At the recent International Association of Chief of Police (IACP) conference in Philadelphia, I was struck by the number of exhibitors and the breadth of their offerings to law enforcement agencies. The event showcased the latest developments in everything from weaponry to software, and it was exciting to see the industry embracing innovation, particularly new developments in how law enforcement agencies are collaborating to understand and deploy cutting-edge technologies.

Across a broad spectrum of public service agencies, from social care to education or health, collaboration is becoming essential to delivering effective, well-rounded service. Law enforcement is no exception. Whether partnering to improve intelligence for frontline officers or taking advantage of the knowledge and experience of private sector or third-party organizations, modern police services cannot afford to ignore the benefits of greater collaboration.

Digital technologies and platform-based business models are proving the adage that two heads are better than one. Adaptable, scalable and interconnected policing platforms can help drive innovation and better capture, analyze and share data to inform real-time police decision making.
At IACP, I visited with a variety of companies that are leading the way in delivering platform-based policing solutions. One example is Mark43, a cloud-based software platform for 911 dispatch and police records and evidence management. The cloud enables Mark43 to deliver unprecedented user efficiency and data quality, giving officers the most important tool to do their jobs – information.

For many cash-strapped departments, shortfalls in cost or resources could also be eased by joining forces with other agencies to deliver services. New cloud-based environments are quite conducive to multi-tenant users or even regional solutions. Above all, tapping into the skills, capabilities and technologies of the private sector could dramatically improve policing efforts both locally and nationally.

Three Reasons to Collaborate

Some police departments, such as Seattle PD, have taken steps to deploy new technologies such as data analytics and cloud. Yet many have failed to embrace technologies that can facilitate effective information sharing internally and across organizations. It seems the greatest challenge is often knowing where and when to start.

A recent Accenture survey found that most police leaders are aware of the benefits that new technologies offer. Nearly two-thirds of survey respondents said they are willing to embrace public-private partnerships and new commercial models (65 percent) and to consider “as-a-service” models for technology deployments (67 percent). By collaborating with universities, research institutes and innovative private sector companies focused on innovation, police services can develop and implement innovative solutions to operational challenges.

Although moving away from traditional practices is challenging for any organization, police services can gain three compelling benefits from partnerships

Solve old problems with new data

More data has been created in the past two years than in the entire history of the human race. Police departments today are faced with an onslaught of data from a wide array of sources, such as arrest reports and social media. The ability to share, sort, analyze and prioritize information across police departments and jurisdictions cannot be underestimated.

With the right data at the right time (and secured in the right way) officers and citizens can be better protected. Officers will benefit from real-time information via mobile devices or social media as they respond to incidents and can better inform decision-making in the field. Scalable storage capabilities, and the flexible processing power of the cloud, can help analyze huge volumes of data from multiple policing systems on demand. By deploying powerful analytics solutions on shared data, police departments can capture and share crime details more quickly and analyze data to predict crime and prevent it from happening.

Improve what you do and how you do it

The nature of crime is changing, and the pressure is on for police to identify new ways to combat cross-border and digital crimes.
With an estimated 26 billion devices connected to the Internet by 2020 and at least one-third of all data passing through the cloud, police departments can no longer rely on in-house intelligence and technologies. Instead, they should partner with private sector and other third-party organizations to take advantage of existing capabilities and new technologies.

Veritone is making Artificial Intelligence accessible to public safety organizations for the first time. Their AI-based cognitive computing solutions are capable of turning unstructured audio and video data into actionable intelligence. This is particularly relevant for police departments that struggle to manage and analyze large volumes of video and audio files from body-worn cameras, dispatch systems and connected CCTV networks.

**Bridge the skills gap**

No single organization has all the skills it needs. Our survey found that more than half (53 percent) of industry respondents say that embarking on new technology projects would require significant investment in employee re-skilling. While collaboration can enhance the talent pool available to police forces, departments must also review how they recruit to ensure they are sourcing the right cross-section of candidates.

The police are used to engaging the community or other agencies to support crime-prevention. For instance, Neighborhood Watch schemes, which rely on volunteer patrols, have proved successful. Such innovative steps enable departments to access additional resources at busy times and to better plan policing activities.

**Preventive Policing**

With increasing service demands and diminishing budgets, police forces must innovate to achieve value. True collaboration breaks down the barriers around funding, innovation and trust that often hamper police modernization efforts. This allows forces to access the data, capabilities and skills they need to succeed. While collaboration is by no means a “cure-all,” it can free up resources so that officers can spend more time preventing and fighting crime, driving investigations forward and improving relationships with the communities they serve.

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