

Giving Your Elevator Pitch

When told correctly, a good elevator pitch will make others want to know more about you. Think of the elevator pitch less as a sales pitch and more as a “high-quality introduction”.

- Basic structure of an elevator pitch:
 - Summary label (“I’m a graduate student in computer science”)
 - Professional background (including educational and relevant work history)
 - Current position or recent projects (major roles or accomplishments)
 - Where you are going in your career (what you hope to do in the future; big picture)
- Your pitch should be:
 - Short. 15-20 seconds should suffice.
 - Confident, but not arrogant. Be relatable, but do not brag.
 - More generic than specific. Speak generally about yourself and wait until later to discuss specific details. You do not want to overwhelm the other person with too much information.
 - Be distinctive, not generic. You’ll be more memorable if you offer a unique group of facts about yourself.
- Benefits to giving an elevator pitch:
 - Capitalize on your opportunity to meet people and get their contact information.
 - Helps you develop a concise professional identity: who you are and where you’re going.
 - Allows you to see how others respond to your goals and get feedback.
 - You’ll receive more professional opportunities.
- Your pitch should:
 - Inform the employer of who you are as a professional, where you’ve been, and where you want to go
 - Add value to your connection by looking for opportunities to help the person (this could mean referring them to a professional organization or an article with useful information).
 - Allow you to relate to the person, both personally and professionally. By finding commonalities with the other person, you will seem more relatable and approachable.
- Always follow your elevator pitch by asking about the other person’s work. Ask follow-up questions and find a way to connect to what they’ve said.
- Know your audience. Don’t use industry-specific jargon with someone unless and until you know they will understand.
- Be proactive to ensure a lasting connection. Ask for their business card and let them know you would like to keep in touch.
- Practice your elevator pitch with a friend, classmate, or colleague, and revise/update it every 12 to 18 months.