



## Network Assessment Exercise:

### Abridged MBA Version

#### Introduction

This exercise is designed to help you identify patterns in your approach to developing networks of relationships.<sup>1</sup> Your “network” refers to the set of relationships that help you advance professionally, get things done, and more generally, develop personally and professionally.

#### 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.**

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<sup>1</sup> This exercise is based on network instruments developed by R.S. Burt. “Network Items and the General Social Survey,” *Social Networks*, 1984, 6: 293-339; *Structural Holes: The Social Structure of Competition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992.

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This exercise was prepared by Professor Herminia Ibarra with assistance of Research Associate Nicole Sackley.

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## Step 1: List Your Network Contacts

In answering the following questions, you may list people from ANY context. It is not necessary to limit your self to fellow business school students or co-workers from previous jobs. 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 up to six names per question. You may list as few as you wish or leave a question blank if no one comes to mind.

**1. Important Work for Academic Matters** If you look back over the last year who are the people with whom you have discussed important work or academic matters? This may have been for bouncing ideas for important projects, getting support or cooperation for you initiates, evaluating opportunities or any other matters of importance to you.

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

**2. Job Search** What people have been most helpful and useful in your job search so far? Consider people who have provided leads, made introductions, offered advice in your decision-making, or other possibilities.

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

**3. Friends** List your closest friends. Consider those people with whom you most like to spend your free time or with whom you would be most likely to discuss a personal dilemma.

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

**4. Professional Development during Business School Years** List those people who have contributed most significantly to your professional development during the past year. You need not limit yourself to members of the business school community.

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

## Step 2: Consolidate Your List

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

## Step 3: Describe the Closeness of 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 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 "Nicole'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 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 Nicole'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. (**Note:** Do not place any checkmarks in the shaded area. If person 1 knows person 2, then person 2 knows person 1.) Once you have finished checkmarking who knows who, compute the density of YOUR network through the following steps:

- a) Total number of people in your network

To follow our example, Nicole's  $N = 10$ .

$N = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$

- b) Maximum Density (i.e., if everyone in your network knew each other). Nicole's maximum density is  $(10 \times 9) \div 2 = 45$ .

$$[N * (N - 1)] \div 2 = 45$$

$M = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$

- c) Total number of checkmarks on your network grid (i.e., the number of relationships among people in your network).

$C = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$

- d) Density of Your Network. Nicole's  $D = 19 \div 45 = .42$

$$C \div M = D$$

$D = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$

**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

Step 4: Density of Network

| Very Close | Close | Not very Close | Distant |    | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
|------------|-------|----------------|---------|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
|            |       |                |         | 1  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|            |       |                |         | 2  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|            |       |                |         | 3  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|            |       |                |         | 4  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|            |       |                |         | 5  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|            |       |                |         | 6  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|            |       |                |         | 7  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|            |       |                |         | 8  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|            |       |                |         | 9  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|            |       |                |         | 10 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|            |       |                |         | 11 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|            |       |                |         | 12 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|            |       |                |         | 13 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|            |       |                |         | 14 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|            |       |                |         | 15 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|            |       |                |         | 16 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|            |       |                |         | 17 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|            |       |                |         | 18 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|            |       |                |         | 19 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|            |       |                |         | 20 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|            |       |                |         | 21 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|            |       |                |         | 22 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|            |       |                |         | 23 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|            |       |                |         | 24 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |



## Step 5: Summarize the Network Information

Complete the sections below, and hand in this page and only this page. To maintain anonymity, please DO NOT write your name on this sheet.

### Individual Information (circle applicable)

- 1) **Last job before Business School**    Large Company    Small Firm & Entrepreneurial    Consulting    Financial Services    Other \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) **Gender**    Male    Female
- 3) **Nationality (by region)**    U.S. and Canada  
                                          Latin America (Mexico, South, and Central America)  
                                          Europe  
                                          Asia  
                                          Africa and Middle East  
                                          Australia and New Zealand

### Network Information

- 1) Total number of people listed on the Network Grid (from Step 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Number of "Very Close" relationships listed on the Network Grid (from Step 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Density of your network (D from Step 4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Look over your Network Grid and determine number of people who are:
  - a) From the same industry background \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) From the same company (pre-business school) \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) Fellow business school students \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) Business school faculty \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) More senior than you, for example faculty or supervisors \_\_\_\_\_
  - f) At your level, in school or at work \_\_\_\_\_
  - g) More junior than you, in age or organizational position \_\_\_\_\_
  - h) The same gender as you \_\_\_\_\_
  - i) The same racial or ethnic group as you \_\_\_\_\_
  - j) The same nationality (by region) as you \_\_\_\_\_

**Keep a photocopy of this page, so that you have it to refer to later.**