

## **A Synergistic Alternative to Traditional Police Promotions**

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Based on recommendations from Police Officers, focus groups, supervisors, professors, union leaders, and others, Civil Service proposed an innovative synergistic approach to the promotional process and career development for Police Officers. The development of a training/testing/mentoring combination should provide the Police Department with better promotional candidates, as well as address concerns raised by candidates. The steps taken are listed below:

1. The Louisville Division of Police was faced with the same dilemmas as many Police Departments today: seasoned officers who did not want to get promoted for various reasons; officers getting promoted with little or no preparation for the duties of a supervisor; and valuable officers who avoided the promotional process because of perceptions of bias, test anxiety and/or a lack of study skills.
2. Two focus groups (Caucasian males & females; African American males & females) were established to determine Police Officers' perceptions about the previous promotional process to Police Sergeant and to solicit their suggestions to improve the promotional process.
3. In addition to the focus groups, Civil Service talked with other Police Officers, union leaders, supervisors, and professors to ascertain issues preventing candidates from applying for the position of Police Sergeant. Some of the issues raised were:
  - a) perception of unfairness in the promotional process
  - b) perception of unfairness in selection after the list is established
  - c) lack of a career development program in the department
  - d) lack of information dissemination to all officers regarding the promotional process
  - e) lack of time to study for the written test - especially around the holidays
  - f) child care issues in trying to find time to study for the written test and in the shift change that comes with a promotion
  - g) too much material to study for the written test
  - h) lack of job relatedness of the written test. They suggested that Civil Service ask current Sergeants what information is necessary for the written test.
  - i) unwillingness to change shifts to become a Sergeant
  - j) unwillingness to change assignments to become a Sergeant
  - k) the unwillingness to be a supervisor
  - l) perceived loss of pay
4. After discussions of the results of the focus groups and other information gathering, we decided to improve on an idea that the Louisville Division of Fire had successfully implemented: Train candidates for promotion PRIOR to testing them.
5. The new process includes classes over the material covered on the test and two tests instead of one to reduce the amount of material covered on a given examination.
6. Police Sergeants and above are trainers. Trainers are paid overtime or comptime for preparation and instruction. Civil Service also provides trainers.

7. A team based approach to teaching is being used so students get different perspectives and as a contingency in case a trainer becomes unavailable.
8. The same classes will be offered at least four times a week at different times of the day to accommodate different shifts, detail assignments, outside work and child care concerns.
9. The classes are meant to emphasize practical applications of the reading material. Trainers are chosen based on their expertise and areas of interest. The goal is to explain by example and present the material in more concrete terms to aid those who have trouble with abstract concepts. Students will also be able to ask for clarification and we will emphasize the value of group studying.
10. A job analysis on the Sergeant position identified the following topics as necessary for Sergeants to know:
  - a) Criminal Investigations
  - b) Laws
  - c) FOP Issues
  - d) District Operations
  - e) Administrative Operations
  - f) Special Operations
  - g) Leadership Issues
  - h) OSHA and other Safety IssuesIn addition to these topics, we will start with a class on note taking and include a class on the job simulation process to demystify the process and help candidates prepare.
11. The written exams are given in two parts to coincide with the classes. Attendance at classes is not mandatory, but applicants must take both tests and a job simulation to be placed on an eligibility list. Reading assignments will be given to everyone. Those who opt to study on their own, may do so.
12. Civil Service will construct, administer, and score the exams, which will consist of multiple choice questions over the written material covered in the classes. Instructors will highlight key information and give pop quizzes to help guide the Civil Service staff toward the most important information the candidates need to know.
13. The written exams are pass/fail and will not be weighted in the final score for ranking on the eligibility list. However, written test scores may determine which candidates go through the job simulation.
14. Instructors will be evaluated by students and Civil Service staff.
15. Civil Service staff of item writers will be attending classes to ensure test material is consistent with instructor interpretation of material. Also, staff will be evaluating instructor effectiveness and suitability.
16. Applicant Reactions-Pertinent Relevant Questions
  - Q1-Why spend 11 weeks on material covered in a written test that is only pass/fail?
  - Q2-Is this just another affirmative action effort to help African Americans?