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## COMMUNITY POLICING TRAINING SESSION

The National Center for Community Policing will host a community policing training session Monday-Wednesday, April 5-7, 1993, at The Kellogg Center for Continuing Education on the campus of Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan.

Seminars and workshops will be structured to meet a broad range of interests and needs for those who are in the initial planning stages to those who are seeking to enhance their established efforts. Training is geared to police professionals, from the chief to the line officer, and also to civic officials and community leaders who wish to learn how they can facilitate community policing in their communities.

For more information, or to reserve space, please call or write:

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ACQUISITION

## INTRODUCTION

Now that Community Policing is rapidly becoming the standard by which police departments are judged, police managers are facing the challenge of dealing with the changes that a switch to Community Policing demands. Community Policing requires major internal changes, and it also requires rethinking the ways in which the department relates to other individuals and groups in the community. The shift to Community Policing therefore has major implications for training, and this paper will focus primarily on the changes in internal training procedures and content that can assist police managers in providing a smooth and effective transition to Community Policing, in ways that allow everyone in the department to make full use of this approach.

The bulk of this paper will focus on training line officers, since they constitute the foundation that, over time, can change the culture within the department in ways that can allow Community Policing to flourish. At the same time, however, it is important to emphasize the need to provide effective training in Community Policing to sworn and non-sworn personnel at all levels in the department. Far too many departments have learned, at painful cost, that the "user friendly" reputation of the entire department can be undermined, for example, by a civilian dispatcher who has not been trained properly in explaining to callers why the shift to Community Policing can mean a delay in the response to non-emergency calls.

Training in Community Policing detailed in this paper refers primarily to three areas: academy training, field officer training, and on-going in-service training. Obviously, changes in training must also be part of other internal changes in: recruitment, selection, evaluation, and promotion; however, these issues will not be addressed directly, but only as they impinge directly on training. Important as well is that academy training is critical to set the tone for Community Policing

department-wide, and Community Policing must therefore inform all aspects of training - it must not be reduced to a single "two-hour block" of instruction.

The primary goal of this paper will be to show how the philosophy and mission of Community Policing can drive all aspects of training, so that training becomes the key to promoting and institutionalizing the shift to Community Policing. This requires analyzing all aspects of training to ensure that they promote the mission of Community Policing, which is to provide

decentralized and personalized police service that empowers the community to participate as partners in the process of making their neighborhoods better and safer places in which to live and work.

### **Free Patrol Time**

If Community Policing is to become a department-wide commitment, it must be expressed by all line officers, not just Community Officers. Experience shows that if Community Policing is viewed internally as a "specialty" assignment, handled by a few, then the rest of the officers will quickly revert to business as usual.

This means motor patrol officers must be required to leave their automobiles to interact, face-to-face, with citizens. While this means that officers need "free" (uncommitted) patrol time to be able to leave their cars and work with the community on problem identification and problem solving, many complain that they do not have enough free patrol time to do so. However, we have found that the real challenge lies in convincing them to use the time they have, and this is an example of the kind of problem that can and should be addressed by training.

The solution requires consistency all the way from recruitment through in-service training that will last through the officer's career. If academy trainees have been recruited with the understanding that they will be expected to leave their automobiles on free patrol time, then they will be more amenable to doing so once out on their own. Academy training can reinforce this expectation by pointing out how face-to-face contact is essential in gaining the trust of citizens, so that the officers can work with people on problem solving.

Then the Field Training Officer (FTO) program should reinforce what was emphasized in academy training. For instance, the FTO can teach by example by exiting the auto whenever possible, so that trainees learn to see this as "normal" behavior.

On-going in-service training after the academy and the FTO program should not only reinforce the two previous training experiences, but it can be expanded by encouraging officers to share examples about how they solved problems as a result of their involvement with the community. Officers can also talk about how those experiences enhanced their job satisfaction and their perceptions of personal safety, since peer group support is extremely effective, especially among police.

## **Benefits of Interaction**

Experience shows that officers enjoy their jobs more when they can see that their efforts in working directly with law-abiding people produce concrete, positive results. Decentralized and personalized police service encourages residents to think of officers who patrol their areas as "our" officers, and citizens become protective of their officers. Not only does this make officers feel safer, but experience shows that residents will indeed come to the aid of an officer in trouble where they might not have before. Exchanging real stories about how Community Policing enhances problem solving and job satisfaction and safety is a potent training tool, even more powerful and positive than any kind of formal training through the academy, the FTO program, or in-service training.

If the support and rewards for "out of auto" interactions are long term and consistent, fewer officers will suffer psychological relapses that will make them want to retreat to the confines of their "office" - the patrol car. Officers who "whine" about leaving their cars can be reminded that this was clearly stated as an integral part of the job when they signed on, and this requirement was emphasized all the way through training. In other words, there is no excuse for officers and their supervisors to grumble about this important aspect of the job.

## **Parallels to Undercover Work**

It is interesting that many officers who are reluctant to leave their autos are also officers who have worked undercover or want to do so, and there are many parallels between both activities. Successful undercover officers are rarely in the office - they are out communicating and interacting, using their verbal skills to gather information. When they "make a case," they credit their interpersonal skills with helping them achieve success, and their peer group applauds them for those skills. Over time, as peer group support builds for community involvement, this can legitimize community-based problem solving, just as it legitimizes undercover operations.

## **BASIC JOB ASSESSMENT**

### **Deficiencies in Traditional Productivity Standards**

Job assessment is an important first step in fashioning an effective training program, since you need to know what it takes to perform the job well to outline a suitable training program. All complex organizations, including and

perhaps especially the police, face a major problem in developing productivity measures that adequately evaluate actual performance. At General Motors, for example, there is little doubt that most of the people in the organization worked hard and tried to work smart, yet they face a massive reorganization if they are to regain market share, because effort and intelligence alone are not the sole indicators of whether the organization is meeting its goals for success.

Typically, what is missing from most productivity standards is a thorough job analysis. Unless you know what the job really entails, gauging performance at any organizational level is virtually impossible. Crucial as well is that the job analysis must be informed by the mission and goals of the organization. In the case of General Motors, everyone in the organization understood that the goal is to make cars, yet the organization lost sight of the overarching goal, which is meeting the needs of the consumer - making cars that people want to buy. The same holds true for police departments; the job is to provide police service to the community, but the overarching goal is to provide people the kind of police service that they want and need.

### Complications in Job Analysis

Analyzing the job of police officers is difficult because their relationship with the community is so complicated and varied. So instead of actually discussing what officers do on the job, most police performance literature instead tends to focus on innate character traits - intelligence, analytical ability, sensitivity, moral character. As a result, police administrators who rely on such criteria tend to dismiss poor police performance as stemming from a lack of training or from the failure to recruit the right types of people. This kind of system risks being dangerously subjective, since it is so difficult to assess fairly. If we think of GM, there is little doubt that they tried to hire the best and brightest at all levels of the company, but those qualities alone do not insure success unless the environment of the organization allows those talented individuals the opportunity to work together to achieve the overall mission.

On the other hand, administrators with a quantitative bent argue that removing subjectivity from performance evaluation requires focusing on objective criteria - the number of traffic tickets issued, arrests made, convictions, security checks, etc. The obvious flaw in this system is that the most easily countable items may not be the best indicators of an officer's effectiveness, and they may not provide the greatest benefit to the community. Again, using GM as a frame of reference, we can assume that

everyone in the organization, from executives to designers to workers on the line, worked hard to produce as many cars as they could as quickly as possible, yet the end products failed to meet the test of the market - the community of consumers.

Communities and neighborhoods are complex social structures, with varying normative patterns. An evaluation system that relies on simplistic assessments, such as tickets issued and arrests made, ends up focusing on activities that may have little to do with what is actually required to do a good job - activities that account for only a fraction of an officer's time. Such a system also risks promoting abuses. Officers can feel pressured to fulfill arbitrary "quotas," if they are to earn raises and promotions. The job becomes distorted to fulfill the expectations of supervision, rather than the wants and needs of the community.

The critical issue is how police performance standards and productivity measures can be structured to relate to actual job functions, so that these can be used to project realistic training guidelines. The police role must be defined in ways that can serve as a foundation for effective evaluation. Even more specifically, the role of the officer in a Community Policing department must be defined, keeping in mind that this approach differs from traditional policing, because it is a special effort to create a symbiosis between police officers and the communities they serve.

### **Comprehensive Training**

Most often mentioned as a potential solution to this challenge is the development of a comprehensive, in-depth training program for new officers. Specifics about such training, especially basic training, remain the subject of debate. An ideal system would also include identifying basic characteristics require to be an effective officer, so that these characteristics could be codified into a model that could then be used in the selection process. Standardizing training is also widely accepted as a valid goal.

If we look at the auto industry, the two obvious success stories are Saturn and Chrysler's second comeback, and both were driven by teaching personnel to harness the entrepreneurial spirit, through teamwork, to the mission of producing cars that people want. As David Osborne and Ted Gaebler point out in their provocative book *Reinventing Government*, comparing private enterprise to public service has its pitfalls, especially since the "consumers" of government services cannot, in most cases, shop elsewhere. However, government can adapt the lessons of private enterprise to the public sector,

including the need to focus on outcomes, not inputs.

In the case of the police, inputs such as character traits and "productivity" (tickets written, arrests made) are irrelevant unless tied to the mission of empowering police personnel to making the community a better and safer place in which to live - the ultimate outcome. The authors propose transforming rule-driven organizations into mission-driven organizations that focus on empowering communities rather than serving them. Thus, an in-depth look at the forms that training will take is imperative in police organizations that adopt Community Policing.

As author Robert Pirsig wrote about the auto industry, the lesson that German and Japanese automakers teach is that quality is not something tacked on at the end, like chrome. Instead, a commitment to quality must infuse every step of the process, and that requires that everyone must work together as a team. Not only is this philosophical shift at the heart of Community Policing's new approach to interaction with the community, but it must be integrated into the internal dynamics of the department and everything it does, including training. As this suggests, the commitment to quality demands rethinking every aspect of the training agenda, to ensure that the philosophical underpinnings of Community Policing are woven into every element of the training approach.

## VARIETIES OF TRAINING

### Mission-Driven Training

In a Community Policing department, focusing on the mission of the department rather than its rules requires a dramatic shift in training from a focus on mastery and obedience to a focus on empowerment. This philosophical shift has profound implications for everything that is taught in training, from the academy, through field training, to lifelong in-service training. As this suggests, teaching police officers to follow orders and master skills is no longer an end in itself. They are important only if they can be harnessed to empowering personnel to fulfill the overarching mission of the department, which is to work as partners with people in the community, so that they, too, can be empowered to help make their neighborhoods better and safer places.

Any police organization that attempts to institute such a significant philosophical change must establish a comprehensive approach to training that provides the foundation for that change. As expected, many within the

department will resist such sweeping change for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to:

- Inherent reluctance to change established attitudes and behaviors.
- Disagreement with the new philosophical approach.
- Misunderstanding of the change implications.
- Perceptions that the change will threaten achieved status.
- Dissatisfaction with training that is not tied directly to mechanical skills, especially those considered as life-saving or those which are tactically based.

All of these obstacles to implementing changes in training based on the philosophical shift to Community Policing must be understood and addressed. However, one of the most troublesome is the latter, because of the particular challenge that it poses to trainers. Police officers, as a whole, are very receptive to hands-on skills training, such as arrest control and defensive tactics, firearms proficiency, high-risk driving techniques, and techniques in the use of intermediate force (batons, chemical agents, etc.). Part of the appeal may well be that the police attract action-oriented, competitive individuals. Those attributes make it likely that such individuals will enjoy mastering action-oriented skills, where the individual's performance can be measured objectively and his or her final "score" can be clearly assessed and compared to others.

Philosophical mission-driven training, which forms the conceptual basis for the individual's role as well as the overall organization's collective goals, is often viewed, in contrast, as too theoretical and not useful in any practical sense. The reality, of course, is that most of any officer's daily routine does not include use of deadly force, high-speed pursuits, and physically engaging or restraining unruly citizens. Most of an officer's time is instead spent on taking cold reports, settling civil disputes, motor patrol of assigned areas, or other similar tasks.

As this suggests, if training is to help officers do their best in a Community Policing department, it should: (1) mirror what it takes to do the actual job well, (2) be informed by the philosophy and mission of Community Policing, and (3) be structured to maintain the interest of trainees. This is not to say that training should therefore ignore teaching skills such as proficiency in firearms, since such skills can be crucial to the safety and survival of officers and those they are sworn to protect. But traditional training has tended to place less emphasis on skills that might help to de-fuse potentially dangerous situations before they escalate.

A shift to Community Policing implies balancing reactive efforts with initiatives that emphasize proactive and positive interaction with the community, and this means that skills training must reflect the balance of these priorities, for example, by including more focus on improving interpersonal skills. Fulfilling the imperatives listed above means that the entire training area must be informed by the philosophy and mission of the department. A comprehensive approach to training can therefore serve as a foundation for Community Policing, with the term "comprehensive" used to indicate department-wide training that touches on:

- Introduction or Orientation Training (Sworn and Non-Sworn)
- Basic Academy Training (Sworn)
- Other New Hire Training (Non-Sworn)
- Police Officer Training (Sworn)
- In-Service Training (Sworn and Non-Sworn)
- Other Specialized Training (Sworn and Non-Sworn)
  - Supervisory
  - Managerial
  - Technical Skills
- Sharing of Current Literature
- On-Going Information Sharing

A brief discussion of each area can clarify the basics of a comprehensive training approach.

### **Introduction or Orientation Training**

Implementing the shift to the Community Policing philosophy must begin with an introduction or orientation to:

- what the philosophy entails,
- how it differs from what it currently being done,
- illustrations of its effectiveness, and
- an overall opportunity for examining the underlying basis for change.

This initial training need not be lengthy, but it should include all department employees, either in the same session or in sessions tailored to each group's specific needs. If we think of a football coach who wants to change his team's approach from a single-wing offense to run-and-shoot, the coach would want to indoctrinate everyone in the organization into accepting the change. Ignoring anyone, from the players to the trainers to the scouts, etc., would risk missing vital links that could help produce success for the

entire team. Training just the quarterback without training the rest of the players would also ensure disunity - and thereby failure. The lesson here is that the success of the department does not rest solely with its officers. The critical functions provided by technical and support personnel requires involving them in the process of changing the philosophical approach to line functions.

### **Basic Academy Training**

It is when entry-level police officers join the organization that they are the most open to adopting a philosophical mindset for the police role. Even in situations where recruits have prior experience, they are usually willing to consider subtle changes in their role as they enter a new environment. This is especially true if recruitment, screening, and testing are designed to select individuals with the desire and aptitude for Community Policing.

We believe that the basic academy seating should offer two tracks for Community Policing training:

- **"Dedicated" Community Policing Training** - This is training specifically devoted to explaining what Community Policing is and how it works. It would include:
  - brief courses on the philosophy and role of Community Policing,
  - selected strategies for problem solving and community organization and involvement,
  - the philosophy of "accountable creativity" at the line level, and
  - other courses, such as mediation and de-escalation of emotionally charged situations (verbal judo, etc.).
  
- **Traditional Training** - Community Policing should be a common thread running through as much of the other training courses as possible. Examples include:
  - **Patrol Procedures** - Strategies for becoming more community-directed and concerned with quality of life and fear of crime issues while on "normal" patrols. Teaching trainees how to survey residents is useful.
  - **Investigations** - Strategies for engaging residents more effectively in assisting investigations; directing investigative efforts toward identifying the underlying causes of crime and disorder; encouraging trainees to think more broadly.

- *Traffic Enforcement and Accident Investigation* - Strategies for diagnosing underlying causes of traffic safety hazards and engaging the community and other service providers in finding resolutions to troubling community traffic safety issues.
- *Law Enforcement Ethics* - Establishment of the ethical confines of a law enforcement role in the context of increased community engagement; creative methodologies to increase order maintenance; and the potential for a return to bias, favoritism, and improper use of influence in a community-based model of policing.
- *Arrest Control and Baton and Defensive Tactics* - An underlying philosophical approach to the use of force and physical restraint that includes the principles of minimum force necessary, humane control; technical proficiency designed to protect officers and citizens alike; and concern for community acceptance of methods.
- *Department Rules and Directives* - An understanding of the framework and rules for the delivery of police service that emphasizes creativity, fairness, community sensitivity, and effective yet humane and acceptable use of force. The reasons underlying the policies and procedures for the organization should always be in concert with the Community Policing philosophy, and instruction in these areas should emphasize that foundation.

Today's trainees ask more questions, and dialogue about the issues should be encouraged. If academy training emphasizes interaction with trainees, this reinforces the kind of communication and engagement that officers should employ in challenging the community to participate in nominating priorities and fashioning solutions.

## **OTHER NEW HIRE TRAINING**

When new non-sworn employees are hired into the organization, special attention should be paid to orienting them toward the mission and role of the department. New support and technical employees need to understand early on that the department is committed to the ideals of Community Policing. This can help them see how their jobs can support operational efforts to translate the Community Policing philosophy into practice.

Any new employee who has direct contact with the public (report technicians, dispatchers or complaint clerks, records clerks, receptionists, property and evidence clerks, etc.) should be trained in customer service, and all should be introduced to the concept of community organization and empowerment and problem solving of community priorities. Many of these

employees interact directly with line officers, so it is absolutely imperative that they understand the changing role of the police officer, since they must be able to provide assistance and support.

## **POLICE OFFICER FIELD TRAINING**

### **Setting the Tone**

The most profound impact on how a police officer works and acts during the early years of his or her career comes from the direction and the example set during field training. Indeed, field training may well be the single most crucial element in changing the culture within the department toward a Community Policing approach. This "on the job" training tends to override whatever trainees learn in academy classrooms, and it sets the stage for what is and is not considered acceptable behavior. Mentoring provided by training officers shapes the strategies, techniques, and, most importantly, the role that recruits embrace. This is particularly true the longer that field training lasts, and when it involve daily evaluations and feedback to the trainees.

Because of the tremendous impact that field training has on the entire organization, the philosophical orientation and skills of the training officers are crucial. Therefore training the trainers in Community Policing deserves special attention. Trainers must be committed to Community Policing themselves if they are to transmit that message to others.

### **Teaching by Example**

Put bluntly, if an FTO does not both believe in and practice the principles of Community Policing, it will be virtually impossible even for rookies who are enthusiastic about Community Policing to withstanding field training that ill prepares them for the job or which undermines their commitment. Since field training is the crucible in which rookies learn what they need to launch their careers, trainers who subvert the principles of Community Policing, whether consciously or because of lack of proper training themselves, can end up perpetuating the ineffective and outmoded strategies of the professional policing model. For example, trainers can talk all they want to about the virtues of "out of automobile" experience, but unless rookies learn by seeing field training officers do this whenever they can, the chances are that rookies will follow the negative example rather than the positive advice.

## Job Task Categories

Among the most important changes that must be made in a structured field training program is that the job task categories of the daily evaluation should be assessed to ensure that they reflect the philosophy and practice of Community Policing. Rectifying problems can require either a redefinition of performance standards under existing job categories (i.e., field performance, investigation, officer safety, interaction with the public, etc.) or even the devising of new job task categories (with corresponding performance standards) that reflect the Community Policing philosophy, such as:

- Knowledge and Application of Resources in Daily Work - Standards should reflect:
  - An acceptable knowledge base, as reflected in verbal or written tests (scores between 70% and 95% on written tests).
  - Making appropriate referrals on a daily basis.
  - Maintaining a list of appropriate referrals for reference in the field.
  - Taking the time to explain options and resources.
  - Making sure information is correct.
  
- Responsiveness to Quality of Life Issues in Performance - Standards should reflect:
  - General recognition of the importance of quality of life issues in the community and the need to address them properly in daily work.
  - Self-initiation of activities such as those listed above.
  - Use of innovative approaches to problem-solving.
  - Commitment to the idea of community service, participation, and empowerment.
  - Courtesy, empathy, respect, and helpfulness in daily contacts.
  - Focus on solving problems rather than avoiding them or just taking reports.
  
- Relationship with the Community - Standards should reflect:
  - Positive interaction with the community.
  - Face-to-face contact with law-abiding citizens whenever possible.
  - Challenging and empowering citizens to participate in nominating and prioritizing problems and in developing short- and long-term solutions.
  - Explaining actions and directions to citizens.
  - Following up on citizen questions and concerns.

It is absolutely essential that management closely supervise the field training program. Weekly evaluations of training officers and sergeants can help ensure that when someone strays off track from the Community Policing model, he or she can be redirected quickly. Additionally, field training sergeants must lead both the trainers and recruits by example during the daily activities encountered on the street.

## **IN-SERVICE TRAINING**

### **Maintaining and Reinforcing Momentum**

Achieving change is difficult, but maintaining change and empowering employees to use new techniques or skills is impossible without a mechanism for continual reinforcement. Formal in-service training provides a way to maintain momentum and to build new skills.

Unfortunately, many organizations provide little refresher training, or such training is directed only at sworn officers. We believe that not only should training be provided to both sworn and non-sworn personnel, but it be infused with and devote sessions to the principles and strategies of Community Policing.

Workshops on community organization and empowerment, problem solving, special projects, performance evaluation guidelines, and local and national updates on police strategies can be structured to suit the needs of both sworn and non-sworn personnel, depending on the needs and constraints of the organization. Of overriding importance is that police managers understand that in-service updates are critical to institutionalizing Community Policing.

## **OTHER SPECIALIZED TRAINING**

### **Educating Supervisors and Managers**

Overlooking the need to provide specialty training risks dooming attempts to institutionalize Community Policing. Not only must first-line supervisors be able to recognize and reward community empowerment and creative problem-solving, but they must be trained to encourage risk-taking and innovation among subordinates. At issue as well is that risk-taking and innovation depend on mutual trust between supervisors and line officers. Without such trust, line officers will stick with the status quo, which typically rewards those who do not make any waves (which means they take no chances).

Supervisors and managers must be willing to accept honest mistakes, or line officers will continue to rely on conventional strategies that ultimately lead to stagnation. Accountable risk-taking emphasizes responsibility, not license, and it examines failures or mistakes as a means of learning how to do better in the future, not as a means of assigning blame. Managers in a Community Policing department can specifically benefit from skills training in redirecting, leading by example, and constructive criticism (coaching and facilitation).

Managers and command officers should also be given the opportunity to understand and facilitate the philosophical change to Community Policing. Without repeated training, top leaders in the department can see Community Policing as a threat to their status and power. Again, training must emphasize that Community Policing means that all functions in the department are driven by the mission, not by the rules, and this means that the role of police managers must change from that of "controller" to "facilitator." Unless this problem is addressed, top-level support can wane, undermining and even sabotaging the entire effort.

Other areas of specialized skills training include:

- application of performance assessment systems,
- development of Community Policing goals and objectives,
- how to organize and facilitate community self-help groups, and
- public speaking.

### **Sharing of Current Literature and Documentation**

The explosion in new information on Community Policing can make it difficult to stay abreast of what is happening in the field. Therefore departments should consider establishing a system to gather materials, to assess their usefulness, and then to make them widely available. A central repository or library of articles, research, video- and audiotapes, and books can serve as a valuable training resource for the entire department. The department should also maintain contact with the National Center for Community Policing, the Police Executive Research Forum, the Police Foundation, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and other national organizations, to ensure receiving new publications as they become available.

### **On-Going Information Sharing**

As efforts to shift to Community Policing gain momentum, the department

should explore methodologies for sharing information on strategies and projects with others inside and outside the department. This is important for many reasons. First, disseminating this information can make it possible for others to borrow useful ideas. Second, it can help reinforce the message that Community Policing works. Third, it provides an "attaboy" for individuals and groups who deserve praise for their initiative. Fourth, documenting success to groups outside the department can help to build broad-based support - among civic officials, business owners, community leaders, taxpayers and voters, other government agencies, non-profit groups, and average citizens.

Many departments have produced newsletters and videos, and some have established computerized databases. A database accessible throughout the department can make it easier to avoid the need to "reinvent the wheel" each time someone is looking for possible solutions to community problems, but departments that cannot afford that luxury must find some way to gather and disseminate this kind of useful information.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **The Function of Training**

Training is crucial for the adoption of any significant change, and it is the foundation for how we respond to challenges, both individually and collectively. A comprehensive training approach is essential in institutionalizing the philosophy and practice of Community Policing within a police agency.

### **Community Input**

Also important is the need to solicit the community's input into training of line officers, since their help can be invaluable in designing training that meets their needs and expectations.

### **Training and Selection**

The new role expectations for Community Officers have obvious implications for selection and training. For instance, considering only the superior communication skills that Community Officers need raises the issue of whether such skills should be a precondition of employment or whether training should be targeted to remedy any deficiencies after hiring.

If the decision is that these skills should be dealt with in training after the candidate is hired, that raises a new set of issues that must be resolved: If communication skills training is added to basic training, what other subjects should be dropped or reduced to make room? Should such classes be offered in addition to the existing program? If so, what are the cost implications?

Perhaps such training should be offered as part of advanced training. Again, this leads to other questions. Should classes be conducted in formal classroom sessions? Or should they be part of roll call, with trainers brought in or with lessons on video or computer? Another option might be to offer self-paced home-study materials. And again, what are the cost implications?

### Other Subject Areas

As this shows, dealing with even one skill area raises questions about others, and Community Officers need many new skills. A case can be made that Community Officers would benefit from additional training in:

- foreign languages
- basic psychology
- human relations
- gerontology and the problems of aging
- child psychology and development
- political science
- urban planning
- city management

It requires little imagination to come up with an intriguing roster of classes, yet the question becomes how much training is both feasible and affordable. Again, realistically, the time available for training is another constraint; unless you can afford to expand training, adding something new to the roster implies short shrift for something else. Obviously, the training roster cannot be determined simply by allocating training time according to how officers spend most of their time - officers spend less than 1% of their time administering first-aid or firing a weapon, yet those are skills that they must learn to perform well or people can die.

The challenge requires balancing traditional and non-traditional training and ensuring that the Community Policing philosophy infuses both. If all the worthwhile skills cannot be added to basic training, there may be ways to provide them in advanced training or through self-paced studies, by assigning trainers to roll call, or by providing training through new technologies like video- and audiocassettes and computers.

## **The Importance of Community Policing Training**

Policing is under intense pressure and scrutiny today, because of everything from the Rodney King incident and the riot in Los Angeles, to the constraints of a criminal justice system overwhelmed by rising arrests, to the myriad effects of a nationwide recession. As a result, police must employ innovative training strategies to inculcate the Community Policing philosophy as the prevailing mindset among everyone in the department. When the pressures on police are the greatest (as they are now), we must be creative if we are to survive. If we approach training as a means of reinforcing the tenets of Community Policing, not only do we enhance our chances of survival, but we can succeed in addressing many of the challenges facing police today.

## REFERENCES

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