UNLV | University Libraries
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

UNLV Theses/Dissertations/Professional Papers/Capstones

5-14-2008

City of Las Vegas human resources promotional selection process program evaluation

Rik Holman
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Cecil Johnson
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

April Thomas
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Steve Weber
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/thesesdissertations

Part of the Human Resources Management Commons, Other Public Affairs, Public Policy and Public Administration Commons, Policy Design, Analysis, and Evaluation Commons, and the Public Administration Commons

Repository Citation
Holman, Rik; Johnson, Cecil; Thomas, April; and Weber, Steve, "City of Las Vegas human resources promotional selection process program evaluation" (2008). *UNLV Theses/Dissertations/Professional Papers/Capstones.* Paper 800.

This Capstone is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Scholarship@UNLV. It has been accepted for inclusion in UNLV Theses/Dissertations/Professional Papers/Capstones by an authorized administrator of Digital Scholarship@UNLV. For more information, please contact digitalscholarship@unlv.edu.

City of Las Vegas Human Resources

Promotional Selection Process
Program Evaluation
Spring 2008

Rik Holman
Master of Public Administration Candidate
Graduate Certificate, Public Management
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Bachelor of Arts, Business Administration
Governors State University

Cecil Johnson
Master of Public Administration Candidate
Graduate Certificate, Public Management
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Bachelor of Science, Business Administration
Lindenwood University

April Thomas
Master of Public Administration Candidate
Graduate Certificate, Public Management
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Juris Doctor
Salmon P. Chase College of Law
Bachelor of Arts, Social Work
University of Kentucky

Steve Weber
Master of Public Administration Candidate
Graduate Certificate, Public Management
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Bachelor of Science, Chemical Engineering
Michigan Technological University

University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Dr. Christopher Stream, PUA 791
May 14, 2008

Acknowledgements

Special acknowledgement to the Las Vegas City Human Resources Department for the support they provided through the entire program evaluation. All staff members were extremely supportive and provided a much needed assistance in conducting the program evaluation of their department.

The evaluation team extends an appreciation to the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Public Administration Staff for providing assistance and direction in the completion of this project.

The evaluation team recognizes the following individuals for their contributions to the successful completion of this evaluation:

- F. Claudette Enus, Director, Las Vegas Human Resources
- Judy Tuttle, Deputy Director, Las Vegas Human Resources
- Glenna Kouns, Recruiter, Las Vegas Human Resources
- Karen Coyne, Chief, Las Vegas Department of Detention and Enforcement
- Benet Murphy, Management Analyst II, Las Vegas Department of Detention and Enforcement
- Don King, Vice President & Grievance Chair, Las Vegas City Employees' Association
- Jon Boardman, Acting Systems Analyst II, Las Vegas Department of Information Technology
- Christine Santiago, Assistant Director, Employees Services, Department of Aviation

Table of Contents

Executive Summary ……..…… 3

Introduction ……..……. 6

Background ……...…….7

Data Collection and Methodology ……..…….14

Existing Data.…….….……..14

Interviews..……..……..16

Survey……..……..…...18

Findings and Interpretation ……..……..…..20

Recommendations ……... 25

Appendix/References……29

Executive Summary:

In 2006, the City of Las Vegas contracted with Simmons Associates Inc. to conduct an extensive cultural audit. The findings of this audit were presented to the City of Las Vegas Human Resources Department, (LVHR), in January 2007.

This audit was conducted in three parts, beginning with executive interviews to ascertain their opinion of how well the City embraced diversity. Secondly, an analysis of all city employees polices inclusive of bargaining agreements and Civil Service polices was conducted to determine if existing regulations and guidelines were supportive of a diverse and inclusive work environment. The third phase consisted of the development and issuance of an employee survey. The *Diversity and Inclusion Survey* specifically measured the employee's perception of their workplace environment and the skill set of the supervisory and management group. The survey also explored the overall employee attitudes, and opinions of working for the City of Las Vegas.

The survey results indicated that a significant number of city employees that responded to the survey believed that preferential treatment was given to some employees during the promotional selection process. Although the Las Vegas City Human Resources Department recognized that this negative perception could not be totally eliminated, the department believed there existed a potential for promotional process change that would reduce the number of employees that assumed there was a level of bias in promotions.

Based on individual interviews and collective meetings with the City of Las Vegas Human Resources Department, the evaluation team began to develop a program evaluation plan to examine the possible reasons for the negative perception of the promotional process. The plan

established the purpose of the evaluation, required data and information to be used, and how best major stakeholders would benefit from the findings of the evaluation.

The evaluation team formed a hypothesis that improvements to the promotional selection practices would assist in creating a more positive perception on the part of the employee group.

The plan prepared by the evaluation team identified two program evaluation goals:

- Identify the strengths and weakness of the promotional selection processs, and where necessary, recommend improvements.

- Determine the possible causes for the perceived preferential treatment in the promotional process as expressed by City employees who responded to the survey.

Throughout the evaluation process, meetings were held with Human Resources recruiters, departmental hiring managers and directors, City Employees Association union representative, and an advisory group consisting of individual members of the aforementioned groups.

The evaluation team analyzed data and information for the purpose of developing the final evaluation that consisted of City of Las Vegas Civil Service Rules, bargaining agreements, Memorandums of Understanding, a sample of written promotional examinations, civil service rules from other municipalities, and the results of the 2007 *Diversity and Inclusion Survey*. Additional data collected by the program evaluation team included the summaries of the meetings and individual interviews conducted with the different stakeholder groups.

Based on an analysis of the above data and information, the evaluation team developed a classified employee survey. The *City of Las Vegas Promotional Selection Process Survey* addressed specific areas of the promotional process, and how employees perceived the fairness of the selection process.

At the conclusion of the analysis of all available data, and associated information including the promotional selection process survey, the evaluation team developed recommendations in conjunction with the evaluation goals. These recommendations consisted of promotional process changes and additional training programs for employees and supervisory personnel.

The evaluation team believes the negative perceptions outlined in the survey results are not driven by the activities of the City of Las Vegas Humana Resources Department. According to the extensive employee comments provided in both surveys, and through analysis of the promotional process, it is more likely that the negative perceptions regarding promotions surround the limitations imposed by the Civil Service Rules and the extensive use of individual employees in “acting” positions.

The City of Las Vegas Human Resources Department are to be commended for recognizing the implications of negative employee perceptions and the departments desire to better ensure that promotional decisions are based on merit and performance in all instances.

The following work will provide an overview of the promotional process of the City of Las Vegas Human Resources Department. The assessment is limited to this area of the department. The study focuses on employee perceptions of the promotional process and how best to improve the opinion of some employees that the process is fair and non-biased.

Introduction:

The City of Las Vegas Human Resources Department requested the evaluation team examine the perception of fairness in the promotional selection process as demonstrated by the results of the 2007 *Diversity and Inclusion Survey* and related complaints from some of the employees. Based on discussions with the Human Resources department and subsequent interviews with other stakeholders, the main focus of the evaluation team covered the strengths and weaknesses of the promotional process and determining the reasons for the perceived preferential treatment in the promotional process as expressed by city employees who responded to the 2007 *Diversity and Inclusion Survey*. While initially discussed, it was agreed that the evaluation team would not examine the new hire recruitment selection process, as all interviewed stakeholders reported little if any concern with any issues of fairness with this process. Additionally, any potential collection of data to investigate possible complaints of fairness by new hire applicants is virtually non-existent.

Background:

Organization:

With a city population of over 540,000, the City if Las Vegas human resources department is responsible for approximately 3,300 employees in twenty departments. In addition to recruitment and staffing, Human Resources are also responsible for organizational development, classification and compensation management, employee training and development, and employee relations. In addition to administrative positions, the City of Las Vegas human resources department oversees twenty-three skilled positions.

City employees are represented by four unions, of which the City Employees Association represents 1,600. The other bargaining agents for city workers include the Police Protection Association (Detention Center), Peace Officers Association (Marshalls), and International Fire Fighters Association.

The City of Las Vegas (City) has two types of job announcements, open and promotional. When practicable and in the best interests of the City, priority is given to filling vacancies in the classified service through the promotional process. The number of employment applications accepted for an open position can be limited to a reasonable number. However, classified employees will be included regardless of the limited number. All regular current classified City employees receive three bonus points on open and promotional examinations. Examinations may consist of one or more of the following test methods: 1) Written, 2) Oral, 3) Audio / Video, 4) Performance, 5) Physical Ability, 6) Evaluation and Experience, 7) Assessment Center, 8) Weighted Application Form, 9) Supplemental Questionnaire, or any other measure deemed appropriate by Human Resources.

The final examination score is a weighted composite of all test scores. All classified positions in the City shall be filled from a list of candidates who have been determined to be qualified. There are Open and Promotional lists but when Promotional and Open lists exist for the same classification, the Promotional list will be given first consideration.

The current promotional process consists of the following steps:

1) Recruitment request and job announcements are completed and reviewed by the hiring department within one to five days.

2) Job posting and application screening for minimum qualifications take a minimum of ten days as outlined by the City of Las Vegas Civil Service Rules. However, in some cases posting for classified positions can remain open for thirty days or more depending on different factors such as insufficient number of applicants due to the complexity of the position, or a very large number of applicants for other positions.

3) Scheduling applicant testing, applicant notification, administering tests, and scoring lasts for approximates ten days

4) The appeals process and written test review last five days.

5) It takes ten to fifteen days for the Civil Service Board to convey a meeting to approve the promotional lists.

6) The hiring department can interview after the five-day appeal period. However, departments cannot make a final selection until the Civil Service Board has approved the eligibility list. Interview questions and tests are prepared by the department hiring manager but reviewed and approved by LVHR.

Overall the time frame for the City of Las Vegas Human Resources Department involvement in the promotional selection process ranges between thirty to forty days. To better explain the process and potential challenges, a timeline of the activities relevant to the promotional process as prepared by the human resources is included in the appendix.

Program Description History:

Problem Statement:

The City contracted with an outside consulting firm to conduct an extensive cultural audit. As part of that audit, the *Diversity and Inclusion Survey* was administered to all employees in 2006. The survey findings were presented in a written report in January 2007. Of an approximately 2,800 total employees, 1,481 responded to the survey. The survey contained 40 multiple-choice questions. All survey questions were stated positively and respondents were to select from one of five responses. Responses included: strongly agree (5), agree (4), neutral (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1) followed by an arithmetic weighting. This weighting allowed the consulting firm to establish arithmetic averages through which they could evaluate the strength of responses. In addition, the survey also had provisions for employees to submit written comments.

The most significant issue of concern raised was the perception of lack of merit-based promotions. The response to the survey question: "At the City of Las Vegas, decisions as to who receives promotions and other advancement opportunities are based primarily upon merit" was responded to with 27% positive and 50% negative. Additionally there were numerous written comments from the respondents reiterating their negative perception of the promotional process.

Many respondents discussed their belief that there was a high level of favoritism and nepotism in the promotional process, as well as strong concerns regarding racism and reverse discrimination in some areas of the City employment. Many individuals who perceive themselves as being well qualified feel that they and others have not been promoted due to favoritism, political and religious affiliations among the hiring managers and selected applicants.

Six questions from the 2007 *Diversity and Inclusion Survey* regarding promotions and advancement opportunities are shown in Table 1. The arithmetic averages for each question have been subdivided by survey groups. The survey results denote a large variance of positive response ranging from non-supervisory employees to the director level.

Table 1- **2007 Diversity and Inclusion Survey Findings – Promotional Process**

		Non – Spvr.	Spvr.	Mgr.	Dir.	Unlabeled	All
	Number in Group	1087	290	66	27	11	1481
1	Mgrs/Spvrs generally conduct an effective, unbiased interview for hiring and/or promotional purposes.	3.05	3.24	4.11	4.26	4.00	3.17
2	I feel that I have an opportunity for advancement at the City of Las Vegas.	3.33	3.55	3.92	4.07	4.18	3.42
3	At the City of Las Vegas, all employees receive appropriate career attention, regardless of educational level.	2.99	3.22	3.27	3.48	3.82	3.07
4	At the City of Las Vegas, decisions as to who receives promotions and other advancement opportunities are based primarily upon merit.	2.51	2.64	3.50	3.89	3.55	2.61
5	Equal opportunity is a reality at the City of Las Vegas.	3.33	3.39	3.76	4.00	3.82	3.38
6	Managers and other leaders are well educated on EEO laws and Affirmative Action regulations to hiring, promotion, discipline, termination and have the skills to manage productively while staying in compliance.	3.22	3.22	3.23	3.63	3.36	3.23

Scale:

4.00 and above = Strength
3.40-3.99 = Acceptable
3.00-3.39 = Concern
2.99 and below = Severe Concern

Question 4 - Demonstrates the greatest variance among respondents. Managers and directors believe merit decides promotional selections, while employees and supervisors do not support this opinion, (group averages range from 2.51 to 3.89 with a total overall average of 2.61).

Question 3 – Responding employees have a concern with "career attention", although the management group believes appropriate career attention is provided to employees, (group averages range from 2.99 to 3.48 with a total overall average of 3.07).

Question 6 - All groups appear to support the need for a level of increased training in the areas specified in the question, (group averages range from 3.22 to 3.63 with a total overall average of 3.23).

Question 1- The responses regarding the interview process, range from a level of "concern" by employees, to a "strength" by managers and directors, (group averages range from 3.05 to 4.26 with a total overall average of 3.17).

Question 2 - Opportunity for advancement responses range from a level of "concern" by the non-supervisory employee group to a "strength" at the manager and director level, (group averages range from 3.33 to 4.07).

Question 5 – The responses regarding equal opportunity demonstrate a large variance of perception between employees and management. (Group averages range from 3.33 to 4.00 with a total overall average of 3.38).

Overall goals of the Program Evaluation:

As a result of analysis of available data and information provided by the stakeholders, the evaluation team's program evaluation goals were:

1) Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the promotional selection process and recommend improvements where necessary.

2) Determine the possible causes for some employees perceived preferential treatment in the promotional process as expressed by some respondents of the 2007 *Diversity and Inclusion Survey*.

Although the program evaluation had two goals, the evaluation team hypothesized early on during the evaluation that recommendations to improve the promotional selection process would most likely reduce perceptions of preferential treatment and unfairness. It was agreed that the evaluation team would not attempt to examine the new recruitment process, as there was little concern with the existing process as reported by stakeholders and data to support any issues of fairness would be difficult to compile.

Data Collection and Methodology:

The evaluation team compiled data and information through meetings and interviews of stakeholders, along with documents provided by the Human resources department. Through this method the evaluation team developed the 2008 *City of Las Vegas Promotional Selection Process Survey, which* was administered to all classified employees at the City of Las Vegas.

Data and Information Examined and Analyzed:

1) The 2007 *Diversity and Inclusion Survey*, which contained 40 multiple-choice questions and extensive written comments. Our review of this survey focused on statistics and written comments relating to the promotional hiring selection process.

2) The City of Las Vegas Civil Service Rules and the Memorandum of Understanding between City of Las Vegas and the Las Vegas City Employee's Association. These two documents were analyzed to determine the bargaining agreement conditions, and the modifications implemented through the Memorandum of Understanding, that govern how the current promotional selection process is structured.

3) An examination of sample written examinations for the positions of Parking Operations Laborer, Office Specialist II, Senior office Specialist, Building Service Technician, and Senior HVAC Technician were conducted to determine the necessity and relevance to the job specification of these positions. Most of the examinations were technical in nature in order to gauge the knowledge relevant to the position. Based on our review of the examinations and our subsequent

interviews with stakeholder group, there were some that expressed concerns regarding relevance of the examinations used in administrative promotions.

4) Civil Service Rules of similar municipalities were examined in an effort to provide a possible benefit in comparison to the City of Las Vegas Civil Service rules. Several municipalities allowed greater flexibility in the promotion process through the use of a selection criterion that favored management decisions without requiring written testing. While other municipalities' utilized previous evaluations and attendance records. The review of comments specific to several of the similar municipalities were:

Douglas County: They promote based on three criteria. (1) Must meet the minimum qualification requirements, (2) Must provide a current evaluation performance appraisal of satisfactory of above, and (3) Must have the ability to effectively discharge the responsibility of the position. If candidates have similar qualifications they use preferences. The first preference is awarded to an employee in the department, the second preference is awarded to an employee in the highest grade, and the third preference is awarded to the employee with the greatest length of service.

City of Rochester: Was generally silent with respect to the content of the examination or promotional requirement. There will be a written examination to fill a position if desired by the hiring manager.

City of Houston: Promotions shall be filled in the department if practical. Promotional examinations may consist of one or more four parts: written, oral, mental and practical performance.

5) A promotional selection process time line report was reviewed to determine the tasks in the process, the party responsible for completing each task, and the duration of the task. The length of time required to fill an open position was seen as a weakness of the current process.

Interviews/Meetings:

The evaluation team conducted numerous meetings and individual interviews with senior executives of the City of Las Vegas Human Resources Department, along with the following stakeholders:

Human Resource Recruiters

Department Hiring Managers

Labor Representative for Las Vegas City Employees Association.

Advisory Group made up of representatives of the above stakeholder groups.

A summary of key issues and concerns from those interviews were:

Human Resource Recruiters:

a. Job classification specifications are frequently not currently maintained by some hiring departments.

b. Job classifications specifications that are revised require review and approval by the both the labor bargaining groups and the Civil Service Board.

c. There is often an extensive time frame between when a position request is received and the selected employee is placed in the position.

d. Civil Service Rules often place unrealistic deadlines on recruiters and hiring managers in conducting the process.

Department Hiring Managers:

a. Maintaining current job classification specifications is difficult due to evolving duties, technology changes, and Civil Service Board approval. Managers also believe their duties prevent them from having time to maintain accurate and updated classification specifications. Making changes is laborious and the assistance of Human Resources is needed to properly prepare classification specifications in a timely manner.

b. The best-suited candidate should possess practical knowledge and technical skills. Hiring managers want a well-rounded candidate with additional skills than those determined by testing alone.

c. Hiring managers recommend that the promotional selection process be examined and revaluated if possible.

Labor Representative for Las Vegas City Employees' Association:

a. The promotional selection process should be streamlined. The lengthy process allows employees to be placed in "acting" positions, which ultimately results in their being selected for promotion.

b. The labor representative has received comments from some employees that they perceive promotions are tailored to specific employees.

c. That the revision to job classifications is done solely to match an individual candidate for promotion.

d. It is believed by some employees that written examinations are not necessarily applicable to the position being filled. Some general job classifications are used to fill position in a wide variety of positions.

e. It was suggested that Civil Service Board approval might not be necessary when classification specification changes do not include a salary change.

Advisory Group:

a. The evaluation team's suggestion to streamline the process by bypassing the Civil Service Board for some reviews and approvals was rejected. The group members expressed concern that it could lead to perceived preferential treatment for certain positions.

b. The City is using the application plus supplemental for hiring some positions, similar to the Clark County.

c. The Group recommended providing voluntary training to employees in the areas of; completing a job application, resume writing, interviewing, and proper interview attire.

2008 City of Las Vegas Promotional Opportunity Survey:

Based in part on the results of the 2007 *Diversity and Inclusion Survey,* along with the input received from the stakeholder groups, the evaluation team prepared the 2008 *City of Las Vegas Promotional Opportunity Survey.* This survey consisted of eighteen questions that were electronically issued to 2,100 classified employees. Of which 1,070 valid responses, or 51% percent of the total employee group responded. The survey data was collected in two forms, by

total respondents and by sub-dividing the survey among respondents that applied and/or were promoted over the last five years.

Survey questions explored the different areas of the promotional process with the intent of determining a clearer understanding of why some employees believe favoritism exists in the selection process. In addition to issues of interviewing and selection, some of the associated areas that were examined in the survey were employee opinions on training programs in the preparation of promotion, and their desire for feedback after unsuccessful interviews. The survey also inquired to what extent written tests should be used and what other selection qualities an applicant should possess for promotion. Much of the evaluation team's recommendations were supported by the results of this survey.

Findings and Interpretation:

The major problems identified based on review of analyzed data, documents, and interviews with stakeholders groups were:

1) Fifty percent of the 1481 respondents surveyed believe promotions were not based on merit.

2) Written tests may not always provide an accurate indication of success of applicants selected for a position.

3) Examination of Civil Service Rules of similar municipalities indicates some have greater flexibility in promotional selection.

4) Although a method of monitoring the recruitment process through certification exists, there is no method to monitor the length of the selection process performed by varying departments.

The 2008 *City of Las Vegas Promotional Opportunity Survey* classified employee survey findings indicated the following strengths in the existing promotional process:

Question 4 - Are the qualifications for promotional opportunities clear and understandable? (67.2% positive responses and 24% negative responses).

Question 5 - Do you feel you adequately understand how the City of Las Vegas hiring process works? (72.3% positive response and 27.7% negative response).

Question 16 - In general, with respect to the items listed, do you feel the hiring/promotional process is fair? Reviewing the results based on the application, job description, and posting indicate an average of 83.2% respondents held a positive response. The results related to the interview were less positive with a 51.5% response.

The survey findings indicate the following opportunities for improvement:

Question 15 - In General do you feel the hiring/promotional process is based on the following? Race, Gender, Religion, Politics/Fraternization. The response rate was greatest under politics / fraternization, (52.5% positive response and 29.9% negative response)

Question 9 - If you were not selected for a position for which you applied, would you like the opportunity to discuss your interview performance? (79.7% positive response and 20.3% negative response). The overwhelming positive response supports the evaluation team's conclusion that non-selected employee's desire for some level of professional critique on their interview performance. Interview feedback could create an increased level of employee animosity if not subjectively delivered.

Question 2 - How would you rate the availability of classes by the City of Las Vegas to further your promotional opportunities?

49.5% of the respondents believed the availability of classes were very good or adequate. 41.3 % of the respondents thought the availability of the classes needed improvement or was poor.

Question 14 - Do you feel the promotional process is fair? (33.5% positive response and 39.5% negative response).

Question 3 - Do you feel you have adequate opportunity to advance from your present position within the City of Las Vegas? (43.1% positive response 44.9% negative response).

Question 6 - Do you believe qualified employees have the opportunity to be promoted at the City of Las Vegas? (52.3% positive response and 35.1% negative response).

Although 52.3% of those responded believe that they have an opportunity to be promoted, only 33.5% of the respondents to question 14, believe the promotional process to be fair. The disconnect may be a result of how the respondent is defining opportunity and there may be issues with one particular department(s). Additional information must be gathered to resolve this disconnect.

Question 17- When considering candidates for a position, how important should these factors be considered in the hiring process?

Table two, below presents the survey findings for each of the eight factors.

Table 2 - 2008 City of Las Vegas Promotional Opportunity Survey Findings

Importance of Factors to be considered in the hiring decision

		Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Attitude		**92.4%**	6.9%	0.7%
Work experience		**85.0%**	14.3%	0.7%
Attendance		**83.0%**	15.9%	1.1%
Performance evaluation		**80.1%**	17.9%	2.1%
Work accomplishment		**78.7%**	20.5%	0.8%
Appearance		**55.6%**	40.9%	3.5%
Certifications		**51.2%**	44.4%	4.4%
Continuing Education		36.9%	**54.6%**	8.5%
	% by Row	70.4%	26.9%	2.7%

Attendance --- 83.0% felt this factor to be “very important”. There is no argument that an examination of an applicant’s attendance record is warranted when considering promotion.

Performance Evaluation --- 80.1% of respondents believed this too is a “very important” factor.

Work experience --- 85.0% responded “very important” this positive response supports the evaluation teams’ utilization of knowledge, skills, and ability as part of the promotional evaluation process.

Work Accomplishment --- 78.7% responded “very important.” An employee’s past performance may be an accurate indicator of their future performance in many areas.

Attitude --- 92.4% responded “very important”. We can assume by “attitude” employees are referring to qualities such as being supportive to the department, motivated, fair-minded, task oriented, etc. However, it’s interesting that the same group of employees, in recalling an earlier question, 39.5% believe the promotional process is unfair. It is difficult to understand the overwhelming support of a subjective quality that is often difficult to assess during the interview. There may be a variance of opinion as to how individual employee views themselves in comparison to the perception held by supervisory and management personnel. This apparent contradiction demonstrates why performance evaluations are crucial in the selection process.

Based on interviews with the stakeholders, the evaluation team is of the opinion that employee evaluations are not consistently administered and different forms are used among different departments. It is recommended that this issue be examined by the Human Resources department as a potential evaluation project for a future evaluation team. During the interviews among stakeholders, some hiring managers used the term “fit factor” as being a consideration for promotions. Perhaps this “fit factor” is synonymous with the respondent’s perception of attitude.

Recommendations:

The assessment of available data, information compiled, stakeholder interviews and survey results assisted the evaluation team in developing the following recommendations. These recommendations consist of two categories. The first being recommendations related to initiating changes to the current promotional process. The second, surrounding additional training of supervisors and employees.

Recommended Process Changes**:**

1) Establish a structured schedule for departments to maintain and update their current job classification specifications and have implement enforcement measures to keep them updated. The current job specifications need to be reviewed in detail, and updated to meet current job classification standards. This is especially important for positions that require technological knowledge and certifications in order to meet the hiring demands and avoid lengthily periods of using acting positions.

2) Prepare a job classification specification template with drop down boxes for making option selections. This would assist the various departments in maintaining their job specifications and ultimately assisting both them and the Human Resources department in filling these positions. This template can be created through a combined effort between the hiring department and Human Resources to best suit the needs of all departments.

3) Transition to a Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSA's) analysis as part of the selection process as opposed to solely utilizing written examinations. By increasing the number of job classifications that are selected using KSA's, the frequency of

testing should be reduced, which will serve to diminish the perception of the tests being favorable to one candidate over another. This method will also place the most qualified candidate within the recruited position, as opposed to the candidate that is better at taking a test. The candidates will be selected using a uniform method that includes their past experience within the City of Las Vegas, as well as their actual skills within the job. The evaluation team, however, does not recommend that the testing component be removed completely. Once the candidates are pre-selected based on their applications and supplemental questionnaires, a skills test can be administered to a smaller group of applicants, reducing the amount of time needed within the overall selection process.

4) Limit the amount of time a person can be within a position in an acting capacity and evaluate their performance before they are permanently selected for the position. The current practice within the City of Las Vegas is that once an employee is placed into an acting position, they can remain in that position for an indefinite period. This practice can support the perception that once a person is placed into an acting position, they will ultimately be selected into that position on a permanent basis. This situation further creates the perception of favoritism.

   The evaluation team recommends that the maximum time allocated to use any individual in an acting position be limited to six months. Once this time frame has elapsed, the position should be filled through the promotional process. By providing the acting employee with an evaluation of their performance during their acting capacity, hiring manager is in better position to support the selection of this applicant, or deny the promotion.

Recommended Training Programs**:**

1) Provide employee development training including application preparation, interviewing, and general information regarding the steps in the promotional selection process. Several respondents of the Las Vegas Promotional Survey stated that they were unfamiliar with the promotional process and the steps needed to successfully navigate through the system. By providing basic, developmental training for those interested in moving up the structural ladder, a greater pool of applicants will emerge, including a reduced number of those employees who believe that the process is somehow biased towards the few employees that tend to rise through the city rank and file.

2) Establish a training program for supervisors to cover managing skills, interviewing and better understanding of the bargaining agreements. Supervisors are front line leaders and their ability to effectively direct the work force is essential in creating a positive change in all areas employee management. By providing this training, the supervisors should be better prepared to communicate to their assigned employees and effectively prepare performance reviews and provide proper direction to the working group. With this training, supervisors should also be better able to assist employees in their increased ability may serve towards succession planning in advancing to a more challenging position.

Summary:

The evaluation team supports the notion that a significant number of employees that responded to the 2007 *Diversity and Inclusion Survey* believe that there is preferential treatment in the promotional hiring process at the City of Las Vegas. It was also clear that the issues surrounding the preferential treatment are not a direct result of the actions of the Human Resource department. The Human Resources department has a legitimate concern about employee perceptions as a failure to respond can create a demoralized work environment and this department has the responsibility to address this issue, as it is one of employee relations.

The findings from the 2008 *City of Las Vegas Promotional Opportunity Survey* provided findings that the issue is not with the promotional process itself but is with the belief that an employee is hired based on politics or fraternization. A combined lack of knowledge and inherent distrust of most organizations in terms of the promotional process usually results in difficulties occurring. While there is no way to completely resolve the issue of perceived preferential treatment, the recommendations provided to the city should work to significantly reduce the negative perceptions held by some employees.

Appendices:

1) City of Las Vegas Confidential Report - Needs Analysis for Managing Diversity / Inclusion dated January 2007 prepared by Simmons Associates, Inc.
2) City of Las Vegas Civil Service Rules, adopted by Las Vegas City Council on October 1, 2006.
3) Memorandum of understanding between the City of Las Vegas and the Las Vegas City Employees' Association dated March 27, 2001.
4) Written examinations: (1) Parking Operations Laborer – 2008, (2) Office Specialist II – 2007, Senior Office Specialist – 2007, (3) Building Services Technician – 2006, (4) Senior HVAC Technician.
5) Civil Service Rules for: (1) City of Houston, (2) City of Rochester, (3) City of Omaha, (4) City of Reno, (5) City of Indianapolis, (6) City of Los Angeles, (7) Douglas County.
7) City of Las Vegas Promotional Opportunity Survey Results, April 2008.

References:

Emison, G.A., (2007). Practical Program Evaluation: Getting from Ideas to Outputs,

Mintrom, M., (2003). People Skills for Policy Analysts

Rossi, P.H., Lipsey M.W., & Freeman, H.E., (2004). Evaluation: A Systematic Approach.

Advisory Group, 2008. *In-person Interview*: City of Las Vegas

Hiring Managers, 2008. *In-person Interview*: City of Las Vegas

Human Resource Recruiters, 2008. *In-person Interview*: City of Las Vegas

Tuttle, Judy, 2008. *In-person Interview*: City of Las Vegas

Union Representative, 2008. *In-person Interview*: City of Las Vegas