

Improving the Promotional Process for Law Enforcement Personnel

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Abstract

The purpose of this research paper was to determine a way to improve the law enforcement promotional process. A survey was sent out to supervisors in the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office and 12 other law enforcement agencies in the Florida pan handle in an attempt to ascertain abnormalities and similarities in the promotional process. The data revealed a best practices approach to promotional practices. This paper also offers thoughts on innovative ways to get buy in from employees participating in the process.

Introduction

On October 10, 1915, Governor Park Trammel appointed Benjamin Haywood Sutton as the Sheriff of Okaloosa County, Florida. Since that time, the need for law enforcement has grown immensely. Not only has the county population grown in the last 104 years but so has the Sheriff's Office and its personnel. As the organization has grown, so have the opportunities to promote through the ranks.

The Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office is currently comprised of 432 full-time employees and 26 part-time employees. 318 employees are sworn law enforcement officers. 118 of the sworn employees are supervisors that have competed in the organization's promotional process. The current process for promotion is governed by General Order 15.01 - Promotions. Promotions within the Sheriff's Office are based solely on the most qualified individual. This individual is determined based on their experience, knowledge, skills, abilities, and performance.

The promotional process prohibits discrimination against any individual based on his or her race, color, religion, sex to include pregnancy, national origin, age, marital status, handicap/disability or genetic information. The promotion of sworn members to the rank of Corporal, Investigator or Sergeant is accomplished through a formal testing and competitive selection process.

The promotional process is conducted annually for the rank of Corporal, Investigator, and Sergeant, and begins with an announcement sent to all employees from Human Resources. The announcement summarizes the promotional opportunity available and is posted at least 30 days in advance. The summarization includes information specific to the promotional position, eligibility requirements, test date and the process used in selecting members to vacancies.

Interested employees apply through an online portal that serves as a repository for Human Resources. The employee submits their application and supporting documentation. Once submitted Human Resources scores the application and the

employee receives a score and initial ranking. This portion of the promotional process is rated at 30 percent of their overall score.

Next, the employee takes the corresponding written exam for the position they are applying for. The written exams are specific for the positions of corporal, investigator, and sergeant. The written exam also has In-Basket-Items attached to the written exam, these In-Basket-Items relate specifically to the responsibilities of the position applied for. Corporals may have to review reports for accuracy, content, and grammar. They may have to determine if probable cause exists and if the arrest paperwork is filled out correctly. Sergeants may have to deal with complex scenario questions dealing with difficult civil matters. These In-Basket-Items are scored along with the written exam and the employee receives a score and ranking. This portion too is rated at 30 percent of their overall score.

The last step in the promotional process is to participate in an oral board. Oral boards are comprised of 5 agency members who are senior agency supervisors. Sergeants generally sit on the Corporal Oral Board. Investigative supervisors (Lieutenants and Sergeants) sit on the Investigator Oral Board. Captains sit on the Sergeant's Oral Board. Applicants are asked 5 scenario-based questions that relate to the position applied for and 5 behavioral based questions. Each member of the oral board completes a score sheet for each applicant. The score sheets are averaged up among the 5 board members and the employee receives a score and initial ranking. This final portion of the promotional process is rated at 40 percent of their overall score.

Scores for each applicant are combined from the application process, written exam and the oral board. The scores are tallied and provide a framework for ranking an employee against other employees. A cutoff score exists for each rank, Corporal is 75 and Investigator or Sergeant is 80. Anything below the cutoff score removes the applicant from being placed on the eligibility list. Once the applicant is placed on the eligibility list the list is published through the Human Resources section. As positions become available eligible employees are selected based solely on the most qualified individual.

In this paper, I will discuss the research that has been published relating to the promotional process for law enforcement. This will be done in an attempt to identify the advantages and disadvantages associated with the promotional process. While Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office has a way of conducting the promotional process, it's a way and not the only way that law enforcement agencies conduct the promotional process. My hope is to discover improved ways of facilitating the promotional process.

Literature Review

Professional Development Program

Sheriff W. Brad Steube of the Manatee County Sheriff's Office, an agency with nearly 700 sworn law enforcement and corrections officers stated, "Our goal is to educate and train the right person for the right task at the right time. We can no longer wait until an individual is placed into a leadership position before receiving proper education and training. This is especially true today because as we grow as an agency,

we are faced with an increased operational tempo: the demands on our supervisors have increased as our agency's missions have grown more diverse and complex" (Capsambelis & Schnering, 2011).

To address the issue above, the Manatee County Sheriff's Office created a task force to develop a Professional Development Program to provide a career roadmap for deputies. The program was designed to provide a pathway toward advancement of personnel and to give the Sheriff's Office a talent pool of individuals who are more prepared to become supervisors.

The task force looked at two primary areas for improvement. First, they looked at their in-house performance evaluations. They were able to get their employee evaluation software providers to cut down the number of job tasks from 80 to 15 for a typical deputy. This allowed supervisors to spend more time focusing on the employee. Second, the task force revamped its promotional process. While the changes might be minor, a task force of personnel of all ranks was convened to review the existing promotional process, make changes and to take ownership of the of those changes. As a result of their initiative, the task force found that the whole "wheel" did not need to be reinvented but only a few spokes needed to be replaced (Capsambelis & Schnering, 2011).

Online Promotional Study Groups

According to Kirkpatrick, a study was conducted of 393 Delaware State Police corporals who were eligible to test for the rank of sergeant. The study investigated two aspects of police promotional testing: identifying and understanding the barriers to participation in the promotional process and the use of online study groups as a mechanism for supporting law enforcement officers in the promotional process from corporal to sergeant.

Those corporals eligible to take the sergeant's test but didn't take the test were provided with a survey to determine the barriers that prevented them from participating in the process. 95 corporals took the test for sergeant, they were provided with a survey to identify whether they were a member of a virtual study group and their level of experience in taking the exam. While the results of the survey were not statistically significant, the results were meaningful in that those who participated in a virtual online study group out performed those that did not participate in an online virtual study group (Kirkpatrick, 2013). In short, the research offered a new approach to promotional test preparation.

Large Texas Metropolitan Police Department

A study of data compiled for the three lieutenant testing processes of a Large Texas Metropolitan Police Department was analyzed. The study found that lieutenants were promoted using a two-test system. First, a written test was administered. Those participants who received a passing score went on to complete the oral examination.

Over a 9-year period, 202 police sergeants participated in the study on at least one occasion. The above two-test promotional process resulted in a list of promotable candidates who had their supervisory skills and competencies tested. Those

candidates that finished near the top of the list were promoted on the rank order (Bishopp, 2013). This study revealed that younger candidates scored higher on the two-system, the number of commendations a candidate had significantly influence the outcome and the number of sustained complaints against the candidate decreased the odds of promotion.

Copping Out

Promotions ensure organizational continuity and a reward for outstanding performance. This study explores why officers elect not to participate in the promotional process. Administrators wished to find out why women and minority members were not participating in the promotional process. Only 17% of the eligible female officers and 24% of eligible minority officers participated in the previous promotional process (Whetstone, 2001).

These low turnout rates prompted supervisors in a Midwest agency to inquire into why officers competed for promotional consideration. This article went on to say that simply advertising a promotional opportunity was not a sufficient enough motivating factor. By the time officers consider promotion many of them are at the midpoint of their careers and may have embarked on a distinct course in their personal lives. For some, a promotion could be considered a huge intrusion into their established lifestyle.

Many employees do not see the benefits of promotion as far as they are concerned. The implication is that managers need to craft more attractive packages sometimes referred to as inducements beyond the usual traditional economic incentives if they want to elicit greater participation from eligible officers (Whetstone, 2001).

Study Strategies

A college education, along with the study skills such an experience brings, can provide a competitive advantage in promotional testing. Having a college degree can be mitigated by study habits and works equally as well for candidates who never finish college. This article focused on study strategies utilized by promotional applicants that had college degrees and those that did not.

Strategies employed included: using a highlighter, reading all material at once, studied while at work, asked managers questions, read more than once, asked others questions, made quizzes, attended one prep session, outlined the material, attended all pre-sessions, made/used flash cards, made practice exams, took notes while reading, made audio tapes, formed a study group, studied with w partner, sequestration, and used a library. College graduates were significantly more likely to ask managers questions, make audio tapes, and for study groups (Whetstone, 2001). While a degree does give promotional candidates a competitive edge, one can overcome the lack of a formal degree by utilizing any combination of the wide variety of study methods available.

Mentorship

No single way to promote exists, but one element proves universal. Regardless of the route to advancement, preparation proves vitally important (Newman, 2017). Supervisors should encourage eligible personnel to test for promotion. Regardless of the route traveled to promotion, one element proves universal, preparation is key to success.

Developing officers is crucial for organizations to obtain a quality list of applicants from which to choose for promotion. (Newman, 2017) offered suggestions that leaders

should share with promotional candidates when preparing for a test, seek promotion for the right reasons, think and act as if you already have obtained the desired rank, focus on communication, become a student of the testing process, use a notebook, pay attention to detail, preparation provides benefits, use all hazards problem solving, control the question and tell a story when answering, and look for an edge outside of the agency.

While the promotional process is about promoting qualified people into higher authority positions it is also a great opportunity to grow law enforcement officers through career development. The promotional process is also an opportunity to encourage leaders to become mentors. These by-products of the promotional process make police organizations stronger and communities better (Newman, 2017).

Methods

The purpose of this research was to identify differences and similarities in the promotional process between law enforcement agencies that were of similar size to the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office.

Data was gathered through surveys provided to members of the Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, and Walton County Sheriffs' Offices. Data was also collected from municipalities located in Okaloosa County specifically Crestview, Niceville, Northwest Florida State College, Shalimar, and Valparaiso Police Departments in order to represent a cross section of duties and departments.

Survey questions were designed to determine the level of participation and knowledge of the agencies promotional process. Questions also asked participants to identify the practices their agencies used as part of their promotional process.

Information about the participants' individual level of preparation and whether their agency offered any form of preparation for the promotional process was collected. Additionally, data regarding individual demographics and agency size to identify whether other correlating factors existed.

The survey was anonymous in order to encourage truthful answers and a greater response. In addition, lack of candor remains a concern despite assurances of confidentiality and anonymity.

Results

This survey was sent internally to 76 members of the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office. I received 54 responses, for a rate of 71%. Of those 54 responses, some respondents chose to skip some of the questions in the survey.

I also sent the survey externally to 1 member of 12 additional law enforcement agencies in the Florida panhandle (Niceville Police Department, Crestview Police Department, Fort Walton Beach Police Department, Northwest Florida State College Police Department, Northwest Florida Public Safety Training Center, Shalimar Police Department, Valparaiso Police Department, Hurlburt Security Forces, Eglin Security Forces, Escambia County Sheriff's Office, Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office and

Walton County Sheriff's Office. I received 6 responses, for a rate of 50%. Of those 6 responses, some respondents chose to skip some of the questions in the survey.

Combined, this survey was sent to 88 law enforcement officers. I received 60 responses, for an overall rate of 68%.

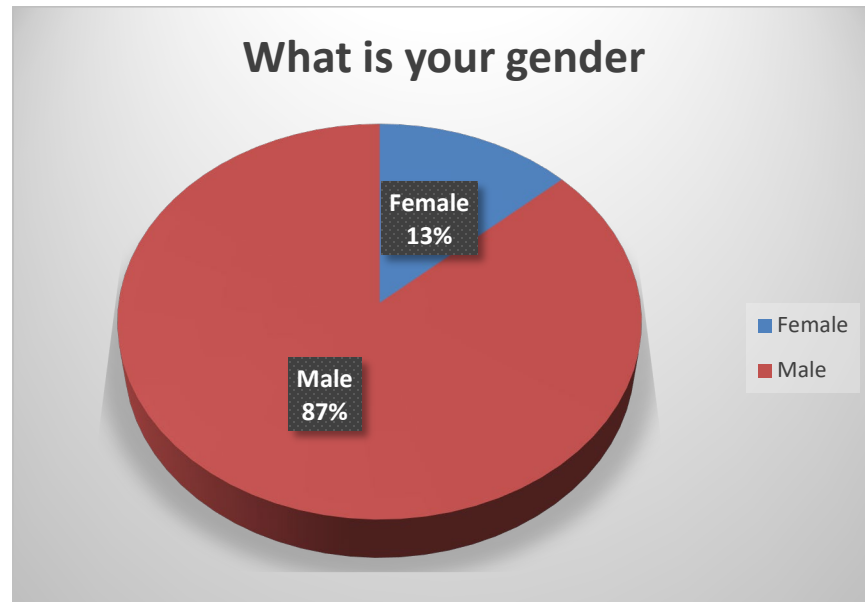
The first six questions on the survey were demographical in nature. Respondents were first asked to identify their race: Caucasian, African American, Hispanic or Other. Fifty-nine respondents (98%) reported they were Caucasian. One respondent (2%) reported they were African American.

TABLE 1: What is your race:



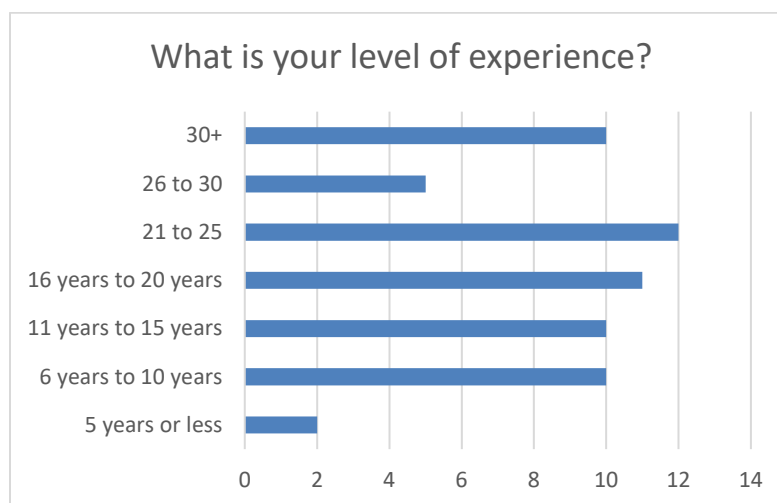
The second question asked participants to indicate their gender. Fifty-two (87%) respondents identified themselves as male. Eight respondents (13%) identified themselves as female.

TABLE 2: What is your gender:



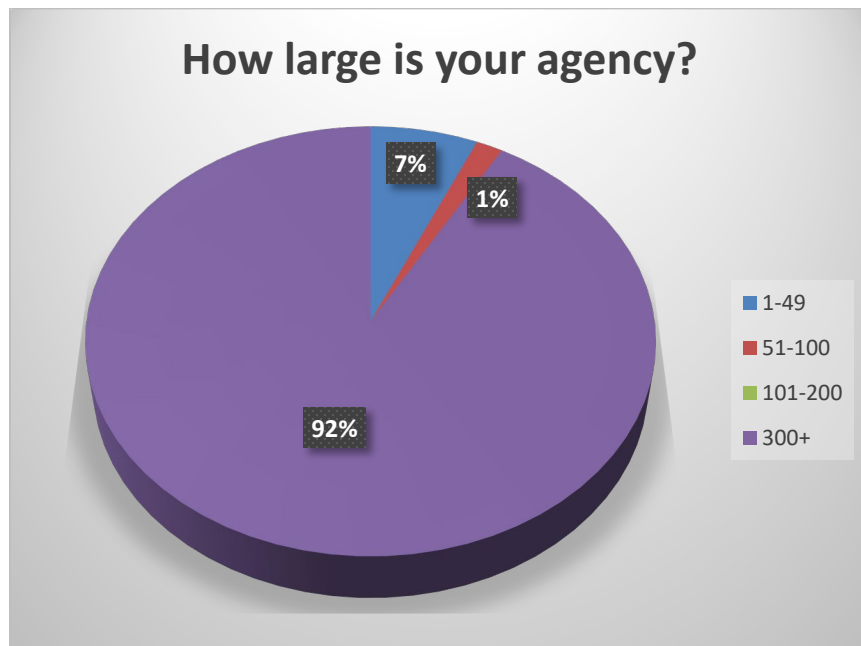
The third question asked participants to indicate their years of service. Of the participants only two respondents (3%) reported having between 1 and 5 years of experience. Ten of the respondents (17%) reported having between 6 and 10 years of experience as well as the same number of the respondents (17%) reported having between 11 and 15 years of experience. Eleven respondents (18%) reported having between 16 and 20 years of experience. Most participants reported having between 21 and 15 years of experience with twelve respondents (20%). The second lowest number of participants reported having between 26 and 30 years of experience with five respondents (8%). Ten respondents (17%) reported having over 30 plus years of experience.

TABLE 3: What is your level of experience:



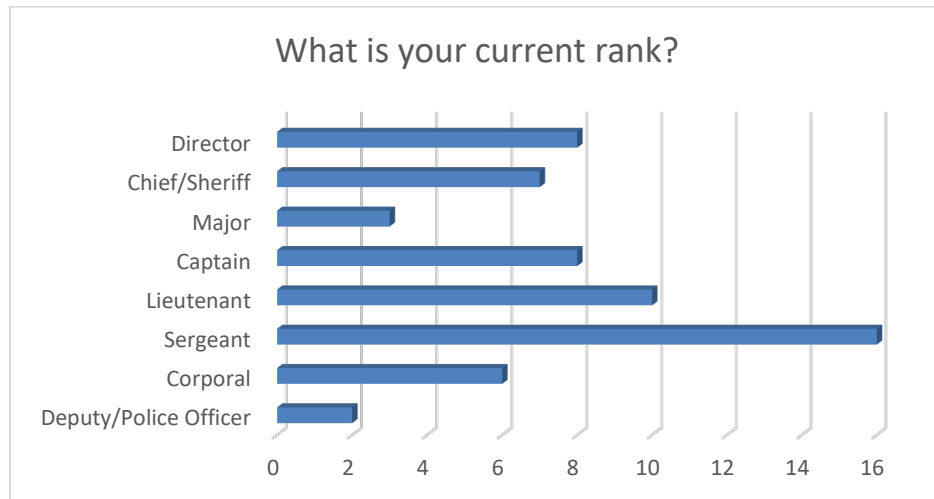
Question four asked respondents about the size of their agency. Fifty-five respondents (92%) identified their agency as being 300+ employees. Four respondents (7%) identified their agency as being between 1 and 49 employees. One respondent (1%) identified their agency as being between 51 and 100 employees. One respondent (1%) identified their agency as being between 101 and 200 employees.

TABLE 4: How large is your agency:



Question five asked participants to identify their rank. Two respondents (3%) identified themselves as a Deputy Sheriff/Police Officer. Six respondents (10%) identified themselves as Corporals. Sixteen respondents (27%) identified themselves as Sergeants. Ten respondents (17%) identified themselves as Lieutenants. Eight respondents (13%) identified themselves as Captains. Three respondents (5%) identified themselves as Majors. Seven respondents (12%) identified themselves as Chief/Sheriff. Eight respondents (13%) identified themselves as Directors.

TABLE 5: What is your current rank:



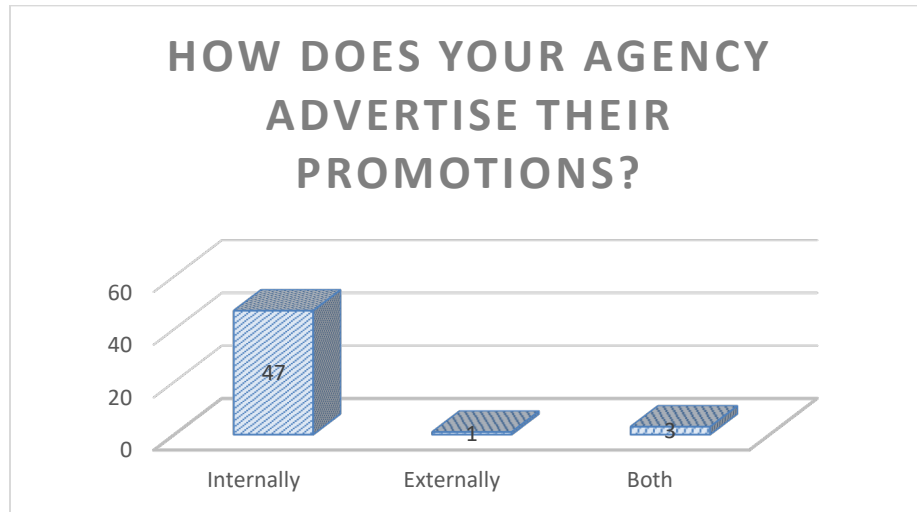
Question 6 asked participants if they have personally participated in their agency's promotional process. Fifty respondents (83%) reported that they have participated in the process. Ten respondents (17%) reported that they have not participated in the process. Question six was designed to remove respondents if they had not participated in their agency's promotional process.

TABLE 6: Have you personally participated in your agency's promotional process:



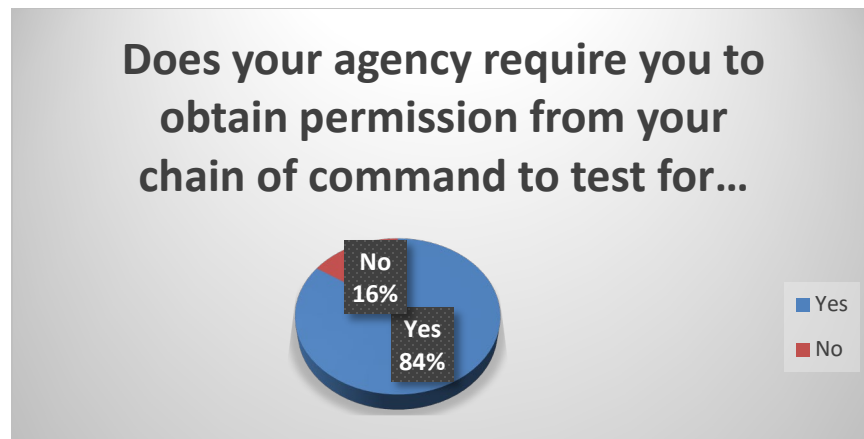
The next series of questions focuses on Promotional Process Practices. Question 7 asked participants how their agency advertises promotions. Fifty-one participants responded. Forty-seven respondents (92%) advised that their agency only advertised their promotion within their agency. One respondent (2%) reported that their agency advertised their promotional process outside of their agency. Three respondents (6%) reported that their agency advertised their promotional process both within and outside of their agency. Nine respondents skipped the question.

TABLE 7: How does your agency advertise promotions:



Question 8 asked participants if their agency required them to obtain permission from a member of their chain of command to be able to test for promotion. Fifty-one participants responded. Forty-three respondents (84%) advised their agency required them to obtain permission from the chain of command before they can test for promotion. Eight respondents (16%) advised their agency did not require them to obtain permission from the chain of command before they can test for promotion. Nine participants skipped this question.

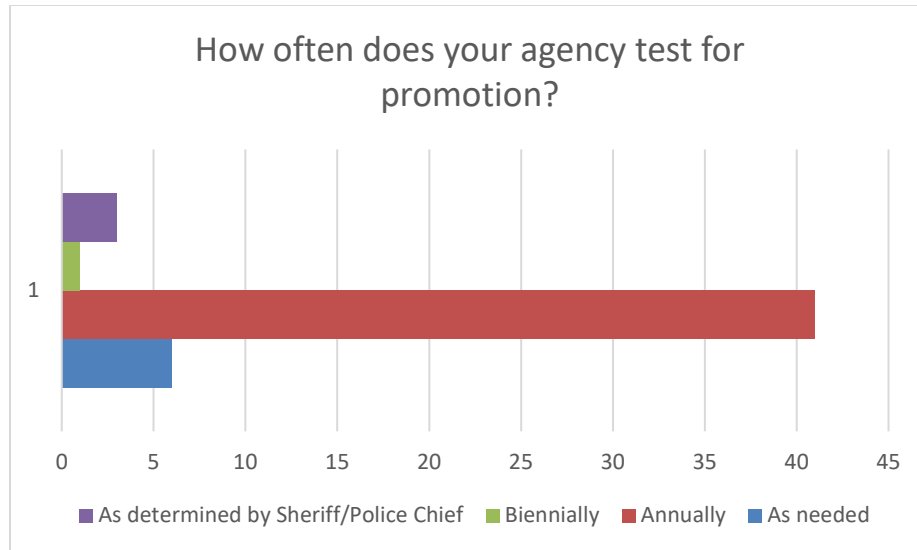
TABLE 8: Does agency require applicants to obtain permission from chain of command to test for promotion:



Question 9 asked participants how often their agency conducts the promotional process. Fifty-one of the participants answered. Six respondents (12%) reported their agency tested as needed. Forty-one respondents (80%) reported their agency tested annually. One respondent (2%) reported their agency tested biennially.

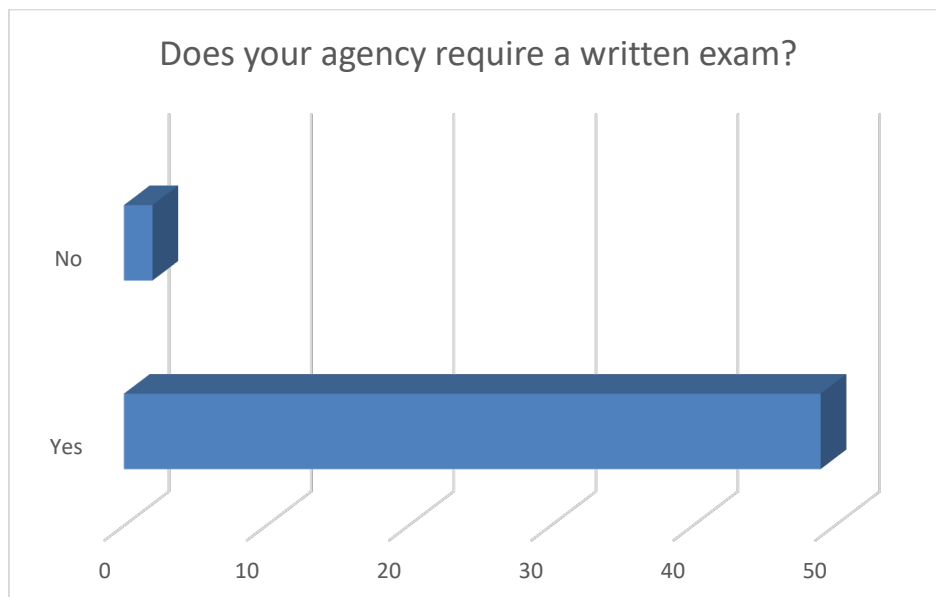
Three respondents (6%) reported their agency tested as determined by the Sheriff or Chief of Police. Nine respondents skipped the question.

TABLE 9: How often does your agency test for promotion:



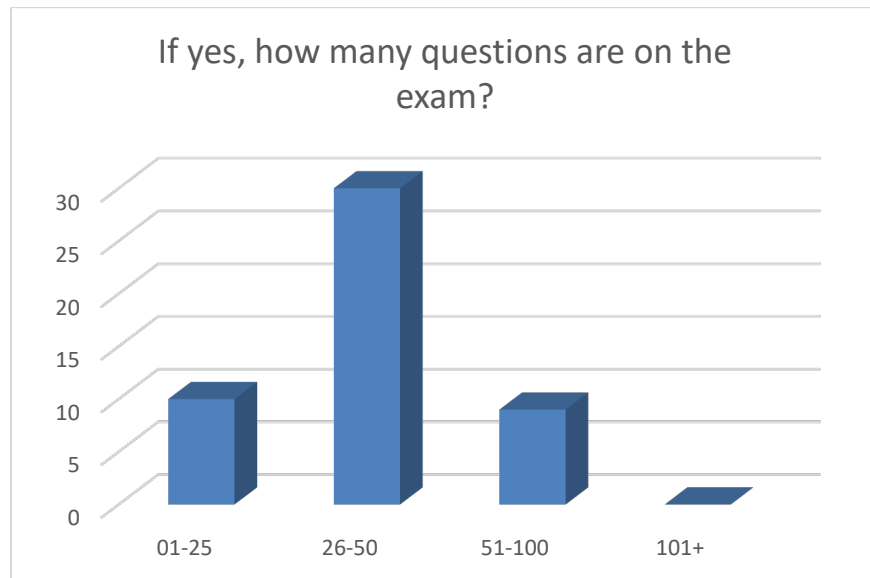
Question 10 asked participants if their agency required a written exam. Fifty-one of the participants responded. Forty-nine respondents (96%) reported their agency administers a written exam. Two respondents (4%) reported their agency did not administer a written exam. Nine respondents skipped the question.

TABLE 10: Does your agency require a written exam:



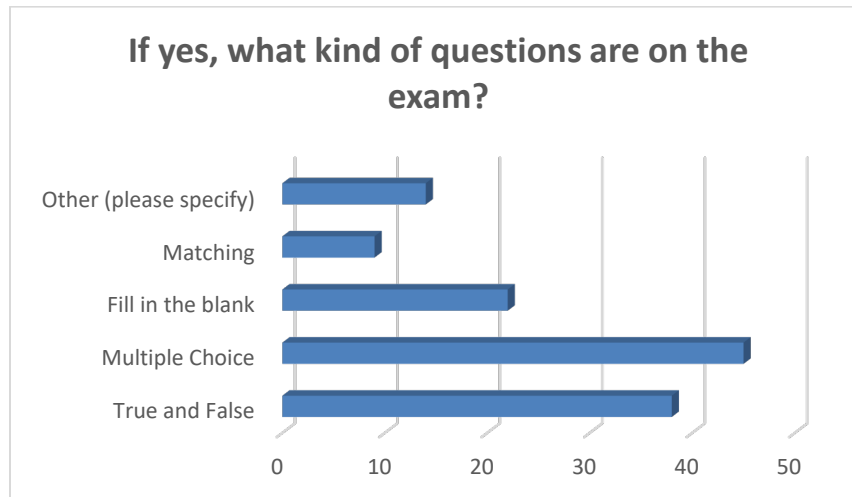
Building on Question 10, Question 11 asked respondents how many questions were in their agency's promotional exam. Forty-nine participants responded to the question. Ten respondents (20%) reported their agency's written exam was between 1 and 25 questions. Thirty respondents (61%) reported their agency's written exam was between 26 and 50 questions. Nine respondents (18%) reported their agency's written exam was between 51 and 100 questions. Eleven participants skipped the question.

TABLE 11: How many questions are on the exam:



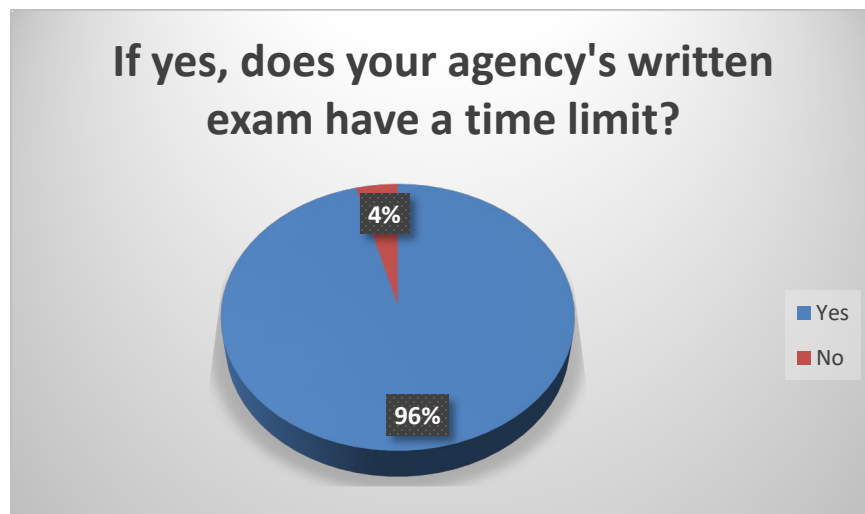
Building on Question 10 and Question 11, Question 12 asked participants to identify the types of questions found on their agency's written exam. Forty-nine participants responded to the question. Thirty-eight respondents (78%) reported having true and false test questions on their promotional exam. Forty-five respondents (92%) reported having multiple choice test questions. Twenty-two respondents (45%) reported having fill in the blank test questions. Nine respondents (18%) reported having matching test questions. Fourteen respondents (29%) reports having other test questions i.e., in box items, scenario and paperwork review, essay, and/or some combination of the above. Eleven participants skipped the question.

TABLE 12: Types of questions encountered on promotional exams:



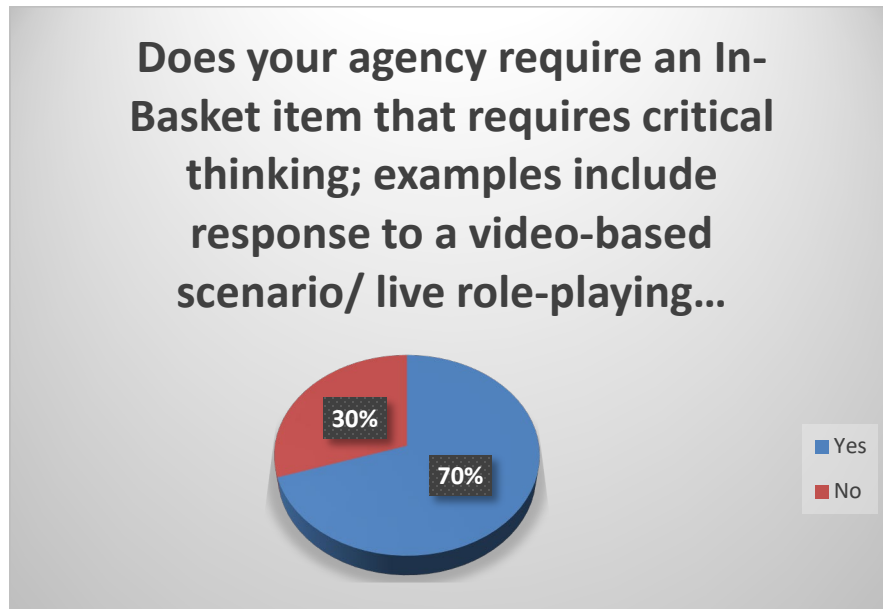
Building on Question 10, Question 11, and Question 12, Question 13 asked participants to identify if their agency's written exam had a time limit. Forty-eight participants provided responses. Forty-six respondents (96%) reported their agency did have a time limit. Two respondents (4%) reported their agency did not have a time limit. Twelve participants skipped the question.

Table 13: Does the written exam have a time limit:



Question 14 asked participants if their agency required an In-Basket Item that requires critical thinking; examples include response to a video-based scenario or a live role-playing exercise. Fifty participants responded to the question. Thirty-five respondents (70%) advised their agency did require a critical thinking exercise. Ten respondents (30%) advised their agency did not require it. Nine participants skipped this question.

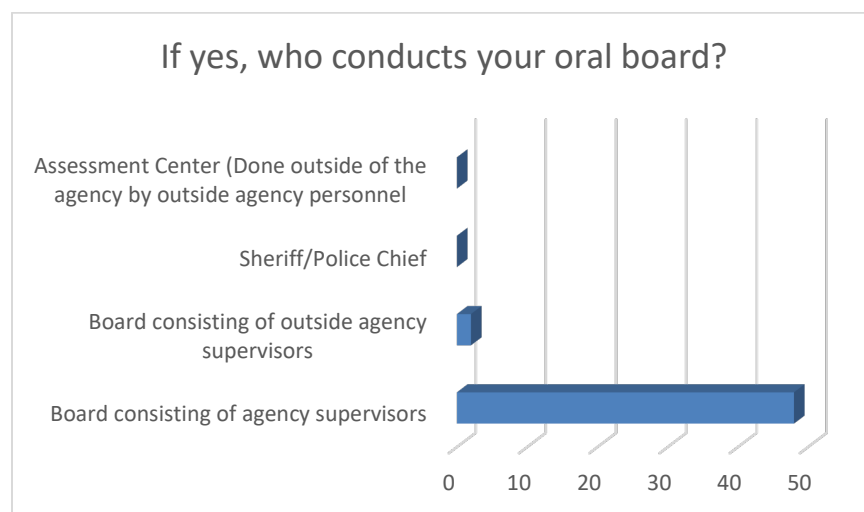
TABLE 14: Critical thinking exercise:



Question 15 asked participants if their agency conducted an oral board. Fifty-one participants responded. Fifty-one (100%) respondents advised their agencies required an oral board as part of the promotional process. Nine participants skipped the questions.

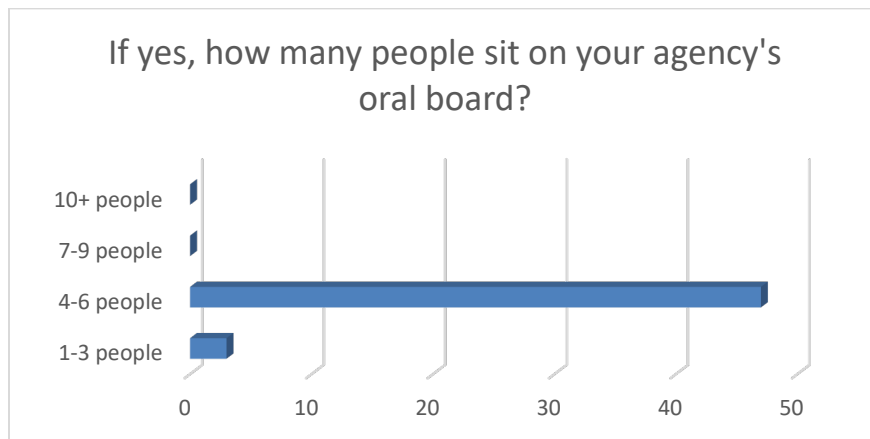
Building on Question 15, Question 16 asked participants who conducts their oral boards. Fifty participants answered the question. Forty-eight respondents (96%) reported that the oral board was comprised of agency supervisors. Two respondents (4%) reported that the oral board was comprised of personnel from outside the agency. Ten participants skipped the question.

TABLE 16: Who makes up your oral board:



Building on Question 15, and Question 16, Question 17 asked participants to determine the number of people that sit on their agency's oral board. Fifty participants responded. Three respondents (6%) advised their agency's oral board consisted of 1 to 3 people. Forty-seven respondents (94%) advised their agency's oral board consisted of 4 to 6 people. Ten participants skipped the question.

TABLE 17: Size of the oral board:



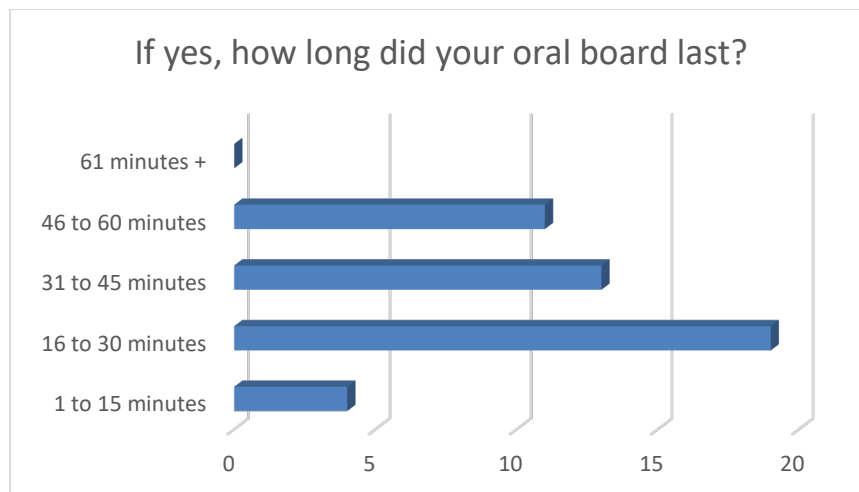
Building on Question 15, Question 16, and Question 17, Question 18 asked participants if their oral board had a time limit. Fifty participants responded to the questions. Twenty-six respondents (52%) reported their oral board did have a time limit. Twenty-four respondents (48%) reported their oral board did not have a time limit. Ten participants skipped the question.

TABLE 18: Oral board time limit required:



Building on Question 15, Question 16, Question 17, and Question 18, Question 19 asked participants how long their oral board lasted. Forty-Seven participants answered the question. Four respondents (9%) advised their oral board lasted between 1 and 15 minutes. Eighteen respondents (40%) advised their oral board lasted between 16 and 30 minutes. Thirteen respondents (28%) advised their oral board lasted between 31 and 45 minutes. Eleven respondents (23%) advised their oral board lasted between 46 and 60 minutes. Thirteen participants skipped the question.

TABLE 19: Length of oral board:



Question 20 asked participants if their agency utilized annual evaluations for the promotional process. Fifty participants answered the question. Forty-seven respondents (94%) advised their agency did in fact utilize annual evaluations as part of the promotional process. Three respondents (6%) advised their agency did not utilize annual performance evaluations. Ten participants choose to skip the question.

TABLE 20: Annual performance evaluations:



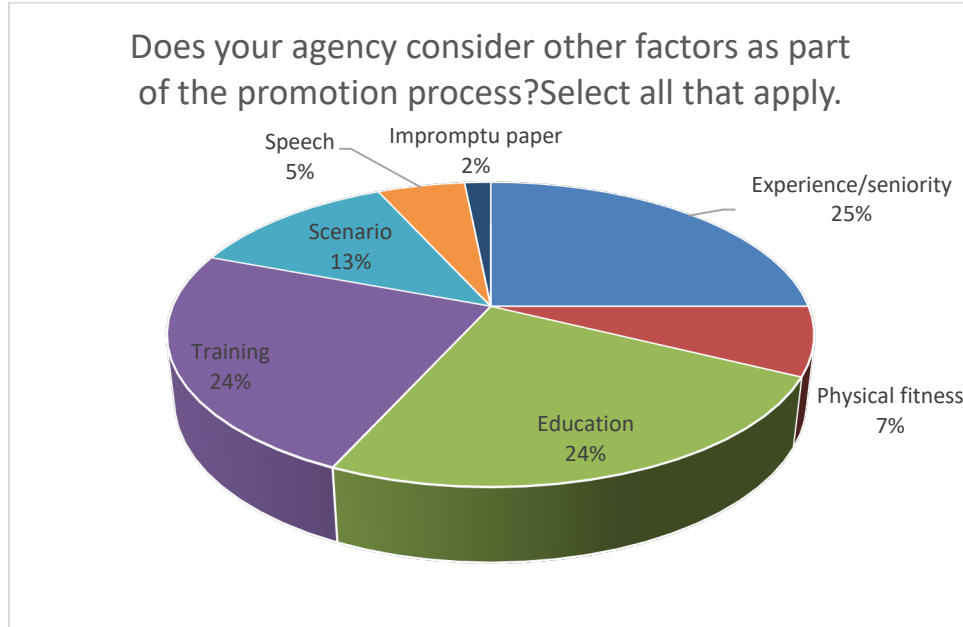
Question 21 asked participants if their agency required them to become Field Training Officers (FTO) before promoting. Fifty participants answered the question. Two respondents (4%) reported their agency required you to become an FTO before promoting. Forty-eight respondents (96%) reported their agency did not require you to become an FTO before promoting. Ten participants skipped the question.

TABLE 21: To FTO or not:



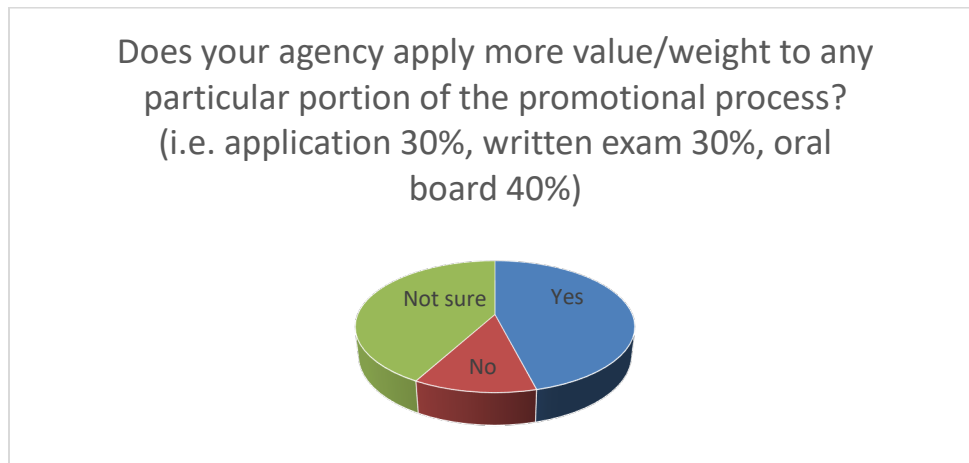
Question 22 inquired if other factors were considered as part of the promotional process. Participants were asked to select all that apply. Fifty participants answered the question. Forty-eight respondents (96%) reported their agency considers experience/seniority; fourteen respondents (28%) reported their agency considers physical fitness; forty-seven respondents (94%) reported their agency considers education; forty-six respondents (92%) reported their agency considers training; twenty-four respondents (48%) reported their agency considers a scenario; ten respondents (20%) reported their agency considers a speech; and three respondents (6%) reported their agency considers an impromptu paper. Ten participants skipped the question.

TABLE 22: Additional considerations:



Question 23 asked participants if their agency applied more value/weight to any portion of the promotional process? (i.e. application 30%, written exam 30%, oral board 40%). Twenty-three respondents (46%) reported their agency did place more value/weight on a portion of the process. Six respondents (12%) reported their agency did not place more value/weight on a portion of the process. Twenty-one respondents (42%) reported they were unsure if their agency places more value/weight to a portion of the process. Of the 23 that responded affirmatively, fifteen provided various explanations as to how their agency weighed their process, i.e. the oral board was weighted more, written exam and application process were each weighed differently, unsure of the values, 60% written exam, 20% oral board and 20% application and their agency used the whole person concept. Ten participants skipped the question.

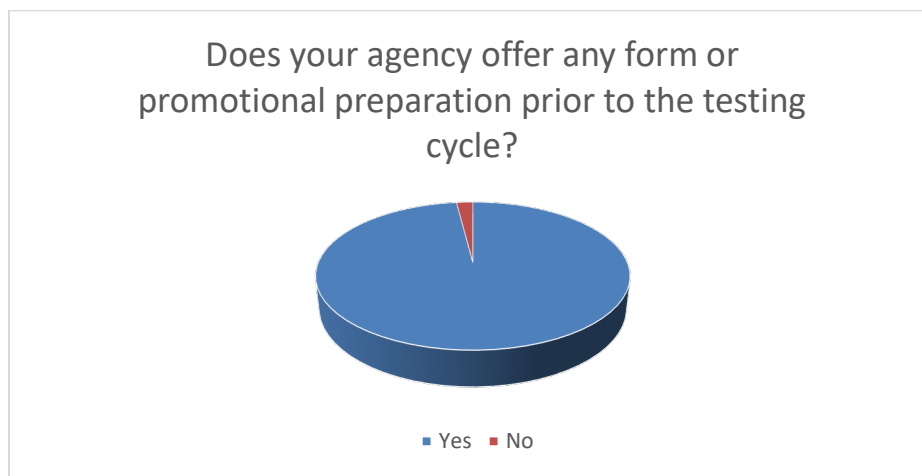
TABLE 23: Weight/Value Scale:



Question 24 asked participants how satisfied they were with their agency's overall promotional process by utilizing a Likert scale asking participants to select from "Dissatisfied", "Satisfied" and "Very Satisfied". The survey failed to collect the required data from this question.

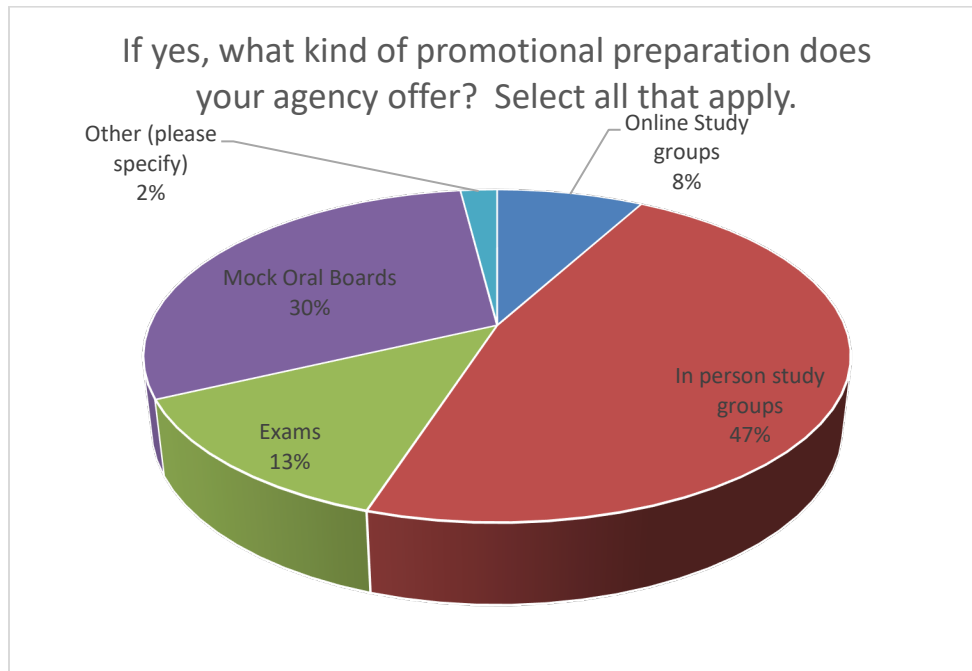
The next series of questions focuses on Promotional Preparation. Question 25 asked participants if their agency offered any form of promotional preparation prior to the testing cycle. Fifty participants responded to this question. Forty-nine respondents (98%) reported their agency did offer some sort of promotional preparation assistance. One respondent (2%) advised their agency did not offer promotional preparation. Ten participants skipped the question.

TABLE 25: Promotional preparation offered:



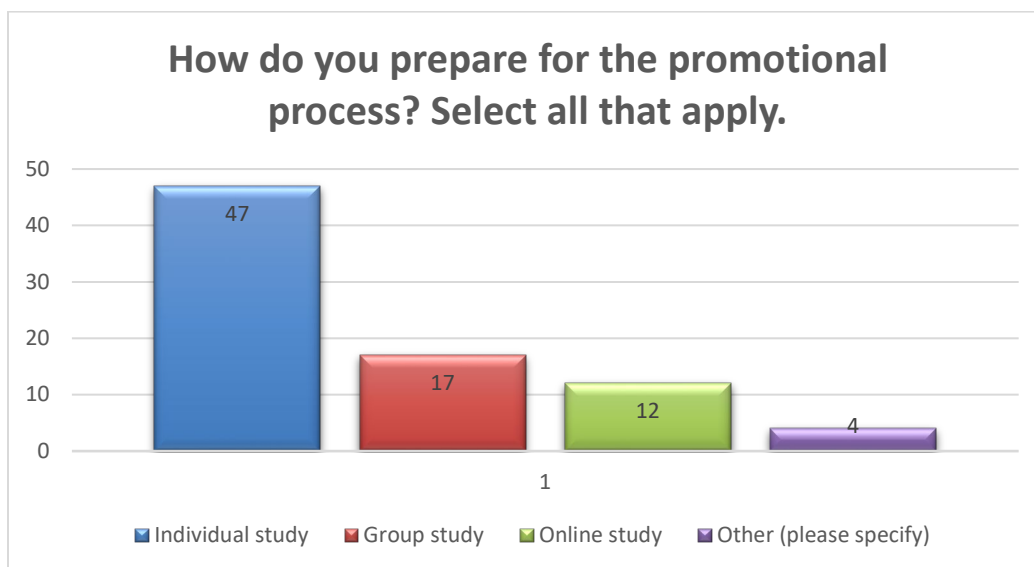
Building on Question 25, Question 26 asked those participants that responded affirmatively to explain what kind of promotional preparation was offered by their agency by selecting all that apply. Forty-eight participants answered this question. Eight respondents (17%) selected online study groups; forty-seven respondents (98%) selected in-person study groups; thirteen respondents (27%) selected exams; thirty respondents (63%) selected mock oral boards; and 2 respondents (4%) selected other and explained their agency provided a book used in the testing process and lectures of leadership. Twelve participants skipped this question.

TABLE 26: Types of promotional preparation:



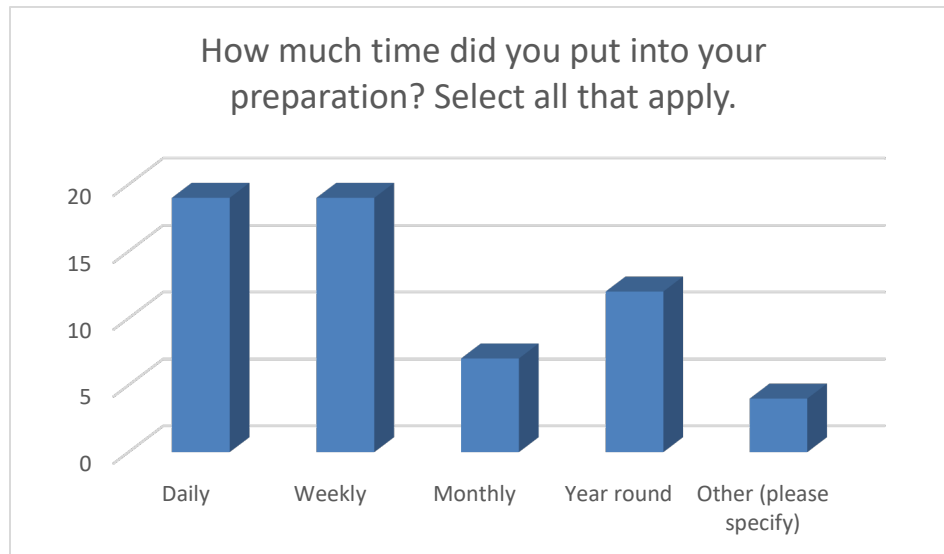
Question 27 asked participants how they prepared for the promotional process by selecting all that apply. Forty-eight participants responded to this question. Forty-seven respondents (98%) advised they utilized individual study; seventeen respondents (35%) advised they utilized group study; twelve respondents (25%) advised they utilized online-study; four respondents (8%) advised they utilized another individual to ask them questions. Twelve participants skipped this question.

TABLE 27: Individual preparation:



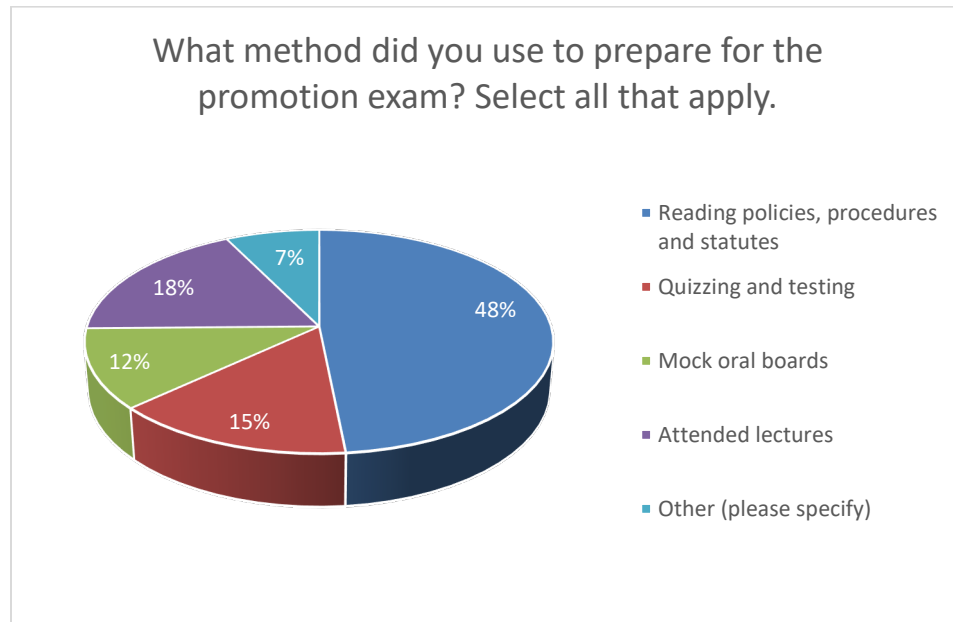
Question 28 asked participants how much time they spent preparing for the promotional process, by selecting all that apply. Forty-eight participants responded to this question. Nineteen respondents (40%) selected daily; Nineteen respondents (40%) selected weekly; seven respondents (15%) selected monthly; twelve respondents (26%) selected year round; and 4 respondents (9%) selected other and provided responses from studying daily, year round and waiting until the last minute. Thirteen participants skipped this question.

TABLE 28: Time spent preparing:



Question 29 asked participants what methods they used to prepare for the promotional exam. Forty-seven participants responded to this question. Forty-six respondents (98%) selected reading policy and procedure; fourteen respondents (30%) selected quizzing and testing; eleven respondents (23%) selected mock oral boards; Seventeen respondents (36%) selected attended lectures; seven respondents (15%) selected other and provided responses from speaking with individuals currently in the position applying for, using flash cards and study groups.

TABLE 29: Study methods:



Question 30 asked participants if their agencies provided professional mentors to those interested in/or participating in the promotions process. Forty-eight participants responded to the question. Twenty-five respondents (52%) advised their agency did provide mentors. Twenty-three respondents (48%) advised their agency did not provide mentors.

TABLE 30: Mentors:



Discussion

The results of the survey were interesting, rather than identify a new innovative way of conducting the promotional process, research seems to suggest a best practices approach for conducting the promotional procedure. Data collected focused on three main areas: demographics, promotional practices, and preparation for the promotional process. The survey was sent out to sworn supervisors within the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office and 12 other law enforcement organizations within the panhandle of Florida resulting in the accumulation of a total of 60 responses.

Demographical results were overwhelming, 98% of responses were Caucasian and 87% were male. The experience level of those sampled was in 5-year increments, from less than five years to over 30 years. The largest group, represented by 20% of the responses, was 21 to 25 years of experience. Ninety-two percent of the responses indicated their agency was over 300 officers, 2% of responses had less than 100 officers, 7% of responses had 50 officers or less. Twenty-seven percent of responses came from sergeants which were identified as the largest rank section to respond, the second largest was by lieutenants at 17%, and was followed by other various ranks.

Of 60 respondents, only 83% had directly participated in their agency's promotional process. The 17% that answered they had not participated were automatically removed from the survey. The main reason for removing these participants from the system was to gain firsthand knowledge on the promotional process.

Regarding promotional practices, 92% reported their agency's promotional process was only advertised internally. Eight-four percent advised they were required to obtain permission from their chain of command to test for promotion. Eighty percent advised their agency conducted the promotional process annually.

Ninety-six percent of responses advised their agency required them to take a written exam. Sixty-one percent advised their written exams averaged between 26 and 50 questions. Respondents reported most of those questions were multiple-choice (92%) and true and false (78%). Ninety-six percent reported that their written exam was timed. An In-Basket or critical thinking exercise was required according to 70% of responses.

One hundred percent reported their agency conducted an oral board. Ninety-six percent reported their oral boards were conducted in house by agency supervisors. Oral boards were comprised of 4 to 6 people according to 94% of responses. Oral boards ranged in length up to an hour; forty percent advised their oral board was 16 to 30 minutes length.

Ninety-four percent reported their agencies utilized annual evaluations as part of their promotional process. Respondents also advised that their agency's promotional process factored in experience (96%), educations (94%), and training (92%) as well as other considerations.

As for promotional preparation, 98% advised their agency offered some sort of preparation prior to the promotional testing cycle. Ninety-eight percent reported the agency offered an in-person study group. Ninety-eight percent reported they prepared for promotion individually. Forty percent reported spending time daily and preparing weekly in anticipation of the promotional process. Ninety-eight percent reported they

read policy and procedure to prepare for the promotional exam. Lastly, 52% reported their agency provided mentors to those interested in or participating in the promotional process. Forty-eight percent advised their agency did not offer mentorship.

Recommendations

The survey results indicate similarities and a best practices approach to the promotional process. This survey confirms what the available data and literature suggests. Law enforcement agencies should consider developing a Professional Development Program to provide law enforcement officers with a roadmap for their career and pathways toward advancement. Promotions are closely linked to recruitment and retention. Furthermore, those persons applying for promotion want to know that the promotional process is fair and unbiased. Promotions are directly related to pay raises and employee pay rates play a major role in retaining quality employees. Promotions happen to be one of the few areas an employee has control over based on how much they apply themselves.

Employees should be included in a periodic review of the promotional process because this gives him or her a voice as well as ownership in the process. More applicants can be expected if he or she can buy into the process; the goal is to create a pool of individuals who are more prepared to become supervisors. Often this periodic review reveals that the whole “wheel” does not need to be reinvented, perhaps only a few spokes need to be replaced.

Supervisors should encourage eligible personnel to test for promotion. For some individuals, a promotion could be considered a huge intrusion into their established lifestyle. Officers often want to feel comfortable doing the job before they consider promotion and sometimes, he or she gets too comfortable in the position they are in. By the time some officers consider promotion, many of them are at the midpoint of their careers and may have embarked on a distinct course in their personal lives. It's up to agencies to come up with attractive promotion packages to entice those that may think they do not want to promote.

Agencies should consider investing in their employees by giving them a personality test and educating them about the results. Knowing an employee's personality type can help them better understand other people. They can help employees identify their likes and dislikes. Personality tests help employees better understand which situations allow them to perform their best. It helps employees to understand their strengths and weaknesses. While personality tests do have their limitations, it is a process used to develop employees and provide them with an opportunity for personal growth.

Agencies should consider ways to reduce the organizational stress associated with the promotional process. An example would be to conduct promotional tests more frequently to provide more opportunities for employees to test. Instead of the traditional annual promotional test, agencies should consider testing a minimum of twice a year. Once employees do make it on a promotional list, agencies should consider lengthening the life of the promotional list for example, instead of being a on promotional list that lasts for only one year, consider making the list last several years. Promotional lists

should be living documents that allow agencies to plan and forecast current and future promotional opportunities.

The promotional process should also be an opportunity to encourage leaders to become mentors. Regardless of the route to advancement, preparation proves to be very important and should be encouraged of future supervisors. Preparation is the key to success. Developing officers is critical for agencies to obtain a quality list of applicants from which to choose for a promotion. While the promotional process is about promoting qualified people, it is a great opportunity to grow law enforcement officers through career development by way of mentorship.

Sheriff Steube of Manatee County said it best, "We can no longer wait until an individual is placed into a leadership position before receiving proper education and training." Agencies must invest in the future and develop future leaders in the law enforcement profession.

Inspector Bill Jerard has been in law enforcement for 30 years. He began working at Okaloosa Correctional Institution in 1989 as a correctional officer. He promoted to the rank of Sergeant in 1993. He became an instructor in 1994 and began teaching at Northwest Florida State College's Public Safety Training Center. In 1997, he left the Florida Department of Corrections and became a Deputy Sheriff with the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office. He was promoted to Investigator in 2004 and was assigned to the Drug Task Force where he also served as a DEA Task Force Officer. In 2010 he was promoted to Sergeant and supervised the Special Investigations Section and eventually returned to Field Services as a patrol supervisor. In 2016 he was promoted to Inspector and currently supervises Training and Professional Development.

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Appendix A

Survey Questions

Welcome to my Survey. Thank you for participating in my survey. Your feedback is important and will assist me with my Senior Leadership Program research project. Please complete the survey no later than July 19, 2019. Again thank you for your input.

Demographics

1. What is your race?
 - a. Caucasian
 - b. African American
 - c. Hispanic
 - d. Other
2. What is your gender?
 - a. Female
 - b. Male
3. What is your level of experience?
 - a. 5 years or less
 - b. 6 years to 10 years
 - c. 11 years to 15 years
 - d. 16 years to 20 years
 - e. 21 to 25
 - f. 26 to 30
 - g. 30+
4. How large is your agency?
 - a. 1-50
 - b. 51-100
 - c. 101-200
 - d. 300+
5. What is your current rank?
 - a. Deputy/Police officer
 - b. Corporal
 - c. Sergeant
 - d. Lieutenant
 - e. Captain
 - f. Major
 - g. Chief/Sheriff

6. Have you personally participated in your agency's promotional process.
- a. Yes
 - b. No

Promotional Process Practices

7. How does your agency advertise promotions?
- a. Internally
 - b. Externally
 - c. Both
8. Does your agency require you to obtain permission from your chain of command to be able to test for promotion?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
9. How often does your agency test for promotion?
- a. As needed
 - b. Annually
 - c. Biennially
 - d. Sheriff/Police Chief determine
10. Does your agency require a written exam?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
11. If yes, how many questions are on the exam?
- a. 1-25
 - b. 26-50
 - c. 51-100
 - d. 101+
12. If yes, what kind of questions are on the exam? Select all that apply.
- a. True and false
 - b. Multiple Choice
 - c. Fill in the blank
 - d. Other: _____
13. If yes, does your agency's written exam have a time limit?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
14. Does your agency require an In-Basket item that requires critical thinking; examples include response to a video-based scenario/ live role-playing exercise?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

15. Does your agency conduct an oral board?
- Yes
 - No
16. If yes, who conducts your oral board?
- Board consisting of agency supervisors
 - Board consisting of outside agency supervisors
 - Sheriff/Police Chief
 - Assessment Center (Done outside of the agency by outside agency personnel)
17. If yes, how many people sit on your agency's oral board?
- 1-3
 - 4-6
 - 7-9
 - 10+
18. If yes, did your oral board have a time limit?
- Yes
 - No
19. If yes, how long did your oral board last?
- 1 to 15 minutes
 - 16 to 30 minutes
 - 31 to 45 minutes
 - 46 to 60 minutes
 - 60+
20. Does your agency utilize annual evaluations for the promotional process?
- Yes
 - No
21. Does your agency require to become a field training officer before promoting?
- Yes
 - No
22. Does your agency consider other factors as part of the promotion process?
Select all that apply.
- Experience/seniority
 - Physical fitness
 - Education
 - Training
 - Scenario
 - Impromptu paper

23. Does your agency apply more value/weight to any particular portion of the promotional process? (i.e. application 30%, written exam 30%, oral board 40%)
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Not sure
24. Overall, how satisfied are you with your agencies promotional process?
- a. Dissatisfied
 - b. Satisfied
 - c. Very Satisfied

Promotional Preparation Questions

25. Does your agency offer any form or promotional preparation prior to the testing cycle?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
26. If yes, what kind of promotional preparation does your agency offer?
- a. Online Study groups
 - b. In person study groups
 - c. Exams
 - d. Mock Oral Boards
27. How do you prepare for the promotional process?
- a. Individual study
 - b. Group study
 - c. Online study
 - d. Other: _____
28. How much time did you put into your preparation?
- a. daily
 - b. weekly
 - c. monthly
 - d. year round
29. What method did you use to prepare for the promotion exam?
- a. Reading policies, procedures and statutes
 - b. Quizzing and testing
 - c. Mock oral boards
 - d. Attended lectures
30. Does your agency provide professional mentors to those interested in or participating in the promotional process?
- a. Yes
 - b. No