A FRESH LOOK AT WOMEN NETWORKS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For simplicity, we use the term 'network', however the survey was inclusive of organizations that go by other names, including e.g. "affinity networks", "Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)", "Business Resource Groups (BRGs)".

The global survey finds that networks, which are often considered a cornerstone of organizations' diversity and inclusion (D&I) activities, produce mixed results and can actually hinder women's careers. Also, many members have a more critical view of their network than would be commonly expected. We hope the perspective shared by survey participants from around the world helps spark new dialogue on better ways to balance what organizations and members hope to gain from their networks.

OVER 1,700 RESPONDENTS

58 COUNTRIES

92% WOMEN

KEY FINDINGS

For most networks, organizational expectations, resources, and metrics are misaligned, resulting in unobtainable lofty ambitions

Networks leadership role tends not to be recognized, correlating with lower engagement of women concerned. Time invested otherwise is probably better suited to propel career

Not even 1 in 3 members would recommend their network to others because it is not delivering on expectations and/or is not seen as valued by others
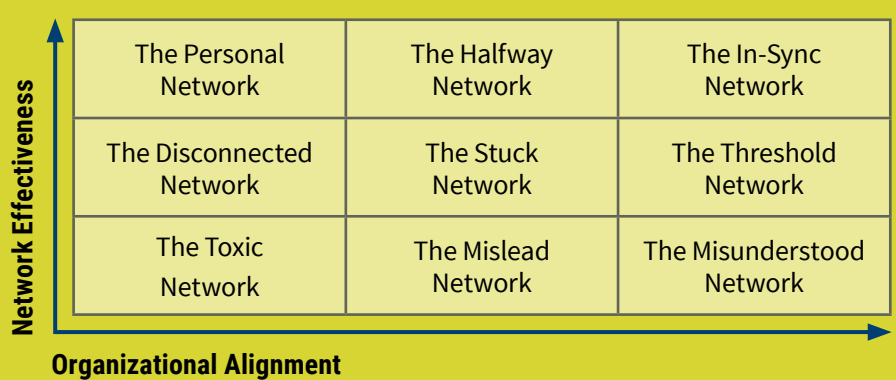
Members who don't feel positive about their network have lower engagement

Despite the overwhelmingly popular occurrence in many workplaces, and the amount of advice offered on how to effectively set them up, many networks deliver questionable outcomes

Some survey results connect with other pieces of research on gender and diversity & inclusion, especially **WORK-TYPE GENDER STEREOTYPING**, the **"WOMEN'S WORK" EFFECT**, **GRATITUDE**, **ROLE MODELS**, **DOUBLE BIND**, and **PSEUDO-NETWORKING**.

Generally, networks show up as typical personas that can be described based on an **EMPLOYEE NETWORK DIAGNOSTICS GRID** that helps to guide targeted steps to strengthen the network and its organization

Network Effectiveness			
The Personal Network	The Halfway Network	The In-Sync Network	
The Disconnected Network	The Stuck Network	The Threshold Network	© Hucke and Kepinski
The Toxic Network	The Mislead Network	The Misunderstood Network	

Organizational Alignment

BASED ON THE RESEARCH, CONSIDER THESE GROUND RULES FOR A NETWORK'S SOUND FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS.

1. Align network resources with expectations of the network and its agenda.

2. Put relevant metrics in place to measure impact and progress.

3. Consider members' needs and expectations in network priorities and strategy.

4. Recognize network leaders for the work they do.

5. Make the network part of organizational culture to position for success.

THE FULL REPORT IS AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD VIA OUR WEBSITES.
Contact us if you'd like to learn more about the research and discuss how it relates to your organization.

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