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DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH

Networks among Women and Minorities in the Military

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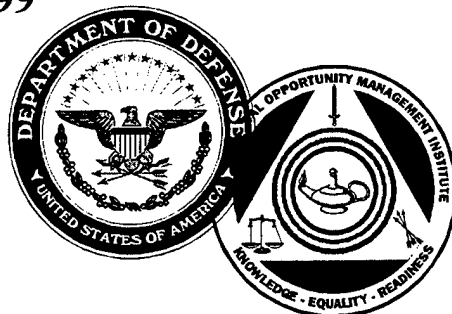
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14. ABSTRACT Networking, which provides information and support for career development and personal growth, is important for organizational members, particularly women and minorities, who face unique problems in many organizations. The present report examines several network variables: homophily (i.e., degree of similarity among network members), network size, range, strength of network ties, network density, and quality of leader-member exchange. In addition, we look at critical problems in specialty group networks of minorities, women, and the military. We then examine several innovative ways of developing networks for these speciality groups, such as education and training, peer networks, and virtual networks. Finally, we present several recommendations for establishing networks for specialty groups in the military.					
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Networks for Women and Minorities in the Military

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Success may look like a solo event. In reality, it depends on established relationships.

-- Anonymous

The worldwide U.S. military mission is becoming more complex, dynamic, ambiguous, and subject to heightened response pressures (Salas, Cannon-Bowers, Payne, & Smith-Jentsch, 1998). Military personnel operating in this environment face daunting career scenarios: their jobs are becoming increasingly complex and stressful; they are subject to temporary or even permanent transfers at short notice; and they must deal with periodic base closings, budget reductions, and personnel downsizing of the Armed Forces producing uncertainty about future job prospects. Under such circumstances, successful military careers demand continuous career guidance and development. One traditional means of career help has been mentoring, where a senior person takes a junior individual under his or her wing. The Directorate of Research of the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) has undertaken several studies of mentoring in the military, particularly focusing upon the unique experiences and concerns of women and minorities (e.g., Sullivan, 1993; Knouse & Webb, 1998; Webb, Knouse, Bourne, & Schwerin, 1998).

Another approach is networking, where individuals develop linkages with other individuals, both peers and superiors, who can provide information and resources for various career problems as well as interpersonal support and guidance (Fisher & Vilas, 1992; Ibarra, 1993). Specifically, effective networking requires leveraging contacts for their greatest benefit through identifying common acquaintances and establishing a reciprocal relationship. Indeed, mentoring can be seen as a special case of the broader concept of networking. Networking is particularly important for women and minorities who may not have access to mentors, have great difficulty linking to available mentors and other helpful senior and more experienced people in organizations, and are less satisfied when mentoring relationships are established (Ibarra, 1993; Shivers, 1993). In addition, networking facilitates the sharing of career strategies, ideas, employment and advancement opportunities, quality information, and "cutting edge"

resources that drive women's and minorities' success (Friedman, Kane, & Cornfield, 1998; Ibarra, 1993).

The present report examines the concept of networking. Several variables involved in successful networking are explored from the civilian literature. Critical problems for women and minorities are presented, and means of developing and improving networks are examined. Finally, recommendations for enhancing networking in the military context are delineated.

The Nature of Networks

The work of Luthans and his associates casts doubt on the previously held presumption that performance was the dominant factor leading to advancement and promotion within the workplace or an organization. In fact, they found networking to be the most important contributor leading to success when based on rapid advancement (Luthans, Rosenkrantz, & Hennessey, 1985). Those findings support a long held, yet unspoken, belief by organizational members that social and political skills were actually more critical for advancement than was job performance. Indeed, the common adage "it's not what you know, but who you know" takes on added significance in this context.

In the broadest sense, networking is a prime method of operation for professionals in the world of work. It is a method by which professionals develop new relationships and enrich existing business contacts (Fisher & Vilas, 1992). Fundamentally, networking means knowing as much as possible about the professional and social interests of the contact person (Bell, 1986). Organizational meetings, professional conferences and conventions, education and training classes, trade fairs, and even the Internet can provide a number of excellent platforms for professionals to grow and cultivate their network.

Networks are founded on relationships that link an individual to others who can provide significant resources (e.g., information, feedback, guidance, social and political support) to the individual (Ibarra, 1993). Formal networks are relationships formally specified by the organization (Ibarra, 1993). Informal networks are relationships that are discretionary (i.e., entered into voluntarily). A primary indicator of the extent of the informal network is the sum of the personal ties of an individual to others (Pugliesi & Shook, 1998). Access to informal networks is important because, to accomplish organizational tasks, individuals must draw on both instrumental resources and emotional resources that informal networks offer (Mehra, Kilduff, & Brass, 1998).

Networks can be characterized according to four factors: social identity, ties, type of organization, and type of recognition (Friedman, Kane, & Cornfield, 1998). Social identity refers to demographic categories, which influence the individual's values, attitudes, such as gender or race. Women, for example, may be more likely to develop networks with other women, because they share common interests and goals. Ties refer to intraorganizational or extraorganizational relationships. The type of organization refers to formal networks set up by management or informal networks setup by individuals. Finally, networks can either be publicly recognized as formal networks or be only locally recognized, as are many informal networks.

Network strength can be measured several ways (Pugliesi & Shook, 1998). Number of involvements pertains to the number of individuals in the network. Frequency of contact refers to the number of times an individual interacts with another in the network. Quality of relationships involves the depth of the interactions and positive outcomes experienced within the networks.

Functions of Networks

Networks serve several functions both for the individual and for the organization. The most direct purpose for the individual is instrumental – acquiring access to job related information that may further one's career (Ibarra, 1993). For example, approximately 70 percent of all jobs are found through networking (Fisher & Vilas, 1992). Moreover, networking is important for dealing with power relationships in organizations (Ragins, 1997). A 1988 award winning short film, *Ray's Male Heterosexual Dance Hall*, presents an offbeat story of Sam Logan and his search for a job. Although satirical, the film provides a penetrating insight into how men, in particular, acquire and lose power through social networking (Hudson, 1995). Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI) trainers have presented this film to senior military and civilian officers during senior executive training sessions to initiate discussion regarding networks in general and male networking in particular.

In addition, networks can serve an expressive function – friendship and social support that helps one to overcome career difficulties as well as crises in life (Ibarra, 1993). For example, Latinos have extensive social support in their extended family networks, which provide comfort and advice both on and off the job (Knouse, 1991). Networks can also reduce the feeling or perception of isolation, particularly for minorities, in impersonal organization cultures (Kram & Hall, 1996). Finally, networks can provide the individual with information and interpersonal support that allow the individual to grow and reinforce his or her ability to succeed.

From the organizational perspective, networks are important for sharing organizational information and for developing individuals into more productive workers with stronger skill mixes. Networks can also be an instigator of organizational change (Friedman et al., 1998). Moreover, there are the issues involved in employee diversity. Despite empirical studies of gender and racial differences in social networks within the last decade (Moore, 1990; Ibarra, 1993), research has only begun to examine what types of networks support the career advancement and development of women and people of color. Across America one can find women and minorities in most predominately White male organizations. However, the true measure of diversity and multiculturalism is the degree to which the policies and practices change the organizational culture or "attitude." For women and minorities, the information exchange and collective strength of networks can focus senior managers in the organization upon diversity issues, such as role conflict arising from balancing family and work, lack of mentors for minorities, and organizational discrimination (Friedman et al., 1998; Kram & Hall, 1996; Keyton & Kalbfleisch, 1993).

Examples of Minority Networks in the Business Sector

Women and minorities face challenges different from those experienced by White males in the workplace (Jones, 1986; Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990). For example, intergroup conflicts and exclusion from formal and informal networks create dynamics on the group level that can restrict the mobility of women and minorities. To meet these challenges successfully, they must network (and mentor) with other women and minorities (Murrell, Crosby, & Ely, 1999). Research indicates that the participation of minorities in networks is critical for success in the business context (Ibarra, 1995). Given the importance and potential power of networks, it is no surprise that many business organizations have attempted to create networks for attracting and keeping minorities. In particular, high tech firms, such as Xerox and AT&T, developed formal networks for minorities in the 1970s. During the 1980s, networks became increasingly valuable for minority professionals. For example, at Xerox, minority networks presented workshops on improving sales techniques, understanding corporate strategic planning, and how to handle one's boss (Friedman et al., 1998).

In the 1990s, as well as into the next millennium, networking is taking on a much more enriching role in the minority professionals' lives as they attempt to develop careers in the business sector. A recent survey of Fortune 500 companies found that 27 percent have minority networks (Friedman et al., 1998). The main reason these networks are needed is because minorities have reaped few benefits from being a part of the mainstream networking groups (i.e., the so-called *Good Ole Boys Network*, which connotes White males helping other White males). Minorities are drawn to these specialized networks because they provide mentoring, career development, and a forum to recognize other minorities, whose presence often goes unrecognized by the larger, mainstream network organizations. As an example, researchers discovered that one African-American network created career optimism and provided a direct source for mentors. Unfortunately, it did not provide the instrumental function of job feedback, and it did not reduce feelings of discrimination or marginalization among its members (Friedman et al., 1998). To overcome such problems in their networks, successful women and minorities in business may establish overlapping networks, where the expressive function is provided by friends, career advice is provided by White males, and both of these networks provide organizational information (Ibarra, 1992).

Network Variables

There are a number of significant variables that describe the strength and quality of networks (see Figure 1). As we shall see, the unique environment of the military with its hierarchical structure and traditional protocol may produce differing results from other types of institutions, such as business firms.

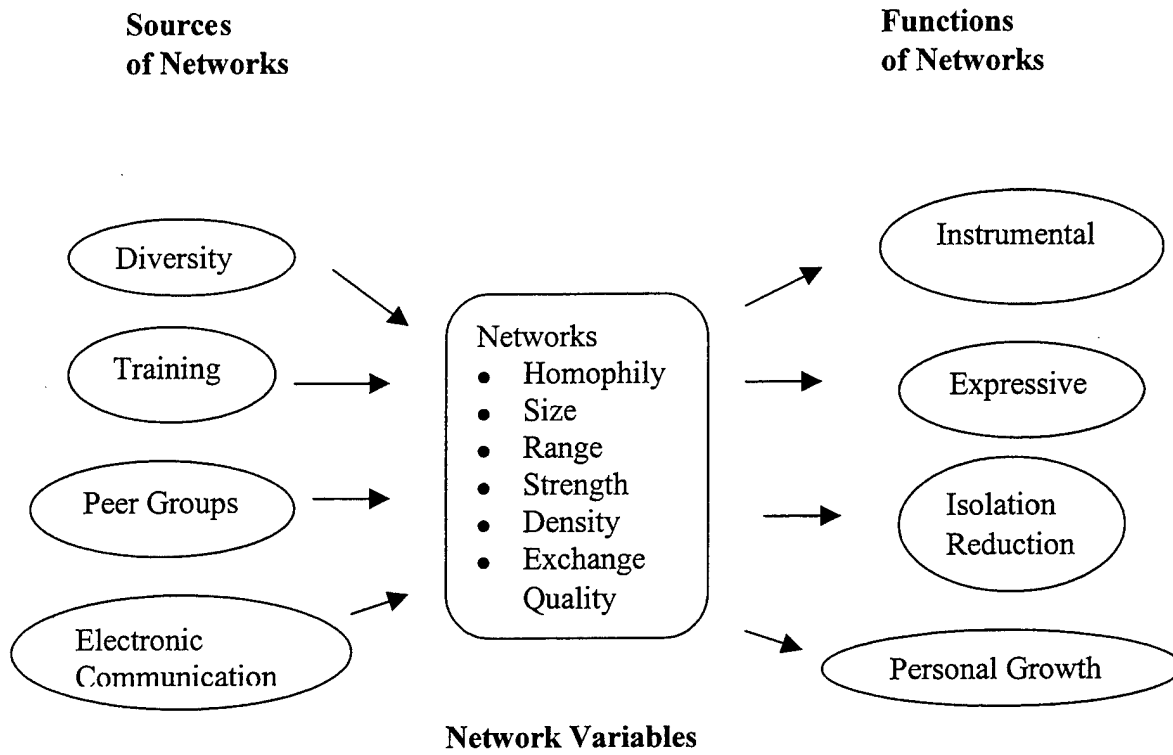


Figure 1

Networks

Homophily

Homophily is the degree of similarity among members of a network. In other words, homophily refers to the tendency of individuals who interact to be similar on obvious attributes such as gender and race (McPherson & Smith-Lovin, 1987). Women and minorities tend to have a smaller percentage of same-gender and same-race ties in their networks than do White males (Ibarra, 1993). In terms of gender, men form homophilous ties across multiple networks involving both professional and social groups (multiplexing), while women tend to focus upon social homophilous ties (Ibarra, 1992).

Homophily, however, depends in part on the degree of distinctiveness of the situation (how strongly individuals stand out in the organization). Distinctiveness theory states that women and minorities tend to form stronger same-gender and same-race ties when they are few in number in an organization (i.e., they are distinctive, Mehra et al., 1998). We would predict in the military, on the other hand, that the larger numbers of women and minorities would make them less distinctive, given the relatively large percentage of women and minorities in the Armed Forces. Therefore, women and minorities in the military may develop more cross-gender and cross-race ties in their networks.

Network Size

Network size involves the number of contacts (i.e., the number of individuals) in the network. Among racial groups, African Americans tend to have smaller networks, perhaps because of their smaller numbers in many organizations (Pugliesi & Shook, 1998). Further, more educated individuals tend to have larger networks (Pugliesi & Shook, 1998). A longer time spent in the education system would allow the possibility for more contacts. In addition, more highly educated individuals may find common interests with a greater variety of people.

Range

Range refers to the degree of diversity of contacts in the network (Marsden, 1990). Women and minorities have a greater range of diverse contacts with other types of people (men and Whites) than the less diverse contacts of White males, which do not include many women and minorities. Women and minorities, however, do not benefit from these cross ties as well as White males benefit from their White male ties (Ibarra, 1993). Women and minorities do benefit from same-race and same-gender ties (Tsui, Xin & Egan, 1995), but they have to reach out farther for these contacts because of their fewer numbers in many organizations. In the military, the job reassignment system of relocating individuals every two to four years may contribute to a greater range of contacts for women and minorities.

Tie Strength

Tie strength is defined as the amount of time spent with individuals in the network, the emotional intensity of the tie, and the degree of reciprocation of interaction among individuals in the network. Women and minorities have fewer strong ties than do White males (Ibarra, 1993). When women and minorities are underrepresented in a group, however, they tend to form strong same-race and same-gender ties (Mehra et al., 1998). In the military, the reassignment system that is regularly relocating people to new units may not allow strong ties to develop.

Density

Density involves the extensiveness of contact in the network. Contacts may be measured as incidents of talking or visiting (Pugliesi & Shook, 1998). Women and minorities have sparser networks (i.e., they have weaker ties across a greater range of organizations; Friedman et al., 1998; Ibarra, 1993). Again, the nature of the military reassignment system may disperse individuals widely across the world and thus create less dense networks.

Quality of Leader-Member Exchange

One type of networking can occur between the leader and subordinate. The leader may be a mentor, may act as a role model for technical and interpersonal skills, and may be involved in subordinate career development. Moreover, what is directly relevant to the military is that the subordinate may adopt the leadership style of the leader (Eby, 1997).

A primary characteristic of this networking is the quality of the interaction or exchange between the leader and subordinate as described by Graen and his associates (Graen & Cashman, 1975; Scandura & Graen, 1984). In brief, Graen and his associates posit that this relationship can either be in the form of a "hired hand," where the subordinate is in the outgroup, or the "cadre," where the subordinate is in the in-group. In the case of the outgroup, the subordinate basically does the job with a minimal amount of interaction with the leader; there are few additional demands, but at the same time there are few rewards. The "cadre" or in-group, on the other hand, is composed of select subordinates, who interact more with the leader, take on greater responsibilities because of greater trust, and receive more rewards (i.e., professional recognition, bonuses, promotion/advancement). This placement into the in-group or outgroup occurs very early in the leader-subordinate relationship (Tsui et al., 1995). Individuals who show early potential by volunteering for extra or difficult assignments and perform "110%" may find themselves in the in-group.

The quality of this relationship depends on three variables: perceived contribution of both the leader and the subordinate, the degree of public support of each other (loyalty), and the amount of liking between the two parties (affect). Unfortunately, women and minorities do not fare well in mixed-gender and mixed-race relationships with White male leaders. They tend to perform less well and report greater role ambiguity and role conflict than do White male subordinates (Tsui et al., 1995). In other words, they are more likely to find themselves in the outgroup.

Fortunately, this situation may be partially remedied by leader training that emphasizes increased leader support for subordinates. Leaders can learn to be active listeners and more directly exchange expectations of performance with subordinates (Scandura & Graen, 1984).

Critical Problems in Specialty Group Networks

The overview of network variables presented above indicates a number of critical problems that minorities, women, and other specialty groups face in trying to establish effective networks.

Minorities

In general, minority networks are less homophilous, smaller, range wider, have weaker tie strength, and are less dense than White male networks (Friedman et al., 1998; Ibarra, 1993). Further, minority networks have fewer instrumental relations with critical ties to important individuals (Ibarra, 1993). Minorities also have weaker relationships with critical individuals (e.g., powerful, influential White males; Ibarra, 1992). African-American women, in particular, lack access to networks that focus directly on their unique concerns. They require job coaching, career guidance, job performance feedback, career information, and inspiration (Moore & Webb, 1998), which are critical factors in their career development.

Gender

Women, like minorities, tend to have weaker networks than White males (Friedman et al., 1998; Ibarra, 1992). They have fewer instrumental relations and weaker relations with critical individuals (Ibarra, 1993; James, 1998). This may be due to the fact that men bond in ways that make them feel more powerful, and one way of achieving this is by excluding and marginalizing women from their circle (Elsass & Graves, 1997). Historically, women have been excluded from many male-dominated organizations, from the boardroom to the golf course. Ironically, although researchers have reported that women are better at networking than men, women may thus have fewer opportunities to network (Ibarra, 1993). In addition, women's networks tend to be more friend and social centered than men's, which are focused more on job ties (Pugliesi & Shook, 1998).

Age

Although personal and social network size may increase with age (van Tilburg, 1998), work network size decreases (Pugliesi & Shook, 1998). Consequently, older men have smaller networks. Retirement decreases their emphasis on strong, job-centered ties, which, as a major part of their networks, decline significantly.

Military

The military job reassignment system with its frequent transfers may render the maintenance of networks difficult for military members. On the positive side, however, the military reassignment system may allow all individuals including women and minorities greater access to critical persons for building effective networks. As one progresses up both the enlisted and officer ranks, access to these critical persons with higher rank and experience, may increase. On the other hand, within the highly formalistic military hierarchy, junior individuals (junior noncommissioned officers and junior officers) may be reluctant to approach critical individuals in higher ranks for developing their networks.

Developing Networks

Networking can develop along traditional or nontraditional, innovative lines (see Figure 1). There are several important techniques for establishing networks.

Education and Training

White males have traditionally developed network contacts in formal training and education environments. Thus, the true value of an expensive Ivy League master of business administration degree (MBA) or law degree is not only in the quality of the education, but also in the number of contacts of future business and professional leaders one makes. The same can be said for graduates of the four military academies – Army, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard -- who are generally academically talented and ambitious. Four years of rigorous training and regimentation forges many close, loyal, and enduring relationships among cadets and midshipmen. Graduates may rely on these relationships throughout their military careers as well as after military service. The distinction of being a “ring knocker” (i.e., military academy alumnus) is reportedly looked upon favorably in the process of job assignments, on promotion boards, and in corporate America among executives who share the same alumnus distinction. Similarly, in training environments, it is logical that work-related ties (i.e., the instrumental function of networks) should develop.

On the surface, it would seem that mixed-race and mixed-gender training, as occurs in most of the military services, should be a fertile ground for developing a range and number of critical contacts with “rising stars.” This is a complex issue, however. For example, there is the problem of combat training and whether women should be excluded from such training. The U.S. Marine Corps segregates men and women in many training activities, particularly combat training, therefore, leading to stronger same-gender networks for women (Mehra et al., 1998).

Peer Networks

Because women and minorities have difficulty finding suitable same-gender and same-race mentors in many organizations, peer mentors have been suggested as an alternative (Kanter, 1989). Peer mentors can provide several of the instrumental and social support functions of traditional mentors (Kram & Isabella, 1985; Sato, 1998). Similarly, women and minorities could build networks with stronger tie strength and denser contacts with connections to their peers.

For example, women and minorities working at predominantly White male business firms and organizations would probably agree that one of the main factors contributing to their success is their strong bond with each other (same-gender and same-race homophily; Ibarra, 1993). Indeed, their formal and informal peer networks support success while simultaneously creating opportunities for them to seek refuge from what could otherwise be difficult places for them to fit in. In short, these networks provide identity, self-esteem, and acceptance (Eby, 1997).

Informal peer networks are critical in helping women and minority employees develop the necessary skills to negotiate their new business environments (Ibarra, 1993). Formal peer networks serve additional functions, such as help with financial planning, organizing programs like child care that meet unique needs, and discussing problematic company policies (Friedman et al., 1998). Although the structure, purpose, and importance may vary, the common denominator for them all is that they allow women and minority members to remain grounded in their profession, culture, and a balance of work and family. Interestingly, it is not always the activities of the organization, but rather their symbolic representation in the organization that signals to women and minorities that they have a place in the organization culture and that their individual voices can be heard collectively. The strong social bonds among women and minorities fostered within these organizations create opportunities for dialogue about gender and race issues and help maintain an identifiable and unified presence of women and minorities in the organization (Kram & Hall, 1996).

Virtual Networks

Electronic communication, such as the Internet and e-mail, can provide a fertile source of contacts for networking. A major advantage of electronic media is that it takes less time to maintain contacts in networks. This is particularly advantageous for the military with its frequent job changes and changes of station, which limit traditional network contacts. Women and minorities, in particular, can build stronger and denser tie strength because of the ease of reciprocation of exchange with contacts on the Internet and e-mail.

Moreover, electronic communication can produce organizational change and improvement. Like many other improvements in efficiency, electronic media can produce first order effects, such as productivity gains for the organization. In addition, however, electronic communication can create second-order effects that improve the organization. Specifically, the easy and extensive exchange of information over electronic media can produce organizational learning (Kram & Hall, 1996). For example, e-mail traffic with copies of messages to key managers can make the organization aware of diversity problems. The synergistic interplay as individuals reflect on the problems and provide ideas to each other for further consideration can set in motion positive organizational change.

Electronic communication (i.e., virtual networking) is not a panacea. But, it will undoubtedly change the way the women and minorities communicate intraorganizationally and develop extraorganizational networks – albeit high tech, but “low touch.” Virtual networks have the potential to offer women and minorities capabilities previously enjoyed exclusively by majority organization members.

Future Research

Considering the importance of networks for women and minorities, it is surprising how little theoretical and empirical work has appeared in the literature (Ibarra, 1993). This is particularly true of military research. While mentoring has attracted attention (see Knouse & Webb, 1998), there are no studies known to us that specifically address the issues of networking in the military. Future military research should examine the relative contribution of the variables we have identified (homophily, size, range, tie strength, and density) to the quality of the networking relationship. Moreover, the interaction of these variables is important. Does an individual benefit more from a larger network with close ties but low levels of interaction or a smaller network with close ties and high levels of interaction (Pugliesi & Shook, 1998)? Are there optimal network sizes, composition, and interaction levels for different diversity groups (e.g., gender, minorities)?

Networking is particularly relevant for women and minorities. Women of color and White women have reported different types of experiences in the workforce (Moore & Webb, 1998; Morison & Von Glinow, 1990; O'Neill, 1994). Therefore, studies are needed to determine the extent to which race and ethnicity, both in conjunction with and separate from issues of gender, affect the experiences of women in various organizations. Women can initiate studies in their own organizations to determine if there are systemic barriers to the advancement of women and discussion forums to identify networking strategies. Ongoing dialogue must be maintained and fostered if the barriers to mainstream networks are to be eventually shattered.

Recommendations

From the preceding analysis of the nature of networking, we make several recommendations for improving networking for women and minorities in the military.

1. Develop specialized networking organizations for women and minorities.

Women and minorities tend to have scarcer and weaker ties in their networks (Ibarra, 1993), but they tend to form stronger same sex and race ties (Mehra et al, 1998). Developing specialized same-gender and same-race networking organizations can thus compensate for problems in traditional networks. There are several existing organizations that can serve as models for specialized organizations: Woman Officers Professional Association (WOPA), Association of Naval Services Officers (ANSO) for Latinos, National Naval Officers Association (NNOA) for minority officers in the sea services, and ROCKS, an African-American organization named after Brigadier General Roscoe "Rock" Cartwright.

2. Encourage women and minorities to develop networks in education and training situations.

As education and training are emphasized in the military to maintain operational readiness, a majority of military members are routinely assigned to a variety of education and training sessions. These sessions have been a traditional source of networking contacts for White males in business (Ibarra, 1993). Therefore, women and minorities should actively seek out the "stars" in their education and training experiences, who will most likely be the future leaders of

organizations or commands.

3. Encourage women and minorities to develop overlapping peer networks.

In the absence of traditional mentoring relationships, women and minorities have developed peer mentors in the business world (Kram & Hall, 1996). In similar fashion, women and minorities should seek out peers who can provide instrumental and expressive functions in the absence of established networks. In the world of business, successful women and minorities have developed overlapping networks: a friend's (coworker) network for social support, a White male network for professional advice, and an overlapping network of friends and White males for organizational information (Ibarra, 1992). In similar fashion, women and minorities in the military should consider overlapping networks of friends, coworkers, and higher-ranking individuals to cover both the instrumental and expressive functions of traditional networks.

4. Encourage women and minorities to develop virtual networks.

Women and minorities can partially compensate for weak and sparse ties in their existing networks by developing on-line networks. E-mail provides an efficient means of maintaining contact with key network contacts around the world. Web sites, particularly of specialty organizations mentioned in point 1, can provide lists of contacts and devices, such as chat rooms, for cultivating contacts.

5. Increase opportunities for junior officers and junior NCOs to interact with higher ranks to expand their networks.

The frequent changes of station among military personnel prevent the maintenance of networks with strong and extensive ties. The military may thus provide opportunities for making initial contacts for junior officers and NCOs. Social get-togethers off-base and in civilian clothes may make contact easier. Professional conferences and team meetings may be another avenue for allowing senior officers and NCOs to see their junior counterparts operate and thus strengthen contact. There are no formal networking organizations for enlisted women, although senior enlisted women network on an informal basis (see Moore & Webb, 1998). In addition to establishing a formal networking organization within their respective service, it is recommended that junior enlisted women also consider networking with organizations outside the military (i.e., women's veterans' organizations, political advocacy groups, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, etc.) The military experience and leadership in these various groups is a viable source of information as well as a potential group of mentors for junior enlisted women.

6. Leader training as source of leader-member exchange.

Leader-member exchange is one source of networking (Eby, 1997). Because the leader generally has the power in the relationship, initiation of contact must derive from his or her initial efforts. Enhancing these efforts may occur through active listening to subordinates and sharing experiences. The Marine Corps' Crucible at the end of basic training illustrates this technique. After a rigorous training session, future supervisors of the basic trainees meet with them to share both expectations of what they will be doing in their new unit and also the supervisors' own Marine experiences (Krulak, 1996).

At the same time it is important to emphasize that junior NCOs and junior officers are more likely to move into the inner circle of their superiors by showing initiative and volunteering for additional responsibilities early in their careers (Tsui et al., 1995). Further, to prevent interpersonal barriers from interfering with effective networking, appropriate, carefully designed, and regularly scheduled diversity training must be offered to continue to challenge cultural stereotypes and assumptions in the majority population. This training can relieve women and minorities of the constant burden of having to educate everyone else to the realities of their experience. At minimum, this training may include coaching White men to be effective networking contacts, which can be mutually beneficial to them, as well as women and minorities.

7. Create a networking/mentoring scale for the MEOCS 2000.

The Military Equal Opportunity Climate Survey (MEOCS) is undergoing upgrades in order to serve military needs into the 21st century. One direction is to develop a series of independent scales that local unit commands can pick and choose according to their particular requirements. We recommend that a networking/mentoring scale be included to measure the extent of mentoring and networking among women and minorities in an organization. We recommend the following items be considered in the scale:

1. I have a mentor in this organization.
2. A person of my race is likely to have a mentor in this organization.
3. A person of my gender is likely to have a mentor in this organization.
4. There is a person in this organization who gives me career guidance.
5. There is a person in this organization who listens to me and is supportive.

To further test tie strength and density, the following two items should be considered:

1. How many persons in this organization give me career guidance?
2. How many persons in this organization listen to me and are supportive?

Conclusion

Networking is important for all members of an organization, particularly women and minorities, as careers become more complex, organizations become more dynamic, and competition for good positions becomes more intense. The U.S. military, as one of the largest organizations in the world, is no exception. To insure good networking opportunities for all its members, including women and minorities, the military should provide opportunities for networking to develop, such as encouraging specialized networking organizations for unique groups and encouraging virtual networking through e-mail and the Internet. At the same time, women and minorities should seize the initiative and develop education and training networks and peer networks on their own. Networking thus can become a unique type of partnership between military organizations supplying networking resources and individual members establishing and maintaining the networking connections.

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