



Evaluating & Revitalization of Recruitment Efforts with Help from a Local University

WHO

West Point Volunteer Fire Department

WHAT

Evaluation & revitalization of recruitment efforts with help from a local university

WHEN

January to October 2012

WHERE

West Point, Virginia

HOW

West Point Volunteer Fire Department recognized that they needed to review and modernize their department's volunteer recruitment marketing materials, recruitment methods and department branding, as a whole. Initially, they looked into using a marketing firm to assist them in the project. When marketing firms proved to be too expensive, they decided to see if the students at a local university could assist them with the project. West Point Volunteer Fire Department chose to work with the University of Richmond's business school as a marketing project for one of the senior-level marketing classes.

At the beginning of the project, the professor broke the class into five groups and had the Recruitment and Retention Coordinator (RRC) from the fire department explain the department's current efforts and expectations to the class. The fire chief and the RRC then worked with each group throughout the semester, typically interacting once a week. Each group developed a new letterhead, logo, and patch that was print quality. They also built a customized marketing plan to include the target audience and how they should be reached. At the end of the course, each group presented their plan and findings to the department. The professor graded each of the groups and advised the department on the plans and findings that he thought were best, based on his experience.

WHY

By working with an outside marketing expert, you increase your chances of developing polished marketing materials, social media posts, website design and general branding that will be concise and target the correct demographics to help you gain more volunteers. Using a marketing firm to revamp a department's recruitment efforts and advise on marketing methods can prove to be extremely useful, but may be out of the question due to budget restraints. Doing it internally may not be feasible either due to limitations on expertise, time constraints and other more pressing duties of volunteers.

Using a local university can prove to be an affordable alternative that allows your department to gain print ready marketing materials that meet your needs and gain valuable insight on how to improve your recruitment efforts.

For more information or to submit a story from your own department, please contact Ms. Jenny Bragiel at jbragiel@iafc.org.

