

*The Communications Lab @ HGSE
Presents...*

How to Give an Effective Elevator Pitch

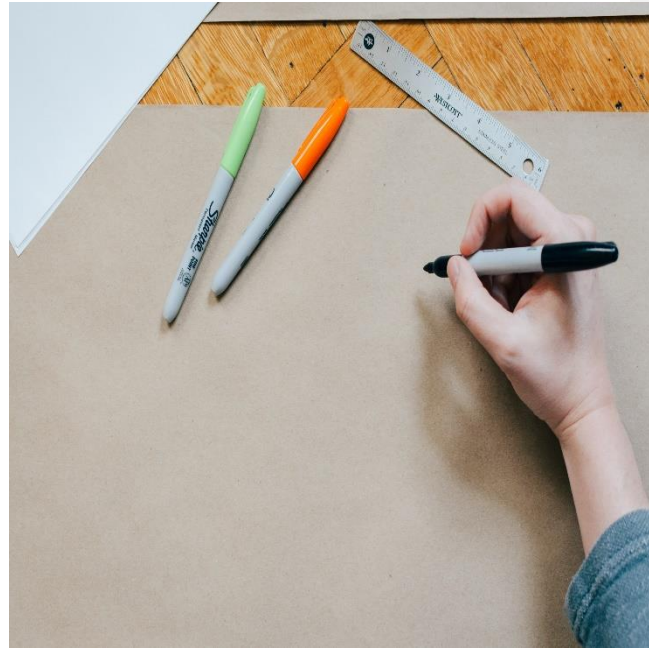
**Creating and
Communicating Your
Vision in Under 1 Minute**

November 2022

About Us

WHAT WE DO

We are a HGSE resource created to help graduate students develop their presentation skills and to provide a space and opportunity for students to cultivate their oral and visual communication skills



1

Workshops



2

Webinars



3

Consultations

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About Us

WHO WE ARE

Ning Zou



Associate Director for Student Academic Services & Learning Design and a research librarian. She oversees Gutman Library's Writing Services and the Communications Lab in addition to providing research consultations and leading the library's learning design projects

MG Prezioso



Doctoral candidate at Harvard University and HGSE. MG studies the intersection of psychology and literature. Specifically, she is interested in the process of children's narrative absorption, as well as how literature contributes to students' moral development and identity formation.

EFFECTIVE ELEVATOR PITCHES

WORKSHOP AGENDA

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01 MOTIVATION

02 INTRO TO ELEVATOR PITCHES

03 ELEVATOR PITCH TIPS

04 PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE

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MOTIVATION

AN ELEVATOR PITCH⁰⁶ WHY SHOULD I CARE?

YOU NEED TO CLEARLY ...

- 1** “Promote Yourself”
- 2** “Promote Your Idea”
- 3** “Promote Your Research”

**...IN 60
SECONDS**

EFFECTIVE ELEVATOR PITCHES

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AN ELEVATOR PITCH

WHAT IS IT?

- **A 60 second high-level overview of your story that effectively details who you are, your impact, your uniqueness and goals**
- **May need to deliver it under pressure and without warning**
- **Contexts vary far and wide. Some include:**
 - Job Recruiting
 - Connecting with new colleagues
 - Recruiting stakeholders (for business, for a cause, etc.)
 - Promoting your research at a conference

AN ELEVATOR PITCH IN 4 STEPS

1

WHO YOU ARE

- Keep it short and sweet

2

WHAT YOU DO

- Go beyond describing or listing tasks
- State your value through the results or impact of what you do
- Another opportunity to showcase your value-add

3

WHY YOU ARE UNIQUE

- Put a pause on being humble or self-deprecating and show the unique benefits you bring
- Your opportunity to highlight how you are different or better (context dependent)

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GOAL FOR PITCH

- What is the goal of your elevator pitch?
- Who is your pitch for and why are you giving it?
- Personal vs. Professional Elevator Pitches

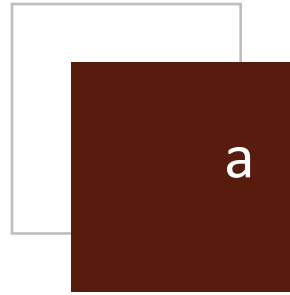
INTRO TO ELEVATOR PITCHES

STEP 1 WHO YOU ARE

One or two sentence
intro to kick off your
elevator pitch and
introduce the listener to
who you are

THIS
IS WHO
I AM

THIS
IS WHO
I AM



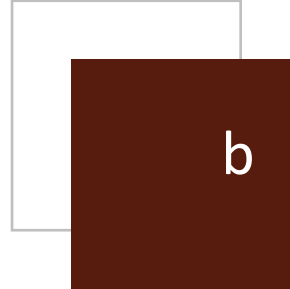
Remember to smile and show enthusiasm

KEEP IT SHORT AND SWEET

This should be a maximum 10-15 seconds

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This can be a statement or question that
grabs your audience's attention



PRIORITIZE & MAKE IT COUNT

What do you most want the listener to
remember about you? This is the "hook" of
your pitch.

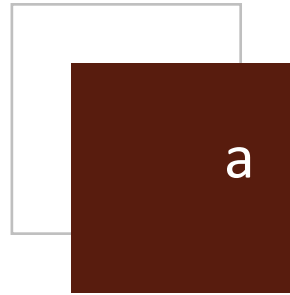
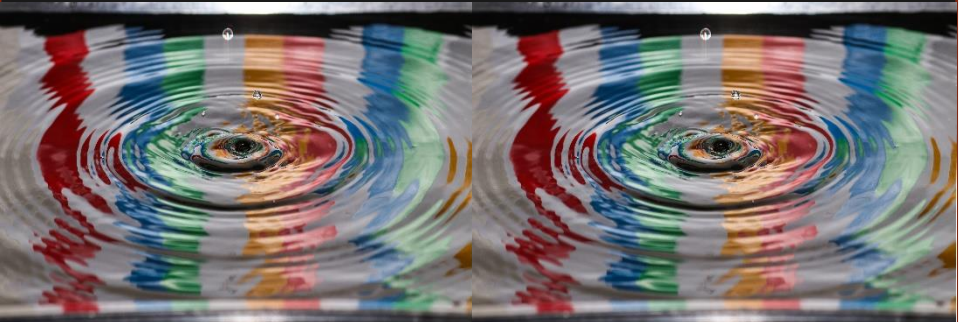
Examples

- Ex 1: Hi, my name is Dylan, and I am a Ph.D. Candidate at Harvard studying education policy and economics. I'm an ex-management consultant that cares about using data and economic theory to impact positive social change.
- Ex 2: Community college students are often frustrated, confused or intimidated by the opaque process of transferring to a 4-year college. I'm passionate about solving this problem for all students, but particularly for first-generation, low-income students with limited support and guidance.

INTRO TO ELEVATOR PITCHES

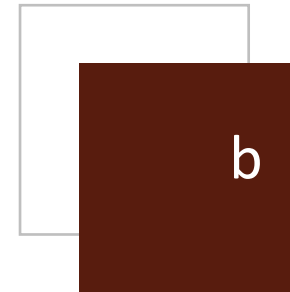
STEP 2 WHAT YOU DO

Now is not the time to list all your job responsibilities and what they entail. Use this stage to go beyond simply describing what you do and highlight the impact of it



WHAT'S YOUR IMPACT THROUGH WHAT YOU DO

Think of this as your "tag line"



CONVEY YOUR VALUE ADD

Your descriptions of what you do should help your listener learn how you can add value

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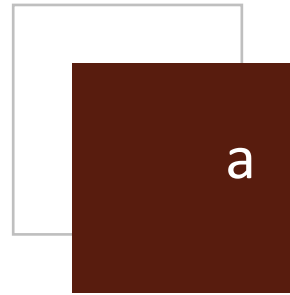
Examples

- Ex 1: "I use advanced statistical techniques to answer challenging educational policy questions that lack a clear consensus or robust causal evidence. My research questions are informed by my passion for economics and my belief that education is a gateway to a more prosperous future."
- Ex 2: "I created an app to tackle this problem. It is an advanced data aggregation and analytics platform that generates academic plans and trackers tailored to a student's strengths and weaknesses to aid them in earning a bachelor's degree via the community college route."

INTRO TO ELEVATOR PITCHES

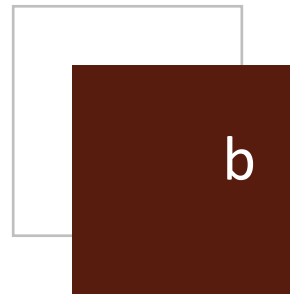
STEP 3 WHY YOU ARE UNIQUE

This is your time to let your unique self shine. Give your listener an inside track to how your different and why it matters.



HOW ARE YOU DIFFERENT?

What unique skills, experiences and perspective do you bring to the organization or community?



HOW ARE YOU BETTER?

What benefits do you bring to the organization or community that others may not?

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Examples

- Ex 1: "My unique set of analytical skills developed during my time in academics is complemented by a suite of social and communications skills sharpened from my time as a management consultant. In a world that increasingly values data analytics and team based skills, I have both."
- Ex 2: "My platform is the first of its kind and will be licensed to high schools and community colleges in California for \$10 per year. This will alleviate the burden placed on academic counselors and provide cost effective support at nationally competitive pricing for low-income, first gen students."

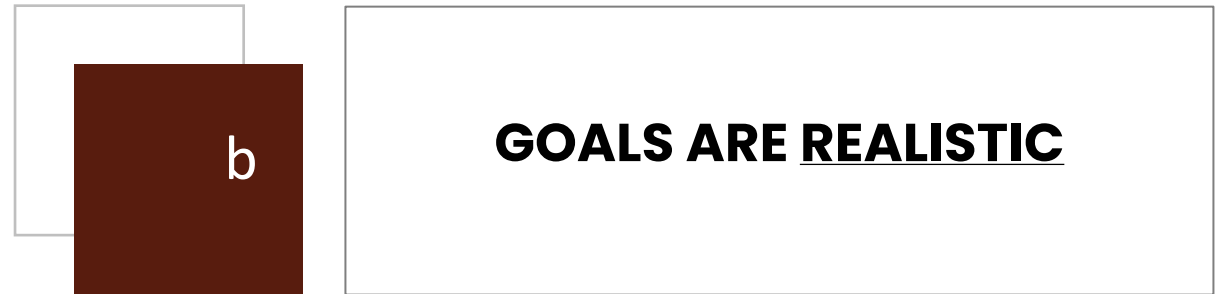
INTRO TO ELEVATOR PITCHES

STEP 4 WHAT'S YOUR GOAL

This is the final stage.
Now is the time to
describe your immediate
goals and make clear
what you are asking of
the listener.



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Examples

- Ex 1: "I read that your organization is involved in education policy research and provides strategic support to state and federal level education agencies. Can you tell me how someone with my experience may fit into your organization?"
- Ex 2: "With 100+ community colleges and 1300 + California high schools, and no direct competitors, my app aims to capture 10% of high schools and 25% of community colleges as clients for a total revenue of \$1M + per year. This is an opportunity for you to invest in an ed-tech start up at the ground-level while making 4-year institutions more accessible to all."

EFFECTIVE ELEVATOR PITCHES

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PRACTICE, PRACTICE,
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TIP #1

“Be Succinct”

- **Avoid the nitty-gritty details (for now)**
 - Too much detail may lose your audience
 - You have a short-time to make an impression and hook your audience, don't linger
- **Make it 60 seconds or less**
 - This is not a hard and fast rule
 - Adjust to your audience as needed



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ELEVATOR PITCH TIPS

TIP #2 “Make it Authentic”

- **This is NOT a memorized monologue**
 - Find the balance between ad lib and rote memorization
- **Make your audience feel SPECIAL**
 - Yes, this is a targeted speech that follows a template...BUT allow yourself some freedom to let your unique personality show
 - Remember you are having a conversation





ELEVATOR PITCH TIPS

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TIP #3 “Be Passionate”

- **Good content and structure may not be enough**
 - Your audience might be impressed by your credentials, experience and acumen but does your story MOVE them?
- **Create a spark. Hook your listener. Make an impact.**
 - Excitement begets excitement
 - If you're not excited, your listener probably won't be either

TIP #4

“Be Confident”

- **Hone your non-verbal communication**
 - Hand gestures (e.g. “the box”, “pyramid hands”, “holding the ball”, “palms up/ palms down”)
 - Stances (e.g. “wide stance”)
 - Posture
- **Nerves**
 - Being nervous ≠ lacking confidence
 - Public speaking can be tough, but practice can help overcome nerves





ELEVATOR PITCH TIPS

TIP #5 “Prepare & Practice”

- **Preparation**
 - What are you going to say? (content)
 - When are you going to say it? (structure)
 - How long does it take it say (timing)
- **Practice**
 - Developing and refining your 60 second pitch takes practice and iteration
 - Rehearse by section and then combine

ELEVATOR PITCH TIPS

SUMMARY

Tips for Success

Center your elevator pitch around these tips and you will be well on your way to winning over your audience and effectively communicating your vision in under 60 seconds. This is not an exhaustive list, but it is a great place to begin as you strive to create a polished and impactful pitch.

TIP #1

Be Succinct

TIP #2

Make it
Authentic

TIP #3

Be Passionate

TIP #5

Prepare &
Practice

TIP #4

Be
Confident



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PROMPT

You're at a conference talk on campus. You find yourself with the opportunity to talk with the headliner after their presentation. Time to put your polished elevator pitch to good use!



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1

Create groups (2-3)

- Give your elevator pitch without preparation
- Each person (if comfortable) should give this a try

2

Prepare

- Using the template we provided prepare each elevator pitch stage
- You can write this down and use script if needed

3

Take 2: Elevator Pitch

- Give your prepared elevator pitch
- Each person (if comfortable) should give this a try

4

Feedback

- Provide feedback to your peers
- What worked?
- What didn't?

THANK YOU

#HGSE COMMUNICATIONS LAB

<https://communicate.gse.harvard.edu/communicationslab>

References

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