How to Write a Compelling Annual Report

2015 Webinar Series
Thursday, February 12, 2015
11:00 am EST
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Introduction and mindset
Common mistakes and their antidotes
Apply what you’ve learned
See what others are doing
Introduction & Mindset
A Compelling Annual Report...

- Demonstrates your value
- Educates your stakeholders
- Wins community support
What is Your Agency’s True Value?

how → what → why
Begin with the end in mind
Tell a Story

(vs. Give a Report)
We appreciate you
Common Mistakes and their Antidotes
Most common mistakes
Focus on activities and tasks

Example

We conducted 219 inspections during 2014
Antidote:

Focus on results, and call me in the morning.
Focus on RESULTS

NOT on Activities
NOT on Processes
NOT on Methodology
lead with Results
• Conduct a six-month test period between the Regional Medical Center and the Fire Department beginning July 1, 2014.

• Establish an Adaptive Response Vehicle staffed by the Fire Department that will respond to non-emergent, preventative medical screenings with chronic patients to reduce emergent 9-1-1 requests.
Healthy Community

Create a healthy community for our residents and visitors

That’s important to me!
Most common mistakes

Include Irrelevant Information

Examples

Hospital destinations
Hiring process
Apparatus specifications
Antidote:

Use relevant information and call me in the morning.
Tell your audiences

Only what they need to know

Not everything you know
Reporting Results

So what?
What’s in it for ME?

WIIFM?

(What’s in it for ME?)
“Through the efforts of our fire suppression crews, we were able to save over $25 million in property from being destroyed. More importantly, our EMTs and paramedics saved over 252 lives that would have perished if our medics had not intervened. Outcomes such as these are what we strive to exceed every year.”
Number of calls by year, month, week, day, time of day, area of the city, station, shift, apparatus
Statistics

The Fire Department tracks numerous statistics annually. What is measured is determined in conjunction with City of performance measures, National Fire Protection Association standards and our own department needs for evaluating our service to the community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population (est.)</td>
<td>106,114</td>
<td>107,967</td>
<td>109,169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Residences</td>
<td>44,818</td>
<td>43,996</td>
<td>44,441</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Businesses</td>
<td>1,807</td>
<td>1,849</td>
<td>1,917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(non home-based)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Served (square</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>miles)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Alarms</td>
<td>8,834</td>
<td>9,267</td>
<td>9,397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure Fires</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>86</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vehicle Fires</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field Fires</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Medical</td>
<td>6,125</td>
<td>6,709</td>
<td>6,595</td>
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<tr>
<td>Calls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>False Alarms</td>
<td>697</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dive/Technical</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rescues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hazardous Materials</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1,732</td>
<td>1,733</td>
<td>1,886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Response Time</td>
<td>5:14</td>
<td>5:24</td>
<td>5:23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(min.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Station 1 Alarms</td>
<td>2,470</td>
<td>2,596</td>
<td>2,669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station 2 Alarms</td>
<td>1,807</td>
<td>1,837</td>
<td>1,767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Station 3 Alarms</td>
<td>1,957</td>
<td>1,910</td>
<td>1,998</td>
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</table>

And on and on...
Antidote:

Use selective statistics and call me in the morning.
Connect

the dots
So what?

Reporting Results
Most common mistakes

Using Non-user Friendly Language

Examples

Technical Term: SCBA

@TEOTD, if PPL DK what you mean, they DC either. LOL – KWIM?
Antidote:

Choose user-friendly language and call me in the morning.
Connect

the dots
“I’m sorry” and “my bad” mean the same thing...

...unless you are at a funeral.
How to Provide Context

- Link to a common big picture
- Identify WIIFM from others’ perspectives
- Use relevant percentages
- Draw multiple-year comparisons (3-5 years)
How to Provide Context

• Use familiar analogies
• Include relevant images
• Answer the “So what?” question
A.A.A.A.S.
(Avoid acronyms, abbreviations, and slang)
We were very busy in 2014

Busy doing ... what? So what?
Antidote:

Tell their story
and call me in the morning
Re-frame your story
Apply What You’ve Learned
“I want you to know, sir, how kind as well as efficient your men were. Too often people are quick to complain; however, I think it’s very important to acknowledge what is right and good.”

- Brenda Eaton

Bloomfield Township Fire Department
Report Cover
Georgetown, TX
Fire Department

WHERE DUTY CALLS, YOU WILL FIND US
Fire Chief’s Letter
Fire Chief’s Letter

Burning Questions

Who is our fire chief?

What are you doing to keep our community safe?

What accomplishments made you most proud last year?

How can we reach you if we have concerns or questions?

What can we expect from the agency during the year ahead?
“2014 was an exciting time for **our community**, as **your fire department** was able to elevate the level of safety, health, and economic viability in many ways. **You** continued to experience short response times despite more calls for service as we...; **Your** homeowners insurance rates remained low due to...; and **the community’s** overall level of emergency preparedness was enhanced by...”
Administration
Connect

the dots
“The XYZ Fire and Rescue Department administration helps create a safe, healthy, economically viable community by allocating its resources in ways that promote effective and efficient emergency and non-emergency operations.”
Admin Info Display
Georgetown, TX
Fire Department
(2011 Annual Report)
Financial Management
Burning Questions

Did you use my tax dollars wisely?

How will I be able to tell?
“Financial Management contributes to the safety, health, and economic viability of the community by allocating the department’s resources efficiently and effectively.”
Operations
“Our [Emergency Services Bureau] mission is to minimize injuries, death, and property loss related to fires, medical emergencies, and other disasters through the efficient delivery of effective fire suppression, pre-hospital treatment, and patient transportation.”

Source: Columbus (OH) Division of Fire 2013 Annual Report
PROPERTY SAVED

During 2013 there was $13.9 million worth of property at risk due to fire.

Ninety-four percent of the property involved was saved. Only $849,000 worth of property was lost.

Easton, PA
Fire Department
(2013 Annual Report)
### Fire Loss and Property Saved - 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value of Property</td>
<td>$16,662,720</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Losses</td>
<td>$562,420</td>
<td>3.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Saved</td>
<td>$16,100,300</td>
<td>96.62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During 2013, the LHCFD saved 88% of the property threatened by structure fires.

Source: Lake Havasu City Fire Department
Emergency Medical Services

Burning Questions

Will you be there when my family and I need you?

Will you have the right people, equipment, and apparatus to help us?

Will you arrive quickly?

Will the new reporting system help paramedics make the best use of their time?
Connect

the dots
Burning Questions

What are you doing to mitigate fire dangers?

What value do inspections have for the community?

Why does the fire department review building plans?

How will I know the benefits of outreach efforts?

Why do you spend time on community outreach – i.e., what good does it do?
Connect

the dots
Fleet Management
Fleet Maintenance

Burning Question

What is the impact on the community’s safety and health if the department’s vehicles are old or outdated?
Connect

the dots
Personnel
Burning Questions

Are department personnel well qualified to protect my family, my business, and me?

Who are the people who keep us safe?

Why do so many firefighters show up at a fire?

Why do firefighters show up when I call for an ambulance?
Connect the dots
“Our community remains safe, healthy, and economically viable because we hire well-qualified candidates, put them through our rigorous training program, maintain high performance standards, and have all members engage in continuous training and development to maintain and upgrade their skills.”
Everyone plays a role...
...including civilian staff
Burning Questions

- Are members fully qualified to keep my family and me safe?
- What return am I getting on the tax dollars spent on training?
- How will all those training hours benefit the community?
- How will I know whether the investment is worth the cost?
Connect

the dots
“Our community remains safe and healthy because the Training Bureau ensures all fire and EMS personnel are knowledgeable, highly skilled, and experienced professionals.”

“Firefighters are able to do XYZ as a result of their dive training.”

“Firefighters are able to do ABC as a result of their hazmat training.”
Specialty Areas
To highlight the importance of this team, on June 20, 2013, EFD personnel performed a successful rescue of a girl who had fallen more than 50’ down a cliff onto the beach at the end of E. 238th St. The rescue operation, led by HASRT team leader Lt. Chris Caimi, was successful with the patient suffering non-life threatening injuries. Photo 2 is a picture of the rescue in progress.
Delray Beach, FL Fire Dept. – 2013 Annual Report
Explorer Program
Other
- Partners
- Recognition
- Community

Sections
- Transitions
- Mutual aid
Did you know the NFPA recommends at least 13 firefighters on scene of a low risk structure fire? I mention this because of excellent Mutual Aid agreements throughout Saginaw and Bay counties. Rarely can one paid on call fire department handle a “low risk” structure fire without help. We currently have an Automatic Response with Carrollton and Zilwaukee on any structure fires in our communities.

- 1 person- Incident Command
- 1 person- Fire Apparatus operator
- 1 person- Water supply
- 2 personnel- Attack line
- 2 personnel- Search and Rescue
- 2 personnel- Ventilation
- 2 personnel- Back up line
- 2 personnel- Rapid Intervention team
See what others are doing
Red Cross Recognizes Paso Robles Firefighters

The San Luis Obispo Chapter of the American Red Cross recently recognized three Paso Robles firefighters as “First Responder Heroes” for their daring rescue on August 1.

A 16 year-old male, traveling at an estimated 100 MPH, ran his vehicle into a power pole. The vehicle came to rest part-way up the pole, which had been sheared off due to the force of the collision. Several power lines were down and laying across the vehicle.

A fire in the engine compartment began immediately. Bystanders could only discharge portable fire extinguishers at a distance and to no avail. The victim was conscious, screaming, and unable to exit the vehicle due to his injuries. The engine company, consisting of Paramedic/Captain Randy Harris, Firefighter/Paramedic John Prickett, and Firefighter Jason Cox, quickly assessed the situation. The rapidly advancing fire could not be extinguished and a power company response was estimated at 15 minutes. The engine company determined immediate action was required to save the victim—regardless of the personal risk represented. The extrication was successful and no one was injured.
Seaside, CA Fire Department
(2013 Annual Report)

In order to better serve our community, survey cards are sent out to those who have recently called for our assistance. A minimum of ten addresses are randomly selected each month. Those who receive our survey cards are given the opportunity to anonymously rate our level of service in the areas of: LEVEL OF CONCERN, QUALITY OF SERVICE, AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE and COURTESY & PROFESSIONALISM. Surveyors are asked to rate each category between 1-4; 1 being "poor", 2 being "fair", 3 being "good" and 4 being "very good". The monthly ratings of 2013 have been averaged and are listed below. In addition to rating service on a number scale, community members are given the opportunity to list any additional feedback regarding the service of the Fire Department. If and when a low scoring card is received, we are able to evaluate our actions taken on that particular call and make necessary changes to our response. Although surveyors are allowed to remain anonymous, if they feel the service received was less than acceptable, they can provide contact information and personnel will follow-up with the resident immediately. Survey cards have proved to be a valuable tool in fine-tuning our service to the community as we continue to work with and serve the residents of Seaside and Del Rey Oakes in years to come.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Average Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEC</td>
<td>3.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOV</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCT</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEP</td>
<td>4.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUG</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>JUL</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>JUN</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>MAY</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>APR</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAR</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEB</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JAN</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We are pleased to report that in 2013 as well as years past, the Seaside Fire Department has received ratings of 3 or higher with the average rating of "4—Very Good".
In order to better serve our community, survey cards are sent out to those who have recently called for our assistance. A minimum of ten addresses are randomly selected each month. Those who receive our survey cards are given the opportunity to anonymously rate our level of service in the areas of: LEVEL OF CONCERN, QUALITY OF SERVICE, AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE and COURTESY & PROFESSIONALISM. Surveyors are asked to rate each category between 1-4; 1 being “poor”, 2 being “fair”, 3 being “good” and 4 being “very good”. The monthly ratings of 2013 have been averaged and are listed below. In addition to rating service on a number scale, community members are given the opportunity to list any additional feedback regarding the service of the Fire Department. If and when a low scoring card is received, we are able to evaluate our actions taken on that particular call and make necessary changes to our response. Although surveyors are allowed to remain anonymous, if they feel the service received was less than acceptable, they can provide contact information and personnel will follow-up with the resident immediately. Survey cards have proved to be a valuable tool in fine-tuning our service to the community as we continue to work with and serve the residents of Seaside and Del Rey Oaks in years to come.
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COMMUNITY SATISFACTION SURVEY CARDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Level of Concern</th>
<th>Quality of Service</th>
<th>Amount of Assistance</th>
<th>Courtesy &amp; Professionalism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEC</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOV</td>
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<td>JAN</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"You're the Best, Thanks"
"Everyone was so helpful and we thank them so very much! We appreciate all the services you provide."
"I think Seaside Fire Department is doing an excellent job. Keep up the good work!!"
"You boys restarted my heart/life. How much better could it get?"
"Awesome work cooperation and teamwork"

"Muy buen trabajo, muy satisfecha con los servicios!!"
"I'm very pleased with your team"
"Buen Trabajo muchachos"
"Well trained great job"

"They were very professional. helpful!!"
"We feel extremely well cared for. Thank you"
"Thank you"
"Thank you for the help they gave us"
"Thank you for your help"

"They were very, very good."
"Thank you for keeping us safe."
"Outstanding- extremely courteous very professional. Thank you very much!"
"Very good"
"You guys were wonderful. Thank you so much!"
"Thank you for being here"
"Thank you"
"Very courteous and professional"
"They were absolutely wonderful!! Thank you!"
"Keep it up."

"You saved mom's life - dad went after he heard mom lived. Thank you All so much. You serve our community well!"
"I do not know of any way you could improve on the quality of service I received. It was all in a word, EXCELLENT!!"

"When responding, everyone from 911 operator to the ambulance team was caring, courteous and very kind. My mom is recovering from a stroke and was in worse extreme pain. Thank you so much!!"
"Very kind and respectful to my son and family. Quickly responded to 911 call @ 2am for seizure grand mal."

Seaside Fire Department - 2013 Annual Report
"You're the Best, Thanks"

"Everyone was so helpful and we thank them so very much! We appreciate all the services you provide."

"I think Seaside Fire Department is doing an excellent job. Keep up the good work!"

"You boys restarted my heart/life. How much better could it get!"

"Awesome work cooperation and teamwork"

"Muy buen trabajo, muy satisfecha con los servicios!!"

"I'm very pleased with your team"

"Buen Trabajo muchachos"

"Well trained great job"

"They were very, very good."

"Thank you for keeping us safe."

"Outstanding—extremely courteous—very professional. Thank you very much"

"Very good"

"You guys were wonderful. Thank you so much!"

"Thank you for being here"

"Thank - you"

"Very courteous and professional"

"They were absolutely wonderful! Thank you"

"Keep it up."
“They were very professional - helpful.”

“We felt extremely well cared for. Thank you”

“Thank you”

Thank you for the help they gave me”

“Thank you for your help”

“You saved mom’s life - dad went after he heard mom lived. Thank you All so much. You serve our community well!”

“I do not know of any way you could improve on the quality of service I received. It was all in a word, EXCELLENT!!”

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“Very kind and respectful to my son and family. Quickly responded to 911 call @ 2am for seizure grand mall.”
SEASIDE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Just as in years past, the Seaside Firefighters Association, Local 1218, continues to be active in the community. A few of the events that Local 1218 participated in are as follows:

MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY ASSOCIATION (MDA)
Local, 1218 has been participating in the MDA’s “Fill the Boot” campaign for over 16 years. During that time, the Seaside Firefighters Association has raised over $200,000 for the cause.

In 2017, Local 1218 members raised over $14,000 during the three-day event thanks to the citizens of, and visitors to, the cities of Seaside and Sand City.

RELAY FOR LIFE
This is the second year that Local 1218 members have participated in the 24-hour event that highlights awareness of cancer victims, as well as survivors. Association members were able to raise over $20,000 for this most worthwhile event.

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS (MONTH OF OCTOBER)
With the approval of Chief Donaven, Local 1218 developed pink Seaside Fire Department t-shirts that were made and worn by fire personnel during the month of October, commemorating Breast Cancer Awareness month. The pink shirts were worn by personnel in place of the standard navy blue t-shirts worn under their uniform shirt. The shirts were also sold in the fire station in the month of October to those who wished to order them. The Seaside Firefighters Association is donating all proceeds to Breast Cancer research.

SAFEWAY BAGGERS
Association members spent an evening bagging groceries at the Del Rey Oaks Safeway in support of Safeway’s Cancer Awareness Day.

SAFEWAY INVITATIONAL GOLF TOURNAMENT
Local, 1218 members provided medical aid coverage for the annual corporate golf tournament held at Bayonet Blackhorse in Seaside. The two-day celebrity event raises money for local charities.

SECRET SANTA
A few years ago, a Seaside citizen showed up at the Fire Department just after Thanksgiving. He was dressed in a Santa suit and had brought a $500 gift certificate to the local Safeway store. He stated, “I am putting this money in the hands of the Seaside Fire Department to purchase personal protective equipment (PPE) for those who need it.” Local 1218 is proud to be able to help other families with this much-needed money.
Just as in years past, the Seaside Firefighters Association, Local 1218, continues to be active in the community. A few of the events that Local 1218 participated in are as follows:

**Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA)**

Local 1218 has been participating in the MDA’s “Fill the Boot” campaign for over 16 years. During that time, the Seaside Firefighters Association has raised over $250,000 for the cause. In 2013, Local 1218 members raised over $14,000 during the three-day event thanks to the citizens of, and visitors to, the cities of Seaside and Sand City.

**Relay for Life**

This is the second year that Local 1218 members have participated in the 24-hour event that highlights awareness of cancer victims, as well as survivors. Association members were able to raise over $20,000 for this most worthwhile event.

**Breast Cancer Awareness (Month of October)**

With the approval of Chief Dempsey, Local 1218 developed pink Seaside Fire Department t-shirts that were made and worn by fire personnel during the month of October, commemorating Breast Cancer Awareness month. The black t-shirts were replaced by the pink Seaside Fire Department t-shirts as employees wishing to purchase the shirts for themselves or their loved ones. The Seaside Firefighters Association is considering selling the shirts through October, 2014 and donating the proceeds to Breast Cancer research.

**Safeway Baggers**

Association members spent an evening bagging groceries at the Del Rey Oaks Safeway in support of Safeway’s Cancer Awareness Day.
SAFETY INVITATIONAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

Local 1218 members provided Medical Aid coverage for the annual corporate golf tournament held at Bayonet Blackhorse in Seaside. The two-day celebrity event raises money for local charities.

SECRET SANTA

A few years ago, a Seaside citizen showed up at the Fire Department just after Thanksgiving. He was disabled and his wife could only find part-time work. He was inquiring if the Firefighters had any programs in place or could steer him to an organization that might be able to assist him and his wife in purchasing some much needed clothing for his 5-year-old daughter. That family became the first in what has become a tradition for Local 1218 members during the Christmas season: Secret Santa. In 2013, Local 1218 was blessed to be able to help out four families from our community that were in need by providing clothes, toys and most importantly - hope.
Georgetown, TX
Fire Department
2011 Annual Report

Total Equipment Ensemble Value
$449,360

- Pierce Engine $403,000
- Red Line Hose $2,000
- Cross Lay Hose $3,150
- Pumping Tools $13,500
- Rescue Tools $20,950
- Fire Tools $410
- Supply Line Hose $370
- Fire Tools $6,980
The Firefighter's Prayer
When I am called to duty, God, whenever flames may rage;
Give me strength to save some life, whatever be its age.
Help me embrace a little child before it is too late
or save an older person from the horror of that fate.
Enable me to be alert and hear the weakest shout,
and quickly and efficiently to put the fire out.
I want to fill my calling and to give the best in me,
to guard my every neighbor and protect his property.
And if, according to my fate, I am to lose my life;
please bless with your protecting hand
my children and my wife. -- Author Unknown
The Firefighter's Prayer

When I am called to duty, God, whenever flames may rage;
Give me strength to save some life, whatever be its age.
Help me embrace a little child before it is too late
or save an older person from the horror of that fate.
Enable me to be alert and hear the weakest shout,
and quickly and efficiently to put the fire out.
I want to fill my calling and to give the best in me,
to guard my every neighbor and protect his property.
And if, according to my fate, I am to lose my life;
please bless with your protecting hand
my children and my wife.

-- Author Unknown
Questions?
What you learned

1. Introduction & mindset
2. Common mistakes & their antidotes
3. Apply what you’ve learned
4. See what others are doing
Your Next Move

Read my article “How to Write a Compelling Annual Report”

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