

Building Your Network

You should complete this exercise if . . .

You know your approach to networking is one of lack of time, interest or active resistance, in order to find ways of making networking work for you.

Networking: What Does Yours Look Like?

Who do you trust to give you feedback on how you are perceived by your peers and more Senior Managers?

Who can give you honest and balanced feedback on how you look and sound in the context of your career ambitions?

Who helps you by giving advice on work related issues?

Who can you talk with about what is really important to you, right now?

Who can you go to when things are not going well, who will be on your side, but not let you off the hook of responsibility?

Who gives you a bigger picture of what is happening within the business, outside of your own area?

Who are you offering help to?

Effective networkers have a range of relationships to meet different needs

The danger for many individuals is that their network is too similar to themselves in terms of:

- Professional background
- Age
- Seniority
- Gender
- Life experience

Building an effective network that can help and sustain your career over time is best achieved through building diverse relationships.

Six Degrees of Separation

The game 6 degrees of separation aims to show that any person can be linked to any other person within 6 contacts. It's based on the work of social psychologist Stanley Milgram. He gave 300 people in Omaha a letter which had to reach a specific person in Boston. They were given the name, address and occupation of the person. The letter had to reach its target by being passed onto someone who they thought could have a connection with the named person (without being put in a post-box). His research showed that on average the letter reached its intended recipient within 6 transactions. Key to success however, was that people passed the letter on to someone who had a different network to their own. If you have never moved outside Omaha, and only knew people with similar life experience the chance of the letter reaching its destination were slight.

The lesson is that if you want to reach out for something new, you are more likely to achieve it if your network is diverse.

Networking: Cataloguing

Reflect on the networking exercise to consider:

What patterns do you see in your network?

What gaps does it highlight?

(consider this in the context of your short and medium term career interests)

What does it show about how your current network operates in helping you meet your goals?

What does it show you about what you are offering to your network?

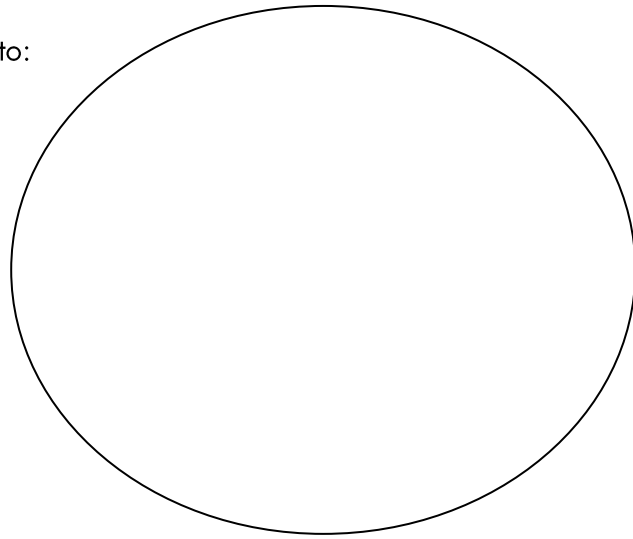
What can you do to address gaps in your network?

Your Career Success Chart

Consider how you live your career at the moment, and divide the pie chart according to your own model.

What proportions do you give to:

- Performance
- Image
- Exposure



Consider the implications of this for your career:

Are you over-focusing on performance delivery as the sole predictor?

Do you know what your image is within Your company?

What is your level of exposure?

What and who are you associated with?

Do you have an active network of meaningful relationships where you are a contributor?