

Correlates of Networking Behavior for Managerial and Professional Employees

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Networking is an important strategy for managing one's career, but little is known about those who engage in networking behaviors. A study of 418 managers and professionals was conducted to examine the relationship of personal and job characteristics to involvement in networking. Multiple regression results showed that gender, socioeconomic background, self-esteem, extraversion, favorable attitudes toward workplace politics, organizational level, and type of position are significant predictors of involvement in networking behaviors. Implications of these results and directions for future research on networking are discussed.

Networking is an important career management strategy in the era of boundaryless careers (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Hall, 1996; Kram, 1996; Mirvis & Hall, 1996a, 1996b; Raider & Burt, 1996). The boundaryless career is distinguished from the bounded or organizational career depicted during times of stable employment when employees tended to stay with one or two employers over the course of their work life (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). The boundaryless career assumes a dynamic environment with individuals taking responsibility for their career futures (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). Building social networks is crucial for those in boundaryless careers who use their networks to seek information about new job opportunities (Arthur, Inkson, & Pringle, 1999; Eby, 2001 [this issue]; Higgins, 2001 [this issue]; Raider & Burt, 1996). Involvement in networking is also related to career outcomes such as income and promotions (Burt, 1992; Gould & Penley, 1984; Luthans, Hodgetts, & Rosenkrantz, 1988; Michael & Yukl, 1993). Although the importance of networking is becoming increasingly well recognized, we know little about the attributes of those who engage in networking behaviors.

Understanding the correlates of networking is critical in helping us develop more complete and accurate theories and frameworks of networking. Furthermore, understanding the correlates of networking has practical implications for organizations in their selection and training processes. For example, organizations hiring people for boundary-spanning roles where networking behaviors are important for success can screen individuals on factors related to effective networking. This research study attempts to answer recent calls in the literature (e.g., Sullivan, 1999) to explore the effects of personal attributes on the development of networks. More specifically, this study examines the relationships between personal and job characteristics of managers and professionals and their involvement in networking behaviors.

NETWORKING BEHAVIORS, SOCIAL CAPITAL, AND THE PROTEAN CAREER

The study of networking behaviors can be placed into a broader context of social capital and the perspective of the *protean career*. *Networking behaviors* will be defined here as individuals' attempts to develop and maintain relationships with others who have the potential to assist them in their work or career. Practitioners have generated a variety of suggestions for initiating and maintaining contacts with others. A sample of these suggestions include going to lunches, joining industry or professional associations, taking an active role in community projects, and engaging in athletic activities with clients, bosses, and peers (Bongiorno & Hof, 1993; Kleiman, 1980, 1994; McDermott, 1992; Richardson, 1994; Roane, 1993; Sonnenberg, 1990). Involvement in these activities is essentially a "network building" process (Kanter & Eccles, 1992).

Some scholars have examined networks as communication links between individuals, with a focus on identifying properties such as position in the network, similarity of network members to each other, and size of the network (Tichy, Tushman, & Fombrun, 1979). For example, research on organizational interaction networks has shown that the relative positions of employees within the workflow, communication, and friendship networks are strongly related to perceptions of influence and to promotions to the supervisory level (Brass, 1984). Other research on network ties suggests that the demography in the typical U.S. corporation results in women and minorities having fewer similar ties available and these ties being of less instrumental value and requiring more time and effort to maintain than those of their White male counterparts (Ibarra, 1993). In a study examining the size of social networks, Carroll and Teo (1996) found that compared with nonmanagers,

managers belong to more clubs and societies and have more coworkers and more contacts in their core discussion networks who do not know one another.

The concept of social capital is important for understanding networking behavior. Scholars have described social capital as an attribute of individuals, organizations, communities, and even nations (Leana & Van Buren, 1999; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). For our purposes here, we will examine social capital at the individual level. Social capital has been defined as "the structure of individuals' contact networks—the pattern of interconnection among the various people with whom each person is tied" (Raider & Burt, 1996, p. 187). Social capital exists in the relations between and among persons and constitutes a valuable resource (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). For example, relationships possessed by an individual can provide he or she with access to valuable information, resources, and opportunities. Differences in the amount of social capital available through one's relationships can produce differences in career outcomes, which can be illustrated by Burt's (1992) concept of structural holes.

Structural holes refer to the separation between nonredundant contacts in one's network. Redundant contacts are those that lead to the same people and thus the same information benefits. Increasing network size without considering the diversity of contacts leads to inefficiencies through wasted time and effort. Therefore, the more structural holes in one's network the more access to information one has and the greater ability to act on the information. In a study of 547 managers from a high technology firm, Burt (1992) found that managers with networks rich in structural holes were promoted faster and at a younger age than their peers. Similarly, Granovetter's (1973, 1974) study of professional, technical, and managerial job changers concluded that job seekers with weak ties (i.e., those less likely to be involved socially with one another) were more successful in finding jobs than those with strong ties (i.e., close friends). Engaging in networking behavior is one means individuals can use to help build relationships and increase their social capital.

According to Ibarra (1993), individuals play an active role in structuring their social networks to achieve their goals. Strategically structuring one's social network is consistent with writings in the careers literature on the protean career (Hall, 1976; Hall & Mirvis, 1996). The protean career emphasizes the importance of performing self-assessments, obtaining varied work experiences, upgrading one's skills, improving one's marketability, and networking (Mirvis & Hall, 1996a). The burden of responsibility for one's career has shifted steadily from the corporation to the individual, with the notion of "employability" becoming one's career goal (Altman & Post, 1996; Hakim,

1994). The protean career is shaped more by the individual than by the organization and emphasizes proactiveness on the part of employees in developing their careers through such means as making contacts with others to obtain the necessary resources or developmental experiences. Developing a set of interpersonal relationships has recently been described as a specific career competency (i.e., knowing who) essential in the era of boundaryless careers (Arthur, Claman, & DeFillippi, 1995; Arthur et al., 1999; DeFillippi & Arthur, 1996).

Engaging in networking behaviors is one method managers and professionals can use to help proactively manage their protean careers. The limited number of studies in the scholarly literature have examined networking behaviors primarily as they relate to managerial salaries and promotion rates. For example, Gould and Penley (1984) examined the relationship between networking and salary progression for 217 male and 197 female clerical, professional, and managerial employees of a municipal bureaucracy. Networking was measured using a two-item scale where participants indicated the extent to which they engaged in "building a network of 'contacts' in the organization for obtaining information about what's happening within the organization" (p. 264) and in "building a network of friendships in the organization which can help to further your career progression" (p. 264). Gould and Penley found that networking was positively related to salary progression for managers only. Similarly, in their study of 457 managers from both public and private organizations, Luthans et al. (1988) determined that managers engaged in four types of activities: traditional management, routine communication, human resource management, and networking. Networking was defined as interacting with outsiders and socializing or politicking. Of the four types of activities, Luthans et al. found that networking had the strongest relationship with managerial success, which was operationalized using a promotion index. A study by Michael and Yukl (1993) examined networking behavior in a sample of 247 managers representing 19 companies in various industries. Networking was categorized as being either internal (interactions with others in the organization) or external (interactions with outsiders such as clients and suppliers). Both internal and external networking were shown to be related to rate of advancement in the organization, confirming the findings of the Luthans et al. (1988) study.

Although networking has been linked to important career outcomes, little is known about those who engage in networking behaviors. Do all individuals have the same propensity to network? The purpose of this study is to examine whether personal and job characteristics are related to involvement in networking behaviors of managerial and professional employees.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

It is likely that the demographic characteristics of gender and socioeconomic background and the personality and attitudinal characteristics of self-esteem, extraversion, and attitudes toward workplace politics are related to involvement in networking behavior. Prior research has suggested that these demographic and personal characteristics might influence individuals' ability and/or desire to interact with others who have the potential to assist them in their work or career.

Women have historically faced exclusion from or lack of access to important organizational circles (Kanter, 1977a, 1977b; O'Leary & Ickovics, 1992; Powell & Mainiero, 1993; Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989). Metz and Tharenou (2001 [this issue]) found that women reported gender discrimination as the most frequent barrier to their advancement. Although engaging in networking behavior is one means women can use to help break the glass ceiling, the barriers they face are more difficult than those faced by males. Women in organizations tend to occupy less influential positions with fewer resources to offer others (Brass, 1984, 1985; Kanter, 1977a, 1977b). This poses a problem for women, as suggested by social exchange theory (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), in that men will view women as less attractive exchange partners. Effective networking relationships are based on reciprocity, whereby managers give and receive assistance at the same time or provide help with the expectation of receiving help in the future (Kaplan, 1984). This norm of reciprocity is necessary to prevent feelings of exploitation (Gouldner, 1960). Writings on the protean career also recognize interdependence, mutuality, and reciprocity as necessary for effective relational interactions (Fletcher, 1996). Within the context of organizations, men have traditionally had more resources to offer others than women have had. Therefore, it is expected that men will be more likely to engage in networking behaviors:

Hypothesis 1: Men are more likely to engage in networking behaviors than women.

Socioeconomic background refers to the economic level of an individual's family as he or she was growing up. Socioeconomic background may be related to life experiences that produce more self-assurance and willingness to take risks (Pfeffer, 1977). Using data from 1,050 adults in the Northern California Community Study, Campbell, Marsden, and Hurlbert (1986) found that socioeconomic background was positively related to network range and composition. Range provides access to diverse others, increasing the likelihood of receiving nonredundant information, and composition

represents the ability to reach highly placed contacts. Moreover, in a study of 399 working males who had used social contacts in seeking jobs, Lin, Ensel, and Vaughn (1981) found that a job seeker's personal resources (initially his family background but later his educational and occupational attainments) influenced his ability to reach high-status contacts. Coming from higher socioeconomic backgrounds may increase individuals' confidence and opportunities to develop contacts with others and consequently increase the likelihood that they may engage in networking behaviors more frequently than those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds:

Hypothesis 2: Socioeconomic background is positively related to involvement in networking behaviors.

In addition to the demographic variables of gender and socioeconomic background, personality traits and attitudes may also influence whether individuals engage in networking behaviors. For example, past research on mentoring has found that proteges who were high in self-monitoring, high in emotional stability, and had an internal locus of control were more likely to initiate mentoring relationships than individuals possessing the opposite characteristics (Turban & Dougherty, 1994). Individuals possessing certain personality traits and attitudes might be more likely to engage in proactive behaviors thereby leading to interactions with others in their environment. Specifically, we examined self-esteem, extraversion, and attitudes toward workplace politics as important indicators in determining who is more likely to engage in networking behavior. These three variables were selected for two primary reasons. First, they appeared to be indicators of proactive behaviors leading individuals to interact with others. Second, in our semistructured interviews conducted with managers and professionals, these kinds of variables kept surfacing in discussions concerning who was more likely to engage in networking behavior.

Self-esteem refers to how favorably individuals evaluate themselves (Brockner, 1988). Individuals with low self-esteem exhibit lower self-confidence and may be more likely to withdraw from esteem-threatening situations (Brockner, 1988; Campbell, 1990). Engaging in networking behaviors, such as accepting speaking engagements or giving business contacts a phone call to keep in touch, might be viewed as highly threatening to low-self-esteem individuals. Low-self-esteem individuals may feel they have nothing worth contributing to others and as a result may withdraw from networking opportunities. In contrast, individuals with higher self-esteem are expected to display more of a willingness to engage in networking behaviors as these individuals are more confident and less reticent toward initiating

contacts with others. High-self-esteem individuals tend to believe that they have valuable resources to exchange with others and that they could satisfy the norm of reciprocity needed for effective networking relationships:

Hypothesis 3: Self-esteem is positively related to involvement in networking behaviors.

Extraversion, one of the "Big Five" personality characteristics (Digman, 1990; Goldberg, 1993; McCrae & Costa, 1987), describes individuals who are sociable, assertive, active, lively, and talkative. Introversion describes individuals who are quiet, reserved, shy, and withdrawn. Barrick and Mount (1991) found extraversion to be a valid predictor of job performance for persons in management and sales, occupations requiring social interactions. Extraverted individuals were also found to have larger social networks than introverted individuals in a study of 190 master of business administration students (Brown, 1996). It appears reasonable that individuals higher in extraversion would be more likely to engage in networking behaviors. Extraverts enjoy socializing with others. As opposed to introverted individuals who experience discomfort in social situations and actively try to avoid them, extraverted individuals attempt to seek out social situations and can more easily initiate contacts with clients, superiors, and peers:

Hypothesis 4: Extraversion is positively related to involvement in networking behaviors.

Finally, individuals' attitudes toward workplace politics should influence their involvement in networking behaviors, particularly if networking is viewed as a means of bypassing formal procedures to obtain self-serving goals. Gandz and Murray (1980) defined organizational politics as "a subjective state in which organizational members perceive themselves or others as intentionally seeking selfish ends in an organizational context when such ends are opposed to those of others" (p. 248). Gandz and Murray analyzed 132 narratives of political office incidents provided by business school graduates and master of business administration students. The most common theme mentioned in the narratives was that of an employee (who allegedly had superior competence) passed over for promotion in favor of someone else who was a friend of the supervisor. Overall, respondents believed that politics were common and inevitable, particularly at higher levels of the organization, but felt that politics were bad, unfair, unnecessary, unhealthy, and full of conflict. To the extent that networking is viewed as political behavior, attitudes toward workplace politics are important. Those who

accept the presence of workplace politics as necessary in organizations—as a way to navigate the informal organization and as a means to the accomplishment of both work- and career-related goals—should be more likely to engage in networking behaviors than those with less favorable attitudes toward workplace politics:

Hypothesis 5: Favorable attitudes toward workplace politics are positively related to involvement in networking behaviors.

JOB CHARACTERISTICS

Two job characteristics are likely to be particularly important as correlates of networking behavior. An individual's organizational level and the type of position he or she holds may influence the likelihood that an individual engages in networking behaviors. Managers who occupy important roles in the organization are in better positions than others to engage in effective networking relationships, because they have more power and a greater ability to make things happen (Kaplan, 1984). Similarly, Kanter (1979) concluded that it is the position, not the person, that often determines whether a manager has power. It also seems likely that as managers advance in an organization, they increasingly encounter expectations from others to be more involved in networking behaviors to help bring in more business for the organization and to fulfill public relations purposes. Such networking behaviors might include, for example, taking current and potential clients to dinners and sporting events, accepting speaking engagements, and participating in civic affairs.

Michael and Yukl (1993) examined managerial level and subunit function (marketing, production, and accounting) as determinants of networking behavior. Michael and Yukl theorized that because higher level managers play a more boundary-spanning role, monitor the environment more, and handle work that is less specialized and that cuts across functional areas more than lower level managers, higher level managers would be more likely to engage in networking behaviors. Results supported their hypothesis.

Michael and Yukl's (1993) results also indicated that marketing managers engaged in more networking behaviors with outsiders such as clients and suppliers than did production or accounting managers. Marketing managers tend to have more external contacts than other managers, as their job is to sell their product or service to others. Marketing managers engage in many activities that take place outside the organization, such as calling on existing and potential customers, attending trade shows, and participating in business and civic groups to promote their organization and its products and services. Furthermore, sales and marketing managers tend to be

rewarded on a commission basis, a system that motivates them to engage in networking behavior. Networking behavior is one method to help increase the number of prospective clients. In addition, gaining salient information about potential clients through one's networking relationships can help marketing managers secure the sale. In the present study, we will attempt to replicate Michael and Yukl's findings that organizational level and type of position are positively related to involvement in networking behaviors:

Hypothesis 6: Organizational level is positively related to involvement in networking behaviors.

Hypothesis 7: Holding a sales or marketing position is positively related to involvement in networking behaviors.

METHOD

SAMPLE AND SETTING

The participants in this study were business school graduates from a large Midwestern state university. A random sample of 1,180 participants who had graduated from 1960 to 1994 were mailed surveys. Potential respondents received a questionnaire and a stamped return envelope and were assured that their returned questionnaires would be strictly confidential. To encourage responses, potential respondents were promised feedback on some basic results and were included in a drawing for season tickets to the university's football games. Sample members who did not respond at first were mailed a reminder postcard and a replacement survey.

The response rate was 50%. Eliminating respondents who had either retired or were for various other reasons not in the workforce reduced the sample size to 503. Only those participants who were working 35 or more hours a week at the time of data collection and who were not self-employed or working in a family business were included in the primary data analyses, resulting in a sample size for this study of 418. Those working part time or those who are self-employed or working in a family business are likely to exhibit different patterns of career-related behaviors. Their exclusion is consistent with other research on careers (e.g., Carroll & Teo, 1996; Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999). Of the 418 respondents, 303 (73%) were male, and 115 (27%) were female. The average age of the respondents was 38. The respondents were predominately Caucasian (98%) and married (73%). The respondents averaged 15 years of full-time work experience and worked an average of 51 hours per week. In addition, 150 (36%) of the respondents had obtained an advanced degree.

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

Networking behaviors. One of the limitations of research on networking is the lack of an accepted, comprehensive scale of networking behaviors. As such, a networking behaviors scale was developed for this study using a combination of semistructured interviews, open-ended survey questionnaires, and items derived from analysis of practitioner and scholarly writings. First, semistructured interviews were conducted with 12 managers and professionals (7 men and 5 women) representing a variety of organizations, levels, and occupations. A critical incident technique was used in which interviewees were asked to describe a situation where their relationship with one of their contacts had a particularly successful outcome for them. Next, the interviewees were asked how their relationships with others developed, how they initiated relationships with others, and what they did to maintain their relationships. To help eliminate self-serving attribution biases and to develop additional items for the scale, interviewees were also asked how they assisted other individuals and how others initiated and maintained relationships with them. Thus, we hoped to capture more information from interviewees who may potentially downplay assistance they have received from their contacts but might more readily discuss how they have helped others.

To further ensure a comprehensive listing of networking behaviors, surveys containing open-ended questions similar to those used in the interviews described above were completed by 49 students in three, evening master of business administration courses at a small private university in the Midwest. Of the respondents, 33 were males (72%), and 13 were females (28%). Three individuals did not indicate their gender. The respondents had an average of 9.7 years of full-time work experience and had worked for an average of 3.3 organizations. Most were currently employed full time.

Finally, networking behaviors detailed in practitioner and scholarly articles (e.g., McDermott, 1992; Michael & Yukl, 1993; Sonnenberg, 1990) were included in the pool of items for the scale. The list of items developed for the networking behaviors scale was examined to eliminate duplicate or ambiguous items. The resulting networking behaviors scale consisted of 33 items for which respondents were asked to indicate on a 6-point scale how often they engaged in the listed behaviors within the past year.

Given the length and the variety of items included in the 33-item scale, it was felt that identifiable dimensions of networking behaviors might exist. As there were no a priori expectations of the dimensions of networking behaviors, an exploratory factor analysis was performed on the 33-item scale to determine the dimensions of networking behaviors. A principal components

analysis with a promax rotation was performed because we expected there would be some degree of correlation among the items in the scale. Examination of the scree plot and the eigenvalue-greater-than-1 criteria suggested that 5 factors be retained. The factor analysis results are included in Table 1. Next, scales were created by calculating the means of the items that (a) loaded .40 or greater on that factor, (b) did not load .40 or greater on any other factor, and (c) loaded on one factor at least .10 higher than on any other factor.

The appendix lists the items comprising each scale. Factor 1 was labeled *maintaining contacts* (5 items, $\alpha = .79$). Factor 2 was labeled *socializing* (7 items, $\alpha = .77$). Factor 3 was labeled *engaging in professional activities* (8 items, $\alpha = .73$). Factor 4 was labeled *participating in church and community* (4 items, $\alpha = .75$), and Factor 5 was labeled *increasing internal visibility* (4 items, $\alpha = .65$). The fifth item loading on Factor 5 was dropped to increase the coefficient alpha for the scale. Nunnally (1967) indicated that reliabilities above .60 are acceptable for developing new measures of constructs.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Gender. Gender was coded 1 for *males* and 2 for *females*.

Socioeconomic background. A scale from Whitely, Dougherty, and Dreher (1991) was used to measure socioeconomic background. Respondents self-rated their family's social class during the time they were growing up using the following categories: 1 = *under class*, 2 = *working poor*, 3 = *working class*, 4 = *middle class*, 5 = *upper middle class*, and 6 = *upper class*. A definition of each category was provided.

Self-esteem. Respondents' global self-esteem was measured on 7-point scales (1 = *disagree strongly* to 7 = *agree strongly*) with 10 items adapted from Rosenberg (1965). Items 3, 5, 8, 9, and 10 were reverse coded. A higher value represents more self-esteem. Coefficient alpha for the self-esteem scale was .85.

Extraversion. Extraversion was measured using Eysenck's (1958) questionnaire. Respondents were asked to indicate either yes or no to six items. *Yes* answers were scored +1 indicating extraversion, and *no* answers were scored -1 indicating introversion. Scores were computed by adding item ratings (possible range -6 to +6) with high ratings indicating extraversion. Because the Eysenck scale is a heterogeneous measure, internal reliability

TABLE 1
Rotated Factor Analysis of Networking Behaviors Scale

Item Number	Maintaining Contacts	Socializing	Engaging in Professional Activities	Participating in Church and Community	Increasing Internal Visibility
19	.77 ^a	-.13	-.08	.01	.22
21	.69 ^a	-.04	.08	-.02	-.03
7	.68 ^a	-.06	.05	-.09	.13
20	.66 ^a	-.09	.07	-.06	.12
8	.60 ^a	.07	-.01	.07	.14
5	.41	.35	.08	.08	-.15
6	.23	.01	-.02	.10	.14
15	-.38	.74 ^a	.07	.05	.07
13	-.04	.67 ^a	.13	-.06	.23
12	.14	.66 ^a	-.11	-.15	.15
4	.14	.60 ^a	-.15	-.02	-.21
14	-.09	.60 ^a	.04	-.02	.15
16	-.05	.56 ^a	-.00	-.03	.11
11	.11	.48 ^a	-.00	.02	.36
9	.14	.39	-.09	.13	-.22
17	.35	.37	-.04	.05	-.09
24	.03	-.04	.78 ^a	-.16	-.02
30	.05	-.04	.74 ^a	-.02	.02
28	.02	-.00	.52 ^a	-.06	-.22
29	-.12	-.02	.51 ^a	.05	-.06
33	-.11	-.02	.49 ^a	.05	.22
23	.12	.01	.47 ^a	.16	-.00
22	.29	.03	.44 ^a	.01	.05
1	.20	.10	.43 ^a	.15	-.00
26	-.05	-.13	-.10	.86 ^a	.13
27	-.04	-.12	-.10	.85 ^a	.08
25	.06	.11	.20	.62 ^a	-.04
2	.13	.18	.20	.56 ^a	-.16
32	.09	-.02	.29	-.01	.61 ^a
31	.00	-.01	.33	.08	.58 ^a
10	.09	.16	-.15	.05	.55 ^a
18	.26	.02	-.19	.08	.50 ^a
3	.16	.16	-.15	-.13	.41 ^a

a. Numbers represent items used to create the scale for that factor.

estimates are inappropriate. Eysenck computed a split-half reliability of .71 for the scale, and Eysenck and Eysenck (1975) reported a test-retest reliability of .89.

Attitudes toward workplace politics. Attitudes toward workplace politics were measured with a three-item semantic differential scale adapted from Gandz and Murray (1980). Respondents indicated on a 9-point scale whether workplace politics were bad or good, unfair or fair, and unnecessary or necessary. Higher values represent more favorable attitudes. Coefficient alpha for this scale was .87.

Organization level. Organization level was measured by having respondents indicate on a 5-point scale which response best describes the level of their current position where 1 = *nonmanagement or nonexempt*, 2 = *lower management level*, 3 = *middle-management level*, 4 = *upper management level*, and 5 = *top-executive level*.

Position. Respondents were asked to list the job title of their present position. Using the U.S. Department of Commerce Occupational Classification System, four dummy variables were constructed to measure the functional area of a respondent's current position. Jobs in finance, sales or marketing, technical, and other professional areas were each coded as 2 and contrasted with jobs in general management (coded as 1). This is similar to procedures followed in other career research (e.g., Turban & Dougherty, 1994; Whitely et al., 1991).

CONTROL VARIABLES

Several variables were included in this study to statistically control for factors that might confound the relationships under investigation. The control variables included were degree, work experience, hours worked per week (classified as human capital variables), and marital status. Because age was highly correlated with work experience ($r = .97$), age was not included as a control variable. These control variables are similar to those used in other research on managerial career progression (Dreher & Ash, 1990; Gattiker & Larwood, 1988; Schmeer & Reitman, 1990; Tharenou, Latimer, & Conroy, 1994; Turban & Dougherty, 1994; Whitely et al., 1991).

Degree. Respondents indicated their highest degree obtained. Degree was coded 1 for *bachelor's degree* and 2 for *advanced degree*.

Work experience. Respondents indicated their number of years of full-time work experience. Years of full-time work experience was converted to months.

Hours worked per week. Respondents provided an estimate of the average number of hours they worked per week.

Marital status. Marital status was coded 1 for *married* and 2 for *single*.

RESULTS

Correlations for the study variables are shown in Table 2, along with the corresponding means and standard deviations. Respondents reported engaging in maintaining contacts ($M = 3.19$) and increasing internal visibility ($M = 3.19$) the most, followed by socializing ($M = 2.74$), participating in church and community ($M = 2.36$), and engaging in professional activities ($M = 1.95$). The correlations among the five networking behavior variables ranged from $-.03$ to $.43$.

Correlation analysis indicated that gender was not related to involvement in networking behaviors, contrary to Hypothesis 1. Socioeconomic background was significantly correlated with both maintaining contacts and socializing, providing initial evidence for Hypothesis 2. In support of Hypothesis 3, self-esteem was significantly related in the predicted direction to all five networking behaviors. Both extraversion and attitudes toward workplace politics were related to all of the networking behaviors except for participating in church and community, providing evidence for Hypotheses 4 and 5. Organization level was positively related with all of the networking behaviors except for socializing. These results offer some support for Hypothesis 6. Correlation analysis showed mixed results for Hypothesis 7. Holding a sales or marketing position was positively related to maintaining contacts but was negatively related to engaging in professional activities and increasing internal visibility.

To provide a stronger test of the hypotheses, multiple regression was performed with the study variables entered simultaneously. The results of the regression analysis are shown in Table 3. Gender significantly predicted involvement in socializing, such that males were more likely to engage in socializing than females, providing limited support for Hypothesis 1. Hypothesis 2 also received limited support in that socioeconomic background significantly predicted maintaining contacts but did not predict the other four networking behaviors. Self-esteem significantly predicted maintaining contacts, engaging in professional activities, and increasing internal visibility, providing strong evidence for Hypothesis 3. Hypothesis 4 was supported in that extraversion was a significant predictor of all of the networking

TABLE 2
Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations of Study Variables^a

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1. Maintaining contacts	3.19	0.96	.79																	
2. Socializing	2.74	0.75	.77	.33																
3. Engaging in professional activities	1.95	0.65	.73	.39	.15															
4. Participating in church and community	2.36	1.08	.75	.21	-.03	.30														
5. Increasing internal visibility	3.19	1.02	.65	.43	.29	.41	.16													
6. Degree	1.36	0.48																		
7. Work experience	179.72	116.21																		
8. Hours worked per week	50.91	8.08																		
9. Organization level	2.76	1.27																		
10. Financial position	1.14	0.35																		
11. Sales or marketing position	1.14	0.35																		
12. Technical position	1.06	0.24																		
13. Other professional position	1.11	0.31																		
14. Gender	1.27	0.45																		
15. Marital status	1.27	0.44																		
16. Socioeconomic background	4.00	0.83																		
17. Self-esteem	6.15	0.74																		
18. Extraversion	2.25	3.04																		
19. Attitudes toward workplace politics	4.03	1.70																		

a. Correlations $\geq .10$ are significant at the $p \leq .05$ level.

TABLE 3
Correlates of Networking Behaviors (N = 406)^a

	Maintaining Contacts	Unique R ²	Socializing	Unique R ²	Engaging in Professional Activities	Unique R ²	Participating in Church and Community	Unique R ²	Increasing Internal Visibility	Unique R ²
Human capital variables										
Degree	-.02		.02		.20**		.09		.09*	
Work experience	.05		-.38**		-.04		.03		-.11	
Hours worked per week	.26**	.06**	.13**	.09**	.18**	.07**	.07	.01	.14**	.03**
Job variables										
Organization level	.15**		.07		.19**		.04		.38**	
Financial position	-.12**		.07		.01		-.02		.12**	
Sales or marketing position	.15**		.06		.02		.04		-.02	
Technical position	-.03		.01		-.02		.04		.03	
Other professional position	-.03	.06**	-.02	.01	.05	.03*	.04	.00	-.05	.11**
Demographic variables										
Gender	.02		-.21**		-.01		.06		.06	
Marital status	.04		.11*		-.06		-.23**		-.02	
Socioeconomic background	.15**	.02**	.04	.05**	.03	.00	-.01	.04**	.06	.01
Personality and attitudinal variables										
Self-esteem	.15**		.05		.11*		.07		.09*	
Extraversion	.22**		.20**		.11*		.05		.12**	
Attitudes toward workplace										
politics	.06	.09**	.08	.05**	.04	.03**	.07	.01	.18**	.06**
R ²	.34**		.28**		.21**		.11**		.29**	
Adjusted R ²	.32		.25		.18		.08		.27	

a. The regression coefficients shown are standardized.

* $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$.

behaviors except participating in church and community. Attitudes toward workplace politics was a significant predictor of increasing internal visibility, providing limited support for Hypothesis 5.

With regard to the job variables, organization level significantly predicted maintaining contacts, engaging in professional activities, and increasing internal visibility, providing strong evidence for Hypothesis 6. Holding a sales or marketing position was significantly related to maintaining contacts only, providing limited support for Hypothesis 7.

The multiple regressions show that many of the control variables were significantly related to involvement in networking behaviors. Obtaining an advanced degree was a significant predictor of engaging in professional activities and increasing internal visibility. Managers and professionals with less work experience were more likely to engage in socializing behaviors. Hours worked per week was a significant predictor of all of the networking behaviors with the exception of participating in church and community. Finally, single individuals were more likely to engage in socializing behaviors, whereas married individuals were more likely to participate in church and community.

As a further test of the significance of human capital variables, job variables, demographic variables, and personality and attitudinal variables for predicting networking behaviors, the unique increment to R^2 was calculated for each set of variables. An F value was computed to determine whether the change in R^2 between the full regression model and the reduced model was significant. As shown in Table 3, the human capital variables, job variables, demographic variables, and personality and attitudinal variables each accounted for significant increments to R^2 in predicting networking behaviors. The relative explanatory power of each set of variables depended to a large extent on the dimension of networking behavior under consideration.

Although both independent and dependent variables were collected on a single survey instrument, we conducted two tests for common method variance suggested by Podsakoff and Organ (1986). First, we conducted Harman's one-factor test by including the personality and attitudinal items along with the networking behavior items in an unrotated factor analysis. The results broke into multiple factors fairly close to what was hypothesized, providing evidence against serious method variance problems in the data. Second, a scale-trimming analysis was performed. Three doctoral students in management were presented with a list of items measuring networking behaviors and a list of items measuring self-esteem, extraversion, and attitudes toward workplace politics. The items were not identified by any construct labels. The students were asked to indicate which scale items on the first list had essentially the same meaning as items on the second list. None of

the students perceived any duplication of items between the two lists, providing evidence that overlapping item content was not a serious method variance problem in the data.

DISCUSSION

This study found support for a number of correlates of networking behavior. In addition, the results highlight the importance of examining the components of networking behavior. Although much has been written about gender differences in organizations (Brass, 1984, 1985; Kanter, 1977a, 1977b; Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990; Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989; Riger & Galligan, 1980), there was relatively little discrepancy in networking behavior reported by men and women. Our results appear similar to findings in the mentoring literature. Although women do perceive greater barriers to involvement in mentoring relationships (Ragins, 1989; Ragins & Cotton, 1991), this does not prevent them from mentoring others or initiating mentoring relationships (Ragins & Cotton, 1993; Ragins & Scandura, 1994; Turban & Dougherty, 1994). It may be that men engaged in networking behavior more frequently than women in the past, but as women have become more aware of the importance of networking to their careers, they have begun to engage in these behaviors to a similar extent as males. Certainly, networking is more openly talked about now as evidenced by numerous articles, books, clubs, and development workshops on the topic. Fondas (1996) suggested that females might be more adept than men at managing in a boundaryless career. Traits that have traditionally been identified in our culture as feminine (e.g., cooperating, building relationships, helping and developing others) are those necessary in the context of boundaryless careers as opposed to the classical masculine notions of directing and controlling. Whether women will be more successful in the era of boundaryless careers remains to be seen and should prove a fruitful area for future research. Our results did show that men were more likely to engage in socializing behaviors than women were. The increased socializing for men may be due to women having less after-hours socializing time because of child-raising responsibilities. A post hoc analysis comparing men with single women found no difference in socializing behaviors. However, to the extent that socializing results in important work-related outcomes (e.g., receiving critical information or important job assignments), women with family responsibilities will remain at a serious disadvantage.

Socioeconomic background was a significant predictor of maintaining contacts. It may be that those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds seek

to retain more active network links than those from lower economic strata. This finding is consistent with prior research that socioeconomic background is related to network range and ability to reach higher status contacts (Campbell et al., 1986; Lin, Ensel, & Vaughn, 1981). We found it surprising that socioeconomic background was not a significant predictor of the other types of networking behavior. Perhaps the other components of networking behavior are recognized and valued equally as much by those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Further research on the processes through which socioeconomic background influence one's networking behavior is warranted.

Similar to Turban and Dougherty's (1994) finding that personality characteristics influence proteges' tendencies to initiate mentoring relationships, personality variables were strong predictors of networking behavior. Self-esteem was a significant predictor of maintaining contacts, engaging in professional activities, and increasing internal visibility, highlighting the critical role self-confidence plays in ability to engage in networking behaviors. Extraversion also strongly predicted networking behaviors. Managers and professionals who are reserved and withdrawn may find engaging in networking behaviors to take extreme effort. The influence of personality variables on networking behavior has critical implications for the individual in the era of boundaryless careers. As the locus of career development responsibility shifts to the individual (Mirvis & Hall, 1996a), those who find it difficult to reach out to others will be at a decided disadvantage.

Attitudes toward workplace politics were a significant predictor of increasing internal visibility. Managers and professionals who tended to feel that workplace politics were good, fair, and necessary placed greater emphasis on their internal visibility. These individuals appear to have much more tolerance and acceptance of the "informal organization" as a way to accomplish the work of the firm (Barnard, 1938). Considering the focus of this measure was on the internal political nature of one's organization, it is perhaps not surprising that it failed to predict other types of networking behavior (e.g., engaging in professional activities, participating in church and community).

Organizational level was a significant predictor of three of the five networking behaviors, providing further evidence for Michael and Yukl's (1993) finding that organizational level is important for networking. As one rises in the organizational ranks, expectations increase for developing new client relationships, playing active roles in professional organizations, and taking more visible assignments within the organization.

Only limited evidence was uncovered to support Michael and Yukl's (1993) finding that holding a sales or marketing position is predictive of networking. Holding a sales or marketing position predicted maintaining

contacts only. One possible reason for this finding is the amount of time sales and marketing managers and professionals spend outside the company. Sales and marketing personnel hold boundary-spanning positions; as such, their networking behavior may differ from those in nonboundary-spanning positions (Raider & Burt, 1996). With their focus more on the external environment of the organization, sales and marketing personnel may spend comparatively less time on networking behaviors that take place primarily within their organization (e.g., socializing with coworkers, pursuing visible assignments within the organization).

The human capital variables were significant predictors of networking behaviors and should be included in future research on networking. Individuals who possessed an advanced degree, who had less work experience, and who worked more hours per week were significantly more likely to engage in networking behaviors. Graduate business programs may be emphasizing the importance of networking and making more networking opportunities available. Students who obtain their advanced degrees may have larger networks as a result of developing contacts with other students (for a discussion of business school culture, see Higgins, 2001). Going back to school to earn a degree or to gain new skills fits comfortably with the boundaryless careers concept (Mirvis & Hall, 1996a, 1996b).

Employees with less work experience may perceive that networking is an important tool for promoting their careers, particularly in the early career stages. In the early career stage, one typically has fewer colleagues and contacts in the industry or profession. Building one's network is a method to gain assistance as well as recognition. In contrast, employees with greater work experience who are in later career stages may feel their careers have plateaued and that networking is a waste of time and effort. Longer term employees threatened by restructuring may find their knowledge and skills no longer valued by their own company (Hirsch & Shanley, 1996). Unfortunately, the needed transitional structures and mechanisms such as retraining and career planning assistance are generally not in place to support the older workers who now find themselves in boundaryless careers (Mirvis & Hall, 1996b). Further investigation into the influence of career stage on networking behavior is needed. Although our results showed a negative relationship between work experience and networking behaviors, we do not know the reasons for this. Perhaps individuals let their relationships with their contacts lapse over time. Although one might expect a resurgence of networking behavior on the part of plateaued employees, it may be very difficult for them to renew their old contacts or to create new ones.

Finally, working more hours per week was predictive of all of the networking behaviors except for participating in church and community. It may

be that more hours spent on the job correlates with an increase in networking opportunities, such as invitations to work on highly visible assignments or to attend impromptu social events. A possible third variable explanation is that successful individuals are more likely to work longer hours and to spend more time engaging in networking behaviors.

Participating in church and community was mentioned as a networking behavior during the interviews with managers and professionals and in various practitioner articles that were examined to help compile a list of networking behaviors. Mirvis and Hall (1996b) predicted that more people would join voluntary organizations such as social support groups, service clubs, religious organizations, and cultural groups to regain a sense of connection formerly provided by their companies. In the present study, only marital status predicted participating in church and community. Future research might investigate other variables (e.g., need for affiliation) as predictors of participating in church and community.

LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

A number of limitations to this study must be acknowledged. This was a sample of highly educated, full-time managerial and professional employees. Whether the results would generalize to less educated individuals or individuals not in managerial or professional work is unknown. Also, we were unable to compare survey respondents with nonrespondents. It may be that nonrespondents are more or less likely than the respondents to engage in networking behaviors. However, we did receive a 50% response rate. Furthermore, at least as far as gender is concerned, our analysis sample appears representative. In our study, 25% of those originally mailed a survey were female, and the resulting analysis sample consisted of 27% female respondents.

As with any data collected from a single self-report survey, common method variance is a concern. However, results of a meta-analysis by Crampton and Wagner (1994) suggest that the effects of common method variance are less prevalent than previously thought. The presence of common method variance can inflate the relationships among the items collected on the survey, although the pattern of relationships remains unchanged. Common method variance tends to be less of a concern when demographic, factual, or otherwise verifiable data are obtained (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). As such, the items measuring involvement in networking behaviors should be less susceptible to common method variance. As we reported earlier, the Harman one-factor test and scale-trimming analysis did not provide evidence for serious common method variance problems.

Reverse causality is a concern in this study. For example, we hypothesized that those with more favorable attitudes toward workplace politics would be more likely to engage in networking behavior. But the opposite might hold as well. Perhaps people who engage in networking behavior are more accepting of workplace politics. However, reverse causality does not appear to be a reasonable explanation for most of our findings. Engaging in networking behavior would not be a determinant of demographic variables such as one's gender or socioeconomic background. Networking behavior also seems to be an unlikely determinant of the type of position one holds within an organization, as compared with factors such as education and vocational interest. Reverse causality is more of an issue with personality traits than demographic factors considering that one's disposition can change. But personality tends to be relatively stable across one's life span, as such, networking behaviors appear unlikely to influence self-esteem and extraversion.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study set out to examine correlates of networking behavior. The networking behaviors scale was composed of behaviors mentioned by managers and professionals in semistructured interviews, by master of business administration students on open-ended survey questionnaires, and by practitioner and scholarly articles on networking. An exploratory factor analysis resulted in five dimensions of networking behavior. Future research on the dimensional structure of networking behavior and further scale development efforts are needed.

The significant relationships of the personality variables to involvement in networking behaviors raise some interesting questions for future research. In addition to self-esteem and extraversion, perhaps other variables such as locus of control, self-efficacy, and self-monitoring are related to involvement in networking behaviors. These three variables have in common a focus on controlling one's environment that may be a critical factor in determining whether one engages in networking. Also, the importance of the personality variables raises the question of whether networking skills can be taught. For example, can introverts be taught to effectively engage in networking behaviors? In organizations and occupations where networking is considered critical for success, knowledge of why some individuals are more likely to engage in networking behaviors than others represents valuable information for selection processes and training programs.

Networking might also be considered as a viable substitute for mentoring, a substitute that may be especially valuable for women and minorities who

are less likely to have access to powerful, White male mentors (Dreher & Cox, 1996; Dreher & Dougherty, 1997). Thomas (1990, 1993) found racial differences in the formation of mentoring relationships and in the type of benefits received. Future research should examine how race and ethnicity influence the networking behaviors one uses, with whom one interacts, and the types of benefits one receives. The human capital variables (degree, work experience, and hours worked) significantly predicted involvement in networking. These findings bring to light some important research questions. Does networking vary with one's career stage? Perhaps newer entrants into the workforce are savvier as to the benefits of networking and put forth extra effort to engage in networking behaviors. Individuals whose careers have plateaued may experience greater difficulty using their network of contacts during the time when they are most desired.

Future studies applying different research methodologies are needed. Performing a research study where participants keep diaries of their networking behaviors would provide information with regard to how opportunities for networking arise as well as to new and different forms of networking behaviors. In addition, analyses of the diaries might provide more insight concerning the other individuals involved in the networking attempt. For example, is most networking done with one's boss, peers, clients, or others? Are different types of networking behaviors used depending on who is the focus of the networking attempt? Other types of research studies, such as observing and interviewing individuals at meetings of business-related organizations, would provide rich information as to how involvement in that particular type of activity benefits the careers of managers and professionals.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS

This study has many implications for practitioners in terms of evaluating their networking behaviors. Five dimensions of networking behavior resulted from the factor analysis: maintaining contacts, socializing, engaging in professional activities, participating in church and community, and increasing internal visibility. Practitioners can evaluate their current networking behavior using these dimensions. This will allow practitioners to determine where they might need to expand their networking efforts. In addition, as the different categories of networking behavior tend to be directed toward different groups of individuals, practitioners can evaluate how to reach various segments of the population. For example, individuals who are well known within their organizations as a result of socializing behaviors or pursuing visible assignments may determine through their evaluation of networking behavior that they are relatively unknown in the city in which they

live or by professional peers in other organizations. With this realization, such individuals may decide to become more active in their local communities and in relevant professional organizations.

Furthermore, although our results show that some individuals are more likely to engage in networking behaviors than others (e.g., higher socioeconomic background, self-esteem, extraversion), there are numerous specific behaviors individuals can engage in to further their networking skills and opportunities. Practitioners may consider pursuing additional degree or nondegree programs to further enlarge their network of contacts. Individuals who are fearful of initiating contacts with others may seek training and assistance in developing their interpersonal skills. Individuals may seek a mentor in their organization for help in introducing them to people they should know. These suggestions, along with the items mentioned in the networking behaviors scale, make networking a skill that can be developed in all practitioners.

APPENDIX Networking Behaviors Scale^a

<i>Item Number</i>	<i>Question</i>
Factor 1: Maintaining Contacts (alpha = .79)	
19	given business contacts a phone call to keep in touch?
21	sent thank you notes or gifts to others who have helped you in your work or career?
7	given out business cards?
20	sent cards, newspaper clippings, faxes, or e-mail to keep in touch?
8	gone to lunch with persons outside the company?
Factor 2: Socializing (alpha = .77)	
15	participated in company-sponsored bowling leagues, basketball leagues, and so forth?
13	participated in social gatherings with people from work (besides going out for drinks)?
12	gone out for drinks with others after work?
4	contacted your friends from college?
14	played golf, tennis, and so forth with coworkers or clients?
16	talked about sports at work?
11	attended social functions of your organization?
Factor 3: Engaging in Professional Activities (alpha = .73)	
24	given professional seminars or workshops? ^b
30	accepted speaking engagements? ^b
28	acted as a commentator for a newspaper, magazine, or talk show? ^b
29	taught a course? ^b
33	published articles in the company's newsletter, professional journals, or trade publications? ^b

- 23 attended professional seminars or workshops?^b
 22 attended conferences or trade shows?^b
 1 attended meetings of business-related organizations?
 Factor 4: Participating in Church and Community (alpha = .75)
 26 participated in church work projects?^b
 27 participated in church social functions?^b
 25 participated in community projects?^b
 2 attended meetings of civic and social groups, clubs, and so forth?
 Factor 5: Increasing Internal Visibility (alpha = .65)
 32 accepted new, highly visible work assignments?^b
 31 been on highly visible task forces or committees at work?^b
 10 gone to lunch with your current supervisor?
 18 stopped by others' offices to say hello?

a. The stem for the networking behaviors scale read "Within the *last year*, how often have you . . . ?" Items were answered on a scale of 1 = *never*; 2 = *seldom, only once or twice a year*; 3 = *occasionally, several times a year*; 4 = *moderately often, every few weeks*; 5 = *often, almost every week*; 6 = *very often, almost every day*.

b. Items were answered on a scale of 1 = 0 times, 2 = one time, 3 = two to three times, 4 = four to five times, 5 = six to seven times, 6 = eight or more times.

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