

Elevator Pitches

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How many times have you lost an opportunity to share something important with a client or senior level executive while riding in an elevator or walking down the hall? Most of us have. An elevator pitch can be a powerful tool for selling your ideas if you are clear and concise. Here is how to do it.

First and foremost, what do you want to happen as a result of talking to this person? Don't just start talking. Be very focused on the action you are recommending. When push comes to shove, what do you want them to do? Is to approve a budget? Sign off on a proposal? If it is, say it and say it in as few words as possible. Do not beat around the bush. It will frustrate the person who doesn't have time anyway.

Next, remember that no one does anything unless they see what's in it for them. As clearly as you can, identify three benefits. Why three? Three is a magical number. People remember things in groups of three. Also, it is important to show that there are many benefits to our recommendation. The more personal we can make these benefits to the person listening, the more convincing our argument will be. For example, if you are talking to an IT director about the benefits of a particular software package, an important benefit might be that the manager will not have work on weekends or have people calling him or her at all hours of the night.

A person who is in an elevator or walking down the hall is preoccupied with where they are going or what they will be doing next. Obviously, they are not very attentive. If you are passionate in the way you talk about your recommendation, you will grab their attention. If you share with them how excited you personally are about what you are proposing, it will grab their attention. A monotone voice that lacks enthusiasm will cause your listener to tune out. Be sure that you are pausing and stressing important words and concepts. Keep the notion of Bob Barker, the game show host, in your mind. Don't be phony, but don't be afraid to show you believe in what you say.

Finally, be sure you look the person in the eye. People cannot ignore strong eye contact. It forces them to pay attention. Use the person's name often during the course of your thirty-second pitch. Again, it makes the person pay attention. End by asking for a commitment from the person to meet with you at another time so that you can go into more detail. If we have been respectful of their time and clear and concise about our ideas, most people will agree to talk to us again.

If you practice these suggestions, the next time you have an opportunity, even though it's short, you will get your message across successfully.

Impact Communications, Inc. consults with individuals and businesses to improve their face-to-face and over the phone communication skills. It is not what you know but how you communicate it that makes a difference. To reach us, phone (847) 438-4480 or contact our web site, www.ImpactCommunicationsInc.com.