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Organization Development

A quiet revolution is happening in organizations. As we move ever deeper into a connected world, it is the relationships between people and systems that is becoming the essential focus of our attention rather than the traditional approach of focusing on the people/systems themselves. To be effective, organization development must meet a growing demand to address complexity.

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Organization Development

ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

1. The Foundations of Organization Development

Introduction

Organization Development (OD) is the systematic application of behavioural science to bring about planned change in organizations. Its objectives are improved adaptability, productivity, effectiveness and a higher quality of work-life. It accomplishes this by changing values, attitudes, strategies, behaviours, procedures and structures so that organizations can adapt to the ever-increasing pace of change, technological advancement and competitive forces. During this first part of the module we will:

- Outline the Four Key Orientations and the 7-S model of OD;
- Review typical precedes to an OD intervention;
- Explore the motives and expectations that may be associated with OD;
- Review approaches to managing motivations and expectations.

1.1 The Four Key Orientations and Seven Ss of OD

OD is a complex behavioural science that has four key orientations:

- **A systemic orientation**: The understanding that all parts of an organization (structure, technology, processes, people) are highly connected. Problems can occur at one or more levels and have far reaching consequences throughout the organization;
- **A problem-solving orientation**: A focus on problem identification, data gathering, option generation, cost/benefit analysis, decision-making, action planning, monitoring, review and adaptability - in the light of subjective experience;
- **A humanistic orientation**: A positive belief about the potential of people, their rights, their need for autonomy and support in varying measures, and the value of their subjective experience;
- **An experiential learning orientation**: An acceptance that training, development and organizational learning should be based on the subjective experiences of all those involved.

OD also influences a wide range of organizational factors. Peters and Waterman, consultants at McKinsey & Company, developed the 7S model in the late 1970s to help managers address the difficulties of organizational change. The model suggests that organizational 'immune systems' and the many interconnected variables that exist within the complex structures and functioning of an organization make change highly complex. Furthermore, an effective change effort must address many (if not all) of the interconnected variables simultaneously. By way of an outline, the original seven Ss are as follows:

- **Structure** The framework in which the activities of the organization's members are coordinated. The four basic structural forms are the functional form, divisional structure, matrix structure, and network structure;
- **Strategy** The route that the organization has chosen for its future growth and to gain a sustainable competitive advantage;

- **Systems** The formal and informal procedures, including, management information systems, capital allocation systems, reward systems, quality systems and innovation systems;
- **Skills** What the company does best; the distinctive capabilities and competencies that reside in the organization;
- **Shared values** The guiding concepts and principles of the organization - values and aspirations, often unwritten - that go beyond the conventional statements of corporate objectives; the fundamental ideas around which a business is built; the things that influence a group to work together for a common aim;
- **Staff** The organization's human resources and the ways they are developed, trained, socialized, integrated, motivated, and managed;
- **Style** The leadership approach of top management and the organization's overall operating approach, including the way in which the organization's employees present themselves to the outside world, to suppliers and customers.

To be effective, organizations must have a high degree of alignment among the 7-Ss. Each S must be consistent with and reinforce the other Ss, with all Ss being interrelated such that change in one has a ripple effect on all the others. It is impossible to make sustainable progress on one without making progress on all the others.

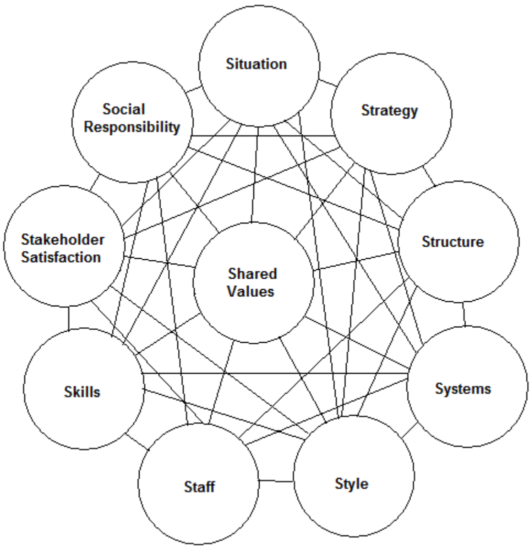
Since the 1970's, some OD practitioners have been critical of the 7S model, whilst others have built upon the original framework to create an even more comprehensive analytical/planning tool. Popular additions have been 'Situation' and Stakeholders', i.e.

- **Situation** The external environment in which the organization carries out its business. Analysis of the external environment is often aided by mnemonics such as STEP (Social, Technical, Economic and Political influences).
- **Stakeholder Satisfaction** Stakeholders are those who have an interest in what the organization does, and how well it does it. Stakeholders span groups as diverse as customers, staff, shareholders, regulators, etc.

I feel one more addition would equip the model for a further decade or so, i.e.

- **Social Responsibility** The approach the organization takes to issues such as business ethics, global warming, charitable contributions, etc.

Taking these additional three Ss into the model, we have the following:



Within a comprehensive OD effort, all four orientations would be used to bring about an improved alignment between all ten Ss. Now, given the complexity that these orientations and factors encompass, effective OD interventions will typically consist of a number of interdependent steps or phases, each of which builds on the previous one. Each step of an OD process provides new data, which can then be evaluated and incorporated into data generated previously and, in the light of this process flow, objectives are reassessed and decisions are made regarding the next steps. Thus, OD is an evolutionary process that responds to emerging organizational needs as the process unfolds.

1.2 Typical Precedes to an OD Intervention

OD interventions usually have as their starting point a client's felt need. This can manifest itself in a variety of ways, ranging from frustration with poor operating results to perceptions of 'people problems.' The initial role of the OD practitioner is one of working with organizational leaders to assist them in the appropriate analysis of their felt need. But in order to establish collaboration and ensure support for eventual change processes, good practice dictates that all those potentially affected by change should be included in this initial phase, i.e. it is not enough only to include those that first perceive, subjectively, the need.

Regarding subjectivity vs. objectivity, OD is a science that strives – in the first instance – for an objective analysis of an organization's state. Although subjective experience is valued (the humanistic and experiential learning orientations), the closest possible approximation towards objectivity is the foundation upon which full value is based (the systemic and problem-solving orientations).

The practitioner can use any of a number of different methods in his/her journey towards objectivity. For example, s/he can administer questionnaires, conduct surveys, employ observational techniques, ask employees to generate on-the-spot data, or analyse the various performance indicators that are found in organizational records (e.g. absenteeism, turnover, service levels). Then, after shared analysis has revealed some of the realities underpinning the client's felt need, and some indication has emerged as to the desired change being sought, it is necessary to establish the degree to which each of the 7-Ss need to be targeted.

1.3 An Exploration of Motivations and Expectations Associated with OD

A factor that is crucial to the success of an OD effort is the managerial motivation for becoming involved. Managers who lack an adequate understanding of what OD can and cannot be expected to accomplish may become involved for the wrong reasons. For example, the motive for engaging in an OD effort may be to 'sort out' staff that are 'misguided.' This view is likely to cause considerable trouble during an OD effort. In contrast, a positive motivation for launching an OD effort would be a willingness to engage in self-examination to build realistic expectations for change within a climate of openness, trust and authenticity.

From this, we can categorize motivations as either:

- Those that are questionable in that they tend to impair the success of an OD effort;
- Those that are supportive and tend to enhance the success of an OD effort.

Let's explore this in a little more detail.

(a) Motives that impair the success of an OD effort

In each of the following motivations, the manager described has begun an OD effort based on an inappropriate set of expectations, or as an indirect means to achieve an alternative agenda.

To key into a new form of training for staff

This manager characteristically believes that OD is a new type of training program designed to bring about a change in staff attitudes to the benefit of the team or organization as a whole. The general image of the OD practitioner is that of an inspiring lecturer who provides insight, advice and a clear path forward. This type of manager is likely to have little awareness of real organizational problems or the challenges of change.

To offer OD as an extra reward

This motive is characteristic of a manager who has some unused budget and wants to use it (rather than loose it!). S/he believes that an off-site OD event would make a good 'reward' in the form of a reprieve from the regular work routine. Thus, OD is seen as a recreational and/or social event run by a practitioner with good social skills. As a result the effort is not taken seriously in terms of operational priorities or for the contribution it can make to change efforts.

To boost staff morale

This may be linked to the previous motive. The manager who manifests this motive feels that some activity is needed to raise the spirits of staff, to convince them of their importance, and to show them that the organization really cares about them. The assumption is that an OD effort will persuade staff that their managers are not as insensitive as they perceive. In effect, OD is thought of as a form of rally that will stress the positive aspects of change and generate support. An OD practitioner is thus seen as a motivational expert who stimulates enthusiasm.

To be included in the trend towards OD

This motive is indicative of political game-playing as well as a desire to keep up with management and organizational trends. Managers who are motivated in this way may believe it is fashionable to demonstrate concern for staff, and often they undertake an OD effort in response to pressure from various sources to adopt new practices (because the old ones aren't working). OD is viewed in terms of a fashionable event at which the practitioner is expected to serve as an articulate and witty 'master of ceremonies' as part of the change programme.

To gain personal approval and advancement

An extension of the previous motive, this one centres on the manager's desire to make the right impression with more senior managers, to appear progressive and concerned, and to ensure that his or her image is consistent with what is expected. Such a manager may view OD as a gimmick that is part of a career-advancement strategy. A practitioner who participates in this fantasy becomes a potential co-conspirator in furthering the manager's career.

To learn how to be nicer

This motive is characteristic of managers who have been conditioned by years of autocratic leadership and suddenly become aware that top management no longer supports this style – at least in theory. The message they receive is that they need to show more appreciation for and interest in their staff and to improve human relations.

Although such managers may view this trend as pampering staff, they resign themselves to co-operating as instructed. The OD process is thus perceived as a form of innocuous charm school, with the practitioner serving as a human-relations theorist who facilitates activities for the purpose of improving work etiquette.

To sell unpopular changes
The belief underlying this motive is that staff members are not mature enough to understand organizational needs and it is a waste of time to consult with them about related changes. Instead, management should make decisions independently and then win support for actions to be taken. A further assumption is that efforts to build staff loyalty will pay off in terms of less questioning of change determined by management. The OD process is thus viewed as a form of advertising conducted by a practitioner who acts as a promoter of carefully orchestrated strategies.

To promote staff conformance
The manager who seeks to promote staff conformance characteristically clings to Theory-X beliefs (McGregor). Certain staff members are seen as unproductive and maladjusted and OD is viewed as a useful control device for manipulating or even shocking them into acceptable behaviour. The practitioner, therefore, becomes therapist, trouble-shooter, or 'hired gun.' Managers thus motivated are often acutely aware of morale problems and believe that the solution lies in an OD effort to communicate the organizational facts of life and to rehabilitate 'dinosaurs' by forcing them to change their attitudes. The probable results of such an effort are fear and its related consequences, including a closed atmosphere, a lack of trust and further 'hidden' resistance.

To avert personal disaster
This motive is characteristic of managers who are under great pressure either to change or to produce results that are not forthcoming. They see OD as a panacea, a last-chance miracle cure to save them from any number of punishments, including the loss of their jobs. Often they feel the need to improve costs, quality or profits quickly and to be able to show measures of improvement immediately. OD is perceived as a means to achieve quick payoffs and the practitioner is thought of as a saviour.

OD efforts based on any of the above motivations will almost certainly produce unrealistic expectations and eventual scepticism when nothing concrete or permanent occurs in the way of organizational and behavioural change.

(b) Motives that support the success of an OD effort
In contrast to the negative motives just discussed, those that follow represent a more legitimate motivational foundation that can provide the appropriate support for an OD effort. These motivation categories are indicative of more realistic views of OD and the practitioner's role. Consequently, the chances of success based on these motives are much higher than those associated with the negative motives outlined above.

To investigate problems
This motive and the two that follow are oriented towards 'learning'. The manager who enters an OD effort to investigate problems recognizes that the organization is not resolving its problems. S/he is likely to be aware that current statements of these problems are couched in terms that make solution improbable and wonders whether the real problems are, in fact, not being voiced. This type of manager relies heavily on intuition and wants to explore the situation to see whether OD can help to define the real problems. OD is thus viewed as an exploratory, analytical device, with OD activities

perceived as cautious, judicious efforts to increase available data by opening communication and generating upward feedback within the organization. When an effort is conducted on this basis, the practitioner becomes a co-investigator.

To test OD as a helpful approach

The manager whose motive is to test the usefulness of OD will see human problems as the underlying cause for other problems being experienced by the organization, but is uncertain whether OD will confirm this perception. Such a manager generally feels that s/he has never been able to break through to the real problem areas, that staff are holding back and hesitant to say what they really think and that all staff should be more involved in problem-solving and decision-making processes. Thus, an OD effort is initiated as a test project to determine whether real problem-solving will occur. Each activity is fully supported and carefully monitored. The practitioner is viewed as a potential source of creativity, a catalyst and a resource.

To undergo an educational process

This motive, like the two preceding ones, is based on an observed need for learning. It is also indicative of a genuine respect for education and a strong belief in the connection between learning and problem-solving. In this case the manager wants to achieve a full understanding of basic OD values, the rationale behind activities, the commitments that must be made and the consequences - before launching an effort. S/he feels that OD may be helpful but wants to be certain about the practitioner's assessment of limitations. Thus, the OD process is seen as an unknown but potentially valuable management strategy. Activities are thought of as including learning and planning events as well as careful evaluations of various process options. The practitioner is considered to be both teacher and co-assessor.

To shape change

This motive, and the two that follow, are orientated towards 'doing'. The motivation to shape change reflects a clear realization that changes are necessary and that they will affect many people. Such a manager has a genuine desire to receive staff input about contemplated changes and wishes to reduce the fear associated with these changes. S/he wants to involve staff at all levels in the process of defining, implementing, and promoting commitment to change. This manager views OD as a respected strategy for bringing about change, and individual activities are seen as proactive steps that reduce the anxiety associated with change. The practitioner is thought of as a sensitive change agent whose responsibility is to help the manager to unfreeze communications.

To assist with preventive maintenance

A manager who manifests this motive believes that the organization is doing well, that interpersonal relationships are generally good and that these positive conditions should be preserved through some mechanism that ensures ongoing future commitment. S/he is aware of the constant need to develop plans for the future and to involve staff at as many levels as possible in maintaining a state of alertness for early-warning signals of deterioration in processes such as communication, delegation and joint problem-solving. Such a manager also recognizes the consequences of maintaining a fast pace in the organization without periodic checks on staff feelings about such matters as involvement and commitment. OD is seen as offering various ways to accomplish such maintenance checks. The practitioner becomes an objective resource, a co-analyst and a helpful critic.

To build organizational strength
This motive is characteristic of the manager who realizes that the organization is functioning well but that vehicles must be established for continual re-examination in order to sustain excellence in performance. An additional goal is to identify and to tap human resources that have not been used to an optimum level. This type of manager also supports the inclusion of as many staff as possible in problem-solving, decision-making and planning. Thus, the manager views the practitioner as a co-analyst and catalyst.

To help remedy human resource problems
This motive and the two that follow tend to be oriented toward reinforcing both the 'learning' and 'doing' aspects of OD. Managers who display this motive recognize organizational difficulties in the human-resource area that may be worsening but are not unsolvable. Usually such a manager admits that people are not addressing these difficulties. OD activities are viewed as necessary, sometimes painful or challenging steps required to fully analyse issues. The practitioner's role is seen as being that of an expert in interpersonal relations, a confronter, and a human-systems analyst.

To change the organizational climate
Managers of this type are anxious to ensure that the climate of the organization facilitates the meeting of organizational objectives. They express a genuine desire to build trust between individuals and groups in order to reduce 'backbiting' and destructive conflict. In addition, they want to increase commitment to objectives, build greater ownership of personal behaviour, and reduce defensive behaviours. Such a manager seeks to enhance collaborative and problem-solving capabilities throughout the organization. OD is thought to be both a philosophy and a strategy for examining current behaviour patterns and influencing norms. Activities are viewed as interrelated steps aimed at long-range improvements in climate. The practitioner is seen as a strategist, an analyst and an interpersonal-behaviour expert.

To revitalize the organization
The chief concerns of this type of manager are lacklustre performance and mediocrity in the organization. S/he wants to revitalize staff interest and involvement in the organization's structure, tasks, objectives, philosophy and vision. OD is believed to represent a strategy for improving the organization's use of resources, particularly through emphasis on staff self-assessment. Activities are seen as steps that are taken to build awareness of problem performance patterns and to elicit support for changes related to these patterns. The practitioner serves as a catalyst and a guide in the process of change assessment.

1.4 Approaches to Managing Motivations and Expectations

Although no one has the ability to fully determine the motives and expectations of another person, it is possible to gain sufficient information to provide a workable assessment. To a certain extent, motivations and expectations can be screened during the preliminary contracting session. It is wise to request that this session be attended by the potential client manager, his or her immediate line manager, and at least some of his or her staff. If the manager seems reluctant to schedule a meeting with both the line manager and staff present, the practitioner can interpret this reluctance as a significant sign of inappropriate motivation. Sufficient time should be allotted for this meeting to allow for a discussion of reasonable depth about felt needs, important issues, reactions and concerns regarding the ideas expressed.

To inquire into motives and expectations, the practitioner can ask questions such as these:

- What is it that interests you in exploring OD as an activity for your team/organization?
- If such an effort were launched, what end results would you expect or hope to achieve?
- What past developmental activities have you felt good about and why?
- What past developmental activities have you viewed as poor investments and why?
- If you had complete organizational power, what would you change and why?
- What concerns do you have about the possibility of engaging in an OD effort?
- What contributed to me being chosen to assist in this effort rather than someone else?
- What is your understanding of the motives of others in the organization for considering this effort? How do you feel about these motives?
- What specific role would you expect me to play in this effort?

While those attending the session are answering these questions, the practitioner should exercise active-listening skills. In responding to these answers it is appropriate to concentrate on reflecting, which consists of restating, in one's own words, what has just been suggested. This technique helps the practitioner to maintain a supportive atmosphere during the question-and-answer part of the meeting. By uncovering the motives for considering the use of OD processes, the practitioner can determine whether those present have a reasonably clear and realistic understanding of OD and what it might be expected to achieve.

As a practitioner, it is important not only to express concerns about motives but also to make one's own position as clear as possible. Therefore, the following information should be shared with potential clients:

- Personal views and concerns about appropriate and inappropriate motivation;
- Reactions to client expectations regarding what can and cannot be accomplished through an OD effort;
- The potential negative consequences of OD efforts that are poorly motivated, poorly conceived and/or poorly executed;
- Personal expectations and requirements for launching an OD effort.

Although using this candid approach with potential clients may create short-term pressure for the practitioner, in the long-term it can pay dividends by laying the basis for the authentic and mutually supportive relationship necessary to achieve success in an OD effort.

The form that such short-term pressure takes depends on the following factors:

- The level of openness achieved during the discussion;
- The perceived receptiveness to feedback on the part of those present;
- The apparent level of credibility enjoyed at this point by the practitioner;
- The practitioner's opinion as to whether any negative motives are susceptible to influence and change.

Without question some intuition is involved here. However, intuition and personal judgement are integral to the practice of OD, and the successful practitioner learns to rely heavily on his or her feelings and evaluations of circumstances.

The practitioner can confront a negative motive by offering direct and immediate feedback if it seems likely that the recipient will react with acceptance and a willingness to do what is necessary for the success of the effort. However, such feedback should not be given in an accusatory manner. Rather, the practitioner should use active-listening techniques to reduce the possibility of a defensive reaction and open the way for co-operation.

To deliver such feedback effectively, the practitioner must explain clearly why the motive is inappropriate, how it might damage an OD effort and how to safeguard against potentially damaging effects by including specific actions and on-going joint analysis. Thereafter the design of the intervention should explicitly guard against the potential consequences of the identified inappropriate motivation.

When dealing with the negative motives of clients who do not seem receptive to feedback, delayed confrontation may be more appropriate. This approach allows time for the organization's representatives to reflect on the discussion and for the practitioner to develop a strategy for avoiding the consequences of the negative motive. Options include:

- Indicating a desire to think about what has been said and to meet again at a later date to discuss a proposal for a project that will ensure that the determined needs are met. In this way the practitioner can formulate the challenge into a presentation, thereby increasing the probability of client acceptance of any necessary actions.
- Suggesting the client summarizes in writing his or her understanding of the project as discussed so far. This option allows the practitioner to confront the motive as clearly as possible in terms of design recommendations.

To illustrate what is meant by 'design recommendations,' the situation in which the practitioner is faced with the impairing motive 'To boost staff morale' (see earlier) will be considered. To recap, the manager who manifests this motive feels that some activity is needed to raise the spirits of staff, to convince them of their importance, and to show them that the organization really cares about them. In such a case, the approach suggested by the practitioner may be:

(a) Use a diagnostic-based intervention to confirm or otherwise the assumption that the problem is, in fact, related to staff morale, then …

(b) Plan the response for the fuller intervention only after additional data have been obtained and jointly interpreted;

By taking this approach, the practitioner confronts the questionable motivation in a productive manner. If, in response to this suggestion, the organizational representatives react negatively, this hesitancy provides the practitioner with an opportunity to deal with the impairing motive on the basis of data rather than impressions.

2. Beginning an OD Effort

Introduction

A successful long-term, OD project invariably begins with, and is guided by, a comprehensive and carefully planned strategy. The purpose of this section is:

- To outline the concepts behind strategy building;
- To present some options for an overall approach;
- To suggest ways to avoid, or at least minimize, the probability of failure patterns developing.

As a general point, the term 'practitioner' has been used, and will continue to be used, to cover the manager, leader or consultant that is leading the OD effort.

2.1 Building an OD Strategy

An OD strategy is a comprehensive plan based on a thorough analysis of organizational needs and goals. It is designed to bring about specific changes and to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to secure those changes. Included in it are:

- Desired objectives;
- Specific interventions aimed at achieving objectives;
- Time scales;
- A monitoring, review and evaluation system.

The strategy must specify contingencies as well as primary interventions and take into account the power and influence dynamics of the organization.

Specific interventions, such as team building and job redesign, are not strategies. Interventions, unlike strategies, are simple activities with limited end objectives. Practitioners who confuse interventions with strategies seldom exert significant, long-term impact on organizational performance. If real organizational change is to be achieved and organizational performance improved, interventions must be seen only as parts of, and be embedded within, an overall strategy.

Because circumstances vary between organizations, organizational-change strategies will vary as well. Likewise, the steps to strategy-building may differ from organization to organization. However, it is possible to identify six general steps in this process.

Step 1: Defining the change (OD) problem
In this step, information is gathered regarding the performance of the organization and barriers to desired performance levels. Factors that might be identified as barriers include job designs, reward structures, skill levels, organizational structure, value systems, etc. Care must be taken at this stage not to confuse symptoms with causes. For example, absenteeism may reduce performance levels but, before progress can be made, the reasons for absenteeism must be determined.

Step 2: Determining appropriate OD objectives
In this step, OD objectives are clearly and specifically defined, in both behavioural and quantitative terms, so that they are appropriate to, and consistent with, the particular

organization. Too often a practitioner initiates standard interventions without having identified clearly what needs to be accomplished or changed. Spending time in determining objectives increases the probability for success and enhances the practitioner's image as a contributor to the organization.

Step 3: Determining the system's and subsystem's readiness and capacity to change
Nothing is more discouraging to a change effort than reaching the middle of a project and discovering that the organization or a specific group within it is not ready or able to change. Analyzing readiness, willingness, and capacity before project initiation can help the practitioner to determine where to start and which interventions to use. Many change efforts fail because the practitioner starts with the wrong part of the system or does not take into account the relationships among readiness, willingness, and capacity. It will pay dividends to evaluate each key manager in this respect, as well as each major area or function.

Step 4: Determining key subsystems
In this step, the total organization is reviewed to determine its key parts and its key personnel. To be successful in an OD effort, the practitioner must focus on those groups within the organization that exert the greatest impact on organizational performance and on those managers who influence the direction of the organization.

Step 5: Assessing one's own resources
Assessing personal skills, talents, and emotional and social needs is not only consistent with meeting real organizational needs, it also assists the practitioner in maintaining an ethical stance. No practitioner can do well in all situations or with all interventions. However, the practitioner who takes stock of personal strengths and weaknesses before selecting a strategy is better able to determine which projects 'fit' his or her abilities and which do not. Consequently, it is easier to determine which activities to conduct oneself and which to refer to other practitioners, thereby matching the right resources with particular organizational needs.

Step 6: Selecting an approach and developing an action plan for reaching objectives
In selecting an approach to an effort and in planning the individuals steps for implementation, the practitioner must be concerned with which interventions to use, where in the organization to start, who is to be involved in the effort, how much time is required and how the effort will be monitored. In view of the fact that OD is a process and that the practitioner must remain flexible and responsive to new developments, it is helpful to establish a flow diagram that accounts for each step. This practice enables the practitioner to analyse the progress of the effort and whether it is leading where intended. In addition, it enables managers to become closely involved in the process and convinces them that the practitioner is committed to reaching specific objectives that will benefit the organization.

2.2 Working with the Organization's Dynamics

While building a strategy, the practitioner should keep in mind the following organizational dynamics or change requirements.

Consideration 1: Felt needs or goals
The selection of specific interventions should be based on client responses regarding problems that are not being solved or goals that are not being reached. Managers and organizations readily respond to proposals that address felt needs.

Consideration 2: Support system

Of major importance in the success of an OD project is the practitioner's initial identification of supportive forces in the organization and his or her subsequent commitment to working with those forces. A project is seldom successful when an attempt is made to influence the total organization at once.

Consideration 3: Chance for success

The entire OD effort, as well as each related activity, should hold a realistic chance for success. This sounds obvious, but many projects are launched on the basis of little or no hope for success. To change an organization, a series of early wins must be achieved. The practitioner is seldom given a second chance if the first activity is not at least moderately successful.

Consideration 4: Multiple entry

Organizations of any size have a tremendous capacity to withstand change. When an organization experiences a short disturbance of the status quo as a result of an OD effort, it will naturally tend to settle back into its original patterns. This problem of inertia can be dealt with through the use of multiple entry points. Although care must be taken and planning must be deliberate, change in a larger organization is more likely to be accomplished if pressure is exerted on several different facets of its operation.

Consideration 5: Critical mass

One of the purposes for using multiple entry points is to bring about a critical mass. Just as a chain reaction builds sufficient force to produce a major result, so an organization is changed through the development of a strong and building effort. A strategy must be built in such a way as to plan for, and cause, the occurrence of a critical mass.

Consideration 6: Organization control

The chances for success in an OD effort are greater when the practitioner works with individuals or groups that have some autonomy or control over their own operations.

Consideration 7: Appropriate levels of involvement

Careful consideration must be given to developing and providing for the appropriate involvement of managers and other individuals who will be affected by the proposed changes. Attention must be centered on those who need to be active in decision making, those who need to be given information, and those who need to provide input for action and evaluation.

Consideration 8: Communication at all levels

It is useful to develop plans for communicating intentions, goals, and progress to the entire organization. In one major project in the social housing sector, a monthly, two-page update was given to all staff. This update had a marked impact on reducing resistance to the project and opening doors for suggestions and input.

Consideration 9: Determination of feasibility

Mechanisms must be established not only for letting key people know about OD plans, but also for enlisting the aid of these people in determining the feasibility of plans. One of the biggest traps in building OD strategies is planning in a vacuum.

Consideration 10: Linking with internal change agents

Most client organizations include staff who are responsible for organizational change and improvement. A practitioner's strategy is much more likely to succeed if s/he establishes ways to co-ordinate efforts with those of personnel such as designers, engineers, quality-control experts, financial analysts, etc. Major organizational change is greatly enhanced by linking change teams from several disciplines or functions.

2.3 Selecting an Approach

After building a strategy and considering organizational dynamics, the practitioner is ready to select an approach for initiating the effort. Several options exist, and combinations of these options may be appropriate in some situations. Each option has, of course, certain advantages and disadvantages.

Option 1: Selection of a winner
With this approach the practitioner selects a project that is associated with a high probability of success and little chance of failure.

Advantages

- Low risk for the practitioner as well as the organization;
- A potentially high, quick return;
- The opening of doors to other opportunities as a result of early success.

Disadvantages

- The practitioner may be perceived as simply being in the right place at the right time rather than as working diligently on the organization's behalf;
- The problems addressed by the project may be seen as minor or of relatively little impact;
- Those involved in the project may be perceived as special or as 'different' from the rest of the employees.

Option 2: Use of a power play
This approach involves starting with the most influential and powerful group in the organization. A suitable project might be a team-building activity conducted with the manager of this group and his or her staff.

Advantages

- A high potential for change because of the target group's power to implement the change;
- A high return or impact attributable to the group's control over numerous variables;
- The fact that if the project is successful, the practitioner gains a great deal of credibility, as does the OD process.

Disadvantages

- This approach may make an overly powerful group even more so, thereby threatening the rest of the organization;
- The practitioner may be seen as part of the organization's power structure;
- If such a project fails, there is high risk to the organization and to the future of other OD projects.

Option 3: Limitation through a pilot project
In using this approach the practitioner proposes and gains acceptance for completing a project that is limited to one or two areas of the organization. Examples include a job-development project accomplished in one department or a team-skills workshop conducted for a particular level within the organization.

Advantages

- It is often more acceptable to key managers than a large-scale effort;
- Its limitation in scope affords greater manageability;
- It gives the practitioner an opportunity to demonstrate what can be done;
- If the initial effort is successful, the practitioner will find it easier to intervene in other parts of the organization on the strength of this success.

Disadvantages

- Such a project may be seen as successful only because it is ‘special’;
- It may be rejected on the basis that it is threatening to the rest of the organization;
- Further intervention may become difficult due to scepticism about activities that were ‘not invented here.’

Option 4: Concentrating on a business problem

With this approach an attempt is made to concentrate on attacking an acknowledged business problem such as turnover, absenteeism, poor quality, high waste or deteriorating relationships. An example of such a project might be the use of problem-solving groups to improve service quality.

Advantages

- The effort is perceived as legitimate because it is directed toward an acknowledged problem;
- As with the pilot-project approach, the chance for success is enhanced because the effort is limited in scope;
- If such a problem is successfully resolved, everyone benefits;
- The organization gains a solution to the problem, and both the practitioner and OD itself gain credibility.

Disadvantages

- Success may be limited because of the many variables that influence business problems;
- The organization’s personnel may be impatient with the time required to obtain visible results;
- If the project is unsuccessful, the practitioner may lose the opportunity to gain entry into other parts of the organization.

Option 5: Control through action research

In this situation the practitioner institutes a controlled experiment in which some aspect of the organization is changed and the impact is then monitored and evaluated. This type of activity is similar to the pilot project, but it is generally even more tightly controlled and limited in scope.

Advantages

- It is often more acceptable to key managers than a large-scale effort;
- Its limitation in scope affords greater manageability;
- It gives the practitioner an opportunity to demonstrate what can be done;
- If the initial effort is successful, the practitioner will find it easier to intervene in other parts of the organization on the strength of this success.

Disadvantages

- Such a project may be seen as successful only because it is ‘special’;
- It may be rejected on the basis that it is threatening to the rest of the organization;

- Further intervention may become difficult due to scepticism about activities that were ‘not invented here’;
- The practitioner may be viewed as a ‘researcher’ who is separated from the mainstream of the organization.

Option 6: Reduction of organizational pain
This approach is similar to concentration on a business problem except that ‘pain’ is defined more broadly than is ‘problem.’ Organizational pain might include poor decision-making or problem-solving, the inability to obtain valid information from staff, excessive time spent in initiating and/or implementing change efforts, the unwillingness of staff to take the initiative in directing their own activities, and so on.

Advantages
- The effort is perceived as legitimate because it is directed toward an acknowledged ‘pain’;
- As with the pilot-project approach, the chance for success is enhanced because the effort is limited in scope;
- The organization gains a relief from the pain, and both the practitioner and OD itself gain credibility. Managers who receive help in reducing the kinds of pain illustrated can become intense supporters of the practitioner.

Disadvantages
- Success may be limited because of the many variables that influence the pain that develops in organizations;
- The organizational personnel may be impatient with the time required to obtain visible relief;
- If the project is unsuccessful, the practitioner may lose the opportunity to gain entry into other parts of the organization;
- The pain may be social or psychological in nature, therefore improvement may be viewed as ‘soft’ or ‘fuzzy’ by personnel in other parts of the organization who are not actively involved in the effort.

Option 7: Involvement in an imposed change
This approach consists of becoming involved in a project or change that the organization has already mandated. Examples might include the promotion of a manager, a merger between two departments, the initiation of a new service procedure, or the launching of a new department or division. This type of project might involve such interventions as a transition meeting, a merger meeting, or a new-division start-up.

Advantages
- The need for change is already established;
- The change itself is the natural process employed in the intervention, which may make the organization more receptive to other OD activities;
- The practitioner is seen as assisting in a natural and/or legitimate process and thus is considered to have a relevant, helpful function;
- The potential for success with such a project is relatively high, and the practitioner shares with others the responsibility for success.

Disadvantages
- The practitioner may be seen as a meddler;
- Success in the project may be attributed to factors other than the OD interventions;

- The reasons for the change may not be consistent with OD values, therefore, the practitioner may be seen as hypocritical or unethical.

Option 8: Association with the influence leader

This approach is similar to the power play except that the focus is on an individual rather than a group.

Advantages

- A high potential for change because of the influence leader's power to implement the change;
- The fact that if the project is successful, the practitioner gains a great deal of credibility, as does the OD process.

Disadvantages

- This approach may make an overly powerful influence leader even more so;
- The practitioner may be seen as part of the influence leader's power structure;
- If such a project fails, there is high risk to the organization and to the future of other OD projects;
- It may be extremely difficult for the practitioner to work in other areas of the organization in which the influence leader's work is envied or suspect.

Option 9: Association with OD support

With this approach, activities are initiated in those parts of the organization that are already supportive of OD values and activity.

Advantages

- Projects can be initiated quickly;
- The potential for their success is high;
- The employees involved feel a strong sense of ownership of these projects and perceive the practitioner as valuable.

Disadvantages

- Success with such projects may be viewed by personnel in other parts of the organization as merely perceived rather than real;
- Success may accomplish little in the way of opening doors into other parts of the organization;
- The practitioner may be seen by the rest of the organization as just 'one of those OD people';
- If the practitioner's support comes from a low-influence group, his or her own influence may actually diminish elsewhere.

Option 10: Total-system intervention

The objective of this approach is to affect all parts of the organization almost simultaneously. Such a project might be a new-division start-up in which the practitioner or a team of practitioners is involved in every aspect of planning and implementation.

Advantages

- Being involved in every aspect of the organization;
- Having more control of the variables;
- If the project is successful, the practitioner gains great credibility and influence.

Disadvantages

- Failure in this type of project has an extremely negative impact on the practitioner's credibility;
- Few managers consider this approach to be a viable starting point for OD.

2.4 Overcoming Failure Patterns

As alluded to in earlier comments, many OD efforts achieve limited or no success due to organizational or managerial circumstances. In addition, certain types of practitioner behaviour may precipitate the breakdown of an OD effort. These behaviours include failing to …

- Obtain and work through a contract (applicable to both external and internal practitioners);
- Establish specific goals for efforts and interventions;
- Demonstrate sufficient courage to confront the organization and key managers in particular;
- Be willing to try something new;
- Determine the identity of the real client;
- Work with real organizational needs;
- Develop viable options;
- Work with the organization as it is rather than as the practitioner would like it to be;
- Measure or evaluate OD activities;
- Plan for and avoid managerial abdication;
- Solve problems (by becoming involved in 'quick fixes');
- Specify both short- and long-term goals for the effort;
- Be honest about what needs to be done and why;
- Determine whose needs are being met;
- Plan for and build toward the client managers' ownership of the OD effort.

In reviewing these behaviours, a practitioner might feel overwhelmed or discouraged. However, simply being aware that certain negative behavioural patterns are potentially damaging to OD efforts can help a practitioner to avoid such behaviours. In addition, the practitioner who conscientiously attends to the following activities may have greater success in overcoming failure patterns.

Activity 1: Building a strategy
As discussed earlier (Section 2.1), one of the practitioner's primary responsibilities is to formulate a strategy. The systematic building of a strategy for specific activities and projects protects against failure by forcing the practitioner to consider and deal with such issues as developing a contract, establishing goals for the entire project and related interventions, and avoiding 'quick fixes.' In fact, a comprehensive strategy focuses attention on each of the failure patterns.

Activity 2: Establishing a flow diagram of activities
Another practice that forces consideration of the issues involved in failure patterns is establishing a flow diagram covering all activities of the OD effort. A flow diagram provides an illustration of the ways in which the various interventions tie together and build on each other, the perceptions of the practitioner and the client personnel regarding progress at various points, and aspects related to the critical question of timings.

Activity 3: Engaging in joint planning with prospective clients
During proposal development and prior to the launching of a long-term effort, the practitioner should engage in joint planning with the prospective client. Without sufficient joint planning and exploration, the practitioner tends to proceed with a high risk of falling into at least one, if not several, of the failure patterns.

Activity 4: Incorporating review and evaluation sessions
Of great help in avoiding failure patterns is the practice of incorporating into a contract a provision for periodic review and evaluation sessions. Such a meeting allows the practitioner and appropriate organizational participants and managers to examine the immediate activity and to ask such questions as the following:

- Are we on track?
- Are the expected results materializing?
- What feelings are we experiencing about our working relationship?
- What modifications or changes need to be made?
- Are any failure patterns beginning to appear in the project? If so, what can we do to eliminate them?

Activity 5: Using consulting teams
Directly or indirectly involving one or more fellow professionals enables the practitioner to be more aware of, and sensitive to, potential failure patterns. Such involvement generates more analysis, the sharing of different perceptions, the use of more specialized skills and experience in given interventions, increased feedback and constructive confrontation.

Activity 6: Participating in OD activities
Frequently, practitioners attempt to guide clients through OD activities that they themselves have not experienced as participants. Being a ‘disinterested observer’ does not allow the practitioner to experience the dynamics and feelings of the ‘owner.’ Firsthand experience can be invaluable in planning OD activities for others.

3. The Design of OD Interventions

Introduction

Having considered precedes, motives, strategies, organizational dynamics and approaches, this section details a range of interventions that may be used within the wider context of a full OD strategy. As such, it is intended to be a source of reference, to be scanned in the first instance and then considered in depth when a specific OD intervention is being developed. The interventions are arranged under three broad categories – the first focusing on implementation at the level of teams, the second at the total organization level and the third around the subject of supporting interventions. More specifically:

- Implementing OD at the level of team structure and function
  - New Team Start-up
  - Team Transitions
  - Team Building
  - Issue Consensus
  - Multi-team Mirror
  - Inter-team Team Building

- Implementing OD at the level of organization structure and function
  - Strategic Planning
  - Survey-guided Development
  - Team Goal Setting
  - Job Development
  - Role Development
  - New Division Start-up

- Supporting OD implementations
  - The OD Seminar;
  - Team Skills Training;
  - Leadership Style Analysis;
  - Diversity Awareness Training.

The overall intention here is to provide a broad bank of material that can be used to stimulate further thought when considering the specifics of an OD intervention, i.e. it is not expected that the illustrations provided in the following pages be used unchanged. However, in keeping with reality, although each and every OD effort should be geared towards to the unique needs of the client, all successful OD practitioners develop, over time, a large repertoire of 'tools' that have worked well in certain situations and are used frequently. It can be argued legitimately that, because client needs are often alike in important ways, drawing on a repertoire of tried and tested tools is appropriate. This is not to suggest that emergent conditions will not require the development of new combinations of techniques or that a practitioner should 'market' a previously successful intervention as universally applicable. The issue is, as ever, one of awareness and balance.

3.1 Implementing OD at the Level of Team Structure and Function

3.1.1 New Team Start-up

Key Objectives

- To accelerate the process by which individual team members coordinate their efforts and become an efficient and effective team.
- To make explicit, and practice, the desired norms for the team's interactions.

Developmental Focus

- The collective vision and mission for the team.
- Individual roles and responsibilities.
- The coordination of strategies, plans and measures of success for the team.
- Methods for conflict resolution.

Participants

- All members of a newly formed group (project team, matrix organization, new business start-up, etc.), including managers and, possibly, close external stakeholders.

Benefits

- An atmosphere is established for dealing openly with team membership issues.
- Team members are provided with an opportunity to work together on understanding their vision, mission, roles and interaction processes.

When to Implement

- When the team if first brought together to begin the process of developing its goals and objectives.

Timescale

- Three to four days, depending on the ambiguity and complexity of the team's mission.

New Team Start-up - Detail of Process

1. Planning session

- Developing a contract and ground rules.
- Sharing and clarifying general session goals and expectations.
- Planning the meeting agenda.

2. Getting to know each other

- Sharing aspects of personal history and own experience, traits and values.
- Responding to related questions.

3. Establishing the vision, mission and goals

- Developing or reaffirming the team’s vision and mission.
- Identifying team goals and general objectives.

4. Exploration of questions and concerns

- Surfacing specific questions and concerns.
- Listing related desires, expectations and/or recommendations.

5. Issue summary

- Integrating key issues.
- Developing a key issue summary.

6. Preliminary role negotiation

- Identifying and clarifying specific roles within the team.
- Discussing and agreeing roles.

7. Action planning

- Identifying specific objectives.
- Developing associated action plans.

8. Intervention

- Implement Plans.
- Review and revise as appropriate.

9. Evaluation

- Evaluating the group from a process perspective.
- Discussion the development and evolution of group norms.

3.1.2 Team Transitions

Key Objectives
- To provide the opportunity for a team to analyse the impact of, and plan its adjustment to, a new team leader.
- To give a newly appointed team leader the opportunity to become familiar with group activities, goals and team member resources.
- To allow both the incoming team leader and the team members the opportunity to share and explore working styles and preferred practices.

Developmental Focus
- The team's goals, tasks, methods and priorities.
- The team's structure and operating procedures.
- Team member's roles and contributions to the team's performance.
- The incoming team leader's experience, priorities and goals.
- Leadership, communication and decision-making styles.
- Role conflict and ambiguity, and resistance to change.

Participants
- All members of an existing team and the incoming team leader.

Benefits
- All participants are given the opportunity to analyse the team's historical performance and use of resources.
- Heightened awareness of teamwork needs during the period of transition.
- Open affirmation, or re-affirmation, of the team's goals, priorities and norms.
- Assistance in accelerating the path through forming, storming, norming and performing.

When to Implement
- Suitable for a group that has never experienced an OD intervention before.

Timescale
- Three to five days, depending on group size and information-collection methods.

Team Transitions - Detail of Process

1. Preparatory session (all participants)

- Developing a contract and ground rules.
- Sharing and clarifying purpose, procedure and content.
- Agreeing information collection items and procedures.

2. Information collection

- Gathering information from individuals (through questionnaires and interviews).
- Compiling information into handouts.

3. Operations review (all participants)

- Clarifying current goals and objectives as well as current projects and activities.

4. Leadership-style review (all participants)

- Identifying similarities and potential differences in the leadership styles of the outgoing and incoming team leaders.

5. Information feedback and analysis (all participants)

- Sharing, clarifying and analysing information regarding concerns about the change.

6. Issue census (New Team - i.e. out-going manager no longer involved)

- Identifying key issues.
- Developing plans to deal with key issues.

7. Role clarification (New Team)

- Redefining/reaffirming roles.
- Reviewing goals and objectives to establish trade-offs between old ones and new ones.

8. Evaluation (New Team)

- Assessing the meetings.
- Planning the follow-up.

3.1.3 Team Building

Key Objectives

- To review and improve the team's effectiveness.
- To provide an opportunity for the team to analyse its processes, performance, strengths and weaknesses.
- To identify problem areas of team behaviour and corrective actions to be taken.

Developmental Focus

- Team performance.
- Individual contributions to performance.
- Team goals, long and short term strategies, goal-setting processes.
- Specific plans for individuals connected to team goals.
- Team composition, structure, operating procedures and efficiency.
- Team norms, culture and feedback processes.

Participants

- The team leader and all team members (from three to fifteen for practical purposes).

Benefits

- The process provides a setting for a realistic self-appraisal of team processes and team member relationships.
- The use of anonymous, topic-related information facilitates problem-centred rather than person-centred analysis.
- The team leader has an opportunity to model the type of behaviour preferred for effective team working.
- Teamwork is enhanced as team members get to know each other better, particularly with regard to work-style preferences and in the context of current work pressures and priorities.

When to Implement

- Usually not the first step for a team unless its members are familiar with OD interventions.
- Useful as an early step for the senior management team in an organization, prior to a more comprehensive OD effort throughout the organization.
- The initial session(s) to be followed by a session 3 to 9 months later to evaluate progress on action plans.

Timescale

Five to seven days, depending on team size.

Team Building - Detail of Process

1. Contract session
- Developing a contract.
- Discussing needs and expectations.

2. Pre-work session
- Developing ten to twenty interview questions and arranging interviews.

3. Information collection
- Conducting individual interviews.
- Compiling responses into a handout.

4. Information feedback
- Distributing copies of the handout to all group members for review.

5. Information analysis
- Analysing the responses in the handout (either in sub-groups or the whole group).
- Identifying key strengths and key weaknesses/problems.

6. Agenda development
- Rank ordering key weaknesses/problems according to importance.

7. Problem examination
- Discussing each key weakness/problem in depth.

8. Option generation
- Generating ideas for solving each key weakness/problem.

9. Action Planning
- Developing a written plan of action for each weakness/problem identified.
- Scheduling a session for review/follow-up.

10. Assessment
- Evaluating the meeting in terms of content and process.

11. Review/follow-up session
- Meeting to examine follow-up, as planned.

3.1.4 Issue Consensus

Key Objectives

- To examine and improve the effectiveness of a hierarchical organizational system.
- To identify key issues undermining effectiveness.
- To explore ways to resolve priority issues.
- To generate specific goals and action commitments.

Developmental Focus

- Organizational goals, priorities, long and short term strategies, and related goal-setting procedures.
- Organizational performance.
- Organizational structure, operating procedures and efficiency.
- Specific plans for achieving organizational objectives.

Participants

- The entire organization if possible. If not, representatives from all organizational levels. Participation should only be limited by the constraints of time and the ability to deal with the processing of the information.

Benefits

- The intervention emphasises honest organizational self-appraisal in an open setting with all organizational levels being present.
- Improved communication, a better understanding of organization-wide issues, and a related action plan that enhances commitment among top, middle and front-line staff.

When to Implement

- This intervention should follow other OD activities, i.e. not be an initial intervention.

Timescale

- Approximately three days depending on group size.

Issue Consensus - Detail of Process

1. Contract session(s)

- Discussing the following with organizational leaders:
  - felt needs
  - mutual expectations
  - overall strategy
  - format and content
  - related logistics.

2. Information collection and issue identification

- Dividing into sub-groups to determine organizational strengths and weaknesses.
- Screening information in sub-groups to select major issues that require work.

3. Information feedback

- Summarising the results of the work.

4. Agenda building

- Reviewing overall information and developing an agenda of priority issues requiring resolution.

5. Information analysis

- Sharing feelings about the agenda items.
- Analysing each item in detail.

6. Option generation

- Brainstorming issue resolutions in sub-groups.

7. Action planning

- Sharing brainstormed ideas.
- Modifying suggestions until consensus is reached on all solutions.
- Developing action plans to ensure the implementation of solutions.
- Setting a date for a review session.

8. Assessment

- Evaluating the session from the standpoint of both content and process.

9. Review session

- Reconvening to evaluate progress to date.
- Developing further plans to ensure continued implementation.

3.1.5 Multi-team Mirror

Key Objectives

- To review the interactions of three or more interdependent teams with an emphasis on improving the effectiveness of the team that is designated as the 'host' team.
- To provide an opportunity for these teams to share individual and mutual goals.
- To provide an opportunity for these teams to share their perceptions of each other in term of the contributions each make to the others' effectiveness.
- To identify areas for improvement in the host team's relationship with each of the other team, and develop action plans for addressing these areas.

Developmental Focus

- The performance of the host team as it interacts with each of the other, interdependent, teams.
- Each team's contribution to overall performance.
- Goals and strategies for improving each interacting team's relationship with the host team.

Participants

- All members or representatives of at least three interacting teams (the host team plus at least two others selected by either the host team or as a result of needs assessment).

Benefits

- The host team receives constructive feedback on its activities with interacting teams.
- All involved teams have the opportunity to think through and analyse their working relationships.
- The emphasis on positive improvement prevents a defensive reaction on the part of the host team.

When to Implement

- This intervention should follow other OD activities, i.e. not be an initial intervention.

Timescale

- Between 3 and 4 days, depending on the number of participants.

Multi-team Mirror - Detail of Process

1. Contract session

- Establishing a contract with the team leaders of all the participating teams.
- Setting goals for the host team.

2. Preliminary meeting

- Meeting with all participants to describe the objectives and process, and to answer related questions.

3. Information collection

- Collecting information from the host team about its relationship with each interacting team.
- Collecting information from each interacting team about its relationship with the host team.

4. Information feedback

- Posting information collected.
- Outlining of information by reporters from the various teams.

5. Team normalizing

- Meeting in original teams to express reactions to information received.

6. Observed team discussions

- Interviewing each interacting team separately about the information while all other participants observe.
- Assisting the host team in discussing learning so far, while all other participants observe.

7. Agenda building

- Identifying important issues to be resolved (in mixed groups, each consisting of an interacting team and one or more members from the host team).
- Sharing issues in the whole group.
- Rank ordering issues to establish a working agenda.

8. Mixed-group planning

- Forming mixed groups to work on designated issues.
- Developing preliminary proposals for resolution.

9. Joint action planning

- Presenting proposals for resolution to the entire group.
- Modifying and accepting the proposals.
- Assigning responsibilities for follow-up.
- Agreeing deadlines for action
- Agreeing a date for the review session.

10. Assessment

- Evaluating the intervention in terms of content and process.

11. Review session

- Meeting as planned to review progress to date and re-affirm or modify original plans.

3.1.6 Inter-team Team Building

Key Objectives

- To examine and improve the total effectiveness of two interdependent teams.
- To identify problem areas and corrective actions for each team and for joint remedies.

Developmental Focus

- Team performance (considered separately and together).
- Team goals, long- and short- term strategies, and goal setting processes.
- Specific plans for individuals in connection with team and inter-team roles.
- Inter-team operating procedures and efficiency.

Participants

- All members of two interacting teams.

Benefits

- The teams engage in an honest appraisal of their interactions.
- Teamwork is enhanced when team members become better acquainted, especially in terms of work-style preferences and particular working conditions and pressures.
- Inter-team planning takes place.

When to Implement

- Usually follows other OD interventions, i.e. may not be suitable as a first intervention.

Timescale

- Three to four days.

Inter-team Team Building - Detail of Process

1. **Contract session**
   - Discussing needs, expectations and the details of the intervention with the group leaders.

2. **Preparatory meetings**
   - Meeting with each group separately to outline the process and objectives and to answer questions.

3. **Information collection**
   - Meeting with each group separately to collect information on perceptions of each other and inter-group relations.
   - Selecting representatives from each group to present their own group's information during the feedback session.

4. **Information feedback**
   - Presenting the results of the information collection sessions and clarifying as necessary.

5. **Team normalizing**
   - Individual teams meet briefly to share reactions to the information.

6. **Observed group discussions**
   - Assisting each team in turn to discuss the information while the other teams observe.

7. **Agenda building**
   - Identifying key issues to be resolved.

8. **Mixed-group planning**
   - Forming mixed groups to work on designated issues.
   - Developing preliminary proposals for resolution.

9. **Joint action planning**
   - Presenting proposals for resolution to the entire group.
   - Modifying and accepting the proposals.
   - Assigning responsibilities for follow-up.
   - Agreeing deadlines for action
   - Agreeing a date for the review session.

10. **Assessment**
    - Evaluating the intervention in terms of content and process.

11. **Review session**
    - Meeting as planned to review progress to date and re-affirm or modify original plans.

3.2 Implementing OD at the Level of Organization Structure and Function

3.2.1 Strategic Planning

Key Objectives

- To identify strengths and weaknesses, both current and future, in relation to accomplishing the mission of the organization.
- To identify environmental factors that presently influence the organization's effectiveness – forecasting their future impact.
- To generate specific strategies, plans, goals and objectives to which the organization is committed to ensure that the problems identified are resolved.

Developmental Focus

- The team's awareness of future issues and factors likely to affect performance.
- The team's goals, long- and short-term strategies, and goals setting processes.
- Specific plans and objectives for individuals, departments and/or functions as they relate to team action plans.
- Development of contingency plans and solutions to forecasted problems.

Participants

- All members of the organization's management if possible. If not, representatives from all levels of management.

Benefits

- Effective medium- to long-term strategies can be developed with the maximum involvement of those who are expected to commit themselves to their implementation.
- Minimizes time-wasting digressions during planning by separating facts from assumptions.
- Allows managers to develop effective change plans by examining constraints and environmental contexts that will affect their organization.

When to Implement

- An excellent starting point for an OD intervention.

Timescale

- Three to five days.

Strategic Planning - Detail of Process

1. **Development of an organizational mission statement**
   - Defining the organizational mission in two or three sentences.

2. **Identification of strengths and weaknesses**
   - Listing 'assets' and 'liabilities' (including the less obvious psychological ones) that affect mission accomplishment.

3. **Assessment of operational constraints and environmental influences**
   - Listing key constraints and influences within which the organization *must* operate.

4. **Determining the facts and assumptions**
   - Listing facts as well as assumptions about the future for each key constraint and environmental influence.

5. **Goal identification**
   - Identifying goals related to the organization's mission, strengths and weaknesses, and current assessments of key constraints and environmental influences.

6. **Generation of objectives**
   - Determining individual objectives for the more complex goals identified in step 5.

7. **Action planning**
   - Writing a plan of action for achieving each goal and each objective.
   - Agreeing a date for the review session.

8. **Review session**
   - Reviewing progress towards achieving each goal.
   - Developing further action plans or modifying original ones as appropriate.

3.2.2 Survey-guided Development

Key Objectives

- To improve organizational performance by surveying all employees, feeding back resulting information through individual teams, and developing analysis and problem-solving plans in response to the information obtained.
- To take a measurement of an entire organization.

Developmental Focus

- Information that covers organizational effectiveness across the whole span of its operations.
- Patterns in information that reveal particular strengths and weaknesses.
- The development of solutions to problems affecting the whole organization.

Participants

- The entire organization.

Benefits

- Allows organizational climate to be assessed at a particular point in time.
- The survey method offers a relatively quick, efficient method of gathering information on attitudes.
- All teams, including the least influential, are given the opportunity to review information that is relevant to them, to interpret the information for themselves and to assess how they compare with the overall organization. They can then develop their own requests, recommendations and plans.

When to Implement

- Provides an indication of areas of concern that may be addressed by localized OD interventions. As such, it can be useful as a first step towards OD – assuming the organization has not previously misused attitude surveys.
- Useful as a follow-up to initial skill-building activities.

Timescale

- Six to ten days.

Survey-guided Development - Detail of Process

1. Contract session

- Clarifying the characteristics of survey-guided development.
- Outlining the objectives and expectations of the intervention.
- Establishing the need for a survey-planning team.

2. Survey planning

- Selecting appropriate dimensions and questions for the survey.

3. Survey administration

- Administering the survey to all participants.

4. Consolidation of information

- Processing survey results.
- Preparing information packages for participants.

5. Training of team facilitators

- Teaching facilitators how to conduct survey-feedback meetings with their teams and how to help teams respond to the information.

6. Feedback meetings

- Distributing and discussing information packages in each team.
- Clarifying relevant team issues.
- Dealing with issues within the team’s control.
- Making suggestions on issues beyond the team’s control for referral to higher levels.

7. Review of items referred upward

- Determining appropriate responses to suggestions submitted by lower-level teams.

8. Development of a communications strategy

- Establishing a constructive method of conveying decisions made in the previous step.

9. Communication of decisions

- Conveying decisions via the method determined in step 8.

10. Assessment

- Surveying participant reactions to the intervention.

3.2.3 Team Goal Setting

Key Objectives

- To generate goals and a related action plan to which a team is committed.
- To clarify the team's mission and related accountabilities, focusing group energy and reducing role confusion.

Developmental Focus

- Team mission, structure, accountabilities and procedures.
- Team goals, objectives and processes.
- Specific plans for accomplishing goals, including individual action plans.
- An analysis of the related facts, assumptions and potential problems associated with team objectives.

Participants

- A full team (team leader and all members), but ideally between three and twenty for practical purposes.

Benefits

- Provides teams with the essential component of clear goals to ensure they focus their energies, ownership and commitment.
- Helps avoid dysfunctional competition and ensure cooperation.
- Increases commitment to team goals.
- Reviews the inter-relationships between individuals and allows these to be improved through planned actions.

When to Implement

- An excellent starting point for an OD intervention, but can be initiated at almost any point during a team's life.

Timescale

- Approximately two days.

Team Goal Setting - Detail of Process

1. Development of a team mission statement

- Composing a statement regarding the team's purpose, customers and unique attributes.

2. Development of team accountabilities

- Determining the results and/or conditions for which the team will be accountable.

3. Identification of cascaded accountabilities

- Identifying accountabilities that should be delegated to individuals or sub-teams.
- Determining the parameters for each accountability that is cascaded.
- Establishing a method for communicating these accountabilities to individuals or sub-teams.

4. Goal brainstorming

- Generate possible goals associated with accountabilities, feedback and related team concerns.

5. Development of team's goal criteria

- Developing criteria for identifying final team goals.

6. Goal identification

- Employing criteria to screen goals brainstormed in step 4.

7. Determination of cooperative goals

- Deciding which goals require working with other individuals/sub-teams.

8. Goal-information brainstorming

- Generating information pertinent to achieving each goal.

9. Action planning

- Establishing a plan of action (containing SMART objectives) for each goal.

3.2.4 Job Development

Key Objectives

- To systematically redesign an existing job such that the conditions for motivation are improved along with attendant performance.
- To identify the components of a job that under-utilize talent.

Developmental Focus

- The impact of job content on performance.
- The impact of technology on job content and process.
- The motivational potential of an existing job.
- The sources of variance in desirable vs. actual performance.
- The specific conditions that create the conditions for motivation.

Participants

- A job-design intervention team consisting of all employees in the organization who hold the job in question as well as their line managers. Typically six to eight participants.

Benefits

- Those best qualified to redesign jobs are those doing the jobs along with their line managers.
- Employees will more readily accept changes when they are involved in, or are represented in, change development.
- Both psychological and technical needs must be addressed in an effective re-design of work.

When to Implement

- When evidence suggests the development or emergence of a problem related to job content.

Timescale

- Typically half-day sessions weekly for two to three months, depending on job complexity.

Job Development - Detail of Process

1. **Orientation of job-design intervention team**
   - Introducing the members of the Job-design Intervention Team to basic principles of job development.

2. **Development of a job-purpose statement**
   - Writing a statement that specifies the reason for the job's existence.

3. **Identification of key accountabilities**
   - Establishing the end results or desired conditions for which a job holder will be responsible.

4. **Identification of systems and operations**
   - Identifying the target system.
   - Describing the operations of that system.
   - Identifying related systems.
   - Developing a flow diagram of work performed in all of these systems.

5. **Brainstorming of job dimensions**
   - Generating ideas for increasing feedback about performance and for increasing autonomy.
   - Generating ways to complete entire tasks and determining ways to deal with barriers to the accomplishment of those tasks.

6. **Screening of information**
   - Selecting and eliminating brainstormed items according to criteria agreed by the Job-design Intervention Team.

7. **Development of final job description**
   - Listing items retained after screening.
   - Grouping items into work modules.
   - Comparing items with the purpose statement and the key accountabilities.
   - Developing an integrated job description.

8. **Development of training plan**
   - Establishing an action plan for training and orienting employees.
   - Reviewing problems that might be encountered with the job description.

3.2.5 Role Development

Key Objectives

- To clarify the definitions and expectations of a specific role.
- To identify the obligations of the interdependent members of a work group.
- To resolve conflict associated with role confusion and ambiguity.

Developmental Focus

- The clarification of a target role.
- The expectations of others regarding the behaviour associated with the target role.
- The development of a consensus regarding individual accountabilities and related authorities.

Participants

- All members of the target team and members of interacting teams as desired.

Benefits

- Minimising role conflict with a team.
- Addressing interpersonal tensions and conflicts that are often the result of role ambiguity.
- Promoting a more supportive environment for the target job, as team members gain a clear understanding of that job.

When to Implement

- Likely to follow other OD interventions that have revealed role conflict or role ambiguity as a key issue.
- An excellent follow-up to OD interventions for new-team start-up, transition planning, new division start-up and job development.

Timescale

- Two to three days.

Role Development - Detail of Process

1. Contract session

- Meeting with appropriate team members to discuss and plan the intervention.

2. Target-role selection

- Agreeing the specific role to be examined and developed.

3. Target-role analysis

- Analysing the purpose, accountabilities and tasks of the target role.

4. Identification of the target-role job-holder's expectations

- Determining what the job-holder expects of those in interacting roles.
- Achieving agreement on legitimate expectations.

5. Identification of others' expectations

- Determining what those in interacting roles expect from the target role.
- Achieving agreement on legitimate expectations.
- Comparing final expectations with those established in step 4.

6. Role-profile development

- Incorporating all information into a profile of the target role (prepared by the job holder after the meeting).

7. Follow-up session

- Meeting to review and approve the job holder's job profile.

3.2.6 New Division Start-up

Key Objectives

- To ensure the implementation of a comprehensive organizational plan to meet identified start-up goals.
- To develop, amongst employees, a high level of ownership and commitment to organizational principles that are likely to meet technical, social and cost/profit objectives.

Developmental Focus

- Overall organizational performance as a function of design.
- Long- and short-term organizational goals and priorities.
- Organizational structure, operating procedures and performance efficiency.
- Individual and group performance planning and implementation.

Participants

- All managers, if possible. If not, representatives from as many functional groups and organizational levels as practical.
- All members of other groups participating in the start-up.

Benefits

- Organizational members can best develop in, and become behaviourally committed to, a system that they themselves have designed.
- Joint planning, shared expectations and the development of teams that are aligned with the development of systems that will meet goals related to cost, quality and productivity.

When to Implement

- During the planning and implementation of a new division.

New Division Start-up - Detail of Process

1. **Preliminary planning**
   - Developing initial agreements regarding the scope of the project, the nature of the processes to be employed, the role of the practitioner and timing.

2. **Strategic planning**
   - Developing a divisional mission statement.
   - Listing strengths and weaknesses.
   - Establishing an overview of the project.
   - Identifying key planning objectives.
   - Developing related action plans.

3. **Socio-system and process-system development**
   - Listing the system characteristics that are consistent with the organization's values and objectives.
   - Listing beliefs about people that are consistent with system characteristics, values and objectives.

4. **Techno-system development**
   - Planning technical systems that are consistent with earlier plans and decisions (involving outside resources as necessary).

5. **Strategic planning update**
   - Reviewing planning to date (presentation from top managers to middle managers).
   - Providing an opportunity for middle managers to offer input and to increase ownership.

6. **Team building (senior management)**
   - Explore experience to date as a team.
   - Making related plans to improve effectiveness.

7. **Management-practices seminar**
   - Meeting to establish management practices and policies consistent with plans and decisions made so far (all managers).

8. **Team building (middle and first-line management)**
   - Exploring team experience to date.
   - Making plans to enhance effectiveness and ensure congruency.

9. **Job development**
   - Developing job content and structure consistent with systems characteristics and management/people principles.

10. **Problem-solving training**
    - Coaching in problem identification and solution to enhance the on-going contribution and participation of all participants.

11. **Operating-issue review**
    - Exploring issues and concerns related to the implementation of the start-up plans (all participants).
    - Setting dates for follow-up session as deemed necessary.

3.3 Supporting OD Implementations

3.3.1 The OD seminar

Key Objectives

- To provide managers with information on the objectives and methods of OD.
- To assist managers in making decisions regarding the use and potential of OD in their organization.
- To clarify the types of organizational issues and problems that can be addressed by OD.
- To increase the potential for OD being implemented for legitimate reasons.

Developmental Focus

- Organizational analysis (including climate).
- Management style and philosophy.
- Systemic thinking.
- Norms, values and inter-group dynamics.
- Consulting approaches, skills and sources.

Participants

- The entire management system if possible. If not, representatives from all levels of management. No more than twenty for maximum effectiveness.

Benefits

- Managers are provided with a common base of knowledge about OD.
- A setting is provided for a candid appraisal of the potential for OD before activities are initiated within the organization.
- The seminar process helps to ensure that managers implement OD in a rational, appropriate manner.
- Realistic outcomes for OD are discussed.

When to Implement

- Usually a first step in a situation in which the organization is new to OD and/or when interventions are likely to affect the entire organization in a relatively short period of time.
- Conducted several times in a large organization, starting with senior management and proceeding through the hierarchy.

Timescale

- One evening plus two full days.

The OD seminar - Detail of process

1. **Introductory session**
- Getting acquainted.
- Explaining the seminar format.
- General definition of OD.

2. **General overview**
- Clarifying the history and background of OD.
- Presenting further definitions and a basic process model.

3. **Intervention review**
- Explaining the basic process model by specifying the steps involved in typical interventions.

4. **Intervention activities**
- Conducting activities that illustrate the content of steps 2. and 3.
- Exploring workplace relevance.

5. **Presentation of case studies**
- Sharing case studies from the practitioner's own experiences, including an example of large system change and an example of inter-group team building.

6. **Clarification of the role of management**
- General data regarding the participants' perceptions of the role of the manager in the OD process.
- Adding the practitioner's thoughts on the subject.

7. **Discussion of beginning an OD effort**
- Discussing resource requirements, strategy and analysis, pitfalls, initiating options, ways to sustain the effort, and the role of internal and external consulting resources.

8. **Application to workplace Situations**
- Dividing the participants into sub-groups to discuss workplace applications.
- Sharing with the whole group and presenting any unanswered questions.

9. **Evaluation**
- Assessing the seminar.
- Making suggestions for improvement.

3.3.2 Team-skills training

Key Objectives

- To introduce a range of teamwork concepts.
- To develop knowledge, skills and competencies in group dynamics, group influence, personal leadership style, self-assessment and interpersonal awareness in individual and group relationships.

Developmental Focus

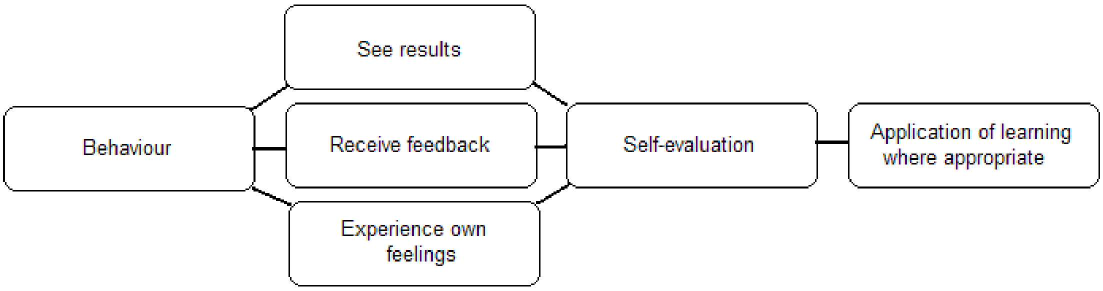
- Strategy and goal setting.
- Problem solving and creativity.
- Resource utilization and coordination.
- Influencing.

Participants

- Members of a single work group or peers from a range of groups, but no more than sixteen for maximum effectiveness.

Benefits

- An analysis of group behaviour is actively achieved.
- Individual assessment of behaviour and results is achieved by:
  1. Active learning;
  2. The analysis of a range of activities in terms of their relevance to the working context;
  3. Encouraging individual and group feedback;
  4. Allowing participants to share responsibility for their learning;
  5. Drawing effectively on the model for experiential learning illustrated below.



Model of Experiential Learning

When to Implement

- A key first step in situations where the organization is new to OD. Where conflict or non-cooperative behaviour is evident.

Timescale

- Two to three days.

Team-skills training - Detail of process

1. **Planning meeting**
   - Meeting with designated members of management to outline content, format and rationale, answer related questions, determine logistics, etc.

2. **Introduction**
   - Drawing out feelings and expectations of participants regarding the training experience.
   - Establishing the ground-rules.
   - Introducing the concept of experiential learning.

3. **Orientation**
   - Administering instruments to assess present knowledge and use of team skills.
   - Conducting an activity that introduces and reinforces the need for team skills.

4. **Teamwork**
   - Using an activity, simulation or discussion to reinforce the importance of teamwork in organizations.

5. **Group decision-making and problem-solving**
   - Using an activity and a discussion to expose participants to the issues of participation and involvement in relation to problem-solving and decision-making.

6. **Values and perceptions**
   - Using a presentation, simulation or an activity to illustrate the ways in which people's value systems affect their perceptions and their behaviour in groups.

7. **Cooperation and communication**
   - Using activities and a discussion to raise group awareness of issues and dynamics involving cooperation and communication skills as applied in group settings.

8. **Evaluation and reconnection**
   - Sharing perceptions of the first day of training.
   - Evaluating adherence to the ground-rules.

9. **Power and conflict management**
   - Using an activity, simulation and/or presentation to explore the issues of power dynamics and conflict management in and between groups.

10. **Inter-group teamwork**
    - Using a simulation and a discussion to illustrate the ways in which team skills affect inter-group relations.

11. **Feedback and workplace planning**
    - Using instruments and/or feedback discussions to provide the participants with data concerning their workshop behaviour.
    - Developing plans to experiment with new behaviours back in the workplace.

12. **Assessment**
    - Generating data about the training experience.
    - Relating the training to workplace situations and other OD events.

3.3.3 Leadership style analysis

Key Objectives
- To provide an opportunity for leaders to examine their own personal preferences, tendencies and values concerning leadership style.
- To increase understanding of the strengths associated with different leadership styles.
- To help leaders explore different ways of developing their leadership styles and effectiveness.

Developmental Focus
- Personal awareness of the nature, tendencies and strengths associated with various leadership-behaviour styles under both favourable and unfavourable work conditions.
- Exploring the impact of various leadership styles on staff and work environments.
- Broadening behavioural options through exposure to alternative leadership styles.

Participants
- Leadership peers.
- Management teams.
- Boards of Directors.
- No more than sixteen for maximum effectiveness.

Benefits
- Improved organizational effectiveness through the improved application of leadership by those in positions of influence and control.
- The creation of an environment for supportive self-analysis.
- Increased self-awareness and ability to employ appropriate situational leadership.

When to Implement
- A good initiating or follow-up event for team-skills training, team building or inter-group team building.

Timescale
- Three full-day sessions over a period of three weeks.

Leadership style analysis - Detail of process

1. **Orientation and pre-work**
   - Reviewing the workshop objectives.
   - Distributing instruments on leadership style and giving instructions for completion.

2. **Presentation of basic leadership model**
   - Presenting a model of leadership based on contingencies.
   - Introducing the concept of authenticity.

3. **Consideration of value systems**
   - Discussing the completed instruments and helping the participants to understand their leadership profiles.
   - Conducting an activity that demonstrates the impact of values on leadership behaviour.

4. **Integration of values and leadership**
   - Explaining the theories behind the instruments.
   - Discussing the organizational variables associated with various leadership styles.

5. **Experiential activity**
   - Conducting an experiential activity that stresses the interconnections of personal needs, value systems, and leadership style options.

6. **Discussion of stress**
   - Discussing primary sources of organizational stress.

7. **Analysis of the consequences of fear**
   - Generating data about fear-producing leader behaviours.

8. **Presentation of authentic leadership**
   - Presenting the benefits of developing an authentic, unique and internalised leadership style.

9. **Reinforcement of authentic leadership**
   - Conducting experiential activities that illustrate authentic leadership theory.

10. **Discussion of workplace issues and opportunities**
    - Discussing, in small groups, real-life concerns about style options and related consequences.
    - Giving and receiving feedback about individual styles.

11. **Summary and conclusion**
    - Summarising the key points of the intervention.
    - Discussing the transfer of learning.
    - Evaluating the workshop.

3.3.4 Diversity awareness training

Key Objectives

- To examine diversity issues as well as opportunities at work to improve the climate for the assimilation, upward mobility and full utilisation of human resources.
- To foster a proactive approach to diversity as a way of life in the organization.

Developmental Focus

- Individual and group awareness of the nature and consequences of diversity issues at work.
- Understanding diversity as it relates to individual effectiveness, team performance and organizational policy.

Participants

- An existing team, including manager.
- HR personnel from outside the team.

Benefits

- A setting is provided for supportive and realistic discussion, self-appraisal and feedback concerning the negative consequences of discrimination in the organization.
- A constructive, controlled environment is needed to raise awareness and facilitate discussion of diversity at work.
- Members of staff who may be exposed to the negative consequences of a poor approach to diversity can best explore issues about career development discrimination, stereotyping and attitudes towards diversity by exchanging perceptions, sharing ideas and exploring solutions with each other.
- The climate for, and ownership of, diversity and full human resource utilisation will eventually be enhanced as people with different experiences develop objectives.

When to Implement

- Either as an initiating or a follow-up event for affirmative action on diversity.

Timescale

- One or two days.

Diversity awareness training - Detail of process

1. Pre-work session

- Meeting with the participants to exchange objectives, clarify the workshop design, and giving a pre-work assignment to collect data via interviews.

2. Introduction

- Welcoming the participants and human resource personnel.
- Reaffirming the support for the workshop.
- Sharing concerns and expectations.

3. Diversity policy affirmation

- Discussing the organization's current policy, application and affirmative action activities.

4. Exchange of interview data

- Forming mixed sub-groups to share the data collected as a pre-work assignment.

5. Consideration of values

- Laying a foundation for the connection between value-system formation and diversity attitudes.

6. Survey of attitudes

- Surveying the participants' attitudes towards incidents in their lives involving members of different groups.
- Forming mixed-group sub-groups to share answers to survey questions.

7. Discussion of career advancement

- Forming homogeneous-group sub-groups to determine opinions regarding the way to get ahead in the organization.
- Sharing opinions in the whole group.

8. Mid-course evaluation

- Evaluating workshop progress so far.

9. Data generation and exchange

- Forming sub-groups to discuss the behaviour of the majorities and minorities at work.
- Developing questions to ask other sub-groups.
- Using a group-on-group configuration to allow minority and majority participants to obtain answers to questions.

10. Joint force-field development

- Identifying key issues, barriers and hindrances in the system.

11. Action planning

- Brainstorming solutions to problems.
- Writing action plans that reflect the specifics of the chosen solutions.
- Examining the organization's formal affirmative action plan.
- Planning a review session.

12. Final evaluation

- Concluding the workshop and evaluating the entire experience.

4. Action Planning – The End of the Beginning

Introduction

The content of this section is largely based on the experience of the author and the reflections of fellow OD practitioners. They are included to encourage further reflection – an essential part of Continuing Professional Development for the OD practitioner.

4.1 The quality and use of action plans

It is essential that the action plans that are developed during an OD intervention contain SMARTER objectives at all levels (Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic, Timely, Evaluated and Revised when necessary).

It may take the novice practitioner by surprise to find that the action planning stage of an OD intervention is often accompanied by anxiety and negative reactions. Potential contributors here include:

- The client's realization of the amount of time required to bring about change;
- The tendency to attempt to address all of the issues that have arisen during the data gathering, analysis and problem-solving stages;
- The emotional 'rebound' that follows the enthusiasm associated with 'seeing the light' and having worked through difficult issues.

During this phase, the practitioner must ensure s/he is not part of the problem! It is essential to ask:

- Am I getting caught up in the 'spirit of the moment'?
- Do I believe the group can deal effectively with all the surfaced issues during the timeframe set?

Beyond this, there are actions the practitioner can take to reduce anxiety and negative reactions. These include:

- Allowing a cooling-off period between analysis and solution to ensure a degree of realism that might otherwise be over-ridden;
- Reminding the group that there will be the usual competition for their time when they return back to their normal working environment;
- Offering own experience and opinions if it is felt that plans are of questionable quality and feasibility.

4.2 Ensuring follow-through and objectivity

The establishment of what appear to be realistic action plans doesn't guarantee follow-through! Possible causes here include:

- Incomplete buy-in by all members of the group – particularly prevalent if peer pressure has been a feature of the action-planning process;
- Inappropriate motivations for OD (refer back to Section 1.3);
- Inability to gain appropriate control over the resources that are critical to the implementation of the action plan;

- Insufficient attention being paid to evaluation and revision sessions;
- A lack of understanding around the amount of maintenance work required to follow-though on an OD effort.

These causes, and their symptoms, may only reveal themselves once an implementation is underway. This, again, highlights the importance of seeing OD as being composed of *'… a number of interdependent steps or phases, each of which builds on the previous one'* (Section 1.1).

4.3 OD practitioner orientations

As practitioners, we all have our preferences, and these will colour the way we see our interventions – and the world in general. A practitioner who is comfortable with team building may over-represent this focus during an OD intervention. Similarly, a practitioner who believes that structural design is the key to producing lasting change may overly focus on job or role development. Clearly, the more aware we are of our preferences, the less likely they are to interfere in our quest for objectivity and/or a truly client-centred approach. Being non-directive in our approach (see next Section) may further help. What is required, in any intervention, is an appropriate migration around, and balance of, different orientations as the OD intervention evolves. The attention of the practitioner should not, therefore, stray too far away from the understanding that no single orientation is always, or even usually, the correct one. The best approach is contingent upon a number of factors that include:

- Client readiness;
- Analysed needs;
- Motivation;
- Resources.

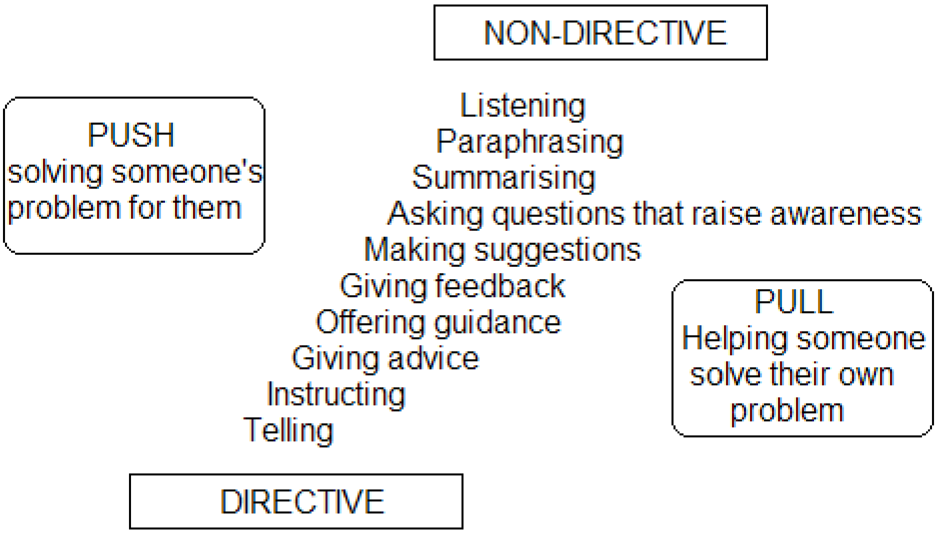
4.4 Directive vs. non-directive practitioner styles

The nature of the OD process, emerging as it does from the applied behavioural sciences, suggests the practitioner should adopt a non-directive style in his or her relationships with clients. The differences between directive and non-directive styles are illustrated below.

Directive	**Non-directive**
(Practitioner as technical expert)	**(Practitioner as process facilitator)**
The client's statement of the problem is either accepted at face value or verified by the practitioner on the basis of his/her technical expertise with regard to the problem.	The client's statement of the problem is treated as information; the problem is verified jointly by the client and the practitioner.
Little time is spent on developing the practitioner-client relationship. The connection is generally short-term and problem-oriented.	The practitioner-client relationship is viewed as essential to the process, and considerable attention is given to its development.
The solution to the problem is generally developed by the practitioner and implemented by the client.	The practitioner's responsibility is to help the client to discover and implement appropriate solutions.
The practitioner brings technical expertise to bear on the client's problem.	The practitioner helps to analyse and facilitate organizational processes.
The practitioner is primarily concerned with increasing the client's knowledge and skill with regard to the stated problem.	The practitioner is primarily concerned with improving the client's analytical and problem-solving skills.
In general, the practitioner accomplishes the job for the client.	In general, the practitioner helps the client accomplish the job.

Directive and non-directive consultancy styles summarised

In reality, a mature client-centred approach may recognise the need for occasionally being directive! The following continuum, drawn from coaching practice, is more representative of the space in which the OD practitioner finds him/herself.



The spectrum of coaching skills

4.5 The competencies of the effective practitioner

It would be overly ambitious to attempt a comprehensive review of the competencies of the OD practitioner. Rather, what follows are a few pointers that may stimulate thinking around what it takes to be effective.

1. *Familiarity with current thinking and application*
2. *Psychological maturity*
3. *Sensitivity in listening and observing*
4. *Awareness of personal impact on others*
5. *Technical background derived from training with an experienced practitioner*
6. *Knowledge of both large- and small-system change strategies and creativity in adapting them to felt needs*
7. *Ability to express oneself simply and clearly*
8. *Ability to confront and be confronted*
9. *Ability to demonstrate confidence without being arrogant*
10. *Willingness to take risks*

These guidelines, along with others you may find researched in the literature or establish for yourself from your own experience, can form the basis for continuing professional development.

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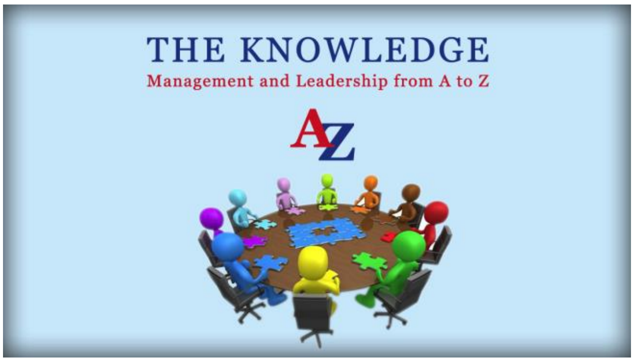
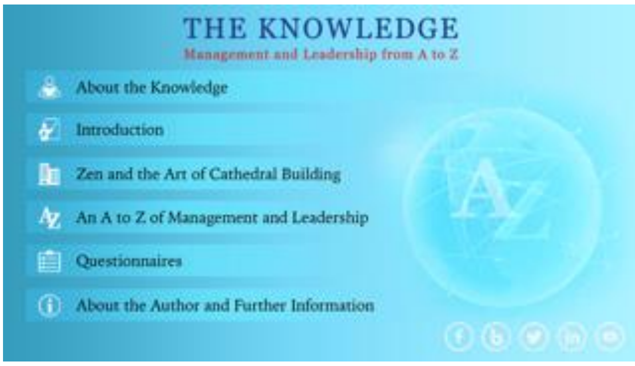
If you have found this paper useful, you may be interested in Carl's iOS App, 'The Knowledge: Management and Leadership from A to Z'.





The **Introduction** offers guidance on how you can develop yourself as an effective learner and provides tips on how to get the most from your use of the App.

'**Zen and the Art of Cathedral Building**' is the story of the building of the Sagrada Familia, or Gaudi Cathedral, in Barcelona. This story, which is part truth, part fiction, offers you a chance to think about management and leadership from a range of different perspectives. You can zoom in on the operational details or take the long view of the strategic content depending on your interests or current needs. You can then explore your own management and leadership challenges through the A to Z sections of the App, which link explicitly with the opening story.

'**An A to Z of Management and Leadership**' contains a range of models which I have selected for their value in meeting the challenges of modern management and leadership. These models are:

- Described in brief to promote uncluttered learning
- Related to the opening story to promote deeper understanding
- The foundation for 26 exercises to promote individual, team and organization development.

The '**Questionnaires**' provide the opportunity for you to reflect in detail on your preferred learning style, leadership style and emotional intelligence.

In summary, The Knowledge resources will:

- Make a range of management, leadership and organization development models accessible and memorable
- Help you explore your attitudes and behaviours at work from a range of different perspectives
- Illustrate that many of the problems within your organizational life are neither new nor unique
- Enhance the creativity you are all able to apply to your management and leadership role.

The App is priced at £3.99 / $5.99

More information and Website: http://theknowledge.biz
Direct link to App Store: https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/the-knowledge/id934698726?ls=1&mt=8