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Improving Family Readiness at Camp Rudder 6th Ranger Training Battalion

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Abstract

This capstone project met the needs of 6th Ranger Training Battalion(RTB), Family Readiness Group(FRG) members and their families. The resource created teaches new members about the area, mission of the organization, training cycle, shares sample schedules, highlights family opportunities to be involved, and shares tips of how to be resilient through the busy schedule.

Keywords: Army Families, Family Readiness, Camp Rudder, Family Welcoming, Area Information

Section 1: Introduction to your Capstone Project

I have served as a volunteer for three years with 6th Ranger Training Battalion (RTB) in the Family Readiness Group (FRG). This time in the unit helped me to see the need for better information sharing to help new, incoming families be prepared for the unique environment here in Florida and to plan for the training cycle that keeps soldiers busy. My desire for this project was to fill information gaps and give new families a thorough orientation to the unit and therefore help to prepare for the high operational tempo training cycle and best understand the battalion and what the FRG does to support.

Section 2: Elements coming together

Innovative Approach

For my capstone project I wanted to create an early connection point for new incoming families to the unit and the ability to easily share information and become integrated into the area. The documents created serve as an orientation guide of the local cities, current and upcoming events, and provide information for the unit and their operations for civilian family members to easily get acquainted with.

Perspective Taking

I interviewed current volunteers, inquiring about knowledge they wanted sooner and what we could do to improve the onboarding process for new volunteers. By creating a new welcome document with a how-to-guide of our family readiness operations, in particular at the bake sale financials. These new documents will serve as a solution to volunteer retention and buy in for more volunteers to serve. The overall goal is to familiarize new volunteers and connect families to their local resources within their companies quickly and efficiently.

Creative Approach

I creatively restructured the information to be most user friendly and shareable. To do this I created a Google Forms page where new families can respond with their email and receive a link to the Newcomer Orientation slides and 6th RTB Family Facebook Page, which makes the information reciprocal and allows families to get the information they need and provides the unit information on the family; causing a complete loop of connection from the FRG to families and families to the FRG. My approach was to give a QR code and link to families which would be a Google Forms site that asks for their email, names, and company and links them at the bottom to the 6th Florida Family's Facebook page and a link to the Newcomer Orientation slides.

Emotional Intelligence*Awareness of Self and Others*

In completing this project I became more aware of myself and aware of others. From this work I am most aware of my limits and leadership. As a civilian I have no assigned duties I simply step into volunteer positions as the need arises. In military life there's clear lines of leadership and 'lanes' you are allowed to maintain work within. I have become most aware of how and where I can work within these lines and how to best use the space I have. I have also become far more content with my duties instead of trying to move into duties or do things that are outside of my scope of ability because of rules or positions. In my time in 6th RTB as a volunteer I learned to be adaptable to change and the limits I have as a civilian working alongside the military to support them and their families best. I now define my leadership as authentic and agree with Rob Goffee and Gareth Jones in *Managing Authenticity: The Paradox of Great Leadership*, "Authentic leaders are comfortable in their skin; they know where they come from and who they are, and they know how to use their backgrounds to build a rapport

with followers. Authentic leaders are not threatened by people with other origins; they welcome them.” In the unit’s FRG, I became comfortable with my position and well connected to the other volunteers, which built my rapport.

Consideration of the Audience: Emotional Intelligence

Through this project I have become best at identifying my own emotions and learned where I am in my emotional wellness. I have become aware of my own emotions, and how to best express my feelings by taking into account how I felt when I came into the unit, especially, in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. I had little information about the unit or what to expect about the area. This led to a good deal of confusion and frustration.

Value to Others: Emotional Intelligence

In order to help other spouses and military members arriving at the unit I examined what I desired to know when first arriving. This helped me to build the orientation around the desires of others and consider their emotions at arrival as well. I believe this helped meet the needs of other spouses and provided a broader perspective. To do this I asked what they needed to know and received a baseline of what knowledge they were lacking, such as who the command teams were, where certain buildings were on base. I asked if a great knowledge of the area and unit would help them feel more settled, and if they desired connection with spouses in a similar style of life(military).

Creative Thinking

The Creative Framework

From the HBR article this rings true in my work, “Confidence doesn’t simply mean believing your ideas are good. It means having the humility to let go of ideas that aren’t working and to accept good ideas from other people. When you abandon the status quo and work

collaboratively, you sacrifice control over your product, your team, and your business.” In reality I have very little control in the FRG. I have good ideas and within the group there are great ideas, but not always movement towards the goals we set. To apply creativity in my project I had to be collaborative and use the other leader’s ideas because they may have a great idea they never put into use because of lack of motivation or time. This makes the work I did essential and helpful. It is proactive, producing information for the families and getting it out with an overall goal of helping others and integrating them to Camp Rudder and all we have to offer at 6th RTB.

Unique Approach/es to Project

My approach is collaborative and seeks others first for ideas. My goal was to serve the community with their own ideas. I did not want to create an orientation that simply got stashed away or forgotten. I wanted to create a connection point of the group to collaborate to help one another and succeed and grow together in community. I think this is unique because most leaders want to have their ideas on display and take credit, whereas I would like to give people what they want and provide the resources needed for families to succeed in our unit.

Your Innovative Solution

Accomplishment of Capstone

In my project, I worked with the family readiness volunteer group for the 6th Ranger Training Battalion on Camp Rudder in Florida. The volunteer group consists of soldiers and their families. Through events like our bake sales we earn funds to hold events for families such as our balls, open house, and company beach trips. My project resulted in the creation of a training presentation on how 6th Ranger Training Battalion runs and how to operate the bake sale.

Innovative Approach to the Problem/Project

I created an up to date calendar through the end of 2023 that provides training cycles, like sale dates, and special events. To best manage the bake sale, I created a Google Sheets which will help with tracking the monetary exchange and does the math for the head cashier. I also created a data sharing loop which includes a Google Forms page to collect new family information and give them connection to the family Facebook page, and the Newcomer Welcome Orientation. I believe these tools provide a lasting legacy of my work by connecting families to the unit and to one another.

Section 3: Results*Measurable Impact*

Impact is not only direct impact but an overall and continual impact. The calendar helps for long term planning and knowledge of annual events. With the work of my capstone the stakeholders(6th RTB families) can learn about the unique nature of our unit and how they operate. This helps the families manage expectations and personal calendars to get the most out of the area and events the unit has. This project also benefits the command teams because they can simply update the calendar and continue using the tool.

Benefits to Stakeholders

The Family Readiness Liaison(FRL), Hunter Wood, reviewed the documents and shared that he is grateful for them. He stated that they are very helpful and shared parts of the documents and current events flyers in the slides I provided. I also gathered reviews from the command teams and new families who I know are coming to the unit summer 2023. I asked, “Were all products easy to read and understand?”, “Did you use the QR codes provided?”, “Did

you need more information not provided on the welcome documents?”, “Did you enjoy the documents?” Replies were, “These are great, thank you so much!” One company commander informed me of some changes to the current events and provided flier updates. New families I shared them with said, “Thank you so much for all the slides. It is definitely a lot so I’ll make sure to reach out to you with any further questions.” Another simply replied with, “Thanks!”

Section 4: Conclusion

Through this project I learned the importance of planning and family life especially in military life. Our lives are uprooted every few years and in those first days in a new place it is important to find community. My goal was to meet the need of providing high quality information that is easily shared to incoming families and leave a long lasting tool for command teams to use in the future when I am long gone from the unit.

From this project I learned that it is important to be organized and work ahead. To plan for changes to occur and to be flexible when things do not go as planned. I learned How to create forms and QR codes for sharing information.

The benefits of this project I believe will be long lasting since the documents can be easily shared and edited by any company command. They will be a benefit to all new families coming to the unit and offer great information to make sound decisions of where to live and what community resources are available to them.

Section 5: References

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Section 6: Appendix

[Orientation](#)

[Training Calendar](#)

[Bake Sale Cash Flow](#)

[Google Forms New Family Intake](#)