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Police Management



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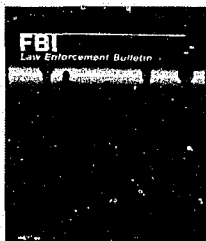
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Cover: Effective management techniques are essential to the success of any organization, including law enforcement agencies. This issue focuses on different police management issues.

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The Law Enforcement Executive

A Formula for Success



By
JAMES D. SEWELL, Ph.D.

During the past 20 years, significant changes in the theory and practice of law enforcement took place. These changes included major technological advances, especially in computers and communications, improvement in management techniques and a greater administrative sensitivity for personnel and the communities they serve. They also involved an increased level of education among newly hired officers and improved training for recruits and inservice personnel. In addition, there has been a marked recognition of the professional nature and requirements of the job, and with that, an increased public

awareness of police needs, especially in the area of salary and benefits.

Even in light of the changes that have already occurred, greater changes than have ever been experienced in law enforcement can be anticipated. Futurists project that:

- By 1995, political terrorism is expected to emerge as a major problem in the United States
- By 1997, state-of-the-art high technology will be used routinely in combating crime
- By 1999, urban unrest and civil disorder characteristic of the 1960s and 1970s will take place throughout the United

States, but with increased intensity

- By 2000, lawsuits will successfully demonstrate inadequacies of and inaccuracies in police computerized files
- By 2000, crimes committed through the use of high technology will become so sophisticated that police will be unable to do more than take initial reports.¹

Weathering these and other unanticipated changes in society and criminal justice, as well as directing law enforcement to greater heights of accomplishment and professionalism, will place strong demands on

the leadership and management of law enforcement agencies. Therefore, as they approach the complexity and change of the future, law enforcement professionals need to move from the dichotomy artificially separating the concepts of leadership and management and into a new concept—the law enforcement executive.

THE SUCCESSFUL EXECUTIVE

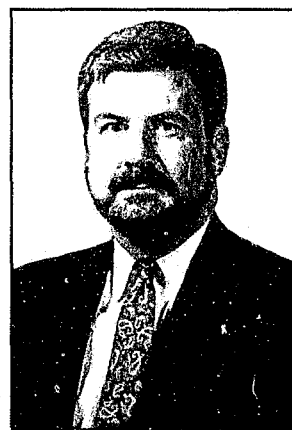
In their classic work on leaders, Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus indicated that “managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right thing. The difference may be summarized as activities of vision and judgment—effectiveness—versus activities of mastering routine—efficiency.”²² Similarly, Kotter advised that “management is about coping with complexity...Leadership by contrast is about coping with change.”²³ Considering this, one might conceptualize the law enforcement *executive* as an individual who does right things right and who possesses “the mind of a manager, the soul of a leader.”²⁴

The model of a successful executive is best defined by a blend of abilities, characteristics, and traits acquired through education, training, and real-world experience. This includes leadership, management, recognition and understanding of the community, a well-rounded understanding of the profession, and allegiance and loyalty to the organization.

Leadership

What makes a leader? This question has haunted the history of

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...*success...depends on the executive's knowledge and understanding of, and responsiveness to, community ethics, mores, direction, and economy.*
”



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public administration. As early as 1951, a number of traits emerged as important indicators of leadership. These traits, identified through research, included mental ability, interests and aptitudes, the ability to speak and write fluently, maturity, personal motivation, social orientation and skills, and administrative skills.⁵

Further research⁶ identified four types of human-handling skills embodied by the leaders studied:

- 1) Attention through vision, i.e., creating focus (an agenda) within an organization
- 2) Meaning through communication—“the capacity to influence and organize meaning for members of the organization”⁷
- 3) Trust through positioning, which involves the ability of subordinates to rely on their leader and which results from “the set of actions necessary to implement the vision of the leader”⁸

- 4) The deployment of self through positive self-regard.

This last human-handling skill relates to several key concepts. Leaders must demonstrate the ability to accept people as they are and have the capacity to approach relationships and problems in terms of the present rather than the past. They must also treat those who are close to them with the same courteous attention extended to strangers and casual acquaintances and trust others, even if the risk seems great, without needing or looking for constant approval and recognition from others.⁹

The leadership element necessary for a successful law enforcement executive, and supported by research, consists of a number of components—vision, creativity, energy, credibility, values, integrity, and mentoring. Vision is the mental image of the possible and desirable future state of the police organization. It is the ability to inspire everyone in the organization toward the same image and to empower them

to act in its fulfillment. Robert Kennedy captured the essence of vision with the following quote by George Bernard Shaw, "Some men see things as they are and ask 'why?' I dream things that never were and ask 'why not?'"

Using creativity, the leader "draws outside the dots" to implement that vision. It is the willingness and the courage to be innovative, to try new approaches to old problems, and to attack new issues and problems, even before they have been identified by one's peers. As Miller noted, "Flexibility, challenge, the free and frank flow of ideas and information, are necessary to promote creativity."¹⁰

The energy of the leader is the driving force that keeps the espoused ideas in motion. Energy is also the willingness, desire, and need to put the strength of one's vision and personality on display through long hours and extreme conditions. It is a vigor that is self-perpetuating, self-replenishing, and to the leader, self-rewarding.

Credibility entails the art of telling the truth and the skill of being believed. It is based on strongly held personal and professional values, beliefs, and principles and is demonstrated by the integrity to exemplify those traits as an individual and as a leader of an organization.

Finally, mentoring is another essential leadership characteristic of a successful law enforcement executive. Mentoring centers on the ability to recognize, develop, and nurture leadership skills and abilities in one's subordinates. It is a willingness to empower and to allow emerging leaders to exercise

their often newly discovered abilities and roles. Through mentoring, future leaders have the opportunity to "actually try to lead, to take a risk, and to learn from both triumphs and failures."¹¹



Management

Theodore Levitt, who is quoted by Zaleznik, describes several essential features of the managerial culture. Essentially, he states, "Management consists of the rational assessment of a situation and the systematic selection of goals and purposes; the systematic development of strategies to achieve these goals, the marshalling of the required resources; the rational design, organization, direction, and control of the activities required to attain the selected purposes; and, finally, the motivating and rewarding of people to do the work."¹²

However, the exercise of leadership, i.e., the movement of an agency from vision to reality, is difficult if one cannot survive current

management issues. Consequently, the leader's vision for the future must have its foundation in an understanding and successful management of issues of the present.

To be successful, police executives must demonstrate the traditional management skills necessary to deal with day-to-day organizational and operational problems and activities. For the most part, administrators learn these traditional management skills—planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting¹³—while preparing to be managers. These skills encompass communication abilities, both verbal and written, which the executive uses to educate, persuade, and innovate. In addition, they include decisionmaking skills exercised in a timely fashion, but even more importantly, the willingness to stand firmly behind those decisions.

Recognition and Understanding of the Community

The activities of law enforcement executives occur within a framework larger than the individual organization. To be successful, these individuals must recognize the reciprocal relationship between the community and the law enforcement agency's philosophy, mission, and operations. At the same time, executives must not underestimate the economic conditions of the community, as well as the impact on the resources available to the agency.

For the most part, success—and ultimately survival—depends on the executive's knowledge and understanding of, and responsiveness

to, community ethics, mores, directions, and economy. In particular, executives must be sensitive to changing trends and issues. Ultimately, their effectiveness will be gauged by their ability to balance community, political, and departmental values, needs, and demands.

That balance necessitates an understanding of the complexities of the political environment within a community. Law enforcement executives must be able to "play the political game." And in doing so, they must recognize the limits of the playing field; the static, yet demanding, nature of the unwritten rules; and the identities and skills of other players.

For most, it means making the transition from often-simplistic and straightforward departmental politics to the more complex and changing community politics, with its wide range of issues, rules, and players. Throughout it all, executives must face the reality that their choice is often between political effectiveness and moral "rightness," and making the correct choice among alternatives, is often the most demanding and dangerous part of their professional lives.

Finally, current law enforcement administration appears to be going through an era of "vaga-bond" chiefs, those who have neither grown up in the community nor developed through the ranks of the department. Especially for these executives, the highest degree of success depends on their willingness to become involved in community activities and organizations, to display active commitment to the community, and to be viewed as a commu-

nity force, not just a law enforcement official.

Understanding the Profession

Too often, efforts to define leadership abilities and management skills fail to include the need for understanding the profession. Yet, knowledge of contemporary methods, techniques, and trends within the profession is critical for the successful law enforcement executive.

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That knowledge should invite an active participation in professional organizations, and even more necessary, continuing professional education and growth.

Equally critical to success is well-rounded preparation for the executive position. No longer can the law enforcement executive afford to be a "top cop" or a long-tenured bureaucrat. Instead, proper professional development requires an understanding of the future without a narrow law enforcement focus. This translates into a knowledge and understanding of trends, styles, and innovations in other professions and technical fields, as well as society at large. It also implies an ability to analyze and synthesize nonlaw en-

forcement approaches into what are traditionally perceived as law enforcement problems.

As part of this preparation, law enforcement executives need to understand the unique nature of law enforcement as a community function. Unlike most other public "servants," the responsibilities of this profession include both service and protection. The successful definition and delivery of these complex and often-competing expectations are major distinctions between the law enforcement executive and other public and private sector colleagues.

Allegiance and Loyalty

The Police Chief's Survival Guide advises that to be a successful leader, a police chief should:

"Be supportive of your department....Never criticize your department publicly. Acknowledge mistakes the department has made and take action to correct them, but don't make sweeping indictments of your officers. Be willing to defend your department publicly when it is right. You weaken your support internally if you can never find an occasion to be a champion for your department to its critics."¹⁴

The issue of organizational loyalty is rarely addressed in literature related to either leadership or management. Yet, especially in the police subculture, the perception of loyalty to the department and its personnel is important to an executive's success. Inherent in this loyalty are an understanding of the

unique nature of the organization and a recognition of the critical role the chief executive plays, both internally and externally, as the embodiment of the agency, its values, and its direction. Loyalty also encompasses an ability to balance the often opposing roles of change agent and innovator with that of organizational representative.

CONCLUSION

Contemporary management literature identifies a variety of characteristics that are present in the successful leader or manager. Too often, however, such literature fosters an almost artificial distinction between the two types of individuals and leads readers to believe that leadership and management are almost mutually exclusive.

The demands of the law enforcement agency of today and the complexity of society and law enforcement in the future require individuals who can merge and expand the concept of both leader and manager. It is the law enforcement *executive* who will successfully combine the best characteristics of the leader and the manager with a real-world understanding of and ability to deal effectively with the community, profession, and the individual organization. ■

Endnotes

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³ John P. Kotter, "What Leaders Really Do," *Harvard Business Review*, 1990, p. 104.

⁴ Craig R. Hickman, *Mind of a Manager, Soul of a Leader* (New York: John Wiley & Son, 1990).

⁵ Cecil E. Goode, "Significant Research on Leadership," *Personnel*, 1951, pp. 344-348.

⁶ Supra note 2, p. 46.

⁷ Ibid. p. 39.

⁸ Ibid. p. 46.

⁹ Ibid. pp. 66-67.

¹⁰ Lawrence M. Miller, *Barbarians to Bureaucrats* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1989), p. 176.

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¹² Abraham Zaleznik, "Managers and Leaders: Are They Different?" *Harvard Business Review*, 1977, p. 68.

¹³ Charles R. Swanson, Leonard Territo, and Robert W. Taylor, *Police Administration: Structures, Processes, and Behavior* (New York: MacMillan, 1988), p. 61.

¹⁴ Michael S. Scott, *Managing for Success: A Police Chief's Survival Guide* (Washington, DC: Police Executive Research Forum, 1986), p. 57.