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*...of the most potentially
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Police Recruitment Through Strategic Marketing Planning

"The police executive can increase the rate of successful recruitment by applying standard marketing strategy to recruitment efforts."

By
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How do the majority of police departments recruit personnel? As a general rule, police departments advertise in newspapers, give a series of tests, and then hope that this filtering process selects the best (and eliminates the potential problem) employee. Is this adequate when choosing employees to fill one of the most stressful and demanding occupations in our culture? Does this type of overall recruitment effort reach those segments of the population who we want to encourage to enter the law enforcement profession?

Experienced police administrators know that all too often, the testing procedure alone does not eliminate all problem employees. In many instances, tests are not scheduled often enough to prevent having to select the applicants who scarcely advanced through the testing system.

Assuming that budgeting problems inherent in improved psychological testing, polygraph examinations, and other components of the typical applicant testing procedure are not going to be alleviated, how can a police administrator improve on the recruitment procedure so that he or she has available a large contingent of qualified appli-

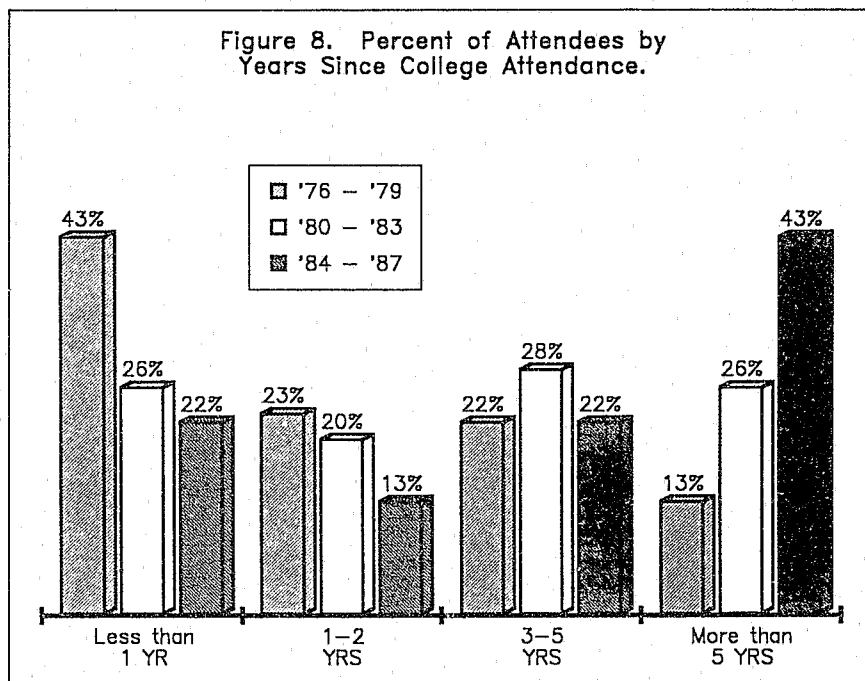
cants? This article explains how the police executive can best take advantage of the testing process currently used by the department and apply a standard marketing methodology known as "The Strategic Marketing Planning Process" to the recruitment efforts. It will define the procedure and show how this program can be applied to police recruitment.

Successful marketing, like all competent management mainstays, cannot stand alone. Its planning must be a result of a competent overall management system. The primary components of any capable management technique, and therefore prerequisite to successful marketing in recruitment, are accurate identification of a mission and strategic planning.

The Organization's Mission

Any organization, whether motivated by profit or by public safety interests, must have a clear understanding and routine review of its mission. A mission, as defined by marketers, is "a human collectivity that is structured to perform a specific mission through the

Figure 8. Percent of Attendees by Years Since College Attendance.



ucation showed a combined decrease of 11 percent, as reported by students. This may reflect increased budget restraints experienced by many law enforcement agencies.¹

Various student characteristics have also changed over the past 12 years. Agencies sent slightly more high-ranking officers and slightly fewer low-ranking officers to the most recent FBINA sessions. Substantially more officers aged 35 to 44 attended the more recent FBINA sessions. Agencies also sent officers with more experience; there was a marked decrease in the number of officers with less than 10 years of experience who attended the most recent FBINA sessions.

One of the trends in law enforcement has been for agencies to encourage, or require, advanced degrees for their officers.² This trend appears to be

reflected in the student body; students are arriving at the Academy better prepared academically for their studies than they were 12 years ago. Almost half of the National Academy students had an undergraduate degree or higher, increasing from 33 percent of the student body for the first time period to 49 percent for the third time period. The percent of students having less than a bachelor's degree has decreased from 67 percent in the first time period to 51 percent in the third time period.

Interestingly enough, however, students who attended the National Academy more recently had been away from the classroom longer than students who attended earlier sessions. Forty-three percent of the students had not taken a course in over 5 years in the last time period compared to 13 percent in the first time period. One explanation

may be that officers are obtaining higher levels of education prior to beginning their law enforcement careers. Another explanation may be that officers are entering law enforcement prior to obtaining degrees but are continuing their education and obtaining a degree at an earlier career stage.

The preceding discussion of trends in the FBINA profile data should be viewed with some caution. While the trends exist for this 12-year time period, generalizing the continuation of the trends for the future is not warranted. For example, it cannot be assumed that in the next 12 years, the number of students with undergraduate degrees will show an additional 15 percent increase from 49 percent to 65 percent of the students.

Conclusion

Who attends the National Academy is of interest to faculty and administrators in planning curricula and programs with the goal of appropriately enriching the National Academy experience. Further, this article should assure prospective students that they will find colleagues with similar backgrounds at the National Academy. At the same time, they will be challenged to broaden their perceptions through exposure to a wide diversity of law enforcement professionals.

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Footnotes

¹H.J. Miran, et. al., *Managing the Pressures of Inflation in Criminal Justice*, National Institute of Justice, Washington, DC, 1979; L.D. Stellwagen and K.A. Wylie, *Strategies for Supplementing the Police Budget*, National Institute of Justice, Washington, DC, 1985.

²J.L. Chronister, et. al., *A Study of Factors Influencing the Continuing Education of Law Enforcement Officers*, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Washington, DC, 1982; International City Management Association, *Baseline Data Report*, "Police Personnel Practices," Washington, DC, January 1983; J. LeDoux, et. al., "Higher Education for Law Enforcement: Half a Century of Growth," *The Police Chief*, vol. 51, No. 4, April 1984; Stellwagen and Wylie, *supra* note 1.



Lieutenant Breen



George F. Dayton
Chief of Police

use of largely rational means."¹ With regard to the law enforcement profession, "Establishing, and routinely updating, goals and objectives of the agency and each component helps to ensure direction and unity of purpose and serves as a basis for measuring progress."² Whether in the private sector or law enforcement, a capable strategic marketing planning process can only be the result of overall competent management, which can only be accomplished through specific mission identification.

Peter Drucker, perhaps the most widely read authority in the management discipline, saw that the potential of an organization becoming confused about its mission is not uncommon. He suggests that an organization periodically needs to ask, "What is our business? Who is the customer? What is of value to the customer? What will our business be? and What should our business be?"³ The examination of an organization's activities relative to its overall goal or mission is forced by asking these questions. These queries are a soul-searching and time-consuming process, but are just as important to the police profession as they are to private sector, profit-motivated organizations. Likewise, in either case, determining if organizational objectives are realistic necessitates analyzing the external environment and assessing the organization's strengths and weaknesses.

Strategic Planning

For a profit-making organization attempting to reach customers, it must be adept in planning how the organization will have to change to accommodate future modifications in its mission and/or

market. Only then can it become proficient in marketing, communications, and advertising planning. Each separate procedure can only be enacted following the successful completion of the preceding stage.

Likewise, in police recruiting, the police organization must first be proficient in strategic planning. The organization must know what type of applicant it wants to recruit. When possible, this conclusion should be based on past measurements that indicate which type of recruit has traditionally been most successful in helping the organization meet its goals or other external factors, such as the recognized need for increased minority representation. Only when the police agency recognizes where to target its recruitment efforts can it develop a successful recruitment marketing strategy. The key to successful marketing, however, does not stop with the systematic identification of desirable applicants. To communicate effectively to these specific applicants, the police organization must next determine what these types of applicants want from a prospective employer.

This marketing mission seems straightforward enough for a profit-making organization. If addressed correctly, specific customer groups and their needs should be identified by virtue of objective research. The organization should then target these customer groups with promotions designed to meet their specific needs. Similarly, in a marketing mission for a law enforcement agency, the police recruiter must understand that he or she is marketing a product (the department) to potential customers (desirable job applicants).

"The primary components of any capable management technique, and therefore prerequisite to successful marketing in recruitment, are accurate identification of a mission and strategic planning."

Research Rather Than Assumptions

In deciding what components are common in quality personnel, the recruiter should minimize assumptions, and to the greatest degree possible, base any judgments on research. The contemporary police recruiter cannot assume what type of applicant will benefit the agency, just as the private sector marketer cannot afford to assume who the best customers are. If competent productivity and evaluative measurements are in place in the organization, the police recruiter may be able to identify commonalities of successful police officers and recruit accordingly. This research is problematic. If the recruiter is from a small- or medium-sized agency, where a limited database could lead to erroneous results, he or she may be able to draw conclusions from larger organizations or by combining the information from several small agencies.

For purposes of illustration, assume that a recruiter's specific research into quality personnel indicates that college education is an advantageous component of the police recruit's resumé. This notion has been stressed in a national review of police in the late 1960's and formidably funded by the government throughout the 1970's.⁵ Also assume that research supports the common notion that applicants with prior military experience and a few years of other life experience, bringing the age of the applicant to at least 26, tend to be more successful than those without these factors.

Successful Recruitment

The recruiter must recognize that like the marketplace for products, he or she is competing with other occupations, and other police departments, to acquire these quality personnel. In the private sector, marketers manipulate

price, place, product, and promotion to position their company in the marketplace. The police recruiter must do likewise. "Price," as applied here, includes promoting the salary, work schedule, and fringe benefits acquired with the job. "Place" refers to promoting the community itself as a good place for police personnel to work. Just as a product name communicates many intangibles in a private sector marketplace, "product" in this realm refers to stressing all the intangible qualities of working in a particular organization, e.g., the pride and history of the agency.

When thinking in terms of "promotion," the police recruiter must again refer to the research that defined commonalities shared by successful patrol officers. In the given example, the recruiter desires a large portion of applicants with a college education, prior military experience, and at least 26 years of age. Therefore, the recruiter may want to specifically promote the department within college campuses and military organizations, while at the same time asking what these "customers" want. Simply assuming to know what a specifically targeted group or type of applicant finds most attractive about law enforcement, and failing to arrive at these conclusions without research, can be the same fatal flaw for police recruiting as it frequently is in the sale of products. Research identifying different desirable aspects of the department by previously identified customer groups is required.

In continuing the illustration, assume that by surveying these customer groups, the recruiter discovers that the greatest portion of prior military personnel find accessibility of overtime as the most important allurements and that the greatest portion of college students list payment for continued education and

the ability to work in a variety of assignments as most important. With these data, the recruiter can accent different characteristics of working in the agency to the desired applicant groups, just as private sector marketers emphasize different values of their product to different types of customers. According to the example, promotion brochures left at neighboring military reserve units should stress the availability of overtime, while brochures left on college campuses should underscore the continuing education program and the variety of assignments within the agency.

Thus, market positioning is simply differentiating yourself from the competition.⁶ The "competition" in the private sector is easily recognizable; it is other companies selling similar products or service. In the given example, however, the competition is other law enforcement agencies and occupations that are successfully recruiting your targeted type of applicant. Manipulation of the marketing mix (perceptions of price, product, place, and promotion), can create a favorable image of a department's position in the marketplace relative to the competition. Once a department's position in the marketplace of quality college student applicants is visualized, relative to other police departments, the police recruiter can best promote the department's assets. As an example, two employers may offer approximately the same annual salary, but only one can provide a variety of assignments. On the other hand, while one department can provide a wide variety of assignments, it may not offer an acceptable salary.

Appraise Recruitment Efforts

Like any other management technique, the job is not finished until evaluations have been completed.

Quantifiable recruitment goals, identifying specific portions of targeted applicant types, should be set and used as performance benchmarks to determine the success of specific tactics and implementation of marketing recruitment efforts. Predetermined measurements serve as a gauge to evaluate a department's efforts. These goals will also be critical in future strategic planning, modifying strategy due to unsatisfactory results, or a modification in the primary mission.

Conclusion

The police executive can increase the rate of successful recruitment by applying standard marketing strategy to recruitment efforts. The strategic marketing planning process, as applied to police recruitment, will result in an increased portion of the pool of applicants possessing common characteristics that traditionally are shared by successful police officers in the community. Undoubtedly, many departments will continue to hire from a group of applicants who simply survived the screening process. In the long term, however, the most successful police organizations will decide on the cost effectiveness of applying a marketing strategy that will result in choosing from an aggregation of applicants whose commonalities have traditionally been shared by the best personnel in their organizations.

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Footnotes

¹Alan R. Andreasen and Philip Kotler, *Strategic Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations* (New York: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1987), p. 162.

²*Standards for Law Enforcement Agencies*, The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, April 1984, p. 1-1.

³Supra note 1, p. 162.

⁴Ibid.

⁵"The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society," President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, February 1967, pp. 109-110.

⁶Margery S. Steinberg, The University of Hartford, lecture on marketing, December 12, 1987.

Book Review

Rape Investigation: A Multidisciplinary Approach, edited by Robert R. Hazelwood and Ann Wolbert Burgess, published by Elsevier Science Publishing Co., 52 Vanderbilt Ave., New York, NY, 10017, 1987, 367 pages, hardbound, \$34.95.

This book represents a collaborative effort of the law enforcement, medical, legal, and mental health communities to provide state-of-the-art information for those who deal with the crime of rape and its victims. The book is divided into four sections: Attitudes and Beliefs About Rape, Investigation of Rape, Medical Aspects of Rape Investigations, and Prosecution of Rape.

In the first section, myths and stereotypes surrounding rape are examined and dispensed with, as are false premises concerning police attitudes concerning the crime victims.

Section II provides in-depth discussions on the collection and preservation of evidence, criminal personality profiling, interviewing rape victims, child molestation, personality assessment, false allegations, and the stressful aspects of investigative work in these areas.

Section III orients the investigator to the conduct of the medical exami-

nation in rape and provides the rationale and intricacies of the examination.

Section IV deals with the prosecution of offenders and provides trial preparation and tactical information. Issues concerning identification, consent, and unpopular cases are discussed in detail.

Over the years, many books about rape have been published, most of which have dealt with narrowly defined aspects of the crime, the offender, or the victim. This book incorporates several aspects into one volume and does so in a manner which proves to be interesting, educational, and practical. It has a comprehensive index which easily allows the reader to access topics ranging from acid phosphates to the voyeur.

While few victims will ever see or appreciate the dedication of this book, it summarizes the thrust of the work succinctly: "This book is dedicated to the victims of rape." It furnishes practical help to the investigator in terms of today's legalities, and most important, today's sensitivities. This book is "state of the art" for this type of investigation and its information should be available to every investigator.

SA Thomas J. Deakin, J.D.