

## MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT



**2015 Winner:** International Association of Fire Chiefs

**Entry Title:** "We are the IAFC" Member Recruitment Campaign

### **Project Overview/Elevator Pitch:**

With a majority of its membership aging and retiring, IAFC needed to target and attract younger and emerging officers with a message of association value and inclusion. The organization also needed to remind current members that there is a place for all leadership ranks in the IAFC, and not just for chiefs as the name implies. The 2014 "We are the IAFC" campaign successfully demonstrated how showcasing members and their specific experiences with the association can change perception and help increase a weakening membership type. The message was consistent and clear that there are benefits for every leader in a fire department, not just for the chief, and the members' stories proved it.

### **Project Goals/Objectives:**

The goals and objectives of this marketing campaign directly relate to IAFC's mission of providing leadership and guidance for officers of various ranks.

#### **Goals:**

1. Correct the misperception that the IAFC is for chiefs only.
2. Use the member's voice to market the benefits of membership and the value of the IAFC in the fire and emergency response community.
3. Incorporate proof point marketing tactics to attract prospects of various ranks.
4. Increase our membership of officers ranked lower than chief.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Increase the awareness of membership opportunities for officers ranked lower than the chief by:
  - a. targeting specific groups with consistent recruitment messages and relevant stories from members.
  - b. visually displaying the diversity of ranks within the current membership both on the website and in public media. i.e. Chief, Assistant Chief, Battalion Chief, Captain.
  - c. showcasing short stories, as told by members of various ranks, about how their specific problems were resolved using IAFC resources.
  - d. consistently targeting specific leads using a variety of touch points including email, mail and face-to-face interaction.

#### **Strategy:**

- Feature 12 members of different ranks and experience levels who have been members for various years.
- Display them in a variety of ways on the website, print and electronic advertising, printed flyers and recruitment letters.
- Target qualified leads by rank with two direct mail campaigns each in spring, summer and fall.

- Target a third group of leads in the fall.
  - Piece was branded for the campaign and included a personal letter from IAFC president and a membership application.
- Direct mail campaigns were supplemented by several follow-up emails featuring a specific member's story and a call to join.
- Campaign was featured at IAFC's annual conference in August 2014.
  - An 80'x90' expo pavilion included large structures showcasing the faces and titles of 18 members of various ranks.
  - Stories of four members, told in first person, on large signs as part of a display. These stories highlighted the member's specific problem, how the IAFC helped, and how the member is now benefitting.
  - A "Find-A-Face" game that required attendees to hunt for the faces of five members featured somewhere in the pavilion and write down the rank shown for each member on a game sheet. From the game sheets collected, two winners were drawn and awarded 12-month memberships in the IAFC.

### **Success Metrics:**

The metric for success was the change in membership of lower ranking officers at the end of the year.

- 2014 yielded a whopping 40% increase in membership over 2013 for officers ranked lower than chief.
- The three "We are the IAFC" direct mail campaigns alone resulted in 280 new memberships.
  - 51% were officers ranked lower than chief.
  - \$48,568 was achieved in new first year revenue.
  - The lifetime value of the 280 members calculates to \$124,334.
  - The ROI for this campaign was an impressive 8:1.
  - Overall conversion rate was 3%.
- IAFC also saw a remarkable increase in group memberships.
  - 2014 resulted in 1,075 total individual group members from 115 fire departments versus 757 new individual group members from 71 fire departments in 2013, a 42% increase in group members.
- IAFC membership finished 2014 with a 3.25% increase and its highest number of members since 2010.
- The 20% increase in new members was the highest number in over eight years.

### **Learn More:**

[www.iafc.org](http://www.iafc.org)