Performance Evaluations: Creating a Structured System of Improving Performance

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CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I hereby certify that the following statements are true:

1. This paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth, quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

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ABSTRACT

The Jefferson Township Fire Department (JTFD) used performance evaluation to evaluate the overall job performance of employees. The problem that this paper addressed is that the employee performance evaluation system used by the JTFD did not effectively evaluate the performance of fire department personnel. This inadequate measurement of performance had led to lower performing employees not being addressed and high performing employees not being adequately recognized.

The purpose of this study was to identify any deficiencies within the performance evaluation system and to emphasize the importance of evaluations as a key personnel development tool. Descriptive and evaluative research methods were used to answer three research questions: What value do members place on the current performance evaluation system? Are performance evaluations the most effective tool to improve performance? What types of evaluation instruments could best be utilized to evaluate established performance expectations?

An extensive literature review was performed on the topic of performance evaluations and appraisals. Surveys were conducted of JTFD employees, as well as an external survey of other fire departments. The final element was to analyze the feedback collected from the surveys and provide additional training to our supervisors on the administration of performance evaluations. The findings illustrated that the JTFD was quite similar to other fire departments in conducting regular performance evaluations. Overall, the JTFD employees did view the process as effective although they desired changes. The results warranted changing the performance evaluation for supervisors by incorporating a 360-degree assessment component, creating a performance evaluation policy, and providing all employees with additional training.

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INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

A performance evaluation in the workplace is a development tool designed to help the employees within the organization to continually improve their performance throughout their career. In an era of increasing demands placed upon public safety agencies, maintaining a workforce that is competent, continually evolving, responsive to the needs of the customers, and exceeding public expectations necessitates a dynamic and functional performance evaluation process. An employee performance evaluation system is a key element to the long-term success of any organization with a workforce.

The problem that this research paper addressed is how the Jefferson Township Fire Department can develop and implement a system to improve the performance of personnel at all levels within the organization. The performance evaluation process in the Jefferson Township Fire Department involves communication between a supervisor and an employee that is directly under their supervision on the employees work related behavior as compared to objective performance standards. The evaluation process requires documentation of the results, along with mutual communication on expectations related to performance improvement.

Since the inception of performance evaluations at Jefferson Township Fire Department in the late 2000's, the performance evaluation system had been conducted inconsistently and lacks clearly defined performance standards. Additionally, many of the supervisors have not been adequately prepared to conduct performance evaluations, resulting is inconsistencies in subordinate evaluation ratings. This inadequate measurement of performance has led to lower performing employees not being addressed and high performing employees not being adequately recognized.

There was evidence that performance evaluations were being inconsistently conducted resulting in the inability to identify high and low performing individuals. The Jefferson Township Fire Department had many high performing individuals that were not identified through the performance evaluation process, this resulted in those individuals not being adequately recognized, rewarded, and encouraged. There were some low performing individuals that may have been a hazard to themselves and others. These low performing employees resulted in a waste of resources, rise in injury claims, increased response times to emergencies, and inferior customer service.

It was essential to identify the current state of performance evaluations prior to objectively identifying the needed improvements, if any. Performance evaluations were objectively measured against written standards that were individually addressed within each performance criterion being evaluated. Identifying the individual perceptions of the subjects, as well as the evaluators, remained an important gauge to effective evaluations.

<u>Purpose of the Study</u>

The purpose of this study was to identify any deficiencies within the performance evaluation system and to emphasize the importance of evaluations as a key personnel development tool. The results of this research were utilized to implement improved training for personnel on the topic of performance evaluations and to enhance the structure of performance measures being evaluated.

Research Questions

The research for this study was conducted using descriptive and evaluative research methods to answer the following research questions:

1.   What value do members place on the current performance evaluation system?

2.   Are performance evaluations the most effective tool to improve performance?

3.   What types of evaluation instruments could best be utilized to evaluate established performance expectations?

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

The Jefferson Township Fire Department (JTFD) is a career fire department on the

Northeast side of Columbus, Ohio. JTFD provides fire prevention and suppression, technical

rescue, hazardous materials response, and advanced life support emergency medical transport

service for Jefferson Township and the unincorporated areas of Gahanna, Reynoldsburg, and

Columbus, Ohio. Jefferson Township is primarily a residential community, with pockets of

commercial and industrial population. The permanent population is 11,086 (U.S. Census Bureau

- American Fact Finder, n.d.) that increases to over 15,000 on weekdays.

The Jefferson Township Fire Department has 26 full-time employees and 12 part-time

employees. The suppression and emergency medical service operations are performed by 3

Battalion Chiefs, 6 Lieutenants, and 21 firefighters divided among three shifts (platoons). The

department operates one engine, one ambulance, one battalion chief (shift commander), one

community paramedic, one fire marshal, and a number of support vehicles out of one fire station

that is centered in the response territory. In 2018 the Department responded to approximately

2,500 incidents, which generated over 6,000 unit responses.

Formal performance evaluations are conducted annually on all employees within the fire

department. Additionally, performance evaluations are performed quarterly during the

employees' probationary period; first year of employment or promotion. On a number of

occasions, performance evaluations have been reviewed in the course of promotional or

disciplinary actions and often, no matter the level of employee performance, they were rated as

"meets expectations" on the grading criteria. This has led to concerns about how the department

defines performance expectations and how those expectations are relayed to the department's

personnel. The goal of this applied research project will lead to the development of job

performance expectations and an evaluation system that will accurately assess the established performance expectations for members of the Jefferson Township Fire Department.

There was evidence that performance evaluations were being inconsistently conducted resulting in the inability to identify high and low performing individuals. JTFD has experienced increasing instances of low performing personnel that are not identified in a timely manner to correct deficiencies. Performance standards are permitted to remain subpar with little corrective action or accountability. Expectations are not consistent across supervisors, and the expectations that do exist are not clearly communicated to the employees.

This inconsistency may result in high performing individuals not being correctly identified through the performance evaluation process and thus not adequately recognized and encouraged. Likewise, low performing individuals may be a hazard to themselves and others, as well as a detriment to the organization as a whole. Low performing individuals, where there is no corrective action to improve their performance, can have long lasting consequences on the organization; wasted resources, increased instances of injuries, mediocrity, increased response times to emergencies, and inferior customer service.

The potential impact this study could have on JTFD is an enhancement of the performance evaluation system to maintain high performance employees and supervisors. This improvement would benefit the Jefferson Township Fire Department by improving individual job performance, providing recognition of exemplary employee performance, and become the foundation for performance improvement. By accurately evaluating performance, a system of corrective action and training can be implemented which may result in a reduction of injuries, improved employee morale, and improved customer service.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This review identifies research that has already been performed on the subject of performance evaluation systems and reflects on previous research that addresses the stated research questions. The review of available literature assisted this researcher in several different ways. First, the review identifies common themes concerning obstacles and deficiencies found in performance evaluation systems in other emergency service organizations. Additionally, the review allows the Jefferson Township Fire Department to address these themes in a proactive manner and minimize their potential for undermining the department's evaluation process.

In order for employees to perform well, they should know what is expected of them (Nink, 2015). There are a number of means that may be used to accomplish this task, however, all are similar, and in that each method requires the establishment of performance goals or expectations. One method is the use of either performance-based job descriptions or results oriented job descriptions. Each of these documents identify what is expected of the employee by establishing benchmarks within the job description itself (University of California, Riverside Human Resources [UCR HR], 2011).

Most career fire departments require a supervisor to conduct an annual performance evaluation for each assigned employee (NFPA, 2015). The National Fire Protection Association Standard 1021 Standard for Fire Officer Professional Qualifications provides the minimum job performance requirements necessary to perform the duties of a fire officer. Chapter five of NFPA 1021 lists the qualifications for Fire Officer II. Section 5.2.2 of the Standard lists the required skill of evaluating the job performance of assigned members, given personnel records and evaluation forms, to ensure that each member's performance is evaluated accurately and per human resource policies and procedures. Section 5.2.3 of NFPA 1021 also requires the fire

officer to have the ability to create professional development plans, given the requirements for promotion, for members to ensure they acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to be eligible for promotional examinations (NFPA, 2015). Each company officer must be well equipped to prepare a firefighter evaluation, but it is the organization that has the duty to provide both training and guidance for newly-promoted company officers on the proper methods of completing them. Company officers should practice their evaluation skills on pseudo employees to help develop their evaluation skill set (Hadfield, 2007).

Characteristics of a well-organized personnel evaluation include timely feedback, clearly stated review criteria, application of standards regardless of gender, race, ethnicity or age, consistency in the application throughout the organization, maintenance of thorough records, properly trained supervisors, and the use of objective criteria (Stowell, 2007). Some of the more recent performance appraisal and evaluation models deal with critical incidents, otherwise known as the necessary KSAs, to complete defined tasks found in an employee's job description (Crawford, 2003). Donny Roberts writes in Fire Engineering (2002), "First, you must make the employee understand what is expected of him. To begin the process, review his job description." To keep the evaluation process as consistent and objective as possible, an evaluation form should be created for all employees in the same job category. Most organizations tailor their evaluation forms to account for the responsibilities of the job position (Hosea, 2004).

The first research question is *what value to members place on the current performance evaluation system?* This question seeks to understand what supervisors and subordinates think about the performance evaluation process, including their role in the process. If there is a disparity in the purpose of the performance evaluation process, then points of view may vary depending on the individual's perception. For example, how their performance evaluation is used

in the future may demonstrate to the employee the overall value of the evaluation. Boswell and Boudreau (2000) found that the performance evaluations used simply as an evaluative tool often have negative connotations, whereas performance evaluations that are developmentally driven are more likely to be viewed positively. Employee attitudes towards the supervisor conducting the evaluation can influence employee perceptions of the process as well. If the evaluation causes the employee to feel defensive, criticized, or discouraged, there may be a long-lasting detriment to their future working relationship. This study identifies a very important consideration as to the orientation of the performance evaluation as either an evaluative or developmental tool.

For different reasons, employees may not always understand the goals of organizational leadership, particularly in an organization with a rank structure such as the fire department. For instance, given an organization with standard operating procedures related to the implementation and administration of performance evaluations, it is individual managers, or company officers, who actually manage these procedures (Kuvaas, 2007). Additionally, if we know that individual differences exist among the supervisors, then how might those being appraised react to the evaluation process? The findings reported in this study provide some good news for organizational leaders because it shows that 80.9 percent of research participants had generally positive perceptions of the evaluations (Kuvaas, 2007); most believed that the evaluations were fair and designed to improve performance. Based on these findings, it would seem that supervisors can be comfortable in knowing that employees appreciate positive appraisal efforts. Supervisors who are motivated to also increase job satisfaction should take actions to ensure that their evaluations are perceived as being fair. Conversely, employees who think that their evaluations are unfair may have lower levels of job satisfaction. Supervisors may also discover

that employees who feel that they are being evaluated on inappropriate or irrelevant criteria are less likely to be highly satisfied with their jobs (p. 394). This study provided valuable insight into the perceptions employees hold in a performance evaluation system. These insights about perceptions are defined and explained, and are generally applicable to most employees who participate in a performance appraisal process (Kuvaas, 2007).

The next question this research strives to answer is *are performance evaluations the most effective tool to improve performance*? A review of the available literature would indicate that a majority of emergency service organizations have some type of performance assessment system in place. These systems take many forms, from formally documented assessments conducted by supervisors to informal counseling sessions between employees and their supervisors. A common theme presented in the literature was that while an organization may have a performance assessment system in place, it often fails to actually improve employee performance.

In his 2004 Executive Fire Officer Program Applied Research Project titled *Improving Job Performance Within the City of Franklin Fire Department by Improving the Job Performance Evaluation Process*, researcher Daniel Mayer (2004) found that while the Franklin Fire Department had a performance assessment system in place, the system was not meeting its goal of actually improving employee performance. Mayer (2004) found that the assessment tool used by the department was not actually measuring job performance, that assessments were not frequent enough, and that feedback was neither objective nor goal based.

At the conclusion of his research, Mayer (2004) recommended linking the department's performance assessment system with specific criteria found in the organization's individual job descriptions and conducting formal evaluations at a frequency interval of six months or less.

Mayer (2004) recommended the use of objective criteria and goals sets, mutually agreed upon by the supervisor and the employee (p.3). Mayer (2004) also recommended the implementation of a reassessment system to benchmark employee performance improvement, and the use of a feedback system that incorporated input from numerous employees having insight on an individual employee's performance (p.3). Mayer (2004) referred to this group of evaluators as the department's "evaluation team." The most notable of Mayer's recommendations was the identification of an evaluation coordinator within the agency. This person would provide continuity for the system by ensuring that evaluations were conducted properly and at regular intervals and that the evaluation system's procedures were adhered to throughout the organization.

In his 2011 Executive Fire Officer Program Applied Research Project titled *Identifying the Criteria for an Appropriate Employee Performance Appraisal System for the Owasso (OK) Fire Department*, researcher Christopher Garrett also found that the performance evaluation system used in the Owasso Fire Department was not effective in enhancing employee performance. Garrett (2011) identified that the fire department was using a performance evaluation system that was used by all departments of the City of Owasso. The generic use of the system throughout the city handicapped its use in the evaluation of fire specific performance.

Garrett's research found that Owasso fire personnel favored a system that highlighted personal growth and development. Fire personnel also valued formal evaluations at an interval of a year or less and the use of both narrative and checklist components. Garrett's recommendations focused on the steps that should be taken to develop and implement an effective personnel evaluation system. Garrett (2011) recommended the consultation of key stakeholders to include

the department's Chief and personnel. Garrett also recommended the formation of a project team to assist with moving the project forward and to assist with its presentation to key city personnel.

A review of the literature indicates that performance evaluation systems are a failure at best in many emergency service organizations. While their failure is not intended by design, it is important to note several conditions that may hamper a performance evaluation system. In his March 4, 2016, Forbes article titled *Why are Employee Performance Reviews Such a Chronic Problem?*, Victor Lipman (2016) provides data that suggests that performance evaluations are too time-consuming for managers and that managers often view ineffective evaluation systems as a waste of time. Lipman's data also suggests that manager bias is too heavy in most evaluations systems and that this bias is not met with objective goal setting. Lipman (2016) also suggests that millennial workers dislike performance evaluation compared to other working generations and woman workers tend to dislike performance evaluations when compared to their male counterparts.

In response to his findings, Lipman (2016) provides the following advice for members of management:

"Two things I can say with certainty about performance reviews from a management perspective: 1. If you as manager don't set clear objectives and don't provide meaningful feedback throughout the year, then if you sit down once a year to do a formal 'performance review,' in all likelihood it will be a stressful, disconnected experience. May well resemble a train wreck. 2. If you as a manager set clear objectives and provide candid, meaningful feedback all throughout the year, then when you sit down to a formal performance review, it won't be a big deal at all. Just the final step in a continuous, logical process known as management" (p. 1).

While Lipman (2016) points to some of the flaws that are seen in performance evaluation systems, there are numerous subject matter experts who believe that the traditional evaluation system should be completely overhauled if not done away with altogether. They point to many of the same systematic flaws identified by the previously mentioned researchers. Second, the literature review highlights the fact that performance evaluation systems need care and attention to detail if they are to be successful.

The final question that this research strives to answer is *what types of evaluation instruments could best be utilized to evaluate established performance expectations?* This question aims to identify what evaluation tools are most effective at ensuring equity, fairness, and maximum impact (both for the organization and the employee), in order to increase the validity and reliability of performance evaluations.

While there are many variations to the performance evaluation, in their simplest form they can be categorized as one of three types. In an April, 2017 article in the *Nile Journal of Business and Economics*, professor Ayomikun Idowa identified the three types of performance evaluations (appraisals) as: 1. 360-degree / multi-rater performance appraisal, 2. Management by objective (MBO), or 3. Graphical rating scales. Each of the three systems have their own benefits and idiosyncrasies.

The 360-degree performance evaluation has gained significant popularity in the recent years, as evident from existing literature. Idowa (2017) describes the 360-degree evaluation as a system that encompasses the views of different groups of reviewers who socialize with the organization's employees. Such reviewers include the employee's superiors (managers and supervisors), co-workers/peers, and often customers (Idowa, 2017). The process also includes the employee's opinion about him/herself and hence its recognition as a multi-source, multi-rater,

and full-circle evaluation system. The premise behind the use of 360-degree performance

evaluation is that a significant amount of performance data about an employee can be gathered

when multi-sources are used and allows for gathering of information about an individual from

different viewpoints.

   While supporting such views, Idowa (2017) underscores that the use of multiple

assessment sources helps ensure that an employee's performance is double checked (p.4).

Moreover, the 360-degree performance evaluation system is considered as one that helps in

overcoming disadvantages such as prejudice, subjectivity, and halo errors, which characterize

many traditional evaluation systems. The primary benefit to the 360-degree performance

evaluation is that the use of this evaluation method makes it unlikely that the employee is

criticized solely by one supervisor and are perceived by employees as more accurate and more

reflective of their performance. They are thus considered as quite effective in providing

comprehensive information that can be used to determine the employee's training needs (Idowa,

2017). Despite the effectiveness of 360-degree evaluation systems, Idowa (2017) identifies

several issues that prevents the effectiveness of such systems. The use of a single type of rating

system, such as numerical or dialectics in the 360-degree systems limits the ability to gather the

objectiveness of information that reviewers provide. In addition, the correct interpretation of

final results is hard as quantitative assessment do not always represent qualitative information

accurately.

   The management by objectives (MBO) type is an evaluation method in which the goals

of the performance evaluation system are mutually defined by a number of key stakeholders,

including subordinates, supervisors, and peer employees (Idowa, 2017). The process begins with

the establishment of clear objectives for the employee. An action plan detailing the way in which

the objectives are to be achieved is developed and the employee is then allowed to implement the developed action plan allowing for the evaluation of performance in an objective manner. Corrective actions are taken in situations deemed necessary as well as new objectives for the future established. As key aspect of MBO is that it stresses the importance and value of employee involvement in the establishment of the objectives and the path to achievement.

In terms of effectiveness, the MBO approach has been found to provide significant benefits to both the organization and the employees (Idowa, 2017). The MBO approach promotes objectivity, allows for a two-way feedback as well as encourages performance improvement of employees through motivation and adds significant value to productivity in the sense that employees tend to show support for goals which they agree are acceptable. A critical review of MBO, however, reveals that this type of performance evaluation is not without deficiencies. One of the main inadequacies of this approach relates to the fact that it does not allow supervisors to see how employees deal with every eventuality over the given evaluation period because the focus is entirely on outcomes (Idowa, 2017). The manner in which the employee arrives at the outcomes may not necessary represent the most efficient use of resources and allows little consideration for a comparative evaluation as no benchmarks are provided based on the changing workplace environment during the evaluation period.

Graphical rating scales constitute the most used method during performance evaluations in most organizations (Idowa, 2017). A graphic rating scale entails a performance evaluation rating in which the manager simply rates the employee on a continuum that may range from poor to excellent, depending on the characteristic being evaluated. Such scales are also considered as requiring minimal cost, training effort, and time commitment. Additionally, the rating system can be utilized for a variety of jobs. First, such scales can be used to evaluate the employee's quality

of work. In this scale the employee's ability to consistently meet the work requirements, expectations, and desired outcomes are assessed. Second, rating scales can be used in assessing productivity in terms of whether the employee makes good use of available resources, work time, and completes assignments on schedule. In addition, the employee's knowledge of the job can be assessed, including job relevant skills that are gained through education, experience, and on-the-job training.

Despite their ease of use, various studies highlight a number of limitations attributable to the graphical rating scales. First, the standardized nature of the scales overlooks the aspects of trait relevance (Armstrong, 2009). Some traits are more relevant in some jobs compared to others and hence specific workplace context should to be taken into account. In addition, rating scales may suffer from systemic advantage in which case relevant indicators of performance may be excluded and hence the inability to achieve results that are reflect the employees' full value (Woods, 2012). This often results in employees being comparatively evaluated to their peers instead of to the performance expectations and standards.

PROCEDURES

The procedures utilized for this applied research project was to evaluate the existing performance evaluation process and suggest necessary improvements based on data collected through research. Understanding what value members place on the evaluation process, and if the current methods identify accurate and consistent expectations were answered through two internal surveys. These surveys were conducted utilizing existing employees, with varying experience and training in performance evaluations.

First, a survey was distributed though SurveyMonkey® [Appendix 1] to fifteen firefighters from within Jefferson Township Fire Department to analyze their perceptions of the performance evaluation process. Of the fifteen surveys distributed, eleven were completed (73% completion). The purpose of this initial survey was to gain a better understanding, from the firefighters, on the following items:

1. What is the perceived use of the results of previous performance evaluations?

2. Was there adequate time spent on delivering evaluations and time to allow supervisor and subordinate feedback?

3. Were expectations discussed with the employee and were expectations consistent with performance standards?

4. How could the performance evaluation process be improved?

The second element of this applied research project was to gain feedback from the supervisors. The supervisor survey was distributed electronically, through the use of SurveyMonkey® [Appendix 2], to ten sworn officers (Lieutenants and Chiefs) from within Jefferson Township Fire Department to analyze their perceptions of the current performance evaluation process. Of the ten surveys distributed, five were completed (50% completion).

The purpose of this survey was to gain a better understanding from supervisors on the following items:

1.   What do supervisors perceive as the value of the current performance evaluation process?

2.   Was there adequate time spent on the preparing evaluations and to allow supervisor and subordinate feedback?

3.   Were expectations discussed with the employee and were expectations consistent with performance standards?

4.   How could the performance evaluation process be improved?

The third component was to obtain feedback from managers and supervisors of fire departments outside of the Jefferson Township Fire Department. The external perception survey was distributed electronically via the Ohio Fire Chiefs Association, through the use of SurveyMonkey® [Appendix 3]. Sixty-nine of the external perception surveys were completed. The purpose of this survey was to answer the following questions:

1.   What percentage of fire departments utilize a formal performance evaluation system?

2.   What is the frequency of performance evaluations conducted for probationary employees and for tenured employees?

3.   Are performance evaluations beneficial to improving employee performance?

The final element was to analyze the feedback collected from the three surveys and provide additional training to our supervisors on the administration of performance evaluations. This training involved a group discussion that breaks down each of the evaluation questions within the performance evaluation form [Appendix 4] individually, along with their desired evaluation expectations. This training was attended by all of the front-line supervisors that have

the primary responsibility to conduct performance evaluations. All of the referenced Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) and Policies were reviewed to ensure that performance standards and expectations were consistently understood. Feedback was analyzed to determine if an improved scoring system was needed to better capture performance variables between evaluation periods.

The group of supervisors also evaluated the intended use of the performance evaluations within the Jefferson Township Fire Department. While it was decided that the primary intention of the evaluation process is to improve employee performance, the tertiary intention of the process is to identify future leaders that may be eligible for promotion or assignments to collateral duties within the fire department. Previous performance evaluations have, in years past, been referenced in promotional processes and disciplinary actions. Though this training and discussion yielded promising feedback, further research and trialing is required to answer the following questions?

1. How will the fire department leadership improve on communicating the purpose and intentions with the results?

2. How will a performance evaluation process include all employees, at all levels within the organization, while maintaining the intended outcome of improving performance of employees?

Limitations of the Study

This applied research project was limited to the employees of the Jefferson Township Fire Department and a small segment of the over 1,100 fire departments in Ohio. As with many small organizations, individual values, relationships, and approaches to work are all variables to evaluating performance. Improving the performance of employees requires a holistic approach beyond formal performance evaluations. Raising awareness of the common mistakes and pitfalls of employee performance evaluations was the intent of this project. Those idiosyncrasies may vary drastically between organizations based upon their culture of adaptability and change. Additionally, this researcher serves as a Battalion Chief of the organization. Despite procedural steps to eliminate a potential hesitation in response candidness, commonly associated with differences in organizational rank, results may be limited by an employee's desire not to offend this researcher. Employee candidness with responses may be compromised when differing roles and rank within the organization are considered.

RESULTS

The qualitative data gained through the three surveys and supervisor training helped to capture the perceptions, factors, and desired outcomes involved in this study, and offered insights on how to address them. Each step of this project was designed to offer further refinement to the original research questions. As most of the questions within the three surveys were multiple-choice, some questions within the external perception survey were open-ended to allow for comments related to the question. It was believed that the most effective method of evaluating and quantifying these responses was to categorize responses by representative themes, and then to list the most common responses to each question, listed in descending order of frequency. Particular responses which best summarized the opinions relevant to each question were included as representative examples.

The two internal surveys both sought to provide a detailed understanding of the first research question, "What value do members place on the current performance evaluation system?" In the Firefighter Perception Survey, the researcher focused on the employees that receive evaluations from their supervisor. In contrast, the Supervisor Perception Survey was aimed at those that primarily administer and carry out the evaluations of their subordinates. The researcher felt it important to analyze the different perspectives in asnwering the first research question.

Firefighter Perception Survey

There were 11 firefighter participants in the 11 question Firefighter Perception Survey [Appendix 1]. Question 1 asked "how do you think the results of the performance evaluation will be used?" This question yielded that 64% (n=7) of the respondants believe the reuslts are intended to improve performance. Furthermore, 18% (n=2) of the respondents feel that

performance evaluations will be used in discipline and 18% (n=2) believe they will be used to identify areas of needed training. Consequenty, none of the respondants felt that performance evaluations were utilized in the promotional process.

Survey question 2 asked "do you feel that the performance evaluation process allows for you to provide adequate feedback?" 91% (n=10) of the respondants answered yes; believing that adequate feedback was allowed. Survey question 3 asked "during your last performance evaluation meeting with your officer, was there communication about items that your officer wanted to see you improve?" 82% (n=9) of the respondants indicated yes, that their officer communicated items they wanted to see improve.

Survey question 4 asked "did your officer communicate to you any work performance expectations in your last Performance Evaluation?" 82% (n=9) of the respondants indicated that their officer did express performance expectations in their most recent performance evaluation. Survey question 5 asked "do you know what criterion is used to evaluate you performance?" 55% (n=6) of the firefighters responded yes, indicating they knew the criteria. Survey question 7 asked "do you know what rating you received on your last evaluation?" 64% (n=7) indicated that they did know their rating on the last performance evaluation they had received. 73% (n=8) indicated that they were satisfied with their last performance evaluation rating and 82% (n=9) felt that their officer was confident in guiding them thought the performance evaluation process.

Survey question 10 asked firefighters how the performance evaluation process could be improved. 55% (n=6) of the respondents indicated that the department should clearly communicate the department's purpose and intentions with the results. 9% (n=1) indicated that training the officers would improve the process, and 36% (n=4) indicated "other," and provided the descriptive answers below:

- "Having it a little more personally tailored to fit the firefighter. Maybe have the office recommend outside training for the firefighter if he does not have training in his goals for the year."

- "All of the above. I believe the evaluations leave a lot of interpretations by the officers and may not 100% reflect performance. Also, using a numerical scoring system will do a better job of tracking performance improvements over the years. The evaluations seem very generic in that it is used across the board without consideration of time on or rank. Lt's [lieutenant's] and LC's [lieutenant candidate's] should have added criterion that reflect their specific SOG's and duties. I believe many answers given on the discussion items are just to fulfill the question with no real intention to follow through."

- "The current process seems to work"

Supervisor Perception Survey

There were 5 participants in the 10 question Supervisor Perception Survey [Appendix 2]. While the survey was adequately planned, constructed, and distributed, its effect was limiting because the majority of supervisors did not complete the survey. Leedy & Ormrod (2016) caution that low return rates result in research that gathers too little, and possibly flawed information, and may introduce a source of bias affecting the data. Nevertheless, the information that was compiled helps to better understand the perceptions of supervisors as it relates to the performance evaluation process.

Question 1 asked "how do you think the results of the performance evaluation will be used?" This question yielded that 60% (n=3) of the respondants believe the reuslts are intended to improve performance. Moreover, 20% (n=1) of the respondents feel that performance evaluations will be used in discipline and 20% (n=1) believe they will be used to identify areas

of needed training. Consequenty, none of the respondants felt that performance evaluations were utilized in the promotional process.

Survey question 2 asked "do you feel that the performance evaluation process allows for you to provide adequate feedback?" 60% (n=3) of the respondants answered no; believing that adequate feedback was not allowed. Survey question 3 asked "during the last performance evaluation that you conducted, did you communicate any items to your subordinate that you wanted to see improve?" 60% (n=3) of the respondants indicated yes, that they communicated items they wanted to see improve.

Survey question 4 asked "during the last Performance Evaluation that you conducted, did you communicate any work performance expectations to your subordinate?" 60% (n=3) of the respondants indicated that they had communicated expectations to their subordinates. Consequently, 60% (n=3) of the supervisors surveyed did not explain, to the employees being evaluated, the criteria that was used in their evaluations. 100% (n=5) of the supervisors met with their subordinate employees at least once during their last evaluation period.

When asked if the participation of officers in the development of performance standards leads to a better performance evaluation instrument, 60% (n=3) strongly disagreed and 40% (n=2) either agreed or strongly agreed. 60% (n=3) strongly disagreed and 40% (n=2) agreed that the performance feedback that they provide is helpful in improving job performance and in attaining the goals of their subordinates. 40% (n=2) of the supervisors disagreed with the statement that the information and ratings that they provide during performance feedback is accurate and truthful, while 20% (n=1) were neutral, and 40% (n=2) agreed or strongly agreed. When asked if the feedback that they provide during performance evaluations is sufficiently detailed and easily understood, 40% (n=2) strongly disagreed, 20% (n=1) were neutral, and 40%

(n=2) agreed with the statement. When asked if the respondents feel they have enough information regarding performance standards to make accurate judgments about employees on each performance dimension, 40% (n=2) strongly disagreed, 20% (n=1) were neutral, and 40% (n=2) agreed. When asked if they take the performance evaluation process seriously, 40% (n=2) of the respondents strongly disagreed, 20% (n=1) were neutral, and 40% (n=2) agreed or strongly agreed.

When asked the question "do you feel that the current performance evaluation process is beneficial to improving employee performance?" 60% (n=3) responded no, with no additional comments provided. No supervisors provided feedback when asked "In your own words, please describe what you believe would improve the performance evaluation process."

External Perception Survey

The external perception survey sought to provide a detailed understanding of the second research question, "Are performance evaluations the most effective tool to improve performance?" Additionally, questions were included in the external perception survey to gain meaningful insight in to research question 3, "What types of evaluation instruments could best be utilized to evaluate performance expectations?"

In the external perception survey [Appendix 3], the researcher focused on the input of supervisors of fire departments from around the state of Ohio. There were 69 respondants to the 13 question survey. 38% (n=26) of the respondants were the fire chief of their organization, 35% (n=24) were chief officers (Assistant Chief, Deputy Chief, Battalion Chief, etc.), and 27% (n=19) were company officers (Captain, Lieutenant, Sergent, etc.). The researcher felt it important to analyze the different perspectives among differing ranks of supervisors in asnwering research questions 2 and 3.

73% (n=49) of the survey respondents presently utilize a performance evaluation or appraisal system within their fire department, 27% (n=18) have no system in place and subsequently did not answer the remaining questions. 47% (n=22) of the respondents have been in their current rank for greater than 5 years, 47% (n=22) have been in their current rank for greater that a year, but less than 5 years, and 6% (n=3) have been in their present rank for less than 1 year.

94% (n=44) of the respondents answered that the primary goal of a performance evaluation is to help improve firefighter performance. 77% (n=36) of the respondents believe that the performance evaluation process allows for them to provide adequate feedback to their subordinates. When asked "how frequent are performance evaluations completed within a probationary period? (for the purpose of this survey, probationary period is defined as the first 12 months after appointment)," 38% (n=18) conduct them 4 or more times, 32% (n=15) administer evaluations two or three times, and 30% (n=14) perform evaluations once in the employees' probationary period. Following the probationary period, 89% (n=42) conduct evaluations annually, while 9% (n=4) do no performance evaluations or rarely follow through with established frequencies.

During the last performance evaluation that the respondents performed, 87% (n=41) communicated items to their subordinate that they wanted to see improve, 89% (n=42) communicated work performance expectations to their subordinates, and 74% (n=35) explained the criterion that was used to evaluate the employee's performance. 62% (n=29) of the supervisors met with their subordinate employees once during their last evaluation period, while 38% (n=18) met two or more times with subordinate employees within their last evaluation period.

When asked if the participation of officers in the development of performance standards leads to a better performance evaluation instrument, 91% (n=43) agreed or strongly agreed. 83% (n=38) agreed or strongly agreed that the performance feedback that they provide is helpful in improving job performance and in attaining the goals of their subordinates, while 13% (n=6) were neutral. 83% (n=38) of the supervisors agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that the information and ratings that they provide during performance feedback is accurate and truthful, while 11% (n=5) were neutral, and 6% (n=3) disagreed or strongly disagreed. When asked if the feedback that they provide during performance evaluations is sufficiently detailed and easily understood, 81% (n=37) agreed or strongly agreed, 17% (n=8) were neutral, and 2% (n=1) strongly disagreed with the statement. When asked if the respondents feel they have enough information regarding performance standards to make accurate judgments about employees on each performance dimension, 58% (n=27) agreed or strongly agreed, 25% (n=12) were neutral, and 17% (n=8) disagreed or strongly disagreed. 72% (n=34) agreed or strongly agreed that they possess adequate knowledge and training to properly implement performance evaluations, while 17% (n=8) were neutral and 11% (n=5) disagreed or strongly disagreed. When asked if they take the performance evaluation process seriously, 87% (n=41) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed, 6% (n=3) were neutral, and 6% (n=3) strongly disagreed.

The final question asked was "do you feel that your current performance evaluation process is beneficial to improving employee performance?" 66% (n=31) responded yes and 34% (n=16) responded no and gave the following manual responses to the question:

- Not utilized or prioritized effectively. Our system needs updated, we lack the administrative personnel to accomplish this currently
- If the employee takes it seriously and not just to get a "better score."
- To vague and generic.

- Evaluation is outdated and does not met todays needs to provide improvement to the employee.
- Done more for procedural purposes than it is for focusing on improving knowledge/skills.
- My evaluations could be more detail specific. IE Training, EMS & Fire Performance and more specific on officers as their roles are different from firefighters.
- It helps to set goals and achieve better understanding of just what is expected of the employee.
- I think we could do a better job of following up with the employees' which are in need of improvement to let them know how they progressing.
- It's not punitive and counts for nothing at promotional time.
- No benefit to superior performance, no consequences for substandard.
- In some cases, yes, but there is still a lot of resistance to the process.
- The process is a little overwhelming for some and we need to simplify to make the process work better and get more buy in.
- No. Recent studies suggest that situational management is more beneficial than annual evaluations for a myriad of reasons.
- The grading schedule is out of date and I usually put more information in the explanation then relying on the point system.
- It isn't beneficial because it hasn't been used in years and even before that, when it was used, it rarely had any consequence to it.

DISCUSSION

The data collected of firefighter perceptions of their role in the performance evaluation process included satisfaction with their last performance rating and confidence in how their company officer conducted the evaluation process. These responses came from survey questions designed to better understand what firefighters generally thought about the evaluation process and some of their specific experiences in the most recent process. This is supported by findings reported by Kuvaas (2007) where a study showed approximately 81% of participants had generally positive perceptions of evaluations. It is likely, based on data from this study and others, that input from firefighters about the design of the firefighter evaluation and evaluation process can make a difference in improvement of the system. This data paves the way for future research related to the firefighter evaluation process.

Data of firefighter perceptions in this case further indicated that company officers were communicating performance expectation and allowing for feedback within the process. Taken together, communication of work expectations, allowing for feedback, and the aforementioned satisfaction with their officer's actions are all encouraging. These findings suggest, from the firefighter's perspective, that the Jefferson Township Fire Department has an evaluation system that is structured well. Nevertheless, the data is also clear that there is room for improvement of communications, not only in the purpose and intent of the evaluation, but also in ensuring that the criteria supervisors apply aligns with the strategic vision and direction of the department. As a stand-alone process, the performance evaluation process is not usually tied to the mission of the organization or any other initiatives designed to get the best out of employees.

The data collected from the perspective of the company officer provided insights for making the evaluation process more effective for improving firefighter and organizational

performance. Findings from the supervisor perception survey would indicate they are not as satisfied with the process as maybe they could be. This is based on their lack of understanding related to the purpose and intent of the evaluations, and responses indicating uncertainty with firefighter ratings criterion. Focusing on the identification of parts of performance evaluations that are controllable by raters is what can positively impact their effectiveness. One of the reasons that supervisors feel their feedback may not be helpful in improving job performance is attributed to lack of clarity about relevant criteria to be used and what benefits come from the process. Absent this, opportunities to motivate that could be realized from the evaluation process are reduced. This conflict may prevent the evaluation process from attaining its full usefulness to the organization, perhaps even contributing negatively to individual behavior and organizational performance.

Although supervisors are called on to be consistently fair and objective in conducting an employee's performance evaluation, it does not mean the supervisor is restricted to only a numerical assessment. In an article titled *Secrets of performance appraisal*, management consultant Dick Grote (2000) describes that supervisor's judgments are exactly what is expected from the evaluation process and that making judgments, even when all information is not at hand, is what supervisors are paid to do (p. 20). This implies that a supervisor has the capacity to think and act appropriately on the basis of limited or conflicting information. Grote (2000) explains this view by offering that employees don't necessarily want "objective" information, but simply their supervisor's opinion, what they really think. Supervisor's may need less training in how to conduct an objective evaluation and more in how to summon the courage to tell it like it is.

The disparity between the firefighter perception and the supervisor perception was rather obvious. The firefighters (subordinates) seem to place more value on the performance evaluation system than their supervisors do. While firefighters feel as if their supervisor was confident in guiding them through the process, supervisors do not feel as if they are able to make accurate judgements about the performance of their firefighters. Most of the supervisors do not believe that the feedback they provide in the performance evaluation process is helpful in improving performance. Conversely, the firefighters are aware of the areas in which their supervisor wants to see improvement and were satisfied overall with their most recent performance evaluation rating.

Kuvaas (2007) says that if supervisors fail to properly conduct performance evaluations, results in lost opportunities to develop employees. For performance evaluations to have a positive effect on employee conduct and future development, the affected firefighter must perceive that the evaluations have merit. Therefore, leaders should be aware of the need to assess the process by which they examine their employees. Based upon the firefighter's perceptions of the performance evaluation process and the supervisor's evaluation techniques, outcomes of the process can include a healthy work environment and an organization that instills pride in its workers that leads to the goal accomplishment.

The external survey concluded that most fire departments utilize some form of a performance evaluation system as a strategic tool to improve employee performance. Conversely, the formal performance evaluation process is only one piece of the process of improving performance. Oftentimes, supervisors are required to coach and counsel their subordinates on job performance issues that require immediate attention. Additionally, the evalutaion tool used by departments often fail to measure job performance, are not conducted

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frequent enough, and lack objective nor goal based. Mayer (2004) recommended linking the department's performance assessment system with specific criteria found in the organization's individual job descriptions and conducting formal evaluations at a frequency interval of six months or less. Of the data collected in this research, most departments conduct formal performance evaluations more frequently on probationary employees than they do on tenured employees. Therefore, an increasing the frequency or incorporating structured follow up sessions with all employees is beneficial.

Though a majority of the external responses yielded a positive response when asked if their evaluation system is beneficial to improving employee performance, a third of the time they are found to be of little benefit. Most of the time where performance evaluations are found to be of little value, it is the result of an outdated, vague, or generic system that is not valued by supervisors or their subordinates. Agencies should conduct an analysis of their performance evaluation system regularly and determine if sufficient weaknesses exist to require reevaluation of the process. Having an antiquated or generic process, or in some cases an overly complicated program, is likely to demine the usefulness and relevance for the supervisor and subordinate.

Selecting the appropriate evaluation tool that is most likely to produce the desired outcome is paramount. Whether selecting a multi-rater (360 degree) evaluation, an objective based evaluation, or a graphical rating system, it is important to recognize that rater bias may be both an inherent part of the process and may occur on a subconscious level. Additionally, agencies may find it appropriate to incorporate different rating systems based upon the job requirements. A multi-rater (360 degree) evaluation may be appropriate for supervisors that would benefit from self-assessment, immediate supervisor assessment, subordinate assessment, and peer assessment. A code enforcement inspector that is expected to perform annual

inspections of all businesses within their district may benefit from a result-based evaluation program such as the management by objective (MBO) method. A newly hired firefighter that is nearing the end of their orientation period may benefit from a graphic rating scale by which a performance evaluating rating checklist is utilized; rating the employee from poor to excellent depending on the aspect being evaluated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to identify any deficiencies within the performance evaluation system and to emphasize the importance of evaluations as a key personnel development tool. After analyzing the various studies and the available research, there are several items that need to be incorporated to improve the overall evaluation process for the Jefferson Township Fire Department. The first is to create an annual performance evaluation policy which will outline the department's purpose for the evaluation. It will also describe how the evaluations are used to measure performance, how the ratings will be determined, and how to complete the evaluation form. Additionally, specific sections will address how employees not meeting performance expectations will be handled through a performance improvement plan and how exemplary performance will be recognized through an awards and recognition program.

The Jefferson Township Fire Department then needs to develop a 360-degree assessment component that will be utilized when performing the supervisor's performance evaluation. The 360-degree evaluation will be completed by their immediate supervisor, subordinate employees, and peer supervisors. Adding the 360-degree assessment would provide supervisors invaluable feedback about themselves from a completely different perspective than what they are used to.

After the 360-degree supervisor evaluation is created, everyone needs to be trained on this addition to the evaluation process. Employees need to know what criteria they are being evaluated on and how it works, and everyone needs to understand the policy and process. Supervisors need to know how to evaluate the employees and what performance measures are being used to ensure a standard is met across the department. Supervisors need basic training on performance evaluations in general, such as the common mistakes, importance of documentation, and how to use the evaluation form. Additionally, when and where it's appropriate for the

supervisor to inject their own opinion; what they really think and how to summon the courage to tell it like it is.

After the new policy is developed and training is conducted, the overall process will begin. The supervisors will be more involved and take a proactive approach in aiding the employee's ability to reach their performance goals. This will begin with the evaluation meeting when the supervisor gives the employee the evaluation for the previous year. At that time, the goals are set for the upcoming evaluation period. Together, the employee and supervisor will create a roadmap to success by jointly establishing career and developmental goals for the evaluation period and how they will be measured.

Throughout the year, the supervisor will provide feedback to the employee, and get feedback from the employee about the progress and where the employee stands. This shall be done whenever the supervisor believes it is needed, but at least once every quarter. Halfway through the evaluation period, the employee and supervisor will meet for an interim evaluation. This is an unofficial evaluation of where the employee is halfway through the evaluation period to address how things are going up to that point, and what actions are needed to change. By meeting with the employees in a formal way, there should be no surprises when the final evaluation is conducted, and it allows the employee to make changes if they are necessary.

Finally, labor and management will meet not less than annually to review the performance evaluation process and address measures to continually improve the performance evaluation system. Annual supervisor training will be provided on the topic of performance evaluations and performance improvement planning.

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Q1: How do you think the results of the Performance Evaluation will be used?

Answered: 11   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
To help improve firefighter performance	63.64%	7
To use in promotional process	0.00%	0
To use in disciplinary processes	18.18%	2
To identify areas of needed training	18.18%	2
TOTAL		11

Q2: Do you feel that the Performance Evaluation process allows for you to provide adequate feedback?

Answered: 11   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	90.91%	10
No	9.09%	1
TOTAL		11

Q3: During your last Performance Evaluation meeting with your officer, was there communication about items that your officer want to see you improve?

Answered: 11   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	81.82%	9
No	18.18%	2
TOTAL		11

Q4: Did your officer communicate to you any work performance expectations in your last Performance Evaluation?

Answered: 11   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	81.82%	9
No	18.18%	2
TOTAL		11

Q5: Do you know what criterion is used to evaluate you performance?

Answered: 11   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	54.55%	6
No	45.45%	5
TOTAL		11

Q6: As part of the Performance Evaluation process, how many times did you meet with your officer(s) during the last evaluation period to discuss the items on your evaluation?

Answered: 11   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1	81.82%	9
2	18.18%	2
3	0.00%	0
4 or more	0.00%	0
TOTAL		11

Q7: Do you know what rating you received on your last evaluation?

Answered: 11   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	63.64%	7
No	36.36%	4
TOTAL		11

Q8: Were you satisfied with your last Performance Evaluation rating?

Answered: 11   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	72.73%	8
No	27.27%	3
TOTAL		11

Q9: Do you feel your officer was confident in guiding you through the Performance Evaluation process?

Answered: 11   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	81.82%	9
No	18.18%	2
TOTAL		11

Q10: How can the Performance Evaluation process be improved?

Answered: 11   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Train officers	9.09%	1
Clearly communicate the department's purpose and intentions with the results	54.55%	6
Amend the ratings criteria	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	36.36%	4
TOTAL		11

- Having it a little more personally tailored to fit the firefighter. Maybe have the office recommend outside training for the firefighter if he does not have training in his goals for the year.
- All of the above
- The current process seems to work
- All of the above. I believe the evaluations leave a lot of interpretations by the officers and may not 100% reflect performance. Also, using a numerical scoring system will do a better job of tracking performance improvements over the years. The evaluations seem very generic in that it is used across the board without consideration of time on or rank. Lt's and LC's should have added criterion that reflect their specific SOG's and duties. I believe many answers given on the discussion items are just to fulfill the question with no real intention to follow through.

Q11: How long have you been with Jefferson Township Fire Department?

Answered: 10   Skipped: 1

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 1 year	10.00%	1
1 - 3 years	0.00%	0
More than 3 years, less than 5 years	10.00%	1
Greater than 5 years	80.00%	8
TOTAL		10

Performance Evaluations - Supervisor Perception

How do you think the results of the Performance Evaluation will be used?

Answered: 5   Skipped: 0
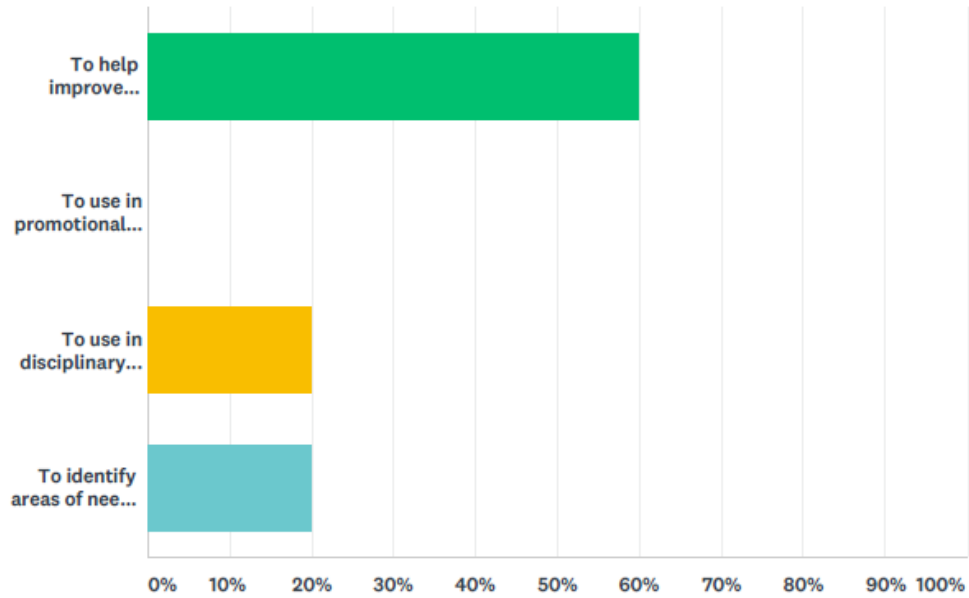
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
To help improve firefighter performance	60.00%	3
To use in promotional process	0.00%	0
To use in disciplinary processes	20.00%	1
To identify areas of needed training	20.00%	1
TOTAL		5

Performance Evaluations - Supervisor Perception

Do you feel that the Performance Evaluation process allows for you to provide adequate feedback?

Answered: 5   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	40.00%	2
No	60.00%	3
TOTAL		5

Q3 During the last Performance Evaluation that you conducted, did you communicate any items to your subordinate that you want to see you improve?

Answered: 5   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	60.00%	3
No	40.00%	2
TOTAL		5

Q4 During the last Performance Evaluation that you conducted, did you communicate any work performance expectations to your subordinate?

Answered: 5   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	60.00%	3
No	40.00%	2
TOTAL		5

During the last Performance Evaluation that you conducted, did you explain the criterion that was used to evaluate the employees performance?

Answered: 5   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	40.00%	2
No	60.00%	3
TOTAL		5

Q6 How many times have you met with your subordinates during the last evaluation period to discuss the items on their last evaluation? (Progress on goals and/or expectations)

Answered: 5   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1	80.00%	4
2	0.00%	0
3	20.00%	1
4 or more	0.00%	0
TOTAL		5

Indicate the level of your agreement with the following statements concerning performance evaluations.

Answered: 5   Skipped: 0

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Participation of officers in the development of performance standards leads to a better performance evaluation instrument.	60.00% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	20.00% 1	20.00% 1	5	2.40
The performance feedback that I provide is helpful in improving job performance and in attaining the goals of my subordinates.	60.00% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	40.00% 2	0.00% 0	5	2.20
The information and ratings that I provide during performance feedback is accurate and truthful.	40.00% 2	0.00% 0	20.00% 1	20.00% 1	20.00% 1	5	2.80
The feedback that I provide during performance evaluations is sufficiently detailed and easily understood.	40.00% 2	0.00% 0	20.00% 1	40.00% 2	0.00% 0	5	2.60
I feel I have enough information regarding performance standards to make accurate judgments about employees on each performance dimension.	40.00% 2	0.00% 0	20.00% 1	40.00% 2	0.00% 0	5	2.60
I possess adequate knowledge and training to properly implement performance evaluations.	20.00% 1	20.00% 1	20.00% 1	40.00% 2	0.00% 0	5	2.80
I take the performance evaluation process seriously.	40.00% 2	0.00% 0	20.00% 1	20.00% 1	20.00% 1	5	2.80

Do you feel that the current performance evaluation process is beneficial to improving employee performance?

Answered: 5   Skipped: 0
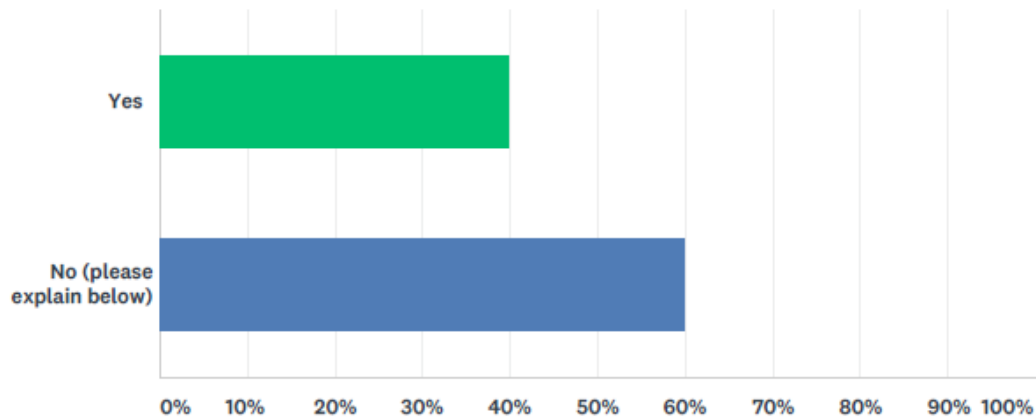
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	40.00%	2
No (please explain below)	60.00%	3
TOTAL		5

In your own words, please describe what you believe would improve the performance evaluation process.

Answered: 2   Skipped: 3

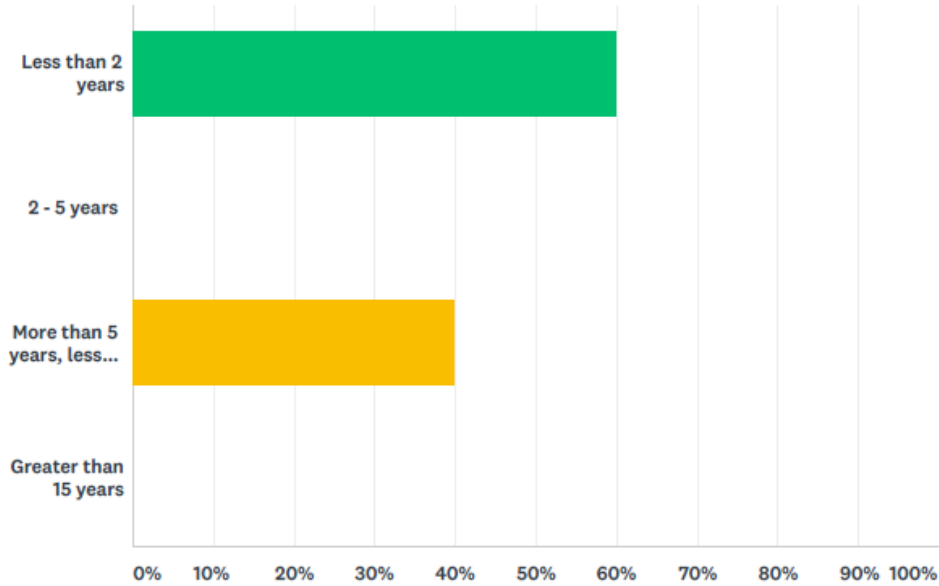---

Showing **2** responses

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9/1/2018 1:02 PM

No comment

9/1/2018 11:10 AM

How long have you been an officer with the Jefferson Township Fire Department?

Answered: 5   Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 2 years	60.00%	3
2 - 5 years	0.00%	0
More than 5 years, less than 15 years	40.00%	2
Greater than 15 years	0.00%	0
TOTAL		5

APPENDIX 3 – EXTERNAL PERCEPTION SURVEY

External Perception of Performance Evaluations

Which of the following best describes your current rank within your organization?
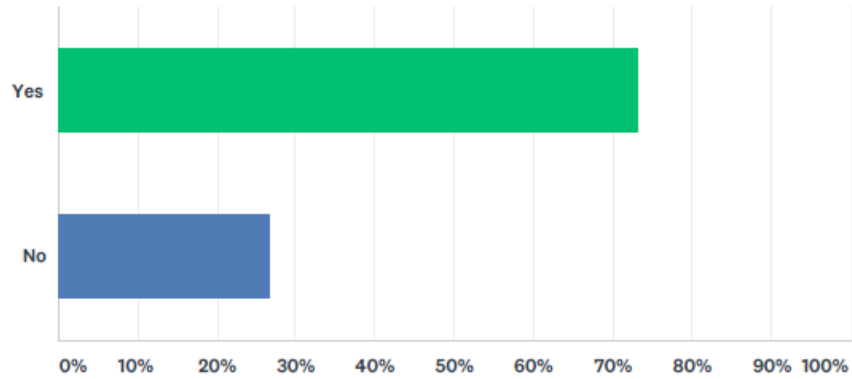
Answered: 69   Skipped: 0
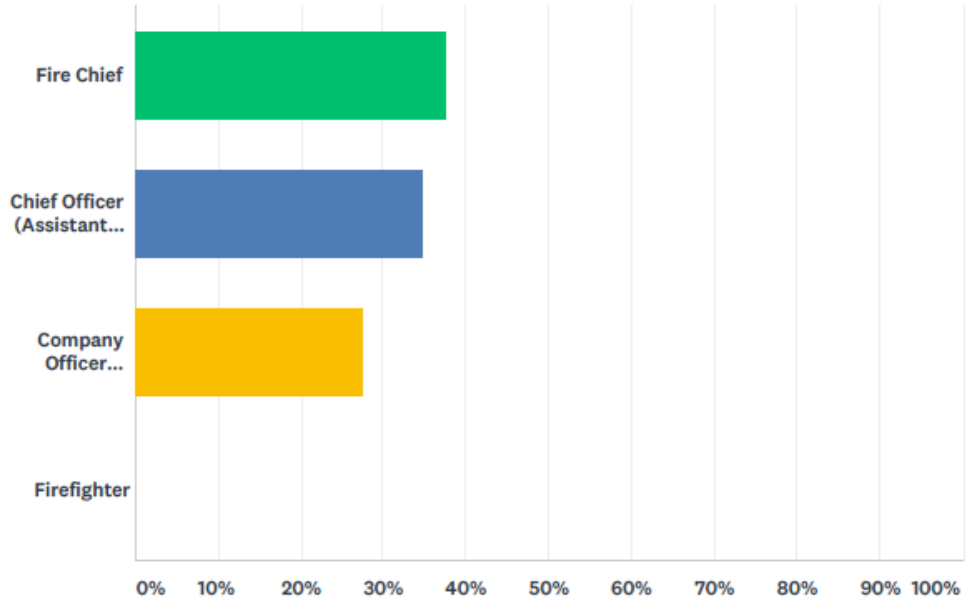
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Fire Chief	37.68%	26
Chief Officer (Assistant Chief, Deputy Chief, Battalion Chief, etc.)	34.78%	24
Company Officer (Captain, Lieutenant, Sergent, etc.)	27.54%	19
Firefighter	0.00%	0
TOTAL		69

Does your fire department presently utilize a performance evaluation or performance appraisal system?
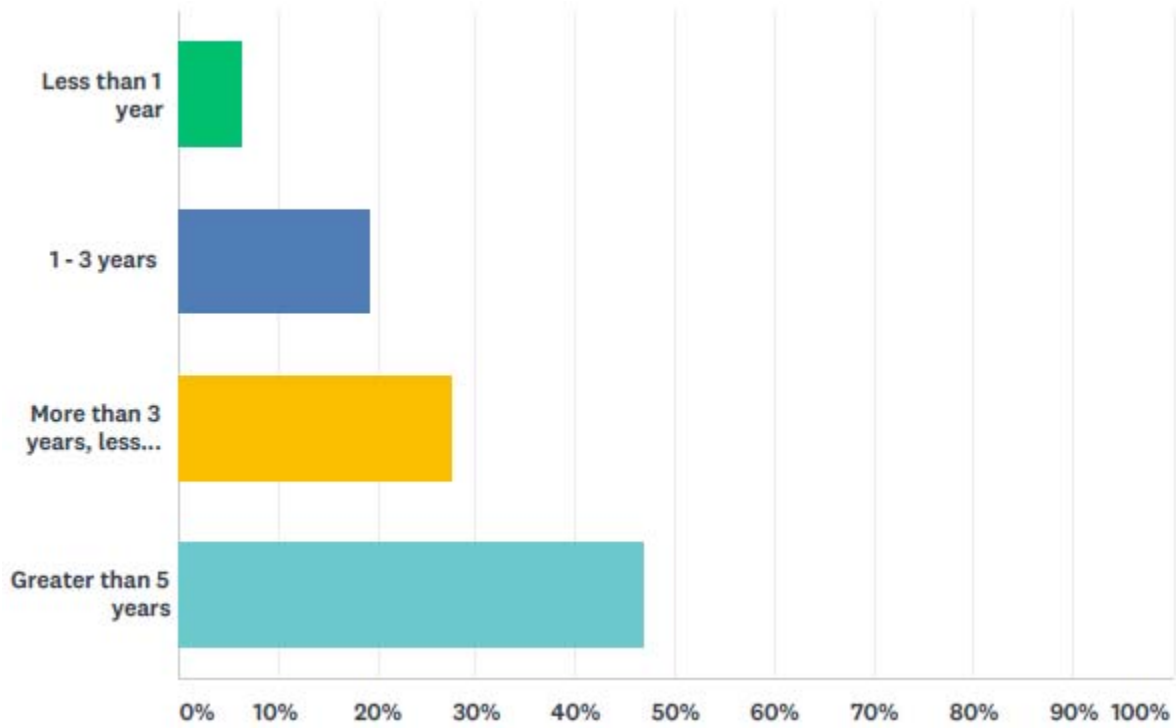
Answered: 67   Skipped: 2

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	73.13%	49
No	26.87%	18
TOTAL		67

How long have you been at your current rank?

Answered: 47   Skipped: 22

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 1 year	6.38%	3
1 - 3 years	19.15%	9
More than 3 years, less than 5 years	27.66%	13
Greater than 5 years	46.81%	22
TOTAL		47

What is the primary goal of a performance evaluation?

Answered: 47   Skipped: 22
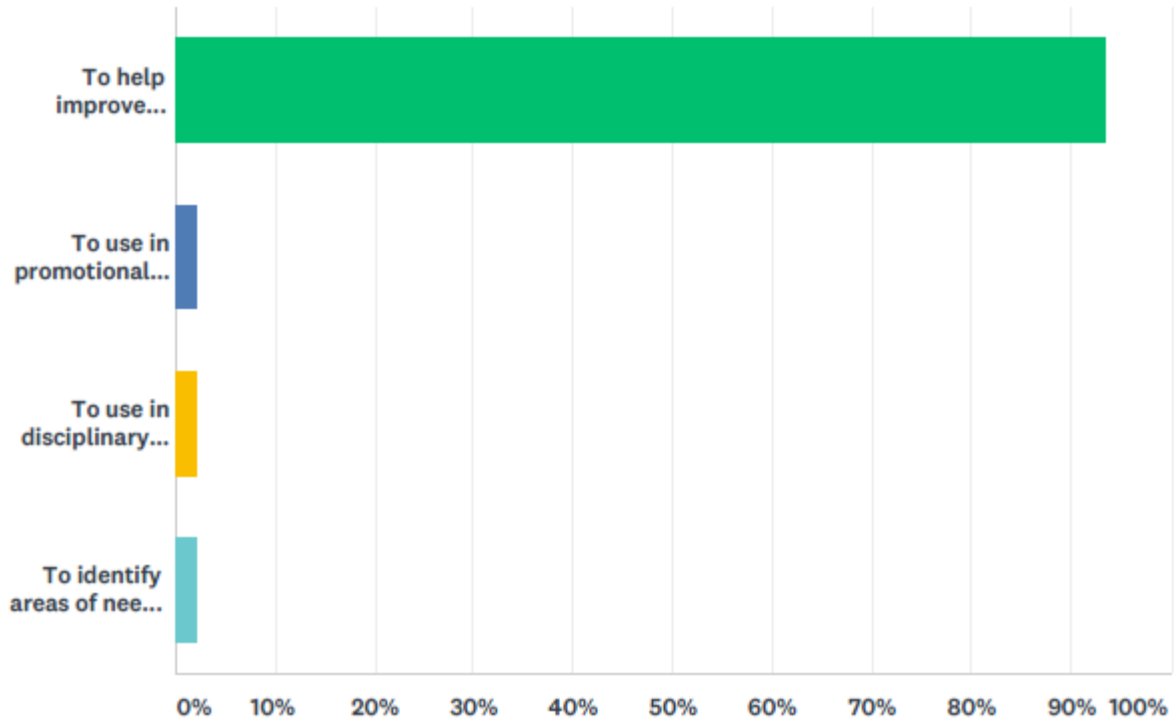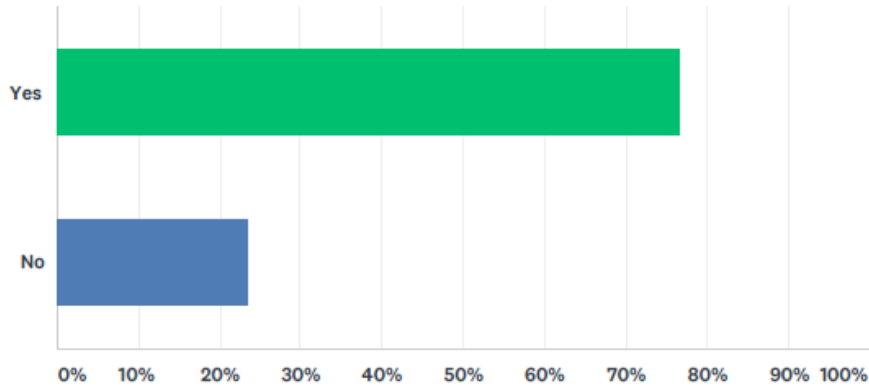

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
To help improve firefighter performance	93.62%	44
To use in promotional process	2.13%	1
To use in disciplinary processes	2.13%	1
To identify areas of needed training	2.13%	1
TOTAL		47

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Not optimal, should also be for professional growth	8/29/2018 9:53 PM
2	Also, to identify strong areas	8/29/2018 3:13 PM
3	Identify desired yearly goals and evaluate the accomplishment of those goals. Monetary reward for officers only	8/27/2018 8:03 PM
4	Limited to first year of employment	8/27/2018 1:03 PM
5	To ensure that probationary firefighters are compliant with learning job skills/knowledge	8/27/2018 12:10 PM

Do you feel that the Performance Evaluation process allows for you to provide adequate feedback?

Answered: 47   Skipped: 22

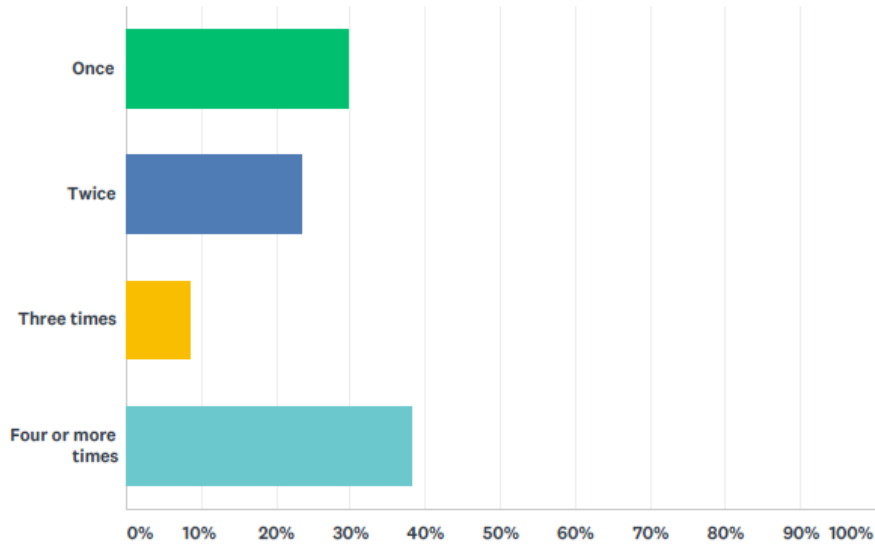| ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	76.60%	36
No	23.40%	11
TOTAL		47

#	COMMENTS:	DATE
1	but should probably be done bi-annually instead of just annually.	8/29/2018 3:13 PM
2	It is a self bragging evaluation, justifying your yearly accomplishments/or lack of	8/27/2018 8:03 PM
3	We also schedule impromptu evals.	8/27/2018 2:36 PM
4	Very generic categories	8/27/2018 2:12 PM
5	New format requires dialogue between subordinate and supervisor, both able to document their perspective.	8/27/2018 12:42 PM

Q19 How frequent are performance evaluations completed within a probationary period? (for the purpose of this survey, "probationary period" is defined as the first 12 months after appointment)

Answered: 47   Skipped: 22

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Once	29.79%	14
Twice	23.40%	11
Three times	8.51%	4
Four or more times	38.30%	18
TOTAL		47

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Monthly throughout the 12 month probationary period	8/30/2018 2:59 PM
2	formal evaluation twice. Informal(company level) evaluation twice.	8/28/2018 7:33 PM
3	Monthly	8/27/2018 2:49 PM
4	18 times over 2 years	8/27/2018 2:19 PM
5	Monthly	8/27/2018 12:10 PM

How often do you receive a performance evaluation after your probationary period?

Answered: 47   Skipped: 22
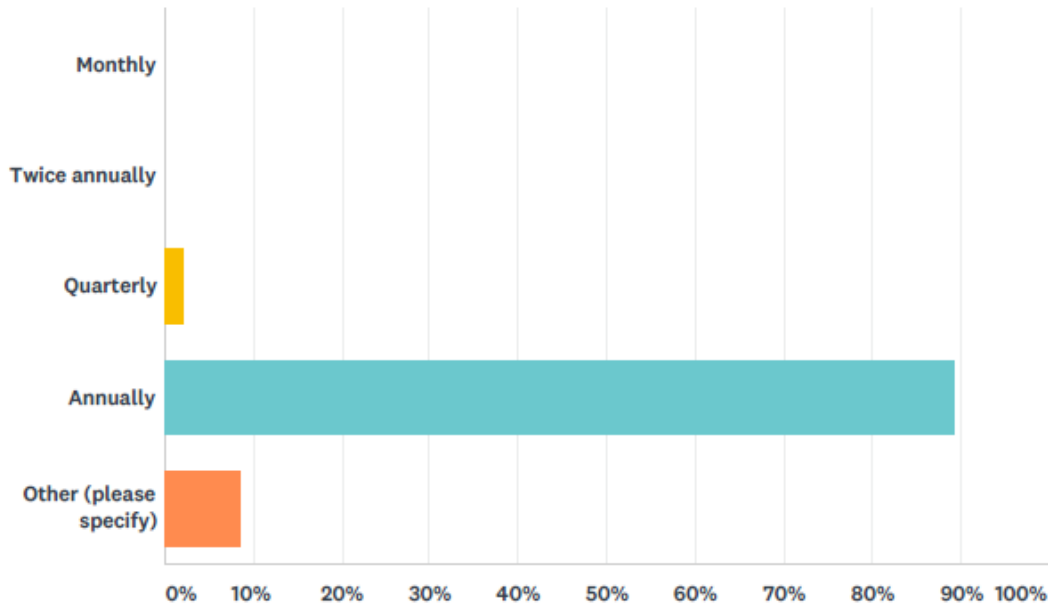
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Monthly	0.00%	0
Twice annually	0.00%	0
Quarterly	2.13%	1
Annually	89.36%	42
Other (please specify)	8.51%	4
TOTAL		47

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Rarely. Hit or miss over the years	8/28/2018 7:33 PM
2	None	8/27/2018 1:03 PM
3	Never	8/27/2018 12:51 PM
4	We are supposed to have annual evaluations but it has not be followed through with for years. It is essentially non existant	8/27/2018 12:10 PM

Q21 During the last Performance Evaluation that you conducted, did you communicate any items to your subordinate that you want to see you improve?

Answered: 47   Skipped: 22
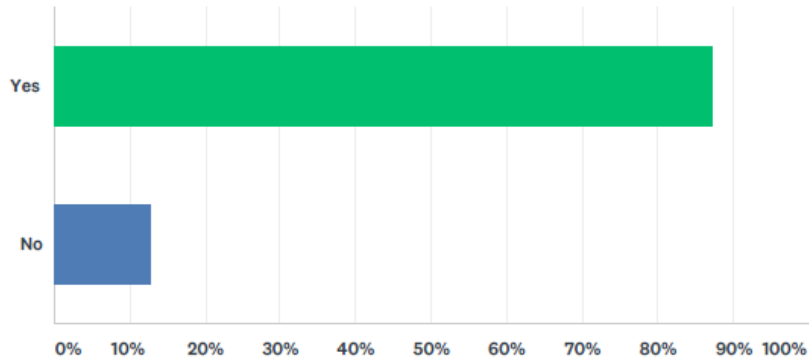
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	87.23%	41
No	12.77%	6
TOTAL		47

#	COMMENTS:	DATE
1	N/A I receive evaluations, I don't give them	8/28/2018 8:32 AM
2	I feel that if you wait until an evaluation to inform your subordinate on areas that need improvement, you failed as a leader. I let the subordinate know throughout the year where they need to improve.	8/27/2018 12:25 PM
3	Haven't done one since promotion.	8/27/2018 12:10 PM

Q22 During the last Performance Evaluation that you conducted, did you communicate any work performance expectations to your subordinate?

Answered: 47   Skipped: 22
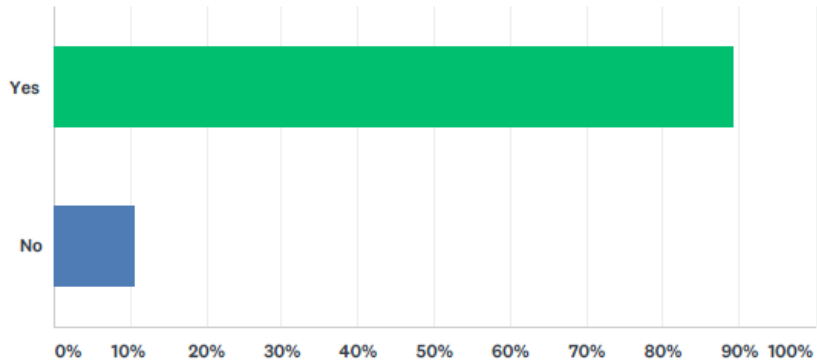
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	89.36%	42
No	10.64%	5
TOTAL		47

#	COMMENTS:	DATE
1	N/A	8/28/2018 8:32 AM
2	Within a timetable	8/27/2018 2:36 PM
3	Again, these are areas they should already know during the year	8/27/2018 12:25 PM
4	Haven't done one since promotion.	8/27/2018 12:10 PM

Q23 During the last Performance Evaluation that you conducted, did you explain the criterion that was used to evaluate the employees performance?

Answered: 47   Skipped: 22
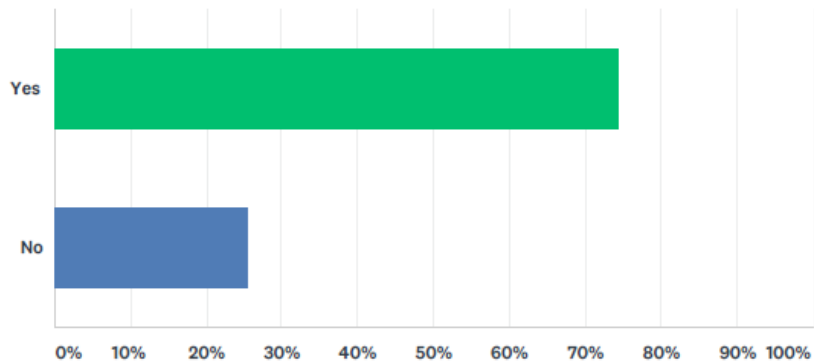
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	74.47%	35
No	25.53%	12
TOTAL		47

#	COMMENTS:	DATE
1	for areas that need improvement; Any time an employee receives an "exceeds" rating, we have to justify.	8/29/2018 3:13 PM
2	N/A	8/28/2018 8:32 AM
3	Haven't done one since promotion.	8/27/2018 12:10 PM

Q24 How many times have you met with your subordinates during the last evaluation period to discuss the items on their last evaluation? (Progress on goals and/or expectations)
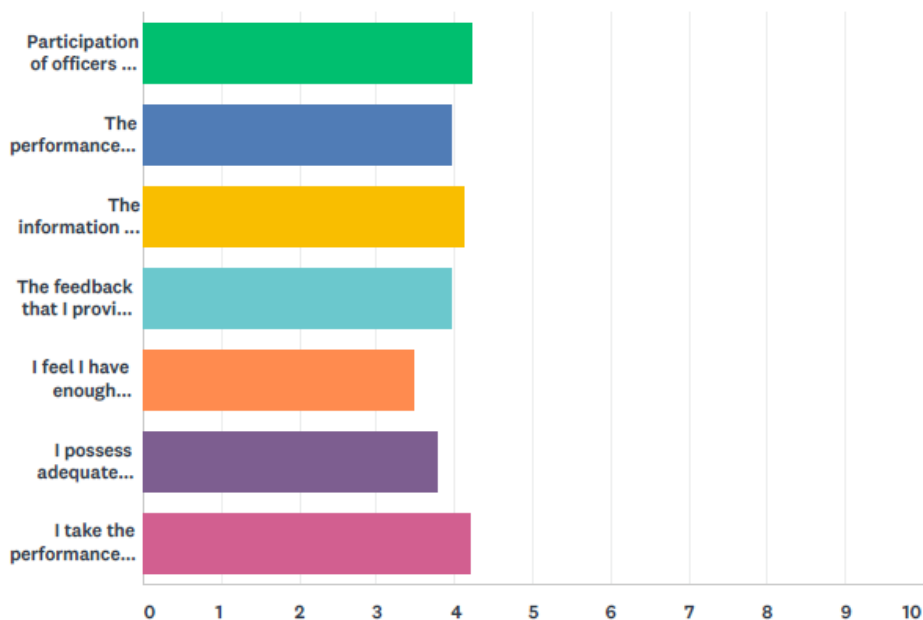
Answered: 47   Skipped: 22
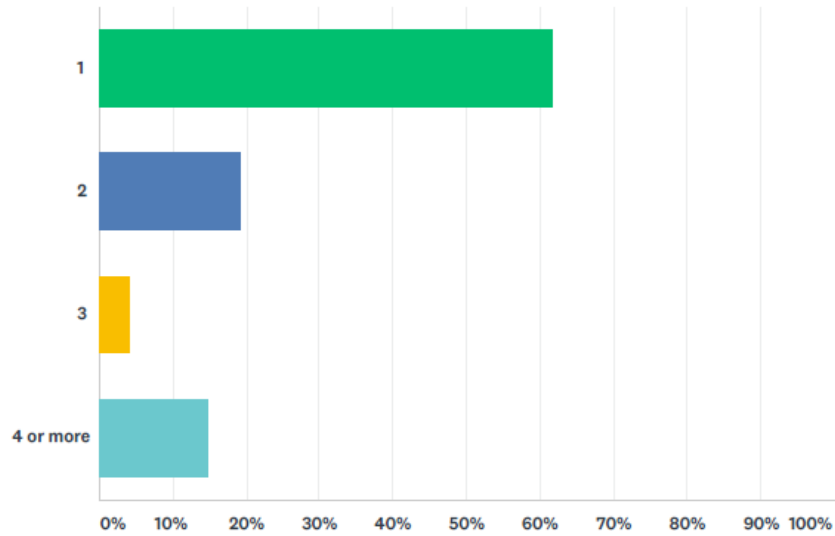
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1	61.70%	29
2	19.15%	9
3	4.26%	2
4 or more	14.89%	7
TOTAL		47

Q25 Indicate the level of your agreement with the following statements concerning performance evaluations.

Answered: 47   Skipped: 22

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Participation of officers in the development of performance standards leads to a better performance evaluation instrument.	4.26% 2	0.00% 0	4.26% 2	51.06% 24	40.43% 19	47	4.23
The performance feedback that I provide is helpful in improving job performance and in attaining the goals of my subordinates.	2.17% 1	2.17% 1	13.04% 6	63.04% 29	19.57% 9	46	3.96
The information and ratings that I provide during performance feedback is accurate and truthful.	2.17% 1	4.35% 2	10.87% 5	43.48% 20	39.13% 18	46	4.13
The feedback that I provide during performance evaluations is sufficiently detailed and easily understood.	2.17% 1	0.00% 0	17.39% 8	60.87% 28	19.57% 9	46	3.96
I feel I have enough information regarding performance standards to make accurate judgments about employees on each performance dimension.	4.26% 2	12.77% 6	25.53% 12	46.81% 22	10.64% 5	47	3.47
I possess adequate knowledge and training to properly implement performance evaluations.	6.38% 3	4.26% 2	17.02% 8	48.94% 23	23.40% 11	47	3.79
I take the performance evaluation process seriously.	6.38% 3	0.00% 0	6.38% 3	40.43% 19	46.81% 22	47	4.21

Do you feel that your current performance evaluation process is beneficial to improving employee performance?

Answered: 47   Skipped: 22
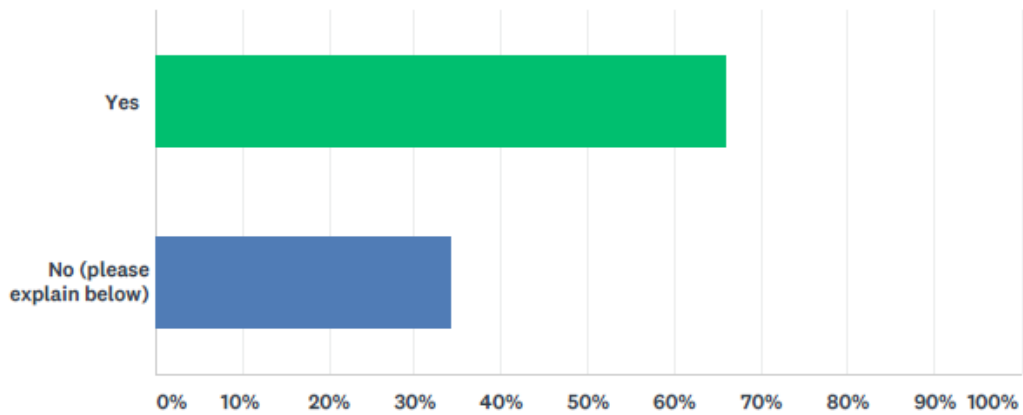
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	65.96%	31
No (please explain below)	34.04%	16
TOTAL		47

| #	EXPLAIN	DATE
1	Not utilized or prioritized effectively. Our system needs updated, we lack the administrative personnel to accomplish this currently	8/29/2018 9:53 PM
2	if the employee takes it seriously and not just to get a "better score."	8/29/2018 3:13 PM
3	It's to vague	8/28/2018 1:03 PM
4	Evaluation in Fire Manager is very vague and generic	8/28/2018 11:39 AM
5	Evaluation is outdated and does not met todays needs to provide improvement to the employee	8/28/2018 10:10 AM
6	its done more for procedural purposes than it is for focusing on improving knowledge/skills	8/28/2018 8:32 AM
7	The instrument is only a tool. The tool provides assistance to benchmark and facilitate a conversation	8/28/2018 7:56 AM
8	If used correctly	8/27/2018 10:31 PM
9	No incentive to anyone other than officers	8/27/2018 8:03 PM
10	I feel it needs to be tweaked	8/27/2018 5:03 PM
11	My evaluations could be more detail specific. IE Training, EMS & Fire Performance. Also more specific on officers as their roles are different from firefighters.	8/27/2018 4:15 PM
12	It helps to set goals and achieve better understanding of just what is expected of the employee.	8/27/2018 2:36 PM
13	I think we could do a better job of following up with the employees' which are in need of improvement to let them know how they progressing.	8/27/2018 2:35 PM

14	It's not punitive and counts for nothing at promotional time.	8/27/2018 2:19 PM
15	No benefit to superior performance, no consequences for substandard.	8/27/2018 2:09 PM
16	In some cases yes, but there is still a lot of resistance to the process. The process is a little overwhelming for some and we need to simplify to make the process work better and get more buy in.	8/27/2018 1:26 PM
17	They should be updated more often	8/27/2018 1:03 PM
18	No. Recent studies suggest that situational management is more beneficial than annual evaluations for a myriad of reasons.	8/27/2018 12:51 PM
19	The grading schedule is out of date. I usually put more information in the explanation then relying on the point system	8/27/2018 12:24 PM
20	It isn't beneficial because it hasn't been used in years. Even before that, when it was used, it rarely had any consequence to it.	8/27/2018 12:10 PM

APPENDIX 4 –PERFORMANCE EVALUATION FORM

Jefferson Township Fire Department

EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION
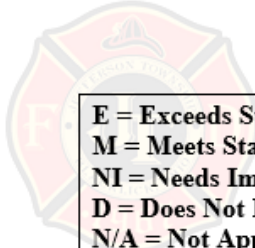
E = Exceeds Standards **M = Meets Standards** **NI = Needs Improvement** **D = Does Not Meet Standards** **N/A = Not Applicable or No Data Available**

Name: _____ Date: _____ Evaluation period: _____ - _____

Officer Completing Review _____

Purpose:
- The purpose of this review is to take a look at where you are strong, where you need to improve, where you want to go, and to get you there.
- This review gives the officer the opportunity to help the firefighter achieve goals and to review how you've been doing and to help you succeed in the future.

Preparedness

1. **Arrives on time, prepared for work:** _____

   Employee arrives on time for duty, fit for work, in uniform with a clean personal appearance. (400.01 (SOG), 400.02 (SOG), 100.16 (SOG), 102.22, 102.29)

Comments:
_____
_____

2. **Applies work knowledge and assigned duties without constant supervision:** _____

   Employee understands his/her assigned duties and does not require constant supervision or reminders concerning those duties or assignments. (100.08)
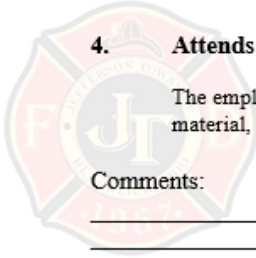
Comments:
_____
_____

3. **Knowledge and compliance with Memos, SOPs, maps, equipment and protocols:** _____

   Employee knows, understands and uses in good judgment all SOPs, policies, procedures, maps and EMS protocol. The employee also is thoroughly familiar with the name, location and proper use of all tools and equipment assigned to the apparatus and stations. (102.25, 102.08)

Comments:
_____
_____

4.   Attends and participates in department training: _____

The employee shall participate in continuing training and instruction programs by individual study of technical material, and by attendance at scheduled drills and training classes.

Comments:
_____
_____

Social

5.   Attitude reflected toward others: _____

Employee is friendly, cooperative and shows good will to all members of the department. Employee accords all officers of the department proper respect due their rank. Employee does not make false report or gossip concerning any other member. (102.14, 102.15, 102.17)

Comments:
_____
_____

6.   Leadership Abilities: _____

When placed in the position of leadership in whatever the capacity the employee maintains a level of competency, accountability and adherence to the policies of the officer under whose authority they are working. (102.0, 102.13)

Comments:
_____
_____

7.   Contact with others, promotes respect for the department: _____

Employee is courteous, respectful and considerate in dealing with the public. The employee does not create any unfavorable impression on the general public. The employee does not destructively criticize the department or its policies, programs, actions, officers or members. (102.0)
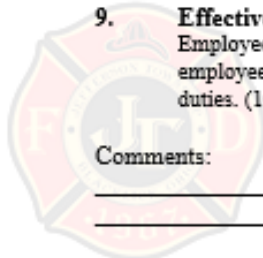
Comments:
_____
_____

Competency

8.   Complies with the chain of command: _____

Employee transacts all matters through and adheres to the chain of command except when urgent matters are involved and their immediate supervisor is not readily available. (100.14, 100.15)

Comments:
_____
_____

9. **Effectiveness under stress:** _____
Employee is efficient in their performance in existing conditions so as not to create or add to confusion. The employee does not display cowardice or lack of energy to amount to incompetence or gross negligence of duties. (100.08)

Comments:
_____
_____

10. **Safety practices:** _____

Employee abides by all the safety rules and common safety practices set forth by the department and common sense. (Appendix C)

Comments:
_____
_____

11. **Accepts direction, orders and changes from supervision readily and without complaint:** _____

Employee accepts orders and directives in any form, without question or complaint, from their immediate supervisors as well as orders issued by any superior officer on the department. (100.04, 100.05, 100.06)

Comments:
_____
_____

12. **Accepts and provides constructive input when it comes to safety and stops unsafe acts immediately when observed.** _____

Comments:
_____
_____

Harassment Policy Review:

We have just read the Jefferson Township Employee Policy regarding harassment in the workplace. I am now required to as you some questions, and it will be necessary for you to document your response to these questions.

a. Do you understand this policy?   Yes / No   _____
                                                                                      Initial

b. Do you have any questions about this policy?   Yes / No   _____
                                                                                      Initial

c. Do you know how to file a complaint should
   you ever have a problem with harassment,
   or if you see inappropriate behaviors at work?   Yes / No   _____
                                                                                      Initial

d. If you ever have a problem or concern regarding
   harassment in the workplace, please tell me who
   inside and outside our department can you address   _____
   your concerns with?

e. Are you aware of any behaviors going on either in
   our workplace or outside the workplace, that may
   impact the workplace, that are inconsistent with this policy?   Yes / No   _____
                                                                                      Initial

72

Discussion items:
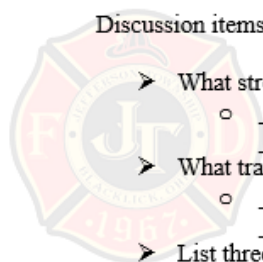
- ➢ What strengths/goals would you like to develop?
    - ○ _____
      _____
- ➢ What training do you feel would help you with the skills wish to improve?
    - ○ _____
      _____
- ➢ List three goals for professional development:
    - ○ _____
    - ○ _____
    - ○ _____
- ➢ Do you feel that you have the resources you need to do your job? Yes/No

OVERALL PREFORMANCE RATING

_____ **EXCEEDS STANDARDS**: Employee performs consistently far above the expected level with outstanding performance. Superior performance is regularly demonstrated well above the standards set forth by the Jefferson Township Fire Department.

_____ **MEETS STANDARDS**: Employee performs at the expected level regularly and occasionally exceeds the standards set forth by the Jefferson Township Fire Department. This is performance which is expected of a fully trained, qualified, and motivated employee.

_____ **NEEDS IMPROVEMENT**: Employee performance is inconsistent and fluctuates between 'meets' and 'does not meet' standards. This review indicates that serious effort is needed to improve performance.

_____ **DOES NOT MEET STANDARDS**: Employee performs consistently below the acceptable level of efficiency. Performance is inadequate and inferior to the guidelines set forth in the job description.

Senior Rater Comments: _____
_____
_____
_____

_____   _____
Supervisor Signature   Date

_____   _____
Battalion Chief Signature   Date

_____   _____
Fire Chief Signature   Date

_____   _____
Employee Signature   Date

Date filed: _____