

What makes for Effective and Sustainable Organisational Development Interventions?

The following is based on the research project commissioned and supervised by The Beech Centre and undertaken during 2015 by Jirong Li, Research Project Student, as part of an academic dissertation submitted to the University of Sheffield Management School (distinction awarded).

Aim of the project

Exploring how to demonstrate the impact of Organisational Development (OD) interventions that were undertaken within member organisations by eliciting their views, through questionnaire survey and follow-up interviews.

Key Findings

- 1) An effective OD intervention - is well-designed and collaboratively on a scientific basis, tailored to an organisation's context. It should be customer-driven to satisfy the organisation's needs and be outcome-oriented to improve organisational performance and strengthen the members' organisation's OD competence. The intervention also should be conducted within schedule and budget as well as at a professional level of quality.
- 2) A sustainable OD intervention - develops managerial and leadership abilities in managing change. It also should embed the positive results of change in organisational culture and strategies and enable OD into daily work to enable transformation leads to improved performance / success in the long term.
- 3) Measurement and evaluation of OD interventions should consider integration of both **effectiveness** and **sustainability**.

Effective OD Interventions

Tailoring to organisation's context and designing on the basis of valid knowledge
 Implementing within schedule, budget and a certain level of quality
 Satisfying organisation's needs and improving their performance and OD competence

Sustainable OD Interventions

Developing change management abilities
 Reflecting on organisational routine through culture and strategy
 Improving performance and achieving long-term success

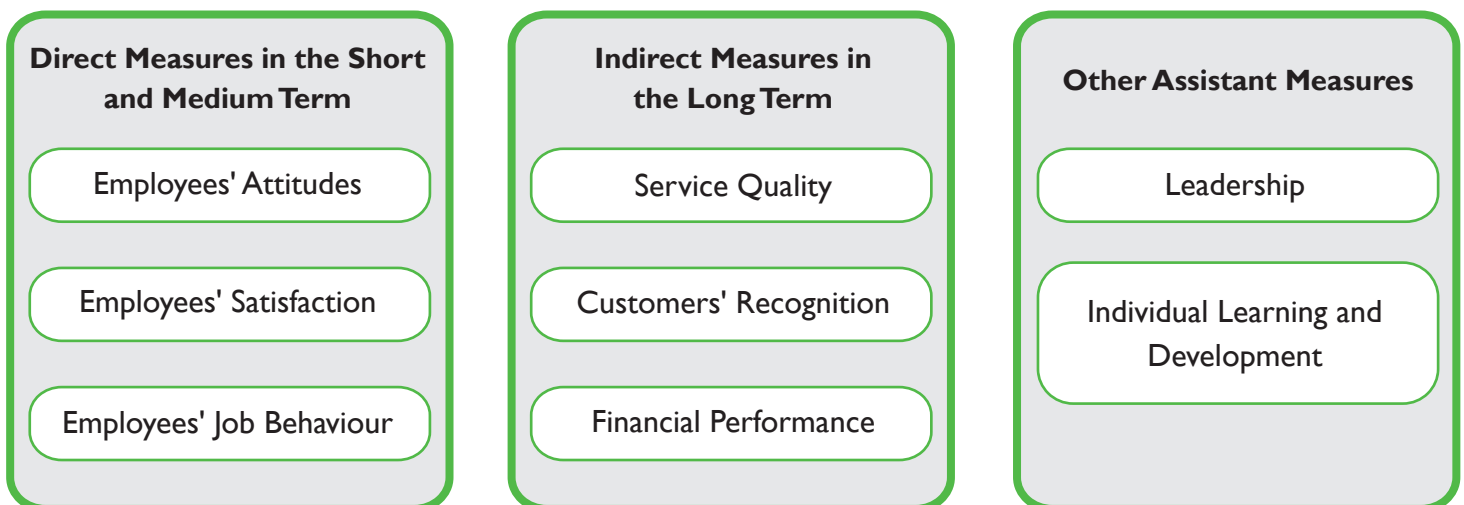
- 4) Influential staff involvement and strategy revision contributed more to effectiveness whereas the development of outstanding individuals was more related to sustainability.
- 5) The consolidation of results in culture, the establishment of a shared vision and the modification of systems, structures and policies benefited equally both effectiveness and sustainability.

Key recommendations

- 1) An evaluation strategy should include both intervention variables and outcome variables.
- 2) The purpose of applying intervention measures is to examine whether interventions are designed appropriately and are implemented as designed and expected.

Stages	Intervention Measures
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether an intervention is tailored to organisation's context and meets their requirements • Whether an intervention is designed on the basis of valid knowledge or past experience
During-implementation evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff engagement and communication • The development of a shared diagnosis, a shared vision with implementation strategies • The open environment for staff to present and implement creative, non-traditional and risk-taking ideas • The revision and fitness of organisational systems, structures and policies • The recognition and celebration of short-term achievements • Staff recruitment, recognition, reward, promotion and development • Embedding in culture and transferring to leadership and organisational strategies
After-implementation evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether an intervention is completed within intended schedule, budget and at a certain level of quality / professionalism • Whether organisation is satisfied with the outcome

- 3) Three types of outcome measures could be used to examine whether interventions reach the goal and produce the expected outcome and whether individual and organisational performance is improved:



Types	Measures	Example outcome measures
Direct measures <i>around employees</i>	Employees' Attitudes	Attitudes about self, others, the job and the organisation
	Employees' Satisfaction	General satisfaction with the organisation, work group and supervisor
	Employees' Job Behaviour	Absenteeism, turnover, grievances, productivity and efficiency
Indirect measures <i>around organisational performance</i>	Product/Services Quality	Product/Service quality measures
	Customers' Recognition	Customers' complaints and satisfaction
	Financial Performance	Cost-efficiency, revenue uplift
Assistant measures <i>Normally intermediate between Direct and Indirect</i>	Leadership	OD competence, consulting, facilitation, performance coaching, change management abilities and their practice in daily work
	Individual Learning and Development	Adult:Adult behaviour

What this means for OD Practitioners

- Effectiveness and Sustainability of OD interventions requires care and attention across all phases of The Consulting Cycle (a structured and collaborative approach to contracting for and designing, implementing and evaluating OD interventions based on robust system diagnosis).
- The evaluation strategy should be considered from the outset to include both intervention and outcome measures.
- A shift in employees' attitudes should be a key focus for contracting – these can be directly measured in the short and medium term.

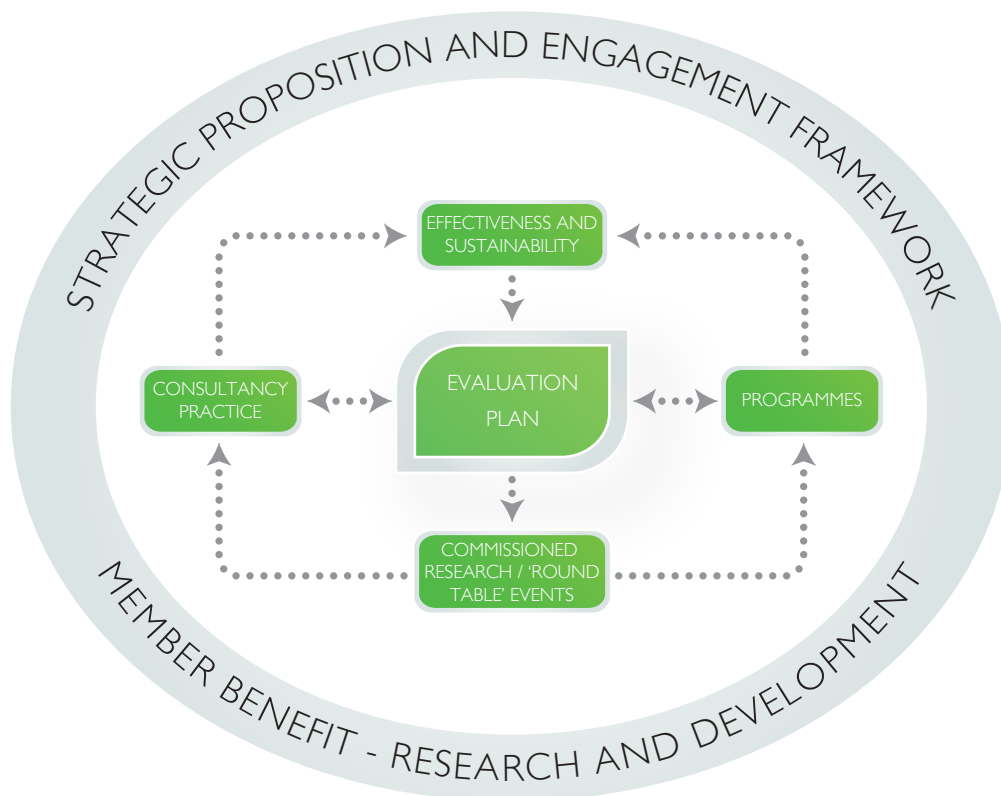
Next Steps

- We will drive the learning from this research into our Evaluation Plan, working within our current Engagement Framework to really embed this approach within our evaluation activity.
- We will then regularly review the outputs from this evaluation activity to identify the key research themes arising, the findings from which will in turn drive our consultancy practice, our programme content and ultimately our strategic proposition.

The following diagram shows this visually, with the Evaluation Plan (which is a core element of our consultancy practice and programme provision) incorporating these research findings.

From the Evaluation Plan will come new themes for Commissioned Research and 'Round Table' Events, which in turn will feed into consultancy practice and programme content and delivery.

All of this sits within our member Engagement Framework to optimise results through agreeing the best methods and frequency of communication via a bespoke communication framework for you and your organisation.



Sign up if you would like to take part in the next phase of validating the findings.

Please email chris.malings@thebeechcentre.co.uk