How Successful People Drive Innovation through Personal Networks
Myth: The Lone Innovator And Flash Of Creative Insight

Most innovation comes from the recombination of ideas drawn from non-insular networks.

A revolutionary cancer medication. Developed, produced and implemented across disciplines, functions and geographies within Novartis and through external networks in research and clinical settings.
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Failed in clinical trials for the treatment of angina and high blood pressure, but became the fastest-selling drug of all time. It’s value became known when clinical trial patients failed to return samples ...
Myth: The Lone Innovator And Flash Of Creative Insight

Thomas Edison’s innovation was not a single invention. He combined existing light bulb design with existing generators, wiring and the gas utility model PLUS he built a community of suppliers, engineers and investors to spur adoption.
Myth: The Lone Innovator And Flash Of Creative Insight

Building and tapping non-insular networks during early-stage problem solving boosts the creation and acceptance of innovation.

Ask: Who can I bring in to help understand and solve this problem?
Networks of Innovative People

http://www.cs.virginia.edu/oracle/
Boundary Spanning Ties Are Critical On Four Fronts

**Emergence/Creativity Ties**
Identify silos or boundaries where value could be created by bridging across two thought worlds. This may be across expertise domains, functions, clients, etc.

**Depth/Best Practice Ties**
Identify others with similar expertise—cross geography, company or functional lines—where connections could help promote depth, currency or efficiency in your work.

**Professional Growth Ties**
People that you seek out or voluntarily offer feedback to you—whether on work, interaction or decision-making topics. At least one person that holds you accountable.

**Sensemaking / Landscape Ties**
People or practices that help you get an accurate picture of the network important to work you are trying to get done. Predictive accuracy is associated with performance over time.
Innovation Is A Social Process ...

When we know that networks are critical predictors of...

- Individual creativity
- Innovation development
- Successful prototyping and implementation

Why don’t we pay attention to networks?
5 Roadblocks To Creating Networks Needed For Innovation

1. Collaboration becomes inefficient not innovative

2. The pace of work limits outreach

3. A culture where trust is in short supply

4. Not having a compelling story of why the project or idea is important

5. What you know keeps you from seeing possibilities
Our Brains Are Narrative-Creating Machines

The stories we tell ourselves and the associated mental frames become the way we “process” the world.
Leaders Who See And Shape Networks Are More Likely To Innovate

**Network Visibility**

- Interviews revealed invisible patterns, habits, mindsets and decisions.
- Storytelling gives visibility to networks and interactions.
- Critical need is making networks visible and actionable.

**Network Intentionality**

- Have to be intentional and proactive in cultivating network interactions.
- Early-stage problem solving needs to engage adjacencies, stakeholders, etc.
- Ask: Am I playing offense? Am I taking action to avoid collaborative overload?