

Business Small Talk

A selection of good questions to ask someone at a business function or conference. (Be polite and not too intrusive!)

About work

- ✓ How is work? How are things at the office?
- ✓ Has it been a good year? How was the last financial quarter?
- ✓ What does your company produce/develop/market?
- ✓ What does your role encompass?
- ✓ What do you think the future holds for the sector?

About the conference

- ✓ How are you finding the conference?
- ✓ What did you think of the presentations/seminars?
- ✓ Did you attend last year?

About the place

- ✓ What are your first impressions?
- ✓ What do you think of the hotel, facilities, country, region, etc...?)
- ✓ Have you tried any of the local delicacies?
- ✓ Have you seen any of the sites? (tourist attractions)

About the other person

- ✓ How was your journey?
- ✓ Where do you come from?
- ✓ What is your plan for the week, next few days, weekend, etc...?
- ✓ Could we exchange business cards?

What not to say at a business conference

- I am going to the very top!
- This conference is a complete waste of time!
- Have we met before?
- I thought you had been made redundant?
- You are going down! (to a rival company)
- I should be paid more!
- My career is going nowhere fast!
- I don't like this country!

What is the difference between?

- *Review* – to assess and provide feedback on a document/proposal/project/idea.
- *Rehearse* – to practise, with the aim of improving your fluency for a presentation.
- *Revise* – to practise, with the aim of memorising information.

What is the difference between?

- *Adjourn* – to formally take a break/reconvene until another time, often another day.
- *Cancel* – to stop an event happening in the future with the assumption it will not be reorganised.
- *Postpone* – rescheduling an event for another (later) time.
- *Delay* – to start an event at a later point, possibly on the same day.

Quote of the month

'The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority.'

Kenneth Blanchard

Some idioms describing business relationships/experiences

1. **To break the ice.** To establish a more relaxed professional relationship.
2. **To get on like a house on fire.** To have an excellent relationship with someone.
3. **Like a fish out of water.** To feel unfamiliar or uncomfortable in a particular environment.
4. **Thrown in at the deep end.** To have been given a significant level of responsibility with little prior training, experience or support.
5. **Real eye opener.** To gain a new and informative perspective on a situation.
6. **Don't see eye to eye.** To have a difficult relationship with somebody.
7. **To get into hot water.** To get into trouble with your manager or a person of authority.
8. **To put my foot in it.** To make a mistake which causes embarrassment/problems for somebody.

So

The word 'so' is used to make an adjective or adverb stronger. Example: 'The lesson was so boring'. Example: 'He talks so loudly.'

The word 'so' is also used to mean 'like this.' Example: 'I am surprised it is so cool; I thought the weather would be hotter in June.'