Submission # 14511

Exploring the Team Boundary: New Directions and Extensions of Team Boundary Management Research

Abstract

Recent research has emphasized the dynamic challenges and performance demands placed upon "externally dependent" work teams. Externally dependent work teams are tightly linked to their environment and as such, their overall performance is highly contingent upon successful *team boundary management* (or the team's efforts to collectively manage its relationships with the external environment). Despite considerable progress in our understanding of team boundary management and its association with team performance, we know relatively little about the factors that predict engagement in critical boundary spanning actions or how the externally-derived knowledge and resources gained from those activities are utilized within the team and effectively applied in ways that facilitate team performance. To address these gaps, this symposium offers four integrative and complementary field studies that explore the challenges and issues associated with effective boundary management for intact work teams. Collectively, these papers identify antecedents and consequences of critical boundary spanning behavior, moderators of the boundary spanning - team performance relationship, and facilitating conditions for maximizing team member expertise and knowledge within externally dependent work teams.

Key words:

Boundary Management, Team Performance, External Knowledge

Presenter Symposium Submitted to Organizational Behavior and Organization & Management Theory Divisions of the Academy of Management for presentation at 2005 Annual Meeting in Honolulu, Hawaii

Explanation of Interest for Organization Behavior Division: This proposed symposium will be of interest to the Organizational Behavior Division given its focus on the study of groups within organizations, namely the nature of external team boundary management processes and the relationship between these processes and team performance. As a collective set, the papers in this symposium span across multiple levels of analysis, integrate several organizational behavior theories (e.g., team process frameworks, ecological models of team effectiveness, social network perspectives, group climate, etc.), and offer practical prescriptions to externally dependent work teams.

Explanation of Interest for Organization and Management Theory Division: This proposed symposium will be of interest to the Organization and Management Theory Division because it explores a variety of theoretical linkages underlying work team-environment relationships within organizations. Collectively, the four papers included within this symposium advance theoretical approaches such as ecological models of team effectiveness, team process models, social network perspectives, resource dependency theory, group climate, social capital theory, etc. and empirically test their validity in explaining the ability of work teams to overcome the challenges associated with gathering and leveraging externally-derived knowledge and resources to maximize team effectiveness.

Participant Information

Statement for the Symposium Chair: "I certify that I have received signed statements from all intended participants agreeing to participate in this symposium."

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Exploring the Team Boundary: New Directions and Extensions of Team Boundary Management Research

Symposium Overview

Recent research has emphasized the dynamic challenges and performance demands placed upon "externally dependent" work teams. Externally dependent work teams are tightly linked to their environment and their overall performance is highly contingent upon the successful management of a variety of external factors, such as meeting customer demands, acquiring and leveraging key sources of external information, and coordinating across multiple stakeholders outside the team (Ancona, Bresman, & Kaeufer 2002). *Team boundary management* reflects these external team processes, or the team's efforts to collectively manage its relationships with the environment (Gladstein, 1984). Boundary management activities predominately include interacting with key external linkages (e.g., for the purposes of obtaining knowledge and feedback regarding team activities, negotiating task demands, soliciting support), coordinating activities across several inter- and intra-organizational groups, and scanning the environment for general and technical information (Ancona, 1990; Ancona & Caldwell, 1992).

The performance benefits associated with team boundary management have been documented in several seminal pieces which demonstrated the importance of team strategies and actions that enable teams to manage their external environment (e.g., Ancona, 1990; Ancona & Caldwell, 1992). Interestingly, findings have suggested that not only are external team processes positively linked to team performance, but also for certain types of teams (e.g., externally dependent teams such as new product development and consulting teams) this link is stronger than the relationship between internal team processes and team performance (Ancona, 1990).

Despite considerable progress in our understanding of team boundary management, at least two significant gaps remain in our knowledge of the nature, antecedents, and consequences of these externally-focused team processes. First, to date, several studies have explored team strategies and processes for gathering knowledge and other resources from external sources (e.g., Ancona, 1990; Ancona & Caldwell, 1992). However, we know relatively little about how those critical resources are subsequently disseminated within the team and effectively applied in ways that facilitate team performance (Hansen, 1999). For externally dependent work teams, the utilization of externally-derived knowledge by the team is critical and yet very little attention has been directed to understanding how teams effectively utilize the knowledge and other resources obtained through boundary spanning actions (Ancona & Caldwell, 1998). For example, despite Ancona's (1990) caveat of potential moderating influences (e.g., type of team, level of project demands, etc.), few studies to date have actually explored the role of team characteristics in enhancing or constraining the capability of externally dependent teams to maximize the resources gained from outside sources. Team factors, such as work group climate and internal team processes, are likely to exert strong influence over a team's ability to utilize the expertise of those team members serving in critical boundary spanning roles and translate boundary spanning actions into maximal team effectiveness. Research into this area offers the opportunity to help externally dependent teams make more effective use of boundary spanning activities.

Secondly, boundary spanning research has generally been conducted at the team-level of analysis, aggregating across individual team member behaviors and ignoring any between person variance. Consequently, we know relatively little about the role of individual or group characteristics that can predict the types of team members who are likely to take on boundary spanning responsibilities or are most suited for such critical roles (Ancona & Caldwell, 1998).

This gap is surprising given the importance of boundary spanning behaviors and the implications for learning how to compose teams to enhance their boundary spanning capability. In addition, future study of the implications of serving as a boundary spanner within the team context is important, particularly given that one's reputation and perceived value within the team are highly likely to impact career advancement and promotion opportunities, most notably within professional services and consulting organizations employing large numbers of externally dependent teams. Furthermore, understanding the consequences of boundary spanning behavior at the individual level has strong ramifications for team member satisfaction and motivation to continue these critical efforts in their current and future teams. Research in this area offers the opportunity to help managers and teams better understand the characteristics of individuals most suited to boundary spanning roles and the implications that taking on boundary spanning responsibilities has for those individuals in terms of their standing within the team, their organization, and their career.

This symposium seeks to address the above gaps by bringing together a group of researchers currently exploring these issues in their research. A primary objective is to provide an integrative session in which a variety of multi-level issues involving boundary spanning processes can be identified, discussed, and explored in detail. Specifically, we offer 4 studies on intact work teams that explore the facilitators and consequences of boundary spanning behavior, moderators of the boundary spanning-performance relationship, and facilitating conditions for maximizing member expertise and knowledge within externally dependent work teams. Our 4 papers each uniquely contribute to these objectives.

The first paper by Haas seeks to understand the ways in which externally dependent teams can overcome the difficulties faced when gathering and utilizing knowledge from outside

sources. Drawing upon on theories of dependence and exchange in organizations, her findings provide support for a buffering role of team autonomy that enables project teams to manage their dependence on external knowledge more effectively. Her study is based on independent ratings of project quality from 96 teams and survey data from 550 team members collected during a multi-method field study conducted at a leading international development agency.

The second paper by Bunderson and Mislin integrates broader research on work group learning and climate to similarly explore the challenges of identifying and leveraging member expertise (offering valuable implications for utilizing externally-derived knowledge acquired by boundary spanners as well as internally-held expertise). This study considers the general hypothesis that group psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999) and group learning orientation (Bunderson & Sutcliffe, 2003) help to create a motivating and safe environment in which group members can effectively utilize one another's expertise. The hypothesis is tested by examining the learning and knowledge utilization dynamics in a sample of 140 MBA professionals assigned to 34 study groups.

The third paper by Druskat and Wolf takes an in-depth look at boundary management processes in 60 cross-functional strategic decision-making teams in a *Fortune 100* pharmaceutical organization. Using a multi-method approach (comprised of interviews and surveys) this study offers another exploration of the boundary spanning – team performance relationship, advancing the argument that externally dependent work teams must give equal attention to the quality of their internal team processes as well as their boundary management. Preliminary results support this claim and provide interesting insights into the nature of the internal and external team processes necessary for teams to maximize their performance.

Moving to the individual level of analysis, the last paper by Marrone provides and tests a multi-level model of the antecedents and implications of individual boundary spanning behavior. Studying 27 consulting teams, comprised of 171 full-time MBA students, her findings shed light on the personality traits, motivational factors, and team characteristics that predict one's engagement in boundary spanning activities for their teams. Additionally, this study integrates social network perspectives to hypothesize and confirm an empirical link between boundary spanning behavior and individual-level consequences.

Collectively, this body of research offers a variety of approaches for studying boundary spanning behavior within intact externally dependent work teams and explores both the facilitators and the consequences of such behavior at multiple levels of analysis. Following the individual paper presentations, Paul Tesluk will lead a diiscussion with the presenters and the audience around the session themes (3-4) introduced by Jennifer Marrone at the start of the symposium. Paul's broad experience in studying intact work teams and how teams manage their external environment (e.g., Tesluk & Mathieu, 1998) are valuable perspectives for the role of session moderator. It is important to stress that this is not a typical symposium discussant role in that after identifying a set of cross-cutting themes, Paul will moderate a discussion beginning with the presenters on these themes and then expanding the discussion quickly to include involvement from the audience. Our objective is to initiate some insightful and valuable discussions amongst the presenters as well as involve the audience for further comments and discussion around the central themes that motivate this symposium.

Our proposed 80 minute symposium schedule is as follows: 5 minutes for introduction, 10 minutes per paper presentation, 5 minutes for session moderator introductory remarks, and 30 minutes for presenter discussion, audience input, and follow-up questions.

From Knowledge Gathering to Project Quality: The Role of Team Autonomy

Martine Haas

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In knowledge-intensive work settings where expertise is widely diffused, such as professional service firms, technology corporations, or product design companies, members of project teams often depend on knowledge from sources outside the team to deliver high quality projects (e.g., Mohrman, Cohen, and Mohrman, 1995; Argote, McEvily, and Reagans, 2003). Recent research has shown that gathering knowledge from sources outside the team can help team members to apply best practices, generate new ideas, solve technical problems, avoid rework, and learn from the experiences of others (e.g., Szulanski, 1996; Hargadon and Sutton, 1997; Argote et al., 2000). Yet dependence on external knowledge also gives outsiders power over the team (cf. Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). Such dependence may improve project quality by increasing the team's responsiveness to issues that would otherwise have been overlooked, but sometimes it may impede team performance instead, by creating conflicts of interest, inhibiting team learning, wasting the team members' time and effort, or leading to cooptation of the project (cf. Eisenhardt and Bourgeois, 1988; Ancona and Caldwell, 1992; Edmondson, 2002). Knowledge gathering that is critical for their work thus creates potential problems for project teams. This dilemma raises an important question for such teams: how can they manage their dependence on external knowledge effectively? This study proposes one possible answer: teams may be able to manage any negative effects of such dependence more effectively if they have greater autonomy, in the form of discretion over critical decisions related to their tasks (Hackman, 1987). Hence, the effects of knowledge gathering on project quality may be more positive when teams have more autonomy.

Much classic organization theory recognizes that knowledge is a source of power in organizations and some recent grounded studies of knowledge sharing processes and practices echo this view (e.g., Pettigrew, 1973; Pfeffer, 1981; Patriotta, 2003). Yet current theory and research on the barriers to effective knowledge utilization in the information-processing, boundary-spanning, organizational learning, and strategy literatures rarely focuses on the power relations between knowledge providers and users, or the conditions for managing such power relations successfully. Meanwhile, the team effectiveness, empowerment, and self-management literatures emphasize the potential benefits of team autonomy for increasing the intrinsic motivation of team members (e.g. Pearce and Ravlin, 1987; Kirkman and Rosen, 1999; Langfred, 2000), but the potential benefits of autonomy for protecting the internal decision-making processes of the team from excessive external influences have received relatively little attention. These buffering benefits suggest that team autonomy may be particularly helpful when teams are more vulnerable to problems of external dependence. Exploring the connections between team autonomy and external dependence is also consistent with growing interest among team scholars in the externally-oriented activities of many project teams, including both knowledge gathering and "ambassador activities" that build support for the team from outsiders (e.g., Ancona and Caldwell, 1992; Goodman and Wilson, 1999; Cummings, 2004). Theories of both team effectiveness and organizational knowledge thus may be advanced by recognizing that knowledge gathering increases the external dependence of teams, and investigating whether autonomy helps teams escape the potential problems of such dependence.

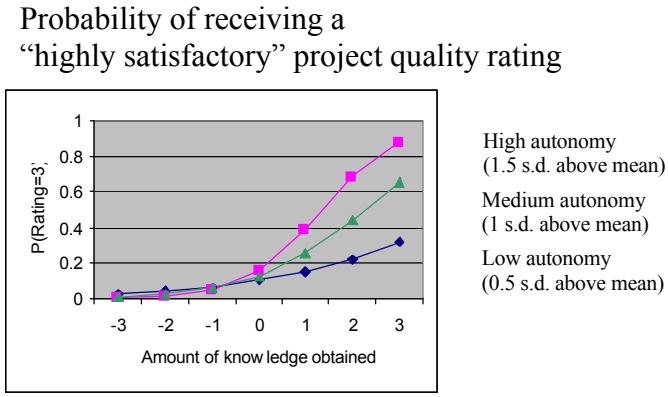
To explore whether the benefits of knowledge gathering are greater for more autonomous teams, I draw on theories of dependence and exchange in organizations to identify conditions under which project teams are more vulnerable to such problems. Specifically, the effects of

gathering more knowledge on project quality are expected to be more positive when teams have greater autonomy, especially when that knowledge is relatively scarce or the projects are more prominent or demanding (cf. Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978; Bacharach and Lawler, 1980).

Method. I test the hypotheses using quantitative data collected during a multi-method field study conducted at a leading international development agency. The mission of the organization was to alleviate poverty and promote economic and social development around the world, and these teams were engaged in complex financial or technical assistance projects which focused on designing major development programs and providing analysis and advice to client governments on specific development issues. Sophisticated technical knowledge and in-depth country-specific knowledge thus were critical production inputs, and the quality of the projects that the teams delivered to their clients was a critical measure of their performance.

Results. The data consist of independent ratings of project quality from 96 teams and survey data from 550 team members. Ordinal logit models are used to examine the moderating effects of team autonomy on the relationship between knowledge gathering and project quality. The interaction effects (see Figure 1 below) provide support for a buffering role of team autonomy that enables project teams to manage their dependence on external knowledge more effectively. The study thus offers insight into the conditions that help teams to manage their external relations, and draws attention to the political aspects of knowledge work.

Figure 1. Moderating Effect of Team Autonomy



Leveraging Member Expertise in Groups: The Importance of Group Climate

J. Stuart Bunderson
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Groups composed of individuals who differ in the domain or in the amount of their task-related expertise present both a challenge and an opportunity for the organizations that make use of such groups and to the scholars who study them. On one hand, such groups hold the promise of significant learning gains when group members exchange knowledge, information, and competence in order to develop new ways of accomplishing their work more efficiently or effectively. On the other hand, the very differences that make it possible for such groups to learn and innovate can lead to coordination problems since members who differ in how much they know about what must overcome well-documented problems associated with interpersonal difference, i.e., problems of social categorization, miscommunication, and status inequities. (For some early reviews of this literature, see Jackson, 1992, 1995; Milliken and Martins, 1996; Tsui, Egan, and Xin, 1995; Williams and O'Reilly, 1998).

Past research on the challenges of leveraging member expertise in diverse groups has offered a number of important insights. For example, researchers have done a convincing job of demonstrating, in the lab and in the field, that groups composed of individuals with different expertise often fail to utilize that expertise. More recently, research has begun to suggest various factors that might help to facilitate the utilization of member expertise in groups. For example, the evidence suggests that groups are better at learning from and leveraging diverse member expertise when group members have a good sense of who has what expertise, when groups have

been together longer, when power and influence is decentralized within a group, when group members are broadly versus narrowly specialized, when members emotionally identify with their group, and when team members engage in dialogue and debate (see Bunderson, 2003; Bunderson & Sutcliffe, 2002; Moreland, 1999; Simons, Pelled, & Smith, 1999; Stasser, 1999; Van der Vegt & Bunderson, In Press). Research also suggests that the benefits of group expertise diversity are more likely to accrue in complex, non-routine task environments (Jackson, 1992, 1995).

The purpose of the present study is to further examine the conditions under which groups more effectively leverage the diverse expertise of group members by considering the significance of group climate. Specifically, this study considers the general hypothesis that group psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999) and group learning orientation (Bunderson & Sutcliffe, 2003), two key dimensions of group climate, help to create an environment in which group members feel both motivated to learn from one another's differences and confident that they can do so without incurring significant interpersonal risk. We test this hypothesis by examining the cross-level learning and knowledge utilization dynamics that take place in a sample of 140 working professionals assigned to 34 study groups as part of an evening MBA course.

While our analysis of these data is still in a preliminary stage, this study promises important insights into the role of group climate in facilitating the utilization of diverse expertise in groups.

Effective Boundary Management Activities in Cross-Functional Decision-Making Teams

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Two decades ago, Ancona's ground-breaking research revealed that the performance of teams in organizations is heavily influenced by how effectively a team manages its relationship with its larger organization (Ancona, 1990; Ancona & Caldwell, 1992; Gladstein, 1984). This research showed that the quality of the interactions between a team and members of the organization mattered more to team performance than the quality of the interactions among team members (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992). The assumption is that high quality interactions and information sharing between a team and its organization facilitates the attainment of information and resources that keep a team from becoming insular in its actions and decisions and enables team performance (Tushman & Katz, 1980; Yan & Louis, 1999).

Ancona's research uncovered another important finding: Teams with effective boundary management strategies and actions had poor quality internal team dynamics, including low scores on effective internal team processes and team cohesiveness (Ancona & Caldwell, 1992). One explanation is that the more time team members spend building external alliances means less time to build team member relationships. It may also be more difficult for a team to develop a collective identity if members are focused on building and utilizing external alliances.

Focusing team attention on boundary management activities despite the cost to internal processes might work fine for teams whose tasks emphasize developing external alliances and acquiring information and resources that exist outside the team (e.g., the sales teams, consulting teams, and high-technology product development teams studied by Ancona). However, little is known about the boundary management strategies and activities that work well for teams whose

tasks have been found to require high quality team interaction and decision making processes, e.g., self-managing teams (Cohen, Ledford, and Sprietzer, 1986), and cross-functional decision making teams (Lovelace, Shapiro, & Weingart, 2001).

Thus, we present a study that takes an in-depth look at effective boundary management processes and strategies in cross-functional strategic decision-making teams in the pharmaceutical industry. Our objective is to advance knowledge about effective boundary management strategies and activities in highly interdependent teams that must give equal attention to the quality of their internal team processes and their boundary management.

Selective Literature Review and Research Questions and Hypotheses

Previous theory and research prompts three sets of research questions. First, similar to Ancona's work, we sought to assess the link between internal team processes and external boundary management processes, and between both types of processes and team performance.

Second, in our socio-emotional theory of team effectiveness (Druskat & Wolff, 2001, Wolff & Druskat, 2003), which applies to highly interdependent teams, we propose that effective boundary management involves three causally linked constructs. We propose that organizational awareness (i.e., awareness of the needs of the larger organization and of the priorities and issues faced by stakeholders) facilitates the development of social capital (i.e., relationships with relevant individuals and teams in the larger organization). We also propose that a team's social capital facilitates its ability to obtain external support. In summary, we hypothesize that social capital moderates the link between team organizational awareness and external support.

Our third question asks about the division of boundary management labor between team leaders and members. Ancona and Caldwell (1992) identified their team boundary management strategies through interview with team leaders. They then assessed the frequencies with which

teams engaged in these strategies by surveying team members. This leaves ambiguity about the division of boundary management labor between the team leader and team members. Note that in our earlier study, we found that in successful self-managing manufacturing teams that require high quality internal team processes, external team leaders engaged in considerable boundary management for their teams (Druskat & Wheeler, 2003). Team leaders built relationships with managers, engineers, and individuals who provided their teams with information, resources, and support. However, we did not examine whether team members also engaged in boundary management. This leads to the following questions: In successful cross-functional decision-making teams, who manages the team's boundary? How is boundary management labor divided?

Methods and Results

We studied cross-functional strategic drug development teams in the research and development division of a *Fortune 100* pharmaceutical organization. We studied these teams because their cross-functional composition and strategic decision making task necessitated attention to both internal team processes and external boundary management. The 60 teams in our sample had 7 to 10 members. Team members were team leaders in their functional areas including: chemical pharmaceuticals, clinical research, global marketing, project management, regulatory, and preclinical. Team leaders were selected by management because of their knowledge of the team's drug compound. Data were collected via two methods: (1) an on-line survey made available to all teams and (2) critical incident interviews with members and leaders from: (a) the ten highest performing teams in the sample and (b) nine average performing teams.

Survey Data Collection. All 60 cross-functional drug development teams in the organization were invited to participate in an on-line survey. Participation allowed a team to receive feedback on its norms and processes, but required participation from 80% of team

members. Our final sample consisted of forty-five teams; a 75% response rate, which we felt was high for these strategic-level teams.

Survey scales. To measure aspects of the teams' internal processes and external boundary management activities we used scales from our group emotional competence survey (see Druskat, Wolff, Messer & Stubbs, 2003). Specifically, we measured the following constructs: team interpersonal understanding, team interpersonal trust, proactive task focus, organizational awareness, external relationships, and external support. All items are worded at the group level (e.g., In our team…).

Team performance. One month after survey completion, upper-level managers completed an on-line performance assessment form rating their teams (using a 1-7 scale) on seven dimensions: (1) Performance against other teams with whom you are familiar in the organization that perform similar work, (2) Quality of the team's work, (3) Ability to sustain motivation, and work together on a long-term basis, (4) Efficiency in getting things done, (5) Effective and efficient in getting through functional stage-gate reviews, (6) Achievement of your 2003 goals and objectives, and (7) Progress toward your 2004 goals and objectives. Responses were tallied to produce a mean performance rating for each team.

Critical Incident Interviews. We used nominations from eight upper level managers to identify a sub-sample of the top ten performing teams in our sample and a comparison sub-sample of nine average performing teams (see Druskat & Wheeler, 2003 for an explanation of this comparative multiple case study methodology and why we compare top performing cases to average performing). For each of the 19 teams selected, we conducted critical incident interviews with two randomly selected team members and the team leader. This included 57 interviews lasting 90-120 minutes. Interviewers were blind to the performance condition of the teams.

Interviews were transcribed verbatim and we used iterative content analysis methods (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996) to develop a list of behavioral patterns and themes capturing the internal processes and external boundary management strategies and activities.

The interviews are being coded by two coders who are blind to the performance categories of the teams and the research questions and hypotheses. Coders were instructed to pay particular attention to identifying exactly who within the team carried out the behaviors so that we could track those carried out by team leaders and those carried out by team members. During training, our coders developed high levels of inter-rater reliability: Above.70 for each code.

Preliminary Results. We are currently in the process of analyzing our data. We are also waiting for some upper-level managers who wanted to wait for end of the year results to return their performance assessment surveys. Initial analyses with 34 of our teams reveals that several of our survey scales (which are aggregated to the group level based on theoretical and ICC support, $p< .05$, to do so) are significantly correlated to team performance: interpersonal understanding ($r = .395$; $p < .05$), team interpersonal trust ($r = .303$; $p < .10$), proactive task focus ($r = .407$; $p < .01$), organizational awareness, external relationships ($r = .364$; $p < .05$), and external support ($r = .346$; $p < .05$). Organizational awareness is not directly correlated to performance ($r = .253$; $p < .25$). At the symposium, we will present all analyses with our full sample, including the test of our model of how organizational awareness builds external support.

Coders have completed coding 78% of our 57 interviews. Initial analyses show that both team leaders and team members are engaging in boundary management behaviors and that the frequency of boundary management activities in the high performing teams is greater than in the average performing teams. Again, we will present our full analyses at the symposium.

Cutting Across Team Boundaries: Antecedents and Implications of Individual Boundary Spanning Actions

Jennifer A. Marrone

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Boundary spanning activities, or external team processes such as establishing relationships with key external parties and gathering pertinent information from outside the team, are critical to the success of many organizational work teams (Ancona, 1990; Ancona & Caldwell, 1992). The performance benefits associated with *team boundary management* have been documented in several seminal pieces (e.g., Ancona, 1990; Ancona & Caldwell, 1992). Studying primarily new product development and cross-functional project teams, Ancona and her colleagues' have revealed that the team's strategies and actions towards managing the external environment coincide with higher performance. Furthermore, in a recent special issue of *The Academy of Management Journal*, several studies revealed performance advantages associated with establishing external ties and acquiring knowledge from outside sources (e.g., Oh, Chung, & Liabianca, 2004; Soda, Usai, & Zaheer, 2004).

Surprisingly, however, while the processes and benefits have been documented at the team level, little research has directly explored the dynamics occurring at the individual level of analysis. Studies of boundary spanning have historically focused on team boundary management, aggregating across individual ratings and ignoring any between person variance in boundary spanning behavior (e.g. Ancona & Caldwell, 1992). Consequently, researchers have not yet identified the factors that predict engagement in boundary management activities. Addressing this gap is critical given the importance of boundary spanning behaviors for team effectiveness and the resulting implications for learning to compose teams to enhance their

boundary spanning capability (Ancona & Caldwell, 1998). Additionally, the consequences stemming for individuals engaging in boundary spanning behavior in a *team context* have not been investigated and we do not know what benefits, if any, exist for those members who carry out these critical roles on behalf of their teams. While previous work exploring boundary spanning behavior within organizations offers related support for a positive relationship with individual performance (e.g., Cross & Cummings; 2004; Druskat & Wheeler, 2003; Tushman & Scanlan, 1981a; 1981b), others have warned that boundary spanning activities are largely outwardly directed in their focus and so maintaining external connections may also result in high levels of role conflict, stress, and ambiguity that can adversely impact individual effectiveness (e.g., Katz & Kahn, 1978). Addressing this research question has potentially strong ramifications for team member satisfaction and motivation to continue these critical efforts in their current and future teams. Furthermore, reputation and perceived value within the team are likely to have important consequences for career advancement and promotion opportunities, particularly within professional services and consulting organizations employing large numbers of externally dependent teams.

To address these gaps, in the current paper, I identify several individual characteristics (i.e., proactive personality, self-monitoring, boundary spanning self-efficacy, and perceptions of project value) and two team variables (i.e., project demands and boundary spanning strategic importance) and test their predictive value in explaining team member engagement in boundary spanning behavior. Additionally, I draw upon social network perspectives (e.g., Brass, 1984), and social capital theory (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998) to predict and explain positive consequences for boundary spanners, namely, high peer ratings of individual leadership, influence, and contributions to the team.

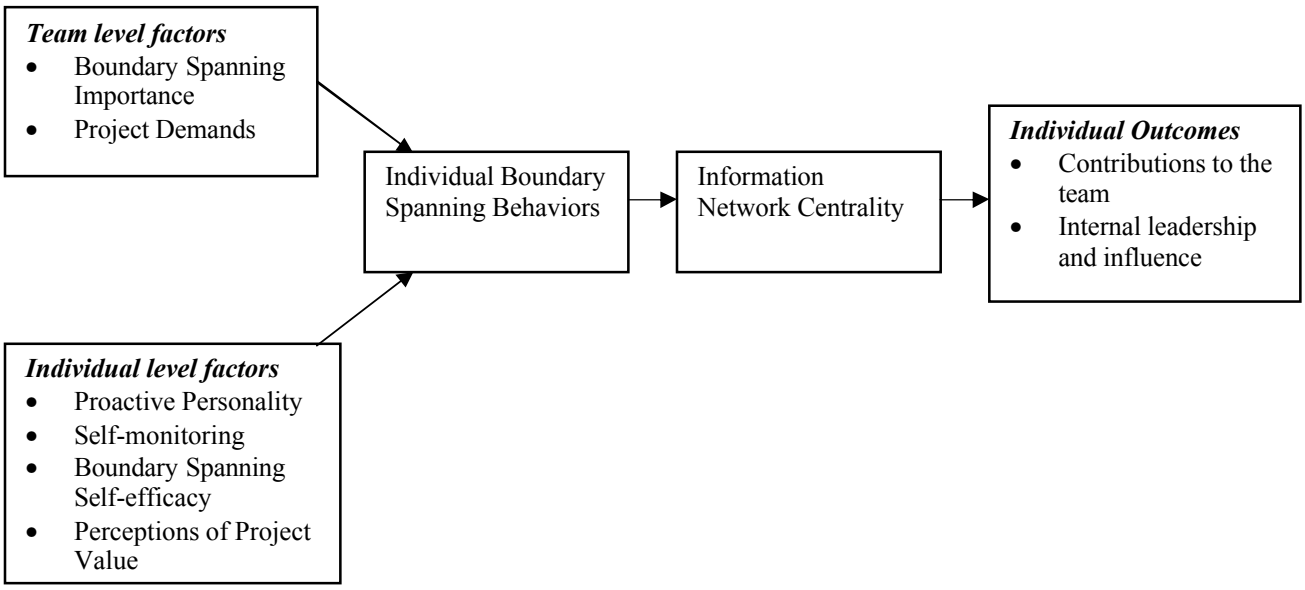
Method. Hypotheses were tested using data from 27 consulting teams, comprised of 171 full-time MBA students. Data were collected primarily through surveys administered to team members at multiple points in time and were analyzed via hierarchical linear modeling, regression, and social network techniques. A summary of the hypothesized relationships is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Results. Results indicated partial support for the predictive value of self-monitoring, proactive personality, and boundary management self-efficacy on an individual's engagement in boundary spanning behaviors within their team. Significant variance in individual boundary spanning behavior also resided between groups and was explained by shared perceptions of the strategic importance of the boundary spanning function and the level of project demands. Teams that collectively valued external connections provided persuasive stimuli, signaling the importance and appropriateness of boundary spanning behavior by the individual team members. In contrast, project demands were found to significantly diminish individual boundary spanning behavior within the consulting teams in this sample. Interestingly, the nature of this negative relationship may be due to the time pressures that demanding projects place on team members, constraining their ability (and perhaps even their motivation) to engage in boundary spanning activities.

With respect to consequences, boundary spanning behaviors directed toward clients and general scanning / scouting of the environment showed strong relationships with peer ratings of individual leadership and contributions, revealing that those engaging in boundary spanning behaviors were highly valued team members (even after controlling for one's general leadership skills and abilities). Finally, the relationships between these boundary spanning behaviors and individual outcomes were fully mediated by information network centrality. Results suggest that

as a result of their connections with key external parties (client contacts, other business professionals, and industry experts), boundary spanners were highly valued by their teammates because they were perceived as integral "conduits" of information throughout the project. As their peers consistently looked to these individuals for information and knowledge, boundary spanners became highly central figures within the team's internal social network arrangement. In line with social capital and social network theories (e.g., Brass, 1984; Nahapiet & Ghosal, 1998), the findings suggest that it is by virtue of acquiring these central positions, that the boundary spanners obtain unique sources of power and influence within the team and are perceived by their peers as such valued team members.

Figure 1. Hypothesized Model



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