First Impressions: How to Deliver a Professional 30-Second Elevator Pitch

Quick! The C.E.O. of the company you’ve dreamed of working for your entire life is standing right in front of you in line at the grocery store. What do you do?

Data shows that when you initially meet someone, their first impression of you is formed within the first two minutes they spend with you. After that first impression is formed, it is extremely difficult for it to be changed. A 30-second elevator pitch should be a part of every professional’s job search arsenal, including yours, for this very reason.

An elevator pitch is a quick speech that you have memorized in case you ever meet someone who it is essential you make a good, professional impression on. It is also a great starting point for beginning a conversation with employers at job fairs, people who you want to bring into your professional network, or as a way of summarizing yourself at the beginning of an interview.

An elevator pitch should be about 30 -seconds in length (about the time an elevator ride would take), and should highlight who you are, and what you have accomplished in your career. To get started on creating a 30-second elevator pitch, write out a list of the types of jobs you are interested in. This list can be as general as employment in a certain industry or field, or as specific as a position title with a certain kind of company. Next, list your experience that is relevant to those types of jobs, and pick three of your top qualities, such as communication skills, leadership or multi-tasking. Then write a script that will take you about 30-seconds to read, and which includes:

• Your Name
• What degrees you have received and from what institution(s) it/they were from, and/or what degree you are currently working toward
• The types of jobs you are interested in
• Your relevant experience
• Your three top qualities, and how those qualities will benefit the organization.

Once you are satisfied with your script, practice delivering it. Remember, you should start by shaking the person’s hand as you state your name, and maintain eye contact throughout the entire pitch. Every few months, you should review your elevator pitch to keep it updated, and so that you keep it committed to memory.

If you are planning on attending the Career Day, Ivy Tech’s Annual Job Fair on Thursday, March 17 the Career Development office recommends developing an elevator pitch beforehand.
HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR PROFESSIONAL PITCH
TEMPLATE

Step 1: Who You Are

_I am a(n)_...

Begin with your name followed by your actual job title or a descriptive term for the occupation for which you are seeking employment. You could also incorporate information about your education here. Also, don’t forget to open the entire introduction with a firm handshake.

__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

Specializing in...

This is a short phrase that makes your title or occupation more specific. To further elaborate on your education, you might add some of the higher level program courses that you have completed.

__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

Step 2: What You Do

This may require more than a sentence but no more than three sentences. What do you do now and what is it that you have to offer the employer in terms of job function or contribution? If you are continuing to focus on your education, you might address your balance of work and school, your academic accomplishments, and any relevant activities.

__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

Step 3: Why You’re the Best

This may require more than a sentence but no more than three sentences. What makes you the best at what you do? Provide a concrete example of something that sets you apart from other people in your field. Specifically describe what makes you different from other people with your education and experience. Think about how you would answer the following interview question, “Why should I hire you?” What is the single most important attribute (skill, ability, experience, education, characteristic) that sets you apart from others? If you are able, quantify it.

__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
Step 4: Your Call to Action

Let the person know what to do to work with and/or contact you. Ask an engaging question, such as “What advice do you have for me?”, “Do you know any employers I should be contacting?”, or “Will you provide me two additional contacts in the field so I may obtain further advice?”. If you have printed networking cards, you might offer the card with your contact information as a means to reach you. You might want to indicate that you are interested in working for the person you are speaking with and offer your resume. Be sure to ask for a business card.

Putting It All Together:
HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR PROFESSIONAL PITCH

Step 1: Who You Are

I am a(n)…

This can be your actual job title or a descriptive term for your occupation. Examples include: Financial Advisor, Attorney, or Artist.

Ivy Tech tips: Begin with your name followed by your actual job title or a descriptive term for the occupation for which you are seeking employment. You could also incorporate information about your education here. For example, you might say, “I am Jenny Jobseeker, an Accounting student at Ivy Tech Community College…”. If you have both education and relevant experience, you could mention both your professional title and educational pursuits. Also, don’t forget to open the entire introduction with a firm handshake.

specializing in…

This is a short phrase that makes your title or occupation more specific. An artist may specialize in portraits, or an Attorney might specialize in employment law.

Ivy Tech tips: To further elaborate on your education, you might add some of the higher level program courses that you have completed. So, Step 1 might look something like this, “I am Jenny Jobseeker, an Accounting student at Ivy Tech Community College where I have completed coursework in Income Tax, Payroll, and Cost Accounting.”

Step 2: What You Do

Write a single sentence that describes what you do and be as specific as possible so people can really picture what you mean. For example, a Financial Advisor who specializes in retirement planning might say something like, “I worry about your retirement so you don’t have to”.

Ivy Tech tips: This may require more than a sentence but no more than three sentences. If you are continuing to focus on your education, you might address your balance of work and school, your academic accomplishments, and any relevant activities. To continue with the example above, Step 2 might look like this, “I am presently employed part-time as a customer service representative at XYZ Company where I practice strong communication skills daily. I also carry a 3.8 GPA and am active in the Student Government Association at Ivy Tech where I serve as the Treasurer. My goal is to begin my career as a staff accountant to make the best use of my skills and education.” In other words, what do you do now and what is it that you have to offer the employer in terms of job function or contribution?

Step 3: Why You’re the Best

Write a single sentence that lets people know why you should be their “go to” person. Provide a concrete example of something that sets you apart from other people in your field. For example, our Financial Advisor might say, “Many of my clients are able to retire early based on the success of the investment strategies that we develop together.”
Ivy Tech tips: Again, this may require more than a sentence but no more than three sentences. Specifically describe what makes you different from other people with your education and experience and what makes you the best at what you do. Think about how you would answer the following interview question, “Why should I hire you?” Another way to think of this is how will you do the job better than anyone else? What is the single most important attribute (skill, ability, experience, education, characteristic) that sets you apart from others? If you are able, quantify it. For example, “My education provides me with a thorough knowledge of current accounting practices and computer accounting programs. Serving as the Student Government Treasurer has given me the opportunity to use that knowledge to manage our $40,000 student program budget.”

Step 4: Your Call to Action

Write a single sentence that lets people know what the next step is that they need to take in order to work with you. Our Financial Advisor might say, “Contact me to arrange a complimentary one-hour consultation to discuss your retirement goals and talk about how you can finally achieve financial security.

Ivy Tech tips: You might want to indicate that you are interested in working for the person you are speaking with and offer your resume. For example, Step 4 might look like this, “I am interested in working at your organization and would like to share with you my resume that further highlights my professional skills and accomplishments, along with my educational achievements.” Or, if you have printed networking cards, you might offer the card with your contact information as a means to reach you. Further action ideas: Ask an engaging question, such as “What advice do you have for me?”, “Do you know any employers I should be contacting?”, “Will you provide me three other contacts in the field so I may obtain further advice?”, or “May I call you for an interview?”. BE SURE TO ASK FOR A BUSINESS CARD! Step 4 could also look like this, “Please accept my resume. May I have your business card and may I call you for an interview and recommendations for other employers to contact?”

Putting It All Together:

“I am Jenny Jobseeker, an Accounting student at Ivy Tech Community College where I have completed coursework in Income Tax, Payroll, and Cost Accounting. I am presently employed part-time as a customer service representative at XYZ Company where I practice strong communication skills daily. I also carry a 3.8 GPA and am active in the Student Government Association at Ivy Tech where I serve as the Treasurer. My goal is to begin my career as a staff accountant to make the best use of my skills and education. My education has provided me with a thorough knowledge of current accounting practices and computer accounting programs. Serving as the Student Government Treasurer has given me the opportunity to use that knowledge to manage our $40,000 student program budget. I am interested in working at your organization and would like to share with you my resume that further highlights my professional skills and accomplishments, along with my educational achievements. May I have your business card and may I call you for an interview and recommendations for other employers to contact?”

Useful Internet Sites:

http://www.15secondpitch.com
http://www.quintcareers.com/elevator_speech_dos-donts.html
http://www.quintcareers.com/job-search_elevator_speech.html
http://www.quintcareers.com/writing_elevator_speeches.html

SOURCE: http://www.15secondpitch.com
Hello –

I am Bill Williams, an Ivy Tech Community College student studying Computer Information Technology specializing in Networking. This is a career transition for me from the manufacturing industry. I have been provided a wonderful opportunity to further my education, and as a dislocated worker I have been making the most of it. Currently I am working part-time at the Workforce Certification Center at the college as a computer technician. This allows me to apply what I am learning in the classroom while gaining practical experience in my field. Although working while attending school full-time is challenging, this has proved to be an invaluable experience. In addition to my part-time work, I have also participated in a job shadow experience at Old National Bank where I learned firsthand from my host about his duties and responsibilities in the Information Technology department there. This reassured me that I am in the right field and I am very enthusiastic about beginning my career for a company in which I can help them sustain cutting edge information technology services and stay ahead of their competition. May I have your business card so that I may contact you for guidance about employment with XYZ Company? Please accept my resume in return. I appreciate your time.