

**CHANGE LEADER CAREER DEVELOPMENT:
THE LEVERAGING OF SOCIAL NETWORKS IN PLANNED
ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE**

By

Zara F. Larsen

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zara.larsen@thelarsengroup.com

CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

This research studies the extent to which a change leader is embedded in and leverages internal and external social networks to contribute to favorable project outcome, influencing his or her career development upon completion of the change initiative. A conceptual framework will be presented to explore the premise that the effectiveness of the leader in implementing planned change is based on successful access to, development and leveraging of social networks – the often informal structure of relationships among organizational members that provide invaluable resources such as information, power, and trust between individuals and groups. These resources are often critical for a change leader to access in order to pull or enable change vs. push or command change. Relationships in the form of networks are often the locus of change acceptance or resistance, fundamental for leaders to leverage to effectively deliver project results, sustain the new process, and contribute to the leader being accepted as an integral, value-added long term member of the organization.

Research questions are presented in order to proceed with the qualitative survey phase which will involve interviewing middle and executive level change leaders in new product development manufacturing companies, to enable further development and validation of the conceptual framework prior to quantitative data gathering and analysis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Background Theory	9
Social Capital	9
Networks: The Structural Dimension of Social Capital	10
Network Closure versus Brokerage across Structural Holes	12
Organizational Change and the Role of Social Networks	16
The Conceptual Framework	19
Dependent Variables: Project Outcome and Change Leader Outcome	19
Independent Variables: Career Background, Change Leader Networks, Sponsorship	21
Mediating Variables: Leveraging of Networks	26
Moderating Variables: Organizational Culture and Type of Change	30
Summary	35
Research Questions	38
References	40

Organizations today are challenged to not just deliver results, but to do so while changing how they do what they do. Leading change is not easy and the classic term “change agent” often characterizes someone as a disruptive maverick sanctioned separate from the community to do something TO targets, other organizational actors affected by the change. With the rate of success of projects as characterized by realizing specific results and sustaining new enterprise methods, systems, and behaviors being traditionally low, it is not uncommon for career fallout of change leaders to be high (Buchanan, 2003).

In a study published conducted in late 2001 for *The Economist*, Peter Drucker discussed future demographic, societal and economic trends destined to impact the future leadership of corporations (Drucker, 2001). With continued workforce aging in most of the industrialized world, in particular within the primary economic engines of Europe, Japan and the U.S., and the lack of births to offset the substantial loss, a talent shortage is predicted to surface within the next five to ten years. The retiring baby boomers in the United States will particularly deplete the experienced leadership ranks of corporations, non-profits, and government, military and academic institutions. Companies must realize that human capital is becoming more central than financial capital (Kanter, 1999).

The classic corporation has been reshaped by sweeping global distribution of manufacturing and service supply along with market connectivity. The days of vertical integration are all but over, with entities focusing on systems integration through outsourcing and global partnering (Kanter, 1999). The contemporary organization is being referred to as the network organization (Powell & Smith-Doerr, 1994), with an employee base expanded beyond fulltime, direct employees to include larger portions of contract, part time and remotely-based contributors. Virtual employees may be fenced

within tiered supply firms and joint ventures, for example. Many businesses are redefining their propriety and strategic core competencies, permanently augmenting expertise through outsourcing, and for some firms, establishing alliances for the entire provision of some functions. The result of these shifts, plus the advent of cross-functional teaming and more open sharing of data/information enabled by new communication technology, has birthed a contemporary organization more open, flatter and potentially less bureaucratic. The manager role has expanded from being a steward of day-to-day operations under direct control, to include leading and enabling change within and across departments, AND within teams of activity not necessarily defined by structure (Caldwell, 2003b). Social capital, a term that will be discussed in detail shortly, can be vital to successfully operating within the new organization comprised of networks.

With the advent of the network organization the boundaryless career has also evolved, a career no longer confined within an organization of well-defined roles, positions or jobs (Arthur, 1994). Given the shifts in organizational structures, the labor market and changing personal values, it is no small wonder that employees have come to realize how careers comprised of progressing through a string of assignments within the same discipline or same firm may be a thing of the past. Indications are that more people are asserting an independence from, rather than dependence on, traditional career principles, finding meaning instead in: a) employment moves across the barriers of separate companies, b) career validation and marketability from outside the present employer, such as the case with academics or skilled craftsmen, c) career sustained by extra-organizational networks of information (i.e. real estate agent), d) traditional organizational boundaries, notably hierarchical reporting and advancement principles,

broken or supplanted by team structures and matrix reporting relationships, and e) individual rejection of existing career opportunities for personal or family reasons.

The word career now conveys a meaning deeper than a chronology of positions held. It is the accumulation of information and knowledge embodied in skills, expertise and relationship networks acquired through an evolving sequence of work experiences (Bird, 1994). The network organization thus can be defined as an organization of connected pieces, as well as an entity populated by individuals leveraging and creating networks internal and external to the extended firm (comprised of outsourced, joint venture, suppliers and even customers as partners) to get work done.

It is with this backdrop of change – change in the labor market, change in the concept of the organization, and change in the concept of career – that we turn to the criticality of organizations to select, develop, coach and retain their change leaders (those vested with leading initiatives) in pursuit of enhancing the firm’s overall change capacity. Having the capability to change – change capacity – is often highlighted as a core competency for modern day firms (Klein, 2004). Change capacity refers to the successful and sustainable implementation of various interventions to address navigating radical change (typically externally-induced circumstances in a fight for business survival), or implementing continuous improvement change, actions along a journey towards incrementally advancing levels of capability in the organization (Huy, 2001).

For radical change, structures and shared belief systems are operated on, the former typically subject to abrupt pacing and top down, compliance-driven activities to specific goals. The latter, changing shared beliefs, often involves a gradual shift in the culture as influenced by teaching and guided learning. Continuous improvement involves

the systematic analyzing and modification of work processes to increase productivity in the short term, often complemented by enhanced social relationships and shifts in behavioral interactions in the longer term. Formal structural and work process change are based on economic value, and changes of shared beliefs and social practices are based on enhancing organizational capability (Beer & Nohria, 2000).

Companies who are change capable must be able to juxtapose multiple intervention types while attending to multiple conceptions of time, dealing with the sequencing, timing, pacing and potential combining of interventions (Huy, 2001). The individuals selected to lead these interventions are often thus challenged to focus not just on the successful outcomes or implementation of a given initiative, but also the longer term sustainability of the new way of doing business.

For organizations committed to talent development, an additional desired outcome of successful interventions is the simultaneous career development and retention of these change leaders, whether they proceed to lead another change initiative or matriculate to a more traditional line or staff assignment in the effected unit or firm. From an organizational perspective, retention of individual leaders could lead to creating or expanding a critical mass of change leaders from which to advance the firm's change agenda and embed learning within the firm to enhance its greater change capacity. Over time a change leader cohort group could evolve comprised of those individuals who have successfully led single or multiple change interventions, perhaps representing a portfolio of endeavors that span radical to continuous improvement, short term to long term implementation horizons, and functional specific to cross-enterprise impact.

This community of experts, or community of practice (Wenger, 1998), could be sanctioned by top management to recruit and enlist others to these assignments which are sometimes viewed as high career risk assignments. The community could also be either formally positioned or informally encouraged to serve as role models, mentors, coaches and trainers of newly appointed change leaders. Finally, these experts could be sanctioned to codify the firm's change "know how", retaining knowledge within the firm in light of demographic shifts and boundaryless career challenges, as mentioned earlier.

From the individual change leader's perspective, a successful project means he (and his team) achieved what he set out to do, ideally establishing a better organization and new ways of doing business that will be sustainable after he moves on. It also means that the leader has added to his personal skills, capabilities and knowledge portfolio. He has enhanced his experience base and personal confidence, resilience and adaptability to lead change, in addition to building and becoming embedded in new networks (Buchanan, 2003). Networks can validate how superiors, peers, subordinates and other organizational actors and stakeholders regard him with higher respect. While it is important to appropriately reward change leaders for a job well done, even more critical could be inclusion in the "going forward" organization via follow-on career moves. The extent to which a change leader is respected as a member of the leadership team will potentially weigh heavy in the number and variety of career opportunities open to him at the close of the project, ranging from assuming the leadership of yet another challenging change project to moving to a line, staff, functional or program/business unit assignment. Change leaders are passionate and have powerful aspirations to continue to make a dramatic impact through their central, high profile contributions.

BACKGROUND THEORY

Prior to turning to a specific discussion of planned organizational change, the role of social networks and ultimately the actions of change leaders within, it is important to briefly review the theory of social capital, introducing definitions, sources and distinctions applicable to the evolution of relationships and transfer of information within and across networks.

Social Capital

The term “social capital” initially appeared in the 1960’s in community studies, highlighting the central importance of networks of strong, crosscutting personal relationships developed over time to provide a basis for trust, cooperation and collective action within communities for their survival and healthy functioning (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). The concept has evolved to elucidate a wide range of social phenomena from the role of social capital as an influence on the development of human capital (changes in a person that bring about skills and capabilities that allow people to perform in new ways), to the economic performance of firms, geographic regions and nations.

The central proposition of social capital theory is that networks of relationships constitute a valuable resource for the conduct of social affairs, providing members with the collectivity-owned capital, essentially a “credential” which entitles them to credit to be applied to actions required in the future. In essence whereas human capital refers to capability, social capital is opportunity, a valuable resource for persons to leverage and like other forms of capital, is productive making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible (Coleman, 1988).

When considering the leading of change initiatives, particularly now within organizations comprised of extended enterprise groups (the network organization), networks, as opposed to the hierarchical bureaucracy or formal reporting structure, facilitate action. Networks lend accelerated access to collecting resources (information, influence, power and trust), and the ability to disseminate information effectively through pivotal, supportive coalitions, channeling timely information in support of change, as well as information to diffuse potential resistance to change. In short, “who you know” affects “what you know”, particularly when timing (translates to cost) is of the essence. “Know who” can be as important to develop as “know how”.

Networks: The Structural Dimension of Social Capital

The source of social capital lies in the structure and content of actors’ social relations, not in the actors per se, as its effects flow from the exchange of information, influence and solidarity made available to the actors (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Nuances of social capital are further defined via a structural distinction -- the actor’s embeddedness within the structure of relations within his group (“bonding” social capital) and the relations an actor maintains with another actor(s) within another group (“bridging” social capital) (Putnam, 2000). Bonding social capital is inward looking and tends to reinforce exclusive identities and homogeneity of groups as the goodwill that people have towards one another. It is a resource. This can enable reciprocity and mobilize solidarity, in particular providing crucial support for social, psychological, educational and economic well-being to those less fortunate or less skilled/experienced members of the community. Shared norms, language, stories and obligations lead to a common identity.

Bridging social capital networks are by contrast outward looking and encompass and connect people across diverse social cleavages. Bridging can generate broader identities and freer exchanges of ideas. This kind of capital can create for certain individuals or groups a competitive advantage to pursue their ends. Better connected people enjoy higher returns (Burt, 2000). In terms of advantage or competition, while bonding social capital is good for “getting by,” bridging social capital is crucial for “getting ahead.” Depending upon where an individual is in the network will determine his effectiveness in gaining access to external assets and diffusing information.

The structure of social capital can carry with it potential risks or negative connotations, however – “ties that bind can blind” (Adler & Kwon, 2002). For instance, 1) the time required to establish and maintain external relationships may outweigh the benefit, 2) over-embeddedness can reduce new idea flow into a group, resulting in parochialism and inertia, 3) bias towards external connections can undermine community solidarity, thus weakening collective norms, 4) feelings of obligation and friendship may be so great between actors that a group becomes a “relief organization” with individuals carrying other individuals), 5) strong in-group loyalty may also create strong out-group distrust, preventing collaboration and sharing of best practices, and to the extreme, 6) solidarity effects can split one group from the broader aggregate, resulting in disruptive internal competition, information hoarding, dominance or exclusion. While at times a social network developed in one context can be leveraged for another, known as an appropriable organization, it too can stand in the way of change or reorientation, as in the example of a cohesive work group subjected to a partial layoff or reassignment as a result of implementing improved work process (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998).

As much as change leaders can leverage networks to assist their efforts, they must be wary of the potential for social capital, bonding and/or bridging obstructing or retarding intervention implementation. Embeddedness can mean entrenchment and strong incentives not to sever ties or put them at risk, and over-bridging can diffuse focus and waste precious energy.

Network Closure versus Brokerage across Structural Holes

In the words of network research and analysis, bonding social capital relates to network closure, and bridging social capital relates to brokerage across structural holes. The channel for information transmission between two people is referred to as a tie. Strong ties are associated with closure, and show key characteristics between the parties to the relationship such as frequent interaction, an extended history, intimacy and sharing, and reciprocity in exchanges that allow for mutually confiding, trust-based interactions (Krackhardt, 1992). These ties facilitate the flow of richer, detailed, and redundant information and knowledge between individuals and groups. Weak ties are associated with brokerage, characterized by distant and infrequent relationships that may be casual, less intimate and sharing, and nonreciprocal and thus less obligatory in nature. Weak ties thus are of greater importance than strong ties in encouraging the exchange of a wider variety and potentially new information between groups by drawing in more peripheral communications and extending access to a wider set of contacts and knowledge resources (Haythornthwaite, 2000). Both strong and weak ties are critical for effective organizations as they provide access to different kinds of resources.

Network closure focuses on the risks associated with being a broker, the key idea being that networks in which everyone is connected such that no one can escape the

notice of others (operationally a dense network) are the source of social capital. Closure facilitates sanctions that make it less risky for people in the network to trust one another (protection from exploitation), and gain easy access to information in close proximity (circulating more within than between groups) (Burt, 2000). Contacts strongly connected to each other are referred to as being cohesive, likely to have similar information and therefore provide redundant information. Redundant information also results from structural equivalence, or individuals getting connected to the same third parties.

The structural hole argument defines social capital in terms of the information and control advantages of being the broker in relations between people otherwise disconnected in a social structure. Disconnected people stand on opposite sides of a hole in the social structure (Burt, 1997). A structural hole indicates that people on either side circulate in different information flows (not necessarily without knowledge of one another, but with little time to attend to the other's activities), such that someone who spans the hole with strong relations and contacts on each side accesses both information flows. The more holes spanned, the richer the information benefits of the network.

The broker between holes is an entrepreneur in the literal sense, a person who adds value by brokering the connection between others controlling accurate, ambiguous or distorted information. Non-redundant contacts offer information benefits that are additive. The volume and diversity of contacts for the broker offer high value as he reaches more people indirectly, people offering richer knowledge from disparate, interdisciplinary sources. The broker most likely sees then the bridges that can be drawn across sources and can move information in a timely fashion.

Individuals with networks rich in structural holes (contacts, contacts of contacts) are those who then know about, have a hand in creating, and can exercise control over information. They have access via ties to efficient screening, combining, exchanging and distribution of knowledge, in ways much faster than others offering additional competitive value. The integrity of the information is often enhanced by the reputational endorsement from actors involved in the exchange, essentially the power of referrals (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Per evidence from various case studies (Burt, 2001), successful network entrepreneurs with access, timing and referrals to their advantage stood out for their skills in a) communicating across differences of opinions, b) reasoning from the interests of the other, c) establishing mechanisms that build trust and reputation, and d) restructuring the organization or market where the current structure is a problem.

It is worth interjecting how effective change leaders are known for their diagnostic and interpersonal skill competencies (Cripe, 1993), attributes similar to the successful network entrepreneur mentioned above. The change leader's ability to deftly collect meaningful information from individuals and organizational systems, drawing conclusions from complex data and making accurate diagnoses, is often only as good as the speed at which he can move – span structural holes. Interpersonal skills as in the ability to express empathy, display genuineness and build positive expectations with people are critical to establishing mechanisms that build trust and reputation.

Studies also have shown that insiders in an organization, “the right kind of people” or those considered legitimate, are most likely to have direct access to brokerage across structural holes. The outsider proposing an idea that bridges groups has to borrow social capital in the sense that he has to work through or be sponsored by a strategic

partner, a person who already spans the structural holes and can give cues and legitimacy to the new or different ideas (Burt, 1998). The adept outsider does build his own networks in time, but key is the element of time. This study was of 3,000 people below the rank of vice president within firms over 100,000 employees in the US electronics and computing industry. Patterns of early promotion and existence of networks were analyzed with relation to gender and race. The findings supported that successful outsiders (predominantly women) were introduced into hierarchical networks by sponsors with social capital rich in structural holes. Most often these sponsors were not the direct supervisor, but rather an additional voice to corroborate the legitimacy of the outsider, yet viewed as removed or remote from the expected supportive and potentially biased boss.

Understanding group performance and networks is important, given how leading change can involve the mobilizing of teams whose members are often carefully selected for discipline-specific skills, and socialized or developed into a coherent team where the whole becomes greater than the sum of the parts. Field research has shown that high performance teams are quite often composed of employees with many non-redundant contacts beyond their team (Burt, 2001). In spanning structural holes, their networks reach a diverse set of perspectives, skills and resources. In addition, closure within a team improves communication and coordination. Closed networks, more specifically networks of densely interconnected contacts, on the other hand, have been found to be systematically associated with sub-standard performance particularly as outside perspectives or unfamiliar information gets blocked or overlooked. Low-performance teams were composed of individuals with redundant contacts beyond the team, but gaining access only to a single set of perspectives.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE AND THE ROLE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS

As part of proposing a conceptual framework model to explore the linkages between the outcome of change initiatives and the change leader's career advancement post change, and the role of social networks, it is worthwhile to review in greater detail three recent field studies exploring how networks in organizations enhance or inhibit planned organizational change. One significant reason for failure of planned change attempts, particularly attempts at structural change, may be the neglect of the informal structure of existing, stable relationships among organizational members (Stevenson, 2003). While ties between individuals and groups in networks can provide conduits of information, power, or trust that can facilitate change (and new networks open up new ideas and additional resources), disregard, neglect or simple lack of awareness of ties can lead to reinforcing natural resistance to change. In absence of understanding which networks sustain the functioning of the organization, networks often invisible to any formal structural characterization, change practitioners could believe they have successfully altered the organization's operation, only to later realize the shift was not "true change", but artificial and perhaps destined to return to its former state.

The right network configuration can facilitate change efforts, as verified through the study of 40 units at two sites within two divisions of a large multinational corporation implementing a new enterprise-wide integration system (SAP). Intra-organizational strong ties, measured as the density of interaction or number of ties between the central unit leading change and the affected operating units ("change targets"), led to more successful on-time complex change implementation as compared to weaker, less dense ties (Tenkasi & Chesmore, 2003). Cross-unit reviews and sharing of lessons learned are

examples where network bridges enabled units to learn from one another's experience. Units can avoid similar mistakes and pitfalls to insure faster first-time quality of operation, inform and influence one another, expand perspectives, provide mutual feedback, and encourage the dissemination of new practices and procedures (as well as "let go" of the older system with a higher degree of confidence or with risks mitigated prior to potential failures occurring). Effective change leaders of these projects had the capability and background to initialize and use inter-unit relations to the teams' advantage – brokerage across structural holes.

In a second study of four organizations that implemented change effectively and four organizations that were less successful, researchers found that successful change involved the creation of a large number of networks, some organization wide and some more locally based, to communicate the change (Mohrman, Tenkasi, & Mohrman, 2003). A combination of strong and weak ties was effective in leading to change. Each company was trying to fundamentally change its organizational design to impact business strategy – making structural changes, shifting to collective systematic performance metrics, organizing around processes vs. disciplines, and flattening the organization. A greater abundance and diversity of networks, characterized by a combination of strong and weak ties, internal and external connections and across system levels, were effective in leading to change. These network connections facilitated change implementation not only by sharing information but also by providing the capabilities to exchange and combine knowledge, and by enabling local self-design. The creation of a variety of networks may allow participants to understand and accept change by providing several positive reinforcing paths.

Weak ties, for example, enabled exchange among a wider variety of contacts including suppliers and customers (external ties), preventing insularity through communication among groups. The research confirmed that reliance on a hierarchical cascading of change from the top to the bottom tended to be ineffective, being overly reliant on prescriptive commands and often sharing information only within existing, understood frames of reference. Change leaders must facilitate a variety of forums for organizational actors to dialogue and interact with one another for change to be accepted, adopted and sustained – going beyond plans, blueprints and events to incorporation into patterns of routine interaction.

Recent conceptual work by McGrath and Krackhardt (2003) offers another dimension as insight into the somewhat contradictory findings of the two studies discussed above (critical roles of intra-organizational strong ties in the first study vs. combinations of weak and strong ties in the second for successful outcomes). They argue that different types of networks and tie strengths facilitate different types of change. Leaders need to consider the shape and characteristics of the overall existing organizational network within the context for change, and match their strategies and actions accordingly. For example if the change is to be radical versus continuous improvement in nature, attention must be given to “the ties that bind” a network high in closure in anticipation of resistance. Other contextual factors such as if the change project is organization-wide or local, or involves the adoption of a controversial or clearly superior innovation should be weighed before deciding on the specific strategy for change. If the change project is intended to be implemented across multiple units over time, it may be advantageous to first implement in peripheral units as pilots, not the

center of the network, to gain confidence prior to larger implementation. For instances of controversial innovations, however, successful diffusion may depend upon the ability of adopters to establish a critical mass of support, and as such engaging within the central network may be required.

In summary, it would serve change leaders well to be aware of the existing networks in the organization, and the meaning and purpose of these networks to the employees, particularly when considering strategies to diffuse hostility or resistance. In attempting to operate within a cohesive organization, change leaders can build a sense of security only through trust and reputation, reflections of network closure (Burt, 2004). To be most effective, change leaders should consider how to integrate the intended result of planned change into existing networks, and/or include in their strategy the development of new networks to reinforce the change. Prior network knowledge could thus be a diagnostic tool from which to set the agenda for change.

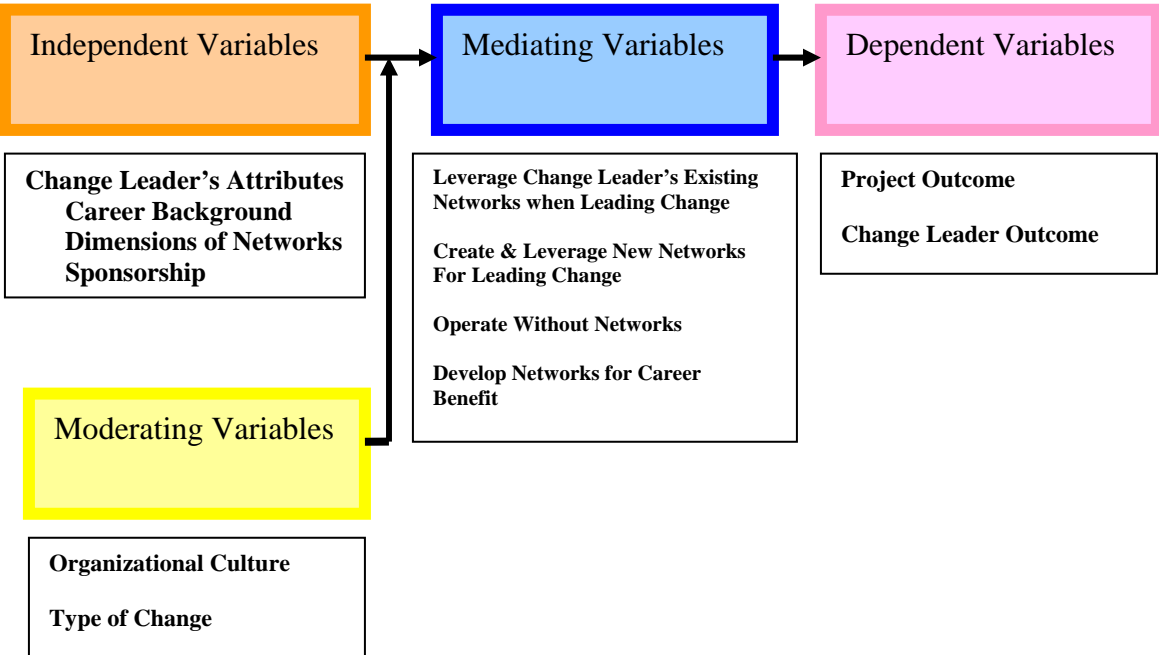
THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework for this research study is graphically depicted in Figure 1, with the following section supporting the definitions of the variables through a synthesis of literature and the investigator's practical field knowledge.

Dependent Variables

Project outcome. As mentioned in the opening problem statement, the intent of this research is to study the outcome of change projects and the evaluation and subsequent career development of change leaders post the project closure. Project Outcome is related to a combination of achieving the result of implementing a new process and sustaining the methodology at an organizational level. The reason for

Figure 1
Change Leader Career Development:
The Leveraging of Social Networks in Planned Organizational Change



spotlighting sustainability rests in how, in absence of true change, a tendency exists quite often that once the change leader moves on, the pressure is off and the organization slides back to the old ways of doing things or moves on to the next “change process of the month” (Klein, 2004; LaMarsh & Potts, 2004). In a recent research study of SAP implementation, change implementation effectiveness was measured using an implementation cycle time variable (implemented and available on “go live” commitment date), and change use or sustainability was assessed through a system usage variable (ranging from not at all, to use all the time) at a point when the system was deemed stable (Tenkasi & Chesmore, 2003), a potential fruitful approach for this research.

Change leader outcome. The second dependent variable is the outcome for the change leader – the relationship between the evaluation of the change leader by others and self-assessment at the close of the project. This relationship is manifest in positive placement opportunities such as staying with the unit as the leader of the stabilized process, moving to a new role in the unit or assuming a new assignment elsewhere in the firm. At the close of the project, the change leader is evaluated for favorable, unfavorable or neutral results, and is also assessed for the extent to which he has demonstrated commitment and loyalty to the organization, becoming recognized and included as a valuable, integrated member of the leadership community – an insider. In the event of a mismatch of career options and expectations between the change leader and his assessor(s) post project, placement could end up in a lateral move (perceived lack of development if the change leader had incoming expectations of advancement), demotion or worst case, exiting the unit and/or firm.

Independent Variables

When assuming new positions, individuals bring with them experiences per their career background, skills commonly characterized as core competencies, and resources in the form of information, knowledge, methods, tools and relationships. For high profile change assignments, some change leaders are extended unique sponsorship in the form of a reporting relationship or senior advisory council connection which gives access to special sanctioning, coaching, insights and information – if not also protection and shielding from detractors, required in some organizations to be successful. Employees also bring with them some expectation of how or where this assignment can take them within their broader career journey. For the purposes of the conceptual framework of this

research, it is proposed at this time to include three attributes of the change leader as independent variables: career background, dimensions of change leader networks and sponsorship.

Career background. The change leader career background can be described by one of four categories: a) Insider – someone leading an initiative within the unit or function of which they have predominantly been a part, b) Outside Insider – someone who is from another unit or function inside the organization or is from inside the unit but known for being able to wear two hats, having the unique ability to see outside and a different picture, and make connections to the world beyond the boundaries of their group (Klein, 2004), being non-mainstream thinkers or capable of “across the grain thinking,” yet known for having the right levers and channels to successfully operate (Antal & Krebsback-Gnath, 2002), c) Inside Outsider – someone recently hired as a fulltime employee from outside the organization , or d) Outsider – an outside consultant on retainer. Given this research study’s interest in the career development of change leaders within the firm at the outcome of the project, sole attention will be given to the first three categories of change leaders.

Dimensions of change leader networks. Of particular interest to this study of individuals as they lead change is their access to resources via relationships in the form of networks, dimensions described by the type of network structure (bridging social capital or brokerage, and bonding social capital or closure), network diversity (within the unit, within the organization, and outside of the organization), and tie quality (duration, intensity, directness and density).

The insider is known for being embedded within the strong ties of the unit, a result of longstanding working and potential friendship relationships with his colleagues, sharing a common set of experiences and beliefs/values that have evolved over time. When leading change engenders significant group resistance, he may be most challenged by having to shift social relationships with peers and staff, “crossing over to management’s side” and potentially coping with tension, isolation, alienation and conflict (Doyle, 2002). The Outside Insider (either taking the assignment coming from another unit or function within the firm, or comes from inside the unit and is recognized as someone who brings “outside of the box” perspectives/ideas forward) most likely brings both bridging and bonding capital from the organization to the unit. He has intra-unit ties like the insider, but courtesy of his access to information from bridging to other units does not have ties that would be so strong as to blind, stopping the ability to think/learn/act outside the norm.

The change leader may also bring perspectives from outside of the organization through networks cultivated via the supply or customer base, industry or academic associations, or community service. The Inside Outsider (newly hired change leader) would have bridging and bonding capital from outside the firm, yet need to develop or gain access through sponsorship to bridging capital within the organization and bonding within the unit (Burt, 1998). The Outsider (consultant) is of greatest value for his bridging social capital external to the organization, developed while leveraging his expertise with other clients. His effectiveness, however, even if he has been on retainer prior with the unit or company and has developed forms of social capital similar to insiders, is typically dependent upon visible partnership with his inside sponsor (quite

often top leadership). Tie quality is postulated to be dependent upon a combination of duration of the tie (non-existent to mature), intensity of the tie (how frequently exercised), directness of the tie (contact-to-contact, as opposed to access passed through others), and density (single connection or multiple connection/redundancy for access to the same information).

Sponsorship. The third dependent variable is the change leader's sponsorship. A sponsor is often a respected and influential senior leader, providing the initial sanctioning of the project in the organization. He is the visible advocate and champion, if not the initial architect of the vision to move to a desired future state. The sponsor provides legitimization of the change leader particularly in the eyes of those affected by the change, often referred to as change targets (Potts & LaMarsh, 2004). He can serve as a mentor and coach, trusted advisor and source of timely feedback in the background. The sponsor is most powerful as provider of or conduit to additional resources for the change leader, and protector, running interference in the event of conflict, in particular subtly managing resistance from the change targets in the foreground.

For change leaders brought in from outside of the unit or firm (outside insider, inside outsider, outsider), sponsors can offer quicker access to the right internal networks (bonding social capital). Depending upon the attributes of the sponsor, access to external networks (bridging social capital) may in particular be critical for a change leader from the inside, giving him access to new ideas and mitigating the potentially negative consequences of embeddedness. A change leader may need to assess carefully, however, the extent to which he should or can rely upon a single sponsor, as a dependency could result in vulnerability in the event the sponsor leaves or loses favor within the

organization. Multiple sponsors could also provide invaluable access to diverse perspectives and channels of information. Like tie quality, sponsorship quality for this study will take under consideration directness, intensity, duration and density.

The interest in the outcome of the change leader as a dependent variable for this research pre-supposes that at the onset of taking the assignment, the leader is motivated to strive for a future assignment and the firm wants to retain him post the change project. In general, a change leader's motivation might be to contribute to the firm's change agenda, then remain with the unit or functional area within which the project resides, being now equipped with stronger skills and new perspectives, or moving to another unit within the firm. The leader may also have expectations of either lateral or promotional opportunities surfacing as a result of taking the assignment, depending upon the project outcome. While he could take the change assignment with the intent of ultimately leaving the organization entirely, in essence using the assignment to build contacts and Leadership competencies to assist in fortifying his resume as part of an exit strategy, for the sake of this study sampling will be confined to those individuals with long term career development interest in the firm.

It will be assumed in this study that the firm has exerted due diligence in the selection of its change leaders, and as such a competency variable will NOT be introduced as a change leader attribute/independent variable. Attempts to develop core competency models specific to successful change leaders have been fraught with contention, confusion and disillusionment in both academic and business circles, referred to by some as the "Search for the Holy Grail" (Caldwell, 2003b). Are competencies personal characteristics, traits, motives, self-images, aspirations or empirical measures of

job-related performance? In principle, the concept of competency offers the hope of creating an integrative framework for selecting, appraising, training and developing change leaders for successful project outcomes; however, the mere possession of a set of competencies does not ensure effective or consistent performance of a role or task. Some authors have argued for broad judgmental capabilities and contextual mastery of the logics of change (problem solving, ownership and legitimacy) underpinned by managing the agendas of content, control and process. Others then speak of multi-layered models that need to acknowledge the context-dependent nature of a change and the emergent dynamics and political nature of the change process (Caldwell, 2003a). All sum, this is a probable complexity that at this time will not be introduced into the conceptual framework.

Mediating Variables

Network leveraging and creation/leveraging for change. While a change leader will bring with him his networks into an assignment, the mechanism of interest is the extent to which he chooses to leverage his networks to contribute to the process of leading successful project outcomes. In the event the leader does not have established access to a network(s), his ability to become embedded or get sponsored into existing networks, and ability to fill gaps by creating new networks to access resources to then leverage is posited to be essential (Burt, 1998). The leader may also opt to “go it alone” and neither leverage nor develop/leverage networks. How the different type of change leader might leverage networks will be illustrated below through an example typically encountered when leading change initiatives, augmenting the team with additional resources.

When a project team needs additional talent, the insider change leader most likely will look within the broader unit for candidates that already pass a “known and proven commodity/looks like us” screen, leveraging strong personal or existing team member ties/bonding social capital. If the resource is to be matrixed from another function, he may look to existing members from that function on the team for referrals, and pursue candidates who receive confirmations from multiple members. If a company-wide posting system is available to develop a slate, the insider change leader often is biased towards those who surface from within a close proximity, or at minimum can be investigated privately through supervisor and peer/former supervisor and former peer contacts who he directly knows. The insider leader may also opt to work this selection and decision process privately (as opposed to engage the team), having confidence in his own knowledge and judgment of the candidates’ skills, and the resulting team dynamics and values/beliefs culture fit. The leader often looks for seamless integration.

An outside insider change leader will most likely augment an internal search by tangentially looking outside of the unit, brokering across the enterprise into departments where he may have established either strong ties courtesy of former first-hand working associations, or has weak ties via more casual, infrequently leveraged relationships. In essence, he will leverage both bonding and bridging social capital. Of importance will be his collaborating with peers laterally for recommendations of candidates, additional search/slating approaches, and even for initial advice/concurrence with the position description. The outside insider is not necessarily looking for seamlessly integrating someone “like the rest of us”, but rather may simultaneously looking to add to the diversity of team thinking by including someone of strong skill, yet divergent

perspectives. He will most likely engage the team in the selection process in some way, ranging from assisting in writing the position description, to hosting candidates for lunch while interviewing, to team interviewing/decision-making. The outside insider may also earnestly consider candidates from outside the organization.

When pursuing new talent for his team, the inside outsider change leader (newly hired, experienced leader from outside the firm) does not have the strong or weak internal ties that his counterparts have within the unit or the organization. This does not mean he will not leverage the internal company posting process or referrals from within his new team; however, most likely he sees every new position as a key opportunity to reshape the organization, a probable additional personal objective in committing to lead the change initiative – to contribute to changing the longer term makeup of the workforce. The inside outsider has extensive external connections and access to new sources of talent, in fact this may have been a primary reason for the firm hiring him. There is often a “Pied Piper” effect to be leveraged, the new leader attracting former proven colleagues to follow him to his new location. The change-savvy inside outsider will engage his existing team and peers in the full selection process of outside talent, to enable commitment to and assistance with ultimately welcoming and integrating the new hires.

While all three of the change leader types could choose to “go without networks” and personally select only people without the assistance or input of others, more likely they will need to pursue the complete opposite end of the spectrum, getting access to new networks for sources of talent. If time is of the essence and financial resources not heavily constrained, the use of retained search firms is a possibility all three leaders may choose to leverage for outside talent. Chances are that the inside outsider and outside

insider change leaders will be more comfortable and potentially experienced with this approach than the insider, given the latter's potential resistance to hiring anyone not "home grown". Accessing top internal company talent, however, is often best provided through sponsorship, in the form of senior intervention and collaboration or peer leader referrals, introductions and slating. Human resource department connectivity into the various line and staff organizations can be invaluable, depending upon the robustness and openness of the firm's internal succession planning and talent pipeline processes.

Career network creation and leveraging. Given this study's interest in the career development of the change leader, the fourth mediating variable captures the extent to which the leader simultaneously develops networks to assist his being regarded as an integrated, value-added long term member of the broader leadership community – simply put, becoming an insider (Klein, 2004). The extent to which he intentionally cultivates mentors and sponsors, supportive peer/lateral relationships (in particular opinion leaders and information gate keepers) (Cross, Borgatti & Parker, 2002), and a general positive following via being a role model and coach for others and/or sharing his knowledge – "know how" and "know who" – are examples of how one might develop such networks, networks that may be different from those leveraged to accomplish and sustain the change project. Change leaders realize that no individual contact, whether inside or outside the firm, is ever too inconsequential to be part of his network because one never knows just if, when, or how a particular contact can help. Working diligently and persistently to earn and maintain credibility and respect builds connections with others, an often career-spanning modus operandi (Spekman, Isabella, & MacAvoy, 2000).

Moderating Variables

Two moderating or situational/contextual variables are being introduced into the conceptual framework at this time: a) organizational culture, and b) type of change.

Organizational culture. Organizational culture is the pattern of assumptions invented, discovered or developed by a group as it learns to cope with problems of internal integration and external adaptation. These assumptions have served the organization's goals and objectives well, and are considered valid to be taught to new members as the correct and accepted way to perceive, think, feel and act (Schein, 1985). Hence, it could be expected that leaders belonging to different organizational cultures would put a different emphasis and value on the legitimacy and effectiveness of creating and leveraging of social networks, particularly in the face of enabling change.

Researchers in the 1980's classified organizational cultures according to two basic dimensions (internal/external orientation, and flexibility/control orientation) and identified a typology of four cultures (group, developmental, hierarchical, and rational), (Skodstad & Einarsen, 1999, re Quinn, 1988; Quinn & Hall, 1983; Quinn & McGrath, 1985). Group cultures are internal and flexible in their orientation, with a tendency towards people orientation, valuing loyalty and group protection. Developmental cultures emphasize dynamic creativity and adaptability with a flexible, external client focus. Hierarchical cultures promote values of formality and structure, with chain-of-command authority reporting relationships, rules, clear roles and responsibilities – overall control and internal-oriented. External, control-oriented cultures were cited as rational, focusing on production and emphasizing near term tactical results and task accomplishment.

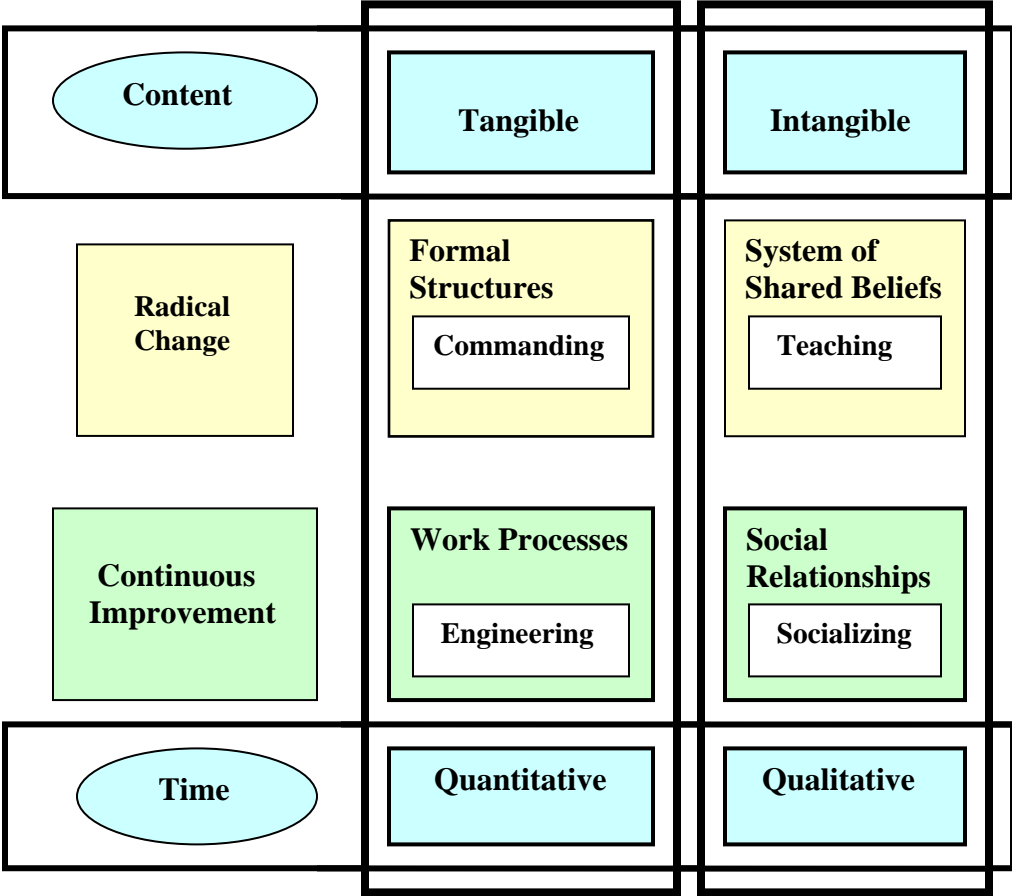
Organizations are likely to have attributes and values reflecting all four culture types, but one type may dominate.

As this earlier research translates to leading change and contemporary social network theory, group culture could be synonymous with having a high degree of network closure (bonding), whereas a development culture fosters members as brokers, or working across structural holes (bridging). Change leaders in hierarchical cultures may need to engage tops-down, tight project control through actions along structure channels and managing within internal networks (closure). They could be characterized as the classical “change agent” affecting “change targets”. Change leaders in a collaborative and open, entrepreneurial culture could ideally focus on influence and consensus building, facilitating action through more open experimentation and inclusion of a breadth of ideas, styles and sources of information – brokerage (Klein, 2004).

A contextual awareness of the rational culture attributes, a unit or firm’s bias for tactical execution as opposed to strategic orientation (for example longer term visioning, preemptive action based on trends, investment in people, processes and methods or some balance between), could influence his choice of actions along network lines, particularly in light of the temporal or time-based influences. Rational attributes may also affect the extent to which a successful project outcome includes both getting results, and driving sustainable process change. A tactically focused organization, for instance, might only value near-term results and not know to expect or value sustainable process change. For all the effort a change leader in this situation has put into staffing/staging/developing a sustainable process, it may go unrecognized and thus negatively effect his self-assessment and feeling of accomplishment.

Type of change. For radical change the formal structures and/or the systems of shared beliefs are operated on, and for continuous improvement, changes to work processes and/or social relationships are the typical focus. Tactical, quantifiable economic gains are realized for projects tied to formal structural change and work process change. Changing of the shared beliefs and social practices are targeted for enhanced organizational capability, often quite difficult to measure in the near term and viewed more strategic in nature. Figure 2 synthesizes how for two major types of change, radical change and continuous improvement, two forms of intervention are commonly identified within each (Huy, 2001).

Figure 2 The Role of Content and Time in Change Interventions



Quantitative and qualitative distinctions of time are important given decision making around resource allocation, prioritization, sequencing and urgency of organizational activities. Quantitative refers to clock time (“time is money”), typically either near or medium term. Near term circumstances require abrupt and rapid response – tangible, visible actions – due to external pressures (typically financial markets). Quantitative for medium term change implies moderately paced actions in discreet, measurable steps, as in measuring the impact of work processes. Qualitative time value relates to an often discontinuous flow driven by internal company factors such as individual psychology, interpersonal relationships, and shared norms. The event trajectories are indeterminate and can be medium to longer term in nature and gradual in pace, results being relatively intangible. The four interventions are, in summary:

Radical Change

- 1) Commanding: Top down, lead and dictated compliance to exact change goals, clock time driven, near term results (typically financial), visible and abrupt pacing to change structures (example: bankruptcy turnaround, downsizing)
- 2) Teaching: Analytical and guided learning, where change targets participate in reeducation to change system of shared beliefs, moderately long term, gradual shift, role of external agents to probe, reveal (example: culture change to customer service vs. production orientation)

Continuous Improvement

- 3) Engineering: Systematic analyzing and changing work processes to increase productivity, clock time driven, medium term enactment (example: streamlining business processes)

4) Socializing: Enhance quality of social relationships/practices to lead to changes in behavioral interactions thus affecting beliefs/culture, long term, gradual shift (example: team-based decision making)

These four ideal types of intervention bounded by content and time create unique situations within which a change leader must operate, relying upon different leadership skills and competencies, as well as unique roles of accessing or creating then leveraging networks – networks for closure and/or brokerage. For example, time might not allow the development or spanning of networks such that the leader must rely solely on those he already has, or is sponsored into. A radical change that involves a major reorganization or merger often results in casualties with the changing of structures, which may or may not “break” a network depending upon its amount of closure – dynamics to which a network-savvy change leader must become attuned. When the goal is to also shape a new culture, the change leader may need to be wary of the internal group ties that become even stronger amidst the disruption, “binding and blinding”, and cautiously take incremental steps via cultivating new network connections to inject new ideas.

Earlier specificity to the mediating variables was given through the illustration of the augmentation of talent by type of change leader and his leveraging of networks or accessing sponsors’ networks. This example is also worth mentioning briefly within the context of the two moderating variables. In the case of organizational culture, for those firms with high closure (internally focused), it is conceivable that staffing would be primarily from within whenever possible. Consideration of outside talent goes hand in hand with those cultures which value brokerage for external ideas and different perspectives.

Depending on intervention type, in particular when time and quantifiable results are key factors, the savvy change leader may make different choices around the leveraging or creation/leveraging of networks. For example, continuous improvement by its nature is often about driving variation out of the system, so as to stabilize, predict and then optimize the performance of a system (Burt, 2004). While the change leader may pursue initial new ideas from a variety of sources (bonding and bridging connections), getting beyond initial implementation calls for efficiency, sustainability, common behaviors, proven reputation and trust, and task execution – network closure. His staffing of his teams, thus, might benefit from a certain degree of closure, particularly if the change team ultimately migrates to sustaining the change, making it the new “status quo”.

For instances of radical change, value can come from new ideas being surfaced, coordinated and implemented across interdependent groups. Unlike projects requiring network closure and controlling of variation, radical change initiatives benefit from high degrees of brokerage, teams that by their very makeup can search for, value and leverage the variation in ideas, roles and implementation approaches throughout the dynamic if not somewhat purposely chaotic cycle of change. The successful change leader here may thus pull from heterogeneous sources to staff his team.

SUMMARY

The expected causal relationships between the dependent, independent, mediating and moderating variables, displayed in Figure 1 and defined and substantiated via literature citation and field examples above, are characterized via the following potential conjectures. For reference, Figure 3 summarizes potential connections between the change leader attributes of background and dimensions of his networks. As discussed

earlier, an Insider may primarily have a high degree of closure or bonding social capital based upon experience within the unit, whereas an Outside Insider may have closure and brokerage (bridging social capital), or brokerage and closure (ranked depending upon the bias of his experiences). The Inside Outsider and Outsider could be known best for their degrees of brokerage.

Figure 3 proposes how the leveraging of networks (mediating variables) may operate within the context of type of change and organizational culture (moderating variables). As an example, for a radical change initiative within a hierarchical, structure-bound culture, leveraging bonding social capital or closure is required to circumvent resistance to change and supercede the rigid or entrenched practices of the past, soliciting ideas from inside and outside the unit (brokerage). Continuous improvement in a collaborative, open culture, could be characterized by external ideas (brokerage) being adopted and sustained through constant, repeated refinement in the unit (closure).

Figure 3 Leveraging of Networks in a Context

		Type of Change	
		Radical	Continuous Improvement
Organizational Culture	Hierarchical Structured	Closure And Brokerage	Closure
	Collaborative Open	Brokerage	Brokerage And Closure

Note: Primary Dimensions of Change Leader Networks
 Insider- Closure
 Outside Insider- Closure and Brokerage or Brokerage and Closure
 Inside Outsider and Outsider- Brokerage

In terms of the full conceptual framework in operation, for successful project outcomes it is speculated that an insider, for example, will have at his immediate disposal and so leverage networks for closure. He could be best suited for leading continuous improvement initiatives in hierarchical cultures, or to the extent he creates (or is sponsored into) new networks for brokerage, be effective in other contextual scenarios so pictured in Figure 3. Outside Insiders could be viewed as the most versatile, bringing both brokerage and closure networks at the onset, provided they know how to/choose to leverage or expand networks depending upon the context. It might be conjectured as well, that while Inside Outsiders and Outsiders may be effective brokers, such skills and access to resources may not be sufficient in leading sustainable change when working within a context with high degrees of network closure. They may need to work on embedding themselves (be sponsored into) existing networks.

It is speculated that a focus on such embedding is particularly important and unique for Inside Outsiders when considering the second dependent variable, change leader outcome post the project. (As mentioned earlier, this study is restricted to change leaders with interest in continuing their careers within the firm, such that Outsiders will not be included.) The model proposes that the extent to which the change leader simultaneously develops networks to assist his being regarded as an integrated, value-added long term member of the broader leadership community – works to become an insider – will influence his downstream career development options. For Figure 3 to relate to leveraging of networks for career development purposes, closure most likely will need to be introduced into all four contextual quadrants.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the presented problem definition, summary of relevant background theory, bridging between theory and practice to outline the preliminary conceptual framework and potential conjectures, this conceptual paper closes with nine research questions from which to gather real world qualitative data through field interviews during the next phase of research. This information will ultimately be synthesized to validate and/or refine the model prior to the final quantitative phase.

1. How do change leaders and their sponsors define the success of a change project?
2. How do change leaders and their sponsors define the success of the change leader at the close of the change project?
3. What are the processes or factors that affect a successful change project outcome?
Is the extent to which change leaders leverage networks important? Internal and/or external networks?
4. What are the processes or factors that affect the outcome for the change leader?
Is the extent to which the change leader develops and leverages networks for career development important? Are these networks distinct from those utilized in leading change?
5. Does organizational culture affect the extent to which a change leader leverages networks? Which attributes of culture differentiate the situation?
6. Do change leaders of radical change and change leaders of continuous improvement initiatives place any different importance on the leveraging of social networks to get to successful project outcomes? Do leveraging internal and

- external networks have differing effects? Is there a different relevance of networks for change initiatives that are tangible (changes in structure or work process) vs. intangible (changes in culture or social relationships)?
7. What attributes do change leaders use to characterize themselves? Do they consider career background (being from inside the organization, inside yet with outside perspectives, hired recently from the outside, working as an outside consultant) important? Do they identify themselves in terms of their networks and/or their sponsors?
 8. Do change leaders of different career backgrounds leverage and develop social networks in different ways and to different extents to successfully lead change?
 9. Is sponsorship a determinant in the extent to which a change leader views networks playing into leading his project?

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