

8 Conversation Starters to Use at Networking Events

Summary: Use these examples of eight conversation starters at the next networking event you attend to make sure you get the most out of the event.



Walking into a room of strangers and being expected to start up a conversation without any effort is terrifying for most of us. When the room is filled with potential bosses and leaders of your industry, that expectation can be almost debilitating. Networking, however, is one of the most important things you can do to progress your career, so you have to be able to find a way to get it done. Here are eight conversation starters that you can use to get started at the next big or small networking event you attend.

See the following articles for more information:

- [5 Habits to Make You More Successful](#)
- [Top 4 Tips on How to Build Your Brand](#)

1. “I just tried (insert food item from buffet) at the buffet table and plan to grab more. Care to join me?”

Food is something everyone is grateful for at events. Most have spent the entire day at work and have not had a real meal yet, so it is not a big stretch to ask them to join you. The area around the food table is a great place to effortlessly continue a conversation with others sampling the cuisine.

2. “I was on LinkedIn and saw we both went to (insert college).” Or “I was on LinkedIn and saw we both worked with (insert mutual acquaintance).”

Leading a conversation with something you have in common with the person will start it off easily.



Ask the event organizer for a list of attendees so you can check before you go to find any personal connections you may have with those attending the event.

3. “How long have you been a member of this organization?”

This question is simple and open-ended, but is an easy one for people that are shy. Refrain from asking too many questions at once, which can make your conversation more like an interrogation or interview.

4. “I read your book ...” or “I really enjoyed your speech at the event last year.”

Starting off a conversation with a compliment that also shows your knowledge of the person or their work will flatter them immediately. Most are eager to hear and discuss what others think of their opinions or accomplishments.

5. “What do you love about your job?”

People love to talk about themselves, so this question is perfect to get them to open up about their job and what they love about it.

6. “I’ve worked here for several months but haven’t been up to this floor yet. What amazing views.”

This question only works if the event is a work one held at the special penthouse floor of the office. Saying this discloses something about yourself so that those around you will feel more open. Just be careful not to expose something too personal, such as your feelings about the management team.

7. “Are you from (insert city you are in now)?”

This simple question leads to a professional and personal connection. The professional part is how your work in the industry brought you both to the city. The personal connection delves into where you both came from, making the conversation more intimate.

8. “Did you see the wacky stuff they are giving away at the sponsor tables?”

Many conferences and expos are sponsored, so those companies will have booths with their logos on everything from toothbrushes to Frisbees to fly swatters. Pick up a random item, like the foam finger, and present it when starting the conversation. Then lead them to the table to find something more useful or more entertaining to discuss.



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