



CASE STUDY – University Of Birmingham, Birmingham Professional

[University of Birmingham](#)'s Birmingham Professional programme is a scheme for non academic staff at, UoB which mirrors the values and practices of the Birmingham Academic. The scheme had been launched with a couple of highly successful events. This programme contained values and practices around internal networks to aid a better use of recourses and knowledge sharing.

Creative Shift was asked to respond to the following challenge.

The staff and student population of UoB is of a similar size to that of a small town (Tamworth was mentioned!). In a large, complex and multilayered organisation often the key to getting things done effectively is in knowing the right person in the right place in the organisation. Knowing the people involved, rather than a name on a chart or looking up a telephone number in a listing, would facilitate innovation and knowledge sharing and encourage cross-school working.

Creative Shift set out to achieve a number of ambitious results for such a large cohort including:

- ⌚ Participants will have a clear understanding of the value of genuine peer-to-peer business relationships
- ⌚ Participants will understand *how* relationships, events and meetings fit into the overall process of business development (and so have a clear idea of *why* they are there and what they are trying to achieve)
- ⌚ Participants know how they might be able to give value to get value to build a relationship and have some tools and techniques to try.
- ⌚ Participants correctly put more emphasis on cultivating relationships both internally and outside the university beyond the initial meeting than just meeting lots of new people

What We Did:

Creative Shift designed and delivered a highly successful programme. An initial workshop was split into two sections. In the first instance we used a lecture format to deliver the core of our networking concepts to 150 delegates. We then used break out groups lead by a handpicked team of associates to give participants chance to practice the conversational tools and techniques that had been introduced and to discuss the implications of what they had heard in more detail. The emphasis here was on practical application of tools learned.



The Results:

The session was fantastically received by both commissioners and participants alike. As a result of the positive conversations that circulated the University, Creative Shift has gone on to deliver similar and more advanced sessions to over **450** academic and non academic staff at University of Birmingham.

Below are some of the unsolicited testimonials that came in the days following that initial session

*“My colleagues and I were discussing the Networking Event on our way back to the office and I thought I would pass on their positive feedback. We all agreed how enjoyable and uplifting the event was and that **for the first time the join in sections did not have us looking for the nearest exit.**”*

“I just wanted to say thank you for the excellent training session on Networking at the University yesterday. I very much enjoyed your presentation and the following session led by John. I had very few expectations of the day, but it has given me greater confidence and a renewed commitment to networking.”

*“I was impressed that no **time was wasted** and **I felt really safe** during the practical exercises and therefore happy to do them.*

*I came away feeling **I had really learnt something and confident that I could practice the skills outlined in the course.**”*

There was a genuine feeling of enthusiasm and excitement amongst the participants.

Anecdotal evidence regarding the effectiveness of our work with participants has been high in volume. We continue to track the wider implications for Birmingham Professional and the University. Despite around 450 participants receiving the session in total this number represents a drop in the ocean in terms of the overall population. A wider programme of activity and continuous tracking is essential for measuring effectiveness.

Creative Shift work with businesses facing difficult situations, and in need of conflict resolution. We do this by creating bespoke consultancy services employing creative approaches: Improbable activities; Intelligent connections and Inspiring results.

If you want to strengthen communication within your team, or discover the ways to achieve successful transformation, find out more at www.creativeshift.uk.com, email Helga@creativeshift.uk.com or call 0121 689 1051