**Applications of Performance and Population Accountability**

**Assisting Prevention and Education Teams to Achieve Results**

An important task of the team is completion of the objectives. Success and approval of the team is dependent on setting meaningful and achievable objectives with the agency at the beginning of the assignment. Adjustments must be made early and decisively. Additionally, the objectives need to be part of the overall strategy of the incident or program. Merely achieving numbers of activities without a direct tie-in to the strategy will be ineffective.

A productive team must have clearly defined strategies for each objective that are within the achievable scope of the team. The leader has to ensure that the entire team understands the function of each strategy so adjustments can be made that still lead to meaningful accomplishment of the objectives.

Following is an example of a Team’s typical interaction with the host agency. It is important to identify the agency objectives (often outlined in the delegation of authority). Open discourse with the agency refines the objectives and associated strategy so the remainder of the assignment can be focused on success.

A team arrives and receives an in-briefing with the agency. The primary objective is to raise awareness. With further discussion, three specific areas are identified with recent high fire occurrence, two with debris burning problems and one with an arson problem. There is mutual agreement that the majority of awareness efforts would be best for the two debris-burning areas. The team suggests they could analyze the arson problem, meet with enforcement officers and community members, and develop a strategy for agency implementation. Agreement is reached that the agency would be better off and the incident would be positively impacted if debris awareness and development of arson strategy objectives were achieved. The team meets, reviews the agency’s objectives and develops specific strategies and action items that will accomplish the needs of the agency. The team makes plans and begins work on the objectives. The communication plan is written and submitted to the agency for review and discussion. One action item is discouraged by the agency due to conflicts and two other ideas are posed for inclusion into the awareness strategies.

Strategy changes are communicated to the team and immediate adjustment is made. Daily meetings are held within the team and agency updates are provided. Agency response is very positive on the direction of the team’s approach. Toward the end of the first week, contacts and reports from field personnel indicate there are real changes in community attitude and a reduction in the fire occurrence.

Periodic meetings, agency updates, and field feedback are essential for team success. The team is better off having good direction and knowledge their efforts are working so that current efforts are still working toward positive accomplishments.

The following section describes one method to use Results Accountability to evaluate success at different levels. The team must function well. The team has direct influence on the agency’s intended direction. The agency program has direct influence on the attitudes and response of the community (population).

**The FPET must function well.**

The customer of the service delivery system is the Team.

This level measures the performance of the FPET internally. The leader gauges whether the team is receiving and giving the appropriate level of guidance and support within the team and getting the necessary information from the agency to judge the agencies’ support and approval of the FPET throughout the incident. Even though a team may not chart or track this data, the concept is useful to focus on the successful outcomes of a team as seen by team members and the host agency.

Service delivery measurements

* Getting timely guidance and support
* Making progress to accomplishing objectives
* Providing input, direction, and evaluation

Customer better off measurements

* Team members feeling informed and productive
* Members feel progress is being made
* Members feel their input is heard

My belief is that success is based on internal efficiency of the team and the measurement of whether the team is better off comes from whether the agency is getting what they need.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **How much did we do?**  # Productive team guidance meetings  # Progress checks/adjusting direction  # Team attitude checks | **How well did we do it?**  % Meetings efficient and effective  % Objectives clearly understood by team  Rating member opinion–worth to team |
| **Is anyone better off?**  # Projects completed effectively  # Field reports on objective direction | **Is anyone better off?**  % Projects considered successful  % Positive field reports on direction |

The function of the above quadrant example gets to the questions ‘Is the team running effectively?’ ‘Is the job getting done?’ and ‘Are we doing what the agency expects?’

If the answer to the three questions above is yes, then the agency feedback and positive feedback of the field will be favorable, pointing to a successful team assignment and will be reflected in the Member and Team Evaluations. The information is shared with member’s home units and GACC.

**The Team has direct influence on the agency’s intended direction.**

The customer of this level of delivery service (Team) is the Agency.

This level of performance accountability considers the FPET as the delivery service and the agency as the customer. The measurements may be charted or evaluated based on anecdotal accounts. The team spends the assignment working toward the stated objectives through strategies and action items. Some assignments are accomplished by delivery of numbers (programs, contacts, delivery of materials, etc.) in which the projects are tracked individually. These assignments can be looked at on another scale. The agency expended time and money to bring a team to their situation. The agency needs to justify the costs and the team needs to demonstrate their worth and value to the incident.

Accomplishing the objectives is a result of good communication, planning, and management. Agency involvement is essential in successful assignments. Teams occasionally need to develop alternate paths to ensure agency input and feedback. The open communication often leads to the agency including new ideas and directions into their existing program strategy.

Justification of prevention teams receives broader acceptance when they are seen to complement the broader strategy of the agency. Positive field reports of how the FPET is contributing to the overall effort is one of the most important measures upper management has of evaluating the program and team progress. For example, if successful community meetings were held by the FPET and the fire cause is reduced, field response and results are positive.

Service delivery measurements

* Objectives being accomplished
* Involvement of agency in direction
* Expansion of ideas to bolster agency strategy

Customer better off measurements

* Objectives complementing broader strategy
* Field acceptance of products or activities
* Impact on identified short and long-term issues

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **How much did we do?**  # Actions/objectives accomplished  # Effective meetings with agency  # Ideas suggested toward agency strategy | **How well did we do it?**  % Actions/objectives accomplished  % Level team feels agency is involved  % Ideas accepted by agency for strategy direction |
| **Is anyone better off?**  # Objectives accomplished or suggested  # Reports from field personnel  # Issues worked on | **Is anyone better off?**  % Objectives complement strategy  % Positive responses to team activities  % Issues getting positive results |

**The agency program has direct influence on the attitudes and response of the community (population).**

The customer of the delivery service (prevention program) is the community.

The agency program handles the overall prevention and education efforts assisting a community, area, state or region. The use of an FPET is just one of the many tools that a program uses as a strategy to reduce the incidence and effects of wildfire. FPETs are on-scene for short blocks of time. Their efforts affect the prevention program and contribute, to some degree, to the immediate actions of the population. The program has the opportunity to influence a long-term change in the actions and behavior of the population.

The program is the delivery service and customer results are measured as performance accountability (how well the program is doing). However, at this level, the quality of the delivery service affects the outcomes of a population. For example, community meetings with concerned groups lead to actions that reduce the vulnerability of the community to wildfire. The better job the agency does with informing and assisting the community, the better community response there is to taking positive long-term actions improving their own safety.

The purpose of prevention programs is to produce positive outcomes of the population. The population is the realm of individuals, groups, and other organizations that are outside of the agency prevention program. The more the population successfully takes on the responsibility of improving their own wildfire situation, the more successful the agency program becomes. The agency continues to support the community and takes on the role of a contributing member to the prevention program of the community.

There are two forms of measure demonstrated in the following example. The effort of the program performance is measured in the upper quadrants and the population outcomes are measured in the bottom quadrants.

The difference at this level to the previous levels is that in this level the outcome results are being evaluated instead of just the program or actions/strategies implemented to create a change in behavior.

Service delivery measurements

* Program is accomplishing objectives
* Awareness and participation is increased in the community
* Actions for implementation are understood by the community

Population Outcomes

* Increased participation, ownership, and leadership in community actions
* Community is accomplishing planned mitigation actions
* Individuals are taking personal responsibility and completing Firewise actions on their homes

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **How much did we do?**  # Objectives accomplished  # Awareness efforts accomplished  # Mitigation trainings held | **How well did we do it?**  % Objective accomplished to planned  # Active participants in community  # Commitments to implement Firewise |
| **Is anyone better off?**  # Community meetings  # Mitigation projects completed  # Home Firewise actions taken | **Is anyone better off?**  % Feel better informed and safer  % Planned projects completed  % Completing 1+ Firewise actions |

An FPET can assist an agency in recognizing performance measurements and expected outcomes for prevention progress. The early identification of the measures and outcomes helps the agency focus efforts getting to targeted objectives. Agencies and communities use accomplishment data to energize the participants and to satisfy the needs of upper management to demonstrate the success of the program justifying the expenditures of time and money.

As communities begin assuming the responsibility for their own program, the use of Results Accountability will continue to be useful. The community program becomes the service delivery system and the general community (outside the program) is the population. The hope is that the program becomes larger and the uninformed and non-participating public is reduced.

The applications in this document are an attempt to use Results Accountability as taught in the NWCG course Fire Prevention Education 2 – P-301. Most teams go through a similar thought process to achieve success. These applications give us a way to display our ideas and use them to guide our activities.

I use the first two levels in a self-evaluation to see if the team feels productive and if the agency thinks we have done a good job. I will make the measures known to the team and the agency and utilize them as an open evaluation. I intend to present the third level concept to agencies for their use in current and future projects.

If anyone uses these or similar applications, I would appreciate your feedback. These applications are ideas. As they are used more commonly, better measures will emerge to improve our efforts and results.