

Leadership Spotlight

Achieving Success Through a Balanced Scorecard

All great performance involves improving the ways one achieves the results—better methods, better means to the goal.

—John Gardner

The art of exercising extraordinary leadership—whether inherited, learned, or both—is a precious commodity of great value to the law enforcement community. While leaders should focus on their greatest asset—the people around them—they also must be attentive to the increasing emphasis on quantifying their results. Consequently, effective leaders must answer this question: What have we (staff, partners, you) accomplished toward the greater vision, mission, and goals? If a leader cannot competently answer this question and quantify it, then it is time to consider using a Balanced Scorecard (BSC).

The BSC was introduced by Harvard Business School in 1992 and has continued to gain momentum across diverse industries and organizations. Effective leaders, using the BSC approach and input from key individuals in the enterprise, define the organizational objectives. Then, they must build a consensus with stakeholders concerning the means, methods, and measurements relative to those objectives. The BSC objectives can be related to, for example, training, customers, projects, client services, and finances. The data gathered and incorporated in a BSC, whether quantitative or qualitative, permits the leader to analyze and measure progress at three stages.

- 1) Beginning stage: initial metrics defined in the BSC (the previous operational state)
- 2) Present stage: measured results from the beginning state to the present (the current operational state)
- 3) End stage: measured results from both the beginning and the present states toward targeted objectives (the future operational state)

Much data collected in a BSC is supplied vertically from subordinates. This results in both rich data that mirrors frontline efforts within the organization, and creates cohesion, synergy, and ownership among employees toward the BSC objectives. Leaders must remember that BSC is never a substitute for personal leadership because performance results follow leadership, not vice versa.

In summary, maintaining a BSC can assist leaders in making decisions quantifiable and sensible to superiors, subordinates, and external constituencies. It will arm leaders with the ability to establish a baseline for measuring and analyzing performance results directed toward driving and sustaining the global vision and the mission of their organizations. ♦

Chris Lenhard, a member of the Leadership Development Institute at the FBI Academy, prepared this Leadership Spotlight.
