# Elevator Speeches

**An outline for a Basic/ Short form Elevator Speech (student or recent grad):**

> Hi, my name is _____. I will be graduating/I just graduated from _____with a degree in _____. I'm looking to_____.

**Example of an elevator speech with a intriguing "hook"**

> Hi, my name is _____. I make dreams come true. "pause" I'm a wedding planner. I plan dream weddings for couples. I have a successful small business working for myself, but I'd like to get in with a large resorts that hosts weddings.

Improve on this basic structure by adding a request for action (and consider adding an element of intrigue -- or a "hook", Here are some action items that can be added in various situations:

**At a career fair:** "I'd like to take your business card, as well as leave my resume. Would it be possible for me to get a spot on your company's interview schedule? **With an employer:** "When can we set up a meeting to discuss how I can help your company?"

A slightly longer version of your Elevator Speech also called a "Commercial", can be used in networking situations in which you have more time to talk about yourself. It is a great job-interview response to "Tell me about yourself" or "Why should I hire you?"

You can start out with the Sound Bite, and when your conversation partner asks you to tell more about yourself, so you segue into the Commercial. This introduction is typically 1-3 minutes long and contains more about your background, qualifications, and skills than the Sound Bite does.

**You don't want your Elevator Speech (or commercial) to sound memorized.** But, you are talking about yourself so the information should be familiar to you. It helps to write it out first. Practice saying it in front of the mirror, friends, and family. Don't worry, if you forget a detail, as long as you remember the main points you want to get across.

Nearly all experts agree in the importance of stressing your benefit to the listener and touching on how you're better than the competition. This principle encompasses many names -- Unique Selling Proposition, value proposition, benefit statement, competitive advantage, deliverables, -- but the bottom line is the same. What can you bring to the employer, and how can you do it better than anyone else?

**Here are the keys to successfully developing and using an elevator speech in your job-search.** Follow these simple rules and you should achieve success with this important tool of job-hunting.

- Do make your elevator speech 30 seconds long. No more.
- Do make your Elevator Speech sound effortless, conversational, and natural.
- Do make it memorable and sincere. Open a window to your personality.
- Do write and rewrite your speech, sharpening its focus and eliminating unnecessary words and awkward constructions.
- Do avoid an Elevator Speech that will leave the listener mentally asking "So what?"

- Do consider including a compelling "hook," an intriguing aspect that will engage the listener, prompt him or her to ask questions, and keep the conversation going.
- Don't let your speech sound canned or stilted.
- Do practice your speech. Experts disagree about whether you should memorize it, but you should know your speech well enough so you express your key points without sounding as though the speech was memorized. Let it become an organic part of you. Many experts suggest practicing in front of mirrors and role-playing with friends. Certified Professional Virtual Assistant Jean Hanson advises practicing in the car on the way to networking events.
- Don't ramble. Familiarizing yourself as much as possible with your speech will help keep you from getting off track.
- Do be warm, friendly, confident, and enthusiastic. A smile is often the best way to show friendliness and enthusiasm, while a strong, firm voice the best way to express confidence.
- Do take it slowly. Don't rush through the speech, and do pause briefly between sentences. Breathe.
- Do project your passion for what you do.
- Do maintain eye contact with your listener.
- Don't get bogged down with industry jargon or acronyms that your listener may not comprehend.
- Do be prepared to wrap up earlier than you were planning if you see the listener's eyes glazing over or interest waning.
- Don't hesitate to develop different versions of your Elevator Speech for different situations and audiences.

When developing an Elevator Speech for a specific employer you've targeted, do research the organization and incorporate that knowledge into your speech. If you're cold-calling a hiring manager and get his or her voicemail don't be afraid to leave your Elevator Speech as a voice message. Practice leaving the message for yourself first. Listen to how you sound. Make changes where necessary.

- Do incorporate examples and stories to help support your points. Stories make your speech memorable.
- Don't focus just on yourself, an approach that will almost assure a "so what?" reaction.
- Do focus on how you can benefit employers and help them solve their problems. Remember as you deliver your Elevator Speech that the listener may be mentally asking, "What's in it for me (or my company)?"
- Do use concrete, listener-friendly language, but at the same time, don't be afraid to paint vivid word pictures.
- Don't forget to include your competitive advantage also known as your Unique Selling Proposition (USP); in other words. how you can perform better than anyone else.
- Do end with an action request, such as asking for a business card or interview appointment.
- Don't forget to update your speech as your situation changes.
- If you are uncomfortable with the kind of speaking that the Elevator Speech entails, **do consider joining a group such as Toastmasters to boost your confidence.**