



Continuing the Conversation from the Organization Development (OD) Webinar

With Dr. Sharon Varney and John Hovell

On April 12, 2023, KMI held a well-received OD webinar with KMI Instructors Dr. Sharon Varney and John Hovell. There were over 50 participants and the [recording is available here](#). During that webinar, we used slido to gather a few questions. The following questions were submitted and voted upon. Here we provide a few thoughts to continue the conversation. We look forward to further discussion during the course. Both Sharon and John have provided their perspectives below which we hope inspires further perspectives and conversation.

Question	Sharon's Response	John's Response
KM vs Change vs OD vs learning vs culture change: what are the overlapping tools/models?	<p>There's good news here. OD has been described as a 'magpie discipline'. So lots of the tools and models from our friends in KM, change, learning, culture will be useful.</p> <p>In the new KMI OD certification course we share our 3Ds model of OD. This means you can easily see where the tools you're bringing to OD fit into the wider landscape.</p>	<p>Fun one! A couple of us are creating an update to Chris Collison's fantastic "KM Landscape" that will directly show some of the overlaps (and more!). "Large Group Interventions" are a great overlap between OD and KM. All of the change mgmt. models can be used to implement transformational KM – especially culture change. In OD, I've been trained to re-frame culture change as "group dynamics." And, from a learning perspective, you can look at adult learning theory and instructional systems design to see lovely overlaps with KM.</p>
Where would you recommend someone new to the concept of Organizational Development start?	<p>John has shared a great selection of resources →</p> <p>In practice, OD can look and feel different in different businesses. It's well worth keeping that in mind.</p>	<p>Here, here and here – and of course the brand new KMI OD certification course 😊</p>
How do you demonstrate the importance of OD to executive teams?	<p>I start with their real-life challenges. As an external, a great question is, where does this organisation get stuck?</p> <p>As an internal, it's about finding where they are stuck!</p>	<p>My response might read a bit harsh – I tend to wait for organizations that have attempted to work without OD, and then engage in conversation when they begin to realize their need for it. Each situation will be different so it depends upon what type of OD they need and are ready for.</p>

		Repeated patterns are a great place to start...
What is the difference between OD and continuous improvement?	OD and continuous improvement can be great friends. By that, I mean there are lots of connections between the two. And if you've got both going on in one org, lucky you. I'd recommend working out how you can partner together. What are you trying to achieve, what are the skills and strengths you each bring? How can you work together to make your differences sing?	This is a fun question that isn't asked often enough in my humble opinion. First, I humbly admit that I am not a continuous improvement or continuous process improvement "expert." But with my limited understanding and experience with CI, there's often an underlying "plan do check act" going on. OD would "simply notice" that pattern, and be open to any other patterns. So the difference is that OD is noticing what CI is doing.
How best can a KM team support an organizational development team?	Again, I'd say that KM and OD are often great friends. Understanding one another's goals and looking for opportunities to support one another can be helpful for both teams. And it's a winning combination for any organisation!	Another fun one that isn't asked often enough, what a supportive and collaborative question! KM often has a learning aspect to it – whereas OD often has a change or awareness aspect to it. I think KM practitioners can simply engage in dialog with OD practitioners to understand each other's roles and approaches. There are some KM techniques (such as CoPs) that OD practitioners might just love!
A question for Eric, is it possible to know how many CKMs there are in Kenya? I would like to create a network to ensure KM and OD awareness in the country.	Great plan to create a network of KM and OD practitioners in Kenya. Creating, enabling and supporting networks is vital in both KM and OD, so joining together is a great idea.	We'll leave this one to Eric, but since it was asked here, we'll provide a few thoughts as well. I would reach out to NTL.org and ODnetwork.org to ask about OD practitioners in Kenya, and nearby areas. KM4Dev.org would also be a KM network to ask as well. All the best!