Leadership Succession Training: The Public Administrator's Role and Responsibility

Keith E. Gaston

Abstract

Leadership training is of primary importance to any administrator. All responsible leaders will cultivate their subordinates and themselves to take on additional roles and responsibilities in leadership of the organization. Leadership training is not a single event; it must be on-going and available to all members of an organization in order for that organization to be successful in achieving their mission. The development of leaders to effectively take over from current leadership requires planning and the planning must focus on the organization's future vision to facilitate leadership development. This research provides a baseline assessment of current leadership talent characteristics, provides insight for future leadership training, and presents a recommended course of action to accomplish leadership succession training goals.

Introduction

Great organizations generally have great leadership. However, leadership is not static and personnel changes are an inevitable part of any organization. It is the responsibility of all leaders in the organization to cultivate their subordinates and themselves for additional roles and responsibilities so they can assume leadership positions as they develop. The development of leaders to effectively take over from current leadership requires succession planning. This planning must include focus on the organization's future vision to facilitate leadership development with the future goals and objectives of the organization in mind.

President Theodore Roosevelt offered some good leadership advice when he said "The best executive is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done, and self-restraint to keep from meddling with them while they do it." This advice identifies two elements of leadership that are still true today. First, the selection of personnel to fill leadership roles is essential to any organization and must not be taken lightly. Once personnel are selected for leadership positions, the second part of the equation becomes training and development of personnel for secession into leadership roles so an organization can follow Roosevelt's advice to "…keep from meddling with them while they do it."

With the exception of elected officials, public safety agencies typically do not hire personnel from outside of their organization for positions of leadership. This policy leads to the situation of growing and promoting leaders from a limited pool of resources. This limited pool only intensifies the dynamics to train and develop personnel at every opportunity.

Legendary football coach Vince Lombardi once said "Leaders aren't born they

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are made." This leads us to the focus of this paper and that is the training of personnel to ascend into positions of successful leadership within their organization. This paper will also examine the options for training, the characteristics and of a good leader, and the opportunities for leadership experience through mentoring. The paper will look at the best practices being used in public safety, business, and from around the world.

Literature Review

Stick your finger in a glass of water then pull your finger out. How long does it take to fill the hole? The split-second that it takes to refill the hole in the water is how long it takes to be forgotten when you leave your job or retire. But, how long will it take to replace the knowledge, skills and experiences that you take with you when you leave?

The words leadership, management, and executive training are often used interchangeably. However, leadership is more encompassing and would include the first-line supervisor and possibly those who have a strong influence in the direction of any organization but do not necessarily supervise people. These non-supervisory leaders may include training personnel, human resource department, and in the case of law enforcement, field training officers. Training and development of leaders involves the developing of the tactical and operational skills but it also includes the development of soft skills such as effective communications and team building skills. These leadership skills can be acquired by a combination of formal education, job specific training courses, and through formal and informal mentoring relationships.

Pete Hammett (2008) in his article entitled *The Paradox of Gifted Leadership: Developing the Generation of Leaders* notes "Senior leaders do not get close or too personal with their co-workers and this isolation can inhibit their ability to identify first hand individuals who might be in the up-and-coming next generation of leaders." (p. 6) Many senior executives lack the need for interpersonal contact with managers and supervisors. "Thus senior executives work better in small groups with regular contacts, or perhaps even alone, and while their work performance depends on input from others, they do not overly rely on others" (p. 5). In the economic atmosphere of doing more with less, some senior leadership is more focused on getting the job done and sometimes it is easier to do the job yourself than to take the time to train someone else to perform the task. However, this hurry-up and get it done attitude "may come across as too pragmatic and insensitive to the needs and aspirations of others. The result may be a perception that they are more concerned with advancing their own careers than helping others move up the ladder" (p. 6). Most North American agencies want to rely on internal candidates to fill eighty percent or more of their general manager and above vacancies (Byham, 2000). The leadership succession challenge becomes the need to develop leaders internally and senior leadership understanding their role as mentor and educator. One might ask if there is a subconscious aversion to training someone to take their place on the company website? There are several acknowledged methods to develop leaders within an organization, such as mentoring both formal and informal, specialized leadership courses, internships, and experience in a variety of positions.

Mentoring

Formal mentoring is a developmental relationship in which a more experienced person helps a less experienced person, also known as a mentee, to develop, usually in a specific capacity. Mentoring is not a new concept; in fact the concept goes back to the earliest times in Western civilization where Socrates mentored Plato, who in turn mentored Aristotle, followed by Aristotle mentoring Alexander the Great. The examples of successful mentoring are numerous in both education and grooming up-and-coming employees deemed to have the potential for leadership roles. Adele Lynn (1998) in her article *Mentoring Programs: Is there a Difference in Formal vs. Informal?* states "formal mentoring implies an expectation. If that expectation isn't clear for both the mentor and the mentee, it's very easy at the end of the mentoring cycle to feel that the process was a waste of time." Another key element that Lynn exposes is "Formal mentoring opens the doors to people who may not normally be mentored through informal channels." However "unlike informal mentoring, there isn't necessarily a trust bond that is present between mentor and mentee in a formal mentoring relationship. This takes time and skill to develop." Marci Alboher gave some good advice to people who are considering the development of an informal mentoring relationship in her *New York Times* article *Advice on Mentor, From One of Mine* cautions a would be mentee to "only approach people you genuinely admire. If you're not honest and there's a game attached, it will be phony, awkward, uncomfortable and lead to no good." In her January 30, 2008 *New York Times* article Alboher suggests it is time for informal mentoring to share the virtual information world with Facebook and MySpace. iMarti found, at http://www.imantri.com, is a social network designed to match mentors with mentee's. One of the features that Alboher liked was the online assessment tools. "In addition to aiding in mentoring match-up, the site offers some ways to assess your competencies in various areas." She also points out:

> It's hard to say you don't have time to be a mentor or find one when you don't have to go to an orientation meeting or show up anywhere. I imagine the strongest connections will involve some face-to-face meeting. But I do think it's possible to build a strong relationship through regular phone calls or other methods of communication (Alboher, 2008).

An informal mentor provides coaching, listening, advice, and other help in an unstructured or casual manner. The informal mentor may be a trusted and respected friend who serves as a mentor without formal acknowledgement of their role as mentor.

Mentoring can be good for both the mentor and the mentee. While the mentee benefits from the knowledge of the mentor, the mentor benefits from relationship with the mentee and generally the increase in commitment to the organization along with a substantial increase in self-esteem.

Specialized Leadership Training

Specialized leadership development courses vary from a single day workshop to series of executive development classes at a University setting taught by distinguished professors leading to an executive leadership certification. In the May 18, 2007, edition

of the *Jacksonville Business Journal,* Staff Writer Kristin Dorsch describes a new leadership program being established at the University of North Florida "Executive Education for Leaders Institute, a joint venture between the university's Coggin College of Business and its division of continuing education, is aimed at providing training for three types of leaders at business, government agencies and nonprofit organizations" (Dorsch, 2007). Programs are designed for three leadership levels; executive management, leaders with high-potential, and those recently promoted to management. "UNF's programs run from one to 10 days and range in cost from $225 to $9,950."

The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania offers similar executive classes with emphasis on impact. The Wharton web site states "Our open-enrollment executive education programs are designed to leave a lasting impact on executives and their organizations. That is why we offer a unique, multi-month process that helps reinforce the classroom learning — and achieve maximum impact back at the office." (Wharton, 2008). However, classes at The Wharton School and similar classes at Harvard Business School range from $16,000 to $30,000 for a week long course.

The New York City Fire Department (FDNY) leadership void was not created by a lack of planning or an inordinate volume of early retirements; it was a result of the loss of life from the terrorist's attacks on September 11, 2001. FDNY lost not only firefighters but also a significant number of senior leaders. To fill the void created by the loss of life and leadership FDNY created the FDNY Officers Management Institute (FOMI) to provide intensive management-training programs in collaboration with Columbia University. "FDNY officers generally acquire management skills through experiential learning, not complemented by formal, classroom-based management and leadership training." (Eimicke, Shacknai, Cohen ,2007). FDNY and Columbia University's Institute for Not-for-Profit Management and the School of International and Public Affairs' Picker Center for Executive Education developed the FOMI – "a program designed to immerse participants in a rigorous curriculum of public administration and business management concepts – including strategic planning, resource allocation, conflict management, professional communications, diversity, and organizational leadership – while illustrating how such concepts could be implemented within a fire service context (Eimicke et al. 2007). FDNY approached the General Electric Company (GE) as a possible donor of classroom space at their John F. Welch Leadership Center in Crotonville, New York. The course was designed as an in-residence program for sixteen officers for six weeks over a six month period.

Training was conducted by a multifaceted faculty, students:

...attended classes one week a month, from Sunday noon through Wednesday evening, over the course of six months. A typical week included several three-hour classroom modules taught almost entirely by Columbia faculty and covering topics related to strategic planning, leadership, finance, communications and human resource management. FDNY and GE personnel added to the classroom lesson with informal lectures on administrative processes and approaches within their respective organizations. During the program, participants also engaged in several one-on-one management coaching sessions with an assigned

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Columbia faculty advisor, to help them understand and improve their personal management style. (Eimicke et al. 2007).

The success achieved through the public private partnership of FDNY, Columbia University, and GE for a comprehensive leadership training course and the leadership foresight provided by each of the institutions is in its self a lesson in leadership.

Several other institutions throughout the country provide law enforcement agencies with leadership training specifically designed for development of personnel into leadership positions, such as FBI Academy, Southern Police Institute at University of Louisville, and Florida Criminal Justice Executive Institute.

Internship, Experience, and Other Opportunities

The discussion so far has been on traditional students attending courses in a classroom setting with a professor or instructor that address the class. The Internet has opened the opportunity for another form of education known as distance learning (DE). There are two types of online courses, those that are taught exclusively online with the exception of the testing component and a blended course that is taught in the traditional classroom but uses online or distant learning components to supplement or expedite the course. "But perhaps the greatest and most often cited advantage of DE is that it is convenient as well as flexible and enables institutions to reach those who are limited by time, space, or physical ability" (Geracimos, 2004).

There appears to be no significant differences in learning outcomes for DE learners versus traditional students. "No matter how it is produced, how it is delivered, whether or not it is interactive, low-tech or high-tech, students learn equally well as their on-campus, face-to-face counterparts" (Geracimos, 2004).

Kevin Groves (2005) in his article *Integrating Leadership Development and Succession Planning Best Practices* states "…leadership development can no longer simply rely on planning the replacement of existing leaders and that organizations must focus on developing the leadership function rather than individual leaders." (p.240). General Electric (GE) has developed a comprehensive leadership development program. "…a comprehensive development program in which executives and managers at all levels are largely responsible for teaching the curriculum and delivering a range of leadership development activities." (p.240). Integrating leadership development and succession planning produces a positive outcome for the entire organization. "…managers at all levels are engaged in delivering leadership development activities such as teaching in-house courses and workshop, facilitating action learning projects, and creating assignments that fall outside of the employee's functional background." (p.244) This wide variety of experiences and opportunities "provide protégés with both psychosocial benefits (e.g. acceptance, encouragement, and coaching) and career facilitation benefits (e.g. sponsorship, exposure, and challenging assignments. (p.244).

Groves also introduced the concept of "leadership academies" created to "…simultaneously develop high potential managers and expose them to multiple organizational stakeholders, a leadership academy is comprised of action learning projects and executive-taught workshop that are intended for early to mid-career

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mangers who would benefit from in-depth exposure to managerial expectations and the inner workings of their organizations." (p.251) The final concept discussed by Groves is the idea of leading through teaching. "Managers are instrumental in developing the leadership pipeline, the organizations in this study require senior executives to teach classes and facilitate workshop on a series of leadership development topics." (p.252).

Problem Statement

As supervisors, managers, and senior leaders leave public service fewer employees are preparing for and accepting positions of additional responsibility.

Hypothesis

Younger generations are not as driven to positions of responsibility for various reasons. Some are generational or cultural issues, while other reasons can be traced to a lessened emphasis by executive and senior leadership on training and development of personnel for additional responsibility.

Method

The purpose of this research is to examine the current pool of supervisors within the Florida Highway Patrol and evaluate their current level of education, experience, and training expectations as it relates to the current needs for leadership development within the Florida Highway Patrol.

On Tuesday, January 13, 2009, an email was sent to four hundred and one law enforcement supervisors from the rank of Sergeant through Colonel within the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP) by the Director, Colonel John Czernis. Colonel Czernis asked each person to complete the on-line survey by Saturday, January 31, 2009. A copy of the survey instrument is included at the end of this report as an Appendix.

Results and Discussion

Two hundred fifty-two (252) supervisors responded to the survey for a sixty-three (63) percent response rate. Sixty-seven percent of the respondents have achieved a 2-year college degree or greater as illustrated below.

Figure 1
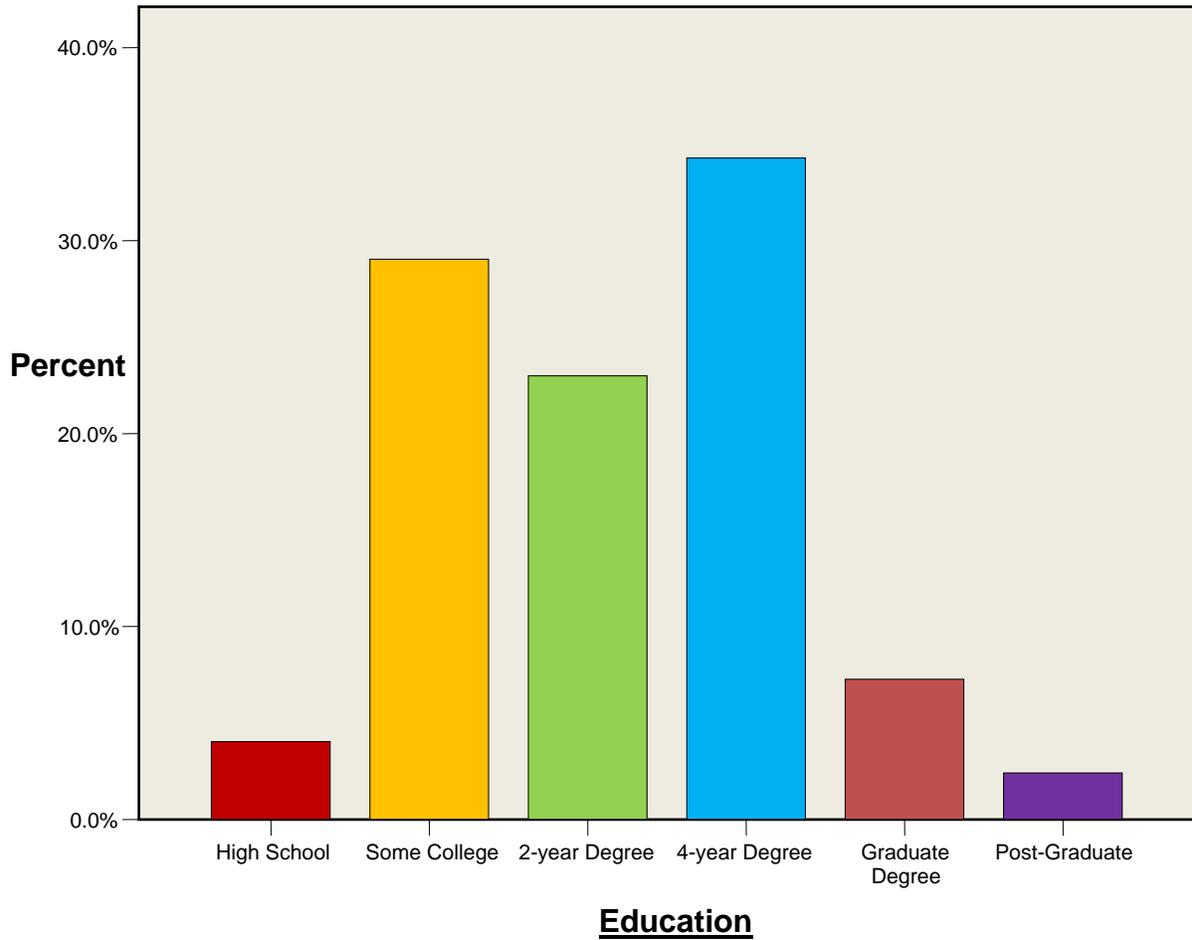
Twenty-six (26) percent of the supervisors have 25+ years of service and eligible for retirement with another thirty-nine (39) percent with 20-25 years of service. This effectively means sixty-five (65) percent of the current supervisory workforce within the Florida Highway Patrol is eligible or could be eligible for retirement within the next five (5) years.

Figure 2
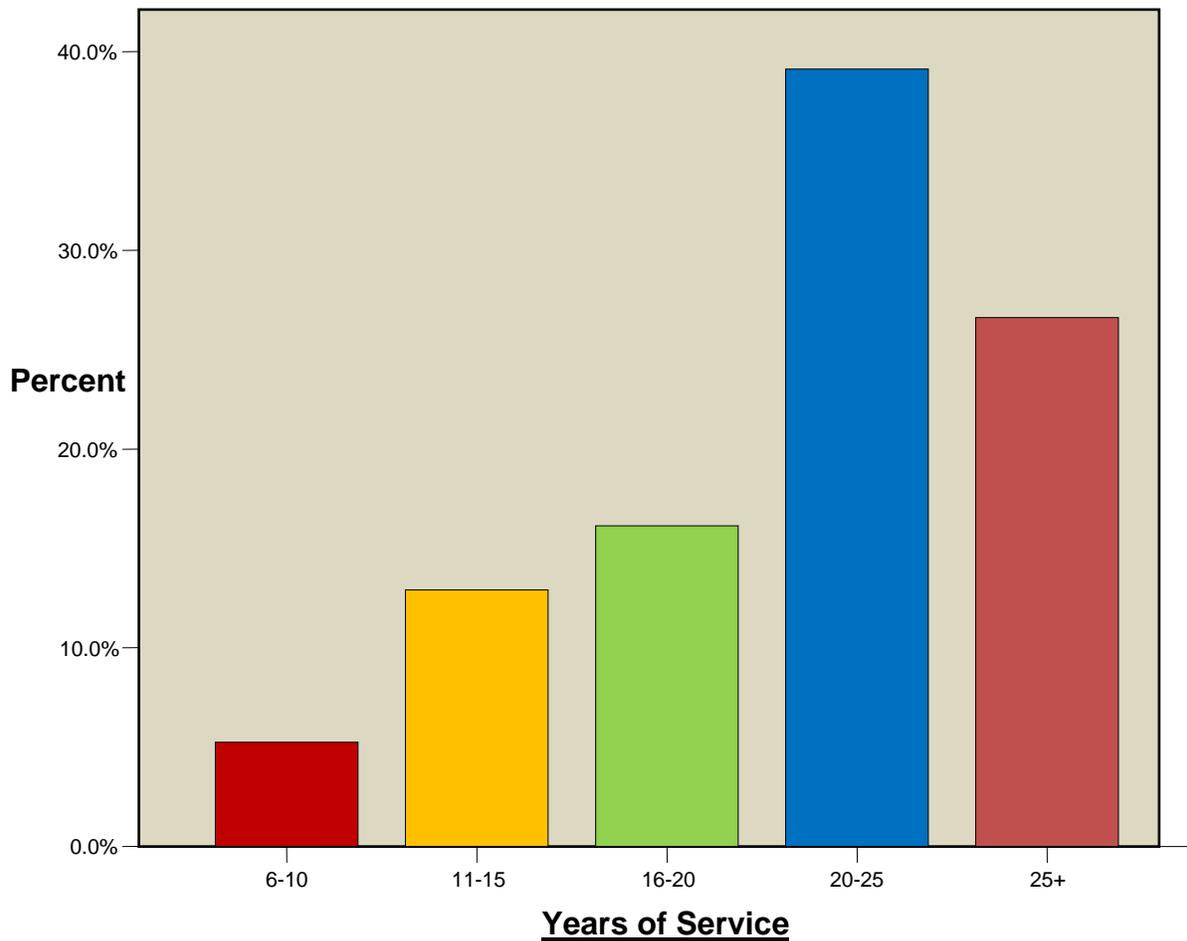
Clearly, there is a considerable need for the development of personnel to assume leadership positions before veteran supervisors retire. Executive leadership has recognized the need for leadership development and is now confronted with the issue of how to deliver leadership training efficiently and effectively to a statewide organization without incurring significant additional unbudgeted training expenses.

Gender and Generation Issues

The percentage of female supervisors in comparison to the general population of the Florida Highway Patrol is very proportional. The males represent 87.9 percent of the total population and supervisors while females represent the remaining 12.1 percent of the population and supervisory positions. While most industries today have representative from four generations, Silent Generation (1925-1945), Baby Boomers (1946-1964), Generation X (1965-1980), and Generation Y (1981-2001), only two generations are represented in the supervisory ranks of the Florida Highway Patrol. The two adjoining generations with many common traits will make training easier in connection with generational training issues.

Figure 3
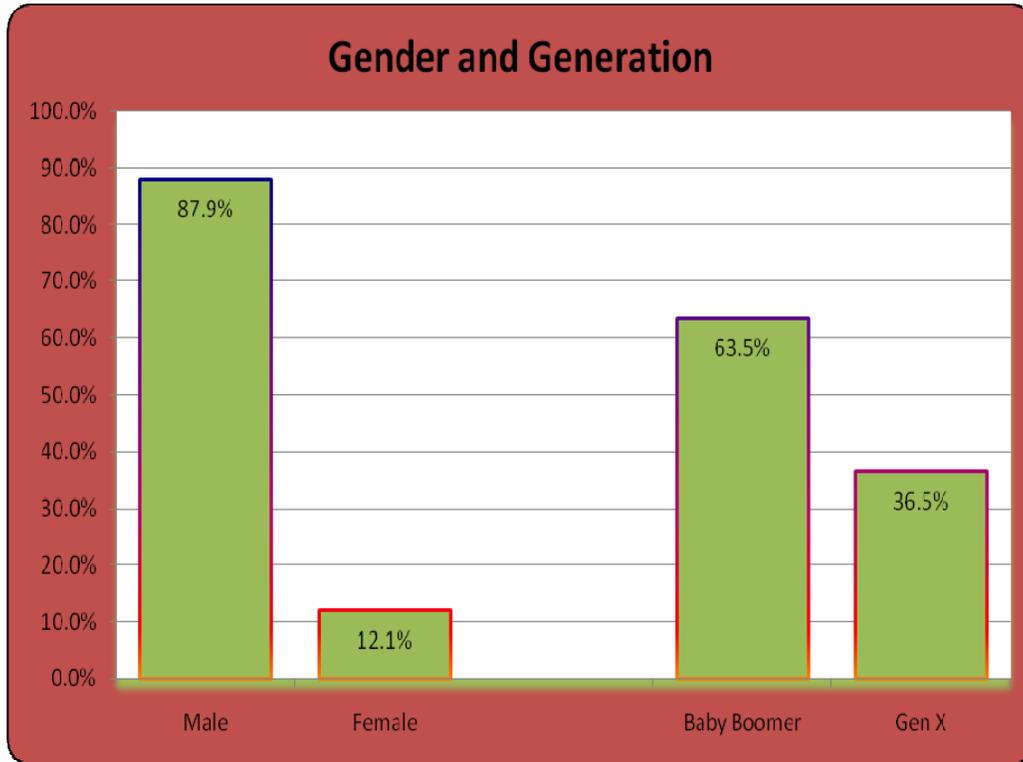
Questions

      The leadership survey asked a series of questions related to leadership talent characteristics in three different phases; supervisors and leaders in general, their immediate supervisor, and their perception of leaders within the Florida Highway Patrol. Using a Likert scale, each respondent was asked to rank the importance of each of the following characteristics; communication skills, consistency and fairness, courage to confront issues, decisiveness, ethical and moral standards, innovative, integrity and trust, involved and participative, knowledgeable and intelligent, servanthood, respect, sincerity and genuineness, supportive, teach and learning, and visionary or strategic thinking.

      The following chart represents the responses from the first question that asked "In thinking about supervisors and leaders in general, which of the following talent characteristics are important."

      Clearly, Innovation was rated the least required talent characteristic for Supervisors and Leaders in General, with Integrity and Trust rated as the most required talent characteristic. While Integrity and Trust is the most desirable characteristic, it should also be noted the Ethical and Moral Standard along with Consistency and Fairness with very high rankings provide some insight into the overarching theme of proper treatment of personnel being a very high priority for all supervisors and leaders.

Figure 4
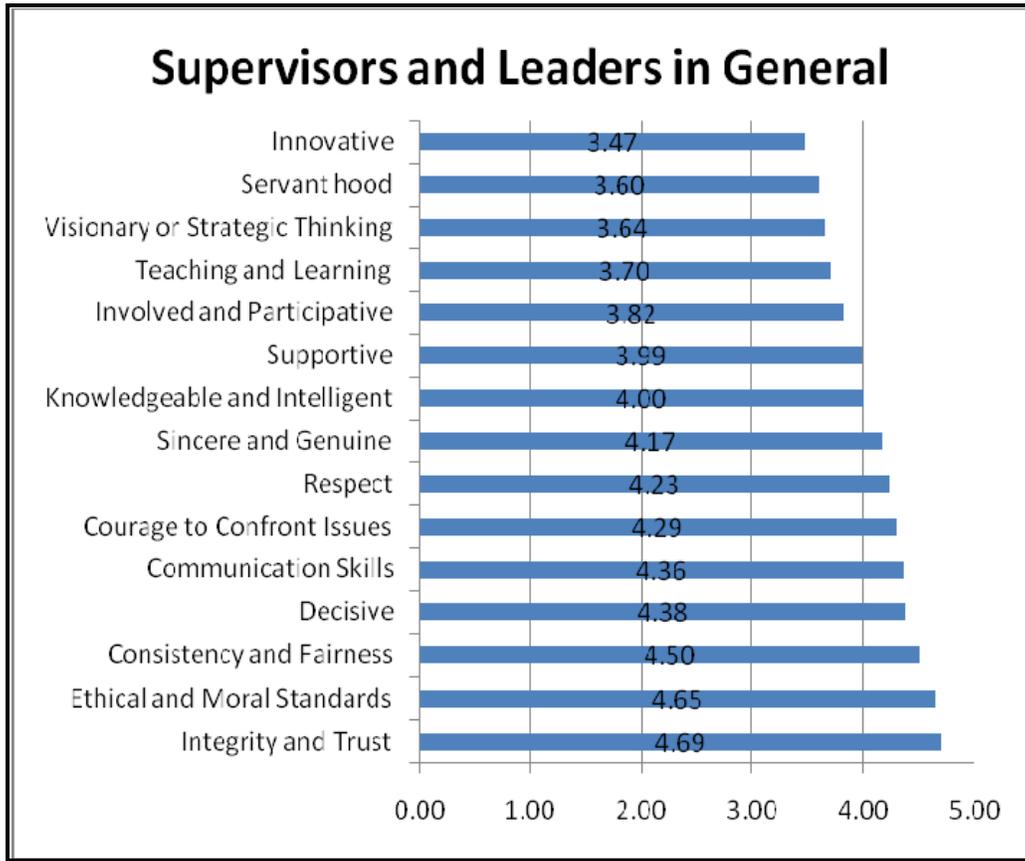
The following chart represents the responses from the second question that asked "In thinking about your immediate supervisor, how would you rate their talent characteristics." The talent characteristic least required for the immediate supervisor was Visionary or Strategic Thinking. While the most important characteristic believed to be required is Ethical and Moral Standards.

Figure 5

Immediate Supervisor

Attribute	Rating
Ethical and Moral Standards	4.00
Knowledgeable and Intelligent	3.88
Integrity and Trust	3.85
Consistency and Fairness	3.66
Sincere and Genuine	3.64
Decisive	3.63
Respect	3.62
Courage to Confront Issues	3.61
Supportive	3.60
Communication Skills	3.47
Involved and Participative	3.45
Innovative	3.34
Teaching and Learning	3.23
Servant hood	3.23
Visionary or Strategic Thinking	3.21

The following chart represents the responses from the third question that asked "In thinking about other leaders within the Florida Highway Patrol, how would you rate the current pool of talents?" The responses revealed FHP leaders were rated as having a large talent pool with relationship to Knowledge and Intelligence. However, they rated FHP leaders as having small talent pool with respect to servant hood.

Figure 6
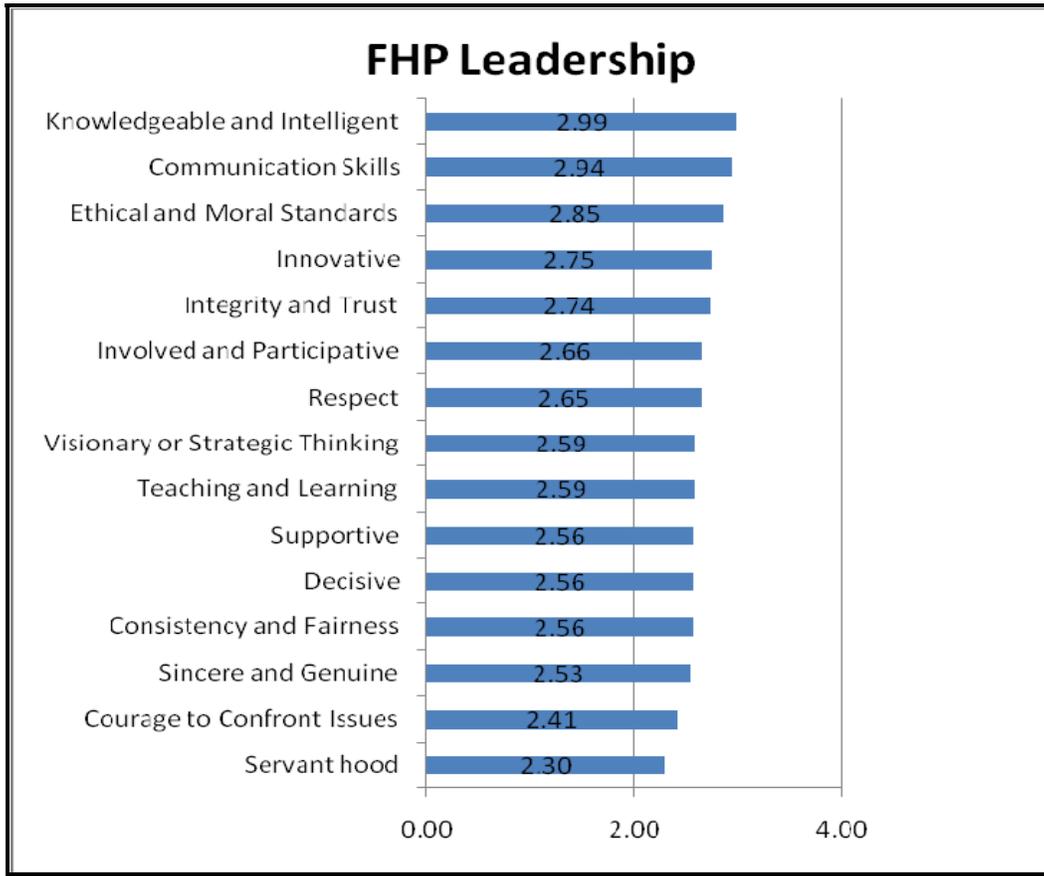
The following chart represents the responses from the fourth series of questions that asked " In thinking about leadership training and develoopment, how likely would you be to participate in the following types of training?" The survey reveled use of Video Conference was the least desirable option followed by Books and Reading. The most desirable training option was Classroom Training within the agency followed by training at Specialized Schools.

Figure 7

Training Participation Options

Option	Score
Video Conference	2.65
Books and Reading	2.90
Formal Mentoring	2.91
Internship	2.96
DVD Scerario	2.98
Informal Mentoring	3.00
Interactive Web Based	3.19
Classroom at FHP Academy	3.22
Small Groups Led by FHP Personnel	3.47
Experience at Various Positions	3.61
Small Groups Led by Subject Matter Experts	3.67
Classroom in University Setting	3.69
Specialized Leadership Courses (IPTM)	3.79
Specialized Schools FBI, SPI, or FDLE	3.90
Classroom within agency	3.92

Next Steps

Based on the information received from the survey we now know the general feelings of what is important to supervisors of the Florida Highway Patrol and their current beliefs on the inventory of talent characteristics. The survey also exposed the perferred participation method to receive leadership training. The next question that must be answered is the type of training needed, who needs the training, what is the best overall method of delivery, and who should deliver the training.

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Training Recommendations

As of January 1, 2009, the Florida Highway Patrol had 401 sworn supervisors which breaks down to 49 Captains, 124 Lieutenants and 209 Sergeants as illustrated on the chart below.

Figure 8
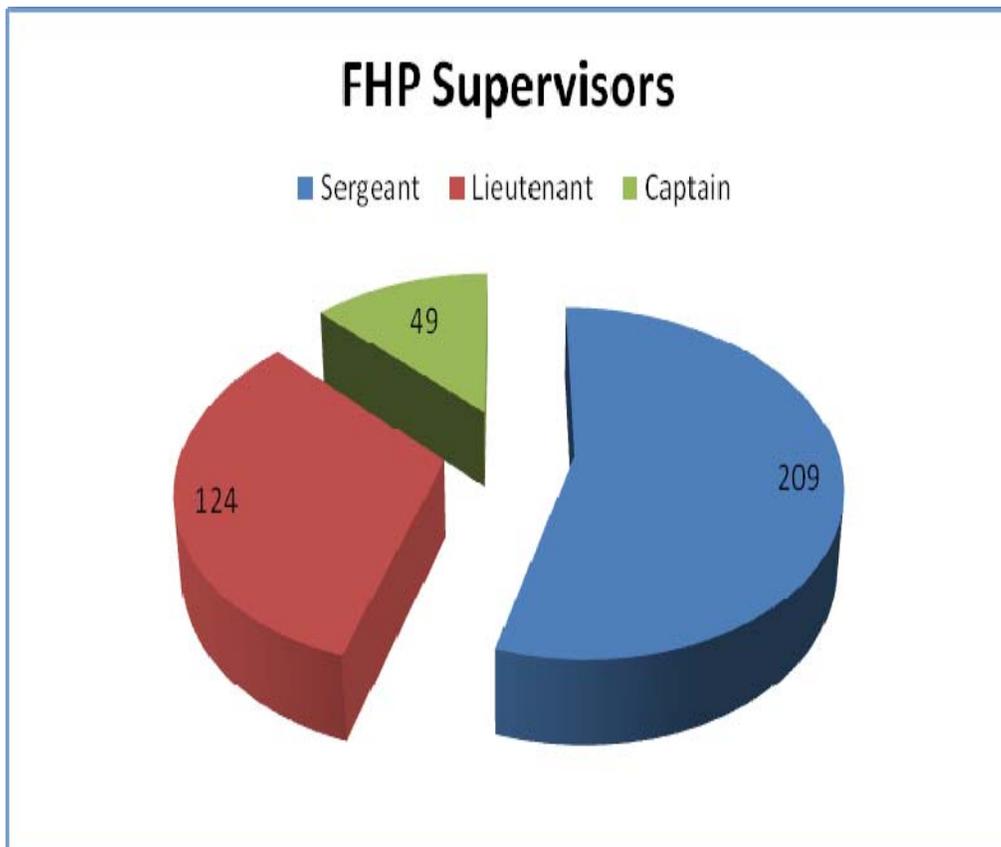
The initial training must focus on the 209 Sergeants and any Lieutenant who has received little or no training in the area of basic supervision. The basic supervision training or simply "Supervision" would include the basic elements of good supervision and management such as the role of the supervisor, planning, integrity and ethics, civil liability, human behavior and motivation, critical incident management, media relations, and time management, to mention a few key supervision areas. The next phase of training would be the "Leadership" training that would build on the knowledge and skills learned during the "Supervision" training. The Leadership training would review and reinforce the core areas discussed during Supervision training, introduce new leadership concepts and provide students the opportunity to discuss their positive and

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negative supervisory experiences since the previous training session. The third phase would be the "Senior Leadership" phase that would include Sergeants, Lieutenants and Captains. The Senior Leadership training would again encompass a brief review of all supervision and leadership skills previously covered for reinforcement of knowledge. The Senior Leadership training will introduce new information and cover current trends in the public safety workplace. The Senior Leadership training would introduce the best subject matter experts available on specific topic areas. The Senior Leadership training would also include sessions with existing Senior Management at FHP and DHSMV in a workshop format to encourage and foster an informal mentoring relationship.

Upon completion of all three training phases, candidates would then become eligible to attend outside leadership training such as the FBI Academy, or one of the programs offered at the Florida Criminal Justice Executive Institute. The Institute of Police Technolgy and Management (IPTM) has introduced a new series of executive leadership classes designed in modules similar to the format currently used by the Certified Public Manager (CPM) program. Each module will be one to two weeks in duration and offered in a variety of locations throughout the state. Upon completion of all modules the student would earn a Certified Police Leadership (CPL) designation. Upon the CPL program completion, the student will also have the option of acquiring undergraduate or graduate college credit through the University of North Florida based on their performance during the Certified Police Leadership program.

Delivery Methods

It is my recommedation the Supervision and Leadership training classes be conducted at the Florida Highway Patrol Training Academy for several reasons. First, the training must be consistent and of high quality. The best instructors must be secured to instruct and facilite this portion of supervision training. Second, the students must be relieved from their daily responsibilites to focus on the training being presented. Third, the students must have frequent visits from senior managent to begin a role model and informal mentoring relationship. Finally, the students will develop working relationships that will foster cooperation for their remaining careers.

It is my recommendation the Senior Leadership classes be presented in a regional format for several reasons. First, Senior Leadership training will encompass personnel from various troops and ranks. Personnel will have the opportunity to listen and learn from others who have had similar experiences. Second, the local training will provide another opportunity to develop mentoring relationships in the local area. It will also provide senior leaders the opportunity to observe supervisors in their working enviornment. Third, it is more cost effective to bring instructors to the group rather than incurring the travel expense of the supervisors traveling to the Florida Highway Patrol Training Academy. Fourth, the training can be a blended curriculum that would require students to complete assignments before the actual class to facilitate the learning. Finally, the regional training concept would allow the introduction of local subject matter experts into the training with minimual expense.

My final training recommendation is to develop a series of short duration training seminars or classes that personnel could complete in various formats depending on the

topic. These classes or seminars may include on-line classes developed by DHSMV personnel that would apply to all DHSMV supervisors.

Captain Keith Gaston has been with the Florida Highway Patrol since 1980. He has served in Collier, Nassau, Dade, Bradford, Orange and Duval Counties. His assignmnents include Trooper, Traffic Homicide Investigator, Sergeant, Lieutenant and Captain. He is currently assigned as Regional Commander of the Jacksonville Regional Communications Center that provides communications services to all state law enforcement officers. He is involved with the development of technology to provide training via the Internet. Keith has a Bachalor of Arts Degree in Political Science and a Master of Public Administration Degree from the University of North Florida.

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Appendix A

Leadership Succession Training Survey

Participants:

Please take a moment to complete a brief online survey to identify training needed for effective leadership succession. Your responses will provide vital information needed in my leadership project.

If you have any questions or need assistance with the survey, please contact me at KeithGaston@flhsmv.gov or (904)301-3660.

Please share your responses by the survey deadline on January 30, 2009.

Thank you,

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Leadership

1. In thinking about supervisors and leaders in general, which of the following talent characteristics are important:

	Most Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Least Important
Communication Skills	○	○	○	○	○
Consistency and Fairness	○	○	○	○	○
Courage to Confront Issues	○	○	○	○	○
Decisive	○	○	○	○	○
Ethical and Moral Standards	○	○	○	○	○
Innovative	○	○	○	○	○
Integrity and Trust	○	○	○	○	○
Involved and Participative	○	○	○	○	○
Knowledgeable and Intelligent	○	○	○	○	○
Putting others first - Servanthood	○	○	○	○	○
Respect	○	○	○	○	○
Sincere and Genuine	○	○	○	○	○
Supportive	○	○	○	○	○
Teaching and Learning	○	○	○	○	○
Visionary or Strategic Thinking	○	○	○	○	○

2. In thinking about your immediate supervisor, how would you rate their talent characteristics:

	Significantly Talented	Very Talented	Somewhat Talented	Neutral	Less Talented
Communication					

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Skills	○	○	○	○	○
Consistency and Fairness	○	○	○	○	○
Courage to Confront Issues	○	○	○	○	○
Decisive	○	○	○	○	○
Ethical and Moral Standards	○	○	○	○	○
Innovative	○	○	○	○	○
Integrity and Trust	○	○	○	○	○
Involved and Participative	○	○	○	○	○
Knowledgeable and Intelligent	○	○	○	○	○
Putting others first - Servanthood	○	○	○	○	○
Respect	○	○	○	○	○
Sincere and Genuine	○	○	○	○	○
Supportive	○	○	○	○	○
Teaching and Learning	○	○	○	○	○
Visionary or Strategic Thinking	○	○	○	○	○

3. In thinking about other leaders within the Florida Highway Patrol, how would you rate the current pool of talent characteristics:

	Large Talent Pool	Emerging Talent Pool	Adequate Talent Pool	Neutral	Small Talent Pool
Communication Skills	○	○	○	○	○
Consistency and Fairness	○	○	○	○	○
Courage to Confront Issues	○	○	○	○	○
Decisive	○	○	○	○	○
Ethical and Moral Standards	○	○	○	○	○
Innovative	○	○	○	○	○

Integrity and Trust	○	○	○	○	○
Involved and Participative	○	○	○	○	○
Knowledgeable and Intelligent	○	○	○	○	○
Putting others first - Servanthood	○	○	○	○	○
Respect	○	○	○	○	○
Sincere and Genuine	○	○	○	○	○
Supportive	○	○	○	○	○
Teaching and Learning	○	○	○	○	○
Visionary or Strategic Thinking	○	○	○	○	○

4. In thinking about leadership training and development, how likely would you be to participate in the following types of training:

	Most Likely	Somewhat Likely	Interested	Neutral	Least Likely
Classroom training within agency	○	○	○	○	○
Classroom training in University setting	○	○	○	○	○
Classroom training at FHP Academy	○	○	○	○	○
Formal mentoring	○	○	○	○	○
Informal mentoring	○	○	○	○	○
Specialized leadership development courses such as IPTM,	○	○	○	○	○
Senior Leadership, FBI, Academy, SPI or similar classes.	○	○	○	○	○

Interactive web based training	○	○	○	○	○
DVD scenario based training	○	○	○	○	○
Small group training lead by agency personnel	○	○	○	○	○
Small group training lead by subject matter experts	○	○	○	○	○
Books and reading	○	○	○	○	○
Video conference	○	○	○	○	○
Internship	○	○	○	○	○
Experience at various positions	○	○	○	○	○

Other (please specify)

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