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## **CHANGE & DEVELOPMENT JOURNEYS INTO PLURALISTIC WORLD: THE 1999 ODC PROGRAM IN CHICAGO**

*by A.B. (Rami) Shani*

The 20% increase in paper and symposia submissions over last year's, promises not only the largest program for our division in record, but a greater variety of learning opportunities. For this year's program, we have granted 26 papers that were grouped into seven paper sessions, 11 papers in shared interest track sessions, 5 papers in interactive papers sessions, 7 symposia that were chosen as an all academy show case symposia, 11 jointly sponsored symposia with other divisions, and 3 symposia sponsored singly by our division. In addition, we are co-sponsoring two "theme" sessions. Altogether we have an excellent program that has been selected by the division's large panel of volunteer reviewers. My apology to those of you who submitted many good papers and symposia that we could not include in the program due to time and space limitations. A major improvement this year to note is that most of our program will be held in the main conference hotel – The Hyatt Regency.

The conference theme -- Change and Development Journeys into Pluralistic World --served as a trigger to many exciting papers and symposia. The division is sponsoring three types of paper presentations: Regular paper sessions, Shared Interest Track paper sessions and, Interactive paper sessions. I have grouped 26 papers into seven regular paper sessions. Paper authors may have to stretch a bit to see the connection between the session

title and their own topic; yet, I hope that you will find the combination of papers interesting and thought provoking. Each paper session will have two discussants -- in most sessions **a North American and a Non-North American scholar** -- and a chair. The session chairs were encouraged to have a dialogue with the discussants and paper presenters in order to develop a creative session design. In addition, we have eleven papers that were grouped into nine different sessions within the all academy shared interest track and five papers that were grouped into two different sessions in the interactive session track. Two best paper awards will be given this year. The recipient of the Best Paper award is Paul Nutt from Ohio State University for the paper titled "The De-Development of Contemporary Organizations" and the best Practice-Related Paper Award titled "Creating Conversations for Change: Lessons from Learning History Projects" that was contributed by George Roth of MIT. The awards will be given during our business meeting, Tuesday 5:30-6:30PM.

Of the 21 symposia in our program, seven were chosen as All Academy Showcases: "Organization Development: Past, Present, and Future" (Ed Schein, Chair); "Making Sense of Change: Essential Stabilities in Breathless Journeys" (Ian Colville, Chair); "Joint Sensemaking and Sensegiving: The Reflective Practitioner and Practicing Academy" (Karen Ayas, Chair); "Information Technology and Organizational Change in Turbulent Environments: Exploring Emergent Technology designs for Sensemaking" (Ram Tenkasi, Chair); "Process of Institutional Change in Organizations" (David Sine and Pam Tolbert Co-Chairs); "Cross-Border Transfer of Management Knowledge for Large System Change" (Ken Murrell, Chair) and; "Approaches to Fostering Organizational Change in a Pluralistic World: Conversations with Authors" (Bob Quinn and Rupert Chisholm, Co-Chairs).

The division is sponsoring three symposia: "Revisiting the Role of Experiential and Case-Based Education in OD&C" (Varney, Glenn, Chair); "Lessons from Theater: Beyond Metaphor" (Steven Taylor, Chair), and; "Social Learning for Change and Development" (L. Dave Brown, Chair). An additional eleven symposia are co-sponsored with one or more divisions: "Change and Development in ODC: Journeys and Practice" (Dale Zand, Chair); "Project Based Learning: Using Reflective Practices to Enhanced Learning Outcomes" (Robert DeFillippi, Chair); "Emerging Trends in Doctoral Education: Educating Scholar-Practitioners for Change and Development in a Pluralistic World" (Kurt Motamedi and Peter Sorensen, Co-Chairs); "Management and Organization Development Across Borders: The Use of Technology Based Learning Processes by Multinational Companies" (Lichia Yiu, Chair); "Beyond Armchair Feminism III: Moving from Gender to a Broader Diversity Lens in Organizational Diagnosis and Intervention" (Robin Ely and Debra Meyerson, Co-Chairs); "Upward and Onward: Advances in Feedback Based

Interventions for Assessment and Change" (Allan Church and Michael Harris, Co-Chairs); "Organization Creativity: Developing Research Agenda" (Dick Woodman, Chair); "International Perspectives on the Knowledge-Action Nexus: Exploring some Cultural Models of Doing Research that Bridges Theory and Practice" (Ram Tenkasi, Chair); "Sweet Home Chicago: Using OD to Create Journeys of Hope and Transformation in the City" (Jim Ludema, Chair); "Euphonic Pedagogy: The Teaching of Music as a Metaphor for Organizational Effectiveness" (Dorothy Marcic and Judith Neal, Co-Chairs); "Re-Thinking the Way We Think About Change: The Role of Critical Thinking" (Steve Cady, Chair). Great titles, very talented panelists and presenters, and the content is even better.

This year we were given the possibility to include **a special "theme-session"** that will focus on the conference theme. We have collaborated with MED, GDO and HCA divisions and, as a result, are able to offer two special theme-sessions. The first "Changing Views and Viewing Change: Conversations on the Interplay between the Academy and the Media" features Tom Petzinger from the Wall Street Journal and three panelists Debra Ellen Meyerson (GDO), Jane Galloway Seiling (MED) and Bill Torbert (ODC). The session will be chaired by Ron Purser and explore the complex and dynamic interplay between journalists and academics, and their role in shaping contexts for change and development in a pluralistic world. The second special theme-session "Change and Development in Health Care: A Multi-level, Multi-Stakeholder Analysis" (co-sponsored with HCA) features current research in the health care sectors in four countries that centers on the complexity of the change process.

Our invited **Keynote Speaker** this year is Dr. Rajesh Tandom. Rajesh is an internationally acclaimed leader and practitioner of participatory research and development. He is the founder and director of the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), an organization that has pioneered Participatory Action Research, training of trainers, and organization development consulting in the service of social change in India and, more recently, all over Asia. Among many other leadership roles, he has been the Chairman of the Asia-Pacific Bureau for Adult Education and Vice-president of the International Council for Adult Education; both international networks are committed to development work with the poor in the development countries. Dr. Tandom has contributed to the evolution of new thinking and methodologies in people centered development through his research, practice and writings. The topic for the session that will be held on Tuesday, August 10th, 3:40-5:10PM is "Future Organization Development and Social Change". This session is followed by our **Business Meeting** and our well known **Social Hour**. If you have not been to one, this is the time to join us and become an OD&C insider.

Our progression as an Academy towards a connected network via information technology will permit us to have the final Chicago 1999 program schedule in May on the Chicago 1999' Conference web page at <http://aom.pace.edu/meetings/1999>.

Last but not least, many heartfelt thanks to the 83 reviewers for the 1999 Annual Meeting. Your timely help is greatly appreciated. We could have not done it without you. Thanks to Terry Armstrong, Gayle Baugh, Ella Bell, Eli Berniker, David Boje, Wayne Boss, Hillery Bradbury, Rick Brown, Steve Cabana, Rup Chisholm, Allan Church, Susan Cohen, Ken Colwell, Roger Conway, Marcy Crary, Tom Cummings, Evelyn Dravecky, Venessa Druskat, Amy Edmondson, Max Eldon, Rebecca Ellis, Robin Ely, Gerard Farias, Jeffrey Ford, Victor Friedman, Kay Glasgow, Allen Glassman, Bob Golembiewski, Guerre Don de, Arie Halachmi, Mary Ann Hazen, Huy Quy, Anders Ingelgard, Dennis Jaffe, Karen Jansen, Richard Jenner, Johnson Homer, Marty Kaplan, Harvey Kolodny, Karl Kuhnert, Laurie Larwood, Mark Levine, Paul Lillrank, Raanan Lipshitz, Jan Lowstedt, Jim Ludema, Craig Lundberg, Newt Margulis, Alfonso Montouri, Kurt Motamedi, Ken Murrell, Eric Neilson, Bill Pasmore, Asya Pazy, David Peach, Joanne Preston, Ron Purser, Peter Robertson, Grace Ann Rosile, Marshall Sashkin, Ed Schein, Jim Sena, Linda Sharkey, Caren Siehl, Ron Sims, Peter Sorensen Jr., Bengt Stymne, Ram Tankasi, Kit Tennis, Torbjorn Stjernberg, Jeff Trailer, Glenn Varney, Frances Viggiani, Ken Weidner, Andreas Werr, Karen Whelan, Candis Williams, Wong Yim Yu, Dick Woodman, Chris Worely, Theresa Yaeger, Youssef Samir and, Dale Zand. See you in Chicago!

## **NEXT CENTURY ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT: BUILDING ON A FOUNDATION OF SPIRIT, COMMUNITY, WORK, WISDOM AND TRANSFORMATION**

*by Kenneth L. Murrell*

Now is a point of time when the ODC division has a chance to look back over its nearly three decades of existence and to think carefully about the role it plays in the world and in the greater academic community it is a part of. The following is an appeal to take this moment of history as a special opportunity to build from a set of assumptions about how to organize our worlds of work that more closely align with the times we are now living in. For the past several years I have been focusing my efforts to better understand and write about what I am convinced could help lay the foundation for the rebirth of our field of Organization Development and Change. The five foundation points, as listed in the title above, are what for an extreme intuitive like myself are called a focus. As a product of both a general systems perspective in my education and a love of interdisciplinary studies it has never been easy for me to focus on

only the smallest parts of anything. I have always kept scanning the horizon to identify the larger picture and have continuously tried to reach out and personally engage the broader world. For me, this is my work; and in writing this I am meeting my responsibility to share what I have learned. Hopefully, there will be something of value for you as I try to share from the learning I have been blessed with in working around the world with numerous large and small systems ranging from Fortune 500 companies to many small villages in Africa and Asia where my faith in humanity was always restored.

This widely diverse learning has made my OD career a most enjoyable one. Five years ago when I was elected to serve on this board I was hopeful that I might be able to add some value to a most impressive record of accomplishments of the many great ODC board members of the last 30 years. All of my predecessors had considerable talents and years of dedication to the field of OD. Each one brought a special uniqueness to his and her role on the board. I wanted in some small way to continue the efforts of Professors Richard Woodman, Gerry Ledford, Bill Torbert, Caren Siehl and David Cooperrider as the last five division chairs and to help carry forward the traditions of ODC within the Academy. Now that I am beginning to see the end of my role on this board I would like to leave behind some of my thinking about where I see our world moving and how we as a discipline and a profession can help our widely diverse clients and students use the skills and knowledge of our discipline.

Let me speak first of a few major changes in our field in my lifetime. This perspective has a special significance since I was born at the end of World War II; my life span nearly matches the life of the field of OD and institutions like the UN and the whole set of global movements that have helped us avoid the World War III that everyone so dreaded back in the 1940's. This field of change was literally created in the aftermath of a horrible war. That experience gave our field such an important impetus for being formed and also set a tone of social justice and action as foundation points. In these last 50 years, our field has on numerous occasions been forced by the times to reinvent itself. Unfortunately, during at least the last two reformations of OD we have lost some of our heritage of social justice and also the dedication to personal growth that the t-group movement spurred. Without being too critical it appears we have easily slipped into the role of corporate apologist and restructuring expert competing with the re-engineering gurus to see who can help form a richer bottom line in the shortest amount of time.

Having been in a prior life an internal corporate OD person I can easily understand many of these changes; occasionally I have supported them. However, as the times now so readily indicate, the field of OD has an

opportunity to make a place for itself by extending its core values and traditions and moving to where a clear vacuum exists. We are doing our work best when it is the work coming from the traditions of a field that has achieved considerable success in responding to social problems. When we respond to these larger issues, not as the expert or social engineer but in the role of co-inquirer and facilitator, we have been helping to mobilize the forces in the organization that value the growth of the whole person. This spirit of liberation from the tyranny of human systems that mistreats or dehumanizes people while failing to utilize their many talents was the ethic that this field was founded on so many years ago. As a field we have allowed ourselves too often to forget what that first generation of OD professionals was standing both for and against. Half a century ago there was clearly a call for this field to exist.

Today, fifty years later, the OD field stands ready to rediscover itself and to again find the passion to help it serve another half century. To do this, it must be able to grow with a dedication to learning and scholarship. This is what our division can best offer. The next reform movement will hopefully come from a flowering of the intelligence that formed a field that was overt in its call for social justice. It will be based in the evolution of the human mind and spirit that calls for organizations that could only be dreamed about a few short years ago. In short, the field of OD can reclaim its soul as a field of social and cultural change. To do this it need no longer worship only the short term economic returns but address itself to the serious challenges of the integration of both concerns for human rights and the needs for sustainable high performance.

I feel the times are demanding these factors again play a major role in the creation and development of our profession. The first two of my proposed foundation points for the reform of OD are represented in the social forces calling for spirit and community in work that are sweeping the world. These public yearnings, heard from nearly everywhere, are calling for significant changes that clearly would help in returning OD to the role it has always represented with its core values. Spirit and community are the two terms that are showing up at such a rapid pace that nearly every management and organization writer has dedicated a title if not a subtitle to the importance of these new areas. What do they mean? At this point they both represent a call for thinking of organizations in dramatically different ways than we have traditionally. Spirit as it is being expressed is not about a new religion but about the kind of work and structure of relationships that create an aliveness and other special qualities of whole life and energy brought out of our work. Spirit here is about the full breadth of life so often lacking in many organizations. It is more than an earlier lack of alienation. It is the presence of a shared vision and a heartfelt commitment to something bigger than oneself.

The second major groundswell of attention is focused on viewing organizations as community and avoiding much of the negative relationships and language that the term organization has created over the years. Beyond the possibility of a language change that can help us create new forms for thinking about organizational existence, the real meaning in this movement is that people want more in their lives than simply a place they go to work. There is a call for something beyond labor and at the same time an expressed desire for creating a way of working together to produce work relationships that seem to matter. People seem to be asking for so much more in their assumptions about how they should be together. Again in this very public yearning there is much that our field has to offer. Some of the more radical responses to this are included in the thought that maybe we should legitimize the role of organizations to help create the kind of culture we most value by creating the intentional communities we truly do want to live and work in.

In both areas we have a large number of writers and scholars pushing the field and asking the important questions that we in the OD discipline will need to respond to and get more deeply engaged in. As the work spirit literature has exploded, the works of Lee Bolman, Matthew Fox, Jack Hawley, Diana Whitney, Jay Conger and the early identification of the role of spirit and values in executive development by Peter Vaill, represent only the tip of a very large and growing iceberg. Judy Neal has on her web site spiritworks a listing of people and publications in this new area. It is impressive that so many of our ODC members have become extremely active in trying to help students and clients determine what is helpful in this attention to the issues of spirit in organizations. For a focus on community the work of the renowned sociologist Amitai Etzioni is clearly some of the most important literature to look into. Kaz Godz and John Nirenberg both have relatively new books out that try to structure the concern for work organizations as community. There are also the writings of Scott Peck and the recent work of Charles Handy who is calling for us to think about work organizations not only as more like communities but as "citizen companies" that play a much larger and more involved role in helping create the cultures we desire to live in.

The third and most central concept in the five new foundations of OD is simply labeled "work," and it is offered as a call for a major redefinition of the concept of labor or work in a world that has so significantly changed in the last few decades. The new reality of work is not what has been predicted for so many years. As Jeremy Rifkin argues so well, we have lost both the dreams and the extended leisure opportunity that the technological revolution had always promised us. For decades we were told to expect decreasing hours of labor to meet our economic needs; this is not

happening, argue Rifkin and others. We have increasingly become a nation of workaholic life styles and families built around the economic dependencies of not one but several incomes. To then redefine work and the economic role it plays in our life again is something the field of OD can help with. Work is our central focus, and the position that we take on it best expresses our values as a field. If work is to be redefined, then the opportunity for us to make a difference in that process is a most important one. We can offer our understanding of the nature of work life well beyond the economic definition as we develop our own understanding of work in a rapidly changing world. Again, as a field, we can offer insight and awareness not to be found in any other discipline. With our history, as a field grounded in larger issues of social justice, we are responsible to offer help in redefining work in a way that promotes our humanity.

Wisdom is the fourth foundation point of a new field of OD, and in this one area in particular we have been given the greatest challenge in building a field for the next century. Wisdom here is used to reflect the thousands of years of human history and the development of knowledge at the level it can be applied to learn how to live and work better with others. The wisdom of the ages and of the sages is what we have an opportunity to build into our field. Though we are sadly (as is so much of our academic culture in the business schools) a-historical, the responsibility we have in reforming our field is such that we must be able to learn from the past and the work of greater minds than our own. This is a dedication to learning that is built from an appreciation of not only what has come before us but also to what is so much broader than our own limited understanding of how the world works. We are obligated to go beyond our narrow and too often parochial intellectual views and see the whole world for what it offers us in understanding change and the nature of organizational life. This search for wisdom is the call for our own continual development as a field. This search should help us avoid creating a crazy quilt pattern that emerges as we try to follow every fad or jump on every new "soon to be copyrighted" idea that has no identifiable history. Wisdom asks us to look back to earlier generations and to also look globally to those things that truly do matter.

Finally, the foundation for a future century of OD is firmly planted in understanding the nature of transformational change and the reasons it is so different from the evolutionary and gradual change models we have always worked with. Change in this mode is calling us to significantly rethink the nature of change. The work of Torbert and his students at Boston College are most important in helping us understand much of these differences. Also the OT or Organization Transformation group that meets yearly around the country and uses the "open space model" to structure its learning community is important to look to in order to help discover the theory of this transformational



field in practice. In questioning our assumptions of how change occurs we are moving well beyond the freezing and unfreezing models of the past and into areas where transpersonal and other forms of new thinking play an important role. Not everyone can relate to these concepts in a scholarly form, but the idea of a new and fresh perspective need not be anti-intellectual. If we form it that way, we will spend needless hours protecting our past positions while the gift of discovery awaits us.

Any one of these new foundations for OD would keep a number of us busy for decades. When they all are integrated together many might ask if it is really possible to know enough about them to develop better theory or practice. My answer is absolutely, and to understand that, try to think about an organizational change process in the next century where any one of the five foundational components are not taken into consideration. The risk in doing OD in the future without a better grounding in these foundation points is severe. The world has changed enough that it is time to question and reexamine the core assumptions our field is based on. Not the core values of the field but the assumptions of how the organization world is and can be are the questions most in need of attention. Our value base is secure but our thoughts about what is possible are often locked into the realities of the last century.

Clearly in the next century the purpose of work organizations will continue to be greatly debated and the ideologues of many persuasions will try to offer their particular bottom line as the one most sacrosanct. For the past few decades the financial return argument has prevailed primarily because we have been living in a world of immense perceived economic need. As that perceived need continues to shift to broader and less material forms the arguments will be made and supported that the organization of work is not just important as it concerns the nature of the products and services produced, but that the organization as a process creates the culture we live in. This is obvious to anyone who can look around and see the culture we have created and the very strong role that organizational life and its many assumptions of how we should live have impacted it. If in the next century we were able to choose to pay more attention to how organizations shape the people who form our culture, we would be in a far stronger position to argue for the bottom line of organizations that take into special consideration what they are producing in terms of a world that we all live in. Organizations produce people, and the values they carry back to their homes then produce even more of the next generation's thoughts and values. Our culture is highly contingent upon our organization and institutional forms and values. In this way, our role is very crucial, assuming we can grow into it. I do assume that with past evidence available to support that faith.

The next trend is that of the need and beginning capability for self organizing systems. My own preference for a term in this regard is Bill Torbert's liberating structures, and the work in this area is just beginning. This line of research and writing is offering us in OD the richest and deepest opportunity to develop our field for the future. When organizations are seen for the full power that they have in creating the worlds we live in, then that importance in creating our ways of life based on how we self organize will reach a conscious level of consideration. When that occurs, just as the dream of democratic government structures did over 200 years ago, people will begin to see why self organizing and in particular organizing for human needs will be such an important area of discovery. Liberating structures that are set up to continuously develop will help take advantage of the needs and goals of people who seek to be masters over their own destiny while at the same time working effectively with others. In many ways this will further help establish the principle that people really have the capacity to grow up and assume responsibility for their collective destinies and to make choices that transcend the narrow economic decisions of the past. This is simply the continuation of the liberation of the human spirit in both form and structure. Governance in this form is what democratic principles call for but in formation of organizational structure the assumption has most often been made that people are incapable of organizing themselves effectively. With the age of the knowledge worker and with the long hoped for information revolution finally here, the field of OD will have to endure some rather dramatic changes itself in order to help further the human revolution that was started over 300 years ago.

All in all, the most interesting of times are still in front of us, and the field we are all a part of will be able to rise to the occasion. To do that well I am strongly suggesting we re-examine our foundations as a field and look forward to better understanding the nature of the world we are creating. With the incredible changes that are predicted in the next few decades, it is clear that the OD assumptions of the past need to be challenged and a set of new foundation concepts be put forward for discussion. I care rather less if these are the perfect five concepts as much as I care that this thinking about the future create dialogue and discovery of what will help our field move into the future. I also have faith in our OD core values and am convinced they are compatible with the changes these new foundation assumptions would bring about. In all of this the greatest hope is that we can learn how to structure and organize ourselves better to get the organizational performances we are still in need of. In this regard, as we help to create better organizations, I believe we will also be able to help create better cultures that will assist us in building the world we want to leave behind for future generations.

\*For sake of space a full bibliography is not included but is available via email to [kmurrell@uwf.edu](mailto:kmurrell@uwf.edu). Each reference

made in the text is to encourage an extensive reading of the authors listed. This work on the five foundation concepts is currently being developed as part of a manuscript for a new OD series of books and also an upcoming OD Journal article. Any and almost all reactions to these ideas expressed would be most helpful.

## **NEW POSITIONS ADDED TO ODC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Due to the expanding needs of the ODC Division, the Executive Committee created two new staff positions: Webmaster and Special Projects Coordinator. The ODC appointed Eric Goodman (Fort Hayes State University) as the new Webmaster. His responsibilities include the ongoing development of and updates to the ODC WEB page, coordinating use of the ODC WEB page for ODC projects and/or special events, and overseeing ODC WEB page e-mail queries and suggestions.

The Executive Committee also appointed Karen S. Whelan (Samford University) as the ODC Special Projects Coordinator. She will support the ODC Board in completing routine and special projects, work to find volunteers to work on projects requiring time and resources beyond the resources of ODC Board, and support ongoing ODC reporting to its membership and to the Academy.

## **1999 OB/OD/ODC DOCTORAL CONSORTIUM**

Following on the success of last year's event, ODC is again co-sponsoring the OB/OD/OMT Doctoral Consortium as part of the pre-conference program at the 1999 Academy of Management Meetings in Chicago. Scheduled for August 6-8, the Consortium begins with dinner Friday evening and closes at noon on Sunday. We have planned an interesting and energetic mix of seminars, discussions, and interactive sessions that are designed to launch doctoral students on their academic careers. This year's consortium is being organized by Carrie Leana (OB), Caren Siehl (ODC), Pam Haunschild (OMT) and Kim Elsbach (OMT).

We encourage schools to nominate students for the Consortium. Because of the need to keep the faculty-participant ratio to an optimal size, the number of participants is limited. This has been a very popular program, so apply early! The deadline for receipt of nominations is May 17, 1999.

To apply, interested students must be nominated by their schools. No university can nominate more than two

students (and each doctoral program is limited to one nomination). Universities with multiple departments seeking to send students need to coordinate their nominations

In making the decision to accept students, preference is given to those who have made the most progress toward completing their Ph.D. program. The Consortium is not open to those who have already completed their Ph.D. degree, as it is designed for students. New faculty will find the Junior Faculty Workshop appropriate for their interests (see the article on the Junior Faculty Consortium in this newsletter).

Applications should be sent by the university department that nominates the student and should include: (1) nominee's name, address, email address, phone and fax numbers, and name of affiliated school and university; (2) statement by department certifying nominee's completion of doctoral coursework and comprehensive exams by August 1, 1999; and (3) letter from a faculty member providing a general appraisal of the nominee, including an assessment of his/her progress toward a dissertation defense, expected defense date and subject of dissertation. The application should also include: (4) a one-page description of the dissertation (topic and method) prepared by the nominee and (5) the nominee's curriculum vita.

Please send nominations and supporting materials by June 9, 1999 to the following:

Pamela R. Haunschild, Graduate School of Business, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305-5015 Phone: (650)723-1527 Fax: (650)725-7979 Haunschild\_Pamela@gsb.stanford.edu

## **ODC DIVISION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS**

*by Ron Purser*

This year the ODC Division is lead sponsor of four professional development workshops (pre-conference events), and co-sponsor of nine additional workshops with other divisions. Things get underway on Friday afternoon, with a tour bus heading to McDonald's University (a.k.a. "Hamburger U."), with our colleagues from Benedictine University--Therese Yaeger, Judi Strauss, Sally Benson, Cheryl Richardson, and Kathryn Farley-Agee--leading the way. Rafik Mankarious, the Dean of Hamburger U. will be hosting the presentation. Pre-registration is required, contact: Liz Hill at 630-829-6208.

On Friday afternoon, and all day on Saturday, Peter Senge, Richard Karah, and Karen Ayas have organized a session, "Organizational Learning as a Developmental Journey" based on the innovative work they have been doing at MIT's Society for Organizational Learning. Vic Leo from the Ford Motor Company, and Lynn Elsenhans from Shell Chemicals, will be presenting their work on learning histories. George Roth and John Carroll will serve as discussants. Pre-registration for this session is required. Contact, Angela Lipinsky at (617) 491-0262.

On Saturday, Alfonso Montuori is facilitating a session on "Complexity, Evolutionary Theory and Organizations," which will feature presenters who are both coming over from Italy to share how these ideas are being taken seriously in European circles. Telmo Pievani, is from University of Bergamo, and Gianluca Bocchi, is from Milan Polytechnic.

On Sunday morning, Peter Sorensen and Therese Yaeger from Benedictine University have organized the first annual "Consortium for Alternative Doctoral Programs in Executive Management and Organization Development." This session will convene faculty and students from non-traditional and alternative doctoral programs that have an interest in developing a forum for sharing ideas on research, program development, publication, and educational innovations at the doctoral level. Institutions and their representatives include, from Pepperdine--Kurt Motamedi and Joanne Preston; from Case Western Reserve--Richard Boland and John Aram; from Saybrook Graduate School and Research Center--Maureen O'hara; from Fielding Institute--Frank Friedlander; and from Copenhagen Business School--Henrik Larsen.

In addition to the above, ODC is co-sponsoring the following Saturday sessions: "Business and Sustainable Development: A Dialogue with Environmental Executives from McDonalds, Monsanto, BP-Amoco, Deere, and IGA," "Career Identities in Academia," "Understanding, Designing and Implementing Spirituality in Management Courses and Practice," "SME Development Programs in Economically Depressed Regions," "Spirituality at Work," "The Power of Music," "Educating and Developing Leaders for Environmental Change and Transformation: The Role of Business School Programs," and "Business Volunteering Connections."

## **ODC LAUNCHES DIVISIONAL WEBSITE**

*by Eric A. Goodman*

Recently, as one of the ways of expanding the value of the ODC Division to you we undertook an initiative to create a divisional website. I am excited about having the opportunity to assist our division in this effort. We have some ideas to make the site useful and interesting. However, in order to establish an informative and useful website, we need your help. If you've got some ideas regarding features and services that we ought to build into our website, then please let us know.

The website located at <http://division.aonline.org/odc/> is just getting underway and currently provides information about our division, activities, links to resources and other useful information. I am in the process of creating a newsletter archive that will date back to 1982 so that we may share this unique resource with the world. We will also have the current ODC Newsletter available on the website. In addition, we would like to begin an archive of teaching resources. So, if you are willing to share relevant syllabi or materials please write me at: <mailto:bueg@fhsu.edu> I hope that you will check out the website in the near future to see it for yourselves. I think that you'll find it to be a useful addition to our division.

With your help, we can shape a website that reflects the energy and array of ideas present in our division. Your contributions will ultimately help determine its success and usefulness. So, help us create an outstanding website for our division by sending your ideas and materials. I look forward to hearing from you!

## **CROSSING THEORY AND PRACTICE BOUNDARIES TO CREATE NEW KNOWLEDGE**

*by George L. Roth*

1998 Best Paper Related to Practice Award

What matters most to organizational scholars and management practitioners is generally seen as being very different. Yet, there is a common interest around knowledge of effective organizational practice, that is, if the use of the term knowledge is inclusive of more than academic theory. Management knowledge has to be relevant to a business and its goals. For example, sustaining business results in organizations requires not only an ability to achieve expected outcomes, but an understanding of why those results were achieved, how to again achieve them, and how to transfer that understanding beyond the setting in which it was developed. Academic theory is most often a form of conceptual knowledge - a "know-why" that provides a more abstract basis for describing, predicting and

replicating behaviors and their outcomes. This knowledge is often distinct from action, concept of knowledge that holds understanding as separate from performing. However, in order to claim understanding, particularly in business settings, would not a claim of "knowledge" require demonstrating expected outcomes?

The connections between understanding and performing can be subsumed by a definition of knowledge which has both conceptual and actionable components (Kim, 1993). The actionable knowledge, sometimes referred to as "tacit" knowledge, is know-how for effective action; meaning that there is an ability to produce actions that are effective in attaining desired outcomes. Conceptual knowledge allows people to talk about, but not necessarily apply, in their action. A formulation of knowledge that is relevant in business settings also needs to include the ability to transfer understanding (consider, for example, the old adage, "you don't *know* something until you can teach it"). An explicit consideration for the transfer of knowledge is itself a characteristic of knowledge. Without being able to communicate understanding in such a way so that it can be exercised effectively by others, the value of any claim of knowledge is limited. For example, a tool or a method is a type of transferable knowledge that guides action while embodying conceptual understanding.

In business settings, the final arbiter of claims for knowledge is an ability to produce results. Business results, whether in the form of financial, product or service measures, are evidence of accomplishments and important indicators of an organization's capability when they are repeatedly produced. While many factors, inside and outside an organization, influence its abilities to achieve results, claims of relevance for knowledge must be able to point to desired outcomes.

Knowledge that is relevant in business settings is inherently multidimensional, including elements of theory (know-why), practice (know-how), transfer (tools and methods) and results (evidence of efficacy). This paper reports on a group whose efforts resulted in knowledge with all these dimensions. As the examination of their effort show, creating this type of knowledge requires a group of diverse constituents and continual attention to balancing their different priorities and perspectives.

What settings create knowledge?

The function of research institutions, like universities, includes conducting the basic research that results in theory.

The function of business practice in creating economic value, and to do so repeatedly and reliably, implies operational knowledge development. Activities that combine research and practice are opportunities to examine the process by which conceptual knowledge might be converted to operational knowledge and vice versa. One approach to understanding knowledge creation is to study situations where this is a goal.

The data upon which this paper is draws from a larger "learning history" effort to capture, document, reflect and transfer learning and change across organizations (Roth and Kleiner, 1998; Kleiner and Roth, 1997). The learning history involved participation, observation and interviews of a project involving researchers, consultants and managers. In-depth taped interviews (twenty-six in total) ranging from forty-five minutes to two hours were held with participants in the project before the project started, during project activities, and shortly after it was officially declared completed. Transcribed interviews, notes from project, archival materials, written communication (including electronic mail), formal presentations and feedback from using the learning history (Kruschwitz and Roth, 1998) are the data upon which this paper is based.

## The 21st Century Special Project

Since its inception, researchers at the MIT Sloan School of Management initiative on "Inventing the Organizations of the 21st Century" have collaborated with managers and consultants from sponsoring organizations. Process Consulting Company (PCC) initiated the particular project described in this paper (the names of individuals and companies have been disguised to provide them with anonymity and confidentiality; given the public nature of the published work on the Process Handbook, the MIT center is identified). PCC's sponsorship, previously a traditional research relationship providing funding, attending meetings, receiving reports and attending workshops, expanded as they became part of the "special project." The project involved researchers working collaboratively with PCC consultants to apply ideas (the Process Handbook) developed in an academic research.

The Process Handbook (PH) project (Malone, et. al., 1993, 1997) uses the ideas of coordination theory (Malone and Crowston, 1994) to describe and improve business processes in organizations. The PH research project studies how to help organizations redesign their existing processes, to "invent" new organizational processes, often in new ways made possible by information technology. The idea of testing the PH concepts by applying them in a real redesign effort was attractive to researchers as a proof-of-concept. The idea of using the PH to re-engineer a



business process was the kind of research that interested PCC. For this project PCC found a company, Financial Services Corporation (FinServ), with whom they would work to test the PH. Although FinServ was not a current client of PCC, several former PCC consultants were FinServ managers.

The lead PCC consultant was familiar with the PH concepts and approach, having spent six weeks at the recent "summer camp" session organized by researchers. PCC's business involved consulting to clients in redesigning and implementing changes in their organizations, with a strong focus on re-engineering business processes. The opportunity that PCC foresaw in the project was to learn more about the PH as a methodology that could be used in their consulting activities.

### The "Hire to Retire" Process

The efforts at FinServ to re-engineer "hire to retire" process had been underway for several months before this project began. Hire to retire included requisitioning and filling positions, establishing their employee records on personnel systems, and maintaining those records through to their departure. FinServ's financial services business enjoyed long periods of sustained growth, requiring a steady focus on recruiting and hiring skilled personnel. Over time various FinServ divisions had developed their own hiring processes, and operated autonomously, and even competitively, with one another. A recent benchmarking had found that FinServ's hiring costs exceeded those of its competitors by almost a factor of three.

The people from FinServ's IS group and the available people from human resources were insufficient to complete the documentation of the existing hire to retire process. FinServ engaged PCC, with assurances from PCC that the research would not inhibit their operational efforts, to provide help them with the re-engineering effort. Other PCC consultants worked on this consulting contract in addition to the lead PCC consultant working with MIT.

### Project Meetings

After several months of discussions the project was formally kicked off with an all day meeting that included participants from the three organizations. The project team included three MIT researchers, two PCC consultants (the senior consultant who had attended the PH summer camp and another consultant managing the relationship

with FinServ) and two FinServ managers (Information Systems manager for the redesign effort and a manager from human resources). The special project was carried out through meetings between the researchers, consultants and managers. The emphasis of the meetings, and who attended, shifted over time. It moved from an initial phase of generating insights, to a second phase of considering theory and approaching FinServ's process more broadly, and a third phase of reflecting on, preparing and presenting the project's accomplishments. Examining each of these phases illustrates the varying roles of researchers, consultants and managers in a knowledge creation process.

## Generating Insights Phase

The project meetings were free ranging discussions where the "hire to retire" process elements were discussed. The meetings lasted between several hours and a half-day. As these meetings were going on, the characterization of the "as is" hire to retire process was completed with the help of the other PCC consultants. The PH was used to help determine the fit and effectiveness of alternative coordination mechanisms. For example, in selecting different ways to hire a candidate, coordination using the Internet, search firms, and self-identification were evaluated in terms of the speed, breath of access, cost and quality of candidates.

The free-wheeling discussion of existing processes, and MIT researchers' translation of them into PH entries, subsequent search of alternative ways to coordinate these activities, and detailed examination of novel ways to manage generic functions, characterized what happened in project team meetings. The MIT students who attended took notes, in particular "bagging insights" when alternative coordination approaches were declared to be "interesting." The lists of insights that was generated was the basis for alternative process designs.

These meetings were interesting and stimulating to all participants. After four meetings the team has a list of forty-one insights. The senior researcher told the lead PCC consultant that they could stop now, they had accomplished what they had set out to do, and proven the PH to be useful. PCC was indeed able to more effectively help FinServ, and the PH had been valuable to their consulting. The idea that the special project was completed created a crisis for the PCC consultant. She expected the project to continue longer, and wanted to apply the PH to additional elements of hire to retire, going beyond a list of useful insights to learning how to use the PH to derive those insights.

## Educating-on-Theory Phase

The meetings that followed had a different character. Researchers considered the consultants' and managers' request as one that required more depth of understanding for the PH and coordination theory. One of the researchers carefully described what the thinking behind generating process alternatives.

The PH is based on a structured approach to process design. The structured approach is based on two key concepts for representing processes - specialization and dependencies. These two notions provide dimensions for representing, analyzing and designing processes. Knowing how to rapidly reduce possible process alternatives to those that are relevant was something that the researchers, who were very familiar with coordination theory, did almost automatically. To the managers and consultants, however, how to make these choices was sometimes a mystery. The researchers explaining theories of specialization, dependencies and coordination, and their application in process design settings, was at times too theoretical and abstract for consultants and managers. These discussions resulted in increasing tension among the researchers, consultants and managers.

During this phase of meetings the number of insights decreased (only eight were documented). One of the FinServ managers had stopped attending meetings, in part because of other time pressures, but also because discussions were "far afield." The lead PCC consultant used the analogy of playing chess to articulate the frustration she experienced. Working with them was like observing "chess masters" — they were able to bring their theoretical understanding into practice by describing in detail a complete range of alternative process designs. The managers and consultants, however, were more interested in what kinds of "moves" they could make, and not getting lost in the theory of what was to them "millions" of alternatives. They wanted to play chess, and not just be apprentices to the masters. The chess master analogy helped "clear the air" so that the team could move forward to its next stage of work

### Preparing and Presenting What-We-Learned Phase

The special project had been underway for over two months, longer than originally anticipated. The lead PCC consultant had to prepare a presentation on the project. It was not clear, at the time, what had been accomplished beyond a list of insights. The consultant had her "neck on the line." She felt a pressure to present something exceptional to PCC partners and FinServ, something significant enough to justify her time and PCC's funding. While researchers believed that it was important to have examples and clear ways to present the PH concepts, the urgency

for the consultant to do so was much greater.

As the consultant reviewed how the team, particularly the MIT researchers, created insights for "hire to retire," she began to better understand what was their implicit approach. The researchers navigated through process designs to propose alternative coordination mechanisms. Through thinking about how the team had used the PH several "dimensions" were evident. One dimension was the level of detail, with different levels of detail being possible by combining or separating activities and subactivities. This dimension, common in re-engineering approaches (often called "functional decomposition"), breaks down activities into their elements and carefully analyzes them. Another dimension was examining processes by whether they were specializations of something more generic. This generalize-specialize dimension examined the structure of a process. These two dimensions, *combine—separate* and *generalize—specialize*, were axes on what was called a "process compass." The process compass was a tool to navigate in the PH and in the redesign of business in general. The generalize-specialize dimension implied innovation, while the combine-separate implied detail. The PH, as the process compass helped to explain, provided an alternative approach to business process redesign.

The process compass was an important concept in presenting accomplishments to FinServ and PCC. The lead consultant made a final presentation to FinServ, suggesting changes their hire to retire. FinServ's managers, the IS and HR manager and their respective bosses, were impressed by the ideas that emerged and the clarity of alternative designs. The process compass helped the lead consultant explain what was learned from the special project at MIT, and the applicability of this approach to PCC's consulting. The PCC partners who funded the MIT project valued these insights and their implications for consulting. Researchers at MIT, however, who understood coordination theory and the PH concepts, were initially unimpressed by the project. To them the process compass was a way to explain what they already knew, they had just never expressed it that way before. Their enthusiasm increased, however, as they saw consultants and managers positive reactions. Subsequently, the process compass has become central to researchers' presentation and use of coordination theory and the PH.

## Discussion

Three key characteristics that Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) found necessary for knowledge creation include 1) the use of metaphor and analogy, 2) moving new knowledge from individuals to an organization, and 3) maintaining

conditions of ambiguity and redundancy. While these characteristics refer to organizational conditions, they are also evident in the project team described in this paper. The challenges that members of the project team encountered in understanding one another came, in part, because of their different perspectives and motivations for participating in the project. They had to create shared concepts upon which to build common understanding. Their development of a shared meaning was facilitated by the use of analogies such as the process compass. New meaning was co-created, with everyone contributing to the understanding that they shaped together.

The priorities of researchers in creating theory, consultants in creating frameworks and methods, and managers in achieving results, were part of the varying motivations and expectations held by team members from the projects' onset. All three categories of individuals needed to find ways of satisfying their own goals in ways that would be recognized as successful by other members of their institutions. Inherent in this project was the need to demonstrate results and articulate concepts so that others could replicate them. In order to accomplish desired outcomes, people needed each other, and needed to work together effectively as a team.

The different goals could not be accomplished without there having been an opportunity for mutual influence. The "special project" was undertaken because no individual or company achieve what they wanted on their own, and everyone wanted to learn from one another. People engaged in an "experiment," in testing new concepts, and, as team members often noted, "making it up as they went." Over the course of the project leadership shifted as different individuals set directions so as to ensure their particular goals were met, and each person did so with a sense of mutual respect for other team members.

The shifting leadership was possible because there was enough time and resources for the team members to learn together. The project involved more people and more of their time than what would have been needed if they were to have just redesigned FinServ's hire to retire process. The additional people and slack time provided the opportunity for people to systematically reflect on their activities.

In studying this project, I could see that there were many difficult elements for each of the individuals who put considerable time and effort into it. Their effort and commitment came at a personal cost, drawing upon the currency of their credibility and good reputation within their respective home institutions. Everyone became committed to a successful project outcome for all involved. The mutual respect and commitment that was evident over the course of

the project developed from a basis in prior relationships. The FinServ manager who provided support for the research was a former colleague of the PCC consultant, having left PCC to become manager at FinServ. The PCC consultant had spent six weeks in the prior summer working with MIT researchers. She was part of a "summer camp" program that taught new researchers and interested company sponsors about the PH while having them work in teams to collect data for it. The FinServ managers were familiar with the MIT research, having read articles on it as part of their own education. These prior relationships were the basis upon which the trust, mutual respect and effective team behaviors necessary for the carrying out the project were built.

A project involving researchers, consultants and managers might easily be seen as an eclectic activity with little relevance outside the university community. Judging the importance of this kind of a project requires thinking about the critical issues that will face managers and organizations in the future. Business conditions in the 21st Century will require organizations to place an increased emphasis on their own knowledge creating activities in adding unique value to their products and services. The ability to develop reliable approaches to effectively balance today's performance with the development of capabilities needed for tomorrow's effectiveness is increasing important in rapidly changing times. A project team combining researchers, consultants and managers can be seen as a knowledge creating structure that is supported by the strengths as well as institutional and professional expectations of its members.

Whether or not this situation can be replicated is a question worthy of further empirical tests. Action research approaches have sought to create knowledge by having researchers work with management practitioners, with the researchers also taking on the helping role of a consultant. These efforts have had limited influence on American management research and practice, although they have been more influential in parts of Europe. However, as this case illustrates, professional consultants are more precisely motivated to create a transferable element of knowledge. This knowledge, in the form of tools and methods to transform what was effective in one setting to what can be applied in other settings, complements researchers traditional emphasis on theory and management practice's emphasis on results. The efforts this team expended in integrating skills and interests of individuals from diverse professions are well rewarded by the possibility of developing of a team structure that could a form of innovation in management practice and the development of new knowledge in American firms.

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## **CHANGE NAVIGATION STYLES AND CORPORATE REVITALIZATION**

*by Quy N. Huy*

Best 1998 Student Paper

This article offers an integrative conceptual framework synthesizing various planned change *actions*, and outlining the theoretical assumptions underlying each change approach. I suggest that most planned change actions can be

understood by using four ideal types (or configurations) of 'planned' change navigation styles. Change navigation describes the complex nature of the change dynamics and the required flexibility and mindfulness of change agents. The likelihood of adopting change depends not only on the selection of the navigation style appropriate to the organizational context (timing), but also on the order in which various styles are applied (sequencing), the rhythm (pacing), and the length of time (duration) of each style. Agents of change should be continually alert to shifting conditions inside and outside the firm and tactically change the direction and pace of change as needed. I will explain why and how these dimensions have important performance implications by linking them to the *content* of change (e.g., structure, culture, task, relationships), the *context* (organizational slack and skill that determine the level of pressure and capability to change, respectively), and the managerial *processes* (navigation styles).

## Four Ideal Types of Change Navigation Styles

Change navigation styles form distinct *configurations* based on genesis and context, where various elements cluster together to achieve consistency in their characteristics, synergy in their processes, and harmony with their situation (Miller and Friesen, 1984: 21). Genesis relates to the fundamental nature of the change style itself, whereas context refers to the organizational context where a particular style is likely to be more effective than others.

## Genesis of Navigation Styles

Two dimensions of change navigation styles can be distinguished: comprehensiveness and focus. Comprehensiveness relates to the level of generality of the change content. For example, an attempted change in the organizational structure or culture is likely to be more general and conceptual than a change in specific work processes or working relationships among individuals and groups (Mintzberg and Wesley, 1992: 40). Focus refers to the basic nature of the change content itself. On a comparative basis, some organizational dimensions are more tangible and easily alterable than others. For instance, formal structures and systems or work processes are considered instrumental or objective entities, while culture and relationships are categorized as social or subjective entities.

## The Organizational Context of Power and Knowledge



Whereas genesis defines the basic nature of the navigation styles, the appropriateness of each style depends on the dynamic organizational context. This context is defined by the change agents' relative influence in creating and diffusing new knowledge inside the organization they seek to change--which relates to power distribution--as well as to the primary *process* by which organizations create new knowledge during a particular *phase* of change--which relates to knowledge acquisition or modes of knowing. These dimensions are not static but can continuously shift under the interaction of both internal and external forces.

The context of power distribution. The conventional divide between political and cultural compliance can be reconciled by adopting the more encompassing view of power theory proposed by Hardy (1996). Drawing upon Lukes' (1974) elaboration of power, Hardy suggests that power can be exerted through the three levers of resources, processes, and meanings. Through the first lever, power stems from one's ability to control scarce *resources* that represent key uncertainties for the organization (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978). The second lever of power excludes certain issues from the agenda and from decision making through control over organizational processes, routines and procedures, thereby allowing behind-the-scenes manipulation by influential figures (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962). The third lever of power is even more subtle inasmuch as influence is exerted on sensemaking and meaning interpretation (Lukes, 1974). Values and preferences are shaped so that individuals cannot visualize a better alternative than the status quo. Two perspectives of power distribution can be established:

1. In the Dominated Coalition (or unitary) view, the organization is assumed to be monolithic, with a single group wielding significantly more power over the organization to effect strategic change. The collective mind of the organization is inseparable from the cognition of the dominant coalition, often represented by the CEO and his close associates.

2. In the Divided Coalition (or pluralist) view, the power to affect the outcome of strategic change is dispersed among many groups. Interest groups may form around particular objectives, task specialties, issues of the day, ideologies, or status systems. These groups are likely to display different perceptions of values, priorities, and behavioral styles. Thus the outcome of strategic change can be construed as the interactive result of different competitive rationalities involved in political processes.

Two perspectives on organizations as knowledge systems. Spender's theory of knowledge (1996: 49) suggests

there are two modes of knowing: one based on reason and rooted in the Platonic philosophical tradition, the other based on experience and drawing upon Aristotelian empiricism. The former is more concerned with universal truth and tends to adopt a realist epistemology. The latter is more pragmatic and pursues functional, partial, local truths without worrying particularly about the ontological status of its objects. These distinctions lead Spender (1996: 55) to propose two views of organization: (1) a system of *applied abstract knowledge* and (2) a system of *knowing activity* with emergent characteristics.

The first perspective emphasizes codification of models and rules under the form of 'if-then' statements. Knowledge can be formalized, explicit, and detached. Thus types of environments are connected to types of strategic behavior in types of circumstances. The future is assumed to be knowable, even predictable. The 'design' and 'planning' schools in strategic management adopt this mode of knowing (Mintzberg, 1990). The classical strategy literature often associates change in strategy with change in structure (Chandler, 1990). Hence the label 'Designing' is attached to the change style that primarily focuses on general and instrumental organizational dimensions such as formal structures and systems and uses dominative power and deductive knowledge. Similarly, the label 'Converting' is associated with the pattern of actions of change agents attempting to transform the organization's general and social dimensions, such as culture.

The first mode of knowing tends to be associated with sweeping, generic change. Deductive change posits that cognition precedes action and moves from the abstract to the concrete. For instance, strategic change would start with a change in vision and culture and systematically cascade down to changes in structures, positions, systems, programs, personnel and facilities (Mintzberg and Westley, 1992: 42).

In the second perspective, human action creates knowledge (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995: 59), or action precedes cognition. The future is assumed to be indeterminate, unknowable (Stacey, 1995: 483). Knowledge is widely distributed in the organization. Firms can no longer be viewed as "assemblies of interrelated components," but as "semi-autonomous organic systems" with some self-regulating capabilities (Spender, 1996: 56). The collective mind is construed as a pattern of heedful interrelating actions by individuals. It is known in its entirety by no one, although portions of it are known differentially to all. In this sense, the collective mind is a distributed system (Weick and Roberts, 1993: 365).

The second mode of knowing emphasizes the tacit, customized, visceral experience acquired through doing (Polyani, 1966: 20-31; Tsoukas, 1996: 16-20). This mode tends to favor localized, specific, or inductive change, which proceeds from the concrete to the conceptual. Changes *start* at the specific, tangible level, such as work processes or relationships among individuals or small groups. I have labeled the change style that primarily focuses on tasks and work processes 'Programming' to denote the concrete yet highly analytical nature of the change process. Many hitherto tacit tasks have to be analyzed then optimized. The 'Animating' style refers to change in social-technical relationships among work groups where the change agent acts mainly as a role model and facilitator. Here the change agent seeks to improve the collective learning skills among the members of the work groups by attending to intra- and sometimes inter-group relationships.

## The Designing Navigation Style

The Designing style reveals several variations: the directive, the coaxing, or the charismatic styles. In the designing-directive style, the top managers know where they are going; they believe they have a reasonably clear vision at the start of the change process. The future environment is assumed to be knowable through systematic analysis of environmental factors (Porter, 1980) and the organization has to change to align itself with the future state. The rest of the organization is assumed to be tightly coupled—like a compliant machine (Morgan, 1986: 19). The means used are mainly structural, such as change of senior executives, reorganization, downsizing, consolidation, acquisitions, and outsourcing. Simplification strategies—a return to the core business—tend to be applied (Grinyer and McKiernan, 1990: 140).

Its variant, the designing-coaxing style, tends to be more Machiavellian. The top managers have a general idea of the vision, but need collaboration from other groups, usually those in the middle part of the hierarchy, to come up with the 'implementation' specifics. Use of brute coercive power is risky for implementation success. A couple of manipulative tactics are possible:

1. Co-opt middle managers through the lure of more personal power, status, and economic gain. This comes from the top managers' realization that there are too many people in these complex organizations and senior managers have no realistic means of controlling directly all the organization.

2. Manufacture an artificial crisis by inventing an 'external enemy' who threatens the survival of the firm, an approach used by many political leaders throughout history (Ansoff, 1988: 216), or raise performance expectations and hold subordinates accountable for achieving them (Simons, 1994).

The Designing-coaxing style seems appropriate in contexts where organizations' performance pressures are present but not overwhelming. Some intermediate time horizon to conduct a more evolutionary, incremental change is possible as a moderate amount of slack is still available. Senior managers do not have to risk bold actions that might alienate or endanger the whole organization, and seek to co-opt the involvement of other groups to conduct a more evolutionary transformation (Dickhout et al., 1995: 102).

### The Converting Navigation Style

The Designing-coaxing style constitutes an intermediate step between the hard and fast Designing-directive style and the softer and gradual Converting style. The Converting style is underpinned by OD theories and action research interventions. According to Stace (1996: 559), OD proponents believe that collaboration and consultation constitute optimal change approaches. Rooted in the Human Relations approach, OD suggests a careful, deliberative, wide participation approach to change. Many of the OD theories of intervention assume preconceived reasons for organizational ineffectiveness and specific ways to remedy these dysfunctionalities. Abstract knowledge is thus applied to large groups of people in a voluntary, participative mode. Moreover, cognitive and attitudinal change is assumed to precede behavioral change. Thus a *normative-reeducative* approach (Chin and Benne, 1994: 119-120) is adopted which focuses on changes in beliefs, meanings, habits, and values. Individuals must participate in their own reeducation through the active intervention of change agents. Change targets are no longer passive or compliant as in the Designing mode: they collaborate in effecting their own *personal* change. The goal is to build commitment through cognitive change, not just compliance.

By probing feelings, the change agents can bring to the surface the relationship difficulties in the client systems (Chin and Benne, 1994: 122). Interventions seek to develop trust, empathy, openness, and caring behavior through training groups. To maintain congruency, the CEO's role should be supportive and empathic; s/he can be expected to play the role of a philosopher-psychologist, competent in interpersonal inquiry skills and comfortable in sharing control and revealing personal weaknesses (Beer and Eisenstat, 1996: 616-7).

This navigation style demands great patience, a long time horizon, and it may lead to strategic drift and unresolvable conflicts among warring coalitions. In actual practice, it puts more emphasis on spreading and stabilizing change than experiential learning (Hendry, 1996: 628). Its effectiveness for strategic realignment is often ambiguous: focus on building new values does not necessarily lead to strategic realization. Changes in cultural norms and values can seldom be decreed. Hence the power distribution context becomes less relevant because change agents cannot unilaterally impose a new culture on the organization and hope to sustain it. Deep and real cultural change is a gradual and voluntary process.

### The Programming Navigation Style

Here the focus is on changing the concrete operating work processes of the organization. The view of the organization as a knowing system of activity prevails. The organization comes closest here to Morgan's (1986: 85, 96) metaphor of 'brains', that is, a complex network of interconnected neurons—work systems—with self-regulating and self-learning capabilities involving negative feedback.

From this perspective the first focus is on changing operational tasks and processes, inducing behavioral change that will be followed gradually by value change. In this sense, action precedes cognition. The change tactics used can be termed *empirical-rational* where the change target is supposed to be rational and moved by self-interest; a rational justification of the potential personal benefits of the proposed changes is thus sufficient (Chin and Benne, 1994: 113). Power is centralized in a single group of leader-experts. The change agent should be skilled in work process analysis and organization design. The CEO should play the role of a teacher, guiding and developing the subordinates' task skills. The proposed changes often make sense because they are concrete and the role definition of each worker is clear. The need for an abstract vision is less acute.

### The Animating Navigation Style

This navigation style comes closest to Morgan's (1986: 46) metaphor of organizations as organisms--interrelated systems open to their task environment and able to self-regulate and evolve. This perspective assumes that power is equally distributed among various groups and individuals and that strategic change will emerge as a result of the learning processes among various groups. Knowledge, mostly of the tacit type, is embedded in the system itself. As

a system of knowing activity, the organization is focused on task performance and oriented toward action as experimentation. Individuals are motivated to engage in autonomous behaviors because such action is congruent with their self-image that is, their motivation may be rooted in an "obligatory logic" (March, 1988). Motivation can also be rooted in "consequential logic" (March, 1988): individuals feel their change initiatives have favorable tradeoffs between rewards and risks in light of their capabilities and skills (Burgelman, 1990: 169).

The Animating style focuses on behavioral or task-relationship changes as a prelude to broader cognitive organizational change. Concrete change in values will take hold and spread only after tasks and relationships change. For this reason, I call this approach '*empirical-normative*'. Attention is devoted to developing the skills individuals need to adapt to new task requirements and relationships and to make a new technical system work. Experience is considered as an effective source of learning; it is within groups that people learn to develop work roles.

The Animating style runs the potential risk of a splintered, anarchic state. A large number of factions might focus on changing their own tasks with no resulting common direction. The lack of clear pressure from the top could facilitate foot-dragging by recalcitrant managers. The result of all these centrifugal forces could well be unproductive at the organizational level. A lot of resources would have been expended locally with no clear collective focus or outcome. Moreover, there is the danger that informal groups indulging in experiential learning may narrow competence, creativity, limit the range of options considered, and tend toward inertia (Hendry, 1996: 631).

### Sequencing Of Navigation Styles in Corporate Revitalization

Skilled agents of change should keep a wide repertoire of change styles and understand the fundamental theoretical assumptions of each dominant navigation style. Each style constitutes a harmonious *configuration* of various elements related to the content, context, and process of change (Pettigrew, 1985). Large-scale transformation typically involves the alteration of many organizational dimensions. Yet one of my central theses is that there is an optimal evolutionary path to revitalize the organization, depending on what (content) needs to be changed, when to change it (timing and context), and how to change it (style, pacing, and sequencing). The implicit premise is that agents of change have to apply different styles according to various organizational change episodes in order to maximize the *effectiveness* of the transformation effort. Since this framework focuses mainly on the *revitalization* of

large, mature, bureaucratic organizations, it goes beyond operating turnaround (efficiency, short-term focus) to include enhancement of sustainable capabilities centered on skills acquisition, organizational learning, and inter-functional and inter-divisional cooperation. Revitalization enhances competence, cooperation, and commitment—the three essential enablers for long-term economic performance (Beer et al., 1990: 9).

Large-scale corporate revitalization will be more likely and faster if agents of change orchestrate their change efforts by gradually moving the organization through various distinct states. The ultimate state is 'high slack and high capability to change'. Two conditions may arise: transformation by anticipation when the pressure for performance improvement is low to moderate, or transformation by reaction when the performance pressure is high.

### High Pressure for Performance Improvement

Agents of change faced with an organization that is in a slack-deficient and skill-inadequate state may choose the quick Designing turnaround mode to increase slack. Highly symbolic actions are used to jolt the organization. Once slack becomes adequate, the next navigation style should be Programming with small change projects dispersed throughout the company to build skills and morale, and a gradual movement to large systems reengineering once both skills and lateral coordination are well developed. Widespread experimentations are also encouraged to foster emergence of a breakthrough strategy. Adequate slack and hard task skills then allow application of the more decentralized Converting style to change cultural values. An 'emotional context' necessary for subsequent deeper changes has to be nurtured (Doz and Thanheiser, 1996: 11) . Finally, newly institutionalized norms ease the subsequent development of work relationships and autonomous work groups. These more subtle organic changes require collective ownership and mobilization that can be fostered by the Animating style.

The power context matters in the selection of change styles. For instance, in a divided power structure, even if top management knows the business and is able to propose a compelling vision, the proposed change still has to be negotiated with other stakeholders' groups. Thus, the navigation style cannot be consistently Designing-directive, even when the organization has to embark first on a painful operating turnaround mode. The risk of insurgency and backlash is high in a dispersed power structure. Leaders of the proposed change can at best alternate between very short bursts of Designing-directive tactics and longer and softer styles such as Designing-coaxing or Converting. Leaders of change have to constantly monitor the mood of the organization and vary the intensity and pacing of

various change styles accordingly.

## Low Pressure for Performance Improvement

An organization with moderate slack and under low performance pressure can start a large-scale transformation effort with a Converting or an Animating style. Once new values or work relationships are established, changes in other organizational dimensions such as structures and systems will follow with a swift and transient Designing style. For example, Bartunek's (1984) study of a religious order describes how leaders guided the sensemaking process of the base organization patiently and with sensitivity. These leaders understood the emotional fear and uncertainty of not finding a new, shared, and acceptable interpretive scheme, and allowed the wide consultative process to stretch over a decade. Once the religious came to terms with newly reconciled values, the Designing style then followed to officialize a new consolidated structure. The same sequence was reported by Burgelman (1991) at Intel Corporation.

The previous discussion can be summarized as follows:

- Planned large-scale corporate revitalization is more likely to be realized when agents of change sequence different navigation styles according to various change phases.

- In organizational contexts where power is dominated by change agents and the pressure for performance is high, an effective and efficient path for corporate revitalization is associated with the following sequence of navigation styles: Designing, then Programming, then Converting, and finally Animating.

- In organizational contexts where power is divided and performance pressure is high, an effective and efficient path for corporate revitalization is associated with the following sequence of navigation styles: Converting, with very short bursts of the Designing and/or the Programming styles; followed by the Animating style when slack and skills become moderately adequate.

## Conclusion

The field of organizational change has been locked in a sterile debate about "one best way" to effect planned large-



scale organizational change. Some strategy management researchers portray a top-down, commander-like approach to implement sweeping, radical change (e.g., Allaire and Firsirotu, 1985; Miller and Friesen, 1984). Other researchers with a humanistic orientation advocate a more voluntary, bottom-up approach (e.g., Beer et al., 1990; Schein, 1992). This article has offered a contingency framework suggesting four distinct configurations of navigation styles and their application. The proposed process framework provides practitioners with a more informed basis for selecting and sequencing their interventions than simply their personal values and preferences. Skilled agents of change should not favor one style of change over another but should thoughtfully vary the use of these four dominant styles in actual practice. Careless mixing of them, however, could breed confusion and inefficacy in the change efforts. Conversely, these four styles could be applied in the same organization with temporal or spatial separation. They could be sequenced in time, or various styles be applied concurrently in relatively independent units of the organization.

I have suggested here a relatively parsimonious framework to conceptualize different change methodologies, their underlying theoretical assumptions and temporal characteristics, as well as their performance implications in specific contexts. I hope that this constitutes a step toward the development of a comprehensive and useful change process theory.

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