John S. D’Alessandro
FASNY

- Association Secretary / VPC
- Recruitment Lane Leader – IAFC VCOS
- Past Commissioner / PIO Halfmoon FD
- 40+ Years Public / Media Relations
“The most important job of every old firefighter is to teach young firefighters how to become old firefighters.”

But what happens if there is no one to teach?
Volunteer Fire Service: A National Problem

Volunteer Firefighters in the US

- 1984: 920,000
- 1994: 880,000
- 2004: 780,000
- 2014: 720,000
Volunteer Fire Service: The Challenge
Volunteer Fire Service: The Problem In NY

1. 1998: Approximately 110,000 Volunteers
2. 2010: Approximately 84,000 Volunteers
3. 2011: $4.2 SAFER Grant To FASNY
4. 2014: Approximately 105,000 Volunteers
“The most important job of every old firefighter is to teach young firefighters how to become old firefighters.”

WHY?

But what happens if there is no one to teach?
Recruitment Success: Identifying Barriers

The difficult we do immediately
The impossible takes a little longer

- Unknown Firefighter
<table>
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<th>Societal</th>
<th>Departmental</th>
<th>Individual</th>
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Recruitment Success: Identifying Barriers
Recruitment Success: Identifying Barriers

Too Many Outlets

Society

Lack Of Community Identification

Decline In Volunteerism ($)

EMERGENCY
911
Recruitment Challenges: Compounded Problem

Percent distribution of volunteers by type of main organization, September 2014

- Religious
- Educational or youth service
- Social or community service
- Hospital or other health
- Civic, political, professional, or international
- Sport, hobby, cultural, or arts
- Environmental or animal care
- Public safety
- Other
- Not determined

An Annoyance

Dependence On The Legacy Affect

Recruits Will Always Come

Recruitment Success: Identifying Barriers

FD
Recruitment Success: Identifying Barriers
Recruitment Success: Identifying Barriers

I’m The One Running Away

Person

I Don’t Have The Time

I Don’t Know How To Do It
Motivated, trained individuals have been, are and always will be the foundation of the fire service.
Recruitment Size Up: SOG #2

Not everyone is cut out to be a volunteer firefighter.
Every public contact is an recruitment opportunity.
Recruitment begins or ends at the “firehouse” door.
Gaining a recruit is just the beginning.
Recruitment without retention is a losing proposition.
Recruitment Success: Yesterday’s Approach
Recruitment Success: Today’s Necessity
Assess your manpower needs.

Determine your recruitment capabilities.

Have a written plan / establish a process.

Review everything on a regular basis.
Recruitment Success: Business Pre-Plan

Assess your manpower needs.
Mission: Growth / Decline

FD

Type Of Manpower Needed

Recruitment Success: Department Needs

Financial / Training Limitations
Assess your manpower needs.

Determine your recruitment capabilities.
Recruitment Success: Department Capabilities

- Department Culture
- Current Membership
- Leadership Buy-In
Assess your manpower needs.

Determine your recruitment capabilities.

Have a plan and a process.
Recruitment Success: Department Approach

- Put The Plan In Writing
- Establish Goals
- Implement A Consistent Membership Process
Recruitment Success: The Plan

- Clearly Define Roles
- Create A Theme And Message(s)
- Identify Communications Channels
- Develop Activities / Events
- Look For Partners
Recruitment Success: Pre-Application

- Quick Response To Inquiries
- Set-up An Information Meeting
- Explain Benefits And Expectations
- Arrange A “Ride Along”
- Assign A Mentor: Before And After
Recruitment Success: Establish A Process
Recruitment Success: Establish A Process

- Straightforward
- Timely Decision
- Reply Verbal / Written
- Keep Accurate Records
Recruitment Success: Running The Business

- Know Your Customers
- In Competition With Other Products
- Promote Several Versions Of Product
- Insure Truth In Advertising
- *Always Watch The Balance Sheet*
Recruitment Success: Running The Business

- Know Your Customers
- Membership Is A Commodity
- In Competition With Other Products
- Promote Several Versions Of Product
- *Insure Truth In Advertising*
Recruitment Resources: Target Audiences

Age Distribution Of US Firefighters 2013
Recruitment Resources: Target Audiences

Age Distribution Of US Firefighters 2013

- 16-19: 0%
- 20-29: 5%
- 30-39: 10%
- 40-49: 15%
- 50-59: 20%
- 60+: 25%

Women: 30%
Minorities: 20%
Recruitment Success: Running The Business

Know Your Customers

Membership Is A Commodity

In Competition With Other Products

Promote Several Versions Of Product

*Insure Truth In Advertising*
Recruitment Resources: Respected Brand

Tradition
Brotherhood
Service
Dedication
Professionalism
Recruitment Resources: Respected Brand
Recruitment Success: Running The Business

- Know Your Customers
- Membership Is A Commodity
- In Competition With Other Products
- Promote Several Versions Of Product
- *Insure Truth In Advertising*
Recruitment Resources:
Image Catch-22

PERCEPTION?

BACKDRAFT
One breath of oxygen and it explodes in a deadly rage

CHICAGO FIRE

LADDER 49
Recruitment Resources: Image Catch-22

REALITY?
Recruitment Resources:
Image Catch-22

BALANCE!
Recruitment without retention is a losing proposition.
Motivated, trained individuals have been, are and always will be the foundation of the fire service.
Age Distribution Of US Firefighters 2013

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Retention
Recruitment Resources: Target Audiences
Recruitment Success: Identifying Barriers

Retention Challenges
Identifying Barriers
Retention Success: Avoiding Friction

RECRUITMENT  ADEQUATE STAFFING  RETENTION
Retention Success: Discontent Catalysts

- Unclear Focus Or Direction
- Lack Of Fairness Or Appreciation
- Sense Of Being Pushed Out

FD
Retention Success: Discontent Cures

Members Informed And Involved

Equal Rewards And Discipline

LEADERS

Balance /
Integrate Groups
“The most important job of every old firefighter is to teach young firefighters how to become old firefighters.”

Set-up An Information Meeting

Arrange A “Ride Along”

Assign A Mentor: Before And After
Recruitment Success: Fire In You Campaign

- Consistent Statewide Theme
- Targets The Barriers / Audiences
- Delivery Methods Are Adaptable
- Networking / Existing Channels
- Resources Available Locally
Recruitment Success: 
Fire In You Campaign

Tuition Assistance AVAILABLE!

Become a Volunteer Firefighter at www.FireInYou.org
Recruitment Success: Fire In You Campaign

Is there a FIRE in you?

Do you have the dedication and drive to do something great?
- Do you have the courage to act?
- The ability to perform?

Do you have what it takes to be a volunteer firefighter? To be the one running in when everyone else is running out?

Not only do you get the satisfaction of helping your community, you also get free training, scholarships and other benefits.

Join your local fire department. It may be the most rewarding thing you ever do.

Join the Fire in You Campaign: Would you like to make a difference in your community?

FIRE in you

FIRE in you

Is there a FIRE in you?

FIRE in you

Train the Recruiter Kit

Recruiting materials for your fire department.

FIRE in you

FIRE in you

FIRE in you
Recruitment Success: Fire In You Campaign
Recruitment Success: RecruitNY Weekend
Recruitment Success: RecruitNY Weekend
Recruitment Success: RecruitNY Weekend
Recruitment Tactics:
Lessons From The Fireground

- Have A Recruitment Plan
- Establish An Application Process
- Recruitment Coordinator / Committee
- Keep Membership Informed / Involved
- Evaluate Plan / Process / Audiences
Recruitment Reality: Lessons From The Fireground

- There is no magic bullet.
- Recruitment is hands-on and on-going.
- What works today may not tomorrow.
- One solution / problem does not fit all.
- On all of us / Don’t Get Discouraged.
Recruitment Success: The End Goal
Your dad is a Cop!!

DUDE!
I'm Joking, He's a Fireman!!

FASNY
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“I have no ambition in this world but one, and that is to be a fireman. The position may, in the eyes of some, appear to be a lowly one; but we who know the work which the fireman has to do believe that his is a noble calling.”

Edward F. Croker
Chief of Department, FDNY (1899-1911)