Key Points Emerging from the June 19th OSIC Tele-Meeting

THEME: What are we hearing/learning about the concerns, needs and wants of our clients – and how does this relate to our knowledge of Open Space and the services OSIC provides?

- Clients are looking to have conversations to identify common agendas and to create breakthroughs.

- While collaboration and partnerships are "preached" in organizations, individual performance is what is measured. What does open space offer in this context?

- Senior level people who are shifting careers discover a new level of connection when they experience open space. They always express an element of surprise in discovering this.

- It is important to help the client identify his/her need. Opening conversations should explore and clarify the alignment between the values underlying open space, the client's values and where applicable, the organizational values.

- First we must understand the issue that the client wants to address, so that we can then determine if open space will do so effectively. Does the client need to mobilize people efficiently in a change process? Does he/she need to look for solutions in an efficient way? How willing is the client to open and share the space on the agenda? Then, we are able to see if OS is effective.

- If the client is looking for an "activity" to entertain or please participants, then open space is not appropriate. It is important to say so and to explain why, without judging. This will protect the integrity of OS technology.

- It is important to understand and convey the possibilities and limitations of OS.

- OS has to be seen/experienced to be appreciated.

- OS can serve as a tool for diagnosis and needs identification in a large organization. This has happened successfully in health organizations and in mergers and acquisitions situations.

- Where OS results were not implemented by the client, as originally agreed, it is important to ask what factors contributed to this outcome. What we see is the need to have a conversation with the client, early in the process, about the risk for him/her of engaging in OS.

- Opening the space with the client/sponsor on his/her vested interest in status quo of large organizations is important and congruent with the practice of open space.

- Before arriving at a final agreement with the sponsor/client, it is important to meet with the highest level of authority (not always the sponsor/client) to inform his/her of OS project and to obtain support for follow-through of OS results.