

Elevator Speech

Isabel Dominguez, Ph.D.

L Building Room L-107 from 12:00 – 1:00pm on Thursday, June 7th

Materials: Example videos at: <http://video.pbs.org/program/1228944061>

What is an elevator speech?

An elevator speech is a short speech, approximately 60 seconds long (e.g. an elevator ride). It is aimed to present what you do (studies, research, teaching, clinical practice, administrative role) in a way that will be remembered. It is targeted to a particular audience, so it may be different if you are in a scientific meeting, preparing for a job interview, meeting with a foundation to apply for funding, talking to lay people, talking to the media, etc. At the end of the speech the audience should know if you have the credentials to fulfill a job, that your work will benefit society, that you can improve life, or have a novel idea to solve a problem, etc. Is a conversation starter that will make the audience want to know more. An elevator speech has to be clear and free of jargon.

How to develop an elevator speech?

Think about your audience and then write sentences that will answer the following questions:

- *Who are you?*

Name/identifying location/Professional identity (e.g. general internist, PhD biologist)

- *What do you do? What is your role?*

(e.g. assistant program director, basic science researcher, imaging specialist, genetic counselor, applicant for job at company, etc.)

- *What you found, are doing, or planning to do?*

Something specific about clinical, educational, research, or job or career goal

- *Why is this important?*

Implication/importance (filling a gap in knowledge, benefit to society)

How do you build your confidence to make your elevator speech effective?

DOs and DON'Ts

- Express passion for your work
- Include a "hook" to engage the audience.
- Avoid the "so what?"- make it appeal to the other person
- Watch jargon, speech should be clear and free of jargon
- Do not use filler words (e.g. like, ah, um, so, you know, uhh)
- Watch your body language (smile, posture) and your tone of voice (passionate/engaged)
- **Write and rewrite your speech** until it presents you and your activities clearly and professionally. Get feedback from friends/colleagues.
- **Practice, practice, practice** so that it appears natural/spontaneous. Use a mirror/a tape recorder. Get feedback from colleagues/friends.
- Think about your personal appearance. Practice in your interview outfit.
- Remember to make eye contact with your audience/recipient

Exercise:

Develop an elevator speech related to your program of study. Pick a job, new technique, process, intervention, and/or research interest etc. that you have read about (e.g. from a newspaper article or other source). Develop the elevator speech as if you were the job applicant, researcher, clinician or educator.

ELEVATOR SPEECH PREP SHEET

<i>Who are you?</i> Name/identifying location Professional identity (e.g. general internist, PhD biologist)	
<i>What do you do? What is your role?</i> Current job/research (e.g. assistant program director, basic science research, studying causes of congenital heart disease, etc.)	
<i>What you found, you are doing or planning to do?</i> Something specific about clinical, educational and/or research interests or particular contribution you want to make as employee	
<i>Why is this important?</i> Implication/importance (filling a gap in knowledge)	
Remember to make eye contact with the audience/recipient <i>Give your card/contact information</i>	Spontaneous!!!

Learning objectives:

At the end of the class, students will be able to:

- Understand the components of an elevator speech
- Recognize key elements of a good speech delivery (content, eye contact, etc.)
- Build confidence about doing an elevator speech
- Deliver an elevator speech