



Elevator Speeches

Concept

Elevator speeches, also called “commercials” and “30 second messages” are not really speeches at all. They leverage introducing yourself and your work in a dynamic and thoughtful way so that others know who you are and what you do. Most of us meet hundreds of people in any business year. Introducing yourself well is an excellent opportunity to get to know others and talk about yourself in a positive way.

What Not to Do

Most people introduce themselves sloppily: “Hi, my name is Susie.” This not only presents a less than professional image, it gives the other person absolutely no information so that they have to go digging. While a few people are happy digging into your details, most are not. It is much kinder and more professional to introduce yourself in a way that helps the other person know who you are and what you do.

What to Do

A good elevator speech is simple if you spend a little time crafting it. Most people write down several versions and practice often until they are smooth and comfortable. You should use your own words and make it sound like you, only better. Here are the rules for a good introduction:

Rule #1:

Focus on the other. Look the new person in the eyes. Offer your hand. Smile.

Rule #2:

Have a solid handshake. No one likes a too firm or too loose grip. Practice shaking hands palm to palm, a firm but not dominating grip, with two quick shakes. Get feedback from someone else on your handshake. Nothing turns people off quicker than a limp or distant handshake.

Rule #3:

Introduce yourself with your first and last name. Speak slowly and clearly so that the other person can understand you, especially if you have an unusual name or an accent.

Rule # 4:

Tell the person your job and where you work. You can say, “I am a tax manager at BPK&Z, a CPA and consulting firm in Golden Valley.” Never just say, “I am a CPA.” It is too generic.

Rule #5:

Give another tidbit of information – something they might be able to relate to or ask questions about. You might add, “My job is to help people and businesses keep more of the money that they make. That means I work throughout the year to make sure all of our clients take advantage of every legal method to save on taxes.” You can see how this might encourage the other person to ask you a tax question – which is exactly what you want to happen! A little enthusiasm on your part encourages the other person to talk to you.

Rule #6:

Make sure you ask the other people, even if their introductions are weak, what they do and who they work with. Nothing is more interesting to others than the chance to talk about themselves. Ask leading questions about the other person and be considered a great conversationalist!

Samples

Some sample elevator speeches include:

“My name is Susan Bold and I am an accountant at BPK&Z CPAs and consultants in Golden Valley. What I like best about my work is the level of attention we insist on giving clients. I feel like I have a stake in the success of every single one. I have been working hard on a small manufacturing firm that came to us a year ago and we have saved them over \$58k in taxes so far.”

“I am Joe Smart and I am a partner at BPK&Z, a large local CPA and consulting firm. While we do the audit and tax work like everyone else, our real niche is some very high end work – serious tax savings, business valuations and litigation support, significantly improving business processes, closely held business advice, that sort of thing.”