

7 WAYS TO CREATE AN EXCEPTIONAL ELEVATOR PITCH

by Bernadette Baynie



What is an elevator pitch?

A great elevator pitch is an essential personal marketing and networking tool for any professional. It's a brief but powerful response that you give to someone who asks about you.

It can inspire and promote interest in you and help you to engage your clients and valuable stakeholders in conversation.

You should always have one prepared and on standby for the occasions when you meet someone new, eg: at a conference or event, when they ask what you do. You can also use it as a part of your bio or your email introductions.

Here are the top seven ways to create an exceptional elevator pitch:

1. FIRST IMPRESSIONS COUNT!

It's all about making the other person feel genuinely interested in you – so design a pitch that creates a great impression on others and sparks true interest in you. Remember that you only get to make a first impression once and this usually occurs within seconds of meeting someone new. So, take care during your pitch to convey the right messages to the other person.

UCLA's communication professor, Albert Mehrabian, studied face to face communication and found that:

1. your words only account for 7% of your message,
2. your tone of voice accounts for 38% of your message, and
3. your body language accounted for 55 % of the message.

So, how you convey your elevator pitch to someone, is even more important than the words that you use. An effective and impacting elevator pitch is conveyed using the right body language and tone of voice. Use great body language to inspire confidence and to connect emotionally with the other person. Achieve this by using a warm and friendly

smile, good eye contact, a firm handshake, a strong and grounded stance with a friendly tone of voice.

2. UNDERLYING MESSAGES COUNT

During first meetings, potential new clients or business associates will usually ask you politely: "What do you do?". But be on guard, as their underlying question could well mean: "What can you do for me?" or "Will this impact me positively or negatively?". Steve Woodruff, summed it up very well in his book *Clarity Wins: Get Heard. Get Referred* when he said:

"The buyer is always tuned in to one radio station: WIIFM (What's In It For Me). The rest is filtered out as noise."

So always design a pitch that focuses on the other person and makes them feel important and considered.

3. CREATE A PITCH THAT COVERS THE FIELD

The best elevator pitch turns your credentials and accomplishments into potential benefits for the other person. So, choose words in your pitch that express:

1. what you do;
2. your key value proposition ie: how your products/services differentiate you from your competitors – eg: are they better, faster, cheaper and/or easier to use; and
3. how they could benefit the other person.

If you are a professional - focus on your delivery of exceptional services and solutions that provide a great client experience.

Emphasise their unique features and what sets them apart from the rest and/or creates value in their lives.

4. MAKE IT PERSONAL

Explain with a genuine and passionate tone of voice what you really like most about your products and/or services and why they would want to specifically seek you out to buy them?

5. DELIVERY TIME

An elevator pitch should generally take 15-25 seconds to deliver, representing the time that it would take to ride an elevator.

But given that you may meet people in different forums, it is best to have all bases covered and design a few that cover the following situations:

- 1. Super Short One** – 15-25 seconds - suitable for informal get-togethers such as dinner parties or impromptu meetings – such as when you bump into someone in an office lobby or on public transport etc.
- 2. Shorter One** – 40-60 seconds - suitable for formal conference, exhibition and networking events etc.
- 3. Longer One** – 2-3 minutes - suitable for marketing and presentation opportunities at interviews and client meetings when you're asked to respond to questions like: "Tell me about yourself" or "What is your background and current role", etc..

6. CONNECT EMOTIONALLY

Speak with a confident and caring tone of voice and align your words with the right body language. This will help you to emotionally connect with the other person. It will help to inspire them to ask you for your business card and potentially for a follow-up meeting. Practice makes perfect, so to yield you the highest results, rehearse your elevator pitch in front of a mirror and then on a trusted friend or family member, who knows you well and can provide you with honest feedback.

7. POSE A QUESTION AT THE END OF YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH

Promote an ongoing conversation between you and your client, after you have delivered

your elevator pitch, by following it on with a question like : "So what about you, what do you do?". You may also want to add a closing line to the conversation in a warm and friendly tone, such as: "It was a pleasure to meet you and I genuinely welcome the chance to catch up with you again, if and when convenient."

CONCLUSION

Developing an original and standout elevator pitch may take a little patience and practice, but the rewards can be immense. Remember to deliver your pitch with great warmth and conviction because how you connect and make the other person feel in the moment - is the essential key to a positive and lasting first impression!

As Will Rodgers once said: "You never get a second chance to make a first impression!"

Written by Bernadette Baynie
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