

Going Up?

Key Elements of a Good Elevator Pitch



creativemedia[™]
orange county

The Key Elements of a Good Elevator Pitch

Whether you're seeking to secure an investor, garner sponsorship for your project, or land the perfect job, a **well-crafted elevator pitch** can be the difference between success and failure. Being able to communicate your idea **succinctly** and with **conviction** is critical to instilling confidence in your audience. If your understanding of your concept lacks clarity, it comes across to your audience as though (1) the idea itself is flawed, or (2) it's simply not fully mature. Since either is undesirable, thoroughly preparing your message in advance and being able to convey it with **certainty** and **clarity** is essential.

Conciseness Counts

The elevator pitch (referring to the chance opening to propose one's ideas occasionally found while sharing an elevator) is a **30-second opportunity** to communicate concepts. The 30-second constraint is based on a typical person's attention span.¹ It's very easy to talk about your ideas in a verbose manner, but it takes significant thought and effort to craft a clear **and** brief expression of your concept. This fact was memorably articulated by former U.S. President **Woodrow Wilson**: "If I am to speak for ten minutes, I need a week for preparation; if fifteen minutes, three days; if half an hour, two days; if an hour, I am ready now."

Multiple Purposes

Although an elevator pitch is commonly associated with requests for financial backing, it can also be a **valuable everyday tool**. Networking opportunities, executive presentations, public relations events, employment interviews, and marketing / sales efforts all require the ability to effectively provide a **concise** explanation of your concept. Your 30-second elevator pitch demonstrates an **understanding** of your concept as well as your ability to effectively **express** it with clarity and self-confidence. While key aspects of your idea may remain unexpressed, most people are adept at assessing a concept's significance and envisioning potential outcomes, even given an incomplete picture.

1. How to Get Your Point Across in 30 Seconds or Less (Pocket Books, 1990) by Milo O. Frank

The Key Elements of a Good Elevator Pitch

Three Goals

The optimal approach to an effective elevator pitch involves (1) **capturing** the audience's attention, (2) **persuading** the audience with the potential of shared success, and (3) **orchestrating** the next steps in the process. Use terminology and expressions your audience can connect with, and express yourself with the **passion** that accompanies the understanding that these opportunities are uncommon and fleeting.

Fundamentals

Consider the following 7 **essentials** in preparing a 30-second elevator pitch:

- 1. Understand the needs of your audience.** Learn as much as possible about the audience and how they operate. For example, before going to a meeting, try to identify and research **each** of the individuals attending. Then slightly adapt your elevator pitch to correspond to the audience's requirements. If there are benefits that **directly** apply to them, they'll listen to you.
- 2. Seize audience attention.** Quickly [connecting](#) indicates to your audience the value in devoting their precious time to hear your thoughts and ideas. Consider beginning with a challenging, provocative, or unconventional declaration that will **arouse** the group, for example: "Talent is overrated."
- 3. Get Organized.** The most effective presentations focus on what is **most** meaningful. The flow of information must be carefully organized to make it as **straightforward** as possible for the brain to assimilate. Normally, elevator pitches begin with an introduction, progress through an explanation of the problem, summarize possible advantages, and finish with a request to further the discussion.
- 4. Be well-informed on your subject.** Are you clear enough on your concept to define it in one sentence? It's **so** much more difficult than it seems. Only by understanding the topic **thoroughly** will the presenter be able to stand out from the competition.

The Key Elements of a Good Elevator Pitch

5. **Have a clear goal in mind.** Consider that the ultimate goal of an elevator pitch is **not** to get funding, project sponsorship, or the perfect job. The goal is to get agreement to **advance the process** forward, whether that's referral to another key person, scheduling a follow-up discussion, or perhaps just a chance to supply supplemental information. The elevator pitch is rarely about closing a deal, but rather opening a door to the next step.
6. **Customize your message.** Expressing yourself with clarity and simplicity is much more influential than a clever turn of phrase. Consider preparing **tailored** analogies that your audience can relate to instinctively. For example, given the knowledge of your audience's fondness for golf, you might use the simple analogy of "sinking a long putt" to share a recent success.
7. **Review. Revise. Repeat.** Record your presentation to video and evaluate your performance, identifying your areas of strength and weakness. Present your ideas to people **completely** unacquainted with the project. If they don't understand your message or are unable to recognize the potential, retool. Continue to fine-tune your pitch until your message is being **clearly** and **positively** received.

The advantages of a good elevator pitch extend past simply convincing your audience, to providing a more accurate and comprehensive **understanding** of your ideas. The aim is to [keep your audience engaged](#) as they're absorbing your vision. A successful elevator pitch will elegantly communicate an often complex **concept**, detail **mutually beneficial objectives**, and establish an **opportunity** for a prosperous future association.

Other Resources

- ▶ [Leveraging Stage Fright – Going from Fears to Cheers](#)
- ▶ [Inspiring Words – Top 6 Tips to Motivate Your Audience](#)
- ▶ [Conversational Presentations](#)