



Sharpen Our Skills

Th Elevator Pitch

S.O.S. Class 3

July 8, 2016

The Elevator Pitch

An elevator pitch is a brief, persuasive speech to spark interest in what your organization does. You can also use them to create interest in a project, idea, or product – or in yourself. A good elevator pitch should last no longer than a short elevator ride of 20 to 30 seconds, hence the name. It should be interesting, memorable, and succinct. It also needs to explain what makes you – or your organization, product, or idea – unique.

The 5 Deadly Sins of the Elevator Pitch

1. **It's focused on sales.** Even the name tells you that. You're giving them your "pitch", you are describing your "value". Heck, you're making them listen to your "commercial"! Tell me the last time you established a strong personal mutually beneficial relationship with the person who interrupted your favorite television program to sell you a paper towel. This is the same thing except it's harder for your victim to change the channel.
2. **It's all about you.** We'll talk about this more later, but if you're talking about your stuff, you aren't finding out more about them. That means you aren't connecting
3. **It's just not very conversational.** Imagine having a nice chat with the person sitting next to you at the alumni association lunch. As a part of the natural ebb and flow of the conversation, you ask them what they do. Suddenly they stop being a human being and deliver thirty seconds of their value proposition. Talk about a conversation killer!
4. **It's fake and more than a little manipulative.** One of the things you are supposed to do when someone asks what you do is to come up with a short snappy response that makes them curious and want to ask more. A dentist might say something like "I make children smile!" Whenever I hear something like this all I can think is "What is this guy selling?" Listen, you know when someone is trying to manipulate you into asking more about their business. They can tell if you are doing that, too.
5. **At the bottom of it all, they just don't care.** Or at least they won't care about your business until they do care about you as a person. Really, the only good thing about these techniques is they're short. You at least won't be in danger of boring the other person to tears.

Guidelines for an Elevator Pitch

1. **Make it *brief*.** In my informal polling of my audiences, for most people, you've got between 7 and 10 seconds before they're bored listening to you talk about your business.
2. **Make it straightforward.** Those "cute" responses just make you look evasive, deceptive, and manipulative.
3. **Make it include who you help and how you do it.** All you want is for them to remember a general sense of what you do.

Beyond this very brief explanation, just stop talking. If they want to know more, they can ask. Until and unless they do you can refocus the discussion on them, their business and their interests. Then you can connect with them as a human being and not as a company...Because that's really the only way you can make great networking connections.

Greg Peters, president and founder of The Reluctant Networker, LLC, is a business networking specialist. He has worked with businesses and associations, entrepreneurs and job-seekers to create a world of better connections and greater opportunity. Find out more at www.TheReluctantNetworker.com or gpeters@thereluctantnetworker.com.

© Copyright 2013, The Reluctant Networker, LLC