

THE FORGOTTEN ART OF HUMAN CONNECTION

Breakout Team Guide

Phase 1 - Developing Effective Networking Strategies

1. Understanding Networking in Leadership

- **Strategic Connections:** Effective leaders build networks that support their growth and influence. For example, executives at LinkedIn strategically connect with thought leaders to expand their reach.
- **Intentional Relationship-Building:** Networking isn't about collecting contacts but fostering meaningful relationships. Think of it as curating a personal advisory board.
- **Diverse Networks:** The most successful professionals cultivate networks that include mentors, peers, and industry experts, ensuring access to different perspectives.

2. Real-Life Example: Sheryl Sandberg's Approach to Networking

- Facebook's former COO, Sheryl Sandberg, emphasized the importance of mentorship and sponsorship in networking. She actively sought out conversations that challenged her thinking and encouraged others to do the same.
- Networking can help leaders find opportunities, but it's also about contributing value to others.

3. Pitfalls to Avoid

- **Transactional Networking:** Avoid relationships that are solely based on personal gain.
- **Neglecting Follow-Ups:** Relationships fade if not nurtured over time. Consistent check-ins maintain strong professional ties.
- **Ignoring Internal Networks:** Many professionals overlook the importance of networking within their own organisations.

Breakout Activity Part 1

Instructions for Students:

1. Discuss personal networking experiences; what worked and what didn't?
2. Identify three key strategies that make networking effective.
3. Prepare one actionable takeaway to share with the class at the end.

Phase 2 - Leveraging Social Media for Networking

1. The Role of Social Media in Professional Growth

- **Building an Online Presence:** LinkedIn, X, and industry-specific platforms can enhance professional credibility.
- **Engaging with Thought Leaders:** Commenting on posts, sharing insights, and participating in discussions help establish expertise.
- **Content Creation:** Authoring articles or sharing knowledge can position you as an industry leader.

2. Practical Tips for Social Media Networking

- **LinkedIn Best Practices:** Keep profiles updated, engage with posts, and personalise connection requests.
- **X for Professional Branding:** Follow industry influencers, participate in relevant conversations, and share valuable insights.
- **Industry Forums and Groups:** Being active in professional groups can lead to new opportunities and collaborations.

Breakout Activity Part 2

Instructions for Students:

1. In your group, analyse a leader's social media presence (e.g., *Satya Nadella, Arianna Huffington, or another industry expert*). This is not just limited to LinkedIn.
2. Identify what makes their social media strategy effective.
3. Present key takeaways on how to enhance one's online networking presence at the end.

Phase 3 - Building and Maintaining Meaningful Relationships

1. The Core of Professional Relationships

- **Trust and Transparency:** Authenticity fosters deeper connections.
- **Active Listening:** Engaging in meaningful conversations rather than just exchanging information.
- **Consistent Engagement:** Regular check-ins, thoughtful messages, and mutual support strengthen relationships.

2. Practical Advice for Relationship Building

- **The Give-and-Take Principle:** Strong networks are built on reciprocity; offering help before seeking it.
- **Hosting and Attending Events:** Participating in industry events creates organic networking opportunities.
- **Long-Term Mindset:** Meaningful relationships develop over time and require nurturing.

3. Real-Life Example: Richard Branson's Approach to Relationships

- Branson emphasizes the importance of people in business. His leadership is built on strong relationships, and he actively connects with employees, customers, and industry peers.

Breakout Activity Part 3

Instructions for Students:

1. In your group, discuss a time when a professional relationship benefited your career or personal growth.
2. Identify two best practices for maintaining long-term professional relationships.
3. Develop a list of actionable steps you can take to sustain relationships beyond networking events.

Phase 4 - Applying Conflict Resolution Techniques in Networking

1. Understanding Conflict in Professional Relationships

- **Why Conflict Happens:** Differences in perspectives, miscommunications, or unmet expectations.
- **The Importance of Resolution:** Unresolved conflicts can damage professional networks and reputations.
- **Constructive Conversations:** Addressing conflicts with diplomacy leads to stronger relationships.

2. Conflict Resolution Techniques for Networking

- **Active Listening:** Ensure all perspectives are heard before responding.
- **Finding Common Ground:** Focusing on shared interests rather than differences.
- **Maintaining Professionalism:** Address conflicts with respect and emotional intelligence.

Breakout Activity Part 4

Instructions for Students:

1. In your group, discuss a time when conflict arose in a professional setting.
2. Identify which resolution strategies were used and their effectiveness.
3. At the end present your group's top conflict resolution technique and how it can be applied in networking.

Phase 5 - Presentation Time

Now comes the exciting part! Each team will present their insights and strategies to the class. Think of this as an opportunity to share what you've learned and hear diverse perspectives. There's no need for perfection; just engaging discussions and valuable takeaways. Let's learn from each other and strengthen our networking skills together.