active notts

Net
WALKING

Future ways of working

"Netwalking - What a fantastic idea? Much quicker than sending emails, and much more enjoyable"

Attendee

Since the Covid-19 Pandemic, we have all seen significant changes to our lives, and especially, in the way we work. Those who could work from home - did, and many continue to do so, in some way. This has both ups and downs, we learnt that being at a desk in an office from 9-5 wasn't the only way to work. Zoom and TEAMs became essential. We experienced more flexibility than ever before. But, for most, a casual chat in the office as a micro break from the screen, has turned into putting the washing on!

Net WALKING

For all the positives this huge cultural shift in the way we work has brought, it still feels like some challenges have emerged that we need to consciously navigate. Back-to-back meetings have become the norm - transporting us from one virtual room to the next, without as much as a tea or toilet break factored into diary management. We miss the reflective time needed to process our thoughts during a commute. Or the walk between transport, or buildings even. Maybe you are motivated enough to squeeze a run or a home workout in? But, are these always incorporated into our working day? Or are they the first things that get dropped as soon as we become busy? Not forgetting that all these activities are often done in solitude. Don't we miss people?

RELATIONSHIPS

How difficult is it to meet new contacts from behind your screen? How are relationships developed sat indoors? Where is the room for personal conversation, in-between the often-transactional discussions on screen? Break out rooms are fantastic ways to facilitate conversations, but are we missing some facial cues? and isn't it too easy to hit the mute button? or turn the camera off when our brain isn't completely focused? And how can we work against the familiar ping of an important new email coming through. And let's not even talk about bandwidth and frozen faces at the most crucial points in conversation... Anyway, you catch the drift.

Future ways of working

We've gained some huge benefits during the cultural shift towards more virtual and flexible ways of working, but we also need to balance these with some of the intrinsic qualities we have lost, such as getting outdoors and meeting people face-to-face. There is an opportunity to try new ways of working; to combine different methods into our working weeks for our own efficiency, balance and well-being.

Netwalking is a new concept and provides an opportunity to combine professional networking with a walk around a local area. It offers face-to-face/side by side contact in a safe, creative and open space, in the naturally ventilated outdoors.

Netwalking brings plenty of benefits, such as; making new connections, developing relationships, improving mental health, normalising physical activity and getting fresh air to mention a few. Netwalking enables casual relationship building conversation, initial introductions, sharing ideas, enhances listening skills and encourages active behaviour change. It's an opportunity to leave our desks, explore, connect, create, and inspire mindfulness.

Net WALKING

FEELING INSPIRED?

There are many ways to facilitate a Netwalk. You could:
- Stage one with new contacts
- Reaffirm old relationships with external organisations you already know?
- Or, arrange an internal Netwalk as part of a team building exercise

We want to ensure that this time remains valuable to you, so to ensure a positive experience for all, we have put together a handy guide on page 4.

Please read 'How to stage a Netwalk?' to make sure you and all the attendees are safe, comfortable and get maximum benefit out of your meeting

How to stage a Netwalk
PLANNING

An average person walks around 3 to 4 miles per hour. For a 60 minute meeting you could plan to walk up to 3 miles, which is a comfortable pace for most people. The route could be in a city, in the countryside, or through a park. As the organiser, we recommend testing out the route prior to the event, or appoint a trained walk guide to handle this. You could use Google Maps, or similar plotting tool to measure the distance first.
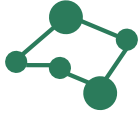
Meet at a public landmark such as a café, community centre, or office with toilet facilities. We advise walking in a loop which returns to the place you started. You could book a more traditional meeting space upon returning to discuss, reflect, capture and collaborate over a coffee and collectively review the day's findings.

You can set pre-determined markers of time depending on the amount of attendees, akin to speed dating. 5, 10 or 15 minute intervals work well for traditional networking. There are benefits to walking in smaller groups of 2, 3 or 4 too, as this allows people to process the conversations internally more effectively, rather than just contributing.

You can set specific topics for discussion, a traditional agenda, or it can be pure networking and initial introductions. For team building you could focus on listening skills and set a time for one person to speak on a topic and let their thoughts flow, whilst the other listens and feeds back after. This allows for the space for each individual's thoughts to be heard first, and an appreciation and further merging of thoughts to come after. You can begin with a walk to enable initial discussions, and afterwards to reflect, capture and collaborate on the discussions further, in a room over coffee with sticky notes and flipchart paper.
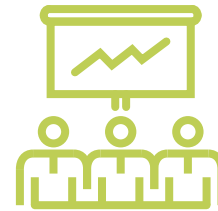
! Depending on your invitees you may need to carry out a risk assessment. Ask if anyone has any special requirements, or concerns to consider beforehand.

Make sure your guests wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Ensure you take their contact details for use on the day, and advise everyone to bring a mobile phone.

5 TOP TIPS

PLAN YOUR ROUTE

SET AN AGENDA

INVITE PEOPLE, GATHER CONTACT DETAILS FOR THE DAY

WEAR COMFY SHOES, APPROPRIATE CLOTHING & BRING YOUR PHONE

FACTOR IN REFLECTIVE TIME