Cases and Exercises in Organization Development and Change 2nd edition Anderson Solutions Manual

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Case Notes

Chapter 2: History of Organization Development

Case Study: A Leadership Transition in Corporate Finance

Case Summary

Jake has taken over leadership of a finance function from a previous leader. An initial staff meeting demonstrates how difficult this team will be for Jake to manage, with a negative attitude among team members being explicitly demonstrated. Team members argue over roles and responsibilities in the budgeting process, with some members outwardly stating that they will not comply a standard team practice and will act independently. Interview data gathered from the team suggest that the team's strengths include respect for one another's expertise and hard work. Opportunities for improvement include communication and collaboration and improvements in quality. The past history of the team appears to be contributing to the current atmosphere, with a former manager who treated members in isolation and may have been disrespectful. Team members appear to have learned to blame one another to protect themselves. Questions for Jake center on his expectations and style.

Teaching Points

The case is written to help students see how an OD practitioner can help a leader involved in a transition activity, and how to intervene to turn around a team that has found itself in a negative pattern.

In addition, it provides an opportunity to more clearly understand the changes in the field of organization development over time by inviting students to consider what an OD practitioner might do if the case took place in different time periods or eras of OD's history.

Discussion Questions and Proposed Answers

1. Imagine that this case took place in each of the eras below. Based on your knowledge of the history of organization development, what do you think a practitioner would have done about this situation in that era?

- 1950s: In the early days of OD, t-groups and action research were popular interventions. This might involve members of the team meeting with a facilitator in an unstructured session to explore the history of the team, why they have had trouble working together effectively, and how each member of the team would need to change in order for the team to change.
- 1960s: This time period saw publication of well-known works articulating the benefits of a participative management style. An intervention in this period

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might involve Jake describing his participative management style and explaining how he would like to involve the team in changing its patterns.

- 1970s: In this era, quality and employee involvement interventions became more popular. The team might understand where quality errors have been occurring in its processes and come to agreement on process change. The team might determine what to do when it looks like problems are about to occur and work together for shared accountability for quality work.
- 1980s: Strategic change and culture assessment were common lenses on organization development in this time period. An intervention might involve using a model to understand the culture of the team and to implement actions to make the team more customer focused.
- 1990s: In the 1990s, there were publications on reengineering. For this team, it might involve mapping the team's processes in order to eliminate unwanted or wasted steps to become more efficient.
- 2000s: Employee engagement and organizational effectiveness were common concerns in this era. An engagement survey might pinpoint the areas that frustrate employees and lead to them not giving their full discretionary effort to the job.

2. Use any of the following management concepts to apply to the case. What does the concept help you understand about what is happening in this case?

- MacGregor's Theory X/Theory Y: Consistent with Theory Y, Jake appears to see his team as having the opportunity to work together, collaborate, and be self-directed. He wants to lead the team in a way that brings out "the best in each person."
- Likert's Four Systems of Management: Jake seems to want to be a participative manager (System 4): Jake notes that he wants to "get to know them, their work, their styles, and their unique personalities. He would show them that his style was to be a boss who would seek their input and opinions, be positive and optimistic, encourage collaboration, and drive accountability for every member of the team to achieve the very best." Teamwork seems especially important to Jake which would not support an interpretation of a System 1 or 2 leader.
- Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid: An argument can be made that Jake wants to be a "9,9" leader, with a high degree of importance placed on the task (given his acknowledgment that there are performance opportunities on the team) and a high degree of importance placed on people (wanting the team to collaborate).
- Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory: The team's complaints in the interview data can be compared to Herzberg's motivators. The team desires quality performance, recognition for their work, and collaboration with others.

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3. Based on your knowledge of the role of an OD practitioner, what could Cody's role be in helping Jake as his organization development consultant? What would be an inappropriate role for Cody to play?

Answers will vary, but there are a number of possibilities:

- Cody could facilitate a new team startup meeting to help design a team mission and team goals, where Jake could also address the team's questions of expectations and Jake's style
- Cody could intervene with a process redesign to help Jake and team design the budget process
- Cody could facilitate a team meeting where roles and responsibilities are clarified

An inappropriate role for Cody to take might involve him taking on more responsibility than Jake for the team's transition, or commenting personally to Jake on the skills and qualifications of various members of the team.

4. If you were in Cody's shoes, what would you recommend that Jake do next? What actions could be taken at the individual, team, and organization-wide levels?

Based on the data it appears that team members could build on the strengths of the respect they have for one another's skills and their recognition of the hard work invested by others on the team. The team appears to desire greater collaboration and has a number of questions about Jake's expectations. Cody could provide coaching to Jake as he transitions to this team, and he could provide team interventions as described above.

Additional Readings

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Exercises and Activities

1. Have a member of the class role play the start of the next team meeting. What should Jake say?

2. A parody poster (Demotivators, at www.despair.com) jokes that "sometimes the best solution to morale problems is just to fire all of the unhappy people." Divide the class into teams and debate the pros and cons of this approach for Jake. Why should Jake make changes to membership on the team? Why should he retain his existing team?

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Case Notes

Chapter 2: History of Organization Development

Case Study: Greencycle Publishing

Case Summary

Greencycle publishing is a specialty publisher of environmental books, in addition to other subjects. David Green is the company founder, and Arthur Thomas is his managing editor. The publishing industry is under tremendous pressure to succeed, with threats from electronic publishing and more, and Greencycle is no exception. The company makes money only when books are on the shelf and available to be purchased. Consequently, a fast cycle time is paramount.

Thomas' staff of three acquisitions editors and three production editors have responsibility for acquiring and producing books. Each area has its challenges. Acquisitions editors spend a lot of their time traveling, seeking new books, and dealing with the frustrations of sales and marketing at conferences. They receive bonuses based on getting titles in the pipeline. The production editors spend time dealing with freelance copy editors and layout designers and are constantly under pressure to meet deadlines. Production editing work begins once the acquisitions editors receive book files from authors and the title is handed off in a "launch" meeting.

The two groups find themselves in conflict as day-to-day pressures seem to frustrate each group. Neither has a particularly positive impression of the other.

Acquisitions thinks Production:	**Production thinks Acquisitions:**
• Does not understand the challenges of travel being not as glamorous as it seems • Usually cannot meet deadlines • Is more fixated on processes and forms rather than getting books out (i.e., art logs) • Fails to pay attention to the important details of the book, asking acquisitions about book details they could figure out on their own • Blames acquisitions for problems that are not the fault of acquisitions (i.e., paperclips on author photos)	• Has it easy, living on an expense account • Fails to pay attention to the important details of the book (that impact layout, typesetting, and schedules) • Hands over unfinished or incomplete book files • Fails to follow the process (i.e., art logs) • Expects them to work miracles • Unfairly has more resources • Does not understand the demands of production work

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• Fails to communicate important deadlines and thus contributes to rework (i.e., layout) • Does not understand the demands of acquisitions work	

In addition, Arthur Thomas as managing editor tries to navigate between both groups, and often reassures both while failing to take action for either group. Arthur seems to be averse to direct confrontation, even though he is clearly unhappy with the performance of both groups.

Teaching Points

1. Is Arthur's staff a team? Why or why not? What are the elements of an effective team, in your view? Which of these are present on Arthur's team, and which are missing? Would your answers be the same if you focused on the acquisitions team and the production team independently?

Larson and LaFasto (1989, p. 19) believe that "a team has two or more people; it has a specific performance objective or recognizable goal to be attained; and coordination of activity among the members of the team is required for the attainment of the team goal or objective." Arthur's team does indeed appear to fit this definition, since the team's and organization's success depends on the effective interaction of acquisitions and production team members.

Larson and LaFasto (1989, p. 26) conducted detailed interviews of members of high performing executive teams, project teams, sports teams, government, and military teams. They concluded that eight characteristics set the successful teams apart:

1. A clear, elevating goal. That is, the goal is understood and seen as challenging to team members.
2. A results-driven structure. Team members must have clear roles, effective communication processes, and an ability to use available data to evaluate progress and take corrective action when necessary. Members must also understand how their roles interrelate.
3. Competent members. The team must be comprised of members with the right technical knowledge and interpersonal skills to contribute to the team's goal.
4. Unified commitment. Team members must be willing to dedicate effort and energy to the team.
5. A collaborative climate. The team must develop a climate of trust in one another in order to collaborate.
6. Standards of excellence. High-performing teams have high standards for individual performance and members feel pressure to achieve.
7. External support and recognition. Teams need external rewards but also support in the form of resources necessary for the team to accomplish its work.
8. Principled leadership. Leaders provide the necessary motivation and alignment to complete the team's work.

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In Arthur's team, one might argue that a results-driven structure (communication in particular), a collaborative climate, external recognition (data unknown about this case), and principled leadership could be improved.

2. If you were consulting with Arthur on the problems or opportunities for organization development interventions in this company, how would you describe and prioritize the main problems?

The central problem in this organization is the interteam conflict that contributes in part to missed deadlines and ineffective communication between team members. Arthur's own contribution to the problem should not be overlooked, since he may be feeding organizational members' beliefs in the superiority of one's own group and the inferiority of another team.

3. How would you work with the client to structure an interteam intervention? Are there other interventions you would recommend? If so, which one(s)?

Answers will vary. Anderson (2010) lists variations on interteam interventions that may be appropriate for this group. In addition, the following have been found to be successful in minimizing intergroup conflict:

1. Increase intergroup contact
2. A superordinate goal
3. Recategorization and developing a common in-group identity
4. Find a common enemy
5. Exchange team members

See also Alderfer (1977), Blake, Shepard, & Mouton (1965), and Dyer, Dyer, and Dyer, Jr. (2007) for examples of interteam interventions that could be applied to this group.

Additional Readings

Alderfer, C. P (1977). Improving organizational communication through long-term group intervention. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 13,* 193-210.

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Larson, C. E., & LaFasto, F. M. J. (1989). *TeamWork: What must go right / What can go wrong.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Levi, D. (2001). *Group dynamics for teams.* (2nd ed). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Wheelan, S. A. (2010). *Creating effective teams: A guide for members and their leaders*. (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Exercises and Activities

1. Divide class into two groups. One group will play the role of acquisitions, and the other will play the role of production. Ask each group to make two lists:

List 1: What we think about [the other group].
List 2: What we think the other group will say about us.

Have each group exchange lists, and debrief the activity. How did each group react to reading how the other group portrayed it?

2. Form small group consulting teams. Imagine that you are consulting to Arthur Thomas. How would you contract with Arthur? What questions would you ask in your initial meeting? What data gathering approach would you suggest? How would you give feedback to Arthur about his group and himself in particular? Ask students to create a feedback presentation to Arthur and deliver it.

The authors would like to point out that while this case reflects a real scenario with a real organization, it bears no resemblance to the authors' experience with, and is not adapted from, SAGE Publishing.

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