Making an Impact Without Moving Up the Ladder:

Leadership Without Rank



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- 911 Communications 16+ years
- City of Dunn Police (2009 - 2015)
- Harnett County Sheriff’s Office (2015 - Present)

- Certified Training Officer
- Harnett County 911 Communications Community Outreach Coordinator
- Harnett County 911 Communications Wellness Committee
- RCC 911 Communications & Operations Advisory Committee
- 911 Gold Line Chaplin Initiative

- NC INTD/TERT certification
- Studying for ENP
- Attending RCC for 911 Associates in 911 Communications & Operations Degree



Objectives:

- ✓ Redefine leadership
- ✓ Identify everyday behaviors that create a positive influence in dispatch
- ✓ Recognize their impact on coworkers, trainees, and center culture
- ✓ Choose at least one actionable way to lead from where you are



WHEN YOU HEAR THE WORD

“LEADER,”

WHAT COMES TO MIND?



LEADERSHIP IS...

How you ***show up,*** not what your badge says.

Something you ***practice,*** not something you are assigned.

What Could You Do?

Scenario 1

A new dispatcher is struggling and becoming discouraged.

What could you do if you're not their trainer or supervisor?

Scenario 2

Negativity is spreading throughout the shift.

How can you influence the culture without authority?

Scenario 3

A coworker handled a difficult call exceptionally well.

How can you recognize and encourage them?

Scenario 4

A seasoned dispatcher starts saying "I don't care anymore", "I'm just here for a paycheck", "Nothing changes".

What could you say to them?

The Reality of Dispatch Leadership

In dispatch, the people with the most influence are often:

- Senior call takers/telecommunicators
- Trusted trainers
- The calm voice on a bad call
- The person others sit next to on purpose

None of those requires a title.



- Dispatch is not an “entry-level job”
- Long-term telecommunicators anchor the floor
- Retention is just as valuable as promotion
- Career fulfillment matters as much as career advancement



Impact Matters More Than Title

- The person who stays calm when everyone else is stressed
- The one who answers the trainee's seventh question with patience
- The teammate who says, "Hey, you did a great job on that call"
- The one who sees someone melting down after a call and checks in

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"Rank might put you in charge, but impact makes you a leader."

It’s not what you say, but *how you say it.*

Someone is always *listening.*

Someone is always *watching.*



THE TONE SCIENCE

7/38/55 RULE:

- 7% Words
- 38% Tone
- 55% Body Language

In dispatch, ***tone holds even more power.***



How you say it matters

The 7/38/55 findings concern feelings and attitudes in conflicting messages, not all communication.

Ways Leaders Influence the Room

- They set the emotional temperature
- They share knowledge, not hoard it
- They speak professionally...even when annoyed
- They show compassion
- They are respectful to everyone
- They are reliable

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER. KNOWLEDGE SHARED IS POWER MULTIPLIED.

Choosing not to promote does **NOT** mean choosing not to *lead*

Everyday Dispatch Leadership Behaviors

Emotional Regulation

- Staying calm during chaos
- Not spreading frustration
- Grounding the room

Language & Culture

- How we talk about:
  - Callers
  - Coworkers
  - Leadership
  - Trainees

Modeling the Standard

- Policy adherence
- Professional tone
- Ethical shortcuts avoided

Peer Support

- Checking in
- Listening
- Encouraging help when needed

Influence on Trainees

- Veteran behavior
- Shift attitudes
- What's tolerated
- What's encouraged

You are that person for someone else - whether you intend to be or not.



You don't need to be assigned as a trainer to shape careers.

Just a Few Reminders

- You don’t need to move up to *matter* or make a difference.
- You can make an impact and *influence others* every day.
- Culture is shaped in *daily moments*.
- Small behaviors create *lasting impact*.