



## Initial Member E-mail Communication

**Date:** March 30, 2011  
**To:** Organization Development Network Members  
**From:** Darya Funches, Ed.D, Chair, Board of Trustees  
**Subject:** Change is Coming to the Network

It is with mixed emotions and much hope that I write to you today.

First, the very good news. I am pleased to say that the Board of Trustees of the OD Network has voted unanimously to engage the well-known association management firm SmithBucklin Corporation to take over the day-to-day operations and management of the Network. SmithBucklin is the world's largest association management and professional services company, serving more than 320 trade associations, professional societies, and other nonprofit organizations. Through an international partnership, SmithBucklin also provides global reach and services to organizations operating internationally

We are doing this to position the Network for future growth because we believe that SmithBucklin's expertise in marketing, member acquisition, event planning and management, financial management, and member services can build on the work done by current staff and management and take the Network to the next level of growth and sustainable profitability.

The sad news is that our current staff will be ending their employment with the Network. The Board is deeply appreciative of the commitment to the Network that Peter and the team have demonstrated over the past several years. Individually and collectively, Executive Director Peter Norlin, Director of Finance and Operations Nicholas Corne, and Membership Associate Joselissa Cerda have not only been dedicated professionals during their service to the Network and to our members; they have worked tirelessly to keep the Network going and provide service to our members. Over the past several years, they have taken on with grace and good cheer more and more work as we've had to reduce the number of staff and consultants to reflect our declining budget. There is no way the Network would still be functioning without their tireless efforts under the leadership of ED Peter Norlin.

I have been deeply impressed with the expertise and breadth of resources that SmithBucklin has brought to the table, and am confident that they will help us expand our reach and allow us to provide best-in-class educational programs, publications, training programs, seminars, and networking opportunities to our members and the industry. The Board approached this opportunity very thoughtfully and critically. We selected SmithBucklin after issuing an RFP and a rigorous review of all of the proposals submitted by several firms. We strongly believe that this partnership with SmithBucklin is the right answer for the Network at this time, and will allow us to serve our current and future members at the highest level possible. This view is shared by each Board member and by the current Network management, despite the challenges of change.

As Chair of the Board, I'm committed to helping the Network turn around and transform into its highest potential. What we are capable of doing is needed in the world and we have a place in today's and tomorrow's marketplace. To bring all of this into reality means transforming the organization, not merely "tweaking" it. There are places where we can get positive results with minor adjustments and other places where to turn the corner and be in a leadership position in our field, we must transform, beyond "tweaking." In this letter, I cannot share my thoughts about

what, why and how we need to transform but I will in another communication. Today, I want to emphasize how much I need and value the relationship with you, the membership, and how encouraged I feel by most of your letters, even the tough messages. Your responses have helped to guide some of my choices, although I am not able to respond to every letter individually. Going forward, I will continue to reach out to create a new Network together.

The decision to work with SmithBucklin is a good one on behalf of the whole system. It is different than our expectation that OD people should run our organization. It makes room for management experts and process/design experts to collaborate and create more synergy and higher performance in these complex times. At the least, it is a worthy experiment and must be done to continue to serve you at this time. We're building partnerships and alliances with you, our sponsors, our donors, and with SmithBucklin. As partners, we all invest and we all need to benefit in ways we value. To see some highlights of the transition, review the chart below.

I will continue to keep you up-to-date on our progress. As soon as the SmithBucklin staff is in place, I will introduce them to you. Should you have additional questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to me and other members of the Board of Trustees directly. Look on the website and below for contact information for the different Trustees.

Best regards,

*Darya*

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## Transition Highlights – Darya Funches, Ed.D., Chair, Board of Trustees

What Stays the Same for Now	What Changes for Now
Conference 2011 is still on in Baltimore with the theme, “Change is Coming.” More information at <a href="http://odnetwork.org/conf2011">http://odnetwork.org/conf2011</a> .	We'll have the benefit of SmithBucklin's market research to support our content decisions going forward and cost savings with hotels and other vendors, creating a financially viable event.
Membership dues remain the same, along with current services and benefits of membership.	Look for improved & new membership services to help practitioners thrive in a global climate: services/programs for affiliates [local and regional networks] globally, website, social media & networking, products and programs.
Board of Trustees is responsible for overall strategic direction and oversight of implementation via ED; Board retains fiduciary responsibility for the Network and is accountable to the membership.	New Executive Director/Staff for the Network Office via SmithBucklin for execution of strategy and day to day operations; will provide service delivery along with active volunteer members and paid members in Network/member joint ventures.
The ED will report to the Board, manage operations, be a strategic partner with the Board, ensure financial viability.	The ED will be an expert in business leadership, yet be familiar with OD; will be selected by the Board, and hired by SmithBucklin through a process we are engaged in now.
Our three publications will continue, under the leadership of John Vogelsang and the great editorial board we now have.	We will use the new electronic format we have for the <i>Practitioner</i> and continue exploring interactive media options and membership's differentiated needs for our publications.
We are still committed to the VSO Project and have begun a Project Leadership Team for it. We will continue with plans to reach out to the membership about how you can be involved.	SmithBucklin's Innovation Center will help with the Vision, Strategy and Organization Project [VSO Project for the Network's strategic direction, organization design and business models going forward].
Network members are still the experts in our field and will continue to provide content leadership and support in program design, conferences, product development, education, publications, and other areas of work.	Increased capabilities for marketing and financial operations, economies of scale for conference activities, and other synergies that will save money and generate new income 18 months from now.
For now, the Network remains as a New Jersey-registered corporation.	OD Network Headquarters will be in Chicago with capabilities also in Washington, DC.