OrgDev
Live Conference
2026

The Confluence of Org. Design and Development

July 8, 2026

COLLABORATIVE

The Root of Organization Design and Development

$$B = f\,(P, E)$$

Kurt Lewin, 1936

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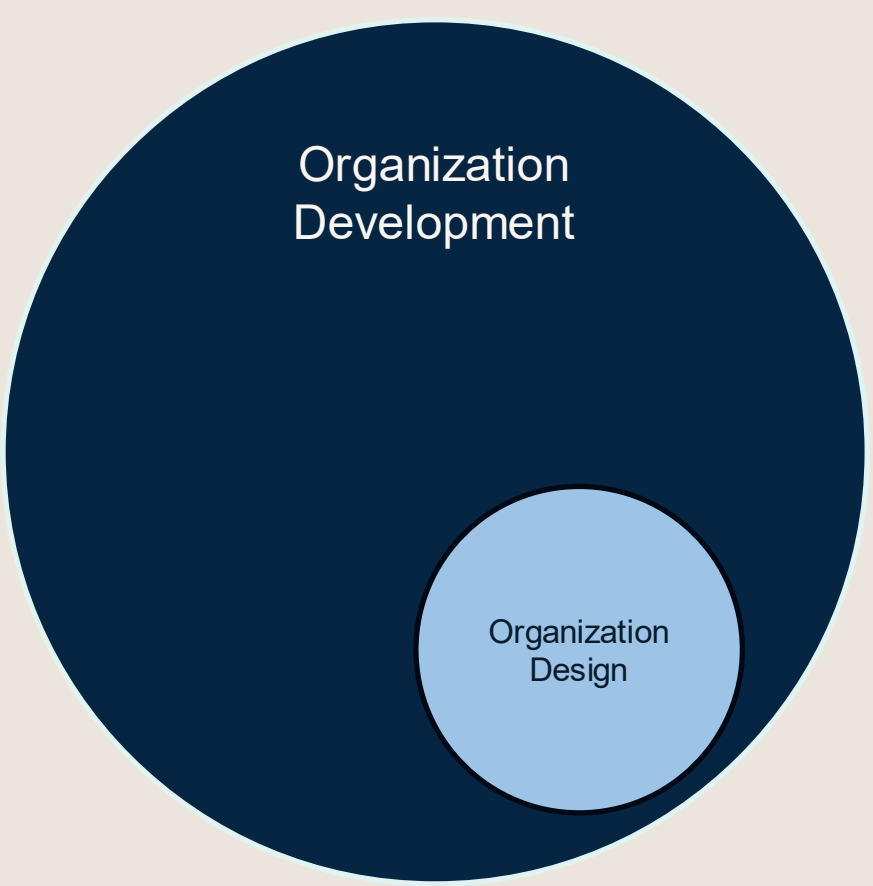
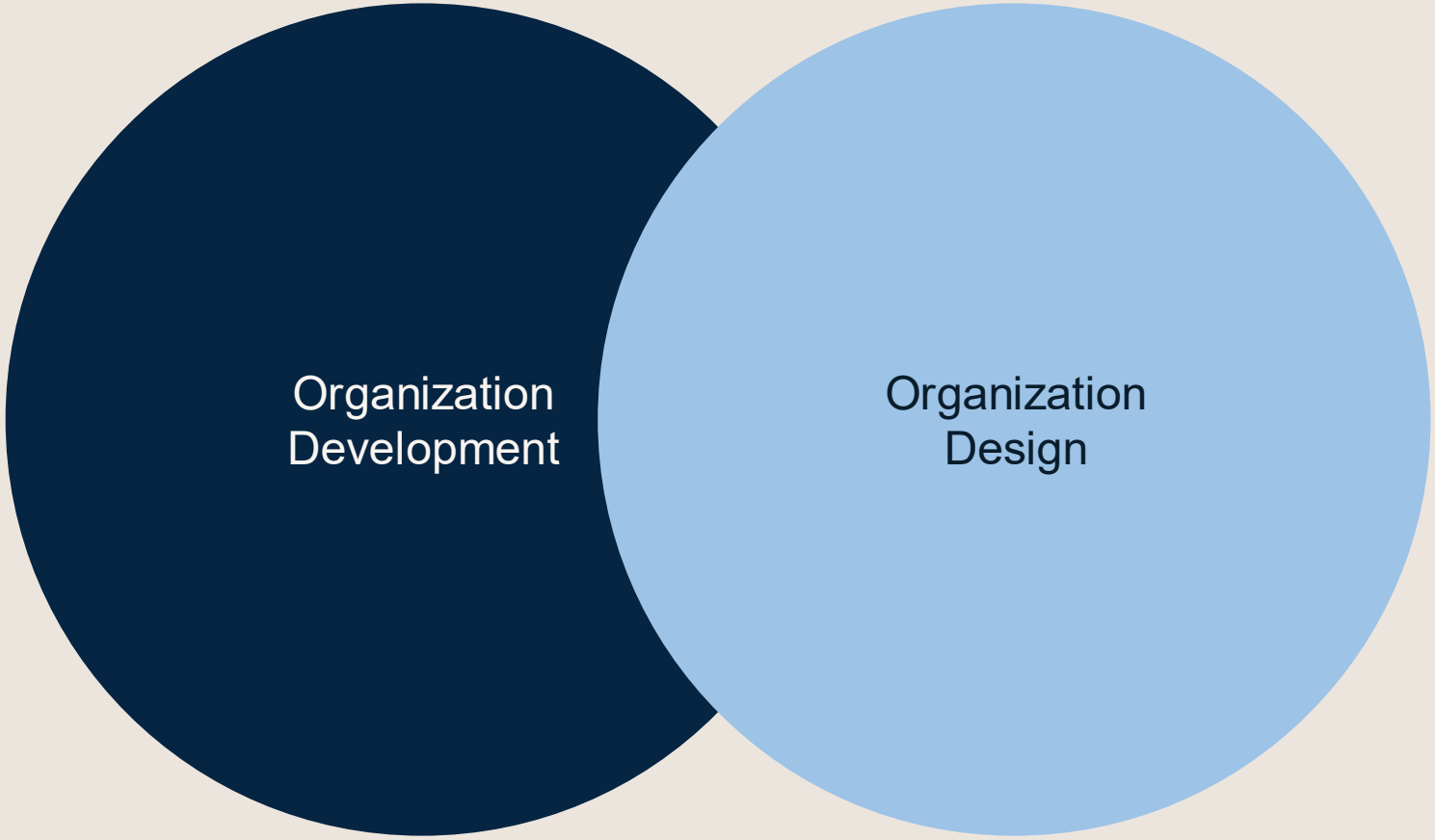
What’s In A Name?

The Core Argument





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The Marketed and Convened Reality

Organization Development Network

Advancing the Science, Practice & Impact of OD

ODN Europe

Advancing the theory and practice of OD

(and many others…)

ODF ORGANIZATION DESIGN FORUM

eodf

European Organisation Design Forum

ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN COMMUNITY

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Some Definitions

There Are 1,000 Ways To Look At Each: Here are Two

- **Organization Development:** Refers to the interdisciplinary field of scholars and practitioners who work collaboratively with organizations and communities to develop their systemwide capacity for effectiveness and vitality. It is grounded in the organization and social sciences. (Smendzuik-O'Brien & Gilpin-Jackson, 2021)

- **Organization Design:** Organization design is the link between the development of a business strategy and its successful execution. It is a decision science for selecting among competing alternatives to match the optimal operating model to the strategy. An operating model is the basic architecture of an organization through which strategy is executed in day-to-day activities. (Kates & Chender, 2026)

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Our Shared Lineages

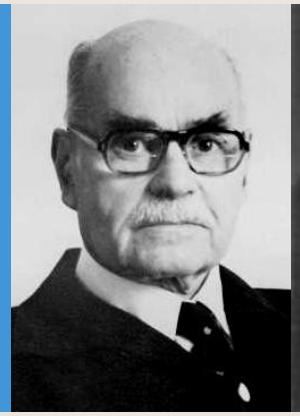
Two Strands Of Systems Theory Underlie Both

Gestalt

Kurt Lewin

Dick Beckhard

Psychoanalytic



Wilfred Bion

Eric Trist

Fred Emery

ntl.org NTL empower | impact | transform

Organization Development

THE TAVISTOCK INSTITUTE®

Complex Systems Theory

Organization Design

Sociotechnical Systems Theory (SST)

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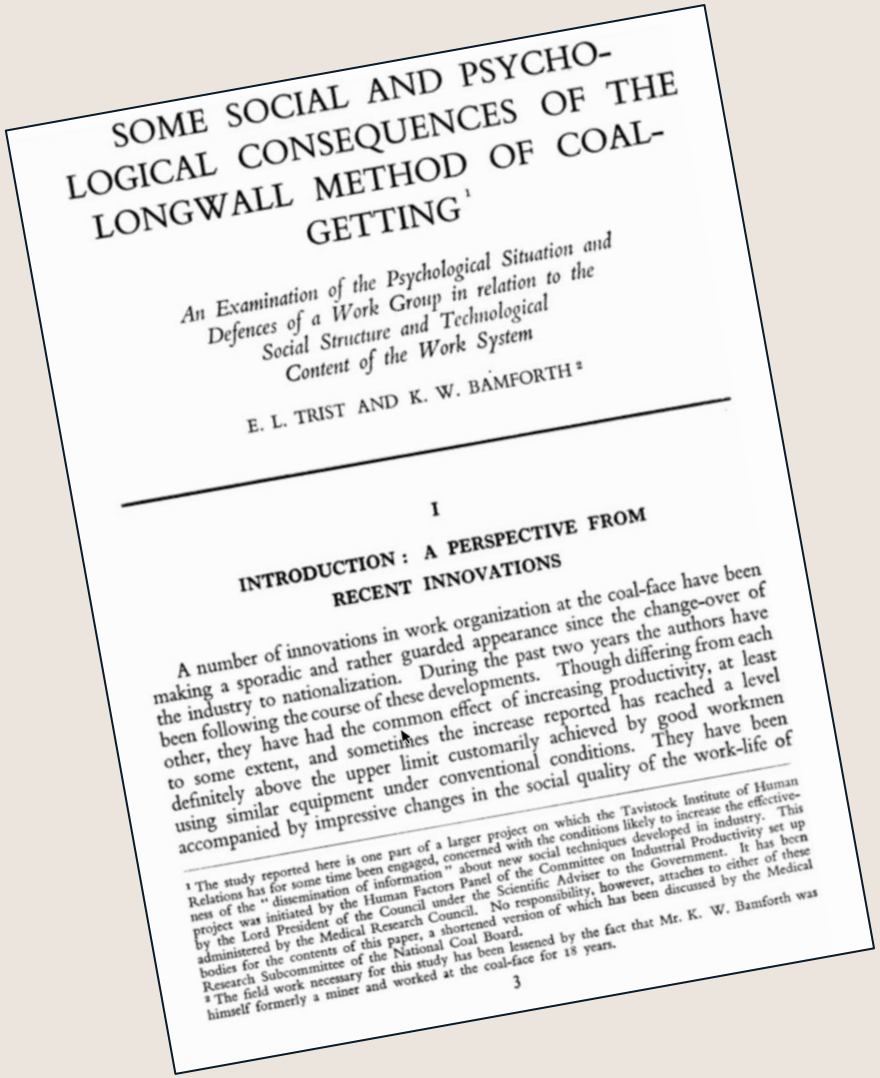
1951: The Moment of Divergence and Convergence



SOME SOCIAL AND PSYCHO-LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE LONGWALL METHOD OF COAL-GETTING[1]

An Examination of the Psychological Situation and Defences of a Work Group in relation to the Social Structure and Technological Content of the Work System

E. L. TRIST AND K. W. BAMFORTH[2]

I

INTRODUCTION: A PERSPECTIVE FROM RECENT INNOVATIONS

A number of innovations in work organization at the coal-face have been making a sporadic and rather guarded appearance since the change-over of the industry to nationalization. During the past two years the authors have been following the course of these developments. Though differing from each other, they have had the common effect of increasing productivity, at least to some extent, and sometimes the increase reported has reached a level definitely above the upper limit customarily achieved by good workmen using similar equipment under conventional conditions. They have been accompanied by impressive changes in the social quality of the work-life of

[1] The study reported here is one part of a larger project on which the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations has for some time been engaged, concerned with the conditions likely to increase the effectiveness of the "dissemination of information" about new social techniques developed in industry. This project was initiated by the Human Factors Panel of the Committee on Industrial Productivity set up by the Lord President of the Council under the Scientific Adviser to the Government. It has been administered by the Medical Research Council. No responsibility, however, attaches to either of these bodies for the contents of this paper, a shortened version of which has been discussed by the Medical Research Subcommittee of the National Coal Board.

[2] The field work necessary for this study has been lessened by the fact that Mr. K. W. Bamforth was himself formerly a miner and worked at the coal-face for 18 years.

3

- Sociotechnical Systems Theory is the first point of both **divergence** and **convergence** of Organization Design and Organization Development.
- The divergence and convergence happened simultaneously.
- A new field (Design) was born out of a field still in its establishment in 1951 (Development).
- The most important context of this moment: very few people were paying attention to either Development or Design!

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Sociotechnical Systems Theory Is Alive and Well Now

Sociotechnical Systems Theory (STS) is discussed and practiced widely within Organization Design today.

STS believes that organizational performance must stem from the **social** (people, culture, values) and **technical** (tools, workflows, processes) aspects of a system being **designed together**.

- The **social** reads a lot like Organization Development….
- The **technical** reads a lot like Organization Design…

- Neither is right or wrong.
- Each is necessary but not sufficient.
- Alone they are incomplete.

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The Confluence

The Practices of Organization Desing and Development

Both practices rely on the combination of **process** and **content**.

Some say true Organization Development is all process consultation….

And some say Organization Design just needs good content expertise.

These ideas are short-sighted. The best practices combine both.

For Example, how Organization Design is practiced todays borrows significantly from the process advancements of Organization Development in the last 40 years, especially **Large-Group Methodologies** like Future Search and Whole-Scale Change.

Similarly, many Organization Development practitioners will include in their services one of the key differentiators of Organization Design: **Structure**.

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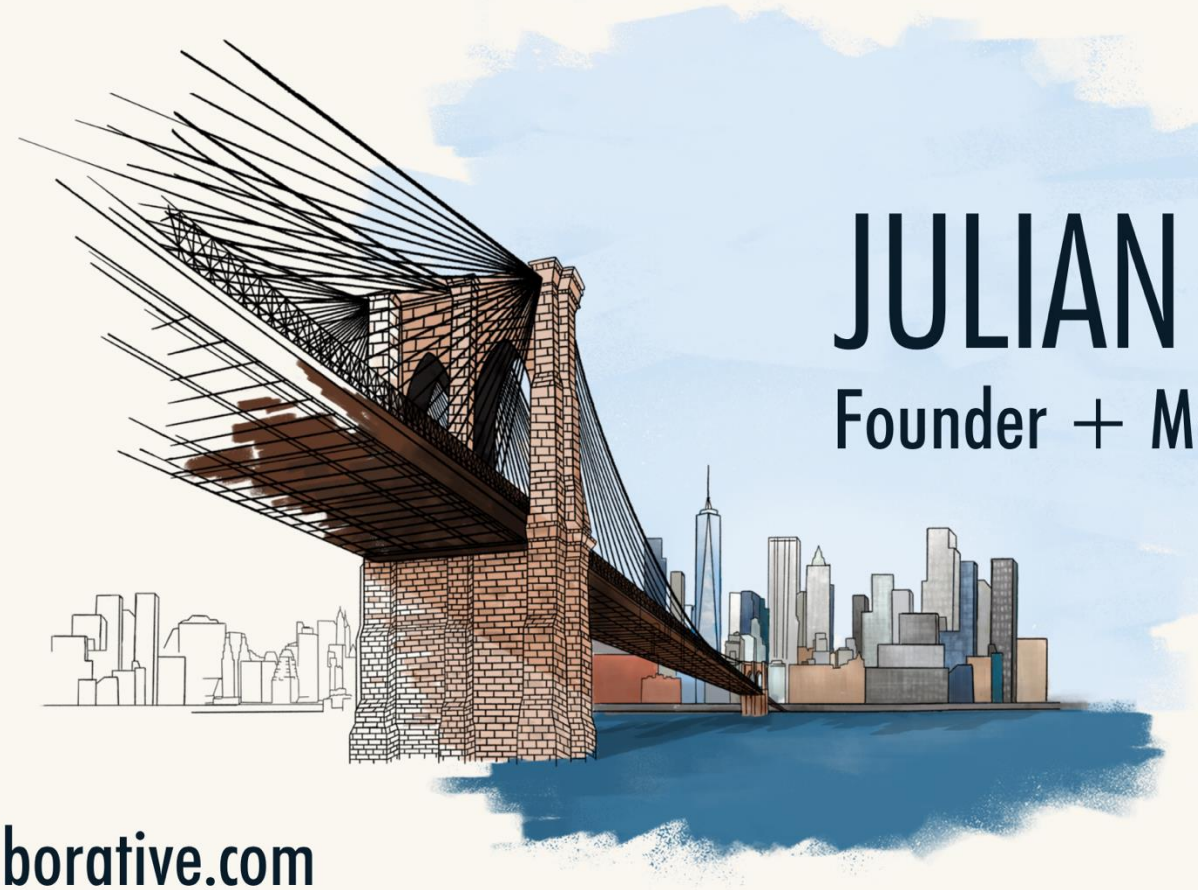

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