

The Elevator Speech

Bad:

“Hi, I’m Shannon Brenner, I am a career counselor. I hold a Master’s Degree in Education and have five years of experience in career development. (Who cares!) I’ve worked for a nonprofit career center, and am a certified teacher. (So what!) I believe that career coaching can be the catalyst to change your life. (Are you asleep yet?)

See how that was all about me, me, me?

Better:

“Hi, I’m Shannon Brenner, and I help excellent candidates find excellent jobs. For example, I’ve helped a client change jobs with a 40% salary increase, I’ve helped a client develop the skills to deal with a difficult boss, and I’ve helped a manager devise new ways to keep her staff motivated.”

Here are a few more examples:

An Avon representative who says: “I help women look beautiful.”

Or a business coach that says: “I help you get more clients than you know what to do with.”

Used by an IRS agent: “I’m a government fund-raiser.”

Action Steps

So, here’s what you need to do to craft your elevator speech.

First, write down the “deliverables” -- the services or features that you provide. Then, think in terms of the benefits that your clients or employer could derive from these services. You could use several successful client outcomes, as I did.

Once you’ve got that written, create an opening sentence that will grab the listener’s attention, as our Avon representative did above. The best openers leave the listener wanting more information. And you do not have to include your title, especially if you think it has a negative connotation (an IRS agent, for example).

Finally, your elevator speech must roll off your tongue with ease. Practice your speech in front of the mirror and with friends. Record it and listen to it. Do you sound confident? Sincere? Is it engaging? Tweak accordingly. Then, take it on the road!

The Elevator Speech: Marketing Yourself

Your Profession and Expertise <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your field and area of interest• Your skills and knowledge; what you know and what you can do• Your education	
Your Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The breadth of your experience across sectors• The depth of your experience within a sector or profession• The level of experience• The amount of experience	
Your Strengths & Key Selling Points <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What you are really good at doing• What people say about you	
Accomplishments <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The best thing you've done• The toughest problem you've solved• The biggest challenge you've overcome• Awards/Accolades	
Your Professional Objective/Career Goals	