

Dismantling Negative Networks

Redirecting Informal Power Toward Organizational Health

Intensives Library · Communication & Connection

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Part 1 · Overview

Dismantling Negative Networks

Every organization has invisible networks — informal influence structures, gossip chains, cliques, and complaint networks that operate beneath the official org chart. When negative networks dominate, they undermine formal leadership, spread cynicism, and create parallel power structures. This intensive provides tools to identify, understand, and redirect these networks toward organizational health.

Learning Slides

Network analysis, informal influence mapping, and culture change through positive network development.

Mind Map

Visual framework for mapping formal and informal organizational networks.

Self-Assessment

Evaluate informal network health and your role in positive or negative network dynamics.

Worksheet

Structured exercises for redirecting negative networks and building positive organizational culture.

Network Health Dimensions

Informal influence pattern recognition

Gossip and complaint network disruption

Clique dynamics in clinical teams

Positive informal network cultivation

Leadership engagement with informal culture

Network-aware change management

Part 2 · Slides

Dismantling the 'Good Ole Boy Network'

Fostering Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

This module explores how to evaluate and dismantle entrenched "Good Ole Boy Networks" while fostering authentic equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI).

Core Objectives

- Recognize informal systems of privilege and exclusion
- Systematically examine organizational practices
- Commit to sustained transformation toward authentic inclusion

What is the 'Good Ole Boy Network'?

Invisible Systems of Privilege

It represents persistent barriers to fairness, creating informal privilege through connections and shared backgrounds.

Manifestations

- Preferential hiring practices
- Insider information access
- Mentoring based on similarity
- Decision-making favoring familiarity

Impact

- Limits workforce diversity
- Reduces patient care quality
- Excludes diverse perspectives
- Perpetuates inequality

Recognizing Inequality Patterns

Hiring & Advancement Barriers

Hiring Inequities

- Decisions favor personal connections
- Opportunities shared informally first
- Homogeneous interview panels
- Inconsistent evaluation criteria
- Limited recruitment sources

Promotion Barriers

- Informal communication of roles

- Favoritism based on social ties
- Unclear advancement criteria
- High turnover of diverse talent
- Homogeneous leadership

Exclusionary Dynamics

Mentorship, Decisions & Culture

Mentorship & Information

Mentoring often follows demographic lines, and strategic information is shared selectively, giving insiders a competitive edge while excluding others from guidance and influence.

Social Exclusion Events and networking favor dominant groups' preferences, alienating others.

Resource Inequity Pay disparities and unfair workload distribution often go unchecked without transparency.

Developing EDI Excellence

Hiring & Promotion Reform

Hiring Transformation

- Wide advertising via diverse channels
- Blind resume screening
- Diverse, trained interview panels
- Standardized evaluation criteria
- Partnerships for diverse recruitment

Transparent Advancement

- Formal communication of all openings
- Merit-based, clear criteria
- Diverse review committees
- Regular pay equity audits
- Accessible career pathways

Fostering Inclusion

Inclusive Mentorship

Formal programs pairing diverse employees, reverse mentoring for leadership, and equitable access to high-visibility assignments.

Equitable Decisions

Diverse input on major decisions, transparent communication channels, and leadership reflecting workforce diversity.

Cultural Integration

Inclusive social events, celebrating diverse perspectives, and explicit organizational values promoting equity.

Implementation Roadmap

Phases of Transformation

Phase 1: Foundation (Mo 1-6)

Audit culture, secure leadership commitment, start bias training.

Phase 2: Systems (Mo 7-18)

Reform hiring/promotion, launch mentorship, transform social practices.

Phase 3: Integration (Mo 19-30)

Evaluate progress, deepen culture change, expand initiatives.

Phase 4: Evolution (Ongoing)

Embed equity in DNA, maintain vigilance, adapt to changes.

Conclusion

The Path Forward

Dismantling exclusive networks requires comprehensive examination, deliberate restructuring, and sustained commitment.

Benefits

Robust, adaptable cultures that attract top talent and serve diverse stakeholders effectively.

Commitment

An investment in justice and effectiveness, creating environments where everyone can thrive.

Part 3 · Mind Map

Personalized Equity Mind Map

Map out your understanding of network inequalities and your personal plan for fostering inclusion.

Network Inequality Pattern Analysis

Identify specific patterns affecting your organization

Hiring & Recruitment Issues

e.g., Positions frequently filled through employee referrals...

Promotion & Advancement Barriers

e.g., Leadership positions consistently filled by similar backgrounds...

Social & Cultural Exclusion

e.g., Networking events mainly golf...

Decision-Making Inequities

e.g., Strategic sessions exclude diverse groups...

Personal Advantage Assessment

Evaluate your own position and advantages

Network Connections

e.g., My relationships with senior leadership...

Demographic Advantages

e.g., I share background characteristics with leaders...

Access & Opportunities

e.g., I receive informal info about opportunities...

EDI Contribution Opportunities

Identify areas where you can make a positive impact

Advocacy & Sponsorship

e.g., Mentoring underrepresented groups...

Process & System Improvement

e.g., Proposing blind resume screening...

Culture & Climate Enhancement

e.g., Suggesting inclusive networking events...

Professional Development Integration

Connect EDI work with your career growth

Skill Development Needs

e.g., Learning about unconscious bias...

Network Expansion Goals

e.g., Building diverse relationships...

Leadership Capability Building

e.g., Developing equity-focused change skills...

Part 4 · Assessment

Dismantling Inequality Assessment

Part 1: Recognizing 'Good Ole Boy Network' Patterns

Rate how often this occurs: 1 (Never) to 5 (Always)

Hiring decisions appear to favor candidates who have personal connections to current employees or leadership.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Job opportunities are shared informally through personal networks before being posted publicly.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Interview panels lack diversity and consist primarily of similar demographic groups.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Candidate evaluation criteria are applied inconsistently or seem to change based on who is being considered.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Recruitment efforts focus on the same sources repeatedly, limiting candidate diversity.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Promotion opportunities are communicated through informal channels that exclude certain groups.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Advancement decisions appear to favor employees who have social relationships with leadership outside of work.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Objective criteria for promotion are unclear, inconsistently applied, or seem to be modified based on preferred candidates.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

High-potential employees from underrepresented groups leave the organization due to limited advancement opportunities.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Leadership positions are consistently filled by individuals from similar backgrounds or demographics.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Mentoring relationships develop primarily between employees who share similar backgrounds or demographics.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Access to senior leadership for guidance appears to be based on personal connections rather than professional need.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Development opportunities are offered inconsistently, with some employees receiving more access than others.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Information about career advancement strategies is shared informally among select groups.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Sponsorship for high-visibility assignments or leadership roles appears to be based on personal relationships.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Important organizational decisions are made through informal discussions among select individuals.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Strategic information is shared with certain employees before others, creating competitive advantages.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Input on significant decisions is sought primarily from the same group of trusted advisors.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Meeting invitations for important discussions exclude certain employees without clear rationale.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Organizational changes are communicated through informal networks before official announcements.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Work-related social events consistently favor activities or venues that appeal to certain demographic groups.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Informal networking occurs in settings or activities that exclude certain employees.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Office culture reflects the preferences and values of dominant groups without consideration for diversity.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Social conversations and relationships at work primarily occur within similar demographic groups.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Company traditions and celebrations reflect limited cultural perspectives.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Pay disparities exist between employees in similar roles without clear justification based on performance or experience.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Resource allocation decisions appear to favor certain departments or individuals based on relationships rather than need.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Training and development budgets are distributed unequally without transparent criteria.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Workload distribution seems unfair, with certain employees receiving more challenging or visible assignments.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Performance evaluations appear to be influenced by personal relationships rather than objective assessment.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Organizational culture tolerates or encourages exclusionary behavior or comments.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Diversity and inclusion efforts are superficial rather than addressing systemic issues.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Reports of bias or discrimination are not taken seriously or are minimized.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Employees from underrepresented groups report feeling unwelcome or undervalued.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Leadership demonstrates limited commitment to equity and inclusion through their actions and decisions.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Part 2: Developing EDI Excellence

Job opportunities are widely advertised through diverse channels to reach varied candidate pools.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Hiring processes include blind resume screening to reduce bias in initial candidate selection.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Interview panels are consistently diverse and receive training on bias recognition and mitigation.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Candidate evaluation criteria are clearly defined, standardized, and consistently applied to all candidates.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Recruitment partnerships with diverse professional organizations and educational institutions actively expand candidate diversity.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Promotion opportunities are communicated transparently to all eligible employees through formal channels.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Advancement criteria are clearly defined, merit-based, and applied consistently across all candidates.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Promotion review committees include diverse membership and use standardized evaluation processes.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Regular pay equity audits ensure fair compensation practices across all demographic groups.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Career development pathways are clearly defined and accessible to all employees regardless of background.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Formal mentorship programs systematically pair employees with diverse mentors and mentees.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Leadership development opportunities are available to all employees with clear, transparent selection criteria.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Reverse mentoring programs enable employees from underrepresented groups to mentor senior leadership.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Stretch assignments and high-visibility projects are distributed fairly based on merit and development needs.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Professional development resources are allocated equitably to support all employees' growth.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Important organizational decisions include input from diverse perspectives and stakeholders.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Communication channels ensure that all employees have equal access to relevant information.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Decision-making processes are transparent with clear rationale provided for major choices.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Employee feedback is actively sought and incorporated from all levels and backgrounds.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Leadership teams reflect the diversity of the workforce and community served.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Work-related social events and networking opportunities are designed to be accessible and inclusive for all employees.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Office culture celebrates diverse perspectives, backgrounds, and approaches to work.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Company traditions and celebrations reflect multicultural awareness and inclusion.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Social interactions at work cross demographic boundaries and build inclusive relationships.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Organizational values explicitly include equity and inclusion with visible leadership commitment.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Compensation practices are transparent and based on objective criteria applied consistently across all groups.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Resource allocation decisions use clear criteria and consider equity in distribution.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Performance evaluations are standardized, objective, and free from bias or favoritism.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Workload distribution is fair and based on capacity, skills, and development goals.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Recognition and reward systems acknowledge contributions from all employees equitably.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Organizational policies and procedures actively promote equity and prevent discrimination.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Regular diversity audits identify areas for improvement with concrete action plans.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Bias reporting systems are accessible, confidential, and result in appropriate corrective action.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Cultural competency training is comprehensive, ongoing, and required for all employees.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Accountability measures tie leadership evaluation and compensation to equity and inclusion outcomes.

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Never · Always

Scoring guide

Dismantling 'Good Ole Boy Network' Assessment

Severe 'Good Ole Boy Network' Patterns

Score: 140 and above

Significant and pervasive patterns consistent with entrenched networks excluding many employees.

Moderate 'Good Ole Boy Network' Patterns

Score: 105 and above

Regular patterns suggest informal networks may be providing unfair advantages.

Mild 'Good Ole Boy Network' Patterns

Score: 70 and above

Occasional patterns could indicate emerging or limited network-based inequities.

Minimal 'Good Ole Boy Network' Patterns

Score: below the band above

Few indicators of systematic network-based inequality.

Outstanding EDI Practices

Score: 140 and above

Comprehensive systems actively promote equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Good EDI Practices

Score: 105 and above

Established important practices but opportunities to strengthen systematic integration.

Developing EDI Practices

Score: 70 and above

Begun implementing approaches but needs substantial development.

Limited EDI Practices

Score: below the band above

Current systems are insufficient to prevent or address inequities effectively.

Your EDI practices substantially outweigh network inequality patterns, creating strong foundation for inclusive excellence.

You have established healthy EDI practices relative to network inequality patterns.

EDI practices slightly outweigh network inequality, but the margin may be insufficient during growth or change.

Network inequality patterns significantly outweigh EDI practices, indicating substantial risk for discriminatory practices.

Part 5 · Worksheet

EDI Transformation Worksheet

Reflecting on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Practices

Understanding Your Organizational Context

What specific patterns in your organization suggest the presence of 'Good Ole Boy Network' dynamics, and how do these patterns affect different groups of employees?

Your reflection...

Which organizational practices most effectively promote equity and inclusion, and what makes them successful?

Your reflection...

How do informal networks and relationships either support or undermine formal equity and inclusion efforts?

Your reflection...

What resistance to equity initiatives exists in your organization, and what concerns or fears might drive this resistance?

Your reflection...

How do current leadership demographics and behaviors either model inclusive practices or perpetuate exclusive patterns?

Your reflection...

Assessing Personal Experience and Perspective

How has your own background and network connections influenced your career opportunities and advancement?

Your reflection...

What privileges or advantages have you experienced that others might not have access to?

Your reflection...

How do you recognize and address your own biases in professional interactions and decisions?

Your reflection...

What role do you play in either perpetuating or dismantling network-based inequities?

Your reflection...

How comfortable are you with challenging exclusive practices or advocating for equity when you observe inequality?

Your reflection...

Evaluating Organizational Change Potential

What specific changes would have the greatest positive impact on creating equity and inclusion in your organization?

Your reflection...

Which leaders or departments would be most likely to champion comprehensive equity and inclusion initiatives?

Your reflection...

How might technology or system changes support more equitable practices in hiring, promotion, and development?

Your reflection...

What cultural shifts would be necessary to sustain authentic inclusion over the long term?

Your reflection...

How could your organization measure and track progress in dismantling network-based inequities?

Your reflection...

Planning Personal and Professional Growth

How can you personally contribute to creating more equitable and inclusive practices in your current role?

Your reflection...

What skills do you need to develop to become more effective in promoting equity and challenging exclusive practices?

Your reflection...

How might your career development benefit from building more diverse professional networks and relationships?

Your reflection...

What allies or resources could support your efforts to promote organizational equity and inclusion?

Your reflection...

How can you balance career advancement with commitment to equity and inclusion principles?

Your reflection...

Your EDI Action Plan

Identify three concrete actions you will take this month.

Action Step 1

Action Step 2

Action Step 3
