

The Elevator Pitch - It is YOUR business!

- *Mary Salvino* -

An "Elevator Pitch" is a concise, carefully planned, and well-practiced description about you or your company that your mother should be able to understand in the time it would take to ride up an elevator. It is NOT a sales pitch. It is a brief introduction to let your audience know about the goods and/or services you have to offer.

The most effective elevator pitches answer the following questions:

1. Give the product or service a name
 - a. For business - What is the product or service that you are trying to sell?
 - b. For personal - What is your current job title?
 - c. If you are a job seeker - What is the job title of opportunity you are seeking?
2. List the competitive advantage of the product or service
 - a. For business - What makes your product or service 'better than' the product or service that potential customers can get from your competition?
 - b. For personal - What makes you good at what you do?
 - c. If you are a job seeker - Can you fill the need[s] of a potential employer?
3. What is your hook?
 - a. For business - What is the tag line for the business?
 - b. For personal - Why does anyone need to remember you?
 - c. If you are a job seeker - What can you do or say to help those you meet remember you?

When perfecting your elevator pitch it may be helpful to consider and incorporate the following helpful hints:

- Concise - Use 100 words or less to focus on what is at the core of your message
- Clear - Use terminology that laypeople can understand
- Make some kind of request - Do you want their business card, to schedule a full presentation, to ask for a referral?
- Practice your delivery and keep it fresh - Your language, your approach, and what you choose to highlight for a particular audience has got to change over time
- Use powerful words
- Use words that create a visual image to help your audience remember you and/or the product you are selling
- Stick to hard facts and numbers
- Tell a story - Focus on the opportunity/problem that you have encountered and why you or your solution is the most unique way to provide value and benefit to your audience
- Target your pitch to the right audience - Develop more than one pitch, if necessary