

Managing Transitions



REFINE: Avoid Common Career-Derailing Network Traps in Transition

THE IDEA

Be alert to network traps to succeed in new role



The drive to produce quick results or the misguided advice of many networking books can derail otherwise high performers.

Failure to live up to expectations in a new role is usually attributed to lack of readiness or capability when, in fact, it is the result of a failed network strategy.

- Four common network traps that derail rising stars, high performers and leaders: the biased learner, the disconnected expert, the formalist and the bottleneck.
- Role transitions—into a new organization, lateral moves and promotions—are highrisk times if you are not attuned these derailers.

AVOID NEW-ROLE DERAILERS





Defend against the tendency to turn to people who you relied on in your prior role. The *biased learner* places too heavy a reliance on a few trusted, well-liked or familiar people, or over-values one or two groups. Often, people continue to hold on to 60-70% of their most trusted ties back in the area they came from.



Avoid over-reliance on your past expertise and personal judgment. The *disconnected expert* does not know when the skills they have used in past roles are insufficient. If you do not seek input from a new network and seek input, you will struggle to understand a new context or know what you need to learn or change.

AVOID NEW-ROLE DERAILERS





Don't overlook or underestimate the value of the informal network. The *formalist* over-relies on titles, org charts and positional authority and does not adequately engage opinion leaders, information holders and key contributors. This blocks you from valuable ideas and information; things will not unfold as expected.

Refrain from becoming too-central in the network.



Bottlenecks create a heavy reliance on themselves that cannot be sustained. You use everyone's time inefficiently; teams become frustrated. You may struggle to deliver results at a time when you are building your reputation.



Assess Your Network Risk



- Know the four common network traps and their symptoms: biased learner, disconnected expert, formalist and bottleneck.
- Block time to assess yourself. In role transitions, don't get so busy that you miss crucial times to assess your network. Scan for network traps at key points and/or every 4-6 weeks.
- Get in the habit of thinking about the network early on. Who is influential and connected? Who could benefit from being involved? Who has been needlessly pulled in? Who has been left out?