SECTION II

Power

In section I, we focus on “what is.” Here, in section II, we focus on “how-to”:

? Develop teams with network characteristics;
? Design the work of larger and more complex teamnets;
? Leverage tools to help make planning as effective and painless as possible; and
? Avoid failure.

In the spirit of a time when all the traditional forms of media hurtle toward one another into one digital mass, we use a computer metaphor to help shape our presentation of a teamnet how-to.

TEAMNET Version 1.0:
The Application Program

Think of the structured ideas in this book as computerless soft ware.’ The Thamnet Principles in “Seeing the Obvious,” chapter 2, the Thamnet Phases of Growth in “Quick Start,” chapter 8, and the

Target Method in chapter 9, “Launching Teamnets,” function like an application program. Just as spreadsheet or word processor designers provide general-purpose capabilities to handle information, we as software designers provide generic tools. You provide the content, and you use these tools to manage your specific information in your way.

Software applications help people do things they define as necessary to do. With each new application, the computer provides a new set of tools. By contrast, most mechanical devices are specialized; they do one thing well for as long as they last.

Cultures develop new metaphors as new technologies become dominant. The metaphors from the Bureaucracy Era are based on precision industrial machines, the mind-set that still pertains in traditional business cultures:

> *The mechanistic ideal is an organization that runs like a well-oiled machine, preferably with steering wheel, accelerator, and brakes.*

New metaphors emerge with the rise of information technology:

> *The 1990s organization is an open system with inputs, value-added outputs, and feedback loops.*

In this book, we offer TEAMNET Version 1.0. Tomorrow, we hope Version 2.0 will reflect the experience of countless users of the original.

How the TEAMNET 1.0 Manual Is Organized

The TEAMNET 1.0 manual is organized in the same way as any good software manual. It starts simply and offers progressively more detail.

Chapter 8 is the "Quick Start" section:

- ? Use TEAMNET 1.0 right out of the box through the "Teamnet Checklist." Remove the shrink wrap, open the box, get out the "Quick Start" booklet, and begin.
- ? Apply the "Thamnet How-to" tutorial with sample problems to your situation. It introduces the application of the Teamnet Principles to process along with some basic facts of teamnet life.
- ? Use the Teamnet Phases of Growth (start-up, launch, perform, test, deliver) to do a quick planning run-through.

The basic "User Manual" begins in "Seeing the Obvious," chapter 2, and "Linoleum, Furniture, and Electrical Systems," chapter 3:

- ? The Five Teamnet Principles (purpose, members, links, leaders, levels) are the first thing to learn; they help you describe and navigate diverse organizational forms.
- ? The Co-opetition Dynamic (cooperation/competition) is intrinsic to every teamnet; don't leave home without it.
- ? The Thamnet Organization Scale (small group, large organization, enterprise, alliance, economic megagroup) is the basic pocket tool for applying the teamnet idea in your work group, your company, and your economic region.

"Launching Teamnets," chapter 9, gives you the workhorse techniques you need to get your teamnet off the ground:

- ? To scope the whole process that your teamnet must tackle, take your first pass at answering the five W's (who?, what?, when?,

where?, why?) using the Target Method.

? To launch your teamnet, develop the five T's (targets, tasks, team, time, territories) to drive a second planning pass.

"Those That Do, Plan," chapter 10, is for the power user:

? Gain access to the rigor and discipline of the method, using data to plan, manage, and capture the learning of your teamnet.
? Put the teamnet conceptual tools together with a supporting set of existing software applications.
? Learn ancillary methods to improve meetings and increase communication.

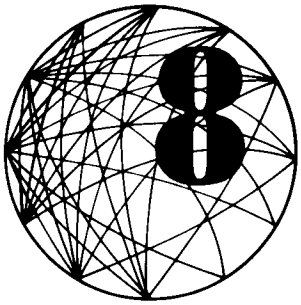
"Rascals in Paradise: How Teamnets Fail," chapter 11, provides an in-depth look at some of the difficulties in networking:

? Spot some of the weak spots in teamnets and learn tips to avoid them; and
? See how much agreement there is on the basic pitfalls.

The Reference Section is the "advanced stuff" at the back of the manual. Designed for the serious programmer, not the casual user, here you find the equivalent of call routines, code interfaces, and translation tables.

? Relate traditional bureaucratic forms to teamnet types to help develop transition paths from traditional to 21st-century organizations.
? Make use of some core TEAMNET code and access the underlying systems philosophy of the program. Use them to build your own extensions to the TEAMNET platform.

It's easier than you think. You already are likely doing many of the approaches we suggest. The value we're adding is some order and missing parts to provide a new context for many capabilities you already have.



Quick Start: Getting Your Teamnet to Click

How long does it take to build a house? If you go by the name of its videotape, the Building Industry Association of San Diego says there is such a thing as a *Four Hour House.'* However, if you watch the tape, actually a competition between two teams to see who could build their house faster, you find out the answer is actually 2 hours and 58 minutes. With extensive planning and a practice run, a 850-person team transforms a bare plot into a 1,500-square-foot, three-bedroom, two-bath, fully landscaped house with a fireplace, family room, and two-car garage in the time it takes to qualify for the Boston Marathon, under three hours.

The "Four Hour House" is a superb example of a teamnet, involving more than 140 firms, and excels at demonstrating the value of up-front planning. "We literally spent thousands of hours planning these houses. And that is not an exaggeration," says Randy Muelhein, a construction supervisor for one of the houses from J. H. Hedrick.[2]

For six months before the competition, the Building Industry Association (BIA) met every Thursday to coordinate the project. They also met with supervisors and city building officials. "What is

important here is that we're cooperating on a project with the inspectors before the fact. It is something that can be done in the future to speed up the whole process," says then BIA president Ray Jessen.[3] Instead of the inspectors coming in when construction is complete to point out errors, they consult with the builders in advance to avoid costly rework.

Cooperation on the team is also noteworthy. "I've never seen the trades work together better. Normally, they're throwing hammers at each other. This time they're helping each other," says Nicholas Haluskey, senior building inspector.

Amazing as the Four Hour House is, even more remarkable is that a group of volunteers, working with knowledgeable trades people, can achieve the same results. On one of its "blitz builds," Habitat for Humanity,[4] the nonprofit organization that builds low-cost, affordable housing, builds 10 houses in five days. Calculated according to an eight-hour day, these, too, are four-hour houses.

Like the people in San Diego, Habitat builders plan extensively beforehand, including construction of a test house on five prior consecutive Saturdays. They also publish an extensive manual that details all aspects of the blitz build, including floorplans, day-by-day construction supply lists, Gantt charts with hour-by-hour schedules, and strict quality criteria. Volunteers each receive a color code—red for highly skilled, orange for semiskilled, and yellow for unskilled—and a category assignment—ranging from crew leaders and runners to specialists and painting coordinators.

"To build a frame house in the United States, 20 people work on each shift. There's one supervisor who's in charge who's not hammering or nailing. I've highly skilled crew chiefs each have teams of four semiskilled and unskilled people working with them. When there's something difficult to do, they bring the crews together and ask for volunteers," explains Tilly Grey of Habitat for Humanity International.

Habitat has little problem getting volunteers for its projects. "They get such a high building a house. It's just magical to see a

house go up before your eyes," she says. The program is so popular that Elderhostel offers Habitat house building as one of its courses for older people.

Teamnets spring up all the time. They spontaneously erupt when something terrible happens, like a natural disaster.[5] People and organizations flock together to do something about it. When crisis intervention teams spend a few up-front moments defining objectives and modifying contingency plans, they work considerably better. When this doesn't happen, groups pay dearly for their lack of planning. The Four Hour House team proves that for the boundary crossing group, planning is the ultimate way to achieve goals. Without certain basic ingredients, you don't have a boundary crossing group. Check your teamnet against these criteria:

- The members of the group *cross traditional boundaries.*
- Members cooperate for *mutual benefit* in at least one area.
- Members can survive *independently* in business, sometimes competing against one another.

First look at the people who make up the group. Are they from different organizations, or does every one simply work for you? If you're just looking at the same people who appear on your traditional organization chart, then you're not looking at a teamnet. When your new chart starts to look a little messy, then you know you're on your way to *crossing traditional boundaries.* Scary as this may seem at first, messiness just happens to be a fact of life in teamnets.

Does the group that you have in mind have reason to cooperate? Is there some shared purpose to which everyone involved aspires? If so, there is a basis for cooperation for *mutual benefit* (although there are no guarantees).

Is the group made up of members who can manage on their own? When members leave the team, do they have some place to go or can they marshal the resources to continue? If so, they are *independent,* which may include competing with one another in other situations.

The Teamnet Checklist

"Okay. Go ahead. Do it." Have you ever fought hard to get approval for an idea, only to dread the final "Yes"? The difficult work of getting something off the ground kills many a great idea. "What now?" you gasp, when the germ of an idea must come to life. Exciting and exhilarating as beginnings of projects are, they are also tough.

> *The unknown can seem personally overwhelming. Mixing in other people and groups "some distance away" across boundaries only adds to the nervousness about the potential for success. They represent more help, of course, but getting more people involved brings its own problems. Then there's your unique problem to solve with a unique set of constraints and resources. And you don't want to reinvent any wheels. Whew!*

"I often dread the final go-ahead because I feel like I've had to sell my soul to get there, promising to do the impossible with the impoverished," says one senior engineering manager whose large high-tech company is downsizing like crazy.

We offer guidelines, not prescriptions. Each situation is different. The players, place, and motivation are unique for any specific group that needs to cross boundaries. You bring the details and we provide a program in this section of the book so you can be more effective. *Think it through.* If you do nothing else, take the time to look at your overall problem. This is an excellent way to *get started.* For

teamnets, “beginning with the end in mind”[6] is not an optional exercise. It is an essential one. Discipline and control can come only from commonly held agreements and clear understanding of what the group needs to do. The next essential lesson is to *think it through more than once.* Iterate, iterate. Further flesh out the plan with each repetition. To make the iterations truly productive, consider as many potential downside risks as possible. More than one great project has died because its members have not been willing to think the unthinkable.

The key points to remember about teamnets number only a handful. Use these five questions as a checklist for assessing the teamnet potential of your group:

COMMON VIEW?

Does your organization have a clear purpose?

Define your *purpose.* It is at the top of the agenda for teamnets to work. If your organization or project has a clear purpose, you are well on your way to success. If you don’t, this is the first hurdle to cross. Until the players agree on the purpose, they have no other work to do. Once you've agreed on a common purpose, you’re on your way to knowing the tasks required to complete it.

COLLEAGUES?

Are there other people besides you working toward the purpose?

If you’re not the sole champion of an idea and others work with you, then your group has *members.* These are the people who cross the boundaries. People identify with groups, and groups identify with people. Either way, a group takes off when a critical mass of people, each with an idea of the role he or she will play, becomes involved.

CONNECTIONS?

Do you have sufficient communication and relationships among you to effectively achieve the purpose?

For a group to accomplish any goal requires interaction—meetings, phone calls, memos, letters, agreements, and the like. to interact, people need *links—both* the technology kinds (phones, paper, computers) and the people kinds (relationships and roles). When a group makes it to the point where people have multiple voluntary relationships among them and numerous, often used communication channels, it can get work done.

VOICES?

Is there more than one leader in the group?

Contrary to popular belief, in the case of teamnets, two heads—or more—are better than one. If only one person plays a leadership role, then the group is no different from a traditional organization. *Leaders* become known through the process of defining purpose and figuring out who's going to do what. Leaders are also followers.

INCLUSION?

Can you "look up" and see that your organization is a part of a larger one? Can you "look down" and see the smaller parts that make up yours?

If the group intends to effect long-term change, it must interact at multiple *levels* with other parts of the business environment. A teamnet needs relationships with larger systems of which it is a natural part. It also needs to recognize its own subgroup components.

Remember to keep a light touch while trying this out. It is very easy to fall into the trap of thinking that exhaustive attention to every detail in the process will ensure success. It won't, but it will wear people out. Beware overdoing it.

The Teamnet How-to

As your organization, under pressure of change, migrates from a mechanis tic hierarchy to an organic network, the future grows fuzzier. You lose the reductionist promise of prediction, but, through planning, gain the ability to *anticipate* the future.

In the real world of teamnet work, many things happen at once. A group process also plays out in something of a logical, relatively straightforward step-by-step sequence that develops over time. The Thamnet Checklist translates into a recipe, a plan to launch your group across boundaries. Take your group through these five steps:

Step 1. ***Clarify purpose*** by agreeing on mission and goals.
Step 2. ***Identify members*** by defining who will be involved.
Step 3. ***Create links*** by connecting people to one another in as many ways as necessary.
Step 4. ***Multiply leadership*** to maximize the responsiveness of the group.
Step 5. ***Integrate levels*** to maintain dynamic balance within and without the group.

STEP 1. CLARIFY PURPOSE

When producers at WGBH, Boston's public television station, get together to develop a new idea for a show, they call such exercises "retreats." Digital Equipment Corporation calls its planning sessions "Woods Meetings," because the original ones took place at founder Ken Olseh's New Hampshire home. One of the United States' last family-owned metropolitan newspapers calls them "think tanks." One consulting company calls them "summits." Many companies simply call them "offsites."

Regardless of what name they have, such meetings encourage people to step out of their everyday routines. together, they go through some sort of process to arrive at a shared view of the work to be done. Clear purpose is the secret of successful boundary crossing. All teamnets need to take this step, whether a joint venture, a new television project, a new self-help group, or a burgeoning political campaign.

Untouchable and invisible, purpose is sometimes hellishly hard to express. Rarely completely defined to everyone's satisfaction, it is nevertheless the bond that makes the impossible possible.

Deep commitment to a few basic tenets inspires groups. Statements of visions, core values, ideologies, missions, goals, objectives, and joint interests all point to the intangible "center" of a network, its defining characteristic. Common belief binds disparate people into a goal-oriented social organism.

Groups cohere through shared purpose.

Purpose throws an anchor into the future. It sets forth the endpoint of the journey and is the internal source of motivation that brings a group alive. Ironically, because a shared purpose can never be completely captured, it needs continuous and varied expression to be kept vital.

Purposes are processes.

Boundary crossing teamnets "get a life" by carrying out their purposes. If purpose remains static and unrenewed, goals die and eventually so does the project.

People fail to realize that purpose is the vital ingredient that links investments to real business goals. To bring purpose to life, consider these possibilities:

? Hold a "project launch" meeting just to focus on purpose. The only agenda item is to clarify the purpose. Begin by brainstorming a list of key words that expresses your purpose. Group them by category, separate nouns and verbs, then write a sentence. Move on when you accomplish this mission.

? Come to the meeting prepared. Beforehand, gather all the existing renditions of the purpose: slogans, symbols, and mission statements already hanging on the wall. Send out a call to everyone for vision statements. Display them all on the walls. One firm quickly collected 39.

? Interview three active members of the group. Ask each to tell you the group's core beliefs. This standard consultant interviewing practice reveals the basic viability of the group. If people have the same basic picture, then the group is ready for takeoff. Three conflicting answers indicate trouble. We spent one day interviewing seven training directors in a 13,000-person technical organization, asking them to assess their shared purpose. Four aligned in one camp, two in another, and one stood in between. With irreconcilable objectives, the group was not able to move.

? Write down your group's lingo. This is your tribe's "language," the frequent phrases, acronyms, and nicknames, which are clues to what's really important. One new product development team produced T-shirts for each of its 20 members. Printed on the front was each person's favorite phrase. Before delivery to

its recipient, the group played "name the shirt," as people tried to figure out whom it belonged to.

? Clarifying the purpose doesn't have to take forever, and can usually be completed in a few meetings. Regardless of how long it takes, this step is crucial before proceeding.

STEP 2. IDENTIFY MEMBERS

A teamnet gets off the ground because a certain group of people makes a personal commitment to an idea. They tie abstract purposes to their flesh-and-blood actions and decisions. Identity is the basis of autonomy. It's a fundamental tenet of good psychology and of good business. It's the clear set of people—the members of a boundary crossing teamnet—that makes it happen. This is true whether you are undertaking an ad hoc project or putting into place a major multi-million-dollar development program that will permanently alter the future of your company.

The inspiration to create a teamnet usually results from the vision of a "spark plug" or two, people with a deep personal conviction. We first learned the term "spark plug" in the mid-1970s, when we worked with the U.S. Department of Commerce to develop a national fire prevention education program, the first of its kind in the United States. There we met Larry Paretta and Lonnie Jackson of Arlington Heights, Illinois, two of the United States' earliest fire prevention "networkers." As a fire fighter, Paretta had carried a dead two-year-old child out of a burning building. He knew the death would never have happened if people understood the fundamentals of fire prevention. Paretta became a crusader, along with Jackson, for fire prevention, traveling all over the country and advising the Commerce Department in its efforts. Everywhere Paretta went he told what he called his "sacred story," which moved people to action.

Often, a few spark plugs have an idea at the same time and find each other. However it happens, people begin to identify with one

another and before you know it, a group has jelled. In other situations, corporate strategy calls for a project or program that can be done only by crossing boundaries, as in the case of Conrail's Strategy Management Group.

There is a "proof" test for whether the members of your teamnet cross boundaries or just occupy another seat on the bureaucratic bus. Imagine mentally removing the head of the group. Do the parts survive? If the members also can stand alone, they're crossing boundaries. If removal of the control mechanism brings everything to a grinding halt, then bureaucracy most likely interlocks the parts.

? To identify members, name the key players. This is the hub of your group. Make a sketch of your group on a piece of paper. Put people's names near one another if they're in particularly close communication. Then draw the picture of whom the people in your teamnet connect to; whom do they communicate with?

? Call a membership meeting, specifically to create a directory. Include everyone who identifies with the group, then add the names of the other people they need to be in touch with. Don't just list individuals; include the names of groups, too. Publish as much contact information as possible as frequently as necessary.

? Remember that *not everyone* needs to be involved in everything. Research shows that in order for people to feel involved in something, they don't actually need to participate. They only have to feel that they can participate if they want to. Too much participation is just as costly as not enough. "An easy way to allow more people to participate is to make them part of the review process," says John Manzo, a senior engineering manager at Digital Equipment Corporation.

? Organizations need a variety of types of people to be successful. A group of all visionaries won't get any further than a group of solid tacticians. The best groups have people with skills in vision, theory, method, and communication.

STEP 3. CREATE LINKS

The next step is to establish links. Begin with the physical connections. Then notice the actual use of the connections, the interaction traffic among the players. Over time, interactions carve a pattern deep enough to forge relationships, the lifeblood of teamnets.

Personal relationships are the threads that bind the network. Many people's jobs consist primarily of networking—passing information, making connections (both personal and conceptual), staying in communication with the vested interests. This is the special "networker" role, the person who focuses on the linking function. Such people can be found setting up information systems, serving as "switching centers" of connections, facilitating relationships, and encouraging a trusting environment.

Every successful boundary crossing teamnet has many internal pathways and multiple connections. Many teams get off the ground quickly if people already know one another. This is not at all a prerequisite; teams only need to account for it when their members do not know one another. Regardless of their familiarity with one another, people thrive on their connections, the more the better.

So leave plenty of space, time, and support for links. Without them, your teamnet is going nowhere, which is precisely what happens if a boundary crossing group lacks purpose.

? Take your membership sketch and add the key relationships in the group. Where are the strongest links? Where are the missing links?

? Because everyone cannot be together all the time, you need to solve the distance problem. Hold a brainstorming meeting to figure out what technology is available to people, what kind of communication system you would like to have, and then tally up the inevitable cost in dollars. Adjust if necessary. Remember that time is key to effective boundary crossing groups.

? No matter how much technology you introduce, make sure you

also meet face-to-face periodically. Face-to-face meetings are where people learn to trust each other.

? Develop a joint presentation that captures the purpose, mis sion, goals, and plans of the group. Use this to recruit new members and marshal resources.

? Develop a simple handbook of key shared information, and a glossary to capture common vocabulary. Include the membership directory as a section in it. It doesn't need to be fancy to be very helpful.

STEP 4. MULTIPLY LEADERS

Of the many myths about successful groups, the most confused are about leadership. There is a popular misconception that networks are leaderless.

On the contrary, they are leader*ful*. Teamnets need many leaders to express common themes from different points of view. Since teamnets cross boundaries, members bring different needed contributions to the table. In our experience, most successful groups have multiple leaders.

This idea is a lot easier to write about than it is to put into practice. Because we've all been brought up in the old hierarchical style, with single teachers, religious leaders, and authority figures, we naturally tend to buy into the sole person-at-the-top as the only way to go. Put that model aside for the moment.

The most effective way to run a boundary crossing teamnet is with many leaders.

Successful teamnets substitute this new approach to leadership for the old one. Everyone involved has a contribution to make toward a shared purpose. Individual expertise plays a critical role in boundary

crossing. One software project team that we worked with for two years had five team leaders, each responsible for a different module of the overall system. The project was highly successful even though the original appointed leader resigned after about four months, and the newly appointed "acting" leader rarely came to meetings or even paid much attention to the project. So long as things were going well and the team met deadlines, he had no concerns, even if he frustrated the team with his lack of involvement. The team was effective, as each of its leaders stayed in close communication and shared the same overall goal.

"Team leadership enhances the possibility that different leadership skills can be brought to bear simultaneously. One member of the team may be a visionary, another may be gifted in conceptualizing a course of action, and so on. No one knows enough to perform all the complex functions of contemporary leadership. Yet most— almost all—discussions of leadership deal with it as though it were a solo performance," John Gardner told the Annual Membership Meeting and Assembly of the Independent Sector in 1984.[7]

The technical term for multiple leadership doesn't exactly roll off the tongue: "polycephalous." Once you learn its simple definition— many = poly, headed = cephalous—you'll never forget it. Astute anthropologists invented the word to replace one that didn't explain a certain phenomenon they were observing.[8] Until they came up with a new term, they described tribes with more than one leader as "acephalous" (without a head). Most indigenous social systems do not have a single chief (monocephalous). Rather, there is a chief warrior, chief midwife, chief hunter, chief herbalist, and other leading experts. The tribe distributes its leadership among the handful of functions vital to survival and prosperity. A particular leader comes to the fore depending on the nature of the crisis facing the group—an enemy, a food shortage, an epidemic. Everyone is first among equals.

Not only networks, but hierarchies also, can have multiple leaders. The Japanese have perfected the form of the "blunt" hierarchy: a small group of powerful representatives makes final

decisions. The West usually regards hierarchy as "single-pointed," a pyramid with a single chair at the top. Still, great differences remain between hierarchical and network leadership. Hierarchies minimize positions of power and changes in leadership. Networks maximize leadership and rapid turnover in response to change.

Whether the external hierarchy appoints or anoints leaders, natural leaders always emerge from within a group based on its own dynamics. Appointed and natural leaders can coincide, complement, or conflict.

Leadership ability includes knowing how closely to entwine leadership with followership. Distributed leadership is regarded as necessary for the successful functioning of a distributed process.

? Does your group have multiple leaders? The test is simple: Can you hear several voices or only one? Is dissent encouraged or discouraged?

? Multiple leadership requires facilitation. Although this role can rotate and its title can vary—facilitator, coordinator, or even chair—someone needs to be responsible for overall facilitation at all times.

? As you plan, think about the roles each person will play and how that endows them with leadership. Make a list of what each person contributes to the group. This is his or her area of leadership.

? Call a leadership meeting. Talk through who is responsible for what, then write it down. Include this information in your "Thamnet Handbook."

? Discuss who else fulfills each responsibility. This exercise indicates where leaders are also followers. The ability to move between these two roles is itself a sign of leadership.

? Think of the different leadership roles at different stages of development: visionaries, communicators, facilitators, practitioners, theoreticians, challengers, collaborators, and contributors all have their moments as the team process unfolds.

These activities are extremely useful: they serve to winnow out which people are truly committed to the task. They also help define who your liaisons will be to other organizations. People connect at all different levels, and in complex loops.

STEP 5. INTEGRATE LEVELS

The more "connected in" any new initiative is to a larger universe, the more successful it will be. The more isolated it is, the more difficult it is to obtain resources and accomplish goals.

Consultants work at multiple levels in organizations. Foreigners "with a pass" (often physical badges) have the privilege of being outside the companies' hierarchies. Without going out of bounds, they talk to the CEO, the executive team, middle managers, secretaries, and people on the shop floor. This access gives them the ability to connect at many levels of the organization simultaneously. The more levels they interact with, the more complete their view of the organization. 'To connect in at many levels of the organization, teamnet members need to take on a consultant viewpoint.

When it comes to levels, there are two directions in which to look:

to the context bigger than yourself, and your components that are smaller. The Center for Quality Management (CQM), a consortium of 85 companies working together to learn new quality techniques, connects to something bigger and to something smaller. It is part of the bigger Total Quality Management movement, which involves thousands of companies, with numerous cross-company and cross-industry trade associations. Smaller, CQM comprises all its member companies, each of which is a whole enterprise unto itself. CQM is successful because it both connects with the outer world, and works closely with its member companies.

The same principle holds for a teamnet within a company that works across internal boundaries. It needs to connect up into the higher levels of the whole company as well as down into the specific functions that its members come from.

? Call a meeting to talk about the levels. Use a white board and markers to draw a common picture of how your teamnet connects in. What boundaries does it cross? When you agree on the picture, enlarge it and hang it on the wall of your regular meeting room. Add a notebook-size version to your "Teamnet Handbook."

? Play "Targets and Arrows." Whom do you need to influence? These people are your "targets." If you lack connections at certain levels, figure out who the "arrows" are: the people you know who know the targets. Who can make things happen? Who can stop them? Who can influence the stoppers? Who are the silent supporters?

? It is a misconception that successful groups are "flat." They are not. They are lumpy, clustered, multileveled organizational forms. Form as many subgroups as are practical, corresponding to the work at hand. Each subgroup chooses a leader. This leadership group gives the network sufficient latitude to do its work quickly, without having to consult everyone on every decision.

Thinking About Teamnets

One piece of good news about teamnets is that you already know much of what you need to know to be successful. Successful boundary crossing groups have many of the characteristics of any healthy team. They employ many of the same methods as any good quality effort, and they follow the basic principles of any good change process. Apply the well-known fundamentals in these areas, and you will meet with success—whether you do so unconsciously, accidentally, or by design.

Now beware. Most how-to resources on teams—tacitly or explicitly—assume that the people co-locate, that the group shares a common workspace, and that they depend on regular face-to-face meetings.

By definition, boundary crossing
teamnets are rarely located in the same place.

This makes the teamnet contribution clear: adding the boundary crossing dimension of distance and difference—across space, time, and function—introduces an entirely new slant. By incorporating existing knowledge of teams, quality, and process, we add the "teamnet dimension."

Small groups are the basis for larger groups. The world works because small groups of people eventually sit down together and make decisions. When multinational companies negotiate global alliances that affect measurable proportions of the planet's resources, they do so in small groups. No more than a few handfuls of people sit down with one another to explore options. At the other end of the scale, when small manufacturers sit down to discuss a flexible business network, they represent companies that are themselves small groups. When a new project gets going, a small group sits down in a conference room to figure out what to do next.

When people come together in small boundary crossing groups, they automatically seek to perform as a teamnet. Networks of any greater size comprise clusters, groups, and teams of people as well as free-floating individuals. If you examine large groups in close, fine detail, you inevitably see small groups interacting with other small groups.

You have been gaining knowledge of small group behavior since the day you were born into your family. You already have an understanding of the dynamics of small groups—perhaps you've even taken a course, read an article or book, or attended a lecture. Basic knowledge about small groups is an essential prerequisite for effective participation in networks of all sizes and scope.

Today, companies urge managers to:

- Get closer to the customer;
- Solve local problems locally;
- Create small business units;
- Push down decision making; and
- Decentralize.

All these prescriptions and trends lead naturally to more empowered small groups and more networked organizations.

The best networks start as teams and
grow into teams of teams.

Teams and quality go hand in hand. Companies form teams to consider whether to do a quality program, then to design and implement programs. Within the program, teams form to tackle specific quality issues. Companies that implement quality programs tend to become more team-based organizations. One consequence of business process redesign is often a permanent team approach to a work process.[9]

Quality programs focus on people as the sources of solutions. Participation is a key value. Good ideas can come from anyone and are most likely to come from people closest to the problem.

You have been part of groups that work, and groups that haven't worked. On more than one occasion, you probably have asked yourself, "How can such smart people be so dumb?" If you're lucky, you also probably have experience as part of an exceptional team—a "dream team," where everything clicks. The group that clicks does so because it pays attention to some fundamental ideas.

Think Teamnets

- Mission and goals
- Customer satisfaction
- Players and stakeholders
- Leaders and decisions
- Group dynamics
- Stages of growth

Teams form around outcomes and serve customers with needs. Where work is a natural chunk of purposeful, needed results, teams with a common alignment of diverse capabilities form in powerful *synergy.* Where teams form around poorly related activities and unclear outcomes, an equally powerful energy *sink* sucks the life from all people trapped in such a system. Following a merger of two airlines, the new company puts groups with the same names from each of the old companies together in the same organization. With entirely different work processes and strikingly different goals, the merged group becomes a war zone, accomplishing nothing.

Take out any how-to book about teams, no matter what decade it was written,[10] and you'll receive your first assignment, something like: "Write a mission statement." Goal setting is usually the first chapter in these what-to-do books. It's very, very basic and particularly important for the boundary crossing distributed sort of team.

Every teamnet needs a sharp, concise expression of motivation. While you do not have to produce a mission statement in any formal sense, you do have to know what your group is about. Regardless of how the group articulates the mission in the beginning, it is the spark of life itself for the still-forming group. Nor do you necessarily have to write it down. A picture, image, diagram, or chart may clearly convey the needs that drive the group. A few spoken

words of intention, or even the napkin that everyone signs at a "commitment" dinner, are heartfelt expressions of the group's fundamental beliefs. One of the most successful vision statements we've seen was the front page of a newspaper set five years in the future. The group manager drew her view of where the project would be with headlines and "photos" with captions.

What is the single most important thing that teamnets must do? Be explicit.

Unless people can externalize the purpose and make it tangible, teamnets cannot fully form. Explicitness of purpose needs to reach some minimal level. Otherwise, there is no basis for common cause. Few actions are as powerful as a teamnet all signing its joint statement of purpose, and hanging it on the wall of its regular meeting room for all to see.

Myriad team training manuals provide a wealth of tools and techniques for helping a group divine and define its vision and goals. However, buyer beware. There are no guarantees that any specific group of people can arrive at a shared purpose using any particular technique.

While difficult for any newly forming group, developing purpose is even more challenging for boundary crossing groups. The problems of distance, time, and diversity aggravate the situation. Unless your distributed group comes to a common picture when together, you'll all go home and go your own way. A shared outcome becomes the potential adhesive for the group.

YOUR CUSTOMER'S CUSTOMER IS YOUR CUSTOMER

Wondering where to start? Quality provides a specific direction to look for purpose. If the quality movement has done nothing else for modern busi-

ness, it has brought the “voice of the customer” to everyone's attention. Quality practice begins with the end in mind—the customer of an organization’s work. For an accounts receivable group, your customer is not just your company’s customers; it is also the people in your company who have to do business with the customer. The customer provides the enterprise with its external goals. The essence of the quality approach is to satisfy or exceed customer needs.

In the search for purpose, the quality view provides direction.

Look to the consumers of your organizations output: they are the ultimate judges of the value you add. They vote with their preferences.

Quality processes build in a feedback loop. Customer focus ascertains needs and dictates where the change process begins. At the end of the process, the organization offers its output to customers, who make their marketplace statement as to whether their needs have been met on time and at an affordable price.

Stumped on how to quickly gather information on customer needs, one short-term strategy development group set up a two-day-long event. Since they couldn’t bring in customers on such short notice, they brought in the major sales account managers, and interviewed them extensively about *their* customers’ needs.

In many situations, customer needs stand for shared goals. They serve as the “higher authority” driving your teamnet’s work and providing the context for decision making. Focus on customer needs as an easy way for your boundary crossing teamnet to arrive at shared goals. With a common customer view, your group can work side by side and from afar. To fully understand your customers, you need to understand their customers, expanding the view of who is in the loop.

WHO'S IN THE GAME? PLAYERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Your mission points to your essential membership. While the quick impulse is to involve everyone you can think of in the network, it is better to at first think small. Ask the question, "Who are the key people who need to be involved to accomplish the purpose?"

Each person brings energy, change, and differences to the purpose. As your group expands from its founders, it needs to reevaluate and reaffirm its commitment to the common purpose. Over time, there is natural feedback between the players and the purpose. The best approach is iterative, shaping these factors together.

Begin with an idea. Get some of the obvious people together. Discuss the idea and decide who needs to be involved. Talk with these people. Incorporate their ideas or debate the issues. Get agreement on a common plan. Go to it. . . whoops! The unexpected. Things happen. Things don't happen. People come, people go. Goals shift and are adjusted. The plan is modified. People affirm revised targets, and continue working.

Within the constraints of purpose and the ever-present limits of resources and time, you need variety in your teamnet membership. The specific purpose determines one type of membership variety:

the experience, skills, and commitments required to accomplish the goal. The more complex your goal or context, the more diverse the mix of skills and knowledge required.

Another type of variety required is general and related to team dynamics over time. This is not another set of people. In a network,

everyone is part of the process. In a network, the pattern of interactions and the realization of a common output are what is truly "real."

People do not play a single process role in a group. Overtime, they play multiple process roles. New steps along a group's journey require different capabilities and skills. Generally speaking, there are four general styles of team members:

- Collaborators,
- Communicators,
- Contributors, and
- Challengers[11]

To see the need for multiple styles, just imagine a team composed of all one type: the vision-no-action group of collaborators, the interminable talkfest of communicators, the isolated confusion of contributors only, or the endless bickering of a collection of challengers.

LEADERS AND DECISIONS

Are leaders born? Is there a unique leadership type, style, or personality? Is leadership learned? Is it earned? Is it Nature or Nurture?

Leadership is the most ubiquitous role in human groups. Every group has leaders because groups need leaders. They create leadership roles that members fill. While in some groups leaders also are appointed, every group develops natural leaders. Sometimes these leaders coincide; sometimes they collide. In teamnets, leaders are not only born; the group itself makes them.

To see leaders in your boundary crossing teamnet, shift your focus from individuals to the group system. The system as a whole has leadership needs that permeate the entire group.

In a teamnet, there is no single person on top all the time.

One or more members take and shift responsibility to represent the group at different times. Every task offers an opportunity for leadership. “Leadership involves conducting, coaching, and mentoring:

A conductor brings forth the best talents of an orchestra; a coach builds capabilities and confidence, and a mentor shapes talent. Knowledge-era enterprises are a composite of orchestras, basketball teams, and jazz combos,” writes Charles Savage, an expert on “knowledge networking organizations.”[2]

Leadership invests purpose with particular people. People make purpose tangible by propounding a position. Different people argue for a need, take responsibility, enlist support, take action, resolve conflicts, move things along, know when to get out. Different people become leaders in varying situations.

Recalling one successful teamnet experience of 15 people from diverse internal organizations in the United States, Canada, and Europe, a manager remarked, “When we needed a technical expert, Joe was the leader. When we needed a marketing expert, Steve was the leader. When we needed a product development perspective, Celeste was the leader. When we had to talk to the vice presidents, I was the leader.”

Hierarchies minimize leadership.
Teamnets maximize it.

Do not confuse leadership in teamnets with decision making. Leadership without portfolio, pocketbook, or power is typical in successful networks. Each group’s decision-making needs are different. Individuals handle some decisions, smaller subgroups handle some, and the group as a whole handles some. Deciding for the whole used to be the job of the top dog; in a teamnet, it can be many people’s

jobs, depending on what decision needs to be made. When four vice presidents acting as co-sponsors of a major business change process could not come to agreement, they jointly took the decision to the CEO, who was able to frame the question in strategic terms, and make a decision.

The first principle of teamnet decision making is to know what level the decision calls for. Keep the list of big decisions short. The second principle is to develop and cull options iteratively, avoiding "winner—take—all'' votes.

Teamnets usually make big decisions by consensus. This does not mean one-member, one-vote where everyone agrees unanimously. This is a potentially deadly practice. Nor does it mean a majority vote with an unhappy minority. In practice, a consensus decision is one without significant opposition, one members can support, or at least tolerate. In hindsight, people seem to make many decisions by virtue of having stopped talking about alternatives.

When a decision calls for some level of formality, try the multivote:

? Generate a list of options, as many as possible, perhaps through brainstorming.

? Combine those that everyone agrees are the same.

? Give each person multiple votes—equal to about one-third of the number of options—to indicate preferences. For example, if there are 15 options, everyone gets five votes.

? Vote. Then reduce the list by dropping items with the fewest votes. Discuss and revise the list as necessary.

? Multivote again. Repeat as necessary until a clear favorite emerges or everyone agrees the next vote is final.

REMEMBER THE T-GROUP: ATTEND TO GROUP DYNAMICS

In the real world, goals are not always clear. Membership is cloudy. Leaders tangle. Time marches on. Meanwhile, groups have their own dynamics, some thousands of years in the making; some in the making now.

There is no shortage of tools and techniques for dealing with the nitty-gritty of team life. For each stage of maturity, from vision to decision making to action to testing to realization, there are multiple approaches already canned and "on the shelf." Resolving conflict, for example, is an ancient team problem. Principles of negotiation, conflict resolution, and constructive feedback codify some of these timeworn best practices. Availing yourself of these resources is well worth the effort.

Today's teamnets are creatures of the Information Age. The modern world of information recasts the ancient scene of a group of people all in one place together.

Information has displaced place as the central organizing principle of human groups.

Information connects people. It explains why a group can spread out and still accomplish work together. Information makes distributed work possible. Distributed work, in turn, requires more explicit communication and information. More information begets more distributed work that begets more distributed teams needing more information, and so on.

In contrast to the use of decreasing physical resources, information tends to increase with use. Too much of a good thing brings its own problems; too much communication may end up choking the system. People and groups need new ways of coping with and assimilating more information faster with less effort.

Team how-to handbooks can barely keep up with technology. Some of the new modules required are:

? How to use new communication systems that connect all of people's channels;

? Adaptation of all the standard face-to-face prescriptions—such

as goal setting, brainstorming, or decision making—to diverse communication media; and

? New methods for coping with information overload.

Design in face-to-face time for your boundary crossing teamnets. It's hard to ever get enough of it from a traditional process point of view. Spread-out work creates teams in which not all members can meet frequently. Teamnet life is a dynamic of people being together and being apart in various configurations at various times. We need to learn a whole host of new techniques for working with exceptionally distributed groups.

CONSIDER THE LIFE CYCLE: THE TEAM STAGES

Teams take time to grow. While each team's life is unique, teams are just like people: they go through general stages of maturity. Some groups go through the stages very rapidly, some slowly. Many get stuck at a stage, perhaps fatally.

Team handbooks usually offer a whole section on group passages, with a chapter devoted to each stage of growth, or stage of maturity, or phase of development, of a group's life cycle. "Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing" is one easy-to-remember and popular team growth process.[13]

Teams form and perform in stages that combine general maturity phases with particular steps rooted in the purpose of the group. Thinking it through requires looking ahead, anticipating what's next, keeping all the right balls in the air. Since everything can't be done all at once, it is necessary to lay out a scheme for what happens when. To do that, you need to chunk time. Group activities into simple phases:

? Things to do right away,
? Things to do next, and
? Finally, the last things to do.

Without strain, you have defined the beginning, middle, and end of a three-step process. Clustering activities into steps is a powerful tool. Used consciously, you can integrate natural group development phases with the steps required to achieve the desired outcome. You can anticipate, generate, and monitor the future.

Phases to Growing Your Teamnet

No matter how you cut it, every project has a beginning, middle, and end. Companies cut the process and name each of these stages differently. Some have formal processes for getting from here to there, while others grope their way along the life cycle.

Regardless of names, boundary crossing teamnets go through five general phases. Each phase represents a set of activities and objectives. While the phases overlap, with some tasks carried out in parallel, there are clear differences between them. Progressing through the phases, the group moves through the life cycle of the project.

PHASE 1. START-UP: SIZING UP THE OPPORTUNITY

This is the just-a-glimmer-in-the-eye stage. That doesn't mean there's no work to do. There is plenty, as the idea goes from vague conception to something that people can act on. "Start-up" means gathering information and arguments, assessing the situation, finding allies, sizing it up, quantifying and qualifying it. It's the early beginning, the concept stage. It may last a very long time, or be brief. It's before things really get started but after the idea's Big Bang.

PHASE 2. LAUNCH: GETTING IT OFF THE GROUND

Fasten your seat belt. You can expect to encounter significant turbulence here. Pressure mounts. Time is short. Things begin to get really rocky and you'd like to hear a reassuring announcement from the captain. Unfortunately, none is forthcoming as the group must make choices and take responsibility. Differences appear, tempers flare, people drop out, others want in, promised resources become scarce, risk takers dare. It begins to feel like the worst thing you've ever been involved in when suddenly things begin to click into place. David Ryder, a consultant at CSC Index, calls this ATAMO—"And Then A Miracle Occurs." Then don't be surprised if things go bad again, relieved by new spurts of progress. "Two steps forward, one back" typifies the zigzag pattern of this phase.

PHASE 3. PERFORM: MAKING THINGS WORK IN REAL TIME

If you make it through the critical Launch Phase, you sail into the Perform Phase with the momentum of pent-up energy, newly released with someplace to go. For some people, this is the stage they've been awaiting impatiently. It's the time to put the plan into action, get the work done, and produce results. Often the longest phase, it is less rocky than the previous one, with many signs of progress. Things look good, but watch out! Keep your seat belt securely fastened. More turbulence is expected just ahead.

PHASE 4. TEST: SHAKING OUT THE RESULTS

Here is where the quality of the early phases is really tested. As completion nears, the team faces the limits of time and money, as it stares at the prospect of delivering the results to its customers. Sometimes the turbulence here is so bad that oxygen masks drop

from the ceiling: massive rework, designs that don't work, planes that don't fly, prototypes that are impossible to manufacture, products that can't be repaired. Benchmarking, testing, qualification, and verification are all ways to evaluate the interim success of a team's work. As the Test Phase causes decision making, unforeseen winds come up suddenly and shake the group from side to side. Many a team has stalled and crashed here, perhaps with a perfect product in hand, but no customers willing to buy.

PHASE 5. DELIVER: HANDING IT OFF TO THE CUSTOMER

At long last, the project reaches completion. After successfully undertaking the Test Phase, there is something to deliver to the customer. Issues shift from development to how to support the results over time. If the original mission was to develop and implement change, here the process stabilizes, and the change becomes operational or routine. Of course, time doesn't stand still. Things happen and new ideas lead to new opportunities. Newly dominant processes contain the seeds of their successors, and the cycle begins again. Today's last stage is tomorrow's first stage.

While all the stages of a team's life cycle are important, we focus especially on the critical second phase, Launch, in the next chapter.