SLAYING THE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION DRAGON

EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

The problem addressed was the poor evaluation process, due to little or no training of the members and limited employee observation in the decentralized work environment.

The purpose of this applied research project was to develop an improved evaluation system for the Anchorage Fire Department.

An action research method was used to answer the following research questions:

1. How is the current checklist used?
2. How are other like-sized fire departments evaluating behavior?
3. What limitations are there in adopting some of these other systems/procedures?

The process began at the National Fire Academy with a literature review of current applied research projects. Local and electronic libraries were utilized to access current related information. Forty like-sized departments in like-sized cities were surveyed to determine how they conducted performance evaluations. All line members of the Anchorage Fire Department were surveyed to determine their feelings and attitude regarding the present evaluation system and to solicit ideas regarding change.

The results were that the Anchorage Fire Department's personnel evaluation system was not current, inapplicable and of little value to the majority of the department for personal and professional development. Present performance evaluation scores were highly inflated. Surveys reflected a desire for an applicable evaluation, prepared and presented with sincerity and used for personal development. Most respondents believed they could give and receive quality performance feedback from co-workers and subordinates. Survey respondents related the poor evaluation system to the lack of training in conducting performance appraisal.

A trend toward the use of 360-degree evaluations was shown within the fire service. Most of the departments surveyed used performance criteria and personnel input in developing their present evaluation systems.

The recommendation was to modify the existing evaluation criteria, implement a 360-degree feedback evaluation system and train the entire department in its use.

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INTRODUCTION

The Anchorage Fire Department's personnel evaluation system is not adequate in meeting the goals of the program and needs improvements.

The purpose of this applied research project was to develop an improved evaluation system for the Anchorage Fire Department.

An action research method was used to answer the following research questions:

1. How is the current checklist used?
2. How are other like-sized fire departments evaluating behavior?
3. What limitations are there in adopting some of these other systems/procedures?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

This research problem relates directly to that portion of the executive development class relating to Unit 2: Professional Development, and Unit 5: Following and Leading.

The Anchorage Fire Department evaluation system changed to its present form in the late 1980s, when it was altered to allow electronic distribution to stations. In 1995 the fire and emergency medical units were integrated and combined into one division. The Anchorage Fire Department staffs 11 stations within two battalions. Seven of the 11 stations are staffed with an advanced life support (ALS) ambulance. Prior to the integration, two paramedics staffed each ambulance. After integration, the ambulances were staffed with one paramedic and one firefighter/emergency medical technician (FF/EMT). The second paramedic was placed on a more remote engine company as a fourth person. This move created seven ALS engines and increased the ALS response capability in areas where the backup units were farther away. The

paramedics rotate between the busy ambulance and a less active engine company. The FF/EMT's within each station rotate from the fire companies to the ambulances. The FF/EMT's spend part of their time working on an ambulance; however, there is no method for performance input from the paramedic who supervises their work when they are assigned to the ambulance. Another problem is that half of the paramedic's time is spent on the ambulance as the lead crewmember and the other half assigned to an engine company working under the supervision of a fire company officer. The ALS company officer over the paramedic has no input into the paramedic's periodic evaluation. Officers are often asked to evaluate a criterion that isn't observed during the rating period.

The Operations Coordinator and the Deputy Chief of Operations who supervise battalion chiefs are not regularly in a position to observe the battalion chief's performance in the field. Supervisors at every level have blind spots when completing the annual performance evaluation. The current performance evaluations are not effective.

Failure to remedy these problems will result in reduced departmental and individual performance. Under developed and untapped human resources will have been lost.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research Question 1. How is the current checklist used?

Part 8; Rule 8 of the Municipality of Anchorage Personnel Rules describes the purpose, form, and frequency of performance appraisals. Section 3.30.081 paragraph A. lists the following purposes for conducting a performance evaluation:

1. To provide a basis for informed decisions on such matters as promotion, work assignments, training, recognition and awards and termination of employment;
2. To keep employees advised of what is expected of them and how well they are meeting these expectations;
3. To stimulate improved work performance and commitment to agency goals;
4. To provide a basis for meeting employee needs for growth and development;
5. To enable management to make better use of its personnel resources;
6. To foster an effective working partnership between supervisor and employee; and
7. To determine the effectiveness of placement and promotion and promotion actions.

Paragraph C. of the above referenced document dictates the frequency of performance evaluations.

> Evaluations shall be conducted before the completion of each probation period, annually before merit anniversary dates regardless of step, upon promotion, demotion or transfer, and for every separation of employees who have worked at least 90 days regardless of the reason. Performance evaluation reports may also be completed at any other time at the discretion of an agency head.

Section I of the Municipality of Anchorage Performance Management Review Handbook provides the philosophy and guiding principles for the review process. This document provides broad guidelines that must be met. Individual departments have the flexibility to develop evaluation systems of their own as long as they meet these guidelines. The first statement of

purpose is "to accommodate the flexibility in performance management system design and its adaptation to different groups, departments, or teams (p. 5)." The guidebook encourages both management and employee participation in developing the performance appraisal system. By defining and documenting reasonable performance expectations and defining clear job expectations and job functions the performance reviews will become more meaningful (5).

Wanguri (1996) says, "The performance appraisal system is not taken seriously when they are not tied to pay or other awards and managers see the performance appraisal system as a necessary evil and routine function which doesn't motivate or control" (Rivera, 1996, p. 3). This is supported by Roberts (1998) when he points out the appraisal process is disliked by most, but it is considered great by those who receive high ratings.

Roberts points out that employees working in remote locations are difficult to properly evaluate. Supervising fire department personnel in other fire stations creates a similar problem (p. 301).

Research Question 2. How are other like-sized fire departments evaluating behavior?

Botto's (1996) applied research project was to develop a more effective evaluation system for the Oakdale, California Fire Department. His research reflected no indications of information gained from other fire departments. Botto's research led him to conclude that Oakdale should adopt a multi-rater evaluation system. Oakdale chose to hire a consulting firm to assist in development and implementation (p. 12).

Lobdell (1997) of the Spokane Valley Fire Department, reported that at the time of his applied research project, Spokane Valley had no formal evaluation system (p. 2). His research found little reference to performance evaluation systems in fire departments or the public sector.

However, through his research he determined and recommended that Spokane Valley adopt a formal performance appraisal system and the system best suited to his department was the 360-degree type of appraisal (pp. 15 and 23).

The following quote by John F. Walsh, Jr., CEO, General Electric, taken from *360 Degree Feedback* by Edwards and Ewen (1996, p. 3) says:

> Any company that's going to make it in the 1990's and beyond has got to find a way to engage the mind of every single employee. If you're not thinking all the time about making every person more valuable, you don't have a chance. What's the alternative? Wasted minds? Uninvolved people? A labor force that's angry or bored? That doesn't make sense. (Parker, 1998, p. 6)

Parker's ARP, like others mentioned, was directed at improving the evaluation system of his home organization, the Wilson Fire Department in North Carolina. Parker's research reviewed the research of Lobdell (1997), Simms (1996), and Rivera (1996). Parker believes the 360-degree appraisal is "the wave of the future" and he concluded, "the majority of fire departments and the private sector are still using the traditional top down, one-on-one supervisor to subordinate appraisal" (p. 23).

In the winter 1998 issue of *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, Coggburn cites others (Daley, 1992, p32; Mount, 1984) when he points out, "Public organizations have made rather limited use of the subordinate appraisals and, as a consequence, we know relatively little about their practical aspects" (68). As an example for public agencies, Coggburn describes how the South Carolina Department of Archives and History developed and implemented 360-degree

performance management system (68). Hewitt Associates revealed in a 1992 study that 68% of those surveyed indicated performance management was a major priority over the next several years (Hirsch, 1994, p. 20). Atwater and Waldman (1998) estimate 90% of large corporations are using 360-degree appraisals (1996).

The Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) developed the Human Services Performance Management Colorado Peak Performance Options Manual (1999, No date of doc.), available in its entirety on the World Wide Web at http:/www.state.co.us/gov/gss/hr/perfpay/dhsmanual.htm (accessed on 8/11/99). The manual was in response to Colorado statute HB 96-1262. The law requires periodic salary increases to be based on performance.

This system is significant in that it provides a statewide system capable of being adapted to many different governmental job functions. It provides the tools for each agency to tailor performance management systems to meet their needs. Also included in this system are tools for developing 360-degree feedback systems.

Rivera (1996) quotes a variety of performance appraisals from an article titled "A review, an integration and a critique of cross-disciplinary research on performance appraisals and feedback" from the July 1995 *Journal of Business Communication:*

> These include: 1) Management-by-objective (MBO), which considers less the homogenous, standardized criteria and more the job-related and goal oriented systems for performance evaluations, 2) Behavioral observations scales (BOS), which employs a rating scale of intervals defined by specific ranges of occurrence rates, 3) Behavior expectation scales (BES) which set behaviors and measures the employees successes in

> achieving these, 4) Behaviorally anchored rating scales (BARS) an instrument that assesses performance on a scale anchored to specific descriptions of work behavior, and, 5) Mixed standard scales (MSS), a variant of BARS in which the rater compares the performance with a series of behaviorally stated descriptions of the worker's job. (6)

"The procedures followed in developing a BARS also result in scales that have a high degree of content validity. The main disadvantage of a BARS is that it requires considerable time and effort to develop" (Sherman, Bohlander, and Snell, p. 323). They define BARS as "A behavioral approach to performance appraisal that consists of a series of vertical scales, one for each important dimension of job performance" (p. 323). Sherman et al. define BOS as "a behavioral approach to performance appraisal that measures the frequency of observed behavior" (p. 323). They quote Latham and Wexley (1994) when they say large companies have used BOS, and "research shows that users of the system frequently prefer it over BARS or trait scales for (1) maintaining objectivity, (2) distinguishing good from poor performers, (3) providing feedback, and (4) identifying training needs" (p. 324).

Sherman et al. indicate that the results method is more objective and empowering when compared to the behavioral method. Furthermore, they say, results appraisals may inadvertently encourage employees to "look good" on a short-term basis, while ignoring the long-term ramifications. One solution mentioned is management by objectives (MBO), first proposed by Peter Drucker in 1954. Part of the MBO process is the establishment of measurable goals for the employee through the joint effort of the employee and the supervisor. At the end of agreed upon periods, the employee prepares a self-appraisal of what was accomplished which is then reviewed with the supervisor (p. 327).

In the table below, Sherman et al. provide the following summary of various appraisal methods (p. 330):

	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Trait Methods	1. Are inexpensive to develop 2. Use meaningful dimensions 3. Are easy to use	1. Have high potential for rating errors 2. Are not useful for employee counseling 3. Are not useful for allocating rewards 4. Are not useful for promotions decisions
Behavioral Methods	1. Use specific performance dimensions 2. Are acceptable to employees 3. Are useful for providing feedback 4. Are fair for reward and promotion decisions	1. Can be time-consuming to develop/use 2. Can be costly to develop 3. Have some potential for rating error
Results Methods	1. Have less subjectivity bias 2. Are acceptable to employees and supervisors 3. Link individual performance to organizational performance 4. Encourage mutual goal setting 5. Are good for reward and promotion decisions	1. Are time-consuming to develop/use 2. May encourage short-term perspective 3. May use contaminated criteria 4. May use deficient criteria

Reykalin (1997) evaluated different rating systems while considering revisions to the Freemont California Fire Department. Reykalin cites Law (1994, p. 18), “Although MBO provides more objectivity during the appraisal process than some other methods, objectives may be difficult to develop for some jobs” (p. 11). The critical-incident appraisal method, according to Heil (1995), requires the supervisor to identify behaviors (critical incidents) that represent

different levels of performance which are observed and recorded and later used to evaluate the employee. The advantage of this method is that it provides a good record of the employee's behavior. A problem is that instances where the boss can measure an employee's ability or performance are infrequent (p. 11). Reykalin cites Hit (1989, p. 289) in defining BARS as a combination of rating scales and critical incidents. He says the advantage of BARS is that it provides a more consistent rating system than other methods (p. 11).

Rivera (1996) recommended multi-source appraisals for the El Paso Fire Department. He felt it would be applicable to address the diversity issues within the department (p. 22).

Lobdell wrote in his 1997 applied research project for the National Fire Academy:

> The peer appraisal is built on the theory that an employee's colleagues have the most accurate perception of functional performance and that peer ratings are taken more seriously by the employees being rated. The bottom up appraisal is also gaining some acceptance, particularly when rating qualities such as leadership and development of subordinates. The proponents of this method claim that a supervisor is not in a position to have-first hand knowledge of a subordinate's leadership style or abilities. (p. 18)

Herr indicated in his 1999 ARP that the members of the Washington D.C. Fire Department who participated in his 1998 research using a 360-degree feedback process "have all used their feedback in the development of a plan to improve their leadership and management skills" (p. 38).

The 360 system is superior in relation to promotions and it has the ability to encourage self-awareness, stimulate change and improve communication, and "… the 360-degree systems

have the edge, with 68% of respondents believing their systems do make a difference when it comes to measuring results" (Bohl, p. 19).

Research Question 3. What limitations are there in adopting some of these other systems/procedures?

> You've been X-rayed, CAT scanned, poked, prodded and palpated in all the most embarrassing places. Now a kindly professional you've never met is about to pull up a folder with your name and tell you what he or she has found. Only it's not your lower intestine that's about to be discussed, but something even more personal –you–your personality, the way you deal with people, your talents, values, ethics, and leadership-and the folks who did the poking and prodding weren't anonymous technicians, but a half dozen of your closest colleagues at work (O'Reiley, 1994, p.1). (Herr, 1999, p. 11)

In implementing a new performance system as well as introducing a 360-degree performance appraisal system, there are often hurdles to overcome. At the web site of 360-Degree Feedback, accessible on the World Wide Web at http://www.360-degreefeedback.com/faq.html, is a list of frequently asked questions regarding the implementation of a 360-degree feedback system. The question, "How do I know if my organization is ready to conduct a 360-degree feedback?" was answered with the following statement. "By conducting a 360 readiness survey…." The readiness survey should include such topics as 360-degree awareness, support (belief that the organization and managers would support the process) and feedback climate – is the level of trust sufficient? The willingness to

give and receive feedback should also be determined. The basis for building a level of readiness is training both the raters (those who fill out the reports) and ratees (those who are rated) (Prewitt, 1999, p. 8).

Rivera (1996) pointed out that forces outside the fire department may have an impact on planned changes to the evaluation or review process. He also pointed out that the local civil service commission had been sitting on proposed changes for more than a year (p. 21).

In an article titled "Has 360 degree feedback gone amok?", Waldman, Atwater, and Antioioni (1998) in quoting Timeric and Bracken point out "half of the companies surveyed in 1997 that had implemented 360 degree feedback for appraisal had removed it because of negative attitudes from employees and the inflated ratings" (p. 86).

Waldman et al. suggest using 360-degree feedback for feedback purposes only until managers and others gain trust in the process. They say, "Once employees see that negative repercussions are unlikely and managers see that the information is truly helpful, they will be less apprehensive about using 360 ratings for evaluation." They also point out if the rater believes he or she will be identified, their ratings will be less genuine. Anonymous ratings used for punitive actions could result in legal problems because of the inability to trace the source (p. 86).

The 360-feedback system has not been developed as an exact science. "One of its possible flaws is culture shock. Managers who are used to having the only word about his or her employees may have a tough time adjusting to this new team appraisal system" (Hein, 1996, p. 40). Hein also says "managers can feel handcuffed by their subordinates" and he cites Segal as saying, "They fear that anything they do can be challenged from below." There is also the fear that these reviews may unleash biases or aid personal vendettas. Hein cites Lawrence in pointing

out, "No one will want to say anything bad about them and they won't want to say anything bad about who they are going to bat for" (p. 40).

Costs to administer 360-degree feedback evaluations vary. "A standard evaluation instrument like the popular Benchmarks, developed by the Center for Creative Leadership in Greensboro, N. C., runs about $225 per person." Customized instruments may cost as much as $4,000 in up-front fees plus another $150 per person (Hirsch, 1994, p. 20).

Many factors influence 360-degree assessment effectiveness. The most significant are integration with the HR systems and business strategy; valid content; accurate responses; clear results; helpful planning and development support and measurable improvement (Morical, 1999, p. 43). "Planning and development are essential to gaining organizational benefit from a 360 assessment. Most products and systems offer a development planning process, but some (such as 20/20 Insight Gold) go to great lengths to help participants create development plans on their own" (Morical, 1999, p. 43).

"Many systems are relatively new—and behavioral change is a slow process" (Bohl, 1996, p. 19).

Summary

This researcher found through a review of the ARPs of Botto, Herr (1998 and 1999), Lobdell, Parker and Rivera and a review of current literature that there is a trend toward the use of 360-degree evaluations. Research also indicates that the 360-degree type of evaluation will fill in the blind spots in performance observation (Herr, 1999, p. 14). The majority of the research supports the use of the 360-degree evaluation for personnel development only, at least in the initial stages (Atwater and Waldman, 1998, p. 96; Coates, 1998, p. 69).

PROCEDURES

Definition of Terms

360-Degree Feedback : A system of performance evaluation in which input is solicited from those individuals with which one works with such as peers, co-workers, supervisors and customers in addition to a self evaluation.

Rater: The person who completes a performance appraisal.

Ratee: The person who is receiving the performance appraisal.

Limitations

It was assumed that the literary research did not reveal all current subject data, that not all relevant personnel management programs were reviewed, and that the research information was factual and as timely as possible. It was also assumed that those individuals from other departments who completed surveys indicated opinions that were reflective of the entire department. At the time of the ARP, a committee was established to review Anchorage Fire Department job descriptions. The combination of reviewing the job descriptions and personnel evaluations presented a coordination problem.

Research Methodology

Research began at the National Emergency Training Center (NETC), Learning Resource Center in Emmitsburg, Maryland in July 1999. Computer searches were conducted for relevant topics. Key search words were 360-evaluation, full-circle feedback, feedback evaluation and panoramic evaluation. Research continued through the use of the Anchorage Public Library and

the library at the University of Alaska, Anchorage. Extensive use was made of the electronic library on-line accessed through the library systems.

A survey was conducted within the AFD to determine the current attitude toward and adequacy of the current process. Additionally, the survey was intended to determine the readiness for accepting a multi-rater feedback system. A survey of 40 other fire departments of similar size in like-size cities was conducted to determine how those fire departments were handling performance reviews. The following questions were used to survey the attitude of the AFD line personnel: They were taken from Lobdell (pp. 27 - 28), Botto (pp. 8-9), and Deimling (appendix). The survey conducted within the AFD was facilitated through the Municipality of Anchorage Resource Development Department. Mrs. Lisa Arnold used 20-20 Insights software to distribute the surveys electronically. The software recorded and tallied the results.

1. The personnel performance evaluation is a fair measurement of my performance.
2. The personnel performance evaluation is subjective.
3. The personnel performance evaluation addresses my specific job duties.
4. The personnel performance evaluation is current for today's fire service.
5. The personnel performance evaluation encourages positive feedback.
6. I have complete understanding as to what I am evaluated on.
7. The performance evaluation is an effective method for disciplinary action.
8. My last performance evaluation gave me useful feedback.
9. My last performance evaluation helped me set goals.
10. The performance evaluation is a good tool for merit pay increases.
11. I think I could give beneficial feedback to my peers and to my immediate supervisor.

12. I think I would benefit from feedback about my work performance from those who work closely with me.
13. I think evaluations should be associated with pay raises.
14. I think evaluations should be associated with promotions.
15. These evaluations pinpoint employee weaknesses.
16. I would prefer feedback from my supervisor on a more regular basis.

Note: Answer the following question only if you are responsible to evaluate other members in your organization.

17. I have had adequate training in evaluation techniques and procedures.

The answers to the above questions were based on a five-point agreement scale with the following choices: 1--Strongly Disagree, 2--Disagree, 3--Mildly Agree, 4--Agree, and 5--Strongly Agree. Additionally, comments relating to each question were solicited in the following three areas:

1. Behaviors or conditions you hope will continue.
2. Behaviors or conditions that bother you, and why.
3. Improvements that you desire.

The first questions received as many as 400 answers. As the respondents progressed through the survey, the number of comments dropped off. Many of the comments provided throughout the process reflected the entire evaluation process.

A survey was sent to other fire departments to compare the type, composition, and use of, as well as satisfaction with their present performance evaluation system. An Internet search for

big city populations was found at http://www.usatoday.com/news/special/pop003.htm. The Anchorage population of approximately 250,500 was compared to cities with populations between 150,000 and 351,000. Cities of similar size would likely have similar resources for human resource management. Of those cities, those with department sizes of from 100 to 370 people were selected. This provided the 40 departments targeted to receive the survey. The department sizes were determined through the use of the 1998 *National Directory of Fire Chiefs and Emergency Departments*, 7th Edition. The following survey questions were adapted from the ARP of Rivera (p. 34).

1. My department evaluates personnel:

   A. biannually **B**. annually **C**. semiannually **D**. Other (specify).

2. My department uses performance appraisals for: (indicate all that apply)

   A. promotions **B**. merit pay increases **C.** tracking performance

   D. determining probation compliance **E.** training and development

   F. Other (specify).

3. My department's performance appraisals include:

   A. written form only **B**. written form and counseling session

   C. counseling session only **D**. supervisor to subordinate feedback

   E. 360-degree feedback **F**. Other(specify).

4. My department has:

   A. adopted 360-feedback **B**. used and discarded 360-degree feedback

   C. not used 360-degree feedback **D**. Other(specify).

5. Our present evaluation system was last revised:

A. within the last two years **B**. within the last 2 to 5 years **C**. within the last 5 to 10 years **D**. more than 10 years ago.

6. What percentage of evaluators in your department have been trained in the use of the evaluation system and providing feedback?

   A. None **B**. 0-25% **C**. 25-50% **D**. 50-75% **E**. More than 75%.

7. My department uses different forms or formats for different positions. **YES NO**
8. Performance standards were used in developing criteria for our present evaluation program. **YES NO**
9. Our supervisors and employees provided input into developing our present performance standards. **YES NO**
10. Our evaluation system is fair and objective. **YES NO**
11. Our evaluation system meets our needs. **YES NO**
12. We are planning on reviewing our evaluation system within the near future. **YES NO**

The process of improving the present evaluation system began at the battalion chief level. To be effective and to set the example, the plan was to implement a top-down approach. The present trait method Battalion Chief Evaluation Survey was then sent via e-mail to the Battalion Chief of Operations, all battalion chiefs, and all captains and senior captains for comment. The evaluation was modified to reflect suggested changes, then redistributed for final approval.

RESULTS

Research Question 1. How is the current checklist used?

Survey Question 1. The personnel performance evaluation is a fair measurement of my performance. There was no strong agreement or disagreement toward this question. The average was 2.5. The responding battalion chiefs showed the most deviation with an average of 2.33 (Figure B1). Many of the comments reflected beliefs that the immediate supervisor was not always in a position to observe the traits on which one was rated. Many expressed a belief that co-workers and other supervisors should have input too. Common rating errors and biases were mentioned in addition to a lack of consistency among raters, and a lack of standards or guidelines.

Survey Question 2. The personnel performance evaluation is subjective. The average response, 3.63, indicated that the present evaluation form is subjective and no group average reflected an indication that the criteria were not subjective (Figure B2). Several respondents indicated the present evaluation was subjective and they felt it was proper to be subjective. Many comments reflected a lack of standards. Additionally, there were comments indicating a desire for feedback from more than one source. As in the previous question, there were referrals to a lack of rater training.

Survey Question 3. The personnel performance evaluation addresses my specific job duties. While the average of 3.35 indicated the majority felt that the process addressed specific job duties, two of the groups, paramedics and senior captains disagreed. The firefighters gave the highest rating with an average of 3.79 (Figure B3). Numerous comments reflected the changes since integration of the fire and EMS. For example, there is no evaluation tool that covers the firefighters while working on the ambulance, which may be one-half of the time in some cases. The paramedics, who split their time between the engine company and an

ambulance, reflected the same concern. Comments also reflected a desire for performance input from peers.

Survey Question 4. The personnel performance evaluation is current for today's fire service. With an average of 3.02, this survey question does not reflect an opinion that the present system has a strong application to today's fire service. Only the group of firefighters indicated any positive average reflecting application toward today's fire service (Figure B4). The paramedics and senior captains rated this area the lowest. A few of the respondents indicated the lack of applicability to the changed job requirements. Several comments indicated that the present criteria are applicable but not used properly.

Survey Question 5. The personnel performance evaluation encourages positive feedback. With the exception of the engineer and senior captain ranks, the remainder of the group leaned toward a positive indication that the present performance evaluation encouraged positive feedback (Figure B5). However, all groups were within one-half of a point either side of mildly agreeing. Most of the comments reflected the perception that the process set the climate for one to receive positive feedback. Many felt they were receiving positive feedback, some felt they were getting nothing of value from the evaluation system, and several felt the rater's lack of training in conducting evaluations was the real problem.

Survey Question 6. I have complete understanding as to what I am evaluated on. Survey results indicate only a mediocre understanding of what an individual is rated on. With an overall average of 3.37, there is no indication that individuals strongly feel they understand how they are rated (Figure B6). Many of the comments in previous questions were applicable to the whole process. Of the comments received, several reflected a desire for more regular feedback, not necessarily a formal evaluation. Many continue to indicate they are not being given clear

direction on how they are evaluated or what is expected. The comments reflect a perception of a lack of consistency among raters.

Survey Question 7. The performance evaluation is an effective method for disciplinary action. All ranks indicated an opinion that the performance evaluation was not a good tool for disciplinary action (Figure B7). The average response was 2.32. The evaluation should be used for constructive criticism and personal development, "it's a joke", "not used properly anyway", and "can't be relied on" were some of the comments. Another comment was "Don't wait for the annual evaluation to discipline someone."

Survey Question 8. My last performance evaluation gave me useful feedback. There was no strong indication that performance evaluations provided positive feedback (Figure B8). The paramedics and senior captains disagreed the most. Of the comments made, the desire for multi-source feedback stands out. Several comments from this question and from other questions also indicate belief that supervisors are not putting a sincere effort into preparing performance evaluations and the evaluations received are not useful.

Survey Question 9. My last performance evaluation helped me set goals. Survey results indicate the performance evaluation process is not helping individuals set goals (Figure B9). Although the average response was low, 2.72, numerous comments reflected some goal setting was taking place. The low level of agreement reflects a belief that the overall process is not as helpful as members believe it should be.

Survey Question 10. The performance evaluation is a good tool for merit pay increases. With an average of 2.58, there is a strong indication that the opinion is performance evaluations should not be used for merit pay increases (Figure B10). Some felt merit pay would lend credence to the evaluation system but the majority of respondents indicated they felt that using

the system for merit pay increases would cause ratings to be inflated due to the desire not to take money from a friend or co-worker.

Survey Question 11. I think I could give beneficial feedback to my peers and to my immediate supervisor. An average of 3.62, with all groups averaging more than 3.0, indicated the individuals believed they could provide positive feedback to their supervisors (Figure B11). The comments reflected some degree of skepticism regarding providing feedback to supervisors. Some felt they would be open to retribution and others commented they didn't want to "rock the boat." There were numerous comments reflecting a belief that they would like the opportunity to provide feedback to subordinates and co-workers.

Survey Question 12. I think I would benefit from feedback about my work performance from those who work closely with me. Question 12 was answered with a strong indication that all ranks felt they would benefit from performance feedback from those they worked with. The average was 3.94 overall (Figure B12). The battalion chief average was 4.83. There were a few comments stating that peer feedback was not desired; however, the majority of comments supported the idea of getting relevant feedback from co-workers.

Survey Question 13. I think evaluations should be associated with pay raises. The average was 3.07. Question 13 reflected a slightly positive attitude toward associating evaluations with pay raises (Figure B13). The comments seemed to be split. Many felt they should be rewarded for doing their job, some indicated they believed the evaluation system wouldn't work well and wasn't reliable enough to do this, and others reiterated the belief that the evaluation system is too inflated.

Survey Question 14. I think evaluations should be associated with promotions. The average was 3.44 with all ranks indicating positively that evaluations should be associated with

promotions (Figure B14). The majority of the comments indicated a belief that evaluations should play some part in the promotion process. There were continued comments reflecting the unreliability of the evaluation system. Some commented that connecting evaluations to promotions would cause the ratings to be inflated.

Survey Question 15. These evaluations pinpoint employee weaknesses. Question 15 survey answers indicated a significant negative belief that the evaluation process pinpointed employee weakness (Figure B15). Replies to this question and previous questions continue to indicate a belief that evaluations don't reflect "reality". The positive comments were few. One comment was, "They can't pinpoint weakness if they are not used right."

Survey Question 16. I would prefer feedback from my supervisor on a more regular basis. The overall average of 3.52 indicated an opinion that individuals prefer feedback more regularly (Figure B16). All but the senior captain rank supported the idea of obtaining more regular supervisory feedback. The comments revealed a belief that many would prefer more regular feedback but felt more regular formal appraisals were too cumbersome. There were multiple indications that individuals received regular feedback.

Survey Question 17. I have had adequate training in evaluation techniques and procedures. Of the survey questions, question 17 received the lowest average of 1.92. The overall belief was that personnel do not receive adequate training regarding performance evaluations (Figure B17). From the comments, few indicated they had received training while working for the Anchorage Fire Department. Several indicated they received their training from a previous employer.

Research Question 2. How are other like-sized fire departments evaluating behavior?

Of the 40 surveys sent to the 40 like-sized departments, 39 were returned. This researcher's evaluation of employee performance appraisals in the fire service is based more on the survey results rather than current literature because it was minimal.

Four of the forty-nine respondents indicated that they did not conduct periodic performance evaluations. These four departments are in states in which the fire service operates under state civil service. The survey results are based on the thirty-five departments that conducted periodic performance evaluations. One department indicated that they used performance evaluations only for probationary employees and another indicated that they used performance evaluations during the first five years only for merit pay increases.

Figure C1 shows the majority of the survey respondents conduct performance appraisals annually. Four respondents indicated that they conducted them on other occasions, such as use in disciplinary action.

Over 70% of respondents used evaluations to track performance and probation compliance. One indicated they were used for disciplinary action (Figure C2).

The majority of the respondents, 91%, indicated that their appraisals included a written form and a counseling session (Figure C3). One indicated they used 360-degree feedback; however, in the following question seven respondents indicated they were using 360-degree feedback. Surprisingly, one indicated that they had used and discarded 360-degree feedback (Figure C4).

More than half the respondents revised their evaluation systems within the last 5 years and half of them had revised within the last two years (Figure C5).

Greater than one-fourth of the respondents indicated more than 75% of their employees were trained in the use of the evaluation system and providing feedback. Of these, two commented that all were trained. At the other end of the scale, six indicated that none of their employees were trained (Figure C6).

Figure C7 reflects survey questions 7 through 12. More than half of the respondents used different evaluation criteria for each position. More than half used performance standards in developing evaluation criteria and the majority used employee input in the development process. Most felt their present system was fair and objective and met their needs. Two-thirds planned to review the process in the near future.

Research Question 3. What limitations are there in adopting some of these other systems/procedures?

In the survey of members of the Anchorage Fire Department, questions 11 and 12 revealed that the majority of respondents believed they could provide and receive positive feedback from their supervisors and co-workers (Figure C11 and C12). A positive employee attitude toward accepting a new evaluation, especially a 360-degree feedback system, is an essential step (Prewitt, p. 8).

Section I of the Municipality of Anchorage Performance Management Review Handbook allows individual departments to have the flexibility to develop evaluation systems of their own as long as they meet established guidelines. The purpose is to "accommodate the flexibility in performance management system design and its adaptation to different groups, departments, or teams (p. 5)." The guidebook encourages both management and employee participation in developing the performance appraisal system.

This researcher obtained cooperation from the Municipal Human Resources Department, the Fire Chief and his senior staff and the numerous other employees and co-workers contacted. The software to administer the performance evaluation system is already in place and being used in other municipal departments. This researcher believes the limitations are minimal.

DISCUSSION

Research Question 1. How is the current checklist used?

Performance evaluations have not been used in the promotional process. Before 1985 they were used to support merit pay step increases. Since that time they have been used to monitor the progress of probationary employees. Their use in the employee developmental process depends largely on the motivation and training of the rater.

A discussion with 30-year veteran Capt. Dave Fridley on December 3, 1999 revealed an interesting perspective regarding change in the use of performance appraisals within the department. Once performance appraisals became tied to step pay increases, Capt. Fridley felt the applicability and use of the system degenerated greatly. Battalion Chief John Huxley, in a conversation on December 29, 1999, supported this comment. Two survey questions were related to this issue. Should evaluations be tied to pay raises and should they be tied to merit pay increases? The average response in favor of tying evaluations to pay increases was 3.07, mildly agree. When the context of the question was phrased to relate to merit pay increases, the average response was 2.58, less than mildly agree. This may be because the Anchorage Fire Department presently does not use merit pay increases and most of the newer employees aren't aware that the department ever did. Many of the comments reflected a desire to receive a benefit for good performance. Wanguri (1996) supports tying evaluations to pay and benefits to give the evaluation system some teeth, otherwise, he believes the evaluation system becomes unimportant. Waldman et al. believe the evaluation system should only be tied to pay after the employees have gained faith in the system. It has also been suggested that employee evaluations, especially 360-feedback, be used initially only for personnel development (Atwater and Waldman, 1998, p. 86).

Roberts quoted Bernardin and Beatty, and Harris, Smith and Champagne when he wrote "The available research evidence demonstrates that performance appraisal is most accurate for developmental purposes, and is more lenient with administrative uses. Hence, personnelists face tremendous challenges in facilitating the integration of both developmental and administrative purposes with multiple sources of input" (301).

The same issues regarding use of performance evaluations arise in the context of disciplinary action and promotions. These too are subjected to the same biases and problems as the previously discussed pay issues.

One common evaluation method has been to prepare the evaluation, then summon the employee to read and sign the document. Little if any training has been devoted to performance evaluations. Most seem to perpetuate the current process. However, some officers have used subordinate and peer feedback and self-evaluations in preparing the annual reviews for their subordinates. Additionally, some use the process as a developmental tool, but they are in the minority. Survey questions and comments regarding fairness, knowledge of specific duties, receipt of positive feedback, an understanding of evaluation criteria, goal setting and pinpointing employee weakness all reflected low levels of confidence and beliefs that these needs were not being met. This ties directly to the total lack of formal training of supervisors in conducting employee performance appraisals. The average reply to the survey question regarding the receipt of such training was less than 2.0 on the 5-point scale.

Roberts cites Bernardin and Beatty in saying, "Raters require training in providing performance feedback, counseling employees, conducting the appraisal interview, setting goals and performance standards, cultivating employee participation, identification and avoidance of rating errors, information processing strategies, documentation techniques, diary keeping, and how to use the appraisal rating form, among other subjects" (301). He goes one to cite Daley and Roberts in pointing out that "an effective training program requires a session of one or two days in length with periodic refresher courses" (p. 301).

Herr (1999) cited Hymes when he discussed circumstances in which a firefighter came to a battalion chief to complain about the behavior of his captain. Further investigation revealed the problem had been a long term and possibly "understated" one (p. 14). Hymes went on to say:

> Because fire stations create a decentralized workplace, battalion chiefs and officials at more senior levels, seldom achieve close contact with subordinate supervisors. We can't monitor supervisory skills as directly as we would like. We generally observe the company's performance and take our cues from there. Since we, as managers, are charged with tremendous responsibility in terms of employee development, we require feedback from every angle to ensure that our subordinates are adequately and appropriately trained. (p. 14)

A decentralized work environment and lack of employee observation by supervisors was mentioned numerous times in the comments of Anchorage Fire Department members. Many employees believed their supervisors had little opportunity to observe them and when they comment on their behaviors, the supervisor's comments were unfounded.

Many of the comments from the Anchorage Fire Department survey revealed individual desires for a means of communicating to supervisors and co-workers regarding their behavior. Cogburn (98) cites McEvoy (1990) in saying the subordinates of a manager are in probably the best position to observe their leadership traits. Their observations come from a totally different perspective than that of peers and supervisors. This also was reflected in the comments. Individuals believed their co-workers had accurate feedback to provide. The majority of respondents indicated they both wanted to give feedback and receive feedback from their peers.

Prewitt quotes Maxine Dalton, a researcher with the Center for Creative Leadership who says; "those who rate a boss or peer may feel highly uncomfortable about giving a frank evaluation." The comments of more than one individual reflected this feeling.

"There is nothing wrong with tying feedback to personnel and pay decisions, provided that the feedback is about results. People should be held accountable for results and rewarded for achieving them. But in a desire to 'pay for performance,' organizations sometimes mistakenly focus on the competence aspect rather than the results aspect of performance. They make this error because they fail to appreciate the distinction between competence and results. Those using multisource feedback are especially prone to fall into this trap, because 360-degree feedback makes it easier to gather competence data than results data" (Coates, 1998, p. 69).

Research Question 2. How are other like sized fire departments evaluating behavior?

Most departments use a written form and counseling session to annually evaluate performance and probation compliance.

Most of the departments surveyed are not using 360-degree evaluations. Seven of the 35 departments that were conducting performance evaluations were using a 360-evaluation process. Parker cites Hollenbeck (1997, p. ix), "Like it or not, 360-degree feedback has become an accepted fact in organizations today, and its use is still growing " (p. 10).

Approximately one-fourth of the respondents indicated that most of the employees were trained in using the evaluation process. Most felt their systems were fair and objective. One-half of the respondents used performance standards in developing evaluation criteria and the majority used employee input to develop their evaluation system.

The larger number of personnel trained in administering personnel evaluations is likely responsible for the high level of personnel evaluation system satisfaction among the respondents.

Research Question 3. What limitations are there in adopting some of these other systems/procedures?

It is important to control the temptation to apply the performance feedback to issues other then personnel development. "…Most companies have limited 360 to developmental exercises, such as team building and management preparation. Now a few are venturing into the controversial realm of using it for performance review, with the multiple appraisals tied to critical decisions such as salaries and promotions" (Prewitt, p. 8).

Most who use 360 conclude that it should not be connected to pay (Hirsch, 1994, p. 20). Additionally, the appraisal could be used to support a performance contract that if exceeded could result in a pay increase (p. 20).

> There are valid reasons for limiting the use of 360-degree feedback to developmental purposes and separating it from the formal appraisal process. First, researchers have demonstrated that when individuals believe the ratings will be used for performance appraisals, they may alter their ratings. Generally, the ratings are favorable; but occasionally employees see this as a chance for retribution, so they lower their ratings.
>
> Second, if the ratings are used as part of the individual's appraisal, game playing may occur. Supervisors may try to get higher ratings by catering to subordinates – at the expense of meeting organizational goals. Or supervisors may implicitly or explicitly indicate that if you give me good ratings, I'll give you good ratings.

> Third, in some companies, the idea of subordinate or peer ratings as part of one's appraisal is so taboo that many individuals boycott the process and refuse to participate. (Atwater and Waldman, 1998, p. 96)

"Many individuals involved in the 360-degree feedback implementation process strongly discourage its use for evaluation. The "Center for Creative Leadership in Greensboro, N.C. even restricts the use of their published instrument to development purposes only" (Atwater and Waldman, 1998, p. 96).

> It's important to understand that competence and behaviors—knowledge, skills, attitudes and the way these play out in practice –aren't the only factors that influence results. Individual competence is just one of an impressive array of variables that exert a strong influence on results: strategy, structure, culture, values, executive leadership, team leadership, planning, work process design, incentives, internal motivation, personal character, individual style, the quantity and quality of feedback, access to information, the quality of communication and information systems, authority, staffing, facilities, equipment, transportation and funds. (Coates, 1998, p. 69)

Coates (1998) credits experience with showing that linking 360-feedback to personnel decisions undermines the process by introducing bias in the ratings (p. 69).

Atwater and Waldman (1998) recognize many organizations are ready to make the transition to using 360 evaluations for more that personnel development. "As one client stated,

'how could having more raters than merely one's supervisor make the appraisal process any worse?'" (p. 96).

"Multisource feedback evolved over two decades as a developmental tool—a way to help people build new skills and overcome weaknesses—not as a performance-appraisal tool" (Coates, 1998, p. 69). In one company, the 360-degree evaluation tool is optional, and is given six months before appraisals tied to compensation. When used in this manner, employees have time to learn and make changes prior to an appraisal tied to compensation (Herr, 1998, Discussion with Dr. David Pass, p. 33).

Unfortunately, the 360-Degree Feedback system has not been developed into an exact science. One of its flaws is culture shock. Hein says managers who are used to having the only word about his or her employees may have a tough time adjusting to this new team appraisal system. "To combat this, a system should be implemented over a period of time starting with a developmental program and then adding the tie-in to compensation once the company has adjusted to the process" (Hein, 1996, p. 42).

Communicate the ground rules. Experts warn that highly competitive situations can bring out the worst in a 360-degree process and that feedback can get pretty brutal (Hirsch, 1994, p. 20).

Using 360 requires an understanding of performance. One usage refers to the "final results…" (Coates, 1998, p. 69). It refers as well to how the work gets done. How do employees interact and treat their subordinates? Are they skilled and knowledgeable? In this sense, performance has to do with behaviors exhibited in the course of producing results (Coates, 1998, p. 69).

"Both results and behaviors can be measured, but they are measured differently and separately. This means they should be managed differently and separately. The failure of performance appraisals to separate the two process has caused many of its problems, with or without the use of 360 feedback" (Coates, 1998, p. 69).

Bryson and Alston explain the initial strategic planning process:

> Step 1 of the strategic planning process is to develop the initial agreement among key decisions-makers and opinion leaders about the overall plan. The agreement will establish support for worthiness and that the scope of plan identifies organizations, units, groups, or persons who should be involved or informed, the tasks involved, activities and time frames for completions and reports, that a committee coordinates the plan's process policies and directions, that there are teams to set up the day-to-day process and project the daily needs of the plan, that resource requirements are available before the effort begins, and that there are process champion(s) to advocate for the process. (Herr, p. 28)

Discussion Summary

The Anchorage Fire Department survey reflected a strong willingness to use and provide feedback to supervisors, peers, and co-workers. This eliminates one of the major hurdles in implementing a 360-degree appraisal process. Survey results also indicate a great degree of dissatisfaction with the manner in which the present evaluation system is administered. Some groups believe it doesn't reflect their current job duties. This is mostly due to the reorganization in 1995 after which no modification to the evaluation process was made. The system doesn't

pinpoint employee weaknesses, help set goals, or provide much useful feedback. Judging from the survey comments, the present trait evaluation criteria are considered fair and accurate. Job descriptions are presently being rewritten; this will address some of the concerns regarding understanding one's job requirements. The elements of National Fire Protection Standard 1021, *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* (1997), is being incorporated into the job descriptions.

The major issue is the lack of training in conducting employee performance appraisals. An appropriate training program would improve the present system greatly and would likely resolve most of the concerns expressed in the Anchorage Fire Department survey. Some comments reflected the opinion that supervisory personnel did not have time to conduct employee evaluations in light of their other duties. The "care and feeding" of our primary resource, our personnel, should be the highest priority.

The problems relating to the decentralized work-sites within the fire service environment and the relation to employee observations for performance feedback could likely be resolved by the implementation of a 360-degree feedback system. At least initially, this information should be used solely for personnel development.

Concerns of inflated performance appraisals will be resolved by providing performance evaluation system training to all employees and the establishment of what is expected of an employee through clearer job descriptions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The battalion chief evaluation criteria has been completed and submitted to the employees who will be part of the 360-degree process at the battalion chief rank. Surveys

reflected a high degree of readiness to implement a 360-degree feedback system at the battalion chief level. To implement the system, the following process is recommended.

Incorporate the evaluation criteria into the software program. For each subordinating trait, use a 10-point rating scale with no midpoint. In addition to the rating scale, feedback should be solicited in the following three areas in relation to each trait:

1. Behaviors or conditions you hope will continue.
2. Behaviors or conditions that bother you and why.
3. Improvements that you desire.

The 20-20 Insights evaluation process keeps all the responses confidential and provides reports in several formats.

Provide training to all members prior to any implementation. This will solve many of the problems experienced in administering the personnel performance program.

The next step recommended is to administer the 360-degree evaluation process to the battalion chiefs and monitor the progress. While this initial phase is being implemented, the evaluation criteria for the remaining ranks should be evaluated and modified as appropriate. It is recommended that a committee representing each group be appointed to modify the present criteria and/or develop new criteria. The evaluations of the remaining ranks should be implemented as the evaluation criteria is developed and incorporated into the software. The implementation should be modified as insight into the previous applications is gained.

"Shorter surveys reduce respondent fatigue and boost participation" (Morical, 1999, p. 43). "Another way to reduce survey size and perhaps increase accuracy is to ask people for only the information for which they are the appropriate source " (Morical, 1999, p. 43). It is recommended that the survey respondents only be required to respond to pertinent criteria. As

with the battalion chief's evaluations, all of the criteria were deemed important by those involved in the process but no one will observe all traits during a rating period.

Lobdell recommended the following steps for implementing a program for the Spokane Valley Fire Department (p. 25).

- Involve labor representatives at the onset.
- Establish labor/management teams to create the specific performance applications, which should relate to job descriptions.
- Select evaluation teams for each position.
- Train all personnel in how to provide feedback to others.
- Train all personnel in how to receive feedback.
- Train all supervisors to create effective follow-up plans.
- Implement the evaluations.
- Assess the results with labor/management teams.
- Make any modifications as necessary.

At Eastman Chemical Co. the bulk of the 360-degree feedback comes from a survey with four questions:

- What is it I do that you feel is especially well done?
- What am I doing that you wish I would quit doing?
- What would you like me to do more of?
- If you had one single piece of advice you could give me to improve my effectiveness, what would it be? (Birchard, 46)

"Its not just about strengths and weaknesses and what we must pay you for your current level of performance. It's about how we can make your strengths much stronger." (Linda Kane, vice president of human-resources development at Stride Rite. Hirsch, 1994, p. 20).

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APPENDIX A

Letter to Chiefs of Like-Sized Departments

(Anchorage Fire Department Letterhead)

October 8, 1999

NAME/POSITION
DEPARTMENT
ADDRESS
CITY, STATE, ZIP

Dear Chief (LAST NAME);

Subject: Survey

The enclosed survey is part of an applied research project for an Executive Development Class at the National Fire Academy. I am using the survey to help determine how the Anchorage Fire Department's personnel evaluation program compares to that of like-sized departments in like-sized cities. Thanks for your help with this project.

Sincerely,

Wade Strahan
Battalion Chief

Enclosure (1)

APPENDIX B

Survey Questions Sent to Anchorage Fire Department Personnel

Figure B1.

Question 1: The personnel performance evaluation is a fair measurement of my performance.

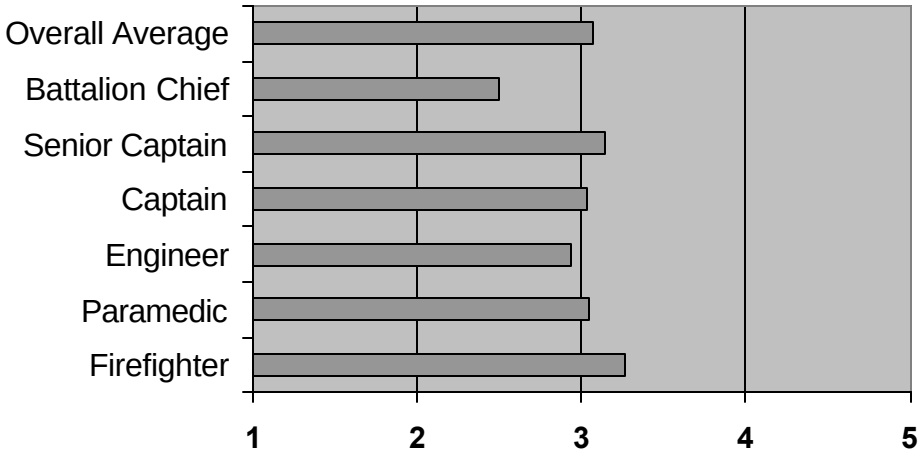


Figure B2.

Question 2: The personnel performance evaluation is subjective.

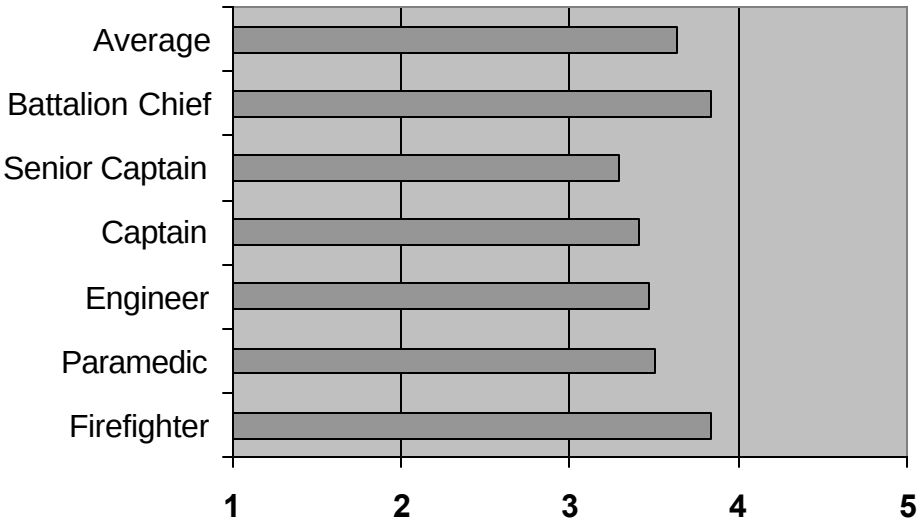


Figure B3.

Question 3: The personnel performance evaluation addresses my specific job duties.

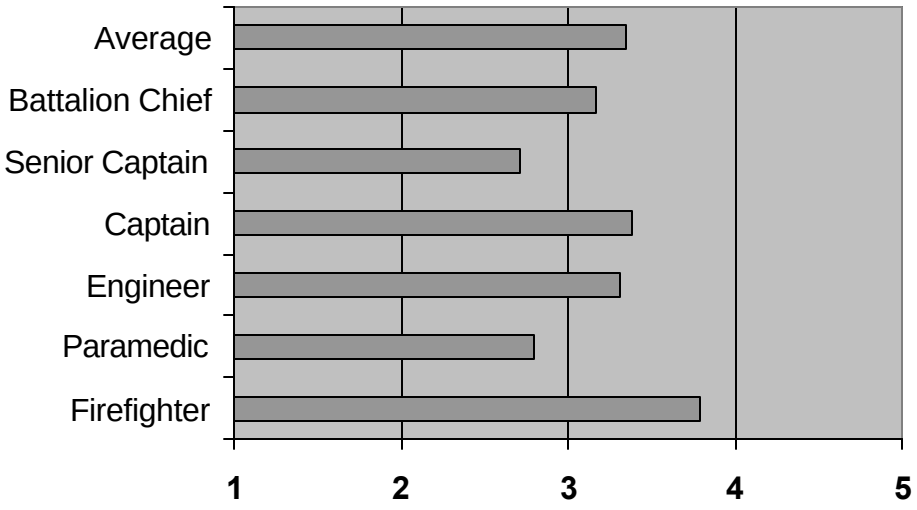


Figure B4.

Question 4: The personnel performance evaluation is current for today's fire service.

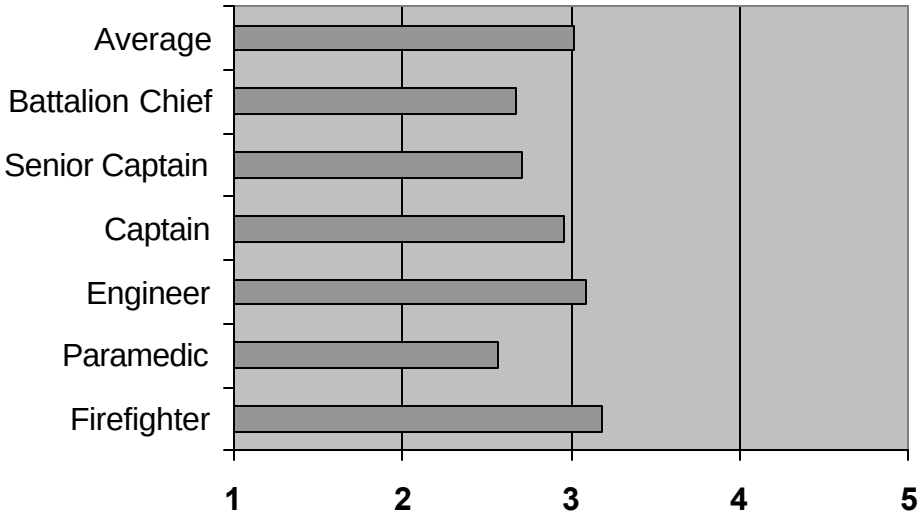


Figure B5.

Question 5: The personnel performance evaluation encourages positive feedback.

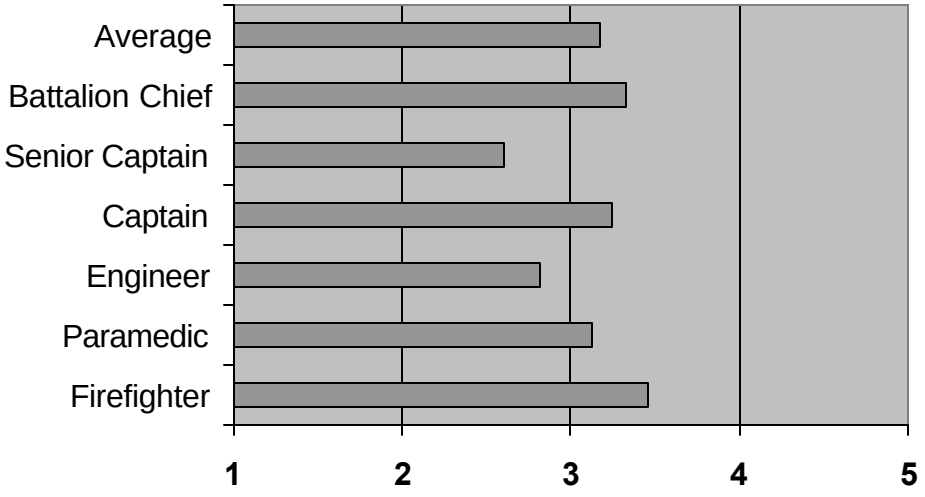


Figure B6.

Question 6: I have complete understanding as to what I am evaluated on.

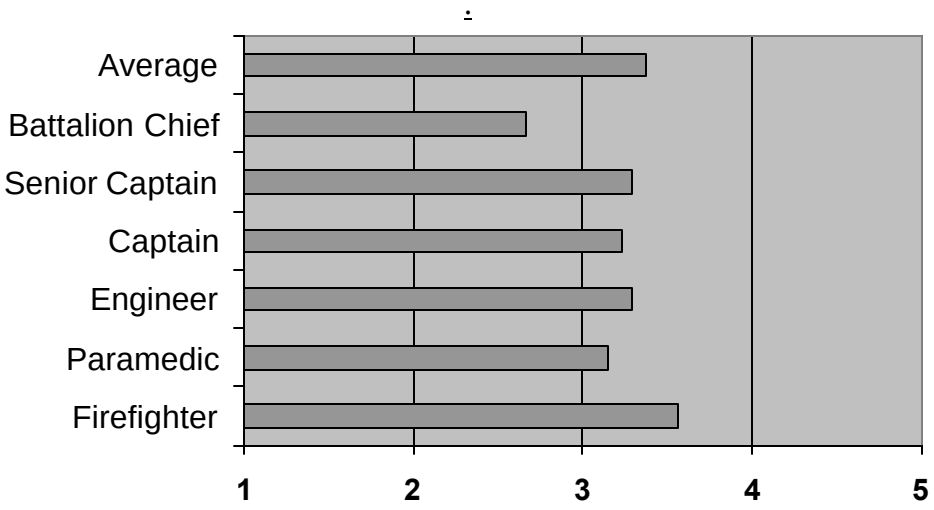


Figure B7.

Question 7: The performance evaluation is an effective method of disciplinary action.

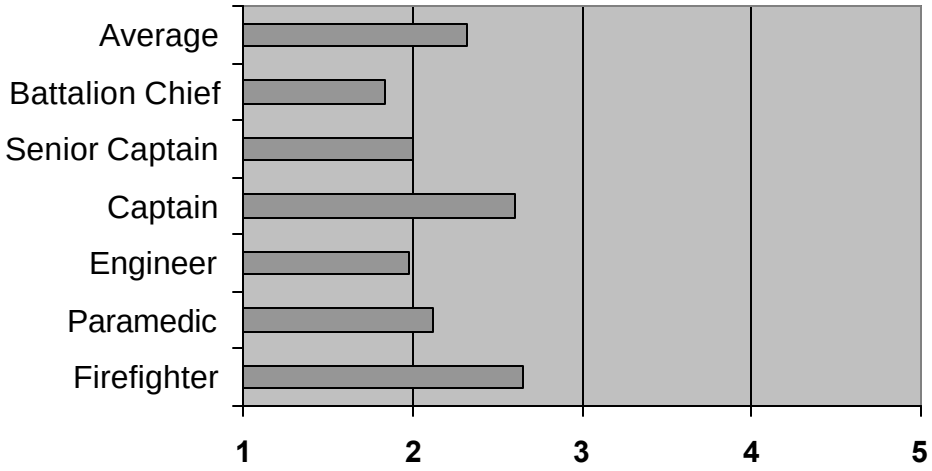


Figure B8.

Question 8: My last performance evaluation gave me useful feedback.

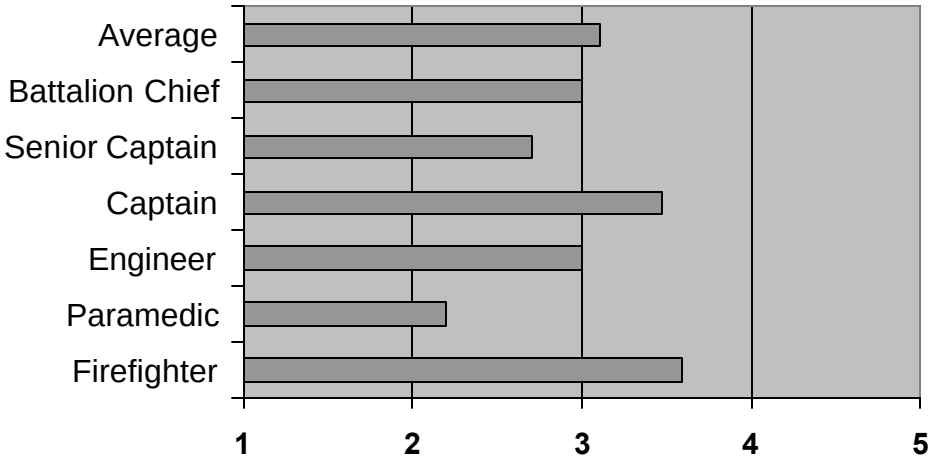


Figure B9.

Question 9: My last performance evaluation helped me set goals.

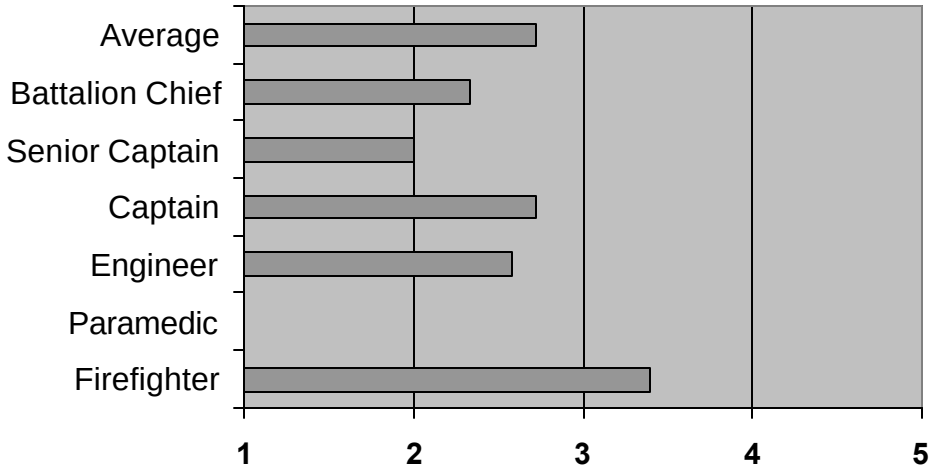


Figure B10.

Question 10: The performance evaluation is a good tool for merit pay increases.

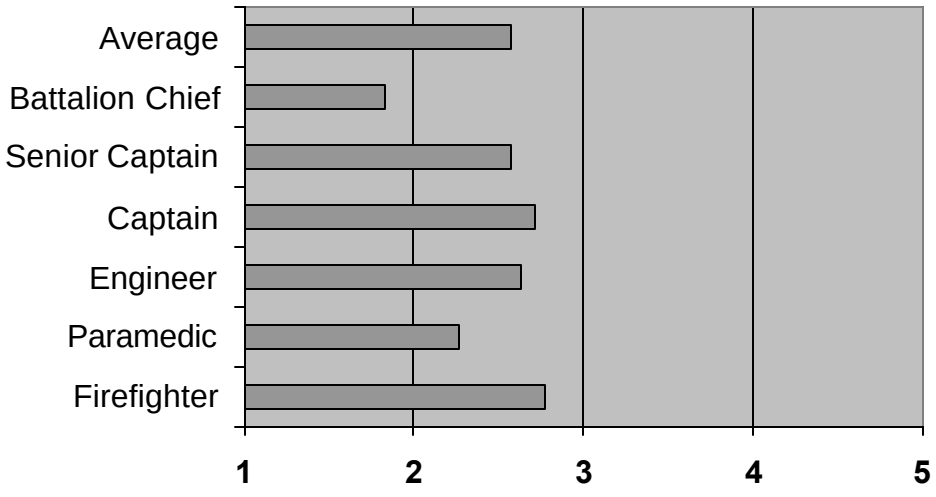


Figure B11.

Question 11: I think I could give beneficial feedback to my peers and to my immediate supervisor.

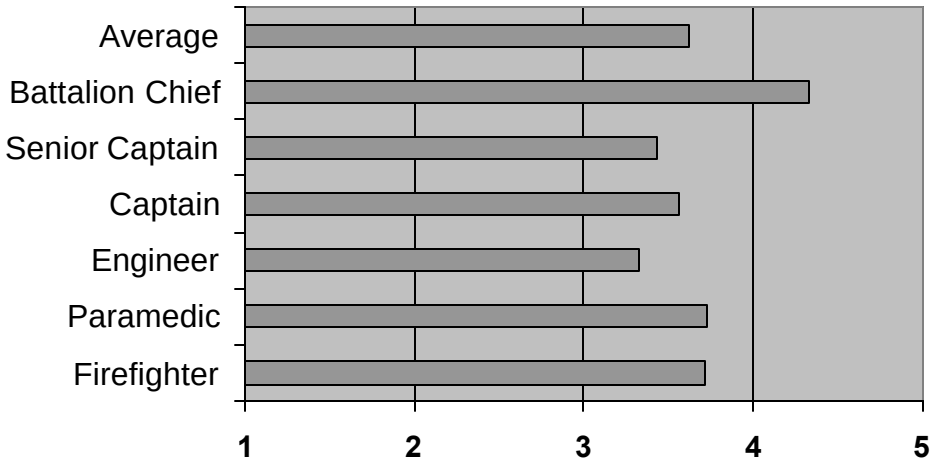


Figure B12.

Question 12: I think I would benefit from feedback about my work performance from those who work closely with me.

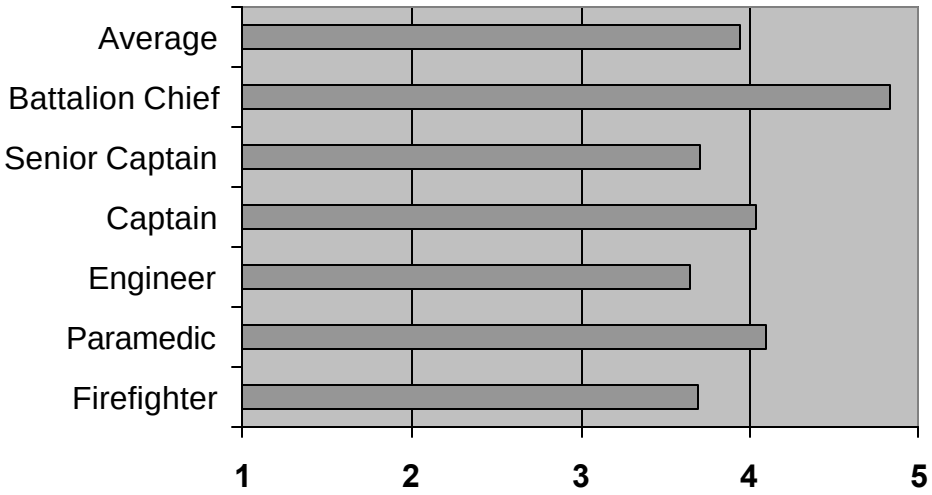


Figure B13.

Question 13: I think evaluations should be associated with pay raises.

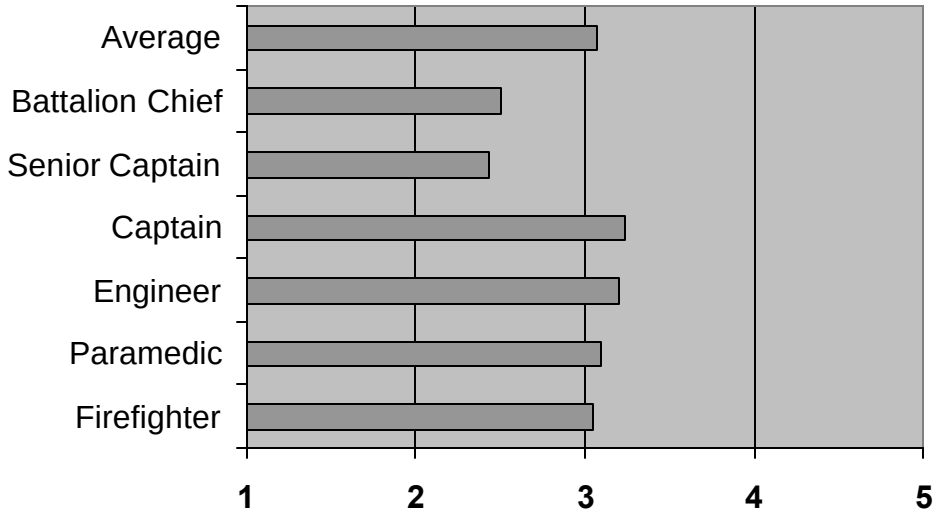


Figure B14.

Question 14: I think evaluations should be associated with promotions.

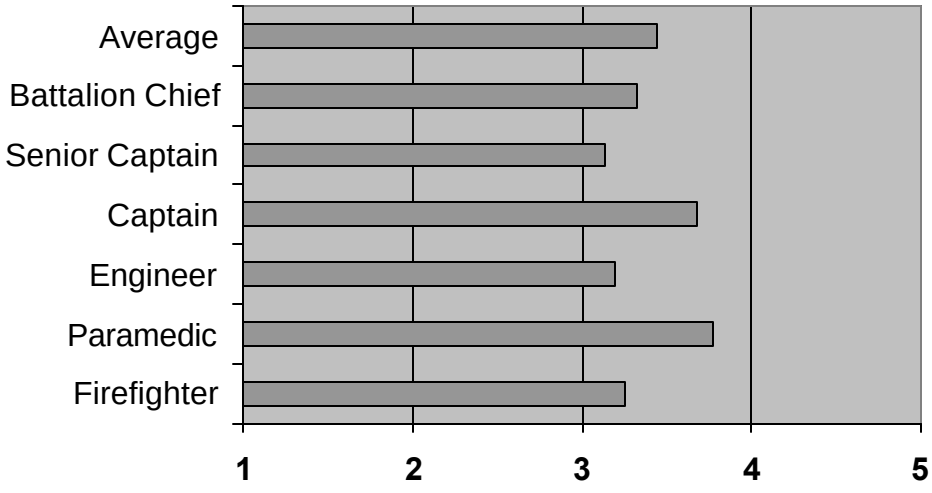


Figure B15.

Question 15: These evaluations pinpoint employee weaknesses.

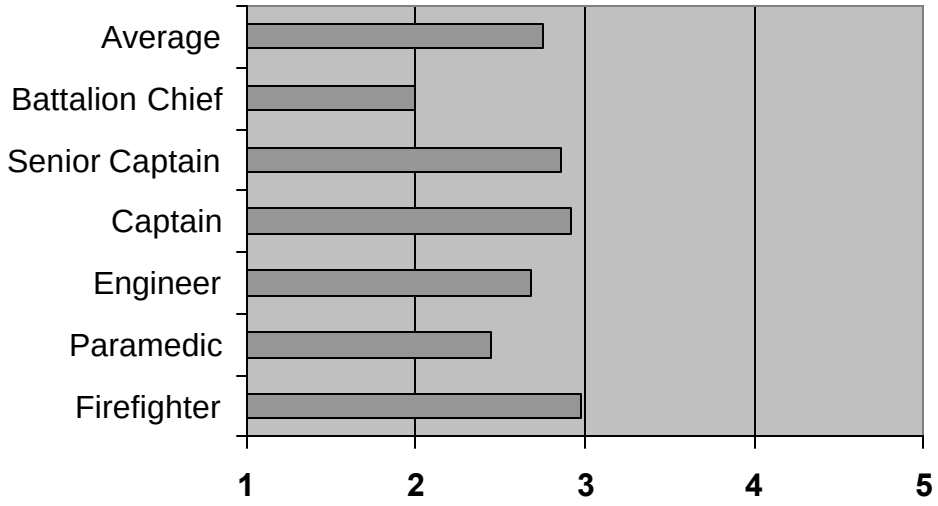


Figure B16.

Question 16: I would prefer feedback from my supervisor on a more regular basis.

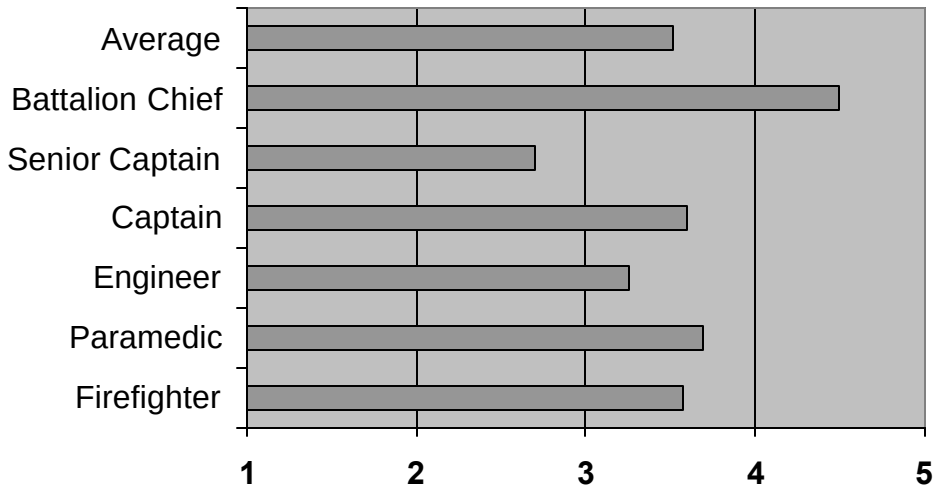
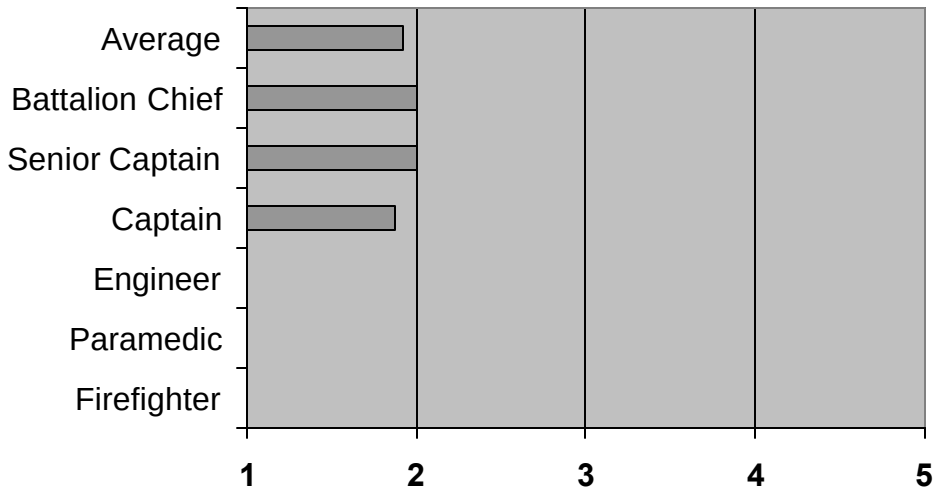


Figure B17.

Question 17: I have had adequate training in evaluation techniques and procedures.



APPENDIX C

Figure C1.

Question 1: My department evaluates personnel:

A. biannually **B**. annually **C**. semiannually **C**. Other (specify).

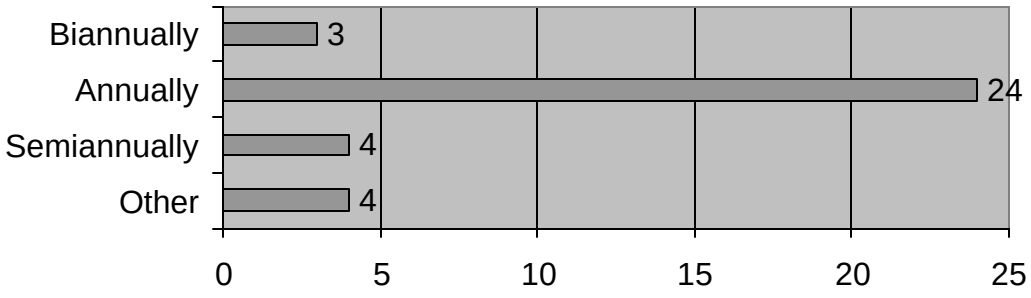


Figure C2.

Question 2: My department uses performance appraisals for: (indicate all that apply)

A. promotions **B**. merit pay increases **C.** tracking performance

D. determining probation compliance **E.** training and development

F. Other (specify).

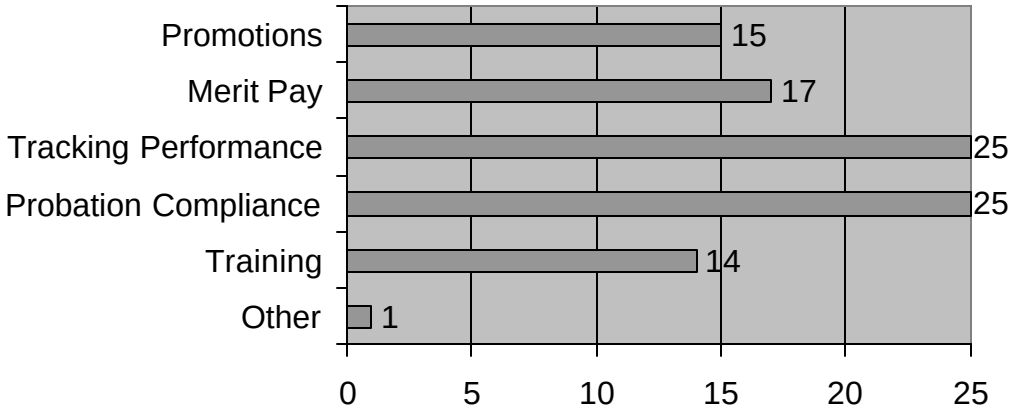


Figure C3.

Question 3: My department's performance appraisals include:

A. written form only **B**. written form and counseling session **C**. counseling session only **D**. supervisor to subordinate feedback **E**. 360 degree feedback **F**. Other(specify).

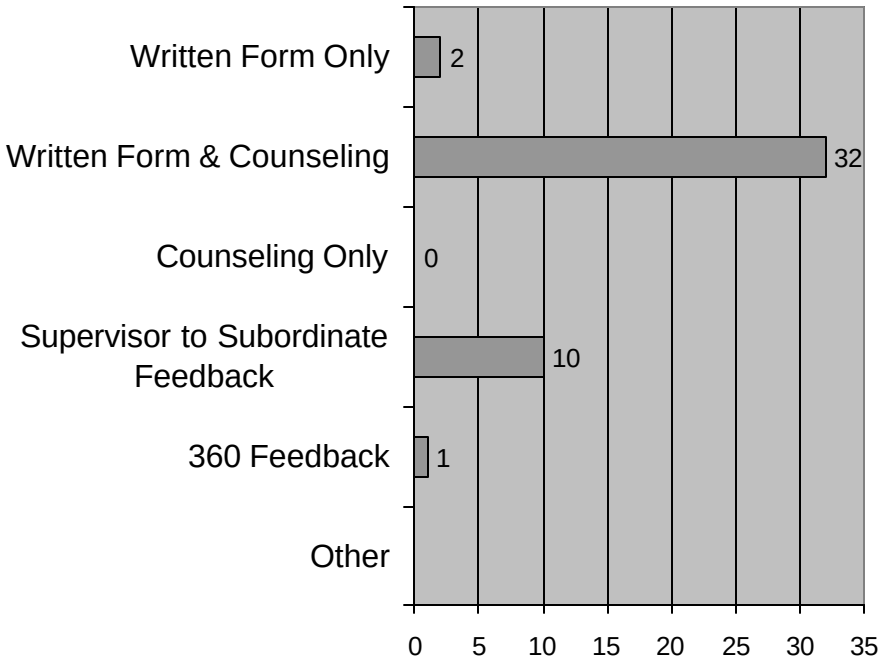


Figure C4.

Question 4: My department has:

A. adopted 360 feedback **B**. used and discarded 360 degree feedback

C. not used 360 degree feedback **D**. Other(specify).

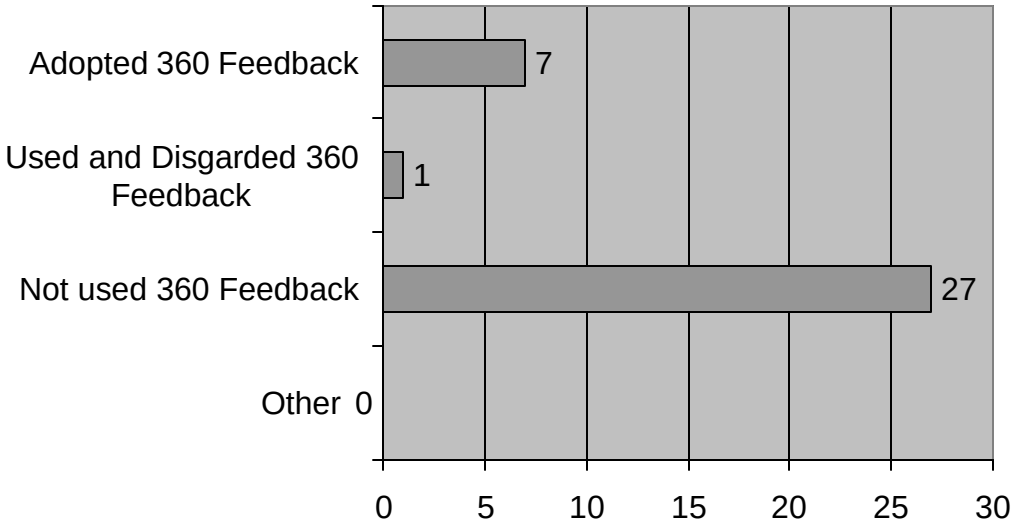


Figure C5.

Question 5: Our present evaluation system was last revised:

A. within the last two years **B**. within the last 2 to 5 years **C**. within the last 5 to 10 years

D. more than 10 years ago.

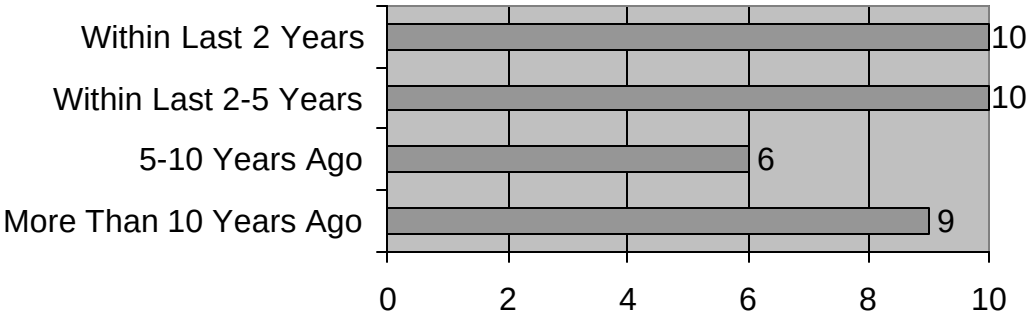


Figure C6.

Question 6: What percentage of evaluators in your department have been trained in the use of the evaluation system and providing feedback?

A. None **B**. 0-25% **C**. 25-50% **D**. 50-75% **E**. More than 75%

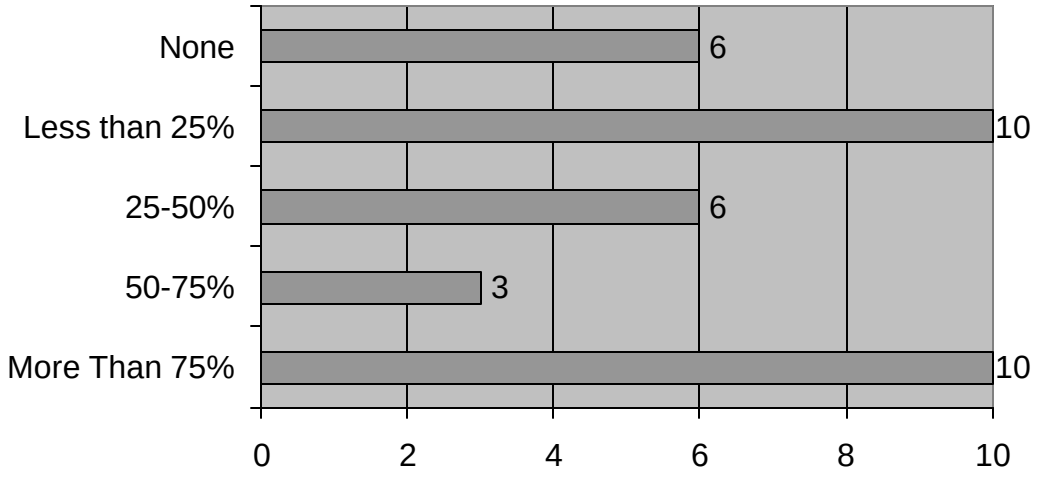


Figure C7.

Question 7: My department uses different forms or formats for different positions. YES NO

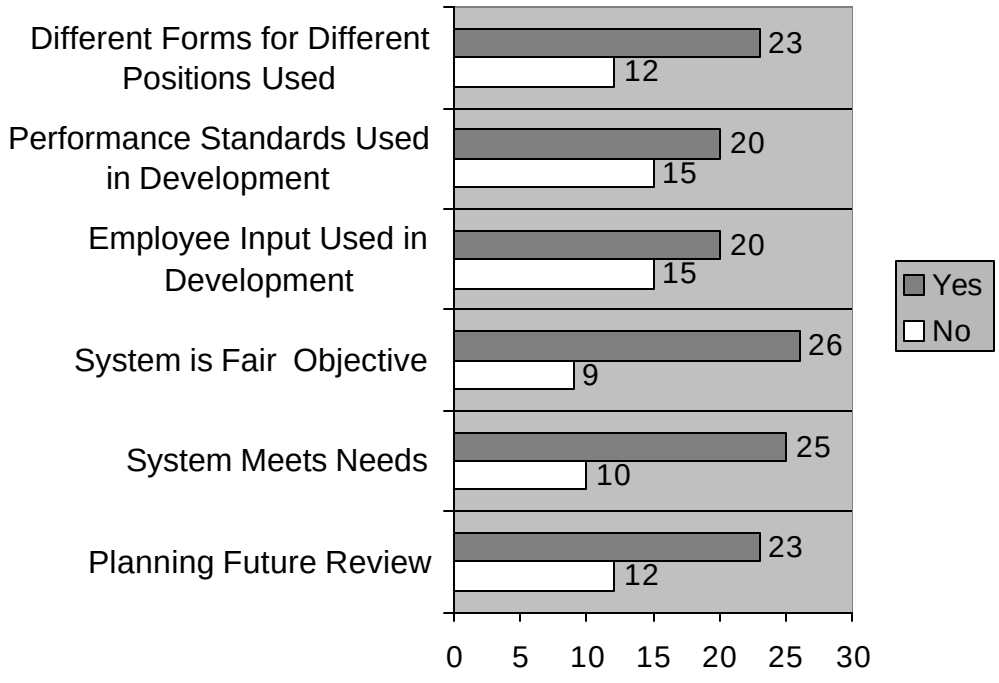
Question 8: Performance standards were used in developing criteria for our present evaluation program. YES NO

Question 9: Our supervisors and employees provided input into developing our present performance standards. YES NO

Question 10: Our evaluation system is fair and objective. YES NO

Question 11: Our evaluation system meets our needs. YES NO

Question 12: We are planning on reviewing our evaluation system within the near future. YES NO



APPENDIX D

Anchorage Fire Department Battalion Chief Evaluation

Section A: Supervision and Direction of Emergency Operations

Performance Criteria:

- Demonstrates adequate knowledge of firefighting tactics and procedures.
- Observes safety considerations in placement and assignment of apparatus and personnel.
- Maintains an acceptable level of radio discipline during emergency conditions.
- Provides frequent status reports of operations to next level of command.
- Promptly returns companies to service when no longer required at emergency scenes.
- Assumes and maintains responsibility and control in emergency situations. Is decisive.
- Provides strong, direct, and visible command presence.
- Displays sound judgement and flexibility in performing size-up, planning, organizing, directing, controlling, and coordinating emergency scene activities (sound tactics and strategy).

Section B: Assignment, Supervision, & Evaluation of Company Officers.

Performance Criteria:

- Company officers understand job assignments and level of performance expected.
- Effectively delegates job tasks and duties appropriate to individual company requirements.
- Corrective action to improve unsatisfactory attendance or performance.
- Outstanding performances or disciplinary actions are documented and processed.
- Exhibits ability to resolve personnel problems.
- Evaluates quality of work by company officers and advises them of results.

- Maintains good rapport with subordinates without diminishing supervisory authority.
- Performs progress checks on subordinates' assignments.
- Protects employee confidentiality and rights.
- Evaluates performance objectively.
- Acknowledges and addresses both strengths and weaknesses of employees.
- Provides ongoing performance feedback to employees throughout the year.

Section C: Implementation and conformance with department policies, rules and regulations.

Performance Criteria:

- Sets a good example by adhering to policies, rules and regulations.
- Periodically reviews policies and advises company officers of any changes.
- Insures that company officers are cognizant of policies and comply with them.
- Policies are applied equally at all times. No favoritism evidenced.
- Advises supervisor of any problems encountered in interpretation of policies.
- Evaluates policies and recommends changes, deletions or revisions.
- Policy violations are quickly recognized and corrective action initiated.
- Solicits comments from subordinates concerning effectiveness of policies.
- Exhibits thorough knowledge of union contract.
- Stays current on e-mail and other information sources.
- Maintains a professional and uniformed appearance throughout the day.

Section D: Inspection of Equipment, Buildings and Personnel.

Performance Criteria:

- Facilities, equipment and personnel are inspected periodically.
- Company officers are informed of problem conditions if any exist.
- Provides specific instructions for correction/improvement of conditions.
- Special attention is given to protective clothing and personal safety equipment.

Section E: Assignments and/or Staff Functions

Performance Criteria:

- Maintains good working relationship with fellow employees at all levels.
- Completes special job assignments in a timely and satisfactory manner.
- Exhibits the ability to perform to apply sound management principles to staff endeavors.

Section F: Preparation and Processing of Reports and Other Documents.

Performance Criteria:

- Exhibits knowledge and willingness to accept temporary additional responsibility.
- Demonstrates ability to apply management skills in decision making process.
- Recognizes and resolves potential problems which could affect department efficiency.
- Exhibits leadership qualities necessary for promotion to higher command level.
- Writes specific, descriptive comments on annual review forms and submits them in a timely manner.

Section G: Leadership

Performance Criteria:

- Acknowledges and promotes strengths and accomplishments of subordinates.
- Accepts responsibility for enforcing department standards/expectations. This includes leading by example and using his/her authority in a positive way.
- Ensures that subordinates comply with the policies and procedures, rules and regulations of the department.
- Positively addresses performance deficiencies of subordinates and counsels them.
- Conducts meetings efficiently and in an effective manner. This includes, if necessary, establishing an agenda, providing opportunities for members to speak, setting a direction, resolving problems, providing minutes, and using time efficiently.
- Sets goals for his/her own responsibility area. Advises peers of these goals and how these goals may be accomplished.
- Is continually seeking ways to improve.
- Challenges conventional thinking.
- Takes ownership of own actions and mistakes.
- Provides timely feedback to employees on issues requiring managerial assistance, direction, and/or action.
- Participants in physical fitness at an intensity that insures personal benefit. Maintains physical condition consistent with expectations of the position.
- Is physically able to perform assigned duties.

- Demonstrates an attempt to gain knowledge of response area – street location, preplans, target hazards and shares the knowledge.

Section H: Interpersonal Skills

Performance Criteria:

- Is courteous, polite, and considerate when dealing with the general public. Treats all others with patience and respect and is sensitive to diversity issues.
- Has a good relationship with co-workers. Actively seeks to avoid a negative influence in the work group.
- Has a good relationship and interacts positively with superiors.
- Is flexible, diplomatic, and inspires group cooperation. Works as an active member to ensure that team projects are completed.
- Understands the importance of working as a team member in all job areas and demonstrates this in daily activities by assisting others and seeking assistance when needed.
- Works well with other agencies and departments; i.e., police, building department, solid waste, streets, etc.

Section I: Communication

Performance Criteria:

- Written expression is thorough, neat, and accurate.
- Relays pertinent and accurate information to superiors and subordinates in a timely manner.

- Communicates verbally in an effective, clear, and appropriate manner and confirms a mutual understanding.
- Effectively listens to and conducts radio traffic in a professional manner.
- Follows oral and written directions with little or no miscommunication. Is able to understand instructions and, when necessary, asks for clarification.

Section J: Organizational Commitment

Performance Criteria:

- Participates in problem solving and goal setting.
- Accepts and supports the organization's overall direction and policy.
- Implement policy decisions consistent with the overall mission.
- Lends experience and expertise to achieve organizational goals.
- Represents the department or the Municipality before the general public.
- Follows up on agendas from higher management levels.
- Coordinates with local, state and federal agencies.
- Maintains good working relationships with other departments.
- Works to eliminate ineffective or outdated policies.