Network Assessment Exercise: Entrepreneur's Version

Introduction

This exercise is based on network instruments designed to help you identify patterns in your approach to developing networks of relationships related to entrepreneurship. Your "network" refers to the set of relationships that help you advance professionally, get things done, and more generally, develop personally and professionally with regard to your entrepreneurial objectives (whether you are doing something entrepreneurial within an existing organization or starting up something from scratch outside of one).

Directions

Follow the instructions for Steps 1 through 5 on the following pages. When you have completed the exercise, hand in Step 5 (page 6) and only Step 5. The information you turn in will be anonymous, so please DO NOT write your name on page 6.

Please DO NOT turn to page 6 (Step 5) until you have completed pages 2 to 4 of this exercise.

Step 1: List Your Network Contacts

In answering the following questions, you may list people from ANY context. It is not necessary to limit yourself to individuals who work for your company. People with whom you have more than one kind of relationship can be listed more than once. In the blanks that follow each question, please list their names or initials. You may list as few or as many as you wish, or leave a question blank if no one comes to mind. If you can remember, try to note the name or initials of who introduced you to each person in this listing.

1. **Discussing important work matters** If you look back over the last two to three years, who are the people with whom you have discussed important work matters? This may have been for bouncing ideas for important projects, getting support or cooperation for your initiatives, evaluating opportunities or any other matters of importance to you.

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

2. **Discussing new business ideas and new business opportunities** What people have been most helpful? Consider people who have provided leads, made introductions, offered advice in your decision making, or provided resources.

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

3. **Advancing your career** List those people who have contributed most significantly to your professional development and career advancement during the past two to three years.

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

Step 2: Consolidate Your List

Consolidate the names listed in Step 1 onto the **Network Grid** on page 4. No one person should be listed twice.

Step 3: Describe the Closeness of the Relationship

For each person listed on the network grid, indicate the closeness of your relationship with them by placing an "X" on a continuum from "very close" to "close" and "not very close," to "distant." Very close relationships are those characterized by high degrees of liking, trust, and mutual commitment. Distant relationships are those characterized by not knowing the person very well, or by having very little liking, trust, and mutual commitment (i.e., problematic relationships). For an example of how to complete this step, see the **Sample Network Grid** on page 5, entitled "Pat's Network."

Step 4: Compute the Density of Your Network

Density refers to the extent to which the people in your network know each other. Using the grid on the next page, indicate who knows who in your network by placing a checkmark in the cells corresponding to each acquainted pair. Leave a cell blank if the pair do not know each other, or if you do not know whether they know each other.

Start with person 1, for example Lisa in the **Sample Network Grid** on page 5. Going across the grid, Lisa knows Jack (2), Jeff (3), and Samantha (8), but no one else in Pat's Network. Go on to person 2, Jack. Jack knows Rick (5), Linda (6), Samantha (8), and David (10). Go on to person 3, and so on. Once you have finished check-marking who knows who, compute the density of YOUR network through the following steps:

a) Total number of people in your network $\qquad$ N = _____
   To follow our example, Pat's N = 10

b) Maximum Density (i.e., if everyone in your network knew
   each other). *Pat's maximum density is (10*9) ÷ 2 = 45.*
   (NOTE: Mathematically, *M can not* exceed 1.0!!!)

   [N * (N - 1)] ÷ 2 = M $\qquad$ M = _____

c) Total number of checkmarks on your network grid (i.e., the
   Number of relationships among people in your network).
   Pat's C = 19. $\qquad$ C = _____

d) Density of Your Network. *Pat's D = 19 ÷ 45 = .42*

   C ÷ M = D $\qquad$ D = _____

When you have completed Steps 2, 3, and 4, go to page 6 and complete Step 5.
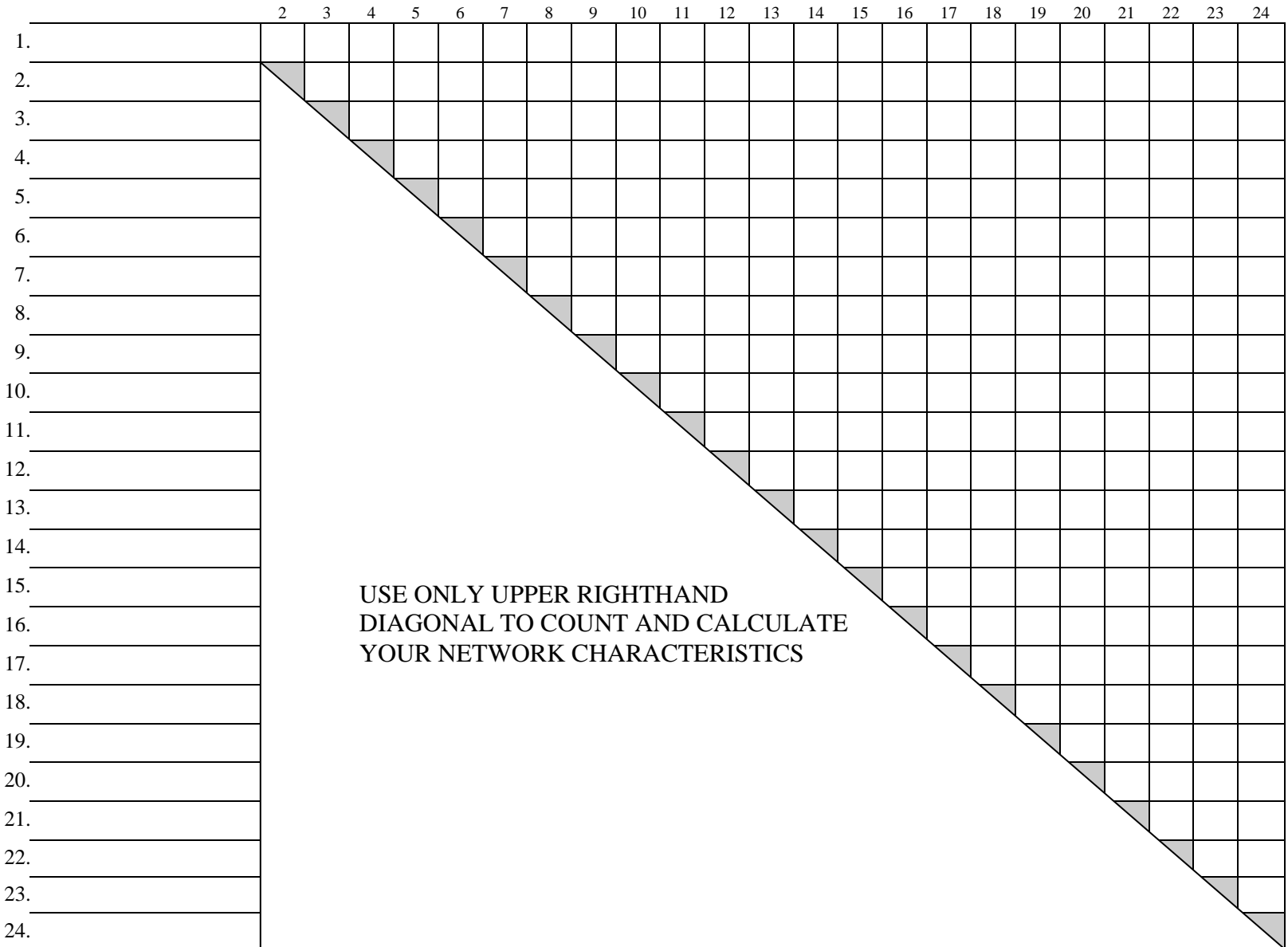
Network Grid

Step 3: Relationship   **Step 2: List Names or Initials**   **Step 4: Density of Network**

Very Close	Close	Not Very Close	Distant

Columns: 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24

Rows 1. through 24.

USE ONLY UPPER RIGHTHAND DIAGONAL TO COUNT AND CALCULATE YOUR NETWORK CHARACTERISTICS

SAMPLE Network Grid: Pat's Network

Step 3: Relationship **Step 2: List Names** **Step 4: Density of Network**

Very Close	Close	Not Very Close	Distant	Name	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	X			1. Lisa	✔	✔					✔																
	X			2. Jack				✔	✔		✔		✔														
	X			3. Jeff					✔	✔	✔		✔														
X				4. Noah																							
		X		5. Rick								✔	✔														
	X			6. Linda						✔	✔		✔														
			X	7. Jay							✔		✔														
X				8. Samantha									✔														
	X			9. Stacy																							
		X		10. David																							
				11.																							
				12.																							
				13.																							
				14.																							
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				23.																							
				24.																							

USE ONLY UPPER RIGHTHAND DIAGONAL TO COUNT AND CALCULATE YOUR NETWORK CHARACTERISTICS

Step 5: Summarize the Network Information

Complete the sections below, make a photocopy, and hand in this page and only this page.

Individual Information (circle applicable)

Gender   Male   Female

Race/Ethnicity   White   African or   Asian or   Hispanic
                                      African-American Asian-American   Other _____

Nationality (by region)   U.S. and Canada
                                      Latin America (Mexico, South, and Central America)
                                      Europe
                                      Africa and the Middle East
                                      Asia
                                      Australia and New Zealand

Tenure   Years in this industry _____
                                      Years with this employer _____
                                      Years in present position _____

Network Information

1.   Total number of people listed on the Network Grid (from Step 2) _____

2.   Total number of individuals who introduced you to these people (from step 1) _____

3.   Number of "Very Close" relationships listed on the Network Grid (from Step 3) _____

4.   Density of your network (D from Step 4) _____ (needs to be less than or equal to 1)

5.   Look over your Network Grid and determine the number of people who are:

       a)   Your senior (higher up in your or another organization)   _____
       b)   Your peer (at your level in your or another organization)   _____
       c)   Your junior (below you in your or another organization)   _____

       d)   From a different functional or product area   _____
       e)   From a different business unit, division, or office in your firm _____
       f)   From a different firm   _____

       g)   The same gender as you are   _____
       h)   Members of the same racial or ethnic group as you are   _____
       i)   The same nationality as you are   _____