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NEW ZEALAND
POLICE
Ngā Pirihimana o Aotearoa

CASE STUDY

New Zealand Police case study

Debbie Francis, April 2020



On March 15, 2019 a mass shooting took place at the Al Noor Mosque in Christchurch during Friday prayers followed shortly after by another attack at the Linwood Islamic Centre. The attacks killed 51 people and injured 49 in the deadliest shooting in New Zealand's history.

A few days later, a photograph of a young female officer guarding the Memorial Park Cemetery in Christchurch made headlines around the world. Constable Michelle Evans was photographed wearing a Calvin Klein scarf as a hijab, a red rose on her stab vest and a Bushmaster semi-automatic rifle in her hands. The image of Constable Evans showed strength, dignity and compassion, something New Zealand Police have been commended on by their colleagues and Governments around the world¹.

In how many countries do we see such compassion demonstrated by police? Regrettably, more often than not, we hear stories of police brutality followed by public outrage and community riots.

Despite such trends affecting policing jurisdictions around the world, the New Zealand Police have managed to achieve the opposite. For example, in spite of a massive armed presence around the country in the aftermath of the shooting, New Zealanders' trust and confidence in police increased to over 80%.

So how did New Zealand Police not only get to the point where their narrative was so positive in comparison to the prevailing one, but demonstrate such exceptional care of the community all the while minimising disquiet amongst those the gunman affected?

This is not just a story about tactical policing but a story about the extraordinary impact effective leadership combined with a purpose-built transformation framework can have on modern policing.

The policing response in the aftermath of the shootings was a consequence of an organisation that has embraced the principles of a performance transformation programme led by Commissioner Mike Bush following his appointment in April 2014.

The Road to 2019

In 2009, I was a consulting partner at PwC New Zealand specialising in 'people and change'.

At the time, transformation projects were in vogue. However, despite the trend, the vast majority of projects foundered against organisational resistance and entrenched practices. Further to this, many chief executives who embarked on such programmes tried to drive change from charismatic oratory in order to achieve quick wins rather than embedding a process that stands the test of time.

1. The photo was taken by a photographer for Stuff. See <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/christchurch-shooting/111491996/hijab-wearing-police-officers-photo-makes-powerful-statement-in-wake-of-christchurch-mosque-shootings>

Around this time, I gained New Zealand Police as a client and although there was a need for them to change, they had a lot to deal with.

- The Global Financial Crisis was forcing the then Government to drive a value for money approach to public agencies which the Police needed to support to help balance the books.
- Justice sector cost pressures had grown by 80% in the preceding decade even though the Government wanted to continue to be strong on crime.
- Internally, Police were still reeling from the 2004-2007 Commission of Inquiry into Police Conduct which had impacted public trust and confidence.

So, in I went to help the Police executive identify opportunities to improve service and reduce costs. We organised initiatives into workstreams, built business cases to satisfy Treasury officials and wrote Cabinet papers.

I facilitated focus groups, went on 'ride-alongs' and listened to the front line. Paradoxes emerged which brought home to me just how challenging it would be to transform such a large, complex and highly scrutinised organisation:

- Constabulary staff said they had joined police to make a difference but were drowning in bureaucracy.
- They said that while the culture had threads of community care, their interest was to 'catch the bad guys' to get them off the street.
- While crime and crash statistics were slowly improving, the public didn't 'feel safe' hence New Zealanders' demands on policing services were increasing.
- Around the executive table, old school employment arrangements meant police leaders struggled to improve efficiencies and engagement with their staff.

Shortly after I started, a newly appointed District Commander named Mike Bush returned from a

stint offshore. He talked about the original architect of today's policing; 19th century UK politician Sir Robert Peel who believed policing lay in the way police officers interacted with the community. He also talked about the need to develop a fundamentally different operating model than the ones being applied globally if New Zealand was to avoid the risk of losing the public's trust and confidence as was happening in most jurisdictions. In essence, he talked about the need to transform Police if it was to deliver the outcomes the nation was looking for.

Although DC Bush talked a passionate game, I was doubtful it could be done. After all, for all the talk around the world, other policing jurisdictions had been unable to achieve such changes despite the fact they had far more cash and resources to play with.

Not long into Bush's stint in Counties Manukau (New Zealand's most troubled district in the county at the time), he started to think about how he could drive the performance and cultural change he knew he would need to make if they were to realise the outcomes they were after. After a number of conversations, the name Craig Steel, an Auckland-based performance specialist and the Principal of Steel Performance Solutions (now Vantaset), came up.

Bush invited Steel to meet with him to talk through his aspirations to transform the performance of his District Leadership Team (DLT) as he knew the change would need to be led from the top to work. Steel talked through his model for change which immediately resonated with Bush giving him the confidence to proceed with a meeting.

Steel then met with Bush's DLT to step them through his model after which they elected to proceed with a pilot programme. Within three months of its introduction, Bush cascaded Steel's process out to 25 of his top Inspectors and Senior Sergeants. Within 12 months, Bush had lifted the performance and engagement of his District from the lowest in the country to the highest.

Following Bush's promotion to Deputy Commissioner of Operations, he trialed Steel's

programme in two other Districts (Auckland City District and the Southern Police District) to the same effect, i.e. both experienced a significant uplift in staff performance and engagement proving to Bush that his model worked irrespective of the region or demographic.

At the same time, Bush's impact on the Counties Manukau District, followed by his success in aligning the country's eleven other districts as Deputy Commissioner of Operations, led to his appointment as Commissioner.

Shortly after taking over the role, Bush invited Steel to facilitate a strategic review of Police with his newly appointed Executive Team to help them identify the change he wanted to pursue. As part of the appointments process, Bush made it clear to his executive that if they were to deliver on the role they had been given, driving change had to be their No 1 priority.

Since taking office, I have watched Bush lead what numerous experts have acknowledged as the most comprehensive policing transformation programme in the world. A process that has not only been described as the greatest Policing change ever undertaken but one of the most successful Government transformations the world has witnessed in a generation².

Although this document is a case study on the deployment of SPS' Performance Transformation Programme in Police, it is also a demonstration of what an organisation can achieve when led from the front and supported by a performance framework.

Since Bush deployed SPS' transformation programme, crime has dropped across New Zealand from a respectable 37% in the 2017/18 year

to 29% in 12 months. At the same time, 81% of Kiwis surveyed now have trust and confidence in Police up from 56% in 2008. Further to this, 90% of those surveyed reported being 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the policing services they received; a number many times greater than those enjoyed by similar nations. With results like these, the New Zealand Police is now arguably the most advanced policing organisation in the world³.

During my time as a consultant, I've worked with many great people and successful organisations in both the public and private sectors but of all of them, I find police's transformation programme to be the most ambitious and compelling exercise in change leadership I have ever witnessed.

How to read this case study

This paper is not intended to be read as a definitive history of New Zealand Police's transformation journey as there are a number of comprehensive documents which have been produced for this purpose, and nor is it intended as an academic analysis⁴.

This report is based on my experience of working with Police as a consultant over the period 2009-2020, and, more specifically, on the impact SPS' Performance Transformation Programme - known as the Police High Performance Framework or PHPF for short - has had on Police.

Specifically, this paper focuses on the impact the 5 'Frameworks' that make up SPS' exceptionally crafted Performance Transformation Programme have had on Police⁵.

Any enquiry about the PHPF or whether it could be applied in other organisations should be directed to Vantaset - www.vantaset.com

2 McKinsey & Company's report 'Government productivity unlocking the 35 trillion opportunity' April 2017: <https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey/Industries/Public%20and%20Social%20Sector/Our%20Insights/The%20opportunity%20in%20government%20productivity/Government-Productivity-Unlocking-the-3-5-Trillion-Opportunity-Full-report.pdf>. 3 For further insights, see the analysis by a recent Fulbright scholar who has studied the approaches taken by New Zealand Police: <https://www.fulbright.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/A-Daniels-Shpall-AxfordFellow2019-Report-JULY2019.pdf>

4. The most useful and comprehensive of these is The Policing Excellence closure Report, which can be found on the New Zealand Police website at: [police.govt.nz/about-us/publication/policing-excellence-transformation-new-zealand-police-2009-2014](https://www.police.govt.nz/about-us/publication/policing-excellence-transformation-new-zealand-police-2009-2014). Also helpful is: <https://www.police.govt.nz/about-us/publication/policing-excellence-overview-30-june-2013>. For information on Police's more recent changes, go to: <https://www.police.govt.nz/about-us/programmes-and-initiatives/transforming-police-service-delivery>.

5. The Police High Performance Framework, or PHPF, is the creation of Steel Performance Solutions. See <https://steel-ps.com/about>. Police commissioned it to help them drive the transformation of New Zealand Police.

Public Tender

Following the pilot programmes Bush ran in the Counties Manukau, Auckland City and Southern Districts, his executive talked about the possibility of extending Steel's programme or something similar out to their eight National Service Centres and twelve Police Districts – essentially to align all 14,000 staff working across hundreds of disparate workgroups.

Although nothing as ambitious as this had ever been attempted, Bush believed they needed to introduce something substantial if they were to change the way they worked as a business.

After filing an Expression of Interest (EOI), Steel Performance Solutions (SPS) were found to be the only company in Australasia (and perhaps globally) that had a process they could introduce that would not only reach all 14,000 employees but impact them in a way that would help them transform the services they delivered across the country.

After carrying out the necessary due diligence, the panel awarded SPS the tender to deliver their Performance Transformation Programme out to the entire organisation ahead of the cohort of established global consultancy firms much to the surprise of the market.

Programme Structure

Because SPS' Performance Transformation Programme is a leader-led process, Steel's team helped the Police form a Governance Group and Programme Team to oversee the deployment of the programme including the appointment of 130 staff who would be trained to act as Subject Matter Experts to support the delivery of the programme across the country.

Once the structure was in place, Steel facilitated the Executive Workshops to ready them for the deployment of his programme followed by their 12 District Leadership Teams, 8 National Service Centre Teams, the Royal New Zealand Police College (RNZPC) and their senior HR Leaders so they could align their HR systems with it.

6. See a recently-updated iteration at <https://www.police.govt.nz/about-us/publication/our-business>.

Programme Deployment

The deployment of SPS's programme is a thorough and well-planned process. It includes the deployment of one 'framework' every six months until, eventually, all five frameworks are in place. Each framework is also cascaded down from the top to ensure the intent remains true to form and can be correctly embedded at every level of the business.

The F1 Strategic Framework

The PHPF started with the formation of what SPS refers to as the organisation's Strategy Poster; a cornerstone document they help customers prepare to capture the essence of their strategy in a way that can be brought to life across every level of the organisation.

Police's deceptively simple but immensely sophisticated 'Our Business' poster has been heralded as one of the most advanced articulations of organisational strategy ever prepared; so much so it was held up at the United Nations assembly as an example of what a world-leading strategy for Government looks like⁶.



By introducing a Strategy Poster up front, Steel says it clarifies the organisation's aspirations or intent in a way that makes sense to staff.

'Ensuring staff know why New Zealand Police exists is critical to their success and the success of the organisation' says Steel. For this reason, getting their purpose right was vital as he said it would inform every aspect of the process while maximising people's sense of relevance to the organisation. By helping Bush embed police's 'Strategic Aspirations' as Steel puts it, it would ensure their strategy endured over time while helping staff see the importance of their work.

From the outset, Bush was able to ground the PHPF in the historical roots of policing and why most staff joined Police thereby nutshelling the 'why' in their strategy on a practical level. In other words, he positioned the PHPF as the mechanism to help his staff deliver on their purpose in the organisation which was to ensure everyone in New Zealand is safe and feels safe.

The top-down cascading nature of the PHPF⁷ allowed Bush to explain to his staff that his aspiration was to engage them in a process to help him transform the organisation so it was not only fit for purpose but reflected the aspirations of the New Zealand public.

While Bush used some of the models of police science, the main thing he did was apply the principles of SPS' people-centred performance-driven process that focused on empowering staff to deliver the outcomes they were after rather than simply following orders from above as is the case in most jurisdictions.

Further to this, he embraced their leader-led approach to ensure his leaders were empowered to own the outcomes in their workgroup rather than thinking it was simply about following orders⁸.

In pivoting to this new way of working, Bush led this change without a lot of top cover either politically

or from the then Police Executive. He also had the challenge of trying to convince his staff that the process he was using would work despite the fact it had never been applied by any other police force. However, as one manager told me:

'It felt so intuitively right to us as long serving cops as we knew we couldn't keep doing things the same old way and hoping for a different outcome.'

In the early days, the case for change was being described in largely deficit terms. Police had a trust and confidence problem. Internally staff were frustrated by clunky processes while the costs of the justice sector couldn't be sustained. They also had unhealthy elements in their culture that had been placed under the spotlight following the Commission of Inquiry.

Therefore, a critical aspect of the programme was the reorientation of the narrative from a 'police will never have enough staff to keep up with demand' to an aspirational vision of 'preventing crime and harm in our communities'. So although the issues were the same, the PHPF allowed Bush to reframe the way they approached it which helped him get his leaders on board with the change.

For example, rather than talk about cost pressures and bureaucracy, Bush focused on ensuring they used their resources to ensure everyone is safe and feels safe, a far cry from where most Policing jurisdictions are as it's all about being 'tough on crime' and having 'zero tolerance' to disorder.

Articulating a powerful 'why' that helps people feel their work has meaning is the most important factor in any transformation; hence it is forms a key part of SPS' purpose-driven process and their F1 Strategic Framework.

7. The Police High Performance Framework is the Police branded deployment of Steel Performance Solutions Performance Transformation Programme (see <https://www.steel-ps.com>)

8. There have been a number of public acknowledgments given to the positive impact Mike Bush has had during his time as a leader within New Zealand Police – for example, by Transparency International New Zealand (see <https://www.transparency.org.nz/culture-builder-a-bouquet-for-police-commissioner-mike-bush/>).

That said, I also see it as the most neglected aspect of organisational strategy as most are little more than branding straplines or fluffy statements rather than something that's visceral and deeply engaging for staff and their role in the organisation.

In short, Bush's application of the Strategic Framework allowed him to link his staff directly to the purpose of the organisation thereby making it real for everyone; he explained it this way:

“At the start, people thought we were bringing the programme in to try and change them rather than helping them transform the impact they had on their community.”⁹

Although translating this message through the various ranks was challenging, the Strategic Framework enabled Bush to connect every level of the organisation up to the Executive's vision for the business.

The F1 Game Plan

In my work as a strategic advisor, I see far too much emphasis on strategy being placed on voluminous and flashy corporate documents. What I call 'coffee table strategies' full of jargon that do absolutely nothing for those who are expected to deliver it.

However, SPS' simple plan on a page has been an absolute game-changer as it allowed Police to connect every person in the business up to the stuff that matters rather than ring fencing their responsibilities as conventional score-cards do.

The power of SPS F1 Strategic Framework (and Game Plan template) is that it demystifies the complicated matter of strategy so every person understands what success looks like in their role in a way they can comprehend.

Even in the early stages, it was striking to hear their new vision being spoken about in remarkably similar terms even though it wasn't embedded. The core

language Bush adopted ensured the change was made clear to all and meant something to everyone.

Although this is obviously critical, it's surprisingly difficult to get this level of alignment right. In fact, very few organisations ever reach the level of distilled strategic impact police have achieved using SPS Strategic Framework.

What it meant for leaders

Although police leaders have historically focused on the things they believe they should work on, the introduction of their Strategy Poster has enabled them to connect their people up to their reason for being thereby making it real for them. In fact, once it had been deployed, most cops who previously wouldn't be caught dead reading a strategy document or talking about it to staff saw it as the 'missing' link in their connection to the business.

On top of this, Bush positioned the deployment of the PHPF as the mechanism to help his staff excel as individual's which proved a lot easier than most imagined simply because Steel had proved his process at the highest level of international sport. In other words, the fact it had been used to help elite athletes win on the world stage meant that 'it must be good enough for us'.

This was important because the discretionary powers bestowed on police meant they often believe they can decide whether they use or do what's being asked or whether they sit it out. However, when they could see the benefits the PHPF would deliver, it became 'a no brainer' for them to use it.

The F2 Culture Framework

If the essence of strategy is widely neglected, so too is the understanding that strategy and culture are not separate things but equally critical aspects of the same thing.

By deploying SPS' Culture Framework, it creates the critical but rarely achieved link between an

9. From <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-and-social-sector/our-insights/transforming-policing-an-interview-with-mike-bush-new-zealands-police-commissioner>

organisation's culture and what it's trying to achieve as stated in its strategy.

The way SPS achieves this is by leveraging their 'Capability Model' to inform the application of every framework including their Culture Framework.

While every organisation knows culture is important, very few ever manage to highlight what it looks like let alone helping their people bring it to life in their workgroup hence it's typically seen as little more than a set of words on a wall (values).

The power of SPS' Culture Framework is it not only clarifies what 'culture' is, it shows people what a high-performance culture looks like in the context of the strategy and how to bring it to life in practice¹⁰.

In other words, the mindset model showed staff that 'who they are' would be critical to 'what they and the organisation achieved'. This unique approach enabled Bush to elevate people's importance to the business thereby demonstrating to staff that the organisation's culture is a consequence of them rather than something they're expected to abide by.

It's important to recognise that this new emphasis on culture was introduced into a police service still reeling from Dame Margaret Bazley's Commission of Inquiry into Police conduct. However, by focusing on their people's 'mindset', it allowed for much richer conversations as to how every person could improve the performance and culture of Police.

In my experience, leaders rarely understand how to create these connections which is why SPS' Frameworks are so powerful as they are designed to provide organisations with a mechanism to realise the changes they're after rather than trying to enforce change on the business as conventional approaches prescribe.

As one might expect, I've never worked, as manager or consultant, on a transformation project where people haven't complained about

change fatigue driven by a flawed premise that there must eventually be an 'end to it'. However, by repositioning the narrative, the PHPF enabled Bush to anchor the change as an aspiration to deliver better outcomes for New Zealanders. As a result, the PHPF gave leaders the ability to talk about the change as something they were doing for the benefit of their community, hence they embraced it rather than wanting to end it. Further to this, it gave police a consistent north star as it allowed them to normalise the idea of striving to deliver ever better outcomes to those they were there to serve.

As Bush says, such continuity and firmness of focus requires immense discipline and belief by leaders but by repurposing the role of leaders which the PHPF does, our people understand they are there to help us deliver the change we're promising our communities.

The cultural transformation

Translating values from a 'poster on the wall' into changed behaviours on the ground takes more than just a well facilitated and inclusive process. As many writers on organisational culture have noted, the slightest dissonance between leader behaviours and espoused organisational values has the effect of damaging the entirety of the change programme.

For this reason, SPS' Culture Framework includes a culture tool known as the 'Characteristics of a High Performing Team' which helps staff understand what a high-performance culture looks like as well as giving them the tools to assess themselves against it. This places the ownership of culture in the hands of everyone which allows organisations to transfer the responsibility for bringing it to life to each and every workgroup.

By deploying the Culture Framework, staff could see the benefits the adoption of SPS culture tools would have on them and their impact on their community making the change not only easier to visualise, but the right and obvious thing to do.

10. This came about following Steel's research with elite sports teams where he identified what he refers to as the (4) consistently identifiable characteristics of the world's best teams.

A mistake I often see in action-oriented organisations such as police, is to take a rational or intellectual approach to cultural change, however, people won't change just because leaders tell them to. They will only change when they believe in the cause and see those above doing the same.

Throughout this journey, leaders at all levels were taught how to apply SPS' Culture Framework to connect their people's heads and hearts to the purpose of the programme and, ultimately, the intent of police.

The power of empowerment

The most difficult group to engage in any change is the middle. In the case of police, this was the ranks of sergeants and senior sergeants, and to some extent their inspectors. From the earliest stage of the journey, it was understood that sergeants had the ability to make or break the programme given the majority held the view that you shouldn't "listen to the BS that comes out of NHQ".

However, by deploying the SPS Leadership Framework, it redefined the purpose of leadership for every leader in the business which allowed them to move beyond their view that they were there to 'protect their people from the organisation' to 'the enablers of their success in the organisation'.

The F3 Leadership Framework

Prior to the implementation of the PHPF, it was not uncommon to hear some in police say, 'just tell me what you want me to do, boss, and I'll do it.'

Whilst, on one level, this reflected respect for leadership, it also reflected a sense of powerlessness as people were simply deferring their responsibility to their manager rather than thinking about what they needed to do to deliver the agreed outcomes.

The intent behind the PHPF is to empower staff by connecting them to the intent of the organisation

so they can make the difference. For some, this appeared to be a bridge too far, however, they found people became so committed to the cause that they naturally wanted to help them deliver the outcomes they were looking for across the country rather than trying to manage them as had been the norm.

That said, Police didn't embark on the programme lightly. There were risks associated with changing the management styles embedded in the organisation and although they didn't always get it right, the benefits, in terms of both community outcomes and staff performance and engagement, have been enormous.

The leadership transformation

The deployment of SPS' Leadership Framework has enabled the organisation to align everyone with their intent meaning every level has become committed to improving outcomes for New Zealanders.

To embed the changes, they had to get their people to see their leader was there to help them deliver the outcomes they were striving for rather than just managing their activities as they had done in the past.

Although SPS' Leadership Framework is powerful, it doesn't focus on style or charisma as talked about by most of the change management gurus. Instead, it teaches leaders how to enable their people to succeed using their performance frameworks, however, because managers could see the benefits the programme offered, it took on a life of its own.

Investing in Leaders

Police realised early on that one of the powerful differentiators of the SPS programme was that it was a 'leader-led' process rather than focusing on structural changes or change management to achieve it.

As a result, police were able to use their sizable leadership cohort to drive the programme rather than consultants who would have otherwise marginalised them. This gave them the confidence to invest in the process as they knew it would help them realise the outcomes they were after in their respective workgroups.

In addition to this, it provided them with a Competency Framework allowing the programme to inform every facet of their leadership training and people development to help them become a more purpose-driven organisation.

As Bush stated, the deployment of SPS' Leadership Framework has, for the first time, showed police leaders what leadership is about and how to do it rather than it being about rank and control. Today, every leader in police knows they are there to enable their people to deliver the outcomes police are promising New Zealanders; hence the astonishing level of support they have gathered from the deployment of the programme.

The F4 Capability Framework

Although all of SPS Frameworks have been 'transformational', Bush says the one staff rave about is their Capability Framework.

What the Capability Framework does is give people the tools to win; to help them gain a larger vision of themselves so they can have a greater impact on the organisation.

In essence, the F4 Capability Framework gives people the tools to perform to their potential using the technology Steel developed to help athletes win on the world stage.

The capability transformation

The introduction of the F4 Capability Framework allowed Police to focus their attention on helping their people be their best in the context of the strategy rather than just trying to force more out of them as had been the norm for decades.

Although it took time for people to realise its potential, the impact it has had means staff now feel 'entrusted' to deliver the outcomes the organisation is after rather than assuming it's about seeking directives from above or an effort to squeeze more out of them.

From HR to High-Performance

In 2009, the police HR function was focused on managing the many complexities arising from the arcane terms and conditions of Police's collective employment agreements which had acted as a handbrake on change.

With the deployment of the PHPF, Bush has been able to transform the purpose of HR so they can focus on their people and how they deliver their services rather than simply trying to manage the fallout as had been the case in the past.

By applying the PHPF as a business-wide High-Performance Framework, Bush has been able to integrate their organisational development initiatives and employee touchpoints in the Employee Life Cycle into a coherent system people trust which has allowed him to better manage the organisation's relationship with the unions. In fact, prior to the PHPF, the relationship with their member organisations focussed on wage bargaining whereas today, it's about helping their people succeed throughout every stage of their career in police.

The F5 Performance Management Framework

Like most organisations, police employees' discomfort with performance management systems meant there were a number of hurdles they needed to work through before they could introduce SPS' Performance Management Framework.

Most notable of all was explaining the difference between their F5 Framework and conventional systems. As Steel says most performance management systems are compliance-based processes that do nothing for those they're supposedly there to support but instead, they tend to only ever be used by managers to help them get people out when things go wrong.

However, unlike conventional systems, SPS F5 Framework focuses on the opposite as it's designed to help people succeed so the organisation can deliver the outcomes it's after.

By applying the Performance Management Framework, police have seen a significant increase in their people's support of the process as they see it as a commitment to their success rather than a mechanism that's designed to judge them.

Having developed the basis of his F5 Framework in sport, Steel is adamant that if an organisation is to excel, it has to figure out how it can help its people be their best, not look for a way to better manage them.

To ensure the Framework delivers on its promise, it's applied as an Annual Performance Cycle that uses the tools deployed during the previous frameworks. This includes the use of the Game Plan from F1 as a Performance Agreement followed by the Culture, Leadership and Capability Frameworks to inform people's Individual Development Plans. Once in place, leaders have regular Progress Reviews with each of their direct reports to ensure they're delivering the outcomes the business is after followed by a formal Performance Review at

the end of the year to clarify how each person went and what the opportunities are for them to progress next year.

Driving accountability and results

From the beginning, the PHPF emphasised the importance of leaders owning the outcomes rather than trying to socialise lofty ideas. Many organisations are littered with plans that lack meaningful targets which is why the PHPF focussed on the community and organisational benefits from the outset.

Everyone I interviewed for this case study told me that while they believed senior leaders had their backs, they also felt there was a much clearer expectation from everyone to deliver results following the deployment of the programme. This has meant that everyone knows what they need to do to play their part in transforming police for the betterment of the country and, ultimately, their community which is why they love it.

With the introduction of the Performance Management Framework, it's allowed police to keep their people's success at the forefront of the organisation for every leader knows, it's the impact they have on their people that will not only determine their success as a leader but enable the organisation to deliver the outcomes they've promised New Zealanders.

As one leader recently said "Introducing the PHPF is the best thing police have ever done in my 35 years of policing."

Summary

While I have no doubt Commissioner Bush would have been successful with whatever approach he took, the Police High Performance Framework (PHPF), with its '5F' dimensions gave him a platform to transform every facet of the business hence it's talked about as the 'golden thread'.

By using the 5 Frameworks, it has allowed Bush to connect his 14,000 staff with his vision of ensuring everyone in New Zealand is safe and feels safe.

Further to this, it has allowed his executive to drive the change deeper into the business so leaders at every level can apply it. It has also allowed them to adopt a proven approach to performance so everyone has a common view of leadership and what high-performance looks like.

As Bush describes it:

“The PHPF has enabled us to create the high-performance culture we needed to realise the change we were after. By applying the PHPF tools or frameworks, we’ve been able to equip our leaders with the tools to have the right conversations with their people so they in turn understand what they need to do to help us to deliver on our purpose. In other words, the PHPF has helped us become the police service we needed to be to realise our mission of making New Zealand the safest country.”

By deploying the 5 Frameworks, PHPF has enabled police to better align their strategy, culture, leadership, capability and performance management practices with the outcomes

highlighted in 'Our Business' – being the one-page articulation of their strategic plan. By aligning these core drivers of performance, the transformation has been future proofed so the benefits can be sustained irrespective of who's in command and the agenda of the Government of the day.

On the ground, the PHPF has taught leaders how to set direction for their staff as well as clarifying their purpose in the business so they know what's important to them. It has also given them the confidence to aim high and believe in their people thereby helping them be their best in their role all the while giving them access to advanced coaching techniques to support them.

The central idea is to ensure that every officer or employee in police has a deep understanding of the organisation's strategy (Our Business) and what it means allowing them to shift from their old prescriptive way of working to one that is principles-based and committed at every level to making New Zealand safer.

The idea of bundling up a whole bunch of big organisational touchpoints or practices into a single programme as SPS has done is a powerful one but one that's rarely ever considered let alone attempted.

Instead, organisations tend to assume the systems they've got for each, and the alignment they need to make them work, are there hence senior managers think it's as simple as coming up with the plan and then telling their people to deliver it. However, when it doesn't work, they can't understand why so they tell it louder, pushing against the business or what they see as disinterest from the troops. The net result being minimal levels of alignment and little if any change in people's engagement.

By deploying the PHPF, Bush has involved everyone in the purpose of the organisation leading staff to believe he brought it in to help them do what they signed up for when they joined the organisation. In this respect, the PHPF has given every member of police a practical and enduring framework to help them do what they're there to do.

True to form in SPS' limited use of consultants, PHPF is a genuine leader-led model as most of the training has been headed by police leaders with the support of facilitators or subject matter experts. As one sergeant told me:

'Although the penny didn't drop immediately, once we got it, it made so much sense which is why it's been such a game changer.'

The performance transformation

Police science is littered with theories of policing which are more or less informed by social sciences, all of which have tended to go in and out of fashion over the years.

One of the obvious strengths of the PHPF is that it wasn't a repackaged application of existing theories but a performance 'framework' based on decades of research with elite athletes and, ultimately, the tools Steel developed to help them succeed.

As a result, Steel and his team didn't go in and tell staff how to do their job but instead, they said to police that if you are serious about performance and want to help your people excel, these are the things you need to do.

This meant any objection to their theory was almost immediately addressed as staff could see they were experts in their field with a track record to prove it. It also meant they could facilitate conversations without having to come up with the answers as they weren't employed to tell them what to do - something all of the other tenderers said they would do.

Transformation programmes are marathons rather than sprints. People get tired. They want to slow the pace of change to catch their breath. It takes great skill to retain the cadence needed to advance while allowing sufficient time for reflection before pushing on with the next piece; all things SPS has managed to build into the deployment of their

Performance Transformation Programme.

By applying the principles of the PHPF, Bush and his team have driven a remarkable change across a large and complex organisation and yet the response from their staff has improved throughout the process rather than waned.

This balancing act of keeping the transformation journey fresh while remaining rooted in the big idea can only be achieved when the foundational work on vision and values etc is emotionally and intellectually powerful enough to go the distance.

Bush's commitment to aim high has brought fresh thinking and creativity to police. It has also built trust with stakeholders thereby giving his staff license to think outside the square for those in their community.

The next frontier for policing?

With Policing 2021 and the injection of extra officers, police are confident they are on their way to making New Zealand the safest country. It is already number 2 in the world, based on the latest Global Peace Index ratings¹¹.

Given the enduring power of police's vision and operating model, it is unlikely they will ever cease innovating. The journey to date has created arguably the most contemporary and responsive police service in the world whilst also offering powerful insights on how to drive change, not just for other policing services, but for leaders of all organisations.

The instructions are on the tin

As I said at the start of this case study, in 2009 I didn't think what Bush set out to achieve could be done but it has been done. While it has taken time, we can all look back in hindsight and see the power of the PHPF and its ability to help a capable and dedicated leader transform his organisation providing a repeatable formula for other leaders and organisations to follow.

11. See <http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2019/06/GPI-2019-web003.pdf>

From the beginning the recipe was there. There was, from the outset, a clear-sighted plan. The vision came first which inspired the rest. People and culture were kept at the centre and drove the results which were continually assessed.

When I asked Bush to describe the secret of his success in leading the change he said:

“It started with the purpose; a commitment to ensure people feel safe and are safe. We then reworked our operating framework to get ahead of demand so we could prevent crime from happening before it did. We then focused on the mindset, or culture, of our workforce given it was critical to the entire process which we then led with conviction.”

On one level, it's a simple recipe. The instructions are there on the tin. At another level, the way the formula has been constructed and deployment plan developed has required exceptional insight and skill but it works.

On this, I will leave Bush with the final word:

“From the old, prosecution focused police to the new prevention focussed organisation we are today has been ten years of unremitting effort. You can never relax. My advice to leaders embarking on such a journey? Listen to your people. Be present with them then deploy SPS' Performance Transformation Programme to help them realise the change you are after.”