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JUN 21, 2017 BY JEFFREY HAYZLETT (/BLOG/AUTHORS/JEFFREY-HAYZLETT.HTML)

What's Your 118? - How to Perfect Your Elevator Pitch

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We've all attended numerous networking events, conferences and even social events where we look to make connections that can help us further expand our business goals and bottom lines. Pleasantries and business cards are exchanged and then comes the usual, 'what do you do?'

Such a simple question, yet one powerful enough to sink your battleship. If you're not ready to answer this question in 118 seconds or less, chances are you won't be making many meaningful connections. Let's start with the basics, what is an elevator pitch? It's a brief, persuasive speech that you use to generate interest for your business, your organization, or what you do. It's also helpful when looking to generate support for a project or idea.



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actually have to pitch yourself or your company – eight seconds to hook people and 110 seconds to reel them in. Those first eight seconds is where you lean in and hook them with your story. The next 110 seconds, or maybe less, is the time you have to drive the message home, with no bull.

So, when is a good time to use an elevator pitch?

The answer is any time you want to introduce your organization to potential clients or customers. It can even be used internally if you're looking to convince a manager to implement a new process to streamline the organization or workloads or pitch them a new idea that would help the company move ahead of a competitor.

Now that we have the basics established, I asked a couple of sales and business experts for their best elevator pitch tips. Here are 5 tips to keep in mind:

Tip 1:

Jeff Winsper, President, Black Ink Technologies (<http://blackinkroi.com/>)

“If you can't say it in 5 seconds, take the escalator.”

Tip 2:

Jason Forrest, CEO and Head Sales Coach, FPG (<http://fpg.com/>)

Do: “Tell me what you can do for me, not what you do.”

Don't: “Don't be needy. Act like you want their business, but don't need their business”

Tip 3:

Evan Hackel, CEO –Founder/Principal, Ingage Consulting (<http://www.ingage.net/>)

“Speak softly, but carry a big message. Trying to bowl anyone over with the sheer force of your energy can only backfire.”

Tip 4:

Matthew Hammer, Marketing Director – LiveWorld (<http://www.liveworld.com/>)

a. “Drop the buzzwords and keep it short.”

b. “It's got to be a conversation, not a pitch.”

c. “Use an emotional benefit statement”

Tip 5:

Jeffrey Levin, Executive Vice President of Sales – Great Eastern Energy (<https://www.greateasternenergy.com/>)

a. “Brevity is key, keeping the pitch to a maximum of 30 seconds. Ideally, will include a call to action and compel the customer to ask questions or request more information.”

b. “It's important to be succinct and clear, and ensure it's a topic that related directly to a topical issue.”

There are other things that need to be considered in order to have a quality elevator pitch.

Identify your goal

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Keep it short

This can't be stressed enough. There's a reason it's called an elevator pitch – it's meant to be short, the length of an elevator ride. I mentioned before your '118,' and while there's no specific number of words to craft the perfect elevator pitch, everyone is in full agreement, it's got to be brief.

Explain what you do

For an elevator pitch to be successful, you focus on the problems you can solve for someone else and what pain points you can help alleviate. If you can, add a key statistic that would strengthen your point.

Also, figure out a way to have your audience remember you. Whether you're the guy with a funky tie or the guy who doesn't use any type of crutch when talking about their product or service, your elevator pitch will be a great complement to your expertise. Show your excitement so that it's palpable to the other party. If it doesn't excite you, how will you get someone else excited? Excitement is infectious.

Practice makes perfect

Practice, practice, practice! It can be a daunting task to have to fit in a lot of information into seconds. What it takes a marketing team hours or days to put together, it needs to take you seconds.

Practice it in front of a mirror. Practice it on your wife or husband. Heck, practice it on your dog, if you want. The point of this exercise is for you to get comfortable with your pitch so when it comes naturally and conversationally, not as a rehearsed pitch.

No one likes to feel like they're being pitched to, so don't just practice your words, but your inflection, too. If you're a fast speaker, slow it down. If you're too verbose, bring it down a notch. Your body language will be just as important as your words. Keep your hands at your sides and avoid overt gesticulations. Those can be a turn off for many and makes you seem aggressive.

You may think talking to yourself in the mirror sounds a bit ridiculous, but trust me when I tell you, you'll think it's less painful than face planting in front of a potential client, or investor, because you didn't practice your pitch.

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Jeffrey Hayzlett is the primetime television host of C-Suite with Jeffrey Hayzlett and Executive Perspectives LIVE on C-Suite TV and is the host of the award-winning All Business with Jeffrey Hayzlett on C-Suite Radio. Hayzlett is a global business celebrity, Hall of Fame speaker, best-selling author, and Chairman of C-Suite Network, home of the world's most trusted network of C-Suite leaders.

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