

Sell Yourself: The Elevator Speech

If you're on the job market, you should have an elevator speech—a very brief summary of your key skills and abilities that you can use to successfully “pitch” yourself in 30 seconds or less. The elevator speech is commonly used at networking events such as professional associations, conferences, and career fairs where you will introduce yourself to potential employers. Think of the elevator speech as a Tweet. Keep it short and focused.

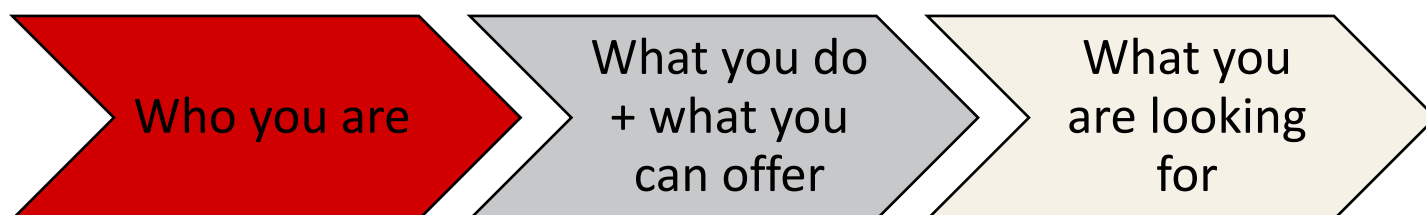
When crafting the message, consider 1 or 2 points you want to convey about yourself. What are your key strengths? What is it you want others to know about you? Why are you interested in a particular company or job?

Write it down. Outline your key points. Answer these questions: What can you do? What can you offer X company? What problems can you solve? What contributions can you make? Tell a story that is vivid and memorable. Give concrete examples that illustrate how you work. Write several versions until you get a tight pitch.

Keep in mind who your target audience is when delivering an elevator speech. At a career fair, employers will want to know about your education background verses a networking scenario, where an individual may be more interested in your current positions and what skill you are known for.

Finalize your pitch. Start with your introduction “Hello, my name is Sarah. I’m an MBA graduate student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.” Next, describe what you do and what you can do for the company. “My area of specialization is business analytics. I have experience in health informatics and healthcare finance. I can provide sophisticated technical skills to help your company plan, analyze, and report management outcomes.” Close by asking a question about the company/organization. Or hand them your business card. The key is to give your listener something to remember.

Avoid using too much jargon or exaggerating. You want to highlight one or two key skills or experiences rather than summarize your entire resume. And don't give out too much personal information, such as your marital status or how many children you have.



Updated Summer 2020