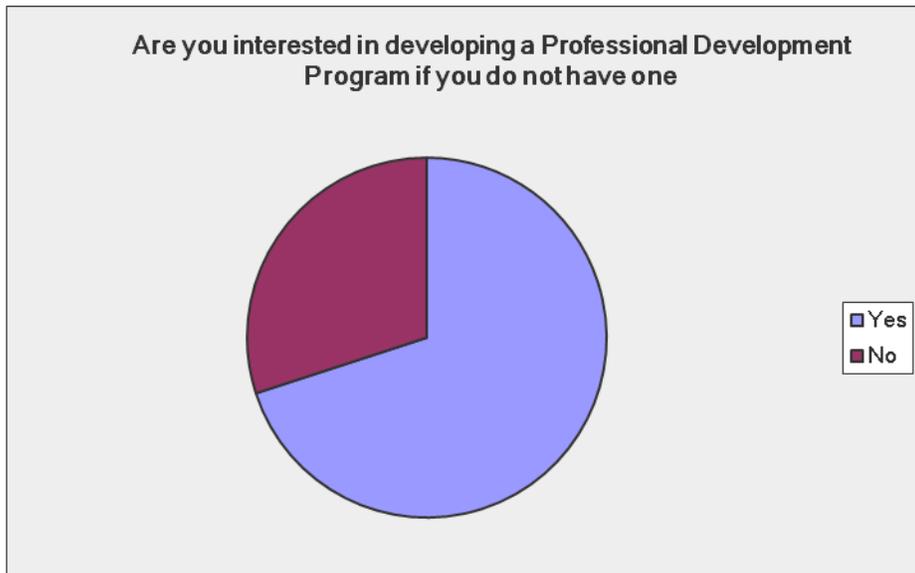
NH Professional Development

| Does your department offer incentives for continuing education and professional development | | |
|---|------------------|----------------|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Yes | 58.7% | 27 |
| No | 41.3% | 19 |
| answered question | | 46 |
| skipped question | | 0 |



NH Professional Development

| Are you interested in developing a Professional Development Program if you do not have one | | |
|--|------------------|----------------|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Yes | 70.0% | 28 |
| No | 30.0% | 12 |
| answered question | | 40 |
| skipped question | | 6 |



Appendix C

Professional Development Guide

General Guidelines for Charting Your Career Path



Bristol Fire Department Leadership Development Program

September 2011

INTRODUCTION

This guide explains the responsibilities of the employee and training officer in completing the Professional Development Guide (PDG) and outlines a step-by-step process for preparing an PDG. The PDG is developed by the employee and their supervisor. As the PDG is built, the employee and training officer will outline development objectives and career goals. The employee and training officer will also select learning activities for achieving these objectives and goals.

The purpose of an PDG is twofold. First, it ensures that the employee maintains the current level of job proficiency through continued training and developmental activities. Secondly, the employee charts a career path by identifying new knowledge, skills and abilities to pursue, as well as learning activities needed to reach the established goals.

Development of an PDG is not required however it is highly recommended.

This guide will help you:

- Analyze and define your career goals and objectives.
- Learn how to make PDGs.
- Prepare your formal PDG.
- Find and use resources for Professional Development Guidening.

WHAT IS AN PDG?

PDGs are individually tailored and describe objectives and activities for the employee's career development. PDGs can be a win/win strategy because they benefit both the employee and the organization. Employees benefit, because implementing an PDG helps them enhance their knowledge, skills, and experiences. Improved competencies help them achieve personal and career goals both inside of and external to the organization. The organization benefits by developing improved employee capabilities, work load planning, and resume needs. Competent employee performance, plus the added bonus of improved moral, and personal job satisfaction can make the organization more effective.

PDGs work by helping an employee and training officer clarify things that are important to them and plan to achieve them. In the PDG are career objectives, and the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to achieve these objectives, as well as, activities that will provide employees the opportunity to learn and apply the knowledge and skills.

An PDG is a written plan for the benefit of both employee and the department. It describes competencies that the employee will apply and enhance and how this development will occur.

This includes the following:

- Responsibility areas – PDGs describe the areas of responsibility assigned to the employee as stated in his/her position description and the competencies needed to perform the responsibility.
- Developmental activities – Each responsibility area is accompanied by one or more specific developmental activities that will enable the individual to achieve or practice that competency.
- Time line with milestones and date completed – Realistic start dates, end dates, and other major milestones are established for each activity. The date completed should be listed when the employee can document proficiency based on the competency, skill, or ability obtained.

WHEN TO PREPARE A PDG

Timing is an important factor in developing the PDG because the following processes work together to establish the same objectives:

- The performance appraisal.
- The training needs analysis.
- Career development planning.
- The PDG.

The optimum time for preparing the PDG is during the first few weeks immediately following the performance appraisal. But the PDG can be developed at anytime the employee determines.

WHAT'S IN A PDG

An PDG should include all of the developmental assignments, activities, and training courses indicated for the employee as a result of the:

- Training needs analysis.
- Mandatory or core competencies.
- Career counseling.

It should include:

- Any activity that is intended to improve performance at the employee's present position or a target position.
- The desired time frame for completion of training.

CORE COMPETENCIES AND BEHAVIORS

The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), and the State of New Hampshire have identified core competencies and behaviors for certification. Most of these core competencies are covered in the following certification classes:

- Firefighter 1
- Firefighter 2
- Firefighter 3
- Driver/Operator
- Fire Officer 1
- Fire Officer 2
- ICS
- NIMS

1. Competencies are a national “benchmark”—they standardize qualifications without interfering with local decision making about training.
2. Shared competencies make interagency crossover and collaboration easier.
3. Competencies are a critical component for the development of performance-based training.

The following brief descriptions will help distinguish between the terms “competencies,” “behaviors,” and “tasks”:

Competency - A broad description that groups core behaviors necessary to perform a specific function.

Behavior - A general description of an observable activity that is a logical and necessary action in the performance of a behavior; how the behavior is demonstrated or performed in a particular context.

Task• A specific description of a unit of work activity that is a logical and necessary action in the performance of a behavior; how the behavior is demonstrated or performed in a particular context.

Competencies and behaviors among positions are similar. This similarity may hide critical differences in proficiency level and the environment or type of incident in which the position is expected to perform. These critical differences are typically captured in the tasks of each position.

RESPONSIBILITIES

EMPLOYEE

Each employee has the primary responsibility for working closely with their supervisor to develop and monitor his or her PDG.

This includes:

- Identifying short-and long-range goals, developmental objectives, and activities to achieve these goals.
- Identifying additional knowledge, skills, and abilities required to achieve the stated career objectives.
- Discussing and obtaining concurrence of goals, objectives, and developmental activities with first-line supervisors or team leaders.
- Satisfactorily completing all assigned reading, education, and developmental assignments.

TRAINING OFFICER

The Training Officer is responsible for assisting each department member in the development of their PDG and supporting developmental activities outlined in the PDG. This includes:

- Performing a developmental needs assessment, in cooperation with the employee, to assist the individual in planning and formulating actions to successfully accomplish identified career objectives.
- Counseling employees concerning career development and encouraging employees to set goals to improve their performance through systematic and continuous self-development.
- Assuring that developmental activities support the objectives of the PDG.
- Evaluating the development, activities, and training completed by each employee.

PROCEDURES

WHERE AM I NOW?

Conduct a self-assessment to determine current skills, interests, and values. In addition to an assessment of current job strengths and areas of improvement, ask questions such as:

- What do I value?
 - How satisfied am I in my current job?
 - How well does my job meet my needs?
 - If I wanted to make a change, what would it be?
 - How do others see me?
 - How do I want to be seen?

- What kind of personal do I want to be?
- What makes me happy?

WHERE DO I WANT TO BE?

Once you have reviewed your current skills, interests and values, begin to examine the options available. Ask questions such as:

- Do I want to move up or over to a new organization?
- Do I want to enrich my present job?
- Do I want to develop new skills?

If so, which ones and why?

Talk with the Training Officer and see what options are available. Interview, collect information, and ask others about their perceptions of you. Do a reality check—match our needs with your options.

HOW WILL I GET THERE?

After deciding where you want to be, identify developmental areas. Ask questions such as:

- What specific skills, knowledge and abilities do I possess?
- What do I strengthen now to meet where I am?
- What do I strengthen for future assignments?

Determine your barriers.

- What do I need to overcome the barriers?
- What is in my way?
- Where do I need to change?

Identify the sources of the barriers and determine the need and actions to overcome them.

WHAT IS MY CURRENT LEVEL OF COMPETENCY?

You may want to conduct a job analysis to determine exactly what job-related tasks are necessary for successful performance of the job. These tasks can then be used to identify the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities needed. Once identified, the employee and the supervisor can determine the areas within which improvement is needed. Ask questions such as:

- Why does the job exist?
- What is its purpose?
- What are the major duties and responsibilities involved?
- What special requirements are necessary or helpful to know?

EMPLOYEE CHECKLIST FOR PREPARING A PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

IDENTIFICATION OF PERSONAL GOALS

1. Identify the assignments or job duties you would like to complete this year.
2. Define your short-range (1 year) goals.
3. List future activities that you would like to accomplish.
4. List possible career paths open to you.
5. Define your long-range (1-3 years) goals.
6. Ask yourself:
 - Are my goals realistic?
 - How strong is my desire to achieve these goals?
 - Are my goals compatible with my strengths and weaknesses?
 - Are my goals compatible with the parts of my job that I like and dislike?

IDENTIFICATION OF ORGANIZATION GOALS

1. Identify organizational core competencies.
2. Identify career field core competencies and career ladders.
3. List long-range training opportunities that provide rotational assignments or developmental assignments outside your chosen career.

IDENTIFICATION OF OBJECTIVES

1. Read your job description.
2. Read your most recent performance appraisal.
3. Read your office/division mission and function statement.
4. List specific job activities that you enjoyed in the past year.
5. List specific job activities that you did not enjoy in the past year.
6. Identify elements of your job where you excel.
7. List those elements of your job where you believe performance could be improved.
8. List those activities within your office/division that are interesting to you.

IDENTIFICATION OF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

1. List the ten most common tasks that you perform. (Tasks are single activities that cannot be meaningfully broken down into smaller elements.)
2. Identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities that are needed to perform each task.
3. Identify and prioritize the knowledge, skills, and abilities you do not have or those you need to strengthen.
4. Identify short-term developmental activities that will help you acquire the needed knowledge, skills, and abilities.
5. List the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to improve your performance.

TRAINING OFFICER CHECKLIST FOR REVIEWING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDES

REVIEWING THE PDG

1. Are the employee's goals realistic based on your assessment of the employee's capabilities and past performance?
2. Are the employee's goals consistent with the department needs, core competencies, and organization goals?
3. Do the proposed developmental activities support the employee's goals?
4. Has the employee considered a full range of potential developmental activities, including self-study, on-the-job training, seminars, workshops, professional society meetings and conferences, details, and special assignments?
5. Do the developmental activities address performance improvement areas noted in the most recent performance appraisal?
6. Are any additional developmental activities needed to address upcoming changes in responsibilities and planned assignments or to maximize cross training of the staff?
7. Is the level of proposed developmental activities reasonable given the anticipated workload?
8. Are proposed developmental activities within the employee's capabilities?

ANALYSIS OF ORGANIZATIONAL NEEDS

1. Thinking from the perspective of the organization as a whole, and of your specific supervisory perspective, what are the organization's needs and objectives, now and in the future?
2. What are the functions and tasks that must be accomplished in your organization's daily work if it is going to meet those objectives?
3. What competencies are needed among your staff to accomplish these functions and tasks?
4. What competencies does each of the individuals within your span of control possess?
5. What are the gaps between competencies needed, and the competencies now present in your organization?
6. In what ways can you bring the required competencies that already exist to bear on the functions and tasks that must be accomplished?
7. What competencies should each individual develop from the organization's point of view?
From the employee's point of view?

PDG objectives result from negotiation and mutual agreement. The Training Officer acts on behalf of the organization to ensure that development or application of targeted competencies.

DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES

Developmental activities are undertaken by an individual to achieve a developmental objective. Some objectives may be achieved by the familiar means of formal training and attending events such as conferences and seminars. However, the skills, knowledge and abilities that comprise many competencies may be better learned and practiced by means of other activities. Activities other than formal training classes or attending meetings that are appropriate for PDGs include the following:

- Job shadowing.
- Reviewing and analyzing examples.
- Internship, apprenticeship.
- On-the-job training.
- Video- or computer-based instruction.
- Special project/assignments.
- Structured interviews with content experts.
- Reading.
- Research.
- Correspondence courses.
- Self-development.
- Mentoring.
- “Just doing it.”
- Rotational assignments.

In most cases, these activities are not as expensive as formal training. They can often be accomplished without travel while on the job.

TIPS FOR THE TRAINING OFFICER

Employees use PDGs to maintain and improve their employability and thus advance their careers. However, the supervisor uses PDGs to enhance the organization's ability to achieve its objective, both now and in the future. Specifically, supervisors use PDGs to encourage employees to enhance their competencies and to make the best use of their competencies. Hence, PDGs include objectives to improve knowledge and skills and to build experience that will be used to benefit the organization as a whole. The responsibility also includes assigning work to employees that allows them to make a maximum contribution to mission accomplishment.

However, in a more general sense, the supervisor's responsibility is to recognize that employees are the organization's greatest assets, and to help develop these assets. That development is not limited to near-term organizational needs and requirements. It takes into account the organization's longer range needs and the need to help every employee maintain optimism and sustain motivation that leads to doing the best possible job every day. The organization relies primarily upon supervisors to make this happen. Fulfilling this role requires a willingness to invest in people. It also requires an understanding of the organization's:

- Goals.
- Needs.
- Functions.
- The competencies needed to accomplish the functions.
- The competencies possessed by the individuals in the supervisor's human resource pool.
- A plan for using and developing available resources that takes into account where individuals are now, and where they can be in the short-term and long-term future.

The approach does more than identify knowledge and skills employees must learn. It seeks ways to change and add assignments to allow the development and practice of unused or undeveloped competencies. It takes the broad view across the organization and the long view over the coming years in imagining and evaluating career development. It empowers and motivates individuals to produce and grow, and to serve the organization at the same time they are building their careers.