

# Fire Service Leadership Development Solutions

Leadership Coaching, Training,  
Development & Team Building



## The Challenge

Many fire departments are experiencing a significant amount of staff transitions due to retirements, which impacts leadership within those departments. For example, in a short period of time, a Bay Area Fire Department, with a staff of about 135 fire personnel needed to recruit and hire 50 new employees. Most of the staff at the Division Chief level and above were experiencing turnover, as well.

As these ranks turnover in a short period of time, those filling the ranks tend to be less experienced. With less experienced staff assuming the higher levels of responsibility, the rank-and-file can be impacted by less effective leadership, and these leaders tend to experience a greater degree of stress.

Our experience is that many teams get stuck in an unhealthy stage of development characterized by in-fighting, lack of accountability, poor communication, unresolved conflict, and lack of trust. Team maturity drops and stakeholders internally and externally suffer.

Over the years, we have seen several trends in working with police and fire leaders. Some of the issues have their root in emotional intelligence and behavioral style issues. Examples include:

- Not being aware of the impact of their behavior and/or not being able or willing to manage their behavior differently in order to get better results
- Not understanding how or when to adapt their communication style to better connect with direct reports, peers, and senior managers
- Not addressing problems early and constructively. Failure to do this often results in problems worsening and the leader losing credibility.

Among leadership teams, we have found that they rarely take time to build consensus around the type of leadership needed in their organizations, given their unique culture or current and future challenges.

Contact us today at (916) 788-1094  
or [info@switzeronleadership.com](mailto:info@switzeronleadership.com).

## The Solution

Switzer Associates-Leadership Solutions has a rich history of working with police and fire agencies, primarily in California, but in a number of other states, as well. Over the years, we have worked with more than 35 different agencies, some multiple times and for extended periods of time.

Through coaching, consulting and training, we have seen teams develop better team skills, such as managing conflict, improve communication, building consensus, and successfully navigating change.

Our staff and external associates are carefully vetted and are dedicated to helping police and fire agency leaders. They are highly competent as leadership coaches and business consultants. Our services are designed to assist them in reaching their full potential.



*“As President of the Western Placer County Fire Chief Association, Bill Mikesell has demonstrated true collaboration and leadership. His passion and sincerity always shine in every project he involves himself.”*

*Dave Whitt, Lincoln Fire Department*



# Services for Fire Departments



## Team Building Workshop Process

- Interview the chief to understand the organization's culture, challenges, and desired outcomes
- Administer a Team Building Assessment to obtain the participants perspectives
- Conduct an organizational health assessment with a focus on supervision and management
- Use input to craft a proposed agenda and we work with the chief to finalize the agenda
- Customize the materials to optimize achieving the desired results
- Additional assessments may be recommended

## Leadership Coaching

- One-on-one coaching to help leaders achieve desired results
- We serve as thought and accountability partners
- We are client centered, helping each client move forward in their thinking about their role, leadership, and results
- Challenge the client's thinking and answers
- Encourage each client to embrace those "next steps" that make the most sense given their abilities and organizational culture

## Leadership Training

- Leadership training for leadership teams
- Training is born out of our personal experience and work with police and fire agencies
- Training is practical, yet underpinned by academic research and best practice

### *Training Examples:*

- Coaching for Performance Improvement
- Leading Organizational Change
- Understanding Behavioral Style
- Recruitment and Retention

## Emerging Leaders Development

- Work individually or as a small group with high potential employees who are likely to be promoted or are transitioning to a new role as a leader
- Typically involves the use of emotional intelligence, behavioral assessments, and coaching
- Coordinate with a sponsor to assist the emerging leader(s) in being more successful in specific areas

**//** *"If you are looking for Leadership Training and Team Building from someone who has a strong background in Public Safety I highly recommend Dr. Switzer."*

*Sean Slamon, Modesto Fire Chief*



## Meet Bill Mikesell

Fire Chief Bill Mikesell retired after 40 years in the fire service. He spent 28 years with the Vancouver Fire Department, then served as fire chief 12 years in California outside of Sacramento. He served on incident management teams in Washington and in California.

Chief Mikesell is an Executive Fire Officer graduate of the National Fire Academy, and he holds a Master of Public Administration degree. Chief Mikesell is currently the Emergency Response Planning Coordinator for The Evergreen State College in Olympia, WA.

Chief Mikesell is committed to developing, mentoring, and coaching public safety leaders. Chief Mikesell has instructed Incident Command and leadership courses for P.O.S.T.; California Highway Patrol; The California State Fire Marshal; Washington State Patrol, Washington State Fire Marshal; and F.E.M.A.

Chief Mikesell continues to consult and teach in the states of California, New York, Washington, and throughout the United States.



## Meet Dr. Merlin Switzer

For 40+ years, Dr. Merlin Switzer has had a passion for leadership. From his role as Captain for the Sacramento County Sheriff's Department, where he was recognized multiple times for outstanding leadership, to his current Switzer Associates-Leadership Solutions Company, he has served others, taught and coached leaders

internationally, developed stronger teams, led and facilitated change, improved operations, and benefited the bottom-line. Dr. Switzer works exclusively in the field of leadership.

As a coach, Dr. Switzer has accumulated more than 1000 hours of client centric, one-on-one coaching conversations. His clients are from diverse business sectors, including the government and fire services. He is a thought partner and has been very successful in helping leaders move forward in their thinking.

Dr. Switzer's education includes Doctor of Strategic Leadership, Emphasis in Leadership Coaching, Master of Public Administration, and Master of Criminal Justice. He is a Certified Management Consultant (IMC, U.S.A) and a Professional Certified Coach (ICF). Dr. Switzer has a broad experience as a conference speaker and trainer. He is also a Master Instructor Program graduate.



*"Chief Mikesell has a broad-based understanding of the material and his experience brought the message home."*

*Anaheim Fire Department*

## Get Started Today

Contact us for a complimentary consultation to discuss potential solutions for your organization.

Call (916) 788-1094 or email  
[Info@SwitzerOnLeadership.com](mailto:Info@SwitzerOnLeadership.com)  
[www.SwitzerOnLeadership.com](http://www.SwitzerOnLeadership.com)

