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## Tool 5 - How to find companies - Workshops with companies

Finding new companies where long-term apprentices can do their mobility and strengthening already existing collaborations can be quite a challenge. This is the case especially for MSEs and certain sectors where nothing is left to chance and manpower is carefully calculated.

Our different experiences point to the fact that using existing networks or building new ones to find out which companies might be open to long-mobilities is the key to overcome such constraints. This is done on a twofold level: by setting up **best practices** whose outcomes are shared with all companies and by organizing **networking events**.

These kinds of events have a double purpose: on the one hand they allow for **new companies scouting**, as well as **building loyalty** among the ones who have already hosted foreign apprentices. On the other hand, they allow companies to network and to understand the **enormous potential of intercultural exchange** for their own business: a foreign apprentice means a new culture, a new language, new ideas and therefore new possibilities of internationalization.

An networking event of this kind and with this scope was organized in 2017, 2018 and 2019 by Uniser under the name of **"Ties That Bind"**. The detailed list of organizational steps is as follows.

### **1. Setting up the event**

#### 1.1 Start planning in advance

It is recommended to start setting up the event at least 3 months before the desired date.

#### 1.2 Form a working group.

Before getting to work, it is useful to determine who exactly will be actively contributing in its organization. At least 1 person from the purchasing department should be present, as well as 2 people from the marketing one. 1 person should be designated as the supervisor.

Roles needed:

- general supervision
- graphic designer
- responsible for logistic matters
- responsible for communications

#### 1.3 State your goals and agenda

Another step worth taking before starting is having in mind the objectives of the event. In this case they are:

- companies networking
- new companies scouting
- strengthening previous collaborations

- make companies understand the added value of having international apprentice

#### 1.4 Choose the right city, dates and time

Choosing the right city is fundamental for achieving the event's goals. Study your market and plan accordingly. A crucial element to bear in mind is the choice of date and time: "Ties That Bind" usually takes place on Friday and in the afternoon, so to encourage working people to come and network, without interfering too much with their work.

#### 1.5 Name the conference

The name of the event should be catchy but not funny, remember that the main target are companies. It should resonate without being too serious or didactic and portray the meaning of the event: creating connections.

### **1. Organizing the event**

#### 2.1 Set a budget

You should set a minimum and maximum budget for the event, bearing in mind all envisageable costs.

How much could it cost? Depends on participants.

- **Participants. 10 to 20 - € 2.000- 3.000**  
Conference hall: € 200-500  
Advertising+marketing+gadget: € 500  
Coffee break+aperitiv: € 100-400  
Audio-video Service: € 700
- **Participants. 20 to 50 - € 3.000 - 4.000**  
Conference hall: € 400-800  
Advertising+marketing+gadget: € 800  
Coffee break+aperitiv: € 200-1000  
Audio-video Service: € 700
- **Participants. 50 to 80 - € 4.000 - 6.000**  
Conference hall: € 800-1000  
Advertising+marketing+gadget: € 1000  
Coffee break+aperitiv: € 500-1600  
Audio-video Service: € 700

Check out the possibility of having sponsors.

## 2.2 Choose the format

This is a fundamental step in the creation of the event and it should be in line with its main goals. "Ties That Bind" format foresees:

- 45 min for registration and welcome coffee
- 15 min plenary session for official greeting and introduction to the works
- 2 hours thematic tables in world café style. Each table is led by a senior member of the organizing institution + one opinion leader, skilled on the discussion topic of the table.
- 15 min closing remarks and invitation to the networking aperitif (in plenary)
- final networking aperitif

## 2.3 Choose your conference venue

The venue should reflect the format of the event. In this case it should have a wide space for the plenary sessions, 4 smaller places (or the possibility of organizing the space in this way) for placing thematic tables and an area dedicated to the welcome coffee and the networking aperitif. It is important to find the right location: it should be appealing to all kinds of companies and public: the idea is to choose an historic building that has been recently renewed, so that it also retains a suggestive impression.

## 2.4 Decide on a menu

Food should not be underestimated in such an event, because its goal is to encourage people to stay and network even after the end of thematic tables. That is why "Ties That Bind" places a great deal of importance on the food and beverages chosen for the aperitif: the choice should favour local producers and local (traditional or innovative) products.

## 2.5 Insist on a walk-through

You want to avoid unforeseen problems as much as possible, that is why you should always check the venue in person at least one week before the event.

# **1. Planning the contents**

## 3.1 Plan the schedule.

Start planning the schedule well in advance, at least two months before the event. In this way you can make sure all selected speakers will be available and all topics will be covered thoroughly.

## 3.2 Decide what type of sessions to have

Sessions reflect the format of the event:

- Plenary session: institutional greetings and welcome by the president of the organizing institution
- Thematic tables in the form of a "networking café". The audience is divided in 4 groups who spend 30 minutes in each of the following table to discuss:

1. Erasmus+ between past and future: some useful numbers
2. Hosting a European apprentice: where? why? how?
3. Testimony of an apprenticeship through Erasmus+: students and teachers share their

experience

#### 4. Strength, power and advantages of the Erasmus+ network

Once the time is over, each group proceeds onto the next table.

- Conclusions: invitation to the networking aperitif

### 3.3 Plan if you need to include any other activities

Here you can plan all collateral activities, such as:

- contacting all suppliers in time for the event
- organize the clean up after the meeting
- check projector and sound system

## **1. Promote the event**

### 4.1 Decide who will participate

“Ties That Bind” format foresees the participation of local companies’ representatives, both old and new ones, a group of former apprentices together with their teachers, other stakeholders such as chambers of commerce, municipalities, the press.

It could be a great idea to invite some of your customers and/or partners in order to strengthen your relationship with them.

### 4.2 Create a coordinated image

The following elements should be prepared before publicizing the event:

- logo
- payoff
- digital letterhead for programme
- ppt format
- participant badges
- graphics with logo:      1200 x 630 pixel for Facebook post & website  
   600x600 for Instagram post  
   1920 x 1080 for Facebook event

### 4.3 Create an online space for the event

Your event should be present on your institution's website and blog, where the programme should be updated at least every week before the due date.

### 4.4 Advertise

#### a. Contact the speakers

The first step is to contact your speakers: this should happen at least 2 months prior to the event

Recall: one week after the first email

#### b. Start inviting companies you already work with

#### c. Mailing list

Use your list of contacts and/or newsletter to spread the word, make news public at least 1 month prior to the event

Recall: two weeks after the first email + 5 days before the event + the day before

d. Social media

You should start promoting the event on your social media channels as soon as you have a draft schedule, in any case at least one month before the date.

- Create a Facebook event

- Publish 1 post every 3 days in the weeks before the event, switch to 1 a day the week right before the event. All posts should be public, include a photo and a link to the programme.

#### 4.5 Begin accepting registrations

Select one person who will be in charge of the registrations and with the update of the participant list. The same person will be in charge of the participant badges.

#### 4.6 Spread the brand!

Consider producing branded gadgets to be handed out at the event, such as: pens, notebooks, pendrives, badges lanyards...