Fighting Fire with Organization: Summing It All Up

Command, Control, and Prevention

Right down the street from you, a single organization uses hierarchy, bureaucracy, and networks to accomplish different but interrelated purposes: the local fire department.'

? When it fights fires, the fire department is a strict, military *hierarchy.* In crisis, a well-trained unit follows a chain of command. The chief calls the shots. For this purpose, hierarchy is the optimal organization. There is no time to build consensus or work through issues when a blaze is burning out of control.

? When it inspects buildings, the fire department is a typical *bureaucracy.* Administratively, its concern is with building inspections, codes, violations, water mains, and all other laws and policies surrounding the control of fires.

? When it works to prevent fires, the fire department acts as a *network*. Fire department personnel work with other community organizations— media, volunteer groups, schools, hospitals, and even Brownie troops— to spread fire safety information tailored to the specific problems of that locality.

Fire departments also *network* at the community-to-community level. Although fire-fighting units are hierarchical, departments come together as equals in regional "mutual aid" associations. So, if one community has a very bad fire, other surrounding departments send direct aid. Meanwhile, departments on the periphery close ranks to fill in gaps left by departments responding closer.

As with other organizations, fire departments and professionals also form peer-to-peer associations at the state and national levels, *networking* to exchange information and influence policy changes— analogous to the voluntary grass-roots associations dedicated to the environment, consumer rights, and the like. Just as a fire chief cannot order you to be "fire safe," a public education fire prevention team cannot put out a five-alarm blaze with Dick Van Dyke's famous "Stop, Drop, and Roll" commercials from the 1970s.

Fire departments, found in most communities throughout the world, show the three basic forms of organization: hierarchical fire fighting; bureaucratic code enforcement; and peer-based networks of prevention, professions, and mutual aid. Complex organizations today—whether voluntary, business, or government—use all these forms of organization.

> *Many businesses fail because of their*
> *inability to use the right form for the right purpose.*

Today's new forms grow from yesterday's. We know, of course, that a "pure" network is hard to find at any level. No one form of organization is right for every part of an organization—not even a family.

Networks, new organizational life-forms emerging at every level, are not fads. They thrive now because traditional hierarchies and bureaucracies cannot adequately cope. The complexity of doing business today in a global economy—which affects everyone from the corner grocer to the globe-spanning multinational—goes beyond traditional organizational capabilities.

Teamnets, Teamnets, Teamnets Everywhere

Boundary crossing teamnets are ubiquitous in business, sharing common characteristics.

Up and Down the Scale

People working in small groups routinely cross boundaries that separate functional expertise domains and command chains. Enterprises struggle to realign work across internal organizational walls. Companies form alliances across the most fortified boundaries of all in business—the enterprise borders.

Size

All sizes of companies cross boundaries. Big firms and small depend upon their small groups for getting work done. Big firms and small organize the basic components of their business into a more flexible form. Both big firms and small form alliances.

Industry

While new technology companies have a high propensity to develop teamnets, the future is not just about high tech. The big news is that teamnets have great success in traditional businesses as well, like textiles, wood, and metalworking.

Global

Finally, boundary crossing teamnets are forming all around the world at an accelerating rate. While American examples of business networking predominate in our survey, there is strong representation from Europe and Japan. Co-opetition—cooperation *and* competition—provides a natural way to balance differences between cultures.
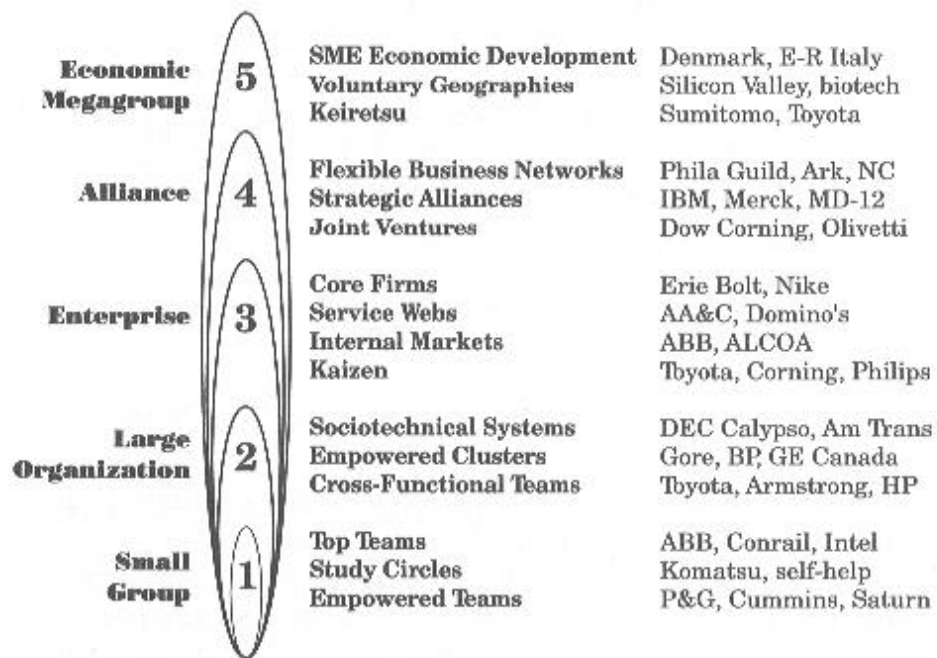
UNITY IN DIVERSITY

The *teamnet factor* is about organizational advantage. The right organization gives you the right edge. However, teamnets are not always the answer. In the wrong context, teamnets offer no advantage; they even can be a disadvantage. Each type of organization maximizes its value under different circumstances and needs.

   In the right context, teamnets are indispensable. What qualifies as a teamnet? An organization is a teamnet if it:

   ? Reflects the Five Teamnet Principles—unifying purpose, independent members, voluntary links, multiple leaders, and interacting levels; and
   ? Struggles with the Co-opetition Dynamic, the ever-shifting tension between cooperation and competition.

   When circumstances require decentralized power and flexibility, there is a teamnet type that will work for you. The Teamnet Organization Scale encompasses the diversity of types.

Teamnet Organization Scale and Examples

Economic Megagroup	5	SME Economic Development Voluntary Geographies Keiretsu	Denmark, E-R Italy Silicon Valley, biotech Sumitomo, Toyota
Alliance	4	Flexible Business Networks Strategic Alliances Joint Ventures	Phila Guild, Ark, NC IBM, Merck, MD-12 Dow Corning, Olivetti
Enterprise	3	Core Firms Service Webs Internal Markets Kaizen	Erie Bolt, Nike AA&C, Domino's ABB, ALCOA Toyota, Corning, Philips
Large Organization	2	Sociotechnical Systems Empowered Clusters Cross-Functional Teams	DEC Calypso, Am Trans Gore, BP, GE Canada Toyota, Armstrong, HP
Small Group	1	Top Teams Study Circles Empowered Teams	ABB, Conrail, Intel Komatsu, self-help P&G, Cummins, Saturn

The scale of types and examples shows where teamnets appear at different levels. Is your organization like the self-directed teams at Procter & Gamble? Are you a cross-functional team like Armstrong's? Does your organization spread out like a spider web delivering service like Domino's? Are you a flexible business network like Arkansas's 67-firm Metalworking Connection? Are you a player in a new voluntary geography like Silicon Valley and the Red River Trade Corridor?

Each type observes the Five Teamnet Principles and each combines elements of cooperation and competition. Each has both external boundaries (the teamnet whole) and internal boundaries (between the member parts).

> *One difference is that each type of organization has different kinds of boundaries to cross. Crossing boundaries from skill to skill is not the same as department to department, which is very different from crossing corporate lines, which differs from crossing national borders.*

THE MOST COMMON TEAMNET: THE SMALL GROUP

Often found in factories with only a few *levels* of authority, *empowered teams* are the simplest form of teamnet. People come together with a very clear common business *purpose. Members* are peers who interact laterally. *Leaders* emerge from within the group based on expertise and fit with group needs, rather than by superior appointment. Team members work near one another and usually don't face the work-at-a-distance *linkage* problems endemic to more spread-out teams.

?   People in these teams usually come from the same broad function. Rather than struggling with internal organizational boundaries, members have to cross *skill* boundaries, cross-training in the multiple capabilities the group requires.
?   A finished product or service defines the outer borders of empowered teams. The biggest boundary to a self-directed work team is its interface with the existing hierarchy. Since it is *self* directed, the group risks alienating the system.

Purposes—both specific work group goals and enterprisewide program visions—guide study circles, which are rooted in the physical workplace. Members are peers whose leaders arise naturally from within the group. While they appear at all levels of an

organization, members come from one or two neighboring hierarchical ranks. In circles, everyone works in the same place. People interact through direct face-to-face links.

> ? A handy way to learn something new or deal with common problems through peer support, you can use circles for anything. A specific location or department typically defines the outer bounds.
> ? Everybody participates. Everyone is encouraged to contribute. But be careful: Talk about turf wars! Even though circles scale only low walls, hurdles can be considerable. Internal warfare between occupational neighbors can be ferocious.

By their nature, *top teams,* the executives at the top of companies, comprise cross-boundary, independent members with considerable decision-making authority. As major players with fiefdoms, they can be a most difficult team to network. This team "owns" the corporate mission or purpose. By necessity, it copes with multiple levels of organization. In this intense place of corporate power and leadership politics, the CEO holds ultimate hierarchical control over the executive network. Members often have two offices, one symbolizing their peer relationships along the executive corridor, and one symbolizing their vertical position at the top of their department. While some linkages among top teams are optimized for their use within the enterprise, many executive groups still lack the basics: regular meetings and easy-to-use communication systems. Top teams also tend to isolate themselves. A huge moat can separate the vice presidents from everyone else, which teamnets can help bridge.

> ? Take cover as people lob hand grenades over the wall! In general, internal walls are extremely high and difficult to break down. Top teams cross every major boundary in the enterprise, like functions or divisions.
> ? For these small groups, the boundary of the whole is the enterprise and its system of external relations.

WHEN A MOB CLICKS: LARGE ORGANIZATION TEAMNETS

Although there may be no more people in a large organization teamnet than in a study circle, they deal with a much larger universe and confront different boundaries.

Cross-functional teams, perhaps the most commonly known teamnet, appear at all levels of a company—from an isolated temporary team to an institutionalized top management coordinating group. They start with a clear corporate purpose and broad membership from diverse parts of an organization. These teams link horizontally through formal and informal processes and communications systems. Unlike quality circles and self-directed work teams, the coexisting hierarchy usually convenes the cross-functional team and appoints its leadership.

? Watch out for the colliding functions. They can be like bumper cars, involving two or more parts of the company that probably don't work together all that often. The core team must build trust very quickly and transmit it to the constituencies involved.

? While the members may see the shared cross-functional purpose that defines the team's outer bounds, their managers' functional walls may remain high. It's no mistake to call in the voice of the hierarchy here with a memo mandating cooperation among functions.

Empowered clusters are internally networked groups that offer enterprise-level economies of scale. Cluster members are multidisciplinary and leadership is internal. Purpose aligns the corporate vision with the participatory formulation of cluster goals. Well designed technology and interactive workplaces enable communication links.

? As in empowered small groups, cluster members cross conventional skill boundaries internally, although they typically include a wider professional range.

? Sparks can fly here as the cluster is an administratively autonomous, mostly co-located work unit. Externally, it must interface with traditional administrative functions as a profit center or as a segment of a value chain. Conflicting organizational styles may require significant boundary crossing capabilities.

Sociotechnical systems become increasingly important as the technology of telecommunications and computer networking expands. In 1968, Doug Engelbart,[2] then at Xerox PARC, unveiled AUGMENT his system for linking technology to organization. Designed on a Perkin-Elmer mainframe, Engelbart's program was more something that you drove rather than ran, with its multiple hand and foot controls, headset, *mouse and pull-down menus!* It was probably the first piece of groupware[3] (computer software designed for use by a group) that maintains common open files, databases, and journals.

Long a proponent of co-designing organization and technology, Engelbart is not alone: high-performance work systems, learning organizations, and knowledge networking all are about empowered multilevel teamnets. Indeed, the teamnet model is ideal for the easier-said-than-done work of creating a good fit between "socio" and "tech." It's much easier to fit technology networks to social networks than to social hierarchies, as untold numbers of companies discover to their great regret.

Teams rather than individuals are basic members of a sociotech system. They derive purposes from customer product requirements or such specific needs as collecting information, sharing databases, and providing electronic services. They link loosely in larger systems of shared information, communications, connections, relationships, and trust. As systems, these organizations are naturally multi-level. While high-performance teams do not explicitly require multiple leaders, they tend to be nonhierarchical and participatory.

? The internal borders of the professions rise like national flags here. The techies and the management types have to work together, as sociotech systems not only cross organizational boundaries, but technology boundaries as well.

? Its vulnerable outer border is highly sensitive to top management, especially since many companies implement technical systems enterprisewide. Unless there's supportive, engaged participation by the top of the house, people will reject sociotech systems.

WHEN THE WHOLE COMPANY IS A TEAMNET

Teamnets permeate some companies. In Japan, companies use the process-oriented management concept of "ongoing improvement involving everyone," called *kaizen.* In kaizen companies, process follows purpose. Small work groups at every level build strong linkages with communication systems as well as culture, participatory planning, problem solving, and the formalized tools and techniques of the quality movement. They involve many members from suppliers to customers. Following the nature of Japanese hierarchy, they depend on multiple leaders.

? What's right for the company is a natural point of reference. Kaizen teamnets also cross time barriers. Kaizen takes a very long view of time.

? There are internal boundaries galore here. Across functions and disciplines, ongoing improvement involving everyone means that identity groups constantly change in dynamic relation to one another.

Kaizen excels in generating *incremental improvements,* such as the 150 successive versions of the Sony Walkman. The American cultural focus on results and individual initiative generates more

breakthrough innovations, many of which the Japanese successfully commercialize through kaizen processes.

> *The complementary integration of East-West, process-result approaches, crossing the broadest boundaries of group and individualistic cultures, makes teamnet management principles applicable worldwide.*

Really successful boundary crossing teamnets have both a *process* perspective *and* a focus on *results.*

When companies create a large number of internal profit centers, they may develop *internal markets.* Here, members forge internal and external supplier and customer links while seeking advantage through alignment with strategic corporate purpose. A lean hierarchy anchors leadership at top levels, responsibility is pushed down to teams, and staff size is very small. It is amazingly simple to use internal markets as bureaucracy busters: just allow internal units to buy and sell externally.

- ? The global hierarchy sets the boundaries for the whole and the rules for crossing them. People in the trenches may disagree, which opens up the potential for border disputes.
- ? In both internal and external markets, members cross incorporation or balance sheet boundaries.

Domino's delivers through *service webs* based on a clear business purpose served by replicable member units. Service webs have few levels and centralized links. Leadership combines a lean hierarchy with entrepreneurial unit owners and/or managers.
- ? With the enterprise whole bounded from the center by headquarters and its control system, service webs constantly struggle to balance global standardization with local customization.

? While members cross internal unit boundaries by cooperating with enterprise standards, they compete locally with separately owned but similar service firms (often another service web).

Erie Bolt Company sits in the middle of a set of relationships with suppliers and customers. It is the biggest company, and it develops the network. Other members of the *core firm* teamnet take their cue from the business purpose of the major partner. Smaller companies, or small parts of other big companies, link with a larger company, one usually in the middle of a value chain, like a manufacturer. Small owners work with core firm leaders at a variety of levels, depending on the context.

? With the core firm defining the boundaries by its choice of
partners, there is little ambiguity about who's in and who's out.
? While members are independent firms operating across enterprise boundaries with one or more major partners, they usually do not do business with other members. These missed opportunities may inhibit the growth of new business.

THE ALLIANCE STRATEGY

When companies deliberately decide to undertake a project together, they create teamnet alliances to link them. Some of these alliance types have been around for many years; others are brand-new. Each poses its own boundary problems to solve.

Joint ventures, like Corning's numerous ones, work best when members and their joint progeny are autonomous at the enterprise level. Voluntary links and joint leadership come from a clear business *purpose* requiring complementary core competencies from the partners.

? The joint venture is quite literally a common corporate whole
created by the partners, whose boundaries include internal and

external enterprise relationships. Since many of the people in the joint venture may come from the partner firms, old firm loyalty can create barriers.

? Members cross enterprise boundaries to cooperatively create the venture, but may compete elsewhere in the marketplace. These confusing sets of relationships can cause impenetrable walls to go up in the wrong places.

Strategic alliances include a wide array of members linking for diverse purposes with two or more levels of business relationships. Top executive leadership is typical, since these often involve major strategic directions for the company.

? Strategic alliances can draw their boundaries narrowly in tight exclusive contracts or broadly in philosophical agreements in principle to work together. The key is to understand the scope of the agreement, so that property rights, intellectual and otherwise, do not become an issue.

? Alliance members cross both enterprise boundaries *and* some complementary business boundary that is the basis for the beneficial alliance. Mutual statement of the shared benefit is critical to avoid transgressing the wrong boundaries.

When many small firms come together to do something they cannot do alone, *flexible business networks* appear. Individual firms are the members who communicate and develop relationships through very voluntary links, hard-won shared purposes, and very few levels. Diverse leadership comes from individual company owners, industry brokers, or facilitators who know the companies and their businesses, and economic development and other public agencies, who provide technical assistance and, sometimes, funding.

? In flexible business networks, the most frightening hurdle for companies to jump is *cooperating to compete*. Working with a

competitor stops many people cold in their tracks. Once people understand the business justification and learn to trust each other, competition is no longer a barrier.

?Since firms can belong to many flexible networks, not just one, the lines on the map keep changing. When doing business in more than one network, it is mandatory that you keep your separate purposes clear.

REDRAWING THE TERRITORY: ECONOMIC MEGAGROUP TEAMNETS

Something new is happening. Companies are grouping in combinations of previously unthinkable size, across industries and geographies. Together, they create new economic megagroups.

Japan's *keiretsu* are a striking example. Members include large companies and small with countless major and minor strategic links between them serving specific market purposes. In Japan, the core enterprise, one of six banks or the lead manufacturer, exercises leadership. Their cascading levels of relationships extend to the smallest entrepreneurial production units and retail distribution outlets.

?While keiretsu are vast in extent, their membership is clear:
you are part of the family or you are not. This makes for
extremely closed markets, inhibiting external competition.

?Member companies have cross-ownership as well as supplier-customer relations. People sit on each other's boards. A totally closed keiretsu system could be stifling, but it's not a problem for most, since a typical member does much less than half of its business within the keiretsu.

Voluntary geographies are forming all over Europe, and in many other places as well. The Association of the Eastern Alps, the Association of the Western Alps, the Celtic Arc from Ireland to

Western Portugal, the European Port Cities Network, the Working Communities of the Pyrenees and the Peripheral Maritimes, all are new voluntary geographies that create economic megaregions.[4]

Voluntary geographies are fluid collections of business members of all sizes. They have myriad links among them that nevertheless share some core market purpose. Leaders come from private industry and from public agencies that support the businesses. As loose associations rather than targeted economic engines, they interact with many levels of the private and public sectors.

? Regions are unbounded at the edges, even in physically identified regions, but everyone who participates has a common economic interest. The fuzzy edges of the regions keep the membership issue alive.

? Participants may know one another well because of physical proximity that can produce a side effect of provincialism. The trick is to be just local enough without becoming xenophobic. After all, it's foreigners who are the customers for your exports.

When the public sector becomes directly involved in *small and medium-sized enterprise economic development,* new boundary crossing relationships flourish. With both public and private leadership that links small and medium-sized member companies, they pursue common or complementary purposes in large numbers. Operating across many domains, it's easy to get lost in these levels. Even so, their results are dramatic—whole regions, like EmiliaRomagna in Italy, and the entire country of Denmark—can benefit from concerted joint effort.

? A combination of government policy and private initiatives defines the new economic borders. Since these initiatives draw new boundaries that supersede older ones, it's important to be mindful of falling into old-think traps.

? Members are small and medium-sized enterprises with leaders able to cross the cultural boundaries of rugged individualism.

Unless companies trust one another, they won't work together. The old axiom, "You do business with people you know," is an important one to expand upon. Pay attention to getting to know new people.

Flexible business networks are the heart of economic development for small and medium-sized companies so important to the future of the world's local economies. Rampant downsizing by the world's largest firms, particularly in the United States, is one inevitable consequence of two fundamental trends: greater decentralization and more external alliances. The biggest become smaller as the smallest become more numerous.

It's in everyone's interest that the small
become smarter and more capable micro-economic engines.

Taken as a whole, teamnets apply across all the levels, giving companies of all sizes in all industries organizational advantage.

Critical Success Factor 1

Get the purpose right! Structure your organization to meet the purpose. Restructure when the purpose significantly changes. Match organizational type to need. Know your glue:

What's going to be the vital something that
holds the whole together?

GLUE BY WARP AND WOOF

Three powerful basic drivers of organizational advantage structure teamnet organizations. They apply up and down the scale for all their infinitely specific purposes:

1. *Complementary needs* create organizations with functional departments, with vertical integration in an industry or market, or with units performing in many contiguous segments of the value chain.
2. *Common needs* give rise to divisional organizations, with horizontal linkages in an industry, or with centralized systems of many similar units.
3. *Mixed needs* try to systematically serve both common and complementary purposes, or markets with both stable and changing features, generating matrix organizations with functions (e.g., marketing, design, production) and divisions (e.g., region, product, project).

This simple set of drivers neatly parallels the most common categories of bureaucracy—functional, divisional, and matrix organizations respectively.

The core giant companies of the past half century and many of the industries they have dominated are breaking up into smaller *units—disaggregating.* To adapt to the 21st century, bureaucracies must break up into smaller parts, forming both internal and external networks.[5] Internal decentralization and external alliances pull bureaucracy in two directions simultaneously.

The columns in the chart represent Critical Success Factor 1, the driver of the organization: complementary, common, or mixed needs. The rows represent the directions bureaucracy is being pulled: the traditional bureaucratic form is in the middle; variations of internal teamnets array along the bottom; and external teamnets are at the top.

From Bureaucracy to Teamnets

	COMPLEMENTARY	COMMON	MIXED
EXTERNAL	**Flex Bus Net/ vertical** (Team Nashua, MD-12) **Joint Venture** (Corning) **Core Firm** (Erie Bolt) ↑	**Flex Bus Net/ horizontal** (garments, metal, woodworking, e.g., Philadelphia Guild) ↑	**SME Eco Devel** (Denmark) **Voluntary Geographies** (Silicon Valley) **Keiretsu** (Mitsubishi) ↑
BUREAUCRACY	**Functional** (most traditional firms) ↓	**Divisional** Automotive (GM); retail (Sears); food (General Mills) ↓	**Matrix** Aerospace (McDonnell-Douglas); electronics (Digital) ↓
INTERNAL	**Top Team** **Sociotech System** (Digital's Calypso) **Cross-Functional Team**	**Service Web** (AA&C) **Empowered Cluster** (BP) **Study Circle** (Komatsu) **Empowered Team** (P&G)	**Kaizen** (Toyota) **Internal Market** (Asea Brown Boveri)

Your teamnet sits somewhere among these levels. Locate its type, then learn from the lessons of other companies that have gone before you. Consider purpose, members, links, leaders, and levels. Ascertain whether you are working internally or externally or both. Sort out whether your needs are complementary, common, or mixed, and whether your teamnet has functional, divisional, or matrix characteristics. Your teamnet is most certainly like someone else's in some fundamental ways—and it is different, always idiosyncratic.

You can creatively address your differences and unique features by "Harnessing the Power of Teamnets," the subject of section II of this book, chapters 8 through 11. By using the tools in different combinations, you can scale and adapt them to virtually any business conditions. Choose your tools wisely and greatly improve your teamnet's chances of success.

With Tools in Hand

It is one thing to understand ideas, and quite another to put them into practice. To help you get your teamnet off the ground tomorrow morning, we offer the Thamnet Interface.

Good software programs have good interfaces. Interfaces are the parts of programs that greet the user, what you see on the screen when you turn on your machine and call up a program. Good interfaces are both intuitive—meaning that they feel natural to the average user—and structured—meaning that they make logical sense from a design perspective. They make it easy to get going and get around. Good interfaces also appeal to people knowledgeable in the application's area of expertise.

The Thamnet Interface consists of three sets of tools, each with five elements:

1. Teamnet Principles

Purpose, Members, Links, Leaders, and Levels

2. Phases of Growth

Start-up, Launch, Perform, Test, and Deliver

3. Target Method

Targets, Tasks, Times, Teams, and Territories

We pair combinations of the three interfaces to organize various parts of the teamnet "how-to" section:

- ? The Teamnet Principles and Phases organize the Teamnet Activities.
- ? The combination of the Phases and Target Method identifies Teamnet Information.

? Teamnet Tools integrate the Target Method and Teamnet Principles.

By understanding the underlying planning frameworks that arise from these combinations, you can easily extend many of our teamnet ideas.

TEAMNET ACTIVITIES CHART: FOLLOWING THE PRINCIPLES ACROSS THE PHASES

In "Quick Start," chapter 8, the Teamnet Principles appear immediately as the "Teamnet Checklist," a simple set of diagnostic questions. These questions appear as the first column in the Teamnet Activities Chart.

With these questions, you can rough out the first sketch of your plan as your first phase of activity. For your second pass, the Launch Phase, you sharpen the questions into a set of five focused activities for producing a plan. This shows up as the "Teamnet How-to" in chapter 8, appearing here as the second column of the Teamnet Activities Chart.

Teamnet Activities

	START-UP	LAUNCH	PERFORM	TEST	DELIVER
PURPOSE	Common view?	Clarify purpose	Detail design	Apply criteria	Act
MEMBERS	Colleagues?	Identify members	Utilize skills	Examine quality	Operate
LINKS	Connections?	Create links	Capture learning	Feedback responses	Network
LEADERS	Voices?	Recognize leaders	Lead tasks	Answer challenges	Manage
LEVELS	Inclusion?	Integrate levels	Review progress	Review tests	Implement

When you get to the later phases—Perform, Test, and Deliver— use this chart as a simple device. Think of it as a checklist with a strategy. Consider how the five principles apply at each stage, one by one:

> *Are we still on the beam with purpose?*
> *How have the members changed? Are the links being used? Where are the new leaders? How can we connect with the*
> *hierarchy?*

TEAMNET INFORMATION CHART: TRACKING THE METHOD ACROSS THE PHASES

Track the Phases of Growth by combining them with the commonly asked questions of our Target Method (the Five W's: *why, what, when, who,* and *where;* and the Five T's: *targets, tasks, time, team, and territory).* "Launching Teamnets," chapter 9, steps you through the first two phase columns of the Teamnet Information Chart: the first run-through of five-W questions and the second run-through of

Teamnet Information

	START-UP	LAUNCH	PERFORM	TEST	DELIVER
TARGETS	Why?	Set targets	Monitor process	Check results	Measure targets
TASKS	What?	Define tasks	Articulate attributes	Evaluate cost/benefits	Standard tasks
TIME	When?	Estimate time	Report actuals	Evaluate cycles	Document process
TEAM	Who?	Select team	Deploy resources	Review participation	Capture learning
TERRITORY	Where?	Choose territory	Localize work	Check variants	Locally operate

five-T answers. When you complete the first two columns, you are on your way to a workable plan.

Information plays different roles at different points in the process. In the Start-up and Launch Phases, you use information to simulate the future and to populate the planning process. In the Perform Phase, you use information to monitor the group's particular work, based on the categories you establish in the Launch Phase. In the Test Phase, you compare actual output with the goals and criteria set in the early stages. In the final Deliver Phase, you implement change, reject it, or return to begin another cycle of the process.

TEAMNET TOOLS: FOLLOWING THE METHOD ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLES

"Those That Do, Plan," chapter 10, makes use of the combination of the Target Method and the Teamnet Principles. Tools manage the information a teamnet generates.

A sturdy foundation for teamnet plans combines tasks, time, and team into four pillars of design:

  ? Task framework;
  ? Task flow diagram;
  ? Schedule; and
   ?Cross-boundary chart.

Use a framework to capture the *tasks* that elaborate the *purpose.* Break down the framework into more detailed *levels* of tasks. Use cross-boundary charts to show *links,* identifying each task *team* according to *members* involved and who has *leadership* responsibility. You can identify other links by creating a task flow and estimating *times* that together produce a schedule.

To convey *targets,* use words and images in multiple media. To establish *territory,* create a "Teamnet Handbook" of shared information to stand for "where," the group's location. Include directories, mail systems, and maps. Get on-line if possible.

PURPOSE IS THE VITAL CENTER

It is no accident that we place purpose at the beginning of each tool set. Purpose is the vital center. The motivating reason and its objectives overlap in the beginning: Start-up/Purpose/Targets.

Start-up/Purpose/Targets get things going. They are the inspiration that passes from one person to another, the arcs struck by spark plugs, the expression of a group's center when it "clicks."

When you hit it right, you know it. You have the certainty that the process will make it. Keep the purpose out in front for everybody. Ask people to sign the flip chart on which you capture the purpose. Chisel in the date you first get it right.

INVEST IN THE BEGINNINGS

Nothing is more important than getting the beginning right. This is why we focus on the early phases of the process, specifically on the Start-up and Launch stages. The Target Method expands on the critical second stage, Launch, which produces the plan necessary for distributed work. The Target Method's five T's create the momentum the group needs to take off, i.e., to launch.

How Phases Relate to Method
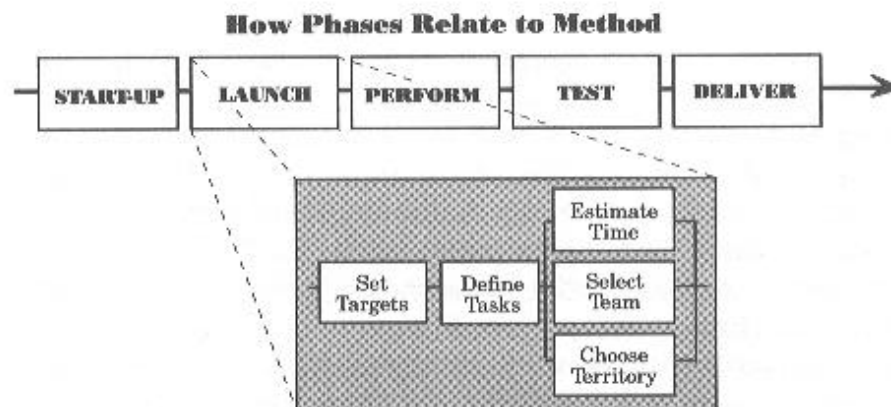
Clarify the purpose and divide the work in the right way.

We stress this repeatedly because it is the source for all the tasks that make up the plan and drive the process logic. Once you define a task, you can attach attributes to it later in any order. Use your early iterations to complete the task structure, matching it with the needs propelling the work.

In the beginning, planning is fluid: you need to adjust elements interdependently. There is abundant feedback within and between the components of the method and the change process. Initially, keep information in a rough state. At first, order-of-magnitude estimates that scope a whole process will suffice. Clarify and refine the information over time.

NAVIGATING WITH YOUR PLAN

Ray Stata, CEO of Analog Devices, has put "planning as learning" into practice. "I believe our approach to planning as a learning process has greatly facilitated our ability to forge a consensus for change among those who must make it happen. It has also helped reduce the obstacles and resistance to change, that is, outdated beliefs and assumptions created by past success."[6]

To make the complex simple, we naturally create models of our world. Then we filter our daily experience through these models. Groups do the same thing. When a group says it has "a common view of the world," it means that people in the group share certain assumptions about their reality. A plan is a model of the future.

Good, realistic models help groups handle the flood of incoming information. Models provide common categories—such as sales, marketing, invoices, pay periods. They allow people quickly to sort new information into the work flow, i.e., a request for a customer presentation goes to a marketing group, not the accounts payable

department. With a clear model, people can then attend to exceptions and pattern changes, the sources of problems and improvements.

When a group of people shares special knowledge about the world, people know what to do in local situations. If the local circumstances fall outside the shared experience, the group receives a signal from people on the scene of the need for new information, resources, or decisions.

> *The planning process is really all about*
> *creating a shared mental model of the teamnet and its work.*

At its fullest extent, a richly elaborated shared memory is the essence of the group. It is a specialized organizational culture unique to this set of people.

New plans are seeds for new cultures. Create a shared reality through the common experience of planning. Capture your learning through continuous access to information throughout the life cycle. Extend your learning into the delivery, operations, and service phases of your business process.

USE YOUR PLAN AS AN INTERFACE

Information Age dynamics drive the formation of more organizational networks. Electronic communications and distributed computer capabilities are both a cause and an effect of more teamnets. Electronic distributed work—when people work together apart using computers—adds its own hazards. Chief among them is information overload. When all planning information is widely accessible to everyone, it increases the potential of too much information that is too little processed and too hard to find.

Designing a good work process helps address this problem. Your work process is a mental bridge to the complex shared information space of the teamnet.
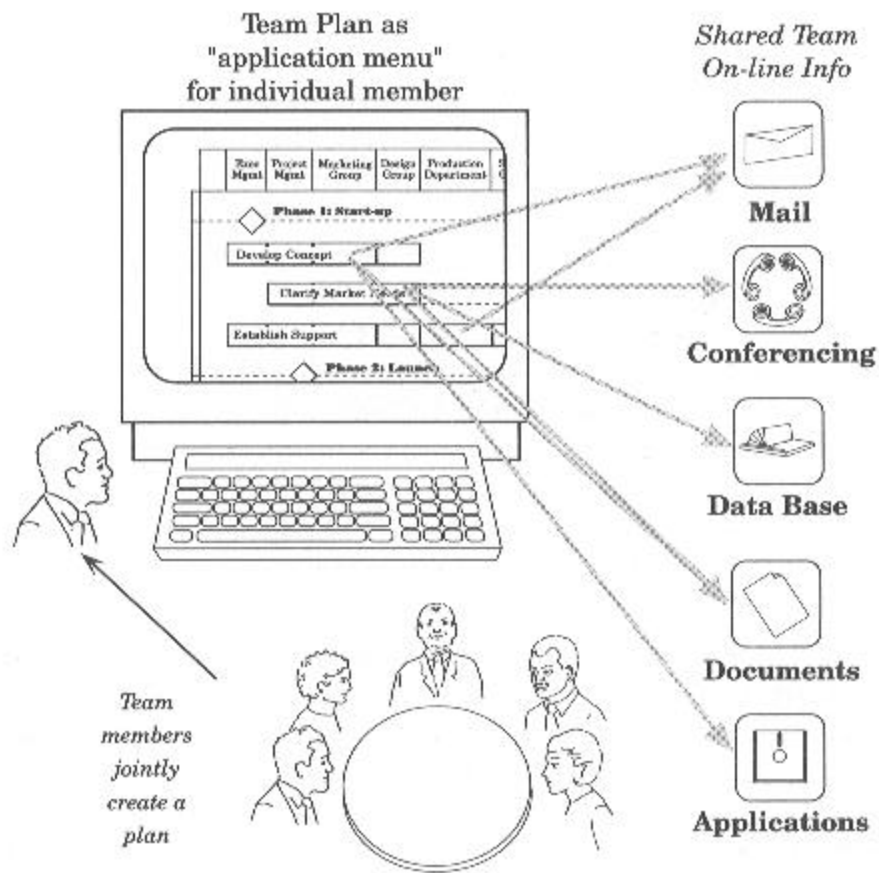
Use shared models of the process as menu categories and graphical user interfaces to on-line information.

Employ the work process elements and design visuals to navigate the shared information. Reflect changes in the work as changes in the pointers to the underlying information network, and reap these rewards:

? Flexibility in changing process elements;
 ?Controllability in maintaining process integration; and
? Ease of use in interacting with the information infrastructure.

Use interfaces and pointers rather than static database designs. In this way, you make the on-line information space navigable rather than a mazelike trap. As the plan and cross-functional associations change, the pointers change as well.

Shared Plan, Shared Interface

Team Plan as
"application menu"
for individual member

*Shared Team
On-line Info*

Rate Mgmt	Project Mgmt	Marketing Group	Design Group	Production Department	

◇ **Phase 1: Start-up**

Develop Concept

Clarify Market Concept

Establish Support

◇ **Phase 2: Launch**

Mail

Conferencing

Data Base

Documents

Applications

*Team
members
jointly
create a
plan*

Imagine conducting this exercise with your on-line system:

> ***Create a cross-boundary chart*** *with icons and names for tasks, deliverables, meetings, decisions, milestones, standards, and functions. Click on a particular deliverable or icon to go directly to associated files wherever they are on the network. Click on meetings, decisions, or milestones to go to information about past or forthcoming events. Click on functions to go to directories of organizations and people, as well as to make electronic connections to them.[7]*

Work process design is one critical element in being smart, in improving the complex world of human work. Systems integration programs not only link computers; they also link people and organizations. Few companies or their systems integrators have yet to tackle the organizational aspects of these programs. In the long run, however, technology enhancement efforts fail unless they also address the all-important people integration issues.

it is easier to support networked organizations and work processes with networked information technologies than it is to support hierarchies with them. It wasn't always so. In the old days, centralized mainframe hosts with "slave" terminals ruled the computing roost. They were completely congruent with the traditional organization structure. Times change. Now the advantage is with network architecture, in both organizations and technology.

In the end, better models of the world enable a group to work smarter and more successfully. It is the smart who will inherit the 21st century global market—smart groups, smart companies, smart nations.

What to Do

In the broad shift from hierarchy to bureaucracy to networks, there are some general clues about what to do.

Maintain boundaries and *cross them.*

Boundaries represent independence. Crossing boundaries is how cooperation happens. Both are important. While some approaches to cooperation demand their removal, the network form requires respect for boundaries. Networks are about learning to live with boundaries by establishing common purpose and interdependent links.

Strengthen the co-opetition dynamic for balance.

Tension is natural and, when not out of control, healthy in a democratic, open economy. Instead of diminishing cooperation or competition to redress imbalances, strengthen both. Measures that encourage cooperation need also to include ways to protect and develop independent leadership and self-reliance. Measures that encourage competition need also to promote cooperative goals and interdependent linkages.

Travel the levels and "walk the talk."

We can all take advantage of the cross-level network principles to apply our learning from one context, level, or scale to another. In particular, in our own "zone of influence," it is of great value to practice what we preach.

Lower the cultural barrier to cooperation.

Most networks and alliances never get past initial hesitations, suspicions, and fears even to begin co-opetition formation. Presidents and other leaders of companies and countries can do something to

work on this critical first hurdle by establishing co-opetition as a corporate norm. This is one area where the "bully pulpit" that comes with the top spot can be extremely effective.

Make work fun again.

"I like networks because every one contains a surprise," says Niels Christian Nielsen, one of Denmark's flexible business network strategy architects.[8] "And the owners say they are having more fun in business." When networks work, they are fun and exciting, forming environments of diversity and creativity. People respect one another for who they are and what they do. Working together is fascinating and satisfying. Serendipity happens. The best in people comes out. Of course, when things don't work, all the opposite behaviors appear, and it's not fun at all.

All the more reason to learn how to function in this new style of work, to:

Increase the fun while meeting needs.

Teamnets cross boundaries rarely traversed before, increasing business and creating new opportunities as people cooperate to compete. Are you?