

**EDWARD NORRIS  
AND THE BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT  
(A) AND (B)  
Teaching Note**

**Overview**

Edward Norris, an assistant commissioner of police in the New York City Police Department (NYPD) supervising over 40,000 officers and credited with assisting in the turnaround in New York's crime scene, is offered a similar job in Baltimore supervising 3,000 officers in the worst crime-laden city in America. The challenges include entrenched crime, racial tension, declining population, negative effects on business, under funding, critical media, low arrest rates, and a police department with underused resources and a dysfunctional organization and culture. In the (A) case students are asked to lay out their action plan for dealing with the situation and in so doing have to wrestle with most of the issues in managing large-scale organizational change.

The (B) case presents, for student evaluation, the comprehensive change action plan that Edward Norris instituted when he became Commissioner of Police for Baltimore. This tough, controversial former NYPD strategist exhibits numerous leadership principles as revealed in the case. He builds commitment from business leaders, community activists, fellow officers, and skeptical politicians under intense media scrutiny. Norris reorganizes the department, seeks to make cultural change, confronts malcontents, uses creative rewards, increases technology use, and adopts a policy of transparency with the media. Classroom discussion helps students see what it takes to develop an action plan that can and does deal with a seemingly overwhelming list of problems and issues.

This undisguised case offers students an opportunity to design and explore a large-scale organizational change initiative and develop a comprehensive action plan for managing it. Extensive video clips on CD-ROM disk format accompany the case and feature Edward Norris, several members of the Baltimore Police force, and a flamboyant community activist—Momma Myrt, for both student preparation and faculty use in class.

## **Topical Areas**

This case can be used to exemplify the challenges of managing and leading change. Issues that are discussed include: change implementation, change management, leadership, management skills, diversity, managerial style, nonprofit organizations, organizational change, organizational culture, organizational design, organizational objectives, organizational problems, and organizational structure. The case also lends itself to discuss racial issues and managing a diverse workforce.

## **Objectives**

- Explore large-scale organizational change initiatives
- Develop a detailed action plan
- Uncover change leadership principles
- Support and appreciate the context in which one does business
- Examine the challenges and rewards of managing diversity
- See a detailed action plan and compare with students' own

## **Timing**

The case has been taught very successfully as a two day series near the end of term. It was used as a closing stage on a leadership and managing change module; students said it was the best class of the term. The discussion provides an opportunity for students to implement their understanding of leading change and connect theory with application.

The case could be taught in one day by assigning the (A) case with the accompanying student video clips for advance reading and then introduce the main points of the B case toward the end of the class period. The two day approach would be to assign the (A) case with the accompanying student video clips for advance reading and then hand out the (B) case at the end of class for reading and discussion on day two. The (B) case is a detailed look at Norris' organizational changes so the second day's discussion would focus around students' assessment of his approach and a comparison of their own plans from day one. This teaching note is meant for a two day teaching plan.

## **Student Assignment**

### **Reading:**

Edward Norris and The Baltimore Police Department (A)

"Technology Accelerators" in *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...and Others Don't*. Jim Collins, New York: Harper Business, 2001. (Optional, no ancillary reading is necessary, but we've used this chapter with the case to encourage students to focus on how he upgraded the department's technology.)

**Study Questions (A) :**

1. Why is this case/situation important to business people?
2. Given the conditions in Baltimore at the time, would you have taken this job? Why or why not?
3. If you had taken the job, what would you have done and why? Be specific and detailed.

**Study Questions (B):**

1. If you were the mayor, a citizen, a business person, how would you assess Commissioner Norris' plan and performance?
2. How is Commissioner Norris behaving like a business person?
3. What lessons do you learn from this case about how to manage large-scale change?

**Time Allocation Plan for 90 minute Class**

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| 5 mins  | Introduction: Why would we study a police department to learn about managing change in businesses? |
| 10 mins | Would you have taken this job? Why or why not?   |
| 45 mins | If you had taken the job, what would you have done and why?  |
| 10 mins | How is Commissioner Norris behaving like a business person?  |
| 5 mins  | Assignment for tomorrow  |

## Analysis and Student Responses (A) Case

1. *Why is this case/situation important to business people? How many of you have ever been victim to a crime? What was it like?*

Asking how many students have ever been a victim of a crime is an excellent starting point to understand their own beliefs about police work and fighting crime. Using the side board to describe the events and how victims felt explores a deeper connection to the central issues in the case. Asking how many in the class know a cop will further explore the context this case takes place in. Frequently many students will be able to add very personal and interesting stories in each of these areas. Later, you can tie this into the discussion of police work as a career if it comes up.

A more reserved, distant approach would ask why the case is important to business people? It turns out that many of the problems in the police department are similar to large business organizations: motivating employees, moving workers forward to a common goal, managing reorganizing for better application of resources, public relations, employees and organizational change, applying technology accelerators, and making change in a high stakes environment are just a few. In our experience, the danger here is spending too much time telling stories and making connections. The goal is just to clarify for students why they would be studying a police department in a business school.

2. *Given the conditions in Baltimore at the time, would you have taken this job? Why or why not?*

The information from this question could evolve naturally into a listing of the problems which is an essential step for doing a detailed action plan. This is a suitable moment to take a vote and ask how many would accept the job offer. The goal is to set up the discussion to have students discuss the pros and cons of this position. In a class of approximately 60 students 25 answered yes, 23 maybe, and 12 said flat out no (a few abstainers). The yes people listed this as an opportunity to achieve something good with no real down side. Since most stakeholders mentioned in the case think Norris is going to fail, there is not much to lose if he takes the job and is unsuccessful at implementing change—they never thought he could. The move could also be viewed as natural step in Norris' career path since he would be taking charge of a large urban police department. In fact, some argue that only an outsider without loyalties inside the department could turn around the situation. Some students were swayed to the yes side with the prospect of Norris being able to help members of a police force that faced severe difficulties in their work. Others were tempted with the challenge of the competition between letting the villains win or putting the crooks out of business.

The maybe group wanted to know more about the Mayor's own agenda. Generally this crowd needed more commitment from superiors other than the mayor and more money. There was a tendency towards thinking this was only a setup for failure.

The 'not on your life' section listed the impact of being an outsider as too great of a handicap to achieve change. Being an outsider impacted Norris' ability to build trust and carried the heavy preconceived images of his being a NYPD cop so that building credibility would be very difficult. Many observed that a lack of support and a shaky system translated into no commitment both internally and externally. The lack of resources was on the top of most lists for saying no to the position. Some students noted that Collin's book, *Good to Great* suggested that good leaders came from inside the company.

3. *If you had taken the job, what would you have done and why? Be specific and detailed.*

This is where students should be able to strut their stuff and lay out an action plan for large scale organizational change. The three steps to action using a leadership point of view are i) see ii) understand iii) do. The seeing portion should be readily apparent from the questions asked above.

Recognizing the forces that affect the organization requires taking into account the broader issues. Often, students will jump from identifying the problems to the action steps they would take. They may need to be reminded that understanding how the organization got into the situation it currently is in needs to be digested. This analysis includes examining where to start, concerns, and the metrics used to determine success. A current analysis of conditions both internal and external to the organization could be laid out as well as how the organization might be affected if these were changed.

The video clips can be put into play as constituents and their issues are raised. For example when discussing public perception the *Meeting the Citizens* clips can be used.

Initiating action plans will include organization design changes like more standard operating procedures (i.e. vehicle inspections, standardized uniforms), breaking up the district structure, choosing different metrics to create a sense of urgency and support to make a change, forming a drug task force, shaping up political buy in and community support, changing the rotational policy, increasing technological capabilities, and seeking support from other law enforcement agencies.

Instructors will need to ask several questions during this period; what elements are missing, what needs more detail, what contingencies have been overlooked and how would you implement your plan. A special heads up should include what obstacles do you anticipate hitting?

At the end of the discussion hand out the (B) case. Direct students to come to the next class prepared to analyze and discuss what Commissioner Norris did while at the Baltimore Police Department.

Norris' Action Plan

- Developed a clear numerical crime picture
- Established standardized measures to gauge performance
- Set goals
- Raised E/T ratio, recruitment, and retention
- Removed the rotation policy
- Reassigned officers to direct crime fighting assignments
- Increased responsibility of commanding officers for crime statistics in their districts
- Rewarded districts that reduced crime numbers with newly painted police vehicles
- Involved outside enforcement agencies like housing police to discuss crime trends
- Mandated two officer patrols and improved police equipment
- Rewarded initiative, loyalty, and hard work
- Cleaned up backlog of arrest warrants
- Reorganized sector management
- Distributed detectives to each of the nine district offices
- Dealt with culture of vindictiveness through firing
- Increased technological capabilities
- Adopted policy of transparency with the media
- Built trust with constituencies both inside and outside of the police department

**Analysis and Student Responses (B) Case**

*1. If you were the mayor, a citizen, a business person, how would you assess Commissioner Norris' plan and performance?*

An interesting introduction to open discussion is to ask for a sense of how the class would grade Edward Norris' action plan. Encourage consideration of all the stakeholders' views.

*Board One*

Grade the Commissioner? \_\_\_\_\_ Surprises?

A =

B+ =

B =

B- =

C =

Another board plan would include a list of Norris' best moves along with a list of what class members would have done differently. Norris made some critical decisions early on: to run the police department like a business; establishing clear measures for defining, measuring, and producing all BPD operational data; and setting goals (bring murder rate under 300 a year). Reorganizing became an important part of Norris' change plan: the rotation policy was ended, the PAL program was reduced, recruitment became a priority, decentralizing districts and sectors and shifting command responsibilities to a time based structure rather than a geographic structure; implanting the COMSTAT system and holding commanding officers responsible for the statistical results in their districts; decentralizing detective services to districts; putting two officer patrols into operation; and assigning more officers to the central office to work on clearing up the warrant backlog.

The Commissioner's solution to changing the culture was to teach by example and establish credibility. Norris believed in being directly involved in law enforcement and never wanted to be viewed as the leader behind the desk. He earned a reputation for being a cops' cop by chasing down drug dealers, holding his top commanders accountable for crime in their areas, pressuring city hall to increase pay for officers, tightening the rules on uniform appearances, replacing old guns, and seeking grants to fund improved technology. Norris built internal relationships through promotion, rewards, his unwillingness to accept corruption yet readiness to remove minor complaints from the IAD, he used fear when necessary and his outsider status to wait, watch, and listen before he got rid of people. Externally Norris adopted a strategy of transparency—"get the good news out fast and the bad news out faster." He built trust relationships with the community through frequent radio and television appearances. The commissioner talked to numerous business groups and used change agents in the community like Momma Myrt to help get his message out.

2. *How is Commissioner Norris behaving like a business person?*

This question opens an opportune time to showcase the video clips under the heading ***Policing as a Business***. He adopted an annual report, collected, reported, and used police statistics like accounting. Goals the commissioner adopted became benchmarks against which his success and the police department's success were measured. Finally, we note that near the end of 2002, when the murder rate was climbing, Commissioner Norris instituted "power shifts", extending the typical 8 hour shift to ten hours so that there were twice as many police officers on the beat during the overlap hours in the hopes that this would reduce the violent crime rate as the year end approached. This seems very much like a business person's efforts to manage to the goals at the end of a reporting period.

3. *What lesson do you learn from this case about how to manage large-scale change?*

Managing large scale change requires strong leadership skills. Norris exhibits many attributes of a strong leader—several are made apparent while reading the case. He had a clear view of what was possible and he created a vision of how to take the BPD to that point. He

watched for members inside and outside of the organization that could help accomplish what he wanted. Norris made decisions and stuck to them because he clearly knew who he was and believed he could do it. He reshaped the organization to run more smoothly and returned an air of dignity to a difficult and under funded work environment. Since 1999, the violent crime rate in Baltimore had been reduced 30 %, one of the largest reductions in the nation. The murder rate in Baltimore ended up at 253 people in 2002 (256 in 2001). The commissioner went through extensive media and community scrutiny and came out as a symbol of change.

## **Epilogue**

In February 2003, Edward Norris accepted the Governor of Maryland's invitation to be Superintendent of State Police. The new Police Commissioner in Baltimore was Kevin Clark (formerly an executive officer in narcotics at NYPD that Norris trained). Mr. Norris developed a new vision for the Maryland State Police Department, to be the national model for Homeland Security organization and effectiveness.

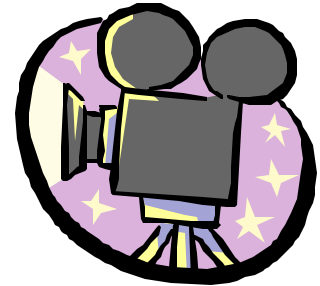
As of the time of this writing, the following web sites may give you additional information on the Baltimore Police Department and the Maryland State Police:

<http://141.157.54.34/bpdmaps/police.htm>

<http://www.mdsp.maryland.gov/mdsp/default.asp>

## **Audio Visual**

This case series is accompanied by a CD-ROM containing several dozen clips of interviews with many of the people mentioned in the cases. The student version of the CD contains clips that don't reveal what happened in the B case, but allow one to get a richer sense of the problems and context of the issues raised in the A case. A faculty version of the CD contains clips about the B case and other clips that an instructor might want to reveal at the right moment in class. One does not need to use the CD clips in advance of the class if cost or time do not permit. The instructor can use one CD to show clips in class to bring richness to the discussions, but the more one uses these in class, the less time there is to develop the students' thoughts about how to manage the change needed here.



A list of the clips included on the CDs and a brief summary of each appears below. There are more clips than one can reasonably use in one or two classes. My strategy has been to try to show a diversity of clips to show various styles, race, gender, perspectives, and levels of energy. Clips showing Momma Myrt's energy, transparency, and sheer courage fighting in various ways for her community are extraordinary examples of first class citizenship. And in the end, Commissioner Norris' clarity of communication, presence, apparent confidence in knowing what needs to be done, no nonsense style, ethics, and determination are elements that carry the day. When he visited class in person, the students gave him a standing ovation.



## Table of Contents

### Student Preparation

#### **BALTIMORE BEFORE (MOMMA MYRT)**

Long time city resident, Momma Myrt, describes life in Baltimore before the drug business and violence invaded.

#### **HEROIN INVASION (MAJOR BARKSDALE)**

Major Barksdale, a Baltimore native, unfolds the changes he saw between growing up as a youngster and when he joined the BPD.

#### **FIGHTING CRIME**

**Hiring Cops:** Olive Cobb Waxter, executive director of the Baltimore Police Foundation, contrasts working as an executive in a private firm with her position in the public. A brief description of Baltimore under the previous administration is provided.

**Career as Cop:** Major Skinner represents a typical career path for those that choose to be police officers. He recalls his first homicide and life on the streets as a rookie cop.

**Cop Families:** Major Skinner reveals his strategy for coping with his inner emotions and exterior professional conduct.

**BPD Organization:** Regina Averella, director of public affairs, explains the nine districts and sectors in the BPD structure. She also walks the viewer through the steps police take from the time a crime is reported focusing on a homicide.

**Importance of Appearance:** Colonel Biemiller, explains the value of ‘looking like a police officer’ when working. He concludes that as uniformed dress became sloppier, police morale slipped.

**Citizen Involvement:** Momma Myrt tells why and how she became an activist in the community.

**Dire Situation and Public Relations:** Olive Cobb Waxter unfolds the story of how the Police Athletic League (PAL) was one of the few policing efforts that gave the BPD a good public image. With a sense of hopelessness over the high crime rates, the PAL program offered a distraction of sorts.

**Comstat:** Major Skinner explains the practice of Comstat and the crime reduction model of policing.

## **CHALLENGE OF KEEPING UP**

Major Skinner discusses changes and challenges to policing methods since the terrorist attacks of September 2001.

## **BPD MISSION STATEMENT**

Commissioner Norris describes the mission statement succinctly.

### **Faculty A Case**

#### **TAKING THE JOB**

**Controversial Appointment:** Commissioner Norris expresses disbelief when he learns from elected city leaders that he may not be appointed because the majority of the populations in the city are people of color and he is not.

**Taking the Offer:** The mayor convinces Norris that there was an opportunity in Baltimore for him to make a very big difference and improve the living conditions of many.

**State of the Department:** Commissioner Norris discovered a feeling of hopelessness among the ranks for several reasons: deficient in technology, lack of promotion on merit, culture of vindictiveness, and poor public perception of the BPD (television series highlighted the drug crime in the city).

#### **MEETING THE CITIZENS**

**First Citizens Meeting:** Momma Myrt attends a meeting with the new commissioner. She challenges him on media reports that he supports 'zero tolerance' policing. When Norris explains that there is no such thing and talks about his plan, Momma Myrt listens.

**Public Acceptance:** Momma Myrt praises Norris for cleaning corruption out of the department and then hitting the streets to crackdown on crime. The commissioner's reputation as a street smart cop begins to emerge.

### **Faculty B Case**

#### **GETTING STARTED**

**Drug Dealer Rundown:** Commissioner Norris describes the boldness of heroin dealers in front of him. In frustration he chases down a drug dealer and his reputation builds for being a cop's cop as opposed to a desk cop.

**Commissioner's Lifestyle:** Commissioner Norris tells how he deals with the emotional toughness of being a police chief and what he goes through every time a member of the force is killed.

**Leadership Style: Public Relations:** Norris tells how others describe him as a leader. He also reveals the leadership principals he believes in.

**Public Relations:** Commissioner Norris outlines his business plan to the public. He embarks on a road trip, armed with his PowerPoint presentation, to let business and political leaders see his plan— he had outlined the problems and set goals. His bottom line was crime reduction not profit.

**Transparency with the Media:** Norris adopts a strategy of transparency with the media. After his contentious nomination process, Norris is aware that he needs to 'handle' the press. Honesty is the hallmark of his plan. Let the media know as much as he possibly can about police business.

## **POLICING AS A BUSINESS**

**Impact on Economy:** Commissioner Norris describes how crime adversely impacts the Baltimore economy.

**Drugs and Cops as Business:** Commissioner Norris sees the drug trade as a business much like organized crime. He uses terms like manufacturing operations, marketing, wholesalers, transporters, and salespersons to describe the drug business.

## **NORRIS PLAN**

**Understanding the Problem:** The commissioner outlines his plan for crime reduction and revitalizing the economy.

**Restaffing:** As with most businesses, Norris needs to examine his human resources to make sure he has the right people. When he discovers corruption, Norris clamps down quickly and harshly. Yet, where he sees merit, Norris made promotions. His plan is to send the message to the force that he is tough minded but fair. If you are loyal and do your job as best as you can, you will be rewarded. If you are dishonest or corrupt, he will get rid of you.

**Warrants:** Commissioner Norris discovers a couple hundred outstanding arrest warrants for criminals still at large. The warrant office was understaffed to deal with the overflow of warrants so he increases the manpower to this important task.

**Reorganization of Districts:** Commission Norris describes the reorganization of the department that he embarks upon. Norris decentralizes the CID and creates rapid response teams to go where needed.

**Reducing PAL:** Although the PAL program generated positive public relations, Norris compares the work to using police officers as babysitters. Norris believes the police should ensure the city's streets are safe enough for children to play outside as opposed to being locked inside a school gymnasium to play safely.

**Improving Technology:** Commissioner Norris describes the improved technological capabilities he worked towards providing the BPD.

**Equipment Changes:** The commissioner presses the mayor and city for improved equipment like guns. He also describes his desire to repaint the police fleet to give a more powerful image of the police in the community. When he is given the okay to paint only a few vehicles, Norris doles them out as part of his reward system.

**Crime Reduction Results:** Colonel Biemiller tells a story of a neighborhood transformation after the BPD adopted a more aggressive approach to dealing with drug related crime. He provides a sense of how frustrating he found his role as an officer before he was empowered to arrest repeat offenders.

**Getting Other Offers:** Commissioner Norris recounts an experience he had on the train while returning to Baltimore from NYC one day. Although his work is demanding and heartbreaking, Norris tells the audience that despite the pain he feels at times, he would rather be a policeman than anything else. He quotes Henry V... "We few, we happy few, we band of brothers."

**Board Plans**

**For A Case**

Board One

<u>Take this job?</u>	<u>Why?</u>	<u>Why not?</u>
Yes		
No		

Board Two

<u>Action Plan</u>	<u>Reorganize? Sector problems</u>	<u>Stronger SWAT teams</u>	<u>Corruption?</u>
Right people on the bus?	Warrants Section	Community relations: funding	Life style Management
Set goals?	Distribute CID	Transparency with media	

Side Board

<u>Crime Victims?</u>	<u>Police Friends?</u>

**Summary of B Case** (for those who wish to teach the case in one day and don't have time to distribute and read the B case.)

## Norris' Action Plan

- Developed a clear numerical crime picture
- Established standardized measures to gauge performance
- Set goals
- Raised E/T ratio, recruitment, and retention
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