



How to Make the Most Out of a Networking Event for AEC Professionals

Conversation Starters

Step 1 – Questions about their Career Path/Training

- Oh, you're from [X Company]? How did you end up there?
- How did you initially get your start in the industry?
- What has your career path been like to date? Is it representative of most people in this kind of position?
- Are you a member of any professional associations? Which ones do you feel are the most important to belong to?
- What are the future prospects in this field? What trends do you see developing over the next few years?
- If you could do things all over again, would you choose the same path for yourself?
- What does a typical day/week in your job look like?
- What do you enjoy the most about your job? The least?
- What skills have you found essential for success in this occupation?
- Could you tell me about one of the main challenges you face in this position?

Step 2 – Questions About Working Conditions:

- How did you get into this field?
- What has your career path been like to date? Is it representative of most people in this kind of position?
- Are you a member of any professional associations? Which ones do you feel are the most important to belong to?
- What are the future prospects in this field? What trends do you see developing over the next few years?
- If you could do things all over again, would you choose the same path for yourself?
- What does a typical day/week in your job look like?



- What do you enjoy the most about your job? The least?
- What skills have you found essential for success in this occupation?
- Could you tell me about one of the main challenges you face in this position?

Step 3 – Additional Questions:

- What advice would you have liked to have heard when you were starting out?
- How would you recommend I “try out” this line of work (i.e. through a summer job, internship, volunteering...)?
- What other fields or jobs would you suggest I research before making a final decision? Is there anyone you would recommend I talk to next? When I call them, may I mention that you referred me?
- Offer a genuine compliment, such as, “I really enjoyed your presentation. Can you tell me more about your?”
- Talk about the event itself, such as:
- Is this your first time attending this conference?
- What session have you most enjoyed so far?
- Hey, I’d love your opinion on [your latest project]. Do you have a minute?

Step 4 – Small Talk:

- What do you do in your spare time?
- Have you been doing much traveling lately?
- Discuss opening sentences like:
 - How do you know so and so?
 - How long have you been a part of this association – how has it been for you?”
 - What do you think about... the speaker, the topic, the weather, etc.?
- You know, I recently read that [insert relevant industry news here]. Have you heard about that?
- Read up on current events, including sports, particularly on topics that may be relevant to the event or locale where you are networking.



- Avoid religious and political topics.