

Learning and Development for **Talent Management**

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INTRODUCTION

The objective of this paper¹ is to document challenges and training solutions to Force talent development and retention, when large numbers of officers are replaced on retirement This paper only discusses Police College's training and development solutions to demographic challenges and will not examine Force succession planning or talent management/retention. Additionally, it will not discuss specialist training programmes, which will be dealt with in separate papers².

PART I: TALENT MANAGEMENT IN 2010s

Background

The number of officers reaching normal retirement age in the Civil Service will peak in 2013-2014³. These officers, recruited during the fast expansion of the civil service in 1980s, represent a sizable proportion of officers currently in managerial posts.

Like other government departments, the Force will see many of its managerial staff leave in the next few years. Talent development and retention is a common concern post 2010 especially within modern economies subject to the post-World War II demographic boom. In Hong Kong, the local workforce has shrunk as a result of slow birth rate and therefore the Force has to compete in the vastly reduced labour market for eligible recruits.

Added to this is the job mobility of the better-educated post-80s generation. Recent years have witnessed increasing resignations amongst degree-holding Junior Police Officers young in service (Environmental Scan Report 2011). One means of strengthening retention, the other side of recruitment, is through offering more and better learning and development opportunities.

Challenges

Knowledge and Experience Retention

With the scheduled retirement of officers in senior management posts, there is the danger of losing vital knowledge and leadership experience. For frontline officers, a valuable part of their policing knowledge consists of street and situational experience (Rubinstein, 1973), which is tacit knowledge not commonly shared formally. There is therefore an immediate need to minimise likely damage resulting from potential knowledge loss and to strengthen organisational memory in the wake of the current retirement wave.

Talent Development

In terms of manpower planning, departure of senior managerial post holders may result in accelerated promotion of less experienced officers currently in junior ranks. A challenge for the Force is to ensure officers filling the growing numbers of vacant posts left behind are adequately prepared for their new roles. Training and development has therefore a role in ensuring smooth generational transfer of leadership.

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 $^{^{1}}$ The paper was submitted to the 6^{th} Symposium on Police Studies of the Strait cum HK and Macao in October 2011.

² For a full discussion of specialised programmes, please refer to the Police Training Series No. 3 "Psychological Competency Training" and No. 4 "Building a Learning Theory for Crime Investigation Training".

According to a news report, there will be around 6,000 to 6,500 retirements in 2013 and 2014 per year. The Force will lose around 10% of its Directorate staff in 2013-2014. Ms Denise Yue, Secretary for the Civil Service, in the meantime pointed out that there was no succession problem (22 March 2011 Ming Pao Daily) http://news.mingpao.com/20110322/gsk2.htm, accessed 2011-03-22.

Talent Retention

While striving to stay competitive in the recruitment market, the Force has to retain experienced officers. Research has indicated that the lack of career growth and the lack of training for career growth are reasons for an officer to quit. Job satisfaction, as well as loyalty, will increase when officers are given training and educational incentives, which will also serve to upgrade organisation competencies to deal with increased challenges to the police profession (Terra, 2009). Training and development may thus be perceived as a retention factor and a competitive edge in talent recruitment and in organisation competency development.

Another retention factor is the influence of management. Dwayne Orrick, Director of Public Safety for Cordele, Georgia sees the immediate supervisor as the 'single biggest influence on whether an officer leaves or stays' (Wilson and Grammich, 2009: 19). Like other organisations, the Force has a fair share of officers from different generations, who have divergent values, needs and expectations. The challenge is to help officers from different generations build effective teams.

With young officers taking over senior and middle management positions in this decade, it is likely that career progression opportunities for officers currently in junior ranks and future recruits may be limited. For these officers as well as officers not identified for career advancement, it may be necessary to provide professional development opportunities for alternative career paths.

PART II: TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS

In the light of the imminent demographic shift, the Police College has to plan training and development ahead so as to:

- (a) capitalise on the knowledge and experience of retirees through knowledge management;
- (b) develop talent to fill gaps left behind through professional development reform; and
- (c) train to retain talent.

Research has indicated that anticipated retirement in this decade will affect organisations with a high percentage of managers and professionals more than others, and that organisations must work on a three-pronged strategy of talent attraction/retention, knowledge management and professional development reform (Dwyer and Dwyer, 2010). As an organisation dependent on the professionalism of its personnel, the Force has to ensure that knowledge is retained on the departure of its managerial and key post holders.

Part II of this study report describes the Police College's training and development solutions to talent management. Part III discusses the theoretical underpinnings of various learning approaches in implementing these solutions.

Knowledge Management

Knowledge management (KM) in the Force is defined as 'the systematic processes by which knowledge needed for the Force to succeed is created, captured, shared and used'⁴. The Force KM journey began in 2001 as a Strategic Action Plan project, which aimed at phasing in KM through five stages: Phases 1-3 codified explicit knowledge (completed in 2006) whereas Phases 4-5 personalise knowledge by sharing tacit knowledge through people-to-people interactions⁵.

The Force KM system aligns KM development with its strategic goals through a structured system (infrastructure), the expertise of its experts (people) and lifelong learning (culture) (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Force KM Framework

⁴ Research Centre (2011). "A Review of Force Knowledge Management Development". HKPF, April 2011.

Phase I is codification of knowledge at organisational level (for example, manuals); Phase II, codification of knowledge at local working levels (for example, inspection reports and aide memoir); Phase III, on-line provision of less accessible knowledge (for example, legal advice); Phase IV, experience sharing (for example, overseas training); and Phase V, collaboration of best practices (for example, both local and overseas best practices).

KM Infrastructure

The Force KM infrastructure is based on knowledge capture and sharing. Its KM Portal (POlice Working Experience Repository or in short POWER) comprises a Force Content Management System that classifies information into appropriate categories/subcategories and a search engine, which facilitates retrieval of updated information.

People

There are both push and pull sharing initiatives. The Police Experience and Acquisition Kiosk (PEAK) (as part of the push strategy) houses open databases: PEAK (Good Practices) captures inspection reports as well as Formation Commanders' good practice submissions and PEAK (Lessons Learnt) deposits wash-up notes from policing operations and exercises. Other open access databases include a legal advice bulletin and after action review reports.

The Force KM system also houses restricted databases built for individual groups/formations and for specific purposes upon request.

Force knowledge sharing also has a pull dimension. These are initiatives like the Peer Adviser Scheme, which enables 'person-to-person' contact with experts/experienced officers; Knowledge Café, which regularly shares specialist knowledge and insights in open, innovative dialogue; and storytelling through audios, videos and narratives.

Driving knowledge sharing are KM Champions, Peer Advisers and KM Administrators. The four KM Champions strengthen awareness through peer influence and drive communities of practice for Peer Adviser Scheme; Storytelling; PEAK (Good Practices); and PEAK (Lessons Learnt). Peer Advisers offer expert opinions on areas of knowledge within their professional specialty while KM Administrators assist in KM publicity and implement initiatives.

Figure 2 outlines the push/pull strategies of the Force KM System.

Culture

Lifelong learning and the promotion of individual learning responsibility is one of the central tenets of the Police College's learning philosophy. The KM Portal is a platform for the Force to facilitate learning and knowledge sharing and for individuals to build up their learning capability and help other learners learn throughout their career. POWER also supports other Police College's lifelong learning initiatives, such as videoed Management Development Programmes and Police College's training materials for sharing Forcewide housed within its Learning Portal.

At present, knowledge capture and sharing is voluntary, with the Police College's Research Centre serving as the overall coordinator and consultant. Voluntary sharing builds on shared understanding and mutual trust and contributes to strong team relationship.

Already, formations are harnessing KM in policing operations, such as after action reviews and individual officers are actively involved in knowledge sharing. In future, plans are in hand to introduce new technology and more people-based initiatives, such that in the next few years when retirement peaks, KM will play a vital role in harvesting, integrating and disseminating knowledge. With new technology and people based initiatives, there will be wider sharing of knowledge across formations and across functions.

Professional Development Reform

The Police College targets its command courses at middle managers, who are set to assume senior management roles in this decade and the next. Most, if not all,

Peer Adviser Scheme

Knowledge Café Storytelling



PUSH

PEAK (Good Practices)
PEAK (Lessons Learnt)
Legal Advice Bulletin
After Action Review Reports
Purpose Built Databases

Figure 2: Push/Pull KM Strategies

of these officers, recruited in 1990s, belong to Gen X⁶ as they are referred to in generational research.

Competencies

In terms of competencies, the Police College recognises that in a world of constant change, uncertainty and interconnectedness, future police leaders need to learn to self-lead, influence others, drive organisational improvement and network the world. These are four key leadership areas that are essential to sustainable high performance, and on which Police College's command courses base their learning model (Figure 3) [Note: Police College's command courses are currently under review to formalise action learning].

Purpose

By developing personal effectiveness, command courses strengthen self-leadership in order to develop and maintain high performance workplaces. Leadership learning influences the workforce towards a shared vision and shared objectives (whether strategic or tactical), and managing change and continuous improvement. Professional knowledge drives the organisation through innovation and by implementing strategies in policing or management. Networking connects with other law enforcement and government departments⁷.

Leadership Experience Development

In developing future police leaders, it is necessary to help them gain first-hand knowledge of and experience in resolving operational and management issues. Project-based learning, which engages students in sustained,



Figure 3: Leadership Learning Model on Command Courses
[Adapted from Handbook on Command Courses]

cooperative investigation (Bransford & Stein, 1993), is an important part of the learning experience in the Police College.

Project-based learning is team-based. Working collaboratively in teams, learners investigate actual Force issues as driving questions. It involves learners in extended inquiry in contextualised, problem-solving environments through which they construct solutions in the workplace.

The overarching objective is to enable these future leaders to appreciate current and probable future operational and management issues, understand community concerns, build international and organisational leadership networks and develop a shared purpose so that they are in touch with Force strengths and challenges, and external (and internal) threats and opportunities. In strengthening a forward thinking mindset, it also serves to develop personal strengths and leadership capability to drive future organisational development.

Learning experience is scaffolded through research, investigation, critical analysis, and culminates in the construction of a solution (an artifact⁸) that is then reported to and critiqued by the whole class, the course instructor and the lead Policy Wing's subject officer who may, where applicable, use or re-visit the data or adapt suggested solutions later in making policy decisions.

Learning is supported both by course instructors in the role of facilitator and by the lead Policy Wing's subject officer. The trainer as facilitator provides a structured framework for enquiry. This may take the form of a theoretical perspective or a research framework. During the investigative stage, the trainer and subject officer advise on the direction of the inquiry as well as encourage reflection and provide frequent feedback on the ongoing learning process.

While formal assessment may not be an ultimate goal, learners' ideas and final presentations of resolutions are critically reviewed in terms of appreciation of the issue under investigation, practicability of proposals, mastery of the investigative tools together with the learners' innovative, critical-analytical, influencing and communication ability.

⁶ Despite different chronological schemes assigned by generational researchers, generally it is assumed that the baby boomers generation covers people born between 1946-1964; Generation X 1965-1980 and Generation Y (Millennials) 1981-2000.

For details, please consult curriculum handbooks for command courses.

⁸ Please see the discussion on constructionist learning theory in Part III.

Train to Retain Talent

Effective Team Building

A Personnel Wing study of officer wastage (2009) identified three core factors affecting recruitment/retention: the economy, attractiveness of a police career and the Gen Y culture. The implication is that the Force thrives best in recruitment/retention at times of economic downturn, when private sector jobs are less competitive in pay and benefits, etc. and where the police work environment answers Gen Y expectations/aspirations.

While the economy and competition from the labour market may be beyond the Force's control, learning and development can go some way to meeting the aspirations of Gen Y (or the post-80s generation, as they are referred to in Hong Kong).

The post-80s generation grew up in an environment of constant change. They are thought to be tech-savvy, team and achievement-oriented, and have high expectations of authority [Personnel Wing, 2009: Annex, paragraph 4(c)]. They value integrity and a values-led style of leadership, would want to work in partnership with their leaders and be recognised as contributors.

Meanwhile, Force research has indicated that some post-80s officers have difficulty adjusting to the disciplined regime and coping with growing public demands, which accounted for increased resignation amongst younger officers in recent years¹⁰.

In a nutshell, the post-80s generation needs to learn to adjust to disciplined work. For police leaders and managers, the drive is towards values-led leadership that includes integrity and integrity management.

Learning to Adjust

For many post-80s recruit officers, policing represents a foray into a new world. However, they may have brought along their personal (and community) values, which may not accord with the police working environment and the existing police culture. Meanwhile, Gen X in-service officers are immersed in the police culture, have developed their own view of the post-80s officers and have not taken full account of their needs and aspirations. Multi-generational engagement is therefore necessary for effective teams.

To narrow generational differences and as a measure of talent retention, a HeadlineJobs.hk survey in 2010 suggested mentoring schemes for post-80s employees along with other management strategies like recognising superior performance, instituting communication channels, reinforcing corporate culture and enhancing staff morale¹¹.

To this end, Police College programmes focus on dialogue and sharing. Sharing sessions are organised during foundation training with in-service officers. The Police College also strengthens mentoring schemes such as revitalising Tutor Police Constable (PC) Scheme and developing the NCO Mentorship Scheme. It also pushes for the formal recognition of the Tutor PC role in annual performance appraisals.

Meanwhile, the Police College is working on a long-term solution of mindset development, which involves nurturing desirable mental qualities such as personal beliefs, values, ethics, etc. as well as the ability to critically reason, analyse, and solve problems, and to interpret

and respond to the environment or a particular incident. The ultimate goal is to develop appropriate attitudes and qualities for police work at all levels

Learning to Lead with Values and Integrity

Values-led leadership is the hallmark of organisations with a strong sense of mission. To a certain extent, values-led leadership is driven by the Gen Y (or post-80s generation) (Blanchard, cited in Training Journal, 2011).

The Force, with its overriding values of honesty and integrity, has a robust Integrated Integrity Management Framework. Education and culture building is one of the four pillars of Force's approach to ethics and integrity, the other three being governance and control; enforcement and deterrent; and rehabilitation and support. Details of the Force's ethics and integrity framework and initiatives are available on the 'Ethics Corner' on POINT (http://point.hpf.gov.hk:8088/english/sqw/ciib/ethics.htm).

Learning and development reinforce the Force's commitment to ethical policing. Force-wide ethics and integrity learning programmes include Living-the-Values Workshops, which since 1996, have been in place to raise awareness of Force Values and to promote the principles of equity, justice and openness. Another avenue for discussing contemporary ethical issues for frontline officers is Training Days.

Ethics and integrity learning is embedded in all Police College's syllabi for managerial and supervisory officers. Specific modules tailored for police managers focus on valuebased decision making, honing critical

⁹ Ken Blanchard highlighted the importance of integrity in leadership and spoke about future sustainable leadership resting with purpose, people, prosperity (not profit) and planet in an interview with "Training Journal". ("Once more, with feeling". Training Journal, January 2011, pp 12-14.)

Personnel Wing of the Hong Kong Police Force approached this situation by instituting Psychometric Test in April 2010 to identify officers with the appropriate psychological qualities for recruitment. Environmental Scan Report 2011, pp 111.

The survey was conducted by University of Hong Kong Public Opinion Programme.

thinking processes required for and value systems relevant to value-based decisions. Through critical examination of controversial issues in ethics and values, the learning objective is to emphasise the importance of building and maintaining integrity in the workplace.

For middle ranking officers, Police College's learning modules introduce learners to integrity management development, framework and strategies, with the objective of appreciating their role in integrity management. For frontline supervisory staff, ethics and integrity learning is a component of development training and promotion courses.

Professional Development

Professional development as a talent retention factor has been well documented in talent management literature. It is often said that people will move on if they see no future in their career. An individual development plan that is well executed develops skills and potential and is itself an element in retaining skilled employees.

The Force's performance management system provides for professional development planning. The Training Management System brings updated Force and Civil Service-wide learning opportunities to officers' desktops, enabling them to plan, implement and review their own learning portfolio. Learning information from local universities is also published on POINT as and when they are received.

In the pipeline is the Police College's plan to launch the Learning Management System, which will combine learning record tracking, e-learning delivery,

and learning information management on one platform. This will further help officers better manage and develop their personal and professional competencies.

Conclusion

The Police College's tripartite learning and development approach to talent management that involves knowledge/experience retention, talent development and talent retention 12 has been around for some time. These initiatives will hopefully help retain expertise and talent at a time of demographic shift while assisting in grooming future police leaders.

PART III: THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

The present age is marked by constant change and future uncertainty, information and data overload, new social relationships, new technologies and multimedia communications. In face of all these challenges, more now than ever, learning is a lifelong and personal responsibility.

Gen X is said to be resourceful, self-reliant, and committed to outcomes in learning. They prefer experiential learning, want to be in control, and enjoy flexibility, freedom and a casual and friendly learning environment (Thielfoldt and Scheef, 2004). Post-80s generation likewise cares about opportunities to learn, to collaborate and share knowledge across cultures and generations¹³.

The traditional lecture style classroom, which allows little flexibility, little interaction and virtually no learning by experience, may not appeal either to the practical, individualistic Gen X or the tech-savvy, interactive post-80s generation. Both groups prefer relevance in learning that is interactive and experiential and which has an element of edutainment (that is, learning has to be entertaining while educational).

Learning Focus

While still relevant to present-day learning, Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive (knowledge), psychomotor (skills) and affective (attitudes) domains, which has since its publication in 1956 exerted considerable influence in industry and corporate training, will need to be augmented by learn-to-learn capability in this modern age of profuse knowledge and information on the Internet.

Learning Theories

Constructivism and constructionism influence most Police College's learning.

Constructivism

Developed by Jean Piaget (1967), constructivist theory 14 perceives the learner as a unique individual having unique learning needs, who constructs meaning through interaction with the world, people and things. Piaget's constructivist learning theory emphasises assimilation (that is, assimilating new experience into existing knowledge) and accommodation (that is, redefining existing knowledge to accommodate new experience).

According to constructivist learning theory, Police College's mindset development training for recruit

 $^{^{\}rm 12}$ For details, please refer to the section on 'Challenges' in Part I.

¹³ Speech by Mr Lam Woon-kwong at the Employee Engagement Summit 2010 referring to Johnson Control's 2010 annual report on Generation Y. "Shared Vision: Equal Opportunities and Successful Employee Engagement Strategy in the Workplace" 2010/11/30, http://www.eoc.org.hk/eoc/GraphicsFolder/SpeechContent.aspx?itemid=9087, accessed 2011-02-10.

Jean Piaget (1896-1980), Swiss developmental psychologist known for his epistemological studies with children. Piaget (1967) thought that individuals form meaning on the basis of previous knowledge. This involves two processes: assimilating new experience into pre-existent schema of knowledge; and accommodating or reframing the pre-existent schema to the new experience.

officers, for example, is not a direct transmission of knowledge, attitudes or values from the trainer but the active creation of such knowledge, etc. on the part of the learner as they redefine what is imparted in the light of their values and previous experience of the police and police work in the community.

Constructionism

Developed out of constructivism, constructionism sees learning as context-dependent:

Constructionism – the N word as opposed to the V word – shares constructivism's connotation of learning as 'building knowledge structures' irrespective of the circumstances of the learning. It then adds the idea that this happens especially felicitously in a context where the learner is consciously engaged in constructing a public entity, whether it's a sand castle on the beach or a theory of the universe (Papert, 1991:1)¹⁵.

Unlike constructivism, which emphasises internalised knowledge construction, constructionism requires the creation of sharable external artifacts ('learning in making' 16).

Papert (1991) distinguishes constructionism from instructional epistemology. Traditional epistemology regards knowledge as abstract, impersonal, and detached from the knower while constructionism favours more concrete and more personal forms of knowledge.

Policing is situational and action-

oriented and police knowledge is concrete and practical, as opposed to abstract, science-oriented reasoning. Constructionist approach, which offers real world experience and helps build learners' situational/practical intelligence, is therefore applicable to police learning where the emphasis is on flexible application of knowledge and skills and appreciation of the environmental context.

Police College's Learning Process

Constructivism and constructionism are not mutually exclusive. In learning, learners 'project part of (their) experience outwards, to detach from it, to encapsulate it and then reengage with it' (Ackermann, 2002: 10). Police College's learning is built around both concepts, with emphasis on investigative, facilitated, interactive learning based on authentic reallife experiences and culminates in the production of a sharable artifact.

In learning through contexts, constructionism trains learning-tolearn capability, which is 'the ability to pursue and persist in learning, to organise one's own learning, including through effective management of time and information' (European Council, 2006)¹⁷ and has the objective 'to empower students to learn beyond the confines of the classroom' (Education Bureau, 2001)¹⁸. The ability to learn engages learners in lifelong learning.

Investigative Learning

Investigative learning can take the form of project-based team learning. In placing considerable emphasis on collaboration, research, reflection, debate and communication, projectbased learning encourages creativity and innovation and connects learners to different contexts.

Investigative learning supports learn-to-learn. Learners build their ability to learn in the project investigation process as they acquire various self-learning skills such as problem solving, self-evaluation and performance benchmarking while developing an open mind to others' viewpoints and making sustainable commitment to working on goals.

Facilitated Learning

While learners take control of their own learning, the trainer takes on a facilitator, rather than directive, role. The trainer-facilitator is a learning organiser and support. Facilitated learning challenges the learners to set their own learning goals and shape their own achievements. Where direct trainer control lessens, learners' active involvement increases as they use skills like synthesis and analysis, and learn from each other in simulated environments (Crockett and Foster, 2007).

Interactive Learning

In police learning, the closest to practical real-life experience is simulated learning. The Police College leverages emerging technology to simulate resource intensive policing exercises such as airplane hijacking in a learning environment.

An example is the custom-built Scenario-based Interactive Multi-

¹⁵ Seymour Papert (1928-) is a mathematician and pioneer of artificial intelligence. His constructionist theory is developed out of Piaget's constructivism. He is recognised as a leading expert on technology in learning.

^{17 &#}x27;This competence includes awareness of one's learning process and needs, identifying available opportunities, and the ability to overcome obstacles in order to learn successfully. This competence means gaining, processing and assimilating new knowledge and skill as well as seeking and making use of guidance. Learning to learn engages learners to build on prior learning and life experiences in order to use and apply knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts; at home, at work, in education and training.' (Directorate-General for Education and Culture, European Commission (2007) "Key Competences for Lifelong Learning - A European Framework" pp 8, accessed on 2011-11-02, http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/ll-learning/keycomp_en.pdf).

Learn-to-learn is one of the guiding principles promoted by the Curriculum Development Council for Hong Kong schools.

player Simulation (SIMS), which is an award-winning ¹⁹ all-in-one computer networked training system that runs scenario-based desktop policing exercises at different locations and allows interaction and collaborative learning through electronic synchronous communication tools. It is an open system in the sense that the facilitator may create different scenarios. SIMS is designed to train leadership and management skills such as intelligence analysis, crisis management and decision-making²⁰.

The Police College is currently developing other simulations such as the Marine and driving instruction simulators.

Other e-courseware includes self-authoring templates, such as the Digital Presentation System (a operational-cum-training digital map system), which are resources for subject matter experts to customise and develop their own e-courseware.

Edutainment

Because the post-80s generation grew up in a digital age, computer games are effective learning tools. Some Police College's e-learning has a strong game element. For example, 'e-Quiz' has taken the design concept from the popular TV game, 'Who wants to be a millionaire'.

Games contribute positively to analytic and leadership skills development as the learner:

...actively seeks new information; incorporates new information; assesses situations using multiple pieces of data; organizes, classifies, and categorizes information; consistently applies successful behaviors; is confident about one's own knowledge; is willing to take

risks; employs corrective action when needed; can consider input from multiple sources; recognizes patterns; uses holistic thinking; is able to integrate information with behaviors; uses inductive thinking; strategizes; thinks critically; and recognizes constraints and misinformation (Vandenventer and White, 2002:46 cited in Reeves, 2006:15).

PART IV: CONCLUSION

The Police College's learning and development strategies amidst the imminent wave of retirement will aim to assure professional competencies through the retention and development of leadership knowledge/experience as well as retaining young officers.

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¹⁹ SIMS has won a number of internationally prestigious awards, including the Silver Award in the 2008 Brandon Hall Excellence in Learning Awards (Best Innovation in Learning Technology).

The current exercise has been in use for command courses as well as Administration Officers training.