



JOB SEARCH TIPS: Creating Your 30-Second Elevator Pitch

Source(s): Adapted from "The Perfect Elevator Pitch to Land a Job," by Nancy Collamer, Forbes.com
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One of the most important tools you need in your career fair toolbox is your 30-second elevator pitch. Employers want you to take the lead when you approach them. You need to be able to highlight the key aspects you bring to the table when it comes to convincing an employer to ask you for an interview.

1. Clarify your job target.

So when you begin putting an elevator pitch together, nail down the best way to describe your field and the type of job you're pursuing. Until you can clearly explain the type of position you want, nobody can help you find it or hire you to do it.

2. Put it on paper.

Write down everything you would want a prospective employer to know about your skills, accomplishments and work experiences that are relevant to your target position. Then grab a red pen and mercilessly delete everything that's not critical to your pitch.

Keep editing until you've got the speech down to a few key bullet points or sentences. Your goal is to interest the listener in learning more, not to tell your whole life story. So remove extraneous details that detract from your core message.

3. Format it.

A good pitch should answer three questions:

Who are you? *Name and educational background*

What do you do best? *Your interests – your career goals*

How have you made an impact? *Your experience, as it relates to the organization/opportunity*

What sets you apart from the competition? *Strengths and accomplishments*

What are you seeking? *Why are you a good fit for the position/organization, etc.*

4. Tailor the pitch to them, not you.

It's important to remember that the employers listening to your speech will be asking "what is in it for me?" So be sure to focus your message on their needs.

For example, this introduction: "I am a senior computer science major with 2 years' experience working for web development companies." The pitch would be more powerful if you said, "I'm a senior computer science major with a strong track record in helping to conceptualize and manage the websites for the nonprofit organizations in which I've worked."

Using benefit-focused terminology will help convince an interviewer that you have the experience, savvy and skills to get the job done at his or her business.

5. Avoid these mistakes.

- Don't confuse an elevator pitch with a resume. The pitch is much different than a list of jobs you've held and duties.
- Don't exaggerate your experience.
- Adapt to your audience and purpose – don't just repeat the exact same pitch every time.

6. Read your pitch out loud and then edit it again.

The language you write in is different than how you speak. Practice your pitch out loud and then edit your written pitch to sound more natural.

Bottom Line:

When approaching employers at a career fair (or anywhere else, for that matter), be prepared to summarize who you are, your interest in that organization (specifically), and what you can do for them (key strengths, what you contributed to a previous employer). Be prepared to identify what type of job you are interested in pursuing. Know five to seven skills employers seek for that type of job. Be able to briefly show by examples (stories) that you have these skills. Memorize your resume. Nothing makes you look more unprepared than not knowing for sure what you've placed on your resume. As you prepare your pitch, try to answer the question "why would a recruiter from company XYZ be interested in you?" Practice your pitch – out loud!!!!

Some Examples:

Hello. My name is _____, and I will be graduating with my Bachelor's in _____ (major(s)/minor(s) in _____ (when). I noticed on your website there are some opportunities in _____ that I am interested in pursuing. (Hand a copy of your resume to recruiter.) You will note that (mention something that ties your skills/qualifications to the position criteria). I am very interested in (name of organization) and would like to know your next steps in selecting people for interviews.