

# THE ELEVATOR PITCH

An Elevator Pitch is a carefully planned and concise introductory message about your professional self. It defines your skill sets, experience, and career hopes for the future. It should take about 60 seconds to deliver—the time it would take you to ride up an elevator—and it should be focused on the specific and unique attributes that you can bring to an organization or employer.

## Why is an elevator pitch important?

You never know when you might meet someone who could be a great networking contact. It could be at a planned event, such as a networking dinner or company information session, or at an informal social gathering, such as a family get-together or a friend's soccer game. Having a well-prepared Elevator Pitch will ensure that you are ready to market your skills and experiences any time you are given the opportunity to do so.

For example:

1. It's homecoming. You're watching the float parade and find that you are hungry. You go into Harrington to buy a pretzel. As you're waiting in line, the man in front of you turns around and says, "Oh, are you a student here? I'm Jim. I graduated five years ago. What's your major?"
2. You're home for winter break. You attend a family holiday party. Your cousin introduces you to his new girlfriend: "Joe, this is my girlfriend, Holly. She's a civil engineer." Turning to Holly, he says, "Joe's at WPI majoring in some sort of engineering." He turns back to you and says, "Right, Joe?"

With an Elevator Pitch already prepared, you can easily respond to people like Jim or your cousin.

## When do you use it?

- Career fairs
- Networking events (alumni dinners, professional organization events, etc)
- Company Information Sessions
- Interviews, when answering the question, "Tell me about yourself."
- Any professional event where you are asked to introduce yourself.

## Preparing your Elevator Pitch

### Know Yourself

Take some time for some self-reflection. Think about your key skills and experiences and what you have to offer an employer.

Consider the following categories and examples:

- **Skills**

For example:

- Technical skills – e.g., Proficient with AutoCAD, MatLab, Linux, C++; Experience with Gel Electrophoresis, protein extraction
- Communication skills, written or oral
- Research skills

- Analytical skills
- Leadership skills

- **Strengths** (i.e., what are you good at?)

For example:

- Motivating others
- Taking initiative
- Time management

- **Personal qualities**

For example:

- Hard worker
- Enjoy working in teams

- **Accomplishments**

For example:

- IQP, MQP, internship experience, leadership roles

- **Values/beliefs** (i.e., things that would be important to you in your work life)

For example:

- Opportunity for creativity
- Relaxed pace
- Action oriented
- Working outdoors
- Team environment

- **Career goals**

For example:

- Conduct cancer research in a laboratory setting
- Work outside in a construction project management role

- **Academic performance**

For example:

- GPA, project / lab work within your courses

- **Activities**

For example:

- Clubs, organizations, teams involved in on campus

## Know Your Audience

Research your audience (company, contact, or event) to customize your Elevator Pitch to the individuals within it:

- What are the perceived needs of the employer or contact in a potential candidate?
- What immediate benefits can you provide?
- What interests you about the company or industry the person represents and why?
- Align your skills and experience with the needs of your audience.

## Questions to Think About

This worksheet will help you identify key topics to include in your Elevator Pitch. Complete the questions below to create a first draft of your Elevator Pitch.

1. What is your career goal? (State this in the form of doing something for someone)

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2. What skills, strengths, or experiences do you have that would help you realize that goal?

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3. What accomplishments prove that you have those skills, strengths, or experiences? (Draw from all experiences – projects, internships, activities involved in on campus, etc)

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4. What are you searching for in a job?

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5. How can you immediately benefit the company?

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## Sample Language

- My name is \_\_\_\_\_.
- I am a student at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, pursuing a \_\_\_\_\_ degree and majoring in \_\_\_\_\_.
- My experience **(Describe)**.
- I am **(Strength)**, which I demonstrated when I **(Accomplishment)**.
- I'm looking for a position where I **(Goals)**.
- I feel I could immediately benefit your company by **(How)**.

Note: This ending works best for a job interview or when you meet someone at a career fair or company information session and you are talking to them about a specific job role.

## OR

- Since you are currently **(in the field I'm interested in/at a company I'd like to learn more about/doing the kind of work I'd like to do)**, I would love to talk with you further about any advice or suggestions you may have for me.

Note: This ending works best at networking events or when you are interested in an informational interview.

## Additional Tips

- Write down and practice your Elevator Pitch.
- Ask for feedback from friends, mentors, and the CDC. CDC walk-ins are a great way to practice this and solicit feedback.
- Your elevator pitch should not sound scripted. Don't memorize it word for word, but focus on the key points and ideas you want to convey to your audience.
- Record your elevator pitch so you can hear it and correct any obvious shortcomings.
- Make it conversational. Don't feel that you have to get through your whole pitch when you talk to someone. Allow for pauses and input from your listener.
- Make an appointment with the CDC to practice your Elevator Pitch.

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