

Speed Networking

Accelerating Change through Connections

Activity Purpose: Connect sustainability minded individuals from organizations, businesses, community groups, and public agencies by helping them form relationships

Objectives of the event:

- Form unlikely alliances
- Discover shared goals
- Build base of relationships
- Clarify sustainability and the need to balance the three Es

Intended audience: Representatives from organizations, businesses, community groups, and public agencies within the three E's (equity, economy, and environment) who are committed to making Sonoma County the best place to live.

Event Planning

Promotion: Invitations/publicity to draw intended audience to event

Site:

- convenient location
- enough room to move around in
- chairs for opening and closing sessions
- decent lighting

Materials List

- Registration Forms
- Name Tags
- Clipboards
- Pens
- Post-it Notes (large for more room to write)
- Forms with questions
- Timer (can use stopwatch on smartphone)
- Bell or Gong (to signal end of speed round)
- Signs with Sustainability areas (the place for people to put post-its)

Summary of Suggested Schedule

Time needed: **50 minutes minimum for activity**; 1-1/2 to 2 hours total

- 30min Registration – Networking, snacks

- 10min **Welcome; Activity Explanation**

- 5min **Sample elevator speech before sitting down with person next to you**
 A talks to B – 2 min
 B talks to A – 2 min

- 5min **Participants get situated in pre-arranged seats**

- 6min A talks to B – 2 min
B talks to A – 2 min
Note writing and transition – 2 min
- 6min A talks to B – 2 min
B talks to A – 2 min
Note writing and transition – 2 min
- 6min A talks to B – 2 min
B talks to A – 2 min
Note writing and transition – 2 min
- 6min A talks to B – 2 min
B talks to A – 2 min
Note writing and transition – 2 min
- 5min Explanation of next steps (put your post-its where and by when) and wrap up/big picture, and follow up after the event
- 10-30min Networking, snacks – Don't forget your post-its

Details of Suggested Schedule

(10 min) Welcome by Facilitator – Setting the Stage

- ✓ Thanks for coming out ☺
- ✓ Why are we here? **Current situation:**
 - There are lots of people doing or wanting to do lots of good work in or on similar projects or areas of Sustainability.
 - Our group felt there was currently no body or mechanism for mapping not only the projects, but the people who were working on them.
 - Our goal was to create a fun and interactive way to snap-shot this data, with the hopes of using it to identify those people and organizations in our area working towards Sustainability – so if someone were to host a Sustainability Summit, they'd have a robust understanding of the local climate.
 - And while brainstorming how we could do this, we realized that the interactive nature of what we were trying to accomplish could also provide a platform that would allow for information sharing, possible cooperation or collaboration, or at the very least the opportunity for participants to promote a project and gauge community interest.
 - But how were we going to make that fun – and something people wanted to participate in? How much time do we have to accomplish this? And really, how much time does anyone have to dedicate to such a process?
 - And then, like dawn on the horizon.....Speed Networking was born.
- ✓ Say Wha?? **The Process:** So basically Speed Networking is....
 - In a very concentrated amount of time, groups of 2 will meet and take turns describing both what they are trying to accomplish and how others might help.
 - Worksheets will be provided to help guide your conversations. The sheet itself is for

you to keep and take notes on if you so choose. The post-its on the side are for you to write down Contacts, Organizations, or Ideas that you think would be of interest to that person.

- Remember: just because the project/interest that the person you're speaking with doesn't necessarily match with what you're doing – that doesn't mean you don't know or work with someone else or an organization that they would benefit from knowing about. Perhaps you would even be willing to make that initial introduction?
- We're calling these post-it's Suggestions for Success, and at the end of activity all participants will receive their suggestions.

The Activity - How it will work:

- All participants need to write their name on a rectangular piece of paper and place it under the Area of Sustainability that you believe your project falls under or an Area that you're interested in becoming more involved with. Come back once you're done. Typically this information would have already been collected during the registration of the event – but we're still in beta testing mode here.
- (Once everyone returns) We will divide everyone into groups of 6. Within that group there will be 3 A's and 3 B's. Group up so each A is meeting with a B.
- Each participant will only have 2 minutes to answer the questions:
 - What is your passion [with regard to sustainability]?
 - What Project are you working on?
 - What do you need to make your project more successful?
- We will let you know when time is up for each speaker. After each person has had the opportunity to share, there will be a minute of transition time, for everyone to finish writing down personal notes or Suggestions for Success.
 - Please note: If you do complete a Suggestion for Success for someone, please right their name on the back to help insure this suggestion is delivered to them properly.
- After the transition minute, all of the A's stay where they are at and the B's will move to the next A to their right and the processes will begin again.
- Once all of the A's have spoken to all of the B's – please take all of your Suggestions for Success and place it around the names of the person you're giving those to and we'll meet back here for a quick wrap up.

- Remember: Our goal is to create connections that will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our local programs.

(5) Sample Elevator Speech with person next to you

(30) Get participants seated and begin activity

Start each new pair with an icebreaker question before they dig into their passion and their projects. Sample questions here:

Ice breaker Questions (you'll need 8-10)

1. How long have you lived in Sonoma County?
2. One food you consider a treat?
3. Favorite Book?
4. Favorite number?
5. Which came first, the chicken or the egg?
6. Where's your happy place?
7. What inspires you?
8. If you were a cartoon character, who would you be?
9. Favorite way to travel?
10. If you could have one wish granted to you, what would it be for?
11. Coffee or tea?
12. Favorite form of communication?
13. Would you prefer a high five or a pat on the back?
14. If you were the 8th dwarf, what would your name be?
15. Are you sweet or savory?
16. Finish the sentence: When life hands you lemons you....?
17. What's a goofy pet peeve of yours?
18. Righty or Lefty?
19. Happiness is....
20. What is/are your favorite pair of shoes you've ever owned?

(10) Wrap Up

Recap purpose, objectives, areas of impact, and next steps.

This would be a good time to review what will be different when this activity is broken down to a model (i.e. mixer time at the beginning and end to allow for attendees to build on the connections created during the activity. It's also good to incorporate a feedback section and designate a recorder and a facilitator so you can capture the feedback on the following questions:

- ✓ Did you like the activity?
- ✓ What parts worked well?
- ✓ What could we change to make it better?
- ✓ Do you think this processes will help us reach our Big Picture Goal which is: To promote and increase communication and cooperation to further the success of local sustainability projects

Follow up will happen both in mingling at the end and in lists summarizing the participants needs and contact information.

Our goal is to provide the pathways to making real connections that will further help what we are all working toward in our own ways.

We're setting the stage and leaving the next steps to you!

Speed Networking Invitation Template

Feel alone in your efforts?

Need a helping hand? Or advice from a trusted source?

Are you too busy or shy to seek out like-minded colleagues?

**Join _____ for Speed Networking
to Accelerate Change through Connections
on _____**

Program:

Arrival and mingling from ____ to _____

Networking program will begin promptly at _____ and end by _____

Informal networking from _____ to _____

Speed Networking aims to connect people who are looking for helping hands, business contacts, or advocates to further the work they are doing--paid or volunteer--to make our world more sustainable. It's fun! It's fast! It's effective!

The format: Participants use a "speed dating" format—rotating meeting of pairs during which each participant gives a 2-minute summary of their project/organization and needs. Listeners take notes and jot down recommendations.

The outcome: Each person walks away not only with a face-to-face introduction to like-minded individuals, but also with short "suggestions for success" (advice, contact information, or an introduction). As a follow up, each person will receive a list of participants' contact information and their sustainability emphases.

Feel free to bring a friend, but we ask that all participants register by _____. This will aid our planning and preparation and make the program run more smoothly. Thanks!

Speed Networking Contacts

notes for yourself (record name; other notes optional):

Who you're talking with: _____

Their **Passion**: _____

Their **Project**: _____

Their **Need(s)**: _____

Who you're talking with: _____

Their **Passion**: _____

Their **Project**: _____

Their **Need(s)**: _____

Suggestions for Success

notes to give them on post-its:

Contacts*Organizations*Ideas

Speed Networking Registration Form

(to be collected, put into spreadsheet and given to participants following the event)

Attendee Name:

Project or Organization/Business:

Sustainability Project Areas: *(these can be adapted to your particular group)*

Check those that apply:

- Carbon
- Community Planning
- Culture/Heritage
- Economy/ Job Development
- Education
- Energy
- Equity
- Food
- Government/public policy
- Health
- Housing
- Land Use/ Wildlife
- Natural Resources
- Spirit
- Transportation
- Waste
- Water

Website:

Preferred method of contact by other participants:

___email:

___phone number: