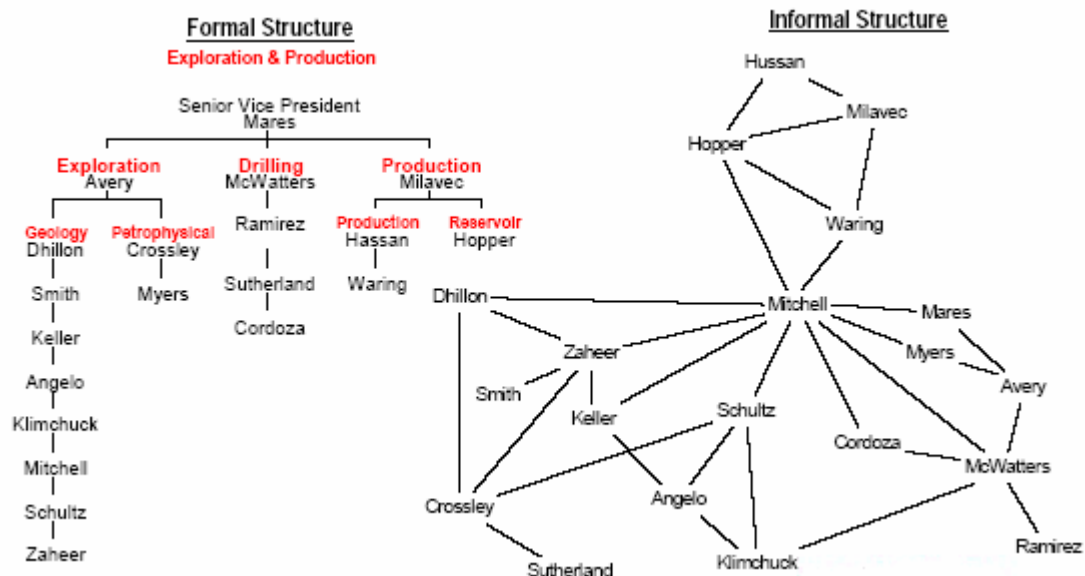


Network Analysis visualizes and improves invisible networks in an organisation

A growing number of organisations work in a flat structure with less resources. Productivity and efficiency requires effective co-operation within and between functions, departments and hierarchy. Managers often focus on external relations and sometimes forget to map and support the networking between staff in their own organisation. These “invisible” social networks have no official organigrams, yet they highly influence performance and innovation in an organisation.

The question is – how can the management manage what it can not see? More e-mails and meetings may not be the solution.



Source: *The Advisory Board Company, 1996*

Applied research in Social Network Analysis by Rob Cross and others, has resulted in a tested method that can help managers map, analyze and support the social networks that are crucial to the success of an organisation.

Mapping and surfacing relationships in an organisation allows you to consciously strengthen and improve co-operation and information flow in an organisation.

The analysis focuses on the interaction between staff.

A sample of possible questions:

- Who do you turn to for information and support in your organisation?
- How is your energy level affected by each person?

A study of the information flow in a working group can be done in the following way.

All staff are invited and asked to list up to 20 people who are important in their work by providing information or help with complex issues.

Depending on the situation and history of the organisation, questions can be developed to target specific aspects. Information about people's location, proximity, departments, hierarchy and number of years in the organisation can be added as background information.

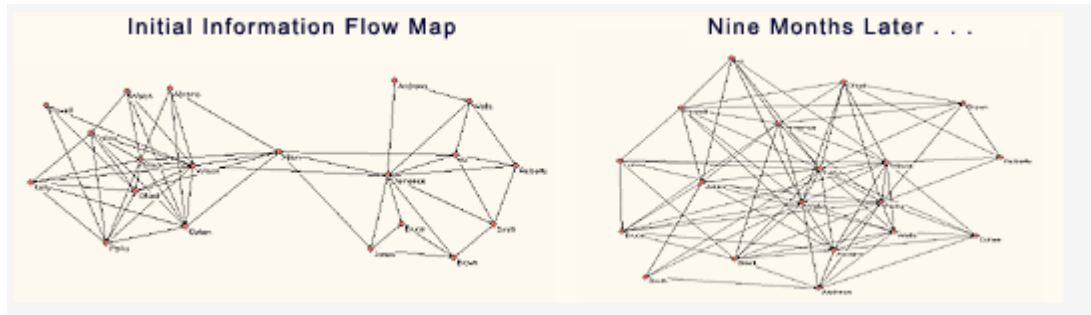
The next step will be to work through a couple of specific questions. Every co-worker works through his or her closest network and indicates for each person;

- *How often do you turn to the person for work related information? (0=Never, 5=Very often)*
- *Assess to what extent you feel that you are aware of each person's knowledge and skills. (on a 0 – 5 scale)*
- *Assess to what extent it would help you if you had the opportunity to communicate more with each person. (0 – 5 scale)*

All the collected data is processed in a software which generates graphics of how information flows in an organisation. The information clarifies who is in the core of a network, meaning that they may be important hubs – or – bottlenecks that information needs to be diverted around. Isolated or under utilized persons will also be made visible so that appropriate action can be taken.

The next step is to interpret the information and suggest a number of actions. This can help clarify possible malfunctions in the organisation's information flow and support a new, positive culture through coaching and workshops.

This is an example of what it can look like in an organisation before- and after a Network Analysis-process that has included actions to improve the information flow;



Contact me for an informal discussion on how Network Analysis could help improve interaction and information flow in your organisation.

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Source: The Hidden Power of Social Networks, Cross, Parker, 2004