

Elevator Pitch

An “elevator pitch” is a concise, carefully planned, and well-practiced marketing message about your professional self. The exercise was developed from the concept of selling yourself to a complete stranger on a short elevator ride. Your pitch is a useful tool for introducing yourself at career fairs, networking opportunities, or even the “tell me about yourself” phase of an interview.

What Should Your One-Minute Pitch Include?

- **Who you are, plus a credential** – Your name and something that differentiates you from your peers (major/degree, athlete) and/or establishes a relationship (graduate of the same college, from the same hometown, etc.)
- **Your specific goal/career interest** – What you are interested in/what you want to do
- **How you have demonstrated your interest** – Provide examples of things that you have already completed in the field, such as relevant coursework or an internship
- **A question or request for assistance** – For example, “perhaps I could meet with you in person to find out more about your organization.”

The following sample may help you in developing your elevator pitch:

“Hello, my name is Sammy Sagehen, and I am a senior Public Policy Analysis major at Pomona College. As a musician and a student of politics, I would like to explore the overlap of my interests and pursue a career in arts policy. I have interned at a number of nonprofit and government arts organizations, including the Lincoln Center Festival, Americans for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts, and I am currently writing my senior thesis about the nonimmigrant artist visa process. I will be in New York City this summer, and I would like to connect with you to learn more about your work at Carnegie Hall. Would you have time to meet for a brief informational interview in August?”

Common Mistakes

1. Lack of confidence in what you have to offer. “I don’t have a lot of work experience yet.”
2. Lack of focus or goals. “I have a lot of interests and don’t want to limit myself.”
3. Inability to articulate the learning and skills gained from one’s academic major. “I know my major has nothing to do with my interest in starting my own business, but...”

Delivery

- ✦ Practice so that the delivery is natural and conversational.
- ✦ Sound the part – show confidence and let your passion shine through.
- ✦ Look the person in the eyes.
- ✦ Smile and try to connect with the person.