

The Elevator Speech

How to develop and use it in your job search

If you've ever been on an elevator and between floors someone asked you the question, "What do you do?" even if your response was "I'm a student," you delivered an elevator speech.

The elevator speech is really important to a job search and should be developed, practiced and perfected, but not to the point of seeming rehearsed or canned. It should be second nature. Conversational yet concise is best but most importantly, short. Less than 30 seconds is all it takes. Not rushed, just short.

Think of it as a door opener or advertisement that draws in the listener by getting their attention and wanting to hear more. Communicate the value you could provide in a sentence or two and then try to open up the conversation. In the simplest sense, it may be just to communicate your availability and tell your story. You may need several variations depending on the situation such as for networking, interviewing, career fairs, or even casual social encounters.



Here are a few tips to help in creating yours:

1. Set the stage by introducing yourself. What is your career interest? Be a little creative and think about it from the listener's perspective. What might the audience want to hear about? Employers most likely want to hear about motivated people with relevant talents that can help them.
2. What is your key message? What special strength do you offer? How are you different? Tell your special story in a few words to set yourself apart and communicate your value. Give quantifiable information if possible, such as, "achieved a double major and graduated cum laude in three years." Facts make an impact.
3. Use emotion and avoid the yawn by making it energetic or even passionate. What makes you excited about your career? Action words can be helpful but use jargon or terminology sparingly if at all. Smiling when you speak can work wonders at helping to continue the conversation. Practice makes perfect.
4. Talk about how you could benefit an employer. If you are in Marketing, you may benefit an employer by helping to develop and sell innovative services. Culinary arts? Deliver delicious dishes that keep customers coming back. Teaching? How about you positively impact students and prepare them for academic success. The benefit statement is persuasive and powerful when well crafted.
5. Use a hook to make it memorable and extend the relationship. Good advice is to "Stroke the corporate ego" or in some way compliment the employer or interviewer. Genuine compliments are always well received as long as they are factual and not pandering. Handing out a business card or resume works wonders too. Try to exchange email addresses, phone numbers, links or offer up your social media profile if appropriate. Keep the door open.

Be prepared to explain, support or defend any part of your elevator speech. Think through questions or challenges that could arise and try to keep it open and conversational. Encourage interaction and discussion. Relax and have some questions ready to ask.



Here are a few basic examples:

- Hi, my name is Sarah Jones and I'm a recent grad of Optimal University with a bachelor degree in accounting seeking a position with a public accounting firm. I interned with Deloitte in the corporate tax department, already passed the first part of my CPA exam and have a real talent for communicating with clients. I work well with clients and deliver under pressure. I'd love to learn more about your company.
- Hello, I'm Jeff Snyder and I just got my degree in economics from Optimal University where I was also a pitcher on the baseball team. From class projects to sports, I've learned about how important teamwork is. I have a high energy level and strong analytical and technical skills that can help a company profit and grow. I'm in the process of searching for a position and a company where I can make a difference.
- My name is Mary Anderson and I'm seeking a position in customer service. For the past year I have worked in a technical support center, and have encountered just about every type of person or problem imaginable. I've realized that working with people and helping to solve their problems is what I'm best at and what I crave the most. I'm pursuing a certificate in IT at night to give me a broader technical skill set and to help improve my employer's service levels.
- Hi, my name is Tom Parker my classmates sometimes call me "The Excel Guru." I'll be receiving my degree in finance from Optimal University this fall. My passion is helping companies measure, make and save money using my finance and accounting expertise. I have a great foundation and a special skill for complex problem solving and am looking for an employer who can appreciate the uniqueness of what I have to offer. I'm eager to find someplace where I can be challenged every day.
- My name is Jane Smith and I'm graduating in May from Optimal University with a degree in nursing. My goal since childhood has been to be a nurse. Right now, I'm currently a part-time lab assistant at Optimal Hospital and I volunteer in their oncology unit as well. My eventual career goal is to work in pediatrics, preferably with cancer patients, but I'm open to other assignments as well, especially starting out. I'm ready to start!
- I'm Tim Warren and a recent honors grad from Optimal University. My major was Spanish, with a minor in Business Administration and I'm hoping to work in employee relations and human resources for an international company. I interned last year at a division of Optimal International and really enjoyed it. I'm multi-lingual, so ideally, I'd like to work overseas at some point or with a culturally diverse workforce here in the US. I can relocate anywhere for the right opportunity.
- I am Chelsea Morgan and my career goal is to help engineer affordable, renewable energy because I believe our environment is on a critical path. My environmental engineering degree from Optimal University and internship with Progress Energy has prepared me for the toughest of challenges in the field. Being on the forefront of change is exciting and rewarding. The opportunity of discussing needs at your environmentally conscious and progressive company would be greatly appreciated.

Also, here is a link to a virtual coaching session video that may be helpful:

https://www.optimalresume.com/OptimalVideo.html?typeVideo=upsell_coaching