.Priya Interview

EDRA conference “Research in Professional Practice”

Topic: “Partnership Models Between Academia and Industry”

Successful partnerships and collaboration between academia and industry, ICHW case story

1. Background:
    a. Always had a foot in both academia and practice in my 40-year career
    b. PHD in I-O Psychology, so natural confluence of both perspectives: work and organizations
    c. Pull science and scientific principles to practice, inform future research by understanding the gap between what is known and not known

2. Model for collaboration/partnerships
    a. Mission: aggregate and synthesize all known science across disciplines regarding health and well-being in order to create a comprehensive and holistic template for achieving healthy workplaces.
    b. To achieve this mission, we take an interdisciplinary approach to understanding workplace health and well-being issues, from the perspectives of research and practice, so that we can weave the disparate pieces of knowledge into a singular, cohesive view of what it will take to promote health and well-being.
    c. On a practical level, it means we focus our efforts around four primary roles:
        i. Aggregator: we identify and synthesize existing research
        ii. Catalyst: we build on existing research by collecting new data to help close gaps in the known science
        iii. Convener: we bring together diverse sets of experts for knowledge-sharing and collaboration
        iv. Advisor: based on our experience and knowledge gleaned from various disciplines, we offer advice and consultation on different aspects of workplace health and well-being
    d. Funding: we are completely self-funded, including all staff, which means we raise funds from donations, research grants, research gifts, and an occasional distribution of funds from entities on campus. We do what we can with what we are given.
    e. Staffing: Both paid on a limited contract basis and unpaid volunteers (students, collaborators)

3. Successful academic partnership example:
    a. Partnership with HGA Architects
        i. Started with a meeting at CoreNet Global Summit having lunch with a HGA designer/architect, followed up by a meeting with a team interested in Gen Z’s and later with a team interested in the topic of Continuous Learning.
        ii. Gen Z project designed to understand what would attract Gen Z’s to an employer from the perspective of the workplace design. What would they like to have as a place to work in order to maximize satisfaction of their basic needs.

iii. ICHW focused on the design of the research study consisting of the collection of data from students at UC Berkeley regarding their preferences in space design, analysis of the data, summarizing the results of the data analysis.
iv. HGA focused on translating preferences into physical space attributes that met the needs and preferences articulated by the student sample. This was achieved through a charrette and then translated into VR scenarios with data-gathering capability during VR viewings.
v. New data were collected from a new sample of students as they viewed the VR scenarios, answering key questions designed by ICHW, to validate and extend the information collected in the first phase of the project.
vi. ICHW and HGA analyzed the data together and reached conclusions regarding Gen Z desires and preferences which best fit their stated needs.
vii. ICHW and HGA jointly presented the findings and implications to several different professional society meetings including CoreNet Global in the US and EMEA.
viii. The study on continuous learning was focused on multiple-generation employees in three organizations. ICHW designed the research study and collected the initial data set from several hundred employees ranging in age from Gen Z to Baby Boomers.
ix. ICHW analyzed the data, gave the results to HGA to translate into VR scenarios, and then ICHW and HGA administered the VR scenario and additional surveys to a new set of employees at the three organizations to validate and extend our understanding of what employees needed to support continuous learning.
x. ICHW and HGA presented our findings and implications at several professional society meetings including CoreNet Global. We also jointly presented the findings and implications to the participating organizations.

b. We have had several collaborations with industry partners including employers, service providers, and professional organizations. The origin of the partnership typically comes from conversations at professional society meetings and through referrals.
    i. Giving presentations at society meetings different from own training and raising new questions and pointing out new opportunities
        1. OERC
        2. CoreNet
        3. HFES
        4. NASA
        5. SOHP
    ii. Publishing in popular literature and having interviews in mainstream media which attracts people of various kinds
    iii. Not being afraid to go outside of your lane to learn something new and see how it relates
    iv. Convening diverse people together to learn what they are thinking and what they are interested in solving

4. Roadblocks

a. Lack of interest in or comfort with unfamiliar topics or issues outside their expertise.
b. Finding experts who are senior enough to want to ask bigger questions
c. Finding people who you are really interested in knowing better because it takes a lot of conversation to understand each other (ruts are hard to step out of)
d. Publication in a peer-reviewed journal cannot be the primary reason to do this—much harder to find a top-tier academic journal that wants to know about your work—narrow topic bias
e. We built it and they came

5. Preparing for Partnerships, Relationship Building, Strategy and Impact
    a. Ask questions that are relevant across disciplines and perspectives—it will attract partners to you
    b. Begin with convenings to demonstrate that there are benefits to sharing one's own knowledge with others unfamiliar with your approach. Each party has a way of thinking about a topic, and understanding the different kinds of thinking breaks open new ways of looking at that topic. Basically, you see the topic 3-dimensionally—from different sides.
    c. You may find that the different perspectives actually fit together and create a more holistic and comprehensive view. It also opens up new research questions, and perhaps new ways of advancing practice. Weaknesses in one discipline can be covered by strengths in a different discipline (OERC).
    d. We found that our needs-based model of health and well-being was a great unifier: All relevant disciplines could relate to it. What they do with that as a framework differs across groups, but each party saw how they could fit into the frame. The recommendation is to ask big questions, creating a big tent.
    e. Unique challenges are inviting people to the table who are not tolerant of different ways of thinking about a subject, people who lacked curiosity concerning the bigger picture, or people who thought only their view was the right view. Other challenge is inviting people who are looking for a specific outcome that is targeted only to their interests: e.g., improving their own brand by associating with an academic institution. Have to turn those people away.
    f. KPI's: was anything new learned that can help the practice in organizations? Can the information learned be leveraged into new research, new practice, or new interventions?
    g. Our organization acts like a think-tank, attracting people who are interested in advancing both the science and practice of health and well-being. The test is whether our work stays in a journal article or lives outside of it in the way employers, consultants, service providers, leaders, employees, and researchers improve the human condition by how it acts.