

*Values Based Policing*  
*“Encouraging Purpose-Driven Conduct”*



By

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In his book, *The Minding Organization*,<sup>1</sup> UCLA Professor, Dr. Moshe Rubinstein defines effective leaders as individuals who possess three fundamental characteristics; “know, think and Passion.” Rubinstein defines “know” as simply domain knowledge, an understanding of fundamental concepts. He describes, “think” as the ability to reason or to be creative. However, the term, “Passion” figures most prominently in Rubinstein’s opinion by defining the meaning as the purpose behind an individual’s sense of commitment.

According to Rubinstein and many others, purpose is central to commitment, desire and production. Without a sense of purpose, workers become assembly line drones (...step one, step two, and repeat the process) until the final work bell rings. Inject purpose into the equation and the outcome is more like that of a musical chord. Think of “know,” “think” and “passion” as musical notes. If you play only the “know” note without any others, at best you will produce a monotonous tone. Add the “think” note and the tone sounds somewhat better. However, add the third note, “passion” and you have a complete chord. Once this chord is created, leaders are then able to stimulate the internal notes that individuals will most likely respond to, thereby ultimately producing a meaningful musical score (or, when applied in the workplace, a meaningful outcome). The essence of constructing this harmonious chord is comparable to laying a foundation for conduct that is purpose-driven, thus creating a level of commitment and quality not possible by rules alone.

### Purpose-Driven Conduct

Like the orchestra conductor who reacts with an almost instinctive understanding of the composers’ intent (principles), police employees also react to the unique circumstances of each incident they encounter. Although the conductor has sheet music (policy) at his disposal, instead of simply following each note stanza by stanza, with the outcome being predictable and limiting, he instead reacts to how the orchestra interprets his direction to produce a meaningful outcome. Police officers are similar in that the incidents they encounter are often fluid and unpredictable. Police personnel need that instinctive understanding of where the department wants them to go when they are faced with the unique circumstances of each different incident. They do not need an encyclopedia of rules and policies.

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<sup>1</sup> Rubinstein, Ph.D., Moshe F. (1999) “*The Minding Organization*,” John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Encouraging purpose driven conduct requires that leaders establish clear and meaningful goals. As goals are being developed, leaders should consider the value of the “know,” “think” and “passion” elements described by Dr. Rubinstein. By following this approach, leaders will find it easier to infuse the sense of purpose necessary in the workplace to create a feeling among employees that their work is noble. Rather than continuing to drift through the myriad of management philosophies employees are exposed to throughout their career, including, *Management by Objectives*,<sup>2</sup> (Drucker, 1954) *Total Quality Management*,<sup>3</sup> (Deming, 1980) or *Post Industrial Management*,<sup>4</sup> (Rost, 1991) which emphasize management control and regulating employee conduct through volumes of rules, law enforcement leaders should look to purpose driven models which emphasize creativity and personal commitment. Purpose driven conduct models encourage creativity by removing the constraints that originate out of rules-based traditional models.

In recent years, leadership practices have shifted to those that concentrate on improving employee-employer relationships. By forging stronger partnerships with the employee, leaders seek to foster a working environment that lends itself to employee self-satisfaction. This goes hand-in-hand with enhanced employee commitment to the mission, vision, values and goals of the organization. In essence, this values oriented approach encourages employees to provide service with an enhanced sense of purpose.

The philosophical shift behind a push towards values based conduct models began in the late 1990's. Following a number of high profile cases involving ethical violations in the public and private sector, the public voiced a demand for more ethical conduct. In response, police leaders took the lead and began emphasizing values instead of merely following the rules. Police leaders recognized the impetus for this transition takes root in a belief that when people and organizations are held to higher principles or ethical standards, both their represented group and their clients benefit.

Common sense suggests people are much more likely to embrace the mission, vision, values and goals of an organization if the purpose serves the greater good and their motivation is intrinsic.

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<sup>2</sup> Drucker, Peter F. (1954) *The Practice of Management*, HarperCollins

<sup>3</sup> Deming, W. Edwards. (1980) *Out of the Crisis*, MIT Press

<sup>4</sup> Rost, Joseph C. (1991) *Leadership for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Praeger Publishers

If law enforcement hopes to maintain the public trust, they must constantly demonstrate that its partnership with the community is fair, objective and securely rooted in consistently applied ethical principles.

When one decides upon a career in policing they enter into the world of service to others. As they embark on these careers, they pledge that their service will always be fair, balanced, measured and performed with the highest regard to ethical considerations. In essence, our professional existence is rooted in ethical service. Simply put, ethical conduct on the part of the police is the cornerstone of public trust.

Presently, the majority of police agencies still regulate employee conduct and discipline by using rules-based policies and procedures manuals. Understandably, these manuals are cumbersome, frequently are outdated and consist of several volumes of information that is not easily understood or more importantly, consistently applied. It is nearly impossible for any employee to be completely aware of every potential violation. Policy manuals not only define the who, what, where, when and how employees make decisions, but are also considered the sole source of reference for charging personnel with violations and for administering discipline.

One unintended outcome of rules-based policy management is a concern that these antiquated policy manuals serve to only manage the minimum acceptable behaviors by its members and to curtail innovation and creativity. In contemporary, community oriented policing models, expectations placed upon police employees beg for officers to be innovative, but ethical as they solve problems. In short, managing conduct by relying on the application of rules only, serves to undermine the direction the profession is moving in, which is to identify and service the emerging needs and desires of our communities. It is accepted that rules-based models serve as the proverbial carrot and stick, meting out rewards or imposing sanctions and essentially attacking a person's logic. In contrast principles penetrate logic through inspiration, which builds a fire in the employees' gut.

Values based policing models cultivate an environment that emphasizes the importance of providing service and completing ones' duties in accordance with the department's value system. Additionally, when measured against the expectations set forth by the community, this model serves to enhance the overall values of the profession itself. A values based conduct model demonstrates to the organization, the community and to the profession that words and deeds must always be aligned with the beliefs prevalent in all three entities.

When a transition to values based policing is then undertaken, reliance on policy manuals as the sole measure of conduct and discipline changes significantly. Adherence to established values makes the use of these manuals far less the focal point for conduct and as discussed earlier, the focus then becomes more about the intent of the employee's actions.

### Trends in Values Based Policing

During the past few years, a handful of law enforcement agencies have embraced the term values based policing. Some have actually begun exploring how they can transition away from the rigid, innovation-limiting systems imposed by rules based models and towards values based models.

Using the term "values based policing" the author recently inquired into the Internet search engine 'Google.'<sup>5</sup> The result was more than 147,000 returns! After examining the first thirty sites, however, it became clear the majority of these agencies had merely adopted this terminology and were using it as a blanket statement to define their department's self-image. Routinely, the phrase appears in the department's mission statement or motto, rather than having been adopted and utilized for the values based discipline and conduct models described above.

For example, when searching the term "values oriented policing" on Google, the introduction page to the City of Cypress, California Police Department<sup>6</sup> identifies the department as practicing a "values driven policing philosophy." When you visit the department's actual website, however, references to values are linked only to the department's community policing efforts. Similar references are found in many other instances, including the Google page referencing the Cincinnati, Ohio Police Department<sup>7</sup> and many others. These references are not intended to be criticisms of an agency's practices; instead they are illustrations of the industry wide misunderstanding of what is being presented as values based conduct models.

Similarly, in 2000 the United States Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) undertook an effort to provide funding for six 'Values Based Initiative'<sup>8</sup> (VBI) sites. The initial VBI sites included Boston, MA; Chicago, IL; Fort Wayne, IN; Fort Worth, TX; Redlands, CA; and St. Paul, MN.

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<sup>5</sup> (<http://www.google.com>)

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.ci.cypress.ca.us/police/community\\_oriented.htm](http://www.ci.cypress.ca.us/police/community_oriented.htm)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/police/pages/-3039>

<sup>8</sup> (<http://www.cops.usdoj.gov>)

On closer examination, however, the term 'values based' revealed, in the context of this undertaking, these programs are actually 'faith based' efforts. The COPS-VBI program was designed to simply partner police, community, and religious entities together to address community problems. These partnerships become the program focus, rather than the values based conduct and discipline of police employees by applying the agency's values and principles for desired performance.

The research shows that a handful of law enforcement agencies have developed actual values or principles based conduct and discipline models, including the cities of Boulder<sup>9</sup> and Fort Collins, Colorado.<sup>10</sup> Both Boulder and Fort Collins have begun transitioning their policy and procedure manuals into values based manuals similar to those currently being used in the Wheaton, Illinois Police Department. While all of these agencies are involved in the transition to a values based conduct model, Wheaton is further along than any other agency found in this study, and warrants further examination.

### The Wheaton Experience

In Wheaton, police leadership has implemented a values based policing model. This was accomplished by transitioning the department away from strict adherence to written policy and procedure manuals and towards innovative problem solving by developing values (principles) oriented guidelines for behavior, conduct and discipline.

During his lecture entitled "Values Based Leadership, an update on the Wheaton, Illinois Experience"<sup>11</sup> Deputy Chief Thomas Meloni spoke of his department's transition to that of a values based conduct and discipline agency. Meloni explained that in December of 2000, Police Chief Mark Field pushed forward his vision of abolishing Wheaton's policy and procedure manuals in favor of a values oriented approach. Before this transition, the agency's manual consisted of, "...hundreds of rules, regulations, administrative orders, and department policies." Field surmised that policies were, for the most part, designed to establish procedural guidelines for completing process work or for restricting behavior, and not for advancing time honored principles and values, including those found in the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.ci.boulder.co.us/police/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.ci.fort-collins.co.us/police/mission-values.php>

<sup>11</sup> "Values based Leadership Update on the Wheaton, Illinois Experience," from a lecture given at the Center for American and International Law, Annual Ethics conference, Plano, Texas, October 21, 2004

At Field's direction, stakeholders in the Wheaton Police Department identified their core principles as; *Respect, Balance, Fairness, Integrity, Ethical Performance, Reverence for the Law, Community Policing* and *Effectiveness*. These eight principles were then linked to associated value statements, attached to a Statement of Quality, linked to the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics, tied to the Department Motto and affixed with seven, high risk/low frequency policy statements. This newly created document now formed Wheaton's policy manual. And as a result of the effort, a reduction in size from the previous several hundred-page manual to one of sixty-three pages!

According to Meloni, Field felt that holding police employees to a set of core values and principles would help create a "gut-level understanding" of what is expected from each employee. He reasoned that once an employee understood the vision implied in the stated principle, and once they understood the intention of the value or principle, it was no longer necessary to memorize each subsection of a written rule to assure compliance.

The Chief felt that values or principles inspired personnel to react appropriately from that gut-level understanding. In contrast, the chief felt the previous rules served as a proverbial "carrot and stick" by sanctioning well-intended behaviors that may have deviated from a restrictive written policy in addition to the conduct they were intended to prevent. More troubling was the concern that written policies often included innumerable exceptions to the intent of the rule, thereby encouraging mediocrity. Field believed that inspiration for most police employees came from their intrinsic commitment to protect, serve and help others. In short, he believed officers want to right wrongs, aid the injured, help the underdog and bring justice to those areas where no justice existed.

#### Will It Work Elsewhere? - A Case Study

In the late 1980's, the Pasadena (CA.) Police Department developed the "Pasadena Way" values statement. In essence, this statement consists of five tenets for employee conduct. They are, "We Exist To Serve The Community," "How We Get The Job Done Is Just As Important As Getting The Job Done," "We Believe In The Personal Touch," "We Are Proactive," and "We Are Fair But Firm."

Since its inception the "Pasadena Way"<sup>12</sup> has served as the cornerstone of the department's commitment to service, so much so that then Chief Jim Robenson contracted with a local artist to design an eight foot, circular brass plate bearing the five tenets now embedded in the walkway entrance to the police department.

In 1996, Bernard K. Melekian became Pasadena's new Chief of Police. Melekian was intrigued by the "Pasadena Way" value statement and later challenged the agency to move further in the area of values based policing by changing the manner by which conduct and discipline is measured.

In response to this challenge, in October 2004, the department hosted a workgroup charged with studying the concept. Representatives from police management, sworn and civilian bargaining units, the city attorneys' office, and community and business leaders met to discuss the concept of transitioning to this model. Discussions ranged from practical to philosophical during the daylong event. When the discussion shifted to the idea that police work is indeed a call to service for a higher purpose, most in the group felt that this change would reinforce levels of personal commitment and was therefore especially relevant in law enforcement.

Concerns over potential obstacles were discussed at length amongst police labor, police management and some of the participants from the legal profession. The focus of these discussions centered on the impact of changing time-honored methods for dealing with conduct and discipline issues. Conventional wisdom suggests that some entities may object to replacing clearly defined and established policies with values or principles that appear to create an air of vagueness, ambiguity and a broader interpretation of misconduct.

To resolve these issues, it was suggested that any attempted transition include a concerted effort to bring all affected parties into the decision-making process. These stakeholders should include the obvious choices (police officer associations, personnel labor groups, city, county and state attorneys and consultants) as well as some that may provide insight and expertise necessary for future success. This second group may include city managers, command staffs, line personnel from throughout the department, business and community members and others having a vested interest in the outcome. Obtaining high-level stakeholder commitments will help create a sense of transparency and alleviate the levels of concern as issues develop.

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<sup>12</sup> [http://www.ci.pasadena.ca.us/police/Pas\\_Values/Value.asp](http://www.ci.pasadena.ca.us/police/Pas_Values/Value.asp)

The Pasadena Police Department is in the process of transitioning from a traditional rule based towards a values based model for conduct and discipline. Under the leadership of Chief Melekian, a 'Values Based Policing Committee' has been formed and is tasked with developing the program. The Committee will review the rules (laws) that must remain as part of the new manual, and then develop eight-to-ten core values that will incorporate the umbrella tenets of the Pasadena Way into an operational values guide for employee conduct. Stakeholders like those identified above will be used throughout the effort, which has already been formally introduced to the department and community by the Chief and staff.

Despite a sense of enthusiasm in anticipation for the new model, the committee recognizes that a number of obstacles remain and a myriad of factors require consideration. Pasadena's experience can provide at least an initial blueprint for others wishing to follow suit, but only if the organization has commitment from the top, an endorsement from those affected and a willingness to move beyond mere words into the transformation necessary for the integration of values based policing into everyday conduct.

#### Implications of the Findings

Agencies intent on a transformation to values based policing should actively attempt to involve stakeholders in the process as soon as possible, with efforts to obtain the active commitment of core groups a necessary first step after the Chief announces the intent to move in this direction. Once a values based culture has been established, the organization must then nurture support during each stage of the change, up to and including efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of the effort. Early stakeholder commitment helps law enforcement executives maintain support throughout any change process.

Another concern is that change of this magnitude does not occur in a vacuum. Wheaton's leadership correctly anticipated that increases in complaints and discipline would occur. These increases were attributed to misunderstanding the intent of the newly introduced values manual by those subject to its provisions. Once personnel recognized the need to balance the outcome of their actions against the initial complaint, the numbers of allegations began to drop. This is not to say acts of misconduct will cease to exist, but the highest percentage of complaints against police personnel in most organizations originate as a result of procedural misunderstandings.

As employees and the public become more educated regarding the intent of the officers' action, these complaints will also drop.

In preparation for conducting an evaluation of their values based effort, Wheaton used 2001 data as a baseline for disciplinary incidents. Beginning in 2002, the first full year following their transition, speculation that increases would occur proved to be true.

As envisioned, however, significant declines in misconduct cases were seen in 2003, continued in 2004 and are still the case in 2005 (refer to figures in Table 1, below).

<b><i>Violation and Disciplinary History – Wheaton, Illinois Police Department (2001 – 2004)</i></b>				
<b><i>Principle or Value Violated</i></b>	<b><i>2001</i></b>	<b><i>2002</i></b>	<b><i>2003</i></b>	<b><i>2004</i></b>
Attention to Duty	X	X	X	X
Community Policing		X		
Courtesy	X		X	X
Ethical Performance	X	X		X
Integrity	X	X		X
Respect	X	X	X	X
Reverence for the Law		X		X
X = Indicates at least one violation of this principle/value occurred in this category				
<b><i>Disciplinary Action Taken</i></b>	<b><i>2001</i></b>	<b><i>2002</i></b>	<b><i>2003</i></b>	<b><i>2004</i></b>
Separate disciplinary actions with loss of pay	9	11	3	2
Total suspension days, from 1-10 days	28			
Total suspension days, from 1-30 days		59		
Total suspension days, from ½ -3 days			4.5	2
Terminations	1			1

Table 1

### The Road Ahead

Given Wheaton's' four year history, it is reasonable to expect that transitioning from a traditional rules based to a values based policing models will significantly change the personnel complaint process. Having participated in adopting the value statements, it is considerably easier for employees to adhere to the eight to ten concise value statements. This change alone lowered the number of complaints that occurred as a result of policy misunderstandings. Further, as envisioned in Pasadena, part of their new model will include a voluntary complaint mediation process.

This will allow department personnel and complainants the opportunity to meet and attempt to resolve their issues without a formal investigation being initiated if the complaint falls into a limited category. Those categories are generally related to issues concern treatment and or procedure. Since a majority of all personnel complaints fall within these areas, this change should also lower the overall number of formal complaints.

By emphasizing purpose driven conduct, employees should develop higher levels of personal commitment. Being encouraged to act ethically and being allowed to use innovative methods to solve problems should also raise the (expectation) bar throughout the department. This sense of purpose will undoubtedly encourage other to exhibit similar restraint and conduct, thereby acting to propagate higher levels of ethical conduct and excellent performance throughout the department.

Clearly, purpose with values oriented guidance is not enough. When they transitioned to values based policing, Wheaton did not simply discard their traditional policy and procedure manuals. Nor is it suggested that agencies that transition to a values based model do so. Certainly, the values shared in the Wheaton example have great potential; however, each agency should take the time to develop specific core values that epitomize their mission, vision and role within their respective communities. Agencies should consider also requiring their employees' allegiance to the law enforcement *Code of Ethics*.<sup>13</sup> Every employee should be required to embrace ideals such as duty, service, respect, liberty, equality, justice, courage, honesty, honor and integrity. It is recommended that every employee swear to keep these oaths, which, along with a determined list of organizational values, make up the framework of the agency's values based policing model.

### The Difference in Action

Under traditional models, when police employees decide to take action, the agency's policy and procedure manuals guide the process and outcomes of any conduct. These manuals are often valuable as reference guides to help shape employee decisions, relating to the technical application or justification for their planned actions. These manuals are codified in several volumes, essentially creating 'rule-based' reference guides. Unfortunately, these same guidelines create loopholes that provide excuses for improper conduct.

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<sup>13</sup> (IACP at: <http://www.theiacp.org>)

By implementing values based policing models, adherence to policies and procedures become less important. This occurs because a philosophical and practical shift allows the department to measure the employees' conduct against their set of core values.

For instance, what if an employee's actions run contrary to a specific policy, but clearly in line with the organizations' principles? Shouldn't the employee's actions be deemed acceptable?

Imagine an incident where your officer encounters a citizen who informs them she has vitally important information about a recent series of violent crimes. This citizen adds that, because she is a member of a violent street gang and is in fear of her life, she will not tell the officer anything that is tape-recorded. Unfortunately, the officer's agency still operates in a rules based environment and has a written policy requiring anyone who conducts interviews tape record every one. Rather than risk losing the information, and in direct violation of the policy, the officer decides to respect the informant's fear and hand writes out the information. The information is shared with other officers and within hours, suspects are arrested and the crime series ends. The officer's supervisor recognizes the officer violated the policy and launches an internal investigation into the violation. Although she may personally disagree with the policy and would prefer to recognize the officer's efforts with a commendation, the supervisors' hands are tied because another policy requires that all known violations be reported, and that a failure to report the violation is also subject to discipline.

In this instance, a written policy rooted in rules rather than values significantly limited the officer's options and likely caused discipline to be unfairly meted out. If this department had transitioned to a values based model, the intent and the outcome of the officer's action would trump the violation since the 'greater good' of ending the crime spree, far exceeded any damage caused by the act.

### Conclusion

With demands on policing to provide long-term solutions to seemingly never-ending arrays of social issues, police leaders must constantly find innovative ways to deliver effective service with limited and often shrinking resources. As such, law enforcement might consider why. Is it the danger, or perhaps the compensation? Do potential applicants take note of constant negative media scrutiny and simply decide it's not worth it?

Is service to others simply losing its luster? Whatever the reasons, law enforcement professionals shoulder the burden of exploring all means necessary to ensure that police protect our neighborhoods. Perhaps by changing the perception of police work from that of public service, to that of service with purpose might reverse the decline.

As suggested in this article, when work has a noble purpose, commitment is higher. One has only to look at the example of the United States Marine Corps to recognize the impact of nobility and purpose on organizational performance and commitment from individual members.

Historically, the Marines have been the smallest fighting force of all the armed services. They have engaged in some of history's most deadly and decisive battles, and in 2004 again achieved their recruitment goals<sup>14</sup> while other branches feel short of theirs. This was accomplished during wartime and despite having a very limited number so jobs outside the realm of infantry soldier! The Marine Corps prides itself on being the first to fight and most loyal of all the armed services. Speak to a Marine and his life long commitment to "Semper Fidelis" (always faithful) resonates in his or her voice.

One way to achieve the sense of purpose suggested by the transition to values based policing models may be to adopt the "always faithful" mantra similar to that of the Marine Corps." To encourage a level of pride and commitment to the mission seen in Marines, police leaders must create an environment that defines the work as being noble and of significant purpose. The Marines do this by promising to never leave a fallen comrade behind. Police departments may be able to establishing this connection to honor, country, dignity, respect and duty by eliminating pitfalls and loopholes found in archaic rules that serve, at best, to encourage a 'just the facts ma'am' attitude.

Innovative solutions to long-term social issues will only unfold when police employees have their creative hands untied, and their efforts directly linked to the organization's stated values. Finding innovative ways to provide quality police services, while at the same time dealing with contemporary issues, beckons one to consider whether or not it is time to look inside our organizations, flatten the internal roadblocks that limit growth and continued success and implement change that benefits both the department and the community it serves. Providing a clear picture of the intended future is the responsibility of police executives, and plays a critical part in the success or failure of any proposed change.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://usmilitary.about.com/od/joiningthemilitary/a/2004recruitgoal.htm>

By discussing this concept today, the profession might begin to expand the ability of our personnel to truly use values based, innovative ways to solve problems and foster stronger bonds rooted in ethical conduct with the communities we serve.

Finally, the question begs, is your organization preparing for the future by encouraging officers to perform at the highest levels of ethical conduct? Does your agency truly trust its personnel to make decision that reflect the values and vision of the organization, or are you still tying their hands by limiting them to the restrictions of rules? If you say you've empowered your employees to be decision makers, then have you established a conduct model that allows them to perform to their potential? The future may be radically different than you've envisioned, and the responsibility to guide your organization into the future is no less urgent than for trend setting leaders like Chief Field of Wheaton, Illinois.

Responsibility for guiding our organizations into the future is in the hands of every law enforcement professional. However, a couple of questions linger. Are you willing to mold the employees of the future by stimulating their "know," their "think" and most importantly their "passion" or purpose? Does it make sense that law enforcement professionals find a way to merge these notes into a meaningful chord? Or should we continue with conduct models that encourage a myriad of single notes, all resulting in an effective but certainly not a very progressive approach to handling conduct and discipline issues? Lastly, should we move the profession to the next level of community policing, or is the status quo about as innovative as you'd like to be? We know what Wheaton's, Chief Field and Pasadena's Chief Melekian think; what about you?