Technical workshops: building business relationships through shared interests

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Technical Workshop

Brokerage Event

Panel Discussion

Scientific Conference

Tradeshow

Round Table

User Forum

Symposium

Technical Workshop

User Forum
## Motivations to attend technical workshops

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academia/RIs</th>
<th>Industry</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Meet suppliers</td>
<td>• Meet customers</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Learn about emerging technology/products</td>
<td>• Learn about new trends/scientific needs</td>
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<td>• Scientific/technical exchange</td>
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<td>• Find collaborators or investors</td>
<td>• Innovation scouting</td>
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<td>• Advertise own skills/services</td>
<td>• PR/image building</td>
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<td>• Meet future employers</td>
<td>• Recruit talent</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Build relationships</td>
<td>• Build relationships</td>
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Technical workshops as a shared interest

• R&D takes place on “both sides of the fence”
  • Shared passion for science
  • Mutual interest in latest developments in the field
  • Mutual interest in collaborating with and learning from each other

• Understanding different motivations and R&D objectives
  • Helps building stronger and lasting collaborations
  • Increases mobility of staff

• Common challenges - different solutions
  • Chance to highlight your own expertise and services
  • Transfer knowledge to your own organization
Creating an environment that allows open exchange

• Small meeting or working groups with known participants (consider “by invitation only”)

• Be clear about publicity versus privacy of the meeting (will the meeting be recorded, presentations published, minutes circulated to a wider audience…?)

• When requesting technical/scientific presentations - allow for sufficient time for presenters to get internal clearance in their contribution (can be weeks!) or consider CDAs

Manage your own expectations – some participants will attend “for information only” and some seeds take a long time to germinate – it’s all about building trust!
Focus on the interaction

• Informal discussions are key - your agenda should provide ample time for discussion between participants (Q&As, panel discussions, breaks)

• Give your breaks a purpose – agenda should encourage discussions during breaks, engagement through tasks (e.g. poster competition, interviews, one-on-ones)

• Combine social with work – save time and keep meeting casual by setting up a bar alongside a poster session or providing working groups with lunch packs

• Don’t be afraid of low-key options - the focus is on technical exchange. A suitable meeting room and white board/laptop to document outcomes is sufficient!
Technical workshops are content- and outcome-focused

Technical workshops can be a good opportunity when on limited resources, BUT take care to

- **Identify suitable topics** with a common unmet need (from community surveys, talking to experts, studying white papers and conference programmes,…)

- **Select your participants** – and tailor your outreach accordingly

- **Ensure attendees are well prepared** so that everyone can participate (good briefing material)

- **Invite technical experts** to set the scene by introducing the topic and chairing scientific discussions (e.g. use cases to illustrate a technical challenge)

- **Define clear follow-up activities** (e.g. will working groups be formed? will participants publish a white paper/meeting report/etc.? will the meeting be repeated?)
Example 1: European Lead Factory (Drug Discovery)

- 100 participants - plenary + working groups + early career event
- External and internal participants, “safe space” for sharing of scientific results through CDAs and
- Interactive competition for early career researchers (best poster/flash talk) to promote RI – industry interactions
- Mutual learning element enhanced through exercises/hands-on sessions with young researchers and academia/industry co-chairs
Example 1: European Lead Factory (Drug Discovery)

Outcomes?

• Optimization of research pipelines in the consortium through exchange on differences in academic versus industrial R&D -> productivity, savings, improvement of academic pitch
  • What are scientific and economical motivators?
  • Where exactly is the translation gap?

• Several young researchers found company positions or started collaborative projects -> sustainability of interaction

• High visibility of events in new networks -> new clients for services

• Company sponsoring of future events -> extra funding

• Identification of local/regional multipliers for outreach
Example 2: Euro-BioImaging Industry Board (Image Data workshop in 2018)

- 30 participants – small working groups, personal introductions possible
- Invited representatives only from industry and experts from Nodes and associated research institutes
- Workshop topic identified by community survey: Common data challenges for academia and industry – volume and storage, FAIRification, lack of standards etc.
- Easy access for industry to academia experts to help improve their products
- Open the door to industry to highlight challenges for scientists
- Bringing the people together that are most engaged in the field
Example 2: Euro-BioImaging Industry Board (Image Data workshop in 2018)

Outcomes?

• Working groups formed on selected topics
• Follow-up activity: joint participation in EMBL-EBI workshop on same topic
• Co-authoring of white paper on meta-data in Nature Methods

-> continuous engagement of industry, new contacts
What is the role of the ILO/ICO before the event?

• Conceptual planning
  • Identify a common need or interest to find a suitable workshop topic
  • Define the scope, objective and expected outcomes of the meeting
  • Select the “right” participants
  • Identify experts/chairs to introduce the theme, attract an audience and advise you in the planning

• Leg-work
  • Depending on the personnel situation in the RI, yes, you will have to do All the planning and organization

• Communication plan
  • Anything from the first personal invitation to public announcements and meeting registration to following the event on social media
What is the role of the ILO/ICO during and after the event?

• Facilitate exchange during the event
  • Introducing people, setting up one-on-ones

• Monitor the exchange among participants during the meeting
  • Who is on the same level? Who has a common interest?
  • Who is looking for something that another participant can offer?
  • What could not be addressed during the meeting?

• Identify opportunities for follow-up
  • Define clear follow-up actions that promote further interaction
  • Post-event communication with actions, minutes and matchmaking
Strengthening imaging research in Europe

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