The most essential element of success in high risk work environments is competent and confident leadership.

Jeremy Bennett
BIA Agency Representative to the NWCG Leadership Development Subcommittee
Background

A Case for Change

• Within the last 20 years a number of high-risk occupations have dramatically changed their training focus

• For the wildland fire service, in the last 12 years understanding human behavior has become as important as understanding fire behavior
Background

Leadership — tackling a tough issue

• You can’t know where you are going unless you know where you have been
Taking Leadership Development to a New Level

- National Wildfire Coordinating Group begins to look at the issue of leadership development in 1999
- Work on a formal leadership development program begins in 2001
- Focus was on Operations initially…
Building a Program – Where to Begin

- Benchmarking the best

“It is incumbent upon the Marine officer to be constantly teaching his men, his junior officers and himself.”

- General Leonard F. Chapman, Jr.
  24th Commandant of the Marine Corps
The Foundation

Building a Program – Guiding Principles

1. Establish a common set of leadership values
2. Invest early in leadership training
3. Provide experiential training
4. Emphasize decision-making skills
5. Encourage students of leadership
6. Partner with outside expertise
The Foundation

Building a Program – Key Components

Values and Principles

Training Courses

Leadership Toolbox
The Nuts and Bolts

Values and Principles

“Not everything that is countable counts, and not everything that counts is countable”

Albert Einstein

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<tr>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Principles</th>
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<tr>
<td>Duty</td>
<td>Be proficient in your job, both technically and as a leader.</td>
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<td>Make sound and timely decisions.</td>
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<td>Ensure tasks are understood, supervised, and accomplished.</td>
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<td>Develop your subordinates for the future.</td>
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<td>Respect</td>
<td>Know your subordinates and look out for their well-being.</td>
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<td>Keep your subordinates informed.</td>
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<td>Build the team.</td>
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<td>Employ your subordinates in accordance with their capabilities.</td>
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<td>Integrity</td>
<td>Know yourself and seek improvement.</td>
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<td>Seek responsibility and accept responsibility for your actions.</td>
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<td>Set the example.</td>
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The Nuts and Bolts

Values and Principles

Paul Gleason Lead By Example Award

A way to recognize field level leaders who model the values and principles
The Nuts and Bolts

Formal Curriculum

Leaders must be grown…

• Formal courses beginning early in a firefighter’s career
• Focus on leader behaviors not supervision
The Nuts and Bolts

Formal Curriculum Focus

Follower concepts
- Situation awareness
- Stress and attitude barriers

Leader of People concepts
- Decision-making and communication
- Teambuilding

Leader of Leaders concepts
- Managing group dynamics
- Detecting operational error

Leader of Organizations concepts
- Imparting command presence and intent
- Integration into team decision process
Leadership Toolbox

Leaders must be students...

• On-line resource for self-development
• Focus on experiential learning
Tactical Decision Games (TDGS) and Sandtable Exercises (STEX) are techniques to help develop decision-making skills in young leaders.
Staff Rides are training events designed for experienced leaders to derive lessons from significant historical incidents.
Why Change?

The ultimate goal of this program is to recognize the increased demands on the wildland fire service and provide better prepared leaders.
Just For Firefighters?

The reality of the modern workplace is that it is unpredictable and it is complex.

This is where we need to do better...
Information Source

www.fireleadership.gov

The most essential element of successful wildland firefighting is competent and confident leadership. The wildland fire leadership development program has been established to provide an avenue for you to improve essential leadership skills during all stages of your career.

This website is designed to provide information regarding the implementation of the NWCG wildland fire leadership development program. In addition, it provides a resource to allow individuals to strive for a higher performance level as a leader through self-directed learning opportunities.
“Leaders aren’t born they are made…and they are made just like anything else, through hard work.”

Coach Vince Lombardi