U.S. Department of Justice
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services

Problem-Oriented Guides for Police
Problem-Solving Tools Series
No. 5

Partnering With Businesses To Address Public Safety Problems

by
Sharon Chamard

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This project was supported by cooperative agreement #2003CKWX0087 by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions contained herein are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position of the U.S. Department of Justice. References to specific companies, products, or services should not be considered an endorsement of the product by the author or the U.S. Department of Justice. Rather, the references are illustrations to supplement discussion of the issues.

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ISBN: 1-932582-62-2

April 2006

About the Problem-Solving Tools Series

The problem-solving tool guides are one of three series of the *Problem-Oriented Guides for Police*. The other two are the problem-specific guides and response guides.

The *Problem-Oriented Guides for Police* summarize knowledge about how police can reduce the harm caused by specific crime and disorder problems. They are guides to preventing problems and improving overall incident response, not to investigating offenses or handling specific incidents. The guides are written for police—of whatever rank or assignment—who must address the specific problems the guides cover. The guides will be most useful to officers who:

- understand basic problem-oriented policing principles and methods
- can look at problems in depth
- are willing to consider new ways of doing police business
- understand the value and the limits of research knowledge
- are willing to work with other community agencies to find effective solutions to problems.

The tool guides summarize knowledge about information gathering and analysis techniques that might assist police at any of the four main stages of a problem-oriented project: scanning, analysis, response, and assessment. Each guide:

- describes the kind of information produced by each technique
- discusses how the information could be useful in problem-solving
- gives examples of previous uses of the technique
- provides practical guidance about adapting the technique to specific problems

- provides templates of data collection instruments (where appropriate)
- suggests how to analyze data gathered by using the technique
- shows how to interpret the information correctly and present it effectively
- warns about any ethical problems in using the technique
- discusses the limitations of the technique when used by police in a problem-oriented project
- provides reference sources of more detailed information about the technique
- indicates when police should seek expert help in using the technique.

Extensive technical and scientific literature covers each technique addressed in the tool guides. The guides aim to provide only enough information about each technique to enable police and others to use it in the course of problem-solving. In most cases, the information gathered during a problem-solving project does not have to withstand rigorous scientific scrutiny. Where police need greater confidence in the data, they might need expert help in using the technique. This can often be found in local university departments of sociology, psychology, and criminal justice.

The information needs for any single project can be quite diverse, and it will often be necessary to use a variety of data collection techniques to meet those needs. Similarly, a variety of analytic techniques may be needed to analyze the data. Police and crime analysts may be unfamiliar with some of the techniques, but the effort invested in learning to use them can make all the difference to the success of a project.

Acknowledgments

The *Problem-Oriented Guides for Police* are very much a collaborative effort. While each guide has a primary author, other project team members, COPS Office staff and anonymous peer reviewers contributed to each guide by proposing text, recommending research and offering suggestions on matters of format and style.

The principal project team developing the guide series comprised Herman Goldstein, professor emeritus, University of Wisconsin Law School; Ronald V. Clarke, professor of criminal justice, Rutgers University; John E. Eck, associate professor of criminal justice, University of Cincinnati; Michael S. Scott, assistant clinical professor, University of Wisconsin Law School; Rana Sampson, police consultant, San Diego; and Deborah Lamm Weisel, director of police research, North Carolina State University.

Cynthia Pappas oversaw the project for the COPS Office. Stephen Lynch edited the guides. Research for the guides was conducted at the Criminal Justice Library at Rutgers University under the direction of Phyllis Schultze.

The project team also wishes to acknowledge the members of the San Diego, National City and Savannah police departments who provided feedback on the guides' format and style in the early stages of the project, as well as the line police officers, police executives and researchers who peer reviewed each guide.

Contents

What This Guide Is About

The annual cost of crime against business is in the billions of dollars. Business victimization hurts business owners, employees, neighbors, customers, and the public at large. Still, convincing businesses of the importance of participating in crime prevention partnerships with the police can be challenging.

This guide addresses crime prevention partnerships and related issues. It begins by discussing the impact of crime against business and the roles businesses play in contributing to crime. Different forms of partnerships and strategies for forming partnerships are presented and analyzed. Characteristics of good and bad partnerships are listed, along with ideas for overcoming barriers that may prevent businesses from participating in crime prevention partnerships. The guide concludes with examples of business-police partnerships and programs, some that are known to be effective and others that are still largely untested.

This guide does not include detailed information about preventing specific crimes against business. However, several of the guides in the Problem-Oriented Policing Guides series do address particular crimes that affect businesses, including the following:

- *Assaults in and Around Bars*
- *Burglary of Retail Establishments*
- *Check and Card Fraud*
- *Crimes Against Tourists*
- *Disorder at Budget Motels*
- *Disorderly Youth in Public Places*
- *Graffiti*
- *Panhandling*
- *Prescription Fraud*
- *Robbery at Automatic Teller Machines*
- *Robbery of Taxi Drivers*
- *Shoplifting*
- *Street Prostitution*
- *Thefts of and from Cars in Parking Facilities.*

What Is Known About Crime Against Business?

Because there has not been a national victimization survey of businesses in the United States for over 20 years,[1] we do not have a clear picture of the extent of crime against business. However, small-scale studies and research from other countries suggest that such crimes are a serious problem.

- In 2003, business targets such as commercial houses, banks, gas and service stations, and convenience stores suffered over 100,000 robberies, compared to 60,000 for residential locations. About one-quarter of all robberies, including street robberies, occurred in businesses. Over one-third of all burglaries occurred in non-residences.[2] The actual rates of business crime are much higher than these numbers suggest, because there are fewer businesses than there are residences.

- A British study of small businesses found that nearly two-thirds had suffered some form of criminal victimization over a five-year span. Theft and vandalism were the most common crimes. The most vulnerable industries were hotel and catering, construction, and retail.[3]

- Businesses suffer disproportionately from crime in comparison to households and individuals. For example, a British national survey found that only 4 percent of households were burglarized in 1993, compared to 24 percent of retail premises.[4] Cross-national surveys suggest that retail businesses may have an overall burglary risk that is 10 times greater than the risk faced by households.[5]

- Many businesses suffer from revictimization. In one town in England, 40 percent of businesses that were burglarized were victimized again within one year. Of this group, 49 percent were burglarized a second time, and 57 percent of the latter group were burglarized at least one additional time, again within a one-year period.[6]

- The typical business loses close to 6 percent of its yearly revenue to fraud. Small businesses are particularly vulnerable: those with fewer than 100 employees suffer median losses of $98,000 a year.[7]

- Goods and services are priced 15 percent higher to make up for business losses from theft.[8]

- Business crime costs the U.S. economy at least $186 billion annually.[9]

§ Although this section focuses on the costs of crime against business, it is important to remember that some businesses benefit when other businesses are victimized. For example, commercial entities that provide target-hardening devices and security services reap their profits from business crime, as do those manufacturers, retailers, and shippers who benefit when a stolen item is replaced with a new one.

Who Are the Victims of Business Crime?§

There are four immediate victims of crimes against business: businesses themselves, their employees, their customers, and the public. But because businesses are parts of their communities, business crime affects the community as much as crime in the community affects businesses. Thus, other stakeholders are affected as well: shareholders, management, suppliers and vendors, neighboring residents, and nearby businesses.

The cost of crime threatens the viability of businesses by increasing expenses in a number of ways. For example, money might be spent repairing damage caused by vandals, or on security devices, such as mirrors, closed circuit television, and alarm systems. Insurance premiums can be increased.[10] It can be harder to hire and retain staff, leading to increased recruiting expenses or higher wages.[11] If fear of victimization

causes customers to stop frequenting the business, sales will drop. All of these factors, in addition to direct losses from theft, can result in lower profits. This can be devastating, particularly to small businesses or to those operating on slim profit margins.

If the viability of a business is compromised due to the costs associated with crime, employee hours may be cut to reduce expenses. In addition, employees who work in businesses with crime problems are at risk of violence in the workplace; at the very least they are more likely to experience fear on the job. Employees of victimized businesses reportedly suffer many of the same damaging psychological effects that residents experience when their homes are burglarized.[12]

The cost of business crime is often passed on to customers in the form of higher prices, reduced operating hours, or even relocation of the business to a safer area. In addition, certain crime prevention measures, such as security guards, target-hardening, and closed circuit television, can make customers feel as though they are shopping in a hostile environment or are being treated as suspected thieves.

Businesses play an important role in community stability by providing goods, services, and employment opportunities. A thriving business community is indicative of a strong local economy and a good quality of life. Businesses also contribute to social cohesion by providing places for area residents to interact casually.[13] When businesses relocate, close, or reduce their hours because of crime, neighborhoods can be substantially impacted. Business relocation can also negatively affect residential property values, because not only does proximity to a blighted area make adjacent properties less attractive to potential buyers, but landlords may have difficulty finding tenants if goods and services are not located nearby or if the social environment creates a sense of fear among community residents.

In addition to local effects, crime against business exacts a cost from the general public. Besides the obvious cost of the resources needed to investigate and prosecute such crime, there are a variety of less obvious drains on public resources. For example, individuals who become unemployed when businesses close or who are unable to find work due to poor economic conditions in their communities can become a burden on the system, as they often do not pay taxes and sometimes even receive subsidies from the government. In addition, failed businesses do not contribute to the public weal in the form of sales or income taxes. And reduced property values around blighted commercial areas can lead to lower assessments, and hence, lower taxes and revenues.

How Do Businesses Contribute to Crime?

Like most other types of crime, business victimization is not spread randomly across all potential targets. Rather, it is concentrated in certain sectors of the economy; even within certain classes of business there are wide variations in victimization rates. For example, a study of budget motels in Chula Vista, California found that the annual rate of calls for service per room ranged from a low of 0.25 to a high of over 11.[14] Similarly, a study of victimization in Britain found that 2 percent of retail premises suffered 25 percent of all retail burglaries in 1993, meaning that certain locations were victimized considerably more frequently than others.[15]

Commercial areas are full of criminal targets: goods to be shoplifted, cars to be broken into, purses and wallets to be grabbed, and employees to be robbed. Still, many businesses do not seem particularly concerned that their methods of operation can actually cause crime—not only inside their establishments, but in neighboring areas as well. Businesses do not operate in a vacuum; they are parts of their communities. There is much they can do to reduce the situational conditions that create opportunities for crime.

Merchandise Display §

§ More information about how merchandise displays and store layouts can affect the risk of shoplifting can be found in the *Shoplifting* POP guide.

Consumers like to be able to touch items, to pick them up, to imagine using them. Accordingly, retailers frequently arrange their stores to allow customers easy access to merchandise. But encouraging purchases also encourages shoplifting. For example, small items placed near cash registers and check-out lines can be easily slipped into a dishonest customer's pocket. Products placed near open doorways or on the sidewalk outside provide opportunities for thieves to grab something and run away. By creating an environment that generates sales, businesses also create an environment that contributes to crime.

Staffing Practices

Businesses that keep their staffing levels low can be vulnerable to crime in two ways. First, fewer staff means less supervision of customers and higher levels of shoplifting. Second, fewer staff typically means more autonomy for employees, which can result in higher levels of employee theft, from outright stealing to sweet-hearting§§ and time theft. Although understandable, the desire to run an efficient operation by minimizing staffing expenses can lead to poorly supervised settings with inadequate surveillance.

§§ Sweet-hearting means giving unauthorized discounts or free items to friends or family.

Premises Security §§§

§§§ More information about how burglary risk is affected by external security can be found in the *Burglary of Retail Establishments* POP guide.

Commercial areas are often bustling with people shopping, waiting for buses, or chatting with neighbors. Such activities can provide good cover for those engaged in illegal activities. In high-crime areas, businesses must be especially vigilant, lest their premises be used to facilitate criminal activities. Businesses that allow vagrants, prostitutes, or drug dealers to loiter or to use their facilities—even if they are making

purchases or otherwise behaving as legitimate customers—make it easier for these sorts of people to operate. This is especially true at night, when the failure to provide adequate lighting or surveillance in parking lots can encourage transactions between prostitutes or drug dealers and their clients and can make it easier for predatory criminals to victimize legitimate customers.

Product Design §

Businesses also contribute to crime because of the products they manufacture and sell. Often, the victims of these crimes are not the businesses themselves, but customers who are hapless enough to buy goods that are both attractive to thieves and designed so that they are easy to steal. People can also be victimized by those who use products in a harmful way; an example of this is alcohol-related crime. At issue is whether businesses have any responsibility in these matters; that is, under what circumstances should businesses be expected to share the burden of crime prevention? It can be argued that if a product or service somehow contributes to a particular type of crime and the seller can do something to reduce the incidence of that crime, then the seller should be expected to do so. This is not always clear however, because in some situations there is no way for the business to know the intended use of the product it sells. For example, a kitchen knife can be used in a stabbing, but it may be unreasonable to hold a seller liable when the knife is used in such a manner.[16]

§ Designing products that are crime-resistant and the role of the corporate sector in preventing crime are discussed in Clarke and Newman (2005).

Barriers to Business Participation in Crime Prevention Partnerships

Belief That the Criminal Justice System Does Not Need Any Help

Business owners may be reluctant to work with the police on crime issues, either because they believe that police cannot do much about the problem, or, conversely, because they believe that the police are already effectively dealing with it.[17] Like the rest of the public, business owners may also believe that certain approaches to dealing with crime work best: a greater police presence, through stepped-up patrols perhaps, or increased penalties for offenders.[18] It is vital that business owners understand that the criminal justice system alone cannot handle the crime problem and that they too must make efforts to prevent crime. Although many individuals are willing to accept the notion of self-protection, businesses are lagging behind.[19] This is especially important because some preventive measures can only be implemented by businesses themselves, such as those related to product design and methods of providing services.[20]

Ignorance of the Costs of Crime

It can be a challenge to convince owners that crime is more than just another cost of doing business. Many business owners are ignorant of the consequences of crime. Few business schools offer curricula relating to crime or crime prevention, beyond fraud detection in accounting courses.[21] Business owners may believe that they have a low risk of victimization and that any losses they suffer will be covered by insurance. Expending extra resources on crime prevention activities might not be considered cost-effective. Even businesses without insurance coverage may be unwilling or unable to spend on crime prevention.[22]

Unwillingness to Accept Social Responsibility

Once businesses understand the direct impact that crime has on their viability and profitability, they should have a strong motivation to try to prevent their own victimization. But convincing businesses that they have a social responsibility to reduce opportunities for crime can be problematic, especially if the crime does not affect them directly. Some business owners may not fully understand how their practices contribute to crime, and even those who acknowledge their role in crime generation might not be convinced that it is in their best interests to work with the police to address the problem.

How you respond to these business owners depends both on the depth of their ignorance and the level of their denial of responsibility. The amount of pressure needed to achieve cooperation can range from gentle suggestions and encouragement to more punitive and even legal actions.[23] Your goal is to encourage businesses to accept some of the responsibility for addressing the problem and to take some of the burden for solving it off of the shoulders of the police.

Practical Concerns

Beyond the need to convince businesses of the costs of crime and of their responsibility for preventing it, there are more mundane logistical issues that can serve to prevent businesses from becoming involved in partnerships with police.

- Some businesses think that police can do nothing to help them.[24] It is up to police to demonstrate new and different strategies that will cause such businesses to reassess their opinions about police effectiveness.

- Businesses with small staffs that work long hours may find it difficult to devote time and energy to crime prevention.[25] Involving these businesses will require a great deal of outreach, such as frequent visits to pass on information and to remind staff of their importance to the success of the partnership.

- Some businesses have concerns about working with other businesses, particularly their competitors.[26] Research indicates that this hesitancy can be overcome once it becomes clear that the benefits of crime prevention outweigh the risks of cooperation.[27]

- In areas with a high business turnover,[28] it can be difficult to maintain continuity in the partnership. Whether this is important depends upon the type of partnership you want to establish. Issue-specific partnerships can be established and disbanded fairly quickly, whereas entrenched institutional partnerships are threatened by business turnover.

- Financial viability is a primary concern of all businesses and must be recognized as a legitimate issue. You should be sensitive to this; do not assume that businesses will want to get involved merely out of a sense of social responsibility. For this reason, partnerships that address crime issues that directly affect businesses will likely have greater participation.[29]

How to Encourage Businesses to Help Prevent Crime

The first step in encouraging business owners to engage in crime prevention activities is educating them about the actual costs of crime, both to themselves and to the public. Statistics on the scope of the problem are a good place to start, especially if they are specific to the type of business at hand. To ensure the commitment of the potential partner, it may even be necessary to present information and statistics that are specific to the individual business. For example, if a business is being repeatedly victimized, you might show the owner call for service data demonstrating that it is being victimized more frequently than its neighbors and explain how these disproportionate losses can affect its ability to compete in the marketplace. Or you might describe how much it costs the business to deal with a single burglary incident or shoplifting arrest, both in terms of the actual material loss and the time spent filing insurance claims, making statements to police, testifying in court, and so on. Other businesses might also be spurred into action if they are instructed on the specifics of crime prevention.[30]

Providing information about the victimization problem or the means of preventing it may not be enough to ensure cooperation. You might have to apply more pressure by asking the business directly—either informally or more confrontationally—to take action to reduce its creation of criminal opportunities.[31] If the business is a franchise or has other external management, moving up the chain of command might convince the local business to cooperate. Before doing so, however, make sure you have enough data and information to show why the owner should change

practices. If the proposed changes are inconvenient or expensive, you must be able to demonstrate convincingly the connection between the business and the crime problem. One way is through the use of case studies illustrating how similar businesses have benefited from crime prevention.[§] Other guides in this series focus on specific crimes against business and give examples of effective crime prevention strategies.

§ Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for this suggestion.

If this approach fails, it can be worthwhile to bring in other agencies to help deal with the problem.[32] For example, liquor control boards can be asked to use their authority to encourage bar and liquor store owners to make changes that reduce criminal opportunities. Businesses that keep unsightly and trash-strewn premises that give rise to nuisance and public disorder problems can be brought into line by environmental agencies or municipal code enforcement officers.[33]

A good reputation is worth a lot to a business. Threatening to damage a good reputation by publicizing the owner's failure to accept responsibility for a crime problem or her refusal to cooperate with reasonable police requests can be a potent tool. Because this approach is potentially so destructive, it is best used only when other methods have failed.[34]

Why Would Businesses Want to Work With the Police?

There are many reasons for businesses to work in partnership with the police. First, their association with governmental agencies and other businesses will allow them access to a broader set of resources than they would have otherwise. Second, even if a particular business does not have a serious victimization problem, it can still benefit from a reduction in the local crime rate. Third, some of the most promising methods for dealing with business crime call for strategies that are beyond the capabilities of individual businesses or even small groups of businesses.[35] Fourth, few business owners know enough about crime prevention to design effective and efficient strategies on their own. Some may even think that common sense tactics—which might not work in all situations and can in fact have unintended consequences—are the best solutions.[36] An example of this is enhanced lighting. Although in some circumstances enhanced lighting can prevent crime by making it harder for offenders to hide in the dark and victimize passersby, in other circumstances it can increase crime by making it easier for criminals to see what they are doing.[§] Fifth, businesses lack the data needed to determine the effectiveness of any given crime prevention strategy.[37] Finally, association with a crime prevention initiative allows businesses to promote themselves and to show that they are different from their competitors. This can lead to improved relations with persons in government and to increased customer loyalty.[38]

§ For reviews of the literature on the uncertain relationship between lighting and crime, see Pease (1999) and Farrington and Welsh (2002).

Police-Business Partnerships

Rationale for Partnerships

Community policing efforts often involve increasing police-business communication for the purpose of developing a positive relationship with the business community; these efforts can go as far as the establishment of a formal partnership. Many of these partnerships are initiated because of a general sense that they should be in place, rather than in response to a particular problem. Before establishing a police-business partnership, you should decide what its purpose will be. Forming partnerships merely for the sake of being able to say that you have a good relationship with the business community might well be a waste of time and resources. And in fact, such partnerships are likely to fail, as they lack a clear focus. It is far better to have a particular problem that needs to be addressed before setting out to form a partnership.

Types of Partnerships

Partnerships between police and business can take a variety of forms. In the simplest form, an individual business works with police to address a specific problem faced by that business. In this type of partnership, police can provide guidance on security systems, target-hardening, robbery prevention, and the like. For example, police in Chesterfield County, Virginia review building plans and give business owners advice on low-cost crime prevention through environmental design principles.[39] Or, police can work with retailers to prevent shoplifting by estimating the cost of measures such as security guards or closed circuit television and then demonstrating how these expenses can be recovered through the avoidance of the losses that would have otherwise been incurred.[40]

Although useful for the individual business, such strategies do little to address the underlying problems and behaviors that give rise to larger business crime issues. Multiagency partnerships are a more promising approach to addressing these issues. Such partnerships can take three different forms: area-specific, business-specific, and issue-specific.[41]

Area-Specific

Area-specific partnerships include businesses from a particular geographic location, such as a downtown core, an industrial park, or a shopping district. This type of partnership makes sense where a number of businesses are affected by a problem that is restricted to a certain area, such as thefts from a mall parking lot or rowdy youth in a downtown area.

Business improvement districts (BIDs) are an example of this form of partnership.[§] BIDs comprise property and business owners who voluntarily pay a special assessment in addition to their regular taxes. The extra funds are spent on beautification, security, marketing, or whatever else the membership decides is needed to enhance the viability of the area.[§§] Typical aims include raising the standards of public spaces; reducing crime, social disorder, and the fear of victimization; improving public transportation; generating sales and revenues for area businesses; and increasing the number of local jobs.[42]

There are an estimated 2,000 BIDs in the United States.[43] Although their effectiveness with respect to crime prevention has not been well studied, anecdotal evidence suggests that the strategy holds promise. For example, BID security patrols reportedly helped reduce crime in New York City's Grand Central Station by 60 percent.[44] After a BID was formed in the downtown area of Columbia, South Carolina, overall crime declined by 25 percent, citations for public drinking dropped by 90 percent, and car break-ins were halved.[45] Police

§ Partnerships similar to BIDs are known as "town centre management" schemes in the United Kingdom.

§§ A BID in Anchorage, Alaska devised a solution to minimize the negative impact of homeless inebriates on downtown businesses and to prevent deaths due to exposure. The Downtown Partnership pays for a number of vans, staffed by emergency medical technicians, which respond to calls-for-service and also patrol areas frequented by street inebriates. The Community Service Patrol picks up people who are perilously intoxicated and transports them to a sleep-off facility, thus lessening the burden on police and ambulance services.

participation in BIDs can take the form of membership on steering groups or boards,[46] information sharing with BID employees,[47] and aid in training security personnel.[48]

Agreements among local businesses to pool the costs of security have met with mixed success. On the one hand, BIDs that seem to be effective are highly organized and often structured according to local legislation. Informal cooperative efforts, on the other hand, which are characterized by "gentlemen's agreements" to share costs, may be difficult to sustain over the long term.[49]

In the Netherlands, Public-Private Partnership projects have been very successful in reducing property crime in industrial parks. In one example, incidents declined by nearly 75 percent after police convinced local businesses to share the costs of private security. The individual cost was determined by a point system that quantified the size of the business and the attractiveness of its products to offenders. Police also trained a group of unemployed people as security guards; after a year, responsibility for this aspect of the project was shifted to a private security firm.[50]

Issue-Specific

Issue-specific partnerships focus on a certain type of crime or a particular situation, most commonly a public order problem that has reached the point where intervention is needed. This form of partnership need not last once the specific problem is solved. Because they may be short-lived, such partnerships may not need to be formal or institutionalized.

Public drinking and related problems have been addressed using issue-specific partnerships in a number of jurisdictions.[51] In Surfers Paradise in southern Queensland, Australia, police partnered with other government agencies,

elected officials, the Chamber of Commerce, community members, and the liquor licensing authority to reduce alcohol-related crime, violence and disorder around licensed establishments in the central business district. A steering committee was created, a project officer was appointed, and a community forum was held, after which a number of task groups were formed. Interventions developed by these task groups included Model House Policies for each establishment, a Code of Practice, and training for liquor service staff in areas such as responsible beverage service, care of patrons, and crowd control techniques. Licensees were involved in the problem-solving process, and generally complied with these changes. The result was a significant reduction in assaults and disorderly behavior.[52]

§ For more information, see the Problem-Oriented Policing Guide *Disorder at Budget Motels*. The Tukwila ordinance is available at http://www.mrsc.org/Ords/T8o1918.aspx.

Business-Specific

Business-specific partnerships are often formed in response to a rash of crimes that target a particular type of business, such as bank or convenience store robberies; others are formed to address a specific chronic problem. In Britain, for example, the Secured Car Parks initiative encourages parking lot and garage operators to adopt active management strategies to minimize crime in their facilities. It is in operation in more than 1,000 parking garages and on average has reduced vehicle crimes by up to 70 percent.[53] In Tukwila, Washington, the police work with hotels and motels to train employees and conduct safety inspections. The more calls-for-service an establishment has, the more it is compelled by ordinance to engage in these activities.[§,54] The Taxi/Livery Robbery Inspection Program in New York City is an arrangement between the police department and taxi owners that allows police to stop taxis without probable cause or reasonable suspicion, and then to make brief inquiries and conduct visual inspections. Participating taxi owners and drivers sign consent forms, and decals of participation are prominently placed where customers will see them.[55]

Partnerships With Private Security

Although figures on the private security industry are imprecise, estimates are that there are currently about two million private security personnel in the United States, working for close to 90,000 individual security companies. Some believe that these security personnel protect about 85 percent of the nation's critical infrastructure. However, only 5 to 10 percent of police departments are believed to have partnerships with private security.[56]

There is great diversity within the private security field, including corporate security departments, uniformed guard companies, alarm companies, armored car agencies, investigative firms, and security equipment manufacturers. Accordingly, there is much that a partnership with private security can offer to the police, from information about particular crimes to access to specialized knowledge and technology.[57] Private security can also benefit from such partnerships, because police have legal powers beyond those of private security, and in most cases, have more extensive training as well.[58]

The activities undertaken by a partnership between police and private security can include networking, information and resource sharing, training, operations, and writing model legislation. With respect to specific crime prevention activities, such a partnership can provide joint security in BIDs or can undertake joint efforts on specific concerns relating to business crime, such as check fraud, false alarms, and so on.[59]

Steps for Starting a Partnership§

1. *Identify key agencies or businesses that should be in the partnership.* Besides police and businesses, partnerships can also include other stakeholders—those who have an identifiable interest or stake in the outcome and can bring something useful to the partnership and its efforts. Examples of possible stakeholders are social service agencies, schools, religious and faith-based organizations, government agencies, and community groups. Obviously, the membership will depend on the nature of the problem. Keep in mind that the greater the number of partners, the harder it will be to organize activities or even to get everyone in the same room at the same time. It will also be more difficult to decide on goals and strategies and to maintain communication and cooperation. For this reason, it is probably better to form a partnership with a core group of stakeholders and to invite others to join as the partnership solidifies and other needs arise.

§ The general outline for this section is taken from Institute for Law and Justice (2000).

HOW TO REACH OUT TO BUSINESSES

One of the earliest steps in any partnership is identifying the particular businesses that should be involved. In the case of area-specific partnerships, this is fairly straightforward. If the area is small, you can contact business owners and employees by visiting each location. For larger areas, initial contact can occur through the mail. Before this can be done, however, a reliable listing of businesses is needed—and such lists can be surprisingly difficult to obtain. If you use governmental listings of business licenses, you risk excluding unlicensed enterprises, which may be at a higher risk of victimization due to their somewhat hidden operations. Lists from chambers of commerce and similar organizations typically include only those businesses that have paid a membership fee. Telephone books are particularly unreliable, as many small

commercial enterprises do not pay for business listing in the Yellow Pages. Some areas have BIDs or other similar business organizations already in place; but here too, keep in mind that such entities may not include all the businesses in a particular area. Therefore, it may be necessary to develop a list of businesses in-house, either by pooling the knowledge of local patrol officers or by conducting a systematic census of the area. The latter is something beat officers can do during their regular patrols.

For business-specific partnerships, a good place to start is with organizations that serve a particular industry, such as an association of retail merchants, bankers, or bar and tavern owners. However, such trade groups may not be helpful in identifying smaller businesses or those from less well-regulated industries. For example, in the United States, the National Association of Convenience Stores represents the convenience store and petroleum marketing industry. The majority of members, however, are franchises or national chain stores; many smaller retail operations, such as bodegas and mom-and-pop stores, do not belong to the national association. Local unions are another source that can assist in identifying potential partners.

The players in issue-specific partnerships are comparatively easy to identify. Looking at call-for-service data will show which businesses are being repeatedly victimized. However, using police data is not without its problems. For example, businesses may be listed in one case by the name and in another by the address. In addition, not all crimes are reported to the police, so call-for-service data do not necessarily give an accurate picture of the nature and extent of crime against business. Officers who work intensively in an area can be a valuable resource, because they may hear informally of unreported crimes and thus may be able to identify businesses that have been victimized by particular crimes.

2. *Make contact with the potential partners.* Although initial partnership contacts can be informal, they should be with individuals who have decision-making authority. Informational sessions and meetings are likely to be ineffective, because those who attend will likely already be convinced of the need for a police-business partnership. A better approach is to target an opinion leader in the business community and to encourage that person to promote the partnership. Personal visits with potential partners are also important. Brochures, pamphlets, and other materials that describe the problem to be addressed and explain the nature of the potential partnership can be distributed during such visits.

3. *Agree on a purpose for the partnership.* Obviously, this will be related to the problem at hand and the nature of the partnership. Partnerships can be formed on a short-term basis to address one particular problem or can be organized with a more distant goal in mind. In the latter case, tackling a small problem early in the process can establish a record of success that encourages ongoing participation.

4. *Structure the partnership.* Like all organizations, partnerships entail a host of logistical problems. For example, where and how often will meetings be held? How formal will the meetings be and who will run them? Where will partnership mail be received? Will the partnership have a physical home, and if so, where? What information will be shared with partnership members? Many of these issues can be addressed informally, particularly in small partnerships that are designed to address one problem. However, if you plan to keep the group functioning independently of a specific problem, a formal structure, specified in memoranda of understanding or bylaws, is better for the long-term viability of the partnership.

5. *Train the partners.* A useful method for solving problems is the SARA approach. SARA stands for Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment. This approach is at the heart of problem-oriented policing. The partnership will have been formed with some problem in mind, but using the SARA process will allow you to be more specific about the nature of the problem and what is contributing to it. This will lead you to identify solutions that focus tightly on the problem, and to determine whether what the partnership did to address the problem worked. Training in the essentials of SARA should happen at the very early stages of the partnership.

6. *Decide on a plan of action.* If you know which problems will be specifically addressed by the partnership, this is the time to spell out the responsibilities and activities of the different partners. To keep partners involved in the process, assign them specific tasks to be completed by the next meeting.

7. *Assess the effectiveness of your plan of action.* Did the partnership achieve its goals? Another guide in this series, *Assessing Responses to Problems: An Introductory Guide for Police Problem-Solvers,* can be a useful analytical tool.

8. *Discuss the future of the partnership.* You can continue working towards the original goal, identify new problems that need to be addressed and determine a plan of action for dealing with it, or dissolve the group.

Building Upon Existing Networks

There may be business networks in place, such as BIDs or chambers of commerce, that you can build upon in creating a partnership. There are several advantages to this approach. First, the existing network will provide a ready forum to introduce the police personnel involved in the problem-solving effort, to discuss the problem of crime in the area or among a particular business sector, and to develop ideas and solutions. Second, working through an existing network can lend legitimacy to partnership activities—assuming that the network is favorably viewed by target businesses. Third, resources that would otherwise have been expended identifying potential partners and organizing the partnership can be applied directly toward the problem-solving process.[60]

Using existing networks also has a downside. Some groups require members to pay dues, which could very well prevent smaller businesses from joining—the very businesses that are often disproportionately affected by crime. In addition, if the network does not represent certain business sectors, the most appropriate crime prevention measures might not be implemented. For example, in order to address the problems associated with rowdy behavior by drunken bar patrons at closing time, it only makes sense to build upon an existing business network that includes many or most of the local bars and taverns. If the majority of members are liquor retailers, the group will likely not be much help in designing an effective remedial strategy. In addition, where many targeted businesses are not members of the network, building upon the network may alienate those businesses, particularly if there is a history of conflict between members and non-members. Finally, there is always the possibility that the network's other priorities will derail or otherwise influence the crime prevention effort, especially where there is too much reliance on the group and its resources.[61]

Key Elements of Successful Partnerships§

§ This list of key elements is taken from Institute for Law and Justice (2000). Another useful resource is the *COPS Collaboration Toolkit*, which discusses in detail how to build, fix, and sustain partnerships to help implement community policing (Rinehart et al. 2001).

Leadership

The top executives of the participating partners must support the partnership, even if they are not personally involved in the activities of the group. Where subordinates are the primary representatives, they should have ready access to their superiors. It is also important for those who are leading the partnership to maintain interest in the group's activities.

Facilitator

In the early stages of a partnership, it is important to have a committed person who will do the difficult work required to secure the cooperation of other partners.

Structure

Although an informal structure can work initially, a more formal organization will eventually be needed to ensure that the partnership does not disintegrate due to changes in personnel (e.g., if the facilitator leaves) or other unforeseen circumstances. Memoranda of agreement or understanding can help establish a formal structure and solidify the goals and commitments of the various partners.

Resources

Partnerships need supplies to support group activities and to ensure good communication among the partners. Possible funding sources include corporate sponsorship and donations from member businesses and police agencies. Not surprisingly, a lack of resources and funding, particularly in the form of support staff, can make it difficult to keep a partnership going very long.

Mission and Goals

The partnership must have a clear purpose in order to motivate people to get involved. Moreover, the mission should be achievable, because if people think the goal is unrealistic they may see little benefit in working towards it.

Tangible Results

Progress towards achieving the goals of the partnership will become evident when the group moves beyond mere organizational activities and begins producing tangible results. In the long run, of course, determining what constitutes "success" is up to the group; success can, however, be measured using a variety of more objective performance indicators.[§] Remember: if partners are repeatedly subjected to boring meetings, or if it seems as though nothing is being accomplished, interest will diminish and members may disengage.

Goodwill

Maintaining positive relationships among partnership members can be complicated by a variety of issues, such as competing interests or concerns about confidentiality. Educating partners about the operation and realities of member businesses can build respect and trust. For example, police who are frustrated by the reluctance of business owners to aid in the prosecution of employee thieves or shoplifters might benefit from knowing that this reluctance stems from the fact that aiding in criminal prosecutions often costs businesses more than does doing nothing at all.

§ Examples of these performance indicators, and how to measure them, are given in the *Assessing Responses to Problems: An Introductory Guide for Police Problem-Solvers* guide in this series, as well as in other problem-specific guides.

It is also important to address issues that concern many or most partnership members. If problems are defined by part of the group (e.g., by the police only) rather than the group as a whole, there will be little incentive for the businesses to continue their involvement. Balancing the competing agendas of the various partners is essential to the long-term viability of the partnership.

Early Successes

Positive early results will generate excitement and increase the likelihood of continued member involvement. In addition, publicizing these successes can cause other potential partners to support or to join the group. Conversely, if partnerships are to carry on past early successes, it is important to have more distant goals to work towards. Remember, however, that where a partnership is formed to address a specific problem there may be little reason to keep the group together once the problem has been solved.[62]

Effective Partnership Strategies and Activities

These examples of successful police partnerships with small business come from the Safer Cities program in England. Whether these potential responses will work for you depends of course on the specific problem you are dealing with, and what you learned in your analysis. Other Problem-Oriented Policing Guides include more ideas for preventing crimes that concern businesses.

Security Upgrades

Installing target-hardening measures, including roller shutters, alarm systems, security lighting, window grills, bars, and mesh, and closed circuit television had an immediate and substantial impact on burglary victimization in a variety of businesses in two cities in England. Businesses that had been victimized previously tended to participate in this program, which reimbursed participants for part of the cost of the various remedial measures undertaken. Of these, shutters and alarms seemed to be the most effective.[63] Also in England, pharmacies that were deemed by the police to have adequate target-hardening measures in place were much less likely to be burglarized than were other pharmacies.[64]

Targeting Repeat Victimization

Once a business has been burglarized, it has a much greater risk of being victimized a second time. This risk is highest in the first few months after the initial victimization.[65] Therefore, where limited resources are available for crime prevention, it makes sense to focus on businesses that have already been victimized. Identifying these businesses entails systematically reviewing incident reports and separating business cases from residential ones. Supplying high-risk businesses with advice about target-hardening measures and supporting their installation is likely to reduce burglaries significantly.

Strategies of Unknown Effectiveness

Storefront Substations

Storefront police substations are typically located in business areas such as shopping malls or commercial strips. Substations can be staffed by sworn officers or volunteers. Although substations primarily serve the needs of residents, their location allows for contact between police and businesses, which often provide space, furnishings, or other needed supplies. In Houston, Texas, for example, businesses donated furniture and a sign; in Anchorage, Alaska, a grocery store set aside part of its warehouse for a substation.

Storefront substations may not be a particularly effective way of reaching citizens or businesspeople or of improving problem-solving capabilities. One study found that African-Americans, renters, young people, those with little education, those with low income, and short-term residents were unlikely to have used the services of a storefront substation or even to have heard of its presence in the neighborhood. In addition, substations had little apparent impact on businesspeople in terms of victimization or concern about crime, although there were improvements in levels of fear about personal victimization and in evaluations of police service.[66] Where storefront substations do not make a big difference for businesses in the area, it may be because businesses generally have fairly routine contact with police; a new storefront substation will not change that.

Remember, however, that a storefront substation can lead retailers to report victimizations to the police more often than they would if there was no substation. On the surface, this will make it appear that crime in the area has increased, while in fact all that has changed is the level of reporting.[67]

Uncovering this explanation for the change in crime rates requires conducting a survey of businesses to assess whether the likelihood of reporting has increased.

Storefront substations can benefit businesses indirectly as well. For example, police in Queensland, Australia found that a high proportion of residents responded favorably to storefront substations in shopping malls because they felt safer while shopping and thought the police were more accessible.[68] If people feel safer shopping in an area, they are more likely to shop there, thus increasing patronage, sales, and revenue.

The success of a storefront substation depends upon the type of activities conducted and the manner in which the substation is run. For example, substations are not good assignments for officers who require a great deal of supervision or who are not highly self-motivated. It is also important to ensure that substation officers feel a sense of ownership, perhaps through involvement in its planning. Frequent turnover of staff should be avoided.[69]

Business Police Academies

The business police academy (BPA) is an innovative approach designed to encourage the exchange of information between businesses and police and to build mutual understanding and trust. The BPA is modeled after the citizen police academy (CPA), but the two differ in several key respects. First, while CPA students are drawn from a wide range of citizens, the BPA specifically targets businesspeople, be they in retail, service, banking, or other industries. Second, unlike the wide-ranging CPA curriculum, BPA curriculum concentrates intensely on the prevention of and responses to property and violent crimes that affect businesses. Third, CPA curriculum

is typically taught by police officers, whereas the specialized nature of BPA curriculum sometimes requires instructors from outside the department, such as loss prevention experts from retail businesses or government employees who work to combat counterfeiting.[70]

Business police academies are inexpensive to establish and operate; the cost can be covered by sponsoring businesses. The benefit to the police of organizing a BPA makes it a reasonable use of resources. Because BPA students are educated about the costs of crime against business, they should be more willing to report crimes and to aid in criminal investigations. Although there may be an initial increase in reported crimes, learning about prevention strategies should reduce real levels of victimization over time.[71]

Business police academies have recently started in Honolulu, Hawaii,§ St. Louis, Missouri,§§ Harrisburg, Pennsylvania,§§§ and London, Ontario.§§§§

Business Watch

Business watch is a variation on the neighborhood or block watch program, except that the participants are business owners and employees rather than residents and homeowners. Research on the effectiveness of residential watch programs is not promising.[72] When they are effective, they tend to be in areas where there is already an underlying level of community cohesion. Neighborhoods that could benefit most are so disorganized that it is extremely difficult to get the program going.[73] There is little evidence that business watch programs are any more effective than neighborhood watch programs; and like neighborhood programs, business watches are hard to establish.[74] Before embarking on a business watch program, specific objectives should be laid out and crime prevention goals should be directed at a specific type

§ See www.starbulletin.com/2003/09/11/business/engle.html.

§§ See www.co.st-louis.mo.us/scripts/PD/press/view.cfm?ViewMe=5033.

§§§ See www.harrisburgpa.gov/pressReleases/prArchives/2003/11/20031114_citizensPoliceAcd.html.

§§§§ See www.oldeastvillage.com/bpa/main/. A model curriculum for an eight-week BPA offered by the London, Ontario police is available at www.oldeastvillage.com/bpa/courseOutline/week1.php.

of crime. While business watch can be useful because it can increase communication among members,[75] after a program is established, its long-term viability can be threatened by limited financial resources, time constraints, and low levels of enthusiasm and involvement.[76] Evaluators of a business watch program in Australia found that most participants were unaware of the program or its components and thought it was ineffective in reducing crime or fear of crime. The researchers concluded that the program failed because of lack of enthusiasm, poor publicity, and a lack of clear objectives.[77] One approach that may work better is "cocooning": when a business is burglarized, neighboring businesses are encouraged to be especially vigilant over that property for several weeks, until the risk of repeat victimization declines.[78]

Police Inspections[§]

Most jurisdictions have ordinances that require food service businesses to be inspected regularly by the health department as a condition of receiving or renewing their licenses. Other types of businesses are also subject to regular inspection as a condition of operation. Often, police departments are involved in these inspections, although typically they are concerned with issues such as the impact of special events on traffic or whether the operator of a business is of good moral character.

As of means of encouraging reluctant businesses to adopt crime prevention strategies, an ordinance could be enacted that ties business licensing to site inspection by police. A point system could be used to rate the extent to which the business has followed the guidelines for reducing and preventing crime in and around its premises. Other relevant factors could include the number of false alarms (see the *False Burglar Alarms* Problem-Oriented Policing Guide for more information) and the number of calls-for-service. Businesses

§ Thanks to the anonymous reviewer who suggested the idea of police inspection and certification for licensing of businesses.

that meet the standards and have licenses granted or renewed could be required to post their certification in a prominent location.

Where such an ordinance is not feasible, it may be possible to establish a voluntary certification program. In conjunction with the program, a media campaign could identify businesses that are good community citizens or partners in crime prevention and could encourage customers to frequent such businesses.

Some years ago, Bellevue, Washington implemented a cooperative program that involved the insurance industry, local businesses, and police. Business owners were invited to a one-day seminar on crime prevention presented by the police, followed by on-site security audits of the retail establishments. Participation in the program increased dramatically after an economic incentive was offered: insurance companies began offering up to 25 percent lower rates based upon efforts to implement crime prevention measures.[79]

Conclusion

Traditional methods of dealing with business crime have not always been effective, as is evidenced by the extremely high level of business victimization. A problem-solving approach involving business partnerships holds a great deal of promise. Partnerships can be small and short-lived, with the goal of addressing one particular problem, or can comprise many partners, address complex social issues, and function for an extended period of time.

Although this guide provides guidelines for creating and sustaining partnerships, it bears repeating that partnerships should not be formed just for the sake of having a partnership. This does not mean that the police should not communicate with businesses, as there are many legitimate reasons to do so. These relationships and communications, although not formally structured, can be an important part of an overall community policing strategy. However, if problem-oriented policing is the underlying reason for the partnership, then there should be a specific issue for the partnership to address.

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Sharon Chamard is assistant professor at the Justice Center at the University of Alaska Anchorage. She was previously a research consultant for the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing and a research associate at the Crime Prevention Extension Service at Rutgers University. Her research has been published in the *Canadian Journal of Criminology*, the *Security Journal*, and the *Alaska Justice Forum*. She is currently co-editor of the *Western Criminology Review*. She received a bachelor's degree in sociology from Saint Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and master's and doctorate degrees in criminal justice from the School of Criminal Justice at Rutgers University-Newark.

Recommended Readings

- ***A Police Guide to Surveying Citizens and Their Environments***, Bureau of Justice Assistance, 1993. This guide offers a practical introduction for police practitioners to two types of surveys that police find useful: surveying public opinion and surveying the physical environment. It provides guidance on whether and how to conduct cost-effective surveys.

- ***Assessing Responses to Problems: An Introductory Guide for Police Problem-Solvers***, by John E. Eck (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2001). This guide is a companion to the *Problem-Oriented Guides for Police* series. It provides basic guidance to measuring and assessing problem-oriented policing efforts.

- ***Conducting Community Surveys***, by Deborah Weisel (Bureau of Justice Statistics and Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 1999). This guide, along with accompanying computer software, provides practical, basic pointers for police in conducting community surveys. The document is also available at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs.

- ***Crime Prevention Studies***, edited by Ronald V. Clarke (Criminal Justice Press, 1993, et seq.). This is a series of volumes of applied and theoretical research on reducing opportunities for crime. Many chapters are evaluations of initiatives to reduce specific crime and disorder problems.

- ***Excellence in Problem-Oriented Policing: The 1999 Herman Goldstein Award Winners.*** This document produced by the National Institute of Justice in collaboration with the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services and the Police Executive Research Forum

provides detailed reports of the best submissions to the annual award program that recognizes exemplary problem-oriented responses to various community problems. A similar publication is available for the award winners from subsequent years. The documents are also available at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij.

- ***Not Rocket Science? Problem-Solving and Crime Reduction***, by Tim Read and Nick Tilley (Home Office Crime Reduction Research Series, 2000). Identifies and describes the factors that make problem-solving effective or ineffective as it is being practiced in police forces in England and Wales.

- ***Opportunity Makes the Thief: Practical Theory for Crime Prevention***, by Marcus Felson and Ronald V. Clarke (Home Office Police Research Series, Paper No. 98, 1998). Explains how crime theories such as routine activity theory, rational choice theory and crime pattern theory have practical implications for the police in their efforts to prevent crime.

- ***Problem Analysis in Policing***, by Rachel Boba (Police Foundation, 2003). Introduces and defines problem analysis and provides guidance on how problem analysis can be integrated and institutionalized into modern policing practices.

- ***Problem-Oriented Policing***, by Herman Goldstein (McGraw-Hill, 1990, and Temple University Press, 1990). Explains the principles and methods of problem-oriented policing, provides examples of it in practice, and discusses how a police agency can implement the concept.

- ***Problem-Oriented Policing and Crime Prevention***, by Anthony A. Braga (Criminal Justice Press, 2003). Provides a thorough review of significant policing research about problem places, high-activity offenders, and repeat victims, with a focus on the applicability of those findings to problem-oriented policing. Explains how police departments can facilitate problem-oriented policing by improving crime analysis, measuring performance, and securing productive partnerships.

- ***Problem-Oriented Policing: Reflections on the First 20 Years***, by Michael S. Scott (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2000). Describes how the most critical elements of Herman Goldstein's problem-oriented policing model have developed in practice over its 20-year history, and proposes future directions for problem-oriented policing. The report is also available at www.cops.usdoj.gov.

- ***Problem-Solving: Problem-Oriented Policing in Newport News***, by John E. Eck and William Spelman (Police Executive Research Forum, 1987). Explains the rationale behind problem-oriented policing and the problem-solving process, and provides examples of effective problem-solving in one agency.

- ***Problem-Solving Tips: A Guide to Reducing Crime and Disorder Through Problem-Solving Partnerships*** by Karin Schmerler, Matt Perkins, Scott Phillips, Tammy Rinehart and Meg Townsend. (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 1998) (also available at www.cops.usdoj.gov). Provides a brief introduction to problem-solving, basic information on the SARA model and detailed suggestions about the problem-solving process.

- ***Situational Crime Prevention: Successful Case Studies***, Second Edition, edited by Ronald V. Clarke (Harrow and Heston, 1997). Explains the principles and methods of situational crime prevention, and presents over 20 case studies of effective crime prevention initiatives.

- ***Tackling Crime and Other Public-Safety Problems: Case Studies in Problem-Solving***, by Rana Sampson and Michael S. Scott (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2000) (also available at www.cops.usdoj.gov). Presents case studies of effective police problem-solving on 18 types of crime and disorder problems.

- ***Using Analysis for Problem-Solving: A Guidebook for Law Enforcement***, by Timothy S. Bynum (U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, 2001). Provides an introduction for police to analyzing problems within the context of problem-oriented policing.

- ***Using Research: A Primer for Law Enforcement Managers***, Second Edition, by John E. Eck and Nancy G. LaVigne (Police Executive Research Forum, 1994). Explains many of the basics of research as it applies to police management and problem-solving.

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Date: March 15, 2006