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ENHANCED MANAGEMENT
CONSULTING

LT COL VICTOR L. KAPINOS, USAF

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LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT CENTER

AIR TRAINING COMMAND   83 10   035

Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama 36112

LMDC-TR-83-2

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The purpose for the report is to present a four part study which provides some suggestions for enhancing the management consulting process within the Air Force. Part one contains an overview of organizational development. The second part discusses how organizational change can be managed through intervention. Part three reviews and discusses present Air Force consulting methodology. The final part presents a detailed yet simplistic consulting model which could be amplified or contracted to meet the contemporary needs of Air Force consultants using basic organizational development strategies.

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BACKGROUND

Since 1975, the United States Air Force has had its own management consultant capability. (21-2) Officers and noncommissioned Officers (NCOs) are recruited from the field and trained to perform as management consultants to commanders and supervisors throughout the Air Force. From the beginning, consultants have been invited by commanders to improve or maintain the effectiveness of their respective organizations. While Air Force consultants have employed a variety of methods over the years, the majority of their efforts have incorporated one or more techniques derived from a management technology described as "Organizational Development."

Organizational Development (OD) incorporates many management techniques into a multi-faceted process described "not only as a humanistic process, but also a collaborative process between those affecting change and those effected by the change." (15-7)

Although Air Force consultants normally perform consulting duties for approximately two to three years, they should develop a working-knowledge of OD and try to stay abreast of new developments omnipresent in the management and workforce environments. "Enhanced Management Consulting" was written to help Air Force consultants to broaden their understanding of OD technology. The paper also describes how organizational change can be managed through intervention and reviews the consulting methodologies presently employed by Air Force consultants. Finally, a proposed consulting model is presented which could potentially enhance the Air Force's consulting capability. Major topics addressed are as follows:

1. Understanding Organizational Development

2. Managing Organizational Change Through Intervention

3. Air Force Consulting Methodology

4. Proposed Consulting Model

"Enhanced Management Consulting" is based on a review of classic and contemporary literature, personal interviews with Air Force consultants, and the cumulative inputs of the Analysis and Research Directorate, Leadership and Management Development Center, Maxwell AFB, Alabama. The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions of the Air Force or the Leadership and Management Development Center.

Part One: Understanding Organizational Development

Since World War II, a variety of management theories and concepts have been introduced to managers in an effort to help them "examine and implement organizational change." (33-430) This proliferation of ideas developed as the postwar sophistication of the workforce and the technical aspects of the work environment increased in both the private and public sectors. (39-412) (36-328) To help managers grasp the new ideas, researchers had to develop numerous "ingenious training techniques to disseminate facts and sharpen skills" (36-330) necessary to optimize the potential a concept may have for affecting a specific work situation. (36-330) Although initial emphasis was often directed towards enhancing supervisory effectiveness, training specia-lists eventually turned to "broader forms of planned organizational change." (36-328) (39-417)

In the early 1960s, a merging of efforts occurred between research and theory in the behavioral sciences and laboratory training. (19-427) This merger produced an "action oriented effort that was humanistically inclined toward bettering the organizational climate." (19-427) Some of the tech-niques which emerged and achieved prominence included T-groups (Training-groups), (26-195) survey research and feedback, and managerial grid training. (39-417) (8-121) (41-326)

Enthusiasm for T-groups (sensitivity training) was initially strong but somewhat short-lived, because the emphasis was aimed at the individual's emotional versus intellectual growth. Participants were often subjected to unexpected situations which produced higher than normal levels of stress and anxiety. "At worst, T-groups may trigger hidden psychological instabilities, leading to mental breakdown or, at best, to a frustrating experience which interferes with real learning. Defenders countered that one of the hallmarks

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of skilled trainers is that they keep tensions within bounds and make sure that critical comments are caring rather than destructive." (36-338) Although observers have noted cases where "T-group training has led to personal damage, this may be an argument chiefly for better care in selecting trainers and trainees and the restriction of organizationally sponsored T-groups to those forms which stress group learning rather than sheer expression of emotion." (36-338) Survivors of T-group experiences, often returned to their organizations motivated to be more open with fellow workers. Unfortunately, they often found their fellow workers unprepared to accept higher levels of openness, frankness, etc. (36-343) (39-414) (26-196) Eventually, management "developed reservations about what some T-group-trained people were taking back to their organizations." (39-414)

Although many organizations no longer support T-groups as a way to improve their organizations, T-groups have "taught OD specialists a great deal about how people act, react, and interact. It has also helped clarify the differences between effective and ineffective group interaction." (26-196) (39-412) (38-256)

While some groups were experimenting with T-groups, others were using "interviews, questionnaires, and/or observations" (8-121) to gather data from within organizations and feeding intrepretations of the accumulated data back to members of the workforce. Survey research allowed a large number of employees an opportunity to expeditiously indicate their perceptions of the work environment using the same survey instrument (questionnaire). (11-96) Once the data was obtained, organized, and analyzed through the use of a computer, consultants were able to help managers learn a lot about the values

and concerns of their employees. Managers could also use the data for instituting change while protecting the privacy of individual workers. (37-114) (26-197) (8-121)

Another important function of the survey-feedback approach occurs when the survey results are fed back to the participants. This step allows subordinates an opportunity to know where they stand without threatening their egos. Feedback provides each individual the additional opportunity to compare their own "survey results (fed back privately) with those of an entire department or organization (fed back privately)." (26-197)(37-112) Through non-threatening comparisons, both supervisors and subordinates can confront their own attitudes and personal shortcomings without any social or professional embarrassment. This passive interaction also allows the individual a private opportunity to respond to appeals for change and improvement. Lessons learned indicate most people welcome feedback in a non-threatening format and will make valid efforts to change or improve once they are able to objectively compare themselves with others. (26-197) (8-123)

Another technique to follow in the footsteps of T-groups was "managerial grid training." (11-388) (39-415) Whereas T-groups concentrated on individual growth, "the managerial grid contains a set of contrasting theories that enable an individual to gain insight (picture) into his or her own power/ authority dynamics." (11-388) The "picture is the managerial grid which highlights manager outlooks and behaviors from the standpoint of two key variables: concern for production and concern for people." (39-416) The basic assumption is that managers cannot separate concerns, but should seek an "acceptable balance" between (39-417) the two in order to effectively achieve organizational goals.

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"Managerial grid training helped offset some of the difficulties that were rapidly eroding the manager training value of T-groups. However, the managerial grid was only a transition in the evolution toward organizational development." (39-417) Specifically, it became evident that manager training could not really achieve organizational growth. While it was not that manager development was unimportant, but even more important to "keep the larger organizational development need in sharp focus." (39-417)

Although some organizations continue to rely on specific techniques associated with T-groups, managerial grids etc., an increasing proportion have moved towards an eclectic approach described by Kurt Lewin as "organizational development." (39-419) In reality, OD has become an amalgamation of ideas which "encourages teamwork in order to arrive at company goals, and encourages just about any kind of training that will fit into the company's needs." (20-357) However, since OD is a combination of concepts, experts in the field have found it difficult to arrive at an all-encompassing description or definition of OD. Some examples are as follows:

1. "OD seeks to change not just individuals but also the values of the organization in which they work. OD today represents the most extensive effort on the part of behavioral scientists to apply knowledge (primarily psychological and sociological) to the improvement of business organizations." (36-339)
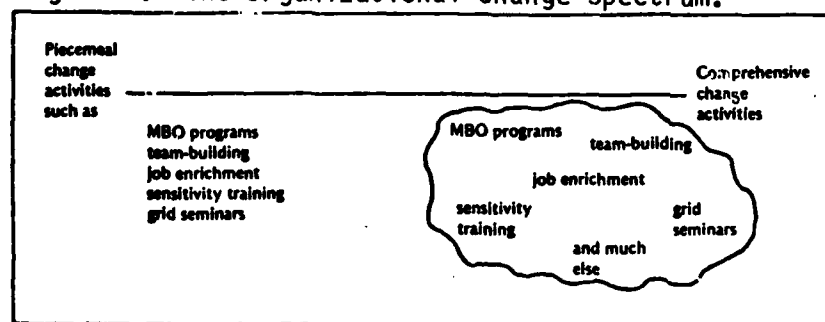
2. "A planned, managed, systematic process to change the culture, systems, and behavior of an organization, in order to improve the organization's effectiveness in solving its problems and achieving its objectives." (35-2)

3. "A long-range effort to improve an organization's problem-solving and renewal processes, particularly through a more effective and collaborative management of organization culture--with special emphasis on the culture of formal work teams--with the assistance of a change agent or catalyst--and the use of theory and technology as applied behavioral science, including action research." (17-14)

4. "Organizational development has two major objectives: a. to train people in the specific skills and field of knowledge that make it possible for them to do their jobs well, and b. to train people in interpersonal and group membership skills." (20-354)

5. "Because organizational development is a total organizational approach to change management, it makes a use of a wide variety of approaches. For example, as illustrated in Figure 1, (39-405) such things as team building, MBO programs, job enrichment, sensitivity, and managerial grid seminars are sometimes used as piecemeal approaches to helping organizations improve their effectiveness--and sometimes part of more comprehensive OD endeavors." (39-405/406)

Figure 1. The Organizational Change Spectrum.

Piecemeal change activities such as

MBO programs
team-building
job enrichment
sensitivity training
grid seminars

Comprehensive change activities

MBO programs   team-building
job enrichment
sensitivity   grid
training   seminars
          and much
          else

6. "Organization development is an effort a. planned, b. organization-wide, and c. managed from the top, to d. increase organization effectiveness and health through e. planned interventions in the organization's "processes, using behavioral science knowledge." (7-9)

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In another movement, management researchers felt such techniques as laboratory training, survey research/feedback and others could be combined into a "multivariate process--a process involving a number of interdependent steps or phases, each of which builds from the previous one." (15-9) Although refinements have continued in recent years, initially the process was composed of four basic steps. Figure 2. (26-198)

FIGURE 2
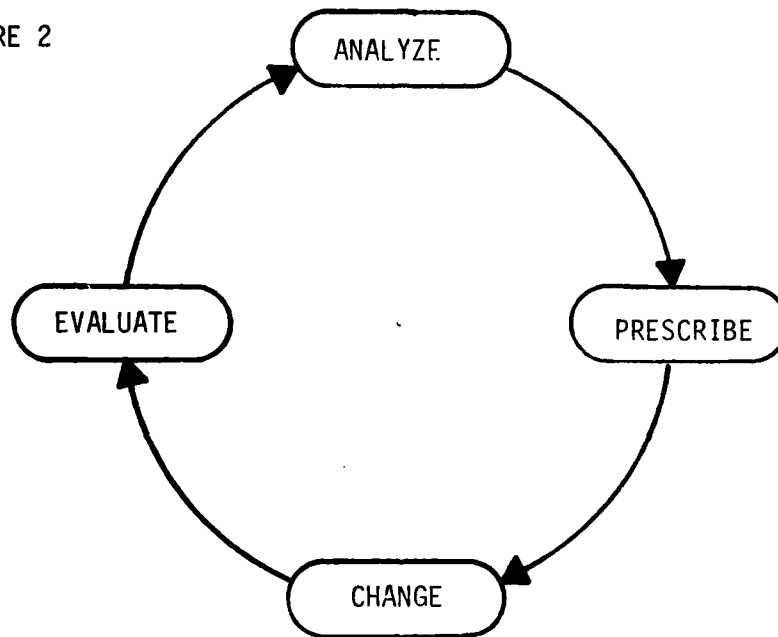
The first step was to analyze the organization's present situation using personal observations, interviews, and opinion surveys to obtain analytical data. Once all the data has been gathered and problem areas identified, managers can then prescribe changes. Baker and Gorman emphasize the importance of a good analysis by saying, "Just as a good physician will diagnose the patient's particular symptoms before determining which remedy to prescribe, so the manager must diagnose the organization's symptoms before prescribing the appropriate corrective techniques." (5-506)

Initiating prescribed change ideas is the second step in what could be described as an analysis-prescription cycle. (26-198) Management remains responsible for developing the action plans which will create sufficient change within the work environment to eliminate problem areas and increase productivity.

Dealing with and monitoring change is the next phase in the cycle. While some modifications can be instituted in a relatively short period of time (adjusted work schedules, procedure modifications etc.), others such as worker attitudes towards task responsibilities may take much longer to modify. Therefore, managers and employees should be cautioned not to expect overnight successes or miracles when attempting to change the way people think about their jobs. Employees who are expecting miracles may "come away disheartened. Realistic expectations, on the other hand, can enhance an OD program." (12-203)

The final step of this basic process includes an evaluation of progress and success. Exactly when this phase occurs normally depends on the work activity and the specific change initiative. Since there are short and long term objectives, the timing of such evaluations may depend on how soon management expects to meet predetermined objectives.

Basically, the described analysis-prescription cycle serves several purposes. First, management can obtain a clear perspective of their present situation. Secondly, managers are provided direction for initiating change based on objective data. They can then monitor specific events, and eventually evaluate accomplishments to determine the results of their efforts. Once the cycle is complete, a roadmap is available for on-going growth and development activities. (26-202/203)

Certainly, OD is not a "panacea for organization ills." (18-424) What is appropriate for one organization or situation, may not be the right answer for another. In spite of necessary variants, there are OD objectives that remain common such as the development of such social processes "as trust, problem solving, communication, and cooperation to enhance personal and organizational effectiveness." (39-198) Normally, OD programs try to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. "Enhance interpersonal trust, communication, cooperation, and support.

2. Encourage a problem-solving rather than problem-avoiding approach to organizational problems.

3. Develop a satisfying work experience capable of building enthusiasm.

4. Supplement formal authority with authority based on personal knowledge and skill.

5. Increase personal responsibility for planning and implementing." (16-23)

There is nothing really new and unique to be found within the above objectives. The spectrum remains broad enough to address key aspects of general management. OD proponents tend to view usual practices of teaching leaders and managers how to plan, solve problems, decide, motivate, lead, and control as perpetuating "haphazard, bits and pieces management styles." (26-199) OD provides managers with "a vehicle for systematically applying a broad selection of management techniques as a unified and consistent package." (26-199) This eclectic and systematic approach can also affect greater personal, group, and organizational effectiveness.

As with any program, there are some assumptions that exist for goal accomplishment. The underlying assumptions of OD deal with people and organizations in positive terms. They are as follows:

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1. People can be trusted to do a good job.

2. A group of people working together on a problem are more productive than a number of people working individually on separate problems.

3. Collaboration is more effective than conflict and "honesty is a prime requisite for collaboration." (10-77)

4. Planned change normally produces better results than haphazard change.

5. People strive to be the best they can be and normally want to be better than they are.

6. Organic organizations (fluid and flexible in design) tend to be more effective than mechanistic organizations (rigid in design and possessing strong bureaucratic qualities). (12-199)

Leaders, managers, and supervisors can no longer categorize people as resources if they are serious about improving organizational effectiveness. Today's workforce expects to be thought of and treated as thinking adults who often see the same things in very different ways. Workers have different needs, therefore, individual effort and output will vary with the perceived "value of rewards" (34-47) and the potential those rewards have for satisfying their needs.

Management has neglected its responsibilities for many years and has "no one to blame but themselves." (32-13) Instead of being over-concerned with organization charts and results, managers should have been concerned with providing strong leadership, putting well-trained people in the right job, and improving the working environment. (32-16) Union officials now admit to doing management's job in leading and taking care of the people. (32-15) Taking care of the workforce is a management responsibility which can lead to the success of an organization through "increased sophistication and effectiveness of individuals and of the group working together." (24-45)

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Part Two: Managing Change Through Intervention

In the past few decades, organizations in the business and nonprofit sectors have turned increasingly to OD consultants as alternatives for enriching their management arsenals. OD "interventions" such as team-building, intergroup conflict resolution, survey-feedback, job enrichment, and quality circles conducted by behavioral scientists and management consultants have been accepted as a regular part of organizational life. Using OD to improve productivity and effectiveness has gained international attention. OD interventions have now penetrated the military services and have been exported throughout the English speaking world. (30-18)

As mentioned, organizations have relatively easy access to OD consultants (internal or external) who are prepared to help solve managerial problems. Consultants help examine local issues without interference of personal feelings. They draw upon research conducted in such fields as psychology, sociology, economics, and management to address both behavioral and functional problems. Although OD consultants tend to be generalists, Frank Murray suggests OD consultants come from one of two schools of thought. (30-18)

One school suggests the consultant arrives with a "pre-established agenda." (30-18) The consultant is often driven by a missionary zeal to convert the client and organizational membership to people oriented-participative management styles. He or she moves quickly to unfreeze groups, equalize power, and even promotes or provokes open confrontation of differences. As Murray states, "For the consultant, these are important near-term goals, tried and proven remedies for the ailments of the client group or organization. This consultant possesses a clear notion of the proper and better way and is impatient to bestow its blessings on the clients."
(30-18)

In a second school, the consultant recognizes the above goals as laudable and even ackowledges their potential benefits. But he remains unconvinced they can be fully realized in a short time. This consultant, when working with organizations, restricts his activities to data gathering, diagnostic mechanisms and facilitating group activities. He allows the client to develop his own agenda and move at a pace which supports prevailing management styles. The consultant normally does not try to be a teacher and avoids prescribing specific changes (functional or behavioral) or trying to convince personnel to switch to a particular management style such as Theory Y unless the group clearly requires such inputs. Of course, the consultant, as an important condition for satisfactory client-consultant relationships, expects clients to have "a desire for effecting improvements and a minimal respect for fellow workers." (30-19)

In the first instance, the consultant runs a risk if the client is emotionally and structurally unprepared for significant changes. For example, domineering and task oriented managers may feel introducing any form of participative management as too drastic; ideas which could "trigger chain reactions with disastrous results." (30-19) Therefore, clients may resist suggestions, especially if the consultant persists in imposing his own agenda and timing. Conversely, if the organization is open to accepting ideas for change, many OD techniques can prove successful.

Whereas the first consultant tends to be rigid, "the latter consultant will modestly propose a method of gathering and analyzing data and making decisions that appear to fit the client's situation, needs, and objectives." Jointly, client and consultant will make adjustments in proposed methods on the basis of client reactions. When working with an organization, the OD consultant often views himself or herself as a helper of change, not

the principal agent of it. He or she will gently steer and not push clients towards facing key issues and making needed decisions.

Such a consultant's operating style remains tentative and flexible. He or she takes care not to impose what has worked with the people 'back home.' Instead, he or she will shape techniques, mechanisms and interactions that can successfully guide the process of organizational change because they focus on issues considered important by the client. Free from the presumption that the consultant knows or is responsible for deciding what is best for the client organization, this consultant makes neither prescriptions nor recommendations and is therefore not seriously handicapped by not doing previous research in the client organization. More pertinent to the consultant's role is involving and guiding the client organization through a process and odyssey of research that results in enhanced capability to make better and more timely decisions, congruent with their own values. This outcome flows from the sharing of insights, experience and expectations of organizational members which is the heart and essence of successful organizational development." (30-19/20)

While a large majority of the experienced OD organizations believe OD involvement and experience to be successful enough to continue the efforts, they also indicate unhappiness. Many wish the programs took less time to implement and allowed for easy evaluation of results. Organizational devel- opment can for example, help "build mutual trust and remove barriers to comm- unication." (39-429) But, it is not a panacea nor a gimmick as described below by Professor Strauss:

"American companies are suckers for gimmicks. Managers are too anxious to find short-cut solutions to complicated problems, particularly in the area of human relations. Companies try one attractive package after another, just as long as each promises a painless solution to their problems. Human relations, suggestions systems, the open door policy, brainstorming, zero-defect programs--all have had their day. Each is tried in turn and then allowed to lapse gradually into oblivion. When instant success is not achieved, there is a tendency to switch one's attention to other areas. And false expectations may lead to cynical disillusionment." (40-669)

Organizational development has unlimited value when implemented for the right reasons. Consultants must insure organizational development rather than manager development is needed. An OD intervention and its associated activities can be helpful to the organization that widely accepts "the need for a really basic therapy, an equally wide willingness to participate in an effort that must necessarily be quite demanding, and a leadership that is prepared to make decisions on the basis of the data developed by OD research." (39-430) Specifically, these requirements mean avoiding the "conversion," "morale," "handyman," and "mafia" motives for launching a so-called OD endeavor (39-430).

Conversion Motive-The "conversion motive" (39-425) is created when an influential manager is exposed to an organizational development missionary--who may also be a competent organizational development professional. Captivated by this exposure, the manager developes a keen desire to introduce OD into his own organization. But OD conversions as religious conversions are rarely contagious, except in a revival meeting setting. By definition, the organizational development prognosis is poor if the impetus behind it is not the concrete difficulties of the organization launching the effort.

Morale Motive-The second type, the "morale motive," (39-426) develops when
those responsible for getting an organizational development program underway
may well understand that they are embarking on a less than full-scale effort.
No great difficulty is in sight; no large consequences are expected. The
collaborative sharing principle behind organizational development, however,
provides an opportunity to "get people together" to show them that top
management is interested in working closely with them. The morale motive is
often triggered by leaders and accepted by managers as something that "might
be helpful." (39-426)

Handyman Motive-Next is the "handyman motive." (39-426) An organization may
have a specific problem, as distinguished from an organizational development
need. There is, in other words, no thought that the organization will be
significantly changed. Furthermore, top management often knows exactly what
they want to do about problems prior to calling in external consultants.
Such situations are especially attractive to opportunists. With top
management already committed to acceptable solutions, the handyman motive can
frequently produce tangible results and successes that facilitate
organizational development advertising.

Mafia Motive-Finally, there is the "mafia motive." (39-426) Outside
consultants are brought in by one manager to "take care of" another manager
(or group of managers). Quite possibly, in this "hired gunman" setting, some
organization changes will be made. That changing will probably, too, be done
in a context of going through the motions of democratic decision making.
Those who are to be "taken care of," (39-426) however, will, of course, have
little to say about what is being done. It is obvious, incidentally, how
useful it is to get outsiders to do an organization's dirty work for it. An
uncomfortable unpleasantness can thereby be put off on someone else, and the
full onus of what was done can later be put on people who are no longer
around. (39-426)

Introducing OD or inviting management consultants in for the wrong
reasons is not new and will continue to be part of reality. Leaders and
managers seek help and often will seek short-cuts to success. However, if
management realizes they need help and seek advice, they have made a major
step towards improving their organization. Some general conditions for an OD
intervention to be successful are as follows:

1. Personnel in key positions realize that problems exist and/or the
organization as a whole is not producing at its full potential.

2. Supervisors at all levels basically concur with the decision to seek
the assistance of external consultants. It is equally important to insure
the supervisors understand the capabilities and methods normally employed by
the consultants and support their efforts.

3. Key people within the organization actively participate in data gath-
ering and initial diagnostic activities. "A first premise of organizational
development work is that it must begin at the top." (39-421)

4. External consultants may initiate and complete an OD intervention,
but internal resources should be developed to continue the thrust and insure
long-range results. Training costs in terms of time and money would be con-
sidered minimal in relation to potential return on investment. Internal
consultants can be effective since they are an accountable point of contact,
readily available to provide leaders/managers with assistance in solving a
variety of organizational problems. (25-113) The internal consulting
"function also serves as a training ground for future, high level managers."
(25-113)

5. A method should be developed to analyze the organization and the
analyzed information fed back to the members. Management Action Plans (MAPS)
or some similar goal development methodology could be used to incorporate
corporate goals with collected data. Eventually, these activities should be
evaluated to determine both progress and results.

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6. Organizational members and consultants must work together to effectively initiate/maintain the OD process and to measure results. They must also use those results to plan future OD activities such as interventions, seminars, or one-on-one consulting.

What is done by consultants and organizational members using an OD process can be an individual or mutual decision. There are right and wrong reasons for initiating an OD effort. If the organization is better as the result, then the reasons lose their importance. The point is, OD can be a comprehensive technique for improving the overall growth and productivity of an organization regardless or whether it is commercial or service oriented. It is also a process designed to help people be better managers and employees.

Part Three: Consulting in the Air Force

Typical of many large organizations, the Air Force started seeking methods and techniques for improving mission effectiveness and productivity early in the 1970's. OD was accepted as a means for improving morale, motivation, and in general terms, the Quality of Work Life (QWL). To expedite the effort, an organization was formed at Maxwell AFB, Alabama called the Air Force Leadership and Management Development Center (LMDC). This newly formed organization was "charged with providing instruction and consultation services in the fields of leadership, management, and job enrichment." (14-1)

The consultation process initially developed by LMDC involved sending a large number of consultants (12 to 14) to client organizations, at the invitation of host Commanders, for the purpose of helping them and subordinate leaders/managers/supervisors improve QWL, motivation,

communications, and a wide variety of other ills. The ultimate purpose was to enhance the organization's mission effectiveness. LMDC's management consultants were selected from officer and NCO volunteers who had a lot of supervisory experience and demonstrated the desire to help others. Upon arrival at Maxwell AFB, each new assignee was provided academic training and experientially exposed to management consulting via an informal practicum conducted by other team members. Once in the field, they relied on interviews, personal observations, and several small, untested sampling questionnaires to gather information about the host unit. The available data were then used to diagnose and form conclusions about the organizational climate. Findings were then fed back to key personnel within each unit to do with as they saw fit.

By 1979, significant advancement had been introduced into the LMDC's consulting process. First, a comprehensive diagnostic survey questionnaire entitled the "Organizational Assessment Package" (OAP) was developed by Hendrix and Halverson (22-10) A "sample of personnel in each work group" (13-1) were administered the OAP and the results stored in computer memory banks for use by consultants and future statistical comparisons. With the inclusion of the OAP, the process was not only enhanced, but was also modified to resemble a survey guided or survey-feedback consultation technique. With the newly introduced technique as its foundation, a more objective form of OD intervention within the Air Force was possible.

A second modification was instituted with the creation of the Management Strategies Course (MSC) (1-1). The in-house course was designed to teach future consultants (trainees) new/individual skills such as one-on-one consulting, survey administration and feedback, and several OD intervention techniques. (2-48/49) (21-1) It was expected the instructional experience

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would provide trainees a capability base, broad enough to help Air Force leaders and managers solve a variety of organizational ills. (9-72) Upon completion of the MSC, a follow-on "management consultant proficiency program" (1-1) was developed to provide trainees an opportunity to observe and apply classroom training under the guidance of experienced consultants in actual consulting situations. When several established requirements (data gathering visit, tailored visit, participation in analysis phase, etc.) were fulfilled, trainees were certified to perform as qualified management consultants. (1-1) To qualify for becoming Senior Management Consultants, individuals had to "be a certified Management Consultant for a minimum of nine months" (1-2).

As previously indicated, LMDC consultants use the survey-guided methodology for conducting OD interventions based on the theory that suggests "most effective OD activities involve the elements of data collection, analysis, and feedback on some scale." (31-42) The LMDC process also adheres to the theory that for an organization to change, it must somehow obtain a valid image of itself in the present, develop a clear picture of its problems, and construct realistic maps to guide it toward improvement (31-5).

While OD encompasses several definitions, Nadler points out that OD involves "a planned and systematic attempt to change patterns of organizational behavior." (31-6) Goals include improved organizational effectiveness and increased productivity. It should be pointed out that OD applications in the Air Force are usually accomplished in response to a "felt need" by a manager or leader to resolve perceived problems. When the need has been verified, a rather structured consulting process is initiated by LMDC management consultants to help the clients affect movement in desired directions.

<u>Note</u>: Because OD "is long-range effort, it should not be looked upon as a one-shot, quick fix solution to organizational problems." (4-28) (27-683) (15-9) Commanders and supervisors should realize it may take several months for an effective OD program to produce visible results and years to successfully institute throughout an organization. (39-429) (6-59)

Another factor to be considered is the resistance at all echelons to actually making any changes. For example, studies have shown that even after the consultant has worked with the client to develop such tools as Management Action Plans, the client still takes little or no action to make necessary changes and resolve problems. (28-456) (37-255) (15-187) To produce lasting results, the consultant should be prepared to help the client review possibilities for affecting change by changing people or by changing their environment, or both. (34-517)

Although some of the techniques used by LMDC consultants may vary during the process of an OD intervention due to expertise or experience, several basic functions remain relatively constant:

1. Systematic Data Collection. This step is accomplished using the OAP to obtain perceptual/objective data to analyze the organization and provide a source for definitive feedback.

2. Data Analysis. This function is either an individual or consulting team effort. While the majority of the data are survey results, it also includes observations and interviews which are important inputs to the diagnosis process.

3. Data Feedback. A consultant responsibility, the methods and effectiveness vary according to the capabilities of individual consultants, size of the unit, and available time. How the feedback is interpreted by the client and used to affect change remains a relatively uncontrollable variable.

The entire process used by LMDC consultants is composed of five basic steps:

1. Initial Request.The process begins when a client (Wing Commander or above) sends a letter of request to LMDC, requesting a management consulting team be sent to his/her organization. Once the request is evaluated, approved, and scheduled, a reply is returned indicating the request has been reviewed and placed on the calendar. From that point, most of the interaction is between the team chief and client appointed project officers.

A recent modification to the process now includes a data gathering pre-visit as soon as practical after confirming the visitation. The intent is to meet with key personnel and selected supervisors to make personal contact, reduce resistance, and jointly establish the ground rules to be followed during the visit. Organizational charts and a general impression of the overall work enviornment are obtained during the pre-visit.

2. Data Collection. Data collection is accomplished when the entire team visits the client's organization. The actual data gathering is a collaborative effort between team members and members of the organization. Data are collected over a period of one week using the following methods:

     a. Confirmation of previously obtained organizational charts.

     b. Administration of an open-ended questionnaire to key supervisors in all units to ascertain their perceptions and attitudes as work group leaders. Perceptions covered by the questionnaire include the current morale of supervisors' work groups, changes that have occurred within the work group in the past six months regarding performance or attitude, and the supervisors' leadership style as perceived by themselves and their subordinates.

     c. Structured interviews with supervisors.

     d. Administration of the OAP survey to approximately 60% (stratified random sampling) of the personnel within each organization.

     e. Observations of the work environment by consultants.

3. Analysis. When all of the available information from the "data gathering" visit has been assembled, consultants can commence to process and analyze the information. The effectiveness of this step is critically dependent on several factors:

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a. quantity and quality of data.

b. training and expertise of consultants.

c. time to conduct analysis.

Responses to the OAP are scored by the computer and the results statistically analyzed by consultants using the factors listed in Table 1 (14-2). Information from other sources (interviews, questionnaires, observations, etc.) is integrated "to give depth and dimension to the picture of the organization created by the OAP results." (28-5)

Based primarily on OAP responses, LMDC consultants develop feedback packages for supervisors who had four or more personnel in their work group who took the survey. These feedback packages statistically compare an individual supervisor's work group aggregate with the total organization as well as with similar work group aggregates in the data base established by LMDC. As consultants develop the feedback packages, they rank work groups within the organization on each factor measured by the OAP. Once ranked, strengths and problem areas can be identified using comparisons. Information gathered from each work group independently of the OAP is compared with OAP results to verify consistency of all data describing a work group. (26-5)

4. <u>Tailored Visit.</u> The next step in the process is the tailored visit. The term "tailored" is used because LMDC consultants are working explicitly with their client's data. Specific tailoring activities are generally restricted to providing verbal and written feedback based on OAP survey results. Occasionally, (time permitting) consultants do conduct such OD interventions as brainstorming, team building, and goal setting. However, interacting with client supervisors and instructing them how to intrepret and understand the computer produced feedback packages remains the backbone of the Air Force consulting process.

23

Skill Variety

Task Identity

Job Feedback

Work Support

Need For Enrichment

Job Performance Goals

Pride

Task Characteristics

Task Autonomy

Work Repetition

Desired Repetitive Easy Tasks

Job Influences

Advancement/Recognition

Supervisory Style

Supervisory Communication Climate

Organizational Communications Climate

Work Group Effectiveness/Work Interferences

Job Related Satisfaction

Job Related Training

Organizational Climate

Task Motivational Potential

Table 1

Factors Assessed by the Organizational Assessment Package

5. Follow-Up. The follow-up step has a dual purpose: to determine if any changes have occurred since the administration of the initial survey and to evaluate the effectiveness of the consultation process.

The two step follow-up consists of LMDC's mailing survey questionnaires (45 to 90 days after the Tailored Visit) to the Commander and key supervisors with whom consultants worked individually. The survey instrument solicits their anonymous judgements about the performance of the consulting team and the impact of the consulting process within the client organization. The questionnaire consists of 28 broad questions such as:

--What activities did the team perform best for your organization?

--Based on your experience and on what you know about the LMDC consulting process, what recommendations would you offer for improving that process?

In addition, other questionnaires are sent to participants of specific seminars, soliciting participants' anonymous opinions about the effectiveness of the instruction.

The second part of the follow-up phase occurs about four to six months after the Tailored Visit. Consultants again visit the client's organization and re-administer the OAP survey to a random sample of personnel. Consultants also conduct interviews with supervisors who received feedback and were provided assistance in formulating Management Action Plans. Consultants determine whether progress toward MAP objectives has been made and whether further assistance to individual supervisors is necessary.

After completion of the second part of the follow-up step, consultants return to the LMDC facility where they statistically analyze the second group of responses to the OAP survey and integrate the data with both interview results and responses obtained from the supervisor's and commander's questionnaires.

Note: Unfortunatly the OAP <u>does not</u> provide a totally objective evaluation of the intervention's effectiveness nor does it provide statistical support for why positive or negative changes may have occurred within the organization. Were the changes, if any, a direct result of the intervention or caused by other phenomena such as personnel rotations, change of seasons, or planned management actions? Although some alternative explanations have been ruled out by research, there remain too many variables to suggest the data derived from the second survey should be used to validate the indicated changes/improvements such as improved productivity, better attitudes, or increased efficiency were the direct or indirect results of the consultant's visit. Therefore, the second purpose of step five, "evaluate the effectiveness of the consultation process" (21-7) cannot be completely fulfilled using presently available post-intervention survey methods.

However, it should also be noted, methods do exist which can be instituted to more objectively determine consultant effectiveness. Control groups would have to be established to determine the exact status of an organization prior to an intervention. Functional variables could be determined for like units, consultant activities closely monitored and recorded, and an objective evaluation periodically conducted to determine positive or negative change within an organization. The search to determine organizational change and consultant effectiveness should address both functional and behavioral perspectives. (35-374) "In general, consultant effectiveness depends on the consultant's ability to identify correctly the focal issue, introduce the kind of intervention the situation objectively requires, and deal with the real client." (11-6) Hersey and Blanchard amplify by saying, "effective OD interventions depend on diagnosing the situation and determining the highest probability success approach for the particular environment." (23-303)

Part Four: Flow Chart of a Proposed OD Intervention

Developing a complete understanding of an organizational development effort from beginning to end can be difficult for both the client and consultant. The problem "stems primarily from the long-term; intangible nature of OD itself, as opposed to the short-run, bottom-line results orientation of many managers." (18-150) The difficulty grows when consultants apply a variety of approaches or interventions over an extended time period to achieve any number of outcomes. To track such activities, it is often productive to plot primary actions on a flow chart. Charting helps explore a complicated process, such as an OD effort, and provides as much detail as required to enhance understanding. (41-10) (15-34)

Part Four presents a modified consulting model originally designed by William R. Gamble (18-151) that is designed to delineate and enhance the consulting process presently used by Air Force management consultants. (3-3) (12-22-1) The model addresses the major segments of an OD consulting effort including initial contracting, data collection, analysis and feedback of organizational assessment data, strategy planning, evaluation, and follow-up activities. The formal reporting procedures included in the model allows the client and the consultant an opportunity to participate in preparing a written record of events. The report's format is intended to provide reference data for follow-on OD activities. While Figure 8 provides the complete model, it is helpful to identify and explain specific activities within the model "as the different phases or processes unfold." (18-150)

1. Diagnosing the Organization

Figure 3 outlines the first steps of effort beginning with the client's "felt need" followed by his/her formal (written) request to LMDC for a management consultant visit. Approval of the request depends on several
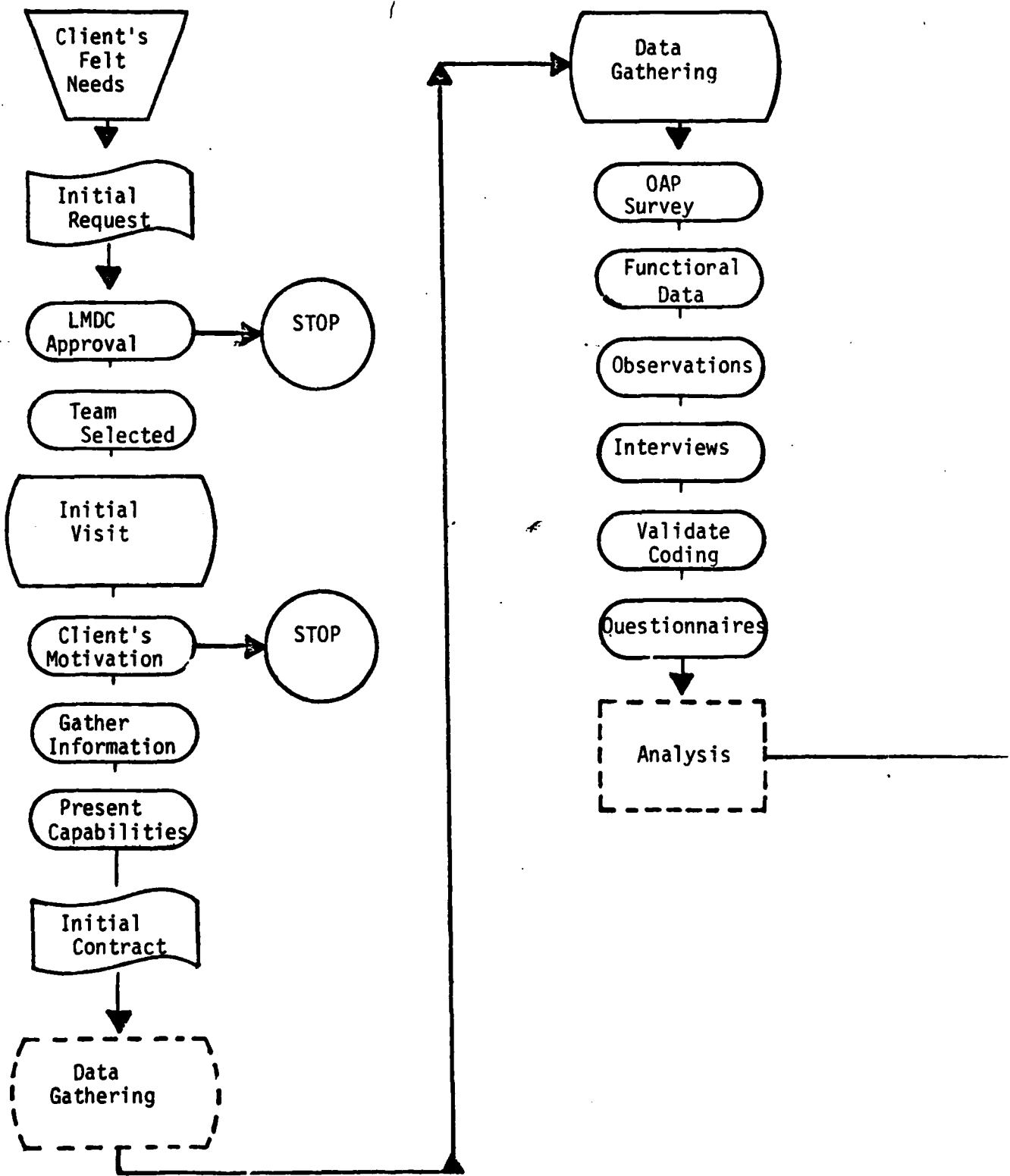
Figure 3

variables. Criteria for approval should include stated reasons for the
request, elapsed time since last visit, potential for success, and consul-
tants schedule. Once approved, the next major step is arriving at a suitable
contract. Contracting can be a complicated and vital process since a client
may be requesting consultant help for all the wrong reasons. Entering a con-
tract under such circumstances literally dooms the effort to failure. There-
fore, it behooves consulting team chiefs to determine client motives during
the initial visit and curtail the effort if those interviews clearly reveal
an OD effort would be a non-productive losing cause.

Once an initial contract has been negotiated and the consultant and
client feel comfortable with each other, they can then prepare for the next
phase; "data gathering." Although some information gathering commences upon
receipt of the written request, formal gathering begins when consultants
administer Organizational Assessment Package (OAP) surveys, circulate ques-
tionnaires, conduct individual interviews, etc. Data collection also
includes obtaining functional information such as Inspector General reports,
operational ready rates, and an accurate coding of the organizational struc-
ture. When all available forms of data have been compiled, the consultants
then enter the "analysis" phase. (Figure 4)

The analysis process is designed to review available data in an effort to
determine organizational needs and establish a direction for the consulting
effort. Targets, entry levels, and specific plans are formulated for each
sub-organization based on the specific needs of the organization and the
desires of the client. Liaison with the client should be maintained through-
out this phase to narrow the effort's focus and insure consultants are deal-
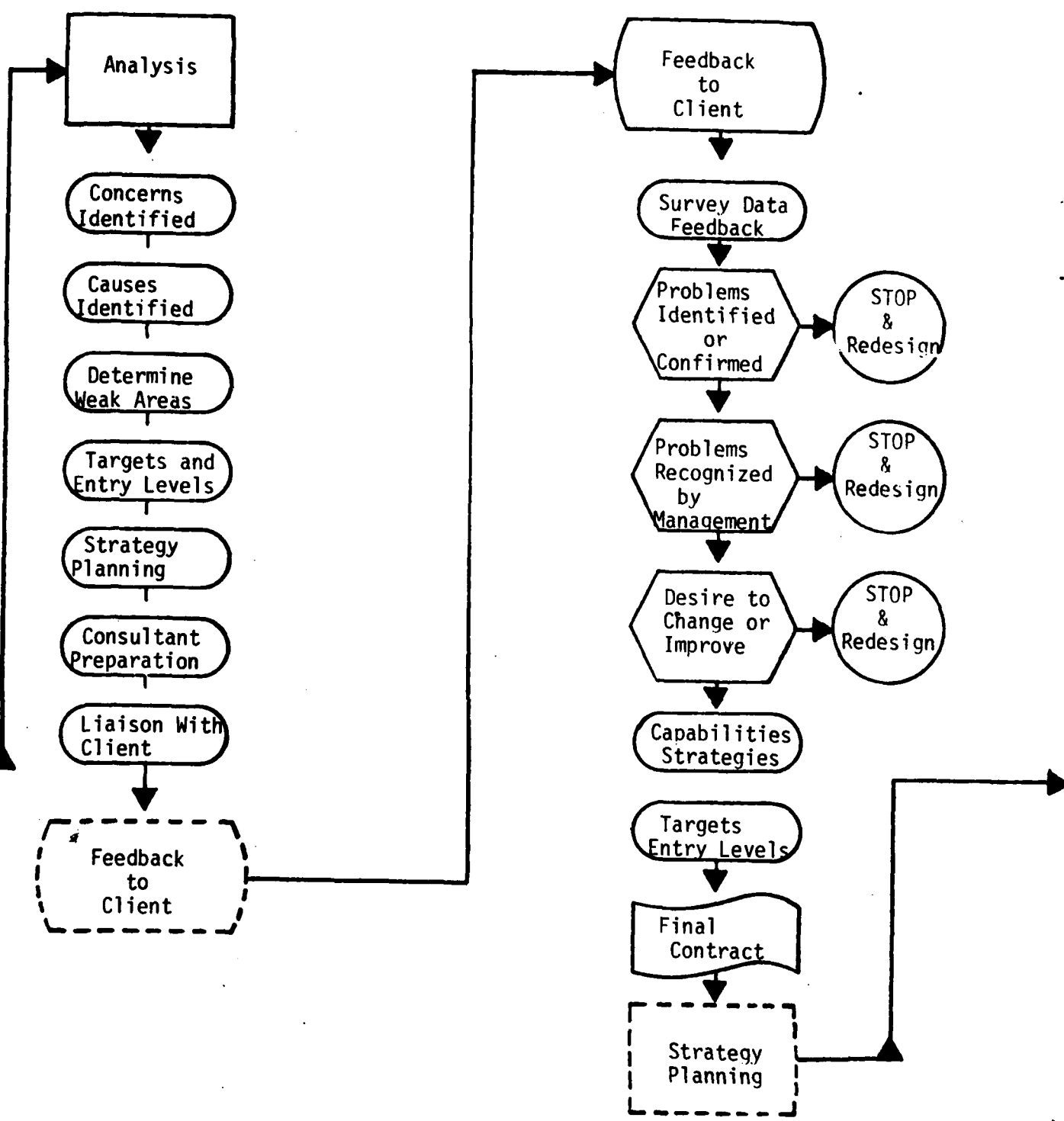ing with high-priority concerns.

Analysis

Concerns Identified

Causes Identified

Determine Weak Areas

Targets and Entry Levels

Strategy Planning

Consultant Preparation

Liaison With Client

Feedback to Client

Feedback to Client

Survey Data Feedback

Problems Identified or Confirmed → STOP & Redesign

Problems Recognized by Management → STOP & Redesign

Desire to Change or Improve → STOP & Redesign

Capabilities Strategies

Targets Entry Levels

Final Contract

Strategy Planning

Figure 4

When the organizational analysis is complete, consultants return to the organization to provide face-to-face feedback to the client, starting with the major client (Commander). (Figure 4) If the need for further or specific action is not recognized by the client, there is little need to continue the effort without additional contract negotiation. It may be necessary to redesign some assessment tools or possibly terminate the effort. However, if the client responds positively, the effort can proceed to the next phase, Strategy Planning.

2. Strategy Planning (Figure 5)

Although planning and designing can be a costly and time-consuming exercise, it is generally recognized that planning and design are critical to the success of the OD effort. To be effective, consultants must first know their own capabilities and limitations. Next, they must understand their client's situation and develop a realistic strategy for affecting change within the parameters of their contract with the client.

For this phase to be most effective, the client must remain involved to assure the effort's focus is extensive enough to address the right targets. Such involvement helps insure interventions selected are sufficiently realistic to meet the unique needs of the organization. Furthermore, involved clients seem to develop an enhanced sense of ownership for the effort and are better prepared to commit the time, energy, and personnel resources necessary for the OD effort to succeed. As Gamble states, "when the stakes are high enough, failure cannot be allowed to occur."(18-150)

Another key aspect of the planning and design stage is "the development of a sound evaluation plan by which to measure the results of the effort in the long run" (18-152) Although clients are typically interested in knowing if anything positive happened which will improve the organization, so are the consultants. Including an evaluation plan in the contract is recommended as
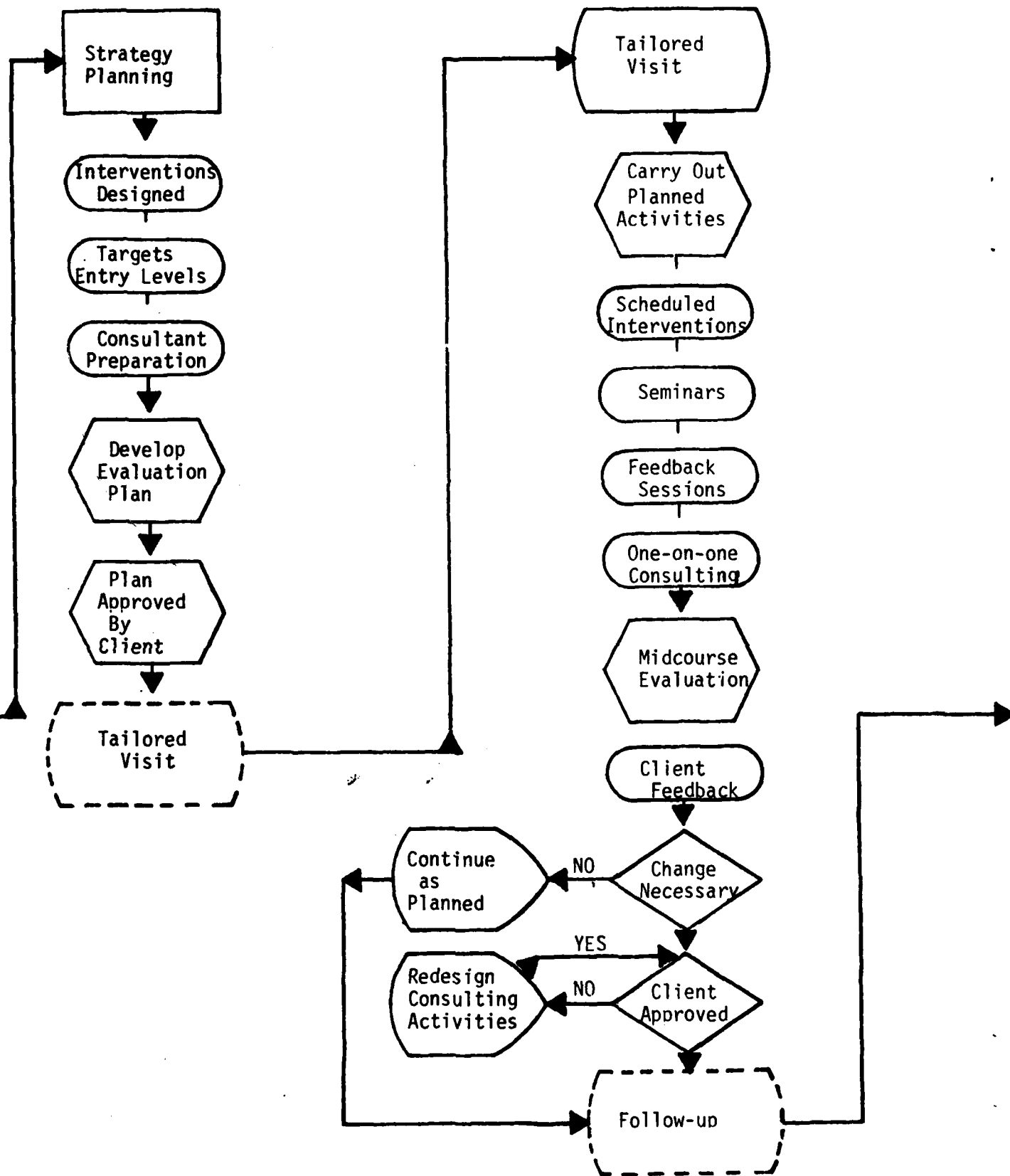
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Figure 5
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such plans may affect the design of the entire effort. Knowing what happened and why is often difficult, but made easier if the evaluation process is clear to all concerned prior to and during the course of the intervention activities.

3. Tailored Visit

Once all plans have been laid-out and client approved, it is time for the consultants to implement their plan of action and conduct the "tailored visit." (Figure 5) Throughout this phase, consultants have the opportunity to exercise considerable technical flexibility and freedom of action. Therefore, caution must be observed to avoid radical departures from the agreed upon contract. Client approval should be sought if major directional changes are dictated by unforeseen circumstances.

Another critical aspect of this phase is the mid-course evaluation. A built-in, systematic review of activities should be instituted to determine if original objectives are being met and whether adjustments to the plan or contract should be made for the effort to succeed. If a change is absolutely necessary, then all courses of action should be carefully considered with the client and the revised plan submitted for client review and approval. Once a new course is decided and approved, the consulting process can continue. The above step is one of several modifications incorporated into the enhanced model. Taking a mid-course look at the OD effort insures focus accuracy by allowing for a mutual on-going review of activities by both the consultants and client.

During this stage of the process, systematic efforts should begin to integrate the philosophies and techniques of OD into the clients' work and social structure. The goal is to leave the organization with sufficient understanding and expertise to carry on the OD effort. As a minimum, selected members of the client's organization should have the capability to

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examine internal affairs and apply OD techniques when necessary. If this capability can be established within the organization, through seminars and one-on-one consulting, the formal OD intervention can be effectively terminated. At least one member of the consulting team should be designated in the contract to remain on call in case problems occur within the client's organization. The commander or internal consultants may want to maintain some liasion with the consulting team after terminating the formal effort.

4. Follow-up and evaluation

Figure 6 depicts one of the most important aspects of the total effort: "evaluating the results of the intervention to determine the appropriateness of the selected strategy, and the implementation of the plans. Two basic questions to be answered are: (1) Were major objectives met? and (2) What impact was made on the organization?" (16-152)

The follow-up step is primarily accomplished using the OAP survey instrument, interviews, observation, and a comprehensive review of functional and statistical data. The model presents another avenue for enhancing objectivity seeking and including client inputs in the jointly conducted follow-up evaluation. Who is more knowledgeable of progress, especially functional progress such as mission effectiveness, productivity, and operational ready rates, than the client?

Note: Throughout this stage, efforts should continue to instill the OD process within the organization. The more leaders and managers learn and know about good management, the more efficiently they can strive for improved unit effectiveness. Such integration can also help to prevent reversals of positive trends and insure continued growth and development of the organization.
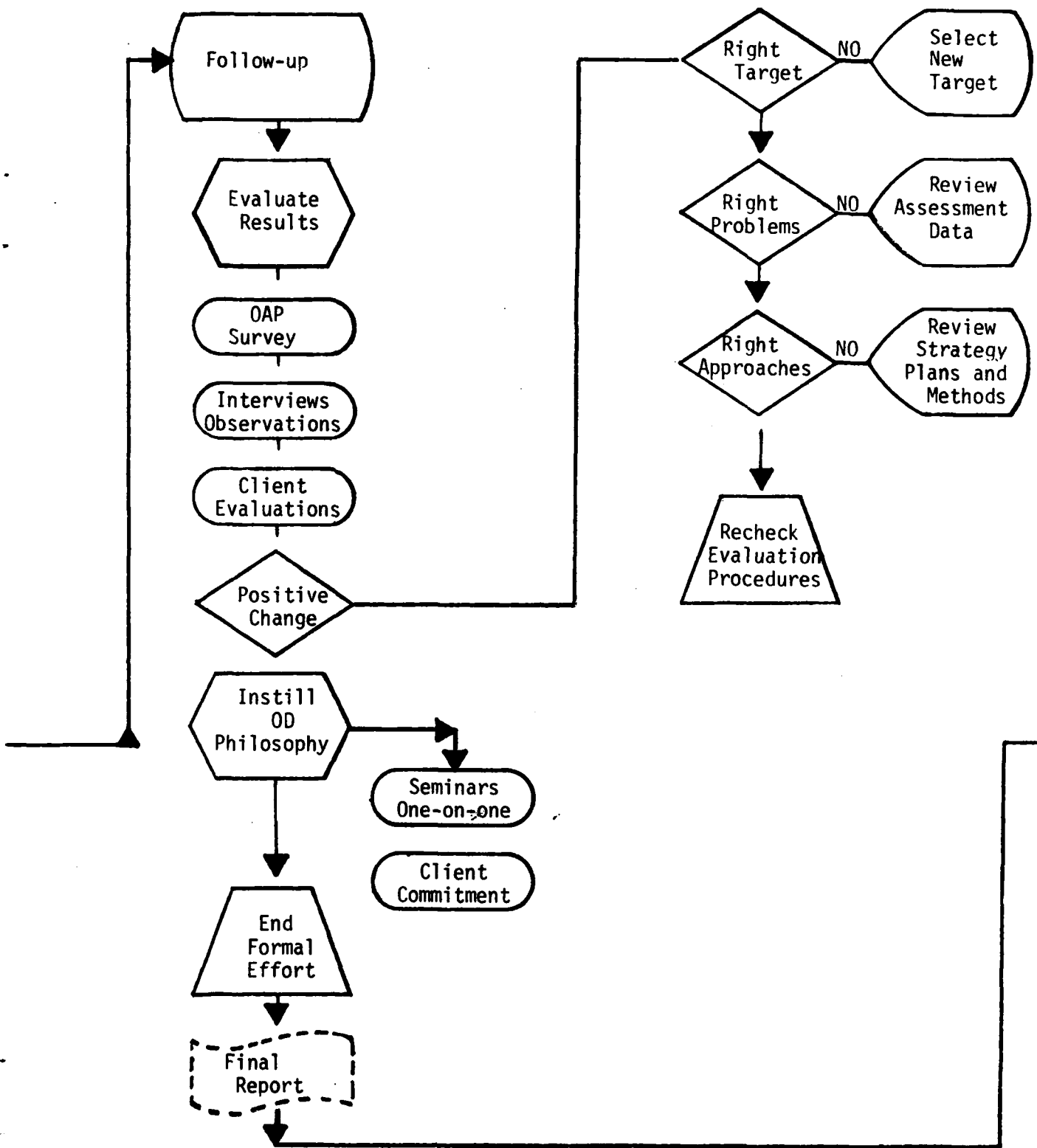
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Figure 6

A distinct thrust of this proposal is to enhance results through a knowledgeable and cooperative effort. Upon completion of the effort, this same level of cooperation can be tapped to determine results; both positive and negative. When the evaluation is complete, both the client and consultant have a better idea of what happened, what did and did not work, and how much the effort was worth in terms of improved mission/combat readiness. Also, existing deficiencies within the process can be deleted or improved. Strong points can be repeated to enhance future visits to the same unit or other units of like nature. As consultants get better at helping organizations, they will improve the overall capability of the Air Force.

Once the evaluation is complete, all scheduled training seminars, and one-on-one consulting sessions have been accomplished, it is time to terminate the formal portion of the effort. At this point, the contract should have been fulfilled to the satisfaction of both the client and the team chief. Unfulfilled plans should have been clearly identified during the evaluation process and annotated in the final report.

Upon termination, the client must assume responsibility for continuing the OD effort, change process, etc. Without follow-on client support, the possibilities for long-term results are extremely limited. As indicated earlier, at least one member of the consulting team should remain on-call for down-line advice on specific problems within the organization. The client may have selected several organization members to perform as internal consultants on an "as necessary" basis. These consultants may also want to retain continued liaison with the team representatives. Once the internal consultants feel confident and are comfortable with their roles, chances are greatly increased that the client organization will continue to grow and develop sufficient capabilities to adapt to all forms of internal and external change.
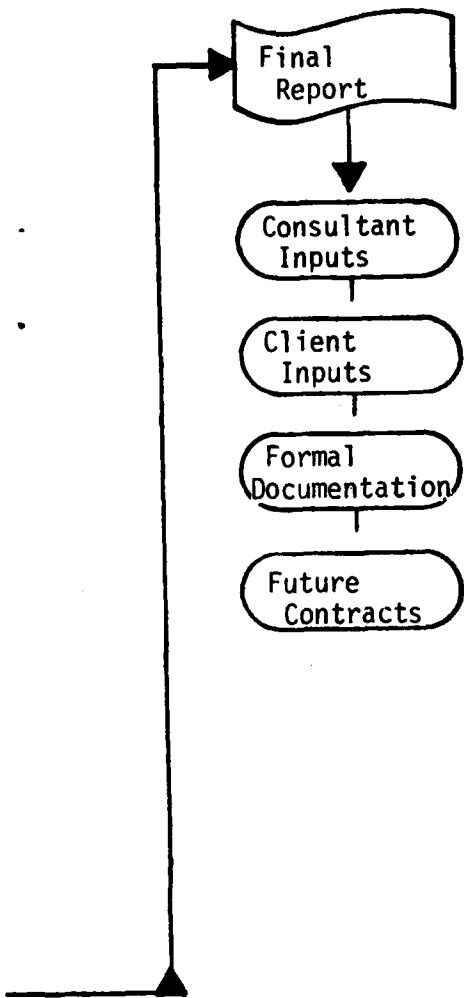
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Figure 7

5. Final Report

The final report should be co-authored by the client and the consulting team. (Figure 7) Basically, it should highlight what was done, why, and in specific terms what results were produced by the effort. One final and-important inclusion should be future goals and objectives which remain in effect for the organization. Keep in mind, a considerable amount of time is required for an OD effort to produce realistic results. OD efforts can take as long as two to three years and even last up to ten years in a long-range effort. (8-74)

Since the client was deeply involved in the effort, involvement in the written documentation can lead to unlimited residual value. The client has access to a permanent record and can use the documentation for reference purposes. The goals and objectives set forth in the report can also be reviewed as a means for measuring progress.

6. Summary

Figure 8 portrays the recommended OD process in its entirety. This model can be expanded or contracted to meet the particular needs of the client and consultant. Consultants are generally familiar with these types of flow diagrams. Consultants will find the model useful when they are requested to outline the general structure of the OD process to clients or sub-group managers. Especially important is the model's emphasis on the organization and its involvement in the process versus any undue emphasis on the consultant. Success or failure of the strategy, selected interventions, and the process as a whole is shown to be largely a function of "the organization's management--and rightly so." (18-153)
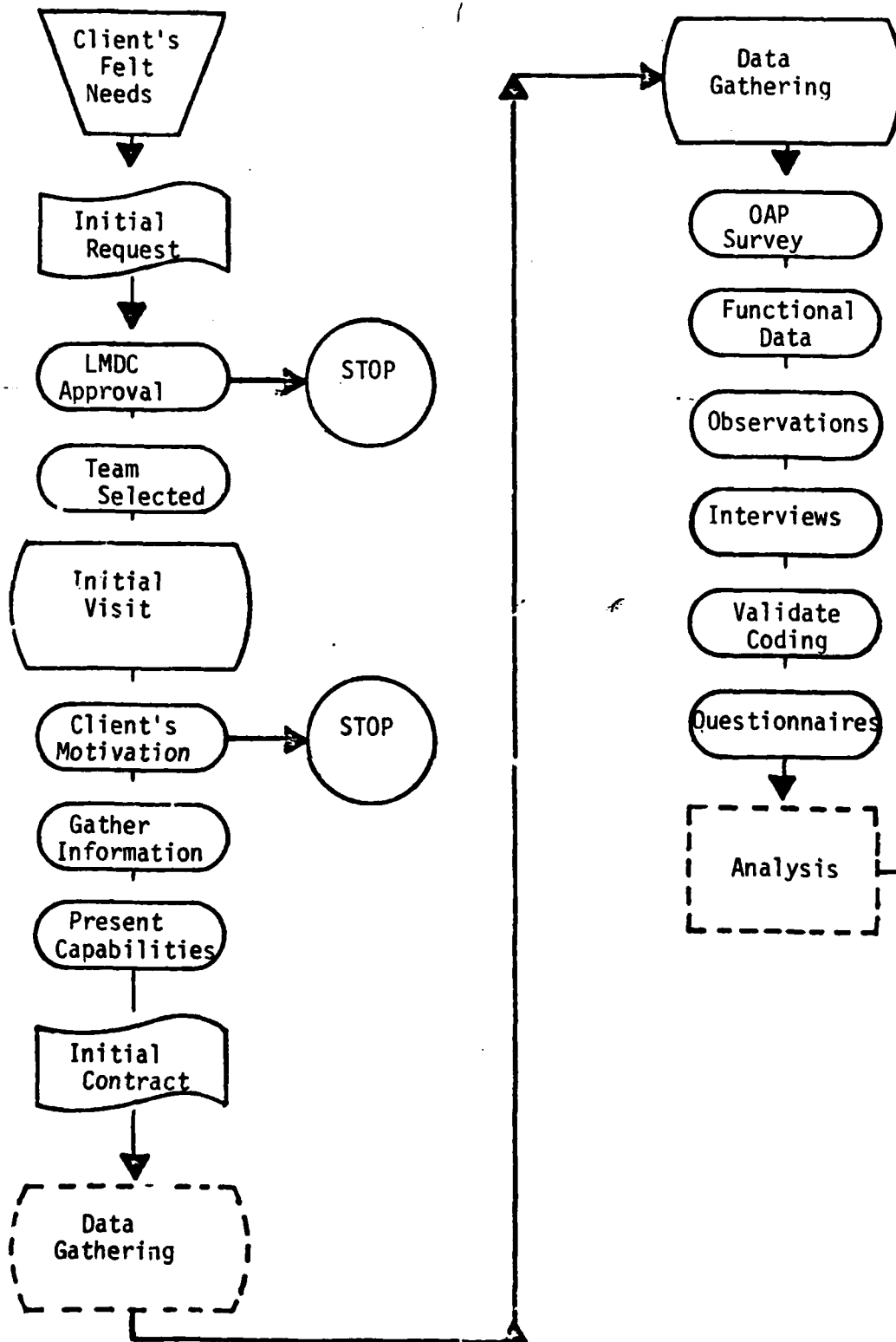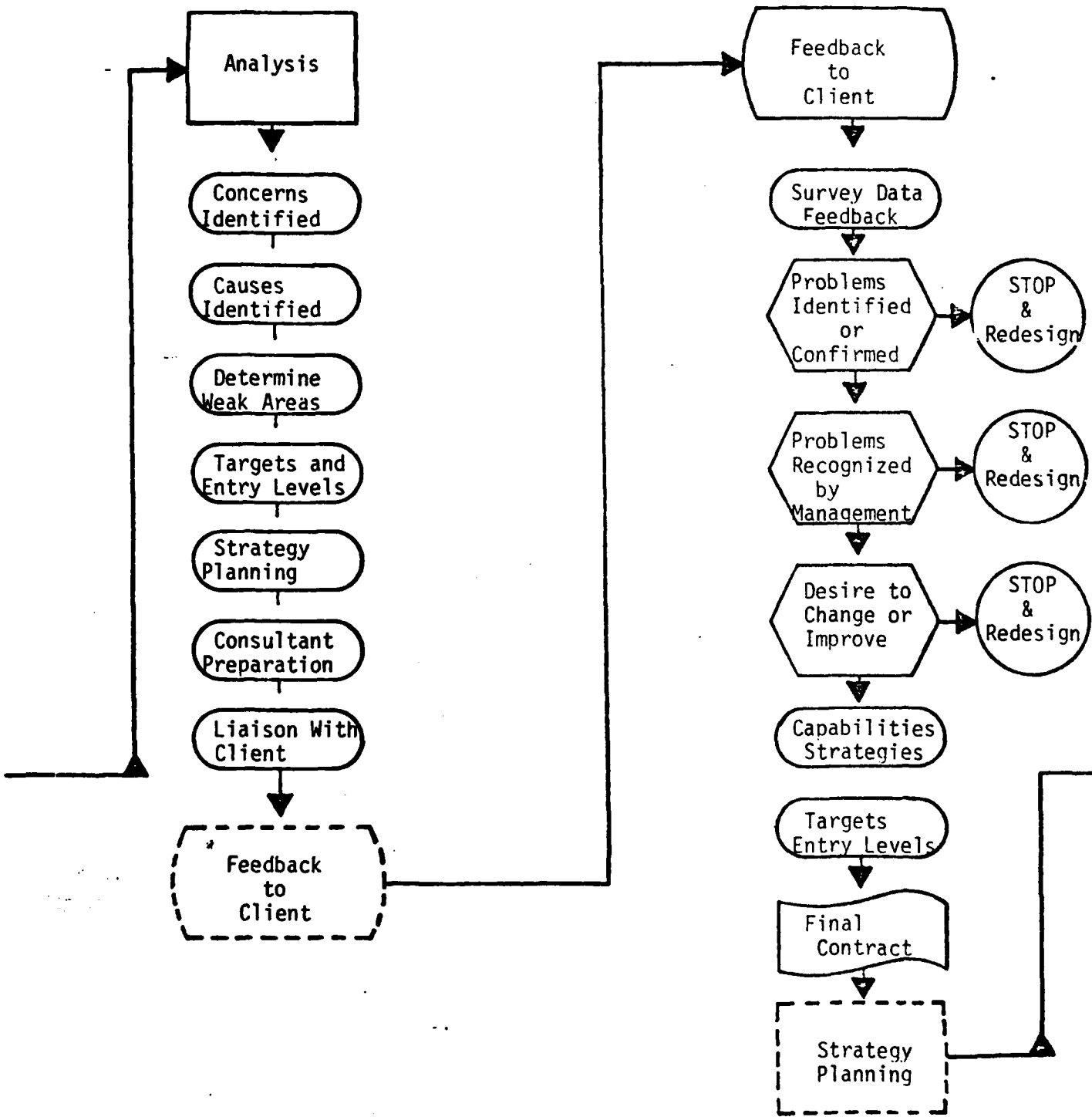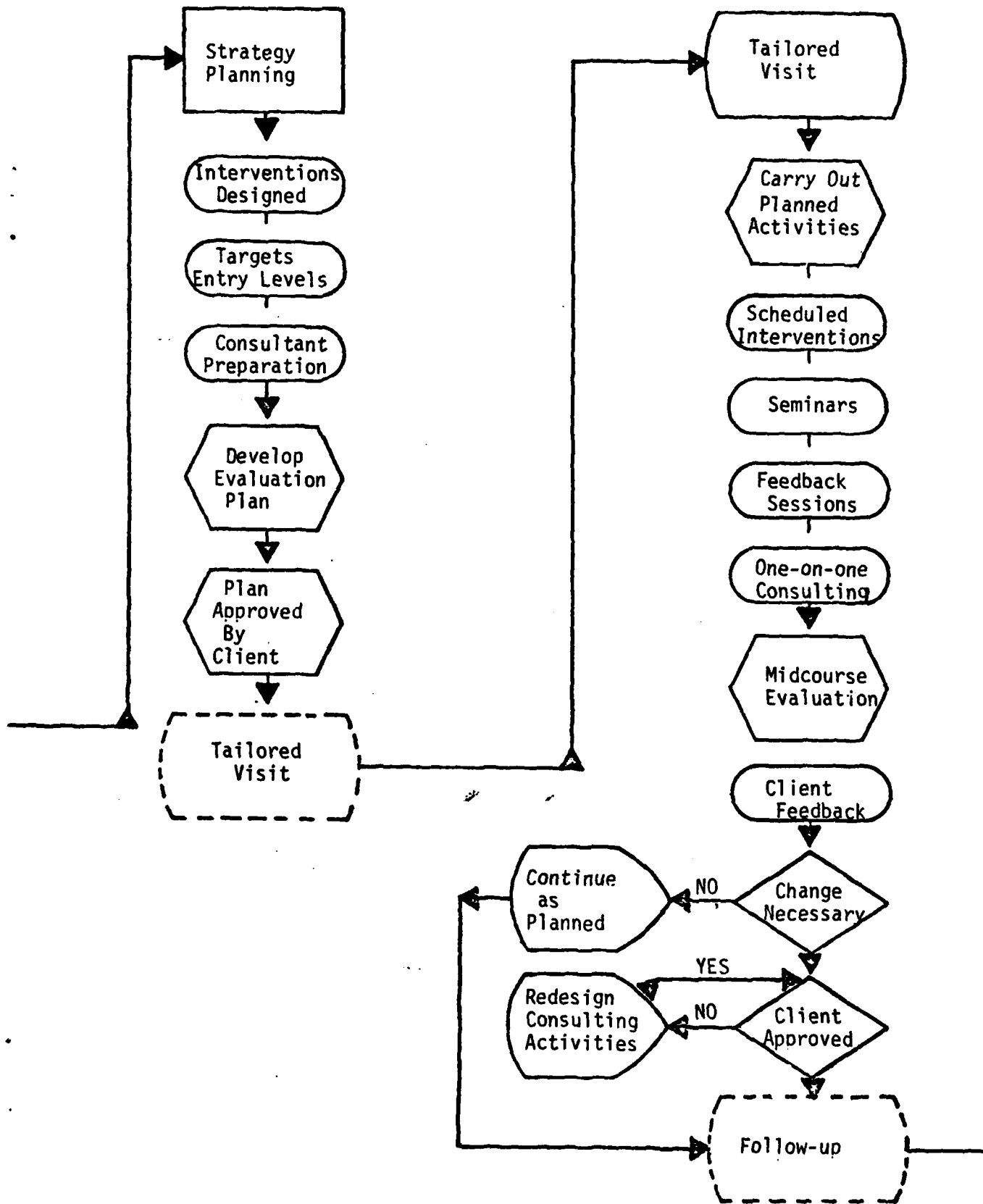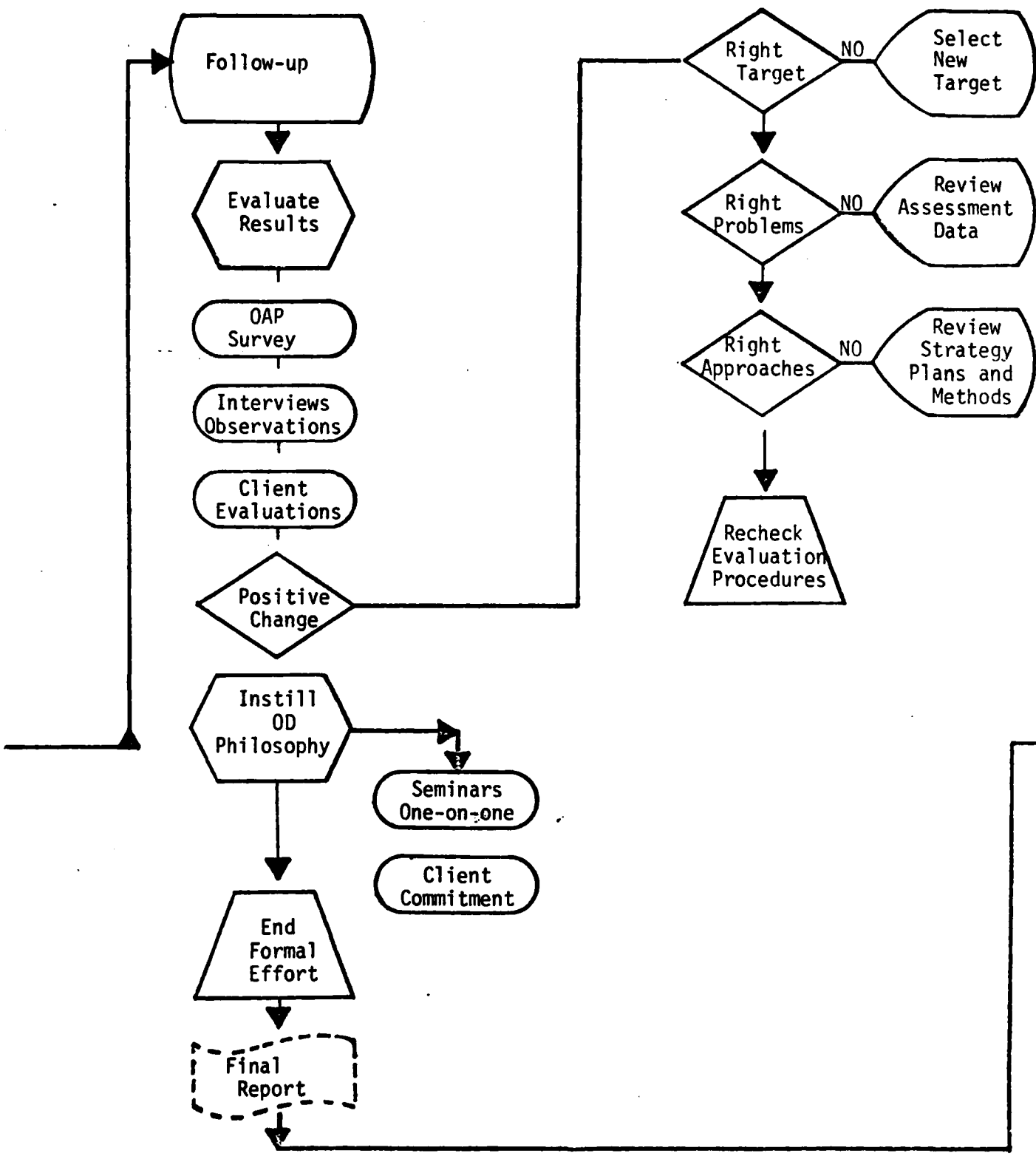
Figure 8

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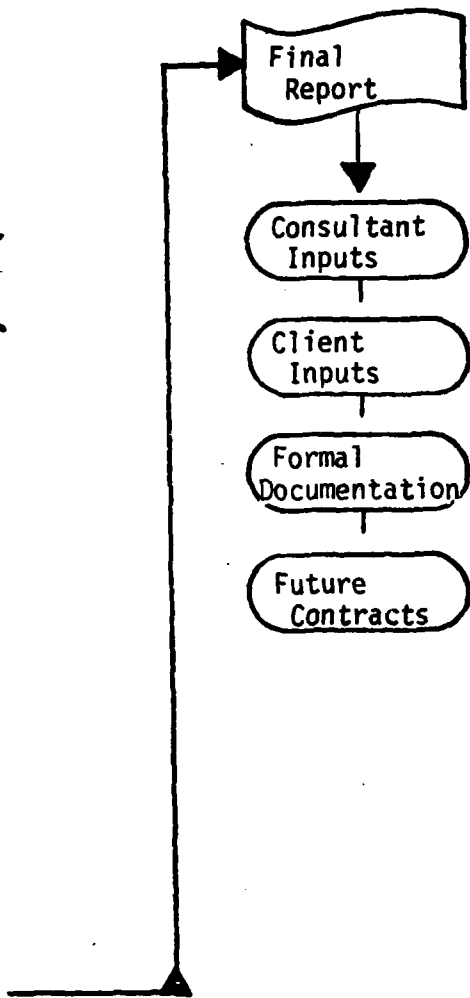
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