

**Creating a Mission Statement, Vision Statement and Core Values that Align with the WHY
of Your Organization**

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Abstract

This capstone project describes ways law enforcement departments can create and implement a mission statement, a vision statement and core values that align with the overall WHY (Sinek, 2009) of the law enforcement department. Some departments do not have a mission statement, vision statement or core values. Some department's statements and values are so long that the employees do not know or understand them simply because they are not talked about or posted anywhere within the department. They are not role modeled or trained on a regular ongoing basis; therefore, they do not know what is expected of them. In the summer 2018, several departments within the State of Wisconsin were able to provide information related to their mission statement, vision statement or core values and how they came up with them and implemented them successfully. Further, leaders should review these statements and values at every evaluation period with their subordinates on a one-on-one basis. The purpose of the review is to remind them what is expected of them and create goals for their subordinates that align with the statements and values. Additionally, the subordinates know what they have to do in order to be able to work towards the statements and values of the department.

Creating a Mission Statement, Vision Statement and Core Values that Align with the WHY of Your Organization

It is vital for each member of their department to understand and know the mission statement, vision statement and core values of their department so they know what is expected of them and what they have to do in order to conform to those statements and values. There are law enforcement officers who fail to conform to agency expectations on a regular basis because they do not have a clear understanding of the statements and values. Department leaders and employees cannot afford to have difficulties in understanding the mission statement, vision statement and core values of the department. It is vital for department leaders to make sure and talk about the vision, mission and core values on a daily basis, their importance and to then model the statements and values at all times. The statements and values should be posted around the department so it is a reminder to each employee. Each employee in turn should be expected to articulate these statements regularly.

Recent events have caused animosity between the media, citizens, law enforcement officers and law enforcement agencies. Law enforcement officers are in the spotlight now more than ever do to easily accessible technology. Criticism of law enforcement officers occurs on and off duty. Therefore, it is crucial for every member of the law enforcement agency to have a clear understanding of the department's WHY which encompasses the vision statement, mission statement and core values to establish the basis of expectations. When those are communicated effectively and efficiently, members will know what is expected of them and what they need to do in order to fulfill the department's objectives. A breakdown of the WHY which includes the mission statement, vision statement and core values can have significant consequences for the

employee and the department. For example, the Springfield Illinois Police Department suffered negative media coverage as a result of an officers' interaction with a citizen. This officer responded to the report of a disorderly child. When he arrived, he immediately started verbally sparring with one of the citizens on scene. The officer started pushing the citizen, put him into a headlock, threw him on the ground and started punching him. This was all on body camera which was released to the media. According to the Springfield Police Departments mission statement, "They will work in partnership with the community to promote open communication, education, cooperation and fair and equal treatment to improve the quality of life, promote unity, encourage respect, and make Springfield a safe community." (Springfield Police Department, 2018). The mission statement was clearly not communicated to the officer effectively because his actions did not reflect the mission statement. This officer was arrested for felony misconduct and battery.

When those are communicated effectively and efficiently members will know what is expected of them and what they need to do in order to fulfill the department's objectives. When there is no clear understanding of the WHY members of the department may find themselves at odds due to failing to follow expectations. As the head of the agency, it is important for the chief or sheriff of the department to come up with the overall WHY of the department with input and direction of his employees. Once the WHY is determined then a vision statement, mission statement and core values can be established.

According to a recent article on Police One, *5 things I hate about department mission statements*, it states that the mission statement should be short and to the point. Members of the department should have the ability to quote or at least paraphrase the mission statement. It is recommended the mission statement should be short enough to fit on the back of a business card

(Shults, 2018). When the mission statement is short and to the point, members of the department can easily understand and refer back to it when faced with any situation.

In this paper, we will examine the means to establish communion and trust in order to create buy-in from the department members and the community when creating and implementing the new vision statement, mission statement or core values. This will assist team members to provide appropriate services for the citizens of the community consistent with organizational desires. Team members will be able to make better decisions and help the citizens understand what to expect from the department which will establish trust and positive relationships through community policing. Finally, we will examine the influence leaders possess while influencing members of the department to carry out the mission statement, vision statement and core values to each member.

Literature Review

Team Cobra sent an email request to more than one hundred law enforcement agencies in the State of Wisconsin for relevant information regarding their mission statement, vision statement or core values. The purpose of the request was to identify strategies on how they created the statements or values and how they implemented them. After Team Cobra read through the responses most agencies included members of the department and members of the community.

After reviewing the submitted requests for information we identified several effective means to assist agencies with the creation and implementation of a mission statement, a vision statement or core values that reflect current industry standards. Team Cobra established a means to provide effective ideologies when creating department mission statements, vision statements

or core values that allow for employees and citizens to comprehend them. Team Cobra will describe these strategies in the subsequent section.

Creating a Department Vision, Mission and Core Values

When a department leader wants to implement a vision statement, mission statement or core values, the department leaders must effectively communicate the WHY of the organization to give employees a platform to establish the statements and values to be incorporated. The department leaders should solicit members who are interested in creating the mission and vision statement to form a committee. Once the WHY is established a committee will be formed to create a mission and vision statement. These committees will consist of members of the department and members of the community. Finally, every member from the department will assist with creating core values that reflect the mission statement and vision statement.

The vision statement committee should be formed and comprised of department members, board members, community members and other stake holders will assist in the creation of the vision statement. The vision committee will seek external feedback to enhance diversity in the creation of the vision. This committee will provide feedback to the department leader as the mission committee had done.

The mission statement committee should be formed with formal leaders or informal leaders from each division within the department. Meetings will be held to develop ideas regarding input for the creation of the objectives. Once the meeting is over each member would go to their employees and seek input. After committee collaboration is completed they will provide the proposal to the department leader.

Training has to be provided to all members of the organization establishing the mission and vision statements. During this training there will be a list of several core values and their definitions. Establishing core values will be a collaborative effort encompassing all department members during this training. Communication is the key to facilitate core values. There has to be significant opportunity to allow the free flow of information. Opportunities for the exchange can be conducted during formal and informal meetings. After training and discussion has been conducted the core values will be selected by the organization.

Personal and Profession Experiences

We spoke with an employee from a surveyed agency. This employee did not serve on the committee to create the new mission statement. She felt she was included on creating the new mission statement because the committee communicated with her unit. A committee member took input from each member of her team. She advised the committee has been working on the mission statement for about a year. They plan to have training for each of their employees to explain the new mission statement, so every employee is aware of the mission and vision moving forward. They plan on posting the mission statement in several different places within their police department to remind their employees of the mission statement daily. The statement will also be posted in the lobby to make it visible for citizens to view when visiting the police department. Challenge coins based on the mission statement will be used for commander's commendations to positively reinforce department values.

While speaking with her, she advised a majority of the officers she has talked to seem to be on board with the new mission statement and are excited about it. They also like the fact that they now have a challenge coin based on the mission statement that will be awarded to them by

the commanders when they do something great. A comment was made that they get pins for awards and the pins accumulated in their drawers whereas a challenge coin is proudly displayed.

Vision Statements, Mission Statements and Values

Several succinct statements were provided to our group for review and comparison. The objectives of the following departments are clearly communicated with simplistic, easily understandable language and are not excessive in length.

Waukesha Police Department

The Waukesha Police Department's Mission Statement is "A Pledge to Serve with Integrity, Honor, and Courage." (Waukesha Police Department, 2018)

Grand Chute Police Department

The Grand Chute Police Department is still in the process of implementing the Mission Statement. They came up with "We, through a relentless pursuit of excellence, protect the lives and property of those we serve and reduce criminal activity by partnering with the community" (Jaeger, 2018). This will be proposed to the chief very soon.

Brown Deer Police Department

The Brown Deer Police Department's Mission Statement is "It is the mission of the Brown Deer Police Department to protect life and property through fair and impartial enforcement of the law" (Brown Deer Police Department, 2018).

Their Vision Statement is “The Brown Deer Police Department will strive to foster an environment where our residents and visitors can live and conduct their business free from the impact of crime and disorder.” (Kass, M. 2018)

Within their policy, they provide three ways in which they will accomplish their vision statement. Their values are “courage, compassion, and commitment” (Brown Deer Police Department, 2018) which align with their mission and vision statements.

City of Wausau Police Department

The City of Wausau Police Department's mission statement is "The Wausau Police Department Strives for Excellence and partners with our community to enhance the quality of life" (Wausau Police Department, 2018).

Their vision is "To be regarded as the standard of excellence in policing" (Wausau Police Department, 2018).

Their core values are “professionalism, accountability, integrity, and respect” (Wausau Police Department, 2018).

Prairie du Chien Police Department

The Prairie du Chien Police Department’s mission statement is “The Prairie du Chien Police Department, together with citizens and other entities, will serve, protect, and educate our community in order to provide a safe and peaceful environment” (Prairie du Chien Police Department, 2018).

Role of Leadership in the Implementation Process

As previously discussed, training and communication were the key factors to explain the overall WHY of the department, the mission statement and the vision statement. The importance of clarity is paramount. During week 4-5.12 of the National Command and Staff College lecture it was evident a lack of clarity will cause ambiguity within the workplace creating tension between the department and employee. It is the responsibility of each supervisor to operationalize personnel performance (Long, 2018). During week 4-5.13 of the National Command and Staff College Dr. Normore discussed the importance of establishing a shared workforce understanding of what is to be achieved at the departmental level aligning skills and knowledge of the employee to produce the desired outcomes. Supervisors and subordinates must meet individually to establish a clear understanding of the vision statement, mission statement and core values. The individual meeting allows for the mission statement, vision statement and core values to be communicated to the employee in a one-on-one setting. The supervisor will verbally inquire if the employee understands the mission statement, vision statement and core values and allow the employee to ask clarifying questions to avoid the potential fear of feeling inferior as it may occur in a group setting. The supervisor and the employee will establish three or more goals for the subordinate that would assist with meeting or exceeding the expectations of the mission statement, vision statement or core values. The established goals will align the employee's goals with the overall department objectives. The purpose is to establish buy-in and create personal growth of the individual employee. This meeting shall be recorded in writing indicating the understanding of the employee (Normore, 2018).

The vision statement, mission statement, and core values need to be posted throughout the department to remind each employee of the departmental goals. The supervisors are responsible to model the vision statement, mission statement and core values and remind the employees of the department objectives on a frequent basis. The addition of the mission statement and core values to business cards will be a constant reminder to every employee who hands a card out. The recipient of each card will receive the department objectives and have an understanding of what they should expect from the department. The mission statement, vision statement and core values must not be relegated to a policy manual and never seen again. Departmental leadership and subordinates have the mutual obligation to successfully implement the objectives for the benefit of the organization and community. The prominent display of the mission statement, vision statement and core values will serve as a continuing reminder of how important it is to achieve the overall WHY of the department. The new vision statement, mission statement, and core values will be presented to the community. The use of technology such as, the department webpage and social media, will allow community members access to the objectives of the department. If the community has an understanding of our expectations we can establish trust and encourage communication.

Mission statements, vision statements and core values should be reviewed by leadership on an annual basis to ensure they are still valid and make updates as necessary to accomplish department objectives. They should be discussed frequently with department members and incorporated with the daily operations of the department. Effective leadership has to look to the future and provide a direction for the department. An effective leader will provide the foundation of principal and purpose to build the department and establish the next generation of leaders. If the legacy of the department is not a priority and we fail to plan, create and

implement department objectives we will drift apart internally and externally in an ever-changing society.

Conclusion

Overall, after talking to the agencies that recently updated their vision statement, mission statement and core values it seems imperative to form committees to come up with vision statement and mission statement for the department based on the department head's overall WHY of the department. The shorter the mission statement, the better so the employees can understand it and memorize it, so they know what to fall back on when doing their jobs. Once the vision and mission statements are created, hold in-service training and talk to all the employees of the department as to what they feel are the top core values every officer should have in order to abide by the vision and mission statements. Once the core values are picked, it is essential to provide a brief description of each one.

Finally, once the mission statement, vision statement, and core values are in place, it is essential for supervisors to meet with employees individually to make sure they understand them and answer any questions they may have. After the employee understands each of them, then the supervisor will create goals for each of the employees that will assist with them being a part of achieving the overall mission and vision of the department. This will create buy-in because most employees want help to achieve excellence for their department, but most of them do not know how. So if they have guidance and direction from their goals and understanding of the overall mission and vision of the department, this will make them feel as if they are part of making the organization a great place which will make them want to work even harder.

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