Network Diagnostic

Brian Uzzi and Shannon Dunlap of Northwestern University, along with other sociologists, have studied the networks of history's most influential individuals, from Pythagoras to Paul Revere to Bill Gates. They've been able to identify the characteristics of the kind of network that sets you up for success, versus the one that dooms you to obscurity. Read their full article from *Harvard Business Review* – fascinating stuff!

To take this simple diagnostic, you'll need to develop the list of the 25 people who have been most responsible for your success today. Next you'll answer a series of questions to diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of your current networking style. These are the 25 who have helped you get to where you sit today. We want to see how healthy your existing network is.

Some common networking foibles:

- The "proximity principle": Most of your relationships are within your immediate circle of colleagues. This suggests limited network diversity. Diversity helps provide you with access to resources and new opportunities – so lack of diversity could hurt, say, when you're looking for your next job.

- Not enough density: In a dense network, you have many connections between contacts. That means people know each other and trust each other, making them more willing to share valuable information and cooperate.

- Lack of superconnectors: The healthiest networks are studded with *superconnectors*, people like Keith who know everyone and are willing to introduce you to new networks.

- Network hoarding: Some people resist introducing their contacts to others in their network. Doing so limits your own opportunity. You're squandering a valuable source of relationship capital, and slowing the flow of information through your network.

Instructions:

Completely fill out the chart in the "HBR Network Diagnostic - Worksheet" at the bottom of this document. Then answer the questions below to analyze your results.

Network Diagnostic Questions

1. Who Are Your Superconnectors?

Look for names that appear more than once in the "Who Introduced You" column. These are your current superconnectors.

- Identify who they are, and which activities bring you in contact with them, so you can continue to develop these important relationships.
- Don't have any in your top 25? Think carefully about your broader network: Who is likely to be superconnectors? Consider developing a stronger relationship with them. Common professions of superconnectors include law, PR, recruitment, and politics.

2. Are You a Network Hoarder or a Savvy Relationship Broker?

If you have very few checks in the "Did you Introduce Them to Others?" column, you may be guilty of the #1 networking mistake: network hoarding!

It's time to get over your scarcity-driven instincts and get smart about introducing fellow members of your network. Whose knowledge, expertise, and skills could benefit each other? Be thoughtful and generous in trying to assess who in your network might mutually benefit each other.

3. Network Density

If very few of your contacts have connections in your network, your network may not be dense enough, which will limit the flow of information to you. However, if your contacts all know each other – i.e., are in the same circle – your network may suffer from being overly homogenous. Network diversity is important when you're searching for new opportunities.

Another easy way to test the diversity of your network is to use the "Network Statistics" feature on LinkedIn. (You'll find it under "Contacts.") This feature can break your network down by industry. How many of your contacts are in your own industry? How many industries are represented?

4. Goal Alignment

If none of your current contacts are able to help you with your goals, it tells you something: You've got networking to do! Becoming conscious of the alignment (or misalignment) of your goals and your current network is a key step to relationship mastery. By focusing our goals, we can focus our sights not just on all relationships, but on creating and maintaining the relationships that matter.

Remember this: Your assessment of whether the people in your current network can help you achieve your next set of goals may be limited by the strength of the relationships you have with them today. That's why it's important to remember the first rule of sales - the customers you have today are your best customers.

This exercise was developed from "How to Build Your Network," by Brian Uzzi and Shannon Dunlap. Harvard Business Review, *December 2005.*

Column 1: Name of contact
Column 2: Who introduced you to the contact?
Column 3: Did you introduce them to others?
Column 4: Do they have other connections within your network?
Column 5: Are they able to help with your current goals? If yes, please write how.

Name	Who Introduced You?	Did You Introduce Them to Others?	Other Connections in Network?	Able to Help With Current Goals?

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