# Elevator Pitch

If you’re looking for a job, one of the first tasks on your to-do list should be crafting an ideal “elevator pitch.” It’s the 30-second to 2-minute speech that summarizes who you are, what you do and why you’d be a perfect candidate for a specific job.

You should be able to reel off your elevator pitch at any time. During a job interview to a job fair to a cocktail party conversation with someone who might be able to help you land a position – or introduce you to someone who can. There are many situations, both formal and informal, where a small summary of who you are and what you can do can be invaluable.

Sounds simple enough, right? But condensing 5, 10, or 20+ years of your life work accomplishments into a 30-second statement that packs a punch can feel as challenging as trying to stuff a Little League Team into a Volkswagen Beetle.

I get that. So, to help you develop a knockout elevator pitch, I’ve broken the process down into nine steps:

1. Clarify your job target. As Yogi Berra famously said, “You’ve got to be very careful if you don’t know where you’re going, because you might not get there.”

According to Forbes, when you begin putting an elevator pitch together, nail down the best way to describe your field and the type of job you’re pursuing. Until you can clearly explain the type of position you want, nobody can help you find it or hire you to do it.

2. Put it on paper. Write down everything you’d want a prospective employer to know about your skills. Include accomplishments and work experiences that are relevant to your target position. Then grab a red pen and mercilessly delete everything that’s not critical to your pitch.

Keep editing until you’ve got the speech down to a few key bullet points or sentences. Your goal is to interest the listener in learning more, not to tell your whole life story. So, remove unnecessary details that detract from your core message.

3. Format it**.** A good pitch should answer three questions: Who are you? What do you do? What are you looking for? Be concise.

Here’s an example of how to begin a pitch that includes the essentials: “Hi. I am Anne Dolan. I am an accountant with 10 years’ experience in the insurance industry and I’m looking for opportunities in the Atlantic City area with both insurance and finance companies.”

That speech would take about 15 seconds. Anne would then want to use her next 15 seconds to add details about her unique selling proposition, special skills and specific ways she could help a potential employer.

4. Tailor the pitch to them, not you**.** It’s important to remember that the people listening to your speech will have their antennas tuned to WIFM (What’s in It for Me?). So be sure to focus your message on their needs. For example, this introduction: “I am a human resource professional with 10 years of experience working for consumer products companies.” The pitch would be more powerful if you said, “I am a human resource professional with a strong track record in helping to identify and recruit top-level talent into management.”

Using benefit-focused terminology will help convince an interviewer that you have the experience, savvy and skills to get the job done at his or her business. In other words, What’s in it for them?

5. Eliminate industry jargon.You need to make your pitch easy for anyone to understand, so avoid using acronyms and tech-speak that the average person or job interviewer might not understand.

The last thing you want to do is make your listener feel stupid or uninformed.

6. Read your pitch out loud. As Fast Company’s Deborah Grayson Riegel recently pointed out in her article “[The Problem With Your Elevator Pitch and How to Fix It](http://www.fastcompany.com/3004484/problem-your-elevator-pitch-and-how-fix-it),” writing is more formal and structured than speaking. If you’re not careful, your elevator pitch can come off sounding more like an infomercial than a conversation. Reading it aloud then tinkering with the words will help you sound more authentic.

7. Practice, practice, practice (then solicit feedback).Rehearse your pitch in front of a mirror or use the recording capabilities of your computer or cell phone, so you can see and hear how you sound. Practice with a friend. You want to sound natural and unrehearsed.

This might feel awkward at first, but the more you practice, the smoother your delivery will be.

Try your pitch out on a few friends and ask them what they thought your key points were. If their response doesn’t square with your objective, the speech still needs work.

8. Prepare a few variations**.** You might want to say things slightly differently to an interviewer than to a former colleague. Also, sometimes you’ll just have 15 seconds for a pitch (kind of a short elevator ride), other times you may have a minute or two.

On the following page is an example of my elevator pitch to demonstrate how your elevator pitch might look:

My name is Ed Garcia. I have 20+ years’ experience attaining revenue growth, increasing operational efficiencies, and increasing capacity to handle sales and operational demands. I have accomplished this both as a manager directing customer service and recruiting teams. I have also increased company capacity by sourcing talent, and becoming familiar with the skills and cultural fit required by Hiring Managers. I am looking to find a suitable position where I can leverage this knowledge into gaining employment for the blind and disabled of New Jersey.

I am a Talent Acquisition professional with experience developing and executing recruiting plans. I have a strong track record in helping to identify and recruit top-level talent into organizations. This includes the management of all phases of full-cycle recruiting, from initial sourcing, screening, and interviewing through offer negotiations, reference checking, placement and onboarding. I creatively source high-caliber candidates by leveraging recruiting software, social media, cold calling and employee referrals. I am also experienced with new-hire orientation and new-hire training. My strengths include a Diversity & Inclusion focus, and creating an enjoyable recruiting experience to enhance internal & external customer delight & satisfaction.

My most recent area of focus has been the preparation of blind and other disabled clients to apply and gain employment. This includes training to create elevator pitches, resumes, cover letters, and provide mock interviews. My process also combines a unique ability to interpret management’s strategic goals into tactical initiatives and exceeding the organizational objectives by synthesizing the corporate needs with the individual’s growth & development.

In addition, I am Bi-lingual in Spanish.