

Crafting an Elevator Pitch | Introducing Your Work Quickly and Compellingly

About the Technique

An elevator pitch is a brief, persuasive speech that you use to spark interest in what your organization does. You can also use them to create interest in a project, idea, or product – or in yourself. A good elevator pitch should last no longer than a short elevator ride of 20 to 30 seconds, hence the name.

They should be interesting, memorable, and succinct. They also need to explain what makes you – or your organization, product, or idea – unique.

When to Use an Elevator Pitch

Some people think that this kind of thing is only useful for salespeople who need to pitch their products and services. But you can also use them in other situations.

For example, you can use one to introduce your organization to potential clients or supporters. You could use them in your organization to sell a new idea to your Board, or to tell people about the change you're working to create. You can even craft one to tell people what you do for a living.

Creating an Elevator Pitch

It can take some time to get your pitch right. You'll likely go through several versions before finding one that is compelling, and that sounds natural in conversation.

Follow these steps to create a great pitch, but bear in mind that you'll need to vary your approach depending on what your pitch is about. And practice! Practice! Practice!

1. Identify Your Goal

- Start by thinking about what you want your pitch to accomplish.
- For instance, do you want to tell potential participants about your organization?
- Do you have a great new project that you want to pitch to your Board?
- Or do you want a simple and engaging speech to explain what your organization does to strengthen your community?

2. Explain What You Do

- Focus on the problems that you solve and how you help people.
- This is not a list of what you do.
- If you can, add information or a statistic that shows the value in what you do.
- Ask yourself, "What do you want your audience to remember most about your organization?"

Instead of saying *"Grassroots Organizations provides services for youth and elders like the local produce markets, youth entrepreneurship programs and healthy eating classes."*

You could say *"Grassroots Organization connects youth and elders to create jobs and feed the community. Our programs netted 4 new markets for local produce, launched a youth business, and reduced obesity by 10%."*

3. Communicate Your Unique Selling Point (USP)

- Identify what makes you, your organization, or your idea, unique.
- What is needed to satisfy the end user? They need to benefit, enjoy and come back.
- Often core values in a community group help mold a USP and will people associate based on the way they feel to be a part of the project, programs or community work.

4. Engage With a Question

- After you communicate your USP, you need to engage your audience.
- Prepare open-ended questions (questions that can't be answered with a "yes" or "no" answer) to involve them in the conversation.
- Make sure that you're able to answer any questions that your audience might have by getting your priority talking points ready.

Examples:

You might ask a partner, *"What kind of impact can we help you create?"*

You might ask a grantor, *"What are the next steps for successful funding?"*

5. Put It All Together | When you've completed each section of your pitch, put it all together.

- Read your pitch aloud and use a stopwatch to time how long it takes.
- Your pitch should be no longer than 20-30 seconds.
- Try to cut out anything doesn't absolutely need to be there.
- Remember! Your pitch needs to be snappy and compelling, so the shorter it is, the better!

6. PRACTICE!

- Like anything else, practice makes perfect.
- Remember, how you say it is just as important as what you say.
- If you don't practice, you might talk too fast or forget important elements.
- The more you practice, the more natural your pitch will become.
- Be aware of how you look (body language) by practicing in front of a mirror and/or with different stakeholders.
- As you get used to delivering your pitch, you can vary it a little – the idea is that it shouldn't sound too pre-prepared, even though it is!

TIPS

- It's a good idea to keep small take-away items with you, to give people after you've delivered your pitch; items like business cards or brochures that talk about your community group's work.
- Remember to tailor your pitch for different audiences, if appropriate.