

Program Abstract

In 1991, the Dayton Police Department initiated a change of philosophy. One of the major changes involved shifting from being a call/incident-driven type of department to one that embraces community-oriented policing. The impetus of our Community Oriented Policing efforts was the high crime in our city and the infamous "hot iron" case. It was decided that Community Oriented Policing (COP) was the way to win back the community and prove ourselves effective and trustworthy. We understood that COP was not window dressing, not a quick fix and would possibly have some costs associated with it - notably a loss of response time for times other than emergency calls.

In October, 1991, the first officers were assigned a sector (roughly, an 8-10 square block area) and became community based police officers (CBOs). The sectors chosen had high calls for service rates, high incident rates and a neighborhood organization of some sort. The sectors and officers were chosen by the Coordinator of Community Policing and the District Commanders.

The instruction to the officers were:

1. Find an office
2. Knock on doors and introduce yourself
3. Get a general idea of the citizens' complaints
4. Take care of visible, quickly solved problems (abandoned vehicles and the like)
5. Assure residents that this is a long-term commitment
6. Be creative

Initially, in order to get to know their area, CBOs took no calls from dispatchers for 3 to 4 months. The residents of Dayton over the years have responded positively to City initiatives to fight crime. In a 1990 survey, Eight-nine percent of Daytontans believed that Dayton's Community-Based Policing program would reduce crime.

As of November *t*, 1998, the department organizational structure was changed to reflect what citizens throughout Dayton believed to be the best starting point for making community policing a way of life for the department and community.

While the SARA model is most often used for neighborhood and crime problems on a smaller scale, we found that by using the same model on ourselves and our organization, we could approach it in an organized fashion. The model has allowed for a systematic approach to any problem or issue with which we are confronted.

We have not stopped with just reorganizing the department; we are now taking a look at our operating systems and how to adjust them to support the efforts of community policing.

The Use of the S.A.R.A. Model in Implementing Community Oriented Policing

SCANNING

In 1991, the Dayton Police Department initiated a change of philosophy.

The change included:

- shifting from being a call/incident-driven type of department to one that embraces community-oriented policing (COP);
- facilitating partnerships between the police department and its total community; while leading the police department into future commitments needed to ensure those partnerships were enhanced and expanded where *needed*; and
- allowing officers to be more community based and continually in touch with the pulse of their designated beat.

The hope of the department *was* to achieve a better response to community concerns *and* to rebuild the trust between the community and its police department. We assigned specially designated officers (CBOs or Community Based Officers) to become familiar with the community, learn *and* understand its concerns and problems, and to address those problems utilizing all available resources.

But the Department struggled with implementing the new philosophy. We understood that our ability to implement the philosophy of COP within the

department would initiate the impetus for *change*. *In order* to effectively move forward, a solid foundation needed to be established so that all of the other changes and innovations desired by the department and the community could come to fruition.

If we could solve this problem by making the change, we would be well on our way to providing the kind of services the public desired and demanded of our department.

After a period of time, a committee was formed to *create* a plan for making *COP* a department-wide philosophy. The committee consisted of the Coordinator of Community Policing, designated CBOs, sergeants and lieutenants who had been working with the *CBOs*, community leaders at the neighborhood level, businesses, and a number of people from other social service agencies. The committee examined the literature on *COP* and discussed what *COP means* to the community.

What soon emerged, after struggling with various issues, talking with other agencies also engaged in *COP*, and having conversations with business/management professionals, was a common pattern amongst the various agencies. We were trying to transition from a command/control model of management to a System 3 (Likert) organization. The transition

was not working well because the proper systems were not in place to support the efforts towards COP.

Another problem experienced with this transition centered on our efforts to maintain a dual organization - one for the *CBOs* and one for "traditional" (i.e. call-taking) police officers. Not only were problems being experienced from within the department regarding the philosophy change; individuals from outside the organization questioned whether or not true change could occur. Due to the many controversies experienced over the years, there seemed to be a lack of trust in the department. True dialogue and communication were needed to bridge the gap between the department and citizens.

In an effort to maintain *effective* dialogue between our department and the citizens, the "Art of Neighborhood Living" program was created. The main purpose of this initiative was to establish each individual's role in creating and maintaining a safe, healthy community. This program was specifically designed to empower the people to take charge of their neighborhoods.

ANALYSIS

The problem of managing the implementation of *COP* as a department wide philosophy has existed since the idea was first conceived in 1991.

However, it was not until *COP* had been operational for a while that it was seen as a problem.

Some department members perceived they had much to lose by a change. A bureaucracy by its nature does not like change. It seeks to preserve itself in its current form. Therefore, agents of the bureaucracy felt threatened and became most determined to preserve the status quo. Because the roles of supervisors and managers *are* undefined under *COP*, it is not as easy for them to see what they should be doing (or not doing); therefore, they resisted most efforts to make *COP* a widespread operational policy. The department needed to strategically plan for definitions of their transitional/new roles and the training necessary to accomplish the change.

By not fully implementing *COP* as a philosophy, we had created a divided department. There was a part of the department that was attempting to maintain the status quo and another part of the department that could see the value and potential of *COP*, sold it to the community and now wanted to make it work. The officers who were in favor of *COP* were often ostracized by peers and labeled as outsiders. The officers were viewed as not carrying their weight because they were not taking as many dispatched calls. The department was being pulled in two separate directions.

Our message to the community was that there were numerous benefits of community policing and touted it as a long-term solution. We informed the citizens of the trade-offs (i.e. slower response time to non-emergency calls). After sharing with the community our vision, the citizens were willing to accept the change. If we did not follow through on what we had promised, our credibility for a long time to come would be questioned.

The department had tried other solutions to tying the philosophy to our work product, for example, we had non-CBOs riding with CBOs; we did training for the whole department; we brought officers critical of *COP* philosophy into the program. In each trial we had limited success. We were able to win over some of the naysayers. However, we had done nothing to change our basic model of operation that would support *COP* beyond a limited experiment. We were doctoring up a program rather than creating support for a change of philosophy.

As the committee did *research* into other police departments and how they were handling *COP* and as we read the literature in both law enforcement and business journals, it became apparent that the stumbling block we were encountering was our basic model of organization. We were trying to be a high performance, community policing organization in a strictly command/control model organization - square peg/round hole. Therefore,

the basic underlying condition that created the problem was an incongruent model for the organization.

To further analyze our position, we needed input from the community at large, both residential and business. We needed to understand their perceptions of us, their requirements for how we *serve* the community and what level of commitment they had for helping to accomplish this change.

In several arenas we discussed with the community how they wanted us to proceed. We established a committee with members of our department, members of the community and members of other agencies with whom we work closely. The committee began the dialogue about how to proceed; then the committee orchestrated a group discussion with a variety of members of the community - social service providers, neighborhood leaders, media representatives and political leaders. This group defined what COP should be for Dayton. Then, after that vision statement was drafted, two focus group meetings were held - one consisting of business owners/operators and the other consisting of neighborhood association members. At each focus group, members of the department command staff were available to respond to questions and record the comments. In each focus group we gathered information about the specific needs and desires of their group, recorded those responses and returned back to the committee to further develop a

plan. After further planning and research, the committee visited another city that had also tackled this problem and had decentralized their department in order to further the philosophy of COP. The visit was accomplished with additional citizen participation - members of each of the priority boards (7) were invited to go along to witness what changes had taken place in the other city. Finally, a plan was drafted, submitted to the Chief of Police, City Manager and Priority Board Chairpersons committee. The plan was accepted.

RESPONSE

Several responses emerged from our work but the clear front-runner was a need for organizational change that would support COP. Our structure was based on functions and affirmed territoriality; what we needed was a structure that affirmed teamwork and a cross-discipline approach. To move in this direction, our divisions were reconstructed so that most personnel were geographically based in their responsibility. To that end, the investigative personnel and uniform crews were placed in the same division. Some specialized functions remained in separate divisions (communications, training, internal affairs, evidence collection and violent crimes) but with a renewed charge towards teamwork. Additionally, the managers of those

divisions, represented at the rank of Major, were rotated so that each had a new, different assignment.

For years, members of the police command staff attended neighborhood meetings and the beat officers were left out of the loop. The new philosophy calls for beat officers to attend the meetings in their *areas*, establishing face-to-face contact with their citizens and developing strategies together. This concept actually empowers the officer to make a positive impact on his or her neighborhood.

We began a transition into a high performance organization that coincided with a similar change throughout the city organization. The committee began to formulate some of the practical solutions to each of the challenges facing our department presently and in the new millennium. As we tackled each issue, a plan began to emerge.

Built into the plan were surveys, an evaluation of data from crime statistics and the annual public opinion survey. This would allow us to measure the perception of safety within the community and any actual changes in the crime data.

Overall, we hoped to accomplish a heightened sense of well being for our citizens, and a smoother, faster, more effective and efficient organization. The former would be measured by the annual public opinion survey and other

surveys; the latter would be measured by performance measurements which *are* continually being developed and modified.

Because this change corresponds to a larger, citywide organizational change, the resources needed to make the change are significant. Much of the Command staff has been through high performance organization training at the University of Virginia; a shorter version has been offered to many first line supervisors and mid-managers. The community has offered its assistance by participating in the educational process necessary to bring the partnership to fruition and to make all partners capable of participating.

Experience shows that transitions can be messy. This change is akin to remodeling a house; first you tear it up and make a mess before you reestablish the walls, coverings, et cetera. There is still some resistance to the changes proposed, but not necessarily to the outcome proposed. Timing in such changes is critical and sometimes seems to work against us.

As part of the change, the department has implemented a leadership team; this team, which is a *cross* section of the department, sworn and non-sworn, looks at various "leadership" issues and policy issues. We will stretch that circle even wider as we tackle some of the issues identified, such as training and development, selection and recruiting, departmental values and others. The department just completed a business plan that examines five

years into the future as to what we want to accomplish, especially as it relates to what the public wants us to accomplish.

Ultimately, our plan is to have every member of the department and any member of the community who wants to participate as members of our team.

ASSESSMENT

As of November 1, 1998, the department-organizational structure was changed to reflect what the committee and others believed to be the best starting point for making community policing a way of life for the department and community.

In order to evaluate and measure what difference this makes, several pieces will be put in place. First, we have established performance measures based upon the *services* that the Dayton Police Department provides daily. Each division and unit has outcomes that will be reported quarterly. Next, the City contracted with the Chartwell Group to chart all of the businesses in which we (the City) are involved. From this list, we begin to see all of what we currently do. This is being compared to what the citizens want us to *do**, what the law requires us to do and what we see we must do to get to other points further out. From those various inputs, a five-year business plan for the Department has been developed to help us move forward in the direction chosen. This effort assists in honing our performance measures.

We are also selecting other organizations to compare our practices to in a "best practice" mode. Rather than reinventing systems, we hope to find other organizations that are successful and running smoothly, effectively and efficiently. We will then compare our ways of operating with theirs and possibly modify what we do.

The reorganization has not been without its problems. More preparation could have been done prior to implementation that would have made it go smoother, however, we have been quick to make the necessary adjustments as they arise. And, while the reorganization makes it easier to create the teams to do the work in the community, the trade-off is that some other aspects *are* more difficult. As an example, when the detectives were all together in one division, getting training and exchanging information was easier because they all had the same boss. Now, they report in two different divisions and 5 separate Districts. We must be more attentive to those types of support details and work together to make sure it is all covered.

CONCLUSION

While the SARA model is most often used for neighborhood and crime problems on a smaller scale, we found that by using the same model on ourselves and our organization, we could approach it in an organized fashion.

The model allows for a systematic approach to any problem or issue with which we are confronted. We have not stopped with just reorganizing the department; we are now taking a look at our operating systems and how to adjust them to support the efforts at community policing. Again, the SARA model offers a simple, straightforward approach to making those changes.

Our goal through our department-wide philosophy is ultimately to maintain trust, respect, and integrity. By tracking calls by the time of day, days of the week, and location throughout the city, the department has been able to adjust its manpower allotment to a tailor-made system for each district throughout the city. This same strategy has resulted in a reduction in response time to calls for service. What the department envisions is a 24 hours per day operation with officers performing the following duties:

- Officers performing community-policing functions on his or her beat;
- Officers having more personal contact with citizens and business owners
- Officers being granted new decision-making authority;
- Allowing multiple officers to take ownership of their assigned beat;
- Increasing efforts to build partnership with the community/neighborhoods;
- Improving Relationships with all Sectors of the Community;
- Officers A Citizens working together in finding solutions to problems
- Building Joint Public/Private Partnerships; and
- Officers working with the community to identify pressing issues

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*This information comes from the CitiPlan 20/20, an effort our Planning Department undertook to get involvement from a wide cross-section of citizens in answering the question, "Where does Dayton want to be in the year 2020?" Focus groups were convened at various locations throughout the *area* to solicit input *on* specific questions relating to schools, quality of life issues, law enforcement, city government et al.