ACCELERATING ROLE TRANSITIONS

Transforming Role Transitions

Accelerating Career Success and Satisfaction for
New Hires, Incoming Senior Leaders, Promoted Leaders and Lateral Role Shifts

A Special Report on the

Opportunities and Imperatives for Transforming Role Transitions

Rob Cross

Co-Founder and
Research Director
Connected Commons

Edward A. Madden
Professor
of Global Business
Babson College

Thank you for your interest in Transforming Role Transitions at your organization.

Perhaps more than any time in recent history, business realities and uncertainty are challenging us to better equip our workforces to be agile, engaged, inclusive, productive and well.

Based on our many years of research and close partnership with members of the Connected Commons, we are pleased to share perspectives, principles and practices that we uncovered that can accelerate both career success and satisfaction for your new hires, incoming senior leaders, promoted leaders and professionals making lateral role shifts.

We hope you find these insights and practices helpful to transform transitions at your organization.

Rob

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Introduction

Moving into a new company, taking a transfer or promotion and joining a new team are frequent experiences for many people—but these transitions are also common points of failure. Without engaging a productive network, quickly, role changes can have negative consequences for individuals and organizations.

Twenty years of assessing networks and individual performance in more than 300 organizations has shown that strategically leveraging personal networks is one of the most important actions a person can take during a transition into a new role.

Through relationships, newcomers get the information, advice and support they need to come up to speed quickly. This leads to higher productivity and early successes, which in turn help them build a solid reputation and position themselves for more challenging, impactful and visible work.

But these powerful networks are invisible. People transitioning into new roles usually don't know how to create effective networks— they are often simply told to build their network. Without strategically building their network, people are slow to integrate into the organization or group and don't contribute as expected. Many remain disconnected and become disengaged. As a result, personal performance and satisfaction suffer. Over time, teams underperform, projects are weakened, and goals are missed.

Research has found that new hires who establish connections within their initial group or team *and* build ties across the organization perform better, have shorter times to productivity and report higher satisfaction in their role.

This special report introduces the research and practices that you can apply to transform role transitions for your organization.

Section 1

Now is the Time to Transform Role Transitions

Role transitions are happening more frequently.

Even before the recent shock waves including the pandemic, unemployment and social unrest, there were significant trends making role transitions more frequent, raising the stakes for individuals and for organizations:

- **The rise of the agile organization**. More organizations are pushing toward speed, agility and adaptability. Agile practices are driving new structures and processes that rely on highly mobile talent. These shifts mean people are experiencing role transitions more often.

- **The workforce expects experiences**. The fast-changing work environment has people seeking career experiences that enable them to remain relevant. If their current organization does not offer these experiences, they will choose to move to an employer who will.

- **The collaborative intensity of work**. Time on meetings, calls, email and other collaborative work has risen by 50% in the past decade. As collaborative demands increase, organizations see diminished engagement and increased employee turnover.

The good news is that individuals can overcome the barriers that impede their transition into new roles and quickly achieve outstanding performance in unfamiliar settings. By understanding and leveraging the *network drivers* of performance, employees taking on new roles—and their organizations—can improve the experience and outcomes of role transitions.

Traditional role transition methods are simply not enough.

As the frequency of job and role changes increases, the decades-old popular advice for successfully transitioning into a new company, role or team is too slow and ineffective. Organizations hire people for their knowledge, skills and abilities—matching those individuals to their business needs. Everyone involved assumes and expects that the newcomer's knowledge and past performance will transfer to their new group and setting.

Unfortunately, standard HR processes and management practices don't help people rapidly integrate into the powerful, invisible networks needed for success. When employees underperform or star talent falters, no one considers the cause to be a failure of network strategy.

A *social capital* approach to role transitions is needed. Social capital is the advantage that is created based on the way people are connected to others. By understanding networks and ensuring that newcomers cultivate networks in specific ways, organizations can boost social capital, accelerate role transitions and drive success.

By applying network analysis to the question role transitions, we can be even more precise about the kinds of relationships that matter. Organizations and leaders can then target specific factors that have a proven impact on employee performance and retention as they craft onboarding and engagement programs.

In our research, we combined Organizational Network Analysis (ONA) with monthly attrition data in 15 large, well-known organizations. We identified the relational predictors of turnover and the kinds of networks employees needed to develop over time to increase the odds of staying.

We found that the most successful and committed long-term employees built a network with an initial focus on *productivity and inclusion* but then shifted their network investments to create *efficiency and purpose*. By adding social capital development practices to the traditional human capital or talent processes, organizations can enable new hire success and drive multiple beneficial outcomes.

	Year 0-1: STRIVING		Year 2 - 5: THRIVING	
Human Capital/ Talent Processes	**Orientation and Onboarding**		**Career Planning and Performance Management**	
HCM Practices	• "Download" lots of data • Process & practices	• New joiner speed dating • Trail & error experiences	• Typically focus moves to individual performance and development without any support and practices for deepening connections	
Unintended Consequences	• Incompetence amplified • "Exclusion" highlighted	• Slow time-to-contribution • Lack of confidence	• Collaborative overload • Diluted Impact	• Burnout • Min commitment / attrition
Social Capital	**Inclusion**	**Productivity**	**Efficiency**	**Engagement (Purpose)**
Social Capital Opportunity	**Speed Inclusion:** Rapidly develop connections for performance and sense-making purposes.	**Reduce Time-to-Productivity:** Build connections for productivity and influence.	**Create Network Efficiency:** Promote collaboratively efficient interactions and boundary spanning ties.	**Build a Purpose-Fueled Network:** Craft interactions and build a network that yields purpose and energy.
Modern Network-Based Practices	Develop robust experiences to connect cohort or similar tenure employees. Teach behaviors to get pulled into the network (versus push strategies communicating expertise)	Connect newcomers on entry with formal and informal opinion leaders	Teach employees how to manage collaborative over-load and create efficient network interactions. Employ staffing, career and performance management processes to build boundary-spanning networks.	Help leaders create contexts of purpose (e.g., establish the "why"; co-create, etc.). Teach employees how to build networks that yield a sense of purpose.

Year 1: Building networks for productivity and inclusion

Employees transitioning into new role have two overriding needs: to perform and prove themselves to others and to acculturate and feel accepted by the organization. Both needs are primarily satisfied through the set of relationships new hires establish with managers, experts, peers, mentors and other newcomers throughout the company. Building these cross-functional relationships over the first 12 months in a role—and before they see a clear need for this network—sets newcomers up for later success.

Years 2 and Beyond: Building networks for efficiency and purpose

After the initial push to establish themselves in the organization, group or team, employees face different pressures and need to adjust their network strategy accordingly. The challenge is that networks designed for productivity and inclusion, which are critical for getting established, can undermine efficiency and purpose.

If the newcomer has been pulled into the organization and viewed as a highly valuable resource, they inevitably get overutilized. They have many opportunities, their views are respected, and they are in demand. While these new top performers may feel successful and accepted, they are likely to become overloaded, exhausted and frustrated.

Review our Research

In partnership with professors Tina Opie and Keith Rollag, this original research on appeared in the April–June 2018 Organizational Dynamics in the article, "Connect and Adapt: How Network Development and Transformation Improve Retention and Engagement in Employees' First Five Years." The article was also made available through the Connected Commons.
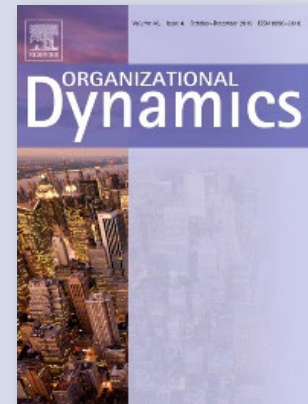
Read the Article

Section 2

**Three Strategies to Transform
Role Transitions at Your Organization**

Three Strategies to Transform Role Transitions at Your Organization

Through our work, we have observed three simple but powerful opportunities to transform role transitions in organizations. **On the following pages, we describe a few of the creative and engaging ways that some of the world's most successful organizations are applying the social capital lens, promoting effective network practices and building organizational capability.**

Embed

Embed social capital principles and practices into people programs. Role transitions programs can be created or refreshed to include network strategies as core component of the content. While new hire programs and onboarding efforts are an obvious and important choice, organizations have also reimagined their leadership development programs, diversity and inclusion initiatives, employee engagement processes and change management efforts.

Enable

Enable employees through intentional learning efforts to apply the practices that accelerate career success and satisfaction. Twelve research-based practices and numerous tactics apply across four types of role transitions: new hires, incoming senior leaders, promoted leaders and professionals making lateral moves and role shifts.

Extend

Extend the application of practices though a series of engaging interactions over an employee's first nine to 12 months. Solidify and scale network practices through multiple touch points or vehicles. Content could be delivered in person or remotely through a series of cohort-based workshops or through online programs delivered in your organization's learning management system.

EMBED social capital principles and practices into people programs.

Organizations are transforming role transitions by reimagining programs and weaving network principles into the fabric of critical programs in creative and engaging ways. We hope that the examples on the following pages—many from our Connected Commons members—will inspire you to consider how you can embed social capital practices into your organization's people programs and begin accelerating role transitions.

New Hire Orientation

As the saying goes, you can only make a first impression once—and New Hire Orientation is no exception. While most companies use this first impression to complete critical paperwork and benefits enrollment, highly successful organizations also set the goal of reinforcing the new hire's belief that they have made the right choice to join their organization. They want newcomers to leave that program beginning to feel they really fit in, and they can positively contribute to the company's purpose. Creative examples from our research include:

- **Your Place in History.** A Fortune 500 global manufacturer includes an immersive and inspiring tour of the company museum for all new hires. During the tour, they connect with the company's iconic place in history and with their new colleagues around a common sense of belonging to their collective higher purpose.

ONLY
53%

A 2019 Hiring Manager Panel conducted by Gartner found that **only 53%** of hiring managers agree that their organization's onboarding program is effective at preparing a new hire.
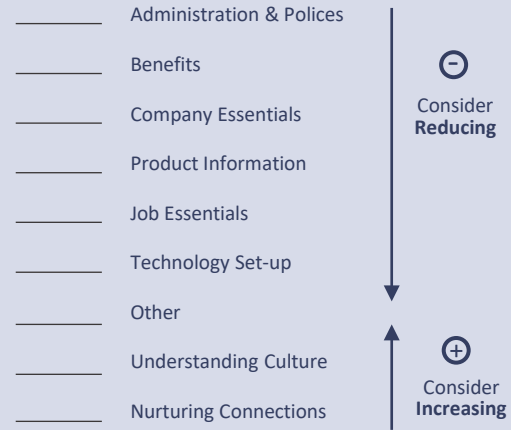
- **Find Your Tribe.** One high-tech company takes a high-touch approach by investing precious Day One time reviewing the company's myriad of clubs and Employee Belonging Councils (their name for diversity affinity groups). They strongly encourage the new people to join clubs to meet people with common interests. One new employee shared that when she joined the company's book club, she jump-started her network, but also met people that shared her deep passion for reading, which accelerated her sense of community and belonging.

- **Connect through Community Giving.** An iconic professional sports organization creates a special space for all new hires to discover new relationships. Their new hire orientation includes a community giving event that not only reinforces the organization's commitment to the community but creates a non-work environment to nurture new relationships. This experience (which also includes some cool company swag!) forges an early and common identity with new peers as well as sense of collective purpose.

Classifying New Hire Orientation Time

One of the most powerful ways you send employees messages about what really matters at your company is where you invest precious time and energy. During New Hire Orientation or onboarding experiences, ask yourself, are your efforts focused on newcomer success or company administrative processes? Consider the time you invest each of the following areas and look for ways to include intentional actions that accelerate broad, cross-organization network relationships.

▼ **Percentage of New Hire Time Invested**

_____	Administration & Polices
_____	Benefits
_____	Company Essentials
_____	Product Information
_____	Job Essentials
_____	Technology Set-up
_____	Other
_____	Understanding Culture
_____	Nurturing Connections

⊖ Consider **Reducing**

⊕ Consider **Increasing**

⊘ Leadership Development Programs

Historically, Leadership Development Programs have been primarily human-capital focused. While leaders come together in a "class," the groups are little more than a collection of people eligible for the program. However, some companies are reimaging their leadership and management programs to intentionally include strategies that nurture networks.

- **Cohort Coaching.** One global organization intentionally applies group coaching to accelerate deeper connections among pre-established groups of senior leaders who the organization anticipates will benefit from highly productive working relationships in the future. These intensely personal group sessions accelerate trust and build a strong support network even before their next level transition. One senior leader in this organization reported resolving issues blocking a new product to market due to the trusted relationship developed in the program.

- **Sharing the Power of Social Networks.** For directors who are identified on vice-president succession plans, one organization includes an in-depth session on social network science. This prepares them for that future transition to VP by understanding the network they will need to be successful at the next level and begin nurturing that network now.

- **Developing Fast Friends.** Another organization has developed an App using the Fast Friends Protocol created by psychology professor Arthur Aron of Stony Brook University to help accelerate appropriate levels of self-disclosure. The 45-minute activity gives new people leaders a creative and engaging tool to get to know their new team members. One participant in the exercise shared that he was amazed at how comfortable he felt sharing things that he had not shared with others based on the ease of the exercise and App.

Inclusion & Diversity Programs

Helping women and under-represented people not only feel included but a deep sense of *belonging* when joining your organization, team or project is essential to building great place to work for everyone regardless of race, gender, generation or geography.

- **Sponsor & Mentoring Circles.** Organizations are strategically applying sponsor and mentoring "circles" to accelerate the sense of belonging and engagement people feel when joining an organization. Beyond the more traditional one-to-one mentoring or sponsorship relationships, structuring as a circle can enable eight to ten people to leverage the knowledge of a circle mentor and each other, with the additional value of a deep relationship with all members of the circle.

- **Invitation to Join Affinity Groups.** Some organizations are strategically incorporating existing Affinity Groups or Belonging Councils into their onboarding and orientation efforts. By sending newcomers a warm and welcoming invitation to join the affinity group, organizations are accelerating sense of belonging and facilitating connections to a broad, cross-functional network.

- **Sign Up, Match Up and Meet Up.** One organization created a program to intentionally jump-start critical connections by: 1) inviting current employees to sign up to host diverse new hires for an hour meeting, once a month; 2) matching each new hire with a host each month for their first three months; and 3) creating a meet up where "veteran" employees share their experience at the company, answer questions and share perspectives. At the end of the meeting, the employees document the meeting with a selfie they post to the program site.
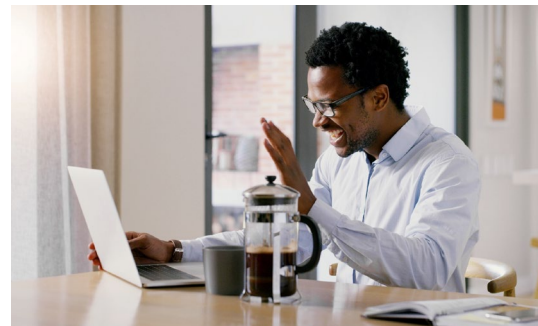
Organization Alignment & Transformation

Organization transformation activities such as reorganizations, mergers/acquisitions, furloughs and layoffs can dramatically disrupt the organizational networks that companies rely on to serve customers, create new products and manage the business. These networks are often invisible and not represented in the organization charts that are often the focus of alignment and transformation efforts.

Our research shows that on average people tend to work significantly with 12 others in their organizations to get their job done. Realignment, reorganization and transformation efforts tend to make those relationships 10-15% less efficient for three to six months as people adapt. This is a real—but invisible—cost that is borne by the employees. Organizations that make the effort to appreciate this impact and accelerate the transitions with activities to re-establish relationships are better positioned to take advantage of benefits proposed by the change.

- **Human Library.** One global telecommunications company immediately followed an acquisition and reorganization by hosting a "human library" where employees received a bio book of key connectors, influencers, experts and energizers. Held at the end of an off-site, employees could walk up to and tap into that person's perspectives. In addition to showcasing the incredible expertise of the combined organization, it put people from both organizations on equal "platforms," celebrating their accomplishments and inviting access.

- **Re-establishing High-Trust Relationships.** Organizations impacted by furloughs or layoffs can help their employees first appreciate how network disruption can disrupt productivity, especially in a challenging business climate and quickly build all three forms of trust—benevolence, competence, integrity—with the go-forward network.
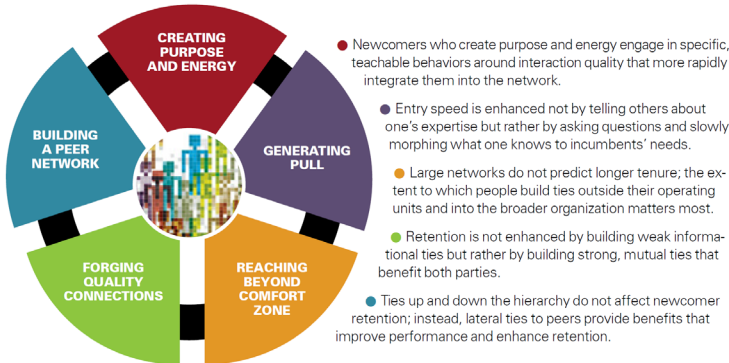
Booz Allen Hamilton Applies New Hire Analytics and Actions to Improve Retention

Consulting company Booz Allen Hamilton applied predictive collaboration analytics to identify that risk for turnover was highest following an employee's transition to a new role. Analysis further revealed that how an employee managed networks shaped the odds of leaving after a transition. Five categories of network-based factors distinguished employees who departed within two years of joining the company from those who stayed.

On the basis of these findings, Booz Allen implemented a new onboarding program that focused on the specific network dimensions that were most likely to increase retention. Follow-up analyses confirmed a significant improvement in new hire retention as a result of the new collaboration training.

NETWORK DRIVERS OF RETENTION AT BOOZ ALLEN HAMILTON

Collaboration data analysis shows that new hires who stay with the company are those who engage in these behaviors.

CREATING PURPOSE AND ENERGY

● Newcomers who create purpose and energy engage in specific, teachable behaviors around interaction quality that more rapidly integrate them into the network.

GENERATING PULL

● Entry speed is enhanced not by telling others about one's expertise but rather by asking questions and slowly morphing what one knows to incumbents' needs.

REACHING BEYOND COMFORT ZONE

● Large networks do not predict longer tenure; the extent to which people build ties outside their operating units and into the broader organization matters most.

FORGING QUALITY CONNECTIONS

● Retention is not enhanced by building weak informational ties but rather by building strong, mutual ties that benefit both parties.

BUILDING A PEER NETWORK

● Ties up and down the hierarchy do not affect newcomer retention; instead, lateral ties to peers provide benefits that improve performance and enhance retention.

Source: Collaborate Smarter, Not Harder; Rob Cross, Thomas H. Davenport, Peter Gray; Fall 2019 issue of the MIT Sloan Management Review.

Review our Research

In partnership with professors Thomas H. Davenport and Peter Gray, we published the example of how Booz Allen Hamilton applied new hire analytics and actions to improve retention in the Fall 2019 issue of the MIT Sloan Management Review.


Access the Article

ENABLE employees to apply the 12 network practices.

Through our analysis of organization networks at 300 companies, supplemented by 160 high-performing leaders (80 men and 80 women) across 20 organizations in financial services, software, consumer products, retail, professional services, manufacturing and life sciences, we uncovered that the most successful transitions required initiating, engage and refining networks in distinctive, often counterintuitive, ways.

The practices of these successful people allowed them to replicate the networks of high performers much faster than their similarly tenured peers. These "Fast Movers" were productive more quickly, more engaged, more likely to stay in the organization and generally more satisfied at work.

Research Reveals Network Strategies of Fast Movers
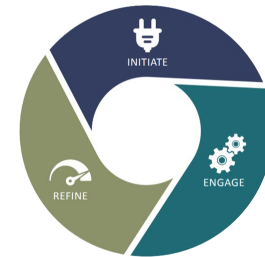
We studied the behaviors of Fast Movers—employees at all levels who became much more connected in their organization than their similarly tenured peers. These newcomers were productive more quickly, more engaged and more likely to stay in the organization. Counterintuitively, it was not a big network that distinguished these more successful people. People that transitioned best:

- **Initiated specific kinds of relationships critical to success.**
- **Engaged others in ways that created pull into networks.**
- **Refined networks for long-term performance.**

INITIATE

Jump-start productivity and inclusion by cultivating relationships critical to success

New hires and newcomers need to intentionally build productive networks. When they identify specific types of network connections and key people to meet and build relationships with, they can invest their time well and position their efforts in ways that yield success.

Conventional wisdom is often counterproductive. Early on, some people prioritize visibility or access to formal stakeholders and gaining political support. Others believe they must hit the ground running and choose to focus only on doing work with their immediate team. Still others may prioritize meeting a lot of people but neglect the specific network-building that could enable rapid integration into the organization and shorten their time from entry to productivity.

At the time, these steps may seem like wise choices, but our research shows these patterns are, in fact, network

missteps that can have significant consequences.

Our research shows that initiating specific kinds of relationships in the first 90 days and continuing to prioritize network development throughout the transition is a differentiator. When new hires and newcomers know specific categories of people to focus on, they can be proactive, invest their time well and position their efforts in ways that yield success. Four network strategies help people initiate key connections early on:

1 **PURSUE A BROAD NETWORK**

On entry, more effective new hires and newcomers seek connections across function, level, and expertise to gain a full view of the people, the work and the challenges in their new context.

2 **BUILD NETWORK TO ADDRESS GAPS**

Rather than assuming they have the needed capabilities—or that they will quickly see what they are missing—more effective people are reflective and ask others to help them spot *and* supplement gaps in skill, awareness or expertise.

3 **Connect with Influencers**
A connection with one or more network influencers leads to more successful outcomes for projects and goals, as well as opportunities for new hires and newcomers to be drawn into future work. Potential influencers fall into four categories. Central Connectors, Boundary Spanners, Energizers and Resisters

4 **Tap Trusted Advisors**
Trusted advisors and confidants—a colleague, a former boss, a mentor, friends and family—can offer input, validation, pushback, reality checks and emotional support which are both needed to learn and grow in a new context.

ENGAGE
Create pull into networks by building energy, credibility and reciprocity.

How new hires and newcomers engage people in their networks is just as important as *who* they connect with during role transitions. Early on, they can either shut down or open up valued networks by the way they present themselves and interact with others.

When new hires and newcomers engage in ways that build energy, credibility and reciprocity, they are pulled into valued networks. Early, positive interactions begin to establish their reputation as someone others want to work with. In turn, established colleagues begin to include them in conversations, ask for their ideas and refer them to others. By engaging with others in a way that *pulls* them into networks, successful people accelerate their transitions and create a platform for future success.

Unfortunately, many new hires and newcomers take the opposite approach, using *push* strategies when they enter new roles. Often unknowingly, they stay in "interview mode" sharing what they did at their previous employer or group, making sure others are aware of their knowledge, experience or brand. However, our research shows these practices drain energy, undermine credibility and discourage established people from giving their time and energy. When people promote themselves too rapidly or forcefully or neglect the needs and interests of others, they often are rejected rather than accepted by the network.

5 ALIGN EXPERTISE TO CONTEXT

Rather than pushing their knowledge or experience out of context, successful new hires and newcomers ask questions, listen closely and tailor how they present their expertise to address colleagues' problems or help with challenges. More effective people show genuine interest, are positive, give respect and status to others, and co-create mutual benefits of working together.

6 **Cultivate Network through Accomplishment**

Prioritizing *either* network development *or* early accomplishment over the other misses the opportunity to build the network *through* the work. More successful people pursue a few early accomplishments with network development in mind.

7 **Pursue Mutual Wins**

Pursuing a mutual win with stakeholders and teams will produce better, more substantive results and more effective network ties. When new hires and newcomers help people see solutions to their problems and ways to attain their goals in work they are proposing, they generate more interest and greater ownership.

8 **Prioritize Trust**

Trust is the foundation for how work gets done through networks; more effective transitions are often accompanied by rapid trust formation. With trust, reservations fall away, information flows efficiently, and people become more enthused about supporting the new person. Colleagues are willing to offer opportunities, take risks and help. In a new role, people rarely consider how their early behaviors and interactions provide clues to others about whether to trust in their abilities and intentions.

REFINE
Foster long-term success by recalibrating networks.

During the early months of a transition, new hires and newcomers have a valuable window to create broad ties, gain perspective and build relationships. More effective people surge into the role and the network, initiating and engaging a disproportionate number of relationships compared to other times in their career. These relationship investments smooth the initial transition and create the foundation for success.

Yet, the network strategies to establish essential ties and engage people early on has a downside if people do not adapt network strategies over time. New hires and newcomers need to refine their networks and collaborative practices to avoid pitfalls that lead to burnout, disengagement or derailment as they transition into the new role.

The good news is that new hires and newcomers can plant seeds early on that prevent negative consequences and make network shifts that propel them to high performance, purpose, efficiency, and adaptability. They can, in fact, use transitions to steer their careers and set a context to thrive by refining their networks in four ways:

9   **Build Enterprise Connectivity**
More effective people skillfully cultivate diverse, cross-boundary networks to meet shifting demands and emerging opportunities. Our research indicates they refresh enterprise and external networks for long-term performance and growth.

10   **Sculpt Role Through Intentional Network**
By engaging network connections that align with work and non-work aspirations, people are propelled into opportunities and toward work that is personally meaningful. These valued connections and purposeful activities also sustain people through difficult times.

11 **Streamline Collaboration**

In transitions, a surge of work to build a diverse network is necessary to grasp a new role and context. But the patterns and habits of involvement and communication that are helpful early on can become inefficient and overwhelming—something we described as Collaborative Overload in our 2016 HBR cover story. After 6-9 months, new hires and newcomers should evaluate their priorities and impose structure to streamline collaborative demands, alter mindset regarding when and how to collaborate, and adapt behaviors to be more efficient in interactions.

12 **Avoid Network Traps**

Our research over more than two decades has revealed four traps, or network archetypes, that derail rising stars, high performers and leaders:

- The biased learner.
- The disconnected expert.
- The formalist.
- The bottleneck.

Review our Research

In partnership with professors Adam Grant and Reb Rebele, our original research on Collaborative Overload appeared as the cover story of the Jan/Feb 2016 issue of the Harvard Business Review.

HBR.ORG JANUARY–FEBRUARY 2016

Harvard Business Review

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COLLABORATIVE OVERLOAD
YOUR MOST HELPFUL EMPLOYEES ARE BURNING OUT. HERE'S WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT.
PAGE 57

Read the Article

In contrast to common advice that a 90-day plan sets a newcomer up for long-term success, our research indicates an extended approach—with thoughtful sequencing and scheduling the Fast Mover practices—will result in greater success.

Some actions are important in the first 60 to 90 days and many are counter to the advice and training given to newcomers. Other actions are critical in the 90- to 180-day window and even beyond to avoid common pitfalls, scale early results, reduce collaborative overload and tee-up future wins.

Our work shows the critical difference extending and fine-tuning the newcomer's network strategy through the first year can make. Some people take on a new role and start strong. Early wins and visibility often reinforce the assumption that the person was the right hire for the role.

But frequently, these rising stars hit a wall at the nine-to 12-month mark, working three-to four-times harder to get things accomplished. Often, their early days of success fade. They underperform, instead of becoming top talent. Many are not able to adapt their practices at this point, and we repeatedly see effective people leave—or be let go—by their two-year anniversary.

In contrast, other leaders make a solid start in their new role but with less visibility or obvious wins. Their time-to-contribution is slower, but they continue to increase their value through the nine- to 12-month point. They effectively lead critical work and move into the high-performer category.

The difference between these two trajectories is very often the way the newcomer initiates, engages and refines their network.

Given the imperative to ensure people transition into their new roles effectively, organizations will want to seriously consider ways to extend the learning and application of the network practices through an employee's first year.

Whether this application is delivered through a cohort group that meets for 60 minutes a month or scaled through a learning management system that autonomously delivers modules each month over nine or 12 months, the value lies in connecting the right practice at the right time.

The order and emphasis of practices to accelerate a newcomer's success will vary depending on the type of role transition. Four critical transition types are described in the next section.

Leveraging Technology to Enable Fast Mover Practices

Digital Course: Fast Mover Program

Engage:
Position Your Expertise to
Contribute to Others' Goals

Fast Movers - Engage: Position Your Expertise to Contribute to Others' Goals

When entering a new organization, new hires may feel the need to immediately demonstrate expertise so they can start making meaningful contributions to the team. While well-meaning, new hires may be unintentionally overselling themselves which could result in mistrust. Learn how you can position your expertise to contribute to others' goals and create "pull."

1   Video Overview: Position Your Expertise to Contribute to Others' Goals   02:40

2   Video Deck: Position Your Expertise to Contribute to Others' Goals   Doc

Based on your company's Human Capital Management technology, you could consider ways to automatically curate learning related to the appropriate Fast Mover practice based on telemetry triggers such as new employee's start date and level, promotion or team/title change.

Section 3

Transforming Four Types of Role Transitions

Transforming Different Types of Transitions

Over the past two decades, we have looked broadly at massive organizational network analyses and quantitatively defined the nuance in connectivity required for success across different kinds of transitions:

- New Hire
- Lateral Move / Role Shift
- Incoming Senior Leader
- Promoted Leader

And critically, we learned that the sequence and schedule of twelve practices matter at different points throughout the first nine to twelve months of a transition.
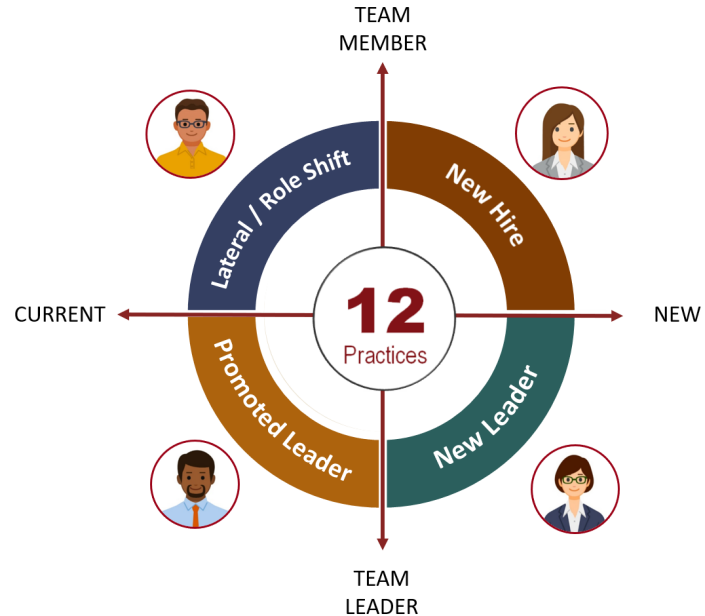
🤝 New Hires

Well before the challenges of remote onboarding driven by the pandemic, a 2017 survey by industry research expert Gartner found that 35% of new hires indicated that they regretted their decisions to join their new company and were more likely to turnover than tenured employees. Perhaps these very concerning and expensive outcomes were related to Gartner's findings from their 2019 Hiring Manager Panel in which they discovered that only 53% of hiring managers agreed that their organization's onboarding program was effective at preparing a new hire.

To counter this challenge, organizations can help new hires initiate and engage critical networks, including guiding them to connect to a broad network that can help them understand their new organization, its culture and priorities. Newcomers can also learn to engage others by focusing on how they could apply what they knew or how they could help—not by touting their prior experience or expertise. In one example, we heard how a Fast Mover prototyped a piece of code that resulted in rapidly building competence-based trust with his new colleagues. This code was built on by the group, who took

⭐ Explore the Story of a New Hire

Cora is a research scientist who joined a pharmaceutical firm following several years in academia. Early on, she was proactive about meeting people in other research groups and across the business. "I was new to pharmaceutical research. I needed to learn. I started meeting people to ask about what they did and how their role impacted processes or fit in to the business." Cora's genuine curiosity led her to make authentic connections. Through her interactions, she began to build "benevolence-based trust" (trust that you have others' interests in mind, not just your own) and "competence-based trust" (trust that you know what you are talking about). By building her network in this way, Cora transitioned quickly—and has been a top performer through six years and multiple role shifts.

Read the Case Study

collective ownership to promote it to influencers and stakeholders. As others saw the potential of the work, they became energized and supportive. Through network interactions, the newcomer was pulled into work of real value and involved in something that was collectively purposeful and interesting.

Armed with these and other insights and Fast Mover practices, new hires can shift quickly from being the "new person" to contributing to the needs and priorities of their team and organization.

Lateral or Role Shift

A critical transition that is often overlooked or under-supported is the professional making a lateral move or experiencing a significant shift in role. These are high-risk role transitions, perhaps even more risky than those of new hires, incoming leaders and promoted leaders. This lack of attention is somewhat ironic given that professionals making these types of career moves are often part of sophisticated talent mobility programs specifically developed for high-potential, future leaders.

Explore the Story of Lateral or Role Shift

Barry is an engineer and project manager five years into his career. When he transferred into a different function, "I was walking into a completely new environment. I knew nobody and nobody knew me." He took advantage of the new situation to adjust and do some things differently than he did in his previous job. "The first thing I decided to do was to ask questions, listen intently and learn from the others around me, not just run straight into driving change … I see where I can help, or how to match what I know to the situation and focus on the why of what we are doing." He joined an affinity group and got involved in company-wide volunteer projects.

By expanding his network outside his group, level and expertise, Barry was better able to see how his work fit in and the rationale behind decisions or processes. He has become an effective team leader and a high performer.

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Organizations can better support this type of transition by helping these talented people understand and establish the strategic relationships needed align goals and deliver critical results. Again, a range of Fast Mover practices can be learned and applied.

For example, in addition to intentionally initiating a broad network, people making a role change must invest heavily in *how* they engage others. Adapting their expertise to new teams and contexts, establishing trust and pursuing a few strategic wins through the network are all critical.

Success in the lateral moves or role shifts also require professionals to be cautious of the time and energy required to maintain their historic network while nurturing a new network that can supplement and close technical, functional, political and culture gaps. An adapted network will drive greater success as well as reduce collaborative overload.

Other practices keep these valued professionals growing and performing over the long term, including connecting with key advisors, steering their role and refreshing network connections that fuel innovation and foster relevance.

Incoming Senior Leader

Insights from Gartner suggest that more than 40% of senior leaders coming into new companies fail or end up having a suboptimal impact. This is a very costly proposition that puts any organization's strategy and success at risk. While some organizations attempt to minimize this risk with well-intentioned executive onboarding and coaching efforts, most over-focus on the business context and fail to put attention into understanding and leveraging the hidden power of networks. Again, our research shows that a carefully sequenced set of Fast Mover practices is a differentiator for success.

A senior leader coming in from outside the company needs to begin by quickly establishing productive roots—making for an intense first two or three months. The network effort continues by building trust, pursuing mutual wins and other practices that enable their ideas and initiatives to be entertained and accepted by their new colleagues. They are able to leverage the social capital of others, rather than rely on their individual capability and capacity.

Applying these practices results in a make-or-break phenomenon for incoming senior leaders at the nine- to 12-month mark. Our research shows that *without* effective network development in the first nine months, these high performers hit an untenable wall, working three- to four- times harder to get things accomplished in the network. The early days of success fade and they underperform, as noted by the sober Gartner research. In contrast, those who establish effective networks lead critical work, scale accomplishments, remain engaged and are poised for greater impact as they hit year two.

Promoted Leader

In contrast to people who are new to the company, the promoted leader starts out with a set of strategic trusted relationships and a solid platform for making an impactful contribution. Yet, knowing the business and culture and having an existing network also create blind spots or pitfalls.

Organizations can help these individuals succeed by creating opportunities to learn and applying several Fast Mover practices throughout their role transition.

Explore the Story of an Incoming Senior Leader

Just four months into his new role as director of learning and organization development, Rick fast-tracked the creation of his network to extend his team's influence and build new capability. He made a list of 47 people to meet within the first 45 days—in addition to building relationships with his manager and within his team. With the heads of the firm's practices and regions, he sought to understand the business and how his team could be an asset. He also asked, "Who's your trusted deputy? Who do you want me to work with?" He also introduced himself to heads of corporate groups such as finance and legal to establish relationships before he had a need:

"Help me know what you do and how you operate. When people need something from you, what approach works best?"

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Newly promoted leaders will want to take a counter-intuitive idea to heart. Instead of overly focusing on showing the formal leaders they deserved the promotion, they should prioritize building trust with their team and peers. This solidifies a network that is essential for delivering results and driving short- and long-term accomplishment.

Promoted leaders should also connect with or re-establish relationships needed for the new role and context, rather than over-relying on their previous network. For example, they should intentionally make room for others who can bridge technical, functional and political gaps, those who are network influencers, and people could identify and implement mutually beneficial wins. Relying on feedback and support from key advisors will help them navigate the role transition, scale efforts and maintain momentum.

By investing in networks in key ways, these leaders ensure they have the rich, boundary spanning, influential networks needed to fuel organizational and individual success.

Explore the Story of a Promoted Leader

With 20 years in a major manufacturing company, Brenda was promoted to a senior-level global role. The shift posed business and technical challenges. Plus, the work was long-term, large-scale and strategic, rather than tactical and self-contained. She also had multiple stakeholders and functions to engage. "It's very important to have a good, strong relationship with my functional partners and make sure we are aligned on what's important … A lot of my time was building those networks that weren't there before." Initially, Brenda listened and sought feedback to fill in gaps in her perspective and knowledge and to build trust. Soon, she gained clarity on her unique value-add and learned to leverage the network. "In the beginning, I wanted to be in every meeting … Now, I will say, so-and-so can handle it … Others can do 80% of what I can do; let me focus on the 20% they can't do."

Read the Case Study
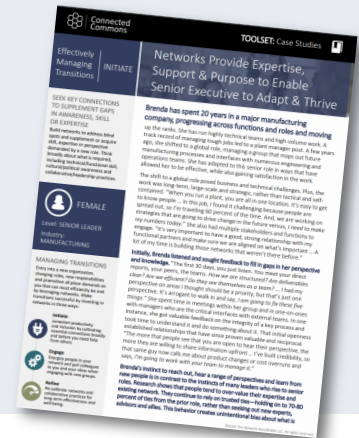
Section 5

**Solutions to Enable
New Capabilities**

Solutions to Enable New Capabilities

Now that you know why transforming role transitions is important and have gained an in-depth knowledge of the 12 Fast Mover practices, you will want to apply what you have learned. The type of transition will guide how you educate and support others, whether one-to-one or as part of a cohort or class. And, while there are numerous creative ways to present the content, we have created four easy-to-apply delivery modes to meet your organization's different needs.

Cards

The card deck and associated activities feature the 12 practices, prompts and activities, and a companion website to extend learning.

Courses

The course delivery option is designed to support multiple sessions over time, either facilitated one-to-many or self-directed, both in-person or remote.

Coaching

The one-to-one coaching delivery mode is typically used in executive coaching to ensure the success of a senior leader joining a new organization, or a leader being promoted or moving into a new group.

Certification

Certification is designed for HR / talent management professionals, coaches and people leaders. The online Accelerating Role Transitions Certification Program builds the skills required to effectively coach people through all four transitions.

Transition Cards & Activities

The Accelerating Role Transitions cards and associated activities are easily applied in new hire orientation, with summer intern or recent college graduate programs, in a newly promoted people leader experience and senior leader transition programs. Or, simply include them as an essential resource in your HR or organization effectiveness toolkit.

Applicable to any transition type, the cards are organized by initiating, engaging and refining networks. There is a card for each of the 12 Fast Mover practices. The front of each card shares the principles, core strategies and a leadership insight. The back of the card describes the warning signs that one is not effectively applying this practice.

A QR code on the back of each card takes the user to a web page where they can watch a video, access an activity or read two case studies from the Fast Movers we studied. Used with a group or one-on-one, the Accelerating Role Transitions card activity is an easy and engaging way to explore the Fast Mover strategies in the moment and for participants to apply back on the job, in the flow of work.

Enable Employees with Card Resources

Card activities are applicable to all of the transition types and simple and easy way to introduce the 12 Fast Mover Practices to people in your organization.

Course Delivery

Most likely applied in the new hire, promoted leader or lateral move / role shift transitions, the course delivery mode gives you options to enable cohorts and large groups to learn and engage. The resources may be pulled into programs for recent college graduates, new hire orientation, leadership development programs or integration efforts for employees who are part of an acquisition or reorganization.

In course mode, you can provide leader-led facilitation, either in-person or virtual, and to groups of any size. In 60-minute sessions, course facilitators engage participants in each of the practices for their transition.

Course resources include a guide and slides for facilitators and a workbook for participants. Workbooks contains QR codes for access to videos from Professor Rob Cross, warning signs, case studies and activities for each practice.

Enable Employees with Course Resources

Course resources provide turn key content that you can share with cohorts of professionals either in person or remote to accelerate employee success and satisfaction.

Course presentation for in person or remote delivery

Program participant workbook

Coaching

One-to-one coaching is more likely used for the incoming senior leader. HR/talent leaders, executive coaches or people leaders play this role are supported by a detailed facilitator's guide and participant workbook.

The facilitator's guide supports you with insights and actions to work through each practice with your new senior leader. The process includes understanding principles and identifying warning sign to create a plan, reviewing case studies to prompt insights, and introducing an activity that the coachee will use to intentionally and strategically deepen their network.

Enable Employees with Coaching Resources

Coaching resources include comprehensive Facilitator Guides and consumable participant workbooks that enable both the coach and transitioning professional.
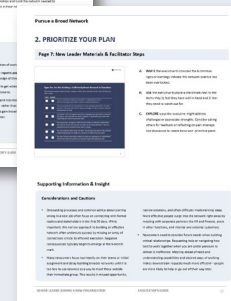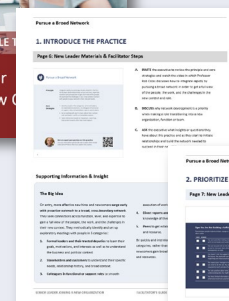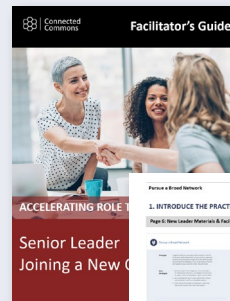
Certification Program

Talent leaders, coaches and people leaders can build their personal capabilities and get certified to accelerate role transitions through the online course where they will learn to:

- Clarify the imperative to accelerate role transitions at all levels.

- Apply the research behind the Fast Mover network practices.

- Identify the big idea, considerations and warning signs for each Fast Mover practice.

- Understand critical role transitions and the associated progression of network development required to accelerate performance and engagement.

- Build a business case with their organization's actual data.

- Embed network approaches into their organization's onboarding, employee engagement programs and flow of work.

- Unlock the Accelerating Role Transitions Certified User Store, with access to tools, workbooks and facilitator's guides.

Enable Employees with Certification Resources

The on-demand Certification Site and Program ensures that coaches, HR professionals and even people leaders can build the confidence and capability to empower others to accelerate their role transitions.

Conclusion: Unlock the Full Potential and Performance of People Transitioning Roles

Organizations are bringing in new talent and moving people into new roles and groups at an increasing pace. It is in everyone's best interest to make these transitions quickly and successfully.

Helping individuals, managers and organizations apply the network research, insights and strategies that Fast Movers use to accelerate the networks of high performers is increasingly becoming a competitive imperative and business advantage. When done well and at scale the outcomes include:

- Employees feel included and confident in their decision to take on their role. They adapt and integrate more quickly. They enjoy improved personal effectiveness that translates to greater innovation, execution and thriving in their current role and over time through multiple transitions.

- Managers and leaders see new employees learn and contribute quickly. They are able to leverage fresh perspectives and deploy talent more fluidly and effectively to meet business demands.

- Organizations smooth entry for new hires, improve retention, retain organizational knowledge and make more successful internal transfers. They cultivate a more agile employee base, as people are able to work across boundaries, transfer their skill and knowledge, and remain motivated and enthused about their work, their colleagues and their organization.

Too often, companies place the burden of success on the person transitioning into a new role. While our work shows that people can and should take steps to proactively understand and manage their networks during transitions, organizational practices can accelerate and scale the process—and transform role transitions for a dynamic and complex future.