

has suggested that the lack of intelligence sharing between the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) may have led to the success of that attack. The initial response to the Commission's report was to create the Department of Homeland Security, whose initial mission was to find ways to improve communication and intelligence sharing across intelligence-gathering agencies. A product of this effort is the development of Fusion Centers. A Fusion Center is a mechanism for exchanging information and intelligence. The Center's goal is to provide a mechanism for law enforcement and intelligence-gathering agencies to place and retrieve intelligence.

The Centers gather information not only from law enforcement agencies but also from the private sector. The Fusion Center managed by the Palm Beach County Sheriff's Department has developed a partnership with private sector entities referred to as Business Partners against Terrorism (BPAT). As this partnership develops, business agencies are given guidelines, training, and a venue to submit critical information for the Centers. The initial purpose was to prevent terrorists' plots from developing into attacks. However, as the Centers have evolved, intelligence on criminal activity, especially in organized crime and gang activities, is becoming a greater part of the system. To the extent that quality and quantity information on criminal or terrorist threats is now being shared across U.S. law enforcement agency boundaries, traditional barriers to interorganizational communication are being bridged. The European Union (EU) is also a target for terrorism and suffers its share of crime. Hence, the EU is attempting to manage and share critical information through better data collection and analysis. Europol's annual Organized Crime Threat Assessment (OCTA) is completing the collection and analysis. The main thrust is against organized crime, but similar to Fusion Centers, OCTA also attempts to include private sector and academic sources (Harfield, 2008).

COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY

The efficiency of communication has dramatically increased with the development of information technology. The Internet is a global interconnection of computers operating independently (Kinicki and Kreitner, 2006). The Internet connects business, governmental and private agencies, and individuals across the globe through personal computers, mainframes, and supercomputers. One individual can communicate with a host of individuals or firms with the click of a button. Also, individuals can receive an interminable number of messages without being at their computers and retrieve them when convenient. It is also possible to search the Internet for information from an almost infinite number of sources on almost any topic. Police officers can search for warrants and other important information with laptop computers in their cars. Reports can be written on computers, checked for spelling and proper grammar, and sent out instantly to a number of recipients upon completion. The main method of Internet communication is, of course,

e-mail. E-mail can save agencies time and money when used properly. It can also facilitate group work and teamwork by allowing individuals to communicate across great distances in real time.

Computers allow individuals to work from home by being linked to their clients or business through personal computers rather than requiring an office—or even a classroom. This can create a significant savings for agencies because they can meet their objectives in part by allowing individuals to work from their homes.

Computers are great storage bins for reports, files, data, and other information that typically is stored in cumbersome filing cabinets, notebooks, or other traditional means of record storage. In addition to eliminating the need for space to file information, filing can be done with the click of a mouse rather than through the efforts of clerical staff. In spite of all these benefits, however, a disadvantage is that a skilled hacker can break into computer systems and steal information, making security difficult. Most agencies that are concerned with security develop an *intranet* system that can function only within agency parameters. To prevent intruders from breaking the agency's computer communication boundaries, a firewall can be installed. The firewall keeps the agency computers from being accessed by non-agency individuals. However, firewalls can be breached and information stolen. Moreover, we are all familiar with computer viruses created by computer hackers that intrude into a system to destroy programs and records.

Teleconferencing, or videoconferencing, is also a technological advancement that improves the efficiency of communication. Teleconferencing brings individuals in distant cities together with audio and video connections. This allows individuals to hold conferences and staff meetings and conduct interviews at a distance, eliminating the time and cost that would be expended to bring people together on a face-to-face basis. In some jurisdictions, arraignments for criminal defendants are held via teleconferencing between the court and the local jail. This eliminates the cost and time needed to transport inmates from jails to local courts for their arraignments, but it provides the defendant with his or her appearance in court and proper judicial procedures.

There is no guarantee that communicating with computer technology or videoconferencing will improve the effectiveness of communication. We still need to be sharp and thoughtful to effectively use these modern tools. The ease with which e-mails can be sent or data and other records stored may cause information overload. Mid-level administrators in a state correctional agency reported that administrators were calling staff meetings several times a week with teleconferencing rather than monthly as had been the practice in the past because of the ease with which such meetings could be set up. The meetings tended to be poorly planned, and the information provided often contradicted information from the previous meeting, depending on who called the meeting.

It is easy to conclude that productivity in organizations is linked to good communications. If individuals within and among organizations communicate

poorly, they will find it difficult to coordinate their work and link their tasks. If directives and orders are communicated ineffectively, programs, plans, and changes in routine tasks are hard to implement. Managers and practitioners would agree on this conclusion, at least in principle, and so does current research (Hinduja, 2006). Therefore, managers and practitioners in criminal justice agencies should actively seek to improve communication channels and individual communication skills. Typically, the task of improving communication is ignored or is relegated to occasional training seminars that do not teach communication skills in the context of the organization.

To the extent that formal training in communication is provided, it focuses on law, agency rules and protocol, chain of command, and other formal aspects of communication. Report writing may be offered to new recruits, but comprehensive training in interpersonal communications is not a common part of training agendas. Some criminal justice agencies, however, do offer training in communication for their professionals. The Michigan Department of Corrections provides extensive human relations training for its corrections officers, who are taught how to recognize and deal with communication barriers between staff and inmates and about the psychological games some inmates play. They then learn effective communication skills to overcome these barriers and problems.

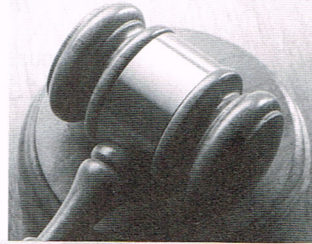
Communication among members of different components of the system is often limited because of conflicting goals. To the extent that members perceive interagency relationships as more conflicting than negotiative, interagency communication will be limited, formal, and closed rather than informal and open. Agencies can improve interagency communication simply by making clear to their members the situations that involve legitimate goal conflict and those that allow for negotiation and cooperation.

The development of new technology using computers to store and process communication has increased markedly during the last decade (Hinduja, 2006; Kinicki and Kreitner, 2006). A great deal of emphasis is being placed on training computer skills to criminal justice practitioners (James, 1996; Leiberger, 1996; Ricker, 1996; Van Buren, 1996), such as developing the communication skills of police dispatch and emergency services, areas that are in obvious need of technical upgrading. As communication systems become more efficient and can connect individuals and agencies to information from across the globe, information management will become extremely important. The ease of access to information will also make the technical side of confidentiality a new task for managers. The recent exposure of governmental classified documents by Wikileaks shows how vulnerable an agency can be.

Administrators will be forced to deal internally with many of these problems by restructuring or streamlining communication channels and providing training to agency members. Most significant in this regard is the crucial need for intelligence agencies to communicate and share information among agencies rather than hoard intelligence, as has been the past practice. It is just such sharing of information that the 9/11 Commission (2003) concluded is imperative for the nation's defense against terror.

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CHAPTER 4



Problems of Communication

Basic Theory of Communication

Communication Process

Nine Barriers to Communication

Communication in Organizations

Chain of Command

Informal Communication

Organizational Rules for Communication

Informal Communication

Networks

Nonverbal Communication

Information and Communication

Communication Roles for Criminal Justice Practitioners

Communication Barriers

Developing Informal Communication Networks

Exchange Theory

Work Perspective: Interorganizational Communication Goes Lacking

The Linking Pin and Communication

Implications for Criminal Justice Managers

Communication with the Environment