

# ODSPOT

Centre for Organisation Development **Newsletter**

Summer 2005

## An OD approach to career management and transition



Erika Meiser



Elspeth Sharp

Increasingly, organisations are providing their employees with career planning advice and support – either to assist them to rise through the ranks or because a change of circumstance requires a downsizing or change in the organisational structure.

At the same time, the escalating competitive nature of business requires Australian organisations to compete effectively internationally, necessitating the change to contract-based business production. This means a substantial cultural shift and new employment relationships.

In this uncertain environment, the essence of successful and effective career management and transition programs is to tailor them to focus on the promotion, career management and transition needs of the individual, whilst retaining an acute understanding of the capability requirements of the organisation.

This whole system approach, which underlies all of the work undertaken by the Centre for Organisation Development, determines that the health of the individual is intrinsically linked to the health of the overall system. It is valid whether working with a senior executive seeking promotion, or an entire business unit undergoing restructure and outplacement.

CfOD's Erika Meiser, a career management coach and organisational change expert, has worked with a number of large companies on outplacement and restructuring programs, including South Pacific Tyers and Coles Myer. She says sometimes it is tempting to seek an outplacement solution that makes the employee exit as comfortably and quickly as possible (keeping to IR guidelines) - in other words, getting it over and done with quickly. On the other hand, an OD approach requires full engagement and support of the entire organisation - a more systemic, open and possibly honest approach.

*'Ultimately, it's not about the event, it's about sustainable business and relationship changes,' Erika said. 'You have to continue to focus on the whole system while remaining vigilant to the individuals' needs. These needs will be evident at all levels of the organisation, incorporating those leading the process, those remaining after the change and those exiting.'*

Erika designs, tailors and delivers career transition programs and trains senior managers to become

transition coaches, learning to manage people seeking new roles within the organisation as well as those who are leaving.

She believes that by supporting individuals seeking career advancement to understand their needs and seek out career movement, they become responsible for their own career development.

*'The individual is expected to take charge and to market themselves as a small business – a far cry from the attitude of old, when an employee would expect their bosses to provide them with a job including a career path for life.'*  
**continued overleaf**

### GOVERNANCE FORUM

Thursday 4 August 2005

Carlton Crest Hotel

65 Queens Road, Melbourne

This one-day forum and networking opportunity will explore, discuss and broaden understanding of Governance continuum from compliance to social responsibility and sustainability.

### OD Professionals Conference Stories from the field Creating sustainable cultures in organisations

5 August 2005

Carlton Crest Hotel

*The sustainable organisation is one that can prosper over the long-term, has a clear and compelling business purpose, and creates positive environmental and community outcomes.*

This one-day professional development conference reflects the feedback from the inaugural conference and will continue to provide 'stories from the field' from leading OD practitioners and thought leaders, as well as plenty of networking opportunities. Sessions are experiential and delegates are encouraged to participate in discussion.

**Full program details for both these events will soon be available.**

Please consult our website for more details at [www.cfod.com.au](http://www.cfod.com.au) or contact conference organiser, **Edwina Coller** on [61 3] 9645 4466.



OD Professionals

## Contact Us

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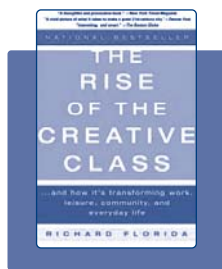
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# BOOKS from the CfOD library...

## THE RISE OF THE CREATIVE CLASS ...and how it's transforming work, leisure, community, and everyday life. Richard Florida, Basic Books, New York 2003 ISBN: 0465024777

Leadership is often seen in isolation from broad social and economic trends but our expectations of leaders are constantly changing as society, and by implication, organisations change. The impact of the dot.com crash, downsizing, flatter organisational structures and the rise of project-based virtual work teams has fundamentally altered the social contact between organisations and individuals.



In this new environment, many individuals have decided not to put their future at the mercy of organisations. While work provides important elements necessary for living, like money, there are other considerations when choosing where to work and for whom – especially for those members of what Richard Florida has identified as the "Creative Class".

In Florida's book titled *'The Rise of the Creative Class'*, he suggests that the core differences between the creative class and the working and service classes, is that the creative class engage in complex problem solving that 'involves a great deal of independent judgement and requires a high level of education and human capital'.

The key to economic prosperity is, according to Florida; in creating societies that have access to a sophisticated technological infrastructure, a breadth and depth of creative talent and a high degree of tolerance for diverse cultures and lifestyles. The key to the development of human capital is for organisations to recognise this reality and to move where the human capital can be found, rather than try to attract it to environments where the members of the creative class will not stay.

These changes have some serious implications for organisations and leaders. For organisations, it is the

recognition that they no longer dictate where, and sometimes even when, people will work. Those organisations that are successful are moving to cities and regions that are attractive to members of the creative class, what Florida terms "Creative Centres".

In addition, they are creating "sculpted" job descriptions that are tailored to reflect the individual's diverse range of interests. These new contracts often trade off 'security for autonomy and conformity for the freedom to move from job-to-job and to pursue interesting projects and activities'. The creative class do not gain their sense of self from their organisation but from their profession, life style and interests. The result is that the traditional models of reward and recognition do not apply to members of the creative class.

Given these changes, how can leaders respond? Above all, leaders need to understand that leadership is about creating new business opportunities and insights that excite and form a nucleus around which others can cluster. The best way to do this is with the involvement and support of others. Under the new social contract, leadership is the art of stimulation not control.

It is clear that what Florida is proposing needs to be considered seriously. To not respond to these broader social changes and the increasing importance of human capital as the driving force behind economics will have a negative long-term economic, social and political impact.

by Christopher A. Bell, CEO of the Leadership Consortium

This is an abridged version of an article originally published in *Exchange* – the newsletter for The Leadership Consortium's and IT Skills Hub's Building the Future Program Alumni.

**Have you read a book that you would like to review or recommend for review in ODSpot? If so, please contact [fiona@cfod.com.au](mailto:fiona@cfod.com.au) or telephone [61 3] 9645 4466.**

## An OD approach to career management and transition (continued from pg 1)

*'People learn to take charge and invest in themselves with a portfolio of transferable skills. This in turn fosters career resilience and adaptability – which are essential attributes as we move towards a more fluid workforce and an increase in contract employment,'* she said.

However, even with the guidance of specially trained and supportive managers within the organisation assisting with career development, an outsider's perspective can be still be extremely useful.

Tim Tamlin, newly appointed Director, Engineering Services at Greater Dandenong City Council, looked both within the Council and to CfOD to fine-tune his career advancement skills.

*'I had no doubt that I had what it took to be the Director of Engineering Services, but I had to ensure I had the set of expert skills on the day to demonstrate this to all parties in the process – the recruitment consultant, internal interview panel and Council,'* he said.

Tim worked through a five-part process with CfOD, which included expert resume and application advice, interview techniques, presentation skills, including the expectations of Councillors in the interview process.

CfOD also provides advice to those returning to the workforce or executives contemplating a career change; a service headed by CfOD consultant Elspeth Sharp, who has delivered a variety of career management workshops and successfully coached numerous individuals in job search skills.

The service includes an assessment of an individual's skills, motivations and preferred organisational environment, establishing career direction, as well as assistance with resume development, interview techniques and job search skills.

If you want to know more about our OD approach to career planning and transition or would like to speak with Erika Mieser (organisational solutions) or Elspeth Sharp (individual job-seekers), please call CfOD on [61 3] 9645 4466.

# Introducing The CfOD Coaching Bench

Organisations around the world are embracing the potential of coaching as a leadership development intervention and there is an abundance of coaching companies and individuals offering their services.

However, unfocused coaching engagements, poor matching of coaching resources, and inconsistent delivery and quality of coaching are some of the challenges encountered with many coaching providers.

So how do you ensure that your planned coaching program will deliver?

International research tells us successful coaching needs a strict business-focus, with coachee selection and program outcome determined by business goals, but this approach falls short of aligning with Australian work culture. Coaching programs in Australia require a distinct focus on the whole organisational system – with the needs of the individual addressed in context of the whole organisation.

*'It's a matter of continuously building sustainable relationships,' explained Mike Allen, who is Lead Coach on CfOD's recently established Coaching Bench. 'You can't look at the business or the individual in isolation. As soon as you do that, it diminishes the impact of the intervention because they are intrinsically connected.'*

The CfOD Coaching Bench is the first in Australia to adapt international coaching standards for the Australian workplace,



Mike Allen

... the care taken in matching executives and coaches is crucial to the success of coaching

establish clear coach-client matching protocols, and create a Lead Coach role to maintain benchmarks and ensure agreed outcomes.

Mike now manages over twenty CfOD Coaches, who work on the Coaching Bench or on one of the organisation-wide coaching programs we provide to a growing number of clients.

The selection of coaches and guaranteeing diversity, quality and experience, is one of Mike's many duties in his role as Lead Coach. He also ensures our coaching programs meet agreed benchmarks and that the balance between the whole system and the individual is maintained – whether it be

in one-to-one executive coaching, or whole organisation coaching solutions and training.

Depending on the length and nature of the coaching program, Mike meets with management, the coachee and the coach to identify learning needs, is involved in the mid-process review, and active in the recognition of outcomes and identification of directions forward at the completion of the program.

Mike believes that the care taken in matching executives and coaches is crucial to the success of coaching.

*'It requires experience, methodology and rigorous process. We take the matching process very seriously. It is important that the "right fit" is achieved to ensure maximum benefit for the coachee and the client organisation,'* Mike said.

All CfOD's coaches are highly regarded, accredited and experienced coaching professionals. They come from diverse backgrounds, each with expertise in specific work environments, cultures and roles. The bench includes accountants, bankers, business owners, civil servants, engineers, manufacturers, professors, property developers, public speakers, teachers and underwriters – all dedicated to helping their clients achieve the best for themselves and their organisations.

We encourage those of you seeking coaching programs to consult the Coaching Bench page of our website, before discussing your coaching requirements with Lead Coach, Mike Allen on [61 3] 9645 4466.

## Training and Assessment Training Package TAA04

### Have you checked the currency of your training qualification?

CfOD is planning to offer the new qualification, Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

This new package replaces BSZ98 Assessment and Workplace Training and is progressively being implemented under transition arrangements. The new package

more accurately reflects current training and assessment practices within the Vocational Education sector.

CfOD offers a range of options for trainers, HR professionals and assessors. To find out more call our office on [61-3] 9645 4466 or visit [www.cfod.com.au](http://www.cfod.com.au)



# The Client Consultant Relationship

## The Paradox of Intimacy

by Margaret Devlin Managing Director, Centre for Organisation Development

It is no surprise to people that organisations are relying more heavily on consultants to complete or complement their suite of services. It makes sense at a number of levels, including improved efficiency, flexibility and economy. CfOD's experience in consulting relationships with our clients is that results improve dramatically when the relationship is a major focus – partnering in the true sense of the word, where each partner takes an appropriate share of the responsibility for the success of the project.

The framework for the success of a mutually beneficial relationship is surprisingly simple, but deceptively difficult to do well. Success or failure lies in an artful dance to manage the mutual interpretation of expectations, boundaries and outcomes and to avoid misunderstanding, disappointment, and blame.

Trust and sustainability are the mainstays of any relationship. In a client-consultant relationship, trust and sustainability rely heavily on both parties being able to define and maintain clear boundaries within which the expectations of the relationship are held.

Whilst contracts are used to document the outcomes of the project task, expectations, such as the way we communicate with each other, how we manage difference and disappointment, how we redefine our relationship as we each grow and develop in capacity and capability are also important to articulate as part of the process. Not surprisingly, this level of intimate contact is fraught with anxiety and avoidance and often takes what seems to be a disproportionate amount of time and energy to deal with.

Whilst it is redundant to say that communication is the key to any successful relationship, maintaining authenticity continues to be a challenge for many partnerships. Paradoxically, as the relationship becomes harmonious, intimate and trusting, it can become more difficult to give the tough feedback inevitably required to keep a client-consultant relationship functioning authentically. The more intimate and invested in the relationship we become, the more anxious we are about the risk of rejection if we do not conform to its expectations. Managing the finely tuned boundaries of a client consultant relationship requires conscious awareness and management of the paradox of intimacy.

In managing the boundaries of the relationship, it is imperative that the client maintains the right to supervise the quality of work and demands ongoing evaluation towards the achievement of outcomes. The consultant has to be able to hear tough feedback in the spirit of continuous improvement and engage with the client in joint problem solving – each partner contributing to the solution and being able to move out of the tendency to defend a 'professional' position. In other words, even as the relationship becomes closer and more functional, each party needs to 'know their place', honour their respective roles and remain focused on the agreed outcomes.

Ultimately, a sustainable client-consultant partnership adds value to both partners through a commitment to mutual success and prosperity. It is the genuine involvement in sharing, trust, integrity, and open, honest communication, which makes working in such relationships a real pleasure.

**ODSpot** is a forum for discussions and issues relating to Organisational Development. We will highlight your workplace initiatives, innovative programs, industry developments, academic research and practical tips.

ODSpot welcomes your feedback, ideas and contribution. Please send comments, letters and articles to [fiona@cfod.com.au](mailto:fiona@cfod.com.au).

We look forward to hearing from you!

## OD Professionals

We start the New Year with a name change from OD Group to OD Professionals – a name that members feel more completely reflects the membership and nature of the group.

At our first meeting for 2005, Alex Milan of Toyota Australia spoke on the highly successful Destiny Project – a voluntary program and the initiative of Toyota's Export and Distribution department, which supported staff to take control of their own destiny, including their attitude, job satisfaction, work-life balance, and career path.

It was one of the most well attended and popular meetings since the group's inception in 2001. Our next session is on Wednesday 23 March and is a discussion by John Batros (Swinburne University, Graduate School of Entrepreneurship) on the power of dialogue – unlocking the creativity imprisoned by hard-wired thought.

### OD Professionals meeting dates for 2005

Wed 23 March	The Power of Dialogue
Wed 11 May	Ford People Development Framework
Wed 22 June	ANZ Organisational Change
Friday 5 August	OD Professionals Conference 2005
Wed 14 September	Building Communities
Wed 26 October	Spiritual Capital
Wed 7 December	Seafood and Champagne & Networking

If you would like to join OD Professionals, to attend a session or you would like further information, please contact Edwina Coller at [edwina@cfod.com.au](mailto:edwina@cfod.com.au) or call [61-3] 9645 4466.



OD Professionals