

Conversation Starters: Ask. Ask. Ask.

Work related:

- What company do you work for?
- What do you do for (company)?
- What does that entail?

Get a sense for the company:

- I'm not familiar with ---, what's the product?
- How many employees are at ---?
- How many offices? Where?
- Is it public or private?
- Do you manage a team? How many?
- What position do you report to?
- How long have you been with ---?

Get a deeper conversation going:

- How's work going this week?
- How's business?
- What have you been working on lately?

Related to the speaker or event:

- What brought you out to this event today?
- Do you have a particular interest in this topic?
- What did you think about the speaker? or ... this event?
- Have you ever been to this restaurant / venue before?

Related to the organization putting on the event:

- Have you come to these events before?
- How long have you been a member of ----?
- What do you find is the best part of being a member of ----?

(Appropriate) personal questions:

- How's your week going so far?
- Seasonal: Do you have any:
 - (fall & winter) plans for the holidays?
 - (spring & summer) vacation plans?
- Do you have any plans for the weekend?
- Where do you live? Or...Where did you drive from to get here?

My favorites:

1. So...what do you do when you're not (thing that is happening now, i.e., attending xyz events)? This gives people the option to talk about work or anything else they choose.

2. What do you do for fun? (...though, be careful with this one: not everyone has fun...and it may catch some people off guard.)