

Succession Planning for Senior Chief Officer Positions
For The Tulsa Fire Department

Executive Development

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as part of the Executive Fire Officer Program

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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.

Signed: _____

Abstract

The preparation of future fire service leaders is a shared responsibility between current management and its subordinates. The problem was the Tulsa Fire Department (TFD) had a significant portion of its upper level management retiring within the next five years, and there was a limited number of internally qualified personnel to fill senior level management positions.

The purpose of this research is to identify how the Tulsa Fire Department can develop and increase its pool of qualified senior chief officer candidates.

Descriptive research methodology was utilized to answer the following questions:

1. What guidelines or standards are available to establish a senior chief officer development process?
2. What are other departments doing with senior chief officer development programs?
3. What is the current senior chief officer development process for the Tulsa Fire Department?
4. What modifications could be made to the senior chief officer development process that would enhance candidate preparation?

The procedures utilized for this applied research project included an extensive literature review on succession planning and officer development

programs. Two survey instruments were developed and distributed in an effort to collect specific data on current candidate eligibility (interdepartmental survey) and the current use of formal chief officer development programs by the market cities as defined by the current bargaining agreement between the city of Tulsa and IAFF Local # 176 (City of Tulsa, 2006) (external survey). The information compiled was analyzed, and a comparison was made to the TFD's current senior chief officer development process.

The results of the research concluded that TFD would benefit from implementing a formal succession plan and senior chief officer development program.

The recommendations established for the TFD included to formalize and define a senior chief officer development program, to gain support from the current senior chief officers and Human Resources Department, to establish a senior chief officer development program, and to establish a Senior Chief Officer Development and Succession Planning for the Tulsa Fire Department Committee.

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Introduction

The problem is the Tulsa Fire Department (TFD) has a significant portion of its upper level management retiring within the next five years and there is a limited number of internally qualified personnel to fill senior level management positions. The purpose of this research is to identify how the TFD can develop and increase its pool of qualified senior chief officer candidates. Descriptive research methodology will be utilized to answer the following questions:

1. What guidelines or standards are available to establish a senior chief officer development process?
2. What are other departments doing with senior chief officer development programs?
3. What is the current senior chief officer development process for the TFD?
4. What modifications could be made to the senior chief officer development process that would enhance candidate preparation?

Background and Significance

The City of Tulsa is located in the northeast quadrant in the state of Oklahoma. This general area is also referred to as “Green Country.” Tulsa is approximately ninety miles northeast of the capital city, Oklahoma City, and is the second largest city in the state. The City of Tulsa maintains a population of

approximately 400,000 residents (Tulsa Metro Chamber, 2006) and a Metropolitan Area Population in excess of 800,000 (Tulsa, Oklahoma). The Tulsa Fire Department (TFD) was formally established in 1900 and offers a wide range of services focused on delivering quality life and fire safety services. The Field Operations section is divided into three platoons providing three shifts for fire suppression personnel. The department maintains thirty-one fire stations housing twenty-nine engine and twelve ladder companies. The Special Operations section includes Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting (Airport) Branch, Hazmat/Technical Rescue Branch, Emergency Medical Service Branch and the Training Division. The Safety Services section includes the Code Enforcement and the Fire Investigation branches. The Safety and Engineering, Finance, Physical Resources and Administrative Staff branches are under the supervision of the Command Staff. With an authorized uniformed strength of 692 members, the Department offers the citizens of Tulsa a wide variety of suppression, safety and prevention services.

Over the past three years, the TFD has seen significant changes in the middle management chief officer positions primarily due to retirement. For the purposes of this research paper, middle management chief officer positions are defined as District Chiefs (15) and Staff Chief Officers (7). Both of these positions hold the pay grade and rank of FDO5. Over the past several years, the TFD has experienced relatively no change in the senior level chief officer positions. For the purposes of this paper, senior level chief officer positions are defined as Assistant Chief Officers (3), Chief of Homeland Security (1), Deputy

Chief Officers (3) and the Fire Chief. The three Assistant Chiefs and the Chief of Homeland Security hold the pay grade and rank of FDO6. The three Deputy Chief Officers hold the pay grade and rank of FDO7. There are a total of eight senior level chief officers including the Fire Chief employed with the TFD. Currently, all senior level chief officers are eligible for retirement.

In 2005, the TFD administration mandated that all senior level chief officer candidates must possess a bachelor's degree in a fire service or a business related field. This mandate has caused some up-and-coming middle managers to initiate effort toward accomplishing the bachelor's degree and has caused others to step back and become content with their current positions.

Today, the TFD finds itself with eight senior level chief officers at retirement age. Furthermore, several of these officers have either contractually or verbally committed to leave within the next five years. Based on these facts, it is imperative that the TFD adequately prepare middle managers for promotion to senior level positions and implement a formal succession plan for the future leadership transition.

The significance of this applied research project (ARP) relates to the professional development issues and organizational culture changes curriculum discussed in the Executive Development course (NFA 2004). This ARP relates to The United States Fire Administration (USFA) operational objective: "To respond appropriately in a timely manner to emerging issues" (FEMA 2004).

In order for the TFD to continue to provide quality life and fire safety services, and meet the administrative demands that are a prerequisite for a

department of its size, our future leaders must be adequately prepared to manage senior level programs. This ARP will examine senior chief officer development and succession planning programs in order to help facilitate and support the future replacement of the TFD's senior chief officers.

Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to research components of senior chief officer development programs and succession planning models. This review process includes findings from both the private and public sectors relative to senior chief officer development programs and succession planning. Research data reviewed was primarily collected from a) National Fire Academy's Learning Resource Center, b) human resources management textbooks and manuals, c) National Fire Protection Associations Standards, and d) Tulsa Fire Department Training Center.

The need to maintain and facilitate leadership and officer development programs is a prerequisite for all effective organizations and high performing teams. Pernick (2002) outlines nine essential tasks to develop a leadership program: 1) Devise Program Selection Criteria, 2) Define Leadership Competencies, 3) Establish an Application Process, 4) Assess Current Leadership Skills, 5) Provide Developmental Activities, 6) Align Structures to Reinforce the Program, 7) Develop Leaders in Context, 8) Plan for the Next Generation of Leaders and 9) Evaluate the Leadership Development Program (p.10-17). Pernick

(2002) believes that systematic leadership development is a strategic choice, representing a long-term investment in an organization's future.

According to Compton (2003), on all fire service leaders' "list of concerns is the issue of developing leaders in fire departments and throughout the fire service industry" (p. 141). Compton (2003) emphasizes many aspects of development that should receive attention, and they are all important to preparing our future leaders for success. The aspects mentioned are a) Education, b) Training, c) Experience, d) Interpersonal skills and e) Integrity (p. 141).

Fleming (2002) states the primary difference between line officers and chief officers is that line officers function as supervisors, and chief officers function as managers. Chief officers are responsible for performing the four basic management functions: planning, organizing, directing and controlling. Furthermore, Fleming (2002) mentions that the greatest barrier to an effective transition from line officer to chief officer is failing to recognize the changes in roles and responsibilities accompanying advancement to chief officer positions.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standard 1021, Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications, has developed an interrelated set of performance standards for the fire service. Fire officer requisite knowledge and skills are outlined for various officer levels ranging from Fire Officer I through Fire Officer IV (NFPA 1021, 2003, chap. 3-7). Also, the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) incorporates NFPA 1021 in their Officer Development Handbook designed to guide future fire service leaders in accomplishing their career goals (IAFC, 2003).

According to Gates (2003) we must continue to develop people as they progress through the ranks if they are to be effective leaders. Mentoring, the process by which organizational knowledge and experiences of senior executives are transferred to others in the organization is a valuable learning mechanism widely employed in the private sector but almost nonexistent in the fire service (Gates 2003). The ramifications of productive mentoring efforts could lead to cloudy succession planning, undeveloped management skill sets, lower employee morale, and the lack of knowledge transfer. Gates (2003) discusses that in the long term, it will be vital to the success of fire service organizations worldwide to engage in formal mentoring at the executive level. Gates (2003) mentions four mentoring approaches: a) formal, b) informal, c) one to one, and d) peer mentoring. If you want to raise up future leaders in your organization, you must give them good examples to follow from people willing to plant footsteps of successful, compassionate leadership (Cleveland 2004). Cleveland (2004) expresses that all we know is completely worthless unless we show the leadership to be willing to give away what we have.

According to Morris-Lee (2001), succession planning is an issue of leadership development, not management training. Effective succession planning involves getting leaders and potential leaders to stay with their departments, and in so doing, develop their leadership skills and long-term vision for their departments. Morris-Lee (2001) states that the characteristics of potential successors include problem analysis, creative thinking, exercising judgment, drive, resilience, and empathy. According to Morris-Lee (2001), there are three

essential elements of a workable succession plan: 1) assessing competency and potential, 2) measuring preferences, and 3) executing the plan. An important point to remember is that a succession plan is not a static document but a dynamic, continuous process.

According to Ludwig (2005) essential components in succession planning should 1) identify critical positions and develop job profiles for them, 2) develop a replacement chart, 3) develop high potential profiles for candidates, 4) incorporate appraisal systems, and 5) establish individual development plans.

The fire service is experiencing an unprecedented transition of leadership as post World War II Baby Boom officers yield to Generation X and the Gen X officers hire recruits who weren't alive when Jimmy Carter was president (Cleveland 2004). Fire departments throughout the nation should start thinking now about how to systematically replace management as a way to sustain and enhance organizational performance. Succession planning and officer development go hand in hand; each component represents an effort to ensure that future leaders are prepared to step into their new roles.

Procedures

The author of this applied research project utilized the descriptive research method in order to compile research and information regarding subject matter on succession planning and senior chief officer development programs.

An extensive literature review led the initial phase of this applied research project. Research data was primarily collected from: a) National Fire Academy's

Learning Resource Center (LRC), b) human resources management textbooks and manuals, c) National Fire Protection Associations Standards, and d) the Tulsa Fire Department Training Center.

Two survey instruments were developed and utilized to gather specific information concerning the TFD's and the TFD's market cities', as defined by the collective bargaining agreement between the TFD and the International Association of Fire Fighters Local 176 (City of Tulsa), senior level officer development and succession planning programs (See Appendix A and B). The Tulsa Fire Department Senior Chief Officer Development Survey found in Appendix A was distributed through inter-office mail delivery to twenty-nine chief officers who are currently employed with the TFD. This interdepartmental survey maintained a cover letter which explained the purpose of the survey, gave instructions for completing the survey with a reasonable return date for said survey, and stated a willingness to share the results of the research with the chief officer sample group. Upon expiration of the return date requested, a total of twenty-six interdepartmental surveys were collected which equated to a return rate of eighty-nine percent.

The second survey, the Market Cities Senior Chief Officer Development Telephone Survey found in Appendix B, was conducted with ten fire departments of like kind and similar genetic make up to the Tulsa Fire Department. The telephone survey yielded a one hundred percent response. The universe of cities surveyed and their corresponding phone numbers are stated in Appendix C.

Some of the limitations identified with this research are a) the reliance of the information provided by the participants was based on their personal knowledge of succession planning and senior officer development programs; b) the respondents of the telephone survey are assumed to be from human resource management departments and/or maintain positions within their organizations that hold senior level chief officer responsibilities for human resource management within their department; c) the interdepartmental survey that was utilized leaves the responses and feedback open to subjectivity based on very personal experiences with the promotional process and/or past experiences with other promotional opportunities and assignments.

Definitions:

Senior Level Chief Officer for the Tulsa Fire Department - Fire Chief, Deputy Fire Chief (3), Assistant Chief (3), and Chief of Homeland Security.

Middle Management Chief Officer for the Tulsa Fire Department - District Chief (15), Staff Chief Officer (7).

Succession Planning - An organized and systematic way to ensure that employees in a particular organization are capable, competent, qualified, and willing to replace and/or succeed to strategic roles within the organization.

Results

The results of this applied research project were compiled from the procedures performed and the literature reviewed. Four research questions were answered through the study of business and fire service human resource management literature,

interdepartmental and external fire department surveys, national standards, and applied research projects submitted as a part of the National Fire Academy's (NFA) Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP).

Research question 1: What guidelines or standards are available to establish a senior chief officer development process?

Research yielded the following as some of the most popular and productive guidelines or standards that are available to establish a senior chief officer development process: 1) the National Fire Protection Association 1021(NFPA 1021) Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications, 2) formal and informal mentoring programs, 3) job rotation programs, 4) the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program (EFOP), 5) continued formal education, and 6) Chief Fire Officer Designation through the Commission on Fire Accreditation International, Inc.

Research question 2: What are other departments doing with senior chief officer development programs?

The most common guideline utilized by the fire service industry as a foundation for senior chief officer development is the NFPA 1021. Out of the ten market cities surveyed, eight respondents reported that their departments utilized at least part of the standard as a guideline for senior level management positions. All ten market city respondents were at least familiar with the standard.

Fire service organizations throughout the nation are participating in formal and informal mentoring programs. Many of the more formal programs are mandatory for eligibility to participate in promotional processes or are a requirement prior to permanent assignment into the higher ranking position. Formal mentoring programs are being used

by five of the ten market cities surveyed. However, respondents from only two of these five cities reported that mentoring programs were specifically in place to emphasize the development of the senior level chief officer. All market city respondents expressed that they felt their departments were participating at some level in informal mentoring and/or coaching programs. Furthermore, research shows that opportunities to perform informal mentoring is inclusive of all ranks and is expected to be practiced at most supervisory levels in fire service organizations.

Job rotations are utilized by many departments to prepare their senior level chief officers. Short term rotations for middle management members who desire to promote appears to be the most common. Only two of the ten market cities surveyed maintained some form of a job rotation program. There were no cities surveyed that maintained a mandatory job rotation at the senior chief officer level.

The NFA's EFOP **is currently being utilized by fire service organizations throughout the nation. Through conversations with survey respondents and fellow EFOP participants, it is clear that the EFOP is considered both a guideline and a standard for senior chief officer development programs. All market city respondents expressed that their departments were familiar with the EFOP. Zero out of 10 surveyed stated that their departments mandated the EFOP. Ten out of ten surveyed felt that their department would support or participate in the EFOP in the future. The EFOP is marketed as a graduate level program which lends itself as an opportunity for senior level chief officers to be on the cutting edge of fire service executive leadership practices.

Many fire service organizations throughout the country rely on the formal education process as a part of their senior chief officer development program. Most fire

service organizations choose to use some level of formal education as a gatekeeper for promotional examinations. Formal education is considered by most departments to be a part of a minimum competency that is required for middle management and above. All market cities surveyed required the completion of at least 60 college credit hours in order to participate in their respective promotional processes for senior level chief officer positions. Each respondent also discussed that the chances of becoming the Fire Chief with anything short of a graduate level degree would be slight. Five out of the 10 respondents revealed that a bachelor's degree or the completion of the equivalent number of college hours is a requirement in their departments for the senior level chief officer position of Deputy Chief. Typically, these chief officer positions have the responsibility of managing a section or division and performing the Fire Chief's responsibilities when so assigned.

Several departments have sought accreditation through the Commission on Fire Accreditation International, Inc. This same organization offers the opportunity of attaining Chief Fire Officer Designation through an accreditation process. This certification mandates certain educational accomplishments and job experience requirements (CFAI 2000). Some fire departments are recommending the accreditation process as a part of a senior level chief officer development program. However, data gathered from the respondents of the market cities revealed that an average of less than 30% of the senior level chief officers in the market cities maintain the Chief Fire Officer Designation. Most market city respondents felt that the Chief Fire Officer Designation program was not well marketed.

Research question 3: What is the current senior chief officer development process for the Tulsa Fire Department?

Currently, the Tulsa Fire Department does not have a formal senior chief officer development process. There are three prerequisites required to promote to senior level chief officer that could be classified as components of a senior chief officer development process. These requirements are 1) completion of a bachelor's degree, 2) completion of a minimum of fifteen years of service with the Tulsa Fire Department, 3) completion of a minimum of two years of service as a district or staff chief officer with the Tulsa Fire Department.

The Tulsa Fire Department Senior Chief Officer Development Survey yields valuable insight into the Tulsa Fire Department's chief officer desires, perceptions, eligibility, and knowledge of the promotion processes and senior chief officer development opportunities inside and outside of the department.

Survey results show that 34% of respondents consider themselves eligible for senior level chief officer positions. The Tulsa Fire Department's Personnel Board determines final eligibility of any promotional candidates by verifying prerequisites mandated by the promotional process and the testing policies and procedures section of the Administrative Operating Procedures for the Tulsa Fire Department (Tulsa Fire Department, 1999). Furthermore, it should be noted that of the 34% currently eligible candidates, only two expressed interest in the Fire Chief position and three eligible members expressed an interest in the Deputy Chief positions.

Out of the 26 respondents, seven members expressed an interest in the Assistant Chief's position; two members expressed interest in the Chief of Homeland Security

position; five members expressed interest in the Deputy Chief position (only three of whom are currently eligible); two members expressed a desire to become the Fire Chief; and ten members expressed no desire to promote to a senior chief officer position.

The statistics derived from the question, “What is the highest level of education you have currently completed?” are as follows: 1) 59% of the respondents have attained an associate degree; 2) 40% of the respondents have attained a bachelor’s degree; 3) less than one percent of respondents have attained a master’s degree. These findings are significant because we can determine that if these percentages are held constant, only forty percent of all respondents are possibly eligible due to incompleteness of a bachelor’s degree, which is one of the three required prerequisites.

All respondents met the eligibility requirement of serving a minimum of 15 years. However, only 66% of respondents met the completion of a minimum of two years service as a district or staff chief officer.

Of the 26 respondents from the interdepartmental survey, no comments or suggestions were made concerning NFPA 1021. However, after the review of the curriculum for Future Company and Future Chief Officer Certifications for the TFD (Tulsa Fire Department, 2006), it is clear that many requisite skills and competencies required for the successful completion of said certificates are also requirements set forth in NFPA 1021 for higher level fire officer positions.

The majority of the interdepartmental respondents felt that the qualifications and requirements for becoming a senior chief officer were sufficient and/or adequate. The majority felt that they were not currently participating in or had been exposed to a senior

chief officer development program. Those respondents that did feel that they were participating in a senior chief officer development program cited the EFOP and the Tulsa Fire Department Training Center as the basis for delivery. Twenty percent of the respondents specifically mentioned that they had either completed or were currently participating in the EFOP. Ten percent of the respondents mentioned that they had completed the Chief Fire Officer Designation. No comments were furnished referencing whether or not the Commission on Chief Fire Officer Designation acted as a guideline or standard for the respondent's personal senior chief officer development program.

The majority of respondents felt that the TFD has qualified, eligible candidates to succeed the current senior chief officer positions. Sixty-one percent of the respondents felt that qualified eligible candidates were in place. Thirty percent of the respondents expressed that the number of qualified, eligible candidates was inadequate for senior level positions. Finally, nine percent of respondents stated that they were unaware of the characteristics of the candidate pool and could not provide feedback.

Research Question 4: What modifications could be made to the senior chief officer development process that would enhance candidate preparation?

Modifications that could be made to the current senior chief officer development process that would enhance candidate preparation are 1) formalize the process, 2) incorporate the opportunities of job rotations, and 3) establish a senior chief officer mentoring program as part of the process. These possible modifications are very broad based and will be discussed with more detail.

The formalization of the senior development program could enhance candidate preparation by delivering specific expectations and requirements of the senior chief

officer positions other than the currently required seniority, time in grade, and educational mandates. A formal process could yield a defined path to attaining competencies for specialized positions, thus offering a guide to the necessary preparation. Establishing formality in the process yields disclosure to all members of the expectations and requirements of senior positions. This point is significant in that it subordinates the non-discriminatory efforts and practices of the senior development processes.

Incorporating the opportunity of job rotation into the development process could contribute toward candidate preparation by providing a realistic view of the roles and responsibilities of several chief officer positions. This would yield a well rounded candidate who would possess a more cross sectional view of the department. In many departments, deputy chiefs and above are expected to have served in more than one functional area of a department.

Establishing a senior chief officer mentoring program could enhance candidate preparation by providing an opportunity for the candidates to receive knowledge transfer and improved management and leadership skills. Further, according to Kaye and Scheef (2000), "Mentoring programs are an effective means of increasing political savvy, exposure, and visibility middle managers need if they are going to succeed in top management positions" (as cited in Gates, 2003, p. 104).

Discussion

In comparing the literature review and the results of the interdepartmental and external fire department surveys conducted for this applied research project, similar patterns were identified to attain success in the preparation of senior chief officer

candidates to succeed their leaders and supervisors. These findings agree with Johnson's statement, "To plan for consistent succession, you must assess the potential for vacancies; assess the readiness of current staff to assume these positions; develop strategies to address the needs of employees and the organization; and mentor, train and develop leadership and management skills" (p. 136).

The role of the senior chief officer has become the role of a modern fire service executive. "Modern fire executives are given multi-million dollar budgets, performance targets, quality assurance goals, government oversight, and a multitude of other things that go along with running our 'business.' Being held to high standards and being expected to perform along with the MBAs at city hall, the EFO of today and the future needs to be ready to face these challenges" (Gates, 2003, p. 104).

Increasing levels of formal education is important to the TFD and appears to be accepted by the up-and-coming chief officers. Currently, it is a requirement to have completed a bachelor's degree to become eligible for a senior level chief officer position. Forty percent of all interdepartmental survey respondents have attained this level of education. Fifty-nine percent of these respondents have attained an associate's degree. Ninety percent of the internal survey respondents felt that the qualifications and/or requirements for becoming a senior chief officer were sufficient and or adequate. "Our professionalism and readiness to assume supervisory, management and executive level positions is judged by some on whether we possess college degrees. Associate's, bachelor's, master's degrees, and for some, doctorates are critical to preparing people to assume leadership and management roles in the fire service, just as in other professions" (Compton, 2003, p. 141).

The external department telephone survey respondents and authors agree that the NFPA 1021, Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications, was a good basis and often utilized guideline for senior chief officer development. Out of the ten market cities surveyed, eight respondents reported that their departments utilized at least part of the standard as a guideline for senior level management positions. All ten market city respondents were at least familiar with the standard. The interdepartmental survey results revealed some degree of unfamiliarity with the NFPA 1021 among the respondents. However, research proved that many requisite skills and competencies required for successful completion of the TFD's Future Company and Future Chief Officer Certifications (Tulsa Fire Department, 2006) are also requirements set forth in NFPA 1021 for higher level fire officer positions.

Many authors agreed that the presentation of a job rotation opportunity could provide increased levels of preparation for any future chief officer candidate. However, only 20% of the market cities surveyed utilized some form of job rotation program and zero percent mandated job rotations. The TFD does not currently mandate or utilize job rotations.

Mentoring has been going on for hundreds of years in the fire service, but most is concentrated on the technical aspects of the job (Gates, 2003, p. 104). According to Branlette (1996), mentoring at the EFO (Executive Fire Officer) level is different from that used to teach tactical decision-making or technical skills (as cited in Gates, 2003, p. 104). Gates discusses that mentorship at the EFO level should be provided by an organizational leader with the specific intent of creating a future leader (p. 104). Interestingly, the external survey results yielded that only 20% of the market cities utilize

a formal mentoring program that emphasizes the development of the senior level chief officer. The interdepartmental survey results did not yield comments or feedback on the topic of mentoring. Currently, the TFD does not have a formal mentoring program in place at the senior chief officer level. The TFD does utilize an intern program at the district chief (middle management) level. This program has been successful in transferring the bodies of knowledge that would be considered more technical and tactical.

In reviewing the external and interdepartmental survey results, it is clear that the NFA's EFOP program is a well known tool for executive fire officer development. All 10 of the market cities surveyed were aware of the EFOP program and 20% of the interdepartmental respondents reported that they were either participating or had completed the program. Several applied research projects reviewed shared the common view that the NFA's EFOP is a program for senior level fire officers which battalion chiefs and above should be encouraged to apply for in an effort to gain increased levels of executive development.

Organizational implications for the TFD primarily target two areas: 1) economic impact of developing and maintaining a formal senior chief officer development program and 2) the ability to perform and sustain a culture shift towards the recognition of the necessity of succession planning and executive level chief officer development.

There is a cost associated with training and development programs. The City of Tulsa is currently under adverse economic conditions, and many of the study results and suggestions would be considered unfeasible at this time due to their cost. On the other hand, there is also a cost associated with not implementing training and development

programs (Pernick, 2002). The cost of losing potential leaders, decreasing morale, dips in productivity, maintaining non-competitiveness are just a few. It would be very difficult to fully assess the costs of undeveloped management and leadership; this assessment is beyond the scope of this research.

The results of this research imply that the organization must embrace and buy in to the fact that succession planning is an issue of leadership management. “Effective succession planning therefore involves getting leaders and potential leaders to stay, and in so doing, developing their leadership skills and long-term vision for the future of the company” (Morris-Lee, 2001, p. 19). In other words, current leadership must keep its arms around future leadership and guide this relationship toward the creation of a long term organizational producing asset.

Recommendations

The problem, as previously mentioned, was that the Tulsa Fire Department had a significant portion of its upper level management retiring within the next five years and that there is a limited number of internally qualified personnel to fill senior level management positions. The purpose of this applied research project was to identify how the Tulsa Fire Department can develop and increase its pool of qualified senior chief officer candidates.

The findings in this study have demonstrated a need for the Tulsa Fire Department to develop a formal senior chief officer development program and apply this program to and with newly developed succession planning culture and practices. If a comprehensive senior chief officer development program is not developed to help

transition and succeed current leadership, the current administration will fail to develop and increase its pool of qualified senior chief officer candidates.

Based on the research conducted and analysis of the results, the following recommendations are suggested to assist with the development of a senior chief officer development program and succession planning for senior officer positions with the Tulsa Fire Department:

1. Formalize and define a senior chief officer development program.
2. Obtain support from the current senior chief officers and Human Resources Department to establish a senior chief officer development program for the development of chief officers who desire to become senior chief officers and current senior chief officers who desire promotion or future development.
3. Establish a committee responsible for the development and implementation of the program.
4. Petition the Human Resource Department, Fire Chief and a labor representative to develop selection criteria for members who will serve on the committee.
5. Develop an evaluation tool to gauge the productivity of officer development and succession planning efforts.

A comprehensive senior chief officer development program will help define succession planning for the Tulsa Fire Department. Succession planning takes hard work, open communications, and commitment from the entire organization. It's a dynamic process that requires an organizational culture to embrace change, and it requires management of the change process itself (Johnson, 2004, p. 136).

Through the support of these planning and development processes, the Tulsa Fire Department will provide the highest level of customer service possible, regardless of attrition and leadership changes.

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Appendix A

Tulsa Fire Department Senior Officer Development Survey

July 31, 2006

Tulsa Fire Department Chief Officers

Tulsa, Oklahoma

Dear Chief Officers:

I am requesting your assistance in gaining information for a research project that I am completing for the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program. I am efforting to compile information to assist the TFD's current senior chief officer development and succession planning programs. The individual data collected will be considered confidential and the results of the survey and research will be available upon request. Please accept my thanks in advance for your participation.

Please place the completed survey in my in-box at headquarters or I will make arrangements for pick-up if necessary. My goal is to receive all surveys by August 11, 2006.

Sincerely,

Harry K. Myers, III
Assistant Chief Officer
Tulsa Fire Department

Tulsa Fire Department Senior Chief Officer Development Survey

The information provided will be used strictly for the purpose of completing my required applied research project for the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program.

For the purposes of this applied research project, senior chief officer positions will be defined as: Assistant Chief, Chief of Homeland Security, Deputy Chief and the Fire Chief.

1. How long have you been a member of the Tulsa Fire Department?

_____ 10-15 years

_____ 16-20 years

_____ 21-25 years

_____ 26-30 years

_____ 30 plus years

2. How long have you been a Chief Officer for the Tulsa Fire Department?

_____ years _____ months

3. What, if any senior chief officer position do you desire to attain with the Tulsa Fire Department?

_____ Assistant Chief

_____ Chief of Homeland Security

_____ Deputy Chief

_____ Fire Chief

_____ None

4. Do you believe the qualifications and/or requirements for becoming a senior chief officer are sufficient and/or adequate? Please explain.

5. Are you currently eligible to participate in the promotional examination process for a senior chief officer position?

_____ yes

_____ no

6. Would you participate in the promotional examination process for a senior chief officer position if you were eligible?

_____ yes

_____ no

7. What is the highest level of education you have completed? Please describe.

8. Have you participated in training and/or educational opportunities outside the Tulsa Fire Department Training Center in an effort to further advance your career? Please explain type and extent of participation.

9. Do you feel that you are currently participating in or have been exposed to a senior officer development program? Please explain.

10. Currently, do you feel that the Tulsa Fire Department has qualified, eligible candidates to succeed the current senior chief officer positions? Please explain.

11. Please provide comments or suggestions:

Thank You for your time!

Appendix B

Market Cities Telephone Survey

Current use of formal Chief Officer Development Programs

1. What is the respondent's position or role in the organization?

Position/title _____

2. Does your department have a chief officer development program?

_____yes

_____no

If the answer is **yes**, what type of curriculum and/or criteria are utilized?

If the answer is **no**, do you feel that your department could benefit from a formal chief officer development program? If the answer is yes, please explain the recommendations.

3. How many middle management chief officer positions do you currently staff?

4. How many senior level (defined as the pay grade and rank above a district or battalion chief) chief officer positions do you currently staff?

5. Does your department require a college degree to become a chief officer? Please explain the different levels of education required for each rank if applicable.

6. Does your department mandate, support or participate in the NFA Executive Fire Officer Program? Please explain.

7. Please estimate the percentage of you department's chief officers who have attained the Chief Fire Officer Designation (CFOD) through the Commission on Chief Fire Officer Designation. _____%

8. Does your department utilize NFPA 1021 as a guide for management training? If yes, at what management levels and to what extent.

9. What does your department feel is the most important criteria for developing and preparing individuals for senior level chief officer positions? Example: formal education, EFOP, time in grade at specific assignments, etc.

10. Does your department have a formal succession plan in place for senior level chief officer positions?

11. Does your department use mandatory job rotations to help prepare middle managers for senior level chief officer positions?

If no, do you feel that this would be a benefit to your department?

12. Does your department utilize a formal coaching or mentoring process for executive development?

13. Does your department currently have an adequate number of qualified, eligible candidates for every senior level chief officer position?

14. Please estimate the percentage of qualified, eligible candidates that you feel will participate in the promotion process?

15. Does your department have the ability to promote from within or does it hire from the outside for senior level chief officer positions?

16. Are there accurate job descriptions in place for senior level chief officer positions that explain all requirements necessary for each position?

APPENDIX C

Subject: List of the universe of cities used to determine the market for FY-06-07

1. Austin, TX (512) 974-0130
2. Fort Worth, TX (817) 392-8436
3. Kansas City, MO (816) 784-9200
4. Tucson, AZ (520) 791-4701
5. Nashville, TN (615) 862-5424
6. Omaha, NE (402) 444-5700
7. St. Louis, MO (314) 533-3406
8. Oklahoma City, OK (405) 297-3314
9. Wichita, KS (316) 268-4451
10. Dallas, TX (214) 498-7474

Source: Section 9.5 of the Agreement Between the City of Tulsa and No. 176 of the International Association of Firefighters (Contract).