**Teaching Note**

**Kenworth Motors**

**Purpose of the Case:**

1. To explore entry and contracting issues in an OD process.

2.To understand “practice” issues in OD consultation.

**Placement in the Course:**

This case should be used fairly early in the course. It is designed specifically to look at entry and contracting issues.

**Overview of the Case:**

The OD consultant receives a telephone call from Robert Denton, plant manager of Kenworth Motors who was referred by a sailing friend who was a colleague of the consultant. Denton has held his job for eight months and believes things are generally going well, but has a sense things could be better. He invites the consultant to visit him and discuss his situation. The consultant does a little research about the company prior to the meeting but was thoughtful about what he wanted his emotional and professional posture to be. During the meeting, Denton describes that his plant and its employees get along fine, work well together and do a good job. Yet, he contends that “things nag at me that I can’t put my finger on…..we haven’t jelled together as a team quite like I’d hoped.” The consultant asks more questions but the answers from Denton reveal nothing indicating a problem. At this point the consultant offers to independently confirm how things are going in the plant through employee interviews. He explains that this approach in itself may impact the organization, possibly raise tensions and even perhaps cause problems. Denton responds by asking about other options. The consultant suggests a weekend retreat for the management team including Denton. Denton expresses interest and the consultant quickly calculates his fees in his head and shares them with the client. He says that the content of the retreat would be somewhat flexible and that Bob Denton would have to trust him. Denton quickly agreed to the retreat weekend. The OD consultant and he proceeded to select a weekend for the event.

**Teaching Strategy: (30-45 minutes – questions and discussion)**

1. Ask students to discuss the entry activities that occur in this case. How does the OD consultant prepare for the first meeting? Have students think of different ways the consultant may have prepared for the initial meeting.
2. The case describes in detail the discussions between the consultant and Denton which were meant to clarify the organization issues. In what ways were these discussions effective or ineffective for the OD practitioner? Are there other questions that might have been asked to clarify organizational issues?
3. The case describes how the consultant and Denton determined future consulting activities. In this contracting phase, have students discuss how mutual expectations, time and resources and ground rules were determined for the project. How would they have done it differently?
4. In this case, the OD consultant brings up the issue of trust with regard to retreat design. Why is this important and what impact will it have on retreat planning and implementation?

5**.** Why do you think Denton agreed so quickly to holding a retreat? What implications might this have regarding the intervention and addressing the real issues of Kenworth Motors?