

OD Network Conference 2013, San Jose

Matt Minahan's Dailies

OD Network Conf 2013 in San Jose – Day 1

It is hard not to hear Dionne Warwick wafting through the memory banks. At least for those of us of a certain generation.

Before San Jose meant high tech and innovation and Ebay and Paypal, it was a sleepy suburb of San Francisco, near Palo Alto the home of Stanford. No one knew it. It didn't stand out for much of anything, except as the rhyme at end of the "Do you know the way to . . ." lyric in Dionne Warwick's famous song. Of course she needed to ask how to get here, because no one knew it when Hal David and Burt Bacharach wrote the song in the 60s. Rumor has it that lyricist Hal David was stationed here in the Navy and had some fond memories of the town, even if he couldn't find it.

Today, though, San Jose is at the soul of Silicon Valley, where innovation is added to the water. Where creativity captivates the imagination. Where every young 30 something is waiting for the IPO. Where there are more hybrid Priuses and electric Volt and Teslas per capita than anywhere else in the world. Where housing costs rose 1,000% in 25 years and are now the highest in the nations.

That's quite understandable, though, when you realize that it is sunny 300+ days per year in San Jose (take THAT, Seattle!) and the average low temps in the winter are near 50 and the average high temps in the summer are near 80 (take THAT, Florida!).

All of which makes San Jose the ideal spot for the OD Network's annual conference this weekend. Our theme is innovation, and we've certainly landed ourselves right in the thick of it here.

The halls are starting to fill up today with people who look like us. Young and old, diverse cultures, many races, eager to connect, eager to learn. Today was about deep dives into interesting topics in our preconference intensives.

The full day deep dives included Ivette Ruiz from Yale New Haven Hospital who did Frontline Staff Leadership Development, fellow NTL member Scott Bristol and Tiffany von Emmel who led an interpersonal leadership lab called Dancing with the Power of Privilege, and Ilene Wasserman and colleagues who worked with a model called Group Work for Transformation and Social Justice.

The half day pre confs included David Drake on the Organization as a Community of Campfires, and Steve Wallis on a model for working within and between organizations.

Your OD Network Board of Trustees met on Friday and Saturday, and are thrilled that we've had a positive net income for the third year in a row, following 6 years of losses, and that our membership is now growing again. Some belt tightening, some focus shifting, some spectacular work by our ODN staff, and an incredibly powerful and effective Board of Trustees are all responsible for the success.

I want to acknowledge this great board, including my co-chair Marisa Sanchez; Secretary and Conf Co-Chair Mike Horne; Treasurer and Co-Chair of the Strategic Relations Committee Magdy Mansour; Co-

Chairs of the Culture, Diversity and Inclusion Committee Norm Jones and Elena Feliz, Conf Planning Co-Chair Yasmeen Burns, Social Media Chair Christina Bell, and your humble scribe, Co-Chair of the Board, and Chair of the Professional Development Committee.

<http://www.odnetwork.org/?page=BoardofTrustees>

We are also thrilled to welcome two new Trustees whose terms begin in January but who were here and making a huge contribution to our Network future already. Sherry Duda is a long time internal who is now President of Talent Impact Consulting in Pittsburgh; she'll be stepping in as Chair of the Membership Community. And Sanjay Naik who is the VP for Performance Development with Emirates Group in Dubai, whose core business is Emirates Air, who will be working with me on the Strategic Relations Committee.

Some more preliminaries on Sunday morning, and then we're off and running on Sunday afternoon. It's great, and it's only getting better.

Plenty of room for more, if you know the way to San Jose ;-)

<http://www.odnetwork.org/?page=ConfReg2013>

You can follow us at #ODN13, on Facebook and Twitter, in our Linked In group, and our ODNet email discussion lists.

Matt

OD Network Conf 2013 in San Jose – Day 2

In the history of OD Network conferences, this one here in San Jose is not going to be a large one; we're just a bit short of 400 this year, though with a brisk walk-in trade, we're hoping for even more.

However, I've heard from at least a dozen people that they prefer this size conference because it is much more manageable for them than our larger events and that they feel and experience the community here more fully than with our larger events.

As the pre-confs were going in yesterday, there were dozens of lobby sightings included Fred Miller, Jo Sanzgiri, Ed Schein, Robert Keega, Karen Davis, Paul Cadario, Mila Baker, Kristine Lea, Eric Saunders, Heather Sherbert, and of others as the multitude begins to assemble.

We also had a nice catch up conversation with Siraj Sirajuddin who leads Temenos, which specializes helping individuals and leaders better understand their motivations and their relationships to the people and situations they interact with, both personally and professionally. I asked Siraj about the word Temenos, and he explained it means 'container' in Greek. The container can be thought of in this context as the space, energy and interactions created between people. A marriage is a container. A group at work is a container. A set of people on a retreat is a container. Imagine all the containers you step into and out of in your daily life. The conceptual model of a container helps us perceive and

understand our relationships with ourselves and others, so that we can consciously let go of emotional baggage and create strategies that serve our and others' needs well. We are thrilled to have Siraj and his folks as sponsors for the conference and look forward to a long and profitable relationship.

Our Sunday morning was a lot the same and a little bit different. We had the gathering of the People of Color Affinity Group all day on Saturday. This morning, the Men in OD, LGBTQ Practitioners in OD, Regional OD Leaders, the Global Forum 2013, and Latino/a affinity groups all met starting at 7:45. The New Attendee and Member Orientation was a 9, followed quickly by the Dick Beekard Mentoring Program. Your humble scribe inherited the wonderfully simple and effective speed dating design for this from Denny Gallagher about 7 or 8 years ago, and was thrilled that Denny was here this morning and involved in the program himself. Fellow Board member, and conf planning committee co-chair Yasmeen Burns co-facilitated the session, and it was great having almost 100 people participate again this year!

The conference officially opened this afternoon with welcomes from Mike Horne and Yasmeen Burns, conference committee co-chairs and Board of Trustee members, and the hosts for this wonderful event. The opening keynoter was Dr. Robert Keegan of Harvard who has done 30 years of research on adult development, leadership development, executive coaching and change management on a global scale.

Bob shared with us his model for a DDO – that is, a deliberately developmental organization. He described the three levels of adult development: 1) the socialized mind, with which we are a team player and faithful follower; 2) the self authorizing mind, which creates its own agenda, and is its own compass, does independent thinking and problem solving; and 3) the self transforming mind, which is the meta leader, the multiframe leader, is able to hold contradictions, go beyond problem solving to problem finding, think interdependently, and can go from learning to lead to leading to learn.

Bob said that if you want to enhance human capacity, you can either 1) buy it from other orgs, or 2) build it, which can be done either via a) technical training within an existing form; or b) transformational learning, which is not just passing along information, but learning how to change the system itself. Transformational learning goes beyond acquiring information or acquiring thoughts and activities or files and folders (in the language of computers) to intervening on the operating system.

He said that 20th century learning relied on coaching, mentoring, leadership development programs, corporate universities, and while all of those are good, the 21st century will be about creating a culture that immersively touches everyone every day.

And then it got interesting.

Keegan said that they had been researching two organizations with he called DDOs – deliberately developmental organizations – Bridgewater Associates, a hedge fund, and Decurion Corporation, a movie theatre, nursing home, and real estate company. In two of the most hard charging, capital intensive, bottom line, competitive sectors in the world. But both have made a commitment to their people and to themselves to create a culture which encourages, even requires staff to be constantly

developing themselves, both personally and professionally. Even at this point, there were some in the room who thought this was a bit sinister, but he went on.

He said that in these and all organizations, and in fact, in all life, we all have a 2nd job: to make sure to protect our image and others' impressions of us. He said we all waste an enormous amount of energy and time being seen as perfect, maximizing our achievements and minimizing our mistakes. He said that for most people, the unchosen sharing of my mistakes and weaknesses is their worst nightmare. He said the DDOs do the opposite. They want their staff to bring their mistakes out into the public. They want them to bring their full, growing, developing humanity to work.

Bob said that DDOs have the following features: 1) rank or title does not have its usual privileges; 2) everyone in the organization is HR; 3) everyone needs a crew, or a group or team to work with; and 4) everyone builds the culture.

So, what do DDOs do? 1) they commit to constructive destabilization. They seek out opportunities to learn and lean into them. At Bridgewater, they believe that Pain + Reflection = Progress; 2) they are constantly seeking to close the developmental gaps. Annual reviews are ludicrous; why wait for a year to talk about performance and development. They tape all of their conversations. ALL of them. Even between bosses about employees. And then they share that tape with the employee. ALL of them. They want the employees to know everything that is being said about them ALL of the time; 3) they look at the timescale for growth of a project or product or a person, not just closure to get it/her/him done; 4) the interior life of staff is part of what is managed. The manager is responsible for what is going on inside of the employee.

He said that in the old economy, it was economic man who was rewarded with material goods and supplies to support an external life. But in the new economy, it is psychological man who is rewarded with intangible goods to support an internal life.

Keegan said that at Bridgewater, they have a quick test: 1) can you tell me your One Big Thing (OBT)? 2) can you tell me what progress you are making on your OBT? 3) who around here cares about your OBT? 4) how regularly do you get to work on your OBT? And 5) when you do make progress on your OBT, how does that get noticed?

He quoted Bryan Ungad of Decurion with the thought of the day: "Feast on your weaknesses, or starve on your ego."

The Bridgewater Principles can be found at <http://www.bwater.com/home/culture--principles.aspx>

Bridgewater's founder, Ray Dalio has written a 123 page treatise on these principles which begins with: "Above all else, I want you to think for yourself — to decide 1) what you want, 2) what is true and 3) what to do about it. I want you to do that in a clear headed thoughtful way, so that you get what you want. I wrote this book to help you do that. I am going to ask only two things of you — 1) that you be open - minded and 2) that you honestly answer some questions about what you want, what is true and what you want to do about it."

<http://www.bwater.com/Uploads/FileManager/Principles/Bridgewater-Associates-Ray-Dalio-Principles.pdf>

Bob Keegan's ideas made my hair stand on end. And it made me want to know about him and his work and these two organizations. Another of Keegan's themes is Immunity to Change, and I found a 15 minute video of him on that topic:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFYnVmGu9ZI>

The last official event of the day was a lively networking reception and posters sessions, with some great topics. Erin McAuley from Cisco on building a change strategy in 20 minutes, David Lutes from Intelladon on learning and performance in transition economies, Susan Duff from Mercy Hospital on rebuilding after the Joplin tornado, Kelly La Venture from Northland College on strategic HR and org learning. Ross Gruebel from Corvis a balanced model for strategic success, Toni Knott from Alliant on building capacity in rural Mexico, Jodi LaMothe from I'm Listening Business Solutions on high power-distance organizations, Maraget Smith Harriff from Acme Business Consulting on resiliency amidst the chaos of change, Ray Leuchtefeld from the University of La Verne on virtual facilitation, Melinda Morrow from Lastar on organizational curiosity and sales, and Ton Voogt on OD knowledge in China. With a lineup like that, the only thing missing was another two hours!

I then had the privilege of hosting the reception for OD students and faculty which was organized by Sherry Camden-Anders of Alliant's CSPP and Richard Stackman of USF on behalf of the OD Education Association. It was way cool to have 12 or 15 OD graduate schools represented, to meet faculty, students, and alums from each, and to hear a bit about each school. It was great to see the women and men who are the future of the field and the women and men who are leading them into it.

First light tomorrow, it's the Sunrise Commemoration Event for Edie and Charlie Seashore. More about it, and them, tomorrow.

Just another exhilarating and exhausting day, and there's still room for you, if you know the way to San Jose.

Matt

OD Network Conf 2013 in San Jose – Day 3

There aren't many days when you hear the names of Edie Seashore, Charlie Seashore, Verna Myers, Ed Schein and David Sibbet all in one breath. And yet, that's the day we had here today.

The morning dawned brightly in the foothills that surround San Jose and the outside world was busy going about its business. Inside, the day had its own character, with the Sunrise Event

commemorating Charlie and Edie Seashore. Folks arrived in a bit of a quandary; not knowing if this was going to be a sad tear-jerker or an Irish wake, and what we found was just wonderful. Cathy Royal and Charles McClintock had organized an hour long "Park Bench" celebration of the fondest and funniest stories from the Seashores, who died within a month of each other this past spring. Both were award recipients from the OD Network; both were long time and stalwart supporters of the field and its work; both were heavily involved in the work and revitalization of NTL Institute; both were loving and generous patrons and mentors and coaches to students and newcomers to the field. They made a huge contribution as the field was finding its feet and setting its internal direction, and who we are today as a Network and as a field is largely due to the work of Edie and Charlie Seashore. The event was lovely, and many thanks are due to Cathy and Charles.

The morning plenary began with the co-chairs of the Network's board, Marisa Sanchez and your humble scribe acknowledging the 50+ members who are working on the project teams and committees that are actually doing the work of Network for us.

We then introduced Verna Myers, author and expert on diversity and inclusion, especially in the legal sector for her keynote "Innovation and Inclusion: What It Takes to Move Diversity Forward." She said that we are shifting from diversity to inclusion, and that diversity is about counting, inclusion is about cultivating. She suggested that we reframe the conversation from problem people to people of promise

Verna recalled the uncomfortable moments of middle school dances, where a few people seemed to be having fun at the center of the dance floor, but most others are standing on the outside, in the room but not asked to dance. A lot about how you'll do at the "party" called work depends upon the music their playing and who is hosting the event, and being invited by the host. She said that diversity is being invited to the party, inclusion is being asked to dance in an organizational sense.

She said inclusion is about promoting a workplace where people from different cultural backgrounds are welcomed and treated with respect, feel included and integrated , are given equal access to opportunities, and are given opportunities to contribute their ideas and concerns.

Verna said that the enemy to innovation is organizational preferences. When a group of like-minded people form an org, they often have similar backgrounds, values, information, and ways of seeing the world, which they incorporate into the org's policies, procedures, and practices. Which leads to a narrow set of acceptable norms, behaviors and people, which the organization mistakes as the only "right" way to be.

She said that shift #1 is that inclusion is a process, not an event. She invited us to think about how you felt when you came into the environment here at the conference– did you feel welcome, and why? Do we do on-boarding in our orgs the same way with everyone? Do generational differences, family responsibility differences change what and how we do things? She suggested that we ask for input from others, and invite newcomers to shape the on-

boarding process; consult others who have been successful at integrating into the environment; take an Appreciative and strengths-based approach. And finally, be prepared to make changes – or DON'T START AT ALL!

Shift #2 is from problem people to people of promise. People who have been marginalized are actually diagnostic for the whole organization, the canaries in your coal mine. Bringing them together and giving them a voice rather than isolating them gives the organization a brand new level of insight and awareness into things that may be going well for the organization and its culture, and things that may not.

Shift #3 is moving from being color blind to color conscious. For years, we've been told to ignore difference and to be color blind and now it seems like the rules are changing. We asking you to notice the differences that are real and important. If we hope to make progress, we cannot ignore that difference makes a difference. She was very funny in her characterizations of how we try to pretend not to look at a pregnant woman, or believe that we should race and skin color out of descriptions of people because it would be impolite or improper. And yet, these are things that we notice, so why not say them? She cautioned that comments about how large the pregnant woman is, or how many children she has had or when she might stop getting pregnant would cross the line. She was very funny!

So, how do we do this? We need to be aware of our own culture and how it shapes our interactions. She showed a model adapted from the work of fellow NTL member Marilyn Loden and Judy B. Rosener, and said that we have an unconscious bias "that people like me," from a group that is like me, are better. And, try as we might, we cannot avoid these biases, and in many ways, we can't even know them unless they are pointed out from outside of ourselves.

Verna recommended that we all take the Implicit Association Test at implicit.harvard.edu. (I require this of my graduate students, as an insight into their own unknown and unconscious biases. It's a longitudinal study, co funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, with tests on our age and race and gender preferences.) She said that you would expect that white people prefer white people, and that black people would prefer black people, but the data says that 50% of black people prefer the white faces in the test. She didn't dwell on this, but I teach this in the context of institutional and societal biases, and that these implicit views are a more accurate predictor of our behavior than what we say we believe or how we'll behave.

In-group favoritism is a bias toward your own group. Try not to look for yourself. Apply standards consistently. Rotate opportunity (don't keep the best opportunities for those who know you well). Consider the entire list of people who could take on the opportunity, because we are naturally biased toward those who are like ourselves.

So, what's a person to do? Consider who you have mentored/sponsored in your organizations, in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, schools, religion, appearance, etc. With whom do you socialize? Choose a person of an underrepresented group to co lead a project or committee. Seek to learn more about groups that are different from our own, in terms of exhibits, museums, books, movies, dialogues. And build relationships across difference.

Verna was a double shot of caffeinated espresso this morning. Larger than life, funny, confronting our beliefs about ourselves and others, making it easy to see our shortcomings by laughing at them, and then challenging us to do even better.

The morning concurrent session presenters included Barbara Bunker, Susan Coleman, Terrence Gargulio, Michael McGovern, Angie Kiester, Maria Odiamar Racho, Trevor Maber, Kathy Hart, and Faye Wilson.

The busy noon hour included Sponsor Spotlight sessions, the always popular “Get Published in the OD Practitioner” led by the Network’s publication guru John Vogelsang, the AU MSOD reception, and I sat in on a session led by Argerie Vasilakes and Ray Leuchtefeld on creating a Community of Practice among internal OD consultants.

The afternoon concurrent session topics included Dialogic OD in Day to Day Complexity, Innovations in EI, Using Improv to Foster Innovation, Leadership as Opening Doors, Solving Complex Problems, and Including Other Nuclei on the Network. Hard choices among those topics!

The late afternoon presented maybe the hardest choices of the whole conference, forcing a choice between the two featured speakers, Ed Schein and David Sibbet. I know, I know. You’re going to say the same thing that I heard a hundred times in the hallways today: “Oh, noooo! How could you schedule them both at the same time? Don’t make me choooooose!” What a wonderful blessing to have all of these choices!

Ed Schein is an OD Network award winner and professor emeritus at MIT. You’ll know his work on career anchors (which I still use in coaching almost 50 years later), culture, process consultation, helping and most recently, humble inquiry. Just about every OD graduate student has at least 2 or 3 Scheins on the bookshelf and those of us who teach in the field always have 1 or two in our syllabus. Those who attended said that Ed spoke about the history of the field, going back to Bethel, Maine, and the NTL T group experiences, and reflected on how the field has developed over time. And he also talked about his new work on Humble Inquiry, which you can see as the natural extension of his recent work on Helping, which grew out of his work on Process Consultation Revisited. It was wonderful seeing him around the conference, gathering groupies, signing books, and entertaining all. He has recently moved here to the Bay area, so there are tons of Ed's disciples here.

Our other featured speaker this afternoon was David Sibbet, who is also an OD Network award winner (Lifetime Achievement this year, see below) and frequent contributor to our conferences and to the skills of our members. David is president and founder of The Grove Consultants International, and has been working on large-scale processes, strategic visioning, and creative future-oriented symposia. Many of us have studied graphic facilitation with David and The Grove, or have his Graphic Guides books, or use their large scale facilitation templates as a foundation to our work in OD.

It was David's session that I sat in on, and I tried my best to take notes, but his talk was so powerful that most of my notes are useless; they only make sense in the context of his talk, in that room, at that time, with his electronic illustrator.

Among the few notes that make sense on their own are: When you work at the wall (facilitating, illustrating) group member participation skyrockets, because the brain is a pattern addict, riveted to someone drawing by hand, especially if they're drawing what you're talking about, whether you agree or not with the content. (See what I mean!)

David said that when we are in group meetings, the amount of process abuse is phenomenal. He paused, long enough for me to scratch my head and silently roar "Not in MY meetings there isn't!" Then he continued and said that process abuse is when you talk and the next person says something that is totally unrelated to what you've said and your comment gets lost or ignored. And I realized that I, too, was busted.

He said that big paper invites big picture thinking. He also said that if you really want to use graphics to facilitate group work, you must create group memory, which can only be done in the front of the room, and not to the side, because the group seeing its own thinking go up in print helps to align the various experiences and perspectives of all in the room -- he speaking drives the illustration, which stimulates more and different thinking, and that if the speakers and listeners aren't speaking to the illustration (because it is not in the field of view) the impact is lost. Story mapping then becomes a powerful tool for getting alignment.

He spoke about his personal reflection and journaling practice, and said that handwriting is the closest way to see your own soul and showed us a few pages from his 175 journal books that he has kept over his life time.

David told us about his studies with Arthur M. Young, the physicist who invented the helicopter, and his Theory of Process, a unified theory finally applicable to physical, biological, and social systems in "The Reflexive Universe." He described the "V" shaped theory and how it underlies the Team Performance Model and the Stages of Organization Model and how it shows up in his graphic facilitation and his other work.

It was a powerful and thought provoking session, not easy sledding by any means. I think of myself as smart enough, and a bit of a David Sibbet groupie for more than 20 years, but this material was so theory-rich and powerful that it made my brain hurt. And it was wonderful.

Then came one of my favorite parts of the conference, the 2013 OD Network Awards Ceremony. Former board member and conference planning committee chair Lisa Kimball led the awards committee, comprised of Mila Baker, Barbara Bunker, David Jamieson, Bruce Kestelman, Cathy Royal, and Paul Thoresen, and they came up a wonderful slate of people to honor.

The 12th Annual Student Paper Presentation was awarded to Jane Harrington of Sonoma State; the 5th Annual Student Research Colloquium was awarded to Deborah Lindh of The University of St. Thomas.

The Service to the Network Award was presented by longtime member and friend Crissa Merron for her service as a board member and as previous chair of the Awards committee.

The Outstanding Achievement in Global Work was presented to the Center for Creative leadership for its Leadership Beyond Boundaries program.

There were two winners of the Outstanding Regional Network Award, the OD Network of Chicago (accepted by Maggie Shreve, president) and the Omaha OD Network (accepted by Jamie Kelly, president.)

The Organizational Excellence Award was presented to Berrett-Kohler Publishers, accepted by Steven Piersanti, for creating a community of authors and readers on topics that have changed the field and the world

The Communication OD Knowledge Award in Honor of Larry Porter award was presented to our OD Network Publications Director and OD Practitioner Editor, John Vogelsang (who by the way has published another excellent edition of the ODP on the Future of OD.)

The Outstanding Article in the OD Practitioner in 2013 award was presented to Steve Cady and Kimberly Fleshman for Amazing Change: Stories from Around the World

The Sharing the Wealth Award in Honor of Kathie Dannemiller award was presented to Peter Jay Sorensen of the Dallas-Fort Worth OD Network

And there two recipients of the Lifetime Achievement Award in Honor of Fred Miller. Mee Yan Cheung-Judge, a former trustee of the Network, and founder of the OD Network in Europe, and who co-wrote Organization Development: A Practitioner's Guide for OD and HR by Cheung-Judge, Mee-Yan and Holbeche, Linda (Apr 3, 2011). Barbara Bunker had some wonderful words to say about Mee Yan, noting in particular her generosity and self deprecating style. We then we saw a video of Mee Yan, whose travel prevented her from attending, which was full of generous appreciation and lovely self deprecation.

The second recipient was David Sibbet, who had just finished his session as a featured speaker. David's thank yous represented the arc of this career, including associations with Michael Doyle of Innovation Associates, and Lenny Lind of CoVision, and Doug Engelbart, and the Institute for the Future, and the folks at Xerox Parc. He is probably best known for the Team Performance (Drexler/Sibbet) Model, but it is quite clear than David is deeply rooted in the high tech, Silicon Valley world that is full of ideas and innovation that we East Coasters don't often know about.

That award is named after Fred Miller, and it was wonderful to see Fred at the conference (as usual) and in attendance at the ceremony (as usual) as just a part of his continuing support and commitment to the OD Network.

Lisa Kimball then led us in a salon-type program of visiting and talking with the award recipients in small groups, which was lovely.

I know it's hard to imagine, but I did find about 20 seconds today to walk outside and take in a breathe of real air, but there wasn't time for much more than that. What a rich and rewarding day here.

One more to come. Can't wait.

Matt

OD Network Conf 2013 in San Jose – Day 4

There is a bit of sadness surrounding the last day of our conferences. People start to check their smartphones more regularly . . . print out boarding passes . . . make one last trip to the ATM . . . and the OD Network book store . . . sponsors pack up their displays . . . roll aboard bags rumble through the clean California slate floor of the hotel lobby . . . the van with the big cookie on it circles through the driveway en route to the airport.

But mostly, it's business cards, and handshakes and hugs, and phone dates and email addresses, making plans to see each other before or at next year's gathering.

All of that was going on today, in parallel to another crackling fine day of the conference.

Around mid day, we held the OD Network Annual Business Meeting, as required in our bylaws, to inform members of the state of the Network. We said that we will have a positive cash position and make money this year for the third year in a row; it won't be a lot this year, but after 6-8 years of steady declines, losses and red numbers, we are very proud to have a string of three numbers in the black. Membership is growing again, with more than 400 members via the OD Education Association schools <http://www.odnetwork.org/?page=ODEA> We had more proposals submitted for this year's conference than in several years past. We had 8 candidates come forward to run for our Board of Trustees this year, when in past years we had to recruit candidates.

So, all in all, the signs for the Network are looking good. The trends are up. The programs are better. The offerings are stronger. And at this conference, the members seemed happier with the conference and the Network.

Two rounds of concurrent sessions started off the day, with some great content tightly aligned with the theme of Innovation. Scott Tannenbaum, president of GOE-Base, presented "Using Debriefs in Experiential Learning," Dick and Emily Axelrod have been working in improving organizations and innovation through better meetings and did a session on that. Lisa Kimball addressed Extending the Half Life of Systemic Change (sounds like physics class, no?), Jim McQueen had a good session on the dynamics of culture, Adrian Zappala, dean of graduate studies at Peirce College addressed "Out of Sight Leaders" who are working remotely, Phil Lohr of Aetna had folks raving after "Transforming Your Practice," having built internal OD consulting groups in several Fortune 100 organizations, and OD Network Trustees (and conf planning co chairs) Yasmeen Burns and Mike Horne had a session on Intervention Innovation.

One session stood out in particular. Sherry Camden-Anders of CSPP at Alliant University and Richard Stackman of the University of San Francisco held a session with grad students about life-after-school-is-done. How to stay in the education loop, how to manage your OD career now that you have that diploma, how to find and maintain a community of practice. Seems pretty basic when you think about it, but we've never offered a session quite like this one, and kudos go to Sherry and Richard for thinking up this one. And, for working to pull together the student track for the conference. (We had thought about having a student day, but they said that every day should be student day, so they build a track that ran through the whole conference. And, they organized the ODEA reception on Sunday night as well. Kudos, and many thanks, to the both of you!

Plus there were another half dozen going on as well. Some tough choices this morning.

Just after lunch, another round of concurrent session. San Kaner came down from Canada to do "Contracting as a Collaborative Process," two OD people from W. L. Gore did a case study of cross functional teaming at their company, two folks from the Volunteers of American in LA did a session on story-telling, Susan Stewart of CCL Asia did a session on boundary spanning with a tool called Boundary Explorer, and several folks from The Get Real Project – Andrea Howe, Shawn Westfall, and Cary Paul – did an Adventure in Improv Comedy that had people laughing and have so much fun that we had to close doors to the other rooms down that whole hallway. We see them about once a year at the Chesapeake Bay OD Network, and we love them and their work every time.

The final keynote was, in many ways, the most satisfying, especially for internals and for those who are consulting to large organizations. Susan Foley, Managing Partner of Corporate Entrepreneurs and on the faculty at Babson College, has been researching and writing on the topic of Intrapreneurs – those people who bring entrepreneur skills to the inside of an organization. She gave us a good profile of who intrapreneurs are, what they do, how they are different, and what it takes for an organization to have them and keep them.

She said that intrapreneurs typically resist diving into the days too soon, make decisions with insufficient data, want the big stuff where they can have the largest impact, are willing to explore the unknown, are there to grow and learn, are not interested in traditional career path, are restless and easily bored, are inherently creative, and are good risk managers.

She said that intrapreneurs do an excellent job of whole brain thinking, being both intuitive and analytical, and balancing thinking with action. In terms of competencies, intrapreneurs score highest on independent thinking, navigating uncertainty, being engaged and thriving, driving change, execution, and leadership effectiveness.

Susan had a wonderful four box model that I can't recreate here, but she said that, organizations need intrapreneurs because innovation is the core driver of growth, leadership is the best predictor of innovation performance, creativity and innovation are the new core competencies, people and culture are the most important drivers, and few senior managers explicitly lead or manage innovation.

Toward the end, she shared a quote from Abraham Maslow: "What is necessary to change a person is to change his awareness of himself."

After lots and lots of applause, Mike Horne and Yasmeen Burns, conf co chairs, thanked Susan, thanked us all for a good conference, wished us all a good year, and said they hoped to see us all in Philadelphia next year for our 50th anniversary conference.

Matt