



INTERNATIONAL NETWORKING

Training material

Part 3

INCONEXT PROJECT

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Advantages of (International) Networks for a company

Networks, especially international networks and cooperations, offer various advantages to companies and other organisations. Following advantages can be identified:

- Increase of flexibility of network members
 - More constant performances via mutual support
 - Mutual stimulation
- Synergy effects
 - Possibility to focus on core competences
 - Increase of innovation and creativity
 - Supervision
 - Mutual learning and knowledge transfer
 - Gaining competitive advantages
 - Access to foreign markets
- Increased efficiency through assignment accumulation
 - Bringing in of strengths of members
 - Mutual orders
 - Increased profits through cost reductions
 - Increase of acquisition area
- Appearance as a big organization
 - Possibility to aim for higher dimensions in business
 - More capacity to increase offers
 - Increase in competence in solution finding
 - Uniform appearance
 - Improvement of market presence
 - Many small companies act as one big player

Which networking platforms and international networks do exist?

Nowadays there are many different network organisations and online networking platforms that can be used to establish, maintain and sustain business contacts.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a webbased social network to maintain business relationships and to connect with new contacts. (LinkedIn, 2012)

Functions of LinkedIn are

- Crosslinking on your own webpage
- Insertation of your CV
- Connecting with now contacts
- Possibility to recommend other members for networks of your contacts
- Compiling enterprise profiles

LinkedIn offers diverse account schemes. The basis account is free of charge and contains:

- Compiling a profile
- Multilingual profiles
- Search functions (names, enterprises, location, etc.)
- Compiling a company profile
- Joining or creating groups
- Network statistics
- News (restricted to contacts, group members, moderators)

A premium account amounts to 29,95 \$ a month and offers:

- Enhanced search functions (job level, company size, functions in the enterprise, etc.)
- Profile organizer (Possibility to save non-contacts in folders and to categorize them.)
- Restricted numbers of inMails

- Enhanced network statistics

There is also a recruiting solution that costs 400€ a month. Thereby LinkedIn offers a collaborative solution for the recruiting environment. (LinkedIn, 2012)

Xing

XING is also a web-based social network. One of the core functions is the display of a contact web. The network also offers community functions such as:

- Sharing news with contacts
- Searching for people, areas of interest and topics
- Company pages (also with interactive functions in the pay-version)
- Groups for different areas of interest (XING, 2012)

Following system languages are supported: English, German, Spanish, French, Italian, Portugese, Dutch, Swedish, Finnish, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Polish, Hungarian and Turkish. XING is especially prevalent in Europe. Similar to LinkedIn XING also offers free accounts which are restricted in usability, and also pay-accounts. (XING, 2012)

Enterprise Europe Network

The Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) brings together business support organisations from across 49 countries. They are connected through powerful databases and know Europe inside out. With more than 580 member organisations EEN helps SMEs all over Europe to find international partners, to source new technologies and to apply for EU funding and financing. Additionally EEN contact points can advise you on:

- Intellectual Property rights
- Going international
- EU law and standards

Networking with EEN works via a huge online database of enterprise, financing and technology requests and offers. Additionally EEN contact points organize information and networking events for SMEs. (Enterprise Europe Network, 2012)

Business Network International

The Business Network International (BNI) was founded in 1985 and is according to own figures the biggest and most successful international entrepreneur union for business recommendations worldwide. In the BNI there are more than 133.000 entrepreneurs in 5.800 chapters (groups). These entrepreneurs are spread in 45 countries in America, Europe, Asia and Africa. (Business Network International, 2012)

The only objective of BNI is the exchange of business recommendations and therefore increasing revenue for the participants. BNI is politically, religiously and ideologically neutral and independent. (Business Network International, 2012)

Exercise: Think about your networking activities: Do you use one of these networks? Do you use other networks? How do you use these networks?