

Supporting Career Transitions in a Time of Organizational Downsizing

The Michigan JOBS Program

Richard H. Price
Amiram D. Vinokur

Consider the plight of the corporate manager or industrial worker who receives a notice that she or he no longer has a job. As painful as this reality is, it is increasingly prevalent on the American work scene. That person faces two major challenging uncertainties. First, there is the uncertainty that, perhaps sooner rather than later, he or she will experience major changes in financial circumstances and, perhaps, serious financial hardship. This newly jobless worker also faces a second major uncertainty: how to search for a new job. After all, this was one skill that was never taught in school, and very likely not even talked about in any formal educational setting.

Uncertainty about searching for a new job has a number of elements, each of which adds to the complexity and threat of the task. The jobless person may be unaware of which skills are most marketable. In many cases the person will not know where to look. Are those ads in the paper really of any use? Does a brother-in-law have some inside information? And even if one had a clear sense of which skills are marketable and where to look, there remains the

question of how to present yourself in the job search. Is the resume the key to success? How eager should one be in a job interview? Finally, it is likely that the job seeker will have to face numerous setbacks before a new job is won. The setbacks may be as subtle as a long silence in response to job inquiries or as explicit as being told "you're overqualified" or "don't call us, we'll call you." If setbacks create a sense of discouragement and hopelessness, the person is defeated virtually before he or she starts to make any progress toward regaining employment.

All of these challenges in the job search amount to this: Searching for a new job is a long-term, uncertain, coping activity that requires the use of complex strategies, substantial self-control, and self-regulation skill, all of it punctuated by discouragements and setbacks that present major motivational challenges of their own. These setbacks can be triggers to more serious problems among vulnerable individuals, including the onset of depression, drinking problems, and family conflict (Kessler, Turner, & House, 1988; Price, 1992).

Unfortunately, this scenario is becoming all too common. As a nation we appear to be in a major period of organizational downsizing with a consequent epidemic of job loss. Careers are changing as well (Reich, 1991). In the future, workers will not expect a single career with a single company, but instead will experience multiple career changes in which job transitions will occur frequently (Price, forthcoming). Job-search skills will become part of a repertoire of career transition skills that all workers will need. This repertoire of skills will be used to move in the labor market, both within one's own organization and outside it as well. Career transitions will not only be from company to company, but also may be from one industry to another; from a marketing job in the automotive industry, for example, to a job requiring marketing skills in the insurance industry. The new workers, whether skilled in management or at a craft, will need to be agile. They will need to be vigilant about opportunities, continuously building bridges in anticipation of future organizational changes. They will also need a ready set of skills for the search process itself.

For organizations the need is equally compelling. Organizations need the capacity to adapt in a variety of ways, including the ability to redeploy workers from one sector to another without

incurring the substantial costs of rehiring and retraining. A workforce that can adapt to new work roles can be a key strategic advantage for companies and for national competitiveness (Reich, 1991). Companies that are able to redeploy their internal labor markets for competitive advantage will need programs that help workers make internal transitions effectively and transitions to other firms with minimal organizational and personal costs (Price, 1990; Price & D'Aunno, 1983).

In this chapter we outline nearly a decade of research on the Michigan JOBS Program, which helps people who are experiencing job loss with the transition to reemployment.

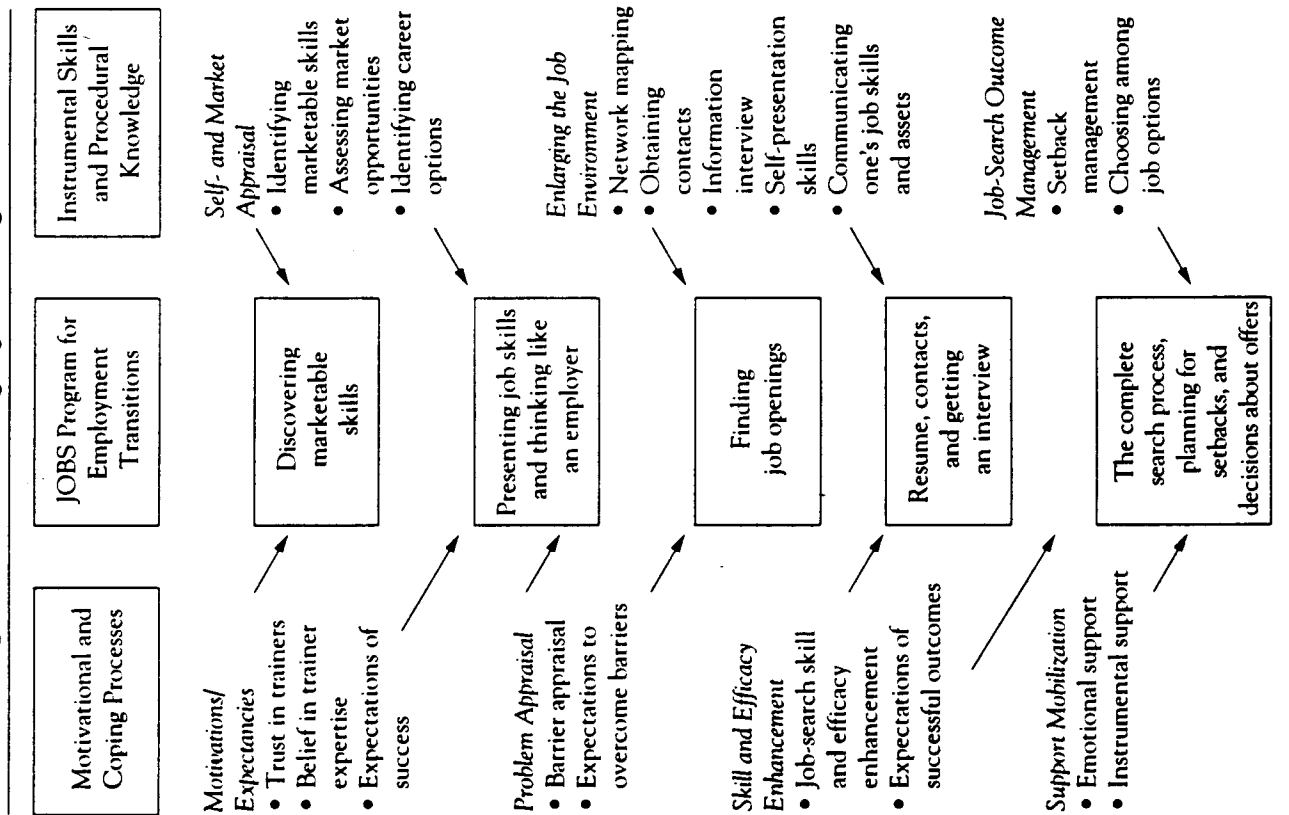
No matter how carefully designed, and regardless of their effectiveness under optimal conditions, human resource innovations such as the JOBS program must be implemented in organizations ready and able to adopt them and must be replicated with high fidelity to their original model if they are to be effective (Price & Lorion, 1989). The remainder of the chapter describes a theoretical model of organizational readiness and procedures.

The Michigan JOBS Program: Research on Program Effectiveness

A major project within the Michigan Prevention Research Center (MPRC) has been the development of the JOBS project for successful job transitions. The goals of the project have been to develop and test a program designed to help people experiencing job loss cope with the job loss itself and develop successful strategies for finding high-quality employment.

Some of the major findings early in this project evolve from studies of job loss conducted at the Institute for Social Research (Kessler, Turner, & House, 1987, 1988, 1989; Price, 1987; Vinokur & Caplan, 1987; Vinokur, Schul, & Caplan, 1987). These initial studies showed that the mental health of people who lose their jobs often deteriorates. The studies also indicated that when unemployed persons find work again they regain their previous levels of mental health and well-being (Vinokur, Caplan, & Williams, 1987). Research conducted by MPRC also indicates that a primary long-term goal of preventive programs for the unemployed should be to provide participants with personal resources and skills that

Figure 9.1. The Michigan JOBS Program.



accepting help from an expert. Initial expectations of trust, a belief in the expertise of the helper, and a belief that the effort will lead to success all must be activated. French and Raven (1959) and Caplan and colleagues (1989) have described these as motivational expectancies based on *referent power and expectations of expertise*. It is these initial expectations that must engage a potential recruit to the program and set the stage for a later cognitive and motivational activation.

A second set of cognitive and motivational processes are activated by *problem appraisal*. Initial appraisal of the barriers to be faced in the job search and the motivation to overcome these barriers are critical in this stage of coping and motivational activation (Caplan, Vinokur, Price, & van Ryn, 1989). A critical aspect of problem appraisal at this stage is the recognition that the coping process in the job search is fundamentally transactional in nature (Heller, Price, & Hogg, 1990) and that understanding the expectations of those with whom one is to engage, such as potential employers, is critical for success. In the actual program this is translated into the reminder to participants that they must learn to "think like an employer."

Following problem appraisal is a group of cognitive behavioral (skill building) and motivational changes aimed at *efficacy enhancement*. This includes expectations regarding one's developing skills and expectations regarding positive outcomes if these skills are successfully mobilized (Bandura, 1977; Zimmerman & Bonner, forthcoming). Self-efficacy has been identified as a critical ingredient for successful coping in a wide range of social and personal tasks requiring the skilled deployment of effort in the face of uncertainty and setbacks.

Another key component in the coping repertoire is the *inoculation against setbacks* (Meichenbaum, 1985). The recognition that even the most skillfully enacted coping strategies will meet with periodic failure and rejection requires that the individual anticipate setbacks in the job search and rehearse alternative coping strategies. Anticipatory problem solving inoculates the individual against setbacks and mobilizes coping strategies more rapidly and effectively when setbacks are actually encountered.

Finally, a cluster of skills that we describe as *support mobilization* is a critical ingredient for coping. This includes not only mobilizing

promote reemployment (Caplan, Vinokur, Price, & van Ryn, 1989; Price, 1990; Vinokur, Price, & Schul, 1994). These skills and resources not only aid in the initial task of finding a new job but are available to help people cope with subsequent job transitions.

Based on the experience gained from these earlier studies, two large-scale, randomized field experiments testing the JOBS preventive intervention were conducted in 1986 and 1991. What impact has the JOBS intervention had? The field experiments to test the impact of the program indicated the JOBS intervention yields more rapid reemployment, higher-quality jobs, and better mental health for program participants and job losers (Caplan, Vinokur, Price, & van Ryn, 1989). They also indicate that the economic benefits derived from the program exceed its costs (Vinokur, van Ryn, Gramlich, & Price, 1991).

Two and a half years after the completion of the randomized trial, people in the experimental group showed significantly lower numbers of episodes of depressive symptoms (Price, van Ryn, & Vinokur, 1992). The JOBS intervention was most successful precisely with those people who were at highest psychological risk for episodes of depression (Price, van Ryn, & Vinokur, 1992; Vinokur, Price, & Schul, 1994). These were people who were at risk for experiencing higher levels of economic hardship, already displayed some depressive symptoms, and who showed lower levels of social assertiveness.

These research results make it clear that a carefully designed preventive program can produce beneficial effects both in terms of mental health and economic outcomes. The nature of the JOBS program itself not only emphasizes the acquisition of sense of mastery through the development of new job skills, but also provides social support for participants as well as inoculation against adverse setbacks associated with the stressful job-search process.

Key Ingredients of the JOBS Program

A successful job-search program must meet several formidable challenges. The program must recruit individuals who are shaken by their recent job loss, uncertain about their financial and career futures, and frequently haunted by self-doubts about their marketability. Having recruited these often fragile candidates, the pro-

gram must gain their trust, help them discover their own marketable skills and appraise the barriers facing them in their job search, develop their job-seeking skills and increase their confidence in the job-search process, support them in actively engaging a sometimes unfamiliar job market, inoculate them against the inevitable setbacks they will face, and finally, help them make career decisions that will launch them into the next phase of their working lives.

Figure 9.1 summarizes the Michigan Prevention Research Center JOBS program and the theoretical elements and instrumental skills and knowledge that are its foundations. This set of skills and knowledge depends in part on knowledge of the local labor market conditions, and is aimed at helping people recognize the optimal fit between their own background and skills and the job market.

The motivational and coping processes outlined on the left-hand side of the figure are theory-derived psychosocial coping skills for coping with challenges in the face of uncertainty and maintaining skilled performance and high levels of motivation in the face of multiple challenges and setbacks over time. These two sets of cognitive and behavioral skills are combined into a single learning and performance repertoire in the JOBS program. By themselves, neither the motivational and coping repertoire on the left side of Figure 9.1, nor the skills and procedural job-search knowledge repertoire on the right side of the figure, is adequate to the task of successful job search. The two skill repertoires must be forged into a single programmatic set of strategic learning activities (Zimmerman & Bonner, forthcoming) to be effective and result in a successful job search.

Motivational and Coping Processes

Figure 9.1 identifies motivational and coping processes that must be activated and sustained through the long-term challenge of job search, which is itself frequently punctuated by multiple setbacks. Caplan and colleagues (1989) have described these processes in detail.

The person facing the coping task of job search is often filled with uncertainty and is considering the possibility of engaging and

the support of one's personal social network including families and friends (Heller, Price, & Hogg, 1990; Vinokur & Caplan, 1987), but also mobilizing more instrumental forms of support, including help with practical tasks and financial demands that become even more acute following job loss.

Instrumental Skills and Procedural Knowledge

As valuable as this set of generic coping skills and motivational processes is, by themselves it is no guarantee of a successful job search. To it must be added a repertoire of procedural knowledge and pragmatic skills. Three major clusters of such skills are required for job-search success and have been incorporated into the JOBS training program.

The first has to do with *self-appraisal and market appraisal* (Curran, 1992). People must be able to identify their own marketable skills. This is not as simple as it sounds, particularly for someone considering a transfer from one labor market or industrial sector to another. Basic job skills often go unrecognized, and procedures are needed to highlight their existence and usefulness. At the same time, market appraisal skills are needed to evaluate viable job opportunities when they emerge. Each of these two sets of skills needs to be combined into a tentative plan identifying a career track or sector in which jobs are likely to be available.

A second cluster of skills involves *engaging the environment*. Active networking skills (Lin & Dumin, 1986; Granovetter, 1974)—skilled abilities to contact prospective employers, the capacity to conduct information interviews, to make further contacts—and self-presentation skills are required once an initial self- and market appraisal has been conducted (Curran, 1992). These skills are acquired and mastered through *active learning* and *role playing* (Zimmerman & Bonner, forthcoming). Furthermore, an effective program requires that they be exercised *in situ* during the course of the program, with results being brought back for review to provide effective feedback for additional attempts to refine these skills.

Finally, even after an effective self- and market appraisal and skillful engagement in the job market environment, outcomes of these efforts must also be skillfully managed. Two sets of outcomes are critical here, the first of which we have already described. Set-

backs must be effectively managed and procedures for *inoculation against setbacks* must be established, both to maintain motivation and to make maximum use of opportunities that exist even in the face of setbacks (Meichenbaum, 1985). At the same time, a persistent skilled job search will generate more than a single job, and the *management of job choice* (Power & Aldag, 1985) is also critical since the first job that one is offered is not necessarily the best job for long-term career management and well-being. In short, evaluating the potential jobs for their future promotion potential, short-term and long-term provision of economic resources, their "stepping stone" qualities to yet another job—this is all part of the complex decision making that must occur during a successful search process (Power & Aldag, 1985; Soelberg, 1967).

Five Sessions, Five Interlocking Goals

A combination of distilled research knowledge from social and organizational psychology and pragmatic skills and procedural understanding described above is embodied in the JOBS training program itself (Curran, 1992). The program can be delivered in public- or private-sector settings and is designed for people experiencing job loss who are recruited and trained to cope with the transition back into work.

The pragmatics of the JOBS program begin with recruiting participants in some central organizational settings such as an employment office or an outplacement program in a corporate human resources division. The JOBS program itself consists of five four-hour sessions distributed over one to two weeks. The five sessions are designed to provide an intensive learning experience using key *active learning techniques* focusing on modeling, role playing, and the application of general behavioral principles to the unique circumstances of each participant (Caplan, Vinokur, Price, & van Ryn, 1989; Zimmerman & Bonner, forthcoming).

The JOBS program is delivered to groups of fifteen to twenty participants using an interactive group-process format. Typically, a pair of trainers, one male and one female, guide the group sessions. Each session involves broad orienting introductions, dramatizations and modeling sessions in which trainers enact both successful and unsuccessful strategies at each stage of the job-

Keys to Effective Implementation of Innovative Programs

A program is only as good as its actual implementation. Even the most carefully constructed program, based on our best understanding of social psychological and organizational principles and aimed at enhancing practical skills and procedural knowledge for job search, is of little value unless it can be delivered with high fidelity to organizations that are receptive to it and willing to support it (Van de Ven, 1986). Like all organizational innovations involving technology that is largely psychological and organizational, meeting the dual challenges of fidelity and organizational receptiveness is critical in successful implementation of the JOBS program for reemployment.

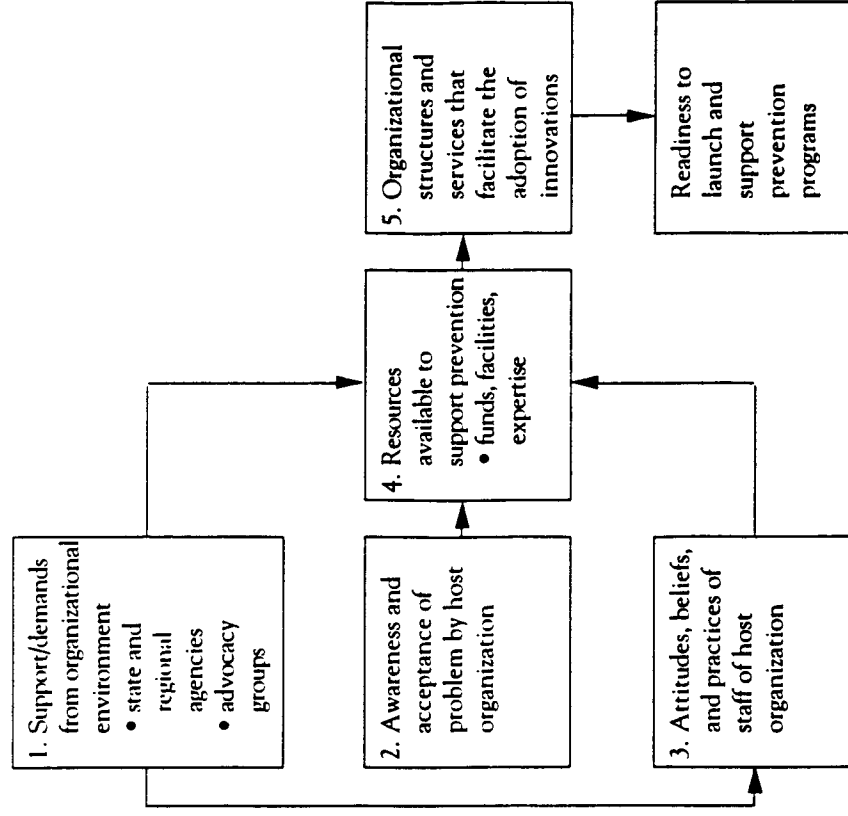
Organizational Readiness

Price and Lortion (1989) have argued that organizations that have certain critical attributes. These attributes can and should be assessed before program implementation is carried out.

Figure 9.2 presents a model that begins with the hypothesis that organizational readiness depends in part on the environment of the organization to adopt an innovative program. For example, corporate decision makers may be more ready to adopt the JOBS program for outplacement purposes if key agencies in the environment of the organization produce incentives for corporate outplacement.

Furthermore, awareness, acceptance, and ownership of the problem by top managers in the organization are also hypothesized to be critical components of readiness. For example, a vice president for human resources may recognize that there are major corporate costs associated with downsizing efforts that do not include an effective outplacement program. The vice president may realize that the lack of an outplacement program may result in demoralization of those workers who remain (see Chapter Three), and she may therefore be more likely to champion a program such as JOBS. In addition, the attitudes, beliefs, and practices of corporate managers and staff or public agency officials in the local organization can also be a critical dimension of readiness. If local human

Figure 9.2. A Model of Organizational Readiness to Launch Prevention Programs.



Source: Adapted from Price and Lortion, 1989.

resource staff, for example, feel that the problem of job search and reemployment is not part of their roles and responsibilities, the likelihood of successful implementation is much lower.

In some cases, as the model suggests, there are organizational structures and services already in place in most organizations that can facilitate adoption of interventions such as the JOBS program (Galbraith, 1982; Van de Ven, 1986). For example, organizations that already allow staff to support effective job transitions within

the organization using available internal labor markets will also be more likely to adopt an outplacement program such as JOBS. Also, organizations with high levels of flexibility in their structures and work roles may be more likely to adopt and implement novel programs (Hasenfeld, 1983; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Thompson, 1967).

Keys to High-Fidelity Delivery

Even organizational readiness is not enough for successful implementation of a new outplacement program, although it is clearly a prerequisite. Organizational efforts to assure that the program is delivered with high fidelity are also crucial.

Most often in the turbulence of organizational life, carefully designed and tested programs are eroded and lose their fidelity to original design because of poor documentation of the program itself and because persons are asked to deliver it who are not adequately trained to do so (Price & Lorion, 1989). In the design, development, and delivery of the JOBS program for thousands of displaced workers, we have found that high-fidelity delivery of the program depends on two vital ingredients: complete documentation of the program content and strategies for delivery, and careful selection and training of personnel who will deliver the program itself.

In the case of the JOBS project, our initial effort to document the program has resulted in the manual titled *JOBS: A Manual for Teaching People Successful Job Search Strategies* (Curran, 1992). This detailed program manual outlines techniques for selecting and hiring trainers, a step-by-step description of the training program for trainers, including an orientation period, the design and delivery of a mock intervention seminar, a trainer's forum for fine tuning the intervention, and final rehearsal periods. The manual also contains detailed information for the five-session program itself as well as appendices providing administrative details for the actual design of the training site and observation forms that can be used for quality control in the delivery of the intervention.

A critical ingredient ensuring the strength and integrity (Yeaton & Sechrest, 1981) of an effectively delivered program is the careful selection and training of the trainers who actually deliver the program. The selection process used in delivering the JOBS program involves screening all candidates to assess their abil-

ity to meet job requirements and also to assess important personal characteristics including flexibility, empathy, sensitivity, self-confidence, and positive outlook. In addition to these personal characteristics, group trainers are selected based on their speaking and listening skills, talent in giving feedback, skill in facilitating group processes, and ability to manage conflict constructively.

To achieve these selection goals, the JOBS project uses preliminary screening through an inspection of resumes and through personal interviews with two independent staff members, who then identify a subset of the most qualified candidates. These candidates are then called in for an audition in which each finalist plays the role of group trainer, presenting material and facilitating activities for a group of staff members playing the role of participants.

After the trainers are selected, they are formed into two-person teams, one man and one woman, representing the best balance of complementary skills and traits. Once trainers with requisite skills and complementary qualities are selected, they are given seven weeks of intensive training. The training includes a three-day orientation to the entire intervention, one week in which trainers are taken through the entire intervention seminar, a one-week trainers forum, and a four-week rehearsal period.

While adequate training is essential, procedures must be developed to ensure that the trainers will implement the program as intended in their training, that is, with integrity and fidelity. To achieve this purpose, the JOBS program used observers from the staff. They attended 40 percent of the sessions on a regular basis, and recorded the trainers' delivery of the intervention on specially designed observation forms (Curran, 1992). The observation forms included two sections. One section included a rating scale evaluating the quality of delivery with respect to the various specific tasks and activities that are planned for the particular session, such as, "To what extent did each participant role play the information interview?" The second section included rating scales that assess issues common to all sessions; for instance, "To what extent do you [the observers] think that participants understood the material? . . . That the members were actively seeking information, evaluations and comments from one another?"

Further, to ensure continued uniformity in the delivery of the program, the trainers were also required to observe their peers and record their observations on the program rating forms. This pro-

vided a corrective feedback loop regarding their own performance as well. In addition, trainers had a bimonthly meeting to share, discuss, and address problems that surfaced in their sessions or that they observed in others. These meetings also served as the main social support structure for the trainers to handle their emotional aspect of their experiences, thereby preventing burnout and maintaining high morale while supporting the norm that quality control is a key to the success of the JOBS program.

Conclusion

Human resources innovations are seldom designed to make optimal use of what we know from social and organizational psychology about maximizing human motivation, providing optimal learning circumstances, and protecting individuals against the threat of failure and rejection. Our development of the Michigan JOBS program attempted to reverse this trend. It attempts to draw on what is known from motivation theory, stress and coping theory, and recent developments on theory and research on self-efficacy and social support to produce a program to support people facing job transitions. The result is a theory-driven intervention tested under large-scale randomized field experimental conditions with relatively long periods of follow-up to produce a job transition program with strong evidence of effectiveness.

Like any other carefully designed and tested prototype, however, JOBS's ultimate effectiveness is only as good as the readiness of its host organization to support it and the fidelity with which it is delivered. These issues of organizational readiness and the need for program integrity represent a generic challenge in the next generation of designing human resource strategies for organizational growth.

References

- Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavior change. *Psychological Review*, *84*, 191-215.
- Caplan, R. D., Vinokur, A. D., Price, R. H., & van Ryn, M. (1989). Job seeking, reemployment, and mental health: A randomized field experiment in coping with job loss. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *74*, 759-769.

- Curran, J. (1992). *JOBS: A manual for teaching people successful job search strategies*. Ann Arbor: Michigan Prevention Research Center, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan.
- French, J. R. P., Jr., & Raven, B. (1959). The bases of social power. In D. Cartwright (Ed.), *Studies in social power* (pp. 150-167). Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan.
- Galbraith, J. R. (1982). Designing the innovating organization. *Organizational Dynamics*, *43*, 3-24.
- Granovetter, M. (1974). *Getting a job*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Hasenfeld, Y. (1983). *Human service organizations*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Heller, K., Price, R. H., & Hogg, J. R. (1990). The role of social support in community and clinical intervention. In B. R. Sarason, I. G. Sarason, & G. R. Pierce (Eds.), *Social support—an interactional view: Issues in social support research* (pp. 482-507). New York: Wiley.
- Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. (1978). *The social psychology of organizations* (2nd ed.). New York: Wiley.
- Kessler, R. C., Turner, J. B., & House, J. S. (1987). Intervening processes in the relationship between unemployment and health. *Psychological Medicine*, *17*, 949-961.
- Kessler, R. C., Turner, J. B., & House, J. S. (1988). The effects of unemployment on health in a community survey: Main, modifying, and mediating effects. *Journal of Social Issues*, *44*(4), 69-86.
- Kessler, R. C., Turner, J. B., & House, J. S. (1989). Unemployment, reemployment, and emotional functioning in a community sample. *American Sociological Review*, *54*, 648-657.
- Lawrence, P. R., & Lorsch, J. W. (1967). *Organization and environment*. Boston: Harvard Business School, Division of Research.
- Lin, N., & Dumin, M. (1986). Access to occupations through social ties. *Social Networks*, *8*, 365-385.
- Meichenbaum, D. (1985). *Stress inoculation training: A clinical guidebook*. New York: Pergamon/Elsevier.
- Power, D. J., & Aldag, R. J. (1985). Soelberg's job search and choice models: A clarification, review, and critique. *Academy of Management Review*, *10*, 48-58.
- Price, R. H. (1987). Linking intervention research and risk factor research. In J. A. Steinberg & M. M. Silverman (Eds.), *Preventing mental disorders: A research perspective* (DHHS Publication No. ADM 87-1492) (pp. 48-56). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Price, R. H. (1990). Strategies for managing plant closings and downsizing.

- In D. Fishman & C. Chermis (Eds.), *The human side of corporate competitiveness* (pp. 127-151). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Price, R. H. (1992). Psychosocial impact of job loss on individuals and families. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 1(1), 9-11.
- Price, R. H. (forthcoming). Unemployment. In J. Rappaport & E. Scidman (Eds.), *Handbook of community psychology*. New York: Plenum.
- Price, R. H., & D'Aunno, T. (1983). Managing work force reduction. *Human Resource Management*, 22, 413-430.
- Price, R. H., & Lorion, R. P. (1989). Prevention programming as organizational reinvention: From research to implementation. In D. Shaffer, I. Phillips, & N. B. Enzer (Eds.), *Prevention of mental disorders, alcohol and drug use in children and adolescents* (pp. 97-123). Rockville, MD: Office of Substance Abuse Prevention/American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.
- Price, R. H., van Ryn, M., & Vinokur, A. D. (1992). Impact of preventive job search intervention on the likelihood of depression among the unemployed. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 33, 158-167.
- Reich, R. B. (1991). *The work of nations: Preparing ourselves for 21st century capitalism*. New York: Knopf.
- Soelberg, P. O. (1967). Unprogrammed decision making. *Industrial Management Review*, 8, 19-29.
- Thompson, J. D. (1967). *Organizations in action*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Van de Ven, A. H. (1986). Central problems in the management of innovation. *Management Science*, 32, 590-608.
- Vinokur, A., & Caplan, R. D. (1987). Attitudes and social support: Determinants of job-seeking behavior and well-being among the unemployed. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 17, 1007-1024.
- Vinokur, A. D., Caplan, R. D., & Williams, C. C. (1987). Effects of recent and past stresses on mental health: Coping with unemployment among Vietnam veterans and nonveterans. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 17, 710-730.
- Vinokur, A. D., Price, R. H., & Schul, Y. (1994). *Impact of the JOBS intervention on unemployed workers varying in risk for depression*. Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan.
- Vinokur, A., Schul, Y., & Caplan R. D. (1987). Determinants of perceived social support: Interpersonal transactions, personal outlook, and transient affective states. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 53, 1137-1145.
- Vinokur, A. D., van Ryn, M., Gramlich, E. M., & Price, R. H. (1991). Long-term follow-up and benefit-cost analysis of the JOBS program: A preventive intervention for the unemployed. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 76, 213-219.
- Yeaton, W. H., & Sechrest, L. (1981). Critical dimensions in the choice and maintenance of successful treatments: Strength, integrity, and effectiveness. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 49, 156-157.
- Zimmerman, B. J., & Bonner, S. (forthcoming). A social cognitive view of strategic learning. In C. E. Weinstein & B. L. McCombs (Eds.), *Strategic learning: Skill, will, and self-regulation*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

search process, and specific exercises in which participants may test their newfound knowledge and their newly recognized skills in structured but supportive role-playing exercises. Each session begins with a structured training problem. Participants develop a cognitive framework regarding a specific job-search problem and then act both as observers and active learners, providing supportive suggestions and constructive feedback to one another (Curran, 1992).

The program begins with trainers establishing a sense that they can be trusted with this critical task and that they have the expertise needed to help participants succeed at it. Trainers discuss their own job-search experiences to illustrate both that they have been there and that they have the knowledge that it takes to mount a successful job-search campaign (French & Raven, 1959). Also, at this early stage an expectation of success in coping with the job-search process requires that participants develop a framework by learning to "think like an employer." This message establishes the idea that successful job-search activities require the development of a transactional perspective in which the job seeker learns to anticipate the needs and concerns of a prospective employer. At the same time, participants begin to identify their own marketable skills and to identify ways to translate those skills into new job or career lines.

Participants then learn to present their own job-search skills while at the same time continuing to think like an employer. They identify personal barriers that must be overcome in presenting their skills to an employer. For example, older workers learn to present their long careers as reservoirs of experience that can be used in new job settings rather than signs of aging and decline.

As these preliminary skills to present oneself effectively in the job market are honed, attention moves to engaging the job-search environment. The key topics for this stage are identifying network contacts, finding job openings, and conducting initial information interviews with prospective employers, focusing in particularly on what the candidate can do for the employer rather than the reverse (Curran, 1992).

By the fourth session new skills in self-presentation are emerging—developing a resume, building a bank of contacts, and securing interviews. At this time, initial training inoculating participants

against the inevitable setbacks they will encounter begins in earnest (Meichenbaum, 1985). Participants are asked to share their anticipation of setbacks with the group. These are used to think through, generate, and refine alternative solutions to reach the goals in the face of setbacks. Evaluations of these alternative courses of action and banking them for coping with future setbacks are also a key to inoculation.

For example, one often-mentioned cause for setbacks is employers' reluctance to hire older workers or younger ones. The group discussion may focus on what employer concerns might lead them to reject older or younger workers. As the session progresses, participants generate a list of these concerns, such as older workers' health issues and adaptability to new technologies and younger workers' lack of experience and demonstrated responsibility. Once these concerns are outlined, participants proceed to devise ways of counteracting these concerns by using more skillful presentation methods in the resume and job interview to address the employer's concerns. For example, older workers may emphasize their good health record in their resume and interview—"not missing a day due to illness in the last three years"; younger workers may emphasize their past experience as volunteers and any activities that demonstrate that they have been trusted and responsible, such as "coaching a little league baseball team."

Finally, in the later stages of the program a complete enactment of the search strategy, including rehearsal and critique of the job interview itself, is conducted, with the participants providing supportive feedback and suggestions for improvements for each candidate. Typically, in the final session a number of job leads will have already been obtained and a number of job interviews will either have been scheduled or information interviews already obtained.

By the end of the program, typically participants report considerable confidence that they know what to do even when initial efforts fail and reversals are experienced. At this point, most participants have not simply internalized a fragmented set of job-search skills, but have gone through an experience of strategic learning (Zimmerman & Bonner, forthcoming) that increases the likelihood of obtaining job offers and also helps sustain them along the rocky and sometimes prolonged road to reemployment.