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POP
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BEERMAT

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Summary

POP on Beer Mat (or How to sell POP)

Problem Oriented Policing has been on the policing agenda for two decades since Goldstein first published in 1979. Virtually everyone who encounters POP is sold on the idea. Yet, consistent, widespread and persistent application of the philosophy remains tantalisingly unrealised.

The problem of unrealised application of POP is evident from all the empirical studies of problem orientation. Generally managers and operational staff have not been able to apply the concepts into their everyday work and achieve the outcomes promised.

POP on a Beer Mat addresses the problem of selling the concept to the doubters and provides ideas for converts to sell POP to others.

POP on a Beer Mat is unashamedly populist. It is designed to be memorable and inspirational. People should leave the Beer Mat fired up to put the concept into action, or at least convince others that they should approach policing differently.

The Beer Mat was developed using the SARA model. The author analysed the way that police officers in Lancashire learnt to apply POP since 1997, when it was adopted force-wide. Common pitfalls and misunderstandings were identified by the author and included in his presentations to police officers and partners working under the terms of the Crime & Disorder Act.

The Beer Mat itself is a means of being able to see others as either demand drivers or resources who can address problems jointly and search for sustainable solutions. All too often, the police culture closes off potential allies who could not only reduce workloads but also have much greater impact on, what are seen as, 'policing' problems.

The impact of the Beer Mat has been immense. The Lancashire Constabulary is becoming increasingly problem oriented — evidence for this is the consistent number and quality of Tilley Award entrants. One reason for this is that the concept of POP has been demystified.

The Beer Mat has been seen by many other Forces and Community Safety Partnerships. Many have commissioned the author to speak to their organisations to either kick start problem orientation or re-ignite it where it has failed to catch on. These invitations themselves are proof that the Beer Mat is effective.

Additionally, feedback from those Forces has shown that problem orientation has been inspired, and this has led to the joint achievement of sustainable solutions to long-standing problems.

Tilley Award 2001

POP on a beer mat

What was the objective or Outcome?

In 1997 I did not know that Herman Goldstein had been working for 20 years on problem orientation. In fact, I did not know that Herman Goldstein existed. My eyes were opened when it was proposed that the Lancashire Constabulary should become problem oriented. At the time I was seconded to the training department and I offered to become project manager for the implementation of POP training in the Constabulary.

Although Goldstein's idea could be described as great, there had hardly been a rush to adopt it. Furthermore pioneer police forces of POP in the UK had all faced difficulties in maintaining progress. I sat in a Home Office Working Group on POP where optimistic views of progress could best be described as three steps forward and two steps back.

I analysed why trumpeted launches had not been followed by sustainable adoption. My analysis suggested that there were insufficient champions and they did not have a memorable sales pitch to win over the doubters.

In developing and delivering training sessions and workshops in the constabulary I realised, through telephone surveys of operational staff, that training packages explaining SARA and PAT models were not having the desired effect of capturing people's imagination. I was concerned that there was still insufficient middle management 'buy in' across the Force and my analysis of rank and file officer understanding, valuing and implementation of POP was that it was still fragile.

In 1998 I was promoted as Detective Chief Inspector to Southern Division, but retained my position as project manager.

I began a series of workshops across the division speaking to staff at all levels. I constantly checked on progress in the division by asking people in canteens, in corridors and when I saw them on other matters what they thought of problem oriented policing. I mostly received positive feedback, the commonest response being: *'s what we have always done'*. I developed a series of responses to this such as: give me an example of where you have been truly problem oriented; give me an example of one of your sustainable outcomes.

One encounter with two road policing constables one evening was salutary. It is from that conversation that the beer mat model was born. The constables challenged the philosophy of POP. They were emboldened because one of the officers had been a constable colleague - he told me (bluntly) what he really thought. I took a beer mat and drew the model looking at the world in terms of red and green lines. Their joint response after 10 minutes was positive: *'why has nobody ever explained it like that*

before?' and from that germ I developed a different way of explaining what **POP** is all about, of selling POP.

I then developed the beer mat model as a means of introducing problem orientation, which then led directly onto coaching through the SARA and PAT models - in effect the nuts and bolts of problem solving. I also delivered training to first line supervisors in Western Division at the invitation of a colleague who had seen the Beer Mat. In the District Audit assessment of the implementation of **POP** in Lancashire, Southern and Western divisions were significantly more effective in the deployment of problem solving than the other four, where I had not been personally involved.

The issue was not only the adoption of the philosophy but also the generation and maintenance of a critical mass of staff who believed it to be the way to approach policing. The paradigm of response policing and 'old fashioned' investigation had to be shifted to one of partnership, reduction of demand and problem orientation.

The embedding of these ideals is the purpose of this organisational initiative and submission.

How did you define the problem?

The feedback from the development and delivery of the training packages was:

- standard training packages delivered by the training officer in the division had been met with disinterest
- people's imagination had to be excited
- there had to be straightforward logical explanation to front line operational staff
- team leaders needed to be trained first
- it was preferable for teams to be trained together
- the teams needed to work on real problems and issues faced by them at that time
- there had to be clear and dynamic leadership back in the work place

At the same time I had formed a **POP** steering group in the Constabulary. I also organised the first of (now four) annual POP conferences, which invited practitioners (mostly constables) in the force to run workshops.

Probationary constables were taught the principles of POP on one module, were then asked to put it into practice before the next module when they would present their initiative, when at least one of the ACPO team would attend. I listened to all these practitioners and questioned them to understand their thought processes, and I found that:

- desired outcomes were not clear, and therefore assessment in the SARA process was often corrupted as a result
- officers were always keen to include strong elements of traditional policing methods, thinly disguised as problem orientation

- sustainable solutions were very thin on the ground - if the committed officer or police presence was removed
- high profile policing was an ubiquitous response- yet it was described or understood differently in each presentation
- among the probationary constables, the *officers who* had not had a paradigm shift those who had not bought the concept - were obvious, they were going through the motions and would do something that approximated with problem orientation on this occasion, furthermore they looked and sounded like they had served over 20 years
- any officer who had worked closely with a experienced constable who was a POP champion stood out and their initiatives were always the most impressive
- reliance was placed exclusively on figures in the scanning process
- + little emphasis was placed on analysis, and generally analysis was merged with scanning or it was used as merely an introduction to response (e.g. 'Is CCTV located at the site?')
- + assessments were generally superficial, sometimes non existent
- partnerships were not always evident and were generally more developed in the response phase, rarely in analysis, and scanning
- when partnerships were absent, the response was always a variation on traditional responses, and there was no sustainability
- the relationship between SARA and PAT was not always understood

The feedback showed that we needed to change the main training package

How did you deal with the problem?

Developing the Beer Mat model

The development of the Beer Mat training package is how I dealt with this problem

As I explained above:

..... I took a beer mat and drew the model of looking at the world in terms of red and green lines. Their joint response after 10 minutes was positive: '*why has nobody ever explained it like that before?*' and from that germ I developed a different way of explaining what POP is all about, of selling POP.

The Beer Mat

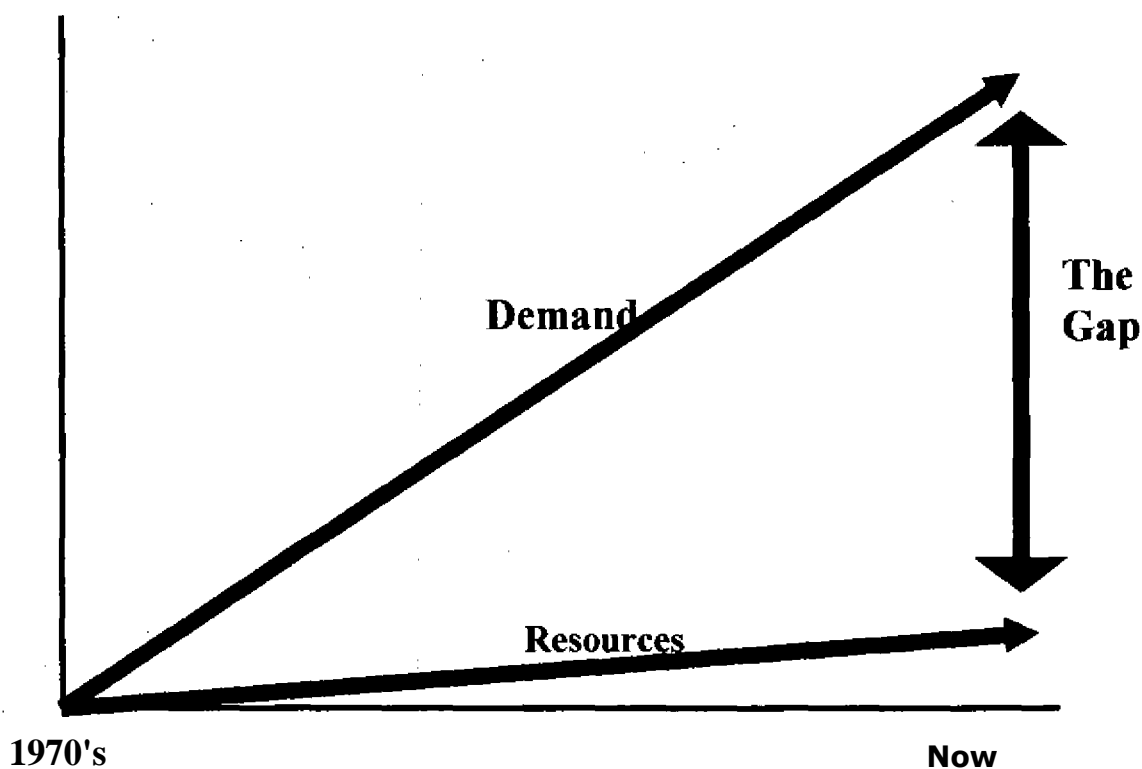


Fig I The beer mat shows the rise in police demand since the 1970 's, the shallower rise in resources available and the resulting gap which means poor or non existent service to customers and stressed, over-stretched people in the organisation

This is essentially the model I used on the beer mat at Leyland Police Station. When explaining the model I have found that it is crucial that people agree every stage. So far every beer mat audience has agreed that they face this mismatch daily and suffer the effects of working in the gap.

Explaining the Beer Mat model -Raising resources

I have found the Home Office figures of the increase in demand on the police helpful, although in the public sector, very few are aware of them: between 1975 and 1995 crime rose by 176%, arrests 233%, 999 calls 237% and other incidents 254%. At the same time police officer numbers rose by 6.5%.

The widening gap leads staff to complain of increasingly stretched resources and the public of less and less effective service. All staff agree that we must attempt to close the gap if we are to keep our sanity and the public are to receive a service of which we can be proud, all of the time.

How can I convince people that in order to close this gap, we have to do something different? I ask them for a definition of insanity. In the silence I offer: *'when we keep doing what we have always done and expect a different result'*. I was offered this pearl of wisdom by one delegate at a conference, I saw the instant impact it had on that particular audience and have used it ever since (with permission).

I then ask the audience which element producing the gap we can best influence: decrease the red line or increase the green line; over 90% select reducing demand rather than increasing resources. I disagree and directly challenge the way they see the world. I then proceed to explain my rationale for believing we can have more impact on increasing resources. I emphasise this part of the presentation because of my experience with probationary constables who do, not value partnerships and who embrace the police culture of insisting we are a thin blue line beleaguered on all sides.

Examples supporting the Beer Mat model

I choose Neighbourhood Watch because it is one of the largest volunteer organisation in the UK, yet when I introduce it to police officers, there is generally a negative response, Most police audiences express some dissatisfaction with the current way NHW are used, some have openly declared that it should be scrapped.

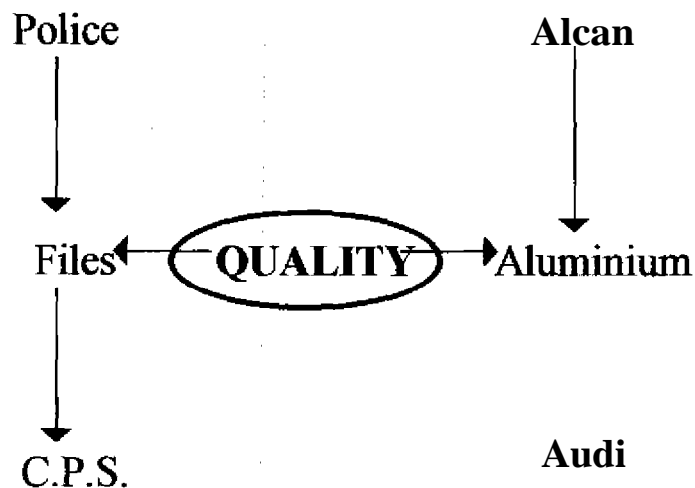
I have analysed why this is. It is because NHW are on the red line of the beer mat model. And that is where the police have traditionally put them. The police describe NHW as *'our eyes and ears'*, and not surprisingly when NHW volunteers see or hear anything they inform the police - and in the process increase our demand. I encourage people to see NHW as brains and doers, not solely as eyes and ears_ There are always examples from the audience of novel ways of using NHW, which would put them on the green line, as resources who themselves can reduce demand and thus close the gap.

I then explore attitudes to the Crown Prosecution Service. There is always a wag who describes the CPS as *'Cannot Prosecute Satan'* or *'Criminal Protection Service'*. Police officers always agree the CPS are on the red line. Why? Because they send memoranda to action further enquiries in relation to files of evidence.

I draw an analogy between car manufacture and the criminal justice process to reveal the illogicality of this position. In the criminal justice process the end product of the police is a file of evidence, the raw material the CPS work with is that same file of evidence, and Joint Performance Management (JPM) measures the quality and timeliness of the file.

The analogy I draw is apocryphal: Alcan's end product is aluminium, aluminium is the raw material which Audi use to make cars. Audiences have no difficulty seeing that the

quality of the aluminium is critical, and 100% quality is required.



The same audience always have great difficulty seeing the parallels with file quality. Excuses proliferate, indeed it is not uncommon for the CPS to be blamed for the police delivering a poor product. Audi are never blamed if Alcan do not deliver, and audiences always (sometimes reluctantly) recognise that the CPS should not be blamed. The only reason the CPS are on the red line is because police officers put them there. Nobody is ever asked to do more work when the file of evidence they have submitted is of acceptable quality.

NHW, CPS, media, local authorities, Crime and Disorder partners, communities can all be on the red line and they can all be on the green line. The only difference is the way we (police or partners) see them.

This concludes the argument that there is more scope to increase resources than there is to reduce demand.

Reducing Demand

However, to effectively close the gap, the red line has to be reduced in addition to raising the green line. The next section *shows* how we can reduce demand by using the SARA and PAT models.

Scanning

People need about 30 seconds to scan their work environment to find recurring problems. I have spoken to over 2000 people who have no difficulty in identifying problems, most are identified through statistics or performance figures. This is true of police officers and partner agencies.

I want problem orientation to deal with the chronic problems which lead to disaffection and apathy from communities where they call for assistance less and less as a result of perceived poor service. Figures do not always show this, in fact disaffection is masked by improving crime or incident figures - a spiral discouraging even less assistance time and effort from police and other services.

I realised I needed to provide a memorable mnemonic for scanning and to separate scanning clearly from analysis.

FF CC was my answer.

I ask audiences to nominate a problem - the vast majority select one based on **figures**. I then take the audience through the 'reporting iceberg' where comparison of crime figures and the 'British Crime Survey' show that about 50% of all crimes committed are reported and the police record less than 30%. Different crimes and incidents are reported differently. People quickly offer high reporting for car theft but low reporting for damage to cars. I find a show of hands of those who have been victims and not reported the crime useful to emphasise this point.

Invariably I can trick the audience to prove they close their minds to issues which are masked by crime figures. I ask if murder is always reported - the answer is invariably : 'yes'. I only need to ask how many of Fred West's victims or Harold Shipman's victims were recorded murders - the answer is of course none - to show how figures alone can mislead. I go on to challenge them about the number of missing from homes they have 'on their patch' - how many could be homicide?

This leads onto the second 'F'. **Feedback** from **community** and **colleagues**. If communities or colleagues report that there is a problem - and you find yourself reaching for the latest figures to disprove it. **STOP!** They will probably be correct, I believe this is the crucial area of scanning if we are to truly provide the service that the public need and want. It also allows the organisation to be receptive to apathetic or disillusioned customers.

Scanning is not the problem.

Analysis

Audiences are urged to stay in analysis. Scanning the research into problem orientation shows that analysis is weak. My own research in Lancashire supports this. I have witnessed on many occasions, indeed I have done it myself, the following sequence:

Scan: we believe this is the problem

Analysis: pause

Response: right well what are we going to DO about it

Lancashire was said to have introduced SARA but at first implemented the SR model. We are now implementing the SRA model. I can illustrate this as follows:

A successful Youth Shelter project in Haile Syke a village near Burnley in Lancashire deservedly won awards for helping to reduce crime and disorder, particularly juvenile nuisance. Many other police officers went ahead and built youth shelters with partner agencies - most resulted in an increase in juvenile nuisance. Why? Harle Syke was a success because the children themselves designed the shelter and were an integral part of the process. The imitators simply did it to the children - the adults visited the original and copied it - the children had no ownership. This played a part in leading the Lancashire Partnership against Crime to stop funding any more youth shelters. Some of those constructed are in danger of being demolished - by adults.

If the imitators had engaged in analysis they would have seen that youth involvement and consultation was the key. Not the bricks and mortar. A leap to the response phase did not allow use of the PAT model, exploring features of the persons committing the juvenile nuisance.

Analysis is often merged with scanning, one divisional guide to problem solving in Lancashire actually merged the two. Clearly separating the two was vital to my presentation. I achieve this by showing how quickly people are able to scan, and then awarding them a diploma in scanning. I immediately ask them what qualification they have in analysis. They accept meekly their relegation to the 'slow learners'.

Through facilitating workshops with Southern Division staff I found that they had difficulty staying in analysis. They found it much more comfortable in response. I saw what people did when they were successfully analysing. The answer was simple they were asking questions. I now use the question mark as a rule of thumb to check that people are actually within the analysis stage.

[then found that police officers reverted to closed questions, which simply suggested a response, for example 'Is there CCTV?' - the questioner is not analysing, they have already decided what the response is going to be.

Hence I now use quality questions or open questions as the rule of thumb for testing if one is in the analysis stage. The best question is: *Why?*

The PAT model should be used in analysis. But I found people were not sure where it fitted - to ensure that people use it to assist in analysis I now write the SARA model as SARA. Since I have **adopted** this change I have found people are able to see that analysis is important and straightforward because police officers in particular use PAT well. Simply exhorting them to analyse without a clear framework does not work.

Response

This is the one phase where I have found I need to spend the least time explaining.

I have found that use of the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time scale) mnemonic has the most impact.

Traditional police responses are built around `High Profile' policing or `High Visibility' policing. My analysis of the probationers' initiatives and those on the Constabulary's databases show that the two responses are ubiquitous, and used interchangeably. I tested what people meant by these terms. Not one was the same. They spanned: *'drive past slowly'* to *'foot patrol officers will always be visible on the street in fluorescent yellow jackets'*.

I now always ask audiences whether the responses `High Profile' policing or `High Visibility' policing are SMART, Most consider that they are. I probe `specific'. Generally police officers and partner agencies agree that it is specific. I was finding it difficult to explain this point and it was clearly a fundamental problem in relation to response. I had to develop a means to convince people that it was not SMART and therefore not a sustainable response, I now use the following slide *in* which I compare police responses with those of partner agencies and ask if anyone would be satisfied with these responses from partners:

High Profile Probation Officering
High Profile Social Servicing
High Profile Housing Officering
High Profile Neighbourhood Watching

This has never failed to raise a laugh from the audience. High Profile Policing - when not further defined has become a cliché and `all things to all men', It has actually become meaningless and allows sloppy thinking and sloppy management. Patrols are sent out to do `High profile' policing but all will do something different, and perhaps use tactics which will not impact on the problem, unless it is accurately explained.

Assessment

My early work on 'mark one' of the Constabulary POP good practice database showed that the majority of initiatives were not assessed. *BritPop*, *BritPop II* and *Not Rocket Science* chart the same (but improving) results.

Even when assessment took place officers were quick to describe a subsequent rise in figures as a blip, and a fall as a sustainable reduction. Partial use of figures meant that most initiatives were reported to be a success. Indeed when Lancashire were asked to provide three successes and three failures in the pre inspection work for *Calling Time on Crime* the Constabulary reported that we had not had any failures only successes.

In answer to my question *'When should we assess?'* The answers varied from *at the beginning*, to *at the end*, to *all the time*.

Goldstein's work was inspired by the lack of focus within police agencies, where the process had become the goal not the policing outcome. This prompted me to use my amended version of the SARA process. I advocate the Irish problem solving model: O'SARA ..An intended Outcome/Objective is followed by Scanning Analysis **Response** and **Assessment**. The assessment then simply becomes: *'Have you reached your objective?'* If not then go back to analysis. By stating an outcome beforehand, it will discourage the tactic of commissioning many data sets but choosing the most complimentary and discarding the less favourable and lauding another success. My research of POP prize winners always show an early or repeated failures, followed inevitably by success because the acknowledged failures allow repeated returns to analysis.

A Paradigm Shift

My analysis of the reasons why early training in POP in Lancashire and elsewhere failed to create a sustainable use of problem solving was that it failed to capture the imagination of the audience. They had to understand that it is not the mechanistic adoption of a set of steps but a paradigm shift. The people who said 'but it's what we have always done' had to be shaken out of their complacency.

Stephen Covey finally gave me the key by explaining paradigm shifts in 'The Seven Habits'. I was then able to end the presentation by challenging all of the audience, no matter their level of knowledge of POP, to question their beliefs. If anyone left the Beer Mat feeling smug then in my view that smugness represented a failure.

I know that this had an impact on Southern Division, the phrase 'creating a paradigm shift' has become a useful way of describing the changing of mindsets and culture. (It has yet to become a cliché.)

This final phase of the Beer Mat presentation has changed as I collect traditional paradigms and the ways in which they are described. The power of the conclusion is that it refers back to the beer mat model of the red demand line and the green resource line. Traditional paradigms are listed in red, problem oriented paradigms are listed in green. First a list of paradigms of policing:

Response
Community based
Detection only
Reduction, prevention & detection
We can do it alone
Co-operative (Co-active)
Law Enforcement Agency
Problem oriented

Then a list of problem oriented partnerships:

Meetings are talking shops
Or Joint Engine Rooms
s.17 is an added burden
0.7 enables combined achievement
Joined up working is jargon
Joined up working works
We've tried this before
A belief that it can happen

I now use the term Problem Oriented Policing less and less, and increasingly use the term Problem Oriented Partnerships. Although analysis suggested the change in title was necessary, I e mailed Mike Scott, Herman Goldstein's associate for his view. I received a problem oriented answer: 'a rose by any other name...'. I had a warm glow. We were implementing an American concept but they were, at least, quoting an English playwright.

Michael Barton Lancashire Constabulary

How successful was the approach?

Evaluation

In over two years I have never had anyone disagree with or disprove my argument, once it has been heard. There have been many who have disagreed at the start.

I have been invited to speak at conferences introducing or re-introducing problem orientation or problem solving in the following Forces:

Avon and Somerset
Cumbria
Devon & Cornwall
Hertfordshire
Leicestershire
Merseyside
Metropolitan Police
West Yorkshire
North Wales
North Yorkshire
South Wales
Suffolk
Thames Valley
West Midlands
Association of Police Authorities National Conference
Crime Reduction College, Easingwold
National POP Conference
National Operations Faculty, Bramshill
Section 17 Conferences in Lancashire and Merseyside

I have not solicited these invitations, indeed I have declined some, either because of my own work load or because my preliminary discussions reveal that the infrastructure or willingness in key parts of the organisation is not present to take full value from my input.

Several Forces have also visited Southern Division to see POP in action. They have not only taken ideas back with them but staff in Southern Divisions have gained from not only explaining how they do things but also listening how others work.

Within Lancashire I have spoken at the first three Lancashire POP Conferences. I have visited all divisions and spoken to key players, be they sergeants, inspectors, senior managers, beat constables or support staff.

I have spoken to all the staff in my division: nearly 800 people including special constables. The District Audit of the implementation of POP iit the Lancashire Constabulary showed that 97% of all staff in Southern Division had come to believe

that working in a problem oriented way was their responsibility, this compared with a force average of 82%. Which is high in itself

I have also been able to deliver problem solving training to all three Crime and Disorder Partnerships and Local Councils within Southern Division.

I have now implemented the third version of the Lancashire Constabulary good practice database, its development has been influenced through work on the Beer Mat and speaking to people both within Lancashire and throughout the UK. In a recent Best Value Review of I.T. it was named as the most helpful software application for operational police officers.

My invitation to provide the last session of the Co-ordinated Approaches to Reducing Crime Course at Bramshill and Easingwold was as a result of providing an evening session to the course as a course member in November 1999, when I saw that the curriculum was lacking in the practical application of problem solving. The course evaluations have all highlighted the Beer Mat as the single most useful tool to use back in the workplace.

I have researched the Forces where I have visited and all are positive that the presentation led to actual problem solving on the ground. Some examples they offered are a 'drink spiking' problem in Hertfordshire, nuisance youths in a residential shopping area and impetus to the Bradford District Project. All are using the Beer Mat as a model to sell POP. So the Beer Mat is now being used across *the* UK to engage doubters and shift paradigms to problem orientation, a dream I had at the start that I am proud to have achieved. I end with the word on many assessments: 'inspirational'.