

**The Bill Blackwood
Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas**

**Servant Leadership in Today's Law Enforcement
and the Millennial Generation**

**A Leadership White Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
Required for Graduation from the
Leadership Command College**

**By
Jeffrey S. Stapleton**

**Royse City Police Department
Royse City, Texas
July 2013**

ABSTRACT

Effective training and development of existing personnel is relevant to law enforcement because leadership must ensure that the future is paved to meet the needs of the next generation. One option to consider is the servant leadership approach. The purpose of the research is to present the current and past law enforcement leadership styles and introduce an acceptable alternative to past ways and means of managing personnel as a new generation of law enforcement enters the profession. The researcher used websites, books, journals, and articles to survey information obtained. The researcher learned that there is great understanding among law enforcement supervisors to support the servant leadership style of training. In addition, Riggio (2010) indicated that the Millennial generation will welcome this style of leadership because they do not believe in the authority hierarchy or having to “put in time” (para. 5) or “earn your stripes” (para. 5). Wood (2001) referenced that Millennials are used to being in close contact with others via technology. Organizational leaders will benefit greatly by continuing to explore and implement new technology and styles of leadership.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract	
Introduction	1
Position	2
Counter Position	8
Recommendation	10
References	13

INTRODUCTION

There are several common leadership styles in law enforcement in the United States including the authoritarian, democratic, also known as participative style, as defined by the Business Dictionary (<http://www.businessdictionary.com>). These styles of leadership are common in military and law enforcement organizations. As referenced in the beginning part of the paragraph, business dictionary defined the authoritarian style of leadership as one that is direct in communication and is from the top-down of an organization where a leader dictates policies and procedures. Little room is allowed for individuals to share their points of view and little concern for employees' well-being is demonstrated. The democratic or participative style of leadership indicates that leaders consult with one or more followers, and this approach offers a higher level of freedom in the decision making process. This is exemplified in law enforcement through first line supervisors and their communication with upper management about the daily activities of each of the teams. Law enforcement leaders should recognize a new style of leadership to meet the needs of changing times including the younger generation.

Law enforcement historically has adopted a paramilitary approach, which includes the leadership models listed above. The Millennial generation, also known as Generation Y, has been defined by Businessdictionary.com as a group of people who were born from 1980 through the early 1990s. This generation will embrace the servant style approach. Servant as leader is a plausible style of leadership for law enforcement. A servant leader has the internal attributes to want to serve and the desire to lead, as opposed to a person who has a desire for power and no desire for social responsibility

or connectivity. A servant leader is known in literature searches as a style of leadership that promotes the personal growth of the employees and helps them to reach their fullest potential so that the company will benefit from the maximized abilities of the employees while still achieving the goals of the organization. This style stresses the importance of the role a leader, demonstrated as the steward (Peck, Senge, & DePree, 1995). Law enforcement leaders should recognize a new style of leadership to meet the needs of changing times to include the younger generation, specifically the Millennial Generation; however, the below characteristics should be introduced first.

There are ten general characteristics of servant leadership: listen, heal, persuade, conceptualize, develop, dream, trust and build, communicate, evolve, and promote (Bennett, 2001). These ten provide the most specific understanding of how someone should lead and follow truly the ideals of servant leadership. A good beginning is by stating that a servant leader begins by having a servant's heart. In order to stay consistent with the main purpose of law enforcement, the servant leader style of management is necessary with Generation Y. Covey (2004) stated that this continual examination of one's belief system is like an ongoing journey that allows individuals to reflect on spirituality, professional interests, and emotional needs by expanding their human potential.

POSITION

"To Protect and Serve" is the motto for all law enforcement. The term was first coined by the Los Angeles Police Department (<http://www.lapdonline.org>) with the motto stickered on the side of their patrol cars, and the meaning was intended to be universal: to protect and serve the citizens. Officers are drawn toward following other officers

who are experienced and action- oriented. The life and death situation of the job promotes the belief that one will follow those who will keep them safe.

Servant and leader are two individual roles that when fused together create Servant as Leader. The Servant as Leader concept is cited by Greenleaf (2008) as being a servant first to their fellow workers. Some in law enforcement support this belief by being public servants to their communities by wanting to serve. The fundamental motivation for servant-leadership should be the desire to serve, meaning serving others. With the Millennial generation taking their places in the work force, it is now necessary to lead in a manner that is consistent with their learning style. As law enforcement leaders evolve, it is their responsibility to ensure that they continue to serve the next generation with the appropriate leadership style and this model should be considered. Junginger stated, "they will expect online learning with interactivity, visual effects and rapid access to information" (as cited in Wood, 2001 p. 4). This indicated that the Millennials are used to being in close contact with others via technology; they are known to have been raised with the focus of a healthy sense of self-esteem. Riggio (2010) stated, "They want recognition and to be taken seriously" (para. 5) Furthermore, a summary of Riggio thoughts stated that Millennials have been encouraged and empowered by their parents who have led them to interact differently in the workforce.

Numerous position papers, articles, and books have been written supporting this approach or style, but it was Greenleaf (2008), who coined the term "Servant Leadership." Most published models of this style relate to business management in a corporate setting. The servant leadership approach works well for law enforcement because its own core belief system, to "Protect and Serve," successfully centers itself

with this model by being seen as serving the public first. Law enforcement officers face significant challenges in operational and organizational roles. Koppenhaver (2007) stated, “The organization of law enforcement agencies have been largely paramilitary-based in their operation since they were formed, and understandably so” (para. 2) Koppenhaver (2007) stated that military and law enforcement have had similar characteristics since the Roman Empire.

Johnson (1994) stated in his report that “law enforcement agencies traditionally adhere to vertical organizational structures. This means that problems that cannot be solved at one level continue to rise through each hierarchical level until a resolution is reached” (para. 1). This research also depicted the decision making in its most extreme form, where decisions are only made at the highest level.

Law enforcement leaders, as described above, are generally promoted up through the ranks to leadership levels, whereas in corporate settings, one may be brought in from outside the corporation and put into a management position. It is this shared understanding in the law enforcement community that builds and supports that relationship as servant leadership. Only authority deserving of allegiance will be given freely to the ones who have served within the ranks. Law enforcement officers should focus on Servant as Leader as the primary style or model of leadership to be consistent with the “Protect and Serve” motto, to align itself with the informal leader process, and to appropriately address the needs of the millennium generation.

Officer retention can be expected to increase if the servant leader style is implemented. Being a servant first exemplifies a person who wants to help and create a better environment. This can easily be translated into law enforcement terms by seeing

a newer officer follow the lead of a veteran officer on the streets patrolling. In the belief that organizations will change as technologies change, it is worth stepping back and taking a look at the current context in which institutions operate because it will-and for that matter must-influence them (Peck, Senge, & DePree, 1995). The organizational goals and culture should coincide with the department mission "Protect and Serve." Supervisors can demonstrate this concept by protecting and serving their subordinates, hence they role model the desired culture.

Perceptions greatly depend on whether or not the mission of the department is clearly identified and projected throughout. Demonstrating this as serving first, either as a leader or follower could be demonstrated or supported by education opportunities. By serving and supporting employees, value is created. Law enforcement agencies that educate their employees create a positive culture and builds relationships. Law enforcement supervisors are able to establish this style of servant leadership by demonstrating to their subordinates how to lead by example with education.

Servant Leadership (n.d.) an internet source indicated that healthy organizations provide this leadership for the good of those being led. This leadership is the initiative, influence and impact. Leaders do not neglect to take appropriate action; in fact, they have a bias for action. This initiative-taking comes not from being driven to personal ambition but by being called to serve the highest needs of others.

Formal and informal styles of leadership in military and law enforcement date back to the beginning of time. Military conflicts have shown where lower ranking personnel did not want to follow someone with only book knowledge, but would follow someone who leads from a position next to them in the trenches regardless of the rank.

Lepre (2011) acknowledged that the Vietnam War was most notable for enlisted soldiers fragging (fragmentation grenades used to kill officers and other soldiers) their lieutenants during combat. They were afraid of the lieutenants' lack of combat experience getting them killed in battle. Informal leadership is defined in the Army Doctrine Reference Publication (2012) as not being based on a rank or position but is established via knowledge the experience of a person whom has taken on a role of responsibility. Servant-hood can be described as leaders who are labeled as servants to others, to the organization, and to the law enforcement profession and mission. They are seen as unselfish and not taking themselves or their rank or position too seriously. This is somewhat similar to a participative style of leadership.

Participative leadership is defined by business dictionary as a style of leadership in which the leader involves subordinates in goal setting, problem solving, team building etc., but retains the final decision making authority (<http://www.businessdictionary.com>). An example of this style in law enforcement would be a supervisor needing to complete a project. The supervisor would discuss all the aspects and parameters of the project with his fellow team members, and then make a final decision as to how to complete the project with their suggestions and views in mind.

The servant-hood approach indicates they work as team members – with people rather than over them. This working hand in hand supporting relationships with all ranks shows the way for others. The leader is seen as an individual who constantly places others and the mission ahead of his own personal needs (Enter, 2006).

Building relationships within a law enforcement organization can be done from the top down or the bottom up. The servant leadership concept relates in many ways

but most recognizably between the department and the community. This is often demonstrated with annual events such as “National Night Out” and “Citizen Police Academies.” Both of these events are designed to strengthen neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships that produce informed citizens. Enter (2006) stated, “Leaders pursue communication opportunities with others” (p. 143). Enter (2006) further stated, “They refuse to sit behind their desks and assume that anyone who needs to talk to them will come to their office” (p. 143).

Managing the Millennium generation demands a change in the leadership style. The Millennium generation prefers to be in constant contact with those they interact with. In the age of specialization, the dominate style of leadership is servant leader. Hennessy, Killian, & Robins (1995) stated, “The servant leader sees people as an end in themselves, worthy of full development” (p. 165). They further stated, “The goal of servant leader is to interact with active followers in such a way as to maximize their self-sufficiency and creativity to satisfy all stakeholders. The servant-leader helps followers to grow, and benefits from their initiative” (Hennessy, Killian, & Robins, 1995, p. 165). According to previously discussed information, the Millennials will easily welcome this form of leadership.

Walker (2009) wrote about the Millennium generation and their desire to be recognized for their abilities. Walker (2009) also stated they will change jobs if they do not get the recognition they feel they deserve. When serving shoulder-to-shoulder with a subordinate, a supervisor has the ability to lead by example and to also compliment the employee immediately on a job well done. Since the Millennium generation is often described as being self-regarding, the servant leader style would greatly compliment

this generational perspective. The supervisor is focused on the employee and has the main goal of mentoring the employee to fulfillment of their self-actualization.

COUNTER POSITION

To “Protect and Serve” is usually associated with the officer on the streets and not the individuals who are sitting behind a desk. Law enforcement officers in a managerial position are not always able to be in the field (Enter, 2006). The servant leader concept may also be frightening for some because this style of leadership is overwhelmingly sacrificial and faith-filled. It carries with it the potential for abuse and misuse.

Military and paramilitary organizations, including law enforcement, have used many styles of leadership, authoritarian and democratic being the two primaries for many years. These styles have shown to be effective with leaders who believe that they are not in the position to make friends. Millennials believe that showing the servant leader style is showing a form of weakness. Tarr (1995) stated that, “Most people dismiss the idea as one of weakness because it doesn’t fit in with our mood of assertiveness, of looking out for number one, or the desire for real power and influence” (p. 79).

Individuals utilizing the traditional styles of leadership would see the servant leadership style of managing as a means to be disrespected. In other words, if input is needed, questions will be asked. Others would view it as a way of not being able to assert oneself. Also, a counterpoint for using servant leader as a managerial style is that not all situations in law enforcement warrant this style of leadership. For example, during a law enforcement or military tactical mission, teams need a direct form of

communication and string or vertical leadership. During these situations, teams do not have time to discuss their fullest potential and to receive accolades of their achievements. Before the mission and in the after-actions- review would be acceptable times to implement the servant leader style of leadership.

The Millennial generation may want to work flexible hours, and research has stated that they have a higher level of expectations in the work setting (Mentel, 2008). Mentel (2008) stated that "Both business and law enforcement executives noticed that many new hires are technically savvy, enthusiastic, and service-oriented, but they also tend to carry high expectations" (para. 2). As a whole, executives felt that these new officers may be more eager for quick advancement and higher starting salaries. In addition, while police officers have traditionally stayed in the same field and even the same agency for their entire careers, workers, in general, are now more likely to switch jobs and employers after just a few years.

Leading from behind a desk will present challenges with the servant leadership model for managers not working side by side with subordinate officers. The lack of direct communication and involvement also adds barriers that will have to be overcome. The use of past leadership styles such as the authoritarian and democratic styles have shown to be effective in respect to the generation at that time. However, trying to implement new ideas as servant leadership in law enforcement may not be welcomed with open arms simply because of rigidity and change in the environment. The idea or concept may be viewed as a sign of weakness. In addition to these mentioned, not all situations will allow for these principles to be used just as it was described above using a tactical scenario. However, the millennial generation will be met with several

challenges if the servant leadership concept is not adopted by law enforcement organizations.

Junginger (2007) believes that “Millennials are a unique generation with different learning styles, expectations, and more increased technological proficiencies than the generations preceding them” (p.14). Since the Millennials have been born into and raised with technology, they are used to interfacing their environment with technology on a continuous basis. One law enforcement training academy has tried to address the current needs of this generation by implementing updated training methods by using state of the art technology and a milieu that is more conducive to their learning abilities. The Millennials are able to adapt to an evolving and changing environment. Law enforcement agencies and training facilities will be able to evolve and also upgrade their standards of interacting and implementing the law enforcement techniques by encouraging the Millennials to become part of the current and future law enforcement family. It would be a win-win situation by having the law enforcement agencies update their technology and also be teaching the current administration to become better managers of the upcoming workforce consumers. The Millennials are user-friendly and are in need of managers who will be able to adapt as well as they do in daily activities through constant communication, state of the art technology, networking, team building, and revised reward system. Servant leadership uses constant communication, which supports the examples given of the millennial generation.

RECOMMENDATION

Servant as leader is a plausible style of leadership for law enforcement. The ability of law enforcement to welcome this style of leadership falls upon each individual.

As previously stated, a good beginning is when a servant leader begins by having a servant heart. Being a good role model is the best way to demonstrate this style of leadership. Others who wish to benefit will observe the characteristics and follow.

It is obvious that law enforcement will have to adjust and grow with the future in mind. It is also obvious that the next generation of officers will be the millennial generation, and they will have different learning styles and expectations. They will be much more advanced with technological proficiencies than the generations before them.

Law enforcement academies and departments will need to be proactive and adjust to meet the needs of this new generation and technology. Curriculums will need to be changed, learning techniques will need to be adjusted, and minds will have to be open to new ideas. The better the recruit from the police academy, the more productive the officer will be in communities.

An action plan for or training class familiarizing officers with this knowledge and future change in law enforcement will educate stakeholders to the changes that are needed. The advancement of technologies, new learning modules, and increased interactivity with existing officers will make this adjustment for the future much easier. This paper presents the idea of implementing the servant leadership concept to existing officers. Stakeholders, being the Generation X and Baby Boomers will need to adjust training and technology to meet the needs of the next generation. Counter positions indicate that the millennial generation will view law enforcement differently, have high expectations, and will not stay with an agency if they feel their needs are not being met.

Covey (2004) showed that the servant leadership concept will, in fact, be a good leadership style for supervisors and existing officers when dealing with new officers

exhibiting this new learning style. Dr. Stephen Covey, a known author in the field of leadership, stated in the foreword of Spears' (1998) book, "Leaders are learning that this kind of empowerment, which is what servant-leadership represents, is one of the key principles that, based on practice, not talk, will be the deciding point between an organization's enduring success or its eventual extinction" (p. xii). Servant Leadership in law enforcement is plausible.

REFERENCES

- Authoritarian Leadership. (n.d.). In *BusinessDictionary* online dictionary. Retrieved from <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/authoritarian-leadership.html>
- Bennett, J. L. (Summer 2011). Trainers as leaders of learning. *Training & Development*, 55(3), 42-44.
- Covey, S. R. (2004). *The 7 habits of highly effective people*. New York: Free Press.
- Democratic Leadership. (n.d.). In *BusinessDictionary* online dictionary. Retrieved from <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/democratic-leadership.html>
- Department of the Army. (2012, August). *ADRP 6-22: Army Leadership*. Retrieved from http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_a/pdf/adrp6_22_new.pdf
- Enter, J. E. (2006). *Challenging the law enforcement organization: Proactive leadership strategies*. Dacula: Narrow Road Press.
- Generation Y. (n.d.). In *BusinessDictionary* online dictionary. Retrieved from <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/Generation-Y.html>
- Greenleaf, R. K. (2008). *The servant leader*. Westfield, IN: The Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership.
- Hennessey, J. E., Killian, J., & Robins, S. (1995). *Reflections on Leadership*: In L. C. Spears, *Reflections on Leadership* (p.165). New York: John Wiley.
- Johnson, R. A. (1994, June). *Police organizational design and structure*. Retrieved from <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Police+organizational+design+and+structure.-a015704701/>

- Junginger, C. (2007, October). *Who is training whom? The Effect of the millennial generation*. Sacramento, CA: California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training.
- Koppenhaver, J. J. (2007, July 24). *Challenges for law enforcement: Moving from a paramilitary past to a community oriented future* (Criminal Justice Capstone). Retrieved from <http://www.scribd.com/doc/217730/Challenges-for-Law-Enforcement-Moving-from-a-Paramilitary-Past-to-a-Community-Oriented-Future>
- Lepre, G. (2011). *Fragging: Why U.S. soldiers assaulted their officers in Vietnam*. Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech University Press.
- Mentel, Z. (2008, December). Today's officer, tomorrow's chief: Police recruitment. *Community Policing Dispatch*. Retrieved from http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/December_2008/police_recruitment.htm
- Participative Leadership. (n.d.). In *BusinessDictionary* online dictionary. Retrieved from <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/participative-leadership.html>
- Peck, M. S., Senge, P., & DePree, M. (1995). *Reflections on leadership: How Robert K. Greenleaf's theory of servant-leadership influenced today's top management thinkers*. New York: John Wiley.
- Riggio, R. E. (2010, May 6.). How to lead the millennial generation. *Psychology Today*. Retrieved from <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/cutting-edge-leadership/201005/how-lead-the-millennial-generation>
- Servant Leadership. (n.d.). *Defining servant leadership and the healthy organization*. Retrieved from http://www.olagroup.com/Display.asp?Page=servant_leadership

- Servant Leadership. (n.d.). In *BusinessDictionary* online dictionary. Retrieved from <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/servant-leadership.html>
- Spears, L. C. (Ed). (1998). *Insights on Leadership: Service, stewardship, spirit, and servant-leadership*. New York: Wiley.
- Tarr, D. L. (1995). The strategic toughness of servant-leadership. In L. C. Spears, *Reflections on Leadership* (pp. 79-83). New York: John Wiley.
- Walker, R. (2009, November 12). *Why servant leadership is ideal for the millennial generation*. Retrieved from <http://www.scooparticles.com/business-articles/strategic-management-articles/why-servant-leadership-ideal-millennial-generation-21753.html#ixzz2PQ4bBQLy>.
- Wood, J. (2001). *Mission: The next generation millennials rising*. Retrieved from <http://www.emory.edu/BUSINESS/readings/millennial/NextGeneration.pdf>