

People management

Bath Consultancy Group

9 November 2006

LETTERS

USE THE THEORY THAT FITS, NOT THE LATEST FAD

Rather than asking: "Is OD the new HR?" (*"Get your motor running"*, 12 October), maybe we should be asking: "Is HR the new OD?" After all, the concept of OD pre-dates the common use of the term HR by decades, as your own article identifies.

However, I am not sure such an either/or view is helpful. Ideas about organisations have developed over time. It is possible to identify links between any number of apparently distinct disciplines – for example OD, change management, learning organisations, total quality management and HRM – which have fed from and contributed



to each other over the years, thus blurring the boundaries. Is our concern really only for which approach out-competes the other when, in fact, our services are needed whatever the prevailing organisational theory and practice is?

It is time to stop demeaning and confusing our contribution by clinging to the coat-tails (yet again) of more fashionable, and possibly transient, or merely resurgent, concepts.

MARK SURTEES, PRINCIPAL, ACHIEVE – HRD

for specialist OD experience and for effective partnership between business partners and OD?

Take, for example, OD's requirement to challenge the status quo and take risks and to stand outside particular business groups. HR business partners need to challenge their business leaders, but in culture change this can be tough for business partners, who are very much part of the management team and "inside" the issues at the table. Where it works well is for business partners to partner with internal OD consultancy when needed, and to use this to develop their own OD capacity.

FIONA ELLIS, DIRECTOR, BATH CONSULTANCY GROUP

FULL-CIRCLE KNOWLEDGE

"Sphere of influence" (12 October) really struck a chord. Tapping into the rich source of collective knowledge, experience and wisdom in an employee base can not only yield new ideas loaded with a serious reality check, but will create a sense of involvement, dialogue and value that is crucial to employee engagement.

Innovation belongs to every single individual, and when it is channelled in the right way, using the right process, it can achieve extraordinary results.

ALISON ESSE, DIRECTOR,
THE STORYTELLERS

IS OD REALLY THE NEW HR?

"Get your motor running" starts and finishes with the question: "Is OD the new HR, or could we just call it 'people management'?"

For me, the question should be: "Is OD the opportunity to bridge the gap between organisational strategy and the people involved?"

It could be argued that OD is the opportunity for cultural change in how organisations see HR. Although unfair, many directors still perceive HR as the "pink and fluffy" element blocking hard business outcomes. The OD

specialist is the person who can add value to the hard business process and introduce some of the softer skills that will ensure a positive outcome.

ALAN WINGROVE, LEARNING 2 ACHIEVE

It is right to say that there is some confusion over the term organisation development and that it is not always fully understood by HR.

With the increasing shift to HR business partners, HR is moving into the OD space, and some organisations have radically cut their OD function in favour of HR business partners. What, then, is the role

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