

# Effective Community Policing Leadership Skills

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## Overview

- Quick overview of community policing; its background and what activities do officers do in this environment
- Review both the Internal and External Skills leaders need to have to effectively lead policing in a COP/POP environment
- Discuss the role that police may play in community wide problem solving
- Review some available resources to replicate “what works”.

## Community Oriented Policing

a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies, which support the problem-solving techniques, to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime.

- Partnership between police officers and their community
- Intensely focused on solving problems
- Police organization is transformed
- Community Partnership
- Problem Solving
- Transformed Police Department
- Shifting decision making to the lowest possible level
- Empowering employees to be problem solvers
- Shifting from Rule Driven to Mission Driven
- Empowered Problem Solvers
- Community Policing is not just about drinking coffee!
- COP/POP versus Traditional Policing
- Officers are actively seeking opportunities to engage with citizens (proactive AND reactive)
- Officers follow through with identified community problems
- Officers seek internal AND external partners to address problems
- Officers wait for a call for service (reactive)
- Officers are basically report takers
- Officers usually turn follow up over to other internal resources
- COP/POP versus Traditional Policing
- Root cause driven

- Often shifts reliance to more community-based resources
- Beat Officer often retains coordination of problem solving efforts
- Engages community to be part of the solution
- Incident driven
- Relies on use of the criminal justice system
- Prevalence of specialized policing units
- Often isolates community from the problem
- Typical Officer Activities in COP/POP agency
- Assigned specific patrol beats; incorporate foot patrols to engage residents, businesses, students, etc.
- Analyzes data of all activity 24/7 within assigned beat to identify potential problems and “hot spots”
- Develops a complete resources manual of all potential agencies and partners to help with identified problems
- Attends formal and informal gatherings and meetings throughout their beat; works with residents to identify problems
- Coordinates problem solving process; may use tools like SARA model
- Draws in other partners as needed
- Effectively leading COP/POP requires skills
- Internal Skills
  - Empowering employees
  - Establishing expectations and boundaries
  - Developing organizational mission and values
  - Providing an organizational vision
  - Reinforcing and training the organizational mission, values and vision
  - Understanding the role of mission and values, rules, and policy
  - Resolving conflict
- Effectively leading COP/POP requires skills
- External Skills
  - Listening
  - Earning trust and respect
  - Tolerance and acceptance of diverse views
  - Getting past anger and disenfranchisement
  - Developing collaboration and partnerships toward a common community vision
  - Mobilizing and empowering the community to problem solve
  - Marketing and publicizing
- Internal Skills for leaders
- Empowering employees
  - It all starts with MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES
    - Mission: our purpose for being; what we’re here to **do**
    - Vision: an inspiring description of **what we aspire to be**
    - Values: the principles and beliefs that define our behavior
  - If you don’t already have these, or if they’re getting “stale”, it might make sense to develop these anew
    - Will signal “change is coming”
    - Good chance to get employees engaged as major stakeholders

- Vision statements can be the leader's, or a collective
- Internal Skills for leaders
- Empowering employees
  - Move from "rules driven" to "mission driven"
    - Every day, every employee should measure their day's activities and behavior as primarily advancing the organization's mission.
    - In this culture, employees aren't acting to AVOID a violation of the rules...they're acting to PURSUE the mission!
    - Behavior is guided by the organizational values, not simply its rules
    - Leaders MUST practice what they preach...
- Internal Skills for leaders
- Role of the Middle Managers requires clarification and reinforcement
  - Middle Managers can be "threatened" in this environment
    - They're used to "giving high level orders".
  - Their job is to help identify needed resources and connect subordinates with available resources
  - They need to closely monitor their subordinate supervisors to ensure they're supporting their troops' problem solving efforts
  - They need to continuously instill in their subordinate supervisors their role in accountability of the mission and values
- Internal Skills for leaders
- Role of Supervisors requires clarification and reinforcement
  - Supervisors must constantly instill the mission and values within their employees
  - Supervisors should provide guidance and expertise to help officers in their problem solving
  - Supervisors can help free up "red tape" and streamline internal processes
  - Supervisors must hold their officers accountable to organizational values while empowering them to act with some independence
  - As in traditional policing, supervisors are "where the rubber meets the road"
- Internal Skills for leaders
- An example of an employee empowerment "decision making tool"
  - Is it Legal?
  - Is it Ethical?
  - Does it carry out our Mission?
  - Is it consistent with our Values?
  - Are you willing to be accountable for it?
  - Optional:
    - Would you be comfortable with it on the front page of the newspaper? Or
    - Would your mother be proud?
  - If the answer to all of these is YES, don't ask, JUST DO IT.
- Internal Skills for leaders
- Empowerment "traps" for leaders to watch for and avoid...
  - "But Boss, I was just doing what you said, being empowered" as an excuse for poor decision making
  - "But Boss, I was just letting my employees be empowered like you said" as an excuse for poor supervision and lack of accountability

- “But Boss, I didn’t think it was my job anymore now that we’ve empowered employees” as a middle manager’s excuse for failing to oversee their unit’s operations and upholding the mission and values
- Internal Skills for leaders
- Leaders must establish expectations and boundaries
  - A foundational piece of clear ethical boundaries is a must. What are the absolutes?
- Leaders must link organizational values to employee conduct
  - Employees shouldn’t need to “ask permission”
  - Their question should be, “am I acting consistent with our values”
  - This requires a steady dose of “do the right thing”
- Leaders THEMSELVES must follow the mission and values
  - Absent this, little hope that employees will
- Leaders need to provide a sense of fiscal boundaries for empowered employees to operate within
- Internal Skills for leaders
- Providing a Vision
  - Leaders need to articulate WHO we are, WHY do we exist, WHAT is important to us, and most important, WHERE are we going
  - The leader’s vision must include a sense of the future target that the organization is aiming for...what will success look like?
  - It is crucial that middle managers and supervisors understand the Vision
    - They are the ones who will ‘translate’ it into employee actions!
- Internal Skills for leaders
- Training to the Vision
  - Constant restatement by the leader
  - Managers and supervisors must learn it to be champions
  - Employees need training on strategic risk taking
- Policy Development and Evaluations
  - Policies help to define boundaries, provide framework for empowered employees
  - Policies illuminate organizational priorities
  - Evaluations assess projects, work, problem solving process.
  - Evaluations reflect employees’ actions to carry out mission within values
  - Internal Skills for leaders
- The role of rules in a COP/POP culture
  - NOT designed for “gotcha” moments
  - NOT designed to be inconsistently applied
  - Are rarely designed as absolutes
    - Exceptions: use of force, ethics, compliance with law, etc
- The rule book can shrink in size; policy book may grow a bit, but ultimately, mission and values are the yardstick of employee behavior!
- Internal Skills for leaders
- Internal conflict is inevitable.
  - Leaders must be adept at resolving at earliest point possible
  - Leaders are the buffer between politics and problem solving
  - “Politics stop at the chief’s office”

- Courage at the top: are you prepared to be fired for blocking external forces such as politics from the ethical deliver of the mission?
- External Skills for Leaders
- Listening Skills
  - Leaders must be extremely patient
  - Leaders need to demonstrate that they're listening to EVERYONE...especially the disenfranchised!
- External Skills for Leaders
  - Earning Trust
  - Showing Respect

- Earning and Keeping Trust

Trust is TOUGH to earn, EASY to lose

- Earning and Keeping Trust

Once lost, it is twice as tough to earn back

- Earning and Keeping Trust

Cannot be demanded

- Earning and Keeping Trust

Is not automatic

- Earning and Keeping Trust

Relationship, person by person

- Dignity and Respect
- Dignity and Respect

Culture

Traditions

Practices

- External Skills for Leaders
- Demonstrating tolerance and acceptance of diverse views
  - Stephen Covey: "Seek first to understand, THEN be understood."
- Getting Past Anger and Disenfranchisement
  - Listening, patience, and acceptance of other views are first steps towards productive conversations
  - Encouraging the disenfranchised to get involved requires proof that their views are important, too
- External Skills for Leaders
- Moving towards a common vision
  - Requires widespread and active community involvement
    - Social Media
    - Slow to grow, small turnouts are the norm
    - Turn to other partners to convene
  - Requires buy in to sustain a common vision
  - Requires constant reinforcement, selling and telling
- External Skills for Leaders
- Developing collaboration and partnerships.
  - Leadership needs to show both employees within your agency, and people in the community, how to forge partnerships.
  - Pick some early "wins" with pre-existing partners
    - Fire Chiefs can be great partners with police chiefs

- School districts, the faith community, the business community all are natural partners
- With time and practice, move into non-traditional partnerships
  - Youth organizations traditionally distant from police
  - Advocacy groups for traditionally disenfranchised
- External Skills for Leaders
- Police leaders need to be deeply engaged in the activities and cultural life of their communities
- External Skills for Leaders
- Moving the Common Vision to a shared agenda
  - Be active on social media
  - Public Forums remain a powerful way to engage the community
  - Be active on the “rubber chicken” circuit
- External Skills for Leaders
- The agenda for action is focused on SOLVING PROBLEMS
  - This IS, after all, about Community Policing
  - By definition, COP is about police and community solving problems together
  - Engaging a broad and diverse set of partners will yield the strongest process to identify problems, develop strategies, and resolve the problem
- External Skills for Leaders
- Empowering the Community!
  - This is more than a mere cheerleading exercise...it is leadership!
  - Mobilize the community, neighborhood by neighborhood
    - Assign neighborhood liaison officers who fully buy in and have special skills in public engagement
    - Structure your patrol beat assignments to ensure your officers are accountable for a defined geographic area for a prolonged period of time....”ownership”
- Tell your story, keep the energy alive!
  - Use Social Media!!!
  - Don’t overlook traditional media and methods like Public Information Officers who partner with the press and broadcast media consistently
- What police leadership means in the Community Policing environment
- Traditional policing....Police Leader was focused internally on his agency, control oriented.
- Community policing...Police Leaders focus equally internally (empowerment oriented) and externally (engaged with the community)
- Police can provide leadership on social issues within the community WITHOUT having to take “the lead role”....
- What police leadership means in the Community Policing environment
- Police leaders can lead by stressing the importance of broad based coalitions
- Police leaders can demonstrate through statistics and analysis where the overlaps in services are, where the gaps are, and how to pull from the duplicity to plug the gaps
  - Ex: the community may not NEED another soup kitchen; but, it is likely to need a place for homeless to get showers and receive mail and email instead
- Leaders find “what works”
- Rarely does a leader need to start “from scratch”
  - “There is very little new under the sun”

- No such thing as proprietary information in policing...we brag and we share!
- Stay well networked within your industry (associations, schools, newsclips, research) and outside your industry (service clubs, churches, Chamber of Commerce, etc)
- Leaders find “what works”
- Resources
  - COPS Office Publications
  - POP Center website
  - PERF
  - IACP
  - The Police Foundation
  - The FBI Academy library
  - Universities
  - NCJTC