

7.1: Chapter 7 Overview

What's in It for Me?

Reading this chapter will help you do the following:

1. Understand the social network vocabulary.
2. Know why social networks and networking are valuable.
3. Know some of the ethical considerations related to social network analysis.
4. Understand the difference between personal, operational, and strategic social networks.
5. Map your own social network and understand its implications.

Most management textbooks do not cover the subject of social networks. This is an unfortunate oversight. Social networks can be considered “the invisible organization”—they are the pathways through which communication and resources flow and how work actually gets done. We include this chapter on social networks in the organizing section of the book because, like organizational design, the management of social networks is important in the planning-organizing-leading-controlling (P-O-L-C) framework. An organization chart might communicate who reports to whom, but it is ultimately the internal (within organization) and external (ties between members of the organization and people outside the organization such as suppliers or customers) social networks that really explain productivity (or impediments to productivity).

Figure 9.2 The P-O-L-C Framework

Planning	Organizing	Leading	Controlling
1. Vision & Mission 2. Strategizing 3. Goals & Objectives	1. Organization Design 2. Culture 3. Social Networks	1. Leadership 2. Decision Making 3. Communications 4. Groups/Teams 5. Motivation	1. Systems/Processes 2. Strategic Human Resources

You are probably already active in social networks through such Web communities as MySpace, Facebook, and LinkedIn. However, these sites are really only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the role of social networks in management. Networks provide managers with three unique advantages: (1) access to information and knowledge, (2) access to diverse skill sets, and (3) power. While managers see these advantages at work every day, they might not pause to consider how their networks regulate them. In this chapter, you will learn about the role and importance of social networks, and social network analysis, in the organizing facet of the P-O-L-C framework. You will also have an opportunity to map and evaluate your own social network, and answer questions about its effectiveness for you personally and professionally.

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