

# January 2006

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*"We go into people's houses on the worst day of their life and try to make it better."*

-Seminar participant IAFC Conference, November 2005



### Establishing Goals For the Organization It's that time of the year...

With the new year upon us, it's the perfect time for the Board to look at the upcoming year and take the time to dialogue about what it wants to accomplish this year. It's an important process for the public, the staff and the department to be aware of the effort put forth in this process.

Goals help us to link everyone to the mission and provide a process towards action in getting them accomplished.

Here are a few thoughts:

- Get input from officers, Chiefs and paid Staff as to areas they feel should be focused upon.
- Have a good interactive discussion to get agreement as to the key issues.
- While the goals them-



elves are important, the process for getting them to be agreed upon is equally important. This is a good opportunity to facilitate a session with both Chiefs and Commissioners.

- Keep them S-M-A-R-T. Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-Based.
- It is important to continue throughout the

year to measure how you're doing against these goals. It's ok to make changes, but use a process to gain consensus.

- Use performance measurement to measure and analyze areas such as response times, fire fighting effectiveness, training and retention rates of the department.

### 10 Key Board Responsibilities

1. Maintain the organization's mission and purpose
2. Establish Chairman and his/her responsibilities and job function.
3. Provide proper financial oversight.
4. Ensure adequate resources for the department.
5. Ensure legal and ethical integrity; maintain accountability.
6. Ensure effective organizational planning.
7. Assess Board and department performance measurements.
8. Enhance the Board's public image and communications.
9. Continuous improvement to strengthen the Organization's programs and services.
10. Support the Chairman and the decisions of the Board 100%.



**inside mgmt. ltd.**  
*a consulting group*

293 Hendrickson Ave.  
Lynbrook, NY 11563  
Phone: 516.596.4280  
Fax: 516.596.3026  
info@insidemangement.com

Visit us at:  
www.insidemangement.com

Inside Management is a full service business consulting organization. Our consulting, training and team development activities are taken from the corporate sector and applied to private, public and municipal organizations. Key members of our team are active firefighters.



Ask us about our District Secretary's Workshop. To be scheduled in Spring 2006. Ask for Mary Calabro for details.

## 6 OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISTRICT LEADERSHIP

### 1. Improve Communications

To the public, the paid staff, the department. Use all tools that you can: message boards, emails, website, personal visits and effective annual meetings. Don't allow the vacuum that is left by not knowing the "why's" of a decision to be filled by gossip.

### 2. Run it like a business

Look at your organization with a critical eye. Are decisions fact based? Are roles and responsibilities assigned and being held accountable? Are meetings professional and productive? Are decisions supported by the group once decided?

### 3. Keep the Mission in Mind

To provide the best possible protection. To provide the best equipment and best trained staff to respond. To provide the fastest response time to an emergency. However you want to define it. Are all decisions made with this in mind?

### 4. Don't Be Afraid of Change

From OSHA, to EEOC, to paid EMT's, to retention issues. It's not your dad's fire service anymore. Are you changing to accommodate the cultural and social changes?

### 5. Celebrate successes

If you are not taking the time to both thank the department and get that message out to the public, you are missing a great opportunity to build morale and maintain professionalism for your organization.

### 6. See the Long-term Picture

Where will you be in 3-5 years? How will you get there? What is the strategic plan? What decisions will you make that will aid in that goal?

*"Sound management practices have the potential to significantly enhance retention rates." \**

## Key Facts on Retention of Volunteers

- It is estimated that the average retention rate of volunteer firefighters is approximately 4 years per person, per department.
- When recruiting volunteer firefighters, the department will spend approximately \$4000 per person in orientating, equipping and training these recruits.
- The ability of a fire department to retain its people is directly related to its ability to manage those people.

\* Taken from Blue Ribbon Report: Volunteer and Combination Officers, Section 2005 IAFC

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