

Thoughts on Comparing the Practices of Organization Development and Coaching

By N. John Borgen

I have studied consulting, facilitation, organization development and coaching as disciplines or competencies for many years. Regardless if what we call ourselves or how we market our services, it seems to me that the kinds of work we do is related to both individual and group development and expanding self-awareness leading to some degree of change, productivity gains and/or transformation. In other words we are about being agents of conversation, reflection and action enabling purposeful outcomes.

With that as a statement of how I see the commonalities between the world of coaching and OD practice, here are some of the differences I see; these are simply my personal impressions and you may have other and better points of reference. To be sure these are simply my view of tendencies and are not mutually exclusive.

Issue	Organization Development	Coaching
Popularity	Diminishing	Growing
Credentialing	Academic Degrees	Certifications
Clientele	Business, Government, Individuals, Non-Profits	Individuals
Features of Interventions	Meetings/Written Reports	Conversations
Significance	Serious Outcomes	Pleasurable Experiences

My personal observation is that many existing professionals in the fields of OD and coaching use interchangeable techniques and terminologies. We can and often do confuse rather than clarify if we attempt to draw too precise distinctions in language. The bottom-line for both organization development and coaching is about creating visions, implementing practices and getting results.

Note:

For John's full article see, Minnesota Organization Development Network (MNODN) Newsletter, March 2005, Volume 19, Number 8, Page 11.