

ELEMENTS OF ELEVATOR SPEECH #08

How to Write a Compelling Elevator Speech That Sticks (Plus 3 Templates You Can Use)



Tell me about yourself.

What do you do?

What makes your product different?

If these questions force you to pause, or you don't feel confident about your ability to convert these inquiries into genuine interest, then you should work on **crafting an elevator speech**.

A good idea may be the start of a big venture, but you—the entrepreneur behind it—are the one responsible for evangelizing your idea and getting others excited about your vision.

A carefully crafted speech delivers your [unique value proposition](#), anticipates questions before they come up and lets you start strong without tripping over “umm’s” and “uhh’s” scrambling for an answer.

Your elevator speech is a versatile tool you can use to:

- Spark interest from potential investors.
- Sell directly to consumers at events.
- Guide your copywriting and [personal brand](#).
- Speech to bloggers and open up strate-

gic partnerships.

- Explain what it is you do to your confused grandparents (We've all been there, right?).

The ideal speech should aim to be **under 30 seconds, around 75 words**, and can be easily adapted, made longer or shorter for different contexts, with the ultimate goal of creating opportunities.

Whether you're already running a profitable business, or you feel like you're still “faking it, 'til you make it”, an elevator speech in your back pocket makes it easier to start conversations off on the right foot.

How to Write the Perfect Elevator Speech



When it comes to delivering an elevator speech, a job seeker, a salesperson and a founder will have different goals in mind, but the basic ingredients of an effective speech are surprisingly similar.

Here's what you need to accomplish in your elevator speech.

1. Grab attention with your introduction

Your introduction should be flexible and depend on how well the person knows you, if they do at all. By the end of your introduction, the listener/reader should know:

- Who you are.
- Your brand and business model.
- Your product/service category and what you're selling.

It's easy to sound robotic with your introduction, so try to personalize your approach for the listener and their existing knowledge in order hook them from the get-go.

2. Identify your target market and how

you're serving it

Once you've introduced yourself and your business, you need to **demonstrate product-market fit**—in other words, you need to illustrate who your target customer is and the opportunity you're tapping into.

Prove that there's demand for what you're doing by considering:

- The pain points you're solving (For products with high utility, like ergonomic chairs).
- The passions you're letting people express (For niche apparel, like shirts for dog lovers).
- The gap you're filling and opportunity you're creating (For game-changing tech).
- The time/money you're helping people save (For helpful tools, like an app that helps you save money when buying groceries).

3. Embrace competition and any inevitable comparisons

Instead of glossing over your competition, acknowledge it—especially if you're pitching to someone who knows your industry or market.

Drawing attention to the competition gives you an excuse to explicitly differentiate your business from others.

You don't necessarily need to call out a specific competitor. You can simply mention an existing alternative, even if it's just the status quo or "the way things are done now".

This helps you start a conversation with a one-up position over the competition.

4. Have a "call to action"

What good is generating interest if you're not converting that momentum into some kind of action?

End your elevator speeches with a strong, contextual call to action based on who your audience is.

Next steps can include:

- Handing someone your business card in case they want to learn more.
- Recommending a product or sending out a sample for them to check out.
- Asking someone to connect with you on LinkedIn or by email to discuss working together.
- Suggesting that the person pass your information along to their own circles.

3 Elevator Speech Templates and Examples



Templates offer a good starting point, but you want to make it your own as much as you can.

As always, practice makes perfect, and the more feedback you get over time, the more you can improve your speech.

But to start, here are three basic templates, with hypothetical examples, that will help you touch upon your major talking points in a natural way.

The All-Purpose Speech

Your generic elevator speech, this format provides you with a clear and intuitive way to cover all your talking points, letting you easily expand upon and cut out parts depending on your audience at the time.

Template:

My name is [YOUR NAME], founder of [YOUR COMPANY]. We offer [PRODUCT/SERVICE] for [TARGET MARKET] to [VALUE PROPOSITION].

Unlike [THE COMPETITION], we [KEY DIFFERENTIATOR]. And we recently [RECENT MILESTONE].

[CALL to ACTION]

Example:

My name is Braveen Kumar, a writer at Shopify. We offer a platform that enables both the early entrepreneur and the large enterprise to build and run their own stores.

Unlike most marketplaces where you can sell your products, Shopify lets you build and brand your own online store with the tools to sell across a variety of channels, manage inventory, start small and scale fast.

Today, over 500,000 entrepreneurs use Shopify to power their businesses.

If you've got a product to sell, [visit Shopify.com](https://www.shopify.com) to start your 14-day free trial.

The Pixar Speech

This speech is aptly named because it invokes the traditional storytelling structure—something Pixar excels at.

Stories are all about transformation and empathy, and if you can explain the journey your customer takes from point A to point B, you can get your audience to step into your customer's shoes even if they're outside your target market.

Give this approach a try if your product solves a very real and relatable pain point for your customers.

Template:

Once upon a time [INTRODUCE CHARACTER AND CONTEXT]

Every day, [ESTABLISH THE WAY THINGS WERE].

One day [INTRODUCE PROBLEM/INCITING INCIDENT].

Because of that [CHALLENGE].

Because of that [SEARCH FOR SOLUTION]

Until finally [FINDS SOLUTION]

Now, [ESTABLISH THE WAY THINGS ARE BETTER NOW]

Example:

Once upon a time, there was a full-time blogger named Andy.

Every day, you could find him happily typing away on a computer, rushing to meet his clients' deadlines.

One day, he started experiencing

chronic joint pain in his fingers and wrists, a consequence of the years he's spent typing for hours on end.

Because of that he couldn't write as comfortably or as fast, and it was affecting his ability to deliver to his clients.

Because of that, he needed a better way to support his wrists so that they could support his livelihood, but he could only find temporary fixes.

Finally, he came across Type-Aid, a therapeutic glove that supports his wrists and combats the joint pain in his fingers due to extended typing.

Now Andy can resume his work with confidence, doing what he loves, distracted less by the pain in his hands and focused more on working magic for his clients.

The Sales Speech

Sometimes you find yourself speaking directly with a potential customer. In this case, you know that focusing on them and their needs is the best way to position your product.

Opening with a rhetorical question lets you establish how qualified they are as a prospect from the start, potentially tease more information from them by

actively listening, and personalize your approach according to how they identify with the pain point you're proposing a solution for.

Template:

Have you ever [SITUATION AUDIENCE CAN RELATE TO]?

[WAIT FOR RESPONSE]

[COMPANY NAME] offers [PRODUCT] for [TARGET MARKET] such as yourself to [BENEFIT].

Unlike [KNOWN ALTERNATIVE/COMPETITION], [YOUR PRODUCT] is [KEY DIFFERENTIATOR].

[CALL TO ACTION].

Example:

Have you ever found yourself up at night reading and starting to nod off, only to realize you still need to get up and out of bed just to turn your lights off?

BrightLight offers more control for the smart home owner such as yourself to turn on and off all the lights in their home

from any device with our app installed.

Unlike other smart lightbulbs, BrightLight is designed to consume 30% less energy saving you money in the long-run.

You can buy them now in our online store.

5 Tips For Persuasive Speeches That Ignite Interest

The templates above shouldn't be used as rigid structures—a speech, above all, needs to be persuasive.

Persuasion is the art of getting your audience to nod "yes" along with you.

The following communication strategies can help you spice up your speech.

Leverage names—the bigger the better

If you're associated with any big brands, have any celebrity customers or investors, influencer endorsements, or can weave social proof into what you say, you can really raise some eyebrows.

Include concrete numbers

Logos—stats, hard numbers and any appeal to logic—is one of the three pillars of persuasion. How many units have you sold or funding have you secured? Significant numbers add an extra layer of credibility to your speech.

Explain your product through an analogy

In *Made to Stick*, brothers Chip and Dan Heath discuss how some of the most memorable speeches are grounded in analogies.

A lot of movies get made simply because the speech successfully anchors the premise to one that's already well-known.

For example, the writers of *Alien* first pitched it as “Jaws in space” and had little trouble generating interest in the film. From those 3 words, you can understand that it's a horror movie, involving an unseen threat that leaves death in its wake, set in space.

Try developing an analogy to use something familiar to explain the unfamiliar and complex, or embrace an obvious comparison to focus more on differentiation instead of basic features.

Sell with stories

Stories are a naturally persuasive vehicle: They grab attention, demonstrate change, and evoke empathy.

In fact, neurobiologists have shown that stories can act as a conduit for understanding pain points that makes them a valuable asset in the business world.

A general rule in storytelling: The bigger the gap you can create between the beginning and the end, the more impactful your story will be. So don't be afraid to start off unremarkably normal or even when your character is at rock bottom.

It's all the better if you yourself are the main character in the story—you've got a personal stake in solving the pain point.

Write for the ears

Alliteration, rhyme, rhythm—there are a ton of ways to wield words so they roll off the tongue.

And when most memorable expressions stick because they're pleasing to the ear, you've got a good reason to put some art

into your articulation.

If you can make your speech sound nice on paper, you can give it a unique style that lends you a certain charisma that's hard to imitate even amongst your direct competitors.

Opening Doors to New Opportunities

“Elevator speech” is a misnomer. You're not looking for them to enter and exit the conversation like an actual elevator—you want the person to invest attention, ask questions, continue the conversation or see value in what you're doing.

You're focusing on getting them interested in your business, and when that's the case, less really is more—what you choose to exclude can be as powerful as what you include.

It's going to be a work in progress and the best way to improve is to get it out there and see how others receive it, observing where you create interest, lose attention and win people over.

So let's hear yours. Practice your speech in the comments below.

