



## **Bob Burg's 10 Networking Questions That Work Every Time**

- 1. How did you get your start in the widget business?**  
People like to be the Movie of the Week in someone else's mind. "I worked my way through college, then started in the mail room, then...etc." Let them share their story with you while you actively listen.
- 2. What do you enjoy most about your profession?**  
Again, it's a question that elicits a good, positive feeling. And it should get you the positive response you're seeking. By this time you've got him on a roll.
- 3. What separates you and your company from the competition?**  
I call this the permission-to-brag question. All our lives we're taught not to brag about ourselves and our accomplishments, yet you've just given this person carte blanche to let it all hang out.
- 4. What advice would you give someone just starting out in the widget business?**  
This is my mentor question. Don't we all like to feel like a mentor – to feel that our answer matters? Give your new networking prospect a chance to feel like a mentor by asking this question.
- 5. What one thing would you do with your business if you knew you could not fail?**  
This is a paraphrase of a question from noted theologian and author Dr. Robert Schuller, who asks, "What one thing would you do with your life if you knew you could not fail?" We all have a dream, don't we? What is this person's dream? The question gives her a chance to fantasize. She'll appreciate the fact that you cared enough to ask. And you'll notice that people always take a few moments to really ponder before they answer.



**6. What significant changes have you seen take place in your profession through the years?**

Asking people who are a little bit more mature in years can be perfect because they love answering this question. They've gone through the computer age, the takeover of fax machines, and the transition from a time when service really seemed to matter.

**7. What do you see as the coming trends in the widget business?**

I call this the speculator question. Aren't people who are asked to speculate usually important, hotshot types on television? You are therefore giving them a chance to speculate and share their knowledge with you. You're making them feel good about themselves.

**8. Describe the strangest or funniest incident you've experienced in your business.**

Give people the opportunity to share their war stories. That's something practically everyone likes to do, isn't it? Don't we all have stories we like to share from when we began in the business? Something very embarrassing happened that certainly wasn't funny then but is now. The problem is that most people don't get the chance to share these stories. You, however, are actually volunteering to be that person's audience.

**9. What ways have you found to be the most effective for promoting your business?**

Again, you are accentuating the positive in this person's mind, while finding out something about the way he thinks. However, if you happen to be in the advertising field, absolutely do not ask this question. Why? Because right now, it would be probing question, and it would be perceived as such by your networking prospect. Eventually you will get to ask that question, but not now.

**10. What one sentence would you like people to use in describing the way you do business?**

Almost always, the person will stop and think really hard before answering this question. What a compliment you've paid him. You've asked a question, that quite possibly, the people who are closest to him have never thought enough to ask.