

## Elevator Pitch Pointers

An **elevator pitch** is an overview of an idea for a product, service, or project. The name reflects the fact that an elevator pitch can be delivered in the time span of an elevator ride (for example, thirty seconds and 100-150 words).

The term is typically used in the context of an entrepreneur pitching an idea to a venture capitalist or angel investor to receive funding. Venture capitalists often judge the quality of an idea and team on the basis of the quality of its elevator pitch, and will ask entrepreneurs for the elevator pitches to quickly weed out bad ideas and weak teams.

It is said that many of the most important decisions made on the floor of the United States's House or Senate are made "within the span of an elevator ride" as a staff aide whispers into a Congressman or Senator's ear while they head down to the floor to cast their vote.

A variety of other people, including entrepreneurs, project managers, salespeople, evangelists, job seekers, and speed daters commonly use elevator pitches to get their point across quickly.

At its core, an elevator pitch (aka elevator speech, elevator presentation, or elevator story) is several things:

- a communication tool to help you articulate your message
- a teaching tool
- a high-level and basic introduction that gives audience just enough information

***An elevator pitch is an overview of an idea, product, service, project, person, or other Solution and is designed to just get a conversation started.***

An effective elevator pitch generally answers questions such as:

- What the product is.
- What it does for the buyer (e.g. the benefits).
- Who you are.

The Elevator Pitch Video Clip <http://www.youtube.com>

# The Nine C's of an Effective Elevator Pitch

## 1. Concise

An effective elevator pitch **contains as few words as possible, but no fewer**. *Think hard about the essentials of your message and ruthlessly cut away the unnecessary details.*

While many people say that an elevator pitch must be short to be effective from a few seconds to as long as one or two minutes to get your point across.

Don't go too long, but also don't waste any of the time you have been given.

## 2. Clear

An effective elevator pitch **can be understood by lay-people** - your grandparents, your spouse, and your children -- just speak English.

## 3. Compelling

An effective elevator pitch very **explicitly explains the problem you are trying to solve, for whom it is a problem, and exactly why it is a problem**.

*Start with a tag line -- a wordplay to pique interest in your pitch.*

## 4. Credible

You must **give people a reason to believe what you are saying**.

The goal is to convince the audience that you know what you are talking about and that you have the knowledge, experience, and resources to get the job done.

## 5. Conceptual

An effective elevator pitch **stays at a fairly high level and does not go into too much unnecessary detail**.

When you are explaining your Solution to someone you have never spoken to before, you must **first** ensure that they know **WHAT it is that you are talking about** before you start to answer all of the HOW questions that you are preoccupied with.

## 6. Concrete

As much as is possible, an effective elevator pitch is also **specific and tangible**.

Make clear to the audience that what you are talking about is real (or soon will be). That means talking about specific products and not just technologies. That also means talking about demonstrable accomplishments, assuming – and hoping – you have some.

## 7. Consistent

Every version of an effective elevator pitch must convey the same basic message.

## 8. Customized

An effective elevator pitch must also address the specific interests and concerns of the audience.

## 9. Conversational

The goal of an elevator pitch is to just get the ball rolling. Generally, that means starting a conversation or dialogue, with the audience. Only later will the audience be interested in the details - the HOW - of your Solution.

## How to Craft Your Killer Elevator Pitch

- **Write down what you do.** Write it several different ways. Try writing it at least 10-20 different ways. Don't edit yourself at all. You will edit later. This first step is for generating ideas. Don't hold back. Ideas can be goofy, serious, wild, funny, or conservative. It doesn't matter. The goal is to get as many ideas as possible down on paper.
- **Write a very short story** that illustrates what you do for people. If necessary, the story can be long. You will boil it down later. Paint a picture with words.
- **Write down your objective or goal.** Do you want to make a sale, gain a prospect, enlist support for an idea, earn a referral, or something else?
- **Write 10-20 action statements.** This is a statement or question designed to spur the action associated with your goal.
- **Record yourself.** You can use Jott if you don't have a recording device. Jott is a free phone based service that translates your messages into text as well as providing an online link to the original audio.
- **Let it sit.** Come back to what you've written with fresh eyes and ears the next day or later on in the same day.
- **Highlight the good stuff.** Listen and read through what you've recorded and written. Then either highlight or circle the phrases that hook you with clear, powerful, and visual words. Obviously not all the words will fall into these categories. You still need connector words, but you want them to be as few as possible.
- **Put the best pieces together.** Again you'll want to write down several versions of this much tighter pitch. Tell us what you do and why people should want to do business with you. Include elements from your story if you can fit it in.
- **Record these new ones.**
- **Do a final edit** cutting as many unnecessary words as possible. Rearrange words and phrases until it sounds just right. Again, the goal is 30-60 seconds maximum.
- **Dress Rehearsal.** Run it by as many people as you can get to listen to you. Get feedback from colleagues, clients you trust, friends and family.
- **Done for now.** Take your final elevator pitch and write it down. Memorize and practice it until it just slides off your tongue naturally.
- **Continue to improve.** Over time, always be on the listen for phrases that you think could make your elevator pitch more clear and impactful. And then test it out. Every once in a while you will probably benefit by starting from scratch because things always change: you, your business, your goals, and your clients' needs.