

# Five Questions to Have on Hand at Your Next Networking Event

by [Refresh Leadership](#)

As you advance in your career, it's very likely the next step up the corporate ladder won't come through an online application, but rather through your professional networks.

According to research from [Interview Success Formula](#), an online interview preparation program, 80% of available jobs are never advertised. And, if you're solely relying on applying online, you may be selling yourself short. In fact, the [research](#) also discovered that of the 118 people, on average, who apply for a job, only 20% will advance to an interview. So, those professionals who actively strive to build their personal and professional networks will always be a step ahead when it comes to competing for top-level positions. Unfortunately, networking isn't an exact science and the types of conversations you engage in will vary depending on what you hope to gain from each situation. However, it's always good to have a few of these easy conversation starters on hand to help kick things off.

## **How did you hear about this event?**

This question can lead to conversations about where a person works, what industry they are in, or mutual acquaintances, all of which can be very useful for laying the groundwork for a new professional relationship.

## **How long have you worked for [insert company]?**

From experience and expertise to rank and influence, asking how long someone has worked for a company or within an industry reveals a lot of information about a potential new business contact.

## **What do you like most about your work?**

Understanding what excites people about their jobs not only reveals a lot about their personality, but it also gives insight into the type of work that interests them, which can spur a conversation about shared interests or how your companies' missions complement each other.

## **Has your company encountered [insert common challenge for your industry]?**

Use this question to start a discussion about common challenges that could lead to an exchange of ideas about how to address them. It may also help demonstrate how your company can help address issues they are dealing with in their business.

## **Do you have a suggestion for a great [type of food] restaurant nearby?**

This one is great when attending out-of-town networking events. People love to talk about

their favorite local eateries or coffee shops and the question can easily turn into an invitation to meet for lunch to learn more about each other or their business.

What are some of your go-to questions to ask at networking events to build relationships?

What are some of the most creative questions you've been asked?