

## Social Networking: A Critical Competency for Leaders in Integrated Water Management

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MEMBERS:




## Objectives

- To learn about social networking.
- To explore its relevance to IWM practitioners.
- To identify some ways to improve.
- To flag some good resources.





## Introductory concepts



## What is social networking?

- **Networking:**
  - “Creating a fabric of personal contacts who will provide support, feedback, insight, resources and information.”  
(Ibarra and Hunter, 2007, p. 40).





## Leadership and networking

- “**Networks** are invisible and informal structures that have the ability to support and undermine leadership, which we understand to be the achievement of:
  - Direction,
  - Alignment, and
  - Commitment toward shared goals.



Leaders must find and tap into social networks to achieve these outcomes”

(Cullen *et al.*, 2013, p. 1).



## Relevance to integrated water management

- **Leaders:**
  - A critical competency along with communication skills.
  - Evidence:
    - Research (e.g. IWM champions).
    - Experienced leaders – e.g. Prof. Paul Greenfield.
    - Commonly included in leadership development plans.
- **Practitioners** not engaging in leadership:
  - It’s importance depends on your role and aspirations.



## The benefits to IWM leaders?

- Helps to boost innovation.
- Helps with 'scanning behaviours' (e.g. spotting opportunities).
- Helps to build and exercise personal power (i.e. influence).
- Helps to build resilience, knowledge and energy / motivation.
- Helps to deliver personal and organisational goals.
- Helps to build trust and facilitate collaboration.
- Helps to solve complex / wicked problems. ...



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## Why become a better networker?

1. Connections matter.
2. Work often happens through informal channels.
3. Leadership occurs through relationships.
4. Successful leaders develop networks of strong, diverse relationships.
5. Network knowledge is an asset in change efforts.
6. Innovation networks can be identified and supported.
7. The most important challenges leaders face today are interdependent.



Center for  
Creative  
Leadership  
www.ccl.org

Cullen *et al.*, 2013;  
Center for Creative Leadership.

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## Importance of networking

"Extensive informal networks are so important that if they do not exist, creating them has to be the focus of activity early in a major leadership initiative."

Professor John Kotter  
(Harvard University, Boston)



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## Importance of networking

"An important driver of Melbourne's transition was the legacy of a committed and innovative group of associated champions working across multiple sectors to advance change. The case study revealed the significant potential for a small network of champions across sectors to create positive change."

Professor Rebekah Brown & Ms Jodie Clarke  
(Monash University)



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## Types of networks

## Types of networks

- Ibarra and Hunter (2007):
  - **Operational** (i.e. networking that is focused on efficiently delivering one's day-to-day, work-related tasks).
  - **Personal** (i.e. networking that is focused on personal advancement, such as career and skill development).
  - **Strategic** (i.e. focused on achieving long-term, strategic organisational goals).



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## Types of networks

- Prof. Lynda Gratton – London Business School (2012):

### Three New Networks for the Digital Age

- 1 The posse—turn to them to problem-solve or seek advice
- 2 The regenerative community—those with whom you have deep, personal relationships
- 3 The “big idea” crowd—people who expose you to completely new ideas and knowledge



Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=49neRmoVPz8>

## What do we know about IWM leaders?

### • My observations:

- Usually very good at all forms of networking – ‘core business’.
- ‘Posse’ / operational network:
  - Often see a cross-boundary network with strong ties that is used as the ‘engine room’ for many IWM projects.
- Often excel at ‘strategic networking’:
  - They think ahead and take risks.
  - Often used for ‘influencing up’.
- Often have a great ‘big idea crowd’ network.
- ‘Regenerative community’ used to build resilience.



## Learning from water leaders

- Multiple case study (Taylor, 2010):
  - PhD research, 6 case studies, focussing on IWCM project champions.
  - 5 of the cases involved local government (e.g. City of Melbourne).

### • 5 networking lessons:

- 1. The importance of ‘cross-boundary’ networks:
  - Intra and inter-organisational networks.
  - Strong ties.
  - Trust.
  - Collaboration.
  - Takes time to build.



## Learning from water leaders

### • 5 networking lessons (cont.):

- 2. The value of broad, diverse networks:
  - Innovation.
  - Scanning behaviours (opportunities / risks).
  - Links to researchers.
  - Capacity building programs and networks.
  - Accessing information and expert power.
  - Energy and motivation.
- 3. The ‘tandem model of championship’:
  - Project – executive champions: strong tie.
  - Helps to influence up.
  - A key to success.



## Learning from water leaders

### • 5 networking lessons (cont.):

- 4. The value of support networks to build resilience:
  - Helps to manage the risk of ‘burn out’.
- 5. The value of strategically building strong ties:
  - Need strong ties to drive change (e.g. a coalition).
  - Example: DA manager and local developers.
  - Needed for development and advice (e.g. mentors).



3 tips to improve

## Learning to become better at networking

"... networking is not a talent; nor does it require a gregarious, extroverted personality. It is a skill, one that takes practice. We have seen over and over again that people who work at networking can learn not only how to do it well but also how to enjoy it."

Professor Herminia Ibarra & Dr Mark Hunter  
(Insead Business School, France)



## Tips

- Macro vs micro skills of networking:
  - **Macro** – e.g. identifying the need to re-shape your network to meet specific needs.
  - **Micro** – e.g. having an 'elevator speech', using Linked-in, etc.
  - Need both sets of skills, but the big gains are in the macro area.



## Tips – macro level

- 1. Adopt a proactive mindset:
  - Leaders should "focus on cultivating a network rather than allowing it to organically arise from the day-to-day demands of ... work" (Cross and Thomas, 2011, p. 152).
  - Networking = 'core business' for leaders.
  - Be purposeful in networking activities.
  - Be a 'constant gardener'.



## Tips – macro level

- 1. Mindset (cont.):
  - "Time spent in the early days of building a network will save time down the road when you're trying to solve problems, leverage resources, and achieve success" (Byham, 2009, p. 22).
  - Have a **generous spirit**:
    - look to help others first;
    - build trust;
    - think long-term; and
    - look for 'win-win' outcomes.



## Tips – macro level

- 2. Have a plan / strategy:
  - Doesn't have to be a written plan.
  - Four steps to build a better network (Cross and Thomas, 2011):



– Analyze >> De-layer >> Diversify >> Capitalize.

## Tips – macro level

- 2. Have a plan / strategy (cont.):
  - Think about the **types of networks** you want / need.
  - **Benefits**: Assess whether your networks are providing you with:
    - information and ideas;
    - the capacity to solve challenging problems;
    - political support and influence;
    - personal development and career opportunities;
    - personal support and energy;
    - a sense of purpose or worth; and / or
    - work / life balance.



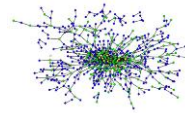
## Tips – macro level

- 2. Have a plan / strategy (cont.):
  - Be aware of **homophily**.
  - **In general**, aim to build relationships with:
    - people with new information and expertise;
    - Formally and informally powerful people;
    - people who can provide developmental feedback;
    - information brokers; and
    - energisers.
  - Use 'shared activities' to build strong tie relationships.
  - Distance yourself from people who sap **time, energy and enthusiasm**.



## Tips – macro level

- 2. Have a plan / strategy (cont.):
  - Learn how your organisation / industry really works.
  - Identify 'hidden leaders' (e.g. information brokers, boundary spanners, change agents, champions).
  - Recognise that networks are dynamic and our needs change.
  - Recognise that 'complex challenges' demand great networks.



## Tips – macro level

- 3. Make time / take opportunities:
  - Implement your plan but also take good opportunities that emerge.
  - **Network**ing requires time and effort.
  - Look to leverage off existing work (e.g. pilot projects, task forces).
  - Look for synergies (e.g. personal + strategic networking).



## Making the time and effort

"Leaders ... must also accept that networking is one of the most important requirements of their new leadership roles and continue to allocate **enough time and effort** to see it pay off."

Professor Herminia Ibarra & Dr Mark Hunter  
(Insead Business School, France)



## Tips – micro level

- The basics:
  - Make a positive first impression (e.g. enthusiasm, credibility).
  - Learn to use on-line tools like Linked-in, Yammer, etc.
  - Maintain a 'contact database'.
  - Listen more than talk when networking.
  - Prepare an 'elevator speech'.
  - Use 'follow-up tasks'.



"Leadership experience? I have  
13 people following me on Twitter!"

## Tips – micro level

- The basics (cont.):
  - Use face-to-face communication where possible.
  - Prepare before networking events.
  - Thank people who help you, even if they just agree to meet.
  - Take some risks.
  - Always act with integrity and be transparent with your motives.
  - Use the 'platinum rule': "treat others how they want to be treated".



## Reflection

- What actions could you take to improve your networking ability at the:
  - Macro level?
  - Micro level?



## Resources for more information

## Good networking resources

- Australian Institute of Management, Queensland (2012). *If networking were an elite sport... 12 tips for networking in 2012*. Cited at: [www.aimqld.com.au/downloads/AIM\\_12TipsForNetworking.pdf](http://www.aimqld.com.au/downloads/AIM_12TipsForNetworking.pdf), 5 May 2013.
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- Grayson, C., & Baldwin, D. (2007). *Leadership networking: Connect, collaborate, create. An Ideas into Action Guidebook*. Greensboro, North Carolina: Center for Creative Leadership.
- Ibarra, H., & Hunter, M. (2007). How leaders build and use networks. *Harvard Business Review*, 85(1), 40–47.
- Uzzi, B., & Dunlap, S. (2005). How to build your network. *Harvard Business Review*, December 2005, 53–60.



## IWC Water Leadership Program



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## Key points

- Networking is a critical skill for IWM leaders.
- Anyone can improve through learning and practice.
- There are plenty of traps / mistakes.
- Start with the 'macro skills'.
- Be a 'constant gardener':
  - Decide what networks you want / need.
  - Plan how you will attain them.
  - Actively build and maintain them.
  - Keep your tools sharp > keep learning.



## Questions?

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