

# Mastering the Pivot

## Using Network Analysis to Intentionally Architect Collaboration

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Adaptability, the ability to be nimble, flexible, and pivot as conditions change is critical for organizations and individuals. Individuals come together and form networks to get work done. It may be easy for 1 person to pivot, but how about an organization of 200,000 people, each with their own networks and goals? These intricate networks make up an organization's energy, and using network analysis, we can see and understand how work gets done and how to unleash the full potential of an organization and its individuals. To truly be adaptable, organizations should embrace intentional collaboration. Intentional collaboration is purposeful and transformative for organizations of all shapes and sizes. And in today's remote-first work environment, there are a myriad of tools that can support an organization's move to embrace intentional collaboration.

## Act I: Organizational adaptability is more important than ever

The future of work is now. The world is fundamentally different. Stability has given way to unpredictability. Organizations are living, breathing systems organized around networks of how people actually work and behave that embraces change as the new normal. COVID-19 has shown a spotlight on the importance of collaboration to build resiliency against the negative implications of the pandemic. The ability of an organization to adapt to new ways of working will be fundamental to bringing organizations back to the same level of productivity that they had before the pandemic (or even altogether new levels of productivity). So far, there has been a multiple-week decline in informal collaboration, leading to decreased engagement and performance. People already on the periphery of an organization are becoming more isolated. Work hours are up on average and given the increased work hours, many people report they are just as productive but business results have not shown a commensurate increase in productivity. However, some organizations, who have been able to harness networks and intentional collaboration, have reported significant increases in interpersonal connectivity.

These organizations are examples of how changing work gets done can offset current and future shifts in the world. Organizations should be able to flex and change around new organizational goals and aspirations. This means the workforce, from those with long tenures, to new students joining the workforce (**Read about how ASU powers the modern learning experience with Slack [here](#)**) should come together in new and dynamic ways. Network analysis can provide an organization with the insights to architect intentional collaboration, and collaboration platforms can bring the intentional collaboration to life. The ability of collaboration tools to democratize access to information and decision-making enables connectivity across the organization. We collaborated with Slack to understand what this looks like in practice – how organizations can leverage network analysis insights to understand the way their organization works today and how they can architect intentional collaboration in the future.



## Act II: Understanding and Harnessing the Power of Collaboration Networks

Organizational charts and graphs are not a proxy for how humans interact and collaborate. Networks hold the key to understanding how work gets done. Using network analysis, organizations can unlock previously hidden insights around collaboration, productivity, and 'well-being', not wellbeing. These insights can help organizations assess the value of changes they have already made, proactively plan for changes, or pulse, before, during, and after to fully visualize a transformation.

**Using network analysis after you have undertaken a transformation effort to change the way your organization works can help understand how a collaboration platform and program changes how work gets done.**

**Case Study 1:** A global media and entertainment organization implemented a collaboration platform and allowed their teams to form new, organic collaboration patterns. Post implementation they measured their collaboration networks and found the number of silos decreased by 6:1 over the course of one year. After seeing their networks, the organization took steps to introduce a more intentional collaboration strategy, bringing together business units and studios into a series of intentional channels. Networks helped them measure the effectiveness and value of their recent collaboration platform and identify what next steps they could take towards an intentional collaboration strategy.



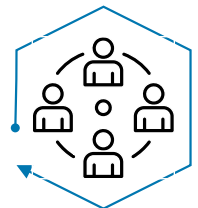
**Using network analysis proactively before a big shift can help organizations improve productivity and connectivity during remote work times. And specifically, for some organizations, how can connectivity between HQ and the field be improved?**

**Case Study 2:** An analytics company had recently introduced a collaboration strategy and platform. They compared their collaboration networks pre- and post-COVID. They saw that the number of connections between colleagues went up 200%. They also saw their organization silos decrease from 9:1. The remote work environment brought on by COVID had actually boosted their collaboration. However, within the networks they pinpointed a critical disconnect in the communications between HQ and the field, which allowed them to make targeted changes to further improve their communication and connectivity to be less HQ-centric.

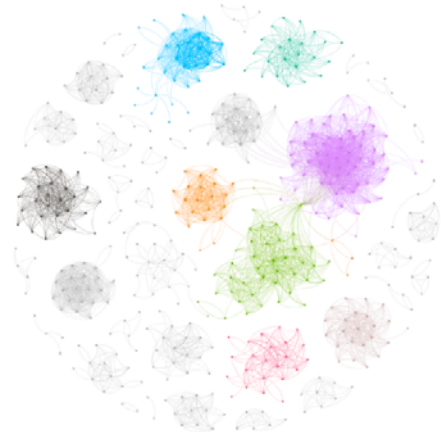
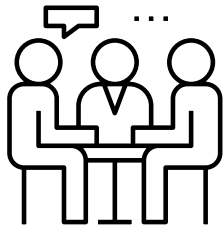


**Finally, using network analysis before, during, and post transformation can identify silos and how to create meaningful connections, even in a mega-sized organization.**

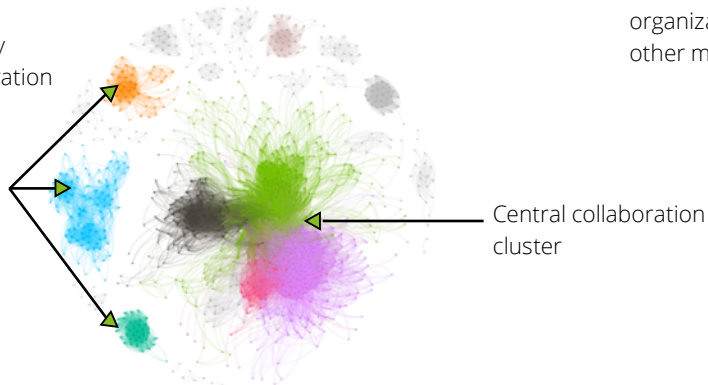
**Case Study 3:** This mega-financial company worked in several disparate and disconnected islands. It took weeks for responses and collaboration to happen between different parts of the organization. Using network data to identify the islands and where connections would bring the most value, within 1 year their active collaboration strategy shortened the response time to less than 1 week and the number of connections between colleagues went up over 500%. After identifying further opportunities to collaborate they saw connections increase an additional 200% the next year. Within 2 short years, intentional collaboration improved 10X.



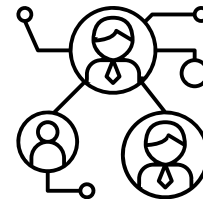
**2018:** Starting collaboration patterns show multiple disconnected islands and a largely siloed organization with limited collaboration across groups.



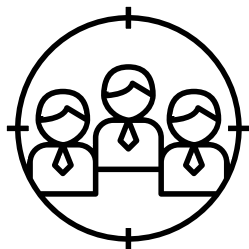
Auxiliary  
collaboration  
clusters



Central collaboration  
cluster



**2020:** The majority of groups have been absorbed into a central collaboration hub making the organization 10X more collaborative than 2018.



If you understand your organization's informal networks and use that knowledge while you implement a purposeful collaboration strategy, you should be able to quickly move towards intentional connectivity and enhanced productivity.

## Act III: Creating Intentional Connectivity

There is a suite of collaboration tools available, from synchronous to asynchronous and everything in between, but the real game-changer is architecting an intentional collaboration strategy to support your business. Slack is one of the channel-based messaging platforms that democratize information and enable intentional connectivity and collaboration across networks. Many companies never progress past organic usage because they provide a platform for their teams to work differently, but they don't actually drive the shift to changing how work is done. Mature usage of a collaboration platform and ultimately transformational change requires understanding how work is done today and intentionally rearchitecting workflows within the platform. Rearchitecting workflows and collaboration allows people to form and re-form networks as organizational goals or needs change. This helps organizations to be intentionally collaborative in times of change. Entire organizations can pivot and direct their energy towards new or refined goals seamlessly.

This purpose driven collaboration, fueled by collaboration tools, will help push organizations to new levels of adaptability that was previously thought to be unattainable. Understanding your organization's networks and utilizing those networks should allow you to move from simple communication to transformational collaboration. Ready to bring your organization to a new bold place? Check out the next chapter in our series on how networks have helped organizations see and take meaningful action towards inclusivity.

### Let's talk

Have an interest in networks? We do, too.

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