



## Giving an Elevator or Hallway Pitch

Did you ever time your elevator ride or your walk down the hallway? Well, try to do it next time because this is how long it could take you to sell your ideas. Usually you have about 30-60 seconds to grab the audience's attention and convince them to spend more time to listen. Sooner or later you will have to use your research topic to get a job, apply for a grant or convince board members to fund your work and all you could have is just a few seconds to pique their interest. This sheet outlines essential tips that will help you develop your elevator pitch.

### 1. Know your audience.

It's important to focus on your listener's interests because human beings are greedy. Oh yes we are! People want to know what is it that you do to benefit them. Are you going to be the next pope or the curer of cancer? Find some common ground between you and your audience.

### 2. Market your product.

Don't just try to sell your product. Make your listeners feel that this is something they need and want to invest in and that you are the one who can provide it. That product maybe you, your ideas, or your research.

### 3. Keep it simple.

Speak in plain English to make it as simple as possible. Remember, keeping it simple does not mean dumbing it down. There is no need to use complicated terms that only experts in your field would understand. People will be turned off by making them feel ignorant. People are not stupid; they just may not have the same vocabulary as you.

### 4. Stay focused.

Be focused, concise and to the point. Remember, all you have is just 30-60 seconds. Just about the time it takes to ride an elevator. Don't get into the whole story of what led you to work on what you do. Highlight the major accomplishments that should appeal to the listener.

### 5. It's not about you.

Don't start talking about yourself, your accomplishments and the awards you earned, unless it directly relates to their needs. It's important to deliver to your audience that you have what they need.

### 6. Develop your personal skills.

Work on your communication skills because you want to grab your listeners' attention and make them want to continue listening to you. Be confident to convince them of your product and its impact. Be passionate and believe in what you do. You want the listener to believe in your product and this can only happen if you believe in it.

## 7. Don't ask questions.

Use the time to tell them what you want them to know about your research or ideas. Instead of asking them about the limitations of the current methods of treating cancer, tell them briefly that currently there is no method to fully cure cancer and that you are developing this new technique that has proven to be very successful.

## 8. Be prepared.

Make sure you work on your elevator pitch early on. You never know when you will need it. It's vital that as you gain insight in your research you develop your pitch to highlight the strengths and possibilities of your work. The more prepared you are, the more confident you will be when delivering your pitch.

## 9. End-off with a hook.

It's important in your pitch to lay the foundation for another meeting to follow-up on your pitch or to create an opportunity to step forward. This hook could be in the form of a question such as "Where do we go from here?", "Would you like to discuss this further in detail?", "Would you like more details on how this solves your problem?", "Are you interested in hearing more? Here is my card" or "Would you like me to send you more information about my work?"

## 10. "Be clear. Be brief. Be seated."

Remember what Franklin Roosevelt said

---

## Activities to do on your own

- Identify what you have to say.
- Make a short list of the important things about what you want to say in your pitch. Not more than three points.
- Convert these points into a paragraph using simple English.
- Give presentations to the general audience and to youth groups.
- Get their feedback and do necessary changes.
- Submit a short paragraph to the office of public affairs; they can help you pitch your research to the general public.
- Join a toastmasters group.

---

## Additional Resources

For examples on how to develop a pitch, see the references below.

- How to Write an Elevator Pitch (pt. 1) by Geoffrey James.
- <http://blogs.bnet.com/salesmachine/?p=124>
- How to Write an Elevator Pitch (pt. 2) by Geoffrey James
- <http://blogs.bnet.com/salesmachine/?p=406>

- How to Write an Elevator Pitch (pt. 3) by Geoffrey James
- <http://blogs.bnet.com/salesmachine/?p=407&tag=col1;post-406>
- Pincus, Aileen. "Crafting an Executive Elevator Pitch", Business Week.
- [http://images.businessweek.com/ss/07/06/0618\\_speaking\\_business/index\\_01.htm](http://images.businessweek.com/ss/07/06/0618_speaking_business/index_01.htm)

This tip sheet was developed from the FGSR Professional Development Session "Giving an Elevator or Hallway Pitch – Workshop" on March 24, 2010 given by Jamie Hanlon from the Office of Public Affairs.