

Surviving Major Organizational Change

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About me...



- 29 Years In Fire Service
- 19 Years As Chief
- 14 Years SFFMA Executive Director
- 2014 International Association of Fire Chief's Association Fire Chief of Year Recipient
- 2012 IAFC John Buckman Leadership Award
- Authored several successful SAFER/AFG Grants
- Education – Bachelors & Masters Degree in Business Administration
- Founder of Emergency Services Solutions

SURVIVING MAJOR ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

Change!!

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- ▶ What comes with our initial thoughts:
 - ▶ Fear
 - ▶ Uncertainty
 - ▶ Denial
 - ▶ Lack of:
 - ▶ Interest
 - ▶ Trust

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What do we generally associate with change?

- Negative Impact
- Required
- For the Better

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I Don't Like Change!

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Mandatory changes versus non-mandatory changes

- Codes
- Local/Regional Changes
- Leadership Direction

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Changes requested by a governing agency
City, County, ESD
Ex: ESD taking over a department or hiring staff

Changes as an unattended consequence of an action

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- Controllable changes
- Uncontrollable changes



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Is the change voluntary?

If so, should we setup a "test/trial period"?

Ex: 48/96 Shift schedule

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How do we go about implementing change without as many headaches/battles?

- ▶ Statement of "Problem or Improvement" for the change
- ▶ Why change is being made
- ▶ Timeline for change
- ▶ End result of change being done
- ▶ Test change?



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What are the intended results of reasons of the change?

- ▶ Make things easier/better
- ▶ Make things more efficient/safer
- ▶ What we have is no longer supported (new model of a product)

Sometimes, we just HAVE to change.....



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- ▶ The Unknowns – the unknown or “side affects” from implementing a change



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- ▶ Small Change = BIG Change
 - ▶ Based on size/structure of your organization
 - ▶ If your organization is small, a simple change such as a change to the command structure, might be considered a "major" event

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Getting Support/Buy-In

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- ▶ If the change is going to have impact on the whole organization, operations, and policies:
 - ▶ Form a committee, have them give input, support them meeting
 - ▶ Give Direction
 - ▶ Listen
 - ▶ Consider
 - ▶ Implement change
 - ▶ Ultimately the CEO, Chief or Board of Directors should have the final say.

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How do we deal with people in the organization that are unwilling to change or are extremely resistive to it?

- ▶ Try to get them to participate
- ▶ Ownership
- ▶ As if it were their idea
- ▶ If no luck, work with person on why the change is being done and see if the person is going to be able to live with the change

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A department going through an organization reclassification/structure type

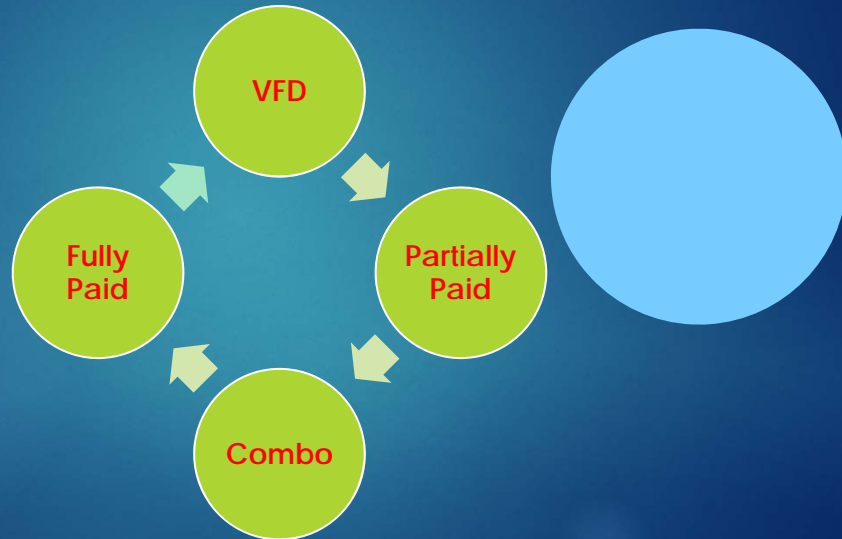
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MAJOR Change

Our Story...



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- ▶ Going From VFD to Combo Dept = Major Change!
 - ▶ Give Opportunity to Volunteers to Become Paid
 - ▶ Allow Volunteers to participate in hiring
 - ▶ Identify Policies needing updates
 - ▶ Everyone treated as equal
 - ▶ Clear goals/tasks/assignments

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When Change Meets Resistance by All

- ▶ Change = Progress
- ▶ Change = Resistance

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The Hardest Change?

For us

Going from all part-paid to full-time staff

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Regardless of:

- ▶ Open Meetings
- ▶ Updates from Officers
- ▶ Open Door Policy



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Lessons Learned

- ▶ Remove from hiring so no conflict of interest
- ▶ Keep everyone informed
- ▶ Over Inform / Document
- ▶ Avoid situations that allow for conflict of interest
 - - President being an employee
- ▶ Remove the "Ring Leader"
- ▶ Gossip = Bad

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Organization Staff Changes

- ▶ Staff issues
 - ▶ Resentment
 - ▶ Pushback
 - ▶ Fallout
 - ▶ Acceptance

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Key to Success

- ▶ **Communications**
 - ▶ Face To Face
 - ▶ Group Meetings
 - ▶ Emails
 - ▶ Phone Calls
- ▶ **Information**
 - ▶ Too much is better than none

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The heartburn

- ▶ By Management
- ▶ By Staff

- ▶ TRY NOT to take it personal....



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Management/Leadership

- ▶ Mind Games
- ▶ Have you done the right thing?
- ▶ Is the headaches worth the battle?
- ▶ Loss of "Friends"
- ▶ Health Issues

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The Fall out

- ▶ People Unwilling To Change
- ▶ Leave the Dept and Convince Others to leave
- ▶ Spread ill-will, gossip, rumors

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Basically....

Regardless if those people are on board with the change or not there's going to be change and they can either embrace it or get out of the way.

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The Rebuild

- ▶ In our case getting out of the way had to occur. They were ultimately forced out of their jobs due to being replaced with full-time staff.
- ▶ However, they were given the opportunity to work for the ESD in a full time position

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Successfully Leading The Change & People (Personalities) you want!

- ▶ Eager Beavers
- ▶ Evangelists

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We LIKE hearing about GOOD change!!

Hartford Fire Chief breathes life into diminished department

Milan or Hartford? That was the choice Reginald Freeman was faced with when the job of Hartford fire chief was offered to him more than a year ago. "I was poised to go to Italy for 14 months," said Freeman, who was the fire chief of Lockheed Martin's aeronautic headquarters in Ft. Worth, Texas, at the time. But the lure of helping restore a once-respected fire department to

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4 Leadership Mistakes to Stop Making, especially during an organization change

- ▶ He, She, They
- ▶ Set them Free
- ▶ Friends, NO benefits

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After Change Implemented

- ▶ Review Change Process
- ▶ Highlight Difficulties & Successes
- ▶ Improvements for Next Process
- ▶ Reap the Rewards?
- ▶ Celebrate!!!

Thank you for your time



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