

Preparing Your Elevator Pitch

As is often the case, most opportunities to meet with influential people happen spontaneously and unpredictably: the rising screenwriter who collides with a Hollywood producer while waiting in line for a taxi, or the hopeful new employee who finds himself in the elevator with the company CEO. The adage luck happens when opportunity meets with preparedness is very true. Today, an elevator speech can be any kind of short speech that sells an idea, promotes your business or markets you as an individual.

An elevator speech is as essential as a business card. You need to be able to say who you are, what you do, what you are interested in doing and how you can be a resource to your listeners. If you do not have an elevator speech, people will not know what you really do.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Before writing any part of your elevator speech, research your audience. You will be much more likely to succeed if your elevator speech is clearly targeted at the individuals you are speaking to. Having a generic elevator pitch is almost certain to fail.

KNOW YOURSELF

Before you can convince anyone of your proposition you need to know exactly what it is. You need to define precisely what you are offering, what problems you can solve and what benefits you bring to a prospective contact or employers

Answer the following questions:

1. What are your key strengths?
2. What adjectives come to mind to describe you?
3. What is it you are trying to 'sell' or let others know about you?
4. Why are you interested in the company or industry the person represents?

OUTLINE YOUR TALK

Start an outline of your material using bullet points. You do not need to add any detail at this stage; simply write a few notes to help remind you of what you really want to say. They don't need to be complete sentences.

You can use the following questions to start your outline:

1. Who am I?
2. What do I offer?
3. What problem is solved?
4. What are the main contributions I can make?
5. What should the listener do as a result of hearing this?

FINALIZE YOUR SPEECH

Now that you have your outline of your material, you can finalize the speech. The key to doing this is to expand on the notes you made by writing out each section in full.

To help you do this, follow these guidelines:

1. Take each note you made and write a sentence about it.
2. Take each of the sentences and connect them together with additional phrases to make them flow.
3. Go through what you have written and change any long words or jargon into everyday language.
4. Go back through the re-written material and cut out unnecessary words.
5. Finalize your speech by making sure it is no more than 90 words long.

The Elevator Pitch

Complete the questions below to create a first draft of your Elevator Speech.

1. What is your career goal? (State this in the form of doing something for someone)

2. What skills, strengths, or experiences do you have that would help you realize that goal?

3. What accomplishments prove that you have those skills, strengths, or experiences? (Draw from all experiences – projects, internships, activities involved in on campus, etc.)

4. What are you searching for in a job?

5. How can you immediately benefit the company?

WRITE OUT YOUR PITCH

My name is _____ . I am a student at The University of Texas Rio

Grande Valley, pursuing a degree in _____ . My experience _____

_____ . I am _____

_____ , which I demonstrated when I _____

_____ . I am looking for a position

where I _____

_____ . I feel I could immediately benefit your company by _____

_____ .

Note: This ending works best for a job interview or when you meet someone at a career fair or company information session and you are talking to them about a specific job role.

Since you are currently doing the kind of work I would like to do, I would love to talk with you further about any advice or suggestions you may have for me.

Date: _____

Student Name: _____

Elevator Pitch Review Rubric

Directions: For each skill, start at *Incomplete* and work your way to the left. Once you find a statement that is accurate, mark that level with an “X”.

Skill	Professional	Proficient	Developing	Incomplete	Note
HOOK Who you are? What makes you stand out? <input type="checkbox"/> Name of student <input type="checkbox"/> Name of school <input type="checkbox"/> Class or grad. date <input type="checkbox"/> Reason for being at event	<i>Outstanding</i> relevance and creativity. This participant is memorable. Includes all information.	Demonstrated relevance (and possibly creativity). Includes all information.	Minimal relevance; or gimmicky. 1-2 pieces of info. missing.	Minimal relevance; or gimmicky. 3+ pieces of info. missing.	
DESCRIBED EXPERIENCE Consider age/academic experience	Chooses compelling experiences/ knowledge to illustrate relevant skills and <i>describes them well</i> .	Describes 1-2 experiences/ knowledge to illustrate relevant skills.	Lists facts/experiences with little description. Could improve on how they are relevant.	Experiences described are not relevant or not offered at all.	
GOALS / ASPIRATIONS What they hope to accomplish via this networking event. Shows confidence.	Describes aspirations in a clear and concise manner; they seem realistic and are <i>targeted</i> to a specific position.	Describes aspirations in a clear manner; they seem realistic but are <i>downplayed</i> , <i>apologetic</i> , or <i>unnecessarily wordy</i> .	Description of aspirations is <i>moderately</i> clear (or if they leave a fill-in-the-blank); goals could be unrealistic.	Aspirations are not described at all, or if they are they are unclear and/or obviously unrealistic.	
ASSESS FIT WITH COMPANY	Demonstrates knowledge of <i>company</i> by: (A) Proposing meaningful question(s) to the employer or (B) discussing company-specific topics or information.	Demonstrates knowledge of <i>field/industry</i> by: (A) <i>asking</i> specific question(s) to the employer or (B) discussing field specific topics or information.	(A) Asks a <i>general</i> (non-specific) question(s) to the employer in order to assess fit with the company, but (B) does not demonstrate knowledge of field and/or company.	(A) Doesn't ask any question(s) to the employer in order to assess fit with the company and (B) does not demonstrate knowledge of field and/or company.	
CLOSING	Has a <i>clear</i> strategy for ending the conversation. Follow-up steps indicate <i>action</i> on the job-seeker's part; <i>exchange of information</i> has occurred.	Has a strategy for ending the conversation. Job seeker <i>gives or receives</i> documents (e.g. resume) but follow-up is <i>passive</i> (e.g. will wait to hear).	Ending the conversation and follow-up steps could be enhanced. Follow-up is <i>vague</i> (e.g. "I'll follow up").	No mention of ending the conversation or follow-up steps (includes "Thanks, bye").	
LENGTH The length of sentence & the length of the whole pitch. Do NOT include the closing.	Pitch length is appropriate. (Typically 7-10 sentences, or under 90 seconds).	Pitch length could be improved. Is either too short (5-6 sentences/under 50 s), or too long (11-13 sentences).	Pitch length is too long (14+ sentences).	Pitch length is too short (less than 5 sentences).	
GRAMMAR Count errors; ignore spelling/punctuation	No errors in grammar and/or verb tense.	1-2 errors in grammar and/or verb tense.	3-4 errors in grammar and/or verb tense.	5 or more errors in grammar and/or verb tense	

Positive, enthusiastic language is used throughout pitch. **Please write any comments on back of sheet.**