Shaping Communities of Work, 
an Organisational Development Approach

Michiel Schoemaker

In order to survive in a turbulent environment many organisations have to operate as an open system. This open system often has the configuration of a network. This networked organisation acts as a community of work. This community of work is based upon a specific organisational identity. The central question addressed by this article is: How can organisation development function in the process of developing communities of work and what is the role of the change agent?

The rise of new organisational forms is described. The importance of the concept of communities of work and organisational identity is shown. Thereupon the insights from 25 cases in shaping communities of work from a perspective of organisational development are presented. Special attention is paid to the role of the change agent.

Key words: Communities of work, organisational identity, change, organisational development, change agent

Introduction

In order to survive in a turbulent environment, many organisations have to operate as open systems. Within open systems, cooperative action is based on the willingness of human beings to contribute and develop their talents as members of communities of work. Consequently, the proper functioning of organisations becomes dependent on shared values and organisational identity between networks of people. This implies that the modern organisation