

# STRATEGIC PLANNING IN LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

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# Introduction

- Initiated in the 1960s in the private sector, strategic planning has gained its popularity among public service agencies since 1980s.
- Strategic planning is an upper management-initiated process that sets specific goals and identifies measurable steps for a division(s) or an entire organization taking into account personnel and budgetary resources.
- It is a future-oriented process that deliberately anticipates planned change for an organization over a period of time, usually within a span of two to five years.
- One prominent example of strategic planning in the public sector is the implementation of Community Oriented Policing (COP).

# Purpose of this study

- to investigate the current status of strategic planning in American law enforcement agencies;
- to develop conceptual models and guidelines that might facilitate strategic planning in police departments interested in such an endeavor.

# Methodology

- Telephone interviews: 219 law enforcement agencies; Fall of 2004 and Spring of 2005.
- Site visits: 7 law enforcement agencies varying in size and geographic location subsequently were selected.

# Major findings from telephone interviews

- A majority of large agencies have strategic plans (55%) compared to less than one-third (26%) of medium-sized and smaller agencies (29%);
- The top three reasons reported for having a strategic plan include: 1) commitment to meeting community demands; 2) interest in reducing crime; and 3) letting rank-and-file officers know what the administration and community expect of them.
- The two most popular sources for learning about the implementation of a strategic plan are other agencies (73.3%) and community surveys (69.5%), with an average of 7 months expended in the development of a strategic plan.

# Major findings from telephone interviews

- An agency's chief executive or its command staff typically is responsible for the implementation of a strategic plan;
- Law enforcement agencies most likely rely upon agency-wide crime data (80.6%) and/or district-specific crime data (71.8%) when updating an existing plan;
- The perceived major strength of strategic planning is a comprehensive approach to planned change and many agencies (32%) identify lack of resources as the largest challenge in the actual implementation of the plan itself.

## Major findings from telephone interviews

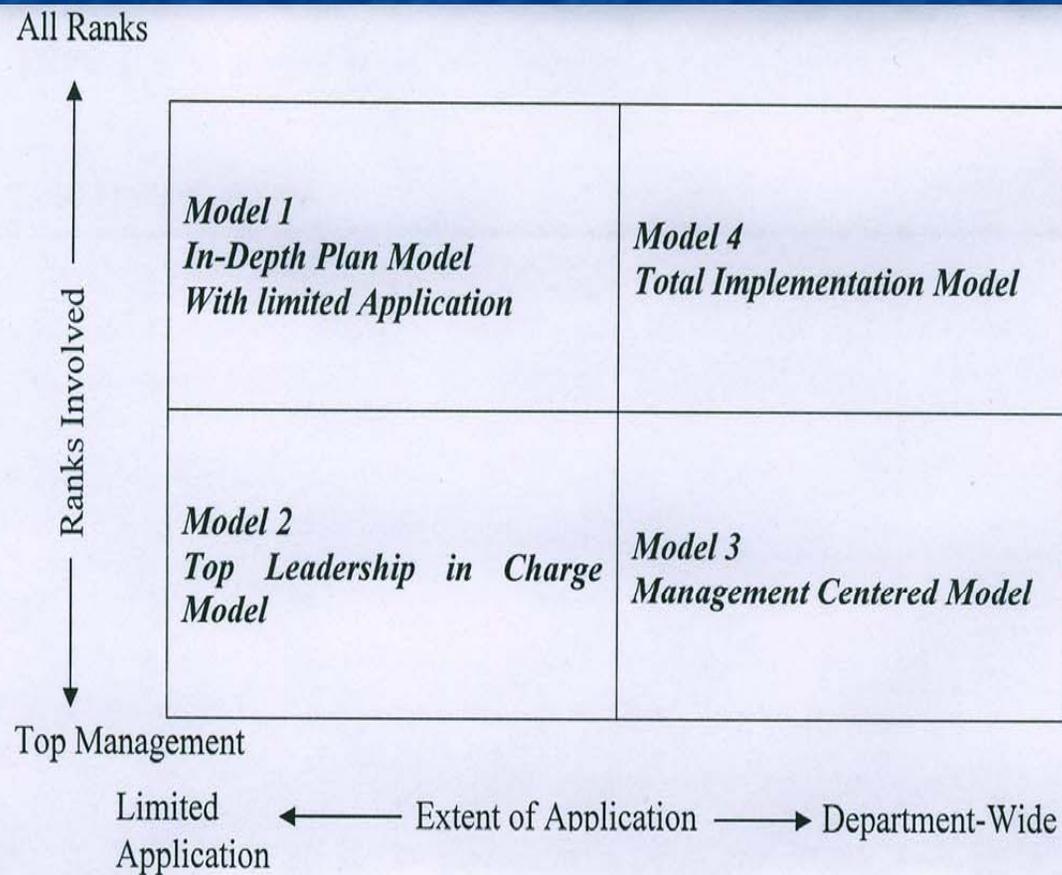
- There is no one best approach that suits all agencies, but rather, the best strategic plan is one that is responsive to an agency's intentions regarding planned change;
- Personnel changes at the executive level severely reduce the likelihood that a previously existing strategic plan will succeed;
- Major, unexpected events tend to reduce the likelihood of the successful implementation of a strategic planning process.

# Four models of strategic planning derived from site visits

- *Two Dimensions*

1. Width --- the extent of coverage under strategic plan (units involved);
2. Depth --- the extent of hierarchical involvement in strategic plan (ranks involved)

# Four models of strategic planning derived from site visits



# Four models of strategic planning

- *Model 1: In-depth Plan Model (Rank involvement—High; the extent of application—Low).*

This model incorporates a limited utility view of strategic planning. Here the scope of implementation is limited to participation by only one or two divisions in an organization. Goals and measures are set up for the division(s), while other units are not directly involved. In the more hierarchical orientation, all employees from top administrators to rank-file-officers are involved in the implementation.

# Four models of strategic planning

- *Model 2: Top Leadership in Charge Model (Rank involvement—Low; the extent of application—Low)*

There is limited involvement across the department's division(s). The top two layers of the organization are in charge of the implementation and only they have the full knowledge of the progress of the plan. Dissemination of information concerning the strategic plan is centralized, and consequently, most employees usually have very limited knowledge concerning the status of the plan.

# Four models of strategic planning

- ***Model 3: Management-Centered Model  
(Rank involvement—Low; the extent of  
application —High)***

Law enforcement departments under this model develop strategic plans that are usually department-wide. Most divisions have been included in the plan with specific goals and measures in mind. Updates are frequent and mechanisms are in place to formally measure goal attainment in each division. In contrast, the hierarchical level of involvement is low, usually limited to the command staff (e.g., chief, deputy chiefs, captains, etc). In general, patrol officers are not aware of the plan.

# Four models of strategic planning

- ***Model 4: Total Implementation Model (Rank involvement—High; the extent of application —High)***

This model entails a fundamental change in the way a police department manages its resources. The implementation of the strategic plan is department-wide and involves all divisions. Goals, objectives, and measures are formally set at each level. All employees from the Chief to rank-and-file officers are all held accountable for the plan. The strategic plan becomes the blueprint for the department in daily operations and other changes.

# Level of Sophistication in Methods

Simple

Middle

Comprehensive

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- Phase 1: Formation of Strategic Plan;
- Phase 2: Implementation;
- Phase 3: Annual Evaluation

# Phase 1: Formation of Strategic Plan

- *Internal methods*
- Command staff involvement;
- Middle management involvement;
- Rank-and-file officers participation;
- Civilian employee participation;
- Hiring an external consultant;
- *External methods*
- Community organization participation;
- Community resident participation;
- *Methodological methods*
- Define mission and goals;
- Specify objectives and measures by using crime and other data sources;
- Set time frame for each goal and objective;
- Identify the designated person or team and budgetary needs;
- Participants' training;
- Modify performance evaluation to meet the requirement in the plan.

## Phase 2: Implementation

- Quarterly meetings to assess the progress;
- Collect data as specified in the plan;
- Analyze the data and produce monthly or quarterly updates;
- Make sure all the participants are informed on the progress of the plan.

# Phase 3: Annual Evaluation

- *Internal methods*
- Create data and document progress;
- Analyze data and assess attainment of each goal;
- Make reports available for community organizations and residents;
- Identify emerging issues in the process of implementation and make adjustments;
- Conduct annual performance evaluations;
- Conduct employee surveys to assess the progress of change;
- *External methods*
- Conduct citizen surveys to assess the effect of programs.
- *Methodological Methods*
- Frequency distribution and trend analysis;
- Correlations;
- Multi-causal analysis;
- Panel data analysis and time-series analysis.

# Three Determining Factors for a Successful Strategic Plan

- Leadership commitment is the most crucial factor;
- Plan for Unexpected Events;
- Management Style Is Also Crucial.