



Best Practice: Advanced Management Training for Senior Officers

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CITY: NEW YORK CITY

POLICY AREA: FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

BEST PRACTICE

The New York City Fire Department's Officers Management Institute (FOMI) supervises a leadership training program for senior level uniformed officers in advanced management and leadership skills. The program allows senior officers to implement new technologies into operations and assess and identify new threats.

ISSUE

Following the September 11, 2001 attacks and an independent assessment of FDNY by McKinsey in 2002, the FDNY recognized the need for coordination of resources and response strategies with other agencies, levels of governments, private, and non-governmental (NGO) partners and an increase in management of long-duration responses. The Department recognized the need to respond successfully to challenges of terrorism, natural disasters, toxic incidents, explosions, fires, medical emergencies and mass casualty events.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

FOMI combines elements of Columbia University's Master of Public Administration (MPA) and Master of Business Administration (MBA) curricula with customized fire-service case studies and General Electric's innovation management tools to provide senior Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) chiefs with an in-service, accelerated certificate in advanced management practices. FOMI-certified chiefs will subsequently help to implement reduced emergency response time, establish an anti-terrorism center and emergency operations center, increase firefighter safety and design a multi-agency, risk-based, building and fire safety inspection system.

IMPLEMENTATION

McKinsey & Company prepared a pro bono report on the FDNY's response to the September 11, 2001. Their recommendations led to the creation of FOMI and the Department's first strategic plan, a major outcome of FOMI pilot. The NYC Office of Management and Budget, NYC Office of the Mayor and United States Military Academy at West Point have supported FOMI since its inception, helped obtain resources and contributed senior officials to conduct classes and seminars.

In 2002, the New York Fire Department partnered with Columbia University and the General Electric Company (GE) to create FOMI, as a highly selective, in-residence, project-based management and leadership training program for senior uniformed officers. By combining elements of Columbia's Executive MPA and Executive MBA curricula, FOMI provides a solid foundation in proven management principles. Staff from Columbia University, FDNY, the New York City Mayor's Office of Management and Budget, and the federal government provide lectures, lead case study exercises, convene informal seminars and lead projects drawn from FDNY's strategic plan process. The FDNY Foundation funds the cost of Columbia University faculty, curriculum and course materials. GE donates its state-of-the-art John F. Welch Leadership Center in Crotonville, New York, facilitating informal discussions and cross-sector learning between GE managers in training and FOMI participants.

FOMI launched as a pilot in 2002 with 24 of the Department's most senior chiefs divided into two sections of 12 over a period of 4 weeks. Based on the pilot, the department established the current model of 16 participants in one section over six months.

Since most participants come from the Battalion Chief rank there are now more courses covering the political and administrative context of fire and emergency services, as well as providing a more informal approach to seminars with FDNY



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leaders, representatives of the Mayor's Office and other government agencies. Training a significant number of Battalion Chiefs has lasting positive impact on the Department as these participants apply FOMI learning in their current rank, and in future leadership positions.

The most important achievement of FOMI is the transformation of FDNY's organizational culture from reactive to strategic, analytical and anticipatory. In addition, FOMI has fostered valuable cross-bureau networks, particularly between senior Fire and EMS personnel. At the core of this new management culture is the Department's successful strategic planning process, launched in 2004 as an outgrowth of FOMI. Since then, three strategic plans have produced nearly 100 breakthrough initiatives in emergency response, safety, management, prevention and diversity.

Most of the more than 130 FOMI graduates have been promoted to important new department assignments—often taking over from civilian leadership—and now head EMS, Communications, Training, Fire Prevention, Planning and Strategy, Special Operations and Counterterrorism bureaus. Two graduates have gone on to earn masters degrees in management, one from Harvard and the other from Columbia University.

Key partners in building and growing FOMI include:

- General Electric Company
- FDNY Foundation
- Columbia University
- McKinsey & Company
- United States Military Academy at West Point
- NYC Office of Management and Budget
- NYC Office of the Mayor

COST

There were no development costs for FOMI because McKinsey & Company, GE and Columbia University provided their expertise, resources and facilities pro bono. The annual operating budget is provided by the FDNY Foundation and General Electric. The FDNY Foundation provides an annual cash grant of \$189,639 which covers the cost of a contract with Columbia University for the curriculum, faculty, supplies and logistics necessary to provide the academic content of FOMI. In 2009, the American Express Foundation contributed to the Foundation's support of FOMI. GE provides the use of its conference center for six weeks over six months annually, including room, board and conference facilities for 16 participants and faculty. The estimated market value of the GE contribution is \$168,000 annually.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Work Process

FOMI has dramatically affected work processes throughout the FDNY. Graduates now have much broader project management capabilities and greater comfort with automated presentation tools. They have learned how to access and analyze data, and utilize electronic management tools such as Microsoft Project and the FDNY's own real-time databases. FOMI graduates now routinely develop surveys to collect data on, for example, the pilot testing of new safety equipment. Work teams managing or proposing new projects now regularly incorporate a detailed timeline, budget and performance measures.

FDNY-EMS Coordination

FOMI has stimulated a related shift in the organizational culture by fostering increased interaction and cooperation between the Fire and EMS bureaus. Since the merger of EMS into the FDNY in 1996 (previously under the jurisdiction of the City's Health and Hospitals Corporation), true integration of the two bureaus has remained elusive. For a variety of cultural and organizational reasons, the overwhelmingly white, male firefighting workforce and the much more diverse EMS workforce



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remained discrete entities, resisting any effort to move toward a fully integrated response system. By providing a venue for Fire and EMS chiefs to come together in an atmosphere of advanced learning, open discussion and camaraderie, FOMI has successfully bridged this vast divide. Year after year, FOMI graduates report in their evaluations that these strengthened relationships are highly valued and have enhanced cooperation and coordination in the field.

Alumni Success

FDNY strategic planning benefits from class projects managed or co-directed by FOMI graduates. Nearly 90 of the 100 projects included in the 2004-2005 strategic plan were completed. Significant accomplishments in this plan include the implementation of a tiered-response matrix to advance the hazardous materials capabilities of fire companies and ambulance units; establishing a creation of the only certified Incident Management Team in the Eastern U.S.; universal Incident Command System training for all uniformed personnel; creation of an annual risk management plan; and the design and construction of a state-of-the-art Fire Department Operations Center. The 2007-2008 plan (now co-led by another FOMI graduate) has already produced a new performance management system and new protocols for fighting electrical fires. The Department has also made unprecedented progress in the 2007-2008 Plan toward the goal of increasing firefighter diversity.

Accreditation

An independent evaluation of the FOMI curriculum, faculty and content was conducted by the American Council on Education (ACE). After completing its evaluation in December 2004, ACE decided to accept the FOMI program into its system and assign it a value of nine advanced undergraduate or graduate level credits. This means that any officer who successfully completes the FOMI program, including a class project and presentation to the Fire Commissioner (which is graded by Columbia University faculty) and is enrolled or returns to a college program that recognizes the ACE program will be entitled to have nine academic credits of management and leadership coursework added to their transcript.

FOMI has been the subject of several academic papers and general circulation articles, including:

Lydia Polgreen, "O.K., Chief, It's Time to Get Down to Business," *The New York Times*, January 16, 2003, page B3.

Fernanda Santos, "Prepare Bravest for worst: FDNY will train to cope with terror," *New York Daily News*, March 29, 2004.

NY1 News, "FDNY Releases First-Ever Strategic Plan For Fighting Fires, Terror," reported by Andrew Siff, March 29, 2004.

William Eimicke, Daniel Shacknai and Keeley Townsend, "Evolution of the Fire Management Paradigm: Lessons from the FDNY Officers Management Institute," IFSJLM Research Symposium (RS05), 2005.

Kristin Sterling, "Chinese Officials Study Best Practices in Public Administration at SIPA," *Columbia News*, August 31, 2005, www.columbia.edu/cu/news/05/08sipa_guangdong.html.

Kristin Sterling, "SIPA Program Fosters Community Building in Northern Ireland," November 7, 2005, www.columbia.edu/cu/news/05/11/north_ireland_group.html.

Ginger Adams Otis, "Scoppetta: FDNY Can Adapt," *The Chief: Civil Service Leader*, August 25, 2006.

Daniel Shacknai, Steven Cohen, and William Eimicke, "The FDNY Officers Management Institute (FOMI): A Public Private Partnership Facilitating Strategic Thinking and Diversity," A paper prepared for the 68th American Society for Public Administration National Conference, Washington, DC, March 23-27, 2007.

"FDNY Chiefs Graduate from Fire Officers Management Institute," www.nyc.gov/html/fdny/html/events2007/050907a.shtml.

"Director of Columbia's Picker Center to Be Next Deputy Commissioner New York City Fire Department," www.columbia.edu/cu/news/07/06/eimicke.html.



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TIMELINE

- Spring 2002 Following the 9/11 attack, Commissioner Scoppetta initiates FDNY meeting with Columbia University to discuss leadership/management training program.
- Summer 2002 GE donates training center; FDNY Foundation funds curriculum.
- August 2002 McKinsey Report on FDNY Preparedness released, emphasizing need for leadership, management and accountability executive training.
- Fall 2002 FOMI I pilot begins with 24 senior chiefs in two classes of 12.
- May 18, 2004 In testimony before the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, FDNY Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta identifies FOMI as one of the most important accomplishments of the Department since 9/11 and as evidence that the FDNY was now better prepared to respond to major acts of terrorism.
- Winter 2004 FDNY launches 1st Strategic Plan led by FOMI graduate & Deputy Commissioner Shacknai.
- Fall 2005 FOMI IV begins with current six week format & curriculum.
- Fall 2006 FDNY & Columbia conduct three-session "FOMI" for civilian managers.
- Spring 2007 FOMI VI graduates its 100th participant including its first fire marshal commander.
- Spring 2008 FOMI was selected as one of the "Top 50 Programs in Innovations in American Government" by the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard's Kennedy School.
- Spring 2009 FOMI was selected again as one of the "Top 50 Programs in Innovations in American Government."

LEGISLATION

No legislation or regulatory changes were needed to implement FOMI.

LESSONS LEARNED

The most significant obstacle encountered by participants during the implementation of FOMI is finding class projects that will ultimately result in improvements at the FDNY. Aspects of a few of the early projects were implemented but most projects came either too soon or too late in the development cycle to be fully utilized. To remedy the problem, FDNY created an agency-wide project suggestion process and established a committee of senior managers to select the final four projects.

As a general rule, class projects should be linked to strategic plan objectives. Every project has an FDNY sponsor who is directly responsible for the activity that the project is designed to improve. The sponsor meets regularly with the FOMI project team and faculty advisor to make sure that the work and recommendations of the project team are timely and realistic.



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In 2007, all four FOMI V project teams worked closely with FDNY sponsors and in turn influenced FDNY decision-making.

By 2009, two more classes graduated and FOMI was selected twice as one of the "Top 50 Programs in Innovations in American Government" by the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard's Kennedy School.

TRANSFERABILITY

FOMI would not be difficult to replicate in other fire and emergency medical agencies across the United States because the FDNY will provide the curriculum, case materials and teaching methodology it has developed and refined over the past six years. Many large fire and emergency medical agencies faced the same challenges that led the FDNY to create FOMI in 2002. For example, the 2007 Report of the Boston Fire Department Independent Review Panel to Mayor Menino on August 29, 2007 recommends that the BFD, "establish a credentialed professional development academy program with specific curricula developed for company and chief level officers."

FDNY envisions a "train-the-trainers" model through which the agency would provide curriculum, cases, exercises, readings and even the Power Points used in the teaching modules. Accreditation by the American Council on Education should enable other departments to offer its participants the possibility of college credits for its version of FOMI. Columbia University faculty could help other departments establish stronger ties with local public management programs.

FDNY has extensive experience working with other fire departments around the United States, and frequently receives visiting fire chiefs from around the nation and the world, which would facilitate an effort to replicate FOMI in other jurisdictions. In 2005, FDNY deployed more than 650 members during a six-week mission to provide critical assistance to the New Orleans Fire Department in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. FDNY Incident Management Team (IMT) members have responded to over 100 wild land forest fires in the western portion of the United States. FDNY is currently collaborating with Chicago FD, Dayton FD, Ottawa FD and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) on testing new methods of fighting wind-driven fires in multiple dwellings.

Most cities have the basic ingredients for a successful FOMI program: a fire/EMS department requiring additional management and leadership training; a local university public policy and administration and/or business management program; local business and philanthropic leaders concerned about counterterrorism and emergency management; and a nearby conference center.

CONTACTS

- Daniel Shacknai, Esq.
Deputy Commissioner for Legal Affairs
New York City Fire Department
9 MetroTech Center
Brooklyn, NY 11201
Phone: 718-999-2013
- William B. Eimicke, Ph.D.
Deputy Commissioner for Strategy and Policy
New York City Fire Department
9 MetroTech Center
Brooklyn, NY 11201
Phone: 718-999-2016

For more information, visit <http://www.nyc.gov/html/fdny>.