

Promising Practices



*Law Enforcement Planning &
Research Directors Forum*

PERF

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Presentation overview:

- Review of major innovations in policing:
 - what are they?
 - are they effective?
 - challenges for planning and research offices regarding their use/ implementation
- Other challenges and issues facing planning and research offices
- Discussion



Successful Innovations and Strategies

- Eight major innovations in American policing developed over the course of the 1980s and 1990s (taken from Anthony Braga and David Weisburd's pending NIJ paper):
 1. Community policing,
 2. "Broken windows" policing,
 3. problem-oriented policing,
 4. "Pulling levers" policing,
 5. Third-party policing,
 6. Hotspots policing,
 7. Compstat, and
 8. Evidence-based policing.
- Effectiveness regarding police performance associated with these eight innovations (crime control and community satisfaction) is limited.
- Note, most police agencies use some combination of



1. Community Policing

Summary:

- community should play a central role in defining the problems the police address.
- the police function broadens and includes order maintenance, conflict resolution, provision of services through problem solving, as well as other activities.

Effectiveness:

- often implemented in combination with other programs, such as problem-oriented policing, making it difficult to determine effectiveness.
- as a general strategy, community policing has not been found to be effective in preventing crime. And unfocused community-oriented tactics such as foot patrol, storefront offices, newsletters, and community meetings do not reduce crime and disorder
- however, there is strong evidence to suggest that community policing tactics reduce fear of crime and increases community satisfaction with police.

Challenges:

- measuring effectiveness of “prevention”



2. “Broken windows” Policing

Summary:

- serious crime developed because the police and citizens did not work together to prevent urban decay and social disorder.
- encourages the police to be concerned with problems of disorder, and moves crime itself to a secondary, or at least second-stage goal of the police.

Effectiveness:

- available empirical evidence on the crime control effectiveness of broken windows policing is mixed
- it remains unclear whether police departments that engage a broad-based broken windows policing strategy actually reduce crime.

Challenges:

- measuring disorder – proxy measures?



3. Problem-oriented Policing

Summary:

- in order for the police to be more efficient and effective, they must gather information about incidents and design an appropriate response based on the nature of the underlying conditions that cause the problem(s)
- identifying these problems in more precise terms, researching each problem, documenting the nature of the current police response, assessing its adequacy and the adequacy of existing authority and resources, engaging in a broad exploration of alternatives to present responses, weighing the merits of these alternatives, and choosing among them.

Effectiveness:

- problem-oriented policing, when appropriately focused on specific crime problems, has been found to be effective in preventing crime.
- researchers have found problem-oriented policing to be effective in controlling a wide range of specific crime and disorder problems

Challenges:

- requires deliberate process (SARA), training and empowering the “problem solvers”



4. “Pulling levers” Policing:

Summary:

- adopts a problem-oriented approach, but provides a broader and more comprehensive combination of strategies than more traditional problem-oriented policing programs.
 - selecting a particular crime problem
 - convening an interagency working group of law enforcement practitioners
 - conducting research to identify key offenders, groups, and behavior patterns
 - framing a response to offenders and groups of offenders that uses a varied menu of sanctions (“pulling levers”) to stop them from continuing their violent behavior
 - focusing social services and community resources on targeted offenders and groups to match law enforcement prevention efforts
 - directly and repeatedly communicating with offenders to make them understand why they are receiving this special attention

Effectiveness:

- seems to be promising in controlling the violent behavior of groups of chronic offenders

Challenges:

- resource intensive



5. Third-party Policing

Summary

- the resources of the police are expanded to “third parties” that are believed to offer significant new resources for doing something about crime and disorder such as using civil ordinances and civil courts

Effectiveness:

- limited studies report that third party policing is effective in dealing with drug problems, violent crime problems and problems involving young people.

Challenges:

- partnership intensive



6. Hotspots Policing

Summary:

- crime is clustered in small geographic areas.
Preventive patrol can be more effective if focused more tightly in problem areas

Effectiveness:

- when police focus their efforts on identifiable risks, such as crime hot spots, repeat victims, and serious offenders, they are able to prevent crime and disorder



7. Compstat

Summary:

- the focus is less on the specific strategies that the police are involved in and more on the nature of police organization itself.
- information sharing and accountability system designed to empower the command structure to do something about crime problems.

Effectiveness:

- simple analyses of crime trend data suggest that cities experience decreases in crime after their police departments adopt Compstat
- however, since Compstat programs are often implemented in conjunction with other crime prevention initiatives such as broken windows and hot spots policing, it is very difficult to untangle the influence of Compstat on any observed crime control gains
- Compstat has yet to be proven as an effective crime control strategy in cities that have adopted the approach.

Challenge:

- ensuring accountability and follow up



8. Evidence-based Policing

Summary:

- argues that it is understandable that standard models of policing had failed because successful strategies must be based on scientific evidence. This approach calls for the development of such evidence, and in particular for the expansion of controlled experimental studies of policing practices.

Effectiveness:

- evidence-based policing has not been empirically tested as an overall model of policing, however, evidence-based police departments would draw policies and practices from a solid research base of strategies that have proven to be effective in controlling crime.

Challenges:

- ethics regarding experimental design when addressing violent crime and victimization
- discontinuing a popular program that has proven ineffective (politics and management of expectation, i.e. DARE)



Overlapping challenges:

- Switching strategies mid-stream to deal with violent crime flare ups, or high profile incidents.
- What happens when leadership changes – philosophy of Chief/Commissioner is different?
- Getting community buy-in
- Getting buy-in from all levels of the police organization
- Measuring effectiveness
- Homeland security responsibilities impact on police agencies, has impacted our relationship with community, as well as a resource drain.
- Some strategies, even if effective in decreasing crime and disorder, can alienate our communities



Other challenges and issues facing planning and research offices:

- Data driven deployment – balancing timeliness with accuracy, completeness and consistency
- Post implementation evaluation design – playing catch up long after a program has started.
- Maintaining long term focus and research projects
- Performance measures
 - Determination of appropriate measures for different units
 - Data collection challenges
- UCR and Clearance rates
- Real time / or more timely accurate measures of public perception
 - Internet?
 - Expense of surveys
- Partnering with academic community
 - balancing their skills and external validation with police needs – timeliness and flexibility.
- Mapping
 - Critical tool, but there are pitfalls.



Discussion:

Major Innovations

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