

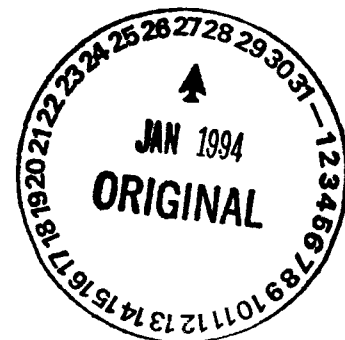
LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

A GUIDE FOR A CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN
SMALL TO MID-SIZED POLICE ORGANIZATIONS

A RESEARCH PAPER
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INTRODUCTION

This paper will examine the issue of career development in small to mid-sized police organizations. Career development programs are relatively scarce among small police agencies in the United States. (Cox 1990) The purpose of this examination is to develop a guide for career development that can be used in departments of approximately one-hundred (100) officers.

The framework for the Career Development Program will be Total Quality Management. The purpose of connecting a career development program with the Total Quality Management philosophy is that the elements required for success in this program are supported by elements found in this philosophy.

This research is particularly important because there is a lack of attention to well-defined goals and processes for the long term development of police careers. Many previous studies examine the need for pay grades consistent with educational or training levels obtained by an individual officer, but they fail to fully address career development. This research is intended to provide a comprehensive guide or foundation for the implementation

of a career development program using a Total Quality Management perspective.

TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT

It is clear that one of the latest directions in private sector management is Total Quality Management. Slowly, the public sector is moving toward a quality management style. (Galloway and Fitzgerald 1992) It is also apparent that the public sector can benefit from private sector management practices. Before designing a career development program for police officers, it is necessary to understand Total Quality Management which will support the career development program.

Because Total Quality Management provides a way to improve operations or services at every level, its use in career development should be apparent. (Brocka and Brocka 1992) As the elements are presented, a connection between a Total Quality Management framework and the goals of career development in law enforcement will be made.

The elements which will be examined are process orientation, inclusive structure, shared vision, communication, consumer drive, personnel investment, training, reinforcement, teamwork, and goal setting. (Brocka and Brocka 1992) These elements are essential

factors in the decision making processes. Elements of the Total Quality Management philosophy support one another and therefore, rate equal consideration. However, while addressing career development it will be necessary to focus on some elements more than other elements. For example, when considering issues related to salaries or benefits, the element of personnel investment is given the most consideration. Further, questions about staffing might be guided by the element of teamwork.

Communication

Communication is the element upon which all other elements are dependant. Communication plays a very important role with respect to development at the organizational or individual level. Within every organization there must be both vertical and horizontal communication processes. Vertical communication is the flow of information and ideas up and down the chain of command or authority. Horizontal communication is the flow of information and ideas across an organization to other employees or units with the same rank or classification. The coordination of both vertical and horizontal communication is essential in the effective transmission of information. As many have discovered within their own organizations, hindsight often reveals

that systemic or situational problems can stem simply from a lack of communication.

Process Orientation

Another element of Total Quality Management is process orientation. Process orientation is emphasized more than results orientation because of the potential to identify and resolve problems while addressing other issues. The idea that implementing a process to resolve a single issue is confining if other issues are ignored. When possible, a process used to address an issue or problem should allow for attention to problems that emerge during the original problem solving process.

Improving the quality of the process improves the quality of the result. (Brocka and Brocka 1992, 8) This is particularly important when dealing with organizational issues because an organization is a system. In a worst case situation, poor process quality may result in poor product quality or a failed product. For example, if an automobile company decides that there is a need to produce the largest and fastest street-legal engine for a particular car model, and they succeed in doing so, but they fail to consider the needed alterations for the suspension and frame, has the automobile company really succeeded? No. The company was successful in producing

the product they wanted, but they failed to recognize that their success created other issues and problems. An automobile is a system of components, and changes considered for one area can be made only after it is determined how they will affect other components. If attention is given to the process used to resolve an issue, it may be possible to recognize other related matters that need attention and make decisions that are the best for several areas.

All-inclusive Structure

Another element of Total Quality Management is an all-inclusive structure. The leadership of administrators is critical when setting the example for quality. (Tenner and DeToro 1993) Therefore, starting at the top of an organization, a commitment for quality must exist. This commitment must be shared throughout the organization at every level. Commitment by line employees to high quality is especially important because line employees, in most situations, are responsible for the actual production of the product or the delivery of a service. If a commitment for quality does not exist at any particular level, the delivery of services could be negatively affected.

Shared Vision

An element of Total Quality Management which supports inclusion is a shared vision. The *vision* provides a description of what the organization will evolve into in the future and...provides continuous guidance to employees at every level as to how they should manage their respective responsibilities. (Tenner and DeToro 1993, 163)

Shared vision is the primary idea that allows an organization to function effectively and efficiently. Depending on the type of organization, vision can be developed with input from every level of an organization. Once the vision has been developed, the responsibility for authorizing or sanctioning the vision generally rests with the chief executive. Without a single vision or direction there can be no expectation that various components of the organization are working toward the same goals. Whatever the purpose is, all personnel must know it and work to fulfill it. (Brocka and Brocka 1992, 10)

Consumer Drive

Consumer drive in Total Quality Management identifies two types of consumers, internal and external. The internal consumers, or employees, require as much attention, time and consideration as the organization can provide. The recognition of employees as organizational

consumers is unique because most organizations are created to produce for external consumers. The attention, time, and consideration needed for employees are expressed in an organization's personnel practices and policies. The ability of an organization to properly address personnel practices cannot be understated because this can have a direct impact on the organization's external customer satisfaction.

External consumers justify an organizations existence by being the service or product recipients. While it may not be appropriate to say that the customer or consumer is always right, it is appropriate to recognize that meeting the needs of both internal and external consumers will translate into success for any organization.

Personnel Investment

Investing in personnel is an element Total Quality Management that supports the most important resource in any organization, the employee. (Bolman and Deal 1991) Most budgets also reflect that personnel categories represent the greatest investment in an organization. The ability of an organization to properly manage and meet the needs of its personnel will determine the level of return on their personnel investments. One of the other Total

Quality Management elements, training, exists to enhance personnel investments.

Training

Training is an element that provides employees with support for their existing capabilities, new skills for additional capabilities, and is a corrective measure for undesirable actions. Training should be a positive activity initiated by, or supported by, the organization with expectations of some specific improvement. In other words, the result of training is modified behavior.

(Brocka and Brocka 1992)

Training is also time-critical. In a fast paced environment, training received on a particular subject may only be appropriate for a short period of time.

Training given today must be used today. (Brocka and Brocka 1992, 10) Therefore, training should be updated as necessary to accommodate the needs of both the organization and individual employees.

Since organizational quality is based on the abilities of every individual in the organization, adequate training is necessary for each and every employee. Adequate training requires that attention be given to individuals within an organization while still meeting organizational needs. An appropriate focus on

training ensures that ability levels are consistent with quality demands. (Tenner and DeToro 1993) As individuals develop through training, the quality of services provided by the organization should also increase.

Reinforcement

Reinforcement is an element of Total Quality Management that is often overlooked in many organizations. Many times it appears as if supervisors spend most of their time attempting to locate problems within the organization, rather than positively reinforcing appropriate practices. Communication from a supervisor only as a result of a problem can diminish the relationship between the employee and the supervisor. This is not to say that an employee should not hear from a supervisor about problems, but the communication and interaction should be balanced with appropriate levels of positive reinforcement.

Different types of reinforcement include rewards and recognition. Rewards may consist of awards, merit pay increases, and improved assignments. Recognition can involve public or private praise. Reinforcement occurs by recognizing specific individuals or unit accomplishments. A message of interest or appreciation from the

administration should, at times, also be seen by other individuals or units. (Tenner and DeToro 1993)

Teamwork

Teamwork is an element that reflects the old adage "two heads are better than one." Individuals who work together as a team stand a far better chance of avoiding the problem of working against each other as individuals. Teamwork should also be viewed as the reason for an organization's existence. Teamwork is a way to provide greater capabilities and strengths. (Tenner and DeToro 1993) Through increased capability and strength, the organization should be able to produce higher quality results. Realistically, if a task or responsibility could be satisfied by one person acting alone, the need for an organization, agency, or group of employees would not exist.

Goal Setting

Goal setting is another critical element of Total Quality Management. Goal setting that is inclusive and involves various levels of participation provides an opportunity for different participants to accept, support, and work to accomplish the goal that is set. Goals also offer concrete objectives that provide participants with a

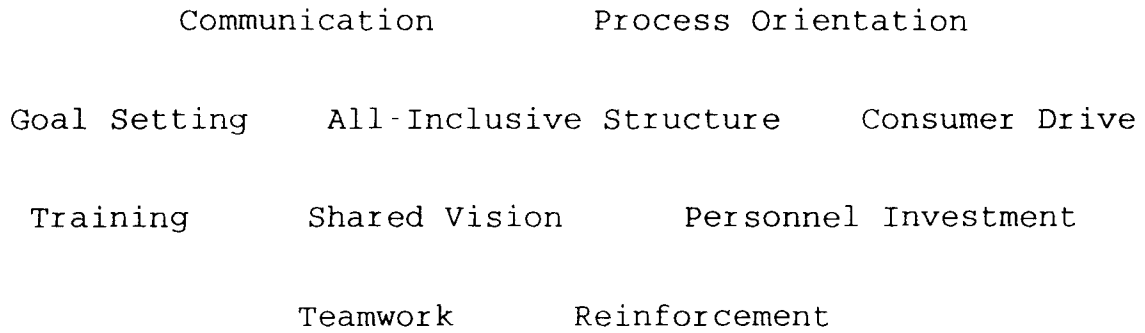
sense of direction and means to achieve the goals which often result in satisfaction when met. (Brocka and Brocka 1992)

With an understanding of the principles of Total Quality Management it is possible to develop a multitude of programs using this philosophy. Total Quality Management is comprised of components that are applicable to many areas of development within an organization. Since the goal of career development is related to improved service and quality for both the organization and individual, the use of Total Quality Management provides an excellent format for a career development plan.

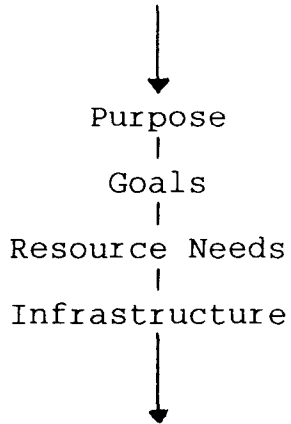
To assist in understanding Total Quality Management as applied to the model components of career development, a diagram illustrating organization and individual considerations has been made (see page 12).

Organizational considerations for career development begin with purpose, goals, resource needs, infrastructure, and communication. Individual employee considerations begin with direction, goals, training, education and end with communication. The communication between the employee and the organization should result in an action plan.

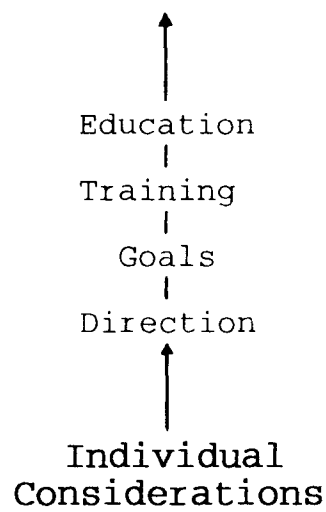
Elements of Total Quality Management



Organizational Considerations



C o m m u n i c a t i o n → Action Plan



CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A career development program in law enforcement, like other areas of public service, is related to improvement and quality-enhancement for both the law enforcement organization and the individual employee. One step in creating a career development program is the identification of organizational deficiencies in job descriptions, personnel evaluations, work assessments, etc. (Cundiff 1986) In order to address career development properly, there must be an examination of all individual employee factors as well as organizational factors. One result of an individual career development program is the organizational insight that results from evaluating the organizational composition. Another result is the individual employee development within the organization.

ORGANIZATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Organizational considerations involve purpose, goals, resource needs, and infrastructure. Each one of these items must be addressed for the organization before individual employee matters can be addressed. Another item, communication, will be addressed later as a joint interest between the organization and individual employee.

Purpose

Before any organizational action ever occurs there should be a clear understanding of purpose. An organizational leader cannot expect that decisions made to improve quality will be successful if there is no clearly defined direction for the organization as a whole. This is not to suggest that an appropriate decision will not occur for specific incident. But, the goal of decision making should not be to make one correct decision at a time. The goal of decision making, or the process of supporting the direction of the organization, must reflect a consistent theme.

The direction of any organization, including a law enforcement agency, must be clearly established through the use of a mission statement or similar document which defines the organizational purpose and vision. An organization seeking a clearly defined direction can use the elements of Total Quality Management to establish that direction.

Goals

With a clearly defined direction in the mission statement should be a set of goals which support its direction. Direction is used to provide a vision, but goals are used to establish measurable or tangible results. Goals often represent milestones through which success is measured. The process of goal-setting provides an excellent opportunity to

involve many different organizational levels and points of view. In addition, participation in goal-setting supports positive communication.

Resource needs

After an organization establishes a direction and supportive goals, it is necessary to categorize and rank resource needs. Prioritizing resource needs most often deals with attaining certain resources, utilization of resources, and development of resources.

Attaining personnel resources is critical. The methods used for hiring can influence the quality of accepted applicants and therefore influence the overall quality of the department. The utilization of personnel resources can then be guided by detailed job descriptions. Updated and properly written job descriptions facilitate the communication needs and goals for a specific assignment. Job descriptions also assist in performance assessments.

The development of resources is the driving force behind the idea of career development. Employees in a law enforcement agency are the producers or providers of services to the public and often represent 85 to 90 percent of the organization's fiscal investment. A career that is developed over twenty or more years in a law enforcement organization becomes a very valuable resource to the organization.

While many administrators recognize the investment in and value of individuals in law enforcement agencies, there does not appear to be a corresponding recognition for the need to systematically develop careers in law enforcement. Employee's careers are crucial because they represent long term investments, employee dedication, and most importantly, it represents employee growth.

Infrastructure

As with other important issues in a law enforcement organization there must be an infrastructure that supports career development. The infrastructure provides support which consists of a written policy that outlines purpose, needs, goals, and internal procedures for career development. Organizational considerations must also be made when developing policy. If a career development policy provides for activities, actions, or procedures that the organization cannot support, the policy becomes ineffective. The organization must review its policy by then assessing or auditing its personnel to determine how to best utilize their personnel resources.

PROGRAM MODEL

The purpose of designing a model for a career development program in law enforcement is to guide such organizations in the systematic and individual development of officers in their careers. Communication is one of the components that is dependent on both the organization and individual employee for success. Therefore, communication is addressed separately from the organizational or individual considerations.

Individual development must occur within the context of organizational direction, goals, needs, and infrastructure. There are a wide variety of methods and activities including temporary assignments, committee assignments, special operations, training diversification, educational assistance, officer exchanges, and specific program studies that can be used to develop careers. (Goodwin 1993) The organizational direction, goals, and needs will most often determine what methods are required for a viable program. The major components for the career development model are communication, direction, goals, training, education, and an action plan. The following is a description of each component and its application to law enforcement.

Communication

One organizational program component consists of communication through evaluations and work assessments. Communication is an element of Total Quality Management that allows for the dissemination of information, direction, and response to questions. (Tenner and DeToro 1993) Formal evaluations traditionally occur every six to twelve months and cover officer knowledge, skills, safety, attitudes, etc. Evaluations usually become a permanent document in a personnel file and on occasion have an affect on merit pay considerations. It is important to realize that communication of this kind might be stressful if conducted only every six or twelve months due to built up anticipation and concern for the ratings. Negative feelings toward evaluations can sometimes result when the evaluation is viewed as unnecessary or one-sided by the employee or the evaluator. If an evaluation has no corrective or supportive impact on the employee or the future of the employee, it may be nothing more than a poor method of communicating deficiencies at time intervals that do not suit the individual or the organization.

Work assessments are traditionally more informal and provide for improved communications between the employee and the evaluator. Work assessments generally cover the same categories as those covered in evaluations, but usually conducted every thirty or sixty days. The real purpose of a

monthly work assessment is to discuss work practices, provide guidance, and offer solutions. In addition, conducting monthly work assessments alleviates any surprises during formal evaluations. Both evaluations and work assessments have the potential to serve as valuable tools in the communication process between the department and the officer.

Interest inventories can also be added to formal evaluations and work assessments. Interest inventories may encourage employees to openly communicate with their evaluator because the inventory invites responses. Use of interest inventories are discussed later in individual goals.

Individual Considerations

Direction

Officers, like the agencies they work in, must also have a personal sense of direction or vision for their careers. Officers who have succeeded in building a solid foundation after a specified period in patrol should assess their own interests and ambitions to determine their direction preference. Any career direction considered by the officer should be consistent with the direction of the department. Some officers may choose to stay in patrol and develop their talents. Others may desire special assignments such as crime

scene investigations, criminal investigations, crime prevention, or supervision.

Goals

With a variety of potential directions for an officer to choose from, it becomes important to establish personal goals. Interests are extremely important in outlining personal goals in the job setting. The use of a standard department interest inventory may provide insight when included with the evaluation and assessment processes. The interest inventory should provide information concerning both current needs and interests, as well as future needs and interests. For most officers there was a certain interest that originally attracted them to the law enforcement profession. Maintaining continued interest in a law enforcement career is aided by goal setting and is necessary for a sustained and productive career.

By utilizing evaluations, work assessments, and interest inventories, the department and officer can come to an understanding about any future assignments or responsibilities. Understanding between the organization and the officer may occur only after a series of intense discussions. Recognition of individual limitations or capabilities may be very difficult to express to an officer. Within any organization there will be employees who meet minimum standards required for basic responsibilities but do not meet higher standards required for

specialized positions. Officers who view themselves performing some duties may not want to admit or may not accept that they do not possess certain intrinsic qualities needed for an assignment or position. If the department or the officer fails to understand one another's direction because of poor communication, or finds that the directions are not compatible, the relationship may suffer and end prematurely.

Training

Training, as described in Total Quality Management, is the beginning and the end of improved quality. (Brocka and Brocka 1992) Training has become very dynamic in law enforcement over the past few years. There are now mandates for many specific training classes for all peace officers in Texas as well as other states. Beyond mandated training there are several other methods and styles of training.

Other training techniques include job rotation or job swaps, specialized or technical training, and non mandated in service training. Job rotation most commonly occurs in the patrol division and is not always associated with the concept of training. Patrol shifts are usually rotated every six to twelve months. Job or shift rotation is a fairly controversial technique, but it does offer different options regularly to those officers who participate. Job swaps usually consist of placing an officer in a particular position, chosen by the

officer, for a period of weeks or months. Often this practice provides valuable insight into other departmental activities and a break from the previous assignment that may have become routine. Specialized training can be any training area that exceeds basic police practices. Non-mandated in-service training is often the method used for delivering specialized officer training.

Education

Depending on agency resources, the education component for an officer may be entirely the responsibility of the officer. The value or benefit of education at the college or university level for officers and requiring degrees for certain positions has been debated over the years by many in the law enforcement community. (Patterson 1991) Despite the debate, there must be recognition that individuals with undergraduate educations will have more intellectual resources available in most situations than if they had no undergraduate education. Undergraduate college courses are believed to expand the knowledge and aid in critical thought processes. (Patterson 1991) This argument does not suggest, in any way, that those officers who do not have a college education will be less able to perform their duties than the officers with a college education.

Action Plan

With all of the factors and considerations that affect developing one's career, there must be a mechanism to ensure efficient and effective progress. An action plan that is designed to reflect a specific organization's career development policy provides the format for recording individual career development program plans. The action plan document should be completed jointly by the department and the effected officer on an annual basis. The action plan should contain specific time lines and each of the previously mentioned components of career development. By considering the established direction of the department and the desired direction of the officer, it becomes possible to outline a list of officer goals, educational needs, training needs, and a strategy for meeting those needs for the officer over a specified period. Even though the action plan is revised on an annual basis there is a need to consider three and five year time periods. Three and five year goals are important because they cause both the organization and employee to remain forward looking. Each year another evaluation of career direction, goals and needs should be initiated.

CONCLUSION

The philosophy of Total Quality Management is that quality can be constantly improved. The elements of Total Quality Management provide the structure for the philosophy. By using a Total Quality Management perspective it is possible to create a career development program that consists of both organizational and individual factors. A program of this type should ultimately enhance the quality of services provided by the organization and also meet the career development needs of the individual. Further, a model of this type should use the components of communication, direction, goals, training, education and an action plan. The model will be simple or sophisticated depending on the department's needs and resources.

The quality of law enforcement personnel and the quality of their careers represent a large investment of time and money. By recognizing employees as the most valuable resource in the organization, it is possible utilize available resources to support long term careers. By creating a career development program for a police organization, a message is expressed to employees and the public that through career development the agency is determined to improve the quality of officers and thus the quality of police services.

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