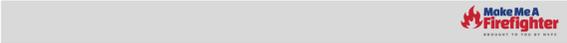


The Value of Volunteers

- 67% of departments are volunteer or mostly volunteer
- Protect 31% of the population
- Value of donated time of volunteer firefighters is estimated at \$46.9 billion
- The number of volunteer departments has decreased 8% since 1986



The Total Cost of Fire in the United States, National Fire Protection Association, Quincy, MA, October 2017.
U.S. Fire Department Profile 2017 National Fire Protection Association, Quincy, MA, March, 2019.



4

The Value of Volunteers

“Several factors underlie today’s retention and recruitment problem in the volunteer fire service. It is a complex and multi-faceted problem. While, stringent training standards, leadership problems, and time constraints caused by increased family responsibilities – particularly in two-career families and single parent households – seem to be the most common roots, there are many other factors.”

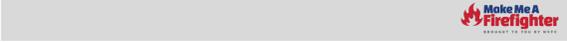
Recruitment and Retention in the Volunteer Fire Service: Problems and Solutions, FEMA, December 1998.



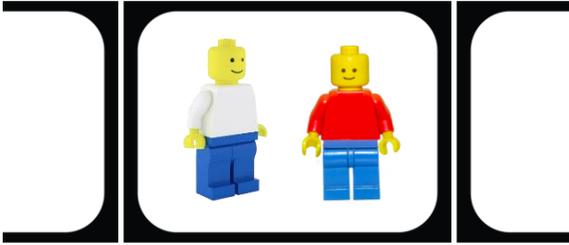
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Before You Recruit...

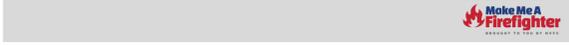
**Before
You
Recruit...**



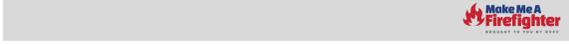
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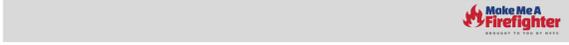
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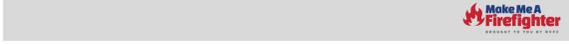
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10



11



12

Awareness is Low

What's Missing?

Easy ways for departments to:

- Build awareness about needs & opportunities
- Find the people interested in volunteering

Easy ways for interested individuals to:

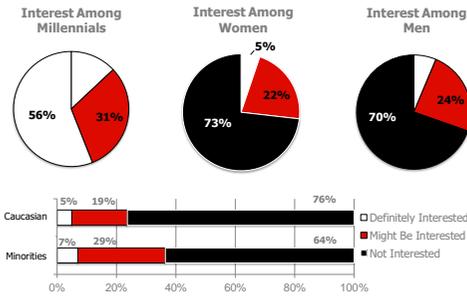
- Search & find opportunities to volunteer locally
- Connect with the right people at a local department

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS.



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There is Interest!



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Challenges

- _____ Fewer recruits coming in
- _____ More volunteers retiring
- _____ Young people leaving town for work opportunities
- _____ More two-income families makes volunteering harder to do
- _____ Demanding training requirements take more time and money
- _____ Leadership challenges & necessary culture change

*Though the mission is hard, it is **not impossible.***



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Needs Assessment

Identify Your Needs

- Firefighters
- Juniors
- Non-operational
- EMTs



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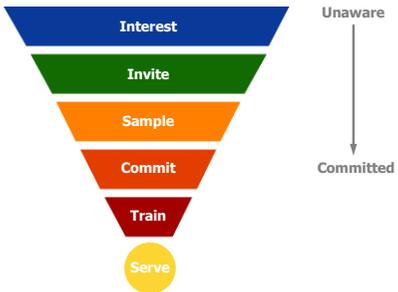
21

How to Recruit



25

So, What's the Plan?



26

Phase 1: Interest



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Waukegan PD, IL

Waukegan PD, IL



28

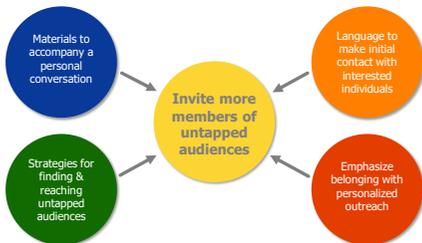
Phase 2: Invite



29

No Invitation? No Recruit!

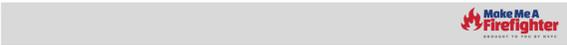
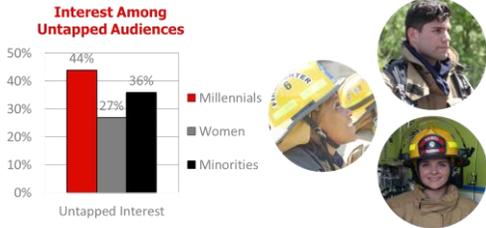
Interested individuals across the country cite a **lack of invitation** as a key reason they haven't yet volunteered.



30

Get to Know Who's Interested

Taking advantage of new, interested audiences requires some perspective...



31

Get to Know Who's Interested

Get to know Millennials

The basics

- Born 1981-2000
- Hard working
- Less flexible with time commitments

What they're seeking

- Leadership
- Mentoring
- Flexibility
- Skill-building

Where to find them

- Online, social media
- Sporting events
- Cafés and bars
- Rec leagues and gyms

Get to know Gen Z

The basics

- Born 2001-present
- Independent
- Video and visual media is preferred method of learning

What they're seeking

- Constant feedback
- Online training
- Flexibility
- Multi-tasking

Where to find them

- Online, social media
- Schools
- Entry level jobs



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Many Women Are Interested Too

Testimonies indicate women are often **uniquely positioned** for firefighting.

- Team players & problems solvers
- Particularly comforting to victims & children
- May be smaller stature, but better to fit into cramped spaces
- Can be very tough & dedicated



Seeking: opportunities to serve community and keep it safe, in supportive, equal opportunity setting

Find me: on social media, online, in school, at a child's school, at gyms, cafes, sporting events

Moscow PD, ID



33

Getting From Being Invited to Applying

Many who are **interested** may have unanswered questions that can't be resolved from a conversation alone.

Sometimes, all it takes is a **taste of the opportunity** to help them see themselves as the right fit.



37

'Sampling Events' Can Help

Offer **fun** ways for interested people to grasp the **total experience**:

Let them try out some part of volunteer experience

Connect prospects with other volunteers, recent recruits, and **your families & friends**.

Offer answers to common questions

Encourage them to bring friends & family along

We'll help you make it fun, easy, and popular!



Help them feel:
"I can do this!
I like this team
and trust
that they'd have
my back."



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'Sampling Events' Might Include



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Phase 4: Commit



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Prospects Drop through the Cracks

Managing and tracking prospective and new recruits over time can be challenging, and **prospects can fall through the cracks.**

Prospective volunteers need to hear from you – to retain their interest over time, and to be assured that you're still interested in them.



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Phase 5: Train



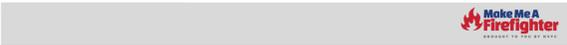
42

Recruitment is Marketing

Focus on universal themes that minimize fear and anxiety.

- Fear (safety)
- Inadequacy (maybe I can't do this)
- Overwhelmed (takes too much time)

- Camaraderie
- Meaning / Relevance
- Accomplishment
- Pride



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When Do You Recruit?

ALL THE TIME



47

Who Should Do the Recruiting?

- > All members should ultimately be involved
- > If possible, appoint an individual to oversee recruitment activities or organize a recruitment committee
- > Engage in a joint recruiting effort with the county or other departments

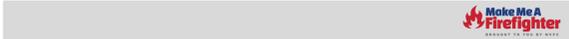
Leadership is Important!



48



Retention

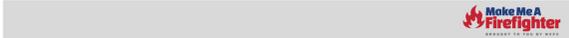


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Make is Easier

What makes it easier or harder to make and sustain the commitment to the volunteer fire department?

What makes it easier?	What makes it harder?
Family and friends within the department	Isolation
Mentorship through doubts, difficulties	Unmet expectations
Sense of belonging	Frustration with leadership
Flexibility in training schedule	Missing out on family and friend experiences
Personal commitment to others on the team	Lack of support from family or employer
Consistent, fair, transparent leadership	
Respect from the community	



50

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs





51

Motivate Your Volunteers

- Treat people as individuals
- Praise sincerely
- Promote participation
- Make the work interesting
- Promote teamwork
- Provide opportunities for growth
- Don't be afraid of change



52

Hurdles to Cohesiveness

- Cliques
- Existing prejudices
- Emergency Medical Responders and firefighters
- Handling grievances and problem volunteers
- Combination (career & volunteer) departments
- Lack of teamwork



West Barnstable FD, MA

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Adopting Departments Standards

- Policies
- Procedures
- Guidelines
- Regulations
- Rules



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Department Image

- Pride in the uniform
- Pride in the department & community
- Deliver public programs
- Positive media
- Customer service
- Good maintenance



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Direct Financial Incentives

- Retirement and pension plans (LOSAP)
- Individual retirement accounts
- Pay per call or per hour
- Annual reimbursement
- Tax exemptions and deductions
- Health insurance
- Tuition assistance
- Housing assistance
- Special low-interest housing loans
- Seasonal bonus
- Local business discounts
- Chamber of commerce dollars and gift certificates
- Health club memberships



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Indirect Financial Incentives

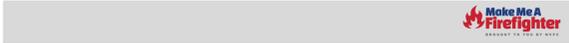
- Death and disability coverage
- Accident and sickness coverage
- On-duty injury and hospitalization
- Line-of-duty death and disability benefits – public safety officer benefits program
- Liability coverage
- Uniform and departmental paraphernalia
- EAP
 - Substance abuse counseling
 - Assistance from chaplains
 - Family counseling
 - Status circles/peer counseling
 - Member advocacy program
- Leaves of Absence



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Recognition

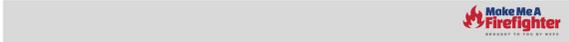
- Newsletters
- Thank You Notes & Greeting Cards
- Pictures
- Press Releases
- State Recognition
- Local Community Recognition & Heroism Awards
- Award Banquets
- Graduation Ceremonies
- Pats on the Back



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Have Fun

Make fire prevention and department activities fun!



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Overcome Obstacles

- Emotional support – Share the Load
- Member assistance programs
- Training requirements
- Stepping-stone volunteer
- Communication
- Time demands
- Consolidation
- Burn out



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Wants/Needs

The wants and/or needs of volunteers are most often **INTANGIBLE**

They want or desire:

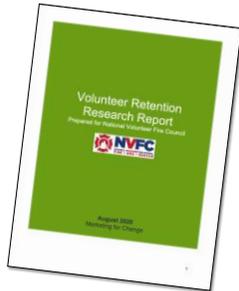
- sense of accomplishment
- achievement
- pride



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NVFC's Retention Research

Through a partnership with Marketing for Change, the NVFC recently conducted research on retention with former volunteers, current volunteer leadership, and current volunteers.



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NVFC's Retention Research

The Results – Retention Issues

- Six out of 10 survey respondents thought their current or former departments had a retention problem.
- Reasons for leaving:
 - Department atmosphere
 - Cliques
 - Lack of camaraderie
 - Unsupportive leadership
 - Not focusing on or supporting the needs of members



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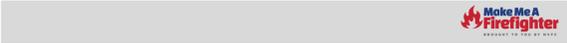
NVFC's Retention Research

The Results – Retention Issues

Quotes from open-ended survey questions.

"Fire Chief is not trained to state best practices, or to a standard, nor are any chief officers required to have any training."

"The Fire Chief needed to be a leader and stop being a politician, internally and externally. We had older FFs and officers putting down the new generations and crippling our retention efforts. Chief did nothing to fix it, too worried about re-election!"



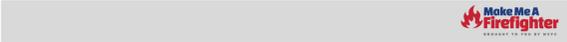
64

NVFC's Retention Research

The Results – Impact on Retention

Potential positive impacts on retention:

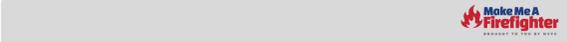
- A mentorship program
- Give out awards or honors
- Conduct "stay" interviews
- Conduct exit interviews
- Offer flexible training options



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The Importance of Leadership

The Importance of Leadership



66

Leadership

Leaders...

- > Must provide adequate supervision and direction
- > Must challenge each individual
- > Must provide feedback



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Top Leadership Qualities

- > Honesty
- > Determination
- > Enthusiasm





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Communication

Common Causes of Communication Problems

- > Failure to share information clearly leading to misunderstandings
- > Failure to share information openly
- > Failure to disseminate information through multiple channels
- > Failure to address rumors
- > Failure to listen



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Communication

Leadership Recommendations

- Establish clear and consistent messages for leaders to use with new recruits to establish better expectations of the requirements to serve
- Establish and communicate a system that promotes transferring rather than quitting for members who are leaving the community, making it as easy as possible for leaving members (including those taking career positions elsewhere) to continue to serve in their new community
- Use a search committee to find, support, and promote the next generation of leaders, particularly in low engagement areas
- Leadership training and knowledge sharing that has nothing to do with fighting fires, but is focused on developing team atmosphere and building culture
- Provide an outlet system for volunteers to lodge complaints against leadership without fear or reprisal



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In Conclusion

Recruitment and Retention is PERSONAL!



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About Us

This program is brought to you by the **National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC)**, a non-profit membership association representing the interests of the volunteer fire, EMS and rescue services.

Make Me A Firefighter:

- National R&R Campaign to assist departments
- Customizable materials
- Research-based messaging and tactics
- Interactive web site

MakeMeAFirefighter.org



www.nvfc.org/tr-training-participant-resources/

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Material Generator

Sample social media graphic



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Sign Up at Portal.NVFC.org

A screenshot of a web registration form. Fields include: Title (dropdown), First Name, Last Name, Telephone, E-Mail Address, Your Department (dropdown), Password, and Confirm Password. There are checkboxes for 'I want to stay up-to-date about the Make Me A Firefighter campaign and receive help from other volunteers' and 'By checking this box you agree to our terms of service'. A 'Register' button is at the bottom.

Step 1
Enter your user information

Step 2
Select your department

Step
Enter a password

You're in!



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Questions?

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Washington, DC 20002
202-887-5700
nvffoffice@nvfc.org



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