The Use of a Training Design Team To Implement Community Policing

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Employee training is increasing in importance as the organization of work is fundamentally transformed. Across all sectors of the economy, increased emphasis on participative management, union-management cooperation, and strategic planning has created a demand for leadership training.

In the service and public sectors, work practices are being redesigned with a renewed focus on customers and quality of service. This new emphasis often involves breaking down traditional boundaries and increasing cooperation among employees, management, external stakeholders, and other governmental agencies. Greater teamwork and cooperation often requires many hours of worker training.

TRAINING AND COMMUNITY POLICING
Defining police officers' responsibilities, identifying required knowledge and skills, and training officers across a wide variety of areas (such as laws, investigation and observation, defensive techniques, and departmental rules and regulations) has traditionally been critical to police effectiveness. Community policing requires an even greater commitment to training and development. Police officers and supervisors need additional knowledge and skills in areas such as teamwork, problem solving, and community building efforts. Police departments must make a profound commitment to continuous learning and improvement.

This paper describes a new approach, called the Training Design Team, to identify training needs and design training programs. It emphasizes involving officers and sergeants (who experience the greatest changes in a shift to community policing) in identifying their own training needs and designing programs to best fit their needs.

THE INSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEMS TRAINING MODEL
The four basic training processes are:

- analysis of training needs (to determine what training is need and who needs it);
- design and planning (includes a plan of instruction with objectives, content, and learning principles specified);
- implementation (selection and use of the appropriate instructional methods); and
- evaluation and improvement (to determine whether new knowledge and skills are transferred from training to the job, so that needed improvements are made in training effectiveness).

The initial determination of training needs should flow logically into program development, implementation, and evaluation. Training should improve continuously as evaluation information is used to re-energize and redesign the training system.

TRADITIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN
The Instructional Systems training model can be quite effective in addressing training needs and designing
training programs. A typical approach is based on an "expert" trainer model. Training needs are identified and programs designed by specialists within the organization (or by outside consultants). Needs assessment usually focuses on key technical skills (e.g., driving or firearms skills) or specific job knowledge (e.g., policies and procedures). Training content and the instructional plans are developed by training experts around core technical and job knowledge areas. Instructors are trained to deliver the course content, usually through lecture and discussion, maintaining close control of the learning process. Evaluations focus primarily on immediate trainee reactions rather than on the transfer of training to the job.

AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH
The traditional expert model of training is limited in that learners are not actively involved. Trainees have little input into identifying training needs or into training program design and evaluation.

The Training Design Team concept is based on an alternative training model which stresses active involvement in all stages of instruction. In fact, each person who receives training learns the material well enough to use it and then teach it to others. Participation leads to commitment and the transfer of key knowledge and skills. Expertise is placed in the hands of officers rather than outside experts or specialists. Insiders teach and train and thereby serve as constant reminders to retain new skills and information.

THE TRAINING DESIGN TEAM
The Training Design Team is small group of people dedicated to planning and developing a training system and serving as the connecting link for the entire design process.

Issues to Consider
A few of the important questions that must be addressed are:

- What are line officers and sergeants' training needs relative to community policing?
- Which training needs have the highest priority?
- What is the logical training program sequence?
- Who will be trained, and in what order?
- Will training be organized around teams, individuals, functions, or by some other method?
- What is the content of the training and what are the specific training objectives for each training program?
- What form should the training take (modules, one session, repeated sessions, etc.)?
- What are the methods of instruction for each program?
- Who will perform the training?
- How will training be evaluated (i.e., what measurements should be taken)?
- What will a successful training effort need in terms of support?

Training Design Team Formation
Each police department determines the composition of its committee, but an attempt should be made to represent varying viewpoints. Managers (Lieutenants, Sergeants, specialty leaders (detectives), union leaders, functional experts (community policing officer's, and other officers are all possible members. The key is choosing a small but dedicated team with members who believe in the training effort.

A common mistake made in forming a Design Team is trying to include representatives from every conceivable stakeholder group. The team quickly becomes too large. The team must make difficult decisions and accomplish many tasks. Thus the number of members should be low; ideally five to eight committed, interested people who are dedicated to improving training.
Stakeholders' Input into Training Design
At several stages of the process, the design team seeks relevant stakeholders' reactions in order to include their voices in the process. For example, feedback might be sought from officers of different precincts, community policing experts, training specialists, community representatives or facilitators. The input and participation of many interested people is sought, but design and development and are not bogged down by an unwieldy group.

Design Team Responsibilities
The Design Team meets frequently, establishes its own ground rules for interaction, and determines which issues it will address and how it will address them. Members also work independently gathering information helpful in determining the form, content, and delivery of training. The team may survey the opinions of other police department members, consult with trainers, and confer with community leaders.

Management Initiation and Support
Management must take a number of steps to initiate and facilitate the Design Team including:

- Identifying team members
- Allocating time for regular meetings
- Outlining team members' responsibility
- Delimiting the team's decision making authority
- Providing the team access to people and resources needed to gather information (e.g. meeting space, person hours, overtime)
- Providing the team with relevant information
- Standing by the team's good faith decisions

Effective Transfer of Training to the Job
Many systems and issues only indirectly related to training may strongly influence the effective transfer of training to the work place. For example, when units are trained in community policing in order to boost coordination and cohesion, constant turnover and rotation will reduce the plan's effectiveness. Barriers to effective training for neighborhood policing must be identified and addressed.

A CASE ANALYSIS: THE LANSING, MICHIGAN POLICE DEPARTMENT
A Training Design Team was recently formed in the Lansing Police Department. It consisted of two sergeants, three patrol officers, a lieutenant, and two civilians, and met twice a month for six months. The meetings focused on identifying new tasks performed by officers and sergeants under community policing. The knowledge and skills needed to perform these additional tasks were then identified.

Based on these findings, a training needs assessment survey, consisting of 45 knowledge and skill statements, was developed. Further items about attitudes towards training and as well as some open-ended questions were added by the Training Design Team. The survey is included in the appendix.

The Training Design Team scheduled and collected surveys from all sworn officers. Michigan State University personnel analyzed the data. Results were then fed back to the Training Design Team to interpret, to identify the top training needs, and to determine the appropriate training content and objectives.

Developing the survey took intensive officer time and effort. Other police departments may now use the survey as a starting point for identifying and prioritizing their training needs. If your department is interested in the Training Design Team concept or in analyzing training needs through a survey-based approach, contact Dr. Kevin Ford of the Michigan State University Department of Psychology (phone: 349-8164, or e-mail: kevin.ford@ssc.msu.edu)
APPENDIX
Police Department
Training Needs Assessment Survey
Developed by
The Police Training Design Team in Cooperation with MSU School of
Criminal Justice 1997
Police Department Training Needs Assessment Survey

Introduction: Your department, in conjunction with several departments in the state, has joined as part of a cooperative effort with the Criminal Justice Department at Michigan State University to study and facilitate the move to community policing. As part of this effort, consultants from MSU have been working with the Police department to understand and develop training that would be useful to this department given the recent changes toward a community orientation, decentralization, and working in teams.

A Police Training Design Team was established, involving members of this department across ranks, precincts, and units. This team has developed a number of potentially relevant skills and knowledge areas useful for effective performance. In order to ensure that training represents the most important needs of as many personnel as possible, we would like you to complete the following brief survey. Your responses are imperative to prioritizing areas of potential training in order to make sure that any training developed is maximally valuable.

The answers will be placed onto a computer disk for analysis by MSU consultants. Responses will be aggregated to form a composite report, this report will be shared with the Police Department and used by the Training Design Team to examine and prioritize the training needs in the department as they relate to recent changes.

Completion of the Survey: To complete the survey, fill in the demographic information as requested on the next page. Then, simply respond to each skill or knowledge item by filling in the circle on the survey indicating the extent to which you have a need for training in that area. If there are any areas of training you think would be useful that are not indicated on the survey, please write them in the spaces provided at the end of the survey. Use the five point scale below to respond to the skills and knowledge areas:

1 2 3 4 5
No Need A Moderate An Extreme
For Training Need Need

Thank you for your time and effort in completing this survey!

PART I. Demographic Questions
Name:____________________________

1. Rank:

[1] Officer
[2] Detective
[3] Sergeant
[4] Lieutenant
[5] Captain

2. Years in this department:

[1] 0-1
[2] 2-5
[3] 6-10
[4] 11-20
[5] More than 20 years

3. Are you currently, or have you been, on any of the following special assignments? If you have never held the assignment, check the box marked "never held assignment." If you currently hold, or once held, the assignment, just check the box indicating the number of months you are/were on the assignment.

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Never Held</th>
<th>Months on Assignment</th>
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<td></td>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>7-12</td>
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<td>A. SOD</td>
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<td>C. Traffic</td>
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<td>F. CPO</td>
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<td>G. Court Officer</td>
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<td>H. Recruiting</td>
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<td>I. K-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>J. Crime Scene</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

4. You are assigned to which precinct at present?

[1] North
[2] South
Use rating scale below to answer the following question: **To what extent do you feel you have a need for training in the following areas?**

[1] NN for training in this area

[2] A SN for training


**Police Department Training Needs Assessment**

1. Skills using computers — typing and using commercial software (Windows, Lotus, etc.)


2. Skills using computers — using Police software (LEMS, RAGS, BARS, etc.)


3. Knowledge of the law — application of criminal and civil laws


4. Knowledge of how to use crime data to identify trends or common problems that need to be worked on across teams


5. Writing skills — grammar and format


6. Preparation for public speaking (outlining, determining your audience, rehearsal, anticipating questions, etc.)


7. Public Speaking — skill in presentation (i.e., talking in public) to small and large groups


8. Skill in follow up after speaking (i.e., addressing questions, clarifying points, etc.)


9. Communicating effectively using different media (voice mail, oral, reports, etc.)


10. Teaching community members to take care of common referral matters


11. Skill in motivating people in the community to be active participants in activities

12. Skill in teaching community members to organize and lead themselves

13. Managing people in a system in which you are responsible for people on different shifts and geographic areas

14. Skill in making clear for community members what police can and cannot do for them

15. Skills in conflict resolution while on patrol

16. Skills in running problem-solving meetings with other police personnel

17. Skills in effective time management

18. Meeting skills — setting agenda, setting ground rules, assigning work, follow up

19. Knowledge about which agencies to call for a particular problem, information needed, and procedures to follow (i.e., animal control, code compliance, neighborhood nuisance, landlord tenant, public service, city services)

20. Knowledge of media policy — what the media want from you, what you can/should tell them

21. Facilitating effective community meetings — keeping them productive

22. Skill in team decision making (e.g., consensus building, checking for agreement, etc.)

23. Skill in coordinating problem-solving efforts across shifts and teams

24. Working effectively with neighborhood leaders and coordinators

25. Knowledge of formal problem-solving methods (SARA, root cause analysis, brainstorming, etc.)

26. Knowledge of "best practices" within Lansing and other departments relevant to problem solving

27. Knowledge of how to approach people in a friendly way
28. Active listening skills (obtaining information while remaining non-directive)

29. Understanding the fundamental goals in community policing approach to delivery of police services

30. Knowledge of department philosophy and mission regarding team policing, and developing a common set of understandings and expectations within the police department

31. Skill in assessing and responding to problems at the level of involvement desired by the community

32. Skill in developing effective policing strategies appropriate to the particular community

33. Knowledge about cultural diversity — how to work and communicate with people of other ethnicities, ages, etc.

34. Knowledge of how to operate effectively within a system with multiple supervisors (team, shift, etc.)

35. Skills in providing follow up and feedback for members of the community

36. Skills in evaluating employees in the current system

37. Skill in community building

38. Identifying problems by researching trends (crime statistics, calls for service, etc.)

39. Analyzing key work processes and removing non-value added (wasted) activity

40. Acting as a catalyst for change and encouraging others to change also

41. Measuring and communicating progress towards team/departmental goals and directions

42. Removing barriers that keep officers from doing their jobs as effectively as possible

43. Staying current with new directions in policing
44. Promoting teamwork and cooperation within the department, establishing systems and mechanisms to support teamwork


If there are other areas not indicated here in which you feel there is a need for training, please write them in below.


Part II. Training Perceptions

The Training Design Team would also like to have a better idea of what your feelings are about the current training that you have attended as a Police Officer. This information will be quite helpful in the design and development of any new training programs in the future. There is no need to provide your name to this sheet—place your completed sheet into the envelop labeled "Training Perceptions." Please complete the following questions regarding previous experiences that you have had with training at the Police Department. Use the following scale to rate each item below:


1 2 3 4 5
Strongly Disagree Neither Agree Agree Strongly
Disagree Somewhat nor Disagree Somewhat Agree

_____ 1. I have received an adequate amount of training for my job.

_____ 2. I have learned valuable skills through training programs offered by the LPD.

_____ 3. Supervisors expect officers to use the training that they have received.

_____ 4. Officers do the job the way they were taught in training.

_____ 5. Job aids such as manuals and other materials are available on the job to support what was learned in training.

_____ 6. When officers use what they have learned in training, jobs are easier to perform.

_____ 7. Supervisors do not care if officers use training as long as they get the job done.

_____ 8. Supervisors praise officers when they use the skills learned in training.

_____ 9. The time spent away from my job to attend training programs has been worthwhile.

_____ 10. I have had the opportunity to use skills I have learned in training on the job.
Part III. Comments about Training

We have all been involved in training programs that we thought were highly effective and worthwhile and those programs that we thought were not worthwhile and were a waste of time. Please use the questions below to address issues and concerns that you have regarding training. This information will be quite helpful in designing new training programs that better meet your needs.

1. If additional training was to be given in some of the areas addressed in the Training Needs Survey, what should be incorporated into the training to make it a valuable learning experience?
2. If additional training was to be given in some of the areas addressed in the Training Needs Survey, what should be AVOIDED so that the training does not become a useless exercise?
3. What can be done to better fulfill training needs for your job?

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