

DEVELOPING VANCOUVER POLICE DEPARTMENT CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES TO  
INCREASE JOB SATISFACTION AND PERFORMANCE

By

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the requirements for the degree of

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In

LEADERSHIP

We accept this thesis as conforming  
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ABSTRACT

This research project asks how developmental programs can increase employee satisfaction and the quality of service that civilian employees offer the Vancouver Police Department (VPD). The opportunity links to the VPD Strategic Plan and the success that the VPD had from 2003 to 2005 in increasing the overall number of civilian support staff positions, including specialized and professional civilian positions. This research is significant because it involves the development of civilian staff in all VPD positions in order to improve job satisfaction, motivation and performance. This action research project includes both quantitative and qualitative methodology accomplished through an archival review, electronic survey and focus groups. The research is complemented by relevant literature and concludes with eight recommendations that include enhancing communication, increased funding for training, employee recognition, and monitoring and accountability measures. The implementation of these recommendations will enable the VPD to provide increased opportunities and conditions for employee development.

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## CHAPTER 1. FOCUS AND FRAMING

### Introduction

*It is never too late to become what you might have been.* (Eliot, 1871, p. 291)

In many Canadian and North American police departments, the focus on staffing has been on police officers and not the civilian staff who provide clerical and administrative support. This situation has shifted over the last several years, and as noted by Griffiths, Palmer, Weeks and Polydore (2006), there is now a greater emphasis on civilian employees to provide professional and managerial support.

Historically, the Vancouver Police Department (VPD) has made it a staffing priority to only increase its number of police officers. As a result, the number of civilian support staff has not kept pace with the increasing number of officers or the increased demands for support functions. This situation changed in 2000, when the VPD included a request for additional civilian staff in the police department's business case for additional resources (LePard, 2000).

However, it was not until April 2002 that the VPD received its first significant increase in civilian staff in approximately 20 years. In a report to City Council, the VPD requested 30 additional police officers and 46 additional civilian positions for 2003 (LePard & Schnitzer, 2002). All of the police officers and 15 of the civilian positions were approved.

In 2004, the VPD embarked on a new Strategic Plan that set a revised corporate direction for the five year period from 2004 to 2008 (Vancouver Police Department, 2004). This new Strategic Plan emerged within an organization that had had no guiding document for over eight years. As a result, the VPD placed a greater emphasis on linking required

resources to the strategic goals and objectives in the plan. This was the impetus for two major staffing increases in 2005 and 2006, both of which resulted from a VPD staffing report prepared by Sorge, Palmer and Weibe (2005). This report led to Vancouver City Council approving a combined increase of 81 additional police officers and 73 civilian staff (City of Vancouver, 2005).

The VPD is now well on its way to achieving the staffing that it requires in its support functions. However, while the increase in civilian staff was a positive situation, there are few human resource practices in place to support civilian development and movement throughout the VPD. In contrast, police officers are given numerous development opportunities throughout their careers in order to progress through different positions and through the ranks.

This research project sought to learn more about the kind of strategies that would benefit VPD civilian employees by increasing their job satisfaction and productivity. I anticipated that any resulting strategies would also assist in succession planning by supporting some civilian employees to progress to senior and supervisory positions. This project also examined best practices to retain professional, supervisory and managerial civilian staff through developmental workplace strategies that make the workplace more personally interesting and engaging. In addition, the project examined leadership development strategies that also apply to performance development for all employees.

Research Question: “How can developmental strategies enhance civilian job satisfaction and the quality of service that civilian employees offer the VPD?” There are also the following three sub-questions:

1. How can development strategies enhance the VPD corporate climate and address the needs of civilian employees?
2. How is job satisfaction affected by learning and development strategies?
3. How do employee development programs and corporate climate contribute to the development of civilian leadership capacity?

### The Opportunity

The 2004 to 2008 VPD Strategic Plan set the stage for the creation of business plans for every section of the VPD. The Strategic Plan has also resulted in the Vancouver Police Board and City Council agreeing to a major operational review of the VPD. This review was conducted with the assistance of an independent project consultant from the University College of the Fraser Valley.

In the initial stages of the operational review, the Vancouver Police Board and senior city staff commissioned a study to examine the possibility of civilianizing select police positions in the VPD. The reason for this was to free up sworn police officers who were in predominately administrative positions so that they could be redeployed to operational police duties. This study resulted in a report titled, “Civilianization in the Vancouver Police Department” (Griffiths et al., 2006).

The civilianization report (Griffiths et al., 2006) recommended the immediate civilianization of 19 police positions (p. 13), with a second recommendation to analyze a number of other positions. The recommendations were approved by the Vancouver Police Board and City Council on April 6, 2006, and the 19 new civilian positions formed part of the approval for 46 civilian positions in 2006.

One conclusion of the civilianization study was “that it is widely acknowledged that having civilians in key positions in a police organization enhances the general organizational environment, brings specialized expertise, and generates numerous benefits for sworn police officers” (Griffiths et al., 2006, p. 33). As a result of the decisions by the Vancouver Police Board and City Council, it became clear that civilian support staff would play a more pivotal role in the future operations of the VPD.

With civilian staff playing an increased role in the operations of the VPD, one issue that was not addressed in the last few staffing requests was how the VPD would be positioned to look after existing and new civilian staff. The fact that the VPD Human Resources Section had limited resources to deal with civilian support staff was evident to me when I was the Director of VPD Human Resources from 2003 to 2005. Since that time there have been no increases in the Human Resource Section staffing complement.

From 2004 to 2007, the number of full-time civilian positions in the VPD grew from 313 to 368. This increase in staffing was not supported by any new professional development programs or strategies, which could create organizational issues in the future, such as employee turnover or poor morale. The civilianization report (Griffiths et al., 2006) commented that the absence of a defined career structure and developmental programs could cause civilian staff to have concerns. The study further noted that “this can be overcome as civilians assume more complex and demanding positions that are correspondingly associated with higher prestige within the organization” (p. 48).

The creation of civilian employee development strategies would ensure that the VPD has a competent, engaged and happy civilian workforce (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003). In fact, the VPD could further benefit from this by instilling a sense of a corporate community within the

civilian support staff. Senge (1994) notes the value of having a positive corporate community and the commitment and sense of purpose that can be achieved in a workforce.

Historically there has been little, if any, support for civilian employees who are seeking supervisory or leadership positions in the VPD. As the VPD moves into the future with increased resources, new plans are required to provide civilian employees with career options within the organization.

### Significance of the Opportunity

One of the oldest clichés in business today is that an organization's most important asset is its people (Kimball & Nink, 2006). The VPD has placed a great emphasis on developing business strategies and operational plans; yet there has been less of an effort on developing the potential of its civilian employees and ensuring a happy and vibrant workforce. In terms of economics, this can be as important as increasing resources, because professional development can contribute to the retention and productivity of long term staff (Grensing-Pophal, 2002).

The VPD is now at a point where it can use the momentum created by the last two years' focus on increased staffing to leverage it into a staffing plan for civilians that will create internal opportunities for advancement, development, and growth. This is especially valid for the civilian workforce as a number of the new positions over the last two years (2005-2007) have been at the professional and managerial level. This is now a great opportunity to analyze how to support career development from clerical duties through to supervisory and managerial responsibilities.

Kouzes and Posner (2002) note that the most important outcome of leadership is giving life and work a sense of meaning and purpose by offering an exciting vision. I would

argue that this is not only applicable to a leadership vision, but can be equally applicable to a staffing vision that provides room for growth, advancement, and succession planning. After all, what is the value of having increased staff resources if the staff is not fully motivated or there is high turnover?

The VPD Strategic Plan (2004) provided a clear path for the acquisition of increased civilian staff. In addition to acquiring additional staff, one of the five major goals of the plan is to “create a supportive workplace” (p. 33). This goal has a key objective of “recruiting, developing, and retaining a highly skilled workforce” (Vancouver Police Department, 2004, p. 33). The challenge now is to leverage this into internal strategies and programs that will look after the needs of VPD employees in order for them to be the best that they can be.

One option in relation to the civilian workforce is to do nothing and to continue with the status quo. However, in my opinion, this option is not in the best interest of retaining and motivating a growing workforce. This is especially the case as the VPD has recently increased both the number and variety of professional and specialist positions. Instead of always recruiting qualified external candidates to these positions it would be preferable to provide entry level employees with a career path on how to attain senior and specialist positions.

The timing for this research project was perfect. The VPD had a Strategic Plan that contained a major goal of ensuring a supportive workplace through recruiting, developing and retaining staff. At the same time, both the number of civilian employees and the variety of civilian positions continued to increase. All that was missing was a clear structure designed to ensure that civilian employees are the best that they can be.

### Systems Analysis of the Opportunity

Senge (1994) advises that there are many useful systems analysis tools available for analyzing, diagramming and redesigning workflow processes (p. 31). The only drawback, according to Senge, in using these tools is that they are for “static” systems, thus inappropriate for organizations that are in constant change. As a result, using an incorrect approach to solve an issue in a dynamic system could lead to increased problems in the system as time passes. This project looks at how various systems inter-relate as well as the best methods to address employee development for civilian employees in the VPD. Another issue requiring consideration was that if different developmental strategies are recommended for the VPD civilian workforce, how would this affect other dynamics in the system? For example, any costs required for increased civilian services would impact the external funder of the VPD, the City of Vancouver, and would need to be considered.

While a key stakeholder in this research project was civilian support staff, it was also important to include a broad range of internal stakeholders including unions, human resource specialists, supervisors, and managers. These stakeholders all inter-relate in the system, and it was recognized that changes to employee development for the civilian workforce would impact other systems.

One important stakeholder is the Teamsters Union, the certified bargaining agent for the vast majority of civilian employees in the VPD (Vancouver Police Board, 2003). A small number of civilian staff are exempt non-unionized employees, who work in managerial and senior supervisory positions. However, the focus of this research project is very important to members of the Teamsters Union as I have heard first-hand from employees, as well as from the union, that there are concerns in relation to ongoing employee learning and the inability

of the organization to assist employees in their attempts to transfer to other senior positions. This information had been shared with me on numerous occasions when I was the Director of VPD Human Resources from 2003 to 2005.

In the case of VPD Teamster members, I considered it to be a key challenge and opportunity to include the union in the research process to gain their support. I felt that union support would provide a positive climate that would increase employee buy-in of any proposed change. This is supported by one of Anderson and Ackerman Anderson's (2001) ten principles of conscious transformation. While this principle applied to transformational change, I believed that it would benefit any type of organizational change. Specifically, Anderson and Ackerman Anderson state that "the transformational process must generate optimal participation and build collective ownership for the change" (p. 128).

All stakeholder groups were important to the project because they interact together and are interdependent. Each civilian employee was also unique as I knew that they must relate to the Teamsters Union. I considered the fact that the union, as a system, had a mandate to speak for its members in a collective sense. Finally, I also considered how the union relates with the VPD, yet another system, which has unique needs often in conflict with those of the union. The challenge was to strike a balance between all of these systems in such a way that each system had its needs taken into account.

It was clear from the onset that this research project could not be conducted in isolation of any systems that link with the civilian workforce. Many factors needed to be considered and taken into account during the planning and research stage. A comprehensive and holistic approach to the analysis was required to ensure that the findings and



recommendations in the report are supported and were not derived in isolation of any associated systems.

### Organizational Context

The VPD came into existence on May 10, 1886, when “John Stewart became the first, and for awhile the only policeman in Vancouver” (Swan, 1986, p. 14). By the early 1900’s the VPD had expanded to over 30 police officers and by its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary the number had reached 53. These increases continued into the first few decades of the 1900’s as the City of Vancouver faced rapid expansion and urbanization.

By the 1940’s, the VPD had already reached 570 police officers, and in 1953, one of the first major reorganizations in the VPD occurred with the creation of the Services Division (Swan, 1986). This new Division was created in response to the dramatic increase in paperwork created by the VPD (p. 75). At that time the VPD had a total of 683 police officers and some civilian support staff.

In the early 1970’s, the VPD was divided into four distinct districts, with district-specific commanders responsible for the deployment of personnel to address specific crime concerns. Later in the decade, the VPD obtained a substantial increase to the number of police officers on staff. The strength of the Department was now at 955 police officers.

The number of police officers in the VPD continued to grow into the 1980’s and with this growth came significant technological advancements. The VPD led the police community with computers in police cars, and in 1984 the police Records Section was reorganized with an emphasis being placed on the computerization of police files (Swan, 1986, p. 128).

The VPD turned 100 years old in 1986 and at this point employed 1,028 police officers and 170 civilian support staff (Swan, 1986). While the vast majority of the first 100 years of history reflects on police officers, very little is on record in relation to civilian support staff. For example, the historical record titled, “A Century of Service” (Swan, 1986), mentions very little about civilian staff.

Throughout the history of the VPD there have been many initiatives and business plans with clearly defined goals that intended to improve levels of service. However, formal strategic planning and associated employee succession and developmental planning were non-existent until the 1990’s, when the first VPD Strategic Plan was developed (Wiebe, 2006).

The current strategic plan (2004 to 2008) was developed in partnership with the Vancouver Police Board (VPB). Together, the VPD and VPB have worked to determine organizational goals and priorities. The process involved facilitated sessions with police officers and civilian staff to assist in developing the mission, vision and values. Finally, the VPD and the VPB hosted a community deliberative dialogue session to discuss the top community safety issues in Vancouver (Wiebe, 2006). The inclusion of the VPB, and later the community, did not occur in past strategic planning sessions and this may be one of the reasons why the current strategic plan has been so successful in making the case for increased police and civilian staffing.

The above process created the current strategic plan for the VPD. This plan contains the following mission, values and vision for the organization:

**Our Mission:** In fulfillment of its public trust, the Vancouver Police Department maintains public order, upholds the rule of law, and prevents crime.

**Our Values:** In carrying out our mission, members will uphold IPAR.

1. Integrity: We believe in doing the right thing in all circumstances.
2. Professionalism: We will pursue the highest standards of professionalism in policing.
3. Accountability: We will maintain the highest ethical and legal standards.
4. Respect: We will be compassionate and respectful in all of our actions.

Our Vision: Canada's leader in policing – providing safety for all.<sup>1</sup> (Vancouver Police Department, 2004, p. 6)

While strategic planning has occurred within the VPD in the past, the current plan is more inclusive of various stakeholder groups and does not just address issues that are specific to police and crime control. For example, one of the five strategic objectives of the current strategic plan is “Creating a Supportive Workplace” (Vancouver Police Department, 2004, p. 33). Within this strategic objective is a goal to create a comprehensive human resource plan. This goal has the following three objectives that apply to both police and civilian staff:

1. To recruit, develop and retain a highly skilled and competent workforce;
2. To enhance partnerships to facilitate the delivery of human resource services; and
3. To encourage maximum leadership in and of our people. (Vancouver Police Department, 2004, p. 34)

The VPD appears committed to keeping this plan current and at the forefront of its operations. The motivation for this plan is based on the recent successes in acquiring additional police and civilian staffing. The next challenge is to provide the structures that are required to create a supportive workplace for not only police officers but the civilian staff who support police operations.

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<sup>1</sup> From the Vancouver Police Department Strategic Plan 2004-2008, 2004, Vancouver, BC: Author. Copyright 2004 by the Vancouver Police Department. Reprinted with permission.

## CHAPTER 2. A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There is an abundance of literature available on the subject of employee development that specifically focuses on job satisfaction and performance. Conversely, there is very little literature on employee development that is specific to civilian police employees. However, despite not being specific to policing, the general principles contained in the literature are directly applicable to the administrative nature of civilian work in the VPD.

This literature review forms the foundation of my research project and provides a detailed overview of the existing body of knowledge in three main areas: organizational climate, developmental programs and strategies, and job satisfaction. This existing knowledge was combined with the results of my research in order for me to reach the conclusions in this report. These conclusions guided me in making operational recommendations for changes in the VPD that are based on best practices.

The three main areas of this literature review also assisted me in determining how the VPD can best embed new strategies into its business practices. I anticipated that these strategies would provide conditions conducive to ensuring an organizational framework for ongoing learning and development. The literature review begins with an exploration and understanding of how organizational climate affects employee motivation and learning, and includes an examination of strategies to enhance corporate climate in order to foster employee development.

The second main topic of the literature review is an examination of developmental programs and strategies that currently exist that may provide VPD civilian employees with a path for continuous learning. This examination includes the link between job satisfaction and performance in situations where development programs focus on leadership development.

Finally, the third main topic examines job satisfaction and how satisfaction at work links to performance, quality of work, and motivation. An analysis was also conducted on whether or not continuous learning and employee development create greater job satisfaction.

### Organizational Climate

The VPD has a 120 year history that is rich in history and tradition. As a paramilitary organization, the VPD has always been structured to include chain of command in its blended force of both civilian and uniformed employees. While the organizational climate in the VPD is perhaps the least tangible aspect of organizational life, it still has a powerful effect on employees.

Steele and Jenks (as cited in Fink, 1992) define organizational climate simply as “the feel of the workplace” (p. 12). They also identify the four key dimensions of climate as being: 1) the amount of total energy people have available to them, 2) how that energy is distributed or used, 3) the amount of pleasure people get from being in the environment, and 4) how much people grow and develop within the system (Fink, 1992, p. 12). Fink (1992) notes that corporate climate is related to employee commitment in the following way:

The proposition related to climate can be stated as: To the extent that an organization’s climate fosters employee pleasure, growth, and development, and to the extent that it energizes its people into actions that serve both individual and organizational purposes, it also tends to foster a high level of employee commitment (p. 13).

Kouzes and Posner (2003) expand further on organizational climate and note that trust is the core human relations factor that must exist within organizations. “Without trust you cannot lead. Without trust you cannot get extraordinary things done” (p. 244). This principle of trust ensures that people are more likely to be happy and committed.

Soloman and Flores (2001) explain that trust is not implicit and that

most people in relationships, whether friendships, marriages, working partnerships, or casual love affairs, find themselves comfortably submerged in trust, taking each other for granted [at least within certain limits], not even thinking about the dreadful things that they could easily do to each other. (p. 4)

It is core components such as trust that greatly influence corporate climate.

Solomon and Flores (2001) expand further on trust with their notion of authentic trust, which recognizes that trust requires work to maintain and that it should not be accepted blindly. The authors state “authentic trust does not necessitate the exclusion of trust and that it embraces the possibilities of distrust and betrayal” (p. 6). They further note that trust is an emotional skill that is ongoing and dynamic and can have ups and downs. In the end, the authors conclude that trust must be earned and that shared commitments and mutual visions must be based on a foundation of trust.

In addition to trust, another core component of organizational climate involves the relationships of the people in the work setting. Relationships are certainly affected by trust, and positive and meaningful relationships increase the satisfaction that employees derive from being at work. Baker (2003) expands on Solomon and Flores (2001) by emphasizing the power of social capital. Baker notes that the key to building long-lasting and trusting relationships is reciprocity. “We are helped because we help others” (p. 13). Baker also indicates that by practicing reciprocity, a person ultimately builds collaborative relationships and increases their social capital.

Baker (2003) describes social capital as an asset that a person has that “includes all of the resources available through personal and business networks, business opportunities, trust, goodwill, information, and much more” (p. 12). He also likens social capital to having a reservoir that can be subject to deposits or withdrawals during times of need. This links to authentic trust because the trust that people have in you does not have to be affected greatly

just because you made a mistake. Social capital is much like a person's reputation and it can mitigate the impact of mistakes.

Cropanzano and Kacmar (1995) build on trust and relationships and discuss corporate climate in three contexts that include organizational politics, justice and support. In relation to organizational politics, they describe this as consisting of unsanctioned alliances and heavy-handed influence. They go on to describe an organization built on justice as having formal rules and strict procedures. Finally, they describe a supportive workplace as involving a fundamental change in the way individuals and employers relate to each other.

Organizational politics and organizational justice are two types of organizational climate that are the least conducive to having a satisfied and productive workforce.

In terms of organizational politics, Cropanzano and Kacmar (1995) advise that there is no clear and universally shared definition; however, they define political climate as “a means of exercising social influence to promote one's own self-interests” (p. 7). In contrast, the concept of corporate justice operates under strict rules which allow each individual to work within their own individual goals. A supportive organization places organizational and individual goals at almost equal importance to ensure that they are mutually reinforcing and enriching. A supportive organization is more apt to have a shared vision and greater emphasis on communication.

Cropanzano and Kacmar (1995) also note that an organization's climate is a product of its psychological atmosphere. Based on a variety of work related influences, employees develop certain perceptions and expectations that relate to their overall behaviour. The authors state that the “importance of this point cannot be overemphasized as people act on the basis of their perceptions” (p. 38). To foster a productive and healthy climate,

Cropanzano and Kacmar advocate for increased teamwork through total quality teams. They highlight that work quality can be improved by doing quality work the first time, through continuous improvement and through teamwork. Each of these steps involves decision making and accountability at the employee level.

Deal and Kennedy (2000) closely link organizational climate to organizational culture in that every organization has a culture that is based on human behaviour and actions. They further note that values are at the core of the culture and that “values provide a sense of common direction for all employees and guidelines for their day-to-day behaviour” (p. 85). While placing values as the bedrock of an organization’s culture, Deal and Kennedy conclude that organizations succeed when values can be identified, embraced, and acted upon by its employees.

The culture of a police department, while steeped in history, still does evolve over time like any other organization. Culture can be entrenched within an organization and new members who enter adopt pre-existing assumptions that take years to create (Schein, 1996). In contrast, a high level of long-term commitment is necessary from an organization’s leadership if a culture is required to be changed.

Schein (1996) goes on to say that in most organizations there are three management cultures that exist that usually do not understand each other. These three cultures are “the culture of engineering, the culture of chief executive officers (CEO), and the culture of operators” (p. 10). These three cultures can be compared to Oshry’s (1996) tops, middles, and bottoms. In both analogies, it takes mutual understanding and a great deal of communication to over-come these barriers. In the end, a lack of understanding between cultures and roles within an organization can affect organizational climate.



Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers (1996) write that individuals and organizations are living systems that are complex and ever-changing. Through their research they have concluded that living systems learn constantly and that they are self-organizing. Living systems have the ability to change when necessary and to create structures that respond to their needs. In the case of employees, these changes and structures can be positive or negative.

Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers (1996) believe that communication is very important in creating a purposeful organizational community, and I suggest that communication is also a precursor to creating a positive organizational climate and culture. The authors state that “information is the nourishment of the organization and the system cannot adapt or change if it is starved to learn what is happening” (p. 13). They go on to advocate for the value of supporting self-organization, which is a form of empowerment and trust that employees are capable of doing a good job. They also question the value of spending so much money and time in training programs versus focusing more attention in engaging employees on how to resolve issues themselves.

In an effort to better understand the effect of organizational climate on job satisfaction, Gunter and Furnham (1996) conducted a research project to study employees in four public sector organizations. This study included such factors as job satisfaction, organizational morale (climate) and pride in an organization. One of the conclusions in their research was a strong correlation between job satisfaction and organizational climate. In particular, “job satisfaction was positively correlated with job definition/clarity, job importance/challenge, job performance awareness, encouragement to work hard, organization performance, and rewards and recognition” (p. 200). There were 14

organizational climate variables involved in this study. They include encouragement to work hard, management involving staff, interpersonal relationships, work enjoyment, and adequacy of training.

Goleman (2000) discusses how a leader's management style can influence organizational climate. Effective leaders must use several different styles to create a climate that allows for increased productivity and increased employee satisfaction, among other things. Specifically, Goleman cites research that was based on over 3,800 executives worldwide that determined there are six distinct leadership styles that impact climate. These six styles are: 1) coercive, 2) authoritative, 3) affiliative, 4) democratic, 5) pacesetter, and 6) coaching (p. 81). Of these six styles, four are conducive to providing a positive organizational climate, while coercive and authoritative, on their own, are damaging to a positive climate.

Sims (2002) advocates that power, influence, and decision making are the foundation of leadership that can affect corporate climate in a positive way. He goes on to say that leaders and followers need to support each other in order to have mutual satisfaction. Sims (2002) states that "leaders must provide an organizational climate that supports and serves followers rather than one in which followers serve leaders" (p. 221). However, followers also have a role to play in helping their leaders become successful and to view the leader realistically.

Sims (2002) agrees with Deal and Kennedy (2000) on the importance of values in that they provide guidance for behaviour. However, Sims goes further by recognizing the importance of ethics in organizations and how this links to climate. He notes that ethics is

important at every level and that leaders must lead by example and in many ways be even more ethical than their followers.

A positive climate in an organization is important for creating a foundation of employee satisfaction, continuous learning, and productivity. A positive organizational climate is also conducive to fostering development and increasing job satisfaction. In addition, by providing developmental opportunities to employees, an organization can positively influence organizational climate, productivity and satisfaction. The remaining two topics of this chapter will expand further on these concepts.

### Development Programs and Strategies

Kouzes and Posner (2002) write that the concept of strengthening or developing others requires up-front investment and that organizations that spend an above average amount on employee development also enjoy higher levels of employee involvement, commitment, and customer service. The authors outline that the more an organization invests in training, the greater the understanding its employees will have in relation to the corporate vision and values.

Grensing-Pophal (2002) advise that education and training is not a new concept and that the first programs for employee education began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, Grensing-Pophal does concur with Kouzes and Posner (2002) that investing in training does pay off and that more and more organizations are discovering that investments in training are critical to success.

Deprea (1990) contends that employee development is closely related to effective communication and that organizations cannot expect to be successful in business without articulating what is expected from their employees. Further, it is through effective

communication that a common vision can be conveyed and understood. A common vision allows for corporate conditions to exist that provide employees the tools to respond to the demands of carrying out their responsibilities. This eventually leads to an individual being given opportunities to grow and to be in control over their destiny.

The literature is clear that while courses and training programs provide some of the technical ways to achieve employee development, organizational conditions must exist in order to develop employees. Harris (1998) notes that while training courses may focus on specific skills, ongoing education must be tied to business goals and must allow for flexibility. Kouzes and Posner (2002) further comment on the need to create a learning climate: “without education and coaching, people are reluctant to exercise their authority, in part because they don’t know how to perform the critical tasks and in part out of fear of being punished for making mistakes” (p. 388). This in itself is a critical component of leadership, and I believe that leadership development strategies can be just as rewarding to front-line employees as they can be to supervisors and managers.

Recent literature on leadership development is consistent in suggesting that leadership in the workplace can evolve in every organizational position regardless of whether the position is frontline, supervisory or management. There is also general agreement that leadership can be taught, and that while certain people may be less inclined to become leaders, further development can assist them in reaching their full potential in non-leadership positions (Parks, 2005).

DePree (1990) noted that leadership is a difficult concept to explain, but that a sign of good leadership is when followers are reaching their potential by “learning, serving, achieving results, being adaptable to change, and managing conflict” (p. 12). The impact of

effective leadership can be demonstrated through many individuals regardless of position if a person makes a meaningful difference in the life of a follower. This is applicable to civilian staff in the VPD as one of the goals of this research project is to identify methods in which civilian employees can reach their full potential in the VPD regardless of their position or level of authority.

Fleck (1999) concurs with DePree (1990) in that leaders can evolve at any level of an organization, and that a special feature in an effective leader is that they know where they are going and why. Effective leadership entails vision, and being focused on the ultimate corporate goal no matter what kind of curve in the road comes into one's path. The requirement for vision in leadership is also supported by O'Toole (1995), Kouzes and Posner (2002), and Yukl (2006). However, Fleck further noted that a transformational leader can yield substantial bottom-line results due to five key leadership behaviours: visioning, inspiring, stimulating, coaching, and team-building.

Senge (1990) expands on the role of vision in effective leadership and advocates for building shared vision from each individual's personal vision. He goes on to state that "when people come to share a vision, the vision becomes more real in the sense of a mental reality that people can truly imagine achieving" (p. 13). The author feels that the skills required to build shared vision are: encouraging personal vision, communication, and visioning as an on-going process.

While recent literature is clear that leaders can evolve at every level and position in an organization, Badaracco and Ellsworth (1989) write that a bottom-up versus a top-down influence makes it easier to attract and develop talented people. A bottom-up influence gives individuals additional authority, responsibility, and accountability. This allows individuals to

be challenged and to further develop skills while fostering a sense of fulfillment by allowing creativity and initiative in the workplace.

It is concepts such as these that link directly with the VPD strategic objective to “encourage maximum leadership in and of our people” (Vancouver Police Department, 2004, p. 34). The fact that leadership can exist in non-supervisory and managerial functions is a very important factor that directly pertains to the civilian workforce in the VPD. This is because of the high number of clerical and administrative positions that civilians occupy. Not everyone will be able to be promoted upwards, but developing leadership skills and reaching one’s potential could assist many civilian members in qualifying for other VPD positions, and equally important, could make staying in certain positions more rewarding.

Csikszentmihalyi (2003) agrees that an individual feels fulfilled when they can live up to their potential. This sense of fulfillment tends to make an employee happy, more motivated and productive, which can further result in higher morale and lower turnover. However, Badaracco’s and Ellsworth’s (1989) bottom-up influence does not necessarily mean that a leader merely reacts to another’s initiative, rather it paves the way to achieve the most out of people and to make them leaders too.

Since leaders can be found at every level of an organization, an objective of this research project is to identify methods that the VPD could use to develop civilians to their fullest potential as leaders. The development and further training of employees can assist in identifying future supervisors and managers, and also motivate and stimulate employees. Kouzes and Posner (2002) support the concept that leadership can be learned and that it is not just reserved for only a very few people. The authors discuss that in over 20 years of

research, they have reviewed many cases suggesting that thousands of ordinary people have managed to accomplish extraordinary things through their personal leadership.

Parks (2005) concurs with the position that leadership can be taught. However, Parks builds on this proposition by noting that often a person may have natural gifts or talents that lend themselves to leadership but may require further training and coaching to bring them up to a higher level. Parks further believes that an individual's personal leadership ability can be enhanced in a work group setting where all participants learn from one another.

Setting an appropriate organizational climate is necessary to allow people to be creative and to reach their full potential. In the case of the VPD, the organization is well positioned to create this type of climate through the current strategic plan. The VPD's major strategic goal of creating a supportive workplace (Vancouver Police Department, 2004), identifies a number of objectives related to the achievement of a learning and empowering workplace. Stephan and Pace (2002) support the concept of establishing a workplace that is conducive to empowering people, and they further believe that if you demand good work from your people, you must first free them from any rule, routine, procedure, or other workplace process that does not make sense.

Fleck (1999) concurs with Stephan and Pace (2002) and further notes that organizational commitment is key in developing people as leaders. This includes setting challenging goals and communicating a strong vision. It also includes implementing systems that support transformational behaviours, such as performance appraisal systems.

Initiatives such as the development of a performance appraisal system for VPD civilian staff are currently ongoing and it should be noted that while the VPD Strategic Plan (Vancouver Police Department, 2004) may be the foundation on which to base change, much

work still needs to be done. For example, a key challenge in this research project was to determine strategies and methods in which the VPD can establish a learning and empowering atmosphere in which to stimulate and challenge civilian staff.

It is important to point out, however, that the strategic plan by itself cannot create the impetus for employee development, and that leadership and vision must come from the top down. For example, the VPD vision of “Canada’s Leader in Policing – Providing Safety for All” (Vancouver Police Department, 2004), must genuinely appeal to all employees and must be communicated regularly.

Quigley (1993) explains that a corporate vision must appeal to the hearts and minds of the members of the corporation, and that there must be a clear understanding of where the corporation is today as well as offering a strategy for the future. Senge (1990) expands on this by indicating that a vision statement must be more than words, and that “where there is a genuine vision, as opposed to the all-too-familiar vision statement, people excel and learn, not because they are told to, but because they want to” (p. 9).

This is the type of foundation that will foster leadership development for civilian staff in the VPD. However, for this to occur, both leadership communications and actions must be consistent and displayed on a regular basis. “Leaders must walk their talk. Failures may occur but their actions must consistently concur with the vision on an overall basis” (Quigley, 1993, p. 141).

Almost every source reviewed on leadership development concluded that there are definite general benefits to creating a climate where people can be empowered to become creative and to optimize their potential. Howell and Costley (2006) also write that this type of corporate climate is conducive to involving people in decision making and encouraging



input. This concept of participative management most often results in buy-in by staff, and fosters the notion of having a common vision and a plan for where the organization is going. They also stated that participative management “has a very favorable consistent effect on the satisfaction of followers, including satisfaction with their leader, with their work, and general satisfaction with their organization and job situation” (p. 144).

Senge et al. (1994) support this type of corporate atmosphere by going an additional step in describing organizations as communities. In their ‘bean supper’ story, they outline the positive benefits that can be achieved by getting people together informally and having open conversations where everyone can learn from one another (p. 518). These bean suppers, or brown bag lunches, can foster creativity by allowing people to propose new projects, discuss how they might learn more, and how the organization could help them succeed. The authors conclude that people value coming together in this community-oriented approach to organizational work.

The positive effects of leadership development practices are further commented on by Greshing-Pophal (2002) who note that today’s employee wants much more than wages and benefits. Employees want their employer to not only understand their needs, but to provide consistent direction and feedback, as well as ample opportunities to share their ideas and to participate in decision making. In reality, none of this should be difficult to implement, but it does entail taking time and communicating with people.

The reviewed literature has been consistent with the concept that a workplace learning environment is best fostered by corporate strategies and workplace opportunities. In other words, the organization must set the stage for creating an atmosphere of continuous learning and encourage its employees to participate. Kouzes and Posner (2002) write that the

act of strengthening others requires a leadership climate that is conducive to learning. This climate includes the requirement for employees to feel safe and to be willing and unafraid to be placed in a vulnerable position. They go on to highlight that without having this type of positive climate employees will not be willing to become vulnerable and that they will react defensively.

Harris (1998) adds to the views of Kouzes and Posner (2002) by further indicating that a learning climate can assist people to learn in many ways and this includes learning by doing particular functions. He further stated that for many people “manuals never suffice, they learn by listening” (p. 144). However, Harris does conclude that there is limited success in developing employees through unstructured training, and that a formal plan must be in place.

Whichever method or methods are used for employee development, the literature is consistent in the fact that there are positive benefits to educating employees. Gensing-Pophal (2002) highlights this by stating that “many employees aspire to self-improvement and advancement” (p. 177), and that training can also be motivating. He goes on to state that “well trained employees are more productive and efficient; they perform more effectively, and make fewer errors” (p. 177).

Drucker (2001) also concurs and writes that an educated person can embody society’s values, beliefs and commitments. He further noted that knowledge places a person at the center, and in doing so, raises new challenges and opportunities. In my opinion, Drucker’s interpretation of society can also be transformed to a corporate community where an employee that is well trained can model a corporation’s vision and beliefs for other employees.

Beauregard and Fitzgerald (2000) write that in addition to increasing the performance of employees through training and development, employers need to manage employee performance with appropriate feedback. This echoes the thoughts of DePree (1990) in outlining that performance cannot be improved without good communication and articulation of what is expected of employees. This also evolves into formal performance reviews which can be a valuable instrument for both employee and employer to discuss development, career opportunities, and strategies to move forward. Performance feedback by itself can be very rewarding to an employee if done correctly.

An effective employee development strategy will also assist in an individual employee's movement throughout the organization. Cross training and allowing individuals the opportunity to experience different jobs can be used as part of succession planning. This can mitigate the impact where employees leave an organization after having accumulated a wealth of information on how to do a particular job or task.

Within the scope of this research project succession planning is discussed based on the internal movement of employees in an organization, and in particular, the VPD. Within this context, Gensing-Pophal (2002) advises that one benefit of employee education and development is succession planning. It can be argued that this type of succession planning can involve movement within an organization by providing employees with the motivation to learn other jobs in order to advance in the workplace.

Harris (1998) agrees that employee development can be achieved through lateral transfers within an organization, and this can result in increases in productivity and employee satisfaction as there is a greater understanding of different roles and responsibilities. For

employees, there is an added benefit of future advancement through the acquisition of different skill sets.

Similar to organizational climate, the creation of positive working conditions and the provision of opportunities is an important part of employee development and learning. Development does not just occur through formal training and learning, and an organization that promotes effective two-way communication, performance feedback and opportunities for employees to experience new things will be well positioned to build a productive and satisfied workforce. This includes establishing a vision that is understood and goals which provide challenges and accountability to every employee.

### Job Satisfaction

This final topic in the literature review connects very closely with the first two topics and there are many overlapping principles that apply to job satisfaction, organizational climate, and developmental programs and strategies. In fact, there were several factors related to job satisfaction in the previous discussions on organizational climate and employee development.

Kouzes and Posner (2002) note that one of the most important reasons people stay in jobs is that they like what they are doing, they feel challenged, and they feel a sense of purpose. They go on to state that “personal satisfaction for doing a good job is cited three to four times as often as getting ahead or making a good living” (p. 152). They conclude by noting that most people have a deep yearning to make a difference, and that the best organizational leaders are able to bring this out in people.

Harris (1998) outlined a number of consequences for an organization that fails to invest in training its employees. He further notes that lower job satisfaction and a less

motivated workforce will result if organizations do not invest in on-going training.

Beauregard and Fitzgerald (2000) concur with Harris and they go on to connect job satisfaction and employee motivation with job retention. They further commented on the expense incurred in replacing good employees that leave organizations when they are dissatisfied.

Beauregard and Fitzgerald (2000) write that there are some basic principles that are attributed to human motivation and that the recognized theory of motivation is the expectancy theory. This theory advocates for the following four ways to motivate employees: 1) by creating a positive work environment, 2) by providing opportunities for growth, 3) by managing employee performance, and 4) by recognizing and rewarding good performance (p. 147). Isaac, Douglas and Zerbe (2001) elaborate that the expectancy theory, sometimes referred to as the valence, instrumentality and expectancy (VIE) theory, suggests that an individual will provide effort based upon that individual's expectation of what outcome can be expected, as well as the value of that outcome to the individual. They go on to state that "people consciously choose a particular course of action, based upon perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs, as a consequence of their desires to enhance pleasure and avoid pain" (p. 2).

When comparing the expectancy theory to job satisfaction in the VPD, it is not difficult to understand how a positive work environment and opportunities for growth could contribute to increased job satisfaction and even increased performance. These concepts are universal in nature and apply evenly to all organizations. However, in the case of the VPD, these concepts complement the VPD Strategic Plan and its goal to create a supportive workplace (Vancouver Police Department, 2004, p. 33).

In addition to providing supportive workplace strategies, Drucker (2001) maintains that the first step in maintaining performance is hiring the right people. He notes that a person must first be selected to do a particular job based on their ability to perform that function. Kotter (2001) also concurs and advocates for the creation of a culture of leadership that begins with recruiting people that fit into an organization. Recruiting individuals into jobs that they are not interested in or cannot do will certainly affect satisfaction.

Grensing-Pophal (2002) concurs with Drucker (2001) and Kotter (2001) on the point that a successful employee starts with the concept of hiring the right person. However, he goes on to point out that once the person is in the job, they must be given the right kind of ongoing training to remain successful. This success will lead to acceptable performance and a satisfied employee.

Levine (1995) builds on the concept of hiring the right people and providing conditions conducive to healthy employees by advocating for the need for employee involvement. He states that “extraordinary claims have been made about employee involvement for generations, and the reason is simple: employee involvement works, at least some of the time” (p. 1).

Levine (1995) writes that providing employees with skills is only one part of building performance and satisfaction, and that by providing employees freedom to choose how they will do their work will increase their motivation. This involves empowering employees and teams to determine the best strategies to get quality work done. Levine does concede that this is not always successful and that factors such as union relations, among other things, can have an impact on how successful employee involvement and empowerment can be. However, “substantive employee involvement can revitalize the union movement, and in

most unionized settings with successful employee involvement, unions acquire new roles that are based on much higher levels of information sharing and consultation before decisions are made” (Levine, 1995, p. 166).

Kimball and Nink (2006) discuss the importance of employee involvement by noting that job satisfaction is critical in maintaining a workforce that is engaged and productive. They also make an important point by stating “satisfaction with pay is less powerful as a predictor of job satisfaction or employee engagement and is less likely to predict whether an employee stays or goes” (p. 66). They qualify this by acknowledging that an employee may be attracted to an organization due to pay and benefits; however, the length of their employment is determined more by their relationship with their immediate supervisor. They further cited the results of a 2005 Gallup poll (as cited in Kimball & Nink, 2006) which listed the following 12 ways employees are engaged, and therefore satisfied:

1. They know what is expected of them;
2. They have the right materials and equipment to do their work correctly;
3. They have the opportunity to do what they do best every day;
4. In the previous seven days they have received recognition or praise for their work;
5. Their supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about them as a person;
6. There is someone at work who encourages their development;
7. Their opinions seem to count;
8. The mission of their company makes them feel that their work is important;
9. Their co-workers are committed to doing quality work;
10. They have a best friend at work – someone who they can unconditionally rely upon;
11. In the past six months, they have talked with someone about their progress;  
and
12. They have opportunities to learn and grow. (Kimball & Nink, 2006, p. 67)

Kimball and Nink (2006) explain that managers and supervisors can engage employees and create the above-mentioned 12 outcomes by maintaining strong relationships,

clear communication, strong co-worker relations, a commitment to allow for risk taking, and opportunities to learn and grow.

In relation to co-worker relationships, Beauregard and Fitzgerald (2000) state that, “in a recent study of over 100 small businesses, *Human resource and work-life practices in Canadian small business*, Duxbury and Higgins found that many employees preferred working for small organizations” (p. 145). The reason stated is that employees enjoyed the respect from their colleagues, the open communication, and a positive work environment. In larger organizations this can be somewhat replicated by creating work teams and smaller functional units.

The creation of a developmental organization that supports lifelong learning is also a key determinant of job satisfaction. Gilley and Maycunich (2000) state that “developmental organizations are a pleasure to work for” (p. 55) and that this results in high job satisfaction. This type of organization is challenging and demanding, yet it is supportive, participatory, and rewarding. They further comment that creating a culture of continuous learning is not easy to do, and strategies must be formed to address barriers that prevent this from occurring.

Barker and Camarata (1998) expand on the concept of creating a learning organization by emphasizing that communication is an essential requirement. The authors support the literature with respect to the idea that job satisfaction is linked to the key indicators of valuing and empowering employees, as well as holding them accountable. “These indicators – again shaped by and expressed in communication – are vital if knowledge is to develop” (p. 6). They go on to note that communication is vital in order to achieve job satisfaction strategies such as praise, empowerment, and performance feedback.



Creating a satisfied workforce is not achieved through any one strategy. As noted above, having a positive organizational climate and an organization that is conducive to development, employee involvement, communication and accountability are just a few of the main strategies that are required to positively impact satisfaction. In the end, leaders who want to increase satisfaction should not underestimate the importance of these strategies as they also positively influence productivity and job performance.

### Conclusion

There is a vast amount of literature that relates to organizational climate, developmental programs and strategies, and job satisfaction. All of the literature overlaps to various degrees, and strategies that positively influence one component will often affect the other.

This body of literature serves as a framework to assess the research findings and to develop recommendations in relation to this research project. The literature and the results of the research have also provided me with an opportunity to determine how best practices can be implemented in the day-to-day operations of the VPD. The end result of this process has assisted me in making informed conclusions and operational recommendations that will assist the VPD and its civilian staff well into future years.

## CHAPTER 3. CONDUCT OF RESEARCH

### Research Approach

This research project asks the main question of how developmental strategies can enhance civilian job satisfaction and the quality of service that civilian employees offer the VPD. There are also three sub-questions that formed the basis of this inquiry. These questions are explored through an active research approach that utilized a mixture of quantitative and qualitative research.

Stringer (1999) defines action research as a process that involves participants in the research in a way that they will benefit from the project in the end. This goes well beyond simple data collection and analysis completed by an uninvolved researcher. This method of research is cyclical and involves observation, reflection, and action. Further, action research “is a highly collaborative, reflective, experiential, and participatory mode of research in which all individuals involved in the study, researcher and subjects alike, are deliberate and contributing actors in the research” (Berg, 2007, p. 223).

The participants involved in this project were civilian employees of the VPD, representing a cross-section of employees who participated in the overall research and resulting recommended solutions. The participants drawn from the various VPD sections were empowered to provide input with the assurance of anonymity during the survey phase, and assurances during the focus group research process that there would be no negative repercussions from anywhere in the organization as a result of participation in the research.

Glesne (2006) emphasizes that an important role of action researchers is to solve problems and take actions without political or controlling overtones. The researcher, as an

agent of change, is involved in both inquiry and dialogue leading to recommendations and solutions. The scope of this research project was internal to the VPD and did not involve outside participants. The results of the research led to recommendations for organizational change that addressed the issues outlined in the research question.

Quinn (2004) notes that through the concept of authentic engagement, a leader must be principled and engaged in the action. He goes on to note that through authentic engagement, a leader must show passion and genuine concern for what is being done. It is this type of leadership that shows participants that the researcher is open to input and leads by example. Authentic engagement also takes into account all of the needs of the participants.

Berg (2007) outlines how the basics of action research involve four stages: 1) identifying the question, 2) gathering information to answer the question, 3) analyzing and interpreting the information, and 4) sharing the results with the participants (p. 225). This research approach is consistent with this project and it provided a process for identifying issues and then resolving problems that affect civilian employees in the VPD. This research project included an archival review, a civilian employee survey, and three focus groups. I also ensured the involvement of the necessary stakeholders throughout the survey and focus group stages.

During the focus groups I used the concept of appreciative inquiry that was advocated by Cooperider, Whitney and Stravos (2003). Appreciative inquiry concentrates on what already is already working in an organization, and allows participants to engage in storytelling in order to build on previous successes. I found that this concept worked quite well for me, and ensured that all focus group participants were included in the discussion.

The first stage of the data collection process was a review of archived files and information in the VPD Human Resources Section. The second stage consisted of a survey of civilian employees throughout the organization. The third stage of the data collection process involved focus groups: one for civilian employees below the position of supervisor, a second for supervisors and managers, and a third integrated focus group with a combination of managers, supervisors and employees. The reason for separating supervisors and managers from other employees in the first two focus groups was to ensure that the participation from the civilian employees was free-flowing and without the threat of intimidation. The final combined focus group built on the results of the first two focus groups.

I elected to combine both quantitative and qualitative methodology to accomplish this three-stage research process. This variation in methodology was intended to strike a balance between different accepted research methods and to involve as many participants in the project as possible. This approach was intended to increase the validity and authenticity of the project as a whole.

The scientific community uses quantitative research methodology extensively, and this approach has traditionally been the most frequently used for most research (Palys, 2003). The use of numbers and the analysis of data are the essential elements of quantitative research. However, qualitative research takes a different approach and focuses on people's experiences and thoughts as opposed to numbers and the counting of data. As such, human aspects are the focus of this method of research and it forms the basis of the majority of social science research, where the goal is to understand human behavior (Berg, 2007; Palys, 2003).

This research project incorporates quantitative methodology to answer broad questions in relation to the thoughts of civilian employees throughout the VPD. This quantitative approach serves to define the scope of the problem and directs the research into manageable research topics for the focus group methodology. I also utilized a qualitative approach in parts of the survey and in the conduct of the three focus groups. This variation of methodologies contributed to the validity of the data collection and helped ensure that the subsequent analysis was valid. Berg (2007) notes that the use of a variety of research methods provides for triangulation of results which will assist in confirming and validating findings.

#### Project Participants

This action research project was conducted under my direction. The project sponsor representing the Vancouver Police Department was the Deputy Chief Constable commanding the Support Services Division. He is the Officer in charge of the majority of civilian employees in the VPD, including the Human Resources Section. A project supervisor was also identified and was approved by Royal Roads University.

Portions of the research were conducted with assistance of others in the VPD. This research team approach included procedural oversight from the Planning and Research Section as well consultation with seven other individuals in the VPD. For example, the research team was involved in development of the survey questions and provided recording assistance during the focus groups, while a staff member in the Planning and Research Section helped in the distribution and monitoring of the electronic survey.

The VPD was the only focus of this research project and all participants involved were civilian employees of the VPD. As of 2007, there are over 1,600 full-time employees of

the VPD, with only 368 positions designated for full-time civilian staff. The relatively small number of civilian employees made it practical to ensure that every civilian employee was invited to provide input during the survey stage.

Since every full-time civilian employee received an invitation to participate in the survey, this ensured that I obtained data from a wide cross-section of employees. Past VPD employee surveys have always had relatively high response rates, and my survey was no exception. The survey spanned all four Divisions in the VPD and included all full-time civilian employees in each Division. Every variety of civilian function – including all of the 31 supervisory/team leads, and all of the 15 management positions – were included in the research. Palys (2003) noted that non-probabilistic sampling techniques provide formal representative samples. It is this technique that produced data specific to the entire civilian population.

Two of the three methods employed in this research had a similar target audience, and the third method was an archival review. While the survey targeted the entire civilian employee audience, the three focus groups concentrated on a smaller list of participants. The process for selecting focus group participants involved sending e-mails to the entire full-time civilian workforce requesting volunteers for certain focus group days, times, and sessions. From the employees that responded, I had a person from the research team draw the names randomly. This eliminated any perception that I had hand-picked focus group participants.

### Research Methods

This research project utilizes three research methods to collect data for analysis. Stringer (1999) notes that there are different formulations of action research and that each method should evolve into a routine where the researcher strives to “look, think, act” (p. 19).

As each major cycle of research occurs, there must be a constant process at work that includes observation, reflection and action. This research project has a blend of methods that consist of both quantitative and qualitative methodology.

### *The Research Methods*

I utilized three distinct research methods to collect research data for this project. These methods consisted of an archival review, a survey, and three focus groups.

*The Archival Review:* The use of archival measures consisted of examining relevant VPD information that was contained in hardcopy and electronic format. The archival review served as a benchmark to assess current strategies and programs in place to develop civilian employees.

Archival material is often a product of human action prepared by someone who is not part of the research (Palys, 2003). As a result, this information must be taken into proper context as certain historical information will not be able to be verified. However, despite the limitations of archival research, Palys (2003) does conclude that it represents a data source worthy of independent analysis.

My archival review focused on existing documentation within the VPD, with an emphasis on records in the Human Resources Section. This provided me with information on the current state of performance development, as well as information pertaining to job satisfaction and performance of VPD civilian employees. It also provided information on areas of concern in relation to civilian job satisfaction and development.

*The Survey:* The use of an on-line research survey tool provided me an opportunity to sample a large number of full-time VPD civilian employees, supervisors, and managers. This helped me assess the current issues and thoughts of employees in relation to their job

satisfaction and performance development. The survey also acted as an important tool for me to understand what the real issues were, and how they compared to what I thought the issues would be. This understanding resulted from a mix of both quantitative and qualitative survey methods.

There are a multitude of ways to conduct and distribute surveys, but the main methods are through questionnaires administered in person, in group settings, or through a mail-out or on-line method (Palys, 2003). For this project, I conducted an electronic survey that was provided to all full-time civilian employees. This included surveying all civilian employees in each of the four VPD Divisions including clerical staff, supervisors, and managers. I developed and administered the survey in the secure electronic environment of the VPD's computer Intranet.

Palys (2003) stresses the importance of personal contact throughout the survey process, and he notes that face-to-face questionnaires can increase the response rate up to the 80% range. In contrast, anonymous questionnaires have much lower response rates that range from 10% to 40%. I maximized the response rate to my anonymous electronic survey by first explaining the process and receiving buy-in from the union that represents the VPD civilian employees. I ensured that there was informed consent by sending out an open invitation to each potential participant asking them to contact me if they had any questions. In addition, I used the expertise of personnel from the VPD Planning and Research Section to provide guidance and strategies to increase the response rate within the organization. The majority of staff in the Planning and Research Section are civilian employees and they assisted me by limiting any perceived power imbalance that may result from my direct participation.



The survey was designed in January 2007 after much consultation with a small research team that I organized. I wanted the survey to inform me about the views of civilian employees in relation to their current satisfaction level, how they thought improvements could be made, and what their views were in relation to how they might become more productive. My research team provided me with very meaningful feedback in relation to the design of the survey. The survey data was also the foundation in designing the focus group sessions and achieving a much deeper level of inquiry.

*The Focus Groups:* Focus group techniques have an extensive history in marketing research; however, they have only recently started to be used in social sciences research (Palys, 2003). The focus group involves a relatively small number of participants who are brought together under the guidance of a facilitator who leads the group, listens, and gathers information. The facilitator's role is different from an interviewer, and as a result, is less restrictive and allows the process to flow more freely. The dialogue that results from this process encourages a free flow of information between the participants (Krueger & Casey, 2000). In this research project, I designed the focus groups to foster a free-flow of discussion and ideas that each participant was able to build on.

Morgan (1997) notes that one of the key strengths of a focus group is the researcher's ability to direct discussion to pre-determined topic areas. Conversely, this can have less than preferred consequences if the participants are unwilling or unable to discuss the pre-determined topics. I overcame this potential obstacle by framing my focus group topics from the data received in the survey and archival research stages. Since civilian employees were key stakeholders in both the survey and focus group stages, I believed that they were more

likely to be active participants in the focus groups. This certainly was the case for each focus group as I did not have any issues in relation to non-participation.

Focus group data is qualitative in nature and my goal was to collect data that outlined the opinions and feelings of civilian employees as they related to major themes that were developed out of the analysis of the archival and survey data. Morgan (1997) concurs with this approach and notes that the combined use of research methods will assist in supplementing and validating the entire research results.

As previously discussed, the focus groups were partially designed based on the data analyzed from the survey. I also anticipated that the focus groups would become a major mechanism for any change that will result from this major project. The general direction that I pursued during the focus groups was to expand on identified problem areas and issues that can be improved upon, as well as the identification of potential strategies to address the issues.

### *Study Conduct*

I conducted the three research methods in sequence beginning with the archival review, moving onto the survey, and ending with the focus group stage. I expected that there would be some overlap between the archival review and the survey stage, but I was able to collect and analyze the majority of the data from these first two stages prior to entering into the focus groups.

The electronic survey formed the basis of the research by providing a broad overview of where the VPD was situated in relation to civilian job satisfaction, performance development, and the needs of civilian employees. Prior to the survey being developed, I

began an archival review of organizational material to assess the current state of civilian human resource and employee development practices within the VPD.

At the completion of the electronic survey, I conducted three focus groups. The first was exclusively for civilian employees in positions below supervisor, and the second focus group was for supervisors and managers. The third group was a mix of civilian employees, supervisors, and managers.

*The Archival Review:* My review of archival material involved a sampling of organizational reports with an emphasis on material relating to the Human Resources Section. The review assisted me in identifying the current status of the organization relating to civilian employee development and strategies to increase job satisfaction. Prior to beginning my archival review, I created a focused plan and also thought about the type of data I would be seeking (Palys, 2003).

The VPD reports that I decided to explore included strategic planning reports, labour management minutes, human resource programs and employee satisfaction surveys. My task was made easier due to the fact that I was the previous VPD Director of Human Resources and I already had knowledge of where documents specific to my research were archived. From this starting point, I conducted a cursory review of each document to determine whether or not it contained information on civilian job satisfaction, performance, or training and development. The documents that contained this information were then thoroughly reviewed.

During my in depth analysis of documents that contained information on civilian job satisfaction, performance and training and development, I looked for particular words which would later assist me in developing themes (Palys, 2003). For example, when reviewing

archived information on job satisfaction, I would look for words such as ‘recognition’, ‘feedback’, and ‘communication’, to name a few.

Once I began to develop themes, I constructed an Excel spreadsheet that contained wide-ranging categories that included ‘Human Resources Section staffing’, ‘civilian orientation training’, and ‘civilian recognition committee’. Within each category, I analyzed the documents and inserted themes that applied to each. Common word usage was then analyzed to understand how prevalent a certain theme was.

During the archival review stage, I also sent out a “Letter of Invitation” (Appendix A) to 299 full-time civilian employees, supervisors, and managers to introduce them to my pending survey and focus groups. This list of 299 individuals formed my target audience, and although the VPD has 368 full-time civilian positions, there were only 299 actually working in the VPD during the time period when I conducted the survey and focus groups. The remaining 69 positions were unfilled due to vacancies and leaves of absence.

The archival review provided an overview of the current situation relating to civilian employee programs and strategies. I did not intend to review material that was so historical that it no longer applied to the present. To ensure confidentiality, I am not identifying private information that was contained in the documents.

Palys (2003) details how the analysis of archival materials can be undertaken through both a quantitative and a qualitative approach. In this research project, I conducted my archival review in a qualitative manner. My approach was to seek information on what was occurring presently in relation to job satisfaction, performance and development of civilian employees. Palys further notes that a more qualitative analysis of archival material is one

where a researcher is not interested in checklists and instead is interested in the analysis of a sample of material that is relevant to the research question(s).

*The Survey:* The Survey Questionnaire (Appendix B) consisted of 47 questions that were partially based on the data collected during the archival review. A mixture of both closed and open-ended questions resulted in quantitative and qualitative data. The closed questions resulted in a more expedient way for me to gather data for analysis, whereas the open-ended questions offered the participant an opportunity to provide increased input with respect to their opinions and experiences, including sharing data that I had not anticipated. The survey was cross-sectional, with the data collected during February 2007, as opposed to a longitudinal method, where data is collected over a longer duration (Creswell, 2003).

The construction of the survey questions was very important as I knew that the questions needed to meet the specific objectives of the survey. To ensure that the objectives were met and that the questions were valid, I utilized the expertise of an experienced survey writer who works in the Planning and Research Section. I also had the survey tested by a small sample of the civilian and police employees who worked in the Planning and Research Section to verify that the questions were clear and that they produced responses that linked with the research questions.

The survey sample was the same 299 civilian employees that the “Letter of Invitation” was sent to. As I sent this survey to every full-time civilian employee working in the VPD at that time, I did not have to take into account representative sample sizes. Palys (2003) notes that impersonal surveys generally have response rates of between 10% and 40% and I expected that I would have a response rate at the high end of this range.

I had this survey developed within a survey software program (Select survey asp (version 8.1) [computer software], 2005) and placed on the secure VPD internal computer network. An internal e-mail with a link to the survey was sent to each respondent on February 5, 2007. This e-mail contained the “Survey Invitation” (Appendix C), and once the survey was accessed via the electronic link, the participant was taken to the first screen of the survey which contained the “Survey Preamble” (Appendix D). This Survey Preamble served to provide informed consent to the participant. If the participant selected “yes” to the consent, they moved to the first question. If they selected “no” to the consent, they moved to the end of the survey and did not have access to the questions.

Administering this survey through the survey software program provided me with an easy method of distribution as well as a good method to monitor involvement on a day-to-day basis. I also ensured that the Teamsters Union was supportive and that they endorsed the survey in order to increase the participation rate. This was accomplished by meeting with the union in advance of the survey to explain the purpose and potential outcomes. This meeting resulted in the union agreeing to assist with explaining the survey and its benefits to all civilian employees prior to it being sent out.

Within four hours of the survey being sent out, 55 participants had already responded. This increased to 92 participants on day five, and within ten days that figure rose to 122 participants that had responded. The survey was closed on February 26, 2007, and prior to the survey closing I sent out an e-mail reminding people of the survey and also advising them of the upcoming focus groups. Attached to that e-mail reminder was the “Focus Group Invitation” (Appendix E) that asked for volunteers for three focus groups that were scheduled

for March 2007. By the survey closing date I had received 173 responses for a 58% response rate.

*The Focus Groups:* This action research consisted of three focus groups, two of which occurred on March 6, 2007 and the third on March 19, 2007. The participants were comprised of a cross-section of volunteers from the same civilian population as the survey stage. Participants in the focus groups did not have to complete a survey in order to qualify as a focus group participant.

Each focus group consisted of eight participants. I facilitated each session and I had two research team members collecting data through note taking. Berg (2007) notes that an experienced and organized facilitator is key to having an effective and constructive focus group. In my case, I felt that I was capable of facilitating the focus groups and that I would be viewed as being fair and impartial.

I began each session by verbally explaining the process and I had each participant sign a “Commitment to Confidentiality” (Appendix F). A “Research Consent Form” (Appendix G) was also signed by each participant as an acknowledgement of how the focus group data would be recorded and how it would be used.

The approach I used in each focus group was an appreciative model of inquiry that was intended to foster an interactive exchange of viewpoints and ideas. I used this process with the assumption that the participants would be able to focus on positive aspects of their work and the organization, and to draw on their experiences to discuss opportunities for positive change. This appreciative inquiry approach is advocated by Cooperider, Whitney and Stravos (2003).

The first set of focus group questions (Appendix H) were created from themes drawn from the survey and archival data. As a result, the same questions were used for the first two focus groups. The last focus group had a revised set of questions that were derived from the data that I collected from the first two focus groups (Appendix H). In the true spirit of action research, this change of questions provided me with a method to involve the participants in the identification of strategies that would be included in the recommendations stemming from this report.

To ensure a free flow of ideas, all questions were open-ended and designed to create appreciative discussion within the group as opposed to the facilitator generating the dialogue. I had two independent and non-participating note takers in each focus group to record each session in writing. The fact that the note takers were not civilian employees of the VPD seemed to satisfy the participants that their confidentiality was important to me.

### *Data Analysis*

The analysis of the data obtained from the archival review and focus groups resulted in qualitative data. Conversely, the survey data resulted in a mix of quantitative and qualitative data.

The archival review examined documentation that was produced historically in the VPD and was qualitative in nature. Palys (2003) notes that analyzing things that we produce is another way to learn about certain subjects. He describes a research method called 'unobtrusive measures' and points out that this method is less influenced by the inquiry conducted by the researcher. In particular,

unobtrusive techniques are non-reactive because (1) the data is typically produced without the thought the evidence might someday be scrutinized by local scientists; and (2) generally, the researcher arrives on the scene after, and sometimes long after, the participants have left. (p. 228)



My analysis of this qualitative archival data consisted of the same methods as employed to examine the qualitative data received from the survey and focus groups.

The survey data resulted in a mix of categorical measures and ordinal measurement. The simplest way to measure data is to categorize it into something it is or is not (Palys, 2003). In my survey, a number of categorical measures were used at the beginning to determine such nominal variables as sex of the respondent, their job position in the VPD, and their Division, for example. In contrast, other quantitative data resulted in an ordinal measurement as the variables were different from one another and imposed a level of magnitude. The survey also posed several questions where the respondent could enter a qualitative written response.

During my analysis process, I aggregated and summarized the survey data. The summary included a frequency distribution which identifies the number and percentages of respondents in each of the categories being analyzed (Palys, 2003). The qualitative data from the survey was analyzed in the same manner as the archival review and focus group data. This involved determining common word usage and common answer themes for specific questions, enabling me to determine the most prevalent responses to certain questions.

The survey software ("Select survey asp, 2005) that was used for this survey enabled me to run cross tabulations in order to gain a more in-depth understanding of the results. This allowed me to compare the answers to specific questions against the different variables of the sample group. For example, for responses that suggested that more training be made available, I was able to identify and compare the responses between managers, supervisors, and employees.

While the survey software greatly assisted me in the analysis of the quantitative survey data, the qualitative data from the archival review, survey and focus groups could not be analyzed in the same manner. In fact, data obtained from the archival review and from the three focus groups was entirely qualitative in nature. I also used an appreciative inquiry approach to the questioning method in the focus groups. With data collected from this approach, there is no single right way to analyze the data, but it is important to listen and understand what is being said from all perspectives (Cooperrider et al., 2003). In addition, “many of the analyses of qualitative data begin with the identification of key themes and patterns” (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 26). Berg (2007) concurs with this, and advocates for the concept of content analysis and the notion that one must first organize and arrange data prior to being able to analyze it. This would include noting the frequencies of specific themes that were identified.

Of critical importance is that the meanings associated with the content data from the archival review, survey, and focus groups formed the basis of the analysis that would later become the framework from which to draw conclusions and make recommendations. I analyzed the qualitative data from the archival review, survey, and focus groups by drawing on the themes from each set of data. For example, themes were developed by identifying common word usage, and terms that were used most frequently. These themes were further analyzed through the use of data displays. This main aspect of qualitative inquiry includes the generation of mind maps and other visual tools that can provide clarity to the data (Berg, 2007).

Using these approaches, I analyzed all qualitative data myself. This analysis also included an assessment of the authenticity and trustworthiness of the qualitative data. The

validation process included a process of triangulation which provided for comparisons of different data collected through different methods to validate the collective whole (Berg, 2007).

Further methods of triangulation, in relation to the utilization of different data sources, are also outlined by Glesne (2006). The fact that the survey and focus groups targeted different civilian positions, including supervisory and management, with the combination of different sample groups will serve to validate the data across all groups. This also helped to substantiate the findings.

The importance of establishing a trustworthy method of data analysis is also noted by Glesne (2006). In this regard, while I analyzed the bulk of the data, I also appreciated the fact that I would have personal biases. To mitigate any bias, and to prevent a loss of focus, I used my research team to provide an independent look at the data, and used their conclusions to both validate my findings and to provide me a fresh perspective of where data needed to be re-examined.

### Ethical Issues

Royal Roads University (RRU) has extensive policies that establish principles, practices, and procedures to guide the ethical conduct of university research. The university also requires that each division implements measures to ensure that students and staff who are involved in research and scholarship are aware of the policies (RRU, 2000).

RRU (2000) mandates that research proposals must address the following eight guiding ethical principles that govern any research involving human subjects:

1. Respect for human dignity;
2. Respect for free and informed consent;
3. Respect for vulnerable persons;
4. Respect for privacy and confidentiality;

5. Respect for justice and inclusiveness;
6. Balancing harms and benefits;
7. Minimizing harm; and
8. Maximizing benefit (p. 2).

The methodology section outlines the steps taken to adhere to these guiding principles. In addition, I was also bound by my own organization's ethics policy.

The VPD Regulations and Procedures Manual (RPM) contains specific policies relative to ethics. Section 53.08 of the RPM details the VPD Code of Ethics, and Section 53.09 details the Conflict of Interest policy. These organizational policy and procedure documents linked very well with the university's policies (VPD, 2007).

This research project involved active participation from many civilian employees and stakeholders in the VPD. The fact that I am a senior manager in the VPD could have placed me in an uncertain position due to the perception of authority and influence. The rank structure of the organization could have become an issue due to the fact that I am in the officer rank, and many participants, including civilian managers, were in subordinate positions. This perception of positional power was addressed in my research methodology.

To further address the perception of bias due to my position, I used consent forms that were intended, among other things, to solicit voluntary participation, to identify a participant's right to withdraw at any time, and to assure each consenting participant of their privacy. Palys (2003) states that "the best way to inspire confidence in research participants is to show them how vigilant you are in safeguarding the information that others give you" (p. 91). Glesne (2006) further states that

through informed consent, potential study participants are made aware (1) that the study is voluntary, (2) of any aspects of the research that might affect their well-being, and (3) that they may freely choose to stop participation at any point in the study. (Diener & Crandall, 1978, as cited in Glesne, 2006, p. 132).

A consent form facilitated the building of trust between researcher and participant.

This research project utilized action research which involved a collaborative approach providing stakeholders with the means to address specific problems (Stringer, 1999).

Participants in action research are also stakeholders in the eventual solutions; therefore, the researcher should strive to be more of a facilitator. This was achieved during my focus groups as I was very careful not to display any of my thoughts and views on the issues. This is consistent with Stringer (1999) who stated that “the role of the research facilitator, in this context, becomes more facilitative and less directive” (p. 11).

The relationship between researcher and participant is a critical component of action research, and, as such, it is important for the researcher to remain objective and unbiased and not push a particular agenda. The concept of authenticity parallels the importance of relationships in the consulting industry. Block (2000) states that “authentic behaviour with a client means you put into words what you are experiencing with the client as you work” (p. 37). Action research is designed around the concept that the research participant is a key stakeholder in the process, and not simply a subject or participant. Authentic behaviour by a researcher will lead to increased trust and commitment, and will ensure engagement in the project at hand, and lead to buy-in during implementation of recommended solutions.

Confidentiality was also a significant consideration during the conduct of this research. The obligation to protect each participant’s information and identity can assist in achieving an authentic relationship, and ensures that participants are true stakeholders in the process. I found that by emphasizing confidentiality during my focus group sessions, I was able to ensure a freer flow of ideas and thoughts from the participants.

Ethical considerations must not only be taken into account when planning the research, they must also be considered throughout the research phase. Ethical issues can arise throughout the research process and a researcher must be aware that this can occur. As stated by Glesne (2006), “ethics is not something that you can forget once you satisfy the demands of institutional review boards and other gatekeepers of research conduct” (p. 129). Ethics in research was therefore a constant consideration throughout the entire length of my project.

## CHAPTER 4. ACTION RESEARCH RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this action research project was to engage as many full-time VPD civilian employees as possible in meaningful input and conversation relating to the main research question which asked how developmental strategies can enhance civilian job satisfaction and the quality of service that civilian employees offer the VPD. From the beginning, I experienced a high level of cooperation and enthusiasm for my research. For this I was not only grateful, but it reinforced the idea that this research was both necessary and timely.

During my analysis of the data from the three research methodologies I found that much of the information collected would be useful and adaptable to the best practices that I discussed in my review of the literature. The research results also demonstrated that the VPD has a satisfied civilian workforce and that, in the spirit of appreciative inquiry, many recommendations stemming from this project could be built on the positive developments that are already occurring in the organization.

I believe that the data collected during this research will assist VPD civilian staff as the organization moves forward. In my opinion, the VPD has always responded to audits and recommendations for change in a very positive way and I do not foresee that the recommendations from this report would be considered any differently. For this reason, it is my intention that the results of this project will be discussed and considered in the coming years.

In this chapter I detail the findings from the three methods that I used to collect data for this research project. These findings led me to develop a number of conclusions in

relation to civilian employee development, job satisfaction and productivity in the VPD.

Finally, I will outline the scope and limitations of this research.

### Archival Review Results

I collected the majority of data for the archival review from records in the VPD Human Resources Section. During this phase of the research, I analyzed approximately 300 electronic documents pertaining to civilian work. The documents that contained subject matter on job satisfaction, training, development, and performance were thoroughly examined to determine their relationship to the current situation in the VPD.

The main documentation examined in my archival review consisted of the following six broad ranging areas: Human Resource Section staffing, labour management minutes, civilian orientation training, civilian recognition committee, civilian performance development, and past VPD employee surveys. The data from this documentation produced a number of themes, many of which proved to be consistent throughout each of the three phases of this research project.

#### *Human Resources Section Staffing*

During the archival review the VPD had 1,286 police officers on staff, all of which were full-time. This brings the total number of full-time civilian and police employees of the VPD to 1,724 employees. The civilian contingent of this total is 26%.

At the time of my research there were 16 full-time staff working in specific Units of the Human Resources Section. Three of these staff members (19%) formed the Civilian Services Unit, dedicated exclusively to the needs of the 368 full-time civilian employees of the VPD. While this research project focused only on full-time civilian employees, it must be



recognized that these three human resource staff members also had duties in relation to the 70 part-time civilian members.

*Labour Management Minutes*

I examined labour management committee meeting minutes for a three year period from February 2003 to January 2007. These meetings occurred between the Teamsters Union and senior staff members in the VPD. There are approximately six labour management meetings scheduled per year, and I reviewed 18 sets of minutes, resulting in four themes that were pertinent to this project. The themes were determined through common word usage, and were: employee brown bag lunches, job enhancement, the inability for employees to take courses due to shift work and the lack of back-filling of positions. The employee brown bag lunches were intended to become information sharing venues with civilian staff. Job enhancement involved discussions on how to provide civilian employees with cross-training opportunities to enable them to learn more and to increase their motivation and job satisfaction.

In five of the labour management meetings, employee brown bag lunch sessions were discussed in an effort to increase communication with the civilian staff. During the course of this three year period, it is evident that a small number of brown bag lunch sessions did occur; however, not as regularly as the labour management committee would have liked. This is in spite of the documentation showing that both union and management agreed that regularly scheduled brown bag sessions would have had a positive impact on civilian staff.

Prior to 2003, discussions occurred regarding the creation of a Job Enhancement Committee that would be tasked to examine the feasibility of allowing some civilian staff to experience different positions for short periods of time. This Committee was disbanded for a

short time in 2003 because management was concerned that it was not productive as the meetings were becoming venues to complain, rather than arenas to seek solutions. It was agreed in June, 2003 to continue with the Committee, and an update on this agenda item occurred in late 2003 with the concept appearing to be moving in a positive direction. However, this item was not discussed again after 2003 and no formal program of this type existed at the time of my review.

An issue that was discussed during two of the labour management meetings was the difficulty that civilian employees had in being able to take City of Vancouver courses due to shift work and the lack of a budget to back-fill employees who are on a course. Both union and management acknowledged that this was an issue and that a lack of a back-filling budget created the situation. The VPD has been attempting to address this in the annual budget process but had met with minimal success. In January, 2007 it was announced to the union that the Information Management Section was successful, for the first time, in having \$20,000 of budget for 2007 to back-fill for civilian orientation courses. It was acknowledged that while this still was not enough, it was a start.

#### *Civilian Orientation Training*

During my review of material, I discovered that the concept of a three-day civilian orientation training course had been proposed by the Human Resources Civilian Services Unit in 2004. This training was for new civilian employees and was to include an overview of the organization, entry-level training on common VPD systems, and a full day of customer service training. The training would complement an 11-page Employee Orientation Manual that previously was accessible to all staff on the VPD Intranet site.

The \$20,000 of budget money that was announced in January, 2007 was the final step in implementing this orientation training as it allowed for on-duty civilian employees to take this training.

#### *Civilian Recognition Committee*

My review of documents in Human Resources led me to discover that the VPD has had an Employee Recognition Committee of one kind or another since the early 1990's. This committee has been comprised of a cross-section of civilian employees and the committee's mandate is to establish recognition programs for civilian employees.

The first program that this committee developed was a "meet and greet" event for new employees where they got to meet the Chief Constable and other senior Officers and managers. Another initiative that was created was a civilian newsletter. Both of these initiatives were no longer in practice at the time of my review.

The initiative that replaced the "meet and greet" event is an annual Civilian Recognition Luncheon where civilians are invited and recognized for specific years of service. Depending on the number of years of service, each civilian receives a gift ranging from a VPD pin at five years, to a more substantive gift at 25 years. This event currently has an annual budget, and the committee convenes prior to the event to plan and organize the luncheon.

#### *Civilian Performance Development*

In 2004, the first of several meetings occurred between Human Resources staff and the Teamsters Union in relation to beginning a formal civilian performance development program. The plan was to use the same system and guidelines as a similar program that was developed for police employees. The main principle behind both programs was that this was

to be used as a tool to develop performance and not used as a performance appraisal system. The proposed performance development program would also be used to identify specific training for each civilian employee. The Teamsters Union and civilians that were involved in the initial meetings were also very supportive of the creation of a program to give employees meaningful feedback.

The work to develop this program occurred in 2005 and 2006 with the development of position-specific competencies for each civilian position. This was completed by the end of 2006 and the performance development program went on-line for all civilian employees in January, 2007.

#### *VPD Employee Surveys*

The VPD conducts bi-annual employee surveys to determine the overall level of job satisfaction among civilian and police employees. During this archival review, I examined the 2004 survey results and also had access to the preliminary results from 2006. The 2006 survey was in the process of being tabulated and written during my research.

In 2004, this survey received a very high response rate of 49% of all employees in the VPD. This was a significant increase over 2002, 2000, and 1998. In particular, job satisfaction for civilian employees was rated quite high with 56% of civilians rating their satisfaction as “very high” to “somewhat high.” The study found that there were no significant variations among length of service in the VPD; however, those employees with fewer than five years of service had higher levels of satisfaction.

At the end of the 2004 survey, each employee was given an opportunity to comment on training, among other things. A common response from civilian respondents was the need

for consistent training in job tasks. This was elaborated on further by requests for courses that developed skills and enhanced career opportunities and advancement for civilians.

The 2006 survey had a similar high response rate that was close to 50%. The preliminary data from this survey indicates that civilian job satisfaction has increased since 2004, with 60% of respondents rating their satisfaction as “very high” to “somewhat high.”

### *Conclusion*

This review of archived records produced the following five specific themes that were useful in understanding the current situation with civilian employees in relation to job satisfaction, performance and development:

1. Human Resources staff dedicated to civilian needs is minimal; however, the VPD does go to certain lengths to include civilian employees in committee work when considering new initiatives;
2. There is a need to provide civilians with increased levels of communication by way of initiatives such as “brown bag lunches” and programs such as performance development;
3. There is a desire by civilian employees to be able to experience other positions for developmental purposes. This concept appears to be supported by both civilian employees and management;
4. There is a lack of budget to allow civilian staff time to take courses; and
5. There is a desire by both civilian employees and management to recognize employees for their contributions to the VPD.

It is interesting to observe that the themes derived from the archival review are very much consistent with the results from both the survey and the focus groups. In my opinion,

this is a good thing and speaks well of the organization as nothing stemming from this research project will be a complete surprise to VPD management.

### Survey Results

My research survey was distributed to every full-time civilian employee in the VPD, including civilian managers, supervisors, and employees. In total, 299 employees received an invitation to participate in the survey, with 173 employees (57.8%) participating.

This survey did not require participants to answer every question. As a result, many of the 173 returned surveys had questions that participants elected to omit. This included several free text fields where a participant had the option to provide further information by writing a brief narrative. With the exception of the free text qualitative questions, the most frequently skipped question still had 137 responses for a 45.8% response rate. Overall, I was very pleased with this high response rate.

### *Demographics*

Table 1 depicts the total breakdown of participants and identifies the number of managers, supervisors and frontline employees that answered the survey. Ten participants elected not to answer this question, resulting in 163 responses.

The total number of respondents produced a representative sample of the available population within the VPD. As previously indicated, the ability to use the VPD internal e-mail system resulted in a high level of participation.

When examining the response rates between the different civilian positions, it is interesting to note that 25 supervisor/team leaders responded to the survey out of a total population of 31 (80.6%) actual supervisors/team leaders. The manager category also had an extremely high response rate of 11 managers responding out of a total population of

Table 1. Civilian Respondents and Their Position Within the VPD

Position of Employee		Total
Employee (Frontline)	Count	127
	% of Respondents	78.0%
Supervisor/Team Lead	Count	25
	% of Respondents	15.3%
Manager	Count	11
	% of Respondents	6.7%
Total Count		163
Total %		100%

15 (73.3%). Frontline full-time employees provided a 50.2% response rate out of the actual full-time positions.

A majority of respondents were female (78.8%), and females occupied 54.3% of all of the management and supervisor/team leader positions. Of the total number of respondents, 67.9% worked in the Support Services Division, 12.2% in the Operations Support Division, 9.0% in the Operations Division, 7.7% in the Investigation Division, and 3.2% in the Office of the Chief Constable. Most respondents (65.5%) reported to a civilian supervisor/manager, as opposed to a police supervisor/manager.

Table 2 depicts the number of years of experience respondents had in the VPD. The majority of the 161 respondents who answered this question (45.3%) had five years or less experience in the VPD. This low level of experience was more pronounced with frontline employee respondents where 48.4% had five years or less VPD experience. The high number of civilians with five or less years VPD experience shows a disparity when compared to other levels of VPD experience.

The high rate of response from a cross-section of full-time civilian employees indicates that most civilian employees have dedicated workstations, enabling a greater access to e-mail and the survey application. While the issue of non-response is always a concern in

Table 2. Years of Service of Civilian Survey Participants

		Years of service					Total
		0-5 yrs	6-10 yrs	11-15 yrs	16-20 yrs	21+ yrs	
Front Line	Count % of Front Line Respondents	61 48.4%	20 15.9%	11 8.7%	21 16.6%	13 10.4%	126 100%
Supervisor	Count % of Supervisor Respondents	6 25.0%	6 25.0%	4 16.7%	5 20.8%	3 12.5%	24 100%
Manager	Count % of Manager Respondents	6 54.5%	3 27.3%	0 0.0%	1 9.1%	1 9.1%	11 100%
Total	Count % of Respondents	73 45.3%	29 18.0%	15 9.3%	27 16.8%	17 10.6%	161 100%

the administration of surveys, I was reassured early in the survey phase that this was not going to be an issue. The Select Survey ASP computer software enabled me to monitor response rates on a daily basis and I never had any concerns regarding the response rate.

I believe that my decision to not make each survey question mandatory helped ensure a very high response rate. As indicated previously, this did not affect the data and all questions still had a very high response rate when compared to the actual full-time civilian population.

*Job Satisfaction*

There were a total of eight questions in the survey that pertained to job satisfaction. A number of these questions were in relation to previous survey question responses. For example, on one question respondents were asked to rate their overall job satisfaction on a sliding scale from very high to very low. Dependent on the response entered, a respondent



was then automatically linked to a free text field where they were given an opportunity to further explain their answer.

Figure 1 depicts the range of responses for the level of overall job satisfaction broken down into frontline, supervisory and manager responses. Of the 157 respondents that answered this question, it is clear that the majority of civilian respondents (60.5%) rate their satisfaction as high. Only 7.0% indicated that their job satisfaction was low, with another 32.5% indicating that their satisfaction is neither high nor low.

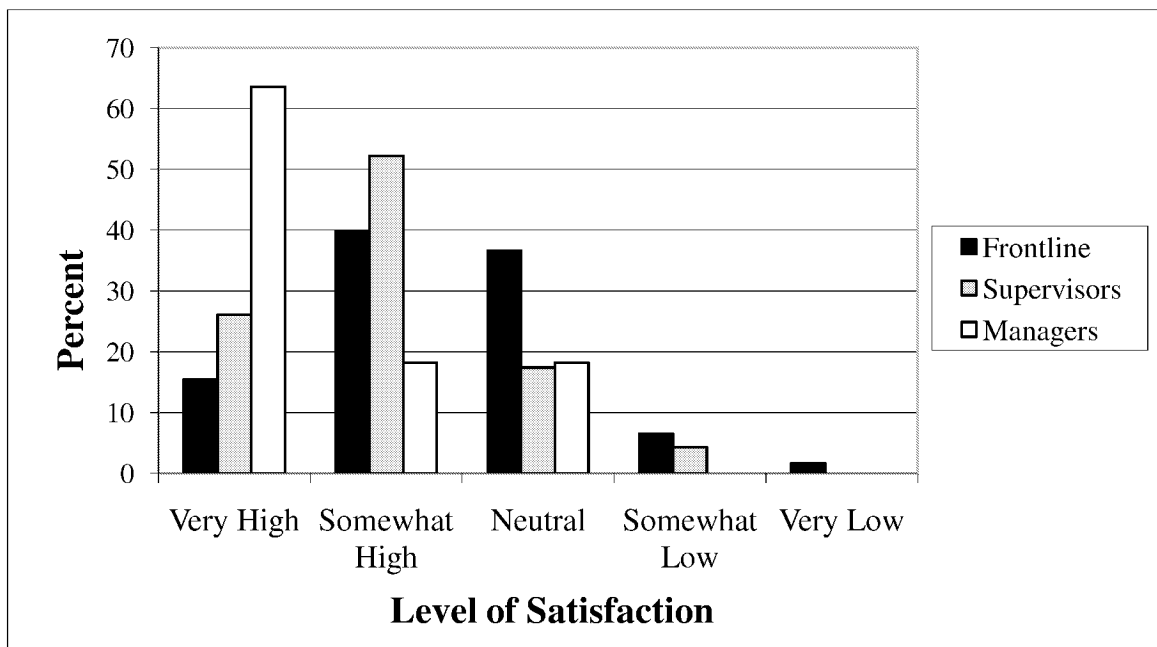


Figure 1. Overall Job Satisfaction of Civilian Survey Participants

These responses are similar to the VPD employee survey information highlighted in my archival review. This consistency in responses validates my survey in respect to the questions pertaining to job satisfaction.

Managers rated their overall job satisfaction as being the highest at 81.8%, followed by supervisors at 78.3%, and frontline employees at 55.3%. Among the respondents that rate

their overall job satisfaction in the very high and somewhat high categories, 78 participants provide reasons for their selections. These reasons fall into three theme areas: liking the job, variety and challenge of work, and a good relationship with co-workers and supervisors. One anonymous survey participant summarizes these three themes best with the statement: "I very much enjoy my work, my work environment, and the members and supervisors I work with."

Of the 40 respondents that rated their overall job satisfaction in the neutral to very low range, the three main reasons fall into the categories of high workload, lack of support/recognition, and lack of challenge. One anonymous survey participant stated:

My manager doesn't provide any motivating factors. My Manager is not supportive of employee development for civilians. I feel that my work is not recognized or acknowledged. The only factors that lead to job satisfaction are the job content, co-worker/team environment and support and acknowledgement from people outside of the office.

The next question pertained to job satisfaction and asked respondents to rate how satisfied they were in their current assignment. A total of 141 participants responded to this question and 74.5% indicated that they strongly or mostly agreed that they were satisfied in their current job assignment. A further 17.7% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and they rated themselves as neutral.

Of these 141 respondents, 110 were frontline employees and 69.1% of this group indicated that they strongly or mostly agree that they are satisfied in their current positions. This increases to 87.5% satisfaction for managers and 95.6% satisfaction for supervisors. When asked to provide reasons why respondents were satisfied in their current assignments, 84 participants provided responses. Sixty-three point one percent (63.1%) of these responses fell into the three main themes: liking the position, liking the variety and challenge, and liking the work climate. As with the previous overall job satisfaction question, the

participants that had rated their satisfaction in their current position as low, it is lack of challenge and workload that were the main reasons given. However, it must be noted that only five respondents (3.5%) felt this way.

Satisfaction in a job position was also asked in a second way in the survey. Once again, a total of 141 participants responded to the question of whether they were content in remaining in their current assignments. Of the respondents to this question, 60.9% strongly or mostly agree that they are content in their current assignments. Only 15.6% of respondents mostly or strongly disagree. Of the 31 managers and supervisors that answered this question, 77.4% strongly or mostly agree that they are content in their current positions. This level of satisfaction is reduced to 56.4% of frontline employees who are content in their current positions.

Of the 67 respondents that provide reasons for being content in their current job position, 68.6% cite reasons that fall into the same three major themes previously mentioned: liking the position, liking the variety and challenge, and liking the work climate. Of the 14 respondents who give reasons why they are not content to remain in their current positions, 78.6% indicated that they would like to change positions to learn more and to position themselves for advancement. One anonymous respondent stated: "I would like to advance my career within this organization, learn more, be more experienced in different areas and subsequently take my experience to the next level." This comment is indicative of several comments where the overall theme suggests that many entry level civilian jobs do not provide on-going challenge and learning opportunities.

The final survey question in relation to job satisfaction asked if there are things that the VPD could do to make the job more satisfying. Once again, 141 participants responded to

this question and 81.8% indicated that they strongly or mostly agree that the VPD could make their jobs even more satisfying than they currently are. The response to this question is somewhat surprising given the high levels of job satisfaction that respondents indicate in the earlier question. However, it is clear that although many civilians are already satisfied, they still feel that more can be done.

A total of 73 respondents gave ideas on how the VPD could make their jobs more satisfying. These responses fall into five major themes: increased recognition/support (21.9%), increased communication/feedback (17.8%), improved facilities/equipment (11.0%), increased staffing (9.6%), and increased training opportunities (9.6%).

### *Organizational Relationships*

There are 13 questions in the survey that explore relationships between civilian employees in the VPD. These relationship questions are further broken down into the main categories of support, respect, trust, communication, and feeling valued.

The first two questions explored whether respondents receive support from their co-workers and supervisors/managers in order to provide a high quality of work. Both questions ask that respondents provide this rating on a sliding scale of strongly agree to strongly disagree.

In relation to support from co-workers, 145 participants answered this question and 82.1% strongly or mostly agree that they receive the necessary support from co-workers in order for them to provide a high quality of service/work. Only 5.5% feel that they require more co-worker support. The response to this question is consistently high between job function with 80.1% of frontline employees strongly or mostly agreeing as compared to 91.3% for supervisors and 75.0% for managers.

The level of support that respondents felt they receive from their supervisors and managers is slightly lower than co-worker support. Out of the 141 participants that answered this question, 73.8% strongly or mostly agree that they receive the necessary support from their supervisors or managers in order to provide a high quality of service/work. Fewer frontline employees agree that they were receiving necessary support from their supervisors or managers (67.9%) as compared to supervisors (95.6%) and managers (87.5%).

The last question pertaining to support is how respondents felt about the level of support they receive in relation to resources provided to them. A total of 141 participants provided a rating on whether they received the support they require to provide a high quality of service. Overall, this question has a lower number of respondents (60.3%) who strongly or mostly agree that they receive sufficient resources to provide a quality service. While the number of respondents who disagree is low (15.6%), the number that neither agree nor disagree is 24.1%. The responses from frontline employees and supervisors who agree is the same (60.9%), and managers have the lowest agreement at 50.0%.

The next two questions explored the level of respect that respondents feel they have from co-workers and then with supervisors/managers. When asked to rate whether a respondent was treated respectfully at work by co-workers, 141 participants replied. Overall, 85.8% strongly and mostly agree that they are treated with respect from co-workers. Only three respondents (2.1%) mostly disagree, and 12.1% neither agree nor disagree. Every job function rated a high level of agreement, with frontline employees agreeing 84.5% of the time, followed by supervisors (86.9%) and managers (100.0%).

In relation to being treated respectfully by a respondent's supervisor/manager, 140 participants responded to this question; 77.1% of respondents strongly or mostly agree that

they are treated respectfully by their supervisor/manager. A further 6.4% strongly or mostly disagree, and 16.4% neither agree nor disagree. Frontline employees agree with this statement 73.4% of the time. Supervisors and managers show the highest level of agreement at 86.9% and 100.0% respectively.

The next relationship based question pertained to the level of trust that a respondent feels they have from their immediate supervisor/manager. Again, this question is based on a sliding scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree, and asks respondents if they feel that their immediate supervisor/manager has trust in them to do a good job with little or no supervision. A total of 140 participants responded to this question and the results are similar to the support and respect questions.

Overall, 86.4% of respondents feel that their supervisor/manager has trust in them compared to 5.0% that feel there is no trust. This high feeling of trust is consistent between frontline employees (85.2%), supervisors (86.9%), and managers (100.0%). This question and its responses are also very closely linked with a question pertaining to opinions.

Again, participants were asked to rate their response on a sliding scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree on whether they felt that their opinion is valued by their supervisor/manager. A total of 142 participants responded to this question and 64.8% agree that their opinion is valued. Another 11.9% do not feel their opinion is valued, and 22.5% neither agree nor disagree. Frontline employees have the lowest agreement (59.3%), followed by supervisors (78.3%), and managers (85.7%).

The questions on trust and opinions were also asked in another way by asking whether respondents feel that they are a valued member of their work group. A total of 140 participants responded to this question on the same sliding scale response as the previous

questions; 84.3% of respondents strongly or mostly agree that they are valued members of their work group, with only 4.3% feeling that they are not. Agreement with this statement is equally high across all work functions with frontline employees providing 82.2% strong or mostly strong agreement, followed by managers (87.5%), and supervisors (91.3%).

The 4.3% of respondents who indicated that they mostly and strongly disagree that they are valued members of their work groups were invited to provide further information on why they felt this way. Of this small group of six respondents, only two chose to provide a further response. One respondent felt that they were unable to contribute as much as the rest of their work group, while a second anonymous respondent stated that “there are members in this unit that believe that police members are different from civilians and I am treated in this manner.”

The last three questions in relation to organizational relationships pertained to communication and feedback. The first question explored whether or not a respondent agrees or disagrees that they understand how their work contributes to the achievement of VPD goals. Among 142 participants that responded to this question, 85.2% strongly or mostly agree that they understood how their work contributes to VPD goals. Only 3 respondents (2.1%) disagreed. This high level of agreement is equally felt by respondents in all work functions with frontline employees providing 81.8% agreement, followed by supervisors (95.7%), and managers (100.0%).

Respondents were then asked to rate whether they agree or disagree that members of their work unit communicate well amongst themselves. A total of 139 participants responded to this question, and the results indicate that 61.2% strongly or mostly agreeing; 10.8% strongly or mostly disagree, and 27.3% neither agree nor disagree. When broken down into

job function, 61.3% of frontline employees agree, with fewer supervisors agreeing (60.9%), and managers slightly higher (62.5%).

Respondents who rated the work unit communication question as strongly or mostly agreeing and strongly or mostly disagreeing were then invited to give specific reasons for their answer; 62 participants gave reasons for strongly or mostly agreeing, and these responses fell into two major themes: the open door policy (38.7%), and regular unit meetings (16.1%). One anonymous respondent stated that

Having a general sense of camaraderie helps, as well as something as simple as everyone going for coffee. This creates a socially comfortable atmosphere where people can communicate with one another and thus be more comfortable communicating in the office environment. If people are comfortable speaking to each other about issues then it is easier to solve issues, concerns, or general questions.

Only six respondents provided details in relation to why they strongly or mostly disagree that their work unit communicates well. Two main themes result from these comments: lack of unit meetings, and lack of workplace atmosphere. One anonymous survey respondent perhaps sums it up best by stating that:

They are too busy gossiping to worry about anything of any importance. There is no TEAM work. It seems as if some people just work to get paid and don't have any pride in what their day-to-day achievements are, and that is sad.

The final question pertaining to communication was in relation to respondents feeling whether or not they receive adequate feedback on their job performance. A total of 139 participants responded to this question with 46.0% strongly or mostly agreeing that they receive adequate feedback; 17.9% either strongly or mostly disagree. Of the responses, 42.9% of frontline employees agree that they receive adequate feedback, compared with supervisors (65.2%), and managers (37.5%).

One anonymous survey respondent states:



The main thing I feel would make my job more satisfying is the giving of feedback by management. I know it is busy and hard to find time to do one on ones with employees, but I think it would be very helpful. Sometimes I feel that hard work is not recognized and that certain behaviours are allowed to let slide. I think it is important to address all issues in order to keep us motivated.

The responses to the 13 organizational relationship questions are generally very positive and these responses position the VPD very well in relation to providing strategies for improvement. I was particularly pleased with the positive tone of many of the respondents that chose to provide written responses in the various free text fields. While this research project will conclude that there are areas for improvement, I believe that a solid foundation already exists on which to build.

Table 3 provides a summary of the responses where the respondent indicated either strong or mostly strong agreement on sliding scale questions pertaining to support, respect, trust, communication and feeling valued. The nine variables included are further broken down into frontline employee, supervisor, and manager responses. An overall average percentage breakdown is then given in relation to the total responses relating to strongly and mostly agreeing.

This table summarizes the positive feelings that respondents have in relation to these relationship areas. The only area that appears deficient is the area of adequate performance feedback.

### *Development*

The survey explored several areas in relation to the thoughts of employees pertaining to advancement and development opportunities. Seven questions were asked in this category and the questions range from thoughts about career goals and ability to advance in the VPD, to actual courses and other learning opportunities.

Table 3. Strong/Mostly Agree, Support, Respect, Trust, Valued and Communication

Questions		Employee	Supervisor	Manager	Combined Ave %
Co-worker support	Count % of respondents	91 80.5%	21 91.3%	6 75.0%	118 82.1%
Supervisor/manager Support	Count % of respondents	74 67.9%	22 95.7%	7 87.5%	103 73.0%
Resource support	Count % of respondents	67 60.9%	14 60.9%	4 50.0%	85 60.3%
Co-worker respect	Count % of respondents	93 84.5%	20 86.9%	8 100.0%	121 85.8%
Supervisor/manager respect	Count % of respondents	80 73.4%	20 86.9%	8 100.0%	108 77.1%
Supervisor/manager trust	Count % of respondents	92 85.2%	20 86.9%	8 100.0%	120 85.7%
Supervisor/manager values opinions	Count % of respondents	64 59.3%	18 78.3%	7 87.5%	89 64.8%
Valued member of work group	Count % of respondents	88 82.2%	21 91.3%	7 87.5%	116 84.3%
Work Unit communicates well	Count % of respondents	65 61.3%	14 60.9%	5 62.5%	84 61.1%
Adequate performance feedback	Count % of respondents	46 42.9%	20 65.2%	3 37.5%	69 46.0%

The first question that was asked in this category was whether or not a respondent's current assignment was in alignment with their career goals. A total of 141 respondents answered this question and 59.6% strongly or mostly agreed that their current assignment is in alignment with their career goals; 15.6% of respondents disagreed or did not know, while 24.8% neither agree nor disagree. Frontline employees are less likely to agree that their

current assignment is in alignment with their career goals (55.5%), followed by managers (62.5%), then supervisors (78.3%).

The next question in this category asked whether or not a respondent feels they have the ability to advance within the VPD in the future. One hundred and forty (140) participants answered this question and 53.6% strongly or mostly agree that advancement could occur for them. A further 25.7% neither agree nor disagree, while 20.7% disagree or did not know. The groups less likely to agree with this question are supervisors (47.8%) and managers (50.0%). This result is not surprising due to the limited number of civilian supervisory and management positions in the VPD.

Stemming from the ability to advance in the VPD was a question that asked if a respondent is even interested in promotion or advancement. Specifically, respondents were asked to rate on a sliding scale whether they agree with the statement that they are not interested in promotion or progression within the VPD. Of the 142 respondents, 65.5% strongly or mostly disagree, which indicates a strong interest in promotion or progression in the VPD. This disagreement is equally strong when broken down into frontline employees (63.6%), supervisors (60.9%), and managers (87.5%).

Respondents that mostly or strongly agree that they are not interested in promotion or career progression were invited to provide reasons on why they were not interested. Of the 12 participants that provided reasons, five stated that they like their current jobs, four have goals outside of the VPD, and three cited lack of human resources and union support. One anonymous participant states: "I am very satisfied in my current position and have no desire to move." Another anonymous participant states that they are not interested in promotion or progression "due to lack of support, chronic non-communication and feedback, as well as the

fact that HR has given me a habitual diet of non-responses or excuses why I can't go on to the next level.”

The next section of this category of the survey moved on to questions about training and the benefits of learning opportunities. Respondents were first asked if they would be more satisfied with their current job if they received increased learning opportunities. Of the 141 participants who responded, 54.6% indicate that they strongly or mostly agree with this statement. Somewhat surprisingly, 38.3% neither agree nor disagree, with 7.1% disagreeing or not knowing.

Respondents that mostly or strongly agreed that they would be more satisfied if they received increased learning opportunities were then invited to give additional thoughts on the learning opportunities they would like made available. Of the 53 respondents who provided further information, 77.4% indicated that they would like to see more learning opportunities provided within the VPD. The three major themes from these responses relate to computer training, position specific training, and in-house VPD training. Only 9.4% indicated that they would like to see external training/learning opportunities.

The final question in the development category asked participants to select from a list of options as to what type of training they would like to see implemented or expanded at the VPD. A respondent could select as many categories as they wished and 137 participants chose to select at least one. Figure 2 depicts the frequency of selection for each of the five categories.

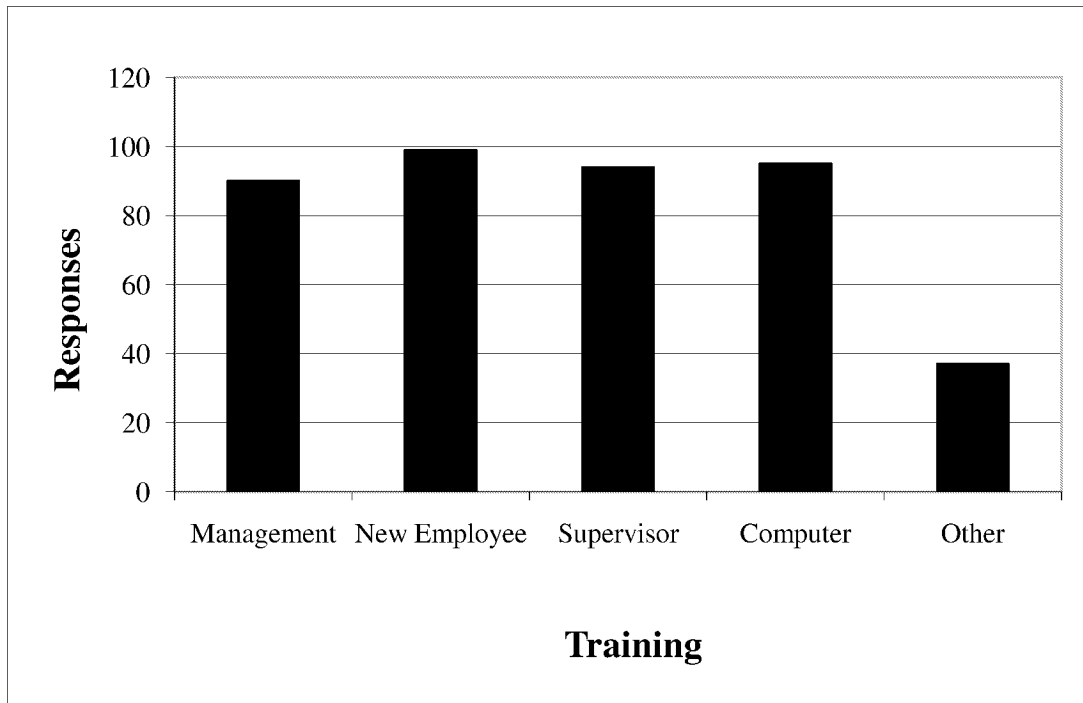


Figure 2. Desired Training of Civilian Survey Participants

*Job Performance*

The final category in this survey was in relation to job performance. This final category of the survey consisted of four questions, two of which are qualitative free text responses.

The first question asked participants to indicate if their performance would benefit from training programs. Of the 141 respondents that answered this question, 71.6 strongly or mostly agree that training would increase their performance. Only three respondents (2.1%) disagree, and a further 26.9% neither agree nor disagree. Surprisingly, 40.7% of frontline employees neither agree nor disagree.

The respondents that strongly or mostly agreed that their performance would benefit from training programs were then invited to give further information on the type(s) of programs they thought they would benefit from. A total of 82 respondents chose to provide

additional information and the responses fall into two main themes: computer software training, and position specific training. A number of respondents also comment on the general inability to take training due to limited budgets to back-fill positions. This area will be explored further during the analysis of the focus group results.

The next question in relation to job performance asked participants to answer “yes” or “no” if they felt that the VPD can help them make improvements in their job performance. This question was answered by 138 respondents and 86.2% indicated “yes” to the question. The strong “yes” response is equally strong amongst each job function, with 86.8% of frontline employees agreeing, followed by supervisors (86.9%), and managers (75.0%).

The final question invited respondents to explain why they responded with either “yes” or “no.” Of the respondents that responded “yes”, 86 provided further information. This information was narrowed down into three major themes through analysis of common word usage: improvements to communication/feedback (29.1%), improved training opportunities (36.0%), and improved facilities/conditions (18.6%). Several respondents specifically mentioned performance feedback in the communication theme, while several mentioned lack of budgets to back-fill positions to enable training. One anonymous participant stated that “standardized training for different positions will be beneficial to the performance of VPD members.”

Of the respondents that chose “no” to the question on whether the VPD could make improvements to their job satisfaction, 14 respondents provide additional information. Of these respondents, 13 (92.9%) indicated that they believe that an individual must take ownership of their own performance. One anonymous participant stated that “improving my

job performance rests with me, I think that the VPD already has and will continue to provide me with the tools I need to excel even more.”

### Focus Group Results

I conducted three separate focus groups after the survey stage of my research. Each focus group had eight participants and each group lasted one hour. The participants for each focus group were drawn randomly from volunteers that responded to an e-mail requesting volunteers. The first two focus groups were held on the same day and they consisted of the same four questions (Appendix H). The only difference between the first two focus groups was that the first focus group consisted solely of frontline employees, while the second focus group was half supervisors and half managers.

The third focus group was held two weeks after the first two and the four questions for this last focus group were slightly different (Appendix H). The reason for this was that I intended to build on the data that I received from the first two focus groups and I specifically wanted focus group three to provide me with potential ways in which to improve civilian development, job satisfaction and performance in the VPD. This final focus group consisted of four frontline employees, two supervisors and two managers.

#### *Focus Group One and Two*

The first two focus groups contained the identical four questions (Appendix H) which explored the following areas: effects of communication, effects of giving opinions, increased satisfaction through learning, and situations that increase productivity.

*Front-line Employees:* My analysis of the discussions that occurred for each question consisted of categorizing common words and phrases that participants used. From my analysis I was able to identify three major themes: trust, respect, and feeling valued. These

themes stemmed from the discussions on effective communication, increased ability to provide opinions, and how participants viewed the ideal work situation that makes them most productive.

This first group of participants generally found that increased face to face communication between supervisors/managers and employees built trust, empowered people, provided a sense of belonging, and connected a person to their work. The consensus was that all of these factors lead to increased job satisfaction.

The discussion on increased communication naturally led to the question pertaining to seeking opinions in order to make decisions. Once again, the participants provided information that led me to conclude that they felt more valued, respected and trusted when their opinions were sought in relation to decision making by the supervisor/manager. The participants also concluded that seeking opinions from employees is only positive if feedback is later given whether or not the opinion was acted upon. One anonymous participant concluded that “this is how we learn, by communicating and giving opinions.”

In relation to improved job satisfaction through learning opportunities, the participants commented that there is a definite link between learning and job satisfaction. In particular, the consensus was that cross-training in different positions would be beneficial, as well as receiving more short duration/informal training during staff meetings and other such venues. It was noted by several participants that the lack of a training budget for civilians impacts the amount of training that is presently occurring. Specifically, participants noted that because of an inability to back-fill positions, civilians had difficulty being able to access existing training.



When it came to inquiring into the ideal work situation that made participants most productive, participants noted three major themes which enabled this to occur: flexibility from the supervisor, feeling valued, and empowerment through ownership of one's work. One point that did arise during this specific discussion was the poor facility that the participants in this focus group worked in, which is the 312 Main Street building, one of three main VPD buildings in the City of Vancouver. The participants did note that the poor facility, and in some cases poor workstations, did impact productivity. In relation to productivity, one anonymous participant stated it best by saying "recognition plus flexibility equals productivity and ownership."

*Supervisors and Managers:* When compared to the other two focus groups, I found that the supervisor/manager focus group was the most lively in respect to comments pertaining to facilities/equipment and lack of funding for civilian training. This pleased me due to the fact that I intentionally separated frontline employees and supervisors/managers in the first two focus groups to ensure that I received candid comments.

As with the frontline employees in the first focus group, the supervisors/managers agreed that increased communication increases a sense of belonging, builds trust, and empowers employees. However, the supervisors/managers did provide additional comments in relation to the fact that many supervisors do not have their own office or private area in order to increase one to one communication. The lack of meetings rooms in the VPD was also noted as an impediment to increasing communication in work groups.

In relation to seeking opinions, these participants noted that they felt good when their opinions were sought. It made them feel valued, trusted, and part of the team. This group of supervisor/manager participants echoed the thoughts from the frontline employees that if an

opinion is sought, there needs to be feedback given at a later time if the opinion was acted upon.

The supervisor/manager participants had somewhat different responses to the concept of improving job satisfaction through increased learning opportunities. While the consensus was that learning could lead to increased satisfaction, the supervisors/managers noted that they received more learning opportunities than frontline employees due to budget limitations. In particular, this group of supervisor/manager participants noted that increased funding was necessary for external courses and for back-filling positions so that their employees could take additional internal and external training. This group also commented on the fact that they believed that the civilian workforce required additional career path advice from the Human Resources Section.

One anonymous participant stated that the “consequence to giving an employee courses is lack of back-filling and having that person come back to work and working twice as hard.” Another supervisor/manager participant noted that increasing training during work hours “would be a huge plus for the VPD.”

The most lively responses from the supervisor/manager participants came when the discussion centered on the ideal work situation that makes a person most productive. This discussion elicited a number of common phrases and word usage, which had the following three themes: having an adequate office area, sufficient staffing, and independence to do the job. However, the area that fostered the most discussion was in relation to the poor facility at 312 Main Street. One anonymous participant stated that “people in 312 Main are working in a pit.” Another anonymous participant stated that “there is no reason why a civilian in 312 Main Street should be complaining of a bug bite in their leg.”

The comments relating to facilities and lack of back-filling budgets became rather animated towards the end of this particular focus group. It was apparent that there was not only frustration over these issues, but also a genuine concern in relation to how this affects frontline employees.

### *Focus Group Three*

The third and final focus group concluded my overall research. This third focus group was asked four different questions and the data from the answers to these questions provided me with possible recommended courses of action relating to civilian development, job satisfaction and job performance. This third focus group contained frontline employees, supervisors, and managers.

In the first question, participants were asked to identify programs and/or strategies that would create more effective communication while resulting in increased trust, empowerment, sense of belonging, connection to work, increased job satisfaction, and a decrease in frustration. Two distinct themes arose from these discussions in relation to VPD-wide communication and work unit communication.

In relation to organizational or VPD-wide communication, the participants had a lengthy discussion on the value of the current Chief Constable's "Town Hall Meetings" which occur two to three times per year. There was consensus that these meetings were an excellent method in which to communicate a common message to a large number of employees. The participants commented that there was great value in hearing these major messages from either the Chief Constable or other senior Officers. The participants agreed that these meetings should be held with more frequency and that perhaps they could be conducted by a Deputy Chief Constable from time to time to present on subject matter

information that is specific to that Deputy's Division. One anonymous participant stated that the Chief's town hall meetings are "new and refreshing, and it is good to hear things from the horse's mouth."

In relation to individual work units, the consensus from the participants was that regularly scheduled staff meetings should occur in every unit and that supervisors/managers should try to keep an open-door policy in respect to giving information. There was also agreement that a lack of communication can result in rumors that can affect job satisfaction.

The second question presented to this focus group asked participants to identify programs and/or strategies that would create conditions where more opinions are sought to make decisions. The participants were asked to consider responses that would increase a person's feeling of value, feeling good about work, feeling part of the team, increasing respect, and increasing trust.

This question resulted in responses that formed three major themes: the need to have forums to express concerns, the continued use of VPD surveys, and the fact that feedback is necessary when seeking another person's opinion. One anonymous participant noted that "there have been more surveys lately and I like it." The same participant also commented that they have noticed positive changes in the VPD after surveys were done. This was also acknowledged by other participants.

The effect of positive recognition and feedback was also cited as a way to ensure that supervisors/managers create conditions for the meaningful sharing of ideas. One anonymous participant noted that this could result in a "snowball effect." There was also consensus that feedback is necessary when seeking opinions, even if the feedback was that the information was not used. One participant stated: "I want people to give me their ideas and opinions

because I have been very surprised with the quality of input that I have received.” In relation to the creation of forums in which to seek opinions, the participants once again noted town hall type meetings and the need for regular staff meetings.

The third question that was explored was in relation to how the VPD could create learning opportunities for civilian members. The dominant theme that emerged from this discussion was acquiring a budget for back-filling employees who attend training while on duty. This was mentioned several times during the discussion. One anonymous participant stated that “there are lots of courses available; I just can’t get time off to take them.” A second less predominant theme was to create ways for employees to job-shadow and mentor with others. While it was acknowledged by the participants that this is often difficult to do, it was the consensus of the participants that job shadowing and mentoring provides employees with challenges and also allows the organization to cope with absences by having cross-trained staff.

The final question in this final focus group explored programs and/or strategies that the participants felt would contribute to civilian leadership development. During the discussion of this question the following four themes arose: providing opportunities for acting supervisor duties, City of Vancouver CityLearn courses, mentorship, and providing funding to assist civilians with external courses of study.

Once again, there was discussion relating to lack of budgets for back-filling positions; however, it was also mentioned that the police union has a negotiated fund that provides police officers with funds to pursue external courses of study. It was pointed out that the civilians have no access to such a fund.

The participants also acknowledged that the City of Vancouver's CityLearn program provided excellent individual courses and supervisory/management programs. However, once again, back-filling and access to this was a problem for VPD civilian staff. One anonymous supervisor participant stated that "as a supervisor I try to delegate things to give my staff some challenges, but this takes time and we are so busy."

### Conclusions

There are several conclusions that I have arrived at in relation to this research project. This section will summarize my conclusions and will provide the context for my recommendations in chapter five. These recommendations will provide strategies and action items for the organization to consider, with the intent of enhancing civilian development, job satisfaction and performance in the VPD.

The research findings generally speak well of the organization and the work that is being done at all levels. One consistent message that arose was that lack of resources, namely funding, has affected civilian development, job satisfaction and performance. While there are areas that can be improved upon, I have concluded that all levels of the organization are doing the best job possible in light of circumstances that the organization has little direct control over.

Based on my conclusions, the findings from my three research methods answer my research questions. The following section of the report is broken down into two parts. The first part provides a brief summary of each conclusion, and the second part expands on each conclusion and how it relates to the research question and the relevant literature.

### *Summary*

I have drawn seven main conclusions from the research findings:

1. Civilian development is important to all levels of civilian employees in the VPD, regardless if they are front-line employees, supervisors or managers.
2. There is an absence of adequate funding to allow civilian employees, especially frontline employees, to enroll in internal and external courses.
3. All levels of civilian employees recognize the importance and need for increased levels of communication and feedback.
4. There is a need to build upon employee orientation training and other training in an employee's first five years in the VPD.
5. The current methods of civilian employee recognition should be expanded.
6. There is minimal formalized career counseling and advice being given to civilian employees.
7. The state of VPD facilities, especially at the 312 Main Street site, has a negative effect on job satisfaction and performance.

#### *Detailed Conclusions*

The main research question asks how developmental strategies can enhance civilian job satisfaction and the quality of service that civilian employees offer the VPD. The answers to this question will be fully discussed in the recommendations; however, the research findings are clear that the organization can accomplish this task in both the short and long-term.

The following seven conclusions will clarify the answer to the main research question as well as the sub-questions that flow from it.

1. *Civilian development is important to all levels of civilian employees in the VPD, regardless if they are front-line employees, supervisors or managers.*

The importance of civilian development to all levels of VPD civilian employees was very evident to me by the willingness of civilian employees to participate in this research. This certainly complements the concept of action research by the desire civilians have to better themselves and to provide an improved service to the VPD. I found that the participants in this research not only wanted to provide me with research data, but there was also a genuine willingness to contribute to solving problems and obtaining solutions (Berg, 2007; Glesne, 2006).

The willingness to participate in this research spanned every level of the civilian structure and was also supported by the Teamsters Union in advance of the research occurring. I also had several civilian employees approach me directly or through e-mail advising me that they were participating and thanking me for involving them in the process. The high rate of participation in the electronic survey was a testament to the overall enthusiasm of civilian employees towards this project. In addition, I found that the participants in each focus group were very engaged and happy about being able to contribute.

Aside from enhancing civilian development, I also concluded that the high level of participation in this project was a clear sign that the organization has committed employees at all levels that truly care about the VPD and the service that is provided. This speaks well of the general organizational climate in the VPD and the overall amount of energy that civilian staff have (Fink, 1992).

Finally, the comments that I received through the numerous open-ended survey questions was a clear sign to me that civilian employees have an interest in improving both themselves and the service that they provide the VPD. The comments that I received were from all levels, including frontline employees, supervisors, and managers. Further, this level



of interest was consistent with the views of Kouzes and Posner (2002) in relation to the fact that most people have a desire to make a difference and that allowing them to contribute makes employees feel challenged, empowered and having a sense of purpose.

2. *There is an absence of adequate funding to allow civilian employees, especially frontline employees, to enroll in internal and external courses.*

The issue of adequate funding for civilian training was a consistent theme that arose out of each of my three research methods. The availability of training was not the issue, the ability to access training during work hours, compounded with additional problems encountered for civilian employees that work shifts, were the major concerns. The lack of funding directly affects how many civilian positions could be back-filled in order for training to take place.

In relation to external and off-duty courses, it was also noted by several research participants that police officers had a fund that they could apply to in order to offset the cost of tuition for external courses. These courses would provide the police officer with a development opportunity that would also benefit the organization. This fund was created through the collective bargaining process between the Vancouver Police Union and the Vancouver Police Board several years ago. Civilian employees have no such fund to access.

It is consistent in the literature that developing employees requires an up-front investment from organizations and that organizations that invest in educating employees enjoy a higher level of employee commitment, involvement and customer service (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). In addition, individuals that can live up to their potential are more satisfied, motivated and productive employees (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003). Drucker (2001) also notes

that an educated person embodies society's beliefs, values and commitment, three factors that I believe can also be applicable to an organization's values and beliefs.

As indicated in the archival review results, the lack of adequate funds to back-fill for civilian training is an issue that the VPD has already acknowledged as a concern. Much work has already occurred in making the case for increased funding, and 2007 was the first year that some funds were specifically dedicated to allow for civilian orientation training.

3. *All levels of civilian employees recognize the importance and need for increased levels of communication and feedback.*

Communication within the VPD generally received high ratings by the participants that responded to the survey. The only area that was cited as weak in the survey was specific feedback on job performance from a participant's supervisor/manager. This being said, participants in the survey and focus groups did acknowledge that effective communication would contribute to keeping employees informed and that this would contribute to increases in satisfaction.

Several participants in the focus groups mentioned that the Chief Constable's "town hall" type meetings are excellent methods for employees to hear first-hand some of the major issues that are occurring in the organization. Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers (1996) note that organizations are living systems that are complex and subject to constant change and that communication is very important to creating a purposeful organizational community. This certainly applies to the VPD and it was interesting to hear that employees generally felt that having dialogue with senior management was useful to them.

Effective communication also has strong links to creating a positive workplace climate in which employees have meaningful relationships with one another. Meaningful

relationships can foster increased trust and the amount of satisfaction that people receive from work (Baker, 2003). Effective communication is also vital in order to increase job satisfaction through strategies such as praise and empowerment (Barker & Camarata, 1998).

Survey and focus group respondents also indicated that having increased staff meetings and other informal sessions would contribute to a more positive work climate and would ensure that all employees were kept informed on issues that concerned them. Effective communication is also closely related to employee development as organizations cannot be successful without articulating what is required from their employees (DePree, 1990). This also contributes to a common vision that helps ensure that everyone is working towards a common goal.

The archival review noted that the VPD began to implement performance development for civilian employees starting in 2007. One intention of this new program was to formalize the feedback process that occurs between an employee and supervisor. The majority of participants in the survey and focus groups commented on the importance of feedback and communication. This is certainly an area of opportunity for the VPD as organizations that foster development and lifelong learning also have higher numbers of satisfied employees (Gilley & Maycunich, 2000).

4. *There is a need to build upon employee orientation training and other training in an employee's first five years in the VPD.*

Civilian employee orientation training was an issue that arose in the findings from each of the three research methods. The survey results identified that 48.4% of front-line employees had five years or less VPD experience. Supervisors were most equally spread out in years of service with only 25% of supervisors with five years or less service.

Survey respondents rated new employee training as the most frequently chosen learning opportunity that they would like to see. This survey result is in line with recent literature that suggests that once a person is selected for a job, that person must be given the proper on-going training to stay successful (Grensing-Pophal, 2002). This in turns leads to acceptable performance and a more satisfied employee.

The survey also revealed that a majority of respondents felt that they would like to see more learning opportunities provided within the VPD. This was further broken down into increased computer training, position specific training, and other in-house training courses. Both survey and focus group participants also concluded that these types of training could also take place in the form of mentoring situations and the ability to cross-train in different positions. Harris (1998) agreed with the concept of cross-training and he concluded that development can also occur through lateral transfers within an organization. He went on to note that these types of opportunities can result in increases in productivity and employee satisfaction.

The current VPD civilian orientation training is more closely aligned to an introduction to the VPD and its work processes, policies and procedures. This research has indicated that there is a desire to expand on this by providing position specific training to increase employee satisfaction and productivity. The results from the survey also suggest that this training may be best invested in an employee's first few years in the VPD since a large number of frontline employees have five or less years of service.

5. *The current methods of civilian employee recognition should be expanded.*

Findings from the archival review indicated that civilian recognition is important to the organization and to the Teamsters Union. As a result, a Civilian Orientation Committee

was formed to develop events such as meet and greets between new employees and senior Officers in the VPD. However, the initial initiatives from this Committee have languished and the only event that currently takes place is the annual Employee Recognition Luncheon for employees with specific years of service with the VPD.

The majority of survey participants generally rated their job satisfaction and relationships in the organization as high. However, several participants who indicated high levels of satisfaction responded to free text questions indicating that their job could be more satisfying if there was increased recognition and support. The participants who rated their job satisfaction in the neutral to low range listed lack of support/recognition as one of three main reasons.

The work of Barker and Camarata (1998) supports the results from the survey in that they linked employee satisfaction with key indicators such as valuing and empowering employees. Barker and Camarata also note that these indicators are achieved through such strategies as praise, empowerment and feedback.

The principles of valuing, empowering and building trust with employees were discussed in each focus group. The participants in these groups indicated that increased communication would create conditions conducive to increased trust, respect and feeling valued. Several participants also noted that employee recognition and feedback were important. All of these conditions can nurture positive organizational conditions and foster a sense of community.

Feeling good about work and regarding one's peers as part of the community builds a positive organizational climate. Recognition of each other's work or accomplishments certainly forms a part of this. Steele and Jenks (as cited in Fink, 1002) summed it up best

with their definition of organizational climate being “the feel of the place” (p. 12). In other words, employees need to receive pleasure from being at work in order to be satisfied. In turn, a satisfied employee will often be more productive and a higher performer (Kimball & Nink, 2006).

6. *There is minimal formalized career counseling and advice being given to civilian employees.*

The archival review provided information on the number of Human Resource Section staff that are dedicated to the needs of civilian employees. Despite the recent addition of civilian positions over the last three years, the number of staff in Human Resources that work with civilians has not increased.

The survey resulted in a low percentage of front-line employees (42.9%) who felt that they received adequate performance feedback. While not predominate, there were several qualitative free text responses in the survey that suggested that Human Resources did not provide necessary levels of feedback or advice. The general theme among these comments was the need for advice on how to be successful in competitions for other positions in the organization.

It should be acknowledged that the Human Resources Section is one of several ways to receive feedback and advice and that an immediate supervisor/manager is likely to be in the best position to provide meaningful input. However, having the capacity in Human Resources to provide this service is another way of increasing communication and feedback. Today’s employee wants more feedback and advice, but this takes time and requires effective communication (Grensing-Pophal, 2002).

The survey also indicated a high percentage of respondents who indicated that they were interested in promotion or progression to more senior positions in the VPD. In addition to providing training and development, employers need to manage performance through regular and effective feedback (Beauregard & Fitzgerald, 2000). This type of feedback will also assist in an employee's efforts to develop themselves for other positions.

7. *The state of VPD facilities, especially at the 312 Main Street site, has a negative effect on job satisfaction and performance.*

An organization's climate is partly derived as a product of the psychological atmosphere that employees are exposed to (Cropanzano & Kacmar, 1995). This atmosphere may result from employee perceptions and expectations. In the case of this research, I unexpectedly found that the state of VPD facilities at the 312 Main Street building was a source of consistent comment during the survey and the focus group stages.

The state of police facilities in the VPD was not part of my research question, nor does it directly pertain to employee development. However, I do believe that it is necessary to conclude from my findings that the state of the facility at 312 Main Street does have some effect on job satisfaction and performance.

The supervisors and managers in the second focus group gave the best linkage between the state of facilities and how it affected performance. The majority of this group cited inadequate office space and privacy concerns as an impediment to adequately providing feedback to frontline employees. Participants in the other focus groups also commented on the poor facility and in some cases poor workstations. The overall lack of meeting space in all facilities was also noted as an obstacle to ensuring effective communication through staff meetings.

### Scope and Limitations of the Research

This research study involved a broad level of input in relation to civilian development, job satisfaction and performance, from civilian frontline employees, supervisors and managers. While I made every effort to include as many civilian employees as possible in my research, the process still did have limitations. In addition, this research did not involve any input from police supervisors/managers.

The scope of this research was limited to employee development, job satisfaction and performance in the VPD civilian workforce. The research is not intended to reflect on the quality of work that civilian employees perform or the quality of work performed by the VPD as a whole. This research project was unique to the civilian workforce in the VPD and may not be applicable to civilian employees in other police agencies.

This research project was conducted by using three research methods to collect data. I controlled the design of all survey and focus group questions with the intention that the participants would remain focused on my main research question and sub-questions. My survey was designed to collect some demographic data; however, I did not use this information to compare responses between gender, as well as other potential biases.

The archival review was intentionally limited to archived records in the Human Resources Section. I did this to limit the amount of time in this research phase and to reduce the volume of material that I would have to review. This decision was made because there were two other research methods being used; however, there still is a possibility that some data was missed from other archived sources.

The survey was intentionally designed not to have any mandatory fields. The only mandatory field was in the survey preamble where consent was being sought from a



perspective participant. Unless a participant agreed to the consent provisions they were not entitled to start the survey. The remainder of the survey questions did not require a response and this was intentionally set up this way to ensure that the maximum number of civilian employees would participate. In spite of constructing the survey this way, the least answered question still had a 45.8% response rate compared to the entire full-time civilian population.

The survey was conducted during a specific three week period using the VPD e-mail system. This method did not account for any people that would have been away from work during the conduct of the survey. This also includes the set times and dates for each of the three focus groups.

I had originally expected a disproportionately higher response rate from supervisors and managers as compared to front-line employees. This did end up as an accurate prediction; however, 50.2% of frontline employees still responded to the survey. A series of e-mail reminders to this specific group may address this issue in the future. There also may be value in providing a hard-copy survey alternative in future surveys to those uncomfortable with using an electronic medium.

The three focus groups were conducted on specified dates and times. I held two of the focus groups in the 312 Main Street facility and one in the 2120 Cambie Street facility. This did not include all of the police buildings and may have limited the number of civilians that volunteered to participate.

Finally, during the course of this research several participants consistently alluded to a lack of adequate funding for back-filling of staff, as well as comments relating to issues in VPD facilities. These issues were applicable to the research question and had value to this study. Budget and facility issues fell outside of the scope of this research as these issues are

mainly controlled by the City of Vancouver and not the VPD. However, this information does provide additional background information for future studies being contemplated by the VPD and City of Vancouver staff.

This research project resulted in seven major conclusions that are the foundation for my recommendations in the next chapter. The majority of these conclusions are directly linked to my review of the literature. In particular, communication and feedback, recognition and the need to train employees were common themes in my conclusions and they will be pivotal in relation to my recommendations to the VPD.

## CHAPTER 5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

There were two main purposes to this action research project. The first purpose was to review and analyze how developmental strategies can enhance civilian employee job satisfaction and the quality of service that civilians offer the VPD. The second purpose was to develop strategies and recommendations that are based upon findings from the research and supported by best practices that were reviewed in the literature.

My three research methods provided me with rich data from which I could draw a series of conclusions in relation to the research question. These conclusions identified gaps relating to communication, learning opportunities, funding, and the physical environment where civilian employees work. However, what was equally compelling was that my findings led me to conclude that the VPD is already aware of many of these gaps, and in fact has already taken steps to improve areas in need. This speaks well of the organization and it is my hope that this research project will provide additional information to the VPD in order for greater progress to be made.

This chapter builds on the conclusions that have already been outlined in this research project. The following recommendations describe various solutions to bridge the gaps that were identified in my research.

### Summary of the Recommendations

The following recommendations flow from my conclusions and are supported by the findings from my research. There are eight detailed recommendations for the VPD to consider in relation to improving civilian development, job satisfaction and productivity.

These eight recommendations are broken down into short and long-term recommendations. I recommend that the VPD:

*Short-term Recommendations*

1. Build on existing processes where civilian employees can participate in discussions on how to improve their developmental opportunities.
2. Create and implement an enhanced communication plan for civilian employees.
3. Expand employee orientation training to include other necessary training in a civilian employee's first five years in the VPD.
4. Expand on the current methods and practices in which civilian employees are recognized.

*Long-term Recommendations*

5. Expand and continue efforts to increase levels of funding to allow civilian employees to enroll in internal and external courses.
6. Create a civilian career planning position in the Human Resources Section.
7. Improve the physical work areas where civilian employees work in all VPD facilities.
8. Develop a monitoring strategy to assess the results of the changes stemming from these recommendations.

This list serves as a summary of the recommendations. The next section will expand on each recommendation and will provide additional supporting information.

Detailed Project Recommendations

The following eight recommendations are general in nature and many may result in several initiatives being implemented under a single recommendation. Any work flowing

from these recommendations will require oversight and management. Recommendation eight provides guidance in this area, as well as a recommendation that the Human Resources Section coordinate any work stemming from this research project.

The following is a detailed examination of each recommendation and suggested courses of action.

*Recommendation 1 – Expand on Employee Participation in Development Discussions*

In the survey and focus groups a consistent theme arose in relation to the high level of willingness by civilian employees to participate in the organization and to feel included. This level of commitment led me to conclude that the civilian employees that participated in the research not only wanted to provide me data, but they also wanted to be included in solving problems and finding solutions.

It is for these reasons that I recommend that the VPD capitalize on this positive energy and create venues for civilian employees to participate in discussions on how to improve learning opportunities in the VPD. Such venues already exist in labour management meetings; however, I recommend that consideration be given to broadening the level of input into these discussions.

This recommendation will require support from both the VPD and from the Teamsters Union as this proposed civilian employee participation in developmental discussions should not be viewed as solely a labour management issue. My involvement in the three focus groups also led me to conclude that there are many good ideas and solutions that are yet untapped from civilian employees. To tap into these ideas will require venues for discussions that provide a positive and non-threatening atmosphere. In some ways this could be accomplished by creating focus groups in much the same way as was done in this action

research project. In the end, for meaningful discussion and input to be guaranteed, participants will need to feel comfortable that they can participate in an environment that is both positive and welcoming.

To give the Teamsters Union and VPD management some reassurance it must also be emphasized that any proposed courses of action that impact the collective agreement must be referred to labour management meetings for final discussions. However, the point of this recommendation is to include those who want to be included in order to capitalize on the opinions and experience from a large pool of employees.

*Recommendation 2 – Create an Enhanced Communication Plan*

Following on the need to include more civilian employees in developmental discussions is the need to expand and improve on communication in the VPD. This recommendation is very broad and it includes several initiatives to improve communication.

As previously indicated, the survey concluded that communication within the VPD generally received high ratings. That being said, there was an acknowledgement by several participants in the survey and focus groups that more effective communication would create conditions where employees would feel more informed and that this would lead to increased satisfaction.

I recommend that the VPD create an enhanced communication plan that specifically addresses the needs of civilian employees. This plan should include, but is not limited to, the following four areas:

1. Improved feedback on job performance.
2. Regular staff meetings.
3. Increased informal face to face communication in work units.

4. Increased “town hall” meetings with the Chief Constable and/or other senior executives in attendance.

Stemming from the results of my research and my conversations with civilian participants in the focus groups, I concluded that improvements in communication would go a long way in increasing satisfaction and employee productivity. As previously indicated, I also have concluded that increased communication with employees would be useful in finding and identifying additional development opportunities for civilians.

This recommended communication plan does not need to be elaborate but it does need to highlight that regular and on-going communication is essential to a workforce where employees feel included and informed. The development of a communication plan would assist the VPD in ensuring that there is a structure in place that emphasizes the importance of communication on several different levels.

### *Recommendation 3 – Expand Employee Orientation Training*

Almost half of front line employees have less than six years experience in the VPD and survey respondents indicated that an increase in new employee training was the main training that they would like in the VPD. The variety of in-house training that the research respondents indicated as being valuable would be available through already established VPD internal training programs. However, these training programs would need to be increased and employees would need to be given time away from work to take the training.

In addition to formal courses and programs, training employees with less than six years experience can also be accomplished through formalized mentoring and coaching programs. This would also instill a sense of community and teamwork, as well as giving newer employees a person to go to when issues arise.

This recommendation simply expands on a concept that is already implemented in the VPD. The current civilian orientation training provides an excellent introduction to the organization, work processes, policies and procedures. The expansion of this concept would include other relevant training, as well as advanced training, in an employee's first few years. This may include publishing a training calendar with suggested training and courses for different levels of service.

*Recommendation 4 – Expand Civilian Recognition Initiatives*

This recommendation is tied very closely with enhanced communication and feedback in that there needs to be communication in order for employees to understand how well they are doing in an organization. The VPD already has a formal Employee Recognition Luncheon that is held on an annual basis and once again, this recommendation is to simply build on a concept that is already working well.

Over the last several years it has been my experience that the VPD is making it an increased priority to recognize employees. One of the main methods of doing this is the commendation process where employees, mainly police officers, are awarded commendations from different levels of command staff for good work, and in many cases, work that placed officers at considerable risk. This commendation process is not exclusive to police officers and civilian employees are included to a certain extent. However, I do recommend that the VPD consider ways to increase the number of commendations that are awarded to civilian employees as it has been my personal experience that the majority are awarded to police officers.

The majority of research respondents rated their satisfaction and relationships in the organization as being high. Despite the high ratings, many respondents still felt that there is



more that can be done to improve satisfaction through increased recognition and support. The literature was also clear that feeling good about work and viewing the organization as a community not only increases satisfaction, but it can increase performance and productivity.

In addition to formal recognition programs it is also recommended that the VPD encourage managers to recognize good work on a daily basis and to reinforce and highlight good performance at staff meetings and other informal settings. Once again, this ties directly to communication and giving feedback to employees on an individual and group basis.

*Recommendation 5 – Increase Funding for Civilian Employee Training*

This recommendation is the most important recommendation of my research project and it is clear that no significant progress can be made in relation to civilian employee development unless there is increased funding. I listed this recommendation as a long-term recommendation due to the fact the VPD and the Vancouver Police Board requires City of Vancouver approval for increases in budgets and funding.

As indicated previously, 2007 was the first year where the VPD obtained funding specifically to back-fill civilian employees so that they could attend civilian orientation training. This level of funding clearly needs to be increased and other methods need to be identified to free up employees to be able to take training. In the case of new employee and advanced training, much of this can be delivered within the VPD, the current problem is freeing up employees to take the training.

In addition to increasing funding to allow civilian employees to take training, I also recommend that the VPD explore ways to provide funding to civilian employees to off-set the cost of external training that benefits the organization. This could be similar to the fund

that was bargained between the Vancouver Police Union and the Vancouver Police Board to assist police officers with tuition costs for external courses.

Through the findings from my focus groups and the survey I believe that even a modest increase in funding for civilian training and development will provide increased satisfaction and a sense of belonging from civilian employees. Many respondents acknowledged the difficulty that the VPD has with funding and I believe that the simple act of attempting to pursue additional funding and even receiving nominal increases will show civilian employees that they are valued members of the VPD.

*Recommendation 6 – Create a Civilian Career Planning Position in Human Resources*

The archival review produced data that indicated that there are three staff members in the VPD Human Resources Section that are dedicated to the needs of over 400 full and part-time civilian employees. The staff in Human Resources has not increased despite significant increases in civilian staff over the last three years.

The Human Resources Section has two Sergeants that form a career planning unit for police officers. I recommend that a similar unit be planned for civilian employees through the creation of a new position exclusively for civilian career planning and development advice. This additional staff member should be tasked with providing advice and feedback to civilian employees on career progression and organizational opportunities. This was one thing that several research respondents indicated as lacking due to the small number of staff in Human Resources.

An increase in staff in Human Resources would also allow the VPD to have improved and more consistent oversight on employee feedback in general. As indicated previously, 2007 was the first year of civilian employee involvement in the performance development

system. This new system requires supervisors and managers to formally and informally provide increased levels of feedback and advice to their staff. An additional position in Human Resources would provide an infrastructure that would foster consistency and would also provide advice and training to civilian supervisors and managers.

From my personal experiences as the Director of VPD Human Resources, the staff in Human Resources that are dedicated to civilian employees have such high workloads that career planning advice and meaningful feedback cannot be given to the level required. The addition of a career planning position would be a valuable addition to the organization as it would provide additional capacity for human resource staff to provide advice and direction to civilian employees.

*Recommendation 7 – Improve VPD Facilities and Equipment*

The issue of VPD facilities was not part of my research but poor facilities and equipment did get mentioned by respondents consistently throughout the survey and focus group stages. This data from my research also led me to conclude that this situation has an effect on employee job satisfaction and performance.

Much like budgets and funding, it was acknowledged and accepted by many respondents that the VPD does not have final control of its facilities and that this control rests with the City of Vancouver. Nevertheless, the poor conditions that some civilian employees work in, particularly at the 312 Main Street facility, do affect job satisfaction and performance.

As with the recommendation for increased funding, I also listed this recommendation as a long-term item. Police facilities have been a major issue for the VPD for several years now and many employees recognize that there has been considerable effort given to

achieving both short and long-term solutions to the quality of facilities and equipment. Despite some significant purchases over the last several years in new ergonomic office furniture, the problem of adequate office space and lack of meeting rooms still exists. This was certainly highlighted several times during my focus groups.

The problem with police facilities is a major funding issue and solutions will not be realized for several years. However, in my opinion, the organization can mitigate the impact on employees by doing everything reasonably possible to provide short-term solutions, but equally important, by effectively communicating to all employees on a regular basis the challenges that the facilities issue creates. Once again, communication is paramount and several respondents in both the survey and focus groups commented that effective feedback also includes receiving news that may not be the best news. In the end, employees need to be kept informed of the challenges that the VPD faces in order to develop a deeper level of understanding.

*Recommendation 8 – Develop Monitoring Strategies*

I recommend that the Human Resources Section develop follow-up and monitoring strategies to assess the recommendations that the VPD decides to implement. I also recommend that the Human Resources Section be made responsible for the on-going measurement of the results of these recommendations, which could entail a follow-up survey of civilian employees.

It was clear through the results of my research that if some or all of these recommendations are to be implemented, that this should be driven from the top down. I heard several times that civilian employees want to hear more from the executive level and I

believe that if these recommendations are adopted that they need to be supported and driven from the VPD Executive.

With the Human Resources Section responsible for oversight of any implemented recommendation, accountability should ultimately fall to the designated section or division to follow through on a specific recommendation. The Human Resources Section should be tasked with assessing the results of any implemented recommendation and can also determine if there are labour relations implications.

### Organizational Implications

I anticipate that the implementation of these recommendations will produce long-term positive benefits for civilian employees in the VPD. However, it is also important to consider other consequences that may be associated with the implementation of these recommendations. The following sections will discuss possible organizational implications, an analysis on the systems impact on the VPD, the consequences associated to not implementing the recommendations, and leadership implications associated to these recommendations.

### *Implementation of the Recommendations*

The Human Resources Section should manage and oversee the implementation of these recommendations. I am recommending this because Human Resources has primary responsibility for civilian employees and is in the best position to oversee strategies relative to development, training and job satisfaction. The Human Resources Section is also able to address any labour relations issues that may arise out of the recommendations.

The implementation of these recommendations must also be considered from a systems perspective. As with any other major change or initiative, the implementation of

these recommendations will create an additional burden on employees that are already busy with their day-to-day tasks. These recommendations may also impact labour relations and the Teamsters Union must be consulted and included whenever necessary.

Senge (1990) writes extensively on how systems interrelate in organizations and he created different models to describe these relationships. Two of Senge's systems models advocate for the need to focus on long-term goals and not to concentrate on short-term fixes that do not last. These models also explain that some short-term solutions may be implemented at the expense of a longer-term goal. I recommend that the VPD take a longer term view on any proposed changes to ensure success.

Finally, as with any other organizational change it is very important to communicate the need for change to all employees and to obtain feedback. The need to reassess the situation and adjust strategy is important to achieve the desired conclusion (Anderson & Ackerman-Anderson, 2001). Anderson and Ackerman-Anderson's (2001) feedback loop is an important concept to move forward and to adjust direction as required. It also serves to communicate progress with employees and ensure that the organization is aware of next steps.

It is my opinion that the implementation of these recommendations will also benefit part-time civilian employees, a group which was excluded from this research. Many of the principles of these recommendations are directly applicable to all employees, whether full or part-time. One example of a benefit to all employees is the need to effectively communicate and to provide performance feedback.

### *Implications for Inaction*

As with the need to monitor and control the implementation of these recommendations, it is also important to consider what the implications would be to do nothing. Based on my conclusions arising from the research data, the implications for inaction would result in civilian employees not being able to take additional steps to be the best that they can be. This has additional effects on the ability to increase job satisfaction and productivity.

Perhaps the greatest implication for inaction will be that the civilian workforce will continue to view police employees as being the organization's main priority. It is true that civilian employees are a support function for policing the City of Vancouver; however, as employees of the VPD they need to know that the organization considers their contribution and service as an important function to policing.

### *Leadership Implications*

An effective civilian employee development program will require active and engaged leadership that promotes a vision that appeals to everyone. In the case of this research project the proposed recommendations should be appealing to everyone regardless of position in the organization. Civilian employees who are well trained, satisfied and productive will produce a positive benefit to the entire VPD.

In order to promote the changes advocated in this report, leaders in the VPD must communicate and share a common vision on where civilian development should strive to be. Quigley (1993) explains that there must be a clear understanding of the corporate vision that must appeal to the members of an organization. Through my research I have concluded that a vision of improved civilian development would appeal to the civilian members of the VPD.

As a result, I believe that the organization has a foundation in place to carry out these proposed changes.

The requirement for active and engaged leadership is not solely the responsibility of the VPD Executive. The implementation of these recommendations will require the support of managers, supervisors, and others in the organization. As Quigley (1993) states, “leaders must walk the talk” (p. 141) and display actions in conjunction with the vision. In essence, leaders must model the communication practices, among other things, that are recommended in this report.

For effective change to take place, the recommendations in this report must be championed by the Deputy Chief Constable who is in command of the Support Services Division. This Division has the majority of civilian employees and also has both the Human Resources Section and the Training Section within it. The Deputy Chief Constable, the Director of Human Resources, and the Inspector in charge of Training, must set the civilian development vision. From that point managers and supervisors must join in to make this truly a team effort that is modeled to every civilian employee.

The motivation to make a difference is also important and this can be achieved through effective communication of the vision, feedback and the courage to make adjustments when necessary. Motivation will also be maintained through the celebration of success, recognition and appreciation, many of this which is already the basis of my recommendations.

I have recently concluded 27 years of service with the VPD and I am confident that the organization has the willingness and the motivation to embark on these recommended changes. My research has also confirmed that there is not only a willingness to improve



civilian development, but there are many civilian employees that truly care about the organization and who want to be the best that they can be. I truly believe that the commitment to the organization and to each other runs not only top down, but there is also a commitment from front line employees to the executive of the VPD. This relationship, combined with a strong VPD community, will inspire people to engage in any change process that results from a new civilian development vision.

Of course, any renewed vision or direction requires commitment from the top down. As a member of the VPD senior management team, I am committed to Quigley's (1993) view that "leaders must walk the talk" (p. 141). This will entail modeling the new vision by supporting and embracing any strategies and changes resulting from this project.

#### Future Research

This research project was not exhaustive as it pertained narrowly to a research question that asked how developmental strategies can enhance civilian job satisfaction and the quality of service that civilian employees offer the VPD. For this reason, I expect that there may be a need for further research in relation to civilian employee development.

My recommendations are broad ranging and in many cases they do not offer specific methods to accomplish end goals. This is why I recommended that the implementation of the recommendations be overseen by the Human Resources Section with assistance from the Training Section. Such oversight during the change process may identify further areas for research and analysis. In the end, the VPD must be willing to constantly analyze the results of any implemented recommendation as well as adjust course when necessary.

Finally, this research project was specific to the Vancouver Police Department and the civilian employees that work there. There was no research or analysis conducted on best

practices in developing civilian employees in other police departments. I can only assume that many of the best practices that were identified in my literature review would be applicable to civilian development in other police department. Further research into the developmental practices of other police agencies would add to the body of knowledge in this report and may also support many of the recommendations that I proposed.

## CHAPTER 6. LESSONS LEARNED

This research project concludes two years of study at Royal Roads University but it will not end my desire for life-long learning. These two years have been a learning journey that prepared me for my research project thesis.

This project has also provided me with an opportunity to learn about my organization and the people within it. The project has given me an insight of where I fit in the organization and how my leadership can assist the VPD in moving forward. I believe that I now have a greater awareness of my strengths, as well as areas where I can develop in the coming years.

At the development stage of this project, my goal was to embark on a research project that was both interesting to me and would also benefit my organization. Through the encouragement and support of a VPD Deputy Chief Constable, together we came to realize that my human resources experience and my concern for civilian employees would make this project the best fit for me and the organization. At the conclusion of this project I can certainly say that my goal was met.

### Organizational Learning

In many ways this research project began unknowingly in 2003 when I became the Director of VPD Human Resources. During that time I observed first hand that there was an opportunity to support and recognize civilian employees to a greater extent than was occurring. I also learned during that time that just showing interest in the civilian workforce was met with much appreciation. These experiences became the seed that inspired me to embark on this project. In many ways, my experiences in the VPD Human Resources Section also prompted me to enroll in Royal Roads University.

The support from the Vancouver Police Department and its Executive Officers towards my learning and my research project was outstanding. Equally outstanding was the support and encouragement that I received from all levels of civilian staff toward my project. This reinforced a lot to me about the quality organization that I belong to, as well as the supportive staff of all levels and ranks that I truly can call my peers.

During the research process I was impressed by the level of interest displayed by civilian employees. When I requested specialized assistance to assist me in developing and conducting my survey, I not only received what I required, but I also received advice and assistance that went far beyond what I had requested. This level of support from civilian employees extended throughout the research process and I was amazed to receive a 58% response rate to my detailed survey. The response for my focus groups was equally impressive and due to the high level of interest I was forced to draw names to select participants.

Aside from the quality of people that work in the VPD, the high level of support and interest in my research created some unanticipated ethical dilemmas for me. These dilemmas pertained to civilian employees that e-mailed me to state that they had either completed a survey or that they wanted to expand on issues that were discussed in a focus group session. As I had taken great effort to assure confidentiality, I was not expecting e-mail communication from survey respondents and focus group participants. All of these e-mails were acknowledged by me but I also maintained my commitment to ensure confidentiality and research rigor by not using any of this additional information.

When reflecting on the entire project there is one main thing that I would do differently if I was involved in similar research. This would involve interviewing a small

group of managers and/or supervisors during the research phase. The reason for this is that I would have had a better sense of where the organization had gaps in certain areas if I had conducted personal interviews with managers/supervisors. The focus groups partially fulfilled this need; however, personal interviews would have provided richer data.

On a final note, based on the enthusiasm that I received, I learned that the people in my organization want positive change and will embrace change under the correct circumstances. It all comes down to including people in the vision and communicating and obtaining feedback and input.

### Personal Learning

This learning journey was a rewarding experience for me and the progression through each step of the major project provided me with increased knowledge in order to move forward. From the onset I committed to myself that I would stay focused during this project and that I would honour the timelines that I proposed in my major project proposal. I did this to provide a contingency in the event my job became too busy for me to cope with two competing time demands.

This project stretched my leadership abilities in the area of time management and reinforced to me that having a plan and empowering people to assist you can make the impossible become reality. This certainly parallels today's corporate world where there are always competing needs and time constraints.

Moving through the major project process resulted in a combination of learning as well as achieving important milestones that inspired me to go further. In relation to my learning, each chapter provided me with a different type of learning, whether it was through researching current literature or planning how my research would be conducted. During the

early planning stages I approached the methodology very carefully so that I would have a well thought out plan that would be least susceptible to arising issues. This attention to planning certainly paid off and I was very happy with my ability to stay on schedule without any significant issues occurring.

During the planning and execution of my research, I enlisted the assistance of a small group of colleagues that was comprised mainly of civilian employees. This research team provided me with a venue to discuss ideas and to plan my research. The team provided me with valuable advice and direction during my actual research. As this was the first time that I was involved in academic research, I learned from others that had experience and insights into research. This worked very well for me and I will be forever grateful for the expertise and feedback that I received. This experience truly showed me the great things that a team can accomplish.

Perhaps the greatest thing that I learned is that there is much to learn from listening to peoples' stories and seeking their input. I believe that this is a cornerstone of my project and that in many ways progressive change cannot take place unless people are acknowledged and included. This may sound simple, but in our busy days and lives it is often not easy to take the time to listen to someone and to receive feedback and input. I have learned that this is something that is so important that in the future I must be conscious to allow time to do this.

#### Some Final Thoughts

In my acknowledgements I gave the analogy of a learning village and how support is critical in being able to participate in a Master of Arts program. Life-long learning is a concept that I truly believe in, but much like a vision it must be shared and communicated

well. My learning vision was supported by my wife Susan and daughter Kristina. Without their support and understanding this project would not have been possible.

The rest of my learning village is the women and men in the Vancouver Police Department who supported me in many different ways. This support reaffirmed to me that the sharing of knowledge and ideas is important for an organization to move forward in a positive way. I learned many things during my analysis of data and through conversations with civilian employees. However, the main thing that I learned was that most people want to be involved, be included, and asked their opinions.

Learning takes place through communication. For civilian employees to learn and develop further the Vancouver Police Department needs to nurture a culture of effective communication and feedback. If this occurs, civilian employees in the VPD will truly be in a position to be the best that they can be.

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APPENDIX A. LETTER OF INVITATION

Dear *[Name of Prospective Participant]*,

My name is Steve Schnitzer and I would like to invite you to be part of a research project that I am conducting relating to employee development for civilian Vancouver Police Department (VPD) members and how this affects job satisfaction and performance. This project forms part of the requirement for a Master of Arts degree at Royal Roads University. My credentials with Royal Roads University can be established by telephoning xxxxx xxxx, the MALT academic lead at RRU, at (xxx) xxx-xxxx, or via e-mail at xxx@xxx.com.

The objective of my research project is to assess the effectiveness of civilian employee development in the Vancouver Police Department, including an examination of methods to further enhance programs and strategies that may positively affect job satisfaction and performance. In addition to submitting my final report to Royal Roads University, in partial fulfillment for a Master of Arts degree, I will also be sharing my research findings with the Vancouver Police Department. Further, the Vancouver Police Board, and possibly external law enforcement and justice periodicals, will also have access to the final report and findings.

My research project will consist of three separate components: an archival review of existing documentation, an 'on-line' survey, and a series of focus groups. The survey is expected to take no longer than fifteen minutes to complete. The focus groups are expected to take no longer than one hour to complete. The questions will include a discussion on your current thoughts and experiences relating to employee development, job satisfaction, and performance. The questions will also explore how improvements can be made to existing programs and strategies in order to contribute to a more satisfying and productive workplace. My complete research process is expected to take approximately two (2) months.

Your name was chosen because you are a full-time civilian member of the VPD, and as such, you are a prospective participant for both the survey and the focus groups. Your identity will remain confidential throughout this research, and none of the information obtained as a result of the research will be attributed specifically to you.

This project has the full support of the Chief Constable, and the executive of the Vancouver Police Department. The results of this research will assist the Department in providing programs and strategies to develop civilian members. Your involvement is intended to occur on-duty, and at VPD expense, and you will be compensated accordingly as per the requirements of your respective collective agreements.

In the next few days you will be sent an e-mail inviting you to voluntarily participate in the electronic survey. You are not compelled to participate in either the survey or in the focus groups (that will be held following the survey). If you do choose to participate, you are free

to withdraw at any time without prejudice. Similarly, if you choose not to participate in this research project, this information will also be maintained in confidence.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Steve Schnitzer

Student – Royal Roads University

APPENDIX B. SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Background Information

1. What is your gender?
  - Male
  - Female
  
2. What is your age?
  - 18 – 24 Years
  - 25 – 34 Years
  - 35 – 44 Years
  - 45 – 54 Years
  - 55 and Over
  
3. Which best describes your current level in the organization?
  - Employee (i.e. Office Assistant, Clerk, Analyst, Policy Advisor, etc.)
  - Supervisor/Team Lead
  - Exempt Manager
  
4. In which Division do you work?
  - Office of Chief Constable
  - Operations Division
  - Investigation Division
  - Operations Support Division
  - Support Services Division
  
5. What is your current level of service with the VPD?
  - 0 to 5 Years of Service
  - 6 to 10 Years of Service
  - 11 to 15 Years of Service
  - 16 to 20 Years of Service
  - 21 or More Years of Service
  
6. How would you rate your overall job satisfaction level?
  - Very High
  - Somewhat High

Neutral

Somewhat Low

Very Low

7. You rated your overall job satisfaction as “Very High” in question 6, could you please explain your response choice?  
\*\* Free Text Response \*\*
8. You rated your overall job satisfaction as “Somewhat High” in question 6, could you please explain your response choice?  
\*\* Free Text Response \*\*
9. You rated your overall job satisfaction as “Neutral” in question 6, could you please explain your response choice?  
\*\* Free Text Response \*\*
10. You rated your overall job satisfaction as “Somewhat Low” in question 6, could you please explain your response choice?  
\*\* Free Text Response \*\*
11. You rated your overall job satisfaction as “Very Low” in question 6, could you please explain your response choice?  
\*\* Free Text Response \*\*

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement

12. I receive the support I require from my co-workers in order to allow me to provide a high quality service:  
Strongly Agree  
Mostly Agree  
Neutral  
Mostly Disagree  
Strongly Disagree  
Don't Know  
Not Applicable

13. I receive the support I require from my manager/supervisor in order to allow me to provide a high quality service:
- Strongly Agree
  - Mostly Agree
  - Neutral
  - Mostly Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree
  - Don't Know
14. I receive the support required to provide high quality service from resources provided to me:
- Strongly Agree
  - Mostly Agree
  - Neutral
  - Mostly Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree
  - Don't Know
15. I am treated respectfully at work by my co-workers:
- Strongly Agree
  - Mostly Agree
  - Neutral
  - Mostly Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree
  - Don't Know
16. I am treated respectfully at work by my manager/supervisor:
- Strongly Agree
  - Mostly Agree
  - Neutral
  - Mostly Disagree
  - Strongly Disagree
  - Don't Know
17. I am satisfied in my current assignment.
- Strongly Agree
  - Mostly Agree
  - Neutral



Mostly Disagree  
Strongly Disagree  
Don't Know

18. You stated that you “Strongly or Mostly” agree that you are satisfied in your current assignment. Please explain why you feel this way.

\*\* Free Text Response \*\*

19. You stated that you “Strongly or Mostly” disagree that you are satisfied in your current assignment. Please explain why you feel this way.

\*\* Free Text Response \*\*

20. I am content to remain in my current assignment.

Strongly Agree  
Mostly Agree  
Neutral  
Mostly Disagree  
Strongly Disagree  
Don't Know

21. You stated that you “Strongly or Mostly” agree that you are content to remain in your current assignment. Please explain why you feel this way.

\*\* Free Text Response \*\*

22. You stated that you “Strongly or Mostly” disagree that you are content to remain in your current assignment. Please explain why you feel this way.

\*\* Free Text Response \*\*

23. My current assignment aligns with my career goals.

Strongly Agree  
Mostly Agree  
Neutral  
Mostly Disagree  
Strongly Disagree  
Don't Know

24. I feel that I have the ability to advance within the VPD in the future.

Strongly Agree

Mostly Agree  
Neutral  
Mostly Disagree  
Strongly Disagree  
Don't Know  
Not Applicable

25. I am not interested in promotion or career progression within the VPD.

Strongly Agree  
Mostly Agree  
Neutral  
Mostly Disagree  
Strongly Disagree  
Don't Know  
Not Applicable

26. You stated that you “Strongly or Mostly” agree that you are not interested in promotion or career progression within the VPD. Please explain your reasons for being disinterested.

\*\* Free Text Response \*\*

27. I understand how my work contributes to the achievement of the VPD's goals.

Strongly Agree  
Mostly Agree  
Neutral  
Mostly Disagree  
Strongly Disagree  
Don't Know

28. There are things that the VPD can do to make my job more satisfying.

Strongly Agree  
Mostly Agree  
Neutral  
Mostly Disagree  
Strongly Disagree  
Don't Know

29. You stated that you “Strongly or Mostly” agree that there are things the VPD could do to make your job more satisfying. Please state your ideas on how this could be done?  
\*\* Free Text Response \*\*
30. You stated that you “Strongly or Mostly” disagree that there are things the VPD could do to make your job more satisfying. Please explain why.  
\*\* Free Text Response \*\*
31. I feel that my immediate supervisor/manager has trust in me to do a good job with little to no supervision.  
Strongly Agree  
Mostly Agree  
Neutral  
Mostly Disagree  
Strongly Disagree  
Don't Know
32. My performance would benefit from training programs.  
Strongly Agree  
Mostly Agree  
Neutral  
Mostly Disagree  
Strongly Disagree  
Don't Know
33. You stated that you “Strongly or Mostly” agree that your performance would benefit from training programs. What type of training programs would you benefit from?  
\*\* Free Text Response \*\*
34. I would be more satisfied in my current job if I received increased learning opportunities.  
Strongly Agree  
Mostly Agree  
Neutral  
Mostly Disagree  
Strongly Disagree  
Don't Know

35. You stated that you “Strongly or Mostly” agree that you would be more satisfied in your current job if you received increased learning opportunities. Please state what learning opportunities you would like to see made available.

\*\* Free Text Response \*\*

36. I feel that my opinion is valued by my supervisor/manager.

Strongly Agree

Mostly Agree

Neutral

Mostly Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Don't Know

37. The members of my work unit communicate well amongst themselves.

Strongly Agree

Mostly Agree

Neutral

Mostly Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Don't Know

38. You stated that you “Strongly or Mostly” agree that your unit communicates well within itself. Are there any particular practices that help to contribute to this communication?

\*\* Free Text Response \*\*

39. You stated that you “Strongly or Mostly” disagree that your unit communicates well within itself. Are there any particular practices that impair this communication?

\*\* Free Text Response \*\*

40. I feel that I am a valued member of my work group.

Strongly Agree

Mostly Agree

Neutral

Mostly Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Don't Know

41. You stated that you “Strongly or Mostly” disagree that you are a valued member of your workgroup. Please explain why you feel this way?

\*\* Free Text Response \*\*

42. What type of training would you like to see implemented or expanded at the VPD?  
(select all the apply)

Improved training for management/leadership

Standardized training for new civilian employees

Training for Supervisors and Team Leads

Information & Technology Training (ie: PRIME, SAP, Excel, etc)

Other: (Please Specify) \*\* Free Text Response \*\*

43. I feel that I receive adequate feedback on my job performance.

Strongly Agree

Mostly Agree

Neutral

Mostly Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Don't Know

44. My immediate supervisor/manager is one of the following:

Police Member

Civilian Member

45. Do you feel that the VPD can help make improvements in your job performance?

Yes

No

46. You stated that the VPD can help improve your job performance. Please explain how the VPD can improve your job performance?

\*\* Free Text Response \*\*

47. You stated that the VPD cannot help improve your job performance. Please explain why you think the VPD cannot improve your job performance?

\*\* Free Text Response \*\*

Thank you for participating in this survey!

## APPENDIX C. SURVEY INVITATION

You are invited to participate in an electronic survey pertaining to civilian employee development and how this relates to job satisfaction and performance. This survey is targeting all full-time civilian managers, supervisors and employees of the VPD.

One of the key components of my research project is to involve as many civilian employee stakeholders in the process as possible. Without stakeholder input it will be very difficult to assess current development practices and how they relate to job satisfaction and performance. Stakeholder input is also required to identify strategies and solutions that will form part of the recommendations of my final report. To effectively do this, I am asking for your assistance and input.

The electronic survey can be accessed by clicking on the link below. It will take no more than fifteen (15) minutes to complete. Please take the time to answer the questions as completely as possible. Additional information is contained in the preamble to the survey, accessible after opening the link.

Thank you, in advance, for your participation.

Steve Schnitzer  
Student – Royal Roads University

#### APPENDIX D. SURVEY PREAMBLE

You are invited to participate in an electronic survey pertaining to civilian employee development and how this relates to job satisfaction and performance within the Vancouver Police Department (VPD). The research question asks how developmental programs can enhance job satisfaction and the quality of service that civilian employees offer the VPD.

This research project is being conducted by Steve Schnitzer and will be used by the VPD in identifying programs and strategies to assist with employee development. The project will also form part of the requirement for a Master of Arts degree at Royal Roads University (RRU). The researcher's credentials with Royal Roads University can be established by telephoning xxxxx xxxxx, the MALT academic lead at RRU, at (xxx) xxx - xxx, or via e-mail at xxx@xxx.com.

This electronic survey is expected to take no longer than fifteen (15) minutes to complete. The questions will refer to your thoughts in relation to employee development, how this relates to your job satisfaction and performance, and strategies that you believe would enhance employee development.

All of the information collected will be recorded electronically in a database within the secure computer network of the VPD. No external access is available to this information. The identity of all participants will remain anonymous. At no time will any specific comments be attributed to any individual unless specific agreement has been obtained beforehand. All documentation will be kept strictly confidential.

Information collected will be summarized and incorporated into the body of the final report. In addition to submitting the final report to Royal Roads University, in partial fulfillment for a Master of Arts degree, the research findings will also be shared with the members and executive of the VPD and the Vancouver Police Board. Further, the final thesis or a condensed executive report may also be submitted to external justice periodicals and journals for publication.

A copy of the final report will be housed at Royal Roads University and will be publicly accessible. Additional copies of the final report will be available through the Planning and Research Section of the Vancouver Police Department.

There are no known or anticipated risks associated to your participation in this research. Conversely, your involvement as a stakeholder within the VPD will benefit the organization, as your input is both important and appreciated. You are not compelled to participate in this survey. If you do choose to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time, without prejudice. Similarly, if you choose not to participate in this survey, this information will also be maintained in confidence.

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey.

- I have read the above information and consent to participate in the survey
- I do not wish to participate in the survey



APPENDIX E. FOCUS GROUP INVITATION

Dear *[Name of Prospective Participant]*,

My name is Steve Schnitzer and I would like to invite you to be part of a research project that I am conducting relating to employee development for civilian Vancouver Police Department (VPD) members and how this affects job satisfaction and performance. This project forms part of the requirement for a Master or Arts degree at Royal Roads University. My credentials with Royal Roads University can be established by telephoning xxxxx xxxxx, the MALT academic lead at RRU, at (xxx) xxx-xxxx, or via e-mail at xxx@xxx.com.

The objective of my research project is to assess the effectiveness of civilian employee development in the Vancouver Police Department, including an examination of methods to further enhance programs and strategies that may positively affect job satisfaction and performance. In addition to submitting my final report to Royal Roads University, in partial fulfillment for a Master of Arts degree, I will also be sharing my research findings with the Vancouver Police Department. Further, the Vancouver Police Board, and possibly external law enforcement and justice periodicals, will also have access to the final report and findings.

My research project consists of three separate components: an archival review of existing documentation; an 'on-line' survey; and a series of focus groups. The archival review and the survey have already taken place, and the final phase of my research will include three (3) focus groups. The focus groups are expected to take no longer than one hour to complete. The questions will include a discussion on your current thoughts and experiences relating to employee development, job satisfaction, and performance. The questions will also explore how improvements can be made to existing programs and strategies in order to contribute to a more satisfying and productive workplace.

Your name was chosen because you are a full-time civilian member of the VPD, and as such, you are a prospective participant for the focus groups. Your identity will remain confidential throughout this research, and none of the information obtained as a result of the research will be attributed specifically to you.

This project has the full support of the Chief Constable, and the executive of the Vancouver Police Department. The results of this research will assist the Department in providing programs and strategies to develop civilian members. Your involvement is intended to occur on-duty, and at VPD expense, and you will be compensated accordingly as per the requirements of your respective collective agreements.

Information from the focus groups will be recorded in hand written notes and by the use of a recording device. All of the information will be summarized in the body of the final report, where appropriate, and remain in anonymous format. At no time will any specific comments be attributed to any individual unless your specific agreement has been obtained beforehand. You have my assurance that all documentation will be kept strictly confidential.

There are no known risks to your participation in this research. Additionally, any and all conflicts of interest, be they real or perceived, will be managed within the research project. The regular use of Research Consent forms and Letters of Confidentiality, combined with an existing level of trust within the organization, should provide for assurances that the paramilitary rank structure of the organization shall have no impact on this research. Your open and candid involvement is essential for the accurate collection of data. I am wholly committed to completely eliminating all elements of bias and conflict, should they arise.

You are not compelled to participate in this research project. If you do choose to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without prejudice. Similarly, if you choose not to participate in this research project, this information will also be maintained in confidence.

If you are interested in participating in this focus group, please reply to this e-mail and advise me of your interest. Final selection for focus group participants will be via a random draw of names of interested individuals. This random draw will also ensure that civilian managers, supervisors, and regular employees are represented in an equitable manner.

Please feel free to contact me at any time should you have additional questions regarding the project and its outcomes. A debriefing session will be held immediately following your focus group. Further, you will also have an opportunity to review the transcribed notes from your session, to verify their accuracy and correct any errors or omissions.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please confirm your willingness to participate in my research project focus groups. I can be contacted at:

Name: Steve Schnitzer  
Vancouver Police Department

Email: xxx@xxx.com

Telephone: (xxx) xxx-xxxx

Sincerely,

Steve Schnitzer

APPENDIX F. COMMITMENT TO CONFIDENTIALITY

*An agreement between Steve Schnitzer (Researcher), and*

\_\_\_\_\_ *(Participant).*

All personal and other confidential information accumulated by the researcher will remain strictly confidential. This information will be used only for the purposes of this research project, related to civilian employee development in the Vancouver Police Department. It shall not be disclosed to anyone other than persons authorized to receive it, both during the research period and beyond it.

This agreement covers all recorded information, in all formats, regardless of the source. By definition, "all personal information" includes names, contact information, opinions, and any other information that could reasonably be presumed to identify an individual, or be linked to an identifiable individual.

Personal information will be collected, recorded, corrected, accessed, altered, used, disclosed, retained, secured and destroyed as detailed in the *Letter of Invitation* and the *Research Consent Form*.

In the event that there is uncertainty whether information is personal or confidential, the researcher will err on the side of caution and not disclose such information without the express written permission of the participant involved.

Statement of Agreement

I have read and understand this agreement.

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX G. RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

My name is Steve Schnitzer and I am currently the Inspector in charge of the Recruiting and Training Section for the Vancouver Police Department (VPD). This research project will assist the VPD with future strategies and programs that pertain to civilian employee development, and also forms part of the requirement for a Master of Arts degree at Royal Roads University. My credentials with Royal Roads University can be confirmed by telephoning xxxxx xxxxx, the MALT academic lead at RRU, at (xxx) xxx-xxxx, or via e-mail at xxx@xxx.com

This document constitutes an agreement to participate in the focus group phase of my research project. There will be three (3) focus groups, and each will consist of eight (8) participants. Questions asked in the focus group are intended to assess the effectiveness of civilian employee development in the Vancouver Police Department, including an examination of methods to further enhance programs and strategies that may positively affect job satisfaction and performance.

In addition to submitting my final report to Royal Roads University in partial fulfillment for a Master of Arts degree, I will also be sharing my research findings with the VPD as a whole, including all participants, and the Vancouver Police Board. The final thesis or condensed executive report may also be submitted to external justice periodicals and journals for publication.

Information collected will be recorded in hand-written format, summarized where appropriate, and incorporated into the body of the final report. The identity of all participants will remain anonymous. At no time will any specific comments be attributed to any individual unless specific agreement has been obtained beforehand. All documentation will be kept strictly confidential.

A copy of the final report will be housed at Royal Roads University and will be publicly accessible. Additional copies of the final report will be available through the Planning and Research Section of the Vancouver Police Department.

There are no known or anticipated risks associated to your participation in this research. Conversely, your involvement as a stakeholder within the VPD will benefit the organization, as your input is both important and appreciated. There are no known inconveniences to you, other than your time commitment as a participant in this study. This time commitment is not expected to exceed one (1) hour.

Given that this research is being conducted by an employee of the Vancouver Police Department, and within the work setting, the potential exists for a real or perceived conflict of interest. While the Vancouver Police Department continues to operate in a paramilitary structure, your open and candid involvement is essential for the accurate collection of data and the furtherance of strategic planning within the Vancouver Police Department. The researcher is committed to completely eliminating all elements of bias and conflict, with the use of tools such as this Research Consent form and a Commitment to Confidentiality form.

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by keeping all data in a locked file cabinet. Your signed consent form will be kept separate from the data. All data will be destroyed within one year of completion of the project by shredding all paper-based notes and transcripts. There is no other planned use for this data.

You are not compelled to participate in the focus group phase of this research project. If you do choose to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without prejudice. Similarly, if you choose not to participate in this research project, this information will also be maintained in confidence. Your participation will have no bearing on your employment or advancement opportunities within the Vancouver Police Department. Additionally, if you withdraw from this research project your data will not be used in the final project, and all personal data will be destroyed immediately.

By signing this letter, you give free and informed consent to participate in a focus group.

Name: (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions or concerns during the course of this research project, please feel free to contact the researcher or the supervisor at any time.

Steve Schnitzer – Researcher  
Vancouver Police Department  
(xxx) xxx-xxxx

xxxxx xxxxx– Project Supervisor  
xxxxx  
(xxx) xxx-xxxx

## APPENDIX H. FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

### Focus Group One and Two

1. What are the effects of increased communication between supervisor/managers and employees?
2. Do your supervisors/managers and co-workers seek your opinions in order to make decisions?
3. How can the VPD improve your job satisfaction through learning opportunities?
4. What is the ideal work situation that makes you most productive?

### Focus Group Three

1. What programs and/or strategies would create more effective communication and result in the following benefits?
  - Increased Trust
  - Empowerment
  - Sense of Belonging
  - Connection to Work
  - Increased Job Satisfaction
  - Decreased Frustration (not knowing)
2. What programs and/or strategies would create conditions where more opinions are sought which would result in the following benefits?
  - Feeling Valued
  - Feel Good About Work
  - Feeling Part of the Team
  - Increased Respect
  - Increased Trust
3. How can the VPD create learning opportunities for civilian members?
4. What programs and/or strategies do you feel contribute to civilian leadership development?