

Being Able to Describe Yourself – ‘the elevator speech’

In a networking context being able to describe yourself is commonly called an 'elevator speech' or 'elevator pitch' - as if you were to meet a potentially important contact for the first time in an elevator at a conference and he/she asks you: "What do you do?" You have no more than 20 seconds - perhaps just 10-15 seconds - between floors to explain, and to make such an impressive impact that the person asks for your contact details.

If you talk (or write) too much, the listener (or reader) will become bored, or think you are rude or too self-centred.

Be concise. You will demonstrate consideration and expertise by conveying your most relevant points in as short a time as possible.

Here are the main points for creating your elevator speech:

1. your name	"My name is..." Look the other person in the eye. Smile. Shoulders back. Speak with confidence. Sincerity and passion are crucial in making a strong early impression.
2. your business name or area of work	"I work for..." or "My business is ..." Loud clear proud again. Do not ask "Have you heard of us..?" or wait for recognition.
3. based and covering where	"I am based..." and "I cover..." Adapt the town, city, geography for the situation. There is little value in mentioning a tiny village if you are at a global gathering, or your global coverage if you are at a local town gathering. Make this relevant to the situation.

**4. your personal
specialism (USP)
and/or offering, and
your aims**

Be different and special and better in some way from your competitors. Be meaningful for the event or situation or group, and as far as you can guess, be meaningful for the contact. Express what you offer in terms of positive outcomes for those you help or supply, rather than focusing on technical details from your own viewpoint. Load your statements here with special benefits or qualities. Be positive, proud and ambitious in your thinking and expression of what you do. Include in this statement **what your aims are**, to show you have ambition and that you know what you are seeking from network contacts.

Your elevator speech

1. Your name	
2. Your business name or area of work	
3. Based and covering where	

4. Your personal specialism (USP) and/or offering, and your aims

.

Elevator Speech Checklist:

Have you:

- ☐ Identified your USP.
- ☐ Planned what you want to say.
- ☐ Made it interesting and enthusiastic.
- ☐ Draft, redraft and edit – remember this will take time and you will go through several revisions before settling on your final version, so don't worry if you don't get it right first time.
- ☐ Spent time rehearsing until it doesn't sound rehearsed.

When you have a draft you are happy with, review it using these questions:

- ☐ Is it under 60 seconds?
- ☐ Does it make you memorable?
- ☐ Are you acting naturally?
- ☐ Have you removed jargon that could lose your audience?
- ☐ Could it be considered too 'sales-y'?
- ☐ Now make any changes and practise, practise, practise!