

NEW

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Directions

Stewardship thrives in a networked organization

To become a better steward of the health care system, the ministry will continue to develop into a networked workplace. In a networked organization, teams or groups of employees from across divisions, or within divisions, work together. High performing companies use a networked approach for its flexibility and as a means to promote innovation.

These organizational qualities will allow the ministry to better plan for and respond to the needs of the health system.

1. Q: What is a networked organization?

A: In a networked organization, teams or groups of employees from across divisions or even within a division work together and share information for a common purpose. Work is organized and assigned based on staff's expertise, knowledge and skill set. In the ministry, networks can be both formal, for example, portfolio teams and priority commitment teams, and informal, such as staff meeting on short-term basis to work together on a particular topic of interest.

2. Q: What is the advantage of this workplace structure?

A: Networked organizations are flexible and innovative to help the organization meet its goals. Networked organizations are learning organizations that adapt and respond to a changing environment.

3. Q: How do you change from working in a traditional structure to working in a networked manner?

A: Changing workplace culture takes time. To create a networked workplace, staff collaborate with colleagues from across the ministry on issues and projects, rather than only within their unit or division. This opens up access to resources and expertise and helps employees begin to see themselves as part of one large community, as opposed to individual divisions. This is an opportunity for employees to initiate this contact and not wait to be invited. Discuss with your managers and colleagues where you think you can make a difference.

4. Q: How does work get done in a networked organization?

A: Work is organized around and carried out by cross-functional teams. Staff in various functions contribute their expertise to a project as needed. Staff expertise, knowledge and data is readily shared to help a project achieve success.

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5. Q: What difference does it make to individual ministry staff? How will it impact on my work?

A: Being part of a networked organization will help you better connect with colleagues and be part of teams and projects where your knowledge and expertise can be put to good use. This can open workplace opportunities for employees in a broad range of areas and subject matters, rather than limiting them to focus their work in a narrow program area. A networked environment can increase your involvement and knowledge level about the wide variety of issues that the ministry is focusing on.

6. Q: Will frontline staff be included in cross-divisional teams? What will their role be in the network?

A: Frontline workers are very important to a networked organization. Staff collaboration is key in this type of workplace. Knowledge and vision is shared at all levels of the organization so that frontline workers can “talk the talk and walk the walk” as effectively as managers. Staff are supported and involved cross-divisionally at every level because a networked organization is a single community working toward common goals.

7. Q: How does staff stay connected in a networked organization?

A: Sharing of information and knowledge is vital to keep staff well-connected. Discussion groups or communities of interest are among the ways links are made in a networked workplace. These resources help you easily find others with common interests, needs and the appropriate expertise who can contribute to a given project. Look to a future issue of *NEW Directions* for details on the ministry’s plans to support these connections.

Watch for upcoming *NEW Directions* articles on working in networks.

A New *Direction* *Transition at Work*

Focus on Project Management Tools for Teams — Issues Management

Issues are immediate problems in a project that need to be resolved — they are inevitable. They can be in the form of a concern or risk which may impact on the project’s end goal or milestones. Team leads need a disciplined process in place to manage issues. As well, team members should always be working to resolve issues to ensure the successful completion of the project.

The issues management tools identify, organize, prioritize, address, track and control issues to ensure that they are resolved.

The issues management log is the tool that the project manager uses to summarize and keep track of project issues. The log is reviewed at project status or update meetings.

At the discretion of the project lead, the issues management form is used by team members to document the details of each issue. For example, does the issue need to be resolved immediately? To determine this, issues are categorized according to priority — critical, high, moderate and low. The impact of whether an issue will affect the implementation or success of the project is also classified — low, moderate or high. This form and categorization helps maintain a consistent and disciplined approach to identifying and managing issues in a project.

The combination of the priority and impact of an issue will help the project lead, team members, sponsors and stakeholders to understand the importance and severity of an issue and the timeframe needed to resolve it. ■

Learn more about how to use the project status tools successfully in the [Transition at Work — Project Management Tools for Teams](#) page on INFOweb.

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Elaine Lurie, *editor* | 416-327-4363 | Maureen Murray, *writer* | 416-212-1884
W.D. Lighthall, *writer* | 416-327-4760

Do you have questions about the organizational change?

- Ask your manager
- E-mail your questions or comments to the feedback account at anewdirection.moh@ontario.ca
- Call the feedback line at 1-888-862-0528 or TTY: 1-800-387-5559