



HR DELIVERY

Making Sure HR Delivers

HR DELIVERY WORKSHOP SERIES

Organisational Development

An introduction to practical organisational development

Explore organisational development as a participative approach to improving how work gets done. Practise contracting an enquiry, understanding a system, involving stakeholders and designing a small intervention with clear ownership, learning and review.



01 DAY

Introductory taster

IN-HOUSE

Your people. Your context.

PRACTICAL

Explore, discuss and apply

A PRACTICAL STARTING POINT

Understand the topic. Try it in practice.

Organisational development brings people into the work of understanding and improving their organisation. It connects evidence about performance with relationships, culture and operating conditions. This introductory workshop helps participants move from a request for a workshop or team event towards a clearer improvement purpose, meaningful participation and a manageable experiment.

Introduce a practical OD enquiry cycle through an illustrative cross-team problem. Participants agree an improvement question, map the wider system, involve different perspectives and compare interventions, then outline a small experiment and learning review that could inform further work with a sponsor.

WHO IS IT FOR?

HR practitioners, OD newcomers, business partners, team leaders and internal improvement colleagues who want to support participative organisational change. Formal OD training or previous intervention design experience is not required.

BY THE END OF THE DAY, PARTICIPANTS CAN:

- 01 Describe the OD purpose**
Explain how participative organisational development connects performance, work conditions and employee experience, distinguishing an improvement purpose from a requested event or activity.
- 02 Contract a bounded enquiry**
Clarify an OD sponsor's question, expectations and decision responsibilities, including who should participate and what lies outside the initial enquiry.
- 03 Map system relationships**
Identify how tasks, interfaces, management practices and feedback patterns may interact in an organisational issue, while distinguishing hypotheses from established evidence.
- 04 Invite varied perspectives**
Plan a proportionate way to hear relevant stakeholder views and test interpretations without assuming the sponsor's account represents everyone's experience of work.
- 05 Compare intervention options**
Compare a small process, team or management-practice intervention against the diagnosed need, likely participation, feasibility and potential unintended effects before choosing a trial.
- 06 Design a learning experiment**
Outline a limited improvement experiment with an owner, participation arrangements, expected evidence and a review point for learning before wider adoption.

A useful first application

The workshop practises introductory OD enquiry and a small intervention proposal. It does not deliver a full organisational diagnosis, resolve live conflict or equip participants to facilitate complex or sensitive interventions independently.

THE FRAMEWORK / WORKSHOP FOCUS

Participative OD enquiry cycle — workshop working model

The workshop working model follows contract, enquire, make sense, co-design, experiment and learn. It provides a simple introductory cycle for connecting an improvement purpose with participation, evidence and small-scale organisational learning.

A PRACTICAL LEARNING AID FOR THIS TASTER

01 Contract the enquiry

What improvement question, authority and participation are we agreeing with the sponsor?

02 Enquire into the system

How do work, relationships and operating conditions interact around this issue?

03 Make sense together

What do different perspectives reveal about our initial explanation and assumptions?

04 Co-design an intervention

Which response fits the evidence and can affected people help shape?

05 Experiment with support

What small trial can be owned, supported and reviewed responsibly?

06 Learn and adapt

What changed, what did we learn and what should happen next?

The six stages are an honest workshop learning aid rather than a new proprietary OD framework. The HR Delivery OD Diagnostic can provide deeper system enquiry when appropriate; complex facilitation requires suitable experience and support.

LEARN BY DOING

Explore. Challenge. Make the ideas useful.

Short explanations lead into lively exercises, paired discussion and small-group challenges. Participants test ideas, share experience and build a draft together. The tone is engaging and enjoyable, with time to reflect and connect learning to real work.

01 Reframe the event request

Pairs role-play a sponsor requesting a team-building day, clarify the business concern and agree a bounded enquiry before deciding whether an event could usefully address the problem described.

02 Draw the system together

Teams map a fictional cross-team service failure, connect tasks, handovers, incentives and feedback loops and mark the points where stakeholder accounts or operational evidence are still needed to understand the pattern.

03 Hear competing perspectives

Participants take different stakeholder roles in a facilitated conversation, practise summarising each perspective fairly and revise an initial explanation when another account reveals an overlooked work constraint or relationship issue.

04 Design a small OD experiment

Groups compare possible interventions, select one manageable trial and define participation, support, ownership and evidence that would help the organisation decide whether to adapt, extend or stop the proposed change.

DIAGNOSE BEFORE YOU ACT

Evidence > shared feedback > agreed priorities

Use selected diagnostic prompts to distinguish known facts from assumptions. Discuss the findings and agree their meaning before proposing a solution. Feedback is part of diagnosis, not an afterthought.

ONE CASE, DEVELOPED THROUGH THE DAY

Two teams blame each other for late customer deliveries. The sponsor requests a team-building event. Employees describe unclear handover criteria, competing targets and little opportunity to resolve exceptions together. Relationships are strained, but the work system may be sustaining the conflict despite earlier attempts to improve communication between managers.

Groups contract a clearer improvement enquiry, map system and relationship factors and design one participative experiment with a sponsor, affected colleagues, evidence of learning and a specific review point.

THE FACILITATOR WILL

- Invite different perspectives.**
- Make assumptions visible.**
- Welcome constructive debate.**
- Capture practical learning.**

SAMPLE WORKSHOP AGENDA

A working day, with room to think.

09:00-16:30 | Six hours of facilitated learning, plus lunch and breaks. The agenda, emphasis and timings are always agreed with the client, including local scheduling needs.

09:00-09:20	Explore OD through an improvement question Explore organisational development and reframe a team event request around work outcomes, participation and the conditions that may sustain the underlying organisational issue.
09:20-10:15	Contract the enquiry with a sponsor Practise clarifying purpose, scope, authority and participation, identifying boundaries and support needed before exploring sensitive relationships or organisational concerns with the affected colleagues.
10:15-10:30	Break
10:30-11:30	Map the connected work system Trace tasks, interfaces, targets and feedback in the case, identifying possible relationships between operating conditions and the experience of people doing the work.
11:30-12:30	Bring perspectives into sense-making Use stakeholder role-play to compare interpretations, hear overlooked constraints and revise the initial explanation while recognising that each account offers a partial perspective.
12:30-13:30	Lunch
13:30-14:30	Compare and co-design interventions Compare process, team and management-practice options for evidence fit, participation needs and practical constraints before selecting a bounded improvement trial for the case.
14:30-14:45	Break
14:45-15:30	Design a small learning experiment Define the trial's purpose, owner, support, participation and expected evidence, including conditions that would lead to adaptation or stopping rather than wider implementation.
15:30-16:10	Review the intervention proposal Present the enquiry and experiment, challenge the connection between problem and response and strengthen learning questions, sponsorship and participation arrangements for the trial.
16:10-16:30	Plan a supported first OD application Choose a local improvement question and identify the sponsor, affected colleagues and experienced support needed for a proportionate enquiry before proposing an intervention.

Contract a useful question, understand the connected system and involve people in an improvement experiment that supports learning.

FROM THE SESSION TO YOUR DESK

Useful models. Practical working records.

The day combines reference materials with drafts developed in the exercises. Each has a clear use beyond the workshop; the work reflects the evidence and perspectives available in the room.

01 OD enquiry contract

A draft agreement covering the improvement question, scope, sponsor responsibilities and participation, with boundaries distinguishing a useful enquiry from delivering the activity first requested by the sponsor.

Agree the purpose before designing an event or intervention.

02 System mapping worksheet

An exercise map connecting work, interfaces, targets, management practices and feedback, with hypotheses and missing stakeholder evidence marked so the diagram does not imply relationships have been proven.

Explore how operating conditions may sustain an organisational problem.

03 Stakeholder sense-making prompts

Questions for hearing different experiences, checking interpretations and identifying overlooked constraints, with reminders to summarise perspectives fairly and seek suitable support for sensitive discussions when needed.

Prepare a more inclusive conversation about how work currently happens.

04 Intervention comparison record

A provisional comparison of process, team and management-practice responses, considering evidence fit, participation, effort and possible unintended effects before selecting a limited trial for further learning.

Choose an intervention because it addresses the diagnosed need.

05 Learning experiment outline

A small proposed trial with its purpose, sponsor, owner, participation arrangements and review evidence, including questions supporting adaptation, extension or stopping after the initial learning period.

Make an OD idea practical, owned and open to revision.

06 Personal OD application plan

A focused next-step plan identifying a local improvement question, colleagues, evidence needs and experienced support, with boundaries around issues requiring skilled facilitation or specialist professional involvement.

Begin an appropriate OD enquiry within your role and experience.

CONTINUE EXPLORING

Continue with the models, diagnostic manuals and development resources on the HR Delivery website. Workshop exercises provide a first application; a full organisational diagnostic or implementation assignment can be agreed separately.

[Open the framework >](#)

[Explore diagnostic resources >](#)



MAKE THE LEARNING COUNT

A better conversation. A practical next step.

Choose a small cross-team problem and clarify the desired improvement with its sponsor. Hear the affected colleagues' perspectives, examine the work system and agree one supported experiment whose learning can be reviewed before proposing broader organisational action.

YOUR FIRST 30 DAYS

01

Days 1-7

Contract the OD question

Meet a sponsor and clarify the outcome sought, scope and people affected. Agree what participation and support are appropriate, keeping the initial enquiry separate from any preferred event, workshop or intervention requested by leaders.

02

Days 8-21

Explore the work with others

Listen to relevant colleagues and examine a small sample of work or handovers. Compare perspectives, map possible system connections and seek experienced support if the enquiry reveals sensitive conflict or concerns beyond your competence.

03

Days 22-30

Agree a small learning trial

Discuss the evidence and options with the sponsor and affected colleagues. Outline one supported trial with an owner, review point and learning questions, using local approval arrangements before making changes to the work system.

Follow-through is participant-led. Additional facilitation, a full diagnostic or specialist support can be agreed separately.

AVAILABLE IN-HOUSE

Shaped around your organisation

The client identifies a bounded improvement theme and potential sponsor. Participants use a fictional cross-team case and may reflect on anonymised examples; complex live conflicts or sensitive employee relations matters remain outside the introductory exercises.

PLAN YOUR IN-HOUSE WORKSHOP

Talk to Dr Phillip Welsh

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Discuss your workshop



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