

Running head: ASSESSING THE MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT PRACTICES

Assessing the Marketing and Recruitment Practices  
of the Fremont Fire Department

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CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

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### Abstract

The City of Fremont is experiencing difficulty in recruiting entry level firefighters from its local community. Consequently, the fire department is facing challenges in getting an adequate number of applicants that represent the diversity of the community. The purpose of this research was to identify potential barriers that may exist between the community and the City of Fremont's hiring process, and to make recommendations on how to increase the local recruitment of firefighters. The descriptive research method was used to find out what recruitment methods are used; if surrounding community organizations and schools have programs that encourage careers in the fire service; if cultural barriers in the community impact recruitment, and what type of program can be developed to generate interest in the Fremont Fire Department. Through literature review and personal interviews it was discovered that there are cultural influences that prevent some groups of the community from pursuing a career in the fire service. The City of Fremont does not have a local recruitment or marketing program that targets individuals in the community, and training institutions are available within the Tri-City area, but lack a connection between these organizations and the local fire departments. Recommendations in this study strongly encourage the development of partnerships with local educational and service providers in the Tri-City Area. It is also essential to establish a local community recruitment program that targets young members of the community and defines a career pathway into the fire service.

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## Introduction

The City of Fremont Fire Department is located in the San Francisco Bay Area of California. The Fire Department serves a community of approximately 211, 662 and has a very diverse population. The problem is the City of Fremont is experiencing difficulty in recruiting entry level firefighters from the local community. Consequently, the fire department is facing challenges in getting an adequate numbers of applicants that represent the diversity of the community. The purpose of this research is to identify potential barriers that may exist between the community and the City of Fremont's hiring process, and to make recommendations on how to increase the local recruitment of firefighters. The descriptive research method will be used to answer the following questions. What is the recruitment method used by the Human Resources Department in Fremont? Do surrounding community organizations and schools have programs that encourage careers in the fire service? Do cultural barriers in the community impact recruitment? What type of program can be developed to generate interest in obtaining a career in the Fremont Fire Department? The following research will address these four questions.

## Background and Significance

In the early 1980's the Fremont Fire Department (FFD) provided fire and emergency medical services to its community of 150, 000 people. The department was staff with 90 full-time career firefighters that were trained to the Firefighter-1, and the Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) level. In April 1986, Fremont began a pilot program that would place advance life support (ALS) paramedics on first responder engine companies. When this program began, Fremont was the first fire department in California to deliver ALS service in this manner.

Because paramedic services were relatively new in the San Francisco Bay Area, finding large pools of paramedic candidates was challenging. Although available candidates were limited, paramedics entering the fire departments were coming primarily from ALS transporting providers such as ambulance companies, and had a significant level of experience. Following Fremont's model of ALS delivery, fire departments throughout the state began adopting the engine based ALS service to enhance medical service in their communities. With ALS services growing in popularity, educational institutions could not provide an adequate number of paramedics state-wide. In an effort to produce more paramedics, training institutions dropped experience prerequisites and qualification requirements for paramedic training. Over the past several years, these actions have resulted in a growing amount of inexperienced of paramedics in the first responder system.

The San Francisco Bay Area consists of 9 counties that that include: Alameda, Contra Costa, Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, San Mateo, Marin, Monterey, San Francisco, and Solano. Throughout these counties there are over 300 ALS first responder fire apparatus in 60 fire departments. Today, Fremont has 13 ALS companies and 132 full time suppression employees that serve a community of 211, 662 (City of Fremont, 2007). The demand for trained paramedics is at an all time high, primarily due to the retirement of large numbers of baby boomers. Due to a large turnover in personnel, fire departments, paramedic schools, and transporting providers are finding it challenging to train and recruit experienced paramedics. Unfortunately, because quality paramedics are in high demand, the City of Fremont's recruitment efforts have reached outside the local community in an attempt to increase the number of overall candidates. As a result, applications are received from throughout California and surrounding states. Before ALS service entered the fire department it was not uncommon to

receive 2,000 applications for entry level positions. In September 2008, the City held an open recruitment for firefighter/paramedics and received 185 applications. From that number, only 7 applicants from the local community applied (N. Dias, personal communication, January 7, 2009).

While system-wide demands for paramedics and recruitment practices of the City may be contributing factors in why local community members are not applying for fire department positions, cultural issues may also be influencing recruitment as Fremont has a Asian population of 48%. This research project will assess the marketing and recruitment practices of the City of Fremont and evaluate if changes are needed in promoting the fire service to the community. If changes are indicated, the model for change taught in the Executive Fire Officer Program at the National Fire Academy (NFA) provides a structured method to effectively implement change through analysis, planning, implementation, and evaluation (APIE) (National Fire Academy, 2006, chap. 3). Current estimates indicate that 50% of the FFD is eligible to retire in the next three to five years, addressing this issue at this time supports the United States Fire Administrations fifth operational objective “to respond appropriately in a timely manner to emerging issues” (National Fire Academy, 2003).

### Literature Review

The following information was obtained from the Learning Resource Center at the NFA, personal interviews, the Internet, and literature from the City of Fremont’s Human Resources Department. These sources were used to find out what recruitment methods are currently used by the City of Fremont and other agencies, if surrounding community organizations and schools

have programs that encourage careers in the fire service, if cultural barriers impact recruitment, and what type of programs could generate interest in the Fremont Fire Department.

Recruitment practices: Fire Chief Richard Marinucci of the Farmington Hill Fire Department in Michigan published an article on hiring problems based on his experiences. Chief Marinucci believes that when vacancies occur it is a common tendency to fill positions as quickly as possible. Without a carefully crafted recruitment and hiring process, “A hiring mistake will last your organization 25 years. It will also create many future challenges for you and your staff” (Marinucci, 2008, p. 38). In most all cases, the best way to fix a hiring problem is to get to the root cause of the problem and look for the solution there. This takes time, but you get the added value of not only resolving your problem, you will also greatly reduce the likelihood of a reoccurrence. Before recruitment begins it is wise to start by reviewing the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) required for the job. In addition to mechanical aptitude and physical ability, interpersonal skills should also be assessed. In addition to the KSA think about any other prerequisites that are needed for the job. Once this information is organized, you’re ready to promote the open vacancies. Chief Marinucci recommends that organizations should advertise in as many places as practical and affordable. Along with posting job opportunities on the Internet, post applications in key locations and think about carrying them with you to hand them out personally. The more applications you receive the better (Marinucci, 2008, p. 39).

The Rochester Fire Department in Minnesota, found success in implementing a recruitment program that would expand the diversity of their department. Their recruitment campaign focused on actively getting out into the community and promoting a career in the fire service. Recruitment methods included: visiting job fairs and regional colleges that offer Fire

Technology and Fire Science programs. They placed poster ads at career centers, restaurants, lounges, women's health spas, National Guard Armories, and health clubs. Billboards and posters were designed specifically toward black, Asian, and Hispanic audiences, using photos of actual firefighters. They also aired free Public Service Announcements to reach targeted audiences. The Rochester Fire Department hopes to generate an early interest in firefighting to a more diverse audience of young men and women in order to allow them sufficient time to obtain the training and preparation to do well in the firefighter entry level process (Felsch, 2007, p. 17).

The United States Military has a very aggressive recruitment program. Their recruitment websites offer comprehensive information about the personal and financial benefits of joining an elite team. Recruiters actively engage the public by promoting the Army at high school and college job fairs, and large public events. They also use state-of-the art technology on their websites. The Army has a program that has a virtual reality soldier that will respond to questions in real time (United States Army, n.d.). Recruitment handout materials are colorful and show pictures of wide-range diversity and include personal success stories. Phrases they use such as "Being a soldier in the U.S. Army can strengthen you today to meet future opportunities", and "With each new accomplishment, you'll feel a sense of pride as an individual and part of a strong Army team" are emphasized in their recruitment guides (United States Government, 2007, p. 2). These forms of advertisements also offer opportunities such as, continuing your education, world travel, and a chance to work in a meaningful job with challenging adventure in the field of your interest. A large emphasis is placed on their educational incentive benefits. The U.S. Army promotes, "If you serve full time you may be eligible for the Montgomery GI Bill and the Army College fund worth \$70,000 and \$40,000 cash enlistment bonus" (United States, 2007, p. 4).

United States Army Staff Sergeant Joseph Williams (personal interview, February 11, 2009) allowed me the opportunity to interview him about the programs the Army offers for recruitment. Sergeant Williams was selected for this interview because he is an active Army recruiter and this author was seeking information about other possible recruitment practices that may exist but not advertised. Beyond the creative recruitment practices the United States military provide, this author found that they have an internal recruitment program of there own. The United States Military has a Career Development Counselor Program for military personnel that are exiting the service. The counselors help find a field of interest for individuals and encourage them to attend job fairs hosted at military posts. These job fairs invite public and private organization to offer opportunities for employment. Sergeant Williams provided information on how City's can attend these fairs and offer employment opportunities to military personnel leaving the service.

The City of Fremont has very little literature available about there recruitment practices. To obtain information on how the City conducts recruitment for firefighters, an interview was conducted with the Employment Services Manager for the City of Fremont. Nancy Dias (personal interview, January 5, 2009) explained that her office currently advertises job openings for new employment primarily through Internet services. These services include: Firejobs.com, 911hotjobs.com, firerecruit.com, Fire careers.com, Women in the fireservice.com, Craigslist.com, and the City of Fremont's web page, fremont.gov. Currently the City of Fremont does not have a local recruitment program. Information on firefighter qualifications and job responsibilities are only posted when an open recruitment is underway. Ms. Dias expressed a strong interest to enhance advertising in key locations in the City. Unfortunately, Ms. Dias said her office does not have the capacity to begin this type of a program at this time. When

firefighter recruitment opens, information can be found on the City's employment webpage (City of Fremont, n.d.)

Community organizations: The cities of Fremont, Newark, and Union City are located in the most southern borders of Alameda County. These three Cities are referred to as the Tri-City Area. The Mission Valley Regional Occupational Program (MVROP) is located in the City of Fremont. This training institution provides career training for high tech and vocational training for the Fremont, New Haven, and Newark Unified School Districts. Over 5,000 high school and adult student attend courses at MVROP each year. Fire Science courses are offered to high school students and their Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) courses are offered to both high school and adult students (Mission Valley Regional Occupational Program [MVROP], 2008).

Jim Write is the Vice President of Academic Affairs for Ohlone College located in the City of Fremont (personal interview, February 12, 2009). Mr. Write was interviewed because of his specific experience in coordinating articulation agreements with MVROP. Ohlone College offers approximately 40 courses to high school students at MVROP and these courses are transferable to the Ohlone College. Although the college does not currently have their own Fire Science Program, students throughout the Tri-City area attending MVROP are getting a head start on their undergraduate college education. Mr. Write said, "This relationship works very well because the goals of both organizations are very similar." Ohlone College's Mission Statement states they provide, "instruction for basic skills, career entry, university, economic development, and personal enrichment for all who can benefit from instruction in an environment where students learning success is highly valued, supported and continually assessed (Ohlone College, 2009)." Mr. Write said this breaks down to three primary objectives that the school works towards: To prepare incoming student for transfer to a four year college, to

provide students with workforce skills, and to promote life long learning. These are similar goals of the MVROP.

Chabot College is located 8.9 mile from Fremont, and is just outside the Tri-City area. Chabot has a very successful Fire Technology Program that is based on the Uniform Fire Technology curriculum approved by the State Board of Fire Services and the California Fire Chiefs Association. The college offers a Firefighter 1 Academy for pre-fire service students that are tied into the college's degree program. After completing the Academy, students can enroll in Fire Technology 95 and 96 (Work Experience and Work Experience Seminar) and participate as a Work Experience Student Firefighter. A Firefighter 1 Certification can be obtained at the end of the Academy; however, full certification is contingent on 6 months experience as a full time firefighter, or 12 months as a volunteer. Work experience hours may apply to meet the service time requirements (Chabot College, 2009). At this time the college does not offer paramedic training, but their Associates Degree Program and Firefighter 1 Academy are a good foundation to meet entry level employment prerequisites.

Cultural barriers: In January 2007, the population of the city of Fremont was 211,662. The community demographics of Fremont are made up of 48% Asian, 32% white, 14% Hispanic, 4% African American, and 2% other (City of Fremont, 2006). For the purpose of this study, the Human Resources Department provided this author the FFD employment demographics that showed 3.27% Asian, 77.12% White, 14.38% Hispanic, 3.92% African American, and 1.31 Other (N. Dias, personal communication, January 14, 2009). Data from the 2000 census shows that the top five fields that Asian were employed in were: 25.8% computer, scientific, and engineering, 22.5% sales, operations, and support, 12.4% skilled blue collar, 11.8% medical healthcare professionals, and 11.1% executive upper management positions.

This data also shows that of all ethnic groups, Asians have the highest proportion in the computer, scientific, and engineering occupations (Le, 2006). This data shows that Asians prefer careers in computer, scientific, and engineering fields twice as much as skilled blue collar jobs. Before jumping to conclusions on why this is they choose these fields, this author followed the advice of Leslie Aguilar that said; “Many assumptions about individuals are based on stereotypes held about a group of individuals. If you are seeking information about a group of people, seek input from multiple sources. One should question assumptions instead of simply believing they’re true.” (Aguilar, 2006, p. 22)

This data is only one indicator that may explain why Asian and Mid-Eastern residents may not be interested in pursuing a career in the fire service. To gain a better understanding of why these cultures appear to be uninterested in public service employment, personal interviews were arranged to receive information on cultural customs that are not found in text. The following individuals were selected for interviews specifically for their direct connection to these cultural issues.

Azadeh Jorgensen (Personal interview, December 10, 2008) is a 32 year old woman who was raised in Iran and came to the United States 12 years ago. She is currently employed as a Human Resources Analyst I for the City of Fremont. I was given the opportunity to interview Ms. Jorgensen on her cultural perspective of work related professions. She said, “In my country education is a high priority and children are expected to pursue professional careers in medicine, engineering, and science as part of their culture. It is also highly valued if one owns their own business.” She went on to say that these career paths are a symbol of status in their culture and anything less is strongly discouraged. Ms. Jorgensen said that technical professional jobs often require less verbal communication. When people from her country come to the United States

they often do not speak English fluently. They fear this leads people to believe that they have a lower level of education and stereotype them as underperformers.

Ms. Jorgensen was expected to follow in her mother's footsteps and become a medical doctor. When she left Iran to come to the United States she completed her Bachelors Degree and decided not to pursue medicine. Despite great family disappointment, she was able to break the cultural expectations she was raised by and pursued a different direction. Based on Ms. Jorgensen personal struggle to pursue her own career path, she believes that it would be very difficult to recruit young people from the Asian and Middle Eastern culture into the fire service because of strong family and culture influence to achieve more prestigious professions.

Osh Ahmad is a 27 year old male who lives in the city of Fremont and is of Middle Eastern descent (Personal interview, February 15, 2008). His father spent his career in the military and moved his family frequently. Mr. Ahmad family background originates in Jordan, but he was born in the Philippines and raised in the Asian culture. He said that the Asian culture expectations to pursue higher education and technical jobs were prevalent, but his experience was different. Due to his father's background and his career in the military, his parents focused more on the safety of their children and were very protective. He explained that the first and second generations in his family that came to the United States encouraged their children to complete school and follow in their parents' foot steps. In his country they did not have police or firefighters, only a military force.

After completing his Bachelors Degree in college he told his parents he wanted to become a firefighter. They were concerned because they viewed this as an extremely dangerous career and tried hard to discourage the idea. Mr. Ahmad believes that his parents' hesitation was widely caused by a lack of knowledge about the fire service. He also believes that this same lack

of knowledge is prevalent throughout many communities. Mr. Ahmad became interested in pursuing a career in the fire service when he saw someone that looked like him working on a fire engine and that attracted his interest. He believed that if someone with his background could be successful in a fire service, he could be too. Mr. Ahmad said that his observations are that the new generation from his culture would be more interested in the fire service if there were avenues to educate young adults and their parents. His biggest obstacle was that his parents had no idea what a career in the fire service entailed.

Types of programs that can be generated: The San Francisco Paramedic Association (SFPA) is a professional educational organization that provides up-to-date, emergency health care classes to both the public and professional health care providers. This organization provides training in Basic Life Support, Advanced Cardiac Life Support, Pre-hospital Trauma Life Support, Pediatric Life Support, EMT, and Paramedic training (San Francisco Paramedic Association [SFPA], 2008). Art Hsieh is the Chief Operating Officer of the SFPA (A. Hsieh, personal communication, November 20, 2008). Mr. Hsieh was interviewed because his organization is the largest emergency medical training provider in the San Francisco Bay Area. He explained that his organization is looking for ways to offer EMT and Paramedic training in the Tri-City Area because his customers travel great distances to attend these course. Mr. Hsieh said his organization would be very willing to partner with the MVROP, the local Colleges, and Fire Departments to provide EMT and Paramedic training if they could share resources and facilities.

Laurie McFadden is the Operations Manager for American Medical Response (AMR) in Alameda County (L. McFadden, personal communication, September 15, 2008). Laurie was interviewed because of her operational expertise in the medical transportation industry. She

expressed an interest in participating in the development of EMT and Paramedics partnerships because her organization has employment opportunities to offer newly trained students. She also explained that they would have an opportunity to receive valuable work experience in a fast paced ambulance environment. AMR is also feeling the impacts of retirements in the fire service. Ms. McFadden said they have been experiencing a large turn-over in paramedics in their organization due to employees leaving for fire department jobs. She sees a common approach to training and recruitment would benefit all stakeholders.

The MVROP provides Fire Science courses that give students interested in a career in Fire Services an opportunity to identify the qualifications and requirements for the position of Firefighter. Through these courses, teachers emphasize the importance of personal integrity, self-discipline, effective oral and written communication skills, interpersonal relationships, physical fitness and health, strong academic skills and effective problem solving skills. This organization also offers EMT training with classroom, skills training, and clinical observation. Students that complete the MVROP are encouraged to transfer to Ohlone Junior College also located in Fremont. Select courses completed at MVROP are approved for articulation credits at Ohlone. MVROP is also interested in working with other agencies to enhance their Fire Science Program. (Mission Valley Regional Occupational Program [MVROP], 2008).

In summary, through literature review and personal interviews several ideas were identified that would enhance the City of Fremont's recruitment process. The information that influenced this author on recruitment the most was found in the Rochester Fire Department's experience. Their recruitment program consists of activities that are relatively simple to organize and implement. Community engagement, accompanied by developing relationships with high schools and community colleges, are likely to generate an increased interest in the local fire

department. It was also evident that a fire department presence at public activities generated interest from different cultures within the community. Although it is very difficult to find written information on why the Asian culture is not interested in a fire service career, the unwritten story was universal in the personnel interviews conducted. What influenced this author was that it seems the younger generation is looking outward to new opportunities that may not have been available to them in the past due to cultural barriers.

Perhaps the most interesting observation was that there are currently several organizations that operate in the Tri-City Area that provide education and service for the emergency services industry. It was interesting to find that there are common needs among each of them. Whether the need is employment, student enrollment, or training requirements, an organized approach with collaboration from each organization would complement each of the stakeholders. Facilitating relationships between these organizations in the Tri-City Area would have a high potential to benefit the local fire departments and the community as a whole.

### Procedures

This research project began with a comprehensive review of the research guidelines located in Chapters 4 and 5 of the Executive Development Student Manual. The collection of information began while attending the Executive Development Program at the National Fire Academy (NFA) in Emmitsburg, MD. Information from periodicals was retrieved from the Learning Resource Center (LRC) at the NFA in August 2008. The primary focus was to obtain information on recruitment and hiring practices of other organizations from archived articles located at the LRC.

Throughout this project the Internet was used to retrieve information on cultural diversity and employment trends of the Asian and Middle Eastern population. This was also the source used to retrieve demographic and population statistics of the City of Fremont. The Internet was very helpful in finding out how other public organizations are utilizing technology. For example; many organizations are moving their recruitment practices to the internet to reach a larger audience. Fire Departments and the Military are two organizations that promote careers by using their young employees to share their success stories. The military even uses a virtual reality recruiter that will answer your questions in real time.

Personal interviews were conducted with personnel from the Human Resources Department of the City of Fremont. The intent of these interviews was to obtain information on hiring practices directly from the source. Nancy Dias, the Employment Services Manager was the primary source used from the Human Resources Department. Additional interviews were conducted with selected individuals in the community to gain a better understanding of cultural influences in career planning, and to identify educational programs offered in the Tri-City area that promote careers in the fire service.

Literature review revealed helpful information on how to pre-organize a hiring process, and market the fire department to the local community. Informative ideas on marketing programs for young members of the community were a very practical and could be implemented using existing resources. By offering a career pathway for individuals before entering the workforce allows future candidates ample time to obtain the minimum qualifications to apply for fire department positions. Literature review was very helpful in finding appropriate ways to communicate with different ethnic groups in the community and how to avoid stereotyping.

### Definition of terms

**Articulation:** An articulated high school course is one in which a determination has been made that a course offered at the secondary level is comparable to a specific community college course.

**Asian:** All persons having origins in any of the original people of the Far East, Southeast Asia, and Indian subcontinent or Pacific Islands. These areas include Cambodia, China, Hawaii, Guam, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Samoa, Thailand, and Vietnam.

**White:** When not Hispanic origin, all persons having origins in any of the original people of Europe, the Middle East or North Africa.

**African American:** When not Hispanic origin, all persons having origins in any of the Black racial group of Africa.

### Results

**Question 1:** What is the recruitment method used by the human resources department in Fremont? The City of Fremont currently advertises job openings through Internet services. These services include: Firejobs.com, 911hotjobs.com, firerecruit.com, Fire careers.com, Women in the fireservice.com, Craigslist.com, and the City of Fremont's web page, fremont.gov. Currently, the City of Fremont does not have a local recruitment program. When individuals contact the Human Resources Department with employment questions they are referred to the City's webpage for application, salary, and job description information (City of Fremont, 2008).

**Question 2:** Do surrounding community organizations and schools have programs that encourage careers in the fire service? Located in the city of Fremont is the Mission Valley Regional occupational Program. This organization provides vocational and technical training to

high schools student in the Tri-City area. Fire Science classes and Emergency Medical Technician training is offered to both high school and adult students on a semester basis. Ohlone College is also located in Fremont and supports the MVROP by offering articulation credits for students planning to transfer to Ohlone College. Chabot College is located just outside of the Tri-City area and offers a Fire Science Degree Program. They also offer a Firefighter 1 Academy, and assistance in obtaining work experience hours through their Student Firefighter Work Program.

Question 3: Do cultural barriers in the community impact recruitment? The city of Fremont currently has an Asian population of 48%. The fire department employment demographics are 3.27% Asians (N. Dias, personal communication, January 14, 2009). It is the preference of those of the Asian and Middle Eastern descent to primarily seek occupations in highly educated careers. National data shows that of all ethnic groups, Asians have the highest population in the computer, scientific, and engineering occupations (Le, 2006). Information discovered in this research indicates that these cultures currently do not encourage family members to pursue employment in the fire service. Based on this information and personal interviews that confirmed these finding, cultural influences do have an impact on local recruitment.

Question 4: What type of programs can be developed to generate interest in obtaining a career in the Fremont Fire Department? This research found that there are currently programs in place that provide fire science training in and around the Tri-City area; however, they lack a connection with the fire departments. The development of a recruitment program created by stakeholders from educational organization and fire departments in the Tri-City areas would be a collaborative effort to meet common goals. The Rochester Fire Department in Minnesota

displayed a good example of collaboration, as they found success in implementing a recruitment program that expanded diversity in their department by actively marketing to high school and college students. A presence in the classrooms and out in the community offers an opportunity for the fire department to educate the public on the benefits of joining the fire department.

### Discussion

In evaluating the recruitment and marketing practices of the City of Fremont, it was found that the City does not have a local recruitment program, or information available for the public to begin preparing for a career in the fire service. Currently the City advertises job opening on the Internet as a primary recruitment method due to limited staffing (N. Dias, personnel communication, January 14, 2009). When the Rochester Fire Department was looking to increase recruitment and expand diversity, they found success in having fire crews actively engaging the public at job fairs, local high schools, community colleges, and by attending public events. This gave them the opportunity to promote the fire department and educate the community on how to obtain a career in the fire service (Felsch, 2007, p.17). United States Army Staff Sergeant Joseph Williams (personal interview, February 11, 2009) explained that the Army attends the same type of community venues to market a career in the military.

In comparing each of these approaches for recruitment with the practices used by the City of Fremont, this author believes that a better connection is made with the public when recruiters make direct contact with the community. Short public relation assignments don't take a lot of effort, but they do have the potential to pay in large dividends. The organizational implications of not making this investment to connect with the community will not only prevent the

department from promoting the diversity of the community, it will also limit the organizations ability to educate the public.

One approach to educating the public may start in the schools. There are organizations that support fire service education in Fremont. The Mission Valley Regional Occupational Program is located in the city of Fremont and offers Fire Science courses to high school students, and EMT courses to both high school and adult students (Mission Valley Regional Occupational Program [MVROP], 2008). Ohlone College is also located in Fremont and works closely with MVROP to offers approximately 40 courses to high school students that are transferable to the Ohlone College. Including full and part time students, Ohlone has up to 18,000 students on their campus every semester (J. Write, personal communication, February 12, 2009). Chabot College is located just outside the Tri-City area. Chabot has a successful Fire Technology Program that offers a Firefighter 1 Academy. They also have a Student Work Experience Program that helps students gain the required experience to complete Firefighter 1 Certification (Chabot College, 2009). In comparing these organizations, MVROP provides Fire Science and EMT training but does not provide an Associate Degree. However, their relationship with Ohlone College offers incentives to students by allowing them to transfer completed Fire Sciences courses into Ohlone's Fire Science Degree Program. Ohlone College benefits by enhancing their future enrollments directly from the Tri-City area. Chabot College offers a well established Fire Technology Program and Associate Degree. It also provides a Student Work Experience Program that the other organizations do not have (Chabot College, 2009). Although these three organizations do not provide paramedic training, Chabot's program does provide information on the 21 paramedic training intuitions in the State of California (Chabot College, 2008).

This author found that each of the programs offer unique opportunities and provide their students a good foundation to meet entry level requirements for the fire service. The City of Fremont would benefit from establishing relationships with each of these organizations and begin mentoring these students. By partnering together to develop a common career pathway into the fire service, these students and programs would greatly benefit the community of Fremont.

Building relationships and educating is essential in a diverse community. Research found that the City of Fremont has an Asian population of 48%, and the fire department demographics represent 3.27% of this culture (N. Dias, personal communication, January 14, 2009). National census data indicates that of all ethnic groups, Asians have the highest career interest in the computer, scientific, and engineering occupations. (Le, 2006)

Through personal interviews it was discovered that these cultures do not encourage family members to pursue employment in the fire service. "It is the preference of Asian and Middle Eastern people to primarily seek occupations in highly educated careers and this is heavily influenced by the family unit." (A. Jorgensen, personal communication, December 10, 2008). Osh Ahmad (personal interview, February 15, 2009) agreed with Ms. Jorgensen's assessment, but added that he believed that the new generation from his culture will be more interested in pursuing a career in the fire service if there were avenues to educate the parents and young adults on what services, benefits, and opportunities the fire department has to offer. Comparing census statistics to the personal interview, this author believes that the national census data support the cultural and family influences found in this research. Based on this information cultural influences do have an impact on local recruitment; however, a well designed recruitment program has the potential to change the perceptions of young people and their families.

The information gathered through research indicates that the development of a community based recruitment and marketing plan may be an effective way to increase public education and interest in the fire department. The Rochester Fire Department displayed a good example of how to expand diversity in the fire department by actively marketing to high school and college students. Working together with other organizations in a collaborative approach they found success in implementing a new recruitment program. An annual evaluation plan for was also put in place to measure the success of the program. Deputy Chief Lyle Felsch said it's also important to carry the firefighter career opportunity message to the young people at an earlier age as well as to the parents and career counselors (Felsch, 2007, p.17). The United States Military uses these methods to reach candidates as well as attending job fairs, large public events, and marketing on the Internet. (United States Army, n.d.) Using these methods of community engagement, accompanied by developing relationships with the two community colleges and the MVROP, the outcome would likely complement each of these organizations.

Art Hsieh (A. Hsieh, personal communication, November 20, 2009) from the San Francisco Paramedic Association (SFPA) explained that his organization is looking for a way to offer EMT and Paramedic training in the Tri-City area because his customers travel great distances to attend these course. Mr. Hsieh said his organization is very willing to partner with the MVROP, the local Colleges, and Fire Departments to provide EMT and Paramedic training if they could share resources and facilities. He also offered to provide continuing education training to assist paramedics in their licensing requirements.

Laurie McFadden (L. McFadden, personal communication, September 15, 2008) from American Medical Response (AMR) in Alameda County expressed an interest in participating in the development of EMT and Paramedics partnership because her organization has employment

opportunities to offer newly trained students. She also explained that they would have an opportunity to receive valuable work experience in a fast paced ambulance environment. AMR is also feeling the impacts of retirements in the fire service. The trickle down effect is that they have been experiencing a large turn-over in paramedics in their organization due to employees leaving for fire department jobs. Ms. McFadden concurs that a common approach to training and recruitment would benefit all stakeholders.

In comparing the information received from each of these sources, this author sees a common need to expand recruitment, training opportunities, and partnerships. Each of these agencies sees a benefit in working collaboratively to support Fire and Emergency Medical Services. The organizational implications of not working together have the potential to continue the degradation of services in the emergency delivery system.

### Recommendations

It was identified in this study that the City of Fremont's current recruitment practice is to advertise open opportunities via internet. Internet recruitment is becoming very popular because it gives the employer an opportunity to reach out to a larger audience. Unfortunately, the City does not have a local recruitment program that is offered to members of the local community. Research found in this study outlined recruitment tactics used by other public agencies and the military that proved Successful. Attending job fairs at high schools, local colleges and community groups are one way to market the fire service and educate the public on services the fire department provides. Placing recruitment posters in restaurants, lounges, health clubs, educational facilities, and public places are tasks that could be performed by on-duty members of the fire department. The development of a local marketing plan should include stakeholders

from the fire department, the Human Resources department, and members of the public. It should also include a cross section of cultural diversity that represents and educates different sectors of the community.

Information in this research indicates that some of the components for generating interest in the fire service are already in place. Currently there are two major institutions that operate in the City of Fremont that partner together on preparing members of the community to enter the work force. The MVROP has a current Fire Science program and articulates with Ohlone Junior College. The missing piece is that there is not a connection between these training institutions and the three fire departments in the Tri-City area. MVROP and Ohlone College could be greatly enhanced by having a uniformed fire department presence in their programs. Forging a relationship between the educational institutions and the fire departments in the Tri-City area would allow an opportunity to communicate the career pathway into the fire service at a local level. The MVROP could benefit from receiving donated fire department equipment to support their program, and have access to fire department personnel to participate in training exercises. Developing a career pathway that take a student through MVROP to obtain Fire Science and EMT training, followed by attending a community colleges that have or support Fire Science Degrees would be a great start. Then, based on performance and commitment, selected individuals could be offered a sponsorship through a network of partnerships to attend Paramedic training with an employment opportunity.

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