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ACQUISITIONS

Contents

- Law Enforcement Role** 1 **Blue Springs Police EMT Program**
By Louis Cox and H. L. Brown
- Management** 4 **Productivity: A Challenge for the 80's**
By James H. Auten 84262
- Personnel** 10 **The Police Problem Employee**
By Hillary M. Robinette 84263
- Physical Security** 18 **Security of a Multimillion Dollar Lottery**
By Arthur C. Weinstock, Jr. 84264
- The Legal Digest** 24 **The Inventory Search (Conclusion)**
By John C. Hall
- 32 **Wanted By the FBI**

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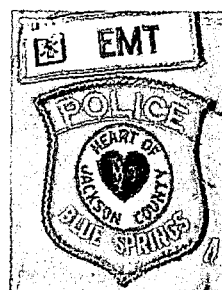
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Management

Productivity

A Challenge for the 80's

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Productivity—that's what the decade of the 80's is about. How does one get more production from existing resources. Not only must industry in the United States solve the productivity problem but so must police administrators. In general terms, productivity can be defined as the relationship between inputs and outputs. For industry, it is the cost of providing a product to the public compared to the profits the product generates for the company. The more profit that can be generated at the lowest possible cost, the more productive the operation. Number of dollars is the usual measure at the output end of the process while input costs are usually measured in terms of both human and material resources.

Police administrators face similar productivity problems; however, there are some important differences. Over the past few years, the police administrator has seen his resources at the



input stage diminish while the need for the product of these resources has increased. This phenomenon is quite likely to get worse before it gets better—if it ever does improve. Certainly, the police administrator who honestly expects to be permitted to hire additional personnel in the next few years is the exception rather than the rule. The prospects for a leveling off of this trend are bleak. As fewer public dollars—all the police administrator has to rely on since his organization does not produce profits—are available, and as other public service agencies in the community are able to provide fewer services to the community, it is highly likely that the demand for services from the law enforcement agency will increase. The demand will not disappear; it will simply shift from one public service agency to another—the police.

As a result, the police administrator is faced with the problem of obtaining more productivity from existing levels of resources, knowing full well that those resources will probably diminish in the future in the face of an increasing demand for the output of those resources. Fortunately, for the police administrator, even though his resources at the input level will not be increased in terms of actual numbers, the resource he has can be expanded. The primary resource of any police agency is the personnel it employs. Approximately 90 percent of the dollar resources of a typical police agency are expended to meet personnel costs. Since the departments' primary resource is people, and since people have the capability of growth through development of unrealized potential, the police administrator has the capability of expanding the output of his resources without having to actually realize an increase in those resources.

This potential for increasing the output of the resources without actually increasing the level of resources rests in the concept of improving the job performance of the officers. Productivity can be improved simply by improving job performance of the officers.

There are various alternatives for the police administrator who is seeking ways to improve the productivity of his officers through improved job performance. Methods of managing the demands for service, of more efficient, allocating and deploying patrol personnel, and of developing alternative patrol strategies all hold the promise of improving productivity. Even though the police administrator has some alternatives to employ in this endeavor, the potential for the success of all the alternatives lies in the same source—people and the manner in which they, as individuals, perform their jobs. Accordingly, if the police administrator is to see his organization realize the potential of these alternatives, there must be, within the organization, a system for effectively evaluating the job performance of these individuals. Before job performance can be improved, it is necessary to know both how and how well the job is being done. Only then can ways to expand the productivity of the people and the jobs they do be devised.

Performance Appraisal Systems

Even though most police departments have performance appraisal systems, most of them are woefully inadequate in terms of suitability for measuring the on-the-job performance of police officers. These systems are predominantly based upon misconceptions of what police officers do. The misconceptions continue to prevail in spite of substantial evidence to the contrary. A quick glance at the instruments used by most police departments in appraising the job performance of officers reveals categories such as appearance, cooperation, loyalty, interest, attitude, judgment, attendance, personal factors, knowledge of work, etc. Most of these evaluative judgments are usually based on numbers of arrests made, traffic citations issued, field interviews conducted, property inspections completed, and crimes investigated.

All of these categories reflect important considerations and duties conducted by the patrol officer, but to a large extent they do not comprise the majority of his on-the-job performance. Numerous research studies have consistently revealed that the vast majority, estimated from 70 percent to 90 percent, of the patrol officer's working day is spent in activities that are not directly related to crime or the enforcement of law. Most of the officer's time is spent in subtle ways of maintaining order within the community or in providing miscellaneous public services to members of the community. If a per-

"All too frequently, goals are formulated by police administrators in an organizational vacuum with little or no input from other members of the organization."

formance appraisal system is going to assess the quality and quantity of an officer's job performance, it must examine what that officer is actually doing on the job and not what we might think, wish, or hope he is doing. This is the first step in improving job performance and making individuals more productive.

Essentially, the process of appraising the job performance of individual officers is nothing more than evaluating the quality and quantity of their work. When we do this, we are engaged in the process of determining or fixing the value of that work which entails making judgments. However, the process of making judgments that permit us to place some value on work performed is not quite as simple as it may sound. Judgments are usually made relative to certain personal expectations regarding what is being judged whether it be the behavior of our children, friends, boss, or people who work for us. What makes the process somewhat unfair is that we tend to keep these expectations to ourselves—we fail to communicate them to those being judged. As a result, many times persons are being judged by an expectation standard of which they are unaware. It is very difficult to measure up to the expectation of another when we do not know what those expectations are.

Organizations also fail to communicate their expectations to their employees. Most police administrators can probably state the goals of their department within the community, and most police officers probably have a vague notion of the department's goals. However, how many departments have taken the time to both formally consider and formulate these goals, and more importantly, how many departments have formally communicated these goals to every member of the organization? How many departments have further enhanced the probability of attaining these goals by developing specific objectives to be accomplished by each element and individual within the organization? The department may have a goal of crime prevention, but has it communicated its expectations of how each individual in the organization is to contribute to the attainment of that goal? In the final analysis, this is what performance appraisal is all about. It is the process of communicating the department's expectations about the quality and quantity of work performance and then judging the value of that job performance according to those expectations.

The overriding objective of any performance appraisal system should be to permit these value judgments to be made so that performance weaknesses/deficiencies can be identified and corrected in order to improve job performance. At the same time, the appraisal system should identify individuals whose performance exceeds the expectations. More specifically, the objectives of performance appraisal are:

- 1) To keep employees informed as to what is expected of them and how well they are doing in meeting these expectations;
- 2) To recognize and reward good work on the part of employees;
- 3) To recognize weaknesses in employees so they can be corrected;
- 4) To recognize strengths in employees so they can be built upon;
- 5) To identify employees who would profit from specific types of training and to identify general departmental training needs;
- 6) To provide a continuing record of an employee's performance;
- 7) To guide decisions in matters of promotion, transfer, suspension, termination, and other personnel matters;
- 8) To verify existing performance standards;
- 9) To check the accuracy of existing job descriptions or classifications; and
- 10) To verify the accuracy of recruitment and selection practices.

If these objectives can be attained, it is possible to know *what* employees are doing, *how* they are doing it, and *what* specific steps need to be taken to improve job performance, thereby improving individual and departmental productivity.

Developing an effective performance appraisal process requires the development of an evaluation system which will be comprised of several components. The first of these components, departmental/organizational goals, has already been examined;

however, its importance cannot be overemphasized. To be effective and efficient, organizations need goals. Goals are a general statement of purpose or intent of an organization. They should reflect what the organization is attempting to accomplish in the community, and as such, should mirror the expectations of the community. As communities vary, so will their expectations concerning the police department. A set of goals established by one department for its operations will not necessarily be appropriate for another department in a different community setting.

Another consideration in the goal setting process involves the manner in which the department formulates them internally. All too frequently, goals are formulated by police administrators in an organizational vacuum with little or no input from other members of the organization. The exact opposite should be the case. As mentioned previously, if goals are to have meaning, they must be communicated to and *understood* by all members of the organization. Additionally, members of the organization must perceive the goals as being desirable and attainable, or it will be unlikely that they will expend any effort toward their attainment. Formally seeking and thoughtfully considering the input of organizational members is a necessary step in satisfying these concerns. Only after members of the organization have an

understanding of what is to be accomplished can any consideration be given to how it will be accomplished.

Determining how the goals of the organization will be accomplished leads us to the second component in the performance appraisal system—the job description. The job description should contain an item-by-item listing of the principal duties/tasks, responsibilities, and accountability for each position within the organization. It should be a clear statement of the department's expectations of how each position in the organization should function/perform in fulfilling its role in attaining the organizational goals.

If the performance appraisal process is to be effective, there must be a job description for every position within the organization. If a position does not contribute to the attainment of an organization's goals, it should not exist. Each position should influence the overall productivity of the organization. Unless job descriptions exist, individuals have no way of knowing what duties are to be evaluated.

Since job descriptions are of such importance to the performance appraisal process, it is essential that they reflect the job as it is actually being done. The role of the police officer in our society has changed substantially in the past several years and will probably continue to change. As the job changes, so should the job descriptions. Attempting to make judgments about the performance of personnel based upon job descriptions that were written 10 to 15 years ago serves no meaningful purpose. Having valid job descriptions for each position within the organization permits the development of the third component in the performance appraisal system—performance standards.

Job descriptions delineate what individuals in various positions should be doing to further the attainment of organizational goals; performance standards delineate the department's expectations of *how* individuals are to perform in meeting the requirements of the job descriptions. Performance standards should be written for each task/duty listed in the job description. These performance standards become the "yardstick" by which judgments are made regarding the value of individual job performance.

From Organizational Goals to Performance Standards

An example of the developmental sequence from organizational goals to performance standards would be as follows:

- 1) *Organizational Goal*—To ensure the safe, efficient movement of vehicle and pedestrians in the community.
- 2) *Job Description*—To enforce existing traffic laws as appropriate. (For purposes of this example, only one task relating to the goal has been selected—obviously there would be others.)
- 3) *Performance Standard*—In looking at the single task/duty selected from the job description, there are at least three possible performance standards that need to be developed, including knowledge of existing traffic laws, the parameters of individual officer discretion so that the "as appropriate" expectation might be fulfilled, and the proper completion of traffic citations.

"It is in the creation of specific objectives that the potential for individual job improvement rests."

For the purposes of this example, let us use one of the standards cited—the proper completion of the traffic citation. The performance standard might look like this: When completing a traffic citation, officers of this department shall use only a black ballpoint pen. All necessary information will be printed in legible form. Officers should exercise care to ensure that all information is recorded accurately and that all appropriate blocks are completed. At the completion of each tour of duty, officers will turn in their completed citations to their immediate supervisor for review.

Returning to the criteria for a well-written performance standard, this standard can be evaluated as follows:

- 1) *What is to be done*—Completion of a traffic citation.
- 2) *How it is to be done*—Officers of this department shall use only a black ballpoint pen. All necessary information will be printed in legible form. Officers should exercise care to ensure that all information is recorded accurately and that all appropriate blocks are completed.
- 3) *How it is to be evaluated*—At the completion of each tour of duty, officers will give their completed citations to their immediate supervisor for review.

Clearly, the process of developing performance standards for each task/duty contained within a job description and for each job description within the organization is extremely time-consuming. However, it is the only way to develop the criteria necessary to make valid value judgments about the adequacy of individual job performance.

Performance standards must be developed to incorporate all aspects of individual job performance. Currently, most police departments have developed performance standards to measure the aspects of a patrol officer's job performance that directly relate to enforcement of the law and control of crime, such as arrests made, traffic citations issued, field interviews performed, complaints investigated, property inspections completed, etc. It is simply a process of recording and comparing numbers—numbers that can be manipulated. Appraising performance based upon these numbers is a legitimate part of the process, but its significance has been vastly overemphasized. Since much of what a police officer does has nothing to do with crime or enforcement of the law, attempting to base the evaluation of an individual's contribution to the attainment of organizational goals by making judgments based upon the numbers generated from law enforcement-related activities is to base the judgment on only a small portion of the officer's total activity. If the performance appraisal system is to serve its intended purpose, performance standards must exist for those activities that are not directly related to the control of crime or the enforcement of the law. To do otherwise is to overlook most of what a police officer does.

Specific Objectives

A meaningful system for performance appraisal should include the creation of specific objectives. Up until this point in the developmental sequence, the focus has been on departmental expectations—departmental

goals, departmental job descriptions, and departmental performance job standards. While all of these components relate to the successful performance of the job, they do not directly relate to the individual capabilities of the person performing the job. Specific objectives exist to put the performance expectations of the organization into individual terms, i.e., what each individual needs to do to perform the job successfully. Because each of us has different abilities and capabilities, we cannot be expected to perform a given task/duty in exactly the same manner as another individual.

It is in the creation of specific objectives that the potential for individual job improvement rests. When these objectives are created by the supervisors in consultation with each of their subordinates, and an attempt is made to go beyond the maintenance of the status quo, and incentives are provided to motivate subordinates, there is a possibility for improved job performance and increased productivity. In writing specific objectives for individuals, it is important that they be:

- 1) *Stretching*—Objectives should take the employee beyond their current status performance and personal growth.
- 2) *Attainable*—Objectives should be realistic in the sense that the individual is capable of reaching the objective. Unless the individual sees the objective as attainable, it is unlikely that he will expend the effort necessary to reach it.

- 3) *Measurable*—Progress toward the attainment of the objective should be measurable or there is no meaningful way to evaluate progress/growth.

Essentially, when supervisors sit down with subordinates to formulate specific objectives, they are forming a "contract" that becomes the basis for future performance appraisals which, in turn, requires the formulation of new specific objectives for each officer each time the performance appraisal process is conducted. If an officer's performance already exceeds the performance standard, specific objectives should still be formulated if there is ever to be improved performance.

It is quite legitimate for performance standards to reflect the minimum acceptable level of performance expected by the department, acknowledging the individual differences in humans. However, it is important to remember that the ultimate purpose underlying the formulation of specific objectives is to take people beyond their current capabilities.

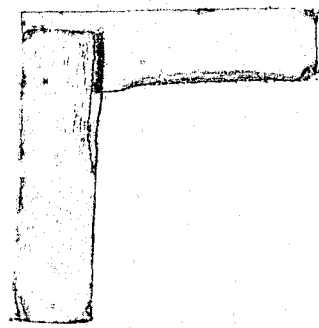
Although the final component in the performance appraisal system, an incident file, is not mandatory, its existence makes performance appraisal easier. If a performance appraisal system is to be effective, the judgments being made about the value of work performed should be made on the basis of personal observations. Unfortunately, time has a way of blurring the image of how others do their jobs. The "halo effect" commonly experienced by evaluators is a manifestation of the passage of time. Maintaining an incident file helps the evaluator avoid this phenomenon, making the process more objective. This type of file consists of notations on the significant aspects of an individual's performance

made either on a regular basis or as they occur. If someone performs some job-related task/duty in a manner that exceeds expectations, that fact should be noted. Conversely, it should be noted when an individual performs a job in a manner that falls below the expectation. Supervisors should log all counseling sessions they have with subordinates following a less-than-satisfactory performance of a task/duty. In this manner, overall, rather than isolated, performance can be evaluated. The incident file should be an open system, accessible to both the supervisor and the subordinate. Keeping a "black book" defeats the intended purpose of the file—open communications between the supervisor and subordinate.

When reviewing the components in the performance appraisal system, it becomes apparent that each component is linked to and builds on the other. The existence of organization/departmental goals requires the development of job descriptions; the existence of job descriptions requires the development of performance standards; the existence of performance standards requires an objective appraisal of progress made in improving job performance. When all of these components are linked in proper sequence, there exists a process that permits the meaningful appraisal of job performance, and more importantly, the process can become a vehicle for individual growth and development, resulting in increased individual and departmental productivity.

Today, most police administrators have already been confronted with the dilemma of "getting more from less." Available evidence indicates that many of them are making a concerted effort to resolve the dilemma, and not surprisingly, they are having some success. While resolving the dilemma in the face of diminishing resources and increasing demands for the product of these resources, the police administrator should find solace in the fact that his primary resource—people—is expandable. Productivity can be improved by improving officer job performance. The key to improving individual job performance is in objectively assessing the value and meaning of each individual's unique contribution to the organization. A valid performance appraisal process permits the assessment of this value. Through its use, it is possible to identify each individual's strengths and build upon them to improve job performance.

The potential of the human resource is the most wasted resource in this country. None of us really come close to realizing our full potential. When we begin to work toward that goal, we will begin to realize our capacity for improvement. Then, and only then, will we begin to solve the "get more from less" dilemma. **FBI**



END