

Exercise 1: Contracting

Ann Marie Lewis is the vice president of product development, and Eduardo Silva is the vice president of product service and support. Imagine that you are an internal organization development practitioner supporting these two leaders, and today you received the following e-mail from Ann Marie.

I wanted to contact you because Eduardo and I have recently been talking about a problem that we are having with our two teams. My team, product development, is in charge of all of the functions and capabilities of our products. We develop new products and work on the upgrades of existing products. Eduardo's team is in charge of product support, so they go to the customer's location and provide installation or maintenance support for customers who order new units or who have problems with their existing products. If something breaks, the customer calls the 1-800 number and we send one of Eduardo's technicians to the site.

The problem is that our two teams are currently at odds. Eduardo's team is constantly sending us product upgrade requests or suggestions to reduce the maintenance needs they see. After all, they see the trends and common points of failure on the products. My team gets defensive when they get these upgrade requests. They want to decide what gets upgraded and what doesn't, and truthfully we have a limited number of product development personnel to work on these upgrades, so we have to prioritize, and sometimes it takes a while for us to get to the request.

Eduardo and I would like to meet with you to determine how we can get our teams to work together more effectively. Can you let me know when you might be available to meet?

Consider the following questions as you prepare for your meeting:

1. Who is the client in this case? Identify the different client types from Chapter 6 that will be relevant to this engagement.
2. What questions will you want to ask Ann Marie and Eduardo in your initial meeting?
3. What would be the "red flags" that might cause you to reconsider whether this engagement is a good idea? What will you be listening for as you hold your initial meeting?
4. What would you propose as next steps?