



Networking

Writing Your Elevator Pitch

When first speaking with a potential employer or introducing yourself at networking functions, you need to be able to quickly describe your career goals as well as the core strengths and/or relevant experiences that you have to offer – all the while conveying the information in a way that gives a glimpse of who you are as an individual. Essentially, you need a personal commercial to pitch your product—you! These commercials are commonly called “elevator pitches” to reflect that the length of your pitch should not exceed the amount of time of an average elevator ride.

Applicable Career Communities:



When to Use an Elevator Pitch

Having a personal commercial is particularly important when attending job fairs and networking events. Many college students approach job fair recruiters in the same way they interact with admissions staff at college fairs in that they mistakenly think it is okay to “shop around” for companies – expecting the companies to sell them on their internship programs or employment opportunities. Adopting that tactic is a sure-fire way to make a negative impression. Recruiters at job fairs expect you to do the selling, to make a pitch for why you are a good fit for their positions.

The Elements of Your Elevator Pitch Should Include:

1. Your name
2. Indication of your present status/situation
3. Brief overview of your skills, strengths, experiences – emphasizing any information that directly connects with that particular individual or the employer for whom they work
4. A reference to a next step, which is generally a request for information or assistance

See the following page for examples of elevator pitches.

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Examples:

Example (student chatting with an alumnus at a networking event): Hello, my name is Scarlet Gray. I'm a junior at Ohio State studying biochemistry, with career interests in basal cell research. I'm working in a faculty member's lab and have been given progressively more demanding duties including training new research assistants on lab procedures. I understand that one of the R&D projects at Abbot Labs is focused on basal cells, and I'd like to speak with someone in that area about opportunities for part-time work or an internship. Do you know with whom I should speak at Abbot Labs about that research program?

Example (student chatting with college recruiter after an on campus information session):

Hi, I'm Jane Vickers. Thanks for coming to campus to help students like me learn about the variety of career opportunities at your company. In my job, I assist with managing the customer service department for one of Kohl's largest stores, and I will be graduating in May with a major in English and a minor in business. I've been offered a managerial position at Kohl's after graduation, but want to explore other options that relate to a past internship I held with the City of Columbus that involved preparing online training materials for new hires. My sense is my greatest talents are connected to technical writing/corporate communications. Is there someone with whom I could briefly meet to talk about any related opportunities at your company?

Example (student seeking resume pointers from a Teach for America recruiter at a campus career fair):

My name is Jesse Reynolds. I'm a junior and am working on a double major in Psychology and History. I've successfully completed a student teaching assignment and also interned at an urban summer recreation program. My goal is to teach history or social studies in the public schools and coach basketball or golf. I have a strong desire to use my skills, background, and dedication to working with disadvantaged youth and would be interested in learning about how to prepare a competitive application for Teach for America. Would you be able to look over my resume and give me tips on how to improve it? I want to make sure I'll have a competitive application when I apply to Teach for America next year.

Example (student introducing self to an Alcon Labs employee at a Career Connections event):

Hello, my name is Derrick Smith. I'm a junior studying Economics with a minor in Statistics. I'm specializing in a track that analyzes the structure and regulation of industry and am investigating internship opportunities that will allow me to apply knowledge have acquired through my studies. While researching the company website I learned that Alcon has a focus on the prevention of blindness, and I am interested in researching the regulation of clinical trials and new product development in this area. Could you tell me a little bit more about this?

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Draft your own elevator pitch:

Once you have your pitch ready, you will want to practice it **BEFORE** using it at a career fair. We recommend first practicing with a Career Coach and then with an alum at a networking events. Another best practice is to take advantage of opportunities that put you in contact with career professionals. For example, maybe you have become acquainted with a repeat customer at your job site and could practice your pitch with them. Repeat practice will help you feel more comfortable when giving your pitch to someone like a recruiter that you want to impress. Log into [Handshake](#) to schedule an appointment with a Career Coach.

Preparing for a career fair involves more than writing an elevator pitch so make sure to also review the Career Fair Strategies tip sheet. All of the Career Success tip sheets are found at <https://artsandsciences.osu.edu/career-success/students/navigating-career-planning-process/guides-tip-sheets>

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