Organizational Survey: An Overview

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Departments considering the move to community oriented policing must collect systematic data to help in their strategic planning deliberations. One method for gathering useful data is through the collection of survey information from officers in the department. The Michigan State University (MSU) School of Criminal Justice, in cooperation with various police departments throughout the state of Michigan, has developed an Organizational Survey. The Organizational Survey focuses on officer perceptions of key issues relevant to the move to community oriented policing. Specific information as to the purpose of the survey, the information gathered through the survey, issues of survey administration, and how the results of the survey are disseminated are described below.

PURPOSE

The Organizational Survey can be useful in three ways. First, the move to community policing can generate both positive and negative responses on the part of police officers. Thus, it is important to capture these perceptions early in the process of moving towards community oriented policing. The results of the survey can then be examined to uncover areas of concern that must be considered as part of the strategic planning process for developing and implementing a community oriented policing delivery system.

Secondly, the survey of officer perceptions provides a baseline measure of what the key issues and concerns are early in the process of moving towards community oriented policing. The baseline can then be compared to changes in perceptions one or two years into the implementation of community oriented policing. Thus, the Organizational Survey can examine changes in officer perceptions over time.

Third, the survey results can be analyzed for differences in perceptions between officers, sergeants, and management. The results can then be disseminated to the department and can open a dialogue between management and officers regarding the change to community policing. Thus, responses to the Organizational Survey can lead to a problem-solving approach between officers and management as the strategic planning and implementation processes are pursued.

SURVEY DEVELOPMENT

The Organizational Survey was developed by the School of Criminal Justice in cooperation with various police departments in the state. The Organizational Survey Team developed a framework to develop items for the survey. The framework is given in Figure 1. In general, the survey focuses on three areas. The first set of items focuses on systems that may support or hinder the implementation of community oriented policing. These systems include the strategic direction of the department, management and supervisory support, and resource allocation and material support. The second set of items focuses on issues of police partnerships with other agencies, problem-solving activities, and issues of officer empowerment to make a difference in the community. The final set of items focuses on key organizational and individual outcomes relevant to the move to community oriented policing. These items focus on issues such as the community orientation of the department and individual levels of commitment to the concept of community policing. Key demographic information is also collected to allow for comparison of the responses of different groups.
SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

The survey is administered by staff from MSU. Departments interested in participating in the Organizational Survey are asked to provide a date when the survey can be administered and a contact person. The contact person works with Michigan State University staff to develop a schedule for officers to participate. The survey takes 25 to 30 minutes to complete. The goal is to survey all sworn officers of the department. The survey responses are transferred into a computer data set and analyzed.

DISSEMINATION OF SURVEY RESULTS

Survey data does not become "knowledge" until members of the police department analyze and interpret the results. The MSU Organizational Survey Team analyzes the results of the survey and breaks down the data (e.g., compares officer and sergeant responses) according to the needs expressed by members of each police department. Regardless of the analyses conducted, a key component of the process is to use the findings appropriately. Utilization is most effective when findings are fed back to the management team and then disseminated down the organizational hierarchy. At each level, subordinates can be asked to help interpret the data and develop plans to make constructive changes that will make the shift to community oriented policing smoother and more effective. At some locations, the findings can be examined by joint management-labor representatives and action plans for improvements in implementation can be made. © Copyright, School of Criminal Justice, Michigan State University, E. Lansing, Michigan 48824, 1997

For more information on technical assistance with an organizational survey contact:
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Introduction: A number of Police agencies have begun to examine alternative ways of delivering police services. The traditional approach to policing is seen as too reactive to incidents and numbers (activity) driven. One alternative way of organizing is the move to Community Policing. Your department has begun the process of exploring how to define and implement a community oriented policing strategy. While community oriented policing can have various meanings, it is typically characterized by a focus on the needs of the community, the development of partnerships with groups such as the community, businesses, and social agencies to address critical needs, and a focus on a unified effort to solve problems.

Partnership: Your department has joined with other police agencies as part of a cooperative arrangement with the Criminal Justice Department at Michigan State University. At this point in time focus group interviews have been held with both management and union members regarding the issues that need to be considered in your department. The Organizational Survey is the next step in this process. The survey was developed to capture the perceptions of police personnel in your agency regarding various characteristics of community oriented policing that may or may not be relevant to your agency.

The information you provide on the survey is confidential and anonymous. Only members of the research team from MSU will have access to individual survey responses. The answer sheets will be placed onto a computer disk for analysis. Responses will be aggregated to form a composite report. Only the composite reports will be shared with each police agency. These summary reports can then be used to examine the issues faced by your department.

Completion of the Survey: To complete the survey, simply fill in the circles next to the questions using the rating scale below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Part I
Please answer the extent to which you agree (or disagree) with each of the statements listed below using the following scale:

[1] Strongly Disagree       SD
[2] Disagree                      D
[3] Neutral                        N
[4] Agree                          A
[5] Strongly Agree           SA

If an item does not apply to your job please leave it blank.

Organizational Survey

Strategic Direction

1. There is agreement on what constitutes community policing in our agency.  
2. The department has a clearly defined set of expectations for officers participating in community policing.  
3. The expectations placed upon officers are consistent with the philosophies and goals of community policing.  
4. The department communicates the fundamental philosophies and goals of community policing to all relevant police personnel.

Top Management

5. Top management displays a commitment to community policing ideals.  
6. Top management establishes policies and procedures that are consistent with meeting community needs.  
7. Top management is responsive to officers' suggestions and concerns with regard to community needs.  
8. Top management facilitates the implementation of community policing.

Managing Change

9. The department seeks input from patrol officers regarding how to better meet the needs of the community.  
10. The department takes steps to remove barriers which prohibit implementing effective community policing activities.  
11. The department takes steps to modify procedures that impede better working relationships with the community.
Union

12. Union objectives and goals are consistent with the objectives and goals of community policing.

13. Community policing has been implemented while respecting the parameters of the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

14. Union representatives have had input in the design, monitoring, and evaluation of community policing as it has been implemented.

15. Union representatives should have input in the design, monitoring, and evaluation of community policing as it is being implemented.

16. The Collective Bargaining Agreement is structured to facilitate the transition to community policing.

Rewards

17. Community oriented activities are reflected in performance appraisals.

18. The department recognizes and rewards officers who effectively perform community policing activities.

19. Creativity & innovation are recognized and rewarded in this department.

20. The reward system in the department supports and encourages closer working relationships with the community, local businesses, and government agencies.

Supervision

21. Supervisors encourage better relationships with the community.

22. Supervisors have a clear focus for instituting community oriented activities.

23. Supervisors are willing to adapt their supervisory style in response to changes resulting from the move to community policing.

24. Supervisors act as role models/mentors in developing officers' skills and abilities.

25. Supervisors communicate their expectations clearly and effectively.

26. Supervisors provide timely and beneficial performance feedback.

27. Supervisors encourage innovative community policing strategies.

28. Supervisors are tolerant of honest mistakes.

29. Supervisors are concerned with the welfare of their subordinate officers.

Support Mechanisms

30. The department has sufficient personnel to implement community policing.
31. The department has reallocated resources (e.g., overtime, financial resources) to implement community policing. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

32. The department has allocated time for officers to implement community policing. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

33. The department has sufficient equipment/technology to implement community policing. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

34. The department has sufficient training to implement community policing. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

Partnerships

35. Officers in this department regularly form partnerships with other non-police agencies (social services, housing, etc.) in the course of performing community policing activities. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

36. Other non-police agencies are viewed as useful resources for identifying and solving problems. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

37. Different teams/units/shifts in the department communicate effectively with one another. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

38. Different teams/units/shifts in the department work well together to solve community problems effectively. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

39. Officers are aware of the available community resources. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

Problem Solving

40. Officers identify problems by researching trends or obtaining information from the community (crime statistics, calls for service, etc.) [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

41. Officers take preventative actions by focusing on conditions or root causes that lead to crime or affect citizens' quality of life. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

42. Officers are focused on finding long-term solutions to problems in the neighborhoods they are assigned. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]


Empowerment

46. First line officers are provided with sufficient autonomy to implement problem-solving strategies. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

47. Officers are encouraged to act as "managers" of their patrol neighborhood. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

48. Officers are given the authority to make crucial decisions affecting their [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
community.

49. Officers are given control over how to perform their duties and responsibilities. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

**Climate**

50. Police personnel within the department support working with the community to solve problems. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

51. Police personnel within the department accept community oriented policing as a valid strategy of policing. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

52. Officers in this department believe that police actions can be successful at improving citizens' quality of life. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]


54. This department structures work to facilitate working with the community. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]


**Risk Taking & Innovation**


57. Officers take control over the performance of their duties and responsibilities. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]


59. Officers do not engage in innovation for fear of getting in trouble should the innovation fail. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

**Community Ownership**

60. Officers demonstrate a sense of ownership over the communities to which they are assigned. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

61. Officers take responsibility for the neighborhoods to which they are assigned. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

62. Officers know the citizens and businesses in the communities to which they are assigned. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

63. Officers are aware of the concerns and values of the communities to which they are assigned. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

64. Officers maintain positive relationships with the people in their communities. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

**Community Orientation**

65. Officers actively seek input from members of the community regarding neighborhood problems. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

68. Officers take community concerns seriously and work to provide answers whenever possible. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

**Commitment to Community Policing**

70. I am committed to the idea of community oriented policing. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
71. I think we should increase the emphasis placed on community oriented policing. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
73. Community oriented policing is just a political move by management. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
74. There is no way that our department can make community policing effective. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
75. Community oriented policing is not real police work. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

**Effectiveness**

76. The department effectively maintains law and order within the community. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
78. The department improves residents' quality of life. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
79. The police force is respected in the community. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
80. All things considered, I am satisfied with my job. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

**Role Clarity**

81. I prefer clear and specific instructions when I am learning a new task. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
82. I prefer jobs that involve change and uncertainty. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
83. I enjoy tasks that are ambiguous. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
84. I prefer working on problems that have more than one solution. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
85. I like trying to figure out tasks when the directions are not explicitly stated. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
86. I prefer to have clearly defined goals and objectives for my job. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

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**Part II**
The following questions concern your policing practices. Please indicate the extent to which you participate in the following activities. Use the rating scale listed below:

[1] I Never participate in this activity (N) [4] I Regularly participate in this activity (RG)
[2] I Rarely participate in this activity (R) [5] I Very Frequently participate in this activity (VF)
[3] I Sometimes participate in this activity (S)

If an item does not apply to your job please leave it blank.

Policing Practices

87. Crime prevention efforts such as youth, anti-drug, and anti-gang programs. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

88. Problem-solving activities such as identifying problems by looking at crime trends, analyzing repeat calls for service, or building on information systems to enhance crime analysis capabilities. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

89. Directed patrol/time set aside for focusing on a specific problem, area, or offense. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

90. Identifying and addressing crime problems with members of the community through attending neighborhood tenant association meetings. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

91. Working with other governmental agencies (social services, landlord/tenant, courts) to address problems in the community. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]


93. Working in schools or other public agencies to teach crime prevention. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

Part III

The following questions concern the issues facing the community you patrol. Please indicate the extent to which you encounter the following community issues. Use the rating scale listed below:

[1] I Never encounter this problem (N) [4] I Regularly encounter this problem (RG)
[2] I Rarely encounter this problem (R) [5] I Very Frequently encounter this problem (VF)
[3] I Sometimes encounter this problem (S)

If an item does not apply to your job please leave it blank.
**Community Issues**

94. Litter, trash, & abandoned buildings.
95. Traffic violations.
96. Prostitution & loitering.
97. Theft or burglary.
98. Gangs.
99. Vandalism of cars and property.
100. Drug dealing.
101. Violent crime.

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**Part IV**

**Demographic Information**


102. Rank:

- [1] Civilian
- [2] Officer
- [3] Sergeant
- [4] Lieutenant
- [5] Captain and above

103. Gender:


104. Years in law enforcement:

- [1] 0-1 years
- [2] 2-5 years
- [3] 6-10 years
- [4] 11-20 years
- [5] More than 20 years
105. Years in this department:

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

106. Race:

   [1] African American  
   [2] Asian  
   [3] Caucasian  
   [4] Hispanic  
   [5] Native American

107. Do you reside in the town where you work?  


108. What is your level of education?  

   [1] High School Graduate  
   [2] Some College or Associates Degree  
   [3] College Graduate  
   [4] Post Graduate or Professional Degree

109. What was your major field of study?  

   [1] Criminal Justice  
   [2] Sociology  
   [3] Psychology  
   [4] Pre-law  
   [5] Other

110. As part of your formal education did you receive training in Community Oriented Policing?  

111. Does your department have a specific position or assignment such as "Community Police Officer" or the equivalent of this position?


112. Have you ever served as a Sector/Community Police Officer or equivalent position?


113. *If you answered yes to question 112, how many months have you held the position?*

   [1] 0-6 months  
   [2] 7-12 months  
   [3] 13-18 months  
   [4] 19-24 months  

Please indicate your department______________________________________________

Please indicate the size of the area that you patrol_____________________________

Please indicate your current assignment_______________________________________

Additional Comments: ______________________________________________________

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________________________________________________________________________
Thank you for your participation

This survey is being funded by the Department of Justice:

Office of Community Oriented Policing Services Grant No. USDOJ 96-CK-WX-0001.