

Class project on san diego police department

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



Police Departments of different cities are undergoing a transition. Police department and their operations, hierarchy design, and strategies are becoming increasingly similar to that of other commercial organizations. Police Departments today operate with a sense of direction, a mission that is broken down into objectives and achievable goals that must be met in order to rank the mission of the department as a success. Therefore, it will not be incorrect to compare police departments to business organizations functioning within the society

About San Diego Police Department

The police department of San Diego is one of the most efficient police departments from across the country. The department is also amongst the pioneers in implementing strategies that have won the country the edge in the fight against crime. These strategies include implementation of an Information Technology infrastructure and programs such as 'Community Oriented Policing'. The San Diego Police Department has a strength of over two-thousand-six-hundred personnel. This strength consists of officers that are sworn, as well as other that are civilians.

These personnel function conjointly towards accomplishing the mission of the police department. These personnel are further divided into eight divisions: Field Operations, Special Operations, Neighborhood Policing, Training and Development, Office of Administration, Personnel Services, Professional Responsibility, and Support Services. All these departments function under the assistant chief, except for the Personnel Services which functions under a civilian personnel director. (Decker, Cordner, Ward, 1999)

The department has been a leader in trying new strategies for implementing effective criminal justice routines.

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The department works closely with the community and encourages the society to participate and coordinate with the fight to make the city free of crime. The 'Community Oriented Policing' and 'Problem Oriented Policing' are two such programs that bring the community and the department together in the fight against crime. Further, the department has also implemented Information Technology as a strategy for efficient crime reporting and monitoring. The aforementioned strategies have yielded promising results for the San Diego Police Department.

The crime rate has considerably declined in the city and is continues to drop. The crime statistics of the year 1997 show that fewer homicides, murders, violent crimes, property crimes and burglaries have taken place that year as compared to 1978 (Decker, Cordner, Ward, 1999). However, this existing crime rates are still quite high for the United States. The San Diego Police Department has therefore the responsibility to sustain the comparative low crime rates and try to reduce these statistics even further.

This cannot be achieved without efficient strategy planning of department's resources. Following is a study and analysis of the San Diego Police Department. The various aspects of the operations of the department are studied, analyzed, and based on these a strategy plan is devised for sustainability in operation of the department. San Diego Police Department's Mission The department envisions cohesion of efforts of various entities in the society, aimed at improving the lives of the inhabitants of San Diego.

The collaborative work is one of the most stresses attributes of the police department's mission. This collaboration includes entities such as "

communities, government agencies, private groups and individuals” (The City of San Diego Web Site, 2002) that share the same vision as the San Diego Police Department, i. e. fighting crime and improving the quality of life in San Diego. The attributes of the mission statement are the values that the San Diego Police Department tends to use to accomplish its mission.

These values are representative of the spirit, and are the basis of the policies of the police department’s mission. San Diego’s Web Site (2002) lists some of the core values of their police department, rating protection of human beings as one of the highest priority values. This is significant for any police department as the primary reason for establishment of peace, law and order systems is protection of human life. The value deserves to be at top priority as a lack of value suggests taking for granted the objective of the department’s motif for existence.

The implementation of ethical policing follows in the list of values. The reason for giving ethics a high importance is crucial for the acceptance of the police department by the people it is established for. There are many issues surrounding execution of duties of the police force and officers, ethics being one of them. It is not fiction but a fact that a police subculture has established itself within the officers which sometimes provides for officers to carry out unethical practices or misuse of authority.

The public shows its concern for such unethical practices implemented by law enforcers themselves. Therefore, the implementation of ethics in particular and mention of it that high in the mission statement of the police department is strategically intended to ward off bad attention. Units in the

San Diego Police Department The police department has been organized into several different units based on nature of function or crime. This helps organization of resources as well as represents the image of a well-organized/equipped police department.

The different units operating in SDPD are: Air Support Unit, Armory - SWAT, Background Investigations, Canine Unit, Child Abuse, Communications, Crime Analysis, Criminal Intelligence, Crisis Intervention, Data Systems, Domestic Violence Unit, Elder Abuse, Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO), Field Training Officer Administration (FTO), Financial Crimes, Gang Detail, Harbor Patrol, Homicide, Internal Affairs, Juvenile Administration, Laboratory, Legal Advisors, Metro Arson Strike Team (MAST), Media Relations, Mounted Enforcement Unit, Narcotics, Neighborhood Policing, Permits & Licensing (Vice Administration), Personnel, Psychological Services, Records, Recruitment, Robbery, School Task Force, Sex Crimes, Special Investigations, SWAT/SRT (Special Response Team) and Vice Operations.

The City of San Diego Web Site, 2003) Critical Success Factors of San Diego's Department of Police The success of the Police Department in accomplishing and maintaining the mission objective in the community can be contributes to various factors. Some of these factors can be outline to be critical for the success of department, without which the SDPD could not have realized their mission objectives. These factors are summed up and briefly outlined here as the critical success factors for SDPD. Well-defined Strategy The reason why San Diego Police Department has been recognized as one of the leading police departments in controlling crime is that the department has well-

defined strategic objectives. The objectives are responsible for focusing the resources of the organization in an organized manner, towards attaining the mission objectives of the department.

Setting up a well-defined strategy for a criminal justice unit is rather a new concept in criminal justice administration as usually these departments just focus resources in an unpremeditated manner towards the customary objective of reducing crime. However, the strategy of the SDPD is different. The police department has laid down a definition of more than one goal and further strategically channelled their resources towards realizing these goals. An instance of such a strategy is the department's awareness about different approaches towards criminal justice, such as the 'problem-oriented policing' strategy or integrating the community in the fight against crime in the neighborhood.

Training of Human Resource The shift away from the conventional means of operations brings forth the need to train the human resource of any organization to accustom it to the new strategy. Not only would a new strategy introduce new processes for conducting conventional operations, but it may also introduce new tools (such as Information Technology tools, including software and hardware) that are intended to enhance the efficiency of the human resource. San Diego Police Department faced the same circumstances where the introduction of a strategy enticed the need for human resource training. Eventually, the proper and trained use of strategies and tools led to efficient operations and increased productivity of the police department which was unprecedented.

Besides the consideration of training with a changing information technology infrastructure, officers at the police department have to undergo extensive training from the police academy before they can start performing their duties in SDPD. A focus of ethical grooming is also maintained during this course of training. This helps realize and implement the value of the San Diego police department to use ethical policing when serving the community. The officers undergo comprehensive training in the police academy which prepares them not only to 'serve and protect' but to efficiently implement policing according to the strategy that is implemented at SDPD.

Use of Information Technology The introduction of Information technology tools is one important development for crediting the success of the mission at SDPD. Conventional policing shows less use of high tech tool for attaining criminal justice objectives, but with the advancement in technology the role information technology tools play has become a crucial success factor of policing. San Diego Police Department has been one police departments that accredits its success to the use of Information technology tools, including software, hardware and processes. The department has segregated the use of Information technology in various units and systems.

The New Technology Unit (NTU) is one such unit which is headed by a sergeant and staffed by patrol officers. Each individual involved in the integration of technology in policing is thoroughly trained, committed and knowledgeable about the use of this technology. The information technology infrastructure is used for a range of operations. This includes activities from

installation of software of laptop machines to the use of Automated Field Reporting (AFR) devices. (The City of San Diego Web Site, 2003; Decker, Corder, Ward, 1999) Information Technology helps improve the efficiency of operations of the San Diego Police Department in various ways.

For instance, the patrol officers can electronically transfer information from their remote locations to the central information system regarding criminal activity or general reports. Financial Situation Finances are the backbone of the any organization as refining the state of the community comes at a cost which must be met. Finances help any organization buy and employ resources towards a definite objective. Similarly San Diego Police Department has the primary objective of making the city a secure place by protecting them and further improving their quality of life. In order to realize these (and many other) objectives for the mission of the police department, the department needs finances.

Once finances have been obtained, which is further required is the proper and efficient management of these finances in order to get the maximum out a limited finances. Budgeting is used by SDPD to plan its finances most effectively. The major part of the budget is used to cover personnel expenses. This shows the worth and its expected reliance on the human resource for the success of the mission of the department. Like any other organization, monetary benefits are used to keep the human resource motivated.

When the major portion of the budgeted amount is spent on salaries, the remaining amount is still a hefty lot for the police department to plan

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investment in information technology and other infrastructure - efforts aimed at improving the efficiency of SDPD. (The City of San Diego Web Site, 2003; Decker, Cordner, Ward, 1999) The primary sources for the finances made available to the San Diego Police Department are five, namely: Property Tax, Sales Tax, Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT), Motor Vehicle License Fee (MVLFF) and Franchise Fee. As the financial resource of SDPD depends on the City's General Fund, they are generally sensitive to political and economic stimuli coming from either local, state or national levels. Organizational Design Strategy The organizational hierarchy is clearly listed at the San Diego Police Department Web Site (2003).

The organizational hierarchy shows the structure of the police department and the chain of command can be conveniently analyzed. An analysis of the organizational chart reveals that the department is arranged in a way of a business organization with the Chief of Police as the CEO, and the managers take places lower in the hierarchy. So much so that the organizational chart is also labeled as " San Diego Police Business Center". The organizational hierarchy is top down, however possesses horizontal attributes, which make communication between individuals working at the same level (horizontal communication) and also across departments. Vertical communication however is not favorable in the top-down hierarchy.

Further analysis of the organizational chart of the San Diego Police Department reveals that the department intends to implement a central control over other departments / entities working lower in the hierarchy. This organizational design will be helpful in enforcing strict monitoring

and accountability of entities lower in the hierarchy. Such an organizational design, therefore, is used to implement effective programs and reduce the relaxation/room for errors for entities as activities are reported to entities higher up in the hierarchy design. This is one strategy that is used to accomplish the mission of ethical policing at all levels within the department.

It is safe to suggest that the organizational design of the San Diego Police Department compliments its ethical policing objective. Strategic Plan for San Diego Police Department The aforementioned analysis has laid the foundation to devise a strategic plan for the San Diego police department for the coming years. The analysis of the department's mission, critical success factors, financial situation and organizational design strategy are the groundwork for a smart strategic plan for the department, which would otherwise not be feasible without these analyses. The following is a suggested strategic plan for the San Diego Police Department including justification for each strategy suggested. Strategic Design for SDPD

The analysis of the organizational design reveals a hierarchy with strict and inflexible structure. This organizational design might be appropriate for implementation of ethical policing and complimenting strict measures of control within the department, however the organizational design conflicts with an important aspect within any organization, i. e. communication. The design strategy hinders communications within different departments at different levels of the hierarchy. The design strategy suggests to the community that officers and entities placed lower in the hierarchy will be the

interface for dealing with the department, whereas entities higher in the hierarchy depict not much interaction with the public.

It is important to mention here the expectancy of the public to have transparent execution of services as it is the public's money which is the source for funding the police department. Therefore, what the San Diego Police Department needs is an organizational design that fosters communication with all the entities involved in policing, however one that also implements a strict control for implementing ethical policing without hindrance. This can be implemented with a new, lean organizational design. Contingent Strategy for SDPD As analyzed earlier, the financial strategy of the San Diego Police Department is susceptible to economic and political fluctuations on the local, state or national level.

This susceptibility poses a threat to the sustainability of operations of the police department by exhibiting dependence on these factors. The department needs to devise a financial management strategy to provide when in difficult times such as those that may not cause disruption of work. This means that an alternative source for generation of funds must be established or sought out by the San Diego Police Department that can cater to the financial needs of the department when other currently implemented sources are not available. Conclusion The San Diego Police Department has implemented quite a few strategies to minimize crime in the city. Nevertheless SDPD must implement further strategic measures for sustainability of its mission of fighting crime.