

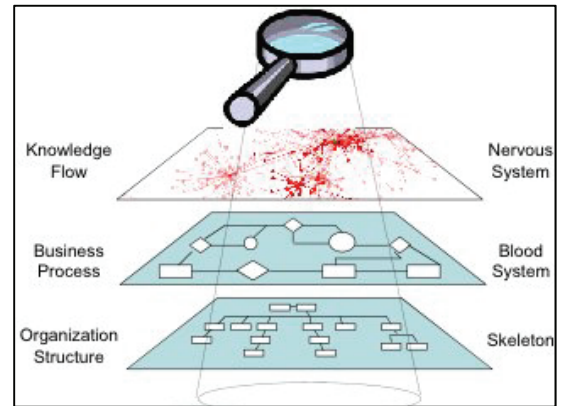
Networks 101

A network consists of the web of relationships formed by every person and every organization. This web supports the many functions that people fulfill at work, from completing routine transactions to socializing, innovating, planning, learning, and developing their careers. These relationships are developed informally and may or may not include people related to an individual through the formal organizational chart or process.

Why Networks Matter

Networks influence virtually everything organizations do.

- ▶ *Change*: If networks are effective, they can adapt quickly to change.
- ▶ *Decision Making*: The quality of people's networks influences the quality of their decisions.
- ▶ *Leadership*: Effective leaders tend to cultivate their networks in specific ways.
- ▶ *Culture*: An organization's culture is embedded in its networks. Networks can effectively resist or enable culture change.
- ▶ *Mergers & Acquisitions*: If networks don't become integrated after a merger or acquisition, the organizations won't achieve desired synergies or cost savings.
- ▶ *Innovation*: Bringing the people with the right skill sets together from across networks improves innovation.
- ▶ *Projects*: Successful projects are run by leaders with stronger networks.



Citation unknown.

Network Dynamics

5 – 10% of entities within a network serve as critical connectors and have more influence over culture, information flow, and decision making. They are:

Hubs – Highly and directly connected with many people. Communicate and disseminate knowledge.

Gatekeepers – Link people, departments, expertise, and/or customers. Act as information gateways and broker knowledge between critical parts of the organization.

Pulsetakers – Have maximum influence using minimum number of direct contacts. Work through indirect means.

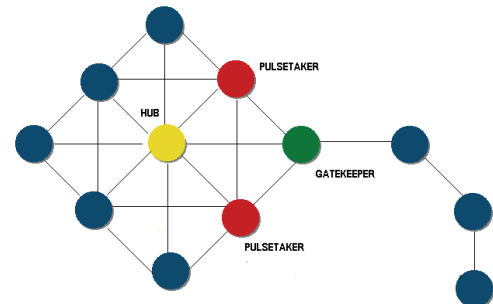


Image © 2005 NetForm, Inc. Used with permission.

The Networks of High Performers

The top 20% of performers in organizations tend to:

- ▶ Pursue relationships that contribute to operational, personal, and strategic goals.
- ▶ Cultivate relationships with people up in the hierarchy.
- ▶ Develop relationships with energizing emerging high performers at lower levels in the hierarchy.
- ▶ Invest in relationships to extend expertise and avoid biases and career traps.
- ▶ Position themselves at key points in the network and leverage people around them for implementation.

From Cross, Thomas, & Light, "How top talent uses networks and where rising stars get trapped."



Recommended Resources

- Anklam, P. (2007). *Net work: A practical guide to creating and sustaining networks at work and in the world.*
- Cohen, D. & Prusak, L. (2001). *In good company: How social capital makes organizations work.*
- Cross, Martin, & Weiss (2006). "Mapping the value of employee collaboration." *McKinsey Quarterly.*
- Cross, R., Singer, J., Colella, S., Thomas, R.J., & Silverstone, Y. (2010). *The organization network fieldbook: Best practices, techniques, and exercises to drive organizational innovation and performance.*
- Cross, R., Thomas, R.J., & Light, D. (April 2006). "How top talent uses networks and where rising stars get trapped." Accenture Research Report.
- Evans & Wolf (2005). "Collaboration rules." *Harvard Business Review.*
- Ibarra, H. & Hunter, M. (January 2007). "How leaders create and use networks. In *Harvard business review.*
- Kleiner, A. (2002). "Karen Stephenson's quantum theory of trust." *strategy + business.*
- Plastrik & Taylor (2006). "Net gains: A handbook for network builders." Available at www.nupolis.com.
- Stephenson, K. (2005). "Trafficking in trust." In *Enlightened power* (Coughlin, Wingard, & Hollihan, ed.). Available at www.drkaren.us.
- Rivosa, P. (Spring 2006). "Are you networked for successful innovation?" In *MIT Sloan Management Review.*
- Rollag, K., Parise, S., & Cross, R. (2005). "Getting new hires up to speed quickly." *MIT Sloan Management Review.*
- Townsend, M. (2009). "A failed succession story." Available at www.tinyurl.com/956vfm.
- Townsend, M. (2008). "The three most important positions you don't know about yet." Available at www.partneringresources.com.