



Sharing and Learning= Changing. A real story at the Institute of Public Security of Catalonia

The Institute of Public Security of Catalonia is the institution that trains, specializes and professionalizes the safety and security forces of Catalonia: police (local and regional), firefighters and civil protection.

Catalonia has 17,000 regional policemen (Mossos d'Esquadra), 11,000 local policemen, 5,000 firefighters and hundreds of civil protection professionals.

Over the last 25 years, the School has trained over 35,000 professionals and every year 16,000 more come to take lifelong training, promotion and specialization courses.

We have proven experience in technically training professionals over many years whilst our institution has grown and consolidated as well as the security forces have.

After these 25 years, we have reached a level of maturity in which the experience and knowledge gained can be aligned to the best security, safety and emergency professionals in the world.

The work done, the achievements and the serious economic crisis, which affects our country in a direct way, have led us to feel a certain state of disorientation almost as an existential crisis.

As always, crises open opportunities. And to identify these opportunities, first we need to go through states of uncertainty, confusion and even despair.

The Institute has professionals with extensive experience in training, specifically with experience in the field of police and emergencies training. Moreover, it also has very talented people. But above all, our institution has public professionals with a desire to serve, who love security and emergency responders and want to provide them with the best knowledge to make them every day better professionals.

In the quest for continuous training improvement, it's during 2009 when e-learning begins to have a presence at the Institute. Virtual training methodology becomes a facilitator for the training of various professionals, avoiding geographical displacement and easing the class schedule.

It's in 2011 when the Institute decided to implement a training master plan. The result was to make the transition from training to an integrated model of creation and knowledge transfer.



At this point, there are some changes. ISPC network is born. We can define it as a platform for e-learning. Until now, the e-learning platform was outsourced, but now we are building our own platform. The emphasis is set on skills training and a big step is taken to transform the methodology of the vocational courses to a skills methodology. Soon we realize that the virtual platform will be useful for many other things apart from e-learning.

As said by Marc J. Rosenberg (2006): “knowledge management is about sharing knowledge, not only to collect it and store it, which is not enough”.

It is precisely at this point where the importance lies in the people and the professionals of our organization. Telematic tools become just a “tool” to serve people. Our aim has been and remains to build faithful teams who through technology allow the flow of talent within the organization.

It was necessary that the organization realized about its value, became aware of its talent. And realized that the real value was in them and the ability to share knowledge. Not just to share it with school professionals, but also with all the members of the security forces and police.

At the same time, the Institute reorganized itself, creating two specific schools within the Institute: the Police School and the Firefighters and Civil Protection School. This reorganization sought specialization for each type of professionals but, also a transversal vision of any actions.

To achieve a transition from an old model to a new paradigm, we implemented a program to implement coaching tools. These actions were aimed to draw together the groups, identify our values, become aware of the strengths, identify the limiting beliefs, learn to work from common values and relying on the strengths, and to build a solid foundation for cooperation based on mutual trust.

Allow me to tell you that the basis for the success of any organization is trust and all the resources and efforts must be spent to build it with sincerity and strength.

I define 2012 as a dense year. Many processes were occurring simultaneously: as I said, we were at the end of a long constitution phase of the forces, nobody knew the future direction of the school itself, we were facing a new organizational model that had brought police and firefighters to work together full time sharing trainers and educational psychologists, and all with a significant decrease in funding as a result of the economic crisis. Simultaneously the virtual platform was born and was growing.

We put the virtual platform in the centre of the process. Initially it also added complexity in itself generating some resistance both in being and in doing, as it was suspected that it was the beginning of a new way of working.



Gradually, it became a good tool to transform and change the ways of working and relating.

Several learning seminars based on reflection practices were scheduled, aimed at specific stakeholders:

- In first place: civil servants.
- In second place: the research teams.
- In third place: the police officers and fire officers working at the Institute.

Training was based on learning using Moodle as a virtual learning environment and DokuWiki as a collaborative writing space where specific groups tried to create and design particular e-learning associated with training needs previously identified.

Simultaneously and almost naturally, slowly, the process has been flowing and taking steady steps towards knowledge management and leaving behind what “only” was training.

In recent months, the whole team has gathered, more than 200 people - around the virtual platform in the discussion of how we wanted our institution to be in the future.

It is for this reason that we began a strategic analysis of ISPC on line. The whole organization participated. The result was that important contributions were provided, innovative ideas and the definition of the new project...

I would like to emphasize that the main conclusions obtained by the organization are that the importance is in the team, in the strength and importance of our institution, we have the ability to influence police and firefighters excellence, the pride to show ourselves to the world the way we are and the certainty and courage that we can train police and firefighters from around the world.

Today, already at the end of 2013 I can say that we are already are a university training centre. We are teaching several masters – university level masters and next September we will inaugurate the first European degree in Security with an international focus.

We continue training over 13,000 professionals each year.

Our courses are taught in a method of skills training and all the training is based in our values. Our teachers have been trained to work on skills and also with the same values.

Our virtual platform, ISPC network, is training a large amount of professionals around our country, in an effective, personalized and interactive way. Moreover, it is becoming a resources source for our professionals.

Allowing teachers to discuss and share materials with each other and students. Introduces contents, exercises and examples... it is already a natural tool for any educational process. It



is and it will always be present in university education and therefore, this tool which could be considered simply as an online training platform, has become for us a tool to manage knowledge, to transform a way of doing, allowing all professionals to share, create and meet with confidence and generosity.

Today, the online platform is already part of all of us. It has become a crucial tool, and I must say that people are always, creative and full of resources and our institution has some excellent professional willing to service with a lot of dedication and effort they have been able to take an important step in our country. We have evolved from training to excellence.

I said that a crisis is a source of opportunity. I'm not speaking only about the economic crisis, which our institution is facing. I speak of a much deeper crisis, when there was a time of questioning and despair where the future could neither be seen nor designed.

Trusting people, teams, their resources, their talent and knowledge management, that has allowed them to create new knowledge that has been the basis of being able to come out stronger.

Today we enjoy training in excellence. To know that, for the security forces, our institution is still as important as at the time of its constitution. They, and we, know that the future of our country's police and firefighters depends on the Institute. The world is changing. Demands are growing. Acquisition and transfer of knowledge is vital.

We don't distinguish between the school and the forces. We are all one unit.

Is has been difficult for all of us. For us, the school, to believe it. For the forces, to believe that after the constituting stage we still play an important and vital role for them.

The road is long and the work and effort must be maintained. Every day, we must work to strengthen our task, our excellence, Give meaning to our work and do it with professionalism and generosity.

That's when we can stop for a moment to realize that networking tools become so important that they are even transparent and, therefore, we must thank them and the team who turned them useful for their work and effort.

Berlin, 6 December 2013