INSIDE

>> Call for papers (p. 4)
>> International responses- Steinman
>> Comments on Jamieson's essay- Arroja.
>> MCD audit by the Academy- YOU FAXBACK
>> Reports on Academy meetings (pp. 2&4)

Covin & Buono

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

BUILDING BRIDGES

Terry Armstrong, University of West Florida

The Managerial Consultation Division continues to concentrate on the theme of "Building Bridges" between practitioners and academics. The vitality of the business school depends on the health of these bridges. The traffic on this bridge is two-way. For example faculty consultants bring stories back to the classroom to enrich teaching. Ideas from academia make their way across this bridge to increase the effectiveness of clients and consulting organizations in the "real" world.

We sponsored several sessions last summer on bridging the gap between theory and practice in addition to pre and post conference workshops for members interested in starting to consult along with programs for the seasoned professional. Further, there was a session on developing business school courses in consulting.

Over the last decade consulting organizations grew substantially more influential in society. They are, for example, among the biggest recruiters of business school students today. The MC division has several initiatives to build bridges to this community. Michael Shays (Journal of Mgmt Consulting Publisher) is a partner in this quest.

Another example is the new $500 best paper award sponsored by the George L Grazadio School of Business and Management at Pepperdine U. This award is for the best paper about consulting practice. We expect many full-time consultants to share some of their insights into effective practice techniques by submitting a paper. We'd like to encourage joint academic/practitioner pre- and post conference program proposals for next year, as well.

Continued on Page 2

WRITE TO US-- Have a comment about the news articles or consulting, you'd like to see published? Send a note to Editor, Bill Vroman (bvroman@loyola.lattarze.edu) or fax 410/628-0380.

MCD INITIATIVES

>> Marilyn Harris (Central Michigan), Ernest Gilmont (ACME) and Terry Armstrong (UWF) are planning a conference between the MCD and ACME which you will be hearing more about as the planning progresses.

>> We are on phase one of our Internet strategy. We're increasing the size of our Web sight at the U of West Florida. Our new webmaster is Brian Peach. You'll get an announcement in the next newsletter about our expanded WebSite.

>> Board Member Max Elden will help practitioners write papers for the Annual Meeting. He can be contacted at Ph; 713-286-3445.

THIS IS your first notice to join us for the 1997 "Members and Friends" dinner at the Boston Convention. Last year's dinner in Cincinnati was shared by a crowd of thirty five people from all corners of the earth. Good discussion... good times.

HELP-- There is going to be extreme competition for limited space in Boston in 1997. We need your help to increase the number of submissions to this Division. The more submissions the more space is the "game." Start soon and send us a paper in January.

(See "Call" on p. 4)

INTERNATIONAL CONSULTING ISSUES

Joseph B. Steinman, Valcon, Dudinger, Switzerland

I quote from our firm's brochure. "We will not take an assignment where we feel that we do not have the skills, training, and capabilities to complete..."
International- continued from page 1
the assignment to our client's satisfaction and to add significantly more value to his company than the cost of our services. We will not assume an assignment where there is any conflict of interest or even a potential conflict with a current or previous client. A competitor or with our own integrity, and we always do what we say we will do.

In other words, we have an ethical responsibility to our clients, our profession and ourselves to accept only those assignments where we truly feel that we can add value to the client organization.

As noted above, I believe (as does David Jamieson) that it is incumbent on consultants to transfer knowledge, skills and capabilities to client organizations (where feasible) rather than developing client sinecures, providing little more than finished reports and recommendations.

THANK YE... THANK YE
Theresa Covin- Kennesaw State
1996 Program Chair

I'd like to thank all of the members who helped in putting the 1996 conference program together. Reviewers, discussants, session chairs, and presenters all did an excellent job. Over 40 MCD members served in these important roles and your contribution is deeply appreciated. Because of some changes in program format for this year, as well as the additional space available in Cincinnati, we were able to accept more papers and symposia than in previous years, and I believe that this lead to a much stronger program.

Three MCD papers were selected to be part of Academy-wide Shared Interest Sessions. These were comprised of papers from several different divisions that were focused on a particular theme, such as quality management. Seven papers were selected to be presented in our two MCD Division paper sessions, and two additional papers were selected for presentation in "interactive paper sessions." The MCD Division also sponsored or co-sponsored five symposia.

We were fortunate to have Professor Edgar Schein as our Distinguished Speaker this year. Over 100 conference participants crowded the room to hear Dr. Schein's discussion of who is and who should be the client in a consulting engagement.

The William Jerome Arnold Meritorious Paper Award, co-sponsored by the MC Division and the Association of Consulting Organizations, was awarded to Professors Andreas Werr, Torbjorn Stjernberg, and Peter Docherty of the Stockholm School of Economics. The three authors received $500 and plaques in honor of their paper entitled "The Functions and Methods of Change in the Work of Management Consultants."

View From the Chair Continued
The division now has 5 awards for papers. In addition to the award for the best "consulting practice" paper, there are 3 student paper awards (thanks to the work of Bob Golembiewski), and the traditional MCD "Best Paper" award. Encourage your academic and consulting colleagues to submit a paper or symposia proposal to the division.

A special thanks to Joanne Preston and Bill Werther for serving on the board. They both leave this term. Bill's service includes being Chair of the Division and continuing work on the Robert G. Wright Founder's Award.

Some Thoughts on David Jamieson's Article, "Let's Get Serious About Consulting.
(others will be published in January)
Rodrigo Arriola, Ph.D.- University in Ecuador
I enjoyed the Jamieson article in the April issue of the Consulting Practice Communicate. I enthusiastically agree with your idea of making consulting a serious activity and keeping it so. However, as the practice of consulting is essentially eclectic and results oriented, I frequently find training and program implementation to be integral parts of wider consulting projects.

I have helped some companies to redesign their structure, to change their managerial style, to solve cross cultural problems, or to get into TQM. All those activities meet your criteria to identify real consultation, as I have participated with the managers in making decisions about what to do and how to do it, certainly a customized job.

Another difficult point is that you are committed to produce results by a dead line and have a very limited time left to ponder whether you should call your services one way or the other. The analysis you propose seems adequate when it comes to sharing experiences with colleagues at conferences. A good definition of what was the overall consulting project, what was implementation, what training was involved, and so on, will help to be sure we are speaking the same language, and the papers we present will follow a more academic style. I agree with you about what we ought to do, yet I think I could benefit from a wider interchange of ideas about how to do it.

1997 CASE COMPETITION--There is a pre-convention case competition in 1997, organized in conjunction with the Business Policy Division. Send Cases/Get info from Bill Naumes; Dept of Mgmt; Whitmore SOBE; U of New Hampshire, Durham, NH 03824; Ph. 603-862-2618

Send MCD a Paper Page 2
A Day Discussing Consulting- from the 1996 Academy of Management Pre-Conference Meeting -- Anthony Buono Bentley College

This is a report of the Managerial Consultation Division Pre-conference Workshop on "The Consulting Process: Diagnostic Tools and Intervention Strategies"

Saturday's full-day session (10-5) was a productive and energetic exchange between beginning and established consultants concerning the myriad challenges and dilemmas confronted in organizational interventions. Marilyn Harris began the morning with an overview of the consulting process, focusing on the dynamics, models and theories underlying planned organizational change. The highly interactive exchange was highlighted by Marilyn's reflections on her consulting experiences and reflective comments by session participants including Bill Wolf, Charles Nelson and Bill Werther. George Trepo concluded the morning session with an examination of organizational diagnosis, emphasizing a sociological diagnostic tool he has developed called the Actor's Logic System Analysis (ALS). The ALS approach focuses on a four-step process of (1) identifying relevant actors, (2) examining their network of relationships (sociogram, alliances and dependencies), (3) analyzing the logic underlying their actions (based on shared perceptions and observations), and (4) assessing the costs and consequences of likely outcomes.

The afternoon session on intervention tools and technology, facilitated by Tony Buono, began with a lively discussion of the limits to planned change in the context of what Peter Vail has referred to as "permanent white water." Following an overview of the various intervention techniques available to consultants -- inter-system, large system, group, and individual level -- the discussion focused on Tony's consulting work on mergers, acquisitions and partnerships. Marilyn concluded the day's session by facilitating a discussion of the role of consultants in initiating change and the challenge of seeking continuous improvement in our consulting efforts through redesigning our future.

Combined with the workshop on "Building a Consulting Practice," chaired by Terry Armstrong and Wait Wheatley, and the "Consultation Clinic," convened by Dave Jamieson and Chris Worley, Academy members were provided with an overview of the myriad dimensions of the consulting experience. Feedback by those attending suggests that this type of exchange should be a regular pre-conference offering at the Academy meetings. Your feedback and suggestions are welcome. Planning has already begun for the 1997 meeting. Please contact Jeff Kerr, program chair-elect, who will develop the pre- and post-conference sessions next year?

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WE WANT YOUR PAPERS.
Submit in January to MCD