

Case Study: New Zealand Police

Advancing Police performance



In 2009 New Zealand Police were reeling following the Commission of Inquiry into Police Conduct and the 'Anti-terror' raids in Urewera. Combined with a predominately reactive approach to policing which focused almost exclusively on 'catching the bad guys', trust and confidence in Police was at an all-time low.

Justice sector costs had also increased 80% on the previous decade while the Global Financial Crisis meant police were being asked to remain tough on crime whilst managing costs.



"I've worked with many great people and successful organisations over the years but of all of them, I find Police's transformation programme to be the most ambitious and compelling exercise in change leadership that I have ever witnessed"

Debbie Francis

Government Appointed Advisor – 2019 Independent Review of New Zealand Police

Fast-forward 10 years and Police's response to the March 2019 mass shooting in Christchurch gained international recognition for both coordination and compassion. And yet despite a massive armed presence around the country in the aftermath of the shooting, New Zealanders' trust and confidence in Police increased to over 80%.

With a Global backdrop of police brutality followed by public outrage and community riots, the Commissioner of Police Mike Bush led what is widely regarded as the world's most successful policing transformation in history.

Further to this, New Zealand Police has become a shining example of what modern policing can look like when led from the front and supported by an appropriate framework.

Using Vantaset's immensely sophisticated **Performance Transformation Programme** as the mechanism for change, the New Zealand Police have been touted by many as the world's best Police service.

The solution - A nationwide success story

By introducing a prevention-first operating model, Mike Bush re-engineered the way Police staff worked which he then supported by deploying Vantaset's **Performance Transformation Programme** (referred to by Police as the Police High Performance Framework or PHPF) to reach his 13,000 staff.

The essence of the change he drove was captured in a single vision for the organisation and a refreshed set of values to support it. In short, Bush set out to transform New Zealand Police so it was not only fit for purpose but reflected the aspirations of the New Zealand public.

"The purpose of policing is to ensure people are safe and feel safe. Today, everyone in New Zealand Police knows this is what we are here to do."

Articulating a powerful why to ensure people know their work matters is the single most important factor in any transformation; hence it informs the basis of Vantaset's Strategic Framework.

While Bush used some of the textbook models in change and police science, the main thing he did was apply the principles of Vantaset's people-first process to enable his staff to deliver better outcomes for the community rather than simply following orders from above as is the case in most jurisdictions.

Victim of crime

↓ 8%

2019 vs 2009

Safest country

#2

in the world

Public trust and confidence

↑ 79%

up from 58%

By adopting their leader-led approach, his leaders were empowered to own the outcomes in their workgroup for the betterment of the communities they served which is evidenced in the results they have achieved. For example, since deploying the PHPF, crime in New Zealand dropped from 37% in 2009 to 29% in 2019 while every other metric police use to assess their performance increased. This included staff engagement, public trust and confidence and service delivery and satisfaction*.

A key to the successful transformation of the New Zealand Police was their ability to connect their staff to their strategic intent. Rather than the emphasis being on another flashy document that's seldom referred to, Bush embraced Vantaset's single-page 'Strategy Poster' format as the cornerstone document to support the change. This 'plan on a page' allowed police to use visuals and key messages to connect their people to the organisation's vision making the complicated matter of strategic policing relevant to everyone at every level of the organisation.

Even in the early years of the transformation, when many in the organisation were far from convinced about Police's new way of working, it was striking to hear their vision and prevention first framework being spoken about in remarkably similar terms in different districts, workgroups and ranks.

*Public trust and confidence was 58% in the mid-2000s vs 79% in April 2020.

In fact, the core language around their vision and frameworks became a defining inflection point as it gave staff the ability to talk about them on a practical level.

While most employees distrust strategic documents, if they can get their heads around what it means for them, it changes their relationship with the business.

“Instead of getting out of bed and saying, ‘who can I lock up today?’ our staff started asking themselves ‘what crime or harm can I prevent?’ which is a mind-set change for everyone of us in police.”

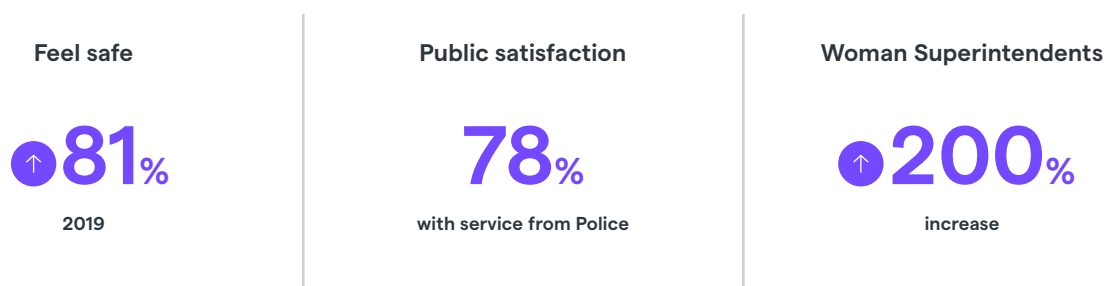
Inspector, Counties Manukau District

Although it sounds obvious, it’s surprisingly hard to get this level of strategic alignment across an organisation of 13,000 staff operating out of hundreds of sites or ‘stations’ around the country. In fact, very few organisations ever achieve the level of distilled strategic impact police have achieved using Vantaset’s extraordinarily impressive yet easy-to-apply frameworks.

“Trusting our staff to take every opportunity to prevent harm is the key to us building public trust and confidence in Police.”

“Today, our frontline staff are feeling trusted to use their discretion to make appropriate, professional judgments on how to tackle the causes of offending and victimisation in their community”

Mike Bush



Together with their vision and strategy for the business, Vantaset’s Culture Framework has not only clarified what a high-performance culture looks like, it has given them the tools to bring it to life across the organisation. Further to this, their mindset or ‘capability’ model showed staff that who they are is critical to what they and the organisation achieves. Vantaset’s deeply personal yet scalable approach enabled Bush to elevate people’s importance to the business which has transformed their aspirations and commitment to both police and the communities they serve. It also showed Bush’s staff that the organisation’s culture is a consequence of them rather than something that just affects them.

“Creating a high performance culture or mindset was the key to the transformation of Police.”

Mike Bush

Deploying Vantaset’s programme has helped Bush transform the New Zealand Police so it is more reflective of the community and, therefore, better configured to address the issues the country is facing. Because their new way of working has been embedded throughout the organization, they have normalised their aspirations to improve outcomes for citizens rather than trying to manage their people’s activities as most police forces around the world try to do. As one senior Police executive explains it:

“It’s no longer about change, instead, it’s just the way we do things around here.”

Such continuity and firmness of focus requires immense discipline and belief by leaders but by repurposing the role of leaders which Vantaset’s Leadership Framework does, they understand they are there to improve outcomes for their staff and the community.

Deploying the PHPF and its integrated ® frameworks gave Bush a mechanism to transform every facet of the organisation which is why it's talked about as the 'golden thread that underpins the business'.

It has also allowed Bush to connect all 13,000 staff up to his vision of ensuring everyone in New Zealand is safe and feels safe; something police had never managed to achieve before.

"Deploying the PHPF is the best thing Police have ever done in my 30 years of policing."

Senior Sergeant, Auckland City District

Because it's a leader-led process, it also enabled Bush and his executive to drive the change much deeper into the business than conventional approaches allow to make it stick. It also allowed police to not only adopt a common view as to what leadership and high-performance looks like, it has given their people the tools to achieve it.

As Bush describes it:

"Vantaset enabled us to create the high-performance culture we needed to realise the step-change in performance we were after. By applying the PHPF frameworks, we've equipped our leaders at every level of police with the tools to have the right conversations with their people so they in turn understand what they need to do to help us deliver on our purpose to the country. In other words, the PHPF has helped us become the police service we needed to be to realise our mission of making New Zealand the safest country."



To find out more, call us on [+64 9 522 9409](tel:+6495229409) or visit our website www.vantaset.com