Leadership Development: A Focus on the Future

Rick S. Gregory

Abstract

Competent and effective leadership, a key element for success in any organization, is especially critical to modern law enforcement organizations. Normal attrition, combined with substantial changes in management philosophy and the implementation of new operational procedures over the last several years has resulted in the assignment of a large number of first-time managers and supervisors in the Florida Highway Patrol. This research provides an assessment of the need for leadership development and the identification of components of a leadership development program, from the perspective of mid and upper management of the Florida Highway Patrol. Surveys of troopers currently assigned to command positions and interviews with senior management were compared to recent research on leadership characteristics in the private sector (Kouzes & Pozner, 1996) as well as to an existing police leadership program.

Introduction

Overview

As the 21st century rapidly approaches, many segments in public service are scrambling to digest the tremendous changes which have occurred over the last ten years (Moulton and Fickel, 1993). These changes are not limited to just technology, but rather involve each aspect of public service. In the criminal justice arena, specifically law enforcement, these changes include innovative criminal behavior, a work force predominately made up of a new generation, increasing public pressure for crime control, and a public that demands a greater voice in law enforcement operational planning and decision making. As a result, much energy is being devoted to past and present problems rather than those to be faced in the very near future.

To accomplish the varied tasks associated with law enforcement and public service, today's law enforcement agencies must turn to innovative and creative personnel to lead the charge. This will require competent and effective leaders that are trained and prepared to confront, challenge and succeed in guiding agencies and its personnel up to and into the **21st** century. There are many obstacles that must be overcome to prepare these future leaders for tomorrow. Past leadership styles, thought processes, and practices must change to meet the needs of the work force, which will be led. Failure will surely be the result if old mindsets are not replaced with creativity, innovation, and genuine concern for employees. Perhaps the key element in organizational success is effective leadership. However, leadership effectiveness does not just happen - it must be developed by management and supervisory personnel (Vaughn & Nordeman, 1983). The success of the law enforcement mission will greatly depend on its the ability to effectively develop leaders who will chart this path through change.

Effective leadership, or the lack of it, can impact dramatically on organizations (Hansen, 1993). The term "**Leadership Development**" is one used commonly in the private sector as well as the business community. Employees are elevated to the management level and are usually placed in long term development programs. These programs are designed to help prepare managers for the difficult task of leading people; which ultimately means leading companies and/or corporations.

In law enforcement, supervisors and managers have tremendous responsibilities impacting individual officers, agencies, and citizens. Unfortunately, too little attention is given to developing these supervisors and managers into leaders of tomorrow. Unlike supervisors and managers in the private sector, those in law enforcement are placed in positions of authority with little, if any, formal training. Usually, the training is offered when officers are placed in the first line supervisor position. After that, no formal training is required or usually offered.

In modern law enforcement organizations, the development of subordinates at the work force level is one that continues to receive extraordinary attention. As compared to the other levels of the organization, basic training is by far the most essential because of the nature of the job. Basic recruit law enforcement certification training consists of over 520 hours, and basic first line supervisory training is 80 hours (The Florida Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission, 1997). Proper training that adequately prepares them for their role in the organization minimizes the enormous task facing today's law enforcement officers, supervisors, and managers. However, with the focus on entry level training only, the FHP, as do other agencies, fall short in providing continuous development to supervisors and managers. Industry and the military spend huge sums of money on leadership development programs, create centers for advanced work, and send their people to universities for appropriate degrees (Gardner, 1990).

In the management development arena, greater attention must be focused on communication and listening skills, training to involve and empower employees, skills in developing others, training people about diversity and its management, and individual and organizational change skills (Jamieson & O'Mara, 1991). In order for police agencies to survive the rapid changes facing them now and in the future, immediate attention must be given to the development of employees and managers.

The Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) has traditionally elevated its command personnel and then expected them to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to perform in their role as command staff. A report by the Carnegie Foundation estimates that corporations spend nearly $40 billion each year for employee education. While only about 30 percent of this total are spent specifically for leadership training (Kouzes & Posner, 1987). This practice, while sufficient for leaders in the past, does not fulfill the needs of today's leaders.

Leaders within police organizations must shift their emphasis from employee control to employee team building (Hansen, 1993). Therefore, leaders must be knowledgeable and skilled in not only operations, but also the complexities associated with human resource management and development. A vast change in the application of law enforcement has also resulted in a dire need for leadership development. As in the private sector, the FHP must begin to take a proactive, progressive approach in developing its leaders, thus enabling them to effectively deal with emerging trends in law enforcement and the work force. The FHP's organizational structure and procedures was developed based on the quasi-military principal. In a quasi-military organization, supervisors do not necessarily need human resource skills, because subordinates follow direction and procedures to avoid harsh punishment. Today, because of changes in employee rights, agency philosophies, and a new generation work force, supervisors and managers can not simply rely on the hard line approach that was effectively used in the past

Over the last several years, the FHP has experienced significant changes in management philosophy, operating procedures, and has experienced supervisor/management turnover due to retirements. While attrition is normal in the FHP and other law enforcement agencies, because of reorganization and the implementation of a shift commander program, the agency has elevated a substantially greater number of people to mid management level. The result is an agency comprised of mid and upper managers who are facing these changes while struggling to digest their new roles in the organization. To compound the enormous tasks they face, mid/upper managers must develop and/or enhance their leadership abilities with little if any formal training or development.

This research attempted to identify what the current state of leadership abilities is from the mid/upper management perspective. It was also felt that the same managers could provide valuable insight as to what components should be in a leadership development program, from their perspective as mid/upper management. Through surveys of mid and upper management personnel, senior management, and professional educators of formal leadership development, specific components needed in a leadership development program were identified. Once the survey results were compiled, a comparison to an existing police leadership development program was done to identify similarities. Finally, the question of what the projected benefits a formal leadership development program would provide to the FHP and other law enforcement agencies was examined.

Method
This research focused on the mid to upper management function within the Florida Highway Patrol. To gather information relevant to the research questions, surveys of those individuals currently representing mid and upper management were designed. Once the survey results were compiled, a comparison to an existing police leadership development program was done to identify similarities. Finally, the question of what the projected benefits a formal leadership development program would provide to the FHP and other law enforcement agencies was examined.

The surveys used for mid and upper management were designed to determine the training they have received to prepare them for their role as leaders, and to identify from their perspective what the key components of a leadership development program should be.

Elements of the survey were identified as recommended areas deficient in leadership and management. The identified elements provide a perspective from command levels of the organization. After examining the results for each group, a comparison was made of a similar law enforcement agency's leadership development program. The Michigan State Police Leadership Development Program (1996) was obtained, and used as a comparison of content, delivery methods, and relativity.

The surveys were limited to two geographical areas of the state. For this project, Troop F, representing southwest Florida, and Troop K, representing the Florida Turnpike were used. Members within these troops offered variety in time in grade as well as overall experience in law enforcement and as managers. Participating members were afforded the opportunity to complete the surveys anonymously.

In addition to surveys, a literature review of law enforcement leadership development, and private sector leadership development was conducted. Information about specific leadership development program contents was limited; therefore, this study is limited in specific component comparison.

Results

Surveys

The survey used for mid and upper management was developed and sent to 28 members of the Florida Highway Patrol (Appendix 1). Of the 28 surveys, 25 (89%) were completed and returned. Of those surveyed, the average length of service at mid or upper management level was 6.5 years. This is a bimodal distribution, meaning there are a large number of members that have been in the mid and upper management level for a short period of time (2 years or less), and a large number that have been in mid or upper management for an extensive amount of time (more than 10 years). Of those members surveyed, 16% had no formal education beyond high school. 16% had less than 30 college credit hours, and 68% had at least an AA/AS degree or higher. None of those who were surveyed had more than a four-year degree.

The focus of these surveys was the state of leadership capabilities and if a need existed for leadership development within the agency. It was interesting to find that of those surveyed, 64% felt they were not prepared for their assignment to management levels. All of those surveyed (100%) felt that there was a need for some type of leadership development program within the agency. When asked when leadership development should begin, 20% thought it should begin at the recruit

level, 40% felt it should begin at the trooper level, 32% at the first line supervisor level, and 8% at the mid-management level.

Using a list of specific, desirable leadership characteristics identified through a recent study outlined in Kouzes and Pozner's "The Leadership Challenge" (Table 1), Question 12 asked those surveyed to rank the list of characteristics from that study in order of importance to them. The following are the top five in order of importance, and the percentile of surveyed responses to the particular characteristic:

- Honest (100%)
- Competent (96%)
- Fair-minded (72%) tied
- Intelligent (72%) tied
- Supportive (64%)
- Self-controlled (60%)

Participants were asked in question 7 what they felt were key components of a formal leadership development program. The responses varied, but the following list represents those components listed by the participants:

- Communication Skills
- Leadership Skills
- Motivation
- Time Management
- Personnel Productivity
- Planning

Question 8 asked what the members felt the emerging issues facing them, as commanders would be in the future. There were a variety of responses; however, the following five were given most by participants:

- Inadequate Personnel and Equipment
- Personnel Issues
- Performance Based Budgeting
- Productivity of Staff
- Ability to Correctly Supervise
- Morale
- Diversions From The Agency's Mission

Question 9 asked what issues the participants felt would impact the agency in the future:

- Performance Based Budgeting
- Outdated Equipment and Supplies
- Training
- Budget
- Increasing Highway Violence
- Reduce liability exposure, but impact services delivery

Using the same list provided in Question 12, Question 13 asked participants to choose the five (5) most important characteristics in rank order, 1 through 5. The following list represents the top five (5):

1. Honest
2. Competent
3. Dependable & fair-minded (tied)
4. Caring & Competent (tied)
5. Loyal & Mature (tied)

Discussion

The Florida Highway Patrol is a quasi-military organization built on the United States Military's line and staff hierarchy model. This means - traditional military rank, procedures, discipline, and structures were adopted from past and existing military organizational composition. Like most police agencies in this country, the FHP is structured in the form of a pyramid. Works force of five to seven troopers form the bottom level of the pyramid. The next level of the pyramid is the first line supervisor (rank of sergeant) followed by the lieutenants, then Captains, etc.

When members are elevated to the first line supervisor level, they receive eighty (80) hours of basic first line supervisory training. This training consists of such topics as:

- Communications and Semantics
- Leadership
- Role of The Supervisor
- Critical Incident Management
- Planning
- Disciplinary Issues
- Legal Issues of Supervision
- Human Behavior and Motivation
- Ethics and Integrity

This training program, as mandated by the Florida Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission (1996), provides the new supervisor with an overview of the above listed topics. After this initial training, members of the FHP are not routinely sent to additional supervisor, management, or leadership training and/or development. Realistically, members could be elevated to and through mid and upper management levels and never receive additional training. Clearly, based on literature reviews and surveys used in this research project, a need for training and/or development for mid and upper management exists.

There are programs presently in place that would help address the development deficiencies identified by the surveys. Unfortunately, these programs have limits to their class sizes. Consequently, the needs of the FHP and their volume of mid and upper managers will require a different approach to solving the problem.

Managers who were surveyed felt that a need existed for some type of leadership development program. As identified by the mangers surveyed communication skills, leadership skills, motivation techniques, time management, personnel productivity, and planning were components identified as necessary in a leadership development program. This list is unique in that it mirrors all but one (personnel productivity) of the topics covered in the basic line supervision course.

While conducting a literature review on the subject of leadership development, the various authors all addressed the issue of personnel, morale, productivity, well being, and the state of personnel abilities. According the survey results for questions 8 and 9, which addresses the futures issues, the overwhelming concern of those surveyed was personnel. Their responses varied from productivity, training, morale, inadequate or limited personnel, and personnel issues in general. These important personnel demands facing today's mid and upper managers are obviously compounded by things such as limited budgets, limited resources, performance based budgeting, increased liability, outdated equipment, increased training requirements, and the increase in the customer (citizen's) demands.

The private sector, private industry, and corporate America have identified these issues as relevant and in need of immediate attention. Leaders of today must focus on the needs of its work force simultaneously with the needs of its leaders, (Moulton & Fickel, 1993). Therefore, the needs of our leaders today and future leaders must focus on the future. This philosophy is found, in part, in the Florida Criminal Justice Executive Institute's Senior Leadership Program (1996). Additionally, there are other leadership development programs that offer much the same philosophy in it's training, however, as mentioned earlier, the limitations in class size prohibit sending more than one to four members at a time.

Conclusion

The intent of this research project was, through literature review, interviews, and surveys, to identify what leadership development is, what components make up

a current leadership development program, and what state the Florida Highway Patrol's leadership abilities is in.

It was proven, based on survey results that a need exists for some type of leadership development within the FHP's mid and upper management. Through surveys, specific components were identified as essential for leadership development, based on job functions, from the survey participant's perspective. The components, in most cases, mirrored the components of first line supervisory training, which lends credibility to the responses given in the surveys. Additionally, using the data from the surveys, a viable, credible development program could be designed that would serve to enhance mid and upper manager's abilities to effectively perform their duties today, and to prepare these same managers for their roles in the future.

The support for this type of formal program is found in the literature reviewed. Specifically, modern corporations and businesses in the private sector have, and continue to address the needs of their managers through continuing leadership development. They're proactive approach coupled with the recognition to change as the society which is served provide an incentive for the public service agencies, and the Florida Highway Patrol. To increase the validity of this research project and it's findings, the need for, and the development of a program based on the job descriptions of mid and upper management mirrored the findings of the surveys, as well as an existing leadership development program used for comparison (Michigan State Police Leadership Development Program, 1996).

Comparison

The leadership development program, developed by Barfield and Associates, suggests a four-module concept. Each module consists of twenty (20) hours, and is essentially designed and builds upon one another. The modules are:

1. Foundations of Leadership

2. Leading teams that Work

3. Leadership, Authority and Diversity

4. Presentations, Analysis, & Wrap-Up

This program utilizes lecture, role-playing, small group discussion, and case study methods of instruction. The overall theme of this program is consistent with the FHP's philosophy of community policing efforts and enhanced community relationships while focusing on its personnel and the future.

The Michigan State Police Leadership Development is a formal study program designed to provide the student with a variety of ways of examining a particular leadership situation. After studying the various leadership definitions, four primary leadership dimensions were identified and are used as the foundation for the program. These dimensions are:

1. Learning
2. Caring
3. Vision
4. Courage

This program uses the student participation style of delivery. Students are provided with historical as well as current leadership information as the basis for this program. Additionally, case studies and situational methods of instruction are combined with the student participation to enhance the program.

Recommendation

Throughout this research, the focus has been to identify the deficiencies in the Florida Highway Patrol's mid and upper management with relation to leadership abilities, development, and the future state of the same. The following conclusions and recommendations are based on that focus.

- The Florida Highway Patrol's mid and upper management feels a need exists for some form of leadership development, based on the survey used for this research project.
- This research identified what the essential components of a leadership development program should be, based on literature review, and surveys.
- Using either existing leadership development programs or producing a tailored program, based on the survey results and research, a program should be developed, and implemented for the mid and upper management of the Florida Highway Patrol.

Once a program is implemented, an evaluation should be conducted to insure the program is meeting the needs of the members, and the needs of the agency. To increase the effectiveness of any future programs, research should continue, and focus on not only what law enforcement or the criminal justice system is doing about leadership development, but focus on the corporate business aspect of society. The future success of law enforcement and the Florida Highway Patrol depends on the work force and those to be led.

Major Rick Gregory has a law enforcement career of over 15 years which includes working as a police officer before joining the Florida Highway Patrol in 1984. Currently the commander of Troop D, covering Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Lake, Volusia, Flagler, and Brevard counties.
Rick has had assignments in Nassau, Volusia, Putnam, and Collier counties as well as being the Assistant Chief of Training at the Florida Highway Patrol Training Academy in Tallahassee. Rick is working to complete his bachelors degree. Married for 14 years, his lives in Central Florida with his wife, Sheri, and their three children.

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Appendix A

Table 1. Characteristics of Admired Leaders.

Characteristics	1995 Respondents Percentage of People Selecting	1987 Respondents Percentage of People
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
Straight Forward	33	34
Dependable	32	32
Courageous	29	27
Cooperative	28	25
Imaginative	28	34
Caring	23	26
Determined	17	20
Mature	13	23
Ambitious	13	21
Loyal	11	11
Self-Controlled	5	13
Independent	5	10

Note: These percentages represent respondents from four continents: America, Asia, Europe, Australia. The majority, however, are from the United States.