

Henrik's Elevator pitch checklist

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1. What is an elevator pitch?

The expression is derived from making contact very quickly when you meet an interesting person in an elevator. But an elevator pitch should be used in all circumstances where you get the question “What are you doing”.

A good elevator pitch should present the advantages of your offering, and open up to further conversation and contact. That is all!

2. What should an elevator pitch contain?

To work well, an elevator pitch should answer three questions:

1. **What do you do?** Don't focus on the products/services that you sell, but on how your customers use what you sell.

2. **Whom do you do it for?** What types of customers are you aiming at?

3. **What benefits does it give your customers?** How are your products/services helping your customers to earn money, save time, reduce stress, increase productivity etc?

3. What an elevator pitch is NOT:

It should not be a mechanical sales pitch, but a time efficient way for you to start a conversation with the other person that can lead to something of mutual value.

You should NOT present everything you can do or sell!

You should NOT try to make the other person buy something from you!

You should NOT ask if they use the kind of products that you sell!

You should NOT ask whom they are buying from!

An elevator pitch is not foremost about you; *it is about how you add value to the other persons business.*

4. What is the goal of an elevator pitch?

The goal is to stop the other person from saying: ”We don't need that”, or “We already have people for that”, or “We don't do that”.

Instead, you want the other person to say: “Oh, how do you do that?”, or “That sounds interesting!”.

Then you have a golden opportunity to make the other person talk more about himself/herself, and listen to your description of how you can be of help.

5. How long should an elevator pitch be?

The shorter, the better!

Many people believe that it should be 30-60 seconds. That is too long; it sounds mechanical and quickly bores people.

An elevator pitch should be under 10 seconds! The reason is that you want the other person to talk as much as possible, so that you understand his/her interests and needs.

Tip: If you talk mostly about yourself you will be perceived as a bore, but if you encourage the other to talk about himself, he will think you are a brilliant conversationalist! That goes for everybody at all occasions.

6. When should you use your elevator pitch?

An elevator pitch is very useful in many more circumstances than you think. It reinforces your image and makes it easier for people to understand you and your business.

1. At all times when you are presenting yourself to others.
2. On your business card. Surprisingly many business cards do not have any information about the value that the person is adding to customers, or even what business sector he/she is working in!
3. On your web site.
4. When you introduce yourself on the telephone to people you want to connect with.
5. When you leave a message on a potential contact's answering service.
6. On your letterheads and printed brochures etc
7. In your email signature.

7. Then what?

When you have managed to get a person's attention with your elevator pitch, you want to extract more information about the other person's interests and needs. Then you can discover together what you can offer that the other needs. Describe in more detail how you create value for your customers, and refer to a happy customer in the same type of business as the other person.

Depending on the circumstances, you can either continue the discussion directly, or agree on a time for a meeting or lunch. If you are in a hurry, e.g. in an elevator, just ask: "It would be interesting to have lunch together and get to know more about your business. Can I have your business card so that I can call you and set up a suitable time?"

Your goal is to exchange business cards and get permission to call.

Tip: Immediately make a note on the card about what was interesting and when and where you met the person. Another way, if you cannot write on the card, is to fold the upper left corner = "Hot prospect", or the upper right corner = "Indirect contact", or the lower right corner = "No contact".

(See also my checklist for business mingling)