

Broken windows, damaged gutters, and police supervision

[Government](#), [Military](#)



For ten years Officer Mike Strzykalski worked with the Merrysville police department utilizing the principle of “no-nonsense” policing where the productivity of the police officers was governed by meeting quotas with regard to tickets and arrests. For many years this was how the police in Merrysville worked, with a barrier between the police officers and the citizens of the town. This was the way in which the police officers grew accustomed to working, how they evaluated themselves, and how they were evaluated by superiors for promotions.

This all ended when Chief Harold Furman came into office. Chief Furman believed in a more progressive form of policing where interaction with the community is encouraged in order to solve problems, make the community a better place, and stop crime. Chief Furman set up mini precincts all over the city in order to make the police force more prominent in their areas, and also introduced a new form of evaluation where the officers were not graded on their tickets and arrests but on their community interaction. Quotas became a thing of the past.

With the demise of the well known, comfortable evaluation system, the police officers rebelled as they no longer understood the system by which they were to operate. Officer Strzykalski fought these changes until he began to notice damage to houses in the neighborhood which he patrolled. Officer Strzykalski found out that the damage he viewed was the result of gangviolence, so he arranged to speak with all of the affected residents privately and in a group setting, assisted in the security and repair of

community homes, and related information to the officers investigating gangs that would help to eliminate gang violence.

This experience gave Officer Strzykalski a new, reformed opinion on the progressive changes that Chief Furman was making in the department, leading to several commendations for many officers and a promotion for Strzykalski. Obstacles to Reform: When seeking to make a drastic change in the philosophy of many different people concerning not only the way in which they do their job but how they see and approach it creates a type of chaos with those individuals.

People as a group are less able to recognize the positive influence of change and as such are more likely to vehemently protest initiating any change. When change is forced on them, they rebel in an attempt to return things to the way in which they are comfortable for the majority of the people involved. Changing from traditional policing to community based policing requires a large amount of change on behalf of the officers because it takes them out of their comfort zone and places them in a position where they are more in control of their job and of how it is done.

This control is based on their interactions with the community members as well as open communication with their superiors. There also has to be consideration given to the police officers' union with regard to what changes in labor practices the police Chief can make without infringing on the rights of the officers in his command. The main difference in supervision is that the officers are put more in a position of responsibility.

Senior officers are used for oversight and administration while lower ranking officers are the ones who are expected to investigate crimes, seek out problems in the community and find effective ways to solve them, as well as to represent community members to the higher ranking officers where previously the officers were simply required to take orders with regards to what crimes to investigate and give out a certain number of tickets a month. The daily supervision of the community falls to the police officers while the supervision of the police officers falls into a more structured hierarchy.

Supervision in Community Policing: The benefit to patrol officers in accepting the philosophy of community policing is that the officers are more in control of not only their beats but also their careers. Rather than being completely limited in their career evaluation by numbers concerning tickets and arrests, they are judged based on actual performance in the community, by the efforts that they are making to make their community a better, safer place. These patrol officers are able to voice their concerns and opinions to their supervising officers.

They are also better in control of the information that is filtered up through the police hierarchy as well as how crimes and community issues are handled. Though the model is very different from traditional police work, many patrol officers would embrace this kind of change, even if they at first balk at it. The community policing philosophy allows them to better control their careers as well as their involvement in the community. By placing them more in a position of power, the benefits of community policing become more attractive to patrol officers.

Frontline supervisors and sergeants should find the concept attractive as well because there is more supervisory demands placed on them with regard to other officers, but there is also a more formal structure that is in place which keeps them from being placed under overwhelming pressure. Also many of the supervisory officers' lesser duties and community duties are placed in the hands of patrol officers which gives the supervisory officers more time to concentrate on other necessary duties.

One of the main issues in this system that would face supervisory officers is keeping their patrol officers in line as well as validating the information that comes from those officers to ensure that nothing is being skewed in the best interests of the police rather than in the best interests of the community. Officer Strzykalski: Officer Strzykalski was extremely pessimistic about the change to community policing when it was first introduced to the Merrysville police department.

He fought against the changes, however once he was won over by the philosophy Strzykalski became very idealistic about the changes that he and his officers could implement in the community. Strzykalski's idealism came from the very realistic goal that were being met in the community on his beat as well as the commendations that he and the other officers were receiving for their good work in the community. Since the idealism came from a realistic place based on his experiences, I would not say that Strzykalski was too idealistic, especially taking into consideration his initial rebuking of the change to community policing.

I believe that a lot of the fears of patrol officers could be addressed by simply explaining in detail to the officers what the changes are, what they will involve and what the consequences of those changes will be. By having a good understanding of what they are facing, it takes away some of the mystery that shrouds the outcome of the changes. Another way to address the fears of the patrol officers would be to not only state their support of the officers throughout the change but to also physically be there to assist the officers as they work through the new responsibilities of their jobs.

While it would be impossible for a supervisor to be there on the job with the officers all the time, they can offer one on one coaching to assist the officers in making the transition. Conclusion: Though the patrol officers, particularly the ones that had been a part of the old regime of policing, fought stringently against the changes implemented by the new chief of police, they eventually came to not only accept their new roles as police officers but also to find pride in their work on a different level.

Rather than simply being the tools of supervising officers, they became a force of good in their communities, actively seeking out ways in which they could improve life for the citizens rather than just being there to help out after something bad had already happened. This philosophy of police work allowed the officers to be more proactive rather than simply reactive when solving crimes.