

What is an elevator pitch?

The pitch isn't your autobiography or a detailed business plan, it's **an overview of who you are, what you do and how you can help the listener**. It's you selling yourself in a brief and concise manner, using a format that most people are familiar with. Whilst the elevator pitch is similar to your personal brand statement and bio, it's delivered verbally and thus should have a slightly different wording to be punchy and memorable.

Who needs one?

People who sell themselves on a daily basis like trainers, speakers and consultants will have very polished pitches as it is integral to their personal marketing.

I would say that anyone that ever meets new business contacts needs an elevator pitch. This could be you going to an **industry conference, a networking event, a seminar or just taking the elevator at your hotel – there are always opportunities to strike up business relationships**. The elevator pitch prepares you for these opportunities and equips you with a powerful tool to get the most out of a chance meeting.

How do you put yours together?

Just like a personal brand statement, **you first have to know the purpose of the pitch.– you have to be clear of your value and audience**. In case you have a number of objectives you might want to consider **different pitches for different situations**.

To put a good pitch together you can ask yourself a few questions and the answers to these will be a good start. These questions are:

- **What value do you provide the listener?**
- **How do you provide this value?**
- **What is unique about your offer?**
- **What is your target market?**

Four step process for crafting an elevator pitch

Step 1 – Begin with an ACTION PHRASE that is NOT a noun. ("I am a X" — but don't use a "label" in the blank. You don't want people to put you in a box.)

Step 2 – Add a one sentence statement about what you DO. ("I do Y" — What do you help people or businesses do?)

Step 3 – Give a statement of the SPECIFIC IMPACT. ("People who utilize my process find Z" — list one or two things from the perspective of your potential employer.)

Step 4 – End with a CALL TO ACTION. ("I am looking to be introduced to A" — be specific! If you ask for something non-specific you are likely to get it. What good is that?)

Example:-

I am a personal virtual assistant to busy and successful professionals and businesspeople. *(a bit of mystery is good)*

Our services is pretty unique...we give you more time to do what you do best, earn more income, free up your time, and take the grunt work off your desk. *(the hook...how can they say no to that!)*

We book appointments for you, respond to potential client inquiries, handle marketing programs, Facebook, email blasts, database management and scheduling. In short, all the workup stuff you need to do, but would rather have someone else do, so you can focus on what you do best. *(this is what we do)*

This works, and it can likely work for you, and possibly some of your busy associates. Our clients love it. *(credibility)*

How about if I drop by your office next Tuesday at 10 AM? Once I get to know you a little better, I can tailor a package just for your needs. Let's talk more. *(call to action...the next step)*

Length

The perfect pitch should be no longer than 60 seconds, which is about 200 words. So imagine you are getting into the elevator at street level, deliver your pitch before you get off at the eighth floor.

Did you hook them?

Just like any good speech, your elevator should be opened with a hook to capture the listener's attention. This could be a question or a statement that really entices them to stay with you for the full 60 seconds. The hook is critical when you are at a networking function and the person you have just met is already looking over your shoulder for the next person, seize their full attention with a powerful hook.

How clear are you?

You have to use simple language in your pitch. This isn't a case of dumbing it down, rather ensuring that anyone can understand it whether they are in your industry or not. If you use too much jargon you tend to alienate most laymen and their minds start to wonder as a result.

Is it memorable?

Make an effort to stay memorable. You can use visual language, be witty or just very different – the point is that a pitch will only be memorable if it stands out. Imagine a speed networking event, you'll hear 30 pitches in an hour and how would you ever remember them unless they had something special about them?

Did you end with a call to action?

At the end of the pitch, you'll want the listener to think "how can we do business?" One way of doing this is to encourage them to contact you, give you their business card or to book a meeting right away.

Time to practice

Now that you have put your pitch together, it's time to rehearse. Do it to your friends, in front of a mirror, on your webcam – work as many failure platforms as possible so that you can deliver the perfect pitch when you really need it.

Conclusion

A well - crafted elevator pitch will come in handy in many situations; selling your services to a customer, interviewing with an employer or asking an investor to part with half a million – none of which you are likely to be successful in unless you have the perfect pitch.