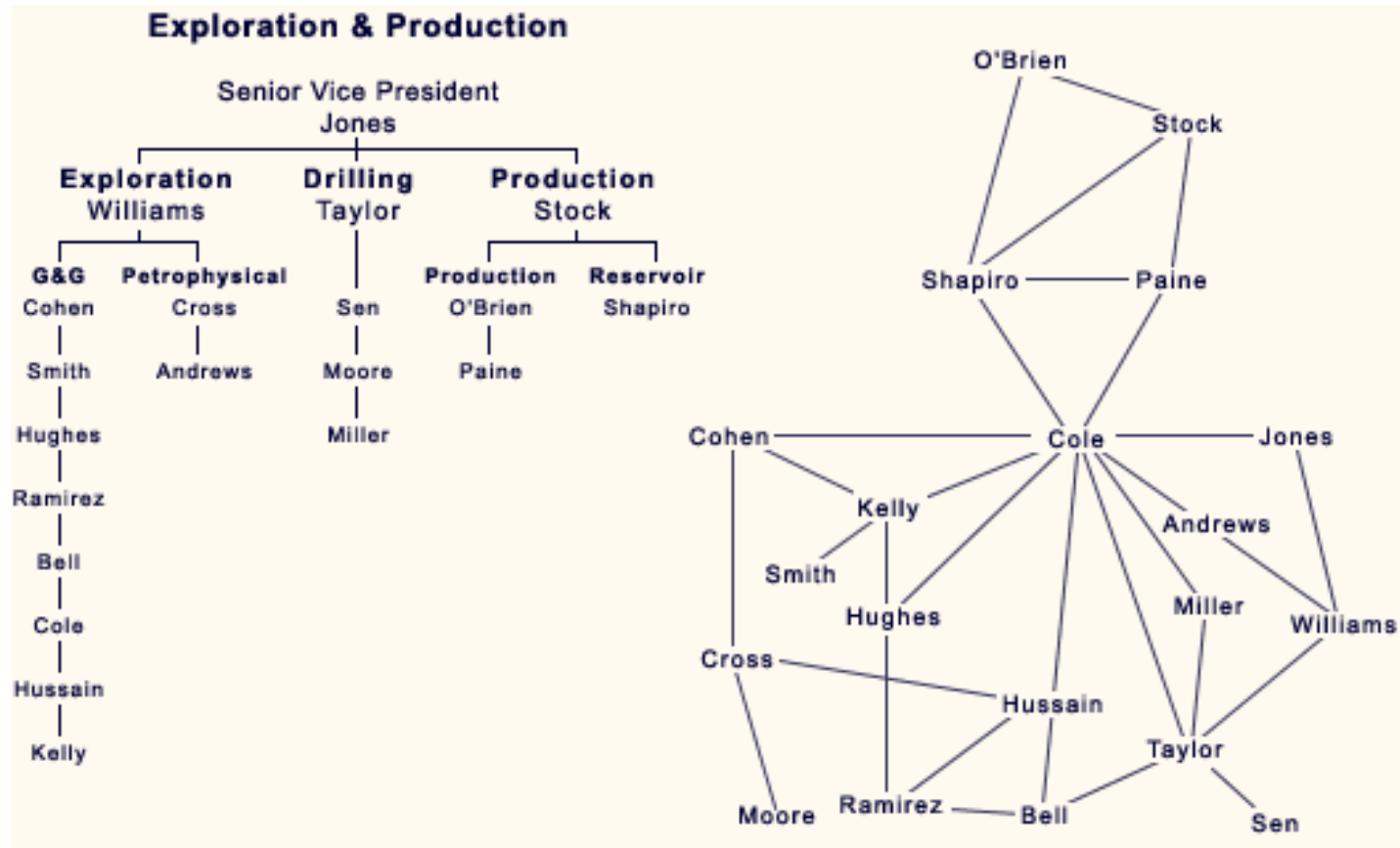


Leveraging Org. social capital

Suresh Bhagavatula



Find organizational disconnects

(Contd.)

The informal network brought out by network analysis shows:

- ▶ Shows that the head of the group, Jones occupies a peripheral position in the network
- ▶ The entire production team is disconnected from rest of the group
- ▶ Cole can either be the most important person in the group or can be a bottleneck



Org. network reality

- ▶ Managers invariable use their personal contacts when they need to meet an
 - ▶ Impossible deadline
 - ▶ Learn the truth about a new boss
 - ▶ Advice on a strategic decision
- ▶ Companies do not look at social networks within employees positively
- ▶ Even if they do look positively, they try to 'extract' value from it



Important Players in a network...

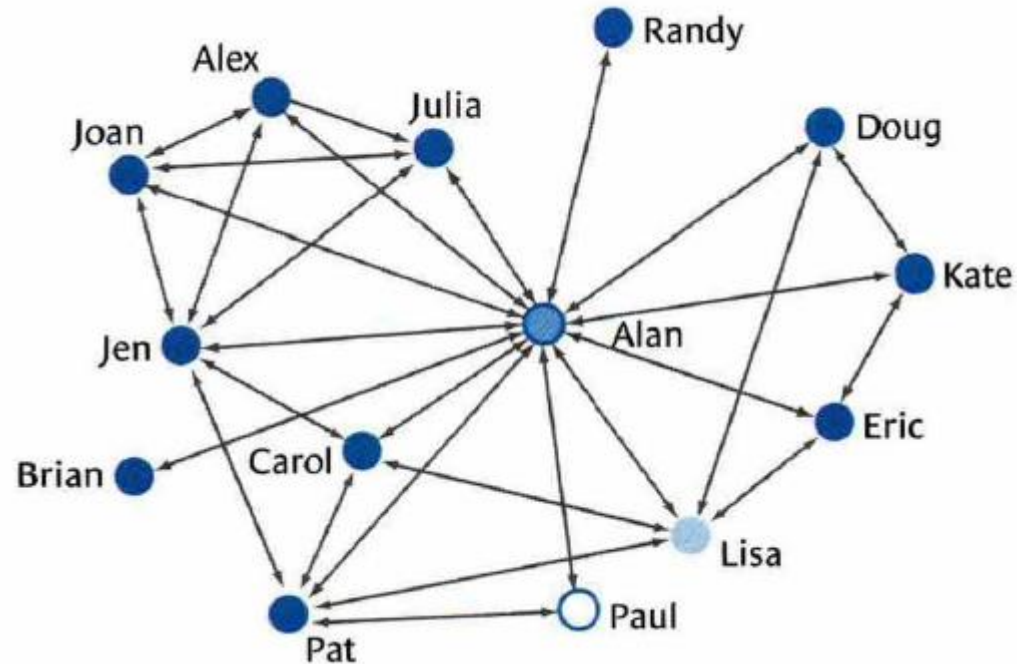
- ▶ **Central players**
 - ▶ **Boundary Spanners**
 - ▶ **Information Brokers**
 - ▶ **Peripheral Specialists**
-
- ▶ Invisible to the senior management
 - ▶ Because senior management relay on gut feel, gossip, or formal reporting structures they can misunderstand the links between people
 - ▶ It is virtually impossible for higher ups to know what is happening within the teams



Players in a network

▶ **Central players**

- ▶ Who link most people in an informal network with one another
- ▶ They are usually not the formal leaders
- ▶ They know who can provide the critical information or expertise that the entire network draws on to get work done



▶ **Central Player...**

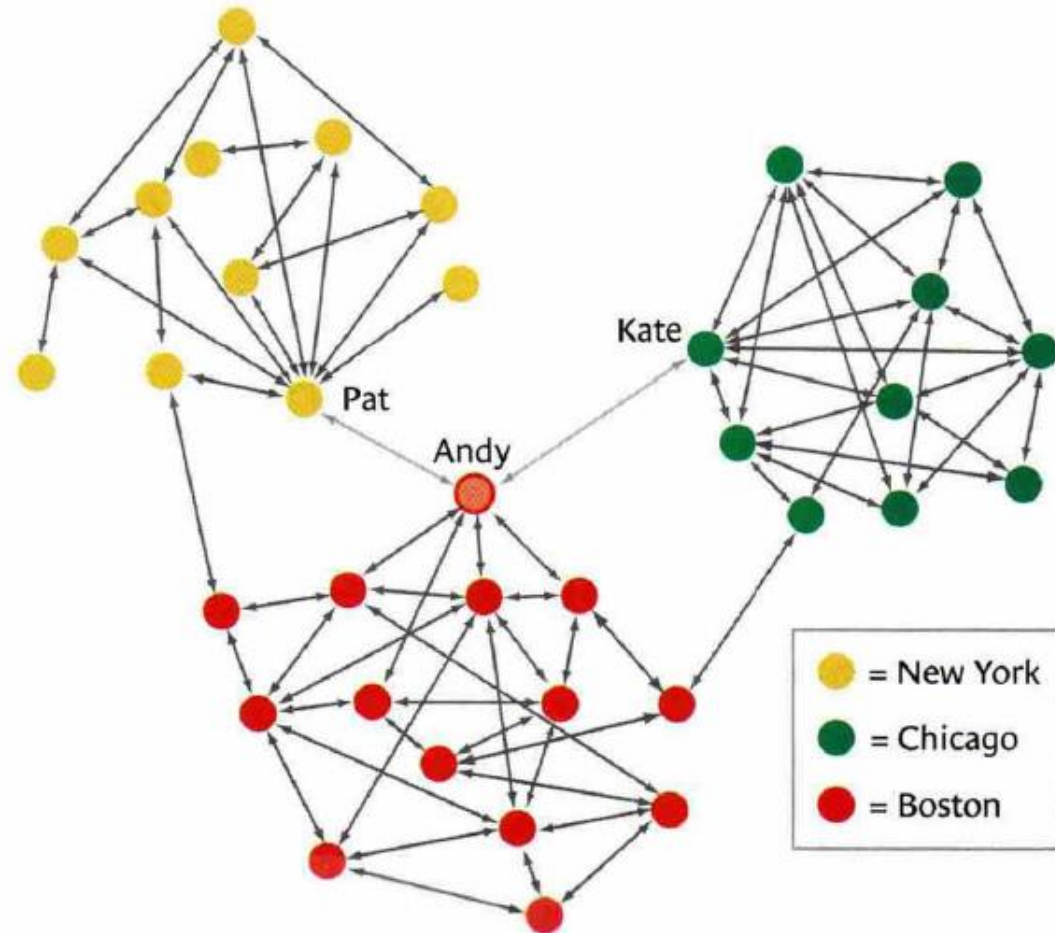
- ▶ Can be over-worked as many others call on them to get their job done
- ▶ Can also be a bottle neck if they are loaded too much (can be a bottle neck intentionally as well)
- ▶ Since they are anyway motivated to help others, an occasional acts of gratitude by the organization can motivate them
- ▶ Sometimes the org may have to lessen their role so that these individuals can perform



Players in a network...

▶ **Boundary Spanners**

- ▶ Who connect one informal network with another parts of the organization or with similar networks in other organizations
- ▶ They consult with people from different departments regardless of their affiliation



▶ **Boundary Spanner**

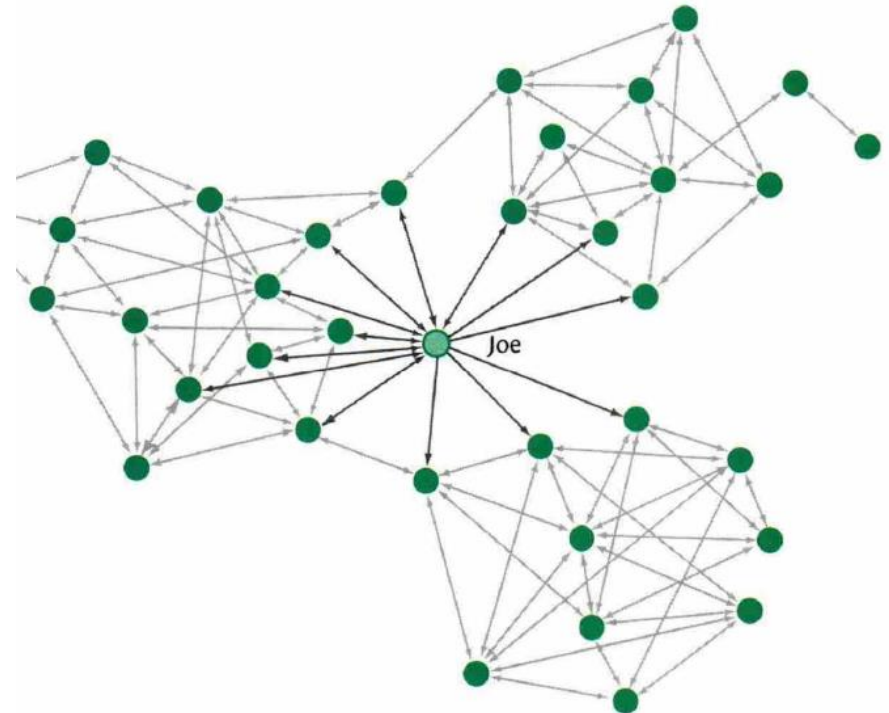
- ▶ Most groups have people who are their 'roving ambassadors' – eyes and ears in the wider world of the organization
- ▶ They are needed when there is a need to search for expertise from other parts of the organization
- ▶ They usually have multiple interests/identities/breadth of expertise and therefore are not very common



Players in a network...

▶ **Information Brokers**

- ▶ Keep different subgroups in an informal network together
- ▶ Are key to the information flow within the smaller parts of the network



▶ **Information broker**

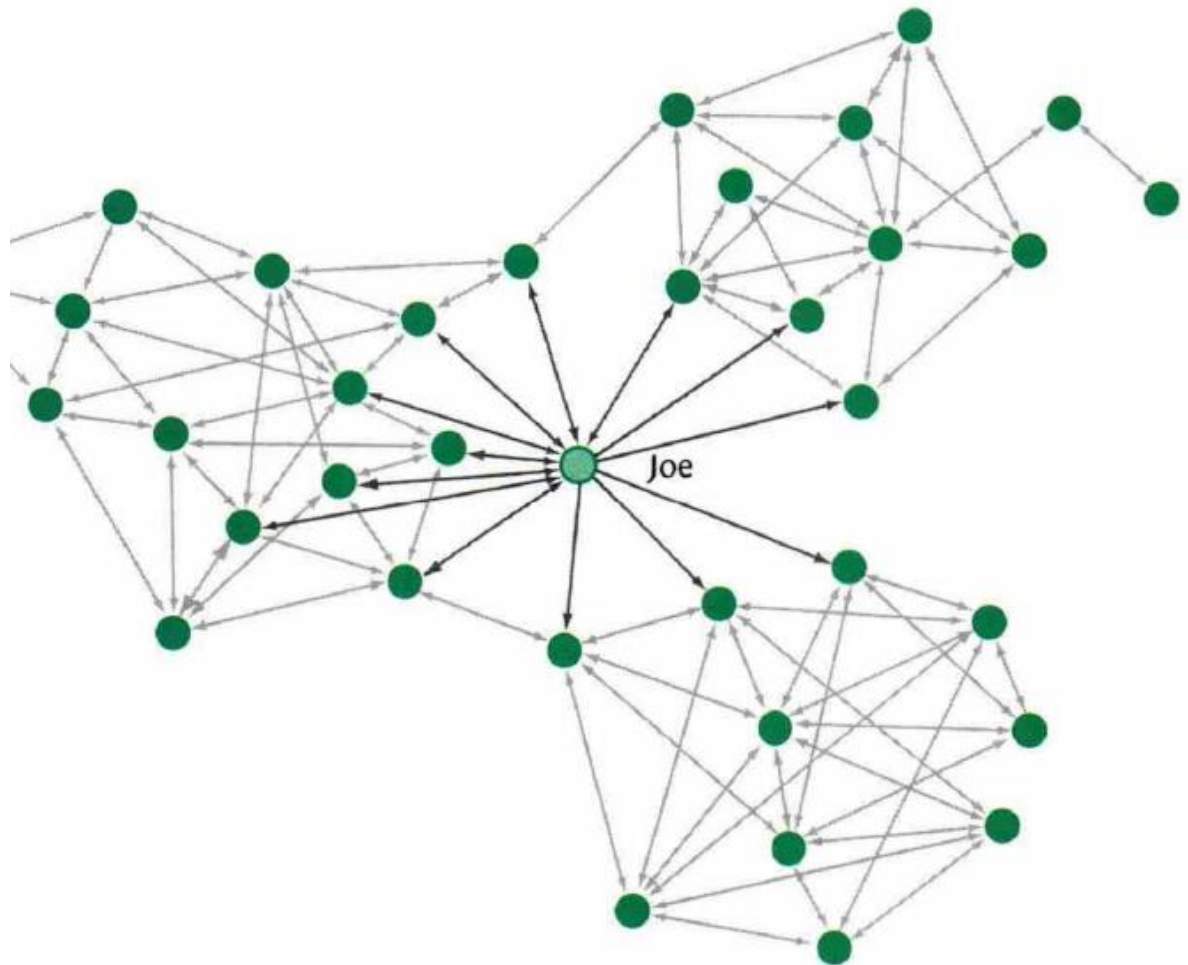
- ▶ Connectors in smaller groups
- ▶ Have high closeness centrality
- ▶ Organizations should not rely too much on Information brokers. If they leave the organization, the large network can be fragment into smaller groups



Players in a network...

▶ **Peripheral Specialists**

- ▶ Who anyone in the network can turn to for specialised information
- ▶ Are likely to be new comers or loners



▶ **Peripheral Specialists**

- ▶ They may not function if they are brought into the centre of the network
- ▶ They may not want to be noticed for other reasons



Dimensions to improve your org network

- ▶ Extent to which you have people from other functional areas
- ▶ Extent to which you have people from hierarchy, tenure and location
- ▶ Length of time you know the contacts
- ▶ Extent to which your networks are a result of formal interactions or as a result of 'water-cooler' encounters



▶ Reference

- ▶ Cross and Prusak (2002), The People who make an Organization go or stop, Harvard Business Review,

