

Running head: BUILDING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE IN THE ALBANY FIRE
DEPARTMENT

Executive Development

Building a Diverse Workforce in the
Albany Fire Department through entry-level recruitment

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An applied research project submitted to the National Fire Academy as part of the Executive Fire

Officer Program

February 2008

Certification Statement

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where 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 lack of diverse entry-level applications received by the Albany Fire Department has caused a disproportional imbalance in its diversity. This applied research project examines methods that can be used to improve the number of qualified diverse entry-level applications.

The descriptive method was used to determine (a) diversity recruitment efforts of other fire departments, (b) recruitment efforts used by the business community, (c) legal barriers prohibiting diversity recruitment, (d) the impact the lack of entry-level diversity has on current employees, (e) if there are obstacles in the hiring process, and (f) are there any possible repercussions for not addressing the problem.

The procedures used in this project consisted of literature review, questionnaire sent to various fire departments, and internet search that included the recruiting practices of the business community.

The results clearly showed that a recruitment program is needed in the Albany Fire Department and is the recommendation of the researcher.

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Building a Diverse Workforce in the Albany Fire Department through Entry Level Recruitment

The problem that initiated this research project is that the Albany Fire Department (AFD) is not receiving a significant number of diverse entry-level applications that meet the Department's minimum hiring qualifications. This causes a disproportional imbalance in the diversity of the AFD, which does not coincide with the expressed desires and wishes of the City Council, and the community as a whole, to have all departments reflect the population makeup of the City of Albany.

The purpose of this research is to identify diversity recruitment efforts used by other fire departments and the business community, in order to develop recommendations to increase the number of qualified diverse entry-level applicants with the Albany Fire Department.

The descriptive method will be used for this project. The research approach will be through questionnaire, literature review and internet search. The results will then be used to make recommendations to the Fire Chief.

In order to find solutions to this problem, several research questions will be asked. What diversity recruitment efforts are used in other fire departments? What diversity recruitment efforts are used in the business community? Are there any legal barriers in recruiting diversity? What impact does the lack of diversity in the entry-level hiring process have on the current employees of the Albany Fire Department? Are there any obstacles in the hiring process that affects the number of qualified diverse applicants for

the Albany Fire Department? What are the possible repercussions of not doing anything to address the lack of qualified diverse entry-level applicants?

Background and Significance

Albany, Georgia is located in the southwest part of the state and is the county seat of Dougherty County. The Albany Fire Department provides fire protection to both the city and the county. The area protected is approximately 335 square miles with a population approximately 96,000.

The City of Albany was founded in 1836. As with any community, the need to provide the essential services to its citizens was very important and this new-found Albany would be no different. The earliest reference of fires in Albany was found in a newspaper article dating back to 1848 (The Albany Patriot, 1848). Any fire that occurred in the city limits was put out by the citizens using whatever means they could find. There was no organized fire department in Albany until 1858 when a Hook and Ladder Company was started by a group of volunteers (Albany City Council Minutes, 1858). This newly organized unit would still have to rely on the citizens for help. Black firemen would become a large part of the volunteer fire department in 1862 with the purchase of the City's first hand engine. The team that would operate the hand engine had a white foreman and sixty black volunteers (Albany City Council Minutes, 1862).

On January 9, 1867, the Albany City Council called a meeting for the purpose of organizing a volunteer fire department for the City of Albany. One Engine Company (Thronateeska No. 1) and one Hook and Ladder Company (Lightning Hook and Ladder Company) would result. Thronateeska No. 1 would be an all-white company while Lightning Hook and Ladder was an all-black company. Within a few months another

Engine Company (Eagle No. 2) would be organized and would be entirely made up of black volunteers (Albany City Council Minutes, 1867). In 1870 another Engine Company, Defiance No. 3, would be formed and would be an all-white company (Albany City Council Minutes, 1870).

On March 14, 1893, the Albany Fire Department would take a step towards becoming a paid department by reorganizing as a combination department. With this change, the black fire companies, Eagle No. 2 and Lightning Hook and Ladder, would be dissolved and their equipment taken from them. Defiance No. 3 would also be dissolved by this reorganization. The Albany Fire Department would consist of five paid white firemen to man the steam engine and one paid black driver for the hook and ladder wagon. The rest of the department would be made up of thirty volunteer firemen (Albany City Council Minutes, 1893).

Finally on January 4, 1897, the Albany Fire Department became a fully paid department with all of the employees being white (Albany City Council Minutes, 1897). White firemen would continue to make up the AFD until the 1970's.

On August 31, 1972, a class-action lawsuit was filed against the City of Albany by black Public Works and Water, Gas and Light employees for alleged discriminatory employment practices in its hiring and promotion procedures. In the investigations and hearings, which would take place as a result of the lawsuit, a great deal of attention was directed towards the hiring and promotion practices of the AFD. During the time of the lawsuit, the AFD consisted of 143 employees, 128 white and 15 black (Johnson v. City of Albany, Ga., 1976).

On September 2, 1976, the Court found that enough evidence existed to prove that the City of Albany had indeed discriminated against blacks in its hiring and promotion practices and entered a permanent injunction (*Johnson v. City of Albany, Ga., 1976*).

The court required that the City undertake many affirmative actions designed to achieve ‘a work force in which the proportion of total black employees to total white employees viewed (a) overall, (b) by job classification and description, (c) by department, and (d) by rate of pay is at least equal to the proportion of blacks to whites in the working age population as shown by the most recent Albany, Georgia Standard Metropolitan Area reports of the Bureau of the Census.’

(FindLaw, n.d., p. 1)

With the injunction in place, the City of Albany adopted the practice of one-for-one in hiring and promoting. As a result the AFD began to use the assessment center approach for hiring and promoting. Any hiring or promoting required the candidate to participate in a variety of skills that related to the particular position applied for. A panel of assessors would rate and rank each of the candidates on a scale of 1 to 6, with 6 being the highest. Once the process was complete, an equal number of the highest ranking white and black candidates would be hired or promoted.

In December of 1994, five white applicants for the position of Battalion Chief filed a “Motion of Perspective Plaintiffs for Intervention” as a result of the Fire Chief, black, selecting a black applicant to fill the position. Part of the Motion also requested that the permanent injunction be lifted. Although they were not successful in overturning the Battalion Chief promotion, the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals did dissolve the

permanent injunction after finding that equal employment opportunities had been achieved in Albany (FindLaw, n.d.).

In 1976 the AFD consisted of seven fire stations and 143 employees. The population make-up of Albany, Georgia, by race at that time was 61 percent white and 39 percent black (Johnson v. City of Albany, Ga., 1976). In 2007 the AFD had 11 fire stations and 160 current employees, 106 (66%) white and 55 (34%) black. The City's population by race in 2000 was 33.2 percent white and 64.8 percent black (U.S. Census, 2000).

The workforce of the AFD has traditionally been male with the exception of the positions of secretaries and Fire Safety Inspectors. It was not until the early 1990's that the first female firefighter would be hired by the AFD. It became important for the AFD to break from the traditional definition of diversity that referred only to white and black.

Since the permanent injunction was dissolved, the AFD has utilized several methods to hire entry-level firefighters. Those methods included assessment centers, educational prerequisites, and interviews with a panel of fire service employees and the Fire Chief. At one point, the AFD had worked with the local technical college to provide Fire Science classes to potential applicants in order to obtain a National Professional Qualification Certificate for Firefighter I (NPQ FF I). During that time, the AFD would only consider those with NPQ FF I for employment. Even though the method was effective at keeping the fire department out of any litigation, the numbers that met the NPQ FF I qualification were less than the number of openings available. An issue that became obvious with the NPQ FF I requirement was that the number of black males and females of any race meeting this requirement was significantly less than the white males.

In 2006 the NPQ FF I prerequisite requirement was dropped as an entry-level prerequisite for the AFD. The AFD now offers a ten-week training program to a select number of those applicants passing a criminal background check, current driving record check, possessing a high school diploma or General Educational Development Certificate (GED), health physical, drug screening and passing a state-mandated physical abilities test. These employees are hired on as Firefighter Trainees for the ten-week training period and are paid at a lower hourly rate than permanently hired firefighters. During the ten-week training period, the Firefighter Trainees test for the NPQ FF I certificate. The Firefighter Trainees that pass the NPQ FF I testing are offered a permanent position with the AFD and receive an increase in pay of approximately \$5,100. As basic as this new system seems, the low numbers of qualified diverse applicants still remains.

Due to the lack of qualified diverse entry-level applicants, the AFD finds itself facing a ripple effect in future promotions. Other possible side effects could be low employee moral, high turn-over rate and future litigation. The significance of this research project is to find ways for the AFD to improve its ability to attract a diverse pool of qualified applicants to hire from.

This applied research project relates to the National Fire Academy's *Executive Development* course primarily in the area of organizational culture and change (National Fire Academy [NFA], 2006, p. v). It also relates to the United States Fire Administration's operational objective of responding appropriately in a timely manner to emerging issues.

Literature Review

In reviewing the literature available on recruiting a diverse workforce, it became alarmingly clear that the issue of recruiting qualified diverse applicants does not only affect the AFD. Fire departments throughout the United States (U.S.) struggle to recruit a diverse workforce. It was also discovered that some fire departments in other countries are having difficulty recruiting a diverse workforce as well. The literature review also showed that the business world recognizes the need for a diverse workforce and works to recruit qualified diverse applicants as well.

How did diversity become an issue in the workplace? On June 6, 1963, President John F. Kennedy proposed the idea of a Civil Rights Act. This proposal would not come to pass until after his death, but when passed was quickly signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson on July 2, 1964 (Historical Documents, n.d.).

The purpose of this law is simple. It does not restrict the freedom of any American, so long as he respects the rights of others. It does not give special treatment to any citizen. It does say the only limit to a man's hope for happiness, and for the future of his children, shall be his own ability. It does say that there are those equal before God shall now also be equal in the polling booths, in the classrooms, in the factories, and in hotels, restaurants, movie theaters, and other places that provide services to the public (Johnson, 1965).

From the Civil Rights Act of 1964 came the term affirmative action. Affirmative action would soon become a controversial term when referring to employment in the years following the 1964 signing. Employers have used affirmative action as a means to increase the representation of women and minorities in their workforce. Some on their

own while others were required to implement affirmative action programs by the courts. This controversy really heats up when preferential selection based on race, gender, or ethnicity is used to make employment selections (Fullinwider, 2005). No preference can be given in recruitment or selection (Fox, Hornick, & Hardin, 2006, p. 4).

Bob Zelnick, a former reporter, took a strong stand on affirmative action in his book “Backfire – A Reporter’s Look at Affirmative Action.” He states that the methods used to implement affirmative action actually discriminate against whites, males and other unfavored groups. He points out that “discrimination is practiced when race is weighed as an independent factor in admissions, employment, promotion, or dismissal” (Zelnick, 1996 pgs. 8-9).

In 2007 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 5-4 against public school choice plans in Louisville, Kentucky, and Seattle, Washington. The ruling simply stated that race could not be a factor when it came to assigning students to public schools. Chief Justice John Roberts went one step further when he said, “The way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to stop discriminating on the basis of race” (Mears, 2007).

Zelnick (1996) described racial preferences as having the reverse effect when it came to breaking down long-held beliefs on the abilities of minorities. The belief that blacks were inferior to whites appeared to be justified because blacks were being hired and promoted with lower scores when tests were administered to make a determination on selection. This only drove a wider gap between the races.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) would be responsible for policing the compliance of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The EEOC would take particular interest in Title VII of the 1964 Act in 1972 when its powers were broadened.

It was not that the other titles associated with the Act were not important. It was that Title VII banned discrimination against individuals by employers with at least fifteen employees, labor unions, and employment agencies regardless of the number of employees. This gave the EEOC a definite group to target being that well over half the America's businesses would be covered by Title VII (Zelnick, 1996).

With the power that the EEOC possessed and the damage that could be done to non-compliant businesses, it was believed that employers would hire marginally qualified applicants only to satisfy the EEOC numbers requirement. It has been suggested that when the progression of blacks and minorities within the business was questioned, the business simply relabeled the positions held by minorities in order to make it appear that affirmative action requirements were being met (Zelnick, 1996).

Affirmative action has not gone away. The Supreme Court has ruled as late as the summer of 2003 to uphold certain kinds of affirmative action. The focus of affirmative action in factories and firehouses has now turned to college admissions (Fullinwider, 2005).

A new term that has come to the forefront in recent years concerning employment practices is diversity. Diversity to many may still have the same connotation as affirmative action but without the strong arming of the EEOC. Depending on how diversity is defined, this could very well be the case. However, by defining diversity in broader terms the word takes on an entirely different meaning. A traditional view of diversity has been that of assimilation. Those coming into the workforce that were considered different were expected to change and become more like those that had traditionally held the majority of the jobs. The burden was placed on the newcomer to fit

in (Thomas, Jr., 1991). But as time passed and different individuals entered the workforce, the act of fitting in or adapting had begun to be challenged. No longer are employees sitting quietly by out of fear of being seen as different. Employees today not only want to be seen as different, they want their differences supported and valued (Jamieson & O'Mara, 1991).

To continue viewing diversity as a politically correct version of affirmative action will set it up to receive the same negative attitude. In order for diversity to succeed in the workplace, a shift in this attitude towards differences in others has to take place (Jamieson & O'Mara, 1991). Diversity has to be looked at as more than race and gender. Everyone has to be included when diversity is considered. Today's diversity includes an individual's age, lifestyle, background, geographical origin, work experience, life experience and education, to name a few (Thomas, Jr., 1991).

In order to change the negative attitude towards diversity to positive, the leadership of the organization has to establish diversity as a "core value" (Cobbs, 1994, p. 27). Failure of an organization to establish diversity management procedures reflects directly on top management (Cross, 1996). "The body of an organization will only go where the head leads it" (Crawford, 2004). An organization's culture and way of doing business will not change overnight. To effect the change required for an organization to embrace diversity will require a long-term commitment from the top. This change cannot be passed on to other employees until the leader(s) first make the change in themselves (Thomas, Jr., 1991). One of the most effective ways to get "buy-in" from the organization is to get mid-management involved (Sandlin, n.d.).

Diversity does not happen simply because an organization is surrounded by a diverse population. Nor does the fact that an organization follows laws regarding non-discrimination create a diverse workforce. Diversity is achieved when there is a strong commitment within the organization (Fox et al., 2006, p. 4).

Successful recruiting begins with a plan. This plan will require that the organization is effectively marketed in order to reach those qualified individuals that the organization is seeking. Wal-Mart created an Office of Diversity in November 2003. This office makes sure that diversity is not only part of the recruiting process but is also part of the every day operations of the company. Wal-Mart's Office of Diversity provides the Company and employees with diversity initiatives, diversity relations and Human Resources (Wal-Mart, 2006). The marketing process has to be a process, not an event that only takes place prior to hiring (Adler, 2005). As tempting as it may seem, the marketing plan has to be customized to the individual organization not an imitation of another organizations (Sandlin, n.d.).

Procedures

Limitations

The intent of sending out the questionnaires was to see if randomly picked fire departments had a diversity recruitment policy in place. This questionnaire was not designed to produce scientific results or analytical data to point out regional deficiencies in diversity hiring. The fire departments depicted in Appendix B were selected randomly from a State of Georgia internet site. Whereas the fire departments represented in Appendix C were picked from fellow students in the Executive Development class at the National Fire Academy since there was a good representation of departments across the

United States. The researcher had no prior knowledge of the various population statistics or department sizes prior to emailing the questionnaires.

Process

Research for this project began at the National Fire Academy (NFA) during the Executive Development class in August of 2007. During an on-campus literature review at the NFA Learning Resource Center, it became apparent that diversity recruitment is a problem in the fire service across the country. The researcher found several research projects on file to support the notion that diversity recruitment was an issue in the fire service. However, in an effort to keep the researcher's current research project up-to-date these documents were not read.

With this information the decision was made to find out if fire departments across the country had diversity recruitment programs in place. This was done by sending a questionnaire (Appendix A) to a small sampling of fire departments using email contact. Twenty-four emails were sent to fire departments across the U.S. with only seven providing responses. In addition, the same questionnaire was sent to fifteen fire departments, randomly picked, in the State of Georgia. This was done because of the close geographic proximity and similar racial make-up. Out of the fifteen emails sent only six responded.

The researcher took the results of the responding departments along with census information of the same and developed statistical charts for each department (Appendix B – Georgia and Appendix C – U.S. Departments). The purpose of these charts was to compare the diversity makeup of each department with the diversity makeup of the

community that they served. The name of the fire departments and cities that they serve was purposely omitted in order not to provide information should litigation ever happen.

A guest speaker came to the Executive Development class and spoke about the difficulty his department was having hiring female firefighters. He was a Deputy Chief from a fire department in Australia. An email was sent to him after returning home from class to verify that the researcher had heard several of his statements accurately.

During the time that this research was taking place, the Albany Fire Department went through an entry-level firefighter hiring process. The researcher was able to apply various recruitment techniques that had been discovered through the literature review and internet search. The results were used to compare to the hiring that happened in April of 2007.

After leaving the NFA, books were ordered on the subject of diversity as well as an extensive internet search for information on the subject. It was through this effort that the decision to compare how the business community addressed recruiting with that of the fire service.

The literature review did not produce much material in book form that addressed recruitment. It was not until an internet search on diversity recruitment that information was found to give a better understanding of how other fire departments and businesses addressed the issue of diversity recruitment.

Definition of Terms

Affirmative Action: Positive or constructive action rather than inaction.

Affirmative action programs and regulations attempt to compensate for discriminatory practices that have in the past denied fair consideration to members of minority groups. For example, an all-white government office may take steps to hire people of color. Or, a mostly-male college program may seek to balance its admissions by giving preference to female applicants. Affirmative action programs are controversial in the present political climate -- many have recently been eradicated or have come under attack -- and the subject is likely to be hotly debated for many years to come.

Diversity: The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies. It is the exploration of these differences in a safe, positive, and nurturing environment. It is about understanding each other and moving beyond simple tolerance to embracing and celebrating the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual. (<http://gladstone.uoregon.edu/~asuomca/diversityinit/definition.html>)

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC): The federal agency responsible for handling complaints of workplace discrimination. The organization was created by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to administer and enforce its prohibitions against discrimination in the workplace.

Motion of Perspective Plaintiff for Intervention: petitioning the court to step in and overturn a previous decision or ruling.

Permanent Injunction: a final order of the court requiring a party to do something or to refrain from doing or continuing to do a particular act or activity.

Title VII: of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It banned discrimination in employment.

Results

The information gathered in the literature review, internet search and questionnaires sent to other fire departments provided the data necessary to answer the research questions.

Research question number one asked: What diversity recruitment efforts are used in other fire departments?

As stated in the Procedures section, a questionnaire was emailed to fire departments in Georgia and across the country (Appendix A). None of the departments in Georgia that responded to the questionnaire practiced diversity recruitment. Several of those responding from Georgia pointed out that they hired the most qualified of all applicants or that they are an Equal Employment Opportunity Organization.

Using the charts in Appendix B, the researcher was able to take the information provided by the Georgia respondents and compare it with information obtained from the United States Census (U.S. Census, 2000). Each chart shows the city's population totals and racial makeup percentages of the particular city under the heading "2000 Census." The makeup of each department is then listed by race and gender with the racial percentage of the department listed as well. These charts allow the researcher to easily view deficiencies in diversity employment. The researcher is aware that the department

percentages may vary due to a variety of variables such as retention issues and retirements.

Using these charts, Georgia City “A” and Georgia City “D” appear to have done a good job with diversity as viewed historically despite the absence of a diversity recruiting program. Georgia City “A” shows impressive statistics based on the size of the department which is one of the largest for the State of Georgia. The Fire Chief of City “A” commented on complaints that he received from employees soon after he had taken the position. These complaints were in regard to the internal promotions not being fair. He stated that he worked hard to ensure that everyone was treated fair and developed a “career ladder” which placed the responsibility of being prepared for promotions on the individual. Because of the confidence this “career ladder” instilled in the employees towards the fairness of the department’s promotion policy, people outside the department started signing up for employment (Georgia questionnaire feedback). Whereas Georgia City “D” being a much smaller department yet nonetheless has done a good job with diversity. Information received from this department gave the credit for its diversity success to the recruitment efforts of their employees and the Department’s website.

Question #4 of the questionnaire (Appendix A) asked what method of advertising was used to notify the general public if the department had no diversity recruitment policy. The respondents from Georgia replied to this question with the following:

- Word of mouth
- Accept applications all year long in written and electronic formats
- Advertise on local Government Access Channel
- Attend civic meetings, church group meeting and other organizations

- City and Department websites
- Local newspaper
- Ads with local college depending on the number of openings

The results of the questionnaire sent across the U.S. were different in regards to diversity recruitment efforts. City “A” in California recruits through neighborhood meetings, offering the Fire Science Program at the local junior college, and advertising in numerous publications. It was reported that the department did not receive any applications from women or African Americans in its June 2007 recruitment.

City “B” in Florida does not have a recruitment policy in place but reported that it is receiving an equal mix with new hires as far as men and women are concerned. City “F” from Oklahoma did not provide detailed department makeup but did return information regarding its recruitment efforts. The department does not have a recruitment policy but does have a recruitment officer and an active recruiting group. No particulars were given on the effectiveness of the recruiting officer and group.

City “G” from Texas reported that it is currently under investigation for its hiring practices. The lack of African American employees was called into question during a Block Grant Audit. The department has already started working on ways to improve the issue by starting a cadet program.

The Hispanic population showed a low employment rate in all but two cities. This is important because of the labor force growth rate of Hispanics is predicted to grow at a rate faster than any other group. By the year 2014, the Hispanic labor force in the United States is predicted to grow by 34 percent. This is compared to the Asian labor force growth rate at 32 percent and African American growth rate at 17 percent for the same

time. The labor force growth rate of white males is only predicted to be 7 percent (NAS Recruitment Communications [NASRC], 2007, p. 1).

If fire departments across the country are now out of balance with their employee diversity makeup when compared against the diversity makeup of the communities that they serve, where will they be in 2014?

An internet search did provide better information on how other fire departments recruited qualified diverse applicants. One of the best finds of this internet search was the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Diversity Initiative study (Fox et al., 2006).

One department that stood out in the IAFF study was Madison Fire Department in Madison, Wisconsin. In fact, they were ranked number one by the IAFF study for excellent diversity for all groups. One item that was pointed out in the study was the fact that the Madison Fire Department accomplished their diversity without ever being under a consent decree (Fox et al., 2006, p. 30).

Madison Fire Department reported using the following recruiting method (Fox et al., 2006, p. 30):

- News stories
- Advertising in major and local/community newspapers
- Ads in newspapers, radio, TV whose audience is women and minorities
- Ads on Cable TV
- Direct mail
- Word of mouth through strong relationships with community groups
- Job fairs

- Churches, schools, open houses, and orientation
- Department website

Diversity recruitment in the fire service is not isolated to the U.S. The Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) in Melbourne, Australia, is an example of just such a department. In an effort to increase the number of qualified female applicants, \$70,000 was spent on full-page advertisements in four major women's magazines. In the advertisement the department featured one of its female firefighters. After receiving nearly 3,000 applications, the department discovered that only eight people applied as a result of the magazine advertisements. What was more surprising was that of the eight only one was a woman (K. Adamson, personal communication, January 3, 2008).

Research question number two asked: What diversity recruitment efforts are used in the business community?

Since the introduction of Federal Grants following the attacks in New York on September 11, 2001, fire departments across the U.S. have had to compete for their share of the money. As the years have passed, departments that have not been successful in the grant process have sought the help of outside consultants. More and more fire departments across the U.S. are becoming like businesses. With that being the case, then it would only make sense to see how businesses have addressed diversity.

The researcher started looking for the answer to the diversity hiring question by looking at two businesses in the Albany, Georgia area. Wal-Mart and Proctor & Gamble (P&G) are not exclusive to Albany, Georgia; however, by being in the area they do draw employees from the same pool that all other businesses in the area are drawing from.

Wal-Mart has over 1.5 million employees worldwide which makes them the world's largest private employer. Wal-Mart uses its competitive pay and benefits as a means to attract and retain the best employees, but it does not rest on these alone for its success. Sam Walton, founder of Wal-Mart, decided at the beginning to set three core values for his business: respect for the individual, service to our customers, and striving for excellence (Wal-Mart, n.d., p. 2). H. Lee Scott, current President and CEO of Wal-Mart, clearly understands that it is the success of these core values that brings success to Wal-Mart's diversity. "Diversity doesn't just happen. Just saying we are committed to diversity is not enough; we must put in place the right systems, processes and leadership to make it happen" (Scott, n.d.).

Wal-Mart recruits through a variety of methods:

- Participates in college recruitment events
- Participates in diversity career fairs
- Participates in charity organizations
- Sets diversity recruitment goals
- Established an Office of Diversity to oversee hiring and retention

Some themes that seem to come to the forefront when reading any material that Wal-Mart offers on its websites pertaining to diversity are 1) live diversity from the top down with actions not just words, 2) be an active part of the community that we serve, and 3) be willing to change (Wal-Mart, 2006).

Wal-Mart has been successful with its diversity hiring efforts and it is able to prove it by its results. It has 139,000 Hispanics employed in the U.S. which puts it as the top employer of Hispanics in the U.S. Wal-Mart also leads other U.S. businesses with

more than 208,000 African American employees. But it does not stop there, Wal-Mart employs over 775,000 females and more than 220,000 men and women over the age of 55 (Wal-Mart, n.d., p. 3).

Wal-Mart has been recognized for its efforts in creating a diverse workforce. Some of these recognitions came in 2005 from Diversity Inc's, Black Enterprise Magazine, Hispanic Networking Magazine and Asian Enterprise Magazine, to name a few (Wal-Mart, 2006, p. 25).

Proctor & Gamble also recruits in colleges and universities. It reports that it hires from more than 100 schools on an annual average. P&G has developed a scoreable application form that allows it to be able to identify the most qualified applicants. P&G is making this process available for sale to other companies (Proctor & Gamble, n.d.).

P&G also uses technology in innovative ways to find the best possible employees. It uses online games that allow students to participate in job-related decision making situations. These games put the student in scenarios like getting a product to market or coping with competitive challenges. These games allow the student to show his/her talents plus they give P&G the opportunity needed to find that special employee that other methods of recruiting may not have identified (Proctor & Gamble, n.d.).

Research question number three asked: Are there any legal barriers in recruiting diversity?

The research conducted for this project did not find any legal barriers to recruiting diversity. In fact, Zelnick (1996), a strong opponent of affirmative action, encourages "expanding the pool" of minority applicants by recruiting diversity but wants all

applicants judged by objective criteria. It is important not to confuse targeted recruitment with giving any kind of preference in the selection system (Fox et al., 2006, p. 5).

Any problems that would come out of such recruitment efforts would be *if* those minorities that were targeted for recruitment were told that they would be hired prior to participating in any sort of hiring selection process. Neither can a minority recruit be given extra points in any testing or interview process. This would discriminate against other applicants and would be a clear violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VII prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. This includes intentional discrimination or practices that have the effect of discrimination (Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII).

Some of the hiring practices adopted to improve the diversity of fire departments are being challenged in courts from whites as well as African Americans. On January 26, 2006, the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that Shreveport, Louisiana, could no longer give hiring preferences to black applicants over white. The Shreveport Fire Department (SFD) used testing procedures but passed black and female applicants over higher scoring white males by using a 1980 ruling by the 5th Circuit Court requiring the SFD to fill given percentages of vacancies with qualified black and female applicants (Adversity.Net, 2006).

After the new ruling came down, the SFD reported that it would stop using test scores in the hiring process. The new system would simply be a pass/fail in hopes that this would eliminate white applicants from filing discrimination suits against the SFD in the future (Adversity.Net, 2006).

Research question number four asked: What impact does the lack of diversity in the entry-level hiring process have on current employees at the Albany Fire Department?

On an individual level this is one question that may never be fully answered due to those employees affected by the lack of diversity in the department never completely opening up to discuss the issue.

There are some areas where the lack of diversity will impact some AFD employees for some years to come due to the recent hiring results. The following table shows the entry level hiring results for the Albany Fire Department over the past 5 years.

Table 1

Race of Entry-Level Firefighters

	5-12-2002 to 4-2007	
	Number Hired	Percentage
White Male	54	85.7%
White Female	1	1.6%
African American Male	8	12.7%
African American Female	0	0%
Total	63	100%

Table 2

Race of Entry-Level Firefighters

	12-31-2007	
	Number Hired	Percentage
White Male	3	30%
White Female	2	20%
African American Male	4	40%
African American Female	1	10%
Total	10	100%

The Albany Fire Department went through a hiring process in April of 2007 having ten firefighter openings to fill. The department received 129 applications that would go through criminal and driver's licenses background checks. Once these background checks were complete, those remaining would go through a physical abilities test. After the physical abilities testing was over, only twenty-six applicants remained to go to the final phase which was an interview with the Chief. Of these twenty-six, two white males dropped out before the interview and two African American males did not show up for the interview. Of the remaining twenty-two applicants four were African American males with the remainder being white males. With the Chief interviews completed, jobs were offered to eight white males and two African American males. One of the African American males declined the job, which resulted in nine white males and one African American being hired to go through a ten-week training program. Eight of the recruits were successful in graduating the ten-week training program, all white males. The only African American in the group resigned, opting to return to his former career.

In December 2007, the AFD found itself ten firefighters short and once again went through the hiring process. This time the department used several recruiting methods discovered as a result of this research project in an attempt to attract more qualified diverse applicants. The department worked with a local newspaper on an article providing the public with information on the upcoming hiring. Public Service announcements were placed on the local radio stations and the Training Division held informative meetings at the local university.

These efforts resulted in the department receiving 159 applications. Of these, twenty-two were female applicants. After the criminal and driver's license background

checks and physical agilities test, 42 made it to the Chief's interview. The Chief hired three females, three white males and four African American males.

As good as the most recent hiring may have been, the lack of diversity in the five years prior will be felt for years to come. The most obvious impact will be seen in future promotions since time in grade is one prerequisite for all positions. As the firefighters hired during the 2005 to early 2007 timeframe become eligible for promotions, far fewer African American males and females of all races will make up the qualified pool.

Research question number five asked: Are there any obstacles in the hiring process that affects the number of qualified diverse applicants for the Albany Fire Department?

The first obstacle that was discovered through this research was the fact that the City of Albany uses limited resources to post job vacancies. The main resource used is the City's website. This method relies on an individual looking to be employed in a particular field in Albany, Georgia; thus seeking out a vacancy, and if none are available at the time, continuing to check back. There are other websites that could be utilized that would get state and national exposure.

Another method used is to send an email attachment listing current vacancies to select individuals in the various departments, assuming that these individuals will forward the information throughout their departments. The researcher knows first hand that the information is being forwarded throughout the AFD via email by the Administrative Secretary. The researcher is also aware that the majority of AFD employees below the level of Lieutenant rarely, if ever, check their City email accounts.

An issue has been discovered with this internal posting that seriously affects a current City employee that wishes to transfer to the AFD. The entry-level firefighter position is classified as a “Firefighter Trainee.” This classification is a temporary employee position and therefore is not entitled to any benefits to include health insurance for the ten-week training period. As currently interpreted this would mean that any City of Albany employee that transferred to the AFD would lose his/her health insurance for the ten-week period. Workers Compensation Insurance would cover any on-the-job injuries that the Firefighter Trainee may experience. They would also stop accumulating leave time and time accrual towards retirement.

The researcher was informed by the City of Albany’s Human Resources Department (HR) that an “external vacancy list” was sent out to local colleges, churches, and other agencies. Again this method is assumptive believing that the information is being passed on and that individuals know where to access it.

Research question number six asked: What are the possible repercussions of not doing anything to address the lack of qualified diverse entry level applicants with the Albany Fire Department?

Some possible repercussions of not addressing this issue are low employee moral, high turnover rate, how employees feel and think about their job and the department. The behavior of any employee is a result of what he or she perceives to be reality. The short and long range impact of the recent hiring numbers will cause some to view this as a negative impact on them in the workplace whether it is fact or not (Cox, Jr, 1993).

To do nothing to address the lack of qualified diverse applicants ultimately does a disservice to the employees of the AFD. By allowing the present trend to continue robs

all employees the opportunity to learn from and experience the benefit of living and working with people from different backgrounds. It causes the cycle to continue repeating itself for years to come.

Simply put, if the current trend is not dramatically changed or at least a clear visible effort undertaken, the City of Albany could find itself right back in the position it was in back in 1976. But this cannot be the reason that any effort to recruit diversity takes place.

Discussion

The results of the literature review, internet search and the questionnaires that were returned make it obvious that the Albany Fire Department has to implement a quality recruitment program. Not a program designed to simply improve diversity numbers but one designed to recruit quality employees. Simply increasing diversity numbers can do more harm than good in the long run when it comes to retention and promotions and ultimately employee moral (Zelnick, 1996). The question that remains is will this program be one of title only sponsored by lip service or one of substance sponsored by a real commitment from the top leadership (Fox et al., 2006).

The Albany Fire Department is not a stranger when it comes to having to pay attention to the racial makeup of the department. It would appear that after being under a court injunction for 18 years, an organization would do everything it could to prevent being brought before the courts again. The researcher was unable to find where any form of recruitment, to include diversity recruitment, has ever been used by the AFD.

The City of Albany, to include the AFD, had improved its hiring practices during the 18 years it was under the court injunction as evidenced by the 11th Circuit Court of

Appeals lifting the injunction in 1994 (FindLaw, n.d.). However, since that time the AFD finds itself, like other fire departments in Georgia and around the country, lacking when it comes to comparing the department's makeup by race and gender, with the population makeup of the communities served (Appendix B and Appendix C). Some sort of tracking method should have been in place to monitor hiring and promotion activities in order to show administration any emerging patterns. Had such a tracking program been in place from May 2002 to April 2007, a clear pattern of hiring inequities would have been seen and steps should have been taken to address it (Table 1).

There is no doubt that terms like affirmative action and diversity used to address the makeup of the department can still bring up a variety of emotions among employees (Fullinwider, 2005). Those white employees that were present during the years of the court injunction that were affected by the injunction or knew someone that was affected may still harbor hard feelings. However, on the other hand those employees that were considered to be minorities have to be affected by the low numbers of representing them on the job and the negative stereotyping that came from affirmative action programs (Zelnick, 1996). Care should be taken with any recruitment program that is put in place to ensure that all individuals are treated equally (Fox et al., 2006). Under no circumstances can any special or preferential treatment be given to anyone in the selection process (Fox et al.).

Today's employees do not sit quietly by allowing the status quo to take place. They are proud of who they are and where they come from and want to be able to represent that in their daily lives to include their work (Jamieson & O'Mara, 1991). It is

up to the leaders of the organization to provide all employees with the opportunity to do just that.

The various methods used in this research project to gather information made it abundantly clear that the lack of employment diversity is not isolated to the Albany Fire Department. Nevertheless, the AFD cannot use this as justification or as a means to make excuses for not having recruitment efforts in place to address this issue. The fact that the City of Albany had been under a court injunction from 1976 to 1994 for its hiring and promotion practices made it even more crucial that recruitment program was established (Johnson v. City of Albany, GA., 1976) (FindLaw, n.d.).

Corporations like Wal-Mart and Proctor & Gamble understand that a diverse workforce is not only profitable in the cash register but in the successful growth of the company. Both companies make diversity recruitment a way of life that takes place on a continuous basis (Scott, n.d.).

The opportunity to put into practice some of the recruitment techniques used by other fire departments and the business world during this research project was invaluable. It proved that what appears to be a simple effort can pay off when implemented in a timely manner. These techniques will not stand alone, there has to be a viable selection method used so that all applicants receive a legitimate opportunity at employment.

Recruitment programs should be geared to attract those men and women that have the desire to serve their community, not individuals simply hunting a paycheck. Likewise, the hiring process should be designed to recognize these desired traits and characteristics. Men and women of all races have demonstrated their ability to do extraordinary things in times of need to help those they do not know. This has been

demonstrated through military service and volunteering in times of man-made or natural disasters. It is true that technology has made tremendous advancements in the fire service. However, all the technology in the world cannot replace the courage, character and intestinal fortitude required to be one of America's Bravest.

Recommendations

The research showed that no one recruiting technique was successful in every department or company at recruiting diversity. The key to the ones that are successful started with a solid foundation in the belief of diversity that was established by those leading the organization.

As a result of the findings of this research project, the following recommendations are made to address the lack of qualified diverse entry-level applications being received by the Albany Fire Department:

- Develop a department "Vision Statement." Make all current employees aware of the direction that the leadership is taking the department. The department leadership must then live the Vision Statement.
- Create an internal Human Resources position for the AFD. This position will be responsible for staying up-to-date on current recruiting trends and employment laws and regulations. The position will also lead a team of department recruiters that will utilize all available resources in their recruiting efforts. These resources include, but are not limited to, job fairs, schools (High School, Colleges and Universities), and local community meetings.

This position would also be the department's liaison with the City's Human Resources Department.

- Create a budget line item for recruitment. The budget should include funding for training recruiters, printing flyers and various handouts, travel expenses and gift handouts with AFD name, contact information and logo (i.e. pencils, pens, cups, etc.).
- Develop and manage an up-to-date department webpage. Currently the AFD is part of the City of Albany's webpage but has no in-house control of the page. Any information to be added or taken away from the webpage must be submitted to the Information Technology (IT) Department. IT then sends the requested changes to a webmaster in another state.

Once the webpage is established the AFD would keep current department activities posted to include hiring information, employee and department activities, and pictures, as well as, any current safety information. Even though the information will be geared towards current employees, a concerted effort needs to go into encouraging others to join the AFD.

- Post vacancy notifications in local, state and national publications, and on any available webpages of the same.
- Utilize local newspapers, local radio and television stations, and national publications for more than hiring notifications. The department's Public Information Officer should submit department information and activities for publication and airing to achieve name recognition.
- Encourage current employees to tell friends and relatives about upcoming openings.

- Develop “Open House” programs. This can start out on a semi-annual basis to give the citizens an opportunity to see first-hand the fire stations and equipment as well as meet the employees. Each fire station will be available for tours, demonstrations and general discussions on the duties of a firefighter during this time.
- Develop a tracking mechanism to monitor the effectiveness of the various recruiting techniques. This can be accomplished by having the different recruiting techniques listed on the job application for the applicant to check as to how he or she heard about the opening.
- Develop a form, as an attachment to the application, to monitor applicant diversity. This form would be filled out on a voluntary basis by applicants and would not be processed (remain) with the applicant’s application.
- Finally, ensure that a valid selection process is in place. Anything less will eventually undermine all efforts that are put in place thus eliminating any hopes of long term success.

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Appendix A

1. How many members are in your department?

2. What is the make-up of your department by

Race	Male	Female
Caucasian		
African American		
Hispanic		
Asian		
other		

3. Does your department have a diversity recruitment policy? If yes please explain.

4. If no to question # 3, how does your department advertise or notify the general public about hiring?

5. Has your department ever had a complaint made to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) or a lawsuit filed against it due to its hiring practices? If yes please explain.

Appendix B

Georgia City "A"	2000 Census	Fire Department Makeup			
Population	665,865	Male	Female	Gender Not Specified	Dept. % Compared to City %
White	38.9%	*	*	508	59.1%
African American	55.6%	*	*	345	40.1%
Asian	4.0%	*	*	2	.2%
Hispanic	9.0%	*	*	5	.6%
Total		680	180	860	100%

Georgia City "B"	2000 Census	Fire Department Makeup		Dept. % Compared to City %
Population	110,765	Male	Female	
White	69.2%	100	9	98.2%
African American	26.9%	2	0	1.8%
Asian	1.9%	0	0	0%
Hispanic	3.7%	0	0	0%

Georgia City "C"	2000 Census	Fire Department Makeup		Dept. % Compared to City %
Population	25,998	Male	Female	
White	49.2%	52	1	84.1%
African American	47.5%	7	1	12.7%
Asian	.8%	0	0	0%
Hispanic	2.4%	0	0	3.2%

Appendix B continued

Georgia City "D"	2000 Census	Fire Department Makeup		Dept. % Compared to City %
Population	31,580	Male	Female	
White	87.7%	105	11	9.2%
African American	6.1%	4	0	3.2%
Asian	3.7%	2	1	2.4%
Hispanic	3.7%	2	1	2.4%

Georgia City E	2000 Census	Department Makeup		Dept. % Compared to City %
Population	48,804	Male	Female	
White	62.5%	95	2	88.2%
African American	32.1%	9	0	8.2%
Asian	1.8%	0	0	0%
Hispanic	3.8%	0	0	0%
Other		4	0	3.6%

Dougherty County, Georgia	2000 Census	Fire Department Makeup		Dept. % Compared to City %
Population	96,065	Male	Female	
White	33.9%	94	3	68.3%
African American	63.9%	43	2	31.7%
Asian	1.1%	0	0	0%
Hispanic	1.4%	0	0	0%

Appendix C

City "A" California	2000 Census Population	Fire Department Makeup		Gender not Specified	Department % Compared to City %
		Male	Female		
White	52.4%	*	*	65	75.6%
African American	6.3%	0	0	0	0
Asian	11.4%	0	0	0	0
Hispanic	41.4%	*	*	21	24.4%

City "B" Florida	2000 Census Population	Fire Department Makeup		Department % Compared to City %
		Male	Female	
White	89.8%	175	54	96.2%
African American	8.4%	4	1	2.1%
Asian	.9%	0	0	0%
Hispanic	8.7%	3	1	1.7%

City "C" Missouri	2000 Census Population	Fire Department Makeup		Department % Compared to City %
		Male	Female	
White	93.3%	47	2	100%
African American	3.5%	0	0	0
Asian	1.0%	0	0	0
Hispanic	2.0%	0	0	0

* Indicates that specific information was not provided.

Appendix C continued

City "D" New Jersey	2000 Census	Fire Department Makeup		Department % Compared to City %
Population	21,907	Male	Female	
White	71.53%	9	3	92.3%
African American	.08%	0	1	7.7%
Asian	.01%	0	0	0
Hispanic	4.07%	0	0	0

City "E" New York	2000 Census	Fire Department Makeup		Gender not Specified	Department % Compared to City %
Population	26,705	Male	Female		
White	89.1%	*	*	82	100%
African American	4.9%	0	0	0	0%
Asian	1.2%	0	0	0	0%
Hispanic	3.6%	0	0	0	0%

City "F" Oklahoma	2000 Census	Fire Department Makeup		Gender and Race Not Specified	Department % Compared to City %
Population	393,049	Male	Female	693	
White	70.1%	*	*	*	*%
African American	15.5%	*	*	*	*%
Asian	1.8%	*	*	*	*%
Hispanic	7.2%	*	*	*	*%

City "G" Texas	2000 Census	Fire Department Makeup		Department % Compared to City %
Population	173,627	Male	Female	
White	77.5%	229	3	97.1%
African American	6.0%	0	0	0%
Asian	2.1%	2	0	.8%
Hispanic	21.9%	5	0	2.1%

* Indicates that specific information was not provided.