The First 180 Days

RETENTION STARTS EARLIER THAN YOU THINK

Lt Col Darin Ninness, CAP  @NHQRecruiting
National Recruiting & Retention Manager
Who IS This Guy?

- 36 year CAP veteran, Michigan & New Hampshire
- 6 time squadron commander
- Recruiting & Retention Manager since 2015
- Army Veteran, Helicopter Mechanic, Skydiving Instructor
- Currently: Sq CC, Wing Personnel & Recruiting, National Recruiting
Today

- Membership & Retention Statistics
- The Overall Concept
- Retention
  - Before membership
  - In the membership process
- Challenges
  - Change declining new member joins
  - Fix engagement in the first 180 days
Membership Since 1950

CADET & SENIOR MEMBERSHIP SINCE 1950

Seniors
Cadets
Totals
The Metrics

- 57,331 Members
  - 24,077 Cadets
  - 33,254 Seniors
- Cadet Retention:
  - ~35% First Year, ~55% Subsequent Year
- Senior Retention: ~74%
The Concept

• **60-65%** of first year members leave in the **first 180 days**.
• Takes a pilot an *average* of **180 days** to get an **initial** CAPF 5
• The Military Retention Model of “interview in the last 60-90 days” misses most of our first year members”
All of This Starts *Before* Membership

- Engage the entire unit in the process, not just the recruiting officer and commander.
- Sell the CAP you *have*, not the CAP you *want*.
- Recruiting for *fit* and *needs*, not for numbers
All of This Starts *Before* Membership

- Know what you need, then go get it.
  - What are your needs? How many? This informs your goal.
  - Knowing the need informs targeted recruiting.
- Putting your best foot forward in the process.
  - Be professional and squared away
  - Knock off the 7th grade science fair displays
  - Have a process in place and ensure people know it.
All of This Starts Before Membership

• CAP Membership is a privilege.
• You don’t have to take every warm body with a pulse and a set of fingerprints
• Screen for fit before you even get to the membership board.
Engagement In the Membership Process

- Use the Membership Board to set expectations
  - The board should be stakeholders themselves
  - Don’t oversell the program.
  - Look for fit (time commitment, schedule, longevity)
  - This is an interview. Treat it like one.

- HR adage: “Hire slow, fire fast”
  - Take your time to get to know the prospect before you get them to part with a dues check.
Engagement *In* the Membership Process

- There is no shame in someone not joining the organization.
  - If the fit isn’t there, it’s OK to say so.
  - The unit doesn’t have to take every person with a pulse and fingerprints.
- Better to recruit 2 members for specific positions than 5 members for none.
Deliver on the expectations

• Leadership & the process
  • Command team buy-in. All on the same page. Include major staff officers to determine your needs.

• Training Roadmap (cadet & senior)
  • New members need to be guided thru the initial process. Communicate that. Constantly.
  • Can’t know where you’re going or when you’ll get there without a roadmap to check progress against.
180 Days Roadmapping (Examples)

**CADETS**
- 1st 6-8 weeks: Great Start/BCT, C/Amn.
- Month 2: Uniform(s)
- Month 3: 2nd test
- Month 4: O-flights
- Month 5: 3rd test, ready for C/A1C
- Month 6: 4th test, etc

**SENIOR**
- Month 1: Level I & First talk, POA, commander/mentor talks
- Month 2: Determine interest area
- Month 3: Assign track & train
- Month 4: CAPF 5, next POA steps
- Month 5: Prep for promotion
- Month 6: GES, etc.
2nd 180 Days Roadmapping (Examples)

**CADETS**
- Month 7: Encampment on the radar
- Month 8: GES, Comms
- Month 9: Next test
- Month 10: Promotion
- Month 11:
- Month 12:

**SENIOR**
- Month 7: ICS/GES, ICUT
- Month 8: MP/MS/MO Training
- Month 9: Prep for SLS
- Month 10: Update POA
- Month 11:
- Month 12:
Member’s Expectations – 1\textsuperscript{st}/2\textsuperscript{nd} 180 days

• With a roadmap, they know what to expect.
• Remember what it was like when you were a newbie. Work to that angle.
• Always look at it from the member perspective.
Training in Those First 180 Days

• **Deliver on the promise.** We tell people “We have training!” when they join. Let’s do it.

• Member training, commander training, technical / functional training, mission training

• **Regularly schedule** this training and **execute**.

• Use **data** to eyeball your training needs. x need SLS, etc
Leadership in Those First 180 Days

• **Good leadership keeps people.** Bad leadership drives people away. It’s really that simple. Retention problem at a unit usually means leadership problems.

• **With sufficient membership,** you have choices in a unit. When a unit has 8 seniors, 4 of whom have been the commander before, your choices are limited to “who’s available,” not “who’s the best choice.”
QUESTIONS?
You can always email me at dninness@cap.gov
Please complete the 2017 survey online for a chance to have your conference registration fee refunded

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/17NatCon
Save the Date
23-25 August 2018
National Conference & Command Council
Anaheim Marriott
Anaheim, California
Online Registration Opens April 2018