

The list

Guidelines for making an elevator speech.

Going up?

You may only have one chance to share your message with a key decision maker, so make sure you have a three-minute 'elevator speech' prepared, says Terri Sjodin

2 mins

1 Define your intention. What do you want to happen as a result of your three-minute elevator speech? The goal of a well-crafted elevator speech is to advance you to the next point in your networking effort, interview or sales process. It's beneficial to keep your intention in mind at all times, and prepared talking points crafted in advance not solely for when you have a presentation on the horizon, but for general use as well.

2 Examine your scenario. You may find yourself in a quick meeting with a CEO, a dream job interview, a competitive sales pitch or a networking event. Is this talk for a planned or a spontaneous situation? Preparing accordingly can help you earn the right to be heard.

3 Draft your core outline. Think about your message, your goals, your creative ideas and your persuasive arguments. Structure must be paired with progression. Your listeners want to know that you're heading somewhere as you build up to your conclusion and close.

4 Get creative. Do your homework on your audience or prospects, crafting an approach that speaks directly to their needs. Ramp up your creative nature and customise your talk to dazzle your prospects and give them a reason for them to want to meet with you again.



5 Speak in your own voice. Try a conversational approach that allows you to be comfortable and true to yourself and your personality. Communicate your experience, vision and excitement directly – in a way that only you can.

6 Build your case. Explain to listeners why they need you, your product or service; why they need to

join your effort; and why now. Provide valid reasons and proof.

7 Don't forget to close. Present your prospect with a clear directive and a respectful call to action. Ask for that next appointment, follow-up call or meeting. Make it easy and painless for the listener to take the next step with you.

8 Write it out. Write out the long version and recite it. Then transfer your core outline and key points and phrases to an index card.

9 Practise, practise, practise. Review your elevator speech again and again until it feels like a natural part of your everyday communication.

10 Use it. Any elevator speech is only effective if you use it! When you strike up a conversation with someone, that person doesn't have to be a designated target. Simply keep your message out there, sharing it with people who know other people. Believe in it, share it, and practise communicating with clear concise talking points that help you move forward your intention and eventually it will become a natural part of your networking communication.

details Terri Sjodin is the author of *Small Message, Big Impact* (Portfolio Penguin, £7.99). Visit sjodincommunications.com