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## **REDUCING BARRIERS TO UNDERSTANDING: THE 1994 ODC PROGRAM**

*by Gerald E. Ledford, Jr.*

The Academy of Management Annual Meeting will be held from August 14-17, 1994 in Dallas. Preconvention activities will be held on August 12-14. The host hotel will be the Loew's Anatole. This hotel has greatly expanded since it last hosted an Academy meeting several years ago.

This year we are solidifying and extending an informal ODC tradition of highly interactive sessions. Every session on the ODC program, whether symposium and paper session, will be designed to encourage dialogue with the audience. In keeping with this design principle, we have no "discussant" role in our paper sessions, since "discussants" often replace interaction between the presenters and the audience. Instead, we will have "session facilitators." The sessions will use a variety of lively formats.

The number of symposia and papers ODC is allowed to accept for the program is governed by the number of submissions we receive. Due to a sharp increase in submissions this year, especially paper submissions, the ODC program is larger than it has been in a number of years. We were able to accept 20 papers and 8 symposia, or 41 percent of the 69 symposia proposals and papers submitted. I believe that the program will be outstanding this year.

The ODC Division is sponsoring eight symposia on this year's program, six of them jointly with other divisions. Two

symposia will be Showcase Sessions for the Academy Meeting. The symposia cover a wide range of topics and theoretical domains, and reflect the keen interest of the division in topics that are important for both theory and practice.

The jointly sponsored Showcase Sessions are "Bringing Work Relationships to the Foreground of Organizational Research," chaired by Connie Gersick, which plows important new ground for the field. "Change Centers and Action Research: Examining Designs and Outcomes," chaired by Rupe Chisholm, examines the experience of four prominent and diverse change centers from three countries.

Other jointly sponsored symposia include "Organizational, Group, and Individual Determinants of Employee Involvement Program Success" (Robert Vance, chair), "The Challenge of Building Trust and Empowerment in Contemporary Organizations" (Gretchen Spreitzer and Aneil Mishra, chairs); "Downsizing Dilemmas: Strategy, Implications, and Recommendations," (Mary Ann Evans, chair); and "Current Issues and Trends in the Learning Organization" (Stephen Nason and Dave Ulrich, chairs).

ODC will be the sole host of two symposia. "The Organizational Dimensions of Global Change" (Diana Bilimoria, chair) addresses a topic of increasing interest for division members. "Research in Organizational Development: A Conversation with Volume Seven Authors" (Dick Woodman and Bill Pasmore, chairs) repeats a small group discussion format that has been extremely popular at several previous Academy meetings.

We also will host four very diverse paper sessions. One session will examine "The Unconscious and the Spirit in Organizational Change." Another, "Organization Theory and Strategic Perspectives on Organizational Change," will examine overlapping theoretical domains of these fields. "Theories of the Change Process" will address a topic of enduring interest to ODC members. Finally, one paper session will have three separate roundtables on employee involvement, climate, and quality; evaluation research; and the change process.

We also were permitted to accept five papers for poster sessions. This year's poster sessions include some of the most highly rated papers in our division. The Academy has given poster sessions increasing prominence, and this year they will be in a large, well-traveled location.

We are delighted to announce that Warner Burke will be our Distinguished Speaker on Monday afternoon. Warner is uniquely qualified to address his topic, "Organization Change: What We Know, What We Need to Know." This session will be followed by the division's Business Meeting, from 5:15 to 6:15 pm on Monday, August 15. We urge all of you to attend. The meeting will report the results of the Academy's formal review of the division (a periodic event), announce the new governance structure for the division and winners of this year's elections, and announce the winner of the Best Paper Award. The award carries a \$500 prize and is sponsored by the Journal of Organizational Change Management. The business meeting will be followed by a social hour, which is always one of the most popular parts of the ODC program.

Finally, we are hosting a series of preconvention activities, as in past years. Once again, we are jointly sponsoring a doctoral student consortium with the OMT and OB divisions. Luke Novelli is the ODC representative for the consortium. Doctoral students must apply and preregister for this event. Dan Svyantek and Steven Ekeberg will host "Assessing Practical Significance in the Field: A Bayesian Approach to Evaluation" as a hands-on tutorial for applied researchers. Dan has won the ODC Best Paper Award in two of the last four years for papers on Bayesian statistics. Bring your data to learn from them! Rupe Chisholm, Tom Cummings, Max Elden, and R. J. Bullock will again host the Empowering Work/Action Research Network in a workshop entitled "Emerging Concepts of Empowering Work and Action Research." Mike Beyerlein, who leads an active center for the study of work teams, will host "Implementing Work Teams: A Dialogue between Academics and Practitioners."

Those of you who submitted proposals to the ODC division know of the long delay in receiving notification of your acceptance or rejection this year. The glitch was due to new software the Academy was using this year to compile the program and to check across all divisions and interest groups for "rule of three violations." The software probably was used a year too soon, and was filled with so many bugs that only an entomologist could love it. I'm sorry for the delay and any anxious moments this caused you.

I greatly appreciate the willingness of so many of you to help out with the critical job of reviewing submissions for the program. Due to increased submissions, we needed more volunteer reviewers this year. Fortunately, we had enough volunteers, and even had a few more than we needed.

Many thanks to the 55 reviewers for the 1994 Annual Meeting. They were: Achilles Armenakis, Jean Bartunek, David

Bednar, David Boje, James Bowditch, Donald Bowen, Tony Buono, Gervase Bushe, Alphonse Carter, Jim Cashman, Cliff Cheng, Allan Church, Susan Cohen, David Cooperrider, Thomas Cummings, Parshotam Dass, Joel DeLuca, Elizabeth Doherty, Evelyn Dravecky, John Drexler, Gary Frank, Ronald Fry, Robert Golembiewski, Mary Ann Hazen, Susan Hocevar, Pan Kim, Joan Kofodimos, Craig Lundberg, Barry Macy, Newton Margulies, Fred Massarik, Michael McCuddy, Gary McMahan, Monty Mohrman, Luke Novelli, Larry Pate, Anthony Raia, Gaylord Reagan, Shelley Robbins, Peter Robertson, Rami Shani, Robert Silvers, Gretchen Spreitzer, Robert Steel, Daniel Syantek, Ram Tenkasi, Christopher Tennis, Mary Tucker, Glenn Varney, Frances Viggiani, Janine Waclawski, R. G. Wade, Gordon Walter, Don Warrick, and Richard Woodman.

As is customary for the ODC division, the chairs and facilitators for competitive paper sessions were drawn from the list of reviewers. Serving as a reviewer for the annual meeting is a good way to get involved in ODC activities. If you would like to review for next year's program, please come to the Division Business Meeting and volunteer. I look forward to seeing you in Dallas.

## **STATE OF THE ODC DIVISION**

*by Richard W. Woodman*

I am going to use the traditional annual column written by the division chair to address two things: An explanation of the new ODC governance structure and a brief summary of the results from the membership survey that was contained in the last newsletter (Winter 1994). But first--an aside:

This issue of the ODC Newsletter contains an inserted ballot which is designed to make it as easy as possible for you to vote in this year's ODC election. The ballot is pre-addressed, and needs only to be folded, stapled, and have postage affixed. In the past, we have used ballots that needed to be removed from the newsletter using your scissors and, of course, precious seconds of your time. Many have complained bitterly that such removal left a hole in their newsletter. Either for this, or other reasons, the number of division members voting in a typical election has usually been underwhelming. While using an insert is somewhat more expensive, we think it will be money well spent if more will vote. Please vote! This election is of historical significance for the division, as it is the first conducted under our new governance structure. Which brings me back to my topic.

## New Governance Structure in ODC

Plans for the new structure of the Executive Committee of the division were developed last year and presented to the membership at the ODC Division business meeting held during the Academy of Management annual meeting in Atlanta. If you were present, you will recall that we had a standing room only crowd estimated at 120-140 members. The membership present approved the new governance structure unanimously.

The most significant aspects of the new Executive Committee structure are: (a) The committee is expanded from six to nine members; (b) the new Member-at-Large positions will allow some individuals to serve for only two years (previously five years had been the minimum term); and (c) the new committee will contain an appointed industry representative.

Notice that your ballot is divided into two separate elections. This dichotomy is an important feature of the new Executive Committee structure. First, one individual will be elected as Division Representative. This person will serve two years as Division Representative and then one year each as the Program Chair, Division Chair, and Past Chair. An individual elected into this officer track will thus serve five years on the Executive Committee. (This officer progression is unchanged from our previous structure.)

The ballot also contains candidates for the two new Member-at-Large positions. There are four candidates on the ballot--you should vote for two. In future years, all Members-at-Large will serve a two-year term on the Executive Committee. For this election only both of these positions will be filled as follows. The individual receiving the most votes will serve a two-year term, while the individual receiving the second largest vote total will serve for a single year. The purpose of electing both individuals in this manner is to allow the committee to be increased to full strength immediately while creating staggered terms so that one Member-at-Large rotates off the committee each year. Thus, next year, and every year thereafter, one of the two Member-at-Large positions will be filled through election by the membership. As in the past, a new Division Representative will also be elected each year. ODC will now have two elected positions each year, rather than a single one as has been the case for a number of years. This will, of course, double the number of opportunities for individuals to serve on the Executive Committee.

In addition to increasing participation from the membership, there are other advantages that made creating the new

positions attractive. In the past, some division members have been reluctant to serve on the Executive Committee since it entailed a five-year commitment. Further, some individuals have perhaps felt constrained by the heavy time commitment required of program chairs and division chairs. For example, untenured assistant professors are among those who are not well positioned to undertake commitments of this nature early in their careers. Under the new structure, the Member-at-Large position opens service opportunities that require less time.

In addition, we will be appointing, again for a two-year term, an industry executive member of the Executive Committee. An important reason for creating this particular position is the relatively large number of executive members in ODC. For example, on January 28, 1994, ODC had 1,080 academic-affiliated members, 320 student members, and 295 executive members. This executive membership represents 39 percent of the executive membership of the entire Academy of Management. It makes sense to provide greater voice for our executive members in the affairs of the division. This position will be appointed because candidates are likely to be less well known to the general membership than fellow academics. At the time of this writing, we have a "short-list" of potential candidates, but the Executive Committee has not yet made its selection for the first industry executive representative.

In summary, following this election, the ODC Executive Committee will consist of nine members: a Past Chair, a Division Chair, a Program Chair, two Division Representatives, two Members-at-Large, and an appointed industry executive representative. The ninth member of the committee is the Newsletter Editor, also an appointed position.

## ODC Division Self-Study Survey

Every division of the Academy is reviewed once every five years by a "Professional Division Review Committee." This year it was our turn, and the activities and functioning of ODC were reviewed for the years 1989 through 1993. As a part of this formal review process, a division is required to survey its membership. Thus, the ODC Division self-study survey was distributed in the Winter 1994 newsletter. Results of this survey were reported to the Academy as part of a required report that addressed membership composition, finances, annual meeting activities and programs, election procedures, and so on. In addition, we want to share results with the membership.

Some 74 completed questionnaires were received in time to be included in the analysis. The survey contained eight

"opinion" questions answered using a seven-point Likert scale, where 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree. A summary of the responses to these eight questions follows:

Item #1: "I feel that I can have a real influence on the division's policies." (m = 3.56; sd = 2.03)

While the mean response suggests that members were somewhat indifferent on this question, the frequency distribution reveals a substantial variance in beliefs regarding the ability to influence policy. Of those expressing an opinion, 53% disagreed while 41% agreed with the statement. Some 6% selected the midpoint ("neither").

Item #2: "The division spends too much of its money on social events." (m = 2.89; sd = 1.34)

Members do not believe that the division is spending too much money in this manner. Only three respondents agreed with the statement.

Item #3: "The division's leaders are very responsive to its members' concerns and interests." (m = 4.91; sd = 1.42)

The mean indicates that executive committee members (and perhaps informal leaders as well) are perceived as responsive. The frequency distribution supports this conclusion, as only eight respondents disagreed with the statement.

Item #4: "Generally speaking, the division's program at the Annual Meeting is both interesting and useful to me." (m = 4.87; sd = 1.60)

The mean indicates that respondents tend to believe that the annual meetings are interesting/useful. Of those expressing an opinion, 74% agreed with this statement. There were, however, a substantial minority (23%) who apparently do not find the program interesting or useful.

Item #5: "Access to the division's leadership positions is controlled by a self-perpetuating elite group." (m = 4.18; sd = 1.87)

The frequency distribution indicates an interesting lack of consensus concerning this issue with 34% of those

expressing an opinion disagreeing and 43% agreeing with this statement. Echoing this ambivalence, an unusually high percentage (22%) of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the item.

Item #6: "I have a clear understanding about how I can become more involved in the division's activities." (m = 3.97; sd = 2.01)

The mean masks sharp disagreement among the members. Of those expressing an opinion, 52% agreed and 48% disagreed with the item. Clearly, we need to do a better job providing information about avenues for involvement, and doing so will be a goal for future executive committees.

Item #7: "The division's preconference activities provide members with a valuable service." (m = 4.67; sd = 1.75)

Both the mean and the frequency distribution indicate that most respondents find the preconference program of value. Of those expressing an opinion, 62% agreed with this position.

Item #8: "The division needs to spend more money on things that would help its members professionally." (m = 4.46; sd = 1.50)

A slight majority (54%) agreed with this statement, although sadly it is not at all clear exactly what form these expenditures should take, based on suggestions made in response to open-ended items in the survey.

There were several open-ended questions that asked about additional services that the division might provide, and perceived strengths and weaknesses of the division. In addition, respondents were asked to rank their reasons for becoming members of ODC.

With regard to the question concerning the most important reason for membership, 39 respondents ranked research first, 7 individuals selected teaching, none would admit that social reasons were their prime motivation, 5 ranked "tradition" as most important, and 13 indicated that training or learning more about the domain was the most important factor in their membership.

Written comments seem to suggest that a number of individuals were content with the leadership or seemed to think

that the leadership of the division was a strength (with the possible exception of an individual who described the current leadership as "nonentities"). In addition, the newsletter was looked upon favorably by a relatively large proportion (18%) of respondents as was the mix in membership of practitioners and researchers (20%). There were some complaints about this mix and some complaints about the number of academically oriented articles in the newsletter. There were responses that reinforced the opinion expressed in item #6 above regarding availability of information. Seven individuals asked for mechanisms that provided more information in response to the "additional services" question and three people listed lack of information in response to the "weaknesses" query. Space does not permit a more detailed reporting of the responses to the open-ended questions in this newsletter. Somewhat more detailed information is contained in the report prepared for the Academy of Management. I want to thank Ed Levitas of Texas A & M University for his assistance with analysis of the survey responses.

By way of closing I would like to state that I consider the report prepared for the Academy of Management as part of our five-year review to be the property of the members of the division. Accordingly, if anyone wants a copy of the ODC "Professional Division Review Report," please write or call and I will mail you a copy. I will not fax you a copy--it is 114 pages long. My address is on the ballot inserted in this newsletter. Please vote!

## **NEWS ABOUT MEMBERS**

Robert A. Zawacki, Ph.D., who took early retirement from the University of Colorado, has been appointed Emeritus Professor of Management and International Business. He has joined the firm KPMG Peat Marwick as Distinguished Scholar in Residence. He will continue to live in Colorado and operate out of their London and Dallas offices, where he is responsible for international research, consulting, and speaking.

## **BOOKS BY MEMBERS**

Alessandra, Tony & Hunsaker, Phil. (1994). *Communicating at Work*. Simon & Schuster.

Bate, S. Paul. (1994). *Strategies for Cultural Change*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Burke, W.W. (1994). *Organization Development: A Process of Learning and Changing*. Second Ed., Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley.

Coffey, Robert, Cook, Curtis & Hunsaker, Phillip. (1994). *Organizational Behavior and Management*. Austin Press.

Harrison, M. (1994). *Diagnosing Organizations: Methods, Models, and Processes*. 2nd Ed., Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Harshman, Carl L. & Phillips, Steven L. (1994). *Teaming Up: Achieving Organizational Transformation*. San Diego: Pfeiffer & Co.

## **A BAYESIAN APPROACH TO THE DEFINITION OF PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE IN FIELD SETTINGS**

*by Daniel J. Svyantek, Steven E. Ekeberg, Michael E. Marinis, & Roberto F. Figueroa*

Statistics may be used to describe a situation (statistical inference) or prescribe action in the context of situation (statistical decision-making) (1). Traditional approaches to statistics and research design have separated these two functions and have emphasized the former function (1). This has resulted in a dilemma faced in the evaluation of change in field settings. This dilemma is deciding whether statistically significant results are practically significant.

Woodman (8) sees the definition of meaning for evaluation in the field as two orthogonal dimensions of statistical and practical significance. These dimensions deal with the a) practical value of the research findings to the organizational client and b) statistical significance for the evaluator acting as scientist. Woodman proposes that four quadrants formed by these dimensions may be used in a decision theory approach to understanding statistical and practical significance in organizational change interventions. Interventions which have statistically significant effects on criteria and have practically meaningful changes in criteria are seen as true positives (TP). This quadrant represents the balancing of the inferential and decision-making aspects of statistics. Interventions which have statistically significant effects on criteria but lead to no practically meaningful changes in criteria are false positives (FP). Interventions which do not have statistically significant effects on criteria but have practically meaningful changes in criteria are false negatives (FN). Interventions which do not have statistically significant effects on criteria and do not lead to practically meaningful changes in criteria are true negatives (TN).

Woodman (8) called for the development of a research paradigm which combines the dimensions of statistical

significance (for evaluators) and practical value (for the organizational client) in a more systematic, comprehensive manner. Bayesian evaluation methods allow the combination of Woodman's two dimensions of statistical and practical significance.

The basic foundation of Bayesian statistics is the quantification of a prior probability (or distribution) for a phenomena being studied (3). The development of such priors, however, requires the use of context experts. Context experts, for the purposes of organizational evaluation, are the employees of the organization in which the intervention is being conducted (6, 7).

In the evaluation of organizational interventions, the prior serves as a baseline defining the expected results of an intervention within a particular organizational context (6, 7). A critical requirement for the use of a Bayesian statistical approach for organizational research and practice is that the active, collaborative input of organizational members be incorporated into the evaluation process. The Bayesian method allow members of an organization to define practical significance within the organization's context and then allows the evaluator to test for this significance statistically.

The utilization of context-specific success criteria is a powerful effect of the use of Bayesian statistics. Bayesian statistics allow the balancing of the practical needs of the individual(s) for whom an intervention is being conducted and the scientific needs of the individual conducting the evaluation of intervention outcomes.

The Bayesian approach allows the testing of statistical significance for different levels of practical significance. It has been shown that the use of the contextually defined level of practical significance may allow the Bayesian approach to find statistical significance when traditional statistics do not (7). In addition, the use of the Bayesian approach may mean that a statistically significant finding, arrived at through the use of traditional statistics, will be found to be non-significant in the context of the organizationally desired levels of change in the criterion (5).

Woodman (8) has described two perspectives on the statistical evaluation of organizational change. Each perspective is a legitimate manner for the use of information gathered during evaluation. The differences in perspective are, however, potential sources of conflict and confusion in the evaluation of change in the field. The Bayesian approach to evaluation provides the researcher with an alternative method of assessing the effects of

interventions in the field which allows the balancing of these two complementary goals. The Bayesian approach is more flexible than the traditional statistics. The Bayesian method allows the determination of statistical significance for defined levels of change which have practical value for the organization conducting the evaluation of an intervention.

The factors influencing the obtained values for traditional statistics (i.e., the t-test) are the mean differences between groups, the variances of the groups being evaluated and the sample size (4). Given the sample data, this obtained statistics showing a significant difference will always show a statistically significant difference. The use of the Bayesian approach, however, allows the needs of the client to be considered. For example, given the same sample data, criteria differences of up that are statistically significantly (using traditional statistics) may not be practically significant. Such results can be shown to be non-significant using Bayesian statistics (5).

The Bayesian approach to evaluation, therefore, adds a fourth factor to the calculation of the obtained statistic. This is the client's expectations for change. The client's defined minimum level of practical significance is tested statistically in the Bayesian approach. It is this factor which gives the Bayesian approach the flexibility to incorporate the goals of statistical inference and statistical decision-making into one statistic.

A principal value of Bayesian analysis, therefore, is its sensitivity to the client's goals for the conducting of the evaluation (2). This requires the use of context experts (e.g., managers) to define the practical level of change deemed to be significant. It is the incorporation of this context information which may change the results of the evaluations of organizational interventions found with traditional statistics. The Bayesian approach, therefore, is valuable anytime a statistical expert works in the service of a client whose goals are accepted as well-defined and legitimate (2).

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(This article is a summary of the "1993 Best Paper Award" for the ODC Division. Those interested in the application of Bayesian methods to OD may contact Dr. Daniel J. Swyantek, Psychology Department, University of Akron, Akron, OH 44325-4301)