

1997 HERMAN GOLDSTEIN AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE
IN PROBLEM-ORIENTED POLICING
ONTARIO POLICE DEPARTMENT

ABSTRACT:

The Ontario Police Department produced a "Citizen's Academy", an established method of providing a service while creating a bridge to the people you serve. We then extended the methodology to a high school "Student Academy". When we began hearing complaints from our business community, we felt we needed to build another bridge. From the original downtown business corridor to the warehouse district and the new mega-mall, came the request for "more officers-more patrol". Our answer, through the academy, was help us to help you".

By Checking commercial crime statistics and meetings with the Chamber of Commerce, a list of crime concerns was developed.

We created six four-hour classes on: Robbery Prevention; Environmental Design as a Crime Deterrent; Alarms; Municipal Codes ; Violence in the Workplace, Internal and Vendor Theft; Credit Card and Check Fraud; Substance Abuse; and Computer Fraud. Classes are held at City facilities or at the business itself. Instructors are City personnel and volunteers from the community. .

Attendees complete a survey at the end of the six weeks. We provide on-site inspection by Crime Prevention personnel. Once enough classes have been given, we will compare new crime statistics to the baseline numbers.

SCANNING

1. The nature of the problem was that we had been expending all of our energies on residential neighborhoods while ignoring the Business Community. The business community was growing rapidly. This brought additional crime without additional resources to combat that crime.
2. The problem was identified by scanning complaints to the City Council and to the Police Department. A Police Manager took the information and requested various statistics to be collected by Crime Analysis. This information substantiated the complaints.
3. (see above)
4. Ontario is a City on the move. The major growth is in the entertainment and shopping industries. In the Fall of 1997, we will open our 60 million dollar Convention Center. In 1998, the Ontario International Airport will open its new facilities. Considering this major investment towards showcasing our city, it seemed vitally important that we put emphasis on this problem.
5. The primary offenders were teenagers who gathered in the industrial areas of the city to witness or participate in illegal street races. Groups of up to 1,000 would gather and destroy property while committing some peripheral crimes to the businesses in the area. The lack of police coverage in this desolate area also made it ripe for burglaries. Other concerns were retail fraud and theft.

Analysis

1. Besides crime analysis data, we sent members of our Mall detail to Civilian Commercial

enforcement schools to enhance their abilities. The Police Manager joined the Chamber of Commerce and is now a Vice President. Working with the Chamber increased our picture of the many unreported problems in the business community.

2. Other than offering "Business Watch", I don't believe that the City has ever concentrated on bonding with the business community.
3. Besides the suspects mentioned above, there was a problem with commercial fraud and theft. Ontario opened a 1.7 million square foot mega-mall in November of 1997. The current customer count surpasses that of Disneyland. The on-site police department was immediately confronted with professional shoplifters, check and credit card abusers, and other crimes in the parking lots. The victims were local shoppers as well as transients from around the world. The motivation was monetary.
4. The resulting harm, was that crime statistics increased while support for the police department deteriorated.
5. Prior to the problem solving project, we were merely responding to calls-for-service and passing the reports on to an overworked detective bureau.
6. The analysis revealed that the cause was opportunity. There were many businesses ripe for picking due to a lack of building security or employee training. Others were victims merely because of their location.
7. The nature of the problem was pretty diversified. The Mall, which had on-site officers, was being victimized because it was new "build it and they will come". The warehouse district was being attacked because the buildings had no security and were in a desolate area far from the center of town. Other businesses were chosen because they kept expensive product in the windows, did not have adequate locks, had poorly trained employees, etc.

8. Although the date, time, and location statistics were a big help, the primary targets were located by perusing crime reports, talking with officers, and talking with the business community.
9. The discussions with the community were mostly through the Chamber of Commerce staff and board. After the academy was started, participants added direction for future classes.

Response

1. The only alternative would be to place more officers in a position to do proactive patrol in the designated areas. This was not an available option. Ontario currently has 8 officers designated as Community Oriented Policing specialists. They work out of two storefront offices and have responsibility for fixed areas of the city. All cases that require extensive intervention, are referred to COPS officers by patrol. Also assigned to the COPS team, are the K-9's, and bicycle officers. These are all officers who do not respond to specific calls for service and have the time to do proactive intervention.
2. We created a Business Academy to give the businessman the information he needs to prevent crime or react to it safely if it cannot be prevented. Meetings were held with the Chamber of Commerce to solicit their suggestions. Instructors were located in the department and in the community. The City Hall was utilized for the first meetings, because it is centrally located. Subsequent Academies were held on-site at the business. Classes are as follows:
 - (1) Robbery is taught by our robbery division. While two detectives are telling the students what they should or should not do during a robbery, two other detectives in disguise burst into the room with shotguns. The suspects order the students to the ground and when they do not comply, blank rounds are fired into the ceiling. This may seem dramatic, but the

students rave about this class. They advise that they become truly frightened and realize they should not try to resist a robber.

(2) The alarms and environmental design class is taught by Crime Prevention, Fire, and a private contractor. Students are given information on how to protect their business through proper locks, alarms, and landscaping.

(3) Violence in the Workplace is taught by police personnel and psychologists. Students are presented with profiles that might signify that their employee was having emotional or physical problems. They are also taught how to approach these people. The officer tells them what the law can and cannot do to protect them.

(4) Our Fraud investigators teach a class on "checks and credit card fraud". A result of this class was the introduction of an Inkless Fingerprint program ("Thumbs-up") at the mall, where all check writers are asked to surrender their thumb print on the check.

(5) The class on Internal theft and vendor theft is taught by private loss prevention managers. They explain what methods are available to the manager towards finding out which employees are stealing from the business. They also discuss how to prevent vendor theft. Finally they talk about what the civilian manager can legally do to uncover evidence, punish or fire an employee, deal with drug testing, alcohol rehabilitation, etc.

(6) A class on Substance Abuse is taught by our narcotics officers. They inform the students how to recognize drugs, and the effects of those drugs on their employees. They also talk about what the managers rights and responsibilities are when an employee is under the influence at work.

At the conclusion of the 6 classes, the students are given a certificate and asked to fill out an evaluation. The evaluations have been very positive.

The Chamber of Commerce had been very helpful by providing insight, publicity, on-site class monitoring, and coffee and donuts for the students. The police Manager wrote a BJA "Partnership" Grant which partners the department and the Chamber in continuing this program. We were recently advised that this grant had been awarded in the amount of \$86,000.

As a result of the feedback from these meetings, bicycle officers have been concentrating in the downtown area. Ontario had a bank robbery, three weeks in a row. The bicycle officers captured the suspects in all three cases.

Ontario also worked with local agencies in a team effort to abate illegal drag racing. The answer was new Legislation, weekly task force raids, and the resulting arrests, citations, and vehicle storages.

3. The response was developed because we were looking for alternatives to having more officers to chase more criminals. The only other response had to be that we needed to eliminate the target. This would take participation from the businessman.
4. When we evaluated this idea, the most important factors were (1) would it work towards resolving the problem? and (2) would there be a prohibitive cost?
5. The response we hoped for was that the business community would become a partner and assist us by creating barriers to crime.
6. We found our resources in the community. Many people in the private sector are willing to provide their services without charge once the need is explained. Our officers taught some

of the classes, but were not able to teach them all. Two private psychologists were enlisted to help in the area of "Violence in the Work Place". Two Loss Prevention Managers volunteered to teach the area dealing with Internal and Vendor theft.

7. Prior to the response plan, we merely responded to calls for service at business locations. Crime Prevention sent out occasional "Business Alerts" referring to criminals working in this area.
8. The only quandary in the beginning, was how to get the message out. The Chamber of Commerce publicized the Academy through their newsletters and weekly faxes. The Academy has to be tailored to the audience. If the students are in warehousing, the portion on checks and credit cards can be eliminated. Each audience had specific needs based on their specific problems. The classes were offered in the early A.M. for owners and managers, while late evenings are best for workers.
9. Those people involved in the response were members of the COPS team, Crime Prevention, the Chamber of Commerce, and others in the community.

Assessment:

1. The results were threefold. Commercial crime is down. Business owners have become part of the solution to their own problems. There is a stronger bond between the police and the people they serve.
2. Every student was given a chance to evaluate the program at the end of the six weeks. Crime analysis provided statistics on crimes in the target areas. We are just coming up on our first year of the program.
3. (see above)

4. There were no problems. This is an easy project with great results. No one loses.
5. The only other method available to us to handle this problem would be to redeploy officers from other duties. We would have done so if necessary, however it would not have produced the same results.
6. All of our goals were met.
7. We measured the results by the evaluations and comfort levels achieved by our students, as well as from crime statistics.
8. We have no suggestions on how to strengthen this program other than to have someone doing it full time. When the grant comes through, this will be our strategy.
9. Once we saturate the community, the only displacement will be beyond our sphere of influence.
10. There will always be new students as the job force changes.

Agency and Officer Information

1. This program was promoted to the entire department so that officers at crime scenes could suggest that the victim become involved in the Academy.
2. All of our Managers, Supervisors and Officers have received training in Problem Oriented Policing.
3. The incentive to involve yourself in problem solving is in the officers evaluations and promotability. It is understood that this is a desirable trait.
4. There was no information available for stopping business crime without spending money. This was the result of brainstorming.
5. There were no problems identified.

6. There was no cost to the program. All instructors were either on duty or voluntary. Publicity and printing were donated.

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