THE EVOLVING PRACTICE OF THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Adult Education, Community Development
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the
University of Toronto

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The Evolving Practice of the Internal and External Organizational Development Consultant

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Abstract

This qualitative study explores the evolution of the practice of Organizational Development over the last decade. Eight OD practitioners with ten or more years of experience were interviewed. An equal number of internal and external consultants were chosen so that comparisons could be made where appropriate. Using in-depth interviews, participants were asked to reflect upon: how the practice had changed over the decade; what factors have caused this change; the professional activities they currently engage in; the values they espouse; and how to train practitioners entering the field.

Participants identified the following factors as having had a significant impact on the role of the OD consultant: the globalization of the economy, technological change, shifts in the employee/employer contract, and evolution within the OD field itself.

Participants in this study demonstrate a pattern of adaptation to these changing circumstances. They have increasingly focused on organizational effectiveness and now tend to use a systemic focus when resolving organizational problems. While they are still using many of the traditional activities associated with OD, such as training and teambuilding, they have adapted them to meet current organizational needs. There are also some new developments within the field at the level of large-scale change,
transorganizational development, and organizational learning. Humanistic values still remain fundamental to the OD consultants in this study.

Some differences emerge between the internal and external consultants. Internal consultants are more adamant about the importance of focusing on organizational effectiveness. Although all participants use a wide range of activities, external consultants are more involved with large-scale change, transorganizational development, and intergroup relations while internal consultants are more focused at the individual and group level.

OD still faces some hurdles in reaching its full potential as a distinct discipline. The OD community needs to find effective ways to resolve the tensions and differences that exist within the field. More work needs to be done to professionalize the discipline. This would involve achieving a consensus on a clear statement of values and ethics, a defined curriculum to educate new consultants, and effective monitoring of practitioners.
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It is difficult to understand the sheer amount of energy and work that is required to complete a doctoral thesis. Without the numerous people that helped me along the way, the task would have been so much more difficult if not impossible to complete.

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CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

I have been working in the field of adult education for twenty-four years. For nineteen of those twenty-four years I have acted as a designer and facilitator of workshops in the areas of management, leadership, and communication for organizations such as banks, pharmaceutical companies, and insurance companies. I have always thoroughly enjoyed that role and received great personal satisfaction from it. Six years ago, I began my doctoral program with a specialization in Organizational Development. I felt ready to try something new but had not really settled on a new direction.

As I became more and more exposed to the body of knowledge related to Organizational Development, I became increasingly aware that for the past nineteen years I had been focused on a very small component of what constituted Organizational Development. This new perspective helped me to view training within organizations in a much broader context. I began to wonder how much of the training that I delivered had "fallen by the wayside" because the organizational climate and structure did not support the skills taught in the workshops.

As a result, approximately four years ago I set a new goal for myself: to become an Organizational Development Consultant. This did not prove to be as easy a task as I had initially thought because it became difficult to define exactly what an Organizational Development Consultant did. Firstly, when I asked knowledgeable people in the field what exactly an Organizational Development Consultant’s role was, I got a variety of different answers. Secondly, when I asked people who called themselves Organizational
Development Consultants what activities they performed, again I got a wide range of responses. Some people who performed training within organizations called themselves Organizational Development Consultants, as did people who performed a wide range of activities under the general umbrella of Organizational Development.

I began to think about why many people, including myself, found this a difficult field to define. I decided that this confusion might be in part due to Organizational Development being a young field and therefore not having developed such precise boundaries as other disciplines. I also wondered whether recent economic and business changes had impacted on Organizational Development Consultants and caused them to make some changes. As an external consultant, I had witnessed first hand some of the turmoil that organizations were experiencing.

I also had a hunch, based on my own experience, about how the role of the Organizational Development Consultant might be shifting. I had worked as a trainer, course developer, and training manager in an organization from 1974-1988. At that time I felt that my greatest allegiance was to the individuals who worked within my organization. I saw my goal as helping people along the route towards self-actualization. However, as an external consultant since 1988, I have become just as interested in helping the organization succeed as I have in helping each individual. I became very curious about whether Organizational Development Consultants had experienced a similar shift, and decided that I would like to find out.

The last area that I became curious about was the training and development of new entrants to the field of Organizational Development. This interest evolved because I had experienced frustration in finding the necessary training to become one myself. I felt
very grateful to have taken some excellent Organizational Development courses at The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the doctoral level. However, I knew that I needed more exposure to the theory and practice of Organizational Development and I experienced frustration when this information was not readily available. Again I wondered whether new entrants to the field experienced similar frustration in finding the appropriate training. In talking to several associates, they did indeed share a similar disappointment. I therefore believe that it is appropriate to ask experienced Organizational Development Consultants to reflect upon their own experiences and share with us how they think new entrants to the field should be trained. My hope is that this will give new entrants to the field a pathway to consider.

The rest of this chapter discusses the purpose of this study and offers why this is a relevant study to conduct. The first section briefly outlines how Organization Development has extended through each decade and discusses how its environment has influenced it. The point is made that because the decade of the nineties has been so turbulent, it is important to research how Organizational Development has evolved through this decade and what factors have influenced that evolution. The purpose of the research is then presented and a discussion ensues regarding why this research is important and how it will add to what is known about the topic. Key terms such as "Organizational Development" and "Organizational Development Consultant" are then defined. The limitations of the study are presented and discussed. Finally, the organization of the rest of the thesis is outlined.
The Evolution of Organizational Development

Organizational Development is still relatively young, having emerged as a field in the late fifties and early sixties (Church & Burke, 1995). Because it is such a young field, it is still in the process of evolving, and each decade has witnessed its growth and development as the field adapts to its environment. Some theorists have characterized the specialization as being in its adolescence or early adulthood (Burke, 1995) but many would agree that the domain has been in a state of adaptation since the nineteen fifties (Church & Burke, 1995; Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992).

Organizational Development evolved from three primary sources and has continued to change both in response to its environment and as a result of the growth in the field itself. The three major forerunners of Organizational Development were sensitivity training, survey feedback, and sociotechnical systems (Burke, 1994; French & Bell, 1995). The late fifties and early sixties proved to be a period of great experimentation within the field as practitioners and academics worked with and refined methodologies such as T-group training and action research. Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992, p.57) point out that by the seventies, "a new pragmatism tipped the scale, and practitioners found themselves marketing Organizational Development technologies on the basis of their measurable effectiveness".

By the eighties, Organizational Development had achieved a greater sense of respectability. Sashkin and Burke (1987, p.409) further maintain that by this decade "there had been an effective integration, resolving the long-standing conflict between structural Organizational Development concerns and behavioral process issues as the focus of Organizational Development activities". Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992) give us
insight into why Organizational Development has unfolded in the way that it has. They argue that “at each stage in Organizational Development’s development, economic and socio-cultural forces in the United States played a major role in shaping theory and practice” (Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992, p.57). For example, they contend that OD’s long-term approach to the management of change that existed in the fifties and sixties developed at a time when leaders and employees had relatively stable tenures within their organizations. Long-term stability of employment was possible because the post-war economy of North America was both stable and growth oriented (Sanzgiri and Gottlieb’s premise will be explored more fully in the literature chapter).

As we reach the end of the nineties it is interesting to speculate about the trajectory of Organizational Development during this decade and what factors have influenced its development. This becomes a very important issue when we consider the increasingly turbulent business environment in which Organizational Development Consultants have operated during this decade. French and Bell describe this environment in the following way:

The plethora of technological innovations, company mergers, acquisitions, leverage buyouts, bankruptcies, success stories, downsizings, and changes in laws have intensified. At the same time, while the frequency of startups has slowed somewhat, thousands of small companies are born each year. Globalization of companies is commonplace. (1995, p.52)

Indeed Katz and Marshak (1995, p.63) say that “just as organizations are facing revolutionary changes to long established principles and practices, so too is Organizational Development facing similar challenges to its principles and practices”. At the end of the eighties Van Eynde and Bledsoe (1990) researched the changes that had occurred in the practice of Organizational Development over
the past fifteen years and the factors that had prompted these changes. Because this decade has witnessed many shifts, I believe that these questions need to be explored again.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is:

To examine the evolving practice of the internal and external Organizational Development Consultant

Specifically, through this study, I hope to answer the following questions:

1. Overall, how has the practice of Organizational Development consultants changed in the nineties and what factors have caused this change?

2. What professional activities do Organizational Development Consultants engage in, and to what values do they generally subscribe?

3. What thoughts do Organizational Development consultants now have about how to best train and develop new practitioners entering the field?

Although no one has as yet taken a retrospective look over the decade, several studies (mostly conducted in the early to mid nineties) have started to enhance our knowledge about how the field is developing. Purportedly, one of the most significant trends is that Organizational Development consultants are becoming more closely aligned with organizational effectiveness rather than interpersonal effectiveness (Church & Burke, 1995; Church, Burke, & Van Eynede, 1994; Hurley, Church, Burke, & Van Eynede, 1992; Van Eynede & Coruzzi, 1993). Another significant trend is a movement towards large-scale systems change rather than focusing on a single program or system (Church & Burke, 1995; Van Eynede & Coruzzi, 1993). Most of this research was conducted at the
beginning of the decade, so it will be interesting to see if these trends have since strengthened or diminished. It is also worth noting that although most of the studies mentioned were conducted on both internal and external consultants, none of these studies conducted an in-depth comparison of internal and external consultants. My study hopes to add to the knowledge base in this area because, where appropriate, I will compare the different perspectives of the internal and external consultants.

It is also relevant to reflect on the typical research methods used by these researchers and compare them to the methodology in this study. In-depth interviews have been used in this study, an approach also taken by several researchers who conducted this type of research in the nineties (for example, Allen, Crossman, Lane, Power, & Svendsen, 1993; Hurley et al., 1992; Van Eynde & Bledsoe, 1990; Van Eynde & Coruzzi, 1993). The significant difference, however, is that they interviewed acknowledged experts in the field. On the other hand, I interviewed people who are experienced, but would not (to my knowledge) be perceived as key leaders or gurus in the field. The other typical research methodology that has been used is the large-scale survey (for example, Church & Burke, 1995; Fagenson & Burke, 1990). Such survey methodology has the advantage of providing breadth of information because more people are covered. However, I believe that close interviews with a smaller number is appropriate since I am asking complex questions and want the chance to clarify and for respondents to expand upon answers.

As discussed earlier, it would seem from the research already conducted in this decade that Organizational Development is moving in a couple of directions: towards organizational effectiveness rather than interpersonal effectiveness; and towards large-
scale systems change. An interesting question (research question two) is how do these changes have an impact on the types of activities used by Organizational Development consultants? Various researchers have focused on this topic. Church et al. (1994) found that the primary forms of interventions in current use were those associated with facilitating long-term change. Typical interventions associated with long-term change were activities such as visioning and strategic planning. However, an earlier study (McMahan & Woodman, 1992), focusing solely on internal Organizational Development Consultants, revealed that they spend the majority of their time (51.4%) on individual or group-level interventions. While several possible explanations exist for this discrepancy, it is clear that “more comparative research would be useful” (McMahan & Woodman, 1992, p. 129) so that we can determine how the internal practice differs from the external practice. With my study, I aim to increase the knowledge base in this area.

One of the elements that distinguishes Organizational Development from some other fields is that it has a strong values base. Given that there seems to have been an increasing shift towards organizational effectiveness, it is worth exploring what has happened to the humanistic values that have always been such a vital part of Organizational Development. Recent research reveals that humanistic values are still important to Organizational Development Consultants even though there may now be a greater emphasis on business effectiveness (Church & Burke, 1995; Church et al., 1994; Van Eynde, Church, Hurley, & Burke, 1992). What is intriguing, however, is that consultants are facing increasing tension in trying to meet these two sets of values which often seem to be at the opposite end of the spectrum (Church & Burke, 1995; Church et al., 1994; Hurley et al., 1992; Van Eynde et al., 1992). It is hoped that my study, which is
being conducted at the end of the nineties, can reveal whether consultants have to some degree resolved this dilemma or whether they are still experiencing tension.

Given that there appears to have been a shift in both the values and the role of the Organizational Development Consultant, it seems appropriate to re-focus on how we train new entrants to the field. Indeed this appears to be a current concern for both practitioners and researchers in the field. Church and Burke (1995, p.39) point out that “there is also a solid consensus regarding practitioners’ concerns for the level of training that new entrants bring to the field”. Several researchers have concentrated on identifying the skills and competencies required to become an Organizational Development Consultant (Carey & Varney, 1983; Esper, 1990; Eubanks, O’Driscoll, Hayward, Daniels, & Connor, 1990; Head, Armstrong, & Preston, 1996; Shepard & Raia, 1981; Warrick & Donovan, 1979), and so I believe that we have an overall sense of what these skills and competencies are. If indeed there has been a shift in the values, roles, and potentially some activities that Organizational Development Consultants use, I believe that we need to update our understanding of what is required to become an effective consultant. Although several researchers have focused on the skills and competencies to become an Organizational Development Consultant, only one group of researchers (Head et al., 1996) has conducted an in-depth study regarding how these skills should be acquired. My study hopes to provide an update regarding the skills and competencies that seem to be required as well as more information on the best ways for people to become an Organizational Development professional.
Definition of Key Terms

Several terms need to be clarified to provide a common understanding of how they will be used in this study. These terms are Organizational Development, Organizational Development Consultant, external Organizational Development Consultant, and internal Organizational Development Consultant.

**Organizational Development (this will be referred to as OD from now on)**

As French and Bell (1995) elaborate, numerous definitions of OD are available (to name but a few: Beckhard, 1969; Burke, 1994; Cummings & Worley, 1993; French & Bell, 1995). In analyzing such definitions, Porras and Robertson (1992) identify that most had key aspects in common: the overall purpose of OD is improvement in the organization’s effectiveness; the conceptual framework comes from behavioral science theory and technology; it is a planned process which frequently uses an action research approach; it uses the consultant-facilitator role; and it is generally supported by top management. Porras and Robertson (1992) attempt to synthesize these aspects in the following definition: “Organizational Development is a set of behavioral science-based theories, values, strategies and techniques aimed at the planned change of the organizational work setting for the purpose of enhancing individual development and improving organizational performance” (p.719).

**Organizational Development consultant (OD consultant)**

Hanson and Lubin (1989, p.21) define the OD consultant as:

A person trained in the behavioral sciences - especially organizational behavior - who seeks to help an organization define and clarify its own issues, values, problems and resources. The OD consultant collaborates with an organization in developing the best method of mobilizing its resources to address the issues it has identified.
It is worth observing that the term “practitioner” is sometimes used in the literature on OD instead of consultant. I will use these terms interchangeably throughout this thesis.

**External OD consultant**

McMahan and Woodman (1992, p.117) define the external OD consultant as “a consultant outside the client organization. Typically, external consultants are entrepreneurs of OD services and operate from a contract to provide a specific intervention or change program”.

**Internal OD consultant**

McMahan and Woodman (1992, p.117) define the internal OD consultant as “a change agent inside, and under the employ of, the client organization”.

**Values**

The New Oxford Dictionary of English (Hanks, 1998, p.2043) defines values as “a person's principles or standards of behavior; one's judgment of what is important in life”.

**Limitations of this Study**

As in any piece of research, the investigator must acknowledge limitations that exist. The following factors therefore pose limitations for this thesis:

1. As this is a qualitative inquiry, the nature and purpose of this research differs markedly from those of positivistic studies. For example, since the sample is small (eight participants located in and around Toronto), the insights generated from this study cannot be generalized to the whole population. What I have attempted to do, however, is clearly lay out my findings and conclusions as well as a description of the time and context in which the research occurred, in this way readers should be able to make their own decisions regarding the transferability of findings.
2. There are also inherent limitations in the interview process. The interviewer holds most of the responsibility for creating and maintaining an appropriate climate so that an effective dialogue can occur. The interviewer needs to maintain a delicate balance between creating rapport so that the participant feels comfortable and yet maintaining a neutral stance so that the participant does not feel judged. In each interview, I was aware of and constantly worked to maintain this balance.

3. This study has only used one technique to gather data: the in-depth interview. As in any situation where interviews are the sole data-gathering tool, the findings are based on participant's perceptions of reality and are therefore open to the typical subjectivity that this brings.

4. As I have been involved in the training and organizational development field for twenty-four years, I have understandably come into this field with my own biases. For example, one of my biases is that the world of the internal and external OD consultant is quite different, and consequently they may at times do quite different work. Another of my biases is that internal consultants will have less humanistic values than external consultants. However, I have come to terms with these biases in the following ways: I have discussed my own biases with colleagues in the field and I have written memos to myself regarding any dilemmas I have experienced regarding my biases.

**Organization of the Rest of this Document**

**Chapter Two** presents the relevant literature for this thesis. First, a brief history of OD is outlined. Then research conducted on changes in OD in the nineties is introduced. This is followed by an overview of the research conducted on values of OD
consultants. The final two sections deal with the research conducted on: activities and interventions of OD consultants as well as the training and development of OD consultants. The purpose of this chapter is to place this thesis within the context of prior research and to indicate how this work hopes to add to what is known.

**Chapter Three** gives a detailed account of the research design and methodology for this exploration. First, a justification is provided for using a qualitative approach to this study. Then the case study method is discussed and an argument is made regarding its appropriateness for this study. The research design is then outlined in detail and a discussion ensues on issues such as: the method of data gathering, ethical considerations, site and sample selection, the pilot study, and data analysis. Finally, brief profiles describe each of the participants in the study.

**Chapter Four** outlines the findings and analysis related to how the practice of the OD consultant has changed in the nineties and what factors have caused this change. The findings for the four internal consultants are summarized, followed by the findings for the four external consultants. Next an analysis of the findings is made. Sometimes, the analysis focuses on OD consultants as a whole while at other times it compares the internal and external consultants. The chapter concludes with an overview discussion.

**Chapter Five** reviews the findings and analyses regarding the professional activities of OD consultants. The activities of the OD consultants are encapsulated (external followed by internal). In the analysis section, the findings are related to the relevant literature. The discussion section examines two overall themes that emerge from the data.
Chapter Six pulls together the findings regarding the values to which participants subscribe as well as their thoughts on how to best train and develops new practitioners entering the field. An analysis of the findings related to the values and training is then offered. In the discussion section, some broader conclusions are drawn.

Chapter Seven gives an overall summary of what has been found and relates it to some of the concepts of postmodernism. The postmodern-socioeconomic context is discussed as it relates to the key trends identified by participants in this study. Then a discussion ensues which explores how OD consultants are adapting to two characteristics of the postmodern environment, increasing complexity and conflict. The chapter concludes by identifying some of the challenges that face the OD field.

Chapter Eight summarizes the study and draws some overall conclusions. Implications are suggested for OD practitioners, the OD community, professional associations, and adult educators. The chapter concludes by compiling suggestions for further research.
CHAPTER TWO:
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the relevant literature for this thesis. The literature is organized into five major sections: 1) the history of OD; 2) research conducted on changes in OD in the nineties; 3) interventions used by OD consultants; 4) the values of OD consultants; and 5) the training and development of OD consultants. The purpose of the section on the history of OD is to illustrate how the field has evolved and grown in response to its environment, and to suggest that at the end of the nineties we need to examine how OD has evolved throughout that decade and to identify the factors that have influenced its growth. Research on changes in the OD field in the nineties is then presented. A case is made for conducting in-depth interviews with OD practitioners who are not perceived as leaders or gurus in the field. The research on values reveals a central dilemma for OD consultants: how do they balance both humanistic and business effectiveness goals? This study hopes to shed some light on how OD consultants cope with this dilemma. Research dealing with activities and interventions of OD consultants is then outlined. The final section considers the research that has been completed on the training and development of OD consultants. Throughout this chapter, a discussion is offered explaining how this study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge.

A Short History of OD

The purpose of this section is to illustrate that since its inception, OD has continued to evolve and grow as it has responded to the world around it. The changes that
it has gone through are a reflection of the socio-economic conditions of the time as well as theoretical developments within the field of applied social sciences. The goal of this section is also to make the case that as we draw close to the end of the nineties we need to step back and examine the changes that have occurred in the field and identify certain key factors that may have been responsible for these changes. The emergence of OD as a field is recounted and an analysis is given explaining why the existing conditions were ripe for its development. The defining characteristics of each decade up to and including the eighties are discussed; at the same time an analysis is made of the social, economic, and theoretical factors that have influenced each decade.

**The Origins of OD**

Warner Burke (1994) pointed out that there was no “big bang” or “blessed event” that signaled the start of OD. However there were three major forerunners that contributed to the development of OD: sensitivity training, survey feedback, and sociotechnical systems (Burke, 1994; French & Bell, 1995; Patten, 1989).

Sensitivity training or T-group training ("T" stands for training or laboratory training) became one of the earliest interventions of what was to become OD. French and Bell (1995, p.37) defined laboratory training as “essentially unstructured small group situations in which participants learn from their own interactions and the evolving dynamics of the group”. The origins of laboratory research, and specifically of T-group training, emerged through a series of interventions that occurred at the New Britain Workshop in 1946. The facilitators, comprising of Kurt Lewin, Kenneth Benne, Leland Bradford, and Ronald Lippit, found that if they had given feedback to the participants at the end of each day about their group and individual behavior, participants learned more
than if they had listened to lectures (Patten, 1989). From their experiences at the summer programs, these facilitators created the National Training Lab in Bethel, Maine in 1947. Their work consequently evolved into T-group and sensitivity training.

What was important about this kind of training was that it helped groups and group leaders focus on group and leadership processes. However, over the next decade as trainers began to work with more permanent and complex systems, they began to realize the limitations of T-group training. This was largely because participants found it difficult to apply what they had learned in T-group settings to their organizational contexts. Indeed, when they got back into their work environment and tried to apply their learning about themselves and group dynamics, they were often met with resistance by those who had not experienced the T-group training. This led to the training of teams from the same organization that proved more effective, as participants were able to support each other when they returned to their work environment. An important shift in thinking occurred as consultants started to focus on the total organization (Patten, 1989).

A second major precursor to OD was survey research. Much of this work was conducted in the Institute for Social Research (founded in 1946) at the University of Michigan under Rensis Likert. Kurt Lewin had founded the Research Center for Group Dynamics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and upon his death in 1947, the center was moved to the University of Michigan. The Institute for Social Research and the Center for Group Dynamics were merged to form Likert's Institute. The work of Lewin and Likert gave OD one of its most important concepts: action research. This can be defined as "...a collaborative, client-consultant inquiry consisting of preliminary
diagnosis, data gathering from the client group, data exploration and action planning by the client group, and action” (French & Bell, 1995, p.50).

The third major influence on OD was the emergence of sociotechnical systems design (STSD). This approach evolved at the Tavistock Institute in England at the same time that the other approaches were developed in America. At the Tavistock Institute, leaders created a group focus approach to family therapy in which both the child and parent received treatment simultaneously. They also developed an action research approach in an attempt to give practical help to families, organizations, and communities. The Tavistock approach grew out of the work of Bion who conducted a series of small group experiments in the forties and concluded that people cannot be understood, nor their behavior changed, outside of the groups in which they live and participate (Patten, 1989). Eric Trist and Fred Emery (1960) translated what they had learned from both Bion and the Tavistock group to actual organizations, and their approach became known as the sociotechnical approach to restructuring work. Their experiments in work redesign and the use of semiautonomous teams in coalmines led to other work redesign experiments throughout the world.

The major contribution from the Tavistock consultants to the field of OD was the concept that an organization is simultaneously a social and a technical system (Burke, 1994). All organizations possess technology, which is a subsystem of the total organization and a part of the culture of the organization. Organizations are also made up of people who interact around tasks that need to be accomplished within the organization. They constitute the social subsystem. Although the emphasis in OD is generally on the
social subsystem, both subsystems should be considered in any attempt at organizational change.

**What Made Conditions Ripe for the Emergence of OD?**

Mirvis (1990) argued that socioeconomic factors created a need for organizational development. America's recovery from the depression and its subsequent victory in World War II had unified people under a common cause. America was perceived as a melting pot and people held high hopes that different ethnic groups could be successfully assimilated. On the industrial front, World War II seemed to vindicate large organizations because 16 million Americans had been in the armed forces, and this large organization had worked effectively to win the war (Mirvis, 1990). However it was acknowledged that the individual also paid a price for being part of a large organization.

On the theoretical front, leading thinkers had begun to recognize the limitations of Taylor's principles of scientific management and they began to promote better human relations in organizations (Mirvis, 1990). For example, studies conducted by Mayo and Roethlisberger at the Hawthorne Works proved that social factors such as emphasis on special attention and care were important in motivating employees. Books such as Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, published in 1936, became guidebooks for managers on how to handle people. However, by the late forties it was recognized that a model such as Carnegie's "was not reaching into the hearts of people nor could it overcome the dehumanizing character of formal organization" (Mirvis, 1990, p.18). Theorists were looking for new ways to train and develop managers and it was in this environment that T-group or sensitivity training was perceived as an appropriate solution to the problems of the time.
**OD in the Fifties and Sixties**

Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992) pointed out that during this period OD was fundamentally shaped by the values regarding people and organizations of those that had initially founded the field. One set of values related to the spirit and capacity of human beings and their potential to learn and grow in their work. These beliefs and values were reflected in the work of McGregor's (1960) theory Y assumptions about human nature and Maslow's hierarchy of needs and theories of self-actualization (1954). OD also focused on a new set of values regarding management and organizational effectiveness. Bennis, for example, argued that bureaucratic forms of organizations could not cope with issues such as coordination, innovation and commitment during periods of rapid social and economic change (Mirvis, 1990). Other notable scholars during this time were Chris Argyris (1962) and Edgar Schein (1969).

The fundamental goal during this period was to create cohesion within organizations. Mirvis (1988) pointed out that Argyris ably articulated this concept in 1964 when he emphasized the importance of integrating both individual and organizational needs. It was during this period that OD began to be associated with what Gouldner called "the applied social sciences" (as cited in Mirvis, 1988). Applied social science or applied behavioral science encompassed an understanding of "processes of effective communication in groups, such as group problem solving and decision making, understanding intergroup cooperation and competition, and the ability to create non-bureaucratic and authentic relationships" (Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992, p.58).

Two key methodologies continued to be used and refined within organizations: T-group training and action research (Mirvis, 1988, 1990). Mirvis (1988) pointed out
that from 1948 to 1955, T-group training took center stage in laboratory training and from 1956-1965 T-group training was refined and introduced as a new form of organizational training. The other OD technique, action research, focused more directly on improving the workplace (Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992). The action research steps such as organizational diagnosis, data collection and feedback, and action planning and implementation were conducted within the organization. The role of the consultant was to help the organization learn about itself and develop the ability to resolve its own problems.

Two other characteristics defined OD throughout this period. One was the belief that the support of top leadership was crucial if successful organizational change was going to occur (Mirvis, 1988; Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992). It was felt that without this top-down commitment there would be insufficient leadership to implement new ideas or commit the necessary resources to make the change efforts work. The other characteristic was a long-term approach to managing change within organizations. It was believed that the organization should involve the whole organization on a long-term basis in a participative change process in which all parties are heard.

Factors that Influenced OD During this Period

As discussed, the values and beliefs of the founding fathers still played a major part in shaping the field. For example, the principles that were taught at locations like the National Training Lab had provided the appropriate environment for the development of applied behavioral sciences within organizations. Qualitative methodologies were evolving within the social sciences and this provided an appropriate spawning ground for action research.
However, the social and economic climate also had a major influence on OD. Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992, p.60) argued that the culture was “sobered by the dangers of excess authoritarianism (such as Hitler’s nazi regime) and thus demonstrated a heightened willingness to engage in a dialogue about participation and democracy”.

Because the economy was relatively stable, organizations felt secure enough to experiment with different organizational designs and to explore the potential for collaboration and teamwork. OD’s long-term focus developed in a climate where leaders, change agents and employees experienced relatively stable tenure within their organizations.

**OD in the Seventies**

Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992) pointed out that a number of readily observable differences distinguished OD in the seventies. One of the biggest changes that occurred was that OD became more results oriented and favored interventions that emphasized measurable results. OD consultants tended to use tools and techniques that could be quickly applied to organizational problems. Rather than being perceived as an OD experiment, OD interventions came to be seen as a number of structured activities that facilitated planned change (Mirvis, 1988).

The concept of what OD was and could be was broadened during this period (Mirvis, 1988). The organization (rather than the lab) became the focal point of OD interventions (Mirvis, 1990). The field maintained its focus on individual and group development and introduced new techniques such as transactional analysis and life planning. There was also an increasing interest in “techno-structural” forms of change within organizations. Basic research was consequently conducted in organization design,
reward systems and management practices and this knowledge further contributed to the vocabulary and technology of the field.

OD practitioners also began to focus on the challenge of "creating community" (Mirvis, 1988, p.11) within organizations. This need emerged because organizations increasingly had to deal with structural barriers based upon sex, class, and organizational status. Mirvis (1988, p.11) contends that "the function of OD in the 1970's was to tackle these barriers and create more pluralism in organizations". For example, Barry Oshry developed a power and systems lab, which attempted to help individuals analyze and change the levels of power operating within organizations. Other OD interventions were also aimed at promoting multiculturalism within organizations. The Quality of Working Life movement was embraced by OD practitioners as a means not only to focus on outcomes but also to create a feeling of community within organizations.

An interesting change that should be noted in this period was the erosion of commitment to long-term organizational change (Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992). This long-term orientation began to weaken because corporate executives and managers as well as academics began to face unpredictable tenures. Both top executives and academics began to commit to change strategies of less than three years in duration because a five to ten year change initiative might well last beyond their periods of tenure, and because change was proceeding more quickly in organizations.

Factors that Influenced OD During this Period

Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992) argued that the changing focus of OD during this period should be viewed within the context of what was happening in North America at that time. The US and Canada in the seventies were plagued by significant economic
problems. The OPEC crisis in 1993 helped cool off the stock market in Canada, which in turn helped trigger a wave of mergers and takeovers (Ross, 1979). While Canada did not have a mid seventies recession like the rest of the world, it did share some of the other economic problems. The economic expansion up to 1979 was the weakest in history, unemployment increased, yet inflation did not decline (Cohen & Shannon, 1984). In the United States, foreign competition was beginning to challenge the ascendancy of American made goods. Moreover, the energy crisis forced the American economy into a recession. The United States was also finding it difficult to maintain its position as world leader. In this kind of climate, corporate leaders felt the need to retrench and invest in plants and equipment rather than people.

Fundamental changes were also occurring in the composition and character of the workforce (Mirvis, 1990). The average worker’s education level had risen by 50% from the post war period to 1975. Many more women were entering the workforce and by 1976, 41% of the workforce was female. The civil rights and women’s movement began to heighten the expectations of women and minorities regarding upward mobility and fair treatment within organizations. Finally, the baby boomers began to enter the workforce and they experimented with new ways of approaching work and authority.

Another significant factor during this period was that “technocracy was on the rise” (Mirvis, 1990, p.33). There was a significant advance in the technical aspects of management during this period. Organizational planning and control became very popular and many organizations used methodologies such as systems planning and tools such as pert and gant charts. A common expression in many business schools of the time was that “hard drives out soft” (Mirvis, 1990, p.33). In this kind of climate, it is easy to
see why OD consultants favored tools and techniques that were tangible and results oriented rather than more process oriented interventions.

**OD in the Eighties**

Sashkin and Burke (1987) pointed out that by the eighties there was a greater sense of respectability within the OD field. This was partially because OD practitioners began to integrate several perspectives into OD rather than getting caught up in an “either/or” tug of war (Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992). Practitioners derived insights from systems theory, sociotechnical design, anthropology, and applied behavioral sciences.

The goal of OD during this period was focused on facilitating human achievement within organizations (Miras, 1988). In accordance with this aim, OD practitioners focused on examining the impact of leadership. Some organizations turned to Japanese style management as outlined in William Ouchi’s book (1981) on theory “Z” practices. Other organizational leaders embraced the principles outlined in the book, *In Search of Excellence* (Peters & Waterman, 1982). Their messages on how to achieve excellence centered on: closeness to customers, value driven production, and leading with passion. This focus on achieving human excellence was also reflected in the teambuilding interventions of the time. No longer did teambuilding concentrate solely on an examination of interpersonal relationships. Rather teambuilding interventions had a clear task focus. Teams still discussed process issues, but more as a technique to analyze and improve the way the team accomplished its task (Sashkin & Burke, 1987).

Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992) noted two other defining characteristics of OD during the eighties. The first characteristic was that OD consultants used both short-term interventions (e.g., training and mentoring) and long-term interventions (e.g.,
organizational analysis) to help solve organizational problems. The second point that they made was that OD consultants were no longer predominantly external. Organizations such as International Business Machines began to use both internal and external consultants to resolve organizational issues and problems.

**Factors that Influenced OD During this Period**

Mirvis (1990) pointed out that North America moved headlong into a second industrial revolution in the eighties. The auto giants as well as their suppliers went through a period of downsizing and many organizations consolidated through mergers and acquisitions. At the same time, the high-tech industry grew (Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992). New industries like the high-tech industries tended towards a flatter organizational structure and often worked with more innovative designs such as work teams and project managers.

The loss of over twenty million jobs due to restructuring and downsizing had a huge impact on society at this time (Mirvis, 1990; Bluestone & Harrison, 1982). Mirvis (1990) pointed out that this divided society into “winners” and “losers”, as many organizations determined who would stay and who would be downsized. However, organizations paid a price for this restructuring and downsizing. As they got rid of loyal employees, they also experienced a steady turnover of workers and loss of loyalty from existing workers. Allegedly, workers became increasingly cynical and focused more on looking after their own self-interest (Mirvis, 1990). In this kind of environment, it is not surprising that organizations embraced Japanese-style management and books such as *In Search of Excellence* (Peters & Waterman, 1982) in an attempt to energize and motivate their workforce.
To summarize this section, OD is still a comparatively new field and, as such, is still evolving. This section has outlined how OD evolved and the major changes that it experienced in each decade up to, and including, the eighties. It has argued that the changes experienced in OD were a reflection of the socio-economic conditions of the time as well as theoretical developments within the field of the applied social sciences. At the end of each decade, researchers have conducted research on and theorized about the major changes that have occurred in the field. As we reach the end of the nineties, we need to again stand back and analyze how OD has changed over the decade and what factors have contributed to that change.

Research Conducted on Changes in OD in the Nineties

This section outlines the studies that have been conducted in the nineties which give us insights into the changes that have occurred in the OD field over the last ten years (Van Eynde & Bledsoe, 1990; Van Eynde et al., 1992; Van Eynde & Coruzzi, 1993; Allen et al., 1993; Church & Burke, 1995). The research methods used in these studies are discussed and a case is made for conducting in-depth interviews with practitioners who are not (to my knowledge) seen as leaders or gurus in the field. The major change themes emerging from the studies are discussed and analyzed. The themes are: OD consultants have become more closely aligned with task issues and organizational rather than interpersonal effectiveness; they are spending more time on large-scale systems change; action research is still a primary methodology used by OD consultants; and finally some OD consultants are motivated by achieving personal power and gain.

Various research methods were used in conducting these studies. For example, one group of researchers conducted telephone interviews with 18 experienced and highly
respected OD consultants with a minimum of 15 years of experience (Van Eynde & Bledsoe, 1990). Van Eynde and Coruzzi (1993) conducted both telephone and face to face interviews with very senior practitioners in the field. In another study, researchers conducted face to face interview with five leaders in the field (Allen et al., 1993). What is interesting is that in all of these studies, researchers chose to interview acknowledged leaders in the field. My study should contribute to the knowledge base regarding OD consultants in general as I will interview practitioners who have been in the field for approximately 10 years, but would probably not be viewed as the key leaders in OD today.

One other research method was used in the studies discussed here: the large scale survey. Church and Burke (1995) analyzed the data received from 416 mailed questionnaires. Participants were selected at random from membership listings of organizations such as the Organization Development Network and the American Society for Training and Development. Given the numbers surveyed, this study would have provided considerable “breadth of information”. However, my study, which will focus on intensive interviews with eight OD practitioners, will have the advantage of providing in-depth information. As compared to questionnaires, in-depth interviews have the following advantages: the interviewer has the opportunity to observe the participant and his/her environment; questions can be clarified if the participant is confused; and the interviewer can probe to gather in-depth information in important areas (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1985).

One of the strongest themes that emerged from the research conducted from 1990 onward is that OD is now more closely aligned with task issues and organizational
effectiveness (Church & Burke, 1995; Church et al., 1994; Hurley et al., 1992; Van Eyn
de & Bledsoe, 1990; Van Eyn
de & Coruzzi, 1993). Practitioners indicated that when assisting a client organization, they focused on task issues related to organizational effectiveness rather than focusing on issues related to interpersonal effectiveness (Church & Burke, 1995; Van Eyn
de & Bledsoe, 1990). Church and Burke (1995) argued that organizational effectiveness was always one of the desired outcomes in the past, however, what has now changed is that organizational effectiveness seems to be the primary focus. Looking to the future, practitioners emphasized that OD consultants must concentrate even more on improving the bottom line if they are to remain useful to organizations (Church & Burke, 1995; Van Eyn
de & Coruzzi, 1993).

Another trend that emerged from research conducted in the nineties is a move towards large-scale systems change. In one study, 18 experienced and respected practitioners were asked what changes if any had taken place in the way they practiced OD (Van Eyn
de & Bledsoe, 1990). They indicated a move towards the greater use of total system interventions. These practitioners indicated that they now had more opportunities to work with executives within organizations and to facilitate changes that had an impact on the whole organization. A similar finding emerged from a study in which 19 senior practitioners were interviewed (Van Eyn
de & Coruzzi, 1993). Practitioners indicated that they were moving from a micro perspective (involving a single system or single program) to a macro perspective (involving total system change). What is interesting about these studies is that in both cases very senior consultants in the field were interviewed. This begs the question: are only senior practitioners moving towards a macro view or are all practitioners? My study, which will focus on OD

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practitioners who are not perceived as leaders in the field, may shed some interesting light on this question. Another study (a survey of 416 practitioners) revealed that many practitioners hoped that the field would move towards a more systems oriented focus (Church and Burke, 1995). Of the people interviewed, 55% believed that in the future consultants should focus on larger systemic issues rather than issues such as group dynamics. This study is again interesting in that it indicated a desire for people to change, but it does not indicate whether consultants have already moved in that direction. My proposed study, coming three years later, may provide some data on whether this shift has occurred in the participants to be interviewed.

"Action research has become the touchstone of most good OD practice" (Van Eynde & Bledsoe, 1990, p.27). This claim was made by Van Eynde and Bledsoe after they interviewed 18 senior practitioners. They indicated that with one exception, there was universal agreement that action research was still the primary methodology used by OD consultants. Again, as the participants interviewed for this study were very senior, it will be interesting to find out if there is a similar finding with less senior practitioners. Shedding some interesting light on this matter, Church et al.(1994) surveyed 416 OD practitioners, finding that action research was the second largest focus of OD practitioners’ efforts. External male practitioners, however, were likely to report the use of action research more than others. As my study will focus on an equal number of internal and external practitioners, it will be interesting to see how they report the use of action research.

One surprising finding that emerged from the literature was that achieving personal power and gain were strong motivating factors for OD practitioners (Church &
Burke, 1995; Church et al., 1994; Hurley et al., 1992). This is perplexing because conventional wisdom would suggest that the OD field has traditionally been composed of caring people whose heart is in their work. There are a couple of possible explanations as to why a shift may have occurred. One possible explanation is that OD has now become an established field and people choose it just as they would a profession like law or medicine. In other words, it is no longer a vocation, it has become a career (Hurley et al., 1992). Another possible explanation is that OD may now be attracting people who are more pragmatic and have a “bottom line” orientation to both their careers and their work.

Against the backdrop of these issues, one may well ask, is OD going to survive and grow or is it going to become extinct? Very diverse opinions were revealed in a study in which five “living legends” were interviewed (Allen et al., 1993). All five interviewees were in full agreement that we are living in a period of continuous change and that for the field to remain useful and vital, it must change. Eva Schindler-Rahman and Warner Burke contended that one way in which the field will change is that it will become less specialized and it will draw closer to other related fields. Burke stressed, however, that the essence of OD will survive even though it will probably become part and parcel of Human Resource Development activities. On a less positive note, Jerry Harvey argued that the future is bleak for OD and that it is a dying field. Further research needs to be conducted to determine whether any of these views have been justified by events.

**Research Conducted on Factors that Influenced OD During this Period**

As we near the end of the nineties, it will be informative to look back and analyze the factors that had the greatest influence on the recent practice of OD. So far, limited
research has been conducted in this area. In one study, three key factors were identified as having the greatest influence on the practice of OD: the practitioner, the client, and the onset of rapid change (Van Eynde & Bledsoe, 1990). The majority of those interviewed attributed some of the changes in their practice to changes in themselves as individuals. For example, many indicated that their practice had changed because they had begun to understand themselves better and they had learned more about consulting skills. Within the client system, the factors that had exerted the greatest influence on OD were: the change in the clients' needs over the years and a greater sophistication on the part of clients in the use of OD processes. The third factor identified in this study was the onset of rapid change. For example, rapid changes in technology have placed unprecedented demands on managers and employees within organizations. Other researchers have also commented on the factors influencing OD. In the research conducted by Van Eynde and Coruzzi (1993), practitioners talked about the need for OD consultants to change the image they projected to the outside world. They were concerned that OD practitioners were perceived as being “too folksy” and not sufficiently concerned about bottom line results. Church and Burke (1995) argued that competitive economic and business changes had also had a commercializing impact on the OD role.

In summary, we are beginning to build up a body of knowledge regarding the evolution of OD in the nineties. One of the major trends seems to be that OD is focusing more on issues relating to organizational effectiveness and less on issues relating to interpersonal effectiveness. Practitioners also indicated that they were focusing more on large-scale systems change. What is interesting about this research is that much of it was conducted with acknowledged leaders in the field of OD in the early nineties. As we near
the end of the decade, more research needs to be conducted with those that are not perceived as the key leaders in the field of OD, to determine whether similar trends are occurring. Up to this point, limited research has been conducted regarding the environmental factors that have influenced the current field of OD. My research should add to the knowledge base in both areas.

**Values of OD Consultants**

From the inception of OD in the fifties and sixties to the present day, prevailing values have always played a central role in shaping the field. Margulies and Raia (1990, p.27) pointed out that “values are powerful and yet invisible factors that guide research, theory building, and practice in the social sciences generally, and more specifically, in organizational development”. They explained that values act as a guiding beacon to direct the process of organization development. However, although values have always been central to discussions regarding organization development, there is agreement amongst researchers that values need to be re-clarified in the turbulent decade of the nineties (Church et al., 1994, Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992). As Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992, p.67) have noted:

> An explicit statement of the core values for the 1990s is crucial. Unless there is a “shared understanding” of the major philosophical framework for the practice of the field, an OD culture cannot begin to evolve. It is through the development of this culture that the practice will be guided for the 1990s and beyond.

Although different values have been associated with OD, many authorities suggest that there are only two primary sets of values underlying the work of the OD practitioner: humanistic values and organizational effectiveness (Church et al., 1994; Greiner, 1980; Margulies & Raia, 1990; Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992; Sashkin & Burke, 1987; Van Eynde et al., 1992).
The personal values of those who founded the field in the fifties and sixties had a significant influence on both the theory and practice of OD (Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992). The major conceptualizers of this time, including Warren Bennis, Chris Argyris, and Edgar Schein, held strong humanistic values. These humanistic objectives were demonstrated through such interventions as sensitivity training and process consulting (Church et al., 1994). One important value stemming from sensitivity training was the belief in personal growth, that it is important for people to achieve growth and self-actualization throughout their lives (Burke, 1994). Another value that stemmed from sensitivity training was the belief that people’s feelings were just as important as the facts when dealing with issues of change. Practitioners also believed that individual and group conflict should be dealt with directly and openly rather than being ignored or manipulated. Greiner (1980) noted that in the sixties there was a slight shift in emphasis to include such values as teamwork, integration, and organizational change.

By the seventies these goals were modified to include a “bottom line” business results orientation for OD interventions (Greiner, 1980). One reason for this shift may have been because academics were joined by professional consultants who wanted to market and sell new designs. Another reason may be that it just made good sense to help the organization achieve its goals as well as focus on humanism. Or it may have been because the OD field decided to react to the criticism that it was too “soft”. Greiner noted that by the late seventies OD consultants were focusing on new issues such as quality-of-work-life, turnover, absenteeism, morale, and productivity. During the eighties OD consultants continued to focus on bottom line concerns as well as the more humanistic values associated with the field.
In the nineties OD consultants have continued to focus on business effectiveness and productivity (Church & Burke, 1995; Church et al., 1994; Hurley et al., 1992; Van Eynde et al., 1992). Indeed, research has revealed that practitioners in the field today tend to be more focused on business effectiveness than on humanistic values (Church et al., 1994; Van Eynde et al., 1992). There are several reasons why there has been an increasing focus on business effectiveness. OD consultants may be responding to the needs of their client organizations who in turn have focused more on survival than development through the turbulent economic times of the nineties (Hurley et al., 1992; Margulies & Raia, 1990). OD consultants may wish to distance themselves from the old OD image of being “touchy feely” (Hurley et al., 1992; Van Eynde et al., 1992) or they may just be struggling to become more relevant (Van Eynde et al., 1992). Whatever the case, some practitioners and theorists feel very uncomfortable with this shift in focus.

Margulies and Raia (1990, p.38) argue that many practitioners:

...have succumbed to management pressure for the quick fix, the emphasis on the bottom line, and the cure all mentality...they are for all intents and purposes ‘in bed’(sic) with their client systems; and more importantly perhaps, they seem to have lost sight of the core values of the field.

Does this mean that humanistic values have ceased to be important to OD consultants today? Research indicated that this is not the case: that a humanistic orientation is still strongly present among practitioners in their work (Church & Burke, 1995; Church et al., 1994). For example, in-depth interviews with twelve experienced practitioners revealed the belief that humanistic values continued to be at the core of OD efforts (Hurley et al., 1992). However, the relative importance of these values may have shifted to focus more on business effectiveness (Church & Burke, 1994; Van Eynde et al., 1992). There also seems to be the belief that the “OD missionary is alive but not
well” (Hurley et al., 1992, p.3). Some of the earlier OD consultants were characterized as “missionaries” or “evangelists” because they crusaded for humanistic and democratic values above everything else. However, there is universal agreement that there seem to be fewer and fewer of these consultants emerging in the field of OD today (Church & Burke, 1995; Church et al., 1994; Hurley et al., 1992).

What is clear from the literature is that OD consultants face increasing tension in trying to meet the often opposed concerns of humanistic and business effectiveness when dealing with clients (Church et al., 1994; Hurley et al., 1992; Van Eynde et al., 1992). This tension or dilemma over values is illustrated by the findings of Hurley et al. (1992) and Van Eynde et al., (1992). When asked to indicate the most important values in the field, practitioners emphasized humanistic values. Yet, when asked to indicate the values that actually characterize the field, the chief values were seen to be increased effectiveness and efficiency. A different interpretation of the same survey data was given by Church and Burke (1995). According to their analysis, respondents indicated that practitioners should focus more on systematic business related issues rather than the humanistic values of the past. Both of these findings indicate that practitioners experience tension between what is and what should be driving the field. Margulies and Raia (1990, p.39) summarized this issue effectively when they make the point that “it is not an ‘either - or’ proposition in which either the core values of the field or those of the organization must prevail”. They and others recommend that OD consultants adopt a perspective that recognizes the legitimacy both of the organizational need to be efficient and effective and of the employees’ needs to be treated humanely (Margulies & Raia, 1990; Van Eynde et al., 1992).
To conclude, OD is a values-driven field and it is therefore important that we constantly examine what these values are and gauge how they continue to guide the practice of OD. Although many values have been associated with OD, the two most important values are humanistic values and organizational effectiveness. From the inception of OD, strongly humanistic values have been associated with the field. In the seventies, however, OD consultants also began to focus on the need for business effectiveness. Research in the nineties indicates that OD consultants have continued to focus on both sets of values in their work with organizations, and this has sometimes created a values dilemma. As we look back over the nineties, the central question here is “Have OD consultants resolved this dilemma over values or are they still facing increasing tension in meeting these opposing values?” My proposed study hopes to shed light on how, if at all, OD consultants have resolved this dilemma.

Interventions Used by OD Consultants

The purpose of this section is to identify the different interventions that have become associated with OD and to discuss recent research that has been conducted in this area. Given the vast array of OD interventions, various classification schemes have been devised to categorize them. These classification schemes are discussed here because they may be used in the analysis section of this research. The research methods used to gather data on interventions will also be discussed, and a case will be made to conduct in-depth interviews that reveal the similarities and differences between the roles of internal and external OD consultants.

Over the years, OD practitioners have created a diverse range of interventions to help organizations handle problems and issues effectively and efficiently (French & Bell,
Because so many interventions are associated with the work of OD, different classification schemes have been devised to show how they can be grouped together based on such criteria as the objective of the intervention or the target of the intervention. For example, Garcia and Haggith (1989) created a classification scheme that divided interventions into three categories comprising structural, technological, and behavioral interventions. McMahan and Woodman (1992) used a different categorization system in their research, which consisted of four categories: human processual, technostructural, strategic planning, and behavioral. Another categorization scheme identified five categories based on the target of the intervention. The categories were divided into interventions designed to improve the effectiveness of: individuals; dyads and triads; teams and groups; intergroup relations and the total organization (French & Bell, 1995; Porras & Robertson, 1992). A more complex and yet highly influential classification scheme called the "OD cube" was developed by Schmuck and Miles (1971). Each of the three facets of the cube: diagnostic problems, the mode of intervention, and the focus of attention, represent the different elements to be considered. The intervention may focus on diagnostic problems relating to such issues as goals and plans, communication, culture or climate, and leadership and authority. The focus of attention ranges from an individual through to the entire organization. Modes of intervention include such techniques as training, problem solving, or technostructural activity.

Over the past decade, various researchers have focused on the interventions and activities undertaken by OD consultants (Church & Burke, 1995; Church et al., 1994; Esper, 1990; French & Bell, 1995; Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992). Some researchers have made assessments and predictions regarding the overall importance and use of different
types of interventions (Esper, 1990; Fagenson & Burke, 1990; Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992). Even so, these predictions were not based on an assessment of consultants currently working in the field but rather on other types of data such as client needs, personal experience or existing literature (Church et al., 1994). More recently, some survey research has been conducted on OD consultants currently working in the field regarding the prevalence of specific interventions and activities (Church & Burke, 1995; Church et al., 1994). Like all survey work, however, it suffers from providing breadth of information at the expense of depth. With questionnaire use, the researcher does not have the ability to clarify confusing or misunderstood questions or probe for more in-depth information in important areas (Ary et al., 1985). Although in-depth interviews have been conducted with experts in the field regarding the activities and interventions of OD consultants (Church, Hurley, & Burke, 1992; Van Eynde & Coruzzi, 1993), so far as is known little if any in-depth interviews have been conducted with less prominent people in the field. With this study, I seek to add to the information base regarding the current use of OD interventions, as all the interviews will be conducted with OD practitioners who, while experienced, are not perceived as high-profile experts. It is also revealing to note that very limited research (for example: Case, Vandenbarg, & Meredith, 1990; Church et al., 1994) has been conducted that reveals similarities and differences between the roles of the internal and external OD consultants. It can therefore be assumed that there is a need for more research in this area.

Since its birth, several interventions have become associated with the work of OD. Laboratory training, teambuilding, survey feedback and action research were among the earliest interventions associated with the field. By the seventies new activities such as
transactional analysis and life planning were added to the repertoire of OD interventions. Interest also grew in "techno-structural" forms of change within organizations (Mirvis, 1990). Other activities that became associated with OD were: coaching, problem solving, job design, strategy development, conflict management, and sociotechnical systems design (Fagenson & Burke, 1990). By the eighties, research revealed that OD consultants spent the largest portion of their time in skills education and training activities. The areas of organization climate and the strategic planning process were the next primary areas of intervention (McDermott, 1984).

French and Bell (1995) pointed out that in the context of the turbulent times of the eighties and nineties "second generation OD" started to evolve. Although the first generation techniques of OD such as action research and team building were still very important, the field developed beyond the capacity of these approaches in that many OD applications became increasingly complex and multi-faceted. One new area of focus was organizational transformation, which can be defined as "multi dimensional, multi-level, qualitative, discontinuous, radical organizational change involving a paradigm shift" (Levy & Merry, 1986). Another increasingly relevant area of focus was organizational culture (French & Bell, 1995; Sashkin & Burke, 1987). Some OD consultants have devised interventions to help leaders and employees identify the cultural assumptions that could help the organization attain its goals together with the assumptions that could hinder the organization. Another area of interest has been the "learning organization" (Senge, 1990). Largely stimulated by the work of Argyris, Schon, and Senge, there has been considerable research to discover the conditions under which organizations, teams and individuals learn.
Given that the environment and the business arena have been so turbulent in the nineties and that there have been new areas of focus in OD such as organizational transformation, it is important to examine how these changes have affected the work of the OD consultant. A prediction made by some experts at the turn of the nineties was that practitioners in the field would change to become more focused on large-scale systematic change rather than on group or individual change (Van Eynde & Bledsoe, 1990; Woodman, 1989). Certain studies indicate that this shift has already occurred (Church & Burke, 1995; Church et al., 1994). A survey study of 416 internal and external OD consultants revealed that the single largest focus of OD practitioners’ efforts was directed at achieving long-term organizational change. Activities under this heading included large-scale organizational interventions such as visioning and strategic planning. However, a survey study conducted in 1992 of 110 internal OD consultants revealed different results (McMahan & Woodman, 1992). Their study revealed that internal consultants spend 51.4% of their time on individual or group level interventions and 44.4% of their time on whole systems or organizational level interventions. Fagenson and Burke (1990) presented similar findings when they asked internal OD consultants to predict what activities would define the practice of the nineties. Group development work was predicted to be the most predominant OD activity of the century's final decade, whereas strategic planning and forecasting were considered to be the least important activity. There could be several reasons for the difference in these findings. It may be that internal OD consultants use different interventions and work at a different level within the organization than do external OD consultants. Frequently, these internal consultants do not have access to senior managers for change efforts. Or it may simply be
that internal consultants have been slower to make the shift to large-scale organizational change. Whatever the case, McMahan and Woodman (1992) pointed out that more comparative research needs to be conducted in order to determine how different the functions of internal and external OD consultants are.

In summary, the purpose of this section was to identify interventions and classification schemes used in OD as well as to discuss recent research regarding this topic. An interesting discrepancy emerged in the literature. Whereas one study (conducted on both internal and external consultants) revealed that OD consultants spend the largest amount of time on large-scale interventions, a study which focused solely on internal consultants revealed that they spend the largest amount of time on group level interactions. It is therefore clear that more research needs to be conducted so that we can determine how different the practices of internal and external consultants are.

The Training and Development of OD Consultants

A recurring theme in the literature on OD has been a concern for the training of new entrants into the field. This theme emerged as early as 1981. A Delphi panel consisting of 65 prominent experts in the OD field identified that 42% of OD professionals were inadequately trained and supervised (Shepard & Raia, 1981). This concern has continued into the nineties. A survey study of 416 OD professionals revealed that participants believed that new entrants to the OD field lacked the appropriate background, training, values, and appreciation of theory (Church & Burke, 1995). Head et al., (1996) argued that the lack of training and quality control for those entering the OD field was one of the weaknesses that threatened OD’s development as a discipline. They further pointed out that this was not just an academic issue; it had
already undermined OD's credibility among the client base. Clearly, there needs to be more effective training for those entering the OD field as well more effective monitoring of those wanting to enter. Varney (1980) suggested that in order to develop competent OD professionals, two issues needed to be resolved: first, the requisite skills need to be identified, and second, the best method to transfer these skills needs to be determined.

Several individuals have conducted research and theorized on an appropriate curriculum for new entrants to the OD field. Warrick and Donovan (1979) surveyed 20 external and 50 internal consultants and asked them to determine the major skills that they thought were necessary to become an OD consultant. Forty major skills were identified which were categorized into four major headings: knowledge skills, consulting skills, conceptual skills and human skills. Shepard and Raia (1981) surveyed sixty-five OD professionals to determine the skills that an OD consultant should possess. Fifty skills were identified and they were refined into nine major categories using the Delphi methodology. The most important categories were identified as (in descending order): general consulting skills, intra-personal skills, organization behavior/organization development knowledge and intervention skills, and inter-personal skills. Carey and Varney (1983) surveyed 600 members of the OD division of the American Society for Training and Development to determine the relative importance of 118 skills and competencies. This study provided support for the three - category model that the researchers had generated earlier (Varney, 1980). These categories were: self-awareness and personal impact awareness; conceptual, analytical and research skills, and change and influence skills.
These earlier studies have been criticized because they provided data that were either too general to be of any practical value or because they focused on personality attributes and attitudes rather than the behavioral dimensions of consulting relationships (Eubanks et al., 1990). Eubanks et al., (1990) attempted to remedy this situation by conducting behavioral event interviews with 23 OD practitioners. Their goal was to generate a set of consulting behaviors that were judged to be both effective and ineffective in organizational interactions. Six competency categories were derived from an analysis of the behavioral events: implementing the intervention; managing group processes; using data; contracting; using interpersonal skills, and maintaining the client relationship. The researchers later extended this initial research by exploring the relationship between practitioner behaviors and consultation effectiveness (O’Driscoll & Eubanks, 1993). Forty-five consultants and their clients were surveyed to assess the perceived frequency of a range of consulting behaviors and their contribution to overall consultation effectiveness. One interesting finding was that the ability to use relevant information and to establish specific goals for the intervention were perceived by both the consultants and clients as the most significant factors in the overall success of an intervention. In 1995, The Ontario Society for Training and Development developed a training competency architecture. Although focused on the position of trainer, it pinpoints many competencies that relate to the role of the OD consultant. The society has identified core competencies that emanate from five functional areas: needs analysis, design, delivery, evaluation and coaching (Ontario Society for Training and Development, 1995).
In reviewing the previous studies, it is clear that several have focused on identifying the skills and competencies required to become an OD consultant. All the same, few have addressed how these competencies should be acquired (Head et al., 1996). Randolph, Ferrie, and Brennan (1979) identified three principal methods of acquiring OD skills: work experience, laboratory experiences, and study/research from related areas. A fourth approach was then proposed by Shepard and Raia (1981): graduate education. A 1982 survey of OD network members revealed that all four methods were used (Head et al., 1996; Kegan, 1982). An impressive 36% of the participants identified graduate education as their primary method of training. Other researchers have also strongly favored a graduate approach as their primary way to become an OD consultant (Shepard & Raia, 1981).

Given the assumption that graduate education had an important part to play in the development of OD practitioners, Head et al. decided to focus on what that role should be. Seventy-eight practitioners at an OD conference completed an open-ended survey on that topic. These survey results acted as raw material for a panel of experts who fine-tuned the information using the Delphi technique. Survey participants identified 11 methods through which to become an OD consultant. However they rated the most important methods as personal growth and understanding, graduate education, and apprenticeships. They indicated that at least half of the requisite skills and knowledge required to become an OD consultant could be acquired through graduate education. When asked to design an ideal graduate program participants identified prerequisite courses for entry, required course work and elective course work. The five-core courses that they identified were: consulting skills, managing change, group facilitation,
intervention techniques, and an internship/practicum. Based on their findings, Head et al. (1996) made several interesting suggestions to improve graduate education. First, they recommended that graduate schools could improve the quality of their programs for OD consultants by balancing skill based courses with experiential opportunities such as internships, team consulting opportunities and mentorships. Secondly they recommended that a graduate OD program should have a solid base in business so that OD practitioners would clearly understand the environment in which they worked.

In summary, several individuals have attempted to identify the skills required to be an effective OD consultant. Many of the earlier studies can be criticized because they either identified skills that were too general to be of any practical value or because they focused on attitudes or personality traits rather than behavior patterns. Later studies were able to identify more specific skills and competencies. For example, by using behavioral event interviews, Eubanks et al. (1990) were able to identify a set of competencies that were judged to be either effective or ineffective during OD interventions. As many researchers have focused on the attitudes and behaviors required to be an effective OD consultant, this is premised on the assumption that we already have a general sense of what these skills are. However, it seems appropriate to ask experienced practitioners to reflect on their own training as well as to reflect on the changes that have recently occurred in the field, so that we can either identify shifts in emphasis of skills and competencies and/or possibly identify some new skills that are now relevant. Whereas several researchers have focused on the attitudes and behaviors required to become an OD consultant, few have focused on how these skills and competencies should be acquired. Only one study has examined this area in depth (Head et al., 1996). Although
researchers have provided some very useful information regarding graduate education, more work needs to be undertaken to give us a broader perspective regarding the best way for aspiring OD consultants to learn the required skills and competencies.

**Conclusion**

This chapter presented the relevant literature and discussed how the proposed study should contribute to that literature. The origins and history of OD up to the current decade were also presented. This section demonstrated how OD has continued to evolve in response to its environment. As no one has as yet conducted research on how OD has evolved at the end of the nineties and determined what factors have influenced the field, it is relevant to do so now. A body of knowledge is certainly growing regarding the evolution of OD in the nineties, but much of this research was conducted in the early to mid nineties on practitioners who were experts in the field. This study should add to the existing knowledge base in that it will be conducted at the end of the nineties with OD practitioners who are experienced, but who are not yet perceived as key leaders in the field.

Values have always been a central point of discussion for OD practitioners. One of the issues that is being discussed right now is how OD consultants should balance the opposing values of business effectiveness versus humanism. This proposed study hopes to speak to this issue. The section on OD interventions outlines and discusses recent research on this topic. However, it identifies one area in which more research needs to occur, namely, the task of identifying the different use of interventions by internal and external consultants. I hope to contribute to the knowledge base in this area by comparing the intervention use of the internal and external participants in this study. The last area
focuses on research regarding the training and development of OD practitioners. The intention is that by asking experienced consultants to describe an appropriate curriculum and to outline the best methods to transfer the requisite skills and competencies, insights may be advanced.
CHAPTER THREE:

CHARTING THE STUDY: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the research design used in this study. First, the justification for placing this study within the qualitative paradigm is presented. Then the case study methodology is put forward and its appropriateness for this study is discussed. I then outline why I chose to use in-depth interviewing as the method of gathering data in this study. I also discuss the ethical issues that I considered in conducting this research. The research design is then traced including: site and sample selection, the pilot study, the first contact visit with participants, and the interview situation. Specific strategies for ensuring the trustworthiness of the research are outlined. Finally, the methods of data analysis used in this research are discussed and clarified. See the appendix for the following information: the interview schedule, the statement of informed consent, the letter to participants, and topic areas to be covered in the interview.

The Qualitative Paradigm

Until recently, quantitative research methods were accepted as the way of conducting research by academics in the social sciences (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Quantitative research was fostered by the positivistic or scientific view in which it is assumed that the world is made up of observable, measurable facts. As Merriam asserts, "Traditional research is based on the assumption that there is a single, objective reality - the world out there - that we can observe, know, and measure" (1988, p.17). The goal of quantitative research was to develop laws that make predictions possible. It was assumed
that these laws could be applied to other persons, places, and times (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Quantitative researchers use precise sampling strategies and experimental designs in the hope of producing generalizable results. When using a quantitative approach, the researcher starts with a theoretical framework, formulates a hypothesis, and makes a logical deduction about what the results of the experiment should be if the hypothesis is correct. Researchers saw their role as one of maintaining extreme objectivity and they took great care not to “contaminate” their data by getting too involved with their “subjects”.

In contrast, the qualitative or interpretative paradigm sees reality as “socially constructed, complex, and ever-changing” (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p.6). The goal of qualitative research is “verstehen” or interpretative understanding (Patton, 1990). Discovery and understanding, rather than the testing of a hypothesis, are the objectives of this research. According to Patton (1990, p.57):

The verstehen tradition stresses understanding that focuses on the meaning of human behavior, the context of social interaction, an empathetic understanding based on personal experience, and the connections between mental states and behavior. The tradition of verstehen places emphasis on the human capacity to know and understand others through empathetic introspection and reflection based on direct observation of and interaction with people.

Several characteristics define qualitative research. It involves holistic inquiry that is conducted in the natural setting of the participants. It is therefore conducted “in the field” so that the researcher can study the whole setting in which the research takes place. Lincoln and Guba indicate that this saturatedness is important because phenomena of study “take their meaning as much from their contexts as they do from themselves...no phenomenon can be understood out of relationship to the time and context that spawned,
harbored, and supported it” (1981, p.189). Another defining characteristic is that the researcher “elects to use him or herself as well as other humans as the primary data-gathering instrument” (Guba, 1981, p.39). In many situations, the researcher has direct contact with and maybe even gets close to the people who are being studied (Patton, 1990). Qualitative research also recognizes that the researcher's personal experience, intuition, and insights are relevant and contribute to the understanding of the phenomenon (Guba, 1981; Patton, 1990).

A number of other interconnected themes contribute to the definition of qualitative inquiry. The analysis of data tends to be inductive rather than deductive. That is, instead of starting with a pre-existing hypothesis, the researcher gathers data and tries to make sense of and discover “important categories, dimensions and interrelationships” (Patton, 1990, p.40). Potential theories therefore emerge from or are grounded in the data rather than preceding them as in conventional quantitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Patton (1990) allows that because of this inductive approach, qualitative research is particularly useful if the goal is to explore or discover more about a phenomenon.

It was my belief that my research would be suited to the qualitative paradigm for various reasons. My goal was to understand and discover more about the phenomenon under study rather than to test a pre-existing hypothesis. In my research I was the “main research instrument”, as I conducted in-depth interviews with each participant in order to fully understand his or her perspective. Because I conducted “in-depth” interviews, I understood that this was a subjective process in which the researcher and participants were strongly connected and had the potential to influence one another. I believed that my personal experiences and intuition contributed to the understanding of the phenomenon.
that I investigated. My research took place in the natural setting of each participant because I believed that no phenomenon could be understood out of relationship to the time and context in which it existed. I made sense of the data using inductive data analysis so that the analysis and interpretation were "grounded" in the data.

The Case Study Approach

As Merriam (1988) attests, although most people were familiar with the term "case study", little agreement has been apparent about what constitutes case study research. She argues that qualitative case study research is a research design in its own right and so can be distinguished from other forms of research. She defines qualitative case study research as: "An intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit" (1988, p.xiv). She explains that the purpose of a case study is twofold: to achieve a deep understanding of the groups being studied and to create some general theoretical statements regarding their structure and process.

In short, four characteristics define case study research: particularistic, descriptive, heuristic, and inductive (Merriam, 1988). Particularistic means that in case study research the researcher focuses on a particular situation, event, program or phenomenon. As Merriam says, the approach is fitting for practical problems that arise from everyday practice because the particularistic has a specificity of focus. Descriptive means that the end product of a case study is an in-depth description of the situation being studied. By description, Merriam means that information about the situation is yielded through prose such as documentation of events and lengthy quotes rather than numerical data. Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.214) explain that "the case report provides the reader a means for
bringing his or her own tacit knowledge to bear; if the description is sufficiently ‘thick’, then reading it is very similar to being there and being able to sense elements too nebulous to be stated propositionally”. The case study approach is also heuristic. Patton (1990) defines heuristic inquiry as a form of phenomenological inquiry that allows for the relevance of the personal insights and experiences of both the researcher and those being researched. A heuristic approach can bring about “the discovery of new meaning, extend the reader’s experience, or confirm what is known” (Meriam, 1988, p.13). The fourth characteristic of case study research is that it is inductive. Essentially this means that hypotheses and new concepts are formulated from a thorough examination of the data grounded in the context itself.

I believe that the case study approach is an appropriate method for my research for several reasons. My research deals with the practice of the OD consultant and, as Meriam points out, “The qualitative case study is a particularly suitable methodology for dealing with critical problems of practice” (1988, p.xiii). My research is particularistic in that I focus on the OD consultant. It is heuristic in that my intention is to illuminate our understanding of the current role of the OD practitioner; I do this by reflecting on my own experience and by asking others to describe their experience. My approach to analyzing the data is inductive in that I gather extensive information about the current practice of the internal and external OD consultant so that I can interpret the data and potentially develop theories that relate to my findings.

Methods of Data Gathering

In-depth interviewing is the data gathering method used in this study. Taylor and Bogdan (1984, p.77) define this method as a face-to-face encounter “between the
researcher and informants directed towards understanding informants' perspectives on their lives, experiences, or situations as expressed in their own words". As Seidman (1991, p.3) writes, "at the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experiences of other people and the meaning they make of that experience". The assumption in interview research is that people's stories are important to hear because they are of worth.

Based on my research goals, I have decided that interviews are a particularly appropriate method of data collection. As Merriam (1988, p.72) attests: "Interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them. It is also necessary to interview when we are interested in past events that are impossible to replicate". Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.273) remark that the major advantage of the interview is that it "permits the respondent to move back and forth in time - to reconstruct the past, interpret the present, and predict the future, all without leaving a comfortable armchair". In this study participants are asked to discuss their OD practice and to share their values as professionals. They are also asked to reflect on their careers and discuss how the practice of OD had evolved over the last ten years.

Patton (1990) explains that there are three basic approaches to collecting qualitative data through open-ended interviews. At one end of the continuum is the informal conversational interview. This kind of interview relies on "the spontaneous generation of questions in the natural flow of an interaction...the person being talked with may not even realize they are being interviewed" (Patton, 1990, p.280). At the other end of the continuum is the standardized open-ended interview. This kind of interview consists of a series of questions that are "carefully worded and arranged with the intention of
taking the respondent through the same sequence and asking each respondent the same
questions with essentially the same words. Flexibility in probing is more or less limited”
(Patton, 1990, p.280). In the middle of the continuum is what Patton calls the general
interview guide approach. With this approach, the researcher develops a list of questions
or issues to be explored in the interview. This ensures that basically the same type of
information is obtained from the interviewees. The interview guide helps interviewers
remember what questions they want to ask, and yet they are free to explore, probe, and
raise questions that will illuminate the subject of the discussion.

For this research, I used the general interview guide approach or what Merriam
(1988) calls a semi-structured interview format. I hold that this is appropriate for the
following reasons. I have a good idea of the questions that I want to ask as well as the
overall sequencing of the questions. However, I wish to remain flexible so that I can
follow the direction set by the participant and be able to probe and explore issues that
come up in the conversation. I also want to make sure that I am systematic enough to be
able to obtain the same kind of information from each interviewee. In this vein, Merriam
(1988, p.74) explains that in a semi-structured interview:

Certian information is desired from all the respondents. These interviews are
guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, but neither the exact wording
nor the order of the questions is determined ahead of time. This format allows the
researcher to respond to the issue at hand, to the emerging worldview of the
respondent, and to new ideas on the topic.

Initially I proposed to meet with each participant between two and three times.
My goal in the first meeting was to: create rapport with the participant; sort out the
logistics of the next meetings; gather some general data about the participant’s
background; and leave the participant with some general topic areas to think about for the
interview. In the second meeting, I had hoped to conduct the bulk of the interview with each participant. The plan was to tentatively schedule a third meeting so that, if necessary, I could clarify any issues and probe further where required.

It soon became clear, however, that participants were "very busy" and did not wish to meet with me on three occasions. I therefore modified the approach considerably. In the initial telephone contact, I explained the purpose of the research, shared my criteria for choosing participants to interview, checked to see if participants met these criteria, and ascertained whether they were interested in taking part in my research project. In the face to face meeting, I conducted the interview. At that meeting, I obtained permission to telephone them in the future if I needed to ask any other questions.

The Interview Schedule

The questions developed for the interview were based on: the goals of the research, a review of the literature on the topic, and my own knowledge and experience working in this field. Drawing on suggestions made by Patton (1990), I drew up a list of questions and checked them carefully to ensure that they were worded clearly and unambiguously. I also placed probes in appropriate spots so that I could use them if necessary. I then reviewed these questions with three colleagues who were OD consultants. They gave me suggestions regarding the wording of some questions in order to increase clarity. One of my colleagues also gave me a suggestion that would improve the ordering of the questions. In the actual interviews with participants, I had planned to gather background data on each participant, and then initiate questions regarding how OD had changed over the last ten years. However when I tried this order in the informal pilot interviews with my associates, I was often met with blank looks. In order to resolve this
problem, my colleague suggested that I ask questions regarding activities and values first, followed by questions regarding changes in the field of OD. She suggested that I ask questions about activities and values first because she believed that participants would have this information at their fingertips and it would set the stage for questions regarding changes in the field of OD. I therefore decided to change the ordering of the topics to be discussed. I then conducted a formal pilot interview (this will be discussed in greater detail in the section on the pilot study) and made appropriate modifications to questions.

Based on the feedback I received, the finalized interview schedule included the following topics (a tentative interview schedule is located in Appendix A):

**Background Information**

These questions were used to obtain information about participants regarding: educational background, length of time in the field, and how they became OD consultants.

**Activities and Values of OD Consultants**

One set of questions asked the participants to describe the activities and interventions that they are currently engaged in as OD consultants. The other set of questions urged them to reflect on their values as an OD consultant.

**The Changes that have Occurred in the Field over the Last Ten Years**

These questions stimulated participants to reflect on what OD was like ten years ago and to describe how the field had changed (if at all) over the last ten years. Respondents were then requested to identify factors that had influenced the field over this period.
The Training and Development of OD Consultants

This set of questions invited participants to discuss the training of OD consultants. Participants were asked to describe what topics should be included in a program for new entrants to the field of OD and how the program should be delivered.

General Questions

These were follow-up questions that did not seem to fit anywhere else in the interview schedule. They covered topics such as: what participants liked about the practice of OD; what they found frustrating; and what metaphor would describe the role of the OD consultant. The last question asked participants whether they would like to add anything else.

Ethical Issues and Concerns

The “OISE guidelines for thesis and orals” indicated that if human subjects are involved in the proposed study, an ethical review committee must vet the proposal before the researcher can formally proceed with data collection. As my study involves human subjects, I completed the appropriate forms for the ethical review and the review committee approved them. Glesne and Peshkin made an excellent point, however, when they remark:

Ethics is not something that you can forget once you satisfy the demands of human subject review boards and other gatekeepers of research conduct...Rather, ethical considerations are inseparable from your everyday interactions with others and with your data”. (1992, p.109)

Kvale (1996) indicates that the researcher needs to consider ethical issues during the seven stages of an interview investigation: thematizing, designing, the interview situation, transcription, analysis, verification, and reporting. In the designing stage, the
researcher ought to consider the issues of informed consent, confidentiality, and analyzing the possible consequences of the study for the subjects. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) indicate that although informed consent cannot stop the abuse of research findings, it can at least contribute to the empowerment of the research participants. Typically through informed consent, potential participants are informed of any risks that might be experienced from participating in the research, that their participation is voluntary, and that they can withdraw at any point in the study. I therefore have sought informed consent from all participants in my study (Appendix B).

Confidentiality is another key issue to be considered by the researcher at the designing, interview, transcription, and reporting stage. Although it is impossible to guarantee confidentiality in all circumstances, I have done my utmost to protect the anonymity of each participant. I used the following methods: I transcribed the tapes myself or I used a pseudonym for each participant if another person transcribed them; and pseudonyms were used in the transcripts so that even if a casual reader saw the transcripts, the real names would not be known. Pseudonyms were also used in the final thesis report (as a matter of interest, I asked participants if they would like me to use their real names, but as one person was uncomfortable with that idea, pseudonyms have been used in all of the cases.) The tapes and transcripts have been kept in a locked drawer and will be destroyed when the dissertation is completed.

An important ethical issue that needs to be considered is reciprocity (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). Glaser defines reciprocity as "the exchange of favors and commitments, the building of a sense of mutual identification and feeling of community" (Glazer, 1982, p.50). As Glesne and Peshkin put forward, due to the nature of the relationship that the
researcher has with the participants, the researcher does not generally have something which is of great value to give to the participants. What the researcher does have, however, is the ability to be grateful for the cooperation and time that each participant has given. I also asked each participant if they would like a copy of the results of my study, and I will be sending this information to them when the thesis is completed. The interview process itself provides an opportunity for reciprocity. As Glesne and Peshkin (1992, p.123) claim, “good listening with its attendant reinforcement, catharsis, and self enlightenment are the major returns researchers can readily give to interviewees”. In each interview I did my utmost to truly listen to what each participant had to say and several indicated that it was an enjoyable and useful experience.

The Sample

As Michael Patton (1990, p.169) suggests, “nothing better captures the difference between quantitative and qualitative methods than the different logics that undergird sampling approaches”. Quantitative researchers tend to use larger samples selected randomly so that they can make generalizations. The logic in qualitative research is to purposefully select information-rich cases for close study. Patton (1990, p.169) defines information-rich cases as “those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term purposeful sampling”.

Patton has described several different strategies for purposeful sampling. Based on an analysis of these strategies, I decided to use the following: typical case sampling; maximum variation sampling; and convenience sampling. My goal was to find participants who, if possible, typified OD consultants. To that end, I identified criteria that would at least ensure some commonalties between all participants. I also decided to interview an
equal number of internal and external consultants, so that differences between the two
groups could be explored. I achieved “variation” by finding participants who work in
different types of organizations, or in the case of external consultants, consulted with
assorted client groups. In terms of convenience, I was able to interview participants who
worked in or close to Toronto. Glesne and Peshkin made the point that it is never
advisable to conduct research in “your own back yard” (1992, p.21), that it is unwise
interview friends or colleagues. So whereas it was tempting to interview participants from
among my broad range of close colleagues and friends in the OD field, I avoided anyone in
the field with whom I had a close relationship.

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) explained that in order to begin selecting participants,
researchers frequently use “snowball” or “networking” techniques in which the researcher
makes one contact and asks this person for recommendations regarding who else to
interview. I decided to use the snowballing technique. Initially, I contacted colleagues
who were operating as OD consultants and asked them to recommend potential
participants who met the criteria that I outlined. Once I started to interview participants, I
also invited them to recommend potential participants. I outlined the following criteria:

**Criteria for External Consultants**

1. *Had operated as external OD consultants for ten or more years.*

One of the purposes of this research was to ask participants to reflect on the
changes in the field over the past ten years. I believed that it would be hard for
participants to do this if they had not been working in the field for at least that
period of time.
2. *Were generalists, i.e., had not specialized in one particular area of OD such as training.*

Believing that the typical OD consultant uses more than one activity or intervention, I wanted to interview consultants who were typical in this respect.

3. *Were currently employed full-time as OD consultants.*

I did not believe that those who worked as OD consultants on a part-time basis would have as clear a sense of the field as those who were immersed in the processes full-time.

4. *Worked with organizations that had experienced restructuring, reorganization, or downsizing.*

I believed that the majority of OD consultants had dealt with these issues in their practice and so I again wanted to interview those who had had fairly typical experiences.

**Criteria for Internal Consultants**

1. *Had operated as internal OD consultants for ten or more years.*

2. *Were OD generalists, e.g., had not specialized in one specific area of OD such as training or strategic planning.*

3. *Were employed full-time as OD consultants within an organization.*

4. *Had worked within organizations that had experienced restructuring, reorganization or downsizing.*

I believed that these criteria were sufficient until I contacted one external consultant who had been recommended to me (this was the third consultant that I approached). He asked me to define exactly what I meant by “OD consultant”. He further
went on to explain that whereas in the past he had called himself an OD consultant, now he generally defined himself as a management consultant due to the nature of the work that he performed. As a result, I decided not to interview this person because I wanted to interview people who saw themselves as OD consultants. However, in case I was asked to define the "OD consultant" to other potential participants, I ensured that I had the definition that I had used in Chapter One close at hand. I also found that several participants that I approached did not meet my criteria for the length of time they had spent as OD consultants. However, I decided that this was a crucial criterion because I wanted to ask people to reflect on the field over the last ten years. I therefore had to sound out quite a few people before I found participants that met this criterion.

A concern for many qualitative researchers is deciding how many people to interview. As Patton (1990) explains, an appropriate size for the sample depends on: what you want to find out; your purpose in conducting the research; how the findings will be used; and what you can do with the time and resources that you have at your disposal. He further contends that it is the richness of the information that is important. He (Patton, 1990, p.185) explains that "the validity, meaningfulness, and insights generated from qualitative inquiry have more to do with the information – richness of the cases selected and the observational/analytical capabilities of the researcher than with sample size". After completing my eighth interview, I began to feel that I had sufficient information-rich cases to analyze patterns and themes that emerged from the interviews as a whole as well as to identify significant similarities and differences between external and internal consultants. I therefore decided that it was time to stop gathering data and to begin analysis.
General Characteristics of the Sample

I interviewed four external OD consultants and four internal consultants. Of the four internal OD consultants, three had worked as OD consultants for over ten years and one had worked as a consultant for nine years. Two were male and two were female. They were all employed on a full-time basis by organizations. The organizations in which they worked varied from government to banking to medical products and services. The four external consultants had been full-time and self-employed OD consultants for well over ten years. Again, two were male and two were female. They all indicated that they had a variety of clients, although one explained that just recently she had been working more specifically for one client. All participants interviewed indicated that they had been employed by organizations that had experienced restructuring, reorganization, or downsizing. A more detailed description of each participant follows. The four internal consultants are profiled first, followed by the four external consultants.

Simon

Simon has been an OD consultant for nine years. He currently holds the position of Organizational Development Advisor with a regional municipality. His role is to assist the organization to change itself in response to the changing environment through reorganization, restructuring, team development, and management development. Before obtaining his first OD function with the Federal Government, he had held a variety of positions. Prior to moving into the OD field, he was a contract officer with the government. This involved negotiating training contracts with unions, employers, and colleges. Before that he acted as a human resources planning officer. This consisted of
training supervisors to write evaluation reports, handle affirmative action programs, and administer management development programs.

Simon was attracted to the OD field for various reasons. He enjoyed having the opportunity to resolve problems within organizations. On a personal basis, he considers himself a shy person and he believed that being an OD consultant allowed him to “relate to people in a richer way”. More than anything else, however, he believed that OD gave him the opportunity to “make a change that is really substantive”. Simon was given the opportunity to move into the field when he was chosen to deliver a one-week residential team building workshop to employees within the organization. He was then offered a permanent position as facilitator. He unofficially expanded this role to encompass many OD activities.

Simon has a B.A. in philosophy and is currently working on a Master’s degree in adult education.

What impressed me as Simon talked was his passion and commitment for his work in OD. He stated “I have a feeling that I have arrived at where I belong. You know, that sense that goes back into your teenage years - this seems to be the direction”.

**Gordon**

Gordon has been in the OD field for fourteen years. He currently holds the position of Vice President, Human Resources and Organizational Development in a medical products and services organization.

Gordon’s first job after university was in the Commercial Loans Department of a Canadian Bank in Western Canada. He returned to Toronto with the goal of moving into human resources, and obtained a four-month contract in the human resource department
of an electronics manufacturer. He was then hired on a permanent basis by the organization and stayed there for five years. During that time he was promoted into various positions within such functions as: compensation, recruitment, and human resource management. Gordon believes that he really started to do OD work in the next organization that he joined - a real estate development company. He held various positions within this company culminating in Director of Human Resources for Canada, and he had overall responsibility for the OD function in the United States. He further honed his OD skills in the next organization that he joined - a municipal government.

What attracted Gordon to the OD field was his innate curiosity and his desire to be creative. He also enjoyed looking at business from a broad perspective. He explained "What really attracted me to OD was that you weren't pigeon-holed into one business discipline. You encompassed everything. It is the only way that you can at a high level get to understand the whole business and not just a part of it".

Gordon has a degree in industrial relations and psychology. He is currently working towards his CGA and a Canadian compensation professional designation. He also takes courses on a regular basis from the Strategic Planning Forum. Gordon has a very clear sense of his role as an OD consultant. He believes that an effective OD consultant needs to have a very clear understanding of the business and what it needs to do in order to succeed, as well as a desire to help people grow and develop.

**Margaret**

Margaret has held an OD position for over ten years. Currently she works for one of the Canadian banks as an organizational effectiveness consultant. She offers OD services to different departments within the organization.
Although she has only formally held an OD position for ten years, she realizes that she has performed a lot of OD work in earlier positions. Her first position was as a public health nurse for an Ontario Housing complex. In this role, she set up groups for young mothers, playgroups for young children, and arrangements for two senior citizens apartments. She now realizes “that it was all OD work. I never recognized it at the time, but it was kind of what I did”. While staying at home to bring up her children, Margaret was involved in a lot of volunteer work. As a volunteer, she conducted activities such as setting up a senior citizens drop in center, setting up a daycare center, professionalizing the parent teacher association, and helping volunteer boards. In hindsight she believes that these were also organizational development activities. Before joining the bank, she worked for a large training organization. Although she primarily facilitated such workshops as sales, customer service, and management development, she believes that she also acted as a change agent because she introduced the organization to some radically new concepts regarding learning styles and facilitation skills.

What attracted Margaret to the OD field and indeed to all the different positions that she has held was an opportunity to make a real difference in people’s lives. She says “one of the things that attracted me is the opportunity to make a difference, and to make a qualitative difference, not a quantitative difference”. Margaret fundamentally sees her role as a change agent. She does not always find this role easy because although her interventions may be successful she has had to come to terms with the reality that not everyone likes her for what she does.

She has an undergraduate degree in public health nursing and a graduate degree in adult education.
Janice

Janice has been in the organizational development field for over ten years. She currently holds the position as the manager in the corporate training and OD Department of a municipal government. Prior to this, Janice had held a number of functions in the training and personnel field.

In one of her earlier jobs in a not for profit organization, she initiated a number of large-scale projects, for example, a violence against women project. She made the transition to OD work when she accepted a position at a hospital that included both training and OD responsibilities.

Janice is attracted to the OD field because it gives her the opportunity to solve problems and to understand how organizations work. When asked what she enjoys about being an OD consultant, she responded by saying “when there are breakthroughs, when clients see a way to solve their problems, or to change, or to show evidence of becoming more humane, or thoughtful or respectful”.

Janice is concerned about the future of her department as significant restructuring is anticipated for the future. She seems to be exhausted by the prospect of this upcoming reorganization as her department went through significant restructuring and downsizing two years ago.

Janice has a B.A. in modern history and a Master's degree in environmental science. She also has an M.Ed. degree and has completed the course work for the Doctor of Education degree.
Joan

Joan has been an OD consultant for approximately 30 years. She first became an internal consultant, although she has been an external consultant since the seventies. She obtained her first internal consulting position in the sixties with Northern Telecom. It was here that she was exposed to the action research methodology that forms the basis of her work as a consultant. One of her first external OD positions was with the sports and recreation department of one of the Ministries. She explains that “these were my days of learning” because she was involved with projects that focused on community development, work change, and adult education.

What attracted Joan to the OD field was her desire to work with people and her firm conviction that anyone can learn. She especially enjoys working with service organizations such as hospitals because the employees “want to be of service to other people”. What defines Joan is her enthusiasm about her work. She says:

I love it. It’s full of uncertainty. It’s a chance to make a difference. Every day there is something to be learned. There is nothing that you could ever be sure of for any ten minute segment at a time...I love that ambiguity.

When asked to think of a metaphor that described her work as an OD consultant, she used the analogy of the sheepdog. This made sense to her because “sheepdogs work in response to something, which is a goal. And they use their instincts to help the herd move towards a designated place. And they are very gentle with the sheep. They never damage the sheep”.

Joan’s undergraduate degree was in fine arts. She obtained a Master’s degree in adult education from Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Prior to becoming an OD
consultant, Joan spent two years working as a selections officer for the Federal government.

**Fred**

Fred has been in the OD field for approximately 20 years. After completing an undergraduate degree in maths and philosophy, he went into the Peace Corps for two years. When he left the Peace Corps, he worked in a variety of jobs for a couple of years and then decided to obtain a Ph.D. in educational psychology. While he was working on his doctorate, he became very interested in general systems theory, which in turn got him interested in organizations.

Fred started into the OD field in the seventies when he moved to Canada. However he then spent a short period of time in market research in the mid eighties, and he points out that this was “the first time that I ran into the concept of the customer”. When he came back into the OD field in 1987, he explains that teambuilding, customer service, and empowerment were big issues in OD. Since coming back into the field he believes that a lot has changed for him in terms of how he conducts his work. There have been two key influencing factors. First he began to realize the teambuilding courses were great at breaking people out of their mindsets, but in terms of new learning, “utter failures at having it stick”. Secondly he met Elliott Jaques (1989), and was impressed both by the man and his theory. He began to believe that if the structure of the organization is effective, then most of the organizational problems will be eliminated.

Since being exposed to Jaques’ theory, he primarily concentrated on helping organizations develop an effective structure. He explains that “the truth is a big part of my
agenda” and he is motivated by “learning more and pushing the theory forward and developing it”. He therefore defines himself as an “applied organizational scientist”.

Sara

Sara has been an external OD consultant for approximately 13 years. Prior to becoming a consultant, she was a special education teacher for four years. She decided to leave the teaching profession because she found the system archaic and she was chagrined because there was minimal support for special needs children outside of the classroom. She decided to become an OD consultant because she was attracted to systems theory and because she wanted to work with adults. She stated, “I like people and I really wanted to make a difference”.

When she left the teaching profession she decided to take a Master’s degree in OD. However, her local university did not offer a degree in that field. She therefore took some Master of business administration courses as well as some psychology courses and graduated with a Master’s degree in psychology. Her practicum work and her thesis focused on leadership.

After graduation, Sara went into partnership with her father and has worked as an external OD consultant ever since. Currently the majority of her work is with different areas in one large Canadian organization; however, she still takes on projects from different organizations as they become available to her.

Sara has a vision of what she wants to achieve. Her goal is to try “to help organizations become more humane and more gentle and kinder but in a more honest and accountable way”. She especially enjoys empowering individuals within the organization to learn and grow.
Paul

Paul has been in the OD field for approximately 30 years. He started out in clinical psychology, studied child psychology, and then switched to theology. After obtaining a theology degree, he worked as a community organizer in the Southern States. He was then ordained as a minister and received a doctorate in theology. Initially he worked as a minister in a hospital chapel. When the Church became interested in OD, he was given a three-year opportunity to study OD and determine how it could be useful to the Church. He then became Director of OD for his Church in the United States, and finally an executive conducting OD interventions for them.

Paul has since moved to Canada, and he now operates as an external OD consultant. While some of his work is with businesses and government, he also consults with colleges, universities, and professional associations.

Because he has been in the field for 30 years and has taught courses in organizational development, he has a very clear sense of the history of the field. He traces the development of OD through each decade, up to the eighties when he believes that a fracture occurred in the field. He believes that there has been a fracturing into two camps between those that focus on individual performance and human dynamics and those that focus on structure. He now focuses primarily on improving the structural components within organizations such as roles, decision making, and planning systems.

Paul has a very clear idea of what distinguishes the OD field from related work. He says that "what differentiates OD consultants is that we focus on organizations as phenomena in of themselves...organizations have certain phenomena about them that are
unique to organizational life, only occur in organizational settings and don't occur anywhere else”.

**The Pilot Study**

Seidman (1991) stresses that all interviewing researchers conduct a pilot of their proposed study so that they can preview their interviewing design with one or more participants. As Glesne and Peshkin (1992, p.31) contend, “the goal is not to get data per se, but to learn about your research process, interview schedule, observation techniques, and yourself”. The pilot participants need to be aware that this is a pilot so that they can answer the questions and subsequently discuss possible improvements with the researcher. As a result of the pilot, the researcher may wish to change interview questions, research plans or how they present themselves (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

As mentioned earlier, I conducted two informal pilot “interviews” with colleagues and a formal pilot session with an internal OD consultant that met the criteria that I had identified. My goal in conducting the pilot sessions was to test the semi-structured interview schedule that I had designed and to focus on my own interviewing style to enable improvements in each area. As a result of the two informal pilot sessions, I was able to make several improvements (this is discussed in the section on the interview schedule). Another suggestion that I adopted from the informal pilot sessions was to send a general outline of the topic areas to be discussed to participants prior to the interview so that they could be mentally prepared for the discussion.

I conducted a formal pilot session with a participant who fulfilled the criteria that I had identified. This interview was treated as a full-dress rehearsal. I contacted the person by telephone, discussed my criteria, and asked the participant if she would be willing to
participate. When she agreed, she was sent a thank you letter along with an outline of the general topic areas to be discussed (Appendix C). I explained that this was a pilot and that I would be grateful for any feedback that could improve the quality of the interview. On the whole, the interview went quite smoothly and I believe that I obtained really useful and insightful information. The interviewee made some minor suggestions regarding how to improve the interview situation. She recommended that I not spend as much time on climate setting (e.g., making small talk) at the beginning of the interview. She also suggested that I re-word a specific question to make it clearer. She suggested that an additional question be added: “What do you find frustrating about being an OD consultant?” She indicated that she appreciated receiving a general outline of the topic areas prior to the interview. This enabled her to mentally prepare for some of the areas that we were going to cover. I incorporated her suggestions into future interviews.

After this pilot interview, I reflected on improvements that could be made in my own interview style. As suggested, I decided not to spend as much time on climate setting in future interviews. Upon listening to the tape, it became clear that at one point I indicated to the interviewee that I agreed wholeheartedly with a comment that she was making. While I do not believe that this influenced her unduly, I felt that in the future I might want to take an empathetic but neutral stance. As I received such high quality information from this participant, I decided to include her as a participant in my study.

The First Contact with Participants

I decided to make the initial contact with potential participants by telephone. My overall goal in this telephone discussion was to lay the groundwork for the “mutual respect necessary to the interview process” (Seidman, 1991, p.38). Seidman also
proposes that the first contact gives the researcher an opportunity to describe the nature of the interview study in greater detail, and it gives the participant an opportunity to state whether they would like to participate in the study.

I therefore began by introducing myself and stating the purpose of my research. I then clarified that I was looking for OD consultants who met certain criteria, and that I would like to explain the criteria as well as the time involved in the process before asking if potential participants would like be involved. When it became clear that candidates met my criteria, they were told that we would need to meet for a period of between one and a half to two hour for the actual interview. They were also informed that there might be the possibility of a short follow-up interview (by telephone or in person, according to their preference). Candidates were then asked if they would be willing to participate. While participants seemed happy to participate, they did want to keep the time involved to a minimum. I therefore asked them to tell me what would be the most appropriate time and place for our conversation. Some people chose to meet in their homes, some people chose a work location, and others decided to meet for lunch.

**The Interview Situation**

The format used to begin each interview remained consistent with each participant. After a brief period of small talk, I restated the purpose of the research and outlined the structure of the interview. I then briefly clarified the concept of informed consent. As discussed earlier, each participant was told that informed consent meant that their participation was voluntary, and that they could withdraw from the study at any point. Participants were apprised of the precautions that would be taken to ensure confidentiality. I asked if I could tape-record the interview as it would enable me to listen
more effectively to what the participant was saying. Finally participants were asked to sign the statement of informed consent. All participants agreed to be tape-recorded and to sign the letter of informed consent. Before moving into the interview, I asked participants if they would like to receive a summary of the results of the study.

Each interview has therefore been tape-recorded and a transcript made of each interview. As Merriam (1988) indicates, the practice of tape recording ensures that everything is preserved for analysis. The researcher can also listen to each interview and determine how to improve his/her interview techniques. Another advantage of tape recording is that the interviewer can truly listen to each participant rather than worrying about and being distracted by taking notes. The disadvantages of this approach are that there can be equipment problems and the participant can initially feel very uneasy about being audiotaped. I decided to offer to turn the tape off if the participants wanted to say anything “off the record”. However, Merriam expresses that after a little while most interviewees tend to forget that they are being audiotaped.

Although I taped the interviews, I also decided to take brief notes during the conversation. My rationale was that this would keep me focused and that it would be a useful back up if the tape recorder failed. I recorded my thoughts immediately after each interview. This gave me the opportunity to write down any insights that I had about the interview, record any data about the interviewee, and analyze the process of data collection. The interviews varied considerably in length. The shortest interview was one and a quarter hours due to the time constraints of the participant. Most interviews were approximately two hours and two interviews lasted for over three hours.
My Stance in the Interviews

I gave careful consideration as to how I wanted to present myself in the interviews. Certainly, it was essential to establish rapport with each interviewee, but at the same time I wanted to maintain a neutral stance regarding the information that they gave me. Seidman (1991) defines rapport as "getting along with each other, a harmony with, a conformity to, an affinity to one another" (p.73). However, he cautions against establishing too much rapport as the interviewer may become over involved and lose objectivity. I therefore tried to strike a balance between being friendly, courteous, and respectful and yet keeping enough distance to allow participants to create their own responses as independently as possible. "Neutrality" means that the interviewee can feel free to say anything he or she wants without worrying that the interviewer be judgmental. Patton (1990) believes that when the interviewer is neutral, "I cannot be shocked, I cannot be angered, I cannot be embarrassed, I cannot be saddened - indeed nothing the person tells me will make me think more or less of them" (p.317). Accordingly, in each interview I attempted to maintain a neutral and accepting stance.

Establishing Trustworthiness

All researchers need to be concerned with producing trustworthy findings. Sharan Merriam (1988, p.164) contends that with qualitative case studies, "To have any effect on either the theory or the practice of education, these studies must be believed and trusted, they need to present insights and conclusions that ring true to readers, educators and other researchers".

In the quantitative paradigm, the criteria that are used to determine the trustworthiness of the findings are internal validity, external validity, and reliability
Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba stress, however, that because qualitative research is based on different assumptions about reality, there should also be a different way of looking at validity and reliability. They propose that researchers use the words “truth-value” rather than internal validity, transferability rather than external validity, and consistency instead of reliability (Merriam, 1988).

Internal validity or “truth-value” addresses the question of whether one’s findings match reality (Merriam, 1988). Most researchers agree that this is a strength of qualitative research (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988) because:

In this type of research it is important to understand the perspectives of those involved in the phenomenon of interest, to uncover the complexity of human behavior in a contextual framework, and to present a holistic interpretation of what is happening. (Merriam, 1988, p.168)

In this research I used several techniques to ensure “truth-value” or credible findings. One technique was member checking (Le Compte & Goetz, 1982; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Patton (1990) asserts that researchers can learn a lot about the accuracy and fairness of their data analysis by having those who were studied review the findings. I therefore presented two of the participants in my study with my interpretation of parts of the data and asked for their comments on its plausibility. A further technique that I used throughout the research process was peer debriefing (Guba, 1981; Patton, 1990). Guba (1981, p.85) points out that peer debriefing provides researchers with the opportunity to “test their growing insights and to expose themselves to searching questions”. As part of the peer review and debriefing process, I became part of a three-person thesis support group in the Spring of 1996 which has met on a monthly basis for the last two years. The goal of this group was not only to support each other throughout the thesis process, but
also to act as “sounding boards” to each other. For example, we used the group to:

discuss our assumptions regarding qualitative research; ask for feedback on our emerging analysis; and obtain critiques of selected chapters as we wrote them. I also exposed my work to another colleague who was knowledgeable in the OD field and asked her to comment on my findings as they emerged (Merriam, 1988).

I used a number of other techniques to assist with the “truth value” of my findings. Establishing structural coherence is a technique that can be used to ensure credible findings (Guba, 1981). Guba defines this as “testing every datum and interpretation against all others to be certain that there are no internal conflicts or contradictions” (1981, p.85). As part of structural coherence, Patton (1990) emphasizes the need to test rival explanations. Throughout the analysis and writing of my thesis, I have endeavored to maintain structural coherence by consistently checking to ensure that there are no internal conflicts or contradictions and by looking for rival or competing themes or explanations.

Referential adequacy is another technique that can be used to improve the “truth-value” of findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990). This term refers to the tape-recording or videotaping of data which can provide “a kind of benchmarking against which later analyses and interpretations could be tested for adequacy” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 p.313). I tape-recorded all interviews that I conducted with participants. Patton (1990) mentioned the importance of intellectual rigor and professional integrity in ensuring the “truth-value” of findings. By that, he means that effective qualitative researchers return to the data again and again to see if the categories, explanations, and interpretations make sense and truly reflect the nature of what has been researched. In that vein, I tried to be
rigorous by returning to my data and analysis on numerous occasions to determine whether my interpretations truly made sense.

External validity is "the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations" (Merriam, 1988, p.173). The word that has traditionally been used in quantitative research is "generalization", yet Lincoln and Guba (1985) indicate that "transferability" is a more appropriate term when talking about qualitative research. Indeed they point out that qualitative researchers do not make generalizations on the grounds that all phenomena in the social sciences are context bound. At best the qualitative researcher can set out a working hypothesis along with a comprehensive description of the time and context in which the research occurred. It is then up to the reader to determine whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility. Guba (1981) suggests several techniques that can be used to assist the reader in determining whether the findings are transferable. One technique that he mentions is "purposive sampling". As discussed earlier, I used the concept of purposive sampling as I identified criteria to assist me in choosing appropriate candidates.

Another technique advocated by Guba is the collection of thick descriptive data so that this context can be compared with other contexts where transferability might be considered. He also recommends that after the study is completed, the researcher develops a thick description of the context so that readers can make an assessment about its transferability to other contexts. In writing a thick description, the researcher "must specify everything that a researcher may need to know in order to understand the findings" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.125). The study should therefore include such information as: a description of the people who provided the data; the researcher's role and status within
the group interviewed; the social settings where data was collected; assumptions and theoretical orientation towards the research; and methods of data collection and analysis. Thick descriptive data is also provided when the researcher gives detailed descriptions of findings and uses revealing quotes from participants. As can be seen from this thesis, I have attempted to provide a rich description of the context so that readers can make their own judgment regarding transferability.

Instead of the term "reliability", Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend that qualitative researchers should think in terms of "dependability" or "consistency". As Sharan Merriam maintains, (1988, p.172) "Rather than demanding that outsiders get the same results, one wishes outsiders to concur that, given the data collected, the results make sense - they are consistent and dependable". There are two techniques that I carry forward to ensure that my results are dependable. One technique is the development of an audit trail (Guba, 1981). That is, I describe in detail how information has been collected, how the data has been analyzed and how decisions have been made throughout the research. This approach would enable an external auditor to examine the processes used to collect, analyze, and interpret data. Another technique that I use to help make my findings dependable and consistent is the practice of "reflexivity". I have kept a journal in which I have recorded my thoughts, my assumptions, my biases, my ideas, and my concerns regarding my research on an ongoing basis.

Methods of Data Analysis

As Glesne and Peshkin expostulate, data analysis involves the following tasks:

Organizing what you have seen, heard, and read so that you can make sense of what you have learned. Working with the data, you create explanations, pose hypothesis, develop theories, and link your stories to other stories. To do so, you
must categorize, synthesize, search for patterns, and interpret the data you have collected". (1992, p.127)

They impart that data analysis is an ongoing process, that occurs both during the data collection period and more intensively once all the data has been collected.

Merriam emphasizes that if the researcher does not analyze data on an ongoing basis, then he or she runs the risk of ending up with unfocused, repetitious, or overwhelming amounts of data. There are several strategies that I employ in order to analyze data on an ongoing basis. One technique that I used was memo writing. I used these memos to record any analytical insights that I had during the data collection period. Merriam (1988) believes that it is important to continue to explore the literature during the data gathering period. I especially did this as new areas of focus emerged through the interviews. Another technique that Bogdan and Bicklen commend is the use of metaphors and analogies, and so I frequently asked myself, "What does this remind me of?" (1982, p.153).

Once the decision has been made to stop the simultaneous period of data collection and analysis, the next step is to organize the information so that the period of intensive analysis can begin (Merriam, 1988). Merriam suggests that the first step in intensive analysis is to bring all the information together that you have about the case - interview transcripts, field notes, records, and reflective memos. Before examining the material in detail, it is important to review the research proposal to remind yourself of the focus of the inquiry and the audience for whom the research is intended. I found this step invaluable as it enabled me to keep focused and not to get lost in the myriad of information that I had collected. Merriam also advises that the researcher should read through all the information
several times and jot down notes, comments, and observations in the margins. I read through all of the transcripts as well as my field notes and wrote comments on yellow “stickies” which I attached to the relevant page.

I then started the formal process of data analysis. As an overall guideline, I used the constant comparative method developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). They outlined four steps in this approach: “(1) comparing incidents applicable to each category, (2) integrating categories and their properties, (3) delimiting the theory, and (4) writing the theory” (p. 105). I started this process by reading through each interview and identifying units of information. I then took the first unit of information, and using the cut and paste capability on the computer, created a specific file for it. I took the second unit of information, and decided whether it was similar to or different from the first unit. Based on my analysis, I either placed it in the first file or created a new file for it. I continued this process until I had categorized and refined all of the units of information. Throughout the process, I wrote memos as insights and ideas emerged about the data.

Wolcott (1994) suggests that three levels of analysis are possible in qualitative research: description, analysis, and interpretation. After the coding and memo writing process, I felt ready to write the first of these levels, a description of my findings. Patton contends that “sufficient description and direct quotations should be included to allow the reader to enter into the situation and thoughts of the people represented in the study” (1990, p.430). I therefore decided to describe my findings in detail, using meaningful quotes where applicable to illustrate what I had found. I made a decision to describe the data relating to the internal and external consultants separately, so that I could make comparisons in the analysis stage where appropriate.
Before writing the second (analysis) section, I returned to the literature as a way of re-familiarizing myself with what others had found regarding similar research and to achieve some objective distance from my findings. I then revisited the analysis of the material with fresh insights and ideas. At the analysis stage, the researcher “proceeds in some careful, systematic way to identify key factors and relationships among them” (Wolcott, 1994, p.10). My goal at this stage was to identify key patterns and relationships and to relate them to the current literature on the topic.

In the final level of analysis, interpretation, we “make inferences and develop theory” (Merriam, 1988, p.140). Merriam defines theorizing as “a step toward developing a theory that explains some aspect of (educational) practice and allows one to draw inferences about future activity” (p.140). The words that Wolcott (1994) uses to define interpretation are “subjective, holistic, generative”. However he argues that it is also important to be cautious at this stage because of the “temptation to reach too far beyond the case itself in speculating about its meanings or implications” (p.37). He asserts that if we make the claim that our interpretation is derived from our research data, then the link should be relevant and clear. My goals, therefore, as I wrote the interpretation sections, have been to think holistically and yet to ensure that my conclusions are derived from the data.

**Conclusion**

To summarize, this chapter has presented the methodology that I used to conduct my research. As outlined earlier, the overall purpose of this research is to examine the evolving practice of the internal and external OD consultant. The qualitative paradigm seemed best suited to this thesis because my goal was to understand and
discover rather than to test a pre-existing hypothesis. I have decided to use in-depth interviews as the primary method of data collection because I regard this as the most appropriate method to get people to reflect on their past experiences as an OD consultant as well as to analyze their current realities. As can be seen from this chapter, I did my utmost to act in an ethical manner at all times. I have also outlined the techniques that I used in order to produce trustworthy findings. My final goal in writing this chapter has been to describe in detail how the information has been collected, analyzed, and interpreted so that it would be possible for an auditor to examine the decisions that I made throughout this research.
CHAPTER FOUR:

THE CHANGES THAT HAVE OCCURRED IN THE OD FIELD OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and analyses regarding the principal changes that have occurred in the role of the OD consultant over the last ten years and the main factors that have influenced these changes. First, the findings concerning the internal consultants are presented followed by the findings regarding the external consultants. The findings about the internal and external consultants are presented separately so that, where appropriate, comparisons can be made between the two sets of data. In the analysis section, four key changes are discussed: a shift away from focusing solely on people concerns; a shift towards organizational effectiveness; a shift towards systems awareness; and the growth of “structuralism”. Then, the factors influencing OD over this period are advanced. The discussion section takes a higher level perspective, and relates the data to the broader societal context.

Findings

Internal Consultants

Their Views on Changes in the Field Over the Last Ten Years

All four of the internal consultants indicate that OD has changed considerably over the past ten years. They agree that the most significant change is a move away from some of the more relationship-oriented approaches of the past towards organizational effectiveness. A number of other changes are mentioned. Janice indicates that OD consultants are thinking more systematically today than they were ten years ago. Simon,
whose experience is with federal and municipal governments, explains that because of
decentralization, OD consultants are conducting fewer top-down interventions and more
often use smaller interventions at practically every level within the organization.

**A Shift in Emphasis from People Concerns to Organizational Concerns**

All of the internal consultants indicate that ten years ago the emphasis in OD was
more on people concerns and less on organizational effectiveness. For example, Janice
explains that OD was focused on relationships within teams and she believes that it was
heavily influenced by the T-group (T for training) movement. She comments that:

> One of the difficulties that OD has had, particularly coming out of some of its
> history, is that it has focused exclusively on relationships for relationship’s sake.
> And it is not relationships for relationship’s sake. It’s understanding relationships
> and making relationships work so that you can make the business work because
> that’s what the purpose is - it’s to make the business function.

Gordon on the other hand characterizes OD a decade ago as “training and development”.
He believes that ten years ago training departments would buy programs “off the shelf”
and implement them within organizations just because they were the fad of the day. As
he describes it:

> What the outcomes are, how it impacted the business was irrelevant. It was kind
> of like this is what we had to do. It was the right thing to do. Whether or not it
> was of any value, we didn’t care. It was more a perk, rather than a business
> strategy.

Both Gordon and Margaret are critical of OD as they perceive that it was
practiced ten years ago because it did not focus sufficiently on organizational
effectiveness, and consequently was seen as superfluous during hard economic times.
Margaret explains that organizations such as large oil companies were able to build up
extensive OD departments without proving their usefulness to the organization on an
ongoing basis. Consequently, when this kind of organization conducted an activity value
analysis, the OD department was the first to be eliminated. Likewise, Gordon indicates that because training and development was seen as more of a perk than an organizational strategy, it was the first to go when it came to cost-cutting measures.

There is overall agreement that today OD consultants need to focus on organizational effectiveness. Janice explains that as an OD consultant you need to:

Pay attention to the strategic plan, you need to understand what the business is all about, you need to be able to understand something about processes and systems, you need to be able to situate the work that you are doing within the environment and you need to understand the volatility of the environment, because change is so rapid.

Gordon is adamant that OD consultants must understand how organizations function in general, as well as the specific industry that they work in. He believes that this is important because internal consultants can undoubtedly build credibility if they talk the same language as their executives. He explains:

So the key intervention that you need is to understand business. So you’ve got to talk in their terms in respect to finances and to know what are your day-to-day sales outstanding - how they impact the bottom line. And if you can get down to these terms, then they start talking to you as an equal and you have more influence.

He further asserts that it is only in understanding the organization that the consultant can use the most appropriate intervention. He states, “What you have got to be able to do is be able to understand the business so that you can bring in things that are applicable”.

Margaret is critical of those OD consultants today who do not focus on organizational effectiveness. These consultants place their own values above the needs and values of the client and this presumably can be dangerous. She points out that:

It would be understanding what a client sees as valuable rather than what I as an OD consultant sees as valuable. Like I find that a lot of the stuff that I read is that OD consultants tend to be a lot “holier than thou” and they don’t have a hope of surviving in this kind of environment, because business is business.
As far as she is concerned, if consultants actually focused on the organizational needs of the client (as well as took into consideration that they were dealing with human beings), they would not be so inclined to take a morally superior stance; they would understand that their job was to make the organization more effective.

**Other Shifts in OD**

Janice comments on another shift that she believes has occurred in the field of OD. She explains that ten years ago, “OD in my opinion isolated aspects of the organization and thought that it could work on the discrete separate pieces”. She maintains that even though people were talking about a systems approach then, they were not putting it into practice. Now she believes that organizations and OD Consultants are looking at change from a systemic viewpoint. For example, some organizations have re-designed their processes in order to become more competitive and this has resulted in the elimination of part of the workforce.

Simon also mentions another shift that has occurred within his municipal government. His summary analysis of OD ten years ago is that it was based on “a work from the top and trickle down assumption”. At that point organizations were more centralized and senior management was the client. When asked to describe OD as it exists today, he explains that “there is less of the big centralized organizational transformation and more working on small select interventions”. He believes that this is because organizations are more decentralized and less centrally controlled. He explains that now “you have a whole bunch of clients. You have got the individual manager struggling with his problem and his problem may be his boss”.

Reasons for the Change in the Role of the OD Consultant

Just as there is substantial agreement regarding the major shift that has occurred in OD, there is also considerable agreement regarding why change has occurred. Participants identify three key influencing factors: modifications in the employee/employer relationship, global competition, and technological change.

Each participant mentions the shift that has occurred in the employee/employer relationship over the last ten years. Both Janice and Margaret deliberate that the practice of the OD consultant had changed because the terms of the employment contract had also changed. Janice mentions that people “are dealing with different relationships in the workplace and I think that people’s expectations have changed too”. From her perspective, the whole nature of the workforce has changed. She explains that people don’t have the kind of opportunities that they used to have since there are fewer jobs and more demands on the individual worker. Mentioning that people aren’t as compliant anymore, Margaret points out that we are in a transition period regarding the concept of “loyalty” because the traditional concept isn’t appropriate anymore. Simon allows that because employees have witnessed such significant changes as reorganization and downsizing over the past few years, they have become increasingly aware of their organizational environment. He says, “You’ve got people thinking more strategically, I think. People’s horizons are a little broader. They are looking at what might be happening to their employer, their profession, and their careers”. Gordon also mentions the rapid changes in society and people’s expectations. He specifically talks about the baby boomers who have realized that their upward mobility is limited due to the bottleneck at the top. His belief is that since people want something more meaningful
than just a day-to-day job, they are "kind of forcing the organization to change as well" in the hope that they can get more involved in contributing to the organization in a meaningful way.

Each consultant mentions global competition as another influencing factor.

Janice describes how global competition had affected public sector organizations. She explains that:

What was previously seen as services exclusive to the public sector are now seen as a target for outsourcing and privatization. There is not one place in this organization that has not been or will not be looked at for outsourcing or privatization. So whereas people thought 'well my job is pretty secure because we will always have garbage collection', it is not the case, and your competition can come from any place. Laidlaws is now in the ambulance business.

Margaret describes how global competition has affected the banking industry. She contends that in the past banks had a virtual monopoly and no matter what they did they kept on making money. She explains that recently, "That's radically shifted so the whole of the competitive environment, everything externally, has demanded that the organization really get serious about strategy and that's been a large focus of the work that I have done". Gordon also describes how globalization affects the organizations that he has worked with. Because of globalization these organizations have experienced increasing competition from markets as diverse as the United States, Japan, and Hong Kong. Simon describes how international competition has effected public service. He believes that they have become more "mean spirited" because they have used tactics such as downsizing to remain competitive. He elaborates that:

...the downsizing and privatization within the public service has led to an 'eat or be eaten attitude' which is not comfortable to those who joined the public service to serve rather than compete. It is an OD challenge to deal with the morale issues that arise from this change and to help employees at all levels to adapt to the new
organizations that are being created. This same shift is affecting the not for profit sector.

Technological change as a major factor influencing changes in the OD field is mentioned as a third factor by all of the consultants. From Gordon comes the opinion that rapid technological change was responsible for many of the changes that have occurred in organizations over the last few years. As one example of rapid technological change, Janice explains how computerization has had an impact on organizations. She says:

What the computer has done has changed business processes, changed people’s jobs, changed people’s skills, and changed the way people think too. And I think also changed our sense of time so that our expectations and our perceived need are for a much more rapid response.

Simon also believes that technological change is having a huge impact on organizations. He explains that “a lot of what I do in organizations is dealing with the introduction of technology”. His focus has been to help people within organizations accept and use technology effectively. Talking in a broader sense about how technology has had an effect upon society, Simon goes on to use the example of how people today can buy such diverse objects as cars and coffins on the Internet. As another example of technological change, Margaret discusses the impact of media on organizations. She mentions that, whereas in the past, organizations could remain relatively isolated and continue to do business in the traditional way, now they are bombarded with information from the media about what is going on in the environment. This has led executives to become more concerned for their organization’s survival and in reaffirming this point Margaret says, “The whole notion of survival has actually shifted OD”.

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Janice mentions one other aspect that she believes has influenced OD: the political climate. She suggests that:

I think it's a field that's heavily influenced by the political climate of the time and I think that's why the seventies and eighties were more focused on inter-relationships, participative management and employee involvement and now that we are in very mean, lean times the focus has shifted.

She further asserts that the political climate has an enormous impact on OD and yet an OD consultant is "like a fish in water" and is not always able to see how the political situation influences the field.

**External Consultants**

**Their Views on Changes in the Field Over the Last Ten Years**

The external consultants have mixed opinions regarding whether the field had changed over the last ten years. Two who have discerned a pronounced difference are Sara and Joan. For example, they indicate that organizations and OD consultants are increasingly focused on the environment external to the organization and on organizational effectiveness. With a different perspective, Paul's response to this question is that for a variety of reasons the OD field diverged in the eighties, and it is now made up of both "dynamists" and "structuralists". Fred's opinion is that the majority of OD consultants have not changed in any substantial way.

**OD has Changed Over the Last Ten Years**

Sara and Joan indicate that the field has shifted, although Joan points out that she is not trying to "paint a drastic change picture" because many of the OD activities that were relevant ten years ago are still relevant today. In Sara's opinion, business people did not connect OD with organizational success a decade ago. The prevailing thinking was, "Well, let's go and do a teambuilding session, or let's do this or let's do that. But
when the rubber hits the road – let’s get down to the real work”. OD was seen as an extra bonus, but it was not perceived as helping the organization move ahead. Joan’s perception was that a decade ago, organizations had started to understand the relationship between learning and performance, “so the notion of bringing people together to learn was common currency then”. However, the focus was mostly on training the individual within the organization.

For Sara, the most significant shift is that business people are now beginning to associate OD with business success. She explains that OD is “not just an add-on to these people and the way that they do business...it is an integral part of their being successful – success being defined not just in terms of monetary values but also sustaining the business”. She still believes that there is a long way to go before OD and organizational success are seen as closely linked, but she indicates that more and more business executives are realizing that OD can add value and help the organization be successful.

Joan identifies three major changes that have occurred over the last ten years. The first is a shift in focus from teaching individuals to intact teams. Now she believes that there is a greater focus on working with and teaching intact groups. She explains that “the intact group can be a whole department, a whole division or just a team...there’s much more system awareness today”.

The second shift that she mentions is that organizations tended to “look inward ten years ago, they didn’t look out”. OD consultants typically helped organizations with activities such as priority and goal setting. Because of this internal focus, she explains that “it was harder to drive organization change. It was easier to drive a team change, but very hard to drive an organization-wide change because there was no notion of alliances”.

Now in her opinion, organizations are constantly looking at the environment around them, and at times are even obsessed by their environment. A typical project that she might get involved in now is helping two or three companies form an alliance to achieve a unified goal.

The third shift that she mentions is that ten years ago, "lots of rivalry, silos and smoke stacks" occurred because process re-engineering and downsizing had not yet begun. She explains that Total Quality Improvement was common within organizations then, and in many ways it set the groundwork for those projects where process reengineering has been successful over the last few years. Now she believes that "everybody is reengineering themselves into I don't know where". She says that OD consultants have a responsibility to learn some new methodologies that did not exist ten years ago such as process re-engineering, statistical process control, and the design of organizational structures. Today she believes that it is no longer enough to "teach team building" and "to be nice" as it was ten years ago.

**A Divergence in the Field**

Paul contends that a divergence began to occur in the OD field in the eighties. He claims that in order to understand how this happened it is important to review what happened in the sixties and seventies. When he went into the field in the sixties, he noticed that:

There wasn't anybody in it that had started in it. They all came from somewhere else. And the sort of things they had in common were they all had some study of human beings — psychology, sociology, anthropology — some variation thereof. They had all discovered organizations as a phenomenon.

He found it a very exciting time because there was "a lot of sharing of everything. People couldn't wait to give away their latest discovery". The field tended to function at
more senior levels within the organization and senior managers were seen as accountable for the development of the organization.

By the seventies some changes began to occur. For one thing, organizations like University Associates began to package and sell training designs. In Paul's opinion, some people became "very proprietar with their material, hid it from each other and charged money for it". By this time, most OD consultants were focusing on activities like group dynamics, T-group training, and inter-personal training. He explains that somewhere in the seventies, the OD people "on the training side of the house had lost their roots which had come out of the human relations movement, and had grown out of the work of Kurt Lewin and his colleagues". He contends that the American OD movement " took a turn towards pop psychology, and 'faddisms' and 'isms' of various kinds which led to a lot of splintering of the movement".

Paul states that in the eighties, a divergence began to occur in the OD field. On the one hand some OD consultants were still focusing on the individual within the organization. Paul explains that some OD consultants " were seeing themselves as directing individual enhancement and enlightenment... but not focusing on the organization". He believed that in part OD became associated with efforts that did not enhance productivity. Because these people couldn't prove what they believed, they attacked the scientific method. OD became known as a fad-oriented field that began to focus its efforts further and further down the organization. At the same time, a new direction was coming out of the work of the Tavistock Institute in the United Kingdom. People like Wilfred Bion and Elliot Jacques all had a psychoanalytic background but had become convinced that this was an insufficient lens through which to view organizations.
So they went in search of other methods that could explain group and organizational development. Their views became known as the "structuralist" school of thought which, given the prevailing intellectual climate of the sixties, was similar to the thinking of Gordon Lippitt (1969) and Ron Lippitt (Lippitt, Watson, & Wesley, 1958) and their colleagues.

As we move into the nineties, Paul explains that there has been a definite divergence in the field of OD. He says "broadly speaking, there are folks who have focused on dynamics and there are folks who have focused on structure... some move back and forth between the two fields". The "dynamists" focus on dynamics, getting rid of hierarchy and encouraging participation. They believe that individual performance and human dynamics will produce organizational effectiveness. According to Paul, the "structuralists" on the other hand focus on:

...the structure of the work, structural components, roles, decisions, authority distribution, planning systems, things of that nature. And they are basically taking the position that human beings, generally speaking, are OK and if you get the structure right and offer the support of the structure, they'll do OK. And the two schools have a real hard time talking to each other.

Paul points out that the "structuralist" movement does not have a big following as yet. It is probably stronger in southern Ontario than in the U.S. or elsewhere. However, he holds that it "has produced incredibly significant measurable productivity increases in a few companies where we were allowed to do research".

Although Paul views himself as a "structuralist", he maintains that the "dynamists" are "good folks" and that the skill sets of both orientations are necessary within organizations. He says:

I think that since organizations are structures, and they are all inhabited by people, you have to have both or you are going to miss it. Organizations have structures
because these structures perform a necessary purpose... By the same token every one of those organizations is staffed by human beings. And there is no other way of staffing to the best of my knowledge. And so you have got to take seriously that human beings are relational in nature and you have to deal with these relationships.

**One Person's Perspective: the OD Field Has Not Changed in Any Substantial Way**

Fred talks about OD both now and ten years ago, first, in terms of the changes that have occurred within himself, and secondly, regarding the changes that have occurred in the field of OD. He explains that ten years ago, when he entered the field, he conducted activities like teambuilding, empowerment, and customer service. However, he felt insecure because he didn’t have “a grounding” in theory. What has changed primarily for him over the last ten years is “having a grounding finally in a science that underlies my work...and understanding Demming’s [F.E., 1982] point that overwhelmingly the problem is with the system”. He began to search for a new theory when he realized that with activities like teambuilding, “We were very successful in breaking people out of their old mindsets, very successful at having them come up with a creative new way, and utter failures at having it stick”. When he was exposed to the work of Elliott Jaques (1989), Fred initially believed that it was the answer to making change “stick”. He then realized that it was the answer to many organizational development problems. What he likes about Jaques’ work is the acknowledgment that “for 3000 years we’ve had hierarchy because that’s the way of human nature”. The goal of Jaques’ work is to help an organization function effectively by focusing on and improving its structure. Fred primarily assists organizations now by helping them improve the structural component of their organization. He has decided that he prefers to call himself an “applied organization scientist”.
When asked to comment on the field of organizational development in an overall sense, Fred does not believe that it has changed in any significant way over the last ten years. In his opinion, nothing has really changed because the predominant value is still that of “inclusion” and OD consultants focus on issues like democracy in the workplace. As far as he is concerned, “We still blame the victim, we still ignore the shareholder, and maybe even more intensely we have an abhorrence of science because science is about truth and falseness. And the word false is politically incorrect”.

However, while he does not believe that the fundamental values of OD have changed, he does believe that the kinds of activities that OD consultants are involved in have changed. So whereas ten years ago they may have been performing activities like teambuilding, Fred now believes that they are engaged in activities like competency analysis (according to Spencer & Spencer, 1993, competency analysis is a methodology designed to identify the skills, knowledge, and traits required to perform a specific job), or consultants are conducting appreciative inquiry (French & Bell, 1995, define appreciative inquiry as a form of action research which focuses on discovering, understanding, and fostering innovations in organizations). Fred explains that OD operates very much like buying a toaster at a yard sale:

I buy a toaster, and this feature that I bought it for, it takes me six months to actually use it and realize it doesn’t work, so the warranty is no longer valid. I put it in my yard sale, you buy it and then six months later you use it, you realize that it doesn’t work and you put it in your yard sale. Our interventions are not of the sort that it’s very clear whether they worked or not.

**Reasons for the Change in the Role of the OD Consultant**

Just as there are differences of opinion regarding how the field of OD has changed, there are also differences of opinion regarding the reasons for the change. The
two participants, Sara and Joan, who indicate that the field has changed over the last ten years identify several influencing factors: social change, technological change, organizational change, and the growth of disillusionment on the part of the OD consultant. Paul, on the other hand, explains that there has been the growth of a new movement, "the structuralists" because these practitioners were disillusioned with certain OD practices in the eighties.

Regarding social change, Sara mentions demographic shifts. She views that as key customers now, "babyboomers" are more educated and more demanding, a situation this has led to different customer service needs. Sara also believes that technological change has had a significant impact. She contends that the information and knowledge age is having a huge impact on the bottom line of organizations. Rapid technological change is having repercussions on how quickly people can access information and this is "creating new pictures in our minds and new ways of doing things".

Joan asserts that there has been "an earthquake in the cosmic order of things in terms of stability of employment and career". This shift has come about because many large companies that were thought to be secure employers have downsized. She believes that this has "shaken a core sense of trust" and left employees and organizational development consultants feeling uneasy. She also mentions that OD consultants have experienced a certain sense of disillusionment with how they have operated in the past and with some of the recent decisions that organizations have made. She indicates that consultants may also feel a certain level of frustration with their own role because some of the goals that they were working towards such as openness, the sharing of information, and better problem solving did not bring positive results within organizations. OD
consultants may also have become cynical about certain organizational actions such as downsizing, especially when they have often been the ones that "have to come in after and clean up the mess".

Paul comments on why there has been a divergence in the OD field, and the growth of the group that he called "structuralists". He believes that the growth of this group had more to do with how these practitioners viewed the field in the eighties and nineties than with external events. The growth of this new movement came about because certain practitioners and theorists within the field were disillusioned with the way that OD was being practiced. For example, in the eighties some practitioners lost sight of the original intent of organizational development, which was to focus on the organization as a whole, and started to focus on individual enhancement and enlightenment. Certain practitioners "took a turn towards pop psychology" and OD became associated with efforts that did not enhance productivity. Because these practitioners could not prove what they believed using scientific methods they attacked scientific methodology. At the same time, based in the Tavistock Institute in England, certain theorists such as Bion (1961) had come to the conclusion that psychoanalysis was an insufficient lens through which to view organizations, and so they went in search of other methods that would explain group and organizational development.

Analysis

**Changes that have Occurred in OD over the Last Ten Years**

This section presents an analysis of the findings regarding the felt changes that have occurred in the OD field over the last ten years. Participants are in agreement that ten years ago OD consultants focused more on people concerns than organizational
effectiveness. The majority of the participants believe that over the last ten years there has been a shift, and today OD consultants focus on organizational effectiveness.

Interestingly, the internal consultants seem more committed to this shift than do the external consultants. A significant number of participants also indicate that the field has greater systems awareness today. Two of the external consultants do not believe that the field had changed in any overall sense. Because of their disappointment with certain OD practices in the eighties, they have decided to focus primarily on structural interventions because they believe that this is the best way to improve organizational effectiveness.

A Shift from Focusing Solely on People Concerns

The prevailing opinion of participants is that ten years ago OD focused more exclusively on people concerns. For example, three consultants indicate that teams and teambuilding were a key area of focus then. Indeed, Janice criticizes the state of OD as it was then practiced because it “focuses exclusively on relationships for relationships sake”. Gordon and Joan associate OD with training and education a decade ago and, as Joan says, “the notion of bringing people together to learn was common currency then”. Paul summarizes OD ten years ago as focusing exclusively on “individual enhancement and enlightenment” while Fred identifies “inclusion” as being the predominant value.

What is intriguing is that while it is true that OD consultants were indeed focused on the social system a decade ago, there is ample evidence that some OD consultants had a broader focus than that. For example, Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992) point out that in the eighties, “Insights from systems theory, socio-technical design, and anthropology...entered the field” (p. 63). Socio-technical systems design is an organizational model that emphasizes not only the importance of the social system but
also the importance of the technical system in organizational functioning (Smither, Houston, & McIntire, 1996). Sashkin and Burke (1987), when reviewing OD in the eighties, indicate that they “have observed increasing evidence of a marriage between task focus and process skills” and that now “OD practitioners take a larger, more systemic perspective, focusing on organizational issues, such as strategic planning... no longer is the OD focus solely on teams, interpersonal issues, and training” (1987, p.104).

It is left for me to ponder, therefore, why the participants that I interviewed did not describe the complexity that existed in OD a decade ago. One potential explanation is that five of the participants would have only just started in the OD field or have been relatively junior ten years ago. For example, Gordon and Sara have been in the field for 13 and 14 years respectively, Margaret and Janice for just over ten years, and Simon for only nine years. Their routes into OD were via training and development, the human resource function, and career counseling. It is not surprising, therefore, that from their perspective OD focused primarily on teams and training and development. Indeed, when Simon was asked to describe the practice of OD ten years ago, he initially said, “I don’t know. That assumes a broader knowledge than I had at that particular time”. Three of the participants have been in the OD field for a much longer period of time, Paul and Joan for approximately 30 years and Fred for 20. Because of her duration in the field, Joan had difficulty pinpointing precisely what was happening ten years ago, and this may explain why she focused on training. I believe that Paul and Fred described OD as focusing on individuals and teams because they were trying to explain and justify why they had embraced the work of Elliott Jaques (1989) over the last decade.
Indeed, it seems that several of those whom I interviewed want to convey the message that OD has progressed since the eighties, and certainly has a more comprehensive focus than it had then. Some are critical of OD as it operated ten years ago because, due to its focus on relationship issues, some organizations perceived it to be superfluous during economic hard times, and it was seen as “more of a perk than a business strategy”. From their view, OD consultants now focus both on people concerns and organizational effectiveness and it is perceived as more relevant to organizations. OD also has a broader scope in that several in the field are looking at organizational issues from more of a systems perspective.

A Shift Towards Organizational Effectiveness

According to three quarters of the participants interviewed in this study, one of the biggest changes that has occurred over the last ten years is a shift in emphasis from people concerns towards organizational effectiveness. Janice explains that the goal of OD consultants should be to help “make the business function”. Margaret suggests that the only way that OD consultants can survive is by understanding the organizational needs of the client and by helping to meet those needs. Sara indicates that there has also been a shift in how organizations view OD consultants. She believes that increasingly, organizations are beginning to see that OD can assist them in being successful. However, she believes that there is a long way to go before OD and organizational success are seen to be closely linked.

Researchers and theorists in the field have called for a shift towards organizational effectiveness since the eighties. One of the predictions made by participants in a Delphi study in 1980 was that in the future there would be a greater
usage of OD to increase profitability and productivity (Jones et al., 1980). Stanley Herman, writing in 1989, says that “it seems increasingly clear that an effective OD specialist needs to understand the business context and economic performance indicators of the client’s organization” (1989, pp. 18-19). A study conducted in 1993 with 18 experienced practitioners echoed this belief (Van Eynde & Coruzzi, 1993). Practitioners indicated that the biggest challenge facing OD in the next decade would be their ability to demonstrate their contribution to organizational effectiveness. They also warned that OD practitioners must learn to describe themselves in terms of client requirements and organizational challenges rather than just techniques and relationships.

The findings of this study support earlier research findings of this decade that suggest that there has indeed been a move towards attention to organizational effectiveness. One of the major findings of a 1990 study conducted on senior OD consultants found that this adjustment was occurring (Van Eynde & Bledsoe, 1990). Practitioners indicated that “the focus on their work with a client is now much more oriented towards task issues related directly to organizational effectiveness and less towards the improvement of interpersonal relationships” (p. 26). More recent research on the values of OD consultants reveals a similar shift in priorities towards organizational effectiveness (Church & Burke, 1995; Church et al., 1994). Church, et al. (1994) conclude that “OD consultants have become more focused on emphasizing business outcomes and concerns as they struggle for viability and acceptance by their clients” (p.45).

Participants in this study are clear in their understanding of what OD consultants need to do in order to facilitate organizational effectiveness. Gordon and Janice mention
that it is crucial for OD consultants to understand the particular organization that they are working with. Gordon also believes that it is important for OD consultants to understand how business works in general so that they can talk the same language as the executives and thereby enhance their credibility. Janice stresses that OD consultants need to understand something about systems and processes within organizations. Both Janice and Joan mention the importance of understanding the environment in which the business operates. As Janice says, “You need to understand the volatility of the environment…because change is so rapid”. Jane Esper (1990) has presented very similar findings from her competency analysis on thirty-one knowledgeable people in the OD field. One of the key competencies that she identified was “a need to know what is happening in the environment of the organization, what’s pushing on the organization” (p.91). This encompassed such factors as: understanding the environment surrounding the organization, knowing the organizational issues, understanding the market place, talking in the client’s language, and understanding the source of the client’s pain.

In comparing the internal and external consultants' perspectives on organizational effectiveness, one aspect that stands out is that all four internal OD consultants are adamant that OD consultants must now focus on organizational effectiveness, and yet only two of the external consultants mention this different direction. What is even more intriguing is the amount of commitment or conviction expressed by the internal consultants when mentioning this shift, and this did not seem to be as evident in the two external consultants who mentioned it. For example, Janice points out that the reason to focus on relationships in today’s environment is to make them work so that “you can make the business work because that’s what the purpose is - to make the business
function”. Gordon is adamant that as an OD consultant, it is only in understanding the business that “you can bring in things that are applicable”. Indeed, Margaret is critical of those OD consultants who don’t put organizational effectiveness first. She believes that these consultants “tend to be a lot holier-than-thou and don’t have a hope of surviving this kind of environment because business is business”.

One may speculate about why internal OD consultants seem so committed to organizational effectiveness. My supposition is that as internal consultants, they have experienced first-hand certain of the traumas that organizations have experienced recently. Some have observed organizations fail for a variety of business reasons. All have worked in organizations that have experienced reorganizations and downsizing. Consultants like Margaret and Gordon have even seen OD and training departments decimated because they could not prove their usefulness to the organization in terms of bottom-line results. As members of an organization, they have also been exposed to the current thinking of the executives regarding what their organization needs to do in order to stay in business and make a profit. Indeed, as Case et al. (1990) point out, through their orientation, training, and socialization experiences, internal OD consultants are more likely to be influenced by organizational factors than external consultants. In summary, I believe that internal OD consultants have become committed to focusing on bottom-line results for two reasons. First, because they care about the people within the organization, they realize that if the organization is healthy, then people will be able to maintain their jobs. Secondly, due to recent socialization experiences, OD consultants recognize that unless they as OD consultants can demonstrate their contribution to organizational effectiveness, they in turn become vulnerable.
A Move Towards Systems Awareness

A significant number of participants mention that as compared to ten years ago, there is much more systems awareness today. For example, Janice explains that ten years ago OD "isolated aspects of the organization and thought that it could work on the discrete separate pieces". She believes that today OD consultants are looking at change from more of a systemic viewpoint. Joan echoes this viewpoint. She states that ten years ago, the focus was on training individuals within organizations. Now, however there has been an orientation to working with intact groups and that could be a division, a department, or a team. She concludes by saying, "There's much more systems awareness today". Fred, talking about his own personal development over the last ten years offers that what has changed for him over the last ten years is the realization that "the problem is with the system" when dealing with organizational problems.

A shift towards a systems orientation has been called for since the early eighties by practitioners and theorists in the field. For instance, participants in a Delphi study in 1980 predicted that there would be an increased emphasis on a systems approach to OD in the future (Jones et al., 1980). As well, Sashkin and Burke (1987), when discussing the trends and prospects of OD at the end of the eighties, state their belief that OD was taking a larger and more systemic perspective. Other theorists in the late eighties and early nineties concur that they have observed a similar trend towards a more systemic orientation on the part of OD consultants (Porras & Robertson, 1992; Van Eynde & Bledsoe, 1990; Van Eynde & Coruzzi, 1993; Woodman, 1989).

Jane Esper (1990), in researching core competencies of OD consultants, identified systems awareness as a key competency. She defines this competency as "the need to
have a deep understanding of the client organization as a system” (p. 92). She further indicates that “It’s the ability to see the interconnectedness of all parts of the client system and not becoming immersed in one part without seeing the impact on the whole” (p.92). Esper also mentions that part of understanding the client organization as a system includes developing a preferred vision of the organization’s future. These points are also made by Peter Senge (1990) in his book *The Fifth Discipline: systems thinking*, he argues, is a crucial skill for those working in and with organizations today because we are becoming overwhelmed by complexity. He defines systems thinking as “a discipline for seeing wholes. It is a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things, for seeing patterns of change rather than static ‘snapshots’ ” (p.69). Senge also stresses the importance of developing a shared vision that will “foster genuine commitment and enrollment rather than compliance” (p.9).

Given that so much has been written and predicted regarding a move towards a systems approach I was initially surprised, because less than a half of the participants in my study indicate that there actually had been a shift in this area. I would have expected a higher percentage to indicate a redirection. Upon reflection, however, I realize by responses to other questions that a systems orientation is becoming increasingly important to most participants. For example, when participants were asked to describe the kinds of training that new entrants to the field should receive, systems theory and systems thinking was identified as a key part of the curriculum. Also, when I gave the first draft of this chapter to one of the external consultants (who had not indicated a shift in this area) to read and critique, he gave some compelling feedback. He indicated that he had not suggested that there had been a key change in systems thinking over the last ten
years because he has always viewed organizations as systems, and consequently practiced in that manner.

**The Growth of “Structuralism”**

Two of the participants, Paul and Fred, reacted differently from others when asked how the OD field had changed over the last ten years. Paul explains that there had been a division in the field in the eighties and nineties, which had resulted in the evolution of two different types of OD practitioners: the “dynamists” and the “structuralists”. According to Paul’s definition, the “structuralists” attempt to improve the organization by focusing on the structural components of work such as roles, decisions, authority distribution, and planning systems. Fred’s response to that question was to suggest that he does not believe that the majority of OD consultants have changed in any significant way over the last ten years and that is why he had taken a different approach to his work, as compared to other respondents. Both Paul and Fred, followers of the work of Elliott Jaques (1989), focus on improving the structure within organizations.

Elliott Jaques lays out his principles for organizational structure, managerial accountability, and effective leadership in his book the *Requisite Organization* (1989). He believes that it is bad structure that creates problems for organizations and that what needs to happen is “the development of institutions with the kind of constraints and opportunities that can enable us to live and to work together harmoniously, effectively and creatively” (Jaques, 1989, p.1). He argues that we don’t need to find a system to replace hierarchy (such as matrix management or teams) but rather we need to fully understand hierarchies and use them more effectively.
Jaques attempts to provide his followers with a comprehensive theory “based upon scientifically validated findings” (Cason, 1997, p.25). He also provides a precise definition of terms which he believes is in sharp contrast to “the pile of vague and ill-defined terms that litter the field” (Jaques, 1989, p.7). He believes that a system should have the right number of layers for its size and that roles should be structured according to the time-span of the work involved. These roles should be filled with people who have the appropriate skills, values, and capabilities to match these roles. Each role should have a clearly defined level of accountability and authority.

One might ask what it is in the backgrounds of Paul and Fred that has attracted them so much to the work of Elliot Jaques. One factor might be their educational backgrounds. Fred’s undergraduate degree is in maths and philosophy and his Ph.D. is in educational psychology. To Fred, truth is all that matters, and he indicates that what motivates him is pushing the theory forward and developing it. He wants to be known as “an applied organizational scientist”. Paul began a degree in clinical psychology and then switched to theology. He has a doctorate in theology. These are the only two participants in the study that have doctoral degrees, and they are the only two people who talk fervently about the need for a “scientific approach” and a coherent theory. They are also both male and I have noticed that more males than females seem to be attracted to Jaques’ work in Toronto.

It is not surprising, therefore, that one aspect that appeals to Paul and Fred is that Jaques seems to have created a coherent theory using a scientific approach. For example, Fred indicates that he now has a unified theory to work from and “a grounding finally in a science that underlies my work”. Paul comments on the scientific, quantitative approach
to the work. He says that the approach “has produced incredibly significant measurable productivity increases in a few companies where we were allowed to do research”. Both Paul and Fred are attracted to this theory because in Paul’s words “it does not blame the victim”. They explain that other approaches to OD attempt to make the individual change (through training for example) while this approach assumes that the employee is basically okay and it is the structure that needs to change. Fred also comments that what he likes about Jaques’ work is that Jaques acknowledges that human beings feel comfortable with and naturally form into hierarchies.

The two consultants are also drawn to Jaques’ work because of their disillusionment with certain aspects of more traditional OD work. For example, Paul believes that in the eighties some practitioners lost sight of the intent of organizational development, which was to focus on the whole organization; instead, they started to focus on individual enlightenment and enhancement (the dynamists). Paul suggests that these “dynamists” are misguided in believing that individual performance and human dynamics will improve organizational effectiveness. Fred is critical of OD today because he believes that the dominant value is still that of “inclusion” and consultants are still churning out interventions like teambuilding or appreciative inquiry. He points out that while these interventions are “successful in breaking people out of their mindsets”, they are “utter failures” at creating lasting change.

Fred and Paul have highlighted one of the discords that have existed within the OD field: the clash between the “hard” and the “soft”. As Herman (1989) points out, one of the key criticisms that has been leveled at the field is that “the term ‘OD’ evokes ‘touchy feely’ or ‘new wave’ images, and is embarrassing” (p. 19). However, while that
may have been a criticism leveled at OD in the past, there seems to be reason to believe that OD has left this image squarely behind. As Church and Burke (1995) point out, this criticism has been leveled at OD for many years. Their research reveals that while 32% of those interviewed agree that OD has become “too touchy feely” and needs a more practical orientation, 40% disagree with this description of the field. This led the researchers to conclude that “OD is perhaps no longer seen by the majority of practitioners in this traditionally softer light” (p.18) and that OD has finally begun to shed this negative image that was based on the T-group experiences of earlier years. Given that we know from this study and earlier studies that OD consultants are now highly focused on organizational effectiveness, it would certainly make sense that they have left behind or have tried to remove, the image of being “too soft”.

Fred and Paul also highlight one of the other tensions that exist in the field: that OD lacks a central theory that is scientifically proven (Esper, 1990; Herman, 1989; Woodman, 1989) and as compared to other fields where there is more of a unifying theory, this charge is probably a fair criticism. Even so, Woodman (1989) discusses the complexity of this issue and points out the tension that OD faces because it is both “a field of social and managerial action and a field of scientific inquiry” (p.213). He explains that some researchers in the OD field still feel constrained by the quantitative, positivistic paradigm that has traditionally dominated the social sciences. These researchers point out that because OD relies on collaborative and informed choices regarding participation, if individuals are “assigned” to experimental conditions, the intervention is no longer OD. A number of authors are trying to expand the boundaries of acceptable research by moving the field towards a “post positivist” way of knowing.
Woodman further explains that other recent developments such as meta-analysis are also making positive contributions to the field. However, he concludes by saying that “In general, the field needs stronger linkages among theory, research, and practice on a variety of dimensions” and that “OD continues to be constrained by the quality of much of the research done” (p.223).

**Reasons for Changes in the Role of the OD Consultant**

Most participants, indicating that there has been a notable shift in the role of the OD consultant, volunteer several reasons for this change. They identify the most significant influencing factor as the change in the workforce and the employee/employer contract. Technological change is mentioned by five of the consultants. All of the internal consultants point out that global competition has had a significant impact on the role of the OD consultant.

**Changes in the Workforce**

All six participants are in agreement that workplace modifications are an important factor. Most comments focus on the employee/employer contract. Consultants mention that reorganization and downsizing has progressively undermined a core sense of trust, and employees tend not to be as loyal as they once were. They tend to be more aware of their organizational environment and to think more strategically in terms of their own careers. This theme emerges earlier in the nineties in the literature. One of the future trends identified by participants in Jane Esper’s study (1990) is a significant alteration in the nature of the psychological contract between the employee and employer as well as redefinition of the whole concept of loyalty. Burke (1997) also confirms that the employee/employer contract has been modified and that “Company loyalty-especially in
large corporations is a thing of the past” (p.13). He also concurs that this shift in loyalty has occurred because of the pervasiveness of downsizing and because of the message from organizations that an individual can no longer expect a lifelong career within one company. Burke indicates that OD consultants can make the workplace a less stressful place for employees by assisting managers to clarify goals, objectives, and task requirements and by giving feedback to their employees on an ongoing basis so that they know where they stand in terms of performance.

Two participants mention the impact of the “babyboomers” on the organizational environment. Sara explains that the “babyboomers” are the key customers now, and this has led to different customer service needs. Although Hammer and Champy (1993) do not specifically mention the “babyboomers”, they do explain that customers now have the upper hand over sellers. They point out, “Customers now tell suppliers what they want, when they want it, how they want it and what they will pay” (p.18). It therefore makes sense that the “babyboomers” are dominant consumers in the organizational world. One of this study’s participants, Gordon, talks about how the “babyboomers” by their sheer numbers have caused a bottleneck at the top of organizations. Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992) also talk about demographic adjustments in the workplace. However, these authors focus on the shifts that will occur between now and the twenty-first century regarding the increase in the numbers of women and minorities entering the workforce. I am surprised that none of the participants mentioned these types of demographic shifts.

**Technological Change**

Most of the consultants identify technological change as a key influencing factor in the evolution of OD. Several participants mention that it has accelerated the way that
organizations respond to their environment. Others explore how technological changes, such as computerization, have had an impact on employees. For example, Janice mentions that it has not only changed the way that people perform their jobs, but it has also changed their skill sets and the way that they think.

Several researchers comment on the impact of technology both on organizations and on OD consultants (Esper, 1990; Hammer & Champy, 1993; Jelinek & Litterer, 1988; Van Eynde & Bledsoe, 1990). Van Eynde and Bledsoe indicate that “Rapid changes in technology have shortened the time available for decision making, increased pressures to produce results as quickly as possible, heightened the necessity to anticipate and plan for the future” (1990, p.29). There seems to be agreement that OD consultants can assist organizations in this area. Esper (1990) believes that OD consultants can help organizations to develop a “hi-tech/hi-touch” balance. Jelinek and Litterer (1988) explain that “OD expertise can help design successful, flexible, change-tolerant organizations” (p.144) that can deal with the swift pace of technological change.

**The Globalization of the Marketplace**

It is noteworthy that only the four internal consultants mention the impact of globalization on the role of the OD consultant. I find myself pondering why none of the external consultants mention this as a factor. Maybe it is because the internal consultants have experienced for themselves how globalization has had an impact on their organization. For example, they all have experienced reorganizations and downsizing and one of the reasons often given for these actions is the globalization of the economy. It is certainly true that they are aware of how globalization has affected their own organization. Janice discusses how the global economy has affected public sector
organizations like her own. She says that services that were once exclusive to the public sector are now seen as potential targets for outsourcing and privatization. Gordon and Margaret talk about the increased competition that their organizations experience from countries such as Japan.

Various writers have discussed the overwhelming impact of the globalization of the marketplace upon organizations (Esper, 1990; Hammer & Champy, 1993; Jelinek & Litterer, 1988; Sanzgiri & Gottlieb, 1992). As Hammer and Champy (1993) point out, with trade barriers falling, no company’s turf is safe from overseas competition, and a company like Caterpillar will compete on the international market with companies such as Komatsu, DuPont, and Hoechst. They point out that “Good performers drive out the inferior, because the lowest price, the highest quality, the best service available from any one of them soon becomes the standard for all competitors” (p.21). Jelinek and Litterer (1988) identify two potential opportunities for OD consultants in this area. They can help executives think globally by getting them to focus on fundamental questions like “What is our business? What is the domain in which we carry out our business?” (p.140). As the globalization of business also means managing across diverse cultures, they point out that “OD has a role to play in fostering understanding and tolerance, as well as effective collaboration” (p.141).

**Other Factors**

Two other factors (although only mentioned by one consultant) are worthy of note. Janice mentions that in each decade OD has been influenced by the political climate of the time, and that is why in the “mean” climate of the nineties, OD is focusing on organizational effectiveness. It certainly seems logical that OD is influenced in some
way by the political climate of the time. Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992) agree with this notion. As they point out, OD was born into a political climate that was "sobered by the dangers of excessive authoritarianism" (p.60). One other point worth mentioning is Joan's comment that OD consultants are wary about how they operated in the past because their interventions did not produce positive results within organizations. This is a similar comment to that made by Fred and Paul who indicate that OD somewhat lost its way in the eighties and did not contribute to organizational effectiveness.

Discussion

The discussion section attempts to relate the findings in this chapter to the broader societal context. In a period of rapid change, participants identify three major factors that they believe have had a significant impact on the work of OD consultants: the rapid introduction of new technologies such as computerization, the globalization of the economy, and a modification in the employer/employee relationship. In terms of how OD consultants are responding to these changes, three trends seem to be emerging: OD consultants are evolving and adjusting; the work of the OD consultant is becoming more complicated; and inevitable tensions arise as consultants attempt to adapt to rapidly changing circumstances.

The consensus of opinion of writers and researchers in the field is that we are going through a period of rapid change (Greengard, 1998; Hudson, 1998; James, 1997; Kotter, 1996; Rifkin, 1996). We have moved from the industrial age into the information age (Naisbitt, 1984; Greengard, 1998; Rifkin, 1996) and as Naisbitt (1984, p.9) holds, "the restructuring of America from an industrial to an information society will easily be as profound as a shift from an agricultural society to an industrial society".
Hudson (1998) asserts that this information revolution is driven by the convergence and proliferation of information and communication technologies such as computerization. Indeed, participants in this study reflect on how computerization has had an impact both on organizations and employees. For example, organizations, which are now bombarded with information regarding their competition, have recognized that they need to speed up the way that they respond to their environment. From an employee perspective, computerization has changed the whole notion of how people work.

Another influencing factor identified by participants in this study is the globalization of the economy. As Kotter (1996, p.18) captures, globalization:

...is being driven by a broad and powerful set of forces associated with technological change, international economic integration, domestic market maturation within more developed countries, and the collapse of worldwide communism.

He asserts that no one is immune from these forces. North American companies may hire information workers in developing countries where labor is far cheaper; conversely developing countries may find themselves competing in global markets where quality and suitability of products is just as important as price (Hudson, 1998). As demonstrated in this study, globalization has had an impact on both public and private sector organizations.

Such far-ranging changes have significant effects on the employee/employer relationship. Mergers, acquisitions, reorganizations, and downsizings send messages to employees that they are replaceable (O'Connell, 1999). Increasingly they have come to realize that they are on their own in this economy, and that they need to start thinking for themselves regarding their future. As Naisbitt (1984) concludes, “we are reclaiming America's traditional sense of self reliance, after four decades of trusting in institutional
help”. As participants in this study affirm, employees are indeed becoming more self-reliant, and are taking control of their own careers.

As in previous decades, OD consultants in this study have shown their ability to adjust to their environment. As organizations struggle to survive and to remain competitive, OD consultants demonstrate their responsiveness by increasingly focusing on organizational effectiveness. This shift has probably occurred for several reasons. For example, OD consultants recognize that in order to remain viable to organizations in “lean and mean times” they must be perceived as “value added”. It also just makes good sense to work to attain the health of the organization as well as the participants within it.

Another trend that emerges from these data is that the work of the OD consultant is becoming more complicated. There is increased complexity because OD consultants are focusing on organizational effectiveness as well as people concerns. As participants in this study identify, this competence requires that OD consultants: have a general understanding of how organizations operate; have some knowledge of how the particular organization works; and also understand the environment in which the organization functions. Another way in which OD is becoming more involved is that participants are increasingly taking a systems perspective to their work. This involves seeing the interconnectedness of all parts of the client system (Esper, 1990) as well as understanding its relationship to its environment. Janice, when comparing this approach to a decade ago explains that then OD consultants believed that they could isolate aspects of the organization and work on discrete, separate pieces.

In a time of such profound change, it is not surprising that tensions exist within the OD community, especially because it is still a relatively young field. This part of the
study reveals one such conflict that exists in Toronto. On the one hand there are the "structuralists" like Paul and Fred who believe in Fred's comment that "if you get the structure right, all of the other problems will be solved". They believe that hierarchy is the most appropriate organizational structure. They are critical of those in the field who do not focus on the organization as a whole, and are concerned because some in the field "focus on individual enhancement and enlightenment". The "structuralists" within Toronto are a small, but highly vocal minority (approximately 35 consultants according to Shepard, 1998). On the other hand, there are those that contend that it is narrow-minded to think that structure will resolve the majority of the organization's problems. Indeed there are other ways of helping hierarchies work productively, apart from Jaques' theory. They also assert that hierarchy is only one potential structure, and there are viable alternatives to it. Indeed, it seems that small groups and teams have become the building blocks of modern organizations (Reddy, 1995). As Kimball Fisher (1993, front cover) indicates, "Across the country, highly competitive, self-directed work teams (SDWT's) are chalking up astonishing productivity gains. These work teams are replacing entrenched, autocratic, boss-driven organizations whose management styles are obsolete".

**Conclusion**

This chapter explores participants' perceptions of how the OD field has evolved over the last decade, and which factors have been most significant in influencing OD throughout that period. As discussed in the literature, this has been a period of significant socioeconomic change. Participants in this study identify two factors that have had a profound impact on organizations: the proliferation of new technologies such as
computerization, and the globalization of the economy. Such far-reaching changes have also had an impact on the employee/employer relationship. OD consultants in this study have adjusted to these factors by focusing on organizational effectiveness, and by increasingly taking a systemic perspective to their work. As in all times of change, however, tension is inevitable, and we see an example of discord in this study between the "structuralists" and the "dynamists".
CHAPTER FIVE:
ACTIVITIES AND INTERVENTIONS OF OD CONSULTANTS

Introduction

OD practitioners continue “to disagree about what actually constitutes the unique work of OD versus other types of change efforts” (Church & Burke, 1995, p.2). For example, they continue to debate whether total quality management is part of OD or whether it is a related field. As I found when I entered the field, this lack of clarity can be particularly vexsome to the novice because it is hard to decide where to focus one’s learning efforts. My goal in this chapter is therefore to provide some understanding of the most frequently used activities of the participants in this study. My goal is also to identify, given the turbulent changes that have occurred within organizations, some ways in which these activities might have changed or evolved in response to their environment.

This chapter is divided into three sections: findings, analysis, and discussion. The findings section presents the data regarding the activities and interventions outlined by the participants in my study. In the analysis section, the major activities will be discussed and related to the relevant literature. Two major themes will be explored in the discussion section: the different pattern of intervention usage between internal and external consultants, and the extent to which there seems to be an evolution in the use of a particular intervention.

Findings

As in the previous chapter, the findings concerning the internal consultants are presented followed by the findings regarding the external consultants. These findings are
presented separately so that, where appropriate, comparisons can be made between the two sets of data. The major interventions outlined by the internal consultants are: management training, individual coaching, competency analysis, teambuilding, and strategic planning activities. The external consultants also mention management training, executive coaching, teambuilding, and strategic planning. However, a number of the external participants also put forward these interventions: intergroup relations, large-scale change, and structural change.

**Internal Consultants**

**Management Training**

This activity is mentioned by all of the internal consultants, and management training seems to be the most frequently used type of training. Several participants make the point that the kinds of workshops that they deliver are different from what is traditionally termed “training”. For example, Janice explains that:

> What we have been doing is moving towards a more integrated approach that links the business issues with the training programs. So most of the training takes place in intact work groups or related work groups, and it is linked to some kind of issue rather than “in February we are training on this, and in March we are training on that”.

A typical example where members of her department have used this approach is with change management. They developed a change management program for managers, as well as a shorter program that managers could use with their employees.

Gordon indicates that he develops management training modules as part of an overall change management strategy. Once the strategic direction of the organization has been agreed upon, and the core competencies have been analyzed, he develops generic management training programs that help managers develop the required competencies to
assist the organization to move in the right direction. Sometimes he or one of his team members conducts the training; sometimes he uses external trainers; and at other times line managers are used to deliver the training. He believes that one of the advantages in getting line managers to conduct the training is that it “builds the critical mass, and the knowledge base within the organization”.

Simon facilitates workshops on an “as needed basis” in a variety of organizational settings. However, he makes a distinction between what he calls traditional training, (which he sees as overly structured and directed) and the kind of workshops that he conducts. He sees this kind of work as “the facilitation of a process by which people solve their own problems”, and it frequently occurs “within intact work teams”. For example, as part of a change management process, he worked with a Director who wanted to change the role of his supervisors, and their working relationship with their employees. Initially he conducted a workshop with the supervisors, and then he conducted an overview workshop with the employees so that they could understand the change in supervisory style. Simon is also responsible for “Management Development Day” which is a one-day seminar that is held four times a year for approximately 150 managers within the organization. He has designed a variety of interventions for this seminar ranging from open space planning, to the use of external speakers from the Conference Board of Canada.

Although Margaret spends some time facilitating workshops, she explains that “I am not doing nearly the number of workshops or facilitation that I used to do”. Instead she finds that she is increasingly working on a one-to-one basis with change agents within the organization. As an example of the kind of workshop that she facilitates, she
explains that she delivers a short course that is called “freeze frame”. This technique is designed as a stress reduction tool as it can help people calm down, and think more effectively in high stress situations.

**Individual Coaching**

One of the activities that Simon, Margaret, and Gordon mention is one-on-one coaching. Simon indicates that from time to time he coaches employees and supervisors on topics such as conflict management. As an example of the types of situations that he becomes involved in he outlines a current case. He is working with two managers who supervise the same employee. This has caused role conflict and dissatisfaction on the part of all parties. He is therefore working with and coaches both managers and the employee as he helps them to re-negotiate their working relationships.

Margaret increasingly coaches individuals within the organization who are involved in facilitating a change initiative. She explains that initially she spends approximately an hour and a half with each change agent, helping them to understand the context around change and the key principles in facilitating it. She sees her role as being a resource to change agents, providing materials, tools, and information to them on an as needed basis. She is happy to consult with change agents either in person or over the telephone when they need some assistance on an ongoing basis. However, as a rule she does not become involved in the change initiative itself.

Gordon mentions two types of individual coaching that he might become involved in: employee counseling and executive coaching. He counsels employees on day-to-day aspects of their job as well as potential career opportunities. He also becomes involved in executive coaching. He indicates that the challenge is “to build a personal relationship
with the individual, and try to give them feedback in a non threatening manner, which is on a one-to-one basis, where you are saying ‘here’s what you did and here are the consequences of it’”. From time to time, Gordon brings in an industrial psychologist to give feedback to an executive, because it provides the individual with an objective, confidential sounding board as he or she tries to make changes.

**Competency Analysis and the Revision of the Performance Management System**

Two participants indicate that they have conducted competency analysis projects at the management level, and have then revised the performance management systems within the organization. Janice explains that “we worked with managers to identify organizational competencies that were needed especially in this environment so that we could build our learning opportunities around those competencies”. Using a model created by Xerox Learning Systems, they went through an extensive process of holding focus groups, and then interviewing managers on a one-to-one basis. The finished product was a series of behavioral managerial competencies, which were identified at five levels of complexity. Based on the competency analysis, the performance management system was then revised.

Gordon uses competency analysis as part of his overall change management strategy. Once the executives have established the vision and values of the organization, Gordon’s next step is to look at the level of competency at the management level. He uses executive input to determine what the critical success factors are within the organization, and what behaviors the managers need to exhibit in order to be successful. In order to determine the training needs at the management level, he uses instruments from Work Systems Associates, which analyze the competencies that are being
performed successfully at the management level. Gordon then revises the performance system to reflect the competencies that have been identified.

**Teambuilding**

All of the internal consultants indicate that they are involved in teambuilding activities, although the type of teambuilding activity differs from consultant to consultant. Simon helps teams that are in trouble to resolve their difficulties. Janice speaks about helping new teams with team-building activities. Margaret, on the other hand, coaches human resource professionals to facilitate teambuilding activities, and from time to time she facilitates teambuilding activities with executive teams. Gordon mentions teambuilding activities within the context of quality improvement initiatives. He indicates that once a cross-functional quality improvement team has been created, the team receives training on how to work together effectively.

Simon follows a set process when working with teams in trouble. Although team members often come to him with a presenting problem (for example, they may want to create a strategic plan), he often finds that the real problem rests with the internal functioning of the team (for example, with decision making, priority setting, or communication). He therefore finds it an important part of the process to interview everyone individually. He believes that:

*The interview has a lot of different purposes. It helps them to get to know me; it helps me to get to know them; gives them an opportunity to ventilate, which is a major factor I think; and it gives them a chance to reformulate the problem... It also gives me a chance to help guide their thinking a little bit, and maybe transfer a bit of ownership back to them if there is a lot of victim language.*
Depending on the particular team and the problems at hand, he will either present his findings to the team as a whole so that they can determine the next steps or he will proceed straight to a teambuilding workshop.

Margaret acts as a coach to human resource professionals who actually conduct teambuilding activities with teams, and she also facilitates teambuilding sessions with executive teams when they are leading important change initiatives. Her approach is to spend a planning session with team members, where she explains some of the fundamental requirements for team effectiveness such as: goals, roles, processes, and responsibilities. She also helps them develop an action plan regarding the activities they need to perform in order to work together effectively. She provides them with teambuilding tools when it is appropriate. However, she doesn’t get involved in facilitating these activities with the team as she believes that they have the maturity to handle these issues on their own.

**Strategic Planning Activities**

Most of the internal consultants mention their involvement with strategic planning. Margaret explains that “everything externally has demanded that the organization really get serious about strategy, and that has been a large focus of the work that I have done - working at a strategic level and working on strategic processes”. She recalls conducted some of the pioneer work within the organization because she helped some of the regional business units understand the importance of creating a strategic business plan. Ostensibly, based on her influence, a strong strategic component was introduced into the training program for these leaders because initially they “didn’t even understand why you would want to do that, nor would they want to know what was
happening in the community or how the demographics were shifting". Eventually
Margaret introduced a strategic planning simulation into this training program which was
intended to help participants grasp the importance of strategic planning, and the long term
consequences of certain strategic decisions that they might take.

Gordon makes a distinction between long-term strategic planning which he
equates with organization development, and short-term planning which he equates with
operational planning. He believes that most strategic planning focuses on the operational
aspects. When he refers to strategic planning, he is talking about:

...the visioning process, the values process, the integration of that within the
organization that takes a minimum of five years to hit critical mass - usually after
the second or third year things begin to change. So it is enabling the organization
to manage change, deal with change, and to handle the intellectual capital that is
within the organization...you have got to understand where you are, and where
you want to be before you can take any action or any initiatives to move forward.
So that has always been the focus when I walk in the door (of a new
organization).

Typically when Gordon joins a new company, he holds an executive retreat that focuses
on issues such as "what is a vision, why is it needed, why is it important to the
organization and also that it has to be a living thing". He uses a film by Dr. Joel Barker
called "The Power of Vision" which illustrates the importance of visioning for countries,
organizations, and individuals. He then uses an instrument called a "Q sort" which
allows the executives to come to a common understanding of terms like "people
effectiveness" and "profit". By the end of the day, the executives generally have a rough
draft of their vision and values. Depending on the type of organization that he is working
in, Gordon may give the rough draft of the vision and values to a group of employees to
receive their reactions and feedback.
Large-Scale Organizational Change

Of the four internal consultants, only Gordon seems to orchestrate large-scale organizational change. He appears to have a defined approach, which he has now followed in a variety of different organizations. His first step is to work with the executives to develop a vision and identify values. Out of this work with the executives evolves the competencies, and the critical success factors. Through the use of an employee attitude survey, he determines where the organization is working well, and identifies training gaps. He then develops a training curriculum for the managers based on the competencies that have been developed. The performance management system is then redesigned so that it reflects the vision and values of the organization as well as the competencies identified. The next process that he becomes involved in is total quality management. Cross-functional teams are identified, and the teams receive training on quality improvement tools such as Pareto analysis. He has found that the quality improvement initiative works most effectively when employees receive a bonus for the money saved by the organization.

A Values Steering Committee

Simon identified a fairly unique activity that he performed at the organizational level. He chairs a values steering committee. The organization articulated its values in 1990, and a committee was created "to help the organization understand what a values-driven organization is". For example, committee members took the value "balancing work and home life", reviewed and revised their human resource policies to ensure that they reflected this value and implemented an alternate work arrangement program. Under
this program employees could extend work hours on one day in order to take time off on other days, or they could job share.

**External Consultants**

**Management Training**

Although management training is mentioned by all of the external consultants, it does not seem to be an activity in which most spend a lot of time. Only Sara states that this is an activity that she performs regularly. She facilitates a workshop that focuses on leading business teams on an ongoing basis for a large organization. Fred indicates that on occasion he conducts performance management training. However, he has not found that this training is particularly effective because he has not always had executive “buy-in”. He says, “So what I am doing is training people in ‘here’s what you have to do as a manager’. None of this matters unless the person at the top holds the next layer accountable”. Paul explains that he becomes involved in management training when he identifies that a group of managers is deficient in one of the managerial functions such as planning or performance management. He prefers to have two or three levels of management within the room for a training session. He is adamant that this is not skills training. Rather, he sees his role as providing the managers with a conceptual framework, and enabling them to have a meaningful dialogue so that they can come to some agreement regarding the function being discussed.

Joan divulges that she is frequently called into organizations where she is asked to “do training”. However she makes a distinction between what she terms “skills training” and the types of activities that she performs in the classroom. She asserts that “I have been in so many settings called training and it is training, and in other settings it is not
training, it's change work. And the difference is what is the critical mass, and how many levels are in the room?" She gives an example of when she was called into a "not-for-profit" organization to conduct "a mid-career" learning event. She explained to the client that she did not want to do straight training because that would not improve the situation. She asserted that in order for this event to be effective, three things needed to happen: mid-career participants needed to come to the training event with their managers; an organizational diagnosis questionnaire should be used; and the training should consist of three sessions spread over a period of time so that participants could have an opportunity to reflect on their learning. She concluded by saying "It started as a training program, and it was always called a training program" but there were some distinct differences that made it more of a change event.

**Executive Coaching**

Three participants indicate that they coach executives on a one on one basis. Paul indicates that what he is primarily trying to do with executive consultation is to "help executives actualize their capacities, whatever they are". He points out that this is the place where individual therapy and counseling comes closest to having a place in organizational development. He explains that:

You are helping the person bring the fullness of who they are to the role that they hold. And that's everything - their hopes, their dreams, their fantasies, their little demons that they dream about at night, their pet peeves, their inability to deal with a manager - it doesn't matter what it is.

He uses a variety of techniques based on the needs of the individual such as: psychometrics and cognitive capacity interviews. If the executive indicates that he would like to receive feedback from people inside or outside of the company, Paul helps to design the feedback process.
Fred and Joan talk more in terms of giving support to executives in difficult times. Fred explains that although he may be called in to conduct a tangible activity like strategic planning, he believes that the real reason that the executive has called upon him is for companionship and support, and to have someone off whom to bounce his ideas. He says:

So here you are, a CEO, and you don’t know how your organization works. You know what you’ve done, and you know it works under some circumstances. But there’s a recession coming and you’re scared and you don’t feel comfortable hanging out with your employees.

Joan reveals that she had been a “shadow consultant” to executives when they were going through the downsizing process. She clarifies her role in the following way:

I’ve been a shadow consultant to CEO’s - listening to their hearts. And these were two really decent men. It was horrible for them, and they had no choice as their stock went down in the market and they had to do something.

This prompted me to ask Joan whether she would ever become involved in downsizing as an activity. She responded in the following way: “I don’t have the technical expertise. I don’t have the emotional disposition. It’s not my thing. I have different gifts than that and the gifts that you bring to it had better be good!”

**Teambuilding**

The majority of the external consultants indicate that they conduct teambuilding activities. Fred, for example, mentions that he has been asked to intervene with a teambuilding intervention when two different departments were experiencing conflict when interacting with each other. As part of a major change initiative in a large organization, Sara has conducted a six-day team-building workshop for intact teams. The goal of these workshops is to help people come together as a team and to achieve their new business strategy. In the workshop they deal with such issues as: What does this
mean to our customers? What does this new role mean to us? How do people interact with each other in order to give service? Sara also points out that once these teams had been operational for over a year, she worked with teams that were struggling to help resolve problems and improve team functioning. She also conducted an “open space” planning session for 70-75 people. The goal of this session was to help each team develop an operational plan for how they were going to make the transition to the new way of operating.

Joan explains that she conducts various types of teambuilding activities, and her approach is essentially very practical. She divulges that “I haven’t in years done teambuilding where I am teaching what teambuilding is”. She reveals that she likes to be involved in real time problem solving where she can halt the team and say, “Let’s just stop for a second and figure out what is making the problem solving work and what isn’t?” She constantly uses the action/reflection model to help teams analyze what they are doing, and to improve their functioning.

**Intergroup Relations**

Three of the external consultants mention that they use interventions designed to improve intergroup relations. Joan divulges that she conducts “conflict management between departments”. Her first step is to interview each party to determine the issues. Then sometimes she uses structured interventions such as tools for multi-disciplinary teams to analyze tensions and power differences. At other times she takes more of an unstructured approach and says “Just get everybody in the room, we’ll worry about what happens when you get there”.

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On occasion, Fred works with departments that are experiencing conflict. He indicates that he typically gets called in when two departments such as sales and marketing are experiencing difficulty in dealing with each other. He describes a typical scenario as “You’ve got Marketing who thinks that Sales are a bunch of cowboys, and Sales who thinks Marketing wants to control the whole company”. His approach is to start with the highest level of management on each side and ask them questions like “What do you typically need to initiate with marketing?” He asks these kind of questions of different people in each department until he has a clear picture of how they interact. He ends up with a matrix of all the roles as well as a clear idea of how people in each department need to interact with each other, which he then presents to the top management level so that they can make decisions about how to clarify roles and responsibilities.

Paul also acts as a facilitator in situations of intergroup conflict. He reveals that:

I’m more often than not playing some sort of a mediator role, where there are two or more identifiable parties who have an identifiable disagreement which must be resolved in order for all of them to get done whatever it is that they are supposed to do. And around that I usually gather some data, design a meeting or a series of meetings, feedback the data, and get parties to articulate their positions, establish criteria for problem resolution and find a solution that meets all this criteria.

He indicates that sometimes he acts as a negotiator, but he draws the line at arbitration.

**Structural Change**

Paul and Fred indicate that they spend the majority of their time in the area of structural change. Paul explains that “we always start with the structure, because I find that when I finish that, less than ten percent of the problems are still hanging around”.

Paul and Fred describe their work in very similar terms. As Paul says:
I start with the “org. chart” and I can make certain assumptions simply based on looking at the chart. Then I can test those assumptions by doing targeted interviews down through the organization...Then by pulling that data together I know whether or not there is agreement around the work of this organization.

He feeds data back to his clients on an ongoing basis so that they can make the appropriate decisions regarding organizational roles. Fred follows a similar process. He indicates that “The better I get at this, the less prescriptive I get and I just say ‘This is how I see it. Now tell me are you happy with the person who is way down here on your chart?’” After helping the organization with role clarification, Paul frequently assists them with “authority distribution” by conducting an analysis of the planning systems that are in place.

As part of his structural work, Paul indicates that he has also worked with colleges and professional associations. For example, a couple of years ago he helped a college review its governance and managerial structure. His intervention consisted of a series of meetings about four months apart with the key stakeholders, in which he helped to facilitate their decision-making regarding governance and structure.

**Strategic Planning**

Joan and Paul reveal that they help organizations with strategic planning. Joan explains that “I do strategic planning in such a way that people do their own environmental scan, engage the critical mass of the organization, the mission statement, the operating values and the current state assessment”. Paul points out that whereas ten years ago “we did strategic planning for everybody whether they needed it or not”, he now takes the time to analyze what kind of planning process the organization requires: operations planning, long-range planning or strategic planning, and makes the appropriate recommendation.
Large-Scale Organizational Change

Most of the external consultants mention their involvement in large-scale organizational change. Sara outlines her involvement in a couple of organizational change projects. In one project she helped design the process for change in a commercial bank. The mandate for this change was to "create an environment and a system around customer segmentation but with a change of culture that would support them around teams, around learning, and around stewardship". She participated in activities like designing the recruitment process, identifying competencies, and designing the orientation process. She cites another example of organizational change, which started when she was called into an organization to help with competency development. However the competency model became "secondary to the huge change process" in which she worked with transitional groups from all levels of the organization to conduct strategic visioning and to identify how to build commitment for the new organizational direction.

Joan and Paul describe their involvement in large-scale organizational change. Joan assisted an Addiction Treatment Center in "moving themselves out of a medical model into a disease prevention, risk reduction model with community based thinking". She contends that this was a "massive organizational change". Paul reveals that he sometimes becomes involved in organizational redesign activities. His usual approach is to work with members of the senior management team to explain organizational design principles and to assist in creating an appropriate design for their organization.
Succession Planning

Fred is currently conducting succession planning for a businessman who owns 18 companies. Due to the imminent retirement of several company presidents, Fred has been hired to find answers to questions like: “Who is going to replace these presidents as they retire? How are we going to train and develop these people? Who is looking after the career of all the employees?” He describes the process that he uses as:

It’s a matter of combing through the various companies, getting managers to assess the capabilities of their subordinates and initiating mentoring… mentoring being what my manager does with me in terms of preparing me for my career.

Transorganizational Development

Joan cites several examples of her involvement in transorganizational development. She worked with three organizations that were trying to develop a strategic alliance. She facilitated meetings in which they were able to sort out “What is the value set that is going to guide our interaction? What do we do when we are in trouble? How are we going to know when we are in trouble? How often should we meet?” On another occasion she worked with a group of CEOs of different hospitals who needed to make some crucial decisions. She helped them plan not only what they were going to do as a team, but also design what they would do in their own organizations so that they would be in step. She cites one final example in which she worked with sixteen people from different organizations whose goal was to design a strategy for entrepreneurship. She helped them to discuss process issues, and to develop short-term and long-term plans.

Analysis

This section analyzes the major activities identified by internal and external participants in this study. In order to facilitate exploration of the themes in the discussion
stage, activities are categorized according to the classification scheme devised by French and Bell (1995). In this scheme, interventions are classified according to the target group. Activities are therefore discussed under interventions designed to improve the effectiveness of: individuals, teams, intergroup relations, and the total organization. I have also included a fifth category called "transorganizational development", because this intervention does not fit into any of the previous categories as it focuses on helping two or more organizations join together to achieve a common purpose.

**Interventions Designed to Improve the Effectiveness of Individuals**

The interventions mentioned by participants that fall under this category include: training, coaching, competency analysis, and re-design of the performance management system. However this segment will focus on the two activities that were mentioned by the majority of the participants: training and coaching. An overall observation that I would like to make at this point is that it seems that internal consultants in this study spend more of their time on activities designed to improve the effectiveness of individuals than do external consultants (this will be reviewed in greater detail in the discussion section).

**Training**

Udai Pareek (1995) maintains that training is still one of the most widely used interventions by OD consultants, and probably has been for some time. A recent study (Church et al., 1994) confirms that enhancing management skills through training is one of the most frequently used interventions of OD consultants. Similar findings were revealed in this study. Training is the only activity mentioned by all of the consultants. Most of the training seems to fall under the umbrella of management training that includes: change management, performance management, conflict management,
planning, and leading business teams. Other types of training that are mentioned are "mid career" training, stress management training, and quality improvement training.

Training seems to be an activity that internal consultants focus on more than external consultants. Research certainly confirms that internal consultants do focus on training. Research conducted by McMahan and Woodman (1992) on interventions used by internal consultants reveal that they spent the majority of their time on individual or group level interventions which included activities such as training and teambuilding. This led the researchers to conclude that the internal practice of OD might be somewhat different from the external practice, in that it might focus on more traditional OD services whereas the external practice might focus more on leading edge activities. This current study certainly suggests that one way that the external practice might differ from the internal practice is that internal practitioners still spend more time on training.

Several participants make a distinction between what they do when they train as compared to what has traditionally been termed training. Janice describes the traditional approach to training within an organization as a calendar of training courses that participants can sign up for. In the same vein, Simon believes that in the past training has been "overly structured and directed". Both are in agreement that they are now more likely to be working with intact teams or work groups on real life business problems or issues. Paul and Joan make a similar distinction between "skills training" and the work that they do which they describe as "change work". Joan makes the point that "organization change is not just about skills. It's about the system that holds things in place". When she conducts training, she does everything in her power to ensure that participants will be able to keep using the tools and techniques when they return to their
work environment. For example, she likes to ensure that there is a critical mass of people at different levels of seniority within the room because she believes that application to the job is more likely to occur. She also likes to use an action/reflection model within the workshop that enables participants to discuss real issues, and resolve real business problems. Paul also makes a distinction between skills training and the type of training that he conducts. His goal when facilitating management training is to create an environment in which two to three levels of management can have a meaningful discussion and come to some agreement about an issue.

What seems clear from the literature and from these findings is that the whole nature of organizational training is changing. The consensus of opinion seems to be that the conventional type of classroom training that is scheduled on a three to six month basis no longer meets the needs of organizations (Hequet, 1995; Klopp & Roth, 1997; Roberts, 1997). Marc Hequet (1995, p.24) points out that training and development practitioners are faced with a decision: "keep doing what they know best - traditional stand up training - or change to a strange new job that might best be described as change manager". Many organizations are trying to re-define their training departments as "units that investigate human performance problems, and recommend any number of different solutions - not just 'the place that you go for classes'" (Filipczak, 1998, p.33). There seems to be an increasing impatience with the idea of simply teaching skills and knowledge in a vacuum. As identified in the literature and in my findings, training needs to be seen as helping to resolve real life business problems such as better productivity, improved sales, or increased profits (Filipczak, 1998; Hequet, 1995; Klopp & Roth, 1997). Also as Joan and Paul point out, there seems to be an increasing bias towards action learning in which the
goal of the learning experience is not just to master some new body of knowledge, but to produce an actual, tangible result for the business.

**Coaching**

Three of the internal and all of the external consultants indicate that they perform some form of coaching. What is interesting is that overall there seems to be a clear distinction between the types of coaching that the external consultants perform versus the internal consultants. As a general guideline, internal consultants seem more likely to coach people at lower levels within the organization. For example, they coach people on issues such as career development, conflict management, and change management. Only one internal consultant mentioned executive coaching, and he sometimes refers the client to an industrial psychologist. The majority of the external consultants mention executive coaching. Joan and Fred indicate that they act as a sounding board and offer support to chief executive officers who are making difficult decisions. Paul uses a variety of different tools to help executives fully “actualize their capacities”.

My findings regarding executive coaching mirror a growing trend in North America for this form of coaching. It is estimated that the number of executive coaches in the United States alone is in the tens of thousands (Hall, Otazo, & Hollenbeck, 1999). Rich Fettke, president of the Professional and Personal Coaches Association, estimates that the demand for executive coaches rose by about one thousand percent from 1997-1998 (Filipczak, 1998). One of the reasons for the growth in this form of coaching is that being a corporate leader has become a much more complicated, human centered activity (Filipczak, 1998) and the survival rate for corporate leaders has become increasingly risky. Another reason is that it has become fashionable to subject executives to lengthy
assessments using 360 degree feedback instruments. Without any follow-up guidance, it has been very difficult for executives to make the necessary changes in their behavior (Hall et al., 1999). Executive coaches are filling that gap by providing the necessary support and guidance to executives so that they can change.

What then does the executive coach do? Michael O’Brien (1997, p.6) defines executive coaching as “a highly confidential one-on-one relationship between an executive and a coach wherein the coach helps the executive work on specific problems or issues at work over an extended period of time”. It seems that most personal coaches are hired to help executives hone their interpersonal skills (Filipczak, 1998). However a range of issues are tackled by executive coaches such as: helping CEOs think through their corporate strategy; assessing staffing needs; setting organizational priorities and assisting with issues such as downsizing (Hall et al, 1999). Filipczak (1998) raises the question of whether executive coaching will be a passing fad or an on-going way to help executives fine-tune their leadership skills. He states that it is too early to tell. Against that background, my own anticipation is that in time it will become less fashionable to have an executive coach, therefore the demand will diminish and this decline will weed out the less effective coaches leaving effective coaches to meet the continuing real need.

If my findings hold up across a wider population, it would seem that it’s generally the external consultants who are involved in executive coaching. This would make sense for a number of reasons. The external coach offers the advantage of confidentiality and anonymity to the executive as information is not generally shared with the organization (Hall et al., 1999). An external coach has the advantage of being able to be brutally honest whereas such honesty could prove to be a career-limiting move for an internal
consultant. External consultants can also bring specialized expertise from a wide variety of organizational settings, which can be of value to the executive. There are, however, times when an internal coach might be preferable. Hall et al., (1999) point out that an internal coach can be useful when it is important to know the company culture and politics or when ease of availability is important. It may also be seen as a less costly option for the organization.

**Interventions Designed to Improve the Effectiveness of Teams**

Based on the number of consultants who mention teambuilding, as well as the variety of teambuilding interventions that they become involved in, it seems that teambuilding is one of the most frequently used interventions of OD consultants in this study. All of the internal consultants as well as three of the external consultants indicate that they facilitate some form of teambuilding activity. Of these consultants, four (two internal and two external consultants) mention extensive use of teambuilding activities in a variety of contexts. For example, Margaret divulges that “I do a lot of work with teams”. She explains that she not only coaches human resource professionals on how to work with teams, but she also facilitates teambuilding sessions with executive teams. Sara also works with teams in several contexts. She facilitates a six-day orientation process for business teams regarding how they will work together to achieve their new business strategy; she works with teams in trouble; and she facilitates a five-day workshop called “Leading Teams in Trouble”.

Writers in the field support the notion that teambuilding is still one of the most common practices of OD consultants (Burke, 1994). Indeed, it seems that teambuilding interventions have become more prevalent over the last ten years because organizations
have increasingly chosen to turn to teams as a key intervention strategy (Bohlander & McCarthy, 1996; Buzaglo & Wheelan, 1999; McFadden & Hubbard, 1998; Parker, 1990; Seers, Petty, & Cashman, 1995; West & Allen, 1997). There are several reasons why organizations have moved toward a team-based environment. Organizations have been seeking new ways to compete in the global economy (Buzaglo & Wheelan, 1999; Little, 1999) and to increase productivity (Bohlander & McCarthy, 1996; Little, 1999; Tudor, Trumble & Diaz, 1996; West & Allen, 1997). Bohlander and McCarthy (1996) indicate that gains of between thirty and fifty percent in productivity have been reported, when teams are used, especially in the areas of manufacturing and customer service. There is also an increasing recognition that the complexity of work at this point in history requires collaboration (Buzaglo & Wheelan, 1999; West & Allen, 1997). In certain instances, too much knowledge, and too many different skills and competencies are required, for any one individual to complete such complex tasks on their own.

Although teambuilding has long been a key activity used by OD consultants, it is useful to trace how this intervention has evolved over the years. As early as the thirties and forties, Kurt Lewin was researching aspects of teambuilding known as team dynamics, and Britain’s Tavistock Institute was documenting that productivity increased when workers were organized into teams (Harrington-Mackin, 1994). From the start of OD until the mid sixties, T-group training was one of the primary interventions used by OD consultants (Mirvis, 1988; Mirvis, 1990). Mirvis maintains that “T-groups came into being as a means of helping people to develop a deeper understanding of themselves, and to diagnose the characteristics of groups and social systems” (p.19). It was primarily seen as a means of personal growth for individuals and personal growth was seen as an
end in itself. Mirvis (1988, p.11) points out that by the seventies T-group methods were adapted to help with “the challenge of creating community in organizations”. The techniques and theory that are used in teambuilding activities stem partially from the T-group training movement, coupled with research in group dynamics. French & Bell (1995, p.171) state that the goals of teambuilding activities are “the improvement and increased effectiveness of various teams within the organization”. By the eighties organizations are using teambuilding activities to help people learn to problem solve and get their work done more efficiently. Sashkin and Burke (1987, p.409) argue that:

In the 1980’s, teambuilding rarely, if ever, consists of an open-ended examination of interpersonal relations. Teambuilding interventions today typically have a clear task focus; process is a way of organizing how the team accomplishes its tasks, not an end in itself.

This trend has continued into the nineties. Organizations are using teams as a means of increasing productivity in a global business environment, and they are calling upon OD practitioners to help their teams operate efficiently and effectively. The consultants in my study indicate that they are called in on a number of different occasions to help teams to learn to function effectively and be productive. Margaret, Janice, Sara, and Joan are called in to help new teams in their formative stages. Another set of teambuilding interventions relate to teams in trouble. For example, Simon indicates that teams generally come to him when “they are in trouble”, and Sara indicates that she works with teams who are struggling. Fred and Joan indicate that they work with cross-functional teams that are having difficulty working together.

The final category of teamwork that emerges from the data is assisting teams to plan or problem solve regarding current business issues. Joan gives several examples of working in this way: assisting two organizations with a merger, helping three
organizations create a strategic alliance, and helping CEOs from three hospitals come to a consensus about some decisions that need to be made with their hospitals. Simon indicates that teams often request his assistance in times of change when they want to re-design something or create a strategic plan. Gordon’s organization forms self-directed work teams, and trains them in quality initiative tools so that they can resolve organizational problems.

It is clear from the literature that some form of teambuilding is an important element of developing successful teams. It is estimated that half of all teams fail (Hitchcock & Willard, 1995; Tudor et al., 1996) and that one of the biggest roadblocks to the successful implementation of teams is lack of adequate team training (Bohlander & McCarthy, 1996; Tudor et al., 1996; West & Allen, 1997). Indeed Bohlander and McCarthy (1996) make the point that teams develop and change over time, and as such may require varying types of team training at different stages of their development. As identified by participants in my study and in the literature, one of the crucial times for teambuilding is at team start-up (Bohlander & McCarthy, 1996; Laiken, 1991; Tudor et al., 1996). Bohlander and McCarthy identify the typical issues that should be covered at this point: the advantages of teams; successful team characteristics; goal setting and meeting skills. Laiken (1991) suggests some additional areas that might be important to cover: climate setting, role clarification, and group building. It is in the “storming” period of team development that teams typically get into trouble, and as illustrated by the participants in my study, this is another stage when teambuilding is appropriate. Typical issues to focus on at this stage are: communication skills, conflict resolution, feedback skills, and negotiation skills (Bohlander & McCarthy, 1996; Laiken, 1991). One final
opportunity identified by consultants in my study is assisting teams with problem solving and planning. A recent study of the activities and interventions of OD consultants (Church et al., 1994) confirms that problem-solving sessions and group goal-setting activities were frequently used interventions (ranking third and sixth out of 22 activities). T-groups and gestalt psychology related to group dynamics were rated as the least used activities. It is clear that the kind of teambuilding that is predominant in the nineties is that which focuses on improving the organizational effectiveness of teams.

**Interventions Designed to Improve the Effectiveness of Intergroup Relations**

From my own experience with organizations, both as an internal and external OD consultant, I have found that intergroup conflict is quite commonplace. These problems arise because as groups become more committed to their own goals and group norms, they tend to become more competitive towards one another (Schein, 1994). When this type of competition occurs, there are some very predictable consequences: each group perceives that the other is the enemy; positive interaction between the two groups is reduced or it becomes distorted and inaccurate; and each group begins to see itself as better than the other group (French & Bell, 1995). This type of conflict can therefore become a distinct liability to an organization.

Although the three consultants who mention this type of intervention use different tools to resolve intergroup conflict, they do share an action research approach. Action research is defined as "the process of systematically collecting research data about an ongoing system relative to some objective, goal, or need of that system; taking actions by altering selected variables within the system based both on the data and on hypothesis; and evaluating the results of actions by collecting more data" (French & Bell, 1995,
p. 138). Paul, for example, talks about gathering data, designing a meeting or series of meetings, and feeding back the data to clients so that they can make their own decisions. Fred explains that the more he feeds back data to the clients so that they can make decisions for themselves, the happier he feels about his work. One aspect of action research that they both emphasize is that the OD consultant’s role is not to take action himself or herself, but to assist the client to take action. While action research was not identified as a specific activity by any of the participants in this study, participants alluded it to on several occasions. For instance, when asked what differentiates OD from other fields, Janice explains that what defines OD for her is the practice of getting participants involved in the action/reflection process. In describing his approach to teambuilding, Simon explains how he interviews each team member individually, and then he reports back to the group as a whole and asks them how they would like to proceed. French and Bell (1995) suggest that action research is now a generic process in OD. Indeed, Van Eynde and Bledsoe (1990, p. 27) conclude that it has become “the touchstone of most good OD practice”.

The three participants who mention using interventions designed to improve the effectiveness of intergroup relations are external consultants. It could be that external consultants are seen as preferable for this type of intervention because they are perceived to be more “marginal” to the organization than internal consultants (Church & Burke, 1995). Although there are disadvantages to being perceived as “marginal”, the advantages for externals are that they work hard to maintain their objective and unbiased stance in order to enhance their effectiveness in making observations and appropriate interventions (Church & Burke, 1995). For this type of intervention, internal consultants
might be seen as being too much part of the system, and too susceptible to the cultural influences and political currents of the organization. It is also important to mention that these three external consultants are highly experienced (two consultants had twenty years experience and one consultant had thirty years). Researchers found that consultants with more experience were more likely to facilitate large-scale change. Perhaps it is also true that consultants with more experience tend to facilitate intergroup interventions.

**Interventions Designed to Improve the Effectiveness of the Total Organization**

A number of activities mentioned by participants fall into this category: strategic planning and strategic management, structural change, succession planning, and large-scale change. This segment focuses on the two interventions that were mentioned most frequently by participants: large-scale change and strategic planning. Overall, however, it seems that the external consultants in this study spend more of their time on activities designed to improve the effectiveness of the total organization than do internal consultants, and this will be reviewed in greater detail in the discussion section.

**Large-scale Change**

As outlined in the previous chapter, organizations today face an environment of continuous change. Organizations have had to deal with issues such as the global economic marketplace, rapid technological change, economic uncertainty, and major shifts in demographics and values. Increasingly, an organization's survival has been based upon its ability to quickly and efficiently restructure itself. However, several organizations have begun to realize that making incremental shifts (such as changing a few products, initiating a new department, or implementing a new training program) often creates more problems than it solves (Barczak, Smith, & Wilemon, 1987).
Organizations have therefore been seeking ways to implement large-scale change as a means of surviving and thriving through these unstable times.

This has provided tremendous opportunity for growth as well as complex challenges to OD consultants in the area of large-scale systems change and transformational change. Large-scale systems change is defined as "organizational change that is massive in terms of the number of organizational units involved, the number of people affected, the number of organizational sub-systems altered, and/or the depth of the cultural change involved" (French & Bell, 1995). This type of change also goes by different names such as "whole systems change" or "large-scale organizational change" (Bunker & Alban, 1997). One form of large-scale change is known as "transformational change". Porras and Silvers (1994, p.84) point out that this term is "emerging, ill defined, highly experimental, and itself rapidly changing". However Levy and Merry (1986, p.5) describe organizational transformation as a "multidimensional, multi-level, qualitative, discontinuous, radical organizational change involving a paradigmatic shift". That is, it involves a radical shift in the way people perceive, think, and act within an organization (Porras & Robertson, 1992). Transformational change is propelled primarily through a shift in the organization's vision (Porras & Robertson, 1992; Woodman, 1989), and generally requires a multiplicity of interventions to ensure that the system is also transformed (French & Bell, 1995).

There also seems to be an emergence of new social technologies or interventions in order to support these large-scale changes (Bunker & Alban, 1997). These interventions focus on getting all key players of the system together in a teambuilding, future planning type of session (French & Bell, 1995). One example of this type of
intervention is the future search conference (see Weisbord, 1987). A typical version of this conference involves getting 50 to 60 people together to reflect on the past, present, and future of their system. The process requires that together people build a database, examine it, interpret what they find, and draw conclusions for action. The last task involves developing an action plan and a structure to implement the action plan. The basis for these type of activities is not new, it is merely an extension and interpretation of earlier work in areas such as systems theory and group dynamics.

There is ample evidence of an increased usage of large-scale interventions by OD consultants in the nineties. As early as 1990, Van Eynde and Bledsoe (1990) found that the senior consultants who they interviewed (most of whom were external) were increasingly concerned with macro issues such as large systems change. Similar findings were revealed in telephone interviews with 19 senior, mostly external practitioners (Van Eynde & Coruzzi, 1993). Fifty percent of the practitioners indicated that their work had shifted in focus from interpersonal dynamics towards large-scale systems change. A more recent study of 416 practitioners revealed a similar trend (Church et al., 1994). The single largest focus of OD practitioners’ efforts was on achieving long-term change. Activities included in this area are interventions such as visioning, futuring, and strategic planning. I was not therefore surprised when half of the participants in this study mentioned that they have facilitated large-scale change within organizations. One issue worth noting, however, is that three out of the four participants who mentioned large-scale change were external consultants, and this point will be explored more fully in a later section.
Of the participants who indicate that they facilitate large-scale change, Gordon illustrates the sheer number of interventions involved as well as the complexity of such change. Initially he works with the executives as well as employee groups to help craft a vision and develop organizational values. He then tries to orchestrate a series of interventions that assist with the diffusion of the change throughout the organization. These activities consist of: employee attitude surveys, competency analysis tools, performance appraisal redesign, training programs, executive coaching, and the creation of quality improvement teams. Although in-depth detail is missing, it would seem by the nature of the words used by a couple of participants that they have worked at facilitating change that is transformational in nature. Joan explains that when involved with a five-year project with an addiction research foundation, she conducted “a massive organizational change” which moved the organization “out of a medical model into a disease prevention, risk reduction model with community based thinking”. Sara describes how she worked with an organization that was going through a dramatic shift from “being unionized last year, to being a Crown corporation today, and wanting to be self-sufficient tomorrow”. She explains how she strived to facilitate a “cultural shift” which involved change at every level within the organization and the re-building of commitment towards the new direction.

**Strategic Planning**

Strategic planning activities are mentioned by three internal consultants and two external consultants. Strategic planning refers to “the systematic formulation and articulation of deliberate, premeditated strategies” (Mintzberg & McHugh, 1985), while
the term "strategic management" encompasses not only strategic planning but also the implementation and control of strategy as well (Buller, 1988).

Traditionally, OD has been more directed towards the internal workings of the organization with a focus on improving the human side of the environment (Buller, 1988; French & Bell, 1995). Strategic planning, on the other hand, has focused predominantly on the external environment, and has made the assumption that change is driven by forces outside of the organization (Buller, 1988). Zand (1984) observes that historically there has been considerable separation, and at times conflict, between OD and strategic management people. Several writers in the field have urged that OD consultants become more involved in the strategic management process, the better to enhance the effectiveness of both disciplines (Buller, 1988; Greiner & Schein, 1988; Jelinek & Litterer, 1988). Strategic planning has not always been as successful as it should have been because it ignores the human and psychological aspects in the implementation stage (Buller, 1988). Jelinek and Litterer suggest that OD can assist strategic management both with strategy formulation and implementation. Greiner and Schein (1988) point out that OD could also benefit from closer ties with strategic management because it would help to build a more effective power base for the OD practitioner. Although writers in the field have been calling for a closer connection between strategic management and OD since the eighties, French and Bell (1995, p.218) believe that "OD practitioners are not stepping up to the challenge" quickly enough.

I am therefore encouraged to see that well over half the participants in my study have risen to the challenge of becoming involved in strategic planning and strategic management. Based on comments from Joan and Gordon, it would seem that they have
effectively blended the concepts of OD with strategic management. For example, not only does Gordon try to get executives involved in an extensive process of sorting out their vision, values, and strategic plan, but he also tries to ensure through effective change management that the plan is implemented throughout the organization. Buller (1988) believes that OD consultants are becoming more involved in strategic planning at this point in time because they now recognize the need for a total systems approach, and that they are becoming more aware of the role of the environment in effective change management. It may also be that the demand for strategic planning has increased because organizations frequently have to shift directions to respond to the continuously changing environment in which they operate. As Margaret says, “Everything externally has demanded that the organization really get serious about strategy”.

**Interventions Designed to Improve Transorganizational Development**

Organizations are beginning to realize that many of the tasks, problems, and issues facing them today are too complex and diverse to be addressed solely by their own organization (Cummings & Worley, 1993). Increasingly they are joining together with other organizations to achieve a common purpose such as coordinating services to the public, conducting joint research and development, or gaining access to worldwide markets (French & Bell, 1995). Participants within these multiorganizational structures are able to make decisions for their member organizations, although they still keep their own organizational identities and objectives. Cummings and Worley (1995) point out that these joint ventures tend to be underorganized with the result that members may have problems managing their relationships, controlling joint performance, or maintaining levels of commitment and motivation.
Transorganizational development has evolved to assist with these types of problems. It is “an emerging form of planned change aimed at helping organizations to develop collective and collaborative strategies with other organizations (Cummings & Worley, 1993). Although only one participant, Joan, indicated that she facilitated transorganizational development, I believe that this approach is worth focusing on because it sheds some light on a new area in OD as well as gives some insight regarding how an OD consultant might intervene.

Joan mentions a number of transorganizational projects that she became involved in: she assisted CEOs from three different hospitals plan a joint strategy; she worked with 16 members from different organizations to design a strategy for entrepreneurship; and she helped different organizations to work together to build a major highway in Ontario. Based on her comments, it seems that Joan becomes involved in what Cummings and Worley (1993 p.512) call “the organization stage”. This is the step when enterprises start to organize themselves so that they can work together. Much of the work that Joan performs seems to revolve around planning. She helps participants create a vision of what they want to achieve as well as set short, mid, and long-term goals. However, she also assists them with process issues such as “What will we do when we are in trouble? How will we know that we are in trouble? How often shall we meet? How will we handle conflict?”

Discussion

In reflecting upon and analyzing the data, two overarching themes emerge: there is a difference in intervention use between internal and external consultants in this study;
and OD consultants are continuing to adapt the interventions that they use to meet the changing needs of organizations today.

The Difference in Intervention Use Between Internal and External Consultants

One question raised in the literature is “How different is the practice of the internal from the external OD consultant?” I have therefore looked forward to analyzing the data regarding this section on activities and interventions, as I believe that this was one place where differences might emerge. Indeed, from the interviewees, a difference in intervention use does emerge. External consultants are more involved with organizational level interventions, intergroup relations, and transorganizational interventions. Internal consultants seem to spend more of their time on interventions designed to improve the effectiveness of individuals and groups.

There seems to be conflicting research results in this area. Studies conducted solely on internal consultants reveal that they still spend a considerable amount of time at the individual and group level. For example, when OD consultants were asked to predict what activities and interventions would define the practice of the nineties, they suggested that individual and group level activities would be most important (Fagenson & Burke, 1990). A 1992 study (McMahan & Woodman) confirmed that internal consultants did indeed spend the bulk of their time at the individual and group level. Individual and group level interventions accounted for over 51% of their activities while system level interventions accounted for almost 45% of their time. However studies conducted on both internal and external consultants reveal no substantial difference in intervention usage. For example, a study conducted by Church et al., (1994) identified that the single largest focus of OD practitioners’ efforts was in achieving long-term change. The
differences that they noted were that internal OD practitioners were more likely to be involved in HRD planning and quality of work life issues. A 1999 survey study of 250 internal and external consultants led researchers to conclude that the difference in activity use between internals and externals was minor (Frey, Schroeder, Wheeler, & Johnson).

The difference in activity use between internal and external consultants in this study is notable and therefore worth exploring in greater detail. One viable explanation might be the difference in experience level between the internal and external consultants. Church et al., (1994) found that practitioners with greater experience in the field were more likely to use activities focused on long-term change. The experience level of the external consultants in this study is far greater than that of the internals, (As a matter of interest, my criteria for choosing participants was that they needed to have 10 or more years of experience, so it is pure coincidence that the external consultants are so much more experienced than the internal practitioners). Of the external consultants, two have 30 years of experience, one has 20 years, and one has 14 years of experience. The experience level of the internal consultants ranges from 9 years in the case of Simon to 14 years for Gordon.

Another possible reason for the difference in activity use may be the point of entry of these participants into the OD field. Three out of the four internal consultants entered the OD field by first becoming trainers within the organization. They may therefore have held onto these types of activities as they developed more of an OD focus. The external consultants on the other hand entered the OD field from less related activities. Paul became associated with the OD field while he was still operating as an
ordained minister. Sara was a special education teacher before coming into the field, and Joan was a selections officer with the federal government.

One final factor that might explain the difference in intervention use is the amount of position power that the internal consultants wield within the organization. Three of the internal consultants held positions at the mid level within the organization. Janice was the Manager of the Training and Organizational Development Department, Margaret was a Senior Consultant, and Simon was an Organizational Development Consultant. My point here is that practitioners at the mid level within the organization may not be seen as having enough power to orchestrate organizational interventions such as large-scale change. Only Gordon held a senior position within the organization as Vice president, Human Resources and Organizational Development, and he is the only one who seems to have been very involved in facilitating organizational-level interventions. One of the external consultants, Paul, laments the lack of influence that internal consultants have within the organization. He uses the law profession to explain the differences that he believes exist between internal and external consultants. He likens external consultants to corporate counsel who are hired to give legal advice to the organization at a senior level, and he compares internal OD consultants to the Legal Service Department within the organization who provide their services to different departments. Until internal consultants hold key leadership positions, he does not believe they will be able to truly influence the direction of the organization.

Participants in the study conducted by Van Eynde and Coruzzi (1993) believe that OD must continue to move towards large-scale and macro level changes. Beyond agreement with this comment, the case can be made that we need OD consultants that
focus at the individual and group level as well as those that focus at the organizational level, because a macro level intervention is not going to succeed unless changes occur at the group and individual level. Indeed Herman (1989) asserts that while there are clear uses for theory and methodologies oriented towards the whole system, it is equally important that we continue to emphasize tactical interventions such as teambuilding and conflict management. He cites two reasons for his viewpoint. Also, only a small (but increasing) number of practitioners have access to senior executives and corporate strategic issues. Most other OD consultants tend to intervene at the functional or work-group level. However these interventions are crucial. He further makes the point that even the grandest large-scale intervention requires implementation at the tactical level in order to be successful.

**OD’s Development: Evolutionary or Revolutionary?**

Over the past decade or so, writers such as Jerry Harvey have expressed doubts about the survival of OD as a distinct profession (interview conducted by Allen et al., 1993) while Mirvis (1988) points out that some believe that the field has stagnated. On this point, Mirvis (1990, p.56) argues that throughout its history, OD has followed both “an evolutionary path marked by continuity and step-by-step progress, and a revolutionary path defined by discontinuity and breakthroughs”. Based on an analysis of participants in this study, it seems that there have been both evolutionary and revolutionary developments.

According to Mirvis (1990), most evolutionary models are based on continuity. The evolutionary process is perceived to be linear and orderly, and development unfolds in a series of steps. As participants in my study talk about the activities and interventions
that they use, we see how evolution has occurred in certain areas. Training is one of those areas where a shift has occurred. Traditionally organizations have had a training department whose main output was a catalogue of classes that participants could sign up for or be scheduled in by their manager (Hequet, 1995). Now, half the participants in my study indicate that there has been a shift in how training is used within organizations. As compared to the past, training is now geared towards resolving real-life business problems, and the audience is more likely to be an intact team or different levels within a particular work group. Teambuilding provides us with another opportunity to identify how the intervention has evolved. In the sixties, T-group training, one of the forerunners of teambuilding, was seen as a technique for personal growth. By the seventies teambuilding was focused on creating "community" within organizations (Mirvis, 1990); and by the eighties it is beginning to focus on goal achievement. Focusing on the nineties, participants in my study indicate that teambuilding now has a very clear task focus. They now conduct teambuilding activities in order to help teams work more efficiently and effectively and towards that end they might assist teams with start-up issues, planning and organizing, or in resolving team problems. We also see an evolution in the use of coaching. While coaching has always been part of the OD tool kit, consultants are now specializing in executive coaching to meet the felt needs of organizations in this area.

Revolutionary development, on the other hand, is characterized by discontinuity and it is punctuated by periods of upheaval. It involves breakthroughs in knowledge, and produces radically new solutions to problems which are faced in a new context (Mirvis, 1990). OD has been faced with the challenge of a new context. Not only has society
experienced some major shifts, such as global competition, but organizations in their struggle to survive have looked at ways to transform themselves. Faced with these challenges, we are seeing some revolutionary developments in OD. For example, a couple of participants in this study talk about facilitating change that is so fundamental in nature that it is transformational. Mirvis (1990) argues that transformational change is revolutionary in nature because it requires OD consultants to think quite differently about leadership, as well as the realignment of subsystems and system members. Data from this study points to another way that a revolutionary change is occurring. Most of the participants in this study facilitate strategic planning sessions and one participant is involved in transorganizational development. Traditionally OD has been based on a closed-system model, and the goal has been to improve relationships within the organization because change is seen as internally driven (Buller, 1988). Now a paradigm shift is occurring in that OD consultants are beginning to concentrate on issues outside of the organization such as strategic management and transorganizational development, focusing on alliances between different organizations.

Conclusion

This chapter examines the key activities and interventions used by participants in this study. What emerges is that some of the most frequently used interventions are still those that have been traditionally associated with OD such as training and teambuilding. However, in several instances consultants have adapted these activities to meet the changing needs of organizations today. In these times of constant changes, there have also been some revolutionary developments in the field such as interventions geared towards transformational change and transorganizational change. From the data, a
different pattern of intervention use emerges between the internal and external consultants. External OD consultants seem to focus more on interventions at the intergroup, organizational, and transorganizational level, while internal consultants seem to concentrate on the individual and group level.
CHAPTER SIX:
VALUES AND TRAINING OF OD CONSULTANTS

Introduction

This chapter deals with two important issues for the OD consultant, the values that they cherish and their views on how new entrants to the field should be trained. Because OD has always been a values-driven field, it is relevant to explore how, if at all, consultants’ core values have evolved through this period of ongoing change. A constant theme in the literature has been OD consultant’s concerns regarding the lack of training for new entrants to the field, and Head, Armstrong, and Preston (1996) argue that this lack of adequate training is a weakness that could threaten the development of OD as a discipline. In this chapter the findings regarding values are presented first, followed by the findings regarding training. Then an analysis ensues which connects the findings for both values and training to the literature. In the discussion section, some broader conclusions are drawn.

Findings

Values of OD Consultants

This section presents the findings regarding the values identified by OD consultants in this study. As in previous chapters, the values of internal consultants are outlined followed by the values for external consultants. While honesty and candor are the predominant values revealed by the internal consultants, other values that they identify are: continuous learning, confidentiality, respecting the right of the client to make choices, balancing people and organizational effectiveness, and respect for the individual. Humanistic treatment is very important to the external consultants. Other
values that they espouse are: respecting the client's right to make decisions, having the
topportunity to make a difference, productivity, and lifelong learning.

**Internal Consultants**

Honesty and candor are values that are mentioned by the majority of the internal consultants. Gordon clarifies what he means by these terms:

If you say you are going to do something, then you do it. If you run into a problem and you are open and honest with people - people are adults and they will react that way and deal with it. Somebody said to me "I am old enough and I am ugly enough - tell me like it is". And for some reason we take this paternalistic view that we want to protect employees, we don't want to tell them. But they are adults too, they have kids, they have families. They've had tough decisions to make and if you are honest with them, they may not like the message but they can deal with it.

Janice and Simon also refer to honesty although they suggest that it should be used with caution. Janice explains that one can use candor only "to the extent that in an environment like this, it is politically possible". While believing in honesty as a value, Simon mentions that it should be approached judiciously. He contends that one of the mistakes that people make is saying anything that is on their mind without considering the consequences.

Continuous learning is another value that is mentioned by several participants. Margaret explains that one of her aims is to take risks and learn on an ongoing basis. She clarifies that "it is learning through putting yourself in difficult situations and learning as you go along". For Janice, learning refers to "the possibility that people have to learn about their situations, to reflect on what they do, and basically to learn new skills".

Confidentiality is a key value for Margaret and Simon. Simon explains that "this is a very pragmatic thing. People sharing confidences become useless very quickly".
Margaret reveals that "confidentiality is a huge piece for me - so you know, the whole trust and openness is an important piece".

For Margaret and Simon, respecting the right of the client to chose is a value that they hold dear. Simon expresses his belief in this value in the following way:

Choices and their implications are the theme of all my work. I simply help people understand what the choices are and their implications. I'm not telling them to do anything because that's what gets you into an intellectual debate.

Margaret always makes it clear to clients that her role is to help them resolve their problems - not to lead them anywhere. She believes that she has gained credibility because clients soon learn that she is there to give them assistance and not to get in their way.

A couple of participants discuss the importance of balancing people values versus the organizational perspective. Gordon puts this idea succinctly. He says: "You have got to have a real understanding of the business and you want people to grow, but you want the business to succeed, and it is the merging of these two". Margaret also affirms that both of these values are important. As a matter of fact she is very critical of OD consultants who place their humanistic values above the values of their client organizations. She states that "OD consultants tend to be a lot holier than thou and I don't think they have a hope of surviving in this kind of environment because business is business, and you can work extremely effectively within those constraints".

Participants mention a number of other values. Janice and Simon identify respect for the individual as a strong value that they hold. Simon indicates that "I am very respectful of people. That is, I think people do the best they can with what they've got, and the way that they are looking at the world". He cites an example of when a
facilitator tried to force a participant to reveal some private information in a classroom setting, and the student ran from the room crying. He summarizes by saying that as OD consultants, we do not have the right to embarrass somebody in front of his or her peers. One of Simon’s values is “being true to yourself”. By that he means, “There are certain things that if you compromise, it doesn’t do you or the situation any good...I don’t lie, I don’t abuse people, I try to avoid running my own agendas”. Margaret has always worked in positions where she believe that she makes a difference and that is very important to her. She states: “One of the things is the opportunity to make a difference and to make a qualitative difference, not a quantitative difference”.

External Consultants

Humanistic treatment is a value that is important to all of the external consultants. When explaining what has drawn her to the OD field, Sara shares that “for me it’s around trying to help organizations become more humane, and more honest, and more gentle and kind, but in a more honest and accountable way”. Joan uses the forementioned analogy of the sheepdog to explain the importance of humane treatment. She explains that, “Sheepdogs work in response to something which is a goal. And they use their instincts to help the herd move towards a designated place. And they are very gentle with the sheep. They never damage the sheep”. Paul likewise mentions that one of his values is “the humane treatment of people”. He reveals that it is “taking everything you know about what helps human beings thrive and making sure that at the very least they are not deprived of that in the workplace”. Fred states that his number one value when he enters a client organization is “do no harm”. He is critical of many consulting
interventions because “the majority of what’s done is either downright harmful or minimally distracting”.

One of the values shared by the majority of the external consultants is respecting the client’s right to make decisions. Joan calls this “informed choice”. She spends time with her clients making sure that they have enough information to make educated decisions. She explains that:

I spend a lot of time with people helping them to collect information. Not in a formal way - but by saying “Wait a minute. Are you sure that you are ready to make a decision? You are going to be making such and such. What information are you going to need? Who are you going to need it from? ...Whose going to be affected by this information and how will they react?”

The words that Paul uses to express this value are that “people have the right to influence the decisions that affect them”. Paul clarifies that people have the right to express their views and ideas, to be heard, and to participate appropriately in the decisions that directly impact on their lives and work. Fred talks about this value in terms of “valuing the manager’s authority and accountability”. He becomes angry with consultants whose goal is to turn their client organization into a “learning organization” or a “requisite organization”. He believes very strongly that “the decision is for the client to make, not me” and that his role is to help the clients implement the strategy that they have chosen.

The majority of the participants believe that OD gives them a chance to “make a difference”. Sara explains that she is at the point in her career where she can turn down a potential contract if she believes that the client’s approach is merely a “band-aid” solution. She wants to work on projects that are “going to have an impact at the individual level, at the group level, and hopefully the organizational level”. Paul is also selective regarding the projects that he becomes involved in. He points out that “if I
think that what you are doing makes a positive contribution to the world as I understand it, then I am interested in helping you do that”.

A couple of the external consultants mention “productivity” as a value. Joan values using her time productively, as well as helping her client use their time optimally so that they can move ahead in a constructive way. One of Paul’s goals is to help the organization function as productively as possible. He explains that “the purpose of OD consultation is to help organizations function as they are intended and as they desire”.

Two other values are identified in the data. Sara talks passionately about the importance of lifelong learning both for herself and for her client organizations. For herself, competence is a very important issue, and when she takes on a new project she puts all her effort into doing an exceptional job. She also discusses lifelong learning as it relates to her client organizations: “lifelong learning and the growth and development of us as people and us as systems within the organization. So the whole excitement around what lifelong learning is about - that’s important to me”. Honesty and truthfulness are very important values for Fred. What he means by this is “not lying, not covering up, being up-front with whatever agendas I have”.

**The Training of OD Consultants**

In this segment, participants’ suggestions regarding the training of new entrants to the field are outlined (internal followed by external). When asked to describe the kind of training and development activities that would be appropriate for new entrants to the OD field, they comment on both the content and processes that should be involved. Although content ranged from OD techniques to selling skills, the two most important ingredients identified by internal consultants are business skills and systems theory. The most
Internal Consultants

Content

The predominant area mentioned by the majority of the internal consultants is business skills. Commenting on her own lack of understanding of certain business fundamentals, and how this hampers her, Margaret explains that OD consultants “should really have a fundamental understanding of business”. Gordon agrees that a general business background is crucial. He believes that OD consultants should learn the fundamentals of business such as accounting, marketing, production, and quantitative methods. He mentions that an overview course such as business policy would help consultants understand how to apply fundamental business concepts so that the business could move forward.

Systems thinking stands out as another key learning area. Margaret, reflecting on her own experience, believes that systems theory has helped her understand that “you are actually operating within a system, and the moment that you intervene you have actually shifted that system”. Janice maintains that an understanding of systems theory would enable consultants to “analyze the situation and make connections with what’s going on in the particular area they may be dealing with, and what’s going on in the whole organization or industry”.

Various OD competencies are mentioned. Janice and Gordon assert that different OD tools and techniques should be covered. Gordon points out that not only should OD
theories and interventions be covered but also “the pros and cons of how they work and how to apply them in the adult education aspect”. Janice says that the development of a fairly wide range of tools is important because “I know a number of OD consultants who treat everything like a nail because they have a hammer”. Margaret mentions that the fundamentals of change management should be covered. Janice puts forward three additional topics that should be included: management theory, the history of the labor movement, and group dynamics.

Margaret suggests some other areas that should be an important part of a curriculum for new consultants. She believes that a personal development segment is very important. She makes the point that OD consultants need to know and understand themselves very well; they should be able to assess their strengths and vulnerabilities; and develop a personal action plan to improve themselves. She also mentions that participants should develop the skill sets of selling, customer service, and consulting because she believes that they need to be adept at knowing “when you are selling, when you need to get into customer service, and when you need to consult”.

**Process**

All participants are clear that some form of practicum would be a key element of the training. Gordon believes that aspects of a co-op program would be beneficial. Participants would come together in a classroom setting to learn the theory and apply it to relevant cases. They would then go back into the work setting to try to apply what they have learned. He maintains that intense learning comes from trying to apply new skills in a real-life situation, and learning from your mistakes. Janice explains that the advantage of a practicum is that participants get to experience what it is like to work in a variety of
organizations. Janice, Margaret, and Simon believe that mentoring is the key to making the practicum work. Simon, who favors the practicum above any other process, states that OD students “would do nothing but work with professionals - a wide variety of them. They would simply be in the presence of people who are doing their job well”. These professionals would act as mentors to students, helping them to reflect on their learning and guide them to appropriate readings. Students would be given a workbook that would identify a list of consultants who would be prepared to work with them as mentors.

Participants refer to several other methodologies. The majority favor extensive readings and classroom learning as an appropriate technique. Janice explains that for the training sessions, it would be most appropriate to use practitioners and managers in the field rather than academics. Margaret offers that the classroom sessions would be most beneficial for experiential learning. She says, “I think that learning the skills component needs to be live tested in some kind of way, so I think that I would probably pull people in for that in a practical experience”. Margaret suggests that the knowledge component could be delivered using the interactive CD-ROM, “where you can have somebody actually speaking to you and you can put in your responses”. For the personal development piece, she recommends some form of career assessment as well as a personal mentor.

External Consultants

Content

There is unanimous agreement that systems theory should be a key part of the curriculum for new OD consultants. Paul explains that he would start with the history of systems and move in to systems theory with the focus on the organization as a system.
Joan believes that this kind of content would be invaluable because it would help them understand “the context for whatever they are doing and the system around it”.

Most of the external participants also suggest that group theory and practice would be useful content. Sara submits that some kind of experiential process could be used to help participants understand themselves as well as how groups work. Joan identifies some areas of group theory that might be useful: the stages of group development, and the characteristics of high performing teams. Indeed she insists that OD consultants need to learn how to work in teams more effectively themselves. She believes that it is “important to work in teams in a collaborative way and to own your human reaction to what comes up, and to know how to process them is absolutely essential, and it is a very under-developed skill in all of us”.

Several content areas are mentioned under the umbrella of organizational development. For Fred and Paul, organizational design and structure are important areas of focus, with specific attention being given to the work of Elliott Jaques (1989). Joan and Sara highlight the importance of organizational learning, and specifically the work of people like Argyris and Schön (1996) and Senge (1990). As Sara says, “It’s all the learning stuff to me that would be critically important”. Joan and Paul mention adult education and design. As Joan points out, it is important to learn “the design and facilitation of meetings as learning events, and the design and production of materials as the learning materials”. Joan adds two additional areas: research methodologies and action research methodologies.

For a number of participants, a crucial element would be a section on self-development and personal mastery. For Paul, this section would help participants to
understand themselves as well as how they function as a professional. Sara believes that a personal mastery piece would assist new OD consultants to “really take a look at themselves and what is important to them - help them identify the values that they carry with them and how they would like to have them translated to everyday activities”.

**Process**

The majority of these participants indicate that some form of practicum would be useful. Paul suggests a series of practicums following a period of residential theory sessions. In each practicum, an on-site field supervisor would be present to mentor individual students. Sara stresses that participants should be involved in a form of action learning in which they are encouraged to reflect on such issues as “What worked? What didn’t? What’s happening to me? What am I doing?” While Joan also likes the idea of a practicum, she cautions that she would not be comfortable bringing students who really didn’t know what they were doing to her live clients.

The majority of participants also favored some form of intensive classroom experience. For example, Paul suggests a six-week intensive workshop interspersed with practicums, while Joan specifies a one-week residential program prior to the practicum. During this week she believes that participants would be responsible for doing:

...a lot of reading, a lot of teaching in this kind of context because that’s what you do with clients. There would be one case study after another. Some of them would have live clients to them, some of them would be written and role-played. People would do a lot of bringing their life experience to it.

Joan indicates that a variety of techniques should be used, including films and videos, because people learn in different ways. Sara believes that an experiential piece would be very important in which the “here and now” is used to help then understand how themselves, groups, and systems work. She would like to:
...introduce participants to the NTL stuff. So they’re actually experiencing, and they’re reflecting, and journaling. They are using in-the-moment stuff to help them learn. So it’s not just academic and it’s not just intellectual - it’s also some of the gut stuff.

Analysis

In this segment, the findings regarding values and training are sorted out and related to the relevant literature. What becomes clear in the analysis on values is that humanistic concerns are still central to the work of both internal and external consultants. However there is a slight difference in terms of which values predominate. Internal consultants identify honesty, candor, and confidentiality as key, while for external consultants the predominant value is humanistic treatment. There is considerable agreement between the internal and external consultants regarding the training of new entrants to the field. For example, systems theory, OD interventions, and a personal mastery segment are seen as key content, while classroom training, practicums, and mentoring are perceived to be appropriate methodologies.

Values

Values have always been powerful and yet hidden factors that have guided the practice of OD. As Margulies and Raia (1990, p.30) articulate, “it is the process, guided by the core values, which is really at the heart of organizational development”. Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992) assert that an explicit statement of core values for the nineties is crucial if the OD culture is going to continue to evolve. Church et al. (1994, p.34) clarify that:

...there are only two primary value constructs underlying practitioners’ work with organizations in the field of OD: fostering humanistic concerns such as empowerment, human dignity, and open communication, and focusing on the more traditional business issues including organizational effectiveness, efficiency, and the bottom line.
It is the interplay between these two sets of values that sometimes causes tension in the field.

Different research findings exist regarding the relative importance to OD consultants in the nineties of the humanistic and business effectiveness value sets. Interviews conducted with a panel of 12 experts in the field revealed that humanistic values continue to be at the core of OD efforts (Church et al., 1992; Hurley et al., 1992). However in a study of 416 practitioners, it was the business effectiveness factor that received the highest rating, both in terms of the importance of the value for today and in the ideal (Church et al., 1994). Some experts in the field believe that there has been a waning interest in humanistic values and that the field has shifted to focus on business effectiveness (Van Eynde et al., 1992). Based on responses to an earlier question, “How has the field changed over the last ten years”, I mentally predicted that the most important value for participants in this study would be organizational effectiveness. This made sense to me because the key response to the above question had been that over the last ten years OD consultants have moved from an exclusive focus on people concerns towards organizational effectiveness.

What emerges from the data, however, is that humanistic concerns are still central to the work of OD consultants in my study. Values mentioned by participants that fall under the humanistic umbrella are: humane treatment of people; honesty and candor; respecting the rights of the clients to make decisions; confidentiality; and continuous learning. Humane treatment in this study refers to treating individuals with respect, creating an environment in which human beings can thrive, and ensuring that no harm comes to participants as a result of an OD intervention. Honesty and candor focuses on
treating human beings as adults by being honest about what is happening in the organization so that individuals can make choices for themselves regarding their future direction. In respecting the right of the individual to make choices, OD consultants work to ensure that participants have access to pertinent information, are able to express their ideas and views, and participate appropriately in decisions that directly impact on their lives.

This in many ways is a very reassuring finding because some experts in the field have expressed concern that the OD field is not remaining true to its origins in focusing so heavily on organizational effectiveness. Burke (1997, p.7) states that:

A number of senior practitioners in OD, i.e. those with 20 or more years of experience, believe that the profession has lost its way - that its values are no longer sufficiently honored, much less practiced, and that the unrelenting emphasis on the bottom line has taken over.

As Church et al. (1992) point out it is the humanistic concern for people that differentiates organization development from other competing fields such as management consulting. They note that:

While practitioners may be attentive to and aware of the business related outcomes, human processes should still remain the primary focus and unique value added area if OD as a field is to remain unique. If today’s OD practitioners become tomorrow’s downsizing specialists and efficiency gurus, organization development will have evolved to a form that will be unrecognizable from its origins.

One of the findings of a study conducted on both internal and external consultants was that internal change agents were less likely than external change agents to profess strong humanistic values (Case et al., 1990). It was with considerable interest, therefore, that I compared the major differences in values between the external and internal consultants. While the major values of both internal and external consultants fall into the
humanistic realm, there is certainly a difference regarding which humanistic values predominate. Honesty, candor, and confidentiality are some of the key values mentioned by internal consultants while humanistic treatment seems to be very important to the external consultants. Perhaps this makes sense if we consider some of the key differences in the environments within which they operate. The internal consultant has experienced first hand the kinds of upheavals that organizations have recently endured. Many organizations have undergone major upheavals such as re-organizations, downsizing, mergers, or acquisitions. Employees have therefore had to make some tough decisions or have had some tough decisions imposed upon them, and as Gordon points out, “If you are honest with them, they may not like the message, but they can deal with it”. To him, it comes down to treating people like adults rather than children.

Confidentiality is also an important trait for internal consultants to possess because it builds trust between the employee and consultant on an ongoing basis - and this becomes even more crucial in uncertain times. Case et al. (1990) point out that because external consultants are not typically exposed to the same kind of socialization processes as internal consultants, it is less likely that their personal belief system will be altered, and more likely that their value system will be consistent with traditional OD values. It is not therefore surprising that their key value, humanistic treatment, is very much in line with traditional humanistic values.

It was initially a surprise that only half the participants mentioned business effectiveness as a value. However reflecting on feedback from previous chapters, it is clear that organizational effectiveness is becoming of increasing importance to the OD consultants in this study. It may be that some participants in this study regard
organizational effectiveness as the key to survival rather than a value that they hold dear. As Church and Burke (1995) found in their study, 69% of respondents agreed that the field needed to concentrate more on organizational effectiveness if its practitioners wished to remain useful and viable to organizations in the future. Church et al. (1994) concur that OD consultants have increasingly focused on organizational effectiveness as a way to gain viability and acceptance from their clients. As Hurley et al. (1992) allow, this bottom line pragmatism is “born out of increasing competition, increased pressure to demonstrate results, and a reaction to having been seen by many as ‘touchy-feely’ types concerned with processes and not outcomes”.

Another value that emerges strongly in this study from both the internal and external consultants is “respecting the client’s right to make decisions”. One way to interpret this data is that OD consultants do not see themselves as the change agent, but rather they see themselves as assisting the client in implementing their chosen strategy. Burke (1994) differentiates OD consultants as divided on whom is the actual change agent: the consultant or the client. However he argues that the majority of OD consultants believe that the client determines the direction of the change, and it is the consultant who helps the client get there. Herman (1989, p.17) summarizes this idea well when he says, “It is or ought to be clear after OD’s first 30 years that executives and managers, not OD people, are the ‘change agents’ of organizations”.

One value that the majority of the external consultants focus on and only one internal consultant mentions is the desire to make a positive contribution to society. For example, Margaret expresses her desire to make a “qualitative difference and not a quantitative difference”. Both Paul and Sara are selective in choosing their projects. Both
indicate that they only chose to work on assignments that are going to make a positive contribution. Two points of interest emerge from this data. It is noteworthy that it is mainly external consultants that identify this social orientation as a value. Maybe it is true that because external consultants are not typically exposed to the same kind of socialization processes as internal consultants, their value system will probably be more consistent with traditional OD values (Case et al., 1990). It is also satisfying to be able to acknowledge that even though some consultants are motivated by personal power and gain (Church et al., 1994); others still have more altruistic motives.

Lifelong learning is identified by certain participants as an important value. Margaret and Sara refer to lifelong learning as it relates to the individual consultant, that is, OD consultants need to take risks, experiment, and learn from their experiences on an ongoing basis. Janice talks about the importance of organizational members learning from their experiences and developing new skill sets. Sara focuses on organizational learning and for her it means the ongoing growth and development of the organization as a system. As discussed in the next section on training, organizations and OD consultants are increasingly recognizing the need for both organizations and organizational members to learn on a continuous basis so that they can remain competitive (Crossan & Hulland, 1998; Senge, 1990). It may also be that they are realizing the importance of continuous learning as a natural human activity that contributes to job satisfaction and individual well-being.
Training

Content

Both internal and external consultants identify systems theory and systems thinking as a key part of the curriculum for new entrants to the field. As Janice points out, a systems perspective enables the OD consultant to make connections with what is happening in the specific area, within the overall organization, and within the environment in which the organization operates. This competency has certainly appeared earlier in the literature regarding the training of OD consultants. As early as 1979, Warrick and Donovan identified that a systems view of the organization and the environment in which it operates was an important conceptual skill for OD consultants. More recently it was identified as a core competency by Jane Esper (1990), and as an important part of the curriculum of a prototypical or ideal OD graduate program (Head et al., 1996). As pointed out by participants in this study, and in the literature, a systems awareness has become of increasing importance through the nineties (Church & Burke, 1995; Porras & Robertson, 1992; Van Eynde & Bledsoe, 1990; Van Eynde & Coruzzi, 1993), and is likely to become even more important in the future.

A solid understanding of OD interventions is identified as important. Janice and Gordon believe that a wide range of tools and techniques should be covered, which would encompass the pros and cons of each intervention as well as how to use it effectively. Fred and Paul on the other hand talk more in terms of organizational design and structural interventions. Given the fear by some in the field that OD consultants are becoming too specialized and overly focused in their interventions (Church & Burke,
1995), it would seem important to cover the whole range of interventions in a curriculum for new OD consultants. This area has certainly emerged as being important in previous studies focusing on the training of new entrants to the field. Eubanks et al. (1990) conducted a competency analysis of the OD consultant and identified “implementing the interaction” as the most frequently used competency. “Intervention techniques” was also identified as one of the five core courses when a panel of experts were asked to design an ideal graduate program for OD consultants (Head et al., 1996).

A significant number of participants highlight the importance of a self-development or personal mastery segment. The key focus here would be in helping people understand themselves, their strengths and limitations, and what motivates them. Self-development surfaces strongly in the literature regarding the training of OD consultants. Varney (1980) cites self-awareness as one of the key developmental needs for OD consultants. He defines this as “being aware of one’s own set of values, beliefs, ideas, general emotional state, intellect and all those things that make up the total person” (1980, p.32). Esper identifies a strong sense of self and personal values as well as being “present and not needy” as key competencies (1990, p.284). Participants in the 1996 study conducted by Head et al. identified personal growth and understanding as the most important method of becoming an OD professional. Clearly a self-development segment should be a part of the OD curriculum, especially because participants in a recent study identified that practitioners needed to be more aware of their own behavior and internal states (Church & Burke, 1995).

An area mentioned by a couple of participants that is worth noting is Organizational Learning. Although Argyris and Schön (1978) have been writing in this
area since the seventies, it is only in the nineties that many organizations have become interested in this concept. As Peter Senge points out in his book *The Fifth Discipline* (1990, p.4), "The organizations that will truly succeed in the future will be the organizations that discover how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at all levels in an organization". While there is not as yet a consensus regarding what organizational learning is or how it occurs (Huber, 1991; Crossan & Hulland, 1998), some groundbreaking work is being conducted by Dr. Crossan and her associates at the Richard Ivey School of Business in London, Ontario. They propose that organizational learning should include learning between individuals and groups as well as learning that becomes embedded in the organization in terms of systems, structures, and procedures. Furthermore, organizational learning needs to consider the flow of learning between the three levels, both from the individual to the organizational level, and from the organizational to the individual level (Crossan & Hulland, 1998). In the future, it is likely that this will be an important area to be included in a curriculum for new OD consultants.

An intriguing difference emerges regarding internal versus external consultants' perceptions of the training that new entrants to the field should receive. All of the internal consultants regard business fundamentals as an important competency while it is not mentioned by any of the external consultants. When internal consultants refer to business fundamentals, they are talking about a high-level understanding of how organizations operate. Jane Esper (1990, p.291) highlights what this competency is all about:

...knowing the business issues, the key success factors, the market place, talking in the client's language, not Organizational Development jargon; knowing how to
get committed customers, knowing where a client’s pain is coming from, whether it is an inability to compete on cost and quality, knowledge changes or government regulations.

Perhaps this difference in perception regarding the importance of business skills is again attributable to the environments in which they operate. Internal consultants, as organizational members, tend to adopt the values, norms, and imperatives of the organization (Case et al., 1990). It is likely that the organization expects them to be knowledgeable about business issues so that they can make recommendations that are appropriate to the organization. Whatever the reasons for this difference in perception regarding the importance of business skills, an argument can be made that one part of the OD curriculum should focus on how organizations function.

Group theory and practice emerges more strongly from the external practitioners than from the internal consultants. This refers both to being able to facilitate teambuilding as well as being an effective team player. This has certainly been identified as an important skill in the earlier literature regarding the training of OD consultants. “Managing the group process” was identified as a core competency in a competency analysis conducted on Organization Development Consultants (Eubanks et al., 1990). Group facilitation was identified as one of five key courses in a prototype or ideal graduate program developed by participants in a 1996 study (Head et al.). What is puzzling is why external consultants view this as more important than internal consultants. It may simply be that they have been involved in more teambuilding activities than the internals. Or it may be that they recognize the importance of this skill, because as external consultants coming into an organization, they are frequently called
upon to work in a collaborative environment and as Joan states, “This is an
underdeveloped skill in all of us”.

**Process**

There is a remarkable similarity regarding the processes and methods that
consultants believe should be used to help people become OD professionals. Three key
elements emerge as being important: classroom experience, practica, and effective
mentoring.

Although participants differ regarding the length of the classroom experience,
most are in agreement that this would be an important process to use. A couple of
participants recommend periods of classroom experience interspersed with practica,
while one suggests an up-front classroom experience of approximately one week
followed by a practicum. Sara and Margaret favor an experiential learning approach in
which participants can use the “here and now” to process their learning about individuals,
groups, and systems. The case study approach appeals to Gordon and Joan in that
participants would be working with real-life cases either in a written or role-play format.

Previous research (Head et al., 1996) has identified the classroom experience as an
important method for training OD consultants. However as pointed out in this study, the
learning should be highly experiential using real-life situations as much as possible.

Participants also identify practica as an important method to use in the training
and development of OD practitioners. The consensus of opinion is that the practicum
should come after the classroom experience so that participants can apply the theory that
they have learned. A couple of other benefits of the practicum are outlined by
practitioners: students would have an opportunity to experience different organizations,
and they could learn by watching experienced OD practitioners in the field. Certainly the idea of a practicum is not new in the literature regarding the training of OD professionals. Shepard and Raia (1981) strongly supported a practicum as part of the training for OD consultants. Head et al. (1996, p.59) concluded their research by saying that educational programs for OD professionals “need to go far beyond the classroom and provide opportunities that test character, promote personal growth and insure a wealth of ‘real world’ experiences”. They therefore believe that a supervised practicum is an essential element of a training program for new entrants to the field.

Several participants suggest that mentoring would be an important element in the training of new practitioners, especially in the practicum. Simon believes that a mentor could act as a role-model, help students reflect on what they have learned, and guide them to appropriate readings. Again the concept of mentoring is not new. Shepard and Raia (1981) talk about supervised practicums, and Head et al. (1996) identify apprenticeships and mentorshops as important ways to learn to be an OD consultant. Indeed in a 1992 study (Church et al.), mentorship was identified as the key process for transferring skills, competencies and values to new practitioners. Yet, as pointed out by participants in this study, there are too few mentors for the number of people entering the field. If this field is to thrive, more experienced practitioners need to take the time to mentor those who are new to the field.

**Discussion**

Two issues are highlighted in the discussion section: the ongoing tension that exists within the OD community because of its conflicting values and the importance of
updating the training for new OD consultants as a way of helping the field remain healthy and grow in an appropriate manner.

As pointed out by participants in this study and in the literature, there are inherent tensions that OD consultants face when they attempt to meet both humanistic and business effectiveness concerns (Burke, 1994; Church et al., 1992; Hurley et al., 1992; Margulies & Raia, 1990). Individual Practitioners can experience stress and internal tension as they attempt to meet both sets of goals (Church et al., 1994). The choice of a particular intervention as well as the approach taken to the OD consultation can force the consultant to prioritize one of the two values over the other. This can cause internal conflict for the consultant if the actions that he/she has taken do not reflect his/her belief system. Church et al. (1992) identify that value differences can cause fractures within the OD field. For instance, they submit that some see their work in more spiritual terms; others are simply interested in improving the bottom line; and others have specialized in techniques such as leadership or team building. They believe that it is the extent to which these tensions divide practitioners that will determine the future of the field. In this study, there is definitely evidence of this kind of tension. For example, Margaret criticizes some practitioners because they have a "holier than thou" attitude and because they try to impose their value system on the client. Fred is very critical of many OD consultants as he believes that they are still focusing on creating an inclusive environment within organizations, and because of this, they frequently use inappropriate techniques when attempting to resolve client needs.

Several writers and researchers in the field contend that one of the key challenges facing OD in the future is to learn how to effectively balance both the humanistic and
business effectiveness values (Herman, 1989; Sansgiri & Gottlieb, 1992; Van Eynde, Church et al., 1992). For example (and to reiterate an earlier observation), Herman asserts that OD needs both the “hard” (concern for business effectiveness) and the “soft” (humanistic concerns) because the “hard can continually challenge the soft to provide evidence of its results, and the soft can equally challenge the hard to maintain its humanity and spirit” (1989, p.19). Along the same lines Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992) recommend that OD consultants adopt a “Janusian” perspective that integrates these seemingly opposing values. Perhaps OD consultants can learn from the work of Barry Johnson (1992) on polarity management. He explains that we get into difficulty when we perceive that we are dealing with a problem that needs to be solved and we decide to choose either one or the other of the polarities: business effectiveness or humanism. If we choose to see it as a polarity to manage, then we choose to encompass both humanism and business effectiveness and we get the benefits of each while appreciating the limits of each. It is not a static situation, but rather an ongoing flow of shifting emphasis from one to the other and back again. Given that several participants in this study mentioned both humanistic and business effectiveness values, it is likely that that they already see it as a polarity to manage. As Gordon, one of the internal consultants in this study points out, “you want people to grow, but you want the business to succeed, and it is the merging of these two”.

Randolph et al. (1979) point out that in the best of times, training OD consultants is a difficult task, because being an OD consultant is a difficult undertaking. In the last 20 years the OD consultant’s work has become even more complex because organizations and OD consultants have had to adjust to a constantly changing environment. It is
therefore crucial that the training of OD consultants be examined and updated to reflect the current reality. It does not seem that this has as yet happened. For example, although graduate school plays a very important role in the training of new entrants to the field, participants in a recent study indicated that it was not performing up to expectations (Head et al., 1996) and participants in other studies have lamented about the poor quality of training for new OD consultants (Church & Burke, 1995; Church et al., 1992). Head et al. (1996, p.52) argue that “Clearly, either we as a field need to improve the novice consultant’s abilities, or we, as a field will never have OD’s image keep pace with its technological growth”.

Participants in this study have some useful suggestions for universities and professional associations regarding how they can update their current OD programs. Their curriculum recommendations range from giving greater emphasis to content such as systems thinking, to including new topics such as organizational learning. In terms of process, participants emphasize the importance of both classroom training and practical experience through the use of practicums. Although values were not mentioned by participants, an argument can be made that this should be an important part of the curriculum. As Gellermann, Frankel, and Ladenson (1990, p.6) declare, “The commitment of professionals to the values central to their professions is what leads society to grant them - individually and collectively - the authority and resources to pursue their values in the service of others”.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has analyzed and discussed the findings relating to two sets of data, the values that OD consultants espouse and their perception regarding how new entrants
to the field should be developed. What emerges, is that although there has been a shift towards business effectiveness, humanistic concerns are still central to the work of participants in this study. Given that the training of new OD consultants is a concern to many in the field, participants in this study have given some positive suggestions regarding how the training can be updated. They recommend that certain topics that have traditionally been part of the curriculum should be maintained (for example, OD techniques and methodologies); other areas should receive greater emphasis (e.g., Systems thinking); and some new topic areas should be added (e.g., organizational learning). They also advocate that while some of the skills and knowledge can be learned in the classroom, on the job learning is crucial in this field and this can be achieved through supervised practica.
CHAPTER SEVEN:
THE POSTMODERN ENVIRONMENT AND THE OD FIELD

Introduction

This chapter integrates some of the conclusions reached in the three previous chapters that have presented and analyzed the findings. The analysis is framed selectively in terms of certain aspects of postmodernism. Postmodernism was chosen as an appropriate framework because it focuses on the socioeconomic context that exists today. The postmodern-socioeconomic context is discussed as it relates to the key trends identified by participants in this study as having had an impact on the OD field over the last ten years. None of these participants explicitly refer to postmodernism per se, yet a careful look at the gist of their remarks suggests they are adapting to two characteristics of the postmodern environment, increasing complexity and conflict. This chapter concludes by identifying some of the key challenges that still face the OD field.

Postmodernism: A Rough Sketch

There is considerable ambiguity and controversy over exactly what is meant by postmodernism and its related terms in the social sciences, and this situation elicits vigorous and widespread debate across intellectual disciplines (Bagnall, 1994; Jennings, 1995; Smart, 1993). For example, as a concept postmodernism is used in complex and confusing ways to denote quite different theoretical and political approaches. As Bagnall (1994) points out, some would say that in the postmodern view, truth ceases to exist while others argue that it has merely become more problematic. Some theorists believe that postmodernity has lost its sense of history while others assert that its strong
Historicity is one of its most notable characteristics. Theorists also disagree regarding when postmodernism originated as well as its relationship to modernism. Many believe that it originated in the sixties, although some believe that it originated earlier. There is also disagreement regarding whether the modern and postmodern overlap and whether postmodernism signals a genuine break from modernity or is actually a logical continuation (Lupton, 1998; Rosenau, 1992). Indeed, the very existence of a condition called postmodernism is open to dispute (Jennings, 1995).

Given the confusion over such terms as "modernism" and "postmodernism", it is important that I clarify how I am going to use each in this chapter. According to Rosenau (1992), modernism as a driving pressure entered history approximately four hundred years ago as a progressive force that hoped to free mankind from the problems of ignorance and irrationality. It can be defined as "a culture that is informed by a belief in and commitment to a world that can be objectively represented to autonomous knowing and acting subjects through disciplined inquiry - rational or empirical" (Bagnall, 1994, p.4). This view holds the notion that the truth is thereby progressively better revealed and each new truth displaces lesser knowledge. Scientifically and technically, it is the search for more comprehensive ways of harnessing and controlling nature because it is assumed that people will benefit from this knowledge. Ethically, it is the search for universal principles which can be used as guidelines for civilized action (Bagnall, 1994).

Increasingly the concept of "modernism" has come under attack. One of the key criticisms of the modernistic era is that science has failed to remedy the problems of the twentieth century. Indeed, attention is more and more focused on the abuse and misuse of modern science. Moreover, the modern record consisting of world wars, concentration
camps, genocide, world-wide depression, and an increasing gap between rich and poor makes it hard for us to believe in the idea of progress (Rosenau, 1992). Smart (1993) points out that whereas at one point we might have considered ourselves to be in possession of secure answers and solutions, we are now more likely to encounter doubts and questions. It is this process of questioning modernistic resolutions that have been diagnosed as symptomatic of an existence of a postmodern condition. For the purpose of this research, postmodernism will be defined as “a form of reflection upon and a response to the accumulating signs of the limits and limitations of modernity. Postmodernity is a way of living with doubts, uncertainties and anxieties which seem increasingly to be the corollary of modernity” (Smart, 1993, p.12).

Before identifying the way that I will use selected concepts of postmodernism, it is important to acknowledge some of the challenges that postmodernism has posed to theory in the social sciences. Rosenau (1992) asserts that almost all postmodernists rejects truth as a goal because it refers to order, rules, and values, depending on logic and reason, which postmodernists challenge. Postmodernists believe that reality is socially and politically constructed, and that knowledge and power are inextricably linked. Rosenau (1992, p.80) points out that they question the value of truth because they:

... consider it impossible to evaluate the adequacy of knowledge claims with any certitude. All criteria for distinguishing between truth and falsehood, for evaluating theory, require that one choose between categories, or they expect one to establish a hierarchy of values that designate some as good and others as bad. Postmodernists reject such distinctions and rather emphasize multiple realities and the view that no single interpretation of any phenomenon can be claimed as superior to others.

She acknowledges, however, that certain postmodernists do accept the possibility of specific, local, personal, and community forms of truth. While these ideas certainly
warrant further exploration as they relate to fields such as OD, it is beyond the scope and purpose of this study to explore them at this point.

In this chapter I am going to use some concepts of postmodernism as a way of reflecting on the socioeconomic context, the kind of environment that exists, and its implications for the changing role of the OD consultant. My intellectual stance in this chapter is not therefore a postmodern one, but rather certain aspects of postmodernism provide an appropriate framework in which to interpret and summarize the conclusions of my study.

While I am using a postmodern lens, it is important to state, however, that the participants in this study are at times very modernistic in their outlook. Bagnall (1994, p.4) points out that modernists believe in “universal truths” and in the “superiority of some beliefs over others”. Fred explains that a belief in the truth drives him, and he was drawn to Elliott Jaques’ work because he finally had a grounding in a theory and “in a science that underlies my work”. Some participants in this study identify that certain beliefs are superior to others, when they explain that “systems thinking” is a concept that is becoming very important to them. As an overall theme, participants in this study demonstrate their belief in the superiority of two key values: humanistic and organizational effectiveness values. Finally, it seems clear that certain OD consultants believe in a sense of progress (Bagnall, 1994), when they justify why it was important to advance from focusing predominantly on people issues a decade ago, to focusing on both people and organizational issues today.
The Postmodern Socioeconomic Context

Writers in the postmodern field believe that we are witnessing a major social revolution, which has been created by a combination of complex inter-related socioeconomic, political and technological transformations (Hargreaves, 1994; Lyotard, 1986; Smart, 1993). As Hargreaves (1994, p.22) elaborates:

The social transformations we are witnessing on the cusp of the millennium extend far beyond the corporate world alone. Extensive changes in economic and organizational life are being accompanied by and also interrelated with equally profound changes in the organization and impact of knowledge and information, in the global spread of ecological danger along with growing public awareness of that danger, in the geopolitical reconstruction of the global map, in the restitution and reconstitution of national and cultural identities, and even in the redefinition and restructuring of human selves.

He further points out that these trends are not entirely clear or consistent, and that "their components and consequences are often ironic, paradoxical, and perverse" (1994, p.22).

Most writers would agree that at the heart of this transition is the globalization of economic, political, and social activity (Hargreaves, 1994). As Smart (1993, p.138) claims:

Alongside the development of a global economy; the growth of transnational corporations, financial institutions and networks; new communications and information technologies…and increases in international travel and the migration of populations, parallel transformations in social and cultural life have been identified.

Hargreaves (1994) talks more explicitly about how globalization has had an impact upon organizations:

Corporations have begun to spread their interests and expertise across national boundaries, utilizing local markets, labor resources and land opportunities, and maintaining instantaneous connection and coordination across the whole network of operations through modern communications technology (1995, p.53).
Participants in this study outline how globalization has had an impact upon their client organizations. Those working in the public sector point out that these organizations, with the goal of becoming more competitive, have assessed each service that they deliver to determine whether they can become outsourced or privatized. As a consequence, they have "downsized", a process that has created a more stressful and "mean spirited" environment for participants. In the private sector, corporations face competition from markets as diverse as Japan and Mexico, and this heightened awareness of their competition has encouraged them to really focus on their strategic direction.

Hudson (1998) asserts that we are in the midst of an information revolution driven by the convergence and proliferation of both communication and information technologies. With the increasing centrality of communication networks, information technology, media, and advertising, postmodernists and others argue that we have moved from the industrial age to the information age (Greengard, 1998; Smart, 1993). One of the consequences of the information age is the intense compression of time and space.

As Hargreaves (1994, p.81) maintains:

Postmodernity is characterized by technological leaps which make communication instantaneous, distance irrelevant and time one of the most precious commodities on earth. Fax machines, modems, mobile phones and lap top computers are the technological harbingers of commercial instantaneity; fast food, microwaves, and same-day cleaning their life-style accompaniments.

Participants in this study reflect upon the impact of these technological leaps on their client organizations. They point out that time has indeed become compressed in that organizations recognize the need for a rapid response to their environment. From an employee perspective, technology has changed people's jobs, the way they perform their jobs, and the way that they think about their jobs.
We are also witnessing a major shift in the contract between employer and employee within organizations. As one of the participants in my study concludes, “there has been an earthquake in the cosmic order of things in terms of stability of employment and career”. In the past, employers have offered long-term employment in exchange for company loyalty (Hargreaves, 1994). This began to change in the seventies and eighties when organizations radically restructured in order to survive, and employees witnessed company closures, strategic breakups, and compulsory redundancies. As participants in this study point out, by the late nineties these kinds of actions have shaken a core sense of trust between employee and employer. Employees no longer have faith that the organization will provide for their long-term employment needs. Consequently, they do not feel a sense of loyalty towards the organization today. They take responsibility for their own careers, and tend to think more strategically about themselves, their organization, and their future employment. As Hargreaves (1994) holds, the traditional bond between the employee and the organization has been irreparably broken.

The Postmodern Environment as it Relates to the OD Consultant

Several writers have discussed the impact of the postmodern environment on fields such as teaching, adult education, and public administration (Bagnall, 1994; Garrick, 1994; Hargreaves, 1994; Lupton, 1998; Rosenau, 1992). A couple of themes emerge from an analysis of these writings: complexity and conflict characterize the postmodern world in which these professionals operate (Jennings, 1995; Hargreaves, 1994; Rosenau, 1992). Based on an analysis of the findings in this study, these two terms would also apply to the world of the OD consultant. Not only are the organizations that they serve facing complex challenges, but the work of the OD consultant is increasing in
complexity. Discord is inevitable in times of rapid change, and two such conflicts have emerged in my analysis of OD consultants: the tension between the “structuralists” and the “dynamists”, and the ongoing values conflict that exists between organizational effectiveness and people effectiveness.

**Increased Complexity**

Over the past 20 years, the workplace has changed more than one could ever imagine (Greengard, 1998). As discussed earlier, environmental pressures such as globalization, technological changes, and political activities have created an environment of constant change, in which organizational restructuring remains a constant threat. Jane Esper (1990, p.301) points out that organizations today face “environments characterized by ‘permanent white water’ with constant unpredictable change where ‘refreezing’ is impossible, or at least inappropriate”. Organizational change is now so complex that it no longer works to establish firm objectives, fixed plans, and concrete programs of change. Given such turbulent business conditions, Garratt (1987) contends that an organization’s ability to learn on an ongoing basis may be the only true source of competitive advantage.

Reorganizations, relocations, mergers, and acquisitions have been the organizational response to such turbulent environmental conditions. For example, 1997 saw a record $1 trillion in mergers involving U.S. companies (O’Connell, 1999). Organizations have also realized that some of the challenges facing them are too vast to be handled independently, and they have consequently engaged in joint ventures with other organizations.
The unpredictable changes and resultant complexities that organizations are forced to deal with today are reflected in the work of the OD consultant. For example, organizational diagnosis has become more involved and complicated than ever before. As some of the participants in my study indicate, they increasingly take a systemic perspective when looking at organizational problems. They recognize that the problem is with the organizational system, and accordingly they realize a need to understand the interconnectedness of all parts of the system in order to intervene effectively. In the past, data were primarily collected from people directly involved in the implementation effort. Now from a systemic viewpoint, it is becoming increasingly common for OD consultants to collect data from people at different levels within the organization as well as people external to the company such as customers, contractors, and suppliers (Van Eynde & Bledsoe, 1990). Van Eynde and Bledsoe (1990) highlight two other ways in which organizational diagnosis is now more elaborate. Different types of information are available to the OD consultant. For example, computers can give the consultant access to information such as market analysis, culture surveys, and selected personnel data. The second trend relates to the point when diagnosis occurs. The usual practice has been to conduct an in-depth diagnosis prior to an off-site retreat. However, because the pace of change has accelerated, managers do not always have time anymore for pre-retreat interviews. The OD consultant sometimes finds that the only time available to conduct any diagnosis activity is at the beginning of the retreat. The consultant then has to work with utmost dispatch to make any adjustments to the agenda.

Not only has organizational diagnosis become more elaborate, but also organizational interventions are becoming increasingly complex. For example,
organizational change efforts are now more extensive and broader-based as more and more OD consultants manage large-scale change efforts. As participants in my study illustrate, large-scale change is complicated in that it involves a number of interventions at different levels within the organization. OD consultants are also becoming involved in transformational change, which requires a paradigmatic shift in thinking as well as a multiplicity of interventions. The tool kit of the OD consultant is becoming more multifaceted as new interventions and ways of working are developed (e.g., the future search conference) to support large-scale change and transorganizational development.

Conflict

Conflicts are typical features of the postmodern environment, and they are certainly apparent in the OD field. Two conflicts have been discussed in earlier chapters of this study: the disagreement that exists between the “structuralists” and the “humanists”, and the ongoing tension regarding the two primary OD values, business effectiveness versus people effectiveness. In the first instance, the debate focuses primarily on what should constitute the work of the OD consultant. In the second instance, the duality of values that exist in OD create tension both between OD consultants, and within the value base of the OD consultant.

The conflicts that emerge from this study highlight only some of the tensions that manifest themselves in the field today. Church, Hurley, and Burke (1992) identify several other stresses that exist within the OD community, for example: the tension between projecting one’s own values and beliefs on the client organization versus being the facilitator of the client’s interests; the tension of focusing on large-scale systems change versus focusing on a limited number if interventions (such as training); and the
tension of being driven by ego gratification and personal success versus focusing on traditional humanistic values as a consultant. The authors contend that it is the manifestation of these types of discords that result in the fracturing of practitioners into distinct camps. They further point out that it is the extent to which these conflicts separate or unify practitioners that will determine the future of the field.

OD consultants also play an important role in helping to resolve the conflicts that arise within the organizations that they serve. This intervention is called third-party peacemaking (French & Bell, 1995) and it addresses a situation in which two individuals or groups are engaged in a conflict that has become a barrier to productivity (Smither, Houston, & McIntire, 1996). The role of the OD consultant is to facilitate a positive discussion or dialogue between the two parties. The OD practitioner intervenes both directly and indirectly to help the parties in conflict diagnose the source of their problems and negotiate a resolution (Smither, Houston, & McIntire, 1996). As outlined in this study, OD consultants are engaged by organizations to resolve conflict between individuals, team members, teams, and departments. It is likely that in the future, as more and more organizations form alliances with others, OD consultants will also be contracted to help resolve inter-organizational conflicts.

The Adaptation of OD Consultants to the Postmodern Environment

Hargreaves (1994, p.63) argues that those most likely to prosper in the postmodern environment are characterized by "flexibility, adaptability, creativity, opportunism, collaboration, continuous improvement, a positive orientation towards problem-solving, and commitment to maximizing their capacity to learn about their
environment and themselves". It seems to me that the participants in this study have demonstrated several of these characteristics as outlined below.

Participants in this study have demonstrated their ability to adapt to a continuously changing, and complex environment in several ways. They have increasingly focused on organizational effectiveness. As Gordon says:

So the key intervention that you need is to understand business. So you've got to talk in their (executives) terms ... And if you get down to these terms, then they start talking to you as an equal and you have more influence.

Participants in this study believe that OD consultants need to have three abilities in this area. They believe they need to understand: the environment in which the organization functions; how organizations operate in general so that they can use the same language as the decision makers; and how the specific organization that they are working with operates.

The ability of the OD consultants in this study to adapt has also been evident in their usage of interventions. While still using many of the traditional activities associated with OD, they have adjusted them to meet the current needs of the organizations and environment in which they work. For example, activities like teambuilding and training are no longer used in a vacuum. Rather they are used to help organizations deal with real-life business issues and to resolve existing problems. Coaching is another example of having evolved to meet current business needs. While coaching has long been one of the OD methodologies, some OD consultants are now conducting executive coaching as there has been a mounting need for this activity.

It also seems that the OD field is undergoing some fundamental shifts as it responds to the changing needs of its environment. Traditionally OD has focused on
improving relationships within the organization. Participants in my study now seem to be taking a broader perspective as they help organizations relate to their environment through the use of interventions such as strategic management and transorganizational development. Transformational change requires that OD consultants think in new ways about how to facilitate change and new interventions such as appreciative inquiry are emerging to meet this need.

OD has some key advantages which help it to adapt readily to environmental forces: it is a relatively young field of endeavor and it is not hampered by the many restrictions that come along with formal professional status. Hargreaves, in discussing the teaching profession, interprets that its ability to adapt to the postmodern world is hampered by "a modernistic, monolithic school system that continues to pursue deeply anachronistic purposes within opaque and inflexible structures" (1994, p.3). OD is not only a comparatively young field, having originated in the late fifties to early sixties, but it was born into a postmodern environment of ongoing change. It has responded to that environment and to its own internal growth as a field by being in a state of continuous evolution and growth. Although most OD practitioners regard themselves as professionals, scholars in the field argue that they are not yet a profession or that they are only in the fledgling stages of becoming one (Gellermann, 1993; Gellermann, Frankel, & Ladenson, 1990). While this comparative immaturity has some disadvantages, the advantages are that the field is not bound by a set of standards that define professional practice, nor has it over-institutionalized and rigidified, like some professions such as law and medicine (Gellermann, 1993).
As Hargreaves (1994, p.63) asserts, those who adapt most effectively to the postmodern environment are characterized by “a positive orientation towards problem-solving, and commitment to maximizing their capacity to learn about their environment and themselves”. OD practitioners have always demonstrated a positive orientation towards learning as demonstrated by the field’s ongoing use of action learning, which has been used to help organizations resolve problems and to generate new knowledge. A new addition to the OD methodologies, appreciative inquiry, attempts to foster organizational learning and problem solving by focusing on what is going well in an organization so that participants can envisage a collectively desired future (McLean, 1996). Many OD participants have embraced the concepts of the learning organization (Senge, 1990) and of organizational learning (Crossan & Hulland, 1998; Crossan, Lane, & Hildebrand, 1993) as they acknowledge that organizations and the individuals within them must learn on an ongoing basis in order to be successful.

The Challenges Facing the OD Field

Although participants in this study have demonstrated their adaptability, the OD field as a whole still faces some complex challenges. These challenges relate to developing a macro (large-scale change) as well as a micro (individual and group level change) level focus and to continuing to set some clear boundaries for the field.

The OD field needs to continue to move towards large-scale systems change. Although a significant number of participants in this study indicate that they facilitate large-scale change, it is interesting to note that not all of them do. However, the knowledge base in this area has come a long way. As Burke (1994, p.200) puts forward:

Now we are beginning to understand much more clearly what the primary levers are for initiating and implementing organization change, levers such as culture,
values, key leadership acts (providing a vision and clear sense of direction), the reward system, and management/executive programs.

Nevertheless, it still seems that OD consultants need a firmer grasp of systems knowledge and they need to increase their capacity to work in meaningful ways with large groups of people (Van Eynde & Coruzzi, 1993). Professionals in the OD field also need to increase their understanding of how organizations learn. Crossan and Hulland (1998) write that in order for organizations to move forward, learning needs to occur at three levels: individual, group, and organizational. Organization learning needs to consider the flow of learning among the three levels, because important learning capabilities can become immobilized at any one of the levels.

A typical criticism leveled at the OD field is that it is not as theory or as research based as it should be. For example, in Esper's study (1990), participants cited their desire to have more coherent theories and substantive knowledge of how organizations develop. In this study, Fred and Paul criticize OD because it lacks a unifying theory and requires more research based on a quantitative, scientific approach. While it is true that no unifying theory exists, the learning curve regarding the change process continues to be steep (Burke, 1995; Woodman, 1989). However, as Woodman puts forward, "In general, the field needs stronger linkages among theory, research, and practice on a variety of dimensions" (1989, p.223). Participants in a recent study indicate that organizations such as the Organization Development Network can assist with this process by "advancing the intellectual frontier of the field" (Van Eynde & Coruzzi, 1993, p.12) and by "conducting research on critical trends" (Thorn & Hogan, 1993, p.6).

The field needs to express its position regarding issues of power and control more clearly than it has done in the past. One of the central conflicts revealed in this study is
about power and control. For example, the “structuralists” believe that hierarchy provides the most appropriate framework for many organizations. Hierarchy, by its very nature, emphasizes “power-over” others rather than “power-with” them (Laiken, 1999). Yet many in the field contend that hierarchy is only one way to structure an organization and that there are other alternatives such as a team-based framework. Such alternatives emphasize collaboration and the sharing of power rather than power and control over individuals (Laiken, 1999). From the viewpoint of OD consultants it might also be useful to clarify these issues. Recent research identified that some consultants are motivated by personal power and gain (Church et al., 1994; Church et al., 1992). As discussed earlier in the chapter, this led Church et al. (1992) to conclude that one of the tensions that exists in the field today is between “being driven by ego gratification, personal success and financial rewards versus championing traditional humanistic values” (p. 20). An explicit statement of where the field stands in relation to issues of power and control would provide some necessary clarity to those in the field as well as to those who are entering it.

All fields experience tension and the OD field is no exception. However, what may differentiate OD from other endeavors is that these tensions seem to create deep divisions within the community, and can potentially threaten its development as a field (Church & Burke, 1992). One example of a deep division in this study is illustrated by Fred’s words. He criticizes some in the OD field because they “blame the victim, ignore the shareholder, and maybe even more intensely have an abhorrence of science because science is about truth and falseness. And the word false is politically incorrect”. It may be that because the field is so young, it has not learned how to reconcile its differences in such a way that the community comes to terms with them. Perhaps the best advice on
how to handle unresolvable differences comes from the work of Barry Johnson (1992). He suggests that we treat unresolvable differences as a polarity to manage rather than a problem to solve. He says:

Polarities to manage are sets of opposites, which can’t function well independently. Because the two sides of a polarity are interdependent, you cannot chose one as a solution and neglect the other. The objective of polarity management is to get the best of both opposites while avoiding the limits of each. (1992, p.X11)

The OD field needs to continue to work to professionalize the discipline. There are, however, mixed views regarding whether the field should attain full professional status. Some question the desirability of becoming a fully fledged profession, while others believe that the field does not have to follow the same developmental patterns as medicine and law, and they can avoid the exploitive and exclusionary tendencies that are found in those fields (Gellermann et al., 1990).

Whether the majority in the field decide to opt for full professional status or not, much can be done to clarify the boundaries of the OD professional community. Gellermann, Frankel, and Ladenson (1990) contend that one of the key characteristics of a professional community is a clear statement of the values and ethics that define the field. They argue that it is “the profession’s core values that both anchor and trigger the virtues and duties expected of its members (p.7)”. Three other characteristics define professional practice: they have a defined body of knowledge; they educate practitioners; and they monitor entry to the practice as well as the behavior of practitioners in the field. While many are in favor of having greater clarity in these areas, others are concerned lest the field becomes over institutionalized, monopolistic, and exploitive (Gellermann, 1993).
Conclusion

Postmodernism has provided a useful lens through which to view the data in this study and relate it to the larger socioeconomic context. Postmodernists believe that we are experiencing a major social revolution that has been created by a complex set of social, economic, political, and technological transformations. When the consultants in this study were asked to identify the elements that had influenced OD over the last ten years, they described the factors discussed in the postmodern literature. Because of these factors the world of the OD consultant has become increasingly complex and conflicted. Flexibility and adaptability characterize those endeavors that prosper in this postmodern environment, and the OD consultants in this study have demonstrated that they have these characteristics. However, OD still faces significant challenges if it is going thrive as a field.
CHAPTER EIGHT:
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the study and suggests implications for relevant parties. First, the research purpose and process is encapsulated. Then the major conclusions are presented. This is followed by an exploration of the implications of this study for the individual OD consultant, the OD community, professional associations, and the adult education field. The chapter concludes by outlining suggestions for further research.

The Research Process

This thesis was created as a result of my deciding that after many years of focusing primarily on training and development that I would like to broaden my scope and move my vocation towards OD consulting. This has turned out to be a much more demanding task than I had initially envisaged. When I started to ask those in the field what the role of the OD consultant encompassed, I obtained a multiplicity of answers. I took some excellent OD courses at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education; however, I still did not feel that I had the necessary skills and knowledge to act as a competent OD consultant.

At this point, my curiosity was aroused and I began to hypothesize about why the field was so difficult to define. My primary hypothesis was that given the huge shifts that were occurring in society at large, many fields such as OD were shifting and adapting. I also began to speculate that because OD was such a young field, it might not have had the time to establish the clear boundaries that existed in other lines of work. I also began to surmise that my exasperation, when I tried to find the appropriate training, was not
unique and that others had experienced the same frustration when entering the field. Out of these curiosities evolved the following purpose and research questions.

The purpose of this research is:

To examine the evolving practice of the internal and external Organizational Development Consultant

Specifically, through this study, I hoped to answer the following questions:

1. Overall, how has the practice of Organizational Development consultants changed in the nineties and what factors have caused this change?

2. What professional activities do Organizational Development Consultants engage in, and to what values do they generally subscribe?

3. What thoughts do Organizational Development consultants now have about how to best train and develop new practitioners entering the field?

This study is placed within the qualitative paradigm as it is exploratory in nature. In-depth interviews, using a semi-structured guide, were adopted to gather data from eight seasoned OD consultants. An equal number of internal and external participants were chosen on the basis of the following criteria: they had operated as an OD consultant for ten or more years; they had not specialized in one particular area; they were employed full-time as a consultant; and they had experienced issues such as downsizing and restructuring. As several researchers had conducted research on the key leaders in the field, I decided that this study would focus on those that were experienced, but not necessarily recognized as key leaders. A pilot study was conducted in order to make improvements in both the interview process and the interview guide. The interviews were conducted over a period of four months, and data were analyzed on an ongoing
basis. The constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used as an overall guideline when analyzing data. Throughout the process, every effort was taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings.

**Summary of Findings**

Sanzgiri and Gottlieb (1992, p.57) note that “if we want to define OD’s role in the 1990’s, we must anticipate a new set of cultural forces”. This decade has certainly witnessed major change. Indeed, Hargreaves (1994) and others in the postmodern field (Smart, 1993; Lyotard, 1986) believe that we are witnessing a major social revolution created by a mixture of complex inter-related socioeconomic, political, and technological advances.

Participants in this study identify several key factors that they believe have had a significant impact on the role of the OD consultant. They suggest that the globalization of the economy has had ramifications for both public and private sector organizations. Public sector organizations have looked for ways to outsource and privatize their services while private sector organizations have experienced increased competition emanating from every corner of the globe. They contend that technological leaps such as personal computers, faxes, and modems have influenced organizations in the following ways: organizational response time to environmental demands have quickened and the whole nature of employees’ jobs have changed. Given such far-reaching changes and the resultant actions of organizations to accommodate them (such as downsizing), participants believe this has changed the nature of the employee/employer contract. Employees tend not to be as loyal as they were and they recognize the need to look out for their own careers. One additional factor seems to have influenced the pathway of
OD. Some of the OD consultants in this study seem to have reacted against how OD was practiced in the eighties because they perceive that it was too focused on people concerns.

Given the significant socioeconomic turmoil of the nineties, the question becomes “How well has OD adapted to these circumstances?” In the late eighties, Sashkin and Burke (1987, p.411) depicted three potential future scenarios for the field: the first saw OD as “stagnating, retrenching, and collapsing inward”; the second saw OD as “healthy and stable, entering a period of slow but steady and productive growth”; and the third saw OD as “moving in exciting and new directions - structure, culture and leadership”. In this third option, OD is seen as a true and viable strategy for improving whole organizations both with regard to human needs and organizational effectiveness. Based on the feedback from participants in this study, it would seem that of the three options, OD is closer to the third option today than any of the others. However, it would not be appropriate to paint such a rosy picture as OD still has some significant hurdles to manage.

The participants in this study demonstrate a remarkable pattern of adaptation to the constantly changing environment in which they find themselves. They realize that in order to be seen as relevant to the organizations in which they work, they need to focus on organizational effectiveness. For them, this means that they need to understand how organizations function in general; they need to understand how the specific organization that they are working with operates; and they need to understand the environment surrounding the organization. Hand in hand with this focus on organizational effectiveness has come a rising trend to look at organizations and change from more of a
systemic viewpoint. Systems thinking involves seeing the interrelationship between parts of the organization and its environment, rather than seeing static snapshots (Senge, 1990).

A similar pattern of adaptation has been demonstrated in the activities and interventions used by the OD consultants in this study. All of the participants use a wide range of interventions and activities in order to meet the varied needs of their clients. While many of these activities fall under the umbrella of traditional methodologies used in the field, OD consultants have modified several of them to meet the changing needs of their clients. For example, training and teambuilding interventions are now geared towards resolving real-life business problems. Teambuilding activities are usually conducted with intact teams with the objective of achieving task accomplishment.

At the same time that traditional activities have been adapted to meet the current needs of clients, there have been some exciting new developments in the field. As Woodman (1989) points out, these developments have been at the large-scale, system-wide level rather than at the individual or group level. First, as identified by participants in this study as well as in the literature (Van Eynde & Coruzzi, 1993; Church et al., 1994), there has been an enlarged usage of large-scale interventions in the nineties. Some participants seem to be facilitating large-scale change efforts that are more transformational in nature, and one participant in this study is heavily involved in transorganizational development. This decade has also witnessed the growth of new knowledge and interventions regarding system-wide change. Perhaps some of the most exciting developments for OD have been in the area of organizational learning. Crossan and Hulland's (1998) work in this area recognizes the importance of learning at the
organizational, team, and individual level and the importance of the flow of learning from the individual to the whole system and vice versa.

While OD consultants in this study have boosted their focus on organizational effectiveness, humanistic values have still remained central to their work. The predominant values mentioned by participants are: humane treatment of people, honesty and candor, respecting the rights of the clients to make decisions, confidentiality, and continuous learning. As Church et al., (1992) state, it is this humanistic concern for people that differentiates organizational development from other fields such as management consulting.

Although participants in this study have demonstrated their ability to adapt to environmental change, perhaps the greatest challenge to the field comes from schisms within the field itself. Some of the tensions that exist have been illustrated within this study. For example, conflicts have been identified between those who focus on structural change versus those who focus on individual and team development; between those who believe that hierarchy is the most appropriate structure to those who believe that there are other viable alternatives; and between those who focus on humanism concerns versus those who believe that business effectiveness should be the key. What can potentially damage the field, however, is the inability of those with differences to resolve them. This may be because OD is still young and has not as yet developed an altogether successful way to deal with conflict.

It is likely that one of the contributing factors to this conflict is the lack of a strong professional identity within OD. While extensive work has been conducted by the OD Institute in order to develop an international code of ethics, there is not at this point,
unified agreement on the values and ethics of the field. OD consultants are concerned regarding the level of training received by new participants entering the field. OD lacks the defined training of other fields such as medicine and law. Unlike other fields, no central body monitors OD’s practice and practitioners (Gellermann, 1993).

**Differences Between Internal and External Practitioners**

One of the central premises of this study is that OD consultants are flexible in adapting to and being influenced by their environment. Given that internal and external consultants partially exist in different environments (that is, the internal consultant is employed by the organization while the external consultant is not), it would make sense that there are some differences between the two types of consultants. Case et al., 1990, for example, state that through their orientation, training, and socialization experiences, internal OD consultants are more likely to be influenced by organizational factors than external consultants. While many similarities exist between the responses of internal and external consultants, there were also some notable differences, and these will now be summarized.

One of the first key difference that emerged was that all of the internal consultants mentioned a shift towards organizational effectiveness, while only a couple of the external consultants mentioned it. As one of the internal consultants explained, she works on improving relationships “so that you can make the business work because that’s what the purpose is - to make the business work”. The internal consultants were also the only ones to mention the globalization of the marketplace as influencing factors on the OD field. It would make sense that these two issues seem more of an intense reality to the internal consultants primarily because of their socialization experiences. They have
experienced first hand the impact of globalization on their organizations, and the resultant actions that these organizations have taken in order to adapt, such as reorganization and downsizing.

Although all of the consultants in this study use a broad range of interventions, the external consultants are more involved with organizational level interventions, transorganizational development, and intergroup interventions while the internal consultants spend more time at the individual and group level. This difference in intervention level is probably in part due to the greater experience levels of the external consultants. It may be likely that, on balance, external consultants do tend to have more experience than their internal counterparts because new OD consultants tend to initially join organizations, and then as Van Eynde and Church (1995) have noted, the movement tends to be from internal to external OD consultant. It may also be partially due to the level of authority and accountability given to internal consultants. While it is true that some internal OD consultants have now joined the executive ranks, most hold mid-level positions within the organization. In these mid-level positions, they can generally only work up to their own level within the hierarchy of the organization. Organizations tend to engage external consultants for large-scale change efforts, transorganizational development, and even for interdepartmental conflict.

The data regarding the values of OD consultants yields some intriguing results. Given that internal consultants are so focused on organizational effectiveness, I expected them to identify this as an important value. To my surprise, the internal as well as the external consultants pinpointed humanistic values as key for them. However, there was a difference in terms of which of their humanistic values predominated. Internal
consultants revealed that honesty, candor, and confidentiality were important while external consultants singled out humanistic treatment as key. Again, we might look to the difference in their environments to look for answers. The internal consultants in this study have been part of organizations that have experienced upheavals such as mergers and downsizing. Traits such as honesty and candor become very important in difficult times, especially if people’s jobs are on the line. One of the internal consultants, Gordon, focused on the importance of treating people as adults and said, “If you are honest with them, they may not like the message, but they can deal with it”.

Implications

The Individual OD Consultant

There are some significant recent developments in the OD area. New areas are opening up, such as transorganizational development and the practitioners are increasing their learning about the facilitation of large-scale change. Managers and researchers alike are devoting increasing resources to understanding and managing organizational learning (Crossan & Guatto, 1996). This presents exciting opportunities for OD consultants to learn about and implement these new developments.

Tensions exist in any field of endeavor and OD is certainly no exception to this. However, what has become evident in talking to people on opposite sides of one of these conflicts is the lack of understanding between different points of view. As is always the case when lack of understanding exists, assumptions are held which have not always been checked out. The danger is that such divisions could threaten the ongoing continuance of the field if taken to the extreme. Perhaps OD consultants can learn from Peter Senge’s work (1990) on dialogue. He explains that in dialogue, individuals explore complex,
difficult issues from many points of view. People in dialogue suspend their assumptions, and yet, at the same time communicate these assumptions freely. The end product is a free exploration, which surfaces the full depth of people’s experience and thought, and at the same time moves people beyond their individual views.

OD consultants are concerned about the quality of training received by new entrants to the field. One of the recommendations that has come out of this study is that as part of their training, new OD consultants need to be mentored by those who are more experienced. Taking the time to mentor is a constructive way that consultants can contribute to and improve the training of those who are newcomers.

This study also has implications for people who are just entering the field. They should be encouraged to search diligently for the appropriate OD training. A course of study that would ready them most effectively for the practice would have the following ingredients: it would cover a wide range of OD methodologies and techniques; the program would include practicum experience; and experienced mentors would be used to enhance each participant’s learning. For those who are entering the world of organizations, they should take an overview course on business fundamentals or they should perhaps work in an organization in some capacity before entering the field (Zak, 1994). Finally, new OD consultants should think about increasing their personal self-awareness, so that they do not attempt to meet their own needs in consulting situations but rather those of their clients.

The OD Community

While the debate is ongoing regarding whether the field should become a fully-fledged profession, many would argue that it should at least act as a community of
professionals. Gellermann, Frankel, and Ladenson (1990) have summarized the elements that shape a profession: a shared set of values and ethics, a defined theoretical body of knowledge, a defined way to educate professionals; and effective monitoring of the practice and its practitioners.

Values have been explicitly recognized as important within the OD community for a long time. In 1981 some members of the community started to develop a position on the values and ethics of the field (Gellermann, Frankel, & Ladenson, 1990). However, what is important is not the statement itself but the consensus of the community. Headway is still being made, although the emergence of this consensus is still very much in progress. When completed, this will be an important step forward for the OD field, because a shared position on values and ethics provides consultants with both a common frame of reference and the understanding that their actions affect the functioning of a larger whole (Gellermann, Frankel, & Ladenson, 1990).

Professional communities are also defined by their ability to monitor entry to the field as well as their ability to set and monitor standards of effective conduct. In order to become a doctor, for example, the qualifications and experience necessary are clearly defined, and the medical profession has the ability to discipline its members for inappropriate conduct. At this point, nothing seems to have been done on a community-wide basis within OD, although individual associations have worked on this issue. For example, the OD Institute located in the United States has created the designation RODC (Registered OD consultant) and RODP (Registered OD professional) for those who have the appropriate qualifications (Cole, 1999). However more needs to be done on a wider basis for these designations to be universally accepted and respected.
Another defining characteristic of a professional community is the possession of a unique body of knowledge and skill. Although there is no one accepted scientific paradigm in the field, several would agree that it has matured considerably in terms of new research in the area of change theory (Burke, 1995; Gellermann, Frankel, & Ladenson, 1990; Woodman, 1989). However this is still an area in which more research needs to be conducted.

**Professional Associations**

Several associations, such as the Organization Development Network (ODN) and the OD Institute exist within the field to meet the needs of OD consultants. Recently two studies were conducted to determine among other things, how the ODN could meet the future needs of OD professionals (Van Eynde & Coruzzi, 1993; Thorne & Hogan, 1993). They suggest that organizations like ODN could play a key part in helping develop the necessary boundaries and definition that the field requires.

Professional organizations such as the ODN can assist the field by sponsoring research and developing ethical and professional standards (Van Eynde & Coruzzi, 1993; Thorne & Hogan, 1993). Members suggest that the ODN should conduct research on critical trends and then communicate these trends and issues to practitioners. The ODN could also play an important role in the establishment of standards for entering and staying in the field. All the same, no professional organization working on its own can create values and ethics and other boundaries for the whole field. Professional associations in the OD field need to work together to create a unified agreement regarding these issues.
Adult Education Field

As I am studying this topic within the Adult Education Department of a graduate school, it is important to outline implications for those in that field. Since many OD consultants choose graduate school as the prime method to receive training, there are some useful implications for adult educators that arise from this study.

This research provides those involved in the training of new entrants to the OD field with an opportunity to examine their current curriculum and make adjustments to reflect current positive changes. Some possible questions to ask themselves are: Are they teaching a wide range of OD tools and techniques? Is systems theory and systems thinking a key part of the curriculum? Are new areas included in the curriculum such as transorganizational development and organizational learning? Are there opportunities for participants to take a self-awareness component in which they can develop a greater understanding of themselves? Are participants given a clear understanding of OD values and what makes OD a unique field? Although OD consultants do work in other venues such as community development, most work in some kind of organizational environment. What emerged from this study is that participants need to have a sound understanding of how organizations function, so that they can speak the same language as their clients, understand key success factors, and come to grips with client problems. This body of knowledge can be handled in different ways by adult educators. Potentially there could be a prerequisite period of experience within an organization before a participant is eligible to enter the program. Or, as part of the curriculum, participants would be expected to take an overview course on organizational functioning. Another option is that organizational examples could be woven throughout the curriculum.
Some useful suggestions regarding the process emerged from this study. While classroom experience was offered as an appropriate method to deliver certain skills and knowledge, practica were recommended as the key way for participants to have on-the-job practice and learn from their experiences. The benefits of having experienced mentors to work with these students were also emphasized. Adult educators can use the following questions to stimulate their thinking: does the classroom component provide a wealth of real-life experiences through cases, role-plays, and experiential learning? Is it possible to include one or more practica as part of the program? How could the concept of mentoring become part of the program?

**Suggestions for Further Research**

The qualitative approach used in this study has yielded some rich information regarding the evolution of the internal and external OD practitioner. However, the goal of this study was exploratory in nature and as such a small sample of OD consultants was used. It would therefore be useful to undertake a more quantitative analysis with a broader sample base, as this would allow for generalizations to the broader OD population.

Although some differences were identified between internal and external consultants, more research needs to be conducted in this area. Some of the issues that could be explored are: In what ways do the environment of the internal and external consultant differ? Who are performing activities such as transorganizational development?

Postmodernism was used in a very selective sense in this study as a way to examine the socioeconomic context as it related to the evolving role of the OD
consultant. Postmodernism has been applied in a more complete sense to other professions and has yielded very interesting results. A future study could explore the OD field from a postmodern perspective.

As discussed in this study, training for new entrants to the OD field is perceived to be a key problem by experienced practitioners. Some of the issues that this study did not address in detail and warrant further exploration are: What are the barriers to providing effective training for OD consultants? Where should this training be conducted? How can the OD community work to improve the level of training for new consultants?

This study indicates that OD consultants seem to differ in their beliefs regarding the use of power and control in the organization. Some consultants seem to favor hierarchy as the best way to structure organizations while others believe that while it can be appropriate in some circumstances, other viable options exist. A useful study might explore this issue in greater detail.

**Conclusion**

During periods of rapid socioecenomic change, the challenge for OD consultants and similar professions is to remain relevant to the clients who they serve. The OD consultants in this study have demonstrated their adaptability by increasing their focus on organizational effectiveness, taking a systems view of organizations, and adjusting traditional activities such as teambuilding and training to the current needs of clients. A challenging area of growth for OD consultants is large-scale change and transorganizational development. Although these consultants are now more focused on organizational effectiveness, humanistic concerns are still central to their work.
The OD community now has a choice regarding the pathway that they take. They can continue by default in the same direction that they are currently moving, that is, reacting sometimes in fractured ways to changes in their environment, or they can take a proactive stance. A proactive approach would provide a plan to develop a distinct professional community and academic discipline. At this point the field does not have sufficiently defined boundaries to enable it to remain distinct from other professions. The danger is that associated fields such as management development or human resource development could assimilate it. A proactive stance would see the OD community working together to create the necessary boundaries and definition that would distinguish the field as a separate entity - a field that would provide an effective service to its clients, through a balanced approach of systematic organizational effectiveness and humanistic values, that is unique to Organizational Development.
References


APPENDICES
Appendix A

Interview Schedule

Background information

1. How long have you been an OD consultant?
2. What did you do before you became an OD consultant?
3. What educational background do you have?
4. How did you get into the OD field?
5. What is organizational development?

Activities and interventions used by OD consultants

1. What activities do you engage in as an OD consultant?
   
   Prompt:
   
   What interventions do you typically use?

2. What was your most challenging experience as an OD consultant and how did you handle it?
3. What are the most important things that you have learned since you have become an OD consultant that help you be effective?
4. What are the secrets of your success as an OD consultant?

Principles and values held by OD consultants

1. What core values are important to you as an OD consultant?
2. How do these values guide your practice as an OD consultant?
3. What theories have influenced you most as an OD consultant?

How the changing context has effected the OD consultant

1. How would you describe the practice of OD ten years ago?
2. How if at all has the practice of the OD consultant changed over the last ten years?

*If they indicate a change*

3. Why have these changes occurred?

*Prompts:*

*How have business changes affected the OD consultant?*

*What other changes have occurred that have affected the OD consultant? e.g. computerization, globalization?*

4. How have you personally adapted to these changes as an OD consultant?

*The training and development of OD consultants*

1. How would you distinguish a good OD consultant from an excellent one?

2. If you were given the job of selecting OD candidates for the field, what skills and knowledge would you look for?

*Prompts:*

*What types of training did you receive that helped you develop the skills to be an OD consultant?*

*What kinds of experiences helped you develop the skills to become an OD consultant?*

3. If you were going to design a program for new entrants to the field, what would it look like?

*Prompts:*

*What kinds of training should new entrants to the field receive?*

*What kinds of experiences should they have?*
General questions

1. What attracted you to the OD field?
2. What is it like being an OD consultant?
3. What do you enjoy about the job?
4. What do you find tough or frustrating about the job?
5. Can you think of a metaphor that describes how you see your role as an OD consultant?
Appendix B

Statement of Informed Consent

I agree to participate in the research project conducted by Susan Geary called "A study of the practice of the internal and external OD consultant" under the following conditions:

1. That I am fully informed about the purpose and procedures to be used in the study.

2. That I will engage in one or two interviews that will focus on the practice of the OD consultant.

3. That I will allow each interview to be tape-recorded.

4. That I understand that my name will not be linked in any way with this study or the research report that will be written.

5. That I understand that I am free to withdraw from participating in this study at any time.

6. That I give my permission for any information gained through our discussions to be printed in a publishable document.

_____________________________  _________________
Signature                          Date
Dear (name of participant)

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study called "A study of the practice of the internal and external OD consultant". As you are aware, I am undertaking a doctoral research study at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto.

I am interested in four major areas:
1. How the practice of the OD consultant has changed over the last ten years?
2. What activities and interventions do you currently engage in as an OD consultant?
3. What core values are important to you as an OD consultant?
4. If you were to design a program for new entrants to the OD field, what would it look like?

To prepare you for this interview, I am enclosing an outline of some of the topic areas that we will cover.

As we discussed on the telephone, this will involve us meeting on one occasion for approximately one to one and a half-hours to cover the above questions. If I need to contact you again to clarify any issues, this could be done over the telephone or in a short follow-up meeting. I appreciate your participation and acknowledge that giving your time is a considered and generous decision.

As agreed, we will meet at .... I look forward to meeting with you and hearing your responses to the above questions.

Yours truly,

Susan Geary
Appendix D

Topic Areas to be Covered in the Interview

Typical areas that we will cover in the interview are:

Background information

- Job experiences before you became an OD consultant
- How you got into the OD field

Activities and interventions used by OD consultants

- The activities you engage in as an OD consultant
- Your most challenging experience as an OD consultant
- The secrets of your success as an OD consultant

Principles and values held by OD consultants

- Core values are important to you as an OD consultant
- Theories that have influenced you most as an OD consultant

How the changing context has effected the OD consultant

- How you would describe the practice of OD ten years ago
- Your impression of whether the practice of the OD consultant has changed over the last ten years?

The training and development of OD consultants

- If you were going to design a program for new entrants to the field, what would it look like?

General questions

- Your impression of what is it like being an OD consultant?
- A metaphor that describes how you see your role as an OD consultant