



## TOOLKIT 35

# HOW TO RUN AN ENTERPRISE EXCHANGE

### 1. Why an enterprise exchange?

Enterprising people like to learn and develop with and from other enterprising people – Peer Exchange.

They do not generally source formal training events – too formal but also putting them in a room together to share experiences also does not work well – too informal. What is required is somebody in between which helps them to share their challenges with like minded others and to get the solutions to their problems from successful peers.

An additional benefit of the Enterprise Exchange is that starting and running a business demands lots of energy. Many of the experiences business people meet act as 'energy vampires' – they suck energy out of the business i.e. accountants, bank managers, VAT, legislation etc. The Enterprise Exchange has been known to top up business peoples energy – like filling their tanks with petrol.

### 2. What is it?

An event lasting up to 3 hours where enterprising people share problems and find solutions by helping each other. It is a facilitated event which has a very simple yet powerful process that produces outstanding results.

### 3. How to run an Enterprise Exchange successfully.

#### Here's how to do it

#### STEP 1

- Invite clients to a 3 hour event with a maximum of 30 people.
- Tell them the purpose is to help them to resolve some of their problems.
- Be careful not to invite anybody who is in direct competition with anybody else at the event.

**STEP 2** Tell the group that enterprising people prefer to get their solutions/learning from peers not 'experts'. This event will help them to solve some real issues.

- Give them all name badges.

**STEP 3**

- Give every client 2 pieces of flip paper.
- Ask them to write NEEDS on one and OFFERS on the other.
- Ask them to put their name on each flip sheet.
- Ask them to write on the NEEDS sheet in marker pen 3 issues/problems/blockages they currently have and would like resolving e.g.
  - Raising 10k finance
  - Finding new customers etc.

**STEP 4**

Then ask them to write on the OFFERS sheet 3 things they have done well or are proud of and are prepared to share with others i.e.

- Found a friendly, helpful bank manager
- Got their first order etc.

**STEP 5**

Stick the flip charts up on the walls and ask the clients to read and review them.

**STEP 6**

Ask each client to find one other persons NEED that they have experience of and can provide insights or even a solution. Get them to spend 20 minutes helping their colleague resolve their issue.

**STEP 7**

Ask each client to consider their own NEEDS and find a potential solution on somebody else's OFFERS, and ask the person to spend 20 minutes helping them resolve their issue.

**STEP 8**

In summary each client gets a NEED resolved and helps someone else solve one of their NEEDS.

**STEP 9**

Encourage clients to take notes of other NEEDS and OFFERS that they can follow up after the event.