

Perfecting your elevator pitch

Imagine that you have to sell yourself or your company in 30 seconds. You've just jumped into an elevator with the head of your company or a major potential investor, and you've got a rare opportunity to pitch to them while the elevator travels between floors.

What would you say to get their attention?

Today, the term is often used to describe your ability to promote yourself in a really succinct way at any opportunity. Here's a few examples of when you may need to use your 'elevator pitch.'

- **Interviews** – Ever been asked to sum up why you'd make a great candidate in 30 seconds? Being able to sell yourself well in an interview is key, so having an elevator pitch ready to go will make sure you come across confident and prepared.
- **Meetings** – When meeting prospective clients, it's good to be prepared to give them a clear view of what you're about, so having your pitch ready for meetings is important.
- **Networking** – At some networking events, you only have a short amount of time to speak to people so having an elevator pitch prepared is a brilliant way to make sure you get as many people interested as possible.

Being able to sum up your professional capabilities or even a business idea is an important skill, and often harder than it seems.

So, where do you start with perfecting your pitch?

1. Simplify

An article on [Forbes.com](https://www.forbes.com) suggests that your pitch should answer three main questions – Who are you? What do you do? And what are you looking for? Work out what your objective is and hone your pitch down to the essentials to keep it clear, engaging and purposeful.

2. Be 'human'

It's important to get the essential information across, but remember to show your personality too. [Richard Branson](#) says "The first step toward delivering a great pitch is to keep it human, far too many presentations and speeches can turn artificial and wooden quite quickly."

3. Identify your USP

Short for Unique Selling Point, your USP should highlight exactly what makes you special. Why should you be hired? What makes your business worth investing in? Your pitch should state exactly what makes you stand out from your competitors.

4. Tailor it

Think about who you will be talking to, and tailor your pitch for the person or situation. You may want to have two or three versions ready with different tones, delivery style or relevant information. The author of '[Elevator Pitch Essentials](#)' advises: "Whether you're at an event, an impromptu meeting or in a boardroom, you have to be able to modify your pitch to fit the environment and the audience."

5. **Test yourself**

If you've got one chance to impress someone, you want to hit the nail on the head. Practice your pitch until you've got every word memorised, and you can roll through it without stumbling. You want your pitch to come across as naturally as possible, so test yourself in front of the mirror, your friends, whatever it takes. It's also good to have an idea of the types of questions you may be asked so that you're prepared for those too.

Creating a good first impression is always important, and especially when your job or your business is at stake. Being prepared could ensure that your next elevator pitch is the most valuable 30 seconds you've ever spent.