

**WHAT WILL BE THE LEADERSHIP TRAINING SUBJECT DELIVERY
SYSTEM FOR MIDDLE MANAGERS 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).

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research was to understand a problematic trend that indicated a need for middle managers to comprehend and apply leadership traits. There have been numerous books and articles written on leadership styles, management steps for improvement, motivation, values and related subjects. The prominent issue of this research was that some form of participative leadership, or cooperative effort, will improve individual performance. It appears that without some form of leadership training, police organizations will continue to use the current method from the military model of management.

There was not any particular style or leadership/management panacea proved to guarantee organizational success from the research. However, a Nominal Group Technique panel consisting of LASD executives related that fear management would continue to ruin any progressive agency trying to survive in the information era. Timing and group agreement can be the catalyst for effective change.¹ Effective change resulted in the quality of leadership and the proper application of management. The required character traits of leadership and management work better when applied together. The abilities to lead, risk organizational change, solve complex communication issues, getting others to participate in mutual concerns, team focus on the mission and a commitment to organizational values (based on individual needs) directly contribute to the success of organizational achievement.²

Conflicts are directly related to how the organizational culture and individual goals resolve individual issues. Which conflicts work best together are often related to the training and life experiences within each individual and group.³

HOW THE RESEARCH WAS DONE

After one year as a student at the Command College, a Nominal Group Technique panel (NGT) was convened in June of 1998. The panel consisted of two executives and three middle managers from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD). All panel participants asked to remain anonymous due to the sensitive nature of the identified events and trends. As the NGT panel aptly stated, the LASD is still fear driven and managed accordingly.

The issue was presented? What will be the subject delivery system for leadership development of middle managers by the year 2003? The NGT panel identified twelve trends and eight events of current and future significance. These trends and events would have direct and indirect impact on the overall leadership concept.

TRENDS

- ▶ The further accountability aspect of Risk Management
- ▶ Sworn and civilian middle managers will be held to an higher accountability level
- ▶ More layers of line supervision personnel will be added
- ▶ There will be less executive latitude in decision making. This will be by design
- ▶ Policy changes will come often and larger in number
- ▶ The LASD will continue to be fear driven, unless there is a change in leadership philosophy
- ▶ The internal culture will continue to change drastically in demographics and direction
- ▶ The development of social skills for all LASD members will be emphasized
- ▶ Depending on changing significant social events will dictate the need for police review boards

- ▶ The Kolts Commission will still be a major source of LASD culture change
- ▶ Programs that look good but are ineffective will be eliminated

After lengthy debate and discussion the NGT panel reduced the twelve trends to eight.

These eight trends were placed on scales, in order of five and ten-year probability and level of concern. The following are the results of that discussion.

Accountability for middle managers was listed by the NGT panel as the most significant trend. More responsibility and accountability will be placed onto middle managers on the LASD. In fact, the NGT panel mentioned several recent events that middle managers will be either counseled or disciplined for following policy but policy failed to make the right decision. In other words the middle manager should have not followed policy.

The next trend was a surprise. NGT panel listed wellness as a significant concern and will increase in importance. The panel cited a number of recent health problems that appear to be affecting LASD personnel. The panel added that mental, physical and spiritual well being will be incorporated into the everyday work ethic. The LASD will take on more responsibility in the personal fitness of its employees.

Next, middle managers will receive extensive training on the subject of Risk Management. Training will include, but not limited to, critical decision making, value-based instruction, teamwork and assorted other topics. These topics will all fall under the title of Leadership. A leadership institute would be best suited to handle the training. The institute will be centralized and co-sponsored by private industry. The institute can be accredited through a major college or university. Students will be accepted on a broad base of knowledge and experience. Students will be from both private and public sectors.

In 1992 a survey was provided to all LASD personnel. In this survey more than 40 percent of LASD personnel responded.⁴ LASD personnel listed a series of problems with executive management and was critical of the current Sheriff. The survey reported that deputies felt the current Sheriff was not doing a good job. The trend of conducting surveys will continue according to the NGT panel.

The NGT panel listed police review boards as a possibility in the next five years but this trend would diminish greatly in ten years. The NGT panel cited the advent of leadership training and organizational culture change as the main factors for the lack of need for police review boards. Another factor was police review boards are neither effective nor efficient. There will be little concern with these types of dated technologies.

In 1992 the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors hired a group of professionals in various fields to carefully inspect and provide critical review of the LASD. This group was named the Kolts Commission after Superior Court Judge Kolts who headed the commission. Since 1992 the Kolts Commission, the NGT panel stated, actually ran the progressive end of the LASD with new innovations and portrayed the position of a critical evaluator. Each member agreed that the Kolts Commission was the single greatest factor in moving the LASD out of stagnation. However, management did not provide sufficient critical review of new technologies and implemented severe changes without proper training and input. As suspected many of these new technologies were good for organizational change, but others were not. One new innovation that caused the most concern was the documentation of false or unfounded complaints. The LASD management decided to keep unfounded complaints in the deputy's record. The panel cited instances of abuse with these records.

However, the NGT panel agreed that the need for the commission would decline greatly as the LASD became more effective.

Executive latitude was listed next. The NGT panel came to the consensus that traditionally executive management made all decisions regarding policy. Since the trend is to move decisions to the level of middle management, the latitude provided solely to executives would now move to middle management. Again the NGT panel listed the need for leadership training.

This means that executive decisions would be less regarding policy and more toward planning. A question was raised that if this trend continued; would there be a need for executives? The NGT panel noted that executives would not easily give up their positions.

A big surprise was the suggestion that fear management would slowly leave the LASD. All NGT members related instances of fear management applied to them during their careers. The cause of fear management leaving the ranks would be the selection of new executives that would embrace change and apply new innovations of leadership to the LASD. Risk taking would become a way of life and would be rewarded accordingly.

EVENTS

- ▶ The retirement of many of the LASD older executives.
- ▶ A new sheriff would be elected in the next five years.
- ▶ The sudden death of the current sheriff.
- ▶ A sudden downturn in the economy would effect the LASD greatly due to the availability of funds.
- ▶ The advent of Hispanic voters would effect the cultural direction of the LASD.
- ▶ A sudden and large increase in gang or juvenile crime

- ▶ A sudden or large decrease in gang and juvenile crime
- ▶ A new promotional process

The NGT panel voiced their difficulty in the health discussion regarding the current Sheriff.

However, the first probable event was the scheduled retirement of many executives.

As the current Sheriff never discussed the methods he used for executive selection, other than he was the final word on promotion of executives. It was impossible to determine if the exodus of executives was planned. However, the NGT panel agreed that the next sheriff would publish criteria and seek more public and department input for these executive promotions. More than 50 percent of LASD executives are scheduled for retirement in two years.

The next possible event was election of a new sheriff had a high probability due to the advancing age and illness of the current Sheriff. Panel members agreed the Sheriff had done a good job but it was a time for change.

An event that no one wanted to discuss but, could not be overlooked, was the possible sudden death of the current Sheriff. Who has been ill for years and was on dialysis. Please note that after the initial writing of this paper the Sheriff died of a brain clot.

The U.S. economy is currently performing at record heights. However, the NGT panel cited that historically, sudden events in the downturn of the economy effect the ability to provide needed training and education. The NGT panel suggested those contingency plans to continue training be developed for such occasions. As one NGT panel member aptly stated, “training is needed more during difficult times.”

The next trend has been a topic of discussion for several years.

Hispanic voters as a political power is now a reality. This ethnic group would change the direction of policing for the LASD. All NGT panel members agreed that this particular minority has been generally ignored by the LASD in representation and promotion.

A series of events that would cause a sudden and large increase or decrease in juvenile crime was the next event of significance. NGT panel members noted that throughout the years the criminal activity of juveniles has effected the entire methodology of application of resources on the LASD. An agreed solution to this trend was any future programs need to have a holistic approach of prevention, intervention and eradication.

The last probable event was the introduction of new promotional processes brought on the courts and various commissions. The NGT panel agreed to past inequities and the lack of safeguards to ensure a principled centered test of ability. Many traditional executives are angered by the new promotional process but the NGT panel forecasted that eventually the new process would prove to be a better system.

FINDINGS

After hours of debate there was surprising agreement to the current state of the LASD and its inner workings. NGT panel members agreed with Deming who stated that if an organization hires good people and the organization still struggles then it is the system and not the people.⁵

The obvious question arose as to how should the LASD proceed in order to affect positive change to achieve community, individual and organizational goals. The identification of a (thinking outside the box) strategic plan and a need for transitional management was voiced.

In the strategic and transitional management plans there is a definite need to apply leadership training throughout a career. A Leadership Institute would be one method toward reaching this goal. However, specific leadership training for specific positions was emphasized, such as training for middle managers.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

The strategic plan will suggest a plan of action that will act as a guide toward moving the LASD toward a leadership-based organization. A de-emphasis on the reliance of mechanical technology is suggested in order to ensure the adherence to our values. The NGT panel reported a caution of placing too much emphasis on technology to support the strategic plan.

PRE-PLANING ISSUES

This strategic plan must be prepared for variations⁶ and continually ask questions. How do we respond to successes or failures? What about programs that did not meet desired results? How do we stay ahead of the future? Should we change our traditional police role should crime continue to fall?⁷ How does this effect the role of leadership training and our managers? Another issue is the development of a mission statement toward the strategic and transitional plans.

A STRATEGIC PLAN

The strategic plan will be divided into four categories. This strategic plan is modeled after the current strategic plan implemented by The Commission on Peace Officers Standards and Training. However, in order to focus on the mission, a definition of leadership is appropriate.

The following definition maybe considered as self promotion but it fits the purpose of the plan. Regardless of the task, Leadership is an influence that a person can apply to oneself or members of a group, who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purpose based on values.

1. Increase knowledge and overall development of all managers.

Middle managers have traditionally been overlooked for leadership training.

In the course of this project the LASD has never conducted leadership training at this level. The internal culture has viewed middle management as a transitional position. This has been confirmed by the number of transfers by middle managers out of line positions. Middle managers must be given the best possible leadership training that fits their position and duties. Middle managers must be tested in both practical and experimental situations. A continual search for commitment to purpose is instituted. Middle managers must understand that the job of quality will never be done. Mentors of varying ranks and positions should be assigned to middle managers. This match up must not be at random or personal selection. Scientific methods of matching personalities should be considered. Mentors can be subordinates, peers or supervisors. There should not be a distinction between sworn and non sworn.

2. Training systems must change

Committees of varying members of the business world, community and law enforcement must be formed in order to facilitate new innovations of training. The Kolts Commission should be selected to oversee the program. Instructors nor instruction from the LASD should not be used. This should ensure thinking outside the box and promote innovation. Selected training systems should be open to all ranks. This will provide varying ranks with the same understanding of training. This should also start to eliminate the traditional distrust between ranks.

3. Emphasis on problem solving and making real partnerships.

As already discussed by the NGT panel, middle managers will have the biggest burden of critical decision making in the future. Middle managers need new methods of solving new or recurrent problems. A quality approach to critical decision making, would mandate middle managers successfully complete difficult courses in this subject. Law enforcement in general has instructed personnel on the concept of personal face versus professional face. This instruction stated that it is totally appropriate to keep your convictions at home and just act professionally at work. This Machiavellian approach as one NGT panel suggested, is similar to having Adolf Hitler go to a Jewish home to assist the family in some type of police matter.⁸

4. Keep track of progress

The LASD must forever evaluate the relevance of training. Again, the Kolts Commission would be best suited to monitor this part of the plan. As do many organizations, self evaluation does not appear to help employees but rather to reenforce the status quo.

To conclude, the strategic plan moving the LASD toward leadership training must contain the suggested changes in overall development of middle managers, drastic changes in methodology in training, problem solving, making relationships and tracking progress.

This strategic plan must be fluid and always focus on the mission.

TRANSITIONAL MANAGEMENT

Transitional Management should be utilized for the LASD middle management to move toward accepting leadership training. However, a secondary purpose is to evaluate this transition plan for other leadership or training courses. The transition plan is presented in three parts.

ORGANIZE

First, selection of team members to develop the transition plan is required. Persons from business, LASD, military and P.O.S.T. should be included. From this team, recommendations of members for smaller teams (Field Cell Teams) will ensure the plan is completed at the working level. To ensure proper notice of qualified personnel, it is recommended that the LASD advertise in the various mediums of the media. Local and ethnic media organizations are a must. From these groups, plans of action and implementation will be discussed and recorded. Realistic time lines and schedules will be projected. Each team member is equal in status and required to provide input. Not until a consensus of quality action plans are approved will any implementation begin.

IMPLEMENTATION OF A PROGRAM

Once the field cell teams have completed their tasks of selecting the best methods of instruction and areas of subject matter, implementation must be planned. Class size will not exceed twenty-four students. Duration of the training will be divided into four one-week sessions.

Each session will be held every other month. Student participation will consist, of individuals, from varying agencies both civilian and government.

All efforts must be made to ensure that ethnic and gender participation is addressed. Each student must submit an application to a review board and submit recommendations from community and department sources. The review board will make the final selections. The review board may conduct interviews but may not disqualify anyone solely on the grounds of a poor interview.

Leadership training will be allotted the most time and emphasis. The purpose of this instruction is to change paradigms. Two facilitators and auditors will be assigned to each class.

Department mentors will attend at least one session with their student. Students will be required to read specific texts and conduct a class project.

EVALUATION

After each session each student is required to submit a verbal and written evaluation. Each evaluation is recorded and statistics kept for analysis. If the student needs time to absorb the information, the student may submit the evaluation upon returning to the next session. Also, students are asked, after one year of graduation, to write and comment on the long term success of their training experience.

SUMMARY

The transition plan is clear and concise, but not exclusive of change or deletion. This program never ends and its goal is to provide an eternal search for improvement.⁹

END NOTES

1. Irving Janis, Group Think, p 174
2. Joseph Rost, Leadership for the Twenty-First Century, p 10-41
3. B.R. Boyd, Management-Minded Supervision, p45
4. ASI Survey conducted for the LASD in 1992, Management Survey
5. W.Edwards Deming, The New Economics, 2nd ed. (Massachusetts: M.I.T. 1997) text
6. W. Edwards Deming, Out of the Crisis, 1st ed. (Massachusetts: M.I.T. 1982) p 112-114
7. Ibid
8. Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince, total text
9. W. Edwards Deming, The New Economics, 4th ed. (Massachusetts: M.I.T. 1994)

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