

THE ROLE OF A CROSS-POLLINATOR IN CONNECTED COMMUNITIES



A core capacity of a network weaver, integrator, or community backbone is that of a pollinator. Like the bees who pollinate flowers, a community cross-pollinator brings critical life-giving materials from one part of the ecosystem to another. For bees it's pollen, for community builders, it's knowledge and understanding.

5 key things a community cross-pollinator does:

1. Bridge relationships

As a community builder, your currency is trusting, meaningful relationships. A common mistake that a lot of community builders make is to keep and hold those relationships so that a network map resembles hub and spokes with you being the hub.

By nurturing relationships between and among people within the community who may not otherwise know each other or have access to each other's wisdom is the essence of cross-pollination and creates both social capital for individuals in the community and spontaneous bursts of collaboration in unexpected places.

It's all about You:
Hub & Spoke Network

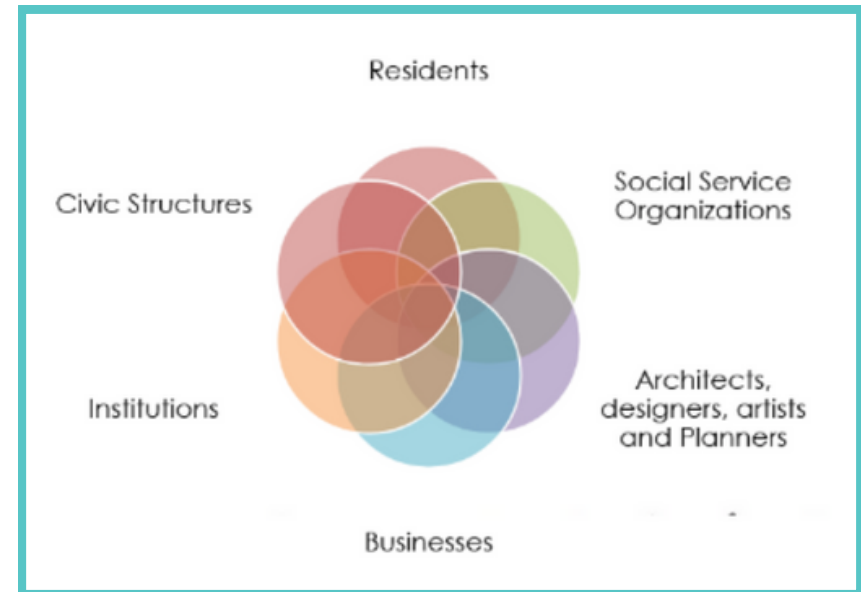


Bridge to Outside Worlds:
Boundary Spanner



2. Look for mutually reinforcing ideas

Some of the best community building happens when people in various sectors who come at problems and solutions from differing perspectives work together. A key skill required to act as a pollinator is the ability to see links between ideas and projects. To nurture that skill, it is important to get past “what” the ideas are to “why” they are generating ideas in the first place, that is, what is the problem they are trying to solve. You will find that



3. Identify momentum

Emergence is where momentum meets opportunity; discerning where the momentum is and what it means is an important aspect of cross-pollination. There are three parts to identifying momentum: 1) pay attention to what people are excited about (problems that elicit anger, ideas that elicit enthusiasm) 2) patterns of discussion (what issue or idea gets referenced across multiple forums or discussions) 3) what’s the community building idea that links, or could link the energy from multiple places (you might want to host a community speak or other discussion to find that link).



We hope you find these tools useful in continuing the momentum to build on local strengths, facilitated collaborative processes and learn together. Catalysts' Circle offers workshops, coaching and strategy design services that can further help you dig deeply into these keys and explore the others that can help you make a truly Connected Community.



Catalysts' Circle can be found at www.connectedcommunities.ca or email agloger@connectedcommunities.ca for more information