

Your Killer Elevator Speech

“So, what do you do?” As a business owner, you aren’t always sure if people are really interested in your answer or if they are just being polite. You have 30 seconds max. to say something compelling so the listener will ask follow-up questions. Here are seven key tips to get you started in giving your killer elevator speech:

1. Begin with the End in Mind

When people hear your elevator speech what do you want them to do afterwards? Set up an appointment? Take your business card? Offer you one of their own? Refer you to a potential customer? Once you are clear on the action, begin writing your elevator speech outline. Create several speeches for the different situations you will encounter.

2. Elevator Speech Outline:

- a) Hook (*First sentence stimulates interest*)
- b) What do I do?
- c) Whom do I serve?
- d) So what? (*Why should someone care?*)

Here’s an example of two different ways a photographer might answer the question “So, what do you do?”

Option I

I am a photographer who specializes in portraits. I’ve been doing this for almost 10 years. I am available to discuss your needs and create a package that fits into your budget. Here’s my card and please call me when you need a photographer.

Option II

As a photographer, I find that the best pictures capture a person’s true essence. For example, when I shoot portraits, I encourage my clients to bring along personal belongings that represent who they are. Last week, a young woman brought her sketch pad and pencils and I shot her while she drew me. There was such joy on her face! That’s why I am a photographer. Please consider me if you want pictures that show your true self.

Which speech is more compelling? Why?

3. Practice and Review

After writing your speech, use a digital recorder and timer and practice it several times. Try and keep the entire speech under 30 seconds. Listen to it with your eyes closed so you can truly hear your words. Also, consider using a digital video camera to record yourself and review your facial expressions.

4. Other Centered

The elevator speech is for the *listener*, not you. Keep others in mind when writing the speech. What is the single *most interesting aspect* of your work you want others to know?

5. Energy and Joy

What message could you say that would *excite you* the most? After you say the speech you should feel energized and joyful.

6. Smile and Belly-Speak

Smile right before you begin the speech to relax your facial muscles and to connect with the listener. Visualize speaking from your belly (not your throat) for a more natural sound and to help you relax.

7. Reduce Nervousness

Some nervousness is good and normal. Use it to feel alive and alert. Suggestion: take a deep breath and say to yourself, "Breathing in I feel calm and breathing out I feel relaxed." (Zen masters use this technique and look how relaxed they are!)

Feel free to pass this tip sheet on to others!

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