Career Central™ Advice

Elevator Speech: Job Search Infomercial

How to sell yourself in 30 seconds or less.

Fast pitch.

You look up and see, standing right next to you, the president of the company you'd like to work for waiting to cross the street. Think fast: You have less than 30-seconds to 1) engage the employer; 2) sell yourself; and 3) prove why you would be the ideal candidate for the job. GO!!

A chance introduction, a networking event, leaving a telephone message are all perfect opportunities for an elevator speech, so called because of its brevity, *i.e.,* the time it takes for an elevator ride.

Not unlike a personal commercial, an elevator speech is a concise sound bite that very quickly markets your skills, capabilities, and aspirations. Lasting anywhere between 15 seconds to three minutes, depending on the situation, its purpose is to quickly educate your audience on the product of you and generate enough interest so they want to learn more. Ideally, for a job seeker, an elevator pitch would lead to an interview.

Perfect pitch.

Your elevator speech should quickly communicate what differentiates you from other job seekers and makes you unique and valuable to an employer. Essentially, it takes all the critical points in a cover letter, résumé, and interview and compresses them into a few seconds. Since time is limited, your pitch must clearly and in a compelling way answer the following questions:

-- Who are you, and what do you offer?

-- Why are you interested in the position?

-- What are your qualifications?

-- What can you do for the employer?

A successful elevator speech enables you to instantly promote yourself and confidently answer those two questions, "Tell me about yourself" and "Why should I hire you?" in as few words as possible. Keep your message focused and your delivery vivid. It's easier to remember a jingle than a song.

Remember, *you* are the product, and who should know you better than you?

© 2012 College Central Network, Inc. All rights reserved.

Practice pitching.

Your elevator speech should:

-- sound natural, spontaneous, conversational, pleasant, and sincere;

-- be brief, believeable, and concise; honestly convey what interests you without drowning the listener with information;

-- provide supporting facts and specifics of your qualifications;

-- engage the listener and compel them to want to continue the encounter;

-- address the employer's problems, but not provide a complete solution; save that for the full interview.

As with any verbal communication, practice makes perfect:

-- study your body language and delivery in front of a mirror; this is a chance, outside of an interview, to interact in person and make a positive impression;

-- once you're comfortable with your message, fine tune and tailor your speech for various audiences and situations; one size does not fit all;

-- maintain eye contact and be aware of the listener's body language, as well; don't overdo things;

-- use everyday, conversational language; breathe, pause; don't sound like you desperately need to sell a cleaning product.

-- ask for a business card, even suggest a future meeting, when done.

Hope for, but don't demand, results; not every pitch will result in a follow up. Also, remember, while it's about you, don't make it all about you. The bottom line in any job search is that the listener is only interested in how the product (you) will meet his/her employment and business needs.

in a nutshell:

Keep your elevator pitch handy:

- **Be prepared; opportunity only knocks, it doesn't notify**
- **Keep it short and simple; time is not on your side**
- **Tailor your pitch according to the listener and his/her needs; focus on what you can offer**
- **Make it personal and sincere, striking and memorable; this is a short story about you**
- **Practice, but don't memorize; you should sound natural**
- **Maintain eye contact and engage the listener**
- **Leave them wanting more**

Elevator pitches are tools. Use them wisely and enjoy the opportunity to make a networking connection.

CollegeCentral.com/bellarmine

Visit the above URL to access our school's exclusive jobs database **and MORE!**