



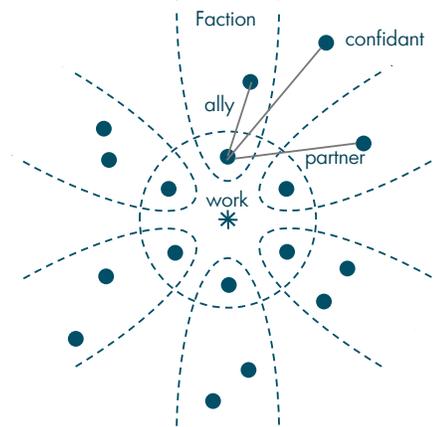
## Stakeholders – Factions – Allies – Partners

### Stakeholders

- Stakeholders are usually **organized by the role** they play in an organization, community or bigger system
- As the issues change, the stakeholders change. For example...
  - When a school tries to extend its hours – the bus company, crossing guards, police department, neighbors, neighborhood business – are all stakeholders
  - When the same school tries to improve its performance in mathematics – many of these stakeholders will not be relevant

### Factions

- Factions can be a more useful way of understanding the groups and politics that develop **around an issue**
- When a school superintendent tries to lengthen the school day the obvious stakeholder groups will include: teachers, parents, school administrators and custodians, crossing guards, and bus companies
- When we diagnose the factions we realize that not all teachers agree. There is a range of perspectives among teachers. There is a range of perspectives among parents, etc...
- Factions are based on perspectives. A single faction can be composed of some teachers, some parents, some students...
- As the issue changes – **stakeholders may remain static, but the factions shift as perspectives change**



### Allies

- Allies are the people **within your faction** (The people in your Facebook feed)
- We are very good at identifying and working with allies
- When a special committee forms – the people on the committee usually share a perspective that make them allies

### Partners

- Partners are the people **in other factions** that are more difficult, but more important to work with
- Partnering is necessary for organizational learning and making progress on adaptive challenges
- Partnering helps you...
  - Understand how different people perceive the problem
  - Identify the losses people face and the resistance they are demonstrating
  - Improves your ability to make progress on adaptive challenges because these challenges are systemic and progress must be made within and across all stakeholder / faction groups

## Confidants

- Partnering across boundaries to do important leadership work requires confidants
- Confidants are people we confide in. They listen to us and help us make sense of our experience as we try to get difficult work done
- The biggest mistake boundary-crossers make is confusing allies with confidants. We tend to see our allies as confidants – but we risk exposing ourselves in ways our allies do not appreciate
- The best confidants are trusted friends or colleagues **OUTSIDE of the system** you are operating in. Someone outside of your system can give you the objective relationship you need to be a successful boundary crosser

## Boundary Crossing

- Partnering requires ‘Boundary Crossing’
  - One must cross a literal boundary into another department or organization
  - And one must cross a figurative boundary into another faction or perspective
- Boundary crossers risk being seen as traitors for betraying their faction and its perspective
- Sometimes systems have gatekeepers in place that make it harder to cross boundaries. In order to enroll gatekeepers in your work, it is helpful to first understand the nature of the threat you represent to them.

## Bridge Building

- Bridge building is needed when wide fractures between groups persists over a long period of time as the result of unresolved issues of the past, competing priorities, misunderstandings or just because the groups are simply a mystery to each other
- In order to begin to build bridges it is helpful to identify competing narratives and sacred values
- “Frontier Guides” can help build bridges. They serve three functions:
  - go to the boundary and even venture into foreign territory
  - be a voice of calm and encouragement to their own faction in face of the possibility of exploring a relationship with the other group
  - play the role of “interpreter” as they mediate between the groups.
- Building bridges involves having tough conversations addressing the nature of the divide of the groups. These conversations generate heat. It is important to remind people of the higher purpose behind building bridges and to keep them in the room as they begin to wrestle with unresolved conflicts

## Case Consultation

- This week we are paying more attention to
  - Stakeholders
  - Factions
  - And the multiple perspectives in your case