

# Law Enforcement Performance Management and Improvement

Kevin Rowe

## **Abstract**

*It is widely regarded as important for organizations to define their mission and communicate their vision to all personnel. Once this critical step is accomplished, all work processes must be aligned to fulfill the mission and realize the vision effectively and efficiently. Managing and improving these work processes on a continuous basis is necessary for long-term sustainability. Criminal justice organizations have an opportunity to increase their operating efficiency and performance of these processes utilizing standardized methods and tools found in Lean Six Sigma. This research paper examines the current level of application of improvement tools via survey and provides an overview of how this methodology can successfully be deployed in criminal justice organizations.*

## **Introduction**

Criminal justice organizations were not immune to the significant decline in operating revenues because of the reduction of taxes. Property taxes account for the bulk of the operating budget and when property values declined, these taxes naturally declined as well. Increasing taxes was not an acceptable answer to the taxpayers in most jurisdictions, so other solutions had to be explored. Organizations across the state handled the problem in different fashions, including layoffs, salary reductions, and reducing staff through attrition.

Conducting business the same old way may not be possible going forward. Exploring methods to streamline operations is becoming increasingly necessary. Utilizing tools such as Lean Six Sigma to systematically reduce unnecessary spending and mistakes in work are common in many manufacturing industries. Fortunately, these same methods used in manufacturing to improve their work are easily applied to service industries, including law enforcement.

Utilizing the appropriate process improvement methods in criminal justice organizations will enable an increase in efficiency of operations, reduction of mistakes, and increased customer satisfaction. Unfortunately, there is limited research or application of these methods in law enforcement. The purpose of this paper is to provide a basis to help reduce this gap and encourage the utilization of established methods from other industries to be applied in law enforcement to ensure optimal efficiency within the criminal justice community. Research was conducted from many sources to determine some methods applied in manufacturing and how they can relate to criminal justice applications.

## Literature Review

It is likely that most law enforcement agencies have a written mission statement and perhaps written vision and value statements, too. Probably the mission statement reads something like: "Our mission is to protect the citizens and the quality of life of anywhere, Florida." It certainly is not a complicated sounding mission statement and it is probably similar for many law enforcement organizations.

Achieving the stated mission of the law enforcement organization will require a significant number of work processes established within existing work systems. A process is a variety of activities that are connected together with the purpose of doing some work that creates worth or value for the organization. An example of a work process is the collection and storage of evidence. A work system is actually how the work is done in the organization (baldrige21.com). In other words, how are the work processes being done? Most law enforcement organizations are likely separated into sections like: enforcement, support, and investigations. These are the work systems. Perhaps it is the responsibility of the investigation section (work system) to collect and store evidence (work process). These systems ideally will align perfectly with the mission.

How will the organization know they are being successful in their mission utilizing the work systems? It is necessary to define success in some quantifiable terms to answer that question. In the mission example above, we must define what it means to successfully "protect the citizens" and "protect the quality of life" in their jurisdiction. Perhaps protecting the citizens is judged by measuring the crime rate and crime clearance rate for that organization and is defined by being at a specific level or target (above or below depending on the measure).

According to Steve Dickinson, Six Sigma Black Belt instructor, once success is defined, the easiest way to quickly determine success is through a visual indicator such as a bar or line graph with clearly denoted targets. Looking at the below chart (figure 1), it is easily ascertainable that from 2007 through 2012 the crime rate was below the targeted level of 3 crimes per 100 citizens and trending downward with a slight uptick in 2012. Although important, this research paper does not discuss how to set performance targets. Proper metrics could be utilized from the top of the organization to the bottom and monitored at proper intervals to ensure the mission is fulfilled. (Figure 2) These measures must be meaningful and aligned to the mission. Having inconsistent focus causes tensions for officers (Delattre, 2011).

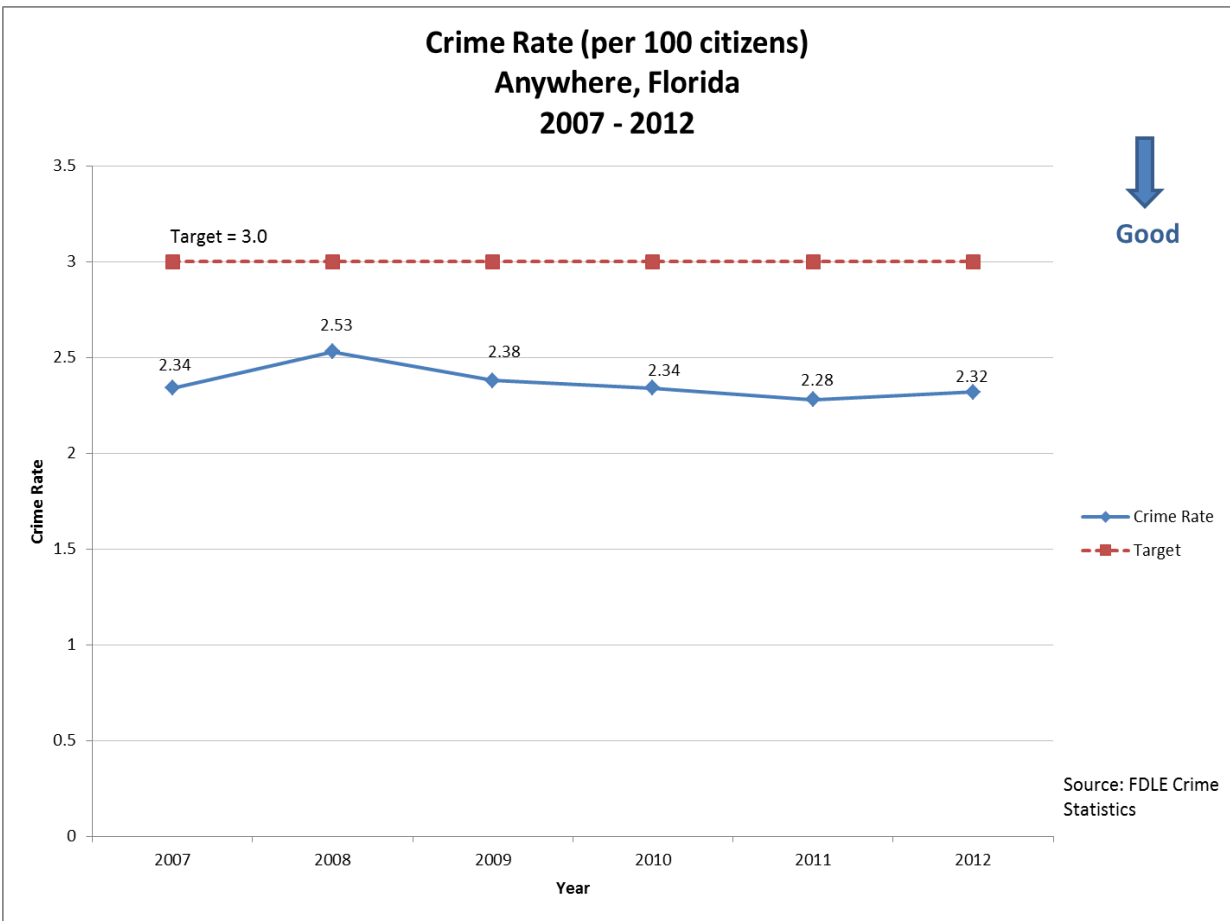


Figure 1

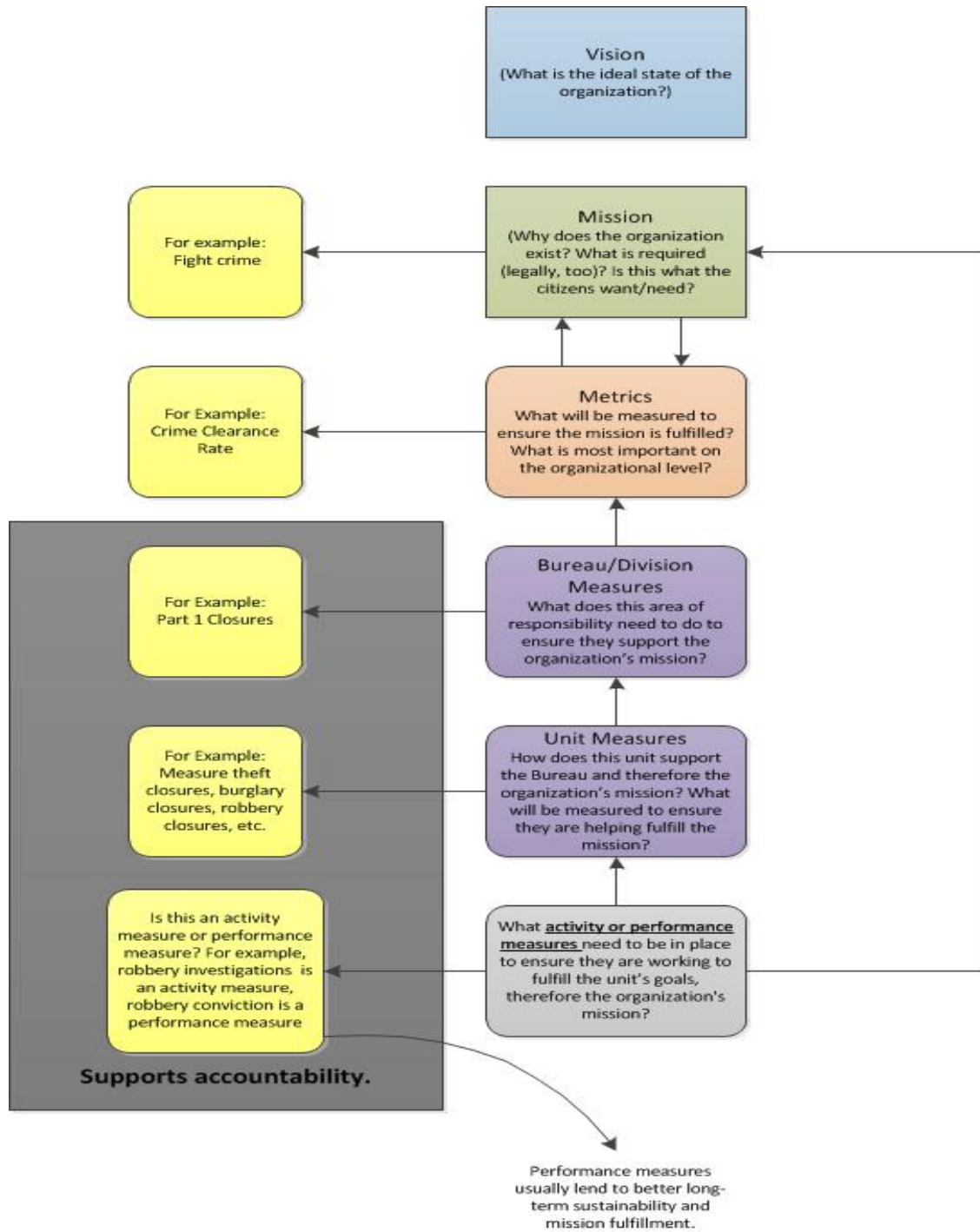


Figure 2

Once effective and meaningful goals and measures are established, there are methods available to manage the work systems to ensure they are functioning optimally. One method is applying Lean Six Sigma quality improvement and the many tools within this methodology. Lean means “reducing the time needed to provide products or services” and Six Sigma is a “collection of techniques for improving the quality of products and services, substantially contributing to increased customer satisfaction” (PeopleCert.org). In the simplest of terms, Lean is providing service quickly as possible and Six Sigma is providing that service with the fewest mistakes possible.

Currently, Japanese company Toyota is highly regarded as the leader in operational excellence because of quality improvement and is often used as the benchmark for other organizations. They refer to their quality improvement method as the Toyota Production System (TPS). “What matters in improving quality is enabling the process and the people” (Liker, 2004,). Lean Six Sigma is a method to accomplish this. Toyota is not alone in the automotive industry to apply this methodology. In 1999, Jacques Nasser took the position as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Ford Motor Company. He made many changes, including “importing...the Six Sigma program, a sort of samurai business regimen that taught managers to attack problems with rigorous analysis” (Ingrassia, 2010). This method to fully analyze and examine work processes “is an opportunity to learn to work in an environment that allows us to solve problems in the best way we can. It is an opportunity to learn to use whatever knowledge and skills we have to master a particular problem” (Harvey, 1988).

Although the initial focus of the quality movement was on factories and manufacturers, quality improvement has migrated into the service sector with success, especially healthcare. Public sector service is also adopting quality improvement methodology, especially since the economic crisis of 2009-2012. Unfortunately, little data is available in the criminal justice profession regarding the implementation of quality improvement tools. Utilizing proper tools to eliminate waste and reduce errors will likely increase the efficiency of the nearly 20,000 federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies in the United States (Scheb, 2011, p.27).

The heart of the Toyota Production System is eliminating waste. There are eight identified areas of waste within an organization. Those are: overproduction, waiting, unnecessary transport or conveyance, over processing or incorrect processing, excess inventory, unnecessary movement, defects, and unused employee creativity (Liker, 2004). By applying the proper tools to address each of these appropriately within a law enforcement organization, there will be a reduction of waste and improvement in efficiency while improving customer satisfaction.

One such method is called Heijunka (pronounced Hi-junk-a) which is “the process of eliminating the overburdening of people by leveling out the workload” (Liker, 2004). For example, a law enforcement organization may have detectives responsible for all property crime investigations. Those detectives may be assigned to a geographic area. It is unlikely that those geographic areas will have identical crime types and crime levels, thus causing an unbalanced work load between the detectives. One detective may be assigned 10 cases per month while another may be assigned 30. By restructuring their work load, it will improve efficiency of the work process and eliminate that waste (excess available capacity of one detective) and stop overburdening another (Liker, 2004).

“A good cop has a capacity for acquiring information. In policing, a well-developed capacity for acquiring information depends not only on being good at listening, reading, observing, but also on asking relevant questions, gathering evidence, conducting surveillance,... and maintaining communication with other police and law enforcement agencies” (Delattre, 2011). Law enforcement professionals, by their very nature, are inquisitive. It is not a stretch to employ these skills of curiosity to solve an organizational problem. Perhaps the most difficult task is to recognize there is a problem and break the “we’ve always done it that way” mentality. Another issue to be considered is avoiding the “knee jerk” reaction to solving a perceived or real problem. According to Dickinson, the majority of problems are caused by a failure of the process and not a failure of the people. Using proper metrics aligned to the mission will identify problem areas and utilizing proper tools will flush out the specific problems to identify solutions.

Utilizing another Six Sigma tool called Rapid Process Improvement (RPI) will pinpoint the problem and lead to the correct solution (Figure 3). It is important to understand that this tool is used when it is known what work process is having problems. Leadership must support the Rapid Process Improvement as it will likely involve significant change. Stakeholders, those individuals that have a stake in the process, must participate because they are the most knowledgeable about the process.



Figure 3, (Warwick.ac.uk)

There are a significant amount of tools available in the Lean Six Sigma toolbox to aid in rooting out organizational inefficiencies and streamlining processes. What is critical in moving forward with these tools is to understand that most of the time it is the process that is failed and not the people working the process. Utilizing proper metrics aligned to the organizational mission, continuously monitoring progress, recognizing a problem or inefficiency, and employing a methodology like Lean Six Sigma will greatly enhance the ability of law enforcement to attack problems at the source and be more efficient in their mission. Law enforcement cannot “do everything expected of them by

everyone” but those things that are done should be completed quickly and without errors (Delattre, 2011).

## **Methods**

In addition to academic, historical, and cross-industry research, this paper included a survey instrument sent to Sheriff’s offices throughout the state of Florida and several police departments similar in size to the Marion County Sheriff’s Office. These organizations were selected because all Sheriffs’ offices have similar functions defined by the Florida constitution and statute and similar sized police departments because they are relevant in size and scope to the Marion County Sheriff’s Office. I excluded very large or small police departments in comparison as they likely do not have comparable resources to this organization.

The purpose of the survey was to determine, by sampling, if law enforcement agencies throughout the state have a defined mission and a systematic method to improve work processes and work systems by utilizing established “root cause” determining tools used in manufacturing and other service industries to help fulfill the mission.

## **Results**

Each Sheriff’s Office in Florida and 28 police departments similarly sized in sworn patrol to the Marion County Sheriff’s Office was surveyed with specific questions regarding performance management and improvement (See Table 1 and Appendix A). The survey consisted of 9 questions, 5 of which used Lykert rating scale. The scale has five possible choices which are; Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree or Disagree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Of the 95 organizations surveyed, 63 organizations responded to the survey. This accounts for a 66% response rate for this survey.

The majority of organizations (98.4%) have a written mission statement but only 60.3% have performance measures indicating if they are successful in their mission. Additionally, 95.3% of organizations agree or strongly agree that improvements are encouraged, but only 20.6% have heard of Lean Six Sigma and 41.0% provide training to staff teaching how to improve work process by finding root cause problems. (Table 1). Survey results by question:

Question*	Answered	Yes	No	I Don't Know	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1 (Mission Statement)	63	98.4%	1.6%						
2 (Executive Performance Measures)	63	60.3%	36.5%	3.2%					
3 (Balanced Scorecard)	63	39.7%	57.1%	3.2%					
4 (Root Cause Training)	62	41.9%	58.1%						
5 (Process improvement culture)	63				65.1%	30.2%	1.6%	3.2%	
6 (Lean Six Sigma Knowledge)	63				11.1%	9.5%	39.7%	20.6%	19.0%
7 (Best Practices)	63				55.6%	34.9%	7.9%	1.6%	
8 (Employee Recognition)	63				44.4%	42.9%	3.2%	6.3%	3.2%
9 (Cross-Sharing Successes)	63				58.7%	36.5%	3.2%		1.6%

\* Question 1 was for voluntarily leaving contact information

Table 1



## Discussion

The results of the survey indicate there is a disconnect between the understood need for improvement of work process to increase efficiency and productivity and providing necessary training to that end. A majority of the respondents appear to agree that they are encouraged to improve their work, are rewarded and recognized for this improvement, and share successes of these improvements across the organization. However, most organizations surveyed do not have a balanced scorecard that enables the organization to set, track, and achieve its key objectives. These key objectives include customer focus, financial results, internal business functions, and knowledge of employees. Additionally, there is limited training to find root causes of problems in an area to facilitate improvement in their work processes and work systems. Lean Six Sigma provides training and tools to address this gap and allow for an organization to systematically improve processes to the betterment of the entire organization.

Any organization can successfully implement Lean Six Sigma, including a service focused industry such as criminal justice. iSixSigma.com identified eight steps to a successful Lean Six Sigma implementation. Employing this strategy will allow for a systematic and repetitive improvement of work process throughout the entire organization. Those steps are:

1. Create a Vision
2. Put Resources in Place
3. Teach the Improvement Methodology
4. Prioritize Activities
5. Establish Team Leadership
6. Take the Right Measurements
7. Manage the Program
8. Recognize Team Contributions (iSixSigma.com, 2010)

The first step involves creating a vision for the program and understanding that there must be motivation to implement the program. If the organization's senior leadership does not recognize that there is a need for improvement of processes, there is seldom a motivation to implement a continuous improvement initiative within an organization.

The second step is to locate, hire, assign, or purchase the necessary resources to implement the program. Assigning the correct person is just as important as providing resources itself. Each person must have the knowledge and desire, but must also have the ability to work effectively within a team setting. Equipment must also be compatible with existing systems to ensure interoperability.

The third step is about training the team members to insure they are well versed in the tools and techniques of improvement. This training is not to create an ad hoc team to address one issue, it is necessary to train to improve any issue at any time as a matter of normal business for the organization. Those trained will become experts and experienced professionals on process improvement for the organization.

The fourth step requires leadership to establish the priority of improvement projects. All resources are limited, which is no less true for criminal justice

organizations. Leveraging resources to be a force multiplier is necessary to ensure projects are implemented to make a net gain of efficiency within the organization.

The fifth step is establishing a leader to manage and lead the organization's improvement initiative. The leadership will be empowered to make changes and are held accountable for any project. Properly selected and motivated, this leader will be committed and engaged in the process improvement initiative.

Measurements are necessary and revealing to the state of the process being investigated, which is the sixth step. If the measurements are not taken then improvement cannot begin. A proper measurement system allows for the team to determine baseline performance and use the data in decision making.

Step seven requires proper management of the program to ensure long-term sustainability of the initiative. This management ideology ideally will include a look at the program itself to ensure that it is continuously improved over time. Lack of or poor management will create an environment that will likely cause the program to fail.

The final step is to recognize the team contributions and celebrate successes. Rewards and recognition can help drive innovation throughout the organization and keeps the team motivated and enthused. This is important to ensure the program continues on the stated purpose of improving the organization's processes continuously.

## **Recommendations**

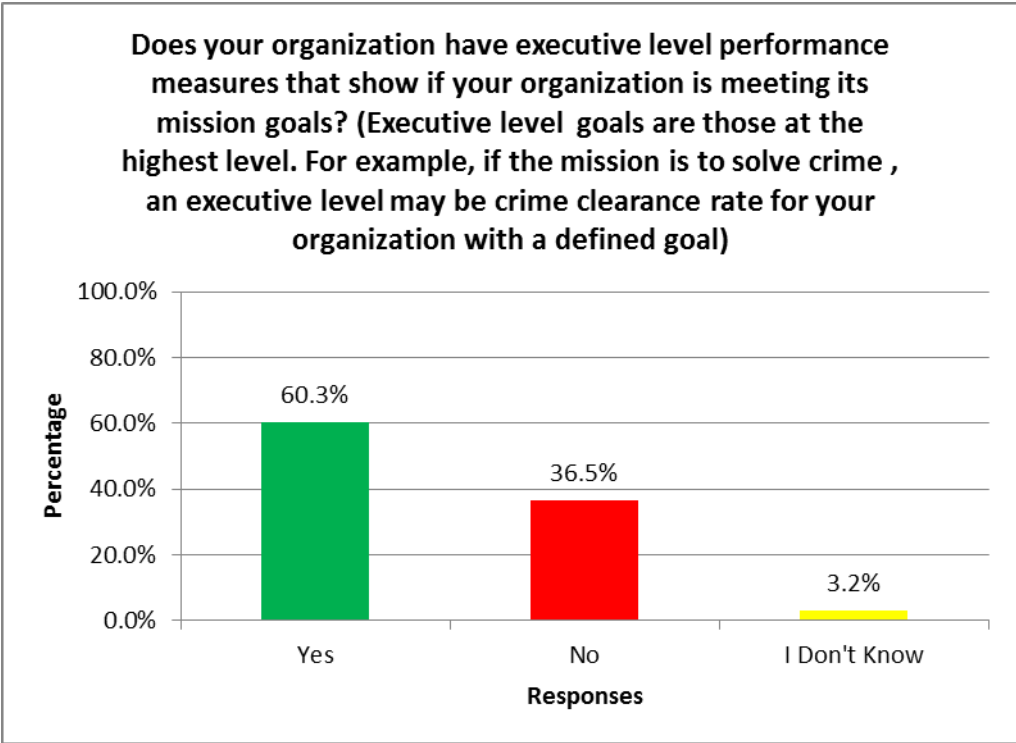
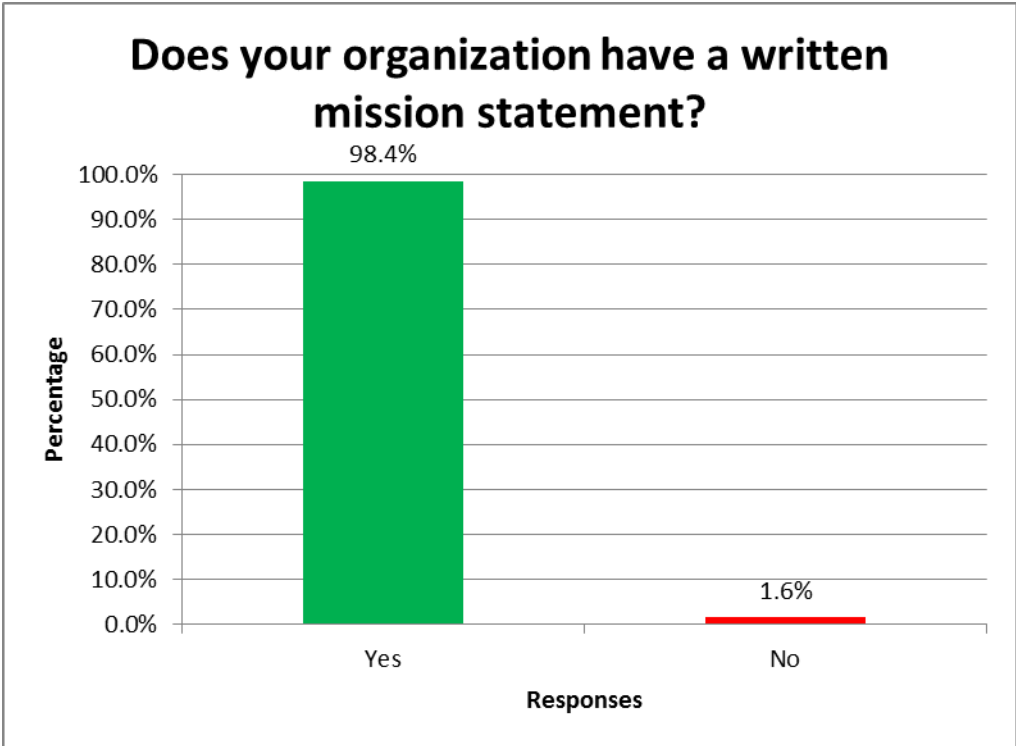
Criminal justice organizations can utilize these tools to improve their operational efficiency and reduce errors within the work processes. Lean Six Sigma has been applied in service organizations with success. Criminal justice organizations can model these service industries to make improvements within their own organizations. Following the 8-step process listed above is one method to implement this method within the organization to that end. Awareness level training for most staff and operational level training for key staff is key to the necessity of process improvement within an organization. This encourages a fundamental change in thinking and behavior that ultimately improves the entire organization and increases the ability to effectively and efficiently serve the citizens.

Kevin Rowe has 25 years of law enforcement experience. He began serving the Marion County Sheriff's Office in 1988 and is currently a district commander. He is an adjunct professor for Rasmussen College, as well. Kevin earned a Master's degree and a Command Officer Academy certification from Saint Leo University. He is an active member of the University of Central Florida's Law Enforcement Training and Technology Committee, Florida's Regional Domestic Security task force, and Marion County's Baker Act task force. Kevin's volunteer service includes active participation in the Rotary Club of Belleview, Board of Directors for Grace Christian School, Board of Directors for Belleview/South Marion Chamber of Commerce, Board of Directors for Belleview Economic Development Council, and Justice Studies advisory committee for Rasmussen College.

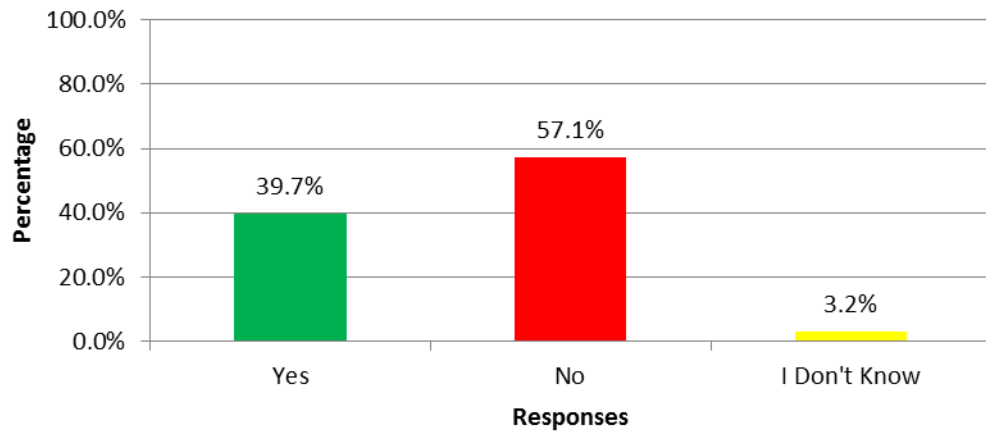
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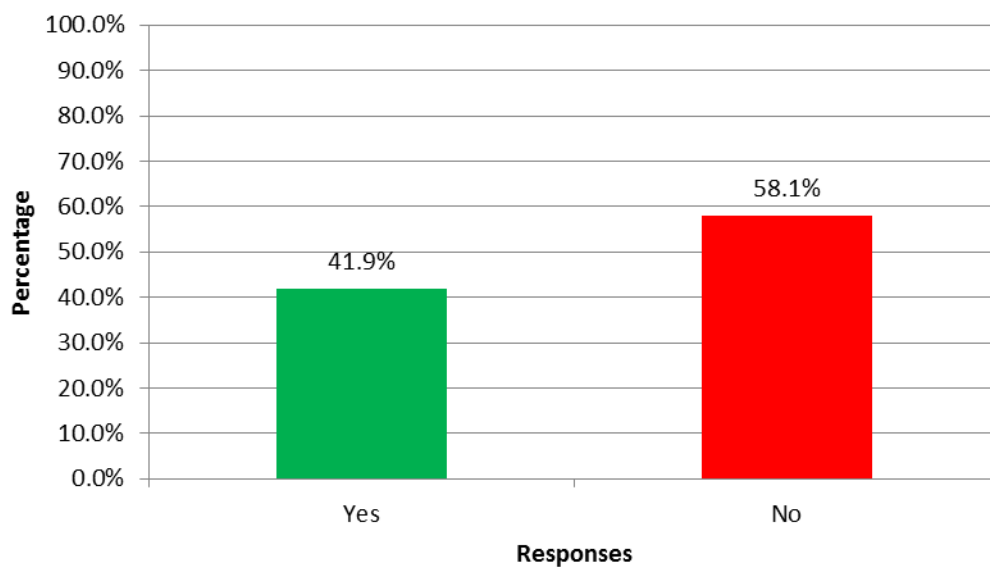
**Appendix A**



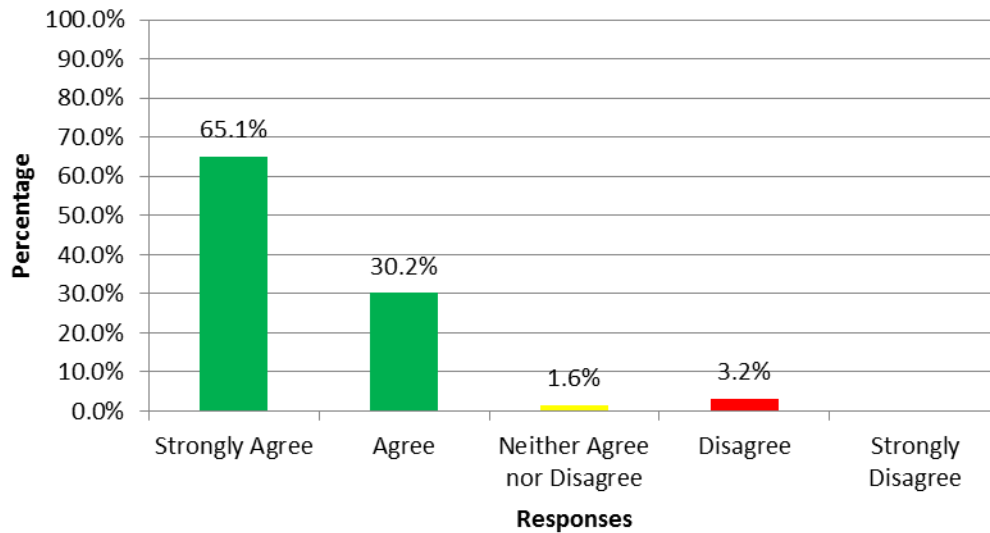
**Does your organization have a “balanced scorecard” with performance measures? (A balanced scorecard enables your organization to set, track, and achieve its key objectives including customer focus, financial results, internal business functions, and knowledge and growth of employees.)**



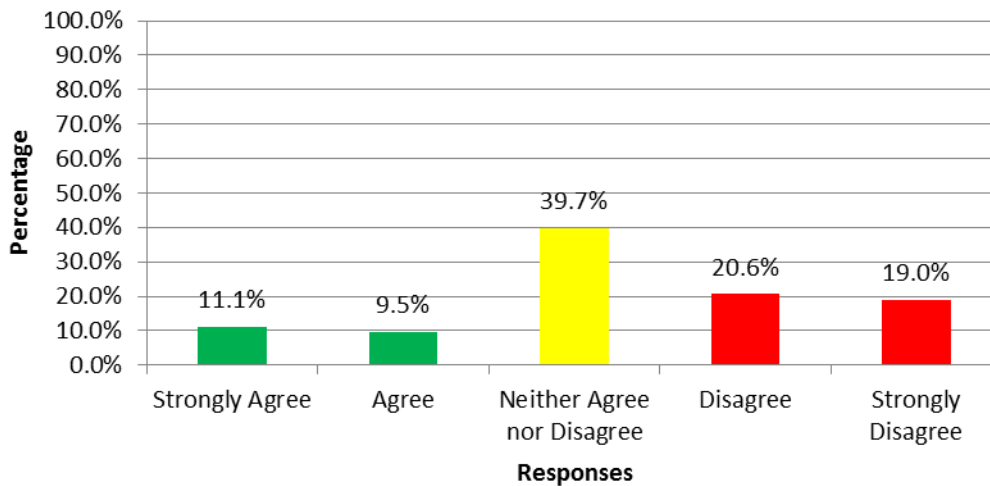
**Does your organization provide training on how to determine root causes of problems in a work area?**



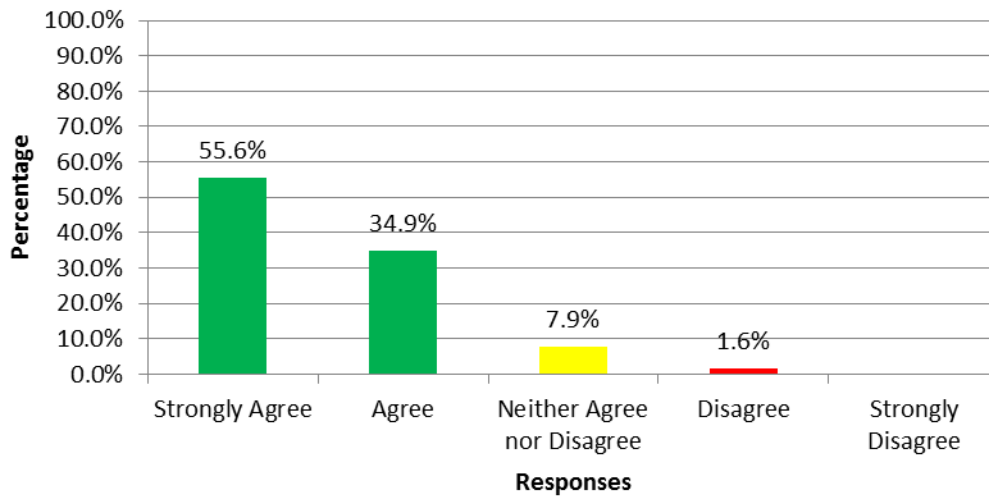
**You are encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things within your organization.**



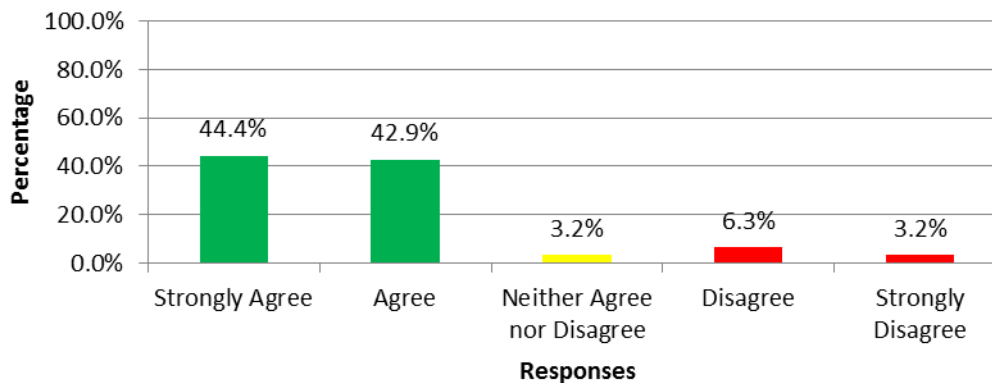
**You have heard the term “Lean Six Sigma” used at your organization and have some understanding of what it means.**



**You are encouraged to contact other organizations to see how they perform a particular work function to improve your organization's similar work function.**



**Employees at your organization are regularly recognized for improving work processes. (This shouldn't be confused with award programs to honor those performing tasks, i.e. making arrests)**



**When my organization initiates changes and improvements to a work process, those successful changes are shared across the organization.**

