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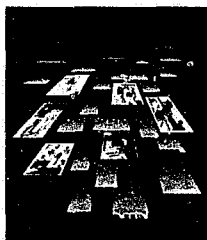
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Cover: In order to combat violent crime problems effectively, today's police officers must be properly trained and educated.

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William S. Sessions, Director

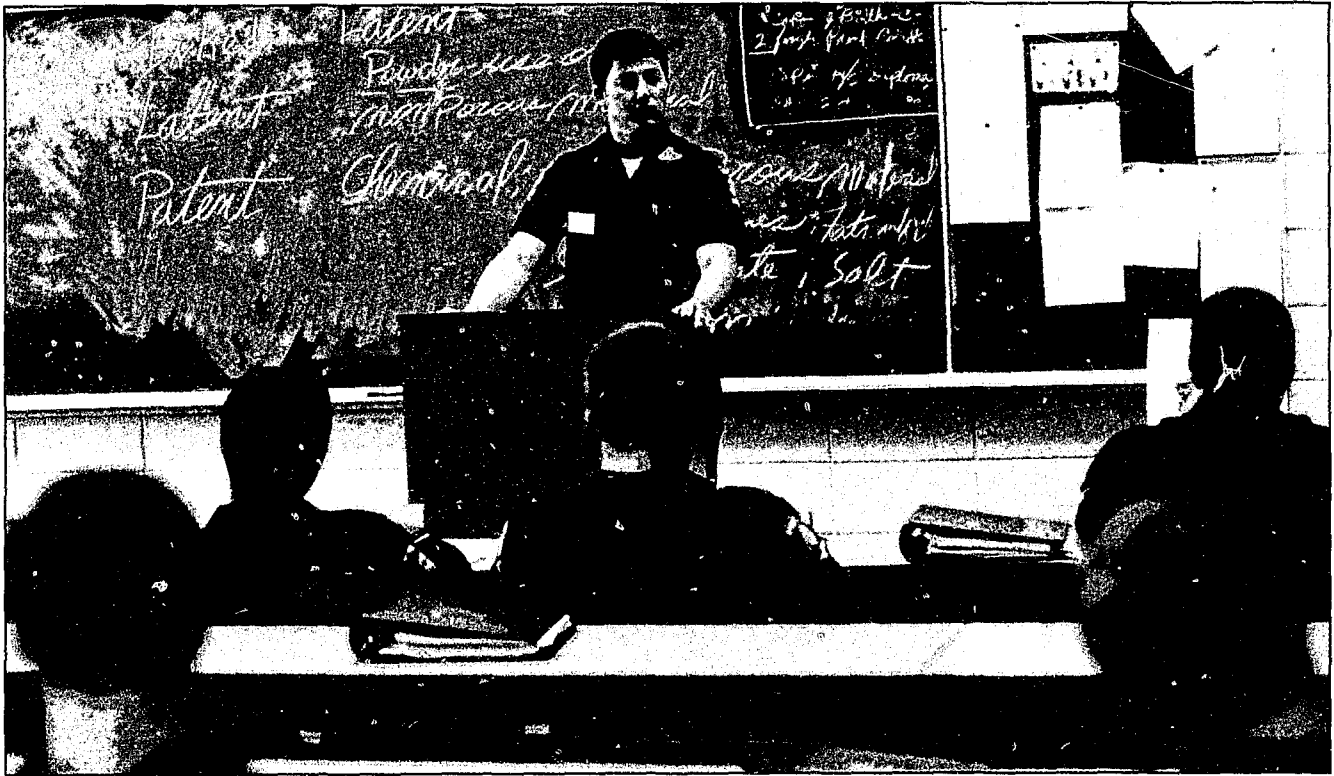
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Police Management Training A National Survey

By
LARRY D. ARMSTRONG and
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There is widespread belief that effective law enforcement training generally helps to produce a higher caliber of police officer. This view is strongly supported by the fact that training activities in police agencies across the country have increased significantly in the past 2 decades. A major impetus for increased officer training efforts appears to have been *The Report of the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice*.¹ This report, published in 1967, strongly suggests that effective officer training is

a critical component that influences an officer's long-term performance and success. In addition, 65% of all active officers in the United States have some college credits, while roughly 25% are college graduates.² The indication, then, is that U.S. police officers are better educated and trained than ever before.

With regard to management training, most police administrators in the United States are well aware of the FBI's National Academy Program, as well as the other prestigious management training courses offered nationwide. These programs

serve a variety of management training needs, but most agencies also find it necessary to develop and present management training within their individual departments.

The management training practices of major U.S. police agencies have largely been an unknown quantity. While progressive, individual departments are thought to offer extensive management training, the content and nature of these programs are not widely known. At the same time, many police agencies operate in isolation, in terms of knowing how other police depart-

ments address the issue of police management training.

As a result, when considering the issue of police management training, a number of questions emerge. Has training for police managers kept pace at the same level? Are police managers being trained to manage a more-sophisticated work force effectively? Are police managers being trained to confront and deal with the myriad of social and budgetary pressures facing law enforcement agencies in the 1990s? What are the negative consequences for failing to conduct police management training?

To learn more about the status of police management training in the United States, we designed a research project to determine what are the current management training practices in local agencies across the country. This article presents an overview of what we learned from the research conducted.

The Project

To begin this research project, we surveyed 144 police departments across the United States, including the two largest police agencies in each State, based on the number of sworn officers. The questionnaire used in this survey was designed to assess a department's recruit training, inservice training, first-line supervisory training, and middle-management and executive training.

In addition, respondents were asked to list the problems their agencies would experience if management training was not conducted. The survey also requested demographic data from each department (e.g., city population, staffing

levels, etc.). Of the 144 surveys distributed, 123 were returned, with an overall response rate of 85.4%.

First-Line Supervisor's Training

The results indicated that 97% of the police agencies surveyed provide inhouse supervisory training to newly promoted officers and that 78% of these agencies make the training mandatory. In addition, this training was conducted prior to or at the time of promotion into first-line supervisory ranks 51% of the time and after promotion in 49% of the cases.

The subjects most frequently taught in the first-line supervisor's courses were supervisory techniques (95%), use of the disciplinary process (92%), counseling techniques (80%), employee evaluation and review (79%), and motivational techniques (73%). Other

subjects included management theory (68%), handling employee grievances and complaints (64%), supervisory report writing (63%), EEOC guidelines and affirmative action (62%), department rules and regulations (55%), police planning (52%), and departmental personal harassment policy (52%).

All agencies reported using their own officers as trainers in these programs, while 78% stated that they also sought the assistance of other instructors to teach such subjects as management theory, stress management, affirmative action/EEO, labor relations, legal issues, and report writing. Principally, these instructors were college professors, community professionals, and lawyers.

There was wide variance on the amount of time allotted for first-line supervisor's training among



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responding departments. Eighty-three percent of the departments require a minimum of 25 hours, 37% require at least 40 hours, and 23% require over 65 hours. In terms of evaluating first-line supervisor's training, 66% of the departments use a formal evaluation procedure, while 34% do not conduct a formal evaluation. According to the survey, the methods most frequently used to evaluate training effectiveness include reaction by participants (85%), evaluation by trainers (34%), evaluation by superiors (32%), and evaluation by peers (14%).

Middle-Management and Executive Training

When contrasting middle-management and executive-level training practices with first-line supervisory training, survey results showed that 81% of the departments provide

- 42% stated they were unsure of why they did not provide training;
- 23% stated it was due to a lack of funds;
- 13% believed it was not needed; and
- 13% stated it was an administrative decision not to do so.

There appears to be no correlation between the size of the police agency and management training availability. Only two agencies with city populations under 100,000 were in the category that did not afford management training. The nontraining agencies averaged 390,000 residents.

The subject areas most frequently presented in higher-level management training include management strategy (77%), budgeting (70%), management by objectives

(31%), community professionals (30%), and department administrators (25%).

Participants are typically evaluated on their performance after attending management training by formal supervisory appraisal (39%), written exam (22%), peer appraisal (9%), subordinate appraisal (7%), combination of techniques (8%), or not at all (16%). In addition, departments reported that 90% of police managers participating in higher-level management training considered it to be a worthwhile experience, which suggests that training beyond the supervisory level is not only needed but also appreciated.

Consequences for Failure to Train

In response to open-ended questions concerning the problems associated with not properly training management personnel, respondents held strong opinions, with a surprising level of consensus. The primary anticipated effects included the following:

- 64% admitted that the department's overall effectiveness would be reduced;
- 60% cited that disciplinary problems would increase;
- 48% stated there would be a loss of leadership in the department;
- 43% stated that supervisory development would be stifled;
- 43% believed there would be an increase in lawsuits and EEOC complaints against the police department;

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Respondents were steadfast in their beliefs that the absence of training for police management personnel creates negative consequences....

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an opportunity for managerial training, while 19% do not. Of those providing advanced management training, 37% provide inhouse training programs, while 63% send their managers outside the department for this training. The most frequently cited reasons for not training higher ranking officers were as follows:

(63%), labor negotiations and contract administration (63%), administration of discipline (58%), news media relations (55%), police planning (52%), and manpower allocation and patrol strategy (45%). Various sources provide this training, including State agencies (51%), contract agencies (44%), the FBI (44%), training department staffs

- 42% stated there would be a decrease in morale of department employees;
- 41% believed misuse of manpower and financial resources would occur;
- 40% believed supervisory effectiveness would decrease;
- 34% said there would be an increase in labor problems and grievances; and
- 27% indicated that lower productivity would result.

Respondents were steadfast in their beliefs that the absence of training for police management personnel creates negative consequences for all parties concerned and ultimately an agency's ability to serve the needs of the public.

Commentary

Law enforcement agencies across the country are being asked daily to do more with fewer resources. This requires that they work smarter, not just harder. And, it appears that training is being used as a strategy to enhance the effectiveness of police management personnel so that they can keep pace with an increasingly educated police workforce.

Our study indicates that first-line supervisor's training in major police agencies is perceived to be very important, as 97% of the departments surveyed make it available and many make it mandatory. However, while middle-management and executive training is gaining popularity, only the most progressive departments are designing, developing, and presenting tailor-made programs to their managers.

Management Training Practices

First-line Supervisors

- 97% provide inhouse training; 78% make the training mandatory
- 83% require a minimum of 25 hours
- 78% use outside instructors, in addition to department officer/trainers
- 66% use a formal evaluation process of training procedures
- 51% conduct supervisory training prior to or at the time of promotion

Middle-Management and Executive Training

- 90% of the managers considered higher-level management training a worthwhile experience
- 81% provide an opportunity for training
- 63% send managers outside the department

In addition, there are vast differences in the sizes of agencies that conduct upper-level training on an inhouse basis. Therefore, it can only be assumed that the administration of the police agency, regardless of size, has a dominant influence on the nature of police management training programs within an agency and the willingness to develop such programs.

While the majority of agencies send their higher-level managers to management training programs, the survey determined that 19% do not make such training available for their upper-level managers. This includes a number of our Nation's largest agencies.

For obvious reasons, this is a disturbing finding. Primarily, the performance of upper-level manag-

ers is critical to the overall success of any agency. And, since training is a performance-enhancing practice, it can only increase the likelihood of success for middle managers and executives.

In addition, those at the top of the organization must lead by example. How, then, can a department deem training important for first-line supervisors, while relegating it to the "back burner" for those in the upper echelon of the department?³ Surely, this does not convey to those in supervisory positions the need to learn and to employ good management practices.

The survey results also provide another interesting perspective. A review of the subject areas most frequently taught to first-line supervisors reveals a strong orientation

toward both human resource management (e.g., supervision, motivation, discipline, counseling, grievance handling, and performance evaluation) and technical supervisory issues (e.g., report writing, EEOC/affirmative action, rules and regulations, planning, and harassment policies). These findings suggest that current supervisory training is aimed at developing the skills necessary to handle both people and procedures properly. Perhaps, the issues covered in current police management training is in response to dealing with a more-sophisticated workforce and the social and budgetary pressures of the 1990s.

Middle-management and executive-level training topics appear to reflect the need for professional management skills in the upper echelons of modern police agencies. Such issues as budgeting, management by objectives (MBO), labor relations, news media relations, planning, and manpower allocation are skills that can be developed more rapidly (with less "trial and error") when presented through formal training programs.⁴

Upper-level police managers must develop executive skills to lead their agencies effectively. While no agency that participated in the survey reported covering all of these subjects in their training, we firmly believe the survey findings offer a good cross-section of the type of topics that should be covered in police management training.

The ramifications of not conducting effective training for agency management personnel include a variety of issues that run the gamut

of modern police agency concerns. Respondents to this survey strongly believe that management training is an extremely useful strategy to enhance police manager performance and to avoid a host of potential agency problems. Written comments in this survey provide strong testimony that failing to develop a progressive training philosophy and program for management personnel can only limit management effectiveness and threaten both day-to-day operations and long-term strategic plans.

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Conclusion

Most police agencies in the United States are convinced that effective officer training produces better police officers.⁵ It also appears that there is strong support for the belief that management training produces a higher caliber of police administrator. At a time when crime rates are up, tax dollars are tight, and agencies are working hard to realign resources with changing priorities, effective police management training is a necessity.

Any agency would be well served to take a long and hard look at how it trains its management personnel. While training alone is not a panacea, it is a highly viable method to enhance both the success of individual police managers and the agencies for which they work. To ignore the issue of police management training is only an invitation to a host of problems at a time when most agencies already have more than enough to handle.

In closing, one additional comment is warranted. There was an underlying theme in survey responses that strongly suggests that police management training should not be a "one shot deal." Rather, training should be an ongoing process that is used to sharpen and update skills of police managers at all levels to enhance management development. Thus, training must be looked upon as not simply a cost but rather as an investment in an agency's long-term viability and success in serving the needs of its constituents.

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Footnotes

¹ *The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society* (Report of the Kerner Commission), 1967, 285.

² H.R. 4184, 101st Cong., 2d Sess. (1990) (statement of Rep. Edward F. Feighan of Ohio).

³ Kenneth Wexley and Gary Latham, *Developing and Training Human Resources in Organizations* (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1981).

⁴ Wayne Pace, Phillip Smith, and Gordon Mills, *Human Resource Development* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1991).

⁵ Gary Pfister, "Outcomes of Laboratory Training for Police Officers," *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 31, 1975, 115-121.