

Improving Morale, Opening Lines of Communication, and Keeping the Criminalist Engaged

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**These slides do not purport to represent the position or opinion of
the NYPD Police Laboratory or NYPD.**

- **One of the management models and methods that might be applicable to many forensic labs is “Managing Chaos” or “Chaos by Design”.**
- **Because occurrences change and develop rapidly, often outside our ability to control them, it is all the more so important to set goals and keep our overall focus on these goals.**

- **The demands and pressures on everyone in the lab, criminalists/analysts and managers alike, can take its toll on morale, communication, and even knowledge.**
- **In this presentation, various tools and ideas will be discussed for improving morale and lines of communication, and making sure that the laboratory is dynamic and not stagnant.**
- **A short open discussion will ensue in the end so that we can benefit from other's ideas and experiences.**

Don't re-invent the wheel----



**But don't be afraid
to improve it!!!**



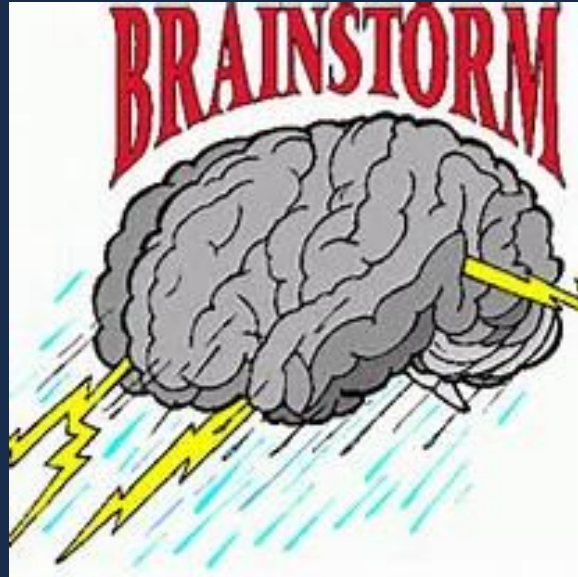
- 1. Nothing earth-shattering – many ideas out there**
- 2. Much is dependent on your organization / department / location**

NYPD Police Laboratory:

- **Approximately 350 people**
 - **~ 230 civilians (MOS)**
 - **of which approximately 160 analysts**
 - **~ 120 uniformed (UMOS)**
 - **of which approx. 48 analysts**
- **Crim I – Crim III, Crim IV Supervisor, POs, Detectives, Sgts, Managers, Lts & Captain**
- **~ 8 different unions (3 civilian, 5 uniformed)**



**Unfortunately,
often, the “carrots”
are lacking**



Bing images

I have a great idea, why don't I say:

“Thank You!!! Your hard work is appreciated!”

“Greetings Dep Director Springer,

I just signed off on my 2012 evaluation. I'd like to express my sincere appreciation for your comment regarding my evaluation.

It was very thoughtful of you to take notice of my "behind the scenes" duties.

Honestly, I didn't think anyone really knew what my functions are here.

I can't express enough gratitude for your observations. Thank you again. Maybe I can stop by sometime next week to thank you personally.”

For cohesiveness and team-building, don't forget your support staff such as:

- **Security**
- **Clerical**
- **Custodial**
- **Maintenance and Repairs**
- **Budget and Supplies**

**Quarterly – Semi-Annually –
Police Department Recognition**

“Thank You!!! Your hard work is appreciated!”

**From Supervisor interview: “ To be recognized
in front of my peers was one of the nicest
things that happened to me!”**

The “flip-side”

- **A conscious effort at reducing the accepted – adjudication process of Command Disciplines**
- **Liken it to a frustrated parent –**
- **Supervisors should when possible, avoid reaching such situations**
- **Amount of yearly CDs halved through a conscious effort**

Ordinary Things – Improved Communication

- Meetings and updates at all levels – seek input
 - People feel a part of the process
 - Helps prevent the “rumor mill”



Ordinary Things:

- I. Planned Training and Professional Development**
 - A. Let Criminalist know what is planned for him.**
 - B. Forensic Discipline related:**
 - 1. Visits to local manufacturing plants:**
 - a. Firearms/ammunition**
 - b. Tool marks**
 - i. Plastic bag**
 - ii. Adhesive tape**
 - iii. Paper clips**
 - iv. Tools**

Ordinary Things – Visits to local manufacturing plants cont.:

- e) Paint manufacturer**
- f) Automobile manufacturing**
- g) Body shop**
- h) Pharmaceuticals**
- i) Paper manufacturer**

2. Brings professional development and break from day-to-day

Ordinary Things – Professional development and break cont.:

3. Library morning

4. Article hour (if you read the first half hour – you will still get your cases done)

a. Supervisor initiated

5. Seminars – article discussion

6. Guest lectures

Ordinary Things – Planned Training & Professional Development – cont.:

C. Other TPD topics:

1. Project Planning – don't assume everyone knows how!
 - a. ASCLD-LAB uncertainty deadline - CAR
2. Managerial/supervision topics – no real training
3. Ethics
4. Combined lab/police/DA's
5. Poster sessions

Ordinary Things -

II. Extra-Curricular activities

A. Teacher/student day – Supervisor for a Day (Crim IV for a day)

1. Advantages and goals:

- a. Change from norm – both for supervisor and analyst
- b. What you see from here you don't see from there

Ordinary Things: cont. - Supervisor for a Day (Crim IV for a day)

- c. Cultivate future supervisors**
 - d. Identify people with more potential**
 - 2. We do it about once every three months in the large sections**
 - 3. Participants give feedback, less criticism:**
 - a. “I had no idea that the position is so demanding!”**
 - b. “In the future, I don’t think I would be interested in this position!”**

Ordinary Things – Extra-Curricular activities cont.:

B. Special Projects

C. WIN Meetings

1. Weekly Improvement of Networking
 - a. Focus Groups (particular section)
 - b. Other (mixed)

2. Once a week for a year
 - a. Mix from different sections (uniform and civilian)

Ordinary Things – WIN Meetings cont.:

- b. First, go around the room**
 - i. Ten people plus top management**
 - ii. Everybody gives brief cv**
 - a) How long here?**
 - b) Where here?**
 - c) Where before?**
 - d) Academic Background and/ or work and uniform experience**
 - 1) E.g.. 24 and 27 years – elevator, never knew name!!!**

Ordinary Things – WIN Meetings cont.:

c. Tour of lab

d. Back together for coffee/donuts and open discussion with top management

i. Bring up any topic

a) Policy and SOP questions

b) Questions regarding needed equipment and maintenance

c) Discover little things that should have been done and get them done quickly

Out of the Ordinary Things:

III. Usual fun, out of the ordinary

- A. Logo design and contest**
- B. Pumpkin carving contest**
- C. Holiday decorations**
- D. Talent show night**
- E. Movie night**
 - 1. Conclusion – not too interested on own time**
- F. Holiday and spring parties**
- G. Before and after/old young pictures**

**Many possibilities and options – we just have
to put the thought, time, and effort into it!!!**

- **But how do we gauge success?**
- **“We are the best _____!!!”**
- **One way that helps me feel that we are on the right track is hearing unsolicited comments of our members in different venues such as meetings, conversations, and emails**

Quote from criminalist email – 07/08/2014

“With the constant pressure of keeping up with the demands of servicing a heavily populated city, our management decided to focus on improving the quality of our work. This was accomplished by increasing the amount of personnel in quality assurance and designating additional resources to revamping our current procedures/policies through the lean-six-sigma model.”

Quote from criminalist email – 07/08/2014

“Through the e-mail system and meetings with management we are constantly encouraging employees to be a part of the management system and engaged in their work environment.

Management has dedicated time to hear concerns or address questions from all analysts through the WIN meetings.

There is constant continued education for all personnel through our "Training and Professional Development" unit. Creation of a team oriented environment through group projects, and developing strong leaders through mentoring programs like "supervisor for the day" and our internship program.”

Quote from criminalist email – 07/08/2014

“...All of these examples show that we care about the quality of the results by reinvesting in ourselves to *elevate* not *strangulate* our resources.

Eliminate unnecessary stress by providing the necessary resources to achieve the numbers. We are proactive in eliminating unethical situations which in turn creates an ethical environment.

These examples create an open, sharing and therefore innovative environment. And innovation is the key to creating sound forensic science and a safe society for our families.”

Questions, comments, and more ideas????

Thank You!!!