



Effectively
Managing
Transitions

REFINE

Craft Your Role and Create Network Connections to Help You Thrive

PRINCIPLE

Pursue work and non-work activities that align with your aspirations. The experiences and network ties you create will propel you into work and roles that are meaningful to you. People have more autonomy than they realize, and a role transition is an ideal time to create a context to thrive.



“You need to be reminded that it’s not all about the bubble you are in now. There are a lot of opportunities and activities externally. Seeing that bigger picture and engaging in activities that slingshot you into new networks is important for success and your mental health.”

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.



Too often, people let the demands of their current role dictate what they are doing and become increasingly reactive in ways that undermine their professional and personal success. Our research indicates that people have significant autonomy to create a context to thrive, even in difficult or high-pressure times. Role transitions are ideal times to sculpt the activities and networks that constitute your role and set conditions to thrive.

To thrive—in a role transition and over the long term—first clarify what is important to you (e.g., expertise you want to distinguish on professionally, values you want to live through your career, personal growth in non-work domains and physical/mental well-being). Then pursue activities that will propel you into the networks that align with these aspirations. By investing in work and non-work activities that have value to you, you create networks that reinforce and pull you toward your aspirations, rather than being reactive or defined by others.

- **Craft the role you are stepping into.** Don’t be trapped by initial assumptions or the way things were done before. Look for ways to address others’ needs *and* pursue your goals and interests. Show your abilities in work you want to be known for. By shaping your role, you prompt others to pull you into similar work and create a network that helps you do more of what you want to do.
- **Pursue relationships and interactions that provide purpose and energy.** Find people who value similar activities (co-creating, taking action, thought leadership, serving others, etc.) and initiate work with them. Often people with similar values and perspectives provide purpose and energy that will sustain you through difficult times and mitigate more challenging relationships.
- **Invest in people and activities to remind you who you are outside of work.** Anchor in life beyond the job through one or two non-work groups: *sports, family traditions, volunteering, academic or artistic interests, social groups, religious and spiritual practices*. Don’t view these activities as optional or easily cancelled. These interactions help you gain a broader perspective on life, build confidence, and foster physical and emotional well-being. Without non-work networks, you risk becoming uni-dimensional and reactive in your work.

Cora morphed her work to create a role and context she knew she would thrive in: “Early in the role, I started to put into motion what was most challenging and exciting to me. I pushed to work with people I respected. I looked at projects from that view: What would they want to do? Could we incorporate that? Could we find overlap? Now, I have no shortage of cool projects and people I enjoy working with.”

Brendan has thrived through several high-intensity roles in part because of his non-work networks. He protects Friday pizza and movie night with family and is a board member of a community nonprofit. He also is unapologetic about occasional golf trips with close friends. “You have to disconnect from the job and be accountable to other people. You are reminded of different things and it grounds you. If you stay in your work bubble, you get over-dependent on the organization. It invariably influences your decisions for the worst, makes you less satisfied and less productive.”

INVEST IN ACTIVITIES AND NETWORKS THAT HELP YOU THRIVE

Being part of valued networks is a critical aspect of thriving professionally and personally. One way to build those networks is to pursue activities that align with your aspirations, passions and values. **Review your calendar over the past 2 weeks**; look at both work and non-work activities. As you reflect on where and how you spent your time and energy, consider the questions in the table below:

What projects, tasks, meetings and conversations energized you? When were you focused and in a state of flow? Who did you enjoy being with?	
What projects, tasks, meetings and conversations were tedious? What activities felt like a poor use of your time? What interactions were draining or unpleasant?	

Your answers above give you clues to what is important to you and the kinds of activities and networks you will want to invest more (or less) of your time in. Using the three categories below, brainstorm work and non-work activities that could give you more experiences in the energizing list and fewer in the de-energizing one. **List 1 or 2 actions you could take to create ties and experiences that will pull you into meaningful work and roles.**

ACTIVITIES, PROJECTS OR GROUPS THAT . . .	ACTIONS / NEXT STEP
... Allow you to put your strengths and talents to use, or help you develop expertise you want to be known for. _____	_____ _____ _____
... Align with how you gain purpose and energy in work. _____	_____ _____ _____
... Generate interest and passion outside of work. _____	_____ _____ _____

NETWORK TIPS

- Know what types of interactions help you bring your best to work—and seek more of them.** Thriving is largely driven by connecting with others in ways that feel purposeful and energizing. For example, you may find satisfaction in the wins of others, by pursuing a big goal with like-minded peers, solving problems creatively, working with someone who challenges you or being on a team that laughs easily.
- Set a few firm rules—tailored to your role, commitments and preferences—to buffer from demands of work.** Don't wait until you are well-established in your new role to put up a few clear boundaries. Consider checking email just three times a day, leaving work at 4:30 once a week to get to the gym, or shutting down your phone from the time you get home until the kids go to bed.
- Don't give up on new activities too quickly.** If you are trying out new interests, give it time—show up and participate at least 3 times. Meet at least 1 new person each time. Building connections early will help you care about new things and compel you to keep commitments.