

BUILDING YOUR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENTAL NETWORK

PART I: DEFINING YOUR NETWORK

Relationships play a critical role in your career development. This exercise is designed to allow you to examine your developmental (mentoring) network to focus on furthering relationships that will help you flourish. Your developmental network is the set of relationships that enables you to thrive in your career by providing both personal and professional support.

- (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 year, consider the following:

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 they 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 your developers in order of importance to you. Then, rate each developer on a scale from 1-5 based on the assistance they provide, as follows:

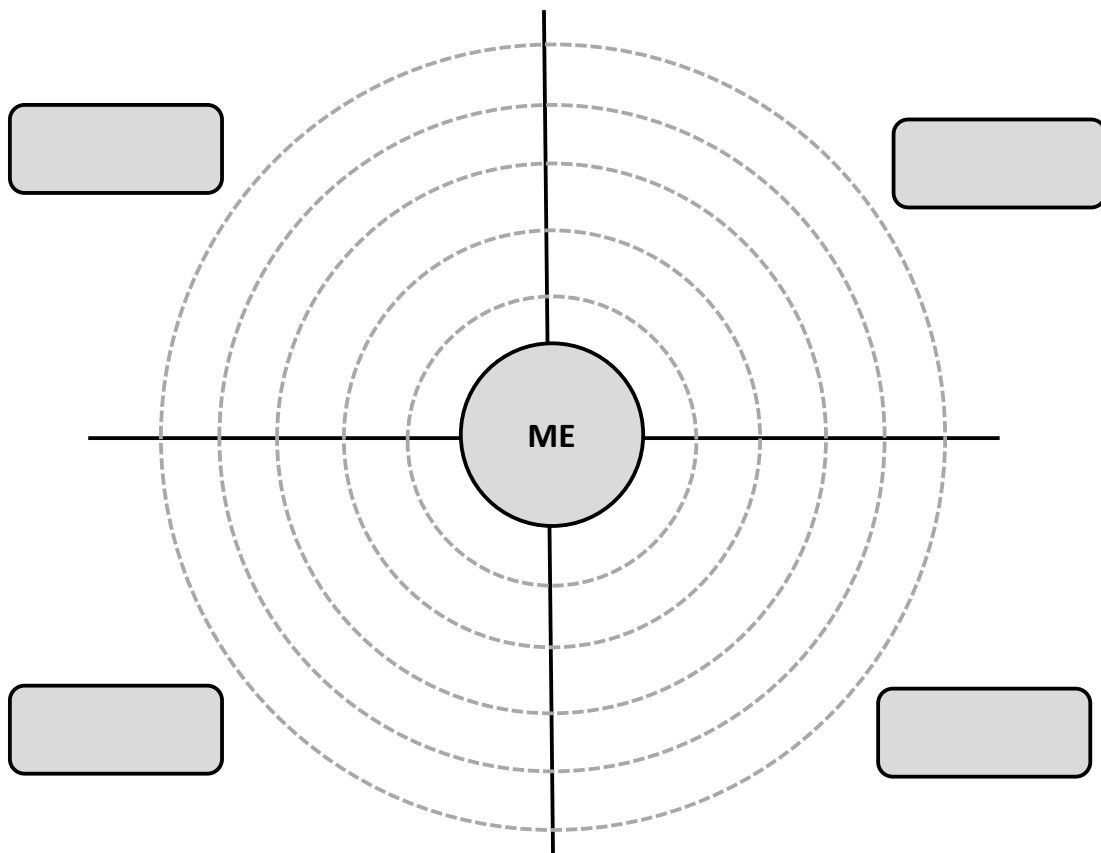
1 ----- **2** ----- **3** ----- **4** ----- **5**
 Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always

Developer Names	Helps me get work done	Helps advance my career	Provides personal support	Is a role-model for me
TOTAL (add up each column)				

Note: This is one way to assess your developmental network, considering different support dimensions (more on this in Part II). Another more visual way, is to map your relationships.

MY DEVELOPMENTAL NETWORK MAP

Group your developers into the **social arena** in which you interact most frequently, often this is where you first met (e.g., work, home, community, professional association, college, graduate school). Label each box with a social arena (it's alright if you have fewer than four!), then place your developers' initials on the map in terms of relationship strength or closeness to you. Draw lines connecting you to each developer, as well as to indicate developers who know one another.



Part II: ANALYZING YOUR DEVELOPMENTAL NETWORK

Research demonstrates that networks vary in structure, content, and quality of relationships. Analyze to better understand the potential value and limitations of your current network.

1. **Diversity.** As you look at the list people in the various categories, how similar or different are these individuals (in terms of gender, race, function, experience, geography)?
2. **Redundancy.** As you look at this set of relationships how much overlap is there in the support you receive (e.g., getting work done, advancing career, personal, role modeling)? Do the same few people provide the most of each type of support?
3. **Interconnectivity.** Draw lines between people who know one another on your map. How closed is your developmental network in the sense that most of the people know each other?
4. **Strength of Connection.** As you look at your map, what is the spread of people in terms of closeness and distance from you?
5. **Connections to Power and Influence.** As you look at the people on your list, how many would you characterize as influential?

CONCLUSIONS:

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

PART III: ACTION PLANNING

The purpose of this action planning activity is to:

- (A) Help you enhance (extend and/or strengthen) your developmental 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

You want to build your developmental network to support your needs, consider the following questions:

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 developmental network help you achieve your goal? (Be specific about individuals and how they can help.) Is there anyone you can help, how?

3. What type of help is missing in your current developmental network?

4. How can you leverage your current set of relationships 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 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 development and support your leadership goals. Then check in with your learning partner to reflect on how your action plan is working.

Relationship 1:

Actions

Complete by:

Relationship 2:

Actions

Complete by:

Check-in with learning partner

Date: