

ODSPOT

Centre for Organisation Development *Newsletter*

Spring Edition

Welcome to ODSPOT

Welcome to our new newsletter, OD Spot - a forum for discussion about issues relating to Organisation Development. It will be produced six times per year and we encourage your contribution and feedback.

OD spot will highlight your workplace initiatives, innovative programs, along with industry developments, academic research and practical tips. As well, we will bring you an insight into the nature of the work we do at the Centre for Organisation Development.

Please send any ideas, articles or comments to Andrew Macdonald at andrew@cfod.com.au

We look forward to hearing from you!

\$30 million arts precinct for Ballarat

As a major provider of training and consulting services to local government, CfOD gets many opportunities to be involved with outstanding projects.

And Ballarat's new \$30 million development, the Camp Street Arts Precinct, certainly qualifies.

The precinct, in Ballarat's central business area, will be launched in the next couple of months after more than five years of study, planning, design and building.

The site that was infamous as the staging post for the soldier's assault on the Eureka Stockade will become a place of education, art, culture and reflection for the city's students, residents and tourists.

The diversity of the membership of the task group which is driving the initiative will be reflected in the finished precinct. It includes representation

from the local members of all three tiers of government, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Ballarat, the Editor of the Ballarat Courier, the CEO of the Council, representatives from the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Department of Infrastructure and the Director of the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery.

Former libraries will become cyber cafes, the old courthouse will be developed to accommodate performing arts practice and the former police station will be converted into gallery facilities.

The opening of the precinct will be a celebration of the benefits of the private and public sectors working together with the community to spectacular effect.

Contact Us

- To receive a copy of our new course guide
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Keeping your professional edge

When CfOD's team of consultants get together, there is plenty of discussion and sharing of ideas and experiences. Like many professionals in organisations, consultants can be quite isolated so regular debriefing, training and development and general networking can be just what an independent consultant needs to stay abreast of industry trends and issues, and stay personally motivated.

Virtual teams are a growing trend and it is important to recognise that the benefits of such a flexible and organic model need to be balanced with people's need to belong and feel a part of something.

That's why the recently held inaugural consultants' meeting is set to become a regular event. The Centre values professional development and in the past it has run training sessions for its team of consultants, but this is the first time the focus has been so general.

"We have a team of up to 20 consultants working with us at any given time and until now we have provided too few opportunities to meet and benefit from each other's experiences", Andrew Macdonald of CfOD said.

"Our consultants had been telling us they wanted to 'catch up' with their CfOD colleagues as training at various sites across Melbourne is not conducive to sharing ideas", he said.

The consultants' night was a result of that feedback.



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"Mike and Margaret presented an overview of the direction the organisation is taking and then we relaxed into exchanging stories and resources".

"It was a great opportunity for the consultants to get together and for us to deepen connections with our team face to face", Andrew said.

"We're already planning the next one", he said.

The Centre for Organisation Development

is a centre in the true sense of the word....

It is not the solution to all organisational problems or the source of all the answers. It is a focus, a conduit for ideas and concepts and people that will facilitate learning for staff, managers and organisations.

In terms of the new management concept 'thought leadership', the Centre aims to be a gateway to sharing ideas through professional networking, providing a focus for relevant publications and research and providing the infrastructure for strategic alliances.

As well the centre provides a range of OD services directly to its clients as it has done since 1998.

Networking program

for Kangan Batman

Many people network because they think they should.

But CfOD management trainer Mark Moore says it's important to first understand why you need to network and then to develop an appropriate strategy.

"This strategy includes developing a detailed contact management system, and then investing time maintaining and growing it in a systematic and planned fashion.

"There are many reasons why you may want to network - to do your job properly, to grow a business, for personal or career development. Once you are clear on your reason for wanting to network, the opportunities become a little easier to identify and select", Mark said.

He says the vital element of any networking approach is to add value to your network.

"This of course requires you to know your skills and be able to put a value on them and for some people this is confronting.

"Networking in the first instant is essentially using your skills and contacts to help others achieve their goals - without expecting anything in return. Once you have demonstrated that you can add value, the reciprocal dynamics of a network are ignited", Mark said.

TAFE teachers are a group of people who have not traditionally had a professional need to network.

But Bruce Bradfield, manager of industry training at Kangan Batman TAFE, said there is a desire to create a

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culture of entrepreneurship within the TAFE sector and networking is regarded as a key skill in developing it.

Based on this organisational goal, Mark recently conducted a session on networking to a forum of industry trainers at Kangan.

Bruce said networking provides trainers with the benefits of sharing knowledge but the experience may ultimately lead to the added benefit of increased business.

"I guess that's where my agenda lies", Bruce said.

The session focused on how to approach people and have that relationship result in a sale.

"It provided an overview of various networking strategies and goals and highlighted who was already doing a lot right and where there was a need for improvement", Bruce said.

The Kangan forum was part of a 'consulting skills for teachers' program, which CfOD has also conducted at Riverina Institute of TAFE.

Leading **best value**

Centre for Organisation Development managing director Margaret Devlin is proud of the leadership development program her team conducted recently with the City of Kingston.

"We were pleased to be part of Kingston's comprehensive Best Value process.

"Kingston has adopted a truly integrated approach to Best Value, creating a positive management culture based on the alignment of personal and organisational values. It is a unique approach involving everyone in the organisation", Margaret said.

CfOD conducted a leadership development program for more than 100 managers from the City of Kingston as part of their Best Value roll-out.

City of Kingston CEO, Rob Skinner, said the program contributed to the across-the-board application of the principles of Best Value.

"Margaret's program helped us to highlight the opportunities for improvement in the organisation as well

as to enable our managers to understand their own unique leadership styles.

"We take a whole of organisation approach to planning and knew very early that leadership development was integral to the successful implementation of Best Value.

"The program helped to create the positive attitude toward Best Value that our organisation now enjoys.

"We had to get staff and managers to understand the benefits of changing to Best Value and we know people's behaviour reflects their values so we needed to ensure they had enough information to value the new system.

"Margaret has worked with us before in change management, mentoring and other training. She's very good at organisational behaviour and the whole OD function", Rob said.

CfOD has also worked with the cities of Greater Dandenong and Darebin on leadership development and team-building for Best Value.

Local Government 'EARLY ADOPTERS'

by Margaret Devlin Managing Director Centre for Organisation Development

A lot of the work we do at the Centre for Organisation Development is with local government.

It is interesting then that it has taken me so long to put my finger on what it is about local government organisations that make them different from so many other organisations.

I think it is, that they are - in marketing terms - early adopters.

Marketers would explain this as 'adopter category theory' but it simply means that they are not amongst the first 2.5 per cent of the population to adopt innovation - they are the innovators - but they fit into the second category, which is made up of the next 13.5 per cent of the community.

Early adopters are big processors of information and sharers of new information. They are prepared to take calculated risks but are concerned with failure.

This profile fits local government ideally. Innovative without being foolhardy, but a very long way ahead of most organisations of a similar size in terms of

learning and applying new ideas that are practical and applicable now, and future focused. Strategic planning and community development is Council's core business and staff are encouraged to innovate and create solutions to often complex, multi-disciplinary issues.

Our private sector clients are often amazed to learn that councils have been implementing leading edge and innovative programs long before it becomes 'fashionable'.

A current example of this is local government's engagement in values-based leadership. As we introduce this and other organisation development and people focused management concepts to our private sector clients, they are regularly surprised that the best examples of excellence and innovation in this area are from local government.

It is a reminder that Councils often take for granted the fact that so much of what they do is transferable and valuable in the private sector.

OD professionals gather

Specialists in any field need the opportunity to share new ideas with peers and to discuss professional issues with those of similar experience.

It's the premise, which binds the Australian Society of Accountants, the Royal College of Surgeons and the Australian Institute of Management.

But when your field is a little more specialist than most - like Organisation Development - it's more difficult to find a suitable forum.

So the Centre for Organisation Development started one.

The group meets informally to discuss OD issues, sometimes with a speaker or facilitator, sometimes to discuss a subject informally.

Swinburne Graduate School lecturer and research scholar Rae Dorai addressed the most recent meeting on the subject of 'the learning organisation'.

Rae's PhD thesis is on retaining and motivating

employees and her research required her to investigate the type of training conducted at different managerial levels in different types of organisations.

She told the group of her evidence that there is a measurable relationship between workplace training and a sense of employee commitment, led discussion on the difference between training and learning and how to change the mental models of older employees and deduced that innovation and creativity is not the domain of large organisations.

Rae said her favourite definition of true learning is that it is about continuous improvement.

Previous OD group sessions have discussed Boundary Management for OD Professionals, How to Become an Employer of Choice and Spiral Dynamics.

The group meets monthly from 4.30pm to 6pm and is followed by a light supper and a glass of wine. Anyone interested in coming along, should contact Andrew Macdonald at CfOD on 9867 2455.

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