Definitions

- *Networking is about connections, specifically people connecting.*

- Networking is not only a support tool but also a resource to help people achieve their goals.

- *Networking is a verb – it is dynamic in nature and that suggests networks can both grow and shrink if not maintained.*

- Networking is the art of building reciprocal relationships that help individuals and the community as a whole achieve their goals.

- *Networking is not personal – it is not a me, me, me activity. Effective networkers know that they are part of a system that operates at a level of reciprocity and each of us is part of a community that involves others.*
Strong networkers

• Brilliant networkers are distinguished from ordinary networkers because they have a clear idea of what they want to gain from the activities they do: have a clear goal in mind.
• Effective networkers are generous – this attracts reciprocity.
• Effective networkers find connectors – those people who can act as mediators or brokers connecting people for mutual benefit.

Strong networks

• Network size doesn't usually matter but it should be diverse.
• Networks need both strong and weak ties. Strong ties could be less effective than weak ties in helping you achieve your goals - weak ties know different people or resources so helpful to diversify your network.
• Effective networks provide both support and challenge.
• Executives consistently ranking in top 20% of performance have high quality networks made up of people from different spheres and up and down corporate hierarchy (Cross and Thomas).
## Networking Impairment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The wrong structure</th>
<th>The wrong relationships</th>
<th>The wrong behaviour</th>
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<td>The formalist: focuses too heavily on official hierarchy, missing out on informal connections</td>
<td>The overloaded manager: has so much contact with colleagues and external ties that becomes a bottleneck to progress and is burnt out.</td>
<td>The biased leader: relies on advisers too much like herself who reinforce her biases when she should seek outsiders to prompt more fully informed decisions.</td>
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<td>The disconnected expert: sticks with people who keep him focused on safe, existing competences rather than those who push him further or to new skills.</td>
<td>The superficial networker: engages in surface-level interaction with as many people as possible, mistakenly believing that a bigger network is a better one.</td>
<td>The chameleon: changes his interests, values and personality to match those of whatever sub-group is in the audience, and ends up disconnected from everyone.</td>
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High performers have strong ties to:
- People who offer them new information or expertise
- Formally powerful people
- People who give developmental feedback, challenge decisions and push them to be better.

The most satisfied executives have ties to:
- People who provide personal support
- People who provide a sense of purpose and worth (bosses, customers, family)
- People who promote their work/life balance.
Purposes of networking

- **Transactions** – buying and selling, getting a job, advertising etc.
- **Relationships** – business, music, friendship, romance, hobbies etc.
- **Awareness** – campaigns, aid, human rights, climate change etc.
- **Care** – medical, recovery programmes, mental health, self-help etc.
- **Knowledge** – learning networks, research, personal development etc.
- **Entertainment** – music, video, sports etc.
- **Religion and spirituality**, religious groups, spiritual paths etc.
Mind Mapping

Finding networks

My network

University

School

Friends

Family

Business

Colleagues

Personal Development

Music

Sports

Rebecca

Helen

Peter
Four steps to building a better network
(Cross and Thomas)

1. Analyse
   • Identify the people in your network and what you get from them. Are they energising?

2. De-layer
   • Make some hard decisions to back away from redundant and energy sapping relationships.

3. Diversify
   • Build out network with the right kind of people, energisers who will help to deliver goals.

4. Capitalise
   • Are you getting as much out of your relationships as you can?
Extending networks

External
- Volunteer to speak at conferences and events.
- Work on an organising committee
- Start your own network
- Speed networking events
- Join cross-industry networks

Internal
- Networking with those junior to you (mentoring, formally or informally).
- At your level – volunteer for cross business opportunities
- Form or join employees network
  - Have co-chairs
  - Have a cross business committee
  - Ensure senior sponsorship
  - Market the network
  - Ensure inclusivity
  - Check what members want
Extending networks

Networking with those above you
• Awareness of those above you and their connections
• Connect with useful information – send a note with information that might be useful.
• Do not over-communicate – keep short and to the point.
• Find a mentor
• Approach people – often senior managers do want to communicate with those at all levels of the organisation.
• Think wide as well as deep.
Effective managers proactively engage the organisation to create the conditions for their success. They build and nurture a broad network of ongoing relationships with those they need and those who need them. That is how they influence people over whom they have no formal authority. (Hill & Lineback – Harvard Business Review)

Do you systematically identify those who should be in your network?
- This is a strength if: you are always aware of which people and groups you and your team depend on and vice versa, as circumstances change.

Do you proactively build and maintain your network?
- This is a strength if: you create and sustain relationships with those in your network, connect frequently with them and support their needs

Do you use your network to provide the protection and resources your team needs?
- This is a strength if: you protect your team from distractions and misunderstandings, use your network to solve problems inside and outside the team and secure the funds, people and other resources it needs.

Do you use your network to accomplish your team’s goals?
- This is a strength if: you form coalitions of network members to support your team’s goals and help others in your network achieve theirs. Your network colleagues believe in your competence and character.