

Implementing Accountability at the Lee County Sheriff's Office

Edward Tamayo

Abstract

Accountability based on the "COMPSTAT model," is a data driven managerial process that requires transparent accountability. The program ensures objective performance standards, holding personnel to open scrutiny. It has the potential to eliminate waste and ineffective projects. This research finds that it can achieve favorable results for the Lee County Sheriff's Office, similar to police agencies throughout the United States. Maximizing Accountability and Performance (MAP) will be the Lee County Sheriff's Office's version of COMPSTAT for its law enforcement operations. It should make the agency more effective in its mission. The program will make personnel more responsive to the community and in turn help the community to appreciate the Lee County Sheriffs Office. Accountability is the key to the success of MAP.

Introduction

When social and visible disorder is left unchecked, it will lead to serious, predatory crimes. There are many ambiguous reasons for crime that cannot be controlled, but there are some symptoms that may be controlled. The belief is that even minor crimes such as public drinking, graffiti and breaking windows will lead to serious crimes. This belief is because ignoring minor violations of law creates an environment for major violations of law due to the perceived indifference of people occupying the community. The lack of action that addresses these symptoms appears to be a lack of accountability. For many years, law enforcement agencies focused only on fighting major crimes and ignored minor violations of the law. Recent literature has shown that fighting crime should include enforcing minor violations of law, which leads to a reduction of major crimes.

Several large law enforcement agencies that have developed accountability based policing modeled after what is called "COMPSTAT." It has been called the "neighborhood approach" and "broken windows" policing by becoming accountable to the stakeholders. This includes other criminal justice agencies, the public and private companies, local citizens and visitors (Rodgers, 2003). The vision requires improvements in all areas of the community. The "Broken Windows" concept asserts that the quality of life issues affect the amount of crime in an area. Once more, this is the case with graffiti and litter. As neighborhood upkeep is ignored, others will add to the problem due to apathy setting in.

Some social science studies show that police in a community did little to lower the crime rate. The gap in the research involves the claim by some social scientists that police do not deserve credit for the decline in crime. With the crime decreasing in cities, like San Diego and Boston, the critics of COMPSTAT claim that crime decreases must be explained by factors common to all these cities, such as an improving economy, smaller numbers of the youthful males who frequently commit violent crimes, and a reduction in the use of crack cocaine. Other critics admit that police practices did reduce crime, but maintain that they did so at the unacceptable cost of brutality, especially towards African Americans. (Kelling, 2001)

This paper examines whether “police do matter” when it comes to lowering the crime rate. It explores the question, how enforcing minor violations of law leads to less serious crime on the streets of a community. The purpose and rationale behind this paper is to identify and consider the best practices behind the CompStat style of accountability and, in particular, its application to the Lee County Sheriff’s Office.

For example, the Lee County Sheriff’s Office will use the COMPSTAT method of accountability to ensure that quality of life issues, enforcement issues, and issues considered being of the “Broken Windows Theory” type, are handled effectively and efficiently. These issues exist in several Lee County neighborhoods which demand and deserve more attention from the Sheriff’s Office.

Methods

This research is based on an academic literature review which included the review of professional trade journals that examined national movement toward accountability in government, with an increased emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness. This researcher attended two POWERTRAC sessions in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, which has been used for the analysis. There were also interviews that took place with commanders at the Lee County Sheriff’s who were part of the development of the Maximizing Accountability and Performance program.

Results

The Broward County, Florida Sheriff’s Office (BSO) employed a program named “POWERTRAC,” which is an acronym for “*Provide Objectives Where Enforcement Resources Target Responses against Crime.*” Broward’s program was well known throughout the State of Florida and would later become known throughout the nation. Then national notoriety resulted from ethical concerns that developed at the BSO last year when it was discovered deputies submitted inaccurate information on crime reports or failed to write police reports in a misguided effort to keep the crime rate low so their respective units and division would look good during their POWERTRAC sessions. The resultant news media

coverage strongly criticized the agency's COMPSTAT efforts, saying it placed too much pressure on deputies to underreport crime to protect their jobs. However, it should be noted that BSO's POWERTRAC system did successfully identify numerous problems as being in need of law enforcement attention.

During the course of this research the researcher attended two POWERTRAC sessions held in Fort Lauderdale, Florida at the Broward County Sheriff's Office. POWERTRAC is similar to COMPSTAT, but appeared to have more intensity in its delivery to personnel. The key was to collect, analyze and map crime data and other essential performance measures on a regular basis and hold commanders and deputies accountable for their performance as measured by these data. The philosophy of COMPSTAT is simple. It is based on four principles, which have proved to be essential ingredients of an effective crime-fighting strategy; namely accurate and timely intelligence; effective tactics; rapid deployment of personnel and resources; and relentless follow-up and assessment.

The Broward Sheriff's Office POWERTRAC program though admirable in design was discontinued recently after some deputies gave erroneous information, and media publicity had pointed to POWERTRAC as being overzealous. Although the BSO is maintaining its COMPSTAT style programs for its Detention Division and Administration.

In 2003 the Lee County, Florida Sheriff's Office also experienced underreporting of crime without a COMPSTAT style program in place. In fact, during 2003, this researcher was a staff inspector and was instructed to make telephone calls to citizens previously serviced by the Sheriff's Office. These telephone inquiries were to determine how the citizens felt about the responding deputies and detective and about how their complaint was handled by the Sheriff's Office. These phone calls resulted in the discovery of deputies not completing written reports when required by law and not conducting investigations as required by agency policy. These quality control telephone calls were a form of accountability assurance practiced in the COMPSTAT process.

This study found that COMPSTAT opens an agency's "operational books" to public scrutiny. It employs both internal and external audits and is a viable method for managing operations which leads to sound decision making and more appropriate direction of resources. COMPSTAT uses data for tracking results and holds upper level management accountable for outcomes (McDonald, 2004). COMPSTAT traces its roots back to 1994 in the New York City Police Department (NYPD). In 1994, major changes took place in the management style of the NYPD. No longer was a centralized "command-and-control" the standard and micro-management from headquarters acceptable. Precinct commanders received latitude in managing their precincts, initiating their own crime control operations and making use of the resources available to them. Precinct commanders avoiding risk no longer had a formula for success. Instead, the department recognized and encouraged the positive efforts of the precinct commanders and their officers in reducing crime, disorder, and fear and the department measured their success (Schick, 2004).

The COMPSTAT model is grounded in the division of responsibilities to operations and administration, and how those can be evaluated. Operations represent the actual services being performed by the agency, such as responding to calls for service. Administration represents how the organization functions, such as budgeting and personnel issues. Staff members choose what topics should be evaluated, how this will be accomplished, and communicates the process to all of the commanders. Both commanders and staff gather operational and administrative data, which are compiled into notebooks for review and presentation. Each meeting permits staff members and commanders to go over that information. This is an on-going process that cycle in six-week sessions, based on the number of components. Commanders are expected to be knowledgeable on operational and administrative issues within their areas of responsibility. Each is asked specific questions and challenged to pose solutions. Commanders must be thoroughly prepared prior to each meeting and then be able to respond to follow up assessment. The process is designed to change the flow of information throughout the agency, restructure relationships, increase effectiveness, and to ultimately reduce crime.

Several innovative results have come from such accountability e.g. calls for service and reported crime data are being used more effectively to identify problems. Efforts are needed to integrate other sources of information, such as field interrogation cards, traffic tickets, accident reports, deputy's daily sheets; community concerns reports, etc., to form a comprehensive picture of trends. Computerized "pin" mapping should be integrated into the LCSO computer network, to display the location of crime to graphically demonstrate patterns or clusters. Pin Mapping has evolved into an important technological advance throughout law enforcement. The process can foster a dynamic management environment, where all levels of supervisors and managers are clearly aware of their responsibilities and expectations for success.

An additional benefit will be the opening of lines of communications between divisions and components that were traditionally "protected environments." The Sheriff will have the benefit of personally knowing every member of his command team, their capabilities, and what is occurring in their individual components by attending the "COMPSTAT sessions." Operational and administrative needs are almost always addressed "on the spot" by the direct authority of the Sheriff.

A direct result of high accountability and efficient use of resources is the crime incidence numbers within sheriff's office jurisdiction should decline in all tracked crime categories. Data analysis is also applied to administrative issue, such as the responsible use of budgeted funds - a direct benefit to the taxpayer. This has been the success of other agencies using a similar program. A cornerstone of this process is to reduce crime, while making the agency more accountable with taxpayer funds (Schick, 2004). The foundations of CompStat are:

Accurate and Timely Intelligence

Effective crime fighting requires accurate and timely intelligence. Officers at all levels, as well as statistics shows the decline of the crime rate at NYPD, give early evidence that CompStat is a useful program in meeting accountability in law enforcement. Some of the strengths to CompStat are:

Levels of the police department must understand when (time of day, day of week, week of year) various types of crimes have been committed as well as how, where, and by whom they have been committed.

Effective Tactics

Having collated, analyzed and mapped this crime intelligence, the department's commanders must develop effective tactics for dealing with the problems it reveals. In order to bring about permanent change in crime conditions, these tactics must be comprehensive, flexible, and adaptable to changing trends. They must also involve other law enforcement agencies such as the FBI, DEA and ATF, the prosecutors, the probation services, other city agencies not directly connected to law enforcement, as well as the public (e.g. community groups, etc.).

Rapid Deployment of Personnel and Resources

Once a tactical plan has been developed, the deployment of personnel and resources must be rapid and focused. To be effective, the response to a crime or quality-of-life problem demands that patrol and special units coordinate their resources and expertise and act with a sense of urgency.

Relentless Follow-up and Assessment

All action must be relentlessly followed-up and assessed to ensure that the desired results have been achieved. This is the only way of ensuring that recurring or similar problems are dealt with effectively in the future.

Implementing COMPSTAT at the Lee County Sheriff's Office. MAP or COMPSTAT is meant to be quality management tool for law enforcement in the form of comprehensive quality control measures. The following are plans that were made within the Lee County Sheriff's Office when this researcher was involved in the planning process.

Steps to be used by the Lee County Sheriff's Office:

- By tracking the crime rate and doing a crime comparison over previous periods, the Lee County Sheriff's Office is able to surmise certain actions and plans are succeeding. If not, plans that are not working will cease. This is to eliminate the wasting of resources. SARA projects will be used to this

end. SARA is an acronym for Scan, Analysis, Response and Assessment. D. S. Johnson (personal communication, November 9, 2004).

- SARA projects will be used to make certain that deputies are making effort where there is a need. For example, by use of crime and data maps they can determine where to focus their patrol activity. MAP Sessions are meant to keep deputies on task to attack crime where it is happening, i.e. a concentration of efforts where the demand is.
- Community meeting attendance is a must to help identify quality of life issues. This question addresses problems that may not normally come to agency's attention through normal means. In reality, many crime problems do not get reported and often time conditions that go uncorrected may lead to crime. Examples are broken windows, graffiti and trash. When this condition exists, there is a likelihood of crime. Deputies should be proactive in enlisting code enforcement, volunteer groups and others who have a stake in keeping a neighborhood crime free. In addition, LCSO is able to use jail trustees and juveniles on community service to perform clean-up duties at no cost to taxpayers.
- Having a process in place to track citizen satisfaction will help to decrease complaints against personnel. Increased satisfaction will lead to increased cooperation between citizens and law enforcement.
- Repeat calls for service is a vital area to be tracked. If deputies are repeatedly responding to the same address on the same type of call on a regular basis, then time and resources is wasted. By identifying repeat calls, action plans (SARA) can be developed to address the problem for elimination. Repeatedly responding to the same call at the same location wastes patrol time, taking deputies away from other necessary tasks.
- Monitoring repeat offenders. For years, probation and parole officers were the only people who tracked parolees and probationers. By knowing where those convicted offenders' reside, deputies may keep them in check by visiting them and providing a deterrent atmosphere. And when there is a crime in the area, the deputies know whom their potential suspects are. This is especially important with burglaries, sex offenders and violent criminals. The LCSO has been committing deputies to JAM (Juvenile Arrest & Monitor), which are juvenile offenders on house arrest. It has been identified through mapping of crime information that burglaries were occurring in the vicinity of JAM subjects. The East District of LCSO has lowered the burglary rates by 40% through heavy monitoring of these juveniles, and making certain they stay home. If they are not home, they are arrested, J.C. Nygaard (personal communication November 10, 2004).

An Example of Reduced Costs in New York City: The Success at NYPD

Crime victims in 1992 lost \$17.6 billion in direct costs, according to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). These costs included losses from property theft or damage, cash losses, medical expenses, and amount of pay lost because of injury or activities related to the crime. The crimes included in this figure are rape, robbery, assault, personal and household theft, burglary, and motor vehicle theft. Crimes include attempts as well as completed offenses. The Costs of Crime to Victims by Patsy A. Klaus, BJS Statistician

In 1992, New York City represented 3 percent of the U.S. population. If \$17.6 billion represents cost to crime victims nationwide, then \$5.28 billion would represent costs to New York City crime victims. From 1992 until 2002, New York City has had a 66.05 percent decline in average of all its part 1 UCR crimes. This 66.05 percent decrease in crime would represent a \$3.49 billion dollar decrease in cost to victims. The aforementioned is an estimate that does not include law enforcement and prosecution costs.

**Analysis of Saving the Cost of One Officer on Certain Calls for Service:
Historical Crime Rate in New York City (NOTE- COMPSTAT began 1994)**

| | 1993 | 1997 | % Change v. '93 | 2002 | % Change v. '93 |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Murder | 1,927 | 767 | -60.2 | 598 | -68.9 |
| Rape | 3,225 | 2,783 | -13.7 | 1,878 | -41.7 |
| Robbery | 85,892 | 44,335 | -48.3 | 25,907 | -69.8 |
| Felony Assault | 41,121 | 30,259 | -26.4 | 18,730 | -54.4 |
| Burglary | 100,936 | 54,866 | -45.6 | 29,173 | -71.1 |
| Grand Larceny | 85,737 | 55,686 | -35.0 | 46,707 | -45.5 |
| Car Theft | 111,622 | 51,312 | -54.0 | 23,132 | -79.2 |
| Total | 430,460 | 240,008 | -44.24 | 146,125 | -66.05 |

Source: NYPD COMPSTAT Unit

The median expected salary for a typical Police Patrol Officer in New York, NY, is **\$49,310**. Source: Salary Wizard 4/4/04. Based on that the average hourly wage for a police officer in New York City is \$23.71. It is feasible that an NYPD officer spends at least 8 hours on a homicide scene, 3 hours on a rape scene and a minimum of 1 hour on other part 1 crimes. The below chart shows what the cost of one officer would be on each of these types of crimes.

Historical Crime Rate in New York City as it Relates to Cost of One Officer:

| | 1993 | 1997 | \$ Savings over 1993 | 2002 | \$ Savings over 1993 |
|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Murder | \$365,512 | \$145,488 | \$220,024 | \$113,432 | \$252,080 |
| Rape | \$229,394 | \$197,955 | \$31,439 | \$133,582 | \$95,812 |
| Robbery | \$2,036,499 | \$1,051,183 | \$985,316 | \$614,255 | \$1,422,244 |
| Felony Assault | \$974,979 | \$717,441 | \$257,538 | \$444,088 | \$530,891 |
| Burglary | \$2,393,193 | \$1,300,873 | \$1,092,320 | \$691,692 | \$1,701,501 |
| Grand larceny | \$2,032,824 | \$1,320,315 | \$712,509 | \$1,107,423 | \$925,401 |
| Car Theft | \$2,646,558 | \$1,216,608 | \$1,429,950 | \$548,460 | \$2,098,098 |
| TOTAL: | \$10,678,959 | \$5,949,863 | \$15,408,055 | \$3,652,932 | \$7,026,027 |

The above chart shows that millions of dollars were saved in NYPD for the expense of one officer. In reality more is saved because multiple officers are involved in many of these crimes. Therefore the absence of crime will allow the reallocation of resources within other areas of the agency, such as prevention efforts. The same results are desired with the implementation of MAP accountability at the Lee County Sheriff's Office.

Implementing MAP at LCSO will not cost the agency any more because it uses material, software and personnel who are already in place. What MAP does is join management and operations together on a regular business and creating communication and feedback.

Below is a conservative estimate of results that are desired with the implementations of MAP and police accountability processes at the Lee County Sheriff's Office

Actual UCR Statistics for LCSO 2000 compared to 2002

| | 1/1/2000 Thru 12/31/2000 | 1/1/2002 Thru 12/31/2002 | Crime Difference | Percent Difference |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Central Investigations | 2773 | 2685 | -88 | -3.17% |
| District Offenses | 8708 | 9294 | 586 | 6.73% |
| Part I Crimes | 11481 | 11979 | 498 | 4.34% |
| Homicide | 9 | 23 | 14 | 100.00% |
| Forced Sex Offenses | 243 | 232 | -11 | -4.53% |
| Robbery | 356 | 382 | 26 | 7.30% |
| Violent Assault | 663 | 854 | 191 | 28.81% |
| Motor Vehicle Theft | 1502 | 1194 | -308 | -20.51% |
| Burglary Residence | 1822 | 2046 | 224 | 12.29% |
| Burglary Business | 640 | 875 | 235 | 36.72% |
| Total Larceny | 6246 | 6373 | 127 | 2.03% |

| | Potential | Crime | Decrease |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| | 1/1/2002 Thru 12/31/2002 | 1/1/2004 Thru 12/31/2004 | Percent Difference |
| Homicide | 23 | 14 | -40.00% |
| Forced Sex Offenses | 232 | 139 | -40.00% |
| Robbery | 382 | 229 | -40.00% |
| Violent Assault | 854 | 512 | -40.00% |
| Motor Vehicle Theft | 1194 | 955 | -20.00% |
| Burglary Residence | 2046 | 1841 | -10.00% |
| Burglary Business | 875 | 788 | -10.00% |
| Theft / Larceny | 6373 | 5098 | -20.00% |
| Total: | 11979 | 9576 | -27.50% |

The median expected salary for a typical deputy on patrol in **Lee County, FL**, is **\$46,000**. Source: LCSO Finance Division 5/7/04. Therefore the average hourly wage for a deputy in Lee County is \$22.00. It is feasible that an LCSO deputy spends at least 8 hours on a homicide scene, 3 hours on a rape scene and a minimum of 1 hour on other part 1 crimes. The below chart shows what the cost of 1 officer would be on each of these types of crimes.

| Estimated Savings | 2002 | 2004 | SAVINGS |
|----------------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Homicide | \$4,048 | \$2,464 | \$1,584 |
| Forced Sex Offenses | \$15,312 | \$9,174 | \$6,138 |
| Robbery | \$8,404 | \$5,038 | \$3,366 |
| Violent Assault | \$18,788 | \$11,264 | \$7,524 |
| Motor Vehicle Theft | \$26,268 | \$21,010 | \$5,258 |
| Burglary Residence | \$45,012 | \$40,502 | \$4,510 |
| Burglary Business | \$19,250 | \$17,336 | \$1,914 |
| Theft / Larceny | \$140,206 | \$112,156 | \$28,050 |
| Total: | \$277,288 | \$218,944 | \$58,344 |

The above chart shows that almost \$60,000 may be saved in LCSO for the expense of one deputy based on a conservative average of 27.5 percent reduction in crime. In reality, more will be saved because multiple deputies and detectives are involved in many of these crimes. Therefore, the absence of crime will allow the reallocation of resources within other areas of the agency, such as prevention efforts. This cost reduction is anticipated with the implementation of accountability at the Lee County Sheriff's Office.

Discussion

What has been determined by a review of the literature and statistics is that CompStat can be a useful tool in making LCSO more accountable to the community. Numerous law enforcement agencies have begun such programs and have had success in becoming efficient.

Maximizing accountability and performance (MAP) systems is a process used to hold law enforcement personnel accountable to the people they serve. This includes victims of crimes, the accused, visitors, officers themselves and the citizens at large. MAP is the agency's management accountability program. Majors, Captains and Commanders report to the Sheriff and the Chief Deputy weekly, detailing how they address crime and work with every neighborhood in their districts. A diligent weekly review process can examine crime committed within the jurisdiction.

MAP will help commanders spot crime trends and develop ways to use existing resources to prevent future crimes. It also helps track administrative matters, such as sick leave and overtime, allowing the effective addressing of those issues. A formal reporting and evaluation process, MAP will be the Lee County Sheriff's Office primary tool for reducing crime and improving the quality of life for the people the agency serves.

It is proposed that MAP sessions be held once a week in a specialized room complete with a multi-media presentation system. At each of these sessions, a captain or commander updates executive command about law enforcement efforts under his or her command. In addition to members of executive command, which includes the sheriff, chief deputy, majors and

Inspectors (the MAP Unit) - commanders of specialized units also should attend these sessions to answer questions concerning their specialty, share in the learning process, generate strategies and provide updates and results.

Each of the agency's district and division commanders presents to MAP sessions on a regularly scheduled basis. Approximately one week prior to each commander's MAP session, he or she is responsible for providing automated data to the MAP analysis team. This information is then formulated into charts and graphs for video display and evaluation during the upcoming MAP session. MAP sessions promote strategy discussions. These strategies are then shared and catalogued for the benefit of other commanders throughout the organization.

Conclusion

Regardless of title, the emphasis on accountability in law enforcement is vital. It is a process that will develop and train all members of the Lee County Sheriff's Office in the best methods for doing their jobs. All members of the Sheriff's Office are put into a position to learn from one another and to become empowered. The process also allows members to know what the community needs to improve the quality of life for all.

Accountability measures in place at the Lee County Sheriff's Office also means better communication, better understanding, better use of resources and better connection with the citizens. It allows the command staff and sheriff to know more about personnel performing their jobs and in turn allows the rank and file members to be better acquainted with the sheriff and his commanders.

The success of crime reduction at the Lee County Sheriff's Office is like success in any business endeavor, it is an ongoing process of self reinvention, and that is what MAP provides. Law enforcement agencies, including the Lee County Sheriff's Office cannot sit back, rest on their laurels, and say *we have arrived*.

Edward Tamayo is a Captain with the Lee County Sheriff's Office. He earned a Bachelor's degree in Management from International College of Naples and just finished a Master's degree in Public Administration. Employed in law enforcement for 27 years, Capt. Tamayo has been a patrol officer, general crimes detective, homicide detective, sergeant, lieutenant and captain. His administrative assignments include internal investigations and staff inspections. He is currently a watch commander overseeing the activities of over 75 patrol personnel, detectives, dispatchers and specialized units.

References

- Giuliani, R. (2002). *Leadership*, New York: Miramax Books
- McDonald, P. (2003). *Implementing CompStat: Critical Points to Consider*. Police Chief Magazine, Retrieved July 17, 2004 from http://www.policechiefmagazine.org/magazine/index.cfm?fuseaction=displayarch&article_id=202&issue_id=12004
- Kelling, G. (2001). *Do Police Matter, an Analysis of the Impact of New York City's Police Reforms*, Manhattan, NY: Center for Civic Innovation Research Paper
- New York Police Department Crime Statistics (2004). Retrieved July 17, 2004 from <http://www.ci.nyc.ny.us/html/nypd/pdf/chfdept/cscity.pdf>
- Rodgers, L. (2003). *Accountability Seminar for Law Enforcement Professionals*. Fort Lauderdale, FL: Broward Sheriff's Office seminar brochure.
- Salary Wizard. (2004). Retrieved August 30, 2004 from http://swz.salary.com/salarywizard/layoutscripts/swzl_compresult.asp?zipcode=&metrocode=119&statecode=NY&state=New+York&metro=New+York&city=&geo=New+York%2C+NY&jobtitle=Police+Patrol+Officer&search=&narrowdesc=Fire%2C+Law+Enforcement%2C+and+Security&narrowcode=LG01&r=salswz_swztsbtn_psr&p=&s=salary&geocode=&jobcode=LG12000003#bottom
- Schick, W. (2004). *CompStat in the Los Angeles Police Department*. Police Chief Magazine. Retrieved from http://www.policechiefmagazine.org/magazine/index.cfm?fuseaction=displayarch&article_id=190&issue_id=12004