LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

MANAGING BY MOTIVATION

A LEARNING CONTRACT

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INTRODUCTION

Managing can be thought of as "making sure that the job is done correctly." Managers work with and through other people in guiding their organizations toward the achievement of goals. Managers have the authority to direct the work of others in their organizations, and they are responsible for achieving desired outcomes.

In systems terms, managing involves creating and guiding the system so that goals are attained. In the police system, managers are concerned with inputs such as money, employees, equipment and information as well as with outputs such as arrests, reports and services to the public. Managers are responsible for obtaining the inputs, for designing and directing organizational processes, and for inspecting and improving outputs. Managers must also arrange for feedback about the operation of the system, so that inputs, processes and outputs can be evaluated, corrected and improved in order to achieve organizational goals and objectives: the maximum protection of life and property and maintenance of order.

To a very large extent, managing a police organization involves managing people. Unlike some systems, in which inputs and processes are primarily raw materials such as machines, money or information, police systems are labor-intensive. Police departments spend in excess of 80% of their budgets on employee salary and

benefits, and virtually all of the work of police organizations is performed by people rather than by machines.

Managing people introduces complications not encountered in managing raw materials, machines, money or information. People have feelings, ideas and personal goals. People vary tremendously, are not always consistent and cannot be completely understood. People change, and yet they frequently resist change. The so-called "human element" really takes management out of the realm of science and into the realm of practical affairs.

Directing and controlling employees, making sure that they know what to do and how to do it, and supervising their work to assure that it is done correctly are basic components of management. Successful police executives must go beyond the basic components, however, to attain lasting organizational productivity. Beyond simple adherence to job specifications and organizational rules, the police executive must reach out for the hearts and minds of employees. This involves leadership, an ability which is somewhat different for management ability.

MANAGING TECHNIQUES

Leading involves showing the way, in most instances, by example or by "motivation". Leaders help people in their organizations understand how their efforts contribute to valuable outputs. They help them picture goals worth striving for. They

reinforce values that contribute to organizational success. Leaders help encourage commitment to values, principles and goals, rather than minimum performance designed simply to satisfy rules and supervisors. 1

Every police organization has to contend with performance problems. Most can be defined as originating from one of three areas: employees with problems, problem employees, or marginal employees. If we are managers or supervisors, it is our job to manage performance problems regardless of origin and regardless of whether the person is a sworn officer or a civilian employee.

Normally, a manager will deal with this worker by means of discipline, termination, or motivation.

For a number of managers, the first tool of choice is that of discipline. Discipline can be defined as that "exercise or regimen that develops or improves a skill".2 If this definition is used it can be effective, but all too often discipline is equated with punishment.

Punishment may have some short term effectiveness but may also have some undesirable side effects. the "do it or else" approach doesn't have the same effect as it once perhaps did because the workers of today lack the same loyalty and work ethic that once characterized police officers.3 This fact, coupled with the shortage of police candidates in some parts of the country, often results in the officer exercising the "or else" side of the equation. In that case, the agency sometimes loses an otherwise salvageable employee and the officer doesn't lose anything.

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he/she loses a job, I suppose!

Another possible outcome of punishment is that the behavior that prompted the punishment doesn't change significantly; the employee just finds ways to avoid sanctions.

Of course, the imposition of punishment might bring about compliance with management's edict which is the desired effect. However, the astute manager recognizes that there are three types of compliance: formal compliance, vicious compliance, and that of enrollment.[4]

Formal compliance is just what the name implies. The employee does the absolute minimum to avoid sanctions.

Literal compliance is probably worse from a management standpoint than non-compliance. For instance, if a sergeant orders an officer to issue more traffic citations, the officer does exactly what he is told and proceeds to issue traffic tickets for excessive speed — 37 miles per hour in a 35 mile per hour zone. Or perhaps for being parked 14'11" from a fire hydrant when the law requires 15'. All legal tickets, but ones that can cause some consternation.

The last type of compliance is that of enrollment. Enrollment can best be described as an understanding of what management wants, why they want it, and a belief in what is wanted or desired by management. In this case the employee makes every good faith effort to comply with the spirit of the order or rule and will make the effort to be successful. Obviously, enrollment is sought.

Termination is always an option to be considered but most police chiefs and other executives realize that most arbitrators

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and city managers view termination as the capital punishment of the working world, and are thus oftentimes reluctant to endorse such a recommendation without a strong case being brought against the employee. Of course, this doesn't mean that executives should not make those decisions for fear of being reversed, but it does mean that they should carefully build the case against the employee as carefully as any criminal case they would make.

In my view, termination is the last option to consider, and since there are some definite drawbacks to the use of punishment, the focus should be on motivation when dealing with performance problems.

METHODS OF MOTIVATION

To enroll an employee in a concept, that employee has to be motivated. All too often, the term motivation is equated with the employee wanting to do the job and liking the job assignment. Many supervisors and managers have spent many hours trying to convince an officer to like a distasteful assignment, and sometimes that simply isn't possible.

In classrooms and in work places, comments such as "that guy just isn't motivated" are often heard, coupled with comments such as "I can't get that person motivated". Neither comment is true because all people are motivated all the time.5 The marginal officer might be motivated to avoid work, or to avoid calls, or to avoid the sergeant, but he is motivated nonetheless.

If this premise is in fact true, a manager has to redefine the goal of a counseling session from how he can motivate to how he can

channel the motivation of the employee into something positive.

One effective means of channeling motivation is an interview model that contains six elements. These six elements can be used in any order. These elements are: establish accountability, use organizational values, build trust, check assumptions, use negotiations, and follow through.

INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES

The interview technique, combined with good communication and basic leadership skills should make it possible for a manager or supervisor to determine whether an employee can perform the job and choose not to, or can not perform the required job or meet the required standard. The former is insubordination and the latter is incompetence. If it is the latter, then the manager can make a choice of training or discipline as a response. The first step and initial focus of the interview is to establish a firm base of accountability. To do this is really quite simple; the manager tells the employee what is to be done, explain the standard of proficiency expected, ask if he is capable of doing the job or performing the task, and then measure the results against the understood standards.

ACCOUNTABILITY: One common error that supervisors and managers make is to allow themselves to be accountable for the behavior of their subordinate officers, and they do not hold the employee accountable. Many feel that bottom line management philosophies help managers not fall into that box. For the purpose of this paper, a bottom line management philosophy is one that

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allows the manager or supervisor to act on end results.5 Excuses, reasons, or justifications do not change the outcome, or bottom line. In some situations, mitigating circumstances might alter managements response, but it still depends largely on the circumstances and outcome of the officers actions or inactions.

STANDARDS AS PROBLEMS OF MANAGEMENT

For example, the problem might be as simple as an employee not getting to work on time. When asked about this consistent behavior, the employee might begin telling the manager about the car trouble the employee is having. This may or may not be a fact. In either event, it doesn't really matter. The problem, as far as the supervisor is concerned, is that the employee is not adhering to the schedule and is not getting to work on time.

The bottom line is that the employee is late on a regular basis, and the manager doesn't really care why. Whatever the reason, it is the responsibility of the employee, not that of the manager. The consequences of this officer's tardiness determine what action will be taken by management. If this consistent behavior begins causing dissent among the troops, one action should be taken. If, on the other hand, the tardy officer is unavailable to act as a back up to an on duty officer and the officer is injured, our response is considerably different. The result of an officer being late on a back-up call can be death of the requesting officer and the end of a career to the responding officer.

Once a reasonable, reliable and valid standard has been set, and the employee knows it and has had the proper training,

materials, and opportunity to meet that standard, it then becomes his responsibility to meet the standard, or else he must justify why to can not meet the standard.

The issue of accountability most often raises its head when the employee is given an assignment he finds distasteful, or one he considers beneath him as a police officer, such as directing traffic at a school zone. The accountability issue can be established early on during the interview. Typically, comments from officers, after learning of their new job are "why do we have to do that — we're cops, not babysitters".

Accountability can and must be established immediately by reminding the officer that the job, in this case, traffic direction, is a basic job of his and one that must be done. Whether the officer agrees or not is not really critical; all that matters is that he acknowledges it as fact, at least as far as the manager is concerned. The next step is to simply ask the officer if he can do the job or not. The conversation might literally be something such as this — "Look, I know you don't want to direct traffic today, but it needs to be done and it needs to be done by you. What I need to know is can you do it or not?" If he says he can do it and won't, you have a case of insubordination. If he says he can't, it can be handled as a training exercise or mission, or perhaps as an officer that is unsuitable for police work. Encouragement to pursue a second career choice may be in order, depending on what skills are required for the assignment.

The level of accountability is the same whether the problem is

working a school zone or working a murder or typing reports. Holding one accountable for one's actions causes motivation to be channeled and directed in a positive direction. If it does not, disciplinary action or training may be appropriate.

ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES: Stressing the values of the organization is important when channeling motivation. In my opinion, law enforcement is experiencing a resurgence of the values necessary to regain the public trust, particularly in the awake of the South Florida police scandals. Values, ethics, and integrity are once again receiving emphasis from police administrators, and police officers are recognizing that the emphasis is necessary.[7]

Even more important than emphasizing these values is that they be demonstrated and exemplified by top management. Today's worker, by and large, will not buy the "do as I say not as I do" mentality. In addition to living the values being perpetrated, posting the statements in lobbies, briefing rooms, and other public and highly visible places helps keep these foundation statements on the minds of the officer.[8]

Policy statements should also be written in such a way that the departmental values are interwoven and explicitly stated. This can be accomplished by prefacing a policy with such language as "this policy is written in keeping with the value of this department and is being written to further those values and ethics". This, along with similar messages in mission statements, help to remind officers what is important to that particular organization so that managers can call on those values when they

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need to, perhaps in an interview setting that this paper is focusing on.

Using these values during the counseling session plays a significant part in obtaining a best effort from the employee. Realizing and acknowledging that the department does not accept partial efforts will strengthen the commitment gained from the employee. Of course, this assumes that one of the organizational values being written and spoken about in a department deals with excellence of service or something similar.

Allowing an employee to participate in goal setting does not always result in a best effort guarantee.9 However, a verbal commitment usually does result in a best effort, particularly when the verbal commitment is said in public or is sealed with a handshake or a physical touching on the arm or shoulder. The norms and social morals of our country allow us to seal those commitments by this touching, and most officers feel ethically bound to do whatever they said they were going to do if this bargain has been "sealed". The use of this seal is an important part of this model.

BUILDING TRUST: If any problem solving or counseling interview is to be successful, there must be a high level of trust between the manager and worker. If the worker doesn't believe what the manager is saying, no real progress can be made.

A lack of trust is often not manifest openly in a verbal sense. It often surfaces through statements such as "why are you picking on me again" or simply "why me again". The implication is thatmanagement is being unfair to the officer, and the supervisor

has to then reassure the officer that the organization is in fact fair to all the employees, even though it doesn't treat all employees the same all the time.

The interviewer must deal with the issues of trust as they surface. If, for instance, the assignment is an unpopular one and the employee maintains that he is being singled out unfairly more often than any one else, the supervisor should ascertain if that is in fact true. If it is, then management should either ensure that it does not continue to happen, or be able to explain why it is happening. Some departments use certain distasteful jobs as punishment, but due to the very nature of law enforcement it may not be in the best interest of the public or the department to use an assignment as punishment. If the job is not punitive in nature, perhaps it would be best to objectively determine if this person is the best or most available person for the job at hand. If they are the person that needs to be assigned, then it is the time to bring negotiation in to the model.

NEGOTIATION: As a police administrator, I know that some of my peers often have difficulty in accepting this part of the model but that is only because of their perception of what negotiation is. For the purpose of this model, negotiation is simply the act of agreeing with the employee about future actions and assignments predicated on his successful performance in the current endeavor. For example, the interviewer might say something to the effect of "I'll keep track of assignments in the future, and you have my promise that you won't be singled out to do this job more often

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than anyone else. Do this, do it well, and I assure you that everyone else will get their turn." If the officer is right, and he is getting the lousy assignments more often than anyone else, and there is no particular reason for it, then administrator makes sure that it doesn't continue in the future.

Some police managers dislike this approach and prefer the my way or the highway method of motivation. There is a time and a place for that type of approach, but the purpose of this model is to save the employee. A skilled manager rarely uses ultimatums as a first technique, but one can always turn to that approach if need be. Sometimes, an employee is right, and they have been singled out or have been treated unfairly. To agree with that doesn't weaken a manager's position; it is instead made stronger because of the element of trust that can be demonstrated to the interviewee.

ASSUMPTIONS: Managers should never preface an assignment with a phrase such as "I know you're not going to like this". If verbiage such as that is used, the manager is setting himself up for a confrontation. Equally, he should not say something such as "I know you can do this job". Instead, he should ask if the employee can do the job, and perform to the required standards of this particular assignment.

Visible and verbal acknowledgements are important tools in channeling motivation, and when the officer answers the inquiries in the affirmative, he is on his way to giving the manager that acknowledgement. Most people can do a good job if the job is something that they like to do. The task of a manager is to get

the employee to commit to a best effort even if the job is something that he doesn't like to do. If the manager begins the interview by assuming that the officer can't commit to a "dirty" job, he is being self defeating. On the other hand, few people will openly admit that they are incompetent to do a job. They might say they don't want to do the job, but most will admit that are capable of doing it.

Instead of telling the officer that you know he will do a good job, ask him if he will do a good job. One statement is an assumption; the other is a commitment. In a purely counseling session, where perhaps the officer is acting out a character and, for instance the supervisor has heard that the officer is having marital problems, he might open the interview by expressing concern over the behavior change, and then tell the officer that "I know it must be because of your marital problems". Statements such as these are dangerous. They might not be true, and even if they are, the manager usually isn't trained to offer any significant help any way. It would be far better to ask if there is anything in particular that is bothering the employee, and if so, then refer him to the proper sources. The remainder of the interview should focus on how the employee's behavior must change, not what caused it in the first place. That is not to say that one can't be understanding and sympathetic, but the bottom line is that the job must get done.

FOLLOW THROUGH: The concept of follow through is different than that of follow up. Follow up takes place after a job has been

done; follow through establishes critical points at which a manager or supervisor will check on the progress of the employee. The manager and officer both decide what are the critical points of the operation, and agree that the supervisor will check at that point in time. This step accomplishes a number of positives in that the employee is once again able to participate in the goal setting process, and it also establishes some short term goals for the employee to strive for. If the manager only uses the concept of follow up, then no corrective action can be taken until the project or job is over, and then it may be too late to be of benefit.

SUMMARY: The concept of motivation is not to get an employee to like a job; it is instead to get an employee to do a job and do it well. It is a matter of establishing accountability, determining standards, communicating those standards and then holding the workers accountable to them. Rewards should be given to those who succeed, and they should be withheld from those who do not meet standards or discipline may be appropriate.

Underscore the value of the department often. Revise them, post them and become an example of them.

Use negotiation to the advantage of the department. Managers shouldn't be afraid or hesitant to use negotiations for fear of being perceived as weak. More often, it strengthens the position of the supervisor.

High levels of trust in an organization are critical. Employees must feel as though they are being and will be treated equitably although perhaps not equal.

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Do not assume anything. An elementary statement, but one that can not be overlooked in its importance. Instead of telling them "I know you will do a good job", say "I think you can do a good job and I'm expecting you to do a good job, can you?" At first glance, one may conclude that this model simply gets the employee to agree to whatever the supervisor wants to have done. Rather, this model is designed to allow a manager to use the work ethic and integrity of the employee to create a win/win situation that is to the benefit of the organization and the employee. This model can also help determine a number of things, does the manager have a problem employee, or an employee with a problem, or an organizational fault that the employee has gotten caught in, or if there is an environment problem that needs to be addressed.

This model, as with any other, is not successful all the time. If it fails, the manager may have to resort to punishment of perhaps termination. If that happens, this model serves as documentation of the steps used to try to salvage the employee and can be used quite successfully to develop the potential of personnel.