Welcome to the NVFC’s Train Strong Webinar Series.

Today’s webinar is “Leadership for the Fire and Emergency Services.”
The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) is the leading nonprofit membership association representing the interests of the volunteer fire, EMS, and rescue services. The NVFC serves as the voice of the volunteer in the national arena and provides invaluable resources, programs, education, and advocacy for first responders across the nation.
MEMBERSHIP

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Steve Hirsch
Chair, National Volunteer Fire Council
Leadership Defined…

“Leadership is influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation, while operating to accomplish the mission and improve the organization”

- John Maxwell
Look no further than the quality of leadership as a primary reason why valuable firefighters are leaving the ranks. Surveys consistently show that more than 40% of people who quit do so because of a lack of appreciation by leaders, lack of teamwork (developed by leaders) and a perception the fire department doesn't care about them (a responsibility of leaders).
Making decisions based on good solid leadership skills is important.

Do you have the ability to make sound decisions based on your ability to lead?

Do you view your leadership skill as sometimes having a life or death impact on those you chose to lead?
Leadership Questions

Have you learned from your challenges?

Are you better than you used to be at initiating and maintaining relationships?

Are you getting better at inspiring, motivating, and influencing people?

Do people seem to generally regard you highly?

Are you aware of your real impact on others?
The Top 12 Leadership Questions

1. What matters most?
2. What can I let go?
3. What is one "problem" I can turn into an opportunity?
4. What would really inspire others?
5. What is our department’s greatest pain?
6. What new fire service relationships will I pursue?
7. How can I think more strategically?
8. How can I make swift yet smart decisions?
9. What leadership skill can—and should—I get better at?
10. What is my role, really?
11. How will I recognize success?
12. What is my biggest fear, and how will I face it?
Good Performance

How do we define the results of good or great leadership?
Great performance! That is the final “test.”
Good relationships are important, but few organizations are social clubs. They don’t exist just for fun and companionship. There is a broader purpose—a goal to be achieved.
You can become great at relationships and communication—and you must! But this, by itself, is not enough.
You need results, too.
Good Results

As a leader, you can also push for results—and sometimes achieve great results—but if you alienate everyone in the process, your long-term potential for leadership is poor. Results and relationships have to go hand-in-hand. That is the leader’s credo, the definition of leadership.
Expectations

Keeping everybody happy does not make you a good leader. Expectations have to be clear and goals have to be achieved. If people also enjoy the journey in reaching those goals or results, they will be committed enough to generate stronger performance. That part is up to you, the leader.

A good relationship with just the right amount of "toughness" defines leadership. Good leadership skills are those actions that produce relationships and results.
Food for Thought

“You do not lead by hitting people over the head - that's assault, not leadership.”

- General Dwight D. Eisenhower
Honesty: Any strong leader knows how important it is to own up to mistakes. When you’ve erred, step up and admit your transgressions to your members. And when it’s time to celebrate, go ahead and bring department members together to celebrate accomplishments.
**Determination:** Leadership is not for the weak. You will be challenged with long hours, the citizens you serve, unreasonable expectations, and dealing with stressful situations. Strong leaders, however, push through the difficulties and drive results, exceeding expectations with flying colors.
Leadership Qualities

**Enthusiasm:** Smile. Laugh. Be positive. Don’t we all want to be around people who make us feel good? We want our leaders to be the ‘beacon of light’ that we crave on a daily basis. Our leaders should not belittle, but make us believe that we can accomplish any challenge set before us.
Greatness

We all want it! We all pursue it! We all tend to judge ourselves by how well we achieve it. The “it” is greatness… A concept that, in many ways, is as obscure as it is illusive.
Greatness

To be sure, “Greatness” can be described in many ways. It means different things to different people. But most would agree on two things:

1. Regardless of how we define greatness, the benefits or end result we are looking for include happiness, fulfillment, and a sense of accomplishment, and

2. Achieving those outcomes is easier said than done.
Greatness

Can be a superhighway, a cluttered side street, a winding country road, or sometimes even a dead end! There are more than a few potholes and traffic jams… and occasionally even major accidents. So navigating your way can be challenging and sometimes confusing. To begin, you need to know where you are going on this all-important journey and that is especially true when it comes to your work, your career, and your organization.
Greatness Strategies

- Self-Awareness & Development
- Capitalize on the Power of Relationships
- Communicate, Cooperate, and Collaborate
- Continually Improve
- Ethically Lead Yourself & Others
- Satisfy the People You Serve
- Shine When Bad Stuff Happens
Self-Awareness & Development

- Always be yourself.
- Start each day with a decision to be happy and productive.
- Don’t get sucked into gripe sessions.
- Be thankful.
- Capitalize on your strong points and confidence.
- Ask questions.
- Keep your emotions in check.
- Tap into your passion.
- Share your knowledge and skills.
- Create a back-up plan.

Focus on the future.
Power of Relationships

• Look for the value that others contribute.
• Be approachable.
• Say “please” & “thank you.”
• Listen.
• Share the credit.
• Be respectful and empathetic.

• Meet in the middle.
• Don’t gossip.
• Stay clear of toxic people.
• Forgive & forget.
• Honor confidences.
• Own your errors.
• Respect others’ time.
Communicate, Cooperate, Collaborate

Understand How People Communicate

- Words - 7%
- Voice/tone - 38%
- Body language - 55%
Communicate, Cooperate, Collaborate

- Be tactfully honest.
- Actively listen.
- Ask for help when needed.
- Don’t assume you know.
- Avoid sarcasm.
- Stick to the schedule/agenda.
- Start & finish on time.

- Be a team player.
- Work to reach consensus.
- Create win/win scenarios.
- Believe in your team.
- Never speak poorly of the boss/organization.
Continually Improve

- Challenge the status quo.
- Go beyond your defined role.
- Control your personal time.
- Be a change element.
- Take calculated risks.
- Stay on tasks.
- Prioritize your work/goals/objectives.
- Eliminate recurring mistakes.
- Measure performance and analyze results.
- Encourage “out of the box thinking.”
- Focus on the root cause and not quick fixes.
Ethically Lead Yourself & Others

- Lead people, manage processes.
- Celebrate successes of the entire team.
- Keep people informed.
- Lend a hand.
- Help build self esteem in others.
- Focus on solutions.
- Show the way.
- Provide hope.
- Don’t shoot the messenger.
- Be accountable.
- Expect a lot from yourself & others.
- Serve others.
- Make things happen.
- Be honest & trust worthy.
- Inspire others.
Satisfy the People You Serve

Remember: You have two types of customers…

1. Internal Customers: are fellow employees for whom you do work and provide services.

2. External Customers: are those who pay for your products and services or can refer others to do so.
Satisfy The People You Serve

• Make your welcome immediate and warm.
• Use their names.
• Know your customers.
• Respond promptly.
• Thank your customers regularly.
• Offer assistance.
• Focus on can do.

• Be proactive.
• Under promise & over deliver.
• Offer “call me anytime.”
• Tell them why.
• Explain the wait.
• Know your product & services.
• Put a smile in your voice.
Shine When Bad Stuff Happens

• Few people like or enjoy dealing with problems; however, problems are the reason many of us have jobs and clients.
• When things go wrong, we are presented with a great opportunity to shine!
• Research shows that when mistakes are effectively corrected, customers often think more highly of the organization than ever!
Bad Stuff Will Happen

- Keep your cool.
- Look for the learning.
- Think before you act.
- See problems as challenges.
- Be tenacious.
- Embrace change.
- Anticipate problems.
- Think gray, not black & white.
- Laugh at yourself.
- Let go of what you can’t control.
- Choose to try.
- Develop a good support system.
- Take care of your body, mind, and soul.
The Future of Your Organization

• Succession Planning

“The process of identifying long-range needs and cultivating a supply of internal talent to meet those future needs. Used to anticipate the future needs of the organization and assist in finding, assessing and developing the human capital necessary to the strategy of the organization.” HR Sentry
Other Planning/Future Options

• **Mentor** – “a wise and trusted counselor or teacher or an influential senior sponsor or supporter.” Dictionary.com
  - Coaching
  - Teaching
  - Training
  - Guiding
  - “taking under your wing”

• **Officer training programs** -
  - Formal
  - Structured
  - Organizational
Ten Tips for Continuous Greatness

✓ Be familiar with your organization’s mission and contribute to its success each day.
✓ Know who your internal and external customers are and strive to “WOW” them.
✓ Constantly think about how you might do your job or role faster and better. Also, implement ideas for doing so.
✓ Look for ways to reduce costs and eliminate waste in performing your daily tasks.
✓ Benchmark and replicate the best practices of other individuals, departments, and organizations.
Ten Tips Continued…

- Be proactive by addressing issues before being asked or told to do so.
- Keep other team members informed about your areas of responsibility.
- View complaints as opportunities to fix issues.
- Get to the root of problems and avoid “quick fixes” that will likely result in issues reoccurring.
- Take specific actions to ensure you continue to learn, grow, and develop new skills.
Q&A SESSION
POST WEBINAR THOUGHTS OR QUESTIONS?

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THANK YOU!

Steve Hirsch
Chair
NVFC
nvfcchair@gmail.com

Caroline Stachowiak
Program Coordinator
NVFC
caroline@nvfc.org
202-887-5700