

The management approach of the compstat model



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The police department of New York has integrated the Compstat model, which is a management approach that uses computer technology to follow up crime occurrences and help police officers identify the areas that are most vulnerable to criminal activities. At the same time, the model is useful in examining current crime patterns, and aims at maximizing resources available to the police officers in their fight against crime. According to Vito, Walsh, & Kunselman (2004), " Compstat (Computerized Statistics) is a goal orientated strategic management process that uses information technology, operational strategy, and managerial accountability to control crime and police neighborhoods," (p. 1).

There are four main principles of the Compstat model. The first one outlines the need for the police to obtain in good time, correct information on crime occurrences. In this case, police personnel perform crime analysis, that is, they identify the nature of the crime, the offender, the time of offense, and how the offender intends to carry it out. To achieve this, police personnel write reports on a weekly basis, giving statistical information on the arrests and summons they have made during the week, complaints they have received from the public concerning crime, crucial cases and the crime trends they have observed. The head of the Compstat Unit is in charge of receiving the weekly reports and saving them in a database. With the help of these reports, police officers can make comparisons between trends in crime and identify similarities as well as differences, and the most appropriate strategies to address these.

The second element requires that the police employ workable strategies based on the intelligence they have, to prevent and solve crimes. In this

instance, they identify which crimes and crime zones need quick intervention and make these their priority. At the same time, the police assess the available strategies in terms of their short and long-term effectiveness, as well as involve other groups, which are not necessarily police agencies. For instance, they involve religious, educational institutions, entrepreneurs, local government authorities and the community. The third element prescribes fast mobilization of material, financial and personnel resources to counter the crime patterns. This is because; the model can identify potential crime situations in an area, even before the residents alert the police on their suspicions. The fourth element demands progressive appraisal of police personnel, departments, and material resources in order to ensure that crime trends reduce. Performance appraisals are possible through reports that capture the profiles of each commander of police and these enable the other police officers to compare their own performance with that of their heads. With correct implementation, the Compstat approach can aid government authorities to assess police departments and check for the improper use of material and financial resources, as well as poor performance.

The other two principles of the Compstat model require that the police operate on clear objectives in their fight against crime and each officer is responsible for the overall success of the police force in reducing crime rates. The members of the police force should be aware of the goals they intend to achieve and these must at the same time, be attainable within the stipulated period. Goals dictate the rating of the performance of police personnel, depending on whether they have achieved them. The chief as

well as the commanders of various police agencies therefore have the responsibility of communicating clear and precise instructions to their subjects, in order to ensure that the latter achieve the desired performance. This explains why there is need for regular briefs among the police force in order to equip them with the necessary information on what their leaders expect of them.

On a short-term basis, the Compstat model aims at reducing crime rates, while its long-term objective is to create a permanent change in the community and improve people's lives by ensuring a safe environment. The measures to assess the effectiveness of the model on short-term basis would include examining weekly reports on the crimes occurring, in order to establish whether there are fewer or more offenses each day. Long-term effectiveness measures would involve the analysis of crime trends over a period such as a number of years, in order to establish whether the crime rates have gone down. At the same time, the weekly meetings to review crime reports provide forums to assess whether the police departments are making progress in reducing crime rates. These meetings on performance appraisal of police personnel serve both the immediate and long-term goals of the Compstat model. This is because if appraisals indicate that, some of the members of the force are not successful in reducing crime over a given period, the chief may take action such as re-training, retrenchment, or shifting to another department.

The model is advantageous in that it promotes a consultative process in decision-making. It enhances intelligence sharing among the police officers and departments, accountability as well as coordination and a team spirit.

This is possible through the meetings involving all levels of management. In addition, seeks to enable the police maximize the available resources in their fight against crime. Moreover, holding every member of the force accountable for its success in fighting crime ensures that each plays his or her role, and that there is no blame game when results are not forthcoming.

In addition, ensuring timely and correct information on potential crime zones enables the police to act swiftly to prevent criminal activities. This is because; they are aware of what is happening on the ground. At the same time, they are able to develop the right strategies and response to the crime trends they have already identified. This increases their chances of success rather than in cases where they act after crisis. The Compstat approach to management promotes the belief that the police force is able to lower crime rates through employing the right strategies. Promoting continuous performance appraisal based on weekly reports enables the police force to establish its strengths and weaknesses. Moreover, it allows police to involve the community and other stakeholders in the fight against crime. This shows that the police are not working alone and are committed to ensuring a safe environment for all.

On the other hand, the Compstat model has some disadvantages. One limitation of this model is that it is difficult to assess its success. When crime rates reduce, it is hard for police officers to attribute this phenomenon only to the model. On the other hand, when the crime rates stagnate or increase, it is difficult to tell whether failure lies only in the implementation of the model's principles. Moreover, the Compstat model is susceptible to manipulation by police officers. For instance, due to pressure to reduce crime

<https://assignbuster.com/the-management-approach-of-the-compstat-model/>

rates, they may fail to keep reports of crimes in order to give a false impression of less crime occurrences in a given area. At the same time, police officers may use their subjective judgments to declare some crimes as minor, and therefore of less significance, in order to reduce the statistics on the major crimes.

This sort of manipulation of statistics will therefore give a false impression of progress in reduction of significant crimes. Similarly, communities whose crime rate reports show that the police have made progress in averting crimes, will receive less financial, material and personnel resources than those where the crime rates are still high. In case these reports are false, this implies that such communities will suffer more from crime because the police will attend to them less. In addition, since evaluation of the performance of police personnel depends largely on the crime rate reports, members of the force are likely to manipulate these, in order to give a false impression of their success in fighting crime. Consequently, the performance appraisals will be faulty, given that their bases are not accurate. At the same time, there is a possibility of awarding ineffective police personnel, rather than those who deserve merit. This is because the ineffective members can manipulate crime reports to favor them, and they will get acknowledgment.

As part of the implementation of the Compstat model, the chief of police will have to take other measures. These include having the current police force undergo refresher courses on crime prevention and at the same time, recruit, and train new officers in order to have sufficient and qualified personnel to serve the community. Police officers will also require training on the Compstat model in order to understand its functioning and crime

analysis so that they are able to filter intelligence in an accurate manner. In this case, the chief will need to seek budgetary support from the government and non-governmental organizations. Apart from monetary aid, the chief will require the government to see to it that unemployment rates reduce through the creation of jobs. This is because crime rates tend to increase with high unemployment rates, as people have to find ways to feed themselves and their families. If they do not have jobs, they are likely to engage in criminal behavior such as theft and murder in order to earn a living.

Another intervention required will be the integration of other police departments, such as traffic police, crime detectives, and forensic experts into the crime prevention department. This will assist in spreading crime prevention to other areas and increase the scope of operation of the model. At the same time, the chief will need to appoint commanders at different levels in order to ensure that there is decentralization of the decision-making process. He will also create meeting rooms to allow for roundtable discussion sessions, as these are more likely to enhance the participation of all the police personnel in decisions concerning strategies to fight crime. Moreover, the chief will have to lay down the protocols that his officers will follow in the convening of briefings and other meetings as well as reporting procedures. This will ensure that there is no conflict in the lines of command because the police officers will be aware of to whom they should report.

Since the Compstat model requires the use of technology, the chief will need to see to it that the police department has sufficient computer equipment as well as the necessary software programs such as systems to aid in identifying crime-prone areas, and databases to record crime occurrences. At <https://assignbuster.com/the-management-approach-of-the-compstat-model/>

the same time, a police website may be necessary to enhance community policing. This will enable the flow of information on crime rates from the public to the police, as well as reports from the latter to the community. In addition, the chief will need to ensure that the police officers clear any pending warrants of arrest and make the community aware that the force will not tolerate even the minor crimes. In this case, the chief will need to organize the force to carry out awareness initiatives among themselves and in the community.

In conclusion, the chief can still adopt the Compstat model and modify it to suit the needs of his police department. He does not have to copy the model of the New York police department, because the situational needs of his department and that of the former are likely to be different. This is because the approach outlines only the basic principles of management that the police force and other organizations need to follow to achieve the intended objectives. Its intent is to serve as a guide to managerial principles and not to provide a dogmatic approach to the running of organizations. The model is therefore flexible, and police personnel can adopt different strategies to fight crime, based on the needs of the community they are serving. According to the model's principles, they will only need to ensure that they choose strategies that are efficient for the crimes they target. Consequently, the model is suitable and can work even in small law enforcement agencies.