

total | enforcement White Paper

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Innovation in Training

Resistance to Change

Charles Darwin is famous for his survival of the fittest philosophy and is quoted as saying “It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.” Without change the world would be at a complete standstill. Life would become mundane and technology would not advance. Can you imagine going back to a world without cell phones? Or computers?

While change is often universally resisted, the public safety realm, in particular, is struggling with modernizing and streamlining processes. That is not to say that those in the public safety realm don't recognize the need to make changes, but little or no action is taken to implement change. Unfortunately, agencies often have the tendency to complicate and duplicate processes. When suggestions to implement best practices, streamline and eliminate duplicative processes, and abandon “paper reports”, many agencies feverishly fight against the changes because they are accustomed to “*the way it's always been.*”

Needless to say, advancing a public safety agency is challenging. The most important element to delivering successful change lies within an agency's leadership. The leadership of the agency must be extremely strong and have the ability to articulate a vision for modernization. The vision does not need to be complex and can be as simple as declaring that “*filing cabinets and filling them with paper reports will be a thing of the past.*” Efficiency, real-time data, real-time alerts, digital dashboards, geospatial analysis, and data sharing are all purely digital processes.

Logically, what are the benefits of paper? Police units don't contain filing cabinets. Even at headquarters, no one is going to rummage through 100,000 sheets of paper to get statistics. Even security is completely compromised by paper. With a secure system, a complete auditing process can be performed for accessing records and tracking data changes. The fear of security with computerized systems pales in comparison to the dangers filing cabinets with paper present. In most cases, paper reports can be easily accessed and copied or photographed with a cell phone camera and/or modified or removed altogether with little-to-no audit trail. Paper indeed is a problem. However, it is what public safety agencies are accustomed to and with that false comfort, often fuels the resistance to change.

Successful Training Approach

At this point, you may be asking yourself how any of this relates to training. The answer is simple; this concept along with similar concepts should be part of the training process. Training in the public safety realm needs to be revolutionized. The airline, hotel, auto rental, and banking industries have completely revolutionized themselves. For example, at this point in time, airline boarding passes can now be retrieved on a smartphone and scanned at airports.

The most common concern when training users on a new system is “*how will we implement a new system, with all these changes and have everyone trained?*” One approach that is highly effective is the train-the-trainer approach. Theoretically, it encourages flexibility by avoiding most scheduling conflicts and creates strong users that learn through hands-on experience. However, even these types of training sessions require high coordination, typically gathering people in one location at one time. This can be inconvenient and even costly as overtime pay may be difficult to avoid.

To avoid the inconvenience of scheduling training sessions, training videos can be a very useful tool. While the concept of video-based training is not new, those who aren't taking advantage of its benefits are missing out in a big way. Some of these benefits are:

- They can be played repeatedly providing users with the flexibility to watch them on their own schedules with or without instructors, at any time, in any place.
- Video creation is straightforward and cost effective to produce. Their value can be priceless.
- They can be modified, customized, and enhanced.
- Videos can be modeled after traditional training sessions. They can be set up in chapters, where users progress through training in areas of their interest at their own pace.

YouTube is an excellent example of an environment that is revolutionizing learning. You can look up almost any topic and watch a video to learn about it there. Another good example of video-based training or video-based help can be found in Microsoft Office 2010. From any of the Office programs, you can search a keyword by clicking on the help, and, if connected to the Internet, you are taken to help topics that contain video-based instructional help on how to use features and even solve problems.

To get started with creating your own training videos, complete the following steps:

1. Purchase software that records computer activities. One such application is [Camtasia](#).
2. Select a designated training person to become familiar with the training video software. This person should also be quite familiar with the training subject at hand.
3. Design a training video by:
 - a. Writing a script for voiceover.
 - b. Planning out, step-by-step, what you want to show on the video.
4. Record the navigation of the system to be trained following your step-by-step plan.
5. Record the voiceover by reading the script.
6. Edit the video as applicable.
7. Produce the video and test the video on a few trainees to get feedback.
8. Re-do and/or edit the recording as applicable.
9. Post the video to an easily accessible area for all applicable viewers.

To facilitate implementing this type of training, email notifications can be sent out to users mandating training. When training has not been completed, users and their supervisors can also be set up to receive automatic email reminders. Additionally, the number of views, number of reads, and length of time the training videos and/or documentation were viewed can all be logged. One such cost-effective COTS solution that specializes in facilitating these types of services is [brainshark](#).

There are industries, such as the pharmaceutical industry, that require rigorous training on a monthly basis. These organizations are often required to train thousands upon thousands of employees on a monthly business in multiple languages. For years, the pharmaceutical industry has proven that video-based training is effective and can be successful if implemented correctly. The public safety industry should follow suit and innovate training as other industries have.

Acceptance to Change through Leadership and Training

It is of utmost importance that agency leadership clearly states the agenda and enforces the mandate for advancement and change within the agency. Once an agency is dedicated to making efforts to modernize, and therefore simplify and streamline processes, gaining acceptance of these changes can be facilitated through training. For example, in training, it can be explained to users that they are only required to complete one step in a process that used to take four steps. In order to do this, there must be users in the agency that are thoroughly experienced with the new system as well as the new streamlined processes that are in place.

Agency leadership should highly discourage user requests to keep the existing application running in tandem with the new application during an agency's transition. This not only has the potential to double user workload and extend the pain of transition, but it also suggests the lack of confidence in the new system. Because of this, it is of mission-critical importance that expectations are set early on and users have confidence in the new system prior to transitioning.

With IT and administrative staff being fundamentally prepared to deal with disgruntled users, the overall process should go smoothly. Users will be looking to gravitate to old ways of doing business. However, in time, the users will discover the unique benefits of the system and really start learning it. After all is said and done, it is a good idea to get a dissident management program in place to deal with highly problematic users. Problematic users come in all ranks and from all departments. Again, the role of leadership is significant in these matters.

Training Alone Has Limitations

Although training can be of tremendous benefit, the reality is that a majority of users will not effectively learn a system until they have to use it in their everyday work routine. Training gives users a basic understanding of a system and eliminates the "*I haven't been trained on this*" excuse. However, it is critical to understand that formal training alone does not prepare users.

It has been our experience that there is little-to-no difference between those agencies that receive an overabundance of training versus those agencies that receive less training once "live" on the system. The fact of the matter is that users don't always pay attention and, ultimately, end up learning when they are forced to do so.

Conclusion

The benefits to modernization are endless; It would take writing a book to describe the benefits of it relative to public safety agencies. In order to get there, strong leadership with a vision to move forward and the tenacity to do so must be in place. It is those individuals that make a difference for not only the present but for future generations to come.

For more information about this topic, contact Total Computer at (631) 777-7477 or email info@totalenforcement.com.