

NETWORKING

Welcome to the Webinar about Important Facts about Networking. I am pleased to tell you something about the well-known topic, everybody is using. I hopefully can extend the knowledge about this topic and give some fresh inputs for the practical application.

As I think networking is a term everybody knows about I choose this quote to start with.

If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go with others. For me it contains the benefit of a good network. In the professional context sustainability and development further is based on a strengthened network.

Especially in case of Adult Education Professionals building a reflected network can be a benefit for the professionals and also the low-skilled learners you are working with.

GOALS OF THE MODULE N.5

To give you an overview of the whole module I will shortly present the goals of the units. You will get some parts of theoretical input like I am doing it in this webinar, based on that lessons we will implement some practical exercises for the individual knowledge building.

You will learn about the different levels of networking, about the importance of having a strength and expanding network. Additionally, I will tell you something about the benefits of networking. Based on this you will check out some methodological approach for the practical implementation.

OVERVIEW ON THE WEBINAR

During the following I will give an overview of the definition, the principles, some possible steps and different fields of networking. **Please, feel free to ask questions during the whole presentation.**

DEFINITION OF NETWORKING

A definition of networking can be given very fast and short. It's about the **exchange of information and services**. It also can be described as **cultivation of productive relationships**. A third classification can be called **to establish contacts and socialise**.

Regarding the desired outcome or goal there can be named different types. First, the **goal** can be set to give or to get information and services. In other contacts networks are used primary for socialising. A third goal, and this one is important for us, can be the professional advancement.

As a first insight, we can divide the requirement for networking in a private or professional area. For sure the realisation and the practice can mix up both parts. Which platforms are you using? Facebook, Instagram? LinkedIn? Do you use it for business or is it a private account?

As is said before, the areas can't be divided strictly and overlap time by time. Important is the fact that it depends on every person himself/herself how to build, strength and grow the network and for sure it's up to you to set up a customized network for you.

In fact, it doesn't matter if you want to build a network around the professional area or concerning your passion/your hobby. The way you connect to people can be reflected and structured. The next slides will give an overview of principles, how a professional network can be constructed.

PRINCIPLES OF NETWORKING

Professional networking is not about gathering business cards. It can be the strategy to collect them, put them in a drawer, and search for people/professions, if you have a question or need a special sport of help. This approach is very **short-termed** and **not sustainable** at all.

The following principles can help you to structure or rethink your way of networking. Or, for sure, it also can be nothing new, as you have heard about it already a thousand times.

1 Networking is an all the time thing, not only, when you need it. Because when you need it, it will already be too late

2 give your value first to the people, it doesn't matter if it is time, energy, education, faith, a recommendation, an advice – bring something positive to the people

3 give more than you take; fill up the deposit of networking befor you withdraw. You will start earning a reputation as a **giver** – and this is a kind of key factor

4 For building lasting relationships it is important to interact personal, as a human. That means, not just sending an E-mail; human interaction means at least using the phone for a call, it is better if the people can see or hear you.

5 build trust, that means do what you say you are going to do. You should have a trust word. Don't promise too much, what you can't carry out.

6 keep on moving forward, you can always expand the network; that doesn't always mean connect to new people, it also can mean bring people together you know and might be useful for each other (who will be good for him or her for?) This can be a benefit for all of you; and maybe if you ask for something you opposite can't help out, he will find somebody who will.

7 th principle means to set up a systematic plan; Networking will be successful if you practice it all the time and have a plan behind it. This pan mostly contains your goals.

This leads me to the 5 steps of networking.

1st of all: set you goal. This is a very important point and you should really take some time to think about it – what to you expect from your network? Do you want to educate yourself/advance the knowledge? Finding mates for sharing your hobbies/your passion? What do you want to share with others? Are you job hunting? Do you want to grow a longlasting partnerships? Take your time to identify your individual goal.

2nd research: who do I know? Who might they know? Who do I want to know? Do I know anybody who know him? What can I invest, what they can need? Building a relationship map (list, diagram)

3rd collect names – identify 60-100 people you connect over the year! more is possible – use 1 hour a month to identify individuals, this isn't a lot time to invest

4th Work out 3 or 4 messages you send out to people – call them? Send them an E-Mail? pre-canned massages and tailor them – You can create some templates! Get in contact and develop your communication-style

5th Then you can execute the plan: at the beginning of the month you take 5 people you want to contact (maybe for coffee/lunch/dinner) want to reach out to – You can give them a week to answer (Focus: you want to spend time with them!), if they do not answer, take out your list and choose somebody else; built trust/expand network!

Those steps are used for business-trainings, so maybe using the whole procedure is not practicable/necessary for the practical approach in our work area. But it can be useful to reflect about

those steps and work out small points we can change/adapt in our contacts (business as well as private)

Where to connect?

Not let us reflect about the places we can get in touch with people. There are countless possibilities to connect.

Training/Education: we are attending trainings and education lessons for a reason; Why are you there? learning in new areas? Expanding present knowledge? learning about alternative approaches? Get in touch with participants to extend and exchange your knowledge

The own work environment: Are there people in different projects/fields in your company? Do they may have knowledge, services you can use? Are there other locations with the same goals/project-description?

Associations: Are you attending some associations in your free time? Which people you are talking with? Which people are there you haven't talked yet to? Pay attention to those facts at the next meetings

Old connections (previous job, school): Think about people you had contact with. Maybe it could be fun to meet some old friends? What are they doing now? Take some time to think about, with know you may lost the contact and want to reunion?

Acquaintance (neighbour): Do you know the people who live in your environment? The flat next door, the neighbour who owns the next garden? Pay attention to people around you. Maybe you will need something from them in your future. Or maybe you have a party at night, and they are disturbed. You can prevent stress or unpleasant situations by connecting to them. Sometimes small gestures are enough to begin.

Catch the moment: Sometimes we are busy while waiting for the bus or attending a flight. But sometimes you can use those moments to connect to people.

Online platforms (private or business): An easy access to people are online platforms. Like pictures, comment contributions, share content. You can also socialise on social media to stay present in peoples mind.

There are a lot more possibilities to connect to people. Those examples can be seen as stimulations for you and your style of networking.

DIFFERENT LEVELS

Networking can be used in different levels. As we have already heard are there **general definitions** and principles for building and strengthen a network. It is used in the private sector – even if we don't notice it (neighbours, friends, associations...). At the business sector people reflect more about their connections (who knows things which are important and useful for me).

In fact networking is a very individual and personal process.

To boil it down to the **work as an AEP (=adult education professional)** the term networking can be specified. At this level the focus can be set on the are of knowledge and useful services.

The concept of life-long-learning teaches us to improve and expand our knowledge. We have never learned enough – there are always things we can improve. Learning can be done easier when connected to a practical point (talk about situations during the training or coachings). While interchange with people you get to know their approaches and perspectives which can be useful and integrated to the personal approach.

Additionally, it is important to be informed about available support-systems around your training. Where can the participants turn, when they have financial or health problems?

As a third level we can offer **participants** help to build and strengthen their own network. Connected to the questions, what are the next steps, when the training-session are over. Is there a professional support system? Where do the people turn, when they need help?