

The Impact Of A  
Strategic Marketing Plan  
On A  
Large Urban Police Department

Article  
Presented to

California Commission on  
Peace Officers Standards and Training

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Command College Class XXVIII

Sacramento, California  
May 2000

## *Introduction*

As we approach the Millennium an interesting dynamic has emerged regarding the public's perception of Policing. While "Cops-and-Robbers" shows remain the most highly rated on Television, and the public is very much interested in policing, press coverage of law enforcement activities still conveys fairly negative images. Even as law enforcement has evolved towards a highly involved community-policing model where police interact directly with the community, negative images and stereotypes are often perpetuated in the media. This is especially so in the larger urban areas of California. Police agencies therefore suffer, since media coverage is the main source of information the public receives both to disseminate information, and report on incidents. A less adversarial relationship between the police and the press would better serve all concerned parties.

Obviously, the more sensational controversial issues will certainly receive a high proportion of media coverage. Unfortunately the acts of bravery, heroism, and community service that are a large part of a police officer's everyday duties receive little or no exposure. Since press coverage is limited to those higher profile incidents, in which the police response is reactive rather than proactive, Law Enforcement agencies often find themselves in a defensive mode, forced to respond to questions and accusations. These conditions are less able to highlight positive aspects of the agency and their individual members.

To counteract the negative, sensationalized media messages that are seen on the nightly news, and in various other media, more sophisticated methods and strategies are being developed to project the proper image of the new policing. These negative images are pervasive and studies show that they tend to shape public confidence in law enforcement and the members of the profession. For San Franciscans, they will benefit from being more aware that balance, compassion, and dedication to the duties of serving and protecting the public are the mission and objectives of the San Francisco Police Department; it's everyday business.

We must determine how best to relate that mission to our citizens. Since we must rely on the press for much of this communication, we must determine how to enlist them to provide more accurate and well-rounded coverage. In this age of increased expectations of the responsiveness of law enforcement agencies to community needs, it is imperative that our numerous innovative programs and efforts be conveyed to contrast the many negative images portrayed in the media.

## *Overview*

This in-depth article seeks to provide answers to these problems relying on a comprehensive analysis of the relevant issues and the formulation of a marketing strategies plan for the San Francisco Police Department. An extensive literature review indicates that such a strategy is not only germane to the one agency. In this age of rapidly developing technology, instant 24-hour news, and increasingly demanding citizen accountability and expectations of their police, agencies will be pressed to develop an infrastructure to respond more effectively to the public and the media. This article examines how this can be accomplished, and asks the question:

*What impact will a Strategic Marketing Plan have on a large urban department?*

The definitions for the question above are the following:

- 1) A Strategic Marketing Plan is defined as a comprehensive plan devised to define and publicize a departments mission and activities within the community, and promote a positive image of the organization.
- 2) The agency highlighted in this study is the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD,) a large urban agency with 2250 sworn members, encompassing 49 square miles, and the airport. San Francisco is a contiguous City and County, and the Police Department is responsible for all patrol and policing functions, with the exception of the courts, custody, and civil actions, which are all handled by the San Francisco Sheriff's Department.
- 3) This project examines and delineates the near term future impacts of the development of the outlined Marketing Plan.

### *The Influence of the media*

The research for this project was first initiated when the author was called upon to teach Media Relations and Public Affairs at the San Francisco Police Academy. Surveys within the San Francisco Police Department had revealed that members felt that there was high tension and strained relationships between the SFPD and the local news media.<sup>1</sup> Class members revealed their perception that the news media was biased in their coverage of police issues, generally portraying negative image of the Department. The influence of the media on society should never be underestimated; the media have an inordinate influence on public opinion.

The awesome power of the media can easily destroy a police chief's longevity, or increase the public's confidence in an organization. A 90-second sound byte can take an agency from the nation's best to the nation's worst.<sup>2</sup>

It is interesting that members of the local media brought in to assist in teaching the classes were quite aware of these feelings expressed by the department members. The reporters and news editors were not at all surprised to hear that the officers thought their coverage was

biased and negative. In fact they generally believed that the officers held a standard distrust of the media, and consequently they believed that members of the department often obstructed their efforts to gather the news.

A survey was instituted to determine how widespread these beliefs were within the SFPD and the members of the local Press. The survey revealed that over 90% of the respondents felt mutual distrust inhibited the fair and unbiased media coverage of the SFPD. Further, the respondents cited tension between the Press and the Police as a main factor in strained Community Relations and poor public image for the SFPD. The survey also queried respondents as to what could be done to counteract these negative conditions. The answers indicated that the root of the problems appeared to be primarily a lack of trust, coupled with a misunderstanding of the needs and conditions of both the SFPD members and the press, and the misperceptions engendered by that misunderstanding.

This survey was particularly disturbing because several high profile police misconduct cases during the past several years had brought press-police relations to an all-time low. San Francisco is a fairly unique city, in that there is a very active, alternative press, which has been characterized as being radical, very liberal, and anti-police. Relations have generally been strained between the alternative press community and the SFPD and this has carried over to the traditional press. For the past several years the Department has had a hard time generating or receiving positive coverage for the many community-oriented policing programs they have successfully carried out.

#### *Media Bias and the Influence on Public Perception*

The powers of the press have been well documented for their feared ability to influence, and oftentimes subvert, public opinion. In an attempt to illustrate the importance of the press, Thomas Jefferson defined his view of the importance of the press as follows: “Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter.” Certainly he realized the power and influence of the press far outweigh the government and the politicians they report on. It is the conveyance of the information, and the perception of the public that ultimately becomes the realities. Unfortunately, while the press may have more power than the leaders they report on, they exert this power without the checks and balances that we enjoy in our democratic form of government. And that is most often the crux of the problem.

Law Enforcement agencies have little recourse when negative press coverage disparages them. Coverage of incidents and dissemination of information are primarily media functions, however there is no system of checks and balances to ensure that the information is

accurate. Nor is there any overview to ensure that the information is in the best interest of the public, and aids in maximizing public safety in the community.

These are the issues agencies must consider when evaluating their stance, and response to the media. Public information dissemination, community relations, public affairs issues, Agency image and perception, and community crime prevention and awareness are all critically impacted by how an agency handles its press relations. In this era of community policing and agency accountability these issues are crucial for Law Enforcement Agencies, and are too often left either to chance, or to be dealt with by one or two overworked Public Information Officers. These officers have rarely had the training and experienced of a seasoned Police Beat veteran reporter, nor the funding or resources that profitable news organizations have to support them. Thus, police agencies find it difficult to counteract, monitor, and respond to the almost constant barrage of information being released about their organizations.

Police Agencies must better promote and structure their Media and Public Relations functions if they wish to control their image, and ultimately the credibility of the dissemination of information about their organizations. Napoleon Bonaparte said it well, when commenting on the powers inherent in the press: “Four hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets.” It will take real commitment of resources and policy by Police Management to provide a proactive, aggressive media relations approach, rather than the reactive defensive posture most organizations assume when involved in controversial issues. At this point it is too late to get out the message from a balanced viewpoint. The perceived desire for sensational stories often spins police coverage into critical adversarial reporting which engenders angry community reaction. The time to set the stage for the type of non-biased educated reporting that will serve both the public and the organization well is well before the needs arise.

As noted, good working relationships between police and the media have not always been easy to achieve given the various pressures each side faces. It is only through training and educating the media, the officers, and the public, as to the role and realities of policing, that a better understanding and rapport between the Media, the Police, and ultimately the public, will result.

If police administrators and personnel deal with the media in a fair and professional manner, they are more likely to be able to communicate their message effectively to the public.<sup>3</sup>

Training needs to be provided for talking with the media, including preparedness, enthusiasm, turning negatives into positives, and not being afraid to honestly admit a lack of

knowledge about some details. Freedom of information requirements and use of public service time are critical need to know issues for all members who deal with the press.

Perhaps the most important fact to remember is that most likely the microphone will first be trained on the officer responding to the incident, not the trained PIO, who generally arrives well after the original incident. Honesty is a key element in working with the new media. Adequate preparation by police officers for the interviews is essential. They should know in advance the purpose of the interview, have their facts straight, know some background information, maintain a conversational style, and say only as much as they had planned to say. Media interviews can greatly benefit the individual officers and the departments they represent if proper guidelines are established, rehearsed, and followed.<sup>4</sup>

Some police departments have hired trained media liaisons and have appointed spokespersons in order to project a more professional image. Even so, police departments are still subject to the editorial and political agendas of others.<sup>5</sup> There are many books and articles on how to write a press release, and how to conduct oneself during a hostile news interview. However, a need exists to provide practical concepts for law enforcement executives on how to establish, improve, and maintain their public image. Most books do not provide information on how to impact cultures and sub-cultures in law enforcement organizations, which may not trust or welcome interaction with the media. Nor do they address techniques of marketing and public relations, so often thought to be only a tool for the corporate world, not for public government agencies. This is slowly changing. One may only look to any larger urban police agency today, and assess very quickly how press and media coverage affects their day to day operations.

Negative press articles are damaging to the organization, members of the profession, and ultimately the public. Image and public perception are crucial factors in determining the amount of confidence and support a Law Enforcement agency enjoys within its community. Confidence and support will determine to a large extent the amount of funding, ballot and initiative support, and trust and credibility the agency garners. Misinformation, lack of coverage, or slanted, biased coverage, all serves to confuse the issues, create public hysteria, and public mistrust regarding the very important issues of public safety. Negative reporting also adversely affects the members of the department. Morale suffers when press coverage of police actions and events are consistently negative. The constant second-guessing of life-threatening incidents in which the officers often have microseconds to respond greatly affect the officers, their families, and the public's perception of these events.

A comparison of crime coverage in the United States and in other countries (Australia, Canada, France, India, Israel, Kenya, Nigeria, Norway, South Africa, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Uganda, and the United Kingdom) contrasts the newspaper crime coverage

in these countries. <sup>6</sup> Four ways are reported in which newspaper crime coverage is basically the same in most countries: (1) there is an overrepresentation of violent or sensational crimes and an underreporting of property crimes; (2) the violent crime statistics reported in the newspapers do not match official crime statistics; (3) newspapers do not accurately depict police and court effectiveness in controlling crime and punishing offenders; and (4) the author maintains that most newspaper coverage fails to educate readers on causes of crime and avoidance of personal victimization.

This leads to a doubly difficult problem for law enforcement agencies. Not only does the media provide a biased view, but it also capitalizes and adds to the public's lack of trust in public entities. This diminishes the public's trust and confidence in their police, and causes elected officials to view funding of needed law enforcement requests, hesitantly, if at all. Reduction of this bias will assist elected officials to provide funding in a more rational environment. Law Enforcement executives, and professional and labor organizations have all been working on these issues of the image of the profession and what the ramifications are. They are increasingly aware of the need for coordinated efforts to promote better understanding and public appreciation for the profession.

#### *The California Law Enforcement Image Coalition*

In 1998 the California Commission on Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST,) sponsored the California Law Enforcement Image Coalition Survey.<sup>7</sup> This survey was mailed to Police Chiefs and Sheriffs in an effort to identify causes and solutions to law enforcement image problems. Responses were received from 199 individuals representing 193 agencies. The survey revealed that over 94% of Law Enforcement executives who responded believed that California Law Enforcement has image problems in certain specific areas. They listed four out of fourteen job tasks as being "fairly likely" to be associated with image problems.

The four tasks were:

1. Parking/Traffic Citations
2. Physical Arrests/Use of Force
3. Vehicle Stops, and
4. Pursuits

Respondents also indicated that four potential causes outweigh all others. It is interesting to note that all four causal factors are external to the organization; and that three of them are media related:

1. Public Misunderstanding of the Role of Law Enforcement
2. Misleading TV Programs and Movies
3. Biased News Media Portrayal
4. Insufficient Positive News Media Portrayal

(California Law Enforcement Image Coalition Survey, 1998)

#### *Media Relations*

This leads to the larger question of how the profession can re-educate the public, and spin a more positive view than that portrayed by the media. A more finely focused analysis of the data reveals that media-related external causes contributed to a belief that there is insufficient or inadequate officer training and inadequate interpersonal skill training. The respondents made mention of the perception that this might also be caused by the media's portrayal of law enforcers.

Key steps toward resolving these problems and establishing long term benefits through Public Relations for law enforcement agencies is to assess, identify and analyze the facts. The next steps involve developing a strategy, implementing a response, and evaluating its progress. It is important to understand just how media exposure shapes public perception, to be able to use the understanding as a tool for the police profession.

S. Chernak examined the sources cited in routine crime stories linked to a highly visible policy issues and in stories covering celebrated cases relevant to policy issues.<sup>8</sup> By examining the sources used by news organizations, then comparing them with other crime stories, the analysis illustrates how official sources use their access to the news production process to frame social problems and to increase the likelihood that public opinion will coincide with their own beliefs. The implications of this research and analysis are that we must understand the role of the media as an institution of social control. Only then will we as a profession be able to recruit it for our uses and needs.

#### *Futures Forecasting of the Relevant Trends and Events Affecting the Topic*

Since this article explores a model of strategic marketing and how it will affect the San Francisco Police Department over the next five years it is necessary to determine probable futures for the issue. This is a complex question since a large part of this study involves examining and predicting what the near term futures related to this topic may be. There are various methods of analysis to aid in identifying probable futures surrounding the issues being studied. Several different methodologies are used to analyze, evaluate, and develop data regarding the futures associated with the central issue. The examination and analysis of the how possible future scenarios may impact the issue aided in the formulation of a strategic implementation plan based on long-term vision and foresight. As Richard Slaughter discusses, foresight is a crucial part of long-term planning:

Analysis, an aspect of the power of reason, provides a number of tools that are important in foresight work. In general, these tend to draw material from past and present to elaborate a decision context that also embraces aspects of possible futures. Thus it is possible to create a number of scenarios, or alternative futures, in order to reveal choices in the present.<sup>9</sup>

Both the Literature Review and the expert interviews and surveys were conducted from a futures perspective, designed to elicit facts and data to identify the probable future

landscape in which the Marketing Strategy Plan would be operating. From these, a scenario was constructed based on the possible futures, trends and events that were identified. This scenario helped guide the choices and strategies used to formulate the Marketing Strategies Plan.

Although one can't know the future there are predictors and controls which you can identify and exert to shape both the future and your planning for it... The future involves certainty, chance and choice. The certainty comes from the hard facts and figures such as demographics, trends, and long-term plans. The chance comes from the likelihoods that events will or won't happen,, and the choice is your chance to shape and alter the future based on the strategies you choose.<sup>10</sup>

The predictors and controls act as guideposts, pointing towards and shaping the future. Strategic Planning utilizes these predictors and controls to optimize the choices and methods used. In order to thoroughly analyze what the near-term future issues that would impact the central issue a third methodology, the Nominal Group Technique Process, was used for Futures Forecasting.

#### *Utilization of the Nominal Group Technique*

The Nominal Group Technique process identifies the most important and probable future events and trends, quantifying and categorizing their impact on an issue. This process can be used for managing participation in such processes as planning, performance improvement, and measurement. This method is very effective at gaining consensus with all types and levels of participants in a wide range of settings. As discussed above, it is easier to favorably influence those events and trends that are anticipated. Action can be taken to bring about a positive outcome, or prevent something negative from occurring.

A group panel was chosen for the initial brainstorming and formulation of the Strategic Marketing Plan developed for the SFPD. The NGT panel consisted of eight members from this committee, each with diverse backgrounds and perspectives, each with some expertise in the field of marketing or press/public relations within the law enforcement realm. There were both sworn and non-sworn members on the Panel.

The members included: a Police Commissioner, a member of the News Media, an Executive Board Member of the Police Officers Association, the Director of a Community Relations Board, the current and former Public Information Officers for the SFPD, the Captain of the Training Division, and several other members involved in training and public relations within the organization.

Once the group was convened they were directed to provide the trends and events they thought would most impact the San Francisco Police Department over the next five years in terms of media and public relations. The panel was provided with the following definitions:

- 1) Trends: A trend is the occurrence of similar events that take place over a period of time and are indicators of possible change. They can be measured quantitatively over time.
- 2) Events: An event is a single occurrence that can be traced to a given point. (Several events occurring over time may create a trend.)
- 3) Cross-Impact Analysis of Trends and Events: an exercise designed to identify which events would have the greatest impact and effect on trends, and whether that impact would have a negative or positive effect.

The panel members were then led through the standard NGT process in order to identify the trends and events that will most likely affect the San Francisco Police Department with regard to their public and press relations over the next five years:

*Trends Identified:*

- Trend 1 Training in Police / Media Relations for both the members of the SFPD and the Media, training is currently for management ranks only, and has been slow to be implemented. The panel felt that training was crucial for all members of the department at all ranks, as well as for the media to educate them on the SFPD policies, procedures and programs. The panel felt the need for better preparation to respond to the ever-increasing presence of the media was very important.
- Trend 2 Increased Public Access to Police News and Information through developing technologies, these include the increasingly affordable and widely available sources such as the Internet, local cable, cable access channels, 24-hour news, etc. Need exists to monitor, respond, and provide accurate information for these different venues.
- Trend 3 Increasing Politicization of the San Francisco Police Department, predicated by the upcoming change back to District elections for the Board of Supervisors, and the emphasis on quality of life and other social issues calling for increased police response by the community. The panel saw this as trend prompting a need for more sophisticated response and training for members to respond to these issues.
- Trend 4 Increased Community Expectations for SFPD Responsiveness and Accountability, with the adoption of the Community Policing philosophy and the emphasis on public responsiveness new levels of accountability and responsiveness to the public are expected. The panel felt the Department must organize outlets for public outreach and dissemination of information
- Trend 5 Emphasis on Customer Service through training and delivery. Similar to trend 4, this relates to training, emphasis on customer satisfaction, through surveys or other measurements to gauge effectiveness.

- Trend 6 Department use of Media for Recruitment, an alarming trend towards decreasing interest and applicants for the field of law enforcement is negatively impacting the recruitment efforts by the SFPD. Marketing the Department and the profession was felt to be the number one antidote to this alarming trend.
- Trend 7 "Checkbook Journalism" (private freelancers) increases media coverage of police incidents. Not only are private freelancers showing up at police incidents, but the proliferation of cheap and handy camcorders assures that many police incidents are now video taped and available to the media. The issues surrounding edited and unreliable recordings, as well as unethical conduct on the part of this new breed of non-professional news gatherers are a concern. The panel felt there must be monitoring of all news sources to insure that erroneous information is not made available to the public.
- Trend 8 SFPD commitment to marketing and public affairs increases. While the Public Affairs Office has done an outstanding job of establishing rapport, and publicizing SFPD events, the office has only two staff, and is unable to respond to the myriad of trends and events deemed to be of great importance to the organization as outlined above.

Based on an analysis of the Trend Table, four trends were identified as most likely to impact the implementation of the strategic plan; Trend 1 (Training in Police/Media relations,) Trend 4 (Increased Community Expectations for SFPD Responsiveness and Accountability,) Trend 5 (Emphasis on Customer Service through training and delivery,) and Trend 8 (SFPD commitment to marketing and public affairs increases.) These four trends all point to the increasing importance of direct and positive interactive communication with the public that the SFPD serves. The level of training and preparation must be increased to transition the organization towards these probable futures.

The panel also identified the events most likely to occur within the near-term future and impact the organization with regard to the issue.

*Events Identified:*

- Event 1 Catastrophic Earthquake hits the city of San Francisco; the scrutiny for the department was very great after the last earthquake, and the public was not aware of the efforts and limitations of the police in such a city emergency. Public education and outreach would best be conducted through the media, although this event could not be chosen, strategies to mitigate the damage could be pre-planned for rapid implementation.
- Event 2 SFPD puts cameras and audiotape on the officers and police vehicles to record all actions; the impact on public perception and the vulnerability and liability issues

were seen as very high by the panel. These considerations should be dealt with prior to implementing this event.

- Event 3 Department Sponsored Community Policing Program results in a tragic incident. this was seen as a very damaging event which was also very possible, i.e. a fatal accident aboard the SFPD Youth fishing program vessel. The PR and outreach to mitigate the negative impact of such events is very important.
- Event 4 Traffic Gridlock causes public outcry for police action. Due to the increasing traffic congestion there are more issues with traffic and pedestrian safety. The large amount of on-going traffic enforcement, and traffic safety plans should be publicized, to decrease public perception of a lack of effort by the SFPD. The media should also be used to provide a forum for traffic and pedestrian safety presentations.
- Event 5 SFPD officer filmed on the news beating a suspect. This would be very similar to the "Rodney King" event in Los Angeles, which marginalized and greatly damaged the LAPD. With the increasing popularity of home video enthusiasts, and the very inexpensive recording equipment available it is likely that there will be many police incidents filmed by citizens. Whether edited to appear controversial, whether misunderstood, or whether there is truly misconduct, the incident must be addressed in a public forum to minimize damage and educate both the public and the press re: proper police procedures and limitations.
- Event 6 "Suicide-by-cop" incident causes increased public scrutiny of handling mentally imbalanced individuals. Increased public scrutiny should be met with increased public education and awareness of standing policies and procedures to deal with these situations, and the choices to be made.
- Event 7 Assassination of a popular public official. This could cause blame of the officers protecting the official, and cast a negative light on the entire organization.
- Event 8 SFPD produces own TV series on local Cable Channel. This could provide a forum for promoting the positive images of the SFPD and its' members, as well as provide a forum for the items listed in the prior events.

A cross impact analysis of the trends and events indicated that the following events would have the greatest impact on the trends listed:

Event 1 A catastrophic earthquake hits the city of San Francisco.

Event 2 The SFPD equips it's officers and vehicles with video and audio recording capabilities.

Event 3 A Department-Sponsored Community Policing program results in a tragedy.

Event 8 Commitment by the Chief to aggressively implementing the Marketing Strategies Plan.

It also showed the following trends would have the greatest impact on the events surrounding the issue:

Trend 5 SFPD puts emphasis on customer service through training and delivery.

Trend 7 "checkbook journalism" freelance journalists saturate media with police event coverage.

Trend 8 SFPD develops and commits to Marketing Strategies Plan.

Trend 3 Increasing politicization and political pressure surrounding police issues.

This matrix indicates that these are the trends the Department should be most interested in evaluating and influencing within the coming five years with regards to furthering and enhancing their media relations and public image. This part of the evaluation process helped set the background for the Strategic Planning Process to further evaluate the internal and external forces at work on the organization as outlined in the following chapter.

#### *Strategic Planning Defined*

Strategic Planning is a process used to evaluate and model positive change that will lead to successful results for an organization. There are several different methods used to evaluate the internal and external forces that impact an organization, in order to assess different alternatives and their likely effects in stimulating optimal change. An analysis of these different factors can help managers and change agents to make decisions about how to guide the organization toward the strategies that will be beneficial to it.

These analyses examine different dynamics both within and external to the organization which will influence the desired changes, and assess different alternatives and their likely effects in stimulating optimal change. This should provide a broad picture of the likely sources of support and success for the program, as well as the obstacles that must be overcome to achieve the optimal conditions for implementing the marketing plan as outlined.

#### *The Strategic Marketing Plan:*

The Strategic Marketing Plan seeks to promote a positive and proactive vehicle for the San Francisco Police Department with which to improve the public's perception of the role of the members of the organization, as well as to promote public safety, and increase direct communication with the community. The plan was designed to create a more positive public perception of the SFPD with improved forums for communication with the public. This was designed to lead to more positive press coverage through better understanding and relationships with the media.

## **The San Francisco Police Department Strategic Marketing Plan**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

To develop and improve communication with the public and the media by capitalizing on technologies available in order to detect and prevent crime and better serve the public; to reach out for community support and closer relationships with the community and the media; and to increase morale and pride within the Department by promoting the values and worth of the SFPD and its' members.

### **IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVES (1-2 YEARS)**

1. "Community Policing in San Francisco" Brochure, a glossy, high quality document that succinctly defines and highlights the SFPD community policing philosophy and programs, will be distributed through several channels; by officers on the beat, by commanders at community meetings, and through mailings to residents. Several possible distribution channels include inserts in the local and independent newspapers, as well as the departments' own publications.
2. Formalized Program Highlighting Community Policing in the Districts, special programs will rotate through the district stations will be Supported with mini-grants awarded through the Mayor's office, featuring community-policing programs in the district commands, highlighting partnerships and programs, and major community cultural event.
3. Department-Supported Interactive Website. The current website ([www.ci.sf.ca.us/police](http://www.ci.sf.ca.us/police)) has a great deal of information that is helpful to the community. Upgrades are needed to include websites at each District Station, which will show up-to-date information and provide community input and feedback to the stations. A website infrastructure developed at the Department level shall be established to handle feedback and e-mail from the community and direct the flow of information. Additional technical support (e.g., webmasters) will be needed to maintain and sustain these efforts.
4. Customer satisfaction surveys conducted on a routine basis throughout the City, a simple questionnaire (10-15 questions) will be distributed through the District Stations, on the website, and through other means. Results will be published in the newsletter, on the web, and in the Chief's newsletter. These surveys will provide needed feedback to the members, their supervisors, the organization, and the community.
5. Outreach through Public Events, will assure that the SFPD is represented at the numerous civic events that occur in the City, such as street fairs, parades, etc.

### **LONG-TERM OBJECTIVES**

1. All ranks trained in media relations, public speaking, and public courtesy. Training will stress that each member represents the department and has an impact on public opinion and why public opinion and community support is so important to achieving mutual

goals. Public speaking and oral presentation skills will be stressed in hiring and promotional exams.

2. Develop a resource catalogue that documents Community Policing programs, a database of contacts will be prepared stressing strategies and successes of the different community policing programs.
3. Annual SFPD Police festival, the Festival, with safety and training demos, recruitment booths, kids demos of horses, robot, talking car, etc. and police memorabilia and historical displays will emphasize the Departments identity, culture, humanity and concerns.
4. Enhance the Public Affairs Office, it will be necessary to ensure the staffing and resources for increased public relations functions and Community Relations outreach.

*Summary:*

It is vital for Policing Agencies to develop positive and proactive methods to improve the public's understanding of the role of the members of the organization, as well as to promote public safety. In order to accomplish this, a marketing plan has been formulated to increase direct communication with a very diverse and varied public citizen constituency, the media, and community advocacy groups working in tandem with the Department. The plan addresses capitalizing on developing technologies to promote communication, and improving efforts to detect and prevent crime through awareness and presentations.

The listed strategies were crafted with the purpose of creating a more positive public perception of the organization and it's members. Another goal was to provide forums for interactive communication with the public and the media. A study of this issue reveals that this will lead to more positive press coverage through better understanding and relationships with the media. This positive press coverage would also help to improve and develop strengthened community support and popularity, and in turn create a more positive outlook for requests for budgeting, funding, grants, and other revenue and resource streams.

Internally, organizations with an improved public image will also benefit from an increase in morale and pride within the organization. This will benefit both the internal and external stakeholder groups and provide a better understanding and acceptance of the police as part of the community. Another important result is that there will be a clearer organizational identity and clarity of the mission, purpose both internally and externally.

*Recommendations for Action:*

Police Executives must recognize and embrace the advantages of marketing and improving their organizations' public images and perceptions to avoid dire consequences for not planning ahead. The identified trends that could impact organizations directly include increasingly sensationalist coverage of police events provided by "checkbox journalists,"

freelancers whose only consideration is selling their home video for the highest price, and an increased politicization and expectation by the public for responsiveness and accountability.

These trends all indicate a great need for improved and direct interactive communication with the public. This can only come about with a commitment to improving the quality of communication with the public and the media. This is no small task, and requires a commitment of both funding and resources, with training and policy directives to support the mission of the marketing efforts. This must be a top-down supported and directed effort to accomplish these goals, with the Leader as the number one Change Agent for this model of transformation.

### *Training Needs*

Training was identified as the number one internal factor that would most promote a positive image portrayed from within the organization. Specific skill sets that were identified as necessary to be included during in-service training for experienced officers, managers, and executives include:

1. Conflict mediation/verbal judo
2. Creating a positive image
3. Cultural differences
4. Customer service
5. Dealing with victims
6. Command level training on image improvement
7. How to better educate the public on the roles and responsibilities of peace officers
8. Image awareness
9. Interacting with the media to accent positive aspects of law enforcement
10. Language
11. People skills
12. Quality control programs
13. Tolerance

In addition to training within the organization, external training and education for the press, the various media, the community and the advocacy committee are important parts of the strategic marketing plan. The external negatives must be overcome through direct communication and relationship building for there to be any change or enhancement of the organizations' public image. Forums need to be established to promote the recommended strategies in order to facilitate this change.

Policing agencies must also face the future challenges in contemporary society due to the ever-increasing multicultural composition of their communities.<sup>11</sup> These factors lead to

issues of language, and the challenges to communicating through the different cultural filters. It is a uniquely modern occurrence with potentially serious consequences that many misunderstandings are often due to the lack of understanding and rapport within the diverse cultures of modern communities. This will be an important element of police planning for the future.

Another challenging issue for Policing organizations is to keep pace with the rapidly developing technologies. This will require technological expertise including business professionals brought in to law enforcement organizations to identify and efficiently address their technology problems. The increased pace of development and the concurrent obsolescence mandate careful consideration and pre-planning in order to position themselves for the lightning pace of technological advances.

### *Conclusion:*

As we approach the new Millennium, major changes will force law enforcement organizations to develop new methods and strategies to deal with the trends and factors identified through the analysis. Rapidly developing technology, instantaneous 24-hour news coverage, and the increasing demand for community responsiveness by the community are just some of the changes facing Law Enforcement in the near-term future. As agencies respond to these changes, they must develop new resources and methods of responding to the public, the media, and their own organizational culture.

The SFPD Marketing Strategies Plan provides a model that will afford it and other Policing Organizations the opportunities to highlight and promote a positive public image, and establish interactive communications directly with the citizens they serve. The overall benefits will be realized in a number of important ways. A direct and credible means of interactive communication with the public will improve the organizations' public image, the community will have enhanced input to and may expect higher levels of responsiveness from their police. The media will have established venues for information gathering, and closer relationships with the police.

There is no doubt that an enhanced public image and open communications with the community will serve the department well.

Police work, by its very nature, is subject to intense scrutiny by the public and the press...efforts will help demonstrate that California law enforcement officers are responsible professionals who care about the well-being and safety of our citizens and our communities.<sup>12</sup>

As we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Law Enforcement organizations throughout the state are

dealing with many of these same issues. The Marketing Strategies outlined in this thesis would have direct applications for many of these organizations as well. These efforts will demonstrate that California law enforcement officers are responsible professionals who care about the well being and safety of our citizens and our communities. Perhaps most importantly, these strategies will help to enhance the image of Law Enforcement professionals, while providing a greater link to the communities they serve.

## *Endnotes*

- <sup>1</sup> SFPD Public Affairs Survey, Media/Press STEP Seminar, 1998, page 4.
- <sup>2</sup> Batts, A.W. "Badge and the Pen: A Love-Hate Relationship -- Police Media Relations by the Year 2005" California Commission on Peace Officers Standards and Training, page 4.
- <sup>3</sup> Warner, J. W., "Police and the News Media." IACP Training Keys,#400, International Association of Chiefs of Police, 1990, page 6.
- <sup>4</sup> Garner, G., "Working with the Media: Winning at the Interview Game." Law and Order, Volume 37, Issue 5, May 1989, page 7.
- <sup>5</sup> Scoville, D, "Any-City Confidential: Here's the story on Cop Media Relations." Police, Volume 22, May 1998, page 7.
- <sup>6</sup> Marsh, H L, "Comparative Analyses of Crime Coverage in Newspapers in the United States and Other Countries from 1960-1989: A Review of the Literature, Journal of Criminal Justice, Volume 19 Issue 1, 1991, page 7.
- <sup>7</sup> California Law Enforcement Image Coalition Survey, California Commission on Peace Officers Standards and Training, April 98, page 8.
- <sup>8</sup> Chernak, S., "image Control: How Police Affect the Presentation of Crime News, American Journal of Police, Volume 14, Issue 2, 1995, page 9.
- <sup>9</sup> Slaughter, Richard A. The Foresight Principle: Cultural Recovery in the 21st Century. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1995, page 10.
- <sup>10</sup> Estensen, Tom "A Little Bit About Futures Research": POST Command College Class 28, Session 5 Lecture Notes, June 1999, page 10.
- <sup>11</sup> DeGeneste, HI and Sullivan, JP, "Policing a Multicultural Community" Police Executive Research Forum, 1997, page 20.
- <sup>12</sup> California Law Enforcement Image Coalition Survey, California Commission on Peace Officers Standards and Training, April 98, page 21.

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