Sponsored Networks

Executives often feel like they are on a lonely mountain peak, where few colleagues see the world as they do. Yet, there is much to be learned from peers who work in similar roles at other organizations. But time is short, and meaningful interactions are few and far between. Sadly, most peer cohorts meet infrequently, if ever.

There is another way. SkyBridge Associates believes in the power of strong peer communities, and we create the platforms leaders need to build authentic relationships and share valuable insights with each other.

WHO IS IT FOR?

Sponsored Networks address the needs of executives whose industries, companies, jobs, and careers are evolving rapidly. These networks can be regional, national, or international in scope, and the 15–25 members who are invited to join often represent leading firms in an industry or market segment.

Over time, network members exchange ideas, explore shared risks and opportunities, and enjoy the benefits of a supportive peer community. The focus is on creating and sustaining a robust peer network (a noun), not networking (a verb).

These networks also serve the needs of their sponsors—typically one to three service providers or vendors who want to support important clients (e.g., accounting firms sponsor board audit committee networks; law firms sponsor general counsel networks). Sponsors often have limited visibility into clients' challenges, desires, beliefs, and constraints outside of their work together. And there are few other ways to spend six hours at a time with important clients, three times a year, indefinitely.

Sponsoring a network also sends a powerful, unspoken message to clients: We care about you, and want to support your success. It is about listening, not pitching. Sponsors offer something of value with little asked in return. This builds trust and generates goodwill.

WHO PAYS FOR THE NETWORK?

Members do not pay to join the network. All network expenses, including SkyBridge Associates' professional fees, are paid by the sponsors.

HOW DO THE MEETINGS WORK?

Sponsored Network meetings typically last three to four hours. They are held three times a year at sponsors' offices or private meeting venues. Formal roundtable meetings are usually held in the mid/late-afternoon, followed by an informal private dinner.

Our network discussions are active, since executives almost always prefer conversation to presentation. Networks follow strict confidentiality principles to encourage candor and a free flow of ideas.

WHAT DOES SKYBRIDGE DO?

To ensure a distinctive experience that is worth traveling for, these elite peer networks must deliver substantial value: with the right people, the right agendas, the right preparation, the right meeting leadership, and the right venues.

To that end, SkyBridge:

- Collaborates with sponsors to design the network (e.g., criteria, priorities, frequency/location)
- Recruits network members
- Sets meeting dates to maximize members' and sponsors' participation
- Plans events and logistics
- Calls/meets with members before each meeting to explore possible agenda items
- Plans/syndicates meeting agendas
- Identifies, invites, and briefs guests (as applicable)
- Develops and distributes meeting books before each meeting (including customized meeting briefs)
- Provides on-site meeting support
- Facilitates meetings
- Prepares and distributes meeting summaries
- Schedules and leads debrief calls for non-attending members
- Develops, distributes, analyzes, and reports benchmarking studies (as applicable)
- Monitors network health and intervenes as appropriate (e.g., design assumptions, new members)

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

For more information, please contact James Millar at jmillar@skybridge.associates, or +1 781 879 7854.

Executives interested in learning more about the power and design of great peer networks may also enjoy *Building Bridges: The Case for Executive Peer Networks*, available in hardcover, paperback, eBook, and audiobook through major online retailers, including Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Apple iBooks, and iTunes.