

Elevator speech basics

“Tell Me a Little About Yourself...”

Task: Explain your work in 30 seconds or less

Develop a brief, razor-sharp description of who you are and what you do. Make it a speech you can use when standing by your poster and meeting someone new.

These are your goals:

- Connect with them on a human level
- Sell yourself as a high potential scientist
- Teach/ show/ involve them in something new

Step by step:

1. Who are you talking to?

- How familiar are they with your subject matter?
- What are their biases/interests?
- How can you connect your topic to what they care about?

2. What's your message? Who are you, what do you do, what do you believe? Formulate one or two key messages from your poster and research. Avoid jargon that your listener may not understand. This message(s) should answer one or more of the following:

- Why is this research/project important?
- What makes your research/project unique?
- What are the short- or long-term benefits of this research?
- Why should the person/audience care about your work?

3. Can you make it personal?

Connect with your audience: Relate a relevant biographical note or anecdote that points to why you were led to this research.

4. Can you tell a story?

Tell a short 10-15 second story about someone involved in your research. It will shrink the rest of your elevator speech, but you may be surprised by how much information can be carried in a narrative.

5. Practice.

Practice with a colleague (preferably someone not too familiar with your work). Consider recording your elevator speech and reviewing it to fine-tune the content as well as your delivery.

Remember: The best descriptions leave the listener wanting more. If you succeed with your 30-second presentation, you'll likely have much more time to elaborate on your work.

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