

EMPLOYMENT

Elevator Speeches Why you need one and how to write one for your job search

Phillip was excited. He had been out of work for 3 months and he was meeting a contact for lunch that had a lot of connections and could be very helpful in his job search. Phillip had been a Buyer for a major engineering company. One of his former vendors set up the lunch for him with an influential executive who had many contacts with manufacturing companies. Phillip was hoping he could get some leads from him.



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They met at a restaurant and after ordering, the executive asked Phillip what he was interested in. Phillip answered, "I'm open. I can do a lot of things and as long as I can find a job that will pay me what I was currently making, I will be happy."

Later that week, the executive met with Frank, an engineer who was also in transition. He questioned Frank about what he was looking for and Frank responded, "I am an international mechanical project engineer. I have turned business plans into profits world-wide. My specialties are heavy industry, exotic materials and hazardous processes."

Who do you think got the leads? It was Frank – the person who responded with focused information that told the executive exactly what he did and how he could help him. Frank had used an "elevator speech".

What is an Elevator Speech?

An elevator speech is a 30-second summary... (The time you have if you run into a potential employer on an elevator) that briefly introduces you and your skills to those who can help you in your job search. It is a one or two sentence statement you can make in 30 seconds that talks about your unique skills.

When do you use an elevator speech?

- when someone asks "What do you do?"

- at networking events
- at clubs / associations / places of worship
- at weddings, dinners, parties, picnics
- at any type of impromptu opportunity

What should be in an Elevator Speech?

In your prepared elevator speech you need to convey:

1. Who you are
2. What you do
3. What you are seeking... including key information relevant to your experience or job search goals.

Although it is very short, an elevator speech is very important. If you prepare one that is too long, you will bore the listener. If you have one that is too general, then it will not enable people to help you. A good elevator speech will take some time to develop, but it's well worth the effort.

Do's and Don'ts for Preparing an Elevator Speech

DO

- Do make your Elevator Speech sound effortless, conversational, and natural.
- Do make it memorable and sincere. Open a window to your personality.
- Do practice your speech.
- Do be warm, friendly, confident, and enthusiastic. A smile is often the best way to show friendliness and enthusiasm.
- Do take it slowly. Try not to rush through the speech, and do pause briefly between sentences. Breathe.
- Do maintain eye contact with your listener.
- Do be prepared to wrap up earlier than you were planning if you see the listener's eyes glazing over or interest waning.
- Do write and rewrite your speech, sharpening its focus and eliminating unnecessary words and awkward constructions. Practice on safe friends.

DON'T

- Don't let your speech sound canned or stilted.
- Don't ramble. Familiarize yourself with



your speech to keep from getting off track.

- Don't get bogged down with industry jargon or acronyms that your listener may not comprehend.
- Don't hesitate to develop different versions for different situations and audiences.

Phillip is a big advocate of the focused elevator speech now. Here is what he used to open a door at a cocktail party:

"Hi, I am Phillip. I am procurement professional with global sourcing

experience in North America and China. I have helped companies consolidate inventory, reduce multiple suppliers and lower acquisition costs. I am looking for my next opportunity as a Buyer with a manufacturing or distribution company."

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