

Continuous and Never-ending Improvement – Building relationship networks

Number 6 in the series of CANI is about building relationship networks because in these days of massive and constant change, strong networks are more important than ever. As we move back to less restrictive working practices, remember the importance of face to face contacts.

Here are five reasons why networking is so important.

1. To communicate your message internally within the organisation both vertically and horizontally.

Given the pace of change and the demands on staff, it is important that they feel connected and loyal to the organisation and its purpose. Getting to know your team individually, building their sense of belonging to a team and helping them to connect with other teams is a critical part of the leadership role. Building strong relationships with colleagues in other functions such as finance and HR is essential to effective management.

Action – Connect with one new person within your organisation each week and see how your network grows.

2. To ensure effective external collaboration with partner organisations and other disciplines

Many of the challenges leaders face are about managing interfaces and strengthening multi-disciplinary and multi-agency collaboration. However, when only looking at issues from one perspective, it is easy to become defensive and protective. How well do you understand the challenges faced by other agencies?

Action– Identify key people in partner agencies, assess the strength of your relationship with each of them and commit to taking them up a notch.



3. To stay relevant

Networks keep you connected in this fast-changing world, when staying relevant can be a huge challenge.

Action – stay relevant by keeping up to date with recent research, practice developments and social media technology. Get involved in conversations in Twitter and LinkedIn or join a mastermind group to stimulate discussion and generate fresh ideas.

4. To identify sources of help and support

Perhaps the most important reason to connect is because networks are an amazing source of help.

Action - Identify a current challenge and use existing relationships to bridge to new sources of help. Ask for what you need.



5. To build credibility for yourself and your organisation

Relationships must be reciprocal and we should always add massive value to others in our network.

Action – Identify ways to add value to colleagues in your existing network? Offer to mentor someone, give a lunchtime talk, share a relevant article, or simply reach out to someone you know has a challenge. Remember people don't care how much you know – they want to know how much you care.

Follow through on any of the above actions this week and watch for the improvements in how you feel. As Dr Samuel Johnstone advises – it is essential that we 'keep our relationships in good repair' – that takes commitment and investment – and it's worth it!!

For more information on CORE leadership skills please visit my website at www.lynnpeyton.com/core