

“What HR doesn’t get about OD”

Oregon Organization Development Network

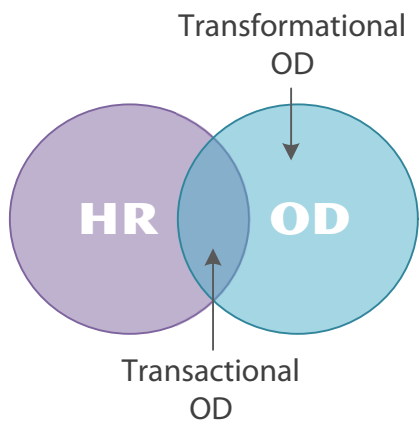
14 October 2020



Two kinds of OD

Transactional	Transformational
Restorative	Generative
Technical problem	Adaptive challenge
Narrow scope	Broad scope
Activity-oriented	Outcome-oriented
Short-term	Long-term
Repeatable	Unique

HR – OD relationship



HR wants to be strategic, too!

	Tactical	Strategic
HR	HR as practiced	Strategic HR
OD	Transactional OD	Transformational OD

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Transactional vs. transformational organization development

	Transactional OD	Transformational OD
Purpose	Restorative, return to par	Create something new
Initiation	Manager has a problem or wants an activity (e.g., “team building”) Primarily reactive	Leader sees an opportunity and wants help realizing it Proactive
Frame	Technical problem “There is a problem that needs to be fixed.” Narrow focus on symptoms	Adaptive challenge “There is a future to be created.” Expansive focus on possibilities—generative, aspirational, inquiry-focused
Process	Typically single iteration Activity-oriented Tight structure Linear	Multiple iterations Outcome-oriented Loose structure Dialectical
Scope	Local Discrete	Systemic Initiative may spawn multiple spin-off projects
Duration	Short-term (“one-off”)	Long-term; longitudinal (multiple course corrections)
Leadership involvement	Varies, but typically low Often <i>laissez faire</i>	Very high; strong sponsorship critical Leaders often experience their own personal transformation
Modality	Primarily diagnostic	Dialogic
Interventions	Off-the-shelf, repeatable Limited set of frequently-used tools (e.g., facilitation, training, team building, conflict resolution)	Highly customized, not repeatable Experimental—invent new tools or use new, creative mash-ups of known tools
Relationship to strategy	Independent of strategy	Integral to strategy
Practitioner interchangeability	High Skills/interventions are similar; practitioner skills are “commodities” (skills are readily available from multiple practitioners)	Low Each practitioner’s approach and relationship with client is unique

Definitions of organization development

OD is a response to change, a complex educational strategy intended to change the beliefs, attitudes and structure of organization so that they can better adapt to new technologies, markets and challenges, and the dizzying rate of change itself.

—Warren Bennis (1969)

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

— Richard Beckhard (1969)

OD is about ongoing improvement, development and learning. What it's not about is simply 'managing change.'

— Gervase Bushe (2018)

Organization development is a process of fundamental change in an organization's culture.

— W. Warner Burke (1992)

Long-term, planned changes in the culture, technology and management of a total organization or at least a significant part of the total organization.

— David Jamieson, et al. (1984)

Planned, long-range systems and primarily behavioral science strategy for understanding, developing, and changing organizations to improve their present and future effectiveness and health...."

— Donald Warrick (1984)

Intentional, collaborative efforts to make the workplace better, that is, more humane, more productive, and more resilient.

— Richard Wilkinson (n.d.)

Common themes

- ★ Improve organization's health and performance, which implies change
- ★ Planned interventions involving learning and informed by behavioral and social sciences
- ★ Affecting culture, values, beliefs, attitudes
- ★ An entire enterprise or significant part of it
- ★ Based on humanist values (e.g., respect, inclusion, engagement, individual agency, etc.)

Six hypotheses

for why we're not doing more transformational ("real") OD

H₁ Clients don't know that OD exists and what it can do. They think transactional OD is all there is.

[Awareness]

H₂ Clients don't know what's possible; they can't imagine a better place. They've never seen a healthy organization and can't identify the organizational results they want.

[The *vision thing*]

H₃ Clients prefers to see issues as *technical problems* rather than as *adaptive challenges*. "Let's make an app for that!"

[Myopia]

H₄ Clients cannot endure the *acute anxiety* that accompanies the change to a better place (lower *chronic anxiety*). Clients shy away from challenges that threaten their identities.

[Wherewithal]

H₅ Leaders are unable or unwilling to effectively sponsor OD work. They "underlead."

[Commitment]

H₆ Clients would see the adaptive challenge, possibilities, manage anxiety, understand OD and be willing to commit if we were more skilled in showing them. We can't effectively articulate the value of OD.

[Practitioner skill]