

Nexora's Spark Circles

# **Fuel Conversations & Build Connections**

An Internal Networking Strategy

## The Challenge

**Nexora Tech** is a fast-growing Swiss SaaS company specializing in AI-driven business solutions. Headquartered in Zurich, the company operates with distributed teams across the five biggest cities of the country. As Nexora Tech scales, cross-team collaboration is becoming more complex.

- New hires struggle to build meaningful connections beyond their immediate office, resulting in a fragmented onboarding experience.
- Existing employees lack structured yet informal opportunities to exchange knowledge and strengthen their sense of belonging, leading to siloed information and knowledge building.

## Design Process

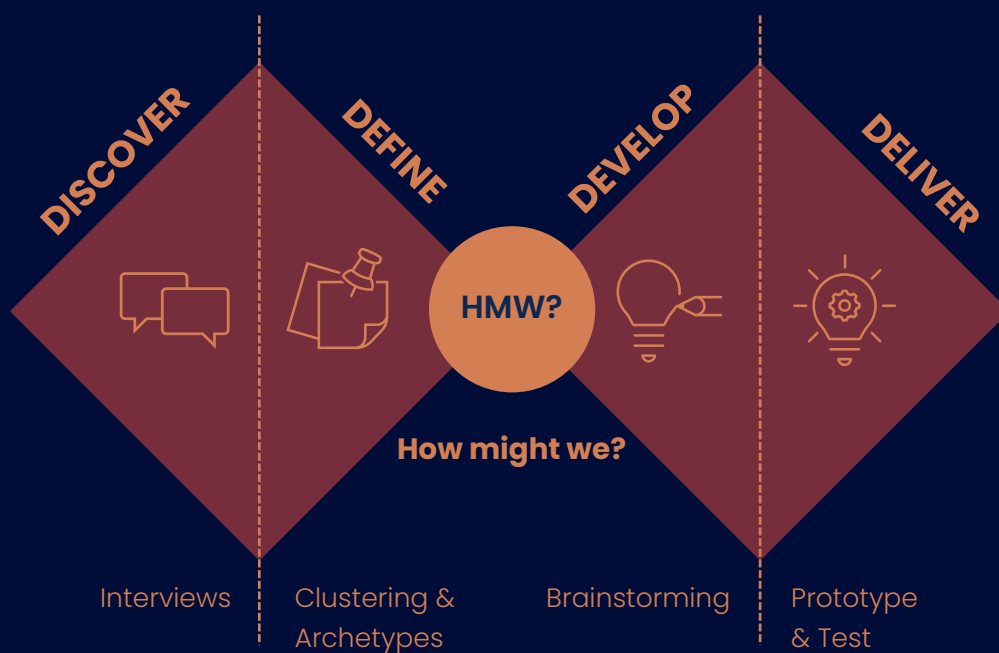


Figure 1. Design Thinking Double Diamond

Following the Design Thinking process, we can gain valuable insights into employees. A systematic approach to data analysis helps identify root causes while crafting archetypes (abstract labels that represent the defining behavioral and attitudinal characteristics) serves as a guide to defining real problems and creating impactful solutions.

## Key challenges



**Time.** Limited capacities hinder the necessary time investment for sustainable networking.



**Attitude.** Skepticism toward informal exchange. Additionally, networking requires self-confidence, curiosity, and critical thinking.



**Leadership.** Lack of support from team leaders and a fragmented overarching organizational culture.

## Archetypes.

### Curious Beginners

Eager to learn but unsure where to start. They seek guidance, structure, and opportunities to connect.

*The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing.*

### Social Experts

Natural connectors who thrive on knowledge exchange. They see networking as a way to grow and collaborate.

*Knowledge grows when shared*

### Pragmatic Experts

Skeptical of networking, they prefer working independently. They engage only when the value is clear.

*I only talk to people who have something to say*



## The Solution

*Spark Circles* are biweekly **virtual meetups** during lunch, organized by voluntary facilitators and moderated by participants in small breakout rooms. A **low-effort, high-impact** networking initiative designed to:



Create **informal spaces** where employees can connect across locations and departments.



Encourage knowledge exchange through **peer-led discussions** on challenges, best practices, and innovation.



Foster a **sense of belonging** by breaking silos and strengthening company culture.

## Experience Design

Based on the **5E Experience Design Model** by Kaospilot, the prototype sessions follow this structure:

- 1. Excitement:** Employees vote topics in advance.
- 2. Entry:** Warm welcome with music.
- 3. Engagement:** Two short interactive activities: one personal, one focused on the voted topic.
- 4. Exit:** Summary and feedback via chat and polls.
- 5. Extension:** Follow-up email with a digital goodie related to the topic.



# Key Principles

Spark Circles are based on four ideas:



## Simplicity

Sessions require minimal setup, no special tools beyond what is already available, and can be hosted by anyone with clear guidance (Tool-Box).



## Relevance

Discussions offer practical insights and real value, ensuring that participants leave with something useful for their work or personal growth.



## Lightness

The sessions are engaging, and enjoyable. The atmosphere is relaxed while keeping the structure light and the discussions lively.



## Connection

No presentations or keynote speakers! Just an open space for colleagues to connect, share experiences in an informal but structured setting.

## Results

The test group particularly appreciated the **simplicity and brevity** of the format, the opportunity to vote on discussion topics, and the chance to **learn something new** about their colleagues. Balancing value and time investment is key. A ready-to-use toolbox of topics and activities for voluntary hosts helps overcome time constraints and skepticism in cross-location networks.

True impact happens through co-creation, **bringing people together to shape meaningful experiences**. To be truly effective, these experiences must be intentionally designed, beyond tangible outcomes, they shape emotional connections that resonate and create lasting engagement.





## Hi! I'm Teresa, a learning experience design strategist.

Since 2019, I've focused my work on applying design thinking methods and leveraging narrative design to create digital learning experiences that matter. I believe in the human power of telling stories, every day stories, which is why I'm so passionate about my work.

I can empathize with people and gain key insights to solve problems. People say I have an exceptional ability to bring ideas to life. I'll be happy to help you.

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