How Can Toyota Help You Lead in Law Enforcement

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There is a plethora of documents, books, studies and research available to anyone seeking information or guidance to improve management and leadership. In fact, there is so much information available we tend to settle on one book, paper or study rather than face the daunting task of weeding through it all. Perhaps many of these articles fail to get to the pointy end of the spear in addressing pressing management, leadership, and cultural issues in our organizations. What we don't need are flash in the pan posters and gimmicks but rather substance.

While much of the literature is useful and pertinent to specific professions some have value for both public and private sector organizations. However, crossing over from a for-profit landscape into the realm of public safety or law enforcement takes some additional work to determine what if anything fits or makes sense.

In searching for valuable guidance in the murky landscape of leadership and management, often intertwined with organizational culture, we seek guidance from respected, renowned and successful practitioners. Some of those are from the sector and profession in which we are engaged (e.g., law enforcement or public safety) and occasionally we come across works from those in dissimilar sectors (public vs. private, or-profit vs. not-for profit etc.) that have significant value if refined and presented in a way that a practitioner can apply to their sector, profession, organization or environment.

For those of us engaged in law enforcement and public safety we gravitate to leadership and management guidance within our sector and profession with good cause. There are vast differences in mission, goals, objectives, operations, performance metrics, and a host of other differences between public and private sector and not-for profit and for-profit organizations and companies. As a result, we tend to look toward those works that are related to law enforcement and by default may pass over insightful, meaningful, and paradigm shifting philosophies. To be blunt, by ignoring information not specifically germane to our field of interest, we narrow our vision ignoring highly successful management and leadership guidelines, philosophies and fundamental principles that worked exceptionally well in other sectors.

At i2S Consulting LLC we seek out, identify and explore proven leadership, management philosophies and guidance from other sectors for a reason. This approach enhances and

broadens our horizons bringing us to an unexpected pinnacle. How many times have we heard terms like “total quality improvement”, “branding”, "lean initiatives” when thinking about public safety management, mission, goals, or objectives?

In this first of a series of white papers i2S introduces a different approach to thinking about public safety management, leadership and culture to break out of the traditional tunnel visioned approach. It will ignite thoughtful and yet perhaps abstract notions that will shape or re-shape an organization’s management, leadership and culture going forward.

In this article we introduce cultural, leadership and management philosophies used successfully in the automotive industry by none other than Toyota. If you are not a “car person” let’s accept that Toyota rose from an obscure Japanese auto manufacturer in the 1960’s to the leading powerhouse of today where its products are continually ranked amongst the most reliable cars and trucks produced worldwide. How did this company successfully complete the “moon shot” of the auto industry by eclipsing the “big three” US auto makers who ruled the industry for more than half a century?

It wasn’t done overnight and like many stories success was fraught with failures along the way; however, the foundational culture and philosophies instituted decades ago produced amazing results. Let’s take a look and see what Toyota does and how their pathway to success can work for your public safety agency.

1. **<u>Base your decisions on a long-term philosophy, even at the expense of short-term financial goals.</u>**

   Ok, so right in the beginning we find a dichotomy between for-profit and non-profit public safety missions. To begin, we need to reformulate Toyota’s philosophy into one for law enforcement.

   First, we need to transform “for profit financial goals” into public safety goals. Clearly, you could easily default by acknowledging both Toyota and public safety have financial goals. In reality, the financial goals are vastly different inasmuch, as the public safety financial environment is short-term governed by annual budgets. We may have long term projects, but overall public safety and government budgeting is an annual cycle with volatility based on tax revenue and sometimes revenue sharing from the state and federal governments. Toyota’s goal is to make money and lots of it while public safety’s financial goal is to extract the most value in terms of public service from every tax dollar. In public safety, we often don’t recognize that we, like Toyota “earn” every dollar, but in reality we do through the public’s perception of the value derived from the

services we provide. And we all recognize the public's interest in parting with tax dollars ebbs and flows with how the public judges our work, leadership and results.

In for-profit industries the goal is to make a profit while in the public safety world our overarching goal is, well, public safety! So, Toyota's first basic philosophy is to base their decisions not on things that result in only short-term flash in the pan profits but look to the long game for profitability.

Here's an example, let's assume there's a huge and unexpected market shift to smaller and more economical cars your company wasn't ready for, maybe due to an oil crisis. This means quickly developing new chassis, developing smaller engines, transmissions and suspensions. You put your engineering teams to work and voila! A new small car! But, in a rush to market this new small car, your company sacrificed build quality, durability testing and reliability. The result? The new "lemon" will plague your company's reputation in the small car space for decades turning millions of prospective buyers in search of a small economical car to? You guessed it; Toyota, Honda and what then was Datsun now Nissan.

Now, let's translate this into what law enforcement needs to think about to deploy this philosophy. The long-term goal for public safety is simply public safety. That's our overarching mission so we should be making our decisions not on short term actions that may temporarily reduce crime but on the "long-game". The long-game I'm talking about here are strategies that improve public safety and reduce crime long-term not just this week, this summer or this season and then return to the same unacceptable levels leaving the public wondering what happened.

For example, your community has suffered an exponential increase in street crime, strong-armed robberies as well as an uptick in violent crime such as armed robberies possibly driven by gang violence or increased drug use. In response, highly aggressive stop/frisk stop/ask policies are implemented; aggressive patrol strategies are encouraged to "move" people from street corners and there is an increase in custodial arrests for minor crimes usually handled with a summons. Then, aggressive "hot spot" policing targeting vehicular traffic in a high crime area where stops are made for non-moving violations (e.g., broken headlight, cracked windshield etc.) and the occupants are aggressively questioned.

No doubt these tactics are successful in the short-term resulting in a reduction in crime for the targeted areas. But what are the long-term effects on the community? Did the

aggressive actions adversely affect the community's perception of the department? Cooperation with the department? Support of the department? Did the operations, despite driving down crime, upset the community for fear of being stopped arbitrarily or harassed from their perspective when doing nothing wrong? And, what effect did this operation have on your personnel? Did it lead to more complaints against officers who believed they were "following orders." Were the officers properly trained and the mission clearly defined or was it "rushed into action" believing it was necessary to "do something now" and worry about the aftermath later?

Was your short-term strategy governed by the notion that the police will deliver what the community wants akin to the "Big Three" automakers deciding what kind of cars the public wants?

Base your public safety operations on long-term public safety goals. Yes, we have to consider short and mid-term goals and objectives but even these should reflect our overarching goal of long-term sustained improvement in public safety. Implementing operations that lack the "engineering" required to produce quality results for public safety tend to produce undesirable and unintended consequences that crack the foundational trust and support of the communities we serve. The results set us back years and sometimes decades just like the small car lemons forced on consumers in the 70's.

You may think the public has no "choice" in selecting public safety delivery services and that your organization has a "monopoly" in the industry. Think again. In many cases there are choices such as the county or state police or not calling the police at all and of course, making the choice known through tax dollars and political activism that is reflected in your budget.

2. **Build a culture of stopping to fix problems, to get quality right the first time.**

This is the key to Toyota's success in producing the highest quality and most reliable automobiles in the industry. Toyota describes this as "automation with a human touch," or "jidoka". Rather than placing the emphasis on keeping the "line" moving to achieve production results, Toyota believes production without quality violates their first principle of long-term decision making. Fixing the problem(s) before they metastasize into a huge recall or reliability "black eye" Toyota acknowledges impact on production objectives to achieve reliability that influences consumer loyalty and the decision to buy a Toyota over another brand. A problem that gets to the customer is considered a

major failure while other perspectives may accept the problem and decide to handle it through warranty recalls. The Toyota way is to fix it now *before* it gets to the consumer. Nissan, for example, routinely pulls production engines unexpectedly from the line and puts them on a test dynamometer running them under excessive loads at maximum RPM for hundreds of hours to mimic more than 100,000 miles of heavy-duty service. Then they subject the engines to a rigorous tear-down inspection to discover any inherent weaknesses in design, manufacture, or parts.

In public safety we rarely "test" or "pilot" strategies or operations and even more rarely do we run a pilot strategy or operation and then seek community feedback, reviews, deploy surveys or have a series of community meetings to flush out any issues, concerns or address unintended consequences. How often do we subject an investigation to arbitrary inspection or "testing" to examine whether a flaw in policy, procedure or execution exists that hampers our ability to successfully resolve the case? How often do we proactively approach the prosecutor's office to determine whether our investigations, evidence collection, reports, policies and procedures are effective or do we have a problem?

In public safety we tend to correct a problem after it manifested itself in a public complaint, unsuccessful prosecution or community unrest. That's fixing the problem *after* it gets to the consumer.

To follow Toyota's lead not only should we consider accreditation but *go beyond accreditation* by adopting practices that identify and "fix" problems before they get to the public. That requires changing the culture of the organization to accept constant introspective examinations of our work.

This is not an exercise or call for draconian internal affairs investigations, inspections or audits to find fault with an employee and issue discipline but rather "fix a problem" that *hasn't yet manifested itself*.

We should strive to develop cultures that are based on quality and "fixing the problem" as opposed to hoping there isn't a complaint lodged or the case gets pled down because of poor investigation. This culture shift requires a lot of effort and the development of trust and confidence from both management and employees. Even "early warning systems" to identify "problem" employees are really not "early" for they rely on the documentation of complaints and issues to identify when intervention is needed *after the fact*. The "problem" has already reached the customer.

Toyota accepts the likelihood that a problem will creep into their product somewhere and to be able to detect and correct it before it shows up on the showroom floor requires a lot of trust from top to bottom and especially from the bottom up to feel confident you will not be chastised for bringing a problem forward.

In the past few years, public safety focused on "active intervention" or "active bystander" to encourage officers to intervene when they see a problem developing and act *before* it results in a problem or tragedy. We should consider taking this philosophy a step further by examining our work in a systematic and proactive way. Will this require more personnel and resources? How will it affect the "chain of command"? Can we promote continual improvement without diminishing trust and confidence in our workforce? Can leadership commit to "fixing problems" without invoking a disciplinary system? All these issues can be resolved with the proper foundation, planning and leadership not only from command staff and management but by including and embracing and empowering employees at all levels. Just like Toyota, it won't happen overnight but if you build a quality and reliable product you will earn that loyalty both from the public and your employees.

3. **Kaizen, or learning through continuous improvement.**

This philosophy is the flip side of fixing the problem before it gets to the consumer. Here, the "problem" reached the customer (public), and we need to *learn from it* to improve. And it just doesn't mean learning from our "own" problems or mistakes but, looking beyond to other departments and organizations that suffered through a situation or event. We should never allow the "this will never happen to us" notion to creep into our decision making.

Continuous improvement requires still another culture shift away from only looking at day-to-day operations and short-term issues to plan ahead by *anticipating problems* and making adjustments now to be ready for the future. How good is your "crystal ball?" Perhaps we shouldn't rely on a "crystal ball" (otherwise known as "instinct"), to anticipate problems but, instead institute a process of learning through continuous improvement.

Learning through continuous improvement expands the scope of dealing with a mistake, event, situation to uncover all the links in the chain. Here, we discover what "link" broke and how to prevent it from happening again or at all. We surely can't

anticipate every event or situation, and nobody has a 100 percent reliable crystal ball. However, we can look at events, situations that may not have directly impacted us, but we can easily see that it *could happen* here and so let's prepare for it.

Toyota was minimally impacted by the semi-conductor chip shortage a few years ago because they stockpiled them in advance. Was that because of a really good crystal ball or something else? It was the "something else" a big earthquake in Japan caused the company to think about disaster and supply chain interruptions for critical parts. They were prepared.

In public safety we consider events, situations or problems that either affect our organization or better yet examine what happened someplace else to cause us to consider whether we are prepared for such an event.

Let's take civil disobedience for example. Most departments have policies and procedures to manage civil unrest and so we rely on those when needed. If we're lucky, we haven't needed them. But are we really prepared? Have we "dusted" those polices off recently and subjected them to critical examination of what may occur today? Has the environment of civil disobedience changed dramatically to the point where our old policy just won't stand up to the test? Have we trained all our personnel especially all those new folks hired after the hiring downturn of a few years ago? Are supervisors and mid-managers ready to address a "pop up" rally that turns ugly and how to mitigate the effects of these events? Are we looking at ways to identify the leaders of the rally and meet ahead of time to work through the issues and lay the groundwork to avoid chaos?

Learning through continuous improvement means someone in the organization looks at a situation, event or case and thinks, "Wow, that could have gone upside down and we're just lucky it didn't." Or, thinking we could have done that a lot better. The key piece is to look ahead and to address the potential problem before it happens or examine how you may have done things better and set about addressing it. We all use "after action debriefings" typically after an "event." But, should we be examining our work continuously in a programmed way at all levels of the organization? Continuous improvement may come as a result of refresher training in an area we haven't experienced lately or at all but perhaps is becoming more likely. Continuous improvement could be an entirely new training evolution to address unexpected unforeseen changes. Continuous improvement may cause you to consider the need to purchase or upgrade equipment or technology. It may result in a total overhaul of policy and procedure in how your organization handles a situation.

We all experienced those unexpected events and situations caused by things beyond our control (e.g., weather or crime) or things that never happened "here" before but sure enough it did. Critical examination of performance during events to uncover weaknesses or shortcomings and address those to be better prepared to achieve success or mitigate problems in the future is learning through continuous improvement. But it takes a strong, trusting and confident organization to be super critical of itself without unraveling. You need to build that culture ahead of time.

Continuous improvement through learning is a paradigm shift and a cultural change that transcends leadership and management to embrace all employees. Crafting a culture in which employees lead improvement is a monumental paradigm shift that will revolutionize policing *if we make it happen*.

4. **Respect your extended network of partners.**

In the auto industry, this involves relationships with parts suppliers and vendors that are oftentimes very competitive and can be adversarial. Rather than treating vendors as disposable cogs that can be replaced by a competitor, Toyota values long-term relationships with vendors and considers them partners. To take it a step further, Toyota collaborates with vendors exchanging engineering and production insights to improve the vendor's quality and efficiency. In rare cases manufacturers reach across company boundaries seeking improvements achieved by competitors acknowledging a better way forward was already achieved by someone else so how can we benefit from them? Can we develop a positive relationship that is mutually beneficial rather than strictly competitive and adversarial?

In public safety the easiest way to explain how this philosophy may work is by examining our relationships with prosecutors. Traditionally, these relationships have been tenuous or wary at best and at worst either non-existent or adversarial. We often engage with prosecutors when a decision to dismiss charges, enter into a plea agreement the department objects to or when the prosecutor directs further investigation when the investigators believe it is unnecessary.

Using the Toyota philosophy, we should respect our extended network of partners and consider prosecutors as partners instead of a separate part of the public safety process. Developing a mutually beneficial relationship based on respect for each other and making that partnership part of each organization's culture will lead to better

understanding and improvements by both entities. Working with instead of against each other builds trust and confidence. But, again, to move forward requires leadership from both to invest in the relationship as a foundation upon which to achieve better results.

Workshops for employees from both organizations can lead to expanded insights into the issues that cause friction and the development of ways to eliminate or mitigate those pain points. One example is making sure the evidence collected in a case is admissible in court or how to avoid adversely impacting the integrity of an investigation through improved investigatory procedures including interviews and interrogations. Conversely, bringing to light the difficulties facing investigators when attempting to gather information or evidence to the attention of the prosecutor gives them a better understanding of what the detectives are facing. Collaborating with prosecutors in a relationship based upon mutual respect will achieve better results and when those inevitable disagreements do occur they are resolved quickly and without adverse effect.

Using the prosecutor and police example was intentional but not to say they are always adversarial. In some cases there is mutual respect at the leadership levels of both organizations but non-existent at the line levels or conversely.

The other "partnerships" in public safety tend to be much stronger and grounded with mutual respect especially in those suburban and rural areas where no singular agency or department has sufficient resources for major events.

With the downturn in staffing beginning in the 2020's, even larger departments today remain critically understaffed and often rely on mutual aid partners. This reliance on inherently fosters mutual respect and close working relationships. But, despite having a good and respectful relationship with a partner agency that does not mean like any personal relationship it doesn't require attention. Like a pre-arranged weekly "date night" with a loved one, there is a distinct benefit derived from attending to your partner agencies especially when you don't need them. It is in time of need when solid partnerships can bail you out of a jam.

5. **Go and see for yourself, and relentless reflection.**

This element of the Toyota philosophy and culture paradigm is where the pieces all fit together. It pulls in elements from the other philosophies emphasizing unwavering vigilance leading to insightful problem solving to achieve the overarching goals of the

organization. In Toyota's case, making money by selling quality and reliable automobiles generating consumer loyalty based upon value and reliability.

The Toyota requirement for relentless reflection, which I characterize as relentless introspection is grounded in two key elements; "genchi egnbutsu" (go and see for yourself) and "hansei" (relentless reflection). Let's look at these individually and then together in the public safety context.

First, let's examine what happens when you don't go and see for yourself. In Toyota's case, this occurred when two of its subsidiaries falsified testing; one for emissions and the other involved doctored crash testing. The eruption and impact of both scandals were significant. Both cases involved deviation from the Toyota "way" which failed to detect and fix the problems. The CEO of Toyota publicly stated management from both companies failed to "go and see" what was going on and thus failed to detect the problems.

Part of the Toyota "way" is how they handled the scandals and used learning through continuous improvement to move forward. First, the company admitted its failures and the chairman publicly *"accepted personal responsibility" and presented a plan to correct and prevent it from happening again.* No scapegoating, pointing the finger at someone else or trying to put a pretty face on a mess (lipstick on a pig seems to fit here). It was an exercise in *doubling down on the philosophy and culture that brought them to success.* "Go and see for yourself" coupled with relentless reflection or introspection ensures the bosses know what's going on and critically examine what they see or found and take the necessary action to avert disaster, scandal or worse.

Toyota clearly learned through continuous improvement in refining its processes to get these two subsidiaries back on the path.

In the public safety world let's compare "go and see for yourself" with "management by walking around" coupled with "Comp/Stat" or similar performance monitoring programs. In large departments the chief, colonel, superintendent or sheriff relies on command staff to be their "eyes and ears". But there is actually no better way than to actually get out there to absorb the full context of what's happening yourself. Some time ago there was a tragic shooting of a New York State Trooper which led to a protracted statewide manhunt for the killer. The superintendent at the time Wayne Bennett, was in the field, in uniform seeing for himself and taking the necessary steps to ensure coordination as well as calm the public and rally the troops working to capture

the killer and bring the case to a close. Leading from the front also means go and see for yourself.

There are many stories of chiefs, sheriffs, and colonels who, despite enormous pressure on time, go and see for themselves, showing up on the overnight shift to ride along, at a large-scale operation or make personal appearances at what could be an adversarial public meeting or session with the city council. Getting the information "unfiltered" or "with the bark on" is essential.

The information and insight gleaned from these efforts are irreplaceable and often lead to changes and improvements the public or employees had been seeking for a long time but never "bubbled up" to the surface. Sure, you are likely to get an "ear full" from a member of the public or an employee, but you now know what's happening and can take action to correct, solve, mitigate the issue or explain why things are.

In times of crisis taking public and personal responsibility while presenting a way forward using Toyota's relentless reflection philosophy presents an entirely different perspective to others. Sure, there are a mountain of legal constraints that scream caution at laying out any framework before all the facts are in. But also recognize as the organization rises to the occasion in what appears to be a tragedy defines it's character and builds greater trust and confidence. Challenging management to continually step beside oneself and reflect on how the actions or proposed actions will affect the organization, how it will be perceived by employees, the public and others is the manifestation of relentless reflection. It's not a one-time event born from a crisis but a culture.

The "Toyota way" clearly isn't fool proof and like any philosophy is subject to interpretation, obfuscation, illegitimate compromises and can be ignored or thwarted by employees for personal gain or protection. However, as a culture forming the foundation upon which the organization or department operates can be revolutionary and galvanizing internally and externally.

In public safety making decisions geared toward long-term results avoiding short-term knee-jerk reactions that cause major problems or unintended adverse effects build confidence and trust internally and externally. Learning through continuous improvement incorporating a philosophy that accepts problems will surface but recognizes the fix should be immediate prevents major problems or can mitigate problems preventing them from tipping over into chaos and tragedy undermining the

organization's mission. Developing and nurturing your extended network of partners in times of both calm and crisis improves outcomes and smooths the pathways to success. Finally, adopting the "go and see for yourself" and relentless reflection brings all the pieces together.

In public safety we're not trying to build a reliable and quality automobile that lasts longer and is cheaper to own than others but rather produce an environment of both being safe and feeling safe, that reflects the highest standards of quality and meets public expectations while shepherding tax dollars. The "Toyota way" can be the way forward for public safety. All it takes is imagination and the willingness to expand our horizons in terms of how we perceive public safety management and leadership.

The i2S team can help your organization embody the philosophies used so effectively by Toyota to propel your organization to the next level of public safety success.

Contact us at https://i2Sconsulting.com