

The Elevator Pitch

Imagine stepping into an elevator in a downtown office building. As the doors close, the person standing next to you says, "Hi, I'm a recruiter at your dream company. Tell me about yourself." Are you prepared for an opportunity like this? Could you concisely introduce yourself, your background and your career aspirations in the time of a quick elevator ride—60 seconds or less? "Elevator pitch" is the term for the introduction of who you are and what you're looking for. It can be used in a variety of situations such as networking events, career fairs, and formal interviews.

Here is a simple 3-step process for developing a strong and effective elevator pitch.

Know yourself.

The first step to introducing yourself effectively is knowing who you are and what makes you unique. Ask yourself the following questions and jot down your answers: Which of your previous jobs, internships and volunteering provided you with experience relevant to this opportunity? What about your major or extracurricular activities?

Craft your pitch.

Think of your pitch in three parts:

1. **Who are you?** Remember that your primary goal is simply to introduce yourself. Share your name and place yourself in context by explaining what school you attend, what you're studying or where you currently work.
2. **What are your major accomplishments/passions/unique skills?** Leverage the skills you listed earlier and frame them in a way that is meaningful to a potential employer or networking contact. What can you say that will make a recruiter remember you or a networking contact want to know more about you?
3. **What do you want/Where are you going?** Laura Allen, founder of 15SecondPitch.com, calls this the "call to action." This is the part of your pitch that lets the other person know what you're looking for and the topic you're interested in talking about. Don't be pushy or aggressive, but do be forthright about the fact that you're looking for a job.

Tailor your delivery to the circumstances of the moment: the goal is to maintain a conversational tone and not sound rehearsed. Think of the above elements as "sound bites" that you can mix, match and cater to each unique interaction.

An example:

"Hi, my name is Marcos Sanchez. I'm an English major at NYU and I'm pursuing publishing internships. I'm really active with several organizations on campus, helping them design their websites. I'm also a big advocate of social media and have helped some nonprofit organizations create their Facebook fan pages. I saw that your magazine is doing a lot of great things in the social media space..."

Practice, practice, practice.

Practice your pitch enough to be comfortable and confident. Video or audio tape yourself to see if you have any speech tics (like "um" or "you know") or if you have a nervous habit like putting your hands in your pockets or brushing your hair aside. Your goal should be a natural delivery that feels confident but not canned. Try it with friends, family, and Career Development staff. Remember that every time you test your introduction and get feedback, you're also getting more and more comfortable talking about yourself. Good luck!

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1. Who are you and where are you now?

2. Where have you been?

3. What do you want/Where are you going?

4. Final thoughts or Information?

This sheet was adapted from PWC's Brand Week