



Effectively
Managing
Transitions

INITIATE

Rely On Select Advisors and Confidants for Feedback and Support

PRINCIPLE

Make time for and be open to a few trusted advisors and confidants. Engage people who know you well—a colleague, a former boss, a mentor, even friends and family—to obtain needed input, validation, pushback, encouragement, reality checks and emotional support.



“You want people who won’t let you complain, who will call your bluff—but who will also tell you when you are right and be there for you during the inevitable difficulties of a role change.”

MANAGING TRANSITIONS

Entry into a new organization, changing roles, new responsibilities and promotion all place demands on you that can most efficiently be met by leveraging networks. Make transitions successful by investing in networks in three ways:

Initiate

Jumpstart productivity and inclusion by cultivating essential connections broadly and before you need help from others.



Engage

Energize people in your network and pull colleagues to you and your ideas when engaging with new groups.



Refine

Re-calibrate networks and collaborative practices for long-term effectiveness and well-being.



During transitions, people need to initiate new connections rapidly to gain perspective, address skill gaps and access informal influencers. In addition, most successful transitions are also enabled by leaning on longer-term relationships for two important purposes: 1) to provide feedback based on knowledge of an individual’s tendencies and history, and 2) to provide personal support during the inevitable setbacks and uncertainties of a transition.

Critical confidants may be a peer, a long-time mentor, a former boss, a colleague from a former job, family or friends, and even a current manager or a direct report. Regardless, the more successful people in our research sought out and relied on a small set of people who knew them well.

During a transition, take time to connect with confidants, making sure you are in regular communication with a few people in two categories:

- **Truth tellers** will give you needed, sometimes brutally honest feedback, telling you if you are over-reacting, sending unintentional signals or handling a situation in a way that is not productive. They will give honest advice, with good intentions for you, the team and the enterprise.
- **Emotional anchors** provide support, encouragement and perspective. They share your values, are invested in you personally and help you re-energize.

In conversation with these confidants, allow yourself to be honest and open. Ask them to test ideas and perspectives, validate your thinking and give advice. Carefully consider their assessment of you, your situation and how to proceed.

Camelia was struggling in a newly created role when she connected with a small team at a company event. “They were wrestling with some of the same issues I was. Plus, we were all about the same age, in the same place in life, early career with young kids ... Over time, we got to know each other. I was able to bounce ideas off them, or say, *I’m struggling, and I’d love any input that you have.*”

Doug’s boss was a truth teller at a few pivotal moments in his career. When he revealed his frustration with a team, she gave him tough feedback about his behavior and what he had control over and what he didn’t. Another time, she said he wasn’t ready for the job he wanted, but suggested a role on a pilot project that gave him needed experience.

Gail described “leaning on my closest, most trusted people” in the company when she was promoted to a senior leadership role. “You need these people to see what you are missing.” She also relied heavily on her husband, mother and sisters as supporters of her work success—and to remind her of her larger identity and values. “There’s just a ton of love and mutual respect in these relationships ... *They will call me out if I am messing up or missing something, but are also there for me in uncertain or tough times.* I am lucky I can have those gut-check conversations.”

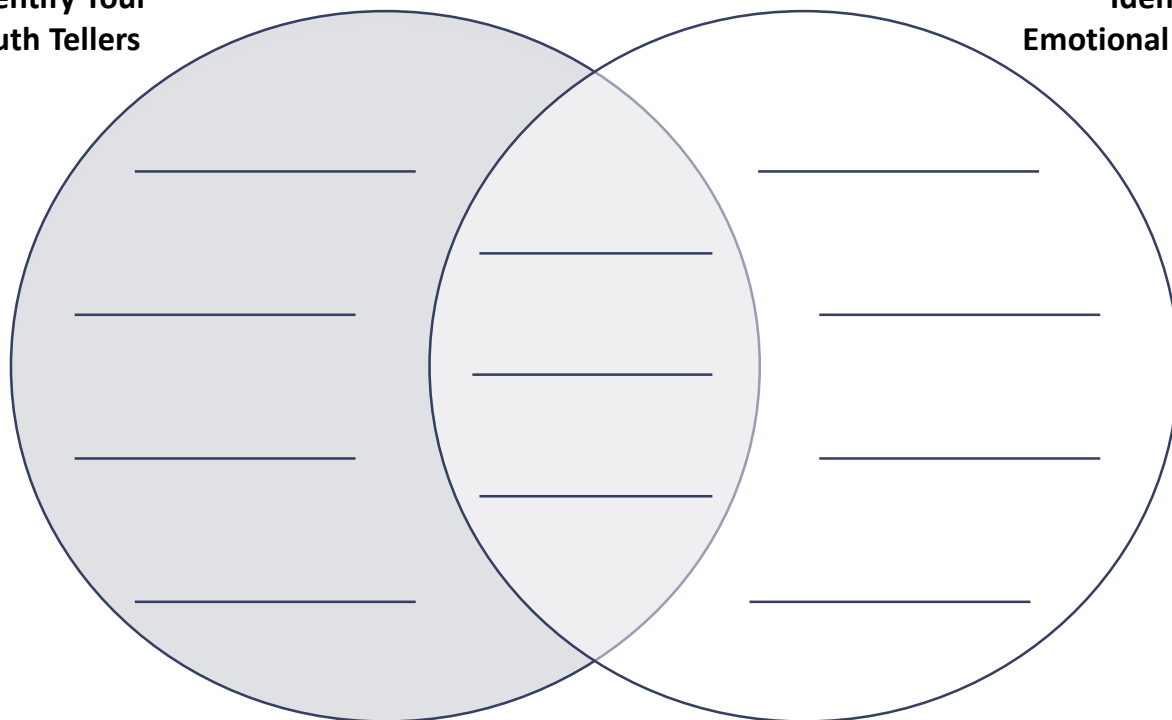
BUILD YOUR NETWORK OF CONFIDANTS

Who do you lean on for honest feedback and to gain perspective? Take a few minutes to think about your network. **Name your Truth Tellers and Emotional Anchors—and those who are both.** In addition to the people who immediately come to mind, think about those you rely on occasionally—but in important ways—or colleagues and friends you turn to every day to be sounding boards, energizers, coaches and supporters.

Then, **consider how you might lean on these confidants for a successful transition.** What kind of support would be helpful and how will you engage them?

Identify Your Truth Tellers

Identify Your Emotional Anchors



A Venn diagram with two overlapping circles. The left circle is shaded light blue and labeled 'Identify Your Truth Tellers'. The right circle is white and labeled 'Identify Your Emotional Anchors'. The intersection of the two circles is shaded light blue. Each circle contains four horizontal lines for writing names.

If you struggle to fill this out, or if you thought of just one or two people, brainstorm a list of who else could be valued confidants (consider a close colleague or significant other). If you have just one person who is both Truth Teller and Emotional Anchor, you are vulnerable if this relationship disappears or if they are unavailable.

Take steps to **expand your network of confidants.** *Who could you turn to but haven't? What steps could you take to create a deeper connection with or make more time for these valuable relationships?*

NETWORK TIPS

- **Avoid a hero mentality.** Don't think you need to solve problems by yourself or pretend you have everything under control.
- **Ask for feedback and avoid being defensive.** You don't need to agree or even respond right away, but if you can listen without overreacting or shutting people down, you have the chance to address blind spots and skill gaps as well as build trusted, valuable relationships.
- **If you are struggling or in a difficult situation, don't overlook what is going well.** Find people who will help you see the positive, find higher ground or pull you into interactions that energize you.