# **How to Craft a Killer 60 Second Elevator Pitch**

### What is an Elevator Pitch?

This is the 30-60 second business description of what you do and why someone should work with you.

**It's called an "Elevator Pitch" because it describes the challenge: "How would you explain your business and make a sale if fate placed you in an elevator with your dream prospect and you only had the time it takes to get from the top of the building to the
bottom?"**

### Why Is Having an Elevator Pitch So Important?

**You only have 30-60 seconds to make a powerful first impression.** The attention span of the average person is just 30 seconds before their mind starts wandering. The other reason is people have less time today. You need to grab them quickly or lose them forever.

### Essential Elements of a Powerful Elevator Pitch

* **Concise.** Your pitch should take no longer than 30-60 seconds.
* **Clear**. Use language that everyone understands. Don't use fancy words thinking it will make you sound smarter. Your listener won't understand you and you'll have lost your opportunity to hook them.
* **Powerful.** Use words that are powerful and strong. Deliver the "Sis-Boom-Bang" to grab their attention!
* **Visual.** Use words that create a visual image in your listeners mind. This will make your message memorable.
* **Tell a Story.** A short story, that is. A good story is essentially this: someone with a problem either finds a solution or faces tragedy. Either type of story can be used to illuminate what you do.
* **Targeted.** A great elevator pitch is aimed for a specific audience. If you have target audiences that are vastly different, you might want to have a unique pitch for each.
* **Goal Oriented.** A kick-ass elevator pitch is designed with a specific outcome in mind. What is your desired outcome? You may have different pitches depending on different objectives. For instance do you want to: make a sale, gain a prospect, enlist support for an idea, or earn a referral.
* **Has a Hook**. This is the element that literally snags your listener's interest and makes them want to know more.  This is the phrase or words that strike a chord in your listener.

### How to Craft Your Killer Elevator Pitch

* **Write down what you do.** Write it several different ways. Try writing it at least 10-20 different ways. Don't edit yourself at all. You will edit later. This first step is for generating ideas. Don't hold back. Ideas can be goofy, serious, wild, funny, or conservative. It doesn't matter. The goal is to get at many ideas as possible down on paper.
* Write a very short story that illustrates what you do for people. If necessary, the story can be long. You will boil it down later. Paint a picture with words.
* **Write down your objective or goal.** Do you want to make a sale, gain a prospect, enlist support for an idea, earn a referral, or something else?
* **Write 10-20 action statements.** This is a statement or question designed to spur the action associated with your goal.
* **Record yourself.** You can use Jott if you don't have a recording device. Jott is a free phone based service that translates your messages into text as well as providing an online link to the original audio.
* **Let it sit.** Come back to what you've written with fresh eyes and ears the next day or later on in the same day.
* **Highlight the good stuff.** Listen and read through what you've recorded and written. Then either highlight or circle the phrases that hook you with clear, powerful, and visual words. Obviously not all the words will fall into these categories. You still need connector words, but you want them to be as few as possible.
* **Put the best pieces together.** Again you'll want to write down several versions of this much tighter pitch. Tell us what you do and why people should want to do business with you. Include elements from your story if you can fit it in.
* **Record these new ones.**
* **Do a final edit cutting as many unnecessary words as possible**. Rearrange words and phrases until it sounds just right. Again, the goal is 30-60 seconds maximum.
* **Dress Rehearsal.** Run it by as many people as you can get to listen to you. Get feedback from colleagues, clients you trust, friends and family.
* **Done for now.** Take your final elevator pitch and write it down. Memorize and practice it until it just slides off your tongue naturally.
* **Continue to improve.** Over time, always be on the listen for phrases that you think could make your elevator pitch more clear and impactful. And then test it out. Every once in a while you will probably benefit by starting from scratch because things always change: you, your business, your goals, and your clients' needs.

### What your "Elevator Pitch" must contain:

* **A "hook"**
Open your pitch by getting the Investor's attention with a "hook." A statement or question that piques their interest to want to hear more.
* **About 150-225 words**
Your pitch should go no longer than 60 seconds.
* **Passion**
Investors expect energy and dedication from entrepreneurs.
* **A request**
At the end of your pitch, you must ask for something. Do you want their business card, to schedule a full presentation, to ask for a referral?

### Example of an "Elevator Pitch"

**Here is a detailed example interview request "pitch" SeekingCapital.com:**

"I have done some research on SeekingCapital.com and know that it is changing the future of private equity investing.  SeekingCapital's private equity is a $100 billion a year market, with over 400,000 entrepreneurs aggressively seeking capital at any given time.  I know SeekingCapital.com offers entrepreneurs and investors an efficient and uniquely interactive method for obtaining or investing capital in pre-IPO companies.  Furthermore, SeekingCapital.com is not an "Internet only" company, but supports its online community with local franchises in the United States and internationally.

From my research I discovered SeekingCapital has decades of experience in the securities industry, investment banking, private equity, and executive management. I wanted you to know my partner and I have worked together side by side for several years co-managing and running the entire Internet operations of a publicly traded brokerage firm.  Our competitors such as XYZ Corp. and ABC Capital have not had as much success as us.  Our-ABC Capital was recently valued at $550 million . . . despite several limitations.

I found SeekingCapital.com isn't just a listing or matching service, they offer a community that breeds interaction, education, and discussion. They work with companies globally, through all stages of funding, and across all industries.  My research also told me that you are anticipating $XXX million this round to be used for employee building, increased office space, and marketing.

I have a compelling two page executive summary that I would like to send you. Can I get your address?"

***\*\*\*\*Still confused, need more information, please keep reading these additional resources\*\*\****

## **The Three Best Elevator Pitches**

**#1 Brian Walter** [www.extrememeetings.com](http://www.extrememeetings.com/)

Brian Walter is one of my favorite speaker coaches. And his elevator pitch method — the WOW, HOW, NOW approach — is the simplest and most fun.

1. WOW. Say something intriguing (even puzzling) that will make the other person want to hear more. A creative summary of what you do that demands some clarification. Ideally, the prospect’s reaction will be to cock their head and ask “what does that mean?”

2. HOW. Answer the stated (or unspoken) question and explain exactly what you do.

3. NOW. Shift into storytelling mode, giving a concrete example of a current customer. The key phrase is “Now, for example…”

Example

Prospect: So, what do you do?

Me: I help build PowerPoint muscles.

Prospect: Huh?

Me: I teach people how to use PowerPoint more effectively in business. Now, for instance, I’m working with a global consulting firm to train all their senior consultants to give better sales presentations so they can close more business.

**#2 Chris Westfall (**Chris is author of [The New Elevator Pitch](http://speakingppt.com/2012/07/26/3-best-elevator-pitches/www.amazon.com/The-Elevator-Pitch-Chris-Westfall/dp/0985414804).)

1. Start with a story/humor/news/etc. Don’t launch into your company spiel. Instead, start with something you expect to hear in a conversation: humor, a story, referring to recent news. Choose something that highlights a problem you help customers solve.

2. Add an emotional benefit statement. Say “That’s what I do.” Then summarize the RESULTS you achieve for customers. It should be an emotional benefit, not a hard-headed business benefit.

3. Quantify your success. Now you add the proof of your benefit statement, using numbers if possible.

4. Use the “velvet rope close”. The velvet rope close suggests your offer is only accessible to certain types. For example, if you’re an investment advisor you might say “I normally only talk about investing in gold with my high net worth clients. But I think it might be right in your case.” Rather than closing like a hungry dog, inappropriate for a social meeting, let the prospect come to you. In your elevator pitch, the key phrase to use is “I’m not sure if I can help you, but…”

Example

Do you remember about 10 years ago when the space shuttle Columbia was destroyed on re-entry? It turns out the engineers tried to warn NASA about the danger. But the PowerPoint slides they used were  a complete mess and no-one understood the danger.

That’s what I do. I train people how to make sure their PowerPoint slides aren’t a complete disaster.

For instance, students who attend my workshop can create slides that are 50% more clear and 50% more convincing by the end of the training, based on scores students give each other before and after the workshop.

I’m not sure if my training could work at your company. It really depends how much you use PowerPoint and what’s at stake if your PowerPoint is unclear. But I’d be happy to talk to you about it.

**#3 Richard Fouts:** Fouts is a [Gartner analyst](http://www.gartner.com/AnalystBiography?authorId=21390) who created the S.I.R. Framework based on storytelling principles: creating conflict, escalating the conflict and then resolving the conflict. It’s a bit too much of a monologue for my tastes, but it does feel more conversational than the “talking brochure” approach.

1. Situation (conflict). Illustrate the pain current customers face.

2. Impact (escalate conflict) – Explain the impact of that situation. How is this affecting profits, market share, customer loyalty, or anything else the prospect is concerned about losing.

3. Resolution – Explain how you solve the problem. Focus on benefits, not products and services.

Example

You know how most business people use PowerPoint but most use it pretty poorly? Well, bad PowerPoint has all kinds of consequences – sales that don’t close, good ideas that get ignored, time wasted building slides that could have been used developing or executing strategies. My company shows businesses how to use PowerPoint to capture those sales, bring attention to those great ideas and use those wasted hours on more important projects.

**Sources:**

<http://speakingppt.com/2012/07/26/3-best-elevator-pitches/>

[www.elevatorspeech.com](http://www.elevatorspeech.com)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2N03L6OaxeE>(TedTalk)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IxunO4S96F4>