



# CJI Management Briefs



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The *Criminal Justice Institute* was created to provide management education and training to municipal, county and state law enforcement and other criminal justice system personnel that support the law enforcement function.

This quarterly newsletter is designed to provide current, timely and useful information to improve the management, leadership and performance skills of supervisors.

*Your comments and suggestions  
are solicited and welcomed.*

***You are encouraged  
to make copies of  
this publication and  
distribute them to  
others in your  
agency.***

## THE NEED FOR ETHICAL INTEGRITY

Any law enforcement agency head can attest to the fundamental importance of their agency retaining its ethical standing within the community which they police. It is absolutely essential to make every effort to retain the vital "public trust" of the community. It is the very lifeblood of the organization and any lapse in its ethical behavior can literally create seemingly insurmountable obstacles in the way of good community health.

Patrick V. Murphy, former Commissioner of the New York City Police Department, speaks on the issue in the Forward of Edwin J. Delattre's *Character and Cops*. Referring to the book, he advises "It faces squarely the fact that without individuals of good character and institutions that apply high ideals to daily practice, the goals of liberty, order and justice cannot be achieved." The heads of law enforcement agencies should find this book indispensable. All members of an agency, who are attempting to retain the proper perspective toward ethical behavior, can refer to it.

Agency heads should certainly be cognizant of the multitude of lapses of ethical behavior that have plagued the Arkansas law enforcement community of late. One only has to pick up the daily paper to be shockingly apprised of it. Now is not the time to hang our heads and to hope that the events will miraculously go away. It is time to renew our com-

mitment of excellence of character to the communities that we serve.

### Excellence of Character

Preventive medicine is very much preferred over any surgical procedure. In certain respects, it is certainly more advantageous to head off a potential problem rather than be saddled with having to resolve it later. Edwin Delattre addresses this issue in his book in great detail. He defines four different "character types" that an administrator may encounter in the recruiting and hiring process. Armed with this information, the agency should strive to obtain the very best personnel that it can.

### The Bad Character

Delattre asserts that individuals possessing bad character should be avoided at all costs. This type of individual will seek opportunities to profit, at the expense of others. They generally will have no sense of "right or wrong." He projects that they are shrewd and without a conscience.

The bad character may be inadvertently employed if the agency is in a rush to fill vacancies. This has happened to several large law enforcement agencies of late and the situation should not be acceptable. Agencies employing proven methods of background investigating should be able to weed out this type of applicant. If any should filter through

the background process, they should be weeded out in the recruit academy or the field training officer stage.

### The Uncontrolled Character

This type of individual tends to be weak willed and cannot successfully avoid certain temptations. Delattre advises that they are “teachable” but they are not necessarily suited for positions of public trust. Working alone they may be productive, but in highly cohesive units such as law enforcement, they may be prone to bow to peer pressure in illicit situations. Such is the case when one hears of an incidence where officers have literally formed gangs to conduct illicit activities.

An agency should resist the temptation to hire these individuals with the view of them having a drastic turnaround in attitude once employed. Every attempt should be made to continue the recruitment process and strive to hire more qualified individuals.

view of this fact, the agency’s recruit class may be totally comprised of this type of individual. This character type possesses certain traits that will have to be kept in mind, for this reason.

The self-controlled individual may resent being held to a higher standard, a necessity in the law enforcement profession. They may be incensed at the idea that criminals are literally getting away with various criminal activities and that they are amassing great material goods with their criminality. Also, the self-controlled officer may be torn between feelings that they know what their duty to the public is, but they desire material goods that may seem beyond their means.

The law enforcement agency will have to make every attempt to provide the necessary support and leadership to this type of individual. The department will have to show them the importance of admirable behavior, and that ethical behavior is good in lieu of temptation.

tions of public trust. They will probably be few and far between, however.

### The Public Trust

Every administrator realizes that the public has placed their faith in their department and that they are expected to protect the basic freedoms afforded by our democracy. It is not an easy task to retain this trust. It is a fragile arrangement that can be violated by any lapse in the ethical behavior of department members.

Every member of the agency should be constantly reminded that they are held to a higher standard because the public has relinquished certain individual freedoms that are better handled by law enforcement. The public is dependent upon law enforcement, and they certainly should be allowed to expect that the organization, and its respective members, is discharging their duties competently and without an abuse of power.

### Leadership in Building Character

As mentioned earlier, it is absolutely essential that the agency provides the necessary support and education required for instilling good character. The best leadership tool is that of “leading by example.” Maintaining good character is a full-time job and requires constant monitoring.

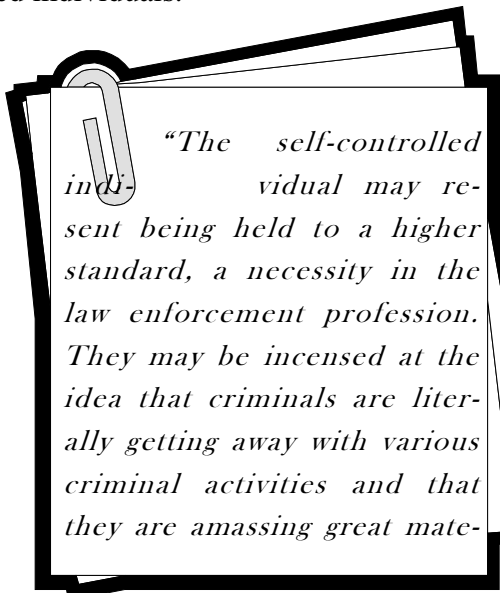
Edwin Delattre reports “People who succeed can fail at success....those who become police officers in a department with serious recruiting and training standards have achieved a significant success. When they abuse authority and power, however, and do not live up to the trust of their office, they fail at success.” In other words, the indi-

### The Excellent Character

Every agency would love to be able to proclaim that their ranks are bursting with this type of individual. It is not impossible, but it is highly improbable. The agency definitely needs to retain individuals possessing this trait.

The excellent character, according to Delattre, has learned the essential habits of trustworthiness and it is an important element in their daily live. Elements of respect and honesty have become second nature to them. They certainly are self-controlled and self-disciplined.

Officers exhibiting this characteristic may truly be incorruptible and they are definitely suited for posi-



### The Self-Controlled Character

It would appear that this type of individual is the most prevalent. In

vidual may be successfully pursuing their chosen profession, but if they do not proceed rightly, with the proper supervision, they can jeopardize their calling.

## Final Thoughts

It isn't easy to assess individual character and the best of character can be compromised by the strangest of attractions. The watchful law enforcement administrator, and any supervisory person as well, will have to be ever mindful of the requirement to demand good character.

Delattre realizes this. His prescription, "...living up to the highest ideals of policing calls for character and wisdom. Genuine professionalism always does." Wisdom has to be sought out and we in the law enforcement profession should diligently seek it.

Delattre, E. (1989). *Character and Cops: Ethics in Policing*. Washington D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research.



## CREDIBILITY

Assessing the credibility rating of a law enforcement agency should be a priority. There are certain organizational characteristics that can be developed and refined that will assist the agency in earning the trust and the confidence of the community that it serves. Rightfully so, the community being policed will place certain demands on the type of leadership exhibited by the law enforcement agency.

And, the greater public has higher expectations of the level of services provided by their police and sheriff's department. This requires

law enforcement leaders to be innovative and inspiring, while keeping their dealings honest and open. The effective law enforcement agency has to be able to put principles ahead of politics and individual self-interests.

To be able to meet these demands, leadership has to become every officers' business. Everyone from the chief official down to the newest recruit has to contribute to the development of trust and to tend to it to keep it vitalized. Credibility has to be everyone's objective. James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner speak of "six disciplines of credibility" in their book, *Credibility*.

### Discovering Yourself

Every effective leader, no matter their station in life, has to clarify their own values and the standards by which they live their lives.

They have to know who they are and what they stand for.

Coupled with this self-awareness should be the competence to do what you say you can do. This requires preparation on your part and a commitment to seek out learning opportunities.

### Appreciating Constituents

Kouzes and Posner advise that "Leadership is a relationship, and strong relationships are built on mutual understanding." This mutual understanding is developed fully when the follower has the belief that the leader has their best interests at heart.

Admittedly, developing these relationships and understandings are more difficult in the modern work place. The effort must be put forward to succeed.

## Affirming Shared Values

Diversity is self evident in the law enforcement communities of today. This allows for many divergent attitudes to develop, which isn't necessarily bad. It just hampers the ability to reach a common ground of agreement at times.

The effective leader will have to develop the ability to bring the di-

*"A good leader takes on the role of 'cheerleader' from time to time. This helps to foster optimistic attitudes. It is absolutely essential during times of transition"*

vergent people together and to unite them in a common cause. This can be accomplished by the leader developing a strong sense of community, both within the organization and in the greater public. Open forums and departmental meetings allow for the airing of differences.

### Developing Capacity

Kouzes and Posner have three words on this subject, "educate, educate and educate." For everyone to contribute to a sense of credibility, they have to have the background and capabilities to compete in the modern work environment. This requires the leader to liberate the "leader" in everyone else and entails an intense educational process. It may be a scary thought, albeit a necessary one.

## Serving A Purpose

Credible leaders know that they are being watched and they have to set the tone by being the first to do what has been agreed to. They have to demonstrate their true commitment over and over and they have to generate affirmation of the shared values of the organization.

If the key values run awry, leaders must be willing to step in and to take corrective actions based on matters of principles. They may put their personal careers on the line, but they are demonstrating their commitment to the shared principles.

## Sustaining Hope

A good leader takes on the role of “cheerleader” from time to time.

This helps to foster optimistic attitudes. It is absolutely essential during times of transition or change.

The leader may have to take on the role of counselor. This will require the leader to be compassionate and to demonstrate that they have experienced the same anxieties. Kouzes and Posner assert, “Cynicism is only reinforced when leaders appear exempt from paying the price of change.” Building credibility must be a shared experience.

Kouzes, J. and Posner, B. (1993). *Credibility: How Leaders Gain and Lose It, Why People Demand It*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

“Everything secret degenerates, even the administration of justice; nothing is safe that does not show it can bear discussion and publicity.”

—Lord Acton

“Only thought can determine what course of action is best on any occasion; excellence of character has the sole but important role of making the agent willing to do what reason determines is the best course of action.”

—J. O. Urmson

“Happiness is the fullest use of one’s power along lines of excellence.”

—John F. Kennedy

“Try not to become a man of success but rather a man of value.”

—Albert Einstein

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