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President/CEO, Sustainability Leadership Institute
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BACKGROUND SUMMARY

Broad experience in designing and facilitating organizational and/or community development and change processes while simultaneously creating context for real-time learning and holistic leadership capability development among process constituents. Particular competence facilitating collaborative processes of exploration, discovery and invention required to develop and implement out-of-the-box strategies for dealing with complex situations. Strength in building capacity for diagnosing, developing and sustaining individual and organizational competence required to achieve success, as defined by individuals involved. Strong background in organizational consulting, strategic planning facilitation, professional training and development, leadership coaching, team development, conflict management, executive/board development, and classroom teaching. Research interests: transformative interactive processes for creating and implementing innovative and sustainable changes in organizations and communities, developed from complexity science and social constructionist perspectives.

EDUCATION

- Ph.D. 2001: Organization Development; Benedictine University, Chicago, IL.
M.A. 1985: Organization Communication; University of Nebraska, Omaha (*Outstanding Thesis Award*)
B.S. 1980: Communication and Psychology; University of Nebraska, Omaha (*magna cum laude*)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2001 to Present: President/CEO, Sustainability Leadership Institute, Middlebury, VT
<http://www.sustainabilityleadershipinstitute.org/>
Adjunct Faculty Associate, University of Nebraska, Omaha, NE
External Examiner, Doctorate of Management Program, Hertfordshire University, Hertfordshire, UK
Principal, Ferdig, Inc., Leadership and Organizational Consulting, Omaha, NE
1997 to 2001: Adjunct Faculty Associate, Benedictine University, Lisle (Chicago), IL and University of Nebraska, Omaha, NE
External Examiner, Doctorate of Management Program, Hertfordshire University, Hertfordshire, UK
1990 to 1997: Manager, Organization and Human Resources Development, Omaha Public Power District, Omaha, NE
1986 to 1990: Consultant-Specialist, Organization and Management Development, Omaha Public Power District, Omaha, NE
1982 to 1986: Communication Faculty, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Nebraska, Omaha, NE
1980 to 1982: Graduate Teaching Assistant, Communication Department, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Nebraska, Omaha, NE
1980 to 1986: Independent Organizational Communication Consultant, Omaha, NE

PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE

Strategic Visioning:	Consult strategic and long-range visioning processes for corporate and non-profit executives, boards of directors and business unit teams. Results: <i>Expanded knowledge among stakeholders of underlying issues impacting long-term organizational success. Substantive “living” documents that serve as management guidelines for ongoing decision making and evaluation of strategic-action implementation.</i>
Whole-system Change:	Facilitate large-system dialogue projects in corporate and non-profit organizations in which participants generate a collective understanding of current circumstances and definitive actions for future direction. Support ongoing implementation process. Results: <i>Participants at every level of the system jointly construct and implement strategic actions, carrying out respective roles and responsibilities needed to achieve organizational goals.</i>
Leadership and Team Development:	Provide leadership development for executive and mid-level management teams. Facilitate resolution of role and interpersonal conflict issues within and among workgroups. Results: <i>Leaders and executive teams assess themselves to have significantly improved cross-functional communication, cooperation and leadership effectiveness needed to achieve success. Organizations and work groups perform according to targeted performance standards and goals.</i>
Diagnostic Consultation:	Identify behavioral patterns impacting performance and safety culture within nuclear power plants through facilitated diagnostic exploration sessions. Coordinate employee satisfaction surveys examining morale, trust, teamwork and leadership. Results: <i>Managers use diagnostic reports to make key decisions and implement improvement actions.</i>
Performance Management:	Develop performance management systems for both large and small corporations, to include education components as well as tools and methods for effective performance monitoring. Results: <i>Performance management systems are determined by users to be effective and time efficient; performance trending data serves to inform management decisions.</i>
Curriculum Development:	Design comprehensive management and supervisory program curricula focused on core competencies related to leadership, performance management, communication, and change management. Results: <i>Executives, managers and supervisors demonstrate significant improvement in targeted competencies as measured by company-wide surveys.</i>
Corporate Education:	Facilitate learning in workshop and seminar settings designed for corporate populations ranging from executive managers to craft level employees; address a broad array of learning topics. Results: <i>participants rate learning experiences high; participants’ on-the-job performance capabilities improve in accordance with learning objectives as reflected in performance reviews.</i>

EXAMPLES OF ORGANIZATIONAL/COMMUNITY

CHANGE INITIATIVES

Sustainable Pueblo (Pueblo, CO, 2005): Facilitated community leadership organization comprised of leaders in public governance bodies, educational institutions, community nonprofit organizations as well as area residents, land developers and business owners in a strategic visioning process focused on regional growth patterns and the extent to which they impact the ecological, social and economic well-being of their community. Outcomes include clarity of organizational purpose, membership and strategies for action to influence public and private policies and actions. Continuing support.

Omaha Public Power District, Facilities Management Division (Omaha, NE, 2005/06): Facilitated the merger of two departments with managers, supervisors and staff who sought to redefine their work processes, workload allocation, accountability and recordkeeping systems as well as organize and implement their physical relocation. Outcomes resulted in a cohesive work team with, clear roles and responsibilities, independent competence with a collaborative mindset that can shift and flow with changing circumstances. Continuing support in other areas of OPPD.

Midwest Child Care Association (Omaha, NE 2006): Designed and facilitated two-day strategic planning retreat for executive director and staff members of a regional child care resource and education institution. Outcome was a clear focus of strategic funding and project implementation priorities for the next five years; 2007 implementation strategies currently on track.

Omaha Symphony Association (Omaha, NE, 2004/06): Facilitated Operations Department effectiveness initiative; provided ongoing coaching support for General Manager of Operations. Outcomes include a notable shift in individual and group behaviors as well as operational outputs. Efforts centered on clarification of work priorities and responsibilities, redistribution of workload, development and documentation of optimally efficient work processes, identification of standards and measures for monitoring ongoing work activity. Continuing support in other areas

Jump Rhythm Jazz Project (Chicago, IL, 2003/04): Designed and co-facilitated five-year strategic visioning process for dance company in Chicago, IL, involving funders, board members, executive and artistic directors, staff, dancers and their significant others. Outcome was a clear focus of priorities and strategic engagement of Chicago-area business leaders needed to advance the vision of JRJP.

Americans United for Separation of Church and State (Washington, DC, 2002/03): Facilitation of five-year strategic visioning process involving 15-member board of trustees and 30-member staff in Washington DC office. Supported executive director in developing strategic visioning initiative, facilitated collective strategy development and organizational alignment.

Leadership for Sustainable Development (Eugene, OR, 2002/03): Facilitation of workshop hosted by the Institute for Sustainable Ethics and Economics in conjunction with the Sustainable Business Symposium, University of Oregon. Workshop designed for business leaders who choose to incorporate sustainability into their strategic goals for profitability and long-term business success.

Omaha Symphony Association Strategic Visioning (Omaha, NE, 2001-2003): Facilitation of nine-month strategic visioning process to identify direction and 10-year goals for the

Omaha Symphony. Supported president/CEO by conducting broad-based community interviews, facilitating exploration and decision-making among board members, guiding steering committee, facilitating town hall meeting and supporting staff work to develop detail for ten-year strategic framework.

Chicago Images and Voices of Hope (Chicago, IL, 2000): Facilitation of large-group (150 participants) dialogue among of media leaders in Chicago to explore ways in which they can influence the collective construction of social reality. Follow-up meetings in progress as strategies are developed and implemented.

Benedictine University Identity Study (Chicago, IL 2000): Facilitation of large-group conversation (175) that included university regents, president and other key administrative leaders, alumni, faculty, monks, students and members of the community to explore the future of Benedictine relative to its core purpose. Highly focused activities have emerged in the context of the first meeting as a part of this extended large-system change initiative.

Nebraska Public Power District (Brownville, NE, 1999): Facilitation of “Strategic Action Inquiry Process” in which employees and managers in a power plant facility engaged in large group dialogue needed to identify existing patterns of behavior and develop strategies to impact optimal performance capability. Plant performance was enhanced as collective purpose and actions were jointly created and enacted.

United Arts Omaha; Joslyn Art Museum; Opera Omaha; Omaha Children’s Museum and ArtsAIM (Omaha, NE, 1993 – 2000): Facilitation of strategic visioning dialogues for numerous Omaha community arts organizations. Initiatives included Board and/or staff retreats, stakeholder meetings, interim tactical planning sessions, etc. Created the space for collective exploration and discovery that led to a deeper understanding of issues, creative strategy development, and implementation of actions that made sense in each unique context.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Sustainability Leadership Institute, Middlebury, VT. (2004-present)

Sustainability Leadership Workshops

Fort Carson Sustainability Conference, Colorado Springs, CO (2004 & 2005)

Sustainable Communities Conference, Burlington, VT (2004)

Leadership for Sustainability Course

University of Vermont, Burlington, VT (support role; 2006 & 2007)

Keystone Leadership Summit, Keystone, CO (2005)

Woodbury College, Montpelier, VT (2004)

University of Hertfordshire, London, UK (2003-Present)

External Examiner, Doctoral Program

Complexity Management Center

Benedictine University, Lisle (Chicago), IL (Intermittently 2002-present)

Sustainable Development: Profits, People and the Planet

Organization Development: Process Consultation

University of Nebraska, Omaha, NE (Intermittently 1982-present)

Organizational Communication
Leadership Communication
Public Speaking Fundamentals
Small Group Discussion and Leadership
Speech Communication in Business and the Professions
Conflict Negotiation

Professional Development Workshop and Seminars (1986 – present)

Advanced Leadership Skills	Mentoring Manager
Career Planning	Performance Coaching
Cultural Change	Positive Disciplinary Action
Diversity Dialogue	Problem Solving/Decision Making
Effective Delegation	Project Management
Face-to-Face Communication	Self-Directed Work Teams
Employee Orientation	Selection Interviewing
Handling Conflict	Supervisory Leadership Skills
High Performance Leadership	Leadership for Sustainability
Holistic Leadership	Team Building
Leading Organizational Change	Time Management
Making Presentations	Union/Management Relations
Managing Accountability	Writing for Result
Meeting Management	

AWARDS AND GRANTS

National Science Foundation:

Innovation and Organization Change Program

Co-Principal Investigator: (with J. D. Ludema and R. V. Tenkasi)

Project Title: Exploring the Social Construction of Emergent Change in a Complex Adaptive System: A Study of Complex Change in the Nuclear Power Industry

Award: \$ 35,000, 2000-2001 (Doctoral dissertation grant)

Best Paper Awards:

Academy of Management (2002); Title: "Transformative Interactions: Relational Principles that Impact the Quality of Self-Organizing Change"

Organization Development Institute (1999); Title: "Leading Change within Complex Organizations"

Human Resources Professional Certificate: Society for Human Resources Management (1994)

Outstanding Project Award: Continuous Quality Improvement: High Performance Leadership; American Society of Training and Development (1992)

Graduate Student Thesis Award: Communication Department, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Nebraska, Omaha (1985). Title: A Communication Methodology for Negotiating a Wheat Contract with China

RESEARCH

Papers and Presentations

- Ferdig, Mary A. (2007). Sustainability leadership: Co-creating a sustainable future. *Journal of Change Management*, Vol. 7, No 1: 25-35.
- Ferdig, Mary A. (2007). Holistic leadership: achieving results through expanded awareness. 2002 Midwest Academy of Management; Kansas City, KS.
- Ferdig, Mary A. and Ludema, James D. (2004). Transformative interactions: Conversational principles that Impact the quality of self-organizing change. W. Pasmore and R. Woodman (Eds.), *Research in Organizational Change and Development*. Stamford: JAI Press.
- Ferdig, M.A. (2002). Co-creating a symphony orchestra's vision for the future: applications of complexity science and social constructionist perspectives; 2002 Midwest Academy of Management; Indianapolis, Indiana.
- Ferdig, M.A. (2001). Managing complex self-organizing change: The joint construction of the nuclear reactor oversight process; American Nuclear Society; Reno, NV.
- Ferdig, M.A. (2001). Exploring the social construction of complex self-organizing change: A study of emerging change in the nuclear power industry; Midwest Academy of Management, Toledo, Ohio.
- Ferdig, M.A. (2001). Complex self-organizing change: A relational view of creative emergence; Organization Development Institute; Chicago, Illinois.
- Ferdig, M. A. and Ludema, J. D. (2001), Complexity and the social construction of organizations: New connections for a new time; National Academy of Management, Toronto, Canada; *Best Practice Paper Nomination*.
- Ferdig, M.A. (2000). Complexity theories: Perspectives of the social construction of organizational transformation; Midwest Academy of Management; Chicago, IL.
- Ludema, J. D.; Ferdig, M. A.; Griffin, T. J.; Mantel, M.; Rodriguez, R. (2000). Working together: Learning through collaboration (2000); symposium, Midwest Academy of Management; Chicago, IL.
- Ferdig, M.A. (1999). Leading change within complex organizations; Organization Development Institute; San Antonio, TX; *Best Paper Award*.
- Ludema, J. D.; Ferdig, M. S.; Griffin, T. J.; Gustafson, J.; Livingston, H; Shearer, D. (1999); Work to build a better world: The compelling call of the human and organizational dimensions of global change; symposium, Midwest Academy of Management; Lincoln, NE.
- Ferdig, M. A. (1997). Communication as an Art of Design: A Leadership Communication Perspective; Organization Development Associates Meeting, University of Nebraska.

Ferdig, M. A. (1996). Leadership and performance effectiveness: A study in human resource development; Organization Development Associates Meeting, University of Nebraska.

Ferdig, M. A.; Gates, W. G. (1994). Self-assessment for performance effectiveness; American Nuclear Society, San Diego, California.

Doctoral Dissertation (2001)

Exploring the Social Construction of Complex Self-organizing Change: A Study of Change in the Regulation of Nuclear Power (Advisors: James D. Ludema, Kenneth J. Gergen, Ralph D. Stacey, Ramkrishnan B. Tenkasi)

Master's Thesis (1985)

A Communication Methodology for Negotiating a Wheat Contract with China (Advisors: Elton S. Carter, Andris Skrejja, Bruce E. Johansen)

CURRENT AFFILIATIONS

- Member, Academy of Management
- Board of Directors, Joslyn Institute for Sustainable Communities
- Executive Council, Women's Scholarship/Mentoring Program, Institute for Career Advancement Needs
- Member, Institute for General Semantics
- Member, Midwest Academy of Management
- Member, Organizational Development Institute
- Member, Organizational Development Network