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Matchmaking events

Guidebook for hosts

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Hello intermediary or business organisation!

You have now opened the matchmaking event guidebook, nice to see you!

We hope that you will find this guidebook for hosting matchmaking events of relevance and value to you. This book will give you a short explanation of what a matchmaking event is and some do's and don'ts you as a host should keep in mind to create a successful event! We wish you the best of luck!

Matchmaking events are a way of networking, under more structured circumstances, with people who want to connect with others, want to help others, or get new perspectives on an idea.

Arrange a matchmaking event if you want to gather pinpointed external partners and businesses to develop and support them in their journey for future growth.



Business matchmaking

- The process of matching two or more people together.
- It is a method to identify and connect people with common business interests, expertise, competencies, resources, etc.
- The goal for a matchmaking event can vary. But in this guide, the goal of the event is to create cooperative connections and realize business opportunities that mutually benefit both parties. Create win-win situations!
- It is the most efficient way to find, meet, and talk to new collaboration partners, in short, one-to-one talks either onsite or online.

Prepare your event



Arranging a matchmaking event – online or offline?

- Onsite, online, or hybrid?

Are you planning for an event onsite, online, or hybrid?

- Pros & cons which the different alternatives:

- **Onsite:** the participants have the possibility to meet but it takes more time to plan.
- **Online:** an easy way of creating cross border matchmaking but it might be trickier to create a safe and comfortable environment in the digital room
- **Hybrid:** some participants can meet onsite and some digitally in the same event and create a feeling of being in a larger context. But it is hard to be attentive to two different kinds of audiences – one online and one offline.

Arranging a matchmaking event

- **Topic/theme**
 - Is there a common topic that several SMEs need expertise in? Narrow it down! The more precise you are – the easier it is to create a successful event that creates real values for its participants.
- **Targeted audience**
 - When you have chosen a topic/theme, you can specify your target group for the event and invite according to that.
- **Expected output**
 - What are the next steps after the event? Should all participants have booked a follow-up meeting?

Prepare your participants

- Participating businesses must state information about what it is that they are searching for, and/or what they have to offer. This pre-information is of great importance, the more specific the participants are the more likely they are to meet the right person/s!
- The more precise the collected information, the better the outcome of the business matchmaking. On the next page, you can help your target group to prepare.
- Preparation will also create some sense of security for the participants. They know why they are going and what they are looking for – hence it is easier for them to approach people.
- Call the participants before the event so they know what to expect and who they would like to meet. Then, you have the possibility to point them towards a specific person or organisation during the event.

S.M.A.R.T request formulation

- S** **SPECIFIC:** Specific and well-described needs are easier to respond to than vague requests
- It might seem that general requests cast the net wider and could potentially let more people help you. But general requests make it harder to help since there isn't a strong trigger for thinking about what and who people know in relation to what you need. Make your need as specific as you can.
- M** **MEANINGFUL:** Knowing why your need matters to you can motivate a helping hand
- Share why your request matters. This can help people relate to your request, take it seriously, and can even help motivate them to help. It also contextualizes your request for them.
- A** **ACTION ORIENTED:** the request should orient you toward the larger goal
- At its best, your request orients you toward the end goal. If your overall goal is to successfully position your product with online retailers, you may need help with a number of things. Perhaps you need to understand the retailer's needs better and may need help in being introduced to relevant retailers so you can interview them.
- R** **REALISTIC:** Your request should be in the realm of possibility
- This doesn't mean that it has to be a small request or that it should be so easy that it can be met immediately. However, the goal should be in the realm of possibility.
- T** **TIME-BOUND:** a good deadline or a timeline makes it easier for people to determine if they can help you
- Vague timelines do not motivate action in you or others. Specify your timeline, and not in general terms (e.g., sometime this year). This will help people determine if they can help you and gives you an extra push to act.

Use the S.M.A.R.T strategy to help participating business representatives formulate their request!



Template for formulating the request

We are looking to {larger goal} so that we can {why this goal matters}. To achieve this goal, we would need help in {specific need which helps you complete a step towards the larger goal}. by {deadline/timeframe}.

Examples

- GOOD example:

We are looking to renew our product offering so that we can better reach our main target market (women in their 20-30s with a strong interest in health and wellness). To achieve this goal, we would need help in identifying an affordable service designer by the end of the month who can do user research and help us develop a holistic service for our users.

- BAD example:

I've been thinking about updating our product offering and need some information to get started.

During the event



Welcome!

Greet your participants at the event. Make sure that you highlight why they are here – to network! Therefore, it might be a good idea to remind them to talk to people they normally do not talk to. Help them by giving them a subject or question to start with.

Mingle!

This activity should be in focus the whole event. But make sure that you break off the mingle so that the participants can shift the person that they are talking to. Otherwise, it is easy to get stuck with the same people the whole event. Encourage the participants to share contact information before moving on to the next person!

Thanks for today!

Close the event by thanking all participants and reminding them to get the contacts of the persons they are interested in staying connected with.

After the event



Internal follow-up

- Shortly after the event, **evaluate!**
- What went well?
 - What can be improved until the next event?
 - How can we make sure it will be improved until the next event?

External follow-up

- Prepare a thank you e-mail to all participants where you can attach documentation from the event, participants list, contact information, etc.
- In a couple of weeks make a follow-up to check in with the businesses if the event was a success. Take their feedback and thoughts into account for your next event!



Good luck with your matchmaking event!





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