

Building a Nonprofit Network: *Designing the Right Structures and Processes*

Offered by
Ontario Volunteer Centre's Network
in partnership with
Ontario Nonprofit Network
Sponsored by: Ontario Trillium Foundation

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**Building a network or
collaboration is a journey.**



**But it is rarely a linear journey,
and often chaotic.**

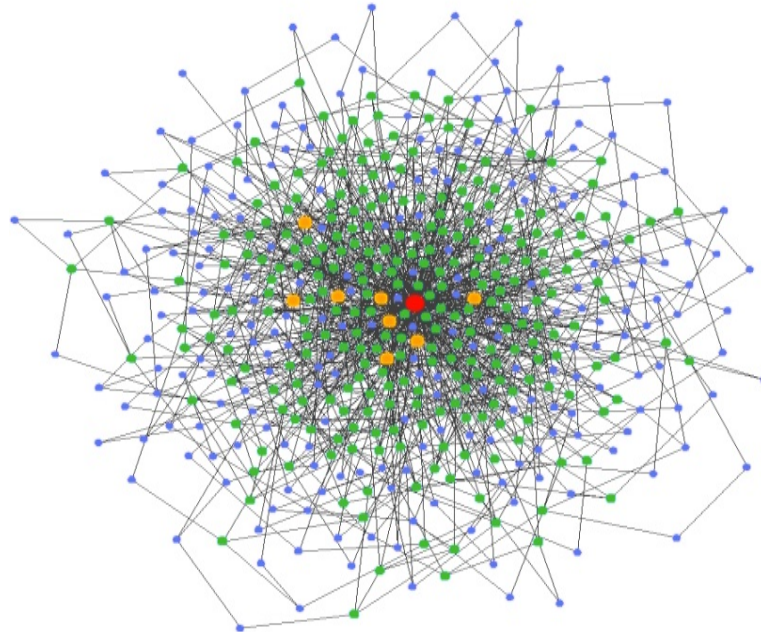


Webinar Objectives

- ✓ **Defining what is meant by a network**
- ✓ **Talk about the critical success factors**
- ✓ **Review the critical choices or decisions**

Polling 1: Participant Profile

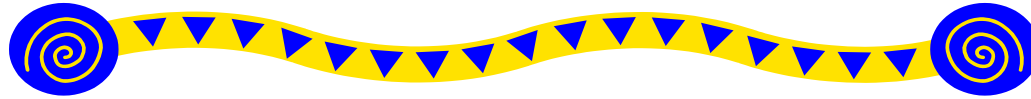
**There is no one model of
how to structure a network
or collaboration.**



Defining Network

- ✓ **Often used interchangeably with collaboration, partnership, alliance, council, coalition and association**
- ✓ **Group of people or autonomous organizations which choose to work together to achieve collective goals**

Wide Range...Drives Design



Formality

Duration

Scope

Diversity

Linkages

Dynamics



Exercise 1: What are the critical success factors that make the structure and processes of a network or collaboration hum?

Critical Success Factors

- ✓ Purpose is compelling and unifying
- ✓ Decision-making and ownership is shared
- ✓ Leadership facilitates and mobilizes
- ✓ Brainpower is unleashed
- ✓ Communication is fast, flexible, effective and accessible
- ✓ Design is practical and adaptive



Unifying
purpose

Codify

Membership

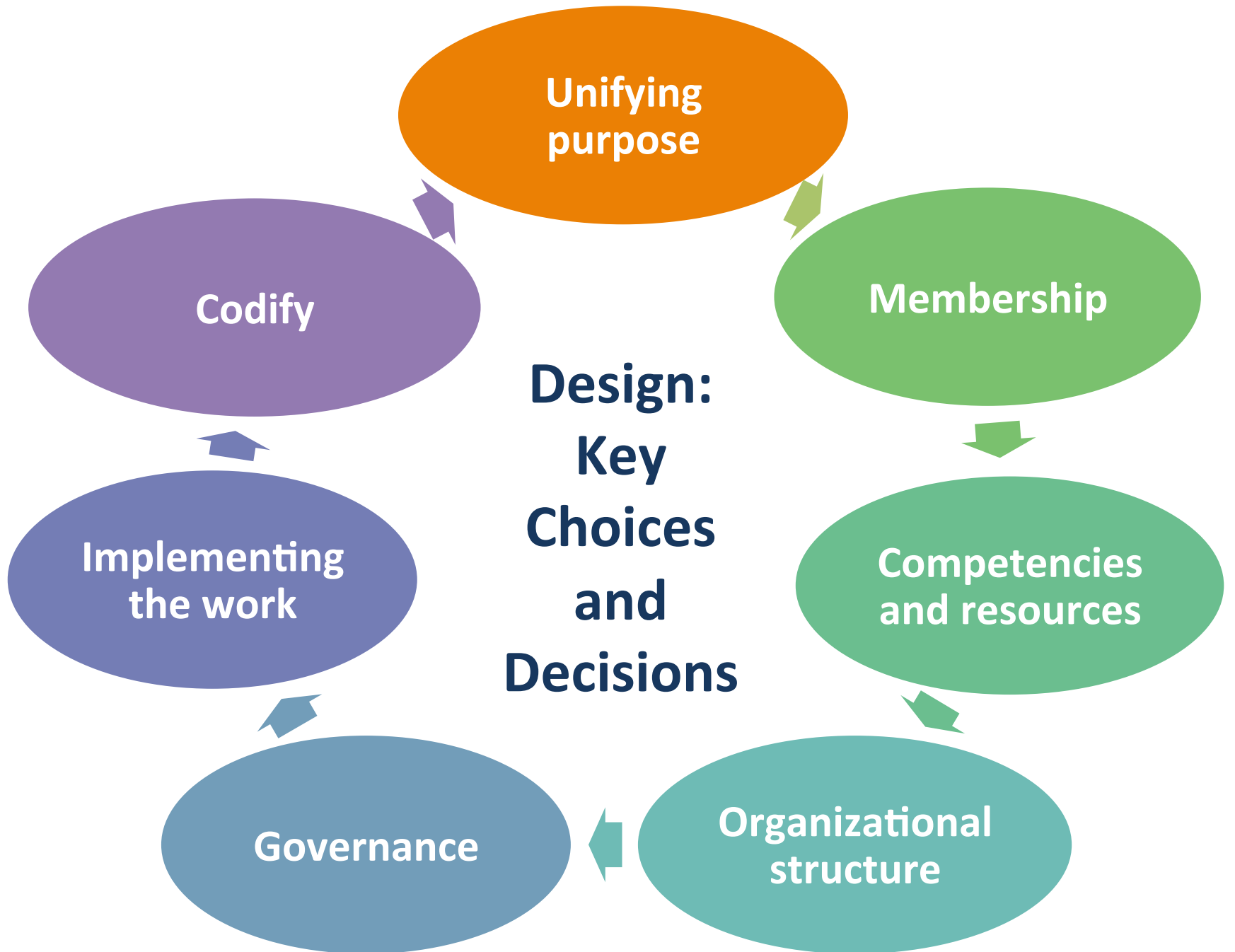
**Design:
Key
Choices
and
Decisions**

Implementing
the work

Competencies
and resources

Governance

Organizational
structure



1. What is the unifying purpose?

Form follows function



1. What is the unifying purpose?

Vision, outcomes, goals and value proposition that are:



- ✓ **Clear**
- ✓ **Grounded in reality**
- ✓ **Unique**
- ✓ **Urgent**
- ✓ **Satisfies mutual self-interest**

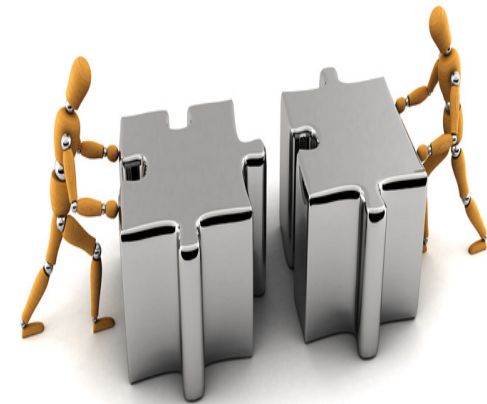
2. Who are the members or partners?

- ✓ **Shared vision and buy-in to the goals**
- ✓ **Vested interests**
- ✓ **Skills, capacities, connections and resources**
- ✓ **Mutual trust and respect**
- ✓ **Willingness to actively participate and be held accountable**



3. What core competencies, capacities and resources are required and how will we access them?

- 1. What are required to achieve the outcomes and value proposition?**
- 2. What can members or partners contribute?**
- 3. Where are the shortfalls and how can they be addressed?**

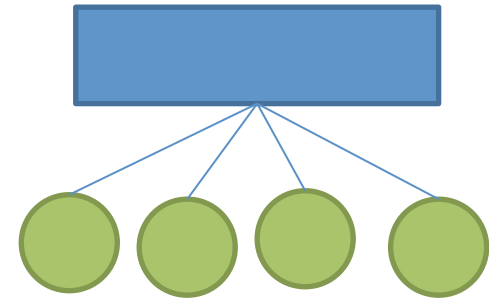
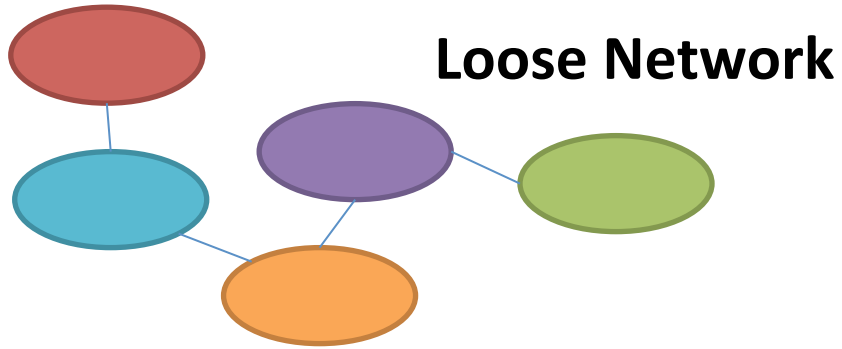


4. What is the organizing structure?

- Should it be collectively organized without any attachment to an entity?
- Will key functions be performed by a lead organization(s)? If so, what and how?
- Should it operate as project of a 'shared administrative platform?
- Should it incorporate as a legal entity?



Organizing Options



Hierarchical



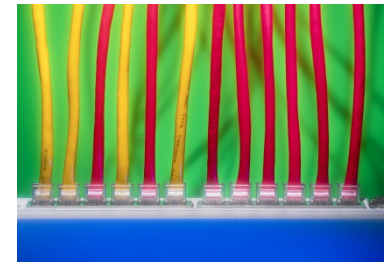
Polling 2: Organizing Structure

4. What is the organizing structure? **Collectively Organized**



- **Contribute all capacities and resources**
- **Formal or informal arrangement**
- **Diversified/shared leadership**
- **Agile and responsive, but process heavy and challenging for accountability**

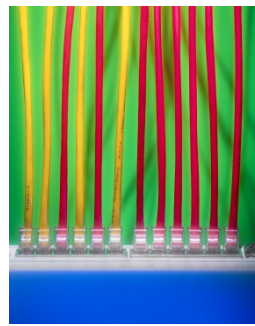
4. What is the organizing structure? Lead Organization(s)



- Utilize membership for various functions (*host/convenor; fiscal/legal; administration*)
- May exert more or less control
- Formal or informal arrangement
- Create efficiencies but also disengagement and/or power differentials

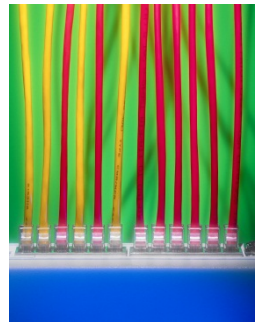
4. What is the organizing structure?

Shared Administrative Platform Organization



- **SAP has governance/ legal/fiduciary responsibility**
- **Project director and Steering Committee set strategic direction and do implementation**
- **Based on Terms of Reference**
- **Raise own funds and portion to SAP**

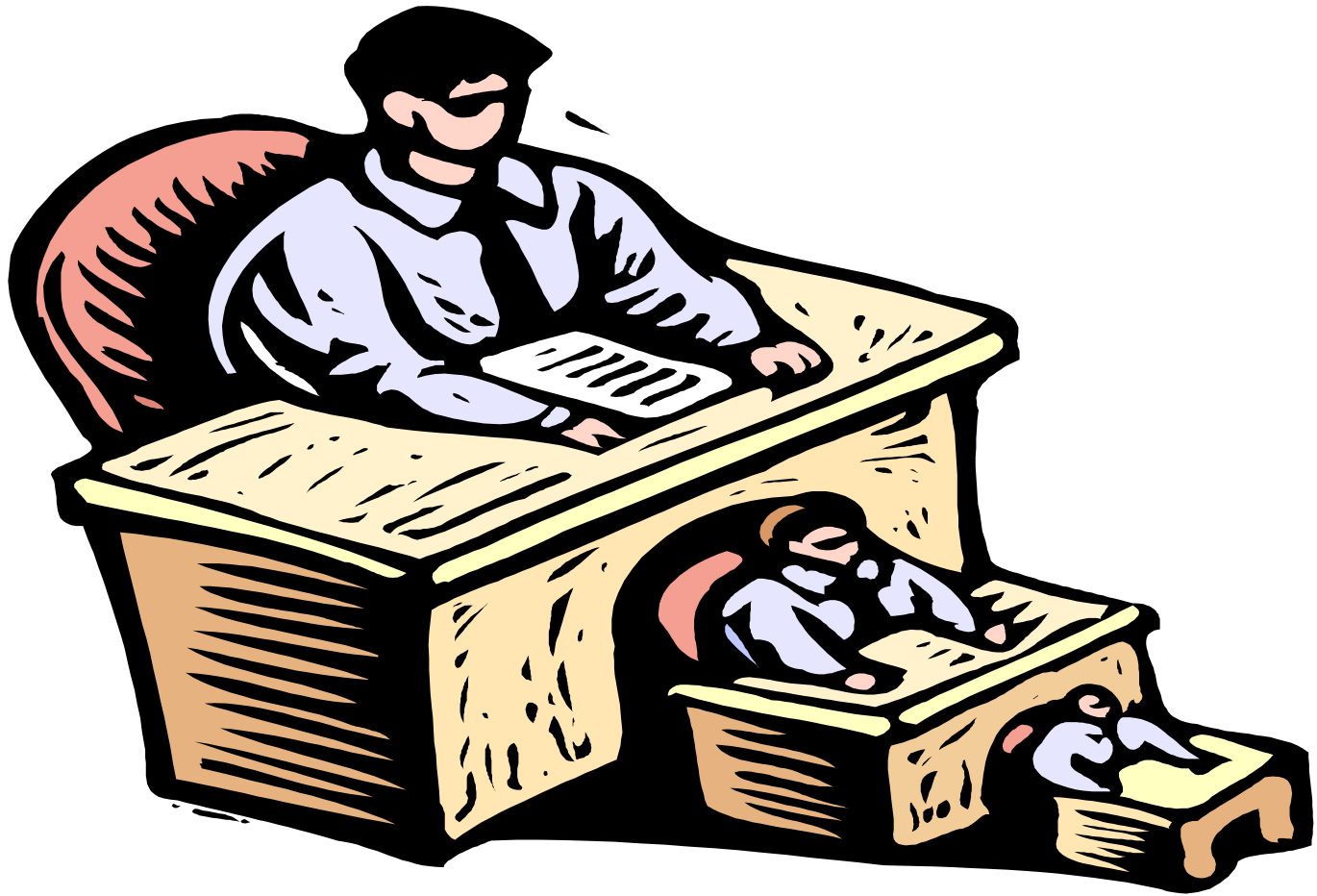
4. What is the organizing structure? Incorporation



- **More infrastructure**
- **More centralized**
- **Participates highly engaged or peripherally**
- **Decision-making highly distributed or centralized**
- **More accountable and easier to manage, but may be less agile and more disengaged**

5. How will it be governed?

Bad



5. How will it be governed?

Good



5. How will it be governed?

Key Functions



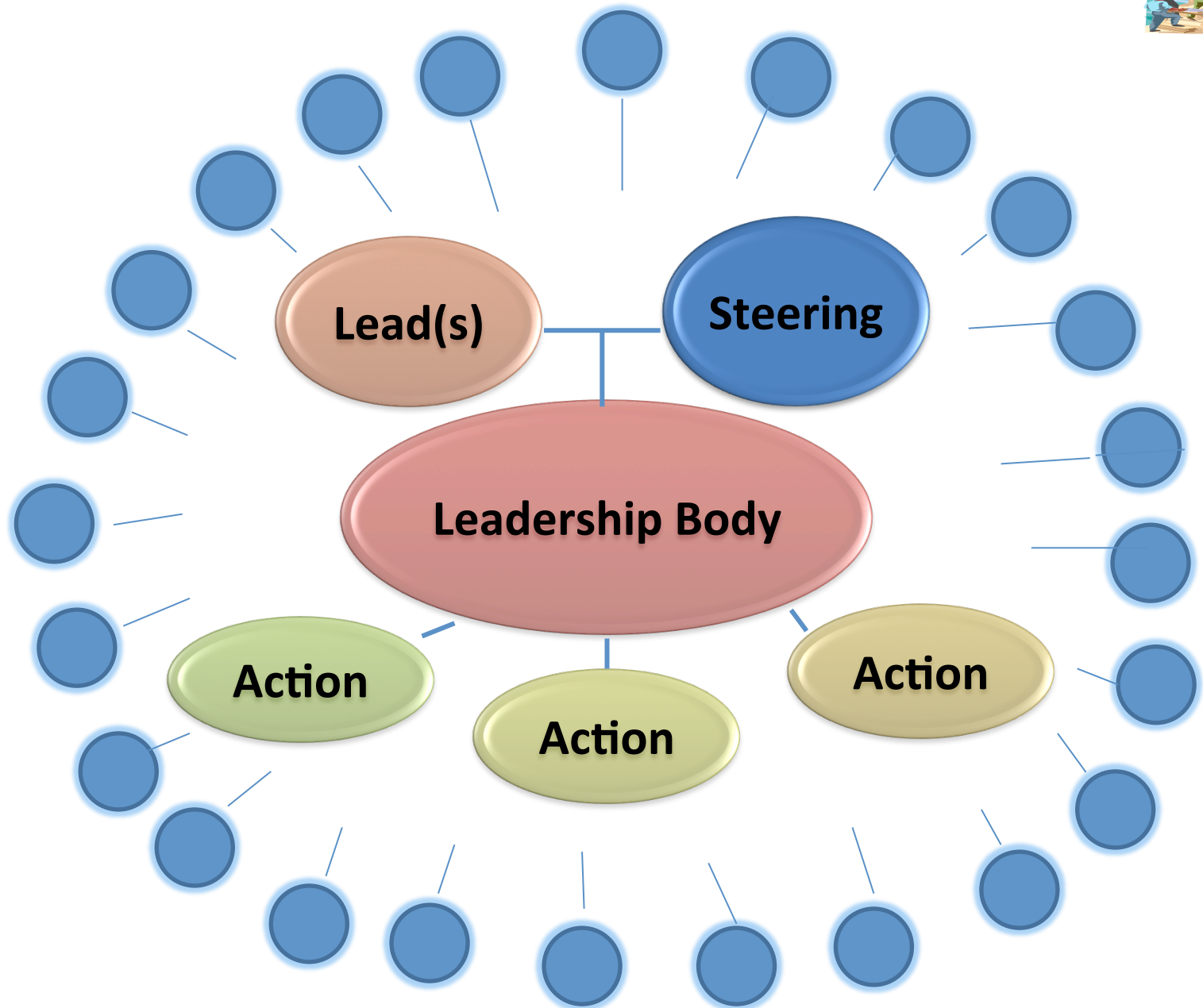
- Resources are acquired and used ethically, effectively and efficiently
- Legal and regulatory requirements are met
- Clear sense of direction and priorities; results are achieved and valued
- Values are lived; there is a high degree of trust
- Participants are engaged and held accountable

5. How will it be governed? Decision-making



- What is to be achieved and how fluid are the outcomes?
- What kind of accountability is required? What are the power dynamics?
- What are the values?
- How centralized or decentralized?
- How can technology be utilized?

5. How will it be governed?





Exercise 2: What are the key characteristics of network leaders?

5. How will it be governed?

Network Leadership

- Inspires vision
- Champion
- Connects
- Facilitates and mediates
- Unleashes capacity
- Balances process with results
- Orchestrates
- Passes the baton



6. How will the work get done?

1. Who will be responsible for the work of the network?

2. How will the network be coordinated?

3. What other infrastructure is required?



**Exercise 3: How is
the function of a
network
coordinator
different than a
normal staff
position?**



6. How will the work get done?

Network Coordinator



- Enables collective action by working with and through members rather than doing the work themselves
- Skilled at: project management, systems and process, engagement, facilitation, mediation

7. How will the relationships, structure and processes be documented?

■ What purpose will it fulfill?

- *Clarify expectations*
- *Ensure accountability*
- *Build engagement*
- *Create trust*



■ How formal does it need to be?

■ Who will create it, monitor and revise it?

For more information:

***Building a Nonprofit Network* document
and taped webinar on:**

OVCN website: www.ovcn.ca

ONN website: www.theonn.ca

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