

Doing More With Less and Succession Planning
Talking Points for IALEP Luncheon (2/9/10)

GOOD AFTERNOON, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Title Slide

First, I wish to thank the International Association of Law Enforcement Planners for this wonderful **Lunch**, and for the invitation to speak with you on a topic relevant to today's economy. Secondly, my thanks go to **Kimberlee Lares** for helping to organize this event, and for the superb work she performs for the Tucson Police Department. Finally, thank you to **everyone in this room**. You are the brains behind your organizations. You ask the questions that need to be asked, and take the long view when so many others are thinking short-term.

For those who don't know me, I've been with the Police Department for nearly **24 years**. I have a Bachelor of Science from the **University of Iowa**, and a Masters of Education from **NAU**. In my time with TPD, I've worked in patrol, investigations, and administration, at the rank of officer, detective, sergeant, lieutenant, and captain. I've been a captain for about **7 years**.

Ms. Lares asked me to speak with you about doing more with less and about succession planning. I'm also going to give equal time to doing less with less, since that's the reality of what many of us face. You are an intelligent and sophisticated audience, so I doubt that I'm presenting anything truly new. I hope, though, that there's some nugget that you can take away that may prove helpful.

Ben Franklin

A year ago, NPR's morning edition looked at these four words, "Doing more with less." They traced the words back to Benjamin Franklin in Poor Richard's Almanac (1758); he said, "**By diligence shall we do more with less perplexity.**" Essentially, he was talking about how effective time management actually lessens stress in a person's life.

Frederic Bastiat

Later, French economist Frederic Bastiat talked about doing more with less in terms of "**lessening the ratio of effort to result, to substitute the action of nature for his own action.**" What he meant by this was that the industrial revolution would bring new tools to make our work easier. Bastiat was not talking about working harder, but rather the opposite. So, we see that "doing more with less" hasn't always been about deprivation, scarce resources, and fewer workers. Now it is. Today "Do more with less" means get the same stuff done with fewer people and less money.

Strategies

There are legitimate strategies for "doing more with less."

1. **Innovate.** As suggested by Frederic Bastiat, we can turn to tools that make us more efficient. Today it's not the industrial revolution but rather the information

revolution. As an example, the Tucson Police Department recently laid off five clerk-transcriptionists. We will be exploring speech recognition programs such as **Dragon Naturally Speaking** to substitute for the transcription of interviews. Another example of innovation is the previous presentation by Sgt. Skeenes on e-citations.

2. **Seek grants.** Stimulus monies may be able to save jobs, particularly officer jobs. Since grant-funding doesn't eat into your General Fund expenditures, it may be a way to **save someone's job** when layoffs come around again.
3. **Cross-train** your personnel. Consider your people to be **fungible or interchangeable** assets whenever possible. It helps protect the individual, gives you flexibility as a manager, and gives the agency more resources on which to rely. There is another advantage. The person in your organization who knows everything about an area, and who is the only person who knows everything about an area, is extremely valuable. They are also the **single point of failure** in your agency. **The single point of failure is the part of the system for which no backup or redundancy exists and the failure of which will disable the entire system.** You are just one car accident, cardiac event, or indictment away from losing that wealth of knowledge and all that goes with it.
4. **Prioritize,** keeping in mind political realities, and the difference between **luxuries and necessities**. For many years, when we had budget cuts, we threatened to disband the School Resource Officer unit. Every time we tried to do that, the community would object, and we'd have to give up something else. We finally disbanded it last year in light of the failing economy and we received little pushback this time. Our priorities haven't always aligned with the community's priorities, but now the priorities have been reordered. Sometimes you have the time to hold focus groups with stakeholders, and then they have ownership of some of the measures you choose.
5. **Reorganize.** Seek ideas from all levels of the organization on efficiencies. The electronic suggestion box is one way. You can also have your captains seek input within their divisions, and they can bring the ideas forward. But you will get edited versions. For this crisis, the **Investigative Services Bureau** moved a number of detectives to nights and changed everyone else's start times to reduce overtime costs.
6. **Seize opportunities for change.** You have a chance to streamline, to re-organize, and to remove unjust entitlements. These are opportunities to prioritize, to decide what really is important. For example, our department is looking at whether it should respond to **vehicle collisions** where there are no injuries. We've wanted to end this service for years, because we basically serve the insurance companies, and now we may have a chance to do that. In the early 80's, we got rid of an expensive longevity pay program for sworn employees; the poor economy was the impetus to discontinuing the benefit.

7. ***Celebrate attrition*** (secretly) because it means fewer layoffs. If you've ever had to deliver the bad news of a layoff to an employee, you know how important that can be.

Human Element

Take care of the people you get to keep. Stress and fear result when layoffs begin and employees are picking up more work. Each employee you get to keep is ever more valuable as your human assets shrink in number. **Morale** will decline. **Productivity** can suffer. Employees may begin to see each other as competition, thereby undermining workplace relationships and teams. It's important to keep communicating, even if it's only to say, "I don't know." Recognize achievements; give out rewards; don't cancel awards ceremonies. Training is a reward that can help morale. Other rewards that don't cost anything include Casual Fridays, alternate work schedules, mid-week pizza.

Exempt employees: Many times, salaried employees simply add hours to their work week to pick up the slack. Of course, this has an upper limit, and diminishing returns when fatigue and burnout set in. Monitor your exempt employees, because even the most rabid workaholic has limits. If you're exempt, monitor yourself.

Doing Less with Less

But let's face it folks. You can only do more with less for so long, then you are forced to do less with less. When I was the Child Sexual Abuse sergeant, I remember losing first one, then two, detectives. **I wasn't in a position not to assign even one child abuse case.** We have a lot of areas like this. **Which home invasion do we ignore?** Well, probably none, as this is a major crime with huge potential for death or serious injury. **How about identity theft?** Do we assign every one of these, knowing how personally devastating the crime can be? As Arizona is the identity theft capital of the nation, we simply can't assign all of these cases. So, how do we choose?

Whatever we choose to stop doing, **it's important to quantify and describe the impact on the mission and the stakeholders.** Someone ultimately makes the decision, perhaps the Chief, perhaps the City Manager, and they need to make that decision in a fully informed way. It's not easy to choose.

Some may start with so-called **support services**, but that can be a mistake as well. It occurs to me that there is a difference between **force multipliers** and **luxury** items. For example, a crime analyst is a force multiplier. By being able to identify patterns of crime, resources can be deployed in a targeted fashion, resulting in greater efficiency. Luxuries, on the other hand, are items that do not necessarily serve the core mission.

Mission Alignment

The mission statement of the Tucson Police Department says we **"serve the public in partnership with our community, to protect life and property, prevent crime, and resolve problems."** One might argue, for example, that the coordination of removal of graffiti is a luxury. In fact, that argument was made, and the **graffiti abatement**

program was moved to the Department of Transportation, a logical choice given how much of the tagging occurs on DOT signs. An agency with an equestrian unit might deem that **Mounted Patrol** is a luxury they can no longer afford. More controversial is whether **bicycle patrols** are cost-effective in areas other than downtown.

Whatever we do, the thing **we cannot afford is to lower our standards**. As a police agency, our greatest assets are our **people** and our **integrity**. Without integrity, we cannot have the support of the community. We would quickly lose credibility with our courts. Finally, we would lose our best people, who would resign rather than be tainted by moral or ethical stain. In order to attract the best people, and to keep them, we have to continue to pay people a wage comparable to other similarly situated law enforcement organizations.

Succession Planning

As you're slashing and burning, have a plan for rebuilding, but don't get in the rut of rebuilding the organization in the exact same way. Keep it leaner and keep it focused. Do not reconstitute a unit simply because it was there before. **Know precisely why the unit is important, and be able to articulate that in a way that would convince a true skeptic.**

There is **replacement planning**, which is short-term. There is also **succession planning**, which is long-term. An example of replacement planning is that our Workman's Compensation staff assistant is retiring and we won't be allowed to hire another. We're taking a recruiting officer and cross-training her in that function, a good short-term plan. The best long-term solution will be to select a non-sworn person from within the City or the department to learn the job and become the institutional expert, not a stop-gap. Moreover, a sworn resource costs more than a non-sworn resource, so my replacement plan does not make good fiscal sense as a succession plan.

When times are tough and people are going out the door, either through layoffs or because they're tired of doing more with less, it's important to keep good people in the **recruiting pipeline**. With regard to managers and supervisors, it is equally important to keep people in the **leadership pipeline**. Again, training comes into play. So do mentoring and coaching. Brain drain is a problem as institutional knowledge goes out the door. Ensuring that people with the knowledge, skills, and abilities are waiting in the wings to shoulder new responsibilities is critical.

The **greatest enemy of succession planning** is the person who hoards information. Often they are hardworking, and perhaps the sole repository of this knowledge. They like it that way, and they become your **single point of failure** if they quit or die suddenly. **It's important to shake that tree of knowledge and let the fruit land on some other folks.**

Road to Recovery

So, we've talked about doing more with less, doing less with less, and succession planning. The road to recovery is going to be **long and curvy** and, as you know, leaders aren't always good drivers. It's going to be up to **you as planners to act as curbs and**

guardrails for your bosses. A good planner is like a private sector consultant. As a commander, I appreciate it when Kimberlee or Autumn say to me, “Have you considered this?” If I’m about to do something monumentally dumb, and believe me, all commanders are capable of doing something just that dumb, or if I’m about to commit an error in logic or reason, I appreciate another voice stopping me, making me think.

As law enforcement planners, you are uniquely positioned to ensure that re-building and recovery proceeds in a logical, well-considered manner with an eye to long-term outcomes. Your agencies are lucky to have you.

I thank you for your time, and open up the floor for questions.