Why Won't OD Phase II Just Happen?

a report on how one organization successfully overcame the back-home application problem

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One of the finest team-building reinforcement activities, following a formal Phase I Organizational Development seminar, is one which enlists the managerial participants in a live, back-home Phase II O.D. Problem Resolution effort. Usually, one of the by-products of the Phase I seminar is the priority identification of seven or eight chief, or significant, obstacles or problems blocking total organizational effectiveness.

The role of the internal catalyst and top management is to provide a means for the returning participant teams to release their intellectual, creative and productive capacities to try to overcome these identified problems through *real team exercises*. Thus, the long-run organizational payoff for the original Seminar investment becomes an actuality. Moreover, the teams gain valuable and lasting O.D. know-how through experimenting and refining their collaborative attempts.

Typical Problem Areas

Typical of these significant problems, agreed upon (through consensus) by the Seminar Phase I participants, include areas where practically any significant lack of effectiveness in management or operations exist. Any of these, if allowed to continue, could be seriously dysfunctional — defeating employee and productivity concern — daily robbing the organization's vitality and purpose or mission . . . in untold amounts.

Areas like productivity, planning, communication, creativity, coordination, result-getting, staffing, a lack of trust and openness, career development, placement and advancement, organizational deficiencies, disorganized change, interpersonal relations, union blockages, organizational environment, supervisory behavior, and organizational alienation and stratification, etc., are often among those identified. Seven or eight of these predominant response problems are singled out and accepted as those "that if resolved could contribute the most to our organization's future effectiveness."

Coming from the participant supervisors and managers, there is a built-in motivation and opportunity for any organization to obtain a nautral and willing effort from these same managers to collaborate and put their thinking and action to the wheels to overcome the obstacles.

Lack of Understanding

The problem lies in the lack of understanding of a successful way to reinforce team action and to harness this unlimited energy and willingness in a systematic and orderly manner. This has been the experience of too many organizations. The cause, the authors feel, is not that the seminar fails to produce Phase II results — but that the actions toward the attainment of these measurable results must be well managed — like any successful endeavor, and too often this is not the case.

A Phase II Problem Resolution systemic approach has proved rather successful in a 4,500 employee organization, involving more than 300 supervisors and managers completing a five day Phase I Seminar. While space does not permit recording all actions and results, sufficient detail following sets forth the manner in which this organization "manages" its Phase II effort — thus assuring not only reinforcement of the team building objective, but with valuable results achieved through problem resolution.

The system is a product of the internal O.D. catalyst, top management, and an internal Organizational Development Coordinating Committee, representatively elected by the participants at seminar conclusion.
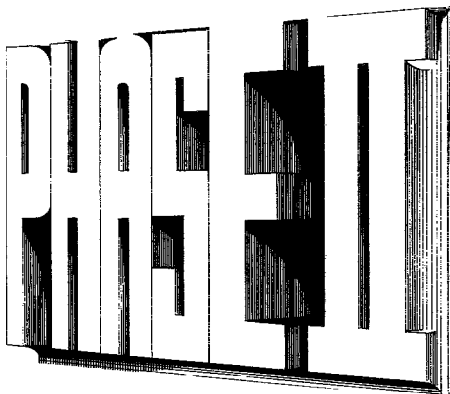
Organization and Project Guidelines

Items one through eight below provide general information. The following guidelines will help OD seminar groups in their efforts to organize and take actions toward completing their Phase II projects. It is not intended that these guidelines be mandatory, or that groups must follow in lock-step each point illustrated below; however, the general ideas given here will be helpful in coordinating and executing your Phase II project on a timely basis.

1. The Purpose of OD Phase II:

a. It is the on-the-job training phase of your organizational development training. During this time you will have an opportunity to work on a real problem, experiment with and refine the concepts that you learned during the Phase I OD Grid Seminar.

b. Deal with a significant Ogden Service Center problem which has impact on the total organization. Phase II is not just a training exercise, but hopefully, the results of the activity can be meaningful and in some way contribute to a more successful and efficient organization.

2. Type of Projects Completed:

Over the years we have had a number of OD projects completed. In many instances, the effectiveness of these projects has been proportionate to the organization, direction, and support provided by the group leaders and membership. A number of them have been very successful. A summary of the prior OD projects was issued to you at the seminar and is attached to this memo for your immediate information. (See Table 1.) Typical of the more successful projects that have been undertaken are Number 2, Lack of Coordination; Number 7, Suggestion Awards Program; Number 8, Incentive Awards Program; and Number 12, Counseling and Coaching Project. Perhaps through your review of the project summary you can get some ideas for your own group. Also, you can pre-

vent duplicating projects already completed. This is not to say, however, that the completed projects have resolved all aspects of the problems they identified. If your group sees additional work to be done in resolving a similar problem, you may select it if you wish.

3. Recommendations for Project Selection:

In selecting your group's problem, here are three points that you may consider:

(1) Table 2, Categories of Indexes, previously issued at the seminar, was prepared by the University of Utah on six basic categories of organizational behavior. Supporting these six basic categories are nineteen sub-indexes. In selecting your activity, first identify one of the six categories in which you feel a problem may exist, then define it in more detail by referring to one of the 19 indexes supporting that category. It is recognized that some problems may not exactly fit an index description. Should this occur, list your problem anyway.

(2) Scope of the project. Too often OD groups "bite off more than they can chew" in their project selection. In selecting your project, make sure that it is of such a scope and size that your group will be able to manage it. Be specific in your project identification. A project of, say "communications," is too broad. It is better to identify the aspect of communications with which you want to deal. Examples are mail distribution system or effectiveness of the public address system in communicating Service Center information.

(3) Time frame. Each OD group has two months in which to organize itself, select a problem area, resolve it, and present resolutions and recommendations to management. The beginning of this two-month period normally is figured from the ending date of the grid seminar. The time frame has a direct relationship to the scope or size of the problem which the group selects. Be sure to select

problems which can be resolved within the two-months' time.

4. Recommendations for a Project Solution:

Three points should be considered when organizing your group to resolve your Phase II problem.

1. The group should schedule all project activities on ROWR Form 2075, Service Center Project Control Record. Some past groups could have been more successful had they planned and objectively gone about their project activity more carefully. An objective way to begin is to complete Form 2075 by outlining the work actions, the starting of completion dates, and the identification of the assignment to a specific person or persons. Figure 1 is a sample Form 2075. Completion of this form helps the entire group visualize the scope of the project and members' specific responsibilities for its completion.

b. Use the four-step approach in your problem resolution process. The four-step approach includes:

(1) The definition of the problem. State the problem in behavioral terms, eliminating generalities. Write it on the chalkboard where all can see and evaluate it for completeness. A good problem statement includes the condition under which it occurs, the specific impact it has, and the identification of the personnel or organizations involved.

(2) The cause.. A list is developed of all the probable causes to the problem. General statements such as incompetent work force or performance should not be used; instead, write what it is that *specifically* occurs and creates the need for correction.

(3) Alternatives. Alternatives are a list of actions that can be taken to solve the problem. A complete and accurate list of causes will provide insight to identify-

ing good alternatives to the solution.

(4) Solution. After considering the list of alternative solutions, the group will select the one or combination of alternatives that will best resolve the problem. This solution is written down in specific terms, i.e., just what has to occur and how will it be done.

c. Coordination with management and the Organizational Development Coordinating Committee. After the OD group has defined the problem, its causes and recommended solutions, a memorandum is prepared which outlines the project activity in sufficient detail for the OD Coordinating Committee and the director to review and give their approval. Once these approvals are obtained, the problem solving aspects of the Phase II activity can begin. It is important to note too, that it is within the prerogative of the OD Coordinating Committee and the director to make additional recommendations to the group for project resolution.

5. *First Meeting Action Items:*

This will be the first meeting in which the total group reconvenes for work on the Phase II project. Adequate preparation for this meeting should be taken by the project chairman along with the OD Coordinating Committee Representative. Action items to be discussed during this meeting include:

a. Problem selection and definition. It is at this time the group determines their Phase II project. The problem should be written in behavioral terms, eliminating the generalities, as was mentioned in paragraph four. Use the chalkboard when possible.

b. The group organizes to determine the problem's causes. The causes may be identified at the first meeting; however, it may require some surveying of the problem area by the Phase II group. If this is the

case, survey questions must be developed and assignments made to survey the target area by either questionnaire or personal contact.

c. Schedule project activities within the completion time frame allotted the OD Phase II activity. The ROWR Form 2075, Service Center Project Control Record, is provided as a guide in developing your project control list. The project chairman may wish to present a suggested project schedule to the group. In this case he would prepare his draft prior to the meeting. When completed, Form 2075 should represent the best thinking of the whole group on what activities need to be accomplished for problem resolution. This project control record then becomes the basic guideline for completing the project on a timely basis since it outlines the actions to be taken, the starting and completion dates and the person(s) assigned to each part of the project.

d. Prior to the conclusion of the first meeting, the chairman will schedule the next meeting date.

6. *Second Meeting Action Items:*

a. The project chairman will receive from his group representatives information on the problem's cause. He will summarize and present it to his group members for their understanding and consensus.

*b. Determine alternatives for solution. Here the group can "brain storm" the best alternatives for resolving the problem. If the list of causes is complete and well defined, it will be a great help in determining these alternatives.

*c. The group selects from the alternatives, the best solution for problem resolution. One or more of the alternatives may be selected and combined as the best action to take for problem resolution.

*d. Assign the preparation of the group's Phase II project memorandum to be issued to the OD Coordinating Committee and the director for their review and approval. This

memorandum should state the problem, the causes, the considered alternatives and the recommended solutions. Attached to it should be a copy of the group's ROWR Form 2075, Service Center Project Record Control. The memorandum should request the OD Coordinating Committee and the director to review and revise it where they think necessary and finally give their approval for the group's continued action. A return date should be specified on the memorandum so that timely receipt of the approved document will be made and resoltuion action initiated.

* Nature and complexity of problem may require additional time and meetings for obtaining all necessary information to complete these requirements.

2. The project chairman should schedule the next meeting date.

7. *Third Meeting Action Items:*

a. Review comments of OD Coordinating Committee and director on OD Phase II project memorandum. Where additional recommendations or restrictions are made, integrate them into your project plans.

b. Organize group for project resolution and assign necessary actions consistent with scheduled completion dates for a project resolution.

8. *Fourth Meeting Action Items:*

a. Summarize and review results of project resolution activities. The project chairman should receive this input prior to the meeting and to the extent possible summarize them for group review. If all actions regarding the resolution of the project problem have been completed, this report will mark the conclusion of the OD Phase II group activity.

b. Assign the preparation of the Phase II Project Report. This report is to be submitted through the OD Coordinating Committee to the director. The report which summarizes the project activity should include the following:

(1) Completed ROWR Form 2075, Service Center Project Control Record outlining project actions and dates.

(2) Description of project cause and resolution actions taken.

(3) Narrative comments on how the corrective actions taken will have a positive impact on the problem situation.

(4) Narrative comments on the level of the group's participation, value of the project as a training device for learning group problem solving techniques, and approximate man-hours expended by the group members.

c. Schedule a group party — you all deserve one.

Table 1
OD PHASE II
PROJECT SUMMARY AND DESCRIPTION

1. *A Lack of Trust:* The objective of this group was to emphasize the problem and make managers aware of the fact that their actions can cause a lack of trust among their employees. They reached this objective by a discussion with the Service Center managers.

2. *Lack of Coordination:* The objective was to involve the Branches in the identification of coordination problems and the need to coordinate the solutions. These actions would in turn improve communication, develop more trust, and improve the procedural processes. This objective was reached by: (1) holding meetings with branch and section chiefs to determine problem areas and discuss project objectives, (2) sending out a pamphlet titled "Lack of Communication" to all supervisors to be used as a problem identification device with their subordinates, and (3) receiving feedback on coordination problems that had been identified and had received corrective action from Branch Chiefs.

3. *Barriers to Effective Communication:* The objective is that all people should receive the information necessary to do their job most efficiently. This objective was reached by getting the Training Branch to develop better training packages and train all employees in their respective duties. All Service Center managers from division to group were contacted about this problem.

4. *Utilization of Training Resources:* To give a class to all managers and supervisors about the training resources was this group's objective. This objective was partially reached with the participants of MDP-IV in November 1970 and also through articles about training resources in the *Newscope.*

5. *Inefficient Use of Training:* This objective was to find out who or what is responsible for inefficient use of training. A separate discussion was held with branch chiefs, first line supervisors, instructors (both class-room and OJT), training coordinators, and trainees.

6. *Communication:* Trying to find the major problems in communication, increasing awareness, identifying voids and roadblocks, and improving communications were the objectives of this group. They interviewed employees, sent out questionnaires, created posters, put articles in *Newscope,* and had editorial comments by the director. A memo and synopsis of the problems identified was prepared and sent to the OD Coordinating Committee in March 1971.

7. *Suggestion Awards Program:* A review of the Service Center Suggestion Awards Program had two objectives: (1) to increase the efficiency of supervisors in making and handling suggestions, and (2) to issue SC Memorandum on the subject for distribution to all supervisors. The project was introduced to OSC employees in *Newscope.* An additional document was distributed to all employees on how to submit suggestions.

8. *Incentive Awards Program:* To investigate the Service Center Incentive Awards Program, a questionnaire was sent to a random group of employees to identify shortcomings in the system and suggest possible solutions. A report on their findings was sent to top management for future consideration.

9. *Security:* As a result of a memo from Regional Security Commission chairman, this group sent a questionnaire to supervisory personnel to determine the effectiveness of our present security system. The results of this survey, along with recommendations for improvement, went back to the chairman of the Security Commission and also to the Service Center Safety Security Programs officer.

10. *Creativity:* Creativity was selected by this group for their Phase II project. Several verses appeared in *Newscope* accompanied by their symbol, a cartoon of a man about to be fired out of a cannon. This group sent out a questionnaire to a cross-section of Service Center personnel. The results of this questionnaire and comments on some of the questions were sent to all supervisors in the hopes of each one seeing where he fit in the percentages of the creativity race. In addition, the results of the survey were also published in synopsis form in *Newscope.*

11. *Planning and Critique:* Planning and Critique was selected by another group as its subject after surveying managers and determining their planning criteria, concern, and involvement. They developed a booklet, "Guide for Planning", which was distributed to all supervisors to aid them in planning meetings, etc.

12. *Counseling and Coaching:* As a result of their research, a three-day session on counseling of employees is planned for this spring. Each supervisor has been informed that he or she will attend.

13. *Employment Placement:* Employment Placement was studied for a two-way effect; to propose ways or means of identifying the employee with prerequisite skills and interest who should be considered for reassignment; and to develop course of action to be taken in an effort to place the employee in a work situation where he could be more successful. Interviews were conducted with supervisors and technicians at different working levels to determine needs and placement techniques.

14. *Getting Results:* The objective of one OD group was how to get results as far as commitment to Service Center policies is concerned. Several employees were interviewed and the consensus was that the lack of commitment was great among Service Center personnel. Suggested comments were the use of seminars to develop supervisors and to "Tell it like it is."

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Table 2.

OGDEN SERVICE CENTER
CATEGORIES OF INDEXES USED IN
UNIVERSITY OF UTAH EVALUATION DEVICE

1. ATTITUDES TOWARD THE ORGANIZATION
Identification with the Work Organization
Image of the Organization
Motivational Climate of the Organization
Climate for Advancement
2. MOTIVATION
Job Motivation

Interest in Work Innovation
Acceptance of Job Changes
3. PERCEIVED EXTENT OF STRUCTURE
Hierarchy of Authority
Job Codification
4. SUPERVISORY BEHAVIOR
Supervisory Behavior (SR)
Supervisory Behavior (PO)
Supervisory Behavior (SB)

5. EXTENT OF EXPERIENCED TENSION/STRESS
Role Conflict
Role Ambiguity
Intolerance of Ambiguity
Alienation
Concern for Interpersonal Relations
Concern for Advancement Opportunities
6. OVERALL NEEDS SATISFACTION
Needs Satisfaction

DESCRIPTION OF INDEXES TO BE USED IN
UNIVERSITY OF UTAH EVALUATION DEVICE

1. *Job Motivation* — A measure of degree to which the job itself inspires the individual to work hard.
2. *Identification with Work Organization* — A measure of degree to which an individual likes to be known as a member of the organization
3. *Interest in Work Innovation* — A measure of degree to which individual is willing to make improvements in the job and to take the chances associated with trying out new ideas.
4. *Acceptance of Job Changes* — A measure of degree to which an individual feels that job changes are worthwhile.

— A measure of the frequency with which an individual feels conflicting pressures on the job.

6. *Role Ambiguity* — A measure of the frequency with which an individual feels uncertain about what is expected of him.
7. *Concern for Interpersonal Relations* — A measure of the frequency with which an individual is concerned about how others may feel about him.
8. *Concern for Advancement Opportunities* — A measure of the frequency with which an individual is concerned about the possibility he may not be able to advance any further in the organization.

9. *Motivational Climate in the Organization* — A measure of the degree to which an individual is stimulated by his work, his supervisor, and his association with the organization.
10. *Image of Organization* — A measure of degree to which the individual sees the organization as having concern for its members and respecting members as individuals with dignity.
11. *Climate for Advancement* — A measure of degree to which an individual sees the organization as recognizing ability and being supportive of those willing to work hard for advancement.
12. *Hierarchy of Authority* — A measure of the degree to which an individual feels he has authority to make decisions on the job.
13. *Job Codification* — A measure of the degree to which an individual feels that rules and procedures restrict freedom of action on how to do his job.
14. *Needs Satisfaction* — A measure of the degree to which an individual feels that his hierarchy of needs is being satisfied.
15. *Supervisory Behavior (SR)* — A measure of the degree to which subordinates view supervisors in the organization as being not self-righteous, arbitrary, and dictatorial. (This index has reverse scoring; a low score is better than a high score.)

16. *Supervisory Behavior (PO)* — A measure of the degree to which subordinates view supervisors in the organization as not being primarily concerned with getting the work done on time and with a minimum of error; people are of lesser importance than production. (This index has reverse scoring; a low score is better than a high score.)
17. *Supervisory Behavior (SB)* — A measure of the degree to which subordinates view supervisors in the organization as not being primarily concerned with helping subordinates to perform well, and that their performance is recognized and rewarded by higher-ups; he doesn't play favorites and treats subordinates with kindness and dignity. (This index has reverse scoring; a low score is better than a high score.)
18. *Intolerance of Ambiguity* — A measure of the degree to which an individual is uanble to tolerate the unknown and wants to have things well defined.
19. *Alienation* — A measure of the degree to which an individual feels well adjusted to his environment and able to cope with uncertainties or work out solutions to problems.

Figure 1.

✓ **Strategic Check Point**
☐ **Report**
★ **Inspection**
⊢⊣ **Activity Span**

Project _____

Date: **Start** _____ **End** _____

Objective: _____

Activities	Who													

One Time Use

Summary of Key Points

It is obvious to us, from the above, that if a Phase II O.D. Problem Resolution effort is successful the benefits are almost limitless. In summary, several key points stand out:

● The problems worked on must be those the participants themselves earlier identified.

● The teams are organized around members' commitments to overcome a specific obstacle in which they have a stake.

● The projects must be achievable, not monumental, and attainable within a two month time frame; any longer jeopardizes finalization.

● Considerable latitude needs to be granted to the teams, with creativity the premium sought.

● The elected projects need to be properly "ball-parked" and resources and endorsement from top management must be forthcoming.

● An orderly process or framework for attacking the problem is helpful, but not limiting.

● Progressively planned team project meetings and reports on the project need to be organized, with starting and target completion dates.

● Top management support and encouragement of necessary or recommended actions will enhance team motivation.

● The project results should be identified, measured, evaluated in terms of some behavioral objectives, or end result, achievement.

● Due publicity and recognition — even awards — are appropriate, where justified.

Conclusion

O.D., Phase II, need not fail. Management of the effort is all

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that is needed. Moreover, the unrecorded byproducts of a successful Phase II are numerous. Not only do managers reinforce their O.D. know-how — they build previously non-existent muscle into the organization — and valuable experience that can surface and tackle and resolve future and inevitable organizational problems in a collaborative, healthy and effective manner — contributing as required to continuing organizational effectiveness. **USEASTD**

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Let's Clean Up America

For Our 200th Birthday

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