

"What OOs
do and do not do"

1994 version

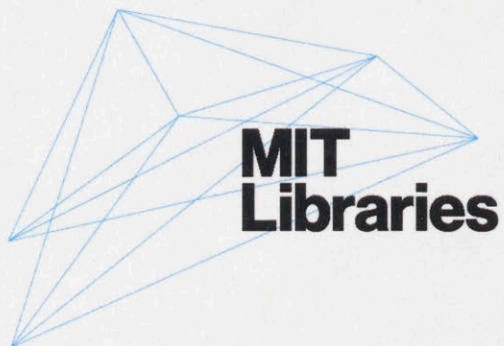
(This topic started
~ 1969-70 (☺))

Functions and Characteristics of Internal Ombudspeople

- We are designated neutrals
 - We report to a top manager, (typically the CEO or COO), independent of ordinary reporting lines
 - We maintain confidentiality (within the Code of Ethics)
 - We are problem-solvers and mediators
 - We are informal fact finders and negotiators for a fair process and outcome to disputes
 - We listen carefully and if necessary will invite someone back so we may listen again
 - We refer our visitors as appropriate to other resources and - with - permission, we work together with other human service practitioners and/or supervisors
 - We help generate options for people with problems and coach our visitors on the options they are considering
 - We keep statistical records and may report these to management and nonmanagement
 - We pick up new problems and surface these in responsible ways
 - We provide feedback on trends, issues, policies and practices
 - We provide support for responsible systems change
 - When given permission, we surface specific concerns and issues for appropriate investigation
- ⇒ There may be other functions which some ombudspeople perform based on their own particular skills (like leading a training course or facilitating a focus group). As long as they do not appear on the following ("Do Not") list, they are probably not in conflict with the role of the Ombuds.

Functions and Characteristics Internal Ombudspeople Do Not have
(and where there may be role conflict for practitioners with multiple roles)

- We do not write formal written reports for decision-making by management
For example: risk assessment in a formal grievance or
fact finding in a formal grievance
- We are not compliance officers in any domain (EO, ethics, etc.) or HR/ER/IR officers nor do we function as internal counsel
- We do not make binding decisions (we are NOT arbitrators)
- We do not accompany visitors in a formal grievance process
- We keep no case records for the employer
- We do not usually initiate contacts with people with problems, they typically initiate contact with us
- We are not advocates for any party in a conflict
- We stay out of the legal process where litigation occurs
- We are not therapists
- We are not part of the due process structure



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