

WHAT IMPACT WILL GENERATIONAL CHANGES HAVE ON RECRUITMENT FOR A
SMALL SUBURBAN POLICE DEPARTMENT BY THE YEAR 2010?

A project presented to
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Peace Officer Standards and Training

by

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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 are not necessarily those of the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training. (POST)

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CHAPTER 1

GENERATIONS

A Historical Perspective

“Children today are tyrants. They contradict their parents, gobble their food and tyrannize their teachers.” This quote speaks of the next generation. Are we at a unique time in history, preparing for generational changes and ways to deal with them? The quote is from Socrates (470-399 BC) which expresses what seems to be a perpetual view of the next generation by the previous generation.

So the question remains, are we at a unique time in history? Our society has produced more information in the past thirty years than the previous 5,000. According to all of the leading market research firms, the availability of information will double in less than five years. This is not only an expression of technological advances, but is symptomatic of societal changes on an exponential scale. The obvious answer to the question, then, is yes.

Law enforcement must prepare to address these changes in many areas: serving a changing customer base, answering to a government with changing values and perspectives and addressing new types of crimes and criminals. The list may go on and on. But perhaps the most critical issue, at the very heart of law enforcement's ability to reasonably deal with the collective future, is the ability to recruit police officers who can be effective in that future. Can law enforcement successfully recruit a new generation of police officers by utilizing present methods and offering the same work environment that exists in law enforcement today? The question that law enforcement must ask and answer is "What impact will generational changes have on recruitment?"

As the Socrates quote exemplifies, each generation is different. And these generational differences are resulting in a dramatic impact on business. Generationally based lifestyles and social values are as important as, or more important than, factors such as income, education and gender in decision-making.¹ It is important for employers to understand the generational differences that shape the potential members of their workforces.² Many misunderstandings between managers and their front-line employees are actually caused by generational differences.³ Identifying and understanding generational personalities can be tremendously valuable, especially to managers. This knowledge can help us to empathize, communicate, and motivate.⁴

Generational Differences

It is important to understand that generational differences are not the result of willful and deliberate defiance against the previous generation. This perspective of generational differences is the cause of considerable misunderstanding resulting in mistrust, ineffective communication, lack of respect, and a flawed perception of others. Generational differences are actually different sets of values, beliefs, perspectives and norms as a consequence of the times in which one grows up. The view we hold of the world – the way it is and the way it should be – is formed, for the most part, during our first 10 to 15 years of life.⁵ As people grow older, they adjust their behaviors. They build their skills. They expand their knowledge. But they generally do not radically change the way they view the world.⁶ If we have an understanding of the way someone views the world, we can have great insight into his or her wants, needs and motivations.

This understanding is critical in effectively assessing potential recruits. Without this understanding, misperceptions will undoubtedly result in flawed selections.

Any discussion about generations must be preceded by qualifications concerning labeling. Labels can be very dangerous. They can lead to stereotyping. They can be self-fulfilling.⁷ However, every generation demonstrates some sort of collective attitudes and behaviors. As long as it is understood that those collective attitudes and behaviors will hold true for individuals to varying degrees, generational designations can provide a useful framework for discussion.⁸

With that said, demographers generally define generations in eighteen-year increments. Although there is some disagreement about precisely when each occurred, most demographers place the generations approximately as shown in the following table.

Table 1. Generational Definitions⁹

Generation	Aliases	Birth years	Births	Age in 2010	Generational Markers
Baby Boom		1946-1964	76 Million	46-64	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil rights • War on poverty • Vietnam • Race to space • Assassinations • Impeachment
Generation X	Baby Bust	1965-1983	66 Million	27-45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AIDS • Video games • Homelessness • Downsizing • Berlin Wall • The Web
Generation Y	Baby Boomlet, Echo Boom, Generation WWW, Nexters; Internet, Net and Millennial Generation	1984-2002	4 Million per year	8-26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty • Technology • Violence • The environment

When discussing generational differences, it is important to remember that there is overlap between the attributes of each generation. For example, a Generation X'er born in the early 1980's may share more characteristics of a Generation Y'er born in the 1980's than of their own generation. This concept is important for a discussion of Generation Y in relation to the labor market, since very little of that generation has yet to enter the work force. Extrapolations must be made utilizing the attributes of the younger Generation X'ers in the workforce and the generational markers and societal conditions of Generation Y.

The Changing Labor Market

Generation X currently represents approximately one-third of the American workforce. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, by 2005 Generation Y and Baby Boomers will each make up about 26.6 percent of the population, while Generation X will make up only 16.2 percent.¹⁰ From 2000 to 2010, there will be 7.4 percent fewer prime-age workers available to fill the jobs of retiring Baby Boomers. America's primary labor supply for the next decade represents the smallest population group in U.S. history and the shallowest pool of entry-level workers in modern times.¹¹

Traditionally, most corporate cultures have sought to foster conformity among employees. Management's goal was to treat everyone the same, ignoring differences. However, with a shrinking labor pool on the horizon, more employers are seeking to position themselves in the labor market as the preferred employer. Business is reaching out to meet the needs of the next generation of workers. Young skilled workers discover they are in an employee's market and have found themselves in a position to interview their prospective employers instead of the other way around.¹²

Law enforcement is already feeling the effects of recruitment problems from the current pool of potential recruits. Applicants for the California Highway Patrol declined by 40 percent from 1995 to 1998. During 1999, the number of Los Angeles Police Department applicants fell 58 percent.¹³ There are many factors that affect the ability to recruit high quality police officers such as the state of the economy and current public perception of law enforcement. Regardless of the other factors, generational differences is an issue that perpetually affects recruitment.

The Next Generation of Workers

Societal conditions for Generation Y seem to be deteriorating.¹⁴ Child poverty rates are high, more than 25 percent of teens fail to graduate from high school. Violence among American youth is at a nearly epidemic status and it is expected to get much worse. In 1996, single parent families represented 31.5 percent of families with children under the age of 18. More than half of American children can expect to live in such households for an extended period before they turn 18.¹⁵

In spite of what previous generations might consider a troubled upbringing, teenagers are optimistic about their career prospects. According to a national survey of 15 to 17 year-olds by Drexel University Center for Employment Futures in Philadelphia, they are excited about working in teams and are confident that sexual harassment and economic inequality for women will be things of the past. When asked to name the single most important concept that will guide their working lives, 42 percent responded, "helping others in need", followed by 32 percent who said, "promoting racial understanding".¹⁶

Generation Y tends to have a number of interests so work may become just one component of well-rounded lives. They not only welcome constant change, but they are more comfortable with constant change than with stability. They are far more relaxed about diversity and they may be far more prepared to participate in teamwork than any other generation.¹⁷

Generation Y has a different set of values than their workaholic parents. A satisfying job for this group has meaning and purpose (beyond merely earning a paycheck) and if they fail to find it they'll simply look elsewhere. Unlike their parents,

the decisions to accept or keep a job is not based on which pays best because they are less motivated by material success.¹⁸ They will tell you with conviction they want a lifestyle with more balance, that they want to work to live – not live to work.”¹⁹ Younger Generation X’ers put it this way:

Most of us admire and respect the Baby Boomers’ work ethic. They paid a high price, though. Work became their lives and the key to their personal identities. We have seen the toll it took on other parts of their lives. We do not want to pay that price. We do not want our personal identities tied to our jobs.²⁰

Rapidly advancing technology is a way of life for Generation Y. Using technology to get jobs done quickly and effectively has become second nature. They are sophisticated in the use of technology and the Internet and are aware of the implications. As one younger Generation X’er said, “There are new rules for democracy in the age of the Web. We can only gain from expanding high-speed information networks for all citizens.”²¹ However, the future workforce may be computer literate but socially illiterate. Some observers see the desire for information quantity at the sacrifice of accuracy, and computer technology may cause basic skills to atrophy.²²

Education used to involve getting an education and then going to work. Now, information is amassing and changing so fast that education is a continuous process. “Weren’t we told if we went to school and worked hard, we’d get good jobs? But it didn’t happen that way”, said one younger Generation X’er.²³

Contrary to myths about Generation Y, they place a high value on character and ethics. Members of Generation Y say it best, “We are not dupes who can be overly influenced by the media. Behavior, character, responsibility and ethics count more than ever.”²⁴ Another member of Generation Y adds, “Truth cannot be manipulated without

insulting the public's intelligence and compromising one's own integrity."²⁵ "(Truth) is not a skill to acquire, but rather a constant guiding principle,"²⁶ is another example from a member of Generation Y articulating their ethics and values. These expressions of generational mores set standards unparalleled by any other generation in recent memory.

For the most part, Generation Y is self reliant, skeptical, want balance in life, are reluctant to commit, are not impressed by authority, but value leadership by competence, and embrace diversity.²⁷ Their preferred work environment is casual and friendly; neat, clean and orderly; technologically up-to-date; collegial; a place to learn; allows a high level of freedom; functional and efficient.²⁸ The most frequent requests from Generation Y are: appreciate us, be flexible, create a team, develop us, involve us, lighten up, and walk your talk.²⁹ One younger Generation X'er puts it, "... we want to be challenged by our work. We want to use our creativity. We want to change and grow."³⁰

There could be growing tension between generations. Funding of today's government entitlement programs such as Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security for Baby Boomers may become the burden of Generation Y. They could very well resent the yuppie Boomer for failure to plan, thus shifting the burden to Generation Y. This is compounded by ecological concerns, which will also be inherited by Generation Y.³¹

It is clear that each generation views the world from a different perspective, a perspective borne of their unique place in history. These different perspectives frequently result in a lack of understanding, poor communication, resentment and hostility between the generations. Personal motivations and values can differ

dramatically from one generation to the next. To successfully assimilate the next generation into the law enforcement work force, law enforcement must gain an understanding and appreciation of these generational differences. Only then can law enforcement begin to recruit the law enforcement officer who will be successful in the future.

CHAPTER 2

FUTURES STUDY

Nominal Group Technique

A Nominal Group Technique (NGT) was used to identify trends and events that could impact recruitment issues related to generational changes. The NGT process involved bringing together a diverse group of people to provide input from their perspective of what impact generational changes will have on recruitment for a small suburban police department within the next decade.

The trends and events identified through the NGT process were utilized to develop potential futures, or scenarios, providing insight into potential intervention strategies and a starting point for strategic planning. The participants were chosen based upon their unique perspective of how generational changes impact societal issues as a result of their occupation, experience and expertise. Persons participating were a high school assistant principal, a high school student, a college professor, a psychologist specializing in family and children issues, a personnel officer from a small suburban city, an advisor for a police explorer post from a small suburban law enforcement agency, and a supervisor of a teen center from a small suburban city.

Prior to the NGT, each participant was asked to reflect upon trends and events that they felt would have the most impact from their perspective. During the NGT process, these trends and events were contributed by each participant for the group to consider. The participants described their contributions and provided a rationale for its inclusion. Input from each participant and the discussion it generated stimulated additional items to consider from the other participants. From all of the trends and

events contributed by the participants, the group then narrowed them down to those they collectively felt would have the most impact on the issue.

The descriptions of the trends and events that follow are those provided by the NGT panel as a collective group. Statistical information was computed using the average.

Trends

A trend is defined as a series of events that have a past, present and future. A trend can have either a positive or negative impact on the issue.

To determine the direction and significance of each selected trend, a reference point of 100 was provided to the NGT panel as a benchmark for today. The panel then provided relative changes through percentages for five years ago, five years from now, and ten years from now for each trend. A concern value, from 0-10, was then furnished by the panel to signify the panel's concern of that trend's impact on the issue. The NGT panel results are displayed in the following table.

Table 2. Trends Identified by NGT

Trends	- 5 Years	Today	+ 5 Years	+ 10 Years	Concern (1-10)
Dependence on technology	55	100	180	350	3
Changing demographics – Increasing diversity	90	100	105	120	2
Education level of community/officers	80	100	130	150	4
Community collaboration	65	100	120	150	8
Political demands for safety	75	100	100	100	1
Need for better public relations	90	100	110	130	4
Need for a holistic officer	50	100	150	200	3
Demand for higher wages	100	100	125	150	3
Inclusion of youth in police decision making	50	100	110	130	3

Trend One, Dependence on technology

Society's dependence on technology doubled during the past five years and will continue to approximately double every five years. The implication is that the need for computer and technology-related skills and abilities of an officer hired today will double every five years. Law enforcement, in general, is not embracing technology to the degree required to keep up with the technological advances, which is why this is a concern. This will not only inhibit law enforcement's ability to work effectively and efficiently, but will also deter technologically advanced potential candidates of the next generation from pursuing a law enforcement career.

Trend Two, Changing demographics – increasing diversity

Demographics become more diverse by about 10 percent every five years. While this is not a significant societal change, many believe that law enforcement is already behind the curve on this issue. While the community at large has generally embraced diversity, the concern is that law enforcement is not keeping pace with the community. Law enforcement candidates from the next generation would seek an environment that embraces cultural diversity.

Trend Three, Education level of community/officers

The education level of the community at large, and of police officers hired, has been increasing. The education level will continue to increase at the rate of approximately 25 percent every five years. As the community becomes more educated the police officer recruitment pool, in turn, becomes more educated. However, many believe that the more educated population is less likely to desire a career in law enforcement, reducing the desirable candidate pool.

Trend Four, Community collaboration

Law enforcement has made significant strides in the last five years in forming community partnerships and involving the community in the law enforcement effort. Law enforcement will continue in these efforts. This was identified as the trend with the most impact on the issue, significantly more than any other trend. The community believes that this will continue to be a critical element of law enforcement. This will also

be attractive to next generation of police officers that will want to work in collaboration with the communities they serve.

Trend Five, Political demands for safety

There has been a prevalent focus on public safety during the past five years resulting in increasing resources for law enforcement through the political process. This trend, however, will no longer increase but will level off. This was identified as the trend with the least impact on the issue.

Trend Six, Need for better public relations

The level of community trust in law enforcement has decreased over the past five years and will, more than likely, continue to decrease. As community trust decreases, the attractiveness of law enforcement as a career decreases, especially to the next generation of potential officers that will demand honesty and trust. To counter the negative public perception, there will be an increasing need for better public relations by law enforcement.

Trend Seven, Need for a holistic officer

What the public wants and needs from law enforcement has changed dramatically over the past five years. Communities want a police officer to be a well-rounded person who can help them with their quality of life issues in a caring manner. The public demand for this type of approach from law enforcement will continue to

considerably increase. This will also be an attraction to the next generation of potential police officers that will gain job satisfaction from working with people to solve problems.

Trend Eight, Demand for higher wages

The demand for higher wages in law enforcement has seen little or no change over the past five years. However, this demand will increase about 25 percent during each five-year period over the next ten years. This will be due, in part, to the competition with business for quality recruits. While the NGT group focused on salary, research indicates that the next generation of police officers will not just look at salary, but the entire benefit package offered to them, such as job flexibility to accommodate their lifestyle. This could be an area in which the current generation may incorrectly assume that their values and motivations are the same as the next generation.

Trend Nine, Inclusion of youth in police decision making

This is reflective of the need for better communication between law enforcement and the youth in the communities they serve. There has been substantial improvement in this area over the past five years and will continue to improve, but at a slower rate. The next generation of police officers will be attracted to working with the entire community, including the youth.

Events

An event is defined as a single incident or event. An event can have either a positive or negative impact on the issue.

To identify the probability and potential impact of the events selected by the NGT panel, the panel identified the probability of each event's occurrence during the next five years and the next ten years in terms of percentages. Then they projected when the probability of occurrence was greater than zero percent. Finally, the panel decided what impact the event would have on the issue, from zero to ten. Additionally, a determination was made as to whether the impact on the issue was positive or negative. The results are displayed in the following table.

Table 3. Events Identified by NGT

Event	Year > 0	5 Years	10 Years	Impact (+/- 1-10)
Government significantly reduces grant funding to cities	2	50%	75%	-6
Revision of local testing procedures for police officers	3	75%	100%	+5.5
Revision of POST requirements for hiring and training	2	50%	75%	+5
Legalization of drugs	25	0%	0%	+4
World war	1	25%	50%	-4
Federally imposed hiring standards	3	25%	75%	-4
Economic depression	4	25%	100%	+4

Event One, Government significantly reduces grant funding to cities

Grant funding is seen as a resource for law enforcement to operate beyond its basic public safety duties. Grant funding reductions would inhibit or eliminate programs

in which law enforcement has been able to become more proactive and effective. This was seen as the event with the most potential to be detrimental to law enforcement's ability to address the impact generational changes will have on recruitment. The panel also felt there was a seventy-five percent chance of this event occurring within the next ten years.

Event Two, Revision of local testing procedures for police officers

Local testing procedures are not completely relevant to the selection of the type of police officer needed today. A revision of the testing procedures will increase and even change the recruit pool and enhance the ability to hire more quality officers. For example, California Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) requires that a background investigation be conducted on peace officer candidates to determine, among other things, if a candidate is of good moral character.³² Each law enforcement agency within California has the ability to define good moral character, and thus can exclude otherwise viable candidates based upon the morals of the current generation. A change in morals and values from one generation to the next generation is often seen by the older generation as lower morals and values. Therefore, a change in testing procedures that addresses generational changes will likely be seen as adjustments to lower standards. This was seen by the panel as the event with the most potential to have a positive impact on the issue. Law enforcement does have the ability to affect this change, but currently not the desire. This area will likely meet a lot of resistance from the current generation of police officers because of the perception that standards

are being lowered. The panel believes that this event definitely will occur within the next ten years.

Event Three, Revision of POST requirements for hiring and training

Police Officer Standards and Training (POST) requirements for hiring and training are not completely relevant to the selection of the type of police officer needed today. A revision of the requirements will increase and even change the recruit pool and enhance the ability to hire more quality officers. As described in Event Two, the requirement of POST that candidates be of good moral character leaves wide latitude by law enforcement agencies to impose current generational values and morals on the next generation. POST also requires that candidates take a reading and writing test.³³ Yet the tests provided by POST are on printed documents. The new generation of police officers will be reading from monitors and writing on keyboards and handheld electronic devices. Won't those skills be just as valuable as penmanship? The next generation will learn to perceive visually in a much different manner than the current generation. What was relevant for one generation may not be for the next. Changes in this area will likely be resisted by the current generation of police officers due to the perception that the change is an accommodation for lower values and morals. The panel felt that there is a seventy-five percent chance of this event occurring within the next ten years.

Event Four, Legalization of drugs

This event would completely revolutionize hiring standards. While the panel saw this event as having no chance of occurring within the next ten years, the event would have a positive impact on the issue due to the substantial increase of the recruit pool. This would also be a controversial issue with the current generation of police officers.

Event Five, World war

A world war would significantly decrease the available pool of total applicants, reducing the availability of quality applicants, especially from the next generation of potential police officers. The panel felt that the chance of this event occurring within the next ten years is fifty percent.

Event Six, Federally imposed hiring standards

This would reduce the ability of law enforcement to hire candidates on the basis of their skills and abilities. The event may also negatively impact hiring standards by requiring law enforcement agencies to adjust their standards that would not necessarily be compatible with the selection of a quality candidate. For example, to force law enforcement agencies to diversify their work force, the federal government could impose hiring quotas based upon race or ethnicity rather than ability. The next generation of potential police officers will have a variety of other attractive job opportunities available to them and would not have to subject themselves to a process involving preferential treatment and discrimination. The panel believed there was a seventy-five percent chance of this event occurring within the next ten years.

Event Seven, Economic depression

Law enforcement has historically been a fairly stable occupation through a variety of economic situations. The priority for funding of law enforcement has remained relatively high even in the worst of economic times. In the event of an economic depression and high unemployment, law enforcement jobs will be coveted and the ability to hire quality police officers will increase. The panel felt that this event would definitely occur within the next ten years.

Cross Impact Analysis

After the trends and events were identified and defined, an analysis was conducted to determine the impact each event would have on each trend. Parameters for impact range from negative five, the most negative impact, to positive 5, the most positive impact. A zero indicates no impact. The results are displayed in the following table.

Table 4. Cross Impact Analysis (Impact of each event on each trend)

CROSS IMPACT ANALYSIS										
EVENTS	TRENDS	Dependence on technology	Changing demographics – Increasing diversity	Education level of community/officers	Community collaboration	Political demands for safety	Need for better public relations	Need for a holistic officer	Demand for higher wages	Inclusion of youth in police decision making
Government significantly reduces grant funding to cities		-3	-2	-2	-3	-5	-3	-2	-4	-2
Revision of local testing procedures for police officers		+2	+3	+3	+5	+3	+4	+4	+3	+4
Revision of POST requirements for hiring and training		+3	+4	+4	+5	+3	+4	+4	+3	+4
Legalization of drugs		+3	+2	+3	+3	-4	+3	+4	+3	+4
World war		-2	+1	0	+2	-4	0	-1	+2	+3
Federally imposed hiring standards		-3	+2	-5	+2	-3	-5	-5	-2	+1
Economic depression		-4	-5	+5	+4	-5	+1	+4	-5	+3

The primary purpose for developing a cross impact analysis is to determine what combination of trends and events will have the most positive, and negative, effect on the impact generational changes will have on recruitment for a small suburban police department within the next decade. In other words, a determination can be made as to what combination of trends and events will more likely lead toward a desired outcome and what combinations will more likely lead toward a negative outcome. Once that is established, an analysis can be made of the ability to influence the trends and events toward the desired outcomes, and away from the negative outcomes.

For example, the first event listed in Table 4 concerning government reduction of grant funding to cities displays a negative impact with each trend. This would be an event to prevent if any influence could be applied toward that goal. The second event relating to the revision of local testing procedures for police officers displays a positive impact with each event. Therefore, this would be an event that would promote a positive impact on the issue, and influence should be asserted towards its occurrence.

A similar analysis can also be accomplished with trends. Community collaboration is a trend displaying mostly positive impacts. This would be a trend to encourage since it would facilitate a positive impact on the issue.

When examining a cross impact analysis, those analyzing the information must remember the origin of the data. In this case the data was developed through an NGT process. The group was comprised of individuals with diverse experiences and viewpoints, but not necessarily the most informed and enlightened on the subjects discussed. Also, group dynamics should be considered, such as a strong personality influencing others in the group, possibly skewing the results. While NGT results can provide fresh and unbiased viewpoints and valuable data, the results should also be tempered with analysis by those with knowledge and experience with the issues. The results of the cross impact analysis were used to develop the potential future scenarios on the following pages.

Futures Scenarios

After an examination of the trends, events and cross impact analysis, potential futures can be postulated utilizing the information and data obtained. These potential

futures, or futures scenarios, can paint a picture of possible impacts generational changes can have on recruitment for a small suburban police department by the year 2010. Scenarios can provide a vision of potential futures, a vision that can be shared with stakeholders who can influence the trends and events toward a desired outcome.

Optimistic Scenario

As a brand new training officer, Sally Miller-Jackson was preparing to train her first trainee. As she reviewed the virtual training module outline, she thought back to when she was first hired over ten years ago. “How times have changed,” she thought, “What a difference changing a few testing procedures and job qualifications can make.” She remembered when she was going through the testing process to be hired: the application, the oral interviews, the background investigation, the physical agility, the polygraph, and the psychological evaluation. Sally knew that even after all of that testing, her proposed employer still did not really know that much about her. She remembered thinking in her own mind how irrelevant, unimportant and unrevealing so much of it was. And even with all that testing and requirements in place, still she saw many officers hired who were unfit for the job.

Soon after the decriminalization of drugs five years ago, POST revised their hiring and training requirements. Prior use of drugs, with some exceptions, was no longer an issue. Psychological tests refocused on decision-making skills, creativity, adaptability, and verbal communication. Sally recalled how silently optimistic she was that better police officers would now be hired. She was silent because most of her

superiors were critical of the changes and prophesized that it would bring an end to law enforcement as they knew it.

But as time passed, cutting edge agencies realized the potential for positive change. Sally had seen it herself. As her own department experimented with the changes, she saw the quality of the officers significantly increase. While her supervisors still had a wait and see attitude, Sally could see that these officers were much more versatile than their older counterparts. The new officers communicated well with all members of the diverse community, especially the youth. They were exceptional with the ever-expanding new technology and could even teach the older officers. The new officers were a perfect fit for the holistic officer the community was now demanding.

Pessimistic Scenario

“Police Scandals Permeate Police Departments”, Statesville Journal (California), 22 September 2010. A new study revealed that most police departments in this state are unable, or unwilling, to hold their officers accountable for their actions. With the increasing number of police scandals statewide, the public is demanding that their police departments be held more accountable. The study suggests that the departments do not adequately train, supervise, or discipline their officers.

In response, many law enforcement agencies are pointing to the federally imposed hiring and promotion standards implemented ten years ago. Police officials claim that they do not have the ability to hire or promote the most qualified candidates, and that this has caused a breakdown in the integrity of the police departments. “We

are asked to be held accountable,” said Statesville Police Chief Robert Jones, “ and yet we can’t hire and promote who we feel are the most qualified.”

Many critics, like ACLU spokesman Halifax Fairchild, feel the police departments are trying to avoid accountability by shifting the blame. “I don’t buy their argument,” said Fairchild, “the police are just trying to avoid hiring minorities.”

Police agencies also report that they are having a difficult time with their recruitment efforts. Chief Jones noted a job opening that once attracted hundreds of applicants now attracts less than twenty, even after aggressive recruitment efforts.

Surprise Free Scenario

Agent Stiller had been assigned to the training and recruitment position in the Statesville Police Department for approximately one year. As he was looking through his old files on the imaging system to delete out the ones he no longer needed, he ran across the proposals he made when he was first assigned to the position.

Stiller had seen the difficulty his department had been experiencing with attracting and hiring quality police officer applicants. He developed many creative ideas to help solve the problem based on the changing nature of the workplace and the available workforce. Agent Stiller recalled how he approached the personnel director of Statesville and presented his ideas. “We need to have flexible and portable retirement plans”, he said, “plans that are compatible with business so that potential applicants in business can transfer them here, and vice-versa.”

His other proposals included the amendment of hiring standards and procedures to identify the type of holistic officer they now needed. Stiller also wanted to develop a recruitment presentation that displayed the high-tech tools available at the police

department, and also emphasized their efforts to let their officers work in an autonomous environment. The personnel director patiently listened to Agent Stiller and commented that he had very interesting ideas and he would get back to him.

That was a year ago. Agent Stiller was now looking over the twelve applications received for two police officer positions. One of the open positions was to replace Officer Jennifer Conrad, an officer who had been hired less than two years ago. She was leaving to work for a high-technology company that offered her flexible hours, flexible benefits, and state of the art technology. Stiller recalled that Officer Conrad was highly skilled in working with the youth in the community. It reminded him of the morning newspaper in which he read the letters to the editor from the youth in the community about how unfair and oppressive they feel Statesville Police Department is. "We need more officers like Jennifer," he thought to himself, "but instead we're losing them to private industry".

Conclusion

These scenarios interpret the data and analysis into more tangible terms. The trends and events are blended to provide a taste of possible futures. Cross impact analysis can now be more than just a chart, it actually provides a scenario on which to base a preferred future. Creating and expressing a shared vision is an essential element in implementing change.

CHAPTER 3

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND TRANSITION MANAGEMENT

Strategic Planning

Strategic Planning Basics

The first concept to understand in strategic organizations and strategic planning are the three C's of the future: certainty, choice and chance. There are some trends and events relating to the impact generational changes will have on police recruitment that will occur no matter what, some we can influence their outcome or prevent their occurrence, and there will always be chance or the unknown. Our responsibility as managers is to work to have the future occur in a predictable manner, handle non-planned events, and to continually consider if we are on the right path utilizing the most effective methods.³⁴ Evaluation of the trends, events and cross impact analysis developed through the NGT process can be employed here. The organization should determine which combination of trends and events it has the desire and ability to occur or prevent. The organization must also prepare to respond to undesired trends and events that are likely to occur.

Strategic planning is defined as a structured approach, sometimes rational and other times not, of bringing anticipations of the future to bear on today's decision making. This planning most often does not, and frequently cannot, include all the details and issues to be involved during the initial process. These will be defined as the planning progresses and through transition management. Strategic organizations use a road map and a compass. Organizations will not always have a detailed road map or a specific destination; sometimes the best they can do is to know what direction they want

to go.³⁵ The vision of the future as expressed through futures scenarios can be a valuable tool to remind organizations where they want to go, and also where they don't want to go, and to determine if they are on the right path.

When an organization sets out to develop a strategic plan to manage the impact generational changes will have on police recruitment, the notion of selectivity must first be addressed. This involves the organization considering the bottom line impact, feasibility/popularity, sense of futurity, and pervasiveness of the issue.³⁶

An organization must determine how to measure the progress and results of their plan. In evaluating the bottom line impact, both traditional and emerging measurements are utilized. Traditional measurements would involve quantitative, internal measurements such as the number of quality applicants, the education level of the applicants, and the number of applicants choosing law enforcement over competitive private sector jobs. Emerging measurements involve qualitative, external measurements such as how well the new officers work with the community, how well the new officers work with co-workers, and how well new officers perform the skills required for all aspects of the job.³⁷

The notion of attracting, recruiting and hiring high quality recruits who will bring with them all the skills necessary to be a successful police officer in the future would certainly be popular among the vast majority of law enforcement professionals. However, the likelihood is great that the current generation of police officers will resist the intervention methods suggested. Most notably would be the implementation of realigned requirements for the selection and hiring of police officers, a concept generally

rejected by the current generation of police officers. This would definitely be a factor when considering the overall feasibility of the plan.

Investing in managing the impact generational changes will have on law enforcement recruitment can be viewed by strategic organizations as a way of preventing tomorrow's problems and seizing tomorrow's opportunities. Law enforcement needs to ask the question; "In 10 or 15 years will we be glad we focused on this area?"³⁸ Given the difficulties most of law enforcement is currently experiencing with the recruitment of quality recruits, coupled with a shrinking labor pool, law enforcement essentially has no choice but to focus on new recruitment strategies. This focus will provide the organization with a sense of futurity and will facilitate the investment of resources to this issue.

The current trends do not render an optimistic scenario of the ability for law enforcement to attract and recruit quality police officers in the future. This will be a pervasive issue and will become more critical as time passes.

Defining the Future

In strategic planning, the future is defined through an evaluation of the current business definition, an external assessment, an internal assessment, and a shareholder assessment of the impact generational changes will have on recruitment.

Private business seems to have a better focus than the public sector on the issue of generational changes and its impact on recruitment efforts. This is likely due to the ability, willingness, and market driven necessity of private business to change. The prevalent business definition is that it is currently an employee's market and the labor

market will continue to tighten. Business must adapt to meet the needs of the future employees. The future workforce has talent and skills that will greatly benefit employers. If law enforcement does not effectively manage the impact generational changes will have on recruitment, they will not be poised to attract and retain the future workforce. Employers who are not positioned to be attractive to the future employees will be left behind.³⁹

An external assessment also brings to light a disparity between private and public sector. Private business generally operates on a bottom-line system, responsible to shareholders for profits. They have a clear vision and can make immediate changes based upon that vision. The public sector, however, is responsible to a complex assortment of stakeholders, not the least of which is the political process.⁴⁰ This results in organizations that are less responsive to immediate needs and future issues.

The goal of attracting and recruiting quality recruits is not in dispute for law enforcement. This is an ongoing objective of law enforcement. The real question to the current generation of law enforcement officers is, at what cost? What changes should law enforcement make to successfully recruit the employee of the future? Traditional law enforcement is embroiled in a culture requiring new officers to pay their dues. They are also resistant to the realignment of standards for new recruits. Current officers see this as a dilution of their profession if not an outright betrayal to law enforcement.

What the community wants and expects from law enforcement continually changes over time, just as generations change. The community focus seems to be shifting from severe crime issues to community quality of life issues. The police officer that the community wants, and needs, is no longer the crime-fighting arrest-conscious

officer. While these duties are still expected by the community, the community also wants officers to talk to the youth, embrace diversity and be open communicators. The community demands a different kind of police officer.

Transition Management

There is no single model or strategy that fits all problems or organizational change situations. Transition managers must be adept at diagnosing change situations, skilled at choosing among different models, and have the ability to use the tools best suited to the moment.⁴¹ For example, some law enforcement plans may prompt resistance from the external shareholders, the public, and support by the internal shareholders, the officers. However, when implementing a plan to manage the impact generational changes will have on recruitment, the organization must address the resistance offered by the current generation of officers, while there may be full support by the public. Each change plan must be individually crafted for its unique situation.

Change is extraordinarily difficult. Resistance to change is natural; it is a behavior learned early in life. It is probably the most important cause of failure in the implementation of sound strategy. Change is furthered, however, if and when an organization can strike a delicate balance among the key players in the process.⁴²

Three basic groups must be coordinated. The change strategists lay the foundation, craft the vision, and manage the boundaries. The change implementers develop and enact the steps, manage the coordination, and make it happen. The change recipients adopt or fail to adopt the change plan and may appear as sources of resistance.⁴³

The change strategists and implementers must develop successful methods to achieve their goals. Vital to the success of any plan is to develop methods appealing to the change recipients, who have significant power to influence the success or failure of the change plan. While the community at large can be viewed as the principal change recipient, the law enforcement community will likely have a greater effect on the successful implementation of any changes in law enforcement recruitment.

It is clear that if those who are affected by the change have more of a stake in the success of the plan, then the greater the opportunity for success to occur. If those who are identified as potentially most resistant to specific portions of the plan, or to the change in general, can be involved as stakeholders, then resistance can be minimized. The stakeholders don't necessarily have to agree with all the means used to accomplish the specified goals, but their input can be identified with the overall success of the plan as viewed by the principal stakeholders, the community. Law enforcement should align their discipline and reward systems to reflect their organizational values and priorities. In this manner law enforcement can guide their personnel in the same direction as the organization when managing the impact generational changes will have on recruitment.

Implementation

Implementation agents, or change agents, must realize that the planning and implementation phases are not sequential or linear. They overlap in a continuous process. As such, implementers must respond flexibly, even opportunistically, to how the change process is faring within the organization and make appropriate adjustments.

They should ensure a constant open dialogue with the shareholders. Guidelines for successful change execution are:⁴⁴

1. Analyze the organization and its need for change.
2. Create a shared vision and common direction.
3. Separate from the past.
4. Create a sense of urgency.
5. Support a strong leader role.
6. Line up political sponsorship.
7. Craft an implementation plan.
8. Develop enabling structures.
9. Communicate; involve people; be honest.
10. Enforce and institutionalize the change.

Action plans can be utilized to focus attention on decisions, actions and responsible parties. Implementers should link new strategic initiatives with ongoing operations by involving recipients directly and should work quickly to avoid unnecessary or undesirable competition from new priorities. When operating in shared-power situations, a powerful coalition must be developed and maintained.⁴⁵

When implementing a strategic plan, organizations should avoid:⁴⁶

- Pursuing too many objectives;
- Excessive planning and paperwork;
- Trying to plan strategically without adequate data;
- Imposing a structured approach on those who prefer not to have it;
- Delegation by the executive leadership too much of the responsibility.

Transition managers are charged with removing obstacles and roadblocks during the implementation process. Careful preparation and pre-planning can avoid delays, setbacks and unsuccessful results. It is much more expedient and efficient to remove, or at least minimize, roadblocks before they are reached.

Resistance from internal stakeholders should be a major consideration for the organization when planning and implementing changes to address the impact generational changes will have on recruitment. Sufficient time and effort should be focused on this area to minimize the potential for failure. Not only should law enforcement align their discipline and reward systems to match the goals of their implementation plan, but they should also create a sense of urgency and provide a shared vision to encourage change.

CHAPTER 4

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

It seems that the greatest obstacle inhibiting law enforcement from successful intervention is the internal opposition. Instead of following the business lead, who have already employed successful interventions, law enforcement has traditionally resisted internal changes in favor of focusing on external factors. In much the same way a generation perceives the following generation, the perception by law enforcement of new applicants is that *their* values and ethics are unacceptable; *they* should be more like *us*.

Take, for example, a recent report in a national law enforcement magazine. In addressing the values and lifestyles of the next generation of potential law enforcement recruits, the author wrote:

Perhaps the first step is to increase and modify the ethics portion of the basic recruit training. The responses (to the survey) concerning off-duty personal conduct and controlled substance use indicate that this area needs to be substantially enhanced.⁴⁷

The implication is that the next generation must be more like the previous generation to be a successful police officer. Yet, from that same pool of potential police recruits will be the community of the future, the community who will define what a quality police officer is. "Don't expect your employees to change the way they see the world; do expect them to learn and grow."⁴⁸

The current generation's view of the next generation's lifestyle and behavior is somehow interpreted as indications of lower ethical conduct and standards. But that interpretation is flawed when viewed from only the limited perspective of the current generation without an understanding of the next generation. Different behavior and

conduct does not necessarily equate to lower ethical standards and values. To the contrary, Generation Y has been described as more optimistic and more well rounded citizens than their predecessors, and places a high value on character, ethics and integrity.

There is a never-ending need for law enforcement to attract and recruit new police officers. The talents and skills that are required of a quality police officer are dynamic, not static. The wants and needs of the communities served by law enforcement dictate, to a large degree, those characteristics. The quality police officer ten years from now will be defined much differently than the quality police officer of ten years ago.

The perception by law enforcement is that the number of quality applicants for police officer positions is declining. To complicate that trend, the labor pool is shrinking. Without intervention, the future for law enforcement recruitment is dismal.

Implications on Leadership

One of the biggest mistakes that any employer can make is to become overly reliant on a single, favored hiring strategy.⁴⁹ Therefore, law enforcement must develop dynamic strategies to scan the current and future workforce if they want to become established as cutting edge and competitive employers.

The next generation of workers will seek employers who provide:

- A position that incorporates meaning and purpose
- End of sexual harassment
- Economic equality between sexes

- Promotion of racial understanding
- Chances to work in a team environment
- Welcoming of diversity
- Lifestyle balance
- State-of-the-art technology
- Emphasis on character and ethics
- Open communication
- Honesty
- Leadership by competence
- Casual and friendly atmosphere
- Freedom to be self reliant
- Involvement – solicited for input
- Opportunity for change

For law enforcement to incorporate the next generation of workers into an environment to facilitate success, organizational structure and role responsibilities will require a complete review. As law enforcement will be serving changing communities with different workers, the organization may very well need restructuring. For example, flatter less hierarchical organizations promote more efficient communication and could be more effective in the future by providing a work environment that will optimize the attributes of the future work force.

While the perception by law enforcement is that the number of quality applicants for police officer positions is declining, it could very well be that law enforcement's current hiring standards focus on irrelevant areas that do not identify what

characteristics will be required of police officers in the near future. Serious consideration should be given to a critical review of hiring standards and testing procedures to determine the relevancy to attributes needed for the future police officer. Law enforcement cannot continue to hire new workers that resemble the prior generation. Not only will this result in the continued deterioration of law enforcement's ability to hire quality recruits, but also law enforcement will be ill prepared to effectively police in the future. Just as law enforcement must embrace racial and cultural diversity, they must also embrace generational diversity. As one younger Generation X'er said:

My manager realized my lifestyle and the things I'm involved in could bring an entirely different perspective to our business efforts. He appreciated my unique knowledge instead of passing judgement on something he didn't understand.⁵⁰

Even the military has realized the need to change their recruiting methods to target the next generation. The Army began to utilize young soldiers as recruiters instead of older and more experienced soldiers. They have discovered that the younger soldier can relate with the potential recruit on the same level, improving their recruitment efforts.⁵¹

The Clinton Administration believes that a New Social Contract is in order. This is defined as employability security. With this premise, the employer provides the employee with marketable skills in return for job performance. A contract of this nature must be based on an understanding that the job is a shared situation. Employers invest by giving employees an opportunity to stretch their skills. Employees, in turn, agree to invest their skills and creativity. A mutually beneficial network is established.⁵²

Law enforcement has historically been an organization that is highly entrenched in bureaucracy and tradition. What this means is that responsiveness and change are

slow. Law enforcement must be proactive to institute changes and plan strategically. Only then will law enforcement be able to position themselves as a competitive employer in the tight labor market of the future.

The next generation grew up in a very different world, and they hold a different view of work. But they will make outstanding employees if law enforcement is willing to take a little time to understand generational changes and adapt management styles and work environment to meet their unique needs.⁵³

Endnotes

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² Human Resources Institute, "The Generations at Work: Implications: Understanding Generational Attitudes and Values" (research report, Eckerd College), 1, quoting Nadel, Human Resources Report, 16 August 1999, 873

³ Claire Raines, Beyond Generation X (Menlo Park: Crisp Publications, 1997), 25

⁴ *Ibid.*, 34-35

⁵ *Ibid.*, 34

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, 11

⁸ Human Resources Institute, "The Changing Nature of People" (research report, Eckerd College), 2

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¹⁰ Human Resources Institute, "Work Ethics, Loyalty and Attitudes: Drivers: Age Composition of the Workforce" (research report, Eckerd College), 1

¹¹ Rains, Beyond Generation X, 15

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²² Human Resources Institute, “The Changing Nature of People” (research report, Eckerd College), 16

²³ Raines, Beyond Generation X, 30

²⁴ Popeo, Setting the Example: A Guide for Business Leaders, a Net Generation’s Look at Crisis Management, Truth and Politics, 4

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²⁶ Ibid, 37

²⁷ Raines, Beyond Generation X, 38-44

²⁸ Ibid., 76

²⁹ Ibid., 59-60

³⁰ Ibid., 91

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³² California Government Code, sec. 1031(d), 187

³³ Minimum Selection Standards: Reading and Writing Tests, in California Peace Officer Standards and Training, accessed September 1, 2000 at <http://www.post.ca.gov/STANDRDS/Select.htm>

³⁴ Tom Esensten, Organizational Effectiveness Consulting, POST Command College Presentation, “Building Strategic Organizations” (January 2000)

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³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Raines, Beyond Generation X, 15

⁴⁰ Professor Cary Simon, "Transition Management In a Strategic Organization", handout materials for POST Command College (Naval Postgraduate School, January 2000), 4, 10

⁴¹ Ibid, 2

⁴² Ibid., 5, 25

⁴³ Ibid., 12

⁴⁴ Ibid., 13, 24

⁴⁵ Ibid., 27-30

⁴⁶ Ibid., 7

⁴⁷ Lt. David Brand, "The Future of Law Enforcement Recruiting: The Impact of Generation X", The Police Chief, August 1999, 52 –63.

⁴⁸ Raines, Beyond Generation X, 85

⁴⁹ Human Resources Institute, "Recruitment and Selection: Strategic Considerations: Favored Hiring Strategy" (research report, Eckerd College), 1

⁵⁰ Raines, Beyond Generation X, 74

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