



HOW MY90 OPENED THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, FL

Serving a jurisdiction with more than 1.5 million residents is no easy task for the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office (HCSO). Located in central Florida, HCSO serves the greater Tampa metropolitan area with 2,100 sworn deputies and other staff, among them Captain Samuel Portalatin. Captain Portalatin has been with Hillsborough County for 15 years, and in that time, he's seen the agency build its [camera program](#), streamline its [digital evidence management](#), and embrace a wide range of technology solutions.

According to Captain Portalatin, HCSO is always looking for ways to directly connect with its community. "What are their fears? What are their concerns? What are the things that they would like us to address more?"

Although the added transparency from body-worn cameras and digital evidence sharing has been a boon to HCSO's relationship with their community, they still did not have an effective way of gathering and understanding community feedback.

THE CHALLENGE: MEETING THE COMMUNITY'S NEEDS

Despite the agency's best efforts, keeping the lines of communication open with so many residents proved difficult. They tried using social media, but that only worked to "a certain extent" because "you're limited to the folks who are on those platforms."

They tried to create surveys on their own, but using third-party apps to construct and deliver these surveys "was very cumbersome and wasn't coming together very well." It was difficult to refine questions that would lead to helpful answers, and the response rate was never very good.

As users of Axon's comprehensive [Officer Safety Plan](#), the agency was already familiar with the Axon Ecosystem and how all of its products and services worked together. So when they saw an opportunity to utilize a new Axon offering that could solve their dilemma, Captain Portalatin and his team jumped at the chance.

THE SOLUTION: BRIDGING THE GAP WITH MY90

In June 2022, HCSO learned about a new engagement tool called [My90](#) by Axon. Designed to bridge the gap between law enforcement leaders, their officers, and the communities they serve, My90 enhances communication in a number of ways:

- **Post-contact surveys:** My90 uses automated surveys to follow up with community members who have interacted with the Sheriff's Office. This increases engagement and gives civilians a chance to share feedback.
- **Public surveys:** Agencies can create public surveys and share them via social media, their websites and community events. While post-contact surveys are delivered to specific people after contact with dispatchers and deputies, public surveys give the community at large an opportunity to engage.
- **Employee surveys:** These confidential internal surveys give officers a chance to share their own feedback, and they are designed to reduce burnout and support officer wellness.
- **Data dashboards:** Once the survey responses are collected, agencies receive key statistics on community sentiment, giving them an overview of their strengths and areas for improvement.



The agency initiated a 'soft rollout' of My90 in early August 2022, just 30 days after learning about and adopting this survey tool.

THE RESULTS: BETTER COMMUNICATION AND PRIORITIZATION OF RESOURCES

After going live, Captain Portalatin said HCSO immediately benefited from My90. After seeing the initial results, "We jumped on board," he said. "It really helped us with that specific challenge of engaging the public because it did exactly what we were looking for in a solution."

"The response rate was high," he said, citing the thousands of comments that came within the first five months. Because community members were already used to post-contact surveys from their favorite companies, it wasn't anything strange when they received My90 requests to fill out a survey and provide feedback.

He shared several examples of how My90 strengthened community relations, improved safety and boosted morale in the Sheriff's Office:

- **Neighborhood safety:** A Hillsborough County mother reported a "suspicious person hanging out near a bus stop" frequented by children. This alerted HCSO to the threat, and they were able to apprehend the suspect – who was legally not supposed to be near children. "We were able to rectify that situation before it became a problem," Portalatin explained. In addition to bolstering neighborhood safety, the incident immediately built trust when the caller saw how quickly HCSO followed up and addressed her concern.



- **Supported CALEA accreditation:** CALEA certification requires agencies to survey their local community, and My90 met all the requirements. According to Colleen Slater, the accreditation manager, “the My90 report worked beautifully and required no extra work or changes to meet the requirements.”
- **Welfare checks:** When several callers submitted concerning feedback about their experiences with welfare checks, HCSO knew that this type of call for service needed extra attention. At roll call, supervisors began to include brief reminders about best practices, such as how much time to spend conducting a welfare check. Without needing formal training, HCSO was able to quickly improve these interactions and the department began receiving positive feedback.
- **Encouraging feedback:** While some people are afraid of the negative feedback that comes from surveys, Captain Portalatin says that the feedback has been largely positive and encouraging. Hearing good stories from My90 users “goes such a long way...It makes a difference to individuals when they can receive confidential feedback and hear that someone likes the job they did.” Dispatchers in particular, who usually don’t receive any type of feedback, found it valuable.

For Captain Portalatin, part of the appeal of My90 is having one integrated ecosystem for all of the agency’s Axon products and services. “We’re not starting from the ground up again, not trying to learn a whole new different platform, a whole new different software. It just feels like it was always there.”

For other agencies considering implementing My90, Captain Portalatin has this advice: Go “from the top down.” By getting approval from executive staff and disseminating the information down the chain, no one in the department was surprised by the new feedback. Additionally, agencies should put the word out – via their websites or social media – that they’re soliciting feedback through this service, incorporating their Public Affairs office if they have one.

“Anytime you can improve communication between the Sheriff’s Office and its community, that’s a huge benefit,” Captain Portalatin said. He carefully reviews reports summarizing My90 feedback. “Now, when you can join My90 results with the statistics we gather for crime data, you’ve got tremendous tools for making decisions about where to better allocate resources to help decrease crime and bolster community relations.”

To learn more about My90 and how it works with the rest of the Axon ecosystem, [get in touch](#).

