

Submission #: 11208

New Directions in Positive Relationships at Work

Short title: Positive Relationships at Work

Primary Sponsor:
Organizational Behavior (OB)

Other Potential Sponsors:
Managerial and Organizational Cognition (MOC)
Human Resources (HR)

ABSTRACT

The PDW on “New Directions in Positive Relationships at Work” aims to build on the energy and continue the tradition of similar PDWs supported by the Positive Relationships at Work (PRW) micro-community (an outgrowth of the Positive Organizational Scholarship – POS – community) during the past two Academy of Management Meetings. Past PDWs have attracted and engaged over 70 attendees in dialogue each year. They have provided participants the opportunity to generate new research ideas and to develop, sustain, and enrich the ever-growing community focused on positive relationships at work. The structure for the PDW is multifaceted. After session organizers introduce the PDW and micro-community, three prominent scholars interested in positive relationships at work will present their latest research relevant to the theme and will answer questions from participants. Based on these presentations, attendees will generate ideas for two-rounds of small table discussions. Each table conversation will have a dedicated amount of time to produce actionable take-away items. The session will conclude with a report-out from each table and a summary of future directions presented by the organizing committee.

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Overview of the Workshop

The importance of recurring and mutually beneficial relationships (i.e., positive relationships; Dutton & Ragins, 2007) at work is a well-established and burgeoning phenomenon in the field of organizational studies. Recognizing the energy around this particular topic, the Positive Relationships at Work (PRW) micro-community, an off-shoot of the broader Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS) community, was created in 2011 to develop and disseminate research on the theory, practice, and teaching of positive relationships in the workplace. During the past two Academy of Management meetings, several members of the micro-community facilitated a three-hour PDW, titled “The Past, Present, and Future of Positive Relationships at Work.” The PDW focused on convening community members and scholars interested in engaging in the topic of positive relationships at work. Both PDWs elicited over 70 participants, suggesting considerable interest in this topic among Academy of Management attendees.

The proposed PDW for 2014’s Academy of Management Meeting is titled “New Directions in Positive Relationships at Work.” The session intends to harness the generativity and momentum of the past two PDWs to focus more intensively on future directions in this research area. Our PDW has both short and long-term goals:

Short-term goals of the PDW:

1. Provide a rewarding, interactive, and stimulating session situated in Positive Organizational Scholarship
2. Generate dialogue on positive relationships at work between scholars whose work spans a diverse set of topics, theoretical lenses, methodological approaches, and disciplines

3. Expand thinking about important topics relevant to positive relationships at work

Long-term goals of the PDW:

4. Energize a more strongly connected community of scholars interested in positive relationships at work
5. Develop lasting partnerships and collaborations on research projects, publications, and conference presentations
6. Provide opportunities to develop connections with and facilitate contributions to the work of the Positive Relationships at Work micro-community

Interest to Divisions

Primary: Organizational Behavior Division (OB)

This PDW aligns with the Organizational Behavior division's mission in numerous ways. First, research on positive relationships at work informs many of the topics included in the division's domain statement, most notably interpersonal and organizational processes and outcomes, such as leadership, teamwork, managerial practices, and human resource management. This array of topics will also help serve to fulfill the OB division's mission of fostering cross-topic collaboration. By inviting scholars from a broad range of disciplines, this PDW will attract a diverse audience (as it has in the past), leading to unique interactive dialogue that generates novel ideas.

Other potential sponsors: Managerial and Organizational Cognition (MOC) and Human Resources (HR)

We believe this PDW also fits well with the Managerial and Organizational Cognition (MOC) and the Human Resources (HR) divisions. This session may be of interest to the MOC Division because much of how individuals come to socially construct reality, make decisions,

and interpret their surroundings is in the context of work relationships. Moreover, MOC's focus on mental models is an important overlap with this session as work relationships serve as relational schema that guide individuals' social expectations (Andersen & Chen, 2002; Sluss & Ashforth, 2007). This PDW also supports the HR Division's effort to understand how organizations can effectively manage human resources. Work relationships at all levels of analysis are integral to many human resource functions, and positive work relationships have the potential to help organizations more effectively carry out HR functions and activities. Furthermore, in line with the HR division's emphasis on the employment relationship, we anticipate that a "new direction" in positive relationships at work research will be a call to broaden the levels of analysis scholars currently consider in their work from a focus on the dyadic to one of including macro-level relationships.

An additional strength of this PDW is its alignment with the All Academy Theme of "The Power of Words." The centrality of words in managing relationships is well known. We hope that by introducing this year's All-Academy Theme as one of the table discussion topics, PDW participants will generate provocative and interesting areas of future research at the intersection of work relationships and words.

Description of Workshop Format

As illustrated in Table 1, the proposed PDW structure includes multiple activities to approach the PDW theme from various scholarly angles. There are three main components to the PDW: (1) welcome/panelist presentations and Q&A, (2) table topic generation and round-robin discussions, and (3) a report-out to the whole group from each table and closing comments. Each portion is discussed in more detail below.

Welcome, panelist presentations, and Q&A

Our PDW will begin with a brief overview of the session and an introduction to the PRW micro-community. This introduction will create a knowledge bridge between PRW micro-community members and those new to the micro-community's activities. Moreover, it formally provides all participants the opportunity to better understand the micro-community, its mission and vision, and information on how to get involved.

Three panelists will then present their research and answer questions related to our PDW theme, *New Directions in Positive Relationships at Work*. Our panelists include:

- *Wayne Baker, University of Michigan*. An integral member of the Positive Organizational Scholarship community, Wayne's latest work focuses on mechanisms of positive organizing, especially generalized reciprocity. He has published chapters in several POS-edited volumes, with forthcoming POS articles in *Organization Science* and *Research in the Sociology of Organizations* on generalized reciprocity in organizations and positive social capital. His research interests include social networks, generosity, and values.
- *Shelley Brickson, University of Illinois at Chicago*. Shelley's research examines the interplay between relationships at multiple levels of analysis. She's especially interested in how these relationship patterns are shaped by organizational identity and how they create various types of value for organizational stakeholders. Shelley is a member of the broader POS community and the PRW micro-community.
- *Ryan Quinn, University of Louisville*. Ryan's research explores what individuals do to make a difference in and through their organizations. Ryan takes a relational approach, beginning with the assumption that organizational change necessarily occurs through relational processes. He studies phenomena such as how individuals find courage, learn,

and collaborate through relationships at work. He is also a member of the broader POS community and the PRW micro-community.

Table topic generation and round-robin table discussion

Table topics will consist of pre-seeded topics and ideas generated during the PDW. Pre-assigned topics will be based on (1) the All-Academy Theme, *The Power of Words* (i.e., future directions in scholarship on the power of words in positive relationships at work) and (2) suggestions generated from last year's PDW. Multiple themes (i.e., How do we measure various facets of positive relationships at work? What are the antecedents of positive relationships at work?) stood out as particularly important and forward-thinking, and we intend to assign tables to these particular topics. In addition to the pre-assigned discussion ideas, tables will generate new ideas for round-robin table discussions. Each table will focus on one of the areas identified.

There will be two rounds of table discussions to allow participants to meet as many other attendees as possible throughout the PDW. This also provides the opportunity for individuals to discuss more than one topic of interest. Each table will have materials (e.g., large post-it notes, markers, idea sparkers) for capturing insights generated during discussion. Based on participant feedback from last year's PDW, we will devote time for conversation on tangible outcomes that can be pursued following the session.

Report-out to whole group and closing comments

Following the second round-robin table discussion, the contributors at each table will report to the whole group the "highlights" of their discussion. After the PDW, members of the organizing committee will assemble these "highlights" and distribute them to participants in a follow-up email. Attendees will thus have a tangible take-away list of learnings from their discussions.

Organizer's Declaration

I, Beth Schinoff, certify that all organizers and speakers have stated that they agree to participate in this workshop if it is accepted, and that they are not in violation of the Rule of Three + Three. I understand that if this submission is accepted, all of the listed participants must be registered for the meeting to fulfill their role in the session. I understand that the scheduling and audio-visual requests are requests only. If my proposal is accepted, the PDW chair will let me know whether my requests are approved.

REFERENCES

Andersen, S. M., & Chen, S. 2002. The relational self: An interpersonal social-cognitive theory. *Psychological Review*, 109(4): 619–645.

Dutton, J. E., & Ragins, B. R. (Eds.). 2007. *Exploring positive relationships at work: Building a theoretical and research foundation*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Sluss, D. M., & Ashforth, B. E. 2007. Relational identity and identification: Defining ourselves through work relationships. *Academy of Management Review*, 32(1): 9–32.

Table 1: PDW Format (Total time requested: 180 minutes)

Topic	Description	Time Allocation
1. Welcome, introductions, and overview of micro-community		10 minutes
2. Round table introductions	In small groups, participants introduce themselves and talk about why they were interested in attending this PDW	15 minutes
3. Panel on the PDW topic (“New Directions in Positive Relationships at Work”)	Introduction of the three scholars and 12 minute presentations by each	40 minutes
4. Q&A for panel scholars		10 minutes
5. Table topic generation	Based on provocative panel presentations, table participants will generate topics for table discussion. A few pre-seeded ideas from last year’s PDW will already be assigned to tables.	5 minutes
6. Round-robin table discussions (Part I)	Participants will self-select into tables of interest for round-robin discussion	25 minutes
7. Tactical discussion: What’s next? (Part I)	Tables will shift their discussions to how we can commit to moving some of these ideas forward (e.g., Papers, projects, and research collaborations, or organizing a submission for AOM next year)	10 minutes
8. Round-robin table discussions (Part II)	Repeat Step 6 above. Assigned table leaders will stay at their respective tables to ensure continuity in discussion	25 minutes
9. Tactical discussion: What’s next? (Part II)	Repeat Step 7 above.	10 minutes
10. Report-out to whole group	Table leaders will report cumulative highlights and identified tactical steps from their discussions	20 minutes
11. Closing comments and thank you		10 minutes
12. Post-PDW follow-up	An organizing committee member will contact all attendees with opportunities for continued association on positive relationships at work	2 weeks after AOM