

Going Up? Bring Your Perfect Elevator Pitch

Imagine that you just got on an elevator with the president of your dream company. She hits the button for the top floor of the tall building you're in. You could have her undivided attention for the next 30 seconds... But instead of impressing her with your wit and unwavering determination, you blurt out something about your university, complain about the humidity, and make reference of your vague desire to work for her company.

Opportunity officially blown.

Don't let this happen. If you haven't already, now's the time to formulate and hone an elevator pitch. A good pitch should be a clear, succinct, and convincing testament of how your experience, accomplishments, and skills make you an invaluable asset. It should also be creative, reflective of your personality (you don't want to sound like you're reading cue cards or just listing qualities), and short enough that you could get your points across if you only have a few floors to deliver it on an elevator.

To start, actually write out your pitch—who are you, what have you done, what has that show you you're good at, and why does that make you the best person for the job? Think back to why you chose your field. This is often a good starting point. Next, note what you've done. Did your internship show you that you excel at a particular task? Did involvement in a student group highlight an ability? Giving a tiny bit of context will give more depth to your statements and make your pitch more of a short story. (And who better to tell YOUR story than you?) Lastly, tell how these experiences culminated in your vision of where your career will take you. You can speak of future aspirations, as well as where you might start out.

The last part is practice. Practice in front of a mirror or friend. The elevator pitch will serve as an essential personal branding tool at networking events and cocktail parties, so you will need to rehearse it and feel comfortable talking about yourself. For some people, this is a little outside their comfort zone. The truth of the matter is that we all have strengths and things we enjoy. If you think of these as factual statements, it will feel less like you are bragging. And the old saying is definitely true here: Practice makes perfect!

Bonus tip: Use your elevator pitch as your “summary” section on LinkedIn! This is great way to tell your story while pitching the things you're great at. Not a bad introduction for someone perusing your profile!

