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The Elevator Speech – Say it with Pizzazz!

By Shawn E. Gilleylen

What is an elevator speech? An elevator speech is a brief thirty second or 100 – 150 word statement that introduces you in a memorable way. It spotlights positive aspects of your personality and shares with people what you do and what you are good at doing. An elevator speech is delivered with ease, confidence, charisma, and sincerity.

The elevator speech is a networking tool that teaches people about your character and competence. You can adapt your elevator speech for any situation and whenever you meet a new contact. A new contact can be the attendant at the bookstore, the passenger on the bus, or the nurse at the doctor’s office – not just people in an elevator.

An effective and impressive elevator speech makes a lasting first impression, demonstrates your professionalism, speaks to your reputation, and differentiates you from the competition.

Here are seven simple guidelines to help you develop your elevator speech and say it with pizzazz:

1. Write your speech and share a story that highlights your skills, achievements, or qualities. Give people positive things to say about you. Include a hobby to personalize your conversation.
2. Succinctly answer the question “Tell me about you.”
3. Create different versions of your speech for diverse settings and audiences.
4. Practice and learn your speech – don’t memorize it. Don’t make your speech sound scripted, fake, or commercial. Record your voice to hear how you sound.
5. Focus on your competitive advantage and unique attributes. What differentiates you and makes you an asset?
6. WOW your audience by speaking with a smile, passion, enthusiasm, and energy.
7. Keep in touch! Ask your new contact for a business card, meeting, or referral. Be a resource and share information to build authentic relationships.