

Improving the Performance Appraisal

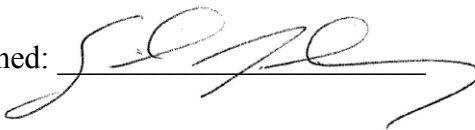
System of the Novato Fire Protection District

Erich W. Mesenburg

Novato Fire Protection District, Novato, California

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

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

Signed: 

## Abstract

The problem addressed by this research is that the annual performance evaluation system at the Novato Fire Protection District (NFD) has not been updated or improved in twenty years and this research aimed to identify the needed changes. Using the descriptive research method, this paper asked what appraisal systems are considered best practice in private industry, what systems are being used by non-fire public service organizations, and what systems are being used by other fire districts. The researcher discovered what elements of the current NFD performance appraisal system the NFD stakeholders felt required improvement and what elements they felt were beneficial. Interviews were conducted with three successful businesses, three local public service providers, and three influential fire districts. Surveys were conducted with the NFD stakeholders and a questionnaire was completed by the NFD Human Resources Director. Seven immediately applicable short-term appraisal system improvement recommendations were made: (1) mandate that evaluations will be done for all employees (2) create SMART goals (3) keep notes (4) meet quarterly (5) hold calibration meetings (6) perform self evaluations (7) create annual detailed and specific evaluations. Five multifaceted long-term appraisal system improvements were recommended: (1) engage senior leadership in the process (2) update criteria with a committee of stakeholders (3) use secured web-based system for file collection (4) develop comprehensive manual (5) continue to seek training. Much of the information gathered and processes recommended in this research reflect best practice performance evaluation guidance which can be readily applied by other researchers to their own organizations.

## Table of Contents

	Page
Certification.....	2
Abstract.....	3
Table of Contents.....	4
Introduction.....	6
Background and Significance.....	7
Literature Review.....	13
Procedures.....	24
Results.....	28
Discussion.....	38
Recommendations.....	46
Reference List.....	50
Appendices	
Appendix A: NFD Annual evaluation questionnaire.....	53
Appendix B: NFD Personnel evaluation - long form.....	54
Appendix C: NFD Evaluation category list.....	56

Appendix D: Google's Rules.....	65
Appendix E: Private industry performance evaluation interview #1 - Google.....	66
Appendix F: Private industry performance evaluation interview #2 - BioMarin.....	68
Appendix G: Private industry performance evaluation interview #3 - Fireman's Fund....	71
Appendix H: Non-fire public service organization performance evaluation interview #1 - NPD.....	73
Appendix I: Non-fire public service organization performance evaluation interview #2 - NUSD.....	76
Appendix J: Non-fire public service organization performance evaluation interview #3 - NYC.....	79
Appendix K: Similar fire district performance evaluation interview #1 - TFPD.....	81
Appendix L: Similar fire district performance evaluation interview #2 - SRVFPD.....	84
Appendix M: Similar fire district performance evaluation interview #3 - KFPD.....	87
Appendix N: NFD annual evaluations survey - firefighter and engineer.....	89
Appendix O: NFD annual evaluations survey - captain and battalion chief.....	100
Appendix P: NFD HR performance evaluation questionnaire .....	107

### Improving the Performance Appraisal System of the Novato Fire Protection District

Formal performance evaluation has a profound effect on the employee of an organization. When done correctly, the performance appraisal can provide valuable feedback to the employee, improve organizational communication, determine merit for pay increases and promotions, verify effective hiring practices, and even identify weaknesses in the skill set of the supervisor administering the appraisal (Buckman, 2006).

In the United States there are over 55,000 career front line supervisors in the fire service managing hundreds of thousands firefighters (Bureau, 2011). Fighting fire constitutes very little of the time spent by the fire officer on an average work day. Much of the fire officer's shift involves interacting with subordinates (International, 2010) and that officer should be monitoring the performance of the employees every day (Buckman, 2006).

Because firefighters tend to be very emotionally bonded (Govindarajan & Bagchi, 2009), there exists a serious challenge separating fact from opinion when evaluating a subordinate's performance. Much conflict can occur if the employee feels their appraisal is unjust or biased and the employee may lose motivation (Buckman, 2006). For the appraisal to be meaningful says Buckman (2006), both the supervisor and the employee need to see the benefit in the process, the criteria developed needs to be specific, and expectations must be clearly defined.

The problem at the Novato Fire Protection District is that the annual performance appraisal system currently used has not been updated in twenty years. The current system is not meaningful to the supervisors or the employees and the process is essentially considered a waste of time.

The purpose of this research was to identify needed updates and improvements to the Novato Fire Protection District performance appraisal system, specifically for the front line operational personnel. The descriptive research method was used and the following questions were posed:

- 1) What are considered best practice performance appraisal systems being used in private industry?
- 2) What performance appraisal systems are being used by non-fire public service organizations?
- 3) What performance appraisal systems are being used by similar sized fire districts with similar missions?
- 4) What elements of the performance appraisal system do the Novato Fire Protection District stakeholders feel require improvement?
- 5) What elements of the performance appraisal system do the Novato Fire Protection District stakeholders feel are beneficial?

### Background & Significance

The city of Novato is the northernmost city in Marin County, located 29 miles north of San Francisco on Highway 101 across the Golden Gate Bridge. The Novato Fire Protection District, commonly referred to as the NFD, was formed in 1926 and covers an area of 71 square miles, which includes 15,000 acres of open and park space. There are approximately 43 square miles of unincorporated Marin County within the fire district (Novato Fire, 2009a).

The NFD serves homes, businesses, and light industrial in its service area, as well as a long stretch of California highway 101. There are approximately 65,000 residents within the incorporated and unincorporated boundaries of the district, and another 25,000 workers within the district, which comprises the service population (Novato Fire, 2009a).

The community of Novato has 27 city parks and there are about 8,000 school age children. The average temperature is 67 degrees Fahrenheit and rainfall averages 27.5 inches per year in Novato. Elevation ranges wildly in the district from sea level with access to the San Pablo Bay up to Big Rock Ridge, the district's highest elevation, at 1,887 feet. Winds are predominantly southwesterly with the exception of late summer when hot and dry off-shore northeast winds often infiltrate the district (Novato Fire, 2009a)

NFD provides all risk fire suppression and emergency management, basic and advanced rescue, emergency medical service including paramedic ambulance transportation, hazardous materials response, risk reduction, fire inspection, public education, plans review, and fire investigation response services (Novato Fire, 2009b).

The district provides emergency services from five stations and an administrative building that accommodate 79 total personnel (57 firefighters, 9 command staff, and 13 administrative staff). The agency maintains an inventory of equipment that includes 40 responding units and has an annual operating budget of approximately 24 million dollars (Novato Fire, 2009b).

Working what is commonly referred to as the 2x4 (48 hours on duty and 96 hours off duty), the operational component of the NFD is divided into three shifts, an "A", "B", and "C". Each shift has one shift battalion chief, one captain at each of the five firehouses, one engineer driving the engine or truck at each of the five firehouses, and a total of nine firefighter



paramedics. Five of the nine firefighter paramedics work on each of the five engines and four of the nine work on two dual medic ambulances. The two ambulances are assigned to two different firehouses and are supervised by the station captain. All of the captain's, engineers, and firefighter paramedics bid for their station assignment on an annual basis and their choice is based on seniority in the district.

Each of the three shift battalion chiefs is responsible to evaluate the performance of their five captains and each of the captains are responsible for evaluating their subordinates. The captains with an engine and an ambulance in their house have four appraisals to complete annually and the captains with just a single company have two.

The process of the evaluation usually begins in late November or early December with a request from each supervisor to their subordinate for information about highlights of their year. These highlights may include classes and trainings attended, projects completed, committee participation, etc... There is a questionnaire (see Appendix A) to guide the acquisition of this information, but this preparation for the evaluation is completely voluntary and not done by every company officer.

The next step in the evaluation process occurs at the end of the calendar year and consists of each company officer gathering information they have collected on the employee throughout the year from a supervisor file located in an office drawer at the firehouse. Typically, only the employee's immediate supervisor places anything into the supervisor's file and those items tend to be either letters of reprimand, letters of exceptional performance, or thank you notes from the community and/or the fire chief. During this step, some officers who keep detailed supervisors notes on the employees from throughout the year would review that information.

The core of the existing appraisal system is the Novato Fire Protection District personnel evaluation long form (see Appendix B). The supervisor reviews thirteen performance criteria like job knowledge, teamwork, and customer service, then gives a score of 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 for each criterion. The numbers correspond to unacceptable, needs improvement, acceptable, above average, and excellent. There is a list (see Appendix C) that helps the supervisor with examples of characteristics which match those numbers.

The scores of the individual performance criteria are then added up to create a total general score that groups the employee into one of five categories ranging again from unacceptable to excellent. Additionally, there are six individual performance criteria focused on management skill by which the captains and battalion chiefs are judged and given another rating 1 to 5. Those additional management scores are also totaled and placed into another one of the same five categories as before. The battalion chiefs have a single additional metric upon which they are rated which is budgeting (see Appendix B).

Once all numbers have been placed into the form and all totals have been tabulated, there is an area for the evaluating officer's comments. Anytime a supervisor gives a score other than a 3, higher or lower, for an individual performance criterion, justification for the variance should be written in the comments section. There is not currently a manual or policy outlining this requirement to comment on under and over achievers and this step is inconsistent among the supervisors.

After the comments are added to the form, the evaluation is discussed with the employee in private. There is no set structure to this sit down conversation and every officer does it differently. At the end of the meeting, the evaluated employee may write a comment on the form if so desired. The form is then sent to the evaluating officer's supervisor for review and

comment. Once the evaluating officer's supervisor has reviewed the appraisal, copies are made for all of the involved parties.

The performance appraisal system in the organization, while considered very good 15 to 20 years ago, is out of touch with the current workforce and very little value is placed on the evaluation process. This is a very serious problem. The district is missing a huge opportunity to strengthen the backbone of the organization by not highlighting this process as significantly important to their health as a group. After years of poor accountability, many officers have started to treat the annual evaluations as optional, often without realizing how important a fair, honest, and detailed evaluation of performance is to most subordinates.

Good performance appraisals do not just measure performance, but also provide guidance for issues with which the employee may be dealing. They set measurable, obtainable goals for the future, and strengthen the relationship between the employee and supervisor, making them a stronger team (McKirchy, 1998). By not adequately guiding and supporting the district members with good quality evaluations, the Novato Fire District is failing in their mission to care for, protect, and to serve their communities (Novato fire, 2009b). The most vitally important of the communities they are charged with caring for, protecting, and serving, is the internal community of stakeholders in the organization.

A combination of factors has occurred recently to create an excellent opportunity to update the appraisal system. The catalyst happened in 2011 when, in response to requests from first-line supervisors for some detailed management training, the fire district contracted with the law firm of Liebert Cassidy Whitmore to provide a series of hands-on supervisor training workshops for 2012. Attorney Morin Jacobs taught five separate one day courses to each of the three shifts and attendance was mandatory for all captains. The acting captains and future acting

captains were encouraged to attend and overtime was authorized for off duty attendance by full time officers if they were unable to attend on duty.

The five courses taught were (a) supervisor skills for the first-line supervisor, (b) difficult conversations and managing the marginal employee, (c) discipline: putting it into practice, (d) Firefighter's Bill of Rights, (e) managing performance through evaluations and performance management: evaluation, documentation, and discipline.

Discussions during the managing performance through evaluations course revealed that many officers were not giving or receiving evaluations and those that were doing evaluations voiced some of their dissatisfaction with the system. Under recommendation by Jacobs and the district's senior leadership, NFD's Human Resources Director, Lisa MacCubbin, was tasked with leading a committee to update the performance evaluation system. Coincidentally, the researcher of this paper was looking for an applied research project that he was passionate about and that related to his first year Executive Fire Officer Program course titled R123 Executive Development at the United States Fire Administration/National Fire Academy. The researcher found both in that he is an ardent supporter of improving ways of providing feedback to his subordinates and that this performance appraisal problem speaks directly to the most important concept taught in the Executive Development course which is understanding the differences between technical and adaptive problems (United States, 2010b).

The performance evaluation issue at the Novato Fire Protection District is much more than a simple technical problem involving the need for new appraisal forms, it is a large scale adaptive challenge which will require changing behavior. In order to change that behavior, though, the evaluation system needs to be updated and reflective of the industry's best practices which is exactly what this research aimed to accomplish.

Another factor making the timing of this research advantageous is related to one of the recommendations by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International (CFAI) given to the NFD in 2009. The peer assessment team of the CFAI recommended that the NFD update its current records management system (Lawrence et al, 2009) and many of the newest records management systems have human resource modules available for purchase. Conversations about the human resource option with customized performance evaluations are timely now as the district is planning to purchase a new records management system in budget year 2013/2014.

Finally, improving and updating the performance evaluation system of the Novato Fire Protection District is aligned with the fourth goal of the United States Fire Administration Strategic Plan: Fiscal Years 2010 to 2014 in that this research will improve the fire and emergency services' professional status (United States, 2010a). The issue being experienced in the NFD with out of touch appraisals is not unique to Novato, California, and the availability of this research to the American fire service on the internet may assist supervisors in other agencies to more professionally interact, lead, and evaluate their subordinates which may contribute to an emotionally healthier, more motivated national workforce.

#### Literature Review

In reviewing the available published research related to performance appraisals, a wealth of information on the topic was discovered. The literature reviewed was focused on the problem of updating and improving the evaluation system of the Novato Fire Protection District and was centered on the five aforementioned research questions.

The first question posed in this study asked what the private industry is considering their best practice performance appraisal systems. The best practice performance appraisal systems are integrated year-round components of good management, not just a secluded annual event

says Lloyd (2009). Google, considered the overall best company to work for in 2012 by Fortune Magazine, agrees with this concept of doing away with one time annual sit-down evaluations and they prefer quarterly performance reviews (Bryant, 2011). Bryant (2011) said of Google employees that what they really wanted most were " even-keeled bosses who made time for one-on-one meetings, who helped people puzzle through problems by asking questions, not dictating answers, and who took an interest in employees' lives and careers" (para. 14).

As noted by both Lloyd (2009) and Renckly (2011), no matter the frequency, the performance evaluation criteria should be clearly defined during the earliest part of the evaluation period and should be based on the employees job description. In addition to feedback from the direct supervisor, Lloyd also suggests the entire appraisal process is significantly upgraded by adding self-evaluation and 360-degree feedback.

At a minimum, Lloyd (2009) recommends the overall process of performance management be a five step cycle. The first step is for the supervisor and subordinate to develop goals together which are "clear, specific, prioritized, challenging, measurable, and supported by action plans" (Lloyd, 2009, p. 128). The second step in Lloyd's process is ongoing coaching to provide a lot of feedback, direction, and support. Lloyd's third step involves the subordinate completing a self-evaluation. Great insight and conversation can be born from the employee judging their own performance prior to meeting with the supervisor and the employee may feel more valued being a bigger part of the process (Lloyd, 2009). The fourth step is for the supervisor to review all of the data and complete the formal evaluation (Lloyd, 2009). Finally, the fifth step is the formal sit-down evaluation session between the employee and supervisor. If done properly, tension and apprehension should not be as present as in systems like the NFD's because there should be no surprises by this step in process (Lloyd, 2009).

In 2010, Google put an interesting spin on their version of the best practice performance appraisal system by applying a data-driven approach to human resources in a plan code-named Project Oxygen (Bryant, 2011). Statisticians at Google correlated phrases, words, praise, and complaints from Google performance reviews and determined what managerial behaviors were having the most effect on the employees (Bryant, 2011). As reported by Bryant (2011) in The New York Times, Google's take on updating their performance evaluation system was much less about the forms and processes and much more about training and assessing how well the managers were managing.

Bryant (2011) stated in his article that Google trained their managers to exhibit eight behavioral directives like "be a good coach" and "empower your team and don't micromanage" (see Appendix D) and did coaching and performance review sessions with individual employees, then found remarkable improvement in the management quality of most of their supervisors.

Lloyd's (2011) five step cycle and Bryant's (2011) report on Google's improvement in the quality of their managers was captured by Grote (2011) when he stated that virtually all appraisal systems have some common features:

- a goal setting component
- the inclusion of competencies, both company-wide and for specific types of jobs
- a rating scale to indicate a final assessment of performance
- the use of a 5-level scale
- a development planning component
- a requirement that both the appraisal and the rating be reviewed by at least one higher level individual and/or HR before the appraisal becomes official
- a tight linkage between the performance appraisal rating and compensation

The following high pay-off techniques are used less often:

- Calibration sessions to help assure a common yardstick in evaluating people's performance (although the use of calibration sessions grows every year)
- Assessing how well managers do their job of appraising performance
- Routinely terminating low performers
- Using 360-degree feedback results as a data source for evaluating performance
- Universal training (particularly for appraisees)
- The use of externally provided Web-based systems

Grote's statement above correlates well with the problem at the Novato Fire Protection District in that the NFD appraisal system has nearly all of the common features and none of the high pay-off technique suggested by the author.

For an opposing opinion on the value of performance appraisals in general, Culbert (2012) calls them a "one-side-accountable, boss-administered review" (para. 2) which is "negative to corporate performance, an obstacle to straight-talk relationships, and a prime cause of low morale at work" (para. 2). Culbert argues that annual pay and performance reviews should be thrown out all together because the process causes tension in the employee/boss relationship, pay increases are determined by market forces and not employee performance, and objective commentary is a farce. The trend of 360-degree feedback is considered by Culbert to be an illogical fad that is more about the evaluators self-interest than it is about the evaluated employees talents, strengths, and weaknesses. Finally, Culbert states that performance evaluations are also faulty because they use the same rating scale for people with different functions and they create an environment that puts more importance on pleasing the supervisor than doing a great job.



Offering an alternative to the common performance appraisal, Culbert (2012) calls for a more two-sided, reciprocally accountable, performance preview. Culbert's use of preview, as opposed to review, refers to having supervisors and subordinates meet before the work happens to discuss, as teammates, how they will work together more effectively and efficiently. Culbert envisions that this type of meeting could occur any time the boss or subordinate felt they were not working well together and would provide more straight-talk relationships with increased communication. Culbert's work seems to be conceptual in nature and no published work was discovered to speak of his specific preview system in operation.

The second question asked in this research was regarding which performance appraisal systems are being used by non-fire public service organizations. In a paper delivered to the United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration titled Performance Management and Performance Appraisal in the Public Sector, Kim (2011) found that there were three basic approaches to performance appraisals and performance-related pay systems used by agencies around the world.

Kim (2011) showed first that a common appraisal system for employee assessment involves performance agreements. These agreements are usually made between the highest level of an organization to a supervisory/management level employee. Components of this type of system may involve performance goals based on the strategic plan of the agency, performance indicators, measurement methods, and accomplishment plans.

The second type of appraisal system Kim (2011) found in the public sector was the common trait-, behavior-, and/or results-based performance evaluation. The evaluation consists of feedback from the supervisor, is discussed on an annual basis, and has a rating scale based

usually on two categories. Those two categories are basic job performance, like timeliness and quality of work, and core competencies, such as planning, cooperation, and innovation.

Kim (2011) stated that the third most common approach of assessing performance was the multi-rater evaluation, or 360-degree feedback, in which managers, subordinates, and peers participate in evaluating each other. Much caution should be used when examining the 360-degree feedback as recent research is proving that these interventions have worked for some employees, but when the process is executed poorly, the employee may disproportionately disengage and suffer a decline in performance (Nowack & Mashihhi, 2012).

Great care is required to insure system reliability and validity of any of these three approaches discussed (Kim, 2011). Kim (2011) concluded a reoccurring theme in the literature reviewed for this paper that the key to a well-articulated and meaningful appraisal system is in-depth understanding of human nature and effective management (Grote, 2011; Kim, 2011; Lloyd, 2009).

Research was mixed on the value of performance based pay as a component of the appraisal system. Performance related pay has often failed to produce the desired change in employee behavior (Perry et al, 2009). In federal workers, performance based pay may have increased employee retention, increased productivity, led to organizational cost savings, and helped obtain organizational objectives, but in other cases merit pay prompted lawsuits and mistrust of administrators (Ginsberg 2008). Paramount to the success of performance based pay as its related to the appraisal system is the buy-in from all of the stakeholders and applicable training for all those involved (Ginsberg, 2008; Lloyd, 2009; Grote, 2011). Although the NFD does not currently have performance based pay for represented members, the research could be valuable during future discussions.

Within the appraisal system of public agencies are the performance evaluations themselves. The law firm Liebert Cassidy Whitmore (2011), which represents public agency management in all aspects of labor and employment law, labor relations, and education law, outlines ten basic steps in evaluating performance:

1. Establish objective job-related goals and expectations
2. Communicate goals and expectations
3. Observe employee's performance
4. Ongoing communication with employee about performance
5. Provide needed training and assistance
6. Prepare annual evaluation
7. Hold evaluation meeting
8. Evaluation meeting
9. Set new goals and expectations
10. Start process over

The third question posed in this paper asks what performance appraisal systems are being used by similar sized fire districts with similar missions. The San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District (SRVFPD) located in northern California is widely accepted as a leader in progressive fire agency best practices and was one of the organizations studied for this research. SRVFPD uses a comprehensive performance appraisal system that aims to assist the employee with personal and professional development in support of the employee's department's goals as well as in support of the SRVFPD overall strategic plan (San Ramon, 2011).

The SRVFPD system is built on a web based platform created by Oracle called Taleo. The performance appraisal component is specific to each different position in the fire district and

is weighed 40% on core competencies, 40% on job specific competencies, and 20% on future objectives (San Ramon, 2011).

Highlighted in SRVFPD's system is the focus on thoughtful assessment of performance referencing first hand supervisor knowledge in addition to previous supervisors input and comments from other managers who have written notes about the employee. The Taleo software allows qualified individuals, who may not be the employees direct supervisor, the ability to write notes in the employee's file for reference. While not considered a 360-degree evaluation, this process does allow multi-rater feedback from others who have current experience with the employee that the supervisor may not otherwise be able to evaluate.

To accompany the Taleo software used in the SRVFPD performance appraisal system is a quick reference guide on how to use the program, very specific job descriptions cut from the SRVFPD career development guide, and detailed descriptions of what the core competencies, job specific competencies, and future objectives need to address for each job classification (San Ramon, 2011).

Another fire agency selected as a subject for the third research question was the Myrtle Beach Fire Department (MBFD) of South Carolina. As stated in his analysis of the MBFD's employee performance appraisal system, Gwyer (2011) was experiencing similar problems to NFD's in that the department's employees did not view the appraisal process as effective and they desired change.

Gwyer (2011) recommended that the MBFD create a comprehensive policy outlining the purpose and importance of the annual performance appraisal. Additionally, Gwyer stated the need to create custom appraisals specific to individual jobs which contain three sections. The first section would contain an objective job performance check sheet specific to the employee's

position in the department. The second section would have essay style questions which would elicit detailed information from the supervisor about the subordinate. The last section in the MBFD appraisal would have a 360-degree performance assessment.

Included in Gwyer's (2011) recommendation was the need for additional basic training on the appraisal process for all involved and an interim appraisal halfway through the appraisal period for the employee and supervisor to check their progress and make corrections as needed. Gwyer's final suggestion was to change the appraisal based merit pay increases to allow for more variance between the department's three final score ratings. In Gwyer's new merit increase plan, two employees could be on different ends of the meeting expectations category, for example, but one employee may receive a 1% raise and the other could receive a 1.9% raise based on the annual performance appraisal.

Gwyer's (2011) proposal, which links the 360-degree evaluation to pay increase, speaks to what Swinhart (2008) said about the 360-degree evaluation being an integral tool for determining pay raises and/or promotions. Swinhart, of the Aberdeen Fire Department in Washington, says that the 360-degree evaluation can defuse biases and give employees a larger range of opinions regarding their performance. The key to the 360, says Swinhart, is anonymity because employees will not be completely honest if they worry about being identified and possibly being targeted for retribution. Swinhart adds that one of the biggest concerns that fire departments have regarding 360-degree evaluations is that a group may conspire to give each other glowing evaluations to justify bigger raises, thus undermining the purpose of the personal development benefit.

Ray Gayk (2011) of the Ontario Fire Department in southern California believes the employee evaluation should consist of four basic phases: (a) establishing expectations and goals;

(b) follow-up; (c) documentation; (d) evaluation meeting. Gayk assures that firefighters will take their evaluations as seriously as their bosses takes them. Therefore, Gayk says, if time is invested to recognize accomplishments, the evaluation is honest, and opportunity is given to improve, the payoff to the organization well worth the investment.

The fourth and fifth questions posed in this research involve the way the Novato Fire Protection District stakeholders feel about their performance appraisal system. There was no previously published literature to speak to the current opinions of the employees and there was no manual or handbook specifically related to the performance evaluation system. Reviewed during the literature research was, of course, the evaluation forms themselves and the associated category lists and evaluation questionnaire (see Appendix A, B, & C).

Relevant to the purpose of this research, in concept more than in practice, was The NFD Way (Novato Fire, 2005) which spoke directly to NFD's philosophy of being a part of the organization. The NFD Way (Novato Fire, 2005) clarifies how all members of the fire family should be treated, gives expectations for individual performance and behavior, outlines leadership traits, describes the importance of the organizations history, and provides a general approach to how all of the members should interact.

The NFD Way (Novato Fire, 2005) asserts that a positive work environment is maintained by self discipline and commitment to the cultural philosophy of the organization. Outlined in The NFD Way (Novato Fire, 2005) are four behaviors to be practiced by all members without exception of rank or status. Those are:

- Consideration: Be considerate and respectful of values, ideals, family, possessions, and feelings.

- Discretion: Be discreet in the things we say and do to each other; don't gossip or spread rumors.
- Acceptance: Accept the differences in one another. These differences make us stronger as a team and better able to serve the needs of our diverse internal and external community.
- Unity: Value the unity of the District, not only in good times, but in difficult times as well.

Further review of The NFD Way (Novato Fire, 2005) revealed useful information applicable to performance evaluation including the organization's mission, vision, values, and ideals, the essential attributes every member must possess, and the guiding principles of the fire district. Also relevant was the Managing Member Performance section of The NFD Way (Novato Fire, 2005) which addressed performance deviations with and without malicious intent as discovered by root-cause analysis, training and performance improvement plans, and employee assistance programs. Although many concepts of The NFD Way (Novato Fire, 2005) are in alignment with the existing district performance appraisals, there is no defined direct correlation between the two.

The literature collected and researched in order to update the appraisal system of the NFD contained many common themes which had an immense impact on this project. The recommendations to the NFD on improvements to their system were based largely on a medley of information gathered in this section.

The best performance evaluation systems in the research tended to shy away from single annual sit down's to a good year-round management system with quarterly, or at least biannual, check-in meetings. High-quality systems coupled the supervisor and subordinate together early

in the process to create goals together based on the mission, vision, and values of the organization. Also present in the best systems were appraisals customized to specific job classifications which judged core competencies and job specific metrics.

On-going support from a well trained and knowledgeable manager was a key component to the valuable appraisal system, as was self-evaluation performed by the employee. Most systems reviewed in the literature included one all-inclusive annual evaluation which gathered data on a web-based platform about the employee from as many angles as possible, many using some kind of multi-rater system or 360-degree evaluation.

#### Procedures

The descriptive research method was used in the collection of data for this study and the procedures used included interviews, surveys, and a questionnaire. In addressing the first research question of what are best practice performance appraisal systems being used in private industry, three interviews were conducted with supervisors in three successful companies operating in distinctly different fields.

One interview conducted was with Kinzie Kramer (see Appendix E), product marketing manager for YouTube whose parent company is Google. Kramer was selected for her knowledge of Google's People Operations (human resources) and because Google was voted as the #1 company to work for in 2012 according to Fortune Magazine.

An additional interview for the first research question was carried out with Michelle Simonetti (see Appendix F), the senior manager of compensation and human resource systems at BioMarin Pharmaceutical, Inc. Simonetti was questioned because of her expertise in appraisal systems as she oversees these systems for a successful \$450 million dollar company with over 1000 employees in over 40 countries.



A third interview related to the first research question was obtained with Susan Cousineau (see Appendix G) who is the human resources business partner at Fireman's Fund Insurance Company, based in Novato, California. Susan Cousineau was selected for this research because of her 30 years of human resources manager and director experience and her professional administration of the appraisal system for the nearly 3000 Fireman's Fund employees.

The second research question examined in this study asked what performance appraisal systems are being used by non-fire public service organizations. Whereas the three companies selected for the first research question were successful worldwide organizations, the researcher chose to interview key members of three local public service establishments for the second question.

One of the interviewees for the second research question was Investigations Sergeant Michael Howard (see Appendix H) of the Novato Police Department. Howard was the architect of a major two year process of overhauling his department evaluation system and accompanying comprehensive appraisal system manual. The Novato Police Department provides law enforcement for the community of Novato, California, and is comprised of 58 sworn officers and 19 support staff.

Another interviewee for the second research question was Alexandra Nelson (see Appendix I), speech therapist for the Novato Unified School District. Nelson was selected because of her 30 years of experience with the school district and her intimate knowledge of how different administrators, principals, and teachers interact. As the only speech therapist on staff, Nelson worked at almost every school in the 16 campus district which serves nearly 8,000 students.

The final interview related to the second research question was conducted with the executive director of the 501(c)3 non-profit Novato Youth Center, Cheryl Paddock (see Appendix J). Paddock manages a paid staff of 70 which helps over 4000 youth and families in the community with a budget of approximately \$3 million dollars. Paddock was chosen because of her familiarity with different appraisal systems and her skilled leadership of a successful public service organization.

Having gathered information about the best evaluation systems of the public and private industries, the research then focused on the third research question which asked specifically what performance appraisal systems are being used by similar sized fire districts with similar missions to the NFD. To narrow the focus of the research even more, the three fire districts chosen were within the area commonly known as the San Francisco Bay Area to help identify programs being used by firefighters with similar cultural values and influences. Furthermore, the research was restricted to fire districts, as opposed to fire departments, to ensure that the appraisal systems explored were specific to firefighters and not to other city workers.

Fire Captain and Acting Battalion Chief Sloane Valentino (see Appendix K) was interviewed to better understand a new system he created for the Tiburon Fire Protection District (TFPD). While a bit smaller in size, Tiburon fit the intent of the parameters and was selected because of its similar mission and service model to Novato. Further adding to the value of this interview, Valentino was just starting to implement an employee appraisal plan inspired by a well-respected leadership program for professionals held at the Dominican University of California.

Also interviewed regarding the third research question was human resources generalist Sonia Martyn (see Appendix L) of the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District (SRVFPD).

Sonia Martyn was selected for an interview because of her involvement with the progressive and promising appraisal system recently implemented in her fire district.

A third fire district was investigated while examining information pursuant to the third research question and that organization was the Kentfield Fire Protection District (KFPD). Battalion Chief Jim Galli (see Appendix M) was interviewed for his reputation of being a hands-on participatory leader and skilled communicator.

The fourth research question asked what elements of the performance appraisal system do Novato Fire Protection District stakeholders feel require improvement and the fifth question asked which elements are beneficial. To find the answers to these two questions, the researcher developed two surveys using the web based survey development tool SurveyMonkey.com. The stakeholders on which this research focused included the firefighter paramedics, engineers, captains, and shift battalion chiefs.

The first survey (see Appendix N) was sent to the 41 firefighter paramedics and engineers on unrestricted full duty at the NFD with 38 of those members responding. The second survey (see Appendix O) was sent to the 15 officers (12 captains and 3 shift battalion chiefs) on unrestricted full duty with all 15 responding. The surveys were sent via district e-mail and respondents were given one month to respond. Members on workers compensation and extended sick leave were not included because they may not have had access to their district e-mail. To encourage participation, a grocery store gift card was issued to crews who completed the survey as requested. In total, of the 56 employees surveyed, 53 responded. No names were recorded, although each member was asked to give their rank and length of service for better results analysis.

Because each member gave their rank and length of service, a low level of confidentiality was one limitation of the two surveys. Another limitation was the experience level of the researcher using the web based survey system.

Although very similar questions were posed in each of the two surveys, the officer survey contained additional questions related to the additional metrics used in their supervisor appraisals. The primary purpose of the surveys was to find out what elements of the evaluation process the employees felt were beneficial and which elements needed improvement. Also contained in the survey were some appraisal system questions related to the frequency evaluations are being completed, the methods used for collection of data for the appraisals, the objectivity and subjectivity of the evaluations, opinions of 360-degree evaluations, and an open-ended question asking for suggestions on how to improve the system.

The final procedure used to collect data for this study was a 10 part questionnaire sent via e-mail from the researcher to Lisa MacCubbin (see Appendix P), the human resources director for the NFD. Related to the fourth and fifth research questions, the main purpose of this questionnaire was to assess which elements of the NFD performance appraisal system MacCubbin felt were beneficial and which elements she felt required improvement. Relevant to the purpose of this study were also questions referring to the use of 360-degree evaluations, appraisal frequency, and evaluation system components.

### Results

Many common themes were identified in interviewing three successful businesses for the first research question: What are considered best practice performance appraisal systems being used in private industry? The three businesses interviewed were Google, BioMarin, and Fireman's Fund Insurance Company.

All three businesses interviewed (see Appendices E, F, and G) start their evaluation period with a one-on-one sit down meeting between the supervisor and subordinate to discuss goals and objectives for the coming year. Google (see Appendix E) employees meet quarterly with their boss to check in, whereas, BioMarin (see Appendix F) and Fireman's Fund (see Appendix G) workers meet biannually to document progress on the predetermined goals. All of the businesses (see Appendices E, F, and G) evaluate the employee based on their core set of job responsibilities and job description and all three tie their goals back to the organization's mission and/or strategic plan.

During the interviews, both Cousineau (see Appendix G) of Fireman's Fund and Kramer (see Appendix E) of Google, spoke of calibration meetings where managers talk about the performance of all of the employees prior to the year-end evaluation. Both interviewees attributed these calibration meetings to better consistency in evaluation among the different managers.

Both Fireman's Fund (see Appendix G) and Google (see Appendix E) used some form of self assessment as part of the annual evaluation. Google (see Appendix E) exercised the self assessment at the end of the evaluation period to create discussion on where the supervisor and employee agree and disagree, whereas, Fireman's Fund (see Appendix G) applied a self evaluation at the beginning of the evaluation period. The supervisor and subordinate combined the self evaluation at Fireman's Fund (see Appendix G) with the organization's value statement and major objectives to create the employees goals for the year.

All three companies interviewed (see Appendices E, F, and G) use either a 5 or 6 category scale for judging employees performance on specific criteria. The workforce in all three companies (see Appendices E, F, and G) tend to feel their appraisal system is fair and they

appreciate that there are no surprises at the end of the evaluation period. Kramer (see Appendix E) and Cousineau (see Appendix G) both noted that the administration of this thorough system is tedious and time consuming for supervisors.

None of the companies interviewed mandated 360-degree evaluations, but each of them offered the 360 to those who wished to try it (see Appendices E, F, and G). The 360-degree evaluation in each case was generally used for promotional reasons. Google (see Appendix E) was unique in that the employee chooses which peers will be their evaluators in the employees peer review process.

The second research question asked what performance appraisal systems are being used by non-fire public service organizations. The three organizations (see Appendices H, I, and J) selected for interview were the Novato Police Department (NPD), the Novato Unified School District (NUSD), and the Novato Youth Center (NYC).

All three organizations have instituted major change recently in the criteria evaluated for each employee. Sergeant Michael Howard (see Appendix H) at the NPD rewrote their rating categories based on what the officers thought was most important in an online survey. Also important to the NPD (see Appendix H) was updating the collection and tabulation of statistical performance information. Howard (see Appendix H) stated that the new NPD system focuses more on what personal and professional SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Relevant, Time-based) goals the employee and supervisor agree to together. The NPD (see Appendix H) evaluations occur once a year and do not have any additional structured sit down meetings written into the system.

A major change made at the NPD (see Appendix H) was increasing the rating scale from 3 possibilities to 5 possibilities and creating separate job performance evaluation criteria for each

of the different job classifications. Howard (see Appendix H) felt these changes helped the department to be more accurate and appropriate with their evaluations. Also, the new system is easier to produce than their previous eleven to fourteen page evaluation form and it is more specific for the employee (see Appendix H). 360-degree evaluations are not part of the appraisal process at the NPD (see Appendix H).

At the NUSD (see Appendix I), a non-profit consulting group helped the district rewrite their performance standards and the rubric used for each standard. The district (see Appendix I) now has five performance standards for effective teaching and the standards are scaled in five ways. Each teacher (see Appendix I) creates their own SMART goals at the beginning of the evaluation period and discusses them with the school principal. There is a structured mid-year review of the progress of these goals at the NUSD and a formal annual appraisal, including the principal's observation of the teacher instructing for a thirty to forty-five minute lesson (see Appendix I). The teachers at the NUSD used to be evaluated every five years and Alex Nelson (see Appendix I) told the researcher that many of the teachers would prefer going back to that system.

Different job descriptions are not recognized in the new appraisal system at the NUSD (see Appendix I) and the same metrics are used for every teacher even though the jobs may differ. It is rare that each teacher gets to sit down with the school principal one-on-one and Nelson (see Appendix I) stated she very much appreciated this feature of the system. 360-degree evaluations are not part of the NUSD appraisal system (see Appendix I).

Cheryl Paddack (see Appendix J) of the Novato Youth Center said employees at the NYC are evaluated annually with a mid-year review and the board of directors breaks down their 3 year strategic plan every year into 1 year SMART goals. The employees at the NYC (see

Appendix J) are then evaluated by how aligned their goals are with the organizations. The employees (see Appendix J) are also rated against the organizations universal expectations and the employees personal expectations.

The annual appraisal at the NYC (see Appendix J) begins with a self assessment and the manager creating a first draft of the evaluation. The employee and supervisor discuss discrepancies between the self assessment and the supervisor appraisal and this process can last for over an hour (see Appendix J). The discussion created by this process was stated by Paddack (see Appendix J) to be very valuable and a good chance for growth. Paddack (see Appendix J) had found this system to be time consuming, but worth the effort. Also, Paddack (see Appendix J) stated that she had experience with 360-degree evaluations, but she found them to be not helpful and potentially dangerous in that anonymous critiques may be undeservedly harsh and damaging to a career.

To answer the third research question, which asked what performance appraisal systems are being used by similar sized fire districts with similar missions, three districts from the San Francisco Bay Area were interviewed. The three districts (see Appendix K, L, and M) selected were the Tiburon Fire Protection District (TFPD), the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District (SRVFPD), and the Kentfield Fire Protection District (KFPD).

Still in the beginning stages of implementation, the TFPD (see Appendix K) appraisal system aims to be a hybrid system combining a self-evaluation with a customized and modern supervisors evaluation. Captain Sloane Valentino (see Appendix K) said that the new evaluation process begins with the supervisor and subordinate setting goals together and is reinforced by revisiting the goals every couple of months. This new system for the TFPD (see Appendix K) will do away with the typical grading scale of 1 to 5 with check boxes for basic competencies.



TFPD's (see Appendix K) goal with the new system was said to remove the basic progressive discipline related items like showing up on time and being nice, which should be addressed immediately, and focus more on setting and accomplishing goals that the supervisor and subordinate determine together.

Valentino (see Appendix K) stated that the new TFPD system will create a good road map for the year and he was pleased with the projected level of employee input into the process. An excellent byproduct of so much employee participation, Valentino (see Appendix K) says, is that it should lead to good support from the employees.

TFPD (see Appendix K) has experience with 360-degree evaluations, but they were not very successful. Valentino (see Appendix K) said that all battalion chiefs participated in a 360 about 3 years ago, but the evaluators were not forthright with information, mostly because they were afraid of being identified, and the process was not considered helpful. As part of a leadership course at a prestigious local private college, Valentino (see Appendix K) was the subject of a 360-degree evaluation and his feelings were mixed about the practice. Some of the criticism Valentino (see Appendix K) received was constructive and useful, however, some of the comments were inappropriately negative and slanderous. Overall, Valentino (see Appendix K) did not find the 360-degree evaluation process helpful or valuable, but he did think that the procedure could be beneficial, especially to officers, if it was administered carefully and professionally.

The SRVFPD (see Appendix L) has annual evaluations which begin and end on the anniversary date of hire and they do not have regularly scheduled check-in meetings, rather on-going discussions throughout the year about the SMART goals discussed during the annual evaluation. SRVFPD (see Appendix L) uses an advanced talent management software package

made by Oracle called Taleo. Sonya Martyn (see Appendix L), human resources generalist at the SRVFPD, says that the Taleo system does a good job tracking notes and forwarding employee information to a single web based virtual employee file.

The SRVFPD (see Appendix L) appraisal system is complex and has identified many performance competencies to be evaluated. Martyn has received some feedback that there are too many competencies and the evaluation takes far too much time to complete. Martyn (see Appendix L) agrees that there is probably some overlap in the criteria used. Most of the SRVFPD members feel that the SMART goal creation and follow up is a successful part of the process, although only the administrative side of the district is currently participating in the evaluation process (see Appendix L). Martyn (see Appendix L) says that while their process does take a long time to complete, it creates great discussion and leaves no room for confusion as to how the employee is performing in their job.

Chief officers at the SRVFPD (see Appendix L) participated in a 360-degree evaluation process about 10 years ago, did not find great value in the exercise, and have not used it since. Martyn (see Appendix L) warned that care must be used in administering the 360 because some find it as an easy way to make nasty personal attacks.

Battalion Chief Jim Galli (see Appendix M) of the KFPD has spearheaded a thorough performance appraisal system which starts every January with talks about goals and training objectives for the year, both individually and as a team. Galli (see Appendix M) gives his subordinates his expectations of them and he also asks the subordinates what they expect from their boss. The employees create benchmarks which are discussed at least quarterly to check on progress (see Appendix M). Galli (see Appendix M) said that his system is a bit informal and

not done district-wide, but he found the process critically important to taking care of his personnel, which he identified as his number one priority.

The actual performance rating forms at the KFPD (see Appendix M) only have a three category generic outline. However, Galli said that the most important part of the whole process is not the form, but rather the conversations, the taking of good notes, and the dispensing of specific feedback.

Galli (see Appendix M) noted that members of his crew seemed to be better prepared for advancement than members from shifts who were not as well supported throughout the year. Although not standardized or professionally administered like a true 360-degree evaluation, Galli (see Appendix M) asks his subordinates to evaluate him annually in an effort to continue to grow professionally and personally.

The fourth and fifth research questions in this paper were closely related and were both answered by two surveys sent to the operational members of the Novato Fire Protection District. The fourth research question asked what elements of the performance appraisal system do NFD stakeholders feel require improvement and the fifth research question asked what elements of the performance appraisal system do NFD stakeholders feel are beneficial. The results were compiled in two groups, one for firefighters and engineers (see Appendix N) and one for captains and battalion chiefs (see Appendix O).

In answering the fourth research question (see Appendices N and O), one of every three employees surveyed felt that every element of the performance appraisal system needed improvement. Specifically, both the subordinates and the supervisors (see Appendices N and O) felt that the total score categories and the individual performance criteria required the most improvement. Almost 30% of the subordinates (see Appendix N) and 40% of the supervisors

(see Appendix O) felt that the supervisors need to be more consistent with their appraisals. One third of the supervisors (see Appendix O) surveyed stated that they felt their score on the management performance criteria needed improvement.

Responding to the fifth research question, the overwhelmingly most beneficial element in the appraisal system, as identified by 71% of the subordinates (see Appendix N) and 93% of the supervisors (see Appendix O), was the one-on-one dialog with the supervisor during the evaluation. Also identified as very important to both groups (see Appendices N and O) were the written comments by the evaluating officer. The self reflection done while gathering information for the evaluation was considered beneficial to about a third of both groups (see Appendices N and O). A significant difference was found in the value of comments made by the evaluating supervisors boss about the employee being evaluated, almost half of the supervisors (see Appendix O) felt those comments were beneficial whereas less than 20% of the subordinates (see Appendix N) felt the same way.

When asked about the objectivity of the performance appraisal system at the NFD, the stakeholders in both groups (see Appendices N and O) surveyed felt the general performance criteria and the total general score were not objective enough, but the evaluating officer's comments were appropriately so. When asked if they might be interested in trying a 360-degree evaluation, 87% of the supervisors (see Appendix O) said they would try it, while only 42% of the subordinates (see Appendix N) wanted to attempt the 360 with another 37% of the subordinates saying that they might consider it.

Some interesting system issues were identified through the results of the surveys. In the last five years, the majority of the subordinates (see Appendix N) had received 3 or less annual evaluations and the majority of the supervisors (see Appendix O) had only received 1 evaluation.

25% of the subordinates and over 50% of the supervisors do not know how their supervisor gathers information for their annual appraisals, but most of the employees have received an e-mail asking questions in preparation for the evaluation (see Appendices N and O). Only 15% of all respondents received the hardcopy questionnaire designed into the system to help illicit useful information from the employee pertinent to the evaluation, but that information may have been gained in an e-mail (see Appendices N and O).

The last question on the two surveys was an open ended question asking for suggestions on improving the annual appraisal system for the NFD. The answers from both the supervisors and subordinates centered around three main concepts. The first concept is to actually complete the evaluations every year and make the way the criteria is interpreted more consistent (see Appendices N and O). The second common theme was to improve communication between the employee and supervisor (see Appendices N and O). And the third type of suggestion for improving the appraisal system involved creating good objective goals that the employee and supervisor develop together (see Appendices N and O). One additional common issue was present in the answers to this survey question by many of the subordinates and that was to decrease the emphasis on promotion based career development and put more stock into evaluating just job specific criteria (see Appendix N).

The final procedure in this research was an e-mail questionnaire sent to the Human Resources Director of the NFD, Lisa MacCubbin (see Appendix P). While she felt the 5 point evaluation scale and key performance criteria are worth keeping, MacCubbin wanted to see the NFD appraisal system have more specific job performance criteria, a secure on-line database, a better process for evaluation review and approval, and improved evaluation status and tracking capability (see Appendix P).

MacCubbin (see Appendix P) wants to have a 360-degree evaluation option on a voluntary basis for members who are interested with a recommendation for the employee to select their own evaluators. Also suggested in updating the appraisal process, MacCubbin (see Appendix P) wants to see objective narrative based on specific observations, a calibration process for the officers to be more consistent on how they rate the employees, and a method of relating individual goals to the organizations goals.

While not meant to replace necessary daily feedback, MacCubbin (see Appendix P) proposed quarterly performance discussions and additional impromptu meetings anytime performance appears outside of the standard. MacCubbin (see Appendix P) wanted to identify leadership attributes to help guide employees looking to take on leadership roles and she wanted to break down all of the competencies.

Also, critically important to MacCubbin (see Appendix P) was that the appraisal process be user friendly so it helps what she identified as the most important concept: The organizational culture supports the appraisal system at all levels. Updating the performance evaluation process was identified by MacCubbin (see Appendix P) as a very high priority with the goal of full implementation by the end of 2013.

### Discussion

Many of the research results in this paper agreed with the literature, but this topic does not have a one size fits all solution that can be immediately implemented without some careful customization. Thankfully, there is enough harmony in the research, though, that best practices can be deduced.

The first research question inquired what appraisal systems were being used in private industry. Consistent with what Lloyd (2009), Renckly (2011), and Bryant (2011) had identified

as best practice, Google (see Appendix E), BioMarin (see Appendix F), and Fireman's Fund (see Appendix G), were all beginning their appraisal period with a private sit-down meeting between the employee and their direct supervisor in which they would talk about the expectation of evaluation competencies, specific job related SMART goals, and company-wide objectives for the year to come.

Highlighted by Lloyd (2009) and confirmed by the researched businesses (see Appendices E, F, and G) was the importance of forming those SMART goals together as an employee and boss team, with the subordinate responsible for self assessment to identifying areas of growth opportunity and the supervisor responsible for aligning the employees goals with that of the organization's mission and vision. As Bryant (2011) and Grote (2011) stressed, and all the research corroborated (see Appendices E, F, and G), the new standard of performance evaluation is much more focused on regular reviews and feedback, less concerned with the forms and process, and a good deal more concerned about how the manager is managing.

The standard scale for judging employee performance on specific appraisal criteria was noted by all of the businesses researched (see Appendices E, F, and G) and by Lloyd (2011) and Grote (2011) as the use of a 5-level scale. Significant emphasis by Lloyd (2011) and Renckly (2011) noted that the criteria evaluated needs to be specific to each employees job description and this message was also echoed by Google, Fireman's Fund, and BioMarin (see Appendices E, F, and G).

A newer best practice management technique called a calibration session was said to help gain consistency among the evaluating supervisors according to Grote (2011), Kramer (see Appendix E), and Cousineau (see Appendix G). Consistency appeared to be of great concern in the private industry as most of their appraisal systems have a tight connection between the

evaluation result and some form of financial compensation as identified by Grote and expressed by the three businesses interviewed for this research (see Appendices E, F, and G).

Much of the information gathered in the research expressed, as Grote (2011) and Lloyd (2009) did, that 360-degree feedback is a lesser used technique that may have a high pay-off. All three of the businesses interviewed offer the 360-degree evaluation to employees who feel that they may benefit from the process, but none of the three businesses mandate its use (see Appendices E, F, and G). Culbert (2012) warned of the 360-degree method being too focused on the evaluators self-interest and this theory may be why businesses tend not to require its use. Kramer (see Appendix E) recommends that the employee choose which peers will be participating in any kind of a peer review process.

The second research question sought to identify what appraisal systems non-fire public service organizations were using. Many similarities existed between what the research and literature concluded for the non-fire public service organizations and what was discussed specifically regarding the private industry best practices.

Interviewed were the Novato Police Department, the Novato Unified School District, and the non-profit Novato Youth Center, all of which had, as Kim (2011) said, some form of common trait, behavior, and/or results based annual appraisal system with a 5 category rating scale (see Appendices H, I, and J). All three of the organizations studied were proponents of communicating expectations and establishing objective job-related SMART goals at the beginning of the evaluation period (see Appendices H, I, and J), which was the recommended procedure from Liebert Cassidy Whitmore (2011).

Kim (2011) described a common appraisal system which involves performance goals based on the strategic plan of the agency, performance indicators, measurement methods, and



accomplishment plans. This is very similar to the way Paddack (see Appendix J) runs her system at the NYC. Critical to Howard's (see Appendix H) evaluation system and that of Gwyer (2011) was to be sure to create a thorough and detailed manual on how the appraisal system works, therefore alleviating confusion and maintaining consistency.

While noted by Kim (2011) that 360-degree feedback is a lesser used, but still common approach for assessing performance in the public sector, Nowack and Mashihhi (2012) warned against it as employees can suffer significant disconnection and decline in performance. NUSD and NPD could not speak to the 360-degree evaluation, but Paddack (see Appendix J) had the same cautionary tone as Nowack and Mashihhi (2011) as she found them to be dangerous.

Repeated with uniform approval in the literature was the necessity for buy-in of the stakeholders and sufficient applicable training for all those involved in performance based pay to be successful as it relates to the appraisal system (Ginsberg, 2008; Lloyd, 2009; Grote, 2011). Paddack (see Appendix J) noted that the employees responded well to incentive in their appraisals, particularly monetary rewards.

The third research question aimed to find out what performance appraisal systems are being used by fire districts with similar size and mission to the NFD. Gayk (2011) of the Ontario Fire Department said the evaluation consists of four basic phases. The first phase is establishing expectations and goals, then follow-up, and next, of course, documentation, then finally an evaluation meeting. Gayk's process is reflected in Galli's (see Appendix M) system of sitting down with each employee at the beginning of the year to discuss goals for the individual and for the team. Galli (see Appendix M) gives his employees his expectations and also asks what the crew expects from him. With quarterly check in meetings and regular feedback, Galli (see Appendix M) found that the employees placed a high value on their evaluations.

The San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District (San Ramon, 2011) uses an advanced talent management system to combine employee personal and professional development while also tracking how the employee supports the district's goals and strategic plan. Martyn (see Appendix L) says that the subordinates and the supervisors set SMART goals at the beginning of the evaluation period and their web based system helps keep track of goal progress, notes, letters, and other pertinent information to be used for the annual appraisal. The SRVFPD system weighs core competencies 40% and job specific competencies 40% towards the employee's final rating score, while future objectives count for 20% (San Ramon, 2011).

Doing away with scores, percentages, and ratings altogether was the Tiburon Fire Protection District. Valentino (see Appendix K) was implementing a plan that relies solely on setting and accomplishing goals that the employee and supervisor create together. Valentino (see Appendix K) argued that most of the information typically graded is basic behavior which should be praised or punished immediately and not left waiting for appraisals. The new TFPD appraisal system would completely eliminate their 1 to 5 competency grading scale (see Appendix K).

The point of Valentino's dramatic new system (see Appendix K) was to give the employee deeply personalized and attentive guidance, similar to what Gwyer (2011) wanted to give the Myrtle Beach Fire Department. Gwyer recommended custom appraisals which were specific to each job, contained detailed essay style questions for each employee, and included a 360-degree performance assessment. A new merit increase plan was also part of Gwyer's proposal to help incentivize the evaluation process and make it more fair for all employees. This agrees with what Swinhart (2008) said about 360-degree evaluations being an excellent tool for deciding promotions and/or pay increases.

KFPD, TFPD, and SRVFPD do not use 360-degree evaluations for merit pay reasons but both TFPD (see Appendix K) and SRVFPD (see Appendix L) did have some experience with the multi-rater format as a growth and potential promotional tool. Neither Valentino (see Appendix K) or Martyn (see Appendix L) were very impressed with the 360-degree evaluation process as they felt much of the information could be misleading, misguided, and biased. Careful administration of the 360-degree evaluation appears to be critically important for its success as Swinhart (2008) says that employees will only give their honest opinion if they feel confident the feedback is completely anonymous. Even with total anonymity, a group can conspire with or against someone or the department (Swinhart 2008). While not a true 360-degree evaluation, Galli (see Appendix M) asks his employees to informally evaluate him annually and he reportedly felt the exercise helped him grow professionally and personally.

The goal of the fourth research question was to identify the elements of the performance appraisal system which the Novato Fire Protection District stakeholders felt required improvement. A full 30% of the stakeholders felt that every element of the current system needed to be improved, but the sections identified as requiring the most attention were the total score category and the individual performance criteria (see Appendices N and O).

While well written and sufficiently descriptive, the performance criteria are generic and not job specific (see Appendices B and C). The NFD Way (Novato Fire, 2005) is a more thorough, descriptive, and customized existing document from which to draw expectations and behavior guidelines. However, no substantial documentation was found to objectively judge each job performance individually. The objectivity of the appraisal system was an issue with the members as the majority of those stakeholders polled did not feel the general performance

criteria and the total general score were measurable and accurate enough (see Appendices N and O).

The fifth research question asked about which elements of the performance appraisal system do the NFD stakeholders feel are beneficial and the resoundingly preferred element was the one-on-one dialog with the supervisor (see Appendices N and O). This result reflects the importance of communication and the desire to focus attention on the philosophy contained in The NFD Way (Novato Fire, 2005). The communication between supervisor and subordinate could be further enhanced with unilateral usage of self-evaluation and information gathering tools like the suggested questionnaire in Appendix A which was only used in 15% of the annual appraisals (see Appendices N and O). Also important to the stakeholders were the written comments by the evaluating officer and self-reflection (see Appendices N and O).

There was some interest in the 360-degree evaluation technique as most supervisors said they would try it and about half of the subordinates were willing to give it a go (see Appendices N and O). For the 360-degree evaluation to be successful, strict adherence to the defined behaviors of The NFD Way (Novato Fire, 2005) would be required. Some of the stakeholders welcomed the opportunity to evaluate their boss, but were not excited to be judged by their peers (see Appendix N). The chance for subordinates to have a structured way to send feedback up the chain may help with buy-in and improve accountability.

Many comments made by the NFD stakeholders surveyed were focused on making the appraisal system more consistent, improving the communication between supervisor and subordinate, and the need to create SMART goals developed together by the employee and the evaluator (see Appendices N and O). In line with best practices identified within The NFD Way (Novato Fire, 2005), many employees also stated they would like the district leadership to put

greater emphasis on job specific training and evaluation to help those employees deliver the best service possible (see Appendix N).

The synthesis of the results aligns well with many of MacCubbin's (see Appendix P) recommendations for an updated NFD appraisal system. MacCubbin (see Appendix P) wanted to see one-on-one employee and supervisor SMART goal creation and the production of job specific performance criteria using the current 5 category rating scale as described by Grote (2011) and Liebert Cassidy Whitmore (2011). A secure on-line database to review, track, and approve evaluations was also desired by MacCubbin (see Appendix P) similar to the Taleo system used by the SRVFPD (2011).

MacCubbin (see Appendix P) liked the concept of a calibration process for the officers as well as specific talent management training as discussed by Grote (2011) and practiced by Google (see Appendix E) and Fireman's Fund (see appendix G). On a voluntary basis only, MacCubbin (see Appendix P) wanted to offer a 360-degree evaluation option for employees as described by Grote (2011), Gwyer (2011), Kim (2011), and Lloyd (2009).

The priorities of the NFD are identified in the Novato Fire Protection District 2009/2013 Strategic Plan (2009b) and MacCubbin (see Appendix P) wanted a method of tying individual goals to that of the organization as was discussed by Kim (2011) and SRVFPD (San Ramon, 2011). Another desire of MacCubbin (see Appendix P) is that the supervisor and subordinate meet quarterly to discuss performance and keep track of progress on goals which is in line with Bryant (2011) and Lloyd (2009). An astute recommendation by MacCubbin (see Appendix P), and a problem identified in the system used at SRVFPD (San Ramon, 2011), was to insure that the updated NFD appraisal system is easy to use so that the evaluation process is welcomed by

all of its users. Top to bottom buy-in of the appraisal process is the most critical element to the system's success.

### Recommendations

Based on the results of this descriptive research using the five research questions mentioned repeatedly, the researcher presents the following short-term recommendations to improve the performance appraisal system of the Novato Fire Protection District:

1. Mandate per policy that annual performance evaluations will be completed for every employee of every rank and job type.
2. During the 1st quarter of the calendar year, ensure that all employees have had the opportunity to meet one-on-one with their supervisor to discuss expectations both of the employee and from the employee, to create SMART goals together for the year, and to review The NFD Way. Special attention should be focused on improving the employees performance at their current rank and not just on promotional opportunity.
3. Encourage all supervisors to keep detailed notes of employee performance. Make sure that the supervisors provide regular feedback to the employee and be sensitive to Firefighter Bill of Rights procedures related to note taking. Employees should not be surprised by any information recorded regarding their performance at work. Supervisors should share information about the performance of employees to their assigned evaluating supervisor.
4. Require supervisors to meet one-on-one with their subordinates in the 2nd and 3rd quarters of the calendar year to discuss the progress of their SMART goals and to talk about current issues.

5. To improve consistency among the supervisors prior to the annual evaluations produced in the 4th quarter of the calendar year, ask that the BC's have a "calibration meeting" to discuss the performance of their captains and to agree on what each category of the 5 point rating scale looks like. Then have the captains also do a "calibration meeting" regarding their firefighters and engineers under the guidance of their shift BC during a fourth quarter shift officers meeting.

6. Also in the 4th quarter prior to annual evaluation production, all subordinates should complete a self evaluation and submit it to their evaluating supervisor. This self-evaluation is for discussion purposes during the annual evaluation only and should not be kept or recorded for future use.

7. Using the existing annual performance evaluation forms and criteria, but now with the addition of detailed notes, a self-evaluation, and employee SMART goal progress from almost a years' worth of meetings, feedback, and observation, supervisors should provide a detailed and specific written performance evaluation of each subordinate. Conduct a sit down one-on-one meeting to discuss the results.

Additionally, the researcher presents the following long-term recommendations to improve the performance appraisal system of the Novato Fire Protection District:

1. The human resources director of the NFD should meet with the senior leadership of the district after the new NFD fire chief is appointed in the summer of 2013 to discuss the findings of this research, gather additional input from that group, and gain support from the highest level of authority.

2. A committee of NFD performance appraisal stakeholders should meet to discuss any changes desired by the group to the evaluation criteria with the goal of encouraging top to

bottom participation and buy-in. Some items to discuss should include how to make the criteria more job specific, how to link the individuals goals to the organization's mission, vision, and values, and how to design an optional 360-degree evaluation for those who desire that specific type of additional feedback. As it was intended, The NFD Way should become heavily involved in the basis of how employee behavior is judged at every level of the organization. Some form of upward evaluation and accountability should be discussed, for example having a subordinate evaluate their supervisor and having that subordinate submit that evaluation to their supervisor's supervisor. This upward evaluation would not be anonymous and could have the potential of identifying strengths and weaknesses in district management and leadership in addition to creating healthy discussion topics at multiple levels.

3. Select a secured web based talent management system which is very simple and easy to use and can assist supervisors with collecting employee information such as supervisors notes, previous evaluations, and SMART goal progress.

4. Develop a comprehensive NFD performance evaluation manual which provides step by step instruction on the required steps of the annual appraisal process. Within the manual, provide management guidance and advice on how to create the best experience possible for both the supervisor and subordinate, supply references to applicable supporting documents such as The Novato Way, and highlight the importance and benefits of the system to the workforce.

5. Continue to provide essential management training sessions similar to those taught by Liebert Cassidy Whitmore: (a) supervisor skills for the first-line supervisor, (b) difficult conversations and managing the marginal employee, (c) discipline: putting it into



practice, (d) Firefighter's Bill of Rights, (e) managing performance through evaluations and performance management: evaluation, documentation, and discipline.

During the course of researching performance appraisals for this paper, the researcher found that the issues affecting the Novato Fire Protection District were not unique. Many of the immediate short-term and more complex long-term recommendations listed above may assist readers and other researchers to improve the performance appraisal systems of their own organizations. These recommendations are mostly a collection of best practice concepts which are not fire department specific and may be applied and modified by others.

## References

- Bryant, A. (2011). *Google's quest to build a better boss*. The New York Times. Retrieved from [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/13/business/13hire.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/13/business/13hire.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0)
- Buckman, J. M. (Ed.). (2006). *Chief fire officer's desk reference*. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett.
- Bureau of Labor Statistics, US Department of Labor. (2011, May). *Occupational employment statistics* (33-1021 First line supervisors of firefighting and prevention workers). Retrieved from <http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes331021.htm>.
- Culbert, S. (2012). *Get rid of the performance review*. The Wall Street Journal. Retrieved from <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122426318874844933.html>
- Gayk, R. (2011). *A means of motivation: if done right, performance evaluations can be extremely helpful – not painful*. Fire Rescue Magazine. Retrieved from <http://fire.epubxp.com/i/33144/61>
- Ginsberg, W. (2008). *CRS report for congress. Pay for performance: Linking employee pay to performance appraisal* (order code RL34529). Retrieved from <http://www.policyarchive.org/handle/10207/bitstreams/19112.pdf>
- Govindarajan, V., Bagchi, S. (2009). *The emotionally bonded organization: Why emotional infrastructure matters and how leaders can build it*. Retrieved from Dartmouth College website <http://www.tuck.dartmouth.edu/people/vg/blog-archive/EBO-2009.pdf>
- Grote, D. (2011). *How to be good at performance appraisals: simple, effective, done right*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Publishing

- Gwyer, T. (2011). *Analysis of the Myrtle Beach Fire Department's employee performance appraisal system* (Report No. 45941). Executive Fire Officer Program. United States Fire Administration. Emmitsburg, MD: Author.
- International Association of Fire Chiefs, & National Fire Protection Association. (2010). *Fire officer: principles and practice* (2nd ed.). Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett.
- Kim, P. S. (2011). *Performance management and performance appraisal in the public sector*. Paper presented at the United Nations Committee of Experts on Public Administration meeting, New York, NY. Retrieved from <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un-dpadm/unpan045257.pdf>
- Lawrence, C., Bullins, C., Drozdowski, J., & Locke, S. (2009). *Commission on Fire Accreditation International accreditation report: Novato Fire Protection District*. Retrieved from Novato Fire Protection District website: <http://www.novatofire.org/index.aspx?page=196>
- Liebert Cassidy Whitmore. (2011). *Evaluation and discipline workbook*. Los Angeles, CA: Author.
- Lloyd, K. (2009). *Performance appraisals & phrases for dummies*. Hoboken, NJ. Wiley Publishing, Inc.
- McKirchy, K (1998). *Powerful performance appraisals*. Franklin Lakes, NJ: Career Press.
- Novato Fire Protection District. (2005). *The NFD Way*. Novato, CA: Author.
- Novato Fire Protection District. (2009a). *Novato Fire Protection District 2009 all risk standards of cover*. Novato, CA: Author.

- Novato Fire Protection District. (2009b). *Novato Fire Protection District 2009/2013 strategic plan*. Novato, CA: Author.
- Nowack, K. M., Mashihi, S. (2012). Evidence-based answers to 15 questions about leveraging 360-degree feedback. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 64 (3): 157-182. doi:10.1037/a0030011
- Perry, J. L., Engbers, T. A., Jun, S. Y. (2009). Back to the future? Performance related pay, empirical research, and the perils of persistence. *Public Administration Review*, 69 (1): 39-51.
- Renckly, R. (2011). *Human resources*. Hauppauge, NY. Barron's Educational Series, Inc.
- San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District, (2011). *Performance review quick reference guide (Taleo)*. San Ramon, CA: Author.
- Swinhart, D. (2008). *360-degree performance evaluations*. Fire Engineering. Retrieved from <http://www.fireengineering.com/articles/print/volume-161/issue-8/features/360-degree-performance-evaluations.html>
- United States Fire Administration. (2010a). *America's fire and emergency services leader: Strategic plan fiscal years 2010-2014*. Retrieved from United States Fire Administration website: [http://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/strategic\\_plan.pdf](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/strategic_plan.pdf)
- United States Fire Administration. (2010b). *Executive fire officer program: Celebrating 25 years of excellence in fire/emergency services executive education, 1985-2010*. Retrieved from United States Fire Administration website: <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/nfa/efop/index.shtm>

Appendix A

THIS SHEET IS TO BE COMPLETED BY THE EMPLOYEE PRIOR TO THE EVALUATION.

ALLOW THE EMPLOYEE AT LEAST THREE DAYS TO COMPLETE THIS FORM.

**IT IS NOT MANDATORY THAT THE EMPLOYEE COMPLETE THIS FORM**

1. What are your major accomplishments for this past year? (What are you most proud of?)
  
2. What did you learn the most from?
  
3. How can I help you?
  
4. What goals should we set for the upcoming year? (list at least one, with a maximum of three)
  
5. What do I do that makes your job harder?

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee's Signature

Appendix B

AD-13

**NOVATO FIRE DISTRICT PERSONNEL EVALUATION - LONG FORM**

Employee Name \_\_\_\_\_ Report Period \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Rank Employee is Being Evaluated at \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluating Officer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

CATEGORY	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA	SCORE	RATING
<b>General</b>	Job Knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p align="center"><b>GENERAL CATEGORY</b></p> <p><b>Mandatory for all Personnel</b></p> <p>13-23 UNACCEPTABLE <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>24-35 NEEDS IMPROVEMENT <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>36-47 ACCEPTABLE <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>48-59 ABOVE AVERAGE <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>60-65 EXCELLENT <input type="checkbox"/></p> </div>
	Performance at Suppression Incidents	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Performance at Medical Incidents	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Teamwork	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Flexibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Initiative	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Routine Activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Interpersonal Skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Written Documentation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Productivity	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Customer Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Rules & Regulations - Policies, Procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>TOTAL GENERAL SCORE</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Management</b>	Supervision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p align="center"><b>MANAGEMENT</b></p> <p><b>Mandatory for Captain &amp; B/C</b></p> <p>6-9 UNACCEPTABLE <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>10-14 NEEDS IMPROVEMENT <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>15-19 ACCEPTABLE <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>20-24 ABOVE AVERAGE <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>25-30 EXCELLENT <input type="checkbox"/></p> </div>
	Delegation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Goals & Objectives	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Judgment & Decision Making	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Employee Development & Training	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<b>TOTAL MANAGEMENT SCORE</b>		
<b>Budgeting</b>	Budgeting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p align="center"><b>BUDGETING</b></p> <p><b>Mandatory for Chief Officers</b></p> <p>1 UNACCEPTABLE <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>2 NEEDS IMPROVEMENT <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>3 ACCEPTABLE <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>4 ABOVE AVERAGE <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>5 EXCELLENT <input type="checkbox"/></p> </div>
	<b>TOTAL BUDGETING SCORE</b>		
<b>TOTAL OVERALL SCORE</b>		<input type="checkbox"/>	
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p align="center"><b>OVERALL CAPTAIN</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p><b>Mandatory for Captains</b></p> <p>19-33 UNACCEPTABLE <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>34-50 NEEDS IMPROVEMENT <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>51-67 ACCEPTABLE <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>68-84 ABOVE AVERAGE <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>85-100 EXCELLENT <input type="checkbox"/></p> </div> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p align="center"><b>OVERALL CHIEF OFFICER</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p><b>Mandatory for Chief Officers</b></p> <p>20-35 UNACCEPTABLE <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>36-49 NEEDS IMPROVEMENT <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>50-71 ACCEPTABLE <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>72-89 ABOVE AVERAGE <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>90-100 EXCELLENT <input type="checkbox"/></p> </div> </div> </div>			

AD-13

**NOVATO FIRE DISTRICT PERSONNEL EVALUATION - LONG FORM**

EVALUATING OFFICER'S COMMENTS:

EVALUATING OFFICER SIGN: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

EVALUATING OFFICER'S SUPERVISOR'S COMMENTS:

SUPERVISOR SIGN: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

EMPLOYEE'S COMMENTS:

EMPLOYEE SIGN: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

I have have discussed this report with my supervisor. I understand my signature does not necessarily mean that I agree with any of the markings.

Appendix C

NOVATO FIRE DISTRICT EVALUATION CATEGORY LIST		
CODE JK1 Unacceptable	TEXT Job Knowledge Seldom shows knowledge of his/her job position and is unable to operate with effectiveness; requires constant supervision or direction.	1
CODE JK2 Needs Improvement	TEXT Job Knowledge Goes to supervisor for help more often than seems necessary; knowledge of his/her position is barely acceptable	1
CODE JK3 Acceptable	TEXT Job Knowledge Has knowledge of his/her position and is able to perform effectively; occasionally requires direction or supervision;	1
CODE JK4 Above Average	TEXT Job Knowledge Typically performs the assigned tasks of the position independently; requires little supervision or direction; is used as a resource by other people.	1
CODE JK5 Excellent	TEXT Job Knowledge Performs almost flawlessly and has exceptional technical knowledge; goes ahead on his/her own without any supervision; has an ongoing program of self improvement to expand job related knowledge; has the knowledge and ability to function in his/Her supervisor's position	1
CODE PE1 Unacceptable	TEXT Performance at Suppression Emergencies Does not correctly analyze emergency situations, usually makes illogical conclusions; never shows ability to develop alternative solutions; can be a danger to his/herself or others.	2
CODE PE2 Needs Improvement	TEXT Performance at Suppression Emergencies Has difficulty deciding what to do in emergency situations; seldom shows ability to improvise or develop alternative solutions; often acts unpredictably in emergency situations.	2
CODE PE3 Acceptable	TEXT Performance at Suppression Emergencies Usually makes accurate assessment of emergency situations; contributions in terms of alternative solutions and improvisation; usually reacts to emergency situations calmly; follows the District Standard Operating Procedures.	2
CODE PE4 Above Average	TEXT Performance at Suppression Emergencies Makes logical conclusions based on good observation; almost regularly develops good alternative solutions; is almost Always calm and organized.	2
CODE PE5 Excellent	TEXT Performance at Suppression Emergencies Accurately analyze most situations; has exceptional ability to develop alternative solutions or improvise when necessary; has the ability to perform in his/her supervisor's position.	2
CODE TW1 Unacceptable	TEXT Teamwork Not a team worker; people avoid him/her when they need to get work done; responds to requests for help with "that is not my problem"; continually criticizes the organization in a manner that is disruptive to the morale of the company; finds fault with most programs and tends to spread rumors that are detrimental to the organization.	4
CODE TW2 Needs Improvement	TEXT Teamwork Does things his/her own way more often than is desirable; contributes very little to his/her company's goals; assists others when asked but doesn't usually volunteer, occasionally takes breaks that disrupt company productivity.	4



**NOVATO FIRE DISTRICT EVALUATION CATEGORY LIST**

<b>CODE</b> TW3	<b>TEXT</b> Teamwork	4
Acceptable	Has no particular difficulty in adjusting work schedule to that of others; supports the goals of the organization and treats the organization with respect; supports and exhibits a positive attitude in the team environment.	
<b>CODE</b> TW4	<b>TEXT</b> Teamwork	4
Above Average	Quite cooperative and able to mesh work with that of others; participates and contributes to discussions at company or district level; makes an effort to reconcile any disagreements with others to keep the work unit running smoothly.	
<b>CODE</b> TW5	<b>TEXT</b> Teamwork	4
Excellent	Has a noticeably good effect on any work group, volunteers to help others achieve objectives while maintaining his/her own objectives even if his/her own workload increases.	
<b>CODE</b> FL1	<b>TEXT</b> Flexibility	5
Unacceptable	Very rigid and opinionated; resists change in any direction.	
<b>CODE</b> FL2	<b>TEXT</b> Flexibility	5
Needs Improvement	Quite Difficult to get him/her to see any point of view different from his/her own; feedback to new ideas is usually what's wrong with them with no alternative suggestions	
<b>CODE</b> FL3	<b>TEXT</b> Flexibility	5
Acceptable	Can make changes to adjust to new circumstances or ideas; remains open and objective to most issues; questions change but accepts it.	
<b>CODE</b> FL4	<b>TEXT</b> Flexibility	5
Above Average	Adapts well to changing circumstances; implements changes initiated by supervisors willingly; able to shift priorities when necessary to meet changing needs.	
<b>CODE</b> FL5	<b>TEXT</b> Flexibility	5
Excellent	Ability to accept new ideas or to recognize when it is appropriate to change viewpoints; usually turns disagreements into positive experiences; enthusiastically tackles new and unfamiliar projects willingly.	
<b>CODE</b> IN1	<b>TEXT</b> Initiative	6
Unacceptable	Frequently shirks responsibilities; must be asked to perform assigned duties; shows no desire to improve performance.	
<b>CODE</b> IN2	<b>TEXT</b> Initiative	6
Needs Improvement	Lacking in drive; usually must be prompted to begin assigned tasks and leaves routine unpopular tasks for others.	
<b>CODE</b> IN3	<b>TEXT</b> Initiative	6
Acceptable	Accepts and discharges delegated duties willingly; usually begins assigned duties without being prompted.	
<b>CODE</b> IN4	<b>TEXT</b> Initiative	6
Above Average	Self-starting abilities and carries through to completion of assignment; occasionally takes on additional duties; makes extra effort to meet goals despite barriers.	

**NOVATO FIRE DISTRICT EVALUATION CATEGORY LIST**

<b>CODE</b> IN5	<b>TEXT</b> Initiative	6
Excellent	Consistently initiates assigned responsibilities and is willing to take on any job or problem that comes up; takes on new projects outside his/her assigned area.	
<b>CODE</b> QA1	<b>TEXT</b> Quality	7
Unacceptable	Work; frequently contains an unacceptable level of errors and mistakes; does not perform acceptable Work on his/her own.	
<b>CODE</b> QA2	<b>TEXT</b> Quality	7
Needs Improvement	Does not seem to have quite enough concern about the quality or accuracy of his/her work, requires frequent supervision to be acceptable.	
<b>CODE</b> QA3	<b>TEXT</b> Quality	7
Acceptable	Quality of Work is usually adequate and thorough; does not require supervision to Perform assigned duties.	
<b>CODE</b> QA4	<b>TEXT</b> Quality	7
Above Average	Frequently turns out a very good job; work quality and accuracy often exceeds expectations and is well planned.	
<b>CODE</b> QA5	<b>TEXT</b> Quality	7
Excellent	Work is of a consistently high quality, highly skilled in all phases of the job; always accurate and thorough.	
<b>CODE</b> IS1	<b>TEXT</b> Interpersonal Skills	9
Unacceptable	Often criticizes other employees or supervisors openly, rarely has anything positive to say about other personnel; spreads rumors that are detrimental to other personnel.	
<b>CODE</b> IS2	<b>TEXT</b> Interpersonal Skills	9
Needs Improvement	Reacts defensively when given negative feedback; lack of tact may cause other employees to become angry or uncooperative.	
<b>CODE</b> IS3	<b>TEXT</b> Interpersonal Skills	9
Acceptable	Dealing with other employees meets expectations and seldom results in conflict; understands the differences in people and respects them; treats peers, coworkers and supervisors with respect.	
<b>CODE</b> IS4	<b>TEXT</b> Interpersonal Skills	9
Above Average	He/she gets along well with everyone; has a sense of humor and maintains it under the most trying circumstances; is usually able to handle difficult personal relationships.	
<b>CODE</b> IS5	<b>TEXT</b> Interpersonal Skills	9
Excellent	Exceptionally courteous and sensitive with all employees; actions consistently result in gaining; cooperation and respect from others; criticism of others is job-related constructive and Non-personal	
<b>CODE</b> RA1	<b>TEXT</b> Routine Activities	8
Unacceptable	Employee must be directed to do each of the daily, weekly or monthly routine activities. Never starts these tasks on his/her own and must be closely supervised to insure that these activities are completed.	

**NOVATO FIRE DISTRICT EVALUATION CATEGORY LIST**

CODE <b>RA2</b>	TEXT Routine Activities	8
Needs Improvement	Completes routine daily, weekly or monthly routine activities on his/her own most of the time. Must be reminded of some routine tasks that need to be completed. Does not always complete routine activities with out supervision.	
CODE <b>RA3</b>	TEXT Routine Activities	8
Acceptable	Completes daily, weekly or monthly routine activities on his/her own. Needs reminding only occasionally. Needs little supervision to complete tasks.	
CODE <b>RA4</b>	TEXT Routine Activities	8
Above Average	Completes daily, weekly or monthly routine activities with little or no supervision. Knows what needs to be done and does it. Is a "self starter".	
CODE <b>RA5</b>	TEXT Routine Activities	8
Excellent	Always completes daily, weekly or monthly routine activities as needed. Needs no supervision to insure that these tasks are completed. Sees what needs to be done and does it. Assists others with tasks to insure that company and district goals and objectives are met.	
CODE <b>CW1</b>	TEXT Documentation Written	10
Unacceptable	Vague and ambiguous in written expression of ideas; information in written material is often not accurate; tends to avoid written communication whenever possible, poor spelling	
CODE <b>CW2</b>	TEXT Written Documentation	10
Needs Improvement	Ability to express him/herself in writing is somewhat limited; written material usually requires additional oral comment for clarity, poor spelling	
CODE <b>CW3</b>	TEXT Written Documentation	10
Acceptable	Written material is usually factual, understandable and neat in appearance.	
CODE <b>CW4</b>	TEXT Written Documentation	10
Above Average	Shows organization and consistency in written expression of ideas.	
CODE <b>CW5</b>	TEXT Written Documentation	10
Excellent	Consistently shows clarity and quality of written expression; assists others in writing reports. Provides excellent staff reports.	
CODE <b>PM1</b>	TEXT Performance at Medical Emergencies	3
Unacceptable	Does not correctly analyze emergency situations, usually makes illogical conclusions; never shows ability to develop alternative solutions; can be a danger to others.	
CODE <b>PM2</b>	TEXT Performance at Medical Emergencies	3
Needs Improvement	Has difficulty deciding what to do in emergency situations; seldom shows ability to improvise or develop alternative solutions; often acts unpredictably in emergency situations.	
CODE <b>PM3</b>	TEXT Performance at Medical Emergencies	3
Acceptable	Usually makes accurate assessment of emergency situations; contributions in terms of alternative solutions and improvisation; usually reacts to emergency situations calmly; follows the District Standard Operating Procedures.	

**NOVATO FIRE DISTRICT EVALUATION CATEGORY LIST**

<b>CODE</b> PM4	<b>TEXT</b> Performance at Medical Emergencies	<b>3</b>
Above Average	Makes logical conclusions based on good observation; almost regularly develops good alternative solutions; is almost Always calm and organized. Embraces CQI Process.	
<b>CODE</b> PM5	<b>TEXT</b> Performance at Medical Emergencies	<b>3</b>
Excellent	Can swiftly and accurately analyze any situation; has exceptional ability to develop alternative solutions or improvise when necessary; has the ability to perform at an extremely proficient level. Contributes greatly to CQI Process.	
<b>CODE</b> PD1	<b>TEXT</b> Productivity	<b>11</b>
Unacceptable	Delays action until last minute, disrupting work flow and causing delays; consistently does not meet deadlines.	
<b>CODE</b> PD2	<b>TEXT</b> Productivity	<b>11</b>
Needs Improvement	Can only handle one project at a time if he/she is to meet deadlines; usually blames "unforeseen" problems for inability to meet deadlines.	
<b>CODE</b> PD3	<b>TEXT</b> Productivity	<b>11</b>
Acceptable	Handles the normal workload for his/her position; can be relied upon to meet deadlines.	
<b>CODE</b> PD4	<b>TEXT</b> Productivity	<b>11</b>
Above Average	Frequently performs more than the normal work load for his/her position; usually informs supervisor when deadlines will not be met.	
<b>CODE</b> PD5	<b>TEXT</b> Productivity	<b>11</b>
Excellent	Handles an unusually large volume of work, completes assignments ahead of schedule; always informs supervisor when deadlines will not be met.	
<b>CODE</b> SV1	<b>TEXT</b> Customer Service	<b>12</b>
Unacceptable	Argumentative and rude with members of the public; refuses to become involved with activities involving the public.	
<b>CODE</b> SV2	<b>TEXT</b> Customer Service	<b>12</b>
Needs Improvement	Does not feel he/she should be involved in public education or other similar activities; complains about responding to public service type calls. Does not serve the public to the best of his/her abilities.	
<b>CODE</b> SV3	<b>TEXT</b> Customer Service	<b>12</b>
Acceptable	Treats the public with respect; answer questions from the public to the best of his/ her ability; meets the need of the public as identified in the District's programs and policies	
<b>CODE</b> SV4	<b>TEXT</b> Customer Service	<b>12</b>
Above Average	Functions well with a diverse group of citizens; supports community programs and gets involved with them when requested; usually skilled in dealing with the public, resolving complaints and obtaining the cooperation of them.	
<b>CODE</b> SV5	<b>TEXT</b> Customer Service	<b>12</b>
Excellent	Provides exceptional customer service. Focus on development of programs to enhance service to the community. Gets involved in community programs on his/her own.	

**NOVATO FIRE DISTRICT EVALUATION CATEGORY LIST**

<b>CODE</b> SP1	<b>TEXT</b> Supervision	14
Unacceptable	Does not effectively supervise personnel, unable to meet Company/District standards.	
<b>CODE</b> SP2	<b>TEXT</b> Supervision	14
Needs Improvement	Ineffective in the supervision of employees, occasionally meets Company/District standards.	
<b>CODE</b> SP3	<b>TEXT</b> Supervision	14
Acceptable	Provides a safe effective work environment for personnel. Completes Company/District standards, supervises employees effectively.	
<b>CODE</b> SP4	<b>TEXT</b> Supervision	14
Above Average	Routinely sees that subordinates meet Company/District goals. Provides a safe and productive work environment for personnel. Demonstrates the ability to supervise multiple tasks to completion.	
<b>CODE</b> SP5	<b>TEXT</b> Supervision	14
Excellent	Supervises multiple tasks on a regular basis to a timely and effective conclusion. Consistently exceeds Company/District standards	
<b>CODE</b> JD1	<b>TEXT</b> Judgment & Decision Making	18
Unacceptable	Erratic in his/her ability to reach logical conclusions; avoids decisions and waits for someone else to make them.	
<b>CODE</b> JD2	<b>TEXT</b> Judgment & Decision Making	18
Needs Improvement	Has difficulty in analyzing a variety of facts to arrive at a sound conclusion; won't make a decision without his/ her supervisor's assistance.	
<b>CODE</b> JD3	<b>TEXT</b> Judgment & Decision Making	18
Acceptable	Is logical in his/her approach to problems; acts on simple problems quickly and decisively; decisions are usually timely and workable.	
<b>CODE</b> JD4	<b>TEXT</b> Judgment & Decision Making	18
Above Average	Shows good judgment in determining relevant and irrelevant details to arrive at sound conclusions; encourages participation by those who will be impacted by a decision; decisions are logical and usually have everyone's support.	
<b>CODE</b> JD5	<b>TEXT</b> Judgment & Decision Making	18
Excellent	Arrives at correct conclusions even in the most difficult situations; takes responsibility for the outcome of all his/her decisions consistently makes decisions which are clear cut and supported by facts.	
<b>CODE</b> RR1	<b>TEXT</b> Rules and Regulations	13
Unacceptable	Continually violates District Rules and Regulations, policies and procedures; has been disciplined since his/ her last evaluation.	
<b>CODE</b> RR2	<b>TEXT</b> Rules and Regulations	13
Needs Improvement	Occasionally violates District Rules and Regulations, policies and procedures; has been disciplined since his/her last evaluation.	

**NOVATO FIRE DISTRICT EVALUATION CATEGORY LIST**

<b>CODE</b> RR3	<b>TEXT</b> Rules and Regulations	13
Acceptable	Rarely violates District Rules and Regulations, policies and procedures; has not been disciplined since his/her last evaluation. Follows Distinct Rules and Regulations.	
<b>CODE</b> RR4	<b>TEXT</b> Rules and Regulations	13
Above Average	Does not violate District Rules and Regulations, policies and procedures. Sets a good example for co-workers.	
<b>CODE</b> RR5	<b>TEXT</b> Rules and Regulations	13
Excellent	Does not violate District Rules and Regulations, policies and procedures; influences peers by setting and supporting high standards relative to District regulations.	
<b>CODE</b> SD1	<b>TEXT</b> Delegation	15
Unacceptable	Never delegates because of the lack of understanding or knowledge of the delegation process; never follows up on delegated assignment.	
<b>CODE</b> SD2	<b>TEXT</b> Delegation	15
Needs Improvement	Delegates work without adequate assessment of employee's abilities; delegates only when under pressure to get the job done; gets involved in the details of a delegated project and over supervises; does not monitor or provide follow-up for delegated activity	
<b>CODE</b> SD3	<b>TEXT</b> Delegation	15
Acceptable	Delegates work to others. Provides necessary information to person/s to whom work has been delegated, maintains control over delegated work by supervision. Sets realistic goals and objectives.	
<b>CODE</b> SD4	<b>TEXT</b> Delegation	15
Above Average	Sets target dates and monitors progress of delegated work; clearly explains expected results of delegated work; sets realistic goals and objectives.	
<b>CODE</b> SD5	<b>TEXT</b> Delegation	15
Excellent	Uses delegation as a means of employee development which will maximize employee's skills, knowledge and abilities. Insures that delegated tasks are completed.	
<b>CODE</b> GO1	<b>TEXT</b> Goals & Objectives	16
Unacceptable	Disorganized and never completes assignments; changes in time and/or money are necessary to meet objectives due to incomplete planning.	
<b>CODE</b> GO2	<b>TEXT</b> Goals & Objectives	16
Needs Improvement	Loses sight of objectives; does not coordinate his/her plans with those of others; when goals are not met shifts responsibility to his/ her supervisor.	
<b>CODE</b> GO3	<b>TEXT</b> Goals & Objectives	16
Acceptable	Meets short term goals and objectives with efficiency; makes efforts to reschedule missed events; establishes goals and objectives for his/ her company or division that are consistent with the Districts.	
<b>CODE</b> GO4	<b>TEXT</b> Goals & Objectives	16
Above Average	Develops plans and schedules for his/her company or division that are usually adhered to; sets realistic deadlines and can handle a variety of projects successfully; reviews and updates plans for meeting goals and objectives on a routine basis.	

**NOVATO FIRE DISTRICT EVALUATION CATEGORY LIST**

<b>CODE</b> GO5	<b>TEXT</b> Goals & Objectives	16
Excellent	Is relied upon to organize and coordinate special projects; quickly organizes confused and difficult situations and gets things back to normal; establishes ambitious but realistic goals and usually exceeds them.	
<b>CODE</b> LD1	<b>TEXT</b> Leadership	17
Unacceptable	His/her company or division continually fails to meet work standards; allows gross exceptions of rules, regulations and the mission of the District.	
<b>CODE</b> LD2	<b>TEXT</b> Leadership	17
Needs Improvement	Discourages independent judgment on the part of his/her assigned personnel; his/her leadership is challenged by increased dissatisfaction of assigned personnel	
<b>CODE</b> LD3	<b>TEXT</b> Leadership	17
Acceptable	Follows and enforces policies and supports the District's corporate culture and mission; does not accept below standard work or performance; is influential in a job done.	
<b>CODE</b> LD4	<b>TEXT</b> Leadership	17
Above Average	Seeks out opportunities to take leadership roles; generates enthusiasm in the work unit; sets and enforces high, yet attainable work standards.	
<b>CODE</b> LD5	<b>TEXT</b> Leadership	17
Excellent	Is recognized as a leader throughout the organization; employees under his/ her leadership are identified as among the top performers in the organization; has the respect and support to function effectively in his/her supervisor's position.	
<b>CODE</b> ED1	<b>TEXT</b> Employee Development & Training	19
Unacceptable	Fails to become involved in employee development and training unless required to do so by his/her supervisor.	
<b>CODE</b> ED2	<b>TEXT</b> Employee Development & Training	19
Needs Improvement	Gives employees feedback only through yearly performance evaluations; evaluations do not result in any improvement of employee's weak points. Does not adequately train new employees	
<b>CODE</b> ED3	<b>TEXT</b> Employee Development & Training	19
Acceptable	Points out negative as well as positive performance in employee evaluations; provides career development training to employees when requested by employees; keeps company trained to acceptable District standards.	
<b>CODE</b> ED4	<b>TEXT</b> Employee Development & Training	19
Above Average	Evaluates employees on an ongoing basis and provides feedback; spends extra time training employees and sets high performance standards. Training is a priority for company/shift.	
<b>CODE</b> ED5	<b>TEXT</b> Employee Development & Training	19
Excellent	Develops employees well, prepares them for competitive exams; supports and trains personnel for the acting positions within the organization. Training is a priority for company/shift.	
<b>CODE</b> BG1	<b>TEXT</b> Budgeting	20
Unacceptable	Expands funds for unauthorized items, makes no effort to control spending; does not follow District policies on purchasing.	

**NOVATO FIRE DISTRICT EVALUATION CATEGORY LIST**

CODE	TEXT	Budgeting	20
BG2	Needs Improvement	Makes errors in budgeting; consistently under or over budget; expenditures usually go beyond budgeted amounts; program goals are not well defined and are confusing.	
BG3	Acceptable	Prepares and executes effective budgets with assistance from the accountant and his/her superior; reports any anticipated budgetary problems to the appropriate source.	20
BG4	Above Average	Has an effective system for monitoring expenses; budget adjustments and deviations are well documented and justifiable; keeps ongoing and up to date files for use in projecting future budget needs.	20
BG5	Excellent	Has an excellent grasp of the entire budget system; shows vision in the budget planning process.	20



## Appendix D

Page 1 of 1

**Google's Rules**

To engineer better managers, Google pored over performance reviews, feedback surveys and award nominations, correlating words and phrases as only a data-driven company like it can do. Here is an edited list of the directives it produced — in order of importance — as well as a few management pitfalls it found.

**Eight Good Behaviors****1. Be a good coach**

- Provide specific, constructive feedback, balancing the negative and the positive.
- Have regular one-on-ones, presenting solutions to problems tailored to your employees' specific strengths.

**2. Empower your team and don't micromanage**

- Balance giving freedom to your employees, while still being available for advice. Make "stretch" assignments to help the team tackle big problems.

**3. Express interest in team members' success and personal well-being**

- Get to know your employees as people, with lives outside of work.
- Make new members of your team feel welcome and help ease their transition.

**4. Don't be a sissy: Be productive and results-oriented**

- Focus on what employees want the team to achieve and how they can help achieve it.
- Help the team prioritize work and use seniority to remove roadblocks.

**5. Be a good communicator and listen to your team**

- Communication is two-way: you both listen and share information.
- Hold all-hands meetings and be straightforward about the messages and goals of the team. Help the team connect the dots.
- Encourage open dialogue and listen to the issues and concerns of your employees.

**6. Help your employees with career development****7. Have a clear vision and strategy for the team**

- Even in the midst of turmoil, keep the team focused on goals and strategy.
- Involve the team in setting and evolving the team's vision and making progress toward it.

**8. Have key technical skills so you can help advise the team**

- Roll up your sleeves and conduct work side by side with the team, when needed.
- Understand the specific challenges of the work.

**Three Pitfalls of Managers****1. Have trouble making a transition to the team**

- Sometimes, fantastic individual contributors are promoted to managers without the necessary skills to lead people.
- People hired from outside the organization don't always understand the unique aspects of managing at Google.

**2. Lack a consistent approach to performance management and career development**

- Don't help employees understand how these work at Google and doesn't coach them on their options to develop and stretch.
- Not proactive, waits for the employee to come to them.

**3. Spend too little time managing and communicating**

Source: Google

## Appendix E

## Private Industry Performance Evaluation Interview #1 - Google

---

Who: Kinzie Kramer, Product marketing manager for YouTube / Google

Why: Google voted #1 company to work for in 2012 according to Fortune Magazine

When: 12/29/12

Where: Phone interview

Q1: Generally speaking, how many subordinates report to a single supervisor?

A1: It totally depends, but usually around 5-7.

Q2: How often do supervisors formally evaluate employee performance?

A2: We have quarterly meetings one on one and then one big meeting at the end of the evaluation period which also has a self assessment and an employee peer review, if you request it. For the big meeting, the managers participate in a calibration meeting to talk about all of the employees because employees can bounce around to different managers. In fact, part of the reason I was promoted was because my name kept coming up in the calibration meetings so other managers knew that I was doing a good job.

Q3: Does the system lean more objective with specific goals and measurable benchmarks or more subjective, leaning more towards the supervisors' opinion of job performance?

A3: They are mostly objective, I guess. This might be a tech thing, but we use Objective Key Results or OKR's. You set your own OKR's and your manager checks them, then you set

team goals. Everyone sees everyone else's individual and team goals or OKR's. The nice thing about other people seeing your individual goals, is that if someone is particularly good at something, they might reach out to you and give you a hand meeting your goal because they know you are working on it.

Q4: What do you like about your performance appraisal system?

A4: I like that it is obvious and there are no surprises. We meet frequently and everyone knows what your goals are, so everyone is held equally accountable.

Q5: What do you dislike about your performance appraisal system?

A5: It is a little tedious. Especially if you have a bunch of subordinates, it takes a really long time to write them well.

Q6: How is your system generally perceived by the workforce?

A6: Everyone seems to like it. There are no surprises.

Q7: Are there any plans for change to your system in the near future?

A7: Not that I know of.

Q8: Do you have experience with 360-degree evaluations?

A8: Not really, but we kind of do that with the employee peer review, if you ask to have one done. It is really good if you are trying to promote. What I like is that you choose your own peer reviewers, so it is less random, but you still cannot tell who said what.

## Appendix F

## Private Industry Performance Evaluation Interview #2 - BioMarin

Who: Michelle Simonetti, Senior Manager of Compensation & Human Resource Systems at BioMarin Pharmaceutical, Inc.

Why: Experienced human resources professional for successful \$450 million dollar company with over 1000 employees in over 40 countries.

When: 10/4/12

Where: Corporate office at 100 Wood Hollow Drive in Novato, CA

Q1: Generally speaking, how many subordinates report to a single supervisor?

A1: Most of the supervisors have more than two subordinates and less than five.

Q2: How often do supervisors formally evaluate employee performance?

A2: The annual performance evaluation is in January and most supervisors check the previously agreed upon benchmarks for each employee in June. Many do quarterly check-ins, as well, but are not required to.

Q3: Does the system lean more objective with specific goals and measurable benchmarks or more subjective, leaning more towards the supervisors' opinion of job performance?

A3: Many of the performance goals focus on pay for performance using a merit matrix. The evaluations are based on the individuals job description. There is no forced ranking and no bell curve in each department, meaning you don't need to judge the best and worst and

rate based on those findings. Basically, the evaluations focus on expectations, if the employee meets or exceeds them, improvements needed, and goals for next year. The most important part of the evaluation is communication...supervisor to subordinate, supervisor to supervisor, subordinate to the mission. Tying the employees evaluation to the mission of the organization is important. The amount of compensation available is related to the company's success in meeting corporate goals. Any issues we have when dealing with a "needs improvement" employee meets with the Employee Relations & Training Department to get them back on track.

Q4: What do you like about your performance appraisal system?

A4: It seems to work well. I like that we changed to a six point rating system, instead of the old three point system. I feel like it is more flexible and allows us to be more accurate.

Q5: What do you dislike about your performance appraisal system?

A5: Nothing really.

Q6: How is your system generally perceived by the workforce?

A6: Employees like the universal nature of the system. All of the evaluations in the different departments are the same so they know what to expect.

Q7: Are there any plans for change to your system in the near future?

A7: Some groups modify the system a bit based on the strengths of the supervisors.

Q8: Do you have experience with 360 degree evaluations?

A8: Yes, it is only used by a few departments and only if someone is up for promotion. It is not widely used or required.

## Appendix G

## Private Industry Performance Evaluation Interview #3 - Fireman's Fund

Who: Susan Cousineau, Human Resource Business Partner at Fireman's Fund Insurance Company

Why: 30 years of HR manager/director experience

When: 10/8/12

Where: Telephone interview

Q1: Generally speaking, how many subordinates report to a single supervisor?

A1: The subordinate to supervisor ratio varies widely...we have 2850 employees.

Q2: How often do supervisors formally evaluate employee performance?

A2: We do an annual evaluation with a biannual check in meeting and sit-down. The biannual meeting is meant to document progress based on the goals and objectives set out in the annual evaluation.

Q3: Does the system lean more objective with specific goals and measurable benchmarks or more subjective, leaning more towards the supervisors' opinion of job performance?

A3: Mostly measured objectively based on a core set of job responsibilities or their job description. Goals are created by the employee during a self evaluation and they are based on the Fireman's Fund value statement and major objectives. Each employee creates three to five goals that are objective and measurable. The supervisor and the

employee review the goals together and adjust them as necessary checking for possible obstructions or road blocks. Some jobs have lots of metric components which are easily measured objectively and some do not. For those that do not have those easy metric components, we look at subjectively *how* (emphasis added) did you meet your objectives. To help with consistency, managers meet together with Human Resources for a "calibration session" to get all the scores on the same playing field and share information about the subordinates.

Q4: What do you like about your performance appraisal system?

A4: I like the calibration sessions, I think they work well.

Q5: What do you dislike about your performance appraisal system?

A5: The administrative management of the program is difficult.

Q6: How is your system generally perceived by the workforce?

A6: Employees tend to think it is a fair system. They get a pay for performance which adds a bonus to salary levels based on market data.

Q7: Are there any plans for change to your system in the near future?

A7: No.

Q8: Do you have experience with 360-degree evaluations?

A8: Yes, we use 360-degree evaluations as a coaching and development tool. It's use is not standard and it is used mostly for future leaders, high potentials, and senior leadership candidates.



## Appendix H

## Non-Fire Public Service Organization Performance Evaluation Interview #1 – Novato PD

---

Who: Investigations Sergeant Michael Howard, Novato Police Department

Why: Architect of 2012 NPD evaluation manual major overhaul

When: 1/9/13

Where: Novato Police Station, 909 Machin Avenue, Novato, CA

Q1: Generally speaking, how many subordinates report to a single supervisor?

A1: Between 4 to 6.

Q2: How often do supervisors formally evaluate employee performance?

A2: We still do an annual evaluation, but we completely rebuilt it last year. The old evaluation took way too much time to complete and was not specific to each person's job description. The old eval would be 11 to 14 pages of blurbs that did not have much value. It was real boiler plate stuff. I got together with Lt. Jeffries, Sgt. Heiden, Technical Services Manager Leslie Turner, and Specialist Dan Jenner representing the sworn patrol personnel and spent two years researching and meeting with all of the stakeholders in the department to create a whole new system and associated manual. I sent a survey to all of the officers to find out what rating categories were important to them so we could make something that had real value and meaning for the employees.

Q3: Does the system lean more objective with specific goals and measurable benchmarks or more subjective, leaning more towards the supervisors' opinion of job performance?

A3: We tried to get as objective and job specific as possible. We spent a lot of time getting the statistical performance information just right. Since the stats are collected by the employees and tabulated by dispatch, there is room for error and manipulation, so we reworked it to try and get good quality performance data. It is sort of an ongoing process. We have also made it easy to look what personal and professional goals the employee and the supervisor agreed to from the previous evaluation and what goals they will agree to for the next evaluation period. We focus on making those goals SMART, that is Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant & Realistic, and Time-based.

Q4: What do you like about your performance appraisal system?

A4: We increased the rating scale from 3 possibilities to 5 and that has made a big difference. We made separate job performance evaluation standards for each job classification and now you can choose Not Satisfactory, Needs Improvement, Meets Standards, Exceeds Standards, or Exceptional Performance. Before all we could choose from were Meets Standards, Not Satisfactory, and Exceptional Performance. Having 5 ratings possibilities helps us be more appropriate and accurate.

Q5: What do you dislike about your performance appraisal system?

A5: It is working well, so far.

Q6: How is your system generally perceived by the workforce?

A6: The supervisors love it, it is easier to produce and more specific. The evaluations seem to mean a little more to the employees.

Q7: Are there any plans for change to your system in the near future?

A7: No.

Q8: Do you have experience with 360-degree evaluations?

A8: No, not really.

## Appendix I

## Non-Fire Public Service Organization Performance Evaluation Interview #2 – NUSD

- 
- Who: Alexandra Nelson, Speech Therapist at Novato Unified School District
- Why: The NUSD evaluation system was just revitalized by Pivot Learning Partners, a non-profit consultant specializing in system updating and redesign.
- When: 9/25/12
- Where: Ms Nelson's house, 15 Sherilyn Lane, Novato, CA 94947
- Q1: Generally speaking, how many subordinates report to a single supervisor?
- A1: The school principals actually do the performance evaluations for every teacher in their school.
- Q2: How often do supervisors formally evaluate employee performance?
- A2: It used to be only every 5 years, but our system was rebuilt in 2011. Now we are evaluated every year in October with a check-in meeting in March. A committee was formed in 2011 made of teacher leaders, site administrators, and district staff. Now we are rated based on five performance standards for effective teaching; (1) plan, (2) teach-environment, (3) teach-instruction, (4) learn; and (5) increase effectiveness. There is now a rubric providing detailed descriptions of each of the standards and they scale the descriptions five ways; (1) distinguished, (2) proficient, (3) developing, (4) ineffective, or (5) not observed.

Q3: Does the system lean more objective with specific goals and measurable benchmarks or more subjective, leaning more towards the supervisors' opinion of job performance?

A3: Well, we set goals every year and try to make them measurable. The goal part is fairly objective...you come up with ideas and then write them together with the principal. We always set a specific goal with a timeline on how you are going to learn something new to help the kids. The actual evaluation part is very subjective in that it is the principals observation of you teaching a single 30 to 45 minute lesson.

Q4: What do you like about your performance appraisal system?

A4: I like the sit-down. We do not usually get focused one on one time with the school principal.

Q5: What do you dislike about your performance appraisal system?

A5: We use the same metrics for every teacher, but the jobs are not the same. Different job descriptions are not recognized in the system.

Q6: How is your system generally perceived by the workforce?

A6: Most of the teachers liked the evaluations every 5 years, so this system will take some getting used to.

Q7: Are there any plans for change to your system in the near future?

A7: We are discussing a different way to observe the lesson plans and perhaps bringing back the 5 year evaluation

Q8: Do you have experience with 360-degree evaluations?

A8: No, not really.

## Appendix J

## Non-Fire Public Service Organization Performance Evaluation Interview #3 – NYC

---

Who: Cheryl Paddack

Why: Executive Director of the Novato Youth Center (NYC)

When: 1/22/13

Where: NYC at 680 Wilson Ave, Novato, CA 94947

Q1: Generally speaking, how many subordinates report to a single supervisor?

A1: We have a staff of 70 and I would say I have about 10 managers. Each manager has between 1 and 10 subordinates.

Q2: How often do supervisors formally evaluate employee performance?

A2: Our evaluations are annual with a mid-year review.

Q3: Does the system lean more objective with specific goals and measurable benchmarks or more subjective, leaning more towards the supervisors' opinion of job performance?

A3: We have a 3 year strategic plan and every year our Board of Directors breaks our strategic plan into 1 year SMART goals. The first thing our employees are evaluated by is their alignment with the strategic plan in relation to some specific detailed goals. Each detailed goal is rated and the total is divided by the number of goals and the employee is given an average score on their strategic expectations. Next, the employee is rated on

their personal and universal expectations which is again averaged. Finally, there is a place for strengths and areas for improvement, then the employee may add comments.

Q4: What do you like about your performance appraisal system?

A4: I enjoy that our process becomes more of a dialog. The process starts with the employee doing a self assessment. The manager makes the 1st cut of the appraisal then they sit down with the employee and add some detail. The employee and supervisor talk about any discrepancies in the evaluation and this really presents an opportunity for some great open dialog. This process can become an hour of back and forth and creates a good chance for growth.

Q5: What do you dislike about your performance appraisal system?

A5: It can be time consuming but worth it.

Q6: How is your system generally perceived by the workforce?

A6: Well, they love it when it is tied to an incentive. Two years ago our Board tied the success of reaching 80% of our annual goals to a 2% cost of living increase, which was great. Last year, though, we did not have room in the budget.

Q7: Are there any plans for change to your system in the near future?

A7: No.

Q8: Do you have experience with 360-degree evaluations?

A8: I have worked around 360-degree evaluations and I find them to be very dangerous and not helpful.



## Appendix K

## Similar Fire District Performance Evaluation Interview #1 – Tiburon Fire Protection District

Who: Sloan Valentino, Fire Captain and Acting Battalion Chief for Tiburon FD

Why: Heavily involved in the improvement of Tiburon FD appraisal system

When: 1/26/13

Where: Telephone interview

Q1: Generally speaking, how many subordinates report to a single supervisor?

A1: It depends, but usually two to five.

Q2: How often do supervisors formally evaluate employee performance?

A2: For a long time we did the once a year evaluation full of check boxes and the typical grading scale of 1 to 5. The evaluations were arbitrary and did not mean much to any of the troops. We would look at things like was the employee on time and does he interact well the others...not very exciting information. During this last year, I have been helping to implement a new and more employee driven system. It is more of a hybrid system that combines a self-evaluation with a more modern and customized supervisors eval. At the beginning of the year, the supervisor and subordinate set goals together and then they revisit those goals every couple of months. We already evaluate the trainees quarterly, so we will probably just line these evals up with when we do the other ones. We are still in the early phase of getting this all straightened out.

Q3: Does the system lean more objective with specific goals and measurable benchmarks or more subjective, leaning more towards the supervisors' opinion of job performance?

A3: We are changing all of the criteria and old metrics we were using to try and focus on what is really important. Things like if the employee has been on-time are issues that need to be addressed immediately during the year as they occur. I want to take some of those issues out of the eval that are really progressive discipline related so that our process is much more about setting and accomplishing the goals that the employee and supervisor create together.

Q4: What do you like about your performance appraisal system?

A4: It really lays out a road map for the year. I like that there is a lot of employee input and that leads to good buy-in from the troops.

Q5: What do you dislike about your performance appraisal system?

A5: Well, we are not fully implemented, yet.

Q6: How is your system generally perceived by the workforce?

A6: Most seem to like it and most enjoy being more involved in the process.

Q7: Are there any plans for change to your system in the near future?

A7: I'm working on the new forms now to reflect the changes.

Q8: Do you have experience with 360-degree evaluations?

A8: Two or three years ago the BC's all did a 360 but it did not go great. Since you could pretty much tell who said what, people were not very honest so the information was not really helpful. I went through one recently as part of a leadership course at Dominican College. For mine, I got to pick the officers and firefighters who would be doing the evaluating so I purposely picked some of the guys who have been critical of me in the past. I got some great feedback from some of the officers, but some of the information from a couple of the firefighters was just cheap shots and outlandish rumors and half-truths. I was a bit disappointed because the process was not very helpful or valuable. When done well, I think it can be part of a good growth process for BC's and captains.

## Appendix L

## Similar Fire District Performance Evaluation Interview #2 – San Ramon Valley FPD

Who: Sonia Martyn, San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District

Why: Human Resources Generalist

When: 1/26/13

Where: Telephone interview

Q1: Generally speaking, how many subordinates report to a single supervisor?

A1: It varies, usually from 1 to 4 or 5.

Q2: How often do supervisors formally evaluate employee performance?

A2: We have an annual evaluation on the anniversary date of hire and talk about the SMART goals for the previous year. There are not really structured quarterly or midyear reviews, but more of on-going discussions throughout the year. Our Taleo system does a good job of helping us track those discussions and notes.

Q3: Does the system lean more objective with specific goals and measurable benchmarks or more subjective, leaning more towards the supervisors' opinion of job performance?

A3: Right now we are only using our talent management system on the administrative side of the district. We are trying to refocus the operational side of the district to appreciate that performance reviews are important. I don't think any evaluations have been done by the firefighters in over two years. Some feedback I have gotten about the new system is that

there are a lot of competencies and it will take forever to complete. We need trim down the number of competencies we use, I think there is some overlap in the criteria. On the admin side, we have had success setting SMART goals and it seems to be working. The process takes a really long time, but it creates good discussions with no room for confusion.

Q4: What do you like about your performance appraisal system?

A4: The Taleo program is pretty neat. We do not use even half of the available features, but my favorite is probably the ability to send notes and forward e-mails to the employees file so that everything is stored in one place. It replaces the old file in a drawer. You can just set up the program right there on your Outlook and track notes, Word doc's, PDF's, whatever you want. Also, you can flag items to remind you when things are due for review, which is nice.

Q5: What do you dislike about your performance appraisal system?

A5: The yearend SMART goals do not populate under the employees name so referencing the goals for each employee is tedious. Also, the process takes a long time.

Q6: How is your system generally perceived by the workforce?

A6: Most people like that the system is very thorough. Some of the officers did not like that the criteria does not auto-populate canned language based the number you enter. We do the rating scale 1 to 5 and had been letting the 3's get by without having to write any narrative. Now every category asks for hand written comments, which I think is very important for the employees.

Q7: Are there any plans for change to your system in the near future?

A7: We do not have a fire chief right now and we are dealing with some cultural issues which have prevented this process from being valuable. I am hoping this will change soon.

Q8: Do you have experience with 360-degree evaluations?

A8: As part of an initiative about 10 years ago, the chief officers went through a 360-degree process. You have to be really careful with those because it can be a nasty opportunity for personal attacks. As a whole, we did not get a lot of value from that process.

## Appendix M

## Similar Fire District Performance Evaluation Interview #3 – Kentfield FPD

---

Who: Jim Galli

Why: Battalion Chief, Kentfield Fire District

When: 1/22/13

Where: Telephone interview

Q1: Generally speaking, how many subordinates report to a single supervisor?

A1: From 1 to 5.

Q2: How often do supervisors formally evaluate employee performance?

A2: I sit down with my guys at the start of the year and talk about goals and training objectives for the whole year, both as a team, and with each individual firefighter. I spell out what I want from the guys and I ask them what they want from me. We set expected benchmarks at 45 days, 90 days, 120 days, 6 months, and a year out, so that it is no surprise that I will be checking back with the guys at those times to check on progress. It is all fairly informal, but I would like to make the system more structured and regular. We really don't even require it to be done at the department, but developing and taking care of our personnel is my number one priority and it is extremely important to me.

Q3: Does the system lean more objective with specific goals and measurable benchmarks or more subjective, leaning more towards the supervisors' opinion of job performance?

A3: A little of both. The form has examples of satisfactory levels of performance so it is up to the officer to decide if the employee is exceptional, satisfactory, or development needed.

The form is not that impressive, it is just something I pieced together from some neighboring departments. The important part is having those conversations with the guys, taking notes, and giving them good specific feedback.

Q4: What do you like about your performance appraisal system?

A4: I like clearing the air at the start of the year and laying out all of the expectations at the beginning.

Q5: What do you dislike about your performance appraisal system?

A5: I wish it was a little more formal and I wish everyone did them.

Q6: How is your system generally perceived by the workforce?

A6: The guys seem to like it. The career development portion makes a big difference in getting our people trained and prepared for the next level, if they choose to go that route. I found that the guys who went through this process with me seemed to excel in the promotional process.

Q7: Are there any plans for change to your system in the near future?

A7: We will see.

Q8: Do you have experience with 360-degree evaluations?

A8: Well, I always ask my guys to evaluate me so that I can try to grow personally and professionally. We don't have anything standardized though.



Appendix N

NFD Annual Evaluations - Firefighter and Engineer

Response Summary

Total started survey: 38

Total finished survey: 38 (100%)

#1) What is your current rank?

	Response %	Response #
<b>Firefighter Paramedic</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Engineer</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>19</b>
	Answered question:	38
	Skipped question:	0

#2) About how many years have you worked for the Novato Fire District?

	Response %	Response #
0 to 5 years	15.8%	6
5 to 10 years	26.3%	10
<b>10 to 15 years</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>19</b>
15 to 20 years	5.3%	2
20+ years	2.6%	1
	Answered question:	38
	Skipped question:	0

#3) In the last 5 years, about how many annual performance evaluations have you participated in with your company officer?

	Response %	Response #
1	5.3%	2
<b>2</b>	<b>28.9%</b>	<b>11</b>
3	15.8%	6
4	13.2%	5
5	15.8%	6
Other	21.1%	8

-6 to 7.

-9.

-7.

-I have not had any evaluations.

-Last year captain x filled it out but left before he gave it back to me so the BC closed the loop.

-I've received two or three...not sure about definition of "participated" and what context you mean.

-0.

-2 out of 3 years.

Answered question: 38

Skipped question: 0

#4) In what ways have your company officers gathered information about your job performance in preparation for your annual performance evaluation in the last 5 years? Check all that apply.

	Response %	Response #
Don't know / not sure	26.3%	10
Personal interview prior to evaluation	34.2%	13
Hard copy questionnaire	18.4%	7

<b>E-mail questions</b>	<b>52.6%</b>	<b>20</b>
Reviewed supervisor notes	18.4%	7
Talked to other officers about me	21.1%	8
Other (please specify)	23.7%	9

-Asked me to email them my classes and what I have done during the current year.

-Requested e-mail regarding my accomplishments for the year.

-Classes/committees.

-Don't know about the last two. Possible review and/or talked with other officers

-Written list.

-Usually they ask me for an e-mail for anything I've done lately. Other than that I don't know.

-Actually worked with me.

-After action reviews.

Answered question: 38

Skipped question: 0

#5) What elements of our performance appraisal system do you value as beneficial? Check all that apply.

	Response %	Response #
The self reflection done while gathering information for the evaluation	28.9%	11
My score on the individual performance criteria (e.g., performance at medical incidents, initiative, customer service, etc.)	23.7%	9
My total score category (e.g., acceptable, needs improvement, excellent, etc.)	18.4%	7

My evaluating officer's written comments	63.2%	24
My evaluating officer's supervisor's written comments (e.g., my BC's comments)	18.4%	7
<b>The one-on-one dialogue with my supervisor during the evaluation</b>	<b>71.1%</b>	<b>27</b>
None of it, next question	5.3%	2
Other (please specify)	10.5%	4

-Captain x has the best approach to this.

-I don't feel a BC's comments are valid as they aren't my direct supervisor and aren't involved with my performance on a daily basis.

-The one on one dialogue is the most important.

-The one-on-one open dialogue is key.

Answered question: 38

Skipped question: 0

#6) What elements of our performance appraisal system do you feel need the most improvement? Check all that apply.

	Response %	Response #
None, it works great	5.3%	2
The self reflection done while gathering information for the evaluation	15.8%	6
The individual performance criteria (e.g., performance at medical incidents, initiative, customer service, etc.)	36.8%	14
<b>My total score category (e.g., acceptable, needs improvement, excellent, etc...)</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>19</b>

My evaluating officer's written comments	15.8%	6
My evaluating officer's supervisor's written comments (e.g., my BC's comments)	15.8%	6
The one-on-one dialogue with my supervisor during the evaluation	13.2%	5
The supervisors need to be more consistent	28.9%	11
All elements of the system need improvement	36.8%	14
Other (please specify)	23.7%	9

-Evaluation by the officer that has been with the individual the longest, not a new officer to the station.

-Having them done every year would be great.

-See #10.

-Two way open and informal dialogue is most effective using performance criteria as a guideline for discussion. It is helpful to express strengths, areas of improvement, blind spots and how to maximize potential as an individual and as part of a company.

-There have been no evaluations.

-The BC won't let anyone get a higher score or I'll have to show why?

-My ability to review my supervisors performance.

-Talk is good when you have a quality company officer.

-What does this evaluation really mean for me and the District? How is it ever used in a positive light?

Answered question: 38

Skipped question: 0

#7) How objective is our performance appraisal system (i.e., measurable and accurate)?

	Way too objective	Too objective	Appropriately objective	Not objective enough	Not objective at all	Response count
General performance criteria	0% (0)	18.9% (7)	29.7% (11)	<b>45.9%</b> <b>(17)</b>	5.4% (2)	37
Total general score	2.7% (1)	16.2% (6)	29.7% (11)	<b>40.5%</b> <b>(15)</b>	10.8% (4)	37
Evaluating officer's comments	2.6% (1)	5.3% (2)	<b>73.7%</b> <b>(28)</b>	15.8% (6)	2.6% (1)	38

Answered question: 38

Skipped question: 0

#8) How subjective is our performance appraisal system (i.e., supervisor's opinion)

	Way too subjective	Too subjective	Appropriately subjective	Not subjective enough	Not subjective at all	Response count
General performance criteria	0% (0)	29.7% (11)	<b>37.8%</b> <b>(14)</b>	29.7% (11)	2.7% (1)	37
Total general score	0% (0)	<b>35.1%</b> <b>(13)</b>	32.4% (12)	29.7% (11)	2.7% (1)	37
Evaluating officer's comments	0% (0)	13.5% (5)	<b>75.7%</b> <b>(28)</b>	10.8% (4)	0% (0)	37

Answered question: 38

Skipped question: 0

#9) Would you be interested in trying a "360-degree evaluation" system that solicited input about your job performance from many directions (e.g., peers, supervisors, self, etc.)

	Response %	Response #
Definitely	21.1%	8
Sure, I would try it	21.1%	8
Maybe / depends	36.8%	14
Probably not	21.1%	8
Absolutely not	0%	0
Clarify your answer		12

-This could be dangerous, how confidential would it be? I'm not completely opposed but would be open to listening about more details.

-With the different clicks around here could lead to more opinion than fact and lead to bias.

-This may be more harmful than good. It would depend upon the motivation of the peers and supervisors. My concern is this may end up backfiring if another member views this as an opportunity to get back at someone. This would defeat the good intention of the process and may have the potential to blemish a strong service record.

-We should care about how we can improve. Use every avenue you can to make that happen.

-While peer criticism is important, I don't believe our peers have a place in performing an evaluation as this is something that is placed in an employee's permanent record.

-It is always good to know how you are viewed by both your peers and supervisors.

-Not interested at this time.

-I'd prefer just to hear from my captain and BC.

-I think it is possible, if those involved stay open minded, for a peer review process to be more informative than a supervisor's evaluation.

-It's hard to please everyone, some people don't know me at all, until they actually work with me. Then they change their opinion of me.

-That it goes both ways.

-I pride myself in my work/performance. I strive to make myself better. Not to be negative but who and why would my peers provide input in my evaluation. That is not the place for it. What benefit would this have on me and the District.

Answered question 38

Skipped question 0

#10) What suggestions do you have for improving our annual performance appraisal system?

-To have an evaluation system which supervisors evaluate subordinates and subordinates also evaluate supervisors. If the true intent is to better ourselves and each other the evaluation method cannot be one directional thru a single lens.

-Have more rank specific criteria. Have more objective goals to help lessen the subjective side.

-We need to give employees credit for being good at their current positions and emphasize this in the appraisal. It seems we place a lot of stock into recognition for extracurricular participation and rate employees based on this. I feel we do not foster firefighter/paramedics and engineers for wanting to focus and be good at their current positions. The merit is based on what classes have you taken and what have you done to prepare for the next step.

-More consistent would be a big improvement.

-Out of all the evaluations I have had, which seems to be a lot compared to others, Captain x gave me the best one I have had. He like all other captains asked me to provide them with a list of classes, projects, teams or committees I had throughout the year. However, he is the only one that actually took the time to ask other captains and firefighters what they really thought about me and my skills and how they like working with me and if they had suggestions for me. He also asked me what direction I see myself in the following years and gave advice to that. This is very critical feedback. He also praised me on a job well done on a couple of occasions which he never did mention before but was of course always watching and evaluating. You can't give someone a



truly complete and fair evaluation on what extra stuff they are involved in or over what they send you in a 5 minute email you need to get a complete global prospective - i.e.: work commitment, interaction with other employees, knowledge of job, motivated to learn and excel, self-starter without needed praise, patient treatment and interaction, or whether they get involved in gossip, easily can sell another workmate down the river, and are negative to the point that it starts bringing down others with them. One of the biggest drags sometimes is working with those types of people or personalities. If we had a section of the evaluation process that had some reflection on this maybe some people would have different attitudes now that they were really aware of how they sound and affect others around them. I understand you can lead a horse to drink the water but he doesn't always take the drink. Some people just don't have the luxury to be a part of those extra projects/committees. But they are absolutely awesome at their duties. I've seen that only people who do these extra duties will get above average scores on their evals. What about the person who does their job well everyday there at work and would be one of your go to guys. How is that currently reflected in our evals? If you want to talk further about this please do. I think that you are the perfect person to make change regarding our evaluations. You someday will be our future and you have a big say in matters. Thanks again for taking the time to ask me how I feel on this matter, firefighter x.

-None

-Develop a system that is based on an employee's job performance and not on how many projects, committees, classes, and titles an employee has. It should also not be based on promotional goals. We should praise those employees that show up every day and do their jobs effectively.

-More communication throughout the year. By doing this, there should be no surprises at the time of evaluation. That might keep the negativity to a minimum.

-The evaluation needs to be more rank specific. Criteria for items such as "performance on medical calls" I don't believe have a place on the Engineers or Captains evaluation for example.

-We need an honest system that will capture the employees qualities; good, bad or indifferent. We need to be able to see where improvement may or may not be needed in an individual. If an employee doesn't know where they stand in an organization then what good is the process?

-Education of all involved of the value and importance of the evaluation process with a strong emphasis on consistency.

-The biggest suggestion that I would give would be to find a way to assure they are done. I have had 1 eval in the last 5 years, and the eval was supposed to be evaluating me as an Engineer, although I rarely work as an Engineer. How am I being evaluated on something I am not doing?

-I think we should try to keep it simple as possible. Sorry not sure what that would be, maybe less goal oriented and more job performance as it pertains to your job description.

-I enjoy the one on one talk with my supervisor but I'm still not sure what the point is of the numbering system.

-Whatever it may be, keep it consistent and annually. I have not had any evaluations in the past several years.

-Why not have bi-annual evals...or semi-annual?

-The numbering system for our performance

-Supervisors that actually take the time to give feedback throughout the year and not just once a year evaluation. It is frustrating to have an issue on the annual eval that you have never heard of. I know this is more of a management issue verse process problem. This should be addresses during this process though.

-Company officers almost every year have told me. I have been doing a great job, above and beyond. But cannot give me a higher score because of the BC's and Chiefs. Don't know what that is about.

-I realize that there are challenges, but I would like to see some more consistency in our evaluations. Perhaps if supervisors could work together across stations and shifts during the process we might be able to achieve this. Maybe a group evaluation setting where all the shift supervisors get together to evaluate a particular employee could be incorporated. In addition, it still seems like evaluations are often done by someone who isn't even an employee's primary supervisor or by someone who hasn't been working with the particular individual due to sickness/injury or staffing changes etc...

-In order for them to have meaning to me, I need to feel as though my input is well received and incorporated into the evaluation. I also need to feel as though the evaluation, where appropriate contains personalized feedback for me that my company officer has put time and effort into creating as opposed to using boiler plate, cut and paste metrics and feedback phrases that are used for all of their direct reports. Basically, the supervisor comments section should read differently for each employee. Also I don't know how to ensure this, but somehow the evaluations should be normalized across the shifts, what is a top or bottom performer on one shift, may not be perceived or evaluated the same on another shift.

-I really don't have any help...Unless they change how this eval effects my job or pay, just tell me I am doing OK or areas where I need to improve...just my two cents.

-No ideas right now. Thanks.

-It all comes down to how a supervisor feels they need to rate someone. It lacks objective qualities. Ex: a captain may give a lower number just because they don't give high numbers. Another captain may give all high numbers to someone that simply does there job well. As it stands you can't simply just do your job and do it at a high level and receive any better than average, it's disappointing to find average numbers where they may deserve higher.

-Maybe having the BC do an annual sit down with the FF/P and Engineer being evaluated. In case there is a topic that the lower rank is uncomfortable talking about with their captain.

-We need to be consistent with completing these each year.

-I would like to have more support from the organization in general. How often do you have a supervisor tell you what a good job your doing or take you under their wing to develop you for advancement. I have pushed to advance myself and have not had a supervisor tell me I am officer potential since I had an evaluation as FF/P. I guess I'm saying we have no succession planning anymore. Just my two cents.

-Improve consistency...i.e., make it an annual occurrence.

-More detailed in regards to special projects and actual job activities.

-It should start with a meeting at the beginning of the year to discuss goals for the year for both you and your supervisor. Several times during the year, you should meet to check on the progress of achieving or modifying those goals. The yearend evaluation should then be a simple assessment of whether or not the goals were achieved.

Answered question: 30

Skipped question: 8

Appendix O

NFD Annual Evaluations - Captain and Battalion Chief

Response Summary

Total started survey: 15

Total finished survey: 15 (100%)

#1) What is your current rank?

	Response %	Response #
<b>Captain</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>12</b>
Battalion Chief	20%	3
	Answered question:	15
	Skipped question:	0

#2) About how many years have you worked for the Novato Fire District?

	Response %	Response #
0 to 5 years	0%	0
5 to 10 years	0%	0
10 to 15 years	40%	6
15 to 20 years	13.3%	2
<b>20+ years</b>	<b>46.7%</b>	<b>7</b>
	Answered question:	15
	Skipped question:	0

#3) In the last 5 years, about how many annual performance evaluations have you participated in with your direct supervisor?

	Response %	Response #
<b>1</b>	<b>53.3%</b>	<b>8</b>
2	20%	3
3	13.3%	2
4	6.7%	1
5	0%	0
Other	6.7%	1

-Zero

Answered question: 15

Skipped question: 0

#4) In what ways has your supervisor gathered information about your job performance in preparation for your annual performance evaluation in the last 5 years? Check all that apply.

	Response %	Response #
Don't know / not sure	53.3%	8
Personal interview prior to evaluation	6.7%	1
Hard copy questionnaire	6.7%	1
<b>E-mail questions</b>	<b>73.3%</b>	<b>11</b>
Reviewed supervisor notes	6.7%	1
Talked to other officers about me	6.7%	1
Other (please specify)	13.3%	2

-Asked my crew about the job I was doing.

-Asked for an overview of the years accomplishments

Answered question: 15

Skipped question: 0

#5) What elements of our performance appraisal system do you value as beneficial? Check all that apply.

	Response %	Response #
The self reflection done while gathering information for the evaluation	33.3%	5
My score on the general performance criteria (e.g., performance at medical incidents, initiative, customer service, etc.)	0%	0
My score on the management performance criteria (e.g., supervision, delegation, leadership, etc.)	13.3%	2
My total score category (e.g., acceptable, needs improvement, excellent, etc.)	6.7%	1
My evaluating officer's written comments	73.3%	11
My evaluating officer's supervisor's written comments	46.7%	7
<b>The one-on-one dialogue with my supervisor during the evaluation</b>	<b>93.3%</b>	<b>14</b>
None of it, next question	13.3%	2
Other (please specify)	0%	0

Answered question: 15

Skipped question: 0

#6) What elements of our performance appraisal system do you feel need the most improvement? Check all that apply.

	Response %	Response #
None, it works great	0%	0
The self reflection done while gathering information for the evaluation	6.7%	1
<b>The individual performance criteria (e.g., performance at medical incidents, initiative, customer service, etc.)</b>	<b>66.7%</b>	<b>10</b>
My score on the management performance criteria (e.g., supervision, delegation, leadership, etc.)	33.3%	5
My total score category (e.g., acceptable, needs improvement, excellent, etc...)	53.3%	8
My evaluating officer's written comments	0%	0
My evaluating officer's supervisor's written comments (e.g., my BC's comments)	0%	0
The one-on-one dialogue with my supervisor during the evaluation	13.3%	2
The supervisors need to be more consistent	40%	6
All elements of the system need improvement	33.3%	5
Other (please specify)	20%	3

-Just doing it on a year to year basis would be good.

-Assurance that I will get the eval and it will be discussed.

-Forms used need to be consistent. The evaluation is often something that "must" be done versus something that "should" be done.

Answered question: 15

Skipped question: 0

#7) How objective is our performance appraisal system (i.e., measurable and accurate)?

	Way too objective	Too objective	Appropriately objective	Not objective enough	Not objective at all	Response count
General performance criteria	0% (0)	13.3% (2)	<b>40%</b> <b>(6)</b>	<b>40%</b> <b>(6)</b>	6.7% (1)	15
Total general score	0% (0)	20% (3)	20% (3)	<b>53.3%</b> <b>(8)</b>	6.7% (1)	15
Evaluating officer's comments	0% (0)	0% (0)	<b>60%</b> <b>(9)</b>	33.3% (5)	6.7% (1)	15

Answered question: 15

Skipped question: 0

#8) How subjective is our performance appraisal system (i.e., supervisor's opinion)?

	Way too subjective	Too subjective	Appropriately subjective	Not subjective enough	Not subjective at all	Response count
General performance criteria	13.3% (2)	26.7% (4)	<b>40%</b> <b>(6)</b>	20% (3)	0% (0)	15
Total general score	13.3% (2)	13.3% (2)	<b>46.7%</b> <b>(7)</b>	26.7% (4)	0% (0)	15



Evaluating officer's comments	6.7% (1)	13.3% (2)	<b>80%</b> <b>(12)</b>	0% (0)	0% (0)	15
-------------------------------	-------------	--------------	---------------------------	-----------	-----------	----

Answered question: 15

Skipped question: 0

#9) Would you be interested in trying a "360-degree evaluation" system that solicited input about your job performance from many directions (e.g., peers, supervisors, self, etc.)?

	Response %	Response #
Definitely	33.3%	5
<b>Sure, I would try it</b>	<b>53.3%</b>	<b>8</b>
Maybe / depends	13.3%	2
Probably not	0%	0
Absolutely not	0%	0
Clarify your answer		5

-Only if the captain asks for it. It can be a weapon if done every year.

-Depends on confidentiality issues.

-It is always good to find out how you are perceived by more than one individual.

-I'm open to try something new. My final opinion of it would vary based upon how much I get out of it.

-I have received one and I have administered them. They are a very valuable tool for an employee who is "dedicated" to identification of blind spots and self improvement.

Answered question: 15

Skipped question: 0

#10) What suggestions do you have for improving our annual performance appraisal system?

- Review the process every other year to keep everyone on the same page. Less drift.
- Objectivity would require VALIDATED testing procedures. Are we ready for that?
- First, do them. Second, be honest with the employee. Third, listen and address the performance issues that are safety related.
- Make sure they are consistently done for ALL employees in a timely fashion and that they are also done from the top down and bottom up.
- Simplify the process. How am I doing and specifically what do I do well and specifically what can I improve.
- Our current system is useless, good luck and God speed.
- I would like to improve the subjectivity portion, and the numerical scoring system.
- I feel a more subjective evaluation process that does not place number values on criteria would be more valuable. Numerical values give false impressions and are an easy way out. By making all supervisors actually write down what they think and observe gives the employees much better feedback than a number.
- I think allowing the officers to use a more objective format to rate employees would be helpful. I think each employee is different and that trying to fit everyone into a category can be hard. Some employees are great for one reason and some for others. Having a way to use this information in evaluating someone would be helpful and would allow for an accurate picture of their true performance.
- Do them on a regular basis.
- Look at other evaluation programs, evaluate those programs and use some or all of the information to build an evaluation process that would work for us. Add an incentive into the evaluation. Right now the evaluation process needs help. Why do we do an evaluation form for our employee's? What good is it? Most of what we do is a cut and paste from the previous year. Do we keep notes? How can we keep track of the good and the bad if all notes have to be reviewed by the employee and then signed. I hope you find a better way, I look forward to the change. Thank you.

Answered question: 11

Skipped question: 4

## Appendix P

## NFD HR Performance Evaluation Questionnaire

---

Who: Lisa MacCubbin

Why: Human Resources Director for the Novato Fire District

When: 1/22/13

Where: Via e-mail

Q1: Which elements of our current performance appraisal system do you feel require the most improvement or updating?

- A1: 1. Job specific performance competency and criteria.
2. Secure on-line database.
3. Workflow for evaluation review and approval signature process.
4. Evaluation status and tracking capability.

Q2: Which elements of our current performance appraisal system do you feel are beneficial and worth keeping?

A2: 5 point evaluation scale, key performance competency/criteria.

Q3: Would you like to implement a "360-degree evaluation" component to the performance appraisal process? Why or why not?

- A3: A 360-evaluation on a voluntary basis for employees that want to improve their performance and/or leadership skills based on the results of a 360 evaluation. Also recommend that the employee should have the option to select evaluators, so the results will be valued by the employee and not discounted.
- Q4: Do you have any suggestions on how to make the NFD appraisal system more objective?
- A4: 1. Objective comments based on specific performance observations.
2. Implementation of an evaluation “calibration” process, a meeting where Captains calibrate ratings of employees and come to an agreement based on supporting comments. This would also help to improve evaluation of employees who work for numerous Captains during the year and with consistency in evaluation ratings.
3. A method of tying individual goals to organizational goals.
- Q5: Outside of performance improvement plan issues, how frequently do you recommend the subordinate and supervisor sit down one-on-one and discuss performance and goals?
- A5: A supervisor should provide constant feedback to employees on a daily basis. In addition, the optimum would be for quarterly performance discussion, to ensure the employee is on track to maintain or improve their performance ratings and goals, how to get back on track, or to realign goals based on business needs of the organization. Additionally, meetings regarding performance should be done whenever a supervisor observes performance outside of the norm.
- Q6: Is updating the NFD performance evaluation system a high, medium, or low priority for you in 2013? Why?

A6: This is a very high priority for me in 2013, as a follow-up to the “Supervisor Training for Captain” series of seven workshops, ending with “Managing Performance through Evaluation” workshop. This training, followed by an update to the performance evaluation process was established as a priority by the Captains in 2010.

Q7: What are some performance appraisal system components not currently used by NFD that you would like to investigate?

A7: A breakdown of Core, Job Specific, and Leadership competencies. Identify leadership attributes for advancement from one rank to the next, so an employee knows exactly what attributes are desired.

Q8: From your experience in HR, are there any common system errors or poor appraisal components to avoid while updating the NFD performance evaluation process?

A8: The evaluation process needs to be as user friendly and easy as possible, avoid complexity. An evaluation tool is only good if it makes the process easier for the evaluator/supervisor. The really important thing is that the organizational culture supports the evaluation process through its action for all levels in the organization. The process needs to be viewed as beneficial and important for the entire organization.

Q9: Is there a manual or instructional guide that pertains to the current NFD performance evaluation system?

A9: I have not been able to find anything. Chief Veliquette might be a good person to ask. I believe he was one of the committee members for the current evaluation process..

Q10: What is your ideal timeline for creation of the new updated system and implementation of the new updated system?

A10: Needs to be fully implemented by 4<sup>th</sup> QTR 2013 so it is in place for 2013 annual evaluations.