



Collaborative Strategic Improvement Through Network Action Learning: The Path to Sustainability

Paul Coughlan, David Coughlan

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Improvement is fundamental to the competitiveness of networks and requires the participating firms to collaborate in identifying and introducing changes. This book presents collaborative strategic improvement as a cycle of activities in which firms in a network can engage together. Drawing on actual cases, authors link this cycle with disciplined action learning as a means of building upon experience generated through collaborative action. They describe how a network can learn from experience and deploy that learning in the marketplace.

This unique book brings together the domains of operations management, organizational learning and action learning. From an operations management perspective, the work extends the established concept of strategic improvement in operations to the network within which firms collaborate to improve and to compete. From an action learning perspective, it draws on the emerging literature on network learning, re-frames the established concept of action learning as a learning mechanism and extends action learning into the network setting. Here, it values the inter-organizational insights that emerge through collaboration. Finally, the study articulates a philosophy and a framework for action learning research, extending the reach of action learning beyond practice to knowledge generation.

Directed to researchers engaged in active intervention in improvement initiatives in organizations, this insightful book will prove to be a must-have resource. Also, it will appeal strongly to practitioners, including managers and action learning facilitators.

Contents: 1. Overture; Part I: The Domains; Introduction to Part I; 2. Collaborative Strategic Improvement; 3. Learning in and Between Organizations; 4. Action Learning in and Between Organizations; 5. Intermission - The State of Our Understanding; Part II: Learning in Action; Introduction to Part II; 6. Collaborative Strategic Improvement Action Learning Programme Design; 7. Effecting Collaborative Operational Strategic Improvement in a Non-Contractual Setting; 8. Effecting Collaborative Operational Strategic Improvement in the Contractual Setting of an Extended Manufacturing Enterprise; Part III: Consolidation; Introduction to Part III; 9. Realizing Strategic Improvement; 10. Guidelines for Realizing Sustainable Strategic Improvement; 11. Action Learning Research in Inter-organizational Settings; 12. Finale; Appendices; Appendix I: National Action Learning Programme (NALP): Background and Overview; Appendix II: CO-IMPROVE: Background and Overview; Appendix III: Introductory Workshop on Action Learning

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