

The 25 Best Icebreaker Questions for Team-Building at Work

By Claire Lew; January 8, 2018

Trust is the oil of the machine in the team. The more you have of it, the more things run smoothly. And the key to building trust within your team is to ask questions that help everyone get to know each other. We put a lot of thought (over four years' research and fine-tuning!) into crafting get-to-know-you questions that would be as non-cheesy as possible, and elicit meaningful and memorable responses from the team. I wanted to share with you the top twenty-five...

#1: What was your first job?

By far, this question has prompted the most interesting responses for the companies we work with. While it's an unassuming question, the responses stand out.

#2: Have you ever met anyone famous?

This question is a fun one, as it taps into the people that your coworkers admire.

#3: What are you reading right now?

Learning what others are reading provides insights into coworkers' interests.

#4: If you could pick up a new skill in an instant what would it be?

With this question, you'll learn how your coworkers want to grow or what they aspire to do.

#5: Who's someone you really admire?

This is a great question to ask to help get a sense of what and who a person values.

#6: Seen any good movies lately you'd recommend?

Movies are a great shared conversation topic.

#7: Got any favorite quotes?

Asking about a person's favorite quote is a great way to break the ice and get to know them better.

#8: Been pleasantly surprised by anything lately?

This is especially a great question to ask a group who might know each other a little better already.

#9: What was your favorite band 10 years ago?

This question always elicits a chuckle or two.

#10: What's your earliest memory?

Hearing about an intimate, early part of someone's life says a lot about who they are.

#11: Been anywhere recently for the first time?

Sharing a new, novel experience is a wonderful way to create a sense of connection between people.

#12: What's your favorite family tradition?

With this question, you get an inside look into the things that bring your coworker's family together.

#13: Who had the most influence on you growing up?

A mother, a sports hero, a grandparent, an elementary school teacher...

#14: What was the first thing you bought with your own money?

This is another great question that fosters a sense of nostalgia and provides insights.

#15: What's something you want to do in the next year that you've never done before?

This is a great aspirational question that exposes people's dreams and hopes they'd love to pursue.

#16: Seen anything lately that made you smile?

The answers from this question are often unexpectedly lovely.

#17: What's your favorite place you've ever visited?

Responses to this are varied and fun.

#18: Have you had your 15 minutes of fame yet?

This is a cheeky question that turns up a variety of answers and interpretations.

#19: What's the best advice you've ever heard?

I'm a big fan of this question - you're really asking what wisdom they personally find most valuable.

#20: How do you like your eggs?

Our customers who ask this question are always shocked by how popular the answers to it are.

#21: Do you have a favorite charity you wish more people knew about?

This is a fantastic question to ask.

#22: Got any phobias you'd like to break?

Spiders, heights, the ocean... Sharing fears is always a great way to feel closer to someone.

#23: Have you returned anything you've purchased recently? Why?

Ask this question and you'll unearth some interesting observations on why people buy things.

#24: Do you collect anything?

Skip the boring question, "What are your hobbies?" and ask this instead.

#25: What's your favorite breakfast cereal?

This question continually (and surprisingly) blows people away with the response when they ask it. One customer of ours had such an enthusiastic response on this from her staff, she created a Cereal Day for her team.

I've used these questions to get to know a new employee, kick-off group meetings for boards I sit on, and even in one-on-one coffee meetings when I'm meeting someone for the first time. Give 'em a shot. Think you'll be pleasantly surprised by the results.

Recommendations from Susan: Optimize your meetings by sending out an icebreaker question with the agenda or meeting invitation. You'll get better answers and give people something fun to think about in advance. Consider publishing the list and letting a team member select the next question at the end of each meeting. They can use the list or come up with one of their own.

<https://blog.knowyourcompany.com/the-25-best-icebreaker-questions-for-team-building-at-work-cf5f48740240>