

Saint Paul Police Department: Effective Policing Through Full Engagement

Sergeant Paul Schnell

Genesis of Concept

- Facilitated voluntary negotiations between police command personnel and local chapter of NAACP – June 2001.
- Locally historic agreement to increase transparency:
 - Distribute business cards at all traffic stops
 - Collect data
 - Consent search advisories
 - Training of officers to improve community relations

Training as prompted by agreement

- Involved the use of local trainers from various communities of color.
- Focused on conveying the policing experience of members of diverse communities.
- Provided forum for members of communities of color to talk directly to police officers and share experiences.
- Some of the trainings elicited heated exchanges described by trainers and officers as destructive.

Look toward a new model

- Importance of discussing varied goals of policing, issues of disparity, need to increase trust.
- Model sought that would achieve goals measurably.
- Training model sought that would engage all in understanding issues.
- Model sought that would create change.

Initial training focus identified

- White male officers would become initial training focus.
- Emphasis placed on “What works.”
- Fuller engagement
- Not simply about creating a positive training experience, but
 - Quality of experience
 - Measurable cultural and behavioral change

Why initial focus on white men

- White officers talked of feeling that they were “talked to” versus being “talked with” about issues of difference and policing.
- Disproportionality conversations resulted a feeling of “fault” on the part of many officers.
- Women and officers of color described difficulty in conveying the significance of their experiences to their white male counterparts.
- The question became: How could white men become engaged in deeper and fuller ways?
 - How could white officers feel that they were part of the solution versus a source of the problem?

Training Researched

- Research data showed correlation between white male engagement and who conducted the training.
- Training consultants identified.
 - Focus on W/M engagement.
 - Developmental engagement of women officers and officers of color.
 - Outsiders (corporate representatives) were important to training process.

Training efforts researched

- Project efforts would be:
 - Qualitatively and Quantitatively measured
 - Research would be academic in nature
 - Quasi-experimental
 - Experimental and control groups
 - Measures for broader cultural influence
 - Qualitative research might help explain quantitative changes.

Research Measures

- Participant officer feedback
- Feedback from peers
- Complaints against police
- Obstructing legal process arrests
- Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)
- Others

Limited experimentation

- 7 W/M police officers attended training
- Selected based on range of factors – not the choir!
- Retreat based training: 3.5 days
- Police represented about 1/3 of training cohort
- Others predominantly corporate

Participant reaction

- First day: Challenging, Anger, Blame, Fear.
- Second day: Experience of commonality, awkwardness with issues of difference, insight into own culture – the way we see the world.
- Third day: Role of W/M in helping facilitate change, importance of dialogue, and “customer” experience, action planning.

Post training follow-up

- IDI changes noted
- Easier to discuss issues
- Without prompting several officers described insight that directly impacted discretionary decisions.
- All participants encouraged broader use of the training/learning model.
- All believed experience was of significant learning value, albeit different than typical “police schools.”
- All thought follow-up was necessary.

Allies Training: Phase II

- Select attendees from first training along with women officers and officers of color attended Phase II.
- Allies training is similarly process-oriented
- Mixture of a police and corporate cohort.
- Focus on full engagement across difference.
- Participant feedback – overwhelmingly positive, identified as a need, and as valuable.
- Women and officers of color reported belief that training could change their experience internal to organization and policing generally.

Current efforts

- Departmental affinity focus groups by race, gender, ethnicity.
- Periodic follow-up with white men's training and allies training participants.
- On-going IDI administration initially focused on pre-service personnel – testing the water.

Future efforts

- Full implementation of multi-year behavioral and cultural change project.
- Incremental and developmental.
- Active measurement of cultural and behavioral impact, if any.
 - Are design measures exhibiting notable change?
 - Do officers report change in perceptions of difference or ease in talking with one another about difference issues?
 - Design of “boosters” to reinforce importance.
 - Engage officers broader conversation

Future efforts

- MN SAG funding statewide DMC Police Input Project:
 - Focused on line officers
 - Training with exposure to DMC issues
 - Facilitated focus groups:
 - Identification of issues by officers
 - Discussion of what line officers can do
 - Brainstorming of line officers suggestions
 - Identification of training needs of officers as defined by officers.

Goal

- Making overt efforts to address DMC through increased engagement.
- Identifying models that work to impact DMC as evidenced by behavioral change and disparate outcomes.
- Sustained efforts that give cultural change needed attention.

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