

**ESTABLISHING A LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS
AT THE COMPANY OFFICER LEVEL**

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An applied research project submitted to the Ohio Fire Executive Program

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ABSTRACT

Several organizations including the Washington Township Fire Department (WTFD) have failed to develop future leaders by not providing leadership training for up and coming company officers. This research paper addresses this problem.

The purpose of this research is to establish the most desired qualities a company officer should possess, and devise the best way to educate Washington Township personnel into becoming competent company officers. The research was completed by literature review, surveys and research questions.

The following is a list of the research questions:

1. According to Washington Township Firefighters, selected Ohio Fire Chiefs and local CEO's what are the most desirable qualities a company officer and or leader should possess?
2. According to documented research, what are the most desirable qualities a company officer and or leader should possess?
3. Should there be a planned leadership program with an established curriculum?
4. After the qualities needed to be an effective leader and or Company Officer have been established, describe the process Washington Township will follow to create a Company Officer Development Program.

The procedures that were used consisted of a comprehensive literature review involving collected data, past surveys, current surveys, interviews, and Internet searches. Surveys were conducted using a random selection of Ohio Fire chiefs, local Firefighters and Washington Township Firefighters. Local CEO's were also surveyed to gather information as to desired personal qualities.

The research results established a list of qualities a leader and/or company officer should possess. The research also informed us of the need for a planned leadership program and established curriculum. The qualities were divided into personal skills and technical skills. Research shows a general agreement on the personal skills required to be a company officer. The following is brief list of the recommended desirable personal qualities according to Kouzes and Posner (1995):

- Honesty
- Dependable
- Competent
- Accountable
- Inspiring
- Cooperative
- Imaginative

The technical skills brought somewhat of a surprise. The firefighters felt training in human resources and administrative areas were just as important as the emergency scene technical skills. The Fire Chiefs surveyed thought that building construction, ICS, and pre-incident planning were some of the most important qualities a leader should possess. The following research will examine the results more in depth.

The following recommendations will be brought to the attention of the administration in the hopes of developing a Company Officer Development curriculum.

- Incorporate a curriculum that covers all of the desired qualities
- Research various organizations and institutions to establish credible programs and/or classes
- Establish a time frame that would accommodate WTFD and its members
- Present research results to WTFD members in the hopes of gaining their support for the program
- Consistently re-evaluate the curriculum and its impact

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout our lives we will come in contact with people that influence us in many ways. Who are these people? Why do they have so much influence on us? Why do we put so much faith in them? How come we will follow them into dangerous situations and never ask why? These are the people that carry the title of “leader”. When did they start developing as a leader? The purpose of this research project is to establish the most desirable qualities in a company officer and research the best way to educate them.

In June of 1990 General Norman Schwarzkopf stood in front of the nation and systematically described how the U. S. and allied forces destroyed the Iraqi forces and their subsequent removal from Kuwait. Shortly after this news conference CNN interviewed several members of the public and asked them what they thought of General Norman Schwarzkopf: “I would walk through fire with that guy”. “He is a role model for my children,” stated a mother of three from St. Louis. A computer programmer from St. Paul said, “Our country could not be in better hands”.

President John F. Kennedy had a reputation as one of the best leaders in U.S. history. President Kennedy (1960) was legendary for his communication skills. Virtually every speech he ever made involved a quote that will go down in history. For instance, “ask not what your country can do for you, but what can you do for your country”. And the quote, “If you settle for second place when first place is available you will tend to do it the rest of your life”.

Lou Holtz has been called the best motivator of all times. During his coaching career he has turned every program into a success in a short amount of time. He has been

able to get uncommon results out of common people. During a halftime interview a reporter ask “you are down 21 – 0, do you still have a chance to win this game?” He answered; “how you respond to the challenge in the second half will determine what you become after the game, whether you are a winner or a loser.”

All of us are in a constant search to either develop the skills to become a leader, or find a leader that we can look up to and try to emulate. There are very few programs available that teach us how to be a leader. For every successful organization you will find capable leaders at the top, and Fire Service is no exception. We must first establish a good foundation for our leaders, and then create a curriculum to develop our future leaders. As John F. Kennedy once said “leadership and learning are indispensable to each other”.

Washington Township Fire Department has experienced a lack of preparation and training for member’s who are in-line to become the next company officers and/or managers. However, while researching company officer development programs, we will survey Washington Township Fire Department members as to the qualities they desire in a company officer. This information will be compared to data received from the Ohio Fire Chiefs and local CEOs. Washington Township has provided limited leadership training in the past, creating a void in our leadership, and this is the problem this research will address. Currently members are promoted through a testing process and then trained to be company officers. However, while these officers are off company receiving their training, which may take several months, the Department remains idle with very little productivity. The Department has experienced this first hand.

Hopefully this will eliminate or reduce some of the problems we have experienced from our acting officers. The research was conducted through literature review, interviews and surveys. A desirable list of qualities was formulated and a curriculum developed to implement the findings.

Research Questions

1. According to Washington Township Firefighters, selected Ohio Fire Chiefs and local CEOs what are the most desirable qualities a company officer and/or leader should possess?
2. According to documented research, what are the most desirable qualities a company officer and/or leader should possess?
3. Should there be a planned leadership program with an established curriculum?
4. After the qualities needed to be an effective leader and or company officer have been established, describe the process Washington Township will follow to create a Company Officer Development Program.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Washington Township Fire Department located in Dublin, Ohio, serves approximately thirty thousand citizens on the weekend and approximately one hundred thousand citizens during normal business hours. Washington Township is the second largest fire department in Franklin County, employing over one hundred full-time

members and forty part-time members the majority of which were hired after 1989. Recently, the Department administered a promotional exam for the position of lieutenant. Twelve members successfully completed all aspects of the testing process and a list was established. The average amount of leadership training these members completed was less than four hours per person. One of the candidates completed thirty hours and several of the candidates had not completed any leadership training.

Washington Township's current chief views the fire service as a business, not necessarily as a public service. He feels the officers should motivate co-workers, demonstrate strong job knowledge, and view every run as a customer service opportunity. As you can see from the leadership hours completed, the Department has failed to prepare the upcoming company officers, and has no future plans to provide further education.

The lack of company officer development and/or leadership training has had a negative impact on the Department. Members on the promotional list are acting in-charge firefighters when the company officer is off-duty. The following is a brief list of incidents that have occurred when acting firefighters were in charge:

- Buildings were not entered even though they were dispatched on a fire alarm
- Size-ups were not given, or given incorrectly.
- No accountability system was implemented.
- No RIC team established.
- Racial comments were made and/or overlooked.
- Failed to see the big picture on major incidents.
- Fire reports missing or incomplete.

- Delayed action initiating a second alarm.
- Unit training decreased
- Confrontation with other organizations.

It goes without saying that company officers on occasion have made some of the same mistakes, but they are far less frequent. Unfortunately, acting firefighters are making these mistakes on a regular basis. By researching the most desirable qualities a company officer should possess, then establishing a curriculum to train upcoming company officers, we may eliminate some of the previously listed mistakes. This is the focus of this research paper. Surveying members of the Washington Township Fire Department in order to obtain their point of view will help assess the qualities desired in a leader. We will also research the topic of leadership at the company officer level. Guidelines that experts have established for a company officer will be researched, and once the research has established the qualities we must then establish a leadership development process that Washington Township Fire Department will use to prepare present and future company officers to become successful leaders.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review was performed to analyze the qualities needed in a company officer. Once the research identified these qualifications, a leadership development process and curriculum can be established. The following literature review will offer more insight into the following areas:

1. NFPA recommended qualities for the company officer.

2. Personal qualities a leader shall possess.
3. Evaluation of planned leadership and curriculum based learning
4. The distinction between training, educational and developmental curricula

NFPA 1021 (1997) Standards for fire officer professional qualifications:

The first edition of this document was adopted in July 1976. The Joint Council of National Fire Service Organization (JCNFSO) created the National Professional Qualification Board (NPQB) for the service to facilitate the development of nationally applicable performance standards for uniformed fire service personnel. The board developed technical committees to develop these standards using the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards-marking system. Subsequent to the adoption of the initial edition, the committee met regularly to revise and update the standards. The latest edition was approved as an American National Standard on August 15, 1997.

According to NFPA 1021 (1997), the following is a list of qualifications for company officer:

General Prerequisites: Departmental operating procedures for administration, emergency operations and safety, department budget process, management and record keeping, fire prevention and building codes, ordinances applicable to your jurisdiction, incident management system, cultural diversity, rights of management and members, policies and procedures regarding operation of the Department. Also, the ability to communicate well both verbally and in writing.

Human Resources Management: Utilize human resources to accomplish assignments in a safe and efficient manner, supervise personnel during emergencies as well as non-emergencies with clear and concise considerations addressed and desired outcomes are conveyed, direct members during training evolutions so evolutions are performed safely and efficiently as directed, recognize signs of stress in emergency service personnel, recommend course of action for a member in need of assistance, apply human resource policies and procedures, coordinate completion of assigned task and projects by members, the ability to plan and set priorities, complete employee evaluations.

Community and Government Relations: Project the role of the Department to the public, initiate actions to citizen's concerns, respond to public inquiry, deliver life safety, and fire protection programs.

Administration: Implementation of Department policies at the unit level, complete forms, records and logs are maintained in accordance with policies and procedures, prepare budgets, news releases, and policy changes.

Inspection and Investigation: Perform fire investigations, secure incident scene, preserve evidence, evaluate available information given at a fire incident and interview first arriving members, know common cause of fires, fire growth and development and when to call investigators, the ability to determine basic fire cause, conduct inspections to identify hazards and address violations and fire investigation to determine fire origin and preliminary cause.

Emergency Service Delivery: Supervising emergency operations, conducting pre-incident planning, deploying assigned resources, knowledge of basic building construction and basic protection systems, basic water supply, fire growth and development, develop initial action plan given size-up information, know elements of size-up, the ability to analyze emergency scene conditions, ability to allocate resources, implement an action plan at an emergency scene, implement an action plan at an emergency operation, basic fire control and emergency operations procedures, activate accountability system, implement incident management system, supervise multi-unit operations, control hazardous material incidents safety.

Safety: Integrate safety plans, policies and procedures into daily activities to ensure a safe workplace, apply safety regulations at the unit level, apply infectious disease control policy, identify safety hazards, review injury reports, prepare accident and health exposure reports, and take appropriate action.

The National Professional Qualification Board (NPQB) has developed the above standards for uniformed fire service personnel. This has been accomplished through the development of technical committees that have met on a regular basis to revise and update the standards.

This research provided a list of qualities for a company officer. This data was sent out in survey form (Appendix A) to Washington Township Firefighters and selected Central Ohio Fire Chiefs to gain their input as to what they believe are the desired qualities of a company officer. They had the opportunity to add as many qualities as they

felt necessary. With the research information and the completed surveys, a list of desirable technical qualities was established.

The research revealed several personal qualities a leader and/or company officer should possess. This was supported through a survey completed in 1995 and 1987. Kouzes and Posner (1995) surveyed several thousand business and government executives. They asked the following open-ended question; “What values (personal traits or characteristics) do you look for and admire in your superiors?” In response to that question, they identified 225 different values. Several independent judges reduced these answers to fifteen categories. The following chart shows the results of a study completed in 1995 and compared with the results from 1987. (p. 21)

Characteristics	1995 Percentage	1987 Percentage
Honest	88	83
Forward-looking	75	62
Inspiring	68	58
Competent	63	67
Fair-minded	49	40
Supportive	41	32
Broad-minded	40	37
Intelligent	40	43
Straightforward	33	34

Dependable	32	32
Courageous	29	27
Cooperative	28	25
Imaginative	28	34
Caring	23	26
Determined	17	30

During the research Kouzes and Posner (1995) also completed case studies involving the world's most popular leaders. They interviewed several people that had direct contact with these leaders and ask them, what makes us admire and follow them?

The majority stated they are willing to follow leaders who are:

- Honest
- Forward thinking
- Inspiring
- Competent

Parcells and Coplon (1995) believe there are several qualities that a good leader demonstrates. According to Bill Parcells, “integrity, flexibility, loyalty, confidence, accountability, candor, preparedness, resourcefulness, humility, self-discipline, and patience are the factors in becoming a good leader”.

John Maxwell (2000) stated, "Leadership is influence to gain influence with people, you must have integrity with people, nurture people, have faith in people, listen to people and most of all understand people. If you put all of these together you will become a good leader".

After establishing these personal qualities through research a survey (Appendix A & B) was sent to Washington Township Firefighters, selected Central Ohio Fire Chiefs and local CEOs. They were asked to identify items that a company officer should possess or at least receive training in prior to their promotion. Each of these surveys was compared, and a list of desired personal qualities was established. Any qualities receiving less than twenty-five percent of the vote was removed from the list.

Currently the Washington Township Fire department does not have an organized approach to developing company officers. One of the goals of this research project was to show support or opposition for a planned development approach. According to Rothwell and Kazanas (1999) a planned leadership program is a systematic effort to train, educate, and develop individuals to influence other people in positive ways. It is conducted to improve individuals, groups, and organizational performance. Also, Rothwell and Kazanas believe structuring and planning what you do will make the learning needs more efficient for you and more understandable to learners. A disorganized approach leaves you unsure what needs to meet and creates more anxiety for the learners. You should have an organized approach with benchmarks established. A curriculum, or learning plan helps prepare someone to enter a new position. Most people adapt to change when gradually prepared to assume their new responsibilities (p.77). As Julia Galosy observed,

“The challenge of curriculum design is to build a coherent sequential plan that provides structure and unity to the full gamut of planned learning experience. The idea is thus to create a unified view of learning experiences that can help employees meet their learning needs” (Rothwell & Kazanas, 1999, p.7).

Washington Township Fire Department on occasion sends members to one or two day training sessions to educate them in leadership techniques. According to Rothwell and Kazanas (1999) there is a distinction between training, education, and development curricular. Training is job-oriented and focuses on helping people meet their job responsibilities. Education is individually oriented and prepares individuals for advancement. Developmental is organizationally oriented and focuses on evoking new insights about the organization, industry, community, society, or culture of which the learners are a member (p 77).

SUMMARY

Through our literature research we were able to identify desirable personal and technical qualities a company officer should possess. These qualities were distributed in survey form to the previously mentioned group. A summary of the outcome is provided in the results section of this paper. The research also showed that an established leadership program and curriculum may be best for the individual and the organization.

PROCEDURES

The research has established a list of modules and ethical qualities that a company officer should possess. It also showed us the benefit of having a planned leadership program with an established curriculum. The next step was to conduct a

survey with each of these qualities listed. Each individual participating in the survey also had the opportunity to add qualities as they saw fit. Qualities receiving less than twenty five percent of the vote were removed from the list.

The surveys were distributed to three separate groups of individuals. The first group were members of the Washington Township Fire Department. There were 140 surveys distributed, with 78 of the surveys completed. The return rate for Washington Township members was 75 percent. The reason for surveying Washington Township members was not only to receive their input, but also encourage them to be part of the development process. The second group surveyed was Ohio Fire Chiefs from the Central Ohio area. There were 32 chiefs chosen within a fifteen square mile radius of Columbus, Ohio and were chosen due to their geographic location. Also, each of these departments offered relatively the same service as Washington Township. All of the chiefs surveyed had at least ten full-time firefighters and provide fire and EMS service to their communities. The survey was not distributed throughout the state because there was no way to be sure the survey would be relevant to the service they provided. Of the 32 surveys distributed, 31 were completed. This was a return rate of 96 percent.

The last group surveyed was 30 CEO's from companies located in the central Ohio area and were chosen primarily due to their geographic location. In the event that completed survey was unreadable, or created questions, I was able to easily make contact with them. Thirty surveys were distributed, 15 were completed. This was a return rate of 50 percent.

This was not meant to be a scientific survey, rather it was meant to be informative and show possible trends throughout Central Ohio. A copy of the technical qualities survey and personal qualities surveys are located in the appendices.

The final segment of this research project was to interview Washington Township company officers to seek their input and buy-in to a company officer development program. Fifteen company officers were asked to participate, only 5 completed interviews. Please refer to appendix C for a copy of the interview questions.

According to one company officer a development program is a career path or guided learning program. Lt. McCann feels it's a "Directed learning process". Out of the 5 officers interviewed, all of them thought the development process should last no longer than 30 days, and it should be a requirement for current company officers to attend. All of the officers interviewed said they would participate in a company officer development program. When asked if the development program should be a prerequisite prior to a promotion, 4 out of 5 said yes, while one believed it should be completed prior to the completion of their probationary period.

As you can see from the results, the current officers interviewed support a development program. However, with only 5 out of 15 officers participating in the interview I cannot say they will all support the program.

RESULTS

The following results will address each research question in a clear and concise manner. I will acknowledge each research question and then the subsequent findings.

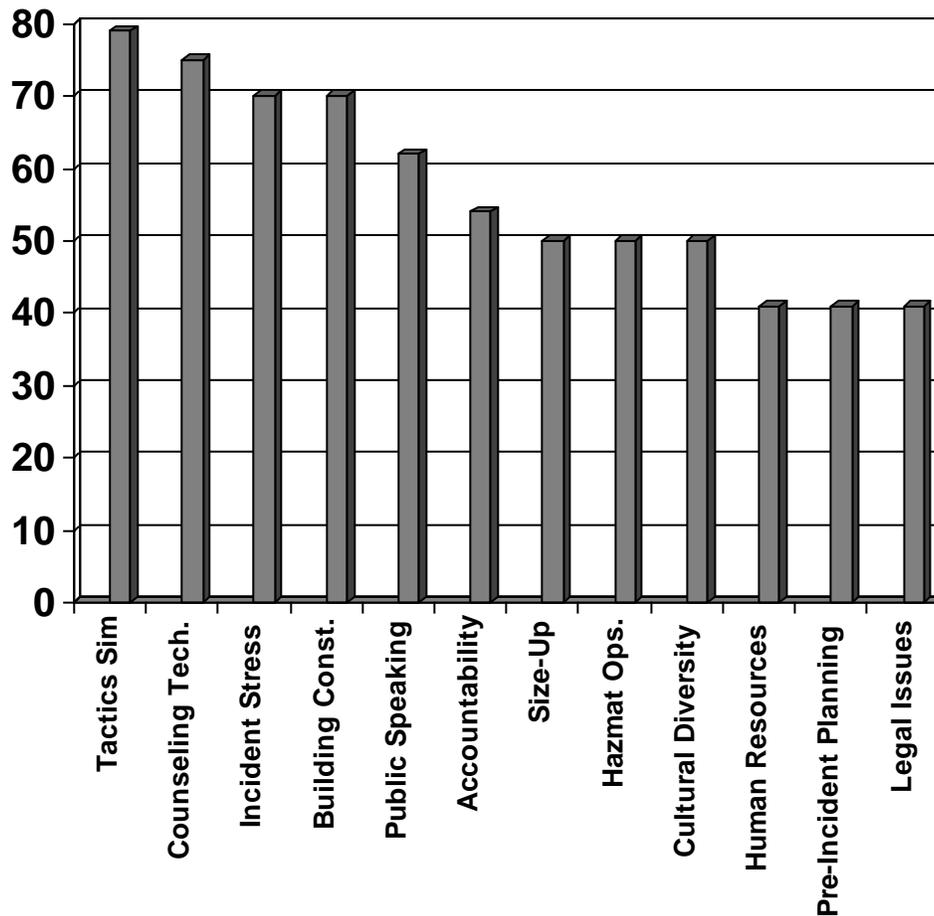
- 1) According to Washington Township Firefighters, selected Ohio Fire Chiefs and local CEOs what are the most desirable qualities a company officer and/or leader should possess?

In order to gain the most accurate information an in-depth literature review was completed to assist members in selecting the most desirable qualities. This literature review will be addressed more in-depth in the following research question. The literature review clearly divided the qualities into two categories: personal and technical. The personal qualities dealt with morale qualities, while the technical qualities dealt with the emergency scene or hands-on portion of the job. A complete list of these qualities along with the option to write in your own qualities was distributed to Washington Township members in the form of a survey.

Chart 1, Washington Township Firefighters survey results listed in percent:

Washington Township Firefighters

Technical Qualities



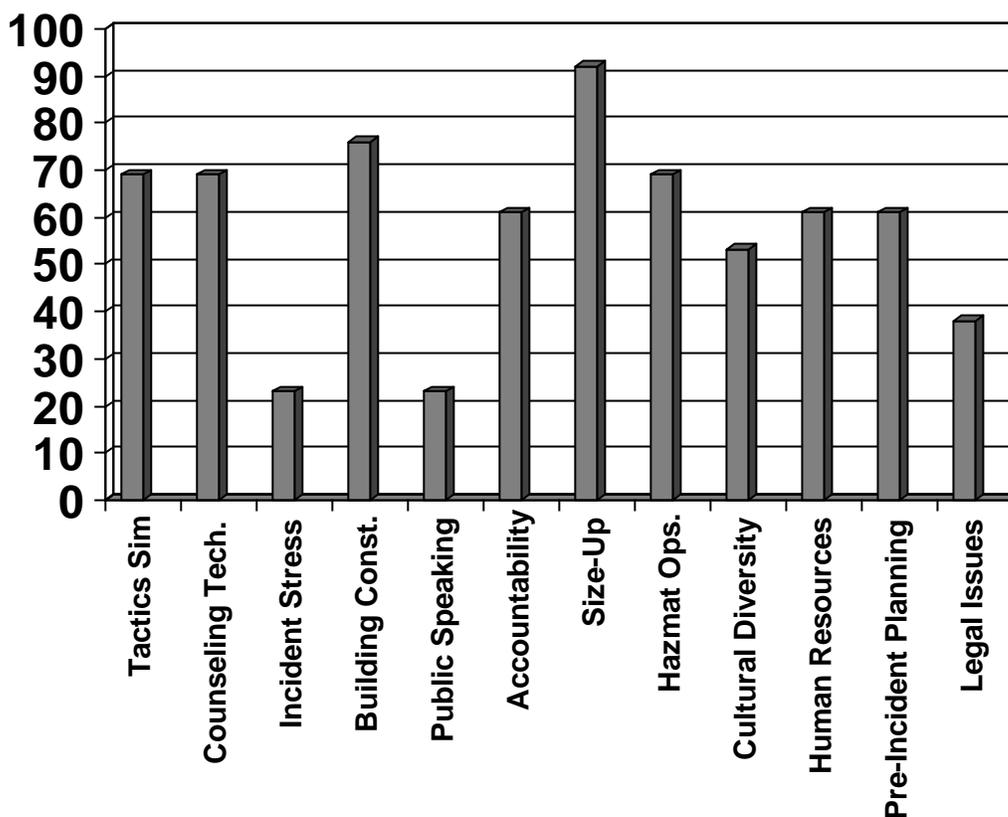
Once again the Washington Township firefighters were surveyed not only to compare their input with the Ohio Fire Chiefs, but also to develop ownership with the new program. The firefighters showed trends in areas such as tactic simulation, counseling tech, incident stress management, and building construction with 70 percent

or more surveyed feeling these were extremely important qualities. Public speaking, accountability, size up, hazmat operations, and cultural diversity training returned a response between 62 percent on the high end to 50 percent on the low end. The qualities that received lower marks according to Washington Township firefighters were human resources, pre-incident planning, and legal issues which showed only 42 percent of the firefighters felt these qualities were desirable.

Chart 2, Ohio Fire Chiefs survey results listed in percent:

Ohio Fire Chiefs

Technical Qualities



As stated earlier, 32 Fire Chiefs from the Central Ohio area were surveyed as to what they felt were desirable qualities for a company officer. The Fire Chiefs showed a trend in size up and building construction with 75 percent or more reporting that these are highly desirable qualities. The following qualities received 52 to 68 percent of the vote: Tactic simulation counseling Tech, accountabilities, HAZMAT operations, cultural diversity, human resources, and pre-incident planning. There were two qualities that received 25 percent of the vote: Incident stress and management and public speaking.

When you compare the technical survey results from the Washington Township firefighters and the Ohio Fire Chiefs you notice a trend in several of the following areas: tactics simulation, counseling techniques, building construction, accountability, cultural diversity and legal issues. This does not mean that these areas received high marks, only that they believed they are the same level of importance. There were a few qualities that showed major differences. Ninety percent of the Ohio Fire Chiefs surveyed felt size up was extremely important. Only 50 percent of the firefighters surveyed felt the same. In contrast the firefighters felt public speaking and incident stress management were very important but only 25 percent of the chiefs agreed.

The technical part of the survey also asked what certification a company officer should possess. Surprisingly the Washington Township firefighters felt the qualifications should be higher than the Ohio Fire Chiefs.

Table 1, Recommended Certification Requirements for Company Officer:

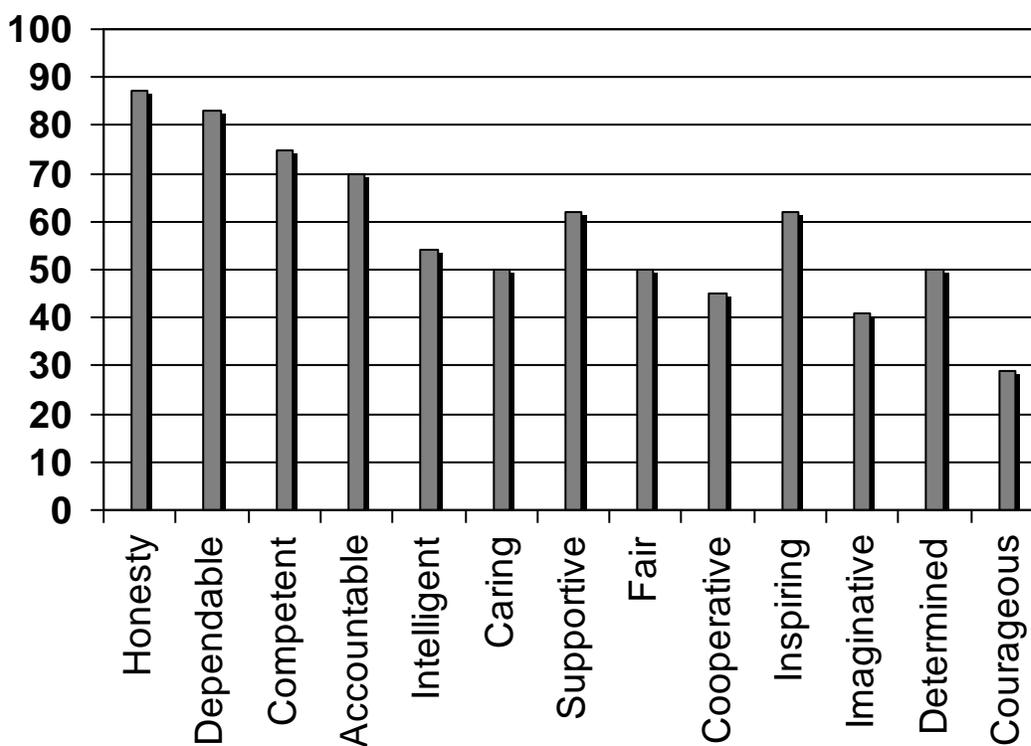
WTFD Firefighters	Ohio Fire Chiefs
EMT PARAMEDIC	EMT-A
HAZMAT TECHNICIAN	HAZMAT OPERATIONS
SAFETY INSPECTOR	SAFETY INSPECTOR
FIRE INSTRUCTOR	
RESCUE TECHNICIAN	

The Washington Township firefighters, selected Ohio Fire Chief members, and an assortment of CEO's from large corporations were surveyed as to the personal qualities desired in a leader. The surveys by Kouzes and Posner (1995), listed the 15 qualities compiled from their study that was completed in 1987 and again in 1995. The individuals were asked to place them in order of importance. They also had the opportunity to add qualities if they felt it was necessary. The following charts show the results of each group surveyed.

Chart 3, Washington Township firefighters results listed in percent:

Washington Township Firefighters

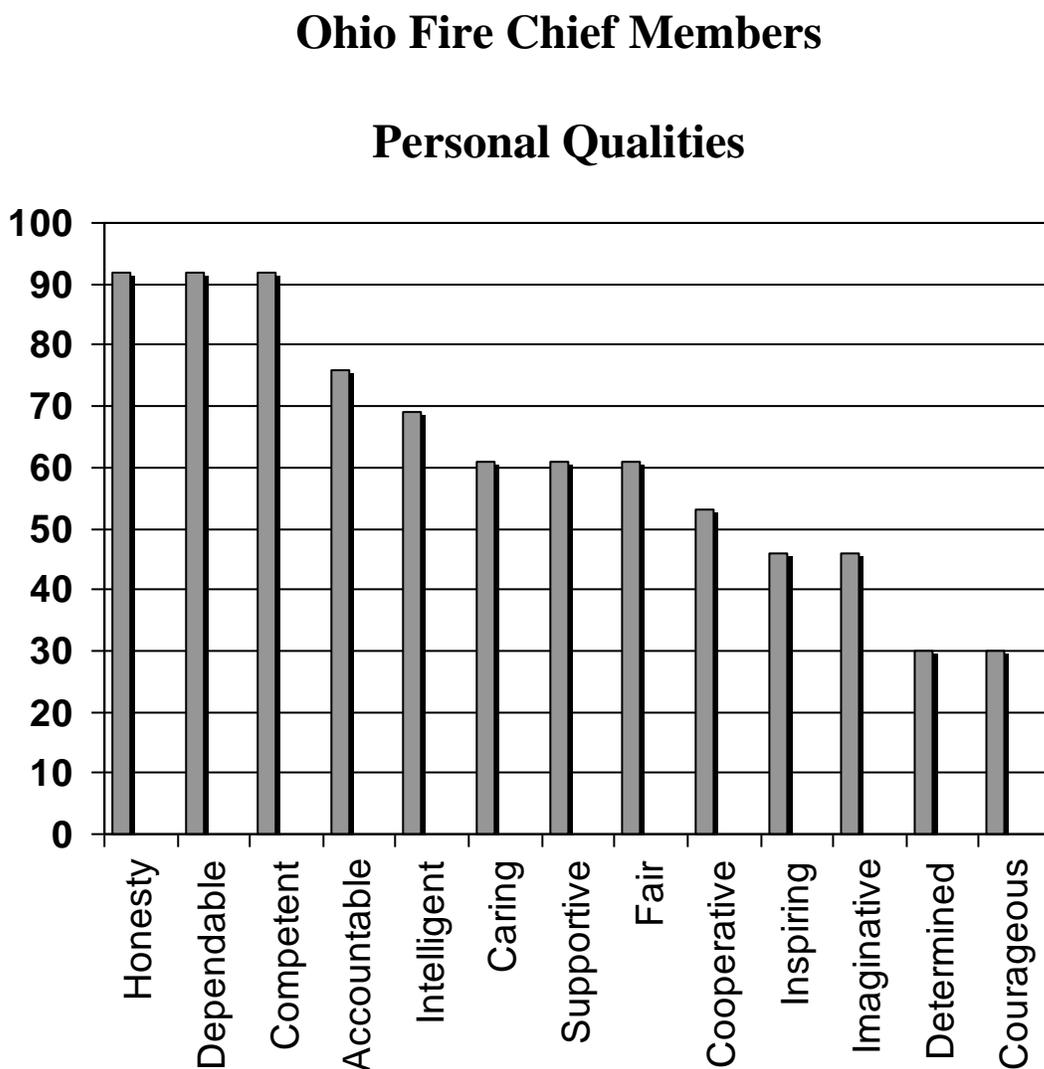
Personal Qualities



The Washington Township firefighters were also surveyed as to the desired personal qualities a company officer should possess. At least 50 percent of the members surveyed felt a company officer must be inspiring, supportive, accountable, and competent. Eighty-two to 86 percent felt they must also be dependable and honest. Fair

and caring fell just short of 50 percent of the individuals surveyed. Less than 30 percent surveyed felt a company officer needed to be courageous.

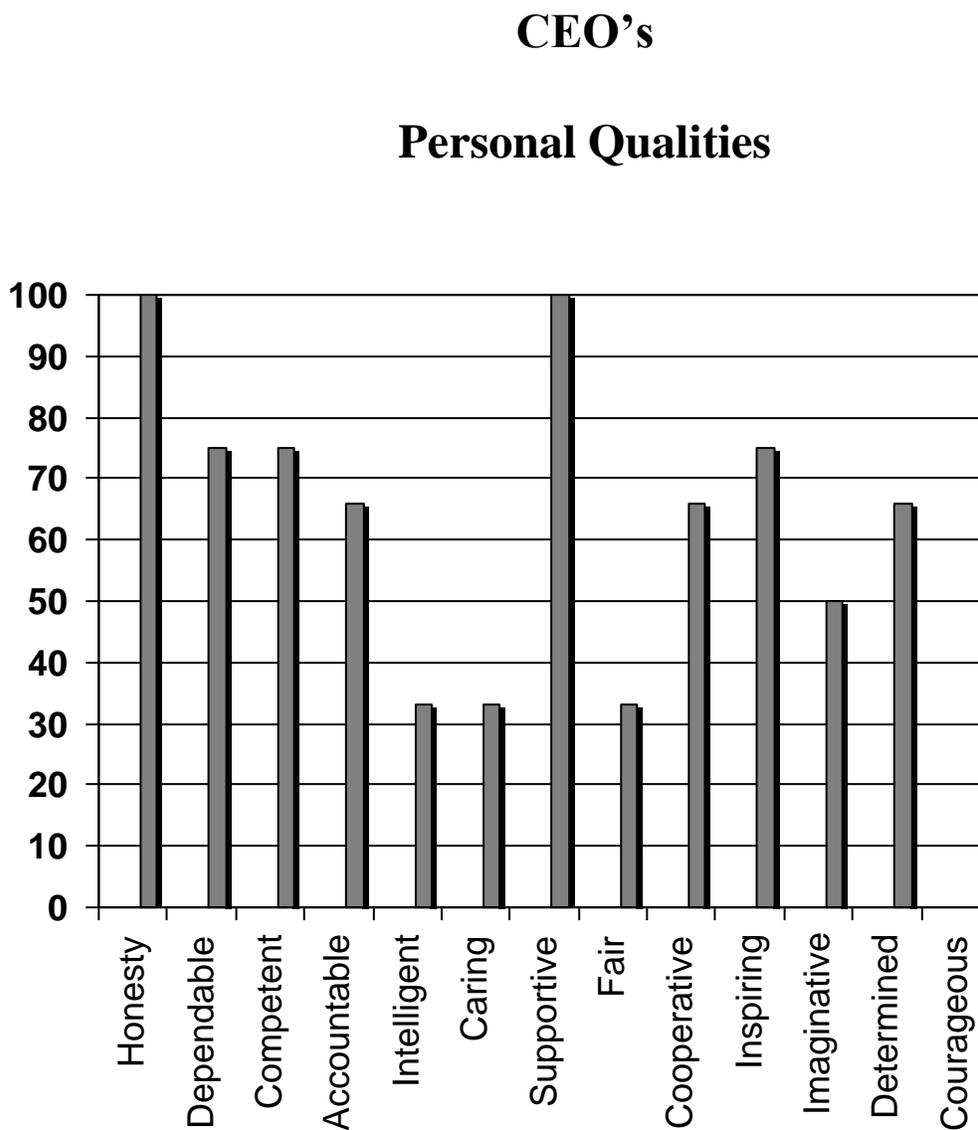
Chart 4, Ohio Fire Chief Members results listed in percent:



The results of the Ohio Fire Chiefs personal quality surveyed revealed over 90 percent of the chiefs felt a company officer must be honest, dependable and competent.

Accountability and intelligence received from 68 to 75 percent of the vote. The following qualities received 62 to 45 percent of the votes: Caring, supportive, fair, cooperative, inspiring, and imaginative. Determined and courageous received less than 35 percent of the vote.

Chart 5, CEO's results listed in percent:



Thirty CEO's in central Ohio were surveyed. They were asked to list the most desirable qualities in a company officer and or manager. The goal was to compare the private sector (CEOs) results with the public sectors (WTFD firefighters, Ohio Fire Chiefs). One hundred percent of the CEOs surveyed felt that a company officer and/or manager must be honest and supportive. Seventy-five percent felt they should be dependable, competent and inspiring. Sixty-five percent felt accountability, cooperative and determined were important. Fifty percent felt they should be imaginative and less than 40 percent believed they should be intelligent caring or fair.

When you compare the results from the personal qualities survey that was distributed to 30 CEOs, 104 firefighters and 32 Ohio Fire Chiefs you find some common trends. All groups' surveyed felt honesty was the most important quality an individual must possess. Dependability also received at least 75 percent of the votes from each group. There was also a trend when it came to accountability, imagination, and courage. However, there were a few noticeable differences. One hundred percent of the CEOs felt a company officer and/or manager must be supportive and intelligent, however only 50 percent of the firefighters and chiefs agreed. Also in contrast to the CEOs, the firefighters and chiefs felt cooperative, determined and inspiring were highly desired qualities.

2) According to documented research, what are the most desirable qualities of a company officers and/or leaders?

Kouzes and Posner (1995), surveyed several thousand businesses and government executives. They asked the following open-ended questions; “What values (personal traits or characteristics) do you look for and admire in your superiors”? The results produced 225 different values. Several independent judges reduced these values to 15 categories. (Refer to table on page 15 for the results)

You can see honesty, forward looking, inspiring, and competent were well ahead of the others. This also held true in a case study complete by Kouzes and Posner (1995). The case study involved several popular people and interviewed the people that have direct contact with them. They asked what makes you admire and follow them? The vast majority had the same four answers as the survey.

- Honest
- Forward looking
- Inspiring
- Competent

The results of their study showed similar results with Washington Township Firefighters, Ohio Fire Chiefs and local CEOs. The research and the groups surveyed believed honesty and competency were the highest importance. In contrast, the survey by Kouzes and Posner (1995) showed inspiring as one of the top four desired qualities. The CEOs did not support these findings. According to Ohio Fire Chiefs intelligence is highly desirable, but this was not supported as strongly by the research or other groups surveyed.

The research for the technical qualities proved to be somewhat repetitive. NFPA 1021 (1989), standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications had covered a vast

majority of the technical qualities. These qualities were established by a committee in 1973 and finally adopted by the NFPA in 1976, and are updated on a regular basis. NFPA 1021 divided the qualities into several subcategories. General pre-requisites, human resources management, community relations, administrations, inspection and investigation, and emergency service delivery and safety. For a complete listing of these qualities please refer to pages 11 -13 in the literature review.

IFSTA Company Officer (1989), also listed the NFPA 1021 guidelines as the appropriate qualities to develop in a company officer. (p. x)

The technical qualities that were gathered from NFPA 1021 (1997), seem to have covered these qualities pretty thoroughly. Out of 108 individual surveys returned, no additional qualities were added. The results of the survey showed trends in several of the following areas: tactics simulation, counseling techniques, building construction, accountability, cultural diversity and legal issues. The only major difference noted was 90 percent of the Ohio Fire Chiefs believed size-up was of the utmost importance. Only 50 percent of the Washington Township Firefighters agreed.

3) Should there be a planned leadership program with an established curriculum?

The documented research supports a planned leadership program and established curriculum. According to Rothwell and Kazanas (1999), a planned leadership program should be established not only to meet the learning needs of the individual but also used for group and organizational development. They also believe by structuring your learning program it is more efficient and understandable to the learners, while a

disorganized approach creates more anxiety. Using a learning curriculum to prepare, orient and upgrade skills of workers, people are properly equipped to meet their new responsibilities.

Washington Township Fire Department currently uses a training curriculum that focuses on people meeting their job responsibilities and this is only used on occasion. Research tells us by using a development curriculum that is organizationally based and focusing on developing each member, everyone will benefit.

According to interviews conducted with current Washington Township company officers they also supported a development program. They felt it should be required for all new and existing company officers. They supported an organized approach.

4) After the qualities needed to be an effective leader and or company officer have been established, describe the process Washington Township will follow to create a company officer development program.

This question will be addressed more in depth in the recommendations section of this research paper. However, the research has shown that a planned leadership program will help not only the organization, but also the individual participating according to Rothwell and Kazanas (1999). It is also apparent through research that an established curriculum better prepares an individual for their new responsibilities. People adapt to change better when they are gradually prepared. As Julia Galosy stated “The idea is to create a unified view of learning experience that can help employees meet their learning needs” (Rothwell & Kazanas, 1999, p.7).

Through research we were able to identify technical and personal qualities a company officer should possess. Any of the qualities that received less than 25 percent of the votes was removed.

As a member of Washington Township I recommend we should strive towards meeting the following benchmarks.

- Establish a curriculum to address each of the qualities the research has shown to be desirable. (Refer to pages 39-40 for a list of these qualities)
- Evaluate the cost and timeline that would be best for Washington Township Fire Department.
- Evaluate current programs or institutions that offer courses on our desired qualities.
- Introduce program to Washington Township member and ask for feedback
- Initiate program

The final recommendation will be to consistently re-evaluate the program to see if it is meeting our needs. We can use previously cited problems as a guideline to see if we are training more competent company officers.

Discussion

One of the goals of this research paper was to establish a list of desirable qualities a company officer should possess. Through literature research a list of qualities was established. These qualities were divided into two categories: technical and personal.

The technical qualities were listed in NFPA 1021 (1021), qualifications for company officer. These qualities were established by the National Professional Qualifications Board (NPQB) for uniform personal. The technical qualities covered all aspects of a company officers job description. They deal with administration issues such as: writing SOGs, record keeping, budget preparation, etc. Human resource issues such as: directing manpower, cultural diversity issues, project planning, applying human resource policy, etc. Emergency Service issues such as: supervising emergency operations, conducting inspections, determining cause of fire etc.

According to IFSTA Company officer (1989), they also listed the NFPA guidelines as the appropriate qualities to develop a company officer (p. X)

The personal qualities were obtained from a survey completed by Kouzes and Posner (1995). They surveyed several thousand businesses and government executives and asked the following open ended question “What values (personal traits or characteristics) do you look for or admire in a supervisor?” 225 different values were identified. Several judges reduced their answers to 15 categories. The qualities were then distributed in survey form to members of Washington Township Fire Department and selected Ohio Fire Chiefs. Local CEOs from Central Ohio were surveyed only on personal qualities desired. They were asked to check all the qualities they believe an officer should possess or at least receive training in prior to their promotion. They were also asked to add any of the qualities they deemed necessary. It appears from the survey results that the Washington Township firefighters and selected Ohio Fire Chiefs agreed with the technical qualities established by the National Professional Qualification board.

There was not one quality added to the list by the groups surveyed. This was also true for the personal qualities established by Kazanas and Posmer (1995).

The groups surveyed showed trends in how they rated the importance of the various qualities. The Washington Township firefighters and the selected Ohio Fire Chiefs showed the same interest in tactics simulation, counseling techniques, building construction, accountability, cultural diversity, and legal issues. However, the Ohio Fire Chiefs put more emphasis on size-up and hazardous materials operation. They firefighters placed more emphasis on incident stress and public speaking.

The personal qualities dealt with morale values. Once again the Washington Township Firefighters, selected Ohio Fire Chiefs, and also local CEOs were surveyed as to the qualities a company officer should possess or at least receive training in prior to their promotion. All groups surveyed felt honesty was the most important quality an individual must possess. Dependability was also rated very high by all groups involved. There were some noticeable differences for instance, 100 percent of the CEOs felt a company officer should be supportive and intelligent. Only 50 percent of the firefighters and chiefs agreed, while firefighters and chiefs put more emphasis on cooperation, determination and inspirational.

According to Rothwell and Kazanas (1999), they showed the importance of having a planned leadership program and established curriculum. They feel it helps both the organization and the individuals involved. By creating this type of plan you also reduce the anxiety of the individuals receiving the training. As I researched leadership planning and established curriculums I found no literature that contradicted their findings.

After researching this topic through literature review, surveys and interviews I am able to make several observations. First, the technical qualities that were identified by NFPA 1021 (1997) appear to cover this area very well. This is supported not only by personal job experience, but also the surveys that were distributed. Out of the 108 surveys returned not one of them added a new quality to the list. One of the goals of this research was to identify the most desirable qualities and eliminate the less desirable. I was able to do this by eliminating qualities that received less than 25 percent of the votes. The qualities received various degrees of support. Perhaps when the curriculum is developed we can put more emphasis on the areas that received a higher number of votes.

The personal qualities identified by Kouzes and Posner (1995), also seem to be very complete. Once again out of the 124 surveys completed in this area, not one of them added a quality. It appears to me that a development program should address all of the technical and personal qualities listed below. The literature research was able to help us identify the desirable qualities and the surveys supported the importance of each one of them.

As stated earlier, Washington Township Fire Department on occasion sends members to various training classes. However, we have no established curriculum or objectives we would like to meet. According to Rothwell and Kazanas (1999), a planned leadership program and curriculum would help the individual meet the goals established by the organization. The interviews of Washington Township company officers also were in favor of an organized approach. It was referred to by Lt. McCann as a “Directed learning process”.

I believe if we follow a planned leadership program with an established curriculum covering all of the qualities technical and personal, we have discussed, it will have a positive impact on the department. The following table lists some of the mistakes in-charge firefighters and company officers have encountered in the past. The second column of the table lists qualities and/or class the curriculum will address in the hopes of reducing or eliminating past mistakes.

Problem	Classes
-Size up improper	-Size up familiarization
-No accountability	-Accountability training
-No RIC team	-Tactics simulation
-Inappropriate Racial Comments	-Cultural diversity training
-Failed to see big picture	-Building constructions
	-Size up
-Fire reports missing	-Human Resource training
-Delayed Second Alarm	-Tactics simulation
-Unit training decreases	-Ethic training
	-Counseling techniques
-Confrontation with outside organizations	-Public speaking
	-Counseling techniques

The problems we have had in the past and established desirable qualities have much in common. I think if we implement a planned leadership program we will directly address several of our problems.

Throughout this project I was able to gain a lot of valuable information that will benefit the Washington Township Fire Department. I have a list of qualities a company officer should possess, the understanding that a planned learning program along with a curriculum will be the most beneficial for our individuals and the Department, A buy-in by members of the Department because they were part of the research, and last but not least, I was able to make contact with several of the organizations in our community. This gave me a chance to tell them about the service we provide and gave them a chance tells us what they expect.

I have also found several short-comings after completing this paper. One of the strongest areas of the paper could have been the interviews with firefighters and CEO's but I did not keep track of exactly each quote or exactly who gave it. I was planning on listing them as generic comments regarding a development program. I found out through a proof reader that this is unacceptable. After reading the reviewers recommendations I see that perhaps I focused too much on the qualities desired rather than the overall picture of creating competent leaders and sound succession planning. I think this paper is a start to developing a good leader but I must now focuses on the leadership aspect. This area will be researched prior to submitting it for approval through our Fire Chief.

Recommendations

As stated in the previous section, there is a correlation between the problems we have experienced in the past and the established desired qualities we would like to improve on through a planned learning curriculum. The problems we have had in the past consisted of technical problems such as: size-ups mishaps, lack of accountability, no RIC team, and delayed second alarm, all which could be very costly at any given time. We have also failed in the personal qualities aspect. Racial comments have been made and overlooked as well as work efficiency decreases when the officer is away. Again, all of these could be costly to the organization. If we educate our members in each of the desired qualities, we can only help to reduce or eliminate some of our problems. We must develop a curriculum that addresses each of the desired technical and personal qualities. Remember, we have established the most desirable qualities. After a curriculum has been established various organization and institutions should be evaluated to see if they meet our needs. This was briefly attempted during the research of this paper but I was instructed by Dr. Darrow that this would be another entire research project. Once the curriculum and classes have been established a time frame should be established to accommodate Washington Township Fire Department and the candidates. After the total process has been defined, meet with all members of the department and advise them of the new program and ask for their input.

Finally, consistently re-evaluate the curriculum and the impact the program is having on the department. Are we truly developing our company officers?

The following list of technical and personal qualities and capabilities was established through literature research and supported by surveys. It is through these surveys and research qualities that I will recommend our curriculum development.

Personal Qualities

- Honestly
- Dependable
- Team oriented
- Competent
- Accountable
- Supportive
- Inspiring
- Intelligent
- Caring
- Fair

Technical Qualities

- ICS system
- Writing skills
- Building construction
- Employee evaluations
- Size ups

- HAZMAT operations
- Cultural diversity
- Public speaking
- Human resource management
- Department SOGs
- Pre-incident planning
- Common causes of fire
- FD critiques
- Incident stress debriefing

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Appendix A

Please take a moment to fill out the following survey. The following is a list of skills one may desire in a company officer. The suggested skills have been divided into two areas: Technical and Personal. **Please check only items you feel a company should possess. And write in any qualities that have not been mentioned.**

Name _____

Date _____

Department _____

TECHNICAL SKILLS:

- ___ Department SOG's
- ___ Knowledge of Fire Prevention Codes
- ___ Certified Fire Safety Inspector
- ___ ICS System
- ___ Fire Instructor Certification
- ___ EMS Instructor Certification
- ___ Incident Stress Debriefing
- ___ Budget Preparation
- ___ Perform Fire Investigations
- ___ Perform Fire Dept. Critiques
- ___ Know Common Causes of Fires
- ___ Certified EMT
- ___ Certified EMT-Advanced
- ___ Certified Paramedic
- ___ Hazmat Awareness Certification
- ___ Hazmat Operations Certification
- ___ Hazmat Technician Certification
- ___ Knowledge of Building Construction
- ___ Human Resources Management Training
- ___ Rescue Technician Certification
- ___ Employee Evaluation Training
- ___ Conducting Pre-Incident Planning
- ___ Water Supply Management
- ___ Elements of Scene Size-up
- ___ Resource Management
- ___ Public Speaking
- ___ Culture Diversity Education
- ___ Written Communication Skills
- ___ Other (Please list any skills that you feel are important)

PERSONAL SKILLS:

- Honesty
- Forward Looking
- Inspiring
- Competent
- Fair Minded
- Supportive
- Broad Minded
- Intelligent
- Straightforward
- Dependable
- Courageous
- Cooperative
- Imaginative
- Caring
- Determined
- Accountable
- Team Oriented
- Other (Please list any skills that you feel are important)

Thank you very much for your participation. If I can be any help to you in the future please let me know.

- Please send me the results of this survey
- Please send me a copy of your career track program when it is completed

Appendix B

Please take a moment to fill out the following survey. The following is a list of skills one may desire in a company officer and or manager. **Please place a check mark next to the items that you feel a Company Officers and or manager should possess and please write in any qualities you feel are missing.**

Name _____

Date _____

Company _____

- Honesty
 - Forward Looking
 - Inspiring
 - Competent
 - Fair Minded
 - Supportive
 - Broad Minded
 - Intelligent
 - Straightforward
 - Dependable
 - Courageous
 - Cooperative
 - Imaginative
 - Caring
 - Determined
 - Accountable
 - Team Oriented
 - Employee Evaluation Training
 - Public Speaking
 - Cultural Diversity Education
 - Written Communication Skills
 - Other (Please list any skills that you feel are important)
-

Thank you very much for your participation. If I can be any help to you in the future please let me know.

- Please send me the results of this survey
- Please send me a copy of your career track program when it is completed

Appendix C

Interview Questions

- 1) What does a company officer development program mean to you?

- 2) How long should a company officer development program last?

- 3) Would you participate in a company officer development program if it was offered to you?

- 4) Should a development program be a prerequisite prior to promotion?

- 5) Should current company officers be required to participate in the development program?