



Centre for Public Sector Service Delivery: Case Study July 2009

CPSSD Case Study 1 Measuring Progress at the RCMP

This Case Study focuses on the introduction and use of new measurement and performance management tools at the Royal Canadian Mounted Police from 2001 to the present.

It is part of the 2008-2009 research program of The Conference Board of Canada's Centre for Public Sector Service Delivery which examines issues and best practices related to measuring progress and success in public sector service delivery transformation.

CASE STUDY OBJECTIVES

This case study provides:

- An overview of the use of different measurement and strategic planning tools and techniques by the RCMP from 2001 to the present.
- An examination of the mechanisms and practices adopted by the RCMP to ensure that results inform strategic planning.
- A discussion of the challenges that emerged during measurement and strategic planning and the approaches used to overcome them.
- A review of outcomes, accomplishments, and insights for other public sector organizations seeking to implement new measurement regimes.

OVERVIEW

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) is an especially well-recognized and important organization in Canadian public life. With roots that stretch back to 1873, the RCMP has consistently pursued the goal of creating safe homes and communities for Canadians across the country. Its scope of operations includes organized crime; terrorism and specific crimes related to the illicit drug trade; economic crimes; offences that threaten the integrity of Canada's national borders; the protection of VIPs; and serving Aboriginal communities. In addition to having jurisdiction and responsibilities in eight provinces and three territories, the RCMP also offers resources to other Canadian law enforcement agencies.¹

¹ Royal Canadian Mounted Police, "The RCMP's History" [online]. (July 9, 2007), [cited January 29, 2009]. <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/fs-fd/history-histoire-eng.htm>.

It has not been easy for the RCMP to fulfill its diverse and geographically dispersed range of functions, as well as coordinate its more than 28,000 employees.² Pursuing central objectives and values in such a large organization, with responsibility for services in very diverse areas, has presented challenges for the RCMP.

However, the move in the early 2000s to a more strategic approach to planning and measuring has improved the organization's overall performance and situated it for further improvements in the years to come.

RCMP QUICK FACTS

- 28,000 employees, including regular and civilian members, and Public Service Employees.
- Presence:
 - Headquarters;
 - 4 Regions;
 - 15 divisions;
 - 750+ detachments.
- Administers or enforces more than 250 federal statutes and agreements.
- Canadian Police Information Centre provides shared computer access to more than 80,000 law enforcement officers from coast to coast.

Source: RCMP.

In 2000, senior leadership determined that change was necessary to make the RCMP a better, more effective organization. Then Commissioner Giuliano Zaccardelli identified two overarching goals—namely, that the RCMP should become strategy-focused and that it should develop as an organization of excellence.³ In addition to other initiatives designed to achieve those goals, the RCMP adopted a Balanced Scorecard approach to strategic

planning and performance management which it tied to results from the Common Measurements Tool. Together, these tools continue to help senior management shepherd the RCMP towards a reality of strategic focus and excellence.

DRIVERS OF TRANSFORMATION

The move to strategic planning using the Balanced Scorecard, dashboards, and the Common Measurements Tool was motivated by a “perfect storm” of factors.⁴ In 1998, the RCMP exceeded its budget and lacked a clear plan to avoid that same outcome in the future. Additionally, throughout the 1990s, the RCMP experienced restructuring and downsizing which reduced its capacity while, at the same time, increasing and new demand for service placed significant pressure on the capacity that remained.

As the RCMP was wrestling with these challenges, the federal government was moving towards “modern comptrollership principles and practices—with an emphasis on clear and transparent reporting; delivering financially-responsible programs; and, ensuring results for Canadians.”⁵ This impressed upon senior RCMP staff that traditional operational approaches—which lacked sufficient transparency and accountability—had to be discarded.

In short, there was a clear sense that the RCMP faced a new set of circumstances and constraints that it was not entirely prepared to tackle. It lacked the strategic focus and direction necessary to overcome its challenges and change was needed. In this context, senior management embarked on a transformation which aimed to position the RCMP for the future by adopting a more rigorous strategic planning and performance measurement framework.

² Ibid.

³ Ronald Mostrey, “Transforming the RCMP into a Strategy-Focused Organization,” *Public Sector Digest* (November 2004).

⁴ Ronald Mostrey. Phone interview by Daniel Munro. January 28, 2009.

⁵ Ronald Mostrey, “Transforming the RCMP into a Strategy-Focused Organization.”

A NEW MEASUREMENT AND MANAGEMENT REGIME

From the outset, there was a desire at the very top of the RCMP to approach change in a sophisticated, well-planned, and well-measured fashion. Consequently, the senior executive searched for a formal management and measurement framework that would allow them to proceed in a rational and transparent fashion.

THE BALANCED SCORECARD

Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton's *The Strategy Focused Organization: How Balanced Scorecard Companies Thrive in the New Business Environment* had a profound impact on RCMP management.⁶ Impressed by the Balanced Scorecard approach to strategic planning outlined in the book, RCMP senior staff contacted and began to work directly with Kaplan and Norton to develop a Balanced Scorecard that would help make the RCMP a more strategic organization.

The RCMP's Senior Executive Committee agreed that a Balanced Scorecard approach would provide a planning framework appropriate for the organization. Members of a Balanced Scorecard Implementation Team began work in 2000 to develop expertise with the Balanced Scorecard and to adapt it to the RCMP's needs. This involved extensive consultation with external experts on the Balanced Scorecard, particularly those at the Balanced Scorecard Collaborative (now The Palladium Group)—the firm founded by Kaplan and Norton.

The most prominent change they made to the Balanced Scorecard model was to eliminate the

THE BALANCED SCORECARD

“The Balanced Scorecard translates an organization's mission and strategy into a comprehensive set of performance measures that provides the framework for a strategic measurement and management system... The scorecard measures organizational performance across four balanced perspectives: financial, customers, internal business processes, and learning and growth.”

Created by Dr. Robert Kaplan and Dr. David Norton two decades ago, the Balanced Scorecard is now used by a wide range of business, government, and nonprofit organizations throughout the world.

Source: Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton, *The Balanced Scorecard: Translating Strategy Into Action* (Cambridge: Harvard Business Press, 1996), p. 2.

financial focus which was more appropriate for profit-oriented private-sector organizations. At the same time, the Balanced Scorecard Implementation Team recognized that attention to costs and accountability for spending would be needed.⁷

The Balanced Scorecard ultimately shaped and adopted by the implementation team focused on three perspectives:

1. Client, Partner, Stakeholder;
2. Excellence in Integrated Policing, including three themes:
 - a. Bridge Building;
 - b. Operations; and
 - c. Management; and
3. People, Learning and Innovation.⁸

⁶ Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton, *The Strategy Focused Organization: How Balanced Scorecard Companies Thrive in the New Business Environment* (Cambridge: Harvard Business School Press, 2000).

⁷ Ronald Mostrey. Phone interview by Daniel Munro. January 28, 2009.

⁸ Ronald Mostrey, “Adapting the Balanced Scorecard Methodology,” *Public Sector Digest* (December 2005).

Convinced that a scorecard focused on these areas would be appropriate for the RCMP's objectives and characteristics, the team moved to implement the approach in the organization as a whole, rather than incrementally or through pilot projects. There was a desire to involve all senior managers in the new performance management regime as quickly as possible.

The team then created and delivered information sessions to all senior management. The goals of the sessions were to raise awareness about the need for performance management, to introduce the Balanced Scorecard methodology, and to take the first steps towards its implementation.⁹

Strategic Priorities

A Strategic Priority Working Group (SPWG) was established to use the Balanced Scorecard methodology to motivate progress on the RCMP's main concerns. Strategic priorities are selected after a rigorous environmental scan and analysis is performed and following a discussion among senior executives about the results of the scan. The RCMP selects five priorities—a number it finds manageable—and asks every employee how they can contribute to advancing those priorities' strategic goals in their own work.¹⁰

Once priorities are selected for the year, senior-level individuals in the RCMP are put in charge of each priority in order to develop and monitor strategies for achieving progress on their particular priority. Assigning specific individuals to priorities reflects a belief that progress will be achieved only if there is a clear sense of ownership and accountability for each priority. Indeed, the principles and practices of ownership and accountability were exercised through all levels of the organization to ensure that each

individual had responsibility for some specific element of performance improvement at the RCMP.

Once the overarching priorities are selected and owners assigned, the SPWG identifies a "critical objective" for the year—i.e., an objective that will be the focus of special attention throughout the RCMP. Divisional commanders are asked to think about and select initiatives that they could pursue in their respective divisions to advance the "critical objective" and targets that they will aim to achieve while pursuing those initiatives. These are taken as the performance objectives for those divisions for the year. As a result, the RCMP has a critical objective which orients action nationally, but decisions about what would be appropriate for individual divisions are sensitive to the unique characteristics and environments of the divisions.¹¹

At the end of the exercise, the RCMP has a Balanced Scorecard which maps:

- objectives (including "critical objective");
- measures of progress and success for each objective;
- initiatives to meet those objectives;
- targets that, when met, would close the "performance gaps" between current performance and desired performance; and
- names of initiative owners.

The result reflects considerable discussion about how exactly a given initiative will lead to performance improvements and it balances the desire for a national strategy with the need for context-sensitivity in each division.

MEASURING PROGRESS

While the Balanced Scorecard is a central element of the strategic management regime and provides the framework through which results

⁹ Ronald Mostrey, "Transforming the RCMP into a Strategy-Focused Organization."

¹⁰ Strategic Policy and Planning Directorate, "Planning and Performance Management Guide" (Ottawa: RCMP, 2007), p. 6.

¹¹ Ronald Mostrey. Phone interview by Daniel Munro. January 28, 2009.

are translated into future planning and action, it is not itself a *measurement* tool. A distinct set of measurement tools is needed in order to assist Balanced Scorecard owners in recognizing how well initiatives are meeting targets and how far strategic priorities are being advanced. In order to track progress, then, the RCMP needed to supplement the Balanced Scorecard methodology with a set of measurement tools and practices. Additionally, the organization needed a way to organize results in a clear fashion in order to facilitate discussion and make judgments about how various initiatives were faring.

The RCMP has adopted two tools to meet those needs. Regular progress reports by divisional commanders and the RCMP “Dashboard” offer a short-term perspective and more immediate results. By contrast, survey results obtained from the Common Measurements Tool provide the RCMP with higher-level, externally-derived

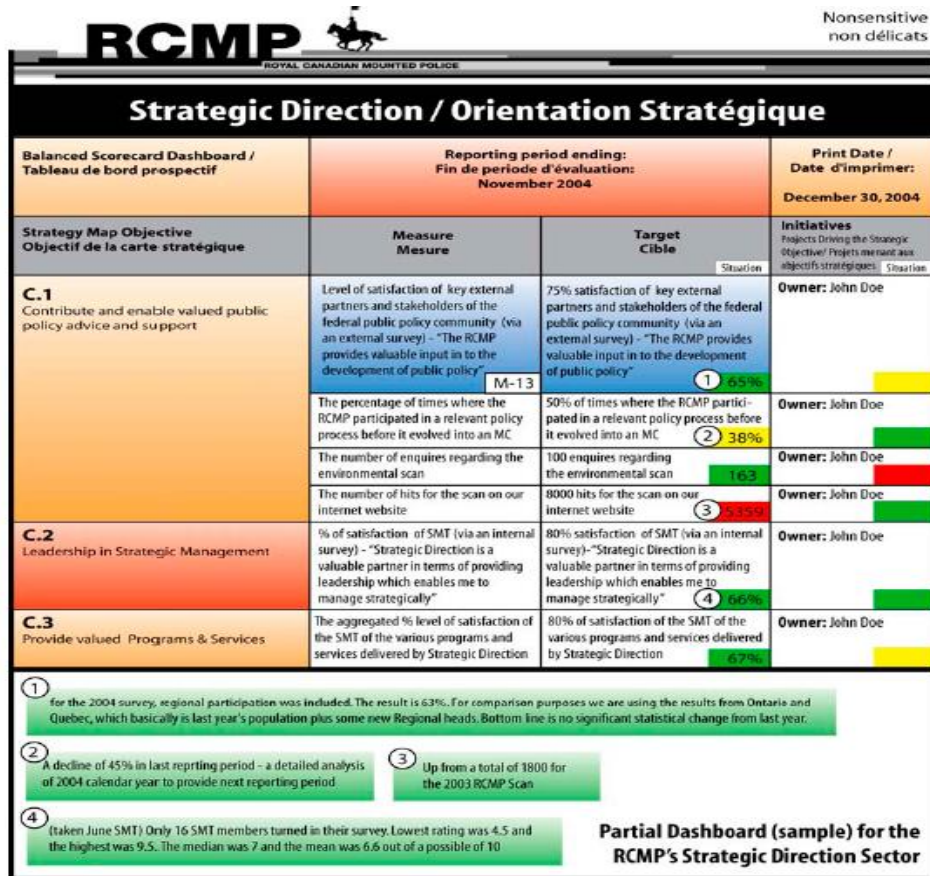
performance results and a long-term perspective on its activities. Both techniques are closely linked to strategic planning.

The RCMP Dashboard

The “owners” of objectives and initiatives are required to make a progress report every 90 days. Each person must address whether their initiatives are on time, on budget, and on track—that is, whether they think that the initiative is achieving what it was expected to achieve at the current stage of its life.

The results from these reports are entered into an RCMP “Dashboard” which is distributed to all senior management and effectively becomes the agenda for management meetings. Using an Excel spreadsheet to create the “dashboard”, initiatives are then coded green, yellow or red to reflect the degree of attention required of divisional commanders and managers.

SAMPLE RCMP BALANCED SCORECARD DASHBOARD



As Chief Superintendent Mostrey explains, “if the results don’t meet the expectations, the ‘owner’ is held to account.”¹² He or she is required to explain the results and has an opportunity to say whether a particular initiative has value and should be continued.

In this sense, a “red” rating on the dashboard is not necessarily bad if the “owner” has a convincing explanation for the result. Perhaps it was just the wrong initiative to pursue. Similarly, a “green” rating is not necessarily good if the initiative or targets were poorly selected at the outset. Divisions will usually bring initiative owners together a few weeks before reports are due to report on progress and to discuss the results. Dashboard reporting thus prompts discussions about what is, and what is not, working and about whether an initiative should be continued. This ensures ongoing reflection about how higher objectives can be achieved and what mid-stream results reveal about a current strategy.¹³

Moreover, the frequency of updates—every 90 days—allows for timely attention to those initiatives that require revision or should be discarded altogether. “Instead of hearing ‘everything is good’ and then at the end of the year finding a problem,” notes Chief Superintendent Mostrey, “we know within 90 days. We’re always focused on results and are accountable for achieving the desired outcomes. This positions us well to report on our progress to the Government of Canada, Canadians, and our stakeholders.”¹⁴

Balanced Scorecards and dashboard results are also tied to performance-based compensation

arrangements. Chief Superintendent Mostrey explains that “at the start of the year, the units’ priorities are identified in their assessment and their contributions to those priorities form part of their evaluation. At the senior levels, Performance Agreements are also aligned with scorecard commitments.”¹⁵ Consequently, Balanced Scorecards and dashboards are performance management tools that have direct links to compensation-based motivation strategies.

Common Measurements Tool

In addition to its dashboard activities, the RCMP looks at survey results from the Common Measurements Tool to assess its performance and to guide future planning and action. Chief Superintendent Mostrey notes that, “when all is said and done, policing is a service to the public. Knowing how the public feels about that service is essential.”¹⁶ To get that public perspective, the RCMP has employed the Common Measurements Tool since 2003.

Survey results on a variety of Common Measurements Tool “core” questions, as well as unique questions designed by the RCMP itself, are used to assess how well the organization serves the public and fulfills its role as the country’s national police service. Chief Superintendent Mostrey describes the RCMP’s use of Common Measurements Tool results as the “feedback loop” that drives future plans and objectives.

Results from the survey are analyzed by the RCMP to assess performance on the previous year and to begin a process of selecting targets and initiatives for the next year. New targets and initiatives are selected with a view towards “motivating those behaviours that you need to have to achieve improvements.”¹⁷ Thus, results

¹² Ronald Mostrey. Phone interview by Daniel Munro. January 28, 2009.

¹³ Steve Graham. Phone interview by Daniel Munro. February 27, 2009.

¹⁴ Ronald Mostrey, quoted in Paul Crookall, “RCMP and the Balanced Scorecard” [online]. (May, 2006), [cited January 30, 2009]. www.netgov.ca/cp.asp?pid=314.

¹⁵ Ronald Mostrey. Email message to Daniel Munro. January 29, 2009.

¹⁶ Ronald Mostrey. Phone interview by Daniel Munro. January 28, 2009.

¹⁷ Ronald Mostrey. Phone interview by Daniel Munro. January 28, 2009.

COMMON MEASUREMENTS TOOL

“The *Common Measurements Tool (CMT)* was first released in 1998 as an easy-to-use client satisfaction survey instrument that would facilitate benchmarking across jurisdictions. Using the *CMT*, public-sector managers are able to understand client expectations, assess levels of satisfaction, and identify priorities for improvement.... [J]urisdictions can also compare their results against peer organizations, identifying best practices and sharing lessons learned.”

“Managers are able to construct a client satisfaction survey by selecting the questions that meet the needs of their organization. The *CMT* assists in this process by identifying a set of "core" questions that measure the key drivers of satisfaction - those elements or attributes of the service experience which, when present, ensure high levels of satisfaction....The *CMT* is designed to be a flexible tool, leaving organizations free to add customized questions that will help improve the quality of service.”

Source: Institute for Citizen-Centered Service

www.iccs-isac.org/en/cmt/

from the dashboard and Common Measurements Tool surveys not only guide decision-making about new plans and initiatives, they are also tied to thinking about how to motivate employees to pursue those initiatives in ways that will improve the overall performance of the RCMP.

The use of the Common Measurements Tool also offers an important complement to the progress reports on the RCMP Dashboard. Whereas dashboard reports rely to a great extent on qualitative narrative reports by divisional commanders and other objective and initiative owners, the Common Measurements Tool offers a higher-level, long-term external perspective on performance and progress. Moreover, the tool allows for organizations to assess their own performance over time and against results from other government organizations on the same

questions and metrics. Together, the dashboard and Common Measurements Tool results provide the RCMP with internal and external perspectives on performance that public-sector organizations require to become more effective and efficient.

OUTCOMES

The RCMP’s use of the Balanced Scorecard methodology, in tandem with its dashboards and the Common Measurements Tool, has resulted in performance improvements. On many of the most critical survey questions that the RCMP sends out each year, it saw steady improvement in the responses from 2003 to 2007. Results for 2008 show slight declines in some areas but these do not even approach the 2003 baseline.

On its main strategic priorities, the RCMP has done very well.¹⁸ For example, whereas in 2003, 48 per cent of respondents agreed that “the RCMP is fulfilling its strategic priority of reducing the threat and impact of organized crime,” that number climbed to 71 per cent by 2008. Similarly, whereas in 2003 47 per cent agreed that “the RCMP is fulfilling its strategic priority of contributing to safer and healthier Aboriginal communities,” by 2008 56 per cent agreed with that statement.

In its surveys of Aboriginal leaders—conducted from 2005 to 2008—the RCMP has witnessed very strong advances in its performance. In 2005, 52 per cent of Aboriginal leaders agreed that the RCMP “provides high quality service.” By 2008, that view was held by 63 per cent of respondents. And whereas only 33 per cent of Aboriginal

¹⁸ Survey results reported in this and the following paragraphs can be obtained from: RCMP, “Core Surveys 2006: National Level Results” [online]. (October 2, 2006), [cited January 30, 2009]; “Core Surveys 2007: National Level Results” [online] (March 12, 2008), [cited January 30, 2009]; and “Core Surveys 2008: National Level Results” [online] (July 14, 2008), [cited January 30, 2009]. www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/surveys-sondages/index-main-accueil-eng.htm.

leaders agreed in 2005 that the RCMP “provides leadership”, and 61 per cent agreed that they have a “good working relationship” with the RCMP, by 2008 those numbers were 58 and 76 per cent respectively.

Assistant Commissioner Steve Graham adds that introducing the Balanced Scorecard and the Dashboard exercise sparked some very good conversations at various levels of the organization and got people thinking in different ways. Additionally, the scorecard and dashboards help drive attention in those conversations more systematically towards core organizational priorities and towards clear thinking about what works and what does not work in pursuing those priorities.¹⁹

In addition to helping the RCMP make improvements in internal communications and operations, as well as on stakeholder satisfaction, use of the Balanced Scorecard has contributed to objectively-measured progress on its strategic outcomes and priorities. The RCMP’s 2006-07 Departmental Performance Report to the Government of Canada provided strong evidence of progress on reducing organized crime, reducing the threat of terrorism, improving relationships with Aboriginal communities, and other priorities since the RCMP adopted the Balanced Scorecard in 2000.²⁰ Commissioner William Elliot singles out the Balanced Scorecard approach as providing valuable assistance in identifying and achieving progress.

While there is still work to be done in many areas, the RCMP believes that its systematic management approach using the Balanced Scorecard and measurement tools will continue to move the organization in a positive direction.

¹⁹ Steve Graham. Phone interview by Daniel Munro. February 27, 2009.

²⁰ RCMP, “Departmental Performance Report,” [online] (March 31, 2007), [cited July 20, 2009]. <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/dpr-rmr/2006-2007/inst/rcm/rcm-eng.pdf>. Results on specific priorities and objectives are found in the report.

RCMP CHANGE MANAGEMENT TEAM

In January 2008, the RCMP created a Change Management Team to respond to, and implement recommendations that emerged from, the Task Force on Governance and Cultural Change in the RCMP (“Rebuilding the Trust”). The Vision for Change adopted by the team aimed for improvement in six key areas, including adaptability, accountability, trust, employee engagement, leadership, and world-class policing.

The team—headed by Assistant Commissioner Keith Clark (who was integral to the introduction of the Balanced Scorecard in 2000)—needed a management and measurement regime to track progress on the RCMP’s Vision for Change. The Balanced Scorecard and RCMP Dashboards seemed like the best tool given their past performance and the RCMP’s familiarity with the tools.

The Change Management Team tracks progress on initiatives that address the recommendations using a modified dashboard. Short-term performance information is gathered every 30 days in the form of narrative reports on how initiatives are faring. Long-term performance is tracked using quarterly and annual aggregate performance indicators.

Because its work started only recently, and because there are so many initiatives to track, the Change Management Team works with an *assumption* that performance on the initiatives (tracked every 30 days in a more qualitative fashion) will have an impact on the root causes and main drivers of performance on the overarching six principles of the Vision for Change.

Nevertheless, the use of the Balanced Scorecard and modified dashboards by the team has enabled it to report on progress to senior leaders and to think clearly about what actions and initiatives can bridge the gap between the status quo and the vision for change.

Source: Keith Clark and Angela Workman, RCMP.

CHALLENGES

Like many organizations that have adopted a new performance management regime, the RCMP has faced challenges.

BUILDING LEADERSHIP

Chief Superintendent Mostrey notes that leadership is a critical component of a successful performance management regime. Assistant Commissioner Keith Clark observes that, despite being a required tool, not all senior leaders have fully embraced the Balanced Scorecard and the “jury is still out” for others. Yet, positive results have been achieved by senior leaders who use the scorecard as part of daily management.²¹ The RCMP expects that once all leaders have embraced the tool, benefits will be realized throughout the organization.

For example, where commanding officers used the Balanced Scorecard and measurement results to address employee morale and engagement issues, there was a significant improvement in the portion of employees who said that “my supervisor goes out of his or her way to make my work life easier.” In one division, those employees who agreed with that statement increased from 37 in the first year of the survey to 67 per cent four years later.

But the result was not consistent across the entire organization. Those leaders who did not embrace the model—and who therefore took a less systematic approach to management and measurement—lagged behind their peers on employee engagement improvements.²²

Nevertheless, the Balanced Scorecard methodology and results-reporting practices can nudge even laggard leaders towards improved

performance. The requirement to participate in the “critical objectives” and dashboard exercises, for example, puts all commanding officers in the spotlight. Those moments of accountability can serve to transform behaviour.

Moreover, meeting the challenge is also a matter of continuing to work with managers to show them the system’s potential to assist them with their activities. By continuing to demonstrate the positive results that can emerge and supporting efforts to use the system, the RCMP may eventually win over those leaders who have not yet bought into the Balanced Scorecard regime.²³

MATCHING INITIATIVES TO CONTEXT

An early challenge, which has since been addressed, was that national objectives and the initiatives selected to meet those objectives were not always sensitive to the unique circumstances of individual divisions and detachments.

Previously, the RCMP’s standard practice had been to deliver, in a more top-down fashion, initiatives that all divisions would have to pursue in order to meet national objectives. But experience revealed that some initiatives were not helpful in particular contexts.

For example, one early initiative required all detachment commanders to hold consultations in Aboriginal communities to determine their primary policing issue, and to put a plan in place to address that issue. While seemingly a positive initiative to pursue, it was discovered that some divisions’ Aboriginal communities were made up of a dozen people or less. In that case, a formal community consultation process was inappropriate.²⁴

²¹ Keith Clark. Phone interview by Daniel Munro. February 23, 2009.

²² Ronald Mostrey. Phone interview by Daniel Munro. January 28, 2009.

²³ Keith Clark. Phone interview by Daniel Munro. February 23, 2009.

²⁴ Ronald Mostrey. Phone interview by Daniel Munro. January 28, 2009.

Early experience and learning has led to the evolution of the current model whereby division commanders are asked to select initiatives themselves in light of what would be appropriate in their unique divisions. The “critical objectives” are still selected at the national level, but the knowledge that divisional commanders bring to the table about their environments now plays a central role in the selection of initiatives to meet those objectives.

OUTPUTS VS. OUTCOMES

The RCMP recognizes that many of its ultimate objectives—e.g., reducing crime—cannot be addressed directly by managers and officers. Initiatives selected with the aim of reducing crime and targets selected to measure how well those initiatives are being pursued, may nevertheless fail to influence or achieve the desired outcomes.

Increasing patrols, for example, might be expected to deter crime and the RCMP may achieve its higher patrol targets, but the rate of crime may remain static. In that case, the organization may receive a failing grade on its *outcomes* even as it receives a passing grade on measures of its *outputs*. Selecting initiatives that will actually influence outcomes is a challenging task for any organization. And it is an especially difficult task for public sector organizations whose ultimate outcomes depend on many factors beyond their control.

Nevertheless, the experience of working through the Balanced Scorecard exercise refines senior managers’ understanding of the causal links between initiatives and outcomes. The constant stream of progress reports, survey results, and crime statistics, when viewed through the Balanced Scorecard framework, leads to greater clarity about which initiatives are, or are likely to be, successful and which initiatives should be discarded.

ADVICE FOR OTHER LEADERS

For leaders in other public-sector organizations considering adoption of the Balanced Scorecard approach and/or the dashboard and survey measurement tools, the RCMP experience offers some advice.

LINK RESULTS TO PLANNING

Measurement has little value to an organization unless there are clear mechanisms for using results in performance assessment and future planning.

Assistant Commissioner Graham cautions organizations about the “metric-centric trap.” For some people, he observes, the measures and metrics become everything and they end up “paying too much attention to metrics when, in reality, the exercise is all about people.” It is essential, he says, to get people to see results as tools that can be used to start and guide good conversations about key objectives and initiatives.²⁵

Survey results that are not linked to a procedure for assessing initiatives and planning future initiatives which might be expected to further improve results are not useful. Simply put, as Chief Superintendent Mostrey says, “tie it in, otherwise nothing will get done.”²⁶ This is why the RCMP speaks of its measurement tools—i.e., the dashboard and Common Measurements Tool—in the same breath that it speaks of its performance management framework—i.e., the Balanced Scorecard.

Measurement results can assist in planning and in motivating managers and employees to improve. At the same time, careful scrutiny of the results from previous years, and the

²⁵ Steve Graham. Phone interview by Daniel Munro. February 27, 2009.

²⁶ Ronald Mostrey. Phone interview by Daniel Munro. January 28, 2009.

initiatives adopted with the intention of improving those results, can lead to greater clarity about the causal links between both. In that case, selecting future initiatives can be done with greater confidence that they will, in fact, positively affect outcomes.

FOCUS ON A FEW KEY OBJECTIVES

Faced with so many different responsibilities, challenges, and stakeholders, public sector organizations that adopt new measurement and management regimes may try to measure and change too much at once. As Assistant Commissioner Clark notes, “measures are the gravy,” but it is essential to “focus on what’s important.”²⁷ By focusing on everything, organizations may achieve nothing.

The RCMP selects five priorities on which to focus each year, and finds this a “manageable number.”²⁸ Moreover, even after selecting those five priorities, the RCMP emphasizes action on just one “critical objective” from each of those priorities throughout the entire organization. In this way, the RCMP maintains its focus on those objectives that it must achieve while orienting additional attention and effort towards just one objective so as not to overburden staff and resources.

Finally, even after the number of objectives has been narrowed to just a “manageable number”, the RCMP finds that it is important to keep the number of measures of performance on those objectives also “manageable”—“if too many measures are used, it could impede the whole BSC methodology and turn it into a ‘measurement exercise.’”²⁹

²⁷ Keith Clark. Phone interview by Daniel Munro. February 23, 2009.

²⁸ Strategic Policy and Planning Directorate, “Planning and Performance Management Guide” (Ottawa: RCMP, 2007), p. 12.

²⁹ Strategic Policy and Planning Directorate, “Planning and Performance Management Guide” (Ottawa: RCMP, 2007), p. 12.

The point is to introduce a measurement and management regime that serves the organizational objectives, not one that becomes a focus in itself.

CREATE A CULTURE OF DISCUSSION AND UNDERSTANDING

Assistant Commissioner Clark suggests that organizations looking to use a measurement regime which ties performance on initiatives to specific owners need to create a culture of understanding rather than one of criticism.

Leaders need to foster an organizational culture in which people understand that it is not necessarily bad to have a red rating on an initiative and not necessarily good to have a green rating. This aligns with the idea that the measurement and management regime should be understood not as a compliance exercise, but instead as a discussion and strategy facilitator.

To build that culture an organization needs to have the “right tone at the top.”³⁰ Senior managers should take care to not react too enthusiastically to prima facie positive results, nor should they react too negatively to prima facie negative results. What might appear to be good or bad results on the surface may mask a deeper story about well- or poorly-selected initiatives. Instead, senior managers should simply use the performance information to start and guide a productive conversation about how objectives should be achieved and which initiatives should be pursued to meet those objectives.

Assistant Commissioner Graham, who was Commanding Officer in P.E.I when the Balanced Scorecard was adopted, echoes this concern and the recommendation to address it. He notes that when first introduced, the Balanced Scorecard

³⁰ Keith Clark. Phone interview by Daniel Munro. February 23, 2009.

and Dashboard exercise was viewed skeptically by some who thought that it would be used as a compliance tool to judge the performance of individual officers. However, by guiding conversations towards the idea that each group of objective and initiative owners is a team and that success or failure is a collective responsibility, the measurement and management regime was increasingly embraced as a team-building tool rather than a judgment exercise.³¹

LEADERSHIP

Finally, it is worth repeating that leadership is a critical part of achieving gains from a management and measurement regime. The RCMP was fortunate to have support and leadership from the very top of the organization and buy-in on the part of most senior management and divisional commanders. This support allowed the RCMP to roll out the Balanced Scorecard methodology throughout the entire organization and helped ensure that measurement results would be taken seriously and used as feedback for future planning.

Other organizations that are interested in introducing systematic management and measurement techniques, will want to ensure that support for those techniques is strong at the leadership level. As the RCMP experience reveals, benefits are maximized when leaders embrace the new approach.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The use of the Balanced Scorecard in tandem with its dashboards and survey results has led to excellent progress at the RCMP and has earned the organization domestic and international recognition. Its achievements have been the subject of many articles in the business and academic press and staff members who were involved in the introduction of the Balanced

Scorecard methodology have received numerous interview requests.

In 2004, the RCMP was inducted into the “Balanced Scorecard Hall of Fame” in recognition of its “break-through results in the areas of improvement in stakeholder satisfaction and internal efficiencies.”³² That not only bolstered internal support for its management and measurement regime, but also allowed the RCMP to demonstrate to stakeholders and others that it takes performance seriously and attends to it systematically.

FUTURE PLANS

The initial launch of the Balanced Scorecard and dashboard, and the use of the Common Measurements Tool, was focused on the management levels of the RCMP including senior executives and divisional commanders.

Recently, the Balanced Scorecard and dashboard tools have been adopted for use at the detachment level as well. While the time available to detachment-level staff to engage in rigorous Balanced Scorecard management is limited, simplified versions of the tools have been embraced by the detachments and provide guidance in selecting initiatives and targets to meet national objectives.

Use of the Balanced Scorecard was also endorsed by the RCMP’s newest Commissioner, William Elliott. Commissioner Elliott feels that

³¹ Steve Graham. Phone interview by Daniel Munro. February 27, 2009.

³² Paul Crookall, “RCMP and the Balanced Scorecard” [online]. (May, 2006), [cited January 30, 2009]. www.netgov.ca/cp.asp?pid=314. See also, Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton, “How to Implement a New Strategy Without Disrupting Your Organization,” *Harvard Business Review* (March 2006). The Balanced Scorecard Hall of Fame is administered by The Palladium Group—the organization founded by Kaplan and Norton. As an indication of the importance of the RCMP receiving the honour, Andrew Pateman at The Palladium Group notes that less than 25 per cent of applicants meet the required qualifications.

not only is the current use of the Balanced Scorecard a great help to the RCMP, but that it would also be a useful tool for implementing some of the recommendations of the recent report by the Task Force on Governance and Cultural Change in the RCMP, “Rebuilding the Trust” (See textbox on page 8).

Indeed, as the RCMP faces new challenges, its experience and expertise with the Balanced Scorecard, dashboard, and surveys appear to position it well to meet those challenges.

CONCLUSION

While challenging in its implementation, the move to a more systematic and transparent management and measurement regime has advanced the RCMP towards the vision of creating a more strategy-focused RCMP and an

organization of excellence. The RCMP now approaches its activities in a more systematic fashion and thinks carefully about how larger strategic objectives can be pursued and achieved through targeted and measured initiatives.

Arising as a response to a “perfect storm” of challenges in the late 1990s, the Balanced Scorecard methodology—and the use of dashboards and survey results—has become a planning and assessment regime suited to guide the RCMP through other challenges as it strives to fulfill its goals. Moreover, the experience of the RCMP with the various techniques offers invaluable lessons to other public sector organizations considering adoption of these, or some other set of, management and measurement tools.

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The Conference Board, Inc. 845 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022-6679 U.S.A. Tel. (212) 759-0900 • Fax (212) 980-7014 • www.conference-board.org

The Conference Board Europe Chaussée de La Hulpe 130, Box 11, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium Tel. +32 2 675 54 05 • Fax +32 2 675 03 95

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