Becoming a Change Facilitator

BECOMING A CHANGE FACILITATOR

An Introduction to Organization Development Skills and Processes

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

How to Use This Book

This book is intended as a practical guide for exploring how to facilitate change within organizations. We want it to be a comprehensible classroom tool for both students and instructors. Below, we briefly outline some best practices and considerations for how to use this book, from both the student and the instructor perspectives.

For Students

This book was developed, first and foremost, with undergraduate students in mind. We tried to make it engaging, easy to read, and easy to navigate. Each chapter begins with a summary of the chapter's content and ends with a high-level conclusion. Questions in each chapter can be used for individual reflection and to deepen students' understanding of the material by asking them to relate it to their own lives and to re-contextualize the information in a different way. Each chapter also addresses a specific Organization Development (OD) skill that students can develop in order to help them in this work professionally and within the broader context of interpersonal relationships.

After reading this book, we hope that students will be able to:

1. Articulate the organizational necessity of being change-capable.
2. Identify how OD skills and techniques are present across an entire organization in a variety of jobs, roles, and contexts.
3. Describe how the discipline of OD supports creating and sustaining effective and productive change.
4. Describe the stages of the OD process and the common roles and responsibilities in each stage.
5. Apply the OD process to examine, diagnose, and develop an intervention for a case study.
6. Describe and apply the basic skills for effective collaboration on a team project.

For Instructors

Developed as a helpful tool for instructors, this book includes the essential content necessary for teaching an introductory course aimed at understanding OD and for helping students develop their skills as change facilitators in teams and organizations. While some of the content acts as an anchor in introducing certain topics, we have chosen other facets of the material to be introduced through links, resources, and videos, hoping that instructors will encourage their students to reach outside this textbook to explore these topics. We have also decided not to include case studies at the end of each chapter, believing such material is better chosen as part of each instructor's tailored approach to their own course. We encourage instructors to bring in case studies that are timely and most relevant to their approach in teaching this course, and even to brainstorm ways of working with local business partners so students have hands-on, practical experience using some of these concepts.

CHAPTER ONE: WHAT ARE ORGANIZATIONS, AND HOW DO THEY CHANGE?

Chapter Overview

In this chapter, we define organizations and discuss why they change over time. We explain why organizations can be understood as living systems, describe the key components of an organizational system, and discuss factors that prompt organizations to change. Finally, we discuss the importance of organizations being change-capable and highlight the key characteristics of a change-capable organization.

Contents

1.1 Organizations

An *organization* can be defined as a collective of people who work together to achieve common purposes and goals. In our lives, as part of a community, we engage in different types of organizations — as clients, employees, and partners. Schools, community associations, sports teams, government agencies, health providers, entertainment providers, virtual and physical stores, industries, advocacy institutions — all are organizations or parts of organizations. Organizations are legal entities with different configurations, like private or public companies, associations, and institutions. They can vary in terms of size and geographical spread, and can be for-profit or not-for-profit.

In general, all organizations share some common elements (Figure 1):

- **Purpose:** Organizations are formed for a reason; they have a purpose and overarching goals. This purpose is usually long-term, and some organizations express it through a statement of mission (what the organization wants to achieve) and vision (why the organization wants to achieve that).
- **Strategy:** Organizations define strategic plans to realize their purpose and achieve their goals. Strategy is how organizations plan to realize their purpose and achieve their goals.
- **Structure:** Most organizations have more or less formal structures that define general responsibilities, reporting lines (who responds to whom), and decision rights (who has the authority to decide what). Some have a vertical hierarchical structure, clear responsibilities, and centralized decision rights. Others have flat structures, with more decentralized decision rights and, sometimes, responsibilities that can more fluidly adapt to organizational needs.
- **Processes and procedures:** Organizations have standard ways of performing the activities necessary to achieve their goals. Some have formal processes and procedures, including policies and ethical guidelines, while others do not.
- **Knowledge assets:** Organizations develop knowledge and skills that enable them to accomplish their goals. Although this knowledge and these skills are initially developed by the organizational members, in the long term, this collective knowledge and skills become an organizational asset.
- **Material assets:** These include infrastructure (e.g., buildings, equipment), inputs and outputs of production (e.g., raw materials, stock), and financial resources that enable the organization to operate.
- **Human assets:** Organizational members are often among the most important assets in any organization, as they manage and execute the work. Human assets include all members, their relationships, and their individual values, knowledge, and skills.
- **Culture:** Every organization has its own culture, developed through the years as members establish ways of making decisions and relating to each other. It includes the values that shape these decisions, processes, and relationships. We can say that the culture of an organization is "the way people do things there." Organizational culture can also be perceived in the way its members communicate through shared language or jargon, rituals, and ceremonies, and in organizational artifacts such as the physical space design and decoration, institutional materials, website, and established dress code.

These organizational components interact with each other. Organizational purpose, for example, shapes strategy, while strategy may determine which skills and knowledge are developed and influence how structure and processes are designed. Culture helps determine the type of people who will thrive in an organization and how its members relate to each other. As we discuss next, these elements are all interdependent, and disruptions in one component likely affect the whole organization.

1.2 Organizations as Living Systems

A *system* can be understood as a set of interdependent components that work together to accomplish a common purpose.[1] The many components of a system are critical to its overall functioning, and when one component is removed or disturbed, it affects the system's operation and outputs. Because organizational components are interdependent and interact with each other, the whole organizational system is always larger than the sum of its parts.

Systems that interact with the external environment are called *open systems*.

The human body is an example of an open system, as external conditions, such as temperature, sounds, and smells, influence how the body operates and responds. Organizations can be understood as open systems because their main components interact not only with each other to achieve organizational goals, but with the external environment as well. The economic, political, and cultural contexts of the locations where these organizations do business influence their operation and performance. A company operating in a country with economic instability, for instance, will likely need to operate differently than a company located in a more stable economic environment. Like the human body, an organization operates effectively when its different internal components are well-aligned and it has the ability to react adequately to external factors.

Understanding an organization as a system enables us to assess which organizational components are working well and which are not. It helps us understand how these different components relate to each other and determine whether they are working well together to achieve organizational goals. Lastly, it might help us evaluate the impact of external factors on an organization's functioning and performance. This is particularly important, as our environment and contexts frequently change.

Different models, including the 7-S and the Star Model, illustrate how organizational components interact with each other. In the figure below, we offer a model to guide the analysis of organizational functioning and help identify potential issues and opportunities for improving performance (Figure 1).

1. Deming, 1986.

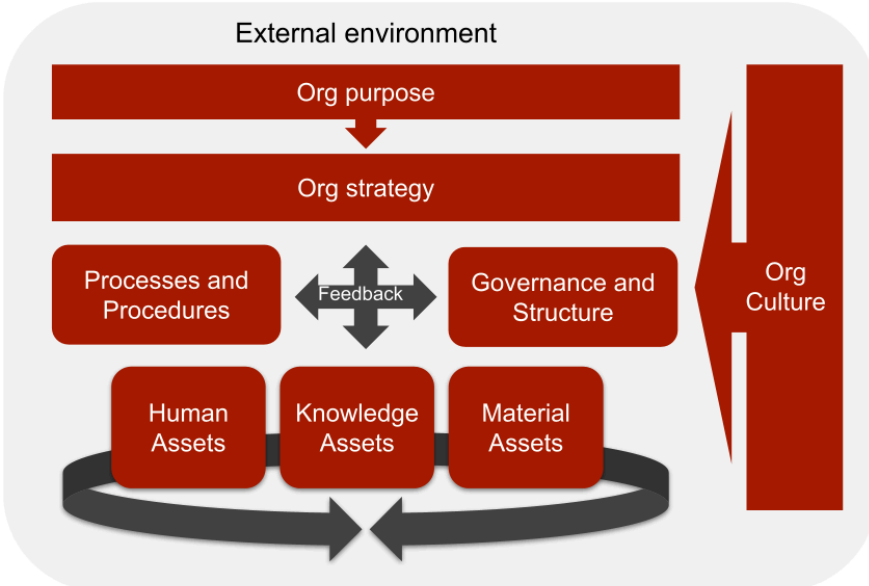


Figure 1: Organizational Components (developed by authors)

Organizational systems are composed of different levels — individual, team, and organizational levels (Figure 2). The organizational level includes all the components described in Figure 1 (i.e., purpose, strategy, structure, processes, culture, and assets), whereas the team level includes the team working norms, their dynamics, and the shared understanding of their goals. The individual level includes aspects related to each organizational member, such as their knowledge, skills, and attitudes, as well as their understanding and satisfaction with their role. Understanding how these levels interact with each other and their specific components is also crucial for gaining a comprehensive understanding of an organization's operations and identifying areas where problems may arise and where there may be opportunities for improvement or change.

Figure 2: Levels of an Organizational System (developed by the authors).

1.3 Organizations as Socially Constructed

Although understanding an organization as a system is a valuable approach to identifying issues and opportunities for improving organizational performance, it is essential to remember that people are a central component of this system. The ways in which individuals interpret and develop their understanding of the organizational environment impact how an organization functions. Social norms and cultural context influence how individuals think about the role of organizations, about the definition of a successful career, and about what it means to be a good professional. For example, decades ago, loyalty was often considered an important characteristic of a good professional. Likewise, a successful career is often seen as a constant progression in the organizational hierarchy, although this is not how most careers evolve. Another prevalent perception in organizations is that the *ideal professional* is often viewed as someone fully dedicated to their work, a view which, in hiring and promotion decisions, can disadvantage women and those who care for others.

Considering how individuals interact with each other and make sense of their organization's rules, processes, and expected behaviors, and how this shapes the organizational culture and practices, is called the *social-construction approach* to organizational theory. From a social construction perspective, how employees interact with each other, collaborate, and work together is determined not only by organizational processes and structures but also by their own beliefs, values, previous knowledge, and experiences. This approach emphasizes the active role of employees in shaping an organization.

1.4 Why Do Organizations Change?

All organizations go through changes. They change in response to alterations in the external environment in which they operate, often related to economic, political, and cultural contexts. Innovations such as the advancement of artificial intelligence, or crises like natural disasters caused by climate change or global pandemics, can profoundly impact how organizations perform. Social changes also impact organizations; individuals living longer or forming diverse family configurations, for example, are societal changes that might drive changes in an organization's strategy and, consequently, in the whole organizational system. Internal adjustments to some organizational components, such as organizational purpose, structure, or assets, also drive change across the whole system. To survive and continue pursuing their goals, organizations must adjust to new and changing external conditions. Occasionally, contextual changes are so impactful that they might even alter the purposes of some organizations.

Why do organizations change?

Example 1: Post-Covid impact on organizations arrangements for remote work

The Covid-19 pandemic impacted the way individuals relate to work. Many people experienced forced remote work mandates and an increased concern for their health and well-being. An initial drastic change involved the preparation for remote work, which included significant change efforts in technological infrastructure, cybersecurity, and operations, and a need to develop leaders to manage virtual teams. After the worst days of the pandemic, organizations faced a new set of dilemmas as many employees were unwilling to return to the office full-time.[2] With defining remote and flexible working policies, revisiting training practices, and developing ways to nurture organizational culture, many companies faced new change processes to accommodate the new expectations of their employees.

Example 2: Increase concern with mental health and well-being

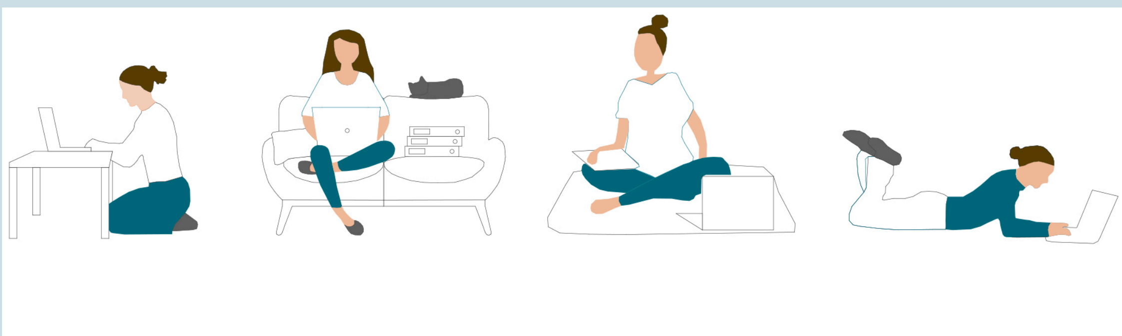
Recent surveys show an increasing impact of mental health on employees' retention and engagement. The mental health crisis seems to be caused by multiple factors, including work stress,

2. Ding, Y., Jin, Z., Ma, M. S., Xing, B. B., & Yang, Y. J. (2024). Return to office mandates and brain drain. SSRN.

the economy, and climate change. Organizations are debating how to respond, recognizing that, although very personal, mental health can be closely related to work. Younger workers are more likely to rank work-life balance as a top criterion when choosing an employer and to pay close attention to organizational culture. In response to this situation, some companies have implemented wellness programs and benefits while others have tried ***flexible work arrangements*** *and four-day work week, challenging managers to rethink their working practices.*

Example 3: use of AI

The use of AI in organizations is a reality, with 75% of knowledge workers already using it worldwide, often to support their excessive workload. While some organizations are investing in transforming their operations with AI, many are still debating how to apply AI to improve their business performance. While leaders who see AI's potential are eager to use it to improve processes and to create and train bot teams, they also mention a concern for the ethical use of AI and for organizations' ability to hire or train AI-skilled professionals.



"Remote work Posizioni creative" by Claudia Carpinelli is licensed under CC BY 4.0.

1.5 Being Change-Capable

While our social and business environments are constantly evolving, requiring organizations to adapt, effective organizational change is not easy to accomplish. Change requires an end to old ways of thinking and doing, so that new ways of thinking and doing that are more aligned with the context can be developed.

William Bridges proposed a model to explain how changes are experienced by individuals. The Bridges Transition Model states that individuals go through three stages during a change process. In the first stage, "Endings," individuals understand that for change to happen, some behaviors, patterns, processes, and other elements must end. Acknowledging this need to leave something behind can be a challenging process for many individuals. In the second stage, the "Neutral Zone" individuals learn new behaviors, define new processes, and adjust. This is often a moment of uncertainty, and may naturally create stress. In the final stage, "New

Beginnings," individuals start to see more clarity and direction in the change process and become energized to make the change happen.

If changing at the individual level can be challenging, imagine changing a team or an entire organizational system. Promoting changes in such a system requires addressing all of the different levels, including individual skills and behaviors, the way people work together in teams, the processes, systems, and structures, and often the organizational culture. While this can be very challenging, organizations constantly need to adapt to new conditions, so they can survive in the long term. This is why facilitating change processes is a highly valued skill, and why many professionals specialize in supporting individuals, teams, and organizations in their change efforts.

As we will see in the next chapter, Organization Development is one discipline that specializes in helping organizations effectively accomplish change. Organizations, their leaders, and their members can develop skills that will enable them to recognize the need for change and promote the transformation necessary to adapt to new conditions imposed by the external environment. Being change-capable is an essential competitive advantage to individuals, teams, and organizations.[3]

1.6 Organizational Capability for Change

The first step to developing critical capabilities for becoming change-capable is to acknowledge the reasons why many organizations fail to effectively change and adapt to new circumstances.

As Bridges states, changes can be confusing and distressing for individuals. Change can sound threatening, and a natural reaction is to look for reassuring, concrete information about what these changes mean and the potential losses and gains they may bring. Many organizational changes fail because of resistance from employees and a lack of support from leaders.[4] Having a clear understanding of the need for change and a compelling vision of what the organization will look like after the change is essential to getting support from organizational members. Moreover, it is necessary to recognize that change may impact individuals differently; thus, it is natural that some will support the change while others will resist. Lastly, it is critical to acknowledge that, to be sustainable, most changes will require a shift in people's mindsets and behaviors.

A second common reason for failure is that organizations often overlook their own systemic nature. Leaders might propose changes in a few components without considering how this will impact other components in the system. As we learned, organizational components are interdependent, and changes in organizational processes, for example, will likely require changes in individuals' behaviors and skills. Imagine an organization that, to survive in a more competitive market, must become more agile in making decisions to innovate its

3. Lagan, P. (2003). The change-capable organization. T&D.

4. Andersen, E. (2022). Change is hard. Here's how to make it less painful. Harvard Business Review

products. Let's say this organization has a centralized decision-making process and a strong hierarchical culture where employees do not feel they are allowed to share ideas or that their ideas are not welcome. Implementing channels for employees to share their ideas or inviting them to decision-making forums will likely not be sufficient if the hierarchical structure and culture continue in place.

Organizations that understand change as a process and that develop certain characteristics are more likely to be successful in their transformation efforts. Authors have suggested different characteristics of a change-capable organization.[5] The most relevant elements that make an organization capable of change are the ability to involve various stakeholders in dialogue, the ability to establish trust, understand the interdependencies in the organizational system, maintain streamlined communication, share knowledge, and learn.

Questions for Reflection

1. Think about a change that you had to make in your life. What was this change? What were the main challenges you faced during this change? Was the change successful? What factors helped you or could have helped you to accomplish the change?
2. How can learning to facilitate change help you in the future as you develop professionally?
3. What do you think is necessary for an organization to cultivate a culture of learning and knowledge sharing?
4. Look back at the examples. Have you seen some of these trends happening in the organizations you work with or interact with? What were some internal changes these organizations have to make (or are trying to make) to adapt to these new scenarios?

Summary

An organization can be defined as a group of individuals who work together to achieve shared purposes and goals. Although different types of organizations exist, they can be commonly understood as multi-level systems with key components that interact and are interdependent. Key organizational elements include an

5. Judge, W. (2012). Focusing on Organizational Change.

overall purpose; a culture; a strategy to accomplish the purpose; a structure with job positions, roles, and responsibilities; processes; and material, human, and knowledge assets. Because the external environment in which they operate is constantly changing, organizations often need to adapt to survive. This process can be challenging, so organizations must be change-capable and prepared to adapt. Organizations that have the ability to involve various stakeholders in dialogue, establish trust, understand the interdependencies in the organizational system, maintain streamlined communication, learn, and share knowledge have a greater likelihood of successfully going through changes.

Media Attributions

- Chapter 1_Levels of an Organization

CHAPTER TWO: WHAT IS ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT?

Chapter Overview

This chapter defines organization development and explains how it can help individuals, teams, and organizations become change-capable. We briefly describe the five main stages of the OD process, which will be discussed in more detail in future chapters. We discuss the foundational values of the OD approach and how they inform ethical guidelines that should be followed by individuals facilitating change. Lastly, we identify essential OD skills for anyone who wants to effectively support change in organizations.

Contents

2.1 What is Organization Development?

In general, organization development is an approach to supporting individuals, teams, and organizations in accomplishing changes to improve effectiveness by applying **behavioral and social sciences** and promoting learning and development. There are several definitions of OD, but we can list essential aspects that are common across these definitions and represent the essence of the OD approach:

- It is a planned **process** that facilitates change by intervening in the system. The facilitator of the OD process seeks to understand the organizational system and work with the organization's members to promote desired changes that will improve organizational efficiency. This involves working at the different levels of the organization — individuals, teams, and the organization as a whole. It is a process primarily used to support complex changes that will be accomplished in the medium to long term.
- It uses social and behavioral sciences — including psychology, sociology, anthropology, and economics — to understand how organizations operate and to facilitate change. This is a characteristic that makes the OD approach different than some other change approaches.
- It aims to build capacity in the organization, their teams, and employees so they can learn how to support change on their own in the future. Therefore, it necessarily involves learning and development initiatives to share knowledge and develop skills.
- It aims to improve organizational effectiveness, understanding that effectiveness can be assessed in different ways, including employee satisfaction, social and environmental impact, financial health, operational performance, and brand reputation.
- It is based on values that drive the decisions made and actions taken by the change facilitator, including participation, personal growth, development and learning, social justice, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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While the field is often called *Organizational Development*, we prefer the term *Organization Development* to emphasize that it supports changes not only among organizational members but also among the organization system as a whole. More than an approach to support organizational change, OD incorporates a set of skills and values that guide these processes. In an organizational setting, any professional — from managers and department leaders to human resource professionals — who knows the OD approach and has mastered the related skills can be a change facilitator, and these professionals are in high demand. One of this book's goals is to provide activities to practice these skills so you can develop them.

OD has become a well-regarded profession. Some professionals become experts in the field and specialize in specific OD interventions, which we will learn more about in future chapters; these professionals are often called OD consultants or OD practitioners. OD associations like the OD Network promote knowledge sharing and serve as guardians of OD values.

2.2 OD Values

Values are deeply rooted beliefs that guide judgments about behavior, providing internal guidelines for how individuals make choices, solve conflicts, take actions, and interact with others. The OD field is founded on **humanistic principles**, which are based on the belief that individuals learn mainly through reflection on personal experiences and that they seek learning and development to realize their full potential. Although various scholars and practitioners define OD values in slightly different ways, they are all rooted in a humanistic foundation based on core values:

- **Participation:** Effective change happens when individuals are willing to embrace it. Therefore, creating conditions for individuals to participate and engaging them in the change process is a key value of OD.
- **Dialogue and collaboration:** In a change process, it is crucial to understand multiple perspectives and seek mutual benefits. Conflicting situations are a natural part of change efforts. The OD approach aims to create spaces for dialogue and collaboration, where conflicts can be discussed constructively and new ideas can flourish.
- **Growth, development, and learning:** A core OD value is the belief that individuals can be and are willing to learn and develop. The OD approach provides opportunities for individuals, teams, and organizations to learn. OD facilitates change through learning.
- **Diversity, equity, and inclusion:** Respect for the multiplicity of identities, backgrounds, and perspectives is essential for creating conditions conducive to participation, learning, and development.

As you will learn over the course of this book, OD values are intrinsically connected to how OD supports changes.

2.3 The OD Approach to Supporting Organizational Change

OD theories date to the 1950s, when Kurt Lewin was working on strategies to improve group work and problem-solving approaches. He developed a model called Action Research, which, to this day, serves as a foundation for most OD processes. The Action Research approach is a participatory and democratic process in which an organization's members collaborate to understand issues and opportunities for improvement and to develop and implement solutions. It has four main steps: defining and diagnosing the problem, planning actions to solve it, implementing actions, and evaluating the results.

In recent decades, the OD field has evolved to address the increased complexity and fast-changing nature of organizations and societies. Frequently, challenges in an organization are not clearly connected to specific root causes, but are instead an outcome of multiple, interconnected factors that are hard to pinpoint. And because context changes quickly, organizations cannot invest too much time in attempting to identify all the factors contributing to a problem and to finding a perfect solution; because, by the time they do so, it is very likely that new contextual factors are in place and the identified solution is already outdated. The complex nature of contemporary organizational problems requires approaches that are more **adaptive**, so that responses to challenges can match reality and be adjusted if needed. Rather than offering the best solution to a problem, OD approaches aim to equip individuals, teams, and organizations with the skills and mindsets needed to deal with complex problems and adapt quickly to fast-changing realities.

New OD approaches focus significantly on nurturing dialogue between members of an organizational system as an effective way to develop these skills and mindsets. These approaches, called *Dialogic OD*, are grounded in a socio-constructivist understanding of organizations and believe that to support change in a complex world, solutions are not only technical, with new processes and structures. Organization's members must also reflect on their understanding of the system and on how they interact with each other, so they can develop new ways of working together. Often, members need to change not only their behaviors, but their beliefs and values. Dialogic OD supports these processes by fostering conversations, inquiry into multiple perspectives, and collaborative problem-solving.

Most OD approaches, including those of Dialogic OD, share some similarities with Action Research. In general, there are several elements present in most OD approaches:

- The **OD change facilitator**: In most OD change efforts, there will be one or more individuals who assume the responsibility for structuring and conducting the OD process, as well as facilitating the collaboration between all the diverse stakeholders involved in the change effort. As mentioned, anyone with knowledge of the OD approach and who is equipped with OD skills and values can serve in this role. It can be a member of or someone external to the organization; the latter are often called OD consultants or OD practitioners.
- The **change team**: Because facilitating change using an OD approach is a participatory process, there is often a group of organizational members who are fully engaged in the change effort. Other stakeholders may also participate in the change effort in different ways, as we will detail later.
- **OD interventions**: OD interventions are structured activities to support change and are based on behavioral sciences and principles of adult and organizational learning. In general, change interventions will aim to disrupt current behaviors and relationships and promote learning and development. Chapter 7 discusses some of the most well-known OD interventions. Examples include assessments, feedback 360, coaching, mentoring, start-up and transition meetings, confrontation meetings, future search, word cafe, and appreciative inquiry.

2.4 The OD Process

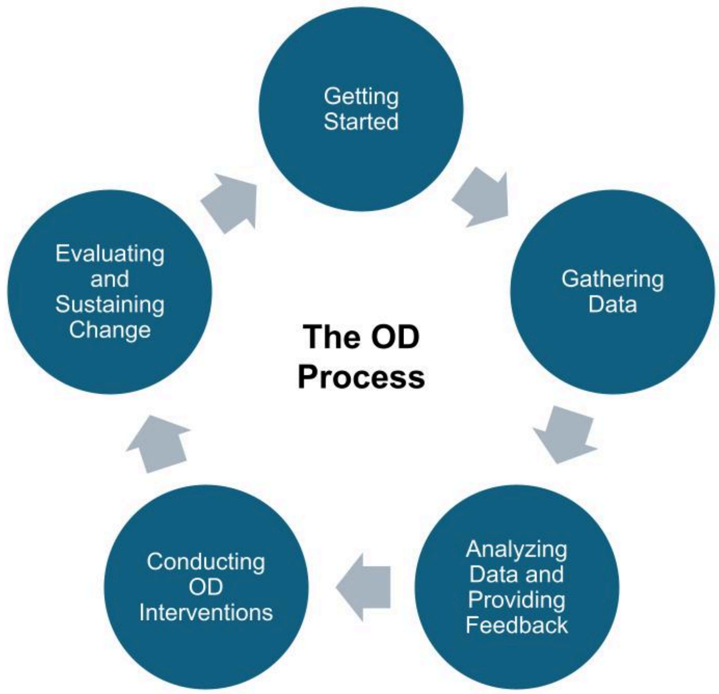


Figure 1: The OD Process

Most OD processes will include the following five main stages (Figure 1):

1. **Getting started**: In this first stage, the change facilitator should answer two main questions: *What is the problem the organization is trying to solve, or the change they want to make?* And, *Who are the key stakeholders that need to be involved in this change effort?* This stage is about developing an initial understanding of the organization, its context and current apparent issues, and its desired future state. This stage is also critical for establishing ground rules about how the process will be conducted, aligning expectations, and defining mutual goals and a shared direction for the change effort.
2. **Gathering data**: The goal of this stage is to deepen the understanding of the organizational system, its issues, strengths, and the opportunities for performance improvement. Through different data-gathering methods, the change facilitator, often supported by the change team, collects internal and external information that can help in developing a broader picture of the situation and identifying interconnections and root causes.
3. **Analyzing data and providing feedback**: In this stage, the facilitator analyzes the collected data and discusses the findings with organizational members. Organizational leaders often jump to developing solutions without attempting to understand the situation at hand. Although it can require some time and resources, carefully gathering and analyzing data to develop a broader perspective of the challenges

and opportunities for improvement is a critical step in an OD process.

4. **Conducting OD interventions**: In this stage, the facilitator plans and conducts OD interventions to support the change effort. Often, a set of interventions is planned over a long period. At the individual level, OD interventions promote reflection, increased self-awareness, and skills development. At the team level, they foster interpersonal relationships and improve team dynamics. And at the broader organizational level, they can support the identification of opportunities for improvement, the alignment of desired changes, the identification and prioritization of necessary actions, and the definition of an action plan and next steps.
5. **Evaluating and sustaining change**: In this stage, the facilitator evaluates the OD process and its outcomes and identifies necessary adjustments and supporting mechanisms to sustain the change in the long term. In this last stage, it is common to identify new opportunities for change or adjustments, and to restart the OD process. In the OD approach, part of the goal is to equip the organization with the necessary skill set to continue this new change process by itself.

Although the OD process is illustrated as a step-by-step process, it is not uncommon for some stages to overlap, or to need to step back and conduct a second round of conversations at some stage. The analysis, for example, might run in parallel with data gathering, or a need for more information and additional data collection might emerge during the data analysis and feedback stage or even during interventions.

In summary, in most OD approaches, the change facilitator will work together with the organization's members to:

- Identify areas for improvement and opportunities for positive change
- Map forces supporting and resisting the change
- Facilitate OD interventions to develop solutions and support change
- Build change capacity in the organizational system and its members
- Develop and implement strategies to evaluate change, promote adjustments, and support mechanisms

Examples of situations the OD approach can effectively support

- A small business is growing, and old ways of managing tasks and people are creating a lot of inefficiencies. The business needs to institute formalized processes and systems, but leaders are afraid of losing the culture they have developed.

- A large corporation wants to become more socially responsible and needs to identify how to do so while maintaining its financial health.
- A company is experiencing an increased level of disengagement and turnover. Leaders need help understanding why employees are leaving and how to retain their talents.
- A family-owned company is going through a leadership change process, and there is a lot of conflict among the family members leading the different departments.
- A company is changing its structure and decision-making process to gain agility and become more innovative, but is facing resistance from some leaders and not seeing the results they expected from the changes.
- A not-for-profit organization received a significant amount of funding to expand its activities to tackle emergent environmental issues. They need help deciding how to move forward.
- An organization is facing external pressure to increase the proportion of women and other minoritized groups in their workforce, but although they have success in recruiting a diverse pool of talents, most new employees stay for less than two years.
- A small company is struggling to grow its business and needs support in generating and evaluating ideas and developing future plans.
- A medium-sized organization has recently seen the retirement of half of the top leadership team. New members have joined the team, but they are having difficulty working together effectively.
- A large corporation is facing challenges in finding professionals with the skills they need to achieve their business goals in the medium term. They need support to devise strategies to address this workforce demand.
- Two medium-sized organizations have recently merged. They have different cultures and need help integrating their businesses and establishing a shared vision among their members.

2.5 OD Ethical Guidelines

The OD process often tackles issues that can directly impact individuals in the organizations that are undergoing change. Changes in an organization's components, in general, have an effect on how individuals work, interact, and develop. Several institutions focused on human resource development and OD processes have established ethical guidelines to ensure that individuals conducting or supporting OD processes do so with care and respect for others, following the humanistic values on which OD was founded.

In simple terms, ethical guidelines are a list of statements that define acceptable and unacceptable behaviors.

Many professions have their own ethical guidelines. For professionals conducting or supporting OD processes, two crucial ethical standards are:

- Integrity: being aware of one's abilities and limitations as related to the OD process, and sharing them honestly with others; acting with integrity and responsibility.
- Respect: acting respectfully toward others and respecting their fundamental rights; striving to avoid or minimize harm and to contribute to individuals' well-being.

The [Academy of Human Resource Development Standards on Ethics and Integrity](#) provides more comprehensive ethical guidelines that can be applied to the OD process and change facilitation.

Ethical concerns may arise in different stages of the OD process. Some potential situations to be aware of are listed in the table below:

OD Process Stage	**Potential ethical concerns**	**Ethical guideline**
Getting started	You are unsure if you have the capabilities to support the OD process. The changes the organization wishes to make and the approach they prefer to follow are not clearly aligned with your own values and/or with OD values.	Reflect on your capabilitie Clearly communicate the conversation about the ch
Gathering data	Data collected might be used in harmful or disrespectful ways.	Before starting the data-ga be collected and used.
Analyzing data and providing feedback	Feedback is being shared in a disrespectful way. Information is being retained or softened to avoid creating an uneasy situation. Stakeholders are attempting to persuade you to soften or retain information to avoid creating an uneasy situation.	Communicate clearly and for inquiries and discussio can be done and opportur
Conducting OD interventions	Stakeholders are proposing interventions that you are not skilled in conducting. There is unclear communication about the goals of the proposed interventions. Employees are being forced to participate in the intervention.	Ensure that you are prepar Clearly communicate the i Invite employees to part
Evaluating and sustaining change	Promoting a dependency on your work as a change facilitator	Ensure that the organizati and sustaining the change.

At all stages, it is critical to communicate transparently with the stakeholders involved in the change effort in all stages of the OD process and to be mindful of your own skills and OD values.

Questions for Reflection

1. How would you explain the OD process to a colleague in simple terms?
2. Now that you have an overall understanding of the OD approach, what characteristics do you believe make the approach effective in supporting change? What is different about this approach to those of other change processes you have experienced or heard about?
3. Consider the examples in Section 2.4. Have you seen some of these situations in organizations you work or interact with? What might happen when solutions are defined by leaders and imposed on employees?
4. How do your personal values align with the OD values described in this chapter? How do you enact these values in your personal and/or professional life?
5. Consider an ethical dilemma that you have faced recently. Reflect on how you reacted and on the factors guiding that reaction.

Summary

OD is an approach to supporting individuals, teams, and organizations in accomplishing changes to improve effectiveness; those providing this support utilize behavioral and social sciences that foster learning and development. The OD process, conducted by an individual with OD skills, comprises five stages: developing an initial understanding of the problem the organization is trying to solve, collecting data to use in developing a broader perspective of the problem and opportunities for improvement, analyzing the data and sharing them with the organization, implementing specific OD interventions to support organizational change, and assessing the effectiveness of the interventions. The facilitator of an OD process must adhere to ethical guidelines, particularly integrity and respect toward others, and embrace OD values of participation, personal growth, development and learning, social justice, and diversity, equity and inclusion.

Media Attributions

- Chapter 2_OD Process © Ana Carolina Rodriguez

CHAPTER THREE: OD SKILLS AND TEAMWORK

Chapter Overview

This chapter examines the key skills an individual should develop to effectively apply the OD approach when facilitating change. It explores the fundamentals of teamwork, a crucial aspect of facilitating change, by first introducing the topic broadly, then positioning teamwork within the workplace and explaining why it is an important part of the OD approach. This chapter aims to help you describe and apply the basic skills for healthy and effective collaboration on a team project within the workplace.

Contents

3.1 OD Skills

A change facilitator leverages a variety of skills in order to help move projects forward, accurately pinpointing issues and opportunities for change, and, ultimately, bringing teams or organizations together around a particular change. The following table highlights some key skills for a change facilitator. Some are more technical, while others are more interpersonal. Some of these skills may be innate, while others may be skills that you have not had the opportunity to engage with yet. The good news is that all of them can be developed over the course of your involvement on a team and during your experiences as a student and as a professional. You can continue to refine them over time, and you will see growth within yourself as you continue to work in this space as a team member, leader, or change facilitator.

In the following chapters, we will explore each of these skills in greater detail and provide suggestions on how to practice and develop them. In this chapter, we will discuss communication and collaboration as essential skills for effective teamwork.

OD Skill (with chapter in which it is discussed)	
Effective communication and collaboration (Chapter 3)	Effective communication is the ability to express oneself clearly and concisely, as well as to listen attentively to others. Collaboration is the ability to work with others towards a shared goal, understand the interdependence between everybody's work, and see the value of incorporating multiple perspectives.
Active listening (Chapter 4)	Active listening is a specific skill that individuals can develop in order to listen in a deeper way. It involves the ability to listen to others fully and with curiosity, reduce prejudgment, and be open to considering other ideas.
Asking good questions (Chapter 5)	Asking "good" — i.e., thoughtful and intentional — questions can help make individuals feel seen and heard. This can be an important tool for establishing trust with those you are working with. An important part of asking good questions is participating in active listening (the previous skill), as listening deeply to others will help guide your questions through reflection on their thoughts and experiences. These two skills go hand-in-hand.
Systems thinking and problem identification (Chapter 6)	Systems thinking is the ability to see a problem from multiple perspectives and identify interconnections and interdependencies. This requires understanding the pieces that constitute a system and how they interact to make the system work. Organizations are systems that are interdependent, which is an important insight to have as a change facilitator. Problem identification is the ability to recognize a problem and identify the systemic factors contributing to it. It is the first step in solving a problem, but it is often not given the necessary attention. This lack of attention to problem identification often leads to inefficient solutions
Openness to different perspectives (Chapter 7)	Being open to different perspectives involves being genuinely curious and developing the ability to set aside preconceived judgments until a deeper understanding of the situation is gained. It also involves recognizing that our perspectives are partial and often biased, which makes expanding our knowledge crucial.
Flexibility and dealing with ambiguity (Chapter 8)	Being flexible means the ability to adapt and change directions when necessary. Being able to deal with ambiguity involves developing a certain level of comfort with continuing to progress even when things are uncertain, unfinished, or not completely known.
Planning and process management (Chapter 9)	Planning is the ability to establish goals and milestones, define necessary tasks to achieve these goals, and consider potential problems that may arise along the way. Process management is about putting the plan into action and monitoring its outcomes. It requires the ability to organize resources to accomplish the planned tasks, to deal with problems and needs that emerge along the way, and to adapt the plan if needed.

3.2 Thinking Broadly About Teams

Working in teams is a frequent interpersonal experience. Reflect on all the teams or groups you have been a part of! Teams at work, student groups on your college campus, clubs in high school — even your group of friends can be seen as a team. Your family can be thought of as the first team you were a part of in your life, one that required you to learn how to, learn together, work together, and communicate.

Working in teams effectively is an essential skill for a variety of reasons. Human beings are social creatures, and even if we have a preference for alone time or working independently, teams are really an inevitable and unavoidable part of human life, starting in school as children. Working in teams can energize some people, and drain others; we might like it sometimes, and other times find it tedious. But when group experiences are successful, they can be rewarding, joyful, and productive, and in the workplace we often achieve more in teams than we could independently. Teams provide a window into the thoughts and perspectives of others, introducing a diversity of viewpoints in order to achieve a goal.

3.3 The Importance of Teams in the Workplace

Teams are an essential part of any workplace. Teamwork leads to learning, improves problem-solving through diverse perspectives, nurtures working relationships, and fosters collaboration. Efficient teamwork has also been linked with better organizational results and innovation[1]. Therefore, developing teamwork skills is critical for anyone in the workforce.

The definition of a "team" can vary significantly by context. It might be an entire department, or a smaller group within a department or the broader organization. Teams can be cross-functional, where members come from various departments and roles within an organization, or can consist of peers at the same level within the company. Teams can be formal, officially designed by the company, or informal, coming together on their own for a shared purpose. In the current work climate, some teams can consist of some remote work employees and others who work in person, and some teams can be fully remote and only work virtually with one another, never having in-person interactions. For virtual teamwork, defining communication channels (e.g., Slack, Teams, Google Chat) and working agreements is even more critical.

1. McKinsey Quarterly. Go, teams: When teams get healthier, the whole organization benefits.

Photo by UX Indonesia on Unsplash

3.4 Essential Aspects of Healthy and Effective Teamwork

While all teams are different and should always be assessed based on their unique members, goals, and dynamics, there are some qualities that all healthy and effective teams should have, or at least be working towards and striving for. We have outlined these broadly as a defined structure; open communication; accountability and commitment; clear, shared goals; and psychological safety. See more about each below.

Defined structure: A team should have clear roles, ongoing progress evaluations at important points, and plans to facilitate corrective action if needed.

Open communication: A team should allow for open communication, making it a part of the team's norms, expectations, and culture.

Accountability and commitment: All team members should be willing to dedicate the energy and time required for the team to be successful. While individuals may have different roles, each member should put in what is required of them in order to positively impact the team.

Clear, shared goals: All team members should understand the team's goals, and share in those goals by feeling accountable to the team and its results.

Collaboration: Members within the team should develop a climate that encourages and supports working together, highlighting their interdependence and the overall value of having multiple voices.

Psychological Safety: Psychological safety is defined as feeling that you can "take interpersonal risks, to speak up, to disagree openly, to surface concerns without fear of negative repercussions or pressure to sugarcoat bad news"[2].

Psychological safety helps create an environment where people feel encouraged to share ideas without the fear of judgment. When individuals have psychological safety in their team environment, they can share brainstorming, ideas, and feedback with their teammates, including feedback that might be perceived as "negative" by teammates, managers, or leaders. Psychological safety is an important part of working in teams because it helps support innovation, inclusivity, and interpersonal connection between individuals.

Patrick Lencioni is an organizational consultant who talks about the five dysfunctions of a team. Check the video to learn about these dysfunctions and see if you can make connections with the points we discussed here.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://open.lib.umn.edu/orgdev/?p=150#oembed-1

3.5 Tools to Support Teamwork

A variety of tools can be used to support teamwork in the workplace, and many of them can be integrated into the day-to-day formal structures that teams leverage to work together more effectively.

One simple yet effective tool, for instance, is a team agreement, which can be used to establish "ground rules" or expectations on how a team will work together and to articulate desired norms for the team. Creating this initial agreement together is a way to open up dialogue among team members on topics that are often overlooked, such as: what are our goals? How do we want to work together? How will we know if we are successful? It also provides an opportunity to formalize these ideas and agreements by writing and documenting them. These documents can be tailored to fit a team's needs, and there are no set rules for what needs to be included.

Below we have included some resources that can be a helpful starting point for teams:

- Suggestions for developing a team agreement.
- Tips for defining team roles.
- Tips for navigating conflict.

2. What is psychological safety? McKinsey, 2023

3.6 Tips for Developing OD Skills: Effective Communication and Collaboration

Communication and collaboration are essential skills for change facilitators as well as for anyone hoping to have healthy, strong, honest relationships on the teams in both their professional and personal lives. While the definitions of these skills are broad and vary tremendously based on the particular context of the organization or team, they are at the core of many other skills needed in the OD process, so it is important to introduce them early.

Communication is an ever-present part of being an individual existing within a variety of social groups and systems. While it may seem a simple or obvious skill that we engage in all the time, if we want to ensure that our communication is effective and supportive, we have to consider the feelings, positions, and viewpoints of those around us. Active listening (explored as a skill in Chapter 4) is essential here, as communication involves verbal and nonverbal communication and cues, including spoken words, eye contact, and body language. Learning to be honest yet delicate when providing difficult news or feedback, as well as to be supportive and developmental is an ongoing journey that people undertake over the course of both their professional and personal lives. Keeping these goals in mind will be helpful as you embark on this journey as both a change facilitator and an effective team member. Consider these suggestions for effective communication with your team, and check this website for further improving your communication skills.

Collaboration is another inevitable part of social life. Whether working on a group project for a class, being a part of a professional team with an upcoming deadline, or simply being part of a family, we need to collaborate with those around us all the time. While clear, effective communication is an important part of collaboration, this skill also involves engaging with your empathy in order to understand the goals of the team and work with those around you to achieve those goals by interacting with and listening to all of its members to ensure that all voices are heard. Collaboration can involve compromise, and understanding that sometimes the group's goals and priorities will take precedence over your own.

Communication and collaboration are essential parts of any team that hopes to create a healthy and open environment with one another in order to be successful. When you are working in groups, can ask yourself some questions to help you hone a collaborative attitude:

1. How will my work contribute to the overall success of our team?
2. What do I need from others so I can do my part in the best way possible?
3. What can I offer others so they can do their part in the best way possible?
4. What are the consequences for the team if I do not do my part?
5. How is my behavior affecting others in the group? Is there anything I can change in my behavior or the way I work to collaborate more with the team?

There are tools that can help foster collaboration in a team. Check these tips for surviving group projects and teamwork in the classroom.

Questions for Reflection

1. Go back to the OD skills table, and reflect on yourself:
   - Which of these skills do you believe you have already developed?
   - Which of these skills do you believe you need to acquire or develop further?
2. Reflect on a few teams that you have been a part of, either in your academic, professional, or personal life.
   - Were they effective or ineffective?
   - What made them either effective or ineffective?
   - Did you enjoy working on these teams? Why or why not?
   - How would you describe the "norms: or working routines of that team?
   - What, if anything, would you have changed about these teams? You may find that some of these changes are things that can be addressed through the OD process we will be exploring in this book!

Summary

Working in teams is an ever-present interpersonal experience. There are a variety of tools that can be used to support teamwork in the workplace. While all teams are different and should always be assessed based on their unique members, goals, and dynamics, there are some qualities that all healthy and effective teams should have, or at least be working towards and striving for. We have outlined these things broadly as a defined structure, open communication, accountability and commitment, clear, shared goals, and psychological safety. Learning how to work in teams effectively and developing the skills necessary to create positive team environments is an ongoing journey, and something people work on throughout their careers.

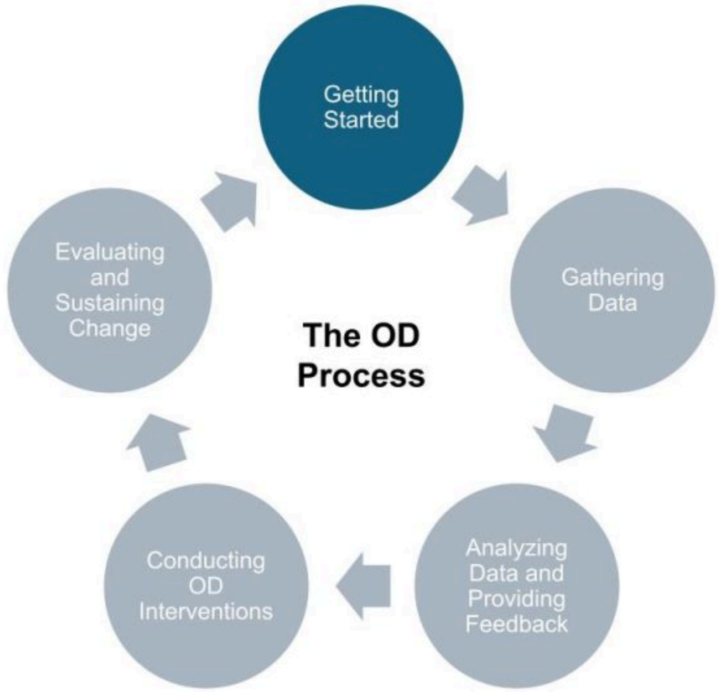
CHAPTER FOUR: GETTING STARTED

Chapter Overview

This chapter explains the goals and key activities in the entry stage of the OD approach. It discusses the importance of building rapport and trust, defining goals (current state vs. future state), and establishing ground rules about how the work will be conducted, and looks at the two main activities conducted in the initial OD process stage — identifying the key stakeholders involved and understanding the initial problem definition and desire for change. The chapter also discusses the difference between the articulated problem and the "real" problem.

Contents

4.1 Purpose of the Getting Started Stage



Step 1 of the OD Process – Getting Started

Getting started can be the most difficult step of any project, but it is often the most important. In the OD process, this step is essential in setting the tone of the change project ahead and ensuring the efficacy of the work that is to come. During this critical first phase, change facilitators develop relationships with stakeholders, establish ground rules and expectations for the project, and establish mutual goals and a shared direction for the outcome of the project.

These early conversions and meetings about the change project at hand also are important in order to provide clarity on what are realistic outcomes of the project as they relate to the role of the change facilitator and the OD process in general. It is important to educate stakeholders about what OD is and what changes facilitators can realistically accomplish within the constraints of a particular project. Many stakeholders and organizations may be unfamiliar with OD and may not fully understand what the goals are or what the process entails.

Change facilitators should articulate that OD is about supporting organizational change through a collaborative and humanistic approach. During the change process, a change facilitator work together with the organization to facilitate the change process. This is important to articulate as it sets the expectation that the change facilitator will need collaboration, support, and trust from stakeholders involved in the project as it unfolds. The change facilitator cannot make these changes happen without active engagement from those involved with the organization, group, or individual that is implicated in the change process.

Lastly, it is important to outline the OD process broadly at the start of a project, and explain the five main stages: (1) getting started, (2) gathering data, (3) analyzing data and providing feedback, (4) facilitating intervention activities to support change, and (5) evaluating the change efforts and sustaining change.

4.2 Understanding the Context

The process of getting started allows the change facilitator to get a first look at the context of the organization or team that the change process will involve. In this first stage, it is important to become familiar with key factors such as the size of the organization, its geographical locations, the line of business, and other general characteristics. If you are not a member of the organization, it is good practice to visit their webpage and check recent news about the organization. Additionally, noticing the way people communicate and interact may give some cues about the **organizational climate** and **culture**.[1].

A change project usually starts with an initial conversation with key members of the organization who will be involved in the process. In this conversation, it is important to gather information about two important questions:

1. *What is the problem we are trying to solve?* In general, organizations wanting to make changes are seeking to solve a problem. While it is critical to understand their perspective about the problem they are trying to solve, it is common that the issue they are presenting is only a part of a larger problem, or a symptom, a consequence of underlying issues.
2. *Who are the key stakeholders?* Stakeholders are the individuals, at all levels of the organization, who are in the best position to influence or contribute to the success of a change effort. These are individuals who can have a significant impact on the outcome of a project, either positively or negatively, and need to be involved in the planning process.

In the next two sections, we discuss these questions in more detail.

4.3 Presenting Problem vs. Real Problem and Root Causes

What is the problem we are trying to solve?

While it is always helpful and important to get initial thoughts and reactions from the individuals or groups

1. Schneider, B., Ehrhart, M. G., Macey, W. H., & Fiske, S. (2013) Organizational Climate and Culture. Annual Review of Psychology, 64(1), 361–388. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-113011-143809

involved in the particular problem from the beginning of the project, during this initial stage, there are some important things to consider during these conversations.

During these initial conversations, you will hear the problem as identified by just a handful of people, sometimes just one or two. This is rarely reflective of the real problem or the entire problem. This is called the *presenting problem*. Often, this presenting problem is a symptom of a broader issue — the *real problem* — which it is the change facilitator's job to help identify. While initial conversations with the involved stakeholders are helpful, providing an idea of the type of issue or problems you are about to address, be aware that there is more to learn and to unveil. The complete picture of the real problem will only become clearer during the data gathering and diagnosis and feedback stages, when there are more voices involved in delineating the core issues at play.

Here are some questions you can ask to guide your first conversations and gather initial information about the problem at hand:

- What do you think are the causes of this problem?
- How long has it been happening?
- Who is impacted by this problem?
- What have you already tried to do to address or solve the problem?
- Why do you want to solve it now?
- What happens and what are the risks if it does not get solved?
- Who will directly and indirectly benefit from solving this problem?

Remember that while the answers to these questions may be insightful and well articulated, one person's or group's opinion cannot be taken as the full picture of a problem.

4.4 Stakeholder Analysis

A critical aspect of getting started is understanding who will come to play an important role in the change process.

Multiple stakeholders may be involved in a change project. It is important to identify them, as these individuals may be the people that will ultimately come to help shape the success of your project. Often, stakeholders are organizational leaders, department heads, or those with some sort of power and authority within the organizational hierarchy who must be on board with the project and the changes you are suggesting.

These individuals, however, might not necessarily be the most impacted by the change or the ones who may have valuable information to help on the project. Organizational changes often affect a variety of groups or people within organizations, and even if those individuals may not have the authority of leaders or **CEOs**, they are still critical to the success of a project. Further, any organizational or team change that directly involves people should take their voices into account, making them stakeholders in the change process. It is not unusual for an OD project to fail because the relevant stakeholders were overlooked or inappropriately defined.

Here are some questions to consider when figuring out how to identify stakeholders:

- Who has the ability to mobilize the necessary resources to support a desired change?
- Who has personal or organizational power within this particular context?
- Who has the responsibility for making the change?
- Who is in charge of the areas affected by the desired change?
- Who can provide valuable information to shape the change?
- Who possesses the knowledge and skills necessary to make the desired change?
- Who is handling projects that may affect or be affected by the desired change?
- Who has been involved in past similar, successful change efforts?

Stakeholders can have different levels of interest in the change as well as ability to inform and support it. If the change is related to how the organization sells its products, for instance, the sales leader and the sales team will likely be very interested. They will also have rich information about what works well in the sales process and what can be improved, and can contribute significantly to the change. Moreover, because they are responsible for the sales processes, it is important that they understand why the change makes sense, are aligned with it, and are committed to making it happen successfully.

Stakeholders can also have different levels of power to make decisions or influence the change. While the leader of the sales department, for example, likely has the power to make some decisions about the way the organization sells its products, members of the sales team probably have no such power, although they might have some ways to influence these decisions.

Change facilitators should identify key stakeholders in a change project and consider their interest in the change, ability to provide valuable information, and their power to make decisions or support the proposed changes. This understanding is crucial in helping change facilitators decide how they will manage these different stakeholders throughout the OD process. The matrix below (Figure 1) is a helpful tool to define the best management strategy for each stakeholder group.

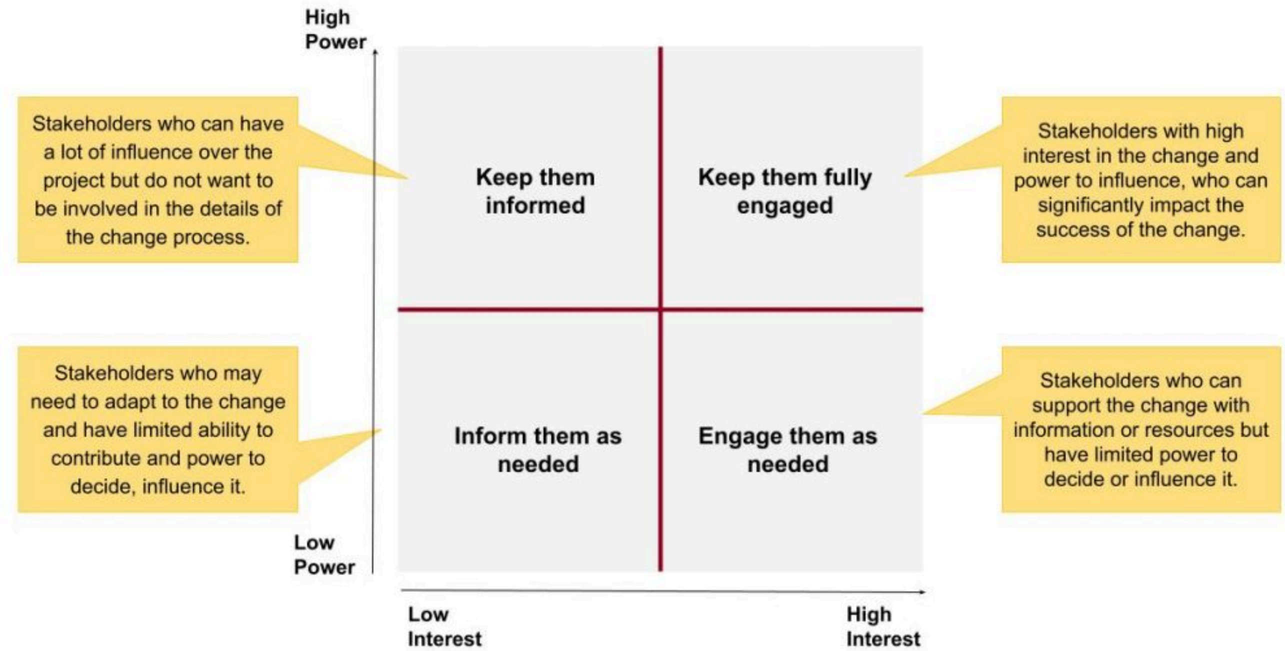


Figure 1. Stakeholder Management Strategy Matrix

Using this matrix with the example of the organization seeking to change its sales processes, the leader of the sales department should be fully engaged in the OD project as they have a high interest and high or medium power to make decisions, depending on the organization's hierarchy. Members of the sales team should be engaged as needed, as they are interested in the change and can contribute to it, but have limited power to make decisions. The CEO of this organization has high power to make decisions and can approve or vet proposed changes, but they might not have detailed information about the sales process and might not have time to participate fully in the OD process; the CEO thus needs to be kept informed about the overall progress of the project, but does not need to be fully engaged. Lastly, if we think about the financial team, which is responsible for tracking and reporting the organization's revenues and profits, they likely have a low interest in changes in the sales process and little power to make decisions about it, but might need to be informed if the changes impact revenues and profits when they are implemented.

The Stakeholder Map (Figure 2) is a template that can be used to map and analyze key stakeholders. This template is meant to be a useful tool to help you identify stakeholders and work through their involvement in a project.

Stakeholder analyses are ultimately subjective. Your reasoning as to why a stakeholder has been identified as "high-impact" or "low-impact" should be well-argued and well-supported. And your assessment may change over the course of a project; you may initially identify a person or a group as low-impact, but come to realize, as you work through gathering data and your data analysis, that they are in fact a high-impact stakeholder. That is ok! The OD process is flexible and iterative.

Stakeholder *(individual or group of people)*	**Interest in the change process** *(high-low)*	**Power to decide /support change** *(high-low)*	**Management Strategy** ***(keep informed; fully engage; engage as neede***
(e.g., CEO)	Low	High	Keep informed
(e.g., Sales leader)	High	High	Fully engage
(e.g., Sales team)	High	Low	Engage as needed
(e.g., financial team)	Low	Low	Inform as needed
...			
...			

4.5 Tips for Developing OD Skills: Active Listening

While we listen all the time, *active* listening is a specific skill that individuals can develop in order to listen in a deeper way. The goal of active listening is to listen in order to truly understand, which requires giving people your full attention while in conversation, and focusing on understanding and engaging with what they are sharing. Active listening involves asking questions, intentional eye contact, paraphrasing what you have heard from the person you are speaking with to ensure that you understand them and making sure to not interrupt them and creating a welcome and safe environment. Approaching a conversation or a meeting with openness and no judgment is essential to active listening. When done effectively, active listening can help establish and build trust, avoid miscommunication, and ultimately improve interpersonal and team relationships.

The video below offers good suggestions for honing your listening skills.

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://open.lib.umn.edu/orgdev/?p=116#oembed-1

Questions for Reflection

1. What might be some challenges in the "getting started" stage if you are an internal member of the organization? What about if you are coming from outside?
2. What are some techniques that you would be sure to implement in order to establish trust early on?
3. How would you broadly explain the OD process to a client who is unfamiliar with it before starting a project with them? Why is it important for them to understand what OD is before working together?

Summary

Getting started can be the most difficult step of any change project, but is often the most important. This chapter included information on how to navigate the early stages of the OD process and, most importantly, the relationship with your collaborators. It also discussed the "presenting problem," and how it is often a symptom of a broader issue, or "real problem." It is important to remember that the 'presenting problem' is a symptom of a broader issue, or the 'real problem.' It is the change facilitator's job to help identify the real problem in order to ensure the success of the project.

Media Attributions

- Chapter_4_OD Process_Step_1
- Management Strategy – Stakeholders

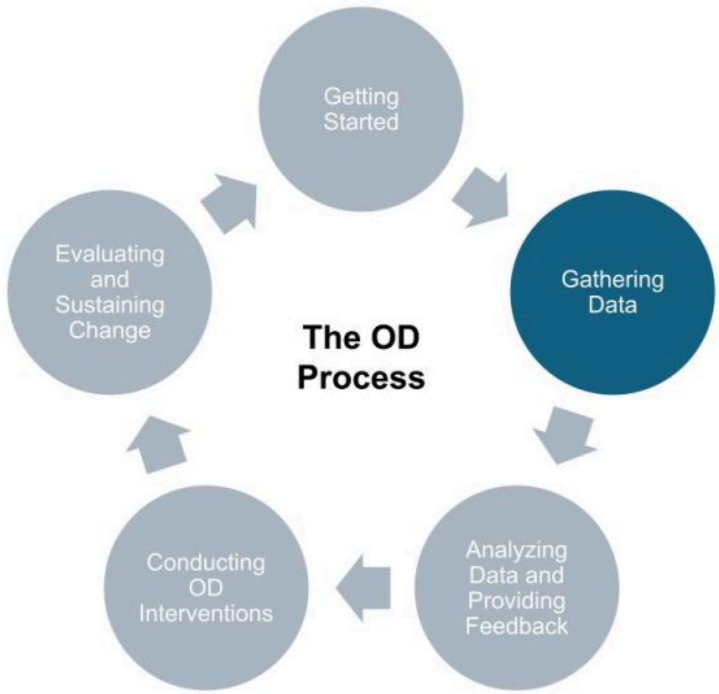
CHAPTER FIVE: DATA GATHERING

Chapter Overview

This chapter discusses the importance of gathering and analyzing information in order to deeply understand organizational issues and change opportunities. We describe the most common data-gathering methods used in organizational settings (interviews, focus groups, observation, and surveys) and explain how each method and the information it provides can contribute to a broader understanding of the problem and its root causes.

Contents

5.1 Purpose of the Data Gathering Stage



Step 2 of the OD Process – Gathering Data

Data gathering is an important stage of the OD process, a chance for you as a change facilitator to explore the issue, question, or problems at hand for yourself, and start identifying the *real problem* vs. the *presenting problem*. The 'real problem' can only be uncovered through a process of data gathering and analysis. As a change facilitator, it is important to consider what those involved in the problem believe the problem is, but it is essential to dig and explore on your own in order to come to an understanding of the 'real problem' and its root causes. As we will explore in subsequent chapters, identifying and addressing the 'real problem' and not the presenting problem is a critical to the effectiveness of the change process. Change facilitators should be looking for the root causes of a situation in order to propose change that gets at the heart of it and informs the rest of the process from a systemic perspective. Gathering and analyzing data from a variety of sources will give you, as a change facilitator, the information and insight needed to successfully move forward in the OD process.

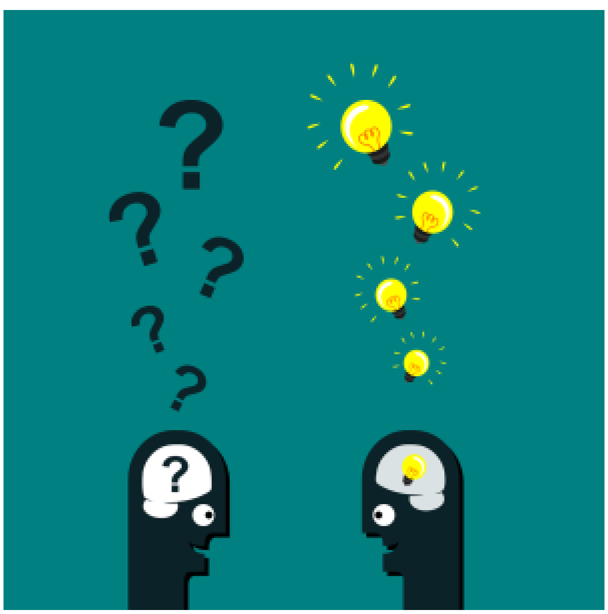
Data is also essential because it captures the voices of the individuals, teams, groups, or organizations involved in a variety of ways. While it is important to provide your preliminary understanding of the situation in advance of the diagnosis stage, once you move forward to crafting your analysis and supporting your claims it is crucial to use the experiences, opinions, and insights of the people who are actually involved and implicated in the change process. When used appropriately, both qualitative and quantitative data can be effective in supporting your claims, suggestions, and actions in the next steps of this process.

The data gathering stage provides the opportunity to directly engage with the people involved in the change process, to establish relationships based on open communication and trust regarding the goals of the change itself, and to make clear that input from individuals within the group or organization is going to be taken into consideration as the change process progresses. This process can create awareness about the change initiative and generate interest and energy for the change to happen.

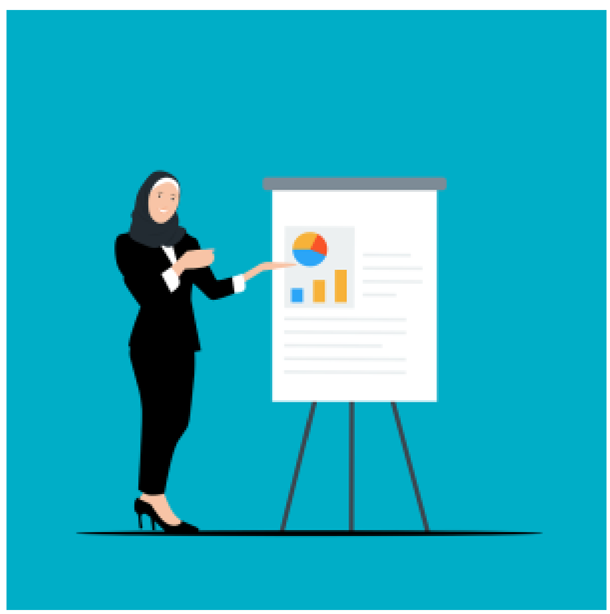
5.2 Defining a Data Gathering Approach

This section describes the different types of data and explores some common data-gathering methods that can be leveraged within the workplace and other organizational contexts. Each of these methods is complex, with a lot to learn about its techniques and implementation. We aim here to give only a foundational introduction, establishing an understanding of how each method can be used in the OD process.

There are two types of data: qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative data often centers on perceptions, stories, and meanings that individuals or groups ascribe to certain experiences or things. It responds to "why" and "how" questions. Often, the data gathered from a qualitative method is non-measurable. Qualitative data gathering and analysis are interpretation-based. Quantitative data, in contrast, is highly measurable, often including numerically measurable or countable metrics or statistics. Quantitative data responds to "how much," "how many," or "how often" questions.



Qualitative data – ideas, perceptions, beliefs



Quantitative data: quantifiable data, measures

When defining a data gathering approach, it is important to understand exactly what you are trying to accomplish and understand. There are a variety of factors that go into determining what type of data gathering method to use, depending on the issue at hand, the number of people the change involves, and the resources you have available to gather data (e.g., time, people, money, space). There is no 'right' or 'wrong' data method to use in a particular situation. Part of the art of facilitating change is understanding which method will be the most effective depending on the issue at hand and the type of data you want to gather. Using a more effective method in an effective way will often provide you with effective data. Using a less effective method may leave you with some lingering questions or missing pieces.

It is often necessary to combine more than one data-gathering method in order to craft a more complete picture of an issue. This is a strategy called *Triangulation.*

Triangulation is a research strategy that uses multiple sources of information to study and explore a situation. It allows to compare data that was collected using different methods in order to arrive at a more complete understanding of an issue. While all of the data collection methods described above will provide you with substantive information, each method is inherently incomplete on its own because of the nature of how it was conducted and the type of data collected. As we saw above, each method has pros and cons. However, if you employ more than one method, and use triangulation for analysis, you can compensate for gaps or missing information.

Below, we provide a brief explanation of the most used data-gathering methods in OD contexts.

Secondary Data Gathering

What is secondary data? Secondary data refers to any public, academic, or institutional available data that you did not collect yourself. Public secondary data might include federal records, national averages and statistics that are relevant to you (e.g., Bureau of Labor Statistics records, Census data, national employment averages within your industry). Academic data might include research, white papers, and reports (although often these are more difficult to access). And institutional data includes data specifically related to your organization, like **turnover** reports, data on the employee population, salary reports, performance reviews, climate surveys, employee surveys, and any other documentation that individuals within your organization might hold.

What is secondary data useful for? Secondary data gathering as a method is helpful for a variety of organizational issues, topics or problems as it can give you data that helps to contextualize what is going on within your organization, or provide historical information that might be relevant. In an OD process, secondary data should always be collected. It is easy and available data that can help you triangulate and complement the other method you opt to use.

There are a few things to consider when collecting and using secondary:

- Check your sources. You always want to use reliable, credible, and valid sources.
- Identify the information that you really need. Make sure that you are looking for secondary data intentionally. This requires understanding the data that will be most helpful *before* starting the data gathering process.
- Secondary data is a good place to start before collecting your own data, as it helps you educate yourself a bit more within the area you're looking at.

Interviews

What is an interview? An interview is one of the most common techniques for collecting data in OD contexts.

Interviews typically take place in a one-on-one setting with an *interviewer* (the person conducting the interview) and an *interviewee* (the person being interviewed). During an interview, the interviewer asks questions of the interviewee in order to understand their experiences and opinions on a particular topic. The data collected from an interview is considered *qualitative data*.

What are interviews useful for? Interviews allow you to create an in-depth understanding of experiences, perceptions, and interpretations. They are useful for understanding individual experiences, gathering in-depth information on a particular topic, and discussing more sensitive topics that individuals may want to talk about privately, away from other people within their broader team or organization. Interviews are also effective because they allow for open-ended questions and follow-up questions. They often initiate conversations with opening phrases such as "Tell me what you think about…." and "What is your experience with…" giving people the opportunity to share opinions, points of view, and experiences with a depth that might not happen with formal survey questions, for example. If an interviewee brings up something you hadn't thought of, you have the opportunity to ask them more about it during the interview.

There are a few things to consider when planning to use interviews as a data gathering technique.

- Interviews require a significant amount of time. While there can be shorter interviews, it is difficult to have an effective interview in less than one hour. With the time required to schedule them, along with constraints on employee schedules, interviews are usually not effective for gathering data from a large number of people. If you are trying to collect data for a company with 400 employees, for example, interviewing each of them is not going to be the most effective way to gather data. Interviews are usually conducted with 10–12 individuals in specific positions or randomly chosen to represent specific groups. For example, the leadership team of an organization and/or some members of the specific teams or departments involved in the change process would be good people to interview in order to find out more about a particular issue.
- Some people can be uncomfortable with the idea of an interview or with an interview in practice. The one-on-one setting can feel intimidating. Creating a comfortable and safe environment for people to feel free to express opinions is essential.

Focus Groups

What is a focus group? Focus groups are facilitated group discussions, led by a moderator, that aim to collect feelings, perceptions, and ideas through a group discussion on a particular issue or experience. The moderator in a focus group plays an important role, they facilitate the discussion and ask follow-up questions, but should allow participants to lead the discussion. Because they are facilitating the focus group to find out more about something specific, moderators a are often biased; they should, however, aim to facilitate the discussion in as unbiased a way as possible so as to create a safe environment for sharing and make all members feel heard. The data collected from a focus group is considered qualitative data.

What are focus groups useful for? Focus groups are useful for gathering in-depth information and insights from multiple people in a way that can be more effective than a one-on-one interview. You should choose the members of a focus group intentionally, with a specific reason for placing these individuals together to discuss this particular topic. Six to eight people is generally a good size for a focus group, but the number of participants in a group and the frequency of meetings can vary depending on the situation and what you are trying to understand.

There are a few things to consider when planning to use focus groups as a data gathering technique.

- As with interviews, some people may not be comfortable with being asked questions and sharing openly in a group. Additionally, as focus group settings include more people, they are not well-suited for questions that may raise sensitive topics in the discussion.
- There is also a potential danger of creating a bad mood or magnifying a problem if you are using a focus group to simply discuss a problem. Adding questions that motivate the group to discuss ways to improve is a good way to use a focus group as a brainstorming session on what could be done. Focusing the entire session or its conclusion on strengths can help mitigate any bad feelings that may arise.
- "Groupthink" — a lack of diversity of positions or opinions — can occur in focus groups. If one person shares something in a focus group, others might feel pressure to express the same position, beliefs, or opinion. This could stunt the possibility of an honest discussion, and facilitators of focus groups should be aware of this potential outcome and have ideas on how to guide conversations so as to allow for multiple perspectives.

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Observations

What is an observation?

Observation is perhaps the easiest data collection method to understand, as humans naturally engage in observation all the time to discover things about the world around them. As a data collection method, it involves observing a particular group or situation and collecting data on behavior related to how people do their work and interact with one another.

What are observations useful for? Observations provide live, in-the-moment data on behaviors that may be unreported or misunderstood. They are easy to conduct and require little preparation and planning.

There are a few things to consider when planning to use observation as a data gathering technique:

- Observation can feel strange to those being observed. Simply by being in a space observing, the change facilitator is inherently changing the situation. Participants know they are being observed and can feel uncomfortable or act in ways they might not normally. If choosing to use observation as a means to collect data, the change facilitator must consider how to make their presence as unintrusive as possible.
- Observation is time consuming. To be fully immersed in observation, the change facilitator should be giving the observation its full attention in the moment and must not be distracted by other things. And because this is a time-bound data collection method, observation must occur when the situation itself is occurring; it cannot be scheduled like an interview or a focus group. This may leave some relevant situations "unobserved," which is why more than one method of data collection is recommended.

Surveys

What is a survey?

A survey (most often administered online) is a list of questions that aims to understand a group's feelings on a particular topic or topics. The data collected can be either qualitative or quantitative; questions that are multiple choice or use rating scales will provide quantitative data, while questions that ask people to write short answers will provide qualitative data.

What are surveys useful for? Surveys are useful for quickly and efficiently gathering information from a large number of people. They often aim to gather data that is more exploratory than explanatory and can effectively and efficiently address a wide range of topics.

There are a few things to consider when planning to use surveys as a data gathering technique.

- Surveys should not be too long or too frequent. People can lose patience or interest when completing a survey if it is too long, or if they are surveyed too many times. This is called "survey fatigue." Survey questions should be clear and intentionally crafted in order to gather data that is needed without creating survey fatigue.
- While short-answer questions are possible on a survey, a survey may not be the best method of gathering in-depth information. Surveys feel less personal than an interview or a focus group, and because of survey fatigue, people may not provide as much information in a short-answer survey question as in an interview. In addition, it can be challenging and time consuming both to collect and to analyze a large amount of qualitative data in a survey.
- Because of their more impersonal nature, surveys also are not always appropriate for addressing sensitive topics, as their simple format does not allow for nuance and complexity that sensitive topics may require in order to be handled respectfully.

Several online tools are available for building surveys and collecting data, including Google Forms, Qualtrics or SurveyMonkey.

5.3 Process for Data Gathering

Regardless of the data collection method(s) you choose, there is a general process for leveraging these methods effectively.

1. Determine the most appropriate approach to the organization and the presenting situation. The data collection method must be directly suited to the issue at hand.
2. Communicate the project and data collection activity that you have chosen to the involved stakeholders.
3. Plan and prepare the data collection process.
4. Collect the data.
5. Analyze and present in the Diagnosis and Feedback stage (explored in the next chapter).

5.4 Ethical Concerns When Collecting Data

Asking good questions is an important skill to develop as a change facilitator and, more broadly, as a member of an organization with interpersonal relationships. During the data-gathering stage, asking good questions can help you understand the underlying real problem. Depending on the data gathering method you are using, questions will be used differently, and what qualifies as a "good" question will vary — e.g., in interviews, open-ended questions are usually best, while in a survey that uses a quantitative rating scale, clear and direct questions are best. A good question, however, is always purposeful. Think clearly about what you are hoping to get from each question; this will help you craft it.

Asking thoughtful and intentional questions can help you make employees feel seen and heard throughout the change process, and can be a critical tool in establishing trust with those you are working with and hoping to both help and gather information from. An important part of asking good questions is participating in active listening — listening deeply to others will help guide your questions through reflection on their thoughts and experiences. These two skills go hand-in-hand.

5.5 Tips for Developing OD Skills: Asking Good Questions

Asking good questions is an important skill to develop as a change facilitator, and more broadly, as a member of an organization who has interpersonal relationships. During the data gathering stage, asking good questions can help to understand the underlying 'real problem' at the heart of the situation. Depending on the data gathering method you are using, questions will be used differently, and what qualifies as a 'good' question will vary – i.e., in interviews, **open-ended questions** are usually best, whereas in a survey, when using a quantitative rating scale, clear, direct questions are best. However, a 'good' question is always purposeful.

Think clearly about exactly what you are hoping to get from the question. This will help guide your crafting of the question.

Further, asking thoughtful and intentional questions can help to make employees feel seen and heard throughout the process, and can be an important tool to establish trust with those you are working with and hoping to both help and gather information from. An important part of asking good questions is participating in active listening – listening deeply to others will help guide your questions through reflection on their thoughts and experiences. These two skills go hand in hand.

Powerful questions to help understand the root causes of a problem

- What needs improvement?
- What must be changed?
- What will have the biggest impact?
- What is working well?
- Why did this happen?
- Why have we been using this process?
- What concerns you the most about _________?
- What is holding you back from _________?
- What seems to be your main obstacle to _________?
- What do you mean by _________?
- What have you tried so far to solve __________?
- What ideas do you have to solve the situation?
- What do you think needs to happen to solve this situation?
- What else do you need to consider?
- How do you want _________ to turn out?
- In an ideal world, what would be the solution to this problem?
- What is your desired outcome?
- If the problem were solved today, what would tomorrow look like?
- What benefits would you like to get out of _________?
- Why is it important to solve this situation now?

Questions for Reflection

1. Which data-gathering method are you most interested in trying?
2. Given your personal strengths, which method do you think you personally would be best at? Why?
3. Which one do you think would be the most challenging for you? Why?
4. If you were involved in a change process within your organization, what would you hope change facilitators would do or prepare in order for you to feel comfortable sharing your thoughts, feelings, and opinions in an interview or a focus group?

Summary

Gathering and analyzing data from a variety of sources will give you, as a change facilitator, the necessary information and insight in order to move forward in the OD process successfully. We explored the most common data-gathering methods used in organizational settings and explained how each source and the information it provides can contribute to a broader understanding of the problem and its root causes. However, it is important to remember to leverage multiple data gathering methods and use triangulation to get as close to understanding the 'real' problem as possible.

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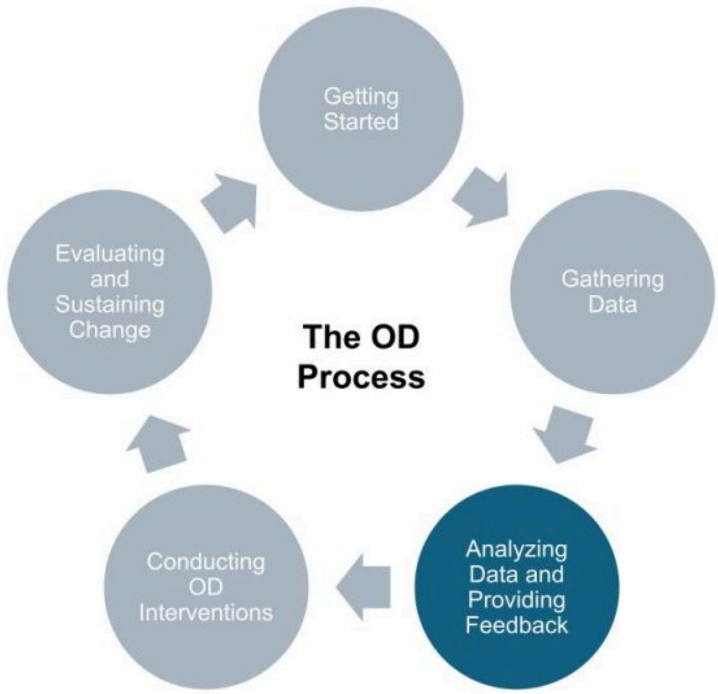
CHAPTER SIX: ANALYZING DATA AND PROVIDING FEEDBACK

Chapter Overview

This chapter discusses how to diagnose opportunities for change and improvement in organizational settings. We will learn some techniques to analyze data, aiming to build a broader understanding of the current situation, its leading causes, and potential barriers and facilitators to promoting change. The chapter emphasizes the importance of systemic thinking when conducting analysis, provides guidelines on summarizing findings into an actionable diagnosis, and discusses practical ways to communicate that diagnosis to an organization, helping define priorities and next steps.

Contents

6.1 Purpose of the Analyzing Data and Providing Feedback Stage



Step 3 of the OD Process – Analyzing Data and Providing Feedback

The analyzing data and providing feedback stage is a core stage in the OD process. This is when the change facilitator analyzes the data gathered and transforms this analysis into meaningful and actionable insights, giving the organization the opportunity to look at its situation and the problem it is trying to solve from a broader perspective and in a structured way. In this stage, the change facilitator and organizational members discuss the findings from the data collection stage and address potential next steps for tackling the identified issues and improving organizational effectiveness. The final goal of this stage is to have a solid understanding of the current situation, a shared vision of the desired future, and a plan of action to move forward with the OD process.

A good data analysis is critical to identify the "real problems" the organization needs to address to enhance effectiveness. Being able to communicate the findings in a structured and compelling manner helps organizational members expand their understanding of the situation and prompts a conversation about potential solutions, priorities, and next steps. Importantly, the change facilitator must be open to questions and different perspectives from organizational members and be able to incorporate these contributions during the feedback process. An effective feedback conversation not only establishes a shared understanding of the need for change, but also generates energy and commitment to action.

6.2 Analyzing Data

In Chapter 5, we discussed different types of data and methods of collecting in an organizational setting. There are also different ways to analyze data. In an OD process, the focus of data analysis is usually to identify patterns and provide explanations for the situation(s) the organization is facing. We look for what shows up frequently in the data versus rarely, commonalities, differences, and inconsistencies. When analyzing data in OD processes, we try to understand "what is going on" in the organization and look for the root causes of the issues impacting organizational effectiveness. Some key questions to consider when analyzing data in the OD process include the following:

- What issues or themes show up most often across the data sources?
- Where do we see similarities or differences across teams, roles, or locations?
- What has changed over time, and what has stayed the same?
- Where are there inconsistencies or contradictions in the data?
- Where are the gaps, and what might need further exploration?
- What strengths or bright spots appear repeatedly?
- What are the problems the data identifies?
- What are the contributing sources of the problems?
- How do these problems impact the organization?
- What are the opportunities to improve?
- How do the strengths this organization have can help solve the problems or enhance effectiveness?

We can think about the data we collect as pieces of a large puzzle. But while the analytical work aims to put these pieces together to create a broader picture, the data collected does not always fit perfectly into the picture. We may find inconsistencies, irrelevant information, and incomplete information. In the data analysis stage, we look for patterns and develop hypotheses about how these patterns might explain the situation the organization is facing and the issues its leaders are trying to solve.

There are several ways to analyze data, and individuals will develop their analytical skills with practice. Someone skilled in data analysis often combines a structured process with some creativity. A general process for those starting to practice data analysis includes the following:

1. Organize the data collected: It is important to keep track of each information source (e.g., company reports, interviews, meeting minutes, observation, survey responses) and the date you collected the data. Also, if you have interviewed organizational members and agreed that you will not share identifiable information, make sure you anonymize information before sharing it.
2. Familiarize yourself with the data: A good practice before starting to categorize data and look for patterns is to become as familiar as possible with the data you collected. Take a look at all of it, keeping

the broad question "what is going on here?" in mind. Take general notes.

3. After you are familiar with the data, choose a more structured approach to further analyze the information. You can use a deductive, an inductive approach, or both. These approaches will help you find patterns and explanations, and will also help you identify inconsistencies and questions. In some situations, you may have the opportunity to elucidate these questions. In others , you might need to share them as part of your analysis and define the next steps to clarify these points.
4. Once you develop some hypotheses that may explain the organizational situation, you have your diagnosis. Now, it is time to think about the best way to communicate what you found to other stakeholders in the organization. In section 6.3, we provide some suggestions on how to communicate your diagnosis effectively and conduct a feedback conversation.

6.2.1 Analyzing data using a deductive approach: models

Deductive approaches for data analysis use a predefined structure to organize the data collected. In OD, we usually use an organizational model or theory. You can use the organizational model described in Chapter One, for example. There are also other well-know organizational models, including the 7-S or the Star Model. After categorizing your data, you can look at the entire model and identify the main issues and potential opportunities for improvement, the characteristics that are contributing to the problem, how these characteristics are interrelated, and whether they are well-aligned or if there are significant misalignments that are impacting the organization's performance.

Offering an inquiry structure to follow, deductive analysis using models can be helpful if you are starting to develop your analytical skills. Once you have organized your data using the model, you consider what the data says about each organizational element. What do we know about this organization's vision? What about the strategy? Is there a clear strategy? Is it aligned with the vision and goals the organization aspires to achieve? And so on. The model helps to think about all the main components of an organization, and also offers a structure to communicate your analysis to the organization in a familiar language (e.g., processes, strategy, skills). A focus on the components of one specific model may, however, make you overlook other aspects of the situation that may not be as clearly connected with the adopted model.

6.2.2 Analyzing data using an inductive approach: common themes

In the inductive approach, we start from the data instead of using a predefined model. We search the data for repeating themes and seek to understand how these themes explain the organization's situation, its challenges, and potential opportunities for development. If, for example, a lot of individuals mention how departments function in silos or how difficult it is to get someone from a different department to help with a project, you may find that lack of collaboration across organizational departments is a main theme. This approach to analyzing data is sometimes called *thematic analysis*. Some people will use color coding to identify common themes (Figure 1), while others may work with sticky notes (Figure 2) or employ a table or a spreadsheet. The outcome of such an analysis is a list of predominant themes that explain the organizational situation and shed light on opportunities for improvement.

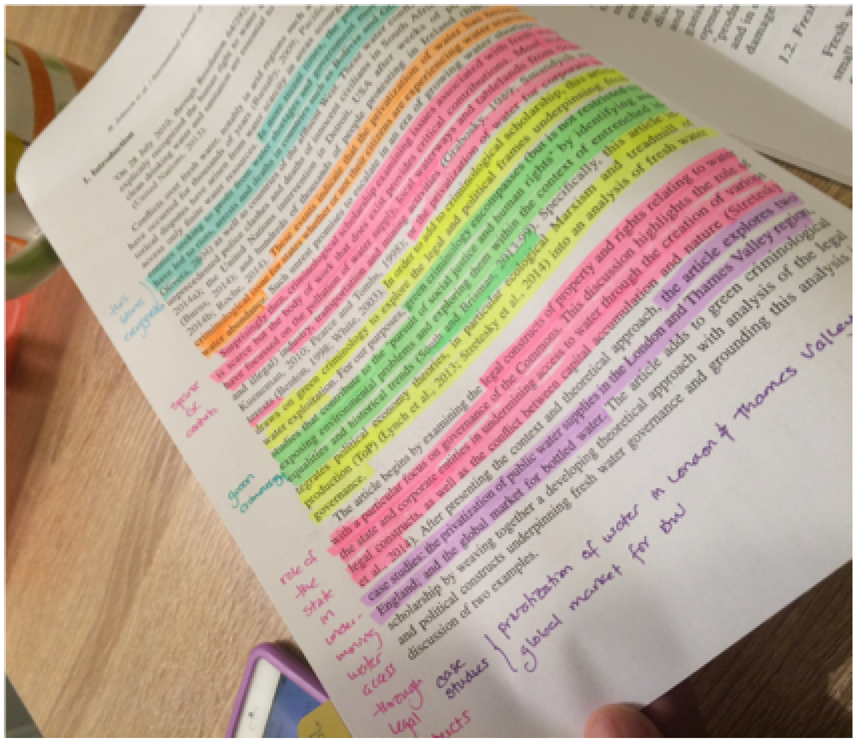


Fig. 1 – Color coding

Fig. 2 – Themes on sticky notes. Image by Aurélia from Pixabay

Because it is less structured, this approach may be more challenging for those with less practice in data analysis. There are no specific guidelines on how to find key themes, and the approach requires a lot of interaction with the data and multiple attempts to categorize that data in different ways until you have a compelling picture of the situation, which can require a significant time investment. Nevertheless, this less structured approach can allow for deeper analysis and the identification of important elements that would not be spotted using a pre-defined model. Another benefit of inductive approaches is that you can use language that is familiar to an organization. Instead of pointing out the potential opportunities in the organization's strategy, for example, you can talk about opportunities in their "5-year growth plan," if that is what they call their strategic plan.

6.2.3 Developing a robust analysis

There are advantages and disadvantages to both deductive and inductive data analysis. No matter which approach you choose, it is important to be aware of potential traps and of ways to ensure robust data collection.

One of the most common traps in data analysis is related to the biases of the individual conducting the analysis. It is natural that, as human beings, we will look at the data through our unique perspectives Our knowledge, previous experiences, and values influence lead us to focus more on certain aspects than others. If you are very process-oriented, for instance, you might emphasize issues with processes and overlook problematic interpersonal relationships, or vice versa. Donald Schon and Chris Argyris developed the concept of the ladder of inference (check the video below) to explain this phenomenon.

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Some recommendations to make your analysis robust:

- **Organize your data**: Whether you are sorting your data into the predefined categories of a model or looking for common themes, it is critical to keep it organized. Spreadsheets, sticky notes, and color can all help categorize your data. Make sure you have an easy system to identify the source of each piece of information. You can add codes to identify your source, such as "I" for interviews (e.g., I1, I2, I3), "R" for reports, and "N" for news.
- **Look at your data in different ways:** Sorting your data in multiple ways can help you identify hidden patterns. For example, you can categorize your data using a model and then experiment with thematic analysis to see what additional learnings emerge, or vice versa.
- **Gather data from multiple sources:** Collecting data from multiple sources allows you to triangulate

this data and look for consistencies and inconsistencies. This helps provide a complete picture of the situation and reduce the risk of biases.

- **Include others' perspectives**: Including others' perspectives is also an excellent way to minimize analytical biases. You might have a partner working with you to facilitate change and help with data collection, or you might ask some key stakeholders to look at your preliminary analysis and provide their input.
- **Investigate inconsistencies:** You will likely find some inconsistencies in your data, and it is crucial to investigate them. They might be due to different groups having distinct interpretations of a situation, and these differences can provide insight that helps you understand the whole picture.

6.3 Feedback – Communicating Diagnosis and Discussing Next Steps

Whether you are an external OD practitioner helping an organization promote change and improve performance, or an internal member of the organization working on a change project, you should consider your diagnosis as a *preliminary* result of your analysis. In OD work, the final diagnosis is developed when feedback is provided to the organization and inputs from others are incorporated. Feedback is thus an essential stage of the OD process.

Providing this feedback is crucial to the success of the change effort for three main reasons. First, it is an opportunity to validate your analysis and get additional input that might explain inconsistencies or shed light on points that are still unknown. This discussion helps the organization's members expand their understanding of the situation and identify the main opportunities for change and improvement. Second, the feedback helps stakeholders prioritize the most urgent and important issues. And third, it creates alignment among stakeholders on what needs to be done and why, generating accountability for the change and energy for action.

The feedback usually happens in a meeting with the organization's key stakeholders. Good preparation is imperative, and should include a presentation of the main findings and creation of a space for dialogue about these findings. When preparing for the feedback meeting, a change facilitator should consider the following:

- Which stakeholders should be invited to participate in this discussion?
    - In general, the discussion should involve all stakeholders who are highly interested in the change process and have the power to make decisions and to support or obstruct the change.
- What information should be presented?
    - Change facilitators often receive a large amount of information from their analysis, and it is important to select only the most useful and relevant information to share. Returning to the original problem they were trying to solve is a good strategy for selecting the information that can expand stakeholder's understanding of the situation. More detailed information can always be

shared later.

- What is the best format for presenting the results?
    - This will depend on the situation and on the style of the organization and its stakeholders. Change facilitators frequently present their findings using slide presentations. Sometimes, a report is sent in advance of the feedback meeting. No matter which format you choose, make sure that the information is well-structured and clearly presented. It is also important to include data (non-identifiable, if it is from interviews) supporting the statements in your diagnosis.

Along with presenting the diagnosis, the change facilitator must be prepared to facilitate a productive and future-oriented discussion, generating alignment among the various stakeholders, avoiding focus on "who is to blame," and focusing the discussion on potential next steps that will lead to a solution.

In general, a well-conducted diagnosis will identify a handful of opportunities for improvement. In a feedback meeting, stakeholders might feel overwhelmed and have trouble deciding what to do next. The change facilitator is vital in helping them make decisions about priorities and next steps; otherwise, the change process may halt.

Using a prioritization technique can help facilitate the discussion about where to start or which opportunities for improvement prioritize. One such technique is to use the impact-effort matrix (Figure 3), which helps categorize opportunities for improvement according to their potential impact on the organization's performance and their required effort, including skills, time, and financial and human resources.

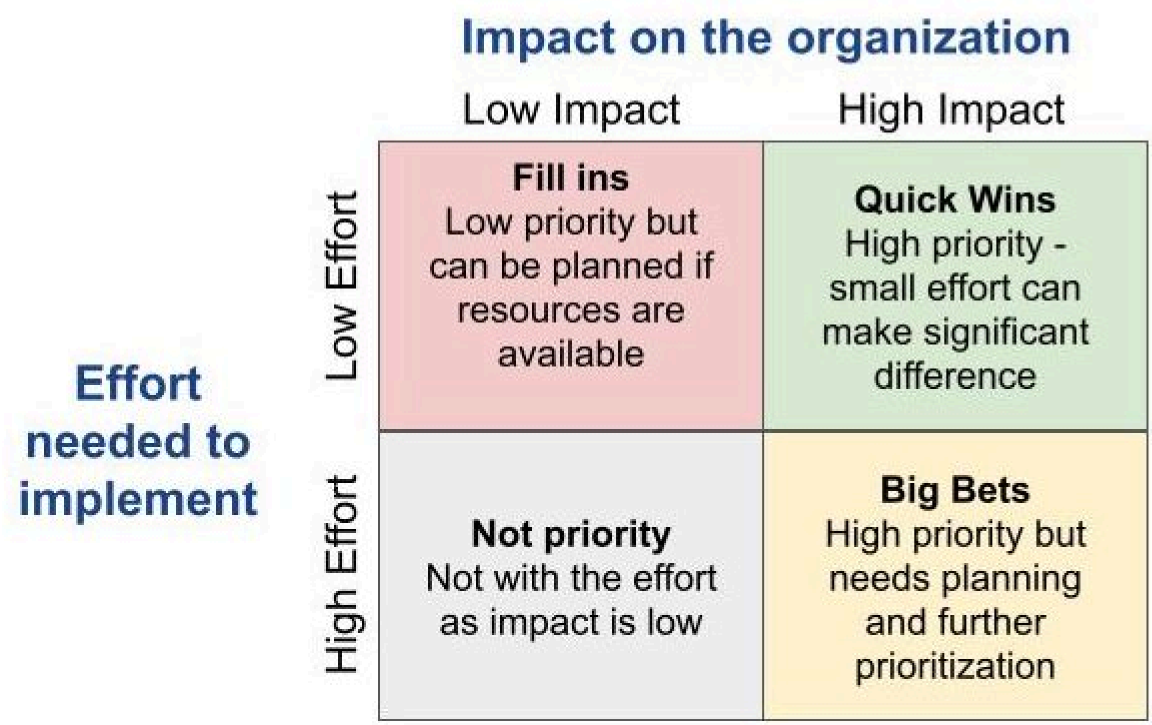

Figure 3 – Impact-Effort Matrix (developed by the authors, adapted from Usemotion)

6.4 Ethical Concerns in the Analyzing Data and Providing Feedback Stage

Individuals facilitating change from an OD perspective should be attentive to two ethical concerns in this stage. The first is your own biases in presenting the findings of your analysis. Maintaining a critical perspective, asking yourself what other possibilities could explain your findings, having others contribute to the analysis, sharing your conclusions as preliminary findings, and inviting other stakeholders to question and add inputs are all good ways to minimize the risk of a biased conclusion.

The second is the temptation to soften the message to the organization or to be persuaded by some stakeholders to soften the message or retain information to avoid a difficult conversation or confrontation. Organizations often experience messy situations, have a toxic culture, or have toxic leadership, which can be difficult to discuss. Nevertheless, honest feedback is necessary to create awareness and accountability for improvement. It is essential to be respectful, to share the feedback only as one perspective and not the complete picture, and to invite stakeholders to share their perceptions. Remember that the organization has the right to access the information you collected as part of this process (ensuring anonymity when required), and remind all stakeholders that the goal is to look for opportunities for improving organizational performance rather than to look for people to blame. Sharing the diagnosis in small groups or individually can be a good initial step, since it gives individuals time to process and react before the diagnosis is presented to a larger group.

6.5 Tips for Developing OD Skills: Systems Thinking and Problem Identification

Most OD skills are essential in the analyzing data and providing feedback stage. Systems thinking and openness to different perspectives, for example, are critical skills for conducting effective analysis, while communication, active listening, and the ability to ask insightful questions are vital in a feedback meeting. This chapter focuses on systems thinking and problem identification as key competencies for supporting organizations during this stage.

Systems thinking is the ability to view a problem from multiple perspectives and to identify interconnections and interdependencies. This requires understanding the components that constitute a system and how they interact to make the system function. When considering ways to support organizations in changing and improving their performance, systems thinking enables you to:

- See interrelationships between the many different components in an organizational system.
- Understand the potential impact of external factors on the organization and the change effort.
- Go beyond surface-level symptoms and identify potential root causes contributing to these symptoms and other organizational challenges.
- Understand how changes in one organizational component may affect other components in the system.
- Identify the different ways in which the system shapes individuals' behaviors in the organization.

Some approaches to developing your systems thinking skills include:

- Look at the same situation from different perspectives. Ask yourself:
  - What is another way to see this situation?
  - What else might be going on here?
  - What might I be missing or not seeing?
- Ask the perspective of others and listen attentively. Then ask yourself:
  - What does this person see that is different from how I see it?
  - What data is informing their perspective?
- Draw!
  - Sketch your understanding of the situation.
  - Draw the different components involved in the situation and the connections and relationships between them.
- Exercise your curiosity by trying new things and ways of doing things.

Problem identification is the ability to recognize a problem and identify the systemic factors contributing to it. It is the first step in solving a problem, but it is often not given the necessary attention. Many individuals and organizational leaders frequently jump into finding solutions without adequately understanding the real problem and its underlying causes. This lack of attention to problem identification often leads to inefficient solutions.

To develop your skills in problem identification, try the following:

- Investigate different sources of information.
- Look for different perspectives, asking yourself and others about other possible explanations for the problem.
- Use the "5 Whys" technique, repeatedly asking "Why" to move beyond symptoms and uncover the root causes of a problem.

Questions for Reflection

1. Analyzing data to identify problems and their underlying causes requires practice. It is an important skill for any professional. What activities could you seek out in order to help you develop your analytical skills?
2. Thinking about your personal characteristics and preferences, which factors do you need to be attentive to in order to reduce your own biases when analyzing organizational issues?
3. Good preparation is key for a good feedback discussion. How would you prepare yourself to provide feedback to organizational members about your findings from the diagnostic stage?
4. What can you do to reduce ethical problems in the diagnosis and feedback stage?

Summary

In the analyzing data and providing feedback stage, we apply data analysis strategies to develop a broader understanding of the context, issues, and opportunities for improvement, to identify the root causes of organizational problems, and to articulate these problems to the organization's stakeholders. We use deductive and inductive analysis, or a combination of both techniques. Importantly, the outcomes of this stage should be seen as a preliminary perspective that needs to be communicated and discussed with the organization's key stakeholders. At the feedback meeting, the change facilitator shares the diagnosis and facilitates a conversation the issues impacting the organization's performance and about a potential action plan and next steps. The ability to identify problems and their underlying causes, along with attention to minimizing biases in the analysis and communicating clear, complete, and respectful feedback, are critical in this stage.

Media Attributions

- Step 3 of the OD Process – Analyzing Data and Providing Feedback
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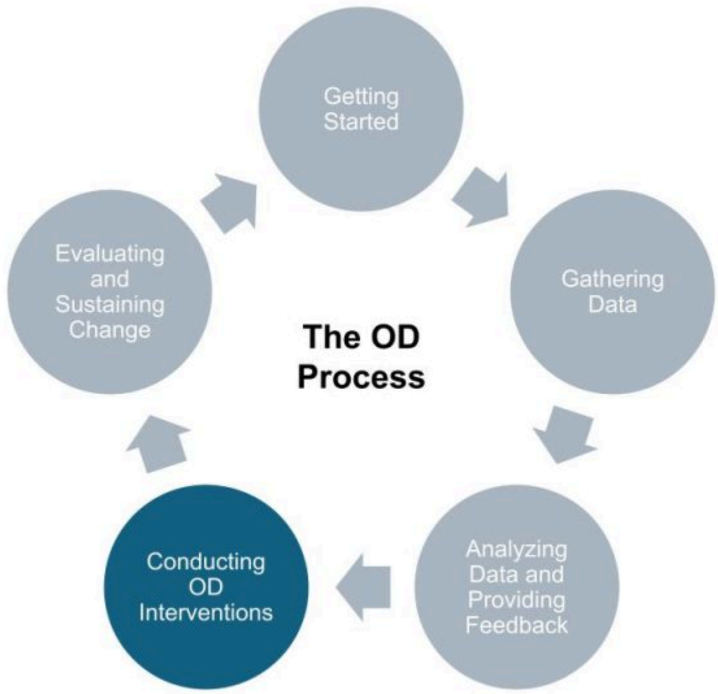
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONDUCTING OD INTERVENTIONS

Chapter Overview

This chapter defines OD interventions and discusses how to select interventions or a combination of interventions to facilitate change given specific organizational context, issues, and opportunities. It also highlights important points of attention that should be considered when selecting and conducting OD interventions.

Contents

7.1 Purpose of the Conducting Interventions Stage



Step 4 of the OD Process – Conducting OD Interventions

In the intervention stage, change facilitators work with organizational members to define and conduct OD interventions to support the organization's desired changes. This stage is vital, as it helps create a shared understanding of the need for the change, promotes a collaborative discussion about ways to make the desired change a reality, provides opportunities for learning, fosters personal and professional development, and improves interrelationships among stakeholders.

Although this chapter discusses specific tasks necessary to conduct OD interventions, some scholars and practitioners believe that almost any interaction between a change facilitator and an organization and its members is already an intervention. This belief comes from the fact that in every conversation about an organizational situation, the change facilitator is asking questions of and prompting reflections by the individuals with whom they are interacting. As organizational issues and opportunities for change are discussed in all the different stages of the OD process, individuals expand their understanding of the situation they are facing, reflect on how they contribute to that situation, and consider what they could do to improve, fostering their learning and development.

7.2 What are OD Interventions?

OD interventions are structured and carefully planned activities that support change. Based on behavioral sciences and principles of adult and organizational learning, they generally aim to disrupt current behaviors and relationships and promote learning and development. OD interventions have a clear purpose of supporting individuals, teams, and organizations in accomplishing desired changes and improvements.

There are numerous different OD interventions, and they can be targeted to support change at the level of the individual, the team, and/or the entire organization. OD interventions are anchored on principles of experiential and transformational learning. Through engaging in a concrete activity, individuals reflect on their experience, acquire new knowledge, develop skills, and revisit their own beliefs and assumptions, aiming to challenge and eventually transform the way they think, relate, and work. At the team and organizational levels, these interventions can promote a collective reflection on the organizational culture and values, a revision of established ways of working and interacting at the workplace, and a collaborative effort to define new working norms, working processes, and team dynamics.

Organizational Learning Theory serves as a foundation for OD interventions at the organizational level. Ultimately, OD interventions at the organizational level seek to help organizations become *learning organizations* — where members develop the ability to create and transfer knowledge and think systemically, generating organizational capacity to change and adapt to unpredictable situations. This theory is based on the assumption that organizations are an outcome of the ways people think and act. Consequently, in order for an organization to successfully change and adapt to new circumstances, it needs to help its members change the way they think and act, and the effective way to accomplish this is through experiential learning and collaborative dialogue, not through command-control or top-down decisions.

According to Senge (1990)[1], organizations that wish to become learning organizations need to support their members in developing five disciplines:

1. Personal mastery, which helps people develop self-awareness (understanding their strengths and opportunities for development) and a developmental orientation (drive to learn and develop).
2. Mental models, which helps people understand how their beliefs influence their actions.
3. Shared vision, which helps people understand the organization's vision and how individuals and teams contribute to accomplishing this vision.
4. Team learning, the ability to mobilize a team to achieve common goals.
5. Systems thinking, which helps people understand the interdependence of various organizational elements and how change impacts them.

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1. Senge, P. (1990). *The Fifth Discipline*.

7.3 Selecting OD Interventions

We have learned that organizations are complex systems and that changes in one organizational element might trigger changes in other elements of the system. In most cases, when organizations face issues or need to adapt to new circumstances, they often have to promote changes in different elements and at different levels of the organization. When organizations had to adapt to the Covid pandemic, for example, many had to make changes in organizational processes and systems, including ensuring secure remote access to internal information, adjusting production processes to align with the new characteristics of the external demand, and improving the communication system to facilitate remote work. At the team level, organizations had to promote changes to their team norms and dynamics so they could operate remotely. And at the individual level, supervisors had to learn how to manage remote teams, and employees had to learn how to work from home, maintaining focus and balancing family demands. In most situations, change facilitators will need to conduct OD interventions to tackle different organizational elements at different levels of the organizational system. And because change is a process, multiple interventions are often required over a long period.

Once key stakeholders have a shared understanding of the organization’s current situation and opportunities for change, change facilitators should develop an OD intervention strategy, defining a set of interventions that will support the organization in the change process. Like other stages of the OD process, this should be done in collaboration with the organization’s key stakeholders, ensuring the designed plan is adequate to the organizational context and ensures alignment and buy-in from relevant stakeholders.

An essential first step in considering which interventions to include is to situate the main issues at different organizational levels. Figure 1 provides an overview of common issues and well-known OD interventions at different levels of the organization. Some of these interventions are explained in more detail in Chapter 8.

Figure 1. Common issues and OD interventions at different organizational levels.

There is no single correct response to a specific problem in an organization. Most of the time, change facilitators will need to combine multiple OD interventions to facilitate the desired change. Things to consider when planning an OD intervention strategy include the following:

- Select interventions that can support change at the organizational level where change needs to happen.
- Given the organizational context, be mindful of the resources—time, money, and people—necessary to implement the proposed OD intervention strategy.
- Consider the organizational culture and assess which types of intervention will be the best fit.
- Reflect on your ability to implement the necessary interventions and whether it might be useful to partner with external providers.

7.4 Implementing OD Interventions

Whether you are conducting the OD interventions yourself or have support from an external partner, as the change facilitator you are responsible for key aspects of this stage, including:

- Defining the OD intervention plan in collaboration with other stakeholders and external partners.

- Defining who should participate in the OD interventions in collaboration with other stakeholders and external partners.
- Executing a good communication plan that includes sharing the interventions' objectives and overall activities and being transparent about the expected outcomes.
- Defining with key stakeholders and communicating about what is not open for discussion or negotiation (e.g., changing organizational values, requesting additional resources).
- Monitoring the execution and assessing the outcomes of the implemented OD interventions.

7.5 Who Can Conduct OD Interventions?

Individuals who develop OD skills and act as change facilitators in organizations may or may not have the necessary skills to conduct OD interventions. Our aim is to make you aware of different interventions, provide a brief overview of how they work, and help you understand in which situations they can be useful. If they interest you, you can seek further development in the future.

Individuals who become OD experts adapt and customize OD interventions to match organizational needs, and often combine and/or develop new OD interventions. As discussed in the following chapters, some OD interventions require specific knowledge and training, and some require professional certification.

7.6 Ethical Concerns When Selecting and Implementing OD Interventions

In this stage of the OD process, change facilitators should be attentive to two major ethical concerns. The first is related to the misrepresentation of your own skill and knowledge. It is vital to self-assess your own competence to conduct an OD intervention that requires specialized training and experience. Being honest about what you can and cannot do and looking for appropriate external partners ensures that you are aligned with the OD ethical guidelines.

Another critical point of attention is related to respect for others. As a change facilitator, you must ensure transparency in communication about which OD interventions are being implemented, their purpose, potential outcomes, and how the information shared in these interventions will be shared and utilized. Organizational members should not feel obligated to participate in any of these activities if they do not feel comfortable doing so.

7.7 Tips for Developing OD Skills: Openness to Different Perspectives

Openness to different perspectives is essential for facilitating change. It is also a crucial part of collaborating well in teams, solving problems effectively, making good decisions, continuously developing new skills, and becoming a lifelong learner. At the center of being open to different perspectives is being a genuinely curious person. As human beings, we tend to jump to conclusions quickly and try to solve problems by ourselves. We carry preconceived ideas about almost everything, and that can make it difficult to be curious. One exercise to expand your curiosity is to hold your judgments and strive to gain a broader understanding of the situation. This brief video shares some tips on how to expand your curiosity.

Video 1: How to expand the horizons of your curiosity.

> *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://open.lib.umn.edu/orgdev/?p=159#oembed-1*

Being open to different perspectives can also be difficult because we deeply cherish our knowledge and opinions, and being open to others' perspectives involves considering that our own perspective might be biased and incomplete. Watch this video for a powerful argument about how dangerous it can be to limit our understanding of a situation to our own perspective.

Video 2: The danger of a single story

> *One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://open.lib.umn.edu/orgdev/?p=159#oembed-2*

Besides expanding your curiosity, some additional tips for you to develop your openness to different perspectives include the following:

- Try new things, new foods, new places, and new activities.
- In a team setting, invest in getting to know your team members.
- Intentionally ask about others' perspectives in a conversation.
- Read or listen to opinions that are contrary to your own and identify the arguments supporting these different ideas.

Questions for Reflection

1. How would you explain what an OD intervention is in your own words?
2. Reflect on something — a habit or behavior — that you had to change or develop. How did you go about doing it? What were some things that helped you make this change?
3. Imagine a scenario in which you are a change facilitator helping a team improve its performance. You propose an OD intervention strategy to the team leader to support the development of specific skills and improve the team dynamics. The team leader agrees with your idea and gives you approval to implement the plan, but also shares that they have decided to lay off two team members. He asks you not to share this news with anyone in the team before the OD interventions are conducted. What would you consider in this situation? What would you do?
4. It is crucial to respect organizational members' willingness to join an OD intervention and avoid forcing them to participate. At the same time, it is also critical to have the participation of a diverse group of people who can contribute knowledge about the organization and ideas on how to improve. Which strategies would you use to invite individuals to join an OD intervention to ensure as much participation as possible without engaging in coercion?

Summary

OD interventions are structured activities that leverage adult and organizational learning principles to support change at the individual, team, and organizational level. These interventions encourage reflection, challenge existing behaviors, prompt changes in mindset, and foster learning and development. Change facilitators develop an OD intervention strategy, often combining multiple interventions implemented over a long period. An effective OD intervention strategy must consider the different elements that need to be changed and the levels of the organization in which they are situated. Additionally, it is crucial to assess the availability of the required resources, the intervention's fit with the organization's culture, and the organization's readiness for change. Importantly, change facilitators must ensure transparent communication and continuously monitor the outcomes of the intervention strategy, making adjustments whenever needed. Ethical concerns include acting with integrity and responsibility regarding one's ability to conduct the selected OD interventions and respecting participants' autonomy to decide whether they want to engage in these interventions.

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- Chapter 7_Tackling issues at the appropriate level

CHAPTER EIGHT: OVERVIEW OF SELECTED INDIVIDUAL LEVEL OD INTERVENTIONS

Chapter Overview

This chapter provides an overview of the most common interventions used in OD to support change at the individual level.

Contents

8.1 Individual Level OD Interventions

Individual-level interventions are often used when there are opportunities to support individual development that can benefit not only that person but also their team and their organization. Such interventions are also implemented as supporting mechanisms for a larger change happening in the team or organization. In general, individual-level interventions support development by:

- Providing feedback on an individual's behavior
- Increase self-awareness
- Identifying strengths and opportunities for development
- Inviting individuals to develop and change

It is critical to recognize that, although individual interventions can be powerful strategies for promoting individual development, they have a limited impact at the team and organizational level. They might be essential supports for these changes, but as stand-alone interventions, it is unlikely that they will promote more comprehensive transformations in the organization. Also keep in mind that individual interventions can be ineffective if the professional does not fully engage with them and put effort into their own development.

We will look here at the most commonly used individual-level interventions: assessments, feedback 360, coaching, mentoring, and training. Other interventions that help individuals learn and develop are training, job rotations, special projects, apprenticeship opportunities, and financial support for education.

8.2 Assessments

Assessments are conducted through the use of psychometric instruments designed by researchers; these are based on psychology and behavioral theory, and rigorously tested for validity and reliability. Most instruments used in OD processes provide information about leadership styles, communication styles, learning styles, strengths, working preferences, and vocational preferences. In general, an individual being assessed receives an electronic or paper questionnaire to fill out. Their responses are analyzed, and a report with outcomes is produced. In most cases, the report is shared and discussed in a conversation by a professional skilled in using that specific instrument. The use of most psychometric instruments requires specific training and certification, and many OD practitioners have these certifications. Individuals facilitating change in their organizations will often hire external consultants certified in the specific assessment they would like to conduct.

There are multiple free assessment tools available on the web, and, as an OD professional, it is crucial to be cautious with them. Robust psychometric instruments are science-based and have an extensive database of responses, which allows their developers to conduct statistical analysis and continually refine their measurements.

Nevertheless, even the robust instruments have limitations and points of attention that you should consider. It is always important to analyze the outcomes of an assessment within a context and to consider other factors. Making decisions based only on the outcomes of an assessment can lead to bad outcomes, and can also raise ethical dilemmas. Combining multiple psychometric tools — often called *assessment centers* — with other individual-level interventions can offer more comprehensive and beneficial outcomes.

For the individuals undergoing these assessments, the main benefit is to expand their knowledge of themselves. These assessments can support individuals in preparing a development plan, seeking ways to leverage their strengths, and working on their opportunities for improvement. For organizations, the collective results of assessments conducted with a group of employees can offer insights into training and educational programs and into career and succession planning.

The table below lists some well-known assessment tools and provides links with more information:[1]

Psychometric Instrument	**Main Focus**	**Resources/Certification providers**
Myers-Briggs Test Inventory (MBTI)	Individual preferences	The Myers-Briggs Co
Strengths Finder	Individual strengths	StrengthsFinder Gallup
DISC	Personality	Everything DISC
Hogan Inventory	Personality	Hogan Assessments
Emotional Intelligence	Social and emotional strengths	The Emotional Intelligence Training Company
Leadership Circle	Leadership skills	Leadership Circle

8.3 Feedback 360

Receiving feedback from individuals who interact with you can be a powerful way to expand your self-awareness, understand the impact of your behavior on others, and identify strengths and opportunities for development. 360 feedback, or multi-source feedback, is a well-known approach to gathering feedback from multiple individuals, and is used by organizations to support OD processes and as a developmental strategy. Usually, a feedback 360 consists of a questionnaire with questions about an individual's skills, abilities, and contributions, which is completed, often anonymously, by other professionals who significantly interact with that individual, including leaders, coworkers, direct reports, and sometimes clients or other stakeholders. It often also includes a self-assessment, where the individual responds to the questionnaire, reflecting on their own strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Different tools can be used for feedback 360 (Survey Monkey, Qualtrics, Google Forms),

and most organizations will adapt or create their own questionnaires, focusing on attributes important to

1. This information is intended to provide some examples of psychometric instruments and certifying organizations. It does not mean we endorse them or receive any benefit from them.

their specific context. In some situations, feedback 360 can be collected through interviews, with the facilitator sharing consolidated results with the individual.

When implementing feedback 360, it is critical to clearly communicate the process to all participants who provide and receive feedback. If this is a new practice for the organization, offering training on how to write constructive feedback can be crucial. Other critical steps include carefully choosing the stakeholders who provide feedback so that the individual can receive a balanced perspective of their strengths and development needs.

Similar to assessments, feedback 360 is helpful in offering a perspective but requires that the individual engage with the results, work towards honing their strengths, and focus on their development. Preparing an Individual Development Plan after receiving the results of an assessment or Feedback 360 is a vital step in these individual interventions.

8.4 Coaching

Coaching is a commonly used OD intervention to support individual development. In a coaching process, a professionally certified coach works with an individual (or a team) to help them define and work towards development goals. Coaching can help individuals increase self-awareness, reflect on their beliefs and behaviors, and experiment with alternative ways of interacting with others. It is a helpful intervention for supporting transitions, including transitioning to a new role or career, developing as a leader, and navigating changes happening in the workplace.

The coaching process usually involves a limited number of conversations in which, after defining a developmental goal, the coach works with the individual, supporting their reflection and development. The coach's role is to prompt reflection and action through questioning and encouragement. In contrast to mentorship, described next, the coach does not teach or advise an individual on what to do.

Coaching also requires a professional with the proper skills to conduct the process. Some essential coaching skills are openness, curiosity, flexibility, and client-centeredness. Some institutions offer coach training, certification, and ethical guidelines for the coaching profession. The International Coaching Federation is a good resource from which to learn about coaching.

8.5 Mentoring

Mentoring is a process in which individuals share their experiences and knowledge with one another. The process often involves an individual with a specific expertise or seniority, called a *mentor*, and an individual seeking to gain specific knowledge and skills, called a *mentee*. Other mentorship models have developed over the years, including group, reverse, and peer mentorship. These new mentorship models allow the multi-directional transfer of knowledge and experience without a hierarchical structure.

While anyone can serve as a mentor or be mentored by others, some guidelines are essential to support a good mentorship program, including being willing to share knowledge and experiences, maintaining a supportive attitude, being open to others' ideas, building trust, and having the ability to provide constructive feedback. Change facilitators can recommend mentoring as an OD intervention and help organizations implement mentorship programs to support their change processes.

8.6 Training

Training sessions are structured and formal educational efforts aimed at helping individuals acquire or improve specific knowledge or skills. Training initiatives can be deployed in several ways — in-person or online, instructor-led, or self-paced — and they can target individuals or large groups. Most organizations offer training as part of their onboarding and ongoing professional development, but training initiatives are also valuable to support change processes. For example, some employees might need to learn a specific technical skill to operate a new technology. Or, if an organization is undergoing a cultural transformation that emphasizes feedback and open conversations, leaders and employees might benefit from training sessions on how to give and receive feedback and how to have difficult conversations. Training can also be a powerful way to disseminate and reinforce organizational values and strengthen the organizational culture.

Table 1. Benefits and points of attention of individual-level OD interventions.

Individual Interventions	Goals and benefits	Be careful...
Assessment (psychometric instruments)	Increases self-awareness and offers inputs for a development plan (IDP).	Not to become a label or stereotype. To ensure that individuals do not feel stuck. It is essential to act upon the assessment, preparing an individual development plan.
Feedback 360	Brings external perceptions. connected to real situations. Provides concrete examples.	Avoid biased, too soft, or harsh feedback. It is important to provide training on how to give an receive feedback to support the process. To clarify how the feedback 360 results will be used.
Coaching	Facilitates self-discovery, fosters self-development, and can support mindset change.	To avoid inappropriate advice or judgment. It is vital to have a well-prepared coach.
Mentoring	Fosters learning for the mentor, mentee, and organization. Promotes openness and empathy.	To provide a structured program with clear engagement rules to prevent unhealthy advocacy, poor advice, and a problematic relationship.
Training	Reaches a larger audience. Can strengthen organizational culture and values and help with engagement and retention.	To ensure effective knowledge and skills transfer. To recognize that training might not solve existing underlying problems.
On-the-job training (apprenticeship/ rotations, projects)	A combination of training and practice is often more effective than stand-alone training. Supports engagement and retention (career opportunity).	To ensure that supervisors have the right skills and adequate support to help individuals in their roles.

8.7 Tips for Developing OD Skills: Flexibility and dealing with ambiguity

Change facilitators conducting OD processes and implementing interventions must have strong planning and management skills, which we will discuss in the next chapter. Equally important, however, is the ability to adapt and change directions when necessary. When dealing with complex systems and individuals' behaviors and relationships, it is impossible to predict everything and follow a strict plan. Often, surprising findings emerge during the diagnosis process, or an intervention has unexpected outcomes, requiring a change of plans. It is essential to develop flexibility and learn to sustain a certain level of comfort with ambiguity, avoiding paralysis when things are uncertain or unknown.

Developing an openness to different perspectives significantly enhances flexibility. Similar tips for practicing an open mindset, such as experimenting with new things, can also help you develop flexibility and the ability to deal with ambiguity. Some other ideas include:

- Experiment going out for a day walk or for a short trip without a strict plan. Make some general plans, stay open to change, and adjust.
- When facing an ambiguous situation, be curious about it. Think about what the ambiguity is, how it makes you feel, and what would help you feel more comfortable with the situation.
- When facing an ambiguous situation, reflect on the worst possible and best possible outcomes of the situation. What would happen in either case?

Questions for Reflection

1. Have you had experience with any of these OD interventions as a participant? How was that experience for you? What have you gained from it?
2. Most OD interventions promote self-awareness. How do you perceive your level of self-awareness? What could help you expand your awareness of yourself?
3. Individual development plans can be valuable tools to support learning. Consider developing an individual plan for yourself. What would be your goals? Which skills and knowledge would you need to develop/acquire to achieve these goals? Which resources could help you? Is there anyone who could support you in your development?

Summary

Individual-level OD interventions aim to increase self-awareness and promote individual learning and development, often contributing to changes at the team and organizational levels as well. Some of the most common OD interventions used to support individuals are assessments, feedback 360, coaching, mentoring, and training. While assessments and feedback 360 are more focused on increasing self-awareness, coaching, mentoring, and training help individuals develop new skills and knowledge. Some of these interventions, like assessment and coaching, require specific training and certification.

CHAPTER NINE: OVERVIEW OF SELECTED TEAM LEVEL OD INTERVENTIONS

Chapter Overview

This chapter provides an overview of the most common interventions used in OD to support change at the team level.

Contents

9.1 Team-Level OD Interventions

Addressing issues within a team or between teams, team level interventions focus on helping teams establish healthy dynamics and become more effective. They can be implemented when a team is experiencing internal situations impacting their work or when there is conflict happening between teams that need to work together. Team-level interventions are often called team building, which can be problematic because of negative connotations associated with this label and some practices that, although frequently applied, do not follow evidence-based approaches.

Effective team level OD interventions are based on behavioral science, have defined goals and structure, and are facilitated by professionals with adequate OD knowledge and skills. These interventions focus on key elements of team dynamics, including team goals, processes, norms and expectations, configuration, and roles and responsibilities. While skilled OD practitioners combine and adapt these interventions to tackle specific organizational needs and contexts, these interventions are based on well-known practices. Some individual level interventions can also be implemented to support team dynamics, such as team coaching, feedback 360 focusing on teamwork, and some team assessments.

9.2 A Note on Team Building

The term *team building* is often used in a generic way to define activities aimed at helping teams work more effectively. It might refer to some structured interventions, like the ones described in this chapter, but more often refers to informal activities such as cooking together, participating in games, practicing an outdoor sport, or happy hours. Although these can be excellent opportunities to build community and get to know one another on a more personal level, they often fail to improve team dynamics and usually overlook critical issues affecting team performance. In some situations, employees may feel that these activities are put in place to avoid discussing the real problems, and a sense of cynicism may arise[1].

Additionally, some activities are not inclusive and/or accessible, which may create uncomfortable situations and show a lack of attention to individual circumstances. A happy hour for a team that includes a member facing difficulties with addiction, for example, or a team sport that is inaccessible for an employee with a physical disability, or an activity that may cause a neurodivergent individual to feel sensory overwhelmed, or yet, requesting the team to travel for a team building weekend when an employee is caring for a severely ill family member can exclude people and make them feel unseen.

Some activities aimed at strengthening social connections can contribute to better relationships within a team and have a positive impact on teamwork. But they should be planned with care and complemented with structured activities that promote open dialogue and that focus on understanding and solving the issues that are preventing effective teamwork. Effective team building and team development activities must have clear expected outcomes and be linked with the organizational context and the team's goals[2]. In the next sections, we discuss some OD interventions that can foster effectiveness within and among teams.

1. https://www.forbes.com/sites/lizryan/2016/09/22/the-ugly-truth-about-team-building/

2. https://www.td.org/content/atd-blog/three-mistakes-that-ensure-a-team-building-flop?

9.3 Team Start-up Meetings

As the name suggests, the team start-up meeting is a structured and intentional intervention that happens at the beginning of a team's formation (Start-up). Its objectives are to create alignment between team members about the team's objectives and to define norms and expectations around ways of working and interacting. A team agreement (or team charter) is a tool that can support these meetings, serving as a discussion guide and a document that records the agreement, ensuring transparency and accountability.

In a team start-up meeting, the team leader often shares their vision and expectations for the team. In self-directed teams, when there is no formal leader and leadership is shared among members, defining the team's vision and expectations should be part of the meeting agenda. The team agreement resulting from these interventions should be clear and direct, providing concrete guidelines for team members.

9.4 Team Transition Meetings

Transition meetings can be conducted when an established team is going through changes, such as a new team configuration (members leaving the team and or new members joining), a change in leadership, a new goal, or a new project. They can also be conducted as a maintenance tool to support effective teamwork or if the team dynamics start to show signs of ineffectiveness. Transition meetings are a good strategy for realigning team goals and norms, clarifying or negotiating new roles and responsibilities, aligning expectations, and resolving disagreements and misunderstandings.

The team agreement can be discussed and revised in Transition Meetings. Usually, the team will have a discussion about what is working and what is not, and then revise their agreement with updated norms, expectations, and ways of working. Some structured activities, such as "Start Doing, Stop Doing, and Continue Doing" exercises, can be helpful for understanding what needs to be updated in the revised team agreement. The video below offers an overview of a Start, Stop, Continue activity.

Video 1: Start, Stop, Continue

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9.5 Role Negotiation

Role negotiation (also called role analysis) is a team-level intervention that aims to promote dialogue between members of a team about the team's required tasks and the distribution of these tasks among team members. At the end of this intervention, team members should have a clear description of their responsibilities and a shared understanding of how each person contributes to the work of the team. In general, a role negotiation meeting involves the following:

- Each team member describes their current responsibilities, sharing what they need to accomplish, the activities involved, and the expected timeline for completion.
- All members read each other's responsibilities and clarify any points that are unclear.
- Members reflect and provide suggestions to each other on about what could be improved to make the team work more effectively.
- These suggestions are discussed, negotiated, and incorporated into the role descriptions.

Although role negotiation can be very effective in clarifying roles, creating alignment among team members, and resolving disagreements, overlaps, and disputes, it can be challenging to implement. An effective role negotiation meeting requires openness to expressing ideas and disagreements. A skilled facilitator can help conduct effective meetings, and after participating in some role-negotiation exercises, team members will likely be more comfortable with these discussions.

Video 2: Role Negotiation and Role Analysis

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://open.lib.umn.edu/orgdev/?p=303#oembed-2

Responsibility charting is a visual tool that can be used as a supporting mechanism in both start-up and transition meetings and in role negotiation exercises. Once roles are clear among team members, the responsibility chart helps members visualize and refine responsibilities and decision-making processes in the team and between teams. The chart consists of a table listing the team's main activities or tasks and the primary role of each member regarding each task. The types of roles are often pre-defined, and might include:

- Responsible: ensures the activity is completed.
- Supporter: supports the activity with time, knowledge, or other resources.
- Approver: can approve or veto actions related to this activity.
- Consulted: needs to be involved or consulted about the activity.
- Informed: need to be informed about the status of the activity.

Consider, for example, the Responsibility Chart for a recruiting activity:

	Recruiter	Line Manager	Interviewers	Line Manager's Supervisor
Job description	S	R	I	A
CV selection	R	R/A	R	I
Interviewing	S	R/A	R	C
Job Offer	R	A	I	C

9.6 Confrontation Meetings

Confrontation meetings are used to improve relationships and enhance the performance of a team or linked teams within an organization. First developed by Richard Beckhard in 1967, their guidelines and format are still used in many OD interventions. The goal of a confrontation meeting is to facilitate a dialogue among individuals from different areas and levels in an organization, helping them problem-solve and plan actions to address issues that involve and impact all of them. It is an effective way to confront an organizational or team issue and develop potential solutions.

Usually, a confrontation meeting can be conducted in a 4–5 hour period and will include the following activities:

- A leader shares the goals and purpose of the meeting and sets the tone for an open and constructive discussion.
- Small, diverse groups are formed to identify obstacles and opportunities for improvement related to the problem being discussed. Questions discussed in these groups might include: What factors contribute to this problem? What could make this situation better? What could be done to make the team or organization more effective?
- The groups reconvene and present their conclusions with proposed actions, and a facilitator consolidates the information generated.
- New small groups are formed (usually by function or area), with members discussing which proposed actions should be prioritized and how group members could contribute.
- The groups reconvene again and share their priorities and proposals.
- Next, a leadership team meets to discuss the outcomes of the large group discussion. They define priorities, select the proposed actions they will support, report back to all participants, and establish a process for monitoring the progress of the prioritized action plan.

Confrontation meetings can be excellent interventions for tackling urgent issues that require the involvement and commitment of different stakeholders. If well conducted, they can offer opportunities to create alignment about the situation, facilitate the definition of priorities and decision-making, increase engagement and commitment to action, and improve communication and collaboration between teams and departments.

Table 2. Benefits and points of attention of team-level OD interventions.

Team-level Interventions	**Goals and benefits**	**Be careful…**
Start-up Meetings	Establish agreements and norms to help teams function more effectively.	If agreements are not followed through and revisions are not made, members may withdraw from future interventions.
Transition Meetings	Discuss teamwork effectiveness and performance, problem-solving ways to improve teamwork, and revise agreements and norms to help teams function more effectively.	Individuals may not feel safe expressing their disagreements.
Role Negotiation	Clarify roles and interdependencies, align expectations, and foster openness and trust. Can be done within a team or across teams.	Hidden conflicts may arise, people may feel negatively impacted, and individuals may not feel safe expressing their disagreements.
Confrontation Meetings	May provide quick solutions to urgent problems. Promotes alignment and encourages participation and ownership. Helpful for addressing issues that involve multiple teams.	Be aware of lack of openness from participants, lack of support from leaders, lack of resources to implement actions, and lack of action plan monitoring.

Questions for Reflection

1. Have you had experience with any of these team level OD interventions as a participant? How was that experience for you? What have you gained from it?
2. Think about one experience you had working in teams. Which of these team interventions could have helped your team to be more effective? Why?
3. What do you believe are essential skills to conduct most of these OD interventions? Which of these skills do you believe you have, and which ones would you need to develop?

Summary

Team level OD interventions aim to enhance team effectiveness. They are often referred to as team-building, but this label can be problematic due to the negative connotations associated with it and the common practices that may not follow evidence-based approaches. Effective team-level OD interventions are grounded in behavioral science, have clearly defined goals and structures, and are facilitated by professionals who possess adequate knowledge and skills in OD. These interventions focus on critical elements of team dynamics, including team goals, processes, norms and expectations, configuration, and roles and responsibilities.

CHAPTER TEN: OVERVIEW OF SELECTED ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL OD INTERVENTIONS

Chapter Overview

This chapter provides an overview of the most common interventions used in OD to support change at the organizational level.

Contents

10.1 Organizational Level OD Interventions

Organizational level interventions are often required when organizations are pursuing some change. These interventions target changes to elements that impact most of the organization's members, including culture, structure, strategy, processes, and systems. As with team level interventions, while experienced OD practitioners usually combine and adapt well-known approaches to better respond to an organization's specific needs and characteristics, many organizational-level OD interventions follow similar principles based on theories of organizational and transformational learning:

- They often involve the participation of a significant number of stakeholders from multiple functions and levels in the organization.
- They often involve multiple interventions that take place over an extended period of time.

The inclusion of a large number of participants from different levels and functions allows for more knowledge exchange and learning, often leading to better and more aligned decisions. It also fosters ownership of the change process and commitment to its goals. Organizational members take a more active role in organizational-level interventions, sometimes also participating in previous stages (data gathering, analysis, and diagnosis). In these interventions, the role of the change facilitator focuses on structuring and conducting the process, creating an environment where participants feel comfortable sharing ideas and making decisions about necessary actions for the change to happen. The change facilitator also ensures that organizational members are moving in the desired directions and facilitates dialogue among them.

Organizational-level OD interventions can be excellent approaches to facilitating strategic planning, promoting changes in organizational structure, defining and supporting necessary cultural adjustments, fostering diverse and inclusive workplaces, and defining or revising an organization's mission, vision, and values. In the following sub-sections, we give an overview of well-known organizational-level OD interventions and provide links to additional resources.

It is worth noting that these OD interventions are also used to explore solutions and develop action plans for problems affecting entire communities, cities, and even nations. We offer some links with examples of such situations.

10.2 World Cafe

Word Cafe is a structured approach to facilitating dialogue in large groups. It is used primarily to support organizational level OD interventions in combination with other interventions and is valuable for sharing knowledge and developing initial ideas to solve existing issues.

In general, a diverse group of participants is distributed at tables with four or five people to discuss a proposed question for a short period of time. In each table, notes are taken with key points of the discussion. When time is up, most group members move to a different table, while one remains at the table, serving as a host. The host welcomes the new group and shares the key points discussed in the previous round. Several rounds are conducted, and groups work with the same question or different questions posed by the facilitator to guide the conversation. After these rounds, individuals share some of their insights with the large group. The materials produced and the insights shared are recorded and used to develop action plans. The World Cafe website offers resources and guidelines for conducting a World Cafe.

Video 1: Art of Hosting – World Cafe

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10.3 Future Search

Future Search is a systemic and participatory process that aims to discuss and address complex organizational problems. It is a more comprehensive problem-solving approach than the World Cafe methodology, as it encourages organizational members to develop a shared vision of the situation, take ownership, generate action plans, and commit to taking action and following through with the plan. Additional benefits of this approach include the strengthening of relationships, collaboration, and trust; the creation of innovative solutions through the involvement of multiple and diverse perspectives, and an increased possibility that change will be sustainable because of the commitment generated by the participatory process. Search Conference is a reasonably similar OD intervention.

Future Search Workshops are usually conducted over three days and involve activities that encourage participants to revisit their own trajectories and that of the organization, consider the present moment and current trends related to the issue they are trying to solve or the change they want to make, imagine ideal future scenarios, define a shared vision for the future, and develop an action plan. This intervention has four principles:

1. Bring the whole system to the room: invite everyone who can have an impact or may be impacted by the issue under discussion and can represent the different parts of the system.
2. Think broadly and develop a broader vision of the situation: help participants envision different possibilities to tackle the issue.
3. Develop a shared future vision: acknowledge differences and look for common ground and shared goals.
4. Ensure accountability and self-management: ensure that people engage and take responsibility for the defined actions.

The Future Search Network provides resources and information on the process. The following video gives an overview of Future Search and includes some examples.

Video 2: Future Search

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://open.lib.umn.edu/orgdev/?p=314#oembed-2

10.4 Scenario Planning

Uncertainty can lead to decision-making paralysis. Scenario planning is an OD intervention that supports organizations in defining their business and strategic plans when facing uncertainty, typically within mid- to long-term timeframes. Its goal is to help organizations explore potential future scenarios and develop skills and strategies to navigate them. Scenario planning helps an organization's members develop openness to diverse perspectives and strengthen their decision-making skills by learning how to incorporate scenario thinking.

In general, a scenario planning workshop involves brainstorming and gathering information to develop a shared understanding of the situation, mapping uncertainties that are critical to the organization and industry, developing possible future scenarios (i.e., what might happen if uncertainty x leads to y), and developing strategies to navigate the most likely scenarios. Like other organizational level interventions, scenario planning requires participants to continuously monitor of the situation, assess opportunities and risks, and revisit the imagined scenarios and strategies. This video provides a good overview of the scenario planning process and discusses interesting ideas about the future of workplaces.

Video 3: Scenario planning – the future of work and place

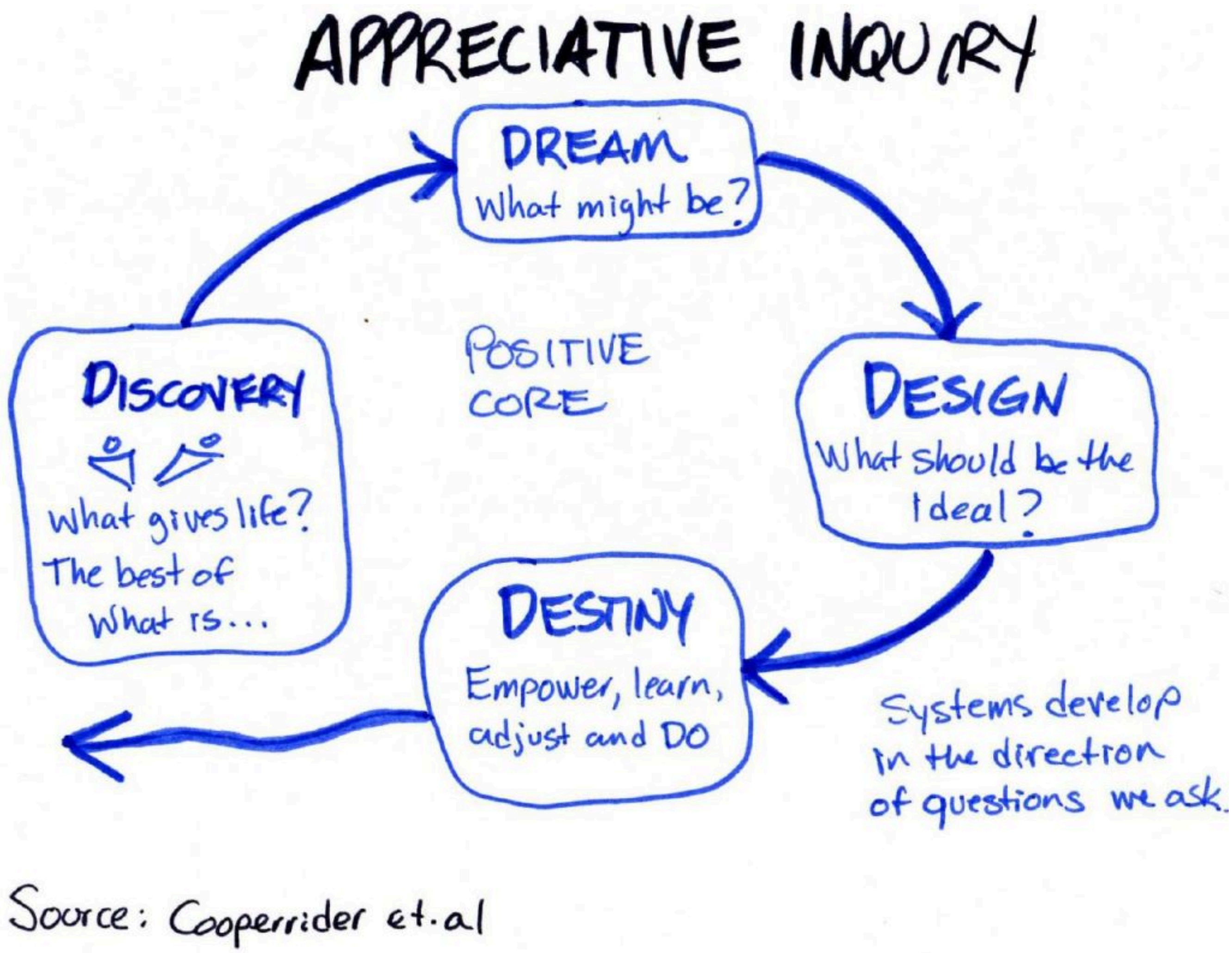
One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://open.lib.umn.edu/orgdev/?p=314#oembed-3

Check some examples of outcomes of scenario planning:

- Workforce of the Future
- Future of Schools

10.5. Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry is a process to promote dialogue and collaborative problem solving using a positive appreciation lens. It involves five steps:



Appreciative Inquiry, which can be applied to changes at both the team and organizational levels, often involves multiple stakeholders. More than a process, it is a participatory approach that emphasizes positive moments, strengths, and future action. The process starts with defining the focus of the exploration (positive core). The discovery stage aims to collect stories through appreciative interviews about the organization's, team's, or employees' strengths, values, and motivations related to the positive core. Appreciative interviews ask questions about good experiences, important values, how they are experienced, and the ideal future. In the dream stage, participants are invited to collectively envision the ideal future for the team or organization in relation to the topic of discussion. In the design stage, participants propose actionable items to build the ideal future vision, they define resources, timeline, and commit to taking action. The last stage, destiny, is the implementation phase and is an ongoing process with participants learning and developing new actions as they move forward.

Table 3. Benefits and points of attention of organization-level OD interventions.

Individual Interventions	**Goals and benefits**	**Be careful…**
World Cafe	Brainstorm ideas and potential solutions. Can incorporate very diverse perspectives from a large group of people.	Not necessarily designed to define structural solutions. Requires a next step to move from ideas to concrete action plans.
Future Search	Create a shared future vision. Generate commitment and energy to engage in action. Develop problem-solving skills and strategic vision.	Requires a skilled facilitator and a well-planned and executed follow-up plan to ensure that actions and decisions are put into practice
Scenario Planning	Help the organization plan and prepare for future potential scenarios. Develop openness to diverse perspectives and strengthen decision-making skills.	Important to define some boundaries to avoid getting into a "rabbit hole." Important to keep monitoring the external environment and not be blinded by the defined scenarios.
Appreciative Inquiry	Create a shared future vision. Generate commitment and energy to engage in action. Foster individual, team and organizational development by focusing on strengths.	"Appreciative" does not mean ignoring issues, and good facilitation is crucial to avoid cynicism.

Questions for Reflection

1. Have you had experience with any of these OD interventions as a participant? How was that

experience for you? What have you gained from it?
2. Which intervention are you most curious about? Explore the videos and links provided in the text and share your key insights.
3. What do you believe are essential skills to conduct most of these OD interventions? Which of these skills do you believe you have, and which ones would you need to develop?

Summary

Organizational level OD interventions focus on supporting change at an organizational component — such as strategy, structure, processes, culture — that affects multiple members of an organization. They are helpful for solving complex problems that require alignment and buy-in from organizational members in order to support change effectively. As these interventions deal with the whole organizational system, they usually happen over an extended period and require skilled facilitators. The main goal of these interventions is to create a space and provide a framework where an organization's members can engage in dialogue and collaborate to develop solutions to the issues they are facing or the changes they need to make.

Media Attributions

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CHAPTER ELEVEN: EVALUATING AND SUSTAINING CHANGE STAGE

Chapter Overview

This chapter discusses the importance of evaluation. It describes potential methods for assessing both the process and outcomes of the OD approach, as well as how the evaluation process can help identify new needs and future opportunities. It also highlights the complexities of sustaining change, discussing some mechanisms to support organizations in this process while maintaining the ability to recognize the need for new changes.

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11.1 Purpose of the Evaluating and Sustaining Change Stage

Although there is no consensus, many business leaders and change facilitators believe that organizational change efforts often fail to achieve their initial goals. As we learned in the previous chapter, change is a process that requires intentional and planned effort. We have also learned that organizations are complex systems operating in a dynamic, changing environment. A change effort that begins with one goal may need to be adjusted and redirected to support the business to adapt to the new conditions of the places they operate. Many expert change facilitators who use an OD approach believe that, as important as it is to achieve an ideal outcome, it is also important to learn the change process and develop the necessary skills to become a learning organization and a change-capable one. In a way, being successful in change is not about achieving all the goals planned one year ago, as many of them might need to be adjusted. It's about learning how to be ready to adapt and adapt again.

The evaluating and sustaining change stage is a vital part of the OD process, critical to guaranteeing the success and sustainability of the change process. In this stage the change facilitator aims to help the organization assess the effectiveness of the change process and its outcomes, design and implement strategies to consolidate the new ways of doing things, and identify necessary adjustments and additional opportunities for improvement. The evaluation process also helps build intellectual capital within the organization, tracking progress and mapping the learnings that result from the OD process. This closing stage can be essential in acknowledging the efforts of organizational members who engaged in the process and boosting organizational morale by celebrating the accomplishments and maintaining energy for the next necessary adaptive move.

11.2 Evaluating Change

Although this is the last stage, conversations about how to evaluate the process and its outcomes should take place at the beginning of and throughout the OD engagement process, with the change facilitator helping the organization defining initial goals and mapping potential indicators to measure the success of the change process. In general, after the analyzing data and providing feedback stage, when the change facilitator and organization are discussing findings and refining goals, they should also agree on how and at what moments they will evaluate progress and outcomes. In many cases, although the change facilitator supports the organization in establishing an evaluation strategy, someone within the organization assumes the responsibility to execute the assessments and report results.

Because the OD process is a developmental one, it is essential to measure both the results of the implemented changes and the effectiveness of the process itself. Evaluating the OD process helps the change facilitator and the organization learn from it and adjust their approach when future changes are needed. Along with defining key indicators to assess outcomes of the change (e.g., team performance, productivity, retention, climate, job satisfaction), for instance, an organization might measure the satisfaction of key stakeholders or organizational members with the OD process itself and with specific OD interventions, and assess what they have learned and their confidence in their ability to undergo future change processes.

As changes in complex systems can take time to show results, the evaluation must be conducted at different points in time to develop a better understanding of outcomes and identify necessary adjustments and areas for improvement. Once the facilitator has helped the organization define what to measure and when, it is important to plan how data will be collected, analyzed, and reported. Many of the data-gathering methods discussed in Chapter 5 can be used in the evaluation strategy, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups.

Collected data must then be analyzed and compared with the criteria defined for a successful change process. The results of this analysis should determine adjustments to the OD process and identify any additional changes needed. It is crucial to report outcomes to the key stakeholders involved in the OD process, as this maintains accountability and energy to support the change in the long term.

Unfortunately, many organizations overlook the evaluation stage, missing the opportunity to learn from the process and putting the sustainability of the change at risk. Common factors that prevent organizations from executing the evaluation stage include finding it difficult to measure progress and outcomes, preferring to prioritize other efforts that are deemed less time-consuming and costly, and wanting to avoid facing potentially frustrating outcomes from the process.

11.3 Sustaining Change

While accomplishing change can be a challenging process, maintaining change is also difficult, and requires intentional effort and a set of planned activities. So much energy and so many resources are invested in the change process itself that organizational members often give less attention to maintaining the positive change once the OD process is completed. Additionally, with change taking time to consolidate, peoples' natural resistance to change, an established organizational culture, and comfort with old ways of doing things will all pose obstacles to sustaining the change.

The change facilitator must therefore help the organization design a set of initiatives that institutionalize the change and map and remove any existing barriers to consolidating the changes the organization aims to achieve. As with the evaluation process, these strategies should be discussed at the beginning of the OD engagement and referred to throughout the change process.

The evaluation process described above is an important mechanism to sustain change, as it helps the organization identify areas that require attention and plan necessary actions. Evaluation also helps organizations to acknowledge when new changes are necessary to adapt to the current scenarios. Some strategies that can help organizations to keep an intentional effort to evaluate and sustain the change are illustrated in this video:

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Other strategies to make a change process sustainable involve the design and implementation of supporting and reinforcing mechanisms. Supporting mechanisms, which aim to ensure buy-in and reduce resistance to change, include intentional efforts to engage key stakeholders in the change process and an adequate communication plan to keep organizational members informed. It is critical that organizational members have a clear understanding of the reasons for the change, the end goals, and the process being deployed to accomplish these goals.

Reinforcing mechanisms include actions that incentivize new behaviors, acknowledge effort put into maintaining new processes, and celebrate accomplishments. They might involve a redesign of the human resources process, including training and performance evaluations, to support the development of new behaviors and reward employees who embrace change. As change processes often involve adjustments in an organization's values and culture, symbolic reinforcement is also a powerful mechanism for consolidating change. Rites and language reinforcing new values and desired behaviors, and ceremonies to reflect on the change process and celebrate achievements, are valuable strategies to sustain change.

The Influence Model, a framework developed by the McKinsey Company, emphasizes four critical components to help individuals reframe their mindsets in support of a desired change: having a compelling reason to change that is clearly understood by the organization's employees, having leaders who champion the change at hand and act as role models, providing training and other learning opportunities to help employees develop the skills to be successful as they adapt to the change, and having reinforcing systems in place to support advancement in the desired direction.

11.4 Ethical Concerns with Evaluating and Sustaining Change

In the evaluation stage of the OD process, change facilitators must be mindful of ethical issues similar to those that may arise in the data gathering and feedback stage, ensuring that the data collected is appropriately used and preserving the anonymity and well-being of the participants. It is also essential to minimize bias towards positive outcomes and away from negative results of the change process. And in feedback conversations about the results, the change facilitator and organizational members conducting the evaluation process should be careful not to soften the message, to treat everyone with respect, and to maintain a future-oriented and action-oriented approach.

11.5 Tips for Developing OD Skills: Planning and Process Management

One of the primary responsibilities of a change facilitator is to plan and manage the OD process. This demands strong planning and management skills, with the ability to establish goals and milestones, define the tasks necessary for achieving these goals, consider potential problems that may arise along the way, identify the resources required to put the plan into practice, and implement and monitor the process. While these abilities can be developed over time, they require significant effort and consistent practice.

As a student, you can practice these skills in your daily routine. At the beginning of a semester, for instance, you can choose a course in which to practice these skills:

1. Understand the goals of the course and map the main assignments and deadlines.
2. Break larger assignments into smaller tasks and create a list of resources needed to complete them.
3. Distribute these small tasks in time, estimating how much time you will need to complete each task and when you will get them done.
4. Choose a tool to help you manage your tasks. It can be a planner, a visual timeline, a spreadsheet, or other tools like (list some).
5. Frequently reflect on how your plan is going and make adjustments.
6. When the course is over, reflect back; map the things that worked well and identify what you can do next time to improve your planning and management.

Questions for Reflection

1. Why is it essential to begin planning for evaluation and sustainability at the start of an OD process rather than waiting until the end?
2. What challenges might an organization face in evaluating change, and how can these be addressed?
3. How can reinforcing mechanisms like recognition and training influence the success of sustaining change?
4. Why might sustaining a change at all costs be a harmful approach?

Summary

The evaluating and sustaining change stage is a crucial part of the OD process. In this final stage, the change facilitator and organizational members focus on assessing the effectiveness of implemented changes and ensuring their sustainability. Although this stage is the last step of the OD process, conversations about how to evaluate the success of the change and ensure that new ways of operating will stick should happen at the beginning of the OD process. Defining evaluation criteria and designing a strategy to sustain the change allow the organization to map resistances, make necessary adjustments, and institutionalize new ways of operating. Sustaining change requires intentional strategies to foster the engagement of key stakeholders and minimize barriers to change. Celebrating achievements and acknowledging the efforts of organizational members supporting the change are also powerful mechanisms to consolidate change. Importantly, as the business environment is constantly changing, a good balance between sustaining change and recognizing new needs is vital. This is what makes the OD approach valuable, as its purpose is not only to support organizational change but also to instill in organizations the capability to constantly learn and to adapt to new scenarios.

This is where you can add appendices or other back matter.