
Edward Emmet Lawler, III: Scholar, Change Agent, Sports Fanatic, and a Hell of a Nice Guy

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Susan Albers Mohrman

Abstract

Edward Emmett Lawler, III, has been a central figure in the development of the fields of organizational behavior, management, and organization development. His early work generated and tested theoretical frameworks about motivation and performance, and he was a leader in investigating how organizational practices impact employee and organizational outcomes, including work design, compensation, performance management, and participation and involvement. The Quality of Worklife studies at the University of Michigan that he co-led with Stan Seashore provided a model and developed a methodology for studying and understanding organizations as dynamic systems and for creating knowledge about organizations by intentionally changing them. From this work, he developed his highly influential high-involvement management framework.

During a career that has spanned 50 years, he has influenced both the theory and practice of organizing for effectiveness during a period when organizations have had to change fundamentally to adapt to the emerging dynamic, digitalized, global economy. Lawler has been a scholar of how organizations are changing to be effective in their changing contexts more than he has been a scholar of change processes. His emphasis on doing useful research led to partnerships with companies to address and learn from the challenges they face and to ensuring that the knowledge created is accessible to both academia and practice. His work has helped shape the development and increasing strategic orientation of the human resource function. He founded and for almost 40 years has led the Center for Effective Organizations (CEO), a research center at the Marshall School of Business at the University of Southern California, which he designed to carry out useful research. He and his colleagues at CEO have contributed to the

S.A. Mohrman (✉)

Center for Effective Organizations, Marshall School of Business, University of Southern California,
Los Angeles, CA, USA

e-mail: smohrman@marshall.usc.edu

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development of methodologies for doing useful research and to the debates in the Academy about the legitimacy of such approaches.

This chapter describes Lawler's evolution as a scholar, the many contributions that he has made to the understanding of how organizations can change to be more effective, and the immense impact he has had on practice and academia.

Keywords

Organizational effectiveness • High involvement management • Useful research • Strategic human resources

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Introduction

Ed Lawler's career has spanned five decades during which modern organization and management sciences have coevolved with the growth and development of the complex global economy, digitalization, and the transition to the postindustrial knowledge economy. He has had enormous influence on organizational people management practices. His early work helped shape the new field of organizational behavior and contributed foundational perspectives in the fields of organizational and industrial (I-O) psychology and organization development. He has had many substantive influences on our understanding and practice of organizational change but first and foremost has been that he has provided a framework of knowledge and has been a role model for how academic research can be relevant in changing times.

Lawler has been less concerned with generating knowledge to help organizations with the process of change than with generating knowledge about the kinds of changes they could make in order to be effective. He has challenged conventional wisdom and served as his own counsel in defining a career and building methodologies and institutional settings for investigating the issues of organizational effectiveness that he believed to be important.

Ed would rather talk about sports than about his career successes and contributions. He attributes his professional accomplishments to the good fortune of having been in institutions where he has had “great people to work with” – something he attributes to “pure luck” (There may have been less luck involved in seeking out universities with great football teams). There is a long list of people, myself included, who feel fortunate to know Ed and to have collaborated with him. And many of us have even have had the chance to go to a football game with him. There the camaraderie was all about what was happening on the field, and the Scholastic All-Ivy Football Team member from Brown University was just as keenly focused, perceptive, and analytic about the behavior on the field (the action) as he is about organizational effectiveness when at work.

A very common way that his colleagues and friends refer to him is as a “hell of a nice guy.” One can’t capture the essence of Ed Lawler if one doesn’t know that about him. This “hell of a nice guy” has put together a stellar career with a mind-boggling list of accomplishments, as will be evidenced below in my attempt to do justice to Edward Emmett Lawler, III, the scholar change agent.

Influences and Motivations: Institutions and Colleagues

Ed Lawler’s influence on the field of organizational change has been deep and pervasive but first and foremost has been his ability to understand and be a role model for how academic research can be relevant in changing times. He has anticipated and rapidly sensed societal and market changes and has focused on generating and disseminating knowledge and practices to help organizations be effective in their changing contexts. He understands that practice evolves faster than academic research. In order for organizational research to be relevant, he has advocated that researchers connect more effectively to organizations and that the knowledge they generate should be useful in addressing the effectiveness challenges that they face.

Lawler’s career unfolded in four chapters in four institutional settings: the University of California-Berkeley Psychology Department, Yale University’s Administrative Science Department, the Institute for Social Research and the Psychology Department of the University of Michigan, and as a professor of Management and director of the Center for Effective Organizations in the Management and Organizational Behavior Department in the Marshall School of Business at the University of Southern California (USC). Lawler’s contribution to the field of change is best understood through his own metamorphosis as he moved through these settings and developed an increasing commitment to doing useful research. In

his own words, his development has been strongly influenced by his succession of experiences in these four institutions. Close collaborations with colleagues and the opportunities for learning and building new methodological and organizational approaches to doing research have been critical elements of his contributions to academia and to practice.

University of California-Berkeley (1960–1964)

After graduating from Brown University with a degree in psychology and experience on the football and track teams, Lawler received a PhD in psychology from the University of California-Berkeley in 1964. There he developed the habits for and value of theoretical framing and methodological rigor. Working closely with Lyman Porter, he received a solid grounding in traditional I-O psychology approaches, albeit through field studies that had him out in organizations interacting with managers and employees about how they experienced their organizations. As a doctoral student and subsequently as a young faculty member at Yale University, Lawler conducted psychology research that would help define the field of organizational behavior by extending the focus beyond the industrial worker to managerial and professional organizational members and by focusing increasingly on organizational practices that yield high performance.

Lawler's dissertation examined the relationship between managers' attitudes and performance and became the basis for his book with Lyman Porter, *Managerial Attitudes and Performance* (1968). This seminal work proposed and found empirical support for what came to be known as the value-expectancy theory of motivation. This model expanded the range of variables believed to impact performance and reversed the prevailing causality assumption that employee satisfaction leads to higher performance. It established empirically that satisfaction results from high performance that leads to outcomes that are valued and are perceived as equitable. This core principle has underpinned Lawler's subsequent work, in particular, his focus on creating work systems and practices that motivate high performance rather than trying to satisfy employees. This breakthrough perspective was an early and important example of Lawler having and testing insights that were at odds with current thinking in academia and practice.

Yale Administrative Science Department (1964–1972)

As a new faculty member in Yale's Administrative Science Department, Lawler built on and extended the theoretical constructs underpinning high performance and motivation (Lawler 1973). He continued doing fieldwork focusing on the interface between individuals and the organization. With his close colleague Richard Hackman and others, Lawler oriented himself increasingly to the practical concern of understanding how organizational contexts can be designed to foster high performance, contributing a body of work in the area of work design (Lawler 1969) and compensation.

He rapidly became one of the foremost authorities on compensation and rewards in the eyes both of academic researchers and corporate leaders (Lawler 1971, 1981, 1990). His multi-community following, and the intentional strategy of focusing on books that were aimed at a dual audience, would be a hallmark of Lawler's career and the underpinning of his undeniable influence on both academic research and organizational practice.

At Yale, Lawler also encountered and was influenced by the work of Chris Argyris, Clay Alderfer, and others who were working within a Lewinian tradition and developing an action science perspective using participatory change processes. Yale provided a fertile environment for exploring the tensions and connections between this group and those who, like himself, were pursuing more traditional quantitative methodologies. He has described his relationship with Argyris as "transformative." It laid the foundation for a fundamental change in how he positioned his work in the field of organization behavior that would be defined during his tenure at the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research (ISR).

The University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research (1972–1980)

At ISR, Lawler saw the opportunity to do larger scale, funded, field research about effective organizational systems and to focus on research that could make a difference. ISR had been founded in the 1970s to do social science research to help address conflicts and social issues that had been manifest in the preceding decades of wars and social unrest. Scholars such as Rensis Likert, Bob Kahn, Stan Seashore, and Dan Katz found fertile ground there to test their advancing theories of organizational systems and human behavior through field studies. Lawler partnered with Stan Seashore to establish a Quality of Worklife (QWL) Program – securing funding from the US Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW). HEW was seeking empirical studies to find ways to address the workplace problems of low morale and its manifestations in absenteeism, turnover, low quality, and worker-management conflict. These issues had been starkly reported in the HEW-sponsored *Work in America* report (O'Toole et al. 1973). The aim of the QWL program was to incorporate theories and research knowledge about organization structure, work design, supervision, participative approaches, compensation, and other organizational features in a coherent organizational system that could be created and empirically studied to understand how the various elements of the system can operate together to yield productive organizations with higher morale.

To achieve that purpose, Lawler and his colleagues had to investigate system level dynamics. Lawler was developing comfort with the Lewinian perspective that the best way to understand an organization is to change it – combined with the belief that there is nothing as useful as good theory. Nevertheless, focusing on organizations that were changing represented a departure from the presumed wisdom among traditional organizational psychologists that creditable knowledge

comes from tightly controlled studies holding everything constant but the variables in question.

Lawler and Seashore led a multidisciplinary team to study eight large system change efforts. The changes were occurring in very different organizational settings and were based on a variety of intervention models and frameworks that were formulated and implemented by experts in organization development, labor management cooperation, and sociotechnical systems (STS), i.e., by action researchers. To maintain the objectivity that Lawler had learned to value, the Michigan QWL group independently “assessed” the change process, the impact of the various elements of the changes that were being put in place, and the outcomes for the company and for the employees. The ultimate purpose was to generate knowledge that could help organizations change themselves to become more effective. Lawler wasn’t particularly focused on the change process and didn’t think of himself as an interventionist. Rather, he maintained his concern with (1) generating theory, (2) testing – with as much rigor as possible – the practices that lead to effectiveness, and (3) disseminating knowledge.

The QWL work represented a methodological advance in research about organization system change. The research challenge was to find ways to study the linkages of the various elements of change and of the overall system to productivity and morale, in order to assess and learn from different approaches to improve quality of work life. In order to do this, he and his colleagues had to become change agents in a different way: by “inventing” and implementing new methodological and organizational ways of doing the work of research and knowledge generation. They had to invent approaches to study complex system change and develop a social system capable of doing that. They created a matrix structure, including cross-discipline research teams for projects, and specialist sub-teams with deep knowledge of various organizational frameworks and disciplines, and an overall approach to developing and implementing common instruments to measure the phenomena of focus (Mirvis and Lawler 2010).

The interventions they were studying were multifaceted and drew on multi-level, multidisciplinary theories, and multiple methods for data gathering and analysis that included observation, qualitative approaches, surveys, and the gathering of quantitative archival information. A comprehensive survey was developed to measure the key parameters of the system that were believed to relate to motivation and performance. Archival data were collected measuring financial and productivity outcomes and behavioral outcomes such as absenteeism and turnover. In addition to an overall assessment of outcomes that was foundational to program assessment, various team members carried out focused mini-studies of particular sub-systems that were changing, using a comparison group when possible. Lawler coined the term “adaptive research” to describe a methodology for adjusting the research approaches to fit a dynamic context and to take advantage of the particulars of a site that enabled focused learning (1977). The multidisciplinary nature of the research team made it possible to look at the full system while also homing in on particular facets of the system and of the change dynamics. The studies resulted in an interwoven pattern of

findings that shed light both on the impact of particular practices and of the system overall.

This research required managing collaboration among multiple stakeholders – each with different interests, understandings, beliefs, values, purposes, and preferences. Among the stakeholders were executives in corporations where the interventions were occurring. Others were the HEW program sponsors, labor unions, teams of interventionists, managers and employees in the research sites, and the multi-disciplinary QWL research team members themselves. An office was set up in Washington to identify research sites and assemble the group of stakeholders that would have to participate in each of the projects to agree to an overall approach. Ed had become a manager of a complex research system, one that could only work effectively if it was populated by people who were energized by the opportunity, excited by the challenges, collaborative in orientation, and able to be heavily involved in making the program a success.

As the work proceeded, the reality of studying such a complex tapestry of interests, interventions, and actors resulted in research approaches that moved farther away from a controlled experimental design. Through long hours of discussion and debate among the research team, each of whom had their own perspectives on relevance and rigor, complex interwoven approaches were generated across the eight projects. Lawler and Seashore ensured that the emerging multidisciplinary, multi-method, multi-level, and longitudinal methodology was systematically documented in articles and books aimed at introducing this systemic and adaptive approach to the field of organizational studies (Seashore et al. 1983; Lawler et al. 1980). This reflects another theme that would characterize Lawler's career – his continual emphasis on generating knowledge about and catalyzing interest in doing useful research.

During his time at ISR, Lawler developed an interest in testing knowledge through new plant startups (greenfield sites) built from scratch to embody the elements of the emerging high-performance, QWL framework (Lawler 1978). The greenfield approach was already being used successfully by companies such as Procter and Gamble and Shell Oil, following a STS approach. The elements of the plant could be developed from scratch by the participants without having to go through the hard work entailed in changing already existing sites, systems, and understandings. This approach provided a different organizational change and intervention methodology in which organizations could build, learn from, and improve prototypes of new ways of operating and disseminate them to other plants. The opportunity to consult to and learn from the start-ups moved him even closer to action science and away from a strict insistence that there should be walls between the research and the intervention.

Lawler was now squarely positioned in the nexus of the methodological tensions and schisms between advocates of qualitative and quantitative methodology and between rigorous positivistic versus action science-oriented research. His emphasis on the importance of research usefulness – albeit with as much rigor as is possible given the constraints of and realities faced by organizations – was now his primary

guiding value. This perspective guided him as he moved to the University of Southern California (USC) and founded the Center for Effective Organizations (CEO) to pursue that purpose.

The Center for Effective Organizations (1978 Through Present)

Before arriving at the USC, Lawler spent time at the Battelle Memorial Institute where he led contract research programs. There he developed the belief that dependence on elaborate contracting mechanisms and large overhead costs worked against research productivity, flexibility to pursue topics of high relevance, and performance motivation. In 1978, Lawler moved to USC, where he had the opportunity to design a research center based on the knowledge he had generated about high performance. He founded CEO with the mission of partnering with organizations to conduct research that contributes to organizational effectiveness through the simultaneous advancing of theoretical understanding and practical impact. In the CEO model, sponsor companies pay a fee to join CEO, help shape its research agenda based on the issues they are facing, host and partner in the conduct of studies, and are the beneficiaries of rich learning from their own and other organizations that are inventing and adopting leading-edge approaches.

He did not want the researchers in the center to be constrained by the increasing pressure in academic departments to focus solely on A-journal articles through what he had come to perceive as methodologies, theoretical perspectives, and focuses that were increasingly distant from useful knowledge about organizational effectiveness. He designed all aspects of the center to motivate and provide a supportive context for relevant work and in so doing departed from many of the norms and assumptions underpinning traditional academic departments. He secured agreement that the center would report directly to the Dean of the Business School and that the researchers who joined it could choose to be on a track that rewarded a combination of academic and practitioner-oriented publications and research impact. This model was enabled by CEO's pledge to be largely self-supporting, which also enabled the development of a staff of skilled administrative and research services professionals so that the research teams could be maximally productive. He and his first hire and Associate Director Allan (Monty) Mohrman, rolled up their sleeves, built a team, developed a cadre of corporate partners, and went about the hard work of building several large research programs in the areas of strategic human resources practices, the design of high performance systems, and organizational change.

The attitudes and values of many in companies and academia at this time had been shaped during the societal turbulence of the 1960s and had been influenced by the visibility that Lawler's work had achieved both in academia and companies. CEO recruited a cadre of researchers who valued doing systematic research that both advanced theory and positively impacted organizations and society and who valued the opportunity to cocreate this nascent institution to carry out its mission. It was also able to attract and rapidly grow a sponsor network of more than 50 companies that wanted to be partners in this mission.

In order to be well positioned to do research useful to organizations in dealing with emerging issues, CEO recruited researchers from multiple disciplines, including psychology, organizational sociology, economics, information systems, strategy, organization design, and system dynamics. It quickly developed a model of partnering with researchers from across the USC campus, and from other universities nationally and globally, in order to expand its domains of expertise. Lawler did what he espoused. He created a high performance system fashioned to address the needs of the time and sufficiently agile to be able to change itself to address the emerging needs of the next four decades.

The corporate members of CEO came largely from the HR function. Lawler and others at CEO maintained a strong presence in studying effective human resource practices, an area where Lawler had become a globally recognized thought leader. This was a natural fit at the time, as the HR function was beginning to evolve from being a personnel function to becoming a strategic business partner. This evolution reflected the emerging knowledge economy where talent management was becoming a competitive differentiator. Lawler foresaw this trend, and he and his colleagues pursued the generation of useful research that focused on the effectiveness issues inherent in this transition. Over its four decades, CEO maintained an engaged group of sponsors by repeatedly anticipating trends and challenges that organizations were beginning to face and by applying and generating multidisciplinary knowledge to generate useful knowledge.

CEO's multidisciplinary group of scholars took CEO toward more macro and change-oriented focuses, generating knowledge useful to organizations in developing new capabilities and practices to deal with the profound changes they were experiencing, such as the digitalization of information and communication, new ways of organizing and working, and the emergence of the global economy. Challenges addressed in CEO research included dealing with multicultural workforces; coordination and work-life challenges of 24/7 work around the globe; new automated work systems; outsourcing and the associated dislocation of work, workers, and communities; the movement away from life-long employment expectations and fundamental changes in the employment contract; sea changes in the awareness, education levels, and expectations of employees; and the increasingly lateral and networked organizing approaches that called into question traditional assumptions about the role of hierarchy.

With colleague Chris Worley, Lawler expanded his interests to how organizations can become sufficiently agile to operate effectively in an ever-changing world. In another twist on conventional wisdom, they argue that instead of being built to last, organizations should be built to change (Lawler and Worley 2006, 2011; Worley et al. 2014). As societal side effects of the ballooning growth of the highly networked global economy became evident, CEO also began to look beyond shareholder value and employee outcomes as the primary metrics of organization success. One stream of research focuses on how organizations can effectively address the purposes and legitimate interests of a complex web of stakeholders that are impacting and changing the way organizations function, in order to be sustainable into the future. Lawler and colleague Sue Mohrman argue for a reframing of how

academics approach and design their research to reflect this new reality (Lawler and Mohrman 2014).

Key Contributions: A Relentless Pursuit of Research Usefulness

Lawler's primary identity is not as a scholar of organizational change. Rather, he is a scholar who has made substantive research contributions that have contributed to change in organizations and introduced new research methodologies for the study of organizations. He has been a change agent with influence both on the directions taken in the field of organizational behavior and on practice. His early contributions were foundational in establishing the field of organizational behavior and provided core tenets for I/O psychologists who would work with and in companies to advance practice. His more recent contributions identify important ways in which organizational practices need to advance to fit changing demands and have influenced the fields of organizational development and organizational effectiveness.

Much of what Lawler has studied and advocated over the years has now been widely embedded in organizational practice, including greater attention to employee development, knowledge sharing, increased participation in decision-making, and a more strategic application of rewards and performance management. The widespread influence his work has had on companies, on the education of managers, and on other academics studying and working with companies to solve effectiveness problems has likely played a role in the adoption of these practices.

Through the way he has crafted his career and the strong stance he has taken with respect to the importance of usefulness, he has been a key figure in keeping alive a debate about the role and methodologies of organizational research. He has questioned assumptions and operated outside of and resisted the institutionalization of an increasingly narrow, discipline-based approach to conducting research. A number of Lawler's key contributions are discussed below.

Systemic and Multi-level Treatment of Organizational Practices Leading to Organizational Effectiveness

As described earlier, Lawler's early work conceptualizing the key link between organizational practices and the motivation of employees and his role in providing a framework clarifying the link between motivation and performance were foundational contributions. Lawler stood out in his early embrace of an integrative perspective on the organization as a system of practices that shape its performance capabilities. This perspective led to a more complex, multi-level treatment of the relationship between the individual and the organization. In the world of organizational practice, it provided the backdrop for the gradual transition of the largely transactional personnel function into a more strategic human resources function.

Related to his work in the QWL program, Lawler developed a system framework for high performance, known as high involvement management (Lawler 1986, 1992). It focuses on a set of mutually supportive practices to increase employee involvement in the success of the business by distributing four resources – knowledge, information, power, and rewards – throughout the employee population. With its simultaneous focus on employee and organizational outcomes, this framework inspired a generation of scholars who honed, extended, and tested it, both through interventional work and assessment of impact and through systematic articulation and testing of theoretical precepts.

Definitional Work on Research Usefulness

Lawler has been persistent in advocating that usefulness should be a major criterion for organizational research. He advocates empirical field research driven by a clear theoretical foundation and yielding useful, data-based knowledge about effectiveness. This value is instantiated in his own scholarly work and in the research programs and the research center he has led. He and his colleagues have edited three volumes providing frameworks, guidance, and exemplars about the conduct of useful research (Lawler et al. 1985, 1999; Mohrman et al. 2011).

Key to his capacity to achieve usefulness is staying closely connected to organizational practice. Believing that practice generally precedes academic research, Lawler has been a keen observer of trends and even of weak signals that change is underway. Over the years, he has anticipated the trajectory of the emerging and dynamic context in which organizations operate and anticipated the challenges they will face and what that means for organization practice and research. For example, under his leadership, CEO developed expertise in information technology and anticipated the fundamental changes to work and organization that would result from digitalization. CEO researchers were early contributors to cross-functional teaming and other lateral approaches to organizing that would become increasingly important in the global, digitalized economy. A strong organization design capability has been nurtured at CEO, so that it can simultaneously shed useful light on the macro-design issues that organizations are facing and on their implications for the management and human resource practices.

As Lawler and colleagues have written, knowledge is only useful if it is used, and their activities have had that intent. Continual sensing of issues companies are facing combined with research that tests ideas in practice are underpinnings for the value that companies find in his work. Usefulness is enhanced by writing, speaking, and making knowledge about effective practice accessible to multiple audiences. Providing consultative support to companies trying to put new knowledge into practice enables a real-world test of usefulness, as well as feedback to enrich and iterate what is being learned and disseminated. Company relationships provide access to research sites in which to study dynamics and practices in the changing contexts faced by organizations.

Methodology for Learning from Organizations That Are Purposefully Transforming Themselves

The rigorous methodological approach (described earlier in this chapter) developed in the QWL studies at ISR for learning about the practices that lead to organizational effectiveness provided a methodological framework for many academics whose focus was to do useful research. I include myself among those who were deeply impacted by this approach. In fact, it was this framework and the QWL research that led me to remain in academia when I left graduate school, rather than go directly to a company to try to help make it more effective for its employees.

Elements of the instruments that were developed at ISR in the 1970s have been used by researchers for decades and can be found in the surveys and assessment methodologies that have become part of the fabric of many organizations. Lawler's influence on the use of survey methodology by companies is also a key contribution to the field of organizational effectiveness and change (Lawler 1967).

Designing a Research Center to Conduct Useful Research

In setting up a purpose-driven research center that has evolved and lasted for 39 years, Lawler was both a social entrepreneur and an innovator. CEO's organizing model is described earlier in the paper. Lawler combined his knowledge of practices that lead to effectiveness, his framework for high involvement, and his experience with greenfield organizations to start up and evolve an organization designed to foster high performance in its mission of relevant research. In so doing, CEO deviated substantially from the traditional academic organization. A key decision Lawler made was to have the research scientists in the center have the choice not to be on a tenure track appointment but rather to have ongoing employment based on research performance. Lawler believed firmly that this was the best way to foster ongoing relevance and productivity. CEO might be considered an exemplar for others thinking about designing high performing organizations for knowledge work.

Lawler carefully designed a strategy to establish legitimacy in the academic world for research that is carried out in a research center by researchers with nontraditional links to the long established ivory towers of academia and mission. He took steps to ensure that CEO's work was connected to the mainstream work in the organizational sciences, while simultaneously connecting it to practitioners. In its early years, CEO convened two conferences involving CEO researchers and a number of highly productive, established organizational academics who at the time were carrying out useful research, and a group of reflective practitioners, to collaboratively produce seminal books on the topics of *Doing Useful Research* (1985) and *Managing Large-Scale Change* (1989). This was a time when scholarly work in the academic fields of management and organization was becoming increasingly distant from the actual operations and concerns of organizations. Lawler's avowed intent was to nudge the

field to contribute knowledge that would be useful to practice and to accept its importance.

As a distinguished management professor, Lawler was able to transcend the pressures for research and publications that advances narrow academic disciplines. He could focus on cross-cutting issues that require new methodologies, highly collaborative approaches, and an openness to discovering knowledge for the future rather than painstakingly analyzing and chronicling what the past has generated. In short, Lawler positioned himself as a bridge between traditional discipline-based university departments and the cross-discipline, problem-oriented research that was being carried out at CEO.

Insights: Reframing Prevailing Frameworks

Lawler's astute observational powers and capacity to cut through complexity and get to the heart of the matter have allowed him to frame and investigate interesting questions and issues throughout his career. His influence on organization change has stemmed from using empirical data to reframe prevailing assumptions and change how people think about the issues they face and the problems they have to solve. For example, his and his colleagues' early work offered an alternative to the prevailing views of organizations as engineering and industrial systems supplemented by industrial relations and administrative processes. They began collecting data and investigating behavioral and attitudinal dynamics and the professional and managerial workforce and contributed to the emerging fields of management and organizational studies.

Always building on the fundamentals of motivation and performance, he has expanded and reframed the internally focused issues of individuals, teams, and the organization to take into account the impact of the global and knowledge-based economy on the nature of performance and on the employee organization relationship as it was evolving in society.

Keeping in mind that Lawler sees his contributions as resulting from collaboration with colleagues, just a few of his important insights are briefly described below.

Motivation, Satisfaction, and Performance

A significant early reframing came from his work establishing that performance leads to satisfaction – rather than causality going in the opposite direction. Lawler continues even in current times to remind academics and practitioners of the fallacy of believing that satisfying employees will lead to performance motivation – and of the futility of trying to achieve engagement by focusing on programs to make employees happy. He reminds us that the research finds that the source of employee engagement in the business is the work and performance outcomes.

Integrative Scholarship

Lawler's work while at ISR cemented his stature as an integrative scholar, one who merged the understanding of individual and organizational behavior and effectiveness in relationship to the changing market and societal contexts that were unfolding. At the time, this represented a reframing for a relatively internally focused field of study. He shifted from research on particular constructs and practices and their individual impact on performance to the investigation of high performance as stemming from a system of practices. His methodological contributions reflect this insight by suggesting ways, imperfect though they may be from a positivistic research perspective, to study, understand, and advance practice in organization systems. This insight led him to question the fragmented production of knowledge both in academia and organizations. A practical manifestation of his impact is the increasing integration of HR functional approaches to support the performance required to deliver on the organization's strategy.

Criticality of Connection to Practice

Lawler dedicated a lot of his personal attention to creating awareness of good practice and drawing attention to areas where companies are falling short in putting in place practices that would be good for the performance of the companies and the well-being of employees. He believed that useful research could not be done at arm's length as is espoused by many positivist researchers and that usefulness required going far beyond simply discovering and writing up knowledge about organizational effectiveness and implications for practice and then declaring victory and moving on to the next topic of interest. He sought ways to share knowledge with new executives and managers, emerging professional societies, young and established academics and practitioners, and professionals and managers in many fields, industry sectors, functions, and institutional settings. Through example, he redefined the mix of work required to make research useful.

Built to Change

After three decades of work studying organizations trying to increase performance in the midst of fundamentally changing market demands, Lawler was one of the first to draw the profound conclusion that organizations should be built to change, not to be stable. He partnered with colleague Chris Worley, who led a series of studies of Organizational Agility that yielded a system of organizational elements that enables an organization to be agile (Lawler and Worley 2006, 2011; Worley et al. 2014). Sustainable organizational effectiveness, in their view, depends not only on sound management practices and value-adding capabilities but also on building the ability to change into the fabric of the organization. Change isn't an episodic occurrence that calls for periodically assembling deep knowledge about change management.

Rather, effective organizations are always changing, and change is a core capability. Agility is enabled by a system of routines built into the fabric of the organization. These promote ongoing strategic thinking, sensing of how the environment is changing and what that means for how the organization should operate, testing and learning from new approaches, and effectively implementing new directions. This perspective on change is a significant reframing from many of the core change frameworks in the fields of organizational development and organizational effectiveness that focus on transformations and/or the implementation of episodic change.

Individualization

Individualization of the treatment of employees has been one of Lawler's key focuses for his entire career (Lawler 1974, 2014; Lawler and Finegold 2000). His insight is that individualization, not homogeneous human resource practices, relates to greater motivation and performance. Despite the field of psychology's concern for individual differences, I/O psychologists have had a quest for ever more sophisticated ways of measuring these and fitting individually different employees into common systems. Lawler has advocated such practices as person-based pay, eliminating job descriptions, cafeteria benefits programs, and other practices that move away from homogenous treatment of employees and that recognize individual capabilities and preferences. In advocating these approaches, he has often been swimming upstream given the legal environment and associated risk aversion of companies, the preferences of managers for commonality and the preferences of many employees and organizations for stability.

Lawler's recent work (Lawler 2017) advocates individualization as a key organizing principle for talent management. He believes this as a key to the agility organizations need to be sustainably effective in today's rapidly shifting society and economy. He points out that individualization is already underway given that life-long employment is rapidly disappearing, and that companies are increasingly relying on contractors and freelancers rather than expanding their full-time employee base to carry out tasks that may not be needed in the future. This perspective is congruent with the pervasiveness of knowledge work that does not fall readily into well-defined jobs, job families, and grading and compensation systems.

Ed Lawler's Pervasive and Deep Legacy

My perception of Ed Lawler's legacy is no doubt biased by the fact that I share the values built into CEO, and have found it to be an ideal setting in which to pursue my interests. My own academic career has been largely based in CEO, where I have had the opportunity not only to pursue my research interests and build my research programs and networks of collaborators but also to do things that I personally believe contribute to society. I have worked, often closely, with Ed Lawler for almost 40 years.

My view that Ed's legacy is pervasive and deep is congruent with the perceptions from many in both academia and the corporate world. Ed is a highly honored academic. He is a distinguished professor at USC and has been honored for his lifetime contribution by the American Psychological Association, the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, the Academy of Management, the Association for Training and Development, the Society for Human Resource Management, and others. He is a fellow in the Academy of Management, The British Academy of Management, and Divisions 8 and 14 of the American Psychological Association, and others and has served on the directing boards of many of these organizations. He has been on the editorial board of more than 15 academic journals.

Ed's expansive influence on academia has been described in some detail earlier in this chapter. Yet it is important to emphasize the continuity: for almost 50 years, he has evolved his underlying concern with motivation, behavior, and performance in organizations. He has built on core theoretical ideas and has studied and described practices that are continuously changing to adjust to the unfolding contexts in which organizations are operating. His research trajectory, though anchored, has been blown by the winds of change. His foundational frameworks have been catalytic for several generations of unfolding theoretical knowledge as well as for the translational research taking theory into organizational practices.

Ed attributes much of his impact to the longevity of his career and the opportunity to pursue his core interests through time. Just one example is CEO's work on performance management that led to the seminal book *Designing Performance Appraisal Systems* (Mohrman et al. 1989b) that squarely positioned performance appraisal as a strategic tool and one that was all about involving employees not only in the process of their own assessment but also in the success of the organization. Twenty years later, Gerry Ledford, Ben Schneider, George Benson, and Ed are revisiting the performance management practices needed in our changed, digitally enabled world of work. I use this focus not only to demonstrate the longevity, continuity, and dynamic nature of Ed's contribution but also to bring to life his belief that dynamic collaborations have been a source of his impact.

Many organizational practices have been profoundly influenced by his work, including the way people are appraised and paid, how work is designed, and how people are involved in the organization. His work has been an important enabler of the transition of human resource management to address the key talent requirements and challenges of today's global knowledge economy. The field of human resource management is substantively different because of his contributions, and the same is true for hundreds or even thousands of practitioners.

I have been struck by how often I hear managers and executives – even those who have never met Ed Lawler – talk about the influence his work has had on how they think about managing and organizing. Although teaching in USC's MBA programs has not been a large part of his responsibilities at USC, he has nevertheless penetrated that pathway for dissemination of his work. Many if not most students have encountered his work as part of their coursework. Other practitioners have

become familiar through his dedication to sharing his ideas with professional associations, in practitioner outlets, and in companies. Practitioners frequently comment that his writing and speaking are clear and the implications are pragmatic and straightforward. He has generated a steady stream of highly varied publications containing a drumbeat of key empirically based principles of high performance situated in the real, constantly unfolding challenges that are being faced in practice. This approach has clearly been successful in accomplishing his major goal of generating and disseminating knowledge that is useful.

Unfinished Business

Lawler's strategy of achieving change through empirical evidence of what constitutes effective practice has had great impact. But he has also come to believe that such approaches are necessary and helpful but not sufficient. Many organizations proceed with and even escalate commitment to approaches to managing people that are ineffective. He has a very realistic appreciation that organizational leaders will not always "do the right thing" for their companies, shareholders, employees, and other stakeholders, even if they know what the right thing would be. During the last 20 years, he has been part of a team with David Finegold and Jay Conger examining Boards of Directors and helping understand how they can be organized to more effectively play their role in ensuring that companies are operating effectively for their owners, employees, and stakeholders. Lawler acknowledges that organizational changes are largely driven by the operating necessity to confront the powerful winds of market changes and competition. But he also views change as a political phenomenon. Organizations respond to powerful stakeholders who can influence the way they operate, often through the legislative and regulatory process or through the creation of reputational risks.

Lawler reflects that those who create compelling knowledge about effective practice run into societal limits and into the power structures that control decision making about how organizations are run. In commenting on his latest writing focusing on the individualization of the relationship of workers and companies, for example, he acknowledges that although inevitable given the current trends in the digitalized and global economy, the individualization of human resource practices raises many societal issues that will have to be addressed and crashes into conflicting beliefs and preferences about the responsibility of corporations. What this trend means for the character of companies and the nature of society opens up a whole new area of focus for the organization and social sciences and for economists and political scientists. This reality, one might say, makes it even more important for researchers to get out of the narrow silos of knowledge and develop a more systemic perspective on how all the pieces fit together for effective outcomes for companies, employees, society, and the earth. Those who are taking on this challenge will find in Lawler's work much learning about how to organize to carry out research to inform this transition.

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