

Elevator Speech

Job-seekers, employers, recruiters

Your elevator pitch is one of your most valuable tools in advancing the success of your networking efforts. The elevator pitch is a brief speech (under 30 seconds) that communicates your skills, abilities and current search concisely to others, and is also a manageable sound bite for someone to remember and communicate to others as necessary.

The history of the term 'Elevator Pitch'

Start-up entrepreneurs are advised to have brief pitches prepared for venture capitalists, for if you get the lucky break of being in the same elevator with a top VC, you've likely got him pinned for about 30 seconds between floors. You need to be able to rapidly sell your company and why it's a phenomenal investment with a spiel that gets the VC hooked enough that he wants to learn more, before those elevator doors open and he's free to get away from you. The same thing applies to career networking. Your job is to quickly communicate your background and mission in a way that people both remember and make them interested in learning more.

Elevator pitch creation guidelines

The elevator pitch should be under 30 seconds in length, the more concise, the better. The precise content of the pitch is up to you, and should communicate: your skills, your experience, and what you are seeking.

Practice the pitch on friends until you're comfortable with it, and able to concisely repeat it to anyone, anytime, anywhere. Use the pitch to make all of your contacts aware of your skills and mission. Then the next time you're riding in an elevator (so to speak) with someone who can possibly help to advance your search, you will be able to quickly communicate your pitch to them in a concise and memorable format that will stick with them, create enough interest to exchange contact information, and provide the launch pad for a later discussion and follow-up.

Sample elevator pitches

Melissa Giovagnoli (Co-Director of Facilitation for turn-about and independent consultant and author): "I help companies to dramatically grow their capabilities and business opportunities through a powerful process I created called Networkling. I'm looking for companies that I can assist to leverage their human capital through some change or performance improvement or alliance initiative."

J.P. Morgan (Power-of-10 facilitator): "I am the former COO of a Chicago-based interactive marketing consulting and advertising agency. I have experience in most areas of running a business, including strategic planning, marketing, sales and business development, and partnerships and alliances. I am looking for clients for consulting projects who are interested in leveraging the capacity and measurability of the internet to both generate a return on marketing investments and to extend their brand."

Sample job-seeker: "I am a skilled sales professional with 3 years of experience in technology sales. At my last position, I increased sales in my division by over 20% in one quarter. I am currently looking for a position where I can leverage my experience and skills to help a bricks & mortar employer to advance their success in the new economy."