

Navigating Conference Conversations

Meaningful conversations start with understanding who you're talking to, what you can learn from each interaction, and how you can build professional connections that grow over time.

1 WHO YOU'LL MEET AT THE CONFERENCE

Who they are	Why speak to them	Questions you can ask
 EXECUTIVE LEADERS Senior leaders shaping company vision and direction	Get a big-picture view of where your industry is going – and what it means for you	- What trends are you watching most closely right now? - What skills do you think will matter more in the next few years? - What advice would you give someone entering this industry?
 RECRUITERS Professionals who manage hiring and recruitment	Understand what gets candidates noticed, and what ultimately gets them hired	- What separates candidates who get interviews from those who don't? What makes an application compelling? - What qualities do you see in high potential candidates?
 PROFESSIONALS People working in corporate or creative roles	Get a realistic picture of the work, culture and what it takes to land and succeed in the role	- What does a typical day (or week) look like in your role? - What skills have made the biggest difference in your career? - What helped you get hired into this role/company?
 ENTREPRENEURS People building ventures, practices or independent work	Learn what it takes to build something and how to navigate challenges along the way	- What prompted you to build your own practice/business? - What was the biggest learning curve when you were starting out? - What do you wish you would have known before you started?
 ALUMNI Former students who have been where you are	Learn how to navigate the transition from student to professional	- How did your education help shape your career? - What do you wish you had known when you were still a student? - What helped you land a career in your field after graduation?

2 ENGAGE WITH INTENTION

 START Find a natural entry point - Reference something you learned or heard them share - If unsure, ask an open question - Joining a group? Wait for a pause, then introduce yourself - E.g.: "I notice you mentioned..." or "What drew you to this field?"	 EXCHANGE Ask → Listen → Build - Introduce yourself in under 60 seconds - Ask one thoughtful question, then listen actively - Build on what they share, this is a conversation, not an interview - E.g.: "Can you tell me more about...?" or "That's interesting, I'd love to know more..."	 CLOSE Thank → Decide → Connect - Thank them for their time - Decide if there's a real reason to stay connected - If yes, make a simple ask, if not, thank you is enough - E.g.: "That was really helpful, thank you." or "Would you be open to connecting on LinkedIn."
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3 MAKE YOUR CALL TO ACTION

If this was...	Try saying...
A HELPFUL CONVERSATION You gained insight, got a question answered, or had a valuable exchange	"Thank you for sharing that, it was really helpful" No follow up needed unless it feels natural
SOMEONE TO CONNECT WITH You'd like to keep learning from their experience, journey, or perspective	I'd love to stay connected and continue learning from your work." Ask to connect on LinkedIn
YOU HAVE A SPECIFIC FOLLOW UP You want to have a 1:1 conversation or explore something further	"Would you be open to a short conversation sometime in the future?" Be clear about your intention, not pushy



QUICK TIPS

- ✓ Quality over quantity: 3 real conversations beat 10 rushed ones
- ✓ Jot a quick note right after each conversation: details fade fast, and it makes any follow-up feel personal, not generic
- ✓ If a conversation isn't clicking, it's okay to politely move on
- ✓ Nervous about what to say? Ask them about their own path, it always works
- ✓ Be curious. Listen. Learn.

