

## **BUILDING YOUR DEVELOPMENTAL NETWORK**

### **PART I: Defining Your Network**

Your developmental network is a relatively small set of relationships that helps you to get your work done, advance your career, and provide both personal and professional support. These may include relationships with colleagues (e.g. bosses, subordinates, peers), family members, members of your community, and/or individuals you have met on Boards, in professional meetings, and at other interest groups.

- (A) **Your Developers.** The chart on the next page helps you identify the people who assist you in different ways. As you think back over the past 1-2 years, consider the following types of relationships.

**People who help you get your work done.** These are the people who are helpful and useful to you in doing your work. They may work directly with you, and/or they may have provided leads to others who helped you with important information, introductions, technical advice, professional expertise, or other resources you needed to do your work.

**People who help you advance your career.** These are the people who contribute to your professional development and career advancement. Whether these are genuine mentors or more distant relationships, these are people who have given you career guidance and direction, arranged exposure to critical people, provided political advice, helped you get important opportunities or assignments, and/or been an advocate for you.

**People who provide personal support for you.** These are the people you go to for your emotional well being. They are the ones with whom you share experiences—both positive and negative, consult about decisions or concerns that are important to you, vent with, commiserate with, debrief critical experiences with—people with whom you can be yourself.

**People who are role-models to you.** These are the people who set an example you aspire to emulate. They are people whose careers you admire and hope to follow in their footsteps, either professionally or personally.

- (B) **Relationship Strength.** People may help you in only one way or in all of these ways. In addition, the strength of your relationship may vary from close to distant. **Close** relationships are ones where there is a high degree of trust, liking and mutual commitment. **Distant** relationships are ones where you don't know the person very well. **Moderate** relationships are in the middle, neither very close nor distant.
- (C) **Access to Power.** Indicate by a star (\*) those people whom you see as very well connected in your organization and/or their organization or industry. That person might be in a leadership position or just somebody who seems to know many other important people.

## MY DEVELOPERS

Think about the people who have taken an active interest in your career by assisting you with your personal and professional development. Think broadly, these may be people from your work or outside of work (i.e., family, community). You DO NOT need to fill in every row, just use as many as appropriate.

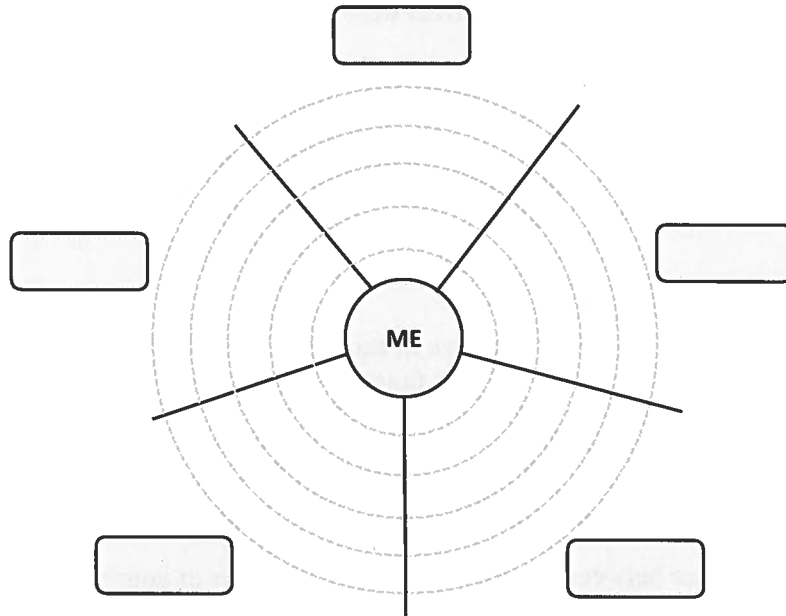
First, list all of your developers. Then, rate each developer on a scale from 1-5 based on the assistance they provide, as follows:

1-----2-----3-----4-----5

Never                      Rarely                      Sometimes                      Often                      Always

Developer Names	Helps me get work done	Helps advance my career	Provides personal support	Is a role- model for me

## MY DEVELOPMENTAL NETWORK MAP



**Suggested Guidelines:**

1. Label each section as a different social arena from which developmental relationships originate, e.g., work, grad school, family, church, professional orgs.
2. Put initials of important people in the appropriate quadrant, indicating how close or distant they are from you by the length of the line that connects the two of you. (Use different colors and be creative!)

## Analyzing Your Developmental Network

Research demonstrates that developmental networks vary in structure, content, and quality of relationships. Jot down some answers to the following questions in order to better understand the potential value and limitations of your current developmental network.

1. **Size.** Do you have the right number of developers to help you reach your goals? Should you enlist more people? Or, do you have too many and need to manage those relationships more effectively?
2. **Diversity.** Consider the people you have in each category, how similar or different are they in terms of experience, expertise or function, background, gender, race, age, etc.?
3. **Density.** Draw lines between people who know each other in your network. Is your network very closed (does everyone know one another?) or is it open?
4. **Strength of Connections.** As you look at your map, are all your developers very close or do you have a few who are more distant?
5. **Connections to Power and Influence.** As you look at your map, how many people would you characterize as influential and/or well-connected?

## **CONCLUSIONS ABOUT YOUR DEVELOPMENTAL NETWORK:**

Summarize what you learned about: the **PATTERNS** you see in your developmental network, your **STYLE** of networking, and/or what you might want to do differently in the future.

## PART II: Action Planning

The purpose of this action planning activity is to:

- (A) Help you enhance (extend and/or strengthen) your network relative to major challenges/opportunities you will face in the next 1-3 years.
- (B) Help you develop a relationship building strategy that will work for you
- (C) Help you develop a specific plan to pursue over the next 3-6 months
- (D) Create an accountability mechanism

Based on the information from today's session and the data you prepared in your Mapping exercise, spend a few minutes responding to the following questions which will be used to complete your action plan:

1. Identify an opportunity or leadership challenge that you would like to pursue going forward. This does not have to be a "new job" or position; it could be taking on a new challenge, changing the scope of what you are currently doing, improving your leadership skills, partnering with others on a new initiative, achieving more balance in your life, etc.
  
2. Given what you are trying to accomplish, how will your current network help you achieve your goal? (Be specific about individuals and how they can help.)
  
3. What type of help is missing in your current developmental network?
  
4. How can you leverage your current network to meet people that could be helpful to you?

5. What, specific actions will you take to get things started? Please specify how you will you initiate contact and/or enhance ONE OR TWO relationships. It is best to start with one or two relationships that you think will substantially enrich your network and support your leadership goals. Then check in with your accountability partner to reflect on how your action plan is working.

***Relationship 1:***

**Actions**

**Completed by:**

***Relationship 2:***

**Actions**

**Completed by:**

**Check-in with your Accountability Partner**

**Completed by:**