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we are pleased to provide you with our latest news from the field of corporate health policy and culture.

Kind regards
EfH-Newsletter-Team

The current topics

Managing stress at work through work organisation and job design

Tackling the issue of work-related stress: This paper briefly identifies the scale of the problem and describes in greater detail the actions taken by the UK's Health and Safety Executive to enable and support organisations in their efforts to reduce the causes of stress at work. The paper will also show how employers have addressed the need to examine the way in which work is organised and jobs are designed as a means of tackling the problem of work related stress. [more...](#)

Appreciative Inquiry - a Methodology to create the Future

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is an exciting way to embrace organizational change. Its assumption is simple: Every organization has something that works right – things that give it life when it is most alive, effective, successful, and connected in healthy ways to its stakeholders and communities. AI begins by identifying what is positive and connecting to it in ways that heighten energy and vision for change. [more...](#)

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Absenteeism, staff turnover, productivity and staff satisfaction are wellbeing-related concerns that many businesses struggle to overcome. So the CSR Europe's 'Wellbeing in the Workplace' Laboratory has produced a Guide including implementation tips, best practices collected from various companies and a thorough list of references to support companies in mainstreaming wellbeing at work. [more...](#)

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Editorial Team: Dr. Viola Weber, Michaela Mißler, Dr. Gregor Breucker

Events & Dates

27-28 April 2009: Perugia, Italia ---
HEALTHY WORK - HEALTHY
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13-16 May 2009: Santiago de
Compostela, Spain --- 14th
European Congress of Work and
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--- Employment Week: Europe's
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18-20 July 2009: Chiba-city, Japan
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2-6 August 2009: Venezia, Italy ---
19th INTERNATIONAL
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20-22 August 2009: Gothenburg,
Sweden --- The 6th Nordic Health
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20-23 October 2009: Elsinore,
Denmark - Understanding Small
Enterprises - a healthy working
life in a healthy business
International conference: Small
enterprises constitute the backbone
of economic activity. Their role in
society is therefore an area of great
importance. [more...](#)

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For further information, please refer to: <http://www.enterprise-for-health.org/index.php?id=259>

(04.03.2009,)

Appreciative Inquiry - a Methodology to create the Future

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is an exciting way to embrace organizational change. Its assumption is simple: Every organization has something that works right – things that give it life when it is most alive, effective, successful, and connected in healthy ways to its stakeholders and communities. AI begins by identifying what is positive and connecting to it in ways that heighten energy and vision for change.

Rik Bijl, senior consultant at TNO Management Consultants, The Netherlands. December 2008

"AI recognizes that every organization is an open system that depends on its human capital to bring its vision and purpose to life." (Cooperrider, D.L. et al., 2003, pp. XVII – XIX)

Together we are building a better world. Together we will create a positive revolution in change among organizations, communities, groups, families, for our common, global future.

The call for positive, life-centered approaches to organization, group, and global change has been sounded by many, and it will take many more to fully explore the vast potential just starting to appear on the horizon. But even now, in the first steps, what is being sensed is an exciting direction in our language and theories of change—an invitation, as some have declared, to 'a positive revolution in change'.

The methodology is explored in more detail in this article as it may be a building block in achieving a new and much needed organizational core, a 'Culture of Health'.

Background

In the years since "Appreciative Inquiry into Organizational Life" was first published by David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva at Case Western Reserve University in 1987, thousands of people have been engaged in co-creating new practices for doing AI and for bringing the spirit and methodology of AI into organizations all over the world.

The velocity of the largely informal spread of the ideas associated with Appreciative Inquiry suggests a growing disenchantment with exhausted theories of change, especially those wedded to vocabularies of human deficit, and a corresponding urge to work with people, groups, and organizations in a more constructive, life affirming, strength-based and spirited way.

AI is about the search for the best in people, their organizations, and the relevant world around them. In its broadest focus, it involves systematic discovery of what gives "life" to a living system when it is most alive, most effective, and most constructively capable in economic, ecological, and human terms. In AI the arduous task of intervention gives way to the speed of imagination and innovation; instead of negation, criticism, and spiralling diagnosis, there is discovery, dream, and design.

Guiding principles

AI seeks, fundamentally, to build a constructive union between people and their capacities: achievements, assets, unexplored potentials, innovations, strengths, elevated thoughts, opportunities, benchmarks, high point moments, lived values, traditions, strategic competencies, stories, expressions of wisdom, insights into the deeper corporate spirit or soul-- and visions of valued and possible futures. Taking all of these together, AI deliberately seeks to work from accounts of this "positive change core"—and it assumes that every living system has many untapped and rich and inspiring accounts of the positive. Link the energy of this core directly to any change agenda and changes never thought possible are suddenly and democratically mobilized.

"The traditional approach to change is to look for the problem, do a diagnosis, and find a solution. The primary focus is on what is wrong or broken; since we look for problems, we find them. By paying attention to problems, we emphasize and amplify them. (...) Appreciative Inquiry suggests that we look for what works in an organization. The tangible result of the inquiry process is a series of statements that describe where the

organization wants to be, based on the high moments of where they have been. Because the statements are grounded in real experience and history, people know how to repeat their success.”
(Hammond, Sue. 1998, pp 6-7).

It may look as if the AI approach denies the existence of real and tangible problems. Not true. It is just that problems are looked at from a positive perspective. There is attention to problematic issue and a clear focus on the solution rather than the determinants of the problem.

An AI based process of change follows five guiding principles

1. The constructionist principle. The ability of people and the organization to create the future together. Its power is the shared conviction that the organisation can be constructed and changed by concerted action of the employees. The constructionist principle states that how we know and what we do are closely interwoven. An important basis of AI is the sociorationalism of Gergen, which argues that in social relations there are no empirical truths “out there” to discover. Organizations are socially, co-constructed realities (co-creation) and so AI should attempt to engage as many members of the system as possible in the inquiry and focus on articulating desirable collective futures.

2. The principle of simultaneity. Posing questions and change itself happen at the same time. The moment the question is asked, marks the first step towards an new future. The principle of simultaneity is based on the belief that inquiry is intervention, that as we inquire into human systems, we change them. This principle argues against the traditional action research model where first we do the inquiry, diagnose the system, generate and select change options, and only then implement the change. Rather, AI theorists argue that questions are fateful and that change begins the moment the system begins to engage in inquiry (action research). In AI practice, the simultaneity principle requires spending considerable time and effort to identify what the inquiry is about and paying close attention to the exact wording and provocative potential of the questions that will be asked right from the start of the process.

3. The poetic principle. The poetic principle states that organizations are more like a book than a living organism, that organizational life is expressed in the stories people tell each other every day, and the story of the organization is constantly being co-authored. The words and topics that we choose to talk about have an impact far beyond just the words themselves. They invoke sentiments, understandings, worlds of meaning. In practice this means that the language of the inquiry has important outcomes in and of itself. In all phases of the inquiry, effort is put into using words that point to, enliven, and inspire the best in people. This leads to a culture in which learning, interpreting and re-interpreting are important and valued.

4. The anticipatory principle. The anticipatory principle says that what we do today is guided by our image of the future. Much like a movie projector on a screen, human systems are forever projecting ahead of themselves a horizon of expectation (in their talk in the hallways, in the metaphors and language they use) that brings the future powerfully into the present as a mobilizing agent.

5. The positive principle. The positive principle states that momentum and sustainable change require positive affect and social bonding. Research on positive emotions suggests that sentiments like hope, excitement, inspiration, camaraderie, and joy are central to change processes.
(Bushe, G.R and Kassam, A.F., 2005; 41; 166-167)

Furthermore, “AI deliberately seeks to discover people’s exceptionality – their unique gifts, strengths, and qualities. It actively searches and recognizes people for their specialties – their essential contributions and achievements. And it is based on principles of equality of voice – everyone is asked to speak about their vision of the true, the good, and the possible. Appreciative Inquiry builds momentum and success because it believes in people. It really is an invitation to a positive revolution. Its goal is to discover in all human beings the exceptional and the essential. Its goal is to create organizations that are in full voice!”
(Cooperrider, D.L. et. al., 2001, page 12).

The 4D-Model

The 4D model consists of Discovery – Dream – Design – Destiny. Sometimes this model is expanded to including a first preceding step of Definition (the Affirmative Topic Choice).

To start with, it is important that the topic is formulated positively, that everyone involved is to a certain extent engaged with it and that it leads towards the desired outcome. The formulation directs the change process and learning process of the organisation. The main intervention model that has come to be associated with AI is the 4D cycle. This is an elaboration of the principles for the practice of AI developed by Cooperrider.

The cycle begins with discovery (appreciating what is), then goes onto dream (imagining what could be), which is followed by design (determining what should be), and then destiny (creating what will be) ... The process of inquiry that perhaps most defines AI practice is the collection of ‘stories’ from system members and other stakeholders about their best experiences. This is supposed to occur during the discovery phase. People are asked for their personal experience of the (defined) ‘affirmative topic’ (i.e. the focus of the inquiry) at its best (e.g.

their best work experience, their best experience of teamwork, their best customer satisfaction experience). (Bushe, G.R and Kassam, A.F., 2005; 41;167).

Result of the discovery phase is to find out what is worthwhile to preserve and commitment by everyone who is involved, as it is characterized by active participation through interviews. Everyone is both interviewer and interviewee, listens to other positive experiences and tells about their positive experiences. This process generates energy and self-efficacy among participants. The stories are analysed on the basis of themes and patterns.

During the dream participants are challenged to formulate their image of a better tomorrow, of an ideal future. Visualization of this future and formulating this image with a 'provocative proposition' that reflects the thoughts about the future.

The design phase concentrates on the question 'how to realize the vision about the future. A picture of the organizational and relational elements needed, in light of other relevant developments. Result is clear analysis of the success generating elements for the realization of the dream, the vision of the future.

In the destiny or delivery phase the decision is taken how to apply the ideas to everyday practice. A clear plan of action is the result. The plan is based on the preferences of participants. Only when people are attracted, motivated or feel passion for the proposed action, they will engage in its realization. The action planning is based on dialogue and strength of participants.

Going through an entire sequence of phases does not have to be a very time consuming affair. If well prepared and organized the process may take as little as a couple of days.

Further reading

Bushe, Gervase R. and Aniq F. Kassam. When is Appreciative Inquiry transformational?: A meta-case analysis. In: Journal of Applied Behavioral Science 2005; 41; 161- 181.

Cooperrider, D.L. et. al. (Eds) , Lessons from the Field: Applying Appreciative Inquiry, Thin Book Publishing, 2001

Cooperrider, David L; Whitney, Diana; and Stavros, Jacqueline M., Appreciative Inquiry Handbook: The First in a Series of AI Workbooks for Leaders of Change, Lakeshore Communications, 2003

Hammond, Sue. The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry. Thin Book Publishing Company, 1998.

For further information, please refer to: <http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/intro/default.cfm>

(26.02.2009,)

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The workplace and working environment are important factors that determine the state of health of employees. Many businesses have recognized this fact, and, moreover, that healthy and well-motivated employees are a great advantage on the marketplace. That is why such businesses are not content merely to comply with legal requirements, but also offer their employees additional voluntary services. This guide informs you about what you and your employer can do for your health.

IGA - The Action Group on Health and Work

Health and work need to go hand-in-hand: This concern lends the action group its name. Associations of statutory health and accident insurance bodies have come together in the group, which was founded by the BKK Bundesverband and the Deutsche Gesetzliche Unfallversicherung. Later, the AOK-Bundesverband and the Arbeiter-Ersatzkassen-Verband joined the group, whose aim is the prevention of work-related health hazards through industrial safety and in-company health

promotion. The challenges, to which businesses and their employees are nowadays exposed, are increasing. One of their main causes is the growing pressure of market competition. This is also reflected in substantial changes in working conditions.

A precondition for business success is healthy and motivated employees. Here, safety and health promotion play a key role. It is a matter of giving incentives to managers and employees for safe and healthy employment.

Accident and health insurance bodies make an important contribution to maintaining and promoting

employee health. In the IGA, successful accident prevention and health promotion concepts are adapted to the

specific requirements of businesses, and new methods are developed and tested. IGA carries out research, provides advice and develops concepts together with health insurance bodies, trade and professional associations and accident insurance bodies. Together with other experts, the IGA has developed the concept of intercultural in-company health management, which aims to ensure that all employees, irrespective of nationality, are aware of their rights and obligations concerning health and safety at work.

Employees should be given access to measures promoting health, and their supervisors should take account of cultural differences.

This guide is an integral part of the concept.

For further information, please refer to:

http://www.iga-info.de/fileadmin/rs-dokumente/dateien/Wegweiser_IBGM_d_e_internet.pdf

(26.02.2009,)

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'Wellbeing in the Workplace' Laboratory has produced a Guide including implementation tips, best practices collected from various companies and a thorough list of references to support companies in mainstreaming wellbeing at work.

The CSR Europe's Toolbox includes information, ideas and advice designed to help companies and their stakeholders address socio-economic and environmental challenges and integrate corporate social responsibility (CSR) into mainstream business practice. The Toolbox is based on the first results of the CSR Laboratories, cross-sectoral business-stakeholder cooperation projects under the umbrella of the European Alliance for CSR.

Promoting Wellbeing in the Workplace is one of the main topics within the Toolbox. Johnson & Johnson and CSR Europe launched the Wellbeing in the Workplace Laboratory to support companies in addressing the essential aspects of a wellbeing promotion strategy, such as prevention, identification and support, and reintegration in to the workplace. This work directly supports the European Commission's 'European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being' (June 2008) which highlights the strong and direct links between mental and physical wellbeing and a competitive and responsible Europe.

For further information, please refer to: http://www.csreurope.org/pages/en/wellbeing_workplace.html

(26.02.2009,)

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For further information, please refer to: <http://www.bhf.org.uk/thinkfit/index.asp?SecID=1590&secondlevel=1593>

(04.03.2009,)

27-28 April 2009: Perugia, Italia --- HEALTHY WORK - HEALTHY LIFESTYLE - HEALTHY BUSINESS

For further information, please refer to: <http://www.enwhp.org/index.php?id=593#922>

(10.09.2008,)

13-16 May 2009: Santiago de Compostela, Spain --- 14th European Congress of Work and Organizational Psychology - Developing People in the 21st Century Organizations: Global and Local Perspectives

For further information, please refer to: <http://www.eawop2009.com/index.php?page=Web>

(05.03.2009,)

24-25 June 2009: Brussel, Belgium --- Employment Week: Europe's Labour Market - ensuring growth through human capital

For further information, please refer to: http://www.employmentweek.com/cms.php?page=93&cms_menu_path=66.93

(06.03.2009,)

9 July 2009: Zurich, Switzerland --- National Workplace Health Promotion Conference

For further information, please refer to:

http://www.gesundheitsfoerderung.ch/pages/Betriebliche_Gesundheitsfoerderung/Allgemeines/nationale_tagung_bgf/index.php?lang=e

(11.02.2009,)

18-20 July 2009: Chiba-city, Japan --- The First Asia-Pacific Conference on Health Promotion and Education

For further information, please refer to: <http://www.dokkyomed.ac.jp/dep-m/pub/apac.html>

(28.01.2009,)

2-6 August 2009: Venezia, Italy --- 19th INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON SHIFTWORK AND WORKING TIME

For further information, please refer to: <http://www.eawop.org/docs/2nd%20%20announcement.pdf>

(11.02.2009,)

(05.03.2009,)

20-22 August 2009: Gothenburg, Sweden --- The 6th Nordic Health Promotion Research Conference

For further information, please refer to: <http://www.enwhp.org/index.php?id=603#938>

(24.10.2008,)

20-23 October 2009: Elsinore, Denmark - Understanding Small Enterprises - a healthy working life in a healthy business

International conference: Small enterprises constitute the backbone of of economic activity. Their role in society is therefore an area of great importance.

For further information, please refer to: <http://www.use2009.dk/>

(04.03.2009,)
