

Stronger Business

F A C T S H E E T

Nine opening lines for networkers

Networking is really useful in business. If like me you find it hard to begin conversations in a room full of strangers, here are some useful starting lines I've gathered over the years.

“Is it quieter on this side of the room? I can hardly hear over there.”

Brilliant. If you ask this question, it's so easy to fall into a conversation and go on from there.

“Have you been here before?”

Useful at regular meetings – I once began a relationship with a millionaire businessman this way! A variation on this is “So, do you know how these events work then?”

“Do you work for [the host company]?”

If it's a meeting sponsored by an organization then it's a reasonable question to ask. An alternative is, “How are you connected to [the host company]?”

“This chicken is lovely, isn't it?”

Commenting about food is always a win. I find praising the food is taken in better spirit than grumbling about it.

“So, was it a pain for you to get here?”

A classic city question, when the mode of transportation and location in the city are always on peoples' minds. There's bound to be a story about it.

“What brings you here?”

We all go to events for a purpose (to be seen, because we have to, to meet interesting people, to make useful contacts, etc) so there's no shame in asking – or answering truthfully!

“Hi, I'm Julian.”

So simple, yet sometimes so difficult. But plenty of people start conversations with me like this. Don't overthink it, just offer a hand to shake and say the words!

“How's business?”

Great in business circles – we all like talking about how things are. My tip is to answer positively and truthfully – don't invent success stories, they have a habit of finding you out

“Goodness, I hate networking.”

See someone else standing miserably in the corner? Why not walk up and start a conversation about your mutual distaste?

Enjoy your networking!

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