

Module 4 - Unleashing Expertise through Organization Development

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For this discussion, I chose the article entitled *The Art and Science of Evaluating OD Interventions* (Church, *The Art and Science of Evaluating OD Interventions*, 2017). This article focuses on the art and science involved in evaluating Organization Development (OD) interventions based on the author's personal external and internal consulting experience and evaluation research over 25 years. This article begins with a brief overview of the evolution of the evaluation phase of the Classic OD Consulting Process model all the way through discussing evaluations as a core element required in the OD field today. As a practitioner, our failure to pay attention to the importance of properly evaluating our training programs results in a disability to appropriately conceptualize and implement suitable outcome measures which can impact determining a good return on investment (ROI) and usage of OD practices. This article also discusses three key requirements for setting an evaluation strategy and how that process can provide the necessary information to demonstrate the impact of OD and other OD interventions.

The first of the three key requirements for setting an evaluation strategy are 1) Clarifying the Definition of Impact (p 28). This means to clarify at the very beginning any outcomes to be measured which is critical to the success of any intervention. Next is 2) Setting Realistic Time Horizons for Measurement (p 29). Understanding that any real change be it behavioral, new processes, company culture, etc. takes time. Establishing expectations is key. As part of establishing the expectations, OD professionals need to ensure that the timeframe of the evaluation and measurement components is clear and reasonable, and I believe it should be agreed upon by all parties. The last of the key requirements is 3) Applying Systems thinking to Systems Interventions (p 30). This means that OD professionals must consider variables across all levels and sub-systems that may be involved with the evaluation phase and aligning the measurement of those impacted by the change or changes. Kirkpatrick's multi-level framework

(1998) is one of the best and most easily recognized approaches to setting a systemic strategy for evaluation.

Additionally, after addressing the importance of having and performing effective evaluations early on to assist in the OD process, the article focuses on the overall process itself. This article provides three recommendations for building an effective OD evaluation process. Those three key items are 1) Design using a multiple measures and levels (MML) approach. This means that the interventions can be focused on individual, group, or organizational levels because they are grounded in social and behavioral sciences which can also be a great challenge at times to evaluate. Next is 2) Build a meaningful story through insights. This can be achieved by creating a sustainable evaluation process from the data and analyzing the data insights in a way that creates insight into what is actually going on in an organization. An additional part of this step is the ability to tell a compelling story from the insights gathered. Finally, is the 3) Maintain a watchful OD values lens to your evaluation work. This involves a return to the use of OD values and ensuring that whatever analysis approach is used for an evaluation of work has safeguards in place to protect not only employees but also the organization within the context of the work being completed. This includes being involved in every phase from designing the evaluation approach all the way through implementation which includes working with the business partners or client to make the right decisions.

When thinking about the textbook chapter reading, this article brings together and into focus the importance of the overall change process and OD practices. Expected outcomes from OD interventions is also a big part of this article including focusing on establishing expectations early on. I especially enjoyed learning that the author of this article works at an organization that I have long wanted to work for, Pepsico. While I think this article was very informative and

closely aligns to our reading assignment, it did help me determine what topic to focus on for my research paper – the importance of having strong OD practices in your organization.

References:

Church, A. (2017). The Art and Science of Evaluating Organization Development Interventions.

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Swanson, R. A., & Holton, E. F. (2009). *Foundations of Human Resource Development* (2nd ed.). Berrett-Koehler Publishers.