

"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 **Online Offers and Needs Market**

Preparations



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Create your offers and needs
- 

Add an event calendar reminder
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Share your offers and needs with the facilitator


Real-time market lead-in: Learn the context, the high-level process, and some pro tips.


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Breakout rooms open **One-to-one exploration**

Matching offers and needs

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Spotlight specific offers or needs to all participants
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Discover potential matches between offers and needs
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Chat with participants and agree to a match
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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!

(Click the image to view larger)

How an OANM Creates and Helps Communities

The nutshell? It sparks connection, action, and joy. Here's what makes it unique and powerful:

- **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.*

The Preparation Checklist

If you want to participate in this event, you *must* do a few steps at least 72 hours before the market begins.

Required

- | |
|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Add your offers and needs when you create a personal copy of this Google Sheets template or by using unique forms linked in the event description for this specific OANM. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Add a reminder to your digital or physical calendar so you remember to show up for the real-time part of the market. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> If you used the Google Sheets template, email your facilitator the link to your spreadsheet with these instructions so they can combine your items with your fellow participants. |

Optional

- | |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Browse the official Offers and Needs Market site . |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Browse real examples of offers and needs from my past OANMs for inspiration. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reflect on these two prompts: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offers: What's one of the most meaningful offers someone has made to you and why?• Needs: Describe a time when asking for something you needed seemed easy. Why was that? |

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.

Where to Put Your Offers

You have a choice between creating a personal copy of [this Google Sheets template](#) or a unique form linked in the event description for this specific OANM.

How to Complete Each Offer

You'll find tips about what to put into each component of an offer in the spreadsheet template or form. :) All columns are required for each offer except for the Expiration Date.

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 virtual band."

Where to Put Your Needs

You have a choice between creating a personal copy of [this Google Sheets template](#) (switch to the Needs tab) or a unique form linked in the event description for this specific OANM.

How to Complete Each Need

You'll find tips about what to put into each component of a need in the spreadsheet template or form. :) All columns are required for each offer except for the Expiration Date.

Prep Like a Pro: Sending Offers and Needs to Your Facilitator

Send your offers and needs to the facilitator **at least 72 hours before go-time**.

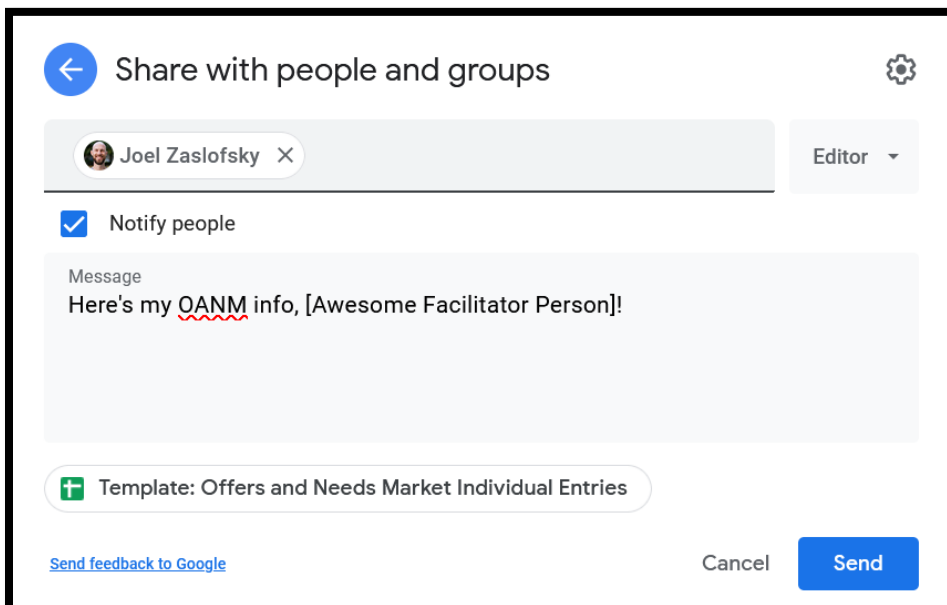
If you filled out the online forms for *both* your offers and your needs, then you don't have to do more. But if you used the Google Sheets template, then they'll need you to email them the link.

Here's how to get them your info with minimum effort:

1. Start with Step 2 in [this article about how to share files from Google Drive help article](#).
2. In the "Add people and groups" field, enter the email address provided in the event description or otherwise communicated by your facilitator.



3. Leave the "Notify people" box checked, write a custom message in the "Message" box if you have context you want them to know about, and then press the "Send" button.



Note: Using Excel or another spreadsheet program? Upload it somewhere and send the link. Facilitators love live links because they auto-update if you tweak anything last-minute.

The Real-Time Market

With all that effort you just put into sending your offers and needs (thanks!), you might be wondering:

"What's the purpose of the real-time market if everyone does all this stuff in advance?"

Your facilitator will combine your offers and needs with other participants' items, polish them up nice and shiny, and give you access in advance.

But we don't want our heads to be buried in a document the whole time! **The real-time market allows us to:**

- Learn context about our offers and needs and make matches on them in a direct, human-to-human way.
- Be courageous (Imposter Syndrome, be gone!) and vulnerable enough to ask for what we need.
- Act on potential matches without the distractions of normal life pulling us away from unique opportunities.
- Embrace the spirit of Asset-Based Community Development as you reflect both inward and process outwards with other generous, brave people.
- Provide a spotlight so everyone has a chance to highlight something special.

Let's turn connection into community and generosity into momentum!

Real-Time Market Overview

1. Housekeeping and pro tips to help you maximize your mindset and matches for the market.
2. Use one-on-one breakout rooms to have conversations about potential matches.
3. Quiet time to browse everyone's offers and needs.
4. Spotlight time for each participant to draw attention to something specific.
5. Individual and group reflection time.
6. Planning your next steps.

Want More Context?

The [official Offers and Needs Market site is right here](#). This guide's process is a bit different than theirs, but the spirit is the same and there's some great info waiting for you there.

If you want to know what it's like to facilitate, [check out Joel Zaslofsky's facilitator landing page](#).

Questions?

Contact your facilitator with what's on your mind.

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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