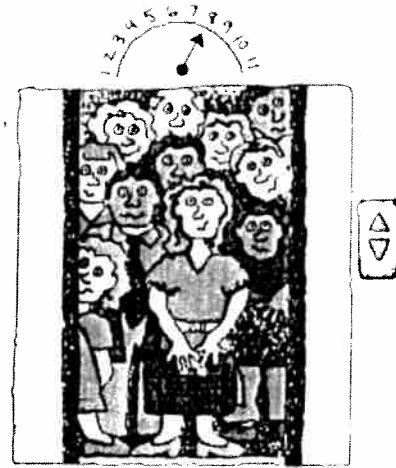


How to Craft an Effective Elevator Speech

by Chris King

I know that at this moment, you are wondering what I'm talking about. Who gives a speech in an elevator anyway? What I mean by an "elevator speech" is a short description of what you do, or the point you want to make, presented in the time it takes an elevator to go from the top floor to the first floor or vice versa. In this article you will find out what, why, where, when, to whom, and how to prepare that "elevator speech."



What exactly is an "elevator speech"? I believe the name was actually coined from the idea that we sometimes meet the important people in our lives in elevators. The odd situation we encounter in most elevators is that nobody speaks to or looks at anyone else, and yet we have a captive audience for that short period of time. Very few people are ready to interact in case someone does speak. The idea of an "elevator speech" is to have a prepared presentation that grabs attention and says a lot in a few words. What are you going to be saying? By telling your core message, you will be marketing yourself and/or your business, but in a way that rather than putting people off will make them want to know more about you and your business.

Why prepare an "elevator speech"? In previous articles I have continually mentioned the importance of preparation, and it is no different for an "elevator speech." Actually, it is imperative to work on this two to three minute presentation until it is perfectly crafted. This is the one kind of speech that I do suggest memorizing. Make it such a part of you that if someone woke you up from a sound sleep in the middle of the night, and asked you what you do, you would smoothly and without hesitation tell them your "elevator speech." This speech will serve as your introduction to others, so it has to be good!

Where and when do I use this "elevator speech"? Of course, if you meet someone who shows interest in the elevator, you can be literal and use it there. But usually it comes in handy when you attend an event, a conference, a convention, or some other type of meeting with networking opportunities. You will notice that one of the first questions people ask is, "And, what do you do?" "Oh, I'm a lawyer ... or an accountant ... or a consultant ... or an artist..." It doesn't matter because they will often say, "Oh, that's nice," and immediately label you in their mind with all of the stereotypes they perceive those occupations carry with them. However, if you turn your message around and start with an answer like, "I work with small businesses that are grappling with computer problems," right away — especially if they own a small business — their ears will perk up and they will want to know more. The reason I suggest working on this speech and memorizing it is that our natural reaction to the question, "What do you do?" is to answer with a label. Then, we continue to describe the process we go through instead of sharing the benefits they will get from working with us. Rather than thinking of ourselves as "solution providers" we picture ourselves as doing our occupation.

To whom do I present my “elevator speech”? The more often you give your short speech, the better it will become. You will have so much fun experiencing the unique reactions to what you are saying, you will easily be able to add enthusiasm and energy to the telling. I suggest taking advantage of a wide variety of gatherings and networking events. And, don't worry, if your “elevator speech” isn't smooth, easy, or natural in the beginning. If you stick with it, you will find that it gets better and better, and before long, you will be getting a surprising amount of business — or, at least a number of contacts who want your business card and to stay in touch. You will also be remembered.

How do I craft my elevator speech? What are the ingredients? Before I go any further, I want to credit the man who turned me on to how to market using a strong core message, which I am calling my “elevator speech.” It is Robert Middleton who calls himself an InfoGuru and who has developed an Action Plan Marketing Manual — which is not only reasonably priced, but loaded with incredible information. You will find him [HERE](#). Even if you don't get his online manual, be sure to subscribe to his weekly newsletter, which is excellent. To start your “elevator speech” determine your niche market, what problem(s) do they have that you can help solve and what solution is the outcome? What makes you unique? What short story illustrates a successful outcome that you have produced?

For example, this is my elevator speech: Everyone has a story. I help small businesses and non-profits tell their story to the people who need to hear it. You see, when someone knows our story, they can't help but like us, and we support and do business with those we like. So, together, we craft your story and start telling it to your employees, the media, potential clients, and to the world. I know it sounds like marketing, but what makes me unique is that first and foremost, I am a storyteller. I also have a technical, art, writing, and design background which I combine to tell your story in a special, get-their-attention way. I recently completed a sixteen-page publication with an additional 15,000 copies that appeared in the March issue of *Cleveland Magazine* telling the stories of Cleveland's community development corporations. They were so delighted with the outcome that I am now in the process of designing an extensive website for them.