

Below is an excerpt from the Get Loose Chapter of [Manage to Lead: Seven Truths to Help You Change the World](#), by: Peter DiGiammarino

Note to OD Students and Practitioners

- p. 13 The application of behavioral psychology to organizations over the past 60 years or so has given rise to Organization Development (OD) tools, methods, and principles. University programs and training labs have taught thousands of professionals in the rapidly evolving discipline. Many of those trained wonder where they ideally fit in the organizations that employ them.

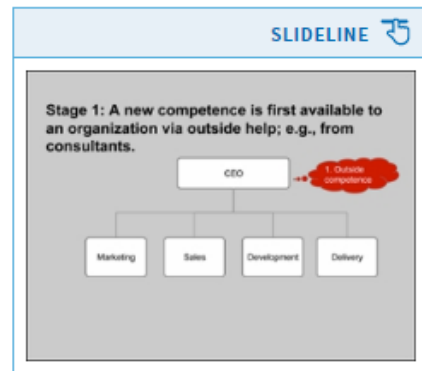
To set the context for thinking about where specially trained resources fit in an organization, consider how other emerging competencies have evolved to fit in organizations. What happened when information technology (IT) entered the work scene provides a case in point.


Stage 1: New competence comes from a source outside the organization. Prior to World War II, IT had yet to enter organizations. When the potential utility of computing power first appeared, organizations hired outside experts (see [Figure 4](#)) who were specially trained to conceive, design, develop, implement, and support ways for IT to drive value.

Stage 2: New competence brought into the organization in a staff position. After experiencing success with outside resources in the '60s and '70s, organizations realized that they would be able to harness and deploy the benefits of IT more efficiently if they staffed their own organizations with IT competent personnel as indicated in [Figure 5](#).


- p. 14 IT departments grew in importance in the '80s and '90s as investments in IT improved productivity and performance. In some, if not many or even most, cases IT departments became disproportionately powerful in their own right with relatively large budgets and the power to decide, even over the CEO, what got done in the organization as suggested by the graphic in [Figure 6](#).

Stage 3: New competence becomes a core competence across the organization. Gradually, IT competence has filtered into the mainstream such that organizations today are often even run by CEOs with IT competence (see [Figure 7](#)) and are no longer likely to be held-up by IT politics. Instead, organizations are being defined by their ability to powerfully employ IT.



[Figure 4.](#)  New competence comes from outside the organization.



[Figure 5.](#)  New competence brought inside to support role.



IT competence is becoming ubiquitous. Every role in an organization will be carried out better because those in it are able to see and seize the potential to improve performance with the intelligent application of IT (as suggested in [Figure 8](#)). IT is headed to be like water, electricity, and phone service in that it will be provided by an outside utility and not manufactured and tended to by resources internal to the organization yet everyone will know how to use it and draw on it to help them perform at peak levels.

OD may be going through a similar progression from outside, to inside staff, to inside core, to pervasive competence in organizations. While the evolution is playing out, those with OD training should either **use OD to help organizations perform better in whatever role they happen to be in or help others in key roles to internalize and effectively use OD tools, methods, and principles.**

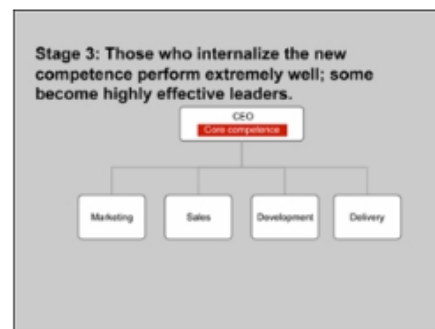
15 The mindset and objective in the latter case, though, ought to be for the OD consultant to put him or herself out of a job. Success for the outside or inside OD consultant is when what s/he knows how to do has been internalized by those s/he helps. S/he can then go on to help others.

That said, OD consultants are a long way from being out of work because it will take decades, if not a century or more, for OD competence to become commonplace. And, in that time, new OD tools, methods, and principles to deploy will certainly evolve to keep OD employment high.

OD professionals who want to secure their financial independence (see [Why Growth is Good and Money Matters](#) in the Appendix) may be wise to consider that those who develop, internalize, adopt, and use OD as a skill in their job function will achieve and be recognized for success and be better rewarded than those who provide OD advice, as important as it might be.



[Figure 6.](#) Support role swells to disproportionate scale.



[Figure 7.](#) New competence absorbed into the line.



[Figure 8.](#) New competence becomes a core skill.



OD competence may eventually show up everywhere in organizations just as today we expect to find rigorous analytical thinking to be universal and ubiquitous across an organization and not housed somewhere in an organization's math or economics department. The evolution of OD competence in-the-line will likely progress through a continuum from unaware to innovator as suggested in *Figure 9* .



Figure 9.  *Competence Maturity Model*

In the meantime, those committed to the evolution of OD competence and the improved performance it helps secure, should, regardless of where they sit in the organization:

- Look for and capitalize upon opportunities to personally make a big positive impact by applying OD tools, methods, and principles to improve performance. Do NOT lead with OD...lead with the improved performance that OD helps produce.
- Find and help develop those in the organization with potential to understand, internalize, and intelligently use OD tools, methods, and principles to perform better.
- Track and promote successes. Consolidate, model, and communicate lessons learned and best practices.
- Connect with those in other organizations, including universities and labs, to systematically bring in new material and contribute to the field.

When considering the points, work problems, and cases presented in this workbook, **there are always three perspectives to consider:**

- That of an **outside consultant**; an individual practitioner or as an employee or contractor with a small or large consulting firm.
- That of an **inside consultant**, such as one who provides staff support in an Human Resources department.
- That of a **worker** in a functional area, such as in marketing, sales, delivery, development, and accounting, or in the role of unit leader or even CEO.

Use and experience all three perspectives when working with the material especially in the cases, the work problems, and the organization selected to study. If you plan to move on in the role of consultant, remember that one learns to **give** better feedback by first learning to **get** feedback. The same is true for what is taught here in that you will do a better job helping clients to perform and grow if you have first stepped into their shoes and put the tools, methods, and techniques into practice in the role of manager or leader.