

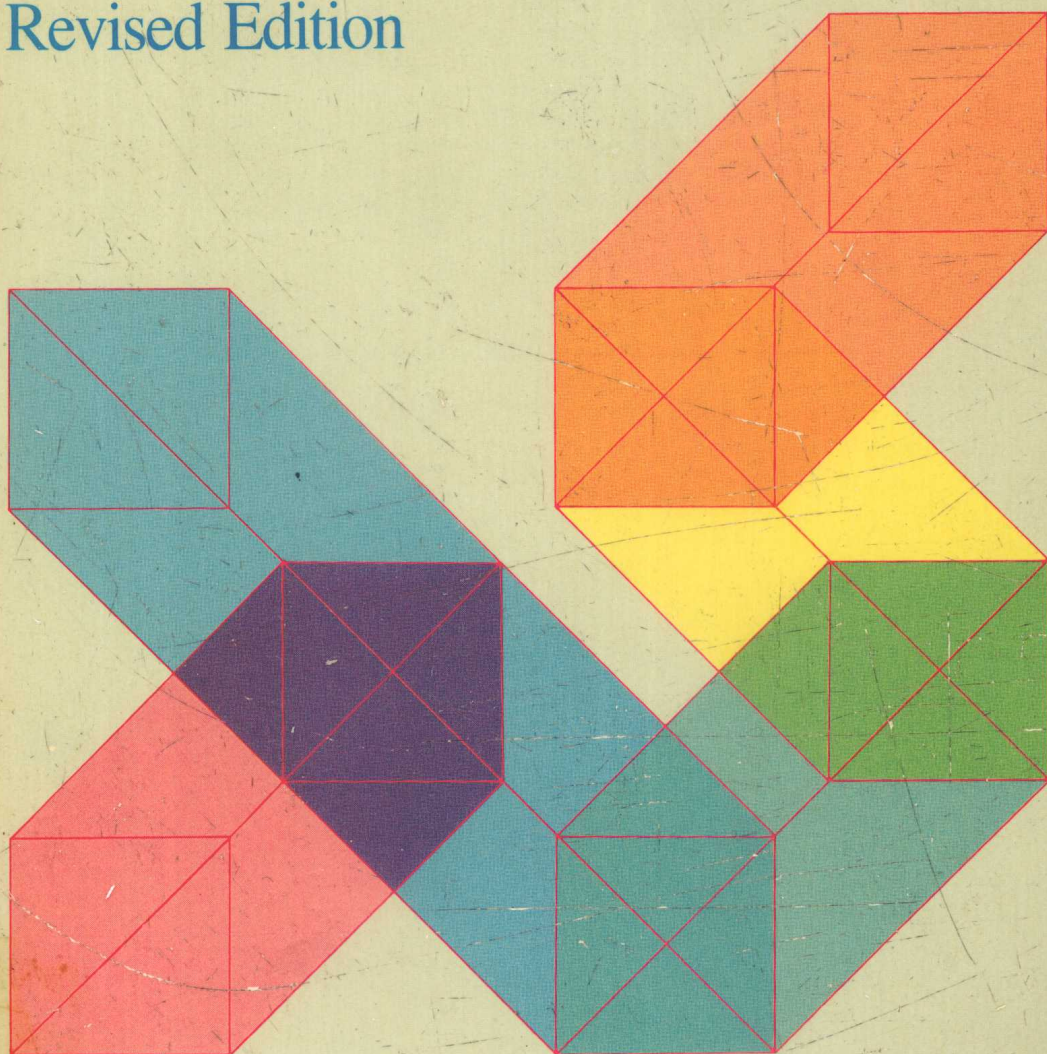
French / Bell / Zawacki

# Organization Development

Theory, Practice, Research

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Revised Edition



# **Theory, Practice, and Research**

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# Preface

Organizations and their members are in a bind: productivity lags; costs skyrocket; inflation soars; constraints on decision makers multiply; markets change rapidly; and new demands proliferate. Managers and employees alike may sometimes feel that Sisyphus actually had it pretty easy compared to them.

And things may get worse before they get better.

But organizations are a social invention: humans design them, run them, and work in them. Many problems of organizations can be solved by systematic, enlightened attention, and effort. Organizations are instruments for getting things done that we want to get done. They are indispensable. They are improvable.

One optimistic and proactive strategy for improving the competencies of individuals and groups in organizations (thereby improving the organization itself) is organization development. Organization development (or OD) is a data-based, problem-solving, systems-approach process for improving the functioning of organizations and individuals. OD is an applied discipline based on theories and principles derived from the behavioral sciences. OD takes what works and what's relevant from the behavioral sciences and applies this knowledge to the domain of organizational behavior.

Although organization development is not a remedy for all organizational ills, it has much to offer practicing managers, students of organizational behavior, and persons interested in improving both organizational performance and the "goodness of fit" between the individual, the group, the organization, and its environment.

This book describes the technology, knowledge base, underlying values, and the implications and applications of organization development. We believe it is a reasonably complete statement of theory, practice, and research in OD and hope it is a useful statement for your purposes.

We wish to acknowledge our debt to the authors whose writings we have included; we thank them for their contributions to the field and to this book. In addition, we wish to thank Samir Y. Naguib, Mark L. McConkie, Katherine A. Abeyta, and Anne S. Reints. A special thanks to Jimmie Lousie Zawacki for the many hours of editing she did on the revised edition.

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**Robert A. Zawacki**

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>	Moving, and Freezing of Group Standards, <i>Kurt Lewin</i> , 66
<b>PART ONE</b>		9 / General Strategies for Effecting Changes in Human Systems, <i>Robert Chin</i> and <i>Kenneth D. Benne</i> , 67
<b>Mapping the Territory</b>	<b>5</b>	10 / The Counseling Relationship, <i>Carl Rogers</i> , 85
<b>A. History, Definitions, and Descriptions of Organization Development</b>	<b>13</b>	11 / Intervention Theory and Method, <i>Chris Argyris</i> , 86
1 / A Brief History of Organization Development, <i>Wendell L. French</i> and <i>Cecil H. Bell, Jr.</i> , 15		<b>B. The Nature of Client Systems: Group Dynamics, Intergroup Dynamics, and Organizations as Systems</b>
2 / What is Organization Development? <i>Richard Beckhard</i> , 20		<b>90</b>
3 / The Nature of Organization Development, <i>Matthew B. Miles</i> and <i>Richard A. Schmuck</i> , 23		12 / Achieving Change in People: Some Applications of Group Dynamics Theory, <i>Dorwin Cartwright</i> , 92
4 / A Definition of Organization Development, <i>Wendell L. French</i> and <i>Cecil H. Bell, Jr.</i> , 27		13 / Functional Roles of Group Members, <i>Kenneth D. Benne</i> and <i>Paul Sheats</i> , 100
5 / Organization Development, <i>Frank Friedlander</i> and <i>L. Dave Brown</i> , 31		14 / Intergroup Problems in Organizations, <i>Edgar H. Schein</i> , 106
6 / Values, Man, and Organizations, <i>Robert Tannenbaum</i> and <i>Sheldon A. Davis</i> , 47		15 / The Two Major Functions of an Industrial Organization, <i>Fritz Roethlisberger</i> and <i>W. J. Dickson</i> , 111
Suggested Additional Readings for Part One, 60		16 / The Informal Organization of the Plant, <i>Fritz Roethlisberger</i> and <i>W. J. Dickson</i> , 112
<b>PART TWO</b>		17 / The Causal, Intervening, and End-Result Variables, <i>Rensis Likert</i> , 113
<b>Theory and Practice on Change and Changing</b>	<b>61</b>	Suggested Additional Readings for Part Two, 115
<b>A. The Nature of Planned Change</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>PART THREE</b>
7 / The Field Approach: Culture and Group Life as Quasi-Stationary Processes, <i>Kurt Lewin</i> , 65		<b>OD Interventions: An Overview</b>
8 / Changing as Three Steps: Unfreezing,		<b>117</b>
		<b>A. Diagnostic Activities: Data Gathering and Data Analysis</b>
		<b>123</b>

18 / Methods for Finding Out What's Going On, <i>Jack K. Fordyce and Raymond Weil</i> , 124		35 / System 4 Builds Performance and Profits, <i>William F. Dowling</i> , 223	
19 / The Confrontation Meeting, <i>Richard Beckhard</i> , 133		36 / Strategies for Large System Change, <i>Richard Beckhard</i> , 234	
20 / Organizational Diagnosis: Six Places to Look for Trouble with or without a Theory, <i>Marwin R. Weisbord</i> , 140		Suggested Additional Readings for Part Three, 243	
<b>B. Team Building and Team Interventions</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>PART FOUR</b>	
21 / Basic Programs and Plans, <i>William G. Dyer</i> , 148		<b>Individual and Educational Interventions Vis-à-Vis OD: The T-Group Method, The Tavistock Approach, and Life and Career Planning</b>	<b>245</b>
22 / Optimizing Team-Building Efforts, <i>Richard Beckhard</i> , 152		37 / Communication in Sensitivity-Training Groups, <i>Elliot Aronson</i> , 249	
23 / A Gestalt Orientation to Organization Development, <i>Stanley M. Herman</i> , 159		38 / Tavistock Conferences, <i>Clayton P. Alderfer</i> , 254	
24 / Strategic Planning: A Major OD Intervention, <i>Thomas H. Rogers</i> , 168		39 / Transactional Analysis in OD: Applications within the NTL Model, <i>Donald D. Bowen and Raghu Nath</i> , 256	
25 / Open Systems Planning, <i>G. K. Jayaram</i> , 171		40 / Life Planning, <i>Herbert A. Shepard</i> , 264	
26 / Operation KPE: Developing a New Organization, <i>Ishwar Dayal and John M. Thomas</i> , 177		Suggested Additional Readings for Part Four, 271	
27 / Planning Procedures/Managing Interfaces/Charting Responsibility, <i>Richard Beckhard and Reuben T. Harris</i> , 179		<b>PART FIVE</b>	
28 / When Power Conflicts Trigger Team Spirit, <i>Roger Harrison</i> , 183		<b>Structural Interventions Vis-à-Vis OD</b>	<b>273</b>
<b>C. Intergroup and Third-Party Interventions</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>A. Quality of Work Life Projects</b>	<b>275</b>
29 / Two-Person Disputes, <i>Carl Rogers</i> , 192		41 / Quality of Working Life: What Is It? <i>Richard E. Walton</i> , 276	
30 / Interpersonal Confrontation and Basic Third-Party Functions: A Case Study, <i>Richard E. Walton</i> , 193		<b>B. Sociotechnical Systems and Work Redesign</b>	<b>283</b>
31 / Strategies for Improving Headquarters-Field Relations, <i>Robert Blake, Herbert A. Shepard, and Jane S. Mouton</i> , 202		42 / Why Productivity Efforts Fail, <i>Paul S. Goodman and James W. Dean, Jr.</i> , 285	
32 / Mediation and Organizational Development: Models for Conflict Management, <i>Jeanne M. Brett, Stephen B. Goldberg and William Ury</i> , 206		43 / From Hawthorne to Topeka and Kalmar, <i>Richard E. Walton</i> , 292	
<b>D. Comprehensive Strategies</b>	<b>211</b>	44 / The Design of Jobs, <i>Randall B. Dunham</i> , 301	
33 / What's New with the Grid? <i>Robert Blake and Jane S. Mouton</i> , 212		<b>C. Management by Objectives and Compensation</b>	<b>315</b>
34 / Improving the Effectiveness of Survey Feedback, <i>Jerome L. Franklin</i> , 219		45 / Management by Objectives: The Team Approach, <i>Wendell L. French and Robert W. Hollmann</i> , 316	
		46 / Working Creatively with a Union:	

Lessons from the Scanlon Plan,  
*James W. Driscoll*, 326  
47 / Changing Organizations, *Edward E.  
Lawler III*, 337

**D. Collateral Organizations and Other  
Structural Approaches 342**

48 / Collateral Organization: A New  
Change Strategy, *Dale E. Zand*, 344  
49 / The Quality Control Circle Explosion,  
*Edwin G. Yager*, 359  
50 / Physical Settings and Organizational  
Development, *Fred I. Steele*, 365  
Suggested Additional Readings for  
Part Five, 370

**PART SIX  
Power, Politics, and Organization  
Development 371**

**A. Readings in Power, Politics, and  
Organization Development 379**

51 / Conditions for the Use of Power,  
*Jeffrey Pfeffer*, 380  
52 / Organization Development: A Political  
Perspective, *Anthony T. Cobb* and  
*Newton Margulies*, 398  
53 / The Politics of OD, *Michael Beer*, 398  
54 / Learning the Fundamentals,  
*R. G. H. Siu*, 400  
Suggested Additional Readings for  
Part Six, 402

**PART SEVEN  
Organization and Implementation  
of the OD Process 403**

**A. Effective Consultant Behavior 405**

55 / The Organization Development  
Contract, *Marvin Weisbord*, 406  
56 / Choosing the Depth of the  
Organizational Intervention, *Roger  
Harrison*, 412  
57 / Rules of Thumb for Change Agents,  
*Herbert A. Shepard*, 422

**B. OD Intervention Issues 427**

58 / An Autopsy of an Intended OD  
Project, *R. Wayne Boss* and *Mark L.  
McConkie*, 428

59 / Ethical Issues in OD Intervention,  
*Matthew B. Miles*, 438

**C. A Strategy Checklist 450**

60 / A Checklist for Organizing and  
Implementing an OD Effort,  
*Wendell L. French*, 451  
Suggested Additional Readings for  
Part-Seven, 460

**PART EIGHT  
Applications and Issues in the  
Nonbusiness Sectors 461**

61 / Organization Development in Public  
Agencies: Perspectives on Theory and  
Practice, *Robert T. Golembiewski*, 465  
62 / New Thoughts on Public-Sector OD,  
*Frank Pecarich*, 474  
63 / Organization Development  
Technology and the Military: A  
Surprising Merger? *Denis D. Umstot*, 480  
64 / OD in Schools: The State of the Art,  
*Michael Fullan* and *Matthew Miles*, 493  
65 / It Doesn't Matter If You Win or Lose,  
Unless You're Losing: Organizational  
Change in a Law Enforcement Agency,  
*R. Wayne Boss*, 501  
Suggested Additional Readings for  
Part Eight, 516

**PART NINE  
Research on Organization  
Development 519**

**A. Research Results and Example 523**

66 / The Impact of Organization  
Development, *Jerry I. Porras* and  
*P. O. Berg*, 524  
67 / Durability of Organization Change,  
*Stanley E. Seashore* and *David G.  
Bowers*, 538  
68 / Organization Development and  
Change in Organizational Performance,  
*John R. Kimberly* and *Warren R.  
Nielsen*, 546  
Suggested Additional Readings for  
Part Nine, 559

---

**PART TEN**  
**Problems and Prospects in**  
**Organization Development**

**561**

69 / Organization Development and  
Bureaucracy in the 1980s, *W. Warner*  
*Burke*, 563

70 / Organization Development at the  
Crossroads, *Warren Bennis*, 572  
Suggested Additional Readings for  
Part Ten, 579



montage (mon'tāzh') *n.* 1. a. The act or process of producing a composite picture by combining several distinct pictures, often so that they blend with or into each other. b. Such a composite picture.<sup>1</sup>

gestalt (gə'shtālt') *n.* 1. a unified whole: a configuration, pattern, or organized field having specific properties that cannot be derived from the summation of its component parts. 2. an instance or example of such a unified whole.<sup>2</sup>

Organization Development (OD). In the behavioral science, and perhaps ideal, sense of the term, organization development is a long-range effort to improve an organization's problem-solving and renewal processes, particularly through a more effective and collaborative management of organization culture—with special emphasis on the culture of formal work teams—with the assistance of a change agent, or catalyst, and the use of the theory and technology of applied behavioral science, including action research.<sup>3</sup>

Our immediate goal in editing this volume is suggested in the three definitions above: We wanted to produce a composite picture of the gestalt known as organization development—a picture that would contain properties greater than and different from the properties of the component parts. So we combed the literature on organization development and related topics looking for significant and seminal writings, organized the writings against an outline designed to cover the topic with both breadth and depth, and generated this anthology that we hope will serve as a resource book for those in-

terested in gaining a fuller understanding of the theory, practice, and research dimensions of organization development. In addition to the immediate goal, we had three more substantive goals—our real reasons for producing the book: we wanted to help clarify the field of organization development; we wanted to help educate those interested in learning more about OD as an instrument for organizational improvement; and we wanted to help “shape” the field in directions we want it to go. Although this is a revised edition of the original anthology, these goals continue to guide our selection processes. The five years between the first edition and this one have brought new conceptual developments as well as new technology to the OD field. We have included these new developments as we continue to try to present a current and comprehensive overview of organization development.

## SOME COMMENTS ON CLARIFYING THE FIELD OF ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

Organization development is an important strategy for improving the effectiveness of organizations and there is considerable literature on the subject. But in spite of the wealth of written material on organization development, there continues to be widespread confusion about what it is and is not, and what it can and cannot accomplish. *Organization development is a prescription for a process of planned organizational change.* The nature and elements of that prescription are described in this book. But the reader should be warned in advance that there is a pronounced lack of clarity and consensus concerning both the whole of OD and the component parts of OD—theorists and prac-

<sup>1</sup> Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam, 1953).

<sup>2</sup> The Random House Dictionary of the English Language (New York: Random House, 1967).

<sup>3</sup> Wendell L. French and Cecil H. Bell, Jr., *Organization Development* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1978), p. 14.

tioners differ widely among themselves on methods, processes, goals, and even definitions of organization development.

Clarifying the field of organization development necessitates addressing and resolving definitional issues, turf issues, and boundary issues as a first step. Semantic clarification is needed: what do the terms *organization development*, *organizational improvement*, and *OD interventions* mean; that is, what do they refer to? There has been little agreement on definitions and what practices are “in” or “out” of the realm of OD. For example, organization development has been described as a process of planned change, as an approach to organizational improvement, as a set of activities, as a set of values, as an educational strategy, as an applied behavioral science discipline, and as a specific set of techniques, that is, a technology. Is OD all of these? Some of these? None of these? It is likely that there is some truth in all these descriptions; however, what is needed is an analytic framework for evaluating statements and assertions concerning OD. Once this is developed, coalescing a workable and acceptable definition of OD should not be too difficult. We make some beginning attempts at building analytic frameworks in Parts One, Four, and Five.

### **SOME COMMENTS ON HELPING TO INFORM THOSE INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT OD**

The field of organization development is now about 25 years old, and it has attracted a large following of practitioners and clients, academicians, and students. The theory and practice of OD have had a substantial impact on the practice of management and the planning of change in organizations. A sizable knowledge base and a moderately sophisticated technology have grown up around OD. Finally, there is a store of clinical experience, anecdotal reporting, and research evidence that suggests that OD is a potent and viable instrument for organization improvement. Granting that organization improvement is not a trivial matter, and granting that OD can be an effective instrument for organization improvement, it seems desirable to examine OD in depth—where it came from and what it is today.

A montage is a composite picture constructed from several distinct pictures. Selected writings of theorists and practitioners having firsthand knowledge of organization devel-

opment were assembled and ordered according to a framework. The separate writings portray different elements and facets of OD; we hope that together they give an understanding of the gestalt known as OD. We assumed that there are many people interested in learning more about organization development, and we believed that a book of readings might be a good vehicle for helping that learning.

We sought moderate breadth and depth in covering the field in the belief that education should consist of knowledge of the subject, and not just acquaintance with it. We included articles that represent the core of the OD literature as well as articles showing how OD relates to other applied behavioral science approaches. We chose some of the classics as well as some “just off-the-presses” articles. Where it seemed appropriate, we chose articles of a more difficult nature if the subject matter did not permit a simple treatment.

The book is directed to the professional practitioner of OD, to graduate and undergraduate students interested in OD, to academicians interested in the topic, and to “those men and women of practical affairs”—managers and action takers in ongoing organizations. Since different readers may be interested in different aspects of the subject, we have deliberately tried to collect articles of interest to a broad range of people.

Perhaps a word should be said about our selection process. The “act or process of producing a composite picture” was a difficult but enjoyable task, one that called for separating figure from ground, substance from form, and wheat from chaff—basically a judgmental task replete with possibilities for human bias and human error. We reviewed hundreds of articles and books and unpublished manuscripts before we settled on these selections. The overriding goal was to achieve a complete and balanced coverage of the subject within the constraints of size and cost of the book. Numerous high-quality selections could not be included for various reasons, especially space limitations. Many of these are noted as Suggested Additional Readings at the end of each part.

### **SOME COMMENTS ON SHAPING THE FIELD IN DIRECTIONS WE WANT IT TO GO**

A desire to help shape the field of organization development was another conscious goal in the preparation of this book. We are biased in our

views of what OD is and is not, in our views of what OD should and should not be, and in our views of what constitutes good and bad practice of OD. These biases helped determine our selections and coverage. We chose descriptions of OD efforts that we think reflect both good practice of OD and an accurate conceptualization of what OD is. We selected articles that deal with some of the thorny conceptual issues that must be resolved if the practice of OD is to advance, and we chose articles critical of and complementary of organization development as it is currently practiced. In those weak areas in the theory or practice of OD we have suggested tentative answers where we could think of them, and have suggested possible ways to discover answers where we could not think of any.

We believe that organization development has some unique characteristics that differentiate it from other organization improvement strategies. We wish to explore and explain these unique features and test to see if others agree. Likewise, we believe that organization development has unique strengths and weaknesses as an organization improvement strategy. These too must be identified and examined. In a sense, until the people working in the field of organization development know what OD *is*, they are relatively powerless to make it what it *should be* (or what they want it to be). And in a way that is the underlying theme of this book: to examine the theory, practice, and research dimensions of organization development in order to improve it, to strengthen both the art and the science of it. An analysis of the current status of organization development reveals several serious but not fatal flaws, such as the lack of a systematic theoretical base, considerable semantic confusion regarding the terms and concepts used, and some serious gaps in the technology available. We believe these flaws can and will be corrected, and we hope this book will contribute toward that end.

There are no doubt several "alternative futures" for the practice of OD, and we wish to promote some of these and discourage others. There is an unseemly faddishness about organization improvement techniques and strategies. A new technique gets introduced, becomes the "rage" and the "in thing" (usually gets reduced to a nickname of capital letters), and then just as rapidly is discarded as people move on to some newer technique. Several problems inhere in such practice: first, both the good and bad aspects of the discarded technique are equally rejected, with the loss of potentially

helpful knowledge and technology; second, systematic evaluation of the discarded technique usually does not get done—specifically *if* it works, *when* and *where* it works, and *why* it works; and third, there is no cumulative building up of a body of practice theory or applied science, which is the hallmark of a successful scientific endeavor. While it is highly unlikely that organization development will be a fad, the forces pushing in that direction are strong. It seems therefore all the more desirable to conduct a careful examination of the unique strengths and weaknesses of OD, and to develop theory and practice to enhance the strengths and eliminate the weaknesses. Organization development appears to be a prescription for a process of planned organizational change that can both improve the effectiveness of organizations and enhance the quality of working life in organizations. If it is truly a viable technique for improving organizations, the reasons for that effectiveness should be understood; and, of course, if it is not a viable technique for improving organizations, the reasons for that should be understood. We believe the weight of evidence is in favor of organization development.

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

This second edition has been substantially revised. The first edition contained 53 articles; this edition contains 70 articles. There are 44 new articles. Adding so many new works and authors necessitated severe pruning—we even cut out articles written by ourselves! In all, we deleted 19 articles from the first edition. Such a revision process allowed us to include the significant new developments of the last five years and to craft a 1983 snapshot of the field of OD.

The practice, theory, and research of organization development constitute the topics of interest in this book. Part One begins the story by presenting the history of OD, definitions and descriptions of OD, different kinds of and emphases of OD, and a sketch of other organization improvement strategies. We call this part "Mapping the Territory"—getting to know the turf, domain, and boundaries of organization development. This part paints a broad-brush picture of the scope and contours of the field. Part Two, "Theory and Practice on Change and Changing," provides a background for understanding some of the theoretical underpinnings of OD. Specifically, the nature of planned change and the nature of client systems are ex-

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amined in this section. OD practitioners utilize implicit and explicit conceptual schemas regarding change, organizations, and human behavior as they practice in organizations. Some of the more important theoretical formulations are highlighted in Part Two. There is no comprehensive theory of organization development, but the practice of OD is based on partial theories and a variety of conceptual formulations.

Part Three describes many of the interventions central to OD—the actual technology and practices available to clients and consultants. This section has been expanded considerably in the second edition to include a wider range of interventions and to describe more recent developments. Part Three is especially relevant for readers who want to know what actually happens in OD programs. Part Four focuses on interventions that may or may not be strictly OD—interventions that are largely supplemental or complementary to OD programs. Overall, the essays in these two parts describe interventions directed toward individuals, teams, groups in conflict, and total systems. What techniques are available, how and when they might be used, and the conditions that may lead to success or failure are covered in these sections.

Part Five continues the description of intervention techniques applicable to organizations but broadens the scope considerably. Numerous structural interventions available for effecting organization improvement are discussed here—sociotechnical systems, job enrichment, quality of work life, job redesign, MBO, and the like. These interventions are compared and contrasted against criteria for inclusion in the category *organization development*. Since these change strategies are clearly important and efficacious, we try both to present the strategies and also to analyze their underlying assumptions.

Part Six is an entirely new section. Its focus—power, politics, and organization

development—directs attention to a long-neglected area in OD. Theory and practice in OD have been criticized for ignoring or being soft on issues relating to organizational politics and power. That situation is changing, as shown by the selections in Part Six.

Part Seven shifts attention to another key aspect of the practice of OD: organizing and implementing an OD program. Issues of central concern to consultant and client alike are covered, such as getting started, setting the contract, consultant-client relations, and developing an overall strategy. This section deals with some dimensions and dynamics that we believe can make the difference between success and failure in OD programs.

Part Eight discusses applications of OD in various settings and situations. The practice of OD is widespread. We wanted to give a sense of the range of application of OD techniques; we wanted to discuss some of the implications of launching and conducting OD programs in different contexts. It is likely that the Compleat Practitioner needs to know how different organizational contexts impact OD activities. What may be successful and relevant in one situation may not be in another.

Part Nine, "Research on Organization Development," addresses the key issue: does OD work? Evaluating the effects of an OD program is a difficult task. Some of the problems inherent in this kind of evaluation research are covered in this section, as well as some of the more exemplary research efforts. We believe this section is a very important part of the book.

Finally, Part Ten deals with the future of organization development. Where is the field going? What are some of the unresolved issues that need attention? What does the "balance sheet" look like going into the 1980s?

We think the study of organizational improvement strategies, in general, and the study of organization development, in particular, are important and exciting arenas. We hope you share these sentiments.

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# PART ONE

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## Mapping the Territory

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The subject matter of this book is organization development, a relatively specific kind of planned change effort aimed at helping members of organizations do the things they want to do—better. We have attempted to fashion a systematic examination of organization development in order that the reader may determine the applicability, utility, and viability of this particular approach as a means of organization improvement. Making sense out of the diverse activities that currently go under the label *OD* is a difficult task: there is a rubbery, imprecise quality to most of the terms and definitions in the area; practices and practitioners are widely divergent; what one practitioner labels OD may not be so designated by other practitioners or observers. In this section we shall attempt to build a common base of understanding and communication.

Organization development theory and practice focus primarily on the human and social aspects of organizations, and view organizational behavior as consisting essentially of coordinated goal-directed activities of a number of people. There are other possible approaches to understanding and intervening in organizations—one can focus on organization structure and design, technology and task design, or organization-environment congruence, for example. Organization development programs often attend to these issues, but the principal focus is on the human aspects of the organization conceived as a social system.

In Part One we begin at the beginning—mapping the territory of organization development. What is OD? What is not OD? What

characteristics differentiate OD from other improvement programs? What are some of the varieties of OD? And what is the place of OD in the vast array of organization improvement strategies? Satisfactory answers must be provided to these basic questions in order to engage in meaningful discourse about organization development. The issues of definition, identification, and specification of OD will ultimately be resolved through dialogue and consensus; we have attempted to contribute to that resolution through the introductory comments and selections in Part One.

Whether or not organization development can (or should) be identified as a “unified whole” or an “organized field” at this time is problematic and debatable. Two extreme positions may be advanced relative to identifying and specifying OD. At one extreme, an all-inclusive position, organization development can serve as a rubric, a classification scheme, for all organizational improvement and all organizational development technologies and activities. In this scheme, OD would likely not be a unified whole or organized field, since the differences between technologies and activities would be so great they would obviate the usefulness of the classification system; OD could mean virtually anything to anyone. At the other extreme, a narrowly inclusive position, organization development would refer to only a few techniques and activities meeting stringent requirements for inclusion in the concept. In this scheme, OD would likely be a more unified whole, but many activities and techniques currently considered as OD activities would be ex-

cluded from the concept. Everyone could agree on what is and is not OD; but rigid and closely drawn boundaries might turn away many colleagues and supporters, and might lead the practice of OD away from the cutting edge of applied behavioral science advances.

We advocate a middle-ground position that would view organization development as an organized field, and that would put the determination of what is and is not OD—and what is partially OD and partially not OD—on a more systematic and rational basis. We hope to advance the middle-ground position by specifying what we believe are the distinguishing characteristics of OD, and by suggesting some criteria for establishing approximate boundaries and making inclusion-exclusion judgments.

## TOWARD A DEFINITION OF ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT

The words *organization development* refer to something about organizations and developing them. According to Edgar Schein, "An organization is the planned coordination of the activities of a number of people for the achievement of some common explicit purpose or goal, through division of labor and function, and through a hierarchy of authority and responsibility."<sup>1</sup> Organizations are social systems possessing characteristics described by Schein, and OD efforts are directed toward organizations or major subparts of them.

Development is the act, process, result, or state of being developed—which in turn means to advance, to promote the growth of, to evolve the possibilities of, to further, to improve, or to enhance *something*. Two elements of this definition seem important: first, development may be an act, process, or end state; second, development refers to "bettering" something.

Combining these words suggests that organization development is the act, process, or result of furthering, advancing, or promoting the growth of an organization. According to these definitions, organization development is anything done to "better" an organization. But this definition is too broad and all-inclusive. It can refer to almost anything done in an organizational context that enhances the organization—hiring a person with needed skills, firing an incompetent, merging with another organization, installing a computer, re-

moving a computer, buying a new plant, and so on. This definition serves neither to identify and specify nor to delimit (perhaps something done to "worsen" an organization would be ruled out). The term *organization development* must be given more meaning, must refer to something more specific, if productive discourse on the subject is desired.

Let us try another way of defining organization development. The following definitions of OD have been suggested in the literature:

Organization development is an effort (1) *planned*, (2) *organization-wide*, and (3) *managed from the top*, to (4) *increase organization effectiveness and health* through (5) *planned interventions* in the organization's "processes," using *behavioral-science knowledge*.<sup>2</sup>

*Organization development* (OD) is a response to change, a complex educational strategy intended to change the beliefs, attitudes, values, and structure of organizations so that they can better adapt to new technologies, markets, and challenges, and the dizzying rate of change itself.<sup>3</sup>

*Organization development* is the strengthening of those human processes in organizations which improve the functioning of the organic system so as to achieve its objectives.<sup>4</sup>

*Organization renewal* is the process of initiating, creating, and confronting needed changes so as to make it possible for organizations to become or remain viable, to adapt to new conditions, to solve problems, to learn from experiences, and to move toward greater organizational maturity.<sup>5</sup>

OD can be defined as a planned and sustained effort to apply behavioral science for system improvement, using reflexive, self-analytic methods.<sup>6</sup>

Organization development is a process of planned change—change of an organization's culture from one which avoids an examination of social processes (especially decision making, planning and communication) to one which institutionalizes and legitimizes this examination.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Richard Beckhard, *Organization Development: Strategies and Models* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1969), p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Warren G. Bennis, *Organization Development: Its Nature, Origins, and Prospects* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1969), p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Gordon L. Lippitt, *Organization Renewal* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1969), p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Richard Schmuck and Matthew Miles, *Organization Development in Schools* (Palo Alto, Calif.: National Press Books, 1971), p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Warner Burke and Harvey A. Hornstein, *The Social Technology of Organization Development* (Fairfax, Va.: Learning Resources Corp., 1972), p. xi.

<sup>1</sup> Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Psychology*, 3d. ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1980), p. 15.

In the behavioral science, and perhaps ideal, sense of the term, organization development is a long-range effort to improve an organization's problem-solving and renewal processes, particularly through a more effective and collaborative management of organization culture—with special emphasis on the culture of formal work teams—with the assistance of a change agent, or catalyst, and the use of the theory and technology of applied behavioral science, including action research.<sup>8</sup> [Italics in the original.]

Analysis of these definitions suggests that organization development is *not* just “anything done to better an organization”; it is a particular kind of change process designed to bring about a particular kind of end result. In Figure 1 the definitions are dissected and put into an analytic framework to discover the particular kind of change processes and the particular kind of end results desired.

The following conclusion regarding organization development emerges from this discussion. Organization development (OD) is a prescription for a process of planned change in organizations in which the key prescriptive elements relate to (1) the nature of the effort or program (it is a long-range, planned, system-wide process); (2) the nature of the change activities (they utilize behavioral science interventions of an educational, reflexive, self-examining, learn-to-do-it-yourself nature); (3) the targets of the change activities (it is directed toward the human and social processes of organizations, specifically individuals' beliefs, attitudes, and values, the culture and processes of work groups—viewed as basic building blocks of the organization—and the processes and culture of the total organization); and (4) the desired outcomes of the change activities (the goals are *needed changes* in the targets of the interventions that cause the organization to be better able to adapt, cope, solve its problems, and renew itself). Organization development thus represents a unique strategy for system change, a strategy largely based in the theory and research of the behavioral sciences, and a strategy having a substantial prescriptive character. (Some supporting literature for the prescriptive elements is given in Part Two.) Organization development is thus a normative statement; it prescribes how planned change in organizations should be approached and car-

ried out if organization improvement is to be obtained.

In summary, organization development is a process of planned system change that attempts to make organizations (viewed as social-technical systems) better able to attain their short- and long-term objectives. This is achieved by teaching the organization members to manage their organization processes and culture more effectively. Facts, concepts, and theory from the behavioral sciences are utilized to fashion both the process and the content of interventions. A basic belief of OD theorists and practitioners is that for effective, lasting change to take place, the system members must grow in the competence to master their own fates.

Let us extend this discussion beyond definitions and examine in detail some of the distinguishing characteristics of OD. These characteristics may be useful as criteria for determining what is and is not OD.

## **DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS OF ORGANIZATION DEVELOPMENT**

Perusal of the many descriptions and definitions of organization development in the literature leads to the conclusion that most authors believe that OD is a unique change strategy, but few of them go beyond listing the features of OD, to the statement that programs and strategies not possessing these features are not OD. It is with some trepidation that we undertake to do just that in this section. We believe OD programs possess the characteristics described in this section; we believe programs that do not possess these characteristics are not OD. They may be efficacious, they may be legitimate change strategies, and they may be powerful tools for organization improvement, but they are not OD.

Two of us (Wendell and Cecil) have been concerned with the issue of identifying and specifying the nature of organization development for some time now. In an earlier publication we stated:

We see eight characteristics that we think differentiate organization development interventions from more traditional interventions:

1. An emphasis, although not exclusively so, on group and organizational processes in contrast to substantive content.
2. An emphasis on the work team as the key unit for learning more effective modes of organizational behavior.

<sup>8</sup> Wendell L. French and Cecil H. Bell, Jr., *Organization Development* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1978), p. 14.

**FIGURE 1 An Analysis of Selected Definitions of Organization Development**

Author	Components of the Organization Development Process				Desired Goals, Outcomes, or End States of Organization Development Effort
	Nature and Scope of the Effort	Nature of Activities/Interventions	Targets of Interaction/Activities	Knowledge Base	
Beckard	Planned. Organizationwide. Managed from the top.	Planned interventions in the organization's "processes."	Total organization.	Behavioral science knowledge.	Increased organization effectiveness and health.
Bennis	Complex educational strategy. A response to change.	Educational. Change-oriented.	Beliefs, attitudes, values, and structures of organizations.		Better ability to adapt to new technologies, markets, and challenges and the dizzying rate of change itself.
Gordon Lippitt (on OD)		Designed to strengthen human processes in organizations.	Those human processes in organizations which improve the organic system.		Enable the organization to achieve its objectives (through improved functioning of the organic system).
Gordon Lippitt (on organization renewal)	A process.	A process of initiating, creating and confronting needed changes.	[Implied] total organization.		Enhance the ability of the organization to: Become or remain viable. Adapt to new conditions. Solve problems. Learn from experience. Move toward greater organizational maturity.
Schmuck and Miles	A planned and sustained effort.	Apply behavioral science for system improvement. Using reflexive, self-analytic methods.	Total system (organization).	Behavioral science.	System improvement. [Implied] continued self-analysis and reflection.
Burke and Hornstein	A process of planned change.	Change-oriented and self-examining oriented; specifically change of an organization's culture from one which avoids an examination of social processes in organization . . . to one which institutionalizes and legitimizes this examination.	The organization's culture and the social processes in organization, especially decision making, planning and communication		[Self-examination] of social processes in organization, especially decision making, planning, and communication.
French and Bell	A long-range effort.	Designed to bring about a more effective and collaborative management of organization culture; using assistance of change agent, or catalyst.	Organization culture. Culture of formal work teams. Organization's problem-solving and renewal processes.	The theory and technology of applied behavioral science, including action research.	Improve an organization's problem-solving and renewal processes.



3. An emphasis on the collaborative management of work-team culture.
4. An emphasis on the management of the culture of the total system.
5. Attention to the management of system ramifications.
6. The use of the action research model.
7. The use of a behavioral scientist-change agent, sometimes referred to as a "catalyst" or "facilitator."
8. A view of the change effort as an ongoing process.

Another characteristic, number 9, a primary emphasis on human and social relationships, does not necessarily differentiate OD from other change efforts, but it is nevertheless an important feature.<sup>9</sup>

While we still believe these characteristics describe organization development efforts, let us add another means of identifying OD.

**An Organization Development Program Is a Long-Range, Planned, and Sustained Effort that Unfolds According to a Strategy.** The key elements here are long range, planned and sustained, and strategy. There is a long-range time perspective on the part of both the client system and the consultant in OD programs. Both parties envision an ongoing relationship of one, two, or more years together if things go well in the program. A one-shot intervention into the system is thus not organization development according to this criterion even though the intervention may be one that is used in OD efforts. Thus the dozens of case studies reporting a three-day or week-long T-group experience for system members do not constitute OD as we see it, if the T-group experience was the only intervention of the program.

The reasons for OD practitioners and theorists conceptualizing OD programs in long-range terms are several. First, changing a system's culture and processes is a difficult, complicated, and long-term matter if lasting change is to be effected. OD programs envision that the system members become better able to manage their culture and processes in problem solving and self-renewing ways. Such complex new learning takes time. Second, the assumption is made that organizational problems are multifaceted and complex. One-shot interventions probably cannot solve such problems, and they most assuredly cannot teach the client system to solve them in such a short time period.

OD programs are planned and sustained efforts. They are planned, not accidental—they

represent a deliberate entry of either an OD consultant or OD activities into the client system. And they are sustained. The assumption is made that follow-up and sustained effort and energy are needed in order to solve organization problems. These points are fairly straightforward. There is, however, a related point that is a source of some confusion. When some good management practices are taking place in an organization without an OD program—for example, a manager has worked out effective ways to manage team and intergroup culture and processes—is that organization development? We do not think so. OD practitioners try to inculcate good management practices in organizations, that is, they try to help organization members learn to manage themselves and others better. But many managers and many organizations are competently managing their affairs without help from organization development consultants and OD programs; what they are doing would not be called OD even though they may be using some techniques found in the OD technology. OD practitioners did not invent good management practices; OD practitioners are not the sole source for learning good management practices; and finally, the term *organization development* is not synonymous with the term *good management*.

Organization development programs unfold according to a strategy. A part of the planned nature of OD programs almost always involves an overall strategy even though the strategy may be only dimly obvious and articulable, and even though the strategy may emerge and change shape over time. (From our experience, the more viable OD efforts have a fairly clear and openly articulated strategy.) Consultants and clients develop overall goals and paths to goals in organization development programs, and these guide the programmatic activities. It is preferable and usual for the strategy to be developed out of the diagnosed problems of the client system, the client system's desires and capabilities, and the consultant's capabilities and insights into client system needs.

**The Organization Development Consultant Establishes a Unique Relationship with Client System Members.** Probably the most fundamental differences between organization development programs and other organization improvement programs are found in the role and behavior of the consultant vis-à-vis the client system. In OD the consultant seeks and maintains a collaborative relationship of relative

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 18.