



ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT ODC NEWSLETTER

Organization Development and Change Division

R. Wayne Boss, Editor

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2011 CALL FOR PROPOSALS: ACADEMY MEETINGS IN SAN ANTONIO

Jim Ludema
Program Chair

The Annual Meeting will be held August 12-16, 2011, in San Antonio, Texas.

The ODC division invites innovative empirical or conceptual papers, symposia, and PDW workshops that develop theory and practice relevant to strategic and organizational change, organization development and transformation, and leadership. Topics and explorations specifically oriented to the 2011 all-Academy theme of “West Meets East: Enlightening, Balancing, Transcending” are especially encouraged.

As in years past, all submissions must be made via the Academy’s submission system. We urge you to review carefully the submission guidelines and procedures at <http://annualmeeting.aomonline.org/2011> prior to submitting. Submissions that do not follow the guidelines or are incomplete will not be reviewed.

Awards, some with an honorarium, will be given for the best paper in the following categories: Best Paper Overall, Rupe Chisolm Best Practical Theory Paper, Best Paper based on a Dissertation, Best Student Paper, Best Action Research Paper.

The ODC Division also recognizes a Best Reviewer Award. All award winners will be recognized at the ODC business meeting.

All submissions (papers, symposia, and PDW workshop proposals) for the 2011 Academy of Management Annual Meeting are due January 11, 2011 at 5:00 PM ET (New York time).

We look forward to seeing your proposals and enjoying another terrific program in San Antonio!

HOW TO DEVELOP A RESILIENT HIGH COMMITMENT, HIGH PERFORMANCE ORGANIZATION

Michael Beer
TruePoint & Harvard Business School
2010 ODC Distinguished Speaker

Implicit in organization development theory and practice is a model of leading, organizing and managing that leads to both high commitment and high performance (HCHP). We do not, however, have an operating theory of HCHP firms—the design specifications—nor do we have a well defined organization development theory and practice that leaders and their advisors can employ to build an HCHP organization. Consequently investors and prospective employees have no means for evaluating the

(See Beer, page 6)

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**2011 ODC DIVISION PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS: CALL
FOR PROPOSALS**

Jeffrey Ford
PDW Chair

PDWs are a platform for colleagues to share knowledge and expertise and foster the development of workshop participants. Coordinated by the Academy's many divisions, interest groups, and theme committees, PDW sessions are different from regular academy sessions in that they can have a longer time frame and use a more interactive and participative format. PDW sessions will be held prior to the AOM regular program from 8:00 a.m. on Friday August 12, through 8:00 p.m. on Saturday August 13, 2011.

This theme invites academics and managers alike to make sense of today's global complexity and multiplicity by thinking in broad and integrative ways. This is an opportune moment for us to ask how we can learn (or re-learn) from the business practices and cultures of the world's emerging economic powers and how these practices challenge existing Western theories of management, particularly as it relates to organization development and change. How applicable are existing western theories of change and development to the rest of the world? How might existing Eastern practices inform and alter Western theories and practices? Is it possible to develop "generic" theories that apply to multiple cultures, or do we need to take a more contingency based approach in which practices vary by culture? What new theories might emerge from an integration of Eastern and Western thought? Is such an integration possible? What implications does the emergence of China, India, and other countries have for how we train future academics and practitioners?

Note that PDW space is limited, so PDW proposals that would be of interest to several divisions or interest groups are encouraged, although a PDW can only be submitted to one Division. (Any co-sponsors will be determined after submission.) If you are interested in submitting a proposal for a PDW session to be sponsored by the ODC Division, please visit the AOM submission site, <http://submissions.aomonline.org/2011>.

Also please note that the "Rule of 3" applies to PDW submissions. Therefore no one can submit or be a part of more than 3 PDW submissions (this is

in addition to the Rule of 3 for the main scholarly program).

Proposals must include:

1. The workshop title
2. Full description of the workshop and activities
3. Time requirements of the workshop
4. Submitter (contact person) and presenter(s) information, including name, affiliation, address, phone, fax, and e-mail for each person.
5. Division or Interest Group sponsor being solicited and why
6. Suggested Division or Interest Group co-sponsors
7. How you intend to create healthy audience interaction and participation

The submission deadline is Tuesday, January 11th, 2011, 5 p.m. EST (earlier submissions are strongly encouraged). All submissions must be sent via the AOM system, <http://submissions.aomonline.org/2011>.

If you have any questions, please contact Jeffrey Ford at ford.1@osu.edu.

2011 ODC DOCTORAL CONSORTIUM

The 2011 ODC Doctoral Consortium will be held on August 12-13 as part of the pre-conference program at the Academy of Management meetings in San Antonio.

The consortium includes an interesting and energetic mix of presentations, discussions and small group coaching sessions with noted ODC scholars designed to assist and support doctoral students at the beginning of their dissertations toward successful completion, publishable results, and smooth transitions into their academic careers.

We encourage advisors to nominate students for the consortium. To achieve the faculty-student ratio we wish for personalized feedback and coaching, the number of participants will be limited. Please apply early!

If you (or one of your students) are studying change and are actively designing or in early working

stages of a dissertation, then please submit an application. The ODC division welcomes doctoral students from all disciplines who are studying issues associated with human system and organizational change. Broad, relevant topical areas that might be of interest include:

- Organization growth & development
- Change management
- Strategy-as-practice
- Social movements in and of organizations
- Organizational improvisation
- Organizational learning
- Responses to change
- Network dynamics
- Institutional change
- Transformational leadership
- Innovation
- Microdynamics of change
- Change Agent-Target dynamics
- Multi-cultural dimensions of systems change
- Complex Responsive Processes, and
- Any other change-related topics

We have designed an innovative approach to the traditional consortium experience, which has received rave reviews for the last two years. The consortium features a working paper workshop, where experienced change scholars such as Quy Huy and Gavin Schwarz will present new work-in-progress and then give and receive collegial feedback in a way that will be a provocative learning experience. Michael Beer, Karen Jansen and Martin Friesl will share their perspectives on career alternatives and the editors of *JABS* and *Journal of Change Management* will talk about how the research on change is evolving. Current and past ODC Executive Board members (such as Jim Ludema, Ron Fry, Inger Stensaker, Jeffrey Ford, Sonja Sackmann, Danielle Zandee, Dick Woodman, Ann Feyerherm, Bill Pasmore, Ian Palmer) will work with you personally to make your research more rigorous, relevant, and publishable. There will be opportunities to meet other doctoral students, to

make some great connections with other leading and emerging change scholars and to be exposed to topics such as publishing action and applied research, qualitative research, career trajectories, and ethics of research and teaching. The consortium is scheduled to begin on Friday, August 7, at 8.30, includes Friday dinner with the ODC Executive Board, and Saturday sessions from 8.30 am to 2 pm.

The ideal candidate for this consortium will have finished his/her coursework and be engaged in preparing a dissertation proposal—or just finished defending the proposal—but not yet into substantial data collection. Because space is limited, we expect that no more than two students per program will be selected to participate, but additional students from a given program may be considered on a space available basis after the nomination deadline.

To apply, please send an email with the following three documents attached to Inger Stensaker (inger.stensaker@nhh.no) by June 30, 2011.

1. A recommendation letter from your dean, department chair, or major advisor that verifies your (a) status/progress and (b) year in your school's doctoral program.
2. A one-page bio summarizing your contact information, research and teaching interests, and publications. This one-page bio will be distributed among consortium participants.
3. A 3-5 page (typed and double-spaced) summary of your dissertation project, including the research question, rationale, hypotheses/propositions, proposed methods and results (if applicable). This will be distributed to consortium faculty and participants in advance of the August sessions.

We anticipate all selections will be made by July 5. Any questions can be directed to Inger Stensaker; inger.stensaker@nhh.no.

NEWS ABOUT MEMBERS

On January 1, 2011 Richard Woodman stepped down as the Editor of the *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*.

William A. Pasmore assumed the Editor position of the *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* on January 1, 2011.

ODC ENDOWMENT FUND 2011 CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Jim Ludema
Program Chair

The ODC Division is happy to announce its 5th Annual (2011) Call for Proposals supported by its Endowment Fund (ODCEF).

The mission of the ODCEF to encourage scientific inquiry in ODC through sponsored research at the regional, national, and international levels; to assist in program and course development in ODC at universities and schools both domestically and internationally; to develop innovative educational processes, teaching methods, and instructional technologies in ODC; and to understand and define ODC competencies for academic programs.

The \$1000 Grants will be awarded by the ODCEF for:

- Scientific studies in Organizational Development and Change (OD&C) at the regional, national and international levels.
- Research that advances program and course development in OD&C at universities and schools, both domestic and international.
- Inquiry and study in the development of innovative educational processes, teaching methods and instructional technologies in OD&C.
- Understanding and defining OD&C competencies for academic programs.

Application requirements include a detailed description of the proposed research/inquiry including:

- Objectives and description of how research qualifies (see above).
- Explanation of how funding will be used (travel is excluded).
- Timeline for completion to meet a January 1, 2013 deadline.
- Statement regarding intent to publish research results.
- CV/resume(s) for principal investigator(s)

Submission deadline is February 1, 2011. Awards will be announced early April 2011.

This call for proposals is an open competition and will follow a blind review process according to standard practices.

The ODCEF values diversity and seeks applications from talented students, faculty, and practitioners from diverse backgrounds. The ODCEF Grant Review Panel does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, or status as a Vietnam Era Veteran or disabled veteran in the administration of its obligations, activities, policies, or awards.

For more information contact: Glenn Varney, Ph.D., Bowling Green State University, 419-352-7782, gvarney@bgsu.edu. Additional information about the ODCEF can be found on the ODC website (<http://division.aomonline.org/odc>) under the Events/News tab.

**CALL FOR PAPERS:
THE JOURNAL OF APPLIED
BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE**

The *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* (JABS) brings both scholars and professionals the latest discussion of efforts to understand the process of change in organizations and systems. The journal provides scholars with the latest research, theory, and methods, while also informing professionals and their clients of issues in group, organizational and system dynamics.

Please submit original work covering applied research, conceptual frameworks, and topics bridging the scholar-practitioner divide to JABS at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jabs>.

JABS is seeking qualified candidates to join the editorial board. If you are interested in joining this elite team and contributing to the scholarly work of the Journal, please send an email to the editor, Bill Pasmore, at JABS@exchange.tc.columbia.edu.

**3RD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
AND DOCTORAL CONSORTIUM
ON ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT
AND CHANGE**

ODC Division, Academy of Management,
ISEOR Research Center, University of Lyon 3

The most recent bi-annual ODC International Conference and Doctoral Consortium took place at ISEOR, University of Jean Moulin Lyon 3 on June 14-16, 2010 in Lyon, France. This conference was co-sponsored by the Management Control Section of the American Accounting Association and the Instituto Internacional de los Costos.

This event included presentations by OD practitioners, researchers and doctoral students from European, American and Latin-American and demonstrates the value-added nature of international relationships in sharing knowledge and experience in the following areas:

- Research methods
- Doctoral Curricula in the field of ODC and MC in the US and in Europe
- Preparation for life as an academician
- Research on change management theories and evaluation methods of the results
- Bridging the gap between change methodologies and management control approaches to planned change

A specific objective of this conference was to bridge the gap between OD and management control on issues such as the evaluation of visible and hidden impacts of OD and the assessment of OD projects considered as intangible investments. The 397 participants came from 22 countries: Algeria, Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Congo, France, Italy, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Mexico, Norway, Portugal, Senegal, Switzerland, Spain, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States, and Venezuela. The 271 speakers made presentations on the following general topics: change management processes, trans-organizational development in territories and cities, tetranormalization, investment in human potential, performance metrics of OD projects, and sustainable management.

This conference enhanced the visibility of the ODC Division in Europe and Latin America and enabled

a cross-fertilization with academics and practitioners in the field of accounting and management control. ODC members, who presented key-note speeches, included David Boje and Grace-Ann Rosile (New Mexico State University), Henri Savall, Véronique Zardet, and Marc Bonnet (Iseor, U. of Lyon), Peter Sorensen and Therese Yaeger (Benedictine University), and Chris Worley (USC).

The fourth co-sponsored ODC and Iseor conference is planned for early 2012 in Lyon, France.

(From Beer, page 1)

quality of leadership, management and organization so they can make good decisions. Similarly, without a coherent theory of what HCHP firm is and how it might be developed, the field of OD will remain fragmented, unable to speak to leaders and students about how to develop an HCHP organization.

There is no reason for this state of affairs. There is overwhelming evidence that HCHP firms outperform their peers over long periods of time and simultaneously develop social capital and social value—high trust relationships with employees, customers, community and society and yes even shareholders. And a mountain of descriptive and action research tells us what the key levers are for building a HCHP firm. My recent book, *High Commitment, High Performance* integrates theory and research in the field of strategy, strategic management, organization design, human resource management, organization change and development and leadership and my own action research over 40 years and proposes a practical and coherent theory leaders and organization development professional require to build an HCHP firm (Beer, 2009). In the rest of this article I provide a brief overview of that HCHP theory.

To achieve sustained commitment and performance organizations must achieve the following three paradoxical characteristics:

Performance alignment. A configuration of organization's design (structure and the roles, responsibilities and relationships it defines) business and operating processes, capabilities of people, senior team functioning and culture that aligns with performance goals and a winning. Alignment is

essential for execution. The configuration is largely contingent on strategy, size and complexity of the business.

Psychological alignment. Employees and other stakeholders are emotionally attached and committed to the organization, its purpose and values. Trust governs relationships with all stakeholders and in particular employees. Internally, the organization is non hierarchical, even egalitarian, and provides challenging jobs, fair treatment and justice. As a consequence a community of purpose is formed where deference is eschewed and commitment to the firm's purpose and goals enable flexible and collaboration in service of the larger good. The management philosophy that underlies psychological alignment is common across firms in different circumstances making though the practices and policies to enact the philosophy may differ somewhat.

The capacity to learn and change. The leadership team—is able to confront external and internal realities and change the organization's design and their own role and behavior accordingly. This is enabled by honest, collective and public conversations with employees and customers about the state of performance and psychological alignment. Without this capability continuous realignment cannot be achieved and the organization's performance and employee commitment decline as market and social circumstances change. This outcome is the most difficult to achieve and typically is not as strong as psychological and performance alignment even in HCHP organizations.

Achieving all three outcomes is difficult because they are paradoxical. It is also why achieving all three outcomes is a source of sustained advantage. Efforts to achieve high performance and performance alignment often result in top down change with little involvement from employees and therefore result in a decrease in psychological alignment and commitment. Achieving high psychological alignment can easily erode performance realignment as valued relationships make it hard to decisively realign for improved performance and deal with poor performers. The very alignment that has led to success in the past causes rigidities in organizational behavior. Outdated assumptions cause managers to resistant confronting new realities. Consider the downfall of great firms such as Digital

Equipment whose leaders defended their assumptions about how to lead, organize and manage despite changing market realities and growth in size and complexity (Schein et al, 2003; Miller, 1990).

Organizations like SAS Institute, Southwest Airlines, Hewlett Packard until the late 1990s, Cummins Engine, McKinsey, Costco, and Nucor Steel, in the US, Infosys and Tata Enterprises in India and Volvo Group and Ikea in Europe, to name a few, were “born right.” Their founders possessed values and wisdom that enabled them to develop performance and psychological alignment from the beginning. These firms achieved sustained above average performance and commitment of multiple stakeholders for decades. Some have also developed the capacity for learning and change, though the experience of IBM in the 1980s and Hewlett Packard in the 1990s suggests that many may not possess the capacity to have the honest conversations required to adapt. A change in leadership was required to improve performance. But when new leaders do not share the values that underpin psychological alignment and commitment efforts to improve performance alignment tend to be top down thereby undermining psychological alignment as it did at Hewlett Packard.

To avoid moving from crisis to crisis and from CEO to CEO—a process that undermines the development of a strong high commitment culture—firms require a capacity to have honest conversations learn and change—to realign around new strategic imperatives. This requires a learning and governance systems inside the firm that enables truth to speak to power—to leadership teams at the corporate and business unit level—about barriers to performance and psychological alignment. Unless institutionalized—it is a requirement that corporate and business unit leaders enable truth to speak to power learn and change regularly—leaders’ defensive routines will prevent them from using the very engaged honest conversations that will save their business, and themselves.

Can companies that were not “born right” become HCHP organizations? My own work with such underperforming and low or average commitment firms has revealed six silent barriers to performance and psychological alignment as well as learning and change that must be overcome if the organization is to become a resilient high commitment, high performance organization (Beer and Eisenstat,

2000). We have called them silent killers, because like hypertension and cholesterol in the human body, they are unknown and potentially fatal. By unknown I do not mean that no one is aware that the silent killers exist. Lower levels in the organization experience the barriers in their daily work and are able to discuss them with each other. Even senior leadership teams, our research shows, are aware of the barriers. By unknown I mean that the barriers are un-discussable across levels. Our research shows that until silent barriers are in the open and discussed managers cannot emotionally come to terms with the ineffectiveness of their organization—its lack of performance and psychological alignment—and their own ineffectiveness as leaders. And unless they hear and share the frustration lower levels feel they are unable to commit to fundamental change.

In the past 20 years I and my colleagues have been privileged to work with courageous managers of low commitment and performance organizations who employed the Strategic Fitness Process (SFP)—a general manager and top team led learning and governance process that enables truth to speak to power (Beer and Eisenstat, 2004) . SFP asks leadership teams to develop a statement of strategic and organizational direction and then appoint a task force of eight of their best people to interview 100 other key people below the top team who represent all value creating activities in the business They ask about whether the strategy and values makes sense and about organizational strengths and barriers to achieving senior management’s strategic and values direction. A carefully designed three day Fitness meeting enables the task force to speak safely to senior teams about what they see as strengths and barriers. After the task force leaves senior teams engage in a systemic diagnosis of the organization and develop an action plan for change. SFP is a learning and governance system. The following six barriers have consistently been identified by dozens of task forces as the core reason for the organization’s underperformance and low morale and commitment:

- Unclear strategy and values as well as conflicting priorities
- An ineffective senior team
- A leader who is either too top down or too laissez faire—does not engage the senior team

or the organization to solve problems that block performance and commitment

- Poor coordination and communication between functions, businesses and/or dispersed geographic entities
- Inadequate leadership development and effective down the line HCHP leaders
- Closed vertical communication and little engagement prevents honest dialogue about strategic direction, barriers to execution and problems in commitment

These barriers are what stands in the way of developing performance and psychological alignment, and the capacity for learning and change.

The first three barriers prevent the development of a clear high quality organizational direction to which they are all committed. The inability of an ineffective senior team to have the conversation that matters prevents the development of shared purpose, values and strategy and in turn blocks their capacity to make difficult and painful changes that improve performance and psychological alignment.

Barriers four and five—seamless integration and effective leaders to lead strategic initiatives, cross-functional teams and functions—block high quality execution of strategy and values. Ineffective senior teams are unable to have the conversation needed to redesign the organization—to develop the appropriate structure, strategic management processes for the business and needed leadership development processes and programs.

The sixth barriers—closed vertical communication and lack of engagement—preclude the honest dialogue about strategy, values and barriers to execution needed for ongoing organizational learning and change. In short without dialogue about the barriers and their underlying root causes organizational adaptation is impossible. Only replacement of the leader and members of the top team will enable change. But, continued use of replacement as a strategy for performance realignment and change makes it virtually impossible, as noted earlier, to develop psychological alignment and a strong high commitment culture. New CEOs have typically not been socialized into the HCHP value system and may not share core values that create a community of purpose. As Collins and Porras found, companies with a sustained record

of performance over a long time typically promoted from within and rarely chose an outsider to be CEO to avoid eroding psychological alignment (Collins and Porras, 1994).

If internal promotion is necessary to sustain psychological alignment and commitment then it is essential that the organization and its leaders possess a learning and governance system like SFP that enables them to learn about the effectiveness of the enterprise and their leadership. Such a process would prevent the six barriers from becoming self-sealing. Our research suggests that when a learning and governance process that enables an honest, collective and public conversation was employed it made discussable the silent killers, led to a systemic diagnosis of the enterprise and led management to make changes that turned silent barriers into strengths. This occurred in a majority of cases but was contingent on the leader's values and willingness to learn.

Feedback about the six silent killers created a mandate for leadership teams to redesign six features of the organization and their role as a senior team. These six organizational facets and additional insights from a broad array of organizational studies led me to the identification of the following six levers for change.

Animating beliefs and an aligned winning strategy: The beliefs are about who we are as a business, what we are good at, what we care about deeply and our purpose beyond developing economic value.

Collective leadership. Leaders and their senior teams engage each other and lower levels in open and honest conversations that define strategy and values, identify barriers to achieving the direction and develop solutions to problems.

Learning and governance system. A structure and process that ensures that truth can speak to power (senior management and the board of directors) periodically about the alignment of the organization with strategy and values. There are of course many conversations in organizations that lead to change, but an honest (the whole truth is on the table), collective (key people in all parts of the system, and public (everyone knows that conversation is going on and will hear the result) is the only way to examine the whole system and redesign it. Organization redesign ideally emerges from the learning and governance system thereby increasing

commitment and putting the organization on a path to a high commitment process of learning.

Strategic performance management system. A senior team led routine process for developing strategic direction, setting goals, measuring and reviewing progress, setting priorities and reallocating human and financial resources to be consistent with priorities. Redesign of their strategic management was the means by which senior teams are able to overcome the perception that strategy and priorities were not clear. An improved process enabled senior teams to adapt strategy to changing circumstances and ensure that execution to achieve the direction. Several HCHP organizations have integrated the learning and governance process into their strategic management process.

The organizing system. The organization's structure and processes are designed to align with strategic intent. Senior teams manage evolution and revolution in organization design as the business encounters changes in markets, technology, size and complexity. The system defines roles, responsibilities, relationships and decision rights in a way that creates appropriate differentiation and requisite integration. And it delegates responsibility to the lowest level consistent with information about decisions to ensure high commitment. Because the organizing systems are contingent on environmental circumstances HCHP companies in different industries, with different strategies and different sizes are likely to have different organizing systems.

The human resource system. Recruitment, selection, evaluation, development, reward, and layoff policies and practices that attract and emotionally attach people (particularly leaders) who fit the high commitment culture management is aspiring to develop. Fit is as important in these decisions as technical skills and results. The human resource system is one of the primary means for developing commitment and ensuring that people work collaboratively and put the larger good ahead of their own interests. Because HCHP firms are concerned with developing high levels of psychological alignment and commitment their management philosophies and core HR policies and practices are likely to be more similar than different regardless of industry, strategy and size.

Average or low commitment and performance companies can be transformed into HCHP organiza-

tions. That process cannot be sustained unless the CEO or business unit leader possesses, or develops over time, high commitment and performance beliefs. They must have high performance standards and the will to win. But they must also believe that the purpose of business organizations goes well beyond the necessary economic goal of providing an attractive return to shareholders. Without the leader's belief that developing relationships of trust with multiple stakeholders is necessary to foster commitment to the enterprise—little progress can be made. This belief system enables leaders to make unconventional choices with regard to strategy, growth rates, financial policies, human resource policies and practices, leadership and learning typically found in HCHP corporations.

For example, strategy is an inside out rather than outside in process. It is about developing a strategic identity rooted in capabilities and passion for a mission. High performance and alignment with values are the criteria for evaluation, development and promotion. Growth is limited to rates that allow the firm to hire outstanding people who fit the culture and avoid debt that could undermine the financial stability of the enterprise and in turn lead to layoffs. Financial rewards are fair but not the dominant means for motivation. Instead high involvement and challenging work are the means.

The path to transformation will vary. It may start with a leader and senior team that are facing a performance and commitment crisis. Or, more likely, it may start with a new leader brought in to turn around the organization's performance. In a recent study of such leaders we find that their high commitment, high performance values led them to be demanding about performance and change while also engaging people in collective learning process about what and how to change (Beer, et al, 2011).

Transformation to HCHP must be led by senior teams. But, OD consultants can help by facilitating a process for honest conversations and a diagnosis and by also being expert resources with regard to substantive questions about six levers for change. To be an effective HCHP OD consultant he/she must possess HCHP values and vision as well as deep knowledge about how to design and in facilitate honest, collective and public conversations. The consultant must be able to co-create with senior teams and key members of the organization a change plan. In this capacity the consultant is

both a process and expert resource. This requires knowledge about the six domains or change levers discussed earlier. These are discussed in depth in *High Commitment, High Performance*. In effect the HCHP OD consultant is a specialist in process consultation and generalist with sufficient knowledge to frame questions and choices in the six HCHP levers.

I have had the privilege of working with several leaders at the corporate and business unit level on the journey to HCHP. The senior leaders that have succeeded in transforming their organization have the will to lead and advocate a new direction but they were also willing to be vulnerable and believe that inquiry can help them create a HCHP firm. “Getting feedback from a task force of your best people about the state of affairs told me exactly what I had to do,” one leader said. “It makes transforming your organization easy.”

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HAPPY TRAILS

Jude Olson

Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company
Executive Scholar-Practitioner

It has been both a privilege and a pleasure to serve on the ODC Board of the Academy for the past three years. I was in the Scholar Practitioner role representing Industry as well as my company, the Lockheed Martin Corporation.

The experience brings to mind three important roles from which I have benefitted in being associated with the ODC Division: mentor, collaborator and scholar-practitioner.

My mentor, Frank Barrett, Ph.D., a professor at both the Naval Postgraduate School and the Fielding Graduate University, invited me to my first Academy meeting in Seattle, Washington many years ago. I was a graduate student and in awe of the famous names—theorists and researchers—I was able to hear present for the first time. Although I am in mid-life, I felt like I was back at those rock concerts of the past, admiring the “stars.” Frank graciously introduced me to his colleagues, recommended sessions to attend, and most importantly, identified the universities that hosted the best socials! I also remember walking the streets of Seattle with Frank, who asked me the provocative question, “Where are you going in your professional career?” I’m still pondering that one, Frank. I know I would not even have arrived at the Academy, if it wasn’t for my mentor—and I thank him.

The community that I entered into with the ODC Board enabled me to witness extraordinary collaboration. I was welcomed warmly and encouraged to share my perspectives as both a newly minted Ph.D. as well as a veteran practitioner. At first, I felt intimidated by the academic credentials held by the members on the Board. Then, I began to help review papers, participate in strategy-development and assist with sessions at Academy meetings. I felt that my voice was heard and valued. The collaborative community I had entered was hardworking, dedicated to expanding ODC research that met high academic standards and on top of it all, fun! I looked forward to our mid-year Board meetings. I enjoyed hearing the conversations

about trends, new practices and collaborative research. I made contacts through this network which resulted in invitations to present at subsequent Academy meetings and opportunities to publish.

As a scholar-practitioner mindset, my focus was two-fold. First, I tried to encourage more practitioners to come and participate in Academy meetings and sessions; and second, I questioned academics about how their applied research might solve critical business issues. In the midst of day-to-day pressures in organizational life, I try to stop to ask important questions like: “Are we using a systems perspective?” “Are there other best practices?” “How could theory inform our practice?”

These are questions that I now bring to my own discipline and mindset as a scholar-practitioner at Lockheed. I actively support internal applied research by building bridges with academics looking for research sites. My personal interest in leadership complexity theory has propelled me to bring a research team in-house. This will give me another opportunity to partner in presenting at the Academy this year in San Antonio .

As I bid “Happy Trails” to my ODC Board colleagues, I want to thank them for their mentoring, joyful collaboration, and inspiration to keep building bridges between academia and the business world. You are role models from whom I learned so much. As I rejoin my fellow ODC Division members, I encourage them to actively mentor others—invite them to the next Academy meeting, and especially, the ODC Division events. Collaborate with the Board—nominate yourself and others for future Board vacancies. Be a scholar-practitioner—bring action research to your practice, take time to teach and publish in addition to consulting. Thank you for the privilege and pleasure of serving you all over the past three years. I look forward to partnering with you in the future.

THE DOWNSIDE OF TAKING SIDES

Craig Lundberg

1974 ODC Division Chair

The field of Organizational Development (OD) has had, from its inception, a mission of assisting organizations to become healthier and more effective. Hence OD’s practitioners (internal and external consultants) intentionally enhance an organization’s capabilities for internal adaptiveness, external alignment, and, sometimes, overall transformation. Similarly, OD research, again intentionally, has sought to explicate change processes as well as the implications of social technologies for diagnosis and intervention. To accomplish these objectives, consultants and researchers alike should, as is widely believed, strive to work uncontaminated by personal or political sympathies, i.e., to be neutral so as to be objective. While a noble aspiration, is it a feasible one for OD? Can OD avoid taking a side?(1)

Let us first examine the situation of OD’s practitioners:

- In hierarchical/stratified social systems power/authority is unequally distributed, i.e., the group at the top (superior) has more power/authority than lower groups (subordinates).
- In hierarchical/stratified social systems there is a “hierarchy of credibility,” i.e., social system participants take as given that the highest group has the right to define the ways things really are and hence deserves to be regarded by lower groups as the most credible about how the system operates.
- The vast majority of organizations are hierarchical/stratified social systems, thus the top management group is superior and all others are subordinate.
- OD practitioners are very rarely members of top management, and as a subordinate group have less power/authority and less credibility.
- In the vast majority of organizations top management is the group entrusted with the care and operation of the organization, i.e., they are, by virtue of their official position and the power/authority that goes with it, responsible for “doing something” when things are not as

they should be or are held accountable if what they do is inadequate.

- The vast majority of organizations, however, do not perform as intended or as society would like them to, i.e., they are refractory.
- Because organizations are refractory top management develops ways both of denying the failures of the organization to perform as it should and explaining failures that cannot be hidden.
- Subordinate groups in organizations, because of top management's power/authority and presumed credibility, unthinkingly accept top management's definition of the organization's reality as well as their ways of portraying it.
- The work of OD practitioners, as a subordinate group, will thus be biased in the direction of the interests of top management, i.e., OD practitioners will be partisans highly likely endorsing top management's ideology and proclamations.

But what about OD research (other than conducted by OD practitioners, which will be partisan per the above reasoning)?

- The vast majority of OD research occurs in organizations that are hierarchical/stratified.
- OD research, at minimum, requires access to organizations for data.(2,3)
- OD research is conducted by persons who are subordinate in an organization, i.e., they have less power/authority and less organizational credibility than top management.
- OD researchers, as subordinates, are dependent on top management for access to needed data.
- OD researchers, because of their dependency on top management as well as their subordinate status in the organization, will be biased in the direction of the interests of top management.

As has been argued, both OD consultancy and OD research are naturally and inevitably partisan. Taking or even leaning toward top management's side means that some distortion will be introduced into OD work—regardless of OD's ethics or the precautionary measures designed to guard against bias and error. Neutrality and objectivity are

always just beyond our grasp—for OD consultancy and research as well as most of the organizational sciences.

The downside of taking top management's side is clear, its distortion. Does this distortion render OD consultancy and research useless? Probably not. Does this distortion require that our work be assessed in light of it? Always.

Notes

1. The inspiration for this notes as well as some of the ideas utilized come from Howard Becker (1967) "Whose side are we on?" *Social Problems*, 14(3): 239-247.
2. We note that non-empirical OD research may be subject to the distortion argued below. Merely reading in the field means one will of necessity read the arguments and findings of partisans and hence be influenced.
3. Of course OD research also often requires top management's approval of the research design and/or data gathering methodologies and/or the form of sharing findings. And, sometimes researchers also seek fiscal support for their research.

DIAGNOSTIC AND DIALOGIC OD

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In recent years there has been a great deal of commentary and controversy about the state of organization development (OD). Current critiques tend to focus on the underlying value system of OD and whether the more traditional humanistic values espoused by the founders of the field are still relevant and actionable or should be replaced by more pragmatic business considerations articulated by newer practitioners. Absent in the discussions about value orientations, however, is any clear recognition that in the past 20 or 25 years a different kind of OD practice has emerged with underlying assumptions that are not consistent with some of the original, basic premises of OD. We think it is fair to

say that newer theoretical orientations to social reality and organizational change are underrepresented in OD textbooks in comparison to the behavioral, humanistic, and open systems theories that helped shape the original formulation of OD in the 1950s and 1960s. Practices congruent with post-1960s theories also tend to be framed as developments rather than departures, thereby tacitly downplaying the import of their differences in both theory and practice.

In the following we review some of the basic assumptions underlying the kind of OD that is currently widely taught and found in OD textbooks, what we label in this article *Diagnostic OD*. This is followed by a description of some of the current organizational change and consulting practices that we believe point to the rough outlines of a new, *Dialogic* form of OD.

Foundational Assumptions of Diagnostic OD

The original formulation of organization development has a strong positivist orientation based in mid-20th-century social science. The classical OD approach to action research as a data-based change method presumes the existence of an objective, discernable reality that can be investigated or researched to produce valid data and information to influence change. In many writings and virtually all OD textbooks, the purpose of this data gathering is described as diagnosis—the organization exists as an entity that needs examination prior to prescribing remedies. That formulation links with another element of classical OD, the emphasis on the organization as an open or living system. When viewing organizations as if they are like living systems, it makes sense to build models of optimal organizing in a given environment and compare a given team or organization to them. It also makes sense to assess them against standards for “healthy” organizations and to prescribe interventions or treatments based on an “objective” diagnosis. The assumption that there are objective data that can be used in a process of social discovery, therefore, is a central aspect of the change process in Diagnostic OD.

Emerging Dialogic OD Practices

A set of practices are now in use that we believe differ enough from classical, Diagnostic OD in philosophical and/or theoretical ways to merit being considered a bifurcated form of OD. We refer to this newer form as *Dialogic OD*.

Of all the new OD practices, the ones most clearly articulating a stance different from the positivism of Diagnostic OD are appreciative inquiry approaches. Rather than attempting to diagnose and manage change levers, appreciative inquiry seeks to evoke new ideas that will compel self-organizing change.

Other successful forms of Dialogic OD are Search Conferences and Future Search, which are designed to help large groups arrive at agreements about the future they want and actions to achieve it. Whereas data are certainly gathered and used in these approaches, it is more for the purposes of presenting multiple possibilities and perspectives than bringing objective “facts” to bear on the situation or producing an objective diagnosis against an ideal model to change behaviors. Instead the greater emphasis is on reaching new social agreements or adopting new mindsets and, therefore, new realities to guide future actions.

Open Space is another popular and successful OD practice that does not employ diagnosis. Instead it creates a container that allows for a bottom-up identification of the interests and motivations latent in any large group and helps people with common interests find each other and make agreements about the future. World Café has some similarities to Open Space in creating a bottom-up process for identifying what is latent in a large group. In the case of World Café, however, what it helps identify are latent mental models through a more structured process and nuanced facilitation than Open Space. In the widely used Technology of Participation of the Institute of Cultural Affairs in the United States there are no data collected independent of people’s beliefs, assumptions, or stories nor any encouragement to diagnose the system.

What may be labeled *discursive* or *conversational* approaches to working with people, groups, and larger social systems also base their change processes less on trying to diagnose and define the current system than on developing narratives, stories, or conversations that aid in the establishment of more effective or just patterns of organizing. In all of these approaches, the OD consultant is working from explicit or implicit premises about how language shapes social reality and that interventions need to directly address discursive phenomena to affect strategies, structures, systems, leadership, rewards, and so on.

Contrasting Diagnostic and Dialogic Organization Development

One of the important ways Diagnostic and Dialogic OD differ is that most of the newer OD practices emphasize a view of human systems as dialogic systems or meaning-making systems rather than biological or open systems. Proponents of dialogical forms of OD don't necessarily dispute that organizations can be described as open systems, they are just more mindful of the limitations.

Objective data collection and accurate diagnosis as formal steps in these newer OD practices appear to be less prevalent for at least three reasons. It only makes sense to collect data and diagnose if one assumes that there is something objectively real and tangible independent of the meaning-making process to diagnose. Discursively oriented change processes tend to view "diagnosis" as mainly the privileging of one view or experience over the many other views and experiences that exist within any organization. Secondly, diagnosis entails a problem-centric approach to action research, where the assumption is that the organization is broken and needs fixing. Newer OD processes tend to take a possibility centric approach that attempts to find alignment in collective visions of desirable futures. Pragmatically, the speed at which things are changing in most organizations makes attempts at data collection and diagnosis difficult or irrelevant.

A third aspect of Diagnostic OD that contrasts with Dialogic OD is the focus on behavior. Whereas both Diagnostic and Dialogic OD are interested in changing actions and the consequences of those actions, their assumptions about how that happens differ. By focusing on the symbols, images, and narratives used to make meaning, and changing those, changes in behavior are self generated. Instead of emphasizing interventions related to changing norms, structures, processes, and incentives, the Dialogic OD consultant emphasizes changing the framings and meaning making that guide behavioral responses.

Of note in most of these newer forms of OD practice is that the role of the OD consultant is somewhat different from that of the consultant working with data in classical forms of Diagnostic OD. Instead of facilitating project groups doing data collection and diagnosis, dialogic interventions are more choreographed events that create a "container"

or enabling conditions within which stakeholders can share their views of social reality and seek common agreements in real time.

What's Similar in All Forms of OD?

Although the newer forms of OD do not embrace the full range of premises of many of the founders, they do embrace their humanistic and democratic values. We believe there is a bedrock set of values that holds all forms of OD together. In both diagnostic and dialogic forms of OD, these values and ideals reflect the empowering and collaborative nature of OD practices, interest in increasing awareness about and in a system to change it, the facilitative and enabling (as opposed to expert) role of the consultant, and the underlying goal of developing and enhancing organizations and broader social systems. Like classical diagnostic practices, the newer Dialogic OD practices are highly participative and attempt to circumvent the power of entrenched interests to equalize the variety of interests represented in the system, giving them as much equal footing in the co-construction of new relational and organizational realities as possible.

One of the ways in which the differences between Dialogic and Diagnostic OD get obscured results from their common interest in fostering greater system awareness. In Dialogic OD, this occurs through intersubjective processes of inquiry. Whereas inquiry and data collection can be synonyms, the image of inquiry in Dialogic OD is sufficiently different from the vision of data collection in, say, Nadler's classic OD text on the subject that equating them obscures more than it reveals. What is similar, however, is an interest in processes that foster greater system awareness.

The role of the consultant in Dialogic OD is also consistent with Diagnostic OD's emphasis on facilitating and enabling others as opposed to providing expert advice. The underlying assumptions guiding the processes used by the Dialogic OD consultant in carrying out this role, however, appear somewhat different from those in Diagnostic OD. In Dialogic OD the consultant acts more as a facilitator of events and constructor of a container within which client systems engage themselves rather than being a central actor in diagnosis, intervention, and/or facilitation of interpersonal and group

interactions—all hallmarks of Diagnostic OD. The consultant's relationship to the client system, however, is similar in both versions of OD. In both forms of OD, consultants stay out of the content and focus, instead, on processes while members of the system deal with the content. And the OD consultant in both forms is concerned with developing the capacity of the client system and not developing client dependence on the consultant.

This emphasis on the consultant's role in capacity building links to the final characteristic both forms of OD share, an interest in development, though what it means to develop an organization is perhaps the least developed aspect of OD theory. Developmental models at the individual, group, organization, and interorganizational levels tend to share similar conceptions of what constitutes a more developed state. There are, at a minimum, three common themes. First, a person, group, organization, or network is more developed the greater awareness it has of itself—it can talk to itself about itself. Secondly, in a more developed system, emotional, reactive behavior decreases and rational, goal-directed behavior increases. Third, the more developed the system, the better able it is to actualize its potential.

In sum, it is these important commonalities that suggest we are dealing with different forms of OD rather than different types of consulting and change altogether.

Toward a Definition of Dialogic OD

We propose four characteristics for categorizing Dialogic OD practice. First, Dialogic OD change processes emphasize changing the normal, everyday conversations that take place in the system. Secondly, there may or may not be a data collection phase, but when there is, there is seldom the assumption that an objective reality exists to be diagnosed. Instead, processes of inquiry are used to surface, legitimate, and/or learn from the variety of realities that exist in the system. Third, the aim is to generate new images, stories, narratives, and socially constructed realities that affect how people in the system think and act. Finally, Dialogic OD is consistent with traditional OD values of collaborative decision making, giving people the opportunity to freely make informed choices and using the change process to develop and build capacity in the system.

Implications for Organization Development

Presently, OD practitioners and scholars discuss the theory and practice of organization development as if it is a single entity based on a common set of premises and beliefs. This is no longer a useful assumption and will be problematic for advancing theory and practice if the differing underlying philosophical and theoretical premises are not recognized.

Implications for Researchers

The theoretical basis of Dialogic OD needs to be more finely enunciated. Studies of the processes and impacts of Dialogic OD need to take place. There is only a handful of published studies of appreciative inquiry and even less of Open Space, World Café, the technology of participation, collaborative loops, reflexive consulting, various discursive change processes, or systemic sustainability. Because creating enabling conditions for different kinds of conversations to take place seems to be a key differentiator amongst the dialogical practices, this seems like an excellent area for OD scholars to investigate.

Implications for Practitioners

We believe differentiating the philosophical premises underlying diagnostic and dialogic practices would also be beneficial to practitioners. It would help provide a deeper and more coherent grounding to what is sometimes a confusing mix of classic orthodoxies and newer intervention practices. It would increase their ability to understand the basic assumptions from which they operate and help practitioners think more deeply about innovations in their own practice. It might also help clarify needed intervention competencies with underlying change premises. Presumably, diagnostic approaches might require greater competencies in positivist data collection and analysis methods as well as project group facilitation skills, whereas dialogic approaches might benefit from greater skills in establishing and facilitating dialogic containers and generative conversations.

Implications for Teaching OD

Currently, students of OD are beset with a monolithic theory base that does not seem to adequately encompass or differentiate the variety of technologies, especially more recent technologies, of developmental change. Being able to provide clear

differences in the theoretical bases to the variety of practices would go a long way to eliminating the confusion this creates. Specifically, we think those who write OD textbooks need to stop squeezing all OD practice into the classical OD action research model and explicitly recognize that fostering greater awareness in a system is not always the same thing as objective and formal data collection and diagnosis facilitated or conducted by an external consultant. For everyone, it might be liberating to have a plurality of differentiated premises rather than implicitly talking and writing as if everything is more or less the same.

Conclusion

We hope those engaged in scholarly practice and practical scholarship will consciously explore the implications of these newer premises and practices for OD. One of the strengths of classical, Diagnostic OD is the solid philosophical base on which it rests. It behooves contemporary OD scholars working with dialogical methods to articulate the philosophical bases for Dialogic OD. We can be testing alternative theories in practice, looking for where the theory fits with OD and managerial experience. We can be creating and trying out practical applications from the findings of organizational researchers working from alternative premises and sharing these experiments through journal publications. This may lead us to be able to describe under what conditions Diagnostic OD is most appropriate and when dialogic forms are more appropriate for effective change and development of organizations.

Note: This is a highly abbreviated version of the 2009 Douglas McGregor Memorial Award winning article: Revisioning organization development: Diagnostic and dialogic premises and patterns of practice. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 45(3), 348-368. All tables, citations and references have been removed from this version

FEEDBACK TO THE EDITOR

We welcome your feedback and would appreciate your comments below. Selected comments on articles in the *ODC Newsletter* may be published in the next issue, so please indicate if you prefer your comments to be withheld. Please address all correspondence to:

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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2. Is there any important information about you or a colleague that you would like to have appear in the next issue?

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