

The Elevator Pitch

I am not going to define the elevator pitch or why it is called the Elevator pitch. Suffice it to say you have a very short period of time to tell me about yourself and why I should continue to listen.

Refining a 20-second elevator pitch:

In a 20-second pitch, the biggest mistake is trying to communicate too many points without driving home a few key attributes. Most listeners will remember no more than three characteristics about a person in a first meeting; determine up front the three most important traits you want to communicate, and then develop statements that effectively illustrate those qualities.

- You would illustrate these qualities
- Then you would go on to substantiate this introductory statement with specifics.
- Finally, you provide the listener information that engages him to make a connection with you.

These three statements portray the core of your value to a company. Then, substantiate the strengths with actual numbers, figures and specifics, closing with your current actions to identify opportunities that meet your qualifications. Play it right by knowing what critical assets you want to communicate about yourself upfront and then develop three concise statements to describe how these traits match the needs of target companies.

When networking, it's important to talk about how you can help the person and add value to his or her organization. It may sound obvious, but people often get too caught up in trying to sound natural and overlook this key part of any communication.

Practicing an elevator pitch is good because it gets you to take ownership of your skill set and explain it with confidence — just make sure that it doesn't come off as "canned". The trick to mastering this type of effective communication in the job search is to prepare that message and make sure it's tailored to a particular person.

Bring value to the listener is the most important idea. Job seekers can figure this out by thoroughly researching the company and making preliminary inquiries before the interview. But interviews aren't the only venue where one would want to explain her value.

No matter the person or the venue, though, the message won't get through unless you're sure of yourself. People are impressed with confidence. If you come across like you're whispering, you won't get it. Nothing beats the real thing. One of the best ways to gain confidence during an interview setting is to go on as many interviews as possible — and learn from each one. If you don't learn from your experience, then it's not that valuable.

As a job seeker, you instantly become a sales and marketing professional. You are now in the business of marketing your skills and expertise to people connected to your target job. Your messaging needs to be consistent across all of your branding channels, your resume, cover letter, and online profiles; what you say when networking; and how you respond to questions in an interview.

What information sticks out to you? What's memorable and shows your passion? Now, identify your hook. What's the nugget you want people to remember you for? This will become your tagline.

In addition to this pitch, I recommend creating a short list of 3-5 stories you can use to demonstrate and quantify your work further.

Practice makes perfect. I don't care how great the content is – if you recite your pitch in a monotone voice, you're not going to impress anyone.

Example:

My name is Christian Pederson most people call me CP! I run a technical professional services company built for today's economy. We focus on Cloud computing, Software QA Services and Technical Executive placement. With the next generation tools that we have built we can and

have helped just about anyone. Last year we helped over 100 people find new positions in the Twin Cities market.