

# Criminal justice organizations and challenges faced



In the world of criminal justice organizations, leaders are facing challenges that have become a part of the daily routine. Criminal justice organizations consist of corrections, courts, and the police. These organizations each have an important role in the criminal justice system that results in the leadership of each organization. This paper will explain some of these challenges of the leaders and steps that can be taken to affect change for the future.

### Leadership

The ability to effectively lead a group of followers making the organization and the followers successful is leadership. An individual must have dedication, commitment and not be afraid of taking in leadership. In leadership, learning and communication skills are important in the accomplishing these tasks while still being able to maintain valid ideas and principles. To ensure their success, leader must know how to treat the followers. In addition, leaders should know how to motivate others and stay consistent their values, morals and ethical standards (Schermerhorn, Hunt, Osborn, & Uhl-Blen, 2010).

### Challenges

There are many challenges that leaders face in criminal justice organizations. Some of these challenges include increased criminal activity, staffing, budgeting, legal and political, terrorism, conflict and power, communication, and ethical and moral issues. Most of these challenges relate to other challenges. Resolving one challenge may help resolve another challenge.

Criminal activity increases as the population increases. Police officers, the courts and other criminal justice organizations are not able to protect and serve the public and ensure safety because of the shortage of professionals. Hiring additional staff or introducing more community programs is necessary to help reduce criminal activity. The question of additional staff brings another challenge of budgeting. Leadership in criminal organizations is battling shortfalls in the budget which brings about staffing and equipment shortages.

Politically, state judges and prosecutors are in position from election votes. When applicable the election can bring in new appointments and result in a number of changes within criminal justice organizations. In terms of legal challenges, the changing of laws, policies and procedures can become a challenge in enforcement and being aware of political alliances (Duelin, 2010).

Conflict and power are two other challenges that leaders face in the criminal justice agencies. The conflict occurs among the variety of agencies inside the criminal justice system. An example is between the courts and the police. The police have a job to uphold protection and safety, so they may make arrests charging individuals with crimes with the hope that these individuals are prosecuted and punished for these crimes. On the other hand, the courts decide what the punishment should be and how it is carried out. These two agencies do not have the same goals and this becomes a conflict. The police and courts have a substantial amount of power with these responsibilities. Leadership for these criminal justice agencies must balance this power with fairness (Duelin, 2010).

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Another leadership challenge is communication. The barriers of communication are individual and organizational. Individual barriers relate to how an individual interprets a conversation or message. Organizational barriers relate to the culture of an organization. Leadership includes being an effective communicator. An effective communicator will have the ability to handle these barriers. Within the criminal justice system, organizations have different jargon which is a part of their culture. This can make it very difficult to communicate with other organizations. Another communication barrier is between the professionals in the criminal justice organizations and the public. With the increasing population, our society includes many races, nationalities, cultures and languages. The ability to communicate with the public is essential.

Other important leadership challenges are ethical and moral standards. Ethics allows us a way to make moral choices at times when we are uncertain of what to do in a situation involving moral issues. In the criminal justice system, ethics is important in management and policy decisions that relate to punishment and the rationality in making decisions. These decisions regarding punishment are to rehabilitate, deter or impose imprisonment. A criminal justice organization consists of professionals that carry power and authority over others and in some case have authority to use force and physical coercion against others. Ethical rules and responsibilities are given to these professionals as the law or accepted standards of behavior that require them to be aware of these ethical standards while performing their duties. To avoid any attempt to abuse power, ethics are crucial in decision making that involves discretion, force, and due process.

Domestic terrorism is the greatest challenge for criminal justice organization. Since 9/11, safety and security is a top priority. Every role in the criminal justice system is affected by terrorism. Although a number of new policies and procedure have been put into place to help ensure the safety of all, terrorism is an ongoing challenge. Employees from many criminal and correctional agencies are away from their regular jobs and are serving active duty for the military regarding the war on terrorism. This means these departments are suffering and have a lack of security. Other employees such as the local police and persecutors have to take more prominent roles in the investigation and prosecution of crimes that would normally be the responsibility of federal law enforcement (Daniels, 2002).

### **Affecting Change for the Future**

Criminal justice professionals can affect changes in the future by reducing the opportunity for crime, changing people's fundamental values, nurturing these values into the youth, and motivating the people responsible for crime will reduce the likelihood of future criminal behavior. Continuing to use the advancement of technology such as DNA analysis, forensic testing, surveillance, stoplight cameras, biometrics, and radio frequency identification microchips will continue to enhance crime solving and prevention. Also increasing the intelligence of databases for use by the general public in addition to the use by analysts and police officers will help educate and make the public aware of criminal activity. A current example of this is the sex offender registries and access to inmate information (Ritter, 2006).

In terms of improving communication and information-sharing, the Office of Justice Programs is working together with the FBI to widen access to the Regional Information Sharing System and the FBI's Law Enforcement Online system to combine the operations of the two systems. This will allow the RISS program to network a variety of different federal and state law enforcement information-sharing to create a secure network that can share information at levels of the government in law enforcement (Daniels, 2002).

In order to facilitate change, hiring additional criminal justice professionals and providing excellent training skills will be a necessity. The training should consist of ethical and cultural standards, policies and procedures, weapons, equipment, and communications skills. The Police Service program has volunteers and the program works to increase the citizen volunteers in law enforcement agencies. This allows the law enforcement professionals to be available to perform their front-line duties. In additions, it allows the law enforcement agencies to enhance existing programs and start new programs while expanding ways to use citizen volunteers (Daniels, 2002).

In terms of terrorism, criminal justice organizations must stay alert in linking terrorism to other crimes. These crimes include cybercrime, drug trafficking and identity theft. In the 9/11 situation, drug trafficking was the source of finance for the terrorists, the hijackers stole the identity of innocent victims to start and build credit and bank accounts to cover terrorist activities. Law enforcement's determination of cybercrime was found. The terrorists were using computers to attach banking networks, and defense system computers. The internet is the method chosen by terrorist organizations to communicate with members by e-mail and to raise funds.

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A balance between neighborhood security and national security must be made. In creating this balance maximizing our resources will allow the continuation of making advances on both sides. This means that criminal justice organizations at every level will have to work together to resolve the terrorism challenge.

## **Conclusion**

Leadership is an important aspect in criminal justice organizations. Challenges arise on a daily basis. Addressing organizational change including more cooperation between the community and law enforcers, and the institution and advancement of technology in law enforcement, and more training will help alleviate some of the current challenges and help with future challenges.