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Write your own Elevator Speech! - Make a connection in 30 seconds or less

To develop an introductory statement that you can use in a variety of settings (waiting in line at a coffee shop, sitting next to somebody on an airplane, sharing an elevator with somebody at work, participating in an interview), think about the following:

Who am I?

Example: "Hello, my name is.... and I am a student at Warren Wilson College

What is my objective?

Example: "I am looking to connect with people working in international human rights law to learn more about their career paths and to find an internship or entry level position with an organization."

What are my strengths (skills, relevant experience, relevant education, etc)?

Example: "I have had a strong interest in law since I first enrolled in college and my Global Studies major has helped me to find a potential career path in refugee law. My liberal arts education as taught me to think critically, write well, and make connections across various disciplines. I have use those skills in my work crew, EMPOWER, as we work to address issues of social justice and inequality."

Hi, my name is _____, I will be graduating next graduation from _____.

What can tell me the three best things about me and what I bring you, I bring you the _____.

Example of a Good Elevator Speech: I have been working for the "Biggest" in the business, as the _____.

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Crafting an Elevator Speech

Minnesota Literacy Council AmeriCorps*VISTA

Definition: An elevator speech/pitch is a brief summary that succinctly defines a product, service, or organization and its value. The name comes from the idea that this summary should be delivered in the time span of a typical elevator ride—approximately 30 seconds to 3 minutes.

Components & Tips: Elevator speeches can vary a lot depending on the goal, audience, and circumstances but they should all contain the following elements.

- **Pertinent Facts**—The five W's: who, what, where, why, how
- **Sparkle**—What makes your organization/service/product compelling or unique
- **Impact**—Statistics and stories that show results
- **Simplicity**—Jargon-free language that anyone can understand
- **Passion**—Show that you care about what you're pitching
- **Flexibility**—Use a framework but adjust your speech to your audience
- **Preparation**—Practice your speech and ask for feedback

Crafting the Pitch: Answering the following questions will help you craft your own speech.

1. What are you trying to achieve? (I.e. recruit volunteers/clients, build new partnerships, inform others about your organization)
2. Who is your audience? (I.e. potential volunteers/clients, area schools/businesses, community members)
3. What is your position and your organization?
4. Why does your organization do what it does? (I.e. what need does it fill and why is this important to your audience?)
5. Where is your organization located? What population does it serve?

The Elevator Speech

Had:

"Hi, I'm Shannon Brenner, I am a career counselor. I hold a Master's Degree in Education and have five years of experience in career development. (Who cares!) I've worked for a nonprofit career center, and am a certified teacher. (So what!) I believe that career coaching can be the catalyst to change your life. (Are you asleep yet?)

See how that was all about me, me, me?

Bettors:

"Hi, I'm Shannon Brenner, and I help excellent candidates find excellent jobs. For example, I've helped a client change jobs with a 40% salary increase, I've helped a client develop the skills to deal with a difficult boss, and I've helped a manager devise new ways to keep her staff motivated."

Here are a few more examples:

An Avon representative who says: "I help women look beautiful."

Or a business coach that says: "I help you get more clients than you know what to do with."

Used by an IRS agent: "I'm a government fund-raiser."

Action Steps

So, here's what you need to do to craft your elevator speech.

First, write down the "deliverables" -- the services or features that you provide. Then, think in terms of the benefits that your clients or employer could derive from these services. You could use several successful client outcomes, as I did.

Once you've got that written, create an opening sentence that will grab the listener's attention, as our Avon representative did above. The best openers leave the listener wanting more information. And you do not have to include your title, especially if you think it has a negative connotation (an IRS agent, for example).

Finally, your elevator speech must roll off your tongue with ease. Practice your speech in front of the mirror and with friends. Record it and listen to it. Do you sound confident? Sincere? Is it engaging? Tweak accordingly. Then, take it on the road!

Elevator Speech

Let's suppose that — completely by accident — you meet a potential employer in an elevator on the floor. She asks you what you do. You have an opportunity to give it your best shot before getting to ground floor where you both get off. If you have a polished elevator speech, then by the time you a the lobby she will know everything of importance about you and your skills and why she and her organization should consider bringing you on board.

The elevator speech is a concise explanation of who you are and what you do that he can be given quickly enough that you have made all key points in the time it would take an elevator to travel from top floor to the bottom floor of your average Washington area high-rise.

You can also use your elevator speech as the basis for your next job interview, where you'll have no more than 30 seconds to tell your story, but still need to be organized, focused, compelling, impressive and memorable.

Craig Harrison, a California corporate trainer specializing in communications skills and author of *Rise of the Elevator Speech to the Top*, says your elevator speech can be just a few sentences long and change slightly every time you give it. "Script it, rehearse it and hone it over months of delivery attempts," he advises. "The goal is to stand out from the crowd, so be memorable."

The Three P's
So how do you make yourself stand out from the competition? Carol Martin, monster.com's Interview Coach, says your elevator speech should cover the "3 P's" of personal marketing: the skills you learned through experience, networking, and education. the.skills.com/help/ask.htm or www.job.hondanetwork.com

For example, if you are looking for a job in marketing, your elevator speech should touch on your experience: marketing knowledge, communications skills, vendor management, press and industry relations, web channel marketing, product development and computer skills.

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