



My View

QUICKLY AND CONSISTENTLY

Recently, a TIP Leader met with a police chief to brief him on how TIP was doing in his city. After their meeting, I asked the TIP Leader: "*Was the chief supportive of TIP?*" She said: "*Yes, he said as long as TIP responds quickly and consistently, we'll use you.*"

I think those two words...**Quickly and Consistently**...sum up what emergency responders value about TIP. If true, there are two implications for TIP Leaders and Volunteers.

First, we need to continuously and almost obsessively focus on the **quickness** of our responses to TIP Calls. We need to emphasize to TIP Volunteers the importance of a 20 minute response; we need to hold TIP Volunteers accountable for quick responses; we need to fix whatever is getting in the way of quick responses; and most importantly, we need to keep our 20 minute response standard firmly in place.

Second, we need to focus on **consistency**. There are two aspects of consistency 1. **Consistency of response**: we need to respond to 100% of calls for service. Our scheduling, backup systems, and volunteer training all should be geared to ensure that we are "*always ready...always there*". 2. **Consistency of performance**: how our volunteers look and perform once they arrive on scene must be professional 100% of the time. There are a number of things which can threaten our reputation for professionalism with emergency responders including a volunteer showing up looking "sloppy"; or a volunteer interfering with emergency responders; or a volunteer being too intrusive with clients. We need to ensure these things don't occur, and if they do to do "damage control" ASAP.

Another aspect of the Chief's statement quoted above ("*as long as TIP responds quickly and consistently, we will use you.*") is worth considering. He did not say "*we will always use TIP*". He said "*as long as...*" In other words, we can't rest on our laurels. We must always be on top of our game. Just because we have been serving our communities for 5, 10, or 20 years we are always on probation.

Let me sum up: Emergency responders are a tough group to win over. We've succeeded in winning them over up until now by our quick responses to their calls for assistance and by our consistent professionalism. Going forward, it just a matter of doing what we have done for 28 years..... again...again....again....and again.

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