From Networking to Net Work

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Where did Net Work come from? How has KMWorld influenced my net work?
Central Questions

- How are networks alike?
- How are they different?
- Can we categorize types of network?
- Can we categorize attributes?
- How would a taxonomy enable us better to create and manage networks?
- What does it mean to manage a network?

Themes from Net Work

- Network properties
- Net work practices
- Net work for leadership
- From “networking” to “net work”
What is a network?

- “An interwoven or interrelated number of things…”
  - American Heritage Dictionary
- Things: computers, neurons, transportation hubs, cells, organizations, companies … and PEOPLE

All networks share certain properties

- They can be drawn
- Relationships among nodes and links can be analyzed:
  - Counted, summed, averaged
  - Patterned, grouped, segmented
Networks can be created intentionally … or arise from the emergence of relationships

What matters is that we can choose to identify them and be responsible for them

No, it’s not all new!

- We have been living in networks all our lives
- But the increased awareness of structures, principles, and heuristics gives us a “network lens”
- Enabling new insights and opportunities for action
Your Communities Are Networks

- How many do you participate in?
- Can you draw them?
- Can you identify their structure and governance?
- What roles do you play in each of them?
- What value do you receive from them?
- What value do the communities themselves produce? For whom?

Intentional Net Work Practices

- Network Design
- Network Examination
- Network Transition
Intentional network design looks at four aspects

- Purpose
- Structure
- Style
- Value-producing mechanisms

Network Properties: Purpose

- Create economic gain for stakeholders
- Aid and support people, environment
- Generate and collaborate in creating and using ideas
- Practice-focused learning and personal development
- Nurture emotional and affiliative relationships
Structure reflects the network’s potential for performance

Hub and Spoke: Starting Context

Heterarchy: Teams

Random Connections: Discoverable

Core/Periphery: Healthy End State

Hierarchy: Command and Control

Different types of network may need different structures and styles

- Team networks
  - Closely knit, focused on purpose

- Organizational networks
  - Sufficient brokering mechanisms for cross-functional and cross-business synergy

- Innovation networks
  - Diversity
  - Links to external resources
Network Properties: Style

- What are members like?
- How does it “feel” to be in the network?
- How does it engage its members?
- How is it led?

Style reflects the cumulative balance among a number of elements.
Network Properties: Value

- What does the network serve?
- What value accrues to individuals as members?
- What is its ecosystem?

Tools for Examination: ONA

- Organizational network analysis (ONA)
  - Often referred to by more generic term, SNA (social network analysis), an emerging competency among businesses and nonprofits
  - View of personal interactions among individuals

A senior VP, the VPs reporting to him, and their reports understood when they saw this map of their interaction frequency, that they were not as collaborative as they prided themselves on being.
Methodology for ONA – “Full” Network

- Understand the context
- Collect data – surveys, interviews
- Analysis
  - Visual
  - Mathematical
- Interpretation
- Action

Colors indicate geographic regions
• #25 is the network leader
• #14 is due to retire next year

There are recurring patterns that are common to many types of network

- Silos (stovepipes)
- Isolated clusters
- Highly central people or functions
- Marginalized voices
- External connectivity
- Distinct roles and influence
Tools for examination: VNA

- **Value Network Analysis (VNA)**
  - Pioneered by Verna Allee, a rich methodology
  - View of the web of relationships that generates economic or social value

> A senior VP in the professional services arm of a large telecommunications equipment provider said that it was “scary” that the customer feedback from the delivery of services went only to the operational arm of the company and not the organization charged to innovate in service development.

Tools for examination: Complex sensemaking

- **Sensemaking framework – “Cynefin”**
  - Developed by Dave Snowden at IBM, now an open source framework maintained by Cognitive Edge PLC
  - View of the context of a problem or situation as revealed by anecdotes or stories

>Distinguishing among the nature and context of specific events, problems, or potential courses of actions makes it possible to select the appropriate method for moving forward.

Understanding that human networks are intrinsically complex helps us learn to leverage the patterns of relationships.

Source: Dave Snowden
Understanding complexity provides a practical guide to network stewardship

- You can’t manage a network, you can only manage its context
- Slight alterations in the structure can create significant change over time
- But you must first look to understand the context
- There are tools for discovering the context

Pattern changes are clues to context changes

- Scattered Clusters
- Hub and Spoke
- Multi-hub Small World
- Core/Periphery

Source: Valdis Krebs
Network Transitions

- Network complexity is based on:
  - Relationships of people within the network to one another
  - Relationship of each individual in the network to the network
  - Relationship of the network to its environment
- Triggers for change can be internal or external

Tools for Transitions

*There are few new tools, but thinking in network terms alters the way we use the tools at hand*

- Conversations for Sensemaking
  - OpenSpace, World Café…
  - Dialog, AI (Appreciative Inquiry)
- Reformulate the mission/value proposition
- Changing patterns / relationships
- Marketing and membership mix
- Adjustments to place, space, and pace
- Empower leadership changes
What is the Net Work of Leaders?

- Network intentionally
- Practice network stewardship
- Leverage technology
- Create the capacity for net work
- Use the net work lens

Network intentionally

- Create connections
  - Randomly
  - Mindfully
  - Between individuals and across groups
- Increase the flow of knowledge
  - Technology, events
- Discover connections
- Correct impedances
  - Overly central people or bottlenecks
- Increase diversity
Practice network stewardship

- Pay attention to change triggers
- Manage the context
  - Enhance trust
  - Clarify roles and responsibilities
  - Watch for imbalances in style
- Prepare for emergence

Embrace and leverage technology

- Introduce new technologies for
  - Collaboration
  - Finding experts
- Leverage technology to discover networks
- Encourage the use of technology
  - Blogs
  - Wikis
  - RSS
  - Social networking sites (LinkedIn, Facebook, etc.)
What becomes possible with network transparency

Create the capacity for net work

- Teach & reward good network behaviors
- Encourage outreach
- Bring the outside in
- Teach networking skills in on-boarding programs
Learn to use the “network lens”

- If it’s a network, you can draw it.
  - Pick up your pencil
- If working across boundaries is really important, and is not happening, then net work tools can help you discover and respond to gaps and opportunities.
- It only takes one big “aha” to shift a network

From “networking” to “net work”

- It’s not about
  - How many networks you participate in
  - How many people you “connect” to
- It’s about
  - How you understand your role in those networks
  - How you connect to people
- And the investment you will make in sustaining those networks and relationships

“It is the time you have spent for your rose that makes your rose so important.”
Thank You!

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- **Blogs:**
  http://www.byeday.net/weblog/networkblog.html
  http://www.theappgap.com/

*Net Work: A Practical Guide to*  
*Creating, Leveraging and Sustaining*  
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