

The BJA Executive Session on

# Police Leadership

2017

*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, [www.bjaleader.org](http://www.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.

*From time to time the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department Chief Steve Anderson sends his employees email messages to share his thoughts on current issues in policing. In this email Chief Anderson writes to his employees in response to an article in the Tennessean describing a poll by Vanderbilt's Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions in which the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department received an 80% approval rating. Chief Anderson draws an interesting parallel between the importance of the public's goodwill to the police and the real dollar value assigned to intangible assets in the private sector. The Chief's email is followed by links to the article and to the poll.*

## Goodwill and the Vanderbilt Poll

by

**Chief Steve Anderson – Metropolitan  
Nashville PD – April 02, 2017**

To ALL Employees:

While the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department is not a for-profit business, in that we do not exist to generate revenues or to create a profit for our shareholders, there are many business practices and models that can be helpful as we work to maximize our service to the public.

Certainly, like for-profit businesses, we pay close attention to the data. Successful businesses use the data to identify potential customers so as to maximize their sales and profits. In a similar manner, the MNPD pays close attention to the data in order to understand where crime is occurring so that we can best serve our customers—the victims and potential victims of crime.

As much as we pride ourselves in being a data driven police department and using that data to measure our successes, we recognize that there are certain intangible qualities that equally contribute to our success. In the for-profit business world those intangibles include customer satisfaction, the likelihood of that customer being a return customer, the likelihood that the customer will recommend the product or service to other potential customers and, in my view, most important, having outstanding employees who are highly trained and motivated.

Likewise, in our world, the confidence of the public is equally important. We know that we cannot be successful without the support of the public.

In the business world there is actually a method to measure those intangibles. It is called goodwill. The goodwill of a business is generally defined as the dollar market value of a business that is above and beyond its tangible assets. That is, after the dollar value of tangible assets such as real estate holdings, equipment, current inventory, fixtures, etc., are subtracted from the total market value of the business, the remaining dollar value is the goodwill of the business.

While there are many intangibles that can contribute to the goodwill dollar value of a business, some common attributes include the reputation of the business, the loyalty of the customer base and brand awareness.

The point is, while the goodwill of a business is an intangible, it is a measurable intangible and it is a very important ingredient to the overall success of a business. It has a real value that can be measured in dollars. Because it is a measurable capital asset there are Internal Revenue Service rules and regulations governing the reporting and amortizing the goodwill dollar value of a business.

[Note: With April 15 looming many of you have been reading various IRS publications in order to properly prepare your tax submittal forms. For those of you that found this fun and interesting reading, you will find Publication 544 and Form 8594, pertaining to the reporting of goodwill, equally exciting.]

So how do we measure the goodwill of the MNPD. We are not a business wherein the market value of the tangibles and intangibles can be given market value. But like the for-profit businesses, there are various ways customer satisfaction can be gauged. One such measure is what I call “the person on the street” factor. That is, all of those persons who approach you to shake your hand and thank you for your service. Another such measure is by polling the public—especially independent polls.

By now you know about the article printed in the Tennessean last Sunday describing a poll conducted by Vanderbilt’s Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions. In that poll 80

percent of the respondents stated that they approve of how the men and women of the MNPd are handling their jobs.

So, this number raises two questions. Is this a good number and, if it is, how did it occur?

It is an extremely good number. In a world where many entities would be excited to receive a number anywhere above 50 percent, an approval rating of 80 percent is outstanding. A nationally known consultant, with decades of experience advising and consulting with police departments across the nation and the world, told me that he had never seen a number that high in any police department, anywhere.

As to the second question (How did this happen?) there is a simple answer. You. Wherever you work in this police department, you had a hand in generating this 80 percent approval rate. Just like those for-profit businesses with highly valued goodwill, all across the MNPd there are outstanding employees who are highly trained and motivated.

I am firmly convinced that the image of any business or any police department is shaped by the people who directly or indirectly touch the customer or consumer in some way. Again, that is you.

If you have purchased a new vehicle in the past you probably do not know the name of the manufacturer's CEO. But, you know how you feel about that vehicle and you know how you feel about the company that made that vehicle. Those feelings are not shaped by the name recognition of the CEO or the advertising campaign of the company. Those feelings are shaped by the comfort you feel, or don't feel, as you operate the vehicle, the dependability of the vehicle, or whether any problems with the vehicle were quickly and cheerfully addressed. These, and all those other little, or big, factors that consciously, or unconsciously, give you a feeling as to whether you would, or would not, purchase another vehicle from that manufacturer. Or, whether you would recommend a vehicle from that manufacturer to a friend or relative.

The engineers who designed the comfort level and dependability into that vehicle. The attention to detail of the men and women on the assembly line that, hands on, created that vehicle. The quality control team that made sure that vehicle met all standards before it left the factory. The service department who readily acknowledged a problem with the vehicle and quickly corrected that problem. These are the persons who directly or indirectly touch the consumer. These are the persons who shape the image of the manufacturer.

It is the same in our world. It is the men and women on the street, directly and indirectly, interacting with the public that has shaped our image. This is done little by little, piece by piece, over an extended period of time. If you do not believe this, stop, clear your mind, and take four minutes to think back over the last few days or weeks. Take this time to recall all those positive interactions you have had with the public, especially a member of the public who is a victim of crime. However small or insignificant it may seem to you, it shaped the image of the MNPd in that person's mind. We tend to take these interactions for granted—just another part of the job that we do every day. But, whether it is saving a life or just a pleasant exchange of words, you are a public figure with a position of authority and that

event is a significant event in the life of that person. It is a few big things and thousands and millions of little things that create those feelings of satisfaction in the minds of the public.

You have also created synergy. Synergy is a phenomenon wherein the combined effect of something is greater than the sum of the individual parts. It is a cooperative interaction that creates an enhanced effect. I see a cooperative effort all across the precincts and divisions. I see a cooperative effort by individual officers and supervisors. This is the teamwork that has created the synergy. This teamwork has created something greater than the sum of all of us individually. Look around you and you can see and feel this. The public can see and feel this also.

And, as I should have told you above, synergy is often mentioned when a dollar value of those intangibles that constitute the goodwill of a business is being analyzed and valued. Likewise, this synergy also factored into that 80 percent approval rating of the MNPD.

If you are at this point, and still reading, thank you. To steal a thought sometimes attributed to Ben Franklin, Mark Twain and others, if I were more talented I could have written a shorter message. But a shorter message might not have given you the pause to think about the good work you do, the importance of the work you do and how your every act impacts the public image of the MNPD.

Thank all of you for doing all of this so well. And, all of you means every person in this police department.

Let's all take a moment and bask in the glow of this 80 percent approval rating. (Maybe even gloat a little.) Then, tomorrow, let's work on winning over the remaining 20 percent.

Below are the links to the Sunday, March 26, 2017 Tennessean article and also a direct link to the Vanderbilt poll.

<http://www.tennessean.com/story/news/local/2017/03/26/new-poll-nashville-residents-support-body-cameras-give-police-high-marks/99550702/>

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csdi/2ndVanderbiltUniversityPollNashvillefinal.pdf>.

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