Champlain College

Week 1: Assignment: The History & Future of OD, According to Me

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“OD focuses on the planned change of human systems and contributes to organization science through the knowledge gained from its study of complex change dynamics.” (Porras & Roberson, 1991) OD in relation to personal life would be observing what works and what doesn’t to plan and execute positive changes in your life. "OD is an evidence-based and structured process. It is not about trying something out and seeing what happens." (van Vulpen, n.d.)

**Timeline**:

* Kurt Lewin (1946): 3 step model of change. “[U]sed rigorous research methods to create an approach for planned change.” (Zentis, 2021)
* Eric Trist (1949): With others Trist “developed the socio-technical systems model along with others at the Tavistock Institute.” (Zentis, 2021)
* Frederick Herzberg (1959): Frederick "address[ed] motivation in the workplace. Herzberg focused on the attitudes of workers and job satisfaction" (Kurt, 2021)
* Richard Beckhard (1964): "He pioneered the use of T-Groups … and … he is credited with developing a Formula for Change." (Foster, 2012)
* Peter Senge (1990): Introduced the “concept … for continuous growth and adaptability – the learning organization.” (Taylor, 2024)

**Examples of OD applications**:

1. COACHING: An employee has trouble communicating thoughts and gets frustrated or gives too much information and overwhelms all other attendees to a meeting. OD allows individuals and managers to help each other improve their communication skills.

**OD Application**: "[T]alent management practices like coaching & mentoring, career planning, development interventions, and management and leadership development." (van Vulpen, n.d.).

1. STRUCTURING: An organization is having issues competing in a new market, such as transitioning from physical sales to digital. OD gives businesses tools to rework their organization to fit advancing technology and fix missing processes.

**OD Application**: "This is a process that involves changing the basic character of the organization, including how it is structured and the way it operates." (van Vulpen, n.d.).

1. JOB ENRICHMENT: An employee is having a hard time with their current role because they are no longer challenged by their duties. The manager speaks with others to add more responsibility or different duties that will bring back the excitement they once had.

OD Application: "The goal here is to create a job that is interesting and challenging for the person doing it." (van Vulpen, n.d.).

**Predictions**:

The question about the future of OD took some time, as the field doesn’t seem to do a good job of defining itself. If you are selling yourself to a company, you have to make a positive impact on its bottom line. I have watched several old companies die in the last two decades. They lack the ability to change, along with many other factors. If you have the role of OD, how do you sell that to a company?

Prediction 1:

I see companies combining offices, several of the articles we have read talk about OD and HR being tied together. “[T] here are many OD interventions relating to Human Resource Management functions. Policies such as performance management, goal setting, appraisal, and talent management practices are all important in achieving effective organizational development." (van Vulpen, n.d.).

From the reading, it seems that OD is not just about people, but if I were a business person, I would combine or remove these duties. In Cybersecurity and Software engineering it is the same. You will find an office that has several people with similar titles but specific duties. It makes it easier to manage and put a number to what they are doing.

Prediction 2:

AI will probably fall off. Companies I work for and have seen are taking steps to block all AI. It is probably more so about security than anything else, but it wasn’t too long ago when Meta’s code was leaked by an engineering looking to AI for answers. I am sure AI will still hang around as a buzzword, but it seems to have plateaued. Not to mention the rights issues we are still having with artists and AI.

Prediction 3:

I have a feeling that DEI will morph into something else, but I don’t think it will be like it was. Appearance is a key indicator. Companies and Government agencies that are failing are being asked why, with their shrinking budgets, they should pay for these offices. My thought process is it will go back to something similar to how companies were in 2000. They don’t discriminate, but they won’t hire based on factors outside of what you bring to their team.

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