

Be Able to Answer “What do you do?” in a One Minute Elevator Ride

Within the first three seconds of meeting someone, you have made a first impression. People notice the way you are dressed, how you carry yourself, the company you keep, whether or not you are neat, your accessories, your delivery, how you make them feel, whether you have common surface denominators, and more. People have a lot to remember in life and they don't remember what you'd like them to. So they store first impressions in their mind for simplicity's sake. It is virtually impossible to reverse first impressions. They are human nature.

In those first three seconds someone will decide if you are on a comparable professional or social level and draw a judgment as to whether or not they want to further get to know you. If you appear to be of the same or higher status, you are admired and cultivated for further interactions. If you appear to be of a lower status, you are tolerated but not targeted to go anywhere from there.

How to Write an Elevator Speech:

1. Write down a list of all of your accomplishments. Think of them in terms of how they helped people solve problems. Remember: accomplishments are not skills. You are not able to use Excel software. You manage account incomes and expenses for to show profitability.

2. Answer the following question: “What is the overall category of transferable skills that encompasses these accomplishments?” Transferable skills fall into three categories: communications (writing, graphic design, photography, art), organization of information (accounting, banking, data entry,) fixing or building things (architect, interior designer, mechanic, information systems support), etc.

3. Imagine yourself taking one giant step up the ladder and looking down on this from a higher vantage point. After reviewing the above list, write down what overall problem you can solve for people in business. Give just enough information that will beg the question, how do you do that? Is it that you take the headache out of computer systems so that businesses can use their systems to make more money? (information systems support). Do you design interior space that draws people to want to hang out there? (interior designer). Do you make a company's employees more productive? (corporate trainer).

4. Write one or two sentences that are now your elevator speech. The opening line should be how you answered item #3. Follow it with what you would say if someone were to ask you, “How do you do that?”