



Creating an Elevator Speech

The elevator speech – so named because it describes your organization's work in the time span of an elevator ride – can be a vital tool to introduce your vision and message.

While your issues may be complex, the policies nuanced, and the needs of your constituents huge, developing clear, straightforward language about your work can help engage audiences. It's not about "dumbing down" your work – it's about opening it up so that others find it relevant and interesting. With a short, pithy description of your work on hand, you can connect with more potential supporters.

Here are some tips for developing a successful elevator pitch (see the accompanying worksheet to get started on your elevator speech).

Brevity. It's not just the soul of wit, it's also the core principle of a good elevator speech. You should be able to say what you need to say in about a minute. Focus on what's most important and cut away the rest.

Opening. You want a hook to pique the listener's interest, or a quick tag line to encapsulate what you are about to say.

For example: "Utopia for Kids finds solutions to the toughest problems facing our state's children and families."

Problem. Define the task at hand in clear simple terms to illustrate the purpose of your work.

For example: "Affordable health care should be within reach of every family in Utopia, but far too many struggle to make ends meet."

Solution. Say what you are doing about the problem. Does your organization's mission and approach match the scale of the problem you've outlined?

For example: "At Utopia for Kids, we know change is possible. Today, more children in Utopia have access to affordable health care than a generation ago. We worked with a bipartisan group of lawmakers to ensure 180,000 children who were uninsured two years ago are able to get the care they need today."

Action. Close with an invitation to your listeners to be part of your solution. What can your audience do to engage, assist, or support your work?

For example: "You can help us continue our advocacy success and deliver more wins for kids by becoming a member of Utopia for Kids."

Avoid jargon. Steer clear of acronyms, buzzwords and insider speak to keep your audience engaged.

Passion. Perhaps the most important part of a good elevator speech is the gusto, enthusiasm and commitment to the work it expresses. Don't be afraid to demonstrate the passion and drive you feel for the work.



Elevator Speech Worksheet

Opening. You want a hook to pique the listener's interest, or a quick tag line to encapsulate what you are about to say.

Problem. Define the task at hand in clear simple terms to illustrate the purpose of your work.

Solution. Explain concisely what you are doing about the problem. What is the unique value your organization brings to the table here?

Action. Close with an invitation to your listeners to be part of your solution. What can your audience do to engage, assist, or support your work?