

# Putting Together the Perfect Team: Networking Matters

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## INTRODUCTION

Networking can be uncomfortable, especially when not everyone speaks the technical language. How often do we get to network externally with people of other professions? The technology world goes beyond engineers, and being able to expand our networks to include other professionals can benefit us tremendously. In this puzzle-solving exercise, we will explore the idea of a sweet spot: what you bring to the table.

If you had to build a company, how would you build the network you need to be successful? Let's transform the room into Silicon Valley for an hour. One scientist has discovered a way to build wireless charging technology. This is going to be big. But what does it take to make it a reality? Today's exercise is to find the right group of people to realize the potential of the new product.

Why is this different/ unique? Tell us how you can scale this exercise for 300 people?

*20 minutes:* Facilitators will announce roles one at a time, and ask the audience to raise their hands if their role was announced. Audience members will then walk around the room, introducing themselves and their roles and form groups. They will start figuring out if bigger groups are more

successful or not by comparing the puzzle pieces, what type of talent they are missing in their business. Facilitators will walk around to make sure that people keep moving and no pitch is taking too long and all the questions are being answered. Each puzzle piece will provide sample questions and considerations for the role at hand. This part of the exercise focuses on building common goals, and the ability to speak on the technical vision of the product. At the end of this time period, new teams are asked to take a seat.

## AUDIENCE

Students, entry-level and mid-level career attendees are targeted. However, I'd like to encourage senior professionals to attend as well. A refresher on networking styles, including insight on what new generations of students bring to the table, would be beneficial even to those who have been exercising networking practices for years.

*10 minutes:* The moderators will lead a discussion on the lessons learned from the exercise. First, we will identify the teams that formed the biggest connected puzzle and ask them to share what they think made them successful, what roles they ended up having on their team, and how they went about finding each other.

Other teams will be asked to speak about the challenges they had. Did an investor reject them because they didn't have a hardware engineer onboard? Did the investor want to see the pieces already in place, or believe in the vision? Did a natural leader emerge and how did that affect the dynamics? Did any teams fall apart? Was everyone able to explain what she brings to the table and why that made her a valuable addition?

Easy to visualize the session at GHC.

## PLAN OF ACTION

*10 minutes:* Moderators introduce themselves and the objective of the session. Then the rules of the exercise are explained – everyone gets a role (scientist, angel investor, patent lawyer, software engineering, site reliability engineer, hardware engineer, product expert, marketing student, etc.). A couple of sample roles are introduced; each person gets a card already waiting for them on their seat. We will ensure that cards are placed strategically so that people don't have to go all the way across the room to find each other. Each role is written on a puzzle piece. The intent for the naturally formed groups is to solve and put together a networking puzzle – what type of partners do you need in your business in order for it to come together?

But wait, turns out there is a shortage of investors and hardware engineers in the market, so it is up to each individual and then the newly formed group to sell the technical vision, and bond on common goals. No pitch can take more than 1 minute, and engineers and investors can ask questions.

*10 minutes:* Participants are now asked to take a couple of minutes to think about their sweet spots, what do they bring to the table – what are their top skills in real life? The next 10 minutes, team members go around the table with introductions and sharing their skills and sweet spots. Facilitators might share their skills at the beginning of this conversation depending on audience level of activity.

10 minutes: The moderators will open the floor for any open discussion points. Participants are asked to write down the skills they shared on the puzzle piece and leave it on the table so that the list of skills can be shared with everyone after the session.  
In case of fewer questions, facilitators will suggest a few a few points of discussion, questions to the audience.

### **OUTCOMES/CONCLUSIONS**

Attendees should walk away feel more comfortable speaking to new people, of different professions within technology world. They would get networking tips and observe strengths and weaknesses of their own and of others. Additionally, they will have a chance to think about their sweet spots and skills set, and connect with others of complimentary or same skills.

Key takeaways for attendees identified

### **PARTICIPATION STATEMENT**

All participants have made a commitment to attend the conference if accepted.

### **FACILITATORS**

**Contact Facilitator** bio (1 Paragraph)

**Facilitator 1** bio (1 Paragraph)

**Facilitator 2** bio (1 Paragraph)

Do the facilitators have the right experience to deliver this session?

### **REFERENCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY**