

Volunteer EMS Recruitment Basics

Pennsylvania EMS Conference
August 16, 2007

Recruitment Principles Grounded in Research

- Demand for EMS Providers Will Grow
- Pool of Potential EMS Providers is Decreasing
- Volunteers are a source of EMS providers
- Less Time Available to Volunteer
- Increased Competition for Available Volunteers
- EMS Turnover Rates are Not Well Tracked

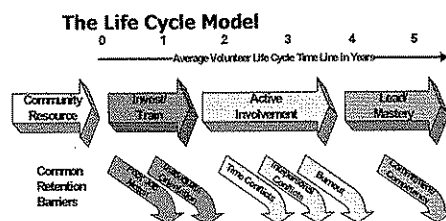
Research

- EMTs Dominate Certifications
- Training is Both a Barrier to and an Enabler of Retention
- More Than One Program is Used to Address Retention

The Retention Principles

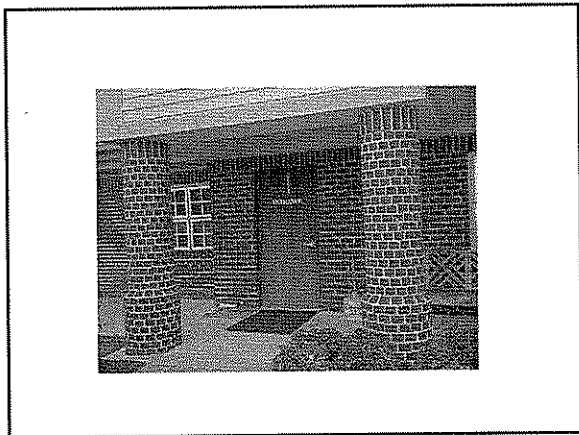
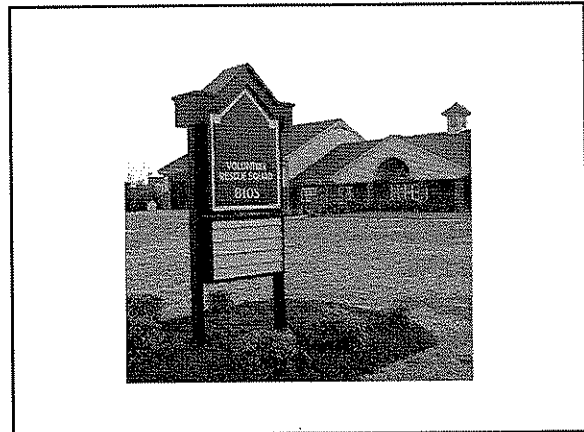
- Life Cycle
 - EMS personnel will stay longer when leaders take specific actions at specific times in the retention life cycle.
- Belonging
 - Members stay longer when they feel welcomed, needed and respected.
- Success
 - Members stay longer when they achieve success in important personal goals.
- Friends and Family
 - Members stay longer when they feel they have strong personal relationships within the agency.

Retention Principles



Are you committed?

- Do you really want new members?
- Are you willing to greet and accept change?
- Will your agency accept "outsiders" or new methods of staffing?
- Does your agency reflect your community?
- Will your agency appoint an officer to oversee staffing/recruitment?



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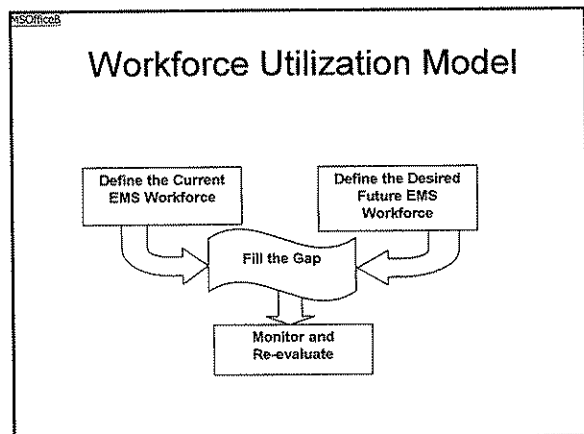
Take a Good Look At Your EMS Agency-Research

- > Get your demographics – the facts
- > Is there anyone to recruit?
- > Is it realistic to recruit volunteers?
- > What is your call volume?
- > How long does it take to get to the hospital on a typical call?
- > Ask yourself where you want to be in 2-5 years?

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Stop the Revolving Door (or at least find out how it is working)

- > Why are members are leaving and staying?
- > Why are members joining?



Assess Your EMS System and Community Resources

- Community-Based Needs Assessment - HRSA
- Benchmark, Indicator and Scoring Tool - nsanddal@citmt.org
- Rural EMS Assessment Tools
- Find out what you have to work with
- Rural communities need to work together to solve EMS staffing issues.
- www.ruralresource.org/ems.shtml

Appoint a Recruitment Officer

- Someone must be in charge
- Follow-up on leads
- Don't let anyone slip through the cracks
- Have a system to process new referrals
 - 24-hour phone line, e-mail and Web site
 - Structured form to field inquires
- Does your application process current and streamlined?

Keep the Recruitment Pipeline Full

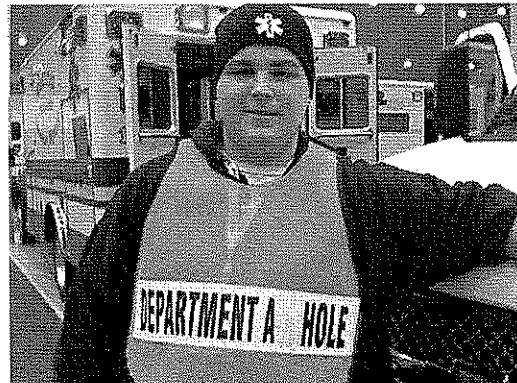
- Exercise in Keeping The Best! Maximizing Your Retention Efforts
 - There are normally three sources for your recruiting pipeline.
 - Advertising, Networking & Legacy/Family Member
 - How can you broaden your pipeline?

Make the Handoff to Retention

- Make sure recruits know they are wanted
- Does your agency have a formal orientation program?
- Is each new member assigned a mentor?
- Do you have regularly scheduled training?

Management and Leadership: Key to Retention

- Internal vs. external retention factors
- Internal conflict – one of the top reasons members leave
- What can your agency control?
- Do you have a turnover of leadership?
 - Do you have annual elections?
- Do you have a leadership succession program where you train prospective leaders?



Core Retention Programs

- "Maximizing Your Retention Efforts"
 - New Member Orientation & Training
 - Membership Feedback
 - EMS Agency Improvement
 - Leadership Development
 - Professional Development
 - Relationship Building

H County Recruitment Campaign

- Hired a marketing firm that just completed a intense recruitment campaign
- Did not expect results
- Received more inquiries than they could handle
- Were not ready with training, orientation and new member mentoring

You have me... now what do you want me to do?

- Patient care vs. non-patient care roles
- Clear and concise job descriptions
- Get them in the door and then get them hooked... if you don't someone else will.
- Remember our research

Take Advantage of Opportunities to Recruit

- Integrate recruitment into fundraising and public education
- Include recruitment messages in all press releases
- Use all available resources to keep recruitment in front of the public
 - EMS Week
 - Camp Rescue
 - Haunted House

Educate Public About Your Agency

- Develop positive relationship with community
- Newsletter and Web site is key
- Hearing more than fund drive
- Augusta County phone book idea
- Camp Rescue

Project a Positive Image

- Let the public have every reason to be confident in your agency....The sky is not falling
- Tell about positive opportunities
- Be honest
- EMS is demanding and challenging
- Professional Training
- Stepping stone to future opportunities

The Media Can Be Your Friend!

- EMS recruitment is news
- Put yourself in the media's shoes
- Develop a professional relationship
- What can you do for the media?
- What can the media do for you?
- Understand the media's limitations

EMS News

- Volunteers rally behind rescue squad, The Culpeper Star-Exponent
- Amherst County 911 Communications Center receives accreditation, Lynchburg News Advance
- Life Saving Crew seeks volunteers, The Danville Register & Bee
- Ambulance driver who hit car charged with reckless driving, The Virginian-Pilot
- EMS Volunteer in Court, Roanoke WSLN News Channel 10

More EMS News

- Squad member charged with burglarizing patients home, WBDJ7 Roanoke
- Rescuer charged with burglary, grand larceny, The Roanoke Times
- Officials disagree on facts in theft, The Roanoke Times
- Pro EMTs still on the job in Culpeper, The Free Lance-Star

Integration of Career Into Volunteer EMS Systems

- Can be fertile ground for disaster, if not prepared
- Volunteer and Career
 - It's not a we vs. them
 - Should be seamless
- Adding career not always an admission of failure
- Times, they are a changing

Formal Retention Programs

- Not a substitute for good management
- Base your programs on the retention principles
- Everyone is motivated differently
- Look at long-term vs. short term volunteer

Retention: What Works?

- An Assessment of retention incentives for volunteer firefighters in Virginia
- Journal of Emergency Management
 - January/February 2006
 - www.emergencymanagementjournal.com
 - Steven De Lisi, Va. Air National Guard Fire/Rescue
 - Christopher Newport University
- Surveyed 108 firefighters
 - 84% male
 - 75% Rank of firefighter
 - 58% more than 2 yrs of service

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Studied Retention Incentives

- Social Events
- Tax Exemptions
- Pension Plans
- Child Care
- Tuition Reimbursements
- Pay per call
- Training competitions
- Gift Certificates
- Health Club Memberships
- Fundraising Activities
- Involvement in decision making
- Delegation of Authority

13

The Results

- High Influence Incentives
 - 77% - Involvement in decision making
 - 61% - Delegation of authority
 - 57% - Tax Exemptions
 - 56% - Training Competitions
 - 53% - Tuition Reimbursement

14

Young vs. Old

- Younger volunteers valued
 - Training Competitions
 - Fundraising activities
 - Tuition Reimbursement

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Most significant findings

- Most incentives not correlated to age
- A decentralized management style that promotes delegation and decision making is important to the vast majority of volunteers, regardless of personal attributes.
- Easier for administrators to manage

145

Resources

- Workforce Retention Tool Kit Workbooks
 - How to Use EMS Retention Principles
 - Survival Guide To EMS Retention Problems
 - Maximizing Your Retention Efforts
 - How to Retain ALS Providers: Workforce Utilization Strategies & Applying EMS Retention Principles
 - <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/oems>
- NVFC and USFA Release Guide to Retention and Recruitment
 - www.nvfc.org/

146

Questions?

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