



THE REVIEW

Central Arizona Fire and Medical - 8603 E. Eastridge Dr., Prescott Valley, AZ 86314 – **June 25, 2021**

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“Self-control is strength. Calmness is mastery. You have to get to a point where your mood doesn't shift based on the insignificant actions of someone else. Don't allow others to control the direction of your life. Don't allow your emotions to overpower your intelligence ”
– Unk



The Chief's Desk

If you were to be asked in an interview, "What do you believe the culture is within CAFMA?" How would you answer? First, describing something that you cannot define is difficult. Second, for most people the concept of culture is not something that is in the forefront of their mind.

In an effort to assist you in future promotional processes, I'm going to provide a bit of insight into culture both good and bad. I think the best place to start is with Merriam-Webster's definition:

Culture – a: the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organization. b: the set of values, conventions, or social practices associated with a particular field, activity, or societal characteristic. c: the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group.

A shared set of attitudes, values, goals and practices that characterize an organization seems the best fit for our purposes. Here is the interesting part of culture for us, we have an overarching culture that we strive for as outlined in *The Compass*, however as a result of our size and outlying facilities we have a multitude of micro cultures that exist. We have ten fire stations, three different shifts, and two battalions. If we are honest with ourselves, that means we have 30 different fire department cultures, and six different battalion cultures. We can go a step further by adding all of the different divisions that make up non-operations. For example, there are four different divisions and three senior staff that work in our administrative offices. This means there are potentially five variations of our culture at play within the same building. That doesn't mean we're all flying off in different directions. It simply acknowledges that there are differences between each, however we all work under the philosophy we outlined in *The Compass*.

We clamor for consistency within the agency. Please understand that being consistent and being exactly the same are two different things. Personally, I prefer to set the rails and allow flexibility within those rails. There is absolutely no way of turning 160 individual CAFMA team members into 160 clones, nor would we want to. This is why we establish expectations, identify our overarching philosophy, and establish minimum standards to which we adhere. There is consistency within the rails.

What do you think the culture was within Wells Fargo when they began creating all of the fake bank accounts in an effort to bolster their bottom line? It started with one person trying to make their sales numbers and spread quickly throughout the entire organization. Why did no one at corporate recognize the red flags and start asking questions? That is a valid question. Could it have been that the fictitious numbers put the company in a better position with Wall Street and improved the corporate bonuses? Unfortunately for them, it was a house of cards built on a foundation of quick sand.

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Upcoming Events:

June 28: State Fire District Labor/Management Meeting, Next Gen Planning Session, Board Meetings

June 29: All hands meeting, hopefully visit stations

June 30: Hopefully visit stations, record two podcasts

July 1: All hands meeting, AFDA meeting, Ambulance meeting

Board Meetings:

June 28 Administration

CVFD – 1600-1630

CYFD – 1630-1700

CAFMA – 1700-1830

Rethinking Leadership: Finding Your Voice in Difficult Moments

By: Benjamin Martin

When we join the fire service, one of our primary responsibilities is to take care of the resources given to us by our organization and community. Stewardship, which is taking care of what's entrusted to you by someone else, is at the heart of our mission and maintains the public trust in the fire service. Knowing the weight of this obligation and expectation, senior members teach and coach new hires to take responsibility for the state of their station, apparatus, equipment, and uniforms. Because our actions matter so much to so many, we are also motivated to take pride in our performance. Hundreds of hours spent training on fireground fundamentals quickly become thousands throughout a career; the goal to reduce the likelihood of getting it wrong when lives are on the line.

In time, some firefighters begin to feel pulled more than others towards leading people. When people step up to lead, they need to understand that they are asking others to trust them with the organization's most significant resource--its people. There are many priorities for leaders, but one of the most important, if not the most, is to take care of your people. Sometimes this will include the opportunity to heap praise on them and celebrate when the job goes well. At other times, it will consist of having to have a potentially difficult conversation about a performance that has dropped below what's acceptable. As a result, leaders can feel pressured into not speaking up when confronted with a co-worker's actions that stand counter to our department's mission and values.

In moments of what may be a potentially difficult conversation, officers must find their leadership voice—the ability to inspire performance that aligns with the values and mission of the fire service. Finding this voice can be challenging even for tenured officers and is especially true in younger leaders still learning the difficult transition from a buddy to a boss role. This transition is filled with personnel traps that can overwhelm and turn off even the most seasoned and optimistic leaders. A leadership voice involves learning the right moments to speak up and ensuring it's for the right reasons.

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What Accountability Means

By: Kevin Eikenberry

I've often said that accountability is the longest four-letter word in business. Not because I think it is a dirty word – quite the opposite – but that is how many see it. The problem isn't the word or the spelling, but the understanding of what accountability means and how valuable it is to all of us. Once people truly understand the word, most will be drawn toward it, rather than shying away. Let's fix that today. I am reclaiming accountability from consultant-speak and making it real and relevant.

Three Examples

Your favorite organization is looking for someone to spearhead the annual fund-raising event, and you raise your hand to take the lead. You decide that you want the event to be successful.

Your neighbor is heading on a two-week vacation and the weather report looks hot and dry. They ask you if you will water their plants. When you agree, you want to make sure their plants look as healthy when they return as when they left.

A key member of the project team has become unexpectedly sick. You are asked to take on an expanded role on the team to meet a critical deadline. While framed as a request, you know you need to say yes. Regardless of how it shows up on your task list, you resolve to rise to the new challenge and meet your additional deliverables with excellence.

In each of these situations, your actions show you clearly know what accountability means. You have chosen to take actions and feel a sense of responsibility and ownership for the outcome, even though you could fail or fall short. In other words, you have chosen to be accountable.

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Chief's Desk Continued

VW engineers were unable to design their diesel motors to meet their fuel ratings while still meeting emissions standards. Rather than fix the actual issue, they developed a program within the vehicles computer so it would recognize when it was being tested for emissions. The program would adjust the computerized settings for the motor so it would meet the emissions standards. Once it passed inspection, the program would reset the factory settings. What was the culture within VW that led the engineers to believe it was better to commit fraud than to continue working on the motor?

These are just two examples of cultures that could be described as caustic and/or entitled. Their focus was more on profit than their customers as well as their employees. In addition, they felt entitled to things they had not earned. They certainly did not have a culture of accountability or a culture that valued integrity. They certainly valued creativity, but not in a way that was truly productive. Both serve as case studies for ethics programs as well as studies regarding organizational culture.

How would you describe a good culture? Maybe it's a culture of inclusiveness. One in which the input of others is valued, and people are accepted no matter their race, religion, gender, or orientation. You may not always get your way in an inclusive culture, but you would at least have an opportunity for input. Maybe it's a culture of accountability. In this type of culture people understand the accountability is ownership – thinking of it in a positive light. Additionally, it means there is clarity in expectations and people are held accountable to the standards. Interestingly, in organizations where standards are set, but no one is held accountable to the standard, the morale is lower. This is generally because those who hold themselves to the standard start to feel their dedication is not valued as other people get away with doing less. Eventually, everyone does less and the company fails.

How about a culture of caring? The concept of caring for one another is fairly broad. I believe that in a culture of caring, people are treated like family. When one person hurts, everyone hurts. People in these environments set up meal trains, they stop by, call or text to check in on someone who is struggling,

and/or they organize a painting party to take care of someone's home while they are out dealing with whatever. These are just a few examples off the top of my head, but they do sound oddly familiar. As strange as it may sound, a culture of accountability is part of caring for others.

How do the concepts of professionalism, respect, integrity, dedication, and excellence play into the culture of an organization? Do those things add value to the overarching culture, and help establish the rails? A culture of excellence – always striving to be a better person or organization tomorrow, than we were today. Not a culture of perfection – which does not exist. Some say we are progressive which would be part of a culture of excellence, and some might say we are not, which would be the opposite of a culture of excellence. It's all about perspective and expectations. Personally, I believe that more often than not, our folks work towards the idea of excellence in all we do, and work hard to exceed the expectations of all those we serve. And, for what it's worth, I believe we are a fairly progressive organization.

I think we all know what we want the culture of CAFMA to be, however, that is not the question. The question is what do you believe our culture is? If your perspective is that things are not as they should be, then your answer to the question may be: I know where we want to be, but this is what I'm seeing. I believe that if I am promoted to the position of X, I can help move things in a more positive direction. Or, you may say, in my part of the CAFMA world things are great and my goal is to continue to guide us in the right direction. Both are strong, and honest, answers.

The culture we are striving for at CAFMA is not one in which everyone gets their way. That my friends, is impossible. There may be some folks who see our culture through a different lens which may lead them to decide we are not a good fit for each other. That's okay as well. Not everyone is right for our organization, and our organization is not right for everyone. To each of their own, as they say.

There are far more examples of culture than I described in this writing, but I think you get the general idea of what culture is and how you might describe it, *should* you ever be asked. Hint, you will be asked 😊
