

HOW WILL MID-SIZE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES
RECRUIT PEACE OFFICERS BY THE YEAR 2006?

A project presented to
California Commission on
Peace Officer Standards and Training

by

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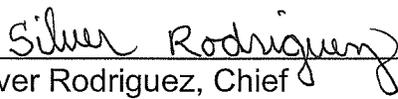
This Command College Project is a FUTURES study of a particular emerging issue in law enforcement. Its purpose is NOT to predict the future, but rather to project a number of possible scenarios for strategic planning consideration.

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.

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).

This project, written under the guidance and approval of the student's agency, mentor and advisor, has been presented to and accepted by the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training, state of California, in fulfillment of the requirements of Command College Class Thirty One.


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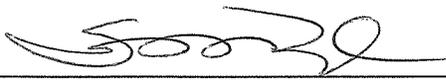
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CHAPTER ONE

ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

Recruiting Employees to the Police Profession

The recruitment and retention of qualified peace officers has been an ongoing challenge for the law enforcement profession. Over the past ten to fifteen years, law enforcement agencies have struggled to find talented, yet suitable, police applicants to fill their vacant positions. During those years, the candidate pool was plentiful and they competed vigorously for the few available positions. Law enforcement agencies have relied on slow bureaucratic processes to move candidates through a cumbersome series of screenings. This screening process has been used to weed out the less qualified candidates with the hope that the cream would rise to the top. Typically, a high percentage of the candidates were deemed unsuitable during the background investigation or the psychological examination. A police or sheriff's department could easily process one hundred applicants to find three to five qualified persons.

In the next several years, law enforcement agencies in California and nationally, will continue to face the daunting challenge of finding and recruiting talented employees. This challenge will be compounded by the shrinking workforce pool. By the year 2006, the workforce pool is projected to be 141 million, while there will be approximately 151 million available jobs.¹ Law enforcement and governmental human resource departments will likely have to adopt new strategies to attract people to the public safety profession. While some of the traditional methods might still be useful, contemporary approaches will be vital to filling vacant positions.

A significant contributor to the recruitment crisis is the recent improvement of retirement plans in use by many agencies. The Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) has a 3% at 50 plan that pays retirees an excellent retirement income. Additionally, recent legislation now allows some retirees to receive up to 90 percent of their salary. A large number of our law enforcement employees are from the baby boomer generation. This generation totals 77 million and includes those born between 1946 and 1964.² A hefty percentage of this group is reaching retirement age and many will be quick to take advantage of their retirement benefits.

The State of Recruiting Efforts

In past years, there always seemed to be plenty of applicants competing for the few law enforcement positions available. In the mid 1990s, the number of entry level employees dropped dramatically. According to Work Force 2020, a study by Richard W. Judy and Carol D'Amico, part of the reason for this drop was the population grew more slowly during the 1970s and 1980s, than at any time since the depression.³ Law enforcement is not the only profession feeling this pinch. Other fields are experiencing this same dwindling supply of new talent. A study published in 2000 indicated there are more than 600,000 vacant Information Technology positions in the United States. In the engineering field, the number of graduates from engineering programs decreased 33 percent between 1990 and 1996.⁴ This chasm in the employment-age population will continue to be a barrier to easy, successful recruiting, well into the 21st century.

A drop in the birth rate in the 1950s and 1960s, resulted in a significant drop in the numbers of people in the employment pool. This reduction, 20 percent below the accustomed rate, has created a shortage in entry level workers in the eighteen to twenty-four age range. Although the birth rate increased after the baby boom, it did not return to the previous level. ⁵

In the past few years, there has been significant discussion and effort focused on the nursing shortage. Despite efforts by the legislature and multiple agencies, this situation goes unresolved. More recently, California Governor Gray Davis has been actively involved in countering a teacher shortage crisis. An assessment of the situation concluded that California needs 300,000 new teachers over the next ten years.⁶ The Governor is committed to opening six regional teacher recruitment centers across the state. Clearly, this is an unconventional approach that seems to be garnering much support and positive reviews.

Police agencies across the nation, large and small, those with low and high incidences of crime, and those with high and low salaries, are all struggling to hire tens of thousands of new officers in a tight labor market. Law enforcement recruiters are seeking candidates who possess high moral values, dedication to service, community commitment, and team involvement. However, recruiters are encountering a different type of employee. As they sift through a depleted talent pool, they are likely to encounter candidates who have used drugs, are out of shape, and lie about their past, in an effort to land policing jobs. Finding talented recruits, especially those who possess strong values has become increasingly difficult over the past few years. A number of factors contributing to this dilemma include a booming economy, culturally

diverse and changing communities, the mind set and expectations of prospective recruits, and competition from other agencies and private sector businesses. The ratio between the number of individuals who apply, to those who are actually hired, has also dramatically increased. In a USA Today interview, Thomas Frazier, Director of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), a branch of the Justice Department, stated “across the country, everybody’s talking about the overall shrinking of the applicant pool.” He said this was a major concern and police departments across the country have been unable to fulfill the Clinton Administration’s six year program aimed at putting 100,000 new police officers on the street by the end of the year. He added that as of June 2000, only about 68,000 officers had been hired or reassigned to patrol duty under the initiative to put more officers on the streets.⁷

Low entry level salaries for police officers are the number one reason cited for the nationwide shortage of law enforcement candidates, according to a new survey of professional police recruiters. The second recruitment problem is finding a sufficient number of recruits who can pass the police examination. According to police recruiters surveyed, the top reasons candidates failed the police entrance examination and application process were:

- failure to pass the written portion of the test (68%);
- failure to pass the personal background investigation (25%);
- failure to pass the reading comprehension portion of the test (24%);
- failure to pass the judgment skills portion of the test (19%);
- failure to pass the physical fitness screening test (18%)⁸;

In 1989, the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) hosted a symposium on the issue of recruitment. During this three-day symposium, efforts were made by the participants to develop strategies that would improve the recruitment of police officer candidates. A summary report of the symposium was produced and distributed throughout the state. Currently, the Standards and Evaluation Bureau of POST is sponsoring a Recruiting Project. There are plans for another symposium, a strategic planning process, the development of a best practices manual and other strategies to manage this notable issue.

The Impact of Improved Retirement Plans

In the year 2000, California had 570 agencies that employed sworn peace officers. Combined, these organizations employed 79,770 sworn officers and 48,993 non-peace officers.⁹ A 1997 and 1998 Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin indicated there were approximately 678,000 sworn officers employed by local police, sheriffs, and federal law enforcement agencies across the nation.^{10 11 12} While only a certain percentage of these officers will actually be retiring, this comes at an inopportune time when filling police officer positions is quite difficult.

As the first of the baby boomers begin to retire, they leave behind an incredible amount of intellectual capital, experience, and energy. They have made significant contributions and raised the caliber of the profession to what it is today. The graying baby boomer generation, beginning to retire now until the year 2020, will be followed by a much smaller generation that may not have the skills to push the economy forward and carry our profession. By 2020, when the last of the baby boomers reaches 65, old

people will comprise 20 percent of the population. Currently, more than 31 million or 12.4 percent of the nation's population is estimated to be 65 or older.¹³

This aging society will have several significant effects on the workforce, such as: aging workers and their productivity, healthcare needs, retirement plans, and rehiring retirees as part of the workforce. Unfortunately, many police organizations have engaged in the practice of putting senior staff members out to pasture when they get to their last few years of service. At times it is the staff member's choice. However oftentimes, it is management who attempts to keep the employee out of the way and uninvolved. Most often they are considered dinosaurs and viewed as no longer contributing to the organization. The smart organization realizes the value of senior employees and relies on their experience and capability as a useful resource in the organization.¹⁴

Since the introduction of the PERS 3% at 50 retirement plan, the number of agencies adopting this plan has grown exponentially. This improved retirement plan is already a benefit for state employees. Local police and sheriffs' departments are quickly jumping on this band wagon. It seems every week, other agencies, large and small, sign up to take advantage of this benefit. As agencies acquire this new plan, they are immediately tasked with anticipating the number of employees who may retire in light of this benefit. In their competitiveness, many agencies do not want to be the last in their area to obtain the 3% at 50 plan. Police managers and human resources' staff see this retirement plan as a significant benefit that will improve recruiting efforts. The terrific irony here is that this recruitment tool is compounding the problem in that it encourages senior members of the department to retire early.

The PERS 3% at 50 plan adds tremendous value to the retirement options of those in the twilight of their careers. This plan allows participants to buy back any military time which can then be counted as service credit. The participants are also allowed the opportunity to buy back service time with other public agencies. This can be very enticing for senior staff members who have been in this profession for twenty-five to thirty-five years. Although age fifty-five is still considered young, many opt to get out of law enforcement and move into less demanding and stressful part-time work. Over the years, they have gained valuable skills in leadership, organizing, project management, team building, problem solving, just to name a few.¹⁵ Many of the retirees will use these skills to enter the job market as consultants, security specialists, managers, or private investigators. If they chose to work less, they will certainly be afforded the opportunity to devote time to those things they might have neglected while in the law enforcement profession. Those who choose not to work, might still live rather comfortably earning up to 90 percent of their highest year income earned. Many see this retirement benefit as a reason to get out of a career that is filled with stress and has been known to have detrimental effects on the health and life expectancy of those in that line of work.

The biggest impact on law enforcement will be felt in the management ranks. Many of those retiring have been with police agencies many years and have climbed through the ranks to supervisory and managerial positions. Along with many battle scars, they will take with them significant experience, intellectual capital, and many skills and abilities that are lacking in the next generation. Over the years, these chiefs, sheriffs, captains, lieutenants, and sergeants have been the driving force of our police

organizations. They have been the catalysts for new programs and the ones who implemented the direction and vision that come from leaders at the top. These senior staff members have made many positive contributions and it will be very difficult to see them leave and even more difficult to replace them.

The Impact of the Generation X Employee

There is much being written and said about the new generation of employee entering the workforce. Sadly, the descriptors or trait of this new breed of workers is not very positive. The Generation X population is a large part of the American workforce today, as it will be in the future. The Generation X population consists of roughly 44 million people born between 1964 and 1979. This generation will be the new officer pool for the next twenty to thirty years.¹⁶ Many are being quick to question their work ethic, values, and general perspective on life. Before we completely define them and confine them to a box, it is important that managers strive to understand them and determine the makeup of the Generation X employee.

The Generation Xer was likely to have grown up in a home where the parents were divorced or where both parents worked. A significant number were raised by a single parent. These were latch key kids in an increasingly dangerous world. They grew up in non-traditional families and were exposed to homelessness, divorce, video games, AIDS, corporate downsizing, presidential scandals, cable television, cellular phones, pagers, ATMs, home computers, and the Internet. During their lives, the world has changed at a tremendous pace and they have responded well and been able to change along with it. They have watched their parents lose jobs to downsizing,

mergers, or the collapsing of their company. The Generation Xers are used to facing problems on their own and have great confidence in their ability to fend for themselves.¹⁷

Police managers will have to strive to understand this generation to be able to meet their needs. While financial security is important to the Generation Xer, training and self-building opportunities are also valued. They live with the idea that the more skillful they are, the better earning power and control over their lives they are able to have.¹⁸ Generation Xers generally have higher education levels and superior technological knowledge compared to their predecessors. They prefer to work alone rather than working in teams. Paid personal leave and vacation time ranks high on their needs list, as does a balanced lifestyle.¹⁹

Of significant concern to police administrators, will be the performance of Generation Xers as they enter the supervisory and management ranks. Certainly they will bring a different style and approach to leading others in the organization. As other generations before them, they will bring their own brand of leadership to our organizations. Potentially, there could be conflict caused by younger Generation X employees managing or supervising the older baby boomer employee. It is expected that it will be no different from the current generation, when young superstar employees progress rapidly through the ranks, bypassing older employees. Generation X employees are expected to change jobs and/or careers several times during their life. This will contribute to the recruitment issue, and employers will have to find strategies and techniques to retain them.²⁰ Refer to Table 1-1 for differences in expectations by the two groups.

As society changes, the workforce will also change with it. Managers in all professions will have to strive to change with it, if they are to be successful. The successful employer will be the one who is able to assimilate the Generation X employee into the organization. They will also have to build and communicate a top employer reputation if they are to retain the Generation X employee.

Table 1-1

Baby Boomer versus Generation X Expectations²¹

Baby Boomers' Expectations	Gen X'ers' Expectations
Reciprocal dependence	Self-reliance
Linear career path	Multiple careers
Workaholism	Balanced work/family life
Career growth within an organization	Career growth through multiple organizations
Organizational identity	Self/professional identity
Commitment to organization	Commitment to self
Strong organization loyalty	Weak/no organization loyalty
Want to be managed	Expect to be coached
Want homogeneity	Expect/respect diversity
Expect retirement at age 65	Expect early retirement before age 50 - or extended employment beyond age 65
Results = job satisfaction	Fun = job satisfaction
Exchange hard work for good pay	Exchange hard work for good pay plus training and development

Finding the Next Police Officers

There are several factors contributing to the shallow applicant pool. Nationally, the strong economy has resulted in low unemployment and this has taken many of the best and brightest out of the applicant pool. The highly talented job hunters are lured away from a once coveted law enforcement career by more lucrative opportunities.

These are often high-tech or business careers that also include high salaries. Negative views of law enforcement in the media have contributed to a low image, causing many to choose other professions. The different work ethic of the generation entering the workforce is also contributing to this recruitment issue. Many of the applicants, who are vying to land police jobs, have little life experiences, have never assumed responsibility, and have no idea what to expect in the academy or what the job entails.²² Most recruiters agree that the overall quality of people striving to enter law enforcement is much lower than in previous years. More and more, candidates are struggling to pass entrance examinations that involve basic reading comprehension and language skills.

The common practice of police agencies used to be that any admissions about past use of hard drugs by candidates were grounds for immediate disqualification. While many managers resist lowering this standard, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find candidates who have not experimented with marijuana. Recruiters are also encountering many who have experimented with addictive drugs such as cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine. In police agencies across the US, large percentages of police candidates are failing the screening process because they admit to recent drug use or are caught lying about drugs or other aspects of their past.²³ In dealing with this issue, many police agencies are establishing some allowances for past substance abuse. Job announcement flyers are now including a drug usage time line, which indicates to the applicant a period of elapsed time during which certain types of drugs must not have been used. The desire of agencies using these time lines is that candidates will self-disqualify if they have used drugs within the prohibited period.

Nationally, police officials are also having trouble finding physically fit police recruits. Some of these couch potatoes have been unable to complete mandatory physical agility tests. This comes as a shock as the tests are fairly simple and not extremely strenuous.²⁴

Lastly, despite the commitment of effort, manpower, and thousands of dollars to recruit candidates, only small numbers of applicants are turning up. Police agencies in several cities are going out of state in search of qualified and quality candidates. As an example, in the later part of 2000, the Phoenix, Arizona Police Department spent weeks and thousands of dollars in radio and marketing ads to conduct a recruiting effort in Oxnard, California. Despite this commitment of effort, only twenty-two applicants showed up to participate in the testing and selection process.²⁵ Los Angeles, California Police Department (LAPD) recruitment billboards can be seen throughout the US. LAPD recruiters also spend a considerable amount of time in other states seeking to fill their many vacant positions. This becomes a concern, especially for smaller police agencies, as they tend to lose officers to larger departments that have higher salaries and pay special bonuses.²⁶ Recruiting has become labor intensive. A typical agency that carefully screens its candidates can easily go through 200 applicants to find 5 to 10 who will be offered jobs. In light of this shallow applicant pool, not only will there be strong competition between law enforcement agencies, there will also be competition with other trades and professions.

Traditional Recruiting Strategies

Over the past several years, police agencies have resorted to traditional recruiting practices that have proven successful. These approaches have been time tested and continue to lead to positive results, although with diminishing returns. Most recruiters, managers, and personnel staff agree that in the next few years, new strategies will be necessary to fill vacant law enforcement positions throughout the state and nation.²⁷ Traditionally, recruiting strategies have included:

- Explorer/cadet programs
- High school/college campus recruiting presentations
- Citizen/junior academies
- Military bases
- Job/career fairs
- Community events
- Professional journals
- Local and area newspapers
- Distributing job announcements to law enforcement community
- Word of mouth

In the past few years, more departments are recruiting for vacant positions through their agency web sites on the world wide web. There has been an explosive growth of online recruiting venues for all employers. This has provided options that work with more speed and less expense than other traditional means.²⁸

Contemporary Strategies for Recruitment

Numerous surveys have shown that salary is not always the most important aspect of working at a job. Employees want to know their work is meaningful, provides challenges, and they want to be recognized for good work. Employers who acknowledge that their employees work hard also realize the value they provide to the company.²⁹ Employers of choice offer excellent employee and family-friendly benefit packages. While these benefits add up in costs, they also build loyalty, attract candidates, and encourage retention.³⁰

- Long term care insurance
- Daycare cost vouchers or on-site daycare
- Flexible spending accounts for childcare or medical benefits
- Wellness programs
- Educational assistance
- Benefits for domestic partners
- Physical examinations
- Home computers
- Low- or no-cost loans
- Parental leave for one year (for new mothers and fathers)
- Pick-up and delivery of dry cleaning and laundry
- Flexible or compensatory time off
- Flu shots
- Relocation pay
- Alternative work schedules

- Home purchase/apartment leases partially paid by employer
- Orientation/mentoring programs
- Prepaid legal insurance
- Lawn care
- Vacation bonuses
- Summer camps/vacation retreats
- Supplemental home loans
- HUD Officer Next Door program
- Take home cars

This list is not all inclusive of benefits employers are offering as a means of attracting candidates to their organizations. While some of these appear suitable for the private sector only, successful employers of the future will be the ones who set themselves apart from others. Certainly new and unconventional strategies will be necessary to entice all job seekers.

The factors contributing to the recruitment crisis are many and varied. Any one of them could be the basis for a project paper. Anyone reviewing material on this subject would find different perspectives on some of the factors. This can be unsettling as there is not always a means to determine which view is accurate. Obviously, reliable facts are vital to the planning process. Some of the factors contributing to the recruitment crisis include:

- Competition from the private sector
- Diminished applicant pool
- Strong booming economy

- Changing demographics (increased number of women & minorities)
- Bureaucratic selection process (slow and unwieldy)
- Uncompetitive salary/benefit packages
- Low professional image of law enforcement
- Cost of living: employees cannot afford to live near their work
- Ineffective recruiting methods
- Disqualifying factors (drug use history, low moral values, unsuitable)
- Low unemployment rates
- Quality of life issues (shift work, commuting, etc.)
- Generation X population - job hopping or changing of careers

The challenge of finding top notch candidates to fill vacant peace officer positions is not likely to be resolved anytime soon. As managers and human resources staff struggle with this challenge, it will be critical they look beyond the horizon to effectively plan a response and be prepared for impacts on recruitment caused by other trends and events.

Summary

As law enforcement agencies strive to maintain their credibility and status, the recruitment of high quality candidates will continue to be a critical issue. The future of peace officer recruiting appears rather bleak. All factors listed have the potential for detrimentally impacting recruiting more than they are likely to improve it. Clearly, the radar screen shows only negative things coming that will affect our ability to attract and hire the number and quality of candidates we seek.

Law enforcement has not readily observed nor learned from the crisis created by the teacher and nurse shortage. We are still significantly behind the curve and poorly prepared to impact recruiting in years to come. Improved retirement plans, Generation X employees and the shrinking work force are factors beyond our control. We can however, improve the image of law enforcement, improve peace officer salaries and benefits to be competitive, and do a myriad of other things to attract good candidates.

One way to ensure the profession is prepared for the future involves an effort to forecast it. This can be accomplished through strategic planning, the nominal group technique process, listening to futurists or observing trends and events. If law enforcement intends to meet the recruitment challenge head-on, anticipating the future then planning and responding appropriately will be critical. The next chapter explores forecasting the future of recruiting and how the profession might be impacted by what lies ahead.

CHAPTER TWO

FORECASTING THE FUTURE

Today, more and more law enforcement agencies are looking toward the future as they strive to create and possibly impact it. The profession is changing its traditional reactive response, focusing more on facilitating the future and certainly being prepared to deal with change and its implications. The value of futures forecasting is realized by strategic organizations as they improve their ability to anticipate the future and their ability to learn and adapt.

In most circumstances, there are signals that change is approaching. The signals may be weak or strong, obvious or invisible, and may be direct or indirect. Often these signals come in the form of trends or events. It is important to examine and anticipate these changes and their impacts on society, individuals, and organizations. When looking to the horizon for these changes, the primary categories to consider are social, technological, economic, environmental, and political. Future forecasting is not about predicting the future. It is more about making assumptions of what the future will be like. Only then can we better plan for it, prepare for it, or possibly change it. Strategic organizations have to take responsibility, and it is crucial they make well-informed choices.

The Nominal Group Technique

In furtherance of this endeavor, a panel of subject matter experts was convened for a Nominal Group Technique (NGT). The NGT is a research method that relies on the brainstorming approach to generate ideas, solutions and special insights on the

subject being studied. The focus of the NGT was to forecast trends and events that have the potential to impact recruitment. The NGT panel comprised participants from the following fields:

- Sheriff's lieutenant overseeing recruiting and background investigations
- Police Lieutenant just promoted from administrative duties including recruitment
- Human Resources Director of community banking system
- Recruiting Coordinator for the California Highway Patrol
- Coordinator of Workforce, Development and Training at Community College
- Supervisor of Human Resources Department for municipal government
- Police Administrative Sergeant

Prior to the NGT panel session, the participants were provided with relevant information about the NGT process, the study issue, and the forecasting of trends and events. This process took place in early April 2001, yet the panel spoke of large scale terrorism domestically and significant conflicts involving the United States.

Trends

In the first phase, the panel was tasked with identifying critical trends that have the potential of impacting the recruitment issue - finding talented and qualified candidates to fill the many vacant police positions. The panel forecasted several trends that potentially could impact the issue of recruitment in years to come. (Appendix A) The following table (2-1) reflects the panel's feelings regarding the trends forecasted. Each of the trends was assigned an arbitrary value of 100 for the "Today" column. With that as a starting point, the panel was asked to rate the level or state of the trend during

the three time periods. In the last column, they rated the level of concern or importance of the trend.

**Table 2-1
Trend Evaluation**

Trend Statement	-5 Years	Today	+5 Years	+10 Years	Level of Concern 1-10 Scale
1. Performance of National economy	100	100	100	100	10
2. Availability of jobs in job market	100	100	110	120	8
3. Socioeconomic status of employees	50	100	150	200	8
4. Loyalty and commitment to the department	100	100	90	80	7
5. Drug usage by potential candidates	90	100	125	150	8
6. Availability of technology	70	100	150	200	8
7. Staffing levels	100	100	120	130	7
8. Image of police officers	100	100	90	90	7
9. Availability of financial resources	100	100	120	140	6
10. Respect for law enforcement as a profession	100	100	100	110	7

The following is a list, description and analysis of the panel's top ten trends:

1. Performance of national economy - The panel felt the condition of the national economy had serious implications on the availability of qualified employees for all professions. Although there were differing views on this issue, the panel generally agreed that a good economy would make it difficult for law enforcement agencies to find good candidates as there would be an abundance of jobs available. They also agreed that a poor economy would result in

improved recruiting efforts, as many people would be looking for employment of any type. This was one of those instances in which a negative trend would have positive results on the law enforcement recruiting picture. All agreed this was a high-impact issue and one that warranted considerable attention and monitoring on the part of law enforcement.

2. Availability of jobs in job markets - The panel felt this trend would also be crucial to the recruitment efforts of law enforcement agencies. This trend is closely affected by the state of the economy, however not interdependent of it. Several panel members felt that despite a good economy, a certain job market might crumble for a variety of reasons. One example is the number of Dot.Com companies that have folded in the recent past. The panel concurred that the economy is not the sole determining factor in the success of any business or corporation. When manufacturing plants, Information Technology companies, airline companies or other industries lay off significant numbers of employees, the applicant pool is temporarily recharged. While the job market and available work force fluctuate, candidates become readily available during mergers, downsizing, rightsizing or bankruptcy by organizations. The panel felt there would be an abundance of available jobs in the market in the future. This was their sense, in light of current literature projecting that the workforce of the future will be much smaller than the number of jobs available.

3. Socioeconomic status of employees - The panel forecasted that the employee's well being and their potential inability to provide for the family would be a significant concern. There was a feeling employers are not providing

competitive salary and benefit packages that are sufficient to attract candidates to the profession or an organization. In some departments throughout the nation, salaries and benefits for officers are so inadequate, they qualify for government aid. In today's world, there are more single parents or two working parents trying to sustain a household. In light of this, little to no support is offered by public agencies for candidates with children and dealing with child care issues. The feeling by the panel on this trend is that employers have generally displayed little concern for the personal lives of their employees. This is likely to be a significant issue as generation X employees will strive to lead more balanced lives, between work and personal quality time away from the work site.

4. Loyalty and commitment to the department - This trend is also viewed as significantly impacted by the Generation X employee. Based on readings about the traits and values of Generation Xers, it is anticipated they will change jobs and careers several times. In a booming economy where unemployment is low, employees are not apt to stay in jobs where their basic needs and satisfaction are not being met. Employees are more likely to abandon any commitment and move to another employer in hopes of increased job satisfaction, treatment, recognition or challenges. This lack of commitment and loyalty is likely to ring true for public service jobs, as well as the private sector. Currently, this lack of dedication, commitment and loyalty is being observed in departments throughout the state, and likely throughout the nation. The panel members believe this pattern will only grow worse with time.

5. Drug usage by potential candidates - It used to be that a certain percentage of police officer candidates were discovered to have experimented with marijuana during their teens or college years. While these candidates might still have passed, any discovery that a candidate had used any hard drug was immediately disqualified. A recent trend and one expected to continue and worsen, are that police candidates have experimented with or used hard drugs regularly. In this context, hard drugs are referring to cocaine, LSD, amphetamines, "crack," PCP, heroin, and methamphetamine. The panel forecasted that at some point, it will be a rarity to find a candidate who had not sampled some hard drug during their lifetime. If police organizations continue the practice of automatically disqualifying such candidates, their candidate pool will shrink drastically. Clearly this trend raises serious implications for police administrators, who are also striving to improve the image of the profession. Of significant concern is what this past substance abuse says about a candidate's character, values and predilection.

6. Availability of technology - The panel felt that technological advances and its widespread use throughout, might lessen the need for workers in public and private sector jobs. In essence, this was man being replaced by the machine. One example, specifically in law enforcement, was that cameras on street signs now result in people being ticketed for speeding and running stop lights and red lights. They also indicated that many agencies now allow people to file police reports through an agency's web site. Video conferencing is being used to arraign prisoners without them actually appearing in court. This clearly

eliminates the need for employees to transport prisoners and provide security during court proceedings. Potentially, this technology could be the means of maintaining contact with various segments of the community. Future advancements could result in robotics that performs certain tasks typically performed by people.

7. Staffing levels - The issue of adequate staffing levels is one that has been debated for years, and is certain to raise concern and animosity for years to come. Most line staff and first line supervisors will contend that more officers are needed to keep up with the demand for services and to be able to handle the unpredictable critical incident that might occur on the shift. Departments have been able to grow through grants and increases in budgets. However, the chief executive had to convince the legislative body and policy makers that this was a priority and that public safety was at stake. In lean years, all government departments are directed to cut dollars from their budgets. Any significant cuts have to be made in personnel, as this is typically eighty percent of the whole budget. The panel felt staffing levels would have to grow to meet increased demands for service and serve growing populations.

8. Image of the police profession - The panel strongly felt that the image of the law enforcement profession would be a critical factor in the recruitment arena. Presently, the public's perception of law enforcement officers leaves much to be desired. Much of this stems from television media and the highly visible ranks of law enforcement in the news. When things go wrong in law enforcement, the media gives it tremendous coverage. This is likely because it

stirs controversy and raises emotions. It is this type of news that sells newspapers and raises ratings. Unfortunately, a few in the policing profession seem to provide the media and public with plenty of examples of breach of public trust, abuse of authority, and disregard for the laws they swore to uphold. While the community oriented policing efforts of police agencies has begun to change the perception of police by many people, there is still much work to be done. Certainly the image of a profession is crucial when striving to attract young educated people to this career.

9. Availability of financial resources - This trend will always carry serious implications on recruiting and retaining talented and qualified employees. The availability of funds will often determine the level of effort an organization commits to a particular aspect of its role. Public budgets are often viewed as policy setting instruments put in motion by legislative bodies with recommendations from staff. When a department's projects or work is not funded due to lack of funds or commitment of funds to other priorities, the message sent is that the department's project is not important. An example provided was that budget shortfalls often result in layoffs or decisions not to fill vacant positions, in an effort to save those funds. In other instances, agencies are not able to provide comparable salaries and benefits to employees. The most likely outcome of this situation is that employees will seek jobs elsewhere. Recruiters will now have to work harder and may have to accept lower qualified candidates, as quality candidates are applying elsewhere.

10. Respect for law enforcement as a profession - The panel presented this trend as different from the trend dealing with the image of the profession. The panel stressed that some part of the population may form negative opinions and see the police in a low light, yet will still treat them with respect and abide by their directions. These folks respect their authority, trust their decision making and have a sense of appreciation for what they do to ensure public safety. On the other hand, a segment of society may know very little about the police, their past conduct and their image. However, they may disrespect the police and disobey or resist their authority. Respect, for a person or position is something that has to be earned over some period of time. The issue of respect is critical to recruitment in that most people entering the job market would not be inclined to join a profession that was not respectable and fraught with questionable integrity.

Events

The panel was then asked to identify potential events that could have an impact on the recruiting of qualified applicants to the law enforcement profession. An event is defined as a singular occurrence taking place at a specific date and time. The panel forecasted 19 different events which might occur and could impact the recruitment issue. (Appendix B)

The following table (2-2) reflects the panel's projection about the events forecasted. The panel was asked to forecast the first year the event could possibly occur, and the probability (as a percentage) the event could occur within five and ten years. In the final columns, the panel estimated the level of impact the event would

have on the issue (1= low impact; 10 = high impact) and whether the impact on the issue was positive or negative.

**Table 2-2
Event Evaluation**

Event Statement	Years until probability exceeds zero	Probability		Impact on Issue Area if Event Occurred	
		+5 Years	+10 Years	Impact on Issue 1-10 Scale	Positive or Negative Impact +/-
1. Open borders	10	0	20	10	+
2. Changes in recruitment standards	10	0	10	10	-
3. Legalization of drugs	10	0	50	9	-
4. U.S./China war or conflict	5	10	10	7	-
5. Economic recession	5	70	75	8	+
6. Reinstatement of the draft	10	0	30	8	-
7. Reinstatement of affirmative action policy	4	40	50	6	+
8. Collapse of the stock market	5	10	40	8	+
9. Large scale domestic terrorism	5	25	25	4	+
10. Legislature increasing staffing levels for law enforcement	5	10	30	5	+

The following is a list, description and analysis of the panel's top ten events:

1. Open borders - The panel felt that fully opening our nation's borders could have a significant impact on this issue. Potentially, such actions could result in both positive and negative effects on recruitment. There was a general consensus that a true open border would place additional demands and change how and whom we recruit. Clearly, there would be an increased need for multi-

lingual and multi-cultural employees. Most law enforcement agencies are striving to have a workforce that is a reflection of the communities they serve. Police organizations need people from those cultures or groups. Those employees will be better able to understand the community, sympathize with them and be sensitive to their unique needs. Several police departments throughout the nation who opted not pursue such goals, are now being pushed toward this through consent decrees or other civilian oversight. The panel saw this as a high impact, but low probability issue, and certainly one that should be of concern to law enforcement.

2. Change in qualification standards - This event is also a high impact but low probability issue. The panel felt there could be an effort to standardize the selection procedures and qualification standards for police officer candidates. POST, the legislature, or an accreditation body could potentially change the selection standards for police officer candidates. The panel suggested that during the search for uniformity or standardization of the police recruitment process, there could be efforts to create a one size fits all. The change in standards could be increased or lowered depending on the focus of the body making the change. Nonetheless, there is bound to be considerable opposition by some administrators who would focus on any potential negative effects.

3. Legalization of drugs - The legalization of drugs in our state or in the country, could also significantly impact the recruitment issue. The decriminalization of the marijuana laws and recent passage of Proposition 36, which calls for treatment rather than incarceration for specified drug violations,

could be an indicator that this may be the wave of the future. Law enforcement has been on the front line of the war on drugs since day one and has fought a tough battle. Should such legislation occur, there would have to be effective transition management to move law enforcement out of the current mind set pertaining to drugs, drug traffickers and drug abusers. Such a change would create some unusual implications for candidates and their past drug use histories. Of major concern is the likelihood that persons with serious drug abuse problems and maybe even current addictive problems might be able to get into law enforcement.

4. United States/China war or conflict - The panel felt if such a conflict arose, it would have a negative impact on the recruiting of police officers. They believed that during a war or conflict, the military would be a big draw for many, especially those graduating from high school and in college. There was a feeling that the war/conflict effort would result in increased production for those companies producing equipment and materials needed by the servicemen. As they hire more people to meet their increased demand for supplies, the available workforce pool would certainly shrink. The panel also concluded that the end of the war/conflict would likely result in more and better candidates being available for hire. There was a comparison to the Persian Gulf War and how the availability of good candidates with military experience returned to join police forces throughout the nation after that event.

5. Economic recession - The effects of a recession are far reaching and rarely leave anyone out. Certainly a recession would have serious implications

for recruitment. The panel felt a recession would severely impact the public budgeting picture, with significant losses of revenues. When public budgets are tight, many public services suffer and some are eliminated completely. In such instances, funds for recruitment may not be seen as a priority. When revenues don't total projected expenditures, managers are directed to make budget cuts. This often results in layoffs or agencies not filling vacant positions. There was a sense that a recession would cause companies to go out of business. Other corporations would layoff employees in their struggle to survive. They felt this would result in people with higher education to enter the available workforce pool.

6. Reinstatement of the draft - A few members of the panel felt that reinstatement of the draft was a possibility in light of international conflicts and the military's inability to attract and recruit service people. The panel generally agreed that a draft would have a negative impact on law enforcement recruiting efforts. Their consensus was that the military would draw and attract a significantly higher number of people who would normally be targeted for law enforcement hiring. These eighteen to twenty-two year olds are targeted for jobs such as community service officers, explorers, cadets, and other entry level positions that eventually lead to employment as police officers.

7. Reinstatement of affirmative action policy - This is an emotionally charged issue that stirs up adverse feelings among many. Such a policy would support law enforcement's desire to have their agencies be a reflection of the communities they serve. The panel generally agreed that all segments of society

should be represented by public service agencies. There was a sense that African-Americans, Hispanics, and women were lacking in our current workforce. This event was seen as one that could have a moderate impact on recruitment, with some positive and negative effects.

8. Collapse of the stock market - The panel felt such an event could have large scale detrimental impact on many facets of American life. Such an event would negatively impact public budgets. Corporations could collapse and it could lead to high unemployment. There is also the possibility it would result in higher crime rates throughout the nation. Certainly all these things could impact the issue of recruiting and retaining qualified police officers. There was a belief that white collar workers, who had suddenly been thrown into the unemployment lines, would be available and willing to enter law enforcement careers. On the negative side, such a collapse would restrict the economy and no one in the private or public sector would be doing much hiring.

9. Large scale domestic terrorism - The panel felt such an event was minimally probable. They also felt it would have minimal impact on the issue. Potentially, a domestic terrorism incident would result in more applicants wanting to join federal agencies directly involved with fighting terrorism, such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation; Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms; Secret Service, etc. If this is the outcome of such an event, it would decrease the applicant pool and make it more difficult for police agencies to find candidates. Some panel members felt it would increase an interest in law enforcement

careers, by those entering the workforce. Sometimes it takes a tragic incident to rally people together against a common enemy, or for a common cause. This could entice job seekers to join law enforcement in the fight against terrorism.

10. Legislature increasing staffing levels for law enforcement - A legislative mandate for increasing the ratio of police to citizens was presented as a potential event by the panel. This could come at the local, state or federal level. The panel considered this a low probability event, but one that could moderately impact the recruitment issue. Such a mandate would likely result in police agencies having to add personnel. This would not only add significant costs to organizations, but it would place a heavy burden on those involved in recruiting. Contributing to the low ratio of police officers to citizens (or customers, as visitors or residents may not be citizens), is the fact that most agencies operate at less than full staffing during the year. This occurs because employees leave and lengthy time periods elapse until a replacement is found, hired, trained and put on the street. As agencies strive to be at full staffing, clearly a mandate for increasing the number of officers would place additional burdens on them.

Cross Impact Analysis

The cross impact analysis is a method of looking at trends and events to understand potential relationships. As they do not occur in a vacuum, it is important to explore any interdependency. The cross impact table which follows (2-3) charts the effect events will have on the trends and their level of impact. The facilitator and one panel member assigned a rating of zero to five, depending on the level of impact the

event would have on the trend. The plus or minus signs denotes whether the impact is positive or negative. The top ten potential events are listed in rows on the left, while the top ten forecasted trends are listed in columns along the top.

**Table 2-3
Cross-Impact Analysis**

Events	Trends									
	T 1	T 2	T 3	T 4	T 5	T 6	T 7	T 8	T 9	T 10
E 1	-3	-5	-2	0	-3	+1	+3	0	-2	0
E 2	0	+2	0	+3	+1	0	0	+4	-2	+4
E 3	+3	+2	-3	0	-5	0	+2	0	-2	-1
E 4	+5	+4	+2	+1	0	+2	0	0	0	+1
E 5	-5	-5	-4	+4	-1	-1	+1	0	-4	-1
E 6	0	-2	+1	0	0	0	+1	0	-2	0
E 7	-1	-2	-2	-2	-3	0	0	-1	0	-1
E 8	-4	-3	-1	+2	0	0	0	0	-2	0
E 9	+4	+2	0	+4	0	+4	+1	+3	+4	+2
E 10	0	+5	+2	+1	0	+1	-5	+1	-5	0

As organizations look to the horizon and strive to plan and prepare for the future, this process can prove extremely valuable. There could be instances when causing an event, or contributing to its occurrence, may be the best way to impact a trend that will have a detrimental effect on how law enforcement does business.

An example that best depicts this is Event 3 and Trend 5. This analysis raises the question, if drugs are legalized, how will this affect drug usage by potential candidates? The five rating indicates it will be a significant impact and the minus sign designates a negative effect. Police officer candidates with histories of substance

abuse create hiring dilemmas for administrators. If drugs are legalized, the level of concern over this issue will be heightened.

Such initiatives proposed by the legislature or through proposition should be strongly opposed by the law enforcement profession. The thought of making hard drugs legal has surfaced on many fronts. The strong opposition by law enforcement and many others has prevented such legalization from becoming a reality.

In analyzing the events and their effect on the trends forecasted, clearly event five, an economic recession is likely to have the most impact on the trends. A recession would have a high detrimental effect on the availability of jobs in the market, the socioeconomic status of employees, and the availability of financial resources. Obviously, it would devastate the national economy and curtail consumer confidence. On the positive side, a recession is likely to have a high positive effect on loyalty to the organization by the employee. As the negatives far outweigh the positives, such an event should be avoided if possible. Unfortunately this is the type of event that is difficult to counter.

Changes in recruitment standards as an event would result in a high positive impact on the image or perception of peace officers and respect the general public has for the law enforcement profession. A push for POST to make changes in recruitment standards for peace officers could dramatically improve those two areas which are in serious need of improvement. An example would be the requirement of a two year college degree for all police officers or the Supervisory Leadership Institute program for all supervisors. The potential for facilitating the future in this instance, can be

recognized in this scenario. A strong campaign by law enforcement administrators and other stakeholders could lead to such action by POST.

A tragic event such as a large scale act of domestic terrorism could have high positive effect on the availability of jobs in the job market, loyalty to the organization by employees, availability of technology and financial resources. While we might enjoy such trends, certainly no one is desirous of experiencing such a cowardly act that brings so much trauma and tragedy.

Lastly, any legislation that required law enforcement organizations to meet specific staffing levels would increase the availability of jobs in the job market. While this can be viewed as a positive, it certainly compounds our recruiting woes. Such an event would have a high negative impact on current staffing levels and the availability of financial resources. Because of the financial impact created by this legislative mandate, all jurisdictions would surely seek reimbursement from the government to cover the costs incurred. Again, here is an event that law enforcement potentially could influence and encourage its occurrence. However, the negative effects it could have on some of the forecasted trends, causes law enforcement to question the desirability of such outcomes.

In the futuring process, it is crucial that organizations examine those trends and events that are likely to impact it, whether in positive or negative ways. Successful organizations will be those consistently looking to the horizon and scanning the environment for signals of change. The strategic or learning organization will be better able to anticipate the future and take measures to shape it and be prepared to greet it.

Future Scenarios

The development of scenarios is a useful tool and component of the strategic planning process. The scenarios incorporate forecasted trends or events that could potentially impact the issues or problems confronting an organization. The focus of the strategic plan then takes aim at identifying goals and objectives that will move the organization toward or away from a specific scenario. The obvious intent is to minimize or possibly change the impact of those events or trends creating a detrimental effect on the issue.

An Optimistic Future

It is Monday morning and Sergeant Tom Green, assigned to Recruiting and Administrative Services, arrives at his office eager to get to work. He checks his calendar. It is June 18, 2006, and it looks like a busy day is planned for him. He and his two recruiters and their clerical typists seem to have been working awfully hard to process candidates the last few weeks. Since POST developed uniform standards, took a stance to limit past drug usage, and supported a standardized selection process statewide, the recruitment process seemed to go much smoother. All agencies were now using the same test and selection process, the only variations might be specific traits an agency was seeking in a candidate. The Human Resources Department contributed by streamlining and shortening the time it took to process and screen applicants. Sergeant Green's unit could now get a candidate through a written test, oral panel interview, physical agility, psychological and a medical exam within a three-day period. Background investigations were now completed within a week. This was

possible through the creation of a Peace Officer Central Registry, where all peace officer candidates had to register and submit necessary information so preliminary background checks could be conducted. All of this information was available to all police agencies for recruitment purposes.

Sergeant Green could not fathom why it would take four to six months or longer, for an employee to get hired in past years. The reinstatement of the military draft a few years ago was a blessing in disguise. After a four-year commitment, those being discharged were prime candidates for police work. Discipline had been instilled in them, they understood structure, knew teamwork skills, had more life experience and were mentally tough. It has helped that law enforcement as a profession finally got its act together to clean up the image. The profession was well respected and the trust, confidence and integrity of law enforcement were rated quite high. These new Generation X employees were nothing like what the department perceived them to be. While some of them did bounce around to different departments and some even changed careers, they were as loyal and dedicated to the department while there as any other employee could be. The new standards did not result in any more disqualifications than the old way of doing it. This new approach was much more user friendly and kept candidates informed. Specifically selected staff members were assigned as contact persons for the applicants. They participated in coaching them, getting them oriented to the public safety service, and preparing them to be successful in all facets of the selection process.

Sergeant Green felt a sense of pride with the recruiting efforts of his unit. The statistics reflected that 125 applicants had applied for three new positions made available through the Cops in Schools Grant program. It was hard to believe that all but 45 had been placed on an eligibility list and were available for hire. Things had not been this good for some time, old timers would tell Sergeant Green. The effort several years ago of targeting many of these applicants while they were in middle and high schools, certainly was reaping great dividends today. The “home grown” theory was finally yielding some fruits of its labor.³¹

A Pessimistic Future

Police Administrative Sergeant Joe Friday was feeling inundated with the amount of work ahead of him. The end of the day seemed so far away and the weekend seemed like eternity. Since the California legislature adopted uniform standards for staffing levels, many police agencies statewide had to increase the number of sworn officers on their rosters to ensure they met the ratio of officers per 1,000 residents. Sergeant Friday had been given until June 30, 2006, only two months, to fill the eight vacant positions in the patrol division. While he had recently hired five new officers, four officers from the department lateral transferred to a nearby agency that paid a little more and two members of senior staff retired. Sergeant Friday could see he was losing ground. This assignment, as the department recruiter, had clearly lost its luster and he was feeling rather neglected. The brass was applying pressure on him to fill vacancies in the patrol division and dispatch center. While they were quick to criticize and point

blame, the administration provided little support and were awfully tight when Sergeant Friday sought public funds to implement creative recruiting strategies at the high schools and community colleges in the area. The department had just received a grant for three school resource officer positions and these had to be in place by the start of the fiscal year. These federal grants stemmed from the government's effort to put police officers in every school. This was the result of an increasing number of acts of violence at schools around the nation. Sergeant Friday knew that finding qualified candidates to fill the vacant positions would not be an easy task.

While everyone seemed to be prospering in an excellent and stable economy, the applicant pool for police agencies across the nation had suddenly dried up. Jobs were plentiful for job seekers. It was clearly a seller's market, where employers were competing for the prospective employees as if they were commodities. Most college graduates, and even some from high school, were quickly lured to high technology or business jobs with the promise of high wages, signing bonuses, 401K's and other sweet deals and benefits. Many in the workforce were opting to change careers. Some were seeking new challenges, better pay or benefits, or just the possibility of riches in the high tech world of Dot.Com companies. Unfortunately, these folks did not see the attraction to police careers. Our profession was not helping much in this regard. It seemed like every week, some police scandal broke and caused many to question the integrity and nobleness of the profession. Headlines grabbed plenty of attention and always revolved around police beatings/abuse, excessive force, missing property, drugs or money from evidence rooms, racial discrimination, sex scandals, and the list went on

and on. After awhile, nothing seemed to amaze the crusty veterans of the department. While many in the profession performed great work every day, those few who betrayed the public trust and brought shame to it, received all the attention. This had done irreparable damage, and Sergeant Friday was dealing with the fallout, day in and day out, as he strived to succeed in his recruitment efforts.

As Sergeant Friday worked on filling the vacancies in his agency, he could not help but feel a dull ache in the pit of his stomach. He had such a small number of applicants to start with and he could not understand why the applicant numbers were not there. He knew that if these applicants were like the last batch, their reading and writing skills were poor, had little life experience, no interpersonal skills, significant drug use history, and personal backgrounds that would cause trepidation for administrators and the public alike. The small percentage that did get past the background and pre-tests, always seemed to get disqualified during the psychological screening. The decriminalization of marijuana and other specified hard drugs, now made it more difficult to disqualify or question applicants about their past drug history. If they volunteered to speak about it, some freely admitted to having experimented with hard drugs, while others had used recently. If history served as an indicator, he knew that roughly five percent would be successful. While Sergeant Friday felt bad about his predicament, he knew the recruiters from other agencies in the three county areas were experiencing the same pitfalls. And, even though they met every month to discuss recruitment issues, they were actually doing very little to improve their plight. So today,

like every other day, Sergeant Friday trudges along, striving to find talented and qualified police candidates to join his organization.

A Normative Future

Lieutenant Hartford began his day by scanning the electronic calendar on his Palm Pilot. The date is July 1, 2006, six years have zoomed past since he was assigned to command a sector of this community in the heart of the Central Valley. He has many ideas about how to deal with crime and the people in the area. He calls the Administrative Services Division to find out when the four officers will be assigned to his sector. This sector has been understaffed for six months with no indication those four officers, who were transferred out, will be replaced anytime soon. Since the vote of the people to decriminalize drugs two years ago, crimes against persons and property have skyrocketed in the sector and statewide. While it is legal to possess, sell and be under the influence of hard drugs, the addicts are “ripping off” everything in sight. There have also been several robberies by those trying to come up with enough cash for their afternoon dosage. Lieutenant Hartford realizes that recruiting of officers moves terribly slow and most likely there just are not enough officers to send to his sector. He still cannot understand why the Human Resources staff refuses to budge over giving up control of all recruiting and hiring of city employees. Their consistent argument is they are responsible for ensuring it is done in compliance with administrative procedures and the law. They are adamant in their disapproval to decentralize any part of the process. In response to complaints they move too slowly and that good candidates are being

lost, they insist they do the best they can and that no department has priority over another.

As Lieutenant Hartford looks over the demographics of his county, city and sector, he can't help but notice the tremendous growth of the Hispanic population. He attributes this in part to the opening up of the nation's borders. In an effort to further the goals of NAFTA and other economic goals, the nation now allows unobstructed travel across the borders. Although Affirmative Action programs have been reinstated nationwide, the department continues to hire a workforce that generally reflects the community. Lieutenant Hartford knows that the department will certainly need more Spanish speaking officers who also understand the culture. He hopes he can get some of them assigned to his sector. As Lieutenant Hartford walks into the Administrative Services Division, he learns that a neighboring agency is doing a background investigation on a department employee. He feels dismay, knowing the staff works hard to find top notch people to fill the ranks. They receive good training, are well equipped, and given opportunities to be challenged and have fun at the job. He knows his agency pays the best it can and has great benefits, but they are still not able to compete with larger agencies who regularly come to take away the best officers.

Today, Lieutenant Hartford strives to implement plans to keep crime in check. He knows it will be a bit more difficult because of his lack of staffing, but he knows his entire team will have to work a little harder and a little smarter.

Summary

The process of forecasting the future is certainly a worthwhile endeavor. Although a crystal ball is not necessary, having a focus group with special insight and knowledge of the subject can yield incredibly valuable results. The panel for the NGT certainly brought various perspectives and experiences, hence the input from each was highly valued. The NGT used as a research method for the project clearly provided trends and potential events which law enforcement should monitor and stay abreast of. In this effort to look beyond the horizon, one can plan to better anticipate the future. Clearly there is an opportunity now to make choices and take actions that might influence the possible future and certainly minimize its impact. If the outlook is positive, law enforcement professionals could take specified actions that will encourage future occurrences.

The creations of scenarios also play a vital role in the futuring process. The goal is to incorporate the forecasted trends and potential events into the scenarios. This is crucial for realizing the impact they may have on a future situation. The scenarios were divided into three possible futures, optimistic, pessimistic, and normative. Potentially, any of the three scenarios could become reality. The importance of the scenarios is recognized during the strategic planning process. It is during strategic planning that a plan is formulated to move toward or away from a particular scenario. This is where an organization can be well prepared for the future or can chart a course to possibly change the future and its impact.

The forecast for peace officer recruiting indicates there are difficult times ahead. The changing and shrinking workforce pool will create incredible challenges for law enforcement organizations. This is a cue for the profession to step up and take action today. Failure to act will result in crisis conditions, such as are being experienced in the teaching and nursing fields. While law enforcement has generally been slow to change over the years, it is vital we assume a proactive stance on recruiting.

CHAPTER THREE

STRATEGIC PLAN

Creating Strategies for Recruiting Top Performers

Strategic planning is a process in which an organization or collaborative group forms to examine its situation, develop a plan, and ultimately create a desirable future. A strategic plan should consist of defining the issue, conducting a situational analysis, redefining the organization's mission, planning for implementation, and feedback and control systems. A strategic plan should be based on the premise that even a good organization can improve itself and it should be a collaborative effort by those involved or impacted by the issue or problem.

This strategic planning section is presented as a model for mid-size law enforcement agencies striving to improve their recruiting and retention efforts to meet the needs of the future. This plan is intended as a generic guide, which mid-size policing agencies can modify and tailor to fit the unique needs of their jurisdictions. This plan is formulated to deal with the issues surrounding the situation in which Sergeant Tom Green finds himself in the optimistic scenario described in the previous chapter. The emphasis will be on moving toward the positive outcomes projected in the scenario. The primary focus of this plan will be to increase our effectiveness in attracting and recruiting quality candidates to our profession and to our organizations.

The issue of recruiting has been on the horizon for several years. In June 1989, the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) hosted a three-day symposium on recruitment. The symposium was developed after realization that

recruiting qualified applicants to become peace officers had become a recurrent concern for California law enforcement. During this symposium, strategies and recommendations were developed by participants, with the aim of improving recruitment. It was interesting to note they discussed many of the same issues being discussed today related to recruitment. Many of the recommendations made then are in place today and considered traditional approaches. The presenters were quite insightful and provided information that is being written about today as significant to the recruitment crisis.³²

Despite past forecasts, efforts and warnings, we are in a situation where we will not be able to fill vacant positions in police departments throughout the state and nation. Hence, there is a need for strong and proactive measures to deal with recruitment and retention of talented and qualified candidates. Clearly a collaborative approach with many organizations involved with our profession, either directly or indirectly, would prove beneficial to creating strategies to deal with this crisis. A strategic plan could be developed by the law enforcement profession as a whole, or by any organization striving to improve its recruiting efforts.

Situational Analysis

The process of conducting a situational analysis involves defining the organization's business, conducting an external assessment, conducting an internal assessment, and identifying stakeholders and potential snail darters. As part of the

assessment, it would be appropriate to recommend that a focus group be initiated to conduct this process.

Current Business Definition

Law enforcement organizations are in the business of public safety. They are charged with making their communities safe through the enforcement of laws, preventing crime, rendering public services, mitigating public nuisances, and a myriad of duties aimed at improving the quality of life for the residents, business people and visitors served. While many agencies continue to provide traditional methods of policing, there has been a significant shift to a more community-based approach to dealing with crime and problems in the neighborhoods.

External Assessment

As we explore new approaches or methods to confront the recruiting issue, law enforcement managers should conduct an external assessment. This external assessment can provide insight on how others are dealing with the issue, help realize the true extent of the situation, understand what works and what doesn't, and generally provide a clearer perspective on the issue. During this external evaluation, it is important to look beyond the horizon and look at the issue through Social, Technological, Environmental, Economic and Political factors (STEEP). This is an effort to define the future and determine if any of these factors will have an impact on

the issue. There is always a possibility the issue may be resolved or made worse, by some factor that is looming in the distant future.

Potential STEEP factors that could impact the recruitment issue include:

Social

- Shrinking work force
- Lack of confidence or trust in law enforcement profession
- Significant increase/decrease in crime
- Change in demographics
- Availability of jobs in job markets

Technological

- Advanced technology to perform certain police functions
- Sharing crime information with community, to prevent it
- Improved weaponry/devices to minimize dangers of “high risk” tasks (less lethal weapons, stop pursuits, deal with mentally deranged)
- Technology designed to identify criminal perpetrators
- Lack of electrical power-energy crisis

Environmental

- Contaminated or limited water supply in communities or regions of state
- Limitations on growth resulting from endangered species or protected areas

- Lack of landfill space and wastewater treatment reservoirs

Economic

- Performance of local, state or national economy
- General socio-economic status of families
- Significant increases in costs for services provided
- Moving from agricultural to service or industrial economy
- Privatization and outsourcing jobs

Political

- Mandated changes in selection standards adopted by POST
- Law enforcement loses priority focus from legislators/public
- Implementation of Accreditation Standards on Law Enforcement profession
- Significant case law which impacts public safety policy/practice
- Open borders and increased immigration
- The legalization of certain drugs

After establishing a mission statement and completing the external assessment, the focus should be on making forecasts of the future. This is an essential prerequisite for planning for the future. Based on the forecasts, the organization should develop scenarios that include those futures, whether good or bad. Planning around these future scenarios will assist the organization be better prepared to deal with it. Under some circumstances, they might be able to change the trend or move away from it.

Internal Assessment

The first essential step in designing an effective recruitment and selection process is an honest self-appraisal that determines whether your organization provides a healthy working environment for employees and whether incentives to join your department exist. One method of performing this is through the effective use of the SWOT model, wherein an organization assesses its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Recruitment strategies should incorporate the values and goals of the department and the community. During this process, the assessor should look to ensure they are congruent with one another.

Strengths

The identification of what an organization does well as it relates to recruiting is a good place to begin the assessment. The leveraging of these strengths will prove invaluable to ensuring a smooth transition to any new strategies adopted from this process. Typical areas to examine and questions to ask during this self-assessment should include:³³

- What is the strength of the support, trust and confidence by the public?
- What does the organization have to offer new recruits? How are we different or better than other agencies in our area or those similar in size?
- What has contributed to the longevity of the organization's long term employees?
- Examine past recruitment efforts and identify why some led to more applicants and eventually led to increased job offers.

- Do we offer a variety of assignments and/or opportunities that challenges personnel and allows them to learn new tasks?
- In small to mid-sized agencies, the close-knit family atmosphere is quite attractive.
- Explore staff responses to the value of working in the department.
- Does the organization promote a spirit of organizational teamwork which encourages employee opinions and input?

Weaknesses

The identification of organizational weaknesses is crucial and brings management to the realization they are not perfect. Even though organizations perform many things well, they should be open to the fact there is always room for improvement. Oftentimes, when we identify a weakness in our organizations, it is easy to pass blame on others for our predicament. We often blame Personnel or Human Resources Departments and accuse them of being slow moving bureaucratic machines, for the ineffective recruiting of police candidates. Law enforcement should not concede responsibility for this process to another department. Police managers are critical stakeholders in this process and should insist on being a part of it. These weaknesses are where the organization needs to focus its energies. Typical areas to examine and questions to ask during this self-assessment should include:

- How clear is the department's vision, values, mission, and purpose? Is it shared with employees, the community, other public agencies and potential candidates?

- How timely or responsive is the organization to persons interested in employment?
- Does the organization conduct exit interviews and seriously consider the responses?
- What type or quality of candidates has the organization attracted in past recruitment efforts?
- What is the retention rate of those hired by the department? Is the organization being used as a stepping stone or training ground for other departments?
- What is the general morale of the employees in the organization?
- What is the reputation of the organization throughout the community, the law enforcement community, and other public service agencies?
- How progressive is the organization? Does the organization use current techniques, practices or equipment that is in use in surrounding agencies?
- What aspect of the organization's operation is most often criticized by those performing the work?
- Is the organization fully satisfied with its recruiting program and efforts to attract talented and qualified candidates?
- What is the average length of time from the date an application is received, to the date a candidate is offered a job?
- What is the rate of employee turnover?

Opportunities

In this part of the self assessment, the organization should seek opportunities from the current state to grow and develop in ways that will contribute to improvements in recruitment. An optimistic view is more likely to result in finding an abundance of opportunities for the organization. During this process, there are possibilities for positive outcomes in areas outside the recruitment issue. Those conducting the assessment should stay open minded and objective during this explorative stage. Another important aspect of the search for opportunities is that they may be masked as challenges. Some typical things to look at or questions to ask include:

- A streamlined and timely process would prove beneficial to everyone involved.
- With more women and ethnic groups in the workforce, the organization can move closer to becoming a reflection of the communities they serve.
- This is an excellent opportunity to evaluate the organization's practices and consider changes to standards and processes that are bureaucratic and no longer practical or desirable.
- New recruitment strategies and methods could lead to improved cooperation with staff from Human Resources/Personnel Departments.
- Seeking out prospective police candidates while they are still in high school and middle school could be an enjoyable challenge and experience.
- As organizations strive to attract candidates by speaking to them about the profession, they educate the public, gain supporters, increase communication with them and they become more understanding of police actions.

- This will be an ideal opportunity to market the organization and community as a place that appeals to new applicants and retains experienced officers.

Threats

In this stage of the assessment, the focus is on adverse forces which can hinder the transition (things that can get in the way of implementation of the recommended strategies).

- Will this mean lower standards for new applicants?
- Is the Human Resources/Personnel staff likely to give up some control and allow police managers or recruiters to be more active participants in the process?
- Are managers willing to commit resources (manpower, general fund monies, etc.) to implement the new strategies?
- Is the organization willing to commit the necessary resources to develop the strategies?
- Will the labor unions take a stand in opposition to changes in recruitment and retention strategies?

In addition to the situational analysis, an agency may consider an Organizational Capability Analysis. This is an objective inventory and assessment of the Organization's strategic strengths and weaknesses. An organization can conduct these self assessment processes internally or they can seek the services of a consultant. The emphasis of the strategic plan will be on the creation of an action plan based on the

findings, assessments, research, surveys, and all data and input collected during this process.

Stakeholder Identification and Analysis

A critical component of the strategic planning process is the identification and involvement of stakeholders. Stakeholders are individuals or groups who are impacted by what you do, who can impact what you do, or who care about what you do. Any significant organizational change has the potential to impact stakeholders. Each stakeholder offers a special perspective and commitment to the issue, hence they bring special value to the process. In looking at the recruitment issue, and the situation described in the optimistic future case scenario mentioned in the previous chapter, the following groups or individuals qualify as stakeholders:

1. City Manager - is a vital player in resolving this issue. The manager would need information relevant to the current recruitment crisis and those things that are projected to negatively impact the issue in upcoming years. He or she would expect accurate statistics and facts along with workable solutions that are fiscally prudent. The manager would also demand collaboration and cooperation between departments and agencies.
2. City Council - would also need relevant facts and statistics to make informed decisions and set policy aimed at facilitating the process and implementing strategies. This includes appropriating funds toward the recruitment effort.

3. Police Chief - would likely be the driving force behind the strategic plan and implementing the objectives that will move the organization toward key result areas. The chief would expect cooperation and collaboration from stakeholders in formulating the plan. It is essential for the chief to display unequivocal commitment and interest in the effort to improve recruitment.
4. Line staff - want to know the organization is doing the best it can to attract and hire new officers to join their ranks. They expect to be allowed input in setting of standards and any change in the selection process. They also want to know recruitments are conducted as timely as possible to minimize understaffing situations.
5. Police Union/Association - interests are generally the same as line staff. They also expect to hear how administration is going to improve the salary and benefit package, to make it comparable to agencies in the area and/or similar in size.
6. POST Commission - is already working and committed to improving the recruitment crisis. The commission would expect to hear from agencies about their best practices and strategies, and gather statistics related to applicants processed versus those actually hired. The Commission would also expect collaboration from agencies, state and nationwide.
7. Police Academy Coordinators - would expect to hear from agencies hiring their academy students for feedback related to future needs. Coordinators should be active participants in the planning and marketing process.

8. Human Resources/Personnel Departments - would expect to hear what other agencies are doing; learn the best practices. They may be reluctant to decentralize the recruitment process and give up control of certain aspects.

They would need assurance that strategies would withstand legal scrutiny and not violate confidentiality standards.

10. Job Training/Placement Programs - need to be brought up to speed on the law enforcement recruitment issue. In most instances they are involved in vocational jobs, however they seek opportunities to get as many people to work as possible.

11. Schools/Education - administrators, counselors, and teachers would require an increased awareness and knowledge of the issue related to recruiting police officers. They understand it, in light of teacher shortages in the state. They would expect to be informed about the skills, knowledge, traits and characteristics that students should possess and that law enforcement is seeking.

12. Community Members - would also expect to learn what type of person law enforcement is seeking. Their perspective of the type of officer they would like to have serving them is also important. They would expect that any barriers between the police and community be brought down prior to the planning process.

13. Law Enforcement Recruiters - recruit persons day in and day out. They have tremendous knowledge about what works and why. They have tested the

varying strategies and techniques and can share the results. They will likely be enthusiastic and offer insightful input on means of improving the process.

14. Civil Liberties Union/activists- will want to discuss matters related to qualifications of police officers, there could be some issues that infringe on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or be seen as causing a disparate impact on minorities, women or other protected classes. This is a potential snail darter. A snail darter is a group or individual who arrives on scene unexpectedly, with strong opposition and an effort to derail the plan.

Setting the Direction

One of the most important responsibilities of an effective leader is setting the direction for the organization. This is performed in several ways, the most common being the creation of a mission, values and vision statement. A mission statement is a declaration of organizational purpose. The mission statement should articulate the basic social or political issue the organization exists to address. It should also spell out its intended response to mitigate or prevent those problems. This mission statement will ultimately provide the sense of purpose and set the direction of the organization. An agency's mission statement becomes imperative when planning for the future, as it is the foundation for all change. It is important to include staff, stakeholders, and the community in the development of the mission statement. The mission statement for this project would clearly outline the organization's desire to find and recruit talented, well educated and qualified candidates who are of good moral character. There is also a

strong desire for department employees to be diverse and be a reflection of the communities they serve, while at the same time being sensitive to their diverse cultures and their unique needs.

A vision for an organization generally comes from the leader/department head, however, such vision should include input from people throughout and outside the department. This vision should provide others with an image of what the organization should look like at some point in the future. This vision becomes a target that the organization strives toward. The vision should be descriptive enough to allow others to visualize it and gain a sense of the direction they need to go to hit the target. The vision for addressing this recruitment issue would include:

We will be a dynamic organization, dedicated to delivering quality services to all customers in the community. We will constantly strive to improve and become an employer of choice, where we attract talented candidates and retain those who have chosen to join our department. We will treat our customers and each other with dignity and respect, while always being sensitive to the diversity and unique needs of all individuals.

The mission and vision statement should include goals and objectives that will contribute to the achievements desired from implementing the strategic plan. During this stage, it would be appropriate to ask: "why are we doing this" and "what is our expected outcome?" The goals should be specific and clearly measurable. In a collaborative effort to improve the recruitment situation, goals and objectives that are likely to make a positive impact include:

- Police organizations will have to do a better job of marketing themselves. This is a year round process where an organization shares information with the public

about its excellent programs, great police work, its employees and the opportunities it provides. This is done through the media, public meetings, everyday contacts, etc.

- Expand recruitment efforts from college and high schools to elementary schools. Get our youth interested in law enforcement careers. As we strive to recruit for the positions we are trying to fill today, we should not forget the positions we will need to fill in the future. Don't just interest them, excite them about the profession.³⁴ Any good salesperson can get people excited about a product. Law enforcement has many great things to offer and this is the time to exploit it.
- It is important for the executive officer to express a sincere interest in the recruitment process and must be committed to ensuring it is timely, equitable, fair, streamlined and effective. This is such an important process that top management should also be involved in it.³⁵
- Police organizations will have to make a commitment of budget funds to improve its recruiting efforts. This might involve funds to pay for billboard advertising, professionally designed job announcement brochures, development of a short recruitment video highlighting the department, out of town (state) recruitment trips, creation of public service announcements or commercials, etc.
- Target specific groups to attract them to a law enforcement career. Attend events unique to them or their culture as part of recruiting efforts (if appropriate). Again, the youth of these ethnic groups should not be ignored.

In light of this recruitment challenge, organizations should conduct a self assessment. They should seek to determine if they are doing everything they can to retain those who have already chosen to work for the agency. Is their work meaningful? Do they receive praise and rewards for excellent work? Does the organization care about their opinions and is their input valued, especially during important decisions that impact them? If not, the organization has work to do to become a place that attracts candidates and then makes their decision to stay an easy one.³⁶

This list of goals is certainly not all inclusive, and there are a tremendous number of things to be done to improve our recruiting efforts. Some are unique to specific jurisdictions, others are dependent on accepted policies or practices, while still others are limited by geographical boundaries or type of law enforcement performed. Each agency, based on its own unique need, would identify appropriate goals and objectives that would assist in achieving the desired results. During this stage, identifying the planning horizon and determining how long the planning process should take is all important. For the recruitment issue, a three to a five-year planning horizon is recommended.

A vital part of the strategic planning process is the evaluation of the outcomes or results achieved. The outcomes should be measured and their impact evaluated. During this evaluation, organizations should determine if they still have the right vision, did they miss the mark, or do they need to fine tune the plan. There are success indicators that let them know if they hit the mark. An effective way to accomplish this is

to have feedback systems in place. One method of achieving this is to have a focus group in place that monitors progress of the action plan. This focus group would also conduct evaluations after certain time periods or upon the achievement of specified goals or objectives.

Strategy Development

At this stage, broad strategies or key result areas are developed. These are areas in which the organization must achieve success, to grow and improve performance in a specified area. In this case, it is a recruitment method. Several objectives are then identified for each key result area.

Key Result Areas

- How can we more effectively market law enforcement careers?

Objective #1 Get police officers in the schools, all grades. Have officers speak to children about police careers and the highlights of the job.

Objective #2 Develop agency specific videos to be used at job fairs, viewed at schools and colleges. Videos highlight the opportunities and challenges of the profession and agency.

Objective #3 Involve staff in the recruitment process at the local level. Have them speak about the profession during contacts with members of the public, especially those in targeted groups.

Objective #4 In addition to selling the department, strive to market the community and area. Join forces with Chamber of Commerce to convince candidates it is

more than department choice they are making, it is a greater lifestyle choice. Sell the beauty, cost of living, less traffic, quality of life features.

- How can we reduce the length of time it takes to process and hire applicants?

Objective #1 Combine phases of the testing/screening process.

Objective #2 Create a Central Registry where all police candidates, including those seeking lateral transfers, must register and participate in pretesting. A preliminary background and the results of written, physical agility, psychological and medical reports would already be completed and on file. This would be available only to agencies considering the candidates.

Objective #3 Work closely and as a team with Human Resources staff to process and move candidates through the screening in timely fashion.

Objective #4 Assign a mentor to all candidates. The mentor will coach the candidate through the selection process to help them be successful. The mentor will be the candidate's contact person and keep them informed of their status.

Objective #5 Increase uses of technology. Written exams could be completed on laptop computers. Exams could be immediately scored and results relayed to all parties. Candidates could also be informed of results sooner. Information regarding testing phases and results could be posted on the agency web site.

- How can we increase funding and resources to improve recruitment?

Objective #1 Educate politicians and CEO's of the urgency of the situation. Work to convince them to appropriate more funds to recruiting efforts.

Objective #2 Get legislators to author state or federal grant programs for funds earmarked specifically for recruitment.

Objective #3 Consider and examine appropriateness of using asset forfeiture funds.

Objective #4 Share resources made available from POST with agencies in a region, similar to sharing resources in a Mutual Aid Region.

- What can we do to improve the public's perception of law enforcement?

Objective #1 Build the image through a large scale marketing program; involve law enforcement, police academies, college criminology programs, POST, schools, and job training/placement agencies.

Objective #2 Develop videos that highlight the positive attributes of the profession and distribute them for viewing at as many venues as possible

Objective #3 Hire carefully, train well, instill values, share mission and vision, and demand excellence in an effort to minimize employees engaging in acts or behavior that tarnish the image.

Objective #4 Like the private sector, strive to be a good corporate citizen. While you cannot donate from public funds, police can give back to the community in many different ways. Enhance the agency's image through good publicity, being a part of the community, pitching in, marketing the organization and public relations.

- Once hired and they become a valued asset, what can be done to retain them?

Objective #1 To attract and keep good employees today and in the future, organizations must have something to offer them. They will want to know

“what’s in it for me.” Organizations should be unique and offer something others don’t, or do it far superior. Organizations should be worthy of good people. First, they should find out what makes them different or better than the competition.

Objective #2 Inform employees they are the organization’s greatest asset and resource, then treat them as if they are. Take care of their needs, pay them good salaries, provide excellent benefits, be sensitive to their personal situations, and ensure their safety and health at work through effective safety programs and training.

Objective #3 Employees today want challenges, responsibility, and opportunity. They want to achieve great results, grow and develop and they would like to be recognized for their accomplishments. Employers should strive to provide employees the opportunities to grow, advance, and tackle new challenges. This includes promoting from within when practical.

Objective #4 Communication is crucial to establishing good relationships with employees. The sharing of information vertically (up and down) is as important as communicating horizontally. Employers should facilitate open communication, allowing for input and feedback on decisions that impact those performing the work. Newsletters, management by walking around, regular unit and division meetings and clear memorandums are good ways to keep people informed about organizational matters.

Objective #5 Organizations train employees to do the job, provide them with tools and materials, give them direction and then count or check their work.

Employers will have to display more confidence and trust in employees in the future. They should also encourage initiative and inspire creativity from employees. Micro-managing is a sure method of chasing employees to competitors.

Objective #6 Link pay with performance and employ other incentives and rewards as part of a compensation plan. Organizations should ensure their benefit package is comparable to that of organizations similar in size or in the geographical area.

During and after the implementation of the strategic plan, a committee or focus group should be in place to evaluate or measure the outcomes or outputs. This group will be responsible for ensuring follow-up and examining the results. Ideally, this group has been collecting data since day one, as a means to manage or inform the leader about progress, glitches in the plan, or lack of progress. If not properly managed, the process becomes nothing more than a comprehensive wish list.

In evaluating the effectiveness of the plan, evaluators should review and examine the following:

- Determine if objectives listed were completed within the time line set. Assess their initial impact
- Examine vacancy rates in the department and compare to area and statewide rates.

- Evaluate expenditures for recruiting and determine level of return on funds spent. Were there any cost savings?
- What was the ratio of candidates who applied compared to the number who were offered jobs?
- Did the organization lose any employees and what were reasons for leaving?

Summary

Strategic planning is a proactive approach to creating a desirable future. While the forecast for recruiting reveals an unfavorable future, this should trigger action on behalf of law enforcement administrators. A strategic or learning organization is consistently striving to improve its efforts to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. An important component of this and any other strategic plan is the situational analysis. This process involves defining the business of the organization, conducting external and internal assessments, and identifying all stakeholders. If performed correctly, this assessment will provide a clearer picture of the issue and present many and varied perspectives. This process will be unpleasant if an organization does not readily accept criticism. The past practice of recruiting peace officers is certainly subject to criticism. The recruiting efforts of law enforcement can be described as bureaucratic and very ineffective.

As efforts to develop strategies get underway, it is important for the leader to set the direction. This is done through mission and vision statements and formulation of goals and objectives. In this plan, goals were established to improve the marketing of

the profession, expand recruitment efforts to elementary schools, high commitment of budget funds for recruitment, and targeting specified groups. Through these, key result areas will be established with the objective to reach or satisfy them. In tackling the recruitment challenge, law enforcement will have to improve its image, reduce the processing time, and improve the ability to retain employees. The effort to improve the recruitment of peace officers should not be taken lightly. It is an onerous task, but one that can be improved upon with the right effort and approach.

As with any new program or approach, there should be an evaluation process to determine the overall effectiveness of the plan. Only then can organizations continue to grow and learn. The transition to a new approach or concept should be monitored and managed. Failure to do so can lead to confusion, increased resistance to the plan and ineffective implementation. The next chapter provides a guide to ensuring a smooth transition.

CHAPTER FOUR

TRANSITION MANAGEMENT

Commitment Plan

To ensure strategic planning is effective and a worthwhile process, it must not just end with a fancy report containing colorful charts and graphs. All members of the organization must carry out the action plans developed during the process. The organization as a whole must support and work the plan, while continuing to respond to new opportunities and challenges. A focus group or committee should be in place to advise the executive officer and management staff of the status of the strategic plan. This focus group or committee will be comprised of internal and external stakeholders. They will track and record progress and make reports to the organization, community and other relevant stakeholders.

The implementation process of a strategic plan is where organizations fall short and then fail to follow through. As with all change, a feeling of uncertainty is brought about and change is implemented incrementally. Most people tend to fear change, primarily because it is different and takes people out of what is comfortable.

This strategic plan should include as many people involved in the plan as possible; we should have many “fingerprints” on the plan. To effectively make the necessary changes occur, managing the transition will be a critical component. The CEO, Chief or Sheriff should make a strong commitment to the plan and create a sense of urgency to affect the changes. While not hiding the potential negative effects, the positive outcomes should be highlighted and brought to the forefront. The executive

must not only support it verbally, he or she must support it through action. Her actions must be congruent with the plan. This includes the tone of memorandums, new policies, and commitment of budget funds.

Critical Mass

The executive officer may simply not have time to meet or communicate regularly with all the stakeholders involved in the plan. However, he should identify the critical mass and work closely with them. The critical mass is defined as the smallest number of stakeholders whose support is necessary for successful change to occur and whose opposition will likely lead to failure. Identifying the critical mass should be the first step of the transition management plan.

After identifying the critical mass, their level of commitment to the plan should be determined. It would also be beneficial to determine the minimal level of commitment necessary to ensure the plan is successful. The critical mass and their commitment levels could be charted in a commitment chart as demonstrated in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1
Commitment Chart

Key Players	No Commitment	Let it Happen	Help it Happen	Make it Happen
Police Chief				OX
City Manager		X→→→→→→→→	→→→→→→→→O	
City Council			O	
Police Union	X→→→→→→→→	→→→→→→→→	→→→→→→→→O	
Human Resources			X→→→→→→→→	→→→→→→→→O
POST				XO
Police Academy Coordinators		X→→→→→→→→	→→→→→→→→O	
Police Managers		X→→→→→→→→	→→→→→→→→O	

The symbol O indicates the minimum level of commitment necessary for the success of the plan. X designates the individual/group present level of commitment. The arrows indicate the direction of commitment change to be brought about through management action.

In reviewing the commitment chart, it appears the police union would have to step up as a stakeholder and increase their level of commitment. This generally rings true in most organizations. Their involvement in the recruitment process is minimal and they express more interest after a candidate is hired, as they seek to sign him/her up. No resistance is anticipated from the critical mass or beyond. If resistance develops, it should be tactfully managed. While the level of commitment is unquestionable, when hard decisions about priorities have to be made, it is hopeful the critical mass will stay the course to commit funds and resources to improve recruitment. The executive

officer should serve as a role model throughout the transition. She should support a changing rewards system to encourage new behaviors and attitudes.

An implementation plan is the preferred method to ensure a smooth transition and to minimize obstacles that can derail change from occurring. The plan does not have to be complex; in fact the simpler, the better. It will ensure there is order and puts mechanisms in place to keep the change process from stalling. The following steps make up a basic plan that can be used to implement change:³⁷

- Create a sense of urgency to implement the strategic plan
 - Educate all parties about the crisis and implications for the organization
 - Identify and focus on opportunities that may present themselves
 - Get “buy in” from all levels, internal and external
- Create a Transition Team or committee
 - Comprise a group with power and influence to lead the change
 - Work closely with a coalition, encourage teamwork
- Develop and communicate a strategy for change
 - Provide training regarding change and how it can affect the organization
 - Communicate strategies and explain clearly; emphasize benefits to organization and work through or over any hurdles
 - Encourage innovation and initiative to solve problems
- Executive officer and transition team role model expected behaviors
 - All actions must be congruent with change
 - Behaviors must display unwavering commitment to change

- Generate short term wins for those involved in change process
 - Celebrate small wins by giving praise and recognition publicly
 - Set people up to succeed, help them win without doing it for them
 - Manage resistance and encourage full participation
 - Implement forced collaboration as appropriate
 - Continue to work and communicate with resisting employees to get buy in
- Another tool to ensuring a smooth transition and tracking levels of involvement or participation is through the creation of a responsibility chart. This chart would be completed by the executive officer with input from management and the transition team. The chart reflects the level of input into the various decisions or actions necessary in implementing the strategies, by the stakeholder group. Through the use of this chart, the executive officer or transition team can spot potential conflicts, bottlenecks or other obstacles that will have to be cleared. They can troubleshoot the situation or plan to deal with it prior to the development of a serious problem. This chart depicts ten of the stakeholders typically involved in the recruitment issue at most police organizations (Table 4-2).

**Table 4-2
Responsibility Chart**

Actors – Decisions or Actions ↓	Police Chief	Human Resources Manager	Police Academy Coord.	City Manager	City Council	Police Manager	Police Union	Recruitment Staff	Schools/ Education	POST
Set & clarify new direction	R/A	R/A	S	A	I	S	S	I	I	--
Streamline & shorten selection process	R	R/A	S	A	S	I/S	--	S	--	S
Improved marketing of law enforcement careers	R/A	I	R/I	S	S	R/S	S	R/S	I	R/S
Revision of selection standards	R/A	R/A	I	A	A/S	I	I	I	I	R/A
Target specific populations/groups	A	R/A	R/S	A	A/S	S	I	R/S	--	R
Commit financial resources to recruitment	R/A	R/A	--	A	A/S	S	--	--	--	--
Improve image of profession	R/A	I	R/S	S	S	R/S	I	I	--	R/S
Improve benefit packages	R	I	--	R/A	A	I	I	--	--	--

- R - Responsibility (not necessarily authority)
- A - Approval (right to veto)
- S - Support (put resources towards)
- I - Inform (to be consulted before action)
- Irrelevant to this item

In reviewing this chart, there is a potential conflict in the first action listed: setting and clarifying the new direction. In many organizations, this is often the source of conflict. It will be imperative the Chief and Human Resources Manager meet to discuss the issues and arrive at a workable solution regarding this first direction setting step. If the crisis is realized by these lead individuals, they know there will have to be some give and take on both sides. The third action describes the improved marketing of law enforcement careers. There are several stakeholders who will share responsibility for implementing strategies. While no conflicts or resistance is anticipated, communication and collaboration will be vital to their efforts. Failure to do so can result in movement in different directions, duplication of effort, poor results and reflect badly on the process.

The only other action that is likely to create a stir is the commitment of financial resources to recruitment. In many organizations, Human Resources and Police Departments spend time, resources and money to attract and hire police recruits. Ideally, the effort and resources should be combined. As with task forces, shared resources, combining of talents and concerted efforts can make a significant difference in outcomes. The approval process to commit funds however, still rests in the hands of the City Manager and City Council. Communication and education on the recruitment crisis will be extremely important if everyone is to get on the same page. Improving the image of the profession is another action that will involve multiple stakeholders. Again, close collaboration and cooperation is crucial to the success of this strategy.

Monitoring and evaluation of the change process will be performed by a transition team. This group should collect data, track and monitor progress and

evaluate outcomes related to the changes occurring in the organization. They should additionally submit a status report to the executive officer on a monthly basis. This status report on the strategic plan should contain:

- Progress report on action plans and their level of achievement
- Report of goals/objectives achieved and their impact on the issue and organization
- Feedback from the transition team regarding change implementation
- Information about the achievement of small wins by parties involved
- Report of expenditures to implement strategies and cost savings if any
- Report of any missed action plan deadlines
- Any information about conflicts or controversy caused by the plan strategies
- Any and all positive outcomes; all negative outputs
- General sense of the morale of the organization

Law enforcement agencies and Human Resources Departments have been conducting business a set way for a long period of time. It will not be easy to change the processes or the mind sets over night. Through the strategic planning process, the chances of creating change will be much improved and you will have the tools to transition to the new strategies.

Summary

In strategic planning, it is crucial that measures are in place to manage the transition to new recruitment strategies and ensure the change occurs smoothly. Most change brings on feelings of uncertainty. With this uncertainty comes fear and a

reluctance to change. To ensure strategic planning was not a frivolous exercise, an implementation plan should be in place. To get commitment from those involved, there should be as many fingerprints on the plan as possible. This is where critical mass plays a vital role in the success of the process. Making changes to long used recruiting practices is certain to meet with resistance from those involved in the effort. They may feel it is not broken and disinclined to accept change.

It is clear that current recruiting practices are not yielding the desired results. For the plan to succeed, the chief executive should display a strong commitment to the plan and create a sense of urgency. It is essential that there be follow through on the strategic plan if agency managers are to be effective change agents. An effort should also be made to determine the level of commitment by the critical mass. Such commitment will steer law enforcement away from slow, ineffective, and cumbersome recruiting practices that have failed to meet the needs of the profession. The formation of a transition team could prove invaluable to leading the change process. Managers and members of the transition team must monitor progress, manage resistance, encourage participation, and evaluate results. Only through such efforts can agencies make positive gains in finding, attracting, and hiring excellent peace officer candidates.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Project Summary

Hiring good police officers has been a challenge for as long as many can remember. In the next several years, this task will not get any easier. On the contrary, it will become more difficult, if not impossible. The shrinking work force pool over the next several years will create an environment where police organizations will be competing against each other and against all other trades and professions for people to fill vacant positions. To compound the problem, a large number of police officers who are part of the baby boomer generation have reached or are nearing retirement age. The PERS 3% at 50 Retirement Plan is providing them with plenty of incentive to retire. Many of these officers can't find the motivation or the reasoning to stay in the job when they can stay home and earn up to 90 percent of their salary in retirement income. If they have been putting money aside into a Deferred Compensation Plan, this will push them up to nearly 100 percent of their salary. Many are opting to leave the profession which is laden with stress and often referred to as a pressure cooker. As a result of this new retirement plan, agencies are anticipating losing officers in record numbers. All of these agencies will be burdened with the task of finding replacements.

The recruitment issue is not one that will be going away anytime soon. Police agencies will have to rise to the challenge and meet it head-on if they are to be successful. Organizations who fail to do so will be burdened by under staffing, high overtime costs, ineffectiveness, low morale, and will eventually become stagnant. As

always, strategic organizations will find ways to meet this challenge by attracting qualified and talented employees wherever they might be.

This crisis will have considerable impact on police organizations. Police leaders will have to adapt and ensure the public safety work continues to get done. The organization will have to find ways to accomplish the work and meet the goals and mission of the department. Indisputably, police agencies will have to work harder and smarter. Becoming a strategic or learning organization is one way to ensure your organization will thrive under these new circumstances. Tomorrow's leaders will have to employ new approaches, strategies, initiative, innovation and consider the unconventional to attract quality employees to their organizations.

Leaders in police organizations will have to collaborate with many others in an effort to confront this recruitment crisis. Some of the collaborators are traditional partners, and others will constitute new challenges for them. Leaders have known for some time they could not solve all problems and do it all. This will be more evident now as our police organizations come up short of personnel. On the positive note, law enforcement has always been quite adaptable and has been able to work through some tough adversity.

There will be some aspects of confronting the recruitment issue that will require budget funds. Part of the leader's challenge will be educating those who hold the purse strings. The next part is creating a sense of urgency and convincing decision makers that recruitment is a top priority issue. Only by succeeding at this will politicians commit budget funds and be willing to explain to their constituents why money is going to

recruitment efforts and not a skateboard park or other priority project. The leaders will also have to convince politicians that higher salaries and improved benefit packages are ways to attract good candidates away from the private sector. There will be critics and persons or groups opposed to giving increasing funds to police. The leader's communication and diplomacy skills will be tested again. He or she will have to be articulate, convincing, and be prepared to counter the offensive from all angles.

While finding talented and qualified candidates appears rather onerous, a strong organization with a good leader and effective managers will find a way to make things work. Not that they are foolishly optimistic, they are adaptable and determined to succeed in one form or another. The best recommendation for leaders and organizations is to understand the crisis, and then make the best strategic plans that will work in their respective jurisdiction. "Plan the work, then work the plan" is a good motto to have in confronting this issue. In light of the current and future hiring atmosphere, the police profession cannot afford to lose good candidates and definitely cannot afford to hire bad ones.³⁸

Based on the results of this project, recommendations and/or strategies to deal with recruitment, include:

1. Add improved recruiting and retention to the organization's strategic plan.
2. Build and communicate a top employer reputation.
3. Hire well, or not at all.
4. Treat employees as if they were customers.

5. Ensure that hiring managers are well trained in the art and science of interviewing.
6. Set and clarify new directions.
7. Streamline and shorten selection procedures.
8. Improve the marketing campaign of law enforcement careers.
9. Review and revise selection standards.
10. Target specific populations/groups.
11. Commit financial resources to recruit employees.
12. Improve the image of the law enforcement profession.
13. Improve salaries and benefit packages.
14. Assign mentors to new hires and implement dynamic orientation periods.
15. Add recruitment pages to the organization's web site and simplify the application process.
16. Make every member of the organization a recruiter on a daily basis as they contact members of the public.
17. Offer bonuses to employees who make referrals that are eventually hired.
18. Create job sharing positions for those who opt not to work a traditional workweek.
19. Assign a contact person to candidates vying for a position in the organization and ensure the employee keeps in touch with the candidates to keep them informed and interested.

20. Have an exit interview process and review the interviews to determine why employees are leaving the organization.
21. Reverse the “us versus them” mentality and value all employees to avoid creating a toxic workplace.
22. Hire older workers. In addition to having maturity and life experience, they are quite reliable.
23. Target students in elementary and high schools. They will be the police officer candidates in ten plus years.
24. Strive to reach a reasonable and uniform standard for dealing with substance abuse.
25. Recruit at military bases for military personnel who are being discharged and were there for short enlistments.
26. Consider establishing a statewide central registry of law enforcement candidates.
27. Re-recruitment. This is an effort to retain employees. If an organization is not aggressively recruiting their current employees, it may be the only one who is not.³⁹

Local and state agencies are launching strong recruitment campaigns that play up the area’s recreational opportunities and natural beauty. This approach emphasizes better lifestyles and takes advantage of well-known businesses and universities that already draw good candidates to the area. This approach also strives to sell the excellent education, low crime rate, less traffic, small community atmosphere, slower pace, and an improved quality of life.⁴⁰

The purpose of this project was to examine the recruitment of peace officers and to identify new strategies that might yield improved results by the year 2006. As organizations and jurisdictions are vastly different, there cannot be a one size fits all approach. Strategies have been presented to target specified groups for recruitment, attract future candidates at the elementary school age, improve the image of the law enforcement profession, and shorten and streamline the selection process. Because every organization is looking for specific characteristic traits and/or abilities in their peace officers, there will always be differences in how and where law enforcement recruits candidates. It is clear that law enforcement will have to adopt new approaches to the complex process of attracting and retaining quality peace officers.

Appendix A

List of Trends

1. What's in it for me?
2. Loyalty and commit to the department.
3. The aging of Baby Boomers.
4. Women in previously male dominated jobs.
5. Level of education in the workforce.
6. Degree of life experience.
7. Availability of jobs in job market.
8. Drug usage by potential candidates.
9. Availability of technology.
10. Performance of national economy.
11. Respect for law enforcement as a profession.
12. Legislature increasing staffing levels for law enforcement.
13. Level of urban immigration.
14. Image of police officers.
15. Bridging the gap with ethnic groups.
16. Degree of internal mobility.
17. Socioeconomic status of employees.
18. Availability of financial resources.
19. Generation Y.

Appendix B

List of Events

1. United States/China war or conflict.
2. Large scale domestic terrorism.
3. Major earthquake strikes metropolitan area.
4. Economic recession.
5. Water/power crisis.
6. Legislature increases staffing levels for law enforcement.
7. Reinstatement of affirmative action policy.
8. Civil unrest in Los Angeles, California.
9. Drug war in Beverly Hills, California.
10. Drastic increase in recruitment standards.
11. Local mandate to consolidate law enforcement agencies.
12. Reinstatement of the draft.
13. State creates Inter-agency Domestic Violence Task Force.
14. True open borders.
15. Legalization of drugs.
16. Collapse of the stock market.
17. California Highway Patrol takes over waterways.
18. Mass transportation lessens need for vehicle enforcement.
19. Mandatory curfew imposed.

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