



SUCCESS STORY



Brunswick Hills (OH) Township Fire Dept.

Then-firefighter Anthony Strazzo got his first look at Aladtec when he was attending FDIC with a fire chief from a neighboring Ohio department.

“He decided to give Aladtec a try, and based on the use and success of his agency, I decided to utilize it almost immediately after being appointed the chief of Brunswick Hills Twp.,” Strazzo recalls.

Six years later, Strazzo recalls the challenges he wanted to address by implementing a scheduling solution for his members.

“Our scheduling was hand-written on a generic paper calendar. Personnel would ‘sign up’ for shifts on a first-come, first-served basis. There was no efficient means to track how much or how little personnel was working each month or year, and no efficient means to track mandatory weekend and holiday shifts.”

Once in a while, a member would scratch his name off a schedule and deny having signed up for that day, leaving shifts short-staffed. And more than once, a member would strike another’s name and replace it with his own.

“It came down to the need for a system where personnel would be held accountable for meeting the department work requirements, and for working the shifts they said they would,” said Strazzo. “It also aids in tracking sick call-offs.”

Strazzo’s first pleasant surprise came within a week of introducing Aladtec.



Whenever my staff or I have been working in the system, and we can’t figure out exactly how to accomplish what we are doing, we know that when we call support, we will talk to a person who will provide us solutions and walk us through how to do it.

— Anthony Strazzo, Fire Chief Brunswick Hills Township Fire Department



DEPARTMENT INFO

ROSTER

40 part-time employees, who respond from two stations

SERVICE AREA

About 13 sq. miles of semi-rural acreage, home to 10,100 people, and 62 miles of town roads, plus two stretches of I-71 that carry about 45,000 vehicles daily

APPARATUS

Two engines, one tender, one brush truck, three ambulances, two command vehicles

Aladtec users since 2014



Anthony Strazzo

Anthony Strazzo is a lieutenant and tactical medic coordinator for the City of Beachwood Fire Department. He has 25 years of service as a firefighter-paramedic, starting in Broadview Heights in 1994. He also works with the Beachwood EDGE SWAT teams. He has an Associate degree in Fire Protection Technology and is finishing a bachelor’s in Fire Service Administration. He has many certifications in paramedic, police, fire, hazmat, and rescue fields.





Aladtec®



Neighboring agencies also using Aladtec

Brunswick Hills Police Dept., Valley City Fire Dept., Medina Fire Dept., Granger Township Fire & Rescue, Erhart York Township Fire Dept., Medina Hospital Life Support Team, Olmsted Falls Fire Dept., Richfield Fire- and Richfield Police departments.

"We had an employee not show up for work on a nice sunny Saturday. He was contacted and stated that he hadn't signed up for today," the Chief recalls. "I was able to tell him the exact date and time he signed up for the shift. This type of incident happened one more time about two days later. The word was then out, and we had a drastic reduction in no-shows."

Brunswick Hills Township Fire provides 24/7 protection for about 10,000 people living on farms, small-plots, and small subdivisions sprawling west, south, and east of the City of Brunswick, 27 miles southwest of Cleveland. Brunswick Hills Township Fire is staffed by three platoons of three members, who work unusual shifts: 11 hours, six hours, and seven hours.

"We staff with three people, 24/7, and we have a crazy rotation between the two stations. It's because we're all part-time, and we try to accommodate people who work Monday through Friday full-time jobs. They may get off of work at 4:30 pm. The 5 pm start "gives them time to get home, change, and get here. Likewise, we understand that people have to be to work by 8 am typically, so that's why our shift ends or starts at 6 am."

"We operate much more efficiently with Aladtec, and as the chief, I could not imagine going back to a hand-written schedule or trying to manage 40 different schedules to ensure our three shifts are staffed daily," said Strazzo.

It wasn't difficult to get members to accept the program, according to Strazzo.

"To be honest, once I told them they would have their schedules on their phones, they were all about it. That was the only selling point. 'You won't need to have a photo of the paper schedule anymore. You will have it on your phone. 'Oh. We will?' Yes.' That's all I had to say."

Brunswick Hills Township Fire is a prolific user of Aladtec's forms tool. Strazzo and his lieutenants have designed daily vehicle checks, personnel forms, a duty-shift checklist with unique tasks each day of the week, an "Hours Donation" form, and forms to report defective hydrants, IT/computer issues, request uniforms and gear, and one through which members can ask for, or suggest a specific type of training.

Some years back, Strazzo was hearing member complaints about the consolidated dispatch center that takes their calls. And likewise, the Chief had heard some grouching from Dispatch about his members.

When he asked his firefighters for details, it was all hearsay. "And my reaction was, that means nothing. From my standpoint, if it's not documented, it didn't happen."



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So Strazzo decided to assemble a “Feedback for Sister Agencies” form. “From an accountability or relations standpoint, I didn’t want our guys going direct to Dispatch with their complaints because that wasn’t working out well. It was just making hard feelings. The police chief who’s in charge of the dispatch center agreed, “You come to me with things; I’ll come to you with things. We’re not going to put our people in the middle of it.”

“When we have a situation, we do the form. I’ll save it as a .pdf and e-mail it to him. He will then give me feedback. If it’s a good thing, ‘Thanks for the positive feedback!’” Accordingly, when an issue was raised “six months ago, and it’s happened four times since, we have a record of it,” said Strazzo.

Strazzo is also a big fan of the “Required Messages” function, which requires a member’s acknowledgment before the program can be accessed.

“When we have a new standard operating procedure or an update to a SOP, I put it on there as Required Message. We have somewhere between 36- and 40 part-time people. I might put out a directive today, but a guy doesn’t work for three weeks. By the time he comes in, no one remembers to tell him, ‘Hey. Did you read that directive from the Chief?’ Now, it’s there. I hate to say it’s in their face, but it’s in their face that they have to read it.”

“I can sum it up in one word: accountability. Because now people can’t say, ‘Well I didn’t know,’ or, “I wasn’t aware,” because it’s tracked. It’s followed either through ‘You were notified, and here’s the date you received the e-mail on it,’ or by text message. ‘Here’s the date you read the required message. Here’s the date the check sheet was done or not done.’

“It’s increased accountability, and to be honest, six years ago, we lacked a lot of accountability when I started.”

And Strazzo appreciates the help he receives when he calls Aladtec.

“The customer service support has been nothing but top-notch,” he said. “Whenever my staff or I have been working in the system, and we can’t figure out exactly how to accomplish what we are doing, we know that when we call support, we will talk to a person who will provide us solutions and walk us through how to do it.”

“The help videos and online trainings are very beneficial as we bring new personnel on board or promote personnel and give them more responsibility. Overall, it’s a great program that many of our part-time personnel have recommended at their full-time departments” said Strazzo.



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