

Total Quality Management: An Assessment of Implementation in Florida's Municipal Police Agencies

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The nature of law enforcement is undergoing great change as we prepare to enter the next century. Nationally, people are demanding a more community-oriented, problem-solving style of police service delivery. This change in agency philosophy, as well as the changes in the workforce, create an environment in which the traditional law enforcement management style becomes less effective and efficient. Total Quality Management (TQM) is a viable alternative to the traditional style of autocratic management.

This study used a survey to determine the current level of TQM implementation in Florida municipal police agencies and the chief executives' knowledge of TQM principles and practices. The study shows a low level of TQM implementation within the state; however, agencies that have implemented TQM are found to be more highly rated in areas of professional expertise, internal stability, interaction with the public, and citizen and officer empowerment. Additionally, effective community-oriented or problem-solving policing may be delayed until implementation of at least some TQM principles, whether or not labeled as TQM.