Networking format cards

25 networking event ideas to print, cut and plan with

How to use these cards

Each card describes one networking format with the same fields: what it is best for, group size, time, what you need, how it runs, a host tip and what to measure. The fields answer the five questions every format has to settle before the doors open: who meets whom, in what group size, for how long, with which prompt, and what you count afterwards.

Print the PDF on A4 and cut along the dashed lines. Lay the cards out by goal, pick two or three that suit your event, and write the plan on the planning sheet at the end. In the Word version, replace everything in [square brackets] with your own details.

Overview of all 25 formats

No.	Format	Family	Group size
1	Speed networking	Structured matchmaking	20 to 200
2	Pre-scheduled 1:1 meeting blocks	Structured matchmaking	50 to several thousand
3	Braindates	Structured matchmaking	100 and more
4	Buyer-seller rotations	Structured matchmaking	20 to 500 on the smaller side
5	Mentor and expert office hours	Structured matchmaking	5 to 20 experts
6	The passport game	Games and icebreakers	100 to 3,000
7	Human bingo	Games and icebreakers	30 to 3,000
8	Mixed-team trivia	Games and icebreakers	30 to 300
9	Venue scavenger hunt	Games and icebreakers	30 to 500
10	Badge conversation prompts	Games and icebreakers	Any size
11	Facilitated roundtables	Small groups	6 to 8 per table plus a facilitator
12	Campfire session	Small groups	15 to 20 in a circle
13	Mastermind circle	Small groups	5 to 6 peers with comparable roles
14	Solution room	Small groups	20 to 60, tables of 5 to 8
15	Seat-rotation dinner	Small groups	30 to 300
16	Rotating conversation zones	Large scale	200 and more
17	Human spectrogram	Large scale	50 to 500
18	Themed lounges	Large scale	Any size
19	Lightning-talk mixer	Large scale	50 to 300
20	Silent networking hour	Quiet formats	20 to 200
21	Topic tables	Quiet formats	30 to 500
22	Walking 1:1s	Quiet formats	Pairs
23	Virtual speed networking	Virtual and hybrid	20 to 300 online
24	Hybrid buddy pairing	Virtual and hybrid	Any hybrid event
25	Post-event follow-up sprint	Virtual and hybrid	Any size, online

Idea 01 · Structured matchmaking

Speed networking

Best for: Many first contacts in a short time
Group size: 20 to 200
Time: 60 to 90 minutes, rounds of 3 to 5 minutes
You need: Numbered tables or chairs in pairs, a bell, a timer, question cards

How it runs

1. Seat people in pairs or at small tables and explain the rotation rule once.
2. Ring the bell every four minutes; one side moves on by one seat.
3. Pause for five minutes after every fourth round.

Host tip: *Open a follow-up channel the same day. Contacts made in four minutes stay shallow until a second conversation.*
Measure: Contacts per person, follow-ups within two weeks

Idea 02 · Structured matchmaking

Pre-scheduled 1:1 meeting blocks

Best for: Qualified business meetings between buyers and suppliers
Group size: 50 to several thousand
Time: Meetings of 15 to 30 minutes in blocks of two to four hours
You need: Structured registration profiles, a meeting area with numbered tables, a personal diary for each attendee

How it runs

1. Ask the matching questions at registration.
2. Open meeting requests three to four weeks before the event; attendees accept or decline.
3. Send every attendee a diary with times and table numbers before they travel.

Host tip: *The better your registration questions, the better every pairing.*
Measure: Meetings booked and held, acceptance rate of requests

Idea 03 · Structured matchmaking

Braindates

Best for: Conversations around a topic instead of a person
Group size: 100 and more
Time: Slots of about 30 minutes across the day
You need: A topic board or app, a lounge with small tables, one host

How it runs

1. Attendees post a topic they want to learn about or share.
2. Others book a 1:1 or small group slot on that topic.
3. The host seats each conversation in the lounge.

Host tip: *Seed the board with ten topics before the doors open, so nobody posts first.*
Measure: Topics posted, conversations held

Idea 04 · Structured matchmaking

Buyer-seller rotations

Best for: Guaranteed meetings with pre-qualified buyers or investors
Group size: 20 to 500 on the smaller side
Time: Half a day to two days, slots of 10 to 20 minutes
You need: A fixed seating plan, a slot schedule, a clear rotation signal

How it runs

1. Qualify buyers and sellers in advance.
2. Sellers stay seated; buyers move on to a fixed schedule.
3. Keep one buffer slot every hour for overruns.

Host tip: *Publish the schedule before anyone travels.*
Measure: Slots filled, no-show rate, seller satisfaction

Idea 05 · Structured matchmaking

Mentor and expert office hours

Best for: Access to experts, investors or senior practitioners
Group size: 5 to 20 experts
Time: Slots of 15 minutes
You need: A booking list, quiet tables, name signs

How it runs

1. Publish bookable slots for each expert.
2. Cap requests per attendee and ask for two sentences of motivation.
3. Run the slots with a visible clock.

Host tip: *The motivation text works as a conversation starter and keeps no-shows down.*
Measure: Slots booked against slots held

Idea 06 · Games and icebreakers

The passport game

Best for: Spreading foot traffic across stands and stations
Group size: 100 to 3,000
Time: The whole event day
You need: Passport cards, one stamp per station, a box for the prize draw

How it runs

1. Hand out a passport with every badge at check-in.
2. Each station stamps the passport after a short conversation.
3. Draw the prizes from completed passports at the last break.

Host tip: *Tie each stamp to a question, not to a scan.*
Measure: Completed passports, visits per station

Idea 07 · Games and icebreakers

Human bingo

Best for: Low-stakes conversations across the whole room
Group size: 30 to 3,000
Time: 20 to 30 minutes, or running all day
You need: Bingo cards with 16 traits, pens, a small prize

How it runs

1. Print 16 work-related traits on each card.
2. Attendees find one person per square and write down the name.
3. The first full rows win.

Host tip: *Use traits from working life, not private life. From a few hundred people, consider an app.*
Measure: Participation rate, new contacts per person

Idea 08 · Games and icebreakers

Mixed-team trivia

Best for: Breaking up company and department cliques
Group size: 30 to 300
Time: 30 minutes
You need: Questions, answer sheets, a team seating plan, a scoreboard

How it runs

1. Assign teams across companies, departments and seniority.
2. Play three rounds of six questions.
3. Announce the scores and let teams stay together for the next break.

Host tip: *Mix questions about the industry and the host city.*
Measure: Participation, contacts per team

Idea 09 · Games and icebreakers

Venue scavenger hunt

Best for: Movement and teamwork after long sessions
Group size: 30 to 500
Time: 30 to 45 minutes
You need: Clue cards, stations around the venue, a team list

How it runs

1. Form mixed teams of four to six people.
2. Place clues at sponsor stands, session rooms or local details inside the venue.
3. The first team back with all answers wins.

Host tip: *Keep it under 45 minutes so it warms people up rather than wearing them out.*
Measure: Teams finished, sponsor stations visited

Idea 10 · Games and icebreakers

Badge conversation prompts

Best for: A first question for every stranger
Group size: Any size
Time: Set up at check-in, works all day
You need: Badges with a blank line "Ask me about", pens at the counter

How it runs

1. Add the line to the badge design.
2. Attendees fill it in at check-in.
3. Hosts use the prompts to introduce people to each other.

Host tip: *Wear the badge centred on the lanyard, where it is easiest to read.*
Measure: Share of badges filled in

Idea 11 · Small groups

Facilitated roundtables

Best for: Depth and peer learning on one theme
Group size: 6 to 8 per table plus a facilitator
Time: 45 to 60 minutes
You need: Round tables, a topic sign per table, three prepared prompts per facilitator

How it runs

1. Assign seats in advance.
2. The facilitator opens with three prepared prompts and brings in quiet voices.
3. Close with one takeaway from each person.

Host tip: *If demand grows, add parallel tables on the same theme instead of more chairs.*
Measure: Return rate, session rating

Idea 12 · Small groups

Campfire session

Best for: Open discussion on a topic too raw for a keynote
Group size: 15 to 20 in a circle
Time: About 45 minutes
You need: A circle of chairs, one microphone, no slides

How it runs

1. The speaker opens for ten minutes without slides.
2. The speaker moderates questions and experiences from the circle.
3. In the last five minutes, each person names one thing to try.

Host tip: *Pick a topic where nobody has the final answer yet.*
Measure: Session rating, follow-up requests to the speaker

Idea 13 · Small groups

Mastermind circle

Best for: Turning acquaintances into working relationships
Group size: 5 to 6 peers with comparable roles
Time: 60 minutes
You need: A quiet room, a timer, a short ground rule card

How it runs

1. One member presents a challenge for five minutes.
2. The others ask questions first, then give advice.
3. Rotate until everyone has presented or time runs out.

Host tip: *Offer each circle a recurring video call between two editions of your event.*
Measure: Circles that meet again

Idea 14 · Small groups

Solution room

Best for: Advice attendees can use on Monday
Group size: 20 to 60, tables of 5 to 8
Time: 60 to 75 minutes
You need: Problem cards, pens, one table host per table

How it runs

1. Participants write a current problem on a card.
2. Each table picks one problem and works on it for 20 minutes.
3. The room reconvenes and each table shares its best answer.

Host tip: *Only accept problems that someone can act on within a week.*
Measure: Session rating, problems worked on

Idea 15 · Small groups

Seat-rotation dinner

Best for: Meeting more people over one meal
Group size: 30 to 300
Time: A dinner with three courses
You need: Place cards with a seat for each course, table hosts

How it runs

1. Assign seats for every course in advance.
2. Between courses, guests move to their next seat.
3. Table hosts introduce the new neighbours.

Host tip: *Print the full rotation on the place card, so service staff are not left guessing.*
Measure: Contacts per guest, guest feedback

Idea 16 · Large scale

Rotating conversation zones

Best for: Structure for a large hall
Group size: 200 and more
Time: 45 to 75 minutes per rotation
You need: Zone signs, one host per zone, a floor plan

How it runs

1. Divide the hall into zones by industry, role or challenge.
2. Attendees choose a zone; the host opens with a question.
3. Rotate on a signal every 45 to 75 minutes.

Host tip: *Count how long people stay in each zone. It shows which themes matter.*
Measure: Dwell time per zone, contacts per attendee

Idea 17 · Large scale

Human spectrogram

Best for: Debate and like-minded neighbours without a stage
Group size: 50 to 500
Time: About 20 minutes
You need: A tape line on the floor, five statements, a microphone

How it runs

1. Mark a line from "agree" to "disagree".
2. Read out a statement; attendees position themselves on the line.
3. Ask one person at each end to explain, then neighbours talk for two minutes.

Host tip: *Statements should be debatable but never personal.*
Measure: Participation, conversations started

Idea 18 · Large scale

Themed lounges

Best for: A place where approaching strangers is expected
Group size: Any size
Time: All day
You need: A corner, a sign, a host, coffee

How it runs

1. Define the communities, for example first-timers, a language group or a sector.
2. Staff each lounge with a host at peak times.
3. Announce the lounges from the stage and in the event app.

Host tip: *A lounge without a host at peak times is just furniture.*
Measure: Visits per lounge

Idea 19 · Large scale

Lightning-talk mixer

Best for: Seeding topics into the room before networking
Group size: 50 to 300
Time: 45 minutes of talks, 45 minutes of mixer
You need: Six speakers, auto-advancing slides, six standing tables

How it runs

1. Six speakers talk for six minutes each, with slides that advance automatically.
2. After the talks, each speaker hosts a standing table on the topic.
3. Attendees join the table whose talk interested them.

Host tip: *Run the clock strictly, or the mixer starts late and empty.*
Measure: Attendees per table, contacts per speaker

Idea 20 · Quiet formats

Silent networking hour

Best for: Including quieter attendees
Group size: 20 to 200
Time: 60 minutes
You need: Prompt walls, sticky notes, pens, one whiteboard per topic

How it runs

1. Post one question per wall.
2. Attendees answer in writing and build on other notes.
3. In the last 15 minutes, invite pairs to meet at the most annotated note.

Host tip: *Keep the room free of music and announcements.*
Measure: Notes per wall, pairs formed

Idea 21 · Quiet formats

Topic tables

Best for: A reason to join a conversation without an opening line
Group size: 30 to 500
Time: 30 to 60 minutes
You need: Standing tables with a question sign, one host per table

How it runs

1. Label each table with a question, not a company name.
2. Attendees join the table whose question interests them.
3. After 30 minutes, each host sums up and the tables mix.

Host tip: *Questions that start with "how" attract more people than topics.*
Measure: Attendees per table, first-timer participation

Idea 22 · Quiet formats

Walking 1:1s

Best for: Relaxed conversations away from the meeting room
Group size: Pairs
Time: 20 minutes per walk
You need: A signposted route, a simple route map, a booking list

How it runs

1. Mark a route that takes 20 minutes.
2. Attendees book walking slots in pairs.
3. Pairs walk side by side and return on time for the next session.

Host tip: *Plan an indoor route for bad weather.*
Measure: Walks booked and held

Idea 23 · Virtual and hybrid

Virtual speed networking

Best for: First contacts across locations
Group size: 20 to 300 online
Time: 45 to 60 minutes, rounds of 4 to 6 minutes
You need: A video platform with automatic pairing, a published participant list

How it runs

1. Publish the participant list in advance.
2. Run rounds of four to six minutes with automatic re-pairing.
3. Send everyone their list of contacts afterwards.

Host tip: *Online rounds need a little longer than onsite rounds, because screen conversations start slower.*
Measure: Rounds per person, follow-ups booked

Idea 24 · Virtual and hybrid

Hybrid buddy pairing

Best for: Remote attendees who network rather than watch
Group size: Any hybrid event
Time: The whole event
You need: A buddy list, a shared agenda per pair, a video link

How it runs

1. Pair each remote attendee with an onsite buddy.
2. Agree one joint meeting slot and one introduction per pair.
3. The buddy brings the remote attendee into one conversation by video.

Host tip: *Choose buddies who know the room well.*
Measure: Share of meetings with remote attendees

Idea 25 · Virtual and hybrid

Post-event follow-up sprint

Best for: Turning good intentions into calls
Group size: Any size, online
Time: 60 minutes, two weeks after the event
You need: A video call, a short list of contacts per person

How it runs

1. Invite all attendees to a 60-minute sprint two weeks after the event.
2. Everyone books up to three short calls with contacts they met but did not follow up with.
3. Collect how many calls were booked.

Host tip: *Put the sprint date into the closing announcement of the event.*
Measure: Follow-up rate for the whole event

Planning sheet for your event day

Write down which formats you will use, when and with whom. One row per slot.

Item	Your details
Event	[Event name, date, city]
Expected attendees	[Number and main groups]
Main networking goal	[For example qualified meetings, first contacts or depth]

Time	Format (card no.)	Goal	Group size	Host	Measure
[09:30]	[Card 10, badge prompts]	[First contacts]	[All]	[Registration team]	[Badges filled in]
[11:00]	[Card no.]	[Goal]	[Size]	[Name]	[Metric]
[14:00]	[Card no.]	[Goal]	[Size]	[Name]	[Metric]
[16:30]	[Card no.]	[Goal]	[Size]	[Name]	[Metric]
[19:00]	[Card no.]	[Goal]	[Size]	[Name]	[Metric]

Within two weeks after the event: [date of the follow-up sprint], [who collects the numbers], [where the results are shared].

When formats turn into meeting schedules

Pre-scheduled 1:1 blocks, buyer-seller rotations and office hours all lead to the same question: who meets whom, when and at which table. Converve schedules these meetings through a rule-based meeting matrix: attendees fill in structured profiles and availability, matching rules suggest counterparts, and every accepted request lands in a personal diary with a time and a table number.

Learn more about B2B matchmaking with Converve: https://www.converve.com/platform/b2bmatchmaking