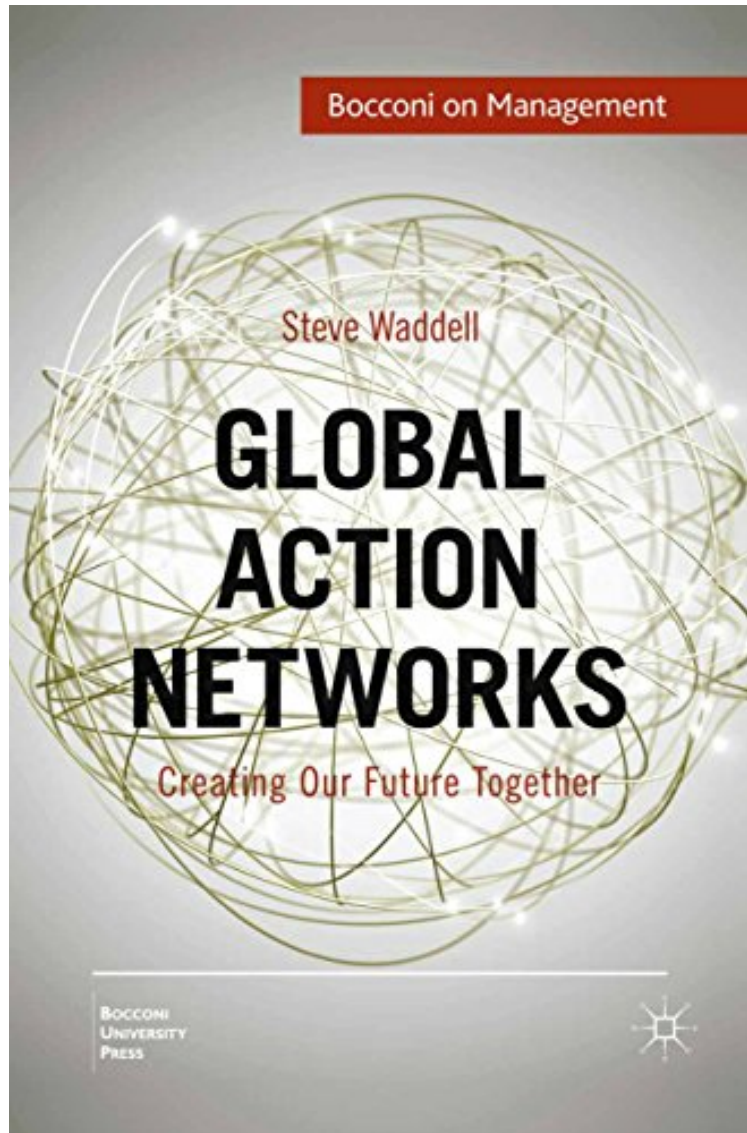


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## Global Action Networks: Creating Our Future Together (Bocconi on Management)

*Steve Waddell*

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**Steve Waddell : Global Action Networks: Creating Our Future Together (Bocconi on Management)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Global Action Networks: Creating Our Future Together (Bocconi on Management):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Elad Levinson ReviewBy Elad LevinsonI read Steve Waddell's book on the recommendation of a colleague who is also an expert in Global Stakeholder democracy and governance.I have read several books that cover the subject matter without the sense of authority and experience that Steve brings to the

subject matter. I especially liked the chapters on "Mastering Change" and "Growing the Competencies Required for Success." Both chapters take you inside what is to a novice an extremely mysterious and complex area of study - how do incredibly diverse systems with oft competing agendas and intentions ever cooperate and can a change agent facilitate collaboration and cooperation? Steve makes the "Black Box" of change more accessible thereby making it also more possible to approach with tools, skills and knowledge. Elad Levinson<sup>4</sup> of 4 people found the following review helpful.

Transformational Networks By Patrick McNamara Global Action Networks provides an outstanding framework for addressing today's complex social and environmental issues. It gives a comprehensive overview of current systemic, large-scale change methodologies and also describes how the complex problems we face globally are being addressed by a new type of entity, the global action network. Based on research of 80 networks, it's rife with grounded examples and concrete ways these networks have been successful. Waddell cites trends of continuing globalization, diversity, complexity and the disruptive impact of new technology as contributing factors to our inability to address today's issues utilizing traditional strategies. These factors are an impetus for shifting our assumptions about the way the world works and the way we engage and innovate to address social and environmental problems. He posits that we need to address issues by utilizing systems thinking and including an array of stakeholders to craft solutions and envision emerging futures rather than breaking up a problem and analyzing its parts in a linear fashion. This leads to more effective, locally applicable, timely solutions that work, given the dynamic nature of our interdependent world. Global Action Networks are basically multi-stakeholder networks that span geographical and institutional boundaries in order to effect systemic change. Because they involve systems thinking, developed by Peter Senge and others at MIT, and are designed to build connections and trust, Waddell argues that they lead to superior results. He says the networks help shift perspectives because they create a collective understanding of a problem, take into account impacts on multiple parties, and operate from a place of future possibilities. The solutions tend to be breakthroughs that change the rules of the game. Examples of global action networks include the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which has increased access to effective treatments, saving 3.5 million lives; the Forest Stewardship Council, which has certified 300 million acres of forests and engaged 16,000 retail businesses in 100 countries to sell certified products; and the Principles for Responsible Investment, which is changing the logic of the global finance system through a set of principles that has engaged 850 signatories representing \$US 20 trillion in assets. These networks take a whole systems approach and a stance of emergence, where the relationships and power dynamics shift due to interactions of diverse players - and change can go viral by connecting local actions. Waddell helps us understand characteristics of successful networks. While the speed and rapid growth of viral networks may be the most visible trait, he shows how crafting a set of principles, embracing diversity, building trust, and fostering entrepreneurial action are necessary components that help networks take global concerted action while responding to a wide range of local conditions. With their voluntary leadership, focus on levers for change, and advancement of best practice GAN's aim to reach a tipping point to shift the global system in their issue area. GAN's go beyond "scaling up" and beyond reform to "scaling across" geographies, applying "triple-loop learning" where the change is both meaningful and transformational. The depth of his approach is similar to Frieze's observations on building resilience and "scaling across" in *Walk Out and Walk On* (Barrett-Kohler, 2011). The book includes chapters on "seeing the whole," "mastering change," and "formalizing connections" with some specific and very useful tools to develop effective networks. Mapping in many different forms is presented as a way to understand the complex and dynamic relationships of network players and to distinguish between types of complexity (spatial, cultural, knowledge, change, relational). In the chapter on mastering change, Waddell starts with action learning as a basis for change and expands on that by proposing four change strategies that range from the individual to the collective to inter-personal to systemic, noting that in order for change to be transformational, it must include both individual and structural change - even bringing in spiritual aspects of change. He includes "leading from the future as it emerges" as seen in Otto Scharmer's Theory U (Society for Organizational Learning, 2007) as well as many forms of Dialogue (reflective, generative) including those in the comprehensive text *Democratic Dialogue* by Pruitt (UNDP/OAS, 2007). In addressing formalizing connections, the book gets into some of the nuts and bolts of organizing, utilizing design principles and building structural components of the network. One of the most helpful chapters outlines competencies required for success. This well thought out set of eight competencies not only applies to those in GAN's but also to any leader working with complex issues, uncertainty, and tumultuous change. They include knowledge, skills, and behaviors in leadership, network development, measuring impact, conflict and change, communications, learning systems, policy and advocacy, and resource mobilization. He brings in the concept of shared leadership seen in "Leadership, Excellence and the Soft Skills" by Bradford and Robin (Stanford GSB, 2004) and personal mastery and learning organizations in Senge's *The Fifth Discipline* (Doubleday, 1990). Waddell's model is part of a growing body of work that addresses social issues with a level of depth and engagement that leads to impact on the global, local, and personal levels as it shifts the system within which it works. In the United States, The Interaction Institute for Social Change (IISC), with its eighteen-year track record, is probably the leading organization pioneering this transformational work. Waddell asserts that global action networks represent a 21st-century global governance model that stems from two main sources: the positive impact of technology on how work and society is organized; and the

weaknesses in post-World War II international institutions. Global Action Networks contributes to this articulation of what's next in governance by showing how we can envision a future and work collaboratively to create a better world. With solid examples and clear logic, Waddell articulately presents a concise, effective, and useful model for us to consider local and global approaches to the complex issues we face as a society. The book will help any social innovation practitioner look at his or her competencies, learn an emerging networked approaches, and find new ways to discern and navigate our most complex problems.

Patrick McNamara Appreciative Inquiry Consulting  
1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Global Action Networks: The Evolution of Society  
By Severyn Bruyn  
Global Action Networks  
by Steven Waddell  
What a great book!  
Steve Waddell's Global Action Networks is exactly what people should read today to build a world community. This is a "need to read." This includes social scientists like sociologists, political scientists, economists, as well as professionals like politicians, diplomats and world leaders, indeed, anyone who deals with global issues.

Dr. Waddell describes how governing systems are evolving around the world in new ways, rapidly. The global scene is on a frontier of major change. New systems of governance are being created at the world level beyond one's ordinary vision. Waddell is finding these systems, analyzing them, and mapping them. And he is building a new language to describe them. He is following in the path of the social contract theorists who, centuries ago, paved the way to modern democracy. Here is what I mean. At one time the idea of "society" did not exist. It evolved slowly as a word when philosophers began to "see" how people were organizing systems of governance beyond the state. The word "society" began to be used in the English language in the 1500s only in reference to an association that people had with one another. That's all. Then, in the 1600s John Locke began to think about society as a "social contract" that people had going beyond government. Thomas Hobbes "saw" just government (a Leviathan) as the great power and authority over people but Locke began to see autonomous structures within a "society," like the family and religious organizations. Such organizations had actually preceded the structure of government as a source of authority. And so the word "society" kept developing, its nature continued to be seen for its greater complexity. It gradually became a reality in people's minds.

Now Waddell perceives the emergence of a world society developing in Global Action Networks (GANs), relatively unobserved and unstudied by social scientists. GANs are social networks that are evolving at the global level. They are part of a new system of inter-organizational relations appearing among the three major sectors of society we call government, the Third Sector and the business order. Just as the Third Sector did not exist in reality at one time in the last century, so GANs did not exist. But they have been developing quietly at the global level and will play a significant role in the future of international affairs.

Some of the first GAN organizations were the International Red Cross and the International Labor Organization. And then slowly NGOs (non-governmental organizations) began to appear around the world. They represented social concerns like human rights, health, education, the environment, peace, and social-economic development. Waddell's analysis of these global networks is brilliant. He describes how these organizations develop tools for "visual diagnostic mapping," which are ways to communicate the increasingly complex information surrounding them. "Diagnostic mapping" allows people to understand their complexity more easily than writing about them. These tools are a product of the emerging computing power and software that has been developing over the past decade. Read about them in Waddell's book. You will be amazed.

Reading this book will enable you to anticipate the organization of a silently emerging global community. As globalization continues, we see a crisscrossing of languages and cultural identities that has never existed before. Waddell writes of a black lesbian Buddhist living in New York who was born and raised in French-speaking Senegal, and who is a world music aficionado making her living as a bio-chemist. She has a multitude of identities allegiances, and networks. She is an individual but in a sociological sense like a GAN. She represents the boundary-crossing trends of globalization. She is like the Forest Stewardship Council, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition, the Global Knowledge Partnership, the Global Reporting Initiative, the Global Water Partnership, the International Bridges to Justice, the Principles for Responsible Investment, and the World Water Council -- all GANs. GANs are not a collection of individuals, but of organizations; they are not elites, but gatherings of organizations committed to working on social issues; they are not self-appointed, but have open membership (to varying degrees) with organizations required to abide by a set of principles to join; they are not "think or policy tanks", but action groups, doing things on the ground as experiments; they are not geographically limited in their thinking (for example, "North Atlantic"), but global in their reach and membership. Waddell suggests that this global development is driven by a "drive toward the unity of the separated," a phrase he draws from the work of Paul Tillich. GANs are the new world organizations that people do not see as significant. They are social organizations with a multitude of different stakeholders around the world to whom the leadership must be responsible. They cut across business, government, and nonprofits. They are perhaps emerging according to the principles that Herbert Spencer once used to describe evolution in biology, by social differentiation and integration. If you want to read a treatise that is like the work of the great "social contract theorists," read this book. It is about the silent emergence of a global society. The work is incredibly well done. It can be complex to read at times but so was the work of John Locke.

The world's governments are overwhelmed with climate change, war and unrest, the global financial crisis and poverty but there is a promising invention in Global Action Networks (GANs). GANs mobilize resources, bridge divides and

promote the long-term deep change and innovation work that is needed to address the global challenges.

Steve Waddell's research and writing have led the way in building up our understanding of Global Action Networks - and so in our ability to work with this critically-important new way of addressing our most complex and vital social challenges." - Adam Kahane, author of "Power and Love: A Theory and Practice of Social Change"; Partner, Reos Partners

In a planet beset with life and death questions, a totally new social form has emerged to give the world a chance not only of surviving but to move on to the next stage of earth's evolution. These are the Global Action Networks that bring the different identities, experiences, and resources of civil society, government, and business into a new global social form that never existed before. In this book, Steve Waddell gives a very clear picture of the strategic importance of global action networks and what new framework, skills, and social processes are needed to make this new global innovation effective in the world. Having followed the literature and on-the-ground activities in this area for over 15 years, I can say without hesitation that Waddell's book contains a tremendous wealth of creative insights and unique practical know-how that can help humanity heal a planet in crisis.' - Nicanor Perlas, Winner of the 2003 Right Livelihoods (Alternative Nobel Prize) Award, Recipient, Manuel Quezon Exemplary Governance Award, the Global 500 (UNEP) Award, The Outstanding Filipino (TOFIL) Award, and the Masterson Award (of Xavier University), President of Centre for Alternative Development Initiatives (CADI)"

All the great challenges of our time, from climate change to poverty, require private actors to be part of the solution. The search is on to build and nurture effective collaborations so that individual actions become transformative movements within and across countries and regions. Steve Waddell is showing us what works and what doesn't in the rapidly evolving world of Global Action Networks. This book is ...

**About the Author** STEVE WADDELL educator, consultant, researcher, and network founder. He has over 20 years' experience developing inter-organizational networks and Global Action Networks. He has worked on network development at the local, regional, and global levels. Over the past 10 years he has focused on local-and-global networks in particular, and has coined the term 'Global Action Networks' (GANs).