



TO: Richard Stackman, Chair, ODC Division
FROM: Mary Tripsas, College of Engineering, UC Santa Barbara
Chair, Division and Interest Group Relations (DIGR) Committee
CC: DIGR Committee Members:
Cindy Devers, Virginia Tech (BOG Representative at Large)
Sabine Hoidn, University of St. Gallen (BOG Representative at Large)
Peer Fiss, University of Southern California, (BOG Representative at Large)
Keld Laursen, Copenhagen Business School (BOG Representative at Large)
Chris Tucci, Imperial College London (BOG Vice President-Elect)
Nicholas Burton, Northumbria University (DIG Leader, Past Chair, MSR Division)
Leonard Dobusch, Universität Innsbruck (DIG Leader, Past Chair, SAP Interest Group)

DATE May 21, 2024

RE: Feedback on Organization Development and Change (ODC) Division's 3 Year Report

On behalf of the Academy of Management Board, I am writing to let you know that the Organization Development and Change Division's 3-year renewal has been made contingent on the ODC Division submitting, by **July 22**, additional information (as specified below) to append to your original report.

The DIGR committee found the division's 3-year report useful in that it identifies major strategic challenges for the division. However, importantly, the report lacks a strategy to address these challenges, let alone a plan for the initiation of concrete activities that would support such a strategy. The division has continued to face a decline in membership (21% decline over 5 years) and a lack of engagement outside of the annual meeting (e.g. only 9% of members participated in elections). These are both ongoing problems that were noted in the 2019 review. So while the lack of specificity in the plan is a cause for concern on its own, in light of the membership challenges faced by the division, it becomes a major issue.

The appended report should include a specification of strategic directions for the division and an outlined set of activities that would support these strategic directions, as noted with specifics in our "Recommendation 1" section of the memo below. Please consider leveraging any of the recommendations within the feedback memo to address key areas of concern. I need to be explicit about the fact that the Academy of Management Board of Governors indicated that if the appended report is not satisfactory, the renewal of the division will be deferred by one year.

While I know this is not the outcome you were hoping for, this decision is taken in the spirit of helping to strengthen the division. Importantly, the DIGR committee and AOM Headquarters staff are committed to providing support as you work toward developing a stronger strategic plan.

In the summary below, we present the DIGR committee's initial response after reviewing your three-year review report and the accompanying data. DIGR committee members were asked to identify what they see as strengths, challenges or concerns, as well as to offer recommendations for addressing concerns and building on the strengths of the ODC Division to provide valuable services to your members.

Once you have had time to read and digest the report, we would welcome the opportunity to meet with your leadership team to answer any questions. AOM's HQ team is available to coordinate the logistics of setting up a meeting, ideally in the next couple weeks (Michael McShane and Lucy Leety-Wheeler are cc'd on this email).

Thank you again for the effort you invested in the 3-year review. We hope the review has provided an opportunity to reflect on the state of the division, areas of strength, and opportunities to further enhance members' experiences. We stand ready to work with you toward our shared goal of ensuring a vibrant and thriving ODC Division.



2024 Review of the Organization Development and Change (ODC) Interest Group

The DIGR Committee concluded that the ODC Division could be in trouble if more aggressive action isn't taken. Listed below are Strengths and Challenges/Concerns noted by the committee as well as Recommendations going forward.

STRENGTHS

Membership and engagement

- Those who answered the survey seemed quite satisfied with their engagement with the Division (82.4% are satisfied, very satisfied or extremely satisfied)
- There is an increase in number of new members (despite an overall decrease in membership)
- Submissions are back to the pre-pandemic level of 2019, with an upward trajectory the last three years.

Leadership:

- The clarity and openness with which the division's problems are discussed in the report are impressive; the report does not sugarcoat the situation but instead lays it out clearly.
- Experimentation mindset amongst leadership

Finances:

- Solid financials when looking at total operating funds available per member, notwithstanding the decline in sponsorships.

Innovation:

- The launch of the ODC Hive seems like a helpful innovation effort, although its implementation still needs work (see below).
- ODC Rigor-Relevance Award and associated PDW session "In conversation with" are great initiatives.

CHALLENGES

Membership decline and lack of engagement

- Membership down by 21% (to around 1700 members) over the past five years (AoM overall: -1%). In particular, student membership has decreased, which does not bode well.
- Weak membership engagement: Submissions as % of membership in Boston: 11.5% vs. AoM overall at 47,1%; 9% of DIG voted vs 20.3% AoM overall; 14% of the membership acted as reviewers vs. 36% for the AoM as a whole.
- Low membership engagement outside of the annual meeting

Strategic Planning:

- While the Division leadership has identified multiple problems, the proposed solutions feel incremental. For instance, the changes to the division structure and revising the by-laws are fine, but they feel like the classic re-arranging of the deck chairs on the Titanic. "The Hive" is also fine, but feels like a necessary, not sufficient solution to the many problems facing the Division.
- Suggested solutions are also lacking specificity. The current report lists social media, fundraising, and generation and location shifts as goals, but is missing concrete actions along with KPIs.
- The vision needs to be updated. The report states that "the vision and plan set out then [2017/18] still inform the division today," and yet that vision has been accompanied by a precipitous decline in membership. The division has a rich history, both intellectually and in



terms of impact, but that history may be creating inertia. Without updating the vision, the division will likely not be able to stave off the exodus of members.

- It is unclear why or how describing the Division’s audience as a “quintet” of scholar, educator, practitioner/consultant, manager, student is an improvement over the scholar/practitioner dichotomy. All divisions have educators and students, so that does not seem unique to ODC. This approach also runs the risk of blurring the division purpose, and it increases difficulty in building community. The most salient balancing act of ODC still seems to be meeting the needs of both scholars and practitioners.

Implementation of online innovations

- While “The Hive” is attractive in theory, the current website isn’t particularly innovative; it seems like a community web portal, the many stock images used on the website create an impersonal vibe, and at least one of the links is broken.
- Similarly, the resources section on the ODC website also features half a dozen stock photos on promising issues such as teaching resources and podcasts, which only lead to “under construction” logos.

Collaboration with other DIGS

- There is limited collaboration with other DIGS. Also, the division leadership might be misunderstanding what “practice” in the Strategizing Activities and Practices (SAP) IG means. It refers to practice theoretical approaches and not so much practitioners. As a result, SAP may not be the best collaboration partner for the planned “practice-focused conference-within-a-conference.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Our primary recommendation is that you amend the 3-year review report to include more aggressive and detailed strategic plan. This involves multiple activities.

Do additional research, analysis, and planning to understand what is driving the decline in membership and to identify possible solutions. Some ideas include:

- Interview some former ODC members who are still members of the AOM and get their feedback on why they switched divisions.
- Review the strategic plans of other divisions that have experienced turnarounds (e.g. CTO) for ideas.
- Engage in a planning process (perhaps a retreat) to develop a revised strategic direction and vision. What can you do to make the division more relevant, given current management challenges (e.g. AI, digital transformation, the natural environment, social turmoil.)? How can you attract young scholars? Simply focusing on the “three italicized sentences,” which emphasize meeting needs of the five diverse membership categories, does not seem to be a clear or aggressive enough plan to turn around the division.
- Meet with AOM head office and Board representative to discuss how to formulate a strategy and consequential activities as well as for discussing practical ways in which the AOM can support the division.

Develop a strategic plan that reflects your revised vision and direction



- Formulate a strategy to provide direction for the division as it moves forward. The strategy should first and foremost address the memberships issues and relatively low engagement by members
- Specify concrete tactical activities that will support the implementation of the strategic plan.
- Produce a strategic roadmap: Prioritize the list of activities, develop a timeline for implementation, allocate responsibility, and create metrics (KPIs) for tracking the progress of each initiative.

Recommendation 2: Improve the website and “The Hive”

- Examine other DIG websites and portals for best practices
- Fix the technical glitches

Recommendation 3: Strengthen ties with other DIGS

- Identify opportunities to co-sponsor PDWs or year-round outreach activities
- Critically evaluate the idea of a new "reflective" practice-focused conference-within-a-conference (like TLC) that could be joint with the MC Division. The time and effort involved in organizing such a conference is substantial, and may be better spent on other “low-hanging fruit” initiatives. Consider whether a mini-conference that happens separately from the AoM meetings might be more feasible (e.g. the NEU IG regional mini-conference).

