

To Whom Will You Pass the Torch?

by

**Kevin L. Childe
Fountain Valley Police Department**

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

To Whom Will You Pass the Torch?

Introduction

“Who’s going to take over when I walk out the door?” Most police executives and managers say this to themselves as they see the new generation file into the back door at the station. Just who is this generation and what are they about? They are young, smart, brash. They may wear flip flops to the office or listen to iPods at their desk, according to Stephanie Armour of USA TODAY.¹ They want to work, but they do not want work to be their life. Compare this one trait with the previous generations who are currently managing or supervising your personnel. Better yet, compare it to your chief or previous police executive who came from the baby boomer generation. Bruce Tulgan of *Rainmaker Thinking*,² which studies the lives of young people, says, “Get ready, because this generation-whose members have not yet hit 30-is different from any that have come before.” A generation gap describes the vast difference in cultural norms between a younger generation and their elders. This phrase was first described in western culture in regards to the gap between boomers and their parents.

As a chief executive or a member of the command staff, you are more than likely one of the elders in your organization. More importantly, you are responsible for the future of your organization and the development of its leaders. Understanding the different generations and what drives them will assist you when planning for succession in your organization. As such, the change now upon us of generations has real impact; what then might we do to prepare those who will follow? To whom will we pass the torch, and what lessons will we leave?

¹ “Generation Y: They have arrived at work with a new attitude.” USA TODAY, November 2005.

² Bruce Tulgan, *Rainmaker Thinking* (Amherst, MD: HRD Press, 1997) accessed 18 September 2006, available from <http://www.rainmakerthinking.com/boxxbook.htm>.

Generations in the Workplace

Baby boomers, those born from 1944 to 1960, presently make up the lion's share of the political, cultural, industrial and academic leadership class in the United States.³ Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, born within 60 days of each other in mid-1946, are the first and second baby boomer presidents, and their careers in office illustrate the wide, often diverging spectrum of values and attitudes espoused by this largest American generational group to date. Police department chief executives who are setting policy and making decisions which affect the future of our organizations are coming from this generation. This single generation had so much influence, Time magazine named it their "Man of the Year" in 1966.

Now consider that some in command staff and many supervisors are coming from Generation "X," those born between 1961 and 1980. Gen Xers arrived with their own ideas about how things ought to be and on how the workplace ought to be run. In the 1990s, many made note of the widening rift between the boomers and Gen X. The media introduced Generation X as a bunch of slackers who were over educated and definitely under worked as they looked for their latest cup of franchised coffee.⁴ These boomers and Xers are now managing and supervising police organizations. As with generations preceding them, they are now coping with the changing face of the workforce in the first decade of this Century.

The new millennium brought an influx of veterans to law enforcement after the downsizing of the military. In fact, police departments offered inducements to get them to apply. For instance, in the city of Pittsburgh, veterans are offered an additional ten points to their raw score on the

³ Wikipedia, "Baby Boomer"; available from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/baby-boomer>; accessed 18 September 2006.

⁴ Schecter, James "Great Xpectations," Time magazine, 13 June 1997, 41-42, 43.

entrance examination and a waiver of the city's residency requirement for police officer applicants. On their website, they note their Police Department "...is structured as a paramilitary organization. This means we employ a culture and protocol that closely resembles those of the armed forces. Concepts like chain of command, organizational hierarchies, military order and discipline and others are ideas that are present in all police organizations. Because of this similarity to the military services, veterans have demonstrated an ability to quickly assimilate into the police organizational framework and are, therefore, productive in their respective duties, quicker and perform at a higher proficiency level than those who have no experience serving in such an organization."⁵ According to Michael Klutchka, who works in the Houston Police Department's recruiting office, "Military veterans are ideal employees because they tend to be more mature, responsible and resourceful than others of similar age."⁶ Consistent with this belief, the Houston Police Department actively recruits military veterans by visiting bases and partnering with military to work programs.

This blending of generations brought a whole new perspective and influence to police organizations. The boomers and Xers had their perceptions; the veterans arrived with theirs too. Now, Generation "Y," whose members were born between 1980 and 1997, begins to emerge in the workforce. They are characterized by an optimistic spirit, patriotic character and the need for supervision and structure. Xerox, a multi-national company who has taken Generation "Y" very seriously, according to Joe Hamill, Director of Talent Acquisition at Xerox Corporation.⁷ Xerox and other Fortune 500 companies view this emerging workforce as the future of their

⁵ City of Pittsburgh, PA, "Employment Rules"; available from www.city.pittsburgh.pa.us/personnel; accessed 15 January 2007.

⁶ City of Houston, TX, "GI Jobs"; available from www.houstontx.gov/police/careers; accessed 15 January 2007 .

⁷ Hamil, Joe, "*Express Yourself*"; USA today, 22 December 2006, sec.4, p.1.

organizations. Xerox is actively recruiting at universities and colleges throughout the nation. They offer summer jobs, internships and school-to-work programs to tap into this emerging talent pool.

Generational Conflict

In almost every organization, three or four different generations work side by side, says Lynn Lancaster, author of “When Generations Collide.” She conducted a survey in 2001, and the following generational factoids were compiled on how the generations view themselves and those around them:

- One-third of respondents said they were often offended by someone from another generation at work.
- Thirty percent of baby boomers and more than 60 percent of Gen Xers said their generation is not viewed positively by other generations.
- Their loyalties are different. When asked who they are most loyal to at work, Gen Xers put co-workers first, their boss or projects second and the company last.
- The Gen Xers’ number one reason to stay was autonomy; the boomer’s number one reason for staying was making a difference.
- The majority of boomers said it would be easier for them to recite the ingredients in a Big Mac than their company’s mission statement.
- Training is an issue; 45 percent of boomers agreed that training opportunities play a key role in their staying at the company.
- When asked, “Have you ever left a job because of lack of training opportunities, 15 percent of the boomers and 30 percent of the Gen Xers said “yes.”

- Clear paths are important. Fourteen percent of boomers agreed that a person should build a lifetime career with one company and just 11 percent of Gen Xers agreed.

The survey results reflect there are real differences between generations at work. Generational differences were most pronounced when examining reasons for staying or leaving for greener pastures. Interestingly, most employees of each generation did want direction, training and clear defined career paths. The generations did have varying perspectives on work life balances, with the perception of Gen Xers seemingly representing the best of both boomers and Gen X.

The Need for Balance

The nature of police work requires law enforcement professionals to respond to many tactical situations with military like accountability and direction. Situationally, this approach is necessary for effective delivery of police services. When this is the dominant management style, line personnel may see themselves at the lower end of the continuum of authority. This continuum denotes the degree of importance within the agency and an expectation of passive, competent obedience. While such traits may be valued in military operations, they can be disastrous when trying to solicit input and involvement from Generation Y line personnel in problem solving efforts.

According to Kevin Gilmartin, who wrote *Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement*, Gen Xers and the current crop of applicants may bristle at this type of command and control.⁸ Human resource professionals recommend that, to tackle adversity, we must not forget our similarities. For example, an executive with Watson Wyatt Worldwide Work USA Research asked 7500 workers at all job levels across diverse industries to respond to 130 statements about their

⁸ Kevin Gilmartin, “*Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement*”; available from www.emotionalsurvival.com; accessed 18 January 2007.

workplaces. Watson Wyatt broke down their responses to look for diversity patterns across demographics, including white versus minorities, men versus women and people over and under 30 years old. They found many similarities, especially in the categories respondents rated as most important to them. People agreed about what inspires their commitment to a particular employer, and they cited the following factors as important: They supported their company's business plan; they had a chance to use their skills on the job; the company acted on employee suggestions; people also agreed on what organizations need to improve; employee input and promoting the best performers while helping the worst performers get better.⁹ What could this mean? For policing, it may mean we have to look beyond the perceived differences to maximize the talents we have at hand.

As police leaders, we may see vast differences “on the surface” in our people. In spite of that, police executives must tap into all their employees' talents, not those who easily fit into the old model of “command and control” type of hierarchy. A systematic integration of technical police skills training, along with leadership development, will afford police officers a shared understanding of leadership that crosses generational lines. Although the generations do have differences, successful organizations recognize similarities in what employees think are important to them. At this time, the issue intensifies due to the “brain drain” caused by recent enhancements in the State's retirement system.

California Law Enforcement Perspective

In 1999, the California Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) started to offer a 3 percent @ 50 retirement option. Senior members of police departments hit the proverbial lotto by

⁹ Watson Wyatt, “Diversity in the workplace”; available from www.humanresources.about.com/od/diversity; accessed 18 January 2007.

increasing their retirement by the stroke of a pen. As more and more police departments negotiated for this benefit, a ripple was felt throughout the state. Institutional knowledge fled police organizations at an alarming rate. Within months, entire command staffs were replaced, but the leadership was not.

The lack of leadership within police organizations in the state of California has risen to the point where the Commission on Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST) identified leadership training as part of their Strategic Plan in 2004. The Plan identifies, in part, a desire to “raise the bar” on POST selection and training standards by integrating leadership in the hierarchy of POST-mandated courses. The Commission also ordered a complete analysis of critical duties and competencies of field supervisors and managers. In addition to the POST Strategic Plan, the California Chiefs of Police Association conducted a survey of 334 municipal police chiefs in the State of California in 2005. They identified leadership as one of the top ten issues facing policing in the next five years.¹⁰

To be successful in the future, police organizations need to invest now in their personnel to develop their technical police skills in concert with their development as leaders. Currently, the industry standard in California requires that a police sergeant attend an only 80-hour supervision course within one year of being promoted. Often, newer supervisors are leading their personnel by trial and error if they have not had any type of leadership training prior to their promotion. This is an expensive proposition, according to Dr. Howard Prince II who has been involved in leadership development programs for almost 30 years. According to Prince, a system should be in place to develop those leadership skills prior to the promotion or assignments to positions of

¹⁰ Krull, Steven, “*California Police Chiefs Demographic Survey*”; (Sacramento CA: CPCA, November 2004).

responsibility. Many agencies do provide for tuition reimbursement, POST certifies SLI, Command College and the FBI has the national academy. For the most part, these opportunities are extended once you have been promoted to a position of rank or authority, unlike the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) leadership program, which develops leaders at the line level once they become members of a police organization. In fact, aspects of the IACP's efforts to prepare tomorrow's leader may hold a part of the solution to this emerging need.

The IACP's Leadership Effort

The IACP is the world's oldest and largest non-profit membership organization of police executives with over 20,000 members in over 89 different countries. IACP took up an initiative in the 1990s to develop future leaders within all levels of police organizations.¹¹ According to their President, "It is vital that we, as law enforcement executives, take an active role to ensure our organizations have programs in place that systematically develop leaders so our organizations have leadership in depth and are continuously preparing leaders for the future."¹²

The IACP has now established a leadership center for development of police personnel throughout the United States. The center is dedicated to assist police chiefs and their agencies in their efforts to promote leadership at all levels. The distinguishing feature of the IACP model is its focus on the systematic development of leaders at all levels of an organization and enjoys the concept of "every officer a leader."

The IACP program is broken down into several core activities.

¹¹ Police Leadership in the 21st Century, Achieving and Sustaining Executive Success, IACP President's Leadership Conference, 1999.

¹² Chief Mary Ann Viverette, IACP President, "President's Message; Tomorrow's Police Leaders," November 2005.

- The first core activity is institutional education and training, keeping in mind the goals set forth in the foundation of an agency's leadership development program and the essentials of dispersed leadership. An agency's leadership can select the training and the timing that is most appropriate for the leadership competencies at each level of the agency.
- The second, and most important, leader development core activity is operational assignments. While depicted as a separate area, leader development from operational assignments become significantly more effective when coupled with an officer's institutional education and training.
- The third core area is self-development; it is what a developing leader does on his or her own to correct shortcomings and reinforce strengths. These can be any number of learning projects such as college courses, technical training, reading or a similar learning task performed either during personal time or at work and designed to make a developing leader more effective and efficient. As there are an abundance of potential projects that compete for a developing leader's time, it is very important to focus the developing leader on what is most important for his or her personal development. This is accomplished by clearly articulated values, ethics, leader competencies, standards and expectations in conjunction with a standardized education and training plan and a progressively more challenging operational assignment that put the developing leader's individual learning needs into context.¹³

Integrating the IACP leadership plan is fairly simple once a commitment to train has been established. It is also very adaptable to each agency's current command structure. The chief

¹³ Training Bulletin 2, A Leadership Development System, Leaders in Police Organizations IACP.

executive sets the curriculum based on their individual department's needs, as well as the depth of leadership and succession planning necessary to address anticipated future needs. Coupled with technical skills training and assignments, the organization will be well prepared for any challenges they will face in the future. There are those, though, who have taken the concept a few steps further. The City of Novato, California, has established a program of training and succession planning others have found worthy of replication. It, too, may hold value as a piece of the puzzle for those wishing to prepare their leaders of tomorrow.

Sample Training Plan – Novato Police Department

The Novato Police Department's training and succession plan is utilized by the California Chiefs of Police Association as a "best practices" policy. The purpose of the training and succession plan is to (1) meet mandated, essential and desired training requirement, (2) enhance the level of law enforcement service to the public, (3) increase the technical expertise and overall effectiveness of their personnel and (4) provide for the continued professional development of department personnel.

The training plan is designed to identify training needs and set priorities for every rank, position and task specialized assignment within the department. It is designed as a tool to assist with the goal of bringing uniformity and consistency to training while providing employees with the greatest opportunity for success. It is used by supervisors and managers on a regular basis to meet the training needs of their employees and to appropriately evaluate and respond to training requests from employees. The Novato Police Department formalized their training plan in 2006 after having an informal process in place. By publishing a defined plan, training and developing

their personnel is done on a more consistent basis, and with greater effectiveness to meet the Department's goals.

To make professional and personal goals possible for the employee, the department has placed an emphasis in several areas: (1) law enforcement professional training, (2) college education and (3) leadership training. Within each rank/position and task/special assignment, applicable training courses are categorized as follows:

- **Mandated** – training in this category is required by federal law, state law or department policy. Unless otherwise noted, this training should be completed within one year of appointment to the position.
- **Essential** – this training has been designed by the department as necessary for the professional development of an employee in his/her specific rank or task assignment.
- **Desirable** – upon completion of the mandatory and essential courses, an employee may pursue additional interests in their law enforcement training.

The department will make a positive effort to accommodate an individual's desired career path with consideration for needs of the department and anticipated employee's career direction. A list of the mandated essential and desirable training, along with any licensed certificate requirements for each rank position, is located in this section. The program has a significant ease of use. In fact, any employee looking at their prospective career goals can readily see what training they will receive, optional training opportunities for added growth, and the types of experiences and education desired by the Department for those who will lead it in the future.

The Novato Police training plan appears to be very thorough, although it focuses on technical skills, not leadership skills. For example, for the position of police lieutenant, no leadership courses are required. All the leadership courses normally afforded a police executive, for instance, Command College, WestPoint Leadership or the FBI National Academy, are listed as desirable. They are not required to hold and enjoy the rank of police lieutenant with the City of Novato. To become effective in work to prepare future managers and executives, Novato must identify and sustain training for their best and brightest to ensure they can step in when needed.

Our Options

Obviously, there are many options for our organizations. A hybrid plan of the IACP leadership model and the Novato Police Department's training plan should be strongly considered by any manager concerned about the future. The hybrid would address both technical skills training and necessary leadership development for line and supervisory personnel wishing to move higher in the rank structure. Novato Police Department's plan as a stand-alone answer only "encourages" participation in many industry standard type leadership courses, i.e., SLI, Command College, FBI N.A., by categorizing them as "desirable." The leadership component is equally important to the technical police skills many organizations solely focus on.

Conclusion

The differing generations at work do provide unique challenges. Integrating your department's training plan will provide them structure and feedback to make them loyal, committed employees. The development of leaders at all levels of police organizations will fill the void left by recent retirees while preparing for future leadership after you have gone. The efforts of the IACP and the example of the Novato training plan are a start. By institutionalizing a training

plan that incorporates both technical and leadership skills your department will flourish. Do it now and it will be a better place to work, manage and lead.