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PROJECT

**MANAGING THE IMPACT
OF GENERATION X
ON THE
LAW ENFORCEMENT PROFESSION
BY THE YEAR 2012**

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

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Introduction

This report centers on the effect the so-called "Generation X" will have on the law enforcement profession from now until the year 2012. That is the year the "baby boomer" generation will reach its peak in terms of potential retirement from the profession and the transition from one generation to the next will have become complete.

The research in this report is a combination of two areas of study. First, reviews of other studies into the characteristics of the "Generation X" workforce were conducted. These works were reviewed to identify specific characteristics about this workforce group, examine their legitimacy and determine their impact on the law enforcement profession. Next, the results of a Nominal Group Technique assignment, where members of the community, whose jobs center on human resources, combined with actual "Generation X" law enforcement professionals from the Fresno Police Department to discuss future scenarios in which "Generation X" professionals become the driving force behind the law enforcement profession.

Finally, the report contains a conclusion, based on the aforementioned study, which provides a guideline for the management of this phenomenon known as "Generation X" and how it will take the profession further into the 21st century.

The report looks at both the negative and positive aspects of the transition from one generation to the next and how that transition will change the face of the law enforcement profession. Executives and managers in law enforcement will look at the job in a much different way, adapting to the “new” thinking on the “Generation X” employee and learn to utilize them to their fullest potential.

Definitions

Any study of generations and their impact must first begin with a working definition of what they are and who represents them in our society. In a book entitled, “ETC.: A Review of General Semantics” written by R. Gozzi, Jr. and published in 1995, the term “Generation X” is first attributed to the name of a rock-n-roll band on the early 1970's. The term has come to mean many things to many people. Most commonly, this term is used to describe the generation which followed the post-world war II generation, known as “baby boomers.”

Most executives and managers in place today in the law enforcement profession fall into the “baby boomer” category. Specifically, they are individuals born between the years 1946 and 1962, numbering somewhere in the neighborhood of 72 million.¹ Character traits commonly associated with this generation will be explored later in the report.

“Generation X” was born in 1963 and runs through 1981.² There are more

than 40 million "Generation Xer's" currently in the workforce. Most of the material written about this group focuses on negative traits, such as arrogance, impatience, cynical, apolitical, and obnoxious. It should be noted, however, that until just recently, most of the authors of material regarding "Gen X'ers" were themselves "baby boomers," with their views deflected through the eyes of another generation entirely. "Gen Xer's" are the product of the "baby boomer" generation, with many of the traits associated with them a product of that same "baby boomer" group.

To best understand "Generation X," we must first take a good look at ourselves, the "baby boomers." Born out of the prosperity of the post-war phenomenon, "boomers" would come to be known as the "yuppie" generation.³ "Boomers" were categorized as materialistic. The work ethic of the "boomer" was grounded in the idea that gaining all one can gain in worldly possessions was the defining nature of mankind. "Trust no one," was the battle cry of the "boomers," learning to rely on their individual ability to survive, yet dependent upon one another for continued success. After the war, the United States enjoyed unprecedented levels of prosperity. In the fifties, per capita income grew by 48 percent.⁴ A full 60 percent of the working class fit into the category of "middle class."⁵

“Boomers” were the most educated generation in American history.

Because of the added years of education the economic successes of the fifties had provided, “boomers” were graced with slow and comfortable transition into adulthood. High education created higher expectations, and standards of living began to rise steadily. The large number of well-educated workers entering the job market soon had a very negative impact on the economy. Competition for higher paying jobs became fierce. American economics was badly damaged by foreign interests in the seventies, and the “boomers,” who expected to do much better than their parents had done, were finding themselves to be the first generation to experience a decline in the earnings relative to those of their parents.⁶

These economic pressures were the first experience for many “Gen Xers” as they entered the educational process that would prepare them for the future. With both parents needing to work full time, the phenomenon known as the “latch key kid” appeared for the first time in American history. Gone were the idealistic views provided by their parents from the fifties. American patriotism seemed to have been replaced by a wave of anti-government sentiments, primarily focusing on the war in Vietnam and punctuated by the assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. “Boomers” soon turned the “us” sentiments

of the fifties and early sixties into the “me” decade of the seventies. Having had their dreams of a glorious continuation of prosperity shattered at the hands of the seventies economy, “boomers” quickly abandoned the lofty issues of their youth (civil rights, feminism, sexual freedom) for the promise of the return of the American dream, offered by the Reagan dominated decade of the eighties.

Born of the decade of high hopes and raised bank accounts was “Generation X.” The youngest of the “Xers,” those able to vote in 1984, came out heavily in favor of Reagan.⁷ But by the end of the decade, the romance had disappeared and most “Xer’s” realigned themselves with democrats and Bill Clinton. The principle lesson learned by “Xers” in watching the eighties transpire was to become as self reliant as possible, as soon as possible. No matter how good things may seem today, in the blink of an eye, the world could be crumbling down around you and everything you’ve ever worked for could be gone. Look for success and reward as quickly as possible and don’t waste time with the process.

Everything the “Gen Xers” did was fast. They are the first group to live with the microwave oven as an everyday part of their lives. Typewriters had been moved aside for computers and information available at a speed never before seen. The VCR became the baby sitter of the day. The absence of the parental figure from the home for extended periods of time forced the “Xer” to become self-

reliant. Their heroes were successful executives from the eighties who had no ties to anyone and did whatever it took to succeed.

The best way to understand “Generation X” and develop a strategy for managing it in the law enforcement profession is to examine some of the more common assumptions made about this group and how they may be used to a manager’s advantage. There are several traits associated with “Gen Xers,” but for the purposes of this report I have chosen to focus on five. They are:

1. Loyalty (or a lack thereof)
2. A Fear of (or resistance to) Change
3. Short Attention Spans
4. “Slackers”
5. Apathetic (or uninvolved)

Loyalty

Most complaints lodged in regard to “Generation X” focuses on the perceived lack of loyalty this group brings to the workforce. More commonly, this trait is referred to as an unwillingness to “pay your dues” before experiencing career advanced and recognition. The complaints center on matters of principle more so than an articulated inability to perform any given function. “Boomers” were raised on the notions that respect for elders equate to a willingness to remain

subordinate, even in a situation where the “superior” individual is lacking, in some way, the knowledge or ability to accomplish the task at hand.

“Xer’s,” on the other hand, are a product of a much different environment. The experience of growing up in the seventies and eighties has created a profound sense of self-reliance. As mentioned earlier, the “latch key” generation was forced to rely on their own wits at a much younger age than their predecessors. They learned to accomplish whatever was necessary to function individually, without the constant, watchful eye of their parental figures. In most cases, there was no “Mr. Douglas” of “My Three Sons” fame to be there to lead them back onto the beaten path. “Xer’s” learned to experiment,-- to test the waters on their own. This has manifested itself into a generation that is no longer dependent on the experiences of the past. In fact, “Xer’s” prefer to generate their own experiences. They are willing, much more so than “boomers” to work long hours without the thought of additional compensation being the focus of their motivation. They are willing to do so in order to gain the experience and knowledge necessary to take on more challenging tasks as soon as the opportunities present themselves.

What “Xer’s” seem less willing to do is “pay dues” simply for the sake of doing so. No longer is the adage, “that’s just the way things are” sufficient to satisfy the worker of tomorrow. Logically and practically explain the need for

these process and the “Xer” will respond by giving the task 100 percent effort, if not more. Fail to do so, the “Xer” loses interest and quickly finds something else that presents a challenge.

“Xers” started working as a group about the time when job security was at one of its lowest points, the times surrounding the 1987 Stock Market “adjustment.”⁸ No job appeared safe, as downsizing became the stuff legends were made of and employees who had devoted a great deal of their lives to the same company found themselves out of a job. The “dues” paid by these people seemed to have been for nothing, prompting “Xers” to abandon the notion that there was some value in loyalty and “dues paying.” Hard work without a meaningful reward system did not interest “Generation X” members.

The lessons to be learned here regarding loyalty and “dues paying” are simple. In order to build loyalty in a “Generation X” employee, managers in the law enforcement field must EXHIBIT loyalty themselves. Base decisions on movement within an organization not solely on length of service, but rather on one’s ability to perform the task at hand. Performance is the only thing that provides a feeling of security for the “Generation X” employee. When they are not rewarded for outstanding performance, but watch others “in the club” gain success and career advancement based on a person rather than professional

loyalty, the “Xer” is lost. They are used to getting quick results from their efforts . . . money from ATM’s, food from microwaves and drive-through windows, and anything else they need in a split second. Asking them to wait around for the reward for their efforts goes against their very nature and does not allow the fullest potential of the individual to be reached.

“Xers” simply need for managers to make note of their outstanding efforts as a matter of daily business. When managers in the profession realize the “Xers” need for this, we can use this to our advantage by reaping the benefits of short-term productivity. Sometimes the mere opportunity to work on a project is enough of a reward to satisfy the need of most “Xers” for a challenge. “Xers” need managers to share their admiration of their work, not keep it to themselves. This is not a function of feeding the ego, rather it’s a method of providing reassurance that their efforts are in fact an important component of the organization.

A Fear of Change

A trait associated with many generations, the fear of change has not spared the “X” generation. Or has it? Unlike “baby boomers,” who were taught from a young age that conformity is good and that creativity is not a virtue, “Xers” have arrived into the workforce with an entirely different perspective.

“Generation X” members grew up in a world of constant change. The late

70's and early 80's were defined by it. The country went from a low-keyed, low profile governmental rule to a country run by a figure as large as the "big screen." And as quickly as prosperity spread across the land, it was gone. The early 90's revealed some of the truths about the 80's and prosperity gone wrong. Mighty institutions across the land began to split up, downsize, or vanish all together. This left the "Gen Xer" in a constant state of change. Nothing was as it seemed to be.

"Xers" began to more carefully choose with whom they would be aligning, and for how long. Because the idea of an institution lasting forever had been disproved, "Xers" did not form the type of loyalty to the status quo. This adaptation has allowed the "Xer" to better handle the rigors of change, both internally and externally. In fact, most would say they thrive on it as a new challenge and stretch of their abilities.

Often the most successful attempts at change involving "Xers" are changes that reflect in some way, their personal value system. Deviations from course that are done in contradiction to the stated values of an organization are difficult, at best, for a "Gen Xer" to handle. When managers make changes that reflect the values of the system, as well as those of the "Gen Xer," they have a much easier transition to the new way(s) of doing business. Also, when work is organized

around functions that have a specific end result, "Xers" begin to feel as if their work does make a meaning contribution to the organization.

Short Attention Spans

Most managers today complain that "Gen Xers" bore easily,-- that they are prone to asking dozens of questions in an effort to provide self stimulation. Once again, "Xers" are creatures of their environment.

Born in the middle of the information revolution, "Gen Xers" have been forced to interact with information as quickly as possible. Cable and satellite television, video games and computers have been the mainstays of this group. To a large extent, "Xers" learned how to write on a computer, where words, sentence and paragraphs can be changed and rearranged in a split second. There is no time to spend contemplating the different meanings of a certain situation or event, because the next one is barreling down the tracks right at you, at least in the eyes of "generation X." Most "boomers" can remember the hours spent in libraries thumbing through card catalogs for research information. "Xers" barely understand to what the term refers. Try to imagine a young man or women in college today, or in the law enforcement professional workplace, thumbing through a card catalog for information.

"Xers" have learned to cope with the fast pace of information flow as a

matter of survival. The large, ever-expanded sources of information required an evolution in how we process information. Managers must learn these skills in order just to keep pace with their “Xer” employees.

“Slackers”

Tremendously independent, “Xers” are natural born problem solvers. Creativity and innovation are skills forged in “Xers” out of necessity, and at a very young age. And because of this, “Xers” would like to see managers provide them with the vehicles to be creative. Remove as many restrictions as possible and let them run.

“Xers” give the impression they are wasting time, but in reality, they are looking for clear direction and a specific mission. In their younger years, most “Xers” were deprived of these things and now that they have entered the workforce, they gravitate toward situations where their methods may be free flowing but their purpose is clearly defined.

“Xers’ provide a good fit for law enforcement today because they thrive on the ideas that if you tell them what the task is, provide all the available information, and then let them create methods to solve the problem, the job will be completed. Managers in law enforcement, and in other large professions, must break the habit of given assignments with desired solutions attached, and

transition to “management of the unknown,” where “Xers” help create alternative scenarios to accomplish the stated goal or mission. Traditional law enforcement training must immediately transition into a scenario development where, “Xers” are allowed to use their creativity in finding new and more effective methods of doing the job.

Apathetic

More accurately put, this preconception of “Generation X” can be described as a lost or fading work ethic. What happened to the days where workers routinely stayed on until midnight and beyond? Willingly giving up scheduled days off without so much as a thought of additional compensation. Carrying two jobs, sometimes two full-time jobs. Ah, the good ol’ days!

Certainly not. Especially not for the “Generation X” crowd. From 1948, the country experienced 50 straight years where the average number of hours worked by employees rose.⁹ As the number of work hours increased, the number of leisure hours began to fall. The old adage, “all work and no play makes Jack a very dull boy” was embodied by the “baby boomer” generation. Of course, there was the period of “awakening,” known as the 60's. However, that was quickly replaced by the economic realities of the 70's and the “need for greed” in the 80's.

Stress retirements became more the norm rather than the exception. Prozac

is well on its way to replacing the "one-a-day" multivitamin as our country's morning medication. "Generation X" has taken a good, hard look at this, growing up as the children of neurotics, and have collectively said, "no thank you!"

"Xers" have literally watched their parents work themselves to death. They are quite sure that it simply isn't worth it. Most "Generation Xers" want a job that's secure, but doesn't become all consuming. Something they can work hard at for eight or nine hours a day, then leave it all behind. They want to know, from their employers, that family and friends ARE the most important concerns ANYONE should have. This doesn't equate to a diminished or nonexistent work ethic. It simply means "Gen Xers" are not willing to take on a work ethic that literally eats them up from the inside out.

An interesting phenomenon in this regard is many "boomer" managers, nearing the age of retirement, are beginning to express the same concerns. Despite the tremendous stress levels "boomers" have imposed upon themselves, modern medical science has been able to, slowly but surely, increase their expected life span. Many "boomers" are wondering what sort of life they have in store for them after retirement, in the light of years of neglect for anything non-job related. This could cause managers today to rethink what is a good work ethic. No one should make the error of confusing having a career with having a life.

Nominal Group Technique Summary

The Nominal Group Technique is a process used to examine an issue from as many different perspectives as possible. A group of individuals from various backgrounds are brought together for the purpose of discussing a selected topic and focusing in on the future as it relates to the topic. Trends and events associated with a specific issue (the management of "Generation X") are identified, analysis is completed on the impact of these trends and events, and "future" scenarios are constructed based on the information developed in the process.

The NGT conducted as a part of this project took place on Friday, February 19, 1999, at the Southwest Policing District Station in Fresno, CA.

Project Issue

Managing "Generation X" in the Law Enforcement Profession through 2012

NGT Panel

Facilitator - Sgt. Clayton Smith, Fresno Police Department

Mr. Jay Chenkin, GM Executive, (retired)

Ms. Alice Badillo, Public Relations Coordinator, A.T.&T. Wireless Services

Ms. Karen Ezell, Human Resources Manager, City of Redondo Beach, CA

Three (3) "Generation X" Fresno Police Officers (Anonymity Requested)

Trends

In the NGT process, a "trend" is anything viewed as being connected to the topic issue that may indicate a long term change in the status quo. The following is a list of trends generated by the panel in regard to the question of managing "Generation X" in the law enforcement profession:

- Changing Technology
- Restructuring Performance Evaluation Systems
- Changing Values and Value Systems
- Hiring law enforcement personnel with previous criminal records
- Changes in Demographics
- Top College performers gravitating away from the law enforcement profession
- Contract and Private Policing Services
- Changing public expectations of law enforcement personnel
- Police Supervision changes ("Baby Boomers vs Gen X'ers")
- Funding for Law Enforcement
- Emerging "New" Crimes (Techno-Crime)
- Pension System uncertainty
- "Job vs Career" approach to the law enforcement

- Civilianization
- Changing Law Enforcement Training

Prioritization

After a Clarifying discussion on some of the trends listed above, the group prioritized a list of the top seven in light of the issue question. The list is as follows:

1. Restructuring Performance Evaluation Systems
2. Changing Values and Value Systems
3. Police Supervision Changes (Baby Boomers vs Gen X'ers)
4. Top college performers gravitating away from the law enforcement profession
5. "Job vs Career" approach to the law enforcement
6. Pension System uncertainty
7. Changing Law Enforcement Training

Most of the trends identified as a priority involved a change in the paradigm currently in place for defining the role of a law enforcement officer. The discussion focused on the trends that will have an impact on reshaping the concept of policing by a workforce comprised primarily of "Gen X'ers" by the year 2012.

Regarding trend #2 (Changing Values and Value Systems), the group

defined this as a move away from the values in law enforcement most commonly attributed to the "Baby Boomer" generation. Included in the discussion were "values" such as loyalty, conformity, and institutional integrity.

The discussion about "Job vs Career" approach to the law enforcement centered on the idea that many "Gen X'ers" change careers more often than their predecessors, thus creating a need to deal with the different aspects of personnel "turn-over" within the profession.

Trend Summary Table

Using the prescribed NGT method, the listed trends were charted to determine their impact on the issue. Please see "Attachment A," illustrating the results of this charting.

Events

The panel's discussion then switched to developing a list of events that, if they occur, had an impact on the issue of managing "Generation X'ers" in the law enforcement profession through the year 2012. This term, in the NGT process, refers to discrete occurrences that can affect an issue. This can be true even in cases where the event is simply, "possibly" happening. Below is a list of events the panel discussed:

1. Collapse of law enforcement related retirement systems

2. Increase minimum age of law enforcement personnel to 30 years old
3. Mandatory employment longevity contracts for law enforcement personnel
4. Major Anthrax terrorist action against state law enforcement agencies
5. Major natural disaster
6. Mass retirement of "baby boomers" from the law enforcement profession
7. Law enforcement function removed from government responsibility and made a private-sector function
8. POST establishes a mandatory experience requirement for promotion to the supervisory level of ten years as a full-time sworn officer
9. All pay scales in the law enforcement profession change to strictly a performance-based system
10. Internal affairs investigations are contracted out to private investigative organizations
11. Peer conducted performance evaluations become the standard for the profession

The above listed events were discussed and a consensus was reached as to

the top five which would have an impact on the issue. Below is a list of those events:

1. Mass retirement of "baby boomers" from the law enforcement profession
2. Mandatory employment longevity contracts for law enforcement personnel
3. Law enforcement function removed from government responsibility and made a private-sector function
4. All pay scales in the law enforcement profession change to strictly a performance-based system
5. Increase minimum age of law enforcement personnel to 30 years old

Event Summary Table

Using the prescribed NGT method, the listed events were charted to determine their impact on the issue. Please see "Attachment B," illustrating the results of this charting.

Cross Impact Analysis

Using a range of "minus 5" to "plus 5", the group helped to prepare a cross impact analysis from the data to should the relationship between the events (should they actually occur) and the trends noted by the group. Please see

“Attachment C” for a charting of those results:

Future Scenarios

The current state of law enforcement finds the "Generation X'ers" becoming a large portion of the work force. Soon, large numbers of "Baby Boomers," the reflection of law enforcement over the past twenty years, will be reaching retirement age. They will, in essence, be turning their profession over to "Gen X'ers," a group they currently hold in low esteem. Based on the trends and events discussed here, the following are three (3) scenarios of what the legacy developed by the "Baby Boomer" generation will look like in the law enforcement profession.

Worst Case Scenario

By the year 2012, the post WWII "Baby Boomer" generation has retired and have turned over the task of maintaining civil order to their children, "Generation X." Much earlier, however, "Gen X'ers" have taken their toll on the profession. A changing value system has reduced the standards for hiring to include ex-felons. The institution of mandatory longevity contracts into the profession in an effort to halt the job vs career phenomenon has backfired. Highly qualified college graduates are opting into other careers that offer better pay and more stability.

Restructuring of performance evaluations, based on a strict "pay-for-

performance" criteria, and the transition of "Gen X'er" into the ranks of supervision has created a "product" so poor, the move toward the privatization of the function has taken hold. So much so that, in a recent election, our local electorate voted to remove the function of policing from government responsibility and opted to contract with the private sector. Although a number of current police officers were offered jobs with the new company, several hundred sworn officers and civilian support staff were laid-off. The ensuing chaos in the city sparked a huge upswing in criminal activity, punctuated by a riot which lasted for nearly two-weeks. National military forces were called in to help restore order as the new policing method attempted to take hold. Several casualties were recorded before order was finally achieved.

Best Case Scenario

2012 brings another bright new beginning to the law enforcement profession. Trends and events over the past dozen years have allowed for an evolution within the discipline, creating a positive, long-lasting image of the police officer.

"Baby Boomers," the generation most often tied to the problems of the past, have all but completely retired out of the profession. "Generation X'ers" have long since changed the face of the job of policing society through innovative,

futuristic approaches to age-old problems. At the center of these positive changes is a shift in the paradigm of law enforcement away from structured, "one-size-fits-all" problem solving methods to open minded, personalized answers.

Performance evaluation processes have changed to reflect the new values in place within the profession. Gone are rewards for those who conformed to the methods of the past. In their place, a system designed to truly encourage and promote innovation. The motto, "if it's been done before, try something else" is firmly in place. Employment contracts for line level officers requiring a minimum number of years in service have created a work pool of experienced, well-schooled personnel. Pay scales based on performance encourage progress and help tap potential.

Training for the profession has also changed dramatically. Little time is spent on physical training. Rather, the mind is "exercised" to build up those mental skills that will allow the police officer of today to better react to whatever confronts them. Managers in the profession seek the counsel of the younger members of their organizations, realizing their potential and understanding the need to view the job from different perspectives.

To illustrate the effectiveness of the new paradigm, officials point to the fact the need for the "street cop" have nearly vanished. Law enforcement personnel

now spend the majority of their time working on "quality of life" issues that have a great impact on the constituents.

Most Likely Scenario

A dozen or so years of transition from the "baby boomer" dominated profession to that dominated by "Generation X" has had a profound impact on law enforcement. A shift in values away from structured, "one-size-fits-all" problem solving methods to open minded, personalized answers to the crime problem has unveiled new, more effective methods of policing. Officers now focus a great deal of their time on dealing with "quality of life" issues, rather than arresting criminals.

Rather than fighting the trend of "job vs career" mentality, managers in the profession have learned to tap the potential of their employees as soon as possible in their careers. Knowing the need to constantly be challenged exists in their work force, managers are sending more and more responsibility "down" as low as possible. Rewards within the profession, including pay scales, are based on performance rather than longevity, encouraging all to strive to improve their work product

Crime rates have continued to remain low, despite the changing demographic picture. This seems to indicate the methods used by law

enforcement in maintaining order and improving the quality of life of their "customers" do, in fact, have a greater impact on the results than original thought. No longer can the finger be pointed outward when questions are asked about the quality of service and the rate of criminal activity.

Challenges Facing Generation X

Before managers of today can prepare for the impact of "Generation X" on their organizations, they should have a working understanding of some of the challenges "Xers" have to deal with on a daily basis.

Finding well-paying jobs for "Gen Xers" is becoming a nearly impossible task. With large, "Fortune 500" type companies still riding the downsizing trend, the executive jobs of the late eighties and early nineties have all but disappeared. The gap between the "haves" and the "have nots" is widening, as the middle-class, once a category with room for the majority of Americans, is shrinking minute by minute.

The American dream of owning a home is also slipping through the fingers of the "Generation Xers." In the fifties, sixties, and most of the seventies, only a relatively small portion of an employees' annual income was devoted toward making the mortgage payments. Today, in most areas across the country, the percentage has reached nearly 40%.¹⁰

Real questions about the value of higher educations are being asked by “Gen Xers.” Many young people today are working in jobs that are not in the least bit related to the degree they earned in college. Some would still argue that the job these “Xers” hold, regardless of its relationship with their degree, would have been out of reach had there not been a college diploma hanging on their wall. Reality may be that employers are becoming less concerned about the “sheepskin” and more concerned about hiring someone just as capable of handling the job, but who possesses fewer qualifications and might be willing to accept less pay for the position.

Social Security, often the only safety net available for the retirement years, is unstable, at best. Where “boomers” and their fathers could expect to basically double the amount of money they draw from Social Security as they contributed to the system during the course of their employment life, “Xers” face the possibility of totality losing their contributions into the only system available for the funding of their lives after the job runs out.

Transition Planning

In order for the law enforcement profession to actively prepare for, and manage properly, the emerging “Generation X,” leaders within the profession must provide the direction necessary to accomplish these tasks.

There will be natural resistance to change, especially change which calls for a shift in traditional thinking within the profession. This resistance can be overcome by positive direction and a plan to best utilize the talents and energies of the "new breed" of law enforcement profession. (See attached Commitment Planning Table)

Agency Head

The organization's leader (Chief, Sheriff, etc.) must first and foremost lead the transition in managing "Generation X" employees by example. As the final authority on matters of assignments and responsibilities, the agency head must take the risk of using the "less seasoned" employee in positions traditionally reserved for veteran officers. Difficult for someone who probably feels like they "paid their dues" to achieve their position, but essential for a successful transition.

Law Enforcement Management

Similar to the role of the agency head, the manager in law enforcement must be willing to take a risk on an "untested" resource. Allow the ideas of the inexperienced to be stated fully, and, when appropriate, implemented. Utilize the "Gen Xer's" aptitudes toward information gathering and processing to the agencies' advantage by identifying positions where these skills are most helpful and assign them there.

Employee Organizations

Ability to perform a specific function and the work ethic brought to a position have long been associated with the ability to advance within an organization. Also connected to this trait is longevity. Labor representatives have championed the cause of the long-term employee in so much as “seniority” within an organization is concerned. This has caused, in some cases, the stifling of “Generation X” performers, who possess equal or greater ability to perform a task, but not the longevity to “earn” a chance. Labor must understand that only by fostering the talents of the “Gen Xers” in the organizations of today, will there be a senior force to represent in the future.

Senior Police Employees

Like the labor organization, senior employees must realize that just hanging on from year to year does not equate to a vested “right” to a position. “Generation X” employees should not be viewed as the enemy by senior performers. Instead, they should be looked at as a motivator to encourage and challenge senior employees to maintain their performance levels at a high standard.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Dealing with the impact of “Generation X” on the law enforcement profession is a matter of opening up our perspective and allowing the benefits of a

new generation flow in. We as managers often forget the impact we have on our employees. One of the principle complaints “Xers” have about management is that we don’t “walk the talk.” We give lip service to ideas such as having a positive attitude, empowerment of our employees, involving them in the decision making process, and genuinely valuing our employees as people.

There are several, simple things managers can do today to deal with the impact of “Generation X” on the profession. Most are attached to the idea of putting the human being, and his or her needs, not necessarily above the needs of the profession, but certainly at the same level.

First, managers can begin by *living* the type of employee they would like to have in themselves. Actions DO speak louder than words, and employees learn more about what’s important to an organization by watching how the managers act, than by dozens of written policies and procedures.

Greet employees on a daily basis as if you are happy to see them and are happy to be on the job. Obviously there will be days in the course of a managerial career where these things are untrue. It is especially important on those days for the example of professionalism to emerge.

Treat employees (and the general public) as if they were your “customers.” The adage which says most law enforcement agencies would be bankrupt, if in the

actual customer service business, is true in far too many organizations.

Experience what your people are going through, not just by “walking around,” as was the prescription given years ago for improving organizations’ health, but by actually stepping into the shoes of your employees. Work their jobs for a few hours each month and experience the highs and lows associated with it. There is no better way of gaining perspective.

Discuss projects and assignments given to subordinates and take the time to explain the benefits the assignment and/or project will provide to the organization and any personal benefits that may be including in working the assignment. Never blame someone “higher up” the command structure for an unpopular policy or procedure. If descent exists, find out how to overcome it, assist in making everyone a part of the solution, and seek clarification of issues from your boss if the questioning of the process is valid.

Be open with personal feelings, in regard to the profession, with your employees. Use them as a conduit for venting your feelings in a professional manner, and be willing to allow them to do the same with you.

Encourage risk taking (haven’t we heard that before). The only way this can **actually** happen is for the manager to create an atmosphere where making an honest mistake becomes an opportunity to learn, not just rationale for discipline.

Attachment A

Trend Analysis

Trend #	5 years ago	Today	5 years from now	10 yrs from now	Concern Level (1-10)
1	50	100	150	150	7
2	75	100	125	175	9
3	50	100	125	200	9
4	85	100	140	150	7
5	80	100	130	175	8
6	90	100	150	200	9
7	75	100	125	150	6

Attachment B

Event Analysis

	Year>0	5yrs From Now	10 yrs from now	Impact (1- 10)	+ or -
Event 1	4	60%	95%	8	plus
Event 2	3	50%	75%	7	minus
Event 3	4	40%	60%	9	minus
Event 4	4	60%	80%	8	plus
Event 5	4	30%	50%	8	minus

Attachment C

Cross Impact Analysis

Range (15 to +5)

Events/Trends	Trend 1	Trend 2	Trend 3	Trend 4	Trend 5	Trend 6	Trend 7
Event 1	+3	+3	+4	-2	-1	-1	+2
Event 2	+2	+3	+3	-3	+4	+2	+2
Event 3	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5
Event 4	+4	+3	+4	-4	-3	+2	+3
Event 5	-2	0	-3	-2	-2	-3	-2

Attachment D

Transition Planning

- Who are the “Stakeholders”
- What is needed from the “Stakeholders”

Stakeholders	Block Change	Allow Change	Assist Change	Make the Change
Agency Head			XXX	
L. E. Management			XXX	
Employee Organizations			XXX	
Senior Employees		XXX		

- Stakeholder is defined as a person or organization with a vested interest in the change

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