GENERATING ORGANIZATIONAL BREAKTHROUGHS
Enhancing the Synergies between HRD research and practice

We’re the A-Team for Organizations! A diverse group of highly talented professionals ready to make an impact.

HRD-related breakthroughs allow our organizations to skip forward. With the rate of change we face, we need breakthroughs.
THE PLAYERS (ROLES)

Organizations (Leaders and Employees)

The PLAYERS (ROLES)

Researchers

Practitioners

Organizations (Leaders and Employees)
We know there is a gap here. We know that there needs to be more partnership. We know that both audiences need to be more deliberate in how they reach out to the other. We know this.
“...SOMEONE NEEDS TO BE THE “BRIDGE” TO TRANSLATE THE RESEARCH INTO PRACTITIONER JOURNALS.”

Lise Saari, Bridging the Worlds

THE PLAYERS (ROLES)

- Researchers
- Connectors (Educators, Writers, Speakers, Consultants)
- Practitioners
- Organizations (Leaders and Employees)
FIVE CHALLENGES

There are many more problems causing the gap between research and practice. These are the most important to solve.

1

DIFFERING DEFINITIONS OF SUCCESS FOR SOLUTIONS. AND WORTHY. AND RIGHT.

Practitioners are not seeking “the truth.” We are seeking approaches that work. These differences cause a lack of mutual respect and trust and partnership and interest in working together.
• All paths are legitimate, because all can help move things forward.
• All paths are highly flawed and have limitations.
• Be aggressive: Helping find the most useful approach.
• Be inclusive: That various tools and approaches are appropriate.
• Create “pull” through interest, not judgment.
• Research can, and often does, inform all paths.
RESEARCH IS NARROW. PRACTICE IS SYSTEMIC.

This is largely a design issue. And a time issue. And an educational issue. And a resourcing issue. OK, it is a complex problem.

"AS LONG AS WE SINGLE OUT INDIVIDUAL PHENOMENA, WE DO NOT DISCOVER ANY FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE LIVING AND THE NON-LIVING."

Ludwig von Bertalanffy, *Problems of Life: An evolution of modern biological thought*
IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND AN ORGANIZED WHOLE, WE MUST KNOW BOTH THE PARTS AND THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THEM.

Ludwig von Bertalanffy, The History and Status of General Systems Theory

EXAMPLE: THE M-PRIZE
EXAMPLE: THE M-PRIZE

Affirmation (Podsakoff, 2007)
Behavior (Podsakoff, 2007)
Coaching and feedback (Rotem, 2005)
Conscientious change (Cunningham, 2004)
Compensation (Wickham, 2005)
Constructive (Haines, 2007)
Creativity (Myers, 2006)
Emotional intelligence (Chen, 2007)
Employee well being (Wright, 2007)
Flexible work arrangements (Haines, 2010)
Informal and external connections (Haines, 2007)
Innovation (Podsakoff, 2007)
Individual identification (Wickham, 2004)
Innovation in the workplace (Lee, 2010)
Industry growth (Haines, 2007)
Innovativeness (Podsakoff, 2007)
Job challenge (Haines, 2007)
Job creativity (Haines, 2006)
Job centrality (Haines, 2004)
Job discretion (Haines, 2006)
Job satisfaction (Wright, 2007)
Job stress (Islam, 2008; Mitchell, 2006)
Macro-economic conditions (Haines, 2007)
Organization/HR (Gorgancioglu, 2007)
Organization identification (Ashforth, 2000)
Organizational identity (Wickham, 2006)
Personal fit and social capital (Lee, 2010)
Polarization (Kim, 1985)
Predictability of time demands (Haines, 2007)
Professional self-esteem (Haines, 2006)
Recruitment (Podsakoff, 2007)
Recruitment processes (Kelley, 2010)
Relationships with customers (Borgough, 1996; Bart, 2000)
Resilience (Podsakoff, 2007)
Self-efficacy (Ball, 1993)
Senior management actions (Kelley, 2010)
Social comparison (Eddleston, 2009)
Social support (Haines, 2007)
Socialization tactics (Yam, 1993; Lee, 2011)
Supportive leadership skills (Haines, 2010)
Support for supervisors (Islam, 2008; Kelley, 2014)
Tribal identity (Kasser, 1993)
Trust in top management (Baedeker, 2006)
Unsolicited vs. non-lottery events (Haines, 2010)
Work (Ball, 2010)
Work life alignment (Parker, 2010)
Work life balance (Haines, 2007)
EXAMPLE: EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

- Multiple papers being presented here.
- Hundreds of others that explore various aspects of employee engagement.
- A group of us in this audience are interested in this topic. We are asking: What practices, approaches, and overall program design will work best for us to increase employee engagement? How can we create a workplace where employees are driven to do their best work in the service of the organization’s goals?
- Based on the eclectic papers delivered here and the others we have not read, what should we be “doing” with this?

“HRD RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES CANNOT ADDRESS COMPLEX PRACTITIONER PROBLEMS.”

PRACTITIONERS FOCUS TOO MUCH ON “BEST PRACTICES”

We benchmark to the point of reinforcing loops of irrelevance. Judging “best practices” as those things the Fortune 100 and our toughest competitors are doing makes no sense. And yet, it carries a lot of weight in the C-Suite.

“…PRACTITIONER JOURNALS COVER VERY LITTLE OF THE MOST ROBUST RESEARCH RELATED TO HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT.”

Lise Saari, Bridging the Worlds
"THERE IS A MISMATCH BETWEEN WHAT SCIENCE KNOWS AND BUSINESS DOES."

Dan Pink, *Drive: The surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*

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WHAT WE KNOW VS. WHAT WE DO

THREE BEST SELLING BOOKS, 100S OF STUDIES CITED, PRACTICE AMONG TRADITIONAL ORGANIZATIONS LARGELY UNCHANGED.

**Drive**
2011

**Punished by Rewards**
1999

**Out of the Crisis**
1982
"WE DO HAVE KNOWLEDGE THAT COULD HELP. BUT GETTING IT OUT THERE, AND PERSUADING PEOPLE TO USE IT, IS GOING TO BE VERY CHALLENGING."

Sara Rynes, Let’s create a tipping point: What academics and practitioners can do, alone and together

4

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK MASKS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORK.

It is nearly impossible for connectors and practitioners to tell how important research is by reading the write up. We practitioners have many things competing for our attention – great research needs to bowl us over.
What practitioners read

We skim the abstract. If we like the content, we might then go to the conclusions. If the conclusions seem helpful, we might skim the middle parts.

Barrier: Too many “limitations.”
Barrier: We can’t understand what you are actually trying to say.
Barrier: Conclusions don’t conclude anything.

A SOMEWHAT RIDICULOUS EXAMPLE

Your Research Paper

Abstract

Stuff in the Middle

Conclusions

CONNECTOR STORIES ARE OFTEN TOO EDGY. AND OUR MOST POPULAR CONNECTORS ARE NOT INVESTED.

“Popular” as defined by the organization – leaders and practitioners. These are the stories that are sought, told, and resonate, but still make little difference.
B&N Bestseller List under “Organizational Behavior”
FOUR IDEAS

Our organizations will be different – better – if we can together do these things.

FORGET RELEVANCE, OUR WORK NEEDS TO BE STRATEGICALLY SIGNIFICANT.

Relevance is not enough. It's all relevant, but we can't use it all. We can link refrigerators and space dust if we try hard enough.
IN ADDITION TO BEING QUICKER TO SPOT EMERGING AREAS OF RESEARCH NEEDS, ACADEMICS ALSO NEED TO FIND WAYS TO DISSEMINATE NEW KNOWLEDGE MORE QUICKLY.

Sara Rynes, Let’s create a tipping point: What academics and practitioners can do, alone and together

LEADERSHIP AND EXISTENTIALISM?

Fascinating? Sure. Useful? Perhaps. Should this be on any practitioner’s to-do list? No. (Unless he/she is looking for an excuse to switch professions.)
A FEW IDEAS....

• What are the best ways to cope with and manage the load bear of change?
• How to balance intrinsic (like engagement) and extrinsic (like accountability) motivation systems so they neither compete nor cancel each other out.
• How can I optimize the performance management system – goals, evaluations, feedback, rewards?
• How can my organization of 20,000+ employees improve partnership, agility, and collaboration?
• What are the best ways to cultivate perseverance, courage, and leadership maturity?

EXAMPLE: LAURA COONS’ WORK ON WRITING SCENARIO PLANNING STORIES

Significance might also require that we apply knowledge beyond the scope of the research – it almost always does. So be prepared and willing to apply your work where it can help.
FOCUS ON OUR MAJOR PEOPLE SYSTEMS/PROGRAMS

• BTW, these are not discreet!
• Talent Acquisition
• Talent Management and Retention
• Performance Management & Accountability
• Culture
• Employee Engagement
• Change Leadership and Management
• Capacity Development
• Planning and Focus

HIGHLIGHT BIG MISSES AND WEIGHTY OPPORTUNITIES.

What does science know for sure that we are ignoring? What are the most compelling opportunities we are missing? Scream it to us!
WHAT PRACTITIONERS
WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT

New Research Opportunity!
Tell Me About This! 😊
Tell Me About This! 😞

New Research Opportunity!
Depends on the Organization and Timing
Depends on the Organization and Timing

I don’t have time for this. 😩
I don’t have time for this. 😩
I don’t have time for this. 😩

Confidence in Research
Low High Very High

SCREAM THIS – UNTIL WE HEAR YOU, AND
UNTIL WE ACT (CAVEAT: NOT FOR NARROW
CONCLUSIONS, FOR THE SYSTEM)

New Research Opportunity!
Tell Me About This! 😊
Tell Me About This! 😞

New Research Opportunity!
Depends on the Organization and Timing
Depends on the Organization and Timing

I don’t have time for this. 😩
I don’t have time for this. 😩
I don’t have time for this. 😩

Confidence in Research
Low High Very High

Where standard practice is **NOT** consistent with what research is telling us.
"THE CONTEXT MUST MATCH YOUR INTENTIONS."

Peter Block, author of Community and Flawless Consulting

CONNECT THE DOTS AND THE LINES
AND THE ARROWS.

See the systems. Tie things together and derive meaning. Don’t be afraid to make a conclusion or recommendation.
FOR EXAMPLE

- We know that the research is clear that early socialization tactics affect short term turnover. But how might we design our recruiting and onboarding practices to optimize all the research?
- We know that there is a downside to using extrinsic rewards for work that requires critical thinking and innovation. But how does this fact combine with the other research on using goals, incentives, rewards, evaluations? What overall picture emerges?

EXAMPLE: M-PRIZE

- 47 studies tell us that numerous and diverse factors that affect whether people stay and grow.
- Our street smarts tells us this, too.
- Our traditional (some of our best, best practices) approach to designing a talent management system comes from a different set of assumptions.
- To make this connection, we have to ask different questions, be willing to apply knowledge, and challenge our practices.
- We need to affect design, not just practice.
- Are my conclusions right or true? Who knows. Are they on the right track and potentially game changing? Absolutely.
PARTNER TO GO BEYOND WHAT WE KNOW, TO HOW WE CAN **USE** WHAT WE KNOW.

Large, conservative, complex, regulated, old organizations often don’t change because the path forward is not clear (not even partly-clear) and does not seem possible or plausible or perhaps even relevant.

“...THEY SHOULD KNOW MORE ABOUT HOW TO **USE** RESEARCH AS A MEANS TO IMPROVE PRACTICE...”

Ronald L. Jacobs, HRD Partnerships for Integrating Research and Practice
CONDUCT RESEARCH, THEN FIGURE OUT HOW TO USE WHAT YOU LEARN FROM IT

Doing Research

“Performance evaluations don’t work. They aren’t worth the resources spent or the effort.”

Applying Research

“Huh?”

HERE’S A TIP FOR THOSE OF YOU COURTING ORGANIZATIONS – TALK TO US ABOUT THIS AND WE WILL PULL INTO THE PARTNERSHIP

Doing Research

“Performance evaluations don’t work. They aren’t worth the resources spent or the effort.”

Applying Research

“Huh?”

Margaret Heffernan, TED Talk, Dare to Disagree

IDEA: PRACTITIONER’S DAY AT A FUTURE AHRD CONFERENCE

Designed from the practitioner’s lens, bringing together researchers and practitioners, celebrating the research, deriving meaning.
IDEA: DEDICATE A CLASS, FOR A SEMESTER, TO UNCOVERING, SYNTHESIZING AND SHARING THE MOST IMPORTANT RESEARCH TO PRACTICE GAPS.

Your local employers will be eager to support and participate.

IDEA: FOR AN UPCOMING CONFERENCE, HIGHLIGHT ONE ORGANIZATIONAL PRIORITY/QUESTION AND SEEK SUBMISSIONS, THEN GET THOSE SCHOLARS TOGETHER TO SHARE THE WORK AS A WHOLE.

You will see organizations go, “me first, me first!”
IDEA: CREATE A TEDX HRD. INVITE LOCAL AND VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE.

Say it like we like to hear it.

IDEA: FOCUS ON HAVING A MAJOR IMPACT IN JUST ONE OR TWO AREAS OF PRACTICE (AS A CONCERTED EFFORT) AND HIT THOSE AREAS BIG AND IN MANY WAYS.

Things change when conversations for the change, outweigh and outnumber those not for the change.
WHO WE NEED TO BE.
To make this happen. To have impact on generating organizational breakthroughs.

| Share What We Know For Sure | Be Brave Show Courage | Play Big | Go Where the Energy Is |

EAGERLY PROLIFERATE ROBUST RESEARCH KNOWLEDGE LIKE WE DO BEST PRACTICES.
BE BRAVE. SHOW THE COURAGE NEEDED TO LEAD INTO THE TRICKY BITS.

Trust yourself and your partners so you can boldly lead.

PLAY BIG OR GO HOME.

I am convinced that this is what our leaders really want. We must be smart about how we nudge our organizations forward, but forward we must nudge.

This also means that we need to question the significance of our work and align accordingly.
GO WHERE THE ENERGY IS.

Lisa Haneberg, said after beating my head against the wall one too many times.

Warning: Double Meaning.

CONNECTORS ARE THE KEYSTONE.

We are all connectors. We also need to seek out and court connectors. Ensure the most important stories are being told.
THE WHOLE THING

Researchers
Connectors (Educators, Writers, Speakers, Consultants)
Practitioners
Organizations (Leaders and Employees)

Keystone
Significant Work
Big & Weighty
Connect the Dots
Path Forward

Share What We Know For Sure
Be Brave Show Courage
Play Big
Go Where the Energy Is

We’re the A-Team for Organizations! A diverse group of highly talented professionals ready to make an impact.

HRD-related breakthroughs allow our organizations to skip forward. With the rate of change we face, we need breakthroughs.
MY SLIDES ARE AVAILABLE AT:
WWW.LISAHANEBERG.COM/SECRET_PAGE.HTML

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