Articles   School of Marketing

1987-01-01

Law Enforcement Marketing: Perceptions of a Police Force

Peter Bohan
Technological University Dublin

LAW ENFORCEMENT MARKETING: PERCEPTIONS OF A POLICE FORCE

Peter Bohan, Dublin College of Catering, Dublin Institute of Technology
David Yorke, The University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology

Summary

This article examines the role and applicability of marketing in a public service organisation. It is argued that the changing external environment now facing many police agencies requires them to develop a marketing orientation if they are to continue to be effective. Obstacles to achieving this as well as the key factors that impinge on the public 'image' of the police force are discussed.

The authors then focus on a major study of the Dublin population's perception of its police force, the Garda Siochana, over a wide range of concerns. The research indicates that in general the Irish police force enjoys a markedly positive image. However a level of dissatisfaction is identified over certain issues and among certain segments of the population, especially youth.

The adoption of the marketing concept and of a bilateral community orientated approach to policing is recommended. This involves encouraging active police involvement in community activities, developing 'internal marketing' to nurture a highly motivated and customer-conscious force as well as gathering and interpreting regular marketing information. As the effectiveness of police operations largely depends on the co-operation and goodwill of the community, the primary task of marketing is seen as maintaining and improving the image of the police.

It is increasingly recognised that marketing principles are applicable beyond the domain of normal commercial enterprise to the marketing of organisations, persons and ideas.[1,2] Many successful applications of marketing by non-business organisations can be found in the arts, healthcare, energy conservation, public transportation and education.[3] With the coming of age of non-profit marketing, this paper explores aspects of law enforcement marketing in general and then focuses on a study about perceptions of the Irish police force or Garda Siochana (the Gaelic language designation of the force).

The Changing External Police Environment

The police agency, like any other organisation, does not operate in a vacuum. The socio-economic structure, values and conditions within the community are everchanging, frequently at a rapid pace. Such changes will affect the police agency's ability to provide efficient and effective services. To maintain its effectiveness, the police agency must develop a understanding of these social structures and values.

In the last two decades Ireland has experienced a dramatic increase in crime, a major cause of concern for the government and the population as a whole. According to McCullagh, the rise in the level of crime showed a marked increase after 1966.[4] This increasing crime rate is of particular concern in the metropolitan area which accounts for two-thirds of reported crime. While statistics for the period highlight the changes in the level of crime, they show a decline in the detection rate. Official published statistics, while useful in showing trends in the number of types of offences for a given period, do little to answer an important question — what are the causes of this increase in crime? Let us now turn our attention to the changes which have taken place in the external environment and their possible effect on crime.

Rottman in his study of crime in Ireland points to a number of such changes, in particular, the demographic structure of the population, material affluence brought about by industrialisation and the process of urbanisation.[5] The demographic characteristics of the population have undergone considerable change since the 1960s. One feature of the period has been the extraordinary population growth, which by the mid-1970s showed a rate of 1.5% per annum, four times the EEC average.[6] This population explosion has resulted in a disproportionate number of people under the age of twenty-five years. This age group is often credited with a large percentage of committed crime.

Economic change is often cited as a possible factor contributing to the level of crime. The experience of other countries shows that with economic prosperity higher levels of crime are recorded and new trends in criminal activity emerge. With industrialisation it is usual to find an increase in the urban population, largely due to migration from rural areas. As a result, with the process of urbanisation one can associate greater prosperity and also increased levels of crime.[7] Social change too, may play a part in leading to higher crime rates. One such factor is unemployment. Philips and Votley found a high correlation between high rates of crime in years with high unemployment and the reverse in periods of low unemployment.[8] As there is little evidence to show that the

The Authors

Peter Bohan lectures in Marketing
and Management Studies at the
Dublin College of Catering, Dublin
Institute of Technology. His
research interests are in services
and non-profit marketing.

David Yorke is a lecturer in
Marketing at The University of
Manchester Institute of Science and
Technology. He has published in
leading European journals. His
current research interest is in the
marketing of professional services.

current high level of unemployment in Ireland is declining, this could significantly contribute to higher levels of crime in the future. There is strong evidence to suggest that a strong relationship exists between social, economic and cultural change and the level of crime. One such endorsement comes from the Irish Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors, who focus on the breakdown of social norms and the concentration of social deprivation in particular areas.[9]

These changes should cause a police agency to question its current goals, strategies and procedures. Clearly, such change can have a profound effect on the agency's activities. What has been the response of the police agency, both in Ireland and internationally, to this changed environment? Nicholls and Schaefer writing in the UK describe a number of responses which include more police manpower, greater reliance on technology, high visibility schemes and a variety of public involvement programmes.[10]

A standard argument prevails that the solution to rising crime levels lies in having more police. Between 1961 and 1983, the Irish police force increased by 5,000. Over the same period the level of crime has increased, while detection rates have fallen. McCullagh suggests that the large increase in the size of the police force does not constitute a barrier to the rise in the level of crime.[11] As a possible response to increased crime, some advocate the need for wider police powers. The case for wider powers has been argued strongly by the Garda Siochana, and partially conceded to it in The Criminal Justice Act (1984). Research however suggests that the widening of police powers may be counter-productive in that certain sectors of the community become alienated. Further, the basis for effective policing, that of public confidence, may be eroded if such powers are increased.

Another response to increased crime is the operations approach which includes the use of technology, such as criminalistics, electronics and communications equipment. The police use of radios, cars, and technical experts has resulted in police work becoming in a real sense, professionalised. However, there is evidence to suggest that the effect of such modernisation has been to further isolate the police from the community. Jones and Levi argue that the advances in police technology have the effect of creating physical distance between police officers and the public.[12] This physical distance has been cited as a contributory factor in the deterioration of police/public relations in many socially deprived areas of the UK.

The community relations approach attempts to enhance the relationship and understanding between members of the police agency and members of the community.[13] Traditionally, most police community relations programmes were developed on the individual experience of chief officers or the collective wisdom of the organisation. This unilateral approach to police community relations creates problems which may limit the effectiveness of such programmes. Gourley suggests that the failure of community relations is often a result of the lack of interest and non-involvement on the part of the public because of its non-participation in the formulation of new programmes.[14] Increasingly, many police agencies are recognising the need to switch the emphasis of community relations from the unilateral approach to a more interactive process with the community. The report on the police prepared by the US National Commission on Criminal Justice emphasises such a need: "Every police agency should recognise the importance of bilateral communication with the public and should constantly search to improve its ability to determine their needs and expectations and to inform them of the resulting policies developed to improve the delivery of the police service."[15]

The authors of this paper believe that the bilateral approach to police-community relations in a real way describes the basic concept of marketing. It emphasises the necessity to determine the needs of the community and to develop and implement policies to serve these needs.

Towards a Marketing Orientation

It is possible to identify a number of potential benefits that will likely accrue to a police agency from the adoption of a marketing orientation. First, it will lead to improved public service. In response to the needs of the community the police agency becomes conscious of all the factors which affect public satisfaction, as it realises its performance is usually measured by how well it is perceived by the population. Further, the adoption of a consumer orientation is likely to secure more legislative support. By improving public services and efficiency, politicians and others may look more favourably upon requests for additional funds. Finally, a marketing orientation will lead to a better understanding of consumer needs and a more careful approach to designing and providing services, all of which should result in higher levels of consumer satisfaction. In turn, increased support for the agency will occur which is vital in its efforts to combat crime.

Police agencies like many other public service organisations are often reluctant to change and adapt because of their monopoly status. Bennett points to the complacency often found in police agencies due to this monopoly position.[16] While this situation may be seen to prevail, citizens are now showing an increasing readiness to protest against mediocre services.[17] While the police agency traditionally monopolised the security of persons and property, it is coming increasingly under competition. For instance, security firms are now policing commerce and alarm companies are providing extensive crime prevention advisory services. In the future, the police agency may have to compete for public support.

Research would seem to suggest that there is a production rather than a consumer orientation in public agencies.[18] Three possible explanations for the absence of a consumer orientation may be put forward. First, while public agencies may accept a consumer orientation, they may not be close enough to their clients to appreciate that they can see problems and solutions differently. Preiss and Ehrlich found that public definition of what the police ought to be doing at any one time can be different to the way in which the police define what they ought to be doing.[19] Thus, in order to satisfy the needs and wants of their clients, the police agency requires accurate and relevant information. Second, police administrators may be aware of clients's perferences, but choose to impose on them their own view of what is better for the community. Third, while decision makers in police agencies may express a preference for a change in orientation, they may choose to actually implement policies not required by clients due to influence from outside sources, such as legislators.

As McKay[20] argues, the move towards a marketing orientation may be a difficult process. It usually demands new approaches to planning, modification of operating practices and re-staffing programmes. These changes brought about by a new orientation may be seen as a threat by those in the police agency and may be rejected. Jones suggests that the possible reluctance to embrace marketing on the part of public agency administrators is because marketing itself is seen to have a tarnished image.[21] It is frequently associated with wasteful expenditure, especially in the areas of research and promotion. Because the police agency deals with intangible offerings, there may be a reluctance to spend scarce resources where results are difficult to assess. Further, the language and concepts used by marketers may cause additional resentment.

Ingleburger and Angell point to two characteristics of the police sub-culture which may resist or even stifle such change.[22] They suggest that the vast majority of police agencies have become secure with their traditional organisational structure. The duties of its members are usually described in detail and superiors tend to ensure that procedures are carried out according to the rules. As the external environment becomes more heterogeneous, these rules and regulations lack the flexibility to respond to the changing needs of the community. The second characteristic of police officers is that they are a product of a rule orientated structure and are unable to differentiate in response requirements.

While obstacles to change may exist in the police agency, it is the function of senior personnel to ensure that a smooth transition takes place. Their major concern should be the provision of an organisational climate which would facilitate the change to a consumer orientation. According to Ames, a shift in thinking and attitude throughout the whole organisation is required, in order that every individual in each area understands the importance of being responsive to market needs.[23]

Police Marketing Research

In order for the police agency to act as a responsive organisation it must gather and interpret information; it must involve itself in marketing research. There may be obstacles or differences within which the research is planned and conducted. Problems often encountered include the lack of secondary data, difficulty in obtaining reliable measures of salient variables and obtaining approval for funding research programmes.[24] Dyer and Skimp point to the superiority complex often portrayed by marketing people and the resistance of administration as additional problems when using marketing research in public agencies.[25]

While problems of market analysis may exist for police agencies, large scale consumer studies have been undertaken which suggest that marketing research can play an important part in policy formulation and evaluation. In 1966, Dr. William Belson conducted a study to determine the present state of the relationship between the police and the public in London.[26] It was intended that the survey would indicate whether there were grounds for remedial action of any kind and the formulation of any such action. A similar study carried out between 1980 and 1982 for the London Metropolitan Police attempted to establish the extent or the lack of support among some sections of the population, in particular ethnic minorities.[27] While it is impossible to include the findings and recommendations of these studies in this paper, it is evident that the findings led to changes in police policy.

It is possible to use and interpret the findings of consumer surveys to determine satisfaction levels, community attitudes towards law enforcement efforts and overall citizen perception of community safety. Another use of such findings would be to support or invalidate arguments for or against modification or expansion of existing police programmes. By conducting annual surveys, the police agency could note shifts in satisfaction or dissatisfaction with police service, and also perferences for new services.[28]

Unfortunately many of these surveys, while being very informative, are mainly conducted on an *ad hoc* basis. What is needed is a continuous and systematic assessment of market information to determine the overall performance of the agency as judged by the community. Bennett[29] argues for the use of opinion polls to help the police to gauge its performance and standing at national or local level, as well as to provide facts with which unfounded criticism may be discredited. Such regular surveys and the proper use of the data could improve police/public interaction. While the traditional marketing research surveys may be used by the police agency, other sources of information are also available to it. Like the sales representative, the individual police officer is a valuable source of information. According to Anderton, police officers on the beat are the nerve end of policing, they are the "eyes and ears of the force".[30] By harnessing this resource, vital information could be used by police superiors as changes emerge in the community.

Image of Police

In recent years, many police administrations have become very conscious of the image of their department in the eyes of the public. One such police force, the London Metropolitan Police, devotes two of its administrative departments to the marketing of its image.[31] What do we mean by this notion of 'image'?

Avery describes image as the concept which relates to the external form of the organisation.[32] Singh in his definition, points to this external

influence.[33] He refers to police image as the standing of the police in the eyes of the public. According to Murphy, police image is the reaction which emanates from the public and which is based on the public's expression of confidence in, and respect for, a police agency.[34]

The above definitions stress the external form of police image, in other words, they emphasise public opinion. While these definitions provide an explanation of police image in general terms, they fail to show how in real terms, such an image may be a highly variable one. In one sense, there may be as many police images as there are policemen or members of the public. Haldene suggests that police image is not a fixed and tangible object. It is the image which each member of the public perceives as being the police.[35] Therefore, police image may be many things to many people, affected by many factors, such as the media, dishonest members or inefficiency. Why is image important to the police agency? Of all the public service agencies, the police force has the highest visibility. The police agency's ability to detect crime and to apprehend offenders depends largely on the willingness of the public to report crime and to co-operate with the agency.[36] An understanding of the nature of police image and ways of maintaining or improving it is one of the main marketing tasks undertaken by the police agency.

Since attempts to modify an image must stem from an understanding of the nature of that image, the authors will review some of the variables which may contribute to an explanation of the perceptions/attitudes of the public towards the police. Decker's article on citizens attitudes towards the police provides a useful framework for the discussion.[37] Individual level variables include race, age, sex, and socio-economic status. The contextual variables include personal experience with the police and the effects of victimisation.

Race: Of all the individual variables which are likely to affect people's attitudes towards the police, race has received the greatest attention in the literature. Brooks and Frederick in their study of police image found that the variable which best differentiates the subjects image of the police is race.[38] They found that blacks view the police more negatively than do whites. Campbell and Schumann examined the perception of the quality of service and found it to be of significance in the formulation of racial attitudes towards the police (while race is the biggest single correlate of attitudes to police, it does not apply in the Irish context due to the absence of ethnic plurality in Irish society).[39]

Age: As with race, age has been found to have a high correlation with citizens' perceptions of the police. Shaw and Williamson found that the young tend to be more critical and to respect the police less.[40] Other research has concluded that the older the age group the more favourable the image of the police.[41]

Sex: Research would seem to indicate that there is a relationship between sex and public perception of the police. Shaw *et al* reported that a lower proportion of men than women held the police in high esteem.[42] However while females may perceive the police more favourably than males, the difference is not significant.[43]

Socio-economic Status: In efforts to develop explanations of attitudes towards the police, little research has included this variable. However, Shaw and Williamson found a positive relationship between social class and attitudes towards the police.[44] While there may be a relationship between the variable and perceptions of the police, it may not be as strong as for age or even race.

Experience with the Police: Evidence found in the literature would suggest that citizen contact with the police is a major factor affecting image. However, it is important to recognise that there are several kinds of contacts which one can have with the police. A distinction must be made between voluntary and involuntary contacts. The former are seen as resulting in a more favourable image of the police, while in the case of involuntary contacts less favourable images are found. Further, the level of satisfaction with the encounter may be based on the quality of the experience.[45] This quality may include the helpfulness, kindness, tolerance

and courtesy of police officers with whom the citizen was in contact.
Effects of Victimisation: There is a lack of evidence to suggest that
victimisation may be a determinant of attitudes towards the police.
However, it may be reasonable to assume that citizens who have been
victims of crime may have less favourable perceptions of the police.

Unsatisfactory Image
Why do people have poor opinions of the police? Why have surveys
indicated an inherent apathy among citizens towards law enforcement
agencies?[46] Friction and sometimes the hostility between the police and
the community is the result of the nature of police work. Wilson and
Western point to the complex dilemma inherent in the police role.[47] The
police are both the servant and the master of the public. They are paid by
the taxpayer, yet are called upon to control the behaviour of the taxpayer
in many situations. Policing often means placing restrictions on an
individual's freedom, curbing and controlling his activities. Consequently
this may often be received with hostility and resistance. It is this
experience of the community which goes to develop an image of the
police in the mind of the public. The solution to this complex police role
is perhaps to increase the scope for more voluntary contacts with the
community. Consequently the public would see in the police officer a
more human aspect and less of the law enforcer.

A second factor which may contribute to a poor image is that of police
misbehaviour. Studies have related the causes of such malpractice to
factors such as bad reputation, poor self esteem and overwork. While this
may be so, one cannot accept such behaviour from members who have
dealings with the public. Its net effect is to damage the image of the
agency. It is imperative that the agency be seen as fair and efficient in
dealing with complaints made by the public against members of the force.
Public confidence can be inspired and police image improved only if the
agency can deal efficiently and fairly with internal discipline problems.

Many images of the police held by the public are not formed by personal
contact, but are derived from other sources such as friends and in
particular the media. The media are often seen as a negative factor in the
relationship between the police and the public. The way in which the
media on occasions depict the police as corrupt, stupid and inefficient,
contributes to the unfavourable image of the police. The police agency
cannot afford any insularity which may prevent an insight by the media or
the public into the workings of the agency. Instead, they must provide
information to keep the public informed of what the police are doing and
why they are doing it.[48]

Fostering good relations with the media is basically a job for public
relations. Bolger goes so far as to suggest that the police agency's total
marketing approach will normally evolve into a public relations exercise,
which attempts to project a favourable image for the agency as a public
service institution.[49] Good police/media relations are essential if rumours
which may be detrimental to the police are to be disproved.

The authors believe that the 'internal marketing concept' may play a
significant role in improving the image of the police agency. Its employees
are the key resources of the organisation in its dealings with the public. As
already mentioned, a major factor which explains people's attitudes
towards the police is the personal experience an individual may have with
them. As the individual officer is in constant contact with the public, the
first step in improving the image of the agency should begin here. The
main emphasis of the internal marketing concept is the need for
customer-conscious staff.[50] The image of the police force not only stems
from how individual officers look in their uniforms but how they act
towards citizens.[51]

Frequently, the police officer is associated by the public with the agency
as a whole. Research findings have confirmed that the discourteous/rude
behaviour of individual officers was one singular cause standing in the
way of the police getting the necessary public support.[52] Thus, any

incidents of individual misconduct or incompetence may not be associated with the individual concerned, but are often seen as a reflection of the agency as a whole. On the other hand, if a citizen comes into contact with an officer who is courteous and who has a good appearance, a more favourable image of the agency will result. To motivate personnel to be conscious of community needs, and of their part in the process of improving the image of the agency, a sound personnel policy is required, particularly in the areas of recruitment and training

The Authors' Study

In order to test the validity of these views and hypotheses about law enforcement agencies and the role of marketing, and to set the exercise in an Irish context, the authors undertook a major study of the Dublin population's perception of the Garda Siochana. It sought to identify the image the city's citizenry had of its police agency. To execute this the research addressed the following:

- Public perception of the level of crime
- Perceptions of the public regarding police powers
- Willingness to contact the police
- Perceived characteristics of the Garda Siochana
- Analysis by different population segments.

The exploratory research was undertaken in order to ensure that the primary research was properly geared to the issues and realities of the study. For this purpose, two focus group discussions were conducted with respondents from various age and social class groups. The main survey was conducted in the Dublin City Borough. Within this region, multi-stage, stratified random sampling was utilised. The achieved sample for the study was 280 respondents, which represented 93% of the target sample. The respondents were all aged 18 years and over and resided in the survey area.

Interviews were conducted using a questionnaire consisting of mainly fully structured questions, with only a limited number of open response questions. The questionnaire coverage was largely determined by the exploratory research, the final draft of which consisted of thirteen sections. The cross-analysis of the results was restricted to three variables; age, social class and sex. These variables were selected after a careful examination of the demographic factors which might significantly affect people's attitudes towards the police.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

As the study focussed on a large number of issues concerning the Garda Siochana, the authors intend only to provide the reader here with an overall appraisal of the key findings of the research.

Public Perception of the Level of Crime

Respondents were asked whether they thought the level of crime in Dublin had decreased, stayed the same or increased over the last year. The results are set out in Table 1.

Over 60% of respondents felt that crime had increased, while only 6.8% felt it had decreased. One quarter of the sample perceived no change.

Table 1
Respondents Perception of the Level of Crime in Dublin.

Has the level of crime in Dublin in the last year . . .?

Decreased	6.8%
Stayed the same	25.4%
Increased	62.7%
Don't Know	5.1%

Those respondents who felt that crime had increased were then asked: "What measures should the police take to combat this increase?". The measures suggested were fairly straightforward with 42.5% of respondents wanting more police on foot, 26.9% looking for increaed number of police, while 24.2% felt that more police patrols were the answer.

Level of Satisfaction with the Garda Siochana

Table 2 details the respondents level of satisfaction with the Garda Siochana. In general, satisfaction with the police tended to be markedly on the positive side, with 62.4% either quite satisfied or very satisfied. The proportion of respondents dissatisfied was 20.8% with 16.8% expressing neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction.

Table 2
Level of Satisfaction with the Garda Siochana.

	very satisfied %	quite satisfied %	not very satisfied %	not at all satisfied . %	neither satisfied / dissatisfied %
SOCIAL CLASS					
AB	11.6	62.8	8.8	—	16.8
C1	12.6	50.7	14.5	3.2	19.0
C2	7.7	52.6	17.9	5.2	16.6
DE	11.5	42.4	27.6	7.7	10.8
AGE*					
18-25	1.5	46.2	29.2	3.0	20.1
25-35	9.8	58.8	7.8	5.8	17.6
35-55	6.3	57.8	16.2	1.2	18.7
55+	24.3	43.9	15.9	3.7	12.2
SEX					
Male	8.1	48.2	16.7	22.6	4.4
Female	14.2	53.9	17.0	12.7	2.2
TOTAL	11.1	51.3	17.6	3.2	16.8

* Statistically significant at p<.05 by the Chi-Square Test.

While respondents expressed a relatively high level of satisfaction with the Garda Siochana, differences were found in some population sectors. Of the respondents aged between 18 and 25 years, 47.7% expressed some level of satisfaction compared to 68.2% in the 55+ age category. In all, the older age groups expressed a higher level of satisfaction with the police than the younger age categories. The level of dissatisfaction was greatest in the lower social class categories. In particular, 5.2% of the respondents in the C2 class were not at all satisfied. Further, 35.3% of respondents in the DE social category were either not very or not at all satisfied with the police.

Public Response to a Number of Positive and Negative Statements About the Garda Siochana

The general level of satisfaction expressed by the public does not rule out negative reactions to, or criticisms of, the police. To obtain a more specific indication of the public's level of satisfaction with the Garda Siochana, ten Likert statements were used. Respondents were required to express their level of agreement/disagreement with the statement on a five point scale (Table 3). Respondents tended to express agreement with those statements which portrayed the police in an unfavourable manner. In terms of police conduct, 56.8% of the respondents felt that the police tended to abuse suspects either physicaly or mentally, while 40.3% agreed that the police may cover up the facts in court. With respect to police impartiality, 67.7% felt that the Garda Siochana treated various population sectors unfairly. Over one third of the respondents felt that in certain situations the police were likely to accept bribes and favours from members of the public.

While criticism was made of the police in relation to specific matters, there was evidence of a sympathetic insight by the public into the special difficulties of the police. For instance, over 70% of the respondents

Table 3
Respondents Agreement/Disagreement with Positive and Negative Statements about the Garda Siochana

	Agreement %	Disagreement %	Undecided %
Negative Statements			
In certain circumstances the Garda Siochana accept bribes and favours from members of the public	36.3	40.3	23.4
The Garda Siochana sometimes exceed their powers by abusing suspects physically or mentally	56.8	18.3	24.8
In court, some Gardai would rather cover up the facts than lose face	40.3	24.9	34.9
The Gardai are never around when you need them	50.0	32.0	18.0
Neighbourhood Watch is a scheme to keep worried house-owners happy and has little to do with preventing crime	36.5	44.2	19.3
The Gardai tend to go easier on certain segments of the population and harder on others	67.7	18.1	14.1
Positive Statements	%	%	%
The media in Ireland tend to run down the Garda Siochana which give them a poor public image	44.6	37.8	17.6
The Gardai are fighting a losing battle against crime where the law favours the criminal over the police	74.9	13.3	11.9
The Gardai do not get enough thanks for risking their lives in carrying out their duties	73.6	16.3	10.1
The Gardai in your area make a genuine effort to find out the real needs of the community	26.7	52.7	20.6

endorsed the statement which outlines the difficulty the police encounter in their fight against crime. Further, the media as a factor contributing to an unfavourable police image was endorsed by 44.6% of the respondents.

Public Perception Concerning the Powers of the Garda Siochana
Respondents were asked if they thought the police had too much power, enough power or not enough power (Table 4); 7.2% felt that they had too much power, 44.4% thought they had adequate power and 41.2% felt that their power should be increased. Respondents in the lower social categories tended to perceive the police as having too much power in comparison to only 6.2% in both the AB and C1 classes. The evidence suggests that young people tend much more than their older counterparts to state that the police have too much power. This is particularly evident in the 18-25 age group (16.9%), whereas no respondents in the 55+ age category felt that the police had too much power. Equally, fewer in the youngest age group felt that the police do not have enough power. Males more than females expressed the belief that the police have too much or enough power.

Willingness to Contact the Police
The public's willingness to contact the police is very important in that contacting the police may provide them with information which they may use in their investigations. Respondents were asked if they would get in touch with the Garda Siochana in each of seven situations (Table 5).

The findings suggest much variation in the respondents willingness to contact the police over the seven situations. The percentage who would get in touch with the police did not rise above 64.7% for any of the

Table 4
Public Perception Concerning the Powers of the Police

	too much power %	enough power %	not enough power %	don't know %
SOCIAL CLASS				
AB	2.9	49.2	45.0	2.9
C1	3.3	53.9	34.9	7.9
C2	6.5	42.3	47.4	3.8
DE	13.7	34.7	35.6	16.0
AGE*				
18-25	16.9	43.1	32.3	7.7
25-35	7.9	50.9	33.3	7.9
35-55	6.2	46.2	41.4	6.2
55+	—	40.0	52.5	7.5
SEX				
Male	8.1	48.1	37.9	5.9
Female	6.4	41.0	44.7	7.9
TOTAL	7.2	44.4	41.2	7.2

* Statistically significant at p <.05 by the Chi-Square Test.

situations examined. In particular, less than 50% would contact the police if they knew someone was selling stolen property. This would suggest that offences of this nature find a level of acceptance in the community. The lowest social categories expressed the greatest reluctance to contact the police in this situation. Less than 50% also would not contact the Garda Siochana when leaving their house vacant.

In general, young people expressed a greater reluctance to get in touch with the police for all of the situations. This was particularly true for the situation in which "someone was acting suspiciously". Finally, willingness to get in touch with the police may be dependent upon the situation. The more personal the situation the greater the reluctance to call the police. However, as the findings show a large variation in the willingness of respondents to contact the police, this may have implications in terms of confidence in the force.

Table 5
Respondents Willingness to Contact the Police

Situations	would get in touch %	might get in touch %	would not get in touch %
If your neighbours child was pushing drugs	64.7	24.4	10.9
If you saw a traffic accident	60.5	33.3	6.2
If you saw somebody acting suspiciously	55.4	32.6	12.0
If you were leaving you house vacant for a period of time	48.5	23.0	28.5
If someone was selling stolen property	46.6	29.7	23.9
If your child was bullied on the road	10.9	14.2	74.8
If you had a domestic quarrel	4.0	5.8	90.2

Image of the Garda Siochana
To establish the public perception of the image of the police, a seven point scale consisting of thirteen bipolar adjectives was used. Respondents were requested to indicate on the scale the point which came nearest their view of the police for each of the characteristics. Generally, respondents tended to view the Garda Siochana favourably in terms of the chosen characteristics, as shown in Table 6. The findings would suggest that the 'image' of the Gardai is markedly positive. For example, 54.9% of respondents saw the police as very or quite "helpful", while over one

quarter viewed them as being very "courteous" and very "honest". Equally, members of the public tended to deny that the police were "rude" and "unfair".

Table 6
Respondents Ratings of Police Characteristics

Character-istic Rated	very %	quite %	slightly %	un-decided %	slightly %	quite %	very %	Character-istic Rated
helpful	32.5	22.4	18.8	13.7	7.9	2.2	2.5	*unhelpful*
courteous	27.1	26.4	17.6	17.2	7.3	1.8	2.6	*discourteous*
friendly	22.0	26.7	20.6	18.0	6.5	4.0	2.2	*unfriendly*
trustworthy	24.5	24.2	19.1	19.5	6.5	3.6	2.6	*untrustworthy*
polite	26.0	25.3	16.6	15.9	8.7	3.2	4.3	*rude*
honest	27.8	22.7	16.1	22.3	7.0	2.9	1.2	*dishonest*
sympathetic	23.3	21.0	21.5	20.7	5.5	3.6	4.4	*unsympathetic*
fair	18.5	22.8	21.4	23.9	5.4	5.4	2.5	*unfair*
tolerant	21.5	20.4	18.6	20.4	9.5	6.6	2.9	*intolerant*
well trained	19.9	21.7	18.8	17.0	10.8	5.8	6.1	*badly trained*
likeable	19.6	23.2	14.1	28.3	8.0	2.9	4.0	*unlikeable*
efficient	13.8	21.8	20.4	16.7	14.5	6.2	6.6	*inefficient*
modern	12.0	18.5	19.6	23.6	12.3	8.3	5.8	*old fashioned*

However, with respect to four characteristics, less favourable ratings were found. Over one quarter of the respondents found the police to be "inefficient" and "old-fashioned", while one fifth saw them as "badly trained". In terms of "liking" the police, almost 30% of the sample were undecided.

Image of the Police by Age of Respondent
While in general terms respondents perceived the characteristics positively, a less favourable image of the police was found to exist among younger members of the population. Table 7 contains seven

Table 7
Image of the Police by Age of Respondent

	fair %	toler-ant %	trust-worthy %	cour-teous %	like-able %	honest %	polite %
VERY							
18-35	7.3	6.6	14.5	17.4	8.5	15.3	11.8
35+	27.1	33.5	32.2	34.9	28.6	37.9	32.9
QUITE							
18-35	15.0	19.2	21.3	23.1	18.5	21.5	25.8
35+	28.3	21.8	27.0	29.3	26.5	23.0	27.9
SLIGHTLY							
18-35	27.9	25.2	21.6	22.7	18.0	21.2	22.8
35+	16.6	13.9	16.2	13.2	10.7	12.7	11.9
UNDECIDED	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
18-35	30.5	20.7	25.7	20.6	32.7	25.6	19.9
35+	19.4	19.0	14.9	13.9	25.1	19.6	13.6

	un-fair %	intoler-ant %	untrust-worthy %	discour-teous %	unlike-able %	dis-honest %	rude %
SLIGHTLY							
18-35	6.4	10.9	8.4	7.4	11.3	10.1	8.5
35+	4.3	8.2	4.9	7.5	4.9	4.4	8.7
QUITE							
18-35	7.3	12.6	2.5	4.1	3.8	4.0	3.5
35+3.7	1.8	4.3	—	2.4	1.8	3.7	
VERY							
18-35	5.6	4.8	6.0	4.7	7.2	2.3	7.7
35+	0.6	1.8	0.6	1.2	1.8	0.6	1.2

Statistically significant at p <.05 by the Chi-Square Test.

characteristics which depict the difference in perception of the police between two groups; the 18-25 age category and those aged over 35 years.

Over the seven characteristics there was a strong tendency for those aged between 18 and 35 years to view the police negatively. For instance, 5.6% of this age group saw the police as "very unfair", while 7.7% rated them as "very rude". Similarly, nearly as many respondents felt that the police were "very untrustworthy" and "very discourteous". In contrast, 28.6% of those aged 35 years and over regarded the police as "very likeable" and 33.5% saw them as being "very tolerant".

Perceptions of the Police in Different Population Segments
The data was analysed by the background characteristics of the respondents. The demographic variables used in the study were age, social class and sex. One of the objectives of the research was to examine the relationship between the citizen's perceptions of the Garda Siochana and these analytical variables.

Social Class: Generally, those in the lower social categories tend to be less satisfied with the police. In terms of police characteristics they perceived the Gardai as "unfair" and "inefficient" more than the higher social classes. Their dissatisfaction with the police may be reflected in their reluctance to contact them as these lower social categories exhibited a lower level of contact with the police.

Age: In terms of general satisfaction with the police, there was marked variation with this variable. Satisfaction with the police was greatest in the older age groups. A more specific indication of this dissatisfaction was to be found in the level of contact with the police. While young people indicated a higher level of contact, they were less satisfied with this contact. Over the range of police characteristics, these younger respondents had a less favourable image of the Gardai in contrast to older respondents. Furthermore, they felt that the police had too much power, and in over six situations exhibited a greater unwillingness to get in touch with them. The findings of the study would suggest that age is a very important factor in citizens perceptions of the police.

Sex: Overall, there is a tendency for females to be more supportive of the Gardai than males. For instance, they expressed a greater level of satisfaction with the Gardai than males. In addition, they showed greater disagreement with those statements which portrayed the police in an unfavourable manner.

Implications and Recommendations
It is not possible for the authors to present in detail in this article all the findings of their study. It is believed however that a more in-depth analysis of the research would continue to underpin the following conclusions and recommendations. One important overall conclusion is that respondents in the survey viewed the Garda Siochana favourably at a general level, indicating that the force enjoys a markedly positive image. However a level of dissatisfaction with the Garda Siochana is clearly visible among certain sectors of the population. In particular young people see the police less favourably than older age groups, a factor reflected in their willingness to contact the police. Further, in contrast to older people they see the police as "very untrustworthy and very intolerant".

Because a police force's performance will ultimately be measured by how well it is perceived by the various segments within the community, the authors of this paper propose the adoption of the marketing concept and a bilateral community orientated approach to policing. Such an approach will result in not only increased benefits to the community but also in increased efficiency for the police.

Community-Needs Orientation: The marketing concept calls for a re-orientation of emphasis, which essentially involves looking towards the needs of the community before developing services. Many police organisations rely on crime statistics as the basis for policing policy. While useful in establishing the number and types of offences committed, such statistics provide little insight into the causes of crime. A more realistic

83

basis for police strategy should emerge from the monitoring of changes in the external police environment.

In the context of the present study, a possible measure to combat the increased level of crime would be to deploy more police officers to the 'home beat' system of policing, the success of which is dependent on police officers being confined to a small area or neighbourhood for long periods.

Segmentation: In its efforts to determine the needs of the community, the police agency must recognise that the population is made up of many diverse segments. Ideally, the police should seek to be all things to all people all of the time (i.e. offering a full range of "services" to the entire "community" as "frequently" as demanded. However, due to the lack of resources this may be impossible. Therefore, the police agency should direct its efforts to those segments which warrant specific attention, in other words, those segments of the population which perceive the police negatively.

The findings reveal a serious image problem to exist in one segment of the population namely, youth. In comparison to older segments of the population they perceive the police less favourably. In the light of these findings it is necessary that the police initiate and implement a programme to improve their image in this segment of the community. The objectives and goals of such a programme may incorporate the following tasks:

- Co-ordinate and centralize information relevant to police/youth relations
- Identify and resolve sources of conflict between the police and this sector
- Develop policies which would encourage active police involvement in community activities
- Stimulate interest and concern among the youth for police/community problems.

The Internal Programme: While respondents generally are favourably disposed towards the police, many criticisms of the force are made in relation to specific matters. Many of the publics criticisms relate to the personal behaviour of the officer, such as police conduct and the unfair treatment of various population sectors.

As the individual officer is an essential part of service delivery, every effort should be made to reduce the possibility of behaviour which might lead to a negative perception of the force. In this regard, 'internal marketing' can play an important role. The primary objective of internal marketing is to get highly motivated and customer-conscious personnel. To achieve this objective, an internal marketing programme should be introduced. The success of such a programme will depend upon the incorporation of the following:

- A management style which supports community consciousness. If top management are not customer-conscious, the rest of the organisation cannot be expected to be either.
- Training programmes, the purpose of which is to increase community consciousness amongst mature and new police officers. Too often, internal training programmes concentrate on the technical aspects of the job with little attention being given to how the public should be treated in different contact situations.
- A clearly devised personnel policy is vital in the recruitment of suitably motivated officers.

Marketing Information: The successful implementation of the marketing concept will necessitate the setting up of a detailed information system. An essential part of the marketing concept requires that strategy be preceded by such information. Further, strategies should only be modified

as a result of such market information which should best indicate how to serve community needs.

While consumer studies have been used by police agencies in the past, they have tended to be on an *ad hoc* basis. It is only by continuous and systematic assessment of market information that the overall performance of the agency can be judged. In the establishment of a police marketing information system consideration should be given to the following:

- Citizen involvement. Members of the population should be able to express their feelings and attitudes toward the police.
- The use of opinion polls and consumer surveys.
- Procedures for citizen complaints and recommendations.
- A formal structure where individual officers 'on the beat' can provide a valuable input to the system.

References

1. P. Kotler and J. Levy, "Broadening the concept of marketing", *Journal of Marketing*, vol. 33, 1969, pp. 10-15.

2. R. O'Leary and I. Iredale, "The marketing concept: quo vadis?", *European Journal of Marketing*, vol. 10, no. 3, 1976, pp. 146-157.

3. C.H. Lovelock and C.B. Weinberg, "Public and nonprofit marketing comes of age", in G. Zaltam and T.V. Bonona, (eds.), *Review of Marketing*, Chicago, American Marketing Association, 1978, pp. 413-452.

4. C. McCullagh, *Deviance and Crime in Ireland: A Sociological Profile*, Institue of Public Administration, 1986, p. 346.

5. D. Rottman, *Crime in the Republic of Ireland – Statistical Trends and Their Interpretation*, Economic and Social Research Institute, Paper no. 2, 1980, p. 10.

6. D.A. Courtney, *Demographic Structure and Change: a Sociological Profile*, Institute of Public Administration, 1986, p. 205.

7. L. Shelley, *Crime and Modernisation: The Impact of Industrialisation on Urbanisation and Crime*, Illinois, University Press, 1981, p. 65.

8. J. Philips and H. Votley, *The Economics of Crime Control*, London, Harper and Row, 1981, p. 79.

9. Association of Garda Sergeants and Inspectors, A Discussion Paper containing Proposals for a Scheme of Community Policing, 1982, p. 3.

10. W. Nicholls and R.S. Schaefer, "Bridging the information gap between the police and the community", *The Police Chief*, April 1984, p. 29.

11. T. McCullagh, "The limits of policing", *Social Studies*, vol. 7, no. 4, 1986 pp. 237-247.

12. S. Jones and M. Levi, "The police and the majority: the neglect of the obvious" *Police Journal*, vol. 56, no. 4, October 1983, p. 360.

13. R. Hommant, "The image of the police: a survey of Detroit area residents", *American Journal of Police*, vol. 1, no. 11, 1982, p. 151.

14. D. Gourley, "The need for marketing in the police field", *The Police Chief*, July 1974, p. 16.

15. National Advisory Council on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, *Report on Police*, Washington D.C., C.P.O., 1973, p. 11.

16. P. Bennett, "Opinion and the police", *Police Review*, May 14, 1982, p. 932.

17. P. Kotler, *Marketing for Nonprofit Organisations*, Prentice-Hall Inc., N.Y., 1979, p. 35.

18. R. Beltramini, "Consumer-client orientation in public sector marketing", *European Journal of Marketing*, vol. 15, no. 4, 1981, pp. 17-25.

19. R. Preiss and J. Ehrlich, *An Examination of Role Theory: The Case of the State Police*, University of Nebraska Press, 1966, p. 98.

20. E. McKay, *The Marketing Mystique*, American Management Association, N.Y., 1972, p. 13.

21. S. Jones, "Social marketing: dimensions of power and politics", *European Journal of Marketing*, vol. 16, no. 6, 1982, pp. 44-53.

22. R. Ingleberger and J.E. Angell, "Changing urban police: a practitioner's view", in A. Cohen and E.C. Viano, (eds.), *Police Community Relations: Images, Roles, Reactions*, New York, 1976, pp. 34-43.

23. C. Ames, "Trappings vs. substance in industrial marketing", *Harvard Business Review*, July/August, 1970, pp. 93-102.

24. P.N. Bloom and W.D. Novelli, "Problems and challenges in social marketing", *Journal of Marketing*, vol. 45, Spring 1981, pp. 79-88.

25. R. Dyer and T.A. Skimp, "Enhancing the role of marketing research in public policy decision making", *Journal of Marketing*, January 1977, pp. 63-67.

26. W.A. Belson, *The Public and the Police: An Extended Summary of the Aims, Methods and Findings into the Relations between the London Public and its Metropolitan Police Force*, London, Harper and Row, 1975, pp. 1-105.

27. D.J. Smith and J. Gray, *Police and People in London*, The Policy Studies Institute, Gower, 1985, pp. 1-601.

28. B.T. Olsen, "Public preferences for police/community public relations programmes", *The Police Chief*, September 1972, pp. 64-67.

29. P. Bennett, "Public opinion and the police", *Police Review*, May 14, 1982, pp. 932-933.

30. J. Anderton, "The reality of community policing", *Police Review*, March 26, 1982, pp. 582-586.

31. H. Kierkus, "Police shake up their image", *Marketing U.K.*, vol. 3, no. 33, November 26, 1980, pp. 18-20.

32. J.K. Avery, "Towards a greater respect for the police", *The Australian Police Journal*, July 1984, pp. 139-153.

33. R.D. Singh, "Police image: an analysis of causes and cures", *Indian Journal of Criminology*, June/September, 1981, pp. 146-151.

34. M.J. Murphy, "Improving the law enforcement image", *Australian Police Journal*, vol. 20, no. 3, July 1966, p. 228.

35. R. Haldene, "Improving the police image", *Australian Police Journal*, April 1979, pp. 102-109.

36. President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, *Task Force Report: The Police*, Washington, 1967, p. 49.

37. S.H. Decker, "Citizen attitudes towards the police: a review of past findings and suggestions for future policy" *Journal of Police Science and Administration*, vol. 9, no. 1, 1981, pp. 80-87.

38. W.D. Brooks and G.W. Frederick, "Police image: an exploratory study", *Journal of Commmunications*, vol. 20, December, 1970, pp. 370-374.

39. A. Campbell and H. Schumann, "A comparison of black and white attitudes in the city", in S.H. Decker, "Citizens attitudes towards the police", *Journal of Police Science and Administration*, vol. 9, no. 1, 1981, pp. 80-87.

40. M. Shaw and W. Williamson, "Public attitudes to the police", *Criminologist*, Autumn, 1972, pp. 18-33.

41. W.D. Brooks and G.W. Frederick, "Police image: an exploratory study", *Journal of Communications*, vol. 20, December, 1970, p. 374.

42. M. Shaw and W. Williamson, "Public attitudes to the police", *Criminologist*, Autumn, 1972, p. 14.

43. W.D. Brooks and G.W. Frederick, "Police image: an exploratory study", *Journal of Communications*, vol. 20, December, 1970, p. 378.

44. M. Shaw and W. Williamson, "Public attitudes to the police", *Criminologist*, Autumn, 1972, p. 12.

45. S. Jones and M. Levi, "The police and the majority: the neglect of the obvious?", *Police Journal*, vol. 50, no. 4, 1983, p. 352.

46. R. Momboise, "Community relations and riot prevention", *Police Chief*, vol. 12, no. 3, 1967, p. 91.

47. P.R. Wilson and J.S. Western, *The Policeman's Position Today and Tomorrow*, University of Queensland Press, 1972, pp. 17-24.

48. Sir R. Mark, *Policing a Perplexed Society*, London, Allen and Irwin, 1977, pp. 123-129.

49. J. B. Bolger, "Marketing techniques and media relations", *Police Chief*, December, 1983, pp. 36-41.

50. C. Gronroos, "Internal marketing — an integral part of marketing theory", in J.J. Donnelly and W.R. George, (eds.), *Marketing of Services*, Chicago, American Marketing Association, 1981, pp. 236-238.

51. P. Kotler, *Marketing in Nonprofit Organisations*, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, 1979, p. 64.

52. R.D. Singh, "Police Image: an analysis of causes and cures", *Indian Journal of Criminology*, June/September, 1981, p. 148.