

Lesson Plan: Networking

How good are your students at networking – or the skill of making useful business contacts through the social aspects of conferences, meetings, parties and so on? This latest life skills lesson plan from *In Company 3.0* is all about networking skills in practice and provides great activities in this key business skill, no matter what your students' level of experience.

Level: Pre-intermediate / CEFR B1

Time: approx 60-70 minutes (or longer depending on how the activities are used)

How to use this lesson plan:

The lesson can be used for the whole class, who can work in pairs or groups of three. Download and print out the [Student's Book pages](#) so each student has a copy, and download the related [audio files](#).

Learning objectives

This unit is about networking – the skill of making useful business contacts by socializing at conferences, meetings, parties and so on. Students practise the kinds of questions that people ask when they are making small talk. Furthermore they learn how to describe other people. In this first section, students listen to two people making small talk in a hotel bar. They answer questions about what is said and complete the questions that are asked in the conversation. They then practise forming their own questions to find out information about the person sitting next to them.

Warm-up

Elicit or explain the meaning of **gossip**. Then ask students to stand in a line. Whisper a piece of gossip to the first person in the line. That person whispers it to the next person, and so on, until it has reached the end of the line. No one is allowed to ask for a repetition of what has been said. The final person tells the others what he / she has heard. Usually the facts will have changed substantially, and students can have fun seeing how gossip and rumours can move further and further away from the truth, the more people are involved in the telling of them.

Focus attention on the quotation and ask students if they agree with it.

Then move the discussion on to networking. Point out that a lot of the conversations students will study in this unit are examples of **networking**. Write this word on the board and elicit that it refers to making useful business contacts by talking to people at meetings, conferences, on planes, etc. A **network** is a collection of things that are connected, and **networking** often involves introducing people to each other or getting introductions to people through contacts you have already made. Find out how often the students have to do it in their work, and whether or not they enjoy it. Ask your student if he / she agrees with the quotation. Discuss what qualities a good conversationalist has.

1:1 notes

Ask your student if he / she agrees with the quotation. Discuss what qualities a good conversationalist has.

1 Students discuss the questions with a partner. Have a class feedback session to compare answers.

2 (Track 1.17)

Explain that students are about to listen to a conversation in a bar between two businessmen. Elicit ideas about the kinds of things the two men might talk about.

Ask students to read the questions in 2 before you play the recording, so that they know exactly what information they are listening for. Check answers with the class.

ANSWERS

- a He works in the marketing department of a retail company that sells leisure goods.
- b He is a sales manager for a large Dutch clothing firm called Verweij Fashion.
- c No, they don't.

Track 1.17 audio script

Conversation 1

- A:** Hello, do you mind if I join you?
B: Er, no, not at all.
A: How do you do? My name's Rick Van Looy.
B: Hi. Pleased to meet you. I'm Florent Rondele.
A: Are you from around here, then?
B: No, but my company has a store in town. Actually, I live in France.
A: So, what do you do, Florent?
B: I'm in marketing. I work for a retail company. We deal mainly in leisure goods.
A: Do you mean sports equipment?
B: Well, both sports and casual wear. Clothes, shoes, accessories, stuff like that. We have stores in several countries.
A: Sounds like a big operation. How many stores have you got?
B: Nearly 50 in total. And what line of business are you in, Rick?
A: Well, quite similar really. I'm a sales manager for a large Dutch clothing firm, Verweij Fashion – do you know it?
B: Yes, of course. Are you opening a store here, then?
A: Yes, we're looking at possible sites at the moment.
B: Hmm. That can be a slow process. Rick, do you fancy something to drink?
A: Erm, yeah, thanks.
B: Come on, then. There's a table free over there.

3 (Track 1.18) Explain that students are going to listen to a second conversation, with different speakers and a different setting. Again, make sure students read the questions before you play the recording. Check answers with the class.

ANSWERS

- a They are on a plane. (clues: *it's a long flight; do we land soon?*)
- b Probably a pen (clues: *it was on the floor; she was looking for it in order to finish a crossword*)
- c Bangkok
- d One of them lives there. The other is going there on business to visit a supplier.

NETWORKING

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Track 1.18 audio script

Conversation 2

- A:** Excuse me, does this belong to you?
B: Oh, thank you very much.
A: It was on the floor.
B: Yes, I was looking for it just now. I wanted to finish this crossword. I'm feeling a bit groggy, actually.
A: Yes, it's a long flight.
B: Isn't it? Have you got the time?
A: Yes, it's ... erm ... just after midnight.
B: So, do we land soon?
A: Yes, in about half an hour.
B: Oh, good. Do you know Bangkok?
A: Yes, I live there. Is this your first trip there?
B: Yes, it is actually.
A: On business, I suppose?
B: Yes, I'm visiting a supplier.
A: Oh, really? I wonder if I ...

4 (Tracks 1.17–1.18) Before listening again, ask students to look through the table of questions and try to complete the gaps. Then play the recordings again. You may need to play them several times and pause between the two conversations to give students time to complete the gaps. After checking answers with the class, ask students to suggest a suitable response to each question.

ANSWERS

- c** What **do you** do?
d **Do** you **mean** sports equipment?
e How many stores **have you** got?
f What line of business **are you** in?
g Do **you** know it?
h Are you **opening** a store here, then?
i **Do** you **fancy** something to drink?
j Does **this** belong to **you**?
k **Have** you **got** the time?
l Do **we land** soon?
m Do **you know** Bangkok?
n **Is** this your first trip there?

5 Students write the questions with a partner. After checking students' answers with them, ask one student to read out a question and another to provide the answer. In this way, students will hear the questions and answers in the context of a conversation, and it should make the structures easier to remember. You could ask students to follow this up by taking turns to ask each other the questions and giving answers which are true for them.

ANSWERS

- a** Who do you work for?
b Where is your company based?
c Where are you staying?
d Do you speak (*German*)?
e Who is (*Alex*) talking to?
f What do you do? / What's your job?
g Have you got any children? / Do you have any children?
h Where are you from? / Where do you come from?
i Are you married?
j Do you play golf?
k Do you know (*Adriana Bellini*)?

6 In this exercise, students get the chance to put into practice what they have learned. See who can find out the most information about their partner in the time allowed, but emphasize to students that the art of small talk does not lie in grilling people about their backgrounds. Questions need to be put gently and answers responded to with polite interest and reciprocal information about oneself.

1:1 notes

Ask your student the questions and encourage him / her to ask you similar questions. Try to structure this as a proper conversation, not an inquisition or a conversational ping-pong match. Demonstrate how questions can be put gently and how answers can be responded to and can be supplemented by information about oneself or a reciprocal question.

Talking about other people

Conversations which focus solely on the exchange of personal information between two people are unlikely to be sustained for long. This section introduces students to talking about other people. They first put a conversation in order, then they examine some of the language used in it and some alternative expressions which could have been used. Finally, they practise talking about other people, using a chart to provide the core information.

Warm-up

Find out from students if they have ever been introduced by someone else to someone they wanted to meet. Was the introduction successful?

1 (Track 1.19) Students work with a partner to order the conversation. When they have listened and checked their answers, ask one pair to perform the conversation for the class.

ANSWERS

See listening script below.

Track 1.19 audio script

Conversation 3

- A:** Do you know Jan Nowacki?
B: Yes, isn't he Director of Business Development at Pepsico in Europe?
A: Not any longer. Now he's the Public Relations Manager at the National Bank of Poland.
B: The National Bank of Poland, that's interesting. Do you have any contact with him in your work?
A: Not really, but I occasionally play golf with him.
B: What's he like?
A: He's a nice guy. You'd like him.

1:1 notes

Take one of the roles yourself and read the conversation with your student. Remember to work on intonation and sentence and word stress, so that the conversation sounds natural.

2 Students identify the parts of the conversation in 1 that could be replaced with the given expressions. If you have time, ask them to roleplay the conversation with a partner, using the new expressions where appropriate.

NETWORKING

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ANSWERS

- a Do you know
- b Isn't he ...
- c Not any longer
- d What's he like?
- e You'd like him.

3 Go through the instructions with the class. Make sure everyone understands that the jobs the people used to do are shown in the two columns on the left of the table, and their present positions by the two columns on the right. Establish that one person has retired, and elicit who it is (Dennis Sexton). Check also that students understand the phrases in the *Useful language* box. As students practise their conversations in pairs, go around offering help and encouragement. Make a note of any particularly good conversations which can be performed for the class.

4 With a different partner, students have the same type of conversation that they had in 3, but using people that they really know. Again, make a note of any interesting conversations which can be performed for the class.