



## The Invisible Organization

How Informal Networks can Lead Organizational Change

Neil Farmer, Informal Networks Ltd, UK



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Despite valiant efforts and the advent of techniques such as delegation, career development, performance management, key performance indicators, programme and project management, social network analysis, and employee engagement, most organizations struggle to beat the 70 per cent failure rule for profound, people-disruptive business change. Surveys show that most employees are still disengaged from their work. Innovation is sluggish and agility elusive. Harnessing the hidden potential of your workforce can be a slow, often painful process.

Neil Farmer's *The Invisible Organization* explains how to adapt your organization's design to the informal networks that form most of the basis for communication between managers and employees. The book explores five key themes:

- Executive leadership - a little autocracy and a lot of collaboration; how senior managers can enable and facilitate change;
- Effective first-line management - in most organizations up to 60 per cent need to be replaced and women need to occupy far more significant roles;
- HR Managers - a key role, but most don't make the transition from 'command and control' towards the effective use of key influencers and informal network which allows HR people to contribute to the future of their business;
- The value of local influencers and those with extensive personal networks - how to identify them and increase their roles across all forms of business change;
- Radical changes to white-collar outsourcing - to an in-house outsourcing service.

This is an important, if somewhat painful, call to arms for leaders and HR specialists across all organizations.

### Contents

Preface - The birth of an insight. 'The Invisible Organization': Highlights of the book. The failure of business leadership; The importance of influencers; The importance of informal employee networks; Balancing formal and informal employee networks; Throwing out those tired old HR models; Managing your business using informal employee Networks; Appendices: Using informal networks - questions and answers; Final reflections on 'leadership and change'. References; Index.

### About the Author

Neil Farmer started his consultancy career in 1981 when he joined the ground-breaking IT research and consultancy firm Butler Cox. From 1988 to 1996, he founded and headed one of the UK's top change research groups - the Farringdon Forum Club. During this period, he carried out extensive research into business change, becoming increasingly focused on a single profound question - why does so much business change fail? He is author of 'Total Business Design' published by John Wiley & Sons in 1996.

Neil is a leading, innovative business change consultant, he is the consultant you rely on when business change becomes challenging. His clients include large Business Process Outsourcing suppliers (Siemens Business Services, BT and Xchanging) as well as household names such as Nationwide Building Society, National Savings, Liverpool City Council, Lloyds of London and Friends Provident.

In late 2009 Informal Networks Limited (which Neil co-founded) joined Professor Karen Stephenson [www.netform.com](http://www.netform.com) to offer a joint service in harnessing the power of informal networks.

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