

# Law Enforcement Leadership for a Changing World

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*“Developing leaders for the future is vital; crime is no longer constrained by borders and we’re seeing the death of distance; police are being held to higher levels of accountability for outcomes and performance; and the environment we live in is evolving more quickly than ever.”*

Pearls in Policing member Ng Joo He, 2012.

## Introduction - Pearls in Policing

Inspired by the international Bilderberg concept, since 2007 Pearls in Policing has brought an international group of top law enforcement executives together to discuss the key strategic issues facing their profession, in an environment that is conducive to focussing on the future (Pearls in Policing, 2012).

The debate and insights that emerge from Pearls in Policing both inform and are informed by the work of an action learning group, which is one of five components of the Pearls in Policing model:

1. An annual conference
2. The International Action Learning Group (IALG), known as the ‘Pearl Fishers’
3. An academic forum
4. Work groups
5. Peer-to-peer consultations

The annual conference is held each June. In 2013 the conference was held in Amsterdam, where the 7<sup>th</sup> IALG presented their research findings which built on the research of previous IALG’s; in 2011 the chosen theme was *Charting the Course of Change*, which examined how social media, new technology and the formation of strategic alliances influence change in policing; in 2012 the chosen theme was *Policing for a Safer World*, which examined professionalism, collective approaches to cybercrime, and achieving a discipline of learning across organisations.

When the 7<sup>th</sup> IALG first met in October 2012 in Ottawa, Canada, their assignment was delivered to them by Pearls in Policing member Ng Joo Hee, the Commissioner of the Singapore Police Force. The chosen theme was *Sustainable Leadership in a Changing World* and the IALG was asked to:

- i.) Identify the key functional and leadership competencies that will be essential for future senior leadership in policing;
- ii.) Examine and assess the various means by which police leadership can be developed through benchmarking and identifying best practices in various organisations; and
- iii.) Develop a framework for systematic and sustainable leadership management and succession.

In February 2013 the IALG met for a second time, at the police college in Manly, Australia, before moving to The Netherlands for their third and final meeting, which ran immediately prior to the annual conference. At these meetings the IALG was exposed to a diverse range of presenters and leaders from academia, the private sector, policing and the public service. In Ottawa, Dr Eleanor Lester worked with the IALG on examining policing through different cultural, structural, political and human resource frames; applying the concepts and theories of Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal (2008). In Manly, Professor Sohail Inayatullah spent two days working with the IALG on exploring alternative futures for the leadership of policing through the application of an alternative futures model (Inayatullah, 2008) and in The Netherlands, the group heard from Royal Dutch Shell about their global quest to inspire a new leadership approach.

## **The Leadership Challenge – Why Change?**

Globalisation is an unstoppable driving force for changes in crime and police leaders must therefore be able to think and act globally. According to Batts et al (2012, p.3), business and industry have moved away from traditional hierarchies and bureaucracy; police leaders in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century must inspire a “similar revolution” in the way they design and lead their organisations.

Policing, particularly in Western countries, remained mostly unchanged until the 1960s, when social change and upheaval began to challenge traditional approaches (Ratcliffe, 2008, p.89). More recently, systemic shocks such as financial crises have affected many police organisations, bringing novel challenges that require new approaches and fresh thinking.

There is no “one-size fits all” approach; financial constraints are not universal:

some police leaders operate within highly prosperous economies. For them the problems include hiring talent and managing negative perceptions of the police as an employer.

Based on 110 interviews conducted by the IALG with agency heads and senior executives from around the world (records of which are now held by the Australian Institute of Police Management in Manly, Australia), of universal concern to police leaders is the ability of their organisations to sustain or strengthen future performance whilst vectors of change and uncertainty (including social, economic and technological forces) continually re-shape the environment, including:

- Demographic change and skills shortages,
- Increasing community expectations,
- Disruptive technologies and e-crime,
- Reduced government revenues,
- The evolving threat of terrorism,
- The globalisation of crime and increasingly sophisticated organised crime,
- Deregulation, and
- Exogenous shocks.

These macro-level forces point towards the strategic importance of leaders in the future and of their ability to effectively diagnose and adapt their current and future capabilities to achieve a fit with the opportunities and threats that exist or are likely to exist.

At the 2013 Pearls in Policing Conference the IALG sought to probe a little deeper into the issue of leadership and undertook a quick “straw poll” by asking the delegates to leave their chairs and take a stand under “Yes” or “No” regarding a series of statements (Table 1). A roaming microphone was used to tease out some key themes.

Table 1. “Straw Poll” Results

<i>Statement</i>	<i>% Responding Yes</i>	<i>% Responding No</i>	<i>Notes</i>
In ten years 50% of all leaders should be women	90	10	Some of those responding “no” believed this was a noble aspiration but unachievable.
Without transformation, police will be less relevant	100	0	Unanimous.
All top level police leaders must have an academic degree	60	40	No academic believed it was essential.
Operational police experience is essential for a leader	90	10	
My successor can be from outside law enforcement	10	90	Opposite sides of the same coin.
I am satisfied with the current succession planning in my organisation	0	100	This was arguably the most telling response.

It can be seen that every member believed that leadership transformation was necessary and that none was satisfied with their existing succession management

arrangements, yet few saw any value in diversifying their leadership mix with experience from outside policing.

## Alternative Futures

So why is it that the top leaders in policing know there is a need to change but seem unable to utilise (or apparently have little enthusiasm for) tools such as succession management and diversification? This situation arguably points to some of the underlying strengths and weaknesses of police culture and its heritage. Recognising these tensions between the call of the future and the pull of the past, the IALG sought to tease these issues out through their research and, in particular, in the work they did with Professor Inayatullah.

In Ottawa the ILAG had developed a deeper and wider understanding of modern policing leadership by examining its structural, human, political and symbolic dimensions. This re-framing exercise had begun to raise questions in the minds of the IALG participants about the readiness of policing to deal with its future challenges, both known and unforeseen.

Following their meeting in Ottawa, IALG participants observed in their interviews with police leaders that whilst some police organisations were undertaking succession management, or parts of succession management, many appeared to have informal or unclear processes and systems and very few had a formal, integrated approach.

When the IALG next met, at Manly, to build on the new insights they had gained, an alternative futures model was adopted. This resulted in different scenarios about the future of police leadership being developed to act as the primary basis for developing new strategies, and for making the case for change at the Pearls in Policing conference.

The first step in developing plausible scenarios involved using Inayatullah's (2008) Causal Layered Analysis (CLA). During a workshop that was facilitated by Professor Inayatullah, four key dimensions of the past and present were explored in order to create new knowledge and a broader understanding of police leadership:

1. The litany or commonly accepted "headlines" of the way things are or should be
2. The social, economic, political causes and solutions of the issue
3. The worldview or the big picture; the paradigm that informs what we think is real or not real
4. A metaphor to illustrate the deep unconscious story

Undertaking CLA was, at times, an exercise in imagination for the IALG and challenged the participants' worldviews and beliefs, which had already been re-framed through the work undertaken in Ottawa. Undertaking CLA included examining the traditions, challenges and effectiveness of police leadership through the imagined lenses of external stakeholders, such as captains of industry and the media.

The CLA process emphasised the importance of ensuring that a new strategy was accompanied by a new metaphor and that it included the advice/perspective of multiple worldviews. CLA also ensured that systemic changes and new measurements – litanies – reinforced the desired future.

CLA was also used in the "incasting" process and to bring depth to overall approach. Four scenarios for the future of police leadership were developed; the

current, the worst case, the best case and the outlier. This scenario method was used as participants hoped to show that the present case was not sustainable and could, in fact, lead to the worst case. The outlier was also developed in order to address issues gleaned from analysis of emerging issues – the disrupters. Most significant was the best case, as this was used to articulate strategic recommendations:

*Scenario 1: the current view*

Police senior leadership development and succession management is largely based on seniority, where centralised HR systems favour experience over vision. Leaders are promoted from within the ranks and don't necessarily have the required leadership competencies, worldview or future orientation.

The police culture values hierarchy and efficacy in command and control, which produces leaders with deep operational experience and an action-orientation.

Innovation and change is largely uncoordinated; bureaucracy and hierarchy serve to inhibit organic change and innovation. As the future becomes increasingly unpredictable, police organisations lack the diversity and agility to cope with emergent challenges.

Looking and acting like a stalwart of tradition is reflected in leadership development, and the police risk becoming viewed as an unattractive employment choice, affecting the recruitment and retention of talent from the next generation of potential employees.

In summary, because nothing changes: police forces quickly come to be seen as predictable, old fashioned organisations with leaders of no vision who are stuck in the past. The metaphor applied to this scenario is the “Old Boys Network”, where change and diversity is threatening.

*Scenario 2: the worst case*

Police leadership is in crisis. There is little if any quality leadership talent, no succession management and no plan. What talent does remain is actively looking elsewhere, becoming disaffected and leaving, taking the investment made in them, their skills and their potential with them. Without a strategic view of leadership, organisations are evolving clumsily and leadership development is left to chance.

Ineffective strategy making and implementation mean new and emerging trends in crime are rarely seen in advance or addressed properly, if at all. This is having catastrophic consequences as police leaders are unable to prepare for and direct change and they are failing to meet the ever-increasing and changing expectations of communities and governments. Levels of public safety and confidence become diminished as policing remains largely reactive to crime. Inevitably there is a loss of reputation and trust in police leadership that reduces the willingness of non-traditional partners to enter into any form of collaborative work.

To break this cycle and achieve the necessary levels of efficiency and effectiveness, political masters seek alternative sources of police leadership and inspiration, from senior military officers to captains of industry, to fill the void in the police leadership talent pool.

The metaphor for this scenario is “Is there a pilot on the plane?”; an absence of effective leadership (pilots) leads to a crash.

*Scenario 3: the best case*

A Police Leadership Development Model addresses current and future strategic

needs and produces leaders who are operationally astute, attuned to their staff and stakeholders and to the ever-changing national and international environment. They demonstrate the right competencies for the job at the right time.

Police leadership teams are drawn from a talent pool of people with a wide range of experience and backgrounds. Diversity is highly valued and enables a culture that retains an action orientation and key core values, but which is also flexible, innovative and not risk-averse. Police strategy is designed to sense and respond to changes in the environment, and has led to the establishment of new capabilities, competencies and collaborative networks that are agile and responsive.

And the metaphor: “every police leader a masterpiece” – future leaders have to be deliberately discovered, nurtured and developed.

#### *Scenario 4: the outlier*

Police authorities and politicians have determined that radical changes to emergency management and community safety are required. Elements of a number of front line emergency services, including the police, are to be merged and will fall within the new Ministry for Happiness portfolio. The new Community Safety Agency CEO is hired from a successful soft drinks company and she brings a handful of trusted senior executives with her. Is the public now less well-protected, and is the break with tradition a bad thing?

In competing for a limited number of new positions within the senior executive, how would today’s senior police leaders fair against their new peers from the private sector and other emergency services? The new CEO runs an on-line poll of staff to find out what they think about the leadership team.

The CEO and her team bring a diverse range of new competencies and approaches to the leadership mix. They embark on developing new strategies and business models in which agility, diversity, innovation, creativity and productivity are prioritised. This leaves some operational leaders, including many who are close to the front line, feeling under-valued and under threat. But the external view is positive and the new organisation is viewed as a modern, future-oriented and interesting employer that values and invests in its staff.

The new organisation develops highly effective and efficient processes, is well led and managed and becomes extremely agile and flexible. But it loses some of its operational edge. The metaphor for this scenario is “Cola is refreshing but it might kill you”; some valuable and enduring capabilities and competencies are killed for the sake of a yearning for new leadership.

### **A New Strategy**

The development of the best case scenario was not only based on CLA and informed by the development of the other three scenarios, it also incorporated the work done by the IALG in Ottawa, and the 110 interviews conducted by participants with today’s senior leaders and stakeholders.

The best case scenario served as a vision for the future of police leadership and as such was the first step in a strategy-making process. The development of alternative futures helped the IALG to identify a number of objectives, in terms of what police leadership should deliver, including desirable organisational competencies like agility. The key functional strategies required to achieve the vision and outcomes and to move from the present state were the development of

a leadership competency model and a succession management model, to which the next sections of this article are devoted.

## Competencies - What is Police Leadership?

For the IALG, the case for change was convincing. Their research demonstrated the ways in which policing is changing rapidly, that the future is increasingly unpredictable and that community and stakeholder expectations are increasing. Meeting these expectations will require police leaders to develop and implement new strategies, organisational designs and capabilities in order to deliver predictive/preventative approaches to emerging issues as well as rapid responses to current issues. Implementing change of this nature requires a more sustainable approach to leadership.

In the interviews conducted by the IALG, interviewees were asked a series of questions including:

1. What are the changes in leadership values that you foresee for the future?
2. What are the competencies that you would look for in a leader today and in the future?

Based on the insights gained from detailed analysis of the interviews, the words of the speakers at IALG meetings and an examination of the leadership models of other organisations, the IALG developed a Police Leadership Competency Model which is deliberately simple and high level so that it can be applied to any police organisation:

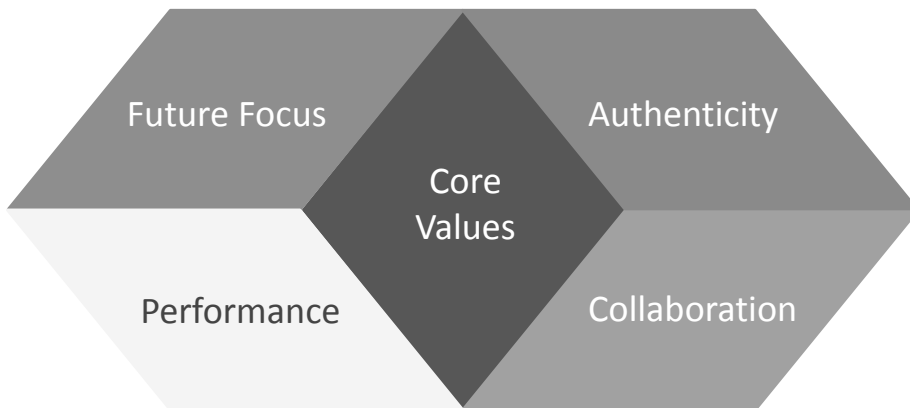


Figure 1. Leadership Competency Model developed by IALG 2012-2013

At the heart of the model is the notion that senior police leadership is built on core values, which have endured over time. This is a golden thread that links competencies and behaviours and which police organisations rely on for maintaining high ethical standards, a healthy culture and a positive reputation. The essential leadership values identified in the development of the model are not new: *integrity, courage and diversity*:

- *Integrity* is necessary for building trust and credibility; the basis for co-creating and implementing strategy with external partners and stakeholders; as an essential attribute of police culture that can be shaped by leaders; and as an

enabler of senior police leaders to develop emergent strategy and implement change.

- *Courage* is necessary for effective decision-making and risk management; as a basis for speed of action; for upholding the values of the organisation; for dealing with moral and ethical dilemmas; and for empowering organisation members to make decisions and innovate.
- *Diversity* is also necessary for innovation and creativity, which will be as important for policing in the future as for any other form of industry. Embracing diversity requires more than addressing sexual, cultural and racial imbalances; it goes to the heart of creating a culture that has a wide-angle perspective, that welcomes different views and ideas, and which feeds these into decision-making at all levels. Modern police organisations must mirror the diverse societal arenas in which they operate and learn to see issues and opportunities through multiple lenses.

Senior police leadership must also be developed as a strategic capacity that can create, implement and adapt future strategies and develop more agile organisation where capabilities and knowledge are able to be rapidly mobilised. What began as a lengthy list of technical and behavioural competencies was refined and aggregated by the IALG into four key areas of competence:

- *Future Focus* - The primary obligation of senior leaders is to prepare their organisations for the future, which requires the ability to look ahead and develop a compelling vision for taking the organisation forward. For policing, such a vision must go well beyond the obvious but remain realistic and provide a clear path for the organisation in terms of tackling crime in whatever form.
- A successful orientation towards the future is not limited to the external environment and anticipating trends, but requires an understanding of how to prepare and reconfigure the internal organisation for the expected and unexpected. For police leaders, creating agility within organisations that have a traditionally hierarchical culture is a difficult proposition.
- As noted by John Kotter (2012), hierarchy plays an important role in defining reporting relationships and locating accountability, but even a “souped-up” hierarchy with fewer layers and less bureaucracy will struggle to handle the levels of complexity and rapid change that are likely to be faced by police in the future. Creating agility within bureaucratic organisations requires a new form of leadership that can keep the organisation stable on the one hand, whilst inspiring people, creating a climate of innovation and creativity and mobilising for change on the other.
- *Authenticity* - It is a truism that leaders must be trustworthy, believable and seen by others to possess good social skills. To use a common phrase, authenticity is about walking the talk. Beyond Generation Y, future generations of employee are predicted to be increasingly likely to question positional authority and to demand leaders who are able to connect with them on a personal level. This is an important area of competence that requires a high level of emotional intelligence. In police organisations where command, control and conformity are the norm, a more personal style of leadership that values consensus and relies less on positional authority may be perceived as being weak or incompatible with the prevailing culture.
- And authenticity is more than simply connecting with people; it involves



creating buy-in to a compelling vision, and knowing when to consult and when to be decisive. Police leaders often do not have the time to consult widely or to develop a well-considered strategic message in response to a crisis. What is communicated must therefore be convincing and credible. As such, authenticity is strongly related to the three core values of integrity, courage and diversity.

- *Collaboration* - No police service can effectively serve the public in isolation and new partnerships have emerged as a major component of policing strategy and their use is likely to grow in the future. Countering transnational crime and terrorism demands that police share knowledge and capabilities through international cooperation, which can serve as a force multiplier.
- Dealing with new forms of crime based on technological developments, such as 3D printing, requires the speedy acquisition of new knowledge, and capability development, which realistically can only be achieved through access to the private sector, scientific know-how and academic resources. In addition to external collaboration, the internal mobility of people and knowledge between business units to deliver enhanced services more quickly is of growing significance for the police, who tend to favour functional or geographic organisational structures that create stovepipes of people and knowledge.
- Taking the police partnership approach to the next level will require the formation of local and international strategic alliances and the co-creation of strategy between partners. Today police leaders often cite various legal and bureaucratic hurdles that inhibit such an approach. Tomorrow's leaders will need to understand the importance and intricacies of these strategic relationships and how to overcome and manage any such hurdles.
- *Performance* - Every organisation has a bottom line and increasingly, for both public and private organisations, these include a range of sustainability measures such as a balanced scorecard. One of the additional challenges facing the police is how to measure and report the benefits of activities that contribute to crime prevention or deterrence. Successful leadership within the police has traditionally been about operational acumen and this is likely to be important in the future because a leader has to know his or her business and lead the organisation and its staff successfully, through an ever-changing environment of challenges and opportunities.
- Performance reporting also reflects the traditional view, in which the focus is on the number of "heads on spikes" (arrests, searches, seizures etc.). This is what most police leaders and the community understand, and is likely to remain the case for the coming years. But the pressure to demonstrate value for money, to achieve productivity gains and to meet sustainability targets is also likely to increase and this will require police leaders to have business acumen and communication skills; to be able to drive performance in a number of different directions at the same time.

## Implementation – How to Fill the Leadership Gap

The IALG's research and analysis was highly future-focussed and the participants determined that ensuring the future of senior police leadership is not only a matter of identifying individual competencies, but also represents an

important strategy gap for most police organisations in terms of being prepared for what the next 5-10-20 years will bring.

To build a sustainable pool of future senior police leaders requires a far more systematic approach to succession management than is used today; each and every police leader who was present in Amsterdam said, in the warm up to the IALG presentation, that they were dissatisfied with succession management in their organisation. The 110 interviews conducted by the IALG also demonstrated that, in the vast majority of cases, succession management in policing is undefined and informally implemented, if at all.

Creating sustainable senior leadership is important if organisations are to be better prepared for the challenges, changes and uncertainty that lie ahead. The IALG concluded that effective succession management is key to this: “Whether public or private, the ability of an institution to survive turbulent times is based on the organization’s capacity to produce sustained and high quality leadership over time.” (Lynn, 2001). Developing and implementing succession management should therefore be embedded within the DNA of police organisations through their strategy, business models and culture.

## Succession Management

Succession management is a strategic tool for mapping the existing skills and competencies base against a desired end-state; identifying what gaps exist and how to address them. In addition to a competency model, this entails the identification, recruitment and retention of talent, development and learning and the acceleration of experience through opportunity. In terms of attracting and retaining high quality future leaders, effective succession management is centrally important.

The IALG examined a large number of succession management approaches from the military, police, private enterprise and public sectors. Some of the key themes and success factors that emerged were:

- The identification of a talent pool and the development of that talent being based on a clearly defined leadership competency framework
- The fairness and objectivity of the processes used for appointing people are important
- The talent pool should be subject to ongoing evaluation of performance, behaviour and potential; people will move in and out of the pool based on these measures
- The system must be visibly owned and driven by the organisations leaders from the CEO down, with support from HR
- Processes must be documented, communicated and well understood
- The system itself must be subject to regular performance evaluation and review and adapted if necessary
- The simpler the model, and the more effective the implementation of the model, the better the dividend

The IALG formed a view that the effectiveness of any succession management model depends largely on the integrity of the system; having its basis in clearly understood processes and underpinning principles. Without clear rules and a game plan, as is often lacking today, people will quickly lose confidence in the system.

In terms of developing future leaders, whilst some protagonists may argue against it, because of the specific roles and responsibilities police leaders have, on-

the-job learning is vital. This is because of the nature of operational police work: it is in the field that leaders can be best tested and improved. The benefits of an increasing shift towards on-the-job learning include:

- Using a more efficient and organic form of learning that enhances the movement of knowledge around the organisation
- Helping to embed and shape culture and values
- Ensuring current leaders engage and connect more effectively with the succession management system and their colleagues
- Having a more practical way of identifying, attracting and retaining talent

The development of leaders must include ongoing coaching, mentoring and feedback in the field. This is the role of today's leaders and it cannot be transferred to HR departments.

Learning on the job can be enhanced and accelerated by, but not replaced with, formal teaching or education. Put most simply, a 70-20-10 principle for leadership development should be used: 70% on the job, 20% coaching/mentoring and 10% in the classroom. This is a guiding philosophy, not a rigid rule.

The IALG identified that "external involvement", including secondments, placements and exchanges with public or private entities domestically or overseas, are also important elements of successful models for stimulating innovation and diversity. The key goal here is to broaden the mindset of future leaders, which is particularly important for developing diversity of perspectives, and judgment of police leaders.

## Conclusions

Based on the IALG's research and experiences, the participants concluded that for most of the existing police systems which were examined, the leadership development and succession management elements were based on the traditional mind-set, which might be good enough for today but is quickly becoming obsolete due to the pace and scale of change.

Digitalisation, globalisation, climate change, deregulation, demographic change and exogenous shocks have accelerated the need for more visionary and evolving approaches to police strategy.

Whilst much in the policing sector has changed, much in police organisations has not. This includes elements of culture, leadership, organisational design and performance measurement. Of concern to the IALG was the ability of police organisations to sustain or strengthen their performance at the same time as these macro-level vectors of change and uncertainty are affecting policing, whether through reduced government revenues, skills shortages, changing community expectations, new technologies, the evolving threat of terrorism, or the globalisation of organised crime. Creating sustainable leadership is the key to dealing with such challenges into the future.

The IALG presented their findings to the international group of law enforcement executives and CEO's who were present at the Pearls in Policing conference in Amsterdam and stepped them through the four scenarios as a means of focusing their minds firmly on the issues at hand and on the future. The IALG also made a series of recommendations, which included that Pearls in Policing member organisations:

- Embrace the competencies and values embedded within the IALG Leadership Competency Model.

- Review their leadership development and succession management approaches.
- Implement a succession management model that ensures leadership talent is fit for the future.
- Make leadership development a strategic priority in their organisations.
- Make leadership development and succession management the personal responsibility of each leader in the organisation, under the direct control and ownership of the CEO.
- Constantly re-evaluate and adapt their approach

In setting the task for the IALG, Pearls in Policing members had identified a potential problem in terms of the sustainability of police leadership in the future. The work of the IALG, which utilised an alternative futures model, confirmed this view and led to the formulation of new strategies for police leadership, including a competency model and framework for succession management.

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