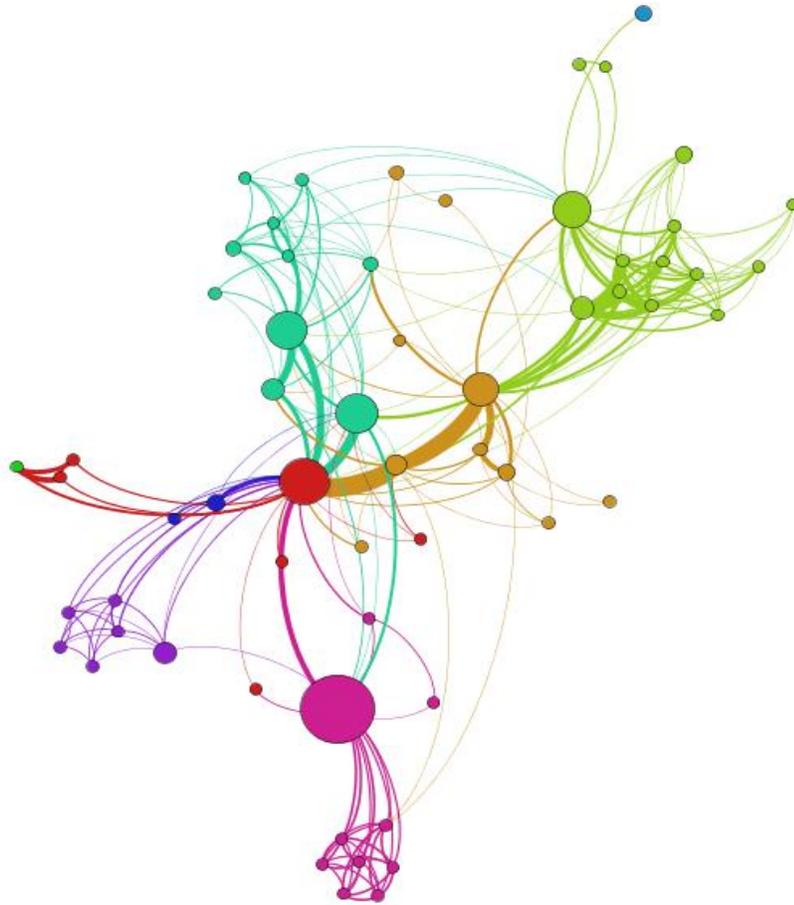


**Building a Labour Supply
Knowledge Network (Project #1)
North Superior Workforce Planning Board
Regional Human Resources Strategy**



Prepared By:

Franco Crupi - Crupi Consulting Group
577 Eleventh Avenue,
Thunder Bay, ON P7B 2R5
Tel: 807-346-7000
Fax: 807-346-7001
www.crupi.biz



This Employment Ontario project is funded by the Ontario government.

EMPLOYMENT ONTARIO

The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of Employment Ontario. The material contained in this report is drawn from various sources. We make no representation or warrant, expressed or implied, as to its accuracy or completeness. In providing this material, North Superior Workforce Planning Board (NSWPB) does not assume any responsibility or liability.

This document may be freely quoted without the permission of North Superior Workforce Planning Board provided that North Superior Workforce Planning Board is acknowledged as the author of the document. The information presented in this report is current at the time of printing.

For further information please contact:

Madge Richardson, Executive Director

North Superior Workforce Planning Board

107B Johnson Avenue

Thunder Bay, ON P7B 2V9

Phone: (807) 346-2940 or (888) 800-8893 Fax: (807) 344-5464

Email: mrichardson@nswpb.ca

Website: www.nswpb.ca

Contents

- Acknowledgements..... i
- Summary 2
- 1.0 Introduction 4
 - 1.1 Scope of Work - Building a Labour Supply Knowledge Network 5
- 2.0 Knowledge Networks 7
 - 2.1 What is a Knowledge Network?..... 7
 - 2.2 Creating Added Value 8
 - 2.3 What Type of Knowledge Network are we Trying to Establish?..... 9
- 3.0 Survey and Survey Instrument..... 12
 - 3.1 Survey Results Summary..... 12
- 4.0 Building a Labour Supply Knowledge Network 17
 - 4.1 The Four Building Stages of a Knowledge Network 17
 - 4.2 Summary Findings..... 20
- 5.0 Building a Knowledge Network - Development Criteria 23
 - 5.1 Development Criteria Factors 23
 - 5.2 What is Missing? 28
- 6.0 What Does the Labour Supply Knowledge Network Look Like? 30
 - 6.1 NSWPB’s Mandate 30
 - 6.2 Defining the Relationship..... 30
 - 6.3 Organizational Structure..... 32
 - 6.4 Set-up and Operational Cost..... 33
- 7.0 Other Stakeholders 34
 - 7.1 Survey Results 34

Acknowledgements

We are grateful for the support and assistance of the founding partners outlined in the table below as their dedication and input has made this report possible:

Table 1: Founding Partners

| Organization | Representative |
|---|--------------------------------|
| North Superior Workforce Planning Board | Madge Richardson, Tracy Roblin |
| 180 Institute | Mirella Stroink |
| Kallio Consulting | Stewart Kallio |
| Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Commission | John Mason, Justin Scott |
| March of Dimes Canada | Carolyn Dowdell |
| North West Local Health Integration Network | James Anderson |
| Lakehead University, Aboriginal Initiatives | Yolanda Wanakamik |
| UNIFOR Local 229 | Kari Jefford |
| Anishinabek Employment and Training Services | Mandy Price, John DiGiacomo |
| Literacy Northwest | Annemarie Wesolowski |
| Thunder Bay Ventures | Royden Potvin |
| Northwest Employment Works | Louise Marcil |

We would also like to extend our sincere gratitude to the following community stakeholders for taking the time to share information and contribute to the success of this project:

- Northwestern Ontario Innovation Centre
- Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce
- Nishnawbe Aski Nation
- Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment and Training Services-Matawa First Nations Management Inc
- Ontario Power Generation
- Kallio Consulting
- Nokiiwin Tribal Council
- Conseil scolaire de district catholique des Aurores boréales
- YES Employment Services
- Oshki-Pimache-O-Win Education and Training Institute

Summary

The scope of this project is to build a Labour Supply Knowledge Network as part of the Regional Human Resources Strategy (referred to within this document as “*Human Resources Strategy*”) as spearheaded by the North Superior Workforce Planning Board (NSWPB). The intent of building a Labour Supply Knowledge Network stemmed from labour market information gaps and the lack of availability of real-time labour market information, as well as the need to match labour supply and demand queries. With the understanding that social networking and its mapping can be used as a tool to fill the above gaps this report lays out the foundation for a successful Labour Supply Network.

The initial idea for the Labour Supply Knowledge Network commenced in June of 2014, when the NSWPB brought together the Human Resource Strategy focus group to assist in the development of a Regional Human Resources Strategy. Ultimately, in September of 2014 the focus group became the Regional Human Resource Strategy Steering Committee. This Steering Committee consists of 11 organizations that we will be referring to as the “Founding Group” or “Founding Members” within this report.

From the outset it was determined that an informal Labour Supply Knowledge Network already existed. This small, informal and loose association of labour supply organizations and participants interacted and shared information among themselves within Northwestern Ontario. Even though some information was being shared, there was still a huge information gap when it came to access of real-time information, inventory of labour market information, sharing of information beyond the reach of the small group, and matching supply and demand for labour. With regards to information gaps, in many cases the members of the participating organization found themselves “not knowing what they knew”. To better explain the notion of “not knowing what we know”, many organizations hold information in silos and don’t share that information throughout their own organization or collectively across other organizations. In addition, over time, organizations develop information that isn’t utilized accordingly, forgotten on dusty shelves, or lost when the organization/corporate information holders move on. The combination of these scenarios leads to loss of knowledge that could have benefited other organizations if they had access to it. The founding group also acknowledged that the statistical data available to them was incomplete and/or outdated.

To be more precise about the scope of work required by this project, through the information gathered and the relevant findings, the research team took a different approach. Rather than building a new knowledge network from scratch, it was obvious to the research team that it would be more beneficial and effective formalizing an existing informal knowledge network. Even though the research team makes this specific clarification, the overall project still focused on building a knowledge network.

In order to accomplish the above task, the Crupi Consulting Group (CCG) research team conducted extensive research on Knowledge Networks and reviewed what led to this success. By reverse engineering successful knowledge networks, the research team identified the necessary conditions to achieve knowledge network success. Once these conditions were identified and evaluated, the research team then determined (through interviews and surveys) whether these conditions existed within the Human Resources Strategy founding group. When these conditions did not exist the question then became clear; what would it take to create the necessary conditions?

On December 14, 2015 the preliminary findings were presented to the Human Resources Strategy Founding Group and upon review, the findings were received very well. However, among the findings, there was one that brought the project to a halt. At that point it did not make sense to engage the second tier of stakeholders or to pursue the project any further if the specific finding was not dealt with accordingly. The issue regarding the future operations, and in loose terms ownership of the Labour Supply Knowledge Network, was tabled. All interviewed founding members expressed interest in participating in a formal knowledge network, and all agreed they did not view themselves or their organizations operating as a formal knowledge network. The founding group previously had acknowledged that other organizations dealing with labour supply related activities needed to be approached and made participants of this initiative. However, it became clear that this could not be done with any measure of success unless initially a major organizational decision was made by the founding group members. After these discussions, the founding group did see the benefit and agreed that the Labour Supply Knowledge Network should be established under and operating out of the NSWPB. The members acknowledged that the scope of this initiative aligned with the mandate of the North Superior Workforce Planning Board than any of the other organizations.

This study lays the foundations, the criteria and the structure of a formal Labour Supply Knowledge Network. It also extends its reach to other stakeholders involved in either the supply or demand side of labour. The need to close the identified information gaps within the North Superior labour market and the need to match labour supply with labour demand requirements in real time within the same market are just some of the Added Value propositions that will stem from this project.

Major Findings

1. The founding group members had a good understanding of knowledge networks and a specific understanding of the Labour Supply Knowledge Network that they would like to establish.
2. The burning issues among participants are aligned.
3. The founding group members did identify a real need and specific reasons why a Labour Supply Knowledge Network should be formally developed.
4. From the survey results, most identified the Labour Supply Knowledge Network as a Professional Learning Network with some elements of the Business Opportunity Network.

5. Most identified information gaps in the labour market especially matching supply to demand for labour.
6. The need for better and real time labour market information was also identified, and through the knowledge network it is expected to be addressed.
7. The expected outcomes (sharing of added value information and opportunity matching) were common themes throughout the interviews.
8. Both sides of the labour market have a communication problem and a hard time relaying their needs. Both sides have difficulty understanding the other side's equation.
9. Every member of the founding group saw themselves and their organization playing a role in the Knowledge Network.
10. None of the founding members saw themselves managing or operating the Labour Supply Knowledge Network through their organization.
11. Most founding members saw the Labour Supply Knowledge Network as a separate entity that would be fed information from all other organizations and then shared or repackaged and shared through the Knowledge Network.
12. The Labour Supply Knowledge Network should include demand side participation.
13. The necessary conditions for a successful Knowledge Network exist.
14. Responses from the other identified labour market stakeholders confirm the need for a Labour Supply Knowledge Network and have also indicated their support in many different ways. Overwhelmingly they all thought it was an "Excellent Concept".
15. The development criterion has been laid out and gaps have been identified. Implementation is now required and recommended. Through implementation, gaps would then be bridged and membership would be extended to other stakeholders.

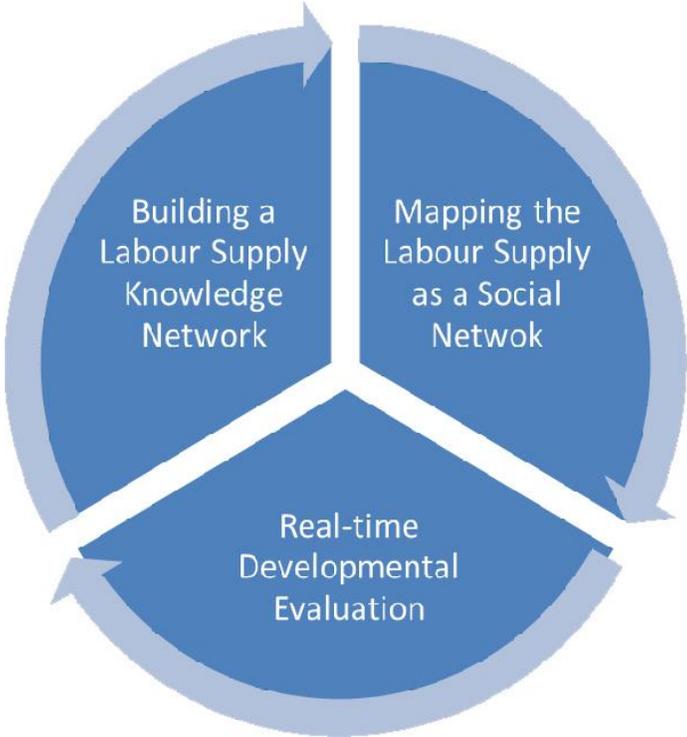
The findings confirm that there is a need to close the identified information gaps in the labour market within the Thunder Bay District. In addition, there is a need to match labour supply with labour demand requirements in real-time within the same market. Using social networking and mapping tools to fill the above gaps this report lays out the foundation for a successful Labour Supply Network and the outlines the steps to begin implementation of the network.

1.0 Introduction

The Human Resources Strategy is a collaborative venture of the North Superior Workforce Planning Board (NSWPB). The purpose of the Human Resources Strategy is to mobilize current and emerging knowledge of the workforce to better align labour supply with labour demand. Labour supply refers to the skills and energy of people. Labour demand refers to the need for these skills in relation to people’s activities. Thus, labour supply and demand are both the products of people’s interactions with each other and with their environment over time. They change constantly as they adapt to complex and dynamic interactions scaling from the local to the global. With this awareness of the complexity of labour supply and demand, it is clear that there is a need to represent the workforce that begins with people and their interactions.

The overall objectives of the Human Resources Strategy are (1) to develop the capacity to accurately observe and analyze the real-time dynamics of the workforce, and (2) to mobilize the resulting knowledge by providing a strong network of workforce stakeholders with relevant and practical information, insight, and strategies to better align labour supply and demand. Beginning with the lens of complexity science, the steering committee has developed 3 interrelated projects as shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Overall Project



In today's labour market, many higher end positions are sourced through methods as simple as via a social network or through word of mouth. Much like the Complexity Theory entails, with regards to interconnectedness, workers in a workforce as individual agents are interconnected with one another in dynamic patterns through changes in training and work experience. When identifying an effective means of human resources management of workers and the workforce, a knowledge network provides the visualization of interconnected nodes that enables one to visualize the labour supply as one talent pool. In order to depict the individual level of labour supply as a complex adaptive system, a component of the Human Resources Strategy consists of the creation of an online portal to enable individuals/organizations to update information on a regular basis.

This report focuses on "building a labour supply knowledge network." It is expected that through a process of building trust and collaboration, the North Superior Workforce Planning Board (NSWPB) will nurture the formation of a living knowledge network of people and organizations who are stakeholders in labour supply. Processes will be developed through which to query this network, and to manage, consolidate, and regularly share knowledge with the network. Thereby, the project will enhance the exchange and use of the full diversity of labour supply information that is already available.

1.1 Scope of Work - Building a Labour Supply Knowledge Network

Through a process of building trust and collaboration, the North Superior Workforce Planning Board (NSWPB) is nurturing the formation of a living knowledge network of people and organizations who are stakeholders in labour supply. Processes will be developed through which to query this network, and manage, consolidate, and regularly share knowledge with the network. Thus, the project will enhance the exchange and use of the full diversity of the labour supply information that is already available.

In today's interconnected world, networks for sharing knowledge are increasingly important. In order to provide an accurate and reliable representation of the workforce that begins with people and their interactions and in order to achieve the above project, Crupi Consulting Group (CCG) proposes to undertake the following steps:

1. Conduct reviews of literature and prior work as needed and share insights from these reviews with the Steering Committee and subsequently include highlights in the report. Determine what we know at this time with regards to either the supply or demand side of the labour market and identify gaps in order to identify what further information is needed. Research how social networks are mapped across populations and what tool is best to utilize in completing this database.
2. In consultation with the Steering Committee, stakeholders will be identified and recruited. They will include employment service agencies, representatives of Ontario Works, Chamber of Commerce, education and training, organizations representing Aboriginal peoples and other advocacy groups.
3. Engage stakeholders in a dialogue about the knowledge network and its potential benefits for accurately understanding and posing questions regarding our local labour

supply. CCG will hold gatherings or meetings in a manner that supports the trust and connection required in a living knowledge network.

4. CCG will work with the Steering Committee to develop a methodology or framework of inquiry through which the Project can query the knowledge network for accurate, comprehensive, and current information on our Thunder Bay District labour supply. Mining the knowledge network for information on labour supply will respect and retain the diversity of perspectives represented within the network.
5. CCG will work with the steering committee to develop a process by which knowledge about the labour supply that emerges from this network can be disseminated both back into the network itself and beyond.
6. CCG will provide a “draft” report that will summarize how the labour supply knowledge network developed, and will explain the methodology or framework of inquiry that was developed to query the network and the process that was developed to disseminate the network’s knowledge. This part of the report will be written in a way that will enable the approach to be replicated elsewhere. Our team will describe the benefits that accrued from this project and provide recommendations for future work, modifications, and next steps.
7. CCG will liaise with the consultant/consulting firm working on “Mapping the Labour Supply as a Social Network” and “Developmental Evaluation” projects and form a consultants’ subcommittee to the Steering Committee to ensure that the connections among these projects are maintained. CCG will participate in the Developmental Evaluation and respond to the feedback of the Steering Committee.
8. Our team will blend the report of this project into an overall or composite report through the consultants’ subcommittee and provide one (1) bound copy and one (1) electronic copy of the approved report.

2.0 Knowledge Networks

2.1 What is a Knowledge Network?

Over the course of our careers how many times have colleagues called us up inquiring about the availability of specialized human resources (labour supply) and how many times have we been able to identify a resource that fit that specific inquiry. Most likely we gained that information/knowledge through our formal and/or informal networks. From this word-of-mouth practice stems the beginning of a knowledge network. The knowledge networking we are referring to here is primarily about a process of human interaction and collaboration, rather than a computer networking that underpins and enhances it. The knowledge network is a community of practice that primarily focuses on the informal gathering of individuals based on shared interests.

Knowledge networks are as old as human commerce, as knowledge was often implicitly exchanged in the production and exchange of goods and services. In the medieval days of guilds and apprentices, formal networks existed between artists, artisans and tradesmen. Today, with utilization of modern communication technology, the identification and distribution of codified knowledge comes at a lower cost and over greater physical distance.

We can define “Knowledge Networks” as a grouping of individuals or teams of individuals who come together across organizational, spatial and disciplinary boundaries to share and produce a body of knowledge.

The focus of a network of this type is to share, develop and use knowledge. Usually any organization that adopts this model learns more quickly and collaborates productively. Knowledge networking today is being recognized as a valuable method in many fields. If applied well it can have advantages of cost, scale and speed over more conventional methods such as training and expert advice. The three key elements of knowledge networking are:

- 1. The community of people participating;**
- 2. The knowledge topic or focus; and**
- 3. The organizing processes used.**

Knowledge networks usually engage in three types of activities:

- 1. Collaborative research and information exchange**

The systematic investigation of the target issue (labour supply) by one or more members of the network with significant consultation with other members.

2. Engaging with stakeholders

Move research into policy and action through improved communication and interaction with those in a position to put the research to use.

3. Network management

Setting up and running an operating structure necessary to build the relationships among the participants in order to strengthen the research, communication and engagement process of individual members and the network as a whole.

Over time, knowledge networks can lose steam and become unsuccessful due to:

1. Poor participation;
2. Goal ambiguity;
3. Mixed allegiances;
4. Technology mismatches;

Knowledge network leaders can influence members' behavior through network design and facilitation, which can mean the difference between magnetism and fizzle, between knowledge sharing and hoarding, between inspiration and cynicism.

Network members participate out of common interest and shared purpose rather than because of contract, quid pro quo or hierarchy. For knowledge networking to be effective it requires participants to shift an understanding of their own role away from the conventional expert model.

2.2 Creating Added Value

Knowledge networks need to be value creating networks. The value that is created usually lies in the areas of improved organizational efficiency, increased innovation and employee/member satisfaction. These benefits can be greater, however in order for them to be greater there needs to be some form of management guidance. Managers who make a true commitment to knowledge networks create a positive environment for organizational members to help an organization find solutions to burning issues.

As stated above, the major benefits of knowledge networks are to be found in three areas:

- 1. Improved efficiency;**
- 2. Increased innovation; and**
- 3. Employee/member satisfaction.**

1. Improving Efficiency through Reuse of Knowledge

Beyond this individually-driven benefit, networks can also deliver value by reusing existing company knowledge. At times “You don’t know what you know”.

2. Fostering Innovation through Leveraging Knowledge

A frequent result of the interaction of organizational members, who share a strong interest in a particular topic and frequently work at the cutting edge of current knowledge, is the creation of entirely new knowledge i.e. a new solution to an existing problem, a new technology, a new product or an entirely new business.

3. Strengthening Employee/Member Satisfaction and Loyalty through Network Activity

The spontaneous and informal aspect of networks highlights the importance of the individual level outcomes they generate. Members participate not only for their individual interest but also for other outcomes such as:

1. Participating in an exchange of ideas with like-minded colleagues, skill boost motivations and satisfaction at work.
2. The feeling of belonging to a group of people with common interests.
3. Recognition by peers who are perceived as competent judges of one’s own ideas and performance.

As stated above, knowledge networks need to create value, and value results in tangible outcomes. Executives usually focus on networks that can quickly lead to a tangible outcome. So what does it take to enable networks to deliver expected results?

The most important factor and the most difficult to implement is demonstrating tangible outcomes. To achieve this, control may not always be necessary. Since networks are at least partially based on self-selection, mutual support and multidirectional exchange, they are more difficult to guide than traditional organizational forms. But this does not mean that they cannot benefit from managerial direction. Managers can sensitize their members to strategically important issues, make it easy for them to meet, support their activities and leverage their results. In essence, “**fostering networks**” means managing the context rather than managing the details of a process.

Short-term results of innovation and increased efficiency are preconditions for success. On the other hand, while the accumulation of tacit knowledge and organizational routines are difficult to imitate or replicate, long-term results may form a basis for sustainable competitive advantage.

2.3 What type of Knowledge Network are we trying to establish?

As stated previously, Knowledge Networks are communities of practice and they are described as “groups of people informally bound together by shared expertise and passion for a joint outcome”. In describing knowledge networks in this fashion, one could assume that the benefit/value of participation is individualistic. This is not necessarily the case. The network as a whole benefits from value that

members contribute. The collection of these values contribute to efficiency, innovation and employee/member satisfaction.

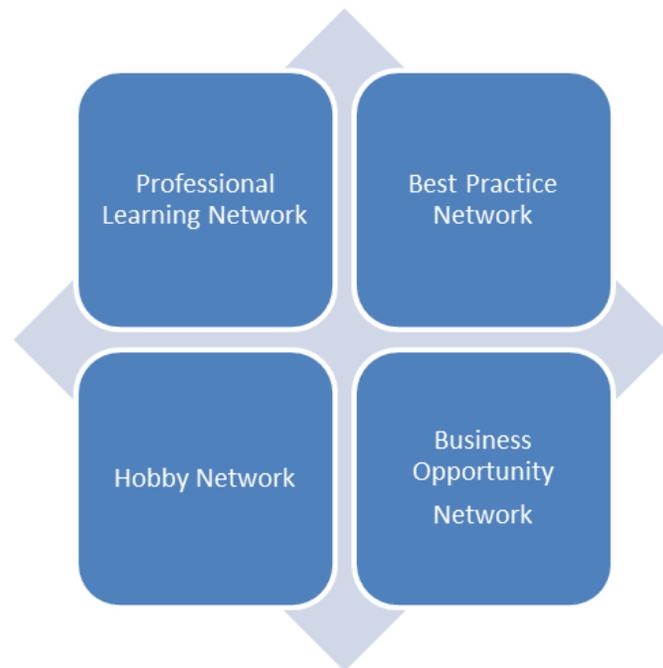
Büchel and Raud¹ identify knowledge networks in four types:

Types of Knowledge Networks

1. Hobby Network
2. Professional Learning Network
3. Best Practice Network
4. Business Opportunity Network

What do these types of networks share in common and how are they different from one another? If we were to build a matrix based on the network's interests and management, it would look something like this:

Figure 2: Network Matrix



¹ Büchel, B., Raub, S. "Building Knowledge-creating Value Networks." *European Management Journal* Vol.20, No. 6 (2002). pp. 587-596. Printed in Great Britain.

2.3.1 What Does This Mean?

Hobby and Professional Learning Networks share in common the following aspects:

1. Both conform to the traditional concept of communities of practice.
2. They focus on individuals, their interests and their satisfaction.
3. They usually do not receive extensive management support.

Best-Practice and Business Opportunity Networks

1. Both types of networks directly contribute to the bottom line.
2. They focus on organizational interests.
3. They usually receive management support.

Individual satisfaction is at the forefront of **Hobby and Professional Learning Networks**. The idea is that individuals satisfied at work are more likely to produce expected results. Professional Learning Networks build the individual's skill base and may get management support if their importance is recognized. Knowledge transfer in these networks is spontaneous and ongoing and is mutually supportive. Even though the benefit may lie with the individual, the networks benefit from higher productivity based on individually acquired knowledge.

Best-practice networks work towards organizational benefits and are more often than not supported or even mandated by management. *Best-practice networks* are essentially institutionalized forms of knowledge sharing in organizations. Best-practice networks are characterized by multi-directionality: each member and each unit can, in principle, learn from all the others. Responsibility for a successful process lies with each and every network member involved in the transfer. Although the success of traditional knowledge transfer is measured in terms of a close replication of source knowledge in the recipient unit, networks concentrate as much on problem-solving and creating new knowledge as on the transfer of existing knowledge.

Business opportunity networks are business-driven, entrepreneurial networks, which are potentially the most innovative and attractive from a growth perspective. A group of individuals genuinely interested in creating the next new product or service requires room to develop an idea that does not necessarily fit in the existing business model. While unlocking existing business potential, these networks thrive on breaking company rules until the day comes when financial resources and therefore management support are needed to support ramping up the new business opportunity.

3.0 Survey and Survey Instrument

In order to gauge the founding group's understanding of the overall scope, their expectations and outcomes of the project, and the requirements and conditions for the project to meet the expected outcomes, a survey was developed and conducted. The survey was designed to gain information on the group's general understanding of Knowledge Networks, specific understanding of the desired Labour Supply Knowledge Network and interconnectedness of the group members. The Survey Instrument is contained in **Appendix A** of this document.

3.1 Survey Results Summary

3.1.1 Section One: General Understanding of Knowledge Networks

The founding group had a relatively good general understanding of what a Knowledge Network is. Some of the newer members or those who didn't participate in the Lakehead University sessions had limited knowledge of Knowledge Networks but did understand the purpose of the project. When asked how they rated their own understanding of Knowledge Networks, the group scored at a medium to high level. When it came to defining "knowledge network", there wasn't a consistent definition among those interviewed. The same can be said about a Knowledge Network's purpose. With regard to the existence of different types of networks, the group was not familiar with their existence and with regards to benefits of a Knowledge Network and what it should create; their answers were more focused on the participant's particular participatory interest. Finally, when it came to belonging to a Knowledge Network, many did not realize that they currently belong to many informal knowledge networks.

3.1.2 Section Two: Specific Labour Supply Knowledge Network

All participants did agree that a Labour Supply Knowledge Network was required and it was required for a series of different reasons. The greatest reason was to fill the supply information gap in the system and match it with the demand for labour. Most participants had the same burning issue. How do we let the market know about the supply of labour organizations produce and/or have access to? Many admitted that the participants in the overall labour market did not understand both sides of the equation. With regard to expected outcomes, the group indicated that the matching of supply and demand is just one outcome, but the development and sharing of new information would be an added value proposition. The gaining of better labour supply knowledge was also identified but not for the purpose of keeping but rather for the purpose of sharing. A portal or organization of some sort is needed for which the main function is to make available information that would lead to the matching of both sides of the labour market. A problem identified by most was that the supply and demand sides of labour didn't know how to talk to each other, nor did they understand each other's needs. The available labour supply side information is not real-time information and monthly labour market reports are considered old news. It is expected that this information gap could be bridged through the network.

A different approach should to be explored and implemented when bridging this gap. The existing approaches do not appear to meet the needs of the current labour market when matching supply to demand.

All participants viewed themselves and/or their organization playing a role in a Labour Supply Knowledge Network, but did not view themselves actively participating in a management or operational role in the formal Labour Supply Knowledge Network. They viewed themselves in an advisory capacity and/or board positions and suppliers of information to the network. Others wanted to be involved to see this specific Knowledge Network established and furthermore be involved to keep it moving and on track and to monitor it for signs of difficulty. They viewed themselves participating in more of a support and advocacy role. All agreed that the information developed, provided, repackaged and shared should create value for others in its utilization. A final observation was made by some of the participants about the geography and scope of the Labour Supply Knowledge Network, in that this network has more of a local reach. Keeping local labour supply employed locally, thereby providing assistance in enhancing the economy from within.

Three topics were then explored with each participant:

1. Network Management;
2. Stakeholder Engagement;
3. Collaborative research and information exchange.

Network Management:

There was general consensus from the participating organization that they would not want to nor be able to fund, organize and operate/manage the Labour Supply Knowledge Network. The Labour Supply Knowledge Network would be seen to be an arms-length organization operating independently and funded by sponsors for the benefit of founding organizations and others. The founding organizations do see themselves as input and information providers as well as having a leadership/guidance role through board appointments. Each organization sees itself as being part of a two-way conduit, a giver/sharer of its own labour supply information and recipient of other existing, newly developed and repackaged information from the formal Labour Supply Knowledge Network. Through the formal Labour Supply Knowledge Network, new labour supply projects can then be undertaken and shared through the network.

Stakeholder Engagement:

Two issues arose when talking about stakeholder engagement. One was trust and information sharing and the other was identifying other organizations that could and/or should be part of this Knowledge Network. Developing trust among participating organizations and how their information would be used by other network organizations was discussed and was identified as an issue that would need to be addressed in the development of the Knowledge Network. This was in conjunction with information

sharing and how this information would be distributed throughout the network and to other end users. With regards to other stakeholders, a comprehensive list of organizations was made available by NSWPB (provided below). Some of these organizations included in the list were identified by the initial interview participants and through the second round of interviews were included as part of the sample size. The resulting sample size was significant with twenty four (24) organizations identified and ten (10) in participation; resulting in a sample size of 42%.

Table 2: Other Labour Supply Stakeholders

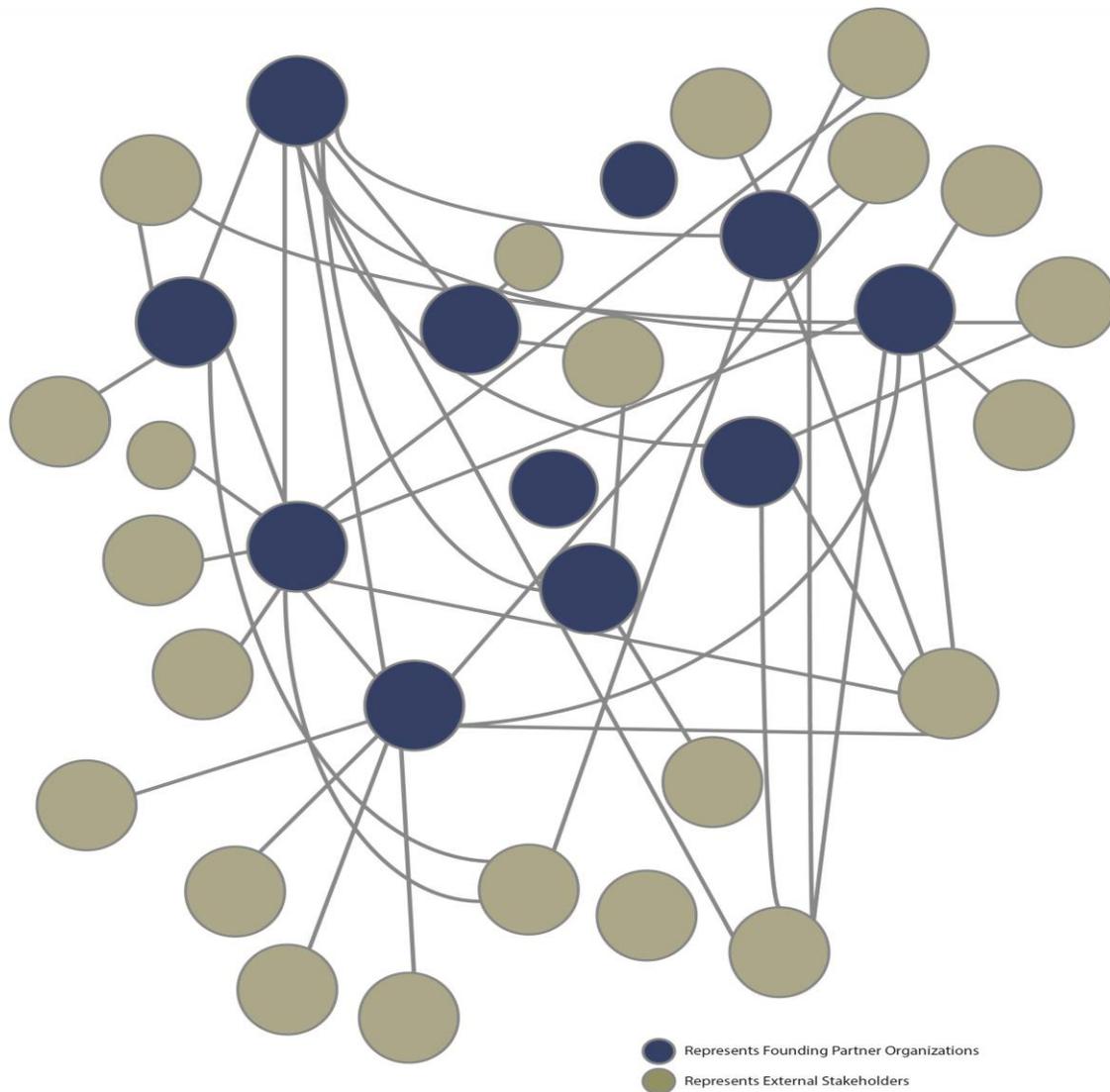
| # | Organization |
|-----|--|
| 1. | Confederation College |
| 2. | Conseil scolaire de district catholique des Aurores boréales |
| 3. | Fort William First Nations |
| 4. | Human Resources Professionals Association of Non-profit Organizations (HRPANO) |
| 5. | John Howard Society |
| 6. | Kallio Consulting |
| 7. | Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment and Training Services |
| 8. | Lakehead Public Schools |
| 9. | Lakehead University |
| 10. | Leadership Thunder Bay |
| 11. | Matawa First Nations Inc |
| 12. | Nishnawbe Aski Nation |
| 13. | Nokiiwin Tribal Council |
| 14. | Northwest Employment Works |
| 15. | Northwestern Ontario Innovation Centre |
| 16. | Oshki-Pimache-O-Win Education and Training Institute |
| 17. | Superior North Catholic District School Board |
| 18. | Superior-Greenstone District School Board |
| 19. | Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board |
| 20. | Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce |
| 21. | Thunder Bay District Labour Council |
| 22. | Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre |
| 23. | District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board |
| 24. | YES Employment Service |

Other interview participants identified the need to engage the demand side of the labour market and to explore the possibility of a role for them in this network.

3.1.3 Section Three: Nodes & Edges or Ties

For experimental purposes, in the first round of interviews, participants were asked to draw their connections to other people/organizations that operate within their sphere of labour market participation. Soon it was visible that most were interconnected with each other and these connections represented a network as a series of “nodes” and “edges” (commonly referred to as ties). These networks are often visualized through socio-grams and these nodes are drawn as points on the diagram and edges are represented as lines. The edges are the relations between each node or the interactions that connect each other.

Figure: 3 Nodes and Edges Diagram



3.1.4 Major Findings

1. The founding group members had a good understanding of knowledge networks and specific understanding of the Labour Supply Knowledge Network that they would like to establish.
2. The burning issues among participants are aligned.
3. The founding group members did identify a real need and specific reasons why a Labour Supply Knowledge Network should be formally developed.
4. From the survey results, most identified the Labour Supply Knowledge Network as a Professional Learning Network with some elements of the Business Opportunity Network.
5. Most identified information gaps in the labour market especially when it came to matching supply to demand for labour.
6. The need for better and real time labour market information was also identified and through the knowledge network it is expected to be addressed.
7. The expected outcomes (sharing of added value information and opportunity matching) were a common theme throughout the interviews.
8. Both sides of the labour market have a communication problem and a difficult time relaying their needs. Both sides have difficulty understanding the other side's equation.
9. Every member of the founding group viewed themselves and their organization participating in the Knowledge Network.
10. None of the founding members viewed themselves managing or operating through their organization i.e. the Labour Supply Knowledge Network.
11. Most founding members viewed the Labour Supply Knowledge Network as a separate entity or a department of an existing organization that would be fed information from all other organizations and then shared or repackaged and shared again through the Knowledge Network.
12. The Labour Supply Knowledge Network should include demand side participation.

4.0 Building a Labour Supply Knowledge Network

In today's labour market, many higher end positions are sourced through methods as simple as social networking or through word-of-mouth. This collection of interactions and interconnections of individuals and workers in the workforce creates the basis of a labor market Knowledge Network. Even though some individuals initially may not identify these interactions and interconnections as a Knowledge Network or see how important and useful it can be if formalized as such, it still exists and it is still out there. How do we formalize and build a Labour Supply Knowledge Network?

In order to build and formalize a successful Labour Supply Knowledge Network, the Crupi Consulting Group explored and deconstructed the elements of other successful knowledge networks and staged its development. The deconstruction and re-engineering allows for the creation of a solid foundation for the Labour Supply Knowledge Network and limits/manages the risk of failure. The following section reports findings prior to December 14, 2015 (the date the preliminary findings were presented to the Human Resources Strategy Founding Group) and thereafter.

4.1 The Four Building Stages of a Knowledge Network

Knowledge networks need:

1. To be **focused** on strategic business/corporate/institutional priorities,
2. To create a **network context**,
- 3 **Network activities** to be reoccurring and regularly scheduled, and
4. **Network outcomes** to be leveraged.

Each of the four stages must be carefully addressed in order to reap the full benefits of a network.

4.1.1 Stage One: *Focusing the Knowledge Network*

Networks enjoy a high reputation and deliver the best results when their activities are closely aligned with the strategic priorities of the business or corporate context they are operating in. Links between members of the network are created around these priorities.

1. *Aligning with 'Burning Issues'*

Make sure that knowledge networks form around topics that are at the heart of the business.

2. *Ensuring Management Support*

There is a direct link between the focus of a network and its ability to obtain management support. For networks that are developed around burning issues, time spent on and participation in the network are more likely to be appreciated than questioned.

3. *Creating Links*

The seed for network activity is formed when links between its potential members are established around a burning issue.

Table 3: Necessary Conditions

| Conditions | Yes | No | Comments |
|-----------------------------|-----|----|--------------------------------|
| Alignment of Burning Issues | ✓ | | |
| Management Support | | ✓ | To be determined by the group. |
| Creating Links | ✓ | | |

4.1.2 *Stage Two: Creating the Network Context*

Knowledge networks essentially form a parallel structure that exists alongside the more traditional boundaries of functional departments, product groups or business units. In order for them to be recognized as environments for productive activity in the organization, the network coordinator must take care to create a network context that enables the sharing of knowledge. This includes laying the groundwork for effective cooperation within the confines of the network by fostering trust.

1. *Establishing Mutual Knowledge (Shared Meaning)*

One of the early challenges for a nascent network is to understand the variety of contexts in which the different organizational members — often from different locations — are working. Knowledge that is to be shared in a network may be difficult to understand without additional knowledge about the context in which it was generated and in which it holds true. In other words, ‘mutual knowledge’ is required. Mutual knowledge can be characterized as shared experiences or close mutual understanding of the respective contexts of individuals.

2. *Choosing Appropriate Communication Mechanisms*

Choosing between alternative forms of communication is key throughout the life of a network.

3. *Fostering Trust*

The old adage ‘knowledge is power’ certainly applies in the context of knowledge networks. In order to overcome the hoarding of information, trust is necessary to pass on tacit knowledge from one network member to another. Building trust can therefore be considered the foundation of knowledge generation within networks. Accepting the contributions and suggestions of other network members requires trust in each individual’s expertise. In addition, given their similarities in terms of interests and skills, network members are likely to interact in more competitive situations outside the network. Thus, sharing one’s expertise with other network members requires trust that shared knowledge will not be used against oneself. Trust in networks is built through repeated rounds of interaction that allow network members to make judgments about the trustworthiness of others.

Table 4: Necessary Conditions

| Conditions | Yes | No | Comments |
|-------------------------------|-----|----|--|
| Establishing Mutual Knowledge | ✓ | | |
| Communication Mechanisms | | ✓ | To be determined by the group. |
| Fostering Trust | | ✓ | To be developed with time and interaction. |

4.1.3 Stage Three: Reoccurring and Regularly Scheduled Network Activities

Given the rather loose links between members of a network, our experience shows that a certain degree of routinization of the network's activities is an important step toward effective exchange and continued engagement by its members. Maintaining a steady pace is vital. In addition, in some firms, networks still have to fight against the image of a 'debating society.' In order to justify their own existence and demonstrate their contributions, networks need to be able to show their results on an ongoing basis.

1. Defining Network Roles

As in any group in an organization, networks require a set of differentiated roles to develop over time. In the most effective networks, we observed a pattern of four typical roles that were systematically used to provide a backbone to the network.

Table 5: Who Breathes Life into a Knowledge Network?

| Network Roles | Main Responsibility | Who should be in charge? |
|---------------|--|---|
| Coordinator | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and linking members Organizing, troubleshooting and energizing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly motivated individuals Interested in particular topics From any part of an organization |
| Support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing specific resources (IT, communication, media) Assisting coordinator and network members Offering continuous coaching | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corporate staff Dedicated staff for larger communities |
| Editor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Validating content Synthesizing and integrating | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content experts |
| Sponsor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing resources and recognition Guiding long-term strategic alignment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Top management |

2. Establishing a Network 'Heartbeat'

Unlike more standard varieties of work units, networks usually have to deal with more ambiguity as to their goals, their work processes and the commitment of their members. A temporal rhythm imposed on the network can generate a much-needed element of stability and bring some routine into network activities. Much as a regular heartbeat allows a sports person to perform at a steady level, a network 'heartbeat' has been shown to make a difference in terms of team performance (Maznevski and Chudoba, 2000). The network heartbeat may consist of regular face-to-face meetings or a combination of several contact patterns. In one of the effective R&D business-opportunity networks, CCG observed in the NextBridge/Bamkushwada Partnership, a regular heartbeat consisted of a Friday morning teleconference from eight to nine. The key point is that a steady predefined rhythm drives the network's activities, not the other way around.

Table 6: Necessary Conditions

| Conditions | Yes | No | Comments |
|-------------------|-----|----|--------------------------------|
| Network Roles | | ✓ | To be determined by the group. |
| Network Heartbeat | ✓ | | |

4.1.4 Stage Four: Leveraging Network Results

Although maintaining momentum for the networks themselves is important in sustaining knowledge creation, it is equally important to transfer the developed knowledge into the wider organization.

1. Demonstrating Tangible Network Outcomes

To be able to transfer the results of a network, it needs to demonstrate that the outcomes serve the organization. The story of Siemens' ShareNet illustrates the wide ramifications that a well-developed network can have for a company. Initially it was created as a free 'professional learning' network by a small group of people in the Information and Communication Network division to help share knowledge internally across locations. The network developed into a business-opportunity network when it resulted in becoming an electronically based tool that could benefit from charging users who subscribe to the tool provided they could demonstrate that the tool has a positive return on investment.

Network members have the responsibility of actively transferring their knowledge to the wider organization. For networks working on burning issues, active marketing may not be necessary as management has an interest in the outcome of their work. For groups where the immediate urgency of their results is not as apparent to management, active marketing of the outcome to other members of the organization will be higher on the agenda.

Table 7: Necessary Conditions

| Conditions | Yes | No | Comments |
|---------------------------|-----|----|------------------------------------|
| Tangible Network Outcomes | | ✓ | Only after Network is established. |

4.2 Summary Findings

In formalizing and building the Labour Supply Knowledge Network, the founding group prior to December 14, 2015 found itself in a very good position at that time. As many of the necessary conditions for a successful knowledge network already did exist, there were still some that needed to be created, organized and agreed upon. There were and will continue to be some challenges ahead, but as this project proceeded and with further consultation with the founding group on December 14, 2015, the group was able to move some necessary conditions in the **No** column over to the **Yes** column. This Labour Supply Knowledge Network is now poised for successful development.

Table 8: Summary of Necessary Conditions prior to Dec. 14, 2015

| Conditions | Yes | No |
|-------------------------------|-----|----|
| Alignment of Burning Issues | ✓ | |
| Management Support | | ✓ |
| Creating Links | ✓ | |
| Establishing Mutual Knowledge | ✓ | |
| Communication Mechanisms | | ✓ |
| Fostering Trust | | ✓ |
| Network Roles | | ✓ |
| Network Heartbeat | ✓ | |
| Tangible Network Outcomes | | ✓ |

Table 9: Summary of Necessary Conditions after Dec. 14, 2015

| Conditions | Yes | No |
|-------------------------------|-----|----|
| Alignment of Burning Issues | ✓ | |
| Management Support | ✓ | |
| Creating Links | ✓ | |
| Establishing Mutual Knowledge | ✓ | |
| Communication Mechanisms | | ✓ |
| Fostering Trust | ✓ | |
| Network Roles | ✓ | |
| Network Heartbeat | ✓ | |
| Tangible Network Outcomes | | ✓ |

The December 14, 2015 meeting was instrumental in giving life to establishing a formal Labour Supply Knowledge Network. The host organization was agreed upon -- North Superior Workforce Planning Board (NSWPB), roles and responsibilities were acknowledged and loosely defined and fostering trust with NSWPB was not an issue as protocols would be developed for information gathering and sharing.

With respect to the other two conditions regarding that of a Communication Mechanism, discussions of platforms similar to those of LinkedIn, Facebook and an application that is being developed by a Confederation College student were discussed. As there is a need for real-time labour supply information, some related to the stock exchange as a mechanism that provides real time market information and would be convenient if the Labour Supply Knowledge Network had a similar mechanism. As to the form of communication, it can be as simple as weekly meetings/updates as conditions need to be further explored and developed based on end users' needs and as it is technical in nature, it would be developed and refined with stakeholder input. With regard to the second and last condition, that of Tangible Network Outcomes, this condition would first be identified within the strategic framework and then evaluated within a specific timeframe. This is a condition that is determined upfront but achieved over time and would move from the **No** column to the **Yes** if archived within the specific timeframe.

Findings: Conditions for a Successful Knowledge Network Exist.

Through extensive research, interviews and surveys it was identified that necessary conditions to achieve a successful Knowledge Network exists.

The founding group members have a good understanding of the knowledge networks and are aligned with the specifics of the Labour Supply Knowledge Network that they would like to establish. All members have identified a real need and specific reasons why the network should be formally developed. Most members have identified information gaps in the labour market with the need to match labour supply with labour demands. All members are aligned with the expected outcomes and are committed to their organization serving a role within the Knowledge Network. However, they have

identified that the network will exist as a separate entity that would be fed information from all other organizations prior to being re-shared through the Knowledge Network.

It was recognized by the founding group that the Knowledge Network should be established and operating out of the North Superior Workforce Planning Board (NWSPB) as it better aligns with the mandate of the NWSPB than any other organization involved. Additional labour market stakeholders have reacted in a positive manner, confirmed the need for a Labour Market Supply Network, and have indicated their support in a variety of ways.

5.0 Building a Knowledge Network - Development Criteria

In developing a knowledge network a development criterion needs to be established from the outset and then implemented when building the network. The following factors are suggested as forming the development criteria:

1. Effectiveness;
2. Structure and Governance;
3. Efficiency;
4. Resources and sustainability;
5. Life-cycle.

5.1 Development Criteria Factors

What do the above development criteria factors mean?

Effectiveness

The goals and objective need to be clear and achievable (SMART). By SMART we mean; specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely.

Structure and Governance

The structure needs to be flexible and does not impede effectiveness. The governance structure needs to be agreed upon as well as the decision making process on the work to be accomplished.

Efficiency

The costs associated to collaboration should not cause a barrier to success. Capacity building needs to occur across the network in order to increase members' ability to collaborate on research and communication.

Resources and Sustainability

The network needs to be resourced in order to operate and become sustainable.

Life-cycle

The network's performance needs to be gauged over time and compared to other networks at similar stages in development.

5.1.1 Effectiveness

For the network to be effective, it needs to clearly identify its goals, objectives and outcomes as well as knowing how they are going to be met and measured over time. It is best that from the outset the network has a strategic framework. Without a strategic framework the network doesn't have anything against which to measure progress, achievement, change or influence within a predetermined timeframe. There is plenty of value that stems from such a framework from managing to measuring work and achievements.

5.1.2 Structure and Governance

When setting up the structure and its governance, one needs to correlate it to network performance. Performance, positive or negative, may result from the way the network has been set up and the way decisions are made within the network. Some specific questions should be asked prior to structuring.

1. Membership selection and exchanges of expectation.
 - a. What are the criteria for membership selection?
 - b. Is performance with any given partner linked to the initial selection process?
 - c. What are the members' reasons for joining?

2. Structure of the network: The nature of the working relationships.
 - a. What was the model for the network? ("Hub and Spokes" or Collaborative model).
 - b. How is the network coordinated?

3. Formalizing the network:
Governance and decision-making protocols; drafting and execution of work plans.
 - a. Will there be funding agreements with donors?
 - b. Who will be accountable to donors and members?
 - c. Who carries the greatest financial and reputation risk for success or failure?
 - d. Is strong/dominant performance by one member linked to their assumption of risk; is poor performance with any given member linked to lack of risk and accountability?
 - e. Will the duties and responsibilities of members be laid out in Memorandums of Understandings (MOUs) or network governance agreements?
 - f. Will duties and responsibilities be clear enough so that members can be held accountable to their commitments?
 - g. Should there be a mechanism outlined for decision-making on network projects and fundraising?
 - h. If there is to be no formal MOUs or governance agreements, how do members make decisions on the work the network is to undertake?
 - i. Will there be contracts with members (usually documenting exchange of funds for specific projects)?
 - j. Will there be work plans for members?

5.1.3 Efficiency

The costs of collaboration can become a significant barrier to success. How a network mitigates these costs is an indication of efficient management of the network. The management issues to explore can be summarized as:

1. Internal communications and interaction among members.
2. Institutional support.
3. Systems and procedures (proposal development; contracting and accounting; logistics for workshops, etc.).

5.1.4 Resources and Sustainability

Working together to generate and share new knowledge, and putting that knowledge to work, can build the long-term relationships among members that are necessary to sustain networks. Nonetheless without adequate financial and human resources over a given period of time, any network or organization will face barriers to achieving its goals. There are several resource issues that need investigation and they are:

1. Human resources:

- a. Network membership and coordination commitment and stability (turnover).
- b. Right mix of skills and ability among members to achieve goals.

2. Financial resources:

- a. Does the network have the required financial and in-kind support to do its work?
- b. Is there an expectation to raise funds? Do members assist with the fundraising efforts? Some of these examples may be lobbying, proposal writing or other related efforts. or (lobbying, proposal writing etc.)?

3. Timelines:

Knowledge networks should be time bound as well as purpose driven. Time is a critical and finite resource for networks, and must be managed accordingly.

- a. Are there sunset or renewal clauses in its agreements with its members?
- b. How does the network ensure members perform their duties in a timely way, in order to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the network?

4. Sustainability

If members do have a long-term vision for the network, one needs to consider whether the network is being organized and managed for long-term sustainability. Building and maintaining financial support from donors/sponsors is only a portion of the issue. If the network is actively planning to work together for a significant period into the future, it needs to address a number of issues in organizational growth.

- a. Where is the leadership within the network?
- b. Is it sufficiently shared across the membership?
- c. Is there a plan for succession of leadership; can it shift from one member to another over time?
- d. What is the sense of ownership that members have of the network?
- e. What do members hope to gain from long-term participation and what do they expect to contribute to it?
- f. Does the network have an adaptive management culture, based on internal monitoring of its work?
- g. Does the secretariat or do the members consistently refine their objectives and their actions in keeping with their observations on what may or may not be working, either in the network's strategic plan, in its structure and governance, or in the efficiency of its operations?

5.1.5 Life-Cycle Analysis

Every network emerges from a unique set of circumstances, relationships and resources, thus making it difficult to compare one network fairly against another. But it is fair to ask what is normal in network operations, in addition to what is optimal. Therefore using a life-cycle analysis as a tool in assessing and evaluating networks becomes useful and fair. The life-cycle of a network can be seen as its organizational growth from initiation to a mature stage of operations.

The life-cycle of networks can be defined in four different stages: the start-up; growth (increasing, decreasing or constant); decline leading either to closure or renewal; and long-term sustainability. Life-cycle analysis is an interesting investigation into the evolutionary process of a network: how and when positive and negative, external and internal factors that cause the network to experience either an expansion phase or contraction phase during each period of operation.

The Life-Cycle - What to Expect

Years 1-3 Formative period

Members get to know each other but work independently with little collaboration. There is some protection of turf; individual institutional priorities take precedence over network "friendships." A great deal of individual work is accomplished – new "knowledge" is created, although not always "jointly" with other members; members are productive if not interactive. Time and money may be invested at this stage in setting up the coordination systems and procedures to support collaboration. Through effective coordination, the work of individual members may be aggregated into "network" successes.

Years 4-6 Status quo/growth

Some of the benefits of investing in coordination should be apparent at this point: funding, contracts and work plans should be in place; members will probably have met several times; it should be possible to assess the effectiveness of the network with respect to its knowledge contributions, communications and relationships with those it seeks to influence.

Members continue to be productive, but also begin to question why they are bothering to do their work within a network context. They question what the value added of the network is. This is a signal of maturing of relationships among the members, recognizing implicitly if not explicitly that they may be limiting their effectiveness by not adding value to each other's work. If this stagnation isn't monitored well, and responded to, then signs of nonperformance begin to be seen: members miss deadlines, don't execute their tasks, and so forth. Often by the fifth or sixth year, the productivity is quite high, indicating membership commitment even if collaboration is still an issue; or is quite dramatically falling off, indicating the likelihood of failure and wind-up in years 7-10. It is during this phase that a core group of members may emerge which has the desire to keep the network going into the future.

Years 7-10 Decline and Renewal

At this point in their history, networks may go in one of three directions:

1. Further stagnation and outright failure; or
2. Significant reduction of activities to simple information sharing around the network; or
3. Real collaboration among a core group of members although not necessarily all members.

Years 10+ Sustainability

Long-term relationships built, interaction sustained among members including joint work, peer review, communications and real recognition and influence beyond the network. We are speculating that "normal" network performance is relative to the length of time a network has been in operation. In assessing a network, interesting insights may be gained by looking at the spectrum of networks in general, specifically at the stages of network development, and how the network under review has performed within these stages, compared to other networks at similar stages in their development.

5.2 What is Missing?

The development criteria has been illustrated above and in moving forward there is an obligation to identify any missing pieces and if any pieces are missing how do they get addressed. The table below illustrates what is still missing and what will need to be addressed as the project proceeds to formalization.

Table 10: Development Criteria Checklist

| Development Criteria | Missing | | Comments |
|------------------------|---------|----|---|
| | Yes | No | |
| Effectiveness | | ✓ | The overall goals and objectives have been identified. |
| | ✓ | | The strategic framework needs to be developed and have the outcomes clearly identified and how they will be met and measured over time. |
| Structure & Governance | | ✓ | The organizational structure has been agreed upon and Governance will be under the NSWPB umbrella. |
| | | ✓ | Membership is open to both Labour Supply and Demand Stakeholders. |
| | | ✓ | Membership performance isn't linked to initial selection process. |
| | | ✓ | Major reason for joining is to assist in filling labour market information gaps. |
| | | ✓ | The network model seems to be a "Hub and Spokes" at this time. |
| | | ✓ | The network is to be coordinated through NSWPB. |
| | ✓ | | Funding agreements with donors/sponsors needs to be initiated. |
| | | ✓ | NSWPB will be accountable to donors/sponsors. |
| | | ✓ | The greatest financial risk is to the donors/sponsors while the greatest reputational risk is to NSWPB. |
| | | ✓ | Poor performance will be linked to membership participation and their sharing of information. |
| | ✓ | | Membership duties and responsibilities should be laid out in a governance/membership agreement and held responsible for. |
| | | ✓ | Decision-making on network projects and fundraising will follow the NSWPB's process. |
| | ✓ | | Work plans for members will be developed based on project undertakings. |
| Efficiency | ✓ | | Communications and interactions among members still need to be agreed upon. |
| | | ✓ | Institutional support has been identified and some is available through NSWPB. |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|-----|--|
| | | ✓ | Systems and procedures are in place through NSWBP. |
| Resources & Sustainability | | ✓ | Human resources have been identified and some are available through NSWBP. |
| | ✓ | | Financial resources need to be applied for. In-kind support is available. |
| | ✓ | | Timelines need to be identified based on project. |
| | ✓ | | Sustainability is dependent on multi-year funding. |
| Life-cycle | N/A | N/A | To be evaluated and measured against over time. |

6.0 What Does the Labour Supply Knowledge Network Look Like?

In order to get a clearer picture of what this specific Labour Supply Knowledge Network looks like, section six builds upon the Development Criteria in section five and defines relationships, structure, roles and operational costs. This is a suggested structure for the infant stage of the Labour Supply Knowledge Network and it is expected to evolve over time and as needed to meet membership's needs.

6.1 NSWPB's Mandate

As determined by the founding members NSWPB was chosen as host organization because the scope of the project aligned specifically with the mandate of the NSWPB.

Mandate:

Leading in the creation of innovative labour market solutions by:

1. Providing authoritative and evidence-based research
2. Identifying employment trends
3. Targeting workforce opportunities
4. Initiating workforce development strategies

The above mandate supports the legitimacy that this initiative be hosted by the NSWPB; the founding group expressed that a trusting relationship already existed and selected NSWPB to be host of the Knowledge network.

6.2 Defining the Relationship

There are many parties presently involved in this initiative and it is anticipated many more will become involved so it is best to clearly define and understand the relationship between members. In social science, a social relation or social interaction is any relationship between two or more individuals. **Figure 3** on the following page illustrates the relationship between the parties.

Figure 3: Relationship between Parties

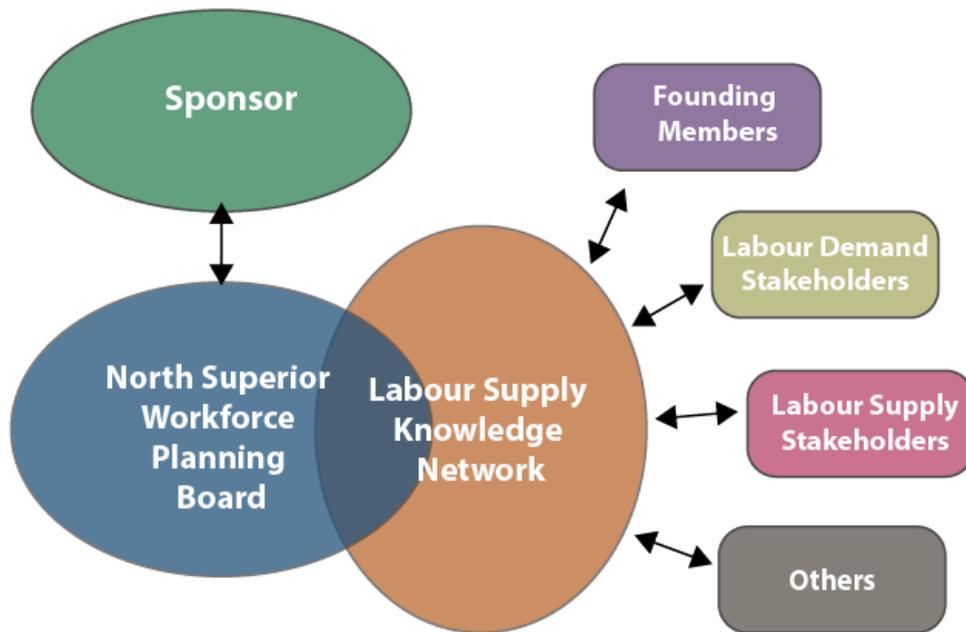


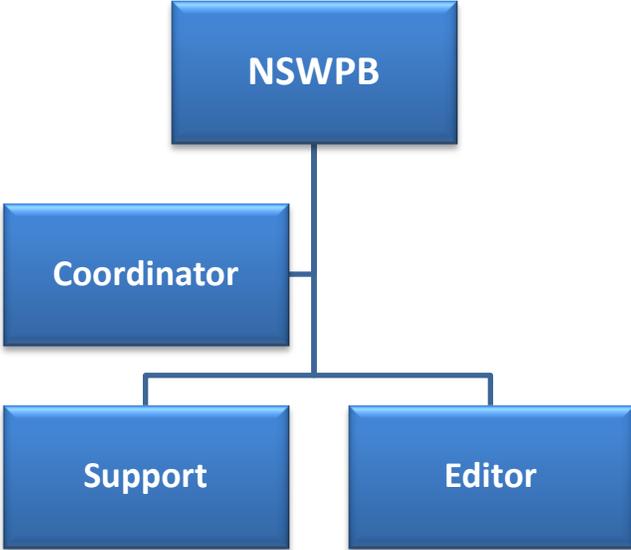
Table 11: Relationship Roles and Responsibilities

| Role | Responsibility | Who |
|---------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| Sponsor | Provides Multi-year Funding Receives Tangible Outcomes | Government/Industry |
| Host | Guide Strategic Alignment Reports to Sponsor Delivers Tangible Outcomes | NSWPD |
| Labour Supply Knowledge Network | Delivers Network Mandate Develops Tangible Outcomes Shares Tangible Outcomes | Coordinator Support Editor |
| Founding Partners | Provides Labour Supply Information Provides input to Host and Network Shares Tangible Outcomes | See Table 1 |
| Labour Supply Stakeholders | Provides Labour Supply Information Provides input to Host and Network Share Tangible Outcomes | See Table 2 |
| Labour Demand Stakeholders | Provides Labour Supply Information Provides input to Host and Network Shares Tangible Outcomes | To be determined |

6.3 Organizational Structure

The Labour Supply Knowledge Network initiative is spearheaded by its membership through the NSWPB who is also a member. As defined by the founding membership the Labour Supply Knowledge Network isn't a standalone organization but an initiative hosted within an existing organization. The NSWPB as host will need to source funding and staff the position to attain the Labour Supply Knowledge Network's tangible outcomes. Roles and responsibilities are loosely listed above in **Table 11**.

Figure 4: Organizational Structure



6.4 Set-up and Operational Cost

Table 12: One Time Set-up Cost

| Description | Comment | Estimated Total |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Work Station | 3 @ \$1,200.00 each | \$3,600.00 |
| Computer Systems | 3 @ \$1,500.00 each | \$4,500.00 |
| Printer | 1 unit Networked | \$1,500.00 |
| Data Server | | \$10,000.00 |
| Stationary & Supplies | | \$1,000.00 |
| Shelving and filing cabinets | | \$2,500.00 |
| Telecommunications and wiring | Hardware and interconnections | \$5,500.00 |
| Branding | | \$5,000.00 |
| Web-design | | \$4,500.00 |
| Marketing Material | | \$3,500.00 |
| Miscellaneous | | \$2,000.00 |
| Sub Total | | \$43,600.00 |
| Contingency | 10% | \$4,360.00 |
| | Total | \$47,960.00 |

Table 13: Yearly Operating Cost

| Description | Comment | Estimated Total |
|----------------------|--------------|---------------------|
| Coordinator position | | \$60,000.00 |
| Editor position | | \$50,000.00 |
| Support position | | \$45,000.00 |
| MERC | 15% | \$23,250.00 |
| Office Space | | \$12,000.00 |
| Utilities | | \$7,500.00 |
| Travel | | \$3,000.00 |
| Telecommunications | | \$2,500.00 |
| Office Supplies | | \$3,600.00 |
| Marketing | | \$6,000.00 |
| Photocopier Lease | | \$6,000.00 |
| Miscellaneous | | \$2,500.00 |
| Sub Total | | \$221,350.00 |
| Contingency | 10% | \$22,135.00 |
| | Total | \$243,485.00 |

7.0 Other Stakeholders

In order to gage the validity of the concept of a Labour Supply Knowledge Network and to further test the need and support of such knowledge network, a list of twenty-four (24) labour market stakeholders was provided by NSWPB for surveying. For the purpose of this study a sample size of forty-three percent (42%) was taken and interviewed. The survey instrument consisted of 13 questions.

7.1 Survey Results

Survey participants:

1. Northwestern Ontario Innovation Centre
2. Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce
3. Nishnawbe Aski Nation
4. Kiikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment Training Services
5. Ontario Power Generation
6. Kallio Consulting
7. Nokiiwin Tribal Council
8. Conseil scolaire de district catholique des Aurores boréales
9. YES Employment Services
10. Oshki-Pimache-O-Win Education and Training Institute

Survey Questions and Summary Results:

1. Are you familiar with the concept of Knowledge Networks?

All participants responded **“Yes”** to the question. The concept of Knowledge Networks was familiar to all.

2. Do you participate in any existing knowledge networks?

All participants responded **“Yes”** to the question.

3. Which knowledge networks are they?

All participants identified the knowledge networks they belonged to.

4. Are they formalized?

Most of the knowledge networks identified were formal networks. Some also belonged to informal knowledge networks.

5. Have you heard about the NSWPB’s initiative to develop a formal Labour Supply Knowledge Network?

Six of the ten interviewed (60%) were not aware of this initiative.

6. What do you think about the concept?

All identified the concept as an excellent, great or fabulous concept.

7. Do you think such a network is required?

All participants believe that a Labour Supply Knowledge Network is required.

8. Would you support this type of initiative?

All participants responded “Yes” to the question.

9. Do you see any benefits for your organization participating in a Labour Supply Knowledge Network?

All participants identified benefits that the Labour Supply Knowledge Network could provide their organizations and themselves especially when it came to matching opportunities and closing employment and employment information gaps.

10. Would you consider participating in this Labour Supply Knowledge Network?

All participants responded “Yes” to the question.

11. What would you expect to gain from the Labour Supply Knowledge Network?

The general consensus was better employment and labour market information. To match proper talent to opportunities was also discussed. Better understanding of the labour market gaps and opportunities to closing them.

12. How do you see your organization sharing information with the Labour Supply Knowledge Network?

The participants had different views on how to share information. Some were worried about the confidentiality of their information and would like to see some form of protocol. Others saw the opportunity for delivering information to a central location where it would be filtered and then shared. While others viewed it as a communication conduit between the supply of and the demand for labour which also conducts advocacy work.

13. What role do you see your organization playing in this Labour Supply Knowledge Network?

All participants saw a role for their organization; everything from being a gatherer and provider of information, being a promotional channel, assisting the network through its infancy, or providing an advisory role.

It is safe to summarize that the need and support for a Labour Supply Knowledge Network exists and that participation is accepted. Overwhelmingly all who were surveyed thought it was an “Excellent Concept” to be implemented.

Conclusions & Recommendations

What has this study accomplished? The study has identified burning issues around labour market information in the local labour market and the concept of developing a formal Labour Supply Knowledge Network has been identified as a solution to the issue. A good cross-section of local organizations dealing with labour market information was canvassed and the need and support for a Labour Supply Knowledge Network was confirmed and validated. Overwhelmingly all who were surveyed thought it was an “Excellent Concept” to be implemented. The findings within the report support the concept and a plan for successful implementation is laid out. The conditions for a successful Knowledge Network do exist. It is recommended that North Superior Workforce Planning Board source a funding sponsor and move this document to implementation.

References

- Büchel, B., Raub, S. "Building Knowledge-creating Value Networks." *European Management Journal* Vol.20, No. 6 (2002). pp. 587-596. Printed in Great Britain.
- Creech, Heather and Ramji, Aly. "Knowledge Networks: Guidelines for Assessment. *International Institute for Sustainable Development*. 2004. Retrieved from <http://www.iisd.org>.
- Creech, Heather and Willard, Terri. Strategic Intentions. Managing knowledge networks for sustainable development. "*International Institute for Sustainable Development*."
- MacCormack, Alan, D, Sven Volpel, and Kerry Herman. "Siemens ShareNet: Building a Knowledge Network." Harvard Business School Case 603-036, November 2002.
- Orgnet.com*. "Mapping and Measuring Knowledge Creation, Re-Use and Flow." Krebs, Valdis. Retrieved April 30, 2015 from <http://www.orgnet.com/IHRIM.html>.
- Parcell, Geoff. Knowledge Networking. *Learning Together: Knowledge Networks in Capacity Development Initiatives*.
- Pugh, Katrina and Prusak, Laurence. "Designing Effective Knowledge Networks." MIT Sloan Management. September 12, 2013. Retrieved April 30, 2015 from <http://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/designing-effective-knowledge-net>.
- Stroink, Mirella. The Emergence of the Regional Human Resources Strategy. *Final Report on the Social Innovation and Leadership for Complex Challenges Partnership Project*. North Superior Workforce Planning Board.



North Superior
Workforce Planning Board

“Connecting community partners to improve the quality of life in our communities through workforce development.”