

Case 3: Strategic Planning in Spokane, Washington

Spokane, a city of approximately 190,000 residents, is nestled in a valley on Washington's western border with Idaho. The largest city between Minneapolis and Seattle, the greater Spokane area is home to almost 1 million people.

This case study describes some of the key features of the strategic planning process used by Chief Terry Mangan to accomplish positive change in the Spokane Police Department (SPD). When Mangan became Spokane's Chief of Police he did not have, nor did he ever create, a long-term "master plan" which spelled out, step-by-step, how the department would move to community policing. Instead, he sought to create an environment in which many different players—both inside and outside the department—could bring different ideas and plans to the table. While Mangan wanted to move the department closer to the community, as an outsider who needed to win the trust and respect of the department, his first goal was to improve the department's morale by upgrading equipment.

It became very evident to me that we weren't going to go anyplace in this department with any kind of community efforts unless we addressed some real fundamental needs. When I came here ... people were working out of a basement with steampipes overhead, World War II surplus lockers ... and old, smelly towels hanging over them. No exercise or work-out rooms, broken toilets, radios that didn't work. Crummy equipment and not enough people. Lowest staff level in the state for a city of this size. You can't tell people their job is important unless you address their [basic] needs. So we focused internally on getting them the stuff and the equipment and the working conditions that would say, "You really are important."

During his first year in Spokane, Mangan attended more than 400 community meetings. At these meetings, Mangan spoke about the need for a new partnership with the community. Mangan told Spokane's citizens that

this is a good police department, but it's a police department that has severe restrictions in terms of the number of people we have. Here's what we want to do as a police department. ... we are the lowest staffed police department in the state, that's an officer safety issue. We need to build this department up and we need your help to do it. More importantly, we need partnerships with the community. We need people to come in and be volunteers.

Within two years he was ready to turn his attention to changing the department itself. While Mangan was open about his goal of opening up the SPD to the community, and adopting a more community-based, proactive approach to policing, he needed to transmit this mission throughout all levels of the organization. As a chief from outside the department, Mangan also needed to gain support and trust from its members. After accepting the position, Mangan began speaking with numerous individ

gain support and trust from its members. After accepting the position, Mangan began speaking with numerous individuals inside the department and in the community in an attempt to identify the natural leaders, from all sworn ranks and civilian titles, whose support would be critical if change was going to occur. Before taking command, Mangan wrote these leaders and invited them to a series of open discussions about the organization. Soon after Mangan took command, he gathered these individuals into an informal advisory group that met several evenings each week to discuss the organization's strengths and weaknesses and make recommendations for improving the department. This group was a vehicle for Mangan to both send his ideas to the department, and to receive feedback about how the organization perceived itself. "They were not going to be making decisions," Mangan explained. "The purpose of this [was] to brainstorm where we are, where we are trying to go, how we're going to get there, and what do we need to do it." Equally important, by bringing in all levels of the department into this "think tank," Mangan gained support for his change efforts and was not seriously challenged by old-guard personnel.

Soon after these meetings began, Mangan formally turned the group into a strategic planning committee, and increased its membership. Committee members described a process that improved communication throughout the department. "Everybody had an opportunity to talk without fear of repercussions, and there were a lot of things said in those meetings that just needed to be said so that people could air them out," a committee member explained. A patrol officer who participated said that he enjoyed the opportunity to hash out ideas with members of other units in the department, and gain a broader perspective about the organization. Knowing that the chief was actually listening to their ideas was very important to committee members, most of whom had never previously been given such an opportunity. Mangan, who ensured that the group's decisions were consistent with his broader visions, described his role in the group as the "sounding board" or the "mirror." "I would tweak it and push it a little bit here and little bit there, and incorporate the best of this group's ideas and that group's ideas," Mangan said.

While the planning committee discussed numerous issues facing the department, Mangan tasked them with a critical project: defining the department's values. "Every agency has a unique culture, an organizational culture that is part of its history and its traditions," Mangan said.

I felt it was really important to take that organizational culture and examine it, and that history, and say who we are and what we stand for and why. To make that work, people have to have ownership of it, and to have ownership of it means that everybody in the department ... has to have a crack at it.

Mangan first gathered several values statements from other police departments and presented them to the strategic planning committee. The committee drafted a values statement that was presented to the rest of the department for feedback and revised. After a final draft was approved, Mangan assigned the committee to create a "hook" for the two-page values statement. When devising the hook, Mangan told his committee to use the FBI as a model. "Anybody that works in that Hoover building, f

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The strategic planning committee also designed a patrol manual that helped operationalize community policing into concrete responsibilities within the patrol division. While the stated purpose of the plan was to provide "direction and purpose for the management" of the patrol division, it explicitly encouraged "all personnel to take risks and innovative approaches to problem solving." Working closely with the community was another expressed goal for the patrol division. "The Patrol Division exists to ... improve police/community relations through the quality and quantity of contacts between citizens and members of the division." This model fit Mangan's goal of encouraging innovation at all levels of the department. "We said to the [patrol officers and supervisors] the best ideas come from you folks, so you figure out what's going to work and what's not going to work," Mangan said.

As a manager, Mangan was described by many in the department as an "idea guy." He was receptive to new ideas, and would sometimes give his staff the broad vision for a program, without filling in many details. While Mangan was the source of some new ideas, and final decision-making authority still rested with the chief and his command staff, he wanted to empower supervisors and line officers to develop ideas and programs on their own. As was previously discussed, the newly developed patrol manual expressly encouraged this bottom-up development of new programs, by assigning the patrol division commander, shift lieutenants, and sergeants to develop programs that identified and addressed long-term problems within their sectors. In order to facilitate this, all shift commanders were required to work with sergeants and patrol officers and create yearly management plans that identified and analyzed problem areas and proposed solutions. (These goals and objectives became the basis for a new annual report that the department submitted to the city manager and city council.) The patrol managers were also directed to "develop and maintain communication" with citizen groups and neighborhoods.

These new tasks were added to the supervisors' standard set of oversight and personnel management responsibilities. While Mangan expanded the managerial duties, because civil service regulations controlled promotion throughout all levels of the department except for the assistant chief and chief positions, he had little authority to replace supervisors who were not up to these new roles. As a result, Mangan identified individuals in the department who were innovators and gave them authority to design new programs, regardless of their rank.

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Some supervisors welcomed this new ability to innovate and experiment. Yet, according to some department members, this model of empowerment created some tension within the organization. "That really kind of disturbed the table or organization. ... We had sergeants that were given responsibilities and ... the captains and lieutenants ... sometimes weren't even aware of things that were going on in their units. ... Some management people realized that they had been kind of ... identified ... as maybe non-producers or road-blocks ... and they were simply being bypassed," a department member said. And, while some supervisors thrived in this new environment, because supervisors were not given much explicit training about their new role, others were unsure how to do their jobs in this new era. This created a situation in which some officers were receiving dual messages from the organization: the chief wants me to work more closely with the community, but my sergeant wants me to collect stats.

Source: Adapted from Peter M. Sheingold. n.d. "National COPS Evaluation: Organizational Change Case Study—Spokane, Washington." Online at: www.ncjrs.gov/nij/cops_casestudy/spokane.html.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Chief Mangan's approach to organizational change in Spokane relied on developing departmental values and a vision statement. Compare the values that were developed in Spokane to the sample missions, goals, objectives, and values presented in **Chapter 3**. In what ways are these various expressions of organizational purpose different? Why do they differ? Which are most important, and why?
2. This case study begins by describing how a new chief took an "inside-out" approach to changing the police department (see "The Inside-Out Approach to Quality Policing" in **Chapter 10**). Compare Chief Mangan's approach in Spokane to Chief Couper's approach described in **Chapter 10**. What are the circumstances in which such an inside-out approach might be recommended, or not recommended?
3. Compare Chief Mangan's management and leadership styles to those discussed in **Chapters 9 and 10**. Which styles and techniques did he most exemplify? In your opinion, how well did his style fit the needs of the situation in the Spokane Police Department at the time?
4. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the approach that Chief Mangan used to improve the Spokane Police Department?