

DITCH THE PITCH!

The elevator speech (also known as the elevator pitch, or 30 second commercial) is commonly used at career fairs and other networking events, and reflects the idea that it should be possible to wow someone with what you do in the time that takes an elevator to go from the first floor to the 10th floor. It usually looks something like this;



Our first tip is: NEVER give an ELEVATOR SPEECH!

Why? Because **being talked AT** is annoying. However, **talking WITH** someone gets them emotionally engaged and connected.

Ok, I don't want to annoy people, so then what DO I say?

Start with your strengths and purpose. Then have a CONVERSATION which includes LISTENING as well as SPEAKING. Ideally, the points below are made as part of a back and forth discussion. This will be easy in some situations, and more difficult in others; below is an outline to get you started.

Elevator Conversation Kickstarter

1. Who you are, plus a credential that differentiates you from your peers and/or establishes a relationship. Make eye contact, and a firm (but not bone-crushing) handshake when appropriate.

“HI, my name is Ima Longhorn, I am completing a PR degree at UT Moody College of Communication.”

2. Your specific goal/career interest. This will allow that person to help you or connect you to someone who can.

“I am interested in a career (or position as) helping non-profits engage local communities and increase donations through education.”

3. Pause and see if the person you are speaking with has a question, or comment. If not, this is a good time for you to ask a question such as;

“What has (company name) found to be the biggest challenge in increasing community involvement?”

4. Now, you KNOW your story, so resist the urge to think about what you are going to say next and LISTEN!

Have a back and forth dialogue during which you want to convey:

5. How you have demonstrated your interest (examples of things you have already done and what skills you have developed)

“I volunteered at Austin Pets Alive for the last 5 years, and during my internship at the Make a Wish Foundation, I managed 4 fundraisers, which really developed my organizational and marketing skills in event planning.”

6. AND what you have learned.

“My first event only had 5 attendees, but I learned that when I began to educate the community about the benefits for children and their families using social media and storytelling, we engaged a lot more people. Our last event had over 100 attendees and we raised \$4,000.00. “

LISTEN, SPEAK, LISTEN, SPEAK, OFFER TO HELP IF YOU CAN!

“ I’ve learned that I really enjoy both fundraising, and helping people realize how even the smallest donations make a big difference. Can you tell me more about (the upcoming gala you mentioned, opportunities to use my skills, help your company engage the local community, etc.)?”

7. End the conversation with a thank you and a plan to reconnect if possible.

“Well, I see there are quite a few people who are waiting for you so I won’t keep you. Thanks so much for your advice and insight. I really enjoyed our conversation!”

Tip: Make a note on their business card about something memorable you discussed to refer back to when you follow up.

***Remember, don’t be a schmuck! Always follow up with a thank you email or handwritten note to anyone who offers advice, resources, or goes out of their way in any capacity to advance you in your career.**