COMMUNITY-LED ORIENTATION

HOW TO CONTROL THAT WHICH CANNOT BE CONTROLLED

A Guide to Network Leadership

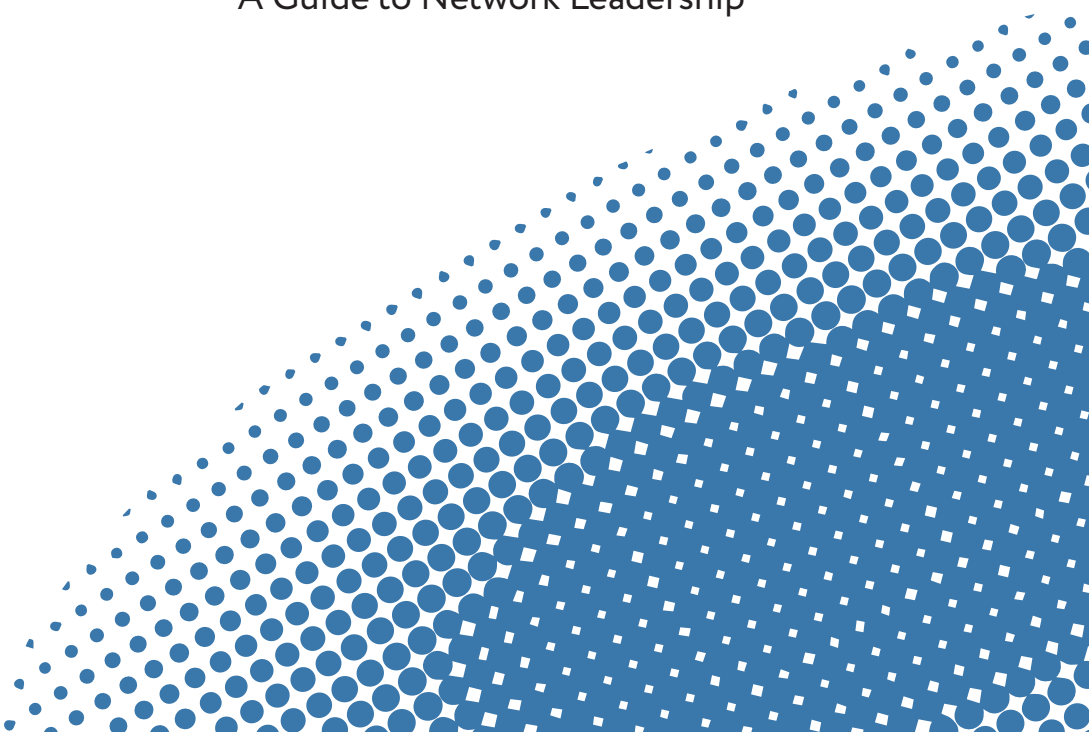
KARL-JOHAN SPIIK

KARLEX

COMMUNITY-LED ORIENTATION

HOW TO CONTROL THAT WHICH CANNOT BE CONTROLLED

A Guide to Network Leadership



Publisher: Karlex Oy
Page layout and graphics: Eve Sillanpää
Translation: Henrik Andergård

ISBN 978-952-65337-6-6 (soft-cover)
ISBN 978-952-65337-7-3 (EPUB)
ISBN 978-952-65337-8-0 (MP3)

KARL-JOHAN SPIIK

COMMUNITY-LED ORIENTATION

How to Control That Which Cannot Be Controlled

A Guide to Network Leadership

KARLEX

CONTENTS

1. Foreword **8**

2. Introduction **10**

3. Leadership and Networks **14**

3.1 What is Community-Led Orientation and How Does It Relate to Networks 15

3.2 What is Shared Leadership and How Does It Differ from Traditional Leadership 16

4. How to Build a Well-Functioning Network and Maintain It as Such **18**

4.1 The Diversity of People 19

4.2 Pleasing Others and Building Relationships 21

4.3 The Network Has to Be Open to Diversity 22

4.4 Utilizing Skills 23

5. How to Foster Learning and Innovation in Networks **26**

5.1 Openness 27

5.2 Information Location and Data Security 29

6. When You Want To Make Changes to the Network's Activities **34**

6.1 Centralising Helps Only on Paper 35

6.2 Change the Methods of Measuring 36

6.3 In a Network You Dare to Experiment 39

7. How to Adapt to the Changing and the Uncertain 42
7.1 Agile Leadership 43
7.2 Getting Away from the Constant Meeting Spiral 44
7.3 Managing Your Own Work 45
7.4 Non-Simultaneous Work Pace 46
7.5 Reacting to Changing Situations 48

8. How to Solve the Problems of Networks 50
8.1 Uncontrollability is a Blessing and a Challenge 51
8.2 Should All Problems Be Avoided? 52
8.3 Recovering From Conflicts 54
8.4 Information Blackouts 56

9. How to Utilise the Potential of Networks in a Large Corporation 60
9.1 Distinguish Pleasing From Manipulating 61
9.2 The Curtain of Acting Can Be Dropped 62
9.3 Quiet Leadership 64
9.4 Secret Organisations 65

10. The Working Life of the Future Functions in Networks 68

11. Closing Words 71

1. FOREWORD

Ice swimmers, families with young children, CEOs, newspaper editors, dog enthusiasts, coders. Humans form networks among themselves, both unofficial and official ones. We talk of social i.e. community-oriented networks: in them, people receive help, ideas, peer support, springboards upwards, and tips regarding new and interesting networks.

During my life I have been part of several different community-oriented networks. The networks have taken shape as I have needed them. When I have wanted something that I have felt I could not attain on my own, I have started creating a network with which I have been able to advance the matter. Networks for various different interests, professional goals, hobbies, and entrepreneurships have appeared in my life.

All these human networks work the same way, because the contributing factor are humans themselves.

In primary school I formed friendship networks so that I could express myself and make friends, even though I didn't yet know anything about networking. In upper secondary school I created study and hobby networks, so that I could find a counterweight to my studies. During my military service I formed support networks, so that I could be able to live happily within the army's leadership system. During my studies I created a peer network by taking photographs and bringing people together in the nightlife.

My career was headed towards the IT field, where people worked in networked and community-oriented ways. As my career progressed, I started to understand how important it is to give people responsibility and power, because then people become motivated by what they are doing. Having acted in networks for over three decades, I wanted to write a book about how networks are led and what they consist of.

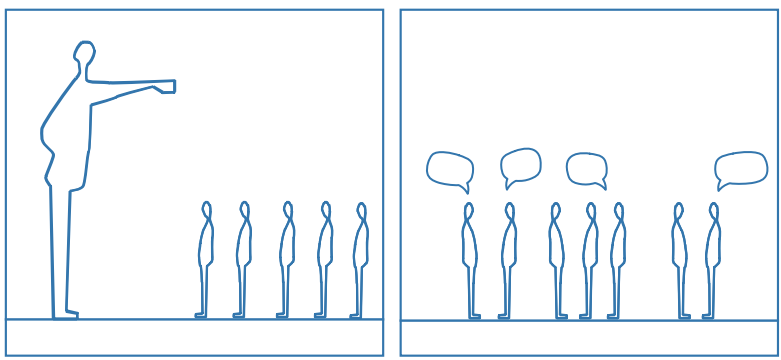
All these human networks work the same way, because the contributing factor are humans themselves."

2. INTRODUCTION

Leading a network means that you influence what people do despite not having the title of leader nor even necessarily being the most experienced person in the group. Leading a network requires taking others into consideration, doing favours, acting as adjudicator, honesty, and an attitude that others can identify with and trust.

Leading a network exposes the person to critique, because leadership cannot be performed from the shadows. The position of network leader can also easily be lost if one tries to lead the network by manipulation and a sanctimonious attitude.

In this book I present how to build and maintain various networks. It is essential to recognise people's differences and differing desires to please others. Networks can consist of similar people, but the most efficient networks are those that are diverse, consisting of people different from each other and people from various different backgrounds. In a network you utilise the skills of all the members towards a shared goal.



In traditional leadership one person directs others, whereas in network leadership everyone is on the same level.

Networks should feature openness, so that the network doesn't start resembling traditional leadership and giving orders. Information needs to be available to everyone in the network. If it isn't, the leader of the network should create such conventions, with which information can easily be found when needed, and thus the information won't be hidden away with just a small group of people. When activities are open and safe, everyone has a chance to improve themselves. Development of a network happens via forerunners and guiding others i.e. orientating people.

If information doesn't flow in the network, the activities of the network slow down and soon cease entirely. A network is based on communication.

One should be able to measure and assess the activities of a network, so that it can be developed. In a network, functions cannot be centralised, but rather everyone should be given the opportunity to influence everything. When everyone has access to the network's information and is connected to the other members, everyone can develop the network's activities in the desired direction.

The desired direction is usually determined by what purpose the network serves. It can for instance serve its members or an outside group. Thus the network's decisions are always made based on what the network sees as the most important for its activities.

Networks are agile and mutable. Networks cannot feature rigid structures, because otherwise the members might feel that the aims of the network don't suit them any longer. Of course, the members can change, or the network might serve its members only for a specified amount of time, if the activities of the network aren't meant to change. If the activities within the network change as its members change, the network can live almost forever.

Networks do not serve their purpose if their activities always require the presence and approval of certain people. Within networks one has to understand that technology changes the world and people's lives, and thus networks have to keep pace with the change. A network can also not drown people in an information overload or take up all of people's time. Everyone in a network should use their time wisely and communicate it to others. Because of this, it is important to have mutually agreed ways of communicating and of writing things down in a network.

The core of any network is people. Conflicts inevitably occur between people. The most important thing for a network is to learn to recover from conflicts instead of trying to avoid disagreements. People need to be able to bring up problems and discuss them openly.

Manipulation, roles, and silent leadership also all occur within large corporations. These are recognisable phenomena, and there is no need to fear them.

Are you a network leader? Leading a network is a skill that is needed more and more in today's working life, but a previous position as a supervisor and years of experience do not guarantee anything in networks. A network is uncontrollable, it cannot be ordered around nor controlled, and every member of the network can influence its operations. If you want to realise your own will i.e. lead the network, you need to get the others to understand your point of view, entice people to cooperate, listen to others, and tolerate diversity and critique.

In a network you orientate everyone into a culture where you communicate efficiently as well as ask for and give feedback. In a network you cannot e.g. not inform others about how the project is coming along, or merely announce things after all the decisions have been made, but rather, all information should be open. On the other hand, openness does not mean the same as drowning people in information so that no one can keep up. The flow of information in a network needs good tools, and you need to be able to measure your success.

Leading a network is not easy, but it is rewarding. A network is support and safety, a source of learning and development, and a key to new opportunities and new collaborative partners. Your network might be quite like-minded with you, or it might consist of sharply differing people, but the most important thing is that you recognise people's differing motivations and needs.

This book gives tips and examples on how you can be a network leader who achieves results and a good spirit. If you want to develop as a network leader, this book is for you!

KARLEX

ISBN 978-952-65337-6-6 (soft-cover)
ISBN 978-952-65337-7-3 (EPUB)
ISBN 978-952-65337-8-0 (MP3)