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The NOBLE Mentoring Potential CEOs Program: A Process to Develop Chiefs of Police

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A Process to Develop Chiefs of Police

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The National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) established a mentoring program for aspiring chief executive officers (CEOs) in July 2006 called the Mentoring Potential Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) Program. The concept is a mentoring model that will prepare law enforcement executives for leadership positions and improve their chances of effectively leading a law enforcement agency. Furthermore, the program's primary goal is to help minority law enforcement aspiring executives overcome professional development and career progression challenges.

The mission of the NOBLE Mentoring Potential CEOs Program is to prepare and inspire law enforcement executives by using professional development activities to expand their vision, build their confidence, and increase their knowledge and skills. Therefore, the program has three major components:

1. The first component is classroom instruction on the knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors, and traits required for an effective law enforcement chief executive officer or police chief. These classes are primarily taught by experienced police chiefs and Cedarville University professors who bring expertise in related competency areas.
2. The second component is the assignment of a mentor to the protégé. Mentors are experienced police executives with at least three years of service as a law enforcement CEO or chief. The mentor provides coaching and instruction concerning effective personal attributes and competencies in the key roles and responsibilities of a police chief.
3. The third component is a written plan, developed by the protégé, that outlines the progression of career development steps from a current job assignment to employment as a CEO. The assigned mentor helps each protégé create an effective career development plan. This plan is a guide to achieving job goals and strategies that will lead to career success. It also includes a plan for the first 30, 60, and 90 days and for the first year on the job as a CEO.

MAJOR PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Classroom instruction

Mentor assignment

Written plan

In addition, the program focuses on areas such as team building, strategic planning, human resource management, developing organizational statements, policy and procedure development, and other critical success job factors. Protégés are also encouraged to develop a plan of succession before beginning a job.

Benefits of Mentoring

The overall goal of mentoring is to efficiently and effectively develop the knowledge, talents, and skills of a less experienced person through a formal relationship of individualized attention from a more experienced and knowledgeable person in a given area of expertise. For the NOBLE law enforcement mentoring program, mentoring is a dynamic reciprocal relationship between a law enforcement CEO (mentor) and a law enforcement officer who is currently a captain or higher rank (protégé). However, a mentoring relationship can be beneficial in any management or entry-level law enforcement position. The mentor in this formal relationship can provide immediate access to valuable insights that can help the protégé to avoid pitfalls and accelerate professional growth. A mentor and protégé relationship is based on the master-apprentice method, perhaps the oldest and, arguably, best training method in the world. A mentor relationship uses individualized attention to transfer information, feedback, and encouragement to the protégé.[1]

A number of organizations have employed mentorship and executive coaching programs for years, and, if implemented effectively, these programs can yield positive outcomes. Leadership skills, professional development, knowledge sharing, psychological support, and professional recommendations are some of the key potential benefits of successful mentoring and coaching. Furthermore, mentoring is beneficial to both the mentor and the protégé.[2] It advances opportunities for networking and relationship building. Political science professor Felix Jollevet, who conducted a study on African American police executive careers, argues that "of the social capital variables, the only variable significantly related to achievement of a police command position, is the strength of mentoring." The evidence indicates that a strong mentorship relationship can help protégés to excel.[3]

Executive Coaching and Mentoring

Employers often use mentorship and coaching for similar purposes. While seemingly synonymous, there are distinct differences between the two. Mentoring expert Margo Murray defines mentoring as "a deliberate pairing of a more skilled or more experienced person with a less skilled or less experienced one, with the mutually agreed goal of having the less skilled person grow

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL MENTORSHIP PROGRAMS

» Clearly defined goals and measurable outcomes

» Financial support

» Flexible framework

» Compatible pairing relationships

» Feedback and evaluations

» Organizational support

and develop specific competencies."[4] Executive coaching is similar to mentoring; however, its purpose is more specific. According to the International Coaching Federation (ICF), "Executive coaching is a facilitative one-to-one mutually designed relationship between a professional coach and a key contributor who has a powerful position in the organization."[5] Therefore, coaching and mentorship are not mutually exclusive. A coach can be a mentor and a mentor can be a coach. However, mentorship is designed to evolve into a personal bond, whereas coaching is a professional relationship.[6] The differences are noteworthy.

Mentoring is the sharing of knowledge. Effective mentoring enhances the career development of both the mentor and protégé. When individuals in the workforce are faced with complex problems, mentors can suggest ways to manage or overcome these challenges. Moreover, mentors can provide insight and clarity by sharing personal experiences or providing a second opinion. Mentoring is teaching. Since teaching and learning work in tandem, mentors will

benefit from the study of organizational challenges that they offer guidance on. The wide range of complex issues—often with nonspecific solutions—faced by executives can lead to intense, work-related stress, which is why corporations often employ executive coaching for people in administrative positions. Mentors can provide support, and protégés can gain confidence, workplace versatility, and reasoning and problem-solving skills.[7] Organizations also benefit from mentorship. A report by the New York State Mentoring Workgroup states,

Formal mentorship programs can potentially achieve results in the following areas: succession planning, retention of valuable employees, improving representation of women and minorities in management positions enhancing morale and productivity.[8]

Mentorship Considerations

Law enforcement agencies that are considering a management mentoring program should first identify the program's goals and specific measurable and achievable outcomes. Mentoring and coaching are effective only if properly employed, and mentorship programs must include certain elements to be successful. First, financial support is extremely important.[9] Mentoring programs can be costly, and the return on investment is not easily measured.[10] Second, mentoring frameworks and programs should be flexible. There is no one-size-fits-all method of successful coaching.[11] This is especially true of mentorship pairing relationships. Not all people work well together, so organizations must offer a variety of options for protégés. Since each person has a different skill set, it is important to find compatible pairing relationships. In addition, programs should provide feedback and evaluations and ensure that the needs of its participants are being met. The success of a mentoring program relies heavily on an effective mentor-protégé relationship. Protégés also need organizational support and a workplace culture of continuous improvement to flourish. If organizations expect positive results, they must allow employees to invest time in mentorship.[12]

Minority Mentoring

There is an abundance of literature that shows mentoring and coaching can play a crucial role in the career advancement of minorities and women.[13] Minorities face an uphill battle when they begin their careers. A study performed by business professor David Thomas on the career progression of minorities asserts that whites and minorities follow distinct patterns of advancement. Promising white professionals tend to enter a fast track early in their careers, whereas high-potential minorities advance much later. Even in the most diverse workplaces,

minorities are stuck in middle management for years, while white counterparts are fast-tracked to executive positions. Furthermore, some businesses blatantly relegate minorities to careers without promotion ladders.[14] This all-too common scenario is a result of a multitude of reasons including prejudice (both institutional and individual), job discrimination, and an alienating workplace culture. Institutional prejudice often involves stereotyping minorities as ineffective at certain tasks. For example, an employer might refuse to assign an African American police officer to patrol a predominantly white community because of the employer's perceptions and stereotypes that a black officer would not interact well with a white community.[15] Job discrimination occurs when a qualified candidate is not chosen for a position because of an employer's implicit bias or alternative motive against the candidate based on race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, or even age. According to social science research, people prefer to work with people like themselves.[16] This creates a perverse incentive for employers to discriminate against minorities. Employers likely want employees to be comfortable in their work environment. Therefore, they can avoid hiring minorities. The knowledge of these existing stereotypes adds increased pressure on minorities. As a result, many

minority employees are overly cautious and tentative in decision making because they fear provoking their superiors. Therefore, it is critical to hire a diverse group of employees and to promote a culture that will raise awareness of discrimination and the pressures placed on minority employees.

Navigating racial challenges and tensions is a daunting task, especially for younger professionals seeking advancement in a corporate environment. However, mentorship can be a valuable tool for these professionals. In his research on diversity in U.S. corporations, David Thomas states, "I've also found that the people of color who advance the furthest all share one characteristic—a strong network of mentors and corporate sponsors who nurture their professional development." This indicates that mentorship is important in the early stages of the careers of minorities because it develops job suitability, confidence, psychological development, and a sense of trustworthiness within an organization.[17] Minorities need more than coaches and more than strictly professional relationships. Instead, they need mentors who act as coaches and personal councilors, and who foster a real bond in the mentor-protégé relationship and push, inspire, and support.

Therefore, the importance of minority mentoring cannot be overstated. Research indicates that minorities do not receive equal

organizational support as their white counterparts in the workplace.[18] Ensuring a strong mentor-protégé relationship for minorities can be the difference between career progress and stagnation.[19] In the realm of law enforcement, an effective mentor increases the odds for a minority to advance to a command position by 35 percent.[20] However, there are extra considerations that must be taken into account when mentoring minorities. The literature shows that cross-race mentoring can be potentially ineffective. People of different races may fear offending the other individual, and, thus, they are not always honest.[21] Honesty is a key component of a successful mentoring relationship.[22] In addition to the fear of offending the minority protégés, white mentors are often hesitant to mentor minority protégés as it is more difficult to find similar career opportunities as the protégé's white counterparts.[23] This emphasizes the importance of promoting a workplace culture of diversity and offering various mentoring options for young executives.

Strong mentoring tends to lead to success in professional law enforcement, and effective mentorship of young minority law enforcement executives can be the difference between career advancement and career stagnation. However, building a strong mentorship program can be challenging—and creating a successful mentorship program

ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND DUTIES OF A CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

NOBLE protégés are taught the key functions of a law enforcement CEO or police chief job. The executive's job is to maintain social order and keep peace in the community. Another key job function is to prevent, reduce, and solve crime in the community. The chief provides police leadership in the community and administers and manages the law enforcement agency's organizing policies, procedures, and programs in order to enhance the quality of life in the community. The assigned mentors ensure that their protégés learn how to perform the following functions of the police chief job:

» Manage the personnel.

» Manage the budget process.

» Establish the organizational philosophy by developing organizational statements.

» Manage the facility and equipment.

» Enforce the local and state laws.

» Manage the records systems.

» Perform public relations activities.

» Establish and maintain relationships with external agencies.

» Manage critical incidents.

» Develop and maintain media relations.

» Maintain personal and professional competence and awareness.

that is tailored for minorities is even more difficult. Fear of racial tensions and institutional barriers hinder the success of mentoring programs for the advancement of minorities. Nevertheless, a law enforcement mentoring program should be created to overcome these barriers and increase management diversity in organizations.

Developing Minority Law Enforcement Executives

The NOBLE Mentoring Potential CEOs Program is designed to help protégés overcome key obstacles that are inherent in law enforcement agencies. The partnership between NOBLE and Cedarville University aims to provide aspiring law enforcement CEOs with mentorship and professional development opportunities that will lead protégés on a pathway to success. The program director, Dr. Patrick Oliver—a criminal justice professor and retired police chief—conceived the idea for the NOBLE program.

The NOBLE mentoring program adopts a principled-centered leadership approach to teaching and mentoring. The principles of ethical, servant, and transformational leadership are built on the premise of making morally sound changes that will benefit the organization as a whole.[24] These leadership

types promote building integrity by ensuring the right things are done, for the right reasons, and in the right way. A book by leadership experts James Kouzes and Barry Posner, *Credibility: How Leaders Gain and Lose It, Why People Demand It*, indicates that, of all the attributes that a leader has, credibility is unquestionably of the greatest importance.[25] Honesty and integrity accounts for more variance in believability than all other factors combined. In his book, *Principle-Centered Leadership*, the professor and businessman Stephen Covey stated that leaders must accept the concept of principles based on natural laws that individuals cannot violate with impunity and that are foundational to principled leadership.[26]

Effectiveness of the NOBLE Mentoring Potential CEOs Program

The NOBLE mentoring program is a successful program designed to develop aspiring law enforcement CEOs or police chiefs to lead with character, competence, and commitment. Currently, the program has graduated six classes of protégés, with the most recent class graduating at the NOBLE National Conference in July 2018. The program has small class sizes with two to seven protégés who are highly qualified individuals preparing to become CEOs of a law

enforcement agency. The first class started in July 2006 and graduated in July 2008. Since 2008, four additional classes have graduated with a total of 23 graduates. The sixth class had three protégés. The NOBLE Mentoring Program Potential CEOs Program is unusual because it provides education and training for qualified individuals aspiring to become law enforcement CEOs as well as an experienced law enforcement CEO as a mentor for each future executive. Moreover, it has helped to facilitate promotion to a higher executive rank or appointment as a chief executive officer of a law enforcement agency.

Key Outcome Measures of the NOBLE Mentoring Potential CEOs Program

Since 2008, 26 individuals have graduated from the program, and 15 have become chief executive officers of law enforcement agencies. The program's primary objective is to develop future law enforcement chief executives, and all but two graduates have been promoted or appointed to a higher rank after entering the program. Therefore, 58 percent of the graduates have become law enforcement CEOs, and 88 percent of all graduates have been either promoted in rank, appointed to a higher position, or appointed as a law enforcement CEO. Every program graduate who has pursued a law enforcement chief executive officer job has been successful in getting hired (15 out of 15, or 100 percent); the other 11 graduates have chosen not to pursue a CEO job or, in the case of the most recent graduates, are not ready yet to pursue a CEO job. It is interesting to note that 12 of the 15 of those attaining a law enforcement CEO job were selected the first time they pursued the CEO job, two on the second attempt, and one on the third attempt. This is evidence that the program helps contribute to the protégés' effectiveness in competing in a CEO selection process.

Conclusion

Mentoring in a professional environment involves an experienced individual training and teaching a less experienced person. Many organizations have employed mentorship and executive coaching programs for years, and these programs can lead to a variety of positive results. An effective mentoring program contributes to professional law enforcement development success. However, building a strong mentorship program is difficult. It requires patience, trial and error, and dedication.

The mission of the NOBLE Mentoring Potential CEOs Program is to prepare and inspire law enforcement executives, through professional development activities, to assume a law enforcement CEO position. The NOBLE program is based on the biblical leadership theory of living and leading based on principles that pertain to human relationships and human organizations.[27] This style

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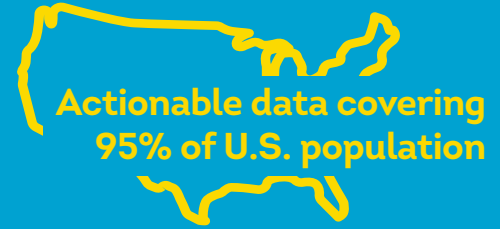
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of leadership is practiced on four levels, including personal accountability, interpersonal relations, management ability, and organizational skills. The leader should demonstrate consistency when practicing principled leadership on each of these four levels. It is important for any leader, especially a law enforcement CEO, to lead based on values. Minority mentoring programs in the workplace do not receive equal organizational support as their white counterparts, and all law enforcement agencies should consider the benefits of establishing a mentoring program, especially to facilitate the advancement of high-potential minorities. ❖

Notes:

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[16]Thomas and Gabarro, *Breaking Through*.

[17]Thomas and Gabarro, *Breaking Through*.

[18]Jollevet, "African American Police Executive Careers," 27.

[19]Thomas, "Race Matters."

[20]Jollevet, "African American Police Executive Careers," 28.

[21]Thomas, "Race Matters."

[22]Jessie Small, "Mentoring Black Males: Discovering Leadership Strategies That Improve Their Future" (PhD diss., Walden University, 2017).

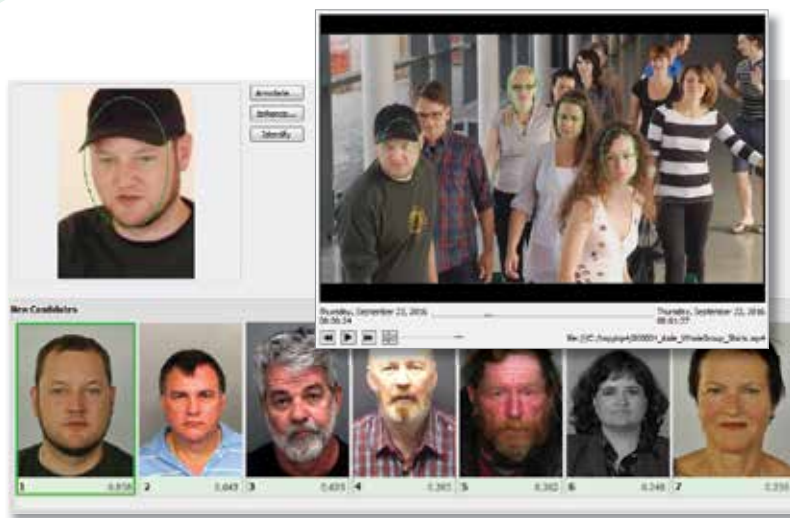[23]Thomas and Gabarro, *Breaking Through*.

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