

Police Research & Development: Exploring the Application of Private Sector Best Practices



**A presentation to the Law Enforcement Organization
of Planning & Research Directors
PERF Annual Meeting
April 14, 2010**

Brenda J. Bond, PhD
Sawyer Business School
Suffolk University

Background



A dialogue and design exploration: Begin an inquiry and generate conversation about the application of private sector R & D decision making principles to policing. Explore the usefulness, challenges, opportunities, and potential future directions

- Seed money provided by the Sawyer Business School, Suffolk University
- An exploratory examination with a targeted group of police research and development/planning (R & D) staff in the NE region

Background - the policing context



- Citizens expect the local police to prevent and respond to crime in the most effective manner possible (Coleman, 2008; Goldstein, 1990; Kelling and Coles, 1996; Moore, 1995).
- The Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) established Standard 15.1 which states that "planning is the development of strategies for bringing about a desirable future condition." This CALEA standard, which promotes an analytical aspect of police outcomes, should direct management and operational activities
- Much of our knowledge of how public organizations are managed centers on change and innovation specific to the "content" of programs or strategies (Andrews, Boyne and Walker, 2006), such as crime fighting "strategies" (Braga & Weisburd, 2006). The desire to identify more effective program-specific change has overshadowed the need to understand how public managers systematically design and advance innovation and change for more effective outcomes (Feldman and Khademian, 2001; Robinson, 1999; Williams, 2003).
- Considering the significant bearing police policy and practice may have on individual and community quality of life, and the modern changes in police philosophies, there is still a need for police management research (Cordner, 2010; Maguire and King, 2004; Robinson, 1999; Sherman, 1998; Williams, 2003).

Theoretical framework



- **Research and development** (R & D) is widely supported in private sector organizations looking to create and manage effective innovation and change, using the best tools and techniques possible (Argyris, 1989; Matheson & Matheson, 1998).
- “Smart R & D is about **making quality decisions** – decisions that produce the best prospects for creating value” (Matheson & Matheson, 1998, p.6).
- The idea of the "smart organization" represents two key ideals - being smart and acting smart. “Being smart means making good strategic decisions whereas acting smart means the activity of effectively carrying out those decisions” (Matheson & Matheson, 1998, pg. 1).
- Research and development strategies assist organizations in "being and acting smart" by creating and supporting the best mechanism for effective innovation, implementation and outcomes (Ammons, 2009; Cordner, 2010; Dean & Sharfman, 1996; Matheson & Matheson, 1998).

Principles of "Smart Research and Development" that influence decision outcomes

Value	Ideals
Value Creation Culture	Value creation is a compelling argument for change
Creating Alternatives	Multiple alternatives are created and evaluated
Continual Learning	Improvements are continually identified and acted on
Embracing Uncertainty	Uncertainty is understood, communicated, and managed
Outside-In Strategic Perspective	Meaningful information is available from the outside
Systems Thinking	People understand complex cause-and-effect relationships and the impact on the whole organization
Open Information Flow	Information is routinely collected, analyzed & shared; it is available across boundaries and is used to create value
Alignment and Empowerment	A common understanding (via participation) of strategies for value creation creates a shared sense of purpose
Disciplined Decision-Making	Systematic decision processes are in place to identify strategic choices, involving the right people and information

The current exploration.....a beginning



Research Questions:

- 1. To what degree do police agencies espouse private sector research and development principles as part of their strategic decision-making practices?**
- 1. What are the challenges of embracing private sector research and development principles in the police organization?**
- 2. What factors contribute to the adoption of private sector research and development principles in this context?**
 - The target group were 22 police staff in NE identified through websites and networks
 - Survey instrument captured organization's approach to decision-making, using R & D best practices principles. The survey was designed measure the "general" use of these principles in strategic decision making. A Likert scale (1 to 5) was used to capture respondent perceptions. There were 5 measures for each principle, resulting in an index for each principle
 - A total of 12 surveys were returned
 - A focus group and follow-up interviews were completed with 5 of the 12 respondents to delve deeper into their responses and gather qualitative data about challenges and opportunities

Value Creation: This group of questions ask about the creation of value in the decision-making and planning process.

On the scale of 1 to 5, circle the number that best represents the extent to which your organization considers value creation as a factor in the decision-making process. The statements included in boxes 1 & 5 are intended to guide your response rather than represent an exact portrayal of your agency.

GENERALLY...	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
A. How do staff within the organization behave to create value?	Staff focus on their own jobs and lack an understanding of how the organization ultimately creates and captures value 1	2	3	4	Staff know who the customers of the organization are and how the organization captures value by serving them 5
B. My organization utilizes formal measures of value creation.	There are no measures of value creation, or there are so many that people do not know which ones are important 1	2	3	4	There are a few common measures of value creation that are used as the basis of decision making and/or compensation 5
C. How are conflicts resolved within your organization?	Conflicts are resolved through organizational power or turf. Often the conflicts get personal, and people lose track of the larger picture 1	2	3	4	Conflicts are resolved through appealing to a shared understanding of value creation and through examining what actions create the most value for customers and the organization 5
D. Are decisions evaluated in your organization, and for what purpose?	Evaluations do not measure ultimate value creation, or measures are used that are not translated into ultimate value 1	2	3	4	Evaluations trace actions through to results measure by value creation 5
E. Do staff feel empowered to question activities that they (or others) are doing that they think are not contributing to value?	Staff feel discouraged from questioning the value of a task. They fear (or have experienced) unresponsiveness or political backlash 1	2	3	4	Staff provide examples of situations in which they have questioned activities. Inquiring into how the task created value is legitimate way to question activities Tasks not creating value are modified or abandoned 5

Site Demographics

Source: 2008 UCR Data

Site	Population	Violent Crime Rate	Property Crime Rate
A	42,603	89	1,211
B	38,370	152	1,654
C*	6,497,967	29,174	155,959
D	26,958	52	945
E	29,005	15	610
F	54,527	33**	861
G	83,191	117	1,111
H	18,344	59	1,202
I	604,465	6,676	22,429
J	177,151	1,718	1,701
K	110,136	1,167	3,750
L	62,656	254	2,769
PERF 08 comparison	Average 700K+	Average 28,000	Average 32,000

* A State agency

**Does not include aggravated assault data, because their definition does not fit UCR standards

About the Responding Organizations

Question	Responses	PERF 2008 Comparison
Placement within Organization	Chief's/Commissioner's Office 42% Executive/Administrative of Support Services 33%	92% at Headquarters
Mandated policies	Yes 58%	
Number of Staff	Between 1-4 83% 5+ 17%	Average size 8 FTE
Sworn Supervisor	Yes 58%	Yes 62%
Title of Office		
Research & Planning	33%	
Research & Development	17%	
Planning & Research	8%	
Other	42%	
Planning, Research and Development; Crime Analysis; Planning & Analysis; Public Safety Analysis		

About the Responding Organizations

Primary Functions	Yes
Policy/Regulation Development	67%* (at least 50% cited in PERF study)
Grants	67%*
Budgeting	58%
Data Collection	58%*
Crime Analysis	50% *
CompStat	33%
Emergency Planning	33%*
Applied Research	33%*
Program Evaluation	33%*
Risk Management	25%
Performance Measurement	25%
Accreditation	17%
Project Management	17%
Procurement Analysis	17%
Intergovernmental Liaison	17%
Strategic Management	8%

To what degree do police agencies espouse private sector research and development principles as part of their strategic decision-making practices?

Site	Value Creation	Creating Alternatives	Continual Learning	Embracing Uncertainty	Outside-In Strategic Perspective	Systems Thinking	Open Information Flow	Disciplined Decision-Making	Alignment & Empowerment	Total Average Score
	M = 16	M = 17	M = 17	M = 17	M = 16	M = 16	M = 17	M = 16	M = 15	
A	17	20	17	15	14	17	16	17	15	16
B	22	23	23	20	23	22	22	22	21	22
C	13	15	12	14	10	14	13	11	14	13
D	11	12	9	13	13	8	16	11	10	11
E	20	19	20	20	18	23	21	22	18	20
F	23	24	24	21	22	20	23	22	22	22
G	15	14	10	14	13	13	10	12	13	13
H	17	17	20	18	16	14	18	17	14	17
I	11	8	19	12	16	11	10	6	7	11
J	18	17	18	17	17	16	16	17	17	17
K	14	15	18	19	19	14	19	16	16	17

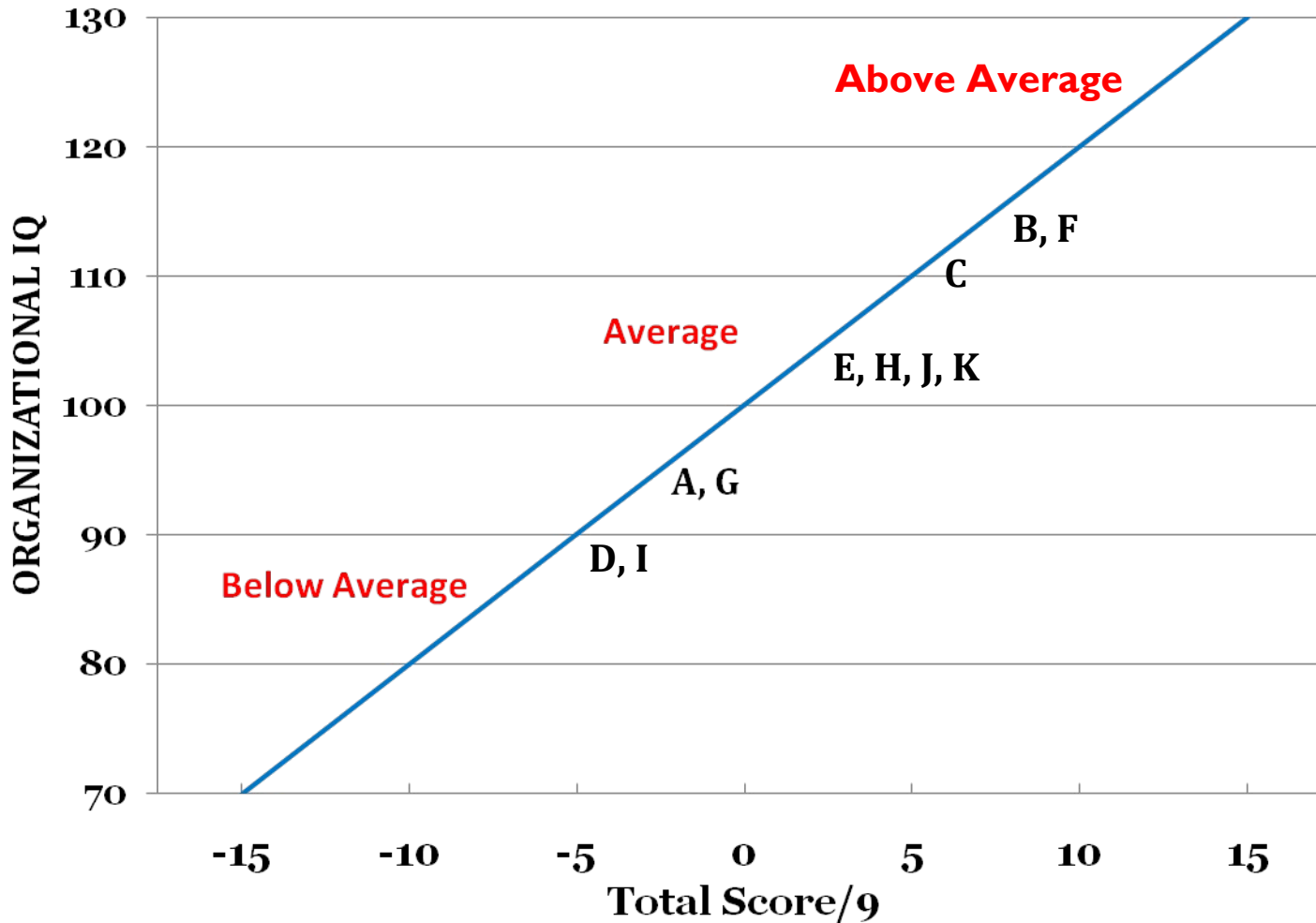
Scale: There were 5 questions for each principle, so for each principle the optimal score is 25 points
N = 11

The survey as a diagnostic tool



- Matheson and Matheson developed an analytical scheme to measure an organization's adherence to the 9 principles. Using their formula for calculating an "Organizational IQ," we converted our scale to theirs
- Organizations can identify a benchmark for each principle
- Identify where gaps are in principle adoption
- Prioritize changes/improvements

Organizational Alignment with Best Practices



What are the challenges of adopting private sector R & D principles in policing?

- **Catch-all unit** (cited in PERF study)
- **Grants rule**
- **Under-valued & misunderstood** (cited in PERF 2007 survey)
- **Management and oversight inadequacies**
- **Culture and hierarchy**
- **Disconnect from end-users**
- **Strategic management is missing**

What are the barriers to implementing R & D best practice principles in the private sector?

- **Change is difficult**
- **Lack of credibility**
- **Lack of resources**
- **Organizational or functional silos; secrecy**
- **Measurement conflicts or misuse**
- **Power and politics**
- **Short-term and internal focus; lack of strategy**

What factors contribute to the adoption of private sector R & D principles?



- LEADERSHIP, LEADERSHIP, LEADERSHIP
- Champions – and not just Command Staff
- Increased information sharing and technology
- Increased awareness locally (internally and externally) of value
- Increased conversations in professional circles; increased attention to the work

What could/should R & D be?



- Unit should have strong and present leadership, with trained managers
- High human and financial commitment
- Strategic roadmap
- Serve as an agency-wide resource
- Utilize and support systems to better connect activities, data, grants, etc to operational and strategic goals
- Well connected to a professional community (cited in 2007 PERF survey)
- Many factors influence the staffing, resources, structure – so there is a question about “prescribing” a model. Should measure contributions and outcomes
- PERF study revealed “some differences in Directors’ vision of the operations of their units.” (Bennett et al, 2008, p.13)

Lessons from private sector high performers



- Focus on “Decision Quality” at all levels and identify and measure outcomes
- Utilize best practices that form a blueprint for quality decision-making
- Foster a supportive culture - Institutionalize principles into the culture – these influence the way people think and act in pursuit of quality decisions and improvement
- Formalize and create explicit decision processes for aligning organizational strategy and expected value



Implications

1. Do we know enough? Who /What should be the focus of research? What are the best methodologies?
2. What to do about expressions regarding Leadership?
3. Does measurement have anything to do with value?

Considerations

Rule-based or principle-based? (A more organic approach? Kuykendall & Roberg, 1982)

1. Practical Dimensions
 - Diagnose strengths and weaknesses
 - Benchmark
 - Start small – use one strategic decision as a pilot for testing a new process
 - Training and hiring
1. Research Dimensions
 - What will be most valuable to the field? To knowledge?
 - Who will invest – practitioners, funders, researchers?
 - Training and hiring

Thanks to SBS for funding and Shannon Fahey & Nicole Rivers Kustanovitz for their assistance

References

- Ammons, D.N. (2009). *Tools for Decision Making: A Practical Guide for Local Government, 2nd Ed.* Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Andrews, R., Boyne, G.A. & Walker, R.M. (2006). Strategy content and organizational performance: An empirical analysis. *Public Administration Review, Jan/Feb 2006*, 52-63.
- Argyris, C. (1989). Strategy implementation: An experience in learning. *Organizational Dynamics, 18*, 5-15.
- Bennett, J., Bamberry, R., et al. (2008). The LEORPD Project Report. October, 2008. Washington, DC: PERF.
- Braga, A.A. & Weisburd, D. (2006). Police Innovation and the future of policing. In Weisburd D., & Braga, A.A. (Eds). *Police Innovation: Contrasting Perspectives.* (pp. 339-350). Cambridge University Press
- Coleman, T. G. (2008). Managing strategic knowledge in policing: do police leaders have sufficient knowledge about organizational performance to make informed strategic decisions? *Police Practice and Research, 9*, 307-322.
- Cordner, G. W. (2010). Community Policing: Elements and Effects. In Dunham, R. G. & Alpert, G.P. (Eds). *Critical Issues in Policing, 6th Ed.* (pp. 432-449). Long Grove, Ill., Waveland Press, Inc.
- Dean, Jr., J.W. & Sharfman, M.P. (1996). Does decision process matter? A study of strategic decision-making effectiveness. *Academy of Management Journal, 39,2*, 368-396.
- Feldman, M.S. & Khademian, A.M. (2001). Principles for public management practice: From dichotomies to interdependence. *Governance: An International Journal of Policy and Administration, 14*, 339-361.
- Goldstein, H. (1990), *Problem Oriented Policing.* New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc.
- Kelling, G. L., & Coles, K.M. (1996), *Fixing Broken Windows.* New York: Touchstone.
- Kuykendall, J., & Roberg, R.R. (1982). Mapping Police Organizational Change. *Criminology, 20 (2)*, 241-256.
- Maguire, E. R. & King, W.R. (2004). Trends in policing industry. *The Annals of American Political and Social Sciences, 593*, 15-41.
- Matheson, D. & Matheson, J. (1998). *The Smart Organization.* Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Moore, M., H. (1995). *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Robinson, D. (1999). The development management task and reform of “public” social services. *Development in Practice, 9*, 78-87.
- Sherman, L.W. (1998). *Evidence-Based Policing: Ideas in American Policing.* Washington, DC: The Police Foundation.
- Williams, E.J. (2003). Structuring in Community Policing: Institutionalizing Innovative Change. *Police Practice and Research, 4*, 119-129.