

# CULTURE COMMS

## THE POWER OF NETWORKING

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Editorial intelligence (ei) want to move the conversation from what networking is to how to navigate through the current climate of networking.

The power and hierarchy of our different communications tools is key. Julia Hobsbawm (JH) notes that face-to-face contact is at the top of the power hierarchy with other methods falling below.

In the post-World War II era and with the founding of the NHS, health was identified along with three kinds of fitness: physical; mental; and social.

We need to update our sense of what it means to be healthy in the modern world and put emphasis on the health of our social lives as well as our bodies and minds.

Images of traditional powerful people, contrasted with the 'new face' of power – vibrant, healthy different people from all walks of life.

Comms used to be very funnelled: the meeting; the minutes; the press release; the media; the people. Now we live in a different era or hyper-perma connection – messages from everywhere at all times. In an instant and global world, the way we communicate has to adapt.

We now need our own customised way of dealing with our new connections and methods of communication.

We have forgotten that being perma-connected isn't the real deal:

- Contact is good
- Face-to-face is better
- Intimacy is at the top of the hierarchy for our human relationships
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It is now our database vs our relationships. The mass/quantity of the network is not the same as the depth of connection. This depth has to be upgraded to have a better relationship to the individual.

In numbers:

- 150 is the maximum number of relationships that primates have
- There are 168 hours in the week

### **Everyone needs a strategy in order to deal with these numbers**

Networks are a natural thing. They occur in nature, they are a system. In order to cope with the hostile environment of the working world where nothing is secure a network can act as a net and support us through collaboration.

Networking is not selfish as was previously thought. Networks provide an intimate environment – names not numbers. And they help spread ideas.

### **Myth: you don't have to be an extrovert in order to network**

The power of weak ties and the randomness of the way we meet people makes networks interesting.

However, networks can be vulnerable to group thinking but diversity of opinion is still important in a network. Do you behave like an orchestra? Riff off each other?

Personal opinion is important – not your brand but what you think, feel and who you are. Connect in this way first. It is important to know who you are and what you're about.

Life is long and connection is about curiosity.

Treat your diary like your body. Your diary is the body of your social health. It's about lifestyle not a diet. Make changes but do not force changes.

How to manage your 150 contacts: they should roughly split into three groups: top tier; middle; and those who you want to connect with. It is also important to network within your organisation and bring solutions as a connected group rather than bringing problems.

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