Organization Development & Change

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The nature of planned change

The pace of global, economic, and technological development makes change an inevitable feature of organizational life. However, change that happens to an organization can be distinguished from change that is planned by its members. In this book, the term change will refer to planned change. Organization development is directed at bringing about planned change to increase an organization’s effectiveness and capability to change itself. It is generally initiated and implemented by managers, often with the help of an OD practitioner from either inside or outside of the organization. Organizations can use planned change to solve problems, to learn from experience, to reframe shared perceptions, to adapt to external environmental changes, to improve performance, and to influence future changes.

All approaches to OD rely on some theory about planned change. The theories describe the different stages through which planned change may be effected in organizations and explain the temporal process of applying OD methods to help organization members manage change. In this chapter, we first describe and compare three major theories of organization change that have received considerable attention in the field: Lewin’s change model, the action research model, and the positive model. Next, we present a general model of planned change that integrates the earlier models and incorporates recent conceptual advances in OD. The general model has broad applicability to many types of planned change efforts and serves to organize the chapters in this book. We then discuss different types of change and how the process can vary depending on the change situation. Finally, we present several critiques of planned change.

Theories of Planned Change

Conceptions of planned change have tended to focus on how change can be implemented in organizations. Called “theories of changing,” these frameworks describe the activities that must take place to initiate and carry out successful organizational change. In this section, we describe and compare three theories of changing: Lewin’s change model, the action research model, and the positive model. These frameworks have received widespread attention in OD and serve as the primary basis for a general model of planned change.

Lewin’s Change Model

One of the earliest models of planned change was provided by Kurt Lewin. He conceived of change as modification of those forces keeping a system’s behavior stable. Specifically, a particular set of behaviors at any moment in time is the result of two groups of forces: those striving to maintain the status quo and those pushing for change. When both sets of forces are about equal, current behaviors are maintained in what Lewin termed a state of “quasi-stationary equilibrium.” To change that state, one can increase those forces pushing...
for change, decrease those forces maintaining the current state, or apply some combination of both. For example, the level of performance of a work group might be stable because group norms maintaining that level are equivalent to the supervisor’s pressures for change to higher levels. This level can be increased either by changing the group norms to support higher levels of performance or by increasing supervisor pressures to produce at higher levels. Lewin suggested that decreasing those forces maintaining the status quo produces less tension and resistance than increasing forces for change and consequently is a more effective change strategy.

Lewin viewed this change process as consisting of the following three steps, which are shown in Figure 2.1(A):

1. **Unfreezing.** This step usually involves reducing those forces maintaining the organization’s behavior at its present level. Unfreezing is sometimes accomplished through a process of “psychological disconfirmation.” By introducing information that shows discrepancies between behaviors desired by organization members and those behaviors currently exhibited, members can be motivated to engage in change activities.³
2. **Moving.** This step shifts the behavior of the organization, department, or individual to a new level. It involves intervening in the system to develop new behaviors, values, and attitudes through changes in organizational structures and processes.
3. **Refreezing.** This step stabilizes the organization at a new state of equilibrium. It is frequently accomplished through the use of supporting mechanisms that reinforce the new organizational state, such as organizational culture, rewards, and structures.

Lewin’s model provides a general framework for understanding organizational change. Because the three steps of change are relatively broad, considerable effort has gone into elaborating them. For example, the planning model developed by Lippitt, Watson, and Westley arranges Lewin’s model into seven steps: scouting, entry, diagnosis (unfreezing), planning, action (moving), stabilization and evaluation, and termination (refreezing).⁴ Similarly, Kotter’s eightstage process can be mapped onto Lewin’s phases: establishing a sense of urgency, creating the guiding coalition, developing a vision and strategy, and communicating the change vision (unfreezing); empowering broad-based action, generating short-term wins (moving); and consolidating gains and producing more change, and anchoring new approaches in the culture (refreezing).⁵

Lewin’s model remains closely identified with the field of OD, however, and is used to illustrate how other types of change can be implemented. For example, Lewin’s three-step model has been used to explain how information technologies can be implemented more effectively.⁶

**Action Research Model**

The classic action research model focuses on planned change as a cyclical process in which initial research about the organization provides information to guide subsequent action. Then the results of the action are assessed to provide further information to guide further action, and so on. This iterative cycle of research and action involves considerable collaboration among organization members and OD practitioners. It places heavy emphasis on data gathering and diagnosis prior to action planning and implementation, as well as careful evaluation of results after action is taken.

Action research is traditionally aimed both at helping specific organizations implement planned change and at developing more general knowledge that can be applied to other settings.⁷ Although action research was originally developed to have this dual focus on change and knowledge generation, it has been adapted to OD efforts in which the major emphasis is on planned change.⁸ Figure 2.1(B) shows the cyclical
phases of planned change as defined by the original action research model. There are eight main steps.

1. **Problem Identification.** This stage usually begins when an executive in the organization or someone with power and influence senses that the organization has one or more problems that might be solved with the help of an OD practitioner.

2. **Consultation with a Behavioral Science Expert.** During the initial contact, the OD practitioner and the client carefully assess each other. The practitioner has his or her own normative, developmental theory or frame of reference and must be
conscious of those assumptions and values. Sharing them with the client from the beginning establishes an open and collaborative atmosphere.

3. **Data Gathering and Preliminary Diagnosis.** This step is usually completed by the OD practitioner, often in conjunction with organization members. It involves gathering appropriate information and analyzing it to determine the underlying causes of organizational problems. The four basic methods of gathering data are interviews, process observation, questionnaires, and organizational performance data (unfortunately, often overlooked). One approach to diagnosis begins with observation, proceeds to a semistructured interview, and concludes with a questionnaire to measure precisely the problems identified by the earlier steps. When gathering diagnostic information, OD practitioners may influence members from whom they are collecting data. In OD, any action by the OD practitioner can be viewed as an intervention that will have some effect on the organization.

4. **Feedback to a Key Client or Group.** Because action research is a collaborative activity, the diagnostic data are fed back to the client, usually in a group or workteam meeting. The feedback step, in which members are given the information gathered by the OD practitioner, helps them determine the strengths and weaknesses of the organization or unit under study. The consultant provides the client with all relevant and useful data. Obviously, the practitioner will protect confidential sources of information and, at times, may even withhold data. Defining what is relevant and useful involves consideration of privacy and ethics as well as judgment about whether the group is ready for the information or if the information would make the client overly defensive.

5. **Joint Diagnosis of the Problem.** At this point, members discuss the feedback and explore with the OD practitioner whether they want to work on identified problems. A close interrelationship exists among data gathering, feedback, and diagnosis because the consultant summarizes the basic data from the client members and presents the data to them for validation and further diagnosis. An important point to remember, as Schein suggests, is that the action research process is very different from the doctor–patient model, in which the consultant comes in, makes a diagnosis, and prescribes a solution. Schein notes that the failure to establish a common frame of reference in the client–consultant relationship may lead to a faulty diagnosis or to a communication gap whereby the client is sometimes “unwilling to believe the diagnosis or accept the prescription.” He believes that “most companies have drawers full of reports by consultants, each loaded with diagnoses and recommendations which are either not understood or not accepted by the ‘patient.’”

6. **Joint Action Planning.** Next, the OD practitioner and the client members jointly agree on further actions to be taken. This is the beginning of the moving process (described in Lewin’s change model), as the organization decides how best to reach a different quasi-stationary equilibrium. At this stage, the specific action to be taken depends on the culture, technology, and environment of the organization; the diagnosis of the problem; and the time and expense of the intervention.

7. **Action.** This stage involves the actual change from one organizational state to another. It may include installing new methods and procedures, reorganizing structures and work designs, and reinforcing new behaviors. Such actions typically cannot be implemented immediately but require a transition period as the organization moves from the present to a desired future state.

8. **Data Gathering After Action.** Because action research is a cyclical process, data must also be gathered after the action has been taken to measure and determine the effects of the action and to feed the results back to the organization. This, in turn, may lead to rediagnosis and new action.
The action research model underlies most current approaches to planned change and is often considered synonymous with OD. Recently, it has been refined and extended to new settings and applications, and consequently, researchers and practitioners have made requisite adaptations of its basic framework.  

Trends in the application of action research include movement from smaller subunits of organizations to total systems and communities. In these larger contexts, action research is more complex and political than in smaller settings. Therefore, the action research cycle is coordinated across multiple change processes and includes a diversity of stakeholders who have an interest in the organization. (We describe these applications more thoroughly in Chapters 20, 21, and 22.) Action research also is applied increasingly in international settings, particularly in developing nations in the southern hemisphere. Embedded within the action research model, however, are “northern hemisphere” assumptions about change. For example, action research traditionally views change more linearly than do Asian cultures, and it treats the change process more collaboratively than do Latin American and African countries. To achieve success in these settings, action research is tailored to fit cultural assumptions. (See “Different Types of Planned Change” below and Chapter 23.) Finally, action research is applied increasingly to promote social change and innovation, as demonstrated most clearly in community development and global social change projects. These applications are heavily value laden and seek to redress imbalances in power and resource allocations across different groups. Action researchers tend to play an activist role in the change process, which is often chaotic and conflictual. (Chapter 23 reviews global social change processes.)  

In light of these general trends, contemporary applications of action research have substantially increased the degree of member involvement in the change process. This contrasts with traditional approaches to planned change, whereby consultants carried out most of the change activities, with the agreement and collaboration of management. Although consultant-dominated change still persists in OD, there is a growing tendency to involve organization members in learning about their organization and how to change it. Referred to as “participatory action research,” “action learning,” “action science,” or “self-design,” this approach to planned change emphasizes the need for organization members to learn firsthand about planned change if they are to gain the knowledge and skills needed to change the organization. In today’s complex and changing environment, some argue that OD must go beyond solving particular problems to helping members gain the competence needed to change and improve the organization continually.  

In this modification of action research, the role of OD consultants is to work with members to facilitate the learning process. Both parties are “co-learners” in diagnosing the organization, designing changes, and implementing and assessing them. Neither party dominates the change process. Rather, each participant brings unique information and expertise to the situation, and they combine their resources to learn how to change the organization. Consultants, for example, know how to design diagnostic instruments and OD interventions, and organization members have “local knowledge” about the organization and how it functions. Each participant learns from the change process. Organization members learn how to change their organization and how to refine and improve it. OD consultants learn how to facilitate complex organizational change and learning.  

The action research model will continue to be the dominant methodological basis for planned change in the near future. But the basic philosophy of science on which traditional action research operates is also evolving and is described below.  

**The Positive Model**  
The third model of change, the positive model, represents an important departure from Lewin’s model and the action research process. Those models are primarily deficit based; they focus on the organization’s problems and how they can be solved so it functions
better. The positive model focuses on what the organization is doing right. It helps members understand their organization when it is working at its best and builds off those capabilities to achieve even better results. This positive approach to change is consistent with a growing movement in the social sciences called “positive organizational scholarship,” which focuses on positive dynamics in organizations that give rise to extraordinary outcomes. Considerable research on expectation effects also supports this model of planned change. It shows that people tend to act in ways that make their expectations occur. Thus, positive expectations about the organization can create an anticipation that energizes and directs behavior toward making those beliefs happen.

The positive model has been applied to planned change primarily through a process called appreciative inquiry (AI). As a “reformist and rebellious” form of social constructionism, AI explicitly infuses a positive value orientation into analyzing and changing organizations. Social constructionism assumes that organization members’ shared experiences and interactions influence how they perceive the organization and behave in it. Because such shared meaning can determine how members approach planned change, AI encourages a positive orientation to how change is conceived and managed. It promotes broad member involvement in creating a shared vision about the organization’s positive potential. That shared appreciation provides a powerful and guiding image of what the organization could be.

Drawing heavily on AI, the positive model of planned change involves five phases that are depicted in Figure 2.1(C).

1. **Initiate the Inquiry.** This first phase determines the subject of change. It emphasizes member involvement to identify the organizational issue they have the most energy to address. For example, members can choose to look for successful male–female collaboration (as opposed to sexual discrimination), instances of customer satisfaction (as opposed to customer dissatisfaction), particularly effective work teams, or product development processes that brought new ideas to market especially fast. If the focus of inquiry is real and vital to organization members, the change process itself will take on these positive attributes.

2. **Inquire into Best Practices.** This phase involves gathering information about the “best of what is” in the organization. If the topic is organizational innovation, then members help to develop an interview protocol that collects stories of new ideas that were developed and implemented in the organization. The interviews are conducted by organization members; they interview each other and tell stories of innovation in which they have personally been involved. These stories are pulled together to create a pool of information describing the organization as an innovative system.

3. **Discover the Themes.** In this third phase, members examine the stories, both large and small, to identify a set of themes representing the common dimensions of people’s experiences. For example, the stories of innovation may contain themes about how managers gave people the freedom to explore a new idea, the support organization members received from their coworkers, or how the exposure to customers sparked creative thinking. No theme is too small to be represented; it is important that all of the underlying mechanisms that helped to generate and support the themes be described. The themes represent the basis for moving from “what is” to “what could be.”

4. **Envision a Preferred Future.** Members then examine the identified themes, challenge the status quo, and describe a compelling future. Based on the organization’s successful past, members collectively visualize the organization’s future and develop “possibility propositions”—statements that bridge the organization’s current best practices with ideal possibilities for future organizing. These propositions should present a truly exciting, provocative, and possible picture of the future.
Based on these possibilities, members identify the relevant stakeholders and critical organization processes that must be aligned to support the emergence of the envisioned future. The vision becomes a statement of “what should be.”

5. **Design and Deliver Ways to Create the Future.** The final phase involves the design and delivery of ways to create the future. It describes the activities and creates the plans necessary to bring about the vision. It proceeds to action and assessment phases similar to those of action research described previously. Members make changes, assess the results, make necessary adjustments, and so on as they move the organization toward the vision and sustain “what will be.” The process is continued by renewing the conversations about the best of what is.

**Comparisons of Change Models**

All three models—Lewin’s change model, the action research model, and the positive model—describe the phases by which planned change occurs in organizations. As shown in Figure 2.1, the models overlap in that their emphasis on action to implement organizational change is preceded by a preliminary stage (unfreezing, diagnosis, or initiate the inquiry) and is followed by a closing stage (refreezing or evaluation). Moreover, all three approaches emphasize the application of behavioral science knowledge, involve organization members in the change process to varying degrees, and recognize that any interaction between a consultant and an organization constitutes an intervention that may affect the organization. However, Lewin’s change model differs from the other two in that it focuses on the general process of planned change, rather than on specific OD activities.

Lewin’s model and the action research model differ from the positive approach in terms of the level of involvement of the participants and the focus of change. Lewin’s model and traditional action research emphasize the role of the consultant with relatively limited member involvement in the change process. Contemporary applications of action research and the positive model, on the other hand, treat both consultants and participants as co-learners who are heavily involved in planned change. In addition, Lewin’s model and action research are more concerned with fixing problems than with focusing on what the organization does well and leveraging those strengths.

**GENERAL MODEL OF PLANNED CHANGE**

The three models of planned change suggest a general framework for planned change as shown in Figure 2.2. The framework describes the four basic activities that practitioners and organization members jointly carry out in organization development. The arrows connecting the different activities in the model show the typical sequence of events, from entering and contracting, to diagnosing, to planning and implementing change, to evaluating and institutionalizing change. The lines connecting the activities emphasize that organizational change is not a straightforward, linear process but involves considerable overlap and feedback among the activities. Because the model serves to organize the remaining parts of this book, Figure 2.2 also shows which specific chapters apply to the four major change activities.

**Entering and Contracting**

The first set of activities in planned change concerns entering and contracting (described in Chapter 4). Those events help managers decide whether they want to engage further in a planned change program and to commit resources to such a process. Entering an organization involves gathering initial data to understand the problems facing the organization or to determine the positive areas for inquiry. Once
this information is collected, the problems or opportunities are discussed with man-
gagers and other organization members to develop a contract or agreement to engage
in planned change. The contract spells out future change activities, the resources
that will be committed to the process, and how OD practitioners and organization
members will be involved. In many cases, organizations do not get beyond this early
stage of planned change because one or more situations arise: Disagreements about
the need for change surface, resource constraints are encountered, or other methods
for change appear more feasible. When OD is used in nontraditional and interna-
tional settings, the entering and contracting process must be sensitive to the context
in which the change is taking place.

**Diagnosing**

In this stage of planned change, the client system is carefully studied. Diagnosis can
focus on understanding organizational problems, including their causes and conse-
quences, or on collecting stories about the organization’s positive attributes. The diag-
nostic process is one of the most important activities in OD. It includes choosing an
appropriate model for understanding the organization and gathering, analyzing, and
feeding back information to managers and organization members about the problems
or opportunities that exist.

Diagnostic models for analyzing problems (described in Chapters 5 and 6) explore
three levels of activities. Organization issues represent the most complex level of analy-
sis and involve the total system. Group-level issues are associated with department
and group effectiveness. Individual-level issues involve the way jobs are designed and
performed.

Gathering, analyzing, and feeding back data are the central change activities in diag-
nosis. Chapter 7 describes how data can be gathered through interviews, observations,
survey instruments, or such archival sources as meeting minutes and organization
charts. It also explains how data can be reviewed and analyzed. In Chapter 8, we describe
the process of feeding back diagnostic data. Organization members, often in collaboration
with an OD practitioner, jointly discuss the data and their implications for change.

**Planning and Implementing Change**

In this stage, organization members and practitioners jointly plan and implement OD
interventions. They design interventions to achieve the organization’s vision or goals
and make action plans to implement them. There are several criteria for designing
interventions, including the organization’s readiness for change, its current change
capability, its culture and power distributions, and the change agent’s skills and abilities
(discussed in Chapter 9). Depending on the outcomes of diagnosis, there are four major
types of interventions in OD:

1. Human process interventions at the individual, group, and total system levels
   (Chapters 12 and 13)
2. Interventions that modify an organization’s structure and technology
   (Chapters 14, 15, and 16)
3. Human resources interventions that seek to improve member performance and
   wellness (Chapters 17, 18, and 19)
4. Strategic interventions that involve managing the organization’s relationship to its
   external environment and the internal structure and process necessary to support
   a business strategy (Chapters 20, 21, and 22).

Chapters 23 and 24 present specialized information for carrying out OD in interna-
tional settings and in such nontraditional organizations as schools, health care institu-
tions, family-owned businesses, and the public sector.

Implementing interventions is concerned with leading and managing the change
process. As discussed in Chapter 10, it includes motivating change, creating a desired
future vision of the organization, developing political support, managing the transition
toward the vision, and sustaining momentum for change.

**Evaluating and Institutionalizing Change**

The final stage in planned change involves evaluating the effects of the intervention
and managing the institutionalization of successful change programs so they persist.
(Those two activities are described in Chapter 11.) Feedback to organization mem-
bers about the intervention’s results provides information about whether the changes
should be continued, modified, or suspended. Institutionalizing successful changes
involves reinforcing them through feedback, rewards, and training.

Application 2.1 describes the initiation of a planned change process in a government
organization. It provides especially rich detail on the planning and implementing phase
of change, and on how people can be involved in the process.28

**DIFFERENT TYPES OF PLANNED CHANGE**

The general model of planned change describes how the OD process typically unfolds
in organizations. In actual practice, the different phases are not nearly as orderly as
the model implies. OD practitioners tend to modify or adjust the stages to fit the needs
of the situation. Steps in planned change may be implemented in a variety of ways,
depending on the client’s needs and goals, the change agent’s skills and values, and
the organization’s context. Thus, planned change can vary enormously from one situ-
ation to another.

To understand the differences better, planned change can be contrasted across situations
on three key dimensions: the magnitude of organizational change, the degree to which
the client system is organized, and whether the setting is domestic or international.

**Magnitude of Change**

Planned change efforts can be characterized as falling along a continuum ranging
from incremental changes that involve fine-tuning the organization to fundamental
changes that entail radically altering how it operates.29 Incremental changes tend to
involve limited dimensions and levels of the organization, such as the decision-making
processes of work groups. They occur within the context of the organization’s existing
business strategy, structure, and culture and are aimed at improving the status quo.
The San Diego County Regional Airport Authority (SDCRAA) was created by a California state law in October 2001; this gave it the responsibility to establish and operate airports within San Diego County. Most importantly, from Thella Bowens’s perspective, the law required the San Diego Unified Port District (Port of San Diego) to transfer operation of San Diego’s international airport to the SDCRAA by January 2003. Bowens was the current senior director of the Aviation Division within the Port of San Diego that was responsible for operating the San Diego International Airport. When the law was passed, she was named Interim Executive Director of the SDCRAA, and assigned an interim advisory board to help manage the transition.

Bowens’s tenure with the organization gave her an important understanding of the organization’s operations and its history. For example, the San Diego International Airport accounted for about $4.3 billion or roughly 4% of San Diego’s regional economy. Forecasts called for air travel to more than double to 35 million passengers by 2030, and contribute up to $8 billion to the regional economy. In addition, Bowens had participated in the Aviation Division’s strategic planning process in 2001. She was well positioned to lead this effort.

As she thought about managing the start-up of the SDCRAA, two broad but interdependent categories of initial activity emerged: developing the transition plan and dealing with the legal and regulatory issues.

DEVELOPING THE TRANSITION PLAN

In April 2002, Bowens took the senior team from the old Aviation Division to an off-site workshop to discuss the creation and management of an effective transition process. This group understood the importance of SDCRAA quickly becoming a stand-alone agency and the need to be seen differently in the marketplace. The group recommended revising the existing strategic plan, to hire staff to research, discuss, and create a transition plan, and to conduct retreats with employees from multiple organizational levels. In response, Bowens chartered the Airport Transition Team to ensure the smooth and seamless transfer of operations and public services provided by the airport without regard to which agency was responsible for their provision.

In May 2002, seven employees were handpicked from the Aviation Division to become members of the Airport Transition Team and relieved of their day-to-day job responsibilities so they could focus on the transition. The selection criteria included the ability to work within a process yet think outside of the box, to communicate well with others in a team, and to influence directors and managers without having formal authority. A one-and-a-half-day kick-off meeting was held to set expectations, to communicate goals and responsibilities, and to initiate the team. A “war room” was established for the team to keep records, hold meetings, and serve as a communication hub. The team named themselves the “Metamorphs.”

Many Metamorph members came from different parts of the organization and, having never worked together, needed to rely on each other to effectively design the transition process. Senior team member Angela Shafer-Payne, then director of Airport Business and Administration, worked closely with the Metamorphs and led formal team-building activities throughout the year. Through their work together, the Metamorphs discovered how large and daunting the organizational change was and yet appreciated the unique, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make an impact. As one member put it, “How many times in your life can you say that you helped put together a brand-new organization?”

The Metamorphs decided that to meet their charter, any transition plan had to be designed specifically to minimize disruption to customers and service, minimize airport and nonairport financial impacts, and properly address and resolve all legal and regulatory matters. These criteria guided the creation of 12 functional teams (which expanded later to 19). Responsibility for the teams was divided among the transition team members, and each team was composed of employees from the old Aviation Division and other Port of San Diego departments. Their mission was to
collect data, establish new or parallel functions for the SDCRAA, and highlight any issues related to the start-up of that particular function. Once the teams were in place, they were given tools to use and questions that needed to be addressed. Each team set aside time to review all of the records in each functional area. For example, the human resources functional team consisted of Aviation Division employees, HR professionals from the Port of San Diego, and Port attorneys; it was charged with developing the actual transition mechanism, HR operations, and HR organizational structure. Another team focused on the environmental issues involved in the transition. They examined over 100 different environmental permits held by the Port of San Diego to understand if SDCRAA needed a similar permit, needed to be a co-permittee with the Port of San Diego, or if the SDCRAA could stand alone. If it were a stand-alone situation, then documentation would be prepared to transfer the permit.

To ensure that no issues fell through the cracks, three distinct peer reviews were held in the summer and fall of 2002. The peer review panels were staffed by professionals within the aviation industry, people who had experienced a transition of some type within an organization, or those who were integral to the start-up of the organization. The first peer review panel examined the transition plan and offered advice on whether to add any other critical and/or missing components. The second peer review panel, consisting of mostly human resources professionals, examined the proposed organizational structure. The final peer review panel focused on the IT systems portion of the transition plan because of technology’s critical role in the overall success of many of the internal processes.

DEALING WITH THE LEGAL AND REGULATORY ISSUES

By January 2002, the SDCRAA was not yet a full agency and had only one employee, Thella Bowens. Despite all the work of the Metamorphs and the functional teams, and sometimes because of it, Bowens also had to interface with the California legislature. The original legislation (California Senate Bill AB93 [2001–2002]) provided a framework for setting up the new agency but left many questions unanswered, including issues relating to property transfer (SDCRAA would lease land from the Port on a 66-year lease) and the transitioning of employees from one public agency to another. To provide clarity and another layer of understanding, “clean-up” legislation (SB 1896) was passed in mid-2002. Together with the original bill, the legislation protected employees to ensure no loss of jobs or benefits. This gave the Metamorphs additional information and guidance to deal with employee contract issues. For example, in the middle of the transition planning process, the Port District had to renegotiate its union contract. The Metamorphs had to work closely with the airport’s external counsel, the Port of San Diego counsel, and state senators to ensure a smooth negotiation.

Finally, Bowens and the Metamorphs had to address changes to federal security regulations outlined in the Aviation and Transportation Security Act that resulted from the September 11, 2001, attacks. Those events caused a number of disruptions for many stakeholders in the air transportation industry. They required the transition plan to include a component that focused on keeping costs contained to enable aviation partners, the airlines, the gate gourmets, and tenants, to weather the storm.

IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

The final transition plan was presented to the interim board and then to the Board of Port Commissioners for approval in October 2002. The approved plan was comprised of several components, including an IT conversion plan and the process for formally transferring responsibility to the SDCRAA, but the key elements were human resources and communication plans.

The human resources plan specified the transition of 145 budgeted Aviation Division employees to 52 vacancies plus the 90 other positions identified by the Metamorphs to make the organization whole. The plan called for all of the positions to be filled by mid-2005. The human resources plan also provided for the purchase of services, like the Harbor Police, from the Port of San Diego until mid-2005.

The communication plan was critical to the implementation phase. The Metamorphs regularly carried information about their progress to coworkers in their respective departments. In addition, communication meetings with the entire organization, called “all hands meetings,” were held to provide
information about the transition. The Airport Transition Plan contained a special emphasis on the needs of the employee. Bowens understood the sociotechnical nature of change and did not want the human factor to be forgotten in the midst of all the legal, technical, and other transitions. She included a number of change management education sessions for all employees. The change management education sessions were developed to reassure employees; to encourage genuine, candid, frequent, high-quality communications; and to neutralize anxiety and fears.

During the sessions, employees were (1) updated on the progress of the transition; (2) introduced to change theories, models, and concepts; and (3) encouraged to share their issues, fears, anxieties, concerns, and creative ideas. Employee input was organized into themes, then documented and communicated to Bowens and her direct reports. The leadership team was committed to answering questions and addressing concerns that emerged from the change management sessions. Airport managers met regularly to select and answer questions for publication in the organization newsletter or live communication at “all hands meetings.” In addition, the employee satisfaction survey was updated with questions to learn about transition concerns.

Thella Bowens was named President and CEO of the SDCRAA on January 1, 2003. By June 2003, the SDCRAA had received awards based on superb customer service and outstanding levels of performance. The SDCRAA, based on all available metrics, is successfully operating San Diego’s international airport and serving over 15.2 million passengers on 620 daily flights in and out of the airport. Part of the success is due to the way the transition plan was developed. Because of the broad participation in its creation, many employees understood the plan. When issues arose, identifying the personnel to become part of an ad hoc problem-solving group already familiar with the topic was easy.

“Ms. Bowens accomplished the extraordinary job of leading a successful transition of the airport from the Unified Port of San Diego to the Authority,” said Joseph W. Craver, Authority (SDCRAA) Chairman. “She is highly regarded and respected for both her breadth of knowledge of aviation management issues and her visionary leadership.” Thella Bowens added, “Fortunately, we’ve been supported by very dedicated professional employees who have exhibited great resolve and sheer hard work through the transition process, and continue to do so as we create a ‘world-class’ organization.”

Fundamental changes, on the other hand, are directed at significantly altering how the organization operates. They tend to involve several organizational dimensions, including structure, culture, reward systems, information processes, and work design. They also involve changing multiple levels of the organization, from top-level management through departments and work groups to individual jobs.

Planned change traditionally has been applied in situations involving incremental change. Organizations in the 1960s and 1970s were concerned mainly with fine-tuning their bureaucratic structures by resolving many of the social problems that emerged with increasing size and complexity. In those situations, planned change involves a relatively bounded set of problem-solving activities. OD practitioners are typically contracted by managers to help solve specific problems in particular organizational systems, such as poor communication among members of a work team or low customer satisfaction scores in a department store. Diagnostic and change activities tend to be limited to the defined issues, although additional problems may be uncovered and may need to be addressed. Similarly, the change process tends to focus on those
organizational systems having specific problems, and it generally terminates when the problems are resolved. Of course, the change agent may contract to help solve additional problems.

In recent years, OD has been increasingly concerned with fundamental change. As described in Chapter 1, the greater competitiveness and uncertainty of today’s environment have led a growing number of organizations to alter drastically the way in which they operate. In such situations, planned change is more complex, extensive, and long term than when applied to incremental change. Because fundamental change involves most features and levels of the organization, it is typically driven from the top, where corporate strategy and values are set. Change agents help senior executives create a vision of a desired future organization and energize movement in that direction. They also help them develop structures for managing the transition from the present to the future organization and may include, for example, a program management office and a variety of overlapping steering committees and redesign teams. Staff experts also may redesign many features of the firm, such as performance measures, rewards, planning processes, work designs, and information systems.

Because of the complexity and extensiveness of fundamental change, OD professionals often work in teams comprising members with different yet complementary areas of expertise. The consulting relationship persists over relatively long time periods and includes a great deal of renegotiation and experimentation among consultants and managers. The boundaries of the change effort are more uncertain and diffuse than those in incremental change, thus making diagnosis and change seem more like discovery than like problem solving. (We describe complex strategic and transformational types of change in more detail in Chapters 20, 21, and 22.)

It is important to emphasize that fundamental change may or may not be developmental in nature. Organizations may drastically alter their strategic direction and way of operating without significantly developing their capacity to solve problems and to achieve both high performance and quality of work life. For example, firms may simply change their marketing mix, dropping or adding products, services, or customers; they may drastically downsize by cutting out marginal businesses and laying off managers and workers; or they may tighten managerial and financial controls and attempt to squeeze more out of the labor force. On the other hand, organizations may undertake fundamental change from a developmental perspective. They may seek to make themselves more competitive by developing their human resources; by getting managers and employees more involved in problem solving and innovation; and by promoting flexibility and direct, open communication. The OD approach to fundamental change is particularly relevant in today’s rapidly changing and competitive environment. To succeed in this setting, firms such as General Electric, Kimberly-Clark, ABB, Hewlett-Packard, and Motorola are transforming themselves from control-oriented bureaucracies to high-involvement organizations capable of changing and improving themselves continually.

**Degree of Organization**

Planned change efforts also can vary depending on the degree to which the organization or client system is organized. In overorganized situations, such as in highly mechanistic, bureaucratic organizations, various dimensions such as leadership styles, job designs, organization structure, and policies and procedures are too rigid and overly defined for effective task performance. Communication between management and employees is typically suppressed, conflicts are avoided, and employees are apathetic. In underorganized organizations, on the other hand, there is too little constraint or regulation for effective task performance. Leadership, structure, job design, and policy are poorly defined and fail to direct task behaviors effectively. Communication
is fragmented, job responsibilities are ambiguous, and employees’ energies are dissipated because they lack direction. Underorganized situations are typically found in such areas as product development, project management, and community development, where relationships among diverse groups and participants must be coordinated around complex, uncertain tasks.

In overorganized situations, where much of OD practice has historically taken place, planned change is generally aimed at loosening constraints on behavior. Changes in leadership, job design, structure, and other features are designed to liberate suppressed energy, to increase the flow of relevant information between employees and managers, and to promote effective conflict resolution. The typical steps of planned change—entry, diagnosis, intervention, and evaluation—are intended to penetrate a relatively closed organization or department and make it increasingly open to self-diagnosis and revitalization. The relationship between the OD practitioner and the management team attempts to model this loosening process. The consultant shares leadership of the change process with management, encourages open communications and confrontation of conflict, and maintains flexibility in relating to the organization.

When applied to organizations facing problems in being underorganized, planned change is aimed at increasing organization by clarifying leadership roles, structuring communication between managers and employees, and specifying job and departmental responsibilities. These activities require a modification of the traditional phases of planned change and include the following four steps:

1. **Identification.** This step identifies the relevant people or groups who need to be involved in the change program. In many underorganized situations, people and departments can be so disconnected that there is ambiguity about who should be included in the problem-solving process. For example, when managers of different departments have only limited interaction with each other, they may disagree or be confused about which departments should be involved in developing a new product or service.

2. **Convention.** In this step, the relevant people or departments in the company are brought together to begin organizing for task performance. For example, department managers might be asked to attend a series of organizing meetings to discuss the division of labor and the coordination required to introduce a new product.

3. **Organization.** Different organizing mechanisms are created to structure the newly required interactions among people and departments. This might include creating new leadership positions, establishing communication channels, and specifying appropriate plans and policies.

4. **Evaluation.** In this final step, the outcomes of the organization step are assessed. The evaluation might signal the need for adjustments in the organizing process or for further identification, convention, and organization activities.

In carrying out these four steps of planned change in underorganized situations, the relationship between the OD practitioner and the client system attempts to reinforce the organizing process. The consultant develops a well-defined leadership role, which might be autocratic during the early stages of the change program. Similarly, the consulting relationship is clearly defined and tightly specified. In effect, the interaction between the consultant and the client system supports the larger process of bringing order to the situation.

Application 2.2 is an example of planned change in an underorganized situation. In this case, the change agent is a person from industry who identifies a multifaceted problem: University research that should be helpful to manufacturing organizations is not being shaped, coordinated, or transferred. In response, he forms an organization to tighten up the relationships between the two parties.
Planned Change in an Underorganized System

The Institute for Manufacturing and Automation Research (IMAR) was founded in 1987 in Los Angeles by a group of manufacturing industry members. In its earliest stages of development, one person who had a clear picture of the obstacles to manufacturing excellence was Dale Hartman, IMAR’s executive director and former director for manufacturing at Hughes Aircraft Company. He and several other industry associates pinpointed the predominant reasons for flagging competitiveness: needless duplication of effort among manufacturing innovators; difficulties in transferring technological breakthroughs from university to industry; frequent irrelevance of university research to the needs of industry; and the inability of individual industry members to commit the time and funds to research projects needed for continued technological advances.

Hartman and his colleagues determined that organizations should create a pool of funds for research and concluded that the research would most efficiently be carried out in existing university facilities. They worked through at least several plans before they arrived at the idea of the IMAR consortium. The U.S. Navy had been interested in joint efforts for innovations in artificial intelligence, but its constraints and interests were judged to be too narrow to address the problems that Hartman and the others identified.

Networking with other industry members—TRW, Hughes, Northrop, and Rockwell—and two universities with which Hughes had been engaging in ongoing research—the University of Southern California (USC) and University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)—this original group formed a steering committee to investigate the viability of a joint research and development consortium. Each of the six early planners contributed $5,000 as seed money for basic expenses. The steering committee, based on experience in cooperative research, determined that a full-time person was needed to assume leadership of the consortium. Members of the committee persuaded Dale Hartman to retire early from Hughes and take on IMAR’s leadership full-time. Hartman brought with him a wealth of knowledge about barriers to innovation and technology transfer, and a solid reputation in both industry and academia that was crucial for the success of multiple-sector partnerships. As a former Hughes networker, he knew how to lobby state and federal government sources for funds and legislation that promoted industry innovation. He also knew a host of talented people in southern California whom he would persuade to become IMAR members.

In his 30 years in manufacturing, Hartman found that university-driven research had not produced a respectable yield of usable information. University research was frequently irrelevant to industry needs and seldom provided for transfer of usable innovation to the plant floor. Industry was only tangentially involved in what the university was doing and Hartman saw little opportunity for the two sectors to benefit from a partnership. Therefore, it was determined that IMAR would be user-driven. Industry would set the agenda by choosing projects from among university proposals that promised to be of generic use to industry members, and it would benefit by influencing the direction of research and receiving early information about research results.

In the next several months, the steering committee and Hartman met regularly to define common research needs and locate funding sources. They sought industry sponsors from high-technology companies with an understanding of the problems in manufacturing research and a desire to do more than merely supply money. They wanted members who would be willing to get involved in IMAR’s programs. Furthermore, they wanted all members to be able to use the results of IMAR’s generic research while not competing directly with each other. Finally, they decided that they wanted a relatively small membership. If the membership grew too large, it might become unwieldy and thus obstruct efforts to get things done.

IMAR’s industrial advisory board was formed with six industrial organizations represented—Xerox, Hughes, TRW, Northrup, IBM, and Rockwell—in addition to USC and UCLA. Members were to pay $100,000 each and make a three-year commitment to IMAR. With initial objectives in place and a committed membership, Hartman was already searching for additional funding sources. He was successful in getting a bill introduced in California’s state legislature, later signed by the
governor, that authorized the state department of commerce to fund IMAR $200,000. Moreover, IMAR was able to tie into the Industry–University Cooperative Research Center Program (IUCRC) of the National Science Foundation (NSF) by forming an industry–university consortium called the Center for Manufacturing and Automation Research (CMAR). NSF funded CMAR with a $2 million grant and a five-year commitment. NSF funding in particular was sought because of the instant credibility that NSF sponsorship gives to such an institute.

NSF requested that several more universities be added to the consortium. In addition, an NSF evaluator was to be present at all IMAR meetings and conduct ongoing evaluation of CMAR’s progress. IMAR already had UCLA and USC among its members and now added four university affiliates to work on research projects: the University of California, Irvine; University of California, Santa Barbara; Caltech; and Arizona State University. The IMAR steering committee then voted to fund research projects at an affiliated university only if it involved cooperation with either USC or UCLA. Each of the four university affiliates was paired with either USC or UCLA. Each affiliate university was selected because it provided expertise in an area of interest to IMAR’s industrial membership. Arizona State, for example, had expertise in knowledge-based simulation systems in industrial engineering, a field of special concern to IMAR’s membership. IMAR funded a number of projects, including projects between the affiliated universities, between joint investigators at USC and UCLA, and independent projects at USC and UCLA. Figure 2.3 shows IMAR’s structure.

CMAR operated under the auspices of IMAR with the same board of directors serving both consortia. There are two codirectors of CMAR: Dr. George Bekey, chairman of the Computer Science Department at USC, and Dr. Michel Melkanoff, director of UCLA’s Center for Integrated Manufacturing. As codirectors they had an indirect reporting relationship to Dale Hartman. Their responsibilities included distributing the research funds and serving as the focal point on their respective campuses. Questions from project team members are directed to one or the other codirector, depending on the project. Each of the codirectors takes responsibility for managing project team members and providing rewards, such as reduced course loads, to research professors wherever possible. The codirectors further work to encourage informal ties with industry members. For example, Dr. Bekey initiated efforts to have IMAR representatives regularly visit others’ facilities to encourage them to cooperate and share ideas. That practice further deepens each industrial member’s commitment to IMAR because the representatives were associating with one another and other colleagues in the workplace. In the event that an industry or university representative left, an associate was more likely to be there to take his or her place. Further, Bekey noted that the association between industry and university helped industry to overcome its short-term orientation and helped university people appreciate applied problems and manufacturing needs.

IMAR’s board of directors set the research agenda at annual reviews in which it made recommendations for topics to be funded. IMAR took these recommendations and translated them into “requests for proposals” that were circulated among the participating university members. CMAR’s codirectors then solicited proposals from the university membership. Researchers’ proposals were evaluated and ranked by industry representatives and then passed back to the industry advisory board, which made final determinations on which projects would be funded.

Not only did IMAR engage in research projects, such as microelectronics, digital computers, lasers, and fiber optics, it worked to resolve critical problems for manufacturing innovation research. One area of study was technology transfer. IMAR established a pilot production facility that Hartman called “a halfway house for manufacturing.” The facility permitted basic research to be brought to maturity and was capable of producing deliverable parts. The facility also engaged in systems-level research in such areas as management and systems software, and provided an excellent training ground for students.

Another strength of IMAR was its affiliation with an NSF evaluator who was appointed to follow the progress of the industry–university cooperative research center. Dr. Ann Marczak was IMAR’s initial NSF evaluator. NSF conducted regular audits of the 39 IUCRCs it sponsored and made information available about survey results, others’ reports of what works, and so
Dr. Marczak served a valuable function to IMAR as an objective source of feedback. After her first evaluation, for example, Marczak recommended that a project team be formed to conduct ongoing progress assessment for each of the research projects IMAR sponsored. The evaluator’s findings also served as NSF’s means of determining how well each of the funded centers was performing. A center was judged successful if after five years it could exist without NSF funds. NSF also evaluated each center in terms of how much industry money its projects generated, how much additional money the center generated in research projects, the number of patents granted,
products produced, and the satisfaction of faculty and industry participants.

After two years of operation, IMAR had dealt with many of the problems that so frequently plague collaborative research and development efforts among organizations. It had a well-defined purpose that was strongly supported by its members. It was well structured and had a good balance of resources and needs among its membership. Formal and informal communication networks were established. It had strong leadership. Members of IMAR respected Hartman for his technological expertise and skills as a networker. Hartman had a strong sense of IMAR’s mission. After a discussion with him, one got the sense that there was not an obstacle he would not overcome. His vision continued to inspire commitment among the IMAR membership. As one member put it, “You end up wanting to see what you can do for the cause.”

Not only did IMAR have the commitment of a full-time leader and strong feedback from its NSF evaluator, it involved user-driven research. Although the research was basic, it was chosen by the users themselves to benefit all members of the consortium. If the research had been applied, it would have been more difficult for members to find projects yielding information that all of them could use. The involvement of multiple universities further provided the talent of top researchers in diverse areas of technological expertise. Finally, NSF was furnishing a large proportion of the funding for the first five years as well as regular evaluations.

Domestic vs. International Settings

Planned change efforts have traditionally been applied in North American and European settings, but they are increasingly used outside of these cultures. Developed in Western societies, OD reflects the underlying values and assumptions of these cultural settings, including equality, involvement, and short-term time horizons. Under these conditions, it works quite well. In other societies, a different set of cultural values and assumptions can be operating and make the application of OD problematic. In contrast to Western societies, for example, the cultures of most Asian countries are more hierarchical and status conscious, less open to discussing personal issues, more concerned with “saving face,” and have a longer time horizon for results. These cultural differences can make OD more difficult to implement, especially for North American or European practitioners; they may simply be unaware of the cultural norms and values that permeate the society.

The cultural values that guide OD practice in the United States, for example, include a tolerance for ambiguity, equality among people, individuality, and achievement motives. An OD process that encourages openness among individuals, high levels of participation, and actions that promote increased effectiveness is viewed favorably. The OD practitioner is also assumed to hold these values and to model them in the conduct of planned change. Most reported cases of OD involve Western-based organizations using practitioners trained in the traditional model and raised and experienced in Western society.

When OD is applied outside of North America or Europe (and sometimes even within these settings), the action research process must be adapted to fit the cultural context. For example, the diagnostic phase, which is aimed at understanding the current drivers of organization effectiveness, can be modified in a variety of ways. Diagnosis can involve many organization members or include only senior executives;
be directed from the top, conducted by an outside consultant, or performed by internal consultants; or involve face-to-face interviews or organizational documents. Each step in the general model of planned change must be carefully mapped against the cultural context.

Conducting OD in international settings can be highly stressful on OD practitioners. To be successful, they must develop a keen awareness of their own cultural biases, be open to seeing a variety of issues from another perspective, be fluent in the values and assumptions of the host country, and understand the economic and political context of business in the host country. Most OD practitioners are not able to meet all of those criteria and partner with a “cultural guide,” often a member of the client organization, to help navigate the cultural, operational, and political nuances of change in that society.

CRITIQUE OF PLANNED CHANGE

Despite their continued refinement, the models and practice of planned change are still in a formative stage of development, and there is considerable room for improvement. Critics of OD have pointed out several problems with the way planned change has been conceptualized and practiced.

**Conceptualization of Planned Change**

Planned change has typically been characterized as involving a series of activities for carrying out effective organization development. Although current models outline a general set of steps to be followed, considerably more information is needed to guide how those steps should be performed in specific situations. In an extensive review and critique of planned change theory, Porras and Robertson argued that planned change activities should be guided by information about (1) the organizational features that can be changed, (2) the intended outcomes from making those changes, (3) the causal mechanisms by which those outcomes are achieved, and (4) the contingencies upon which successful change depends. In particular, they noted that the key to organizational change is change in the behavior of each member and that the information available about the causal mechanisms that produce individual change is lacking. Overall, Porras and Robertson concluded that the information necessary to guide change is only partially available and that a good deal more research and thinking are needed to fill the gaps. Chapters 12 through 24 on OD interventions review what is currently known about change features, outcomes, causal mechanisms, and contingencies.

A related area where current thinking about planned change is deficient is knowledge about how the stages of planned change differ across situations. Most models specify a general set of steps that are intended to be applicable to most change efforts. However, the previous section of this chapter showed how change activities can vary depending on such factors as the magnitude of change, the degree to which the client system is organized, and whether the change is being conducted in a domestic or an international setting. Considerably more effort needs to be expended identifying situational factors that may require modifying the general stages of planned change. That would likely lead to a rich array of planned change models, each geared to a specific set of situational conditions. Such contingency thinking is greatly needed in planned change.

Planned change also tends to be described as a rationally controlled, orderly process. Critics have argued that although this view may be comforting, it is seriously misleading. They point out that planned change has a more chaotic quality, often involving shifting goals, discontinuous activities, surprising events, and unexpected combinations of changes. For example, executives often initiate changes without plans that clarify their strategies and goals. As change unfolds, new stakeholders may emerge.
and demand modifications reflecting previously unknown or unvoiced needs. Those emergent conditions make planned change a far more disorderly and dynamic process than is customarily portrayed, and conceptions need to capture that reality.

Most descriptions of planned change typically describe a beginning, middle, and end to the process. Critics have argued that planned change models that advocate evaluation and institutionalization processes reinforce the belief that the organization will “refreeze” into some form of equilibrium following change. In the face of increasing globalization and technological change, it is unlikely that change will ever “be over.” Executives, managers, and organization members must be prepared for constant change in a variety of organizational features that are not obvious in most models of planned change.

Finally, the relationship between planned change and organizational performance and effectiveness is not well understood. OD traditionally has had problems assessing whether interventions are producing observed results. The complexity of the change situation, the lack of sophisticated analyses, and the long time periods for producing results have contributed to weak evaluation of OD efforts. Moreover, managers have often accounted for OD efforts with post hoc testimonials, reports of possible future benefits, and calls to support OD as the right thing to do. In the absence of rigorous assessment and measurement, it is difficult to make resource allocation decisions about change programs and to know which interventions are most effective in certain situations.

Practice of Planned Change

Critics have suggested several problems with the way planned change is carried out. Their concerns are not with the planned change model itself but with how change takes place and with the qualifications and activities of OD practitioners.

A growing number of OD practitioners have acquired skills in a specific technique, such as team building, total quality management, AI, large-group interventions, or gain sharing, and have chosen to specialize in that method. Although such specialization may be necessary, it can lead to a certain myopia given the complex array of techniques that define OD. Some OD practitioners favor particular techniques and ignore other strategies that might be more appropriate, tending to interpret organizational problems as requiring the favored technique. Thus, for example, it is not unusual to see consultants pushing such methods as diversity training, reengineering, organization learning, or self-managing work teams as solutions to most organizational problems.

Effective change depends on a careful diagnosis of how the organization is functioning. Diagnosis identifies the underlying causes of organizational problems, such as poor product quality and employee dissatisfaction, or determines the positive opportunities that need to be promoted. It requires both time and money, and some organizations are not willing to make the necessary investment. Rather, they rely on preconceptions about what the problem is and hire consultants with skills appropriate to solve that problem. Managers may think, for example, that work design is the problem, so they hire an expert in job enrichment to implement a change program. The problem may be caused by other factors such as poor reward practices, however, and job enrichment would be inappropriate. Careful diagnosis can help to avoid such mistakes.

In situations requiring complex organizational changes, planned change is a long-term process involving considerable innovation and learning on-site. It requires a good deal of time and commitment and a willingness to modify and refine changes as the circumstances require. Some organizations demand more rapid solutions to their problems and seek quick fixes from experts. Unfortunately, some OD consultants are more than willing to provide quick solutions. They sell prepackaged programs for organizations to adopt. Those programs appeal to managers because they typically
include an explicit recipe to be followed, standard training materials, and clear time
and cost boundaries. The quick fixes have trouble gaining wide organizational support
and commitment, however, and seldom produce the positive results that have been
advertised.

Other organizations have not recognized the systemic nature of change. Too often,
they believe that intervention into one aspect or subpart of the organization will be
sufficient to ameliorate the problems, and they are unprepared for the other changes
that may be necessary to support a particular intervention. For example, at Verizon,
the positive benefits of an employee involvement program did not begin to appear until
after the organization redesigned its reward system to support the cross-functional
collaboration necessary to solve highly complex problems. Changing any one part or
feature of an organization often requires adjustments in the other parts to maintain an
appropriate alignment. Thus, although quick fixes and change programs that focus on
only one part or aspect of the organization may resolve some specific problems, they
generally do not lead to complex organizational change or increase members’ capacity
to carry out change.38

**SUMMARY**

Theories of planned change describe the activities necessary to modify strategies,
structures, and processes to increase an organization’s effectiveness. Lewin’s change
model, the action research model, and the positive model offer different views of the
phases through which planned change occurs in organizations. Lewin’s change model
views planned change as a three-step process of unfreezing, moving, and refreezing.
It provides a general description of the process of planned change. The action research
model focuses on planned change as a cyclical process involving joint activities
between organization members and OD practitioners. It involves multiple steps that
overlap and interact in practice: problem identification, consultation with a behavioral
science expert, data gathering and preliminary diagnosis, feedback to a key client or
group, joint diagnosis of the problem, joint action planning, action, and data gathering
after action. The action research model places heavy emphasis on data gathering and
diagnosis prior to action planning and implementation, and on assessment of results
after action is taken. In addition, change strategies often are modified on the basis of
continued diagnosis, and termination of one OD program may lead to further work
in other areas of the firm. The positive model is oriented to what the organization is
doing right. It seeks to build on positive opportunities that can lead to extraordinary
performance.

Planned change theories can be integrated into a general model. Four sets of
activities—entering and contracting, diagnosing, planning and implementing, and
evaluating and institutionalizing—can be used to describe how change is accomplished
in organizations. These four sets of activities also describe the general structure of the
chapters in this book. The general model has broad applicability to planned change.
It identifies the steps an organization typically moves through to implement change
and specifies the OD activities needed to effect change. Although the planned change
models describe general stages of how the OD process unfolds, there are different
types of change depending on the situation. Planned change efforts can vary in terms
of the magnitude of the change, the degree to which the client system is organized,
and whether the setting is domestic or international. When situations differ on those
dimensions, planned change can vary greatly. Critics of OD have pointed out several
problems with the way planned change has been conceptualized and practiced, and
specific areas where planned change can be improved.
NOTES

13. R. Beckhard and R. Harris, Organizational Transitions, 2d ed. (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1987).