

# White Paper

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Solution Focus Areas:

**Engagement / Morale**  
**Productivity**  
**Leadership / Supervision**

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# Organizational Development and Training: Strategies for Managing Planned Change

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Over the course of the past 50 years, managing change has become an increasingly important obligation for organizations throughout world. The need and desire for change has led organizations to search for answers as to how best to plan for the large scale change they must now be equipped to face. In order to understand and manage this change more effectively, the related disciplines of organizational development and training were developed. Though organizational development and training are inherently different, the two possess many similarities and compliment one another in leading organizations to successfully manage change.

Though many organizations face unplanned or unexpected change, it is the implementation of planned change that is most crucial for the success of any organization today. Organizational cultures, and continuous demands of the market, have forced organizations to be prepared to recognize and invite change. In order to meet these demands, organizations typically turn to organizational development and training.

Organizational development has been described as the applied behavioral science dedicated to improvement of organizations and the people within them through the use of the theory and practice of planned change (French & Bell, 1999). As a subset of organizational development, organizations often introduce training in an effort to ensure that their employees are familiar with the objectives and goals of the organization. Training provides employees with the basic skills and competencies that are necessary for the organization to introduce planned change (French & Bell, 1999). Essentially, training improves individual performance while organizational development improves organizational performance.

Organizational development is often identified as a solution when certain goals of an organization are not being met through the utilization of their current processes. Once a problem has been identified, the organization will often seek the support of others to help to design and implement the change program (French & Bell, 1999). If successful, the change program will highlight inefficiencies within the organization and work to improve the identified inefficiencies.

The use of training is essential for employees to understand and aid in carrying out the goals of the organization. Organizations must employ skilled workers who are both proactive and reactive to a changing environment. They must identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to obtain their goals and instill them into their employees (Buhler, 2002). In doing so, organizations must ensure that the competencies identified for individual employees match the goals and objectives of the organization. Investment in continuous training and development of competencies in their employees will help organizations to better meet their goals and objectives.

Training programs can be developed to focus on managing change within the work environment (Armstrong & Mitchell, 2008). For example, an organization may develop a new performance management system that better communicates the overall objectives of the organization. Employees can be trained to efficiently use the new performance management system, and therefore aid in the overall objectives of their organization. Essentially, implementation of training can assist an organization in management of large-scale change.

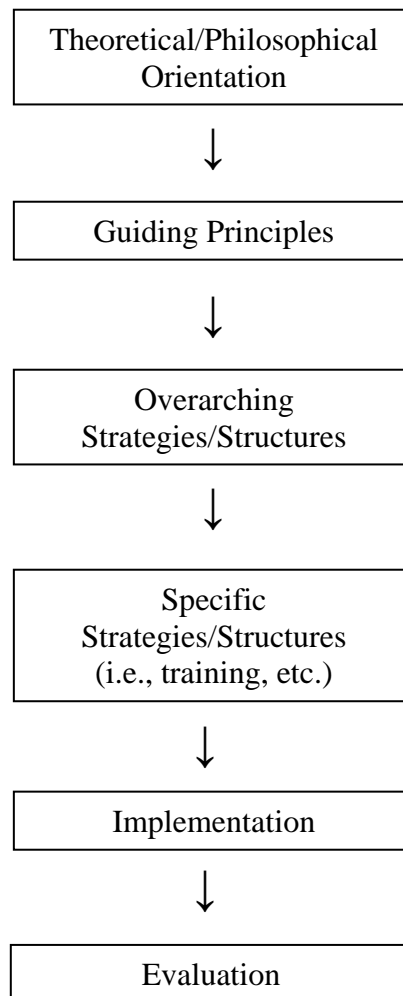
According to William Bridges (2003), management of change can be viewed as a process of helping people through three developmental phases. The first phase of change, or New Beginning, requires an individual to recognize inefficiencies and leave them behind. The second phase, or Neutral Zone, is when realignments take place. Though the new functions may not have become operational, the old functions have been left behind. The final stage, or Endings, occurs when the new sense of purpose has been discovered and change is beginning to take place. In terms of organizational development, the organization must also follow very similar phases to those experienced by the individual. Training can be viewed as necessary for the individual, or organization, to move into the final phase of development. Training bridges the gap for movement from the Neutral Zone into the Endings phase by ensuring that the implementation of change will be supported by the employees.

Though organizational development and training possess a multitude of similarities, there are many differences between the two related concepts. Organizational development is often recognized as a long-term process that elicits total system change. Organizational development takes a long time to implement and results are not necessarily immediate. Training, on the other hand, is most often short-term and focused entirely on the individual (French & Bell, 1999). When organizations provide training to employees, they typically expect their return on investment to be immediate. While training is often thought of as a function of organizational development, training in itself is not an end-result. Training can be considered to be an OD intervention, or a step in the process to change.

In addition to the fundamental differences between organizational development and training, the two processes possess differences in structure as well. Organizational development represents a developmental process which encompasses all aspects of the organization's life-cycle, including birth, growth and decline. Organizational development is ever-changing and encompasses planned change to make the organization more efficient at any given point of its life-cycle. Conversely, training is a strategy for bringing organizational development to life. Training is one subset of many that organizations rely upon when implementing organizational development. Other areas of organizational development may include recruitment of staff, professional development, organizational structure, policies and communications.

According to the Rising Sun Model, organizational development is a systematic process that can be outlined in terms of a series of distinct steps leading to change. As such, organizational development must begin with a theoretical or philosophical orientation. An organization must clearly understand the philosophical or theoretical foundation upon which it is based. Once this understanding exists, the organization must develop a set of guiding principles or core beliefs. The actions that the organization plans to adhere to must be considered and decided upon in light of its core beliefs. Following identification of the actions, the organization must develop overarching strategies for taking those actions. Once the overarching strategies have been outlined, the organization must develop specific basic strategies for reaching their overall objective, which normally includes training. Next, the organization must implement the specific strategies that they have identified into the workplace.

Finally, evaluation of both the plan and the actions taken must occur in order for the organization to be able to determine whether or not they have been successful in meeting their organizational goals and objectives. Graphically, this distinction could be represented as follows:



Training can be considered one of the strategies to an OD intervention. Therefore, training is a specific strategy by an organization in an attempt to improve overall efficiency. Training is vital in facilitating any large scale organizational change and development.

As suggested above, organizational development and training have several inherent differences in their strategies and objectives. Training is short-term and has an individual focus. Organizations typically expect an immediate return on investment through the implementation of training to their employees. The objective of training is to shape employees knowledge, skills and abilities to satisfy stated goals (Goldstein & Ford, 2002). Once this behavior is modeled to the employee population, the employees are immediately expected to transfer skills learned to their job. Organizational development, on the other hand, has a much broader focus in terms of the overall objectives. The goals of organizational development include improvement of the functioning of individuals, teams,

and the organization as a whole. Organizational development also aims to teach the organization's population how to continuously improve their own functioning (French & Bell, 1999). Upon examination of organizational development and training, it is clear that the objectives of the processes vary from specialized to extremely broad focuses.

Despite the differences between organizational development and training, the practices are clearly interrelated. The concepts compliment one another in introducing planned change to an organization. The desired outcome of organizational development is to help organizational members learn to solve their own problems and to do it better over time (French & Bell, 1999). In order to do so, the members of the organization must be instructed on the overall objectives of the organization and the knowledge, skills and abilities expected of them to reach those objectives. Training is introduced to teach the employees these necessary competencies. Training is one among many of the strategies organizations utilize to bring planned change to life.

Organizational development is considered a flow of interrelated events moving toward the goals of organizational improvement and individual development (French & Bell, 1999). In bringing about individual development, an organization will introduce training to teach employees the skill set necessary for improvement of the organization. Efficiency can only be reached by clearly outlining objectives of the organization and identifying the skills that are crucial in reaching those objectives. The absence of training when bringing about organizational development will severely inhibit the organization's ability to accomplish their goals.

Though there are fundamental differences between organizational development and training, the concepts are clearly interrelated. Both processes are crucial to an organization in the accomplishment and success of planned change. Through the practice of organizational development and training, organizations can make their processes more efficient and employees can be better prepared to successfully manage change. The presence of both organizational development and training are essential to the continuous improvement of organizations.

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