**30 Brilliant Networking Conversation Starters**

By [The Daily Muse Editor](https://www.themuse.com/author/editor)

When it comes to conversation, you're a natural. You can chat up a storm with just about anyone, you're a pro at listening, and you love meeting and connecting with new people.

But when it comes to starting that conversation? That's a different story.

This is one of the most common concerns we hear about networking: How do you just walk up to someone you don't know at an event—*and start talking*?

Well, it is a tad easier than it sounds. Fact is, no one's going to turn you away if you walk up, smile, and say, "I'm so-and-so. Nice to meet you." In fact, [others will probably be relieved](http://www.thedailymuse.com/job-search/an-introverts-guide-to-networking/) that someone else started the conversation!

But, the process is definitely a lot easier when you have a few go-to icebreakers in your back pocket. So we've put together a handy list to refer to before your next event—some of our own lines, a few favorites from our career expert friends, and icebreakers our Twitter and Facebook followers have used, too!

**The Classics**

When in doubt, just try the basics: asking what someone does, inquiring why he or she is at the event, or even just reaching out your hand and saying hi.

1. "Hi, I don't know too many people here, so I wanted to introduce myself. I'm [name] and I work at [company]." And bam—you got it. [*@cbmcmillan*](https://www.twitter.com/cbmcmillan)

2. “So, what do you do?" It gets them talking first and you can think about how to approach the conversation or how you could possibly work together. [*@GrowSouthwest*](https://www.twitter.com/GrowSouthwest)

3. “So, what brought you here today?” [*@twofacedhrlady*](https://www.twitter.com/twofacedhrlady)

4. "How's your day going?" This is my go-to in any situation, and it never fails. It's simple, classic, and always effective if you throw in a smile. [*@missmcheng*](https://www.twitter.com/missmcheng)

5. "What's your story?" It always sparks a fascinating and non-generic conversation. [*@leslieforman*](https://www.twitter.com/leslieforman)

**Location, Location, Location**

No matter what, you've got at least a couple things in common with every person in the room: the event you're attending, the place it's being held at, and the food and drink you're consuming. Use that to your advantage by striking up conversation about what's going on around you.

6. If I'm at an event with food, I'll often use that as a conversation starter, à la "I can't stop eating these meatballs. Have you tried them?" [*@erinaceously*](https://www.twitter.com/erinaceously)

7. "How did you hear about this event?" [*@myuliyam*](https://www.twitter.com/myuliyam)

8. “It's so hot (or cold) in here.” Hey, maybe it is, maybe it isn’t, but the person will either agree or disagree, and pretty soon you’re talking about weather patterns, your best umbrella, and then your career goals. [*Jessica Gordon for*The Daily Muse](http://www.thedailymuse.com/job-search/10-networking-conversation-starters-youll-actually-use/)

9. "I’m feeling pretty overwhelmed by the deluge of info that’s being firehosed at us today. Is there one nugget of brilliance that’s really resonating with you?" [*Alexandra Franzen*](http://www.alexandrafranzen.com/2011/04/29/100-alternatives-to-so-whadda-ya-do/)

10. "What a beautiful venue. Have you been here before?"

**The Newsworthy**

Another thing you have in common with, well, everyone? What happened in your city or the world today. While you don't want to start up any hot political debates, some light-hearted headline sharing is a great way to break the ice.

11. “What do you think about [insert topic germane to the event or person here]?" I'm biased: News is great engagement tool. [*@thatsportsgirl*](https://www.twitter.com/thatsportsgirl)

12. “Wow, I just can't believe all the crazy news headlines today. What a week!"

13. "Any chance you read the news today? I missed it, and I'm dying to know what's happening with [insert news topic here]."

14. “So, was it a pain for you to get here?” The mode of transportation and location in the city are always on peoples’ minds. There’s bound to be a story about it. [*Jessica Gordon for*The Daily Muse](http://www.thedailymuse.com/job-search/10-networking-conversation-starters-youll-actually-use/)

15. “Did you catch the game last night?” It’s a classic, but it’s a classic for a reason.

**Great for Introverts**

[If you're an introvert](http://www.thedailymuse.com/job-search/an-introverts-guide-to-networking/), walking into a room full of unknown people can feel extra intimidating. One of our favorite approaches is to look toward the outskirts of the room and find someone who looks a little lonely. Maybe that woman sitting by herself at the table doesn’t know anyone and is just hoping that someone will come talk to her. Be that person, and try one of these lines.

16. “Man, these networking events can be so crazy. Mind if I join you over here where it’s a little quieter?” *[Careerealism](http://www.careerealism.com/conversation-starters-networking-events/%22%20%5Cl%20%22dM4Y98HxZwBgZGei.99%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)*

17. "As we're both here at the (buffet, bar, waiting room), I feel I should introduce myself. I'm [name] from [company]." [*@ainegreaney*](https://www.twitter.com/ainegreaney)

18. I like to compliment people on their clothes and accessories. I find this approach to be more friendly and less about professionally connecting, especially if you're at a networking event. I believe both men and women can compliment each other on their choice of attire and use it as a conversation starter! [*@MsMeganGrace*](https://www.twitter.com/MsMeganGrace)

19. "I'm trying to make myself meet new people here instead of just talking to the usual suspects. Do you mind me saying hello and introducing myself?" *[xoJane](http://www.xojane.com/relationships/20-icebreakers%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)*

20. “Man, I hate networking.”If you sense a fellow party-goer has similar misanthropic tendencies, walk up and start a conversation about your mutual distaste. [*Jessica Gordon for*The Daily Muse](http://www.thedailymuse.com/job-search/10-networking-conversation-starters-youll-actually-use/)

**The Funny**

We don't recommend using anything like the joke, "How much does a polar bear weigh?" (Answer: Enough to break the ice.) But when you're meeting new people, a little humor is a great way to ease the awkwardness and kick-start a fun conversation.

21. I always start by saying, "I can't believe how under-dressed I am for this event." A little self-deprecating humor is always good, and I'm always poorly dressed. [*@EllBell9*](https://www.twitter.com/EllBell9)

22. Something jokey—like “I just came for these carrot sticks." Then ask a question, like "How'd you hear about this event?" [*@beetorr*](https://www.twitter.com/beetorr)

23. "So, on a scale of 1 to undrinkable, how terrible is the Chardonnay?"

24. "Did you see the Japanese 'Attack of the Raptor’ office prank video?" Timely mixes of humor and intrigue can be great. [*@kylehsf*](https://www.twitter.com/kylehsf)

25. "I'll be honest, the only person I know here is the bartender, and I just met him two minutes ago. Mind if I introduce myself?"

The Totally Random (But Hey, They Just Might Work)

If all else fails, try one of these.

26. "Any chance you know a great sushi place around here? I'm not familiar with the area, and I'm headed to dinner after this."

27. “Hey, aren’t you friends with [fill in random name]?”It doesn’t matter if you really think the person is someone you know, just walk up and ask if he or she is friends with someone you know. He or she will tell you “no,” and conversation will commence. [*Jessica Gordon for*The Daily Muse](http://www.thedailymuse.com/job-search/10-networking-conversation-starters-youll-actually-use/)

28. If you see a group of people that seem engaged in quality conversation, just approach them and say, "Well, you guys are certainly having more fun than the last group I was talking to.” *[CareerBliss](http://www.careerbliss.com/advice/6-surprisingly-effective-networking-icebreakers/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)*

29. “If there is one question you do not want me to ask you, because you are sick and tired of answering it, what question would that be?” [*Conversation Arts*](http://www.conversationarts.com/2010/two-funny-conversation-starters-you-can-use/)

30. "I'm working on an article about the best and worst conversation starters ever. Any particularly good or terrible ones you've heard tonight?"