Volunteer Company Leadership and Administration

Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute
University of Maryland
Steven T. Edwards, Director

Fall 2014
The Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute of the University of Maryland is the State’s comprehensive training and education system for all emergency services.

The Institute plans, researches, develops, and delivers quality programs to enhance the ability of emergency service providers to protect life, the environment, and property.
Student Performance Objective

- Given information from lecture, discussion and class activities, the student will be able to describe the importance of leadership in fire and emergency services organizations and describe the characteristics of effective leaders.

Overview

- What is Leadership?
- The Importance of Leadership
- Characteristics of Effective Leaders
- Selecting Qualified Leaders
- Adaptive Leadership
- The Transition from Member to Leader
What is Leadership?

• Leadership is the process of influencing others towards the achievement of organizational goals.

What is Leadership?

• Supervision is the action or process of watching and directing what someone does or how something is done.
• Management is the act of directing, controlling or making decisions related to a project, program, situation or organization.

Classroom Activity 1-2-1

• Characteristics of Effective Leaders
The Importance of Leadership

• In emergency situations, leadership helps ensure safety of personnel.
• In non-emergency situations, leadership promotes organizational efficiency and efficacy.

Characteristics of Effective Leaders

• Effective leaders
  – See opportunities
  – Identify challenges
  – Communicate effectively
  – Plan for success
  – Build trust

Characteristics of Effective Leaders

• Leadership is not about the position, but is about the individual in the position.
Adaptive Leadership

- There are two categories of problems that leaders will face.
  - Technical problems
  - Adaptive problems
- Modern leadership studies point to adaptive leadership as the means to change the culture of an organization.

Classroom Activity 1-2-2

- Adapting to Change

Selecting Qualified Leaders

- Elections
- Appointments
- Nominating Committees
Selecting Qualified Leaders

- Selecting the right individuals to serve on committees is one of the most important duties of the company leaders.
- Committees provide an opportunity for developing future leaders.

The Transition from Member to Leader

- Who are your company officers?
  - Administrative officers
  - Line officers
  - Committee chairpersons
  - Staff
  - Informal leaders

- Individual Members
  - Function at the task level
  - Have limited decision-making responsibility
  - Are generally supervised
- Intermediate Supervisors
  - Provide direction to individual members
  - Determine how to implement objectives
The Transition from Member to Leader

- Leaders
  - Establish goals and objectives
  - Communicate goals and objectives to members
  - Review and monitor progress on goals and objectives.

Classroom Activity 1-2-3

- Leadership Self-Assessment

Student Performance Objective

- Given information from lecture, discussion and class activities, the student will be able to describe the importance of leadership in fire and emergency services organizations and describe the characteristics of effective leaders.
Review

• What is Leadership?
• The Importance of Leadership
• Characteristics of Effective Leaders
• Selecting Qualified Leaders
• Adaptive Leadership
• The Transition from Member to Leader
Student Performance Objective

• Given information from lecture, discussion and class activities, the student will be able to describe the basic organizational principles that promote the success and efficiency of a volunteer company.

Overview

• Understanding the Bylaws
• Conducting Company Meetings
• Discipline in Volunteer Organizations
• Planning for the Future
Understanding the Bylaws

• Hierarchy of Corporate Documents
  – Articles of Incorporation
  – Constitution and Bylaws
  – Policies and Directives
  – Standard Operations Procedures

Understanding the Bylaws

• Articles of Incorporation—The basic charter of a corporation which spells out the name, basic purpose, incorporators, amount and types of stock which may be issued, and any special characteristics such as being non-profit.

Understanding the Bylaws

• Constitution—The structure, composition, physical make-up or nature of the organization.
• Bylaws—The rules adopted by an organization chiefly for the government of its members and the regulation of its affairs.
Understanding the Bylaws

- Directives—specific communications which initiate or govern actions, conduct or procedures in an organization.
- Procedures—A fixed set of instructions for carrying out an operation.

Understanding the Bylaws

- The bylaws are the rulebook by which your organization has agreed to operate.
- The bylaws are legally binding and are required by both federal and state statutes.

Understanding the Bylaws

- Composition of the Governing Body
- Conflict of Interest Statement
- Statement of Indemnification
- Committees
- Membership
- Voting Procedures
- Financial Management
- Meetings
- Amendments
Understanding the Bylaws

• Do not put too much in your bylaws.
• Do not limit the discretionary authority of the leadership.
• Rely on your bylaws to guide departmental actions when trouble erupts.
• Conduct a periodic review to ensure that the bylaws remain current with operating practices.

Understanding the Bylaws

• Robert’s Rules of Order is widely recognized as the authority on parliamentary procedure for organizations.
• Many organizations “adopt” Robert’s Rules of Order without ever having seen a copy.
• Robert’s Rules of Order should only be used on questions of parliamentary procedure IF the bylaws do not specify the appropriate action.

Student Activity 1-3-1

• Evaluating Your Bylaws
Conducting Company Meetings

- Effective meetings have a purpose.
- Effective meetings use time wisely.
- Effective meetings leave participants feeling like progress was made.

Conducting Company Meetings

- Meeting minutes provide an official (and legal) record of each meeting.
- Meeting minutes should consist of a clear, accurate, and complete report of all business transacted.
- Meeting minutes should be worded in a manner that is simple and unambiguous.
- Review and approval of the minutes at a subsequent meeting are a necessary order of business to ensure accuracy of the company record.

Conducting Company Meetings

- Meeting minutes should include the following elements:
  - Date and time of the meeting
  - Type of meeting
  - Names of those present
  - Establishment of a quorum
  - Summary of reports and discussions
  - Motions, decision and actions taken
Discipline in Volunteer Organizations

- The degree of professionalism in dealing with these issues will substantially impact the retention rate of your organization.
- The handling of personnel issues will define whether your department is considered a quality department or just a clubhouse for reckless individuals.

Discipline in Volunteer Organizations

- As the company leader, your goal should be to provide positive direction to improve behavior and performance.
- Your members expect that you will deal with personnel issues in a fair and professional manner.
- It is important to develop a disciplinary policy and follow it.

Discipline in Volunteer Organizations

- Progressive discipline provides a multi-step process to address discipline issues.
  - Verbal warning
  - Written warning
  - Disciplinary action
- The goal should be to address issues at the lowest level by modifying behaviors that cause the performance issue.
Discipline in Volunteer Organizations

• The company has an obligation to investigate allegations rather than react to hearsay or rumor.
• Depending on the circumstances, the member may need to be placed on suspension while the investigation proceeds.
• Detailed investigations may require the support of a third-party resource.

Discipline in Volunteer Organizations

• Federal laws related to workplace hostility and sexual harassment apply to volunteer organizations.
• Every department must establish a policy on hostile work environment and sexual harassment AND conduct annual training for members.
  – This policy should apply to spoken and written words, including electronic mail or social media.

Discipline in Volunteer Organizations

• Each officer must understand his or her responsibility to immediately advance any complaint to the appropriate department authority.
• Members must be assured that any complaint of alleged conduct or inappropriate interpersonal behavior will receive immediate attention.
Discipline in Volunteer Organizations

• Poor performers have a negative effect on the entire department.
• Every department should routinely evaluate member performance.
• Work with individuals who need assistance with additional training or counseling.
• Termination should be a last resort after you have attempted all other means to improve behavior.

Planning for the Future

• Planning is the foundation of the management process.
• Planning allows an organization to balance community needs with departmental effectiveness.

Planning for the Future

• Strategic planning provides a roadmap for the future growth of the organization.
• Strategic planning provides insight:
  – Where are we now?
  – Where do we want to go?
  – How do we get there?
Planning for the Future

• Strategic planning
  – Establishes a common purpose and sense of direction.
  – Improves communication.
  – Promotes effective resource management.

Planning for the Future

• The basic strategic planning process:
  – Review and revise the mission statement.
  – Review and revise the vision statement.
  – Review and revise the core values.
  – Conduct a SWOT analysis.
  – Identify the strategic issues of the organization.
  – Establish measurable goals and objectives
  – Establish a timeline to complete the goals.
  – Review annually, measure progress and make adjustments as needed.

Planning for the Future

• Succession planning is the process of identifying potential future leaders and providing them with appropriate training.
• Succession planning helps prevent under-qualified people from being forced to assume leadership roles.
Planning for the Future

• The basic succession planning process:
  – Identify key roles within the organization.
  – Define the competencies required to assume those roles.
  – Evaluate members against these criteria.
  – Identify pools of talent that could eventually fill these roles.
  – Provide training opportunities and mentoring to these individuals.

Student Performance Objective

• Given information from lecture, discussion and class activities, the student will be able to describe the basic organizational principles that promote the success and efficiency of a volunteer company.

Review

• Understanding the Bylaws
• Conducting Company Meetings
• Discipline in Volunteer Organizations
• Planning for the Future
Student Performance Objective

- Given information from lecture, discussion, and class activities, the student will be able to describe the importance of establishing partnerships with outside organizations for the successful operation of a volunteer company.

Overview

- The Importance of Partnerships
- PIER Programs to Improve Partnerships
- Marketing your Organization
- The Role of Social Media
- Politics and Emergency Services
The Importance of Partnerships

• Fulfilling your organizational mission and meeting the needs of your customers requires forging partnerships.
• The first step is to understand who your customers are and what they expect from you and your organization.

The Importance of Partnerships

• Identifying Your Customers
  – Public/Community
  – Fire Department
  – Membership

The Importance of Partnerships

• Expectations of the Community
  – The fire department will provide the services that are needed to keep citizens safe.
  – The fire department will respond in a timely manner.
  – The firefighters that respond to an emergency are trained and experienced.
  – The taxpayers’ money is spent in the best interests of the firefighter and community safety.
  – Services will change to meet growing demand because of changes in community demographics.
The Importance of Partnerships

• Expectations of the fire department
  – Members are trained and proficient.
  – Members share the response burden.
  – A strategic plan for growth exists.
  – Rules are in place to keep the system stable.

• Expectations of the members
  – Members will be treated fairly.
  – The working environment will be safe.
  – An environment will be created that encourages personal growth.
  – The importance of teamwork will be reinforced.
  – The leadership is receptive to hearing opinions.
  – Members' time will be used efficiently and effectively.
  – Members' service will be appreciated.

• A partnership is defined as a relationship between individuals or groups that is characterized by mutual cooperation and responsibility for achievement of a specified goal.
• The public perceives information from partnership efforts as more credible.
• Demonstrated community support is well received by the public and by elected officials.
The Importance of Partnerships

• Each partnership member brings something to the table that is a benefit to all other members.
• Isolation is broken down and creates an environment that stimulates empowerment.
• The needed resources are brought together to achieve goals.

The Importance of Partnerships

• Forging partnerships
  – Make cooperation a guiding principle.
  – Maintain an open organization.
  – Counter internal hesitation.
  – Think creatively to identify potential partners.
  – Maintain the connection.

The Importance of Partnerships

• Forging partnerships (continued)
  – Encourage diverse viewpoints.
  – Develop a shared sense of the future.
  – Share responsibility and credit.
  – Allow a coalition to build.
  – Recognize that personal relationships foster professional success.
PIER Programs to Improve Partnerships

• The traditional mission of the fire service was once very clear: saving lives and protecting property from fire.
• Fire departments today do much more than simply suppress fires, including expanded response roles, prevention and outreach efforts.

PIER Programs to Improve Partnerships

• Public Information, Education and Relations (PIER) programs provide the tools for partnering with the public to enhance prevention efforts.

PIER Programs to Improve Partnerships

• Public Information
  – We need to take action to inform the public about our operations and why we do certain things.
  – The public information function generally is accomplished through the media, public speeches and presentations.
PIER Programs to Improve Partnerships

• Public Education
  – Public education seeks to change a person’s attitude about his or her personal safety and wellness, resulting in a change in behavior.
  – Public education uses many methods to achieve its goal.

PIER Programs to Improve Partnerships

• Public Relations
  – Public relations fosters a positive public perception about the fire department, its members, its programs, and its services.
  – Public relations programs use many methods to reach the public.
  – The focus of a public relations program is often the value of the programs and services provided.

PIER Programs to Improve Partnerships

• The three elements of PIER are fully integrated in an efficient public partnership program.
  – All three elements are aimed at members of the public.
  – Each element employs similar methods to reach the public.
  – When one element is done well, it supports the other elements.
PIER Programs to Improve Partnerships

• A partnership program has benefits to the fire department because it
  – Increases efficient use of existing resources by educating the public to prevent or properly respond to emergencies.
  – Increases political exposure and support.
  – Increases public support for additional resources.
  – Improves retention of current members.
  – Improves morale through positive public and internal recognition.

PIER Programs to Improve Partnerships

• Partnership programs benefit the community as well because they
  – Reduce the number of deaths, disabilities and property loss.
  – Reduce costs for the individual citizen and the community.
  – Reduce emotional trauma.
  – Improve service.
  – Increase community pride.

Classroom Activity 2-1-1

• Public Partnership Programs
Marketing Your Organization

• Many volunteer organizations do not consider marketing part of their operation.
• In reality, every action of your department and its members is a marketing opportunity.

Marketing Your Organization

• Product
  – The goods of services that you provide.
• Price
  – The amount a customer pays for these goods or services
• Place
  – What makes the product accessible?
• Promotion
  – The vehicles used to communicate the value of the product.

Marketing Your Organization

• How do your customers perceive your product?
• Do they know who you are?
• Who are your competitors?
• How does your product compare to your competitors’ product?
Marketing Your Organization

- Our service is our product.
  - We want to promote or “sell” it to our service population.
  - We want it to be the best that it can be.
- We want our service to be accessible to the public.
- We want our service to be supported by our community.

Marketing Your Organization

- The internal market
  - Members need to feel fully informed, be aware of department programs, and feel that the organization values them and their opinions.
  - Fostering member perceptions is an important part of marketing your department.
  - Remember to ask, listen, and respond to the needs of your own people!

Marketing Your Organization

- The external market
  - The external market consists of both those to whom you provide service and others who support your organization.
  - There are many individuals and organizations in your external customer pool.
Marketing Your Organization

• Marketing strategies
  – Assess the customer’s needs.
  – Design your programs to address those needs.
  – Communicate the value of your product and explain how it will meet the customer’s needs.

Marketing Your Organization

• The importance of marketing
• Marketing generates awareness.
  – Word-of-mouth advertising can be extremely important when developing a publicity campaign.
  – Recent studies show that 90% of consumers trust word-of-mouth suggestions.
• Marketing is important to receiving the support from your community and local government.

Classroom Activity 2-1-2

• Establishing Effective Partnerships
The Role of Social Media

• Social media has become one of the primary means of communication.
• Social media can be a powerful tool for public information.
• Social media is a catchall for any online or mobile communication technology that stresses interactivity between individuals, groups or organizations.

The Role of Social Media

• Social media embraces the two-way flow of information by putting organizations in direct and continued interaction with their customers through interactive dialogue.
• Social media marketing focuses more on the relationship between the customer and the organization, allowing for the sharing of information and interaction that was never possible with traditional media.

The Role of Social Media

• The fire and emergency service should embrace the use of social media to enhance communication and information exchange, streamline processes and foster productivity with its employees.
• A company policy should be developed to communicate a department position on the use and management of social media and provides guidelines on the administration and oversight.
Politics and the Emergency Services

• Politics is the art of building and using influence to achieve an individual or group public policy goal.
• Politics starts with establishing partnerships and leveraging their influence to affect policy decisions.
• The emergency services need to be active in influencing political decisions that affect operations.

Politics and the Emergency Services

• Creating public policy
  – Identify the problem.
  – Build a community agenda around the issue.
  – Propose public policy to resolve the issue.
  – Advocate the adoption of proposed policy.
  – Implement, once adopted.

Politics and the Emergency Services

• Establishing and maintaining influence
  – Visibility
  – Interaction
  – Policymaking process
  – Ethical behavior
  – Organizational performance
Politics and the Emergency Services

• The political power structure
  – Involves elected and appointed officials.
  – Acts within the constraints of laws, codes and ordinances.
  – Is influenced by the informal power structure.
  – Is influenced by the individual goals and values of each official.

Politics and the Emergency Services

• The formal power structure
  – Elected officials
    • County/City Council or Commissioners
    • County Executive or Mayor
    • District Board of Governors
  – Appointed officials
    • County/City Manager or Administrator
    • County Administrative Officer
    • Fire Chief

Politics and the Emergency Services

• The informal power structure
  – In every community and organization, there is an informal political power structure.
  – Any public policy initiative must have the support of the informal power structure.
  – In order to be effective, the fire service leader must understand, respect and build a relationship with the informal power structure within the community.
Politics and the Emergency Services

- Failure to align programs and services with the needs and expectations of your community reduces your department’s credibility and political influence.
- One of the best ways of aligning your programs and services to the needs and expectations is to become part of the community’s political structure.

Classroom Activity 2-1-3

- Politics and Influence

Student Performance Objective

- Given information from lecture, discussion, and class activities, the student will be able to describe the importance of establishing partnerships with outside organizations for the successful operation of a volunteer company.
Review

• The Importance of Partnerships
• PIER Programs to Improve Partnerships
• Marketing your Organization
• The Role of Social Media
• Politics and Emergency Services
Student Performance Objective

- Given information from lecture, discussion and class activities, the student will be able to effectively manage the financial operations of a volunteer fire company.

Overview

- Principles of Financial Management
- Fiscal Accountability
- Financial Planning
- Preparing a Budget
- Keeping Funds Safe
Principles of Financial Management

- Financial management is defined as planning, organizing, directing, monitoring, and controlling the monetary resources of a business or organization.
- Financial management requires an understanding of the organization's goals, objectives, and performance measures.

Principles of Financial Management

- Evaluate funding sources.
- Determine how funds are to be used.
- Control the expenditure of funds.

Principles of Financial Management

- Financial management is a critical leadership responsibility.
  - Ensures long term fiscal sustainability.
  - Builds community trust.
  - Enables organizational planning.
  - Supports responsible resource allocation.
Principles of Financial Management

- Elements of financial management include
  - Accountability
  - Planning
  - Budgeting
  - Procurement policies and procedures
  - Fiscal controls
  - Property management

Fiscal Accountability

- The organization (YOU) are answerable to a higher authority (THE COMMUNITY) for the appropriate use of financial resources.

Fiscal Accountability

- Fiscal accountability involves
  - Meeting community and organizational expectations.
  - Complying with laws and regulations.
  - Maintaining accurate financial resources.
  - Ensuring transparency of financial transactions.
Fiscal Accountability

- Community Expectations
  - Good stewarding of financial resources.
  - Desired outcomes achieved and sustained by the organization at the lowest possible cost.
  - Fiscal accountability and transparency.
  - Effective fiscal planning.

Fiscal Accountability

- Organizational Expectations
  - Based on organizational culture relative to fiduciary responsibility.
  - Based on personal and organizational values.

Fiscal Accountability

- Non-Profit Organizations
  - Are created for purposes other than creating a profit for its owners or investors.
    - Not necessarily for a purpose that would qualify it for exemption of taxes.
  - Are granted status by the state.
Fiscal Accountability

• Tax-Exempt Organizations
  – Are exempt from federal corporate and income taxes for most types of revenue.
  – Are permitted to solicit tax-deductible contributions.
  – Are granted status by the IRS.

Fiscal Accountability

• Charitable Tax Exemption
  – The best known type of tax-exemption is 501(c)(3), also known as the "charitable tax exemption."
    • These organizations must be organized and operated exclusively for exempt purposes.
  – Volunteer fire and emergency services organizations are eligible for 501(c)(3) status because they are charitable organizations and they lessen the burden of government to provide emergency services.

Fiscal Accountability

• Charitable Tax Exemption
  – The earnings of a tax-exempt organization may not inure to any private shareholder or individual.
  – A charitable organization may not attempt to influence legislation as a substantial part of its activities and it may not campaign for or against political candidates.
  – Although they are exempt from income taxation, charitable organizations are still required to file annual returns of their income and expenses with the IRS.
Fiscal Accountability

- Annual filing of tax returns is required via Form 990.
- Gross receipts and assets determine which Form 990 is required:
  - Gross receipts less than $50,000: Form 990N
  - Gross receipts less than $200,000 and assets less than $500,000: Form 990EZ or Form 990
  - Gross receipts greater than $200,000 and/or assets greater than $500,000: Form 990
- Consult your tax accountant for further information.

Fiscal Accountability

- Recommended Policies
  - Conflict of Interest: prohibits members/officers from participating in financial decisions that they or a relative/close associate may benefit from.
  - Documentation Retention: states the length of time that records are maintained by the company.
  - Whistleblower: provides a procedure and protection for members to report financial irregularities.

Financial Planning

- Proper financial planning ensures that the organization has sufficient funds to provide the services that the public expects.
Financial Planning

- Financial planning involves the following steps
  - Assess current program, services and resource needs.
  - Assess ability to sustain current program and service levels.
  - Assess program and service effectiveness in meeting community expectations.
  - Assess future program, services, or resource needs.
  - Maintain long-term fiscal stability.

Preparing a Budget

- Having and following a budget is critical to the financial planning process because it
  - Provides a management tool to balance income and expenses.
  - Allows the department to assess whether expectations are being met.
  - Identifies income needs and allows projection of future needs.

Preparing a Budget

- An operating budget
  - Typically covers a one year period, often called a fiscal year.
  - Includes a detailed projection of all income and expenses related to the daily operation of the department.
- A capital budget
  - Includes items of a larger dollar value often purchased with a loan or mortgage.
    - These items often depreciate over time.
Preparing a Budget

• Sources of Income
  – Local/State government assistance
  – Fundraising and charitable contributions
  – Grants
  – Fee for service

Preparing a Budget

• Common expenditures
  – Apparatus and facility loan payments
  – Equipment and supply purchases
  – Utilities
  – Insurance
  – Training
  – Fuel
  – Maintenance
  – Administrative costs
  – Public education
  – Member benefits

Preparing a Budget

• The budget process entails
  – Identifying participants
  – Reviewing local economic trends
  – Forecasting revenue
  – Estimating expenses
  – Conducting a gap analysis and closing the gap
  – Planning for the unexpected
  – Allowing the organization to review the budget
  – Approving/adopting the budget
Classroom Activity 3-1-1

• Preparing a budget

Keeping Funds Safe

• Banking
  – Conduct background checks on all new officers and members.
  – Always require two signatures on checks and make sure they are signed after they have been written in full.
  – Never sign blank checks or allow the use of signature stamps, even for convenience.
  – Ensure that your bank requires a signature card and keep it up to date.

Keeping Funds Safe

• Banking (continued)
  – Have bank statements received and reconciled by someone who does not have check writing authority.
  – Require purchase orders and invoices for all purchases of property or service and compare to checks.
  – Have an independent third-party audit your books annually.
Keeping Funds Safe

- Fundraising and special events
  - For events where large amounts of cash come in quickly or for events occurring over a long period of time, have frequent pick-up of and accounting of cash.
  - Have at least two people responsible for reconciliation and deposit of cash.
  - Have some form of paper trail so that a close estimate of the anticipated cash can be obtained and confirmed.

Keeping Funds Safe

- Credit cards
  - The governing board must authorize credit cards.
  - Members should be trained on the proper use of credit cards.
  - Cards should be issued in the names of specific individuals.
  - Personal use of credit cards should be prohibited.
  - Credit cards that allow cash advances should be avoided.

Keeping Funds Safe

- Credit cards (continued)
  - Reasonable credit limits should be established.
  - Guidelines should be in place for phone, fax or internet purchases.
  - Statements should be reviewed to identify red flags.
  - A clearly defined reconciliation and review process must be in place.
  - Always verify that items purchased were actually received.
Classroom Activity 3-1-2

• Handling Department Theft

Student Performance Objective

• Given information from lecture, discussion and class activities, the student will be able to effectively manage the financial operations of a volunteer fire company.

Review

• Principles of Financial Management
• Fiscal Accountability
• Financial Planning
• Preparing a Budget
• Keeping Funds Safe
Student Performance Objective

• Given information from lecture, discussion and class activities, the student will be able to conduct human resource operations to ensure adequate staffing of a volunteer fire company.

Overview

• Volunteerism
• Recruitment and Retention Challenges
• Recruitment Strategies
• Retention
• Retention Strategies
Volunteerism

• The fire and emergency services across the United States are highly dependent on volunteers for staffing.
  – 88% of US fire departments are volunteer.
  – Volunteers protect 40% of the US population.
• Recent trends show a steep decline in volunteer participation over the last five years.

Volunteerism

• You are competing for a portion of the limited spare time that an individual has to offer.
• Your challenge is to motivate the individual to give up part of that time to serve as a volunteer in your department.

Volunteerism

• People volunteer because they want to be a part of something that benefits the community and themselves.
• People volunteer because they want a sense of accomplishment or achievement.
Volunteerism

- The most common barriers to volunteerism are the lack of time and poor leadership in the department.
- The same reasons drive people to leave a department.

Volunteerism

- If members are content, they will attract new members that want to be part of a productive team.

Classroom Activity 4-1-1

- Recruitment and Retention Challenges
Recruitment and Retention Challenges

• Sociological changes
  – The median age is increasing.
  – Higher housing costs are driving away younger people.
  – There are more two-income families and individuals with multiple jobs.
  – The population is more transient.

Recruitment and Retention Challenges

• Negative pressure on the volunteer fire service
  – Many individuals work outside the community in which they live.
  – Larger employers have replaced small, local employers.
  – There is less emphasis on the social aspects of volunteerism.
  – Training requirements have increased.
  – Call volume has increased.

Recruitment and Retention Challenges

• Generational diversity
  – Each generation has differing values, experiences, expectations, methods of communication, motivation, etc.
  – Today’s fire service is comprised of members of three distinct generations.
    • Baby Boomers (born 1946–1964)
    • Generation X (born 1965–1980)
    • Generation Y (born 1980–2000)
Recruitment and Retention Challenges

- Organizational culture drives the organization and shapes interactions between members.
- Organizational culture can have both positive and negative effects on the membership.

Recruitment and Retention Challenges

- Strong organizational culture has a positive effect on membership.
  - High member motivation and loyalty.
  - Higher retention rates.
  - Increased team cohesiveness.
- Weak organizational culture has a negative effect on membership.
  - There may be lack of alignment with organizational values.
  - An extensive bureaucracy might be put into place in an attempt to compensate for the weak culture.

Recruitment Strategies

- Conduct a needs assessment
  - Recruitment must begin with a needs assessment of the department.
  - The needs assessment will identify critical needs and gaps.
    - Levels and types of service
    - Community growth and development
    - Community expectations
    - Fiscal capacity
Recruitment Strategies

- Identify qualities and skills
  - Identify the character traits and skills required to fill positions.
    - Character Traits
    - Education/Specialized Training
    - Experience
  - Many departments focus on recruiting operational members, but you must also consider administrative and support needs.

Recruitment Strategies

- Establish a general strategy
  - Centralized
  - Decentralized
  - Internal
  - External

Recruitment Strategies

- Identify potential volunteers
  - Personal contacts
  - High schools
  - Colleges/technical schools
  - Churches
  - Civic organizations
  - Local businesses
  - Community events
Recruitment Strategies

• Advertise and recruit
  – Advertise in local papers and community newsletters.
  – Post flyers in libraries, community centers, and shopping malls.
  – Promote through web page and social media.
  – Conduct an open house event.
  – Attend community association activities and wear your uniform to identify you as a member of the volunteer fire company.
  – Partner with organizations such as Citizens Corps, Fire Corps or Explorers.

Recruitment Strategies

• Conduct informational sessions
  – Set expectations
  – Define duties and training requirements
  – Define administrative requirements
  – Review rules and regulations
  – Introduce department leadership

Recruitment Strategies

• Screen potential members
  – Motivation
  – Level of commitment
  – Organizational fit
  – Disqualifiers
  – Specialized education or skill set
  – Future leadership potential
Recruitment Strategies

• Follow through—orientation
  – Introduce the new member to the officers and general membership.
  – Create an information packet that outlines responsibilities for training, fundraising, operational response, duty crews, etc.
  – Develop a checklist to track progress in completing processing paperwork and training requirements.
  – Assign an existing member to assist the new member through the probationary period.

Retention

• Causes of Attrition
  – Personal Issues
    • Lack of Time
    • Family Demands
    • Emotional Problems
    • Work Demand/Changes
  – Organizational Issues
    • Ineffective leadership
    • Training demands

Retention

• Your ability to lead and motivate people will have a direct effect on retention.
• As the leader, you have to identify what hurdles exist in your department and take measures to remove hurdles that impact retention.
Retention

• The Keys to Retention
  – Meet the needs of the membership.
  – Provide rewards and recognition.
  – Provide adequate leadership and supervision.
  – Provide a challenge.

Retention Strategies

• Effective Leadership
  – The number one reason cited by members that leave a department is ineffective leadership.
  – Departmental leadership is something over which we have control.
    • Leaders should be selected based on qualifications, not popularity.
    • Steps should be taken to avoid frequent turnover.

Retention Strategies

• Effective Communication
  – Leaders must actively listen to the membership to understand needs and expectations and address concerns.
  – Multiple methods of communications should be used to reach the membership.
    • Email
    • Web site
    • Social Media
Retention Strategies

• Department Standards
  – Standards establish a framework for the department and for individual performance.
    • Minimum response/call volume
    • Training/drill participation
    • Fundraising requirements
  – Standards must be achievable for members that have outside commitments.

Retention Strategies

• Image
  – Having a positive organizational image improves retention rates.
  – Establishing a connection to the community will improve public image.
  – Providing quality service and focusing on customer service will create a positive public image.

Retention Strategies

• Recognition
  – Feeling appreciated and valued is a basic human need.
  – Members should be recognized for good performance or personal achievement.
    • Say “Thank you”
    • Involve members in decisions.
    • Highlight performance or achievement in an internal newsletter
    • Recognize and celebrate milestones.
  – Withholding recognition is not a neutral act; it actually has negative effects on morale.
Retention Strategies

• Incentives
  – Incentives give the best people in the organization reasons to stay.
  – Some organizations are able to offer direct financial incentives.
  – Some organizations are able to offer indirect financial incentives.

Retention Strategies

• The Fun Factor
  – It is important that members have fun throughout the volunteer experience.
  – A social committee can help create fun activities and events to keep members connected and engaged.
    • Host social events that include members’ families.
    • Make training enjoyable.
    • Host fundraising events.
    • Take group trips.

Retention Strategies

• Exit Interviews
  – A key element in retention is understanding why members leave.
    • Consider developing an exit interview process to collect this information.
  – The exit interview should be an open discussion permitting the member to discuss reasons for leaving.
  – Exit interviews should be conducted one-on-one with a departmental officer.
Retention Strategies

- Exit Interviews
  - Exit interviews should include questions designed to improve company relations.
    - What are your reasons for leaving the organization?
    - What were your most satisfying experiences?
    - What were your least satisfying experiences?

- Exit Interviews questions (continued)
  - What recommendations do you have to improve the organization?
  - Are there ways that the department can be of assistance to you?
  - Is there any way that the department could have prevented your departure?

Retention Strategies

- Maintain contact with former members
  - Keep former members informed of company activities through newsletters and email updates.
  - Make personal contact periodically to check on former members.
  - Offer opportunities for former members to come back in a limited capacity (administrative support).
**Student Performance Objective**

• Given information from lecture, discussion and class activities, the student will be able to conduct human resource operations to ensure adequate staffing of a volunteer fire company.

**Review**

• Volunteerism
• Recruitment and Retention Challenges
• Recruitment Strategies
• Retention
• Retention Strategies
Student Performance Objective

- Given information from lecture, discussion and class activities, students will be able to develop a personal action plan to improve personal leadership capabilities and improve their department operations.

Overview

- Becoming a Better Leader
Becoming a Better Leader

- Serving as a leader in your department is not an easy job.
- The rewards are high when you are successful, but the consequences of failure are high as well.

Becoming a Better Leader

- This course has introduced a number of concepts to help you become an effective leader.
- It is your personal responsibility to develop your skills and build on your experiences to make your company successful.

Classroom Activity 4-2-1

- Personal Action Plan
**Student Performance Objective**

- Given information from lecture, discussion and class activities, students will be able to develop a personal action plan to improve personal leadership capabilities and improve their department operations.

**Review**

- Becoming a Better Leader