



Digital Networking Events with Companies

Models for Event Planning

The REACT-EU projects are financed as part of the European Union's efforts in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

What are the digital event models?

- The event models presented in this slideshow are based on real events that DigiMESH organized and tested during the project
- We hope that the event models help you in organizing your own events. Feel free to use the models as you see fit and, if needed, to modify them to serve your purposes
- Other supportive materials
 - Are you planning a digital event? Familiarize yourself with ["Inspire and engage remotely!" – Handbook for organising remote events](#)
 - How to engage your participants and increase their interaction? Check out the set of networking methods we have gathered on our [website](#).

DigiMESH project aimed to strengthen the possibilities of highly educated immigrants living in Finland to find employment matching their skills by developing digital networking. The project partners are Turku University of Applied Sciences and Tampere University of Applied Sciences and International Working Women of Finland association works as a close collaboration partner. The project was funded by European Social Fund (REACT-EU funding) from 3 Jan. 2022 to 31 Oct. 2023.



DigiMESH

Elevator Pitch Event



How we did it?

- Tampere and Turku Universities of Applied Sciences organized a joint elevator pitch event, which was held in Zoom
- In the event international students and job seekers gave a 3-minute-long elevator pitch each, after which a tech company representative commented on them.
- DigiMESH staff also commented on the pitches
- There was an open call for participants, but they were required to fill in an application form beforehand. 4 participants were selected based on the applications.
- The event was marketed through the universities' email lists and social media channels (personal, DigiMESH and International House Tampere).
- The overall length of the event was 1 hour long

Basic idea of the event

- Create an opportunity for international job seekers to briefly present themselves and their skills to the company representative(s)
- Role of the company representative(s) is to comment on the elevator pitch of foreign students and international experts
- Authentic feedback helps job seekers to improve their presentations for the future
- International job seekers and the company representatives are easily connected on a digital platform
- Aim is to help international job seekers to develop networking skills and widen their professional networks



Pros and Cons

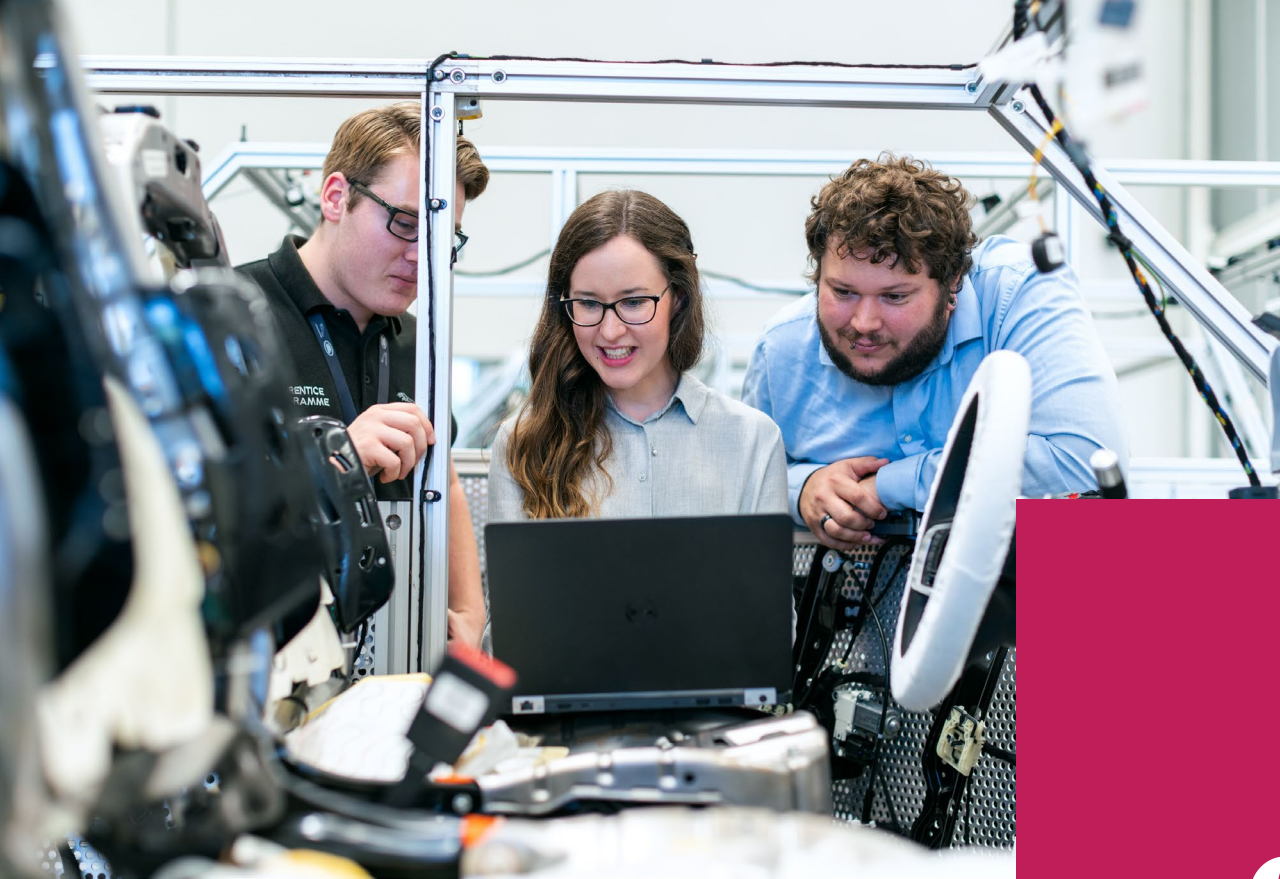


Pros

- + A good platform for international job seekers to practice a professional interview
- + A relatively easy way for a company to get involved and find possible new talents
- + Compact event that doesn't require too much time from the participants' side
- + Fellow participants can learn from each other and get ideas for their own pitches

Cons

- Some participants may find it awkward to speak in front of others
- Company representative(s) should be prepared to give some constructive comments and be honest; just showing up is not enough
- Even if companies show interest towards this kind of activity, it is fairly difficult to get them to join due to their busy schedule



Technology Professionals Getting to Know Each Other

Basic idea of the event

- The basic idea of the event was to bring technology companies and international talents closer to each other
- The role of the company was to present itself and the job opportunities it provides
- There were also some informal networking and facilitated discussions in small groups
- The objectives for the event were 1) for the companies to lower their threshold to hire international talents; and 2) for the international talents to learn more about the company and the employment possibilities it provides



How we did it?

- The event was organized via Zoom
- To promote interaction and networking we utilized Zoom chat and breakout rooms. In breakout rooms, there were group discussions, in which we utilized Flinga platform to collect ideas from specific topics
- Flinga platform worked well with group discussions. This was probably helped by the fact that project staff acted as facilitators in them
- The estimation of participant numbers was challenging, as many who registered did not show up in the event

Some title, ideas?



Pros

- + Companies were eager to participate and happy with the event
- + Also plenty of interested international talents participated
- + Facilitated group discussions worked well

Cons

- Quite high number of "no-shows" amongst the participants

- <https://digimesh.turkuamk.fi/blogit/yrityksia-ja-osaajia-tormayttamassa-case-teleste/>
- <https://blogs.tuni.fi/tamk-international/rdi/digital-networking-boosts-immigrants-integration-into-the-finnish-working-life/>



Social and Health Care Professionals Getting to Know Each Other

Basic idea of the event

- Introduce international talents to the employment possibilities in the social and health care sectors, as well as the early education sector
- The role of the companies was to tell about their activity, professional requirements for the jobs, application procedures etc
- An expert by experience was invited to join the event to share his story about finding a job in Finland as a foreigner
- The objectives for the event were 1) for the companies to get to know international talents; and 2) for the international talents to learn more about the company and the employment possibilities it provides

How we did it?

- The event was organized via Zoom
- To promote interaction and networking we utilized Zoom chatbox and Flinga platform
- Flinga platform worked to some extent. In some cases the use of such tools needs quite a lot of encouragement and facilitation from the organizers' side
- In one of the events, there was also an observer from Talent Boost program, who evaluated the event later on
- We faced challenges with the "no-shows", people who registered but did not participate

Some title, ideas?



Pros

- + It was easy to find social, health care and early education companies to join the event. This is probably due to the high demand of work force in these fields
- + The participants were very interested in the experiences of the international talent already working in the field, his suggestions and tips
- + The discussion was active and constructive feedback was given to the companies as to how they could attract more international applicants and employees

Cons

- The other platform, Flinga, was not fully utilized by the participants
- The language requirements in these fields is rather strict, which might discourage both job seekers and companies to join such events



Breaking the Language Barrier



Basic idea of the event



- To discuss the language requirements in the social and health care sectors and the effect it has on job search
- The event included representatives from social and health care sector companies but also Finnish language teachers from the integration training courses.
- Health care and family welfare service companies were selected, because it is often in the health and social services sector that the language issue is the most acute.
- TAKK, which specialises in language and integration training, approached the topic in a solution-oriented manner, taking into account the perspectives of both the employer and the employee.
- An international talent from the Philippines who worked as a nurse in Finland (expert by experience) gave a commentary speech.

How we did it?

- At the event, representatives of the health and social services company shed light on good experiences and practices related to breaking the language barrier
- To increase interaction and engage the target group, Mentimeter and AnswerGarden were used at the event, but their use was limited
- Participants were searched through an open call (forms form) within university community and through advertisements on social media channels (own channels, IHT, DigiMESH, etc.)
- Initially a lot of people showed their interest towards the event, but only 16 attended in the end. Guidance professionals from International House Tampere attended the event as observers.



Pros and Cons



Pros

- + The event was very interesting, and lots of learning and networking took place
- + Participants realized that Finnish language skills are quite necessary if they want to start a career in Finland
- + The discussion was many-sided and diversified because both companies and education providers were present
- + The commentary speech by the expert by experience gave a nice touch to the event

Cons

- Despite a large number of initial registrations, only one third of the registered participants actually joined the event
- It was mentioned that such an event would be better to organize live, where participants can meet face-to-face
- Participants would have wanted more concrete tips on how to learn Finnish well
- The discussion on how to manage language problems in the career was left short



Panel discussions on a recruitment fair



Basic idea of the event

- Basic idea of panel discussions on a recruitment fair is to provide insights, inspiration and role models as well as information about networking as an international student
- Companies and services offer their employees to join the panel discussions, which gives wider perspective and presentation for the audience and also the companies and services gain visibility
- The objectives for the event are to give relatable role models with an international background and provide practical tips – especially when the target group is international as well

How we did it?

- Two panel discussions were organized as a part of Find Your Future recruitment fair organized by Turku University of Applied Sciences
- Topic of the first panel discussion were: "How to network online"
 - Panelists were employees from a service of Turku city, education provider and association who work with international population
 - Almost all panelists had international background
- Topic of the second panel discussion were: "Career stories by alumni"
 - Panelists came from three different company / organization to share their career stories
 - All panelists had international background
- Host of the panel discussions could have included the audience to take a part



The pros and cons of the event



Pros

- + The event was connected with a bigger event
- + Panelists were mostly international and were relatable
- + Tips provided were concrete and discussion had a positive vibe
- + Host of the panels was well-prepared and relaxed

Cons

- It was challenging to attract audience, when there were other things happening in the fair
- Audience weren't able to take part in the discussion or it was not easy to join it
- Networking possibilities with the panelists were limited – however it would be possible after the event

<https://www.tuas.fi/en/articles/536/find-your-future-fair-connected-students-and-companies/>



DigiMESH

Mini-mentoring





Basic idea of the event

- Mini-mentoring refers to a one-off event where international job seekers can talk about their career goals, hopes and challenges with an expert from their own field in a secure and candid environment
- Role of the company representatives is to act as mentors. They tell, for example, about the Finnish working culture, how and where to look for jobs, which kind of job application documents are needed and how the trade unions operate
- The main objective is to provide international students and job seekers support in finding a job in Finland relevant to their field of education or profession

How we did it?

- The event was co-organized with the Association of Middle Eastern Women
- The mentees came from the association, while the mentors were searched by the DigiMESH-personnel making use of their own personal networks
- The mentor-mentee pairs represented the same professional fields, namely early childhood education, biochemistry and architecture
- The number of participants was kept modest. There were 3 mentor-mentee pairs and 3 facilitators
- The event was organized in a hybrid form using Zoom
 - The mentors participated in the event remotely and the mentees, with the exception of one, were present at the association's premises
- The event lasted for 1,5 hours including a common introduction and conclusion
- The mentors and mentees had a 45-minute private mentoring session based on the discussion openings presented by the mentee



The pros and cons of the event



Pros

- + Easy to organize, requires little commitment and time from the company representatives compared to extensive mentoring programmes
- + Offers international job seekers an easy way to widen their professional network within their own field of expertise
- + Provides the company representatives (mentors) with an opportunity to learn about possible job candidates informally

Cons

- It might be challenging to form suitable mentor-mentee pairs, which share the same educational or professional background
- Some mentor-mentee pairs may need more facilitation from the organizers to get the conversation going
- The timeframe of 45 min. can in some instances be too short, especially if a mentee has a lot of questions