

THE BILL BLACKWOOD  
LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE  
OF TEXAS

Total Quality Management  
In Local Government

A Reseach Paper  
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirments for  
The Professional Designation  
Graduate, Management Institute

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June 1996

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this paper is to develop policy for and examine implications of the transition to Quality Based Management. This information will guide the Collin County Sheriff's Office management team in developing a comprehensive strategy for forming a cohesive alliance within the organization and achieve more effective services for the electorate. This paper examines three specific concerns for the manager considering the move to Total Quality Management (TQM). This paper examines the dynamics of organizational change. Change in law enforcement is inevitable. To understand the direction of the future, the evolution of modern law enforcement will be taken into account. The paper presents a plan for the implementation of TQM and the effective use of the agency's society as a tool for the change. The paper examines the application of TQM tenets to the politically based law enforcement agency. Finally, the paper presents implications for the elected law enforcement executive.

## **Evolution of 20th Century American Law Enforcement**

Throughout the history of the United States, the role of law enforcement has changed from generation to generation. Law enforcement has evolved from the hue and cry system of the 18th century to the computerized metropolitan agencies of the late 20th century. Today's law enforcement executive is faced with developing strategy for policing in the next millennium. The pressure to provide more services with fewer resources will continue into the next century. Increased expectations have led administrators to rethink their approach to management.

From the late 1800s to the 1930s law enforcement was a graft and bribe driven industry. Rarely looked upon as an honorable vocation, police from precinct captains to officers on the beat openly accepted payoffs and gratuities to supplement their meager incomes. The emphasis of command was placed at the precinct level with most decisions made by the precinct commander (Stone and Deluca, 1985, 23-24).

Community leaders from across the country launched an effort to reform law enforcement. These changes in expectations took the form of efforts to centralize command, create uniform hiring policies, and create a fair method of promotion. Until the reform movement, new officers were hired based on their political leanings and bribes paid police and elected officials. Precinct and ward politicians of the time fought the reform efforts (Fogleson, 1977, 26).

World War II changed the complexion of American law enforcement forever. Veterans had difficulty finding jobs upon returning from the war. Law enforcement agencies benefited by hiring these soldiers. The new breed of officer had an undying patriotism and a desire to pursue the American Dream. This new pride in law enforcement led to the dawning of the professional era of American law enforcement. In post war America, the police enjoyed higher regard than ever before (Stone and Deluca, 1985, 30-31).

Increased professionalism led to a more authoritarian form of law enforcement command structure. This structure, Management by Objective (MBO), is based on a rigid top down hierarchy of command. Many agencies employ a method of MBO called the "profit-maximizing managerial value system" (Hellreigel and Slocum, 1976, 414). These agencies expect objectives to be established and tightly controlled by each higher level of management. This type of MBO is management by fear. It results in a decrease in worker satisfaction. This form of MBO uses employees as the means, not the ends (Hellreigel and Slocum, 1976, 51). Executives must recognize that their management philosophy has a direct correlation to agency morale and employee performance. They should begin to accept the notion that participatory management is crucial to the success of their organization.

### **Understanding Total Quality Mangement**

Carr and Littman (1990,3) offer a working definition of TQM: "Involving everyone in an organization in controlling and continuously improving how work is done, in order to meet customer expectations of quality.' While this definition is clear and concise, it does little to aid the understanding of TQM and how it works. To clearly understand TQM, one must return to its source, Dr. W. Edwards Deming and post war Japan.

Dr. Deming is considered the father of quality management (Swiss, 1992,356). Deming, a statistician, applied the principles of statistical control and analysis to ensure quality in the US Department of Agriculture prior to World War II. After the war, Deming became a management consultant. Japanese industrialists hired Deming to help rebuild Japan's post-war economy. The Japanese embraced his concept of quality and used it as the basis of their rebuilt nation (Carr and Littman, 1990, 20-21).

When distilled to its basics, management focused on quality is composed of six core elements:

1. **Quality is determined by the customer.** The organization must direct its efforts at identifying and satisfying the desires of the customer. Customers may be internal or external, but in either case, they are the clients who must be satisfied in the TQM organization (Swiss, 1992, 357; Keehley, 1992a, 11-12).

2. **Processes must be continually improved.** "Quality is considered a journey, not a destination" (Keehley, 1992a, 11-12). The culture of the TQM organization includes constant change based on hard data. These are not usually breakthrough changes, but small changes resulting in continuous improvement (Carr and Littman, 1990, 20; Kline, 1992, 8).

3. **TQM focuses on systems, not individual employees.** Improvement is directed at systems. If the quality is not there, the system is at fault, not the employees. Essentially, the employees have been placed in a bad system (Aguayo, 1990, 65). "TQM says that 85 percent of the problems...arise from systems or the way that management sets up the work to be done" (Carr and Littman, 1990, 19).

4. **Teamwork is rewarded, not individual employees.** Management practices that reward individuals and foster competition, such as bonuses, performance reviews, merit systems and the like should be junked (Aguayo, 1990, 60-61).

5. **Employees must have the authority to make decisions.** Decision-making is placed at "a level where people can take quick action to satisfy customer, handle problems and make improvements" (Keehley, 1992a, 12). This requires the organization to invest a great deal of training guidance, and feedback in employees.

6. **The entire organization is responsible for quality.** Management and employees become partners in the quest for quality (Keehley, 1992a, 12). As a corollary, this means that all resources of the organization will be devoted to quality. "Quality is achieved only when managers create an organizational culture that focuses on consistently producing quality products and then on improving them every period" (Swiss, 1992, 158).

### **Implementation Strategy**

The move to TQM is a bold and risky step for the law enforcement executive. Academic article after academic article warn of the potential pitfalls that face the fledgling TQM effort. The key to the successful customer-driven law enforcement agency is commitment to excellence at all levels of the agency. This commitment begins with the unwavering resolve of the agency executive. To ensure success, the executive must not hesitate to allow team members to make important decisions and must recognize that there are no unimportant assignments.

The first step in developing the successful strategy for TQM is executive decision. Jablonski (1992) identifies this as the preparation stage. It is essential for the executive to recognize the move to TQM is a long process that will affect the culture of the agency. Strategic implementation allows the executive to plan for the effect of TQM on his or her agency culture. Careful molding of the agency's culture will facilitate acceptance of new ideas and concepts. The executive must have a clear image of the organization's current status before embarking in a new direction (Shashkin and Kiser, 1993, 132-133). The agency's culture can be an effective tool for winning the support of rank and file officers.

During this preliminary phase, the law enforcement executive must examine his or her role in the transition to TQM. Any change in agency philosophy should begin at the top and cascade down through management to supervisors to workers (Keehley, 1992b, 11). The executive and his or her top level staff should frame the vision for the future of the agency and establish preliminary objectives and missions based on that vision. During this phase, the executive and staff should become trained in the concepts of TQM.

Once the executive and staff have sufficiently prepared for the change to TQM the second stage, planning, can begin. The preparation of the vision statement is the key to the planning stage. At this point, the executive will bring other employees on board. The executive can establish an implementation team or steering committee. It is important that this committee be made of employees of all levels within the agency. Failing to include all disciplines will cause the initiative to be viewed as yet another management fad and will not be considered as a serious attempt for change (Beer Eisenstate, and Spector, 1990, 158-166). Strategies for customer identification, customer research, and employee training are created by the team during the planning stage. The implementation team should have the added responsibility to clarify the mission, values, and vision that has been established in the organization (Persico, 1992).

The implementation team should consider benchmark measurement to ensure the anticipated level of excellence. Benchmarking is the process of comparing your agency's

systems and processes to the leaders in a given field. According to Charles Burke (1996), benchmarking in the 1990s is not a choice, but a necessity. Benchmarking should lead the organization to a greater level of excellence.

Three benchmark measurements lend themselves readily to government. These are:

**Internal**--comparing one particular operation within the organization with another. Success in this area is a matter of the everyone understanding how their operation fits into the organization's "big picture." It is simply having the right hand knowing what the left is doing.

**Functional**--comparing an operation with that of similar ones. Comparing methods of supervision in county detention facilities across the country can lead to a hybrid that is more effective.

**Generic**--comparing operations to unrelated industries. A police records division might use storage and warehousing techniques of a private industry to more effectively store and retrieve its files.

While benchmarking is important for businesses to keep their competitive edge, government agencies can benefit from benchmarking as well. The Collin County Sheriff's Office (Texas) used benchmarking to develop innovative ideas on inmate supervision in their detention facility. During construction of their new facility, members of the sheriff's office studied the nation's leading county jails. The result was a new method of direct inmate supervision that now serves as an example for the whole country.

Measurement of the success of the TQM transformation is relative. Recognizing that the change is a process not an event is important when establishing measurement criteria. Measures for success can include:

- \* Number of active and completed teams
- \* Percent of employees participating in teams
- \* Employee satisfaction index
- \* Customer satisfaction index

An additional, crucial element is the direct measurement of important agency objectives in such areas as program development, response time, and number citizen complaints (Feinberg, 1995).

While establishing agency goals and objectives, the implementation team must constantly focus on the customer. "The activity of developing ...processes required to meet the customer's needs" should be the central focus for these objectives (Hunt, 1992).

During the planning phase, customer focus must be maintained. Identification of both internal and external customers is the first consideration of this focus. Once the different customer bases are determined, the needs of the customer must be assessed. These needs should then be translated into terms that relate to service that can be provided. Specifications of these services should be detailed. The method of delivery of the services should also be considered. Those who will be responsible for delivering this service should participate in this process (Juran, 1988).

Although planning is a constant process, the next step is internal assessment. During the assessment phase, the focus shifts to the organization and its members. The strengths and weaknesses of the organization must be identified. Understanding the dynamics of agency culture can lead to the success or failure of the TQM initiative.

The implementation phase "starts the process of cascading TQM throughout the organization" (Keehley, 1992b, 11). Pilot projects are begun during this phase. They help provide demonstrable indications of how well TQM can work and what stake each employee can have in the TQM organization. Team building activities take place during this phase. The use of a quality coordinator to facilitate the implementation team's objectives can be a valuable tool in government (Carr and Littman, 1990, 260).

The final consideration in the implementation of TQM is the goal of constant improvement. The old saying "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" should not apply to the TQM organization (Harrison, 1996, 32). The attitude should instead become "if it ain't broke, break it" (Kiel, 1994). As the principles of TQM become internalized, the members of



the agency should be encouraged to continually strive to improve processes and should be rewarded for new ideas (Smith, 1993, 59).

### **Implications of TQM for the Elected Law Enforcement Executive**

The county sheriff's office by its very nature lends itself to TQM and customer driven policing (Sikes, 1996). The sheriff must face the electorate every four years and in most cases must stand on his or her record. As previously stated, the voters are demanding more service for less money. The sheriff can benefit greatly by the use of increasing customer satisfaction. Prior the transition to TQM the sheriff must be aware of the potential impacts on the agency and his or her political future.

As previously discussed, organizations are resistant to change. Sheriff's offices are no different and may in fact be more resistant. When transforming an agency to TQM, the executive must be careful to take meaningful steps to achieve his or her goal. Particularly in larger agencies, the transformation is likely to be perceived as making change for change's sake. The administrator must lay the proper ground work to ensure the changes make a noticeable difference in the agency.

Sheriff's Offices tend to have a more experienced and older employee base. The departmental stability that this creates leads to the resistance to new ideas. In the case of the Collin County Sheriff's Office Operations Division, employees with more than five years with the agency out number those with less by a three to one margin. This longevity creates an air of comfort for the old way of doing things and more cultural resistance to the changes. In many cases officers have 15 to 20 years experience and are suspect of the motivations behind administrative changes.

If TQM is properly initiated, the elected executive will increase the contact with the citizens the office serves. This increase in contacts will lead to information sharing and create a true open relationship with the constituents. This openness will tend to reduce the number of citizen complaints against officers, as the citizens understand officers' actions. Customer surveys will afford the electorate to express their attitudes

outside of the voting booth. If taken to heart, the elected official can use the consumer information to become virtually unbeatable. By positively responding to the problems perceived by the public, the elected official can keep touch with the constituency, fix problems in mid-term, and show their diligence to improve service.

Once TQM is entrenched into the daily operations of a sheriff's office, Community Oriented Policing (or more aptly phrased, Customer Driven Policing) is a natural progression. Employees at all levels will strive to deliver a quality service to those served. From that desire, employees will increase the number of non-emergency citizen contacts. This increase of "personal" contacts can in turn increase the efficiency of the agency. Citizens are more likely to impart information to an officer they know and have talked with before. The street officers in the TQM agency will also benefit from this personal relationship. In a critical confrontation, citizens will be more likely to stop and aid officers they know. The officer in the confrontation is now "Joe," not just "some cop." Conceivably, TQM could reduce the number of officer involved altercations.

The positive implications of implementing TQM far outweigh the negatives. The elected official will benefit from the increased public awareness of the agency. The public will be more comfortable with the agency and less suspicious of it during times of question. The electorate must not only be considered the customer, but they are, in fact, the stock holders as well. The transition to TQM can lead to a restoration of the respect and faith in the law enforcement agency.

### **Recommendations and Conclusion**

The transition to TQM must be viewed as a process not as an event. The metamorphosis must begin with a complete review of TQM by the management level staff. This review should consist of training for the chief executive and those managers who will be responsible for TQM's implementation. The potential positives and negatives must be explored and a preliminary path set. The transition to TQM must have the undying support of the elected official.

The management staff should have a basic implementation strategy in mind. While the actual nuts and bolts will be put in place by the implementation team, a general direction must be agreed upon. A time table for obtaining training, establishing teams, and program implementation should be outlined. Requirements for the training should be established. A plan to train the trainers must be established. Upon completion of this phase, the plan must be submitted to the Sheriff for his or her approval. The implementation of TQM is a big step for the elected official as they will voluntarily surrender some of the power they to which they have grown accustomed.

The success of TQM depends on the organization. If properly executed and maintained, the agency can grow into a benchmark for other area agencies. If not properly instituted, the transition could be a complete and utter failure. Even if TQM fails, the officers and the agency will have learned something. They will have been exposed to different management styles used by other departments.

While the Collin County Sheriff's Office cannot be called a complete TQM agency, pockets of the TQM philosophy exist. In times past, like many agencies, the deputies of the Collin County Sheriff's Office could disregard a call or could be told not to respond by a supervisor. However, within the past five years, a policy of all calls will be answered regardless of the apparent nature of the call, including chronic false alarms. This has lead to fewer citizen complaints and has decreased response times.

Sections of the Operations Division, by their nature are currently TQM sections. Community service sections such as Crime Prevention, Drug Abuse Resistance Education, and Health and Safety currently operate under the TQM concept. Officers in these sections require little supervision and work on projects the officers see fit. The officers in these sections have a higher morale than traditional sections, have a high rate of work output, and have few problems carrying out their tasks. The officers in these sections tend to show more initiative and creativity than officers in other sections.

The potential of TQM in an agency with an elected executive can appear exciting. The citizens have a more responsive and cost efficient agency. The elected official is perceived as a true leader who has the concerns of the voters at heart. The effectiveness of the agency increases while budgets remain the same or decrease. The officers have more input into working conditions and take pride in what they do. While TQM is an experiment in governmental management, if properly implemented, it is a win-win situation for everyone concerned.

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