CHAPTER 1

Introduction and Overview of Organization Development as a Data-Driven Approach for Organizational Change

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Unlike medicine, accounting, law, police work, national politics, and many other disciplines, professions, and vocational callings that one might choose to pursue, all of which have a clear, consistent, and focused sense of purpose, the field of organization development (OD) is somewhat unique in its inherent and fundamental lack of clarity about itself. OD is a field that is both constantly evolving and yet constantly struggling with a dilemma regarding its fundamental nature and unique contribution as a collection of organizational scientists and practitioners. Although OD practitioners have been thinking, writing, and debating about the underlying nature of the field for decades (Church, Hurley, & Burke, 1992; Friedlander, 1976, Goodstein, 1984; Greiner, 1980; Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992; Weisbord, 1982), the field itself has yet to come to agreement on its basic boundaries or parameters. Moreover, various practitioner surveys conducted in the 1990s (Church, Burke, & Van Eynde, 1994; Fagenson & Burke, 1990; McMahan & Woodman,

1992) have suggested that the field is no closer to finding the answer to these important questions than it was twenty years ago.

It should come as no surprise, then, that one of the most poignant criticisms leveled at OD since its inception is that there are almost as many definitions of the field as there are OD practitioners (Church, Waclawski, & Siegal, 1996; Jamieson, Bach Kallick, & Kur, 1984; Rothwell, Sullivan, & McLean, 1995). The field of OD has been characterized in the literature over the years by such divergent notions as a data-based process driven by survey feedback (Nadler, 1977), a sociotechnical approach focused on job tasks and characteristics (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), an interpersonal process approach to facilitating group dynamics (Schein, 1969), and even a religious movement driven by zealots out to democratize organizations (Harvey, 1974). To put it mildly, there is some disagreement in the field as to what is and is not OD (Church, 2000a).

This lack of a unified definition of or approach to the central nature of OD is due in large part to the diversity of backgrounds of those who engage in OD practice—from forestry, to law, to history, to the social sciences. Because one of the values of the field is inclusivity, relatively little attention has been paid historically to maintaining boundaries around the practice or labeling of OD. A cursory review of some of the professional associations with which OD practitioners affiliate (see Table 1.1), for example, highlights the breadth of membership even among somewhat like-minded groups.

Moreover, it has been argued by some that literally anyone can hang a shingle outside and be a self-proclaimed OD practitioner (Church, Waclawski, & Siegal, 1996). Thus, for some, OD represents anything and everything that might be offered. Moreover, because there are only a handful of OD doctoral programs in the United States, there is a real sense among many in the field (Allen et al., 1993; Church & Burke, 1995; Golembiewski, 1989; Van Eynde & Coruzzi, 1993) that the lack of common education, training, and experience is continuing to damage and erode its overall credibility as a profession.

Clearly, given the fractured state of the field and the nature of the many divergent perceptions regarding OD, there is a need in the literature and with respect to training future practitioners for

Table 1.1. Professional Associations with Major OD Representation.

Professional Organization	Mission and Objectives	Information About Membership
Organization Development Institute	"To promote a better understanding of and disseminate information about Organization Development and to build the field of OD into a highly respected profession."	500 members, 90 of them registered organization development consultants (RODCs) Split between practitioners and academics No requirement for general membership The only organization to institute a credential membership option of RODC with a test of knowledge, prior experience and letters of recommendations.
Organization Development Network	"The Organization Development Network is a values-based community which supports its members in their work in human organization and systems development, and offers leadership and scholarship to the profession."	4,000 members Practitioner majority No formal membership criteria required to join Largest single body of OD practitioners
Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology	"To promote human welfare through the various applications of psychology to all types of organizations providing goods and services, such as manufacturing concerns, commercial enterprises, labor unions or trade associations, and public agencies."	6,000 members Split between practitioners and academics Specific educational requirements for membership No formal interest groups Approximately 15–25 percent of membership engage in OD-related activities

Table 1.1. Professional Associations with Major OD Representation, Cont'd

Professional Organization	Mission and Objectives	Information About Membership
Academy of Human Resource Development	"To encourage systematic study of human resource development theories, processes, and practices; to disseminate information about HRD, to encourage the application of HRD research findings, and to provide opportunities for social interaction among individuals with scholarly and professional interests in HRD from multiple disciplines and from across the globe."	850 members Academic majority (85 percent versus 15 percent) Emphasis on learning and performance improvement No interest groups but significant proportion of content overlap with OD theory and research
Academy of Management	"The purpose of the Academy is to foster the general advancement of research, learning, teaching and practice in the management field and to encourage the extension and unification of management knowledge."	10,000 members Academic majority (93 percent versus 7 percent) Emphasis on organization behavior and theory Several relevant interest groups including Organization Development and Change (2,000 members) and Managerial Consulting (1,000 members
American Society for Training and Development	"To provide leadership to individuals, organizations, and society to achieve work-related competence, performance, and fulfillment; a world-wide leader in workplace learning and performance."	70,000 members Practitioner majority Emphasis on workplace learning and performance No formal membership criteria required to join Several relevant interest groups including Organization Development; HRD Consultancy; Performance and Quality Improvement; Management Development; Learning Organizations

Source: Official association Web pages, documentation, contact with administrative offices and senior leadership, and assorted member survey efforts.

a conceptualization and framework that pulls together the fundamental aspects of OD into a single, unified approach to working with organizations. This chapter presents such an integrative framework for OD. It is intended to encompass the entire spectrum of OD work, from the macro to the micro and the hard data to the soft. Following an overview of some of the differences and similarities among key definitions of the field proffered throughout the past several decades, we explore what we believe are the fundamental guiding principles for OD (including, among other points, the singular importance of interpersonal or human data) and how these are manifested in contemporary practice.

Definitions of OD

Fundamentally, OD is the implementation of a process of planned (as opposed to unplanned) change for the purpose of organizational improvement (as opposed to a focus solely on performance). It is rooted in the social and behavioral sciences and draws its influences from a wide variety of content areas, including social psychology, group dynamics, industrial/organizational (I/O) psychology, participative management theory, organizational behavior, sociology, and even psychotherapy. This diverse background has been cited as both a strength and a weakness of OD. Its strength lies in the breadth and diversity that such openness affords. For the most part, all one needs to do to join a national network of OD professionals is to agree to abide by a set of stated principles and values; no specific tests of skills or knowledge are required. It is unlikely, for example, that a more restrictive or narrowly focused profession could yield practitioners specializing in one-on-one coaching using multisource feedback and large-scale interventions with five hundred or more executives in the same room at the same time. Such openness to new perspectives, approaches, and experiences as being equally representative of OD work, however, is seen by many as a weakness of the field as well. The lack of set boundaries contributes significantly to the perception among potential clients, colleagues, and card-carrying OD practitioners themselves of the field as a scattered and inherently lost profession that lacks a core ideology or set of fundamental assumptions.

Table 1.2 provides an overview of some of the more coherent and comprehensive definitions of the field offered over the past few decade. Although we are somewhat reticent to offer yet another definition, in the interest of integration and advancing the field forward, we believe the best and most current definition of OD is as follows:

Table 1.2. Some Definitions of OD.

Source	Definition
Burke (1982)	"Planned process of change in an organization's culture through the utilization of behavioral science technologies, research, and theory" (p. 10)
French & Bell (1978)	"A long-range effort to improve an organization's problem solving and renewal processes, particularly through a more effective and collaborative management of an organization culture . . . with the assistance of a change agent, or catalyst, and the use of the theory and technology of applied behavioral science, including action research" (p. 14)
Margulies & Raia (1972)	"A value-based process of self-assessment and planned change, involving specific strategies and technology, aimed at improving the overall effectiveness of an organizational system" (p. 24)
Porras & Robertson (1992)	"Planned, behavioral science-based interventions in work settings for the purpose of improving organizational functioning and individual development" (p. 721)
Jamieson, Bach Kallick, & Kur (1984)	"Long-term, planned changes in the culture, technology, and management of a total organization or at least a significant part of the total organization" (p. 4)
Warrick (1984)	"Planned, long-range systems and primarily behavioral science strategy for understanding, developing, and changing organizations to improve their present and future effectiveness and health" (p. 916)

> Organization development is a planned process of promoting positive humanistically oriented large-system change and improvement in organizations through the use of social science theory, action research, and behaviorally based data collection and feedback techniques.

Regardless of the definition that one subscribes to, however, it should be apparent when reviewing these definitions that although they differ on several important dimensions—for example, some focus on the importance of technology in the change process, whereas others explicitly mention top management support, and still others reference values explicitly—they share common components as well. Given the nature of these definitions and our collective consulting experience in and exposure to others in the field over the past decade, it is our view that OD should be conceptualized as representing three essential components.

First and perhaps foremost, OD is fundamentally a data-driven process; diagnosis and intervention are based on some form of behaviorally relevant data (such as observations, assessments, and surveys) collected through a process known as *action research.* Second, the OD model represents a *total systems approach* to organizational change in which this change is a formal and planned response to targeted organization-wide issues, problems, and challenges. Finally, although this component is controversial and by no means universally accepted as yet (Church, Burke, & Van Eynde, 1994), we strongly believe that values represent a third key component to the field. OD is (or should be) a *normative and humanistic values-based approach* to organizational improvement. In short, from our perspective, OD work should be focused on and conducted for the good of the individual, as well as the good of the organization. Although balancing issues of effectiveness and profitability are certainly important for economic success and survival, we would argue that an OD approach does not prioritize these concerns over the human perspective. This emphasis represents our firm belief, as well as of most of the other practitioners writing in this book, and is without a doubt one of the key differentiators of the field of OD from other types of organizational consultants in the field today (Church, Waclawski, & Siegal, 1996; Margulies & Raia, 1990).

Next, we describe each these basic conceptual areas that we feel represent and characterize the field as a whole. Although these points have been made elsewhere in the context of using multisource feedback for organization development (Church, Waclawski, & Burke, 2001), because they apply to the entire field, it is important to describe them in this broader context as well.

OD as a Data-Driven Process Using Action Research

One of the most basic notions behind OD is that change and improvement are conducted through a data-based process known as action research. Kurt Lewin, who first conceptualized action research (1946) and has often been credited as saying that "there can be no action without research and no research without action," was truly one of the first scientist-practitioners in the social sciences and a major contributor to much of the thinking underlying OD theory and practice (Burke, 1982; French & Bell, 1990).

In OD work, action research entails systematically gathering data of whatever form, quantitative or qualitative, on the nature of a particular problem or situation, analyzing the data to find central themes and patterns, feeding back a summary and analysis of the data in some participative form, and then taking action based on what the analysis of the data and resulting diagnosis of the situation suggest (Church, Waclawski, & Burke, 2001). Given this framework, it is easy to see how both the classic and more contemporary OD tools and techniques described in this book meet the criterion of being data-driven OD, because they collect and apply information for various problem-solving and improvement purposes. Organization surveys, multisource feedback, focus groups and interviews, personality assessments, process observations and consultation, action learning, appreciative inquiry, and large-scale interventions all fall squarely within this framework. They follow the progression of steps outlined in the basic action research approach from data collection, through diagnosis, to taking action for improvement.

The process by which data are used to drive change is a relatively simple one. Lewin, a social psychologist who specialized in studying group dynamics, asserted that individual and organizational transformation is best described as a three-stage process (see Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1. Classic Change Model.

In the first stage, *unfreezing,* the goal is to create motivation or a readiness for change (Church, Waclawski, & Burke, 2001). In most cases in OD practice, this translates to surfacing dissatisfaction with the current state and identifying a better or more desirable alternative, which is commonly referred to in OD terms as the *ideal* or *desired future state* (see Beckhard & Harris, 1987). An analogy from everyday life is dieting. Most people go on a diet because they are unhappy with their weight. It is this dissatisfaction with the current situation, coupled with a vision of a better future state of weighing less and therefore being healthier and looking better, that motivates them to change their eating behavior.

The second stage in Lewin's model, *movement,* consists of making changes and engaging in new behaviors to help make the desired future state a reality. In short, once the need for change has been realized, steps toward achieving a new and better state must be taken. In the dieting example, this would represent the point at which the dieter makes a change in behavior—a reduction in caloric intake and an increase in exercise levels. In OD, the movement stage typically translates into focusing one's change efforts at three different levels: individual, group, and organizational.

The third stage, *refreezing,* requires establishing a system or process that will solidify (or refreeze) the new desired state. In the dieting example, this would mean making what people call a permanent lifestyle change, such that the new eating and exercise regimen becomes a permanent and normal part of everyday life. In OD, an example of the refreezing stage would be instilling a new reward and recognition program as a result of an organizational culture survey to reinforce a new and desired set of leadership behaviors. In reality, however, given the rapid pace of change experienced by most organizations today, refreezing occurs all too infrequently (Church, 2000b) if at all, and even when it does, it is not likely to last for very long before some other chaotic event affects the organization.

OD as a Total Systems Approach to Change

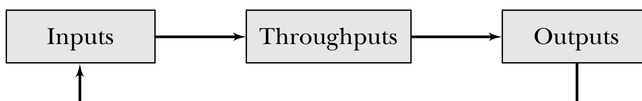
OD is fundamentally grounded in a social systems approach (Katz & Kahn, 1978). From this perspective, the organization is conceptualized as a system or series of interdependent subsystems and individual components, such as people, technology, or processes, that operate as a collective entity in response to changes in and pressures from the external environment, such as competitors, customers, or government regulations.

An example from biology is that of a single cell existing within a larger organism. In this context, the organization is the cell, and the larger organism is the global business environment. The cell, although self-contained with its own series of inputs and outputs, depends on the larger organism to survive. The larger organism, in turn, is dependent on the functioning of the unique cells comprising it because these cells collectively transform and produce materials that are vital to the organism's existence. As part of its function, the cell inputs certain materials from the larger organism, transforms them into other states, and then exports them back into the organism for use by other cells. Thus, the individual cell and the larger organism form a symbiotic relationship; each is dependent on the other for survival and growth.

By applying systems theory, an organization is seen as operating in much the same way. It takes in inputs from the outside world, such as raw materials, intellectual capital, human resources, or money for goods and service; acts on them to transform them into new products or services; and then exports them back into the business environment for distribution and dispersal (see Figure 1.2).

From this perspective, large-scale OD and change efforts are seen as occurring within an organizational system and are generally initiated in response to changes in the business or external environment in which the organization operates (Burke &

Figure 1.2. Systems Approach Model.



Litwin, 1992). Given this framework, it is apparent that an OD model is somewhat different from other consulting approaches because most OD interventions used are aimed at changing the entire system, as opposed to a specific portion or segment of the organization.

OD as a Normative Process

The third concept, and in many ways the truly unique element, driving OD theory and practice is the notion that OD is or at least should be a values-driven, humanistically oriented, normative process for change. OD is about helping people have better lives at work. Taken by some as an ethical mandate against the perceived evils of organizations, some OD practitioners focus their efforts on initiatives aimed at improving the state of human dignity, democracy, honesty, integrity, and empowerment in organizations (Burke, 1982; Friedlander, 1976; Margulies & Raia, 1990). Although these "OD missionaries," as they have been called (Harvey, 1974), are probably not the norm, they do represent a truly unique aspect to change management. Moreover, when certain executives and organizations are heralded for their innovative people-oriented practices or cultures (Roddick, 1994), the OD field is quick to focus on such triumphs of the human spirit at work.

Unfortunately, one of the results of this emphasis on instilling meaning and dignity in the workplace (particularly when taken out of context) has been the perception of OD as being too soft or "touchy-feely" in focus (Church & Burke, 1995). Interestingly enough, such perceptions both attract certain types of practitioners and clients while putting off others. Although the extent to which these values are truly enacted in practice remains a major question for the field, particularly given the financial realities of a consulting marketplace where expertise has been devalued and few can afford to stand for professional ideals or integrity (Church & Waclawski, 1998), it is nonetheless important to recognize, appreciate, and even reinforce such values. Values drive a profession and make it unique (Weisbord, 1982). Clearly, given the moral corruption that exists in some of today's political, social, and organizational systems, it is heartening to know that some group of professionals somewhere stands for a higher purpose.

Although the question regarding which values do or should drive the field of OD has been a topic of debate for decades (Burke, 1982; Friedlander, 1976; Gellermann, Frankel, & Ladenson, 1990; Goodstein, 1984; Greiner, 1980; Hurley, Church, Burke, & Van Eynde, 1992; Margulies & Raia, 1990), we believe strongly that OD does indeed represent a normative approach to organizational change. Just as the fields of I/O psychology and human resource development (HRD) are grounded in improving the conditions of people's lives and promoting human welfare and learning in organizations, so too is the field of OD. Although we know from research (Church, Burke, & Van Eynde, 1994) that not all OD practitioners act according to such ideals, there is a strong bias, and we believe an ethical imperative, in OD work toward promoting human development and positive growth (Waclawski, Church, & Burke, 1995). In sum, OD is driven by a value-based, systemic mind-set using action research methods for organizational improvement. Although these three elements represent the basic theoretical approach taken to OD work, they do not specifically reflect the role of data in the diagnosis and intervention process itself.

The Role of Data in the Consulting Process

One of the best-known approaches to OD practice is the seven-phase consulting model (Kolb & Frohman, 1970; Nadler, 1977). Based in Lewin's action research framework, this model consists of seven distinct phases that apply to every change initiative or engagement: *entry, contracting, data collection, data analysis, data feedback, intervention, and evaluation* (see Table 1.3).

In general, the seven-phase model has a wide range of applications in a variety of consulting situations and is especially important for OD practitioners for three reasons: (1) it reinforces the centrality of data in the process of organization development and change, (2) shows how and when data should be used to inform OD practice, and (3) is based on a systems approach to organizations.

Phase 1, entry, represents the first meeting between the OD practitioner and client. This is often the practitioner's first exposure to the current client system (Katz & Kahn, 1978) and is critical in terms of building what we might call a facilitative (as opposed

Table 1.3. Seven-Phase Consulting Model.

Phase 1. Entry: Initial meeting between client and consultant.
The client and consultant meet to explore issues and the possibility of an OD effort. The client assesses if the consultant is trustworthy, experienced, and competent. The consultant assesses if the client is ready for change and has the resources and power to support change.
Phase 2. Contracting: Reach agreement on what each party will do.
This includes determining mutual expectations, expected time frame, schedule of activities, cost of activities, and ground rules for proceeding.
Phase 3. Data collection: Gather information about the organization.
Interviews, questionnaires, company documents and performance records, focus groups, and other methods are used.
Phase 4. Data analysis: Summarize information and draw conclusions.
From the data, the client and consultant determine next steps once the diagnosis is understood and accepted.
Phase 5. Data feedback: Present summary and conclusions to client.
The consultant presents the summary and preliminary interpretation, followed by a general discussion to clarify information. Next, the consultant and client arrive at a final diagnosis that accurately describes the organization. Together they generate plans for responding to the issues.
Phase 6. Intervention: Take action.
The selected interventions should be a direct reflection and response to the diagnosis.
Phase 7. Evaluation: Determine success or failure.
Change efforts are evaluated to see if the desired change has occurred.

to an expert) relationship. Typically, during this initial meeting, both the client and the OD consultant are assessing one another to determine whether they will be able to collaborate on the pending change initiative. This process includes the potential client's attempts to determine the competency and experience levels of the OD practitioner, as well as the practitioner's initial assessment of the presenting problem (that is, the symptom) and its underlying causes (the real problem), which will need to be examined through some form of data collection. As the potential client looks for signs of rapport with the practitioner, the practitioner looks for signs of the potential client's true level of motivation for and commitment to the potential change effort. The fact is that if a client has neither the intention nor the resources to implement a significant change effort, there is little reason from an OD perspective to pursue the situation in this context. In short, the quality of the interaction here determines whether the OD effort will occur at all. If positive relations are not established, the relationship and thus the change effort will go no further or stall in midprocess.

Contracting, phase 2, consists of setting the expectations, roles, and anticipated outcomes for the change effort (Block, 1981; Burke, 1994). From an OD perspective, the preferred mode here is to rely on open and honest communication rather than on a more formalized legal contracting process, though the latter is often requested in today's litigious and increasingly vendor-driven (Church & Waclawski, 1998) business environment. For example, if a client is interested in undertaking a series of one-on-one interviews to help diagnose the functioning of the senior leadership team of the organization, he or she may call in an external or internal OD practitioner to do this work. During entry and contracting, the consultant and client will not only discuss the work to be done and the practitioner's qualifications for doing this work, but they will also explore interpersonal issues (such as whether the two can communicate and therefore work with one another) and what can and cannot be realistically accomplished as a result of the diagnostic interviews and feedback process.

Once entry and contracting have been successfully completed, the internal or external OD consultant will need to collect data about the organization in order to gain a better understanding of the problems to be solved or the underlying issues at hand. To this

end, phases 3 through 5 of the consulting model concern the collection, analysis, and feedback of data. These data can be either quantitative (multisource feedback, survey instruments, personality assessments, or performance measures) or qualitative (observations, interviews and focus groups, or process measures) in nature, or some combination of both. The consultant at this point would begin collecting and analyzing the major themes in interview data (see Chapter Five for more on this technique). By gathering perceptual, attitudinal, and perhaps behaviorally based critical incident data through one-on-one discussions, the practitioner is positioning himself or herself to develop a detailed understanding about the nature of the team's functioning. Moreover, by directing the discussions toward a focus on the nature of the team dynamics now, where members want these to be, and what barriers, real or perceived, might exist, the consultant is not only building awareness of the challenges but also simultaneously creating energy for change on the part of team members. This energy, caused by attending to the perceptual gap between the existing and future states, is one of the basic means for initiating behavior change in the Lewinian approach.

Once data have been collected and analyzed, phase 6 can begin: specific interventions based on the diagnostic summary performed using the interview results can be interactively discussed and selected for subsequent action. The important point to remember here is that regardless of which interventions are chosen, their determination should be based on an interpretation of the issues inherent in the data itself (and not simply because it is the trendiest, most expensive, or most flashy OD, I/O, or HRD technique available), and jointly selected by the consultant and client. This leads to commitment on the part of the client and ultimately contributes to the success of the entire change process.

Finally, an evaluation of the success of the OD effort should always be undertaken. Often this requires collecting additional data regarding the impact of the intervention in the light of the deliverables that were agreed on in the contracting phase, as well as brainstorming about process improvements for future OD efforts (see Chapter Fourteen for more on this subject). Clearly this is easier said than done. One of the truly unfortunate situations in many OD efforts over the past thirty years, and one that has damaged the

reputation of the field somewhat as well, has been the lack of significant attention to evaluating the success or failure of an OD process. As many researchers and OD scholars have noted (Golembiewski & Sun, 1990; Porras & Robertson, 1992; Woodman & Wayne, 1985), there is a real need in the field for the consistent application of evaluation strategies to the entire consulting cycle. Although some firms believe in the value-driven approach enough to forgo this element, it is not a helpful or a recommended approach to practice.

Overall, the internal and external practice of OD work is a truly data-driven approach to helping organizations identify specific problems and issues and plan for improvement. The next point to consider is the role and function of OD within organizations as this relates to the areas in which practitioners (and particularly internal practitioners) can have and do have an impact within the larger system.

The OD Function in Organizations

Although much of the trade literature and case studies regarding the practice of OD focus on the skills, challenges, and role of external consultants (Burke, 1994; Block, 1981)—and indeed for many this lifestyle represents the perceptually more glamorous choice (Van Eynde, Church, & Burke, 1994)—the fact is that at least half of all practitioners in the OD, HRD, and even I/O psychology arenas work internally in corporations, universities, and nonprofit organizations. Unfortunately, this role and consequently the contribution of this half is underemphasized, underrepresented, and in some cases underappreciated in the field (Church, 2000b; McMahan & Woodman, 1992). Although a detailed discussion of these issues is beyond the scope of this chapter, it is important to highlight a few central themes regarding the nature of internal practice and the OD function itself that have emerged from research and experience.

Despite some popular claims that organizational change occurs from the bottom up (Schaffer & Thompson, 1992), research with the Fortune 500 Industrials and the Fortune 100 fastest-growing firms has shown that the primary client in most internal OD efforts is senior management (Church & McMahan, 1996;

McMahan & Woodman, 1992). Perhaps this is not surprising given that senior leadership support is almost always cited as a necessity for any effective intervention or systemic initiative. Nevertheless, this reinforces the notion that internal OD practitioners must be skilled at working within the political and cultural landscape of the organization if they are to effect change from within (Church, 2000b).

Despite an apparent resurgent interest in the field, the state of the OD function in the mid-1990s was less than optimal. Survey results noted that only 34 percent and 26 percent of the Fortune fastest-growing firms and industrials, respectively, had "well-established" functions, with the rest of the responses scatted among such categories as struggling (respectively, 20 percent and 18 percent), worried (7 percent and 5 percent), or even nonexistent (9 percent and 3 percent). Furthermore, in some organizations, the term *OD* has such negative connotations (as being ineffective or too "touchy feely") that alternative terms such as *organizational effectiveness* have been created (Church & McMahan, 1996; Golembiewski, 1989). In other organizations, this manifests itself as more of an issue of the location of OD within other groups, such as HRD, personnel research, or even the occasional organizational learning function. At Microsoft, for example, some of the more strategic-level OD efforts are conducted through the executive and management development function (Church, Waclawski, McHenry, & McKenna, 1998). Although it is likely given the improvement in the global economy in the past few years that internal OD functions have started to become more prominent once again (and particularly in response to the changing nature of work and emerging trends in training and retention issues among younger workers), it remains an unfortunate reality that many organizations either place little emphasis on or do not have internal OD function at their disposal at all.

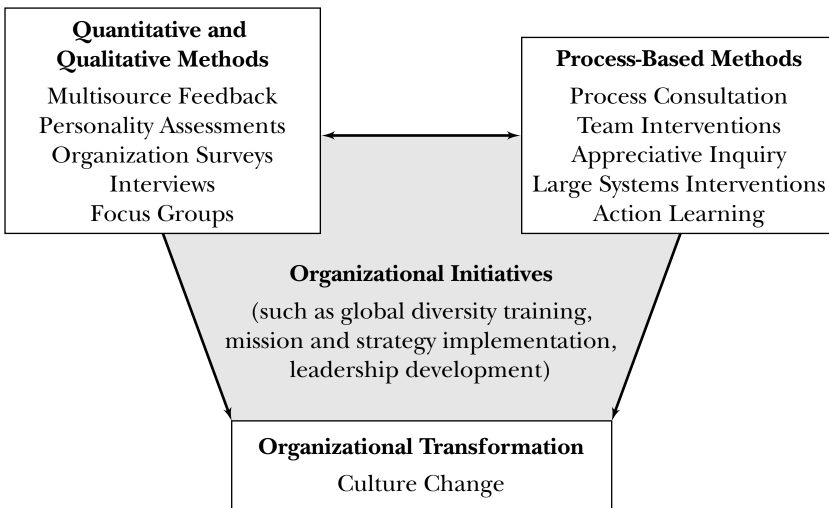
Despite these issues and concerns, it is important to recognize that most of the legwork of organizational change and improvement is driven by these internal practitioners. As a field, we need to begin to recognize these individuals more (and, conversely, not chastise them for having "sold out" to big business). This means more partnerships (rather than circumnavigation) and more shared learnings and skills across the internal-external boundary. From the internal

side, this also means focusing more on collaborating with externals as opposed to focusing on issues of turf, and less application of the vendor mind-set to the way external work is contracted and used (Church & Waclawski, 1998) before the unique contribution of the entire field has been eroded or supplanted by other consulting models. In short, we need to leverage our strengths as a field of internal and external practitioners to help promote OD and improve the state of organizations.

A New Framework for OD

Given the variety of issues and complexities regarding the field, there is a need to provide a single source, as well as an overarching framework or model, regarding the contemporary practice of OD. The chapters in this book provide a comprehensive review of the state of the art of OD practice and applications. The chapters in Part One provide a larger framework that bridges the gap between the variety of the specific methods and interventions and the sources of data available on how these drive organizational change. Figure 1.3 provides just such a framework.

Figure 1.3. Framework for a Data-Driven OD.



Although the framework is relatively self-explanatory, several points should be made about it. First, data represent the central set of inputs (in systems terms) into the overall process. *Data* here refers to quantitative, qualitative, or process-based inputs that reflect the different interventions and methodologies detailed in this book (see Chapters Two through Five and Seven through Ten). Because many practitioners rely on more than one form of data, and in many instances a diagnosis using one method might lead to further examination or an intervention based on another, an arrow indicates the reciprocal nature of their relationship. The outcomes of these data-driven methodologies drive the large organizational initiatives, which represent the movement stage in the change process. These initiatives include broad issues such as leadership development, global diversity training, and mission and strategy implementation. Moreover, some of the complexities involved in working with these initiatives as an OD practitioner include the challenges of using information technology effectively, developing an awareness of diverse cultures and practices in doing OD around the world, and the ethics and values OD practitioners need to embody (see Chapters Twelve, Thirteen, and Fifteen).

These interventions, when pursued in a focused and highly integrated manner, will ultimately help transform the organization and result in improvement and change. In addition, the role of evaluation and linkage research (see Chapters Six and Fourteen) is crucial for establishing the impact and credibility of OD as a field. Although we are not advocating an outcomes-only approach here, given the societal importance placed on metrics and numbers—our vital signs, as some have argued (Hronec, 1993)—it is time for the field to accept fully its roots in a data-driven approach and understand the value inherent in measuring what we do and how we do it.

Conclusion

How is the OD perspective truly different from other approaches to using data to inform organizational effectiveness and decision-making processes? The answer lies in the way the data are used and the level of formality that is attributed to them.

Historically, OD practitioners have used data as a means for opening a dialogue with their client (or client system) about difficult individual, team, and organizational issues. While other groups of practitioners have recently started to recognize the importance of ensuring that action (such as behavior change or organizational change) occurs as a result of the data feedback provided, OD has been focused on the action part all along. Despite this emphasis, the solitary nature of many OD practitioners, the inconsistencies in formal academic and experiential training across the majority of practitioners (surveys indicate that only a third of those practicing have some doctoral training and another third have a master's degree), and the lack of high-quality published OD research detailing methods, processes, and outcomes (particularly when compared to other disciplines such as I/O psychology, social psychology, and HRD) have resulted in an approach to working with data that is considerably different from that of formally trained scientist-practitioner professionals.

In our experience, most OD practitioners rely on a more informal approach to collecting and working with data. This often translates to less specific attention to such empirical issues as item construction, instrument layout and design, establishing criterion validity, and performing confirmatory factor analyses. It is not that these issues are unimportant to practitioners (though clearly some OD practitioners would not know what these terms even mean), but rather that in the mind of the OD practitioner, data are used as fodder for the consulting relationship and as a vehicle or means to problem solving and creating change in OD. Data typically are not collected solely or even primarily for the purpose of performance assessment (as is the case in much I/O work). The principal use of data in OD is to inform the consulting process and provide a means for delving deeper into a situation or tracking progress and improvement over time. Generally, the data are not the primary intervention but rather the means by which issues are uncovered, energy is created, and change is initiated.

As practitioners operating in the realms of OD, I/O psychology, and HRD, we strongly advocate a more central role for data in the consulting process. Indeed, the data-driven methods detailed in this book should be included in every OD, I/O, or HRD practitioner's tool kit.

Our numbers-driven world makes facility with these data and data-based decision making a necessity. In our experience, organizations are far less receptive to non-data-based approaches to OD today than they were ten years ago. Proven methods that lead to financial as well as humanistic gains are now a requirement. The days when a consultant's charisma and intuition were enough to get by on are gone. Clients today are more knowledgeable, sophisticated, experienced, and demanding than ever before. Thus, contemporary OD practitioners must be well versed in a wide variety of areas, possess a myriad of skills, and embrace the use of data in their work. We believe that practitioners who do not embrace this approach do so at their own peril.

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