



**Internal Audit Report**

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**Dispatch Culture Survey**

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## Auditor's Opinion

March 4, 2019

Internal Audit has completed the Dispatch Culture Survey. We conducted this engagement as a special request engagement from Deputy Chief Paul O'Keefe.

The audit objective was to establish a benchmark baseline for the state of the culture in Public Safety Communications (PSC). Internal Audit will conduct a second survey in late 2019 to assess the degree of any change in the department's perceptions of their culture.

To this end, Internal Audit:

- Issued the culture survey to all Public Safety Communications (PSC) staff
- Evaluated and summarized for Management.

We believe that the survey results and assessment provided in the following report are a fair representation of the current state.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Wayne C. Sommer', is written over the printed name and title.

Wayne C. Sommer, CPA, CGMA  
Internal Audit Manager

## **Audit Profile**

### **Audit Team**

Wayne Sommer – Manager

Sheree Van Buren – Lead

### **Background**

There have been significant changes and turnover in the Dispatch division. What used to be a stand-alone department is now a division of the Aurora Police Department (APD) reporting to Division Chief Harry Glidden. Jamie Brower, Brower Psychological Police and Public Safety Services, conducted a communications gap analysis at the end of 2017 and provided management with recommendations for improvement.

Jamie Brower is a psychology consultant, specializing in Police and Public Safety Services. She concluded a communications gap analysis for PSC in December 2017. This report provided Management with possible causes of and recommendations to solve the low morale and attrition issues at the Dispatch Center (the Center). Management is implementing those recommendations. The Jamie Brower report (Brower report) summarized data received from 31 Center staff and discussions with Dispatch Executive leadership.

According to the Brower report, 74 employees left the Dispatch Center during the years from 2014 – 2017<sup>1</sup>. Other significant changes occurring before and following the Brower report included:

- The implementation of a new dispatch system, *ProQA*
- The Center coming under the direction of Deputy Chief Paul O’Keefe, Aurora Police Department
- The turnover of department leadership, including the Dispatch Manager and Supervisor
- The assignment of Lt. Robert Wesner as interim Dispatch Manager

Internal Audit informed APD that we intended to conduct a culture survey in Public Safety Communications (PSC) as part of our 2019 audit plan. Due to the changes occurring in PSC, APD requested that we conduct a benchmarking survey in 2018 against which they will compare the 2019 survey results to assess change progress.

### **Scope**

Our scope included all the PSC staff as of our survey date, October 18, 2018.

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<sup>1</sup> Aurora Public Safety Communications Division Gap Analysis; Brower, Jamie Brower, Brower Psychological Police and Public Safety Services; page 1

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## The Culture Survey

In 2018, Internal Audit developed a culture survey that we employ in assessing the culture within a department or division. We based it on Rensis Likert's Four Systems of Management<sup>2</sup>.

# The Four Systems of Management

Rensis Likert

### Exploitative-Authoritative

The leader imposes decisions on subordinates and uses fear to achieve employee motivation.

### Benevolent-Authoritative

The leader uses rewards to encourage productivity, but management is responsible for all decisions and there is no teamwork.

### Consultative

The leader listens to subordinates and incorporates some employee ideas, but most subordinates do not feel responsible for the organization's goals.

### Participative

The leader engages subordinates, solves problems with teamwork, and everyone feels responsible for achieving the organization's goals.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.pocketbook.co.uk/blog/tag/likerts-four-management-systems/> ; <https://www.business.com/articles/management-theory-of-rensis-likert/> ; Rensis Likert studied people, group dynamics, values, and management styles, developing his theory on the systems of management. The survey was also adapted from work performed by the Commonwealth Centers for High-Performance Organizations (CCHPO).

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Likert advocated for the Participative management system. "Participative management is based on trust and confidence in employees. Goals are determined collectively and form a basis for motivation and rewards. This fosters a collective sense of responsibility for meeting company goals, and incentivizes collaborative teamwork and open communication."<sup>3</sup> These attributes contribute to staff having positive attitudes and producing quality work.

Internal Audit distributed the anonymous culture survey to the 78 Dispatch staff. We received responses from 52 staff members for a 66% response rate<sup>4</sup>. The survey questions fell within the following categories:

- Leadership
- Motivation
- Teamwork
- Communication
- Decision Making
- Goals
- Controls

In an effort to assess differing perspectives based on staff classification, we issued a Staff survey (42 responses, 81%) and a Supervisors and management survey (10 responses, 19%)<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.pocketbook.co.uk/blog/tag/likerts-four-management-systems/>

<sup>4</sup> We issued the survey on October 18, 2018 and closed it on November 14, 2018.

<sup>5</sup> For purposes of evaluating the results they are summarized as follows:

- Staff: non-supervisor staff, front-line dispatchers and call takers
- Supervisors/Management:
  - supervisors and above
  - Executive management: dispatch manager and other APD leadership

# Staff Results

## Leadership Section



**Question:** How much confidence and trust is shown in you by those who oversee your work?

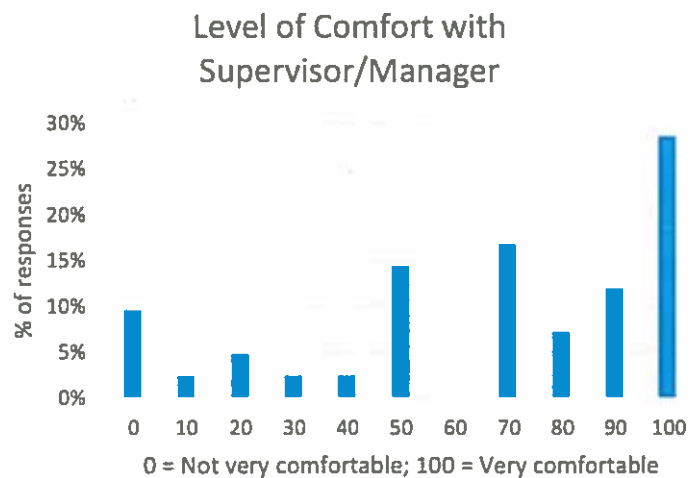
**Response conclusion:** While the largest response group was in the middle, the general staff perception is that Management trusts and shows confidence in the Staff.

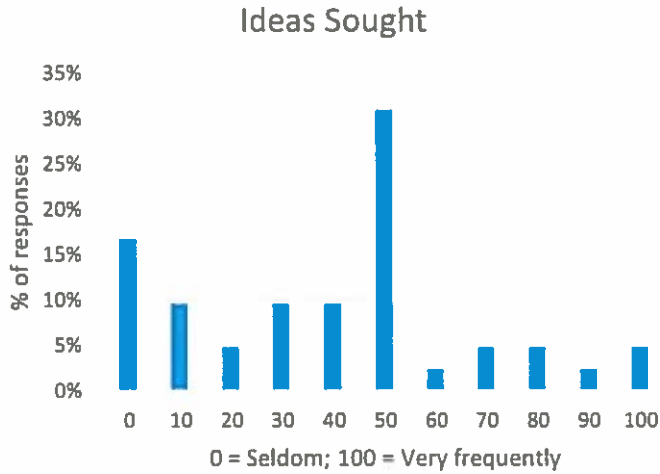
**Median Response:** 60

**Question:** How comfortable do you feel talking to your direct supervisor or manager about issues related to your job?

**Response conclusion:** Staff generally feels comfortable talking with Management about issues related to their job.

**Median Response:** 70





**Question:** How often are your ideas sought and used constructively by those above you?

**Response conclusion:** Predominant Staff perception is that Management only sometimes seeks and uses Staff's ideas.

**Median Response:** 42.5

## Motivation Section



**Question:** What are the predominant methods used to motivate you in your job?

**Response conclusion:** This is close to a normal distribution with the general perception that a combination of fear, threats, punishments, rewards, and involvement are the predominant motivators.

**Median Response:** 50



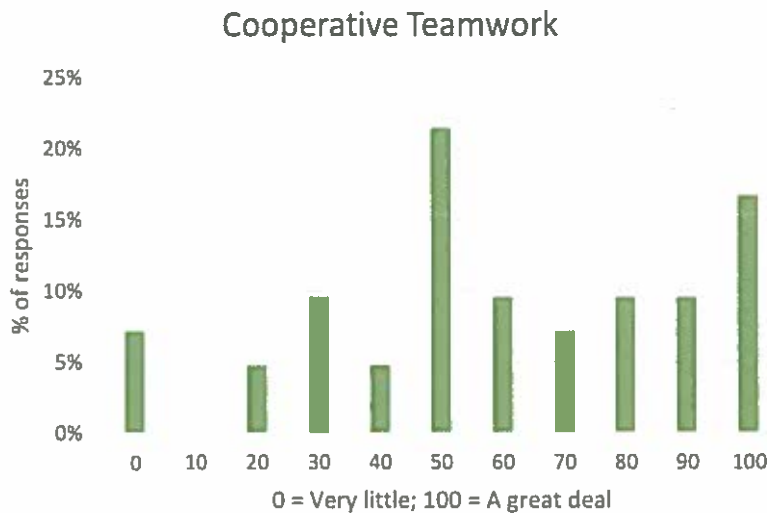
**Question:** Where do you believe the responsibility should be for achieving your areas goals?

**Response conclusion:** Predominant Staff perception is that all levels should be responsible for achieving area goals.

**Median Response: 90**



## Teamwork Section



**Question:** How much cooperative teamwork occurs within your division?

**Response conclusion:** Predominant Staff perception is that there is a moderate level of cooperation within the division.

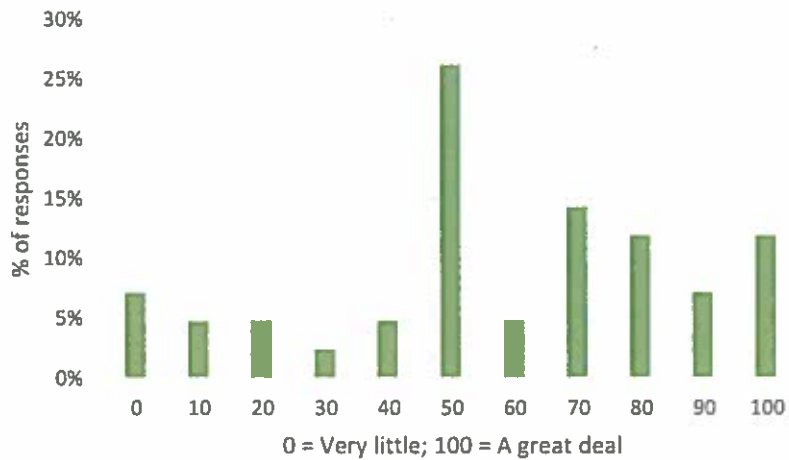
**Median Response: 55**

**Question:** How much cooperative teamwork occurs between your area and other departments?

**Response conclusion:** The predominant Staff perception is that there is a moderate level of cooperation between Dispatch and other departments.

**Median Response:**  
52.5

Teamwork Among Departments



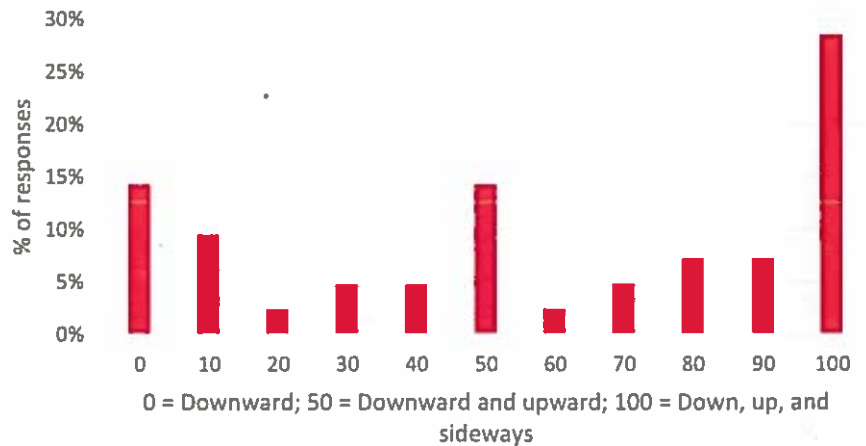
Communication Section

**Question:** What is the usual direction of information flow? [Any information related to your division, department, or the City.]

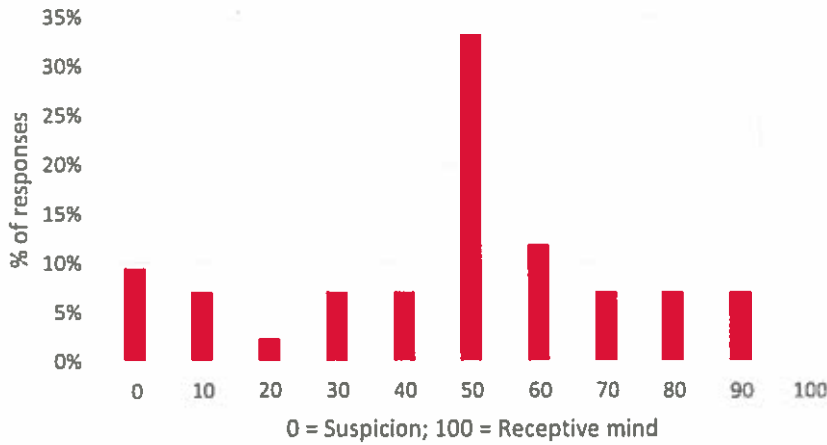
**Response conclusion:** Staff perceives information flows downward and upward.

**Median Response:** 52.5

Information Flow



### Communication Receptivity



**Question:** How is communication from those above you received?

**Response conclusion:** Staff perception is that downward communication is received with caution.

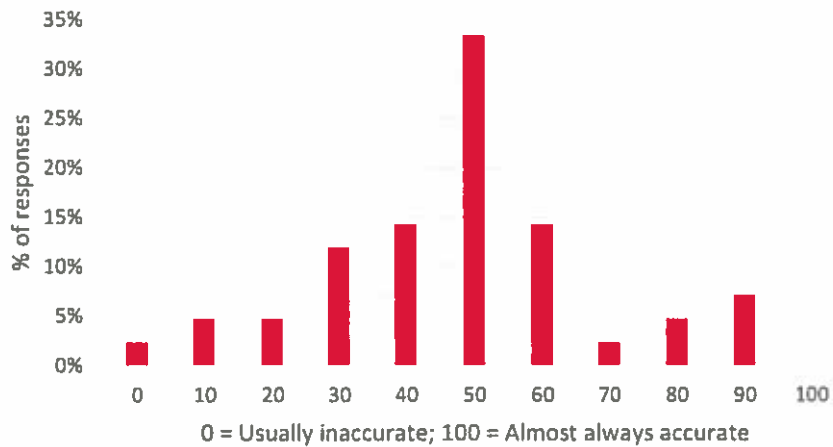
**Median Response:** 50

**Question:** How accurate is upward communication?

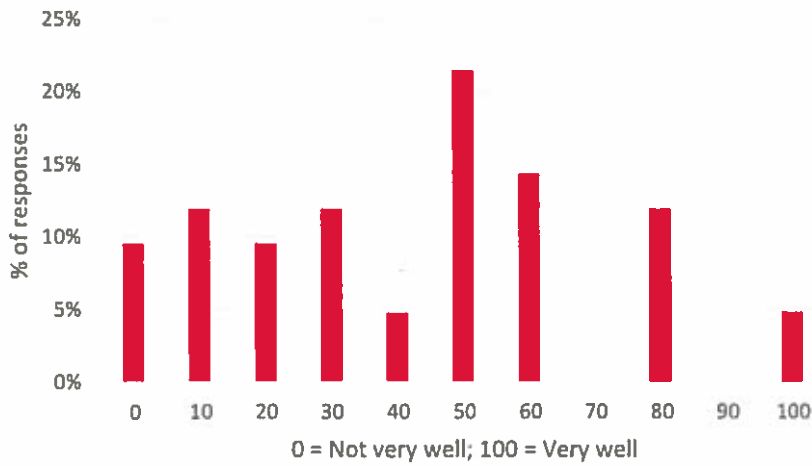
**Response conclusion:** This a close to a normal distribution with the general perception that upward communication is sometimes accurate, sometimes not.

**Median Response:** 50

### Upward Communication Accuracy



### Knowledge of Problems



**Question:** How well do those above you know the problems you face?

**Response conclusion:** The Staff perceive that Management only somewhat knows the problems they face.

**Median Response:** 45

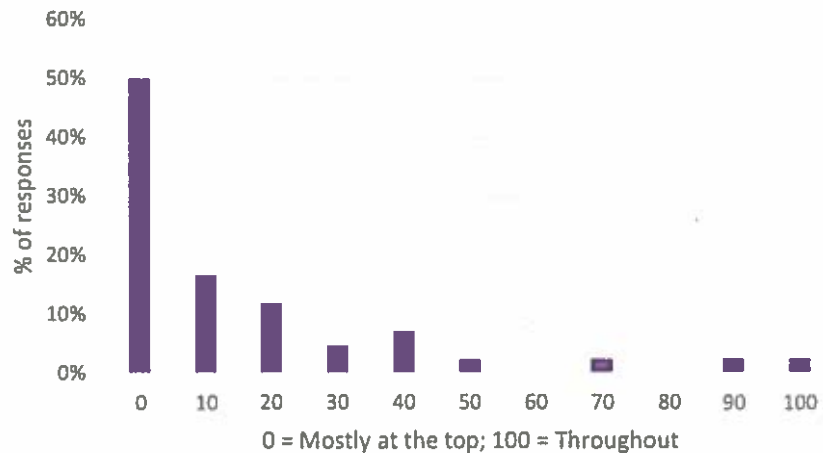
### Decision Making Section

**Question:** At what level are decisions made in your division?

**Response conclusion:** The overwhelming perception is that decision-making occurs mostly at the top.

**Median Response:** 2.5

### Decision Making



### Involvement in Decisions



**Question:** Are you involved in decisions related to your work?

**Response conclusion:** Majority of Staff perceive that they are almost never involved in work-related decisions.

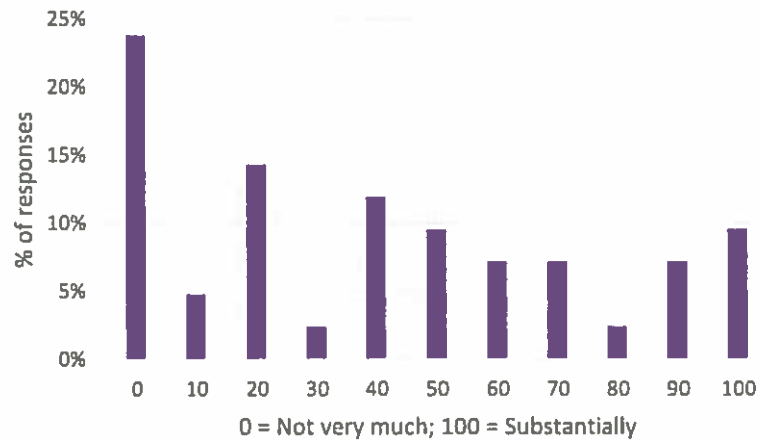
**Median Response:** 10

**Question:** Does the decision-making process used in your department/division contribute to your motivation?

**Response conclusion:** The predominant view is that the decision making process contributes relatively little to Staff motivation.

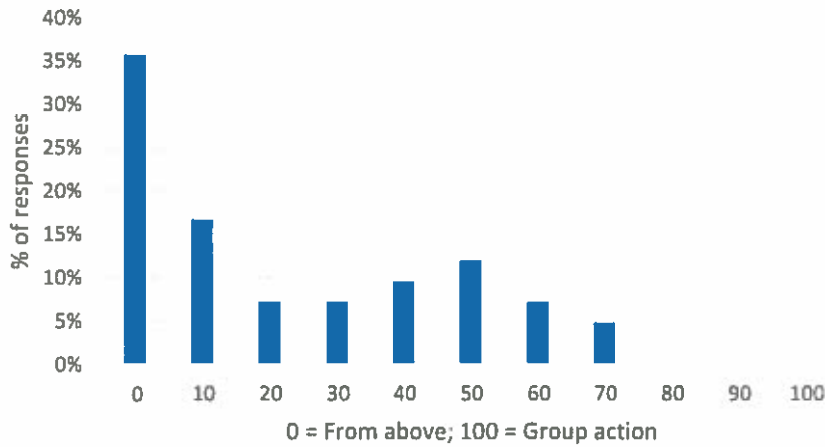
**Median Response:** 37.5

### Decision Making Contribution to Motivation



## Goal Section

### Goal Establishment



**Question:** How are your area goals established?

**Response conclusion:** Majority of Staff responded that Management establishes the goals with little to no group action.

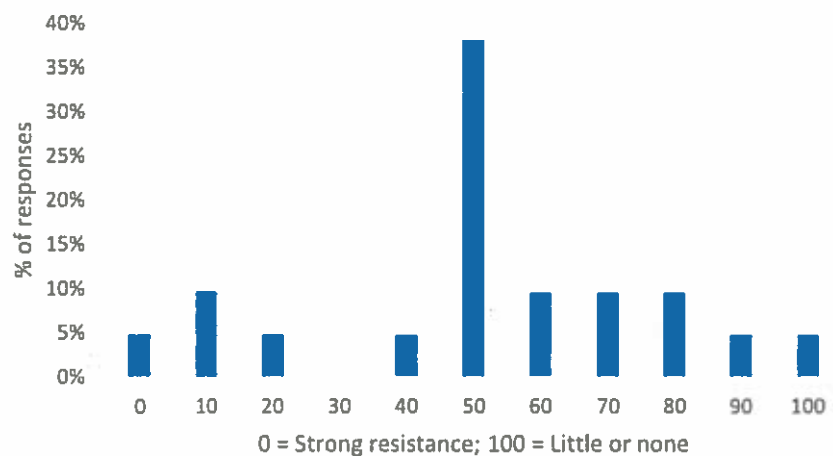
**Median Response:** 10

**Question:** Do you see other staff in your area actively but quietly resisting department/division goals, programs, or projects?

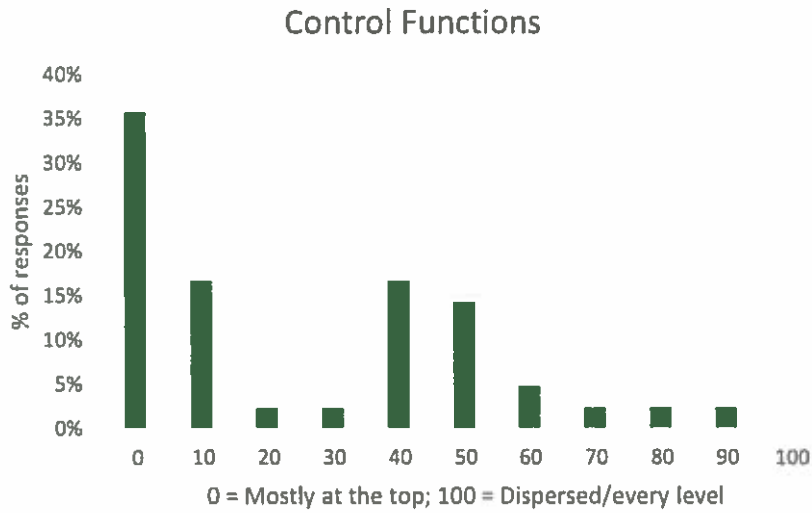
**Response conclusion:** Staff perception is that there is some resistance occurring.

**Median Response:** 50

### Resistance



## Control Section



**Question:** Where do the work review and control functions mostly occur in your department?

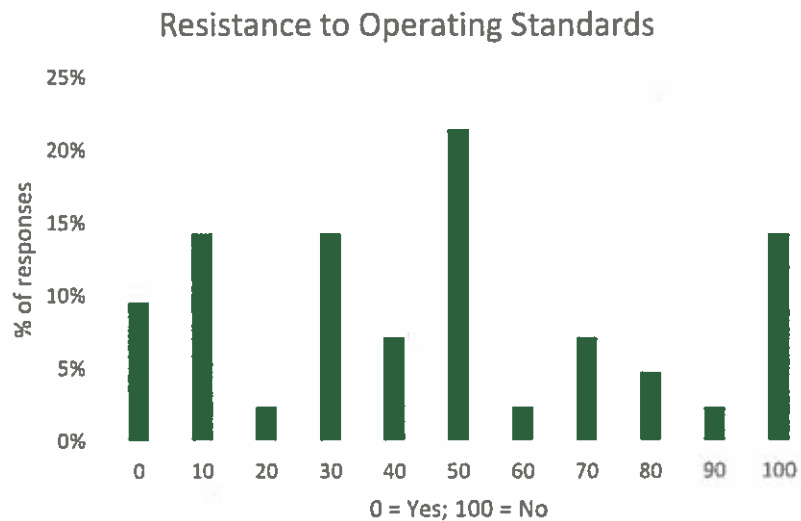
**Response conclusion:** Majority of Staff perceive that work review and control functions reside mostly at the top.

**Median Response:** 10

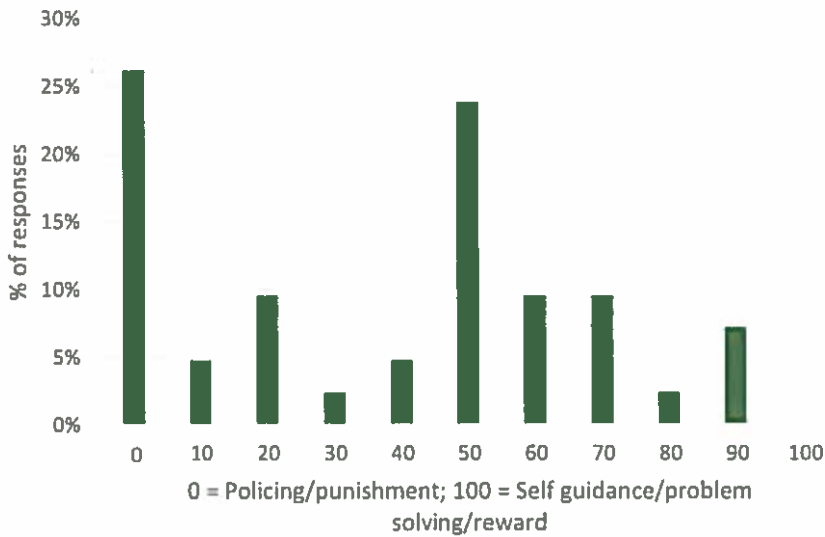
**Question:** Do you see in your area resistance by other staff to the department's operating standards?

**Response conclusion:** Staff perceives some resistance to the department's standards.

**Median Response:** 47.5



**Performance Data**



**Question:** What is performance data used for in your area?

**Response conclusion:** The perception is that Management tends to use performance data more for policing and punishing than for guidance and problem solving.

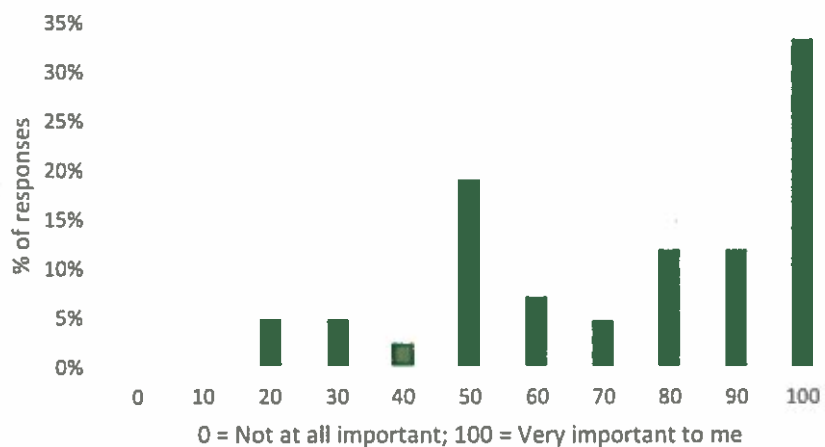
**Median Response:** 45

**Question:** How important to you are the Core 4 values?

**Response conclusion:** Core 4 values are important to Staff.

**Median Response:** 77.5

**Core 4**

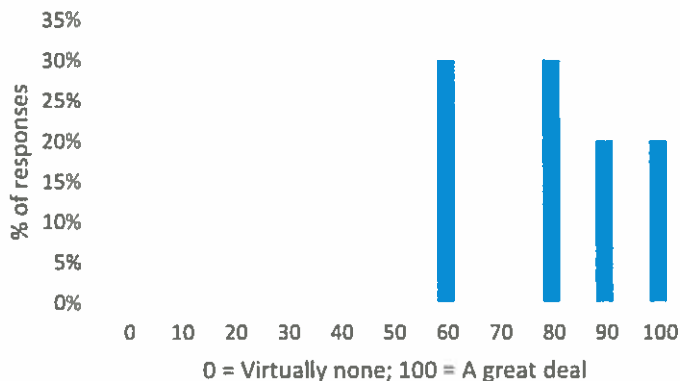




# Supervisors/Management Results

## Leadership Section

### Confidence and Trust



**Question:** How much confidence and trust is shown in you by those who oversee your work?

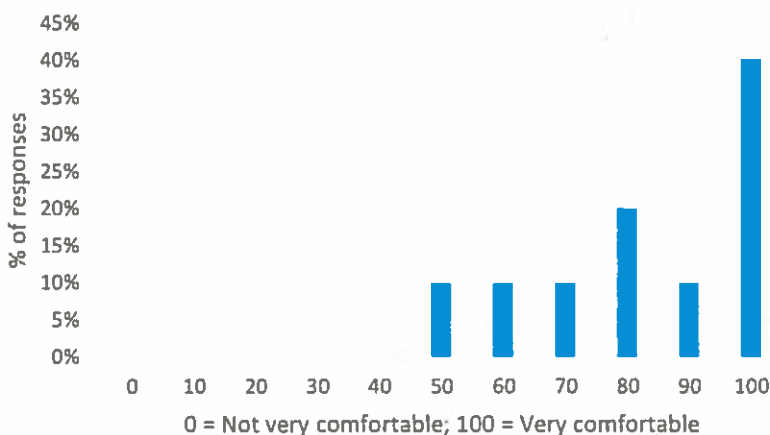
**Response conclusion:** Supervisors perceive a great deal of trust and confidence from Executive Management.

**Median Response:** 75

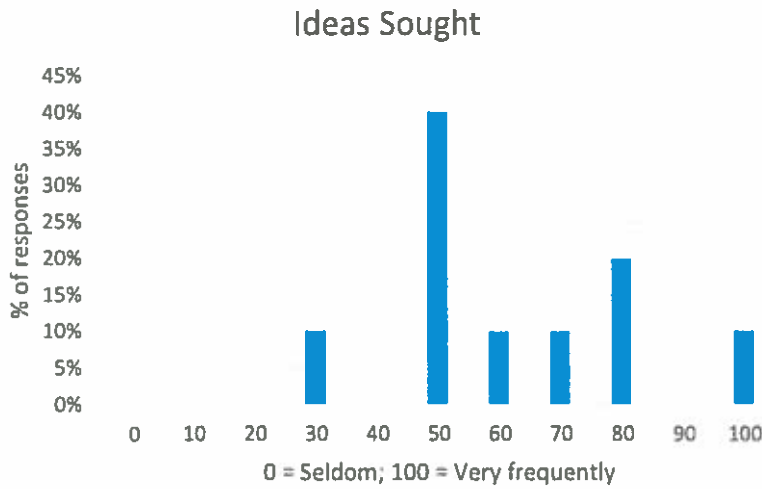
**Question:** How comfortable do you feel talking to your direct supervisor or manager about issues related to your job?

**Response conclusion:** Supervisors are very comfortable talking with Executive Management about issues related to the job.

### Level of Comfort with Supervisor/Manager



**Median Response: 85**



**Question:** How often are your ideas sought and used constructively by those above you?

**Response conclusion:** Predominant Supervisor perception is that Executive Management only sometimes seeks their ideas.

**Median Response: 55**

**Motivation Section**



**Question:** What are the predominant methods used to motivate you in your job?

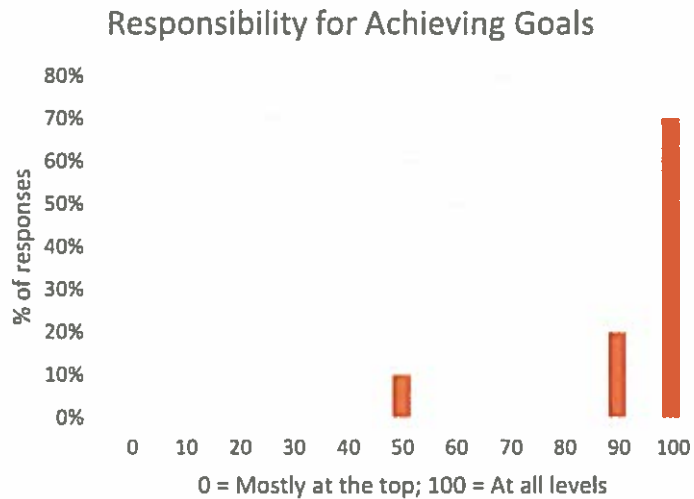
**Response conclusion:** Supervisor perception is that rewards and involvement are the predominant motivation methods.

**Median Response: 90**

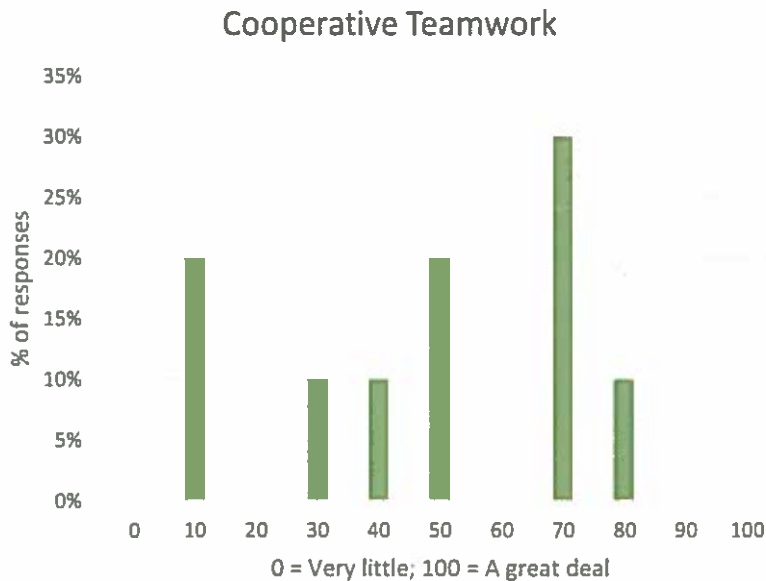
**Question:** Where do you believe the responsibility should be for achieving your areas goals?

**Response conclusion:** Predominant Supervisor perception is that all levels should be responsible for achieving area goals.

**Median Response: 95**



## Teamwork Section

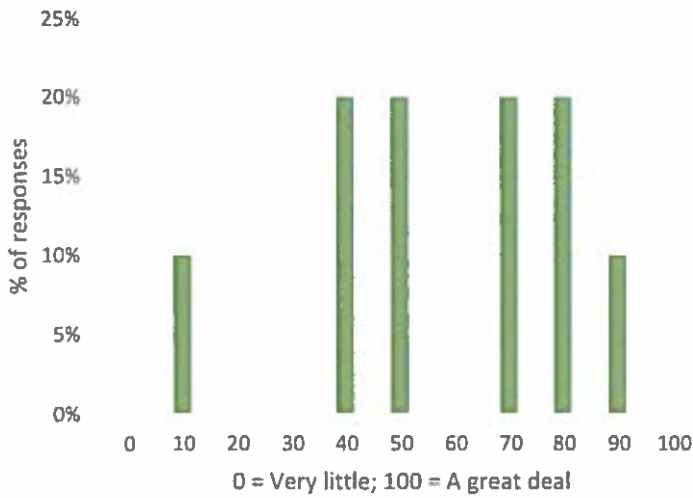


**Question:** How much cooperative teamwork occurs within your division?

**Response conclusion:** Predominant Supervisor perception is that there is a moderate level of cooperation in the division.

**Median Response: 50**

### Teamwork Among Departments



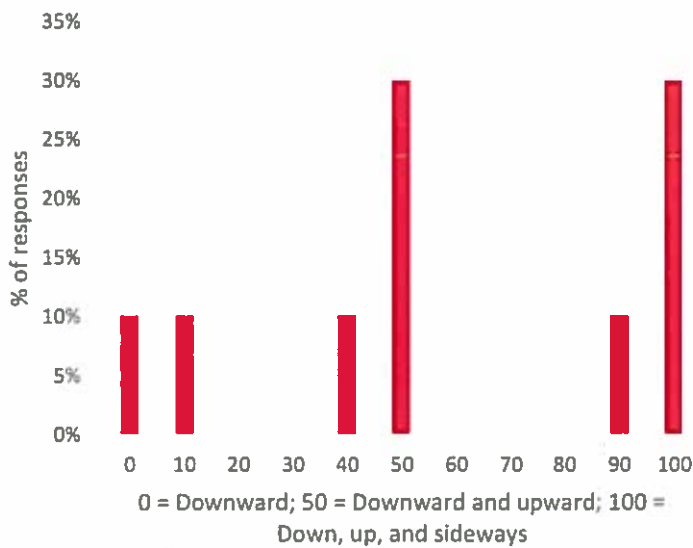
**Question:** How much cooperative teamwork occurs between your area and other departments?

**Response conclusion:** Supervisor perception is that there is a moderate level of cooperation between Dispatch and other departments.

**Median Response:** 57.5

## Communication Section

### Information Flow



**Question:** What is the usual direction of information flow? [Any information related to your division, department, or the City.]

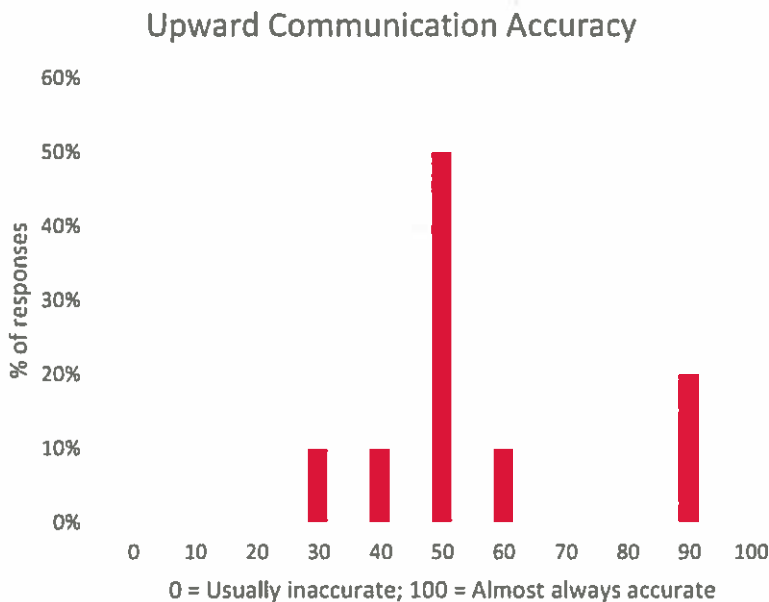
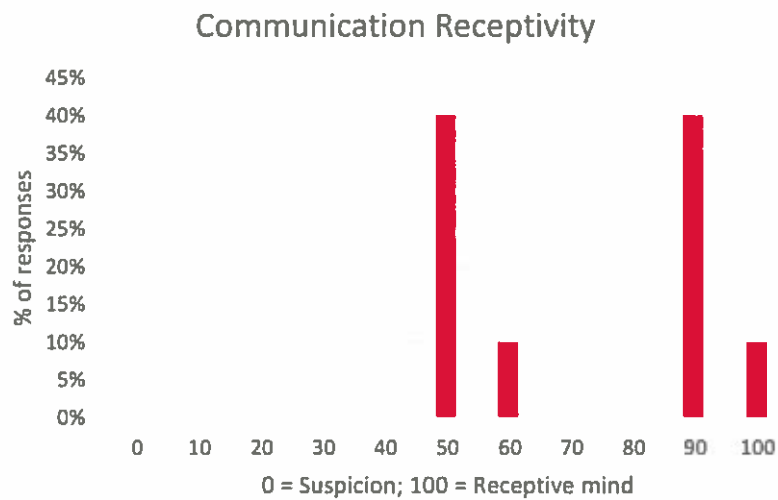
**Response conclusion:** Supervisors perceive that information typically flows downward and upward with a leaning toward some sideways communication.

**Median Response:** 50

**Question:** How is communication from those above you received?

**Response conclusion:** Supervisors receive downward communication with a receptive but cautious mind.

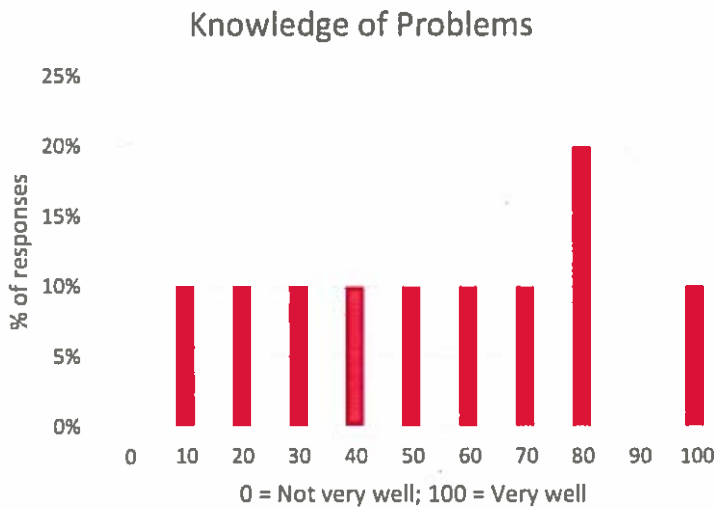
**Median Response:** 70



**Question:** How accurate is upward communication?

**Response conclusion:** There is a strong sense that upward communication is sometimes inaccurate.

**Median Response:** 50



**Question:** How well do those above you know the problems you face?

**Response conclusion:** These responses run the rating range; there is no consensus within those who responded.

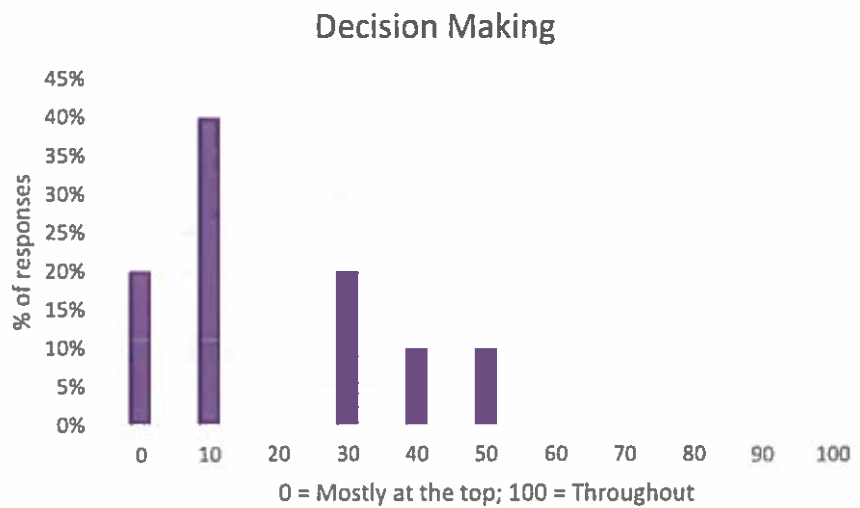
**Median Response:** 55

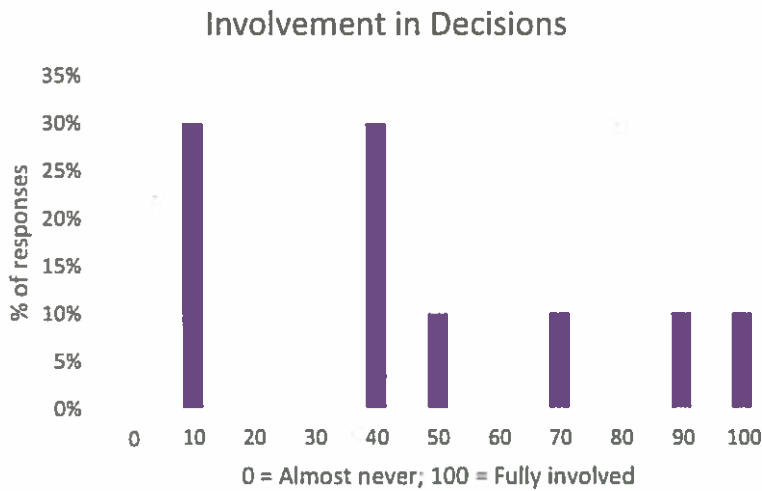
## Decision Making Section

**Question:** At what level are decisions made in your division?

**Response conclusion:** Supervisor perception is that most of the decision making occurs mostly at the top.

**Median Response:** 7.5





**Question:** Are you involved in decisions related to your work?

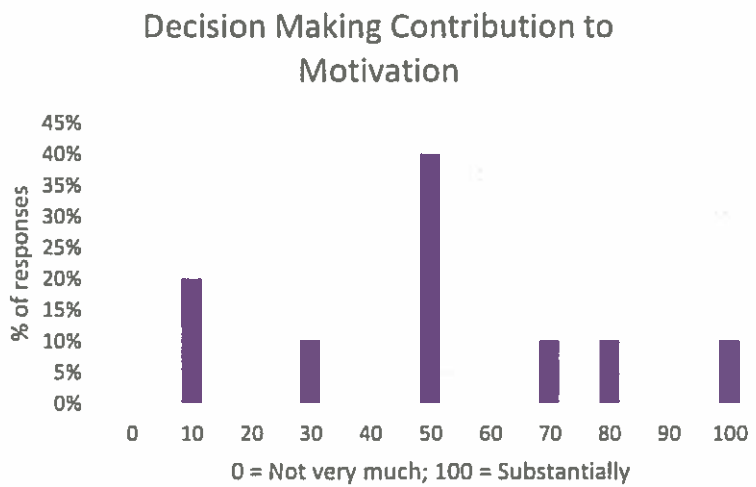
**Response conclusion:** Supervisors perceive that they are occasionally consulted about the decisions related to their work.

**Median Response:** 40

**Question:** Does the decision-making process used in your department/division contribute to your motivation?

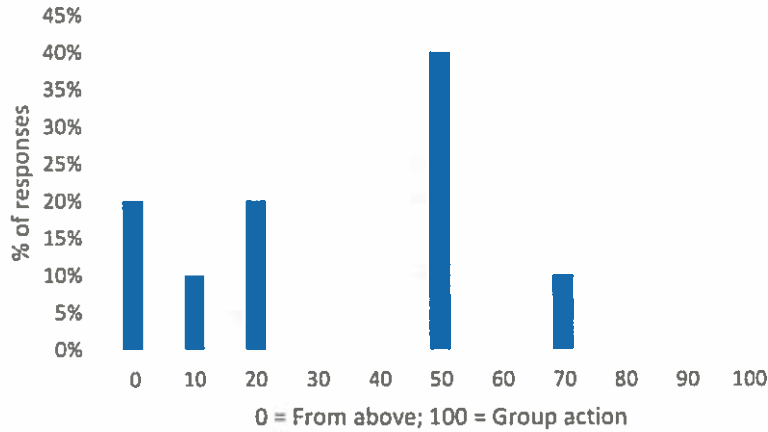
**Response conclusion:** Supervisors perceive that the decision making process provides some contribution to their motivation.

**Median Response:** 50



## Goal Section

### Goal Establishment



**Question:** How are your area goals established?

**Response conclusion:** The expressed perception is that Executive Management develops the goals with comments occasionally invited.

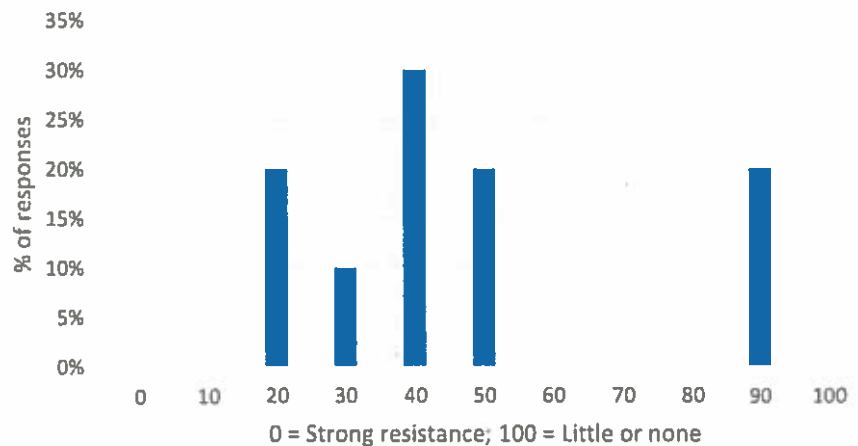
**Median Response:** 35

**Question:** Do you see other staff in your area actively but quietly resisting department/division goals, programs, or projects?

**Response conclusion:** There is a general perception of some resistance.

**Median Response:** 40

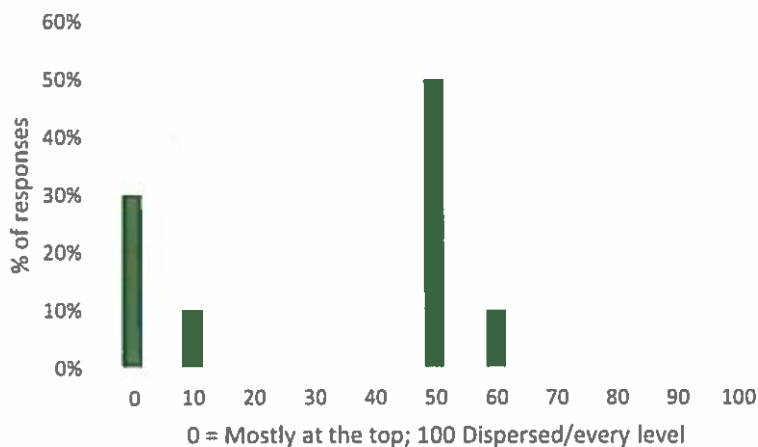
### Resistance





## Control Section

Control Functions



**Question:** Where do the work review and control functions mostly occur in your department?

**Response conclusion:** Majority of Supervisors perceive moderate delegation for review and control functions.

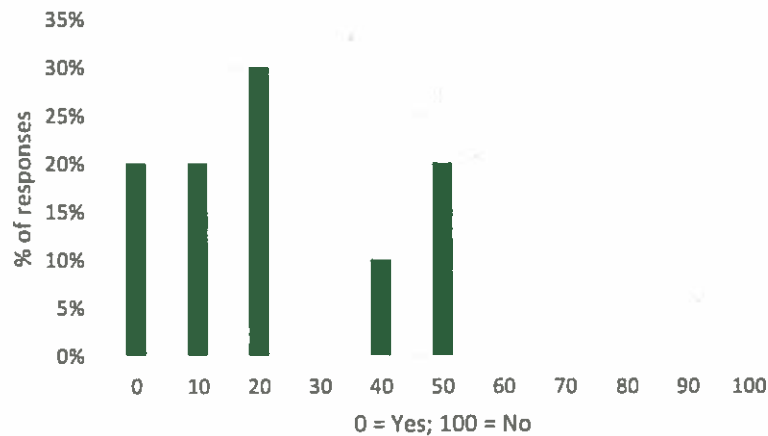
**Median Response:** 45

**Question:** Do you see in your area resistance by other staff to the department's operating standards?

**Response conclusion:** Supervisors perceive a resistance to the department's standards.

**Median Response:** 15

Resistance to Operating Standards





**Question:** What is performance data used for in your area?

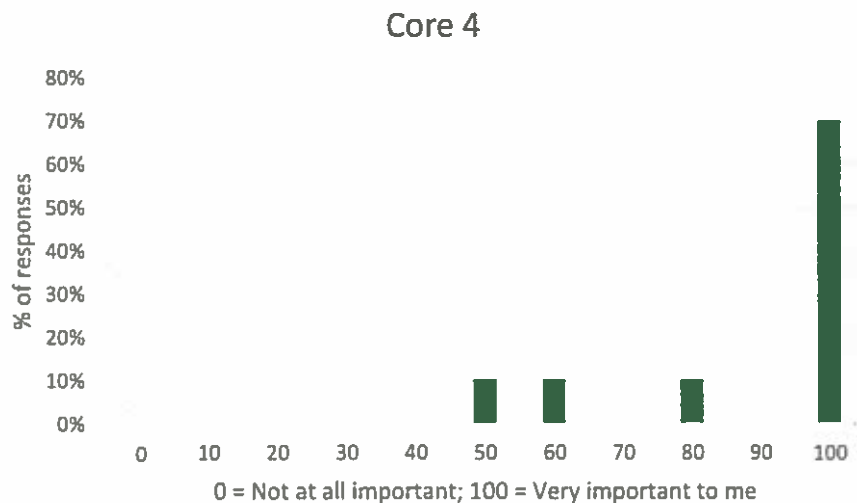
**Response conclusion:** The typical perception inferred from the responses is that Executive Management uses performance data for both punishment and guidance.

**Median Response:** 50

**Question:** How important to you are the Core 4 values?

**Response conclusion:** Core 4 values are very important to Supervisors.

**Median Response:** 100



The chart below compares the median responses of Staff and Supervisors/Management for each question group. From the Staff results data perspective, the perception is that the department is more of a benevolent-authoritative system (System 2.) In this system, management uses rewards to encourage productivity but responsibility for all decisions reside at the top with little to no teamwork or communication.

From the Supervisor/Management perspective, the data leans more towards the consultative system (System 3.) In this system, management may consult supervisors but supervisors do not feel responsible for accomplishing the organization’s goals.

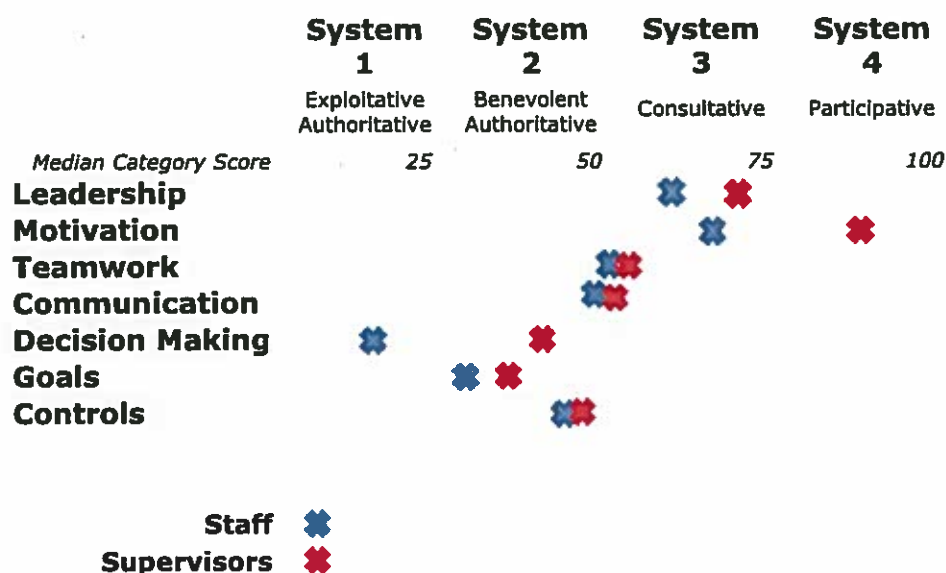


Figure 1—Internal Audit mapped out the median score for each category based on Staff and Supervisor survey results.

## Moving Toward a Participative Culture

The Participative system (System 4) is considered the most productive management system. In a Participative system staff:

- Need *and* want to do a good job at work (*emphasis added*)
- Produce excellent work products without much external control or direction
- Have challenging work assignments
- Experience professional development
- Receive recognition for contributions<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> With permission from Commonwealth Center for High Performance Organizations (CCHPO); adapted from Rensis Likert, *The Human Organization* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967)

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In the Participative system, staff is motivated to achieve the goals set by the team. It enhances teamwork when staff ideas are incorporated into the decisions affecting them and the goals they play a role in achieving. While working toward goal achievement, staff develops a greater loyalty towards the group, towards accomplishing the goals, and obtains a greater sense of satisfaction when they achieve their goals.

To work towards achieving this system, we recommend the Dispatch Center continue to focus on three attributes of the Participative system: communication, teamwork, and decision-making. As discussed in the Brower report, the Center can also benefit from fostering an environment of trust.

Lt. Wesner and his team have already begun to make some significant improvements in these primary areas<sup>7</sup>.

***Internal Audit Recommendation***

The Center is still in a transition period with the expected hiring of a permanent manager to occur in first quarter 2019. We believe that focusing on communication, teamwork, decision making, and trust (as shown in the Brower report), will help the Center improve its culture. As these attributes build one on to the other, it will be important for the Center to work progressively through each one.

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<sup>7</sup> See appendix A for details.

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## Appendix A

Internal Audit met with Lt. Wesner to discuss the changes made at the Center since his arrival.

### *Communication*

Upon assignment to the Center, Lt. Wesner implemented a chain of command, similar to the APD command structure. That included creating an Executive Staff made up of himself, the Operations Manager, the Training Supervisor, and the Administrative Assistant. All floor personnel report to Supervisors and Supervisors report to the Operations Manager. Supervisors communicate information received from their Staff to the Operations Manager. The Operations Manager communicates the information received from Supervisors to Executive Staff. Executive Staff also created a Supervisor and Management e-mail chain to ensure that all upper management is aware of current Center happenings and issues, increasing the transparency and accuracy of shared information.

### *Teamwork and Decision Making*

While there is a skill difference between *dispatchers* and *call takers*, these designations were causing disparities in the respect shown to each other. In the new command structure, dispatchers and call takers are now all considered *floor personnel*.

A recent Police Staffing study recommended 12-hour shifts for Center staff<sup>8</sup>. Prior to the current shift bid, Management asked Staff for their input on working 10- or 12-hour shifts. Based on that feedback, the Center implemented 10-hour shifts. The approach to this issue provided Staff the opportunity to be involved in a decision that directly affected them. This change has also freed up Staff personal time and increased the number of overtime volunteers.

During a critical incident, the Operations Manager and Center Manager must respond and share the load by taking calls and providing phone relief for floor personnel. The visibility of Supervisors and Management is important to Staff. All Executive Staff have to show up on different days and hours to show Staff that they are a part of the team. Even the Operations Manager is required to work 10-hour shifts, on weekends, and during afterhours. These few changes have begun to increase the level of teamwork among the division and visibility of upper management at the Center.

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<sup>8</sup> City of Aurora Police and Communications Center Staffing Study, The Novak Consulting Group, September 7, 2017

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## *Trust*

To address issues from the Brower report, Executive Staff revamped many of the policies and procedures to align with current Center practices and current APD policies (where applicable).

These changes included the discipline process. The Supervisors now play a larger role in disciplining their assigned Staff. Supervisors are held accountable for knowing the policies and procedures in order to enforce disciplinary actions. This has opened up the communication as discipline comes from Supervisors and not the Manager. There is more discussion among Supervisors and Managers for handling disciplinary actions at the Center. The Operations Manager and Lt. Wesner will give direction but Supervisors handle most decisions.

Supervisors also signed a confidentiality form, requiring them not to speak on Staff issues that occur in closed management discussions, to each other or to other Center Staff. This is intended to decrease the amount of rumors and misinformation and increase Staff's trust that what occurs in private stays private.