

**WHAT WILL BE THE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PROCESS FOR
POLICE OFFICERS IN A CHANGING COMMUNITY POLICING
ENVIRONMENT BY THE YEAR 2003?**

JOURNAL ARTICLE

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This Command College Independent Study Project is a FUTURES study of a particular emerging issue in law enforcement. Its purpose is NOT to predict the future but rather to project a number of possible scenarios for strategic planning consideration.

Defining the future differs from analyzing the past because the future has not yet happened. In this project, useful alternatives have been formulated systematically so that the planner can respond to a range of possible future environments.

Managing the future means influencing the future--creating it, constraining it, adapting to it. A futures study points the way.

The views and conclusions expressed in the Command College project are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST).

Performance appraisals: nearly everybody does them, but almost nobody seems satisfied. In fact, many believe they often cause more harm than good. What makes performance appraisal so difficult is even the best-managed organizations seem to struggle constantly with them. One of the worst things done in corporate America is not telling people what is really thought of them. Most appraisals look the same. This is a common problem among the law enforcement agencies with traditional, supervisor-only appraisal processes.

Uncomfortable in the role of evaluator, supervisors often give everyone the same general feedback, especially if the evaluations are used for personal decisions such as pay raises, promotions or disciplinary actions. As a result, the traditional process frequently fails to motivate good workers or address poor performers. It can also lead to legal troubles; terminated employees have used positive performance appraisals to support wrongful discharge lawsuits.

In addition to the traditional problems with the appraisal process, law enforcement is faced with a changing workforce and adoption of a more formal community oriented policing philosophy. There is growing evidence that the emerging “Echo Boomer” generation is bringing a vastly different set of values to the workplace. Experts point out that the traditional employer-employee relationship that traded loyalty for job security has been washed away by global economic, competitive, technological and social changes. Traditional means of performance evaluation will not be effective in a changing community policing environment. As a result, law enforcement agencies are searching for new approaches to the process.

The challenge Law Enforcement is faced with is changing performance appraisal systems to go hand-in-hand with the changing community policing environment. Many practitioners such as Robert Trojanowicz and Lee Brown have written that the shift to community policing requires

a change in how the police department assesses officer performance.¹ The changing community policing environment has brought about an emerging issue which is the focus of this article: *Future methods of evaluating police officer performance in a changing community policing environment.*

In order to get a perspective on how police officers will be evaluated in a changing community policing environment, we need to first briefly define and explore what community policing is. The key element within a community oriented policing philosophy is the partnership created with the community. At its core, community policing is founded on shared problem solving. The community and law-enforcement work together to identify problems, suggest solutions, and eliminate or mitigate problems. It recognizes that the traditional model of the police telling the community what is right and what is wrong simply doesn't work. Community oriented policing requires an organizational philosophy, strategy, and management style which is based upon problem solving in the community-police partnership. Community policing requires new thinking and a degree of risk-taking unlike those in traditional policing models.

The expectations of patrol officers have also changed as result of the changeover to community-based policing. Officers are expected to be more service-oriented and spend time on community projects. As a result of the community policing trend, new broader requirements are asked of officers, for instance, interpersonal skills such as verbal, people, and problem solving capabilities.

In a recent survey conducted of California law enforcement agencies, only six of fifteen responding agencies incorporate an evaluation process which reflects a community/problem oriented philosophy. The assumption would be that the majority of law-enforcement agencies are

evaluating their officers on traditional standards driven by statistics rather than on more service-oriented factors. A critical component of the survey showed that only four of the total responding departments involved community input in the officer evaluation process. With the departments that used it, the input included community surveys, quality service letters, and community contacts by supervisors. This survey was compared to a similar survey conducted in 1992 by a Command College Graduate. Considering the six-year difference in questions requested in the survey, it appears that although agencies have continued to utilize some form of community policing, there exists little change in the methods of the evaluation process.

Research of performance appraisal systems suggests that despite the inherent problems and frustrations, most still realize the importance of good performance evaluations. Most companies use some type of performance appraisal system. Ninety eight percent of the 754 firms responding to a March 1996 fax poll by the American management association have an appraisal system.² In response to a number of problems associated with traditional appraisals, more and more firms are adopting the multi-source assessment (MSA) processes.

One type of MSA process is the 360-degree feedback. Also known as a full-circle appraisal, multi-rater assessment, peer review and group performance appraisal, the 360 degree feedback is a process in which individual performance is assessed through feedback from managers, direct reports, peers, internal and external customers in the individual him/herself. In a law-enforcement setting for example, with the various work shifts, managers seldom see their supervisors and rarely observe them working in the field. This makes it difficult to evaluate them. By involving personnel at all levels of the organization who have knowledge of employees performance, the 360 degree feedback process is significantly more powerful, reliable, balanced

and accurate than feedback resulting from traditional one-source feedback methods.

This history and information, lead to discussions with experts within law-enforcement and the community utilizing the nominal group technique (NGT) process. Future trends and events relating to community policing and police officer performance methods were identified. Based on this information, a snapshot was developed of the possible future of performance evaluation methods in the community policing environment by the year 2003.

This best case scenario, based on research and NGT input, indicates that the level of involvement in the performance evaluation process from the community and within the organization will increase. Three sixty-degree process as opposed to supervisor-only evaluations will be utilized more by law enforcement agencies in the future. Officers will become more problem solvers in their communities thus changing the traditional job description of the police officer. With advanced technologies, recruits will have to be more educated and computer literate and the recruitment process will profile candidates based on these changing, necessary qualities. The value of teamwork will become more important as job duties will expand causing employees to do more with less.

Scenario

At the conclusion of command college, Commander DeRohan provided copies of his command college project to all department staff. At a staff meeting, the need to change the performance evaluation process was discussed and a committee was formed with various representatives within the department. The group met on numerous occasions. They reviewed the results of the NGT process, job descriptions, the department's mission, values and goals, and samples of collected data from the Commander's project. The job description of the patrol officer

was re-written and performance standards were established taking into consideration the changing community policing environment. Thus a new evaluation system was born and accepted by all. Input is collected from the officer's peers, supervisors, co-workers, and the public via surveys.

It's now the year 2003 and Officer Maloy's annual performance evaluation is due. Sgt. Reed informs Officer Maloy via voice activated e-mail and asks him to submit his self-appraisal. Since the Pismo Beach Police adopted their tell-the-truth policy as part of their teamwork value, Sgt. Reed sends out an appraisal questionnaire to other members of the organization at random to solicit feedback on Officer Maloy's performance. Sgt. Reed then checks the department Internet web data server which stores community survey data on all department employees. With nearly every home and business equipped with computers and Internet access, the department utilizes this technology with press releases, public information, department surveys, etc. Sgt. Reed finds fifteen returned surveys relating to Officer Maloy on how he performed during traffic stops, citizen contacts, arrests, reports, etc. Sgt. Reed also gathers the quarterly performance reviews that have been completed on Officer Maloy. Sgt. Reed meets quarterly with his officers to review their goals, accomplishments, training, and other areas identified in the annual evaluation. There should be no surprises for Officer Maloy because the evaluation process is really ongoing throughout the year. Sgt. Reed has received extensive training in the evaluation process. With the new system in place where officers know exactly what is expected of them for each performance category, Sgt. Reed's job will be easy and non-stressful.

After completing the 360-degree review of Maloy's performance, Sgt. Reed sets up the appraisal conference in the quiet conference room, free of distractions. Sgt. Reed assures Officer Maloy that nothing is set in concrete and when the discussion is over, mutually accepted goals will

be determined. Sgt. Reed shares the feedback information with Officer Maloy which includes positive and areas that could use improvement. Each performance standard is addressed and rated. Officer Maloy shares problems as he sees them and discusses his career goals.

The interview is concluded with both Reed and Maloy reviewing what was accomplished. Sgt. Reed completed the final evaluation form on his computer and e-mailed it to the other supervisors for any final input. The final draft was then e-mailed to the Chief of Police. Chief Boon reviewed the evaluation and met with Officer Maloy to review the expectations and give him final encouragement.

Officer Maloy was enlightened by the whole process and feels he received an honest review of his performance. Some areas where his peers perceived him as needing improvement, he went right to work on. Sgt. Reed reflected back on how stressful the old system used to be and how he now looks forward to the opportunity to meet with his officers in this environment.

This scenario can become reality by innovative, risk-taking leaders designing a better future for their organization. In a society where people want to help make a difference, this strategy brings it together. Most law-enforcement agencies surveyed are searching for a model evaluation system that will meet their future needs. This most optimistic scenario is reasonable and attainable if properly introduced using a well thought out strategic plan, implementation plan, and transition management plan.

Strategic Plan

The strategic plan process should consist of defining the issue, conducting a situational analysis, redefining the organization's mission, implementation plans, and feedback control systems. Situational analysis consists of defining the organization's business, conducting an

external assessment, conducting an internal assessment, and identifying/analyzing stakeholders. Prior to transitioning to any new evaluation system, law-enforcement managers should conduct an analysis of their external environments through use of surveys, nominal group techniques, and STEEP. The STEEP model examines five environmental forces (Social, Technological, Environmental, Economic and Political) which will affect any strategic plan. One model to consider when conducting an internal organizational assessment is the WOTS UP which focuses on the Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats and Strains Underlying Planning of the organization. Another crucial element of any strategic plan is the identification and analysis of stakeholders. Stakeholders are individuals or groups who are impacted by what you do, who can impact what you do, or who care about what you do. Any type of organizational change impacts stakeholders. A successful change strategy must account for relationships with and among stakeholders.

Implementation Plan

The following implementation plan is a brief overview of a recommended step-by-step process for designing the performance appraisal system. It discusses three phases that need to be included in the strategic plan to implement the process. Phase one discusses a step-by-step approach to begin a re-designed process of the appraisal system. Phase two outlines a recommended generic appraisal process for supervisors to follow. Phase three identifies suggested performance criteria to measure.

I. Phase One

Designing An Individualized Performance Evaluation System - A values based process

An article in the March 1998 FBI Law-Enforcement Bulletin written by Officer Kramer of

the Bainbridge Township Police Department in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, outlined several important steps to follow when designing an individualized performance evaluation system.³ This article was used as a guide to developing phase one of the implementation plan.

Step 1: Administrative Direction and Support

Agency administrators serve three vital functions in the process. First, they must initiate the process by setting and communicating the vision. Second, they must provide broad overall objectives that the initiated change will accomplish. Finally, administrators must provide adequate support in the form of resources such as time, money, space, and equipment to allow the process to succeed.

Step 2: Committee Formation

Committees enrich the decision-making process by drawing on the expertise and creativity of department personnel. The change management structure is a group that represents the major constituencies involved in the change. A “diagonal-slice” model can be used. It involves getting representatives at all levels of the organization as opposed to getting formal representation from groups.

Step 3: Introductory Tasks

The initial step in preparing for action is creation of an activity or change plan that will specify the activity and critical incidents or events that must occur to get from here to there.

Step 4: Evaluation Design Process Explanation

The committee chairperson should explain the steps involved in the evaluation

design process and the committee's objectives.

Step 5: Values Identification

Once committee members understand the design process, they can begin to address the needs of the organization. Each member defines and defends their values. Next the committee should consider outside sources such as mission statements, code of conducts, surveys, research and studies, and other evaluation systems. After devising a list of all the values, they should be rated by the committee. The committee must then commit to specific values and define each one.

Step 6: Initial System Development

At this point, the committee needs to develop a few critical parameters for the system, such as the length of the evaluation period and rating scale the system will use.

Step 7: Measures and Standards

A valid, fair evaluation system requires measures and standards. The committee should begin by attempting to set objective measures and standards for each performance dimension. The committee then identifies specific standards that employees must meet to attain certain ratings. In short, the committee should identify a department value, convert it to a simple, well-defined performance dimension, and then further clarify it through specific measures and standards.

In addition to values, essential functions of the job must be determined. The essential functions must be identified on the position description and on the Performance Appraisal form. Essential functions are the major responsibilities within a job. A performance standard is a measurement spoken in terms of quantitative or qualitative.

Examples of essential functions and standards to measure them are as follows:

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

- Meet regularly with subordinates.
- Write clear, accurate reports.
- Solve community problems utilizing Problem Oriented Policing.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

- Meet with each subordinate weekly.
- No more than 2% error rate by 6-1-98.
- Conduct at least one P.O.P. project per month.

Performance standards should be specific, clearly stated, measurable, results oriented, and challenging yet achievable.

Step 8: System Development Finalization

The committee next determines how the system will operate and must decide:

- What types of evaluation will the department use, for example, traditional, 360-degree feedback or other types.
- How often will evaluation interviews take place?
- What will be discussed?
- What type of training will employees need to operate the new system?
- What documentation will the new system require?
- Who will design any new forms deemed necessary?

After the new evaluation system has been developed to include new essential functions and performance standards, the plan must be communicated to the organization and a implementation date set. Employees must have a clear understanding of what will be expected of them. Supervisors and managers must be trained as to the purposes of the performance appraisal, the accuracy of performance indicators to be utilized, and the

errors that potentially could be made.

Step 9: System Relevance

Formal program evaluation requires recalling the original objectives of the endeavor and selecting appropriate ways, such as a department survey, to determine if the department is making progress toward those objectives.

II. Phase Two

Recommended Actual Performance Appraisal Process

The actual performance evaluation process is of equal importance. Research of the public and private sector showed that many different processes are utilized. The following general appraisal process is recommended for law-enforcement agencies to follow when conducting the performance appraisal review.

1. **Notification of appraisal.** Generally, the personnel department or administrative division will notify the appropriate supervisor that an employee's performance evaluation is due. This notice should be sent at least four to six weeks in advance of the review due date.
2. **Self Evaluation.** The employee should be given a Pre-Evaluation Employee Input form designed by the agency to complete and bring to the appraisal interview. This form allows the employee to self evaluate himself/herself and list accomplishments during the rating period.
3. **Evaluator Preparation.** Prior to the evaluation meeting, the supervisor should make sure that the following preparations have been completed:⁴
 - ▶ Standards have been established.

- ▶ Employee has been informed and understands the standards by which his/her performance will be measured.
- ▶ Employee has formulated goals and objectives that will have included job improvement, educational achievement, human growth and development.
- ▶ Employee has experienced direct feedback from the supervisor as to his/her performance discrepancy, including coaching and counseling which is on-going during period to be evaluated.
- ▶ Employee has been asked to bring his/her documentation to the review for self assessment.
- ▶ The review has been scheduled in advance, at a time when there are the least interruptions.

360-Degree Feedback. The supervisor should solicit feedback from other supervisors, employee peers, surveys, or whatever other means the department has set up.

4. **Performance Appraisal Meeting.** The initial performance appraisal meeting consists of meeting with the employee before any formal documentation takes place. The employee brings with them their self evaluation and supporting documents and the supervisor brings with them a rough outline or rough draft of the appraisal form.

Performance reviews should achieve three key tasks:⁵

1. Clarify the employee's job;
2. Review past performance;

3. Explain future performance expectations.

A highly ethical performance review should have two primary objectives:⁶

1. It should provide an honest, truthful assessment of performance;
2. It should develop a plan to improve an individual's effectiveness.

A successful appraisal review contains the following ingredients:⁷

- ▶ Two-way communication between the manager and employee - managers should ask open-ended questions to encourage a discussion;
- ▶ Honest words regarding the employee's performance;
- ▶ Ideas on how to improve employee performance;
- ▶ Consistent expectations regarding the employee's job;
- ▶ Positive feedback.

Performance Review Environment: The performance review environment should be one of the least possible stress for both the supervisor and the employee. The meeting should be held in a private and comfortable place. Such conditions will encourage the employee to talk openly and assure him/her that the discussion is confidential.

5. **Completing the Appraisal Document.**

After completion of the interview, the supervisor translates the meeting onto the department forms and completes the written portion of the appraisal. The written product should still be in draft form. The supervisor should submit the written evaluation to his/her supervisor for approval prior to giving it to the employee.

6. Presenting the Written Document to the Employee.

When the written document is given to the employee, it should be explained that changes can still be made. The employee should be given at least a day to review and digest the information. If the employee is uncomfortable with some part of the document, allow them time to meet with the supervisor again and make any adjustments. The employee should then sign the document.

7. Routing and Filing.

Every department has different procedures for routing and filing. Regardless of the system, the employee should be given a copy of the signed, completed evaluation document. The supervisor/rater should also be given a copy to maintain in a working file in order to periodically review and monitor performance.

8. Appeal Process.

Every agency should have an appeal process if they disagree with the evaluation.

9. Post-Evaluation Follow-up.

The supervisor should conduct a self assessment of the interview process. The appraisal process is on-going throughout the year. The supervisor must follow-up on his/her commitments made during the appraisal and monitor the employees progress.

III. Phase Three

Recommended Measures of Performance

Over forty (40) performance evaluation programs and forms of law enforcement agencies across the nation were reviewed for this project. Few agencies such as the Irvine Police Department have actually revised their forms to include community policing performance measures. We recommend law enforcement agencies consider evaluating their patrol officers with the following measures. Included are traditional areas that are always relevant and recommended community policing areas.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. INTERPERSONAL SKILLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Relationship with fellow employees<input type="checkbox"/> Relationship with the public<input type="checkbox"/> Acceptance of criticism<input type="checkbox"/> Acceptance of supervision<input type="checkbox"/> Team player<input type="checkbox"/> Effectiveness in controlling stress situations<input type="checkbox"/> Courtesy<input type="checkbox"/> Shares ideas and information<input type="checkbox"/> Accepts change - adaptability | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Initiative</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Leadership</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Accuracy</p> |
| <p>2. JOB SKILLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge of laws<input type="checkbox"/> Judgement<input type="checkbox"/> Safety skills<input type="checkbox"/> Written skills (report writing, grammar, neatness, etc.)<input type="checkbox"/> Radio communications<input type="checkbox"/> Driving habits<input type="checkbox"/> Firearm proficiency<input type="checkbox"/> Weapons/Defensive tactics proficiency<input type="checkbox"/> Investigative ability<input type="checkbox"/> Self-initiated activity<input type="checkbox"/> Oral communications<input type="checkbox"/> Decision making<input type="checkbox"/> Emergency incident management<input type="checkbox"/> Proficiency in first aid<input type="checkbox"/> Operation and care of equipment<input type="checkbox"/> Enforcement tactics | <p>4. PERSONAL FACTORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Appearance<input type="checkbox"/> Self Confidence<input type="checkbox"/> Loyalty<input type="checkbox"/> Physical Fitness<input type="checkbox"/> Interest and Effort to improve<input type="checkbox"/> Stability |
| <p>3. GENERAL WORK HABITS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Dependability<input type="checkbox"/> Attendance<input type="checkbox"/> Punctuality<input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge and adherence to policies<input type="checkbox"/> Time management | <p>4. PRODUCTIVITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Self initiated activity<input type="checkbox"/> Quantity (acceptable number of arrests, citations, FI's, etc.)<input type="checkbox"/> Quality of work <p>5. COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Identifies problems and concerns<input type="checkbox"/> Formulates plans<input type="checkbox"/> Rapport with citizens<input type="checkbox"/> Community Problem Solving<input type="checkbox"/> Utilizes available resources to address problems<input type="checkbox"/> Use of field interviews<input type="checkbox"/> Use of crime analysis data to identify crime trends<input type="checkbox"/> P.O.P. projects <p>6. DEPARTMENT VALUES</p> <p>*Each agency places their published values here</p> <p>7. DEPARTMENT GOALS</p> <p>*Each agency places their published goals here</p> |

Each of the above areas must be clearly defined not only by definition but what expectations of performance are expected in each rating category, i.e., unacceptable, needs improvement, meets standards and exceeds standards. Agencies should strongly consider minimizing the rating categories in certain areas such as job skills. Patrol officers either meet the standard of the critical skills outlined in the job description or they don't. Other performance areas might include more rating categories. Each agency should define the rating categories during the initial design of their performance appraisal process as outlined in the strategic plan.

Conclusion

Performance appraisals, when properly done, are a valuable tool and are a great benefit to the organization in the employee. The changing community policing environment is shifting the role of the patrol officer from traditional policing methods to more of a problem solver in the community. The mission of law enforcement agencies is shifting from narrowly focused crime fighting to forming partnerships designed to solve community problems together as a cooperative effort. This shift will require law enforcement agencies to re-define the job dimensions of the patrol officer. Job dimensions will need to include the ability to organize community meetings, mediate disputes, solve problems, develop rapport with citizens, organize and carry out problem oriented policing projects, and much more.

In addition to redefining job skills, law enforcement agencies must modify their vision and mission statements, values and goals to meet the demands of the changing community policing environment. As such, patrol officers should be evaluated as to their performance in these areas in addition to the traditional qualitative measures. Qualitative measures that reflect problem-solving skills must become part of the evaluation system.

With sincere effort, law enforcement agencies can implement the necessary changes to create the best case scenario of an evaluation system that will result in a changing community living environment in the future.

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