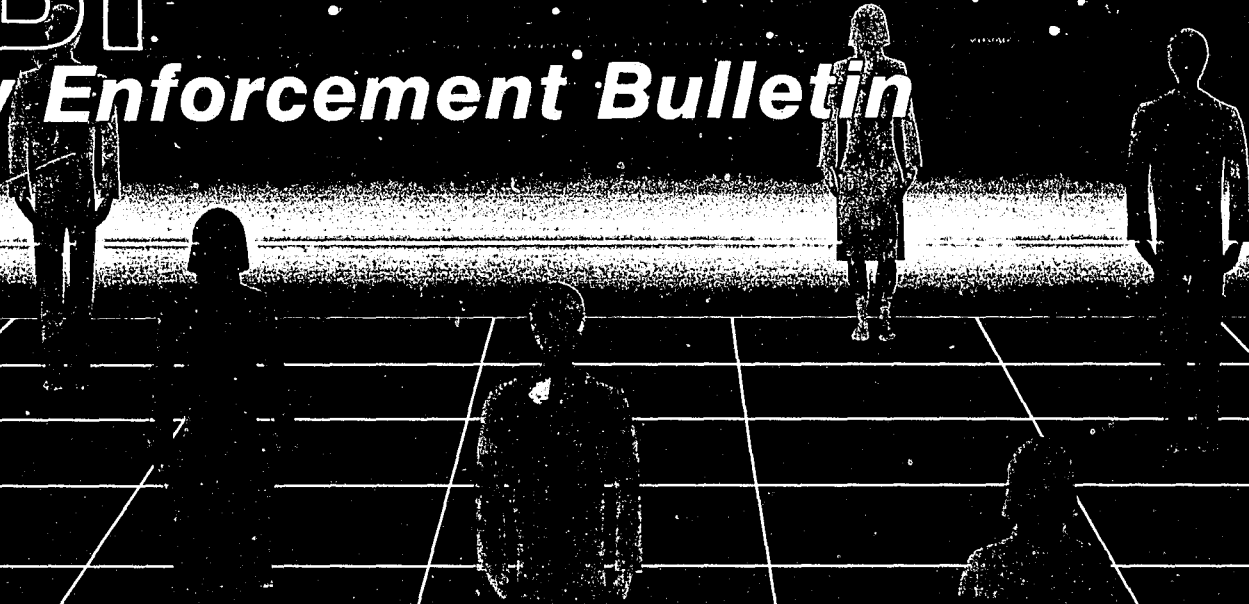


FBI

April 1992

Law Enforcement Bulletin



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U.S. Department of Justice
National Institute of Justice

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Police Management



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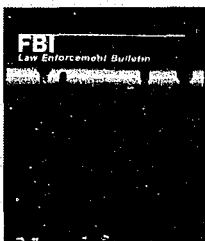
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Cover: Effective management techniques are essential to the success of any organization, including law enforcement agencies. This issue focuses on different police management issues.

United States Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Washington, DC 20535

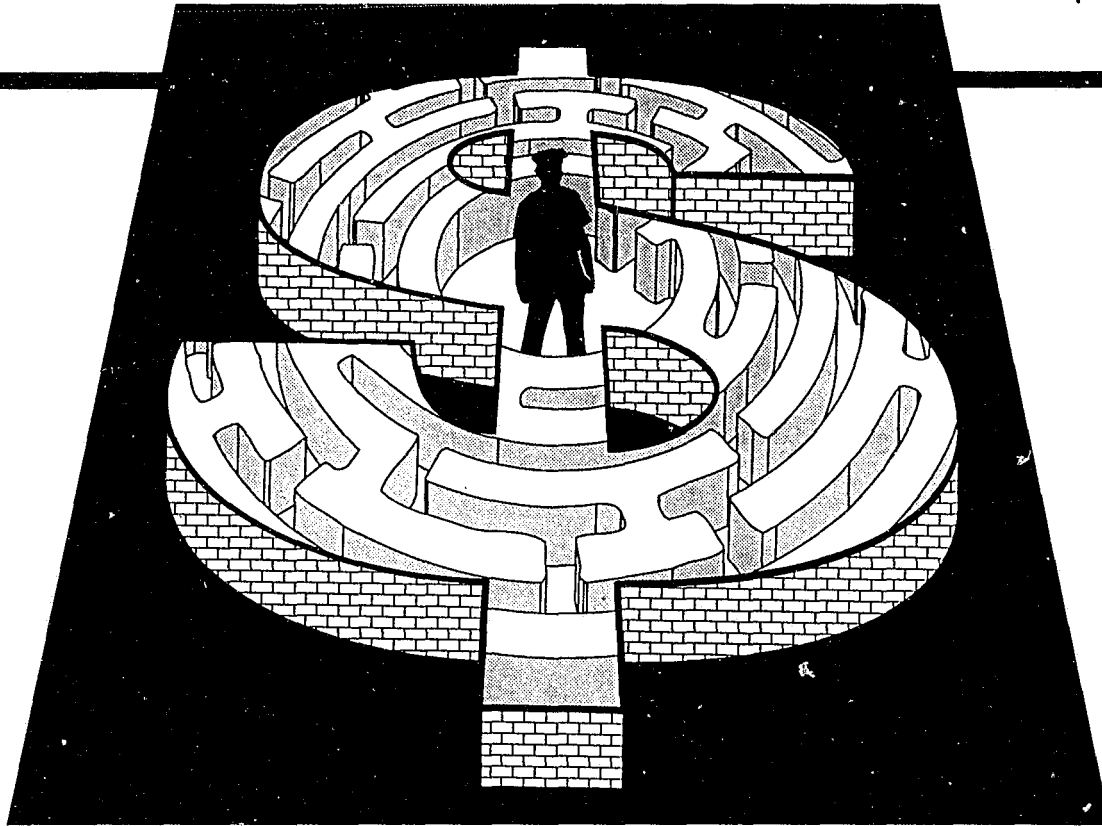
William S. Sessions, Director

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The Attorney General has determined that the publication of this periodical is necessary in the transaction of the public business required by law of the Department of Justice. Use of funds for printing this periodical has been approved by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Editor—Dr. Stephen D. Gladis
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The *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* (ISSN-0014-5688) is published monthly by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, 10th and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20535. Second-Class postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington, D.C. 20535.



Reducing Costs in Law Enforcement Operations

By

RICHARD M. AYRES, M.P.A.

With the United States battling a recession, unemployment, and alarming increases in violent and drug-related crimes, many cities, counties, and States face the dilemma of cutback management. Law enforcement agencies nationwide continue to examine ways to streamline their operations without laying off officers—managing with less while still fulfilling their mission of serving the community and protecting life and property.

Gone are the days when the traditional response of meeting crime control problems and community service needs was to hire more of-

ficers and purchase more equipment. Gone, too, are the days when salary and benefits could be arbitrarily increased. Gone, indeed, are the ample budgets that often permitted managers to use intuition and snap judgments—even to cover up administrative mistakes without undue embarrassment or concern. Looking back, a manager's job was much easier when budgets were fat.

Effective management is vastly different in today's difficult economic times. Now, there is a critical need for law enforcement managers to promote efficiency and effectiveness. As this almost impossible responsibility of providing more serv-

ice with less funding falls upon the chief of police or sheriff, it can be easy to simply tighten the administrative screws and allow the burden to fall on the employees. However, this shortsightedness may well lead to resentment, labor/management conflict, or serious morale and job satisfaction problems.¹

To avoid these difficulties, law enforcement managers should involve their officers, employee associations, and unions to resolve the urgent management issues of the 1990s. This forces employees to accept more responsibility for shaping the future and may reduce their resistance to cost-cutting measures.



“
...there is a critical need for law enforcement managers to promote efficiency and effectiveness.
”

Mr. Ayres, a former Chief of the Management Science Unit at the FBI Academy, is currently a management consultant in Fredericksburg, Virginia.

Given the fact that employees frequently have firsthand knowledge of how to best cut operational costs, their involvement has never been more critical. This article discusses tactics law enforcement managers can take to come to grips with cutback management, while upholding efficient and effective police services.

Case in Point

Recently, the Michigan State Police needed to abolish numerous positions in order to meet mandated budget reductions. This required the agency to implement a contractual reduction in force or institute layoff procedures, which would result in significant numbers of members either being demoted in rank and/or relocated. The relocation factor also applied because of a seniority bumping provision in the department's collective bargaining contract.

However, in an effort to avoid significant grievance action, litigation, and the emotional trauma associated with the threat of layoff and/or demotion, the department ob-

tained the assistance and cooperation of its troopers' union. The department's management invited the union to assist in the administration of the contract and to be a partner in the actual reduction-in-force process. Union officials were asked to manage telephones, assist in verifying seniority lists, and be available to answer specific questions from bargaining unit members confronted with certain bump options.

As a result of their participation, union members developed an appreciation for the emotional trauma, the significant complexity, and the inherent difficulty in their mutual effort to interpret the contract language in a practical, efficient manner. When the contract was accomplished, few grievances were experienced, no litigation was encountered, and management received expressions of appreciation from the union.²

Cooperation and Sensitivity

As this case illustrates, both managers and employees need to cooperate and remain sensitive to the feelings and sentiments of the

work force in order to implement successfully the types of changes necessary to downsize or streamline law enforcement services. Thus, for managers, the following steps are critical:

- Ask employees for ideas about how to cut costs
- Maintain high visibility (Managers should be available for both formal and informal discussions with employees to facilitate organizational assessment, as well as to strengthen morale. Also, when employees are involved, either individually or through their organizations, their level of awareness is raised, and there is usually an increased readiness for change.)
- Determine how other departments are cutting costs (Law enforcement executives struggling with cutback measures should not hesitate to tap the rich reservoirs of experience available from other agencies faced with the same dilemma. Reinventing the wheel can be costly, and many mistakes can be avoided by learning from the successes and failures of other counties and municipalities.)

NEI Survey

As mentioned, sharing ideas on how to cut costs is critical. Therefore, to facilitate idea-sharing among agencies, the National Executive Institute (NEI) recently queried more than 100 law enforcement executives in the United States and Canada on ways their agencies either increased productivity or cut

costs effectively during the past year.

Most respondents applauded the NEI for its timely undertaking of such a study, as they were presently facing decreasing tax revenues, rising costs, and a down-turned economy—all of which placed greater demands on departmental services. Further, because nearly all departments were in the process of attempting to implement major cost-cutting measures without adversely impacting the quality of services, they were eager to share their experiences.

The ideas submitted covered the entire spectrum of law enforcement services and reflected a wide range of creativity and imagination. Many departments provided lists of ideas of cost-saving measures implemented recently, while others sent information only on their most effective method of reducing costs during the past year.

Upon reviewing the survey results, the NEI found the areas that provided the greatest opportunity for cutting costs involve:

- Overtime
- Vehicles
- Volunteers
- Civilian participation
- Operational streamlining/downsizing
- Automation
- Reducing false alarms
- Increased use of Federal forfeiture funds

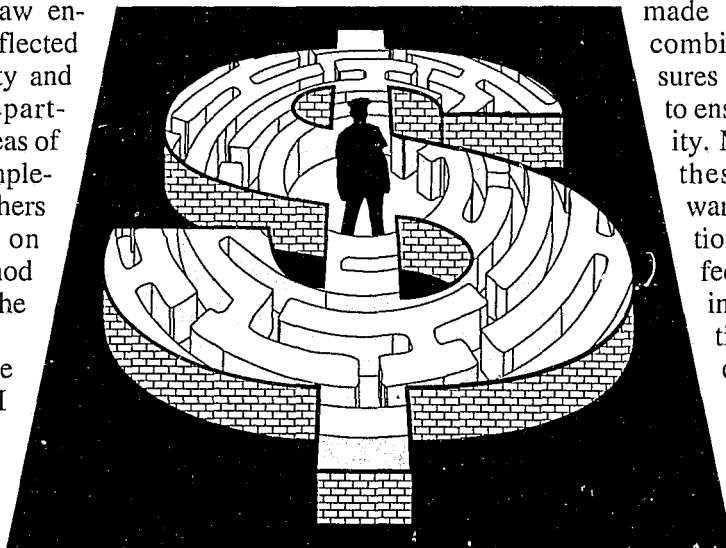
- Service fees
- Subcontracting for services.

Specific examples on how police departments have cut costs in each of these areas are available through the FBI Academy.³ Each example contains a description of the process, the savings and benefits derived, and the point of contact for further information.

These examples provide a valuable exchange of information on cost-cutting measures currently being employed in the United States and Canada. And, as more agencies are confronted with shrinking

tional effectiveness. For example, the Chief of Police in Orlando, Florida, recommends developing a "Strategic Long-range Plan" (SLRP) to solidify the police department's vision and long-range strategies. For the Orlando Police Department, the SLRP not only analyzes trends and the city's future direction but also documents how the department must respond to growth and other external factors. The SLRP also ensures that every attempt is made to maintain an acceptable level of police service for the next 15 to 20 years and beyond.

Numerous departments have made other recommendations combining cost-cutting measures and community policing to ensure long-term productivity. Many of the managers in these departments also warned against the temptation to apply simple, ineffective solutions that may, in fact, be knee-jerk reactions to whatever ails the organization at the moment. Additionally, before cost-cutting programs are instituted, managers should also examine all of the interrelated aspects that



budgets and increasing demands for service, ideas will become even more vital to law enforcement managers.

Cost Cutting: One Positive Step

In focusing on cost cutting as a necessary means to efficient management, law enforcement leaders should understand that this effort, although a critical one, is only one step toward long-term organiza-

tion contribute to the department's problems, such as ineffective management skills, poorly functioning work groups, bureaucratic red tape, and reward systems that ignore performance.

Conclusion

Today's law enforcement leaders who tackle the problem of managing with less will be truly successful only when they recognize that

this issue, much like violent crime, illegal drugs, and community unrest, is one of leadership that will require long-term commitment toward planned organizational and institutional change. Excellent law enforcement leaders must believe in what they are doing and must combine these beliefs with actions. The most consistently described quality of excellent leadership can be characterized by one word—commitment. Commitment can be seen as a powerful combination of beliefs and actions.

Managers must be committed to the customer, the department, themselves, employees, and the task at hand. Separately, these commitments are extremely important to effective leadership. Together, they form the essential framework for long-term achievement of excellence.⁴

Today, there are no quick fixes. Only through genuine dedication and commitment can law enforcement managers provide effective leadership to the department and positive service to citizens. ■

Endnotes

¹ Nancy K. Austin, "No Panic Managing for Tough Times," *Working Women*, May 1991.

² Gary Maher, "Layoffs: A Sign of the Times—Making a Smooth Transition," North American Police Labor Relations Association, Spring 1991.

³ For specific examples on how various law enforcement agencies have cut costs, please contact Special Agent Edward J. Tully, Unit Chief of the Education and Communication Arts Unit, at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia 22135.

⁴ Keilty, Goldsmith, and Boone, *Building Commitments*, 1984.