

**A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF THE
ADVANCE SUCCESSION PLANNING PROGRAMME
FOR THE NEW ZEALAND FIRE SERVICE**

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

BY: Russell Wood
Auckland Fire Region
Auckland
New Zealand

An applied research project submitted to the National Fire Academy as part of the
Executive Fire Officer Programme

January 2005

ABSTRACT

In 2003 the New Zealand Fire Service (NZFS) had identified that over the next five to fifteen years a significant proportion of its middle and senior level managers would be reaching retirement age. In response to this issue the NZFS instigated a succession planning initiative called the Advance Programme aimed at developing participants for future senior management positions and also people for Chief Fire Officer roles.

Since its inception no critical evaluation had been undertaken to determine whether the programme was meeting its organisational objectives or the professional development needs of individual participants. The purpose of this applied research project was to determine what succession planning meant in the context of a public sector organisation such as the NZFS as well as determining whether the objectives of the Advance programme were being met.

Historical and descriptive research methods were employed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the importance of succession planning in a public sector context?
2. What does succession planning mean in a NZFS context and is an organisational succession plan required?
3. Are the objectives of the Advance Programme currently being met for both the organisation and the individual participants?
4. What are some development initiatives that could be incorporated into the Advance Programme for the future?

Findings confirmed the strategic importance of succession planning in the public sector and particularly for the NZFS. There was the suggestion that the Advance Programme may require further development if its long term objectives were to be met.

A range of development initiatives were identified for future inclusion in the Programme.

Recommendations centred on the need for improved reporting and communication to senior managers regarding the progress and goal achievements of Advance. In addition, there was a need to provide a more structured and coordinated approach to providing developmental opportunities for participants. Finally, it was recommended that a review of the programme be undertaken, at both mid point and programme end to ensure independent assessment of whether the anticipated organisational benefits accruing from the initiative had occurred.

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: _____

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INTRODUCTION

Since 1995 the New Zealand Fire Service (NZFS) (Appendix A) has undergone two significant organisational restructures. These have resulted in the early retirement and redundancy of a number of middle and senior managers as well as creating a number of new management positions.

The age profiles of those holding middle and senior level management positions suggests that over the medium term there is the potential for a significant number of managers to retire from the organisation. *“It is assessed that over the next 15 years 65% of current Executive Officers may be considering retirement. The Fire Service is planning now to meet the vacancy requirements with sufficient numbers of skilled personnel ready to fill management vacancies as they arise”* (NZFS, 2002). These factors combined with the absence of any formalized organisational succession planning have required that the NZFS consider the introduction of some means of identifying, encouraging and developing potential leaders to take the place of those leaving in the future.

In 2003 the NZFS initiated a succession planning initiative called the Advance Programme. The programme aims to assess and identify a number of managers who have demonstrated the potential to progress to senior management level and put them through a two-year development programme designed to prepare them for the role. A second tier Advance Programme was offered in 2004 to identify front line officers with the potential to progress to Deputy and Chief Fire Officer level in the future. This second programme is also scheduled to take two years.

Since the inception of Advance some eighteen months ago no formal review has been undertaken to determine whether the programmes are meeting their organisational objectives or the professional development needs of participants. The purpose of this

applied research project is to determine whether the objectives of the Advance Programme are being met for the organisation and the individual participants in order to suitably prepare them for the positions of Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Regional Commander and Regional Commander within the NZFS.

Historical and descriptive research methods were employed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the importance of succession planning in a public sector context?
2. What does succession planning mean in a NZFS context and is an organisational succession plan required?
3. Are the objectives of the Advance Programme currently being met for both the organisation and the individual participants?
4. What are some development initiatives that could be incorporated into the Advance Programme for the future?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

How organisations address leadership capacity building is an important indicator of an organisation's ability to develop the intellectual capacity necessary for it to thrive. This is no less the case for public sector agencies facing formidable challenges in identifying and nurturing the next generation of public sector leaders. Increasingly, leadership capacity building is receiving renewed attention as governmental and other public sector agencies face mounting pressures to ensure organisational sustainability, flexibility and responsiveness in the face of increasing uncertainty and limitations. (Lynn, 2001).

Past organisational restructuring and a prolonged industrial dispute during the nineteen nineties, combined with an ageing workforce, has meant that the NZFS is

facing a shortage of suitable personnel prepared and motivated to fill mid to senior level management positions. The absence of structured succession planning has meant that the issue has grown in significance since industrial stability was achieved in 2001. Recent retirements have shown the lack of depth the organisation has in providing sufficiently motivated people with the capability to fill positions at senior management level of Fire Region Commander and Assistant Fire Region Commander. There also appears to be a lack of suitable candidates prepared to take on the middle management roles of Chief and Deputy Chief Fire Officer. Appendix B illustrates the age profiles of the various ranks within the NZFS as at October, 2004. Of concern is the number of middle and senior managers in their mid to late fifties which indicates that the organisation will come under pressure to find suitable replacements in the next 5 to 10 years.

The fact that the NZFS is the singular, national fire service for the country means that it is not easy to recruit externally to fill middle and senior management positions. Internal candidates usually possess the requisite levels of organisational knowledge and credibility, which are built up over time. The problem centres on ensuring suitably skilled and qualified candidates are developed from within to enable the organisation to meet its future management requirements.

The appointment of a new Chief Executive in 2001 was the catalyst for the NZFS to embark on a more structured programme of succession planning. The flagship initiative was the Advance Programme, first advertised in 2003 (Appendix C). The programme seeks to identify and develop future management talent for senior and middle management positions. Successful applicants have embarked on a two-year development programme aimed at preparing them for promotion and thereby providing

the NZFS with a suitable pool of officers with identified potential, from which to select its future leaders.

The initial Advance Programme was designed for those middle level managers seeking promotion to senior management positions. A group of seven managers was selected and commenced their two-year programme in June 2003. The programme consists of quarterly meetings whereby participants spend a day together at National Headquarters undertaking some sort of professional development activity. Individuals then spend some time with an individual programme manager from an organisational development consultancy, aimed at developing and reviewing their own individual professional development plans. In addition, participants are given opportunities to participate in special projects, take on secondments in other departments or act up in the role of more senior managers during that manager's absence.

A second tier Advance Programme was launched in 2004 targeting frontline officers seeking promotion to Chief and Deputy Chief Fire Officer level within the next two to five years. This programme is currently being run along similar lines to the first Advance Programme with participants meeting quarterly, having their own programme manager and, where possible, being provided with developmental opportunities in the workplace. An overview of the Advance Programme is attached as Appendix D.

The time, effort and funding for both programmes is significant, therefore it is important that the NZFS determine that its organisational objectives are being met as well as the developmental needs of the participants. For the Advance initiative to succeed it is also important that current senior management team members are aware of the programme, its objectives and who the participants are so that they can fully support the initiative and assist in coordinating any developmental opportunities such as secondments and acting up in more senior roles.

With the first Advance Programme over half way through it is timely to undertake a critical review to ensure the organisational investment is achieving the desired outcomes. Any identified improvements necessary can then be instituted in the second tier programme while it is still early on into its scheduled duration. It is important that such a significant organisational undertaking such as the Advance Programme undergo a review process to ensure it is achieving its primary objectives. The National Fire Academy's Executive Leadership Course focuses clearly on the need for organisational leaders to identify their own professional and personal strengths and weaknesses and to implement their future development in a planned and structured way. A review of the NZFS Advance Programme will assist individual participants towards maximizing the potential benefits of their involvement in such an initiative. A review request was initiated by means of a memorandum to the Director of Human Resources and also the manager responsible for the implementation of Advance (Appendix E). As well as a one day review workshop, it was determined that this applied research project would also comprise an integral part of the review process.

Results would be fed back to the senior management team, programme participants and the Human Resources department to enable recommendations to be included in any corrective action plan aimed at improving current and future Advance Programmes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Succession management is a strategic, systematic and deliberate activity to ensure an organisation's future capability to fill vacancies, without patronage or favouritism. It specifically focuses on ensuring the availability and sustainability of a supply of capable staff who are ready to assume critical roles, if selected through normal competitive selection processes. (Australian Public Service Commission, 2004).

Globalization, competitive imperatives, rapid technological change, political and societal uncertainty, changing attitudes to work, the importance many workers place on lifestyle over job security. These are just some of the issues facing private and public sector organisations when planning for their continuance and growth. The need to predict and respond to leadership gaps within an organisation is one of the key challenges faced by organisations and their senior managers. *“The importance of the identification and development of leadership potential and the process chosen by an organisation cannot be underestimated, for outcomes of leadership succession choices may ...have a large impact on organisational directions and policies”* (Zald, 1970). Mihm (2003) further supports the critical importance that needs to be placed on succession planning when he suggests, *“succession planning and management can help an organisation become what it needs to be, rather than simply recreate the existing organisation”*.

Wallum (1993) provides a simple definition of succession planning when he states that it *“encompasses the strategic process and actions aimed at ensuring a suitable supply of successors for senior or key jobs and future roles”*. However, the National Academy of Public Administration (1997) gave an expanded definition that may provide greater understanding when they proposed that;

Managing succession is more than fingering a slate of replacements for certain positions. It is a deliberate and systematic effort to project leadership requirements, identify a pool of high potential candidates, develop leadership competencies in those candidates through intentional learning experiences, and then select leaders from among the pool of potential leaders.

Any organisation is defined by its people and particularly by its leaders. This makes it critically important that a strategic and structured approach is taken to the inevitable process of replacing an organisation's management personnel. *"Although senior level positions remain a key to an organisation's success, there's a growing realization that the entire management structure determines how a company acts and reacts to industry conditions and global events"* (Greengard, 2001). Underpinning the requirement for such a structured approach to succession management is the assertion from Eastman (1995) that *"efforts to address the question of leadership capacity confirm what many leaders and practitioners already know - there is a growing gap of leadership talent in the public service"*. This shortage of leadership talent is compounded by the fact that loyalty to a single organisation for the duration of a person's career is largely a thing of the past and that management retention is becoming a critical issue for many companies. Morris-Lee (2001) suggests that *"some human resource consultants estimate that as many as 75 percent of executives are now busy marketing themselves"* and *"as a result of the turnover the war for top talent will be fierce"*.

Traditionally, succession planning has been thought of more in the context of family owned companies or large corporations and with arguably little emphasis in public sector organisation's. Baldwin (2004) asserts that succession planning should be part of every organisations strategic plan to *"assure a continuing sequence of qualified people to move up and take over when the current generation of managers and people*

retire or move on". Lynn (2001) agrees that *"whether public or private, the ability of an institution to survive turbulent times is based on the organisation's capacity to produce sustained and high quality leadership over time"*. This is supported by Schall (1997) in his view that *"sustained innovation, the ability to keep change alive, extends beyond sector characteristics and encompasses the leadership capacity of all organisations"*.

The public sector is not immune from the impacts of a lack of succession planning and may well be facing a depressing future based on the results of a 1996 survey of federal US agencies and public sector organisations undertaken by the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA). Of twenty seven respondents only 28% indicated that they had, or planned to have a succession management programme. This despite the fact that 56% of the same respondents indicated they believed their organisation was seriously short of leaders to meet emerging changes in their organisations (Department of the Premier and Cabinet, 2004). This situation is supported by Lynn's (2001) research when she found there was *"uniform recognition that the subject of succession management in the public sector has received scant attention"*. Rainey and Wechsler (1988) further suggest that *"effective transition management is essential to achieving positive results"*, however they characterise senior level succession at all levels of government in the United States as *"marked by serious deficiencies in preparation, orientation and communication"*.

While the need for succession planning in the public sector is just as great as in the private sector there are some particular barriers to effective public sector succession management that emerged from the 1996 study conducted by the NAPA. These included organisational culture, low priority given by senior officials, insufficient resources, inadequate rewards for initiative, limited mobility and a lack of role models.

The study concluded that public sector leaders were not perceived as a corporate asset in the same way they often are in the private sector. The corollary of this finding was that fewer resources were dedicated to the recruitment and development of the leadership group. Schall (1997) identified four barriers to public sector succession management being given serious consideration.

- A reluctance by the current leader to take up the “succession” task
- The assumption that succession issues are beyond the scope of the leader’s work
- Confusion about what is meant by succession planning (replacing oneself or strategic positioning)
- How to plan succession in the midst of a shifting political environment and given regulatory and political constraints.

Persuading public sector leaders to take on the responsibility of succession management may not be easy as *“sector does not matter when it comes to the leader’s dark side; the wish to believe in one’s own immortality and to stay in control can be found in leaders across sectors”* (Kets de Vries, 1998). Schall’s findings resulted in a view that it was extremely important *“that the public sector starts to accept that succession management is no longer a replacement issue but rather a strategic responsibility to be shared among the organisation’s stakeholders”*.

The State Services Commission (SSC) of New Zealand has identified the key influence towards successful implementation of government strategies that effective succession planning can have in public organisations. To that end, it has developed good practice guidelines for management development and succession in the NZ public service. The full definitions and objectives contained within the paper are attached as Appendix F. The SSC has clearly linked succession planning with management

development and sees the two as accruing benefits across the wider public service and not just limited to individual departments or organisations. *“In the context of the Public Service, senior management development and succession refer to developing the capability of senior managers to work effectively, not only in their current department, but also to ensure effective performance in other positions within the Public Service”* (SSC, 2004). In addition, the SSC identifies the key participants in the succession planning process as chief executives who *“are responsible for taking a view broader than their own department when training and developing staff for senior management and providing for executive succession”*. The SSC also puts responsibility on to senior managers *“for attending to their career development in consultation with their chief executive”*.

This approach is in stark contrast to the historical practices of structured succession planning taken by senior public sector managers.

For years, marred by the goals and guidelines of civil service systems, public sector human resource professionals shied away from any form of succession planning. If it was conducted at any level, it was usually done on the back of an envelope, and then thrown away for fear there would be allegations that the merit system principles were not being enforced. (Green, 2000).

It appears that only recently has the public sector grasped the strategic importance of succession planning for their future sustainability and achievement of strategic objectives.

In a fire service context we may be further behind than many other public sector organisations. The experience of the Fire Department of New York in losing significant numbers of its management staff during the World Trade Centre attacks in 2001 graphically illustrates that emergency service organisations face additional risks beyond

mere commercial imperatives that demand there be sufficient numbers of suitably experienced personnel to step into management roles when required.

The NZFS has apparently grasped the importance of a structured approach to succession. As a single-point-of-entry organisation it relies on sufficient new recruits to remain for long enough, as well as having the potential to develop into future Chief Fire Officers and Regional Managers. Previously, the NZFS had used the merit-based system to determine who would take on senior roles in the organisation with somewhat mixed results. This dictated a strict hierarchy of succession based more on time in the job and exposure to different training and geographic locations rather than any identified talent or competency in areas necessary for senior leadership positions. As Pernick (2002) suggests, *“the time honored way of learning one’s technical specialty, then somehow making the transition into supervision, is not a reliable method for producing adequately trained staff”*. Now however, the NZFS Human Resources Strategic Plan 2004-2009 (NZFS, 2004) includes as one of its key strategies (strategy 4.2);

4.2 Nurture future leaders to provide a pool of talent for succession planning.

4.2.1 Complete rollout of Advance to CFO level

4.2.2 Extend Advance to cover specialist operational and non-operational roles

4.2.3 Implement Senior Exchange Programme targeted at high potential employees

4.2.4 Develop strategy and programme to identify potential at recruit level and manage career development towards future leadership roles

The final objective, regarding the need to identify potential at recruit level, is extremely important considering the single-point-of-entry philosophy promoted by many fire

departments. Schaefer (2002) supports this initiative when he purports that effective succession planning should start at the moment of hire, when new staff members have explained to them the career options available and the paths to achieve their career goals.

Clearly, there is a need for fire services to develop their future leaders from within. In fact, *“Fire Chiefs are strategists, both on the fire ground and at the station. They must think strategically about the future of their departments”* (Meyer in Rooney, 2004). Unlike many private sector companies, the specific knowledge, skill sets and organisational culture of a fire service make it difficult to recruit externally from other industries for middle to senior level positions. However, Garrisi (2003) identifies benefits accrued by developing from within. *“The first is the organisation gets to develop the next generation with the company’s strategic and cultural agenda in mind. Secondly, the company has greater control over the amount of employees that have the requisite skill, therefore making strategic implementation faster”*.

Given that succession planning is a necessary and important tool for ensuring strategic continuity for a public sector organisation such as a fire department the obvious question is, what are the recognized steps or methods for effective succession management. In general terms, Morgan (2003) discusses some of the issues that need to be considered when embarking on a succession planning initiative, such as the long term direction of the organisation, key areas requiring continuity and the identification of key personnel for development. Once decisions have been made about these issues then thought needs to be given to designing dynamic and tailored career paths targeted at the individual’s capabilities and future needs.

Mihm, from the US General Accounting Office (2003) identified six practices used by agencies in other countries to effectively manage succession.

1. Receive active support of top leadership
2. Link to strategic plan
3. Identify talent from multiple organisational levels, early in careers, or with critical skills
4. Emphasize developmental assignments in addition to formal training
5. Address specific human capital changes such as diversity, leadership capacity and retention
6. Facilitate broader transformation efforts

More specifically, Greengard (2001) proposes five key steps to effective succession planning.

1. Identify key leadership criteria
2. Find future leaders and motivate them
3. Create a sense of responsibility within the organisation
4. Align succession planning with the corporate culture
5. Measure results and reinforce desired behaviour

An organisational assessment strategy model for succession planning has been developed by Lynn (2001) (Appendix G). The model links succession management to an organisation's strategic planning. *“Based on this strategy, a leadership template of competencies is established identifying position requirements [which] guides the development of a cadre of leadership candidates”* (Leibman, Bruer & Maki, 1996).

Related to succession planning is the concept of talent management discussed by Green (2000). Talent management focus on the strategic needs of the organisation and provides *“a form of organisational development that takes a proactive approach to preparing individuals to take the leadership reins of the future”*. Green determines six key elements which should be considered essential if the organisation expects positive

results from their investment. There needs to be alignment of organisational strategy with core values, top management leadership and line management ownership, substantial and frequent talent reviews, a focus on development from within and incentives for investment in development. She goes on to suggest that “*if the organisation does not value the development of staff, and if the core values of the organisation do not focus on people, talent management will not be supported*”.

The Australian Public Service Commission (2004) has determined ten key principles (*Figure 1*) that contribute to effective succession management.

Figure 1

<u>Principles for Effective Succession Management</u>
1. Top leaders in the organisation must be actively committed to and involved in the process
2. Succession management should be an integral component of the organisation’s business
3. A succession culture should be developed at all levels
4. Implementation strategies should be developed with clear timeframes and periodic evaluation built into the process
5. Succession management should focus on identifying a robust field of potential candidates for leadership roles
6. Succession management processes should be relatively simple and flexible
7. The process should be open across organisational levels
8. The succession management process should feature the use of capability templates rather than developing people for specific, current job requirements
9. Developments should focus particularly on challenging experiences that take people out of their comfort zone to develop new skills
10. The approach to succession planning must be in accordance with Australian Public Service values

In a New Zealand public sector context, which the NZFS must be cognisant of, the State Services Commission suggests succession planning good practice should

incorporate clear commitment from the chief executive, a clear strategy be in place, senior managers have personal development plans and that opportunities for development are created. Finally, it is deemed essential that any training and development be evaluated for effectiveness. Greengard (2001) emphasizes the need to view succession management as *“a people oriented process, from top to bottom. It’s up to senior executives to take ‘ownership’, human resources to analyze and manage, and line managers to evaluate. Only then can organisations avoid tossing people into positions before they’re ready”*.

Once an organisation has embarked on a succession planning process it is important that any development programme is in alignment with the identified competencies required if participants are to achieve at the higher level. The NAPA (1997) stated that, when it came to identifying requisite competencies in a succession planning context, *“leadership competencies are the heart of the process because they describe what a leader looks like, acts like and produces”*. This supports Kotter’s view (in Blunt and Clark, 1997) that while *“good management produces predictability and consistency, good leadership produces significant change – constructive or adaptive,”* which is necessary if organisations are to confront environmental challenges of instability, ambiguity and rapid change.

As part of the selection process in the NZFS Advance Programme candidates underwent cognitive testing to ensure they had the requisite intellectual capacity to perform at a senior leadership level. In addition, their interpersonal, communication, strategic thinking and problem solving skills were also assessed. Other methodologies described in the literature included review of biographical data by a review team of senior managers, performance reviews, interviews to determine career goals and self

perceptions, psychometric testing and assessment/development centre analysis (Dept. of Premier and Cabinet, 2004).

More and more employees are choosing their employers based not just on pay and benefits but also on what training and development opportunities are on offer.

“Coaching, mentoring and career development programs have become standard fare in progressive organisations interested in retaining star performers” (Green, 2000).

Development opportunities available as part of a succession planning programme are varied, however, much of the literature reviewed emphasized the need for any developmental plan to be individualized and to specifically work on identified competency gaps that an individual might have (Schall, 1997; Green, 2000; Greengard, 2001; Australian Public Service Commission, 2004; NZFS, 2004). Rohr (2000) emphasizes that *“organisational development needs to be tied to an effective program that provides insight to the future for managers”* and suggests a *“well planned rotation policy as a method to develop personnel and bring fresh viewpoints to an organisation”*. Buckner and Slavenski (2000) recommend *“planned, structured activities that enable executives to acquire leadership skills naturally as part of their professional growth”*. Coleman (2000) promotes a balanced development programme focusing on constant improvement, role modeling and mentoring plus a personal evaluation of strengths and weaknesses.

The literature identified a range of developmental initiatives aimed at closing any gaps in a manager’s personal skills inventory. Much of the literature focused on the need for future leaders to possess skills and attributes centred around strategic planning and vision, problem analysis, drive, resilience, creative thinking, communication skills and coaching abilities (Morris-Lee, 2001). Blunt and Clark (1997) discussed the concept of the three pillars of leadership development as *“three mutually reinforcing*

means to induce leadership learning and development". The first pillar is based around ensuring individuals have varied job assignments, as the ability to achieve results in different roles is critical to leadership development. Secondly, education and training through formal internal or external programmes will help to expand leadership knowledge and skills. The third pillar requires that the individual take responsibility for making maximum use of job and educational opportunities. This means that "*the individual should engage in self-initiated learning*" (ibid.) comprising professional reading, participation in professional organisations, conferences and workshops, courses, seeking feedback from peers and subordinates, finding a mentor and engaging in business projects beyond their immediate job.

Green (2000) discusses some developmental initiatives in use in the United States public sector as a means to retain and develop their talented people. Examples include job rotation, the creation of "Top Gun" academies that offer formal training and coaching, utilizing 360 degree feedback tools, the use of personal coaches, establishing co-managers of critical functions to prepare new leaders for their roles and outsourcing hard to fill functions and diverting existing staff to more strategic roles. The New Zealand State Services Commission (2004) discusses the developmental benefits of external and internal secondments as well as job rotations. The SSC concludes that there is a double benefit from these sorts of initiatives in that they can boost resources at crucial moments as well as building staff skills for the benefit of the individual and the organisation.

In addition, the New Zealand government under the administration of the SSC has created an entity called the Leadership Development Centre (LDC) with the strategic aim of developing the capability of public sector leaders. The LDC discusses

the four-element cycle of learning which should form the basis of any developmental initiative. In essence, the four elements consist of;

1. Conceptual development
2. Applying the theory to practice
3. Engaging in critical reflection and evaluation
4. Experimenting with and testing new ideas, behaviours and practices.

The LDC's website (2004) suggests a number of developmental activities which could be incorporated into a succession management initiative or by individuals wishing to create their own professional development plans. A summary of the development activities is included as Appendix H.

Finally, some of the developmental activities promoted as part of the NZFS Advance programme are outlined in *Figure 2*. These activities are in keeping with much of the other literature reviewed in this area.

Figure 2

Applicants that are selected for the full development program will have development plans tailored to their individual needs. Because solutions are tailored to the individual it is not possible to say what an individual's programme may include. However, options will include:

- Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC) Executive Development courses.
- Inclusion on Fire Service Committee or working groups.
- Temporary secondment to other positions within the New Zealand Fire Service.
- Assisted courses of extra mural tertiary study.
- Project work.
- Short courses, such as those through the New Zealand Institute of Management.
- Being assigned a mentor.
- On-the-job learning activities.

There will be an external Programme Manager who will meet those in the program quarterly. He/she will assist in formulating and reviewing progress against development plans. They will also liaise with the participants' managers to ensure their normal duties are not being adversely affected because of participation in the program.

“In an environment of early retirements, reorganisations, and lean hierarchies, often with depleted pools of middle management, there are many challenges facing the public sector in regard to developing and selecting leaders” (Byham, 1999). The ability of any organisation to meet these challenges is very much determined by the quality of its leaders and senior managers. To ensure that the right people with the right skills are moving up through the organisation at the right time a formalized approach to succession planning, supported by senior level managers is imperative. The literature review confirmed that the public sector in general, and the fire service in particular, ignore succession planning at the risk of a lack of organisational capability to meet the challenges of the future. *“The crisis can be diverted, and public sector organisations can prosper – but only through proactive staff development and retention efforts”* (Green, 2000).

PROCEDURES

Definition of terms

Succession Planning – developing a strategy to replace key individuals with an organisation.

Succession Management – Managing the process of succession planning

Advance Programme – a succession planning initiative instituted by the NZFS to ensure the availability of a pool of suitably skilled and qualified managers is available to take up middle and senior level management positions over the next two to five years.

Merit System – A system used by many public sector organisations to manage organisational succession. The system used objective based criteria such as length of service, departments worked in, courses attended and qualifications attained to determine the order of promotion. Subjective based criteria such as future potential, intellectual capacity etc does not form part of the promotional decision making process.

Research Methodology

This research project sought to identify what succession planning meant to the NZFS in the context of it being a public sector organisation. In addition, it provided a means to critically evaluate the Advance succession planning and professional development programme to determine whether the programme was meeting the organisation's objectives and those of the individual participants. Finally, it sought to identify developmental opportunities that could be considered for inclusion in either the current or future programmes as a means for participants to gain the most out of their involvement in the Advance initiative.

Historical research was conducted in order to contextualize succession planning in general and more specifically in the public sector. Literature was reviewed principally from New Zealand, Australia and the United States on both succession planning and professional development initiatives aimed at building organisational leadership capacity.

Descriptive research by means of a focus group review workshop was held on 16 September, 2004 comprised of a convenience sample made up of members of one of the Advance Programmes plus representatives from the NZFS senior management team and an organisational development consultant and facilitator who was also acting as a professional development coach within the Advance Programme. The workshop was conducted to assist in determining whether Advance objectives were being met, the level of support the programme enjoyed from senior managers, strengths and areas requiring improvement in the administration of the programme and also to identify possible developmental opportunities that might be incorporated into the programme for the future. A record of the focus group discussions and suggestions is included as Appendix I.

Further research was undertaken by means of two survey instruments (Appendices J and K) targeting members of the NZFS senior management team and participants of the two Advance Programmes currently operating. The sample sizes and response rates for each survey are included as *Table 1*.

Table 1

Advance review survey population and response rates

Survey Group	Total population N	Number of responses n	Response rate %
Senior management team	15	13	86
Advance participants	21	19	90

Initial results from the surveys were presented at the focus group workshop to assist in generating discussion. Full survey results were forwarded to the Director of Human Resources for presentation to a senior management team meeting. The charted survey results have also been included in the research project as Appendices L and M.

Assumptions and Limitations

A limitation to the project was the decision to combine both groups of participants from the two Advance programmes in the survey process. One group had only recently embarked on their two-year programme while the other group was over half way through. The anonymity of the survey process meant that the results of the two groups could not be differentiated. The ability of new participants to respond to questions as to whether the programme was meeting their individual needs was limited by the fact that they had only recently started the programme. This limitation did not appear to impact negatively on the ability of respondents to respond to questions

regarding possible future developmental initiatives which might be included in the Advance Programme.

RESULTS

Research Question 1 – What is the importance of succession planning in a public sector context?

The literature review clearly identified that succession planning is just as important in a public sector context as in private industry. The challenges of an ageing workforce, skill shortages, changing employee expectations about careers and developmental opportunities plus strong competition from the private sector for talented leaders, are all contributing to the need for the public sector to take succession planning seriously.

The need for public sector organisations to be responsive to a rapidly changing social and political environment as well as proactively ensuring future organisational sustainability, flexibility and responsiveness requires skilled leaders and managers at senior levels in the organisation. The previous merit based system for identifying and determining future senior management personnel is no longer able to meet the needs of many public sector organisations. A comprehensive and structured approach to succession management is foundational to ensuring that the public sector has the leadership, management and technical capacity to deliver government expectations.

Succession planning can also ensure that the long term strategic objectives of the organisation are achieved. Some of the literature reviewed discussed the relative merits of succession planning from within the organisation compared with bringing in leaders from outside. The consensus was that generally internal succession management was more likely to promote leaders with the organisational knowledge and credibility.

However, when suitable leaders cannot be identified from within, or if a significant organisational change agenda was being promoted then external succession could be of value.

While public sector succession planning was acknowledged as being extremely important the success of any such initiative was clearly dependent upon the commitment and involvement of senior managers and particularly the chief executive. One writer discussed the need for the development of a “succession culture” to be developed to ensure a shared responsibility for succession management right across the organisation. Various models and principles were discussed in the literature review with one in particular providing a clear process that linked succession management with the organisation’s strategic plan (Appendix G).

Research Question 2 - What does succession planning mean in a NZFS context?

Historically no formal succession planning had taken place in the NZFS. Only recently, with the introduction of the Advance Programme in 2003, had any obvious organisational importance been placed on the issue in any significant sense. Like many NZ public sector organisations the NZFS had relied on the merit system to determine who would fill senior roles over time. However, since an organisational restructure in 1994 the merit based selection system had not been used in any formalised way and promotional decisions were made based on alternative criteria.

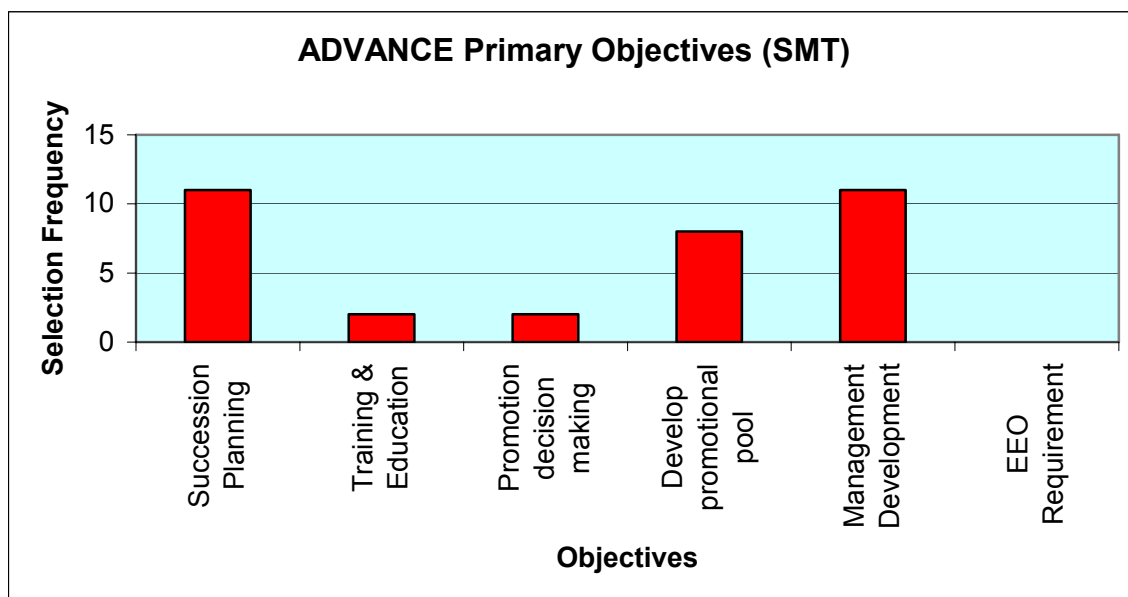
The demographic makeup of the NZFS indicate that over the next 5 to 15 years the organisation may well be facing a shortage of suitably qualified and experienced personnel able to fulfill senior management roles. High levels of recruitment during the 1970s meant that an age ‘bubble’ is moving through the organisation with significant numbers of staff at more senior levels due to exit the organisation in the short to

medium term. In fact the Advance Programme explanatory booklet makes the point that over the next fifteen years as many as 65% of current Executive Officers will be reaching retirement age.

The fact that the NZFS is a single tier entry organisation and has only rarely sought to recruit externally for senior level positions means that it is expected that a given proportion of its employees must move up through the ranks to take up middle and senior level management positions. The organisation has recognized this fact and has incorporated a succession planning strategy, incorporating the Advance Programme, within its strategic human resources plan over the next five years. The intent is to create a pool of people with the necessary competencies to achieve at the level of Chief Fire Officer and above.

Responses from the senior management team to a survey question asking what they considered to be the primary objectives of the Advance Programme indicate that it is viewed very much in the context of a succession planning initiative. The three highest frequency responses were that Advance objectives comprised succession planning, management development for participants and the development of a promotional pool for future positions (*Figure 3*). More importantly, when asked whether they considered the NZFS needed a programme like Advance, 100% of respondents answered in the affirmative, indicating a high level of apparent support from the senior management team to the need for a succession management initiative.

Figure 3



The senior management team also seemed to place high importance on the more strategic and leadership based competencies that should be included in any development activities by Advance participants. The two highest frequency responses were a requirement for leadership skills and strategic planning ability. These were closely followed by the competencies of political awareness and professional development planning (*Chart 4, Appendix L*). This tends to support the notion that the programme is a succession management initiative specifically designed to prepare participants for senior management positions in the NZFS.

The literature review clearly showed that for succession planning to be effective it needed the support and involvement of senior managers and middle level line managers. Some of the survey comments from senior management and Advance participants about the perceptions of management support gave cause for concern as to whether Advance enjoyed full support among NZFS managers (*Figure 4*).

Figure 4

Senior Manager Comments

- Programme does not appear to be sufficiently rigorous or structured enough to ensure rapid development & promotion
- Seems to be more about scoring points than developing successors
- Why have recent AFRC and CFO roles not been sought by Advance candidates or why have Advance candidates not been successful?
- Hard to tell, programme and achievements of participants against programme goals not communicated widely
- Lack of promotional opportunities will frustrate participants. Organisation is downsizing management positions
- More recognition could be given to those not in Advance but with potential

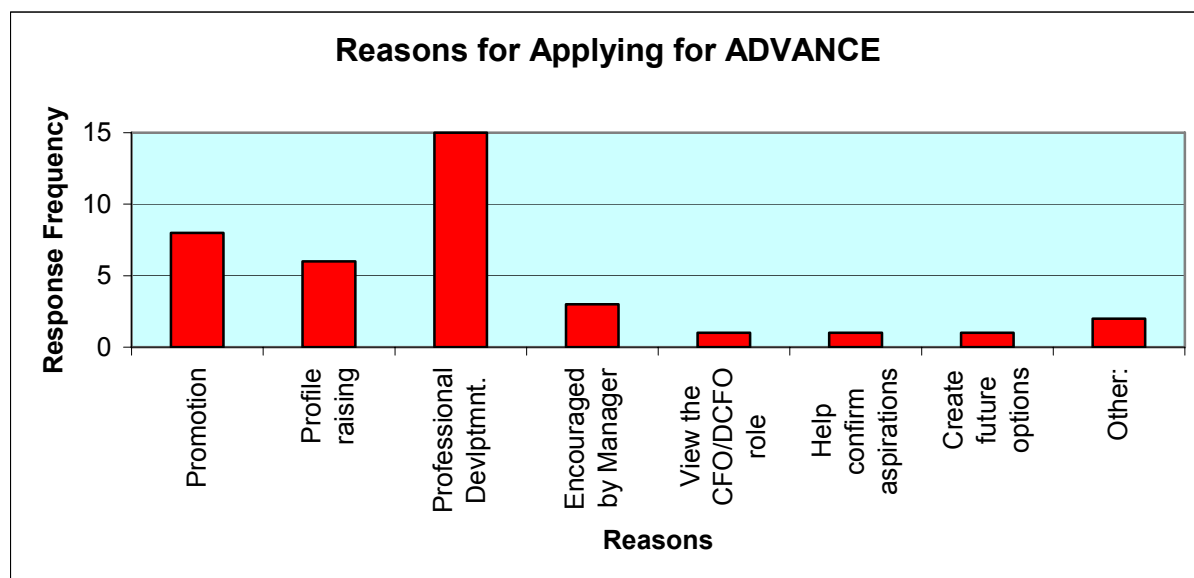
Advance Participant Comments

- Seen as a “threat” at Regional level [i.e. Advance participants]
- Not had any communication from management about being on programme
- I think he [respondents manager] supports it?
- No interaction other than to acknowledge successful appointment to programme
- Now, but not from previous Regional Manager

Whether the Advance Programme has been accepted by participants as a succession planning initiative is not clear from their survey responses. When asked what they saw as the primary objectives of the programme the clear majority of responses indicated succession planning with the complementary objective of providing management development opportunities for participants (Appendix M, *Chart 1*). In addition, all but one of the programme participants who responded to the survey agreed that the NZFS was in need of a succession programme like Advance. However, when asked why they applied for the Advance programme the clear majority of respondents indicated that it was reasons of professional development rather than promotion that had motivated their applications (*Figure 5*). Whether participants go on to seek promotional

opportunities as they become available will remain the true test of whether the programme has indeed fulfilled its organisational succession objectives.

Figure 5

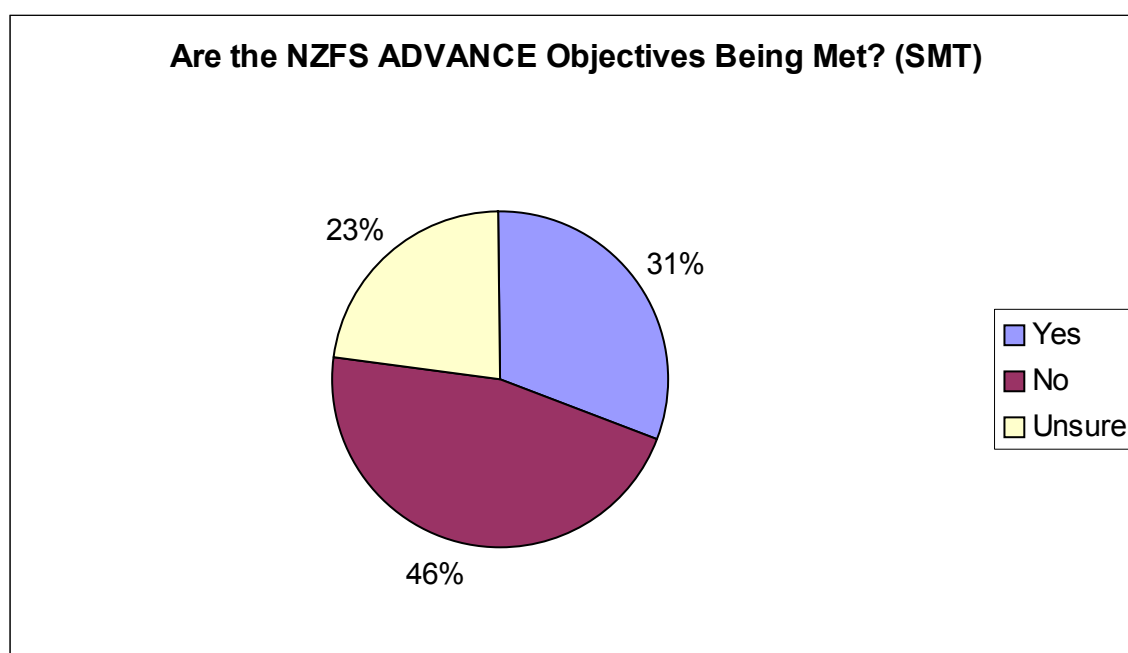


Research Question 3 - Are the objectives of the Advance Programme currently being met for both the organisation and the individual participants?

The survey instruments sought to determine whether senior managers, as representing the NZFS, thought that the Advance Programme was achieving organisational succession objectives. In addition, individual Advance participants were asked whether they considered organisational objectives were being met and, more importantly, whether their own professional development objectives were being met. A limitation to the survey process discussed previously identified that the two Advance groups had been running for different lengths of time. The second group had only started during 2004, which made it difficult for participants to determine whether their personal objectives were likely to be met given the limited knowledge they had of the programme and likely development opportunities.

Responses varied between senior managers and Advance participants. Forty six percent of senior managers believed that organisational succession objectives were not being met at this time (*Figure 6*). Contrary to this just over half of Advance participant respondents believed that the objectives were being met. However, a significant 37% of these respondents indicated that in their opinion organisational objectives were not being achieved (*Figure 7*). The proportion of those who were unsure at senior management level (23% compared with just 11% of participants) may be indicative of the lower level of personal involvement and feedback to senior managers compared with Advance participants.

Figure 6

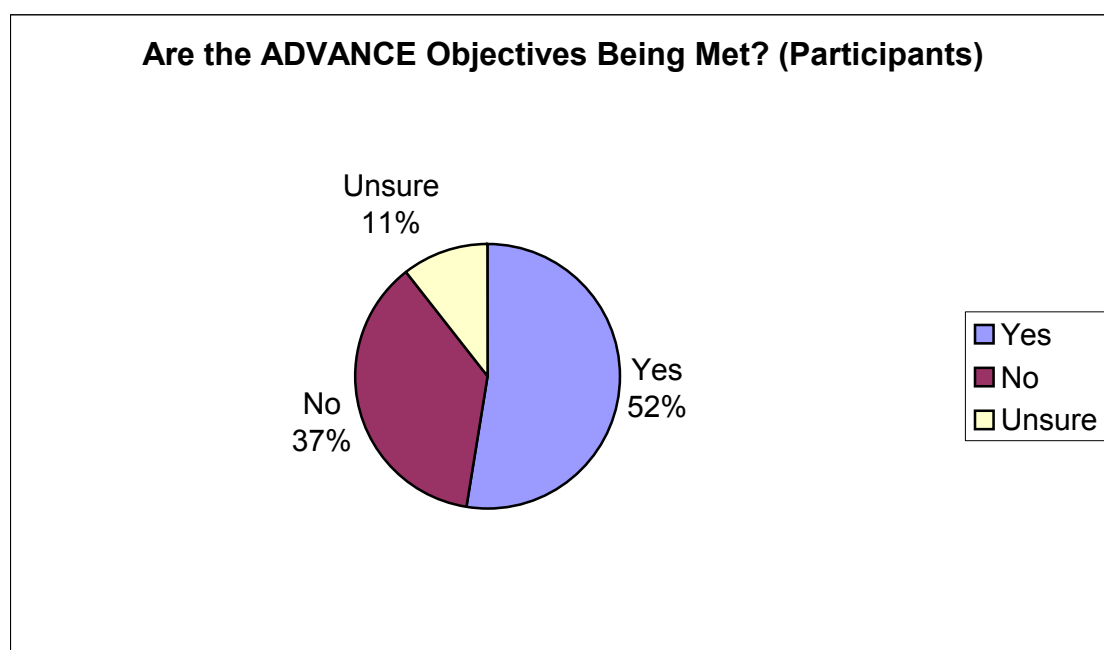


Some of the comments made by senior managers in response to the survey with regard to meeting NZFS succession objectives also indicated doubt and a lack of confidence in the programme. Comments such as “*programme does not appear to be sufficiently rigorous or structured enough to ensure rapid development and promotion*”; “*seems to be more about scoring points than developing successors*”; and “*why have recent AFRC and CFO roles not been sought by Advance candidates or why*

have Advance candidates not been successful?” tend to support the quantitative responses indicating doubt as to achievement of objectives.

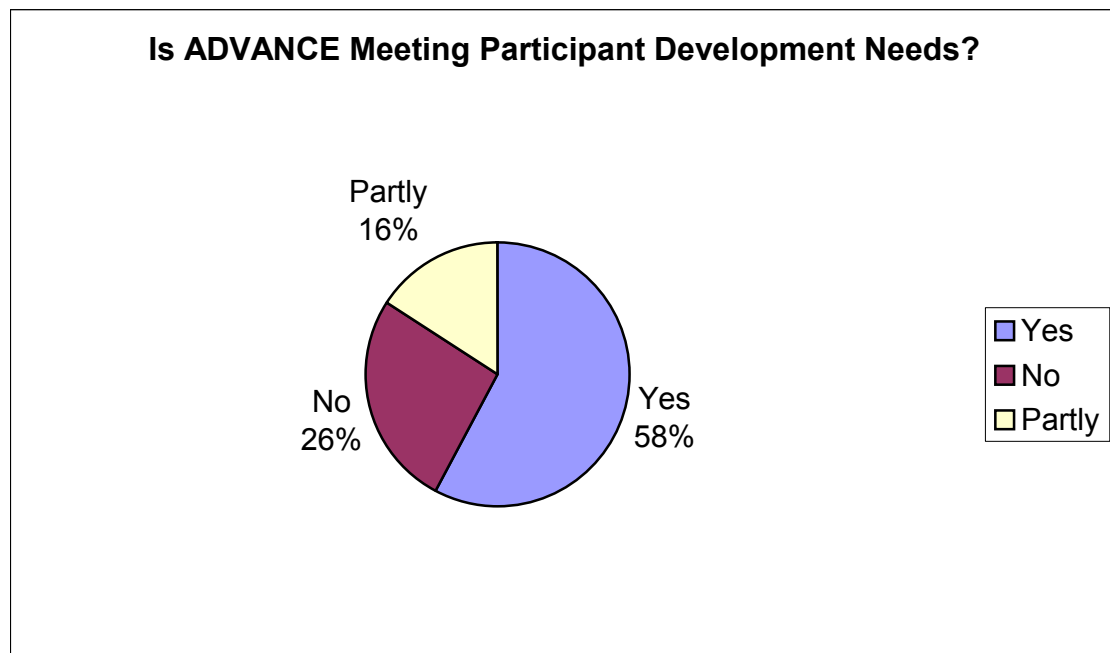
As discussed, some of the apparent lack of confidence in the programme may be due to the fact that senior managers are not intimately involved with or receiving sufficient feedback as to the progress of individuals on the programme. Comments such as *“hard to tell, programme and achievements of participants against programme goals not communicated widely”*; *“we are not monitoring the groups at SMT. I am unaware of any development of the people in the programme”* and *“no evidence either way”* tend to support the lack of information and feedback hypothesis.

Figure 7



With regard to meeting the individual development objectives of participants, the survey results show that 58% of respondents felt that their personal objectives were being met with a quarter suggesting they weren't and 16% responding that partial achievement was being attained (Figure 8). This result needs to be viewed in the context of the limited timeframe that the second Advance Programme has been running with respondent comments such as *“heading towards identifying my needs but it hasn't met them yet”*; *“a qualified yes. Still too early to judge”* and *“I didn't fully understand what was required. Now I am beginning to get the ball rolling”* tending to support this assessment.

Figure 8



Research Question 4 - What are some development initiatives that could be incorporated into the ADVANCE Programme for the future?

There appeared a strong correlation between the responses from senior managers and those from the Advance participants with regard to the type of competencies that need to be included in a succession management and development programme in general, and Advance in particular. Each group listed among their top four competencies the need to have leadership skills, strategic planning ability, political awareness and professional development planning skills (Appendix L, *Chart 4* and Appendix M, *Chart 7*).

The strong correlation between the two groups' responses continued with regard to the types of development initiatives each would like to see made available as part of the Advance programme. Both groups included secondments, mentoring, organisational

exchanges, participation in special projects and acting in a higher position among their top five development initiatives (Figures 9 and 10).

Figure 9

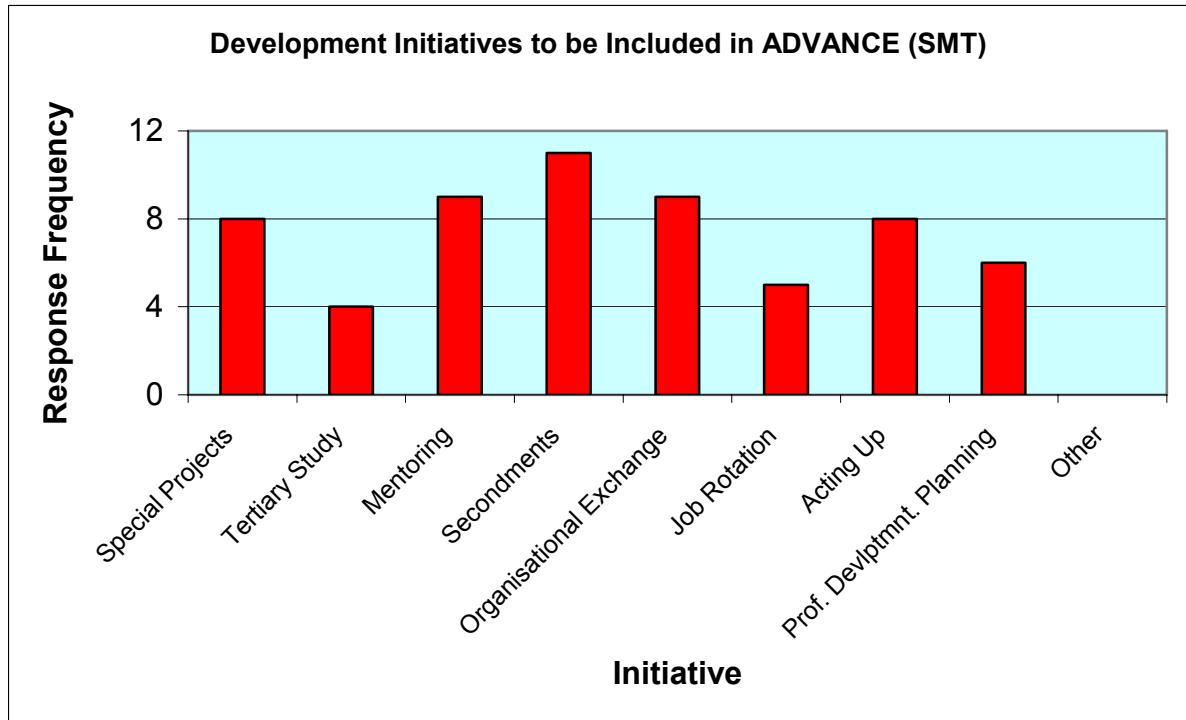
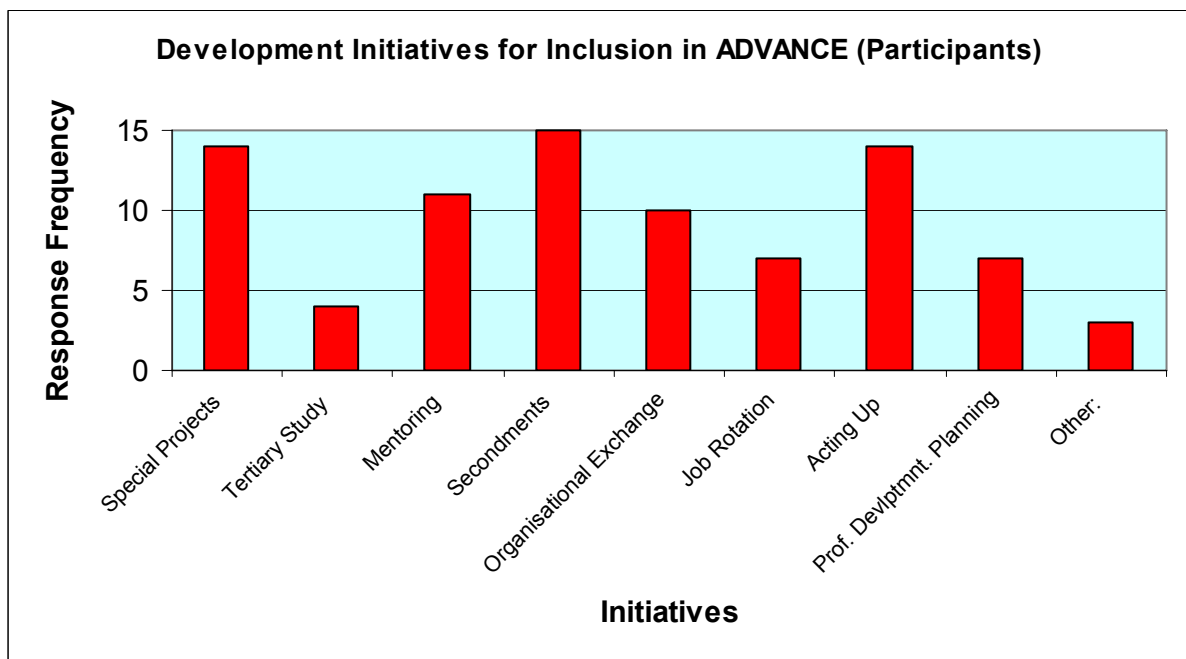


Figure 10



Some of the comments from Advance participants promoted the ideas of secondments, participation in special projects and opportunities to act up. An interesting adjunct to this was the comment from one senior manager that a *“lack of promotional opportunities will frustrate participants as the organisation is downsizing management positions”*. Some additional suggestions from Advance participants indicated the need for activities that provided insight and knowledge about the role of the Chief Fire Officer. Activities such as a “role of the Chief” workshop and opportunity to “ride-a-long” or “shadow” a Chief for a period of time would prove beneficial for participants in learning exactly what it is that Chiefs do in addition to helping them judge whether the role actually appealed to participants or not.

The survey results were in keeping with the results of the literature review, which included development initiatives such as job rotation, secondments, special projects, mentoring, attendance at courses, seminars or workshops and academic programmes. Some of the literature reinforced the need for any developmental initiatives to “stretch” or challenge the participant, taking them out of the comfort zone to enable real learning and development to take place.

A review of the Advance Programme information for applicants indicated the requirement for any development plan to be individualized to suit the participant’s specific needs. Personal coaching by an external professional development consultant was also offered to assist participants devise and review progress against development plans. Suggested development activities included placement on Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC) Executive Development courses, inclusion on Fire Service committees or working groups, secondments, tertiary study, project work, short courses, being assigned a mentor and other on-the-job learning activities.

DISCUSSION

It was clear from the literature review that the workforce demographic challenges and the need to identify and develop future leadership talent were not problems unique to the NZFS. It could be argued that such challenges are more keenly felt in the public sector than the corporate world. The ageing of the senior management workforce in the public sector is providing the most pressing reason yet as to why public sector leaders need to look at succession planning as a strategic imperative (Department of the Premier and Cabinet, 2004). This view is certainly reflected in the NZFS where it is estimated that up to 65% of current executive officers will be considering retirement over the next fifteen years.

A study undertaken by the National Academy of Public Administration (1997) suggests that there are organisational barriers to prioritising succession planning specific to public sector organisations. Barriers such as organisational culture, low priority given by senior officials, lack of role models and inadequate rewards for initiative resulting in a lack of significance placed on succession planning, can also be identified as existing in the NZFS. The fact that the NZFS has incorporated a succession planning and development programme into its human resources strategic plan supports the view that the organisation is taking this issue seriously. It is apparent that the NZFS is endeavouring to comply with good practice recommendations as determined by the NZ State Services Commission. This requires, amongst other criteria, that a department has in place a strategy for senior management development which “*aligns with the overall human resource strategy*” and “*supports training and development policies that will result in effective development initiatives for senior managers*”.

Senior managers and Advance participants were almost unanimous in their agreement that the NZFS was in need of a succession planning and development

programme such as Advance. This was tempered somewhat by the survey comments from senior managers which tended to be either neutral or, at times, negative regarding the Advance Programme. While there appeared to be general agreement about the need for succession planning in general, and Advance in particular, the level of knowledge about, and support for the programme seemed somewhat limited. It is possible that NZFS managers are exhibiting some of the attitudes that Schall (1997) identified as barriers to succession planning being taken seriously in the public sector. She found that there was reluctance by current leaders to take up the succession task, a belief that succession issues were beyond the scope of the leader's work, as well as confusion about what exactly was meant by succession planning.

Certainly, the level of demonstrated support for Advance participants by their managers appears somewhat muted judging by the survey responses received from participants when asked whether they thought their manager supported the programme. This apparent low level of overt management support is of concern if the succession objectives of the NZFS are to be met. Mihm (2003) reinforces the need to link any succession planning initiative to the organisation's strategic planning and to ensure the programme receives "*active support of top leadership*". If the Advance programme does not have the required management support, or if some managers are questioning the programme or attempting to undermine it then it is unlikely to achieve its succession goals. In fact one of the concerns raised during the Advance review workshop centred on determining exactly what were the expectations of the senior management team with regard to Advance. Again, there seemed to be a lack of clarity as to what the organisation could expect after two years of Advance, notwithstanding the fact that most managers agreed that the NZFS was in need of some sort of initiative aimed at

succession planning. It is possible that managers need time to observe the real results that the programme might deliver before it receives their full support and commitment.

It may be that the apparent low levels of support and involvement are merely a function of a lack of information and reporting to managers regarding the objectives of the programme and the development and performance to date of the various participants. The Advance review workshop discussed the issues around the organizational-wide awareness of the programme. It was agreed that this was a double edged sword, in that having an increased profile may bring greater levels of legitimacy and acceptance of the programme but also ran the risk of potentially alienating managers who were not selected and others who may view the initiative as short circuiting the historical promotional pathway. This was in contrast to Lynn (2001) who viewed open communications policies regarding the identification of high potential employees as generating benefits such as *“increased respect for the institutionalized leadership development process, ultimately ensuring a level of rigor that can withstand scrutiny”*.

It can not be discounted that some managers view the programme with a degree of suspicion based on the belief that if they support the programme they are effectively assisting in their own premature exit from the NZFS. As Kets de Vries (1988) asserts, *“the wish to believe in one’s own immortality and to stay in control can be found in leaders across sectors”*. Somehow the NZFS needs to convince its middle and senior managers of the truth of Blunt and Clark’s (2000) assertion that, *“growing the next generation of public sector leaders may be the single most critical responsibility of senior public service leaders today”*. It is imperative that managers understand their role in supporting Advance and its participants. The future success of Advance is dependent upon the provision of practical support through providing developmental

opportunities for participants. This must be viewed not as the sole responsibility of the human resources department but as the wider responsibility of senior and line managers.

The continued leadership and commitment of the chief executive will play an important role in promoting this change of mindset. Presently the NZFS chief executive is a clear supporter of the need for formalized succession planning and specifically the Advance Programme. The NZ State Services Commission (1998) reinforces the need for this high level advocacy when it identifies good succession practice as including support from the chief executive through their commitment to training and development throughout the organisation and their active support of senior managers in meeting their training and development needs. Blunt and Clark (1997) also emphasize the need for “*top organisational leaders*” to be “*personally involved and deeply committed*” as a benchmark principle for managing succession.

The NZFS has introduced the Advance Programme as a succession planning initiative specifically aimed at creating a pool of talent for the key positions of Chief and Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Regional Commander and Regional Manager. Baldwin (2004) agrees that while “*it may not be vital to have a succession plan for every position in the company...there are some key areas of responsibility which must be considered*”. Whether the programme should be considered a succession plan in the truest sense of the word is arguable. The information to candidates clearly points out that participation in the programme is by no means a guarantee of future promotion. It seems that the egalitarian culture of the organisation, where time in the job and experience tend to be more valued perhaps than leadership skills, intellectual capacity and personal drive and ambition has determined that any attempt at formalized succession is tempered with a “no promises” caveat. This is apparently more in keeping with the public sector ethos where participation in a succession initiative does not

guarantee promotion but rather seeks to ensure “*the availability and sustainability of supply of capable staff who are ready to assume key roles if selected through normal competitive selection processes*” (Australian Public Service Commission, 2004).

Perhaps the culture of the NZFS will determine that any succession planning initiative is best promoted as more of a professional development programme rather than an overt attempt at future succession placement.

While it is acknowledged that no succession plan can absolutely guarantee promotion to any participant it would seem that it is more acceptable in a private sector context for high performers to be identified early in their careers and then developed and nurtured to the extent where they become the obvious best candidates for future senior leadership positions. Such apparent certainty of success is not consistent with the approach to succession in the NZFS, nor across the wider public sector. The historical view of promotional pathways underpinned by the concept of merit, experience and time in the role may take some time to work its way out of the organisation, if in fact it ever does. It could be argued that this organisational culture that the merit-based approach to promotion has as its foundation has contributed to the current lack of leadership talent available to public sector organisations. Highly capable managers with potential may be unwilling to wait around for their turn for promotion under the merit system and may choose to seek more rapid development, advancement and rewards in the private sector.

Downsizing of positions and making Advance participants wait too long will frustrate many and work against the objectives of succession planning. Numbers selected, timing and repetition of programmes needs to be carefully considered. There is however, an inherent risk of demotivating other potential leaders through guaranteeing positions as of right to succession management participants. As discussed

in the context of the Australian public sector, *“succession management should focus on identifying a robust field of potential candidates for leadership roles: it does not involve the development of lists or queues for promotion”* (Australian Public Service Commission, 2004).

It was interesting to see that both groups surveyed agreed that the primary objectives of the Advance Programme were both succession planning and management development. This may be the result of a lack of clearly expressed objectives of the Advance Programme or a belief by respondents that a succession planning programme must, by definition also be a management development programme. Certainly there is a strong link between the two objectives. What should be considered is that this duality of objectives has the potential to impact on the strategic results of the programme, which ultimately must be to fill senior management positions over time with Advance participants. The chance that some Advance participants may view the programme as merely a vehicle from which to gain professional development opportunities whilst remaining in their current positions should not be overlooked. Green (2000) identifies a 1998 study by the American Society for Training and Development that found that 99% of workers surveyed wanted more training from their employers. The perceived lack of professional development opportunities for frontline operational officers in the NZFs may cause some to view initiatives such as Advance as a means to get the professional development they seek without necessarily viewing it as a precursor to future promotion. This was an issue discussed during the review workshop and a need was determined for clear policies on how participants can exit the programme during the 2 years and how the organisation can exit a participant for non-engagement in the programme. Certainly the apparent lack of full engagement by some Advance participants provoked a survey response from one senior manager when the question

was asked as to why recent Assistant Fire Region Commander and Chief Fire Officer roles had not been sought by Advance candidates. The future administration of Advance will need to incorporate the ability to identify whether candidates are demonstrating continuing potential and progress toward meeting developmental objectives as well as determining what alternatives can be offered to candidates who are not meeting expectations (Baldwin, 2004).

Arguably the real test of the success or otherwise of the programme as a succession planning initiative will be the placement of Advance participants into middle and senior management positions over the next two to five years. If, as the survey results might suggest, participants became involved primarily to gain access to professional development opportunities, with promotion considered secondary, then the programme's objectives of succession may not be achieved. This could also suggest a lack of professional development opportunities elsewhere in the NZFS for employees wishing to develop but remain at their current levels. Careful attention will need to be paid to recruitment and selection of participants for any future Advance Programmes to ensure candidates are applying for the right reasons and are displaying real intent to move up the organisational ranks. Of course, a related issue impacting on the potential success of the Advance Programme centres on the ability of the NZFS to attract employees into middle and senior management roles. Issues such as remuneration, hours of work, workplace pressures and stress and a perceived lack of security are some of the reasons why many operational staff are apparently not actively seeking further promotion or involvement in programmes such as Advance. Any succession programme will only be as good as the quality of its participants. Therefore, there may be some deeper organisational issues regarding recruitment to management positions

that need to be addressed if succession planning initiatives in the future are to attract the best possible candidates.

Turning to the type of development initiatives that need to be included in the Advance Programme, there was again a strong correlation between the responses of both survey groups and much of the literature reviewed. Activities such as secondments, departmental exchanges, mentoring, acting up and participation on special projects were mentioned by a number of authors (Green 2000, Australian Public Service Commission. 2004, Lynn 2001, NZ State Services Commission 1998 and 1999). The key issue facing the NZFS is whether it is able to provide sufficient opportunities for development to Advance participants. This will require a well coordinated approach across the various geographical and functional departments of the fire service to ensure that developmental opportunities are offered to the appropriate people and that quality feedback is provided to participants during and at the conclusion of the activity.

One of the recommendations of this research project is that the NZFS Human Resources Department takes a more direct role in coordinating the placement of Advance participants into various development activities. The greater the participation of programme members in various secondments and development activities the greater the potential for the programme to be more widely understood and accepted by middle and senior managers. It is clear from the survey results and the literature reviewed that a keystone to any developmental plan is the necessity for honest and robust feedback to be given to candidates that focuses on their performance against the competencies requiring further development. Only through the provision of good quality feedback can meaningful future development plans be developed. This principle may require training and development amongst existing managers to ensure they have the requisite skills to provide quality feedback to Advance members.

In conclusion, it is clear that the NZFS is now aware of the strategic importance of succession planning. While this level of understanding and commitment may not be prevalent across all sectors of the organisation it is a significant achievement that the need to develop and provide future organisational leaders from within has been clearly signaled through its inclusion as a strategic goal in the Human Resources Strategic Plan. The responsibility for organisational commitment to succession management appears to have also been readily accepted by the Chief Executive. The Advance Programme should be considered as a promising first step towards incorporating proactive succession management into the wider organisational culture. Further refinement and monitoring of the programme should help to ensure that it achieves its objectives of providing a high quality pool of potential candidates for middle and senior management positions in the future.

As governmental agencies around the world anticipate the need for leaders and other key employees with the necessary competencies to successfully meet the complex challenges of the 21st century, they are choosing succession planning and management initiatives that go beyond simply replacing individuals in order to recreate the existing organisation, to initiatives that strategically position the organisation for the future (Mihm, 2003).

The NZFS has recognized the strategic importance of succession planning, particularly in a public sector context and more significantly is doing something about it!

RECOMMENDATIONS

There is clear evidence that the NZFS requires some form of structured organisational succession plan to ensure a pool of experienced and prepared employees is developed to take on the roles of Chief Fire Officer and above over the next five to fifteen years. It is apparent that the Chief Executive and the Director of Human

Resources have recognized this need and have incorporated succession planning and management development objectives in the human resources five year strategic plan. Currently the Advance Programme is the organisation's attempt at a formalized approach to succession. To ensure the success of this initiative it is essential that the aims, objectives and successes of the programme are clearly identified and communicated to senior management. Also, middle level managers need to be clear about their role in the process and how they can best support its objectives for the wider organisation and for any direct reports who may be on the programme currently or considering applying in the future.

It is the recommendation of this report that clearly defined organisational outcomes are developed for the Advance Programme and that these objectives are more widely communicated and promoted within the NZFS. In support of the need for a greater emphasis on succession planning background data on the demographic profile of the organisation's managers should also be provided to assist in the marketing of the programme. In addition, senior and mid level managers should have succession planning and staff development objectives incorporated into their respective individual performance agreements.

The survey results indicate that improved communication is required to members of the senior management team regarding progress of individuals and general Advance Programme results data. Such reporting needs to be against clearly defined outcome objectives for both the organisation and the individual participants. This is particularly important for senior managers who are not personally involved in the programme through having a direct report as a participant, acting as a mentor, or providing instruction by some other means to participants. Progress reports determining value against financial investment, motivation and intent of participants and

development progress of participants in general, need to become a regular part of senior management team meetings

As part of the initial selection process for Advance, candidates were assessed as to their strengths and weaknesses, which formed the basis of their individual development plans. It is recommended that, at the conclusion of the two-year timeframe, participants from the respective programmes undertake further individual assessments. This will assist in determining whether Advance development initiatives have actually met the needs of participants and may assist in the further development and refinement of future Advance programmes.

Survey respondents from both the senior management group and the programme participants indicated the need for a range of developmental initiatives to be included in the Advance Programme. There was some suggestion from the second group of Advance participants that it would be beneficial to see the whole programme mapped out at the beginning. There was also a suggestion from one senior manager that the programme needed to be more structured in its approach. A recommendation is made that the Human Resources department undertake a more managed and coordinated approach to developmental opportunities available through Advance. The human resources team has to become more involved in finding and brokering developmental opportunities for Advance participants across the wider organisation. A recommendation is to create an organisational register identifying opportunities for Advance people such as special projects, secondments, acting in higher roles and internal exchanges. Such a register would be administered by the Human Resources department which would effectively become a development broker tasked with getting Advance participants together with managers offering opportunities or needing help with particular local projects and initiatives.

Mentoring is identified as one of the single biggest contributors to professional and personal development. The potential for Advance participants to learn from more experienced senior managers from within the NZFS and from other public sector organisations should not be understated. Therefore, it is recommended that a more formalized mentoring programme be developed within the NZFS. The programme should seek to identify and select suitable managers to become mentors as well as provide training in the skills of mentoring. Once a suitable pool of mentors is established then the programme should provide a mechanism of introducing and pairing of mentor with mentee. Such a programme need not be limited to just Advance participants as there are benefits for the wider organisation of having a mentoring culture at all levels developed within the NZFS. In addition to the establishment of a traditional type of mentoring programme Advance participants need to be advised of and coached with regard to the benefits of peer mentoring. This will provide them with learning opportunities from within their own Advance cohort by exposing them to the experiences and thoughts of their peers operating in a similar context but perhaps in different management environments.

In addition to the reassessment of individual participants discussed above, it is recommended that the Advance programme itself is assessed and reviewed. For the first Advance Programme such a review should be held at its conclusion scheduled for mid 2005. For the second Advance Programme a mid point review should be undertaken after one year to ensure any identified deficiencies have time to be addressed before the programme reaches completion. Such a review needs to focus on answering questions such as had the individual's needs been met, had training & development filled identified competency gaps, how many participants had been promoted, was there any

organisational cultural shift towards a better understanding of the need for succession and the impact the Advance Programme may have had in meeting those needs?

The review should also include an assessment of how often the NZFS should consider offering the Advance programme based on demographic analysis and the organisation's ability to provide sufficient progress and promotion opportunities to participants. If there aren't sufficient opportunities available for people to move into it can become frustrating and demotivating for participants. To ensure a high degree of objectivity it is further recommended that any such review of the programme is undertaken by an independent third party such as an external consultant who has not been involved in the ongoing administration and management of the programme.

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APPENDIX A

Background on the New Zealand Fire Service

The New Zealand Fire Service (NZFS) is a national fire and rescue service delivering emergency response services, technical and legislative fire safety advice and community fire safety education to the public and other stakeholders of New Zealand. The country is a relatively small South Pacific nation with a predominantly European based population of four million people.

The NZFS employs approximately 1600 fulltime career firefighters primarily deployed in the metropolitan cities and larger towns. In addition, there are around 8,000 volunteer firefighters servicing the provincial and rural sectors. A government appointed entity called the New Zealand Fire Service Commission governs the NZFS. The Commission is responsible to a Minister of the Crown for the strategic outcomes of the NZFS. As a statutory established Crown Entity the NZFS is part of the public sector of New Zealand.

Within the NZFS there is a Chief Executive who is responsible for day-to-day management and appointments of all other Fire Service personnel. The Chief Executive also holds the position of National Commander. The National Commander is the operational head responsible for the prevention, suppression and extinction of fires, and the safety of people and property endangered by fire. The annual operating budget for the 2003-04 financial year was \$NZ213m.

Currently the NZFS is divided into eight distinct geographic Fire Regions. Each Region has a Fire Region Manager and two Assistant Fire Region Commanders. These positions are considered to be senior management positions. In addition, there are twenty four career Fire Districts each with their own Chief Fire Officer and many with

their own Deputy Chief Fire Officer. These positions are considered to be middle management.

The strategic and administrative hub of the NZFS is the National Headquarters which incorporates a Strategic Human Resources Department. This department is responsible for the implementation of any succession plan required by the Chief Executive and the ongoing administration and development of the Advance Programme aimed at identifying and developing future leaders within the organisation.

The Vision and Mission of the organisation are;

Vision

Working with communities to protect what they value

Mission

To reduce the incidence and consequence of fire and to provide a professional response to other emergencies

APPENDIX B

Age profiles of career staff in the NZFS - October 2004

Chart 1: Age percentage by rank

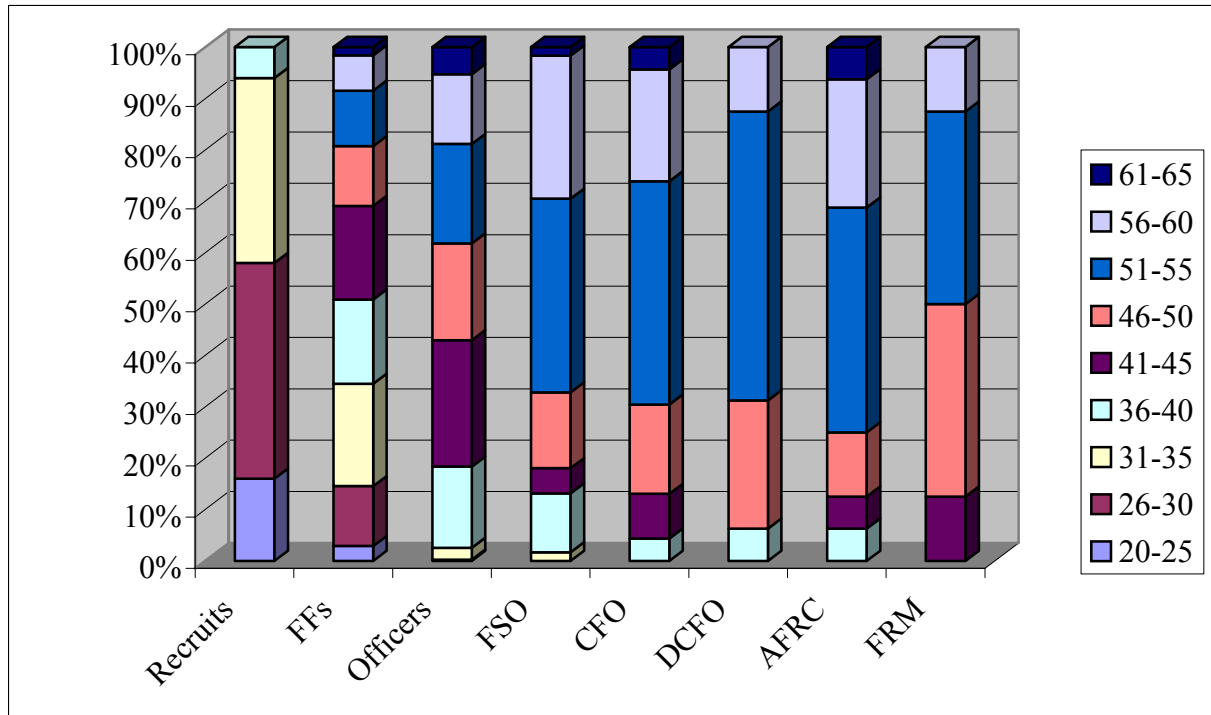
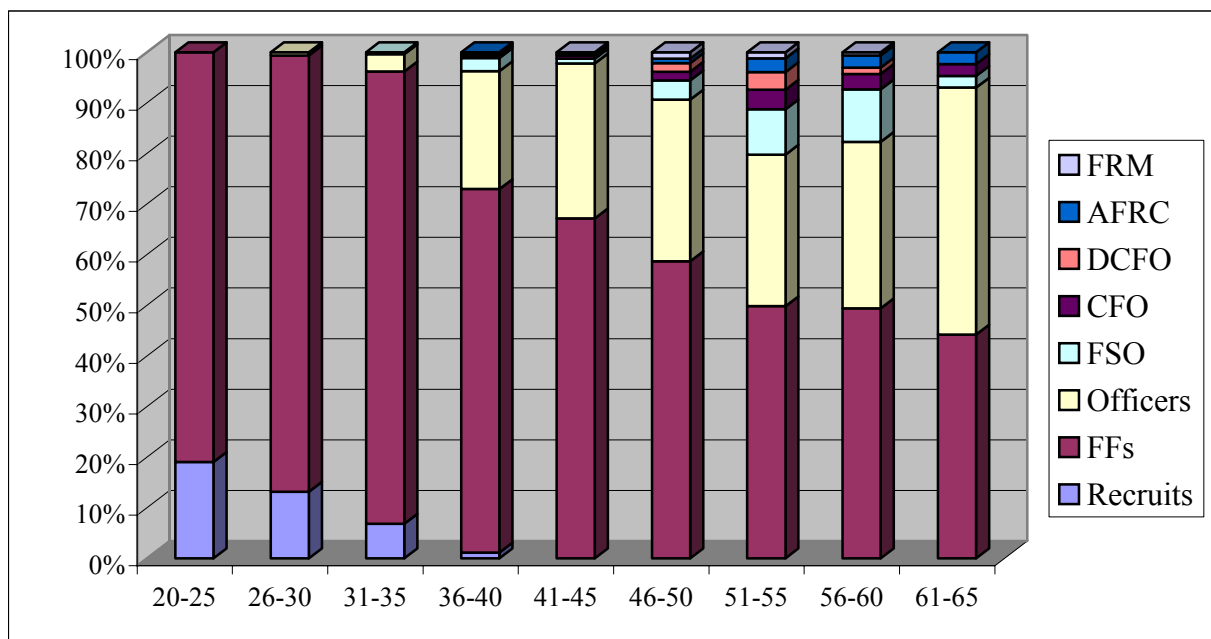


Chart 2: Percentage of ranks in each age bracket



APPENDIX C

NZFS Gazette Notices announcing the respective Advance Programmes

Notice No. 127/2002

Applications are sought from people seeking inclusion in the **Advance** Programme. Advance is a programme to assess career officers for higher ranked positions and provide them with feedback on their individual development needs to achieve their career goals. In some cases the Fire Service will take a hands on role in managing their development needs. Applications are now being sought from career officers considering applying for Assistant Fire Region Manager or Fire Region Manager vacancies within the next two years.

Detailed information on Advance can be obtained from the K-Net. Applications must be made on the prescribed application form, which is available on K-Net.

Applications are to be addressed to:

‘Advance’
Human Resources Department
New Zealand Fire Service
PO Box 2133
Wellington

Applications must be received no later than 0900 hours Tuesday, 7 January 2003.

Notice No. 109/2003 The Advance Programme

Advance is a programme to assist operational personnel preparing for promotion. The programme assesses potential for higher leadership roles and provides the individual with feedback on their strengths and development needs. In some cases the Fire Service will take an active role in addressing applicants’ development needs.

The Advance Programme is now being run for those preparing for promotion to district management positions (Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer vacancies).

Applications are currently being sought from employees who meet the following criteria:

- Hold rank; and
- Have experience as an officer of a career/permanent crew; and
- Ready to apply for Deputy Chief Fire Officer or Chief Fire Officer positions in the next 2 years (2004-2005); and
- Willing to apply for promotional positions outside of their current district.

Detailed information on the Advance Programme can be obtained from the K Net. Potential applicants are advised to read the booklet “Advance, Leadership Development Programme for the New Zealand Fire Service” and the “Timeframe for Advance Applicants”. Applications must be made on the prescribed application form, which is available on K-Net.

Applications are to be addressed to:

‘Advance’
Senior Advisor Leadership and Organisational Development
Human Resources Department
New Zealand Fire Service
PO Box 2133
Wellington

Applications must be received no later than midday Friday, October 31, 2003.

APPENDIX D

Overview of NZFS Advance Programme

Advance Leadership Development Programme For the New Zealand Fire Service

It is assessed that over the next 15 years 65% of current Executive Officers may be considering retirement.

The Fire Service is planning now to meet the vacancy requirements with sufficient numbers of skilled personnel ready to fill management vacancies as they arise. **Advance** is a leadership development program designed to meet this need.

Advance is about

- identifying personnel with the talent to undertake higher positions in future years;
- assessing the gap between the skills they have now and the skills they will need in higher positions;
- suggesting ways they can develop their current skills to meet future needs.

For those with the most potential for higher positions it will also mean their development is actively managed by the Fire Service.

This booklet is designed to provide potential applicants and their managers with information on **Advance**.

The booklet takes a questions and answers format. It answers the following questions:

Question	Page
What is Advance ?	3
Why do we need the Advance Program?	3
Does Advance replace traditional promotional interviews?	3
Who is running the program?	3
What is involved in the Advance Program?	4
What will I get out of Advance ?	5
What sort of development is being offered?	6
What will the Fire Service expect of me?	6
Why will I have to be mobile as part of Advance ?	7
Can anyone apply?	7
Will all ranks be assessed together?	7
Can I re-apply in subsequent years?	7
How often will Advance run?	7
If I get promoted do I stay in the Advance Program?	7
Can I leave the Advance Program?	8
Are the test and assessments in my time or work time?	8
What about travel to the test and assessment location?	8
What can I expect at the tests and assessments?	8
What happens to information stored on me?	10
Where can I get more information?	11

What is Advance?

The **Advance** Programme is a program to assess staff against their future career aspirations and provide them with an understanding of their individual development needs. For those assessed as having the most potential, the Fire Service will take a hands-on role in managing their development needs.

Why do we need the Advance Programme?

The **Advance** Programme is about preparing staff for higher leadership roles so we always have that pool of quality internal applicants.

Does Advance replace traditional promotion interviews?

No. The two are quite separate.

The **Advance** Programme is about identifying personnel with the ability to work at a higher level in the future, assessing the gap between where they are now and where they would need to be, to be a strong candidate for that higher role and assisting them meet that gap.

The **Advance** Programme is quite separate from selection and appointment, which remains on the basis of the “best suited” applicant, having been through an open selection process. Being in the **Advance** Programme *does not guarantee* you will be promoted. Similarly, not being in the program will not prevent your promotion.

Who is running the Programme?

Human Resources and the Senior Management Team will be heavily involved in all aspects of the **Advance** Program.

However, there are some highly specialized aspects involved so Cerno has been selected to partner us in this program. It a company of specialists who assist organisations with a range of specialist Human Resource functions such as:

- Senior Management Development
- Senior Management Appointments
- Change Management Strategies
- Career Development

Cerno was selected to assist the Fire Service with the **Advance** Programme following submissions made by several similar providers in the market place. Cerno was selected because of their ability to understand our organisation and their willingness to include Fire Service Senior Management in all aspects of the assessment, from building the Assessment Centre, to assessing participants and building development reports. The Fire Service is confident that the end result will be a process that is right for the Fire Service and that is relevant for those who undergo assessment.

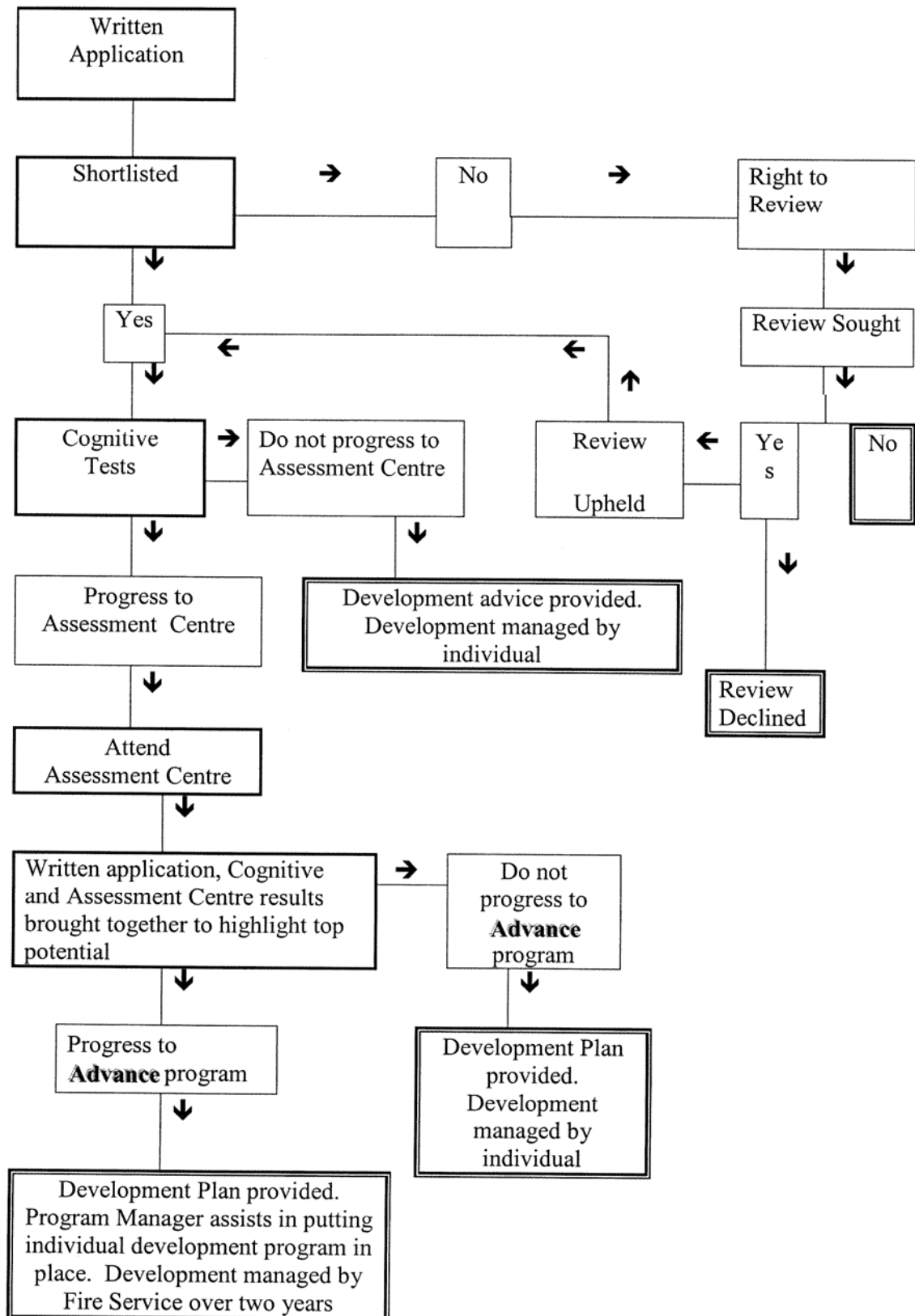
Cerno have experience running similar programs in other organisations. If you wish to know more about Cerno you can visit their website www.cerno.co.nz

What is involved in the Advance Program?

The program involves the following:

Written application
Assessment Centre

Cognitive Tests
Tailored development options



APPENDIX E

Initiating memo for a review of the Advance Programme

To: Vince Arbuckle, Karen Quigan	From: Russell Wood
CC: R Saunders, I Pickard, S Barclay, T Andrews, S Mitchell, J Graham	Date: 16 August 2004
Subject: ADVANCE Review	Action:

Background

ADVANCE is the leadership development programme introduced last year to assist selected personnel to prepare for promotion to Fire Region Manager and Assistant Fire Region Commander vacancies. A second programme has since been introduced to assist in preparing staff for promotion to Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer. In essence, the objectives of the Advance initiative were to ensure the NZFS was preparing for the future by identifying and developing individuals as part of its succession planning strategy.

With the programme having been in operation for just over one year now I believe it is appropriate to undertake a review of progress. This will help to ensure that the objectives of the programme for the NZFS and individual participants are being met as well as identifying any development initiatives that might be considered for the future.

Review

To ensure that the needs of participants are being met I am recommending a review of Advance. With the programme just past its midpoint it is timely to determine whether participants feel they are being suitably prepared or challenged to take on the role of Assistant Fire Region Commander or Fire Region Manager? Such a review may also assist with identifying any areas for improvement in the second tier Advance programme.

Positive things so far have been some of the speakers at our quarterly meetings and the opportunity to discuss personal development initiatives with our respective programme managers. Other positives are the profile raising and the potential to become involved in any special projects that might be occurring.

Some initiatives which I think might help to improve the programme would be to attend and observe some of the Senior Management Team meetings and/or Commission meetings. More exposure to the political/industrial environment might also be beneficial. The possibility of some sort of corporate exchange or outside placement in another organisation could also be explored. It might be another emergency service provider or public sector organisation or even a relevant private company. Another issue to explore could be the ability of the NZFS to provide release time from normal duties to work on professional development initiatives such as research projects being undertaken as part of the Manly Police College or National Fire Academy Programmes. Certainly finding time to work **on** the business rather than **in** the business can be a very real challenge.

Another issue, which could be explored, is the level of understanding and support of the objectives of Advance by senior managers within the NZFS and how the programme has been embraced. Also, the level of communication and coordination between department managers and the Strategic HR department to ensure a consistent approach to the provision of developmental and/or promotion opportunities for participants

In addition to any organisational review I am planning to undertake a critical evaluation of the Advance Programme as part of my next applied research project for the Executive Fire Officer Programme from the National Fire Academy. This will include a general review of succession planning in the public sector and the NZFS as well as surveying opinions of Advance participants to determine how effectively it is meeting their personal objectives.

I believe it will be beneficial to have an informal feedback session with Karen Quigan and yourself to determine what positives participants are gaining from Advance and what some improvement options might be. It is important we get the feedback loop working effectively to ensure the future success of Advance. I look forward to participating in the review meeting on 16 September.

Regards
Russell Wood (CFO)
Auckland City East Fire District

APPENDIX F

New Zealand State Services Commission - Good Practice Guidelines for Management Development & Succession in the Public Service

Introduction

The successful implementation of government strategies depends largely on the capability and performance of public officials. Well qualified, capable and committed senior public servants are central to a high performing Public Service.

It is important that capability is maintained at all levels of the Public Service. This document is particularly concerned with the development of senior managers to facilitate effective performance in current roles as well as effective preparation for future Public Service roles.

It is recognized that the diversity of Public Service departments means that there will be variance across agencies, and that all these standards will not be appropriate for all departments. These guidelines are therefore presented as generic good practice standards.

Definitions and Objectives

Public Service senior managers are second tier executives. Because of the diversity of the senior executive population this definition includes those who manage significant resources in the organisation and have staff responsibilities, those who operate at a strategic management level, and those who report directly to the chief executive in a managerial capacity.

Succession planning is defined as developing a strategy to replace key individuals. **Succession management** is actively managing this process.

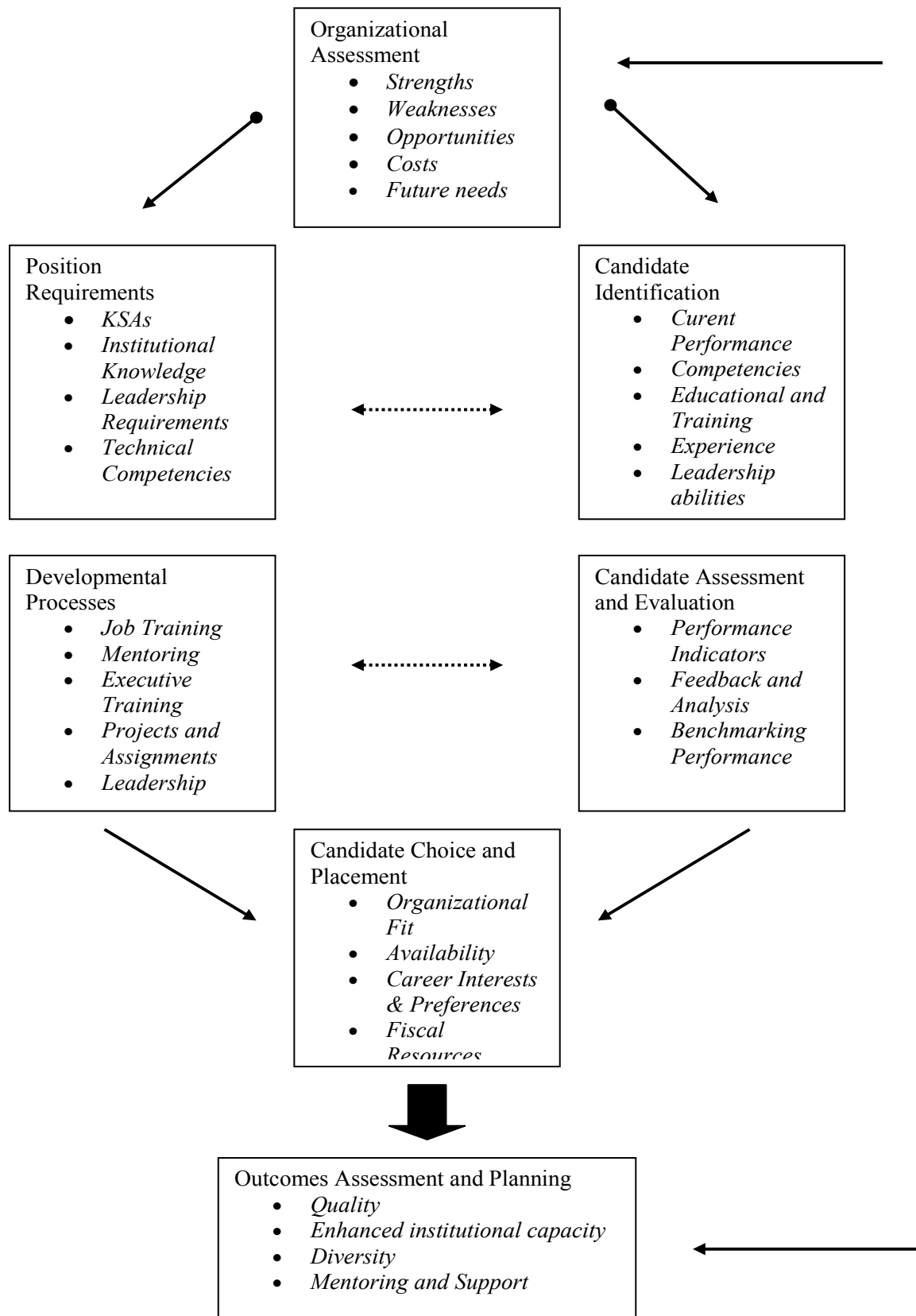
In the context of the Public Service, **senior management development** and **succession** refer to developing the capability of senior managers to work effectively, not only in their current department, but also to ensure effective performance in other positions within the Public Service.

The main objectives of senior management development and succession for the Public Service are to:

- ensure the development of a corps of highly qualified senior managers capable of performing effectively at senior levels in the wider Public Service
- create a pool of credible candidates who are available for consideration for appointment to chief executive positions
- ensure that the senior levels of the Public Service are representative of society.

APPENDIX G

Succession planning organisational assessment strategies model from Lynn (2001).



APPENDIX H

Professional Development Activities suggested by the Leadership Development Centre. Sourced from www ldc.govt.nz/docbuild/publish/elp/doc_page60.asp?node=60

Whakapapa: Ko Māori Te Kōwhiri Māhara

LEADERSHIP
DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
Ara Kaiārahitanga



Developing the capability of public sector leaders

Search

Ngā Ratonga Whakapakari Kōwhiri Ngā Akoranga Maramataka Ngā Mea Hou Ngā Hononga

Development activities

The suggested activities given here are designed to encourage you to think of your development as comprising a four element cycle of learning which includes: conceptual development, applying theory to practice, engaging in critical reflection and an evaluation process, and experimenting with and testing new ideas, behaviours, practices.

Full learning in any given area will involve completing this cycle. You may be strong in the knowledge of finance, but never have managed a budget, good with people in informal situations, but never understood the psychology of what motivates behaviour and commitment. It doesn't matter so much where you start on the learning cycle, this will be a matter of learning preference. However, to put ideas into practice you will need to actually have practical experience and feedback on your performance for real learning, development and change to occur. You will be given help to assess the development that you require this document will assist with that process.

The activity will also change depending on your role and level within the organisation. Managers will be able to apply these activities to their development as well as to those people they manage. Individuals seeking management experience will perhaps be guided towards shadow, secondments or sabbatical arrangements where the level and complexity of learning can incorporate a group and business dynamic as well as a focus on their individual development.

The following is provided as a guideline and as prompt to further thinking. In no way is intended to be a prescriptive or definitive list of experiences that are considered to be relevant to leadership development

Lead with integrity	Examples of relevant development activities
---------------------	---------------------------------------------

<p>Strategy forming</p> <p>Leaders structure and position the organisation to reflect strategic intent and achieve government's goals, priority outcomes and investment in the future.</p>	<p>Read about, or take a course in strategic thinking and techniques employed in 'futures analysis'.</p> <p>Conduct an environmental scan to assess the demographic, environmental, social, business, economic changes that are likely to affect the work of your department.</p> <p>Write and present a report outlining several scenarios for change to your peer group, department, and chief executive.</p> <p>Lead a project, which attempts to implement one set of initiatives designed to address the future.</p> <p>Set up systems and processes to ensure commitment, implement changes and monitor progress.</p>
<p>Culture shaping</p> <p>Leaders shape an organisation culture to reflect NZPS values and give effect to the strategy to deliver results.</p>	<p>Produce a visual map of examples of culture in the organisation, your department, (pictures/words/documents/ protocols and processes) compare with the statement of 'cultural intent', and produce a short analysis of match between the two.</p> <p>Reflect on one culture change that you have experienced and write a critical evaluation of the way it was introduced and the impact.</p> <p>Read case studies on culture change, discuss with colleagues.</p> <p>Develop a strategy for implementing a change in an aspect of culture.</p>
<p>'Senior Official' nous</p> <p>Leaders manage the interface between the political environment and the Public Service, use the processes of government, understands the debates and practices surrounding Te Tiriti o Waitangi, operate on the basis of a</p>	<p>Attend a self-managed induction programme, covering government machinery, constitutional framework, "who is who", government law, process and protocol.</p> <p>Shadow opposite number in Cabinet secretariat or Minister's office.</p> <p>Work on an inter-agency project in an</p>

<p>politically neutral 'whole of government' framework and work collaboratively with others to achieve results.</p>	<p>evaluation/observer capacity.</p> <p>Track and critically review the progress of one policy development, through all stages of forming, development and implementation phases.</p>
<p>Manage with prudence</p>	<p>Examples of relevant development activities</p>
<p><i>Management of people</i></p> <p>Leaders recognise the aims, aspirations, and employment requirements of all staff, and build and maintain a high-performing workforce to enhance the organisation's performance to achieve government's goals and objectives now to in the future.</p>	<p>Take part in 360-degree performance feedback on your leadership, management, communication style.</p> <p>Shadow your manager, or another leader in their 'people management' activities (negotiating with unions, attending a hui, chairing a meeting, communicating to large groups of mixed stakeholder group at a public consultation).</p> <p>Conduct development reviews with your staff; agree development activities and coach to improvement.</p> <p>Attend seminars, courses, and workshops to work on, gain knowledge about, or discuss aspects of people management.</p> <p>Develop a strategy for addressing all or some of the strategic human resource management issues faced by your department.</p>
<p><i>Business acumen</i></p> <p>Leaders consistently apply sound general management practices to ensure the business operates effectively and efficiently and delivers agreed outputs to contribute to priority outcomes.</p>	<p>Get to grips with your budget, understanding how it works - budget process, timelines, rules for spend and purchase. Attend courses to learn about the financial management and business systems in your organisation. Visit key people in charge of the budget process and develop relationships.</p> <p>Examine one area of your business from a systems and finance perspective and recommend improvements; present case for change and implement and monitor progress.</p>

	<p>Join a cross-government working group tasked with initiating business improvements.</p> <p>Take on a 'failing' project and plan to turn it around.</p>
<p>Walk with respect in diverse worlds</p>	<p>Examples of relevant development activities</p>
<p><i>Stakeholder engagement</i></p> <p>Leaders manage multiple working relationships with stakeholders to enhance understanding and co-operation to achieve desired results.</p>	<p>Organise or participate in a public consultation process.</p> <p>Attend public fora where interest groups put forward their case (e.g. council meeting; parliament; courts).</p> <p>Write a review paper based on your reflections of the experience note what worked and how things may be handled differently for future consultations.</p> <p>Apply learning to your own work area. Identify opportunities to engage with internal and external stakeholders and plan practical project to accomplish this. Review experience.</p> <p>Seek a mentor to coach you through the process.</p>
<p><i>Responsiveness to Maori</i></p> <p>Leaders develop, build and maintain effective relationships with Maori respecting obligations under te Tiriti o Waitangi; working to improve responsiveness to Maori; and interacting appropriately with Maori taking into consideration tikanga (customs) and kawa (protocol).</p>	<p>Ensure you and your staff have basic understanding of personal and departmental obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Attend appropriate courses. Conduct meetings with regard to Maori protocol.</p> <p>Create a 'portal of aims and achievement' of work to create positive outcomes for Maori. Arrange a secondment to TPK or area of work that is concentrating on Maori issues.</p> <p>Manage a specific policy area that attempts to improve consultation or service delivery for Maori.</p>

<p><i>Cultural respect</i></p> <p>Leaders enable people from different cultural backgrounds to work together effectively; reinforce culturally sensitive behaviour and foster a culturally safe working environment.</p>	<p>Research and obtain a profile of the cultural, demographic mix in New Zealand, your locality, your department's service group and your employees.</p> <p>Identify your level of knowledge with respect to the cultural values and protocols pertaining to key stakeholder groups for your department.</p> <p>Attend seminars, read, talk to respected elders, and representatives of stakeholder communities.</p> <p>Find out your department's policy for encouraging harmonious working relationships across cultures; review your section/departmental practice and develop a process of consultation to introduce and monitor changes.</p>
<p><i>Technical credibility</i></p> <p>Leaders have the functional and technical knowledge and skills to achieve the high level of respect and accomplishment needed in the role.</p>	<p>Attend professional updating courses, seminars, and meetings.</p> <p>Present 'leading edge' thinking seminars to peers on the technical developments in their field and impact on the department's work.</p> <p>Undertake a secondment in another agency whose work relies on your technical expertise.</p> <p>Conduct a customer satisfaction survey with your key stakeholders with regard to the value, timeliness and relevance of your expertise to their role and work. Seek to identify improvements and plan for change.</p>

APPENDIX I

Record of Advance Review Workshop

Inaugural Advance Leadership Programme Workshop Held 16/9/04

Attendees: Vince Arbuckle (Director, Strategic HR)
 Karen Quigan (Advance Programme Co ordinator)
 Russell Wood (Advance Participant)
 John Graham (Advance Participant)
 Trevor Andrews (Advance Participant)
 Ian Pickard (Advance Participant)
 Rob Saunders (Advance Participant)
 Steve Turek (Director, Operational Support & Training)
 Jan Watt (Consultant/Facilitator)

Summary of Highlights of Programme

- Rigor and robustness of the Assessment Centre. In particular the honesty of the feedback.
- Quarterly meetings as they have provided a forum for bonding with fellow programme participants and building relationships at National Headquarters.
- Secondment opportunities that have arisen to date. These have been very well targeted at individuals development needs.
- Opportunity to meet with an external coach.
- Advance programme has provided an excellent opportunity to raise profile within the organisation. It has been invaluable to attend meetings rather than just reading about them or their outcomes.
- Speakers at the quarterly meetings.
- Operational support throughout the programme.
- Ability to have informal access to key players at National Headquarters.

Ways the Programme Could be Enhanced

- Exposure to SMT meetings. This could be done on a rotation.
- Access to an in-house mentor during the programme (also this could continue after programme finishes).
- More opportunities to “rock sit” (step up in acting role) to level above current operating level.
- Better communication on secondment or acting-up decision-making process. It was agreed that this was joint responsibility.
- Look at ways that Advanced participants receive richer feedback after unsuccessful promotional interviews.

- Have a clear statement (or policy) on how participants can exit the programme during the 2 years or when the organisation can exit a participant for non-engagement in the programme.
- Look at the option of a midway link-up with programme manager, participant and participant's manager.
- Time Commitment – *suggested we monitor this with the next group.*

Other Issues

- Concern about SMT's expectations on what the programme will deliver. This was highlighted in Russell's survey.

It was agreed that a midway feedback paper be prepared for SMT to raise their awareness of the development opportunities that have already been completed by the participants.

A second SMT paper was recommended on completion of Russell's review.

- There were concerns about what happens at the end of 2 years. It was agreed this was largely up to the participants and will be addressed at the last quarterly meeting.
- It was suggested that each participant leave the programme with an end of programme development plan.
- Importance of ensuring participants understand the programme is a partnership between them and the organisation.
- Several discussions on the issue around the organisational wide awareness of the programme. It was agreed that this was a double edge sword and no conclusion or recommendations were agreed.

APPENDIX J

Research Project Survey Questionnaire for Senior Management Team Members

The following survey seeks to gather information and opinions on the NZFS ADVANCE Programme for a research project being undertaken by Russell Wood as part of a study programme at the National Fire Academy (Emmitsburg, USA). It would be greatly appreciated if you could take a couple of minutes to complete the survey and return in the envelope provided.

All responses are anonymous and strictly confidential. Results will be used solely for the purposes of this research project.

1. The NZFS has initiated a professional development programme called ADVANCE. What do you understand to be the main objectives of the programme? (you may select more than one)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Succession planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Management development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Training & education | <input type="checkbox"/> EEO requirement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help participants to determine if they want promotion or not | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a promotional pool | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please explain |
-
-

2. Do you believe the NZFS needs a programme like ADVANCE?

- Yes No

Provide brief explanation why or why not:

3. Do you believe the organisational objectives of the ADVANCE Programme, as you understand them, are currently being met?

- Yes No

If not, why?

4. What management competencies do you consider necessary for participants to cover in a programme like ADVANCE? (you may select more than one).

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Communication skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Political awareness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Networking opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial relations management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Media training | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional development planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please explain: | |
-
-

5. What specific development initiatives/opportunities would you like to see included in the ADVANCE Programme? (you may select more than one).

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special projects | <input type="checkbox"/> Organisational exchange prog. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tertiary study | <input type="checkbox"/> Job rotation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring | <input type="checkbox"/> Acting up |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secondments | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional development planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please explain: | |
-
-
-

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.

PLEASE RETURN THIS SURVEY IN THE ENVELOPE SUPPLIED.

APPENDIX K

Research Project Survey Questionnaire for ADVANCE Programme Participants

The following survey seeks to gather information and opinions on the NZFS ADVANCE Programme for a research project being undertaken by Russell Wood as part of a study programme at the National Fire Academy (Emmitsburg, USA). It would be greatly appreciated if you could take a couple of minutes to complete the survey and return in the envelope provided.

All responses are anonymous and strictly confidential. Results will be used solely for the purposes of this research project.

1. As a participant in ADVANCE, what do you understand to be the main organisational objectives of the programme? (you may select more than one)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Succession planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Management development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Training & education | <input type="checkbox"/> EEO requirement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> For participants to determine if they want promotion or not | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please explain | |

2. Do you believe the NZFS needs a programme like ADVANCE to identify and develop people for future promotion?

- Yes No

Provide brief explanation why or why not:

3. For what reason(s) did you apply for the ADVANCE programme?

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Promotion | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Raise your profile | <input type="checkbox"/> Encouraged to by manager |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please explain | |

4. Do you believe the organisational objectives of the ADVANCE Programme, as you understand them, are currently being met?

- Yes No

If not, why?

5. Do you believe the ADVANCE Programme concept is supported by your immediate manager?

- Yes No

Why/why not?

6. Do you believe the ADVANCE Programme is currently meeting your professional development needs and expectations?

- Yes No

If not, why?

7. What management competencies do you consider necessary for participants to cover in a programme like ADVANCE? (you may select more than one).

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Communication skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Political awareness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Networking opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial relations management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Media training | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional development planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please explain: | |

8. What specific development initiatives/opportunities would you like to see included in the ADVANCE Programme? (you may select more than one).

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special projects | <input type="checkbox"/> Organisational exchange prog. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tertiary study | <input type="checkbox"/> Job rotation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring | <input type="checkbox"/> Acting up |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Secondments | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional development planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please explain: | |
-
-

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.

PLEASE RETURN THIS SURVEY IN THE ENVELOPE SUPPLIED.

APPENDIX L

Survey result charts from Senior Management Team

Chart 1

Q 1. The NZFS has initiated a professional development programme called Advance. What do you understand to be the main objectives of the programme?

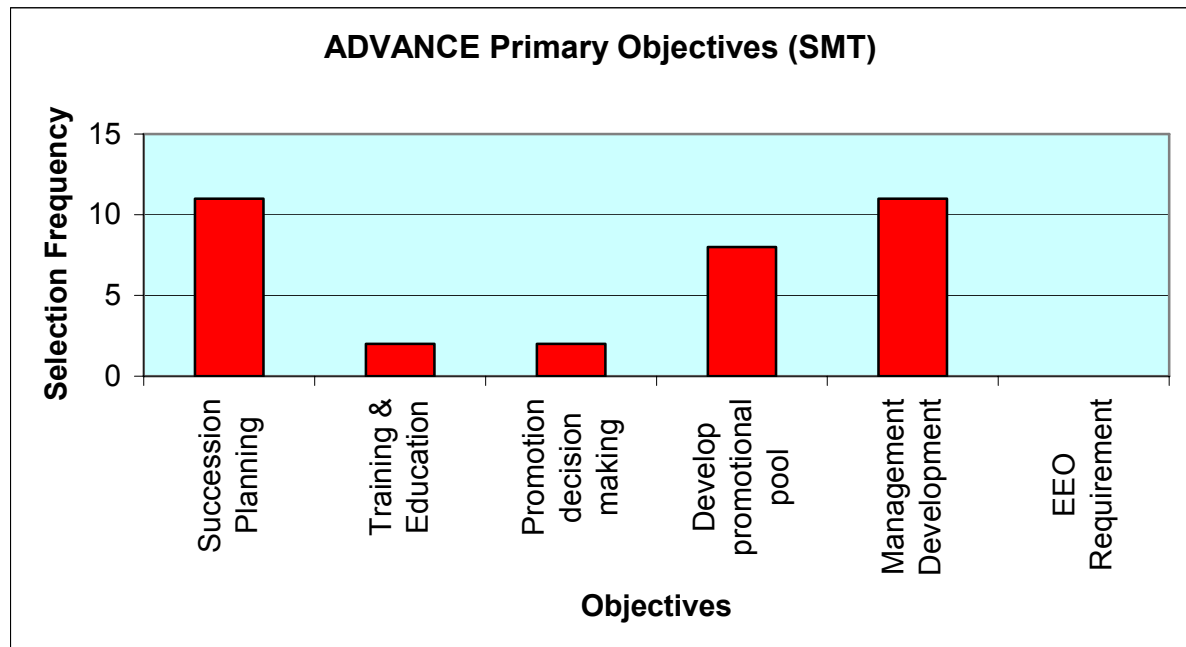


Chart 2

Q 2. Do you believe the NZFS needs a programme like Advance?

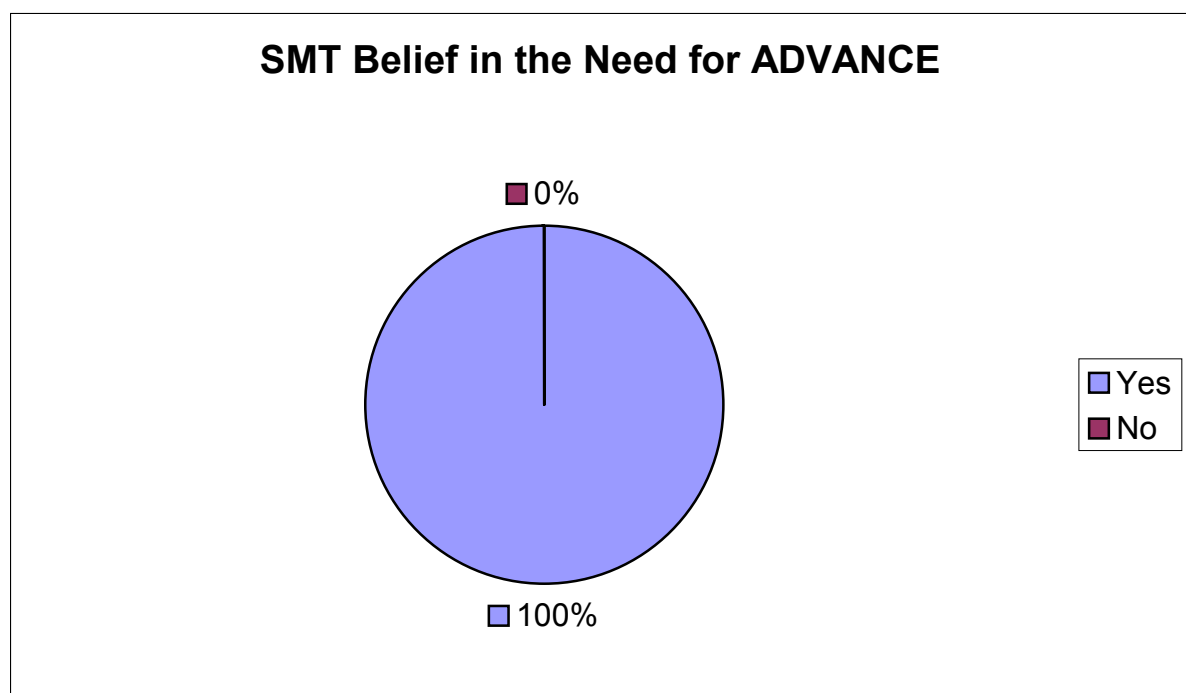


Chart 3

Q 3. Do you believe the organisational objectives of the Advance Programme, as you understand them, are currently being met?

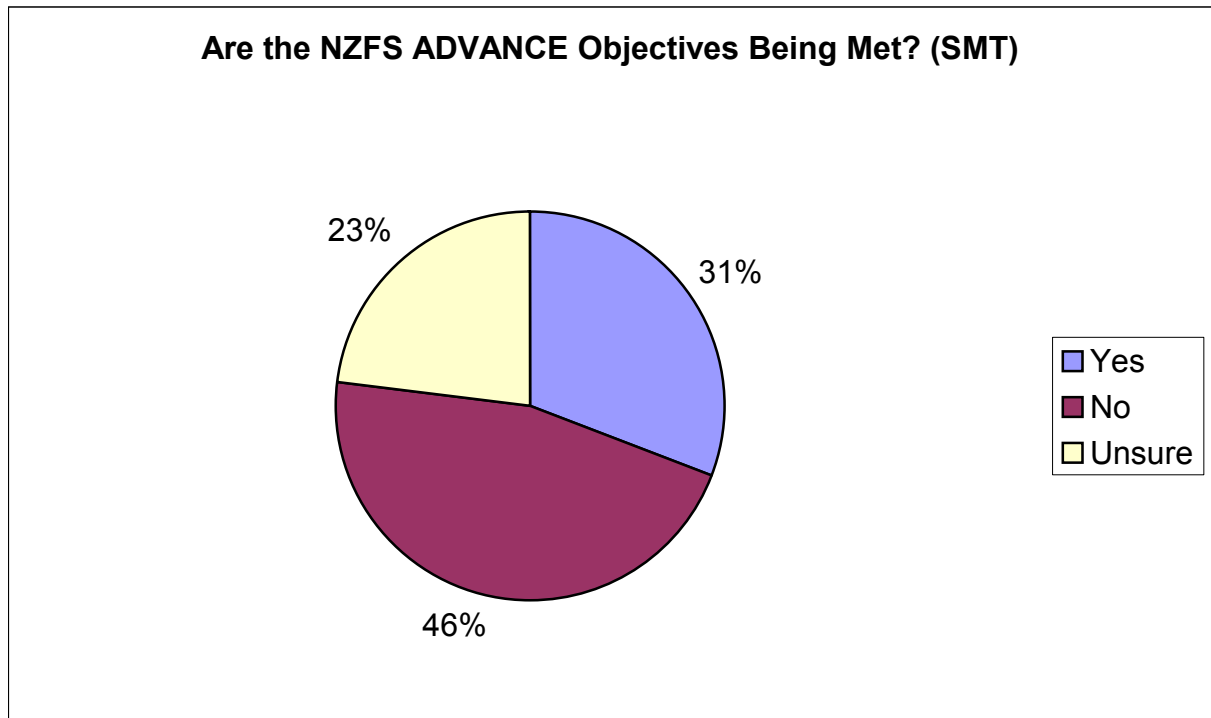


Chart 4

Q 4. What management competencies do you consider necessary for participants to cover in a programme like Advance?

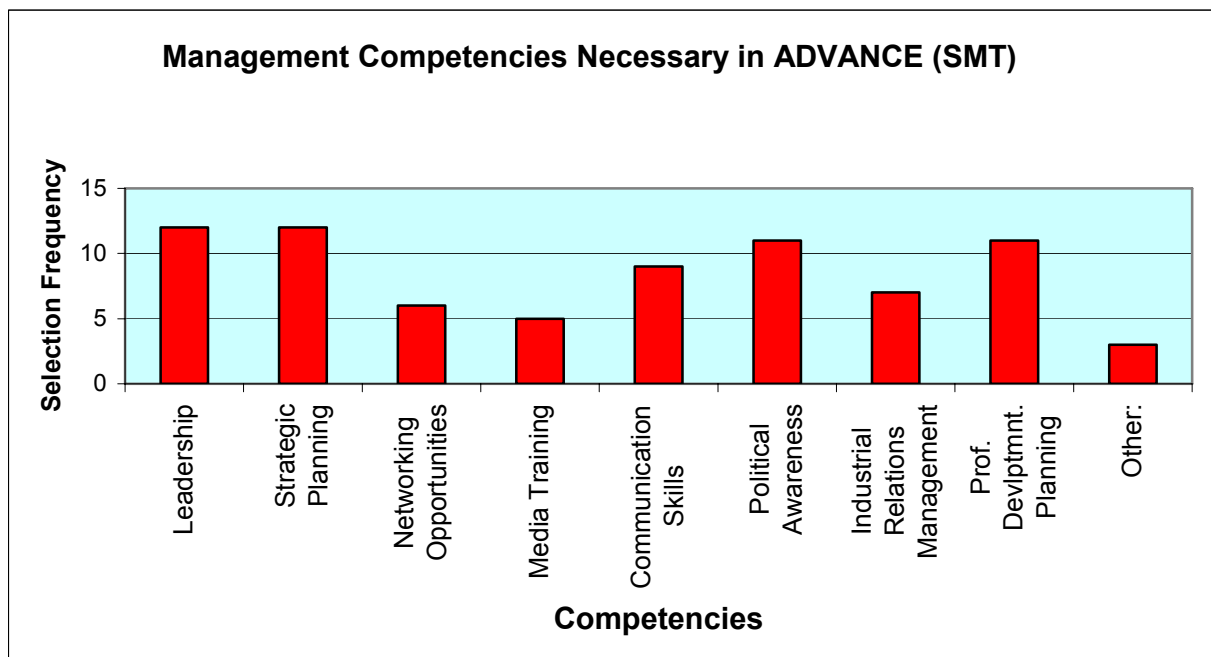
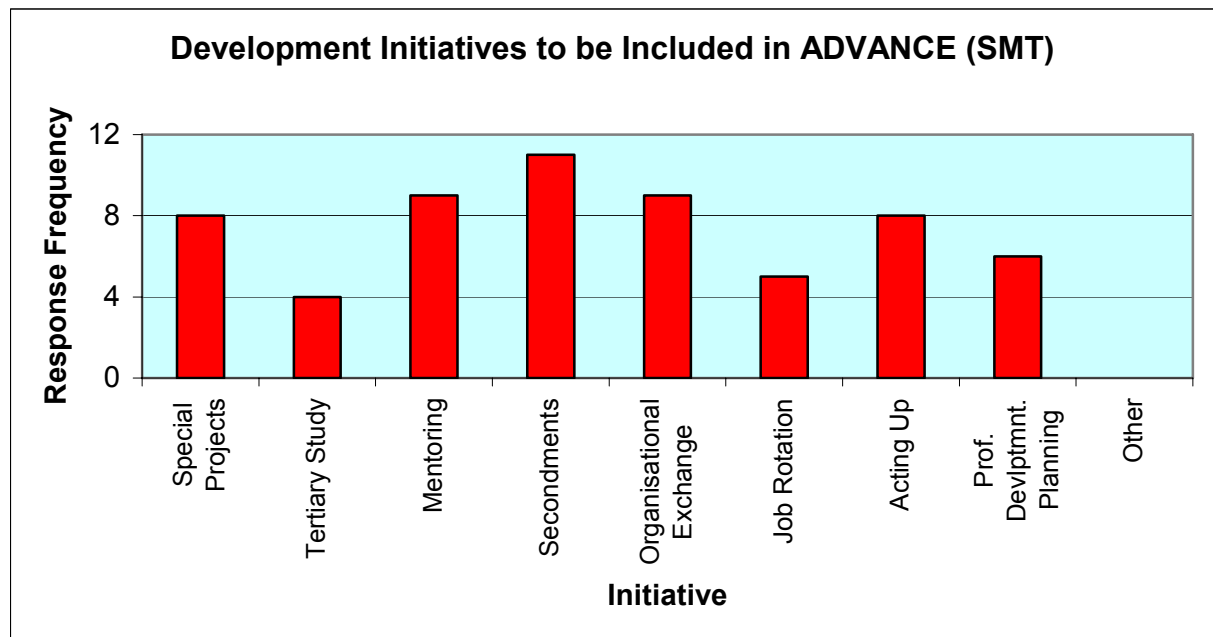


Chart 5

Q. 5. What specific development initiatives/opportunities would you like to see included in the Advance Programme?



APPENDIX M

Survey result charts from ADVANCE Programme Participants

Chart 1

Q 1. As an Advance participant, what do you understand to be the main organisational objectives of the programme?

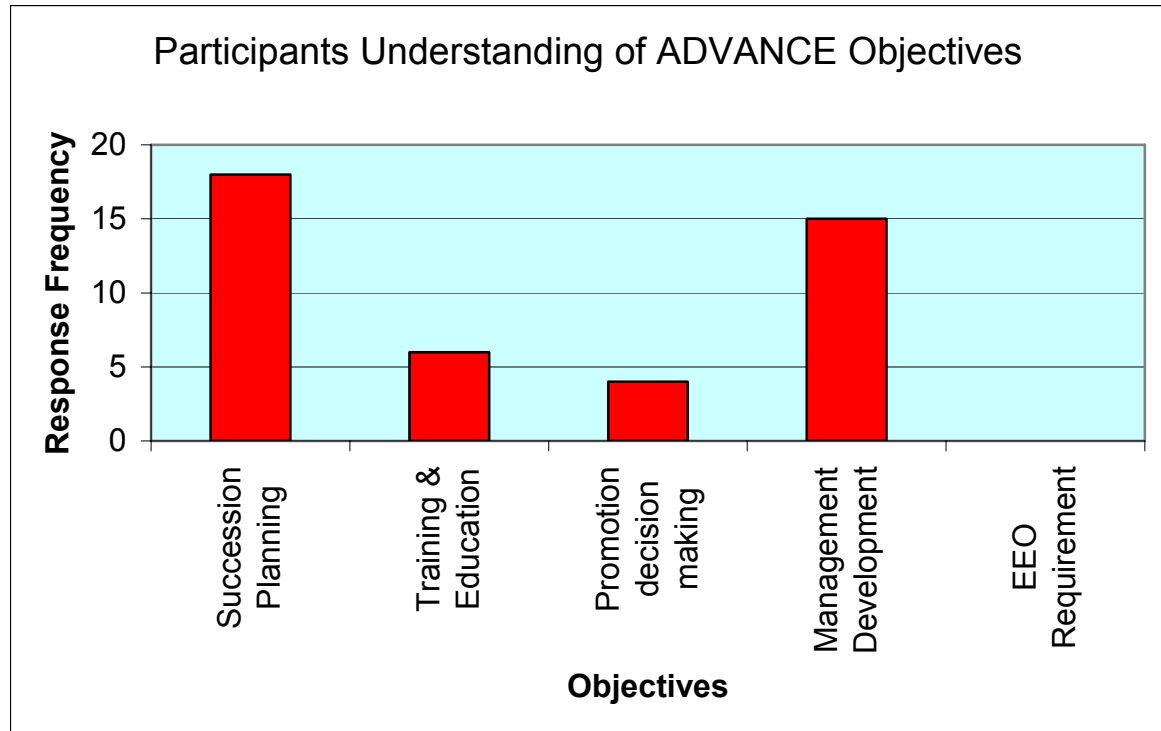


Chart 2

Q 2. Do you believe the NZFS needs a programme like Advance to identify and develop people for future promotion?

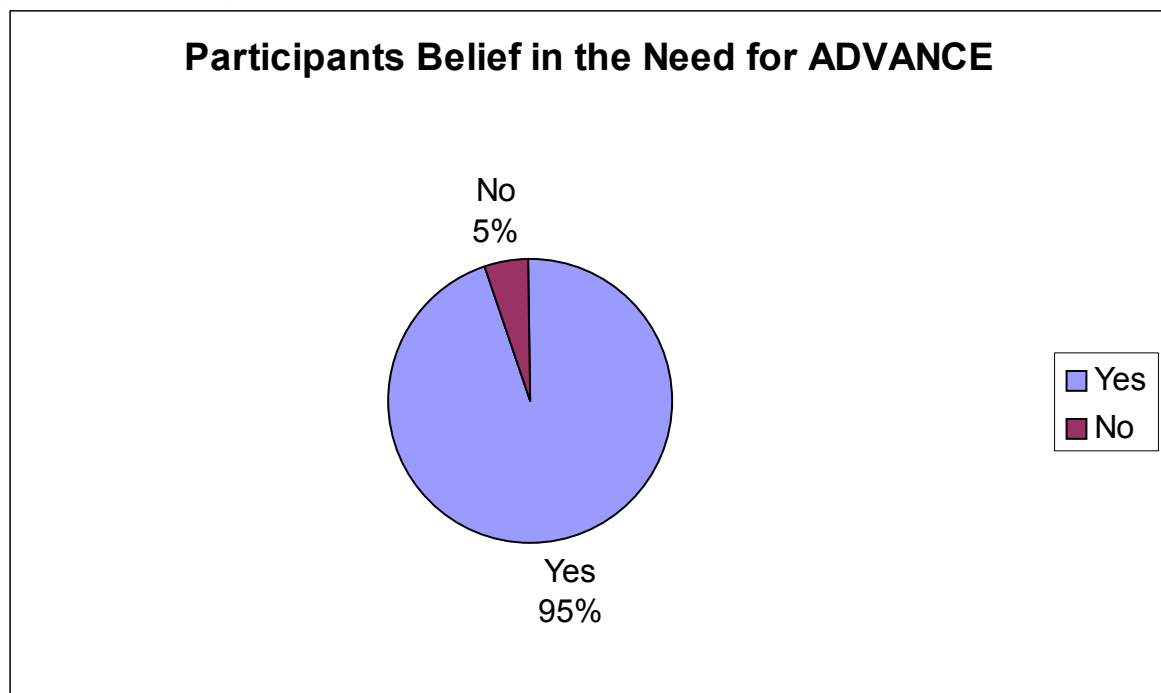


Chart 3

Q 3. For what reason(s) did you apply for the Advance Programme?

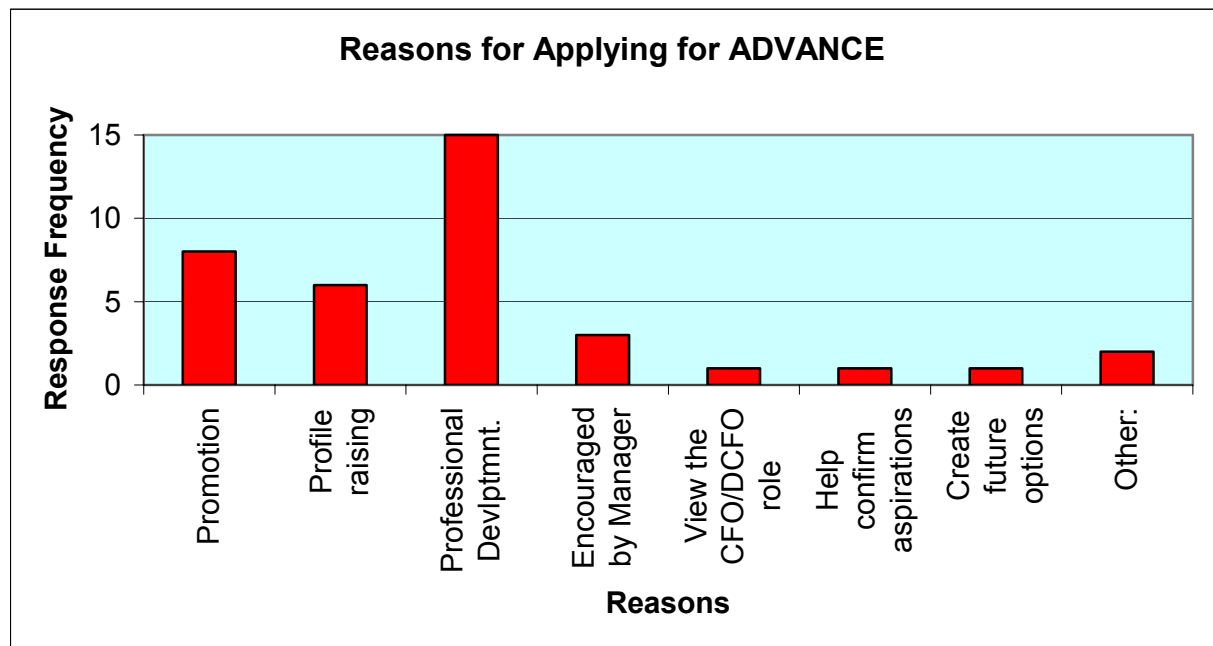


Chart 4

Q 4. Do you believe the organisational objectives of the Advance Programme, as you understand them, are currently being met?

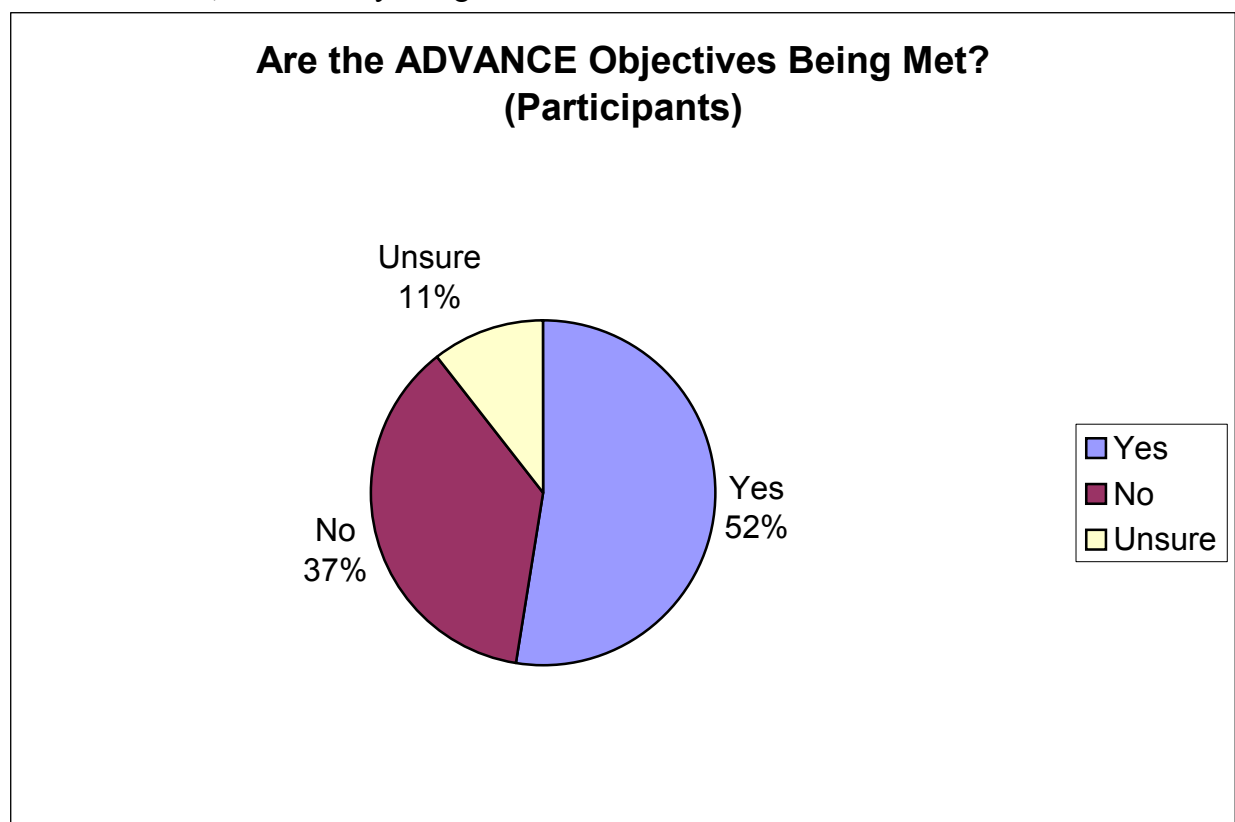


Chart 5

Q 5. Do you believe the Advance Programme concept is supported by managers within the NZFS?

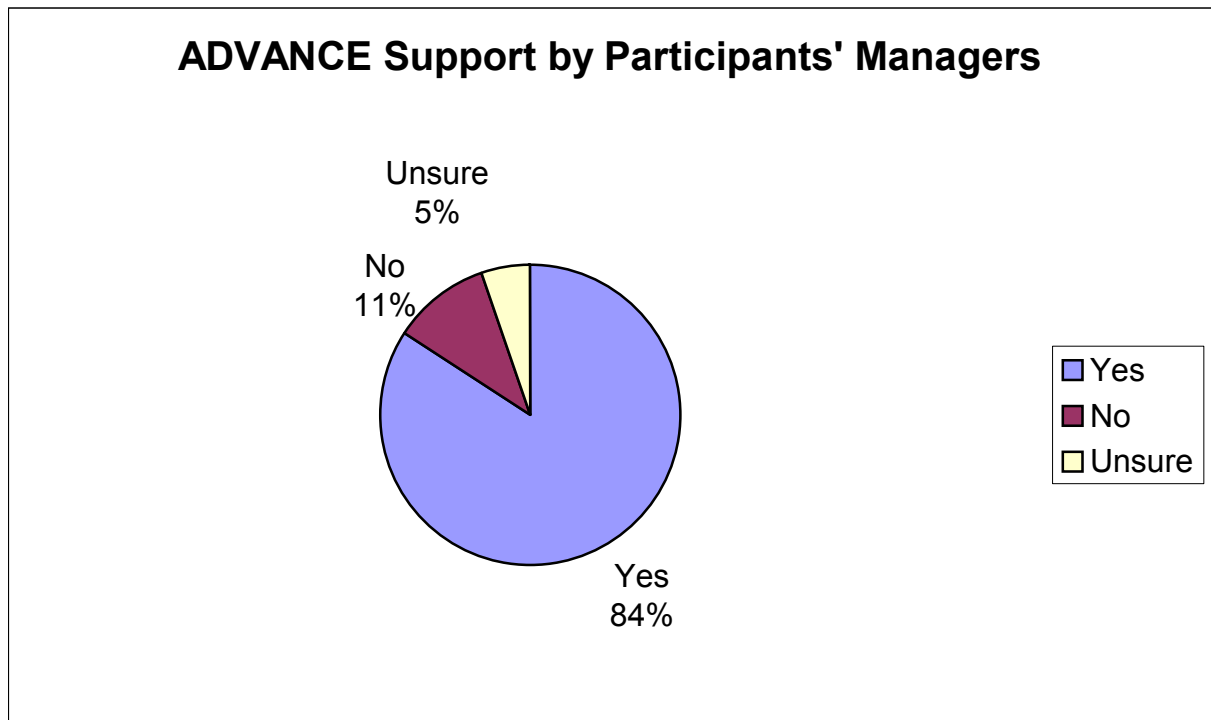


Chart 6

Q 6. Do you believe the Advance Programme is currently meeting your professional development needs and expectations?

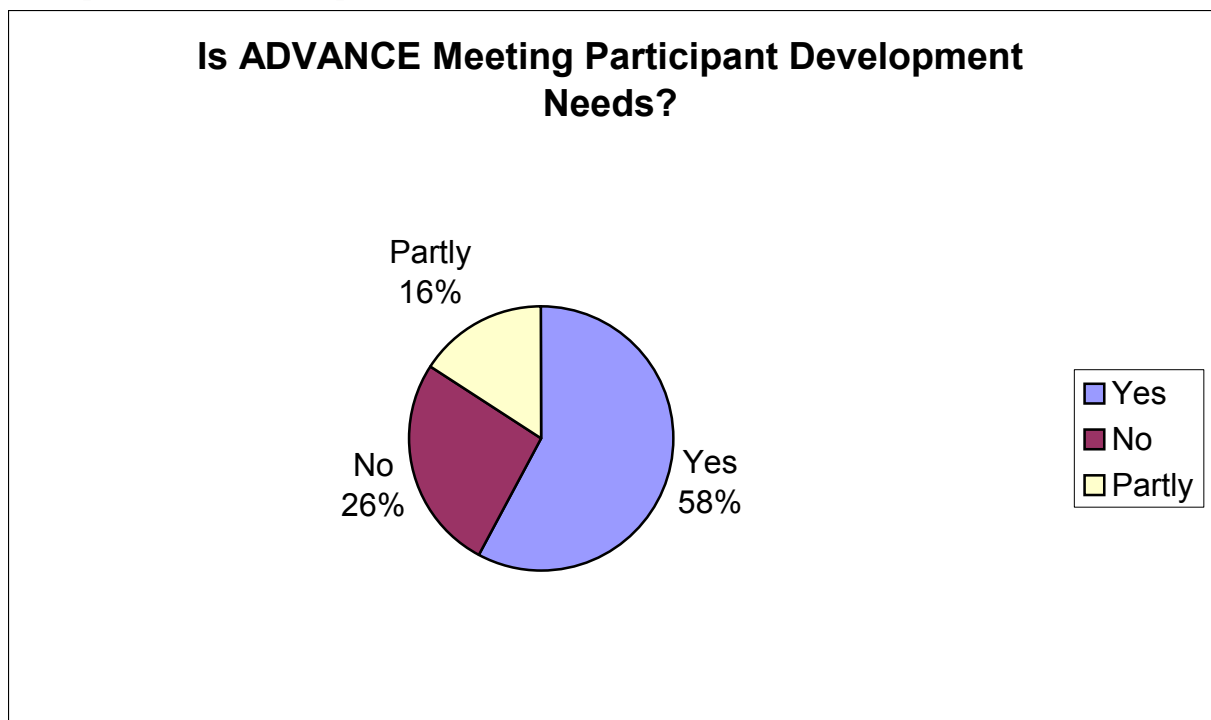


Chart 7

Q 7. What management competencies do you consider necessary for participants to cover in a programme like Advance?

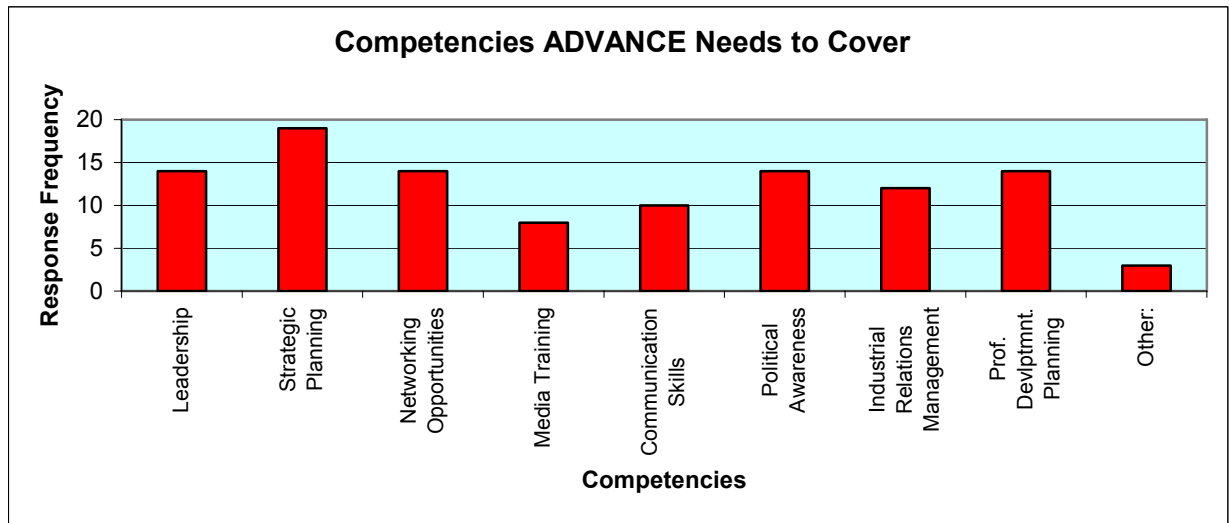
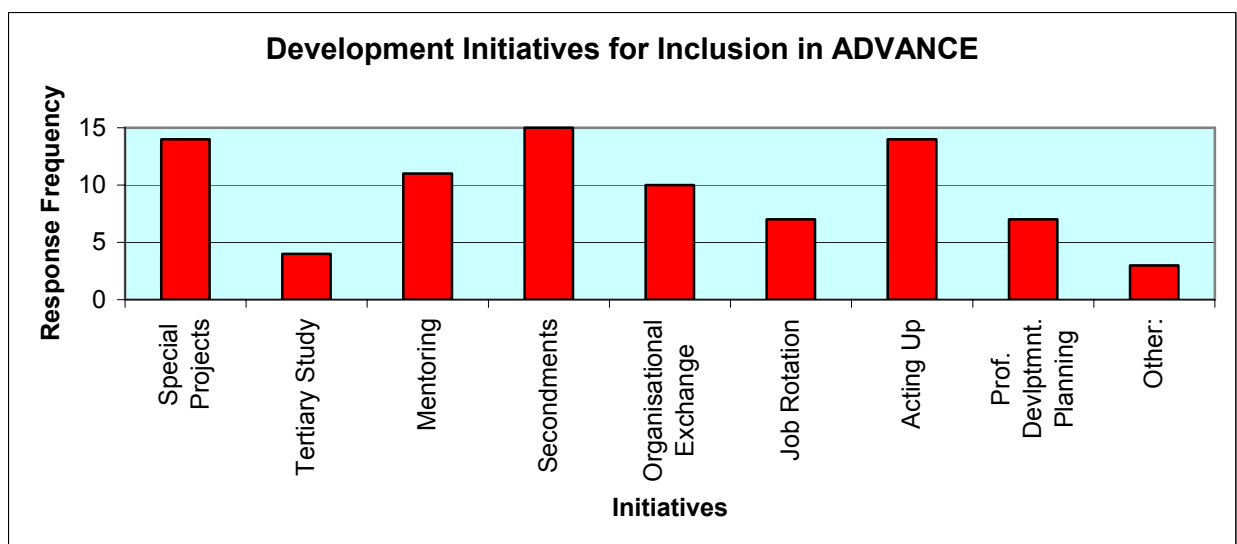


Chart 8

Q 8. What specific development initiatives/opportunities would you like to see included in the Advance Programme?



APPENDIX N

Qualitative comments from Advance Programme review survey responses.

A) Senior Management Team Responses

In response to a question on whether they consider the organisational objectives of Advance are currently being met (Question 3)

- Programme does not appear to be sufficiently rigorous or structured enough to ensure rapid development & promotion
- Seems to be more about scoring points than developing successors
- Why have recent AFRC and CFO roles not been sought by ADVANCE candidates or why have ADVANCE candidates not been successful?
- Hard to tell, programme and achievements of participants against programme goals not communicated widely
- ADVANCE members not exposed to enough higher level activity e.g. attend SMT meetings
- Lack of promotional opportunities will frustrate participants. Org. is downsizing management positions
- More recognition could be given to those not in ADVANCE but with potential
- We are not monitoring the groups at SMT. I am unaware of any development of the people in the programme
- No evidence either way
- Early days, subject to further refinement on feedback

B) Advance Programme Participant Responses

In response to a question on whether they consider the organisational objectives of Advance are currently being met (Question 3)

- Seems to still be in experimental/development stage
- Unveiled piece by piece
- Would be nice to see at the beginning what the 2 years will involve
- Meetings infrequent and lack of contact between meetings

- Greater exposure to national projects
- Signs are encouraging
- Very early in the programme. It's just beginning for this group
- I have not seen any opportunity to participate in major projects
- Not sure yet. Too early to pass judgement
- Appears that programme is being formulated as it progresses. Hasn't been firm direction to its objectives
- Light on detail

In response to question on whether Advance is supported by their manager (Question 4)

- He can see the need to expose participants to the NZFS outside their normal routine
- Too early to comment
- Seen as a "threat" at Regional level
- Not had any communication from management about being on programme
- I think he supports it?
- Advised that reason on National Recruitment team due to ADVANCE
- No interaction other than to acknowledge successful appointment to programme
- He advised me to apply
- Now, but not from previous RM
- He's a believer
- I have not received any negative feedback
- He has given encouragement for participation
- Was certainly supported by my former manager

In response to question on whether Advance was meeting their development needs (Question 5)

- Very broad brush, more specific info. required for individual development
- Too early to comment
- In some ways, yes

- Come to rely on input from Cerno rather than other ADVANCE peers
- First meeting well structured but scratched the surface
- I didn't fully understand what was required. Now I am beginning to get the ball rolling
- Why not ask us if there's something we would like to participate in?
- Have not done anything yet!
- Only one session which introduced us to NHQ
- A qualified yes. Still too early to judge
- "Heading towards identifying my needs but it hasn't met them yet
- "Partly. Don't see it as a complete development package but an add on

In response to question on what development initiatives could be included. (Question 7)

- Important that participants given opportunities on special projects and to act up
- Honest feedback and action plans for future development
- Secondment opportunities would allow & encourage participants to apply for positions (will know more about the CFO job)
- Advanced incident management training
- Tertiary study can be planned and done later
- Continued access to and addresses from SMT members to build the "big picture"
- Ride-a-long with a CFO for 1-2 days
- Secondment opportunities
- Session on CFO employment conditions & experiences from when they moved up