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for the World®

# Networking in a virtual world... and why you need a personal Board of Directors

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## What I hope you leave with today



1. Habit formation and goals are essential
2. Think long term
3. Get weak ties to come to you → Host “Office Hours”
4. Build your Personal Board of Directors

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## Why network? Your personal capital



### Social Capital

Connections (and Disconnections)  
Among People You Know



Your career

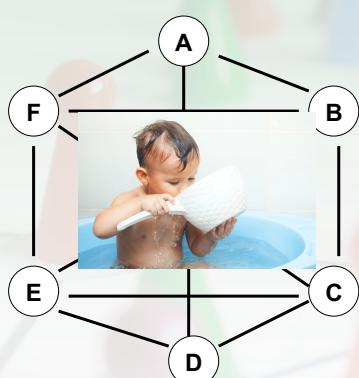
**Human Capital**  
Knowledge and Skills

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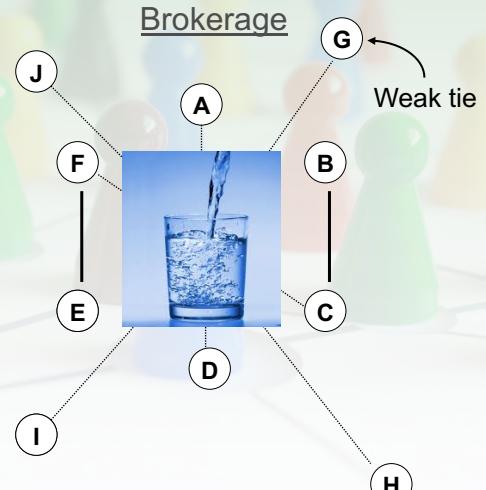
## Origins of social capital: Network properties



### Closure



### Brokerage



Brokerage: bridging two (or more) unconnected groups or individuals

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## Developing Your Network...Remotely

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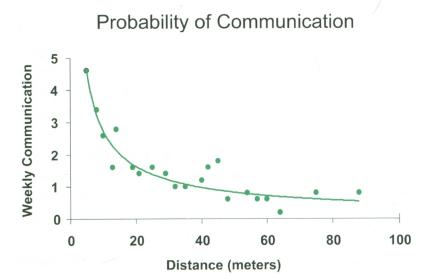
But I'm not good at that / It feels dirty / I hate networkers

Personality Trait/ Behaviour	Making or strengthening ties?	Value exchange (give <i>and</i> take)
Extraversion	+	—
Agreeableness & Conscientiousness	—	+
Openness	+	+
Networking	+	—
Relationship building	+	+

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## Reminder: our biases

- **Similarity** (homophily)
- **Proximity** (ease)
- **Inertia** → We repeat interactions and communications with the same people



It was *possible* to overcome these in an office environment.

But in a post-COVID world...

**WHAT DO YOU DO NOW?**

Source: Allen and Henn, 2007. *The Organization and Architecture of Innovation*. p. 57

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## Networking: Forming new habits



**“Networking is 1% inspiration and 99% hard work”**

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## Forming new habits → Have a plan



### 1. Determine **goals** → Where do you want to be in the next 1-3 years?

- Check in with yourself and update regularly

### 2. **Track**/log your behavior → Use a “To Do” app

- Make sure you can set reminders, keep notes, etc (I use Wunderlist)
- Create one “To Do” list called “Contacts”
- “Practice” **regularly**

### 3. Figure out the **who**

- Max of 50-100 **medium** and **weak** ties to cultivate over the next 1-2 years
- Get **warm intros** if there’s someone (unknown) you **need** on your list
- Sort into “B’s” (medium ties to contact 3-4x/year) & “C’s” (weak ties to contact 1-2x/year)
- Start “pinging” ~2-3 people per week: keep it short, sweet, informative, and friendly

Inspired by / adapted from Keith Ferrazzi’s “Never Eat Alone.”

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## Networking habit-building: Tips & reminders



### • **The 80/20 rule:** 80% of networking is simply being in touch regularly

- Don’t be afraid to take “long shots” if someone’s interesting to you
  - In general, recognize that some people won’t respond—that’s OK (< 5% for cold “calls”)

### • **Whatever you do, do your homework!**

- Why should someone respond to you? What’s your story?

### • ***Behavior first, attitude will follow*** → repetition > willpower

- Be kind to yourself: small changes add up over time!

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## Think long term



1. Create connections ***before you need them***

2. ***Give first, give value, make connections***

3. Use the ***norm of reciprocity*** & the “Five-Minute Favor”

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## Get weak ties to come to you: Office Hours



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2mo • Edited •

I've decided to hold (virtual) office hours!

They're \*open to anyone\* who wants 15-30 minutes to chat. Sign up for a Zoom meeting via the link below.

Why am I doing this?

Well, if you've ever taken a class with me, you know how I feel about networking & relationship building. But more than that, I've been feeling a bit like a non-contributing member of society during this lockdown, and wanted to figure a way to give something (small) of value...at this point, that amounts to my time and knowledge.

Plus, with two kids under 3, short blocks of time is about all I can piece together for work-related activities. Might as well do something socially stimulating.

So...want to discuss/ask something about organizations, networks/networking, creativity, music, management, getting a PhD or MBA, your career, my product executive program, life\*, or whatever? You can sign up here:

<https://lnkd.in/dnwZwh5> <-- April is fully booked. Now you can go here:

<https://lnkd.in/d8KJit9>

\*You're getting what you pay for on this one.

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## Get weak ties to come to you: Office Hours



1. Block 1-2 hours of 15, 20, or 30-min blocks every week or two
  - Calendly is a good tool for this
2. Announce to the world\* that you're open for conversations
3. Dissuade closer friends from signing up (find other time for them)
4. Wash, rinse, repeat → 4/week x 30 weeks/year = **120 convos/year**

\*LinkedIn, Facebook, your social media site of choice, your company intranet, etc.

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## Office Hours: But, but, but!



1. Zoom fatigue!
2. Useless/dumb meetings!
3. People trying to sell me something!
4. I have nothing of interest to offer! → **Curse of Knowledge**

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## Build your Personal Board of Directors



- For advice, direction, help, & guidance (on short notice)
- Could be very structured, could be more informal...it's what you're comfortable with
- Mentors, peers, advisors, former colleagues/bosses/professors...
- But what's in it for them?

***"I hope at some point in your career you get to be a mentor to someone like you...just so you understand."***

Adapted from Gibson Biddle (<https://medium.com/@gibsonbiddle/hacking-your-product-management-career-cce227a9c39a>)

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## Why care about having mentors / a BoD?



### • Professional benefits:

- Quicker advancement
- Higher salaries
- Higher job & career satisfaction
- Stronger org commitment & identification

### • Personal benefits:

- Better physical health & self-esteem
- Happier with work-life integration
- Stronger relational skills
- Improved empathy

***If the mentors are “strong” / “good”***

If mentors are poorly chosen, not committed, unnecessarily harmful, or even simply not a good fit,  
***there are plenty of downsides***

Source: <https://hbr.org/2020/07/why-your-mentorship-program-isn-t-working>

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## What are we talking about?



"A coach talks **to** you, a mentor talks **with** you, and a sponsor talks **about** you."\*

\* Roles may sometimes overlap

Think of a mentor as a cross between an advisor and a (constrained!) therapist.



COACH

A coach provides guidance for your development, often focused on soft skills (e.g., active listening) rather than technical skills (e.g., financial acumen).

**Who Drives the Relationship?**  
You and your coach are responsible for driving the relationship—you can reach out to your coach when you need help, but your coach can also reach out to you.

**Actions**  
Provide development feedback outside the formal performance evaluation process.



MENTOR

A mentor informally or formally helps you navigate your career, providing guidance for career choices and decisions.

**Who Drives the Relationship?**  
You drive the relationship. Your mentor is reactive and responsive to your needs.

**Actions**  
Help you determine possible career paths to meet specific career goals.



SPONSOR

A sponsor is a senior leader or other person who uses strong influence to help you obtain high-visibility assignments, promotions, or jobs.

**Who Drives the Relationship?**  
The sponsor drives the relationship, advocating for you in many settings, including behind closed doors.

**Actions**  
Advocate for your advancement and champion your work and potential with other senior leaders.

At the end of the day:  
These are all relationships

So make the relationship(s) primary

Source: Catalyst. Coaches, Mentors, and Sponsors: Understanding the Differences. New York: Catalyst, December 11, 2014.

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## Fundamentally, what is relationship building about?



Relationships =  
Social exchanges  
over time

You can take out what you put in

What you put in:  
• Effort / Commitment  
• Value  
• **Trustworthiness**

This holds for you & your board members / mentors!

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## Build your Personal Board of Directors



WHO	HOW
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. People whose experience and judgment you value and take seriously</li><li>2. Admirable skills, broad network</li><li>3. Trustworthy!</li><li>4. Care about you personally</li><li>5. People whom you're comfortable asking for help</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. No need to "DTR"; nurture</li><li>2. Aim high</li><li>3. Look to your "weak ties" &amp; friends of friends</li><li>4. Figure out how you can help them (now or in the future)</li><li>5. Patience, persistence, thick skin</li></ol>

Adapted from Gibson Biddle (<https://medium.com/@gibsonbiddle/hacking-your-product-management-career-cce227a9c39a>)

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## Your Board: Tips on engaging



### 1. **Invest & inform** (especially when things are going well)

– People don't want to hear from you just when things suck or you need something

### 2. Encourage (and welcome) direct, honest feedback

### 3. **LISTEN**

### 4. Adapt your board to your **current and future needs**

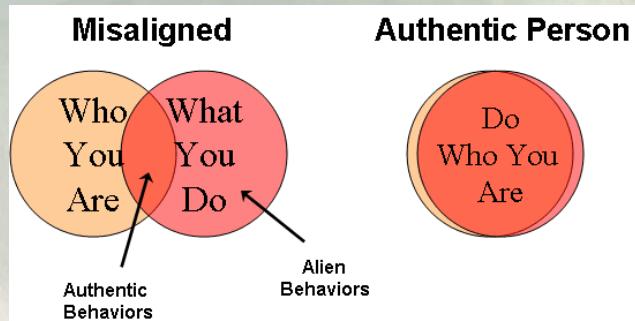
### 5. Seek the right **diversity**

Adapted from Gibson Biddle (<https://medium.com/@gibsonbiddle/hacking-your-product-management-career-cce227a9c39a>)

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## In closing: the importance of authenticity & curiosity



**Authenticity** is the feeling of alignment between who you are and your behaviors

**Curiosity** is approaching the world as if you always have something to learn

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## In closing: the importance of authenticity & curiosity

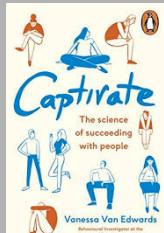


If you're authentically curious, networking won't feel gross...

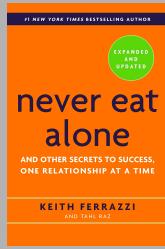
...and if you consider it to be learning—or even *giving*—it might even feel good.

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## Book recommendations



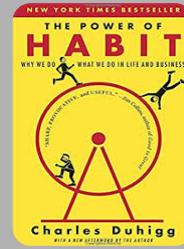
“Captivate: The Science of Succeeding with People”  
By Vanessa Van Edwards



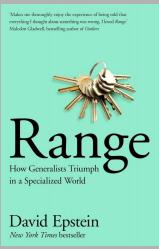
“Never Eat Alone (And Other Secrets to Success, One Relationship at a Time)”  
By Keith Ferrazzi



“Give and Take: Why Helping Others Drives Our Success”  
By Adam Grant



“The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business”  
By Charles Duhigg



“Range: How Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World”  
By David Epstein

And a podcast:



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