

Leading Followers to Success

A White Paper

by

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The Project

Leading Followers to Success

Law enforcement leaders, like those in the private sector, are under constant pressure, to succeed and to demonstrate their effectiveness. In fact, “organizational success and organizational failure are often attributed to the leader” (Giessner & van Knippenberg, 2008, p. 15). When leaders fail in the private sector, the results may include reduced dividends for stockholders, loss of jobs, and/or some other form of negative fiscal impact. However, when law enforcement leaders do not create alignment between work assignment decisions and levels of supervisory oversight related to personnel, with the developmental stages and characteristics of individual officers, and failure occurs, the results can be more costly.

When leaders make personnel assignment decisions related to complex jobs and tasks correctly, they reflect positively on the leader and the organization and community benefit. When these decisions do not produce positive results, leaders come under criticism, and the organization and community may suffer a variety of negative consequences including a lack of overall functionality and efficiency of the law enforcement agency and the officers it employs. In addition, it may lead to ancillary organizational problems such as reduced morale, a stifling of personal growth and development, and incomplete or improperly completed work. Ineffective personnel assignment decisions can also lead to staff turnover (Sanders, 2010), which can have significant implications for the organization in terms of operational interruption,

additional workload for others, and hard costs associated with replacement of personnel (Giessner & van Knippenberg, 2008).

Organizations are complex and dynamic (Lawrence, Lenk, & Quinn, 2009), and organizational demands may put pressure on law enforcement leaders to take swift action in personnel matters (and other circumstances). However, in many cases, leaders make hasty decisions based on limited information, which can prove costly. For example, poor decisions when promoting people to assume key roles can reduce organizational effectiveness and affect quality (Jaques, 2006). Law enforcement leadership decisions related to personnel occasionally create *misalignments* because leaders and managers fail to take into account how aspects of human development impact the *developmental level* or capability of the individual, and this in turn can lead to task or role failure. The greatest danger related to these misalignments is that continued faulty decisions can undermine public confidence and result in concerns over public safety.

In some instances, promotional decisions are made based on past performance or as a reward (Kaiser & Craig, 2011). In other cases, they are determined based on performance evaluations, procedural knowledge, and/or evaluations of decision-making capability through mock exercises (Schafer, 2010a). Promotions based on these types of criteria can result in a mismatch of employee capability and job demands (Jaques, 2006). Accordingly, promotional processes that focus too heavily on technical skills may exclude an examination of soft skills such as judgment, communication, motivation, and organizational focus, all of which are key skills for effective leadership (Goleman, 1998; Northouse, 2013). Although these observations are typical relative to promotions,

consideration of personnel for non-leadership tasks or roles often uses the same evaluative criteria, with similar results.

Few studies have looked at leadership in an effort to identify failures. This is true in law enforcement, in other public organizations, and in private industry (Schyns & Schilling, 2010). Instead, there has been a tendency by researchers to examine leadership as a positive phenomenon, even to the extent that those not perceived to be good leaders are not considered leaders at all (Schafer, 2010b). There were scant data in the literature that identified leadership failures within the law enforcement industry (Schafer, 2010b). However, certain events demonstrated such failures by identifying instances of misconduct by police officers that had a direct connection to leadership errors or ineffectiveness. Examples of such incidents include the Rampart scandal (Rampart Independent Review Panel, 2000) or the recent consent decree in which the federal government assumed control over the New Orleans police department (*United States of America v. City of New Orleans*, 2012).

Misalignments can occur, therefore, because of leadership failures based on intentional decisions, or those that involve ineffective decision-making processes by leaders. Unfortunately, these misalignments may become apparent only after an individual is engaged in a particular task or assignment and something goes wrong (Jaques, 2006; Schafer, 2010b). Although it is not the intention of any leader to position an employee for failure, when critical decisions are made without fully aligning task complexity, individual developmental level, and supervisory oversight, the foundation for potential failure is established. In this regard, it is evident that leadership plays a key role

in officer and organizational success and that in order to avoid misalignments of this nature, adjustments to the leader's style and/or decision-making processes need to occur. This includes the need to consider and pre-assess developmental levels of staff, particularly in relation to a proposed job, task, or assignment that is significant.

Framework for the Study and Project

This project is the result of a research study that examined leadership decision-making processes related to promotions, or the assignment of personnel to duties or tasks that are complex in nature. The study merged the *Situational Leadership*® model, developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1982, 1996), with Kegan's (1980, 1982, 1994) human development theory of constructive stage development, to build a framework for this inquiry (see Figure 1).

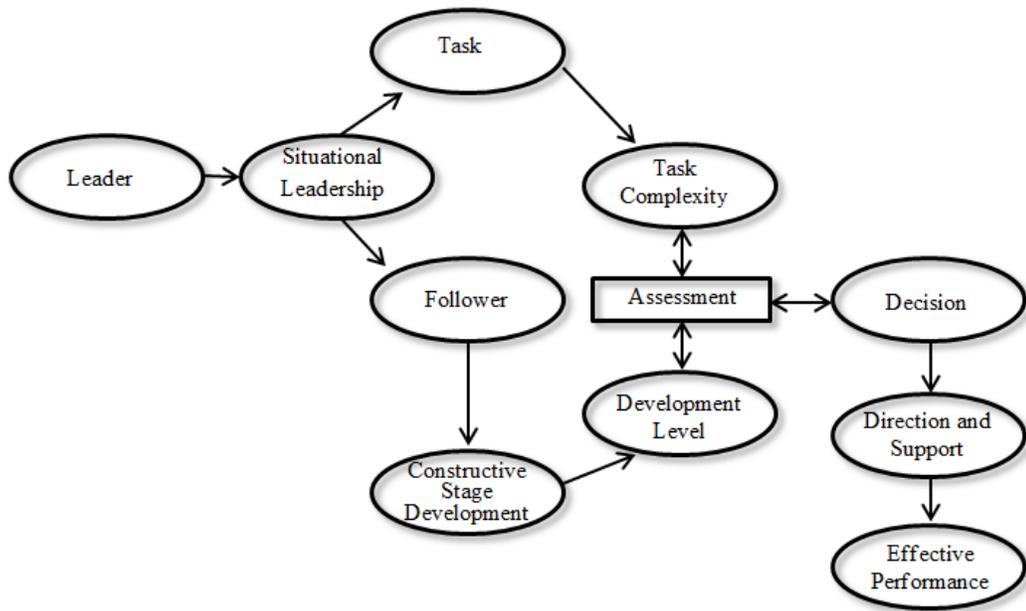


Figure 1. Conceptual framework for the study.

The merging of constructive stage development and *Situational Leadership*® is significant because the developmental level of the individual must be assessed and considered in relation to the task in order to exercise the *Situational Leadership*® model effectively (Blanchard, 2008), and constructive stage development provides a mechanism for examining individual developmental levels. Figure 1 expresses the integration of constructive stage development with the *Situational Leadership*® model. The elements of constructive stage development are an important aspect of the assessment process for the follower and the task, because these factors inform leader decision-making, leading to effective performance by followers.

Situational Leadership® Explained

The *Situational Leadership*® model developed in 1969 by Hersey and Blanchard (1982) relies on three dimensions and suggests that accurately assessing task complexity and individual developmental levels and pairing appropriate levels of supervisory direction, guidance, and support, are critical elements in the leadership decision-making process (Ardichvili & Manderscheid, 2008; Hersey, Angelini, & Carakushansky, 1982; Thompson & Vecchio, 2009). *Situational Leadership*® is described as a process that is “contingent upon the characteristics of those being led, the followers” (Guest, Hersey, & Blanchard, 1986, p. 215), and because of this focused emphasis on the role of the follower, they have proposed that it is through the follower that the leader's success is determined. Guest et al. (1986) have also suggested that, as the "follower's level of maturity [developmental level] increases, appropriate leader behavior requires less structure and less socio-emotional support" (p. 46). Additionally, Guest et al. explained

that the follower's developmental level is comprised of several factors such as the individual's achievement, relative independence, and ability to take on responsibility, adding that although age may be a factor, the developmental level of the follower is not dependent upon age.

The *Situational Leadership*® model suggests that, with respect to an assignment, the leader's behaviors should shift or change based on the developmental level of the follower (Hersey et al., 1982; Thompson & Vecchio, 2009). Within the model, those followers who are considered to have low developmental levels are described as having low ability, competence, commitment, confidence and motivation; while those with high developmental levels are thought to be responsible, competent, capable, motivated and self-directed (Blanchard, 2008; Hersey et al., 1982; Papworth, Milne, & Boak, 2009; Thompson & Vecchio, 2009). The model, as further explained by Blanchard (2008), considers the follower's developmental level in relation to the given task, and this analysis reportedly informs and directs application of the appropriate leadership style or method (e.g., directing or delegating; guiding and supporting, versus a laissez-faire or hands-off approach).

Contingency models like *Situational Leadership*® emanate from a need to consider the convergence of the leader and the follower and the context of the situation that brought them together (Best, 2011) (see Figure 2). More importantly, contingency models stress the need for the leader to recognize and understand the situational dynamics of this convergence and to have the flexibility to adapt their managerial style to meet different situations (Muczyk & Holt, 2008). *Situational Leadership*® is also

premised on the idea that there will be variations in situations and individuals and that these differences require a system in which leadership decision-making and leadership styles can be adjusted to align with situational demands (Eberlin & Tatum, 2008; Manning & Robertson, 2011). In short, leader adaptability is a key component of the *Situational Leadership*® model, but it is tied to a firm understanding of the situation (task) and the developmental level (which is linked to capability) of the individual.

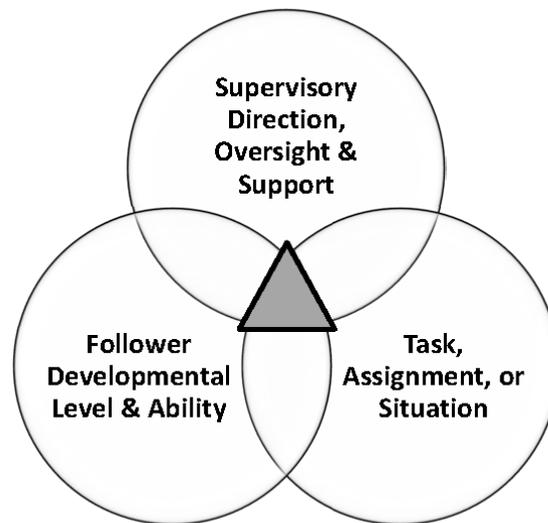
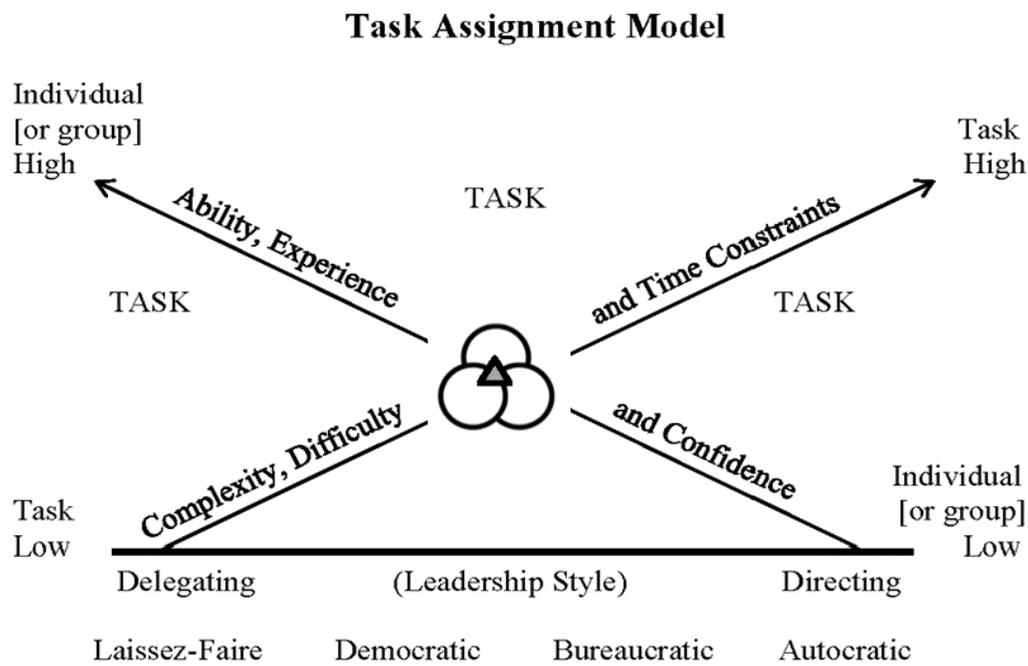


Figure 2. The contingency model convergence.

Situational Leadership®, like other contingency models, posits that no single leadership style is the best or only way to lead, and that the choice of one leadership style over another may occur for a variety of reasons (Cunningham et al., 2008). The model suggests that by using an assessment process related to task complexity and follower development level, the manager can choose a particular leadership style that has the greatest potential for success (Hersey et al., 1982).

In order to understand better which leader behaviors to apply, one must be able to identify task complexity as a factor of the model and, in particular, how the complexity of the task relates to the individual proposed for the assignment. In Figure 3, a model is provided that adds clarity as to the interactions between the task, the follower, and the style of the leader. This diagram of the task assignment model, considers the task based on complexity, difficulty, and time constraints required, and it examines and considers the developmental level of the follower with respect to their ability, experience, and confidence to perform the task. When these two components are jointly considered, the point of convergence can be determined, and the leader can determine the appropriate leadership style to apply.



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Figure 3. Task assignment model.

Within the task assignment model, the leadership styles of delegating and directing reside on opposite ends of the leadership style spectrum, and they are expressed on a linear scale along with the four traditional leadership styles of laissez-faire, democratic, bureaucratic, and autocratic. Like other contingency models, using the task assignment model to determine the appropriate leadership style (delegating to directing) involves an examination of the task to be completed and the readiness or developmental level, of the person assigned to complete it.

In essence, when the follower has a high level of ability, experience, and confidence, the leader may consider a more hands-off or delegating approach. However, if there are significant time-constraints associated with the task, or if the task is particularly complex or difficult, it may be necessary for leaders to move toward a more hands-on or directive approach. These two elements, the task complexity and developmental level of the individual, are often in competition, which can complicate leader decision-making. In order to plot the convergence of these elements, and to apply an appropriate leadership style, the leader must engage mechanisms to understand both the complexity of the task and the developmental level of the follower, and constructive stage development contributes to this effort.

Constructive Development

Constructive developmental theory as proposed by Kegan (1980, 1982, 1994) suggests that individuals pass through a variety of developmental stages within their lives. Kegan and others (Erickson, 2006; Mezirow, 1991) have found that people come to know the world through a constructive process of transformative learning, which includes

meaning-making that is reliant upon “using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one’s experience in order to guide future action” (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007, p. 132). Essentially, developmental growth relies upon how individuals examine those experiences, how they inform ways of meaning and knowing, and how this shapes individual behavior and actions (Kuhnert & Russell, 1990).

Within the scope of human development, two types of development occur-- horizontal and vertical Horizontal development refers to the accumulation of skills or information, but it does not produce any fundamental changes in how one constructs meaning or how one views the world. Conversely, vertical development suggests a transformational change in a person’s thoughts and ideas about the world, and even in one’s individual beliefs (Brown, 2011; Valcea, Hamdani, Buckley, & Novicevic, 2011).

Constructive development is considered a vertical development process through which people come to understand and know the world they live in through the process of constructing meaning making, and which also describes and explains how understandings and ways of knowing occur and change over one's lifespan (Laske, 2008). Passing through various developmental stages adds to the individual’s level of complexity and understanding as each stage subsumes the prior stage and comes to represent a more complex worldview and sense of meaning making (Harris & Kuhnert, 2008; Laske, 2008). Constructive stage development also considers each of the stages to be progressive, encompassing learning and skill development from previous stages, and, although individuals can be in transition between stages, sometimes exhibiting behaviors

that would fall above or below their primary stage, regression to a lower stage typically does not occur (Claxton & Jackson, 2002; Kegan, 1994). This is because once attained, individuals generally cannot discard knowledge.

The developmental levels within Kegan's constructive stage development theory (1982, 1994) are not differentiated by age, the actions taken by any individual, or based on their collective experiences; instead, the developmental level of individuals can be assessed and categorized based on how they "construct and organize their thinking, feeling, and social relating" (Erikson, 2006, p. 291). When individuals engage in this type of internal reorganization and they construct new meaning making and world understanding, they engage in a shift within one of three developmental domains. According to Harris and Kuhnert (2008), these constructive stage development shifts occur as "individuals move from an externally defined to internally defined understanding of themselves in the *intrapersonal* domain, from self-focus to other focus in the *interpersonal* domain, and from simplicity to complexity in the *cognitive* domain" (p. 49). These developmental shifts may occur conjunctively, or in an irregular fashion, with development occurring in some, but not all, of these domains at the same time.

Constructive Development in Policing

Applying *Situational Leadership*® and constructive stage development in a law enforcement setting requires that decision makers are equipped with tools that they can use to examine the developmental level of the follower in relation to the task or role. This is necessary so that they can apply a proper leadership style, and so that they may engage an appropriate level of guidance and support. It is evident that police officers travel

through different stages or development levels during their careers, and that these levels are definable. Constructive stage development provides a framework for the construction of a developmental model for police that mirrors the concepts expressed in constructive stage development, which can provide insight into follower developmental levels, and aid decision makers in their evaluation of personnel with respect to different selection processes.

New Data

Research Study and Findings

With these things in mind, and using *Situational Leadership*® and constructive stage development as a theoretical framework, I conducted a study to examine agency procedures and decision-making processes by chief law enforcement officers to determine if there were potential gaps in practice that might benefit from the application of some additional methodology. This qualitative research study consisted of a series of interviews with nine chief law enforcement officers in the Minneapolis and Saint Paul metropolitan area in Minnesota. It involved an analysis of what might be missing or deficient in the practices used by law enforcement executives as they make key personnel decisions, in an effort to identify any potential areas for improvement, and to offer solutions if such issues were discovered.

The results of this research affirmed the initial point of inquiry offered for this study regarding the occurrences of personnel-task-supervision misalignments resulting from selection processes for promotions or specialty assignments. The chief law enforcement officers interviewed provided numerous examples and responses that

indicated the presence of the types of misalignments described. The conversations also provided evidence that these misalignments occur because of gaps in practice related to the application of the different components described in the *Situational Leadership*® model that included consideration of the readiness and developmental aspects expressed in constructive stage development theory.

Essentially, through their responses and examples, the chief law enforcement officers provided evidence that the proper application of *Situational Leadership*® and constructive stage development can inform leader decision-making, resulting in improved outcomes for leaders and followers. However, they also provided evidence that the current selection processes in use do not adequately address factors such as task complexity and officer developmental level, leading to an inability to engage the proper leadership style or to apply an appropriate level of guidance and support, consistently and purposefully, and from an informed perspective.

Themes and Gaps in Practice

After a critical analysis of the data from the study, I identified the following general themes: (a) selection and assessment processes; (b) development; (c) leadership application; (d) leader decision-making; and (e) best practices. Themes (a) through (d) relate to gaps in practice while theme (e) is a solutions-based theme. In analyzing each of these thematic categories for gaps in practice, I generated four *Gaps in Practice Themes*: (a) subjective data and interpretation, (b) categorization of developmental levels, (c) key performance areas/developmental assessment, and (d) development, guidance, and monitoring plan. Each of these themes represents an area of potential deficiency that a

new model or process might improve, and these themes, used in combination, provide the foundation for this project. The following is a brief summary of the findings for each

Gaps in Practice Themes:

- Subjective data and interpretation: Current processes for selection contain potential flaws, which may contribute to role or task failure. The various informal processes and practices used generate significant amounts of subjective data, and this data may be inaccurate or incomplete, leading to uninformed decisions.
- Categorization of developmental levels: The current processes in use do not identify the developmental stages of police personnel, and consequently, these selection processes do not consider officer developmental levels as a part of the decision process. This presents a problem in accurately assessing the individual's skills for a proposed task or role, and it prohibits determining their general developmental needs within the proposed position. Secondly, a lack of understanding of these levels eliminates the possibility of focused development of personnel in advance of an assignment to an elevated position or specialty assignment.
- Key performance areas/developmental assessment: Current processes in use do not comprehensively identify the key areas of performance for given tasks, there is no mechanism for evaluating the developmental levels of staff, and there is no mechanism to compare these two elements, which may contribute to task or role failure. The inability to identify the capability of a staff member

with respect to a critical area of performance for a specific job or task also eliminates the ability to provide the proper level of developmental support to the person.

- Development, guidance, and monitoring plan: Current processes do not provide a formal mechanism for applying an appropriate supervision style to individuals in roles, which rely on an analysis of their developmental needs, and the level of support they require in consideration of the assignment. This lack of structure precludes an organized method of monitoring the individual in the assignment, which can lead to task or role failure.

The Need for a New Model

The participants from this study clearly understand the elements that comprise the exercising of leadership through a contingency-based model like *Situational Leadership*®, including the aspect of personnel developmental levels. However, the gaps in practice identified indicate that additional attention and focus on each of these elements will contribute to a greater likelihood of follower success with respect to tasks and roles.

In order to exercise the *Situational Leadership*® model, leaders and decision makers must first come to a firm understanding of the situation or the specific parameters of the work to be completed. Whether referred to as a job, a specialty assignment, a complex task, or anything else, the decision maker needs to know what the key aspects of performance are for each potential assignment. The second aspect of the *Situational Leadership*® model involves an examination of the follower's developmental level. The

chief law enforcement officers that participate in this study indicated that, they understand that officers or supervisors may pass through or reside, within varied developmental levels. However, the selection and assessment processes described do not provide mechanisms to identify or quantify these levels, nor do they provide processes through which assessment of staff can occur in relation to their current state of development.

The final aspect of the *Situational Leadership*® model involves engaging an appropriate leadership style in relation to the developmental level of the individual, one that compares the individual's readiness to perform the task to the assignments made. However, without an understanding of the developmental level of the individual and the key performance areas associated with a given task, it is not possible to determine an appropriate level of oversight. Because the current processes do not generate an understanding of these factors, the typical result is a style of supervision that is subjectively determined, and one, which may or may not match the actual need. Further, even when decision makers identify these elements, the current processes described do not define supervision plans that account for developmental needs, and expanded levels of guidance and support. Thus, these findings suggest the need for a new model that more specifically and intentionally engages these aspects. The following information provides a discussion concerning the foundation for constructing a new model that addresses these needs.

Career Stages and Development Levels

A number of researchers have examined career stages and individual developmental levels, and these studies have used a variety of frames of inquiry. In their research from a general perspective, Super and Hall (1978) found that there are “various stages that a person goes through as his or her career develops in work organizations” (p. 351), explaining that these can include early, midcareer, obsolescence, and late career, among others. In a qualitative study by Sanders (2010) that examined police chiefs’ perspectives on good policing by officers, one chief described policing as a three-stage process. He indicated that the first stage is the *Hollywood or arrest stage* and that this lasts about a year or two. Following this stage, officers ascend to the *technical skills stage* in which officers build skills through training and experiences. The third stage is the *management stage* where officers recognize that the purpose of policing is broader, and that it is about serving the community (p. 128-29).

Looking at developmental levels from a leadership perspective, DeChurch, Hiller, Murase, Doty, and Salas (2010) parsed leaders into three categories: low-level, mid-management, and top-level (p. 1070). Kaiser and Craig (2011) made a similar distinction, separating leaders into the categories of first-line supervisors, middle managers, and executives. They also offered a litany of characteristics that are associated with each leadership job level, and they suggested that leader behavior and skill requirements are different at the varied levels of leadership and that these vary based on a qualitatively different need as determined by the level.

Kaiser and Craig (2011) also found that certain leadership characteristics were discontinuous, meaning that as leaders ascend to higher levels of leadership, even as new skills are desired and developed, certain skills that were required at earlier levels are no longer needed and that they may be abandoned (or minimized). In a study that examined leadership skills across varied positions, De Meuse, Dai, and Wu (2011), like Kaiser and Craig, found that the skill needs of leaders tend to change as leaders ascend through higher levels of leadership. De Meuse et al. explained that as leaders move up through the hierarchy, they require less in the way of technical skills, noting that in moving from supervisor to middle manager, people skills become most important, and that from middle manager to executive, strategic skills are most important.

Based on a study that examined ideal leadership behaviors in police leaders, Andreeschu and Vito (2010) offered three levels of police leadership: first-line supervisors, middle managers, and senior leadership. Similar to Kaiser and Craig (2011) and De Meuse et al. (2011), Andreeschu and Vito described different skill needs in association with varied positions. Within these categorical silos, leaders are reportedly responsible for developing and sharing the organizational vision (senior), team building, mentoring, and coaching (middle managers), and leading by example and training (first-line).

One concern raised in the examination of career stages is that past studies have typically relied upon things such as organizational and occupational factors, positional tenure, or age considerations, to define them (McElroy, Morrow, & Wardlow, 1999). The problem with these approaches is that using age-bracketed or tenure-based systems fail to

take into account those who enter the profession as a second career or later in life (who may be further developed), and they also fail to recognize individual capabilities and capacities which may not be tied to the passing of time.

Based on this research and the findings of this study, it is evident that police officers operate at varied developmental levels that change over time, based on experiences and shifts in meaning making. It is also clear that decision makers seek employees with greater levels of capability as the complexity and responsibility of work assignments increase. However, assessing developmental levels must occur through an examination of traits and behaviors that result from increases in understanding and meaning making, not simply based on age or length of experience. One way to understand the developmental levels of police officers better, within their career stages, is to consider the connection between constructive stage development and emotional intelligence.

Emotional Intelligence

The concept of emotional intelligence suggests that there are characteristics and indicators that are predictive of success and promotion that transcend cognitive ability and functioning and that these indicators extend beyond the technical ability of individuals to complete their work. These characteristics include personal traits such as initiative, empathy, adaptability, and persuasiveness, elements in the foundation of one's emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1998). Based on his research, Goleman (1998) has suggested that for top performers in all jobs, these characteristics and indicators, often referred to as *soft skills*, are considered "twice as important as purely cognitive abilities"

(p. 34). Additionally, Goleman's research indicates that, at the top corporate levels, emotional intelligence competence accounts for the entire difference in the separation of those who are simply performing and those who are performing at the highest levels.

Emotional intelligence is an important element of follower development because of its link to certain traits. During the interviews of the chief law enforcement officers for this study, the participants referred frequently to specific traits and characteristics that they considered desirable for candidates under consideration for a promotion or a specialty assignment. The responses of the chief law enforcement officers included references to caring and empathy, maturity, motivation, confidence, and being able to see the *big picture*, among others. Conversely, the participants made very few direct references to the technical ability of candidates, and although professional competence is clearly a desired trait, it was evident that the participants were more concerned with skills that fall within the spectrum of emotional intelligence. The participants' responses seem to align with Goleman's perspective, which is that intellectual capability and technical ability are merely a baseline expectation for demanding roles. These capabilities, while important and essential in most cases, will not likely result in excellence, without the presence of emotional intelligence.

Goleman (1998) has also alluded to the value of emotional intelligence in predicting success for followers in various roles and in promotions, and there is some evidence to support this (Bratton, Dodd, & Brown, 2011; Campbell, 2012; Ono, Sachau, Deal, Englert, & Taylor, 2011). The study by Ono et al. suggested that emotional intelligence might be particularly important in law enforcement settings, due to a strong

need for officers who can readily engage relationship skills and other skills attributed to emotional intelligence. The study also indicated a possible connection to constructive stage development, particularly as it relates to the need to manage emotional intelligence skills and cognitive skills in relation to leadership.

Goleman's (1998) emotional competence framework separates skills or development categories into three silos: cognitive or technical ability, personal competence, and social competence (pp. 26-7). According to Harris and Kuhnert (2008), in constructive stage development, "individuals move from an externally defined to internally defined understanding of themselves in the intrapersonal domain, from self-focus to other focus in the interpersonal domain, and from simplicity to complexity in the cognitive domain" (p. 49). A clear connection between emotional intelligence and constructive stage development can be seen when the categories of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive as expressed by Harris and Kuhnert, are overlaid with Goleman's emotional competence framework (see Figure 4).

	Developmental Stage	→	Developmental Stage
Personal Competence Intra-Personal Domain	Externally Defined Self	→	Internally Defined Self
Professional Competence Cognitive Domain	Simple	→	Complex
Social Competence Inter-Personal Domain	Self Focus	→	Others Focus

Figure 4. Domains and developmental shifts.

Human Development

From a leadership standpoint, it is important to recognize that follower development has two dimensions, the current developmental level of the follower, and the process through which individual development occurs and/or is encouraged. Understanding individual developmental levels aids decision makers in assessing staff capability in relation to assignments, it provides leaders with information concerning appropriate supervisory guidance and leadership styles, and it helps leaders identify areas of growth for followers. However, although understanding the developmental level of followers is valuable and it is connected to decision-making and supervisory style, it is also a critical element in engaging in the process of human development.

Leaders need to understand how human development occurs and what their role is in that process because leaders need followers to learn, grow, and develop so that they can take on greater levels of responsibility in the future. Follower growth and

development are also important so that leaders can reduce their level of oversight and guidance over time. This is not only valuable for organizational health and individual growth, it is also necessary because leaders have a limited amount of time and resources, and they cannot sustain a high level of supervision for each staff member indefinitely.

The theory of constructive stage development (Kegan, 1982, 1994) provides both an overview of the elements and aspects of the different developmental levels that individuals may pass through during their lives, and it describes the process of development. In his theory, Kegan has explained that human development occurs through the individual constructing new understandings of the world and that this type of meaning making leads to an internal reorganization of the person.

Although it is evident that development involves a change in an individual's perspective of the world, theorists disagree about how this occurs. However, based on the extensive theory that has emerged and research in this area, it is evident that development occurs in different manners (DeRue & Wellman, 2009; Greyvenstein & Cilliers, 2010; Hatch, 2010; Kegan, 1982, 1994; Laske, 2008; Meyer & Land, 2005; Mezirow, 1991; Vurdelja, 2010; Yip & Raelin, 2011). Irrespective of the debate concerning how development occurs, Valcea et al. (2011) have suggested that psychological development occurs only within one of two categorical dimensions: ontic, which involves natural development that occurs over time, and agentic, which includes development that is prompted and promoted through human intervention. The notion of agentic development is significant because it supports the proposition that human development can be prompted intentionally, aligning with Laske's (2008) suggestion that each individual has

a current capability based on the individual's current developmental level and a potential capability which describes what the person might be able to accomplish given the right developmental level, direction, and support.

Peace Officer Performance and Development

In order for staff members to grow, they must be open to it, and in the right position for growth. It is important for leaders to understand that people will have different orientations to learning, meaning that some will be inclined toward learning in general, and toward complex learning, while others may not be so inclined at (DeRue & Wellman, 2009). Participants in this study described this same issue, explaining some officers simply choose not to grow. However, even when people are open to growth, they must make a decision to take the initiative to develop, and leaders must promote and guide followers along the proper path for growth.

However, openness to growth and the individual decision to engage in that effort does not necessarily ensure that growth will occur. One reason for this is that not all individuals are operating at the same developmental level. Helsing, Howell, Kegan, and Lahey (2008) have suggested that professional development programs should take this type of disparity into account, but Avolio and Hannah (2009) have explained that many leadership development programs fail to account for the developmental readiness of would-be leaders, and, as a result, the attempts to aid in their development may not produce the desired results.

In order to ensure growth for personnel and to position followers for such growth, leaders must engage a deliberate and well-constructed process (Avolio & Hannah, 2009;

Valcea et al, 2011). There is some evidence to support the idea that focused attention on growth areas can lead to development in police officers (Miller, Watkins, & Webb, 2009), and others (Kaiser, McGinnis, & Overfield, 2012; Marshall, 2009; Pinkavova, 2010) have suggested that development of police officers can be encouraged through intervening efforts. Agentic development, which can occur through coaching and mentoring, can result in the person achieving vertical growth and in transitioning to a new level of developmental consciousness. Tying *Situational Leadership*® to these types of developmental interventions, Yip and Raelin (2011) explained, "The concept of *Situational Leadership*® has the potential to transform the practice of leadership towards one that is sensitive to context and person-environment interactions" (p. 16). Expanding this point, Schafer (2009) has suggested that development of officers can also occur by assigning them projects to complete that are challenging but within their capacity, expanding these responsibilities to include more complex tasks, as their experience and development improves.

In discussing leadership development, Schafer (2009) has suggested that police agencies should work to develop leadership skills throughout each officer's career. Leaders have a responsibility to assist in officer development processes, and the respondents in Shafer's study acknowledged this, suggesting that the value of "this learning would be enhanced through the guided application" of leadership skills (p. 246). This is true even in cases where the officer has no desire or likelihood of ascending to a formal leadership position. Schafer's remarks are suggestive of a pattern of continuous growth (in the leadership area) throughout an officer's career, but this same philosophy

may transfer to a process in which the nourishing of officer's general development occurs over time.

Given this research, this project includes a development and supervision plan which, when used with the other tools provided in this project, will assist leaders in identifying areas of needed growth for followers, and in structuring a plan to help them develop while in role, or in preparation for a future role.

Decision-Making

Leaders face important decisions on a daily basis and these decisions can have a great impact on the organization, including how others judge the leader in relation to those decisions (Eberlin & Tatum, 2008). Decision-making involves a process that engages a series of steps that ultimately produces a conclusion through “selecting an alternative from among those available” (Kao H., Kao S., Chen, & Chiu, 2012, p. 2). The chief law enforcement officers participating in this study provided several examples of personnel decisions that were made that did not produce positive results, whether their own, or those of others.

The participants from the study described several situations in which they used an intuitive approach that relied on their instincts or hunches, or a dependent approach in which they sought advice and relied on others as part of their decision-making processes. Both of these approaches are susceptible to poor outcomes, due in part to their subjectivity and a lack of established criteria for consideration. Sanders (2010) explained that there is a lack of clarity as to what constitutes good performance by police officers, and that these criteria can vary based on the community they police, or the vantage point

of the person making the assessment. Following a similar track, Sy (2010) reported that there is research that suggests that leaders' perceptions of followers can influence personnel decisions. This type of influence can result from performance ratings that are artificially high or low, due to positive or negative rater bias, or they may relate to the lack of a relationship between the leader and the follower.

Milkman, Chugh, and Bazerman (2009) explained that poor or incorrect decisions based on limited or poor information can have significant implications and that, errors in judgment and in decision-making, can be very costly. To combat this they suggest that considering decision-making as a two-tiered system can help explain the variations in decisional processes. The first tier of this system relies on "our intuitive system, which is typically fast, automatic, effortless, implicit, and emotional" (p. 380). The second tier "refers to reasoning that is slower, conscious, effortful, explicit, and logical" (p. 380). Milkman et al. have offered that one way to reduce decisional errors and to improve decision-making is to shift people from first-tier to second-tier decisional processes, which engage more formal methods and which have a greater likelihood for positive outcomes. The model offered through this project encourages second-tier decision-making by law enforcement executives.

Situational Leadership® and Decision-Making

Leaders must understand the general components related to decision-making, but leaders also need to recognize how aspects of *Situational Leadership*® integrate with these processes. Appelt, Milch, Handgraff, and Weber (2011) have suggested that the issues of time constraints, cognitive load, and social context, all impact leader decision-

making. *Situational Leadership*® also relates to decision-making in other ways. Vroom and Yetton's decision-making model (as cited in Jago & Vroom, 1980) expressed four styles that a leader can use: autocratic, consultive, group, and delegation. These four styles align respectively with the leadership styles of telling, selling, participating, and delegating as described in the *Situational Leadership*® theory (Guest et al., 1986).

In their study, Yip and Raelin (2011) indicated that although the participants entered the study with a basic view of leadership, they reported that, after their introduction to the *Situational Leadership*® model, they had gained a different perspective, and they found themselves considering situational and contextual factors in relation to their decisions. The researchers suggested that this shift in thinking was both transformational and irreversible, in that, students' knowledge concerning leadership skills no longer relied on a single focus, but rather the process had expanded their knowledge in an irreversible manner.

Leader development is also a component of decision-making. Florio (2008) has suggested that the body of research on constructive development related to leadership indicates that leader developmental levels affect ethical and other decision-making. Additionally, Campitelli and Gobet (2010) have explained that there is a distinct difference between how novices and experts make decisions in areas that are within their domain and scope (p. 359). They have also argued that experience adds efficiency to the decision-making process, and experienced individuals are more capable of quickly discarding untenable solutions.

Key Performance Areas

The findings of this study demonstrate that identifying key performance areas related to tasks or assignments are an important part of the decision-making process. Despite the fact that it is widely accepted that identifying key objectives is a critical component in making decisions concerning significant issues, Bond, Carlson, and Keeney (2008) found that initially when faced with a decision, decision makers consistently failed to identify nearly half of the relevant objectives they were later able to identify and determine were relevant to the decision. This is problematic because job fit, which expresses the compatibility of the follower with the job based on their knowledge, skills, and abilities, and their self-efficacy as well as their motivations and desires, can be helpful in predicting success (Indartono, Chiou, & Chen, 2010). When decision makers do not fully identify or consider these factors, the predictability for failure is increased.

In order to improve decision-making, Bond, Carlson, and Keeney (2010) have indicated that decision makers should engage a process that defines objectives. In a prior study, Bond et al. (2008) suggested that the use of *master lists*, could improve the identification of key objectives. They also suggested that the inclusion of multiple persons in decision-making processes could help expand the list of identifiable objectives, thereby improving the potential for a successful decision and outcome.

According to Commons (2008), “each task’s difficulty has an order of hierarchical complexity required to complete it” (p. 307). DeRue and Wellman (2009) have suggested, "Organizations should compare an individual’s current skills and capabilities to those required by the experience and then deploy the individual to

experiences that challenge those skills and capabilities but do not overwhelm the individual" (p. 870). They have argued that decision makers should assess the abilities of followers, and the requirements of the challenge at hand, placing followers in a developmental-challenge position that allows for them to stretch as far as they are comfortable without being overwhelmed. In essence, decision makers should consider the task complexity and the individual's capability, and then provide the right amount of guidance and support.

A New Process Model

The results of this study indicate that decision makers will benefit from a new model that aids in decision-making processes relative to promotions and specialty assignments for personnel. The reason for this is that the selection processes and applied decision-making models typically in use often do not involve rational or discovery-based decision-making processes, and they typically involve a high degree of subjectivity, which makes them prone to a greater probability for decisional failure. By adding a mechanism to assess task or assignment outcomes and/or objectives, and individual developmental levels relative to a proposed assignment, this project adds objective data to the decision-making process, which will improve the potential for successful follower outcomes.

The solutions offered through this project involve a model that provides a series of tools that decision makers can use, together or independently, as part of personnel assignment decisions related to complex jobs or tasks, or for other leadership purposes such as performance monitoring, development of personnel, and/or succession planning.

The tools offered as part of this project address each leg of the *Situational Leadership*® model. They provide for assessment of individual developmental levels, an analysis of task complexity in relation to the individual proposed to complete the task, and a mechanism for determining and applying the proper leadership style and for structuring a guidance and support plan for the follower. The remainder of this section describes each of the tools and their application.

Personnel Assignment and Compatibility Assessment Model

The personnel assignment and compatibility assessment model describes the new process as a whole. The personnel assignment and compatibility assessment model involves engaging a series of tools and steps as part of the process of consideration of one or more individuals for a promotional process, specialty assignment, or for any complex task or duty. The depth to which this process is used is up to the agency to determine and will likely vary depending upon the significance of the assignment and the level of customization applied. The personnel assignment and compatibility assessment model includes using the peace officer development matrix to assess follower developmental levels, the key performance area worksheet for task assessment, and the development and support plan for structuring a support plan tailored to the individual within their role.

I designed the tools in the personnel assignment and compatibility assessment model for collective or independent use, depending upon the agency's need. In addition to using the personnel assignment and compatibility assessment model for selection or assignment processes, if there is a performance concern, decision makers can use any

component of this process to assess the work of a staff member within their current assignment. I have described each of these tools and their respective uses in detail below.

Peace Officer Development Matrix

Using Kegan's constructive stage development (1982, 1994) theory and Goleman's theory of emotional intelligence (1998) as a framework, I created a developmental model for peace (police) officers for this project. The model, called the peace officer development matrix, details and describes five developmental categories that peace officers may travel through during their careers: novice, developing, intermediate, accomplished (leadership), and advanced (executive) (see Appendix A). The data within this matrix emanates from the literature, the responses of the participants, and my own experiences as a law enforcement executive and law enforcement executive trainer. Like Kegan's constructive stage development theory, the peace officer development matrix is progressive, and officers move through the developmental stages in a linear fashion, based on their level of meaning making and the complexity of their world view, rather than on age (or years of career experience) plateaus.

I have separated the peace officer development matrix into three different domains, cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal, for each of the five developmental stages. Within each of these domains, and in a linear fashion through the stages, the traits and characteristics progress respectively as described by Harris and Kuhnert (2008), from simplicity to complexity, from externally defined to internally defined, and from self to other focus. These transitions are visible in the Peace Officer Development Matrix – Theoretical Framework diagram (see Figure 5).

PEACE OFFICER DEVELOPMENT MATRIX – THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

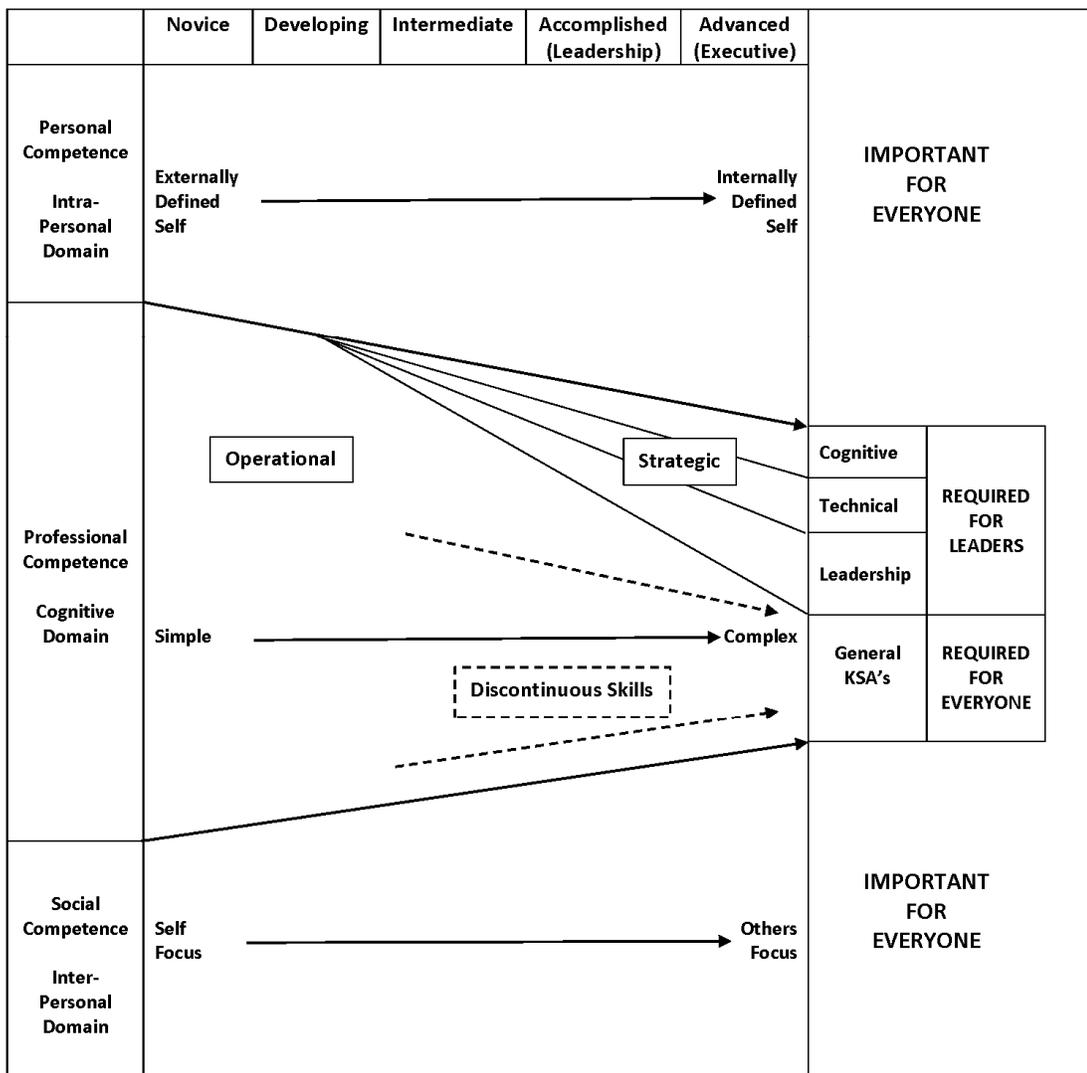


Figure 5. The peace officer development matrix theoretical framework

This theoretical framework, used as an aid in the development of the peace officer development matrix, also provides a visual expression of the subcategories within the professional competence or cognitive domain. Although not every individual that progresses to the advanced stage of this model will be in a position of formal leadership, those who develop to this level will have reorganized their technical skills within the cognitive domain. This amounts to a shifting these skills from an operational perspective to one that is strategic in nature, and one that is more focused on leadership-related skills (see Figure 6). Through this process, technical skills that are associated with operational needs tend to diminish in value (discontinuous skills) as the need for these skills reduces and the need for leadership skills increases.

Professional Competence (Cognitive Domain)	Cognitive Skills	The ability to exercise intellectual functioning in one's work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical and creative thinking • Judgment • Problem-solving • Decision-making
	Technical Skills	Knowledge, skills and abilities needed to perform one's work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KSAs: The capacity to apply job relevant knowledge, job specific skills, and one's unique abilities, in relation to a work assignment.
	Leadership Skills	Competencies associated with leadership: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic thinking: Proactive thinking considering broad implications • Broad focus (big picture): Leader perspective • Visioning: Setting direction, expectations, and organizational values • Leadership style: Appropriate style, guidance, and support • Ownership: Responsibility and reflective accountability

Figure 6. Professional competence in the cognitive domain

Explanation of developmental levels. Within the peace officer development matrix, there are five levels: novice, developing, intermediate, accomplished, and advanced. Like the domain shifts expressed in constructive stage development, the same types of domain shifts occur in peace officers as they travel through these developmental levels. Similar to constructive stage development, not all peace officers will pass through

each developmental level. This can be the result of a lack of motivation or a lack of ability, or both. When peace officers do transition from one level to the next, it is generally the result of a shift in the intra- and inter-personal domains, as well as a change in their cognitive processing and meaning making related to their experiences. For motivated officers, hastening of these shifts can occur through developmental coaching, mentoring, and guidance. This next section provides a general description of the major developmental levels associated with career police officers.

Novice. The novice stage is where all peace officers begin their career. Because they are learning at a rapid pace and most things are new to them, they are highly motivated, inquisitive, and engaged in learning, but they lack confidence in their judgment, skills, and abilities. These individuals tend to be very process oriented and rigid in their approach, and they lack an understanding of how discretion applies in a law enforcement setting. These officers are prone to mistakes, lack creativity and problem-solving capabilities, and are unable to process complex problems. Their focus is on themselves and they lack self-awareness. Although they are aware of the organizational mission, vision, and goals, they do not see the connection between these aspects and their actions.

Developing. As officers leave the novice stage, they enter the developing stage. Officers in this category are developing competency in their job skills and they are more confident in organizational processes. These officers develop improved self-confidence, and are less reliant on other officers and supervisors. They remain highly motivated to learn and seek out additional training opportunities. Officers in this category make fewer

mistakes, and increase their capability in managing complex problems and issues. These officers remain highly motivated and are able to begin exercising discretion as a part of their job duties. Relationships and peers are a driving force for these officers, heavily influencing their actions and decisions.

Intermediate. At this point in their careers, police officers are motivated to develop professional mastery of policing skills, and they will seek advanced training opportunities. They see policies and procedural rules as guiding principles for carrying out their job, but they also recognize the need to be flexible in their approach to problems they encounter. These officers fully understand discretion, and they exercise solid judgment in their decision-making. Officers in this category see problems before they occur and use critical and creative thinking in seeking solutions. They display leadership characteristics in the performance of their duties and become informal leaders within the organization. These officers are fully competent, typically do not make mistakes, and require little or no supervision. They collaborate, build relationships, and recognize their own shortcomings.

Accomplished (leadership). Although this stage of development includes the word leadership, not everyone who ascends to this stage will become a formal leader. Officers in this stage recognize their desire to lead, but they may not necessarily be in formal leadership positions. The defining characteristics of this stage are that these officers have changed the focus from themselves to others, and they have an increased awareness of the needs of others. They will engage in proactive problem solving but generally do so from a divisional perspective. The leadership and decision-making of

these officers is highly susceptible to influence by others, and they do not readily recognize the cross-categorical implications of their actions and decisions. Although they understand the value of the organizational mission, vision, and goals, they still see these aspects through a divisional lens and lack full organizational focus.

Advanced (executive). The final stage of police officer development is the advanced level. Individuals in this category need not be in positions of formal leadership, but, because of their potential value, they should be in advanced leadership roles. These officers are motivated to leave a legacy and recognize the mission, vision, core values, and organizational philosophy and goals to be of paramount importance. They look at the organization as a single unit and problem-solve from this perspective. These individuals are always looking to improve themselves, and they are constantly alert for ways to improve others and the organization. They collaborate well and value everyone, internally and externally. They use their skills to work with and to assist others. These individuals make decisions from an operational perspective, with forethought and input, but without undue emotional influence; these leaders chart their own path.

Peace officer development matrix use, applications, and implications. The peace officer development matrix is a multi-functional tool that can be engaged in a variety of ways. Decision makers can use the peace officer development matrix as a part of the personnel assignment and compatibility assessment model, as a personnel evaluation tool for evaluating an individual within a role, to evaluate an individual's performance and development in general, or as an assessment tool for personnel development.

Using the peace officer development matrix. The design of peace officer development matrix suggests using it in the form of a checklist for each individual officer. The method of use for the checklist is the same, regardless of the intended purpose. A supervisor who has a deep knowledge of the working patterns and capabilities of the individual, including how they manage themselves and how they relate to others, should complete the checklist (the accuracy of this process can be increased by having multiple supervisors complete the peace officer development matrix assessment simultaneously for any individual). For each row of the peace officer development matrix, the person (or persons) completing the checklist should review the statements, moving from left to right. The reviewer should check the box of the statement furthest to the right in the matrix, which best describes the consistent behavior or work patterns of the individual.

When rating an officer using the peace officer development matrix, assuming that the assessment is accurate, a pattern will typically emerge. Officer ratings will generally be grouped into one developmental level (e.g., novice, developing, intermediate), or they may demonstrate that the officer is in transition between two levels. It is also possible that there will be *outliers* (ratings that are high or low in relation to the primary developmental category or categories), and these are important to note as they may require additional attention and focus. Additionally, the pattern may be consistent across each of the domains (intra-personal, inter-personal, and cognitive), or it may be different for each.

Once the checklist is completed, a comparison of the results against the key performance area and peace officer development matrix, rating scale, should occur (see Figure 7). In examining the results of the peace officer development matrix against this scale, the relative developmental position of the officer can be determined, which also aids in providing an indication of the optimum level of guidance and supervision required. Essentially, those areas rated in the red rating area are in need of development, those in the yellow rating area are in need of continued and structured guidance and support, and those in the green rating area may be amenable to monitoring, with a minimal amount of supervisory effort.

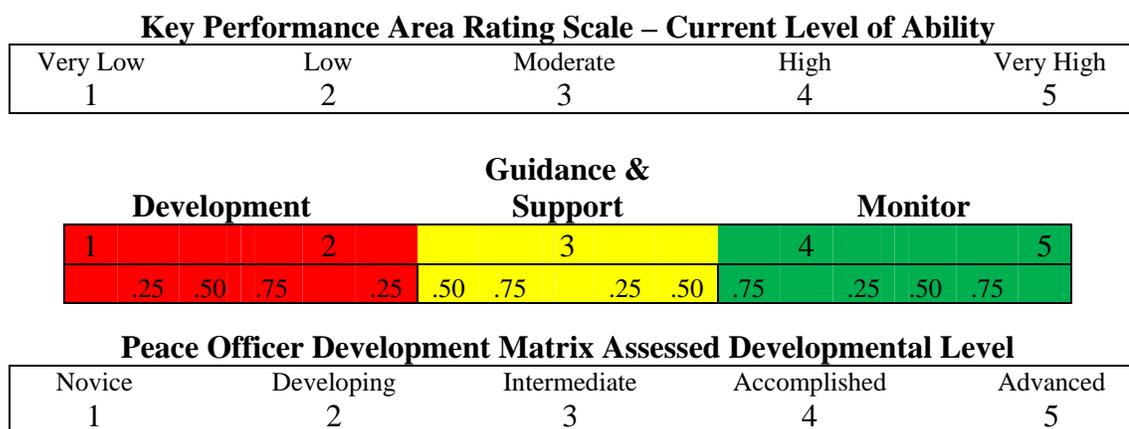


Figure 7. Key performance area and peace officer development matrix, rating scale.

It is important to note that the peace officer development matrix produces results that relate to three different developmental areas. First, the peace officer development matrix produces a view of the general developmental level for the officer based on an examination of the pattern that emerges. Although there may be variances, in all likelihood, the officer will be predominantly in one developmental level or straddling two levels. This general developmental level is important in considering the officer for

specific job assignments that might require advanced skills. For example, an officer that rates at the developing level would likely lack the required skills for a position as a field-training officer. Whereas an officer who rates at the accomplished level, would generally be considered a good candidate for a promotional position.

The second type of information produced relates to the officer's domain levels. As mentioned, it is possible to have developmental levels that are different across the developmental domains. In some instances, an officer's developmental level may be low in one domain, but high in others. This is because an officer's personal development may be unequal. If the ratings are inconsistent across each of the domains, this may represent an emotional intelligence issue that is in need of development.

Finally, the peace officer development matrix provides information concerning specific developmental areas. For example, an officer may demonstrate a significant amount of self-focus in the inter-personal domain even though the officer may rate higher in the areas of relationships and collaboration. Alternately, an officer may lack confidence in his or her judgment though he or she may rate high in the remaining areas within the intra-personal domain. These inconsistent ratings, or outliers, represent a particular area of developmental need, which may call for a specifically developed guidance and support plan.

Applications of the peace officer development matrix. There are three primary intended uses for the peace officer development matrix, although others may emerge as this tool is actively engaged in a formal setting. I will briefly describe each of these areas of application.

Personnel assignment and compatibility assessment model. The primary use of the peace officer development matrix is as a part of the personnel assignment and compatibility assessment model to assess individuals for a proposed specialty assignment or promotion. A comparison of the results from the peace officer development matrix against the key performance area and peace officer development matrix, rating scale (see Figure 7), will help to determine any areas of needed growth. Within this model, use of the peace officer development matrix occurs in conjunction with the key performance area worksheet. Any areas of growth needs identified are then assessed against the key objectives that are identified in the key performance area worksheet. These results form the basis to structure a personalized development and support plan.

Personnel evaluation tool. If there is a performance issue with any employee, use of the peace officer development matrix can help assess the developmental level of the individual. This process can also help identify any obvious areas of growth that might be contributing to the problem or that might be resolved through a development and support plan. For example, if a school resource officer was struggling with a performance issue, and it was determined through the peace officer development matrix that he or she rated low in collaboration, focus could be applied to this area (which would likely be a key performance area for an school resource officer) , leading to the potential for greater success.

Personnel assessment and development tool. Another intended use for the peace officer development matrix involves engaging the peace officer development matrix with each employee on a regular basis as part of a process of ongoing personnel development.

The purpose for this is to encourage a continuous process of development so that personnel are prepared to take on more complex tasks and roles when those opportunities arise. As with the other applications, the use of the peace officer development matrix is to identify areas of growth. The biggest difference in this application is that the focus is not on a particular job or proposed role but on the officer's overall development in general. Supervisors can use the results of the peace officer development matrix to structure an overall development plan for the officer, with the purpose of assisting them in shifting from one developmental level to another.

Implications of the peace officer development matrix. There are several implications that arise from using the peace officer development matrix in an operational setting, and they coincide with the prescribed uses for the peace officer development matrix for selection processes (personnel assignment and compatibility assessment model), supervision (personnel evaluation), and development of personnel (personnel assessment development).

Selection processes. The peace officer development matrix has significant implications for selection processes for a variety of positions, but perhaps the most significant of these relates to promotions. The promotion of individuals should not occur until they are developmentally ready, unless the agency is willing and able to provide adequate ongoing support and guidance until the person is more fully developed. Within the peace officer development matrix, those seeking leadership positions should be rated at the accomplished level, or higher. If a person considered for promotion rates

consistently at a lower level, the potential for failure without continuous efforts at monitoring and developing the person is high.

Supervision. The peace officer development matrix has great utility as a personnel assessment tool, and this has implications in a variety of areas, the first of which relates to the initial training of officers. It is important for field-training officers and supervisors to understand the capabilities of new officers. It is also important for supervisors to understand why field-training officers might suggest that an officer in training is not performing up to standards. This might be the result of field-training officers failing to understand the personal ability and development level of the officer in training. This is important because, as officers learn, develop, and grow, they can easily forget what their actual capability was at the time they were in training. Using the peace officer development matrix, supervisors and field-training officers can examine the developmental level of a new officer in relation to where he or she should be at that point in their career, which should provide appropriate perspective to those evaluating the new officer during their training period.

Another important implication of using the peace officer development matrix model relates to *Situational Leadership*®. It is critical that supervisors know what developmental stage members of their staff are in so they can manage them appropriately. This relates to work assignments, direction and feedback, and understanding why failure sometimes occurs. Supervisors should not position followers for failure, they should not give work direction to staff that they cannot accomplish, and they should not have expectations for outcomes that staff members are not capable of achieving. Recognizing

what developmental stage officers are in can help determine what work assignments they can manage, and this informs the level of supervision, oversight, and support.

In some cases, failure will occur. From a supervisory perspective, it is important to examine the issue to determine why it occurred. In some cases, the failure may be occur because of mistakes, disinterest, or other motivational issues, or the failure may be inadvertent. However, in other cases, failure may be the result of an individual who was over tasked and/or under-supervised. Using the peace officer development matrix in this regard can help supervisors better understand the developmental capabilities of the person assigned to the task or role, so that an accurate assessment can be made in reference to the cause of a failure to perform.

Personal growth and development. Using the peace officer development matrix as a personal growth and development tool also has several implications. The first of these relates to goal setting, which is a typical aspect of performance evaluation processes. The peace officer development matrix examines a variety of categories that a standard performance evaluation may or may not evaluate, but it also takes a further step. Most performance evaluations have one set of expressed criteria for a performance area. Supervisors typically assign numerical ratings to officers without a clear understanding of the variations associated with the category and without an understanding of how the officer's performance in that area aligns with his or her developmental level. In this regard, the peace officer development matrix provides a more detailed perspective that considers each individual's developmental level, which also helps define the steps

necessary for the officer to develop to the next level within the area of consideration.

This, in turn, can assist in creating goals that lead to growth and development.

In a similar fashion, the peace officer development matrix can also be used as a personal development tool to help officers understand where they may want to focus and direct their efforts in developing specific skills. Examining the results of the peace officer development matrix can provide officers with an understanding of their position from a stage development perspective, and this can help inform officers and supervisors which areas are in need of attention. This can create the opportunity for the supervisor and the officer to focus on these areas, both from a training perspective, and from a guidance and support perspective.

Lastly, the peace officer development matrix has significant value as a succession-planning tool. In many cases, leaders consider succession planning as a tool for elevating certain staff members to key leadership roles within the organization. This approach tends to neglect appropriate consideration for those who will fill mid management positions that open up because of a command-level promotion. Moreover, in some cases, promotions of officers to a first-line or mid manager leadership position may create a void in a key role that they previously held. Accordingly, leaders may use the peace officer development matrix as a personnel development tool in general, but it also has value as a tool for developing all staff in preparation of future roles, whether they are leadership positions, or in other key areas.

Key Performance Area Worksheet

The purpose of the key performance area worksheet is to identify the key performance areas for any assignment, promotion, or complex task (see Appendix B). Those with inherent knowledge related to the assignment or task, and/or supervisors generally complete it, and it describes the key performance areas required for success within a given role. The key performance area worksheet is unique to the agency and to the proposed role, and it outlines the specific areas in which a high level of functionality will be required for success. This process provides for an analysis of the task or assignment, but it also identifies potential areas of growth for those evaluated, assisting decision makers in the selection process and/or in establishing a leadership style and development plan.

Completing the key performance area worksheet. The first step in completing the key performance area worksheet is to identify the key performance areas for the specific task or role. This is a very important aspect of the process, and it requires careful effort. The objective of this process is to identify five to seven of the most important factors needed for an individual to be successful in the proposed role or assignment. This is not a fixed number, and agencies might want to add more if the role is particularly complex. However, the process should identify a minimum of five so that a proper assessment can occur. The most important part of this process is to ensure the identification of the right key performance areas. The best way to accomplish this is by engaging multiple people in identifying these success factors. This could include others

who have been in the role or who have completed a similar task, those who have supervised others in that process, and/or those that have a stake in the outcome.

Regardless of the process used, once identification of the key performance areas has occurred, as a part of that process, a short, descriptive narrative that explains each of the key performance areas should also be included. The purpose of this narrative is to ensure that those conducting an evaluation of staff relative to the key performance areas have a clear understanding of each success factor. Once this information is gathered, the supervisor or leader responsible for this process should transfer the key performance areas and the associated narrative to the key performance area worksheet.

Once created, leaders or supervisors can use the key performance area worksheet as an evaluation tool with respect to the task or assignment. Several iterations of use are possible with the key performance area worksheet. In short, use of the key performance area worksheet involves evaluating any proposed candidates for a task or role against the criteria in the key performance area worksheet. Like the peace officer development matrix, those persons who have the most specific knowledge of the proposed individual or individuals should complete this process. Again, the accuracy of this process will improve through engaging multiple evaluators. The structure of the key performance area worksheet allows for rating of multiple individuals at the same time, allowing for ease of use and for comparative analysis for those under consideration.

Application of the key performance area worksheet. Use of the key performance area worksheet can occur in three specific manners. It can be used as part of the personnel assignment and compatibility assessment, by supervisors to assess an

individual that is currently in a specific role or assignment, or as a self-evaluation tool by those in a current work assignment as part of an assessment and development process. Regardless of the type of use, there are two objectives in using the key performance area worksheet. The first of those is in determining the appropriateness of assigning a person to a particular role at all. If, through the evaluation process, it is determined that an individual lacks sufficient skills in one of the key performance areas identified, a determination has to be made as to whether the person can be developed or successful in that role despite the limitation. If the deficiency is such that it will not allow the individual to be successful, irrespective of the application of sufficient guidance and support, then the person should not be assigned to that task or placed in that role.

A second outcome of the key performance area worksheet, and similar to the peace officer development matrix, is the identification of growth areas for the individual with respect to the task or role. Again, using the key performance area and peace officer development matrix rating scale (see Figure 7), each of the key performance areas should be examined to determine whether the individual's skills are sufficient for monitoring only, or if they are in need of development or guidance and support. The results of this analysis form the basis for the development and support plan. This is true regardless of whether the evaluation occurs because of a selection process or it involves the assessment of an individual who is already in a role.

Development and Support Plan

The development and support plan includes several components (see Appendix C). It outlines which growth areas require attention and it establishes an action plan for

improvement. It also includes a supervision and monitoring plan that can be used to support and guide personnel development in one or more key areas. The development and support plan can be used as part of the personnel assignment and compatibility assessment process, or it can be used independently at any time there is a need to address developmental issues with staff. Use of the development and support plan would typically occur in conjunction with at least one of the other documents, as these will drive the elements of the development and support plan, and inform the proper leadership style to use.

Leaders should complete a development and support plan based on the assessment information gathered through the peace officer development matrix and/or key performance area worksheet, process. Each of the areas identified for development or guidance and support, based on the peace officer development matrix and key performance area, rating scale, should have a separate worksheet on the development and support plan. These worksheets will likely involve greater depth when the area of focus requires development as opposed to guidance and support. Nonetheless, creating a separate development and support plan worksheet for each of the identified areas will ensure a proper level of supervision and the right leadership style for each individual within each task or role.

Best Practices

During the course of conducting the interviews for the study, the chief law enforcement officers provided a great deal of information about their agencies and their practices. Most of the information and data related directly to the focus of this inquiry.

However, in some cases, the chief law enforcement officers related information that demonstrated what I would refer to as a *best practice*, which was not always in step with the framework of this study. In this context, a best practice is a leadership element or behavior that epitomizes what effective organizational leadership should look like.

Admittedly, the best practices identified in this project are the result of my opinions about leadership, which I have formed over twenty years as a supervisor, chief law enforcement officer, and educator, and through the course of this study.

The best practices identified, serve two purposes. First, they explain how these chief law enforcement officers are positively addressing some of the points of this study. Because the focus of this study was an assessment of the current selection processes in an effort to identify gaps in practice, it is easy to look for areas to express a critical viewpoint. However, these chief law enforcement officers do many things very well, and this was clearly visible in the comments they shared. Second, although some of the information that the chief law enforcement officers shared was not directly on point with respect to this study, they shared many examples of positive leadership behaviors. One way that leaders can learn is through the positive actions of other leaders. As a result, a narrative regarding best practices has been included with this study, in hopes that those who examine it will benefit from its content (see Appendix D).

Conclusion

Through this study, I found that, by their design, the current personnel selection processes in use for making specialty assignments or promotions within the agencies that participated in this study encourage decision makers to rely on data that is often overly

subjective, inaccurate, and/or incomplete. These same processes also do not appropriately assess the areas of development of those individuals proposed for these roles, which contributes to a variety of potential concerns. The most important of which is the inability to structure a comprehensive supervision plan. These structural limitations increase the potential for task or role failure, which can have serious individual, organizational, and community implications.

All of the structural limitations identified in this study can benefit from a new model that includes tools that address these shortcomings. The tools created because of this project provide executives with information that is critical to decision-making processes. The primary value of these tools is in aiding decision makers in determining whether an individual is capable or suited for a proposed task or role at all. The design of these tools provides for consideration of task complexity, individual capability, and one's developmental level with respect to the proposed assignment. Additionally, they provide a basis for creating a customized development and support plan that addresses the needs of the individual with respect to the proposed position. This, in turn, should contribute to a greater potential for follower success, benefiting the individual, the organization, and the community.

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Appendix A: Peace Officer Development Matrix

	Novice	Developing	Intermediate	Accomplished (Leadership)	Advanced (Executive)
Intra-Personal Domain	<input type="checkbox"/> Highly motivated	<input type="checkbox"/> Motivated to learn the job	<input type="checkbox"/> Motivated to master job skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Motivated to lead others	<input type="checkbox"/> Motivated to leave a legacy
	<input type="checkbox"/> Inquisitive and interested in learning	<input type="checkbox"/> Seek relevant training opportunities to build job skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Seek advanced opportunities for training and work assignments	<input type="checkbox"/> Seek advanced opportunities to engage in personal growth	<input type="checkbox"/> Exercise opportunities to improve themselves; are self-aware
	<input type="checkbox"/> Tremendously influenced by peer actions and direction	<input type="checkbox"/> Highly influenced by peers and others in their decision-making	<input type="checkbox"/> Place value in peer direction and advice, in their choices and decisions	<input type="checkbox"/> Susceptible to peer influence, but are also independent thinkers	<input type="checkbox"/> Make thoughtful decisions, but without undue peer or emotional influence
	<input type="checkbox"/> Consider constructive feedback from an incident-specific perspective	<input type="checkbox"/> Recognize that constructive feedback may apply in more than one type of circumstance	<input type="checkbox"/> Humbly accept constructive criticism and positively apply the information in their future actions	<input type="checkbox"/> Self-reflect and consider constructive feedback as an opportunity for personal development	<input type="checkbox"/> Are self-analyzing and adjust their decisions, actions, leadership, and communication style, as needed
	<input type="checkbox"/> Act, based on their individual perspective or desires	<input type="checkbox"/> Work for the benefit of the shift, team, or division	<input type="checkbox"/> Are inspired by a higher purpose; work in furtherance of the mission	<input type="checkbox"/> Mission, vision, philosophy, values, and goals are guiding principles	<input type="checkbox"/> Mission, vision, philosophy, values, and goals, drive decisions and actions
	<input type="checkbox"/> Lack confidence in their judgment	<input type="checkbox"/> Begin to develop confidence in their judgment	<input type="checkbox"/> Are confident in their abilities and decisions	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate confidence in their decisions, even when unpopular	<input type="checkbox"/> Make sound, ethical, and difficult decisions, confidently and decisively
	<input type="checkbox"/> Single-task orientation; methodic	<input type="checkbox"/> Organized; complete work quickly, accurately and efficiently	<input type="checkbox"/> Can manage multiple tasks; are reliable and consistent performers	<input type="checkbox"/> Innovative and accomplished, respected and trusted	<input type="checkbox"/> Competent in role, authentic and trustworthy, self-accountable

(table continues)

	Novice	Developing	Intermediate	Accomplished (Leadership)	Advanced (Executive)
Cognitive Domain	<input type="checkbox"/> Process oriented and regimented in their actions	<input type="checkbox"/> Understand the foundations for processes and their purposes, and how these guide their work	<input type="checkbox"/> Understand the role of management and the need for adopting and following organizational processes	<input type="checkbox"/> Support and promote decisions that benefit the organization, regardless of how they are personally impacted	<input type="checkbox"/> Engage in regular analysis of operational processes and work to continuously improve them
	<input type="checkbox"/> Follow policy and procedures explicitly	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop an understanding of policies, procedures, and laws as they relate to their work	<input type="checkbox"/> Recognize policies and procedures as guiding principles, and adjust their actions as appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/> Contribute meaningful feedback as part of the process of constructing the organizational culture	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify, set, and communicate the organizational values, mission, expectations, and culture
	<input type="checkbox"/> Indiscriminate in decision-making, rigidly applying the law and rules	<input type="checkbox"/> Apply discretion in their decisions on simple issues or problems	<input type="checkbox"/> Use discretion appropriately and exercise solid judgment in decision-making on complex issues	<input type="checkbox"/> Use discretion, make decisions, and take action, but without regard to cross-divisional implications	<input type="checkbox"/> Make decisions from a whole-organization perspective, considering all the relevant facts and implications
	<input type="checkbox"/> Use simple solutions in reacting to problems, without engaging the next logical steps to be completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop the ability to use creativity to problem-solve in complex issues, and to offer deeper solutions	<input type="checkbox"/> Begin to proactively problem-solve, using critical and creative thinking in developing long-term solutions that prevent specific problems	<input type="checkbox"/> Proactively problem-solve from a divisional perspective, using critical and creating thinking to address divisional and operational needs	<input type="checkbox"/> Proactively problem-solve, engaging strategic and conceptual thinking, and considering the broad organizational implications
	<input type="checkbox"/> Highly reliant on others for advice and affirmation	<input type="checkbox"/> Become more independent in work; guiding feedback is less important	<input type="checkbox"/> Require little or no supervision; become informal leaders and begin to display leadership characteristics	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete their work, lead, guide, direct, and support others, from a team or divisional perspective	<input type="checkbox"/> Apply Situational Leadership® style and levels of guidance and support from an organizational perspective
	<input type="checkbox"/> Prone to frequent mistakes, large and small	<input type="checkbox"/> Mistakes decrease in frequency and severity	<input type="checkbox"/> Mistakes are essentially eliminated	<input type="checkbox"/> Reflect upon operational mistakes as learning opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/> Analyze mistakes, take ownership, and provide operational solutions
	<input type="checkbox"/> Learn job skills rapidly	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop competency in core police job skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Learning is focused on advanced policing skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Learning is focused on leadership and management competencies	<input type="checkbox"/> Pursue excellence for themselves and for the organization
	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete their work as an independent action	<input type="checkbox"/> Identify their work as impacting their team or division	<input type="checkbox"/> Begin to see that their efforts impact multiple divisions, and in what ways	<input type="checkbox"/> Can see the whole organization and recognize the various divisions	<input type="checkbox"/> See the organization as but one part of a larger community

(table continues)

	Novice	Developing	Intermediate	Accomplished (Leadership)	Advanced (Executive)
Interpersonal Domain	<input type="checkbox"/> Focused on themselves and their individual needs	<input type="checkbox"/> Recognize that others act in a way that fulfills their own needs	<input type="checkbox"/> Recognize their actions may impact and conflict with others' needs	<input type="checkbox"/> Shift their focus to understanding and fulfilling the needs of others	<input type="checkbox"/> Recognize everyone's value; place others' needs ahead of their own
	<input type="checkbox"/> Work independently	<input type="checkbox"/> Work with others within their team to satisfy operational needs	<input type="checkbox"/> Collaborate with others and other internal teams to make decisions, solve problems, or to complete necessary work or other objectives	<input type="checkbox"/> Recognize the importance of collaborative relationships, internally and externally, and work to identify and establish these	<input type="checkbox"/> Build and maintain collaboration efforts with others, internally and externally, and use these to further organizational objectives
	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop, based on their experiences, and through trial and error	<input type="checkbox"/> Seek guidance from others as part of their own growth and development	<input type="checkbox"/> Use opportunities to guide others in their personal development	<input type="checkbox"/> Use feedback and coaching to help others develop for future roles	<input type="checkbox"/> Use challenges, mentoring, and coaching to develop others
	<input type="checkbox"/> Establish initial relationships with co-workers	<input type="checkbox"/> Develop and maintain professional work relationships	<input type="checkbox"/> Work well with others, build trust, camaraderie and strong relationships	<input type="checkbox"/> Are attuned to the needs of others, provide support and assistance	<input type="checkbox"/> Place value on relationships with others; service the relationships

Appendix B: Key Performance Area Worksheet

KEY PERFORMANCE AREA WORKSHEET

Job Task or Assignment: [Canine, School Resource Officer, Sergeant, Captain]
Rater: [Name of person doing the rating]

Please rate each of the officers listed, for each of the key performance areas identified. The rating is your assessment of the officers' current level of ability for the given task, not whether they are able to learn the skill. Circle the number that best represents their current ability.

Key Performance Area 1

Key Performance Area: [Instructional ability, Independent worker]
Details: [2-3 sentences that explain the Key Performance Area identified]

Key Performance Area Rating Scale – Current Level of Ability

Rating Scale	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Officer:	1	2	3	4	5
Officer:	1	2	3	4	5
Officer:	1	2	3	4	5
Officer:	1	2	3	4	5

Key Performance Area 2

Key Performance Area: [Instructional ability, Independent worker]
Details: [2-3 sentences that explain the Key Performance Area identified]

Key Performance Area Rating Scale – Current Level of Ability

Rating Scale	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Officer:	1	2	3	4	5
Officer:	1	2	3	4	5
Officer:	1	2	3	4	5
Officer:	1	2	3	4	5

Use the above format to add key performance areas that are relevant to the task or job assignment. The number of key performance areas should range from 5-7, depending upon the complexity of the job.

Appendix C: Development and Support Plan

DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT PLAN - INSTRUCTIONS

Decision makers may use the development and support plan in conjunction with the key performance area worksheet, or the peace officer development matrix, or both. The design of the key performance area worksheet provides for use in personnel selection for complex tasks or roles, or for assessing officer capabilities within their current role, when there are concerns over performance. The design of the peace officer development matrix allows for use with the key performance area worksheet to aid in personnel assignment decisions. The structure of the peace officer development matrix is also conducive for use as a general development tool. The rating scales below relate to the score or average of the scores from the key performance area worksheet, or to the overall developmental level of an officer, or the developmental level of an officer in relation to a particular skill area as assessed through the peace officer development matrix.

Key Performance Area Rating Scale – Current Level of Ability

Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
1	2	3	4	5

Development				Guidance & Support				Monitor				
1			2			3		4			5	
	.25	.50	.75	.25	.50	.75	.25	.50	.75	.25	.50	.75

Peace Officer Development Matrix Assessed Developmental Level

Novice	Developing	Intermediate	Accomplished	Advanced
1	2	3	4	5

Key Performance Area Worksheet Rating

For each performance area on the key performance area worksheet, a rating in the green area (3.75 or higher) indicates an acceptable skill range, which suggests that general monitoring of the performance area will be sufficient. Performance areas assessed in the red rating area (2.25 or lower), suggest the need for development in order for a positive outcome to occur, and this will require a specific development plan. For areas that receive a score within the yellow area (2.5 to 3.5), the leader should provide guidance and support, and the leader's effort should be adjusted (additional- or reduced-supervision) based on follower performance. Areas in the yellow area are likely to have a greater need for development if they are closer to the red rating area, or they may be more amenable to monitoring if they are closer to the green rating area. Decision makers should consider the appropriate support style for each key performance area.

Peace Officer Development Matrix Rating

Using the peace officer development matrix to evaluate officers will produce two types of ratings. These include the officer's overall developmental- or transitional-level, and task or category-specific levels. When the peace officer development matrix is used to rate an officer, a pattern will emerge. Officer ratings will generally be grouped in one developmental level (e.g., novice, developing, intermediate), or they may be in transition between two levels. It is also likely that there may be outliers (ratings that are high or low in relation to the general developmental category or categories), and these are important to note as they may require additional attention and focus.

Although there are no specific jobs or roles that must align with certain developmental levels, the closer the developmental level is to the type of job assignment or duty, the greater the predictability for success. For example, if an officer is rated in transition between levels two and three (developing to intermediate), promoting the officer to a supervisory position (which generally requires the skills identified in level four), may cause him or her to be overtasked, and this may lead to failure. Similarly, if an officer is new (novice), assigning him or her to a task that involves high problem-solving and collaborative efforts, and a high degree of independent work (all level three characteristics), may have negative results. Conversely, if an officer is rated squarely in level four, with indications of transition into level five, the officer may be an ideal candidate for a command-level position.

The first step in applying the results of the peace officer development matrix against a job assignment is to consider the developmental level of the officer in relation to the task or role. Is there alignment, as suggested with the command position, or is there misalignment, as provided in the prior examples? Alignment adds to the predictability for success for that officer within the given role. Misalignment does not indicate that success is impossible, but it suggests that additional development, guidance, and support will likely be necessary in order for the individual to be successful in that role.

After determining the general level of the officer, identification of any characteristics rated at a lower level than what is likely required for a task or role must occur. Once identified, these areas must be included in a development and support plan

(like those identified in the key performance area worksheet). The plan must include each developmental area considered underdeveloped for the proposed task or role.

It is important to understand that the peace officer development matrix does not generally preclude assignment of a lower-level officer, to a higher-level task. Assigning personnel to tasks or roles where there is a significant misalignment can produce success, but the amount of supervision and guidance must be intense enough to overcome any shortcomings. However, in some cases, supervision and guidance may not be enough. For example, if an officer in consideration for a school resource officer position, does not routinely use discretion or collaborate well, it may not be possible to provide sufficient supervision to ensure success for that officer. Consequently, this role may be a mismatch for that individual officer.

It is also possible to observe variations between the domains in the peace officer development matrix. For example, an officer may rate high in the cognitive and intra-personal domains, but not in the inter-personal domain. Assessing these areas can also provide a platform for officer development and growth through the development and support plan.

DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT PLAN

Use the chart below to identify the appropriate supervisory approach for each of the areas from the key performance area worksheet or the peace officer development matrix, or both. Use the template below to provide a structured response for each item.

Key Performance Area Rating Scale – Current Level of Ability

Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
1	2	3	4	5

Development				Guidance & Support				Monitor				
1			2		3			4			5	
	.25	.50	.75	.25	.50	.75	.25	.50	.75	.25	.50	.75

Peace Officer Development Matrix Assessed Developmental Level

Novice	Developing	Intermediate	Accomplished	Advanced
1	2	3	4	5

Development and Support Plan Task Worksheet

Officer:	Work Assignment:
Key Performance Area or Development Area: _____	
Supervision Style: Development – or – Guidance & Support	
Supervisor Responsible: _____	
Goal: _____	
Key Action Steps:	Timeframe
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
Additional Resources Needed: _____	
Assessment & Success Factors: _____	
Progress Checks & Revisions: Weekly - Bi-Weekly - Monthly - Quarterly	

Add development and support plan task worksheets for each development or guidance and support area.

Appendix D: Best Practices

Introduction

The research study that generated this project examined decisions by chief law enforcement officers in relation to selection processes for promotions and specialty assignments. This research involved focused interviews with a series of nine police chiefs from the metropolitan area of Minneapolis and Saint Paul in Minnesota. Although the focus of the interviews involved an examination of selection processes and decision-making, along the way, the chief law enforcement officers provided a significant amount of detail about the operation of their agencies, some of which was more oriented toward general leadership practices as opposed to the specified purpose of the research.

In analyzing the information provided, there were many points made by the chief law enforcement officers that were indicative of positive or best practices for law enforcement leaders. The best practices determinations are the result of my interpretations and opinions, which I have formed in my sixteen years of experience as a police chief, my experience as a national educator on leadership practices for law enforcement, and based on a wide body of research on leadership, oriented to both the private and public sectors. These best practices have been included here as an appendix because it is believed that they have inherent value and that law enforcement executives can use this information to expand their knowledge base regarding sound leadership practices within the industry and within their respective agencies.

I have outlined the best practices information here in separate categories, with an understanding that, in many cases, the information might fit into one or more additional

categories. I have categorized the information based on the perceived best fit with respect to the categories identified. Additionally, I have generally summarized the best practices responses within the categories. Where I used direct quotes, I have intentionally withheld the names of the contributing chief law enforcement officers in order to ensure confidentiality.

Process Validity

During the interviews, the chief law enforcement officers provided a great level of detail concerning the selection processes used in their departments, and I have included a wide range of that detail in the following sections. However, on a more general level, all of the chief law enforcement officers spoke about the need for their staffs to consider their selection processes to be “valid.” One of the chiefs summed it up very well by saying:

I think especially when it comes to promotions, people in the organization, they want transparency, and I think they’re more satisfied when they can walk into it, take part, and then come out and say, “I think I got a fair shake.”

Other chiefs described the need to set up a process that has “face validity,” including the use of objective criteria, so that those who are involved consider the process fair. From a standpoint of best practices, organizations need to establish selection processes that are fair and objective, but those that are also transparent, so that everyone can readily ascertain their validity.

Assessment

The main component involved in making decisions relative to promotions and/or the selection of personnel for specialty assignments is the assessment process. The chief law enforcement officers described many different types of assessment, both formal and informal. These assessments also covered a wide range of general assessment categories. This section outlines several assessment aspects, in the categories of feedback, evaluation, focus, and motivation.

Feedback

The use of feedback in selection processes was a commonly described method of gathering information concerning a candidate for a proposed role. Two of the agencies described the use of a document called a forced choice tool. In essence, this tool outlines several key objectives of a role or task, and some or all of the agency's supervisors then evaluate all of the officers proposed for that role or task in relation to those objectives. Those completing the ratings compare the officers to each other in order to determine which one is best suited to fulfill the role. This tool provides a series of objective factors for use in evaluating the candidates, and it engages the expertise of those individuals charged with supervising those candidates.

Another feedback method used to assess candidates for a proposed role or task involves a 360-degree feedback process. This process involves using a wide range of others to provide feedback concerning a specific candidate (or candidates). This type of feedback process typically involves both peers and supervisors. For supervisory positions that involve a midlevel or command position, the process generally also seeks follower

feedback as well. The feedback provided in an evaluation of this nature is in response to structured questions, and like the forced choice tool, it provides objective criteria for examination. A 360-degree feedback process can be helpful in the selection process, but it may also provide valuable information concerning areas of perceived need for developmental growth.

When considering one or more individuals for a proposed role or task, it can be helpful to solicit feedback from those persons either who are, or who have served in that same capacity. Because of their experience, those who have served in a specific role (or who are currently in that role), have a tremendous vantage point from which to examine those who might be proposed to do the same work. Practitioners have the best perspective in recognizing and understanding what behaviors and/or characteristics might be important to success within a given role, and their feedback in this regard can be extremely helpful. Whether these individuals assist in developing a set of objective criteria, or in evaluating proposed candidates against those criteria, or both, they can play a vital role in helping ensure selection of a suitable candidate for the position.

Evaluation

Performance evaluations. Each of the chief law enforcement officers described the importance of engaging performance evaluations as part of the selection process. Despite their expressed importance, the chief law enforcement officers also noted that the diminished value of a performance evaluation that is inaccurate. Accordingly, some of the chief law enforcement officers explained that they have taken steps to ensure the value of these evaluations. These chief law enforcement officers have taken the time to

communicate with those supervisors who are responsible for completing performance evaluations, explaining that they must go beyond a surface examination of the employee's performance, and provide a more in-depth analysis of their organizational contributions. When performance evaluations are accurate and thorough, and when they address appropriate operational components and objectives, they can provide vital information for decision makers as part of selection processes.

Traits and characteristics. Each of the chief law enforcement officers explained the importance of examining a variety of specific characteristics considered desirable for individuals in different roles. For supervision and management roles, managerial philosophy was an important consideration, as was the ability of the individual to mentor, guide, and train others. Other supervisory traits that were frequently mentioned included integrity, humility, ambition, being a team player, and a demonstration of leadership qualities. Regardless of whether the proposed role was a supervisory position, chief law enforcement officers also described a desire for candidates to have a connection to the community, the ability to collaborate, and strong relationships with colleagues, whether followers, peers, or supervisors.

Despite this noted focus on the traits and characteristics described here, the chief law enforcement officers acknowledged the difficulty in assessing them. From a standpoint of best practices, the benefit is in recognizing that these traits and characteristics exist with respect to different roles, and in taking steps to evaluate these in relation to the proposed assignment. Decision makers may accomplish this through

performance evaluations or another mechanism, but engaging the process provides executives with additional information that can aid in the decision-making process.

Self-awareness. One of the characteristics that the chief law enforcement officers consistently identified as a defining factor for supervisory roles, and in particular for command roles, was self-awareness, or the ability to self-reflect and to be aware of one's actions. In this regard, self-awareness is associated with humility and being able to accept criticism and to take responsibility for one's actions, but it is also indicative of the ability to engage in developmental growth. In describing the evaluation of one candidate's self-awareness, one of the chiefs explained it this way, "I want to hear those things. I want to hear about successes that they've had, and also failures, and what they've learned from those things." The chief law enforcement officers described self-awareness as a key characteristic, and one that separates candidates that are prepared for a supervisory role, from those who are not.

Focus

Like self-awareness, the chief law enforcement officers described the focus of the individual as a characteristic that is critical to leadership and supervisory roles. The term focus refers to one's perspective or vantage point, relating to whether the person has a focus that is narrow and related to themselves or their immediate situation, or one that is broad, and one that considers the needs of the entire organization and/or the community. Within this category, the chief law enforcement officers divided focus into two categories: focus expectations for those in a line-level supervisory position, and focus expectations for those in a command-level position.

The chief law enforcement officers explained that for each person in each role, there is an expectation of an expanded focus. They indicated that this is true whether the role is one of formal supervision, or one in which there may be a greater level of responsibility (e.g., field training officer, firearms instructor), without formal supervisory authority. Despite these expectations for general roles, the chief law enforcement officers indicated that as candidates move into supervisory positions, there is a greater emphasis on examining their focus. In describing a situation where focus was a pivotal point in a decision-making process, one chief said, “It wasn’t, in that case, who has the most experience in this particular operational area, or that operational area.” In the process described by this chief, the candidate who demonstrated a broader focus was the one promoted.

In explaining the type of focus required for those in command-level positions, the chief law enforcement officers described the broad perspective that is expected. One chief explained that this involves the need for a “whole department” or “citywide view of how their decisions could affect the organization.” Another chief said this:

It’s hard to quantify, what makes that person have that perspective, but there is an element to that, that once you see a person with that, you see it with their [*sic*] decision-making, you see it in their [*sic*] perspective, you see it in the way they [*sic*] analyze issues, and the way they [*sic*] move resources.

Despite the difficulty in assessing these characteristics, the chief law enforcement officers noted the need for command-level personnel to have a broad focus that is strategic in nature, and one that engages a viewpoint from an organizational perspective. From a best

practices perspective, organizations should take steps to assess this characteristic in candidates for promotion.

Motivation

The term motivation can have a variety of meanings, and it applies to various categories. The chief law enforcement officers described officer motivation in several ways, but those of greatest significance included: motivation toward self-improvement, motivation to take on new challenges, and motivation to benefit the organization as a whole. The chief law enforcement officers explained that, they look for those officers who are taking steps to improve themselves, and those officers who are making an effort to attend classes or to obtain additional education, in order to improve their performance. One chief explained how additional education could be a benefit to officers and the organization, “People that go after advanced degrees – master’s type of courses, or get their master’s, have a tendency to definitely think more in line with the command staff.” Through these efforts, these candidates demonstrate their desire to learn and grow, which can be important in developing the skills needed for success as a supervisor.

In addition to seeking candidates who demonstrate a motivation for formal learning and development, chief law enforcement officers look for those candidates who are willing to take on new challenges. As one chief explained, the focus is on “looking for those people that are eager to learn, not afraid to try new things,” noting that these individuals are “motivated to better themselves because it gives them opportunity, personally and professionally.” Another chief described what motivated officers look like, “They are the go-to people. They will take the next class. They will offer to do the

next project. They will run that overtime shift.... They will do anything you want of them.” These officers are always willing to raise their hand and volunteer, and this type of motivation is important for supervisors to have, because they will need to take on a variety of sub roles.

In addition to a willingness to take on new challenges and to work on their personal development, some officers’ motivation to perform is intrinsic and it is focuses on benefiting the organization. One chief described this type of motivation as “being able to be positive and passionate about the organization, about public safety, about the job that we do.” Another chief explained that the desire of these officers “wanting to succeed or contribute to the organization, or serve, is coming from the inside.... There’s something inside that’s driving them to do what they’re doing.” Essentially, these officers demonstrate a great deal of initiative, but their motivation comes from a desire to serve the organization and a higher purpose. As with the other motivational categories, motivation related to a higher purpose is extremely beneficial to the organization, and chief law enforcement officers look for these characteristics in candidates for promotion and specialty roles.

Task Considerations

One of the most important elements in exercising contingency-based leadership models, like *Situational Leadership*®, involves an examination of the situation or the task to be completed, to determine who to assign to the task, and what level of supervision or oversight might be required. There are two aspects of task consideration from this perspective: evaluating the task to ascertain what skills or demands are required to

complete it, including what outcomes are expected, and evaluating the capability of the individual in relation to the task. The chief law enforcement officers discussed these two elements, and they represent another best practices category.

Evaluating the Task

Evaluating the task is about considering and determining the complexity of the task. This occurs by examining the task itself. As one chief explained, “What is the need of the position? I think we sell ourselves short by not sitting down and thinking out; what does this position really need?” The needs of the task are important, but others explained that other elements require consideration. These include the priority of the task, potential risk of failure, whether the task involves matters outside of the department, and what the developmental level is of the person proposed to perform the task.

From the perspective of the chief law enforcement officers, determining whom to assign to a specific task should be a thoughtful process that is dependent upon the task and the person proposed to complete it. As one chief explained:

Once you say if it’s a high priority and there’s a high negative impact of failure that will go towards the more capable people. If you’re lower on those, scales now you can start taking more risks and being more supportive of mistakes to help develop people.

Another chief explained that if the task involves an operational issue within the department, delegation to a capable person is likely. Alternately, if the task involves dealing with city hall or the mayor, delegation may not occur, but delegation of a serious

task, if any, would involve a highly capable person. Essentially, part of the delegation process involves an evaluation of complexity of the task.

Evaluating the Individual

The chief law enforcement officers acknowledged that work assignments must involve an appropriate pairing of a capable person, with a task they are suited to accomplish. One chief explained that if officers “are not at the right point developmentally in their career and they get over tasked, or it’s not a good match for that, that you’re setting people up for failure, and for a difficult time, if not for failure.” The chief law enforcement officers remarked that it is very important to work toward people’s strengths and that in doing so, development can occur, which positions staff for more complex roles in the future. One chief explained it this way, “I think law enforcement has gotten more into that human side of people, understanding what their true talents and abilities are and putting people where the organization needs them.” At the same time, the chief law enforcement officers also were cautious about how this type of assessment influences their decision-making. One chief explained that it is important to engage in this type of evaluation, because if this does not occur, people may be elevated to a position that is beyond their capability, and this may position them for failure.

Leadership

The topic of leadership is incredibly broad, and this section will not cover even a fraction of the important aspects of leadership. Still, there were some notable comments made by the chief law enforcement officers that are worth identifying. The first area relates to one’s personal development as a leader. The chief law enforcement officers

explained that, for promotions or specialty assignments, they look for individuals who are committed to personal growth and development, but they did not express this sentiment as being exclusive to others. In fact, the chief law enforcement officers described the importance of continuing to develop themselves. In essence, the prevailing thought is that followers want to follow leaders who are more advanced than they are. If the leader fails to develop, and the follower ascends to the same plateau as their focal leader, there may be a tendency for the follower to lose interest (or confidence) in that leader. Accordingly, leaders need to commit to a process of continuous development, both for themselves, and for those within the organization.

Another notable leadership aspect involves the concept of mistakes. The chief law enforcement officers explained that it is important to establish a culture that is tolerant of mistakes. As one chief explained, officers “gotta know that they can make some mistakes. They gotta know that we’re gonna [*sic*] push ourselves to be better than we are.” Others echoed this sentiment, but pointed out that being tolerant of mistakes also requires that those who make the mistakes (regardless of their position) must demonstrate humility and accept responsibility for the mistake. It is through this process of responsibility and taking ownership that chief law enforcement officers expressed that valuable learning can occur. As one chief explained, this involves taking a reflective approach and asking why something did not work out as planned, and then taking the position, “Let’s not make that same mistake again.”

One of the frameworks for this study was constructive stage development, based on the work of Robert Kegan (1982, 1994). Kegan’s work relates to various stages of

human development that individuals pass through, and this study examined the career development cycle of police officers through a similar lens. During the course of the interviews, and based on numerous examples provided by the chief law enforcement officers, it was evident that police officers function at different developmental levels or stages and that these are categorically definable. In speaking directly to the point of this research, one chief said, “You can’t be the same boss for each of these four stages of these people’s career because they just don’t get supervised the same way.” This chief, expressing four stages of officer development, makes a very important best practices point, explaining that it is up to supervisors to understand the varied developmental levels of those they supervise, and then to adjust their leadership style accordingly as suggested by contingency-based leadership models.

Another best practice related to leadership involves the process of training that occurs after a promotion. In many cases, new supervisors assume their new roles without any additional training (and oftentimes without any pre-training). Although this seems rather illogical, it is commonplace within the law enforcement industry. Two of the chief law enforcement officers explained that, they have taken a different approach to this process. One chief explained:

We’ve formalized it. Here’s your stripes. You’ve got four weeks. Here’s your FTO manual. Here’s your partner and you’ll work with all the sergeants in one way or another, so that after four or five weeks you’re ready to go.

This likely occurs in other agencies, as well, but this approach represents a concentrated effort to position followers for success, rather than simply hoping that their prior skills will carry them through in their new role.

Communication

Communication, like leadership, is a very broad category with many facets, and like the discussion on leadership, this section will highlight only a few aspects. One of the most consistent messages that the chief law enforcement officers provided was one of communicating with staff concerning the organizational culture and the important aspects of mission and vision. One chief explained how this process has taken root within their organization:

I think at some points, agencies and departments in their growth; if you stick to solid values if you stick to the same message, that week in week out, year in year out, decade in decade out...eventually you hope that some of that sticks and I think it has with our folks.

Other chief law enforcement officers mentioned communicating with all staff regarding their role as leaders, and the need to understand the values of the organization, including the higher purpose of what they do. One chief explained that this is accomplished by helping people realize that they have a unique opportunity to be in service to others and that their efforts in helping even one victim, changes lives.

Another communication issue that came up several times relates to the need to change or revise different personal relationships following a promotion. The chief law enforcement officers described different situations in which a person was elevated to a

supervisory position, only to discover that the role was not what they thought it would be, and/or that they did not realize how this would affect the relationships that had established previously within the organization. One chief explained the importance of having a conversation with supervisory candidates or new supervisors, “Just really be making sure they understood, and we both understand that, you’re not one of them anymore unfortunately...making sure they’re mature enough to separate themselves from friends, peers.” Holding this type of communication in advance of a promotional process may even be helpful, so that candidates have a clear understanding of how this will alter their work relationships and roles.

In the end, communication relates to leadership in many respects. The examples here are a minimal representation of the need for leaders to communicate with staff. Describing the need for organizational communication and the need to send the right message to staff continually, one chief said, “I think it’s making sure you’re having those day to day conversations.” The point made here, and throughout the discussions concerning the importance of organizational communication, is that leaders must communicate regularly and consistently so that the message permeates the organization and the staff.

Guidance and Support

A second aspect of the *Situational Leadership*® model involves the guidance and support that leaders need to provide to staff as they perform their jobs. In this context, guidance and support refers to the range of leadership styles from delegating to directing. It refers to the amount of supervisory guidance and support offered to staff, based on an

analysis of their level of capability in relation to the work assignment. In this respect, guidance and support can occur in one of three fashions: the need for guidance and support can increase, it can decrease, or it can remain the same.

Generally, when assigning tasks, supervisors should provide some guidance to help staff understand what they need to accomplish. From that point on, the process of monitoring should begin. Monitoring may increase or decrease, based on how well the project, task, or role is being executed. One chief explained that monitoring might involve asking the officer, “How’s it going? What have you accomplished? Are you getting where you want to go? Do you feel comfortable that you made it thus far?” The responses to these questions should drive the level of supervision and monitoring that ensues. As one chief explained, “If things are going really well and going fairly smoothly, you know, the check-in’s can be perhaps a little less frequent, or a little less detailed.”

In some cases, assignments may not work out as planned. This can be the result of a capability issue, or it may be the result of external forces. When the employee is faltering, the amount of direction or support may need to increase, and if so, it is important to explain to the employee why there is a need for a change. As one chief said:

This thing is going south, and I see it and it’s gonna be harmful. This officer will be embarrassed with the end results, or this product or project is doomed. I’m not gonna let that just spiral out of control. It’s time to step in and say: “Wait a minute.”

In other cases, the situation may relate to factors that are out of the control of the staff member, even to the extent that these factors may affect that staff member negatively. When this happens, as one chief explained, “Even though your employee may be completely capable of handling it, I think you have some obligation to insulate them from some of those other influences.”

As mentioned, guidance and support is an element of contingency models like *Situational Leadership*®. Accordingly, it is up to the supervisor to monitor the progress of the individual within the work role, to ensure that things are on track, making any necessary adjustments as appropriate. This is a best practices point because, in many cases, staff members are given work assignments (including promotions), with little direct support and guidance. When this occurs, the potential for missteps is great, and the potential for harmful outcomes is equally significant.

Development

The last of the three legs of the *Situational Leadership*® model relates to the development or developmental level of an individual. This is important because one’s developmental level or capability in relation to a task forms the basis for the type and level of guidance and support provided relative to the work assignment. There are two best practices perspectives that relate to development: challenge and opportunity, and guiding growth.

Challenge and Opportunity

It is evident that police officers function at different developmental levels. Realizing this is important because it suggests that officers may improve their operational

value by engaging in processes that encourage growth. This can occur as one chief said, through giving officers “increasingly more difficult or challenging opportunities to try to solve issues, or complex assignments.” It is through these opportunities that officers will gain experience and develop, and this is true even if they are not completely successful. As one chief explained, “Even if they fail an opportunity, say it was an opportunity taken; the lesson was learned, let’s try it again and see if we can do something else.”

The chief law enforcement officers explained that giving tasks to officers provides “an opportunity for them to learn.” This can be very important because certain tasks can be a good precursor to other more significant roles, like supervision. As one chief said in reference to trying to build these skills in staff, “We really promote that for those that want to test the waters, as leading groups or leading organizations. Field training officers, as you know, starts to give you a little bit of that leadership challenge in helping the training and mentoring others.” Again, these opportunities can lead to officer development, and they can provide decision makers with a chance to observe an officer in a leadership role.

Guiding Growth

In addition to providing opportunities for people to grow through task assignments or other challenges, in some cases, an individual’s growth may need the direct support and guidance of a supervisor in order to flourish. Although this type of guidance is generally associated with a single individual, one chief explained it as a philosophical perspective that the organization should adopt:

We have to do everything we possibly can for the moment these kids walk through our door and become part of our organization to make them better, to make them understand the organization better, to understand the culture, to mentor them, help them get better, put them into the right circumstances where you know that they can be successful and build upon that.

Another chief explained the developmental role of supervisors, “You coach people to success, and you try to develop their skills so they can get to the point where they don’t need spotters, and they don’t need extra help in the basic areas.” In the end, this type of guiding comes down to an assessment of what their current capabilities are, and what they need to do in order for them to achieve the next level. When an assessment identifies an area of growth for a person, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to act as a mentor and to coach the individual into developing that area.

The chief law enforcement officers also mentioned an important point regarding staff members who may not seem to be developing. One chief mentioned the common fallacy that everyone wants to move up within an organization. As the chief explained, “One mistake that a lot of departments actually make is that everybody wants to be a supervisor, and that’s not true.” Further, the chief noted, “there are officers that start as a patrol officer and wish to remain a patrol officer their entire career, and love that portion of the job, and are great at it and do a great job.” However, there is a distinction here, which is important to note. Although it is true that some officers may not want to develop, others have this desire, but they do not develop. There may be a variety of reasons for this, and it is up to the supervisor to identify the goals of each officer and to

help the officers achieve them, including any barriers or impediments to their growth.

This may occur through coaching, mentoring, and/or providing tasks and challenges with the proper level of support.

Conclusion

The best practices outlined here are not all-inclusive. They are nothing more than a compilation of observations made during the course of this study. Moreover, they do not begin to describe the full extent of the competent and professional leadership that is clearly ongoing within the organizations involved in this study. Instead, the items identified here are merely data segments, collected from a very large data set, because they stand out in terms of their connection to this study, and because they represent practices, that seem to align with positive leadership actions.