

ELEVATOR PITCH



volunteer

If you were in an elevator actually talking with a potential volunteer, your normally quick elevator ride would seem even shorter as you tried to convey what your organization is about and why they should join it. However, if you have prepared and practiced a concise, persuasive statement conveying that information in approximately 30 seconds, then that short ride would be more than enough time to articulate your organization's value.

You will use your elevator pitch for informational meetings, networking events, or formal recruitment opportunities. No matter where you are, you will want to be able to succinctly state who you and your organization are, what you are looking for, and how the person you're speaking with could help you. If done well, 30-45 seconds is plenty of time to convey your need without losing your audience's attention. Always try to be brief. This will leave more time for a conversation with your new contact around ways that you can help one another out.

YOUR PITCH

1. Who are you and your organization?
2. What you're looking for and why
3. A specific outcome

1. WHO ARE YOU?

"Hi, my name is Edgar."

While it may seem obvious, be sure to state your name! State it clearly, slowly, and with confidence. Practice this beforehand several times. This is how the person you're talking with will remember it. If you have business cards, handing one to the person will provide a visual reminder of your name, as well as a means to contact you in the future.

After stating your name, provide a brief explanation of your organization's role or key mission in the community. The trick here is to be as specific as you can without boring the listener with unnecessary details.

2. WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR AND WHY

Be specific! The bulk of your elevator pitch should explain exactly what you are looking for and why. Have at least a general idea of what you're looking for, whether it is a specific position you're seeking to fill, generally boosting membership, or a contact with another organization or group.

Clearly explaining what you are looking for can be tricky if you have not prepared. Spend the most time practicing this part of your pitch to make sure it is direct, concise, and polished.

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3. A SPECIFIC OUTCOME

If you know what you want to get out of the conversation, you can find a way to subtly work it in to the end of your elevator pitch and allow the person to offer it. Of course, be aware that a specific request can put the person you're speaking with on the spot, and if they can't help you with your exact request, the conversation may end there. Open-ended requests will likely lead to a fruitful conversation.

Open the door for conversation without demanding anything. Often, you will get a response such as, "Oh, I know exactly the person you should talk with. Let me get you their contact information." This way, you get what you're looking for while allowing the people you're speaking with to determine how they can help you.

DEVELOP & PRACTICE YOUR PITCH

1. WRITE IT OUT

You should write your pitch out first and then practice saying it until it feels natural. You can also begin by speaking what you think you want to say and writing it down as you go; once your words are down on paper, you can polish them. Either way, be sure to work on both the spoken and written versions of your pitch.

The written version is to make sure that you're saying exactly what you want to say as you want it to be heard and can also be useful for email introductions and written requests for informational interviews. The spoken version is what your audience will hear and it is essential that you are able to say a close approximation of the essential details you have on paper (without sounding like you are reciting a list from memory).

2. PRACTICE IT OUT LOUD

Once you've practiced it in front of the mirror and you feel like the wording sounds natural and concise, find some friends or family members who will give you honest feedback on all aspects of the pitch.

Ask everyone who listens to provide you with at least one aspect to improve, as well as one aspect that works well. Have your practice audience pay attention to your content, clarity, tone, and pace, as well as to your body language and poise.



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