

Introduction

In the decade since we began writing the first edition of this book back in 2010, and even since the second edition in 2015, the environment in which organizations function has changed beyond belief – not least because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Much has also changed in organizations – in the ways they are organized, operate and relate to clients/customers and their own staff. Against a backdrop of vast uncertainty, short-term solutions continue to surface as organizations struggle to cope. Many leaders have realized that the current way of running organizations carries with it all sorts of vulnerabilities, and find the future daunting. There is growing recognition that organizations must become agile and resilient to thrive in this context. Those who are in HR and OD roles find themselves continuing to search (or scramble) for different ways to support their organization and its leaders to navigate complexity and chaos – keeping fingers crossed that they will come through on the other side with new insights and doing things in new ways.

We recognize this sort of scenario and the challenges that organizations, OD and HR practitioners face, so we have added three new chapters – on what is organization health, how to build up the impact of OD in organizations and how to build a culture conducive to innovation. We have heard that people found the previous editions of the book helpful so we have retained and updated material where space has permitted.

The third edition has retained its practical orientation to continue to be useful to a wide range of people – from those at the entry level to those who are experienced. From novices who want to learn the trade to those experienced practitioners who would like to have a book that will facilitate their reflection and review of their practice. We know from readers' feedback from the first two editions that very experienced practitioners found affirmation and revitalization of their passion from the book. Some of the chapters in this third edition can also be useful for those eager *leaders* who are interested in better handling change as well as eager to learn the craft of building sustainable organization health.

We know from some readers' comments about the first edition that it felt like reading two different books, which is no surprise to us, as we did not aim to do an integrated book; we wanted instead to produce complementary insights. As two very different, committed individuals in both background and practice we chose to come

together because of our great shared passion to support both HR and OD practitioners to be better at building effective and healthy organizations.

So what is different about this edition compared to the last? This edition has several new chapters.

In **Part One, the OD section** (Chapters 1–13) Mee-Yan has added two new chapters – one on organization health’ and one on how to build up the impact of OD in organizations. The 11 chapters from the second edition by Mee-Yan have been updated and revised, adding more theories to different sections. Chapters 10 and 11 have undergone quite substantial changes with focused discussion on use of self in Chapter 11, and OD competence in Chapter 10.

Mee-Yan has removed the postscript to her section; instead she has integrated thoughts about practitioners needing to be future-wise into the last chapter on how to increase the value of OD functions.

So in terms of structure, **Part One** is organized into five sections. **Section 1: OD history and theory overview**, has two chapters – the history and the theory overview. **Section 2: OD cycle of work** has four chapters covering the four key phases of the OD cycle – entry and contracting, diagnosis, intervention and evaluation (in Chapter 6, the evaluation chapter, there is a new end-of-chapter ‘Quick reference for evaluation’ that readers will find useful as a practical summary of what they need to know). **Section 3: OD and change** has three chapters covering the balance of the two change approaches, the back- and front-room change matters, and can behavioural change be made easy? At the end of Chapter 8, a section on change implementation capabilities has been added to cover the downstream process of change. **Section 4: The Organization Development practitioner** has two chapters – the Organization Development practitioner, and power and politics in Organization Development. The final section – **Section 5: Additional thoughts** – has two new chapters, the first on what is an organization and what is organization health, and the final chapter is on how to build up our presence and expand our space and impact on organization life. Chapter 12 is Mee-Yan’s determined effort to see whether we can have at least a loose normative framework to guide OD work. In terms of what we are aiming to achieve through change, what type of healthy organization do we want to help to develop? Chapter 13 comes from Mee-Yan’s desire to see OD as a profession in its own right, continue to thrive and become an indispensable function for all organizations. So, instead of asking ‘what is the future of OD?’ this chapter encourages practitioners to own the fact that the future of OD is in the hands of the OD community, and it is our job to make the future a permanent reality.

In Part Two, the HR section, Linda has added another chapter and revised and updated the chapters from the previous edition with the changing context in mind. These include some fundamental shifts in the nature of work, working practice and the workforce in the light of technological advances and the global pandemic crisis. In Chapter 14, HR in relation to OD, Linda proposes that HR adopting an OD

frame, and HR and OD specialists working together can help achieve their joint aim of organizational effectiveness.

The chapters that follow address different ways in which HR can help build a nimble, resilient and change-able organization. A new chapter on innovation and learning reflects the urgent necessity to build organizational and individual capability, not only as a source of competitive advantage but also as a means of creating a fair deal for workers by upskilling them to face the challenges of the 21st-century job market. In similar vein, employee engagement should be a reflection of a high-quality employee experience. The chapter suggests practical ways in which HR can support line managers and individuals to create the context where more people are likely to be engaged and enjoy well-being. The final chapters – on building effective leadership, including shared leadership, and looking ahead at how HR can build healthy and resilient organizations that can thrive in volatile contexts – include various suggestions on ways in which HR can add profound and enduring value to organizations moving forward.

So the running order of Part Two is now:

HR in relation to OD

Organization Design

Transformation and culture change

Building organizational agility and resilience

A culture conducive to innovation and learning

Building the context for employee engagement

Developing effective leadership

Postscript – towards a better tomorrow

Arguably events of recent years make a skilled OD/HR contribution more valuable than ever. We hope you will find the book helpful as you deal with demands for ongoing transformation or look to carry out high-impact interventions in complex change situations, or to build the capacity to continually change and adapt throughout the organization.

We recognize that none of this is easy but we believe that the possibilities and the challenges may be greater than the challenges. We wish you well on your journey!

Quality & Equality have made over 40 videos on various matters in OD. Many of them will complement the content of this book. Feel free to watch the miniseries by visiting the Q&E YouTube Channel or by finding the videos on the Q&E website (<https://www.quality-equality.com/>).

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