



## Elevator Speech

**What is an elevator speech?** Originally, 'elevator speech' referred to entrepreneurs attempting to score a contract with big companies in a difficult market. It was during the 30 seconds they found themselves in an elevator with a prospective client, a captive audience, that could make or break their sales pitch.

In other words, an elevator speech is a 30 second sales pitch, or sound bite, that lets the audience know who you are and what makes you stand out from everyone else.

**So when/why would you use an elevator speech?** As a student and a job seeker, you can develop a personal elevator speech to use when making a new contact, when introducing yourself at career fairs, in answer to the 'tell me about yourself' question of a job interview, or to introduce yourself to professionals in your career field.

**How do you put together your own elevator speech?** There are a few basic elements to consider when putting together your elevator speech. Most importantly, always know who your audience is, and why you are 'pitching' yourself to them.

- How do your interests and experiences relate to the career field? Try to remember valid information from classes, as well as your own research on the industry.
- What are five strengths you can use to sell yourself?
- Keep in mind how you have demonstrated key skill sets appropriate for your career field.
- What would be the benefits for the company if they were to hire you? What is in it for them? Think of what you plan to bring to your new employer. Try to draw from experiences such as internships and relevant course projects.
- What should they do about this information? Why are you speaking with this person? You might want to finish by explaining what you want from the audience. For example, would you like to schedule an interview, an informational meeting, or maybe exchange business cards to follow-up with the audience?

**Can you make your elevator speech stand out from all of the others?** You want your elevator speech to attract your audience by capturing their imagination. Ask yourself, "Does my speech allow the audience to see me in this industry?" (Try not to bore your audience with the same

information they have heard from the last 30 students they have spoken to.) You want to stand out from the crowd!

**Elevator Speech Example:**

"Hi, I'm Victor, and I'm a student at Northeastern Illinois University. I'm studying science and would like to work in education after I graduate."

This does not capture the audience's attention, nor does it give any relevant information about the skills and expertise of the student. Instead, Victor's elevator speech should sound more like this:

"Hi, I'm Victor, and I am a senior Environmental Sciences major. Over the past few years, I have been strengthening my research and analysis skills through my work with a local watershed council on conservation strategies to support water quality and habitats. I would like to use these skills in the future. Eventually, I would like to develop educational programs on water conservation awareness. I read that your organization is involved in water quality projects. Can you tell me how someone with my experience may fit into your organization?"