

HOW WILL TELECOMMUTING TECHNOLOGY BE EFFECTIVELY  
IMPLEMENTED IN A MEDIUM-SIZED URBAN POLICE  
DEPARTMENT BY THE YEAR 2005?

A project presented to  
the California Commission on  
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.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Chapter One

Introduction.....	1
Historical Perspective.....	4

### Chapter Two

Forecasting of Trends and Possible Events.....	11
Scenario 1 / Pessimistic .....	20
Scenario 2 / Surprise Free .....	22
Scenario 3 / Optimistic.....	25

### Chapter Three

Strategic Plan.....	30
Situational Analysis.....	30
Stakeholders.....	31
Implementation Strategies.....	33
Transition Management Plan.....	35
Readiness Assessment of Stakeholders.....	35
Implementation Team.....	37
Activity Plan.....	39

### Chapter Four

Implications on Leadership.....	45
Funding and Budgetary Implications.....	46
Evaluation Activities.....	47
Recommendations.....	49

Conclusion.....49

Appendix

One.....52

## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

Within the next five years, law enforcement agencies throughout California will need to explore telecommuting implementation programs that facilitate efficient work away from the primary work place. Selected police personnel should have the ability to work and make decisions from their home, travel location, or satellite office location. In order to be effective, police managers will be required to effectively manage telecommuting issues throughout the organization. Managing resistance and skepticism, supervising telecommuters, and managing change will impact the organization.

The employee participating in the program could face issues such as isolation, lack of interaction with coworkers, household distractions, and perceived hindrance of career advancement. Chief executives who manage these issues will benefit from telecommuting technology, as selected employees experience increased flexibility, increased motivation and commitment, reduced commuting time, and increased individual productivity. The combined factors will allow the employee to provide a better quality of service to the community and the organization.

Who are today's telecommuters? The 1999 Telework America National Telework Survey, conducted by Joanne H. Pratt Associates, found that today's 19.6 million teleworkers typically work nine days per month at home with an average of three hours per week during normal business hours. In this study, telecommuters were defined as employees who work at least one day per month at home during normal

business hours. The typical teleworker is married and well educated. The majority of teleworkers are managers or professionals.<sup>1</sup>

Telecommuting is the partial or total substitution of telecommunications technology for the trip to and from the primary workplace along with the associated changes in policy, organization, management, and work structure.<sup>2</sup> Simply put, it's moving the work to the workers, instead of the workers to work. Computers, cellular phones, fax, advanced communications links such as Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) and dial-up access have removed the physical barriers that once required workers to be in their offices.

There are three types of telecommuting. The most popular form of telecommuting is working from home. The employee designates work space at home to conduct business functions. Next is a satellite office location. These are remote office locations usually placed within a large concentration of employee residences, allowing employees at a single company to share common office space and reduce the time and expense of the commute to and from the main office facility. Third is the Neighborhood Work Center or Telecommuting Center.<sup>3</sup> The neighborhood work center provides work space for employees of different companies in one location. Each company housing employees at these locations is usually responsible for the administrative and technical requirements of its employees.

Telecommuting also involves the mobile workforce. The mobile workforce represents employees who are constantly on the road using technology as the main link to centrally located resources. However, occasional checking of voice mail from

home or on the road, or working at home less than one day per week does not qualify as telecommuting.

The benefits of telecommuting are numerous. In addition to the obvious advantages such as reduced rush hour traffic and enhanced air quality, there are a number of less visible benefits like improved productivity and expanded geographic range. The ease with which a computer age employee can be linked to his or her office is a viable incentive to implement a telecommuting program.

According to a 1999 study, 87 percent of telecommuters drive to and from work alone, reflecting the typical American commuting pattern. Only four percent reported using car or van pooling, while two percent use public transportation. Telecommuters drive an average of 18 miles one-way to work each day, taking 26-27 minutes each way. When adding errands to their commute, telecommuters report adding 7.9 more miles to a typical round-trip commute. On the days that they work at home, telecommuters report driving an average of 9.3 miles per day for personal and family errands. By working at home, telecommuters save 52.9 minutes each workday, or, in effect, one hour per day. This is the equivalent of six days per year, assuming one day of work-at-home per week, less two weeks' vacation time. Annually, telecommuting decreases round trip commuting by roughly 1,800 miles per year per telecommuter, representing a significant cost savings for individual telecommuters.<sup>4</sup>

Additional information from the 1999 study revealed gains from increased productivity. The average productivity increase reported by telecommuters is 22 percent per day worked at home. Using an estimate of 169 dollars in daily salary per

telecommuter, 22 percent represents a 37 dollar gain in value per telecommuter per day for organizations that facilitate telecommuting. Annualized, this equal's 1,850 dollars in productivity gains for 50 days of telecommuting, or if employees worked 150 days at home, 5,550 dollars per year. Prorated for 47 percent of teleworkers who reported productivity gains, less than 10 percent who said their productivity decreased (42 percent saw no change), the net daily benefit is 685 dollars per telecommuter who averages just one day per week at home or 13 billion dollars for 19.6 million telecommuters.<sup>5</sup>

Telecommuting and telecommuting technology are emerging and exciting issues for law enforcement organizations. The purpose of this project is to examine telecommuting issues relative to future implementation and impact in a medium-sized, urban police department.

### Historical Perspective

The idea that telecommunications technology could substitute for travel dawned on people soon after the invention of the telephone. In the late 1870's letters and articles speculating on the potential of the telephone to replace face-to-face meetings appeared in various London newspapers. Science fiction books described videoconferencing machines that could accomplish the same goal.

An article in a *Scientific American* supplement from 1914 predicted that telecommunications would reduce transit congestion. These ideas resurfaced in the 1960's and 1970's, as computing technology began to permeate society and the energy

crisis was an issue. But today, with fax machines and personal computers widespread and videoconferencing almost mundane, congestion on the roads is worse than ever.<sup>6</sup>

In 1982, the first national conference on telecommuting was held in the United States. In 1985, the Southern California Association of Governments established the International Telework Association and Council (ITAC). In 1987, the State of California launched the first comprehensive public-sector telecommuting pilot program. In 1992, the California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS) and the United States Federal Highway Administration funded the Neighborhood Telecenters Project which opened 15 telecenters in California. By 1997, nearly 40 demonstration telecenters had been opened in California alone.<sup>7</sup>

In 1993, the United States Office of Personnel Management officially endorsed use of telecommuting by Federal agencies. In 1996, the President's Management Council implemented the National Telecommuting Initiative (NTI) led by the US Department of Transportation (DOT) and US General Services Administration (GSA). The mission of the NTI was to increase the use of telecommuting by all American employers, public and private, with special emphasis on Federal agencies. In 1997, the Department of Transportation hosted the first International Workshop on Planning Regional Telecommuting programs in Irvine, California.<sup>8</sup>

In 1998, there was a growing interest abroad in telecommuting, with the largest push in Western Europe. Employers reported an improved ability to recruit and retain talented workers using telecommuting in an increasingly competitive labor market.<sup>9</sup>

For decades, characterizing the typical workforce was as easy as strolling

through the office halls. Most employees were core, permanent members of a single company who worked Monday through Friday at the same location with the same group of people on an ongoing basis. Each employee was assigned to a department and reported to one manager. Each employee also worked under a clearly-defined job description, performing the same types of tasks and projects until he or she found either a new job or retired. This could be used to describe some law enforcement agencies today. However, a number of trends, including the information revolution, corporate restructuring and downsizing, a shortage of qualified labor, growing market competition and global expansion, are turning the picture of the typical workforce upside down.<sup>10</sup>

Today more and more companies are adopting very different workplace arrangements where people work together without regard to location, time and many other factors. Many workers, for example, don't report in-person to the same location and the same supervisor every day. They may work at home, at a telecommuting center, on the road or with people in other states or countries who they rarely or never see. These new workforce arrangements are becoming even more prevalent as companies struggle to recruit scarce resources, increase employee productivity and retain their most valued employees.<sup>11</sup>

Telecommuting enables employees to better manage their work and personal lives. When they work at home employees are geographically closer to their family members and the institutions and services with which they interact. Also, that means employees can intersperse work and family tasks instead of being absent from work the

entire day. Telecommuter's productivity is the same or higher when working at home, and being able to work at home is an employment incentive.<sup>12</sup>

Employees are often absent because they have to meet family and personal obligations during the business day. According to a 1999 study, 80 percent of telecommuters indicate that they had to take time during the normal workday for doctor or dentist appointments. In addition, 72 percent of telecommuters with children take time off for school and after-school functions and 44 percent when a child is sick. Telecommuters reported an average of 45.3 occasions per year of absenteeism associated with managing personal and family needs, equaling 165.1 hours per year, or about 22 working days.<sup>13</sup> Research into the issue of implementing telecommuting into a medium-sized, urban police department suggested that it was necessary to examine what other medium-sized police departments were doing in California. The research revealed that law enforcement is either not in favor of such a concept, or has not made a legitimate attempt at its implementation.

The most widely used definition of a telecommuter is, "an employee who regularly spends at least one day a week working off site."<sup>14</sup> Part of the research involved in this project included a telephonic survey involving 16 medium-sized, urban California law enforcement agencies. Each agency was asked if they practiced telecommuting and whether or not they had any formal policies and procedures addressing it. Each agency's respondent was the rank of Lieutenant or above. The following agencies were included in the survey: Santa Monica, Culver City, Brea, Redlands, El Segundo, Yuba City, Claremont, Chico, Redding, Whittier, Stockton,

Glendale, Buena Park, Huntington Beach, Santa Rosa, and Laguna Beach. Agencies surveyed ranged in size from 150 to 700 total personnel. From the 16 agencies surveyed, only the Claremont Police Department regularly permits telecommuting. The City of Claremont permits telecommuting on a citywide basis and has a formal policy outlining the telecommuting program's policies and procedures. Claremont's general policy states:

The telecommute program is a program designed to allow eligible city employees to work at home one day a week. It is part of the City's efforts to reduce air pollution emissions from mobile sources, to help alleviate traffic congestion, and to eliminate unnecessary employee vehicle trips to City facilities.<sup>15</sup>

According to the Society for Human Resources Management, only 27 percent of companies, public and private with active telecommuters have formal policies about how telecommuting should be handled.<sup>16</sup> Referring back to the telephonic survey, the remaining 15 agencies had no written policies or procedures on telecommuting or working away from headquarters. Of the 15 remaining agencies, six indicated they have an unwritten informal policy that communicates telecommuting is generally discouraged unless they are permitted by a supervisor. Usually special circumstances must exist such as a unusually extensive work load or an unexpected deadline. The eight remaining agencies indicated that telecommuting is prohibited; however, it was practiced widely on an informal basis among managers.

Most agencies surveyed indicated that working from their residence was necessary at times due to the nature of their management position; however, none were compensated if they chose to catch up on their staff work from home or an off-site

location. Several managers surveyed indicated that their departments have shown interest in telecommuting concepts at one time or another; however, there was no continued interest and/or support.

Telecommuting is a fairly new concept being introduced to law enforcement. Unlike private industry, many of law enforcement personnel are required to staff positions requiring their presence on a seven day per week, 24 hour per day basis. Uniform patrol is the best example of this. The backbone of any police organization are the men and women who are required to respond to a citizen's call for service. The need continues to exist for an available police officer to respond to radio calls. Despite the need for continued face to face service, there appears to be some room for telecommuting implementation in limited areas of law enforcement organizations.

Currently, the following public organizations are actively engaged in telecommuting practices; Board of Pharmacy, CalPERS, Franchise Tax Board, Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs, Department of Personnel Administration, Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST), Department of Motor Vehicles, Department of Social Services, and the California Integrated Waste Management Board.<sup>17</sup>

There are several contributing factors as to why these public organizations have implemented telecommuting programs. They include office space, overhead, productivity, morale, attendance, retention, employee effectiveness, employee performance, and recruitment.<sup>18</sup>

In order to properly implement a telecommunications program in a medium-sized

urban police department, managers will need to be imaginative and flexible. Moving the work to the workers instead of the workers to work is a new concept for law enforcement. The benefits are many. They include reduced traffic, enhanced air quality, improved productivity and increased geographic range for employees while decreasing their commuting miles per year. In addition, telecommuting allows employees to better manage their work and personal lives. Many law enforcement agencies practice telecommuting informally. Telecommuting is not for everyone; however, its implementation in law enforcement is worth exploring.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Forecasting of Trends and Possible Events

On January 6, 2000, a Nominal Group Technique (NGT) exercise was conducted for the purpose of forecasting potential trends and events regarding the issue of telecommuting. The NGT panel consisted of nine members. There were two police lieutenants, one police captain, and six civilians. Of the six civilians, two were independent security contractors, one police office manager, one assistant personnel director, one police technical specialist, and one Information Systems Department Head. (Appendix one)

The panel identified 36 trends and 35 events. A trend refers to the past, present, and future. A trend can either be qualitative or quantitative relative to the issue of telecommuting. An event refers to a specific incident which, if occurs, impacts the issue of telecommuting, positive or negative.

The panel was quick to identify the necessity for management buy-in from the top down. They felt that if a telecommuting program was to be successful, management would be required to actively participate in the process from the beginning. They also pointed out that law enforcement may not be able to absorb an aggressive telecommunications program with large groups of employees similar to private industry. However, even considering smaller numbers of participants, organizations need to adapt a strong philosophy in support of the concept.

There was a strong interest in legal questions that may arise as a result of the program's implementation. In addition, there was concern over the employee

bargaining units or labor group's involvement. As an alternative to increased traffic congestion, the panel identified telecommuting as an effective remedy. Additionally, the panel identified the concern for additional training and the increased amount of technology and information, described by some panel members as information overload. The panel agreed on several advantages of telecommuting implementation including; less commuting, childcare issues, housing costs, employee retention, privacy, less pressure, and environmental advantages such as decreased fuel usage and improved air quality.

Some of the disadvantages and concerns of the panel were; cost, equipment maintenance, lack of training, organizational pressure, professional development, lack of presence, working more due to accessibility, increased stress due to accessibility, mixing child care with work, time management, and employees taking advantage of the system.

Each trend was reviewed for clarity and direction. Following a review of the trend list, the events were reviewed, clarified and several of them consolidated. These lists were filtered down to eight trends and events. Upon conclusion of this clarification process the panel was asked to rank each trend and event based upon its impact on the issue.

The panel identified several events that could take place that would have positive and negative effects on the issue. For example, it was discussed that if a natural disaster occurred, it would be positive relative to the issue because it would confirm the need for telecommuting technology. There was extensive discussion

regarding a legislative mandate which would require organizations to implement telecommuting due to traffic congestion, air pollution, and fuel shortages. In addition, an event such as a change in city leadership could have an effect on the program's implementation and / or success, depending on the new leader's philosophy.

### Trends

From this ranking process eight trends emerged as most valuable in the context of having a determining long range forecast of their movement. The panel was asked to review each trend, forecasting their levels using a ratio establishing today with a value of 100. The forecasting required trend estimates of five years ago and nominal (will be) future estimates for five and ten years from now. The following describes the results of the panel's forecast.

#### Trend Summary - Median

	-5 Years	Today	+5 Years	+10 Years	Concern (1-10)
<b>Trend 1</b>	50	100	150	200	10
<b>Trend 2</b>	40	100	150	200	8
<b>Trend 3</b>	50	100	140	150	9
<b>Trend 4</b>	50	100	150	200	9
<b>Trend 5</b>	75	100	160	200	10
<b>Trend 6</b>	40	100	120	150	8
<b>Trend 7</b>	25	100	150	180	7
<b>Trend 8</b>	60	100	150	190	7

### Trend 1, Technology Advancement

The median forecast indicates a significant increase in advanced technology from five years ago and continuing to increase rapidly over the next ten years.

Technology advancement will likely change the way we would anticipate implementing and managing a telecommuting program.

### Trend 2, Increased Use of Technology

The median forecast indicates a steady increase in the use of technology and increased usage over the next ten years. This upward trend will cause increased employee use of technology by becoming more familiar and comfortable utilizing it away from the workplace.

### Trend 3, Legislative Support for Use of Technology

The median forecast of this trend indicates a gradual increase in government legislation mandating the use of technology. Legislation in the future may mandate computer and technology use to aid in decreasing traffic and pollution. In addition, legislation may dictate additional technology use to benefit the disabled.

### Trend 4, Training

The median forecast of this trend indicates a gradual but significant increase in work-based training relative to technology and telecommunications applications. The panel forecast this trend as a high concern due to the need to train as it relates to implementing a telecommunications program. The panel indicated a trend of increased training to meet the demands of evolving technology and its relationship with telecommuting.

#### Trend 5, Security / Privacy Issues

The median forecast of this trend indicates a gradual but significant increase. The evaluation indicates that as technology and telecommuting increase, security and privacy issues will be of utmost importance. The panel forecast the trend as a high concern.

#### Trend 6, Leadership, Management, Control, Mentoring

The median forecast of this trend indicates a sharp increase from five years ago to today; however, less of an increase for five and ten years in the future. The panel indicated less of a concern for management and control issues as a telecommunication program would decrease the need for control and less face to face contact with supervision.

#### Trend 7, Family Related Issues

The median and high forecasts tracked closely, with a significant decrease five years earlier. The trend made a significant increase from five years ago, indicating a strong move toward issues relating to the family, quality of life, and child care issues over the last five years. As the trend increases, telecommunications issues will become more important as the need for creativity to accommodate family related issues increases.

#### Trend 8, Political and Social Pressures

The median forecast of this trend indicates a gradual but significant increase in state, federal, political and social issues. This evaluation indicates that political and social pressures will have an impact on the implementation and success of a

telecommunications program. In addition, these pressures could have an impact on the timeliness of the program's implementation.

**Events**

The following eight events emerged as having the highest probability of occurring and the most significant impact on the identified issue. The panel was asked to forecast each event on a percent probability scale. It was explained that the value of zero indicated that the event was not expected to occur and a value of 100 percent indicated that the event probably would occur. Each panelist was asked to provide a forecast as to when the probability of the event occurring would first exceed zero and what the subsequent probabilities would be at five and ten years. The panel was also requested to rate the impact, positive or negative, on the issues should the event occur. The impact, either positive or negative was scored on a scale of one to ten. The following describes the results of the panel's forecast.

**Event Summary - Median**

	<b>Year &gt;0</b>	<b>+5 Years</b>	<b>+10 Years</b>	<b>Impact (1-5)</b>
<b>Event 1</b>	7	50	100	+3
<b>Event 2</b>	2	75	100	+2
<b>Event 3</b>	4	75	100	+3
<b>Event 4</b>	3	50	90	-3
<b>Event 5</b>	6	20	25	-4
<b>Event 6</b>	5	30	80	+4
<b>Event 7</b>	5	50	100	+1
<b>Event 8</b>	7	25	60	+2

#### Event 1, Natural Disaster

The probability of an event such as a major earthquake will significantly impact the possible implementation of a telecommunications program. The probability of this happening begins seven years out and has a 50 percent probability in five years, increasing to 100 percent in ten years. The panel agreed that this event would have a positive impact on the implementation of a telecommunications program providing cause for telecommunications practices.

#### Event 2, Legislative Mandate

The occurrence of this event would mandate a telecommunication program. The probability of this event occurring begins two years out with a 75 percent chance of occurring in five years followed by 100 percent probability in ten years. The panel agreed the event would have a positive impact on the issue providing cause for its implementation.

#### Event 3, Change in City Leadership

An event describing supportive leadership toward implementing telecommunications technology. The probability of this event occurring begins four years out with a 75 percent chance of occurring in five years followed by 100 percent probability in ten years. The panel agreed the event would have a positive impact on the issue.

#### Event 4, System Abuse

Employees take advantage of the telecommunications program by utilizing the systems for personal use or failing to meet the program's expectations. This event

prompts a suspension or termination of the program.

The probability of this event occurring begins three years out with a 50 percent chance of occurring in five years followed by a 90 percent chance of occurring in ten years. The panel agreed this would be a negative impact on the issue.

#### Event 5, Loss of Funding

The probability of this event occurring begins six years out with a 20 percent chance of occurring in five years followed by a 25 percent chance of occurring in ten years. The panel agreed this would be a negative impact on the issue; however, not as likely to occur.

#### Event 6, Start of a new Super Computer System

The probability of a computer system which enables a transition to telecommunications more efficient begins five years out with a 30 percent chance of occurring in five years followed by a 80 percent chance of occurring in ten years. The panel agreed this would be a positive impact on the issue providing more incentive to utilize technology.

#### Event 7, Change in Economy

The probability of a strong local economy begins five years out with a 50 percent chance of occurring in five years followed by a 100 percent chance of occurring in ten years. The panel agreed this would be a positive impact on the issue allowing more flexibility for funding a telecommunications program.

#### Event 8, Memorandum of Understanding Mandates Technology Use

The probability of this event occurring begins seven years out with a 25 percent

chance of occurrence in five years followed by a 60 percent chance of occurrence in ten years. The panel agreed this would have a positive impact on the issue; however, not significantly.

### Cross Impact Analysis

Four members of the Nominal Group Panel met as a subgroup to analyze the cross impact of the identified trends and forecasted events upon one another. The purpose of this analysis was to identify those trends and events in which interrelationships existed and to gauge their impact on one another. The purpose of doing this analysis is to develop a better understanding of how the future of this issue of implementing telecommunication technology might develop.

By assuming that an event actually happens, an estimate can be made as to how it impacts other identified events and trends. This is then analyzed in relation to the issue to foresee reactions. An estimate can also be made concerning how each individual event and trend was impacted by the occurrence. There were three events that had the greatest impact on the issue of telecommuting.

Local, state or federal government provides a legislative mandate introducing telecommunications technology into the police department. Initially the event would have a negative impact relative to the training trend. Training personnel would be immediately tasked with satisfying mandated requirements therefore taking resources away from other department training functions. However, this would prove to be a positive sacrifice long term. Additionally, the event would have a positive impact on the

increased use of technology by enabling employees to familiarize themselves with the technology necessary to meet the mandate.

Complete loss of funding for a proposed telecommunications program would have significant negative impact on the issue rendering a department unable to increase the use of technology or acquire any advanced technology.

A Memorandum of Understanding mandating the use of technology would have a negative effect on leadership, management and control issues. The panel's analysis indicated that an event of this nature would remove management's flexibility to design the program. In addition, a mandate may have similar negative effects on training.

## Scenarios

Each scenario concerning the issue was developed using forecasted trends and events, literature research, environmental scanning, interviews and the investigator's own insights. The purpose of each scenario is to motivate decision makers who will be involved in shaping the future. The scenarios are designed to promote imaginative and creative thinking about possible future alternatives by which they can anticipate change and react accordingly. The three forecasting scenarios presented are Pessimistic, Surprise Free, and Optimistic.

### Scenario 1 (Pessimistic)

It is mid-July, 2004, at the Smithville Police Department, California. Smithville is a city of 11 square miles and a population of 100,000. About one year earlier the

Department put together a small committee of five employees to explore the possibilities of allowing department employees to telecommute or work from an off-site location due to several contributing factors, including: traffic congestion, productivity, childcare, sick leave usage, workplace morale, emergencies, Internet capabilities, and several others.

Over the past year the committee has attempted on several occasions to meet with the police chief to discuss a telecommuting project. The chief had indicated he is interested; however, he has not attended any of the meetings. Smithville Police Chief Mike Jones has indicated his support to the committee through his captains. He has indicated he would review a pilot program if necessary. Chief Jones has never outwardly supported the idea with the rest of the organization and usually de-emphasizes the topic at staff meetings.

It is now March 2005, at the Smithville Police Department. Chief Jones has retired and been replaced with Chief Marks. Chief Marks is from a small, Midwest police department. Chief Marks received his Bachelor's Degree in Police Management in 1970. Chief Marks has good intentions; however, his philosophy is to be in control. Chief Marks also insists that his command staff, including lieutenants, civilian managers and captains be available to him at all times.

Upon Chief Marks' first meeting with the telecommuting committee he advised them that he wasn't aware of any such telecommuting concept and wasn't briefed on any pilot program by the previous chief. He responded by telling the committee if they wanted to continue to meet it was up to them, but only on their own time.

The committee continued to meet with little support or involvement from the chief. Despite being invited several times to the meetings and briefed through department memorandum, Chief Marks never bought-in to the idea enough to move beyond the acknowledgment that there were committee meetings. Subsequently, without the support of the department head and/or his staff, the telecommuting technology concept never got off the ground. As a result, the department did not realize several benefits to the organization including, decreased work-related injuries, decreased sick leave, increased work production and morale.

This pessimistic scenario points out several important factors relative to the requirements needed to properly implement a telecommunications program. Chief Jones was passively supportive of the idea but never really committed his heart to the idea. In addition, Chief Jones never publicly supported the program. Incoming Chief Marks believed in control and having his employees physically present, a requirement which is in direct conflict with implementing a telecommuting program.

#### Scenario 2 (Surprise Free)

Lieutenant Mike Smith is the Commanding Officer for the Office of Administrative Services for the Luxville Police Department. Luxville is a medium-sized, urban police department with approximately 450 personnel.

The department is divided into four offices including, Operations, Criminal Investigations, Special Enforcement, and Administrative Services. Management and supervisory personnel make up approximately 20 percent of the department.

Lieutenant Smith is extremely energetic and embraces challenge and change. He is aggressive but respectful when presenting ideas and opinions to the chief of police. Lieutenant Smith has a reputation for strong leadership and the ability to transform new ideas into operational reality. The chief is a participative leader who believes in taking risks within reason. The chief is a big supporter of technical resources and their use in the organization.

Recently, Lieutenant Smith was asked to participate in a steering committee for a new idea involving telecommuting and telecommuting technology. Lieutenant Smith became a member of a committee of nine individuals tasked with implementing a pilot telecommuting program. Lieutenant Smith was the ranking officer on the committee and a liaison with the chief of police.

After several meetings, Lieutenant Smith met with the chief and briefed him on the concept of telecommuting in the organization and possible implementation. The chief fully-supported the idea on a trial basis under strict supervision providing a tool was in place to measure the effectiveness of the program. The chief was particularly concerned about the various labor organizations and their involvement. The chief wanted to make sure they were in support of the pilot program. Additionally, for the time being, nothing was to be tied to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Lieutenant Smith continued to meet with the committee for three months before actually beginning the formulation of guidelines and policy. It was important that the committee was clear regarding the universal definition of telecommuting and teleworking. Teleworking referred to any form of substitution of information

technologies such as telecommunications and computers for work-related travel.

Telecommuting refers to moving the work to the workers instead of moving the workers to work.

Top level management including city leadership fully supported the pilot program. Through proper education and training, there was strong stakeholder support from the unions, support staff, management groups, Local Area Network / Information Systems managers, and technical support staff. A planning team was tasked with actual implementation and identifying who needs to be involved initially. Parameters for the program were also developed by the planning team. Lastly, a monitoring and evaluation system was developed to properly critique the effectiveness of the pilot program. After one year of telecommuting practices involving a select group of managers, the program underwent several changes, both technological and personnel related. The chief of police was very satisfied with the results and is a strong supporter of future telecommuting practices in a limited capacity. The chief has tasked each division commander with identifying personnel who fit the criteria to telecommute with an emphasis on benefitting the organization as well as the employee.

This surprise free future scenario illustrates complete cooperation and outstanding communication from start to implementation of the program. Lieutenant Smith possessed the leadership energy necessary to run full speed with the idea. The chief of police was completely supportive and allowed Lieutenant Smith the flexibility necessary to introduce a telecommunications pilot project. The program included several important elements including a tool in place to measure its effectiveness. The

idea of telecommuting was well defined from the beginning. The program had the necessary top-level management support including city staff.

### Scenario 3 (Optimistic)

Sergeant Mark Riley was on his way to the Santa Monica Police Department where he is assigned as the Internal Affairs Sergeant. Santa Monica Police Department has approximately 450 personnel, sworn and civilian. Sergeant Riley is part of a two-person Internal Affairs Unit. His partner and supervisor is Lieutenant Mary Anderson. Sergeant Riley's case load has been running abnormally high for this time of year.

On his way to work, Sergeant Riley received a call from his wife who told him their three-year-old daughter is ill with the flu and will be unable to attend school today. Mrs. Riley is attending college and cannot miss an exam she is scheduled for at 10:00 A.M. Sergeant Riley has no other choice but to return home and care for his daughter. On his way home, Sergeant Riley is frustrated knowing he will be even more behind when he returns to work. His attention is focused on his falling behind at work rather than his ill three year old daughter. Sergeant Riley quickly realizes what is important and begins to wonder if there may be a compromise for future occurrences like this. It is because of this event, Sergeant Riley raises the issue of possibly doing some of his case work at home or "telecommuting." Sergeant Riley spent the next two days at home caring for his daughter.

When Sergeant Riley returned to work he was met by 41 e-mails, 11 phone

messages, two new cases, and 20 new items in his in-tray. Sergeant Riley spent the next few days clearing his in-tray, calling everyone back, and responding to e-mail messages. The next week Sergeant Riley did some research on the Internet on the subject of telecommuting or teleworking. Sergeant Riley found an incredible amount of research and statistics related to the issue. He gathered some pertinent information to present to his Lieutenant. His thought was that if he were placed in a bind such as his daughter being ill that he may have the option of working from his home. He also relished the idea of working with more privacy.

In his position, there are days when Sergeant Riley doesn't make contact with anyone at work or from the community. Subsequently, Sergeant Riley felt that he could accomplish his administrative tasks from home, if necessary. Lieutenant Anderson thought it was a good idea and asked Sergeant Riley to put together a short presentation on the subject for command staff.

Based on information Sergeant Riley obtained from private industry and his Internet resources, he put together a briefing kit to present to command staff. Sergeant Riley arranged an appropriate training facility and made arrangements for audiovisual equipment. Sergeant Riley developed a slide presentation, short video, and handouts. Sergeant Riley reviewed the material extensively and made the appropriate modifications to fit his agency and his presentation style.

Sergeant Riley's telecommunication's presentation went extremely well. Sergeant Riley reviewed the advantages and disadvantages of telecommuting and was clear regarding the widely recognized definition, "Employees who regularly spend at

least one day per week working off site.” As a result the Chief of Police asked Sergeant Riley to research the subject further with the idea of a pilot telecommuting project as a desired outcome. In addition, the Chief told Sergeant Riley and Lieutenant Anderson he would support the resource’s necessary and personnel involvement to get the program off the ground.

The Chief insisted that a representative from his office be present at all telecommunications project meetings. The Chief was particularly concerned about the selection of telecommuters, liability, and cost. The Chief assured Sergeant Riley that the City Manager would also support the project. Previously the city had adopted the philosophy that telecommuting is a work arrangement in which employees work at any time or place that allows them to accomplish their work in an effective and efficient manner.

Based on previous conversations with the Chief and directions from his Lieutenant, Sergeant Riley was appointed the Telecommunications Project Manager. In this capacity, Sergeant Riley was the single point of contact for the organization. Sergeant Riley immediately formed a telecommuting implementation team. Ensuring proper input and participation, Sergeant Riley appointed individuals from the following sections of the city and department; Chief’s office representative, Legal Counsel, Human Resources, Labor Relations, Training, Policy Unit, Emergency Operations, Information Systems, Research and Development, Community Relations, Patrol, Investigations, and Special Enforcement.

The first item on the agenda for the telecommunications team was to solicit

interest in the concept from department personnel. A brief survey was developed and given to a select number of employees who would qualify for telecommuting. In addition, alternative workplace arrangements were discussed. Equipment needs and costs were identified followed by targeting specific positions in the department which are appropriate for telecommuting arrangements.

Next, the team developed an operating strategy and working policy for the project. They identified the parameters and who specifically, will be participating in the pilot project. A training orientation was developed followed by a step by step working arrangement agreement between the organization, manager, and worker.

A mechanism was established for coordinating, supporting, and troubleshooting the program once it is underway. Adequate technical and policy support for participants were identified and established. An implementation program including awareness, promotion, and acceptance was developed to inform the entire organization why this is being done and how it will benefit them and the organization, in general, to dispel misinformation and anxiety. Finally, Sergeant Riley and his team established and implemented a monitoring and evaluation system to ensure that the program goals are being met. In addition, the system will properly evaluate the pilot project for possible expansion, adjustments, or termination.

As a result of several meetings and the implementation of the pilot project, the following events have, or will occur as the program reaches full implementation: complete office arrangements for the homes of select employees in the organization, these arrangements will include furniture, hardware, software and physical working

conditions that meet or exceed the employee's normal working conditions; Video teleconferencing arrangements for those employees indicated by the telecommunications team and/or Chief of Police; City paid Internet Service Provider for each employee designated to telecommute; and a comprehensive training program provided to users and those who will be managing and supervising the user group.

As a result of the telecommuting program, work-related injuries are down 21 percent, sick leave usage is down 25 percent, work production is up 16 percent, and based on a recent interdepartmental survey, positive morale is increasing.

The optimistic scenario demonstrates the ideal situation. It starts with a creative idea followed by a plan with support from top management. The organization must be thorough in identifying advantages and disadvantages of a telecommuting program and properly presenting the information to staff. A primary point of contact for the program is essential. All of the necessary stakeholders must be included in the process. Finally, a system should be put in place to properly evaluate the program on a continuous basis.

Each scenario illustrates different outcomes based mainly on the support from the organization's leadership, management's flexibility and creativity, and the courage to deviate from traditional behavior.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Strategic Plan

It is apparent that implementing telecommunications technology in a medium-sized, urban police department is worth exploring further; however, it should be approached with caution and patience. The strategy for setting up a telecommuting program will depend on organizational and implementer characteristics, preferences and circumstances. There is no single, simple recipe. The following strategic plan is based on an optimistic future scenario.

#### Situational Analysis

Telecommuting has become an increasingly mainstream alternative with the number of telecommuters growing to more than 11 million in the United States, up 15 percent from 1995. Currently, half of all companies in the U.S. and Canada allow employees to telecommute through ongoing or pilot programs, according to a recent study conducted by the William Osten Center for Workforce Strategies in Melville, New York.<sup>19</sup>

But in some cases this alternative work arrangement has not delivered the results such as reduced overhead costs and higher productivity that many companies expected. Because of this, private companies are scaling back their programs. Of the 150 private companies surveyed in 1998, 60 percent have cut back on telecommuting because it has not lived up to its billing.<sup>20</sup>

There are several possible causes of a program's poor results or failure. One

reason is that employers may not be adequately training their staffs to deal with the telecommuting experience. "Without the proper training, people are really ill-prepared to telecommute and many get very frustrated," says Steve Schilling, president of Tele Commute Solutions, an Atlanta company that develops telecommuting programs for large organizations. "It sounds like such a utopia, 'oh, great, I'm going to work from home,' but then employees go home, and it is great for the first couple of days, maybe the first couple of weeks, but they start to go through burnout periods." The most common mistake employer's make is that they train on technology, but they don't get into the basic experience-type things or the coordination involved.<sup>21</sup>

Law enforcement may be at an advantage having the ability to learn from existing research on telecommuting, its successes and failures. Using Santa Monica Police Department as an example, there is no current written policy on telecommuting. Telecommuting is allowed on an informal basis; however, a legitimate reason for its practice must exist. A good example may be a privacy or space issue where an employee may be able to accomplish a better, more timely work product away from his or her office where there may be very little privacy due to distractions or interruptions.

As mentioned earlier, telecommuting practices will have limited use in any law enforcement agency. Through strategic planning and implementation strategies, proper personnel can be identified to most effectively participate in the program.

## Stakeholders

It is important to identify and recognize the important stakeholders relative to this

issue. Stakeholders are those individuals or groups who can have an impact on the implementation of a telecommuting program in the agency and those individuals who will be impacted by the creation of such a program. It is also important to recognize snaildarters which are either individuals or events that can stand as obstacles to the desired objectives.

Certainly any medium-sized, urban police department, as an independent organization, is a primary stakeholder in the implementation of a telecommuting program in their respective agency. Each department will be responsible for committing their full attention to the program's transition for it to be successful. Within the agencies, the Police Chief and management team are extremely important to the program along with the City Manager and the members of City Council. Additional stakeholders are the employee bargaining units or labor unions. It is imperative that strong communication exists between the program facilitators, management, city personnel, and labor union presidents. A telecommuting agreement should include working conditions and terms requiring meet and confer items and union involvement.

Another stakeholder group will be the agency's management association. Management groups will be the biggest participant in a telecommuting program. They will be facilitating the program as well as participating in it.

Local Area Network staff, Technical Support staff, and Information System's staff are significant stakeholders. These individuals are the experts in technology and are a crucial component of the implementation process.

Certainly the citizens of the various agencies are important stakeholders. Part of

the program's success will depend on the continued high level of service that the individual communities and citizens are accustomed to. If the implementation of a telecommuting program within an agency diminishes the level of service which the community currently enjoys, the program is destined for failure.

A significant concern relative to this issue could be the threat of organizational change. One of the most consistent findings is that the number one challenge to telecommuting acceptance and implementation, both in general and at the individual organization level, is overcoming management resistance. Telecommuting runs counter to the prevailing industrial-based management culture.<sup>22</sup>

#### Implementation Strategies

Understanding the potential problems associated with implementing a telecommunicating program is essential to its success. Awareness of these problems will assist law enforcement managers in determining what program will make sense for the organization. Before proposing a telecommuting project, ask the question, "What is in it for us?" This exercise will determine what reasons support implementation of a pilot program.

Some of the common reasons for implementing a telecommuting program include recruiting, employee retention, office space cost, productivity, child care, disability accommodations, absenteeism, air quality regulation ordinances, and emergency preparedness / disaster recovery.<sup>23</sup> In some ways, setting up a successful telecommuting program is like painting your house, much of the success is dependent

on the preparation. If prepared, telecommuting implementation will be easy. Becoming educated on the subject of telecommuting is important. Knowing what you are doing before beginning a project is common sense. For telecommuting implementation it is critical.<sup>24</sup> Telecommuting is not a one-size fits all proposition; nor is it a concrete set of standard operating procedures. There are many types of telecommuting arrangements and programs and ways to implement them.

Telecommuting is a progressive concept, constantly being refined. Telecommunications programs vary in their impact and operation in any given organization. Telecommunication implementation affects individual workers, their co-workers, their organizations and their customers. It is very important to create a telecommuting program aligned with the organization's individual workers, needs, mission, culture and circumstances.

Despite the fact that telecommuting has been around for awhile, telecommuting implementation is still associated with organizational culture change. Changes in the organizational culture, no matter how beneficial, can be fragile and difficult at the beginning. Telecommunications program implementers will usually need to draw on a solid understanding of both telecommuting and the organization to make them work cohesively and overcome the initial resistance.<sup>25</sup> Common perceptions of telecommuting are usually masked in misinformation and anxious anticipation. Much of the initial implementation work should be communicating and teaching what telecommunication is and clarifying false perceptions.<sup>26</sup>

Finally, there are well-known questions to telecommunication implementation.

Typically, nervous, inquisitive, and change resistant employees, including management, will barrage telecommunications facilitators with questions. The educated implementer should be prepared to handle these. The unprepared, uneducated implementer will magnify existing discomfort as well as implementation difficulty.

### Transition Management Plan

The optimistic scenario presented earlier and in the strategic plan, identifies the desired future of where law enforcement would like to go relative to telecommunicating implementation. In the situational analysis section, a brief description of where law enforcement is now, based on its current involvement in telecommuting, is identified. Current conditions should be identified followed by a vision of where the program must work toward relative to telecommuting. At this point a transitional plan is necessary to facilitate getting there.

### Readiness Assessment of Stakeholders

Telecommuting is changing the way people work as well as the interaction among employees, managers and workers. The transition can be unnerving for everyone. While it may seem that telecommuting employees are the ones making the biggest accommodation in terms of work style, in actual practice, telecommuting requires the greatest leap of faith and causes the greatest consternation for managers.<sup>27</sup>

Management and supervisors will be the cornerstone of the telecommuting program's success or failure. Communication skills are the core. When you start to substitute e-mail and voice mail for face to face conversations, communication suffers. When you're implementing a telecommuting program, step one is to understand that there are a lot of issues at play beyond technology and that the cultural, managerial and interpersonal implications of telecommuting are really much bigger than technology.<sup>28</sup>

Management should focus on several identified areas of concern including, lack of face-to-face time, absence from the workplace, lost creativity, and unmet expectations. How does a manager know telecommuters are working if he or she can't see them? Managers have to learn new ways to measure productivity. This may also cause some resentment among other workers in the agency. Unless the telecommuter is extremely sophisticated at coordinating, handing things off and leaving instructions, it can lead to a less rather than more productive environment. The inventiveness and energy that drive innovation can get lost when people are not interacting with one another on a regular basis. In addition, there is an assumption in telecommuting that somehow, home is going to be a friendlier, easier, quieter place to work than the office. That's not always the case.<sup>29</sup> Training, education, and familiarization are all key characteristics for managers to assist in providing a smooth transition as primary stakeholders.

The next important stakeholder is the labor union representative. Consulting a union representative on working conditions is essential when dealing with union

contracts. If the telecommuters are represented by unions it is critical to have a department representative interface directly with the union or include a union representative on the implementation team.

The Information System's representative is another important stakeholder. This representative is responsible for assisting the implementation team with computer and software recommendations. This stakeholder will also be critical in providing the implementation team and management with information and assurance regarding data security.

Lastly, the citizens, business community and customers of the police department will be critical stakeholders. It is important that community concerns be considered from the beginning. A commitment to maintaining current or increased level of law enforcement services should exist as a result of implementing a telecommuting program.

### Implementation Team

In order for a telecommuting program to be properly evaluated, an implementation team must be organized and several key positions must be identified. The team should consist of eight to ten department members in addition to a Telecommuting Project Manager. Each team member will provide their own expertise relating to their position within the organization. Each will play an important role in the implementation process.<sup>30</sup>

Ideally, the implementation team should consist of the following participants; the

Chief of Police or a designee, Department Legal Council, Human Resources / Personnel, Labor Representative, Training Manager, Disaster Coordinator, Information Systems Representative, Public Relations, and a representative from each division of the department.

The most important role on the team is that of the Telecommuting Project Manager. The primary role of the telecommuting project manager is to be the single point of contact for the organization. The size of the organization will dictate how much responsibility the project manager will have. Telecommuting is more effectively implemented when several people share the responsibility and have an opportunity to feel ownership for their individual contribution to the program. The telecommuting project manager should obtain support for the program from staff level positions either at the beginning of the program or after a pilot program has been implemented and evaluated. However, traditionally in police organizations, the support from the top is necessary at the program's infancy.<sup>31</sup>

The primary activity of the telecommuting project manager is to provide leadership for the program. In addition, the project manager must provide a clear understanding and constant promotion of the benefits of telecommuting. By leading the project, the project manager will acquire a global perspective. Through the team, the project manager should spread the word about telecommuting. A creative approach is necessary using every available means of communication. These steps will help ensure that everyone understands why telecommuting has been implemented in the agency. The project manager must be familiar with the advantages of telecommuting

and emphasize it whenever possible.<sup>32</sup>

### Activity Plan

Once a project manager has been selected and a transition team formed, an activity plan must be formulated to affect the changes needed to bring about the desired future.

The focus in the beginning should be on developing a telecommunications pilot project. A pilot project will benefit the agency, potential telecommuters, their managers, and their co-workers by establishing a solid base of experience on which to build. The purpose of the pilot project is to identify what does and does not work for the agency prior to a larger scale implementation of the telecommuting work option. The pilot project should encompass a broad cross section of job classifications. The pilot project should include units where there are multiple telecommuters to assess the impact of the unit. The project should be large enough to be evaluated for the agency as a whole. It is important to also assess the satisfaction and effectiveness of staff who do not telecommute, as successful telecommuting is a team effort.<sup>33</sup>

Pilot projects typically last six months to one year. During this time, regular assessments and evaluations should be conducted, both by surveys and informal meetings of telecommuters, managers and non-telecommuting co-workers. At the end of the pilot project, the agency will have a strong sense of how appropriate telecommuting is for the agency and its staff.<sup>34</sup> Keeping in mind adjustments may be necessary through experience, the following things should be done in order to properly

implement, operate and evaluate the program:

- Develop a decision-making consensus of expectations from the program. Why is the organization interested in implementing telecommuting?
- Obtain top level support and agreement that the telecommuting program will be completely embraced by the Chief of Police.
- Obtain stakeholder support. Carry out negotiations or consultations, as necessary, with stakeholder groups.
- Form a telecommuting implementation team that is most advantageous to your organization. For optimal support and ease of implementation, identify who needs to be involved in planning.
- Identify the Telecommunications Project Manager and make him/her the single point of contact for the organization.
- Solicit interest in the concept from department personnel.
- Identify alternative workplace arrangements tailored to fit the organization's needs and capabilities.
- Develop an operating strategy and policy for the program. What are the parameters of the program? Who will be in it? How will it work?
- Develop implementation and change plans for management. What is the schedule for implementation? How will it be implemented? How will the change be managed?
- Develop orientation training for the program. How will it be communicated?
- Develop policy instruments such as work agreements between the organization, manager, and worker.
- Establish mechanisms for coordinating, supporting, and troubleshooting the program once it is underway. Ensure adequate technical and policy support for the participants.
- Establish and implement a program awareness, promotion, and acceptance plan. Inform the organization why this is being done and how it will benefit them and the organization. In general, dispel information

and anxiety.

- Establish and implement a monitoring and evaluation system to ensure that the program goals are being met and proper modifications are being made.<sup>35</sup>

### Selecting Telecommuters

Telecommuting is only feasible for those tasks within a job which are amenable in whole or in part to being performed away from the department. Management of the agency should establish employee selection criteria such as employee motivation and job specific positions suited for telecommuting. Other selection criteria may include reasonable accommodation provisions for permanently and temporarily disabled employees and displaced employees such as light-duty personnel.

Employee participation in telecommuting should be voluntary. No employee should be required to telecommute. If there are employees in the organization who are good candidates for telecommuting, it should be discussed with them. Determining which of your employees will make good telecommuters requires consideration of the individual's work responsibilities and habits, and if applicable, whether his or her home situation is conducive to telecommuting. The following issues should be considered when evaluating potential candidates; supervision and feedback, social interaction, organization and time management skills, self-motivation, and performance.

It is crucial to select employees who are motivated and self-directed. It is equally crucial to have managers with appropriate management skills, or the willingness to learn to fully utilize the telecommuting work arrangement. A manager

who is comfortable managing for results will generally be a successful telecommuter manager. Additionally, a good working relationship and good flow of communications between the manager and telecommuter are essential.<sup>36</sup>

### Technology and Telecommuting

While some telecommuters may do their required work at home or in the office with pen and paper, others will require a computer, computer with modem, or dedicated terminal to communicate with people and access the information needed to do their jobs. It is essential that the equipment used at home be compatible with central office equipment. Purchase of a laptop computer should be considered. A laptop eliminates the need to buy expensive computer furniture in which to house a regular size personal computer, allows greater flexibility, and makes it more convenient for the telecommuter to use a single piece of equipment both at home and in the office. Typewriters, copiers, or fax machines may occasionally be necessary.<sup>37</sup>

The minimum requirement is a telephone so that the telecommuter may stay in contact with the office. Voice communications may be handled through the telecommuter's residential phone, if call volume is not heavy. If extensive voice communications are necessary for the tasks performed at home, a second line should be considered. The need to transfer incoming calls to the regular office from the telecommuter must also be considered. Options such as call forwarding on the office line and voice mail should be evaluated.

Data communications may also be handled through the telecommuters home

phone if volume is light. If extensive data communications are necessary, a second line should be considered. An additional option for data is a dedicated line in which the telecommuter's agency should pay for.

If the agency has an office automation network or other centralized computer services such as Local Area Networks, arrangements should be made so that the telecommuter can access his/her electronic mail and transfer files.<sup>38</sup>

### Information Security

Telecommuting is a powerful tool for increasing management and employee effectiveness. Information security risks can increase in a telecommuting environment as a result of additional technology applications and increased communications access. There are standard information security activities that have particular relevance to telecommuting. During the investigation of telecommuting, the agency should review its information security practices. Those practices and policies should be updated to a telecommuting environment prior to the start of the telecommuting pilot project.<sup>39</sup>

It is apparent that implementing telecommunications technology in a medium-sized, urban police department is worth exploring further. Utilizing some degree of caution and patience the organization should begin by analyzing the telecommuting alternative in a particular agency. As mentioned earlier, half of all companies in the United States and Canada allow employees to telecommute through ongoing or pilot programs; however, in some cases telecommuting has not delivered positive results

expected.

Stakeholders need to be identified early in the planning process.

Implementation strategies identifying potential problems associated with implementing a telecommunications program is essential to its success followed by a transitional management plan. Management and supervisors will be the cornerstone of the telecommuting program's success or failure. Communications skills are at the heart of the program. A transition team will move the program toward implementation by identifying a telecommunications program management at the programs infancy. The primary role of the telecommuting project manager is to provide leadership and be the single point of contact for the organization. Through an activity plan a telecommunications pilot project should be developed. The pilot project should have a target duration of six to twelve months.

Telecommuting employees should be chosen carefully. It is crucial to select employees who are motivated and self-directed in addition to matching specific jobs suitable for telcommuting. Finally, an analysis of current organization technology needs and related security issues should be explored to properly facilitate telecommuting.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Implications on Leadership

Telecommuting is a product of the Information Age. The very nature of telecommutable jobs is tied to the manipulation of information. Managing the work of information workers is very different from managing production units. The products are often intangible, production standards are difficult to develop, and assessment of quality is often subjective in the short term.

Perhaps the most significant implication that this issue has on leadership is the necessary buy-in to a change in management style relative to telecommuters. Some leaders will accept it with open arms while others will reject it.

“For a lot of old-school managers, this is such a big change that, if you don’t train them, it’s doomed to fail,” says Richard Skinner, president of Clayton College & State University in Morrow, Ga., and head of Metropolitan Atlanta Telecommuting Advisory Council. “If you don’t get the managers and leaders trained and prepared to do this, and to completely rethink how they view supervision, it’s not going to work.”<sup>40</sup>

The most successful philosophy for managing telecommuters is that of management by end result. The elements that should be built into this style of management are project schedules and key milestones, regular status reporting, peer and project reviews, team participation in decision making, trust, and telecommuter agreements.<sup>41</sup>

## Funding / Budgetary Implications

Funding a telecommunication's implementation program is not a major concern. For home telecommuters the up-front costs can be as little as zero, where the only equipment needed is a telephone and the existing home phone is used. More realistically, the telecommuter will need access to a variety of equipment and/or will use the telephone extensively on telecommuting days. In the beginning, the program should be introduced as a pilot project with four to six selected telecommuters.

The following up-front and ongoing expenses may be incurred by the agency. Those noted with an asterisk are commonly already incurred by most agencies; thus where the costs are incurred becomes the only difference; further, these expenses do not necessarily represent additional costs to an agency.<sup>42</sup>

- Long distance charges\*
- Installation and monthly charges for a second telephone line
- Telephone usage charges
- Computer or typewriter assigned to the employee
- Computer software\*
- Specialized furniture
- Modem
- Modifications to the central computer system
- Answering machine or voice mail\*
- Fax machine
- Equipment maintenance and repair charges\*

- Replacement of damaged or lost equipment\*

Issues similar to those for productivity assessments impede true cost-benefit analysis of telecommuting programs. While there have been few comprehensive cost benefit analysis reported, there have been reports based on individual or selected factors such as facility costs. In fact, there is a growing research suggesting organizations are realizing substantial savings by using telecommuting and alternative office arrangements.<sup>43</sup>

## Evaluation Activities

### Focus Groups

Telecommuting focus groups should be part of the evaluation process. Focus sessions should be held when the program is implemented in the agency which has had no previous experience with telecommuting. These sessions are an excellent way of determining how the program is doing in its early stages.

A focus session should take place two to three months after the telecommuting program has been implemented, or after the participants have telecommuted 10 or more times. The focus group moderator should be a neutral party or someone outside the department. The purpose of the focus group is to obtain an honest snapshot of how the program is progressing. Information from the focus groups should be documented and communicated to the organization. Focus group feedback can then be used to correct any problems uncovered by the sessions.<sup>44</sup>

The following questions would provide management and facilitators with the best

possible information for evaluating the project:

- Has annual use of sick leave or overtime changed from pre-telecommuting years?
- Has the need for office space been reduced?
- Are computers or other equipment more or less available to in-office staff as a result of some employees telecommuting?
- Are telecommuters generally available when needed or do co-workers waste time because of lack of access to telecommuters?
- Has the morale of either telecommuters or the non-telecommuting staff changed as a result of the telecommuting program?
- Have recruitment and hiring opportunities improved as a result of offering the telecommuting work option?
- Has retention of valued employees improved?
- Has the agency/city/county increased its ability to meet trip reduction goals as a result of offering telecommuting?
- Have peak commute trips been reduced?
- Have Air Quality Management District (AQMD) average vehicle ridership measures improved?
- Has reducing the number of employees in the office reduced the demand for parking spaces?

Telecommuting benefits are sometimes difficult to measure. According to Mike

Verespej of Industry Week Magazine:

Companies are benefitting from these alternative work arrangements, but will not realize their full potential until they begin developing ways to measure productivity and efficiency. Rather than act on hearsay and gut instincts, companies need to develop quantifiable data that will enable them to expand these concepts to the entire workforce. That will also quiet the skeptics—many of which, according to survey data, are older,

more traditional managers.<sup>45</sup>

## Recommendations

It is recommended that copies of this project be forwarded to the stakeholders identified as well as selected California, medium-size, urban police departments for possible pilot program implementation. Following a review of the document, if an agency is willing, there is enough information contained to begin facilitating a telecommunications pilot project. In the beginning, it is extremely important to recognize the need to be properly educated on this subject. In addition, it is imperative that command staff is briefed properly and there are no surprises along the way. Therefore, patience is a necessary element while exploring and eventually implementing the project.

Independent agencies should utilize the step by step process in formulating their telecommunications program. Each agency will have individual needs, therefore, the process may need to be modified to ensure a successful implementation.

## Conclusion

In order to effectively implement telecommunications technology in a medium-sized urban police department by the year 2005, a department must address it initially as a small experiment and approach it slowly using the step by step process outlined in this report. Law enforcement agencies operate in traditional paradigms. Law enforcement agencies are unique in that this technology does not apply as readily to

the profession as compared to many private industries; however, there is room for exploration. Certainly there are positions in police departments which can be easily identified as fitting the criteria to benefit from telecommuting.

The agency should begin by developing a transition management plan which must include complete support by top management officials and stakeholders. A telecommuting project manager must be appointed and designated by the Chief Executive Officer as the point person for the organization. The project manager will develop a telecommunications program implementation team. The implementation team will consist of a wide range of stakeholder representatives. The implementation team is responsible for developing an activity plan to include the a telecommunications pilot project. The target completion for the pilot project should be no longer than one year. Telecommuting employees should be chosen based on the criteria established in this report. An evaluation process should be part of the program including focus groups to monitor the program for efficiency. Command staff and peripheral managers must remain flexible and patient through the process.

If law enforcement organizations are going to continue to be successful, organizations must continue to look outside their walls and into the operations of other organizations including private industry. While law enforcement agencies may not want to initiate identical programs or configure their operations for profit, they have an obligation to stay with, or ahead of the curve. Under the watchful eye of the community, organizations must continue to justify and compete for resources while searching for alternatives and improvements to standard operating procedures.

This is an opportunity for law enforcement organizations to explore an exciting alternative to traditional operations. Telecommuting will offer opportunities, challenges and ultimately advantages to law enforcement and the community we serve.

APPENDIX ONE

PANEL MEMBERS - NOMINAL GROUP TECHNIQUE

Conducted by Mark Smiley  
Santa Monica Police Department  
January 6, 2000

Eric Uller, Police Department Technical Specialist

Mr. Uller is the Santa Monica Police Department Technical Specialist.

Glen Guldbeck, Security Specialist Salesman

Mr. Guldbeck is a security products salesman for Westec Security.

Cathy Carnes, Office Manager

Ms. Carnes is the Office Manager for the Special Enforcement Division of the Santa Monica Police Department.

David Smiley, Independent Sales Manager

Mr. Smiley works for a large corporation owned by Tyco Inc. Mr. Smiley travels within the country providing sales presentations.

Roy McGinnis, Police Captain

Captain McGinnis is the Office of Special Enforcement Commander for the Santa Monica Police Department. Captain McGinnis is a POST Command College graduate.

Mike Rock, Police Lieutenant

Lieutenant Rock is the Investigation's Lieutenant for the Glendale Police Department and a Command College classmate.

Pasquale Guido, Police Lieutenant

Lieutenant Guido is the Youth Services Division Lieutenant for the Santa Monica Police Department.

Lunita Rodriguez, Personnel Analyst

Ms. Rodriguez is an assistant to the City of Santa Monica's Personnel Director.

Jory Wolf, Information Systems

Mr. Wolf is the City of Santa Monica's Department Head for the Information Systems Department.

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