

Topic: **Networking**

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**Networking plays an important role in the success of new and existing businesses. Networking unites organisations and individuals, granting quicker, cheaper and higher quality access to resources, such as information, finance, human and physical resources.**

Networking also encourages businesses to work together in order to achieve common goals, for example, by strengthening the cooperation with education or research organisations or by influencing public policy.

There are various forms of business networking - from formal organisations like business associations to informal networking events and everyday networking activities like lunch with a business partner.

**Learning goal:**

To raise knowledge and skills for an efficient business networking.

**Learning objectives:**

By the end of this session participants will:

- understand the concept of business networking,
- know the benefits of business networking,
- learn the forms of business networking,
- improve networking skills,
- learn how to use modern communication/gamification tools during group work.

**Methodology:**

- lecture (illustrations, infographics, multimedia tools),
- gamification (using mostly ICT trendy tools),
- group work, discussions (including case studies).

**Content:**

1. Concept and benefits of networking.
2. Forms of networking.
3. Networking skills.

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**Structure:**

**1. Welcome and introduction, work rules:**

(10 minutes)

Welcome all participants in this session. If you did not before, introduce yourself and share some information regarding your background. You should present shortly the subject of this session and teamwork rules. It is a good idea to divide the group of participants into smaller teams (3-5 persons).

Inform young people that they have to be very active, because at the end of the session you will do a short competition for them.

Using ICT tools like AnswerGarden (<https://goo.gl/kYbqMJ>) you can have a brain storm by asking the group why should businesses network, what would they gain from networking and with whom (other businesses and organisations) should they network? After this you can discuss the answers with the youngsters.

*Hint: before the session, please ask the participants to bring smartphones or tablets with them.*

**2. Lecture 1 and exercise 1, Forms of networking:**

(30 minutes)

You should introduce young people to the forms of business networking, for example:

- Business association / trade association,
- Co-working space,
- Networking events,
- Virtual platforms.

Give each group a handout introducing one form of business networking and one example of the best practise. Ask participants to read the handout and prepare a short presentation (about 5 minutes) introducing the networking form. Participants might use ICT comic-creating tool such as ToonDoo (<http://goo.gl/o1tvWc>) or PixTon (<https://goo.gl/l6rUPS>). Ask each group to find on the internet also other examples of this form of networking.

After about 10 minutes of teamwork (or less, if they managed to do the task fast), ask one participant from every group to do a small presentation of their results.

*Hint: before the session you can prepare you own comic and show it as an example during the session, to make the process faster.*

**3. Lecture 2 and exercise 2, Partners for networking:**

(25 minutes)

To simulate an exchange of business ideas and a search for partners, ask participants to create an „elevator pitch” - a 1 minute talk, around 130 words, including such aspects of their business idea as:

- Product (what is it?),
- Competitive advantage (why is this product better than others?),
- Market (potential customers, number of customers, their income level),
- Competitors,
- Business model (how the product will reach the customer).