

# **BRASS**

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The Behaviour Risk Assessment and Strategic Systems (BRASS) is a preventative risk assessment and educational strategy for strengthening unit control systems and reinforcing individual integrity. First developed for undercover units of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, it is the principal control method for the organised crime units of the Quebec Provincial Police. BRASS has been successfully used by high risk narcotics and organised crime units of the Tampa PD, St. Petersburg PD, Orlando PD, Denver PD, Kansas City PD, the Jackson County Task Force, and by other agencies in Europe. BRASS is a three day corruption prevention program aimed at: (1) assessing the risk of corruption and professional misconduct linked to 12 known indicators of weakening personal integrity, and to 60 high risk work practices; (2) educating officers and managers about their own risks and those of the unit as a whole; and (3) rehabilitating integrity and shoring up unit weaknesses with policies and procedures tailored to the organisation.

## **A Three Pronged Analysis**

The BRASS paradigm derives its effectiveness from the merger of two professional activities: performance auditing on the one hand and psychological assessment of personnel on the other. Information is collected from an inspection of the control environment and from the assessment of cognitive, personality, and behavioural predispositions of personnel. The BRASS approach analyses behaviour risks first from the perspective of each discipline independently and then from the conjoint interaction of person (P) and environment (E) risk co- occurrences. The risk profile describes:

1. latent character insufficiencies and excesses in personnel (P);
2. deficiencies and weaknesses in the control environment (E); and,
3. P x E risk co-occurrences and their incendiary potential.

Law enforcement organisations discover important gaps in policies and procedures, and identify officers more likely to respond to opportunities created by weak monitoring and compliance controls. By analysing the interaction potential between the control environment and the people working in it, BRASS can forecast exposure damage with greater clarity and timeliness than either discipline can on its own.

## **Risk Reduction**

The risk communication to executives provides a picture of the number of high risk personnel, their job responsibilities, the control environment factors that either mitigate or enhance this risk, and options for managing these risks. The BRASS methodology also includes options for risk *reduction* and/or risk negation. An organisation invested in its human resources may focus on *reducing* risk by shoring

up fractures in the control environment and by implementing an educational, integrity and risk self-management program for its personnel. This behavioural risk self management training is integrated into the risk assessment sessions.

### **Risk Negation**

The BRASS risk analysis looks at each person from the point of view of six data collection probes. Not unlike a medical exam where test results come together and point to an unhealthy condition, the risk analysis can reveal cognitive, emotional, and behavioural parameters pointing to a high risk of particularly negative conduct. Where it is only the relative lack of opportunity that prevents an incendiary event from occurring, executives may consider a pre-emptive risk *negation* measure. A thoughtfully conducted integrity validation can provide a confirmation of latent early warning signs, the basis for further action with the employee, and the removal of that source of risk.

### **OVERVIEW OF BRASS**

BRASS consists of 2 1/2 days of interactive training and assessment. Each is tailored to the specialised functions of the unit and its personnel.

BRASS related to corruption and integrity training is aimed at officers, unit commanders, and command staff. It is designed to shape knowledge and skills for identifying and managing the risks of corruption, mental ill health, and poor performance in officers. The assessment segment identifies weaknesses and provides recommendations to agency personnel on improving policies and procedures in key areas such as: personnel selection and training, case management, operations management, leadership, informant handling, funds accountability, and evidence control.

Each officer conducts his own confidential self-assessment. He receives his own individual profile from which to assess his own risk.

BRASS uses ortho-psychiatric methods to instil responsibility and motivate self-change.

An on-going involvement and discussion in integrity related matters is ensured after completion of the 2 1/2 day program.

### **Some Successful Applications**

Posing as a corrupt financial consultant, a US Customs investigator applied his undercover skills to build a money laundering case that brought down the Bank of Credit and Commerce International. He had been part of a BRASS assessment and management effort. This same agent later teamed up with a drug officer from a South Florida jurisdiction and observed a BRASS behavioural profile that convinced him his partner was going bad. He alerted his superiors who caught him stealing more than \$100,000 in confiscated drug money.

*What is this BRASS system that can detect future criminal behaviour as if it was a*

*latent fingerprint of intentions? Police who have had the system applied to them are eager to learn to apply it to others and become guardians of integrity.*

When European law enforcement organisations undertook the use of undercover methods on a large scale many were concerned that problems might accompany inexperience. Three years after creating special units one federal police organisation looked into an alarming degree of misconduct and corruption.

Officers who stayed out of trouble provided key insights about how they saw problems just in time to avoid it. Again the BRASS effect kicked in.

"I was about 1 year into an undercover. . (gang).. . investigation and the profile I took at the start was starting to come true. I was thinking and acting more like the criminals. I made things up for them. My (BRASS) profile said I did not have a strong disciplined image, that I resembled persons who are easily impressed by others, and I saw that was the case for me. I quit undercover work just before the trouble started."

"For me," another officer said, "I am not the person who breaks rules. My profile said I had severe standards. I do not like unpredictable things, I get nervous. I studied my profile many times. I am too disciplined and get upset when people have not any rules and or policy. They asked me to do things that were against my principles. . . . My profile said I was at risk for emotional stress when that happened. I saw it happening, so I left the unit before I got sick. That saved my career. I would not have the strength to fight the others and I think I would have been charged with the others."

*Self-knowledge of this type is not typically expected from police officers. How does the BRASS system create self-reflection and get people to act on the early warning information it provides?*

### **Erosion from exposure**

The day to see the biggest difference between a criminal and an organised crime investigator is the day he graduates from the police academy. After that, it is said, it's the street that rubs off on the officer. For, as the saying goes, "If you sleep with dogs, you're gonna catch flees."

Progressive organisations have discovered that even if they can't control the physical environment where investigators work, they can at least impact on their cognitive environment. The BRASS self-knowledge system appears to create that control.

What latent character traits lead to misconduct? What weaknesses in policies, procedures, and inspection mechanisms lead down the slippery slope of corruption? What mixture is potentially explosive? The truth about an incendiary situation is that you realise it was there all along, quietly ticking away, only after it has gone off. The behaviour Risk Institute has engineered sensitive listening devices to pick up the distant ticking of humans with latent destructive devices. They are buried deep the day of graduation, but they surface when cognitive and institutional controls have failed.

## **Maximum performance with minimum exposure.**

After 20 years with premiere law enforcement organisations and working with more than 3,000 organised crime investigators, the researchers at the Behaviour Risk Institute have designed a comprehensive strategy for getting the best quality, most reliable, and legally sound work product from investigators.

Working at the level of individual mental processes, unit structure and morale, organisational culture, BRASS induces self-awareness and the kind of social responsibility that can make them crusaders for integrity throughout the organisation.

## **The BRASS System**

The BRASS System is composed of six Distant Early Warning devices uniquely designed to pick up and integrate high risk signals in the officer and the organisation. These probes are made possible by creating a facilitative environment where officers provide their data. Once high risk signals are detected they trigger a process of education, and self-correction.

Law enforcement professionals at the Institute strengthen skills and shore up weaknesses in a three part program that emphasises: (1) Behaviour capability enhancement, (2) Psychological and physical risk control safeguards to ensure the ethical and legal integrity of investigations; and (3) Risk control strategies for minimising exposure and ensuring success in any forensic performance audit.

## **Applications Tailored to the Organisation**

BRASS is both a risk self-assessment and integrity strengthening program. A group of highly experienced investigators, trainers, and behavioural scientists formed the first BRASS team in the U.S. Housed at the Criminal Justice Institute of Florida, BRASS was required for all investigators in Counterdrug Task Forces in Florida. Its success led to applications with the organised crime units of Tampa PD, St. Petersburg PD, Orlando PD, and Kansas City (HIIDTA).

The most highly acclaimed application of BRASS was a recent French adaptation BRI entitled "GERE" (Gestion et evaluation des risques d'enqueteurs.) Impressed with the BRASS capability for curbing misconduct, and in need of a proven approach for affirming ethics and integrity, the Quebec Police Force made GERE one the jewels in the crown of their urgently needed rebuilding and reform efforts. Highly motivated officers were trained as a mobile team to deliver the GERE program to 225 investigators in 17 organised crime units across the province.

Anticipating corruption could also extend to the GERE team empowered with new tools for social control and influence, BRASS has built-in training and self-monitoring guidelines aimed at curbing a "normalisation of deviance" and an erosion of its own integrity. (See: Girodo, M. (1998) "Undercover probes of police corruption: Risk factors in proactive internal affairs investigations." *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, 16, 479-496.

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Dr. Michael Girodo has consulted over 20 years with Canadian, U.S. and European law enforcement organisations. With a distinguished university career in applied and forensic psychology, Professor Girodo's international reputation in managing behavioural risks in law enforcement organisations is grounded in a unique blend of science and experience in the field.

Following a post-doctoral fellowship in clinical and forensic psychology Professor Girodo became the chief behavioural science consultant to the RCMP in the field of human factors related to undercover investigations. Later, as the first Visiting Scholar at the FBI Academy, he developed a training program for effective decision making in deadly force encounters, innovated a latent behavioural risk profiling and Distant Early Warning system for anticipating behavioural failures of personnel in special investigations, and was sent to Haiti to head a UN recruiting team to build a new police force.

His prescriptions for reinforcing integrity and experience in assisting organisations with behavioural risk issues have been widely recognised by law enforcement, para-military, and academic communities.

Professor Girodo's work with NATO Advanced Study Institutes has appeared in *Stress and anxiety* and in *Role transitions: Explorations and explanations*. His applied law enforcement research has been published in such journals as *Behavioral Sciences and the Law*, and the *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*.