

Investing in the Future Leaders of the Bedford Fire Department

By: Shawn Solar
Assistant Fire Chief
Bedford Fire Department
165 Center Rd. Bedford, Ohio 44146

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CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The Bedford Fire Department has the possibility of seeing an entirely new officer corps within the next seven years. This possibility exists because of promotions and the retirements of the current officer core. This type turnover in the officer corps has happened in the past, which had a negative impact on the organization. Having newly promoted officers with no education and experience led to many unsafe emergency scenes, training accidents and an overall decrease in the morale within the Bedford Fire Department. The problem this study will address is how the Bedford Fire Department can better prepare its future leaders with the necessary skills and knowledge needed for the demands of promotion. The purpose of this study is to identify what is being done within the fire service and other organizations to prepare their future leaders. This was accomplished by utilizing descriptive research techniques to answer the following questions: (a) What are the best practices being used to develop future leaders? (b) What role does mentoring play in developing future leaders? (c) What are other fire departments doing to develop their future leaders? (d) What are some core competencies that should be developed for company officers? A thorough literature review was conducted that studied the private sector, United States Military and the fire service. An external survey was distributed to the Cuyahoga County Fire Chiefs Association. The research indicated that the Bedford Fire Department can be doing more to prepare the current firefighters for the demands of promotion. The recommendations include: Increase the amount of service time prior to promotion, require firefighters to have Fire Officer 1, Fire Inspector and Fire Instructor prior to promotion, formulation of job descriptions, elimination of “2nd” in charge program, development of internal training program and the allocation of funds annually to career development.

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INTRODUCTION

The Bedford Fire Department (BFD) originated in 1881 and since that time has grown and changed with the community. The evolution has included increased responsibilities placed on the department and the use of modern technology to deliver premier service to the citizens of Bedford. Today, the BFD can be seen as a progressive and well-trained department that has evolved through the years as the demands have increased. The staffing levels and available leadership positions have changed with the times as well.

In 1995, the citizens of Bedford passed a levy requiring nine additional firefighters to be hired, and allowed the fire department to begin delivering paramedic service to the residents. Prior to that time, the firefighters provided only Basic Emergency Medical Technician level service. The next five years also offered changes within the officer corps. Officer retirements within that time period and the creation of three additional Lieutenant positions allowed for a younger group of officers to lead the department. Four newly promoted Lieutenants had only a combined sixteen years of fire service experience.

The Lieutenants at the BFD can be seen as the face of the organization on a daily basis, which carries an enormous amount of accountability. Daily responsibilities are vast and can include being incident commanders, conducting training, public relations, code enforcement, and personnel issues. Many of the decisions made require an immediate course of action rather than seeking consultation on the matter.

The expansion of manpower and leadership allowed for some growing pains within the BFD. Multiple issues developed when firefighters questioned tactical decisions given by newly promoted officers during serious incidents. Tactical issues that were debated included initial

attack line deployment, sufficiency of manpower and offensive or defensive operational decisions. On several emergency scenes, the newly promoted Lieutenant allowed command decisions to be made by firefighters rather than make the decision himself. The situations that developed on emergency scenes created an unsafe environment for firefighters and the community. Morale issues increased as firefighters showed a general lack of respect for the newly promoted Lieutenants because of the inconsistencies that were being displayed for the first several years of their promotions. Coleman (2008) expresses the importance of using past experiences in order to have positive outcomes in the future.

The dynamic of significant turnover will once again play out, but this time the entire officer corps within the BFD has the chance of changing within the next seven years because of retirements and promotions. The problem this study will address is how the BFD can better prepare its future leaders with the necessary skills and knowledge needed for the demands of promotion.

The purpose of this applied research project is to identify what is being done within the fire service and other organizations to prepare their future leaders. Utilizing descriptive research techniques the following questions will be answered:

- What are the best practices being used to develop future leaders?
- What role does mentoring play in developing future leaders?
- What are other fire departments doing to develop their future leaders?
- What are some core competencies that should be developed for company officers?

BACKGROUND & SIGNIFICANCE

On January 1, 1881 the Bedford Village Council approved the formulation of a volunteer fire department consisting of twenty-eight firefighters. The BFD continued delivering service with only volunteer firefighters until October 1, 1963 when four full-time firefighters were hired. Almost one-hundred and thirty five years later things are much different for both the BFD and Bedford Village. Bedford Village is now the City of Bedford and the BFD consists of twenty-seven full-time firefighters, which protect 13,074 citizens (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The City of Bedford is 5.30 land areas and is located in the southeast region of Cuyahoga County. Thirty-nine percent of the land is designated as residential, 16.5% as metro parks, 8.8% commercial, 7.4% public and institutional, and 3.3% industrial (City of Bedford Master Plan, 2007). In 2011, the BFD responded to 2538 calls for service. During the time period from 1995-2011 run volume has shown an increase of 25%. All firefighters are required to possess State of Ohio Firefighter II and Paramedic qualifications prior to being appointed a Bedford Firefighter/Paramedic.

Today, shift strength consists of two shifts of eight firefighters and one shift of nine firefighters who are on a 24/48 shift. The economic downturn has prohibited the BFD to hire two additional firefighters to allow for staffing levels that were seen in the mid 90's through the mid 2000's. The current officer structure consists of two Lieutenants per shift, with the senior Lieutenant taking responsibility of the shift when both are present. The administration consists of a Chief and Assistant Chief who both work a forty-hour work week.

The Bedford Civil Service Commission handles the testing process for all positions within the organization, from firefighter to Chief Officer. Bedford Civil Service rules permit

any firefighter with two years of service with the BFD to take the promotional exam. There are no other requirements, or a written job description, for any of the leadership positions within the department. In contrast, Bedford Civil Service rules permit Bedford police officers to test for the position of Sergeant after three years of service. This position is considered to be equivalent to the rank of Lieutenant in the BFD. In addition, to be eligible to drive the fire engine at the BFD one must have had five years of service within the BFD, so a contrast does exist between these two very important positions. The Ohio Revised Code section 124.45 states firefighters who are seeking promotion must have forty-eight months in their current position, not including their probationary period to seek a position higher than firefighter. Bordering cities of Bedford Hts. and Maple Hts. are more aligned with the Ohio Revised Code by requiring five years of service prior to taking a Lieutenant promotional exam.

The passage of a Paramedic Levy in 1995 allowed the BFD to hire an additional nine firefighters. Between 1997 and 2000 four new Lieutenants were promoted because of the creation of three new lieutenant positions and one retirement. The combined fire service experience of four of the newly promoted Lieutenants was thirteen years. Their educational backgrounds included State of Ohio Firefighter II and Paramedic certification. None of the newly promoted Lieutenants had attended any outside schooling with regard to leadership or firefighting tactics. Those who are not thoroughly prepared for promotion have the most difficult time with the transition (Prziborowski, 2012).

Today, educational requirements for the newly promoted Lieutenant require them to become a certified Fire Inspector and Instructor within their first year of becoming a Lieutenant within the BFD. Once certified these certifications allow the Lieutenants to provide daily trainings to shift members and conduct fire safety inspections within the City of Bedford. The

current Lieutenants are not required to obtain any other certifications or continuing education other than the current State of Ohio Firefighter Level II requirements. Currently, the BFD doesn't have an official job description document for each particular rank, but the responsibilities are very well known throughout the organization.

Since 2006 the Fire Chief has made educational dollars available for firefighters to take advantage of outside schooling, but doesn't specifically tell the firefighters what opportunities to take advantage of. Fifty-seven thousand dollars has been budgeted for outside training since 2006, with \$4500 being spent on leadership development and fire training for firefighters. Other training opportunities for firefighters are conducted on a daily basis by Lieutenants within the BFD, which allows for a multitude of different areas being covered throughout the year.

In 2008 the Fire Chief presented a new program called "second in charge." It was developed to put firefighters who might seek promotion into a leadership role and to give the Fire Chief the ability to observe them in such a role. This group of firefighters would be in charge of the shift when both officers were not on duty. Educational requirements included Fire Officer 1 training and maintaining sixteen hours of tactical continuing education from an outside resource. Six firefighters sought this newly created role and currently four of the initial six remain. A Lieutenant promotional exam was given in May 2012 and two of the four remaining firefighters in the position did not take the promotional exam. To date, no other firefighters have entered the program since the inception. The opportunity to be in charge for these firefighters is a rarity; in fact only one firefighter who took the promotional exam has ever been in charge during a Lieutenant's absence.

In the very near future, retirements or other opportunities could change the officer corps drastically within the BFD. At no other period in the history of the BFD has the possibility of such a drastic turnover in the officer corps occurred, which warrants the need for a strategy to develop the future leaders. Handling leadership transitions can be dangerous, so there is a great importance in doing it correctly (Van Hook, 2004). *The potential impact this research project could have on the BFD is the creation of training requirements for future leaders within the BFD to help enhance their development prior to promotion.*

LITERATURE REVIEW

The intent of this research project is to gain information that can be utilized by current leadership in order to prepare the firefighter seeking promotion within the BFD and give them the best opportunity to succeed. The author reviewed multiple different sources including the United States Military, private sector and other fire departments to help the BFD have a better understanding on how to possibly develop our future leaders. Like any investment that is made through training and education, the organization usually gets paid back with a competent officer who will be an asset to the organization. Having no strategy, objectives or long term goals means there is no vision for the future of the organization (Anderson, 2012).

General Electric (GE) spends one billion dollars annually specifically for developing future leaders. Their specific belief on leadership is centered on developing, connecting and inspiring their future leaders. GE leaders are groomed through approaches that are simple and natural that is made up of consistent, ongoing dialogue and ingrained corporate values with various assignments for on-the-job training (Knudson, 2012). According to Conaty, (2008) GE uses definitive, purposeful steps in developing their future leaders. They give absolute priority to

developing, managing and retaining talent, seeing this as much a priority as attracting the right people to the organization. They also have a leadership development practice that recognizes and rewards top performers, differentiating them from others so that everyone knows where they stand. Leadership development priorities need to be in line with business and marketplace conditions. Finally, GE embraces continuous learning for individuals. The bar is consistently raised for performance and detailed feedback is given to individuals with regard to strengths and development needs.

While conducting research for officer development the author found an interesting article regarding how to develop future leaders. Although the article is pinpointing the private sector it can be applied to the fire service as well:

First, realize that one size doesn't fit all. There are different approaches which may be used, depending on the situation in each company. In some cases, a company may have to move some people along quickly, in order to expose them to a broad range of experiences, and possibly to fill vacancies. In others, a deeper involvement in selected departments or disciplines may be indicated. Some of this will depend on the culture and processes of the company. In yet other cases, decisions about the process will depend on the individual's capabilities and competencies, and the structure and operations of the company. In virtually all situations, your ability to educate and promote will depend on the capabilities and strengths of the people who currently occupy the key positions and where they will be going in the future - what are they being groomed for? (Baldwin, 2000, para. 5)

Targeting the right employees for officer development is very important because of the time and possible financial investment the organization is putting into the employee. In the business world some human resource departments are currently using the 9 Box Model Matrix for deciding which employees should be placed into leadership positions. This tool allows businesses to access their internal talent within the organization and invest in their future. According to Glasco, (2011) the 9 Box Model Matrix is designed to reward, develop, orient, recruit, promote and even terminate employees. See Appendix 1 for 9 Box Model Matrix.

The typical way governmental agencies develop their employees according to the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) *Officer Development Handbook* (2010) is by breaking the development into three categories. Educational development takes a huge chunk of the development at 70%, followed by mentoring at 20% and experience only plays 10% of the development plan. The *Officer Development Handbook* goes on to explain that the best practice to use should consist of 10% education, 20% mentoring and experience ranking the highest at 70%. To gain this important experience it is suggested the employee receive it through true experiences, highly visibility in the organization, structured to ensure the risk of failure is present and a significant amount of pressure is provided.

The research also indicated employees who want to excel to higher position want to be challenged with goals that are set forth for their advancement opportunities. The company Meddius takes goal setting to the extent of developing measurable and obtainable goals every three months (Labosky, 2010). This approach can help build confidence in the employee and allow for constant monitoring by upper management.

A very interesting graph can be found in Appendix 2 that compares what the top twenty companies are doing to prepare their future leaders in comparison to the non-top companies (Hewitt and Associates, 2005). The graph clearly indicates that the top companies are putting more time into their future leaders than other companies. It should also be noted of the four developmental ideas all can be seen as no cost opportunities for the future leader.

With proper leadership development and implementation practices, organizations can help grow their own leaders prior to them being in key positions. This not only helps the individual succeed, but the organization continues to focus on the vision they are striving for. Having a vision as pointed out by Webb (2012) can help the organization look more organized. Organizations with a vision allow their employees to know exactly which direction they are heading. According to Revere (2012) vision tells us where we want to go, what we want to become, and what we want to accomplish. Passing the vision of the organization on to fellow firefighters requires the department to have key members in mentoring roles.

The need for mentors to be a part of officer development was clearly evident throughout the research, but opinions on who should serve as the mentor varied. Alyn (2011) believes every leader should strive to make great leaders not only for the future of their department, but the fire service as a whole. When putting firefighters' in such an important role it must be considered imperative to give them every tool possible to better their chances of having success. Hodgins, (2007) believes having a mentor multiples the chances for individual success.

Regardless of what research was studied, mentoring proved to be beneficial to both the organization and the mentee as was pointed out by Triple Creek, (2007). The mentee benefited in areas of technical and professional expertise. Mentees also can develop an expanded personal

network, increased self-awareness and self-discipline. Also mentioned was the ability of the mentee to have a smoother transition for career development. Nelms (2009) expressed that mentoring has the ability to give energy, challenge and focus.

A variety of theories were discovered when pairing a mentor and a mentee. Asala (2012) believes that to be successful in life it's essential to have a mentor who has more experience than you and the mentor is in a position you desire in the future. Asala goes on explaining how a mentor has valuable insight to only experience can teach. This theory is further emphasized by Olophant (2002) who stresses the importance of moving information throughout the organization in order to help prepare it for the future. Additional thoughts on who should serve as mentors included the company Intel, who teams up employees not by experience, but by what skill sets are needed by the particular employee (Warner, 2002).

The Officer Development Handbook (2010 IAFC), describes how important it is for firefighters to draw upon the past experiences of mentors who have "been there and done that." Additionally, current officers should try to maintain a healthy dialogue with firefighters who are seeking promotion. Finally, it was stressed that future leaders should find a mentor in the fire service for any beneficial coaching and development.

The FDNY has developed the "Firefighter Mentorship" program to help with developing future leaders within the organization using a teamwork approach. FDNY "Firefighter Mentorship" program goes along with the theory expressed by Asala with regard to how a mentor can give valuable insight on relevant issues. The essence of the program is the company officer sharing his knowledge with the other firefighters, which helps spread knowledge and past experiences.

In the Firefighter Mentorship program, the working firefighters on each tour of duty are considered a "Mentorship Team." At the beginning of its tour, the team receives a written problem to analyze and solve. Before the end of the tour, these firefighters must submit their individual solutions and recommendations. The on-duty members analyze the problem as a team, engage in discussion, and finally offer a collective answer or procedure that would solve the problem. The company officer discusses and critiques the information with the team for additional input or clarification after the team has given its response. (Tracy, 2004, para.9)

While the United States Armed Services, which draws some comparison with the fire service because both rely on their training, experience and education to make life and death decisions. When dealing with mentoring and succession planning for future growth the Armed Services have contrasting views.

Air Force- The mentoring process is formal with the immediate supervisor taking the role as mentor for all of his/her subordinates. The mentor is to be the role model, teacher and guide (United States Air Force, 2000)

Army- A voluntary approach is taken in the mentoring program, with the chain of command often not making a difference in who gets paired up. The organization believes if mentoring takes place within the chain of command biases and favoritism, which can be detrimental to the organization (United States Army, 2006)

Marines- Take a formal and mandatory approach to mentoring requiring all Marines to be mentored by a member senior to them in the chain of command. The Marine Corps Mentoring

Program casts a mentor as a teacher, guide, coach and role-model (United States Marine Corp, 2006).

Navy- The mentoring is more of a voluntary relationship that is formed between a subordinate and an experienced superior. The mentee chooses the mentor on his or her career development desires. In addition the mentor shares experiences and insights they have learned through their career (United States Navy, 2005).

The research clearly indicates there are other fire departments in the United States that are developing future leaders prior to them being in a leadership position. The following is the course description used by Colorado Springs Fire Department (Springs, 2010):

The Colorado Springs Fire Department Fire Officer Academy is a 7-week program in which the officer candidate will complete Fire Officer I and II performance evaluation sheets that are designed to meet the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) 1021 Standard. After the 7-week program, the officer candidate will be "mentored" by the company officer and battalion chief for at least 30 emergency responses and 6 shifts. A few areas in which the officer candidate will be evaluated on is in incident management to include: structure fires, medical incidents, traffic accidents, hazmat incidents, interpersonal skills, customer service, report writing, training, staffing decision, public education, and CTS entry. The Officer Candidate Evaluation Form will be used and signed off by the company officer and battalion chief to evaluate the individual on these critical elements. Upon successful completion, the candidate will be eligible to take the nationally recognized Fire Officer I and II certification exams.

Another suggestion for developing an officer candidate academy was discussed by Barakey, (2009) who suggested the academy should be performed over a two-week period. Suggested topics for operational preparation include emergency operations, disaster planning, risk management and strategy. Barakey also pointed out administrative discussion should include budgeting, policy expectation, discipline, ethics and performance appraisals. Also, the academy should take place at a higher education facility and a professional dress code should be enforced for candidates.

The Western Reserve Fire District according to Comstock (2008) helps prepare firefighters for promotion by creating administrative/operational committees relating to the functions of the fire department. Committees include budgeting, training, human relations, health and safety, building construction, human relations, maintenance, prevention, inspection and public relations. The committees are all headed up by current Lieutenants, which allow members to gain additional knowledge on certain responsibilities of the fire department. Comstock points out the department uses a lot of hands on experience, including trade conferences, which allows firefighters the opportunity to bring back knowledge to the department. Firefighters and officers who are in charge of training are involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the training the department institutes.

Clark County (NV) Fire Department according to Morgan (2008) requires candidates to have finished Phase I-Fire Instructor 1 and Phase II-Fire Officer prep, including “Intro to Company Officer” and “Firefighting Tactics and Strategy” Phase III is “Officer Candidate School,” which is seventy hours and includes fire investigation, technical rescue, hazmat awareness, command, tactics, and strategy. Also, leadership issues, ethics and legal issues are discussed during the program. Morgan also points out that candidates are required to poses ICS

100, 200 and 300. In the future the candidate will likely be placed in the officer seat during real incidents and be required to perform the role as an officer under the supervision of a mentor.

The Merriam (KY) Fire Department prepares their future leaders according to Mosher (2008) take the approach of using the International Association of Fire Chiefs' (IAFC) recommended career advancement program. Merriam explains that on a monthly basis firefighters in the officer development program receive articles on various topics with regard to leadership, tactics and building construction. Once the articles are studied they are asked to join in a discussion pertaining to the given articles. Firefighters who don't participate are no longer considered in the program.

The research indicated that many of the fire departments that have a developed program are using NFPA 1021, which is the national standard for officer development. NFPA 1021 has four levels of development or progression as a fire officer climbs the ranks. Included in NFPA 1021 are some of the core competencies a fire department can use when developing an officer development program:

Human Resource Management- Involves utilizing human resources to accomplish assignments in accordance with safety plans and in an efficient manner. Also, evaluating member performance and supervising personnel during emergency and non-emergency work.

Community and Government Relations- Dealing with inquiries of the community and communicating the role, image, and mission of the department to the public and delivering safety, injury, and fire prevention education programs.

Administration- Involves general administrative functions and the implementation of departmental policies and procedures at the unit level.

Inspection and Investigation- Conducting inspections to identify hazards and address violations, performing fire investigations to determine preliminary cause, securing the incident scene and preserving evidence.

Emergency Service Delivery- Supervising emergency operations, conducting pre-incident planning, and developing assigned resources accordance with local emergency plan.

Health and Safety- Integrating health and safety plans, policies, and procedures into daily activities as well as the emergency scene, including the donning of appropriate levels of personal protective equipment to ensure a work environment that is in accordance with health and safety plans for all assigned members.

In addition to meeting the above competencies, the fire officer should meet the minimum standards set forth by Firefighter II (NFPA, 2013) and Fire Instructor I (NFPA, 2012).

The United States Armed Forces again was looked at to get insight into what core competencies and leadership strategies exist. The Marines and Navy have no definition of what leadership means that the public can access. While the Army and Air Force both readily let the public view their opinion on leadership and what it means. The Army in particular describes leadership as motivating, influencing, providing direction, influencing and accomplishing the mission (Department of the Army, 2007). While the eight core competencies Army officers strive for are the ability to lead others, lead by example, create a positive environment, communicate, develop leaders, prepare self to lead, get results and extend influence beyond chain of command.

The private sector was again researched to help gain a better understanding of what competencies are being focused on. Eichinger and Lombardo in their book *The Leadership Machine* (2007) discuss 67 common core competencies that were discovered during their study of businesses and leadership since 1994. These competencies can then be grouped into six consistent statistical patterns. The six themes are strategic and operating skills, courage, energy and drive, organizational positioning skills and personal/interpersonal skills. In their book it was mentioned that those competencies had a direct relationship with profit, retention, both current and long-term performance, promotion, potential and stock and bonus differentials.

In summary, the literature review set out to define the key ingredients needed for developing future officers for the BFD and what other organizations are doing to developing their leaders. The research showed that both private and public sectors believe leadership development is imperative to both the individual and the organizations success. The research also showed there is no specific formula when developing future leaders. The organization must identify their specific needs and choose the appropriate course of action. Being able to adjust the plan when appropriate has also been shown to benefit both the organization and the employee. Mentoring was identified as being a significant part in the success of any employee looking to advance in their career by gaining experience from another individual in the organization. The research again showed many different thoughts about who should be doing the mentoring in the organization, but all felt mentoring was beneficial. Fire Departments that are involved in officer development are taking different approaches to the goal of preparing future leaders. Although different approaches are being used, the core of the learning can be seen as extending from the criteria set forth by NFPA 1021. Finally, the core competencies of leadership were researched

and some differences were found between the fire service and other organizations that develop their leader's core competencies.

PROCEDURES

The procedures of this research project began with the author attending the Ohio Fire Executive (OFE) program. Archived research papers from both the OFE program and the Executive Fire Officers (EFO) program were reviewed. Information was also obtained through internet searches dealing with leadership development in the fire service, United States Military and within the private sector. Valuable information was obtained through NFPA standards, International Association of Fire Chiefs, leadership textbooks and archived trade publications dealing with leadership development. Further information was obtained through the City of Bedford Civil Service Commission and the Ohio Revised Code (ORC).

Additionally, a survey was created on Survey Monkey with the intent of helping in answering the research questions. The survey was sent out electronically to 48 representatives from the Cuyahoga County Fire Chiefs Association. The members had two weeks to answer and submit ten close-ended questions.

The survey questions dealt specifically with how their organization prepares firefighters for promotion to company officer. Information was obtained in regards to certifications required prior to promotion, mentoring programs, budgetary and if their organization gives firefighters opportunities to be in leadership roles. The survey also obtained what those surveyed felt was the most important information a mentor can give to a firefighter, the skill the individual felt they lacked prior to promotion and if they were personally involved in a leadership development program prior to promotion.

Limitations of Survey

The survey was answered by members who belong to fire departments within Cuyahoga County. This region has suffered major budgetary cuts within the fire departments, which could have led to reduction of training and developmental opportunities. It is possible the results could have been different if the survey was distributed during favorable economic times.

RESULTS

To help answer the research questions for this project a survey was sent out to 48 Cuyahoga County Fire Chiefs representatives, with 34 respondents to the survey. Twenty-eight (82.35%) came from a career fire department. Two (5.88%) represented a part-time department, while four (11.76%) of the respondents were a part of a career/part-time fire department. In addition to the survey, a literature review was conducted to help gather information pertaining to the research questions.

Question One

What are the best practices being used to develop future leaders?

A literature review was conducted to answer the first question. The results clearly showed that the top companies are willing to invest time and resources into developing their future leaders. One of the more important aspects of developing the employee is making sure that the organization is pinpointing the right individual to make this investment in. The *Officer Development Handbook* (2010) believes that developing firefighters should consist of 10% education, 20% mentoring and 70% experience. It was found that the top companies give their

future leaders access to senior leaders, internal training, developmental assignments and mentoring.

Question Two

What role does mentoring play in developing future leaders?

Thirty-one (91.17%) of the Chiefs responded that their fire department doesn't utilize a mentoring program, while three (8.82%) stated their department has a current mentoring program. (Figure 1)

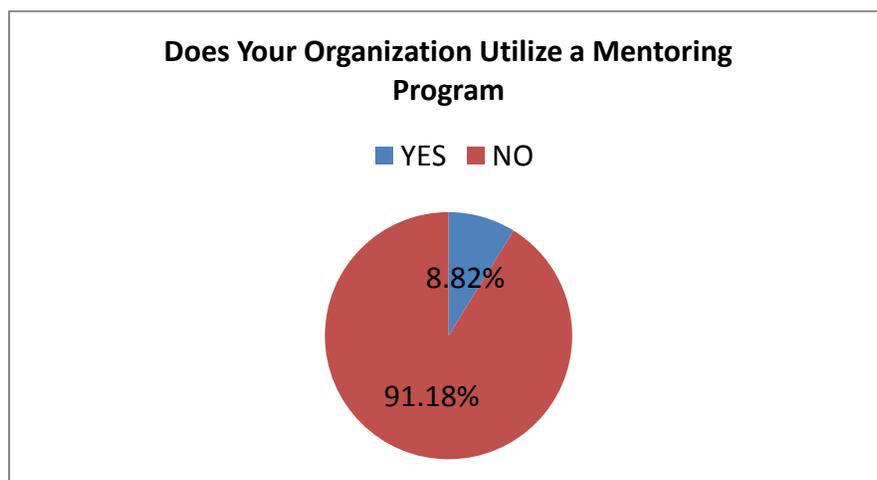


Figure 1.

Eighteen (52.94%) responded that interaction with subordinates is the most important information a mentor can give a future officer. While six (17.64%) felt past experiences was the most important. Eight (23.52%) stated that administrative duties was the most essential information that can be given. Two (5.88%) responded with tactical experience. None of those surveyed felt interaction with the public was essential in the mentoring process. (Figure 2)

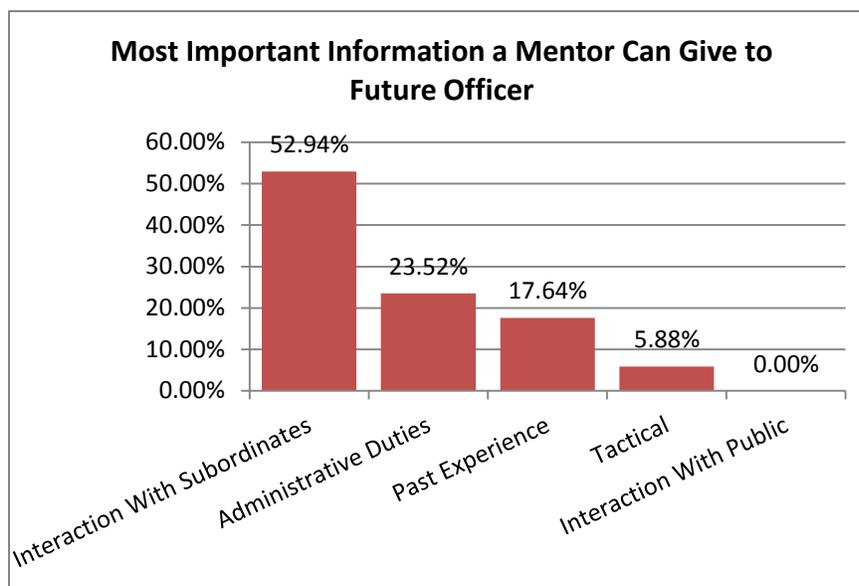


Figure 2.

By a very large percentage a formal mentoring program doesn't exist within many of the fire departments within Cuyahoga County. Those who responded gave the opinion that interaction with subordinates followed by administrative duties would be important information a mentor could give to a future officer.

Question 3

What are other fire departments doing to develop their future leaders?

The survey identified that twenty-eight (82.35%) of the fire departments don't budget money for the development of future leaders. Six (17.64%) of the departments do budget money specifically for the development of future leaders. (Figure 3)

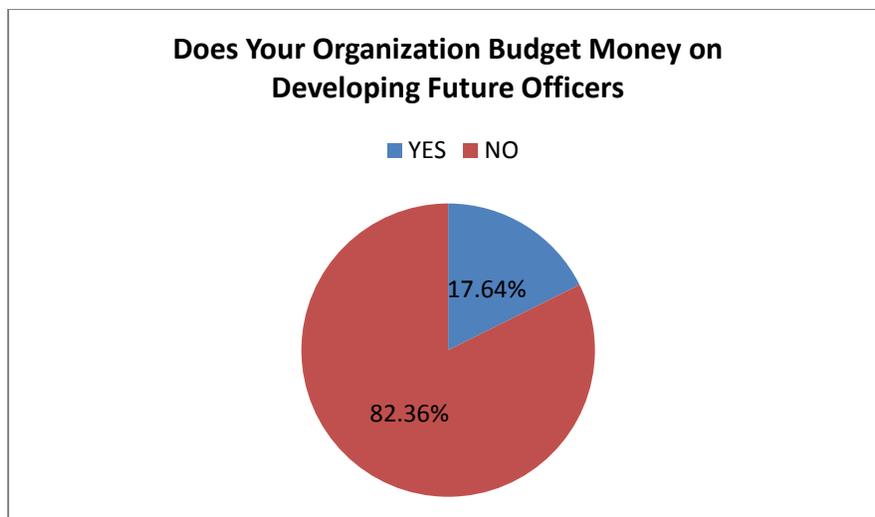


Figure 3.

Twenty-eight (82.35%) answered that their fire department doesn't require any certifications prior to promotion. Four (11.76%) require Fire Officer 1 certification, while two (5.88%) require Fire Inspector certification. None of those who were surveyed had fire departments that require Fire Instructor certification prior to promotion. (Figure 4)

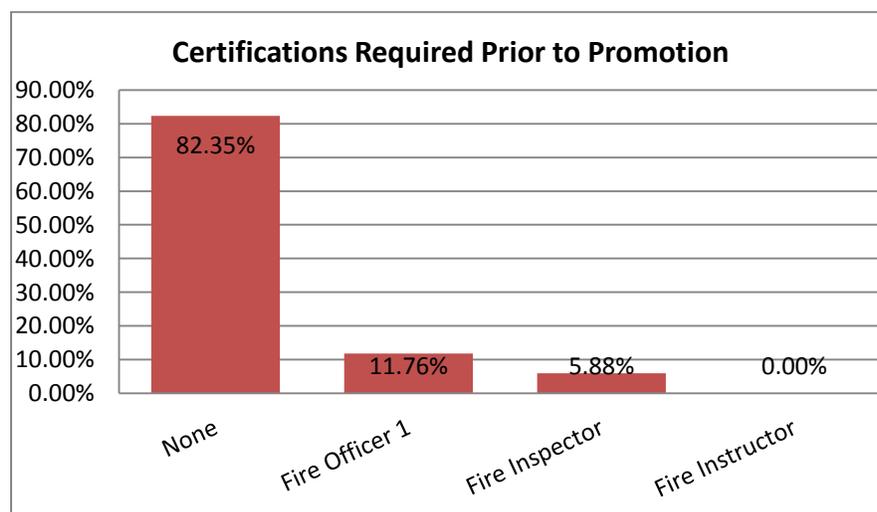


Figure 4.

The survey revealed that twenty-two (64.70%) of the fire departments give future leaders the opportunity to be in leadership roles. Twelve (35.29%) of those surveyed didn't give such opportunities to future leaders. (Figure 5)



Figure 5.

Twenty-eight (82.35%) of those surveyed were not involved in a leadership development program prior to becoming an officer. While six (17.64%) were involved in a leadership development program prior to becoming an officer. (Figure 6)

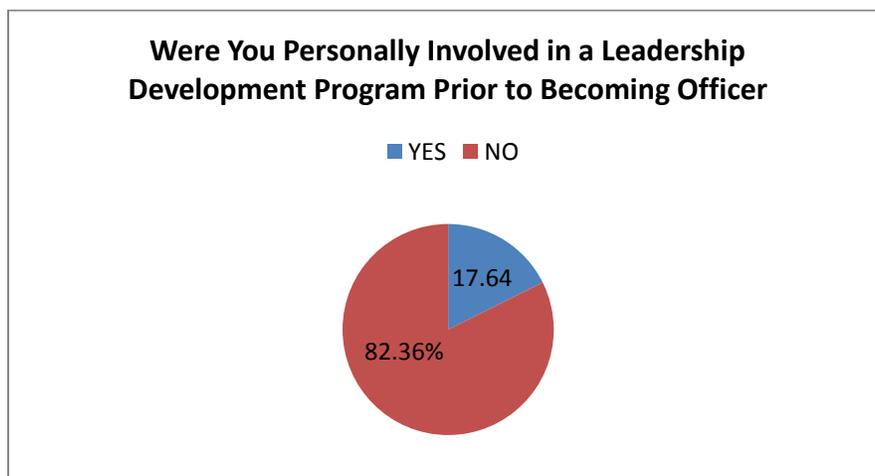


Figure 6.

The surveyed showed that a majority of the fire departments in Cuyahoga County don't require any certifications prior to being promoted, which correlates with the fire departments not specifically budgeting money for leadership development for future officers. The survey also revealed that a majority of the fire departments give those identified as future officers the opportunity to assume leadership roles within their fire department. The numbers also indicate that the majority of Chief Officers within Cuyahoga County received no initial leadership training prior to becoming a company officer.

Question 4

What are some core competencies that should be developed for company officers?

Twenty-one (61.76%) of those surveyed stated their fire department didn't follow certain criteria in leadership advancement. Thirteen (38.23%) followed certain criteria in leadership advancement. (Figure 7)

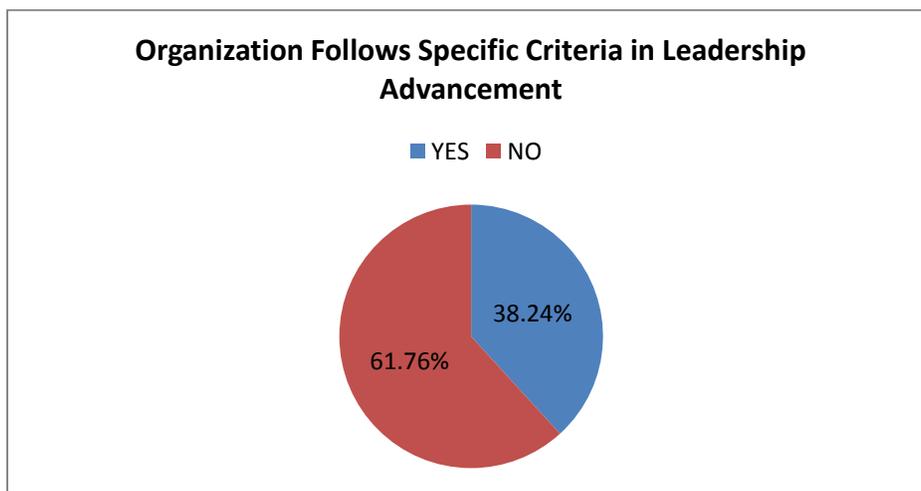


Figure 7.

Those surveyed were asked what criteria their organization followed in developing future officers. Twenty-one (61.76%) stated they didn't follow specific criteria, while six (17.64%) followed NFPA 1021. Four (11.76%) followed their own organization program. Three (8.82%) used the IAFC Fire Officer Handbook as their criteria in the development of future officers.

(Figure 8)

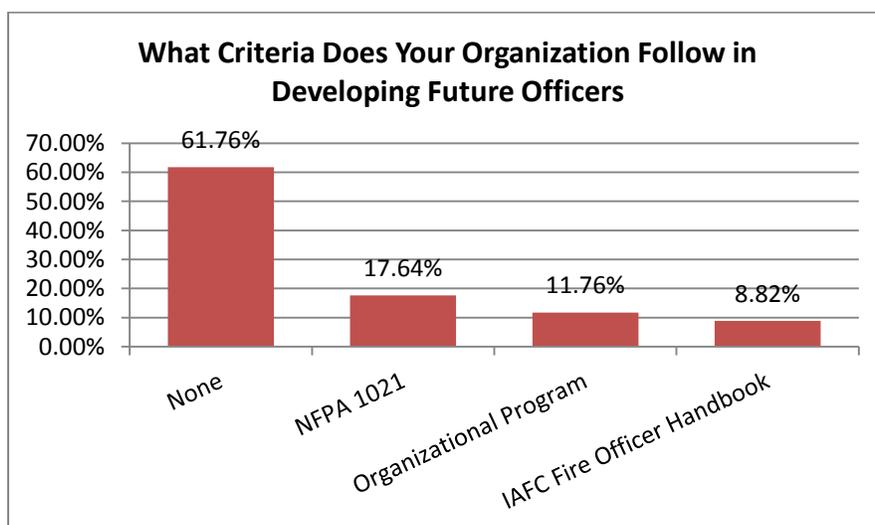


Figure 8.

The survey found that fourteen (41.17%) felt they lacked administrative skills prior to them being promoted, while eleven (32.35%) identified leadership as their personal shortcoming. Six (17.64%) expressed tactical issues as what they lacked prior to promotion. Two (5.88%) suggested they lacked field experience. One (2.94%) of those surveyed felt they lacked Incident Command. (Figure 9)

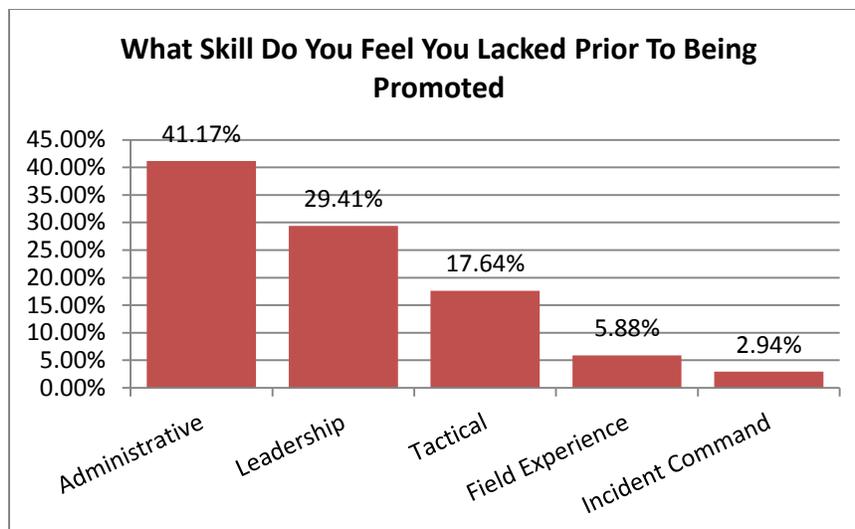


Figure 9.

The survey revealed that a majority of those who responded belong to fire departments that don't use set criteria for their firefighters to follow in leadership advancement. The numbers did indicate that those departments that do follow set criteria are using NFPA 1021 as their guide. Leadership and administrative skills were the two skills that those responding to the survey felt they lacked the most when they were initially promoted.

DISCUSSION

The intent of this descriptive research project was to research the fire service and other organizations to see what is being done to develop future leaders. Regardless of the type of organization being analyzed, the leadership is often considered essential to the overall success of that organization. Research clearly indicates that those making the transition into a leadership role must be given the necessary skills and tools prior to assuming such a position to enhance the chances for success.

The need to develop future leaders whether in the fire service or private industry is not a new concept. This study clearly showed that successful companies are spending large amounts of money annually to develop their future leaders. The opposite was found with the results of the survey, which showed 82.36% of the fire departments within Cuyahoga County don't specifically budget money into leadership development. This statistic also holds true for the BFD, as a very small portion of the yearly budget is focused on leadership development when being compared to other training topics. Sargent (2006) emphasizes that fire departments must commit financial resources into future officer development and ongoing continuing education in the development of current officers.

Although a difference does exist when comparing the monetary commitment of funds to leadership development, some similarities were found to be the same between the private sector and the fire service. Private sector companies are giving their future leaders goals to obtain and are constantly challenging them with new goals. This philosophy is also being used according to the survey, which showed 64.71% of those surveyed put their perspective leaders into leadership roles. The research shows that being challenged is imperative to the development of future leaders regardless of the type of organization. These challenges also provide a sense of experience for the individual, which helps with their personal growth. Charan et al (2011) commented that most people don't want to plateau and stagnate within their organization.

The usage of a mentoring program was used in the various organizations. Research showed that many fire departments are using mentoring to develop their firefighters internally, while the IAFC *Officer Development Handbook* also prescribes to this theory. Ninety-one percent of those surveyed stated their fire department didn't utilize a formal mentoring program. Although the vast majority of those surveyed don't have a formal mentoring program, it could be

stated that anytime important information is transferred from one individual to another in regards to educating or explaining past experiences it could be considered mentoring. Mentoring can be seen as a valuable asset to the development of employees as it is a no cost initiative that involves important career development skills for both mentor and mentee.

A multitude of developmental programs exist within the fire service to help develop the future leaders of the organization. It was found that there is not one distinct path to follow that will guarantee success for firefighters making the transition into a leadership position. Many of the programs that were discovered were based upon NFPA 1021 *Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications* and the IAFC *Officer Development Handbook*. Eighty-two percent of those surveyed didn't receive any formal officer training prior to becoming an officer, which correlates with the fact that 82.36% of those fire departments surveyed didn't require certifications prior to promotion. Although NFPA 1021 is the minimum standard, there is nothing that states to be a fire officer those standards identified within the document must be met prior to becoming a fire officer.

When developing the competencies for a fire officer (61.76%) of those surveyed belonged to fire departments that don't follow any set criteria in the development of their leaders. Seventeen percent used NFPA 1021 as the source for developing competencies in future officers. When researching what competencies other organizations are developing in their future leaders a drastic difference can be seen when being compared to the fire service. The competencies outlined in NFPA 1021 are more job specific, while the competencies for the Air Force are what can be perceived as leadership skills.

Many differences were found throughout the research in regards to leadership development. No one organization follows the same playbook when it comes to developing their leaders. This is very evident when looking at how the United States Military views leadership and mentoring. Research did indicate that leadership development does exist in many different types of organizations and those who develop future leaders are increasing the success of their organization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The BFD has already gone through the growing pains of promoting officers without a developed plan in place that will groom potential officer candidates. Promoting firefighters without the proper training has already been proven to be an unsafe and undesirable practice for the community and the BFD. The current leadership within the BFD now has the ability to change the way firefighters are prepared for promotion. Based on the research that was conducted, if the following recommendations were to be considered, it would likely lead to more prepared firefighters making the transition to the officer ranks:

1. To be eligible to take a promotional exam, a firefighter would need to have five years and six months of service time with the BFD. This would entail working with Bedford Civil Service Commission and Bedford Firefighters Local 1683 to make the necessary changes to the current promotional rules.

2. Require firefighters seeking promotion to have State of Ohio certifications in Fire Officer 1, Fire Inspector and Fire Instructor prior to being promoted. This will help provide a base of education prior to firefighters being promoted. This also will require working with Bedford Civil Service Commission and Bedford Firefighters Local 1683.

3. The formation of job descriptions for all ranks within the BFD. This will allow firefighters and officers to know exactly what all positions within the BFD are responsible for, thus training can be more narrowly focused for those seeking promotion. Job descriptions will also allow for easily identified skill sets that will be needed when seeking advancement.

4. The elimination of the “second” in charge program.” This would ensure a sworn officer would be on duty at all times.

5. Instituting a well-developed mentoring program that gives firefighters seeking promotion the opportunity to be challenged, coached and ultimately increase their chance for success.

6. The current officer corps should develop an internal training program for firefighters seeking promotion. This committee should contact fire departments that are currently executing successful programs. The program must be formulated to fit the BFD and should be continually reviewed to ensure its success.

7. The allocation of funds annually that specifically addresses career development for the current officer corps. This would ensure the current leadership is always progressing and being developed.

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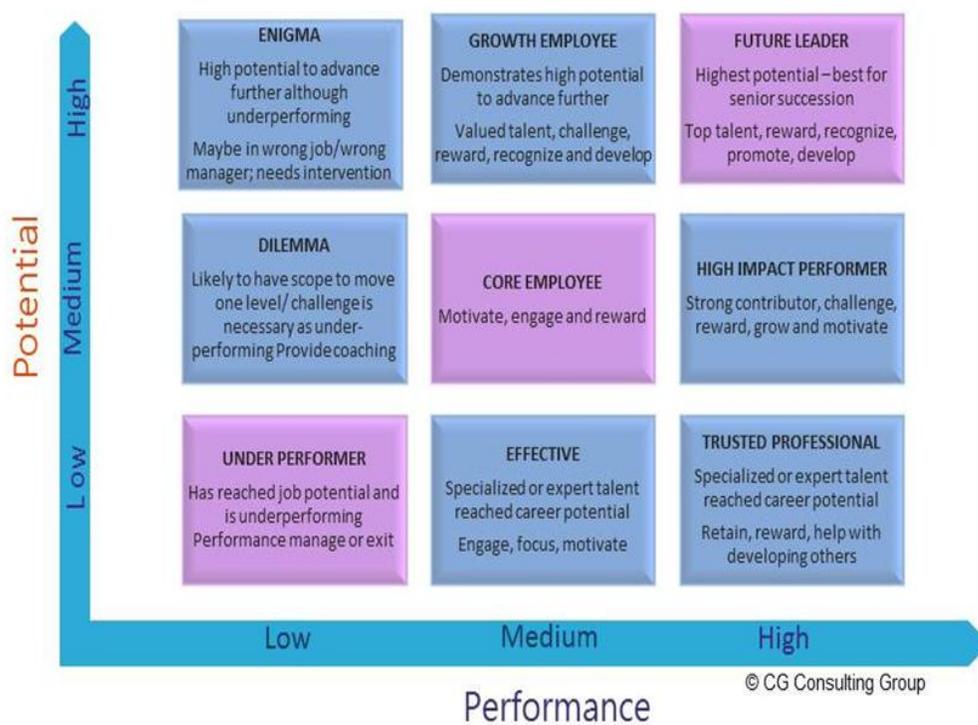
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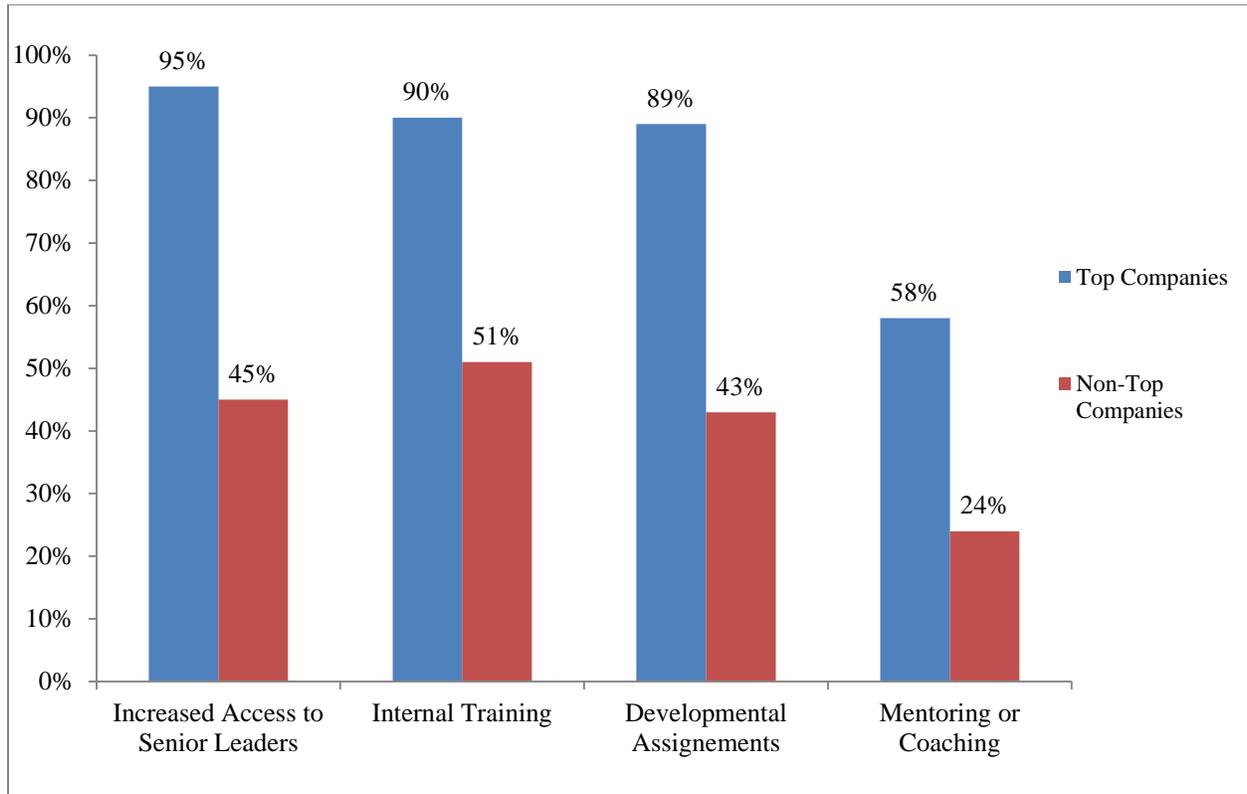
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APPENDIX 1-

9 BOX TALENT MANAGEMENT

MODEL



APPENDIX 2- TOP COMPANIES VS. NON-TOP COMPANIES

APPENDIX 3- LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SURVEY**1. Which of the following best describes your organization?**

- Volunteer
- Career
- Part-time
- Career with part-time (combination)

2. What certifications does your organization require for firefighters prior to promotion?

- Fire Officer 1
- Fire Instructor
- Fire Inspector
- None

3. Does your organization utilize a mentoring program for future officer candidates?

- Yes
- No

4. Which of the following do you feel is the most important information a mentor can give a future officer?

- Administrative duties
- Interaction with subordinates
- Interaction with public
- Tactical
- Past experience

5. Does your organization follow specific criteria in leadership advancement?

- Yes
- No

6. What criteria does your organization follow in developing future officers?

- IAFC Fire Officer Handbook
- NFPA 1021
- Organizational program
- None

7. Does your organization give those individuals identified as future officers opportunities to assume leadership roles?

- Yes
- No

8. What skill do you feel you lacked prior to becoming a leader within your organization?

- Leadership
- Incident Command
- Administrative
- Tactical
- Field experience

9. Does your organization specifically budget money on the development of your future officers?

- Yes
- No

10. Were you personally involved in a leadership development program prior to becoming a fire officer?

- Yes
- No

APPENDIX 4- SURVEY RESULTS

	Total # People	# of People	% Breakdown
1. Which of the following best describes your organization?			
Volunteer	34	0	0.00%
Career	34	28	82.35%
Part-time	34	2	5.88%
Career with part-time (combination)	34	4	11.76%
2. What certifications does your organization require for firefighters prior to promotion?			
Fire Officer 1	34	4	11.76%
Fire Instructor	34	0	0.00%
Fire Inspector	34	2	5.88%
None	34	28	82.35%
3. Does your organization utilize a mentoring program for future officer candidates?			
Yes	34	3	8.82%
No	34	31	91.17%
4. Which of the following do you feel is the most important information a mentor can give a future officer?			
Administrative duties	34	8	23.52%
Interaction with subordinates	34	18	52.94%
Interaction with public	34	0	0.00%
Tactical	34	2	5.88%
Past experience	34	6	17.64%

5. Does your organization follow specific criteria in leadership advancement?

Yes	34	13	38.23%
No	34	21	61.76%

6. What criteria does your organization follow in developing future officers?

IAFC Fire Officer Handbook	34	3	8.82%
NFPA 1021	34	6	17.64%
Organizational program	34	4	11.76%
None	34	21	61.76%

7. Does your organization give those individuals identified as future officers opportunities to assume leadership roles?

Yes	34	22	64.70%
No	34	12	35.29%

8. What skill do you feel you lacked prior to becoming a leader within your organization?

Leadership	34	11	32.35%
Incident Command	34	1	2.94%
Administrative	34	14	41.17%
Tactical	34	6	17.64%
Field experience	34	2	5.88%

9. Does your organization specifically budget money on the development of your future leaders?

Yes	34	6	17.64%
No	34	28	82.35%

10. Were you personally involved in a leadership development program prior to becoming a fire officer?

Yes	34	6	17.64%
No	34	28	82.35%