Predictive policing: A force multiplier for cash-strapped police departments

Posted At : October 25, 2011 1:11 PM | Posted By : Jeff Webster

Related Categories: Homeland Security, Justice/Public Safety & Homeland Security, Grants, Emerging Technologies, State & Local

With Crime Prevention Month coming to a close, we take the opportunity to highlight another method of preventing crime: predictive policing. This is a fairly new method of crime prevention that has been picking up steam the past few years. The basic concept of predictive policing is built on statistics and crime data. When this data is combined with statistical analysis tools, agencies can better pinpoint hot spots for crime. The statistical analysis software provides insight into the different dynamics of crime within a specific location. When used effectively, this tool can allow an agency to better manage its personnel, time, and resources. Not only does it improve efficiencies within the agency, it also acts as a force multiplier for cash-strapped agencies.

So, who is using this technology? Several agencies in cities across the country are using different forms of predictive policing. For example, New York City, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, and Baltimore have all implemented comparative statistics (COMSTAT) into their work processes. This form of predicative policing involves the comparing of events, crimes, and locations to get a better understanding of how and why crime happens. It also focuses on identifying the drivers behind crime. Based on these analytics, the agency can deploy officers to areas that are prone to crime.

Crime Prevention 2012 Report: Jeff Webster, Deltek Senior Research Analyst Justice/Public Safety, on Predictive Policing from **GovWin, a Deltek Network** on **Vimeo**.

In a recent study on the effectiveness of predictive policing, the **Santa Cruz Police** stated that it has 30 percent more calls for service, but 20 percent less staff. This demand has forced Santa Cruz and other police departments to think proactively about policing. A lack of funds and a reduced police force are continuing to drive the market for predictive analytics. States and localities aren't expected to see a turnaround in their budgets within the next few years, so these tools will continue to see increased demand.

Analyst Take:

With this continued need, vendors will need to begin thinking proactively about who to target for new business. The obvious would be to target agencies experiencing layoffs and reduced resources. However, vendors should not forget about agencies that have a full staff and money to spend. It actually might be harder for a vendor to sell to an agency that is strapped for cash than it is to sell to an agency that has funds. This might sound obvious, but a lot of vendors shy away from low-hanging fruit due to increased competition.

For more a more in-depth look at predictive policing, see Deltek's recently published **Analyst Perspective**.