Networking at international conferences:
make it work for everyone

Networking is one of the most common marketing activities. However, too often it simply isn't effective. Why is that? Firstly, most people believe networking is just another word for 'selling themselves' and they don't like the idea. Secondly, people often do not prepare for networking opportunities or know how to follow up effectively. And finally, the majority of people have never had training in the skill and feel very uncomfortable doing it! Another key element that some academics feel uncomfortable with is using social media to grow their networks and make their work more visible to a wider audience.

This dynamic course is aimed at all academics and researchers who need to network in order to promote their own work, the work of their community, faculty, university or sponsor. Most of the work covered in the workshop can also be applied in delegates' personal lives. The workshop begins by exploring some commonly held beliefs about the real value of networking and how to go about it. Alternative ideas that will generate much higher success are offered. We examine and work on core sub-skills that are key to creating real connection with people.

Workshop content:
The workshop covers the following topics:

- planning for networking opportunities
- employing strategies to create connections with others
- using active listening & guided questioning to build rapport
- using English to open, close and escape 'going-nowhere' conversations, etc.
- dealing with nerves
- working with body language: reading others' and your own body language
- using social media to drive your networking

Approach:
This is a dynamic, interactive and practical workshop. Participants work on a number of increasingly challenging activities starting from 'opening lines' to start a conversation, to elevator pitches to introduce themselves and their work at a conference, and finally, to building conversation frameworks for the contexts in which they need to network. These exercises are done via role-plays and simulations which model real-life scenarios.

Small sections of a networking event will be filmed so that delegates can observe themselves in playback. This also provides an opportunity for giving and taking feedback from colleagues. Participants are actively encouraged to share their experience, knowledge and skills with each other.

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