## Case Insight 17.1: City of London Police

# Superintendent Helen Isaac

Hi, my name’s Paul Baines, I'm Professor of Political Marketing at the University of Leicester, and co-author of the fifth edition of *Marketing* by Oxford University Press. In this clip, we talk to Superintendent Helen Isaac, of the City of London Police, and she talks about how the police organization that she works for uses communications in order to reduce criminality.

The City of London Police was founded in 1839. The City of London is a fantastically historic and diverse area, a square mile right in the middle of London. We have a resident population of around 9000 people and a business population of about 300,000 plus a large number of tourists coming every year, to look at the historic venues in the Square Mile, such as the Bank of England, St Paul’s, Mansion House, and the Tower of London, to name just a few.

We police a large number of events every year, some of these have great historical importance such as the Lord Mayor’s Show, a lot of pageantry, very important for the City that these go well and that the community has a chance to come along and see them safely.

The changing net of terrorist threat is obviously very important to bear in mind here. In the mid-1990s, we had a threat from vehicle borne large explosives we had the Bishopsgate bomb and the Mary Axe bomb and this led to the Ring Of Steel being implemented and this was where we closed down a large number of the entry points coming into the City of London and just left a very small number where vehicles could actually enter. These had an entry point box with a police officer staffing that 24/7, obviously very resource intensive, with CCTV and AMPR cameras capturing the index numbers of every single vehicle entering into the city.

The threat we face nowadays is clearly different, it’s not from the large vehicle borne devices that we were seeing in the mid-1990s. The threat now is more unpredictable and so we have to think about how we protect the public from this unpredictable, changing face of terrorism in the current situation.

Project Servator uses highly visible police deployments, deploying a range of police assets such as dogs, horses, mounted branch, firearms officers in a range of locations in an unpredictable way. We are using PR, media communications, and the community to amplify the results from the use of officers on the ground and get our message out to a wider audience.

Now clearly the use of highly visible deployments could easily alarm the public and that is something that we really don’t want to do, we want to use the public as our eyes and ears, they are of huge importance to us in getting our message over that they must be vigilant, that we rely on them to feedback anything into us but also that we don’t want to alarm them at the same time.

The marketing problem that we had with the Servator was that we were communicating to a dual audience, so that of our community who we wanted to reassure and to get them to report instances of suspicious behaviour into us and also, the would-be terrorist who we wanted to know that we were out there watching and that we were going to be operating in an unpredictable manner, should they decide to come into the City of London.

It was a very complex problem and one that we thought a great deal about in how we were going to get this message over, using a campaign, the same campaign and the same branding and messaging to both audiences.

The impact of getting this campaign wrong would have been really severe for the force and for our community and for the confidence that our community has in the City of London Police, so we had to get it right.

We had to design a message that spoke to the different audiences in different ways, which was very challenging but what we did was we designed messages that conveyed to the public that our need for them to be vigilant, our need for them to phone us if they saw anything they thought was suspicious and also the reassurance that we wanted them to feel from the operations that we’re doing on the ground.

For the would-be terrorist, we wanted them to know that we are out there, we’re watching out for any suspicious behaviour, that the public are working with us on this, that our next security operation might be along at any minute, that we’re using a range of police assets and that they really don't know where we’re going to be next and what we’re going to be using next, to actually stop them from committing any acts of terrorism within the City of London.

We used a range of different mediums, so we used PR articles, we used posters, we used mediums in stations, in crowded places, and we looked at messages that would mean something different to each audience. So for example, we used a message about a plain clothes police officer potentially being in a crowd of people and asking the question, ‘Can you spot the plain clothes police officer?’ and of course, it’s very difficult to do that in a crowd of people.

For the public, that would be a message, hopefully reassuring to them to say that even though you can’t see a uniform, there are police out working today. For the would-be terrorist, that would be a message that would deter them from coming into the City of London because they can see that even though they might not be able to see a uniform, it doesn't mean to say that there isn't a plain clothes operation taking place in the area.

We had another poster that we used as well, which was one about the public being our extra 300,000 pairs of ears and eyes and the fact that we love rush hour for this very reason. Now for the public, that hopefully makes them feel that they are part of the operations that we’re running and impresses on them the importance that we place on their role in the security of the City of London.

For the would-be terrorist, that would be a deterring message to show them that it’s not just the police that are involved in this, it is the whole community of the City of London, who are watching out for anything that they might feel is suspicious.

There are a range of different mediums, so for example, if you have a member of the public coming out of a Tube or rail station within the City of London, they’ll see a poster or digital medium on coming out of that station, talking about Project Servator and the operations that we’re running. On coming out of the station, they’ll see a police operation running with various different types of police units there.

Then they go and have a coffee in a nearby coffee shop, in that coffee shop will be posters, a number of leaflets on the counter that they can read about Servator. On sitting down at their table, they look at their Twitter account; there’ll be a Twitter message from the City of London Police, talking about Servator, about what it’s there to do and about the fact that we need their help in preventing crime within the Square Mile. On coming out of that coffee shop, they’ll be handed a leaflet by a PCSO working with the Servator team, which explains what Servator’s about and how it’s designed to reassure them and keep the city crime free.

Well a potential terrorist carrying out hostile reconnaissance in the City of London would see the message in, in several different formats, so they would see police deployments, they would see the messaging within coffee shops, they would see police officers deploying with security guards in businesses and they would see the range of media that we’ve got in the high profile locations and Tube stations.

So that person will immediately start to feel uneasy, as soon as they come into the City of London. The longer they spend there, seeing all the different ranges of work that we’re doing, the deployments, the messaging, the more their unease increases and the more the hostile feels that the City of London is a hostile place for them to operate within.

We’ve ensured that we have consistency of message across all the different mediums that we’re using, so the messages that we have on our posters, on our leaflets, on the Twitter, are all complementary to each other, so the message that the public gets is one of constant reassurance, of us needing their assistance in helping to keep the city safe and to the would-be terrorist, it’s one of letting them know that our deployments are unpredictable, that we do use a range of assets, that we are out there being watchful of everything that’s going on.

We carried out a large number of surveys with members of the public who’d witnessed Project Servator deployments and what this showed us is that most people felt reassured by the deployments and they were more likely to feel reassured if they’d seen the communications about the deployments in more than one medium.

We had fantastic results from the officers involved in the deployments as well, we had an increased number of arrests and outcomes as result of wider crime being detected during the campaign and we also had increased instances of reporting of suspicious activity during the period, which was a very positive outcome for us.

I think this is an example of where marketing can be used very successfully to complement police deployments, for example, we’ve seen Police Scotland using Project Servator during the Commonwealth Games, we’ve seen it being used by the British Transport Police also, Project Servator and the marketing techniques and we’ve seen other forces with renewed interest in using this for their police deployments.

At the end of the day, this is about old fashioned policing; it’s about using our community, working with them in partnership to protect their safety.