Zencity

Strengthening Community Bonds:
The Comprehensive Trust Solution for Public Safety Agencies

Key Challenges in Earning Public Trust

Trust between police and communities is vital for public safety and effective policing. Police need community cooperation to reduce crime, and build legitimacy by meeting or exceeding the public's expectations, as well as policing in a manner aligned with community priorities.[1] But it is impossible to be successful without *understanding* the public's expectations, how they are changing, and how good of a job your agency is doing in the eyes of the public. For as much as we talk about this issue, departments struggle to evaluate priorities and progress, other than through anecdotes from community meetings and media stories. As a result, many agencies end up focusing their attention on the loudest voices, rather than addressing the needs of the entire community they serve.

We want to hear
We want to understand your perception

We heard
Here is what we heard from you and your neighbors

TRUST

Re-evaluate
What is the community reaction to our actions?

We did
Here is how we reacted to what we heard

In order to be successful, agencies *must* be able to evaluate the effectiveness of various policies and interventions, as well as continuously improve performance in the eyes of the public. Not only is a targeted, evidence-based approach a more efficient use of public funds, but having high quality data on the public's priorities and satisfaction enables greater success – focusing the direction of resources to where they are needed most.[2] It can also serve to demonstrate to the public an agency's commitment to inclusion and transparency – essential values in an era of challenges in trust.

Highlights

✓ **Improve Performance**
Enhancing agency performance in the modern era includes improving community perception with the same rigor with which we track and reduce crime. Accurate and up-to-date data is required to evaluate and adjust agency performance to keep driving success.

✓ **Better Deploy Resources to Top Resident Concerns**
In a world of limited resources and personnel, agencies must ensure that they are putting their efforts towards the initiatives, tactics and strategies that actually move the needle with the public. Zencity's data on the public's priorities and satisfaction allows your agency to focus resources where they are needed most, evaluate the effectiveness of policies and interventions, and deliver more of what works.

✓ **Satisfy Accreditation Requirements**
Surveying communities is not a new concept to law enforcement – it has been recognized as a best practice by accrediting bodies, including CALEA (Standard 45.2.2.) Rather than merely meeting an accreditation standard, Zencity surveys save the labor and distraction of design and administration and ensure that the results are methodologically sound, and actionable beyond checking a box.

✓ **Demonstrate Transparency and Engagement**
How can agencies engage with the public as a whole, to include hard-to-reach communities? Utilizing best practices to evaluate the public's perception of the agency and understand the community's priorities provides inclusion and increased transparency.

✓ **Align Practice with Resident and Policymaker Demands**
Ensure that dialogue with policymakers and community leaders is more constructive, solution oriented, and fact-driven by centering the conversation on high quality data on community perception. Our tools allow an agency to collaborate with policymakers and community members to solve community priorities, instead of merely debating what those priorities are.

✓ **Change Culture**
We know how to reinforce results in reducing crime, but without data it is hard to reinforce positive results in building trust, making community members feel more safe, or their priorities better addressed. A data driven culture enables building a culture that rewards and reinforces the type of behavior that we all want to see from our agency and its personnel.

1   Importance of Police-Community Relationships and Resources for Further Reading. U.S. Department of Justice, Community Relations Service. Retrieved from https://www.justice.gov/file/1437336/download

2   Camello, M., Faris, S.B., Krebs, C., & Planty, M. (2023). A landscape report on measuring community sentiment and perceptions of safety and law enforcement performance. Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI International. Retrieved from https://cjtec.org/

Solutions

Public safety agencies across the country are now deploying technology solutions to track, measure, and improve community perception, with positive results for both agencies and the public they serve.

Zencity is the leading provider of a holistic solution that encompasses the three key capabilities that forward-thinking agencies are equipping themselves with to navigate the modern mission of public safety.

Addressing Priorities of the Entire Community (Not just the few)

While the importance of representative surveys to measure indicators of public trust and satisfaction has not diminished, the technology and approaches used to administer them (combined with the collapse of legacy methods) has changed the field drastically over the last few years.

Traditional surveys suffer from two main issues: first, participants tend to be skewed towards people an agency is already hearing from. Second, traditional survey response rates have dwindled over time. In 2019, response rates to telephone polls had declined to 6%, and continues to trend even worse.[3] In contrast, technological advances allow for wide scale digital surveys that overcome the challenges in traditional phone and mail surveys. Zencity uses digital ads, honed to recruit diverse respondents. We aim for large numbers of responses, and adjust the results using validated statistical weighting methods after the survey has closed.
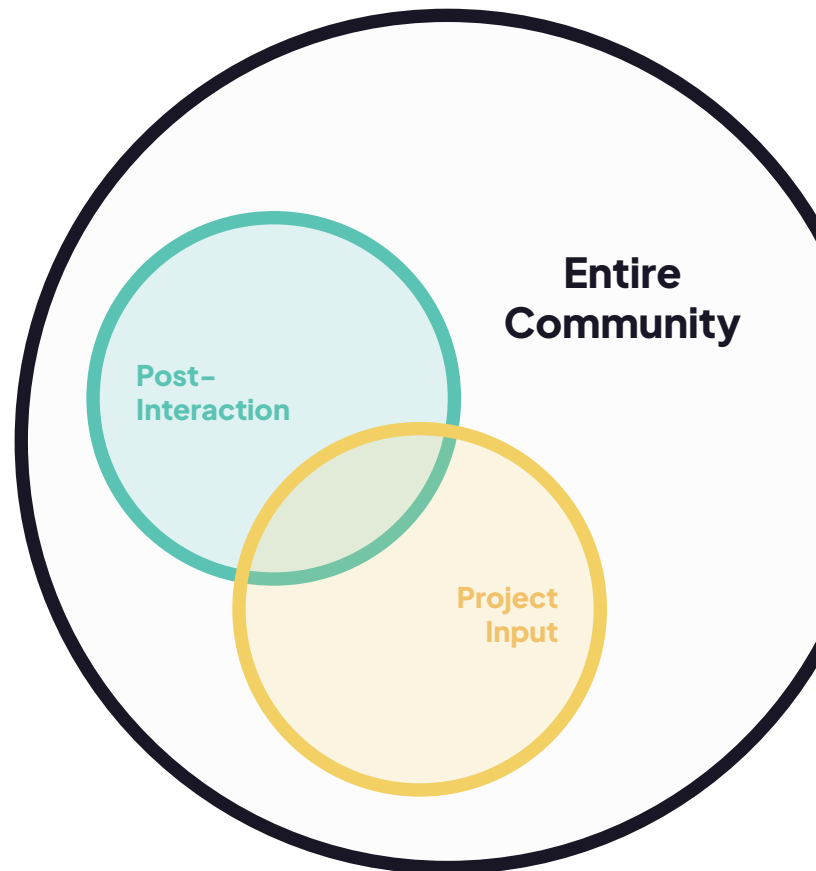
> Zencity can conceivably ask any question on resident perception, and not measure the value once, but track how it differs by population group and how it changes over time.

Zencity's methods allow for large samples, impractical or impossible with traditional methods. These large samples have the benefit of not only being potentially more accurate, but the community sees the results as being more legitimate because the data reflects a larger proportion of the population. Finally, these surveys can be targeted in conceivably an unlimited number of languages, and appear on a user's device in whichever language the respondent selects.

Improving Every Interaction

In order to deliver improvements in safety services and increased trust, agencies must systematically track the quality of interactions between personnel and the public to double down on what is working, and correct what isn't.

Zencity enables agencies to automatically follow up with outreach via SMS and/or email to victims of crime and reporting parties, with no additional work by already over-stretched employees. This capability not only results in rich insights into "customer service" within an agency, but also demonstrates to community members that their opinions are taken seriously by the agency.

Productive, Less Polarized Community Input

Zencity also supports inclusive digital engagement at any scale with its industry-leading Engage platform. Engage focuses on both providing resident education and gathering and analyzing qualitative and quantitative feedback in the service of creating a deeper, more critical understanding of resident priorities when making key decisions.

Users of Engage benefit from productive, two-way communication and interactivity between residents and agencies, and simultaneously demonstrate a commitment to hearing from the entire community, not just those with the time and conviction required to show up to a town hall meeting. The solution is ideally suited for facilitating engagement around key decisions like new policies, personnel, or resource allocation, where community input is desired.

3   https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/02/27/response-rates-in-telephone-surveys-have-resumed-their-decline/

Advances in Modern Survey Technology

Traditional Surveys

- Respondents called or mailed from list with unknown or low levels of accuracy and reach
- Hard to get respondent to answer (6% and declining response rate for phone)
- Longer questionnaires
- Must pre-match language (e.g. mail Spanish survey or have Spanish surveyor call likely Spanish speaking respondent)
- Weeks or months to field to allow for interviewer training, programming into specialized systems, etc.
- Weeks or months for results once survey finished

Zencity Blockwise Population Surveys

- Respondents recruited via digital advertisement (reaches 90%+ of US adults)
- Low respondent burden (take survey whenever convenient, on own device)
- Shorter questionnaires (~20 questions)
- Dynamic sampling, sample is adjusted based on demographic and geographic criteria to resemble the population
- Dynamic languages, ad can be delivered in language of device, or allow respondent to select language
- Can be fielded in days or weeks (depending on sample requirements)
- Easy to repeat or run continuously
- No delay for results, which can be reviewed instantly

Components

Blockwise
Always-on, representative survey that tracks KPIs on trust, safety, and community priorities over time. Key values: Know what's working, hear from the entire community, communicate with policymakers and community stakeholders. This realtime feedback is then displayed in easy-to-utilize dashboards and reports.

Blockwise uses geo-targeted digital advertisements to recruit survey respondents, tracking survey representativeness in realtime to ensure alignment between the sample and the actual population in a given area by race, age and sex. The resulting data is both methodologically rigorous, and timely.

Community Experience (CX) Surveys
Automated post-interaction survey to rate the quality of every touchpoint your agency has with the public. Key values: Identify and correct problems in safety services before they become headlines, recognize top performers in public feedback, make the community feel heard.

CX surveys can be accessed by members of the public based on a link or QR code provided at the point of interaction, or can be triggered automatically via an integration with CAD or RMS, and sent to the device of a 911 caller, victim of crime, or other involved party via SMS or email. Results can be analyzed, in real time, at various levels of granularity, depending on the requirements of the agency. Agencies can track quality of service from the agency level all the way down to individual squads, shifts or officers.

Engage
Digital engagement platform to educate the public and solicit feedback on important projects, policies and initiatives. Key values: Source broader feedback, demonstrate inclusiveness and transparency, de-polarize public input.

Engage affords agencies the ability to couple rich educational resources – plans, videos, interactive maps, timelines, data, and agency narrative – with two-way, asynchronous engagement that lowers the barriers to participation and invites informed public participation at scale. The product has been successfully used for public engagement and input around proposed policy changes, deploying new technologies like ALPR and body worn cameras, and major personnel changes like a new chief search. For anything that would be a potential topic for a community meeting, Engage can be used to augment the engagement.

Benefits

For Police Chiefs and Sheriffs
In the modern era, police chiefs and sheriffs must effectively maintain the public's trust in order to be successful. What isn't measured can't be effectively managed. Zencity's public safety suite provides both the data and tools for agency chief executives to track, manage and improve public perception, and create alignment around the actual priorities of the community they serve.

For Community Policing Leaders:
When successful, the outcome of community engagement is enhanced community trust. While it is straightforward to look at reported crime patterns to develop strategies and demonstrate effectiveness in crime control, when it comes to aligning with the community, agencies are forced to rely on mere anecdotes from a self-selecting, often small number of community members. Zencity data and tools provide real data from a representative sample of the community to help understand priorities and progress, as well as digital tools that act as force multipliers to over-stretched community engagement teams to broaden engagement beyond the usual participants.

For Communications Leaders/PIOs
Communications leaders "own" the reputation of an agency, and are often the front lines of communicating actions and initiatives to the public. With limited resources, it is vital to have the best possible data on public perception and priorities to direct outreach and earned media strategies, as well as to shape the conversation about public safety with facts about community priorities.

For IT Leaders
Technology leaders bear responsibility for sourcing and managing solutions that tackle the top priorities of an agency. Zencity is a proven partner in innovation, trusted by hundreds of agencies, delivering easy-to-deploy technology and data solutions that support the mission to broaden community input and build community trust. Zencity solutions can be put in place in weeks, not months, don't require complex integrations, and are designed to be easily interoperable with widely used systems like Tableau and Microsoft PowerBI.

About Zencity

Zencity was founded in 2016 to help agencies track and improve the "vital signs" of community trust and satisfaction. Today, we are proud to work with hundreds of agencies of all sizes on systematically improving trust with their communities, including seven of the ten largest cities in the US, the London Metropolitan Police Service (UK), Ottawa Police Service (Canada), police departments and sheriff's offices in more than a dozen states, in communities urban, suburban and rural.

Trust Matters. Measure it. Build it. Earn it.   zencity.io | info@zencity.io | 516.200.2508