



## Raise Your Job Prospects with an Elevator Speech

An “elevator speech” is a brief commercial of yourself; it is a verbal snapshot of your key qualifications, achievements, and goals. The common explanation of the term “elevator speech” is that it’s like a brief commercial for yourself that can be delivered in the time it takes to ride from the top to the

bottom of a building. That’s maybe 90 seconds. In other situations, it can be shorter or longer. A good elevator speech can help you to clearly show what sets you apart.

If you have an "elevator speech," you won't have to grope for words to describe yourself. You'll be ready at any time with examples and success stories that say, "This is who I am and what I do." A good elevator speech reflects your "personal brand," that is, the unique skills, abilities, and achievements that make you stand out in a crowd. An elevator speech is also an opportunity to show your positive attitude, energy level, and communication skills.

The elevator speech is an essential tool for the job hunter. If you’ve been out of the job market for a while, the term may be new. But the underlying concept is simple. The elevator speech consists of a few well-chosen sentences that tell your work story.

Creating an elevator speech helps you think in new ways about yourself, your job history, and your goals.

### When to Use It

You must have your elevator speech ready at any time and any place. This may sound like a tall order, but the result will be worth your while.

- Use your elevator speech anytime you are networking. It can be more casual if you’re talking one-on-one and more formal if you’re introducing yourself in a group.
- Use it in an interview. The elevator speech is shorthand for how you respond to questions such as, “Tell me about yourself,” and “Why should I hire you?”
- Use your elevator speech in cold calls to employers—for example, when leaving a voice-mail message for a hiring manager.

### Elements of an Elevator Speech

A good elevator speech is short but packed with information that is memorable, original, and personal.

It reflects your “personal brand”—that is, your unique skills, abilities, and achievements. It contains brief examples or stories describing your successes—the achievements that set you apart.

It contains answers to these key questions:

- Who are you?
- What do you do best?
- How have you made an impact?
- What sets you apart from the competition?
- What are you seeking?

### Tips for Developing Your Speech

- Create a “hook”—something that will engage the listener, prompt more questions, and keep the conversation going.
- Write out your speech if that helps, then practice without reading or memorizing it. Aim for spontaneity.
- Rehearse with family and friends. Your speech must sell you professionally and be natural.
- If appropriate, add a request for action, such as asking for a business card or interview appointment.

Here’s an example of an elevator speech that includes both personal and professional information. This speech can be adapted and expanded depending on the situation. The speaker could use it when looking for a job, seeking funding for a project, or networking.

“I’m Sandra Green, and I make things grow. I’ve created gardens of all sizes for friends, schools, and senior centers. I teach gardening at after-school programs and have started a gardening blog. So far, I’ve worked with 10 schools and five other community organizations in my local area. My goal is to create better neighborhoods by bringing people of all ages together around gardening.”

### Avoid These Mistakes

- Don’t confuse an elevator speech with a resume. An elevator speech is much different than a list of job titles and years of experience.
- Resist the impulse to exaggerate. It’s easy to spot a phony.
- Don’t use the exact same speech in all situations. Adapt to your audience and purpose.

### To-do List

- Schedule time to work on your elevator speech.
- Jot down personal success stories and accomplishments that you could include in your elevator speech.
- Look for examples and advice on elevator speeches at [http://www.quintcareers.com/job-search\\_elevator\\_speech.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/job-search_elevator_speech.html).
- Ask someone you trust for feedback on your speech

