

"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 an Offers and Needs Market (OANM)?

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 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.**

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 knows many people 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!

Participating in the **Offline** Offers and Needs Market

Receive and review your supplies



Printed or digital participant instructions



Writing utensil



Two colors of sticky notes



Name tag



Your facilitator shares context, the high-level process, and some pro tips.

Your Name	Contact Info	
[The contents of your offer goes here]		
Availability	Expiration Date (Optional)	Method of Exchange

Create your offers



Your Name	Contact Info	
[The contents of your need goes here]		
Urgency	Expiration Date (Optional)	Method of Exchange

Create your needs

Matching offers and needs



Explore participants' offers and needs



Discover potential matches between offers and needs



Chat with participants and agree to a match



Match again and again, then reflect as a group



Post-market

Follow up with fellow participants and complete your exchanges.

You did it. Woohoo for you!

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.



"I love Offers and Needs Markets! It's so much bundled into one: community-building, vulnerability, sharing resources, owning up to our own depths, and the generous use of sticky notes. We all inherently want to help, so giving and receiving with an intentional, organized process allows us to contribute and gain without it feeling transactional. This is just genuine and heartfelt." – Aja Marsh, Offers and Needs Market participant

Housekeeping Notes

Acting upon these notes makes for a better 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.*
- 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.
- Place your sticky notes once you think you're done to avoid everyone doing the same thing at once. Additional notes can be added later if you think of more.
- If you have questions or need supplies during the silent writing time, *quietly* get a facilitator's attention.
- Your facilitator(s) will be gently persistent in keeping the silence during writing time.

Creating Offers and Needs

Anatomy of an Offer and a Need

Your Name Contact Info

[The contents of your offer goes here]

Availability Expiration Date (Optional) Method of Exchange

Offer

Your Name Contact Info

[The contents of your need goes here]

Urgency Expiration Date (Optional) Method of Exchange

Need

Creating Offers

These are typically things that come from your head, heart, hands, or human connection.

- **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

Needs work almost the same way as offers except that availability is replaced with urgency.

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

- Put your notes on the designated surface if you haven't yet. Then browse others' sticky notes and approach people about potential matches or curiosities.
- Leave all sticky notes where they are so others have a chance to see them. Feel free to take a picture or transcribe them physically or digitally.
- Your facilitator may take down all the sticky notes at some point to share them digitally.

Want to Experience More OANMs?

Contact your facilitator for details, learn how to run one of your own at [Joel Zaslofsky's OANM facilitator page](#), or [send a note to Joel Zaslofsky](#) so he can provide you with the resources you'll need.

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