



Fast Track to Familiarity

Methods to promote interaction and networking in digital events

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What are Fast Track to Familiarity methods?

- Fast Track to Familiarity methods have been created as a part of the DigiMESH project, which aimed to increase interaction and activity in remote events. The methods are gathered from various online resources and some of them are more familiar than others, for example, in teaching.
- We hope that the methods give you new ideas when planning your own online or onsite event. The methods presented here are just ideas that you can modify to better suit your needs.
- We recommend you to get familiar with our other event organisation materials.
 - [Inspire and engage remotely! – Handbook for organising remote events](#)
 - Event models for organising remote events together with companies on our [webpage](#).

The DigiMESH project aims to strengthen the possibilities of highly educated immigrants living in Finland to find employment matching their skills by developing digital networking. The project was implemented by Turku University of Applied Sciences and Tampere University of Applied Sciences, and the International Working Women of Finland Association worked as a close collaboration partner. The project has been funded by the European Social Fund (REACT-EU funding) from 3 January 2022 to 31 October 2023.



The Icebreaker Race

Idea and implementation



Idea of the method

- Playful competition between groups of participants
- The groups look for unanimous answers to the questions; each time a group's members submit matching answers, they are awarded one point. The goal of the groups is to earn as many points as possible
- Works best face-to-face. The method can also be implemented remotely if the groups have their own facilitators in virtual breakout rooms or if a separate platform is used

Question examples

- Working life representatives can also be involved in the competition by placing the participants into groups
- What do you think is the most important feature in case X?
- What one thing stood out to each of you from the previous presentation?
- Where can you get the best lunch in town?
- Why is topic Y relevant and important at the moment?

Implementation in practise

- Participants are divided into groups of 3–5 people. Small groups work better and allow everyone to participate
- At the live event, each group is given a stack of notes, each with a question. In a remote event, the facilitator of the small group can ask questions or use Flinga or another similar platform so that groups can see the questions independently.
- Questions should be easy. The aim is not to find the 'right answer', but to provoke discussion and seek consensus within the group. Questions can be related to the theme of the event or be more general. Some questions may include humour, such as raising the issue of whether pineapple belongs on pizza
- The groups discuss and find a unanimous answer to the question, after which they move on to the next question. A point is awarded for each unanimously agreed upon answer. You can book about 20 minutes for this exercise.
- The group with the most points wins. After the exercise, you can reserve discussion time for the most interesting questions.



The Jigsaw Method

Idea and implementation



The idea of the method

- Groups of participants learn about each other or a specific topic and share their knowledge with other groups. The method emphasizes co-learning
- Works well both face-to-face and remotely
- Typically used in teaching, but also works for networking by modifying topics (e.g. introducing companies, other participants or the industry)

Implementation in practice

- Participants are divided into groups of 3–10 people. Small groups work better and allow everyone to participate
- Each group is given a topic or area (e.g. a specific company/organisation or a work-related topic) to explore. The group then presents the topic to the other groups
- Another option is for the participants to find out about each other, for example, through social media and introduce each other to other members of the group
- 10–15 min can be reserved for the method depending on the given topics



DigiMESH

Speed networking



Idea and implementation



The idea of the method

- Allows event participants to quickly get to know more new people
- Works best face-to-face, but also remotely to some extent. The challenge in remote implementation is the formation of changing pairs
- Working life representatives can also be involved in the implementation

Implementation in practice

- Participants are divided into pairs or groups of three, and each pair has 5 minutes to discuss
- The pair changes after every 5 minutes. For example, there can be 5-7 rounds, depending on how much time you want to give for the method.
- In remote events, couples or small groups are in virtual breakout rooms. Remotely, there is a risk that people will end up talking to the same people more than once. The risk is lower if there are a large number of participants.
- The organiser can give questions to help starting the conversation, such as "why are you here today?" or "what are you studying/where do you work/what field are you interested in?"



Couple chatting



Idea and implementation



The idea of the method

- The participants get to discuss the topic in more depth with their own partner or small group
- The method engages people to participate in the event and its topic with a low threshold, when everyone only talks to one or a few people
- Works best for medium-sized events and webinars
- The method can be used for both face-to-face and remote events
- Working life representatives can participate in pair/small group discussions

Implementation in practice

- Participants form pairs or small groups, preferably with people they don't already know. In the remote events, the organisers divide the participants into virtual breakout rooms
- Couples or small groups are given a question or topic they are supposed to discuss. They can search for an answer to a question or have a more general discussion related to the theme. There can be several topics
- For example, you should allow 5-15 minutes per topic, depending on the number of topics
- After the pair/small group discussions, the topic can be discussed together, where the participants can share their own thoughts



Fishbowl

Idea and implementation



The idea of the method

- The idea is to create a discussion environment (fishbowl) where some of the participants discuss while others are observing the discussion and learning from what they hear. The method emphasizes conversation and listening skills
- The method may seem challenging or intimidating to participants who are shy or nervous in social situations
- Works best for medium to large events
- Can be implemented at face-to-face or remote events
- Depending on the topic, company representatives may be involved in groups

Implementation in practice

- Depending on the number of participants, participants are divided into one or more "fish bowls". Participants are divided into inner and outer circles, where those in the inner circle discuss the given topic. At the same time, those in the outer circle follow and take notes
- The organizer gives a topic or question to the inner circle. The topic should be debate-provoking and interesting
- The maximum number of insiders should be 6–8 people. In an ideal situation, there are approximately the same number of people in the inner circle and in the outer circle, so that parts can be changed, for example, when the topic or question changes
- For example, one conversation can take 10–20 minutes, depending on the topic and its thought-provoking nature



Mingle bingo

Idea and implementation



The idea of the method

- Through playful competition, participants get to know each other by asking questions and discussing based on bingo cards
- Works best for at least medium-sized events
- The method works better for face-to-face events, but it can also be modified for remote events
- Working life representatives can take part in bingo

Implementation in practice

- The organizer makes various 5x5 bingo cards with statements such as "has 3+ pets", "volunteers" or "has traveled in Asia". Alternatively, the statements may relate to an industry if the participants are from the same industry
- Each participant get their own bingo card (note: bingo cards should have different statements). After this, the participants try to find participants among themselves who match the statements. The first, who gets five horizontal/vertical/diagonal lines, wins
- Remote implementation: each participant is sent their own bingo card in advance. Participants are divided into groups in their own virtual breakout rooms, where they discuss and try to get bingo on their cards
- The maximum duration should be 30 minutes