Is Your Networking Working? The Top Ten Connecting Questions

Make the most out of every networking opportunity by making a connection. Always be ready to talk easily about yourself and your work, using these ten questions as a guide. If you’re tempted to skip one, figure out why, then work at it the hardest. You can even practice with your colleagues until you stop sounding funny or feeling awkward.

#1. Who are you? Be prepared to describe what you do in plain English. Can you introduce yourself without using your title? What’s the 30-second explanation of what you do, why it has value, and how it fits?

#2. Where have you been? Talk about your recent work history and what you accomplished while you were there. What do employers and clients value most about your work?

#3. What’s in it for them? Given what you just said, tell every prospect what you can do for them. How do you know? Why should they believe you?

#4. Who’s on your team? Talk up your colleagues’ talents. Where have they been and what did they accomplish for their clients? How do you all differ and complement one another?

#5. Who’s a good fit? Know the kinds of clients and challenges you’re best suited for. How does your current prospect fit or not fit that picture?

#6. How do you work? Be able to speak knowledgably about your company’s processes. What’s your methodology? If they sign on, what can a client expect in the weeks and months to come?

#7. How do you make money? Be clear and confident. Never waffle on this one. How do you charge for your work, and why is it right, for everyone involved, to structure the payment the way you do and to get paid on time?

#8. What won’t you do? Know your limits. What are you not willing to do for a client? Why not? How would doing it anyway be against your mutual best interests?

#9. What does the future look like? Express with pride and passion the vision and mission of your firm. What are you striving to achieve? What strategic direction are you taking and why? How will your future clients benefit when you realize those dreams?

#10. How can you be supportive? Learn to offer genuine verbal support to a client. Mean it. Ask for it back. What do they need from you? What do you need from them?