

Memorandum for Assistant Chiefs
Regarding Vision for Democratic System Design

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LEPS-580: Conflict Resolution and Decision Making

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June 29, 2020

In addition to those systems that have historically proven successful, moving the department forward, we will be employing new practices designed to encourage collaboration throughout the rank structure. We can no longer afford to lose productivity from disgruntled employees or to lose valuable resources to unnecessary disciplinary investigations and procedures that supervisors could have avoided through informal dispute resolution means. We must not continue to ignore the costs associated with low morale issues caused by understaffing patrol shifts while overspending on frivolities. We must be committed to building a more vital, leaner, happier, more productive department and to fight crime, not each other.

Cloke and Goldsmith (2011) detail several techniques for designing more democratic organizational systems. The first technique we will employ is to hold a strategic planning retreat for the bureau-level commanders. The two-day meeting will be held off-site to encourage social interaction and relationship building while discouraging distractions. The conference will consist of a collaborative review and realignment of existing bureau strategies.

Another of Cloke and Goldsmith's (2011) techniques is to increase team building within our bureaus, divisions, and elements. To maintain transparency and operational success, we must encourage our team members to propose insightful changes in how we operate. These team-building experiences will help gently pry insight from field officers into how we can improve. In the past, we have used the input of executive leadership to make changes to policies and procedures without consulting those who use them most. When Michael Maccoby visited an automobile plant in Japan, he "was told that there were an average of 47 ideas per worker per year of which 80 percent were adopted" (as cited in Cloke and Goldsmith, 2011, p.176). The most valuable insight on improving a policy or procedure will come from the people who use it most.

The final of the primary initiatives encompasses several of Cloke and Goldsmith's (2011) system design techniques. We will create an Ombudsman Unit (OU) to fall under the Peer

Support Unit rather than Internal Affairs. The goal is to create an informal mediated dispute resolution mechanism outside our traditional administrative investigation practice. We must nurture a culture where anyone (directly involved or not) can call on the OU without repercussions to help with counseling and informal problem-solving. Our initial investment in training and staffing the unit will yield returns in the form of a happier and more productive workforce.

As leaders in this department and the community, our job is to provide our people the guidance and framework to grow and thrive professionally. Moving forward together, we must change how we look at conflict in our department. Rather than look upon it with dread and as someone else's problem, we must view conflict as an opportunity to collaborate, improve our situation, and better serve and protect.

Reference

Cloke, K., & Goldsmith, J. (2011). *Resolving conflicts at work: Ten strategies for everyone on the job*. San Francisco: John Wiley.