



## SFFMA Leadership Development Program

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Leading the Way . . .  
*From GOOD to GREAT*



State Firefighters & Fire Marshals' Association of Texas  
Promoting Unity, Respect, and Excellence in the Fire Service of Texas


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## Instructor information





- **31 years fire service experience**
  - Central Regional Manager / Consultant, ESCI
  - Fire Marshal & interim EMC for Harris County (retired)
  - Asst. Chief, Cy-Fair VFD (retired)
  - Guest Instructor, TEEEX Municipal School
  - TX-TF1 Logistics Manager
  - TEEEX Annual School Advisory Board
  - Lone Star College Advisory Council
  - TX Rural Fire Advisory Council
- **24 years private sector experience**

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## Getting from Good to Great



- What keeps you up at night . . .
- What do people think about your department . . .
- What do you want people to think . . .
- What kind of leader are you . . .
- How to define the successful outcome . . .
- How to create a compelling story . . .
- How to identify strategic priorities . . .

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**As a Chief ...**

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**What keeps you up at night ?**

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From the Fire, Smoke, and Guts Portfolio © by Paul Combs, <http://artofthefire.com/>

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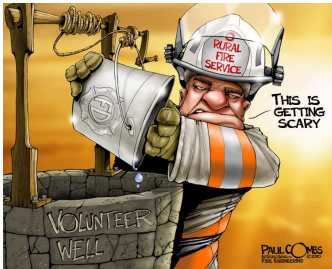
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**Future of the TX Fire Service ?**

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- Funding
- Staffing
- Training
- Leadership



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**As a Chief ...**

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**What do people think about your Dept ?**

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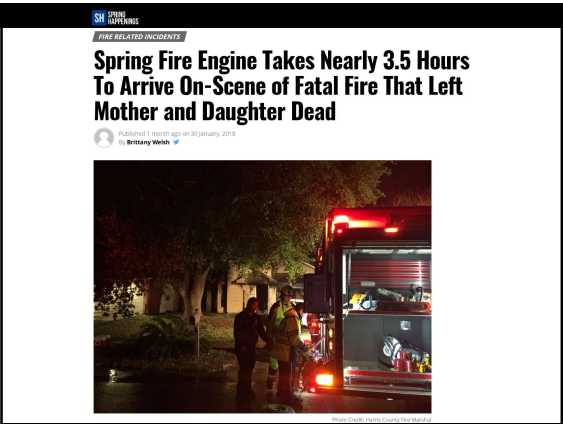
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## Dealing with the Investigative Report

- Name it
- Claim it
- Fix it
- Move on



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## As a Chief ...

What do you want  
people to think  
about your Dept?

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## The VFD Myth ...



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## The VFD Reality...



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## Today's public service reality

- **These are challenging times for governments**
  - Social and economic issues
  - Forced to readjust policies and skills
  - Many challenges; many opportunities
- **Public administration has a crucial role**
  - Markets and the private sector alone cannot make life better
  - People are looking to government as a catalytic force
- **Public administration needs to be transformed**
  - More responsive to constant change
  - More proactive, more service-oriented
  - More efficient, more accountable

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## The new reality



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- In theory . . .  
reality and theory are **the same**.
- In reality . . .  
reality and theory are **not the same**.
- So . . .  
How can we do **MORE**  
with **LESS** ?

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## As a Chief ...



**You need to  
be able to define a  
“successful outcome”**

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**If we lose sight of where we're going,  
someone else will probably point it out to us**

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## A successful outcome ?



**Missouri firefighters fail to find body  
of woman in bathtub after fire.  
Captain says there was 'too much debris'.**

"I had to round them up and tell them," said Harris, 36, of Dellwood. "That's unbelievable that they couldn't find the body. Who's to say she wasn't living still? ... I'm going to get some answers. You miss a body? How do you miss a body?"

Northeast Capt. Phil Boling, one of the firefighters who went into the house, said the crew conducted two searches before leaving. Boling said the home was difficult to search because it was full of debris. Banks' godson and a neighbor confirmed that the house was jammed with clothing and other items. They referred to Banks, a retired St. Louis Public Schools teacher, as a "pack rat."

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## Public Service in Difficult Times



- **An unhappy customer is an unhappy customer**
  - Your fault, my fault, nobody's fault—it doesn't matter.
  - When in doubt, ask for help.
  - After they forget why you came, they remember how they were treated.
- **Learn how to accept alternate realities**
  - Get back to basics.
  - Focus on what's important – walk a mile in their shoes
  - You expect Starbucks to deliver an "excellent coffee experience"
  - What if your business card said "Customer Service Rep" instead of ...

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## Elements of a Successful Outcome



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Source: adapted from the U.S. Coast Guard




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## As a Chief ...



**You need to  
be able to create a  
"compelling story"**

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## You need a compelling story



- |                         |                         |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Image                 | What you see            |
| • Mission               | What you do             |
| • Vision                | What you aspire to be   |
| • Values & Expectations | What you believe in     |
| • Strategic Priorities  | What you focus on       |
| • Elevator speech       | What you say in 30 sec. |

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## The Fire Dept advantage



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## The Fire Dept advantage



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### The Fire Dept Advantage



Photo Source: 3 Generations of Fire Engines at Burk Burnett VFD in Burk Burnett, TX. Pinterest

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### The Fire Dept Advantage



Photo Source: The Galveston Times, Scott Rogers, © 2015

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### What would your community think?



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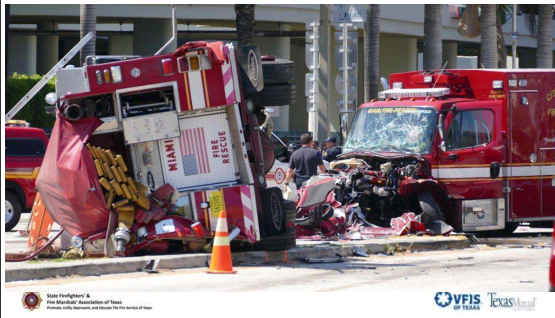
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What would your community think?



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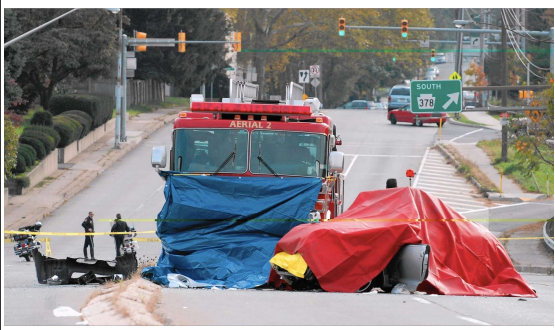
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What would your community think?



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What would your community think?



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## Creating a positive image



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## What is the most common complaint about the local fire department ???



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## What would your community think?



City of Leander Texas  
Our Community Business & Development

Fire Department

About LFD Emergency Preparedness Inspections & Permits Operations

Home » Fire Department » About LFD » Frequently Asked Questions

### Why do firefighters go to the grocery store together on a fire truck while on duty?

From Leander firefighters are always ready to respond! One of the unique traditions of the trade is that the shifts are 24 hours long. The company an individual firefighter is assigned to becomes a surrogate family. Firefighters eat together, spend 24 hours (and sometimes 48 hours) together at a stretch, have disagreements, laugh, and generally experience long periods of heavy work interrupted with their hours of life-threatening and split-second decisions. Firefighting has long been recognized as one of the most stressful careers available.

The Leander Fire Department encourages its firefighters to sit down with each other at least once a shift and have a meal together. It is very much like having dinner with your family at home. Meals are often filled with lots of general conversation and lots of laughter. In order to facilitate some of these meals, the firefighters go as a group to the grocery store. They go as a group so that they can load their shopping, leave the grocery cart where it sits, and respond to a request for assistance from the citizens.

Our firefighters are never far away from the engine or each other. They get no formal "breaks." Even though they may be buying groceries, these firefighters are still available for 911 calls.

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## Creating a positive image




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## Creating a positive image




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## Effective Mission Statements

- **Answers one or more of these questions:**

- What do we really provide?
- Who are our real customers?
- What do we really do?

- **Should be clear, concise, and memorable**

- Be simple and specific;
- Be easily understood;
- Be relevant to your agency's needs;
- Inspire employees and customers;
- Orient activities toward goals and objectives.

State Firefighters & Fire Marshals Association of Texas  
Source: "Writing an Effective Vision Statement", Marc Revere, Fire Rescue Magazine, © 2011




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## Example Mission Statements



- To be Earth's most customer-centric company where people can find and discover anything they want to buy online.



- Our mission is to be one of the world's leading producers and providers of entertainment and information. Using our portfolio of brands to differentiate our content, services and consumer products, we seek to develop the most creative, innovative and profitable entertainment experiences and related products in the world.



- Our mission is to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful.



- Our mission is dedication to the highest quality of Customer Service delivered with a sense of warmth, friendliness, individual pride, and Company Spirit.




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## Example FD Mission Statements



- To preserve life and property, promote public safety and foster economic growth through a commitment to prevention, preparedness, response and recovery as an all risk life safety response provider.



- To provide a wide range of programs designed to protect the lives and property of all who live, visit, work or invest in our area from the adverse effects of fires, sudden medical emergencies or exposure to dangerous conditions created by man or nature.



- To protect Lives and Property against Fire, Medical emergencies and other emergency situations.



- Saving lives and protecting property




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## Writing a Mission Statement

**"Who – will do what – for who – how"**

*The Harris County Fire Marshal's Office will  
make a difference in our county  
through the creation of fire-resistant communities and  
the delivery of professional fire protection services.*




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## Effective Vision Statements



### • Answer one or more of these questions:

- Where do we want to go?
- What do we want to become?
- What do we want to accomplish?

### • Should be clear, concise and memorable

- Be simple and specific;
- Be easily understood;
- Be relevant to your agency's needs;
- Use common strategic language; and
- Define future direction.

State Firefighters & Fire Marshals Association of Texas  
Source: "Writing an Effective Fire Department Vision Statement", Marc Revere, Fire Rescue Magazine, © 2011




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## Example Vision Statements



- Be the world's beer company. Through all of our products, services and relationships, we will add to life's enjoyment.



- To be the global energy company most admired for its people, partnership and performance.



- A world where everyone has a decent place to live.



- To foster the most successful, well-adjusted generation of wounded service members in our nation's history.



- To maintain our independence as a private company so we can continue to focus on the customers instead of the bottom line.



- To be the best retailer in the hearts and minds of consumers and employees.

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## Example FD Vision Statements



- We strive to be the best.



- To be the best trained, technologically advanced, customer-focused fire service organization in the country.



- Will be recognized as a premier public service organization, respected and admired by our peers and the community as the most diverse, innovative, and efficient public safety provider in the world.



- To be a service driven, nationally recognized leader in providing emergency services with exceptional leadership, open communication, state-of-the-art resources, and a healthy, highly trained, and motivated workforce.

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# We will . . .



provide <b>Superior Performance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deliver results that meet or exceed expectations</li><li>• Manage resources and service delivery</li><li>• Provide a positive emotional response</li></ul>
with <b>Distinctive Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Remain a key point of civic and professional pride</li><li>• Others seek our staff for elite professional groups</li><li>• Others copy our style and we become more influential</li></ul>
and <b>Lasting Endurance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sustain excellence by anticipating external changes</li><li>• Secure funding that meets operational needs</li><li>• Build a strong organizational culture that survives time</li></ul>



**Simply put, we will deliver the best possible public service.  
Every one . Everywhere. Every time.**

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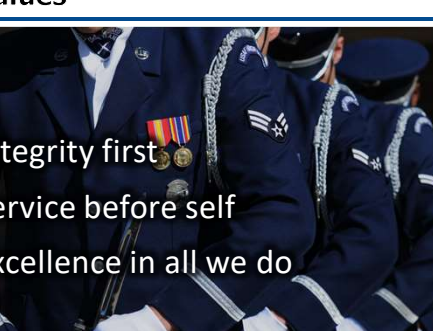
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# Values

- Integrity first
- Service before self
- Excellence in all we do

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# Effective Elevator Speeches




- **Starts with the customer**
  - “What would it mean to you if . . . ?”
  - Focus on the outcome that matters most
  - Is delivered with authenticity and conviction
- **Answers three questions**
  - What do you want the listener to think?
  - What do you want the listener to feel?
  - What do you want the listener to do?
- **Ends with a call to action**
  - What do you want the listener to do next?



Source: *State Fireloggers' & Fire Marshals' Association*, "The Most Effective Elevator Speech in Seven Words", Chris Westfall, 2013.



National Fire Incident Statistics



Texas A&M University

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## What's your "elevator" speech ?

"I \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ so they can \_\_\_\_\_."

**do what** (feature or service)      **who**      **do what** (user benefit)

*As the county fire marshal, I make a difference in people's lives by providing the best possible public service so they can be successful in what they do.*

*I am looking for ways to \_\_\_\_\_.*

*When can we get together to discuss this in more detail?*

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Source: ["Your Elevator Pitch Needs an Elevator Pitch"](#), Tim David, © 2014

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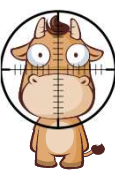
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## QUESTIONS ?



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## From the Leadership Library



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For more information:



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mike.montgomery@esci.us  
**ESCI** Emergency Services  
Consulting International  
Providing Expertise and Guidance that Enhances Community Safety

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