

# Establishing Contacts & Effective Networking

*“It’s not what you know but who you know & who knows you that matters”*

**PROF. DR. NORIFUMI KAWAI, MPIA (Pittsburgh)**

International Business & Trade  
Università degli Studi di Bergamo  
Dipartimento di Scienze Aziendali  
Bergamo, ITALY

# Networking & Your Future Career



## ■ Today's Presentation Topics

**1** **WHAT** is networking?

**2** **WHY** is networking important?

**3** **HOW** can effective networking contribute to your career?

# What is Networking?



## ■ Definition

**Networking** is “the action of making use of a network of people for the exchange of information, etc., or for professional or other advantage”. —Oxford Dictionary



Individuals high in **network ability** “are often **highly skilled negotiators & deal makers** & are adept at **conflict management**” —Ferris et al. (2007: 292)

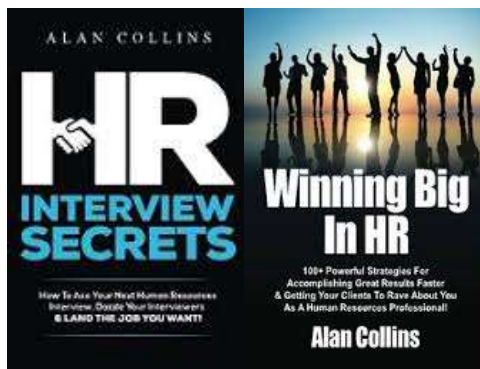
Source: <http://www.oed.com>; Ferris, G.R., Treadway, D.C., Perrewe, P.L., Brouer, R.L., Douglas, C. & Lux, S. (2007). Political Skill in Organizations, *Journal of Management*, 33(3): 290-320

# What is Networking?



## ■ Powerful Quotes (1/2)

*“If you want 1 year of prosperity, grow grain. If you want 10 years of prosperity, grow trees. **If you want 100 years of prosperity, grow people**”.* — Chinese Proverb.



*“Pulling a good network together takes **effort, sincerity & time**”.* — Alan Collins.

*“The true value of networking doesn't come from how many people we can meet but rather **how many people we can introduce to others**”.* — Simon Sinek.



# What is Networking?



## ■ Powerful Quotes (2/2)

*“Networking is marketing. Marketing **yourself**, marketing **your uniqueness**, marketing **what you stand for**”*. — Christine Comaford-Lynch.



*“Instead of better glasses, your network gives you **better eyes**”*. — Ronald Burt.

*“Networking is more about **‘farming’** than it is about ‘hunting’. It’s about cultivating relationships”*. — Dr. Ivan Misner.



# What is Networking?



## ■ Types of Networks

- ❖ **Strong ties:** parents, close family members, friends, relatives.
- ❖ **Weak ties:** neighbors, industry networks, professional organizations, clients, suppliers, academic institutions, accountants, bankers, alumni, ex-coworkers, consultants & etc.
- ❖ **Granovetter, M. (1973).** ‘The Strength of Weak Ties’ (*American Journal of Sociology*)

## ■ What Resources Networks Bring to You?

- ❖ Emotional support;
- ❖ Exposure to senior organizational decision makers;
- ❖ Access to special information;
- ❖ Performance feedback; &
- ❖ Help & advice.



**Source:** Bozionelos, N. (2003). Intra-Organizational Network Resources: Relation to Career Success and Personality, *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 11(1): 41-66.

# What is Networking?



## ■ How to Measure Networks?

- ❖ **Network size:** The **number** of **actors** in a network.
- ❖ **Network intensity:** The **frequency** with which individuals access different networks.
- ❖ **Network diversity:** The **number** of **different networks** individuals are involved with.
- ❖ **Network density:** The **degree** of **interconnectivity** among network members.
- ❖ **Network stability:** The **duration** of **relationships** that individuals have established **knowledge exchanges** with network members.



# What is Networking?



## ■ Social Networks

### ❖ Connectors

- They use many ties to different social worlds & who have **the ability to link people, idea, & resources** that wouldn't normally bump into one another.
- Connectors are **critical facilitators for collaboration & integration**.

### ❖ Closure Relationships

- ... refers to the degree to which all members of a social network have relationships (or ties) with other group members.
- **High levels of trust** help to ensure that informal norms in the group are easily enforced & there is **less “free riding”**.

### ❖ Bridging Relationships

- It stresses the importance of ties **bridging disconnected people** receive timely, diverse information due to their access to **a wide range of heterogeneous information flows**.

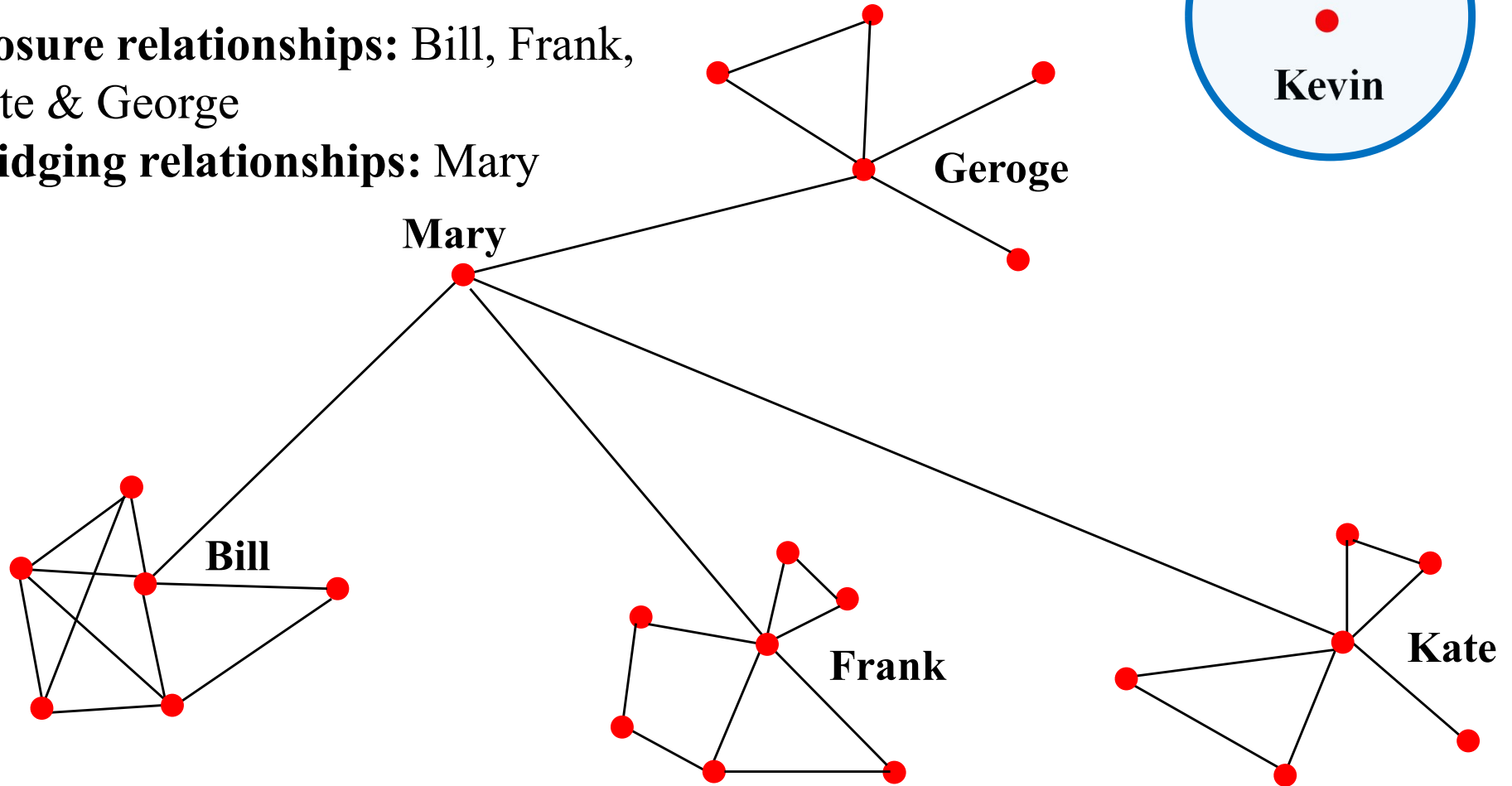


# What is Networking?



## ■ A Simplified Social Network

- ❖ **Closure relationships:** Bill, Frank, Kate & George
- ❖ **Bridging relationships:** Mary



# What is Networking?



## ■ Implications for Career Success

### ❖ Private Information

- Private information from **personal contacts** can offer **something not found in publicly available sources** (e.g., the release date of a new product or knowledge about what a particular interviewer looks for in candidates)

### ❖ Access to Diverse Skills Sets

- **Highly diverse networks** can help you develop **more complete, creative & unbiased perspectives on issues.**

### ❖ Power

- Most corporate networks are made up of several clusters that have few links between them. **Brokers are especially powerful** because they connect separate clusters, **stimulating collaboration** among independent specialists

# What is Networking?



## ■ The Potential Downside of Social Capital

### ❖ “Groupthink”

- A tendency **not to question standard beliefs**
- In effect, **too many warm & fuzzy feelings among group members** prevent people from rigorously challenging each other.
- People are discouraged from engaging in the “**creative abrasion**”.

### ❖ Deep-Rooted Mind-Sets

- The organization or group would continue to hire, reward, & promote like-minded people who **intensify organizational inertia & erode innovation**.
- Such **homogeneity** would increase over time & decreases the effectiveness of decision-making processes.

### ❖ Own Self-Interests

- Individuals may use the contacts they develop to **favor their preferred courses of action & to take advantage of their power**.

# What is Networking?



## ■ Do Network Resources Matter in the Career Context?



### POINTS

- > Supervisor-subordinate dyads data in a large Japanese manufacturing company (N=217)
- > Social capital signifies **resources** (*i.e.*, information, influence, solidarity, career & psychological support, mentoring).
- > Network resources exert a statistically significant & **positive impact** on both **job performance & promotability**.

Source: Own unique data.



## ■ Why An Informal Networking Interview So Important?

- ❖ Helps you **gather timely information**;
- ❖ If you are to succeed in applications & interviews for types of job that you have not done before, you will need a **very clear idea of what the work is like**;
- ❖ Jobs are frequently filled either through **personal contacts** or through **specialist publications**;
- ❖ **The referral process** can put you **in contact with key people** you might otherwise never meet;
- ❖ Most employers would prefer to hire a **person referred by a colleague, peer or friend**; &
- ❖ **The overall amount of time** it normally takes you to find a job can be drastically **reduced**.



## ■ What Support Can You Gain from Effective Networking?

- ❖ You can get a **better idea of whether you would enjoy this work & be successful.**
- ❖ Your contact person may:
  - (1) Outline the range of jobs within their field;
  - (2) Clarify the level of competition for them;
  - (3) Look through your CV & suggest some improvements;
  - (4) Advise you on the skills or experience that you might need; &
  - (5) Recommend other sources of information, including their own contacts.
- ❖ Contacts can be very helpful to guide you to gain insights into the **organizational culture & the history of the company.**
- ❖ Your contacts may be able to tell you **which newspapers & recruitment agencies to use for job vacancies & let you know about openings within their firm.**



## ■ Strategize Your Networking Success

### 1 Create a list of contacts !

- > Your extended family;
- > Your friends & acquaintances at junior high school, high school & university;
- > Sports clubs, school associations, & societies that you have joined; &
- > University alumni networks & your parents' professional networks of friends.

### 2 Build & cultivate new contacts !

- > Join events where you may obtain some advice & information related to your career (*e.g.*, professional association meetings, family or friends events, graduate recruitment fairs, careers information fairs, short courses etc.); &
- > You bring **some copies of your CV** when attending any of the above events !

### 3 How to maximize the potential value of your contacts?

- > Think about what your contacts can do for you.
- > Set your objectives for your networking;
- > Prepare a list of questions for each discussion; &
- > Polish up your communication skills.





## ■ Golden Rules in An Informal Networking Interview!

- ❖ Focus on **obtaining advice** ! – Never ask for a job !
- ❖ **Prepare well** for the interview in advance ! You are the interviewer !
  - You need to be **clear about the specific questions** you wish to address & what you want to say about yourself.
- ❖ Ask questions people can **realistically answer**.
- ❖ Ask **questions about the person** you are meeting, what they do & how they got where they are.
- ❖ Write a **thank-you note** within a few days of your meeting.
- ❖ **Stay in touch**, in a considerate way with the people you meet.
  - A great way to do that is with brief email reports on your progress, indicating you do **NOT** necessarily expect a reply.

Source: Navarro, A. (2011). Good Networking/Bad Networking, PEJ, 58-60.



## ■ Examples of Some Critical Mistakes

- ❖ You start contacting with those who you do **NOT** know very well.
- ❖ You do **NOT** provide any clarifications about how you got the contact.
- ❖ The person you meet do **NOT** fully understand what you wish to know.
- ❖ You should **NOT** begin by asking for a job rather than help & advice.



## ■ Possible Questions in Your Networking Interview (1/2)

### ❖ Company Overview

- Can you tell me about the **history of this organization**?
- What **values or visions** do employees in this organization share?
- How does this company's **decision-making structure** look like?

### ❖ Position Overview

- What are the **major task of your current position** at this organization?
- What are some of the **other types of positions** in this industry?
- What **types of entry-level positions** are usually available?

### ❖ Occupational & Organizational Interests

- How did you personally **become interested** in this field?
- What **attracted you to this organization** in particular?
- What was the moment when you felt a **great sense of achievement** in your position?



## ■ Possible Questions in Your Networking Interview (2/2)

### ❖ Working Conditions

- What **obligations** does your workplace upon you outside the standard 40-hour work week?
- Are there **any travel obligations** with your position?
- Is there **any dress code** at this organization?

### ❖ Job Requirements

- What **specific qualifications** makes me successful in this industry?
- What **expectations** does this organization have of its employees?

### ❖ Job Search Techniques

- How did you get **your current position** in this organization?
- What do you recommend is the **best tactics** for acquiring an entry-level position in this field?

### ❖ General Advice & Recommendations

- How would you **advise** people wishing into **this kind of career path**?
- Do you have **any suggestions** about the **quality of my CV**?



## ■ Making Your Career Successful

- ❖ **The earlier** you begin, **the better** it is !
- ❖ **Informal networking interviews** can be very useful in choosing a major career path !
- ❖ Know about **your objectives** in your informal networking interview !
- ❖ Know **why you are networking** & be prepared to be honest about that with the people with whom you network!
- ❖ **Brainstorm, categorize & prioritize** the names of people you think can put you in touch with someone in those !
- ❖ **Networking** interviews helps you feel **much more confident** !

# The End of Today's Lecture

---



ご清聴有難う御座いました。

**Thank you so much!**

**Vielen Dank für Ihre Aufmerksamkeit!**

**Grazie mille !**

## **【Contact Address】**

**ADDRESS: 208 in Via dei Caniana 2, 24127 Bergamo, ITALY**

**E-mail: [norifumi.kawai@unibg.it](mailto:norifumi.kawai@unibg.it)**