

“We have science on OUR side, who are you listening to?”

If you have been paying attention to the fire service social media conflict regarding the IFSI curriculum of SLICE –RS, then you probably seen or heard this question. Set in the context of refuting a premise that the initial actions of the 1st engine according to the IFSI, are not consistent with the practices and principles set by our American fire service.

Perhaps you have seen a few different expletive “Rants” on the issue. My personal loss of dignity on this subject received some attention several weeks ago. (See it here: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10153581735521085&set=a.10150210755516085.344897.663181084&type=3&theater> ). As a rule I try to keep emotions and intellectual issues separate but the TFT fire Appliance Company continues to disappoint and perpetuate products committed to nothing more than making a buck. In marketing that tactic is called **product differentiation**.

The IFSI instructors that are rolling out this “new” science are not to be painted with a broad brush as the responsible agents for the discomfort between “legacy firemen” and “modern firefighters”. They are just be the agents of change that are **compartmentalized**. With the good intentions of improving their co-workers safety and increasing workplace efficiency, this benevolent group seeks to be consistent and congruent with the fire services and their own personal values. They do this by referencing the proclaimed authority on fire behavior, that being the Underwriters laboratory. This authority is now one of the most sought after organizations to be a part of. For reference one could look to the UL’s panel of names associated with any of their fire studies.

So what is going on here? In my opinion it is **consensus science** with **reciprocity in association**. Essentially, if you can get on the UL’s study panel then your name and reputation is then elevated to the reputation of the organization. You are now part of something bigger (and smarter?) than yourself. This gives you a bit more credit on the subject matter as you may now be considered an intellectual on the issue.

Following the needed steps to further the progress of the “new” way of firefighting there needs to be an external motivating factor. In psychology it is called **scarcity**. The motivation is the fear of loss. People are more motivated by the idea of losing something rather than the idea of gaining that same thing. This is where firefighter safety is held up as the only goal for this curriculum. Which at the heart of the instructors, is true. I am not making the statement that the ISFI is at all interested in solely making money on this... see the definition of **compartmentalization**. This all leads to the result of **Consensus**. There are 6 principles that lead to a consensus. They are noted after this article.

Which type of investigative science are you referencing comparative, experimental, investigative, or descriptive? It is important to know so we can understand what the mission is of your grand standing. By inferring that you have the sole authority to understand and disseminate information I hope you have a good understanding of the surrounding factors that *make you think* that you can preach from your intellectual mountain. Just to be fair I will tell you exactly who I am listening to. The names are those that have been the very basis for understanding fire behavior in the largest test lab ever conceived. The lab is the streets of the American cities, towns and rural jurisdictions. The variables are infinite but the experiences have allowed for hundreds of years of documented procedures that have allowed us to try new technology and figure out what really works towards our mission. Our mission is to save lives and property.

So to answer your question I am listening to William Clark, Vincent Dunn, John Norman, Dave McGrail, Ted Corperandy, Andy Fredericks, Sulka, Brennan, Shupe, Fields, and Comella. Collectively over 400 years of experience in different time periods using different technology in different settings. So pardon me as I scoff at your self righteous insult to the very scientific artists that framed the job into the modern era. Your arrogance is enough to turn me from engaging you for your own professional benefit.

These men studied and rebuilt the fire service with the benefit of snail mail and monthly periodicals. This allowed for more time testing versus rushing to conclusions and generating reputations overnight. A national consensus took years to happen as the pendulum swung much slower. Detailed observation and study was accomplished in the heaviest fire duty on earth during the war years. From the early 60's to the early 80's more technology poured into the fire service for trial and error. The pumps, the hose, the clothing, breathing apparatus, and the construction all changed right before our eyes. There was a new way of doing almost anything every year, yet the tried and true principles of the job remained. Today's social media context is as good for the service as it is bad. From overzealous fire instructors trying to make a name for themselves to appliance manufacturers trying to make a buck, the instant proliferation of "fact based opinion" can accomplish either one.

This new science argument is not about science at all. The UL group has not mixed it's words but the IFSI has. The argument is about marketing and propaganda to result in the profit of a mindset change in the brains of the American firefighter. The campaign appeals to the short on experience and long on narcissism generation. This shift in principles is only possible by re-founding the basic practices. Just as history is revised by the victorious, the new fire service academy texts give weight and legitimacy to the SLICERS program. As the ignorant cadets try to get their pro board check off sheets done, they are missing the creative and experienced based tactics that are true for that specific area of the country. I call it the common core for the fire service. The same algorithm of teaching with data and numbers only, and the same motivation: make money on texts and curriculum changes. If you would like to conduct your own scientific study about the shift in priorities may I suggest you go talk to a new academy graduate. Ask what the initial action would be for a single family dwelling with fire showing from a bedroom window as they arrived with an engine. 100% have answered me with stretching a line under the window and resetting the fire.

With that as a backdrop where do you suppose the fire service will evolve too? Is it possible that interior firefighting will be abolished as initial tactic? Will the ridiculous saying of "risking a lot to save a lot" be qualified as there is no risk worth taking? The betrayal of our fire service history to homogenize the training will also lead to the standardization of what is a legitimate fire attack. Currently, the NFPA 1403 addresses fire attack as a charged hose line taken into the structure to extinguish fire. When that standard is rewritten to reflect the curriculum of the state academies, then the exterior stream will be an essential part of the standard. As with most of the NFPA (Not For Practical Application) the industry manufacturers will be well prepared for the next mandate with all the gadgets you will now have to have. If you don't think so may I suggest you review the large reduction in the requirement for ground ladders on a ladder truck from the 60's to now, or how the Bourke eye shield finally became safe enough to use.

Back to the surrounding factors of the situation I am writing on. I have made a few attempts to engage others on social media to help them recognize what is actually going on with the marketing and instruction surrounding the "new" science. It is worth noting that the IFSI as a whole does not propose to attack every fire from the outside first regardless of situation. However; the **syillogistic**

**reasoning** used throughout much of the lessons is obvious. The step of “C” in the SLICE RS acronym is for cool from a safe location. Most instructors would agree that that would mean from the interior hall or adjoining room. To use the reach of the stream and not use your turnout gear as your line of defense against injury. I whole heartedly agree with that statement but what is being shown in every example of cooling from a safe location is an exterior stream playing into a window. This is the inference that is setting the tone for our more junior and less experienced firefighters. It is planting the seed for the default action to be taken. That is flat out wrong!

Another consequence of a rewritten priority is the potential litigation that will be brought to bare on any of the “traditionalists” who experience any injury or tragedy on the fire ground. Just as the ambiguous reasons listed in NIOSH reports like lack of ICS, accountability, modern equipment, and communications, so too will be the neglect of using “the modern tactic of fire control from the exterior”. The real reason most tragic things happen is because our training regiments do not reflect our reality nor our principled reasons why most of us get into the job.

Most could go 10 – 20 years following this silly acronym but eventually a fire will present you something very important and out of your usual order. When a tragic event happens you will not have the mental history to draw on for a creative solution. You have not been applying principles to deal with unusual circumstances, therefore you will retreat and self preserve to only regret and never forgive yourself for not being someone they expected you to be.

So before you discount what has been done for us in generations past, or fully embrace those with a marketing team, industrial sponsorship or federal grants, I suggest you get back to the basics and understand why principles and practices must have the first seat at the table.

#### 6 principles of consensus science

- Robert Cialdini defines them as follows:
- 1) **Reciprocity**: we are always more willing to say yes to someone who has already said yes to us. If someone invites us to a party or has done us a favor in the past, we feel obligated to reciprocate. Robert Cialdini gives the example of a restaurant where a small gift (a mint or a sweet) by the waiter increases the amount of the tip left by a customer. If we want to use this principle to influence others, we should be **the first to give, we should personalize the gift and the gift should be unexpected**. Simply put, we should give before we expect to receive.
- 2) **Scarcity**: People are more motivated by the idea of loosing something rather than the idea of gaining that same thing. Robert Cialdini mentions the case of the work he did with US Hi-Fi equipment manufacturer **BOSE** where by changing the marketing message from one which emphasized **newness of the product** to one which emphasized **what the customer risked loosing if he/she didn't opt for the new product**, Bose increased the sales by 45%.
- 3) **Authority**: we are always more ready to follow the advice and say yes to people recognized as experts in their field. Doctors and dentists have long known this and usually post their diplomas in their consultancies to remind patients of the legitimacy of their expertise. Cialdini gives the example of how a real estate agency applied this principle to its business by instructing its receptionists to mention to callers the length of experience of its real estate agents before

putting them through. This simple technique reinforced the confidence of callers and future customers and led to significant increases in business.

- 4) **Consistency**: a basic fundamental trait of human psychology is that we constantly seek to be consistent and congruent with our own personal values when we make decisions. This means that we seek to ensure that future decisions are congruent with previous commitments. So the challenge is to get people to make small commitments in writing if possible which will then lead them to make further commitments later on down the line on bigger issues.
- 5) **Liking**: we are more likely to say yes to people we like and Cialdini points out that there are three factors which lead us to like other people:
  - We like people who are similar to us
  - We tend to like people who pay us compliments
  - We like people to seek to cooperate with us to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes
- So when we are seeking to influence someone and get to yes, establishing a sincere and positive bond with the other person by bringing to the surface shared values, behaviors, experience, interests will help us build confidence and trust with the other person.
- 6) **Consensus**: when trying to persuade others, we don't always have to rely on our own powers of persuasion but we can seek to demonstrate what **similar others** are doing. We are all indeed influenced by what our peer group are doing and how they are deciding. Especially in situations where there is uncertainty as to what to decide (how to vote, what product to choose, etc.), if we can show to someone that **people similar to him/her** have already said yes to our proposal, we increase our chances of getting to Yes.
- **Compartmentalization** is an unconscious [psychological defense mechanism](#) used to avoid [cognitive dissonance](#), or the mental discomfort and anxiety caused by a person's having conflicting values, cognitions, emotions, beliefs, etc. within themselves.
- Compartmentalization allows these conflicting ideas to co-exist by inhibiting direct or explicit acknowledgement and interaction between separate compartmentalized [self states](#).<sup>[1]</sup>
- **Syllogistic Reasoning - Changing Minds** A **sylogism** (Greek: συλλογισμός syllogismos, "conclusion, inference") is a kind of logical argument that applies deductive **reasoning** to arrive at a conclusion based on two or more propositions that are asserted or assumed to be true.
- Marketing Smith's "differentiation and segmentation strategies"

"In product differentiation, according to Smith (1956, p. 5), a firm tries 'bending the will of demand to the will of supply.' That is, distinguishing or differentiating some aspect(s) of its marketing mix from those of competitors, in a mass market or large segment, where customer preferences are relatively homogeneous (or heterogeneity is ignored, Hunt, 2011, p. 80), in an attempt to shift its aggregate demand curve to the left (greater quantity sold for a given price) and make it more inelastic (less amenable to substitutes). With segmentation, a firm recognizes that it faces multiple demand curves, because customer preferences are heterogeneous, and focuses on serving one or more specific target segments within the overall market"