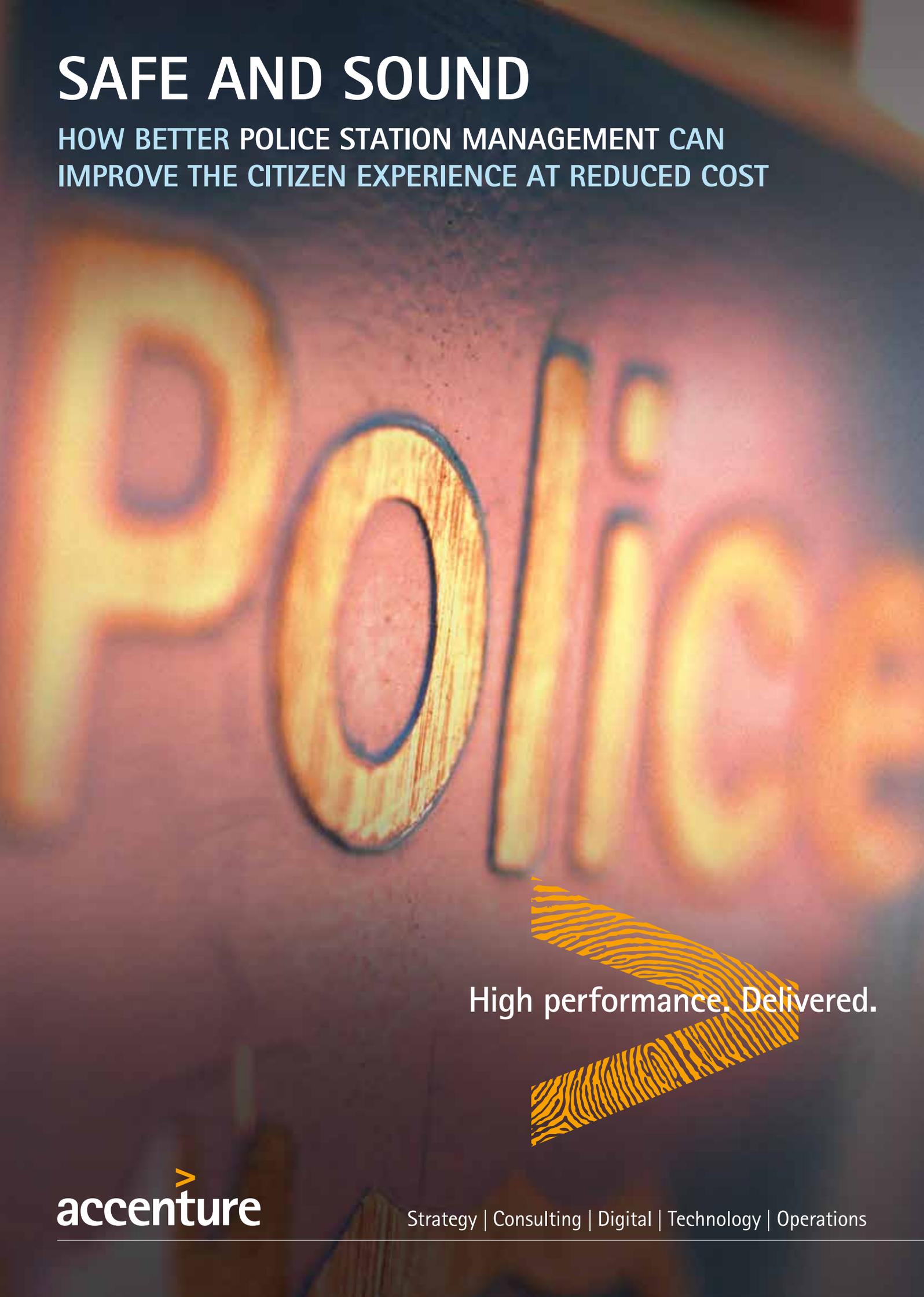


SAFE AND SOUND

HOW BETTER POLICE STATION MANAGEMENT CAN
IMPROVE THE CITIZEN EXPERIENCE AT REDUCED COST



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AS A PORTAL FOR PUBLIC SAFETY, THE POLICE STATION IS ESSENTIAL TO EFFECTIVE POLICE SERVICES.

Yet recent demands on the police to reduce operational costs are having an immediate effect on this front door to the force. While police station management is most obviously represented by the front desk and the "customer service" aspects of serving the public, there are also the issues around information, assets and people management to consider. If police forces are to remain open, accountable and citizen-focused they will depend on sound information-sharing and collaborative practices. So how can police stations handle their day-to-day demands while offering a cost-effective service to the public?

While the media speculates about the closure of police stations, police forces everywhere are being reminded of the need to be more efficient. Yet, considering the complexity of police operations, police management could be forgiven for wondering where to start. Centralizing police operations or reducing the number of officers may address short-term cost reductions, but these measures often lead to frustration for citizens. In addition, the growing number and type of crimes means the police must be flexible and take into account how they manage the whole police station operation—from "front office" waiting times and reception conditions to the "back office" processing of information and interactions with key stakeholders. By addressing station management holistically, Accenture believes police forces have an opportunity to both reduce costs and improve the citizen experience.

WHAT IS INVOLVED?

Although police stations are not required to adopt a standardized way of doing things, there are considerable economies of scale to be made from lean, more efficient processes. Indeed, Accenture has found that 75 percent of the processes required to track and respond to crimes are the same; streamlining such key processes means police stations can stand to gain between 20 and 30 percent of efficiencies that can help to release extra capital for generic police operations. Simple solutions such as using clear metrics to track and manage time and workloads or documenting standardized procedures in a police station management can result in savings that are then invested back into providing better police services.

Accenture has analyzed in depth the core components of station management and found that enhancing communications, channelling activities and standardizing processes can help police forces around the world to:

- Improve citizen reception conditions to avoid citizen dissatisfaction and lack of confidence in the police process
- Adapt staffing levels to reduce citizen waiting times
- Create homogenous competencies that encourage specialization and consistent guidance
- Encourage citizens to provide the right information in a timely way to handle an enquiry or complaint
- Enhance interactions with key external stakeholders who can influence an investigation
- Separate the public interface from offense and crime-fighting activities.

IMPROVING STATION MANAGEMENT

Accenture has worked with police organizations across the globe to reduce costs and help the police improve the service to citizens. We believe the police can achieve effective station management by:

ENHANCING THE CITIZEN EXPERIENCE

Improve welcome conditions and reception facilities, such as installing partition walls to retain confidentiality, and make the public aware of when and how to make contact with police officers. Develop internal capabilities to serve specific police station needs, for example, identifying local contacts such as locksmiths following a break in, or medical facilities following an accident.

EMBRACING INNOVATION AND STANDARDIZATION

Broaden communications vehicles by introducing IT-led innovation such as electronic information systems, improving the police website, and regularly updating display boards and media. Employ standardized processes and procedures, check lists, training and back-up support during peak periods to maintain a consistent service.

CHANGING THE FOCUS OF THE FRONT- AND BACK-OFFICE

Consider physically separating public areas for general information or urgent crime reporting from offense and criminal management. Employ rationalization programs to make the best use of assets (such as buildings and land). Optimize the front desk with new models for offering police services, similar to the Post Office model with support hubs in shops or other business outlets. Extend online capabilities using portals and electronic links with external organizations—as a recent Accenture survey¹ reveals, 92 percent of citizens want to support their police force, and a keen 81 percent say they would be happy to do so using social media channels.

IMPROVING SUPPORT MANAGEMENT

Introduce a virtual queuing system providing real-time staff monitoring and resource planning with alerts that notify management of when service levels are exceeded so they can take action to correct them. Enhance staffing levels by using civilians for non-skilled roles and promoting police skills by encouraging daily team meetings, fostering a climate of multiskilling and establishing a practical training program to maintain flexibility.

To be effective, the scope of station management must extend beyond a new system or IT program. By introducing IT-led processes that embrace enabling technologies and workflow management, police officers can adopt a “task not ask” approach and remain flexible in the face of ongoing change. In short, station management should be viewed from a “big picture” perspective to encompass greater process efficiencies and a desire to improve the citizen experience.

Accenture recognizes there are a vast number of operational and emotive factors influencing effective station management. Indeed, to distort the well-known phrase about the punishment fitting the crime, the police may want to consider if they are able to “let the service fit the public need” in the long term. We believe one of the key opportunities to improve station management lies in the ability to carefully manage and analyze information. With greater integration between systems, access to higher quality information and the right tools to analyze that information, police forces can “connect the dots” on intelligence to gain insight and make more informed decisions. What is more, the police will find themselves in a better position to respond to changing operational demands and maintain flexibility around staffing and support.

COST EFFECTIVE CITIZEN-CENTRICITY

With the accent on achieving more for less, police forces must consider new ways to handle their station operations. Whether managing information to deliver improved investigative outcomes or using innovative technologies, processes and insights to enhance performance, the police need to address station management in its entirety to retain citizens' confidence and trust, maintain sound financial practices and serve the public well.

¹. Survey conducted by Market Connections in June 2012 among nearly 1,300 citizens in six countries

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