



Effectively
Managing
Transitions

REFINE

Refresh Enterprise and External Networks for Long-Term Performance and Growth

PRINCIPLE

Assess internal and external connections to ensure you have the diverse networks you need as demands, goals and circumstances change. Avoid the natural tendency to settle into the network that you first establish in a new role by investing in connections critical to ongoing success.



“People’s roles are constantly shifting. Success is more about the relationships you build than about what you are doing on any given day.”

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

Energy 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.



Investing in networks and relationships from day one contributes to successful role transitions. However, it can be tempting to settle into the initial network you create, focusing on people in your group or colleagues you work with every day. More effective people skillfully cultivate and adapt networks to meet shifting demands and emerging opportunities. They are stronger performers and better able to stay upwardly mobile throughout their careers through effective networks.

To ensure you have the network you need, make it a habit to initiate and rejuvenate connections. At regular intervals and in moments of change (a new project, a different direction, new people) review your connections and make a plan to adjust and augment your network. Be sure to include the four types of connections shown below to help you see and solve problems more innovatively, execute more effectively and enjoy a sense of influence and autonomy.

- **Connections for Emergent Ideas, Creativity and Innovation.** Network ties across expertise domains, functions, clients, cultures or social groups allow you to gain a richer understanding of a problem space and see solutions or opportunities more broadly than is possible with a more insular network.
- **Connections for Expertise, Depth and Best Practice Transfer.** Ties with others doing similar kinds of work but in different contexts (other geography, function, division or company) improves, extends or maintains your expertise, introduces new work practices and improves efficiency.
- **Connections for Professional Growth and Career Development.** A mix of new people and established ties helps you learn and develop through experience. Rely on them to give you feedback and advice on performance and deliverables, team effectiveness, leadership capabilities and future direction.
- **Connections for Political Support and Influence.** Ties with stakeholders are critical for implementation and driving results. Formal leaders have resources, voice, influence and perspective. Informal influencers can provide energy, legitimacy and support to your efforts.

When Lars was promoted, he realized significant gaps in his network. He had developed strong ties and political support within his function and up the hierarchy, but had ignored opportunities to build ties into other groups. “Looking back, I see that my world was very small and narrow. I realized all those people that I blew off or didn’t appreciate, or didn’t collaborate with before, I had to go back and build or repair those relationships when my role changed ... It’s a lot smarter to invest in those networks early on and as you go.”

In contrast, Marley built and refreshed her network strategically to succeed in a fast-changing, early-career, international assignment. “I had access to 20 different sites. I learned to reach to the network to find out how people do things differently, which sites do something really well, who to go to for ideas or support ... The relationships I built were foundational to my success then and now.”

REVIEW AND UPDATE NETWORK TIES FOR PERFORMANCE

People typically assess outputs and performance once or twice a year, or at key points in a project's lifecycle. Rarely do they assess their networks to ensure they are connecting to the right people. Periodically and at clear points of change, **think about your work goals and development goals for the next 6 months. Review your network via the four categories below.** Who do you know that may be helpful to you as you pursue your goals? Where do you have weak or no ties, but need them? **Write down 1-3 people or groups to meet or reconnect with and a next step** (e.g., ask to discuss an idea over coffee, seek an introduction, bring into a team meeting).

MY GOAL, ASSIGNMENT OR CHALLENGE:

NETWORK TIES	PERSON OR GROUP	ACTION
Identify connections for Emergent Ideas, Creativity and Innovation. Look to people who operate in expertise domains, functions, clients, cultures or social groups that are outside your current scope. Reach to people whose work is adjacent to, downstream or upstream of what you are doing, or who can simply offer a different perspective. Seek access to clients and also consider external experts.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Identify connections for Expertise, Depth and Best Practices. Find people who are doing similar kinds of work in a different context. Consider people with technical or functional expertise in various internal groups, as well as in other companies or associations. Connect with colleagues who face similar challenges or manage similar processes in other groups, geographies or organizations.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Identify connections for Professional Growth and Career Development. A mentor, manager or peers can help you understand your role, what is changing and how you might learn and develop through experience. Tap people to give you regular feedback and challenge your thinking.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Identify connections for Political Support and Influence. Seek connections with formal leaders who have resources, voice, influence and perspective. Find informally powerful people who may lend resources, energy, legitimacy and support to your efforts.	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

NETWORK TIPS

- Build the network before you need it.** Be proactive to build relationships apart from current role or need. People who consistently refresh their network will always be more mobile and adaptable than those who don't.
- Make network discussions part of development planning, performance management and/or conversations with a mentor or coach.** Use periodic check-ins to discuss what kinds of relationships you have developed to make future success possible. As you address accomplishments and goals, always ask: *Who else do I need to meet to be more productive, more motivated and/or to learn and grow?* People at different levels and locations have a different view of the network, can see gaps and make introductions.
- Don't be afraid to prune your network.** As work demands change, you engage with different people and groups on new priorities. At this time, consider pulling back on other interactions or network commitments.