

**THE BILL BLACKWOOD  
LAW ENFORCEMENT MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE OF TEXAS**

The Justification for the Development of a Competency-Based  
Training Program for Mid-Management Law Enforcement Supervisors

A Policy Research Project  
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by  
David L. Peck

Orange County Sheriff's Department  
Orange, Texas  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
Abstract	
Introduction	1
Historical, Legal, and Theoretical Context	2
Review of Practice	4
Discussion of Relevant Issues	8
Conclusion	9
Bibliography	

## ABSTRACT

As law enforcement organizations of today continue to expand, the need for better trained supervisors is essential. Supervisors must be experts not only in the area of criminal law, but also ever mindful of civil liabilities. Their failure to properly supervise employees can result in the civil prosecution of not only the employees themselves, but the law enforcement organization that employs them.

The purpose of this report is to present the justification for the development of a competency-based training program for mid-management law enforcement professionals. It will provide insight into why a supervisor's training program is needed and the advantages of cross training departmental supervisors within each agency. A training program for supervisors would be in addition to any formal education in the criminal justice field or any state mandated certification the officer may have.

The conclusion of this research will show that a well-written and enforced mid-management training program will not only enhance the performance of the employees but will also relieve the county of civil liabilities in some areas due to officers being well trained and educated.

## **Introduction**

Supervisors of today's law enforcement officers face more complex issues than ever before. Not only must they be concerned with the safety and welfare of the citizens they protect, but also with the safety and welfare of the individual officers they supervise.

The functional aspects of personnel management include recruitment of personnel, placement of personnel in the proper position in the structure, training and development of personnel to suit the needs of the organization, and service activities directly related to the welfare of personnel (Massie, 72).

The Orange County Sheriff's Department has no training program or written procedure for mid-management supervision. Department policies provide some type of training. However, it would be impossible for the supervisor to understand the needs of the department or the required experience needed to fill an employment vacancy without standard operating procedures. This paper is directed to the administration of the Orange County Sheriff's Department, law enforcement administrators, training coordinators and anyone with an interest in the increased training of mid management supervision. The purpose of this research is to examine, develop and implement a mid management training program for the Orange County Sheriff's Department.

There are numerous sources of information pertinent to this project, many of which are personal interview. A review of current management training must be made on a voluntary basis as opposed to mid-level management training on a mandatory basis to ensure the proper supervision of personnel. To facilitate the transition from a mid-management supervisor to a highly trained law enforcement professional, the Orange County Sheriff's Department must utilize some type of mid management training program if it intends to remain a modern law enforcement agency.

As with any organization, the most valuable asset that the Orange County Sheriffs Department has is its employees. The employees cannot do a good job unless you, as supervisor, show them how and provide them the necessary tools and knowledge in order to properly do an assigned task. Poorly trained supervisors will not only destroy the leadership structure within the agency but could impact the agency financially with unnecessary costs. In today's litigious society, people are suing for the most trivial reasons. It is the responsibility of management to reduce the opportunities for litigation created by foolish employee mistakes. If a mid-management program can be implemented in the Orange County Sheriffs Department, the benefits to be derived will substantially outweigh the costs.

### **Historical, Legal, and Theoretical Context**

While supervision is a commonly used term, and there is a relatively broad agreement on its meaning, the supervisor may be seen most appropriately as the person who has the direct responsibility of getting things done through people (Sherwood and Best 13). A supervisor must be properly trained in all aspects of his job to effectively get things done by the efforts of the very people that he is charged with supervising. Anything less would be an injustice to the employees and the employer. This training should be conducted at all levels of an organization to ensure the success of that organization. Implementing a mid-management program in the Orange County Sheriffs Department would help that department maintain the high level of service that it has traditionally provided to the citizens.

As a Japanese proverb says "to teach is to learn." That is the concept behind implementing a mid-management program: helping people do their job more efficiently and effectively by providing training, experience, and new technology that is available. By making schools, training

seminars, and instructional sessions accessible to mid-level supervisors, the entire organization will continue to grow.

Training may occur in a variety of ways. The task of training is not easy. It will be difficult precisely because it cuts across nearly all aspects of an organization. A group of top industrial executives underscoring this point once went so far as to report that nine out of ten management functions could be classified as education or training. This may be true, but to effectively operate an organization, training must be conducted on a regular basis to ensure that the proper procedures are being followed and everyone knows what the proper procedures are. An improperly trained supervisor is just as bad as an untrained supervisor. The end results will usually prove to be costly in every aspect.

Every supervisor should be familiar with the aims or objectives of the organization for which he works. Furthermore, he should be sold on them and enthusiastic to the extent that he can sell these objectives to the men under him (Spriegel, Schulz, Spriegel, 9). Only through proper training and education can a person help achieve the goals of any organization. To sell these ideas or objectives to the people within his charge, a supervisor must be fully knowledgeable of the subject matter. This will facilitate the proper training and education of all personnel, the ability to achieve within the organization and enhance its organizational goals. If a supervisor is fully knowledgeable of the subject matter, this will instill confidence in the people under him. Any attempt to try to sell your ideas or objectives to your subordinates, without this knowledge, could very well diminish your leadership abilities in the eyes of the personnel you supervise. Do it, delegate it or dump it! Whichever you choose, you must have the knowledge.

In any organizational unit, leadership does not remain constant. As the situation changes,

leadership shifts from one person to another, according to his ability to provide what is needed at the moment ( Hanna and Gentel 9). In an organization such as the Orange County Sheriff's Department, job duties are constantly shifting. People are promoted, transferred and given different assignments on a constant basis. Isolated training in one area is a waste of manpower and can be costly.

Consequently, supervisors should be trained in all aspects of the organization so that transfers and promotions can be made as smoothly and cost-effective as possible. This is especially true of mid management supervisors since this is the level where most assignments change on a regular basis. Complete training will only enhance the performance of the entire department and help to better serve the general public in a more efficient and cost-effective manner. The citizens deserve and expect the very best that a department can provide. To do any less is cheating the very people we are paid to serve.

### **Review of Practice**

As Col. Harold P. Knutty once said, "lead, follow or get out of the way." (Fulton 40). A supervisor must do one of the three to be a good leader. Since most of us are not "born leaders," proper training is necessary to create good leadership within an organization.

In reviewing local police departments and other agencies from around the state, it was discovered that very few have mid-management training programs for newly promoted supervisors. "Once promoted, our supervisors are afforded the opportunity to go to the FBI Academy or Southern Police Institute, if they want to," stated Lt. Paul Davis, assistant commander for the Texas Department of Public Safety, Beaumont Division. This opportunity is strictly voluntary. A newly promoted supervisor should jump at the chance to help make their job easier. Nevertheless, such opportunity is presently not available to supervisors employed by Orange County law enforcement

agencies. "We do send supervisors to the basic field training officer program and to the first line supervision school," says Ralph Osborne, Former Chief Deputy, Hardin County Sheriffs Department, Kountze, Texas, 16 years. This type of basic supervisory training is indeed essential to begin the management program. However, it would be an injustice to a newly promoted supervisor if mid-level management training stopped there.

"If you try to push a length of rope, it doesn't work. If you lead from the other end, you are successful," quoted Donald R. Anderson, Loss Control Coordinator for Orange County. How very appropriate. You cannot push employees. Education in management helps new leaders to understand positive and negative reinforcement. A mid-management level supervisor needs to know what motivates the people he supervises. If a supervisor can find what motivates his people and handle such discovery in a positive fashion, the whole organization will be successful. "Mid-management level training is very crucial to any organization and will be supported by the Orange County Sheriffs Department," states John Tarver, Chief Deputy, Orange County Sheriffs Department.

Negative role models can sometimes be effective. "I learned how not to supervise from some of the sheriffs I have worked for," quoted Capt. Thomas Hennigan of the Orange County Sheriffs Department, who has worked for six sheriffs in Orange County. If a supervisor can learn how not to supervise and be trained how to supervise, he will be successful in just about any organization. Successful supervisors lead to successful organizations.

Because of the discretion they had as patrol officers, most law enforcement managers are comfortable making decisions as long as guidelines exist (Bennett and Hess 153). Without guidelines and training, mid-management supervisors can do more harm than good in many situations because discretionary decisions at a management level are more difficult. However, with proper guidelines



and training, the supervisor should be able to make sound, correct decisions that will enhance the performance of any organization.

In researching various law enforcement agencies, it seems that there is an absence of any type of mandatory training for mid-management supervisors. The common practice seem to be that supervisors are left on their own to get the education they need to try to do a better job. The Texas Department of Public Safety offers training and educational opportunities to their supervisors, but only on a voluntary basis. Leaders of today must communicate the importance of training and education to the rest of the organization. Too often, members of the staff are overwhelmed with tight deadlines, leaving little or no time for training. If upper level management does not see the importance in training lower level supervisors, this may discourage or prevent employees from attending. With this type of blind ignorance in management, an organization does not have the resources or the ability to function at an efficient and effective level.

The Hillsborough County Sheriffs Department maintains the belief of "People Oriented Positive Leadership." People leadership skills are emphasized in the various levels of supervisory leadership training. The Hillsborough County Sheriff s Department has pre-promotional requirements for the ranks of corporal, sergeant and lieutenant. Corporal candidates are required to complete a course entitled Line Supervision; sergeant candidates are required to complete a course entitled Middle Management; and candidates for the rank of lieutenant are required to complete a course entitled Developing and Maintaining a Sound Organization. Each of these must be completed prior to being eligible to sit for the promotional examination in the respective rank. The courses range from the basic managerial skills to the more complex. Upon promotion, they have established training for newly promoted corporals which includes: Philosophy of Leadership; What is a Leader?;

Interpersonal Skills Development; Managing the Marginal Employee; Performance Evaluation Training; and Written Communications Skills Improvement.

Newly promoted sergeants and lieutenants at the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Department must attend the following courses: Command Expectations; Leadership; Today's Workforce; Managers - Supervisors or Leaders?; and Communication; Planning and Decision Making. The Hillsborough County Sheriff, Cat Henderson, is an advocate of continued leadership training.

According to Dr. James P. Doane, Director, Criminal Justice Training Center, Lamar University, Beaumont, Texas, "Command staff share in the vicarious liability with the CEO, and must be provided with on going management, and leadership training. Mid-level manager training programs need to focus on developing new skills that build on the supervisory skills of the trainee. Methods of instruction should rely on the manager's experience and use case studies, feedback, in basket exercises, leaderless group discussions, presentations, role playing, and simulations. Mid level managers must develop interpersonal, oral and written communication skills as well as techniques in goal setting, problem solving, community oriented policing, EEOC, planning and time management. "

Megan Hanson, Government Management Development Center, University of Texas, Austin, Texas, states, "There are courses available for mid-management supervisors, so there is training available to help local agencies." This school does not teach directly on mid-management, but the concept is taught throughout the training process. Mid-management training should not be limited to on-the-job training but should include some formal education on how to supervise as well.

You are responsible for the effective and efficient utilization of the resources at your disposal. This includes material, education and the most valuable of all resources, your fellow

employees. Do not hesitate to get their ideas and thoughts. Two heads are sometimes better than one.

### **Discussion of Relevant Issues**

Most medium to large-sized law enforcement agencies experience what may seem like endless assignment changes for middle management personnel. Sergeants and lieutenants are moved around to various divisions in a department, usually with little or no expertise in the functional aspects of their new assignment and no personal knowledge of the dynamics associated with personnel. Through routine transfers, promotions, retirements, etc., reassignment of middle management personnel is an ongoing fact of life.

Since they will inevitably experience reassignment, middle managers should be prepared for the new assignment as soon as possible. With a clearly focused goal in mind, it will be possible to do more than walk through the door, scratch one's head and acquire the immediate status of the leader. Proper training and education of mid-management supervisors will help to ensure a smooth transition and will turn the organization into a well-groomed machine with interchangeable parts.

In a mid-sized organization, such as the Orange County Sheriff's Department, the training is such that most could be taught at a local level using in-house personnel to do much of the training. With outgoing personnel training incoming personnel, most of the training will be on-the-job.

For more specialized training, the local police academy and Lamar University occasionally offer courses on some of the subjects that need to be taught. If no training is available through other local sources, then the Orange County Sheriff's Department training personnel can develop a program that is suited for its local needs. By developing these in-house schools and opening them to other agencies, the costs can be shared, thus making it more cost effective for everyone.

Nevertheless, we must be ever mindful of the fact that not every agency will agree as to what

is the right way to implement a mid-management training program. As Jim Goodman says, "If you were selling hundred dollar bills for a quarter each, you couldn't get every policeman to buy one." Everyone has their own idea of what is the best and most cost effective way of running any organization. With the Orange County Sheriff being an elected official, what works well for him may not be worth the paper it's written on for the next elected sheriff Any training conducted should be done with this in mind. However, any organization that has a well-trained staff can effectively operate no matter who is at the helm.

The Orange County Sheriff s Department has the opportunity to start from the bottom and build a training section for mid-management officers that can become a model for other agencies to follow. If they will implement training that is suitable for small to middle-size organizations, they may even be able to realize a profit by offering training and education to other departments in the area. Even if they choose to limit its use to the Orange County Sheriff's Department personnel, they will still reap a profit by becoming a well-organized department which is capable of operating in a more cost-efficient manner. Additionally, as a well-trained organization, they will also be able to better serve the citizens of Orange County.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this report is to present the justification for the development of a competency-based training program for mid-management law enforcement professionals. This paper examines a need for a training program for mid-management supervision. It will provide insight into why supervisors' training programs are needed and the advantages of cross-training departmental supervisors within each agency. A training program for supervisors would be in addition to any formal education in the criminal justice field or any state mandated certification the officer may have.

The Orange County Sheriff's Department, at this time, does not have a mid-management training program or policy that is used in any of the training. The development of the training will greatly enhance the ability of the officers to operate in a more efficient manner. Learning new skills will also help to keep an employee from becoming stagnant and part of the problem. Mid-management training will result in those same employees becoming part of the solution to problems within the organization. This, in turn, will also help the morale of the department. And more than in any other type of organizational structure, morale is a key ingredient to the success of a law enforcement department.

Further, written policy also lets the supervisors know what is expected of them. With proper training, this will make everyone's job easier. If the policies are written, then how can an employee use the excuse, "I didn't know." "Any time people involved with other people can improve their communication skill, they will be farther down the road," says Jim Sharon Bearden, a local attorney.

Mid-management training should be an ongoing project and not just a one shot deal. If a business hires people, fails to train them and then places them in positions of authority, without any guidelines, the business will not blossom to its full potential and will ultimately fail. "If one tire on a car goes flat, that car cannot operate at its best," say Tom Kinder, acting police administrator for the West Orange Police Department. If all the wheels are not turning in the right direction, the vehicle is almost useless. For an organization, whether it be law enforcement or ditch digging, to fail to train its personnel at all levels is only a disaster waiting to happen.

The intent is that we have a well-trained agency that is confident in its ability to interface with the public, as opposed to personnel that are reluctant to interact with the citizenship for fear of mistake or litigation.

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