Networking in practice

As word of the power of networking spreads, so do its areas of application multiply. Networking is now being used intentionally in nearly every sphere of human activity.

In this chapter, we profile the deliberate use of networking within a mainstream Protestant denomination, a nonprofit organization that helps corporations to exchange information about the employment of disabled people, and a multinational consulting firm that describes its organizational structure as a network.

Connections 84

"Confer" is a word first used in 1538 that combines *con*, meaning *together*, and *ferre*, meaning *intensive*. "Coming together intensively" summarizes the essence of those events we call conferences. Many networks trace their beginnings to one "special" conference or meeting in their past, and many networks host conferences as a major organizational function.

Networks are born and grow through alternating phases of face-to-face interaction and cooperation-at-a-distance. Conferences and other types of meetings provide periodic opportunities to reaffirm or redefine shared values, to establish and realign relationships, to conduct work, and to have fun with others.

Besides whatever is communicated at a conference through its *content*, there are also the messages generated through the conference *structure*. Conferences usually have a title, often a theme, and frequently a specific purpose. Conferences also have an organizational structure and may be interpreted using hierarchical, bureaucratic and networking models.

Conferences are media of organizational expression. While a

conference design inevitably makes some *metacomment* about authority and values within the sponsoring group, it may also be a conscious experiment in social organization. As intense, brief social forms, conferences sometimes become microcosms of their particular universes and new organizational configurations are tried.

A network is a whole of free-standing participants cohering through shared values, goals, and/or interests. A conference design can easily experiment with variations on this definition, creating enduring social wholes from dynamic, independent human parts—people and groups. Creating opportunities for peers to come together, for new leaders to emerge, for old groups to congregate, and for new groups to form are among the reasons for using a network conference design.

Somewhere along the spectrum from very centralized to very decentralized meetings, the clear distinction between form and content begins to fade. Where a traditional meeting schedule is built from blocks of well-specified time, a network schedule perceives the time *between* the content blocks as equally important. As many a wag has noted, the best (most fun, meaningful, profitable) time at a conference is had at lunch, in the pool, at the bar, or wherever, with other participants.

Our interest in network conference design took a big leap one hot August day in 1983 when the telephone rang. Robert Wood, a New York management consultant, was calling on behalf of a large organization in need of networking skills. The context for the need, Wood explained, was a conference planned for May 1984, which would bring together the networks among the organization's 3.2 million members, a gathering of those in agreement and those in conflict.

We were intrigued. Wood was calling for the Presbyterian Church (USA), which had its unique slant on a common networking problem. After a hundred years of Civil War-induced separation into two churches—a national northern church and a regional southern church—and several previous attempts at reunification, the two churches merged in June 1983.

The merger involves two central offices, one in Atlanta, Georgia, and one in New York City, twenty synods comprising *195* presbyteries (literally "ecclesiastical court in Presbyterian Church composed of all the ministers and a ruling elder from each parish

in its district") that arise from 11,662 churches attended by the three million people.

The mandate of the reunited church? *Inclusiveness*, an idea that was easier to talk about than to actualize in a church which now included dozens of networks of difference—in ideology, theology and constituency. It sounded to us like a model of the world.

By the time we entered the process, planning for the May 1984 conference had been underway for more than a year, under the guidance of Sandra Grear, Director of the Communications Unit of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Grear, a radio and television broadcaster, took her position in the church's New York office with the dream of creating the conference.

"We wanted to bring together a microcosm of the church and put into practice what we say we are about. The church is being restructured, which gives us the opportunity to reorganize. We don't have the luxury of pointing a finger at the hierarchy any more and saying, 'How are you going to make this work?' We have to make this work", she explains.

Thus, Grear and her colleagues embarked on a two-year planning process that involved dozens of people at all levels of the church hierarchy who considered everything from conference site and dates to attendees to menus to content areas.

The result was a five-day invitational conference, attended by 200 "connectors" and "communicators" in the church, who congregated in a Kansas City hotel. "Connectors" came primarily from special-interest areas within the greater church, while "communicators" were those who work in media, both inside and outside this major Protestant denomination.

The "content areas" already had been decided when we entered the process: cross-cultural communication, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (a psychological profile based on Jung's classic "archetypes"), networks and networking, and theological perspectives.

Each content area had its own team of presenters. The keynote speaker was *Megatrends* author John Naisbitt.

When the conference was over, Grear received the master link in a motorcycle drive chain that had been distributed in three-link pieces to each of the content area presenters as key chains. "The master link is invisible in the chain," explained William Moore, pastor of the Sharon (Pennsylvania) Community Presbyterian

Church who served on the three-member conference "tracking team" with Grear and Wood.

Lunch, dinner, and morning and afternoon break times were all scheduled as integral parts of the conference. Two worship services also took place, the first on the opening night of the conference, and the second on the last day, Sunday morning.

Throughout the conference, reference was made to two possible images of the reunited church, with its differing concerns: the traditional melting pot, where immigrants from the various regions dissolve indistinguishably, and the salad bowl, where each ingredient maintains its integrity. The preference at the conference seemed to be for the salad.

Just before the conference began, Robert F. Cramer, who publishes *RFC News,* a newsletter about communication in the ecumenical community, and *Church News International,* a daily online press service *a la* UPI on NewsNet, put out his newsletter with these cautionary words about Connections 84:

> The first large-scale experiment in group process, extended to an entire church denomination, is about to begin. ...It's daring, and forward looking, and it should creatively set the stage for many years of participatory power sharing in one of America's major churches. But it's bound to unleash a lot of frustration and hostility and it could backfire. It's a risky idea.

No one knew what would happen at a conference that included pro-life and pro-choice activists, evangelicals and gay/lesbian ordination advocates, "racial/ethnics" and "tall steeple ministers" (to speak Presbyterianese).

And no one knew what would happen with a conference design that left open the possibility of on-site changes in order to respond to the evolution of the conference itself.

It worked. Cramer's postconference issue (he attended as a "communicator" and took extensive notes on his lap-top computer) expresses the enthusiasm of the participants, and captures the more subtle meaning of the event as history.

> In a nutshell, what happened was that people's notions of communication shifted perceptibly towards the larger notion of interpersonal connections.

People began to think less about media products and more about interpersonal processes.

During a two-year [planning] process an elemental theory of communication was explored and was returned to time after time: compelling communication occurs in what are now being called networks, that is, the circle(s) of one's associates.

Alongside that was the realization that there are many networks in place in the church which function very well—Presbyterians for Pro-Life (represented at Connections 84) is a good example.

And, planners had a growing awareness that networks of networks can provide vehicles, fuel, and steering mechanisms for very large, diverse populations—maybe even for a 3.2-million member denomination.

The strength of the conference was that it was conceptual, not technical. The media experts formed a network to share their concerns—but they were only one of many networks formed at the conference which will continue. It was a visible and explicit picturing of the future—media concerns taking their place as only one of many aspects of human intercommunication. In this sense, the conference was, as it tried to be, a microcosm of the entire denomination in the present as well as in the future.

Two years later, Connections 84 continues, with regional "Connections" conferences having been held in several locations, a periodic newsletter, regular telephone conference calls, and an online computer conferencing system called PresbyNet.

"Our behaviour must model our beliefs," Grear says. "Networking must extend to all forms of media, and not be exclusive of any. No one is to be left out. This is a global community."

Networking abilities for jobs

At the Massachusetts Division of Employment Security, housed in one of the newer buildings in Boston's Government Center, the staff jokes that if job applicants can find Katharine Rolfe's office, they ought to get the job. Down narrow corridors, past unnamed

offices, and within a small cubicle with a large picture of Gloria Steinem on the crowded bulletin board, sits Kathy Rolfe.

Kathy Rolfe is a networker. When we arrived at her office on a rainy day in August 1985, she looked straight at Jeff and said, "I know you". Indeed she did. They went to both high school and college together. From the University of New Hampshire, Rolfe moved to Boston, began her career in state government, and soon became active in disability issues.

On the day we saw her, Rolfe was wearing "polycephalous" (see Chapter 9) hats, both as chair of the Governor's Commission on the Employment of the Handicapped and as the sparkplug behind the Massachusetts Corporate Partnership Program (MCPP).

We couldn't meet in Rolfe's cubicle; we were too many. Besides the two of us and Kathy, there were two others: Cecily Lewis, Program Coordinator and first staff employee for MCPP, and Edward M. Kennedy, Jr., who was the reason the interview had come about in the first place.

In Massachusetts, Kennedy watching is a political spectator sport. Every election, the media is filled with reports about which Kennedy (the third generation has come of age) is running (or not) for which office.

So it was one Sunday morning that a *Boston Globe* headline caught our attention: "Ted Kennedy Jr. says he won't run for Congress."

The second sentence leapt out of the page: "Kennedy said that he was eager to pursue his role in a networking organization to get jobs for the handicapped."

The article went on: "Kennedy spoke enthusiastically about what he called a networking role for the foundation where he gets successful employers of the handicapped to get new companies to listen to them."

A little networking goes a long way. Though the name, purpose, origins, activities, and Kennedy's role in the organization all were incorrect in the article, there was just enough information there to enable us to find Cecily Lewis, who spent the first five minutes of our initial telephone conversation clearing up the facts. People looking for jobs and money had been calling all morning.

As Lewis told MCPP's story, it sounded more and more like a networking organization. We requested an interview.

The Massachusetts Corporate Partnership Program states its goal

on its simple, one-color brochure: “to increase the number of employers participating in activities which promote opportunities for handicapped persons.’’

In essence, MCPP is developing a comprehensive database of resources for employment of disabled people. Specifically, what MCPP does is to link those who need information about employing disabled people with those who have already gone through that process. MCPP *is,* as Kennedy says, a networking organization.

An example from Lewis: “Say a company wants to hire a blind person but doesn’t know what kind of accommodations to make. We can search our database and give them the names of other companies that have done that. Many companies think they’ll have to spend thousands and thousands of dollars to hire a blind person. But that’s not true. Lots can be done with very little money.”

Beginning with what Rolfe describes as a “very low key approach,” and lacking what she calls “the desire to build an empire,” MCPP gathers information.

Kennedy, 23, has been hired as Marketing Coordinator to help sell the idea to corporations.

Corporations participate in the program as “corporate partners,” which they cannot become until they have done “the activities.” “Activities” include:

? expanding job possibilities—”Take a fresh look at all job descriptions [and their] requirements. Do they inadvertently screen out disabled people?”
? expanding education and training of disabled people—”Provide subcontract work to local rehabilitation organizations whenever possible.”
? public relations—”Make yourself and your company executives available to speak about employment of disabled persons at local service clubs.”
? inhouse motivation—”The CEO should declare his/her own personal commitment to the employment of disabled people.”
? expanding employee awareness of disabled people—”Include articles about successfully employed disabled workers in inhouse magazines, and newsletters.”

Once the activities are behind them, corporations are *bona fide* partners, and thus able to answer questions for other companies.

Each corporate partner fills out an extensive questionnaire, which doubles as an educational tool.

"We never do mass mailings of questionnaires," Rolfe says. "We ask people these questions and the questions cause the employers to think of things they've never considered before."

Rolfe describes MCPP's "diffusion of innovation" theory as the "old New Hampshire snowball dance. You start with one couple, then they split and get another partner, and so on."

Corporate partners recruit new corporate partners. But Rolfe is not fixated on numbers of corporations involved; she envisions what she calls "the soup to nuts approach."

"We're looking for five or six companies to volunteer to do everything," she says, citing possible involvement of every echelon of the corporation from the CEO down to the shop floor level.

Along the way, MCPP is creating information resources that have never existed before. Besides the Corporate Partner database which includes information on some 250 companies, MCPP has assembled the first comprehensive statewide directory of social service agencies involved with rehabilitation.

"Each of the particular agencies had its own directory of affiliated organizations, but there was no single source that included things like Joe's Rehab workshop in Pittsfield," Lewis said.

Referring to her Kennedy coworker, Rolfe says, "He wasn't hired for his name. He was hired for his public relations skills. We needed someone who could market the program with the credibility of being disabled."

Rolfe first met Kennedy at the 1985 Boston Marathon, where he fired the starting shot for the wheelchair competition. They arranged to meet a few weeks later in Washington at a meeting of the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped where Kennedy gave a presentation on how new technologies can be applied to disability issues.

One year Out of college, and extremely active in the public sector on disability issues, Kennedy was ready to apply what he knew to what he considers the key issue.

"Jobs. It's all about jobs. If people can work, then they can be independent," he says leaning forward as if to put even more drive behind his words.

Kennedy has been "disabled" since he was 12 when his right leg was amputated as a result of bone cancer. His ceremonial duties

at the Boston Marathon are typical of his engagement with disability issues.

Tall and in excellent physical condition, he's a good advertisement for "abilities rather than disabilities," as he says. "*If* you call up for a job and say, 'I'm in a wheelchair, and I can't go up a flight of stairs', instead of saying, 'I'm a computer programmer and I know six languages', you don't get anywhere."

"It's all got to come from the grassroots," he says, dismissing the idea that working at the powerbroker level has much to do with disability issues.

In that regard, Rolfe says, "We're administered by the Information Center for Individuals with Disabilities, a private nonprofit." Thus they're plugged in to one of the key nerve centers for disability issues in the state.

Rolfe's hope is for MCPP to be a model for others. "As far as we know there's nothing else like this," she says.

Her program for success is very straightforward. She cites her three basic rules: "(1) KISS—Keep it simple, stupid; (2) If it's not fun, don't do it; and (3) No mass mailings—make it person-to-person like the old New Hampshire snowball dance."

Networking Arthur D. Little-style

Robert Kirk Mueller (pronounced Miller) is a student of networking. A chemical engineer and a member over the past several decades of some thirty boards of directors, he is Chairman of the Board of Arthur D. Little, Inc. (ADL), an international research and consulting firm.

Our correspondence with Bob Mueller began some years back, prompted by a 1980 letter from our old friend Robert A. Smith, III. Smith enclosed an exciting article by Mueller titled "Leadingedge leadership." In it, Mueller called for "more leaders and fewer executives," and pointed to "the recent trend toward plural management organizational structures." He maintains that "a free-form organizational style is probably the most likely to survive" and that "peer systems of management with a minimum of hierarchical structure are more likely to retain the leading-edge leader."

Much to our delight, Bob Mueller was one of the first people to join The Networking Institute. We then met Bob face-to-face in July 1984, when he called together a group of ADL people who

were concerned with the concepts of networking either directly or peripherally in their work.

A year later we met again, this time in Bob's office at Acorn Park, ADL's main research facility, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It is a rather simple place for the chairman of the board of a multinational corporation. Painted white cinder block walls, large glass windows in the best public school tradition, plain industrial carpet on the floors. The art is intriguing, mostly folk pieces from the Third World. One wall holds a plaque board, with seals of the countries in which Bob has worked in various activities.

"If you were from Argentina," he explained as we were leaving, "I'd have put the Argentine plaque in the middle."

Thoughtfully, he had put the first issue of the *Networking Journal*, which we had recently published, on the coffee table.

We originally knew Bob as an astute observer and theorist of management and large-scale organization, by way of his 1974 article, "Wider horizons for the corporate board."

A decade later, the news release on his speech to the Society of Professional Management Consultants was bannered: SOCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING VITAL TO SURVIVAL OF INSTITUTIONS. In his address, Bob offers his view of the relevance of networking to large-scale organizations:

> As a result of our structured institutional worlds being under siege, new strains of organization are forming in contemporary human activity. While this is a normal, evolutionary phenomenon, I suggest it presents an opportunity for us to think about empowering human networks in order to compensate for some of the inadequacies of a hierarchical-type organization.
>
> Organization, as we know it, is obsolete in the information society in which we now exist. Those of us in management who weave human networks have confounded ourselves and our establishment's thinking. These human networks are thriving while our staid and rigid organizations heave and struggle to be effective or even to survive. Something fundamental is happening in our organized society.., centered on the intuitive notion that, somehow or some way, networking may be basic to organizing and managing people in the future.

Bob Mueller believes in some theory and lots of practice. His ideas about networks and network management are rooted in his experience, particularly at ADL, which is the focus of this interview.

A society of professionals

Bob Mueller: "Arthur D. Little is a nonhierarchical, relatively egalitarian organization which is peer-driven. In one sense, it appears to be disorganized. On the other hand, it's a mobile, organic type of organization with minimal hierarchy. The only hierarchy comes when we get a task or engagement or assignment—a 'case,' which becomes a contract. When General Motors or somebody asks us to do a research job, we assign that to an individual who is qualified by a peer selection process and ratified by the contract office. That person is the prime contractor and she or he solicits staff from the rest of ADL around the world or outside and runs a project as project manager. In that sense, we have a hierarchy in that we have a case leader, an engagement leader, who is responsible for client relationships, for writing the proposal, for billing the client, certain administrative procedural tinfoil, if you will, to package it up in.

"The contracting office watches for conflicts of interests, and that sort of thing. But that hierarchical form has a short half-life in that it dies when the project's over. Then everybody goes out and works under other hierarchies. You may work part-time or full-time on an assignment. You may be working on three or four at the same time, just like a dentist with three chairs.

"Our hierarchy is episodic. The organization is made up of what I call 'tribal groups'. Basically, tribal groups are disciplinary or industry groups where the economists are in one tribe or those who know the electronics industry are in another group. But they're always exporting their services out to other groups because most of our work is multidisciplinary. Tribal professionals get together because they can exchange information in their discipline. It's completely segmented, like a beehive.

"The way in which we get things done is by networking, by

going directly to somebody by reputation or by referral or from any place that you know to say, 'Who knows something about hospital management or boards of directors?' And, they'll say, 'Well, Dr Kasten knows something about that. Go to him.' Then Dr Kasten refers them to somebody else. So that's the way the staff is recruited.

"Because Arthur D. Little [the founder] was a chemical engineer, the theme of the chemical industry—chemical engineering, physics and related sciences—is quite profound in the organization. We're rooted in that. We do a lot of laboratory work, a lot of consulting, a lot of survey work, a lot of publications that are in the chemical industry.

"With ADL, we have what I call the 'chemical estate.' We have a 'chemical estate' network and its registry identifies 300 professionals worldwide in fifteen overlapping nets of affinity or tribal groups. Within those fifteen nets, there are 177 nodes of experience where we've got people who are very specialized in organoleptic chemistry or whatever.

"There are fifteen autonomous segments that have a profit and loss statement, and are organizationally self-sufficient. They can float on their own. They have a practice, they do their 'thing,' and they're busy on that. They're embedded conceptually in this organization and they may be scattered geographically but they are organizationally self-sufficient. They've got enough work to continue their practice-like the pharmaceutical group which is busier than a hornet or like the environment assurance center which is dealing with post-Bhopal-type things.

"Since they float in this kind of Sargasso Sea of professionals, they find it easy to communicate not only by Telex and computer, but also by walking into the bathroom or the lunchroom or the hall. You can see people. It's just like being in the Pentagon, you can go around. That's pretty important.

"There's no single paramount leader who can control any one of those networks, because they're a bunch of *prima donnas.* They may have an organizational section head or president of a subsidiary who has a hierarchical role for administrative purposes but he or she is there not only for business administration purposes but because of peer respect.

It's a professional peer group, where the leader is sort of the 'chief of the department of surgery'."

Benzenoid snowflakes

"These centralized constellations of people can be depicted metaphorically in what I call a 'benzenoid snowflake' form. The benzene ring represents the organizational unit, the node, and the spines are the practice areas of expertise. Dots around the spine are the number of peer qualified individuals within each one of those spines.

"Underneath the professional operations is a group of senior people. They're senior gurus who look over these particular groups which are the benzene rings, so to speak. But these groups are all very fluid—we do this to satisfy the accounting aspects.

"We put all of the benzene rings together into metanets. The chemical estate with twelve people rotates and meets in the center. All of the snowflakes are floating around and melting and reforming in different crystals. It's just an interesting way to describe the organization and one way in which we network.

"Nobody really believes all of the analogy but it's more or less true. The metanets meet once a month and we talk about what's going on that might be of interest to other people. We just verbally network.

"There are about eight different metanets in the areas of life sciences, telecommunications, environmental health and safety. They are evanescent; they are dissipating structures; they're reforming. People move from one to another depending on their professional background. They're reformed depending on the market. At the same time, we have to keep track of people's contract work, and people's salaries, so they all fall within conventional classical organization. They belong to a sectional unit or a subsidiary.

"We have multiple forms. Some groups are subsidiaries, some people float in a kind of corporate cloud and are called on as independent consultants."

"For example, let's take the Arthur D. Little Management Education Institute (ADLMEI), which is in the education business. This is the only place in the world that you can get an accredited master's degree in developing world management and in which the organization operates at a profit. We have a thesis that if we're going to educate in management, we ought to be able to manage it so that we break even, so we don't have to be subsidized.

"It bears on this point of networking. The ADL Institute is run separately, with separate trustees. They network by drawing on people who are working on ADL research and case work elsewhere. The Institute has an administrative staff and a dean, but the faculty is not tenured. They're contracted for the institute from the professional staff.

"We don't allow anybody to devote full time to it because we don't think that is proper for a school that teaches management practice. One becomes too theoretical. They'll come to you [gesturing toward Jeff Stamps] and say, 'Dr Stamps, we want you to talk on systems theory to this group. Will you teach a class one hour a week during this period?' You have to be pedagogically approved. We say, 'You can't preach unless you practice.' So they'd buy your services at the billing rate that you'd sell it out as a consultant and you'd teach that class. And you'd fall under the regular constraints of school—academic parameters instead of a consulting group.

"The students are people that have undergraduate degrees from the London School of Economics, or universities in Nigeria or Beirut. They are mainly from the developing world. The current class is about sixty people from two dozen nations, and a few people from the developed world who are going to work or live in the developing world. It's an eleven-and-a-half-month course which costs as much as the Harvard Business School or Sloan School of Management. All work is done by case study and lectures on activities in developing countries, and taught by consultants who are practicing in the developing countries.

"So the cases that we study are not General Motors or Volvo or Texas Instruments, but we talk about what do we do in

Mauritania? How do you operate in Tanzania if the telephones may not work? And how do you teach marketing? It's tailored to equipping these people to go back, either in industry, in education, or in government positions. They may go back as subministers or ministers. We have many distinguished government officials who've come to ADLMEI.

"The graduation ceremony is like the United Nations. We put up a tent and some attend wearing tribal dress and bring their families. It's a fantastic event."

Professionalism and integrity

Jessica and Jeff: "What is the substance of ADL? What holds your organization together?"

Bob Mueller: "Professionalism. In the sense of a high degree of integrity and concern for the ADL mission in life, which is to be 'on the leading edge of change', and to do things that are worthwhile but for a profit. We add that, realizing that we work for not-for-profit organizations. We say we ought to be able to earn a profit as a measure of the utility of what we do. We should pay our way, not be subsidized. Our major competitors who are as diversified as ADL—RAND Corporation, SRI, Battelle—do their work in the laboratory and in offices, as we do. However those are not-for-profit organizations.

"We believe we should be 'for profit,' and we add to that that we should be publicly held—at least a portion. About 71 per cent of our stock is now held in a trust fund which is for the benefit of the employees and 9 percent is in an employees' investment fund. About 20 percent is traded on NASDAQ. We say, and this is a philosophical argument at all times, that we ought not to operate as a closed corporation, which tends to function like a private partnership.

"If you satisfy a partnership you can exist as long as the partners reproduce themselves, if you will. A closed system, a partnership or privately held corporation, may not be as responsive to social and general needs as an open system, a public corporation.

"So we have to satisfy the independent investor who invests in Arthur D. Little and doesn't care whether we're working

on something exciting or not. He or she invests because of the return on the investment. As long as the owners of a privately held corporation satisfy themselves and operate responsibly, in their own judgment, there isn't any way to enforce the 'ethic of service' except by statutory or regulatory means. This ethic is not as preserved as it is when you have to earn your keep for somebody who's investing in you because you make a profit while serving in the public interest.

"We're in both public and private worlds and we stay in both, a situation that's constantly under discussion and review. Some of the staff would much rather just do their thing and be paid appropriately and not have to worry about having to earn a dividend for somebody who invests in them.

"It puts a different cutting edge on remaining flexible and responsive to the market place. If it sells, fine. If it doesn't, then you change. Working for profit forces you to change because you have to stay alive.

"All that heritage, value system and belief in the sense of what is important (and some myths) wrap up into a symbol of Arthur D. Little's role in life. This is basically a role perception by the staff, and it changes as the staff changes.

"The board of directors has a role in the sense of governing, but it's difficult because we're so diversified. All they can do is to preserve the objectives, performance, reputation and the attractiveness of ADL as a place to work. The fact that we do things of which we are proud, and that our ethics and our integrity and our value to the world are recognized, earns our way.

"Perhaps that's why 2000 people send in unsolicited resumes to ADL every month. We answer all of them. We induce turnover because it brings new brains into the network. New intellectual property is added to the pot. People who have new backgrounds can come in and can sell their services either directly outside or indirectly to someone else on the staff who has a client. So you're always in the selling mode and you have to earn your keep by offering your intellectual property.

"Some staff find that uncomfortable because it is fuzzy, because it's tenuous, because the peer pressure is terrific, in a civilized way. Anything you propose can be immediately shot at.

"But the freedom to fail and the freedom to get shot at are expected. It's nothing personal, it's just an intellectual sort of a philosophy of trying to do something and innovate and implement. Those are all abstractions, but what it really boils down to is what you have to offer that is different from the many other consulting firms.

"We're always in a state of change. That's why this depiction is a snapshot. It's moving. It's like looking at an aquarium with things moving. Occasionally the sharks get over in one corner together, and the jellyfish get over here and the sunfish get over here. Pretty soon they all move around and they resort themselves."

Trust that binds

"Movement goes on all the time here and the main thing that holds the organization together is trust and respect between individuals. These are the elements that you two have written about so eloquently. The empowerment of networks and the reason they're cemented together is personal trust and respect. That exists here. If it doesn't exist, then it doesn't fly.

"This doesn't mean that everyone networks with everyone else. It's like any other human group. It's not all one happy family, you know; there are little families, little groups. It's like any civilization, small community, or society. It's a society of its own with different pockets of completely opposite attitudes. It's all held together by superlative ethics.

"Most of the things that we do have the potential, or perception of such, of a conflict of interest in some way. There is an opportunity to mishandle inside information. Every professional on the staff knows the code of ethics here, which is not only written but is constantly reinforced. If we misbehave in that regard, we don't last. So it's self-correcting in that way.

"The network is based on a trust and a high intellectual respect for the sanctity of information and deciding what is in the public domain and what is not. We've got cases here that we work on where we're working on security information and only a few know what's underway. And we don't work on projects for two different governments or

companies if there's a potential for strategic conflict. We are very careful about that and we turn down business because of that.

"We can be working for one company that's trying to acquire another and we can't get tangled up in that. We stay away from executive recruiting. Some consulting firms do recruiting. But if a client ever thought that we had identified somebody who relocated because of knowledge of their staff, we'd get really zapped. So we stay away entirely from recruiting as a professional practice.

"These potential conflicts are essentially managed by individuals. There's no one person or one group who can effectively manage all interrelationships or intervene or listen in on the network communications.

"For example, I don't know what a person is doing unless I'm working with him or her. So it's an interesting way to work as opposed to an industrial hierarchical organization where the boss knows what the people below are doing. You are expected to tell the superior what you are doing. As a result the information flow can get constrained."

Jessica and Jeff: "You had many years in a different kind of organization. What brought you to this view? Or did it come to you when you came to ADL?"

Bob Mueller: "It came to me when I came to ADL. I worked thirty-three years in hierarchy—board, executive committee and chairman roles. I came here to do consulting, writing and some lecturing, because one of the officers at my former place of employment had become an officer here and said, 'Come on over here because we have more fun.'

"I never knew what happiness was until I got into the consulting world and then it was too late, you might say! You lose a lot of the perks, privileges, and trappings of power which many, many hierarchical positions have.