Dear Community Managers,

Thanks for accepting to speak at our Soft-Skill SIG session on Networking. We would like to ask you to prepare a short speech/presentation (10-15 min max.) to share your experience on the topic with us. To inspire you, here we suggest some questions that you could try to answer during your time slot:

* What does it mean Networking for you?
  + Making contact with people outside our organization and establishing some kind of relationship
* What is the difference between a good and a bad networking? What are the ingredients that make a good networking possible?
  + Difficult one – I dare not say. One approach would be to say “good” networking is networking that leads to a collaboration, but sometimes it is difficult to see where there is potential for collaboration and when there is none.
* Is there any strategy/recipe you use to start a new network?
  + It depends on the setting. For example:
    - At a conference you could approach someone after their talk: “hey, I liked your talk on …”
    - You could reach out to a scientist: “hey, I read your paper …”
    - On Github you could open an issue: “hey, I’ve been using your tool …”
* How do you maintain it afterwards?
  + Next time you go to the same conference, bump into the person at a different event, just say hi “Hey, we met at the last conference…”. If you continue using the same tool, open a new issue when you have a new suggestion.
* How do you deepen your network pool?
  + With time. For example, the more you go to the conference, you will get to know more people -- in that sense, it is good if you go to say hi to the person from the first conference when he is having a coffee with another person, then on the third conference you will know: 1) the person you approached in the first conference, 2) the guy he was having coffee with, and 3) the other person you approached during the second conference…
* How do you deal with a rejection of a prospect?
  + I do not believe there is such a thing as “rejection to network”. Even if there is not chance to start a collaboration right now, you still have established a connection with the person. It could take years before that connection leads to a collaboration, but it is still there.
* Can social media help to construct good networks?
  + Yes, no and maybe. You can approach someone via social media (just as you can via github or email). Depending on the situation, if that is the most natural way of approaching the person, then sure.
* How important a good network is for the eScience Center as a whole?
  + Very important. How can we share knowledge if we don’t talk to the outside world?
* Should RSEs do more networking? In that case, what impact will it have?
  + See above. DISCLAIMER – I think saying that everybody should spend X% of their time in networking activities is not realistic and not productive. Just like not every RSE needs to know every technology under the sun.  
    As for the impact – sharing our knowledge, getting users for our tools, making our software sustainable.
* Do you think networking skills can be trained?
  + Absolutely. Like every skill, it might require pushing you outside your comfort zone, but like every skill, practice makes perfect
* How would you increase the networking abilities of the eScience Center employees?
  + Out colloquium (and pre-corona times, associated lunch) provides a good practice ground. Also, I think there are plenty of conferences and low-key events (NL-RSE meetups, LCRDM networking events, NWO events, etc.) which can be used to practice such skills.
* What makes you a good networker, what are your strengths and weaknesses?
  + I always try to treat people in a friendly way, I think that helps. One thing that I think helps is to be interested in what other people have to say. Asking questions and opinions instead of trying to push your own point of view usually leads to people being more open.
  + Confession: I have a terrible memory in general, in particular for faces & names. Name tags are great, and many times I have googled someone’s name and checked my email to remember where I know them from. Unavoidably, this leads to “remind me where we have met before” situations. Yes, it is a bit awkward, but it is not the end of the world and people are usually understanding.

**Big disclaimer:** these are mainly my opinions, based largely on my experience. This may or may not work for other people or under different circumstances, and I may be completely wrong in everything I’ve said. - Carlos