

The 30-Second (Elevator) Pitch



WHAT IS IT?

An elevator pitch, sometimes called a “15 or 30 second pitch or commercial”, enables the listener to become aware—relatively quickly—of specific, unique, and impressive attributes you can bring to a position. It is essentially a brief monologue describing the benefits of buying a particular product or service—YOU! The name comes from the idea that if introducing yourself to someone in an elevator, you only have a few seconds to do so before the elevator stops and either you or the other person gets off. Your introduction must therefore be brief, concise and get right to the point.

WHEN DO YOU USE IT?

- In an email to a perspective mentor
- Social /networking events
- At an interview with perspective mentor (“Tell me about yourself.”)
- Professional associations/ organizations meetings (when asked to introduce yourself)



WHAT CAN I INCLUDE?

- Who am I? (Your name)
- Where I work (Institute/Center).
- Current position within your organization.
- Why am I talking to you (seeking a mentor)?
- What are my mentoring goals and objectives?
- What am I currently doing to meet those goals?
- What I want out of the mentoring experience?
- What is my vision for the mentoring relationship (timeframe, basic logistical preferences)?

HOW DO I PUT ALL THAT TOGETHER TO MAKE IT EFFECTIVE?

- Use the word “I” as little as possible.
- Use crisp, concise, and memorable language---not over- detailed and rambling statements.
- When emphasizing your strengths, link them to the perceived needs of the employer.
- Be descriptive of your acquired skills and abilities.

DO's & DON'Ts

DO:

- ...Make it sound natural, effortless and conversational...Make it sincere.
- ...Let them see your true personality.
- ...If applicable, request a meeting to determine if you would be a good fit for one another.
- ...Express your appreciation for speaking with you.

DON'T:

- ...Leave them hanging. If you express a desire to meet or begin a relationship, follow through.
- ...Let it sound canned or memorized.
- ...Ramble.
- ...Try to sound too self-important.
- ...Get bogged down with too many details. Set up additional meeting to further discuss the potential relationship.



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PUTTING IT TOGETHER

❑ Think of your pitch in three parts:

1. WHO ARE YOU?

Share your name and place yourself in context by explaining what school you attend, what field you are studying, or where you work.

2. WHAT ARE YOUR MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS OR SKILLS?

Frame your message (skills and accomplishments) in a way that is meaningful to the employer or contact. Are your talking points relevant?

3. WHAT DO YOU WANT? WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

This is where you let the other person know what you're looking for or the topic you are interested in talking about. Be forthright but not overly aggressive.

❑ Now, write a draft of your message. Create several versions for various situations (social event, career fair, networking reception, job interview and others).



EXAMPLE #1

"Hi, I'm Cathy Cox. A junior marketing major at the SMU Cox School of Business, I am seeking a summer internship in new media marketing. Last spring I created a Facebook fan page and a blog site for XYZ Community, a local non-profit organization, where I volunteer in the office eight hours each week. As part of the honors marketing practicum course, I developed a website for our client, the undergraduate career center. Last month I read in D Magazine that your company has implemented a lot of cutting-edge social media strategies. After reading more about that on your website, I knew I wanted to apply for your internship program."

❑ The effectiveness of your pitch does not just depend on your words. Consider your body language (posture, eye contact, volume, tone, facial expression, clothing, handshake) and how it may impact your message.

❑ Practice! Once you have created your pitch, practice it enough to be confident in your delivery.

❑ Remember to keep your "pitch" relevant to the situation. Mix and match your content depending on the circumstances.

EXAMPLE #2

"Hi, I'm Joseph Cox. I'll receive my BBA in finance from the SMU Cox School of Business in May. For the past two summers, I interned at Bank of America Merrill Lynch where I worked on energy team projects. On campus, I am actively involved as an officer in the Cox Energy Club. In March I coordinated a field trip for our members to tour a working oil rig near Fort Worth. Using contacts I made on my internship, I worked closely with our advisor to plan a field trip to Houston to visit three oil companies and two banks specializing in energy investments. Both were very successful and had more than 75% member participation. I am seeking an analyst position with the energy division of an investment bank in Houston."