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## **Investigating organizational socialization: A fresh look at newcomer adjustment strategies**

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### **Abstract**

**Purpose** – The majority of organizational newcomers have prior work experience. Organizational socialization tactics are less effective for such “experienced newcomers”, relative to graduate newcomers. Hence experienced newcomers tend to rely on their own actions to become socialized. The aim of this article is to assess and potentially extend the range of adjustment strategies identified as being used by experienced newcomers themselves to achieve positive adjustment.

**Design/ methodology/ approach** – Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 86 experienced newcomers entering a professional services organization.

**Findings** – Nineteen strategies emerged, with seven newly identified in this research. These are compared with strategies found in past research.

**Practical implications** – HR, and the managers and colleagues of newcomers can use the strategies identified and categorized here to encourage newcomers to use organizationally-appropriate behaviors. Newcomers can use these strategies to help themselves achieve their own adjustment goals.

**Originality/ value** – There is an increasing focus on newcomer proactive behavior in organizational socialization research, yet there are few empirically grounded developments of newcomer adjustment strategies. To our knowledge, this is the first

paper to focus on what experienced newcomers report doing to help themselves adjust.

**Keywords:** newcomer adjustment, organizational socialization, experienced newcomers, newcomer tactics

## **Introduction**

Employees are moving organizations frequently, with approximately one fifth of employees in Europe, and one third of employees in the US, moving jobs within any 12 month period (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006; Macaulay, 2003). Both theoretically and practically, it is important to understand what facilitates the newcomer adjustment process for this large tranche of employees, to the benefit of newcomers, their colleagues, and their employing organizations. Effective organizational socialization is desirable, and results in more rapid role learning, task mastery, and social integration, and is also associated with greater job satisfaction, organizational commitment, person-organization fit, and lower intent to quit and turnover (Cooper-Thomas, Van Vianen, and Anderson, 2004; Kammeyer-Mueller, Wanberg, Glomb, and Ahlburg, 2005; Kramer, Callister, and Turban, 1995; Ostroff and Kozlowski, 1992).

Research has investigated both organizational actions and individual behaviors toward achieving organizational socialization. The tactics that organizations use provide either a considered and structured institutionalized process, or relatively unplanned and informal individualized socialization experience (Jones, 1986; Van Maanen and Schein, 1979). Meta-analyses show that institutionalized tactics are more effective in general than individualized, and that they have a stronger positive influence for graduate newcomers than for newcomers with previous work experience (“experienced newcomers”; Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, and Tucker, 2007; Saks, Uggerslev, and Fassina, 2007). This makes sense, with graduate newcomers more likely to seek organizational guidance rather than trying to forge their own role, whereas the inverse is true for experienced newcomers (Feldman and Brett, 1983; Kramer, 1993). Hence experienced newcomers will rely more on their own adjustment strategies. Since experienced newcomers make up the majority of new

employees (Carr, Pearson, Vest, and Boyar, 2006), it is important to more fully understand the behaviors they use to facilitate their adjustment.

Given the frequency with which new employees are brought into organizations (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006), and the variety of roles they fill, the optimal socialization process needs to cater for this frequency and diversity of employee entry. In this context, institutionalized socialization tactics may be inefficient – a one size fits all approach may not work. In this case, HR induction and onboarding processes may be better off encouraging newcomers to use their own adjustment strategies that can be adapted according to the role and context. To this end, it is important to discover the full range of adjustment strategies that newcomers can potentially use. The key contribution of this paper is in providing an empirically-grounded development of newcomer adjustment strategies. To our knowledge, this is the first paper to focus on what experienced newcomers report doing to help themselves adjust.

***Previous research identifying newcomer adjustment strategies***

A summary of the extant literature outlining newcomer adjustment strategies is provided in Table 1. We have divided the strategies into three categories of *change role or environment*, *learn or change self or seek information*, and *mutual development*. It is notable that, over time, there has been a shift in research from learning-oriented strategies (*learn or change self or seek information*) to also focus on more proactive and assertive strategies as are listed in the other two categories here. For example, from strategies of monitoring and asking questions (Ashford, 1986; Miller and Jablin, 1991) to the investigation of new strategies such as networking and job change negotiation (Ashford and Black, 1996; Kim, Cable, and Kim, 2005). In addition to this general trend to focus on newcomer proactive behaviors, research has

also shown that graduate and experienced newcomers differ not only in how much they are influenced by organizational socialization tactics, but also in the adjustment strategies they employ. For example, Feldman and Brett (1983) compared strategy use across two groups, those newly hired (new hires) versus those changing jobs within the organization (job changers). They found that job changers tended to use strategies to control and change their situation (e.g., delegate responsibilities), whereas new hires tended to use strategies that relied on resources provided by the organization (e.g., social support). Thus those with more experience used more proactive strategies, attempting to shape their new environment, and thereby achieve a better fit (see also Kramer, Callister, and Robertson, 1995).

***Weaknesses in past research on newcomer adjustment strategies***

While past research on newcomer adjustment has investigated a number of strategies (see Table 1), and used a range of approaches including information-seeking and coping, such research has been limited in a number of ways (Miller and Jablin, 1991; see also the recent meta-analyses by Bauer et al., 2007; and Saks et al., 2007). First, research typically investigates only a handful of strategies, with recent research mostly drawing from the seven strategies proposed by Ashford and Black (1996; Gruman, Saks, and Zweig, 2006; Kim, Cable, and Kim, 2005; Morrison, Chen, and Salgado, 2004; Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). We argue that using only a few strategies risks providing a biased picture of the impact of those strategies. This was emphasized by Ashford and Black (1996), whose results contrasted with Morrison's (1993b) with regard to the strategy of feedback seeking, with Ashford and Black finding no effects. Ashford and Black (1996) suggest this may be due to their investigating multiple adjustment strategies at once, providing a truer picture of the relative importance of different strategies.

A second issue relating to these proactive newcomer strategies is that such research generally has a focus on greater proactivity being associated with better outcomes (Parker, Williams, and Turner, 2006). Chan (2006) challenged this, and showed that proactive behavior can be maladaptive for some individuals. This is supported somewhat in newcomer research, with the occurrence of negative relationships between newcomer proactive behavior and outcomes, for example role negotiation was negatively correlated with job performance in Ashford and Black's research (1996).

Third, as noted in reviews of newcomer adjustment and organizational socialization, the typical participant sample is of college graduates, who represent only a minority of the workforce (Bauer, Morrison, and Callister, 1998; Fisher, 1986; Saks and Ashforth, 1997). Indeed, a recent meta-analysis has shown that there is a stronger relationship between organizational socialization tactics and positive outcomes for graduate newcomers than experienced newcomers (Saks et al., 2007). One explanation for this is that experienced newcomers have more developed career agendas, depending on their own resources (i.e., adjustment strategies) to achieve desired ends rather than being influenced by organizational efforts. Since experienced newcomers are the largest pool of organizational newcomers, and the most sought after by employers (Carr, Pearson, Vest, and Boyar, 2006: 344), and given evidence that experienced newcomers tend to use more proactive strategies (Feldman and Brett, 1983; Kramer, 1993), this under-researched population requires further investigation.

Last, several researchers have noted that most strategies investigated to date minimize the newcomer's potential role as an active giver or creator of information (Jablin, 1984, 2001; Kramer, Callister, and Turban, 1995). Given the increasing transitions of experienced workers who are hired for their expertise (Carr et al., 2006),

it seems likely that these experienced newcomers will use – and be supported in using – strategies to provide as well as acquire information, and hence shape their new role to best fit their experience and abilities.

### ***Aim of the present research***

In this research, the aim was to utilize a grounded approach and be open to the strategies that newcomers may use, rather than using a specific theoretical framework, such as coping or sense-making, that might bias our understanding. By investigating experienced newcomers in a white-collar environment, it was hoped to confirm and extend our knowledge of newcomer adjustment strategies, particularly with respect to information-giving strategies that may have been overlooked in prior research (Jablin, 1984, 2001). Experienced newcomers are hired for their expertise, and are likely to be career-focused individuals wishing to establish their credibility through sharing their knowledge. Hence, they are likely to be proactive and creative in getting their needs met (Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000), using their own experience and initiative as well as any resources made available, such as mentors or buddies (Ashford, Blatt, and VandeWalle, 2003). Experienced newcomers are likely to use a larger range of strategies that subsume those used by graduate newcomers. The study's aim was to begin to address the question: What is the full range of strategies that experienced newcomers use to facilitate their organizational socialization?

### **Method**

This research was conducted with a large professional services organization headquartered in London (“Proserv”), which was chosen as having career-oriented experienced newcomers. It was anticipated that employees working in professional services have to adapt to communicate successfully with diverse clients, and therefore it was anticipated that this sample would be relatively skilful communicators, using a



broad range of strategies. The organization employed approximately 2000 full-time staff at the time of the research. Eighty-six experienced newcomers entered the organization during the research period, and all agreed to be interviewed. The median averages for the sample were as follows: 30 years of age, 7 years of work experience, with 3 years working for their last organization which were primarily professional services (30%) and industry (33%) (16% other; 20% non-response). The sample was approximately two-thirds men (58, 67%) and one third women participants (28, 33%). Newcomers entered predominantly across the first three levels of the organization's five-level hierarchy (48% at levels 1 and 2) and proportionately across all five of the organization's business units.

Half-hour semi-structured interviews were conducted either at the organization itself or at various client sites, focusing on the newcomer's adjustment. The question used to initiate discussions on newcomer adjustment strategies was "What strategies have you used to help you adjust, find out information, and make sense of things?". This question was deliberately broad, covering adjustment and coping, information-seeking, and sense-making. Responses were followed up with probes to gain a clearer picture of newcomers' actions. Detailed written notes were taken during interviews, and were typed up immediately afterwards. The researchers adopted an interpretive perspective to data analysis, aiming to describe and understand the adjustment strategies of respondents (Gephart, 2004). Analysis entailed a series of iterations through the data. First, all records were read multiple times to ensure familiarity with the data prior to any analysis (King, 1994). Five tactics were then used to generate meaningful codes for the data: noting patterns, clustering, making comparisons, factoring, and conceptual coherence (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The strategies that emerged were compared with each other to ensure uniqueness, with a final set of

nineteen strategies established as being unique and meaningful. The first and third authors independently coded the data to assess the reliability of the strategy definitions; and agreement between the coders was acceptable (Cohen's kappa of .81).

### **Findings**

To help situate the strategies elicited from experienced newcomers in this research in the context of past research, we have presented the strategies from both past and current studies in Table 1 within three categories. These are: change role or environment, learn or change self or seek information, and mutual development. Effectively, these represent strategies with different foci of change. We use these categories also to present the study findings.

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#### ***Change role or environment***

From the research findings, four strategies were categorized as self-determined, namely *minimizing*, *proving*, *giving*, and *role modeling*. The first three of these are newly identified here. *Minimizing* refers to actions that newcomers take to reduce the amount of new learning required, and instead find ways of using their current abilities to ensure good performance. This has some conceptual similarity with two of Feldman and Brett's (1983) strategies, of changing work procedures and redefining the job, although the difference with *minimizing* is the focus on actions that reduce new learning and therefore are likely to enhance newcomers' performance and career prospects.

*Minimizing*     *"I'm going to get onto a project relevant to my previous job and industry skills to reduce the amount of new learning"*

For the strategy of *proving*, newcomers aim to advertize or demonstrate their abilities in order to gain credibility, and hence to obtain a preferred role or boss, or be

assigned to a specific project or team. Like *minimizing*, *proving* is explicitly performance and career-focused. It is similar to Feldman and Brett's (1983) "working long hours" strategy, but goes beyond this by finding multiple ways of getting the work done and showcasing one's abilities. It also overlaps with Kramer's (1993) "gaining credibility" strategy.

*Proving*        *"It is part of my strategy to try and figure out ways to allow me to demonstrate my abilities if I'm not given opportunities to do so".*

We found support for a strategy of *giving* information (Jablin, 1984, 2001), where the newcomer provides information or advice to co-workers. This was mentioned by few participants, and some of the mutual development strategies would necessarily involve newcomers providing information (see sections below, for example *exchanging*). Therefore we note that future research may show evidence for subsuming it within other strategies.

*Giving*        *"As an [experienced newcomer], it's not so much about learning. You're expected to give to a certain extent, which is something that I've certainly done. I've given a lot of experience and information about the way that my industry operates to these younger people with a real strong desire to learn. So giving out information."*

*Role modeling* consists of using colleagues as exemplars of good performance and trying to copy their behaviors and ways of working; apprenticeship learning was also mentioned. There is overlap here with Ashford and Cummings' (1985) strategy of observing those who are rewarded by their boss, although their strategy does not explicitly include a copying element. Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) serial organizational socialization tactic is equivalent to role modeling from the organization's perspective, that is, providing insiders to fulfil this function.

***Learn or change self or seek information***

Many participants indicated that they would use opportunistic strategies, relying on colleagues or organizational resources to provide learning opportunities. All of these strategies appear in some form in previous research. *Doing* comprises getting on with the task in hand and learning through this process. This overlaps with other strategies, including testing limits (Miller and Jablin, 1991), trial and error (Miller, 1996), and learning by doing (Beyer and Hannah, 2002), although these previous strategies include concepts of deliberately pushing the boundaries and making mistakes, which we did not find.

Observational strategies are those where newcomers watch others to obtain information, either focusing their attention to find specific facts, or being open to events in order to obtain useful information by chance. Such observational strategies have been among the most studied in previous research (Ashford and Cummings, 1983, 1985; Morrison, 1993a, b); we found evidence for two such strategies here, *gathering* and *waiting*. *Gathering* involves newcomers deliberately discovering and reflecting on information to improve their understanding. *Waiting* refers to newcomers allowing information and resources to come to them, accepting what they are given. *Waiting* has similarities with Miller and Jablin's (1991) surveillance strategy but is less strategic. However, the fact that relatively few behaviors were categorized within *waiting* may mean that, practically, it should be subsumed within *gathering* (Casey, Miller, and Johnson, 1997; Miller, 1996).

*Gathering*      “I was quiet at the beginning. I spent time reflecting and developing a strategy. Almost a consulting approach of gathering information before forming opinions and acting.”

*Waiting*        “My learning has been very casual and not in any way forced....I've not felt overly pressured that I'd have to learn something.”

*Following* refers to being explicitly guided by colleagues with more experience as to what to do, and how to do it. It is conceptually similar to the monitoring strategy identified by Ashford and colleagues (Ashford, 1986; Ashford and Cummings, 1983), and established in subsequent research (Morrison, 1993a, b; Ostroff and Kozlowski, 1992) although *following* involves colleagues identifying appropriate behaviors for newcomers.

*Following*      “[I] get very good guidance of what I should be doing from juniors on my team who have been in Proserv longer, and also those above me are willing to give advice and guidance.”

*Attending* refers to choosing to be present at training and induction events, as well as departmental meetings. This strategy overlaps with Bauer and Green’s (1994) concept of involvement, which refers to optionally attending organization- or colleague-sponsored social or academic events. In the current research *attending* has a narrower and more formal focus, and does not include explicitly social events. A strategy of *attending* is clearly related to organizationally-directed socialization (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979), which is relevant where attendance at training and induction events is voluntary, as in the current research setting.

The remaining two strategies in this category relate directly to past research. *Asking* is equivalent to one of the most commonly researched strategies, of direct inquiry (Ashford, 1986; Ashford and Cummings, 1983; Miller and Jablin, 1991) and also includes general feedback seeking (Ashford and Cummings, 1983). *Reading* appears as a strategy in previous research, defined as relating to organizational manuals or documents (Morrison, 1993; Ostroff and Kozlowski, 1992). Participants in the present research mentioned a range of resources including company intranets, external websites, business media, and other depositories of company information.

***Mutual development***

Strategies in this category necessarily imply the involvement of colleagues in the newcomers' environment. Four new strategies were apparent in the data: *Befriending*, *teaming*, *exchanging*, and *flattering*; and five confirm previous research: *negotiating*, *talking*, *asking*, *socializing*, and *networking*. With both *teaming* and *befriending*, the newcomer is aiming to influence how others view him or her. They differ in that *teaming* focuses only on team relationships with the aim of putting in the effort to be seen as a team member and demonstrating commitment to the team, whereas *befriending* has a narrower aim of establishing social relationships, but a broader scope since it is not restricted to the newcomer's immediate team. These both have links to coping strategies of seeking social support, although participants made no explicit mention of such an aim (Feldman and Brett, 1983; Kramer, 1993). We note that *befriending* is implicitly suggested (in reverse) in Beyer and Hannah's (2002) avoiding strategy, which includes trying not to get too close to colleagues.

*Teaming*        *"I think it's important to become a member of a team as soon as possible, and be seen as a team member."*

*Befriending*   *"I'm a talkative person who makes friends easily, so I walked around the open-plan offices and went to say hello to everyone informally during my first month throughout the London office."*

Three strategies reflected newcomers being aware of possible sources of power: *exchanging*, *negotiating* and *flattering* (French and Raven, 1959, Yukl, 2002).

*Exchanging* refers to the newcomer trading resources with colleagues, with the newcomer providing industry contacts, expertise or experience in return for desired roles, project team assignments or other useful resources. It has similarities with Ashford and Cummings' (1985) strategy of comparing oneself with others, although in their research this is a covert, monitoring strategy whereas in the current research it

was mentioned as an overt strategy. It also overlaps with Yukl and Falbe's (1990) exchange influence tactic, although in their research this is presented as primarily a downward tactic from seniors who have resources that they control.

*Exchanging* "I 'phone and arrange a meeting if we have appropriate information or assistance to exchange."

The strategy of *negotiating* refers to discussing and agreeing on role expectations with colleagues, mostly comprising superiors but also same-level peers who will be relying on the role holder in some capacity (e.g., to provide industry information). Both Mignerey, Rubin, and Gorden (1995) and Ashford and Black (1996) found evidence for a job change negotiation strategy involving others. Further, Feldman and Brett (1983) confirmed two individually-determined role change strategies (e.g., redefining the job), and Kramer (1993) found evidence for three role change strategies (e.g., changing other's perceptions of the importance of the role). *Negotiating* in this research encompasses all these, with participants presenting a range of negotiation situations from relatively calm, team-based discussions through to heated supervisor-newcomer debate. The quote below illustrates role negotiation for a newcomer who had to develop his own role.

*Negotiating* At the first [department] meeting, it was clear that no-one understood my role in [business area] but I was already recruited. I spent the first month going around the [department] asking individual [senior managers] 'What do you think [this business area] is? What do you think my role should be?' ...[there were] divergent views including those saying that I was not needed or wanted. I persevered.... there is a role there, but we need to decide as a group what the role should be about."

The third power-related strategy, *flattering*, aims to make colleagues feel good, so that they are more positively disposed to the newcomer. This has some similarities with the strategy found in Kellermann and Berger's (1984) research, of relaxing the partner in a social interaction to encourage self-disclosure. Their participants were university students in an experimental setting.

*Flattering*      *"I ask lots of questions to make others feel useful, so they feel good and I'm also finding things out."*

*Talking* is a relatively opportunistic strategy of picking up information in passing. Its undirected nature distinguishes it from the other mutual development strategies, as well as information seeking strategies. We note that *talking* may overlap with Kramer's (1993) strategy of informal conversations. One interviewee in Beyer and Hannah's (2002: 644) research mentions talking to people, although Beyer and Hannah place this together with other strategies (e.g., reading) that they classify broadly as information seeking.

*Talking*      *"Information comes from tapping Proserv experience. It's important to talk to people, who are very open to share information and knowledge. At all levels, people have been understanding and will give time to discuss things."*

The two remaining mutual development strategies, *socializing* and *networking*, have been identified in previous research. Ashford and Black (1996) identified general socializing and networking from their research with MBA students. Further, Feldman and Brett's (1983) strategy of seeking social support can be interpreted as being similar to *socializing*, although here the strategy was not overtly directed at gaining support. To clarify the distinction between *befriending*, *teaming*, *networking*,



and *socializing*, the first three of these are all self-directed but with different foci. In contrast, *socializing* takes advantage of opportunities provided by others.

### **Discussion**

The aim of this study was to begin to answer the research question: What is the full range of strategies that experienced newcomers use to facilitate their organizational socialization? In answering this question, this research makes two main empirical contributions. First, the findings suggest that newcomers are able to draw on a wider range of adjustment strategies than previously identified, with seven new strategies distinguished (*minimizing, proving, giving, flattering, befriending, teaming, and exchanging*) and a total of nineteen strategies identified among these experienced newcomers. Second, the research shows the range of strategies that newcomers use. This confirms that research investigating only a limited set of these risks providing an incomplete picture of the organizational socialization process. These findings suggest an obligation, on the part of researchers, to make clear and explicit choices about what strategies to investigate, and limit their conclusions accordingly (Ashford and Black, 1996).

### ***Management Implications***

The range of newcomer strategies that are outside of formal processes suggest that those designing HR induction, orientation and onboarding programs should consider how to enable newcomers to help themselves. Appropriate HR practices to onboard such newcomers could include providing resources such as explicit guidance on acceptable strategies, and opportunities for informal socialization through social and networking events. The specific mix of support provided will depend on organizational factors (e.g., size, complexity) and newcomer factors (e.g., diversity, rate of newcomer hiring). We note that these considerations may be especially

important for smaller organizations, which are less likely to have the resources to provide a formal structured process, and are also less likely to have custodial, replicable roles that benefit from a formal approach (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979).

At a broader level, these strategies may provide a basis for explicit discussions on those behaviors that are, or are not, acceptable. As an example, Wesson and Gogus' (2005) research showed that social interaction was critical to positive socialization outcomes in a technology-based consulting firm. In such an environment, HR could emphasize the utility and acceptability of strategies in the mutual development category that are achieved through social interaction.

From a practical perspective, the strategies identified suggest ways in which HR and newcomers' colleagues can facilitate socialization. Specifically, all strategies within the "mutual development" category require reciprocity from newcomers' colleagues, for example socializing. Additionally, for most strategies in the "learn" category, newcomers are reliant on organizational resources, for example their colleagues, to provide information or feedback. Hence HR and newcomers' colleagues can structure the environment to maximize learning and adjustment opportunities for newcomers. This might include providing relevant reading materials (e.g., recent presentations) or informal guidance, in addition to any formal organizational socialization programs. This is particularly important given the lesser impact of organizational socialization tactics on experienced newcomers (Saks et al., 2007). Indeed, some companies provide training to newcomers' colleagues to ensure a smooth entry transition (Martin and Saba, 2008). Finally, we note that even strategies within the "change role or environment" category might be more effective when insiders are receptive to newcomers' adjustment attempts (where these are appropriate), for example acknowledging the value of newcomers' contributions.

### ***Newcomer Implications***

For newcomers themselves, the entry and adjustment process is a challenging time. There is minimal research on interventions with newcomers that aim to help their adjustment outside of organizational socialization tactics research (Wesson and Gogus, 2005). The three categories of newcomer adjustment strategies, as proposed here, provide a useful framework to help newcomers make conscious choices about how to behave. These may be particularly useful in cases where HR provides insufficient support or guidance, with newcomers able to select from these strategies and take the initiative in directing their own adjustment.

### ***Limitations and Strengths***

While a large number of respondents were interviewed, they were only asked about their activities at one point in time. Further, no graduate newcomers were interviewed, and it is possible that they may use additional strategies not identified here, particularly in the category *learn or change self or seek information*. All experienced newcomers worked in London, and came from a single firm representing one industry and this may have constrained further the strategies identified. In this regard, we note that some strategies identified in past research were missing here, including several coping strategies (e.g., positive framing) and more specific information-seeking strategies (e.g., disguising conversations) (Ashford and Black, 1996; Miller and Jablin, 1991). It is possible that the professional services industry may attract people with particular work experience or personality traits which may have influenced which strategies they mentioned (Schneider, 1987). Additionally, their specific roles as client-facing professional service providers may have limited available or sanctioned strategies (De Luque and Sommer, 2000). For example, there was evidence that context (e.g., time pressures) forced reliance on a restricted range of strategies for some newcomer participants:

*“I don’t feel that I’ve been sufficiently proactive for my career. But this has conflicted with the pressure to be billable...so I’ve missed events and training. Because I don’t have a good network, I know less about what is going on, and it’s difficult to establish a network as time pressures mean I exclude non-essential things.”*

Balancing these observations, the present research has several inherent strengths. First, our intentional focus upon experienced newcomers is unusual in the socialization literature. Second, grounding our results in qualitative data from experienced newcomers differs from the majority of past research which has largely taken a theoretical approach to developing strategies, or – for qualitative studies – has not focused on *adjustment*. Last, our findings here present a broader picture of the activities of newcomers, some of which have not been identified in previous studies.

### ***Future Research***

Two recent meta-analyses on the tactics that organizations use to socialize newcomers have provided useful insights on the implications of organizational actions during newcomer adjustment (Bauer et al., 2007; Saks et al., 2007). The categorization and increased number of newcomer strategies identified here provides further impetus for now focusing on the newcomer, and assessing the implications of newcomer actions. Given that most newcomers are experienced, and will want to shape their role and context to some extent, a continued focus on newcomers’ behaviors is warranted. We suggest three major areas for future research. First, to refine further the current measures of newcomer strategies, and develop new measures as needed (Ashford and Black, 1996). Second, since theoretical predictions on the antecedents of strategy use have not been completely successful (Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000), we suggest further research to identify these antecedents. Third, to investigate the effects

of newcomer adjustment strategies. In this respect, the categories suggested here may provide meaningful empirical groupings, for example, strategies in the *mutual development* category may be associated with greater social integration.

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**Table 1. Newcomer adjustment strategies: Comparing findings from past research and the current study**

	<i>Past research</i>	<i>Present research</i>
Change role or environment	Changing work procedures <sup>b</sup>	<b>Minimizing<sup>±</sup></b> : Doing work that closely matches skills and experience to facilitate performance
	Working longer hours <sup>b</sup> Redefining the job <sup>b</sup> Delegating responsibilities <sup>b</sup> Persuasive attempts <sup>c</sup> / presentation <sup>c</sup> Gaining credibility <sup>c</sup> / personal credibility <sup>c</sup> / personal style <sup>c</sup> Importance of the job <sup>±c</sup> Job relationships <sup>±c</sup> New position <sup>±c</sup>	<b>Proving<sup>±</sup></b> : Working hard to demonstrate abilities <b>Giving<sup>±</sup></b> : Providing information or advice to insiders <b>Role modeling</b> : Copying others
Learn or change self or seek information	Positive framing <sup>a</sup>	
	Physiological or psychological palliation <sup>b</sup> Action & feedback <sup>c</sup> / experimenting <sup>d</sup> / testing limits <sup>d</sup> Observing <sup>d</sup>	<b>Doing</b> : Learning by doing / experimenting <b>Gathering</b> : Observing and reflecting to work out requirements <b>Following</b> : Being guided by others' expectations <b>Waiting</b> : Being open to information and feedback, being relaxed and unhurried
	Information-seeking <sup>ab</sup>	
	Delayed learning <sup>d</sup>	
	Feedback seeking <sup>a</sup> Involvement <sup>f</sup>	<b>Attending</b> : Training, demonstrations, induction events, meetings
	Task help* <sup>b</sup> Direct inquiry <sup>d</sup>	<b>Asking</b> : Direct questioning to find out information
	Indirect inquiry <sup>d</sup> Third parties <sup>d</sup> Reading <sup>e</sup>	<b>Reading</b> : HR and local documents, books, trade magazines, intranet and internet
	Relationship building – boss <sup>a</sup> / talking to supervisor <sup>c</sup>	<b>Befriending<sup>±</sup></b> : Being open, friendly, and helpful towards colleagues at work
	Social support* <sup>b</sup>	<b>Teaming<sup>±</sup></b> : Being visibly involved as a team member <b>Exchanging<sup>±</sup></b> : Trading resources with other employees <b>Flattering<sup>±</sup></b> : Behaving in ways that make others feel good about themselves
	Role negotiation <sup>a</sup>	<b>Negotiating</b> : Discussing role expectations

Informal conversations <sup>c</sup>	<b>Talking:</b> <i>Participating in informal conversations/</i>
General socializing <sup>a</sup>	<b>Socializing:</b> <i>Arranging or attending social events outside of work</i>
Networking <sup>a</sup>	<b>Networking:</b> <i>Establishing contacts with key people</i>

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*Note.* \* Both seeking and receiving each of these; <sup>±</sup> all of these are attempts to change others' expectations of the newcomer or of their role. <sup>a</sup> Ashford and Black (1996); <sup>b</sup> Feldman and Brett (1983); <sup>c</sup> Kramer (1993); <sup>d</sup> Miller and Jablin (1991); <sup>e</sup> Ostroff and Kozlowski (1992); <sup>f</sup> Bauer and Green (1994). <sup>±</sup> New strategies in this research.