



Evidencing the Pledge

Intelligent call handling, response optimisation and evidencing of front line policing activity are just some of the features that Fortek has enhanced in response to the demands of the Policing Pledge. BAPCO Journal speaks with Fortek Sales Director Alan Hall.

Heat Maps, taken after the pro-active policing patrols have taken place, can be printed and distributed to senior officers and management, thus evidencing force-wide improvements against the Pledge.



The buzz terms may at times read like a management-speak bingo card: accountability, community focus, evidencing, national policing offer, low level crimes, but the nucleus of the challenge for police forces is simple. Increase public confidence and prove that you are doing so.

Fortek's expertise is in working closely with all emergency services bringing forward functionality to meet specific local, national and government led initiatives. Its focus in the police has been to introduce a series of enhancements through its Command and Control systems aimed at helping forces to improve customer satisfaction. The recent challenge has been to focus on specific requirements of the Policing Pledge and to exploit its VISION PX product to enable forces to deliver against that Pledge.

The challenge now, believes Hall, lies not so much in harnessing the technology itself but in streamlining the business processes to make it work.

Improving contact management

It is no secret that traditionally in the context of non-urgent call taking, each incident report by the public has been handled as a unique event. It doesn't make a difference if a caller is reporting that his garage has been broken into for the third time, or the first. Each time the call handler takes down all the same details, starting with name, address etc. The impression that that makes to the caller, points out Hall, is that the police are unaware of the previously

reported crime, and by implication, that it has done nothing about it. To tackle this impression, Fortek has introduced what it calls Enhanced Contact Management;

Working with Nottinghamshire Police, Fortek has extended its Command and Control system by seamlessly integrating contact management functionality into the call handling process. At the time of the call the operator is presented with relevant information pertaining to the caller. Previous contact history, including call history, location based information and personal information is offered to the operator; by making this data instantly available the operator can have a more informed conversation with the caller. It allows the call handler to maintain a consistent approach when handling the call and importantly helps the public feel confident with the process and police contact.

Hall believes that by using this functionality an individual force can not only easily improve its relationship with the public as well as provide a useful communication tool for its call handlers, but that such functionality by itself serves as evidence that the force is proactively striving to improve upon its performance.

Tony Eggleton, CAD project Manager, Nottinghamshire Police comments: "Our Command Officers and the new Chief stated that levels of customer service are paramount when dealing with incident calls. Therefore, the new software is used as part of our customer service desk. The difference between VISION PX and other Command and Control systems is the way in which it stores and processes

information. The system provides control room operators with a detailed display, enabling them to access pertinent information associated with all aspects of the call or incident scenario."

Optimising response – non-emergency and emergency scenarios

Another key point that Fortek has identified in relation to improving confidence in the police also relates to non-urgent police response. The Police need to offer a flexible response to public request for non urgent crime visits, the policing pledge states:

"If you are calling about an issue that we have agreed with your community will be a neighbourhood priority and attendance is required, we will aim to be with you within 60 minutes. Alternatively, if appropriate, we will make an appointment to see you at a time that fits in with your life and within 48 hours."

Up to now call handlers have not had the technology to schedule appointments directly into officers' diaries.

Nottinghamshire Police are one of the first forces in the UK to have embraced Fortek's enhanced Command and Control functionality. A key benefit of the system is that it is fully integrated to the Microsoft Office suite of products, by using this standard technology such as (Microsoft Exchange), call handlers in Nottingham will be able to schedule appointments for officers in one of their three Managed Incident Cars, which are dedicated to following up on non-urgent crime reports. Importantly, the scheduling takes place at the point of contact. The fact that the call handler can say that Sergeant Jones has an appointment free tomorrow at 2pm gives the caller much more confidence than previously available.

This is a major plus point for us because Fortek now exploits commercially available technology in the control room environment providing real tangible benefits. The next step, adds Hall, is adding another feature which verifies an appointment via text message to a mobile phone or via email, and sends a reminder prior to the scheduled time. Similar scheduling is already in widespread

use in medical, commercial and other industries.

Emergency call response is further improved with Fortek's latest dispatching and response management software.

By utilising vehicle and personal tracking technology to quickly allocate the nearest resources (with the correct skill set) to an incident means that the dispatcher can now provide emergency callers with an estimated time of arrival. Once the nearest available unit has been assigned to attend, our system uses routing technology from mapping software to create an ETA that is presented to the dispatcher immediately.

Evidencing and maximising front line policing

A key driver of the Pledge is improving police visibility, and the Government stipulates that forces must be visible 80% of the time in their neighbourhood addressing their priorities. "The question is, how can individual forces evidence that? Working with West Mercia Police authority we have added functionality that uses mapping to capture APL (Automatic Person Location) and AVL (Automatic Vehicle Location) data and hold it historically. The captured data can then be presented onto a mapping system like a heat map, showing Police activity levels within specific geographic areas."

Such a dynamic and visual analysis can lead to what Fortek calls "priority pathing". This feature has been developed through work with New South Wales Police in Australia where Policing Initiatives have been driven around improving Police visibility in high crime or target areas. Priority pathing prompts the supervisor in the control room to allocate travel route plans for units through target areas.

Priority pathing ensures that officers travel in and out of areas that have seen criminal activity, and visibly increase their presence.

VISION PX system records that and allows the senior officers to evidence that crime areas are being targeted. Heat Maps can be taken after the pro-active policing patrols have taken place which can be printed and distributed to senior officers and management, thus evidencing force wide improvements against the pledge.



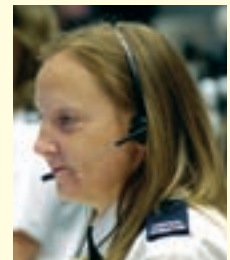
The dispatcher can now provide the emergency caller with an estimated time of arrival at the first point of contact.

Policing Pledge excerpts – we will:

- Always treat you fairly with dignity and respect ensuring you have fair access to our services at a time that is reasonable and suitable for you.
- Aim to answer 999 calls within 10 seconds, deploying to emergencies immediately giving an estimated time of arrival, getting to you safely, and as quickly as possible. In urban areas, we will aim to get to you within 15 minutes and in rural areas within 20 minutes.
- Answer all non-emergency calls promptly. If attendance is needed, send a patrol giving you an estimated time of arrival, and:
 - If you are vulnerable or upset aim to be with you within 60 minutes.
 - If you are calling about an issue that we have agreed with your community will be a

neighbourhood priority and attendance is required, we will aim to be with you within 60 minutes.

- Alternatively, if appropriate, we will make an appointment to see you at a time that fits in with your life and within 48 hours.
- If agreed that attendance is not necessary we will give you advice, answer your questions and/or put you in touch with someone who can help.
- Provide monthly updates on progress, and on local crime and policing issues. This will include the provision of activity maps, information on specific crimes and what happened to those brought to justice, details of what action we and our partners are taking to make your neighbourhood safer and information on how your force is performing.



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