UNDERSTANDING DECISIONS MADE DURING THE INITIAL

STAGES OF OD INTERVENTIONS

by

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(Under the Direction of Bradley C. Courtenay)

ABSTRACT

Competitive pressures, technological advances, mergers and acquisitions, and global expansion fuel the need for organizations to initiate successful change. The failed rate of change initiatives is appalling—greater than 50 percent and possibly as high as 75 percent. Although several factors have been found to influence success and failure there is a gap in our understanding about the influence of the early decisions on success or failure of a change initiative. This study examines how understandings of decisions made by the change agent and the OD practitioner during the early stages of a change initiative shape perceptions of success or failure.

This study was a basic qualitative inquiry seeking to understand how the decisions made during the initial stages of an OD initiative are interpreted and understood by the OD practitioner and the change agent. This study drew from the concepts, models, and theories of organizational development and change. The data from the interviews were transcribed and analyzed by constant comparative analysis.

The first conclusion was that the congruent understanding of the decisions made by the change agent and the OD practitioner suggests the change initiative might result in the desired results. It was also found that face-to-face feedback meetings may have contributed to the understanding of decisions by the OD practitioner and the change agent. The second conclusion of this study, indicate four factors that were perceived by the research participants that could differentiate their view of success or failure of change initiatives emerged from the data—the close working relationship with the OD practitioner, education and training, the exercise of organizational leadership, and the effects of continuous communication.

Further study was recommended in the global community to ascertain whether those findings might agree with the findings of this study. Further research could also explore whether there is a link to understandings of the decisions made by the change agent and the OD practitioner to the success or failure of change initiatives.

INDEX WORDS: Organizational development; Organizational change; Decision-making; Change management; Communications.

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B.S.B.A., Shorter College, 1994

M.B.A., Brenau University, 1995

A Disertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2003

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August 2003

DEDICATION

  This study is dedicated to my wife Sandra and my two children, Sonua and Rick.

They have been my support and encouragement during the years that I have pursued this

endeavor of continuous learning.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My gratitude and acknowledge of their assistance goes out to all of my committee: Bradley C. Courtenay, Helen C. Hall, Sharan B. Merriam, and Karen E. Watkins. They have always been there when I needed assistance and have been encouragers whenever I needed encouragement.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The industrial revolution matured slowly over a period of about three centuries (Toffler, 1980). Today civilization has moved beyond the industrial age. Some call it an age of digital economy (Downes & Mui, 1998; Tapscott, Lowy, & Tiscoll, 1998; Thurow, 1999), the third wave (Toffler, 1980) or, for some, the information age. In this age change occurs more rapidly than in the industrial age (Thurow, 1999). Over 20 years ago, Peter Drucker (1980) foresaw how change would accelerate, especially for business organizations:

> The one certainty about the time ahead, the times in which managers will have to work and to perform, is that they will be turbulent times. And in turbulent times, the first task of management is to make sure of an institution's capacity for survival, to make sure of its structural strength and soundness, of its capacity to survive a blow, to adapt to sudden change, and to avail itself of new opportunities. (p. 1)

Drucker's (1980) predictions have proven to be accurate. In today's turbulent business climate, change,

driven by competitive pressures and the digital economy, comes very quickly to most organizations—quicker than some individuals and companies can adapt (Downes & Mui, 1998; Tapscott, Lowy, & Tiscoll, 1998; Thurow, 1999). There are the added elements of recession (Grogan, 2001; Kelly, 2001), corporate downsizing (Charan & Tichy, 2000) or reengineering (Jaffe & Scott, 2000b), and the war on terrorism (Long, 2001) that drive change in today's organizations. Most organizations—education, health, families, justice, political, and business enterprises—were designed to work in an industrial society (Wiersema, 1996). That way of life is being left behind as organizational change becomes commonplace.

A characteristic of organizational change is the acceleration of the rate of change over time (Beckhard, 1997; Burke, 1994; Sauser & Sauser, 2002). One of the fuels of this accelerated rate of change is the economy as it has moved into the third industrial revolution—from one of national economies to a global economy (Thurow, 1999) or digital economy (Downes & Mui, 1998; Tapscott, Lowy, & Tiscoll, 1998; Thurow, 1999) where the balance of power is shifting to the customer or consumer. Startup companies, taking advantage of technology changes and the Internet, can appear out of nowhere and quickly create new wealth and

capture significant market share by appealing to the technological savvy customer (Charan & Tichy, 2000; Wiersema, 1996).

Weidman (2002) says that in the past change was measured in years and in some cases decades, but now change can need to occur in months or even days to meet the competitive pressures of the business environment. Changes in the past were sometimes just as radical as the changes today, but the pressures of time and speed to bring about the changes were not as great.

This new digital economy is dominated by innovation and drives change. The success of business enterprises has been based on their ability to introduce revolutionary innovation and defy prevailing logic in a particular industry as they constantly raise customer expectations and impose their standards on suppliers. One such innovation is the Internet. The Internet bombards customers with options of where and how they will conduct their business (Wiersema, 1996).

Only those organizations that can respond to change quickly will survive in this new economy (Downes & Mui, 1998; Tapscott, Lowy, & Ticoll, 1998). As new companies emerge and existing companies reinvent themselves, there is good growth, growth that is profitable and sustainable, and

bad growth, growth that "is profitless, wasteful of capital, and even reckless" (Charan & Tichy, 2000, p. 3). The bad growth has led to the failure of companies in some cases or the downsizing in other cases as they attempt to restore an acceptable return on investment (ROI) to their respective shareholders (Charan & Tichy, 2000). This downsizing activity results in the loss of jobs and also creates change within the enterprise. The U.S. Labor Department reported that the second quarter of 2001 marked the worst quarterly job loss since the recession of 1990-91 (Joyner, 2001).

Downes and Mui (1998) said it is important for organizational leaders to be aware of the forces or factors shaping the competitive environment in the digital economy. One example of these forces has been described as Moore's Law, a prediction by Intel founder Gordon Moore that every 18 months chip density (computing power) will double while costs remain constant. This allows new companies entering the market to do so with a lower cost structure, giving them a competitive advantage over existing companies using older computing technology. This drives change in those older companies as they strive to keep up with the newer technology.

Another example is an observation made by Robert Metcalfe, now commonly called Metcalfe's Law, that networks—whether telephone, computer, or people—dramatically increase in value (utility) with each additional node or user (Utility = Users^2). Once a technological innovation (e.g., the Internet) achieves critical mass, its value to users increases exponentially (Downes & Mui, 1998). These forces not only shape the competitive environment but also affect how businesses view transaction costs.

Coasian Economics observed that firms reduced transaction costs of recurring and intricate activities involved in selling and distributing goods and services by centralization of operations in the industrial era. These firms grew larger and larger by growth or mergers and acquisitions to further centralize operations and thereby reduce those transaction costs. Increases in computer power and in the value to users of technological innovation brought about a reversal of Coasian Economics. Trends are now developing toward downsizing, outsourcing, and moving enterprise activities from centralized to decentralized operations—again to reduce transaction costs. This de-centralization of operations trend along with technological advances, competition, and corporate downsizing drive the

need for rapid, successful change for all enterprises in the digital economy (Downes & Mui, 1998).

These forces or trends also demonstrate the necessity for business leaders to examine their corporate strategies for implementing change. The business environment will continue to be chaotic with organizations driven to change, and only those enterprises that are well-designed and well-led and that can manage change successfully will experience a competitive advantage (Bolman & Deal, 1999; Jaffe & Scott, 2000b).

The literature on organizational change offers several models for conducting change efforts. These models make up what is referred to as organizational development (OD), a concept that has evolved in its meaning over the past 30 years. Early on Bennis (1969) said that OD, as a response to change pressures, is a complex educational strategy designed to move the beliefs, attitudes, and values of the group in a positive direction. The strategies for accomplishing this vary widely. "Whatever the strategy, organizational development almost always concentrates on the values, attitudes, relations, and organizational climate—the 'people variable'—as a point of entry rather than on the goals, structure, and technologies of the organization" (Bennis, 1969, pp. 10-11).

Later French, Bell, and Zawacki (1994) offered the definition of OD as:

a process of planned system change that attempts to make organizations (viewed as social-technical systems) better able to attain their short- and long-term objectives. This is achieved by teaching the organization members to manage their organization processes, structures, and culture more effectively. (p. 7)

Burke (1994) said that OD is the process of surfacing implicit behavioral patterns that help or hinder the desired results of an organization. OD has as its goal the design and implementation of change interventions within the organization. OD should be in concert with the strategy makers and leadership within the organization for a successful change initiative (Burke, 1994; Tichy & Cohen, 1997).

In this chaotic business environment, unfortunately some scholars have suggested that OD models are marginally successful in effecting change. In fact the rate of unsuccessful change is alarming. Among Fortune 500 companies the failure rate for change initiatives is greater than 50 percent (Beer & Nohria, 2000; Bolman & Deal, 1999; Boss & Golembiewski, 1995; Jaffe & Scott,

2000a; Jaffe & Scott, 2000b; Schieman, 1992). In an earlier study by Burke, Clark, and Koopman (1984), the respondents, not the researchers, fixed the success rate at 53 percent successful, 47 percent unsuccessful. Jaffe and Scott (2000a) put the number of failed interventions as high as three out of four attempts.

In a study of change in 40 organizations, LaClair and Rao (2002) found that 58 percent of the organizations did not meet their goals. Of the 42 percent that did meet their change objectives, they either met or exceeded them by as much as 200 to 300 percent of their expected returns.

Failed change efforts are expensive. With an intervention failure rate of between 47 percent and 75 percent, work must be done to increase the rate of successful change interventions that should equate to huge reductions in resources directed toward on-going change activities. Jaffe and Scott (1998) reported that corporations spent billions in change efforts. Holland (2000) wrote that organizations have "cost overruns of everything from a few percentage points to orders of magnitude" (p. 5) when implementing change initiatives. Lewis (1999) wrote that change initiatives were not only costly because of financial investments, but also costly in the drain on employees' time spent on the change initiative

versus performing their normal work, and businesses lost productivity due to lower employee morale. These high failure rates and the cost of organizational change should cause management to look at just how they are implementing needed organizational change.

Several scholars have examined change failures and uncovered a number of reasons for failure. First, employees are not properly trained and prepared for change (Bolman & Deal, 1999). The organization's cultural and people issues are not addressed (Anderson, Klein, & Stuart, 2000; St-Amour, 2001). CEO support and involvement for the initiative are lacking (Weidner, 1999). The organization's managers are too involved in too many initiatives (Beer & Nohria, 2000). Employees are resistant to organizational change (Schiemann, 1992). The organization has a low commitment to learning (Jaffe & Scott, 1998; Watkins & Golembiewski, 1995; Watkins & Marsick, 1993). And finally, executives and managers fail to properly communicate change to the organization (Larkin & Larkin, 1996).

One area that has received little attention in the change process is the congruency of understanding of the initial decisions by the major implementers of the change process. The two prominent players in the change process, at least in the initial phase, are the OD practitioner and

the change agent. The OD practitioner or consultant working with a client organization change agent initiates OD. OD practitioners initiate, design, and implement change interventions based on the needs of the organization and in conjunction with the organization's change agent. OD practitioners may reside within an organization, usually in the human resources group, or may be an external contractor or consultant. The OD practitioner will typically work with the client's change agent.

Organizational change agents are important to the change initiative because they provide the vision of the change as well as provide the resources necessary to bring the change to fruition. The change agent and the OD practitioner participate in establishing the strategies to launch the change initiative in the organization. Certain decisions are made in the early or contracting stages of a change initiative, decisions that will guide the future actions of the change agent and the OD practitioner.

In a change initiative important decisions are made about the intervention design and implementation during initial contact meetings or the contracting stage of the intervention. In two studies Eisenhardt (1999) found evident differences in the decision-making strategy between more effective or successful enterprises and those that

were less successful in today's competitive environment. These differences were attributed to effective, strategic organizational leaders making decisions that were fast, of high quality, and with broad support within the enterprise.

Neal (1999), in a study of effective strategies of the contracting stage of organizational change, found "only three empirical studies [that] dealt specifically with the contracting process (Eubanks, O'Driscoll, Hayward, Daniels, & Connor, 1990; McKinney, 1979; Milstein & Smith, 1979), none of which described critical success strategies for this stage" (p. 7).

The contracting stage of the change initiative has been found to be critical to the success of the OD intervention in several early studies (Boss, 1979; Burke, Clark, & Koopman, 1984; Covin & Fisher, 1991; Kolb & Frohman, 1970; McKinney, 1979). Burke, Clark, and Koopman (1984) found that bilateral clarity of the contracting stage was essential during the contracting phase of an intervention and critical to the project's success or failure. An agreement of the contributions to be made by the client and by the consultant during the intervention must be clearly defined (Kolb & Frohman, 1970: Long, 1999). The contracting stage may require that many decisions be made, and the OD practitioner and the change agent will

generally be the principals in that process of decision-making. How the OD practitioner and the change agent understand those decisions may have some impact on the outcome of the initiative.

Light (1998) stated, "… [C]onsultants and clients believe they communicate effectively when, in fact, they fail to understand one another. Each person will bring to the intervention his or her own biases and way of thinking" (p. 28). If clarity of what is wanted is not established by the change agent and the OD practitioner/expert, "the expert may decide the content of the change and how it will be managed" (Beckhard & Pritchard, 1992, p. 88) resulting in a change initiative that the client did not buy into and that may result in something totally alien to the change that was needed. Holland (2000), in addressing the requirements for engineering change, stated "the [change] vision should be tested with members of the organization to ensure that it is an understandable picture of the desired future" (p. 230).

Clarity over the goals of the change initiative may also be affected by the biases and perceptions of the OD practitioner and the change agent. For example Russo, Medvec, and Meloy (1996) wrote that people often distort information after a decision has been made. They examined

"whether a parallel type of distortion occurs predecisionally" (p. 102), that is, the influence of biases or experiences prior to the planned change initiative. Their findings, based on a preferential choice study by individuals, found such predecision distortions. By extension it can be assumed that predecision distortion could affect the understanding of decisions made by two parties engaged in a common exercise such as planned organizational change.

Several scholars point to the importance of the contracting stage and the communication of understanding of contractual agreements for change initiatives to be successful. However, there does not appear to be any research that has examined the congruency of understanding by the OD practitioner and the change agent around their decision making in the contracting or initial stage of a change initiative.

A literature review of organization development and change, OD consulting and contracting, diffusion of innovation, and decision-making as it is related to organizational change found no studies that examined the understanding, by the OD practitioner and the client change agent, of the decisions made during the contracting stage. However, in a paper that developed a framework for

considering organizational change as a communication-base and communication-driven occurrence, Ford and Ford (1995) suggested further research is needed in types of conversations. They state, "Managers' assumptions about how ideas are related can be discovered through a study of their conversations about change, particularly during conversations for understanding" (p. 563). This article tells that effective communication, especially at the initiative of successful change, is important. Wheatley's (2002) work also indicates that conversations and their mutual understanding are the easiest way to bring about change in an organization whether it is "personal change, community and organizational change, or planetary change" (p. 8).

Problem Statement

Competitive pressures, technological advances, mergers and acquisitions, and global expansion fuel the need for business enterprises to initiate successful change. This chaotic business environment suggests that successful change initiatives need to occur in a shorter time period and at a higher success rate within organizations. The failed rate of change initiatives is appalling—greater than 50 percent and possibly as high as three out of four change initiatives (Jaffe & Scott, 2000a). These change

initiatives have failed for a myriad of reasons ranging from employees not properly trained and prepared for change to executives and managers that fail to properly communicate change to the organization.

These studies indicated very high failure rates in change initiatives, and it can be speculated that the high failure rate might also be attributed to gaps in the congruency of understanding of decisions made by the OD practitioner and the change agent. Research indicates understanding of contract details to be crucial for successful change. However, very little research has been conducted to examine congruency of understandings of decisions made by the OD practitioner and the change agent during the initial or contracting stage of the intervention. Furthermore, the factors that influence the understanding of the decisions made during the conversations in the initiative of a planned change are absent from the literature.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe how understandings of decisions made by the change agent and the OD practitioner during the early stages of a change initiative shape perceptions of success or failure.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do change leaders and OD practitioners describe the initial OD intervention, design, and implementation?

2. What were the decisions made by the change agent and the OD practitioner during the launch of the change initiative?

3. How do change agents and OD practitioners differ or agree in their interpretation of the decisions that were made during the launch of a change initiative?

4. What factors differentiate the perceptions of the OD practitioner and the change agent about success or failure of the change initiative to this point in the change effort?

Significance of the Study

This study tells whether the understanding of the decisions made by the change agent and the OD practitioner during the early stages of a change initiative shape their perceptions of success or failure. The study findings inform the various OD theories and conceptual models of the importance of congruent understanding or interpretation of decisions made during the initial phase of a change initiative. OD practitioners have been influenced by a group of minitheories—each explaining only a portion of organizational behavior and effectiveness (Burke, 1994). In

practice these minitheories or approaches are used in combination to build an effective intervention (Huffington, Cole, & Brunning, 1997). This study benefits the OD practitioners and organizational change agents by informing the literature with additional information of one aspect, the understanding or interpretation of decisions, to the various approaches or models they may take in OD design and implementation. The results of this understanding could be better resource utilization and flexibility within the organization to address environmental pressures and ultimately bring additional value to the organizational stakeholders.

This study informs change theory on the potential benefit of the congruent understanding of decisions made by the OD practitioner and change agent during the initial planning and contracting phase of OD.

In the practice of OD, this study adds to the knowledge base of how OD and change can be more successfully accomplished. Its findings provides a clearer understanding to the change agent and the OD practitioner of the necessity for feedback of and verification of the decisions made when selecting the minitheories or models that will make up the foundation for change interventions. The result leads to an increase in the effectiveness and

efficiencies of the resources involved in the change

initiative.

Definitions

The following definitions clarify some of the terms as

they were used in this study:

Change agent – The person, with the authority and resource

control, who champions and initiates change in the

organization.

Major change – A condition or situation requiring most

people in the organization to learn new behaviors and

skills to give the organization a competitive advantage,

i.e., the capability to produce more and more performance

in shorter and shorter time frames (Katzenbach, et al,

1996).

Fundamental change - The creation of and leadership of

change that will change the very essence of the

organization (Beckhard & Pritchard, 1992).

Organizational development – A process of surfacing buried

behavioral patterns that help or hinder the desired results

of an organization, reinforcing those behaviors that assist

the organization's development and changing those behaviors

that impede the organization's development (Burke, 1994).

OD interaction processes move the organization from the

degenerative state of low regard for openness, low

tolerance for owning a problem, high risk in decision-making, and low trust to a regenerative state where openness, owning, and trust are high and the risk for decision-making is low (Golembiewski, 1990).

OD Practitioner – One who draws from the theoretical knowledge of organizational development and uses that knowledge in practice as an internal or external OD professional.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This literature review examined several areas of writings relevant to organizational change initiatives and the decisions made in that process: organization development (OD) and change; OD models, factors and barriers affecting organizational change; OD consulting and contracting; and decision-making as it is related to planned organizational change.

Computer searches were used to explore the University of Georgia Library's Galileo and GIL Systems. The databases searched were: ABI Inform, Dissertation Abstracts On-line, and the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC). Keyword searches of leadership and change, organization change, organization development and change, consulting and contracts, diffusion of innovation, and decision-making were conducted. Journal articles, research studies, doctoral dissertations, and books were reviewed.

Organizational Development and Change

Today change is universal and is viewed as the one predictable factor for organizations. Competitive pressures, technologacal advances, global expansion,

mergers and acquisitions (Downes & Mui, 1998; Tapscott, Lowy, & Tiscoll, 1998; Thurow, 1999), recession (Grogan, 2001; Kelly, 2001), corporate downsizings (Charan & Tichy, 2000; Walsh, 2001) or reengineering (Jaffe & Scott, 2000b), and terrorism (Long, 2001) demonstrate the need for change within organizations.

Companies are also being driven to achieve greater speed in designing, manufacturing, and delivering new services and products to the marketplace (Schein, 1992). Weidman (2002) writes that today "we measure the rate of change in months and, in some cases, even days" (p. 16). There is a reason for all this change and the desire for it to be quick—successful change initiatives result in a "huge competitive advantage" (Jaffe & Scott, 2000b). Yet with this desire for success, on the part of organization leaders, we find that change initiatives have a high failure rate.

Bolman and Deal (1999) fix the failure rate of organizational change efforts at about two-thirds. Anderson, Klein, and Stuart (2000) say the research fixes that failure rate at 85 percent, St-Amour (2001) 66 percent, Jaffe and Scott (2000a) 75 percent, and many others fix the failure rate above 50 percent (Beer & Nohria, 2000; Bolman & Deal, 1999; Boss & Golembiewski,

1995; Jaffe & Scott, 2000a; Jaffe & Scott, 2000b; LaClair & Rao, 2002; Schieman, 1992). To what factors can we attribute these high failure rates of organizational change?

Bolman and Deal (1999) found that employees were not properly trained and prepared for change; cultural and people issues are not addressed (Anderson, et al. 2000; St-Amour, 2001); full support of the change is not secured from the CEO by the change agent (Weidner, 1999); managers are involved in too many initiatives at the same time (Beer & Nohria, 2000); employee resistance to doing things in new ways (Schiemann, 1992); low commitment to learning (Jaffe & Scott, 1998; Watkins & Golembiewski, 1995; Watkins & Marsick, 1993); and communication failures (Larkin & Larkin, 1996). These reasons for failure of organization change are just a sampling and certainly need to be addressed when found in an organization looking to implement change.

In any discussion of OD, one has to arrive at a definition, as there are as many definitions of OD as there are OD professionals. Some OD professionals use the term "organization development," others use the term "organizational development," and some use either term

interchangeably. The terms are used synonymously in this literature review and in the prospective research.

French, Bell, and Zawacki (1994) summarized several definitions of OD found in early OD literature with this definition, " … [O]rganization development is a process of planned system change that attempts to make organizations (viewed as social-technical systems) better able to attain their short-and long-term objectives" (p.7). Instructing members in the organization to more effectively manage organization processes, structures, and culture accomplish this planned system change (Charan & Tichy, 2000; Jaffe & Scott, 2000b).

In exploring what organization development is, Burke (1994) stated the following general definition as a beginning point: "Organization development is a planned process of change in an organization's culture through the utilization of behavioral science technologies, research, and theory" (p.12). Burke then discusses several perspectives of a definition for OD, and his final definition of OD was this researcher's choice for the purpose of this study:

OD, therefore, is a process of bringing to the surface those implicit behavioral patterns that are helping and hindering development. Bringing these patterns of

conformity to organization members' conscious awareness puts them in a position to reinforce the behaviors that help development and change those that hinder. (p. 11)

Having defined OD, the literature reviewed also revealed that the field of organizational development and change has some turmoil in it about what OD is, how it should be practiced, and what it should be called. All of the descriptors of change—whether change management, business process redesign or reengineering, or organizational development—are grounded in the OD models examined later in this literature review.

Worren, Ruddle, and Moore (1999) look at change management as a discipline that can unify different perspectives in the field of organizational change. They cite the view of Robert E. Quinn that OD has become irrelevant because OD practitioners do not understand business and the majority of executives do not understand OD. OD departments are not growing, and OD has failed to generate any interest in MBA programs. Quinn is the proponent of a new profession—one with an understanding of business and organizational development.

Worren, Ruddle, and Moore (1999) disagree with Quinn's view and state that there is resurgence in the profession of OD due to the growth in the field of change management,

albeit the OD practitioner usually works as a facilitator while change management consultants generally work in teams. Major consulting firms now have separate divisions specializing in change management. These firms expect continual growth in their number of change management consultants. These authors conclude, "Change management promises to be a discipline that will integrate the thought worlds that separate OD from strategy and technology, thus enabling the coordinated efforts necessary to bring about strategic change" (p. 285).

Furnham (2002) states that from the aspect of change management one needs courage to bring about organizational change. He says there are three types of courage needed in change management, particularly in business. These types of courage are the courage to risk failure, interpersonal courage or the ability to confront other employees about specific failings or problems, and moral courage or "courage to stand up for a set of moral beliefs when in the quicksand of modern day business" (p. 23).

Moosbruker and Loftin (1998) examined whether OD could provide the framework of organizational understanding and change management that could lead to the successful implementation of business process redesign. These two approaches, organizational understanding and change

management, have different histories, languages, values, and organizational arrangements. They reviewed five business cases and suggested that although an OD framework increases the likelihood of a reengineering success, additional research is needed in this area.

In the decade of the 1990s, hundreds or perhaps thousands of business-process redesigns have been attempted. Most have failed (Bolman & Deal, 1999; Boss & Golembiewski, 1995; Jaffe & Scott, 2000a; Jaffe & Scott, 2000b; Schieman, 1992). The conjecture is that the model for success for business-process redesign must encompass the principles and practices of organization development and change management (Moosbruker & Loftin, 1998).

Buchanan, Claydon, and Doyle (1999) found that the literature dealing with OD and change has grown while at the same time becoming fragmented. The fragmentation is a result of the many names by which OD is referred to in the literature even though the prescriptive elements of change literature—clarity of goals, systematic planning, broad consulting, and effective communications—are the same regardless of the name attached.

Certain skills and knowledge must be present to lead organizational change. Beer and Eisenstat (1996b) stated, "Skills to manage organizational fitness tend to be far

less developed than today's competitive environment demands" (p. 53). OD plays a major role in facilitating change in those companies. Human resources development (HRD) focuses on the individual within the organization while OD interventions are focused on the organization or workplace as a unit (Hanpachern, Morgan, & Griego, 1998).

However, it is organization development that is instrumental in designing interventions to facilitate successful change initiatives within an organization. For this to happen, OD needs to be aligned with the strategy makers within the organization (Bennis, 1989; Tichey & Cohen 1997). OD interventions can bring strategic thinking to all levels of the enterprise when change agents are identified and engaged in the change effort.

Katzenback, et al., (1996) found that when change leaders or agents at all levels of the organization were engaged with the organization's vision and need for change, there was a greater chance of success. This is especially true in major or large-scale change that can best be described as "breakthrough, radical, or revolutionary changes" (Jaffe & Scott, 2000b, p. 13). This type of change generally affects all elements of the organization.

In carrying out change through OD, generally individual functional roles are utilized—that of an

organizational change agent and the OD practitioner or consultant. The one who works with the client organization and helps identify the need for change in an organization and then helps design the intervention to bring about that change is known as an OD consultant or practitioner. Anyone who intervenes in the problem-solving efforts of a social group or organization from within can be regarded as a change agent. The change agent may be a catalyst to the change process, a solution giver, a process helper, or a resource linker meeting the needs of the organizational change (Havelock & Zlotolow, 1995).

The OD practitioner's role is to help induce higher levels of responsible freedom; e.g., empowering and removing obstacles to meet the needs of the changing organization. The OD consultant or practitioner must consider interaction processes that are both unobstructed and empowering, such as the regenerative and degenerative systems discussed by Golembiewski (1990). The OD consultant or practitioner analyzes the organization and when it is found to be degenerative, OD interventions are designed to move the organizational values toward the regenerative system norms (Golembiewski, 1990). These norms are: high tolerance for openness or communicating, high tolerance for owning or accepting responsibility, and high levels of

trust that result in low risk for the individual making decisions, assuming responsibility, or taking action to deal with organizational issues.

Individuals prefer regenerative interaction in an organization because it generates an environment that promotes the behaviors of openness, responsibility, and trust in organizations while reducing the consequences of taking risk (Golembiewski, 1990; Watkins & Golembiewski, 1995). Regenerative organizations are more likely to be receptive of change therefore the chance of a successful intervention would be increased in a regenerative environment (Golembiewski, 1990; Watkins & Golembiewski, 1995).

Degenerative systems, on the other hand, were characterized by poor communications and decision-making, workers became less effective in identifying issues, the number of unfinished tasks rose, workers failed to resolve problems and may have even created additional problems, individuals became less likely to venture out, and organization norms developed that exacerbated myriad organization problems.

The review of OD and change literature revealed that organizations need to change for a number of reasons and that there is a high rate of failure when organizations

attempt to change. OD helps the client organization bring about necessary change within the organization, these changes affect the culture and values of the organization (Burke, 1994; Golembiewski, 1990; French et al. 1994), and leadership has the greatest influence on the changing of or management of an organization's culture (Argyris, 1992). OD is the process of identifying implicit behaviors that help or hinder the development of the organization and designing a plan to overcome the hindrances. OD practitioners, working in concert with the client organization's change agent, help identify the need for change and bring the skills and knowledge of change methodology to the change initiative. Their goal, working with the organization's leadership, is to move the organization in a positive direction along a continuum between degenerative and regenerative systems.

Organizational Development Models

Just as there are several definitions of OD, and it is known by different terminologies e.g., change management or reengineering), there are also alternative models of OD. The following discussion of the literature demonstrates that all change processes or models are grounded in organizational development regardless of whether it keeps the name OD or is called something else (e.g., change

management). The profession of organization development has its proponents and those who advocate that OD needs to be changed or updated to better serve the needs of business (Hornstein, 2001). In either case, if one is to understand change processes, some models of organization change must be examined to lay a foundation.

There is not a single comprehensive theory of OD, but rather the foundation of OD efforts come from three models explored by Burke (1994): "… (1) the action research model, (2) Lewin's three-step model of system change—unfreezing, moving, and refreezing, and (3) phases of planned change as delineated by Lippitt, Watson, and Wesley" (p.54).

With action research, the research within the organization is conducted first and then appropriate action is taken based upon analysis of the research data (Burke, 1994). Dickens and Watkins (1999) stated, "Most action researchers agree that action research consists of cycles of planning, acting, reflecting or evaluating, and then taking further action" (p. 134). OD practitioners choose between methodologies for their action because various forms of action research exist.

Lewin's three-step model unfreezes the present level of behavior in the organization as the first step of the OD process. Movement is then taken to change the current

social system's behavior level to a new level. OD consults or practitioners refer to this process design as an intervention. The third step refreezes the new level of behavior by setting a norm of behavior that is resistant to change until a new need for change is determined (Burke, 1994).

The Phases of Planned Change Model expands Lewin's three-step model to five phases. Phases are more descriptive of reality as the term "step" suggests the completion of one step before the next step can begin. This model adds the establishment of a "change relationship" phase between "unfreezing" and "movement" in Lewin's three-step model. It also adds the fifth phase, "achieving a terminal relationship," after the "refreezing" step of Lewin's model (Burke, 1994).

In the same text Burke (1994) discussed E. H. Schein's elaboration on Lewin's three-step model. Schein points out that the stages overlap and may occur very quickly in some instances. As the change is diffused throughout the organization, different work groups may be involved with different phases of the change. It is therefore imperative that the OD practitioner remain aware of the stage in which he or she is working.

Burke (1994), with reservation because he believes the model was still emerging, described the generic model of organizational change as:

> … [A] process by which a consultant collects information about the nature of an organization (the research) and then helps the organization to change by way of a sequence of phases that involve those who are directly affected—the organization members themselves. (p.62)

Burke (1994) felt a generic model may not yet be established because organizational development is so complex. It is important to this study to recognize that all models have a beginning, unfreezing, or initial phase. It is during this phase that the OD practitioner and change agent collaborate and make decisions about the organization's problem and a course of action to guide the change intervention.

Sauser and Sauser (2002) posit five assertions about organizational change. The third assumption stated is, "It has become essential to manage change as a continuing process, not as a discrete event or even a series of discrete events" (p. 36). This assertion moves away from the assumption that change is a step process. This move toward continuous organizational change would then reflect

the continuous quality improvement that has manifested in total quality concepts within organizations.

Because of the organization's need for speed in organizational change (Schein, 1992; Sauser & Sauser, 2002), one other model warrants a brief examination. Galpin's (1996) model is explored because it attaches time-to-complete to the steps in the change process. This model defines nine stages for creating and implementing change. The model is generalizable for various change initiatives. Each stage has a time frame associated with it of one to four months with the entire process taking from 13 to 20 months to implement a major change. This model requires an understanding of the model by all management in order to apply the characteristics of both strategic and grassroots change. This model would not likely be accepted in its present form in today's business climate because of the need for greater speed in designing, manufacturing, and delivering new services and products to the consumer in order to meet the various competitive and business environmental pressures (Schein, 1992).

This review of the literature on OD models found that most if not all models stem from Lewin's three-step model. Recent models such as Galpin's (1996) require long periods of time to complete presenting a dichotomy with the

businesses' or organizations' need for speed (Schein, 1992).

Factors Affecting Organization Change

Senge (1990) describes the successful organization of the future as an organism with the competence to continually improve its capability and mold its own future. Competitive pressures, mergers and acquisitions, and global expansion are creating the need for business enterprises to initiate rapid, successful change within the organization (Downes & Mui, 1998; Tapscott, Lowy, & Tiscoll, 1998; Thurow, 1999).

In effectively managing rapid, successful change some factors are considered more influential than others. These are the learning organization, the responsibility and role of organizational leadership, organizational communication, and diffusion of innovation as it's related to change. There are also barriers to change that encompass these factors that will be reviewed as well.

First, consider the learning organization. Since the inception of organizational development and change as a field of study on the 1960s, new and innovative teaching/learning advances have surfaced. Training groups, focused on continuous learning, are an example (Varney & McFillen, 2000).

In a discussion on the implications of the learning organization for the practice of OD, the learning organization is defined as one that learns continuously and through that learning transforms or reinvents itself (Watkins & Golembiewski, 1995; Watkins & Marsick, 1993). Learning occurs in organization members, work teams, the overall organization, and the communities where the organization resides and interacts. Learning improves the organization's ability to innovate and grow implying that on a theoretical level, a theory of learning encompasses a theory of change. Watkins and Golembiewski (1995) write, "This is a significant shift in the frame of reference for OD, from a focus and emphasis on theories of change to one on theories which emphasize change and learning" (p. 88).

Changes of organizational structure or culture necessitate the need for continuous learning. Continuous learning helps the individual to cope with new positions and reorganization efforts (Watkins & Marsick, 1993). In a study of 12 large reengineering interventions, Jaffe and Scott (1998) found that an organization's low commitment to learning was a factor in unsuccessful change initiatives. Larkin and Larkin (1996) related why, in some cases, change takes longer than necessary. In attempts to increase manufacturing productivity, as much as two-thirds of

productivity gains from new equipment were because of
acceptance of this new equipment and subsequent change in
operations by frontline supervisors who in turn
communicated the need for acceptance and change to their
direct reports. The productivity gains were a result of the
employee learning through their supervisor.

People need support, training, and an opportunity to
participate in the planned intervention in order to feel
valued, effective, and in control (Holman & Deal, 1999).
Without support, training, and an opportunity to
participate in the initiative, workers become a barrier to
an organization becoming a learning organization. Holman
and Deal found, "countless reform initiatives falter
because managers neglect to spend time and money on
developing necessary knowledge and skills" (p. 8).

A major advantage of a learning organization is that
it gives support to the elimination of barriers to
successful organizational development and change (Alange,
Jacobsson & Jarnehammar, 1998; Dodgson & Bessant, 1996;
Watkins & Marsick, 1993).

Second, we will look at the responsibility and role of
leadership in organizational change. Holland (2000) wrote
"organizational change is an act of leadership" (p. 51).
The responsibility of leadership is to envision a better

future for the enterprise and to lead toward the objective. The leader has to grow the business for the betterment of the stakeholders. The leader should be instrumental in leading the present business operation, envisioning a better future for the organization, and leading the transitional efforts that occur intermittently during the journey.

Leadership complements management—it sets the direction or vision for change (Kotter, 1990). Kotter (1998) told us that competent leadership at the top is critical to organizational change but will not carry the load of organizational change in and of itself. In successful change a committed leadership team and managers guide the change initiative with many of them playing the change leadership role (Boss & Golembiewski, 1995; Katzenbach, et al., 1996). However, leadership must be simultaneously involved in the organization's "old work" to serve its current customers, envisioning the "new work" of the future, and leading the "change work" that occurs during the transition or change (Holland, 2000).

Boss and Golembiewski (1995) studied the CEO's role in two medium-sized medical facilities over a period of four years. They found the total commitment and support of the CEO to be of utmost importance to organizational change

initiatives. However, they found the CEO role, in an OD effort, could be played out at other leadership levels within the organization provided the CEO role player had independence and autonomy, had control of the work processes affected, had control of personnel and budget, had the flexibility to deviate from normal organizational procedures and policies, and that there was a degree of decentralization to the organization.

In a study of six large corporations over a period of four years, Beer, Eisenstat, and Spector (1990) found "having a CEO or other senior managers who are committed to change does make a difference—and when it comes to changing an entire organization, such support is essential" (p. 159). But they also found many grassroots changes occurring very successfully in these corporations when general managers formed ad hoc organizational groups to solve real business problems. When these problems were solved, the new processes drove corporate change as needed. These grassroots success stories were attributed to six overlapping but distinct steps:

1. Mobilize commitment to change through joint diagnosis of business problems.
2. Develop a shared vision of how to organize and manage for competitiveness.

3. Foster consensus for the new vision, competence to enact it, and cohesion to move it along.

4. Spread revitalization to all departments without pushing it from the top.

5. Institutionalize revitalization through formal policies, systems, and structures.

6. Monitor and adjust strategies in response to problems in the revitalization process. (pp. 161-164)

There are other examples of change being driven from management leadership other than the CEO. Senge (1999) wrote that middle managers at Intel were the force that moved Intel from memory chips to microprocessors and that the sales force at Canon was responsible for its move into photocopiers.

A three-year study by McKinsey and Company found a new breed of middle managers in dynamic companies that were as essential to the change occurring within the business as the visible executives at the top. This new breed of managers is establishing new practices in management with a "distinctive combination of tough, balanced performance standards and a fresh sense of how to motivate and mobilize the better worker" (Katzenbach et al., 1996, p.8). Katzenbach et al. dubbed this new breed as the real change

leaders (RCL). Three characteristics that set RCLs apart from the norm are: their desire to move to top leadership positions, their ability to generate workforce energy and productivity, and their ability to frame a true picture of what the customer wants as well as the potential of the competition. These RCLs were found to be the force separating high-performance companies from average- and low-performing companies. This study encompassed banking, telecommunications, the oil industry, the personal computer industry, medical centers, public transportation, and other industry groups (Katzenbach, et al., 1996). The leadership role is essential to successful organizational change and must be a consideration of the organization's change agent and OD practitioner when initiating, designing, and implementing change.

A third factor that has been found to influence change initiatives deals with organizational communication. Bennis and Biederman (1997) reveal a great example of the impact of communication within an organization. During World War II the Army recruited the best and the brightest of engineers for the Manhattan Project. They were not told what they were working on or the impact of the project if it was successfully concluded. Their work was slow and not

very good. Feynman, their supervisor, prevailed on the authorities to let him divulge the mission.

When permission was granted and the engineers were informed of the organization's mission and the vision of its impact on the outcome of the war, there was a transformation. The engineers began to do everything better. They worked at night and without supervision because now their work had meaning. Their success brought an earlier ending to the war and is estimated to have saved many lives due to this vital communication dealing with the importance and potential impact of their work (Bennis & Biederman, 1997).

Burke's (1994) generic model of organizational change requires the OD practitioner to be proficient in communication skills. Other scholars also agree that communication is a key ingredient to successful organizational change (Larkin & Larkin, 1996; Tichy & Cohen, 1997), and it is a leadership function to ascertain that good communication practices are in place to support the transition (Burke, 1994; Katzenbach et al., 1996). Communication is an indispensable part of building trust between people interacting with each other, and that trust increases or decreases in relation to the interaction

(Preston, 1994). Low trust results in poor communication, causing a barrier to the change effort.

Bolman & Deal (1999) told us that successful planned organizational initiatives required much communication to reduce confusion and to make the necessary structural changes to support the new vision. But one study found that executives still use old failed methods of communication (Larkin & Larkin, 1996).

Larkin and Larkin (1996) discovered that most advice given to top-level management about communicating change to the organization was incorrect. These top-level executives were advised to communicate more values, mission statements, and directions or vision concerning organizational change utilizing videos, meetings, publications, and executive road shows. The authors' advice to these executives was to communicate facts, face-to-face, and to utilize frontline supervisors to introduce change to employees. This advice stemmed from these facts: "43% of employees believe that management cheats and lies" (p. 56); 55% do not believe their union is truthful; and, "96% said that their supervisor was usually or always telling the truth" (p. 99).

Good communication skills also involve listening. The results of a management survey concerning organization

change by Buchanan, Claydon, and Doyle (1999) found that the management voice is mostly ignored in change studies despite the fact that change is such a challenge in today's business environment. They question, "have the 1990s left a legacy of cynicism and resistance following changes which have been driven or forced on staff as inevitable or fashionable, and which have increased working pressures and stress without clear benefits" (p. 21). Are there lessons in communications for the OD practitioner and change agent?

A study by Lewis (1999) addressed that question by providing the first generalizable description of communication methods used by OD practitioners and change agents during planned change. To disseminate information about planned change, the three most commonly used channels of communication were small informal discussions, general information meetings, and word of mouth from employee to employee. The least frequently used channels were written bulletin board posting or handouts and the use of line supervisors. She also found that the OD practitioner/change agent "appear to solicit input much less frequently than they disseminate information" (p. 65). Small discussion groups, unsolicited complaints and praise, and staff supervisors were used most frequently to gather input.

Lewis's (1999) work informed OD practitioners/change agents of three findings. First, temporary workers, telecommuters, workers at remote sites, and part-time employees are often left out of the communications channel for planned change information. Second, line supervisors are underutilized to disseminate information and their attitudes and behaviors have a big impact on the success or failure of planned interventions. Finally, she found that planned change often neglected certain connected issues, e.g., changes in job description, changes in employee status (promoted, demoted, displaced), changes in the reward system, work relationships, work assignments, etc.

Light (1998) wrote that OD practitioners/change agents believe they effectively communicate, but in reality "they fail to understand one another" (p. 28). She offered some ways to more effectively communicate:

1) The goal of clear communication is understanding, not necessarily agreement. 2) Communication can break down as easily as with the speaker as with the listener. 3) The meaning of your communication is provided by the response you get. 4) If what you're doing isn't working, do something different. (pp. 28-29)

Weidman (2002) writes about the necessity of ongoing communication during change if organizations and change leaders in particular want to capitalize on change. They must practice factual and complete communication. This communication has to be two-way discussions between the change leaders and those employees affected by the organizational change and the information communicated must be balanced with motivation and inspiration.

There must also be a connection between verbal, nonverbal, and tonal information. About seven percent of our communication is verbal, about 35 percent is tonal, and nonverbal (body language) makes up about 58 percent of our message (Light, 1998). Not only is communication very important to change initiatives, it is also critical that communication is understood and that it occurs to or between the right people and that the message is communicated by the right people. Despite considerable attention paid to communication, no research has surfaced that examined the conversations of understanding that occur during the initial phase of an organizational change effort. In particular, no studies were found that targeted the understanding of those decisions by the OD practitioner and the change agent during that phase.

The fourth factor that affects OD and change is diffusion of innovation and change and its relationship to organizational development and change. Rogers (1995) defines diffusion as "the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system" (p. 5). Rogers further describes diffusion as "a particular type of communication in which the message content that is exchanged is concerned with a new idea" (p. 6). Communication occurred more effectively whenever two or more individuals involved in the diffusion are homophilous (Rogers, 1995). Networking is also an aid to effective communication during the diffusion of innovation (Dodgson & Bessant, 1996). An understanding of intercultural communication, the exchange of information between individuals from dissimilar cultures, could also facilitate success in today's global business environment (Rogers & Steinfatt, 1999).

The knowledge of the principles of innovation adoption and diffusion should certainly have a place in the OD practitioner's tool kit. Keep in mind that Rogers differentiated the adoption process from the diffusion process in that the diffusion process occurred within a social group and the adoption process pertained to an individual.

Rogers (1983, 1995) presented a definitive exploration of how innovations become adopted. Rogers' key concept, the "innovation/adoption cycle" described how an innovation appeals first to a rare breed of "venturesome innovators" who habitually experiment with new ideas and products. These innovators ignore the criticism that often faces a new idea and become champions of the innovation. These innovators in turn influence a group of "early adopters" who in turn influence a large group known as the "early majority." This group in turn acts as role models for the skeptical "late majority," who will finally persuade the traditional, change resistant "laggards."

The central dynamic of innovation adoption is that most people respond not to the superiority of an idea or product but to whether other people are using the new idea or product (Rogers, 1983, 1995). To make an innovation successful, one must first target the influential, venturesome innovators and early adopters and then present the innovation sequentially to the other groups (Rogers, 1983, 1995). Patterson and Havelock (1981) referred to these individuals as opinion leaders. Katzenbach et al. (1996) had a similar finding in the change literature to Rogers' (1995) venturesome innovators and early adopters and Patterson and Havelock's (1981) opinion leader in the

innovation adoption and diffusion literature. In a three-year study of organizational change, Katzenbach et al. (1996) found that the real change leaders were not always at the top. Very often these individuals were at various levels within the organization, but they were all similar in that they were receptive to new ideas and wanted to make a difference in the success of the organization. When these real change leaders were found at all levels of the organization, that intervention was more likely to be successful.

The function of Rogers' (1995) venturesome innovator and early adopter compared to Katzenbach's et al. (1996) real change leaders, Patterson and Havelock's (1981) opinion leader as well as the organizational change agent described by Burke (1994) in his discussion of the three foundational OD models. Burke's (1994) organizational change agent would more likely be in an organization leadership position.

Greve and Taylor (2000) indicated that geographical size and proximity to the innovation is also a vital key to success. Innovations in metropolitan areas tend to be more quickly adopted because of the relative social and economic advantages, e.g., better communications facilities. Organizations that are close to the site of the innovation

are more likely to change as well. The diffusion and innovation literature also addressed decision making, a key element of this study.

Reid (2003) found that the development planned by Human Resources contributed to success at Capital Radio when faced with implementing a major structural change. HR's contribution to the success at Capital Radio was in the strategic reevaluation of its business and subsequent operational change. Reid also stated the importance of creating a feedback channel as well as a communications channel as being critical factors to the organization's restructure.

Rogers (1995) identified an innovation-decision process through which an individual, group, society, economy, or country pass through during the innovation diffusion process. That innovation-decision process consists of five stages: 1) from first knowledge of the innovation, 2) to forming an attitude toward the innovation, 3) to a decision to accept or reject, 4) to implementation of the new idea, 5) to confirmation of this decision. Prior conditions can affect the innovation-decision process, e.g., previous practice, felt needs or problems, innovativeness, and norms of the social group.

We would be negligent if we did not look at the negative aspects of the OD and diffusion literature because these aspects can affect the outcome of an organizational change effort. Patterson (Patterson & Havelock, 1981) examined successes in the OD literature of acceptance and adoption that got out of control and led to overall negative results. Patterson found six reasons that could negatively impact OD diffusion. First, negative results may happen at the point of entry if the wrong person is attempting to sell the OD programs within the organization. The most influential individuals, opinion leaders, are unfortunately the first to become involved with the new innovation. Next, OD affects levels of hierarchy differently. Success at one level may lead to failure at another level because of the different perceptions of the individuals involved.

Third, reinvention of the innovation by different sub-groups in the organization may lead to the innovation becoming unrecognizable. Fourth, speed of acceptance of OD changes could be slowed if there is insufficient time for the groups to gear up for the change.

Fifth, OD innovation can become popular as a means of gaining political advantage and not because it is a useful process for addressing certain problems. And last, rewards

can be a downfall of OD if excessive attention is paid to the innovation and individuals merely go through the motions of implementation to gain the rewards.

Havelock (Patterson & Havelock, 1981) reacts to Patterson's findings by stating, "OD professionals should look first at a few value premises, as guides to action, that might keep them out of the troubles described by Patterson" (p. 13). The OD practitioner's job is to help the clients help themselves (Burke, 1994; Patterson and Havelock, 1981; Schein, 1987). It is not his or her role to have a certain number of employees in the client system adopt the innovation but rather increase their level of insight regarding themselves as human systems (Patterson & Havelock, 1981).

Venturesome innovators (Rogers, 1995), opinion leaders (Patterson & Havelock, 1981), real change leaders (Katzenbach, et al., 1996), and organization leaders (Burke, 1994) are a major key to the success of OD interventions and diffusion of innovation if the change agent and OD practitioner can identify them. But just as there are contributors to diffusion and organizational change, there are also barriers to the OD change initiatives.

Selection of the wrong person to work in a change initiative could be a barrier to OD and change (Patterson & Havelock, 1981). The choice of a person to lead or assist in a change initiative who is looking for rewards or political advantage versus one interested in helping the change occur could negatively impact both an OD intervention and the diffusion of an intervention.

Another barrier to organizational change is the inadequate communication of the change, the failure to communicate the necessity of the change, and the failure to communicate how the change will be implemented. Larkin and Larkin (1996) stated, "The best way to communicate a major change to the frontline workforce is face-to-face" (p. 97). Resistance to change by the frontline employees increases when senior executives are visibly associated with the change. A review by Larkin and Larkin (1996) of several surveys dealing with communications found that employees trust their immediate supervisor more than any other level of management. Based on their findings from reviewing these surveys, they conclude that change should always be communicated to employees by their immediate supervisor or manager in a face-to-face situation:

The studies conducted jointly by the International Association of Business Communicators and Towers,

Perrin, Forster & Crosby in 1980, 1082, and 1984, and by TPF&C in 1990 all reached the same conclusion: U.S. and Canadian employees prefer their immediate supervisors as sources of information. (Larkin & Larkin, 1996, p. 101)

Sidle (2003) also affirms that "if executives communicate the purpose of the change early enough in the process and do so in a way employees perceive to be fair, then good things should happen" (p.127).

Similarly, communication channel blockage in the diffusion of change information can be overcome by utilizing the innovators (Rogers, 1995) and opinion leaders (Patterson & Havelock, 1981) in the organization. Additionally, in the area of communication, Buchanan, Claydon, and Doyle (1999) also found, through a survey of management experience and attitudes concerning OD and change, that executives have largely ignored the management voice and its benefit as a positive aspect of change.

In another study of barriers to organizational change, Beer and Eisenstat (1996b) stated, "… [T]op management teams in several corporations commissioned a task force of their best middle and upper middle managers to interview employees on the question, 'What are the barriers to implementing our business strategy?'" (p. 52). Those

barriers consisted of such things as poor organizational harmony or teamwork, vague strategies and priorities, ineffective executives, autocratic or conversely, too laid back leadership, ineffective communication, poor leadership skills, and poor middle-level management development programs.

These barriers were identified after an analysis of the issues discussed by employee task forces in 10 organizational fitness profiles. These barriers were indicated at a frequency of 70 percent to 100 percent in the 10 profiles. These same barriers have been found in other corporations. Management skills in handling these barriers are essential to successful change initiatives (Beer & Eisenstat, 1996a).

Another barrier is whether the organization's members are resistant to organizational change. Hanpachern et al. (1998) conducted a study that investigated the relationships of margin in life (MIL) and environmental variables to an employee's readiness for change. The conclusions drawn from the study indicated that work factors—particularly management-leadership relations, job skills, and employee knowledge—were better predictors of readiness for change with employees than non-work factors.

Because successful organizational change brings about a change in the culture of the organization, resistance to change often seems above reason in the organization and can be manifested by fights between departments instead of getting the job done. Otherwise reasonable people exhibit communication problems and misunderstanding during change initiatives (Schein 1992). Strategic change and its resultant change of organizational culture is often resisted in organizations due to politics and defensive routines (Beer & Eisenstat, 1996a).

Leadership values can be another barrier to organizational change. Employees discern management and leadership's values from their respective behavior. The employees in an organization undergoing change will adopt the values of leadership only if they are certain that those values will ultimately assist them in reaching their personal goals (Larkin & Larkin, 1996).

Another set of barriers to organizational change is provided by Bolman and Deal (1999) as they identified four different frames of reference in an organization. From the human-resource frame, they identify anxiety, uncertainty, feelings of incompetence, and unsatisfied needs. The structural framework reveals loss of clarity and stability in the organization as well as confusion and chaos. The

political perspective points to disempowerment of some and conflict between winners and losers. And finally, they found a symbolic frame where individuals sense a loss of meaning and purpose and cling to the past.

We can learn from these barriers to change. Having a learning organization aids in the elimination of barriers to successful organizational change (Alange, Jacobsson & Jarnehammar, 1998; Dodgson & Bessant, 1996; Watkins & Marsick, 1993). Other aids to overcoming barriers to change are effective communication from the most effective level of management (Bolman & Deal, 1999; Larkin & Larkin, 1996) and spending the time and money to develop the necessary knowledge and skills within the organization (Bolman & Deal, 1999). Although the literature on barriers identifies many factors that can affect organizational change, scholars have paid little attention to the potential for communication breakdown at the initiation of a change effort, specifically in the area of congruent understanding of the decisions made by the OD practitioner and the change agent.

What the innovation adoption and diffusion literature affirms is that communication and good decision making are critical to success in diffusion of innovation. The organization development literature also supports good

communications and decision-making as essential to successful change. At least a part of communication and decision making are addressed in the contracting stage of a change initiative.

OD Contracting and Consulting

In any large-scale change initiative, someone is asked or designated to lead the change, usually the OD consultant or practitioner. This may be an internal employee or external person acting as a consultant (Bennis, 1969; Burke, 1994; Harvey & Brown, 1992) whose primary role is to help clients learn how to more effectively help themselves (Burke, 1994; Schein, 1987). Key operating ground rules need to be established for the internal consultant and a contract for the external consultant (Harvey and Brown, 1992).

French and Bell (1990) suggested the client and consultant need to formulate a "'psychological contract'. The resolution of such matters as, who the client is, underlying concerns about how the OD effort might evolve, and whether the consultant will make substantive recommendation" (p. 224). They prefer to have a verbal agreement concerning compensation although Block (1981, 2000) stated that a contract is sometimes verbal and sometimes written.

Weisbord (1997) pointed out that a contract is an explicit exchange of expectations and is critical for defining expectations, the investment, and the ground rules that should guide the OD practitioner and the change agent as well as others who might be involved. Weisbord stated "In OD consulting, the contract is central to success or failure" (p. 107). An OD consulting contract is different from the typical consulting contract. In an OD consulting contract "the *client* [emphasis in original] is the central figure. He hires me to work with him while he is working on his problem, helping *him* [emphasis in original] to achieve a better diagnosis of what has happened and what steps he must take to improve things" (Weisbord, 1997, p. 108). Weisbord's meaning of a contract is:

> [A]n explicit exchange of expectations, part dialogue, part written document which clarifies for consultant and client three critical areas:
>
> 1. What each expects to get from the relationship;
> 2. How much time each will invest, when, and at what cost;
> 3. The ground rules under which the parties will operate. (p. 108)

Weisbord (1997) stated the contract should be repetitive and renewable. The contract is never finished: it is reviewed and modified with each client meeting.

Burke and Bandick (1998) gave a client's perspective on contracting. They said the client wants a contract when the consultant is exposed to company trade secrets, if the material being developed is original, if the ownership of materials will be questioned, and if risks and costs are high if the project fails. They recommended working with attorneys when establishing consultant agreements. If a formal contract is not initiated a confidentiality and nondisclosure agreement should be drawn up for the protection of proprietary or exclusive materials (Burke & Bandick, 1998; Sutcliffe, 1999).

Sutcliffe (1999) surveyed consultants in other fields about pitfalls they had encountered in using contracts. Two main cautions emerged: don't sign a contract you don't understand; and, be cautious about the amount of liability in a contract. Lesser cautions were: define the scope of work; establish a time schedule; and establish a payment schedule. The author also suggested these pitfalls can be viewed as advantages as well to the consultant.

It was also recommended that the consultant write up new verbal agreements or decisions that occur during the

intervention as soon as possible to avoid confusion and misunderstanding. "Those who have experienced contract negotiation firsthand agreed that if a consultant follows the scope of work defined by himself and the client, most problems can be avoided" (Sutcliffe, 1999, p. 152).

The literature revealed more than one perspective on the phases of a relationship between the consultant and client. Lippitt and Lippitt (1986) identified six major phases of a consultant-client relationship: 1) initial contact; 2) contract formulation and relationship building; 3) diagnostic analysis of current organizational state; 4) designing an action plan and setting goals; 5) implementing the action plan and gathering feedback; and 6) completing and terminating the contract. Beyond the contracting phase of a change initiative, the various scholars have different perspectives on the phases of a relationship between the consultant and client.

Neilsen (1984) said that there are three activities or phases involved in getting started on an OD consultant project: scouting, entry, and contracting. Burke (1994) devised a modified list of seven phases to OD contracting. Block (1981) identified five phases: entry and contracting; discovery and dialogue; feedback and the decision to act;

engagement and implementation; and, extension, recycle, or termination.

Although there are sound models of the OD contracting process, a few elements are common among the models. For example: the consultant must act with a set of values, a promise to act in the best interest of the client (Block, 1981, 2000; Lippett & Lippitt, 1986; Neilsen, 1984); there are certain phases to consulting that constitute a plan of action; the contract may be written or verbal depending on the consultant-client preference and relationship (Block 1981, 2000); there are pitfalls to a contract as well as not having one and there are two views of a contract—the client's view as well as the practitioner's view; and the OD literature reveals many perspectives to contracting (Block, 1981; Burke, 1994; Lippitt & Lippitt, 1986; Weisbord, 1997).

In the OD contracting literature, decision-making was generally only a series or list of questions to be decided upon by the OD practitioner and change agent in the OD contracting process (Block, 1981; Burke, 1994; Lippitt & Lippitt, 1986; Weisbord, 1997). The decision-making aspect of OD contracting is important to the purpose of this study but the OD contracting literature was fairly narrow in scope and did not inform the researcher about the

congruency of understanding of the decisions that were made by the OD practitioner and change agent during the contracting process.

Decision-Making in Organizational Change

A review of the decision-making literature was undertaken to ascertain whether any studies might have examined the understanding of the decisions made by the principle participants at the start of an organizational change initiative. Many factors around the area of decision-making surfaced during this reading of the literature.

For example, McLain and Hackman (1999) found that trust is an important function in managerial decision-making. The authors defined risk as the probability of negative result to a decision so then higher levels of trust can be recognized as having the potential for reducing risk. When decisions are based on trust, a specific expected outcome does not have to be identified. The decision makers rely on that trust to ascertain that the right thing will be done. The experience of knowing the outcomes of decisions made modify the experience base of the decision makers and form a trust-risk environment. That modification to the experience base of the decision makers can be positive or negative. Negative outcomes take longer

to rebuild than it takes to build trust anew. Positive outcomes are that trust in the decision-making environment has a positive impact on successful change (McLain & Hackman, 1999).

McLain and Hackman (1999) determined that the success of an OD intervention begins with the creation of an environment that is supportive of organizational trust. The authors wrote that the outcome of an OD effort starts long before the change initiative by the creation of a trusting atmosphere in which to make decisions. The authors also stated that as valuable as trust is for reducing risk it is costly in that it requires time to build and or determine another's trustworthiness.

In that respect, OD could benefit from a study conducted by NASA on how flight crews make decisions (Dornheim, 2000). One of the findings that might be generalized to other fields indicated that the decision makers made better, faster decisions the more information the flight crews had. Certainly then, OD practitioners and change agents with more experience and knowledge of their respective business would make more informed decisions.

The worldview of the OD practitioner and the change agent could also be a factor in their decision-making. Through the lens of institutional theory the strategic

decision-making process is largely situational. While managers may bring their experiences from other environments, school or home situations, their worldview is formed by the experiences or situations they are currently involved in within the institution. For this reason, often when organizations need a new organizational strategy new leaders are brought in from the outside to bring a different perspective to the group (Bloodgood & Morrow, 2000). The authors wrote that in organizational change, decision makers that have been in the organization a long time will be looking through that institutional lens and that factor can influence their decisions.

The lens of institutional theory suggests that external OD practitioners would bring a new or fresh perspective to an organizational change initiative. This is supported by a study where Cross and Brodt (2001) found that decision making in today's global business climate requires diverse experience among the decision makers because one's experiences can bias one's perceptions of new situations.

This possibility of bias is also supported by Hammond, Keeney, and Raiffa (1998) in a work warning of traps decision makers can fall into in the decision-making process. The authors termed one of these traps "the framing

trap." How a decision is made is often determined by the respective decision maker's worldview. The authors advise the decision makers not to accept a situation as presented but to reframe it in several ways in order to see it from different angles and perspectives.

Hammond, et al. (1998) also warned us of additional decision-making traps. There are psychological traps individuals can fall into in the way they make decisions. We are not aware of these traps until we begin to understand them and make allowances for them. "At every stage of the decision-making process, misinterpretations, biases, and other tricks of the mind can influence the choices we make" (Hammond, et al., p.58). One example is the "status-quo" trap, "a strong bias toward alternatives that perpetuate the status-quo" (p. 48). To break from the status quo, one has to take action alien to the organizational culture or processes and the responsibility for it, opening them up to criticism. It is conceivable that the action to break from the status quo trap would be easier in a trusting, risk tolerant environment. The authors warn that although these traps usually work in isolation they are more dangerous to the decision-making process when they occur in concert with each other.

Another decision-making problem is that distortion of information has been known to occur after decisions are made (Russo, Medvec, & Meloy, 1996). These authors conducted a study to determine whether individuals are apt to distort information before making a decision. These researchers found that distortion of information known before a decision was made exceeded the distortion that occurs after a decision is made. This study was based on a preferential choice study with individuals being given a choice of "two alternatives according to personal tastes" (p. 103). They found the pre-decision distortion even occurs in the complete absence of a preexisting preference. "Two potential psychological mechanisms may account for this distortion: (a) the desire to maintain consistency and (b) the desire to reduce effort" (Russo, et al., 1996, p. 108).

Decision-making can also be influenced by other biases. For example, from a global perspective, an organization without diversity of its people might not exhibit ethical leadership in decision-making. According to Schnebel (2000), ethical leadership in today's global corporations "is firstly the integration of people with different personal and cultural value systems in decision-making processes" (p. 87). In homogeneous organizations

leaders could make decisions based on similar worldviews shaped by similar experiences. In leadership, moral behavior-a tradition of Christian professional ethics, cultural values, and personal responsibility-can form the basis of corporate values (Schnebel, 2000). Schnebel's examination of Luhmann's Theory of Communication and Habermas' Theory of Discourse informs the literature of the influence that diverse values can have on decision-making in multicultural organization.

In another study, Libby and Agnello (2000) found that age and work experience had an influence on ethical decision-making from a legal perspective. Those participants who were older and more experienced in business, made decisions that were more legal or ethical in a social worldview. This aspect could potentially have a bearing on decisions made during an organizational change initiative. Borrowing from this literature would suggest that the age and work experience of the OD practitioner and change agent involved in an organizational change effort could have an impact on the decision-making.

From an entirely different perspective on decision-making, Ford and Ford (1995) wrote an article to further "the understanding of producing intentional change by developing a framework for considering change as a

communication-based and communication-driven phenomenon"
(p. 54). These authors posit that four different types of
conversation are fundamental in producing intentional
organizational change by a change agent: initiative,
understanding, performance, and closure. Initiative
conversations make up the initial phase of a change
initiative; conversations for understanding are where
agreements are made; conversations for performance define
the course of action or specific results; and conversations
for closure bring about fulfillment of the change process.

Of interest to this study, conversations for
understanding (Ford & Ford, 1995) bring forth three
significant aspects in the organizational change process:
conditions of satisfaction for the change; degree of
involvement, participation, and support; and decision
makers' interpretations. These interpretations allow the
decision makers to make sense of or have an understanding
of what has been learned and determine future changes.
Conversations of understanding focus on the reasons for
organizational change or "the options for action" (p. 554).
The authors stated "Manager's assumptions about how ideas
are related can be discovered through a study of their
conversations about change, particularly during
conversations of understanding" (p. 563). This appears to

be the area of literature that best describes the need for additional study in the interpretation or congruency of understanding of decision made during conversations of understanding that a change agent and OD practitioner might benefit from for future change initiatives.

Although there is no specific discussion about decisions made during conversation, Wheatley (2002) supports the notion that change comes about as a result of conversations. She states, "Human conversation is the most ancient and easiest way to cultivate the conditions for change—personal change, community and organizational change, planetary change" (p. 8). Based on Wheatley's experiences and work as an organizational consultant, she says that there is not a "more powerful way to initiate significant change than to convene a conversation" (p. 13). One of the advantages to conversation is that it aids individuals to become good listeners so that the conversation will not be misinterpreted.

Lloyd and Maguire (2002) also support the concept that conversations between people about organizational possibilities enhance the change process. They state, "…[I]t is the deeper mutual understanding that these conversations bring that allow for new possibilities and previously unimagined emergent horizons" (p. 150) for the

organization. These purposeful conversations that truly support the vision of the organization "leave little room for ambiguity or misunderstanding …" (p.155).

This review of the decision-making literature tells us that trust and risk tolerance are important factors in an organization for the decision makers. Decision makers can also have biases, e.g., ethical influence, age, and work experience. Borrowing from NASA research we see that better informed decisions come from folks with more knowledge and experience. Managers with lots of experience in one organization are also influenced by that institution's lens.

There are also psychological traps, such as the "status-quo" trap, that decision makers can fall into that will influence the choices they make. Decisions can also be influenced by distorted information the decision maker has—both before and after decisions are made. And finally we learn from Ford and Ford (1995) that change may be brought about by types of conversations—initiative, understanding, performance, and closure. Under conversations of understanding, there are three aspects for the change process: conditions of satisfaction for the change; degree of involvement, participation, and support; and decision makers' interpretations. These authors stated that all

areas considering change as communication-based and communication-driven could be further researched. This research focused on the decision makers' interpretations by examining the congruency of understanding the decisions made during the initial stages of a change intervention by the OD practitioner and the change agent. In this examination, the researcher was attentive to the potential influence of the factors described in this section of the literature review.

Summary of the Literature Review

The literature reviewed revealed there is more than one way to conduct organizational development and change. Organizations undergoing change initiatives have a plethora of options—organization development, change management, business process redesign, or organizational fitness profile—all underpinned by the action research model, Lewin's three-step model of system change, and phases of planned change (Burke, 1994). The underlying message of this literature is that the opportunity for success can be enhanced by engaging leadership at all levels, better communication between all stakeholders involved in a change initiative, organizational trust, leadership support for change, and building learning organizations.

In spite of all the change methods and models reviewed, change efforts have a very high failure rate. These failures are due to: employees improperly trained and not prepared for change (Bolman & Deal, 1999); organizational culture and people issues are not sufficiently addressed (Anderson, et al., 2000: St-Amour, 2001); leadership does not fully support the change (Weidner, 1999); managers too involved with simultaneous initiatives (Beer & Nohria, 2000); resistance to change by the employees (Schiemann, 1992); inadequate commitment to learning (Jaffe & Scott, 1998; Watkins & Golembiewski, 1995; Watkins & Marsick, 1993); and failures in communication (Larkin & Larkin, 1996). Yet an underlying theme to all these reasons for organizational change not working or not being accepted by the workforce is communication throughout the change effort.

Communication about the decisions made is critical in OD contracting, OD and change, and diffusion of innovation, yet it does not appear to have been examined during the conversations of understanding between the OD practitioner and the change agent at the initiative phase of organizational change. The comparison of the interpretation of the decisions made by the OD practitioner and the change agent would be such an area of research. This literature

review has not revealed any study that examined the congruency of understanding of the decisions made between the change agent and the OD practitioner during the initial phase of an organizational change effort.

We have learned that organizational change is crucial to survival and that organizations look to OD for help. There are many OD models but yet, OD efforts continue to sustain a high failure rate. Scholars investigating failures found various reasons for the failures but again, none have examined the understanding or interpretation of the decisions made by the change agent and the OD practitioner for congruency.

This study examined the gap in the literature by examining the decisions made by the change agent and the OD practitioner, looking for congruency of understanding or interpretation by these decision makers and then informing the organization development and change, diffusion of innovation, OD consulting, and decision-making literature of its findings.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the qualitative methodology that was used in this study. The design of the study, the sample selection and criteria, data collection techniques, data analysis, reliability and validity, and assumptions or researcher biases concerning this study are discussed.

The purpose of this study was to describe how understandings of decisions made by the change agent and the OD practitioner during the early stages of a change initiative shape perceptions of success or failure.

The following research questions were examined by this study:

1. How do change leaders and OD practitioners describe the initial OD intervention, design, and implementation?

2. What were the decisions made by the change agent and the OD practitioner during the launch of the change initiative?

3. How do change leaders and OD practitioners differ or agree in their interpretation of the decisions that were made during the launch of a change initiative?

4. What factors differentiate the perceptions of the OD
   practitioner and the change agent about success or
   failure of the change initiative to this point of
   the change effort?

Design of the Study

This study was a basic or generic qualitative inquiry
(Merriam, 1998) seeking to understand how the decisions
made during the initial phase of an OD initiative are
interpreted or understood by the OD practitioner and the
client change agent. Qualitative research methods permit
the study of chosen issues in depth and in detail (Patton,
1990) and this methodology is considered to be the most
appropriate when little is known about a phenomenon
(Merriam & Simpson, 1995). The study draws from the
concepts, models, and theories (Merriam, 1998) of
organizational development and change. The OD practitioner
and the change agent were asked to relate a recent change
initiative where they worked together on the change
initiative, the intervention design, and the intervention
implementation. The researcher then interviewed them using
research questions designed to capture their perspective on
the decisions made during the early stages of the change
initiatives.

The researcher selected the methodology of qualitative inquiry because he wanted to know *how* decisions are interpreted or understood by the OD practitioner and change agent. This contrasts to quantitative studies that ask *why* and then look at comparing groups or at determining the relationship between variables seeking to establish associations, relationships, or cause and effect (Creswell, 1998). The researcher felt there was a need to explore the topic of study to determine if the results might help reduce the failure rate of change initiatives. The study presents a detailed view (Merriam, 1998) of the congruency of understanding of decisions made by the OD practitioner and the change agent. Qualitative studies are best suited for this type of exploration as they typically produce a wealth of detailed information about a smaller number of participants but increase the understanding of the situation being studied (Patton, 1990).

Utilizing qualitative research, characterized by a tolerance for ambiguity, sensitivity, and good communications skills, the researcher was able to gather rich, descriptive discourse of recent change initiatives. The researcher was the primary instrument for gathering, as well as analyzing, the data and was cognizant of maximizing opportunities for bringing together and constructing

meaningful information (Merriam, 1998). This research design, qualitative inquiry, allowed the researcher to follow up or explore new topics that surfaced during the interview thereby gaining more data and better clarity of the area of study (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998). The rich experiences of the participants gathered as data in this study resulted in an understanding of the meaning people have constructed or how they view the experiences gained when they have been participants in organizational change (Merriam, 1998).

Sampling Criteria and Selection

Merriam and Simpson (1995) defined a sample as "a strategically and systematically identified group of people or events that meets the criterion of representativeness for a particular study" (p. 57). LeCompte, Preissle, and Tesch (1993) tell us that a sample is simply a subset of a larger population and that this distinction is important. Patton (1980) discussed two types of sampling—random and purposeful. A researcher uses random sampling when he or she is looking to generalize the finding of a study to the larger population (Patton, 1980).

Purposeful or nonprobability sampling was utilized as a strategy for this study. Purposeful sampling is used when there is a desire for in-depth, detailed information from

the participants versus the ability to generalize about the areas of study (Merriam, 1998; Merriam & Simpson, 1995; Patton, 1980). Merriam (1998) writes of two basic types of sampling—probability and nonprobability. Probability sampling is inclusive of random sampling and allows the researcher to generalize the finding to the population of study while nonprobability or purposeful sampling is generally chosen in qualitative studies. LeCompte, et al. (1993) refers to purposeful sampling as criterion-based selection.

The strategy for using purposeful sampling by the researcher was to examine select phenomenon to learn and understand something relevant to those situations and in this study that will be decision-making in change initiatives (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1980). The goal was to understand the participants' experience in depth, not what is generally true of the many. Selection of the participants for this study was based on those the researcher could learn the most from (Merriam & Simpson, 1995; Patton, 1980), e.g., those who have experienced two or more major organizational change initiatives within the past two-year period.

Purposeful sampling is grounded in the assumption that the researcher's goal is to uncover, understand, and

discern; therefore, the researcher must choose samples from which the most can be gleaned (Merriam, 1998). This is important for this study because the researcher needed to have the flexibility to uncover as much as possible about the role of the OD practitioner and the change agent during the decision-making process of the initial phase of the change initiative.

Merriam (1998) identified several types of purposeful sampling: typical, unique, maximum variation, convenience, snowball, chain, and network. For this study, a 'typical' sample was selected, reflecting the commonplace position that organizational change occupies in today's corporate world (Downes & Mui, 1998; Tapscott, Lowy, & Ticoll, 1998; Thurow, 1999). Merriam (1998) defines a typical sample as "one that is selected because it reflects the average person, situation, or instance of the phenomenon of interest" (p. 62).

Purposeful sampling begins with the selection of the attributes or criteria that are the key components in choosing the participants to be studied. The established criteria should mirror the purpose of the study and help identify the participants (Merriam, 1998).

The selection criteria for this study was:

- Teams consisting of an OD practitioner, internal or external to the client organization, and a client change agent who had worked together within the last two years on the same major change initiative within the client organization. This two-year period ensured that the participants have a clearer recollection of the events surrounding the change initiative.

- The OD practitioner could be external or internal to the client organization. The OD practitioner participant should have a graduate degree in the areas of HROD or behavioral science with three years experience in designing and implementing organizational change, or not have a degree but have five or more years of experience as an OD practitioner designing and implementing organizational change. This criterion was to assure the OD practitioner has likely been through at least two organizational change initiatives.

- The demographics of the OCA in Atlanta, GA, are approximately 60% percent female, 40% male, and 30% minority. Given these demographics, the researcher attempted to enlist representative numbers of male and female participants and a representative number of minority participants. Since the OD practitioner

recommended clients they have worked with, the researcher did not have any control of the demographics of the change agent participants.

The unit of analysis, or sample (Merriam, 1998), for this study was selected OD practitioners who are members of the Organization Change Alliance (OCA) in Atlanta, Georgia, and their clients from recent OD interventions. The OD practitioner research participants were selected from the membership dictionary of the OCA based on their areas of expertise—either managing change or design.

There were 26 members within the two areas of expertise. The researcher began calling and soliciting participation in this study until four teams were secured as participants. It was thought that this number of participating teams of change agents and OD practitioners would be sufficient to start and if more teams were needed they would be solicited. These four teams proved to be a sufficient number as no new data was forthcoming after these participants were interviewed.

Those that met the criteria of the study and had a client who would also consent to participate were selected. The OD practitioners recommended the clients from their respective customer base. Only OD practitioners and clients

who have worked together on the same change initiative were selected as participants in the prospective study.

The OCA is an alliance of diverse professional facilitators of change. The OCA is informally affiliated with the Organization Development Network (ODN), the Organization Development Institute (ODI), and the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD). This alliance consists of approximately 85 members. The majority of these members are current, practicing organization development professionals.

Data Collection by Interviewing

Qualitative research is a term referring to several research strategies sharing certain characteristics. One of these characteristics is in-depth interviewing, a component of field research (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Merriam and Simpson (1995) state, "An advantage of the interview technique is its effectiveness in surveying special populations and gaining in-depth information" (p. 71). Another advantage according to Borg and Gall (1971) is that the interviewer can adjust and follow up on topics during the interview because of the nature of the interview; that is, there is direct verbal interaction between the participant and the researcher.

This study utilized in-depth interviewing to collect the thoughts or perspectives of the interviewees concerning the organizational change initiative on which they collaborated. Interviewing allowed the researcher to enter into the interviewee's perspective with the assumption that that "perspective is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit" (Patton, 1980, p. 196). The emphasis, during interviewing, is on the relationship, seeking equality, closeness and informality between the interviewer and the participant versus a relationship of formality and control by the interviewer (Bogdan and Biklen 1992).

There are different types of interviews depending on the amount of structure desired by the researcher. Merriam (1998) lists three types on a continuum: unstructured/informal, semistructured, and highly structured/standardized. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) also refer to a structured/unstructured continuum. The highly structured interview employs questions that are predetermined as well as the order that they are asked. At the other end of the scale is the interview that is open-ended and unstructured (Merriam, 1998; Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) allowing the respondent to address the topic in unique ways (Merriam, 1998). This type of interview allows "the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the

emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the subject" (Merriam, 1998, p. 74).

This study used a semistructured in-depth interview technique to ensure each interviewee was asked the same basic questions but at the same time allowing the interviewee freedom to express any additional thoughts related to the study topic. Semistructured in-depth interviewing techniques also allowed the researcher to pursue any comments or areas of interest that the interviewee injected into the discourse with additional questions. It was the goal of the study to gain as much knowledge as possible from the practitioners and change agents about their understanding or interpretation of the decisions made during the contracting stage or initial stage of the change initiative. The interviews were one-on-one with the subjects being assured that their narratives would remain confidential. Neither the identity of the OD practitioner, the client change agent, nor the OD practitioner's or client change agent's corporation would be revealed during or after the conclusion of the study.

"An interview question is a stimulus that is aimed at creating or generating a response from the person being interviewed" (Patton, 1980, p. 211). The researcher conducting a qualitative study must make sure that all

questions are open-ended (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Borg & Gall, 1971; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1980), to minimize the possibility of getting predetermined responses (Patton (1980). The interview questions for this study were based on the four research questions regarding (1.) how the change agent and OD practitioner describe the initial OD intervention, its design, and its implementation, (2.) what decisions were made during the launch of the intervention, (3.) how change agents and OD practitioners interpret the decisions made for the launch of a change initiative, and (4.) what factors differentiate the perceptions of the OD practitioner and the change agent about success or failure of the change initiative up to the current point in the change effort. The Research Participants Consent form is exhibited as Appendix A. The interview guide is exhibited as Appendix B. The Interview Questions are exhibited as Appendix C.

The interviews were conducted either face-to-face or over the telephone if face-to-face interviews were not feasible (Merriam, 1998). Three of the interviews were conducted at the study participants' personal offices and six of the interviews were conducted over the telephone at the request of the study participants. An interview is a purposeful conversation led by one person in order to

obtain information from the other person although more people may be involved (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, 1992). It was foreseen that it might be possible that the OD practitioner may have worked with more than one change agent in the client organization. That was the case with Change Initiative One of the study. There were two change agents working with one OD practitioner. The change agents were interviewed separately.

Merriam (1998) stated, "The main purpose of the interview is to obtain a special kind of information" (p. 71). In this study the "special kind of information" is related to the decisions made and how the decisions were understood during the initiation of an organizational change. The researcher attempted to discover as much as possible about the participant's experience and perception of the initial stage of a change effort (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 1980).

The researcher informed the participants of the purpose and confidentiality of the interview in the process. Permission to tape the interview was requested before the actual interview date. The interview recordings were transcribed and samples of the findings were returned to five of the nine participants for reading and approval as to the accuracy of the interview (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998;

Merriam, 1998). These research participants agreed that the transcribed interviews were accurate.

Documents as a Source of Data

In qualitative research, interviews may be used in conjunction with other data such as document analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Documents are a type of artifact and their collection and examination involve locating the document, identifying the document, analyzing the document, and evaluating the document (LeCompte, Preissle, & Tesch 1993). Not to confuse the issue of the terms, "record" and "document," described by Guba and Lincoln (1981), this paper uses the term "document" as "the umbrella term to refer to a wide range of written, visual, and physical material relevant to the study at hand" (Merriam, 1998, p. 112).

Documents can be used as supplemental data to the interview (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998). The review of documents related to a study will enhance or strengthen the study because of the multiple perspectives brought to the table (Patton, 1980). Patton also states, "Document analysis ... provides a behind-the-scenes look ... about which the interviewer might not ask the appropriate questions without the leads provided through documents" (p. 158).

The document's authenticity and accuracy must be assessed and it should not be used in isolation (Merriam, 1998). Kidder (1981) warns that caution should be used with any personal documents because of the problem that authenticity cannot be assured. The researcher has the responsibility to gather as much information about the documents as possible—origins, reason for being written, author(s), and the setting or environment in which it was written (Guba & Lincoln, 1981; Merriam, 1998).

Merriam (1998) described documents available to the researcher for analysis as three major types—public records, personal documents, and physical material. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) as well as Guba and Lincoln (1981) have more exhaustive lists inclusive of almost any written or recorded item. The interviewees were asked to share with the researcher any documentation that was prepared as a result of the initiative. Examples could be email, paper correspondence, personal notes, written contracts, or meeting minutes prepared by the OD practitioner and/or someone in the client system.

Such documentation would be useful in this study to substantiate the understanding of the OD practitioner and the client change agent of the decisions made during the planning and implementation of the change initiative.

Unfortunately, when the research participants were asked about documents, such as meeting minutes and emails, that could be shared with the researcher for the purpose of triangulation of the data, they all replied that their respective agreements and the decisions they made had been verbal.

Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed as they were conducted and constant comparative analysis was employed as a data analysis strategy. Qualitative research is primarily *an inductive strategy* (Merriam and Simpson, 1995, emphasis in original), the inference of a general proposition based on the researcher's empirical observations (Dey, 1993).

Comparative analysis of the collected data started as soon as the researcher began transcribing the tapes from the interviews and generally followed the guidelines of Tesch (1990). The data were "ordered into preliminary categories according to their conceptual context, and then were constantly compared within a category to establish consistency and across categories to establish clear boundaries" (Tesch, 1990, p. 24). The analysis was integrated with the data collection and they informed each other. This process proceeded in an orderly manner until no new insights were forthcoming. The researcher annotated

reflectively in the margins of the transcribed data
throughout the data analysis process as a way of opening up
the data and preparing for a more systematic or thorough
analysis (Dey, 1993). The data was segmented or cataloged
into relevant and meaningful categories that were derived
from the data themselves. Fr example, the data were
constantly compared within and across transcripts to
discern similarities, allowing the placement of the data
into categories to ascertain patterns. The final results
are some higher-level synthesis that will inform the
literature of new findings and future studies (Tesch,
1990).

Reliability and Validity

Researchers and consumers of research findings want
assurance the findings can be trusted and believed (Merriam
and Simpson, 1995). Patton (1990) wrote that in
qualitative research "the *researcher* is the instrument" (p.
14, emphasis in original) so validity depends mainly on the
competence, skills, and ethics of the researcher doing the
fieldwork. Merriam and Simpson (1995) suggest the
trustworthiness of research conclusions with small,
nonrandom samples is dependent on the internal and external
validity of the study as well as the reliability.

Qualitative studies employ rich, descriptive narratives to present findings. Creswell (1998), in a discussion of verification procedures, told us that the rich, descriptive interviews allows the reader to discern transferability because the researcher "describes in detail the participants or setting under study" (p. 203).

Clarifying researcher bias (discussed in a later section) is another point of verification for reliability of the study (Creswell, 1998). The researcher's past experiences, biases, and prejudices that could shape the interpretation and method of the study are revealed.

Next, triangulation, the comparison of multiple sources, is a strategy that can be utilized to validate the interviews of a study to the extent the participants shared documents. As noted earlier, there were no documents that could be shared with the researcher for validation. The research data were validated by returning the transcribed data to those research participants that would read and verify the transcribed data were correct as near as they could recall. Five of the nine research participants read their transcribed data and agreed that it was correct.

The researcher also ascertained the validity and reliability of the interpretation of the data by asking the participants to review the findings of the study (Creswell,

1998). Three of the nine participates agreed to discuss the findings. These conversations were conducted over the telephone. This strategy is called member checking and is commonly used to ensure validity in qualitative studies (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998). Finally, the researcher used peer review of his research and analytical efforts, relying on his dissertation committee for guidance. Thus, the multiple sources of data, member checking, peer review, and the revelation of the researcher's biases are the cement of reliability for this study.

Assumptions and Limitations

Any study has certain assumptions that the researcher makes. For the purpose of this study it was assumed that the membership of the OCA in Atlanta was representative of similar groups affiliated with ODN, ODI, and ASTD. This assumption was based on OCA member profiles, available to the membership, and the common interest the membership has in organizational development and change as a vocation.

It was also assumed that the OD practitioner and the client change agent were trustworthy and would be very open with their worldview of the change initiative in which they participated. It was also assumed that the OD practitioner and the client change agent shared their experiences in a

change initiative regardless of whether it is viewed as successful or unsuccessful.

Researcher Biases

As a researcher, my observations and analyses were filtered through my perspectives and values. The researcher has to be sensitive to and understand how subjectivities shape and define the findings of their research (Merriam, 1998).

This researcher has thirty years of experience in the telecommunications industry. During that time many changes have occurred—the breakup of AT&T and its subsequent impact on that industry as a whole. Lately, some of these changes and the actions of some executives biased me to be skeptical of persons identifying themselves as a "change agent" because of the personal impact, e.g., new executives, on more than one occasion, would appear on the scene, proclaim to be change agents, and announce that they would immediately begin organizational changes without fully knowing or understanding the organization's particular functional role. This "change agent" mentality began to negatively impact the employees in the organization because their job was constantly changing. It also severely affected our business relationship with various customers because it became evident to them that

the corporation's focus was internal. During this time, it was my observations that many changes were carried out to promote the individual change agent's future opportunities instead of what might be best for the organization or the business so I have come to have a jaundiced eye toward anyone that calls him or herself a change agent. On more than one occasion, I experienced the failure that resulted from attempts at organizational change that came about due to a new business unit leader proclaiming him or herself to be change agents and espousing deep change in the way business was conducted before they were familiar with the business or the customers it served.

I believe I was able to exercise what Patton (1990) refers to as empathic neutrality, the ability to divorce myself from the immediate happenings and to be nonjudgmental concerning the participants' experience during data collection. This empathic neutrality was confirmed or validated by having the participants of the study review the conclusions drawn from the data.

Summary

This study was a descriptive study utilizing basic or generic qualitative methodology with semi-structured interviews as the primary methods of data collection. Secondary data were to be documents that could be collected

from the study participants. This secondary data was to be used to triangulate the data so that the validity of the study could be strengthened. However, this secondary data did not exist so member checking was utilized instead. The constant comparative method of data analysis was the means of examining the data, whether it was the interview data or any data provided by documents. Reliability and validity were assured by the use of rich, descriptive interviews, by clarifying researcher biases, and by the use of member checking.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to describe how understandings of decisions made by the change agent and the OD practitioner during the early stages of a change initiative shape perceptions of success or failure.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do change leaders and OD practitioners describe the initial OD intervention, design, and implementation?

2. What were the decisions made by the change agent and the OD practitioner during the launch of the change initiative?

3. How do change agents and OD practitioners differ or agree in their interpretation of the decisions that were made during the launch of a change initiative?

4. What factors differentiate the perceptions of the OD practitioner and the change agent about success or failure of the change initiative to this point in the change effort?

The design of the study was a basic or generic qualitative inquiry (Merriam, 1998) seeking to examine how

the decisions made during the initial phase of an OD initiative are understood by the OD practitioner and the client change agent. In-depth interviews were held with four teams of change agents and OD practitioners who had worked together in a change initiative within their respective organizations. All of these interviews were either held at the respective participant's home office, work location, or via the telephone if so requested by the participant. The findings were determined by the use of constant comparative analysis during and after the data collection and transcription process.

At least one of the participants in each change initiative of the study was a member of the Organization Change Alliance (OCA) in Atlanta, Georgia, and some of the participants were clients or consultants not associated with the OCA. The OCA is an alliance of diverse professional facilitators of change. The OCA is informally affiliated with the Organization Development Network (ODN), the Organization Development Institute (ODI), and the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD). The OCA consists of approximately 85 members. The majority of these members are current, practicing organization development professionals in their field of expertise.

All of the participants as well as their respective organizations or businesses were assured confidentiality by the researcher. The researcher assigned fictional names to the participants and to their respective organizations.

Each team consisted of a change agent (CA) and an OD practitioner (ODP) with the exception of the first change initiative where two change agents were involved. The change agents/OD practitioners were assigned a unique name corresponding to the change initiative they were involved in. For example, those participants involved in Change Initiative One were assigned fictional names beginning with the letter "A" and those involved in Change Initiative Two were assigned fictional names beginning with the letter "B" and so forth. Table 4.1 was constructed following this pattern to link each research participant to their respective change initiative and organizational information.

All of the change agents were internal to the organizations undergoing change. Of the OD practitioners, only Cole was an internal consultant. The remaining three OD practitioners, Andrew, Barbara, and David, were external consultants to the organizations initiating change.

One of the initiatives was a merger of two information technology groups brought about by the merger of their

Table 4.1 *Profiles of Change Initiatives and Participants*

Change Initiative	Type of Business	Size of Organization	Nature of Change	Section(s) of the Organization Involved	Duration of Change @ Time of Interview	Participants in the Change – Role (years of Experience in OD)
One	Insurance	~5000 Employees	Merger of Two Companies	Two Information Technology Groups ~300 Employees	2 Years	Anthony – CA Anna – CA Andrew – ODP (30)
Two	University	11,300 Students 2,500 Faculty	Structural Change Initiative	Library Leadership and Staff ~200 Faculty and Staff	5 Years	Betty – CA Barbara – ODP (15)
Three	Electrical Products	28,000 Employees 100 Global Locations	Structural Change initiative	Several Departments ~300 – 350 Employees	1 Year	Charlie – CA Cole – ODP (6)
Four	Non Profit Public Access Television	~100 Executives and Staff	Strategic Planning Initiative	Entire Organization 30-50 (Includes Board of Directors, Producers, and Staff	1 Year	Dorothy – CA David – ODP (36)

respective company. These companies are in the insurance industry.

Two of the organizations were going through initiatives to bring a better structure to the organizations to better meet the needs of their respective customers. One of these is a large university and the other is an electrical product manufacturing and sales group. The last initiative was a strategic planning initiative within a non profit public access television station. These organizations represent two large groups, one intermediate group, and one small group.

Descriptions of the Change Initiatives and Participants

    Change Initiative One

Change Initiative One examined the merger of two Information Technology (IT) organizations under one chief information officer (CIO). Their respective companies were owned by the same holding company in the Midwest. These two merging companies were involved in insurance and were merging due to market pressures to be more efficient. The merger of the two companies affected approximately 5000 employees although the study only examined the merger of the two IT organizations. Anthony, the change agent, described the merger with these words,

… I was told by my boss who was the CEO [chief

executive officer] of the company that had hired me

that we were merging with another company—same

business that we were in, in fact owned by the same

parent company, putting the two together. And he was

becoming the CEO of both companies and informed me

that I would be the CIO of both companies and that my

job was to merge the two IT organizations.

In addition to the organizational merger, the IT

groups would also be migrating from a mainframe computer,

or batch processing, environment to one of client servers,

or distributed computing processors. The two merging

companies would also be relocating, a factor that the

research participants knew would cause many employees to be

resistant to the change.

Anthony has been in information systems for over

twenty years and had participated in several other change

initiatives in other organizations. He is a white male,

over fifty years of age and had been CIO with one of the

two merging companies for about seven or eight months. In

addition to Anthony there was a second change agent, Anna,

who assisted him in the change initiative.

Anna had worked in the insurance industry for several

years. She was an assistant vice-president. She is a white

female, over fifty years of age. She had little or no previous experience in organizational development.

The OD practitioner contracted in Change Initiative One was Andrew, a white male over fifty years of age. He has been a consultant for over thirty years in the areas of organizational behavior, organizational change, and organizational needs analysis. He previously had been the training and development director for a public company. He owns his own consulting company and has been working with IT groups in particular for over twenty years on organizational change issues. He had been educated in the areas of industrial engineering and organizational behavior for four or five years but never completed his B.A./B.S. degree.

Change Initiative Two

The second change initiative involved restructuring the library department of a large southern university, as well as helping it to come up with processes that would effect better decisions and improve communications. The university has about 11,300 students and 2,500 faculty. The library department restructuring initiative affected approximately 200 faculty and staff. This initiative had had several consultants involved over a number of years and had not resulted in an acceptable organizational structural

solution until Barbara, an OD practitioner, was hired in 1999. The library director was concerned about the library's ability to keep pace with change. She felt it needed "to be more flexible and agile." The organization reaffirmed its goals to this new OD practitioner. She was able to help them accomplish the original tasks to restructure the library department and put in place processes for improving decision making and communications within the department to more effectively serve their customers.

Betty, the change agent in this initiative, described the change as follows:

> … [I]n 1996 our leadership group, including our director, was concerned about our ability to keep pace with change and wanted our organization to be more flexible and agile. And she was also concerned that we had a very talented, well-educated staff and that our current structure was set up in a way that didn't really utilize fully all of those talents.

Betty, the change agent assigned to Change Initiative Two is a white female, in her thirties and had prior experience as a change agent in the redesign of the circulation department of the library. Because of this limited experience, she utilized a small leadership group

as advisors during her role as change agent. Betty holds a
Bachelor of Arts in History and a Master of Science in
Library Science.

Barbara, the OD practitioner, was contracted by the
library department to help put a new structure in place.
She is a white female, over forty years of age. She owns
her own consulting firm specializing in large group
interventions, change management, organizational
design/redesign, process redesign or reengineering and
strategic planning. She holds a Ph.D. in organizational
development and had more than fifteen years of experience
as an OD practitioner.

Change Initiative Three

The third change initiative was also a restructuring
effort of certain departments within an electrical products
manufacturing company to better focus on the needs of its
customers. This corporation has about 28,000 employees at
100 locations throughout the world. The change initiative
involved organizations in the southeastern region of the
U.S. only. Charlie, the change agent, described this effort
as:

Uh, currently I'm responsible for technical
applications or technical support, applications,
quotations, and customer service. Today each of those

departments that I mentioned basically act as an independent group. Uh, and what my goal is, is to create some efficiencies and synergies between these groups so I'm looking at putting together a new organization that will more closely unify these groups, uh, trying to put more technical support, quotations, and customer service together so that we're more seamless to the end user.

Charlie made these additional comments about the change effort to restructure and his perception of what needed to happen: "… I thought we were not properly organized properly to move forward with the change that we needed to meet the company goals of resource reductions and efficiencies." After Charlie met Cole, the OD practitioner, his perception was confirmed. Charlie then stated:

So that was really the crux of that is that we both felt that after the initial meeting … if it wasn't a significant reorganization there were certainly some significant issues with the organization I had today and that we needed to move forward in trying to flush out either a new organization or some serious modifications to one that I have today.

Charlie also described leading the change effort as "I felt like I was trying to herd kittens as they say." He has

been with his company for several years as Director of Marketing Services and Strategy. He is a white male in his forties. His current responsibilities include technical support, engineering applications, quotations for customer proposals, and customer service. His goal is to "create some efficiencies and synergies between these groups so I'm looking at putting together a new organization that will more closely unify these groups …."

Cole, the internal OD practitioner involved with Change Initiative Three, is a white male in his forties. He has been involved with change efforts within his company for about six years. Prior to his move to organizational development, Cole was in finance. He holds a Ph.D. in organizational development and is currently the director of training and organizational development. His areas of expertise are large group intervention (Appreciative Inquiry), mergers and acquisitions integration, and strategic planning. He has six years of experience in the field of organizational development.

Change Initiative Four

The fourth change initiative involved a strategic planning effort in a public access television (TV) station located in a major city in the southeast. This public access television station offers video services to non-

profit organizations located within this metropolitan area. This strategic planning initiative involved the board of directors, the producers, and the staff of that TV station. Including the board of directors and producers this organization has approximately 100 personnel associated with it. The organization had never established a process for strategic planning so it contracted with an OD practitioner to help facilitate strategic planning within all organizations at the TV station. The strategic planning initiative encompassed between 30 and 50 of those associates. The OD practitioner involved in this initiative also provided some business coaching to the change agent who was the general manager of the station.

Dorothy, the General Manager and change agent, stated the mission of the public access TV station as:

> To be fiscally responsible to producers, the city of [Metro], our audiences, our staff, and our cable provider by creating a climate for efficient use of resources, proper internal controls, diversifying and increasing income, fiscally skilled staff, fiscally responsible producers, advocacy in communication to our primary supports. Respect to foster attitudes and skills that generate mutual respect with all persons with whom the [CommunityTV] comes in contact, and one

of my favorites, the last one—integrity. To be honest, ethical, authentic, and trustworthy in our dealing with everyone and to operate with integrity.

Dorothy, the change agent involved in Change Initiative Four is a white female. She is in her forties and has no prior experience with a change intervention. She is the General Manager of the public access television station.

The OD practitioner for Change Initiative Four is David, a white male in his fifties with approximately 36 years experience as a Human Resources Development consultant. He holds a Ph.D. in Human Resources Development and owns his own consulting firm. He specializes in managing change, organizational design/redesign, process redesign or reengineering, strategic planning, and training in strategy, design, and delivery. David has about 36 years of experience in organizational development.

To summarize, these change initiatives involved one merger, two organizational restructuring initiatives, and one initiative to bring strategic planning into an organization where none had previously existed.

The change agents involved in the various change initiatives had limited experience in organizational change with the exception of Charlie in Change Initiative Three.

He had been a participant in several other change
interventions within his company but had not been in a
leadership role in a change effort previous to this
initiative.

The OD practitioners had all been involved with
organizational change for many years (see Table 4.1) and
all of them held related degrees with the exception of
Andrew. Andrew stated that he had more than enough hours
for a degree in Industrial Engineering but was never
granted a degree in that area. He did have over thirty
years of experience as an OD practitioner. Cole had the
least experience, six years, in organizational development
but he held a Ph.D. in that field of study. Three of the OD
practitioners had their own consulting practices and the
fourth, Cole, was an internal OD practitioner.

Interpretations about the Initial Decision

Each change initiative was examined to determine the
major decisions that were made during the launch of the
initiative. All of the major decisions in the four change
initiatives studied were verbal agreements. There was no
existing documentation about the decisions that were made
in the initial stages of the change initiatives that the
research participants could make available to the
researcher for triangulation of the data.

In examining the data, it was determined that in Change Initiative One, the decision to merge the two companies and subsequently the two IT groups was made at the corporate level. When that decision had been made, Anthony, the CIO of one of the two merging companies, was instructed to merge the two IT groups into one organization to help the merged company bring about efficiency of operations and gain a better competitive position for the merged company. Anthony then approached his human resources group for assistance in procuring the services of an OD practitioner to assist in the organizational change effort. An external OD practitioner, Andrew, was selected through an interview process. Anthony also brought in Anna, an internal employee, to act as a project manager/change agent to assist him in the change initiative.

When the OD practitioner was selected the major decision that was made between the three research participants had to do with Andrew's role in the change initiative. Anthony, one of the two change agents, believed that the major decision for the change initiative was to obtain an understanding of concerns of the individuals from the organizations that were being merged. Anthony described his understanding of the decision as:

The thing that I remember most about Andrew's [OD practitioner] perspective was that we agreed he was working for me but that in the course of his interviewing and working with the managers to try to understand what their concerns were and what their motivations were that, uh, specific information about the interviews that he conducted would be confidential so that they would feel like they could be open with him and it would not come back to me, at least, with a name attached. Obviously key issues would be summarized by Andrew from all of his interviews but I didn't want to know about any particular person just as a result from his interview. So that was the one big agreement.

Anthony's understanding of the decision differed from both Anna, the other change agent, and Andrew, the OD practitioner. Anna understood that the major decision for Andrew's role for this change initiative was to promote organizational learning about how to deal with change. She stated:

Initially he [Andrew] was brought in for, uh, an intervention, although I don't think I knew that term for it at the time, and he was to work with us for, I believe a specific period of time to accomplish some

specific goals and that was to, uh, to help us learn how to deal with the organizational change that we were going through. And understand issues around organizational change and help us move forward through the merger—we were kind of stuck.

Andrew, the OD practitioner, had an entirely different concept of the decision to bring about this initiative. He understood that he was brought in to do a readiness for change analysis of the organization. He described it this way, "So he [Anthony] agreed for me to do—and I submitted this proposal—and they agreed to do an organizational readiness for change study." He then stated,

But I told them that a reasonable place to start was with an organizational assessment of where they were now and, and an assessment of the significance of the change and that we could find, kind of feel our way into what was needed to be done. But you couldn't just come out of the bag and say you need two aspirins, drink plenty of fluids, and get lots of rest.

From the discourse by these three individuals, it was apparent that there was a difference of understanding of the major decision that they made at the beginning of Change Initiative One. Neither Anthony nor Anna mentioned

the organizational assessment that Andrew felt he was contracted to do for the merging IT groups.

In the second change initiative examined, the university library director had made a decision several years previous to the current initiative to change the structure of the library to better serve both internal and external users of library services. Several consultants had been involved since 1996 but the desired results had not been obtained by whatever efforts they made. In 1999, Barbara, yet another external OD practitioner, was brought in to facilitate a meeting and subsequently was contracted to help the university library group make the desired organization structure change.

The library director, the HR director, the internal change agent, and the OD practitioner then met to decide the role of the OD practitioner. That decision was that she would help to bring a new organizational structure to the library as well as help develop new decision-making and communication processes for the library staff leading to a change in the culture of the organization.

When interviewed, the change agent, Betty, and OD practitioner, Barbara, were in agreement as to what the major decision had been. Betty, the change agent, described the decisions as "… [W]e agreed we needed to redo our

[organizational] structure …." She and the OD practitioner also agreed that there was a need to work on improving the organization's ability to make decisions and communicate with each other as well as its customers. Betty made this remark about that decision:

> I knew that we needed to do a lot of other work on mainly communication and decision-making and shifting our culture for any structure to work. And our director acknowledged that, uh, and said, 'Yes, and while, you know, let's do a little bit of both as you go. So, you know, develop the new structure in a way that brings in the new culture and work with Barbara as you can to improve communication and decision-making and change our culture.

Barbara, the OD practitioner, described the initial decision by stating, "I'd kind of like to let her describe more specifically what its original intentions were but it had to do with improving communication and decision-making in the library." But later in the interview she expanded her role by stating, "I was being, I was hired to consult to the project and in terms of the decision, I was hired to work with the [organization] structure sub-group." The data gathered from Betty and Barbara indicated that there was

agreement between them on the decision of what the role of the OD practitioner was to be in Change Initiative Two.

In the third change initiative, Charlie, the change agent, was responsible for several departments. He said, "… [C]urrently I'm responsible for technical applications or technical support, applications, quotations, and customer service. Today each of those departments, that I mentioned, act as an independent group." He decided that a new organizational structure would "create some efficiencies and synergies between these groups …." Going through the HR department, Charlie secured the services of Cole, an internal OD practitioner to assist in making this structure change to the organization.

In conferring with each other, Charlie and Cole agreed that there was a need for this organizational structure change and that Cole's role would be to facilitate this organizational initiative. Charlie described this major decision as:

> Well the first one, the first major one [decision], was probably verifying that the organization I had today probably wasn't what I felt was necessary. … I wasn't certain that I initially had the wrong organization but I think the first meeting helped

flush out that there was probably a better way to be structurally organized.

Cole, the internal OD practitioner, stated the decision to make a structural change this way:

Um, what he [Charlie] was looking for was for someone to come in and conduct a process so he could be actively involved in, uh, in thinking about the changes that he wanted to take place and since we had both he and all of his direct reports in the room, he wanted to just be a part of the process and listen to and dialogue with the people who reported to him. So what he was looking for from me was a structure, you know, kind of a way to structure those conversations so that he could relax into the process and be part of designing this new organizational structure ultimately that he wanted to design.

These two descriptions of the major decision in Change Initiative Three reveal that the two involved change leaders, Charlie and Cole, were in agreement in their understanding of what the change initiative was to accomplish—a new structure for the organization.

Change Initiative Four data revealed that Dorothy and Davis met at a non-profit summit (trade show) and engaged in a conversation about organizational changes. Dorothy's

organization had been in existence for some time and had never established a process for strategic planning. She felt that this was needed and David agreed. They then had to convince the board of directors of the public access television station of the value and importance of having a strategic planning process. The decision was made that David would come in as an OD practitioner and assist Dorothy in presenting to the board of directors the value and importance of strategic planning and that David would then help them in the change initiative to create a process for strategic planning.

Dorothy's comments on the major decision made early in the initiative were, "… [W]e needed a strategic plan and that this was the first time that the board [of directors] had been involved in such a thing. … [A]nd how he [David] could help us."

David stated the decision this way, "The initial decision had to do with, first of all, would there be strategic planning and so the board [of directors] did approve of doing that."

Dorothy was in agreement with the description of the decision of the board of directors and David to implement a strategic planning process in the organization. She simply stated, "Well, I followed David's lead on most things in

that [making decisions]." In the opinion of the researcher, based on the data from her interview, Dorothy was not knowledgeable of change initiatives but did agree with the initial decision of the board of directors and David. Later in the project as she gained knowledge about organizational change and development from David, she came out of that shell and was a positive contributor to the change initiative.

The method used to ascertain that the understanding of decisions made by the change agent and the OD practitioner were congruent was done through a process of feedback in face-to-face meetings in all four of the initiatives studied. These meetings were an opportunity for the change agents and OD practitioners to talk further and as they talked, clarity or agreement was enhanced about their decisions. This method or process was evidenced in the following dialogues.

In Change Initiative One, Anthony said, "Just feedback, follow-up meetings and just be sure we were both doing and saying the same thing." His co-change agent, Anna, was brought on board after the initial decision of the role of Andrew had been established between Anthony and Andrew. Andrew had a different perspective on this process.

He stated, "They could never articulate what they were looking for [in their meetings]."

In Change Initiative Two, the change agent described that process, "… we had several meetings of the foursome: Beverly, the HR director; Belinda, the [library] director; and, Barbara and I. And we really did work the issues, quite thoroughly, around what, you know, how we should proceed."

Barbara, the OD practitioner in Change Initiative Two stated her view of the feedback process as, "… we had discussions in that meeting room but Betty and I had a ton of discussion before we went to the meeting—between the two of us."

In Change Initiative Three, the OD practitioner documented decisions and presented them back to the change agent to ascertain their mutual understanding. He stated, "We probably had two or three, several hour sessions, maybe as short as an hour, but, you know, fairly extensive discussions about each draft of the process over a several week period."

The change agent's view of the feedback process in Change Initiative Three was, "After every meeting, he's come back, giving me, uh, the notes or the minutes from what we discussed, asked me to follow up on it, then we

normally meet on it to make sure that even though he may have written it down, we're both on the same page."

Dorothy, the change agent in Change Initiative Four responded, "How did we arrive at a consensus [of decisions]? Uh, we each presented our case and whoever made the most sense, we went with it."

David said they arrived at a consensus, "After we had gone through a lot of work, I'd say the first two meetings, and even after the first [meeting], where the strategic process continued by starting with the outcome of and the mission and those kinds of things …."

To summarize this section, we find that of the four change initiatives examined, three of the change agent/OD practitioner teams were in agreement or were congruent in their understanding of their initial decision(s) concerning the respective change initiative. Only in Change Initiative One was there disagreement or incongruence between the participating change agents, Anthony and Anna, and the OD practitioner, Andrew, of the understanding of the decision they made in the early stages of that initiative.

Also, a process of feedback in face-to-face meetings was the primary method of making sure that the decisions made were understood by both the change agents and the OD practitioners. These face-to-face meetings appeared to be a

very important factor in ascertaining clarity or congruency of understanding of the decisions made by the change agent and the OD practitioner.

However, in Change Initiative One Andrew and Anthony differed in their view of that feedback process even though Anthony stated there were feedback meetings. The different agendas of Anthony and Andrew, as evidenced by their different understanding of the initial decisions, may have been a bias that contributed to their failure to effectively utilize their feedback processes. The researcher discerned from the opposing views or biases of Anthony and Andrew that the feedback processes in this organization's change initiative did not work and may have been a contributing factor to or at least a link to the failure of that initiative.

Factors Contributing to Success/Failure

In analyzing the data for factors that might have led to the success or failure of the four change initiatives being studied, the researcher first had to determine if they were in fact successes or failures. Consequently, as we examine the data from Change Initiative One, we find disagreement over the perceptions of the success of the change initiative. Anthony thought the initiative was a success. In his words, "I think it was a success in that we

made the transition to a merged organization *better*

[emphasis by research participant] than we would have done

without him [Andrew, the OD practitioner]." So we see that

Anthony attributed the success of this change initiative to

the use of an OD practitioner, Andrew, as a consultant or

OD practitioner.

Anna viewed the success/failure of this initiative to

be about 40 percent on a scale of zero percent failure to

100 percent success. She attributed the use of Andrew as a

consultant to have been the contributing factor to her view

of the 40 percent success of the initiative. She perceived

that the education process about organization change that

he put the organization through also contributed to this

minor success. However, Andrew never mentioned the

educational aspects of the change initiative in his

interview. From a failure aspect, in a subsequent

conversation with Anna, she stated that the merging IT

organizations had not come together. They were still

experiencing poor communication, resolving the cultural

differences, and had not been able to create a forum for

discussing these issues. She stated:

> … [T]his is something that, that undermined us,
>
> continues to undermine us, is the unspoken
>
> assumptions, the assumptions that are so deep-seated,

that nobody, it doesn't even occur to people to
question them but they may be different for the two
companies and since the individuals who hold these
assumptions so, don't question them themselves, they
don't articulate them, they don't throw them out for
discussion, they don't know that there's, they never
even consider that there's another way of doing
things.

Andrew also viewed the initiative at only 40 percent
success on a scale of zero percent failure to 100 percent
success because of several factors. First, there was a lack
of decision-making on the part of the client change
participants and lack of commitment to his recommendations
in the organizational assessment that he conducted. Second,
he felt the organization lacked the ability to be
consistent and follow through with plans. And finally, he
felt there was a lack of sponsorship for himself at a
higher level than the Chief Information Officer (CIO).
Based on the rating of the three participants of this
initiative, the researcher categorized this initiative as a
failure even though Anthony had a view that he received
what he was looking to attain from Andrew.

In Change Initiative Two, both Betty and Barbara rated the change initiative as a success. In the words of Betty, "Yeah, I think it's a success." Barbara stated:

Uh, well Betty and I just set down to write a case study for an OCA presentation and, uh, when I look at what has changed in the library, I would say it's been at least, I'm sort of between, somewhat and largely successful. [Laughs] Uh, and the reason that I say that the, the senior leaders have uh, what I would, there's a new group of senior leaders, it's broader, more representative of the library, uh, they are working together differently than they worked before. They're doing more, they're kind of more consciously strategic, they're more conscious of how to communicate and using kind of multi mechanisms. There is an understood model for communication. There is a model and a mechanism for doing decision-making differently than they used to, uh, and in a way that, I guess I would say, people are more aware of things they have to consider when making a decision and the, a process that will, and a process to use.

Change Initiative Three was considered to be a success by Charlie and Cole, at least to the point it had evolved to when the interviews were conducted. The change

initiative is ongoing but was far enough along to bring these comments from Cole about its success. "Well I would say that so far I must consider it a *great* [emphasis by research participant] success because of the, because of the level of buy-in that I think we have at all levels of the organization that know about it so far."

Charlie used several terms to describe the success: "… [T]he project is moving forward …;" "… senior management involvement …;" and "… most people, uh, if not all that work within my department realize there needs to be a change."

In Change Initiative Four, both Dorothy and David gave the success rate at 80 percent because it was still under way and will be completed this year, 2003. They did not feel that they could give the change initiative 100 percent before the completion of the project. David worded the success as, "I'd say about 80 percent [successful] and the reasons are that, uh, the organization has not picked up on, uh, everything that I recommended but they're, the longer I stay there the more they're doing that."

Dorothy, the change agent, stated the success in these terms:

> … I'll give it 80 percent …. We, uh, you know the fact
> that we have one [strategic plan], that we're, you

know, we're much more defined than ever before. It's
huge and that the board [of directors] would even
consider that we're supposed to have a strategic plan
[laughing]. It's huge. So uh, I can't give it a 100
percent because we're not complete with it yet.

David described the level of success with this
statement about how the board of directors is assuming more
of a leadership role in strategic planning as the
initiative moves forward. "I'd say about 80 percent
{success] and the reasons are that, uh, the organization
has not picked up on, uh, everything that I recommended but
they're, the longer I'm there the more they're doing that."

In summarizing the success or failure of the change
initiatives, it was determined by the researcher that
Change Initiative One was a failure but there was some
residual success in organizational learning as a result of
the education processes that Andrew presented on
organizational change. Change Initiatives Two, Three, and
Four were deemed successful by the research participants
and the researcher concurred with their respective
perceptions.

Factors that Influenced Perceptions of Success or Failure

In examining the data from the change initiatives
studied, a number of contributing factors emerged that

could differentiate the perceptions of the success or failure of the change initiative by the change agents and OD practitioners. These factors are exhibited in Table 4.2. This table lists the factor, the contributing research participant, and whether the perception attributed to the success or failure of the initiative. The substantiating narrative(s) for each factor is then presented to the reader. These factors are presented in no particular order of priority although the data revealed that the "Leadership" factor was mentioned most often by the participants.

Table 4.2 – *Factors that Differentiate the CAs' and ODPs' Perception of Success or Failure*

Factor	Perception of Success/Failure

Close Working Relationship with the OD Practitioner	Success
	    Anthony (CA)
	    Anna (CA)
	    Betty (CA)
	    Barbara (ODP)
	    Charlie (CA)
	    Dorothy (CA)
	    David (ODP)

Education/
Training
	Success
	    Anna (CA)
	    Betty (CA)
	    Barbara (ODP)
	    Cole (ODP)

Exercise of Organization Leadership (Role of Executive leadership and Role of Change Leadership)	Failure
	    Andrew (ODP)
	
	Success
	    Betty (CA)

                              Barbara (ODP)
                              Charlie (CA)
                              Cole (ODP)
                              David (ODP)

Effects of Continuous   Failure
Communication   Anthony (CA)
                                  Anna (CA)
                                  Andrew (ODP)

                               Success
                                  Betty (CA)
                                  Barbara (ODP)
                                  Charlie (ODP)
                                  Cole (ODP)

Close Working Relationship with OD Practitioner

An important factor by five of the change agents and

two of the OD practitioners in their respective change

initiatives was the close working relationship with the OD

practitioner. A close working relationship means there was

open communication, clear understanding, credibility or

trust, commitment, and demonstrated leadership skills

between the change agent and the OD practitioner. No clear

pattern or phenomenon in this factor that would

differentiate the perceptions of the change participants

was evident in this data. The examples germane to the

relationship with the ODP that were recalled by the change

agents and the OD practitioners follow: the skill of the

ODP can contribute to success; the tenacity and patience of

the ODP are conducive to good change practice; the working

relationship of the ODP with the CA brings understanding of what they need to accomplish; the credibility of the ODP builds trust; the understanding of the organization's goals by the ODP; the commitment of the ODP to the change process; and the leadership skills of the ODP builds commitment to those involved in the change process. Narratives relating these examples follow.

All five of the change agents and two of the OD practitioners of the four change initiatives studied perceived that the use of an OD practitioner or consultant contributed to the success or partial success of the initiative. Anthony, the first change agent, stated, "… I think it was a [partial] success in that we made the transition to a merged organization." Andrew, the OD practitioner was given credit for this success by Anthony.

> I think Andrew has a particularly strong ability to
> get people to open up to him quickly. So his
> interviewing skills, his understanding and feedback of
> what he's hearing from people was very good. … [S]o I
> would say he was particularly beneficial that way.
> That was, that was his big strength.

Anna substantiated Anthony's perception about the use of Andrew as the OD practitioner. She stated her perception as, "… [W]e were getting nowhere and we were, it was, we

were attacking each other and that had to stop and it did stop with Andrew's intervention."

In another initiative, Betty discerned that the tenacity as well as the patience of Barbara, the OD practitioner, and herself, the change agent, differentiated the success of this initiative. "Umm, and I think just my own tenacity and Barbara's tenacity, I mean, just really hanging in and believing that it's going to happen. And also being patient [contributed to the success of the initiative]."

Barbara also observed that the relationship established between the OD practitioner and the change agent contributed to the success of their change initiative. She stated:

> I would say, I think it's important to know that I think Betty and I worked really well together and that we, I, I, I, and I say that because I think that had we not worked well together, umm, I don't think nearly as much would have been accomplished.

In the third change initiative studied, Charlie perceived that the understanding of the organization's goals by the ODP as well as the credibility of the OD practitioner, Cole, contributed to the success of their respective change initiative. He stated,

He's [Cole] been instrumental in working with my, my VP along with the VP of HR, *understanding what our goals* [emphasis by research participant] [are] and what we're trying to accomplish and helping them understand it so it's coming not just from me but also from himself. Uh, he's well received in this company so when he says he believes the project we're, in the project that we're working on—that also lends a lot of *credibility* [emphasis by research participant] at the senior level management.

Dorothy attributed the success of the fourth change initiative to the commitment of herself and David, the ODP, and their efforts to enlist support from the board of directors. She expressed this with these words, "Umm, commitment from David and myself to make it happen and then enlisting of enough key board members, not all the board members, but enough."

One of David's perceptions supported that of Dorothy. He attributed the success to the level of commitment of Dorothy and the board of directors after their initial reluctance to the change of implementing strategic planning in the organization. His perception was, "One [example] is Dorothy's commitment to, to doing this. Two is a commitment by the board members once everything got started."

David's perception of another example that contributed to the success of this initiative was his own leadership skills in gaining commitment on the part of Dorothy and the board of directors. "… [W]hat really underlies those commitments is the leadership that I exercised as their consultant."

Education and Training Activities

Education, training, or development emerged from the data as a factor that two of the change agents and two of the OD practitioners perceived as important to the success of their respective change initiatives. However, the perception of the change agents and the OD practitioners regarding the role of education and training in the success or failure of the change initiatives were similar. The following examples related to education and training activities emerged from the data: the education by the ODP to the organization about change processes led to the organization's better understanding of change; training in organizational culture contributed to better understanding of organizational differences; training in communication and decision-making processes that led to better organizational effectiveness; and leadership development by the ODP in order to retain people with experience in a companies' business.

Anna perceived that education or training contributed
to the partial success of Change Initiative One in that
there was residual organizational learning as a result of
the ODP's education process about organization change. She
stated:

Well the things that contributed to the success were,
uh, first and foremost, the educational process that
Andrew put us through, just about, the cycles that you
go through when you are facing a high degree of change
and understanding that it's perfectly normal to go
through those in order, you know, denial, betrayal,
uh, identity crisis and on into being more focused on
solutions. And learning a common language so that
everyone knew how to discuss these feelings and
experiences.

Betty also brought training out as a contribution to
the success of Change Initiative Two. She said, "… [B]ut
our training program was I would say outstanding. The
structure is working. … [O]ur culture is shifting."

Barbara's perception was that training added to the
success of this initiative as well but she emphasized a
different area. She explained it this way: "… [T]hey needed
some form of, I'll call it training in communication and

decision-making and kind of a conflict resolution, in working together effectively."

Cole's perception that because of longevity of service and resistance to change of some of the managers involved with Change Initiative Three that there needed to be some leadership development or training. He stated, "And so we thought we would either have some leadership development challenges or possibly even need to replace some people." His perception about training was affirmed later in the change process as these second-tier managers began to buy into the change initiative. Their buy-in came as a result of several meetings where an appreciative inquiry process was utilized by Cole to bring this group of managers up to speed about the changes that were needed in the organization in order for it to become more effective.

Exercise of Organizational Leadership

Leadership was mentioned more often than any other factor by the research participants as either contributing to the failure or success of the change initiatives studied. All four of the OD practitioners and two of the change agents perceived the exercise of organizational leadership to be a factor in the success or failure of their respective change efforts. There are two perspectives or properties of leadership that emerge from the narratives

of those six participants. The two properties of leadership are the role of executive leaders and the role of change leaders. The views expressed by the change agents and the OD practitioners are so much alike demonstrating that the factor of the exercise of organizational leadership and the two properties are similarly important to both groups of participants.

Role of executive leaders. Executive leaders in this study were referred to as the senior leaders of an organization, for example, the CEO or executive vice-presidents. The narratives of the research participants view the role of executive leaders as one of providing vision, direction, transforming themselves, and involvement or support of the change initiative occurring within their organization. These executive leaders may not have been directly involved with the change initiative but their support was essential. The supporting narratives for the exercise of leadership from the role of senior or executive leadership follow.

From a success perspective, Betty's perception was that the role of executive leadership contributed to the success of Change Initiative Two. Examples of this role were leadership vision and leadership support. In reference to leadership vision, she stated, "I think the director was

unwavering in her vision." The director also provided
support to the change effort. "But she did not [give up on
the vision of a new structure] and her willingness to put
money into the project and to support Barbara and myself, I
think, and the other subgroups, she was very supportive of.
And I think that was key."

Barbara rated Change Initiative Two as between
somewhat and largely successful. She stated her view of
that success and two of the differentiating themes as the
transformation of leaders from the old way of doing things
to the new way of doing things and supporting the new
processes or models for communication and decision-making.
Her description follows:

> … [W]hen I look at what has changed in the library, I
> would say it's been at least, I'm sort of between,
> somewhat and largely successful. [Laughs] Uh, and the
> reason that I say that the, the senior leaders have
> uh, what I would, there's a new group of senior
> leaders [as a result of the new structure], it's
> broader, more representative of the library, uh, they
> are working together differently than they worked
> before. They're doing more, they're kind of more
> consciously strategic, they're more conscious of how
> to communicate and using kind of multi mechanisms.

There is an understood model for communication. There

is a model and a mechanism for doing decision-making

differently than they used to, uh, and in a way that,

I guess I would say, people are more aware of things

they have to consider when making a decision … and

[now have] a process to use.

Charlie's perception of the role of executive

leadership example that contributed to the success of

Change Initiative Three was leadership involvement and

keeping informed about what is going on. Charlie summarized

this example in the following dialogue:

I think for the success of a project this big, *senior

management has to know what's going on [emphasis by

research participant]*. He's [Cole] been instrumental in

working with my, my VP along with the VP of HR,

understanding what our goals [emphasis by research

participant] and what we're trying to accomplish and

helping them understand it so it's coming not just from me

but also from himself. … So, that part of it's been

successful.

In Change Initiative Four, David perceived that the

commitment of the board of directors was a deciding

leadership attribute in the success of that initiative.

This board had not initially stepped up to the plate in

providing leadership in instituting or supporting a process for strategic planning. As the initiative progressed, the board did acknowledge the value of a strategic planning process and then stepped up to the plate to provide leadership and support in that direction. When asked about the factors that contributed to the success of the initiative, David gave two; the second was the commitment by the board of directors. "Two is a commitment by the board members once everything got started."

Initially the board of directors did not have a high level of commitment. David found and developed an advocate on the board of directors and stated this was another contributing factor. "… [H]e was the vice-chair, uh, or the vice president of the organization and his advocating for this process once it got going. So he's been a champion for doing the strategic planning."

Dorothy supported David's perception that enlisting the support of board members' leadership was a contributing factor in the success of this initiative. She expressed this with these words, "Umm, commitment from David and myself to make it happen and then enlisting of enough key board members, not all the board members, but enough."

From a failure perspective, in Change Initiative One Andrew felt there was a lack of sponsorship at the CEO

level since the CIO reported directly to the CEO of the merged companies. He stated, "And I would say a third bullet would be … the OD consultant did not have sponsorship, I think I needed sponsorship at a higher level than Anthony [CIO]."

Role of change leaders. The change leaders in this study were the change agent and the OD practitioner. Their roles were promoting the change, providing leadership, the understanding of change and its goals, and their involvement or support of the change initiative occurring within their organization. These change leaders are directly involved with the change initiative. The supporting narratives for the exercise of leadership from the perspective of the role of the change leaders follow.

From a success perspective, Betty's perception was that there were several leadership attributes of the change leaders that contributed to the success of Change Initiative Two. Examples of these were the use of leadership teams, tenacity or commitment, and patience.

Betty's first perception was that the use of leadership teams was an integral component that differentiated the success of this initiative. Betty described the teams this way. "… [W]e had team leaders or subgroup leaders who were also key in moving the work

forward as well as our HR director and the, uh, library director."

Concerning commitment and patience, Betty said, "… I think just my own tenacity and Jackie's tenacity, I mean, just really hanging in and believing it's going to happen. And also being patient."

Charlie's perception of the leadership examples on the part of the change leaders that contributed to the success of Change Initiative Three was understanding the goals of the initiative and the realization that there is a need for change. Charlie summarized these examples in the following dialogue:

> The other part is we are looking at making some major changes and while most of my senior managers, who are the only ones in the loop on it, are obviously nervous about change. They're only, I think at this point they're more nervous just about just going through a change, but they feel like, I think they feel they've had a lot of *buy-in* [emphasis by research participant] and a lot of chance to influence the decisions and their careers so I think it's been successful (a) that we're going and (b) because the key players underneath me, uh, all have *buy-in* [emphasis by research participant] in what we're doing.

Cole felt that Charlie was a collaborative leader and described him as follows: "… [H]e tends to be someone who really likes to help people." and "… [H]e wanted just to be a part of the process and listen and dialogue with the people who reported to him." Cole then describes one instance where Charlie demonstrates autocratic leadership:

> Forcing, and I like that word, forcing his direct, his direct reports to get engaged in the process of thinking about what was working in their organization and adopting the role of making decisions about how to draw best from those strengths. And the reason I'm so adamant about using that word 'forcing' is that I think there was some push-back about the appreciative process and charges that maybe it was too, you know, fluffy and it wasn't task focused enough and all that.

Charlie used this technique in this instance because he said, "… [U]nfortunately I've got, unfortunately or fortunately, I've got some very loyal people that work for me and sometimes they will say whatever they think I want to hear versus their real thought." These different views of Charlie's leadership styles lead the researcher to conclude that he is a situational leader.

In response to the question of contributing factors to the success of the initiative, David responded with

examples of leadership on the part of the change agent, "One is Dorothy's commitment to, to doing this.

David also felt his own leadership was important to the success of this initiative. In describing the commitment that the board of directors eventually demonstrated, he said, "[W]hat really underlies these commitments is the leadership that I exercised as their consultant."

Dorothy also felt that the commitment on the part of David and her were contributing factors to their success. She said, "Umm, commitment from David and myself to make it happen and then enlisting of enough key board members, not all the board members, but enough."

From a failure perspective, Andrew perceived Change Initiative One as a failure because of certain change leadership inadequacies as they carried out their role. First he gave lack of commitment and decision-making by the change agent and other leaders involved in the change initiative as one reason for the failure. "… [T]here was a lack of decision-making and commitment to the recommendations that were made on the OD as the result of the [needs] assessment."

Next, he also thought the organizations being merged lacked consistency and follow through and so stated, "There

was a lack of consistency and follow-through on those things that they did try to do themselves." The researcher discerned this to be because of the lack of change leadership in this area.

Andrew also observed within the organization the inability to focus on identifying the problem instead of the solution. In other words, change leadership did not agree on action that needed to be taken to move the change initiative forward in the merging IT organizations. He said, "… I was trying to talk strategy and plan and make decisions and they [the change agents] were talking about remedies."

And finally the last obstacle to a successful intervention Andrew saw was that the wrong person was put into a leadership role, by the change leadership, as project manager over the entire merger of the two CIO organizations. He said:

> "… Anthony went ahead, created a project management department, put someone in charge who in my opinion and everybody else's opinion was not what you would call a driving force who makes things happen. Very nice guy! But he hadn't really accomplished anything in his last thirty-five assignments—the thought that

he would accomplish anything in the next assignment

was a *stretch* [emphasis in Andrew's voice].

We see that the roles of the executive leaders as well

as the roles of the change leaders in their exercise of

organizational leadership had an impact on the perceptions

of success or failure of the four change initiatives

studied by the research participants.

Importance of Continuous Communication

The data revealed that continuous communication was

perceived as a contributing factor in the respective change

initiatives. The perceptions of the change agents and the

OD practitioners were similar with regard to the role of

communication influencing the success or failure of the

change initiatives. Several aspects of communication were

revealed that came about because of continuous

communication. Some barriers to communication also emerged

from the data of this study. First, the narratives that

were examples of continuous communication are presented.

Anthony's narrative about the change initiative he was

involved in revealed that regular communication helped

builds trust. He observed:

I was a new manager to them, you know, so they heard

it but they didn't believe it until they experienced

it [the merger]. So my challenge was for us to go

through this change exercise to be sure I gave them a

message [communication] and followed through so that

they [employees] would build a trust in me.

Betty had insight that communication was a factor that

contributed to the success of Change Initiative Two.

Initially this organization did not have adequate

communications as described by Betty. "… [C]ommunications

was not flowing through the library. [Uh-huh.] So, that was

really kind of an eye-opener for the organization." This

situation changed as Betty and Barbara worked together to

institute training to improve communication skills in the

organization and contributed the success of that to the

support of the HR director and the library director. Betty

said:

I think our HR director, again, was very supportive.

The two of them [the library director and the HR

director] are very close in their thinking and Barbara

and I and the two of them [the library director and

the HR director] meeting periodically and staying

connected [communicating] I think was absolutely key.

She later stated, "It was just that, that communication

among leaders in supporting the [change] leaders, I would

say was really critical." She also stated that regular

communication about the change between lower level leaders

and the library director was a lesson learned and would be

something she would do differently in another change

initiative.

Barbara supported Betty's insight with these words. "…
[T]hey needed to work on how they were going to fill the

roles in the new structure, Uh, it was clear that people

still needed some form of, I'll call it training, in

communications … in working together effectively." She also

added, when asked what she would do differently on a future

initiative:

> Probably the one thing I would do differently would be
>
> to set up a regular meeting with the library director.
>
> … [W]e tended to set up meetings on an 'as needed'
>
> basis instead of, kind of, more regular and that's the
>
> one thing I would do differently.

Charlie expressed the need for regular communication

to build buy-in from the organizational change participants

and prepared his direct reports by the process of

appreciative inquiry facilitated by Cole. This

communication occurred at off-site meetings and lunch

meetings as described by Charlie:

> The third part which we've talked about which is the
>
> buy-in from my direct managers below me have been very
>
> active. We've had one off-site meeting and I think two

or three follow-up meetings since then as a group outlining and defining where we're going.

Before these meetings, Charlie described his direct reports, "I've got some very loyal people that work for me and sometimes they will say whatever they think I want to hear versus their real thought." After the Appreciative Inquiry at off-site meetings and the later lunch meetings this perception by Charlie of his direct reports changed, "… I think they feel they've had a lot of buy-in and a lot of chance to influence the decisions and their careers …."

Cole discerned that communication was essential between him and Charlie. His statement was, "And so I knew that to have the communication with him about this intervention I was going to have to lay out something concrete in front of him and make it easy for him to edit. So that's what I did." He described these processes further with this one example:

> … I built a draft of the appreciative inquiry process, took it to [Charlie], and walked him through the process and we, from then we really re-created the process. He had some changes. He had some suggestions. I would rework the proposal, come back and we did that over a period of a week or ten days and built this one-day intervention.

When asked about how Cole and Charlie arrived at a consensus of agreement concerning the decisions they made, Charlie described it this way, "We probably had two or three, several hour sessions, maybe as short as an hour, but you know, fairly extensive discussion about each draft of the process over a several week period."

Dorothy also gave an example of regular or continuous communication in the decision-making process with David. She said, "You know, we met on a weekly basis for several weeks before it all began. So I'd say we met probably five weeks before it started." After the initiative was under way she said they went with a process of trial and error until "we always ended up with a consensus."

These narratives by the research participants of regular or continuous communication brought out that by-products of communication are the building of trust (Anthony), demonstrating leadership support (Betty), and building buy-in from the people affected by the organizational change (Charlie).

Second, there were some barriers to communication that emerged from the data from this study—organizations sometimes speak different business or technological languages and gaps or "black holes" in the communication process.

In Change Initiative One, Anna perceived that the IT groups had different languages because of the different computer technology deployed. The researcher had the impression that this could have contributed to Anna only rating the initiative at a 40 percent success. She said, "… [S]ome people would say, 'Well we're a data driven shop.' But when they described what they meant by that they described a transaction-driven shop so we were trying to drive home decisions that we didn't, using language that didn't mean the same thing to everybody." This language difference could also have contributed to the black hole that Andrew saw in the organization.

Andrew described it this way:

Communications, serious communications problems, uh, and this really grieved Anthony, I know, because Anthony, as a CIO, really did many, many things to promote good communications within his organization. But, he had a black hole below him. He would communicate and disclose and share and encourage his people to go out and spread the word and there was a black hole, there was a void in the organization. They just, for the most part didn't happen.

In summarizing this section, four factors emerged from the data that were perceived by the research participants

as influencing their view of success or failure of their respective change initiatives. However, due to the similarities of the examples used by the change agents and the OD practitioners, their views of the role of the factors were the same. These four factors were the close working relationship with the OD practitioner, education and training, the exercise of organizational leadership, and regular or continuous communication. These four factors and the participants' perception of success or failure are depicted in Table 4.2.

All four of the factors found in this study were also found to be factors contributing to success or failure of change initiatives in the literature. None of the factors seemed to be of more importance to either the change agents or the OD practitioners. No particular group identified with any one factor. Additionally, no theme emerged from the data pertaining to a factor, a set of factors, or examples unique to either the change agents or the OD practitioner.

Relationship with the OD practitioner was mentioned by five of the change agents and by two of the OD practitioners. Training and/or education was mentioned by two change agents and two OD practitioners. Four of the OD practitioners and two of the change agents disclosed

leadership as a factor contributing to the failure or success of their respective change initiative. And finally, communications was mentioned by three of the change agents as well as by three of the OD practitioners.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarizes the study, presents the conclusions of the study, and addresses the implications for research and practice derived from the study. Suggested future research is also presented.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe how understandings of decisions made by the change agent and the OD practitioner during the early stages of a change initiative shape perceptions of success or failure.

The following four research questions guided this study:

1. How do change leaders and OD practitioners describe the initial OD intervention, design, and implementation?

2. What were the decisions made by the change agent and the OD practitioner during the launch of the change initiative?

3. How do change agents and OD practitioners differ or agree in their interpretation of the decisions that were made during the launch of a change initiative?

4. What factors differentiate the perceptions of the OD practitioner and the change agent about success or failure of the change initiative to this point in the change effort?

The design of the study was a basic or generic qualitative inquiry (Merriam, 1998) seeking to understand how the decisions made during the initial phase of an OD initiative are interpreted or understood by the OD practitioner and the client change agent. Qualitative research methods permit the study of chosen issues in depth and in detail (Patton, 1990) and this methodology is considered to be the most appropriate when little is known about a phenomenon (Merriam & Simpson, 1995). The study drew from the concepts, models, and theories (Merriam, 1998) of organizational development and change.

Based on the criteria outlined in Chapter 3, the researcher selected the OD practitioners and change agents involved in four change initiatives to participate in the study. The researcher either traveled to the participants' office or home office to conduct the interview or the interview was conducted via the telephone at the research participant's request. A total of four teams consisting of a total of five change agents and four OD practitioners participated in the study. The teams were made up of an OD

practitioner and a change agent who had worked together on the same organizational change initiative. Change Initiative One consisted of two change agents and one OD practitioner while the other three change initiatives consisted of one change agent and one OD practitioner.

All of the interviews were tape recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Semistructured in-depth interviewing techniques allowed the researcher to pursue any comments or areas of interest that the interviewee injected into the discourse with additional questions. It was the goal of the study to gain as much knowledge as possible from the practitioners and change agents about their understanding or interpretation of the decisions made during the contracting stage or initial stage of the change initiative.

Constant comparative analysis was employed as a data analysis strategy. Qualitative research is primarily *an inductive strategy* (Merriam and Simpson, 1995, emphasis in original), the inference of a general proposition based on the researcher's empirical observations (Dey, 1993). Comparative analysis of the collected data started as soon as the researcher began to transcribe the tapes from the interviews and generally followed the guidelines of Tesch (1990).

Conclusions and Discussion

The major conclusions derived from the data of this study are presented in this section. First, the researcher concluded, based on the data from this study, that when there is agreement or congruence of the understanding of the decisions made in the early stages of a change initiative, as was true in three of the four change initiatives, there is the possibility that the desired results may be achieved. The opposite result is also speculated, namely, that when there is a disagreement or incongruence of the understanding of the decisions made in the early stages of an initiative, the initiative might not achieve the desired results.

Further, an important factor contributing to the congruency of understanding on the part of the research participants was the face-to-face feedback meetings that occurred between the major players. These meetings allowed the change agent and the OD practitioner to calibrate or clarify their understandings of the decision they made in the early stages of the change initiatives studied.

There were three change initiatives where the change agent and the OD practitioner had the same or a congruent understanding of the decisions they made in the early stages of their respective change initiatives. These three

sets of research participants also described their feedback
meetings in similar language. There was one change
initiative where the change agents and the OD practitioner
differed in their understanding of the decisions they made
in the early stages of that change initiative. This set of
research participants also expressed differing views of
their attempts at feedback meetings.

This study contributes to the organizational
development and change literature in understanding the
relationship between congruent understanding of decisions
made and the potential outcome of a change initiative. This
study also found that the use of feedback processes or
methods are very important in the congruent understanding
of the decisions made by the research participants. This
should be an important finding to practicing OD consultants
and change managers.

Second, the researcher concluded that change agents
and OD practitioners hold similar views about the factors
that influence the success or failure of a change
initiative. Burke, Clark, and Koopman (1985) and Reid
(2003) tell us that the working relationship and
competencies of the OD practitioner or consultant, whether
they be internal or external contribute to the success of a
change initiative. That appears to be what the data from

this study revealed as well because both the change agents and OR practitioners participating in this study mentioned the ODP as a factor in the success or partial success of the initiatives.

The literature supports that education and training can contribute to successful change initiatives (Holman & Deal, 1999; Alange, Jacobsson & Jarnehammar, 1998; Dodgson & Bessant, 1996; Varney & McFillen, 2000; Watkins & Marsick, 1993). This finding of this study substantiated the information revealed in the literature review.

The literature also shows the exercise of organization leadership to be an important factor in organization change and the success of change initiatives (Holland, 2000; Kotter, 1990, 1998; Boss & Golembiewski, 1995; Katzenbach, et al., 1996). This study also found and agreed with the literature that leadership is an important factor in successful change initiatives.

And finally, regular or continuous communication is a determining factor in organizational change according to the literature (Bennis & Biederman, 1997; Burke, 1994; Golembiewski, 1990; Larkin & Larkin, 1996). This factor from the literature was also supported by this study.

Trust was revealed as a factor that is an important function in managerial decision-making (McLain & Hackman,

1999) when reviewing the literature about decision-making in organizational change. In this study, all of the research participants, when asked about the level of trust between the respective change agent or OD practitioner and themselves stated that trust was high. None of them, however, associated this level of trust to any decisions that were made in their respective change initiatives. This study reveals that even if trust is high, it does not ensure success.

The literature also reveals that communication is an indispensable part of building trust between people interacting with each other and that trust increases or decreases in relation to the interaction. Low trust would result in poor communication, causing a barrier to the change effort (Preston, 1994). Albeit this was not the case in Change Initiative One—there was a high level of trust between the change agents and the OD practitioner in that initiative but yet it was deemed a failure by one change agent and the OD practitioner. Consequently, it is unclear that the level of trust between the OD practitioners and the change agents had any effect on the outcome of the change initiatives in this study.

A third finding of this study is that there can be some success even in a failed attempt at organizational

development. For example, in Change Initiative One, the failed initiative, Anna's view of a 40% success is in concert with Golembiewski's (1990) view that there is some residual success to interventions or change initiatives that are rated as a failure by the OD consultant. These minor successes could be seen in one or more of the eight classes of activities that Golembiewski lists as alternative designs of an OD application: process-analysis activities; skill-building activities; diagnostic activities; coaching/counseling activities; team-building activities; intergroup activities; technostructureal activities; and system building or system-renewal activities. Anna's view of success was related to the skill-building activities, coaching/counseling activities, and team-building activities listed by Golembiewski.

Implications for Theory

This study presents empirical research that covers a gap in the organizational development and change literature on how understandings of decisions made by the change agent and the OD practitioner during the early stages of a change initiative shape perceptions of success or failure. Existing organizational development and change theory may be impacted by this study since the researcher did not find any literature dealing with whether the understanding of

decisions made early in an initiative by the participating change agent and OD practitioner differed or agreed.

The findings of this study of four change initiatives suggest that congruency of understanding of the decisions made by the change agent and OD practitioner involved in an organizational change initiative could possibly impact the success or failure of change initiatives. Three change initiatives studied found the change agents and OD practitioners had congruent understandings of their respective major decisions and these change initiatives were all deemed successes by the research participants. Change Initiative One was deemed a failure and it in turn was the only change initiative studied that the two change agents and the OD practitioner were not in agreement about the major decisions made in the early stage of that particular initiative.

Wheatley (2002) says that there is not a "more powerful way to initiate significant change than to convene a conversation" (p. 13). Lloyd and Maguire (2002) also support the concept that conversations between people about organizational possibilities enhance the understanding of the change process. They state, "… it is the deeper mutual understanding that these conversations bring that allow for

new possibilities and previously unimagined emergent

horizons" (p. 150)

Ford and Ford (1995) posit that three significant

aspects in the organizational change process are:

conditions of satisfaction for the change; degree of

involvement, participation, and support; and decision

makers' interpretations. These decision maker's

interpretations allow them to make sense of or have an

understanding of what has been learned and determine future

changes. The authors stated, "Manager's assumptions about

how ideas [about change] are related can be discovered

through a study of their conversations about change,

particularly during conversations of understanding" (p.

563).

This study addressed the need for further study in the

areas of conversations of understanding posited by Ford and

Ford (1995). Specifically this study provided thick, rich

narratives by the change agents and the OD practitioners of

the initiatives they were involved in, the decisions they

made, the success or failure of their respective change

initiatives, the factors that differentiated their

perceptions, and the factors that contributed to the

success or failure of the change initiatives.

Implications for Practice

The search of the literature found several factors that contribute to the success of change initiatives. This study adds an additional factor to the body of literature on organizational development and change that the OD practitioner should pay attention to—the change agent and the OD practitioner may be able to enhance the probability of success by ascertaining that they have a congruent understanding of the decisions they make during the early stage of a change initiative. In this study that understanding was accomplished by only one method and that was feedback in face-to-face meetings. This is an important finding of this study that OD practitioners and change managers need to understand.

This study found four factors that the research participants (change agents and OD practitioners) perceived to be of importance to the success of a change initiative—the close working relationship with the OD practitioner, training and education, the exercise of organizational leadership, and the effects of regular or continuous communication. These factors do not constitute new findings as they are all found in the literature.

Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this study was to describe how understandings of decisions made by the change agent and the OD practitioner during the early stages of a change initiative shape perceptions of success or failure. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations for future research are made:

1. This study was conducted in organizations in the Southeastern United States—two business groups, one large university, and one non-profit organization. Additional studies need to be conducted in international locations to examine whether the findings of this study hold true. Geographical location or cultural differences may result in different findings.

2. This was an exploratory study to determine whether there were differences in the understanding by the change agent and the OD practitioner of their decisions made early in the change initiative. The findings suggest there may be a link between the understanding of those decisions and the outcome of the initiative. A future study might examine if indeed there are linkages between the decisions made early in an organizational change by the change

agent and the OD practitioner and the success or failure of that change initiative.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title of Research: <u>Managing organizational change: How change decisions are</u>

<u>understood</u>

Researcher: Richard R. Bohannon
                                       770-479-6605

UGA Faculty Advisor: Brad Courtenay
                                       706-542-2214

I agree to participate in the research titled *Managing organizational change: How change decisions are understood* which is being conducted by Richard R. Bohannon, 770-479-6605, Department of Adult Education at the University of Georgia under the direction of Dr. Bradley C. Courtenay, 706-542-2214, Department of Adult Education. I understand that this participation is entirely voluntary. I can withdraw my consent at any time without penalty and have the results of the participation, to the extent it can be identified as mine, returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

1. Reason/Purpose of the Study:
The purpose of this research is to examine how the organizational development (OD) practitioner and the change agent understand the decisions made during the launch of a change initiative. This is a qualitative study and the research interviews will be conducted with the OD practitioner and the change agent involved in a change initiative.

2. Benefits:

The benefits I may expect from this research is that knowledge gained from the results of this research can be utilized by Human Resources Organizational Development for future training of organizational leaders and managers and may add to the existing literature about OD initiatives and processes.

3. Procedures

I will be asked to participate with the researcher in a recorded interview session. The interview is expected to last about one hour and will occur at a time that is convenient for me and at a mutually agreed upon location. This interview will take place on _____. The interview will be transcribed and retained the researcher for a

period of five years. I will be afforded an opportunity to review the transcribed interview and offer additional comments/corrections.

I will also be asked to share any documents that relate to the initial planning of the OD intervention such as meeting minutes, emails, agreements, etc., that could add useful information to the researcher. I may black out any data contained in these documents that are sensitive, confidential or proprietary.

4. **No discomforts or stresses are foreseen from participating in this research project.**

5. **No risks are foreseen from participating in this research project. The researcher will not ask questions specific to my firm or organization.**

6. **Deception will not be used in the study.**

7. **The results of my participation will be confidential and will not be released in any individually identifiable form without my prior consent unless otherwise required by law.**

My name will not be affixed to the interview tape, the transcription of the interview, or any documents provided to the researcher. My identity will be kept confidential by the researcher, and will not be disclosed in the resulting research paper (dissertation) or any subsequent papers written concerning this research project. The data gathered in this project will be destroyed by erasing the tapes at or before the end of the five year retention period.

8. **The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project and can be reached at 770-479-6605.**

9. **My signature below indicates that the researcher has answered all questions to my satisfaction and that I consent to volunteer for this study. I have been given a copy of this form.**

10. **PLEASE SIGN BOTH COPIES OF THE FORM. KEEP ONE AND RETURN THE OTHER TO THE INVESTIGATOR/RESEARCHER.**

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

11. **IRB Oversight**

For questions or problems about your rights please call or write:
Human Subjects Office
University of Georgia
606A Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center,
Athens, Georgia 30602-7411
Telephone: (706) 542-6514
Email: IRB@uga.edu

Research at the University of Georgia that involves human participants is overseen by the Institutional Review Board. Questions or problems regarding your rights as a participant should be addressed to Ms. Julia Alexander, M.A., Institutional Review Board; Office of V. P. for Research; The University of Georgia; 606A Graduate Studies Research Center; Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-6514.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDELINES AND INFORMATION

Managing organizational change: How change decisions are understood

A. Consent Form

B. Participate Designation: CA_____ ODP_____

C. Demographics

    a. Member of OCA: YES _____   NO _____

    b. How long ago was the project started? _____

    c. Consultant: EXTERNAL _____ INTERNAL _____

    d. Type of Business/Industry/Service _____

    e. Degree held by consultant _____

    f. Years experience as consultant _____

    g. Ethnicity _____

    h. Gender: Male _____ Female _____

    i. Age: _____

    j. Interviewee Position: _____

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

These questions were directed to the appropriate person,
e.g., OD practitioner or change agent depending on the
interviewee's role.

1. Please tell me about the change initiative you were
   involved in as a (OD practitioner/change agent).

2. Recall the first meeting between you and the (OD
   practitioner/ Change agent). What did you discuss?

3. What were the major decisions that were made during the
   early meetings on this initiative? If no major decisions
   were made during the first meeting, when were major
   decisions made? To what extent did you and the (OD
   practitioner/change agent) agree on those decisions? How
   did you confirm or arrive at a consensus of
   understanding? How much discussion was there between the
   two of you about these decisions?

4. What was your understanding of each of these decisions as
   it related to the (OD practitioner/change agent)? To what
   extent did the (OD practitioner/change agent) accomplish
   his/her role?

5. To what extent were the decisions that were made and the roles determined by those decisions documented and distributed to each of you?

6. To what extent do you consider this change a success or failure and why? What factors do you think have contributed to the success or failure of the initiative to this point?

7. Are there any additional points of interest you would like to relate about this change initiative, the decisions made, and the roles of the (OD practitioner/change agent)?

8. Did you have any prior working relationship with this (OD practitioner/change agent)? Please elaborate on that experience. How would you describe the level of trust between the two of you?

9. What would you do different, if anything, in the early stages of another change initiative based on your experience during this initiative?