

Chief's Corner
March 15, 2006

For the past year the Redlands Police Department has been developing an organizational initiative with roots in the private sector.

The concept is known generically as “knowledge management” or “KM.” Literally, every Fortune 500 company has a KM initiative designed to improve profitability by increasing what the company “knows” or “can know” about customers’ needs and desires, product innovation and a myriad of business practices.

The initial phase of the police department’s KM strategy was designed to formalize management of the knowledge that members of the department have about the nature and control of crime and other community problems and issues in Redlands. The next phase of the initiative is to determine what the community knows about crime in a more structured manner than we have in the past.

Our KM initiative is framed around the idea that we can thoughtfully *capture, use, share* and *increase* the knowledge we have about the “business of policing” in Redlands.

To accomplish this we are trying to ensure that we capture the crime fighting knowledge our tenured employees have before they retire. We are also attempting to make sure the knowledge we currently possess actually translates into action by our officers and that through officer rotations we disseminate that knowledge throughout the department. We want to make sure we share what we know about crime with community members through local presentations, publications, our evolving website, public service announcements on RTV 3 and a variety of other public information strategies you will read about in the coming months. And finally, we are trying to increase what we know through intensive training and by our employees spending time with their counterparts in other police departments throughout the county to find their “better” policing ideas.

So how does this relate to business in Redlands? A recent meeting of the Chamber’s Public Safety Subcommittee illustrates – again – the invaluable interplay between the business community and the police.

We were discussing graffiti, and its adverse effects on businesses’ bottom line. Officers Ric Rincon, Jacinto DeLeon and Dean Johnston shared their knowledge about taggers while the business people explained the repercussions on their businesses, what they have experienced in graffiti “etching” on mirrors, sinks, etc. and how they need to deal with it in a way that minimizes the impact on their businesses.

As I watched the interaction between the officers and business people it became clear that the exchange was a real-life example of how we can share our crime knowledge, and -- by enlisting the support of the business community -- increase what we know about the activity of taggers in areas we don’t normally patrol and the challenges faced by businesses in both

Some of the results of my “new learning” – thanks to the “teacher-business people” – has been downtown officers assigned specifically at night, a video camera strategy for hard-to-monitor problem places and the dissemination of the downtown officers’ knowledge among other officers in the department.

It is clear to me that managing our knowledge about crime and other problems in Redlands will serve only to make us more responsive to the community and better leverage the taxpayers’ investment in public safety.

If you have any questions or concerns about policing or crime issues please don’t hesitate to call me at 909-335-4744 or e-mail me at chief@redlandspolice.org.