



# Esprit d' ACCORD

Association for Creative Change in Organization Renewal and Development



## Case Study Introduction to a New Client Culture



Gail Aller-Stead

By Gail Aller-Stead

Until recently, I thought I was reasonably knowledgeable about cross-cultural issues. I've lived in every major city in Canada; attended school in three different countries; worked in non-English-speaking organizations in Central Europe and South America and in English-speaking organizations in the Caribbean, the USA, West Africa, and Australasia. My husband and I recently spent a year's sabbatical traveling. I'd felt comfortable with my general awareness of the work of Edward and Mildred Hall on context, space, time, and message flow – and the work of Geert Hofstede in power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity. We even have foreign ESL students living with us regularly!

What has happened to make me re-examine my assumptions? I have recently begun working with an organization comprised primarily of people who are deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing. As a hearing person, I am in the minority. As the facilitator and consultant guiding them through development and implementation of strategy, I have been introduced to a cultural richness and diversity like never before. Not only am I working with the unique culture of the organization and customizing my interventions and approaches as I would for each and every client organization, I am also learning how to effectively work with people who communicate in ways very different from me – via face reading, captioning, or signing. Signing itself can be done in English, in First Nations' languages, and in LSQ (Quebec).

Edgar Schein's definition of culture is "a pattern of shared basic assumptions that a group learned as it solved problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems." As Fons Trompenaer has

stated, culture is both explicit and implicit and contains basic assumptions, norms and values, and artifacts and products.

### Learning a New Culture

Building upon these definitions, each of us must be aware of the culture each time we begin work with a new client system. In this particular client organization where the majority of the members does not hear or speak verbally, the practice is to employ sign language interpreters and captionists in meetings. Key learnings for me, the facilitator who happens to be hearing, are that I must:

- Know my material and express it without jargon, complicated words, or slang
- Keep my sentences short and pause between sentences
- Pace my rate of speech so that the sign language interpreters and the captionists aren't exhausting themselves
- Attune myself to the rhythm of the meanings expressed
- Speak slowly and clearly (definitely a challenge for someone like me who is known to speak quickly and who also has a speech impediment!)
- Use a list so that people can speak in turn
- Be aware of my body language at all times. I have learned for example, not to break eye contact when speaking with a deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing person (even if just glancing away for a moment) – it is considered to be extremely rude.

### Using International OD Competencies

To help me feel more confident in meeting the needs of this client group, I revisited what I still consider to be one of the best books for OD practitioners: *Practicing Organization Development: A Guide for Consultants*,

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## Members in Motion

Edited by Bryan Walton



Jane Adams

**Jane Adams**, who recently completed her tenure on the ACCORD Planning Committee, continues to take her OD practice in a Solutions Focus direction, with exciting results. Using a combination of Appreciative Inquiry and Solutions Focus, she has recently done a successful mediation at a detention centre; a debrief of a crisis with Toronto Public Health; a town hall meeting at a housing co-op; and is working on an organizational change project with the Ministry of Education.

Jane and Marion Langford offer a two-day training in Solutions Focus, several times a year. You can contact Jane through her new website [www.janeadams.ca](http://www.janeadams.ca) which, oddly, devotes more space to painting than the practice of OD!

**Michelle Chambers**, OD Consultant, has been volunteering and providing support to the Leadership Development Services Program for the United Ways in Durham Region for over five years. Although each United Way program is tailored to the needs of the community, the Durham Region offers volunteer opportunities as facilitators/trainers in community (open public) workshops on a wide range of topics from board governance to

recruitment and selection. In addition, they provide organizational needs assessments, facilitation support in areas such as strategic planning; management assistance and coaching; and customized solutions. Many of these organizations simply do not have the funds or experience to move forward and it is extremely rewarding to engage them and assist them as they continue their good work within the community. Michelle says, "Not only is it an enriching experience, but I have learned so much more about my own community and enhanced my own OD skills! One of my favourite experiences was engaging board presidents in developing their own community of practice and providing facilitation support to them." If you are interested in volunteering similarly within your community, please contact [michelle.chambers@sympatico.ca](mailto:michelle.chambers@sympatico.ca)

**Marcelene Anderson** has attained the Strategic Management Certification (Gold Mastery Level) from the Centre for Strategic Management for having completed the training requirements and applying an in-depth knowledge of Systems Thinking to Strategic Planning and Enterprise Wide Change.



Marcelene Anderson

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## Sharing Resources

By Mark Dowds

**Blog: [www.robhyndman.com](http://www.robhyndman.com)**

Rob is a Canadian technology lawyer and a key voice into how the web is reshaping our life and work together. His writing is not only intelligent but helpful when it comes to learning the trends of the world around us here in Canada. He was also one of the founders of [www.meshconference.com](http://www.meshconference.com) which took place at MARS U of T in May.



Mark Dowds

### Book

*In Their Time, The Greatest Business Leaders of the Twentieth Century*, by Mayo & Nohria. HBS Press: This book has not had much mention in the general press that I am aware of, however it is a must read for anyone serious about studying

and learning from leaders in the last century. The book is a result of serious research and is detailed to say the least. It is broken into 10 year segments and covers all of the Twentieth Century. Its analysis, comparison and insight is worth paying the \$35 US to have on your shelf. It is not bedtime reading and it could give you a sore arm if you hold it for too long!

### Resource

Michael Koscec recommends as a resource [www.employeeonlinesurvey.com](http://www.employeeonlinesurvey.com). I have not personally used the surveys, however they appear simple and subjective enough that used in mass they could paint a very objective picture of the health of a company. This would only be of interest to those working in corporations wanting to survey more than 100 people at once.

*Mark Dowds is a consulting partner of Creationstep. He provides a different perspective on organizational re-creation and training. Contact [mark@creationstep.com](mailto:mark@creationstep.com) with resource ideas for future columns, or visit [www.creationstep.com](http://www.creationstep.com).*



## Tools & Techniques

# Using Colour Typing in OD Consulting

By Marcelene Anderson

In her work as an OD consultant, Jo Ellen Logan helps people explore and discover what their temperament or “personality preference” means to them personally and in their interactions with others. According to Jo Ellen, the use of colours to



Jo Ellen Logan

describe personality preferences provides a simple framework for learning about yourself and others. She has used two trademarked tools in which she is certified, True Colors and Personality Dimensions, in team building initiatives, mediations, and sales training.

True Colors was developed by Don Lowry and is based on research by Myers-Briggs and David Keirse. The Canadian tool, Personality Dimensions, developed by

Career/LifeSkills Resources, builds on this same research base as well as research by Lynda McKim. This extensive research base gives Jo Ellen confidence in the validity of these tools.

Both tools use colours to describe four main personality preferences. Unlike more complex models, Jo Ellen finds that four colours makes it easier for people to remember, and use, the personality information. Personality Dimensions augments its tool with an inventory that looks at Introversion and Extraversion, another important aspect of understanding ourselves and others.

## Learning the Basics

During an introductory half-day True Colors or Personality Dimensions workshop, participants complete the instruments, learn about the characteristics of all four preferences, and experience how each colour contributes to teamwork. The workshop format is “edu-taining,” so participants are actively engaged in learning and self-discovery while having fun.

Key workshop messages include:

- Everyone is a blend of all four colours. We all have the full spectrum of colours in greater or lesser strength.
- All colours are equally good. They each have strengths and weaknesses.
- Differences are gifts. Each colour makes a valuable contribution.

## Using Colours for Team-building

Jo Ellen often creates customized designs that enable teams to get the maximum benefit from what they learned during the introductory workshop. For example, they may look at the implications of their personality preferences team profile, deepen their appreciation of the contributions of each colour to their team functioning, and then use these insights to develop strategies that will enhance team communication, problem solving and decision making, as well as issues resolution.

## Using Colours in Workplace Mediations

Where there is conflict between individuals, Jo Ellen uses colour types to legitimize the preferences of each style, appreciate their differences and contributions, and help the parties understand that differences aren't good or bad. “Different is just different, not wrong,” according to Jo Ellen.

She asks individuals in a mediation if they would be interested in using a tool to explore what is occurring. If they agree, she has each person complete the preferences inventory and score it. Then, before the mediation begins, she explains to them what their scores indicate and the common problems their colour types often encounter. Then she gives the participants time to discuss what they see as the implications of their profiles and any insights they have gained about their current situation. They then develop their own behavioural guidelines for respectful communication.

Jo Ellen believes that the use of True Colours or Personality Dimensions in mediation encourages the participants to be more receptive to exploring ways to value their differences and accommodate each other's preferences in a respectful way. This often leads to a deeper exploration of their issues and options and, ultimately, to a sustainable agreement for improving their ability to work together.

## Using Colour Dimensions for Sales

Colour dimensions can also be used to help sales representatives increase their effectiveness. Once they understand their own communication preferences, they can learn how their style may have an unintended negative impact on some customers. They can then learn ways to recognize the preferences of their clients and strategies they can use to adjust their own communication style accordingly. Modifying their communication style enables them to relate and sell to individuals the way they want to be sold.

“Colour dimensions”, according to Jo Ellen, “help people accept each other. It helps people feel recognized and appreciated for who they are, and learn ways to enhance their relationships with others. Used well, colour dimensions can assist in creating a truly effective and respectful work environment. If organizations want people who are engaged, they should consider incorporating the use of colour preferences as one way to make that happen.”

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## In Spirit Spirituality at Work

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**B y S h e r r y C o n n o l l y**

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Please send contributions for In Spirit to  
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### “How can I bring spirituality into the workplace?”

As a consultant, how do you respond to this question? Are you heard as being authentic, grounded, inclusive, and professional?

Over the past 15 years, I have been in many conversations about this question. In some cases, it is with an HR professional or OD consultant concerned about employees and the work environment. More often, it is a deeply personal plea for a change in work from someone who is hurting or is searching for something more. From these many experiences, I have learned the importance of two fundamentals: Awareness of life as a spiritual journey and an understanding of how it connects with work. Your most important action in the conversation is to listen.

### Your Spiritual Journey: Where are you?

To me, spirituality is the essence of being human. It is about living faith, and I use “living” as both verb and adjective. My faith is a lifelong journey of exploration and discovery emerging from my interpretations of my experience. It is nurtured and challenged by the traditions and values of my Christian community. My spirituality is practical, grounded in my daily life engagement with people, work, and nature, integrating head, heart, body and spirit.

I encourage you to reflect on what spirituality means to you and to articulate it, including what intentional action you are taking to strengthen your faith and your ability to live it out. These are just a few questions to stimulate your own exploration:

- Do you believe, or feel that your life is a spiritual journey?
- Are you conscious of what you might call soul or spirit in other people?
- Do you sense that you know who you are, and why you are here?
- Do you see human life as being a part of something larger, such as nature or the cosmos?
- Do you believe there is a God, higher power, divine energy, or whatever name you use, that is influential in human matters? What is your image of God?
- Do you feel you are missing something, or have some kind of void within you?
- Are you spiritual-and-religious or one or the other?

If these questions make you uncomfortable, think about why that is ....

Your integrity and authenticity are the foundations for trust and credibility in any connection to spirituality and work. Consciousness of what you say and don't say, do and don't do is a core component.

### Spirituality at Work: What does it mean?

As a starting point, I'll share my own perspective. I believe that my work is an essential aspect of my personal growth and development in cooperation with God's creation of the universe. I believe that it is important to the well-being of society, though many times I could easily see it as mere toil! I see my work as helping people deepen the connection between who they are and the work they do.

What does spirituality at work mean to you? If a financial advisor, are you making money or leading people to financial self-sufficiency? Those who see their work as drudgery or an economic means usually receive little fulfillment from it. Yet others doing the same jobs grow as people whose work is a positive contribution to themselves and the world.

Certainly a workplace can be demoralizing or dehumanizing; a boss can be undermining or disrespectful, mental or physical health problems can overwhelm. It can be very difficult to maintain a life-giving perspective, especially in the absence of a community that supports it. This is where the OD consultant comes in. Many of your best practices will fit; to build trust, open communications, and so on. However an additional one to consider is being “faith friendly” without making those who don't wish to practice their spirituality uncomfortable.

Consider the following:

- Routinely start meetings with 2 or 3 minutes of silence -- prayer for some and stress-release for most.
- Honour religious holidays and daily prayer needs.
- Provide a quiet space for employees.
- Have a clear set of values that emerges from the employees and connects with management priorities.

No one brings spirituality into the workplace – it is already there. Your job may be to help release and nurture it. First, listen. Encourage people to reflect on their own spiritual journey and how it is connected with their work. Be prepared to share your own reflections to offer a starting point. Then let the rest emerge.

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*Sherry Connolly, MBA, MDiv, DMin (cand.), is the Founding Director of the Centre for Spirituality at Work and the Program Director for Pathways, a new “Progressive Christianity” venture in Markham. Her website is: [www.SpiritualityAtWork.org](http://www.SpiritualityAtWork.org)*

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# Marketing Your OD Practice

By Waheed Aghashirin



Waheed Aghashirin

Why is it that well educated, intelligent consultants struggle with marketing their consulting practices? As consultants we are brilliant in supporting client businesses to grow and prosper, but we do not do a good job in promoting and accentuating our own consulting practices. Why is that?

The truth is, we haven't acquired the skills to market and brand our services. Consultants want more

projects and more revenue, but unfortunately we do not plan for these to happen. That is, consultants don't plan and budget for marketing; they don't take an integrated approach to marketing to grow their consulting practices. They say, "Well, I do it every time I am in the presence of a potential client, such as in a conference or in a networking group ..."

But what about when you are not in the presence of a potential client? How do you intend to ingratiate them then? And let's not confuse selling with marketing! Selling is the transaction between a prospective buyer and your service; whereas "marketing" is the act of creating and accentuating need among potential buyers of your services" (Alan Weiss, *Getting Started in Consulting*, 2000, John Wiley & Sons).

## Develop a Marketing Plan

Here are some key marketing questions that I keep in mind when developing my marketing plan:

- Who are my potential clients?
- Why do they buy from others and not from me?
- Who are the other service providers (my competition) and what are their marketing strategies?

In my marketing plan, I identify my primary and secondary target markets, that is, the people that will most likely pay for my expertise. I identify my primary target by industry, by number of employees, changes impacting their business and industry, who their financial decision-makers or cost-centre managers are, and most importantly, their budget for the upcoming fiscal year (if at all possible!). As a rule of thumb, I make sure that most of my marketing dollars are spent on my primary target market because they are the ones who will need me and will use my consulting services.

When you are developing your marketing plan, itemize each marketing initiative in a spreadsheet with specific dates and funding. Do your homework and ensure that your marketing initiatives are aligned with potential clients' buying cycle.

## Understand Your Target Market

I make a conscious effort to understand the psychological buying process of my primary target market. What do they pay

for: quality, price, value or name brand? Understanding my target market's mind-set has shortened my sales cycle as well. My pricing strategy determines if price is a major buying criterion in a potential client's purchasing process.

What kind of purchasing decision does the *competition's* primary target market go through? Do they use the internet? Do they go through the RFP process or, do they outsource the purchasing to an external firm? Understanding the competition's key target market's buying process assists me in utilizing these purchasing channels to effectively market my services.

## Understand Your Competition

I look at key industry trends and find out who are the key players in the learning and development consulting services, and what changes impact my practice and the industry my business is in. What are my competitors doing to adjust to these changes? This assists me in identifying my key competitors by geographic areas, sales volume, goodwill, strengths and weaknesses.

There are lots of independent, small and medium sized consulting practices. I find that there is very little information available on them, particularly the independent consultants. This information constraint poses a great challenge for some consultants to engage and conduct in-depth marketing analysis. But I am sure that with some resources invested, you will find lots of information on businesses that offer similar services or products to yours. And you can use that information to effectively develop your own marketing plan.

## Brand Your Business

A picture says a thousand words...right? Then why don't we consultants fully utilize this old adage? We are in a visual age! Most of the information we ingest comes in through our eyes, not our ears. Information received visually is processed faster by the brain than verbal and other sensory messages.

We must create a brand, even if we are promoting an intangible asset. Brands like McDonalds, Kraft, Pepsi, Honda, voice a particular statement, leaving a unique impression in our minds thus giving rise to a particular emotional response.

Work with a professional logo company to design a unique logo/image that reflects the purpose of your business and your company. Most professional logo companies can have your logo done very quickly. Once you find a logo that suits your business, use it over and over and over again.

Yes, we have to spend money to make money. Research shows that we should be spending twelve to fifteen percent of our annual revenue on marketing our consulting services, e.g. \$12,000 to \$15,000 on revenue of \$100,000.

## Marketing Tips

Here are some other marketing tactics for consultants:

- Name of company & logo
- Stationery
- Website & domain name



## February Connections Evening

# The Practice of Creativity: Creativity in our Practice

By Andrew Burnham



Lee-Anne McAlear

Lee-Anne McAlear, the presenter, greeted me enthusiastically as I arrived for this event; what a wonderful way to start a session on creativity! If there were any one state of mind that one could say spurred creativity, innovation and learning – enthusiasm would definitely be a candidate. I knew immediately that I had come to the right

session. Now that my emotional needs were taken care of, I looked forward to achieving my professional goal to use the information in the session to make a difference in my practice.

### Creativity vs. Innovation

We started by defining creativity and innovation. Creativity is that which is new and unexpected, and innovation is that which is useful and therefore has value. Consider a true story from a large and wacky Canadian family as an example. The family's intent and idea was to re-purpose drapes for use as lamp shades. This would amount to a creative idea using our definition as this represented a new idea to the client (the family). The fact that drapes can be extremely flammable, though, disqualified this idea as being innovative. Lee-Anne unabashedly and unflinchingly deployed this historical and humorous family story for our benefit.

Creativity in and of itself is clearly not enough, for some recognized value must occur to someone internal or external to the organization. And this implies implementation, which is a *change*. We must be careful not to undermine the importance of creativity, though, as without it, innovation is next to impossible. The two must work together and I saw the immediate links to elements of my practice within improvisational skill building. Elements of innovation were stated as: fostering change, generating ideas, winning commitment and implementing change. Laughter erupted at the session when Lee-Anne pointed out that implementing change should not be confused with project management!

### Success Factors for Innovation

We then considered the research of Christenson, Cash, Lehman, Green, and others, which indicated what we have always known to be true: that creativity and innovation

flourish in certain environments and flounder in others. By considering three case studies along with the research, we were able to learn what the success factors for innovation are as well as get examples of how they are being used. The success factors were:

- Executive as champion
- Design with client
- Real outcomes
- Align to strategic driver
- Buy-in at senior and mid-management level
- Performance management to reflect innovation focus
- Perpetual program reinforcement.

We heard first-hand accounts of how some organizations are using specific workshops causing breakthrough innovation, e.g. carefully designing workshops with real outcomes; capitalizing on the magic of cross-fertilization by sending out innovation teams to experience different environments; or hiring “counter culture” people. One success factor that I saw in all the studies was the executive as champion or more generally, evidence of leadership supporting innovation at many points and levels inside the organization.

### Using Innovation in our Practices

After the case studies we gathered in smaller groups and asked ourselves if we were innovative in our business. We had fun to give away, we had fun “to burn,” as we answered this question. After the event was over, some diplomatic people across the hallway who were enjoying a chess club meeting commented on the liveliness of our session. Some participants shared stories about how their organizations were moving towards innovation. The story-telling allowed us to break out of theory and avoid intellectualizing creativity and innovation to the point where it becomes a barrier to realizing them. Lee-Anne facilitated these conversations marvelously and we all walked out with more than we expected to get.

Asking ourselves to consider our own ability to innovate was a great way to conclude the session; seeing innovation as consultants, entrepreneurs, and change agents in our own work can only help us recognize and implement it along side our clients and employers. And with that my professional goal was taken care of. Thank you Lee-Anne!



Andrew Burnham

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## January Workshop

# Cracking OD Dilemmas

By Lorraine Sutton

Co-presenters Marcelene Anderson, Jo Ellen Logan and Dorothy Aaron welcomed 25 participants to the half-day breakfast session on OD Dilemmas, held January 27<sup>th</sup> at the lovely facilities of the Faculty Club.

Open Space was the technique, shared by the presenters and used with the group of mainly women, to surface the dilemmas faced by these OD practitioners. The opening circle for introductions, the lovely chimes which helped us transfer from one activity to another, and the warmth of the three facilitators, quickly brought the group together.

More than half the group had experienced Owen Harrison's Open Space Technique before, so the presenters briefly outlined the core framework and assumptions of Open Space, and provided each participant with an Open Space Primer handout.

### Our OD Dilemmas

Dilemma in the English Oxford Dictionary is defined as "a position that leaves only a choice between equally unwelcome possibilities" or "a difficult situation." We surfaced our OD dilemmas using the Open Space style: thinking, then writing, and finally stating to the group, the difficult consulting situations we were experiencing. The dilemmas included:

- Create client accountability through coaching
- Work effectively with clients who have unrealistic goals, timing or outcomes.
- How to incorporate a healthy workplace into day-to-day activities?
- Where are the leading edge organizations - the "Olympic level" organizations? I want to work with mature clients. Do they exist?
- How can we align corporate culture with business unit culture?
- How to make sense of OD in highly structured organizations?
- Reaching consensus across groups (mergers)
- Getting people to tell the truth
- Sustaining commitment to change
- Working with managers who cannot articulate their needs
- How to reduce silos and get people working together?

### The Open Space Rounds

Participants joined a group and held a discussion that was of interest to them. My participation was primarily in two groups. In one, some of the participants offered their wisdom and practical design experience to the question "How do you gain consensus?" The insights developed by the respective group

members were that mergers take time (e.g., six months meeting weekly), constant attention and deep listening skills. So consensus cannot happen in one half-day meeting. The absorption, understanding and engagement with change are personal and group experiences, not like "fast food in a microwave."

In the other group I attended, about identifying leading edge clients, I found that trying to articulate my dilemma and work it through with others was very helpful. In this way, one can explore new possibilities, hear other viewpoints or experiences, and learn about new techniques or approaches. The exercise clarified for me some of the criteria I need to state upfront about what is desirable in a client organization.

### Group Reflections

The group shared the following insights and observations after the Open Space Rounds:

- We seem to be in a "speedy world" yet many of the basic tenets of OD are more in tune with the "slow food" movement.
- We can learn to ask useful questions and assist clients in expanding their approaches and points of view, to find their own answers and actions to dilemmas.
- There are a wide range of techniques at our disposal – learn many and be skilled with them.
- Value and share your own experience and reflections with the client.
- Revisit the work of Jack Gibbs, Barry Oshry and Stephen Covey for continuous levels of understanding in your own practice.

In evaluating the session, participants found...

- The half-day morning time slot is fine for many
- There are good resources in the ACCORD peer group
- Some new frameworks for their dilemmas (e.g., Nameless Organizational Change: No-Hype, Low Resistance Corporate Transformation by Glenn Allen-Meyer with Neil H. Katz, Ph.D.)
- Greater dimensions to the original dilemmas they had described
- New insights
- Lots of fun.

Thanks to the presenters for this very useful session.

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## Marketing Your OD Practice

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- Business card
- Blog
- Free consultation
- Free seminars and clinics
- Success stories & client testimonials
- Speaker at a club/conference
- Article in a publication
- Electronic newsletter
- Community involvement (pro bono work).

Most of the above do not cost much. In fact, some are even free! Other marketing tips include: remembering your client's business planning dates; sending them relevant articles pertaining to changes that may impact their business and industry. Utilize all of the above to help market your services.

Think about what magazines, subjects or topics your target market reads and sees, and place ads in these. Attend clients' industry conferences and events to get a better understanding of industry changes and needs. Then link these changes and needs to the services you are offering.

### Follow Through

Avoid hearing yourself think, "I had a good month last month, so I don't need to do any marketing next month." The key is to have a *consistent* marketing plan with a *budget* for marketing tools, and *monitoring* each tool for effectiveness.

In my own practice, I keep reminding myself, "If I don't do enough marketing, there will not be enough awareness of my services, which will lead to potential clients not knowing that my services exist, which will lead to lower client acquisition, which will lead to low revenue, and eventually, will lead me to being *out of business*."

Marketing works – we just have to do it!

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## Introduction to a New Client Culture

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by Rothwell, Sullivan, and McLean (1995). They list three fundamental competencies for practicing international OD which are directly relevant to what I am experiencing:

- *Self-awareness*: Consultants must understand that their images of the world are highly-dependent on their own cultural assumptions, values, and beliefs.
- *Understanding of others*: Consultants must practise empathy; respect other cultures; learn from interactions; avoid attributions; be non-judgmental; and avoid rigid stereotyping.
- *Interaction skills*: Consultants must utilize all their personal and professional resources to adapt their actions to suit the uniqueness and immediacy of a situation.

The opportunity to contribute to – and learn from – this new client organization has enabled me to once again test my assumptions and become more attuned to our multi-dimensional world. A total reframing of "active listening" has occurred for me. I am reminded yet again of the importance of being "in shape" to practise our profession.

References:

1. Hofstede, Geert, and Hofstede, Gert Jan, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*, 2005
2. Schein, Edgar, *Organizational Culture and Leadership (Second Edition)*, 1993

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### Letters to the Editor re: Winter Issue

Dorothy: It's meaty, it's attractive, it's interesting, it has a good layout and I can print it at home... What an excellent job you have done. Way to go! - Jill Malleck

I thought the ACCORD newsletter was the best so far. You are doing an amazing job. - Sandy Wise

### Esprit d'ACCORD: Purpose & Policy

*Esprit d'ACCORD* is the newsletter of ACCORD, the Association for Creative Change in Organization Renewal and Development. Its aim is to further the goals of the Association by reporting relevant news and resources, and to aid in establishing and maintaining a sense of community among likeminded professionals. The views expressed in *Esprit d'ACCORD* are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the policies of ACCORD. Articles may be reprinted or excerpted only with the permission of the author(s).

Send contributions and feedback to [dorothy.aaron@sympatico.ca](mailto:dorothy.aaron@sympatico.ca) or to the relevant editor. Submissions will be reviewed by the Editorial Team, and edited at its discretion to adhere to publication guidelines and space constraints. *Esprit d'ACCORD* is posted to the ACCORD website [www.accord.org](http://www.accord.org), so published articles automatically appear there.

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# April Connections Evening Helping Consultants and Managers Have Meaningful Conversations

**B y S h i e h - C h i C h e n**

The April Connections evening was attended by approximately 25 people from many diverse organizations. All came with numerous examples of difficult conversations they faced in their workplace. Duncan Holmes, as presenter, had us start the evening in small group discussions to generate a list of difficult conversations in the workplace. We then deconstructed “conversations”, “questions” and “listening,” and ended the evening by applying the constructs discussed.



Shieh-Chi Chen

Table discussions generated an exhaustive list of difficult conversations which were categorized as: ethics, root causes, performance management, and lack of management accountability from both the line and executive levels. According to the group, what made these sample conversations difficult was built in power imbalance; risk to relationship; fear of retaliation; and defensiveness/fear. Also, having these conversations might expose our own vulnerabilities and leave us open to unpredictable outcomes.

It was suggested that the key to having these difficult conversations is the willingness to ask difficult questions. We need to be able to speak our position as well as to challenge people on what they learned from the experience. As a minority woman, I learnt very early that to be successful in the workplace, meant having to be comfortable with difficult conversations especially since silence meant allowing others to speak for me or giving them tacit permission to operate from their stereotypes. As an OD practitioner, I find it just as important to clarify other people’s issues, values and goals rather than assuming intuitive knowledge of their perspective.

Program Planning Meeting  
Photos by Sheila Goldgrab



Dorothy Aaron, Marcelene Anderson, and Waheed Aghashirin examine program suggestions

## Planning for Difficult Conversations

According to Duncan meaningful conversations are planned... “I plan, and also have an alternate plan and all my tools to fall back on.” He suggests that not only do we have to identify the topic and actions needed for a conversation, we also must consider *how* we will use the information gained in the conversation. Doing this will focus and narrow the conversational parameters. Duncan thinks out and types up his list of questions before a conversation and puts them on the table in advance, saying, “I want us to answer these questions.”

There are apparently four levels on which people react when asked to answer a question:

1. objective – facts – experience
2. reflective – internal response
3. interpretive - meaning – significance
4. decisional – next steps

Marilyn Laiken, one of the participants in the session, summed these up (after some reflection and interpretation!), as *What? Gu!, So what? and Now what?*

In our haste to make decisions, Duncan noted, we often jump to steps 3 or 4. We assume we know the common objective and we ignore any gut level response. By clarifying objectives, and giving people a chance to be reflective, we ensure that each person’s “story” matches before we move to decision making, i.e. that we are all “on the same page.”

In a group setting, it is important to clarify the history, the vision, the obstacles, as well as strategic decisions before moving to action planning. Team members need to be engaged at all four levels before they take responsibility for the issue and any resolutions.

Two books recommended by Duncan were both written by Brian Stanfield: *The Courage to Lead*, and *The Art of Focused Conversations*, which notes two “intention questions”:

1. What are the outcomes you want from the conversations?
2. What are the experiential outcomes you want, e.g. the *feeling* you want the other person(s) to go away with as a result of the conversation?

*Continued on page 10*

Program Planning Meeting



Olia Stachnyk points out a program idea



## March Workshop

# Strategy Mapping: Beyond the Balanced Scorecard

B y I r i n a S m a g i n a

### What I Was Looking for

My interest in performance improvement and developing effective training programs brought me to this workshop on Strategic Mapping. I wanted to learn more about the Balanced Scorecard and how OD consultants are using it. Having very little exposure to strategy creation before, I was a little concerned that I might be the only person who didn't have hands-on experience in developing strategies.



Irina Smagina

I was pleased to find that the other participants who had exposure to strategy creation had questions that I would be very much interested in, e.g. how to know that the strategy is going in the right direction, how to compare strategy programs, how to make the process of strategy mapping easy, how to use visual process to communicate strategy, and what are the practical guidelines on strategy mapping.

### The Strategy Mapping - Balanced Scorecard Link

At the beginning of the workshop I learned that there is a link between the Balanced Scorecard and Strategy Mapping, and this link is simple and makes perfect sense. As soon as we start thinking how to create value for our stakeholders - how we are going to get where we want to be - we have to look at four perspectives: Financial, Customers, Internal or Business Processes, and Learning and Growth. And the beauty is that The Balanced Score Card is the process that includes these same four perspectives.

Earlier I was trying to understand how to ensure that mission and strategic vision of the organization are reflected in the performance and actions of the employees, and I found the answer while going through this workshop.

Typically, *mission* explains why the organization exists; it goes along with core values - what the organization believes in. *Vision* is what the organization wants to be. *Strategy* - the organization's game plan - is about how to get there. Balanced Scorecard shows the implementation and focus from financial, customer, process and learning perspectives. From here we move to strategic initiatives - what we as employees need to do, and it also linked to personal objectives - what I, as employee, need to do. And it brings us to the strategic outcomes - from a financial perspective, customer perspective, process perspective and learning and growth perspective.

The whole picture became even clearer when we did a strategy mapping exercise. We worked in small groups and it gave us a chance to learn about each other's experiences and to share ideas on strategy mapping. I found that strategy mapping could be quite a messy process, and we need to focus on the

desired result and start from building strategy from bottom to top. These principles can be applied when creating business plans or modifying existing ones. The exercise helped people think about their own organizations - what would be the strategies and what are the activities that would allow them to reach strategic goals?

### What I Learned

I found that I can apply the principles of Balanced Scorecard and Strategy Mapping to other aspects of my life: whatever activity I am involved in I try to think about financial, customer, process and learning perspectives.

I also learned that I need to start from the end while working on strategy creation - start from the value that I am going to bring to the organization, the value that I can bring to the customers, i.e. why they should choose me. I need to ask myself: am I going to provide the best services and solutions, develop partnerships to deliver the best total value, create loyalty through excellence in quality, service and delivery or what are other values that would differentiate me from the competition? How am I going to achieve this? What do I need to do to improve processes, product innovation and operational excellence? How do I need to improve learning and growth: recruitment and training, culture and climate, leadership, IT and tools?

Now I have more questions than answers, which is how it should be when you are at the beginning of a new journey.

I met wonderful people. Every time I go to an ACCORD event, I am impressed by the friendliness and openness of its members, and I'm happy to be a part of it.

The workshop was presented by Marlene Durrell, based on the work of Robert Kaplan and David Norton, mainly *Strategy Maps* and *The Strategy-Focused Organization*. (See [www.bscol.com](http://www.bscol.com).) Thanks, Marlene, for a great workshop.

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## Helping Consultants and Managers Have Meaningful Conversations

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With the tools and resources Duncan gave, it is now up to us to ensure that the world hears what we want it to hear. I know I still have a lot of work to prepare for my meaningful conversations. Thank you for some great pointers, Duncan!

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## What's New in OD

# The Dialogue and Deliberation Movement in Canada

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By L. Deborah Sword

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### The Difference between Debate and Dialogue

Think of a passionate *debate* you have had about contentious issues. Did it go nowhere, rise in volume, repeat points without persuasive effect while no one listened, no one learned and nothing changed? Given a choice, most of us would prefer *dialogue* with people who disagree and *also* listen, question, reflect and learn from each other. Debate has discernable physical effects: heart racing, blood pressure elevated and, often, feelings damaged. Dialogue's discernable physical effects: brain thinking, heart engaged and feelings energized.

If you prefer dialogue to debate, you are part of a growing movement of people wanting to transform the too-familiar kinds of debates in news media and government. This grassroots movement also envisions democracy as not merely voting at elections, but truly participating in societal governance. The Canadian movement announced its presence with the first Canadian Conference on Dialogue and Deliberation (C2D2), held in Ottawa from 27-30 October 2005, bringing together people with a vision of dialogue as a basis for capacity building and for solving complex problems. Dr. Lloyd Axworthy, now President of the University of Winnipeg, wrote endorsing C2D2, "When the Coalition to End Landmines began its work, which culminated in a Noble Peace Prize, it began with global dialogues."

### Inspiration for C2D2

America's 2002 National Conference for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD) inspired C2D2. Miriam Wyman and Sandra Zagon, C2D2 co-chairs, knew that they had to convene a comparable event for Canada. At NCDD, Miriam was excited "by the number of people who identified with dialogue and deliberation models and ways of thinking". It was in early 2003 that she and Sandra began identifying private, public and nonprofit sectors' volunteers, potential sponsors, and funders. Through the conference website and extensive networking, Miriam and Sandra connected with people promoting dialogue and deliberation in a number of African and South American countries, as well as Australia, Nepal and India.

### Participants

Among the 320 participants at C2D2, there were 60 from Canada's three levels of government. Interestingly, 62% of participants were women, suggesting a need for research on gendered dialogue and decision-making. The diversity of ages, sectors and geographic areas represented, and interests discussed, revealed the range of possibilities available for those inspired by C2D2 to create the conditions for dialogue and deliberation in decision-making and governance.

Almost 11% of participants came from outside Canada. With help from the Public Health Agency of Canada, IDRC and the Commonwealth Foundation, six Africans were among the international participants attending C2D2. Those six are now part of a larger group, planning an African Conference on Dialogue and Deliberation.

### The Conference Itself

The conference program melded process and substance. The plenaries, on a wide range of topics, modeled dialogue and deliberation methodologies and technologies. The conference opened with World Café and closed with Open Space Technology, followed by Playback Theatre. In between, five plenary sessions, six community conversations, close to fifty presentations and ten poster sessions, showcased such dialogue and deliberation methods as online forums, community conversations, "university of the streets," study circles, graphic recording, multi-media tools, and focused conversations.

### Conference Outcomes

C2D2's achievements were to:

1. Build a community of Canadian dialogue and deliberation practitioners, researchers and policy-makers and connect with the international dialogue and deliberation community;
2. Enhance dialogue and deliberation skills both in-person and on-line;
3. Increase use of dialogue and deliberation in policy, research and decision-making;
4. Highlight research questions and issues.

C2D2 was only the first step in identifying, building, and strengthening the dialogue and deliberation community in Canada. It provided the launch to, as Miriam explains it, "clarify who we are, where we are, what we are doing, with whom and to what end." On March 2, 2006 Miriam Wyman, Charlotte Young and Melissa Abramovitz organized a Toronto C2D2 mini-conference of about 30 enthusiastic participants, to continue the community building with a World Café, and four presentations that had been given at C2D2 in Ottawa. There was a "spider facilitation" led by Charlotte Young, resulting in a strong collection of suggestions, later compiled by Colleen Loomis, of what people envision, who else could be involved and next steps to be considered.

Over the longer-term, C2D2 participants plan to expand their network and to help ensure that citizens' voices are heard in decision-making, public policy formation, and democratic renewal. To find this network, go to [www.c2d2.ca](http://www.c2d2.ca).

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*Deborah Sword, Ph.D., was a lawyer before transforming her practice into conflict management consulting. She has facilitated dialogues nationally and internationally, researched, written about and taught university graduate courses on the theory and practice of dialogue. She can be reached at [ldsword@shaw.ca](mailto:ldsword@shaw.ca).*

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# Message from the ACCORD Chair

By **Marlene Durrell**



Marlene Durrell

This Association for Creative Change, Organizational Renewal and Development is indeed practicing what it stands for. The Board of Directors has focused a considerable amount of time on what our purpose is and where we need to go as “The premier association for leaders and facilitators of organizational transformation.”

We are developing some key strategies to “rebrand” ACCORD to expand our reach and increase value to members. Although some directors were considering stepping down, after our planning session, all were enthusiastic about staying on to create the vision.

## Website Initiatives

Some of the initiatives are already under way while others will require committees and more “hands on deck” to get them done. One such initiative is the implementation of our “Find an OD Practitioner” website. Bryan Walton has been working on this and will be moving forward as soon as a few other website upgrades are completed. We are also planning to make it easy for search consultants and HR recruiters to post their positions with us for OD related roles.

Additionally, we have plans to build website content that will be of value not only to our current local members but for members at a distance. This intellectual capital will include models, resources, articles and references that will make the ACCORD website a go-to place for information. This objective will require a team of enthusiasts who are willing to research and create a great repository of information. If you have any interest in contributing to this please contact Phyllis Benjamin or any of the other board members.

## Program Initiatives

On another front, our program committee is continuing its efforts to get better information

on what you, our members, are looking for from our programs and will be issuing some of the findings from the survey they conducted shortly. The committee is grateful to those who took time to provide their thoughts. We gathered a great deal of useful information to help us provide relevant programs to our membership. We want to thank Jane Adams for her leadership and effective efforts on the program team, as she moves on to focus on other areas of interest.

Talking about programs, we are pleased to be connecting in a meaningful way with Ingrid Richter in her role as IODA Conference Chair for 2007. It is exciting to hear what Ingrid and her committee have in mind for this conference and to be watching also the unfolding of the 2006 Conference in Amsterdam. (The next issue of *Esprit d'ACCORD* will have more details.) Taking a more global view and understanding how others around the world are viewing and developing OD is critical for us as an association concerned with growing the capacity of our members. We encourage you to keep these events on your horizon and to be prepared to participate in whatever way will be meaningful for you.

## Administrative Changes

Lee Anne Skingley, who has provided us with her energy, enthusiasm and support for the past five years, is moving on to focus on other aspects of her business. Jenny Faucher, founder of Managing Matters, is taking over to provide the necessary service to grow ACCORD and take us to a new level. Jenny's company specializes in providing service and expertise to not-for-profit associations such as ACCORD. Not only will we have Jenny and her team to support us but we will also have a physical address that will display the name of ACCORD in the lobby!

As you can see, ACCORD is springing into new action! We invite you to contribute where you can and be a part of this emergence.

*Marlene Durrell is a Coach/Consultant with the Walmsley Group, providing both executive coaching and organizational development consulting to leaders to assist them in creating exceptional results. She can be reached at 416-544-8722 or mdurrell@thewalmsleygroup.com.*

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Mary Yates at the Program Planning Meeting  
(Photo by Sheila Goldgrab)