The BJA Executive Session on Police Leadership **is a multi-year endeavor started in 2010 with the goal of developing innovative thinking that would help create police leaders uniquely qualified to meet the challenges of a changing public safety landscape.**

In support of an integrated approach to creating safe and viable communities across America, the project directors recruited 20+ principals from a range of disciplines. The principals, in turn, led national field teams of practitioners focused on the work of policing and the organization of the future.

To gain new insights on leadership, the *BJA Executive Session on Police Leadership* **engaged police chiefs in documenting their own paths and invited leaders to participate in various audio and video forums to tell their stories and discuss the future of policing and police leadership.**

Please visit our website, http://bjaleader.org, to learn more about this project and to access a broad array of interactive, multimedia resources.

The principals are supported in their work by a team that includes project co-directors Darrel W. Stephens and Nancy McKeon, and BJA Senior Policy Advisor Steve Edwards.

Help or Hinder?

An Exercise That Can Reveal Your Agency's Branding Challenges

The image or branding of policing is a constant preoccupation of leaders. Going back to Peele himself, the public trust is essential to the function of public policing. At a recent meeting of the BJA Executive Session on Police Leadership (ESPL), participants took part in an exercise to answer the question:

The Brainstorm: What helps and what hinders the image of policing?

The results were surprising and instructive. We invite leaders to undertake this fairly quick, low tech, high involvement exercise with groups in their own agencies.

The ESPL participants carried out the brainstorm in two groups. Exhibits 1 and 2 below show the results of the 20 minute brainstorm, each group standing around two flip charts. In the spirit of a true brainstorming, the Exhibits contain the "disorganized, unprioritized" raw output of the groups' work.

The Reveal and the Challenge

As the exhibits show, both ESPL groups identify the same forces as important. Beyond that, the big reveal here are the challenges the brainstorm exposes. Defining and sustaining an image of policing is challenged by:

- What HELPS that image can also HINDER it. Several factors show up as both HELP and HINDER factors. One group, for example, lists militarization of police as a HINDER, while the other group has it first on the HELP side. Potentially as startling, fear of crime is another factor perceived as both a HELP and a HINDER. Is there a shared point of view among your officers?
- There may be a disconnect between how the police spend their time and the way they (and potentially the public) think they should spend their time. Those areas where police are spending increasing time and resources – opioid epidemic, mental health – top the HINDER lists. As police work expands to include partnering on social issues other than strictly crime, should that work help the image of policing's contribution to public safety and community well being?

Carrying Out the Exercise

As noted above, the results of the brainstorm were surprising and instructive to the ESPL participants. During the discussion that followed, they pointed out that it would be helpful to take other groups through it.

Embedded in the brainstorm raw results are potentials steps toward improving the profile of policing with the community – public education and transparency chief among them. A good first step for leaders is to learn what the internal point of view is on what is HELPING, and what is HINDERING that profile today.

The brainstorm can be carried out with manageable groups throughout the agency revealing consistencies and inconsistencies and leading to productive discussion and potential next steps.

While the brainstorm is powerful on its own, it can be followed up by aligning, prioritizing and determining action steps.

Exhibit 1:
ESPL Group 1 Image of Policing Brainstorm

HELP	HINDER
- Solid community relations – the need to continue investing in the community - Public education - Community trust - Image branding – one agency can be doing something good, but get ruined by the actions of another agency. - National model on Use of Force - Organizational support – goes hand in hand with value proposition, what is in it for me/you - Value proposition - Community perception - Racial issues – must be willing to talk (vulnerable) - Civil rights in protest – want voices heard, managing public protests, communication with leaders, boundaries - Body-worn cameras	- Opioid crisis – not something LE should be responsible for - Immigration – see above - Mental health – see above - Use of force – transparency on why the use of force - Recruitment – moving target - Retention – fighting for same people who jump from one agency to another; sifting through more candidates trying to find qualified people. - Privacy vs. forensic evidence - Fear of crime - Gun policy – different throughout the country - War on police - Militarization of police – needs to be more transparency about the equipment and its use.

Exhibit 2:
ESPL Group 2 Image of Policing Brainstorm

HELP	HINDER
• Militarization of police – Can help and hinder. Some equipment can be used to help the public, such as the armored rescue vehicle. "Rescue vehicle" not "tank." Need to be framed properly. • Use of force – if the public is informed on Use of Force, it can help. Forums, town halls to create and explain policy, gain support. • Gun policy – We can impact and explain, make the public aware • Value proposition for LE • Fear of crime • National Use of Force policy	• Opioid crisis • Immigration • Mental health – repeat calls for service, no tools • Use of force – optics of abuse, excessive force • Image – nationally challenged, i.e. Car chases, gunfights, abuses • Privacy vs. forensic evidence • Recruiting/retention • Fear of crime – creates a false narrative and false expectations • POS – unions, discipline • Community perception – can believe police unfairly do work • Racial Issues • Civil rights – demonstrations in the age of protests • Gun policy – open carry • Cyber crime – unreported victimization • BWC – false expectation for the "utopia of solving issues" • Fictitious war on police • Militarization of police – perception, need policy.

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