

Background

You were asked by Dr. Babcock to meet with his direct staff and give an overview of OD and what has been discussed by the executive team so far. You were immediately swept up in the group's excitement about the idea of improving the organization and became involved in talking through what made them most successful. These thoughts were summarized as the key values of the function. (See the list below for further details.)

Creating increased involvement at all levels was one change the R&D management felt was mandatory. They convinced you that the people in the organization really did want this to happen, but no one was sure how to go about it. They asked you if it is possible to reinforce this change by how a diagnosis and analysis is conducted.

Based on your capacity as an expert in OD, you were asked to draft a questionnaire to assess where the function is now and where it should be. Being researchers, they understood the need for information and thought the questionnaire approach was a fast way to proceed. You know you need help to generate definitions that could be used to make the questionnaire meaningful and understandable. They agreed that their organization needs to be involved, but they want a working document to discuss to save time. Once they have a means (the questionnaire) and plan for collecting information, they can then use it to set priorities and begin discussions on what to change and how to go about it.

They want open discussions involving all members of the organization at every stage.

One idea was to use staff meetings—the intent being to use some mechanism, such as force field analyses, to generate information and consolidate it across all areas as a starting point.

You want to talk with your consulting company to see if this might be a good way to involve the organization in creating the questionnaire. You have put the following question on the agenda for the next review meeting.

Is this a good way to generate the types of information that could create the behavioral endpoints for a questionnaire?

Another suggestion was to start with the higher priorities and form taskforces or multifunctional teams to generate the information and communicate the work with the general community to get reactions before working on the change plan. Eventually, they will work down the whole list according to priority, need, and the resources needed. Time being one of the scarce resources, this method was seen as a way to focus any effort on the most important items: those with the highest return to the organization.

You know there are many ways to have large groups set priorities you want to discuss this with your colleagues also. What methods could they suggest, and is it a good idea?

Toward the end of the meeting, there was a movement to hold a general or total community event to build the function; it would be a meeting, organized in some way to get all the force fields done. It is key, in its view, to have input and communication across

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all levels and from all functions for each category. If time is critical, why not do it all at once? Complete the survey, score it, review it, and set priorities as a group. Then, in smaller groups (meeting at the same time and in parallel), come up with the force field analyses. These then could be presented to the community as a whole, and one or two key actions, for each category, could be identified for implementation and next steps.