

"The irony of the modern market is that it can get a spare part from across the world, but a neighbor still might not know that the mechanic with the skills to fix the car is right next door." – Donnie Maclurcan, Offers and Needs Market Creator

What's the Offers and Needs Market?

The Offers and Needs Market (OANM) is a lively, guided exchange where groups swap skills, stuff, and support – anything from tech help to a new mindset to the food on your plate. Whether it's free, bartered, or paid, it's all about better knowing that what you offer matters and what you need is valued.



General Context

The OANM, like [asset-mapping](#), is a way to practice Asset-Based Community Development as you focus on what resources (a.k.a. “assets”) a group already has. It's a simple, playful, and cheerful way to highlight what people can already do, and provides a positive way to short-circuit the “But we don’t have any resources!” narrative. The emphasis is on creating and sustaining a mindset of what you can do to help – and get helped – right now.

A Few Examples:

- A local business has an incoming supply of extra pallets and some neighbors need wood to create furniture for a homeless shelter. Match!
- A person has friends in creative agencies and a freelancer is looking for their latest work connection. Match!
- A spreadsheet enthusiast loves teaching people simple ways to use Microsoft Excel and another person needs to learn how to use Excel for work. Match!

[Click here to see anonymized examples in a spreadsheet](#) from OANMs that I (Joel Zaslofsky) have run at various events and gatherings.

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The High-Level Process



(Click the image to view larger)

Notes about My Style

My style of running OANMs is rather comprehensive. So you might be better served using another facilitator toolkit like [this great one from offersandneeds.com](https://offersandneeds.com).

I recommend you're at least some of these things below or you might end up more frustrated than satisfied. Ideally, you:

- Enjoy attention to detail.
- Are willing to do some work up front to make the real-time market experience better for everyone.
- Have a good pool of potential participants (say *that* five times fast!). Expect that one out of ten or fewer people you invite will show up.
- Aren't running this as part of an unconference. The unconference "Law of two feet/mobility" – meaning people who aren't learning or contributing can use their virtual two feet to leave – doesn't mesh well with this style of OANM.

Assumptions about Your OANM Choices

There are several assumptions baked into this style of OANM. You're free to make different design decisions, but it means big adjustments to what's proposed in this guide.

Here are my operating assumptions:

- You're running it by yourself with no co-facilitators and no event co-organizers.
- There's no financial registration fee.
- The event will be 90 minutes or less.
- You have a small budget to run the event (e.g., you can buy sticky notes and other required supplies).
- You already know how to use common online tools like Google Drive and spreadsheets.

Notes about Formatting Cues in This Document

You'll see some formatting in this document that prompts you to either read something verbatim or take an action. Here's a brief guide to what each formatting implies:

[Anything that's in brackets like this and colored red is a placeholder for you to customize with your specific context or a prompt to do an action]

"Anything that's indented like this and contains quotes (") is intended for you to read verbatim or customize to your tone, length, and style."

How an OANM Creates and Helps Communities

- **Stronger Bonds:** You get to see who knows what, who needs what, and who's got your back.
- **New Possibilities:** People team up to make things happen in ways they couldn't alone.
- **It's Fun (Seriously):** Want an accountability buddy, creative sidekick, or ukulele jam partner? Those are real examples among endless options.
- **Quick, Real Feedback:** Share an idea or project, get thoughtful responses right away, and learn how it might be life-changing.
- **Less Waste:** One person's extra is another's perfect fit – saving time, energy, and resources.
- **More Ownership:** The more you give and receive, the more committed you feel. Now you, and the group, are about what's abundant instead of what's scarce.
- **Confidence Boost:** Asking for what you need and owning your gifts? That's real power.
- **Super-Efficient:** It taps into what already exists ... people's often-hidden talents and treasures.
- **Multiple Exchange Modes:** Gift, barter, or commercial market? Yes to all three in one place!
- **Feel-Good Science:** Giving makes people happier and healthier with tons of research to back it up.
- **Safe for All Personalities:** Are you shy, introverted, neurodivergent, or just show up in a unique way? Connections and exchanges come easier here.

The Checklists

You may want to add reminders to your calendar for each of the checklists or some items in a specific checklist. Even seasoned facilitators can forget some of the key steps!

Facilitator Preparation and Prerequisites

<input type="checkbox"/> (7+ days ahead, optional) Look through the offersandneeds.com decisions checklist for additional items to consider (e.g., surveying participants about their accessibility needs).
<input type="checkbox"/> (7+ days ahead, optional) Recruit some helpers .
<input type="checkbox"/> (5+ days ahead) Secure/reserve a space that can alternate between quiet and interactive, has at least one large, flat surface (e.g., a wall) or multiple smaller, flat surfaces (e.g., tables) for sticky notes, movable and/or circular tables, and lightweight chairs.
<input type="checkbox"/> (5+ days ahead) Round up the physical supplies you'll need .
<input type="checkbox"/> (3+ days ahead, optional) Create your run sheet .
<input type="checkbox"/> (2+ days ahead) Schedule email reminders to people who have RSVPed or haven't responded to your invite yet.

Marketing

<input type="checkbox"/> (14+ days ahead) Create the event invite .
<input type="checkbox"/> (14+ days ahead) Put reminders on your calendar to promote your OANM in specific places at specific times. Space out the promotion so you're not doing <i>all</i> of it in a short period of time (e.g., an email on one day, social media platform 1 promotion two days later, social media platform 2 promotion three days later, etc.).
<input type="checkbox"/> (4-14+ days ahead) Promote your OANM (e.g., on social media) however you see fit. One of your needs may be asking others to help you market the market. :)
<input type="checkbox"/> (4+ days ahead) Make a "go/no go" decision about running the event based on the number of registrants or RSVPers. If you're canceling the event, communicate with <i>all</i> people who registered, RSVPed, or otherwise expressed interest in participating.

Day of Market: Set Up the Environment

<input type="checkbox"/> (30+ minutes ahead) Set up the physical space .
<input type="checkbox"/> (5+ minutes ahead) Welcome participants and orient them on where to sit.

The OANM Process

<input type="checkbox"/> (3-5 minutes) Welcome and provide context.
<input type="checkbox"/> (3-5 minutes) Run through the housekeeping items.
<input type="checkbox"/> (3 minutes) Explain the anatomy of a Offers sticky note
<input type="checkbox"/> (10 minutes) Create the Offers
<input type="checkbox"/> (2 minutes) Explain the anatomy of a Needs sticky note
<input type="checkbox"/> (10 minutes) Create the Needs
<input type="checkbox"/> (3-5 minutes) Spotlight specific Offers and/or Needs.
<input type="checkbox"/> (Remaining time available) Interact with participants, check out the Offers and Needs for yourself, suggest that participants can run their own OANM, and whatever else you enjoy
<input type="checkbox"/> (Last step) Do your administrative steps after officially ending the event (e.g., digitally capture the sticky note information or physically take down the sticky notes and hand to the volunteers who will be doing the digital data entry)

The Follow-Up

<input type="checkbox"/> (0-2 days after) Email the data entry template to volunteers.
<input type="checkbox"/> (0-2 days after) Add a reminder to follow up with data entry volunteers who don't send back the information by your deadline.
<input type="checkbox"/> (2-14 days after) Aggregate, edit, and format the submitted offers and needs from all participants.
<input type="checkbox"/> (As soon as the digital data is edited) Share the digital data with your participants.

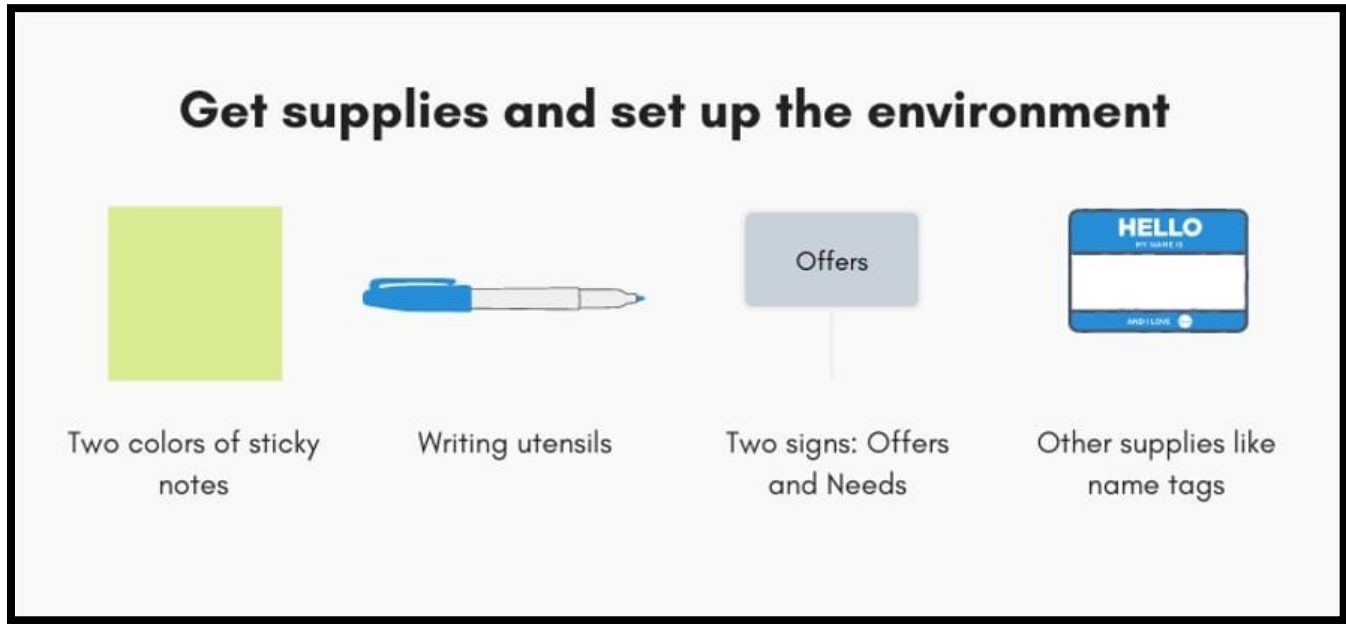
The Run Sheet

A run sheet is a list of procedures or events organized in a specific timed sequence. They help break an overall process into chunks where you can pace yourself, see who's involved at any point (and for how long), when breaks will take place, contain notes or prompts that you might otherwise miss, and more.

My ideal offline OANM event is 90 minutes, although I've done it in as little as 60 minutes when necessary. You won't know how long you want your OANM to take you – or how long it might *actually* take you – unless you have your own run sheet or another document that sets your pace for each part of the facilitation.

[Here's an example of how the offersandneeds.com style of online OANM approaches a run sheet.](#)

Facilitator Preparation and Prerequisites



There are [other great ways to facilitate an OANM](#) (you can even do a [decentralized version](#)). I typically practice a specific process with specific tools (Post-It Notes, spreadsheets, and quirky facilitation – oh my!).

Physical Supplies

1. Two eye-pleasing colors (no neon please) of sticky notes (e.g., Post-it Notes) with up to 10 notes of each color per person. Don't get dispenser style (accordion stack) notes because, when stuck on a wall, half of them will have the sticky part on the bottom and fall off much faster.
2. Pens, pencils, thin markers, or something else for each person to write with. Black pens or dark, thin markers are generally the easiest to read on sticky notes of various colors.
3. [Kraft paper](#) (e.g., butcher paper) to place sticky notes on that otherwise won't stick well to your space's wall or allow you to roll up and take away the sticky notes in bunches (e.g., to bring back another day).
4. One sign labeled "Offers" and another labeled "Needs" for each person to place their sticky notes around.
5. Clear or light-colored tape (e.g., Scotch/magic, paper, masking/painter's, or spike) to secure signs or kraft paper.
6. Name tags if everyone doesn't know everyone else since they'll want to match a person with their name on a sticky note.
7. Markers for name tags or miscellaneous use.
8. Printed or digital copies of the [participant instructions](#).

[Get the Participant Instructions](#)

Note: Time and resources allowing, I recommend one set of printed instructions for every three participants (many will want to take theirs home or write on them). Digital instructions aren't as useful unless you project them on a large screen or have a good percentage of people who prefer things to be digital.

9. A timer to track ten-minute segments for writing Offers and Needs without watching the clock.

The Ideal Environment

- A large space that can be quiet when people are silently writing and interactive when people are connecting about matches.
- A single large, flat, *smooth* surface like a wall or multiple smaller, flat surfaces like a table for sticky notes. You'll want about 10 feet of uninterrupted wall space per 6 participants so people can cozily huddle around the notes and see them even if they're standing behind someone else. If possible, test the surface ahead of time and limit any air currents that might blow the sticky note off the wall or table (e.g., from a nearby air vent or open window).
- Movable and/or circular tables for people to write on and chat around.
- Light chairs that participants can move themselves so you won't have to.

How to Find a Gathering Place

The simple act of hosting is amazing in itself, so don't overthink your gathering place. Here are some guidelines to help you find and line up a great spot for your group:

1. **Light on distractions.** Avoid places with loud TVs, giant ads on walls, people moving around constantly, or anything else that might limit people's attention on you and their fellow participants.
2. **Free is generally best.** Money tends to complicate things. Rented venues can be great, but free is often better and simpler.
3. **As private as possible.** Private rooms, or at least areas free of the general public, promote greater sharing, more authenticity, and the power to mold your environment into one that captures the OANM spirit. If you plan to have 10+ people, some venues may waive their room rental fee or you might easily cover a food and drink minimum. Tell a potential venue why you're gathering and they may even buy into the vision enough to make special arrangements for you.
4. **Allows for a circular set-up.** I believe the difference between an audience and a community can come down to which way the chairs are facing.

Unique places are great, but here are some tried-and-true suggestions to get your brain juices flowing:

Free Location Ideas: Bookstores, cafes, coffee/tea shops (especially independently owned or operated ones), community centers or communal rooms in school buildings, grocery stores with indoor or outdoor seating areas, intentional community buildings/houses, public libraries, municipal recreation centers, living room of someone's house/apartment, non-profit businesses, places of worship (e.g., churches, mosques, or temples) and retirement/assisted living facilities.

Rented Location Ideas: Aquariums, art galleries, atriums, college/university rooms or student centers, conference centers, co-working spaces, gymnasiums, museums, restaurants, retreat or wellness centers, theaters (e.g., performing arts or movies), and warehouses.

Productive Google Searches: I recommend using a few Google searches (or your own variations) to more easily find a local gathering spot:

Free meeting location/place [insert your city, town, or region]

Community meeting rooms [insert your city, town, or region]

[insert your city, town, or region] best cheap/discount/bargain/budget event/venue space

Recruiting Helpers

If you need help, ask for it! What better time than now to start making your needs known? ;)

After all, it's more sustainable (and fun) to recruit others for key roles. Just make sure to define and schedule their tasks in advance so they don't have to guess what you need them to do, when, and who else is involved.

Pro tip: Explain why you think a helper would be great at a certain role. Be specific! Communicate the unique style, mindset, or skills that make you believe it will be rewarding for them and meaningful for everyone else. Also feel free to make tangible what they'll get from helping – a free ticket, a meal before/after, hugs, etc.

Consider the list of helpers below a good starting point:

Co-facilitator. The main face at a OANM doesn't have to be you. But even if you're comfortable doing things like facilitating group conversations and keeping the process on track, it can be great to have a co-facilitator to share responsibilities with and take over part or all of a gathering if you're unavailable.

Promoter. Ideally, this person knows how to connect online and offline, understands effective promotional tactics that are aligned with the OANM spirit, and how to craft a compelling story. They also know how to implement the latest tech or old-school strategies. They can send emails, market on social media, engage people around town, and just generally be your OANM ambassador.

Welcomer/Registration Person. Who do you know that radiates warmth, is quick with a smile, and enjoys giving hugs, high-fives, and/or handshakes? Who has a knack for fun chats, will happily check people in, and will set a positive tone from the beginning? Put them front-and-center before (and maybe after) the gathering.

Moment Capturer (i.e., Photographer, Videographer, or Graphic Recorder). Everyone loves seeing and sharing pictures, videos, or creative illustrations of a meaningful get together. Find one person – or better yet, multiple people skilled in different mediums – to capture the best moments.

Note: Get negative consent – an acknowledgment that inaction equals agreement – from participants to capture and share their presence outside the gathering (e.g., “Raise your hand or tell me after the gathering if you're not comfortable having pictures, videos, or other evidence of your presence here shared privately among us or publicly”).

Supply Person. You already have a [list of supplies](#). How about supplemental paper, cables to hook up electronics, scissors, a guest book for participants, small signs to direct people to the gathering spot, and other physical supplies? It might help to find a supply person to bring everything that you need.

Space Setter-Upper. Since you'll wear many hats, having someone else set up the room or environment for you is nice. That might include moving chairs and tables into a circular formation, asking the venue staff to get a projector screen ready, putting up signs, etc. This same person can help restore the area to its original set-up if necessary.

Identifying Accessibility Needs

This is something that the Post Growth Institute does particularly well with their OANMs. If you're going to solicit input or information from your potential participants, consider making [a copy of this Google Form template to assess their accessibility needs](#).

Emails Reminders to Participants

I recommend an email reminder to RSVPers 48 hours and 1 hour before the live event. But you can adjust the timing and number of email reminders to suit your needs.

48 Hour Reminder Email

Notes:

- Use the email address(es) people provided in their registration or RSVP to test if any of them are invalid or come back rejected. You don't want a participant to contact another participant with a known bad email address if you can help it.
- Make sure all email addresses are on the bcc line.

Subject Line: What you need for our [brand associated with the event (e.g., "My Awesome Brand Name")] Offers and Needs Market in [X] hours

Email Content:

Hi wonderful [humans/name the community or group refers to themselves as (e.g., multipotentialites)] who are participating in our [brand associated with the event (e.g., "My Awesome Brand Name")] Offers and Needs Market!

I'm stoked to see you on [date you're running the OANM (e.g., May 19)] at [Start time in the three most common time zones for North America and Europe (e.g., "11:00 a.m. PDT / 2:00 p.m. EDT / 20:00 CEST")]. And since you can clearly follow directions as you already read the event description and [registered/RSVPed], here are some other things that will help you get the most from your upcoming experience.

- We'll be meeting [details about the physical place you're meeting so they don't have to click through to all the event detail page].
- Want to know the general flow of the event and what to expect? Check out page [X] of your participant guide [hyperlink to your participant guide on the "Check out page 7 of your participant guide" text].
- Want to remember what the Offers and Needs Market is all about? The event description will help [hyperlink to your main event ticket/RSVP page on the "The event description will help" text].
- After the real-time market ends, you may want to block off 30-60 minutes on your calendar to start or follow up with any conversations you have about potential matches between offers and needs.

I'm excited we'll be together soon for a great exchange!

[Your preferred sign off]

1 Hour Reminder Email

Notes:

- Use the email address(es) people provided in their registration or RSVP to test if any of them are invalid or come back rejected. You don't want a participant to contact another participant with a known bad email address if you can help it.
- Make sure all email addresses are on the bcc line.

Subject Line: Live in 1 hour: our [brand associated with the event (e.g., "My Awesome Brand Name")] Offers and Needs Market

Email Content:

Hi again wonderful [humans/name the community or group refers to themselves as (e.g., multipotentialites)] who are participating in our [brand associated with the event (e.g., "My Awesome Brand Name")] Offers and Needs Market!

I'm jazzed to see you in one hour for some great matches and surprising exploration. **Please show up right when we're scheduled to start** so you can get the full experience. :)

Here's some key information so you'll have everything on hand when we begin.

- We'll be meeting [details about the physical place you're meeting so they don't have to click through to all the event detail page].
- Remind yourself of the general event flow and what to expect. It's on page [X] of your participant guide [hyperlink to your participant guide on the "Check out page [X] of your participant guide" text].
- Consider blocking off 30-60 minutes on your calendar shortly after the event ends to start or follow up on any conversations you're about to have about potential offers and needs matches.

Get ready for a great exchange starting in one hour!

[Your preferred sign off]

Marketing Your OANM

Often, you'll need to have a concise description of what your OANM is, how it works, and how people benefit when they participate. Whatever you do, emphasize that OANMs work best when people learn about them in advance and come to the market with at least one offer and one need already thought out.

Here's a template below that you can tweak for length, style, and your unique needs. Add some images and mix up the styling of the text (e.g., block quotes) to provide some visual interest.

OANM Event Description Template

Event Title

The Offers and Needs Market: **[Your Subtitle Here If You Want One]**

Event Summary (If Necessary)

- Where talents are treasures and desires are delivered
- Where kindness is currency and community is wealth
- From "I need" to "we have" – building together/together we thrive
- What you offer matters – what you need is valued
- Small exchanges, big connections, stronger communities
- Give what's useful and get what's necessary
- A lively exchange of skills, support, and serendipity
- A joyful way to give, receive, and thrive
- Reimagining wealth, one connection at a time
- Reclaim the joy of giving and receiving
- Communities built on trust, not transactions
- A simple way to create abundance together

Event Description

The Offers and Needs Market (OANM) is a lively, guided exchange where groups swap skills, stuff, and support – anything from tech help to a new mindset to the food on your plate. Whether it's free, bartered, or paid, it's all about better knowing that **what you offer matters and what you need is valued**.

This event will **start at [add your day and time here (e.g., on September 1 at "10:30 a.m." or "15:00")]**.

What to Expect

The OANM has helped participants find work, a place to live, meet new friends, and discover a deeper sense of belonging. Every exchange **builds connections**, those connections weave **stronger communities**, and more trust creates **more possibilities**.

It's also a fun way to flip the script on scarcity. No more "We don't have enough" blues! Instead, let's celebrate what we *do* have, showing how we can **help – and get helped – right now**.

The High-Level Process

1. Think about what you might offer to or need from your fellow [whatever name your group or community identifies with (e.g., "Weavers" or "WDSers")]. [The participant guide](#) has all the context you want.
2. Write down those offers and needs on provided sticky notes.
3. Put your sticky notes on a wall with everyone else's offers and needs.
4. Browse people's offers and needs.
5. Find someone you have a potential match with and prepare to have others come up to you and say, "I just saw your offer/need. We need to talk!"
6. Repeat steps 4-5 as much as possible.

Required Preparation

[If you have any required preparation you need participants to do, list it here. For example, "Add a reminder to your digital or physical calendar so you remember to show up. :)"]

If you want more details about the OANM, feel free to [explore here](#).

Are you looking for inspiration? [Here's a spreadsheet with real examples](#) of offers and needs from various gatherings.

[Oh, and consider bringing a friend or two and uncover surprising ways to connect.]

Notes about RSVPs

[Add information about how to RSVP, notes about the capacity for the event (e.g., the first 100 people), or anything else about RSVPs]

How to Join the Live Market

[Add information about how and where people will participate.]

Just One More Step ...

I'd be grateful if you RSVPed "Yes" so I can plan for a certain number of participants. [Add information about how they can easily get the details on their digital calendar (e.g., "You may also want to use the 'Export' feature on the event detail page to make sure this event makes it on your calendar").]

Don't let a blind spot on your calendar keep you from this unique experience!

Questions?

Contact [your full name (e.g., Joel Zaslofsky)] at [your best email address or other common contact method (e.g., myemailaddress@gmail.com)].

OANM Testimonials

If you feel like it'll help, you can use any testimonials you find on my [OANM landing page](#) or link people to [the offersandneeds.com The Impact page](#).

Social Media Share Templates

Facebook / LinkedIn / Other Social Media

Join us on [\[Date of event \(e.g., "March 13"\)\]](#) for the [\[brand associated with the event \(e.g., "My Awesome Brand Name"\)\]](#) Offers and Needs Market (OANM).

It's a lively, guided exchange where groups swap skills, stuff, and support – anything from tech help to a new mindset to the food on your plate. Whether it's free, bartered, or paid, it's all about better knowing that **what you offer matters and what you need is valued**.

[\[Add link to event detail page\]](#)

The OANM has helped participants find work, a place to live, meet new friends, and discover a deeper sense of belonging. Every exchange **builds connections**, those connections weave **stronger communities**, and more trust creates **more possibilities**.

It's also a fun way to flip the script on scarcity. No more "We don't have enough" blues! Instead, let's celebrate what we *do* have, showing how we can **help – and get helped – right now**.

X / Twitter

Join us for an interactive event on [\[Date of event \(e.g., "March 13"\)\]](#) [\[I/we\]](#) call it the Offers and Needs Market. Intriguing, right? :) It's where talents are treasures and desires are delivered, where kindness is currency and community is wealth. [\[Add link to event detail page\]](#)

Who to Invite

The OANM is for *everyone*, so consider these just the very tip of the iceberg. Your imagination and connections are the only limits here!

- Friends and family. Start with the people you already know and who already trust you. Mutual respect, shared experiences, and solid communication make for fertile ground to find participants.
- Groups, organizations, and communities you are or have been affiliated with. This could be online/offline work places, secondary and post-secondary education (e.g., high schools, community colleges, or school to work programs), maker spaces, or religious and spiritual groups (e.g., churches or yoga groups).
- Aligned meetup groups. Websites like Meetup.com or Facebook groups are great for finding existing local groups that might enjoy OANMs, too. Depending on your context, searching for these types of keywords or phrases can pay off quickly: barter, gift economy/exchange, community, time bank, or alternative economies.
- Anyone who self-identifies as generous, curious, or kind.
- Unemployment centers or other places where people may need to find work.
- Local journalists (who might want to give you some publicity before or after the OANM).

When to Run an OANM

OANMs are versatile and work any time of the day, week, month, or year. If you're running one as part of a bigger event (e.g., conference), here are some tips on optimum timing:

- 1-day event: Run it right after the welcome/event introduction. OANMs make for great icebreakers, plus set a generous and candid tone.

- 2+ day event: Run it as early as possible on the second day. Participants should already be in an open mood and a bit more willing to offer or ask for help with people they know better.

Pro tip: Poll people to determine their ideal day and time. Instead of guessing when people can show up, find out with a poll from a free service like [Xoyondo](#) or [Doodle](#).

Set Up the Environment

1. Create stacks of up to 10 sticky notes of two different colors (one for Offers and one for Needs) and place them on a flat surface for each person to take.
2. Set a writing utensil next to each stack of sticky notes.
3. Clear an approximately ten feet / three meters space (e.g., remove chairs and tables) around where the sticky notes will go so people have room to huddle around them.
4. Assess whether there are participants with mobility issues (e.g., in wheelchairs) so you don't place the sticky notes too high above the shortest / lowest person's eye level.
5. (If necessary) Tape the kraft paper where you want participants to place their sticky notes.
6. Display [visual examples](#) of completed Offers and Needs notes (physically or digitally with a projector).

Pro Tips

- Hand write at least one example of an Offer sticky note and one example of and Need sticky note. Then place them at *each* area that people will be writing at. It's the simplest and fastest way for someone to know they're writing their Offer or Need the way you want them to.
- Suggest that people sit by some people they don't already know. That way, new connections can be formed – which is a *huge* part of the OANM.

The OANM Process

Providing Context for Participants

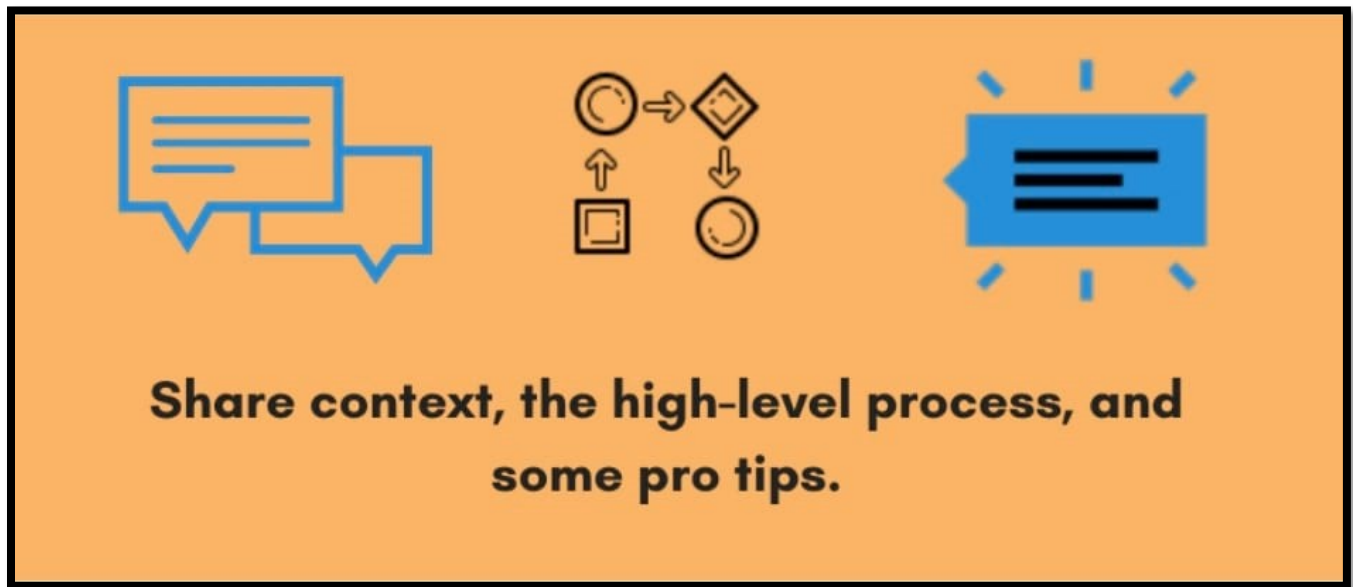
Once your participants are settled in front of their sticky notes, it's time to set expectations and give them the context. Here are some suggestions about what you might *concisely* say in 3-5 minutes:

- Introduce yourself in thirty seconds or less.
- Explain your history with OANMs and your experience in running them (for some social proof).
- Mention a surprising story/testimonial from one of your previous OANMs.
- Give a high-level overview of the process.
- Let participants know that, if they give themselves fully over to the process, they'll get some great side benefits. That might involve making a new friend, reducing the frequency or intensity of their Imposter Syndrome as they humbly own their gifts, get better at asking for help (which can be *really* hard for most folks!), etc.
- You're going to ask them to maintain silence for up to ten minutes at a time. Yes – it can be hard. But we can do it ... and your fellow OANM participants will be grateful when you do!

If you want a script of sorts to read from, you can adapt the template from the online Facilitator Guide to your style and tone. To find the template:

1. [Go to the online Facilitator Guide source file.](#)
2. Jump to the “OANM Real-Time Process” section.
3. Look at the script in the “As the Participants Join with Real-Time Video” sub-section and copy/paste or edit what you want.

Housekeeping Notes

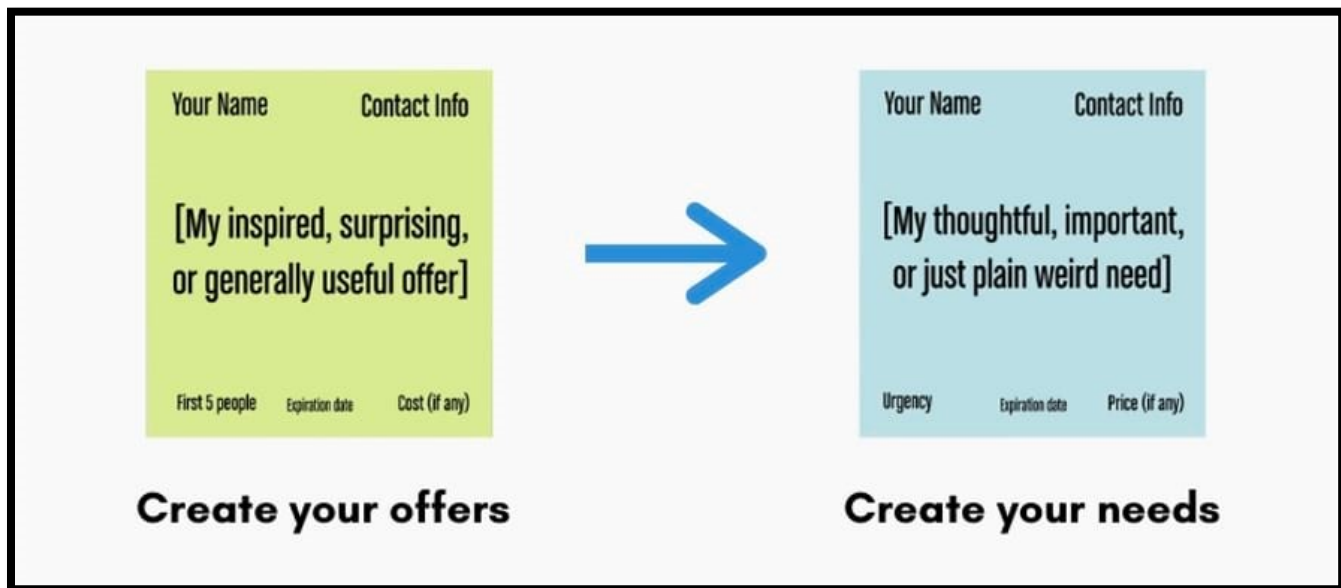


Provide a printed and/or verbal list of these housekeeping notes to make a better and more valuable experience for everyone:

- You only need to share what you're comfortable with.
- The OANM is both a community-building and trust-building exercise. Everyone's gifts are respected, nothing is infinite, and nobody gets exploited.
- Go beyond a standard concept of a gift. The more specific the gift, the more likely it will be unique ... and potentially of even greater value.
- Writing down an offer or need comes with implicit permission for participants to contact you about it. *Don't write it down if you don't want someone asking about it.*
- Talk about the power of the informal economy and the importance of the commercial economy. You're giving people permission to be generous *and* to have a financial exchange if they see fit – which avoids guilt or shame for wanting to charge for an offer.
- The contents of each sticky note will be put in a spreadsheet and made available *exclusively* to only participants. In other words, writing down an offer or need comes with implicit permission for participants to contact you about it in-person or in the future. *Don't write it down if you don't want someone asking about it.*
- Prompt your participants: "If you *don't* have sticky notes and something to write with at hand, let me/us know and I'll/we'll get you what you need – maybe literally." ;)
- Write in your largest, most legible hand-writing. Even someone with poor eyesight should be able to read the contents of every note from at least six feet / two meters away.
- Write with the provided [pen / pencil / marker]. You can use your own writing utensil *if* it's plain blue or black – two colors that work well on the provided sticky notes.
- Ask if anyone has specific accessibility needs and let them know if there's a helper for them (which you can try to find in real-time if necessary).
- If you want to take pictures, ask if there is anyone who does *not* want to be in photos and explain where you plan to share them.

- Ask for one volunteer per 100-150 sticky notes to put the contents of the sticky notes into a digital archive (e.g., spreadsheet) that participants can access later.
- Tell participants – and continue to remind them – to place their sticky notes on the designated surface once they're done (or think they're done) to avoid everyone placing their notes in a cramped area all at once. Additional notes can be added later if they think of more offers or needs.
- If you have questions or need supplies during the quiet time, non-verbally get a facilitator's attention and they'll come help you.
- Mention you'll be gently persistent in keeping the silence during writing time.
- Do a brief icebreaker or somatic exercise. For example, "If you've participated in an OANM before, raise both your hands up high. If this is your first OANM, put your hands on your cheeks."

Overview: Completing Offers and Needs



1. To verbally say: "Everything I'm about to say is included in greater depth in the printed/digital instructions that you can find [in front of you, at a specific URL, etc.]."
2. Explain the [anatomy of a Offers sticky note](#). Don't deviate from the provided examples or printed instructions unless you're ready for some confusion or questions.
3. Remind participants that any negotiation about a potential financial exchange for an Offer or Need should be done after the market has concluded.
4. Give participants ten minutes to write down their Offers (remember to start your timer) and prompt them to start sticking their sticky notes to the designated surface once they're done to avoid everyone trying to do it at once.
5. About five minutes in, let everyone know they have about five minutes left and that they can start placing their sticky notes on the designated surface as soon as they feel done or need a mental break before they create more Offers.
6. Let everyone know their ten minutes are up and they can continue with more Offers as they come to mind.
7. Explain the [anatomy of a Needs sticky note](#). Don't deviate from the provided examples or printed instructions unless you're ready for some confusion or questions.
8. Remind everyone that we're about quality over quantity and to be silent while others are still writing.

9. Give participants ten minutes to write down their Needs (remember to start your timer) and prompt them to start sticking their sticky notes to the designated surface once they're done to avoid everyone trying to do it at once.
10. About five minutes in, let everyone know they have about five minutes left and that they start placing their sticky notes on the designated surface as soon as they feel done or need a mental break before they create more Needs.
11. Let everyone know their ten minutes are up and they can continue with more Offers or Needs as they come to mind.
12. If you don't already have a volunteer (or multiple if you have more than 100 notes) to put the contents of the sticky notes into a digital archive (e.g., spreadsheet), ask for one/some now.
13. Transition into [opening the market](#).

Creating Offers

We begin with Offers because they're almost always easier to think off and symbolic that we've come together to be generous. Offers are typically things that come from your heart (caring about children or the environment), head (knowing creative writing), hands (cooking or carpentry), or connections (the groups or associations you and your family belong to).

- **Head examples:** "I know a lot about tiny houses" or "I can help you streamline a podcast."
- **Heart examples:** "I'm passionate about animal rescue" or "I love organizing messy spreadsheets."
- **Hands examples:** "I can do major plumbing jobs" or "I can teach you how to design your own logo."
- **Connections examples:** "I know people who do permaculture" or "I'll sponsor your membership in [insert desirable organization]."

Pro tip: Think wide *and* big – personal, professional, on behalf of an organization, etc. Services, skills, passions, stuff, advice, or introductions – if it's potentially useful (or just plain delightful), it counts.

1. Take up to ten minutes to write up to ten offers.
2. Write these things on each Offer sticky note:

Required

- **Your full name** (in the upper left).
- **Contact information** (in the upper right). This tells participants how you prefer to be contacted (e.g., email or phone number).
- **The offer itself** (in the center). Use abbreviations if necessary. Keep the description short and text large.
- **Availability** (in the lower left). How many times can an offer can be used? For example, "3x Total" or "5x per Week." If you have a limited quantity, write "1 2 3" and have participants physically strikethrough a number when they take you up on your offer (e.g., 4 2 3).
- **Method of exchange** (in the lower right). Use one of five ways to indicate how or if you want an exchange for your offer: Free, Barter, Fixed Price (with your currency symbol, like \$ or €, and the specific amount), Hourly Rate (with your currency symbol, like \$ or €, and the specific hourly rate) or Negotiable.

Optional

- **Expiration date** (in the lower middle). If you'd like your offer to expire after a certain amount of time.

Creating Needs

What are you working on, seeking, or where could you use support? Feel free to think in terms of head, heart, hands, and connections again – just don't limit yourself if the framework doesn't feel right.

- **Head example:** "I want to self-publish, but don't know how."
- **Heart example:** "I need a business coach who can help me choose among or smooch together many passions."
- **Hands examples:** "I'd like to create a simple website" or "I want to build a shed in my backyard."
- **Connection example:** "I play guitar and want to meet a drummer and cellist to form a band."

1. Take up to ten minutes to write up to ten needs.
2. Write these things on each Need sticky note:

Required

- **Your full name** (in the upper left).
- **Contact information** (in the upper right). This tells participants how you prefer to be contacted (e.g., email or phone number).
- **The need itself** (in the center). Use abbreviations if necessary. Keep the description short and text large.
- **Urgency** (in the lower left). Use short-hand to tell others if your need is urgent (U), semi-urgent (SU), or not urgent (NU). This might make the difference between someone helping you or never getting around to it.
- **Method of Exchange** (in the lower right). Leave blank to indicate the default gift (a.k.a. free) option. Write a currency sign (e.g., "\$" or "€") if you're willing to pay to have your need met.

Optional

- **Expiration date** (in the lower middle). If you'd like your need to expire after a certain amount of time.

The Market Opens: Matching Offers with Needs



1. (Optional) Allow each participant to verbally pitch *one* of their Offers and/or Needs in fifteen seconds or less, starting with their full name. The time limit *will* be enforced. Microphones are good if you have a private and/or big space. Example: "I'm Joel Zaslofsky and I'd like to offer teaching you how to use spreadsheets in simple, minimalist ways."

Pro tip: Don't allow discussion or clarification during this step unless you have lots of time. It'll slow things down or allow extroverts to dominate the conversation.

2. If participants haven't put all their sticky notes on the designated surface, prompt them to do that.
3. Remind people not to physically take a sticky note they're interested in. Just take a picture with their phone or otherwise make a note of the note.
4. Encourage participants to approach each other about any verbal offer or need they heard (if done) and start browsing the Offers and Needs notes placed on the designated surface. Conversations will organically happen and you can even connect people in real-time when you identify a potential match.
5. Announce that every participant who put their email address on a sticky note will be getting the contents of all the sticky notes in a spreadsheet later. If someone *didn't* put their email address on a Offers or Needs sticky note and wants to get everything in a spreadsheet, they should give a facilitator their contact information.

End the Event

In general, you're just recapping what you promised to do as follow-ups and expressing gratitude for any co-facilitators, tech helpers, and participants who made this OANM special. Here are some things you could mention:

- Recap the spirit of the OANM (based on generosity and connection).
- Give an example of something that just happened in this OANM that reiterates why you love OANMs.
- Explain how and when you'll follow up with participants, and in what medium.
- If applicable, remind participants that they can share any matched or unmatched offers and needs with the wider community in whatever way they see fit.
- If you have co-facilitator(s) or other people who helped you prep for, host, sponsor, or run the OANM, thank them for helping.
- Thank your participants for showing up for themselves and their community.
- Prompt people that they can run their own OANM and you can contact me or go to X website to learn how.
- Give people permission to leave now.
- If you want, go into the bonus round – a.k.a. anything goes conversation or nerding out about the event experience of themes of the event – do it.

Administrative Steps After Ending the Event

1. Rearrange the items in the physical space (e.g., put chairs or tables back to how they were set up before you got there) and make sure you round up any leftover supplies you can use for a future OANM.
2. Have your volunteers [capture the contents](#) of the sticky notes and set expectations about their responsibility to keep the info safe and get it back to you by **[your deadline]**.

The Follow-Up

Depending on variables like your number of participants, how long they have to browse or discuss the sticky notes, and whether they actually see all the notes or not, there are many matches that can be made after the OANM by the facilitator or the participants.

I *highly* recommend you capture the information in the sticky notes and distribute them to the participants soon after the gathering so you all can extend the connection and matches. There are plenty of ways to do this, but I prefer getting volunteers to do it.

Finding Volunteers and Giving Them What They Need

1. Get a volunteer (or multiple volunteers if you have more than 100 notes) to capture all the information on the competed notes. You can use a digital tool like the [Post-it App](#) or the [Microsoft OneNote app](#), or just grab them and physically take them home.
2. Provide your volunteer(s) with [a spreadsheet template](#) to enter the sticky note information. [Here's an email template to use when contacting them](#).
3. Have your volunteer(s) put the contents in a spreadsheet so people can easily sort, filter, or search for a variety of relevant items:

Edit the Digital OANM Content

Once your volunteers have given you back the contents of the sticky notes in your preferred digital format, it's time to edit what they've done. **Don't skip this step!** The value to participants is directly tied to how well you edit the digital data.

1. If you have more than 100 offers and/or needs in the OANM data capture spreadsheet, add a category for each offer and need. And if you have more than 300 rows, consider adding a subcategory for each offer and need, too. Sorting and filtering for the win!

Pro tip: Here are some suggested main categories for you to use: Accountability, Advice, Business, Coaching, Communication, Community, Connections, Content Creation, Content Development, Creative, Design, Events, Food, Financial, Habits, Health, Information, Making, Marketing, Personal Finance, Physical, Productivity, Relationships, Research, Resources, Sharing, Skills, Teaching, Technology, Travel, Volunteering, Writing, Other, N/A (Not Applicable).

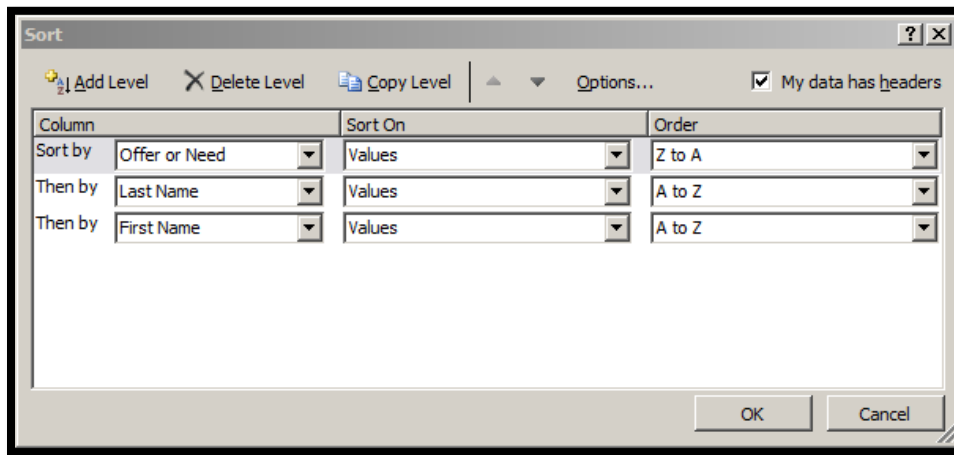
Pro tip: Here are some examples of subcategories for you to use. A more complete list might be hundreds of items long: Art, Blogging, Editing, Entrepreneurship, Feedback, Fitness, Graphic Design, Interviews, Kids, Languages, Mindfulness, Music, Non-Profit, Nutrition, Parenting, Photography, Podcasting, Public Speaking, Referrals, Self-Publishing, Simple-Living, Sleep, Social Media, Stories, Systems, Time Management, Video Production, Website, WordPress, Other, N/A (Not Applicable).

2. Go back through the Category and Subcategory columns and make sure the labels are consistent. For example, you might realize that "Health and Fitness" is too broad of a category and requires separating "Fitness" from "Health." Your "Health" label will also help you decide whether it's too big, even for a master category, or whether it should be divided into "Physical Health," "Mental Health," and "Environmental Health" subcategory labels. Another example is consolidating "Connections," "Connection," and "Connecting" into simply "Connections".

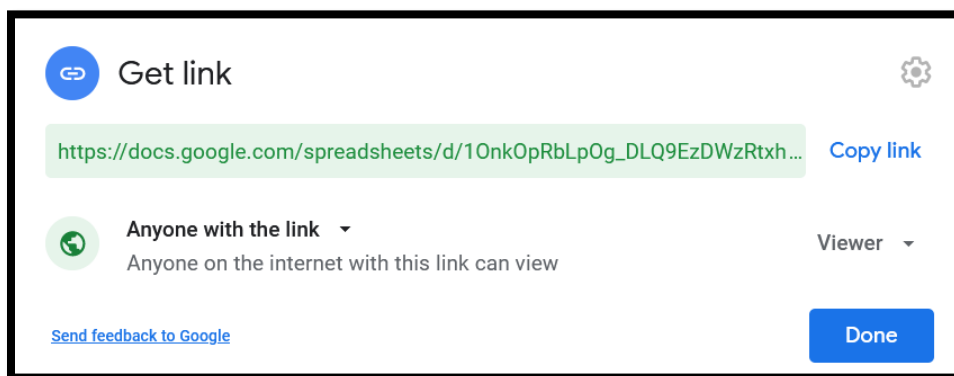
3. Edit offers or needs descriptions that are too long, imprecise, confusing, use acronyms that you can't expect everyone to know, and whatever else is important to you.

Pro tip: As you edit the spreadsheet for content and formatting, feel free to contact someone to suggest a match that might not have been made during the real-time market. [Here's a template for that.](#)

4. Remove extra spaces or correct poor formatting in the various spreadsheet columns.
5. Using the filter drop-down on each column, look for values that are inconsistent (e.g., typos of a person's last name or weird formatting of a phone number) and change them. This is important because any participant may need to sort or filter on any spreadsheet column and solid data integrity will help them do that well.
6. Run spell check on the spreadsheet.
7. Sort the spreadsheet by Offer or Need column first, Last Name second, and First Name third.



8. If you're not already editing in a Google Sheet version of the spreadsheet, upload the Excel version to Google Drive so people without Excel can access it easily.
9. (Optional) change the column width in Google Sheets so the data headers wrap well.
10. Change the Google Drive link access restrictions so anyone with the link (a.k.a. only your participants) can view it.



Note: I **strongly** recommend view only access so people don't mess with each other's offers and needs or unintentionally mess up your formatting.

11. Distribute the completed spreadsheet however you see fit ([email template](#)) and remind people that the contents are intended only for people who actively participated in the OANM.

12. (Optional) Here's how to best [sort](#) and [filter](#) columns in Excel or [sort and filter](#) columns in a Google doc spreadsheet if your participants are going to use one of those tools to explore the captured information.

Email Templates

Email Template for Providing Data Entry Spreadsheet to Volunteers

Subject: Spreadsheet template for [Community name] Offers and Needs Market sticky notes

Body:

Hi [volunteer(s) first name(s)],

Thanks again for offering to put all our [Community name] OANM Post-it Notes into a spreadsheet to send out to other participants. [Here's the spreadsheet template](#), and feel free to ask questions if the column names aren't self-explanatory.

I'm not expecting you to categorize and subcategorize – I'll do that later if we have enough offers and needs to justify it. You just need to briefly review the format in the examples at the top and then do your awesome data entry thing until you get that gratifying "Check! Done." feeling.

It would be great to have a filled-out spreadsheet template back by [insert your reasonable deadline here]. Just don't go rearranging your life for this task. :)

Some grateful folks will have you to thank for many post-market connections and matches, so I hope you feel good about the impact you continue to make in our nifty community.

You're awesome!

[Your sign-off (e.g., Your friend, Joel)]

P.S. [Tell them what to do with the physical sticky notes once they're done with data entry (e.g., recycle them).]

Email Templates for Suggesting a Potential Match to a Specific Participant

Example 1 (if you have email addresses or the ability to send a group direct message):

Subject: [Community name] Offers and Needs Market connections: [topic or theme of the match (e.g., video production/documentaries, SEO, book recommendations)]

Body:

[Person 1 first name],

I was going through the [community name] Offers and Needs Market information and [Person 2 first name] had an offer of [copy and pasted offer (e.g., "Video production and video editing")]. [Additional context if helpful (e.g., "Perhaps more importantly, [Person 2 first name] filmed and produced their own documentary.

[Person 2 first name],

[Person 1 first name] listed a need of [copy and paste need (e.g., "Guidance or ideas for producing a documentary about building our 'right-sized' small family house")].

It seems like you two may have a match on your hands, so take it from here if there's anything to discuss!

Happy connecting,

[Your sign-off (e.g., Your friend, Joel)]

Example 2 (more informal, concise, and one-to-one):

Subject: Potential [Community name] Offers and Needs Market match

Body:

Hi [Person 1 first name],

I'm editing our [Community name] Offers and Needs Market spreadsheet and I see a potential match here. Pardon the brevity – I'm prioritizing getting these emails out quick. :)

Your need: [copy and paste the need from the spreadsheet (e.g., "Guidance or ideas for producing a documentary about building our 'right-sized' small family house")]

[Person's name giving the offer (e.g., Joel Zaslofsky)] offer: [copy and paste the offer from the spreadsheet (e.g., "Help creating a documentary")]

You can contact [person's first name giving the offer (e.g., Joel)] at [whatever their preferred contact method is (e.g., joel@joelzaslofsky.com or +1 555-555-5555)].

[Your sign-off (e.g., Your friend, Joel)]

The Recap Email

You want your participants to have a permanent place where they can find the link to the master Google Sheet with all the offers and needs. You'll also probably have specific and maybe time sensitive calls to action for them to do now that the event is over.

The recap email template below is intended to be sent 1-5 days after the real-time market ends. Sooner is better, but take the time you need to create or update any documents you link to in the email.

It's up to you whether you want all the email addresses on the "To" line or Bcc line.

Email Template

Subject: [Community name] Offers and Needs Market recap + spreadsheet (the matches continue!)

Body:

Hey wonderful [humans/name the community or group refers to themselves as (e.g., multipotentialites)] who gave offers and needs in our [date of event (e.g., "March 13")] Offers and Needs Market (OANM)!

I'm grateful for the generosity, warmth, ideas, hugs (physical and virtual), and conversations in our [Community name] OANM. As the connections and matches march on, I want to help you get even more from our experience.

With *major* thanks to [first or full names of people who volunteered to put the sticky notes content in your spreadsheet template (e.g., Bennett, Steven, Shari, and Brad)], we have all your sticky notes lovingly put into this spreadsheet [hyperlink to the spreadsheet on "lovingly put into this spreadsheet" text]. I saw some potential matches as I was consolidating all the info [something quirky or popular (e.g., "(soup recipes or accountability, anyone?)")] and I'll leave it up to you to know whether a match has already been made or should be made.

Pro tips to Use the Spreadsheet

Your sticky note data entry helpers and I wouldn't have taken so many hours of time to put everything in a spreadsheet [hyperlink to the spreadsheet on "put everything in a spreadsheet" text] and *not* have you use it. So, keep these tips in mind as you look for more matches:

- Do keyword searches within the spreadsheet for things you said you need (e.g., accountability) or things other people need and you might offer (e.g., design).
- Sorting or filtering among the offers and needs is going to help a lot. [Use these instructions](#).

What Now?

Offers and Needs Markets (OANMs) are not just community-building exercises; they're also trust-building activities. So please remember to keep the contents of our spreadsheet among people who actively participated in-person (a.k.a. people you see in the spreadsheet) or trusted fellow [name of people in the community (e.g., church goers, WDSers, or puttypeep)].

Thanks again for letting me share one of my favorite gifts – the gift of a fantastic OANM! I'm grateful to be living a life of [themes of the group you ran the OANM with (e.g., "community, adventure, and service")] with you.

[Your sign-off (e.g., All the best, Joel Zaslofsky)]

Visual Examples of an OANM



Joel Zaslofsky jezaslof@gmail	Joel Zaslofsky jezaslof@gmail	Joel Zaslofsky jezaslof@gmail
Show you how to authentically connect with people in-person.	Teach you how to podcast (complete with a ridiculous workflow document).	Give you one heck of a good, big hug!
M Doesn't Expire	M Doesn't Expire	Any Doesn't Expire
Joel Zaslofsky jezaslof@gmail	Joel Zaslofsky jezaslof@gmail	Joel Zaslofsky jezaslof@gmail
Someone to do one-off graphic design or document layout tasks.	Advise me on how to use the Elegant Themes Divi 2.4 WordPress Theme for a new website.	Teach me how to fall asleep fast.
Any \$ SU	W 09/15/2015 SU	Any NU

Miscellaneous Tips

Facilitator Pro Tips

1. If you want to use a different framework than the head/heart/hands/connection one to help people wrap their heads around what they might offer or request, OffersandNeeds.com has had good ones in the past, but they are no longer public domain.

What Now?

Did you enjoy your OANM experience and want to have one happen for another community you belong to? Contact your facilitator for details or [send a note to Joel Zaslofsky](#) so he can provide you with the resources you'll need.

And if you want to go even deeper, consider and answer some modified questions from Peter Block's book, *Community: A Structure of Belonging*.

- What gift have you received from another in our OANM? (Get specific)
- What has someone in your community done today that has moved you or been valuable to you?
- How did someone in your community engage you in a way that had meaning?
- What gift do you have that nobody knows about?
- What are you grateful for that has gone unspoken?
- What is the positive feedback you receive that still surprises you?
- What is the gift you have that you don't fully acknowledge?

Changelog

Version #	Date	Version Notes (e.g., what was added, modified, or deleted from the previous version)
1.0	2025-04-05	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Made the verbal templates a whole lot shorter and more playful.• Added some general tweaks from experiments I and other facilitators have run.

Acknowledgments

I probably would have never heard about the OANM if it were not for a conversation with my friend, Donnie Maclurcan. He continues to be my go-to OANM resource and much of what you see in this facilitator guide is a variation of resources he's put together on running OANMs.

I couldn't do it without ya, Donnie! And neither could many of the people using this guide. Thank you, **thank you!**

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