

Mentoring Volunteer Officers Pre- and Post-promotion

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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 act of mentoring an individual can have lasting positive influences on a person's life. Focusing that act of mentoring into the realm of the fire service is not necessarily a new concept however the process of mentoring before and after certain benchmarks can fall short. This is predominately found at the newly-promoted volunteer officer rank. The problem is that Marion County Fire District #1 (MCFD) lacks a formal mentoring component for volunteer officers in both pre-promotion and post-promotion periods resulting in ineffective supervisory practices.

The purpose of this research is to identify mentoring components for volunteer officers for both pre-promotion and post-promotion periods that MCFD may be able to incorporate for future candidates and promoted members. Through evaluative methodology, the author will explore the following research questions: What are the characteristics of a mentoring program? What mentoring components in officer development programs are other combination departments using? Does the mentoring style change after the promotion? Who would be a good mentor?

The procedures to identify answers to those questions were found in literature review and personal interviews spawned from a questionnaire. The results of the research revealed that while some mentoring components are relevant and could be utilized by MCFD, others are not applicable to the fire service or volunteer members. Recommendations include continuing research tailored for mentoring fire service volunteers, developing a formal mentoring program and identifying mentors that would have the greatest impact on our new and future volunteer officers.

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Introduction

The success of an organization can be attributed to many things, however the act of mentoring inside of an organization has gained momentum in focus for a progressive and healthy workforce. In 2010 testimony to Congress, Nancy Kichak from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management stated that “mentoring is also an integral part of many developmental programs and plays a huge role in developing and retaining a diverse workforce” (Developing federal, 2010). In 2008, the Missouri Valley Division of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) stated that “mentoring is one of the best ways to invest in the future of our fire service organizations” (IAFC, 2008).

In the fire service, one of the most visible avenues to observe mentoring is examining the company officer. This person is considered a first-line supervisor, leading a small group of people in a variety of tasks including fire suppression, emergency medical services (EMS), and/or fire prevention. While that description of a company officer may sound familiar, the level of mentoring that occurs before and after a company officer promotion can vary greatly from person to person and organization to organization.

That variation of mentoring can be even more profound when it revolves around a volunteer firefighter. These individuals typically hold full-time jobs and divide their time between work, family, sleep and volunteering, but certainly not equally. Setting the volunteer firefighter up for success as an officer takes a definite time commitment that can be enhanced and possibly accelerated by a mentor.

The problem is that Marion County Fire District #1 (MCFD) lacks a formal mentoring component for volunteer officers in both pre-promotion and post-promotion periods resulting in ineffective supervisory practices. The purpose of this research is to identify mentoring

components for volunteer officers for both pre-promotion and post-promotion periods that MCFD may be able to incorporate for future candidates and promoted members. Through an evaluative methodology, the author will explore the following research questions: What are the characteristics of a mentoring program? What mentoring components in officer development programs are other combination departments using? Does the mentoring style change after the promotion? Who would be a good mentor?

Background and Significance

Marion County, Oregon is located in the northwest corner of the state, about an hour south of Portland, which lies on the border in between Oregon and Washington. The City of Salem serves as the County Seat as well as the State Capitol. In 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau stated that Marion County's population is 315,335, of which 154,637 reside in the city of Salem. Along with the large employment pool of state workers, the area known as the Willamette Valley is home to major agricultural farms for wine grapes and hazelnuts.

That diversity of urban versus rural setting describes much of MCFD's interior. While a small amount of people believe that the fire district covers all of the 1182 square miles that sits within the county lines, the fire district covers only a fraction of that protecting 85 square miles. Most of that fire protection coverage surrounds outside the north and east side of Salem's city limits.

The fire district manages a combination of 40 career and 75 volunteer members, which protect approximately 55,000 people with fire fighters dispatched out of eight fire stations. Four of the eight stations are strictly volunteer fire fighter staffed, with the other four housing a combination of career and volunteer/student members. The organization provides fire suppression, fire-based emergency medical services (EMS), fire prevention and hazardous

materials awareness-level responses within its jurisdiction and to other agencies where automatic and mutual aid agreements exist. In 2011, MCFD ran a total of 5836 calls for service, with 74% of those signifying medical emergencies in nature (A. Kraemer, personal communication, February 19, 2012). A significant bond measure coupled with several successful federal grants allowed MCFD to update a large percentage of their fleet of suppression units and staff vehicles, along with some fire and EMS equipment.

While the organization has taken great strides in making the combination department work, there has been a growing number of incidents that have been executed by newly appointed volunteer officers that have gathered some negative attention. Those incidents have been on the fireground, in the station and administratively. Those series of events, which could be classified as ineffective supervisory practices, have led some chief officers to believe that there has been a breakdown of communication, leadership, or quite simply, mentoring. While some of the incidents can be treated with a learning lesson on departmental standard operating procedures (SOP) or standard operating guidelines (SOG) that were instructed on pre-promotion, most of the incidents that have occurred may have been thwarted with a more robust period of mentorship during training sessions.

However, there are distinct training differences between career and volunteer members, starting with the recruit academy. The career fire fighter typically has a formal, intense recruit academy at the beginning of their tenure that includes equipment use, firefighting and EMS tactics, and departmental procedures. After the conclusion of that academy, the new recruit is traditionally paired with a preceptor, or mentor for a probationary period. The entry-level career member at MCFD is hired as both a paramedic and an engineer, or driver/operator, requiring the intensive recruit academy and long-tenured paramedic school to be completed before

employment. The typical rear seat fire fighters at MCFD are filled by volunteers and/or student fire fighters from a local college fire program.

Conversely, the volunteer fire fighter academy can be much less intense due to the drawn out schedule of availability of its participants. While covering much of the same material, a volunteer academy may cover only the minimum hours required by the state certification system which determines that a member is able to make fire attack into a structure. This is the case at MCFD, and after the academy, the newly training volunteer is assigned a station and certain apparatus to ride upon. Weekly trainings enhance the volunteer's skill set in fire and EMS operations, but mentorship can vary greatly depending on what station the member is assigned to.

After a successful probationary period, MCFD volunteer firefighters are eligible for promotion. During the last few years, the Training Division at MCFD has evaluated the requirements to be eligible to become an officer in the volunteer ranks. That evaluation resulted in the refinement of a document to clearly define the steps to obtain the credentials to test for Lieutenant and Captain in the volunteer ranks. The promotional development document (Appendix A) is a matrix that illustrates requirements for tenure, certifications and volunteer meeting and training attendance. While the matrix requires a letter of recommendation from the candidate's superior for promotions, it does not specify any requirements for acting in capacity (AIC), or ride-alongs with members of that sought rank. Those missing elements are part of a mentoring program that needs to be explored. However, mentoring programs include many facets that can be perceived as time consuming and intensive, especially for a volunteer member.

Those variations are what propelled this research. Enhancing mentoring will have direct ties to two of the five United States Fire Administration's (USFA) operational objectives as well.

Those are (1) improving the fire and emergency services' capability for response to and recovery from all hazards, and (2) improving the fire and emergency services' professional status (National Fire Academy [NFA], 2012). Those improvements may be realized by increasing performance and professionalism of the current and future company officers through mentorship. This research is also linked to the NFA Executive Development course through change management and team building (NFA, 2011).

Literature Review

The review of literature in the topic of mentoring yields large and diverse search results, including improving financial gain in business and improving structure in a specified group of people like troubled youth. While those groups have received a lot of mentoring exposure, public service tends to stay out of the spotlight but yet take care of their own. The literature review for this research was pulled from peer-reviewed journals, internet articles, books, and fellow Executive Fire Officer (EFO) research papers. Most of the EFO papers that were searched for with a keyword of *mentor* yielded returns of wanting to increase mentoring as a recommendation, but not as a research topic. The following literature review is aligned with each research question below.

What are the characteristics of a mentoring program?

Mentoring occurs in many forms, however it is common to have mentoring being described as formal or informal. In his book on mentoring, Zachary (2012) states that formal mentoring traditionally occurs under the umbrella of an organization, adding both structure and accountability. Conversely, informal mentoring is more casual and may be used for an "as needed" time. Observing either promise or malfunction could initiate informal mentoring. While observing a positive drive that leads to informal mentoring is advantageous for the mentee, it

may be detrimental to others. In a written statement to a Congressional Hearing, J. David Cox Sr. stated that informal mentoring has “historically, in effect and if not in intention, been discriminatory against women and minorities” (Developing federal, 2010). Cox continues to add that formal mentoring available to all of a group or organization impedes that discriminatory factor.

The federal government association advocates for a formal mentoring program to be effective, it must hold the following characteristics: the mentor shall not be the employee’s direct supervisor, each person must be dedicated to the mentoring relationship, and the “mentoring relationship shall cross professional areas of expertise while lasting a specific period of time” (Developing federal, 2010).

Phillips-Jones (n.d) states that mentoring programs “look deceptively simple, but they are not”. She continues to add that there are some key characteristics to increase the success of a program. She advocates for top end support from management, and the ability to utilize time and resources from the organization. The need for a healthy organization needs to be present. This is relating to the interest for this type of program, and negative events like layoffs not happening. The presence of informal mentoring needs to be in place, and is well-received by those who are participating. Lastly, Phillips-Jones states that there are specific goals that need to be produced so the program can be successful.

In addition to the requirements to starting a mentoring program, there are several mentor/mentee relationships. In 2012, Zachary added that there are several configurations of relationships that can be explored by non-traditional practices. Those configurations include reverse mentoring, peer mentoring, group mentoring and the “personal board of directors”. The list finally rounds out with the more typical supervisory mentoring.

Reverse mentoring, according to Zachary in 2012, started in 1999 when the CEO of General Electric requested the senior management to explore the expertise of the newer employees in the fields of technical knowledge and informational technology (IT) concepts. While considered by many to be more than a decade old, reverse mentoring gained momentum with the Generation Y employees, a group that is characterized as tech-savvy and goal oriented.

Peer mentoring is performed by two people that may share the same job description or academic background. This configuration is conducive to people that are newly assigned jobs, promotions, or memberships into other related associations. Zachary (2012) mentions that this is also beneficial in groups, where the group takes it upon them self for “crafting its own learning agenda”.

While peer mentoring can occur in groups, group mentoring refers to having multiple mentors, and/or a common facilitator. Mentoring quads (a group of four people) is an offshoot of group mentoring, and is a growing concept that is parallel with the fire service engine or truck company. They can also begin with a single mentor/mentee, then the group grows as people are invited (Zachary, 2012).

Finally, the personal board of directors type mentoring requires a group of trusted people as mentors, with the mentee being advised from the board’s experience or collaborative knowledge. This allows the group to be a sounding board for ideas for the mentee. In 2012, Zachary stated that this configuration of mentoring allows for a broader and diverse return of ideas due to the makeup of the group convened. This configuration is not limited to a Fire Chief/City Council type relationship, but a Fire Chief/Chief Staff relationship as well, utilizing subordinates to comprise a team of advisors.

Zachary (2012) also describes mentoring in a four-phased mentoring cycle. Those phases are preparing, negotiating, enabling growth and coming to closure. While the preparing and negotiating phases have to do with the discovery process of the mentoring relationship and the agreement of learning goals respectively, the enabling growth phase is most relevant to defining the characteristics of a mentoring program.

This portion of the cycle is where the mentoring process is managed, and more importantly, supported. Providing a safety net through listening is paramount for the success of the mentee. Creating a learning environment is also crucial for the mentor (Zachary, 2012). Those environments could include sending the mentee to outside conferences or related organizational or association meetings. Gaining exposure to learning outside the comfort zone is an avenue taken to enhance the mentee's diversity of knowledge.

Zachary (2012) adds that maintaining the momentum is necessary if the mentee is to stay engaged. Both regular check-ins and evaluating progress are pivotal points of keeping the relationship sound. Zachary (2012) continues with the importance of fostering reflection. Identifying what worked and what did not work becomes a larger learning platform for the mentee. That feedback can be linear of the mentee simply asking for feedback and then receiving feedback. While that feedback is essential, Zachary (2012) feels that the process should be more dynamic with the following process: asking for feedback, giving feedback, accepting feedback, and acting on feedback. That dynamic process can only happen if there is a certain level of trust between the mentor/mentee.

The coming to closure phase of mentoring is obviously necessary, but it may not happen as planned. The shifting of priorities may land the mentoring relationship to an unanticipated ending with or without closure (Zachary, 2012). Either way, good communication is needed to

provide closure for both the mentor and mentee for reaching a conclusion that was a learning endeavor.

What mentoring components in officer development programs are other departments using?

Again, the literature review found many instances of recommending mentoring, but a reduced number of instances of components of implemented mentoring programs. One organization that did offer a substantial mentoring pilot program was in Alaska. The Anchorage (AK) Fire Department has placed heavy weight into officer development after a large turnover rate of employee retirements and an increased response area which mandated hiring a large amount of people. Losing some institutional knowledge forced the department to look at officer development in a three phase process. Schrage (2007) stated that a proposed mentoring program would complement an advanced fire fighter series of classes and a formal officer academy that lasted nine weeks.

According to Schrage (2007) the mentorship program was proposed to:

- assist new officers in transitioning from crew members to crew leaders and managers;
- help new officers and their crews appreciate the organization's history and traditions;
- provide a program for company officer development;
- help new officers develop critical decision-making skills in leadership, supervision, and incident management;
- provide to new officers reassurance and develop their confidence; and

- provide feedback to senior staff regarding training, organizational, and operational needs and concerns.

Some departments have used outside class experiences with mentoring components for officer development, including the NFA Leadership I, II and III series. Cowan (2011) revealed that while not a highly utilized class, the NFA Leadership III class *Strategies for Supervisory Success* was taken advantage by a portion of a group surveyed in volunteer officer development research. The class covers delegation, leadership styles, discipline and a mentoring component with the application of “coaching/motivational techniques” (U.S. Fire Administration [USFA], n.d.).

In 2005, Shouldis stated that the Philadelphia Fire Department used five subject tracks in an officer development program: Management, prevention, operations, safety, and fire cause investigation. The management track includes subjects in “critical thinking, the art of persuasion, leadership, supervision, and coaching for top performance” (Shouldis, 2005). He continues to add that “organizational guidance, mentoring, and technical training will overcome obstacles and barriers” (Shouldis, 2005).

Does the mentoring change after the promotion?

Often times mentoring is utilized to assist a new employee with learning the dynamics, culture or procedures for a successful tenure in an organization. Mentoring can also be implemented to assist in succession planning or success in promotional capabilities of an individual. While all of those preceding reasons may be advantageous to the individual and/or the organization, does the mentoring change from pre-promotion to post-promotion? Or does the mentoring become a continual loop of counseling for the next phase of a career.

As stated above, Shouldis (2005) described the Philadelphia Fire Department officer development program to include five subject tracks. However, those components are utilized post-promotion in a new officer academy. The pre-promotional period revolves around a fire science-based college program obtained at community colleges or four-year higher learning institutions (Shouldis, 2005). Those educational components equate to points on promotional exams. While education alone does not dictate capability of promotion, “it does give an indication of a person’s commitment to learning” (Shouldis, 2005).

In 2007, the California Police Chiefs Association (CPCA) published a comprehensive document outlining nineteen different law enforcement agencies’ mentoring guides. Several guides were of the “task book” style of information management where a topic is covered with the newly promoted supervisor, or potential supervisor, and subsequently initialed as completed. One guide in particular specifically stated benefits of a mentoring program for both the pre-promotion candidates and the newly promoted sergeant (CPCA, 2007, p.263). The benefits for the pre-promotion candidate include:

- Establishes a bond between the mentor and the candidate.
- All aspects of the position are revealed.
- Provides a support person for the candidate to go to for assistance.
- Develops leadership and management skills.
- Learns the administrative duties.

The benefits for the newly promoted sergeant include:

- Establishes a bond between the mentor and a new sergeant.
- Ensures the right person is in the right position, to do the right job.
- Ensures the supervisor is properly prepared to handle the assignment.

- All aspects of the position are known to the new sergeant.
- Establishes intrinsic fundamentals of leadership.

The benefits to the organization included both candidate and promoted member receiving the same training, development of future leaders, development of future mentors, and the retention of qualified personnel (CPCA, 2007, p.263).

The Jefferson Fire District (JFD) takes a fairly strong stance on the importance of mentoring. Located in the Willamette Valley just south of Salem, Oregon, JFD is a combination fire district that employs four full-time staff and approximately 55 volunteers, in which seven are volunteer officers. In JFD's officer development program, the new officers are shadowed by senior staff for at least four months to ensure a good success rate on operational facets of the job. What is unique about JFD is the annual assessment center of current officers that evaluates technical command functions and decision-making paths (Troy Jurgens, Personal Communication). This annual assessment is not taken lightly, and a poor performance during the evaluation could lead to loss of supervisory functions. While that is not the preferred outcome, JFD strives to balance effective supervision and command functions while building officer development and succession planning.

Who would be a good mentor?

The organization that initiates a mentoring program obviously needs to find a good mentor/protégé fit, and that may be easier said than done. There are often limiting factors in organizations of who will mentor protégés. Factors as in organization size dealing with the number of potential mentors due to the mentor pool, or due to the desire to mentor. Once a mentor is found, there still may be influences that may contribute to a mismatch of personalities.

In 2000, Lee, Dougherty, and Turban stated that “an individual's personality is likely to be related to the success of one's experience as a mentor or a protégé”.

One of those personality characteristics is agreeableness. Having the ability to be empathetic and understanding is important to the mentoring relationship. Additionally, a moderate degree of openness is required to encourage thinking outside of the box. Lee et al. continue with the need for emotional stability. They state that mentors that possess low levels of stability have issues with taking comments personally, and not producing a positive aura. A good mentor also has their life in order and a “competent, organized, achievement-oriented mentor will provide effective role-modeling (Lee et al., 2000).” The characteristic of being slightly extroverted is advantageous as well, because that trait adds to the ability to engage other people or groups of people for seeking information that may not be accessed by the introvert. Lee et al. (2000) close with the need for possessing similar work values. Those work values, including ethics, work style, and levels of risk-taking, are paramount to the working mentor/protégé relationship.

Along with matching personality characteristics, age diversity may need to be evaluated for program success. One may think that an employee close to retirement may be a great mentor to a new employee, but that may not be the case. In a 2003 research study, Finkelstein, Allen and Rhoton revealed that in a specified large organization, the most populated mentor/protégé age difference was six to fifteen years. A larger gap in age may lead to the lack of effort on the part of the mentor due to their background and experience in the field. Conversely, while some potential mentors may be younger than their respective protégés, those mentors may be perceived as having a lower level of competence, leading to an unsuccessful career relationship (Finkelstein et al, 2003).

In 2008, the Missouri Valley Division of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) developed a mentoring committee and associated tools for a mentee to “receive effective counsel and guidance of the mentor within the fire service” (IAFC, 2008a). This program was voluntary to both mentors and mentees, and allowed for a relationship that could cross departmental borders throughout the Division. The program identified commitments that the mentor would need to keep to the mentee and included trust, honesty, respect, positive outlook and encouragement (IAFC, 2008b).

In 2007, Schrage revealed that the Anchorage (AK) Fire Department started a formal mentorship program that initiated from both the large amount of turnover in the late 1990’s, and the expansion of the fire department response area and subsequent hiring of personnel up to 2005. During the conclusion of a formal mentoring period, feedback was requested from participants and the information received about the mentor’s led to a discovery. That discovery was that new company officers were not the best choice for mentors due to perceived lack of critical thinking skills and incumbent officers were not the best choice because of their time constraints (Schrage, 2007). Additionally, he reported that retired officers were better mentor candidates over current officers. Schrage further noted that those retired officers should possess the following attributes:

- Be committed to personal and organizational development.
- Exhibit a calm, steady demeanor.
- Possess training, coaching and counseling skills.
- Have a positive work history and be in good standing on retirement.
- Have good rapport with members of all disciplines within the department.
- Continue to associate and be familiar with department members.

- Demonstrate communication abilities.

The preceding literature review provided fairly good depth into the answers of the research questions. Information from both the Alaska mentoring program by Schrage (2007), and the CPCA's (2007) documents assisted in solidifying the premise that mentoring in public safety is a needed and worthwhile trend.

Procedures

Researching both pre-promotion and post-promotion mentoring in the fire service involved some exploration of resources. Many of the sources found described with the importance of mentoring, or how to set up a mentoring program. Promotional mentoring in the fire service research was even more limited however, several procedures were utilized to gather the information for this paper including literature review and personal interviews. The following pages represent the procedures of research parallel with the research questions.

All four research questions had portions, if not the entirety, of the research conducted by literature review. Due to the size of the facility and specificity of fire service materials available, the Learning Resource Center (LRC) located on the campus of the National Fire Academy (NFA) was used initially. A combination of industry journals, Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP) Applied Research Projects (ARP), and books were browsed for relevant content. Both physical and online versions were evaluated on site. Even after the author left the campus, the collaboration with interlibrary loans made LRC resources available in cooperation with the postal service for use of specific ARPs.

The literature review progressed with the use of two higher education facilities, Chemeketa Community College (CCC) and Willamette University (WU), both located in Salem, Oregon. Because of both CCC's fire science program, and WU's two large libraries, literature

was readily available. However, the information produced seemed to be limited or duplicative in nature. This was most apparent for the research question, “*Does the mentoring change after the promotion?*”

Those factors initiated the need to interview some specific local departments. A questionnaire was developed by the research author that provided data collection in two main areas: department characteristics and professional development with a total of 22 possible responses. Outreach was made to the Oregon State Fire Marshal’s office (OSFM) located in Salem, Oregon. The OSFM is a division of the Oregon State Police (OSP), and provides but not limited to, data collection, code and technical services, fire and life safety, licensing and permitting, and emergency response through incident management teams (IMT).

Because of OSFM’s data collection abilities, a database was collected that revealed every reported local fire response agency in the state. This report also stated contact information and career/volunteer size. The database reflected over 250 local fire agencies, so the list was reduced by only using combination departments that were reported to have the same ratio of career to volunteer staffing as MCFD. A total of 16 local-level fire organizations were contacted and produced many duplicative answers as well. As stated above in the literature review, the profound positive illustration came from a personal phone interview with a chief officer from Jefferson Fire District, in Jefferson, Oregon.

There were some limitations in the research. As previously stated, there was a lot of information from public, private and industry specific sources on mentoring, but much of the information was repetitive on the importance of mentoring, or the components of a mentoring program. When specifics were found, many were not relevant to an organization the size of MCFD. The data collection used in the interviews assumed that the answerer had a clear

understanding of the difference in formal and informal mentoring and what components of a program were mentoring in nature.

Results

The results of the research are assembled by the order of the research questions. The first research question asked “*What are the characteristics of a mentoring program?*” The literature review revealed that the mentoring should be categorized into formal or informal mentoring programs first. Using the principles from the Federal Government, formal mentoring should be available to all participants in a group (volunteer officers), and have a dedicated mentor that is not the protégé’s direct supervisor.

In private industry, the first step should be planning the mentoring program with the inclusion of four phases: preparing, negotiating, enabling growth and coming to closure. Support from management along with mentoring occurring in a healthy environment is vital. Time management from both mentor and mentee are advantageous as well as being able to produce resources for the protégé from inside the organization. However, the literature review also advocates identifying the different styles of mentoring that could occur: reverse, peer, group, board of directors, and the traditional subordinate/superior relationship. Feedback is one of the most profound elements in mentoring, and a common phase of feedback that is sometimes overlooked is the acceptance of feedback by the protégé. This generally is easily accomplished when trust between protégé and mentor is high.

The next question asked “*What mentoring components in officer development programs are other combination departments using?*” This question had a level of increased difficulty because it had such specific parameters. The literature review revealed programs in Anchorage (AK), Philadelphia (PA), and within a NFA Leadership series of classes. The Anchorage

program placed the newly promoted officer in a nine-week officer development academy to hone the tactical and leadership skills of the new officer along with adding feedback to program administrators and chief staff. In Philadelphia, a five-section program assisted new officers in management, prevention, operations, safety, and fire cause investigation, and that a mentoring component existed to assist in future issues. The NFA Leadership class series is an optional group of classes that includes coaching and motivational techniques.

The third question asked “*Does the mentoring style change after the promotion?*” The answer is yes, with limitations. The procedures to research this question included literature review, but also spawned the need for the interview of like-sized organizations compared with MCFD. Using the Philadelphia program described above in the second research question, the pre-promoted officer must complete a series of college-level classes to be eligible to test.

The CPCA identified several California police agencies that had some in-depth task-book type professional development documents that encouraged a certain path of learning with mentoring before the promotion, and another path of learning post-promotion with an integrated evaluation period for both the promoted and the organization.

The telephone interviews illustrated that mentoring is still limited in the fire service with many departments. In interviews with 16 departments, less than half have current policies on officer development, and only four out of the 16 polled had a mentoring component to that officer development policy. The Jefferson Fire District shadowing of an officer for four months was progressive for the area, and the annual officer volunteer assessment was even more unique.

The last research question asked “*Who would be a good mentor?*” Literature review was utilized to find that this question can be answered many different ways. Certain personality characteristics can affect the success of the mentor program including, agreeableness between

the protégé and mentor competency level, organization and extroversion of the mentor. One source mentioned that mentors that are older than the protégés tend to have a better success rate in a mentoring situation, however that employees that are close to retirement are not necessarily the best mentors due to their goals being accomplished already and desire to move on. Schrage (2007) found the opposite to be true when Anchorage Fire Department utilized retired officers to mentor new officers.

Discussion

MCFD is like many other departments in regards to the struggles of a combination department that suffers from volunteer turnover and the disappearance of progressive institutional knowledge. The following discussion points will parallel the research questions in format.

What are the characteristics of a mentoring program?

MCFD does not have a formal mentoring program, and the author agrees on the points of creating a program using some of the characteristics listed in the planning phases. Further, the author sees legitimacy in not using the direct supervisor as a mentor due to reasons that may conflict the effective supervision, or unbiased mentor relationship. The style would follow the subordinate/superior model, however, there is some advantage to other models for other groups of members including the board-of-director and peer mentoring styles. Feedback that Zachary (2012) explained would indeed be a pivotal portion of the program, and would be planned into the program appropriately.

Further, the author agrees in the need to have mentoring occur when the organization is in a healthy state as recommended by Phillips-Jones (n.d.). As the research is concluding, MCFD is experiencing a heavy loss of revenue which may lead to organizational change with staff

reductions. While this is not a practical time to initiate a program, it would be advantageous to align a program with change.

What mentoring components in officer development programs are other combination departments using?"

Both the Anchorage (Schrage, 2007) and Philadelphia (Shouldis, 2005) programs are thought to be legitimate in theory, but MCFD does not have the staff numbers that these larger departments have currently. Also hindering the Anchorage model is the lack of qualified retired officers that would (a) be eligible to mentor, or (b) desire to mentor. Like the Anchorage program, the Philadelphia officer development course would take MCFD over a year to complete the post-promotion academy as stated, although the pre-promotion course work is similar as it stands presently. The NFA Leadership courses stated by Cowan (2011) provide good core leadership issues that are economical to send personnel to, however, motivation and benefit of the class would result in different outcomes.

Does the mentoring style change after the promotion?

The literature review says yes, but mentoring was different or non-existent to start with. Philadelphia's pre-promotion educational component (Shouldis, 2005) aligns with many MCFD members' life-long learning attitudes, but again, the post-promotion academy has too many components for a department our size. One of the issues of this topic for MCFD is to have a continuation of mentoring pre-promotion and post-promotion. Many fire service entities have promoted an individual and then assumed the person knows how to handle situations that they have never seen before. However, it is encouraging to learn that portions of the CPCA (2007) police officer task books included a mentoring component that starts pre-promotion with a candidate and continues through well after the promotion.

The phone interviews that were conducted for the research confirmed that mentoring is not on the forefront of many departments' priorities. Additionally, many smaller Oregon department contacted did not even institute a base line officer development program.

Who would be a good mentor?

The literature review refers to many qualities in who would make a good mentor (Lee et al., 2000; Finkelstein et al., 2003; IAFC, 2008b) and the author agrees with almost of all the characteristics including:

- Compatible personality.
- Agreeable.
- Moderate degree of openness.
- Competent.
- Organized.
- Achievement-oriented.
- Extroverted.
- Smaller than expected age difference.
- Trustworthiness.
- Honest.
- Calm, steady demeanor.
- Positive work history in the organization.
- Good rapport with members of all disciplines within the department.

However, the utilization of retired members (Schrage, 2007) would probably not align with the progressive changes that have occurred within our organization and conflicts with the smaller age difference recommendation from the 2003 research study by Finkelstein, Allen and Rhoton.

Recommendations

The purpose of this research is to identify mentoring components for volunteer officers for both pre-promotion and post-promotion periods that MCFD may be able to incorporate for future candidates and promoted members. The recommendations that spawned from the results include:

- Developing a well-planned mentoring program that emphasizes feedback when the organization is in a healthy state.
- Utilizing relevant successful components from other organizations.
- Broadcast expectations of the mentor/protégé roles for time and intensity, to include pre- and post-promotion timelines
- Identify mentors that would be willing to mentor both current officers and future candidates.

Mentoring happens all the time. However focusing those efforts into developing formal programs to assist in succession planning and to hone effective supervisory practices should continue to be a profound concern of the fire service.

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Appendix A

Volunteer Fire Fighter Promotional Matrix

Name	FIREFIGHTER										ENGINEER										LIEUTENANT										CAPTAIN									
	NFPA FF 1	NFPA Driver	Wildland Interface Firefighter	NIMS IS 700	NIMS ICS 100	NIMS ICS 200	Minimum Activity Level	Meets Firefighter Req'ts	Min 1yr Service	Minimum Activity Level	NFPA Pumper Operator	NFPA Mobile Water	NFPA Wildland Operator	NFPA FF 11	DPSST Skid Avoid	Eng Compet Course	Letter Station Officer	NIMS ICS 300	EMS First Responder	Meets Engineer Req'ts	Fire Ground Leader	ITAC Fund	Letter Station Officer	Letter Vol Coordinator	Minimum Activity Level	Min 2yrs Service	NFPA Instructor 1	EMT Basic	NIMS ICS 300	EMT Intermediate	Wildland Engine Boss	NIMS ICS 400	NFPA Fire Officer I	EMT Intermediate						
1	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
2	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
3	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
4	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
5	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
6	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
7	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
8	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
9	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
10	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
11	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
12	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
13	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
14	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
15	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
16	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
17	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
18	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
19	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
20	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
21	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
22	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
23	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
24	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
25	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
26	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
27	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
28	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
29	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
30	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
31	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
32	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				
33	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C				

C=Completed/Meets Req W=Working On Blank=Nothing on File/Defer to Another

Appendix B

Structured Interview Questions

Department Characteristics

1 Department name:

2 Your name:

3 Contact number:

4 Contact email:

5 Career members: Line: Staff:

6 Volunteer member size: Chief Officer: Fire fighter:
 Company Officer: Support role:

7 Total number of stations:

8 Number of stations that are led by career staff:
 24/7:
 Daytime only:

9 Number of stations that are led by volunteer staff only:

Professional Development

10 Do you have an agreement/policy/SOP/SOG on officer development? Yes No

11 If yes, does it differentiate volunteer versus career requirements? Yes No

12 If yes, does it contain any mentoring components? Yes No

13 If yes, please list the mentoring components: (ie shadow senior member, weekly/monthly progress meetings)

14 If no, does the organization utilize formal or informal mentoring? Yes No

15 If yes, please list the mentoring components (ie shadow senior member, weekly/monthly progress meetings):

16 If mentors are used, how are the mentors chosen:

Person's assigned officer? A random member volunteers to mentor?
Hand picked by a chief officer? From a formal "pool" of mentors?

17 Does the mentoring change/discontinue after a benchmark such as coming off a probationary term, or promoting in rank? Yes No

18 If yes, please list:

19 Does the newly promoted officer go through any type of officer academy, task book check-off or similar process?

20 If yes, please list:

21 Does the volunteer fire fighter receive annual evaluations in your organization?
Yes No

22 If yes, does the evaluation have a future goals to be performed?
Yes No