

NETWORK ROLES
NETWORK WEAVING WORKSHOP 1
SPEAKERS NOTES
11/10/2020

The Essential Roles that Must be Fulfilled for a Network to be Effective

A network weaver is someone who is aware of the networks around them and explicitly works to make them healthier. They do this by helping people identify their interests and challenges, connecting people strategically where there's potential for mutual benefit, and serving as a catalyst for self-organizing groups.

A network will be more effective if the four essential roles of a network weaver can be regularly and consistently fulfilled:

Connectors – Identify undeveloped aspects of the network and work to strengthen them. One of the key activities they carry out is connecting people and figuring out how they might help each other or the broader network. Connectors have a good understanding of people in their networks. They can see gaps or opportunities for members to collaborate, and also help support other members as they engage. Connectors often “close the triangle”; that is, they serve as a link between two people who may not already know each other.

Coordinators – Enjoy coordinating work and once collaborative projects begin to emerge, they catalyze and coordinate the project teams and coach other project coordinators. Coordinators often take the lead in organizing people and tasks. They help manage the work of networks and can play a role in coaching others to do the same.

Facilitators – help convene people to address an issue or challenge. They help get the network ball rolling by gathering people or groups together and facilitating the structure or organization of the network. Facilitators help groups of people who share a common interest or issue to come together and set up a more formal network. First, they gather a group, Then, they help the network develop an appropriate structure and help coordinate actions. Finally, facilitators work across the network to strengthen network relationships and facilitate in smaller action teams or work groups. Facilitators will also help organize and implement Communities of Practice where learning and sharing happen in the network.

Guardians – concern themselves with the well-being of the network. This can include managing communications and technical work (like setting up a web page or social media channels), finding funding opportunities, and providing training for other members. Guardians have a bird’s eye view of the network (the macro-level view) meaning they can see what the whole network needs to function more effectively. Guardians “listen” to the network and help fine-tune and problem solve network systems.

Not every network member or network weaver will fulfill each of these roles. Instead, as with all work, some are more interested or better at one or two of these roles. The key is to ensure that the network has sufficient interested volunteers on hand to cover each of these four essential roles. In vibrant and healthy networks there will be dozens of weavers who play a role -- sharing, allocating, and executing based on their interests, areas chosen for growth, and passions.

Resources

Everyone a Network Weaver (Interview with June Holley)

<https://blog.kumu.io/everyone-a-network-weaver-interview-with-june-holley-f0fd52b7573b>

What Type of Network Weaver are You? (Ontario Nonprofit Network) 22 Feb 2019

Network Weaving 101: What your network role says about you

John Saunders

<https://theonnc.ca/network-weaving-101-knowing-your-network/>