CSIOP

Canadian Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology

Le regroupement canadien des psychologues industriels et organisationnels

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NEWSLETTER

The Industrial-Organizational Section of the Canadian Psychological Association

Volume 16, Number 3

April 2000

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COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR
Gary Johns, Ph.D., Concordia University

The CSIOP Executive met in Montreal on March 18 for its annual Long Range Planning Meeting. This meeting gives your Executive a chance to exchange and discuss reports about their respective functions and to actually do some long range planning. Several initiatives from that meeting will be discussed at the Annual General Meeting in Ottawa, including the potential electronic delivery of this *Newsletter*, policy on advertising inserts, policy on the provision of our mailing list to vendors of I-O related products and services, and a revision of CSIOP bylaws to reflect the expanded role of some Executive positions. I have been repeatedly amazed at how proactive Executive members are at going above and beyond the call of duty to improve CSIOP. At the meeting, we agreed that I would remind you that CSIOP is always ready to help promote worthy candidates for CPA Fellowship status. If you have suggestions from among the membership, please let us know.

In the last issue I promised that I would try to discuss something in this issue that is particularly relevant to practitioners. Here goes. Some of you may know that I have some interest in how it is that state-of-the-art, psychology-based HR techniques are not used with greater frequency by more organizations. This is borne out by a number of scientifically conducted surveys, and spans the domain of training, recruitment, performance appraisal, and

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economy and our work lives, I think that we could do more to translate the findings of our research into practice. What are the barriers to this happening? Here is a list of potential reasons, some overlapping. I want you to vote for the most accurate interpretations. I merely report them as told to me.

1. In the January issue of this *Newsletter*, Vic Catano opined that the scientist-practitioner model may be dead. If it is, the whole idea underpinning the translation of research findings to the field via an underlay of common training is unreasonable. Vic cites the example of practitioners offering competency-based selection and appraisal systems despite the lack of a research base. True scientist-practitioners would not do such brazen things.

2. As implied in the above point, not enough translation occurs because our research findings do not speak to the concerns of practitioners. There are two versions of this position. One is that we do not study issues of current concern, that organizational life is moving too fast for our research to keep up. In some cases this is true. For example, the quality circle fad had all but ended before the research appeared showing what a bad idea they were. On the other hand, I think the research on teams has been pretty timely. One thing that makes me suspicious about the generality of this timeliness thesis is my impression that many successful high-tech firms (which face the most dynamic business environments) seem to be some of the best consumers of I-O related HR practices (e.g., employee surveys; 360 feedback). If it is any consolation, the practice-outpaces-academic research theme occurs in the discipline of finance too.

3. The second version of the irrelevant research charge is that some of our research is *substantively* irrelevant. I must admit that I am surprised by the large proportion of lab studies reported in *JAP*, no doubt because all the really cool field studies were rejected by reviewers who think they are still taking their comps. If it is any consolation to practitioners, I can tell you that psychologist job applicants to business schools get a real grilling if their dissertation is a lab study. (Note to applicants: When asked to explain why your lab results are important, do not cite an arcane argument between two academics as justification for how you have spent the past year).

4. Much of our research does not get applied because we use the wrong lingo. That's *teams*, not *groups*, Pilgrim. And surely, *knowledge* is not a *competency*. I had the rather sobering experience of looking up the word *turnover* in the relevant databases recently and finding that it had been changed to *retention* (a scary prospect for anyone with a single clinical course). Retention, of course, is trying to retain the employees hired back after they were summarily downsized five years ago. People who cannot make these translations should have their PhDs revoked.

5. The scientist-practitioner model frames the justification of HR practices as a technical matter and sells them on these terms (e.g., with validity and utility analyses). Managers frame HR practices as matters of managerial style. Choices in the domain of managerial style (so-called administrative innovations) are little influenced by technical merit. I go on about this at length in a really interesting 1993 *Personnel Psychology* article.

6. Some practitioners really unconsciously wish they had gotten an MBA instead of a degree in psychology so they could use terms like *P-E ratio* rather than terms like *synthetic validity*. Such people will not be enthusiastic translators of I-O research.

As you can see, we are intent on attracting letters to the Editor.

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The I/O Files
Arla Day, Ph.D., Saint Mary's University

Welcome to our new column: The I/O Files (Chronicles of the paranormal in I/O psychology). This column is a forum to present the happenings of I/O Psychology in Canada. This column is meant to keep you updated on upcoming workshops and conferences; accolades garnered by our members; recent I/O graduates; incoming and outgoing I/O colleagues; publications by members; etc. Your input is vital! Let us know if you have any newsworthy events that you want passed on to your colleagues.

Conferences

Obviously, we are all excited about the upcoming CPA conference in Ottawa (June 29-July1). The pre-convention workshop on June 28 with **Kevin Murphy** (Honesty Testing in Organizations) looks fantastic. Remember, this conference celebrates the 25th anniversary of CSIOP. We will also be presenting **Dr. Pat Rowe** with the CSIOP Distinguished Scientist Award. Don't miss the festivities (including the "Social Hour" with the military section...we are on dry land this year, but it still looks like a lot of fun!) If you are planning on being in Ottawa for CPA, you may want to make it an extended trip and drive to Montreal the next week (July 8-11) for the ASAC (Administrative Sciences Association of Canada) and IFSAM (International Federation of Scholarly Associations of Management) conference.

Comings & Goings

There has been a flurry of activity within the I/O & business departments across Canada. As you may already know, Calgary lost **Dan Skarlicki** to the business department at UBC this year. At the same time, Guelph lost Dr. Kevin Kelloway, but the management department at Saint Mary's was more than happy to acquire him. Calgary has managed to attract **Derek Chapman**, who is currently finishing up his Ph.D. at Waterloo.

Guelph is picking up another Waterloo (soon-to-be) graduate, Leanne Son Hing, who has an I/O and social psychology background. Meanwhile, back in Waterloo, the I/O team has added to its numbers by hiring Doug Brown. Doug is originally from Canada and has been studying leadership with Bob Lord at Akron.

Gary Johns and **Stephane Brutus** are thrilled to have another I/O colleague, Sheila Webber, in the Management Department at Concordia. Sheila is originally from Oklahoma and is a soon-to-be graduate in I/O psychology from George Mason U.

Rumors abound that Windsor has hired, although the news could not be confirmed by press time. Hopefully, we will have something more substantial for the next newsletter.

On the downside (for academia), Saint Mary's lost **Laura Methot** and **Shaun Newsome**, who have both succumbed to the lures of "the real world." Laura is now an independent consultant and Shaun has accepted a position as Director of Organizational Effectiveness with Sobeys. On the consulting end of things... **Marjory Kerr** has taken on the position of Consultant, Organizational Effectiveness and Management Development, at Hay Management Consultants (moving from Ellis Associates). **Brenda Tomini** has taken on an internal OD role (performance and change management, succession planning, management development) in the pharmaceutical industry with SmithKline Beecham.

Kudos

Two U. of Western Ontario grad students were honored for research excellence by the Human Resources Professional Association of Ontario. Kathleen Dindoff, supervised by **Mitch Rothstein**, received this year's Best Dissertation Award for her research on recruiter's reactions to features of applicant resumes. **Jinder Gill**, supervised by **Joan Finegan**, received the Best Master's Thesis Award for her research on person-job fit and organizational commitment. Well done! Have I missed anything? If so...please e-mail me (Arla.Day@StMarys.ca).

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CPA PRE-CONVENTION WORKSHOP

Marjory Kerr, Ellis Associates – Workshop Coordinator

This is just a reminder about our upcoming workshop at this year's CPA conference. If you haven't yet heard, the title for the workshop is **"Honesty in the Workplace"**, and our guest presenter is Kevin R. Murphy, Ph.D., from Pennsylvania State University. Many of you will be familiar with his work in the area of assessing honesty and integrity, as well as the broader issues of personnel selection, placement and performance appraisal.

The workshop is a full day, and will include lots of opportunity for discussion and interaction. Our goal is to provide participants with an understanding of the critical issues associated with various strategies for assessing honesty, both benefits and potential pitfalls, and to assist them in making informed decisions about how and when to assess honesty in the workplace. We will also look at strategies that have been used to deal with (dis)honesty in the workplace.

CPA has received some registrations already, but there are still spaces available. Don't wait too long to send in your registration! If you want more detailed information, please refer to the January edition of this newsletter, or the winter edition of *Psynopsis* (volume 22, no. 1). Alternatively, you can always contact me at 416-815-6370 or Marjory_Kerr@haygroup.com.

We are using a number of strategies to advertise the workshop, but if you know someone who might be interested, please pass the word along. We are looking forward to an interesting and informative day with Kevin - hope to see you there!

CPA CONVENTION 2000 PROGRAM

Here's a sneak peek at the I/O presentations at the CPA Convention in June. Hope to see you there!

<u>Thursday, June 29</u>

11:00 – 11:30	Presentation of Distinguished Contribution to I/O Psychology Award to Dr. Pat Rowe
11:30 – 12:30	CPA Invited Speaker : Work experience : Rethinking its value for the individual and the organization (P. Rowe)
2:00 – 2:55	Police officer selection: The psychologist's role & responsibilities (R. Saltstone)
3:00 – 4:55	Celebrating 25 years of CSIOP: Past chairs reflect (G. Latham, V. Catano, G. Johns, R. Hackett)

<u>Friday, June 30</u>

10:00 – 11:50	Poster Session
12:00-1:55	Towards a motivational model of organizational behavior: Recent contributions (M. Blais, K. Baron, J. Bourbonnais, M. Levesque Kombila, C. Leveillé)
12:00 – 1:55	The employment interview: Issues of construct and predictive validity (V. Catano, A. Day, S. Newsome, M. Royal, S. Smithers)
12:00 – 1:55	I/O Psychology in the RCMP (J. McGinnis, C. Lavergne, D. Worth, A. Gray)
2:00 – 2:30	Dilemma perspective: Organizational conflict (J. Veitch)
2:00 – 3:55	Work-related stress & burnout: Factors & consequences in the Canadian workplace (J. Lapointe, J. Dompierre, M. Kerr, R. Burke)

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2:30 – 3:55 Compensation practices in the 21st century (L. Lapierre, D. Zinni, M. Al-Waqfi)

<u>Saturday, July 1</u>
8:00 – 8:55 CSIOP Business Meeting
10:00 – 11:55 Student symposium in I/O psychology (S. Farrell, T. Cocivera, D. Zweig, A. Chawla)
12:00- 1:55 Corporate consulting: What graduate school doesn't teach—and maybe should (P. Warshaw)

NEWS FROM THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE
Martin Royal, Saint Mary's University

WANTED: New CSIOP Student Representative for 2000-2001

For this coming year, students interested in the position of CSIOP student representative should make their interests known to others. In doing so, the prospective student representative should solicit at least one supporting nomination. Alternatively, students may simply nominate another student, with the nominee's permission of course. Nominations need only consist of the name of the nominator and nominee as well as the respective emails and/or phone numbers, and the name of the university each is attending.

This nomination should be sent, in writing, along with a short bio of the nominee (the latter of which should be written by the nominee him/herself). The short bio should include: (1) strengths, including any relevant past experience in leadership/organizational skills, (2) reasons why the prospective student representative feels he or she will be well suited for the position, and (3) plans for what the prospective representative might consider to further the position and the Society. The bio should not exceed 250 words. Remember that you must be a current, paid member of CSIOP to be eligible for the student representative position. If you have any questions as to your current student membership status, you can contact Dr. Arla Day, the CSIOP membership coordinator, at arla.day@stmarys.ca.

The nominating letter and bio, together, should then be sent to me, either by regular mail or email (mroyal@apexmail.com), no later than April 28, 2000. The bios will be published in a separate voting bulletin sent to all the student members in May, 2000. The "voting" period will take place between the time the voting bulletin comes out (early May, 2000) and June 16th. All current CSIOP student members are welcomed and encouraged to participate by sending their vote (including your full name, email address, and phone number) to me, either by email or regular mail. You will receive notification of the receipt of your vote. Votes received after June 16th will not be accepted. Please ensure that all nominations and bios are signed (does not apply to emails). The successful candidate will then be notified, by phone, no later than June 21st. This timing is such that I will be able to announce the new student representative at this summer's CPA conference.

As the current student representative, I would like to share with all interested "future reps" that being a student representative for CSIOP is both hard work and rewarding. It is a good way to let others know who you are, network with faculty and professionals in I/O psychology, but it comes at somewhat of a cost.

Interested students should give serious thought to the fact that such a position can be quite time consuming, depending on your various duties and obligations throughout the year. I encourage all I/O students wanting to develop their leadership, organizational, and interpersonal skills to consider vying for the

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one-year appointment. For more information on the roles and responsibilities of the student rep please feel free to contact me.

Important Deadlines:
Nominations: April 28, 2000
Voting: June 16, 2000

TRANSITIONS: COMMENTS FROM AN ACADEMIC AND A PRACTITIONER

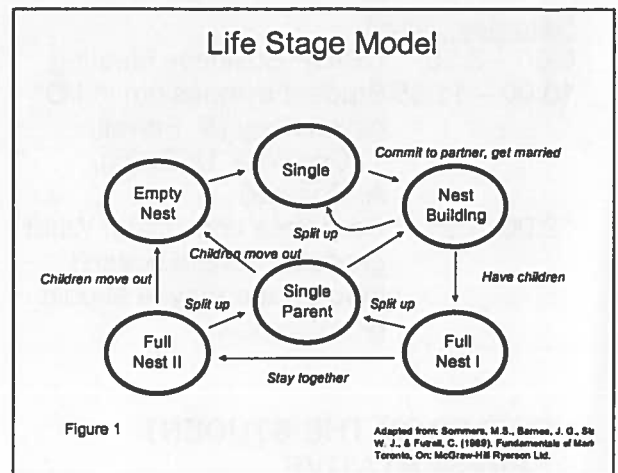### Transitioning from Consulting/Corporate Life to Academia: It's all in the timing

Peter Hausdorf, Ph.D., University of Guelph, (519)-824-4120 ext. 3976, phausdor@uoguelph.ca

The most common question that I have been asked by everyone I know (e.g., friends, students, colleagues and total strangers I pass by on the street) is why did you go back to academia? This question is not surprising given that there are plenty of excellent opportunities in industry for I/O graduates at both the Masters and Ph.D. levels. These opportunities provide for challenging and interesting work as well as excellent remuneration. So why would someone give up the chance to do well-paid, fun, challenging and important work to go back to academia?

Life Stage Model
The reference to timing in the title of this article is the key to understanding why I made the decision to return to academia. I trust that elaboration of this point will move many of you from a state of incredulity to comprehension as to why I did this and encourage you to reflect on the implications for your own careers. There is a concept often used in the marketing literature which refers to the family life cycle or life stage model. Figure 1 on the right represents this model. The model simply describes different stages people may experience as they go through life. For example, the nest building

stage simply refers to the investment of resources in creating a home (with or without preparation for the arrival of

Figure 1

Adapted from: Sommers, M.S., Barnes, J. G., Stanton, W. J., & Futrell, C. (1989). Fundamentals of Marketing. Toronto, On: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd.

children). If you take this model and use it to describe a person's focii (i.e., where s/he focuses her/his energies and activities), then one can clearly see what happens at each stage in the model. Figure 2 below shows this.

Figure 2
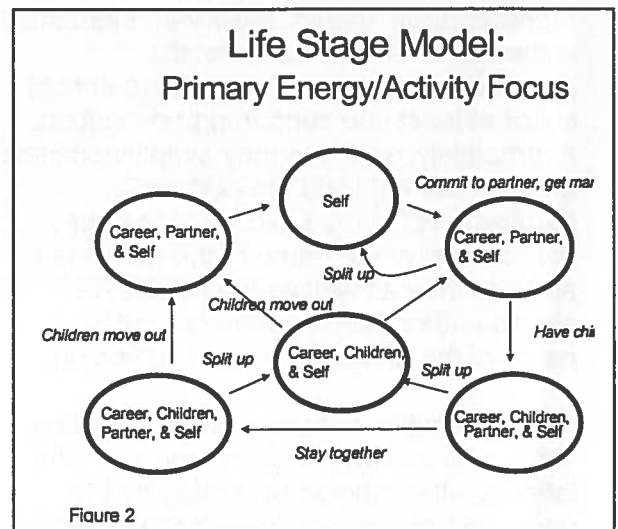
The primary energy/activity focus represents where one may spend the majority of his/her time and is not designed to be representative of everything one does. The focus on self includes career and personal interests (e.g., hobbies or fitness). Therefore, when one is single s/he spends as much time as s/he wants in career (i.e.,

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school, working) or personal activities. When two people make a commitment to each other or get married, then a portion of each person's energy and activities should be allocated to her/his partner (a rather impersonal way of saying you should spend time with each other). As you can see from the model, there are increasing demands for our time as we move through the different life stages. Also, this model highlights why some people may be surprised by another person's decision if both are at different stages in the model. For example, most students are at the Single or Nest Building stages and therefore may not fully appreciate the demands of the Full Nest I stage and implications for career choices.

Finding the Match

The key to the right decision is to match your career decisions to your life stage. In Table 1 below, I outline some of the work/life characteristics between academia and corporate/consulting. These are by no means exhaustive but are relevant to me, given my personal experience. Moreover, they may not be relevant across all consulting/corporate or academic positions, although I suspect that they do generalize across many.

Characteristics	Consulting/ Corporate	Academia
Mental attention/focus	High	High
Control over job demands	Low	Medium
Control over personal schedules	Medium	High
Working hours	High	Medium
Amount of stress	High	Low
Business travel	Medium	Low
Compensation	High	Medium/Low

Both jobs require a high amount of attention and focus. The big differences are with control over personal schedules, the time required to meet job demands, business travel and amount of stress. In academia, you have more control in deciding how much you want to do, how well you want to do it and when you want to do it. Although

one can expect to make less money with respect to total compensation in academia (I am making 45% of what I made last year), this does not consider how that pay would be reflected in an hourly wage (i.e., divide your total compensation by how many hours you worked over the year including commuting and travel time).

Whether you find these characteristics to be positive or negative depends on where you are with respect to each life stage. The characteristics of consulting/corporate life would more likely be positive for individuals at the Single, Nest Building (assuming your partner is similarly occupied) or even Empty Nest stages but less likely for anyone who has children (particularly if both partners are career professionals with children and no family support network).

Doe-s this suggest that all of you should be looking for an academic job? Not necessarily. First of all, your job has to be one that you will be good at and would enjoy doing and second you may have other ways of dealing with the competing demands that life presents (e.g., decide not to have children or a partner who stays home). My goal here is simply to identify another option that is often overlooked.

For me, I chose academia because I have strong research and teaching interests and it allows me to meet the multiple demands of my life: doing interesting and challenging work, supporting my spouse, spending time with my children and finding time for me. These are things that I have managed to find (so far) in my new role as Assistant Professor at the University of Guelph. Many of you will find these things in consulting and corporate positions or in other opportunities yet unimagined. The work/family balance issue is omnipresent for all of us and one that will require our best attention and effort. I hope that all of you are successful in meeting the challenges you will face in your work and personal lives. Having recently made the

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choice myself I do not know what the final outcome of this decision will be but what I do know is that it is firmly in my hands. The best you can do is make sure that the choices are in your hands as well.

Having dealt with the issue of why someone would want to make a career move from a corporate or consulting role to an academic one, my focus is now on how to make this transition. So, for those of you who may want to move into an academic role from corporate or consulting life, this section will be most relevant to you. The piece is organized around the following topics: the need for academics, transition planning, implementing the plan, negotiating the position, and the first year. Before I expand on each of these I should provide the caveat that what I present here is my experience and mine alone so you may not agree with all that I say, but I provide this information to guide those who may come after me.

The Need for Academics
An article of this nature would be incomplete without reference to the need for more I/O graduates to devote time and energy to teaching and research in the field. This does not have to be done exclusively through an academic appointment, although I believe that this is the most effective way to achieve those goals. In my consulting experience, I found that research always took a distant back seat to client demands. From my perspective, the future of I/O Psychology is in the hands of academics for two reasons: first they are more likely to formally publish and disseminate their work and second, they are primarily responsible for the training of future I/O Psychologists. So, if you are thinking about making the move, you can rest assured that you will have an important role to play.

Transition Planning
The biggest challenge that I found in creating a transition plan was dealing with the fact that my work experience might work against me. When I started applying for academic positions I felt that my work experience would be considered an asset, especially given that we work in an applied field. As it turned out, applied experience may have been considered a negative factor for many of the programs I applied to. People seemed to question why I wanted to come back to academia after being in a practical role (particularly when it came to a lot less money). Furthermore, when I first started applying for positions, it was suggested to me that I demonstrate my interest in academia by teaching part-time and publishing research. So, despite an already full plate with respect to my full-time job, I started to take on sessional courses and work towards publishing research articles. In addition, I tried as much as I could to network with colleagues I knew well and those in schools that were hiring.

Implementing the Plan
Knowing what to do was the relatively easy part. Implementing the plan was a challenge. I would suggest establishing moderate goals with respect to teaching and publishing (such as: teaching one semester course per calendar year and publishing one article every two years). In my opinion, this should be sufficient to convince the most skeptical of departments that you are interested in an academic role. Personally, I taught three courses (one per semester) in one calendar year and this was way too much. It leaves little time for family or anything else. One thing I feel certain about is that the transition plan will require time and effort outside of work. Under ideal circumstances, if you can integrate the teaching and research into a work role (e.g., as a researcher for the Conference Board of Canada), then you could achieve your long-term goals of academia without too much short-term sacrifice. Also, don't underestimate the need for a supportive partner to successfully implement the plan. If you can do some of these things, then you should be in a good position for an academic

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appointment (of course, the bulk of upcoming academic retirements won't hurt your chances either).

Negotiating the Position

The first thing you should reflect upon is whether you will consider only tenure-track appointments or contract appointments as well. For me, I was only interested in tenure track because I was not prepared to leave a good, well paying, secure job for a low paying, insecure one which might also require the family to uproot itself. Obviously, if you have less personal constraints then you can explore both options. As you explore different academic opportunities one thing to keep in mind is what type of university and department you want to work in. We all know that person-organization fit is important but I think that here it is extremely critical. Also, know what the university and department expect of you, particularly if you are expecting a decrease in workload to be commensurate with the decrease in salary. The last thing you want to do is find yourself working as hard as you were in consulting and making half the money.

Once you have offer(s) on the table and you have done your homework on the department, now is the time to work out your negotiating strategy. This was the one thing that I did not do. Although I have negotiated strongly for other positions in the past, I was so surprised and thrilled to get one academic job offer (after 6 rejections without even an interview) that I did not negotiate anything. Fortunately, the deal I was presented was a pretty good one. However, my advice to you is to try and negotiate even if you only get one job offer. If you do it appropriately then it shouldn't work against you. You may not get everything you want but you won't know until you ask.

In retrospect, some of the things that I would have tried to negotiate for include: more money, more start up research funds,

additional reduced teaching loads, laboratory space, new office furniture and greater coverage of administrative expenses.

The First Year

My thoughts here can be easily categorized into pros and cons. Suffice it to say that, all in all, this has been an extremely beneficial move for me and my family. I only hope that I can accomplish my career goals and maintain the personal/worklife balance that I have achieved this year.

The Pros

The most significant change that I noticed when I arrived at the university was the amount of personal control I had with respect to my workload, work hours, style of dress, teaching content, and research interests. This was a big shift from my previous jobs where extremely tight deadlines, multi-tasking, high stress, and constant travel were the norm. Essentially, I traded in my Aeroplan Elite card, high tech laptop and overnight travel bag for my mountain bike, some good books and a knapsack. This was an easy transition to make (which should not surprise any of you).

On many different occasions, I find myself commenting on how amazing it is to be paid to do something you love to do. A colleague of mine and I came out of a particularly interesting oral examination and we both said we can't believe we get paid to do this. So, if you have accumulated many research ideas and interests over your years practicing I/O then academia is the perfect place to start attempting to find the answers to those questions.

Finally, there is the reduced stress that comes with academia. The most stress I have experienced to date is giving negative feedback to students. Compare this to sharing employee survey results with hostile senior managers who don't believe their results are accurate because they are so negative. There is simply no way to

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compare the stress levels between the environments.

<u>Cons</u>
On the negative side, the university system is still cost focused and has very little money for professional development, administrative expenses and other items that are essential for a quality teaching and research institution. In addition, most universities are classic bureaucracies and they move very slowly. Since most of the companies I worked for were small to medium sized organizations, I was used to fairly quick and effective decision making. Therefore this shift was somewhat of a significant change for me.

I have found it difficult to maintain contacts with prior colleagues from the corporate and consulting world, which is something that I had hoped to do. Moreover, although my new colleagues are great, I feel that I have less in common with them than previous co-workers I have worked with. In academia I feel more like an individual contributor than a team member, as I felt in prior companies.

Finally, I have not had as much time as I had hoped for my research. This may be due, in part, to the considerable time it takes to set up courses and to get oneself organized. In addition, the creation of a long-term research program requires somewhat different skills than those expected of me in my prior roles.

As I look toward my first summer at the university, I am looking forward to an opportunity to do some writing, to attend some conferences, discuss I/O stuff with colleagues, spend quality time with my family, and possibly to relax a little. Given my arrival here I know that at least one thing is certain – I can now consider all of these things as possibilities – the rest is up to me.

Transitioning from Academia Consulting/Corporate Life: It's all in the job content
Laura L. Methot, Ph.D., Independent Consultant to The Continuous Learning Group, Inc. Lmethot@clg-online.com

Like Peter Hausdorf, I too receive many queries concerning why I moved from academia into consulting. Isn't academia, after all, a privileged environment in which to spend one's career? The view of many is that academia is a gentle place with little work to be done in the summer and most of one's energy focussed on intellectual pursuits and various forms of navel gazing. Anyone having spent time in the hallowed halls knows this to be false. The academic life, particularly for new hires, can be gruelling. Imagine the early years: several new courses to prep, a research programme to get off the ground, writing for grant funding, publishing, supervising thesis students, committee work, and so on. Then the papers to grade start flowing in. There isn't much time, nor often energy, left over.

The work of a consultant
Consultants work to achieve a positive impact on their client's business performance. My job is to partner with clients to design and implement performance management systems to help them meet their strategic execution goals. How do we do it? We work with individuals, cross-functional teams and business units to identify best practices, facilitate process redesign, and manage change implementation. Our tools derive from Applied Behavioural Science and we aim to change the organization by changing behavior. Given that we help clients to (1) pinpoint the right results-linked behaviors (e.g., those related to leadership, communication, job performance, etc.), (2) identify the right performers (e.g., executive leaders, execution managers, front line staff), (3) manage the antecedents and consequences in the work environment to support those behaviors, and (4) remove

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obstacles to good performance, then (5) targeted business results will improve. It's that simple, and that complex. And it's challenging.

Advantages and rewards
As I brainstormed a "top 5" list of things that I really get a kick out of in the consulting role, here's what I came up with:

1. Partnering with clients. Unlike large undergraduate classes comprising captive audiences with often dubious motives, clients tend to be more interactive in the change process. They seek out consultant support because of real business needs and are highly motivated to succeed. Students come with a mixed bag of motives -- course credit, "gotta be here", "my friends are all in the course", and when we're really lucky "I heard it was a great course and I really want to learn." Sure, we get people in our client organizations who are with us because they were ordered to. There will always be C.A.V.E. people (citizens against virtually everything), but resistant clients, I've found, are a whole lot easier to turn around than unmotivated students in a class of 100 or more.

2. Building relationships. The success of the job relies heavily on the consultant-client relationship. Relationships in the academic world, although rewarding when they are built, are not necessary for the success of the learning process. Building relationships is a bonus for many in academe, and these relationships tend to happen in upper level classes with fewer students. There is a much closer link between successful outcomes and relationship building in the consulting world. Success is most likely when the client lets the consultant into the inner sanctum of organizational knowledge. To accomplish this, the consultant as an outsider must earn the respect and trust of the client. The consultant is

simultaneously a facilitator, confidant, and change agent.

3. Learn, learn, learn! For most forms of business consultation, it is essential to understand the client's business. What do they do? How do they do it? What are the unique barriers and enablers they face? This type of learning is broader-based than one typically finds in academic work. Academicians, especially those following a well organized research path, focus in on discrete topics, becoming specialists in their areas. Consultant learning, in my experience, is broader based. In the past year I have learned how fossil power plants are built, how nuclear plants operate, how government and citizen groups are involved in protecting the community and the environment, how telecommunications networks are organized, and how monolithic business organizations get their work done. While being a specialist in applied behavioural science, I am learning to be a generalist in the application of tools to a wide variety of problems and contexts.

4. Travel and see the world. Having convinced myself that seeing the insides of every major airport in North America is a perk makes the travel portion more bearable. Truly, the travel does take me to some pretty interesting places; the lovely Maryland countryside, DC and all its monuments, NYC, Toronto, and more. I'll return to this notion later in discussing disadvantages.

5. Observing behavior change in action. As a university professor, I often felt cheated by not being able to see the real effects of my classes on students. The effects are cumulative and take place over time. Many students come back to tell their professors what they're up to following graduation, but it's spotty and delayed and unclear as to how much of an impact I had. Corporate behavior change can be documented and tied to specific change initiatives

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and is more immediate than academic development. As an executive and performance coach, I get to facilitate behavior change in real time and observe the effects of a good performance improvement plan. I attend meetings with my executive coachees and observe them in interactions with others. I coach them on providing clear direction and delivering frequent and relevant positive and corrective feedback and interpersonal consequences. We work on body language, verbal behavior, and the impact of their actions on others. All of this occurs in both simulated and real world situations. When change is apparent, it's immediately rewarding for the coach and the coachee.

Time commitment, travel, and a life of moderate uncertainty
Over the past year I have logged over 100,000 travel miles and have slept in hotel rooms more than in my own bed. When I arrive at my usual hotel on a Monday night I'm almost ready to say "hi honey, I'm home!" to the desk clerk. The work of a traveling consultant requires a great deal of flexibility and adaptability. We often need to mobilize at a moment's notice and hit the ground running. While some find the idea of this lifestyle unpleasant, for others it's a mild inconvenience that we put up with because of the fast pace, good compensation, and pure joy of the work. I get to know interesting people and places.

In closing, let me leave you with a short and idiosyncratic comparison of my experiences as a consultant versus an academic. The list is by no means exhaustive nor is it validated through scientific or statistical means. It is meant to provide a point of view to get students and others thinking about where they belong and what career choices they might make.

	Consulting	Academia
What we do	Help clients achieve positive business impacts through executive development, performance coaching and change implementation	Teach students knowledge, skills, and abilities for further study or practice
How we do it	Partner with clients; work with individuals, teams, and business units; train, coach, develop plans for affecting corporate and interpersonal consequence systems	Lecture; tutor; mentor; advise; conduct research
Application versus theory	Mostly application; based on science, theory and practice	More theory; linked to practice and application; application usually in advanced stages
Advantages	Learn by doing; healthy financial compensation; building generalized knowledge base; application of research findings	Learn through study; bring practice into classroom; minimal need for travel; get to do research
Disadvantages	High degree of travel; eating in restaurants; sleeping in hotels; living out of a suitcase	Lower compensation; need to be on university committees

One year into the life of a full time consultant, I'm happy to report satisfaction. Sure, there are times when I really don't want to leave home and get on that airplane. But, once airborne, I know why I'm there and what I'm doing. I haven't had a day yet where I've pondered the wisdom of my decision. I also haven't had a day where the benefit of having been an academic wasn't readily apparent.

CONTROVERSIAL CORNER:
Respect for research

Nathalie Allen, Ph.D., University of Western Ontario

An article in a recent issue of the well-respected (non-psychology) journal, Gourmet[1], began as follows: "What happens when you're invited to utter an honest opinion of something you've uneasily edged around for years? If you are like me, you get psyched up...and then begin to squirm as you realize truthfulness also means acknowledging a snag or two in your own thinking" (Mendelson, 1999, p. 136). Although the author of this article had something quite different on her mind than I have, I think I know how she feels. Whining is easy. Writing it down for your colleagues to read is quite another thing, especially if you realize you don't (and can't) know the whole story and that your impressions are based on your own, possibly quite idiosyncratic, experiences. Nonetheless, I believe that people should keep the amount of informal whining that they do about a particular issue in some reasonable ratio to their efforts to articulate their concern more clearly (also called "formal whining"). So here goes.

The bumper sticker version of my concern is quite simple: ***"Research gets too little respect"***. Like most bumper stickers, this is pretty general. Narrowing my scope to what I know at least a little bit about, let me elaborate on this concern. First, I am referring to empirical social scientific research and, more specifically, to research of the sort that I/O psychologists read, conduct, and disseminate. Second, I am not referring to a lack of respect for particular empirical studies or topics of study (I know it is fashionable in some circles, and probably quite entertaining, to deride "silly" or "trivial" topics. Who am I to spoil the fun?). Rather, I am talking about something much more basic: Respect for the whole idea of conducting empirical research. Recognition that careful, systematic inquiry about

phenomena can help us understand those phenomena. A belief that research can make a difference. You get the idea. Third, I am not referring to respect for research among academics. Most of us who are regularly engaged in the research process are already true believers. Although we do so less frequently than we should (but more often than we get credit for), most academic I/O psychologists really do leave the "tower" and visit the "real world" of Canadian organizations. When I do so, my strong sense is of a world in which psychological research is considerably undervalued – both by the movers and shakers (senior managers and others) within organizations and by practitioners who work on the "people side" within, or for, those organizations.

Let's deal with the mover and shakers first. It is my strong impression that senior managers see little connection between what they do (and/or are advised to do by various experts) and the research process. Indeed, research seems not to appear at all on many of their radar screens, except possibly as a way of "Helping-a-Student". Over the past several years, I have made many presentations to senior management at potential research sites. Presentations often end like this:

Me: "So, that's basically what we are doing. We think there is a lot to learn in this area, and that this information will be useful to organizations like yours. We would be very pleased if your organization would participate..."
Senior Manager: "That's really an interesting topic. But why are you doing this? Finishing up your thesis, eh?"

The idea that numerous I/O psychologists conduct research on issues that managers deal with every day comes as a surprise. Even more surprising is that we would do so even when we no longer bear the burden of finishing a thesis. Why is this? In part, I suspect it is because many of the theories

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and findings from our field are delivered so re-shaped and re-packaged that they are unrecognizable as products of anyone's research; it is as if they come from thin air. At the other extreme are the products of academics. Technically, of course, the papers we write are very accessible (any university library; increasing in e-journals), but practically speaking, they might as well be invisible. Another recent conversational snippet:

Senior Manager: "By the way, do you know anything about employee loyalty?"
Me: "Well, yes, actually I do. In fact, a colleague and I have been conducting research in this area for many years. Not long ago, we published a book summarizing the commitment research and describing its HR implications"
Senior Manager: "Hmm, gee, well why don't you write a book like the chicken soup guy?"
Me: [To myself: "This is not the time or place to visibly cringe!"]

Income potential aside, and with all due respect to the chicken soup guy, it would be hard to underestimate my interest in writing such a book (never mind the lack of talent.) The real message of this conversation for me, however, was that we need to make our research come alive for those who would benefit from it. Many I/O psychology researchers do this by giving talks to relevant associations and organizations, being available to describe their work or offer expert opinion for the media, and writing for (not at) more general audiences. Many more, however, do not (how many of us even have an answer, ready and digestible in lay terms, when our tax-paying neighbor asks what our research is about?). Quite simply, we need to do much better.

Even if all academic I/O psychologists took an oath to improve considerably on this front, however, it must be acknowledged that exposure of the movers and shakers to research would still be an occasional thing.

Which brings me to the role played by practitioners. We all know that many folks crowd the somewhat ill-defined field that involves the "people side" of the workplace: HR managers, OD specialists, consultants of every stripe, shape and size, and (even!) I/O psychologists. Of course, there are many things that differentiate these groups. Prominent among them, however, is the role that research has played in shaping their careers. It is difficult (and, in my view, would be appalling) to escape a graduate program in psychology without a great deal of experience with empirical research. Unlike most other people-side professionals, I/O psychologists know a lot about conducting and interpreting evidence from empirical research. Accompanying all this, I very much hope, is a strong respect for the research process. Over the years, however, I have had many conversations with practicing I/O psychologists that suggest to me that such respect is either (a) distressingly thin or (b) in fine shape, but kept hidden from the movers and shakers. I waver between the two, while hoping that neither is the case. In thinking about where this (wavering) impression comes from, three themes come to mind.

First, it comes from conversations about the empirical evidence on which psychological products/services are based. Some people I have talked to have freely acknowledged that their organization's product (or set of products) has been used "forever" and that they are not at all sure on what sort of evidence it is based. Sad, perhaps, but that's the way it is. But, I am assured, clients like it a lot and the client list is long. OK. But surely we have some obligation to offer clients more compelling evidence than this? Further, if an I/O psychologist is vague about the origin and evidence associated with a product, what message is being sent about the value of such knowledge and, for that matter, the value of psychological research?

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Second, my impression comes from practitioners who find themselves in work settings that do little to reinforce their own eagerness to keep up with current research and/or to be involved in research. How long before this eagerness dissipates? What do we lose when we lose touch with the science in this scientist-practitioner discipline? How easy is the road back? Another snippet:

Me: So, what have you been up to lately? What interesting stuff are you doing? *Former student / Now consultant*: "Well, last week was great! I actually got to go to the library to look something up and read some research stuff – we never do that. It's like it doesn't exist."

To be sure, time is one of the great enemies here. Nonetheless, those who believe that I/O psychology is a <u>scientific</u> endeavor, as well as an applied field, need to find the time to keep current, scientifically-speaking. In doing so, they will add value to their clients and their practice – value that cannot be added by people professionals who have no understanding or appreciation of the research process (I realize they may also need to convince their employers that the time is well-spent. Perhaps "making the case" is a topic we need to explore a bit in grad school?).

Third, my impressions come from (fortunately, only a few) conversations I have with practitioners in which psychological research is treated as a dirty word: at best, something to be endured until the thesis is done; at worst, a set of academic party games with no meaningful consequences. Mostly, I think this stems from a frustration with the topics researchers choose and/or the approaches they use rather[2] than a dismissal of the value of empirical inquiry. On this point, rapprochement, if desired, is fairly straightforward. I/O practitioners and scientists (whose professional training, after all, provides them with much in common)

have to get together and design research both can live with. Challenging, but not impossible, and quite likely an activity with a big pay-off. What worries me more about the "dirty word" thing is its effects on the movers and shakers. What happens the next time the I/O psychologist that they know and love (and pay) rolls his or her eyes when research is mentioned? While <u>we</u> all understand the distinction between "Study X is trivial" and "research is trivial", this may be lost on the movers and shakers. For them, the more vivid (and memorable) take-home message is the latter. Pity the next researcher who knocks on the door wanting to discuss participation in a study!

<u>Limitations, Conclusions, and Future Work</u>

I will readily concede that there are exceptions to my thumbnail sketches and that my samples of both academics and practitioners are neither random nor very large. Just as there are many academics in I/O psychology who have braved (and explained their work to) the real world, there are many I/O practitioners who convey their respect for research throughout all their professional activities. Nonetheless, we all can do better. Rigorous psychological research should be considered neither a luxury nor trivial. Rather it is a process through which we can greatly increase our understanding of important phenomena – in our case, within the workplace. Those of us who have frequent and direct contact with organizations are perfectly positioned, and have the credibility, to champion and reinforce this message. Those of us who use public money to conduct research need to use (and create) opportunities to make clear the value of what we do.

The <u>Gourmet</u> writer that I mentioned earlier acknowledged that there are snags in her thinking. Doubtless, there are many in mine – all of which I would be happy to hear (nallen@ulian.uwo.ca). At a minimum, it would mean that some of my colleagues are still willing to talk to me. Plus, I have this big box of bumper stickers to give out.

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Footnotes

[1] Anyone who has eaten at my house will wonder about this choice of reading material. Suffice it to say that I believe in, though only sporadically engage in, remedial education.

[2] Ironically, a common complaint about methodology is the lack of organization-based samples. It is in this regard -- research access to appropriate organizational samples -- that practitioners can play a unique and pivotal role.

Reference

Mendelson, A. (1999). Should chefs write cookbooks? Gourmet. October, 136, 149.

THANK YOU FROM UQAM

The University of Quebec at Montreal (UQAM) would like to extend an official 'thank you' to Dr. Steve Cronshaw, from the University of Guelph. Dr. Cronshaw traveled to Montreal in February to facilitate a day-long workshop dealing with legal aspects of personnel selection and ethics in I/O psychology. Students and faculty from UQAM, as well as the University of Montreal were very enthusiastic, and greatly appreciated Dr. Cronshaw's time. Thanks again!

CALL FOR PAPERS:
The RHR Kendall Award
Stephane Brutus, Ph.D., Concordia University

The Canadian Society for Industrial Organizational Psychology in collaboration with RHR is sponsoring the RHR Kendall Award, our annual competition to recognize outstanding papers by undergraduate and graduate CSIOP student members. The winner of this award will receive a prize of $250. The award is named in honor of Dr. Lorne Kendall, a Canadian psychologist and member of CPA whose work on job satisfaction and various psychometric issues contributed greatly to the field of Industrial Organizational Psychology.

All papers, posters, and presentations accepted in any part of the program of the annual convention of CPA submitted by graduate or undergraduate students are eligible. The work must have been carried out by a student but may be part of a larger research program directed by someone else. The student must also be first author on the paper submitted.

Submissions will be judged on the following criteria: (a) Quality of conceptual background; (b) Clarity of problem definition; (c) Methodological rigor; (d) Appropriateness of interpretations/conclusion, (e) Clarity of presentation. Criteria (c) is omitted for theoretical and review papers. Papers will be reviewed anonymously by three CSIOP members representing both applied and academic areas.

Entrants must provide a letter from a faculty member certifying that the paper was written by a student. Entrants should submit four copies of an article-length paper. The name of the author(s) should appear only on the title page of the paper. The title page should also show the authors' affiliations, mailing addresses, and telephone numbers. Papers are limited to 12 double-spaced pages, including title page, abstract, tables, figures, notes, and references. Papers should be prepared according to the current edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association. Entries (accompanied by letters from the faculty members) must be received by June 1st, 2000. Winning papers will be announced at the Conference in Ottawa during the Section Business Meeting on July 1st. Entries should be submitted to: Stéphane Brutus, Ph.D., Concordia University, 1455 deMaisonneuve W. (GM 503-15), Montreal, Qc, CANADA H3G 1M8

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RETRACTION

We mistakenly announced in the January newsletter that Dr. Pat Rowe would be receiving the first-ever Distinguished Contribution to I/O psychology award at the CPA convention in June. In fact, Dr. Rowe will be receiving the second such award— Gary Latham received the first in 1997.
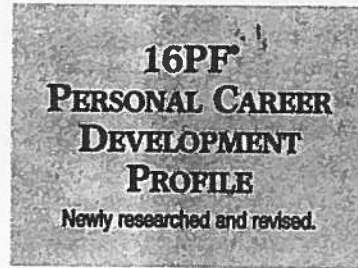
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♦ Dr. Norm Johnston
♦ John L. Simone

Welcome to CSIOP!

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Note: The articles in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Canadian Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology.