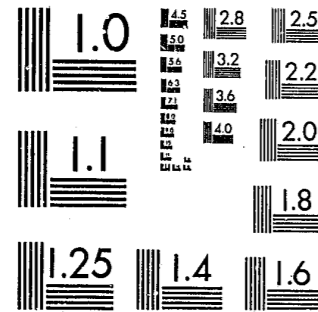


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Summertime Cops

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Measuring a Police Organization's Effectiveness:

A Case for Improving Job Satisfaction

By
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Detective Bureau
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One phenomenon of municipal law enforcement is that many administrators and supervisors are oriented toward crisis management. With present recruiting and retention problems, what is needed in the police profession are managers and supervisors who organize for effectiveness. This requires individuals understanding their role and recognizing what motivates their personnel.

Many police administrators and supervisors are more apt to push numerical objectives rather than define or understand reasons for reaching them. Consequently, they measure "tools," such as field interview cards and citations, and totally miss the point and value of management by objectives.

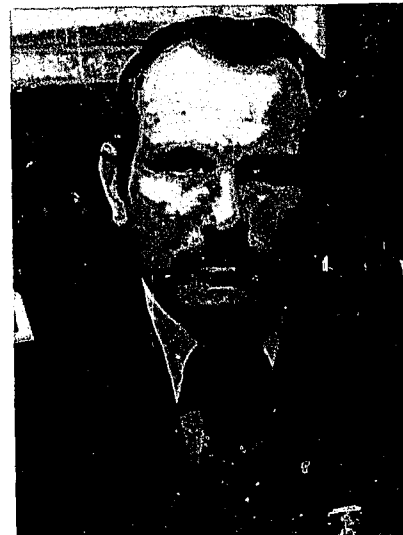
Police professionals do not agree on how to measure the effectiveness of their organizations. However, all of them would agree that whatever measures are used will be influenced in a positive or negative way by the morale of the agency. Morale, in part, has to do with individual job satisfaction, a matter often related to retention.

Many municipal police agencies throughout the United States typically measure productivity and morale of their department based on statistics relating to individual officers, the overall physical appearance of the department and its personnel, or response time to calls for services. These "measurements" do not really measure the overall effectiveness of the police agency. For example, response time in reality is a reflection of the productivity and morale of one division, the patrol division. Individual officer statistics, such as field interrogation cards, citations, and arrests, are also used as indicators of productivity and morale of one division, again the patrol division. The overall image or "appearance" of an agency is usually centered on personnel from one division—those in uniform driving marked police vehicles—the patrol division.

Since late 1978, the management staff of the Culver City Police Department has used three criteria for measuring the effectiveness of its organization—case clearance, morale,



Lieutenant Ericsson



Elwin E. (Ted) Cooke
Chief of Police

and response time. For purposes of this article, response time will not be addressed as it requires separate treatment in specific terms.

Case Clearance

One of the most often neglected, but one of the easiest detectable and least obvious measurements of the effectiveness of any municipal organization, is case clearance. In simplest terms, case clearance is the number of reported crimes versus the number of cases cleared by identifying the persons responsible. This measurement is valuable to each municipal police agency because all work is within the guidelines established by the Uniform Crime Reporting Program.

Since June 11, 1930, when Congress approved legislation recommended by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the FBI has served as the clearinghouse for uniform crime records throughout the United States. The collection of these reports on a nationwide scale is based on the fact that police need to compare certain basic data for local administrative and operational purposes.

The manner in which this information is reported is tantamount to the overall effectiveness of the program nationally. Quality police records are needed and certain minimum standards have been set in the Uniform Crime Reporting Handbook, which details a well-defined policy on case clearance. Those standards are:

1. A permanent written record of each crime is made immediately upon receipt of the complaint. All reports of thefts and attempted thefts are included, regardless of the value of property involved.
2. Staff or headquarters' control exists over the receipt of calls for service to ensure each is promptly recorded and accurately tabulated.
3. An investigative report is made in each case showing fully the details of the offense as alleged by the complainant and as disclosed by the investigation. An effective followup system is used to see that reports are promptly submitted in all cases.
4. All reports are checked to see that the crime classification conforms to the uniform classification of offenses. That is, offenses reported to the UCR Program, regardless of what the offense is called at the local or state level, should conform to the UCR classification of offenses.
5. The offense reports on crimes cleared by arrest or exceptional means are noted as cleared.
6. Arrest records are complete, special care being taken to show the final disposition of the charge.
7. Records are centralized; records and statistical reports are closely supervised by the administrator; periodic inspections are made to see that the rules and regulations of the local agency relative to records and reports are strictly complied with.
8. Statistical reports conform in all respects to the Uniform Crime Reporting standards and regulations.¹

Case clearance can and does reflect productivity, contributes to job satisfaction, and impacts the morale of the entire department. It can be used to make comparisons with adjacent ju-

“Case clearance can and does reflect productivity, contributes to job satisfaction, and impacts the morale of the entire department.”

jurisdictions to determine agency effectiveness. Unfortunately, many agencies use creative figures to show case clearance and mislead the public they serve. When discovered, these distorted clearance rates have serious negative impact on the quality of life in those communities.

Problems Involved with Declining Clearance Rates

In municipal police agencies, members of the detective division have minimal supervision and tend to display good or bad work habits based on previous experience. It would be an understatement to say that members of the patrol division do not always produce thorough, concise reports, which include interviewing all possible witnesses and obtaining fingerprints or other physical evidence whenever possible. Are patrol personnel “report takers” or “preliminary investigators”? How many personnel know the difference?

However, the problem is not with detective or patrol personnel, but with the leadership of the organization. In the absence of leadership, each does the best he can, but many cannot work toward an objective without direction. Officers have to know how they fit into all of the department’s programs. Initial training programs set forth tasks that lead to performance objectives. But task performance objectives must be reinforced constantly to achieve success. Subordinates must grow to believe in themselves. When encouragement is given to develop accuracy and skills, talent is created.

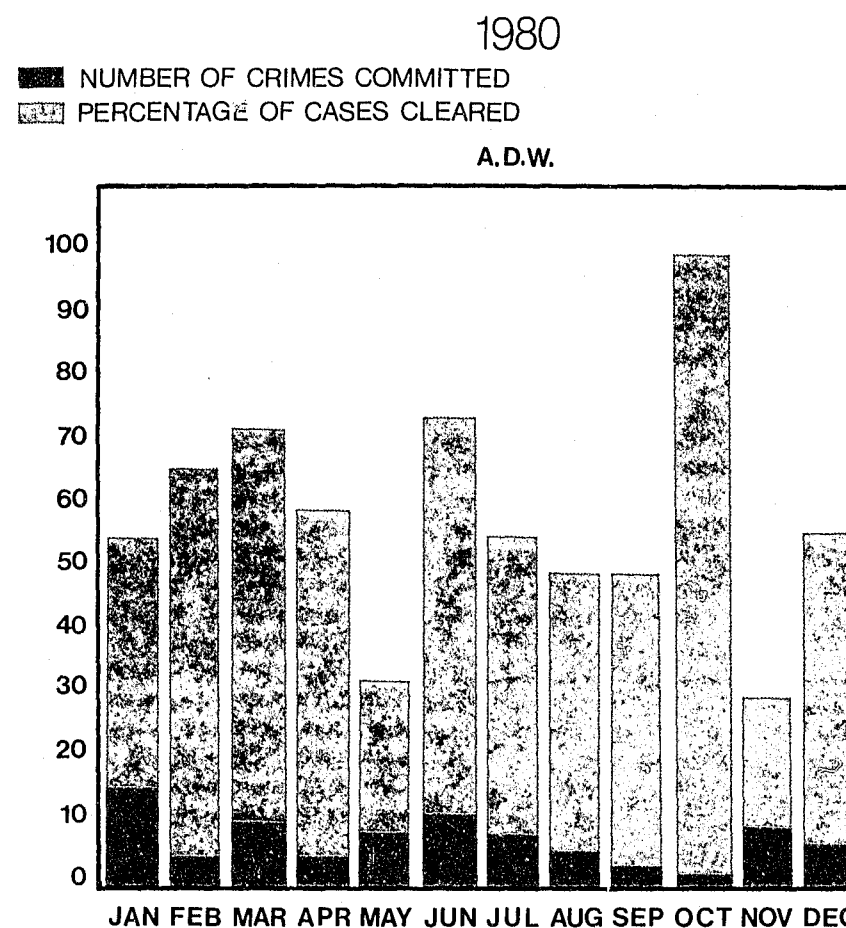
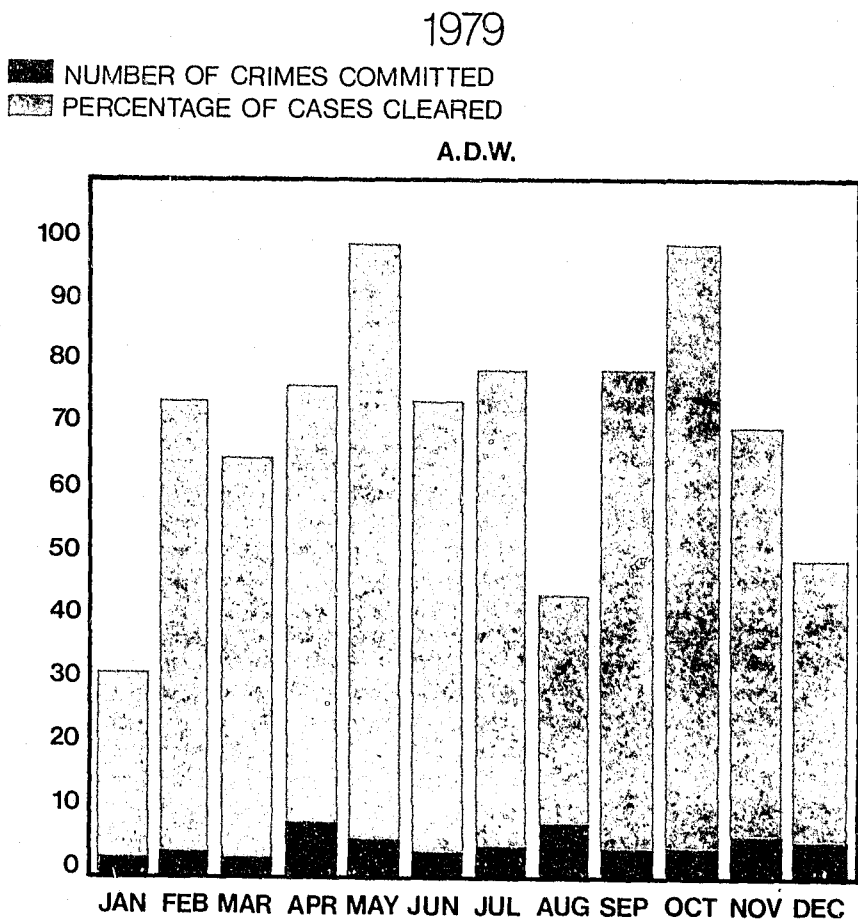
In general, municipal police supervisors keep track of day-to-day statistics and review these statistics occasionally for crime trends, but few supervisors wage a continuing battle on a month-to-month basis with crime

statistics in their jurisdictions. In some instances, the case clearance records of these agencies may be lower than those of adjacent jurisdictions. Unfortunately, this is where some supervisors sit back and do nothing more to fulfill their responsibilities. Again the issue is not with individual officers, for if not properly motivated or directed toward the tasks involved with performance objectives leading to high case clearance records, they miss a great opportunity to achieve basic job

satisfaction—an issue which has a direct impact on morale.

Methods to Improve Case Clearance

Management personnel of the Culver City Police Department became aware of the problems in increasing or maximizing the organization’s effectiveness. Since 1978, three criteria—case clearance, response time, and morale—have been used. Through this experience it was discovered that the most critical measurement of the overall effectiveness of the organization,



from a job enrichment perspective, has been that of case clearance. The morale “spinoff” is obvious.

Figure 1

Control Ledger

For the past 3 years, the department has been measuring its effectiveness by comparing present case clearance percentages with previous ones. (See fig. 1.) To accomplish this, a control ledger is maintained by the detective division. The control ledger offers accountability of individual officers assigned to cases, shows all reports received by the detective division, and insures that all cases are followed up in a timely fashion.

Before forwarding a report to a specific detail, the detective division supervisor logs in the ledger the daily report (DR) number, the type of crime committed, the investigator assigned, and appropriate information in the mis-

cellaneous information column, such as suspects, descriptions, or license numbers. The reports are then distributed to each assigned detail. Any crimes against persons, such as robbery, assault with a deadly weapon, rape, or grand theft require that the victim be contacted within 3 days. All other crimes, with the exception of those without any leads or suspect information, require a 30-day contact. If there are no leads or suspect information, a form letter is sent to the victim indicating receipt of the report. This letter informs the victim of the detective assigned to the case and the report number. It also directs the victim to the person to contact if there are any inquiries and when to do so. The letter is a good public relations device as it lets the victims know that the police department is aware of the crime and has assigned an investigator to the case. It also alleviates unnecessary phone calls by the victim to the

Six Month Case Clearance Study

	CASES REPORTED			CASES CLEARED		
	1979	1980	1981	1979	1980	1981
Repressible Crimes						
Burglary	478	459	406	62	49	118
Grand Theft Auto	304	301	351	31	60	68
Burglary from Motor Vehicle	215	292	347	21	17	22
Theft from Motor Vehicle	164	145	165	7	4	8
Grand Theft Person	0	30	37	0	3	4
Violent Crimes						
Robberies	156	230	196	33	30	46
Aggravated Assaults	29	56	48	22	44	28
Forcible Rape	11	9	5	6	0	3
TOTAL	1,357	1,522	1,555	182	207	297
				(13.4%)	(13.8%)	(19.1%)

“... the most critical measurement of the overall effectiveness of the organization, from a job enrichment perspective, has been that of case clearance.”

police department to ascertain who is working their case and if any leads have been developed.

A monthly tally is also kept as to the frequency of crimes in each category. At the end of the month, this shows a supervisor how many cases of each crime a section has received. This also helps with monitoring the case assignments of the detectives and will show if they have logged all cases given them in a particular month.

The control ledger is an important instrument for the detective division

supervisor. He must be accurate with entries and must make any notations that will assist him in overseeing the proper followup of all crimes committed.

Case Clearance Chart

Another tool used by the Culver City police is the individual case clearance chart. Each officer assigned to the detective division has a composite chart depicting the case clearance rate by month from January 1, 1979, to the

present. These charts, which are maintained by each detective, depict the total number of crimes for each month and the clearance rate for each month. The simplicity and ease of maintaining the chart has a positive value in that each officer identifies with his function. An example of how effective this program has been would be to review the violent crime section in figure 1. For the first 6 months of 1981, the clearance rate for robberies was 23.5 percent; aggravated assaults, 58.3 percent; and forcible rape, 60 percent. There have been no homicides reported, and the overall clearance rate for violent crimes is 30.9 percent, which is approximately 8 and 10 percent higher than the clearance rates of the two cities bordering Culver City.

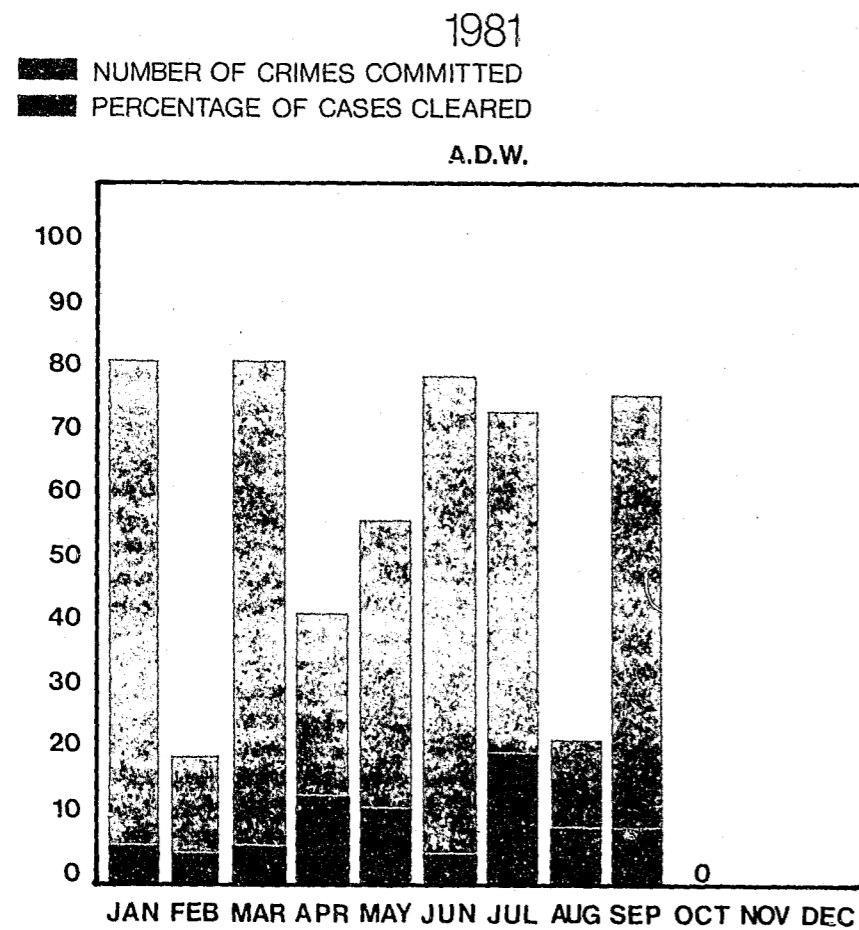
Conclusion

The positive effect of emphasizing case clearance to each investigator is that they become more concerned with the tasks involved in initial followup performance objectives. This encourages and fosters more communication between the detective division and the operations division to insure they are working in consonance with each other. This also results in more one-on-one relationships between the two divisions.

By implementing these programs, managers and supervisors of the Culver City Police Department believe they have made all officers more aware of their individual performance, have removed self-doubt, have increased productivity, but more importantly have enhanced job satisfaction at the officer level.

FBI

Footnote
Uniform Crime Reporting Handbook, Federal Bureau of Investigation (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office), pp 2-3.



END