CHAMELEON

Resource 5
Online Networking and Communities
Student Handout

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Unlocking the Potential of Female Migrants as Entrepreneurs in the Digital Age

Resource title:	**Resource 5 Online Networking and Communities**
Introduction to the Activity:	In our age of smartphones and 5G networks, many people see the world through social media. There are online networks on every social media platform. The network is the "social" part of each social network, it's your followers on Twitter and Instagram, your friends on Facebook and your contacts on LinkedIn.
	Online networking is the process of growing and developing your network of social and business relationships through online communication channels, namely social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.
	An online community is a group of people with a common interest or goal who use the internet to communicate with each other.
	What makes social media different from online communities is that communities are formed from groups of people from all different backgrounds and histories. People join online communities for all sorts of reasons - because they share a preference for similar things or a similar lifestyle.
	In conclusion, the biggest difference between social networks and online communities is the origin of the connection. If it was made offline, it may be a social network. If the connection was made online, it is definitely an online community.

What will you achieve through this self-reflection?

- Provide information on networking opportunities available
- Connect, explore and organise networking and communities
- Using networking platforms such as LinkedIn to start networking
- Expand your network with confidence
- Manage different network management strategies

- Know how to deal with the complexities of networks and variety of actors

Questions to ask Myself:

Question 1:   What benefits can an online community bring to my business? Should I invest my time in an online community?

Question 2:   What should I consider when choosing a network or online community?

Question 3:   How to make the best use of virtual networking opportunities?

Question 4:   With an online network or community will I get more customers and increase the sales of my business?

Question 5:   What do you think a general purpose to an online community would be?

Checklist

1. Choose a type of online community to start
2. Select the online community and networking platform

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3. Define a strategy
4. Who is my audience?
5. What are my objectives?

Follow-up Activities

- Create an online community where your members feel they have a voice. It's a way for them to get involved in the community. And that sense of belonging translates into greater engagement and loyalty to your organisation.

- Differentiate from the competition with a better customer experience. A member community or online customer community provides a vehicle to stand out from the competition by answering questions or developing products and services that meet customer needs.

- A community can be a great place to help you generate more leads or acquire more members. A community makes you visible and adds value immediately. Aberdeen's findings show that an online community platform helps businesses improve return on marketing investment by 33%.

Take-away Notes - Next Steps:

Social networks and online communities bring many advantages but can also represent an overload of work. However, you can do some things to cope with social media overload:

- Defining your social media goals and strategy can be an effective way to avoid being overwhelmed by social media.
- Planning your posts in advance is a great way to avoid social media overload.
- There is already great content you can share with your audience, and there are multiple benefits to using curated content. You can curate blog posts, social shares, or even your visual content.
- Use scheduling tools. It can be very useful to schedule predetermined messages that you already have.
- Choose the platforms where your target audience is.

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