

**Organizational Development Approaches and Considerations**

**For B. R. Richardson Timber Products Corporation**

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**Part 1**

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The Papoose Laminators Company is one of four interrelated companies run by Ben R. Richardson in the B. R. Richardson Timber Products Corporation. A newly hired professional, Richard Bowman has been hired into the company and is seeking training to improve motivation at the Laminators Company (Lam Co). The Lam Company is the most profitable company in the corporation and is experiencing rising demand for sales, strong growth overall, and is outgrowing its space. A university professor, Jack Lawler, was contacted by Richard Bowman to analyze, design, develop and implement basic training on motivation. Mr. Lawler visited the Lam Co with two Graduate School of Business students, Mitch, and Mike. The Lam Company is experiencing friction in the areas of safety awareness and enforcement, workplace organization, leadership styles, and an under-defined organizational structure (Cummings, T. G. & Worley C. G., 2009).

In most applications, my preference would align with implementing the Positive Model because it works in psychological research to provide positive reinforcement to what is being completed correctly. However, this model has been described as “reformist and rebellious” and is seen as a newer more aggressive model (Hacking, I., 1999). In this specific case of the Papoose Laminators Company, I would propose the Action Research Model. This is a result of the preliminary analysis identifying a multitude of opportunities for improvement.

Also, the president of the corporation, Ben Richardson is a conservative leader who is perceived by many to be “authoritarian” and “insensitive” (Cummings, T. G. & Worley C. G., 2009). This sort of personality would be better served by tactile action plans driven by hard

empirical data. Mr. Richardson will want to see how improved safety and organization will benefit the bottom line by improving efficiency.

Lastly, the iterative nature of the Planned Change Model suits this situation. Most of the workforce does not have any work-life experience outside of this environment, so reactions to planned change will be unpredictable. The change management process will need to be a dual focus cycle that reinvents the change model based on data gathered during the transitional phase. This “general knowledge” from the data gathering after each cycle will be beneficial to re-align the plan as it unfolds (French, W., 1969).

The Papoose Laminators Company suffers from a chronic under-organized environment. Leadership roles are not defined, and communications channels shift daily for random or arbitrary reasons. One of the Graduate School of Business students, Mitch, commented in his analysis that the workspace was “crowded and difficult to walk around” because tools were not replaced, trash was not discarded and the space was simply too small. (Cummings, T. G. & Worley C. G., 2009). The other research assistant, Mike, quoted a scheduler named Dirk Vorhees as saying; “The men change jobs so much it is hard to train them.” (Cummings, T. G. & Worley C. G., 2009). This statement illuminates the pains around the lack of organized scheduling and adequate staffing.

A successful Organizational Develop practitioner working on this case will need especially strong inter-personal skills as well as working knowledge around OSHA compliance. Employees in the company clearly stated that Ben Richardson openly liked or “hated” certain people in the organization. Also, Richard Bowman is the only executive who was hired from outside of the company as a professional. Many of the employees are from the area and may have never experienced a workplace culture outside of Timber Products Corporation and there are several political agendas at play (Cummings, T. G. & Worley C. G., 2009).

A successful candidate will need to be experienced in the industrial factory environment and OSHA compliance integration. There was recently a death at the Lam Co. that was a result of poor safety awareness and enforcement. The analysis assistant, Mike commented in his notes, "I wonder how they meet OSHA standards." (Cummings, T. G. & Worley C. G., 2009). It was observed that no safety glasses were being worn, and the cheap safety helmets provided were inconsistently worn. Also, band saws did not have proper guards on them. Walkways were crowded with garbage, sawdust, and tools. Raw lumber and completed beams were often stacked too high and resulted in tumbling over.

Considering the locally developed family-style culture of the relatively small corporation (for its product) and intense working conditions, I would recommend an external OD professional to assist in developing and implementing an OD plan. The unaligned organizational structure paired with the traditional authoritarian/top-down leadership styles of both Ben Richardson and Joe Bamford would deter internal managed change candidates from finding creative ways to solve internal opportunities of the company.

Ethics play a crucial role in ensuring that the solution provided is in the best interest of the organization. In the current state, Lam Co is primarily interested in productivity but is also neglecting spending or on system/machinery over-haul or update, and regulations employee safety. An effective OD consultant would need to be able to leverage data in a way that identifies the cost-benefit of implementing these items into the culture.

The primary client of this OD assignment would be the president, Ben Richardson. There would be an opportunity for the external OD practitioner to closely partner with the Industrial Relations Representative, Richard Bowman, because he initiated the request and seems to have the most potential around having required skills. Another internal partner could be the under-represented quality control specialist, John Walton who is a trained EMT with an even temper

and is well-liked by the president. Lastly, Joe Bamford was identified as a potential change agent by supervisors in the company, but also as being overly production-driven by others.

The objectives would be a result of further investigation and data collection but would primarily focus on employee safety, workplace structure, role definition/workgroups, and work/life balance. The proposed action for the external OD contractor would be to partner with Richard Bowman and John Walton to formulate a formal plan that could support the defined safety and structural needs of the organization. This contract will need to be a group effort that also includes mutual expectations of the OD practitioner, Wayne Teeterman, Joe Bamford, and Ben Richardson and all of these stakeholders will be encouraged to openly state their goals (P. Block & J. Nowlan, 2015).

First, an organizational-wide meeting will be held to publicly announce the managed change project and share an update on the current state. The meeting will be mostly one-way communication to begin and will clearly state the goals of improving safety and reducing the chance for injury as well as improving work/life balance. There will be time provided for questions and answers around the project, but participants will be asked to share feedback and perspectives openly and candidly on the anonymous survey.

Directly after the org-wide meeting a survey of the entire company could be conducted on key elements that were identified in the analysis. Topics would most likely relate to: work-life balance, safety, workplace organization, perception of leadership and lack of work/life balance and could be implemented to candidly track the voice of the entire workforce. The survey will initiate the managed change but continue throughout the transitional state to realign plans and measure success.

There will also need to be meetings schedule privately and in small groups with members of leadership and the OD, practitioner to review survey results and formally discuss action plans.

In addition, formal interviews from a stratified sample could be conducted from varying levels in the organization. Observations could be conducted from the offices that overlook the laminating plant.

Lastly, there is a significant amount of production data being collected by at least three individuals in the company (Cummings, T. G. & Worley C. G., 2009). This data could be collected unobtrusively and used to gauge the success of proposed changes by the OD practitioner. Once data has been collected and interpreted it should be presented to Ben Richardson and Richard Bowman on a quarterly or bi-monthly basis during the transitional period.

The contract will need to be a precise agreement that formally states the mutual goals of all key stakeholders. It will outline the timeline and specify any required resources listed separately as well as projected costs of those resources (P. Block & J. Nowlan, 2015). Ground rules will be set around potential uses of the data collected. The contract will also clearly outline who will do what by what time. Fees would be dependent on the relevant experience of the OD practitioner and the projected timeline of the project. Final plans would need to be negotiated and approved by both the OD practitioner and key stakeholders (S. Pellegrinelli, 2002).

The OD practitioner should be made aware that the original request was a simple training on motivation. After initial visits to the plant, it was apparent that more than simple training would be required to repair the broken systems. However, leadership at the company is accustomed to providing orders that are strictly followed without question, so the OD professional must remain acutely self-aware and sensitive to this dynamic. (Cummings, T. G. & Worley C. G., 2009).

The reason that simple training on motivation will not speak to the need of this organization is that basic human rights of workplace safety are being overlooked. Staffing is not

being managed appropriately to meet the demands of work. From an organizational level, the processes are disjointed and unorganized. These deeper issues must be repaired if the goal is to actually raise morale and promote motivation. A simple piece of training on motivation will not resolve the cause of the problem, so any observed benefits will be impermanent.

It should be recognized by the OD professional that the initial visit from the university professor and his two students already received a great deal of attention from Joe Bamford as well as Rolf Dunbar and in a way was the first intervention (E. Schein, 2003). Joe Bamford also reacted negatively to the concepts of workgroups, as well as business theory in general when speaking with Mike and Mitch during the initial analysis (Cummings, T. G. & Worley C. G., 2009).

A Force-Field analysis should be conducted where the OD practitioner would work with Richard Bowman, Joe Bamford, and perhaps John Walton and Dirk Vorhees to create an analysis of items that promoted change or resisted change (K. Lewin, 1951). The goal of this analysis would be the outcome of improved morale and motivation. This process could be used to identify and prioritize the underlying forces that contribute or detract from that goal.

One of the possible effects of presenting employee survey feedback to Ben Richardson could be a negative backlash. Richardson is not interested in spending additional amounts for the wellbeing of staff and is quoted as saying, "Fine, if you want a union, I'll just close the place down." (Cummings, T. G. & Worley C. G. 2009, p. 762). Therefore, the survey feedback must be strongly paired with solutions that drive an outcome of improved production and profit.

The process for feedback should be on a set schedule with specific deliverables. Every two to three months an updated survey result will be presented. There is a lack of trust in the organization and participants could fear retaliation if their name is tied to a negative result. The

survey will need to be completely anonymous without any way to tie a result to an individual's identity.

The current state of the Lam Co. is summarized by Dirk Vorhees as, "Morale is low. Safety and overtime are the main causes." To motivate change within the organization there must be a clear and concise goal of the future state (Beckhard R. & Harris, R. T., 1987). The vision of the future state will include an organized safe environment where employees are valued and developed to reach their full potential. This vision will be clearly stated, preferably in a presentation by Joe Bamford and Richard Bowman. Political support of this vision will be developed from outlining clear business needs for the change and projected return on investment. The focus will not be on previous decisions or lack of action but on the active engagement of current leaders to help build the future vision. (Macri, D., Tagliaventi, M.& Bertolotti, F., 2002).

These enhancements will provide the capability to increase production to meet new demands while decreasing liability. Additional reward systems will be implemented by John Walton (or whomever Joe Bamford appoints excluding Rolf Dunbar), that promote safe and organized workstations. Awards and prizes (fishing reels, fishing lures, fishing line, doughnuts, pizza lunch, gift cards, etc.) will be provided to teams that reach goals around productivity as well as the number of days without a safety incident. Teams that fail to meet these metrics will be awarded with Hello Kitty stickers or forced to wear Hello Kitty armbands (Mydans, S, 2007).

During the transitional state production will be expected to decrease but will be projected to then increase and surpass previous metrics from before the interventions. Safety incidents will be tracked and will be projected to decrease. Additional surveys will be administered on a bi-monthly basis to track employee's morale and gather feedback on the transition.

The goal specificity should remain relatively narrow and be poised around a need to increase motivation by way of improving morale. How aggressive these interventions should

become will be a group decision made by Ben Richardson and Joe Bamford. The goal should be to use existing processes and procedures and enhance or reprogram them, so they focus on more clearly defined targets. The level of change will first focus on the entire organization and include defining set roles for leadership around specific steps in the laminated beam creation process.

Individual contributors should also experience a certain level of change that aligns with the organizational-wide change to reinforce the future state (Martin, J. & Siehl C., 1987).

Individual contributors will complete a personal assessment of which step in the process they excel at and this data could be compared with a similar assessment of the individual contributors completed by the supervisors. Loose workgroups could be formulated based on the primary and secondary skill-sets of the individual contributors.

Once the transitional period has completed additional positive and negative consequences will “freeze” the new state into a permanent existence (K. Lewin, 1951). In the future state, the awards for safety and production metrics will continue every quarter. An annual prize may be introduced for the individual contributor that has the highest number of consecutive days without a safety incident; as well as the workgroup with the highest productivity or the highest net-gain in productivity.

At the end of the transitional period employee satisfaction surveys should have improved results. Employee attendance should have improved, and unscheduled absences decreased. Beam production should have returned to normal, or have increased, which should negate the need for any overtime. Safety incidents should have decreased. Employee deaths should remain at zero percent in the future state.

## Part 2

### Explanation Section 3

This is my first writing around Organizational Development, and I have had difficulty organizing my thoughts. I have fallen back on previous skill-sets including theatrical play analysis and Instructional Design methodology. A prominent form of thought in both of these practices is working *backward*. A popular model in Instructional Design is the backward design model where an instructor focuses on the goal that the student should leave with, or asking: *What will be measured in the final learner assessment?* (Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J., 2005).

A potentially lesser-known workflow is the Backwards Forwards model in theatrical play analysis, where actions in a play are tracked by reviewing the events backward to identify the through-line of the play (Ball, 1983).

I do not believe this backward model is a part of Organizational Development. However, this is the method I inadvertently resorted to using in this process because this is how I have been trained to think. In the draft of this paper very little was produced but when I reached the Institutionalizing Process and Indicators of Institutionalization my thoughts flowed freely. In a sort of “thought experiment” I envisioned the changes that I perceived would best benefit this company within the given circumstances and then I worked backward by selecting OD interventions that I thought could potentially lead to these outcomes. (I have shared these thoughts below in Part 3.)

I realize that these outcomes may or may not happen and that key stakeholders in the company should generate these solutions organically. I might even be breaking the role of ethics as an OD professional to think in this way, but I have listed these concepts below as some of the data collection, tracking, and institutionalization measures are tied up in these thoughts. This content might also be a potential resource for the second Term Paper and PowerPoint.

### Part 3

#### Potential Outcomes of Leadership Workgroups

Several organizational level opportunities could be addressed. The business strategy would be improved by better defining roles. For example, Joe Bamford is overworked, and has an inefficient bidding and purchasing process with the secretary that he hired, Susan Lyons. He then passes purchase information to either the scheduler Dirk Vorhees or Rolf Dunbar. Mr. Vorhees is the employee who needs the purchasing information, had a master's degree in forestry, and an interest in sales. In the current state, Dirk is a flight risk until he sees a path toward self-development. A solution would be to train Dirk Vorhees on the bidding and purchasing process so he would naturally have a stronger pulse on incoming lumber along with increased job satisfaction, Joe would have more time to direct the vision of the company and Rolf would not be included.

Technological and structural improvements would increase safety, efficiency, and productivity. The current workspace is described as too small and business at the Lam Co. is in a growth pattern. Additional storage space for incoming lumber and outgoing beams would support higher production and decrease the chance of injury. A millwright named Bruce stated, "Stacks of beams are too high. Two of them fell last week." A policy around stack height paired with additional space for storage would decrease this risk while improving organization and efficiency. There is a field next to the factory that would be useful for this purpose. (Cummings, T. G. & Worley C. G., 2009).

Containment racks constructed of sturdy metal pipe/ I-bar or mistake A.K.A. "bastard" beams laying out in the yard will provide stability while measuring beam and lumber stack height. Each containment rack will have a top bar where beams and lumber cannot be placed

above. At the end of each shift, unused tools will be placed back in their “home location” and trash will be removed from the floor and placed in dumpsters.

Also, several individuals run manual reports on a set schedule and store them in separate locations on paper. A collection of personal computers on an intranet would improve the quality of data, decrease the time spend on data processing, and improve communication around data. A chat and email function could reduce travel times between locations, increase social culture of learning and create timely updates of crucial information.

An optional plan would be to install two ventilation near the ceiling on either side of the warehouse. One fan positioned on the northern side blowing in cooler air and one fan blowing warm air outward on the southern side. There is also an option to install solar-powered fans so that there is no additional cost after implementation and the fans will operate on hot sunny days or on rechargeable batteries on hot cloudy days.

Programs like the Incentives for safety, created by Joe Bamford and Rolf Dunbar, should be further developed, and implemented. (Cummings, T. G. & Worley C. G. 2009, p. 762). The current focus of the program is built around lost time, which is a function of productivity and is not directly linked to safety. If this program were linked to the number of days without an injury, then that would improve the physical, and emotional condition of the workforce. An increased feeling of being valued would enable them to produce more efficient outcomes while having a higher level of self-respect and pride in the company.

John Walton will perform a workspace audit at the end of every shift and will assign citations to teams who have not prepared the workspace for the next team. Three workspace audit citations in one thirty-day period will be equivalent to a safety violation and disqualify the group from that quarter’s “prize”. Not wearing OSHA approved safety glassed or high impact

helmets while on the production floor will result in a workspace audit point. Any supervisor will have the authority to report not wearing appropriate safety equipment while on the factory floor. These processes and values are open for adjustment by Joe Bamford and John Walton, and should be presented for review by Richard Bowman.

Lastly, the Human Resources department is not observable in the current state. Employees have stated that they do have benefits including medical insurance. A stronger focus on consistent safety regulation and OSHA compliance would protect the company from legal liability and would improve morale leading to increased motivation and productivity. The assignment of bidding to Dirk Vorhees is an example of employee development that would strengthen the company while developing talent and retaining top talent in-house. An Employee Assistance program could provide a limited number of Tela-health (or in-person) counseling to deal with the stress of witnessing the death of an employee on company property at no cost to the employee or at a discounted rate.

Staffing and attendance will be regulated via a point system. All new hires are awarded 6 points upon hire. Thirty days without missing scheduled shift awards a point. Calling off during a scheduled shift without a statement from a medical professional reduces a point. Paid Time off does not affect points. If an employee is sick, they may call off three consecutive days in a row and only lose a single point, however they must call the day before and not the day of or each day will be a single point. An employee who reaches zero points is automatically terminated and not considered for re-hire. Susan Lyons will be assigned a standard 9 AM to 5 PM schedule and will participate in the point system. The point system will be managed by Joe Banford and regulated by Dirk Vorhees or whomever Joe assigns (excluding Rolf). Attendance will be tracked, and an indicator of institutionalization will be a decline in absence.

Employees will have strict job duties that include a primary and secondary skill-set in the beam development process. Schedules will be designed with employee technical strengths in mind. Back-ups for absent employees will be built into the schedule. Additional workforce members could be hired as “float” workers to assist teams who are understaffed, if needed. Teams or workgroups will be formed, and an indicator of success will be a drive to meet productivity and safety metrics. An employee will not work longer than their scheduled shift. When production is down overtime will be awarded on Saturdays and pay double-time. Only those employees in good standing who have more than 3 “attendance points” will be eligible.

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