HRD In The Middle

This is an interview conducted by Bill Harshman, founder of the consulting consortium OPR (Organizational Performance Resources). Bill interviews one of the **BPI** partners about how HRD professionals are utilized.

OPR: Your company has specialized in critical thinking for more than 30 years working successfully with well-known corporations like Verizon Wireless, Daimler-Truck, IBM, eBay, Solar Turbines, Bank of Tokyo and Union Bank. These are some of your success stories. What's one thing you have noticed about typical training projects that needs to be changed or improved to assure successful outcomes?

BPI: Many training projects begin in the middle. The HRD department is consulted only after the decision has been made to do a one type of training.

'For example: *This group needs training in time management (or creativity or project management or effective communication.)"*

OPR: What's wrong with handing off a training project to HRD? Isn't that their area of expertise?

BPI: Yes, but was the decision chain leading to the training project valid? Training may not be needed. Or, the real need may require more than training including changes in policies, incentives, and leader behavior. And often the training target group should be expanded to include management.

OPR: What can an HRD manager do about this start in the middle problem?

BPI: I think it is very useful to establish a consulting relationship with internal customers. Then, even if you are not called in at the early stages of discussion, you should be able to help your internal customer to think through the decision and make some needed adjustments that can make a big difference for the better.

OPR: For example?

BPI: The operations manager of a major power plant

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construction firm decided to do training with his engineers, supervisors, and project leads in project management basics. But the HRD manager helped him re-think this issue.

OPR: How?

BPI: First, the HRD manager asked him what triggered the interest in doing the project management training with this target group. With more questioning and discussion, it was revealed that costs associated with overtime to meet end customer deadlines and the complaints of project leads struggling to get work from resource managers triggered the decision.

OPR: So, what's wrong with the project management training decision?

BPI: Well, as it turned out, the cause of all the stress was the organization's project system. The system needed to be changed so that each project is assigned a clear priority and that critical organizational resources are not overloaded causing long wait times. Once the system was made rational and realistic, training in project management basics will make a significant contribution. But, without these changes training alone would not have the desired level of impact.

Learn a systematic process for internal organizational consulting and troubleshooting your systems. Sponsor a **Critical Thinking** workshop for your HRD staff. Give them the skills to be competent internal consultants. **Contact** us now. We can help!