

Preparing for the Career Fair

Part 3: Elevator Speeches

CS1000 - Explorations in Computer Science

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Outline

Overview

Preparation

Delivery

Elevator speech overview

- ▶ An “elevator speech” is a short speech to present yourself
- ▶ It’s similar to an advertisement: You want people to realize that you are interesting and they would like to learn more about you
- ▶ Main idea: You are prepared to share this information with anyone, at anytime, even in an elevator
- ▶ Having a well-prepared elevator speech is essential
 - ▶ for job seekers
 - ▶ to start new professional relations (networking)

Elements of an elevator speech

Answers three questions:

- ▶ Who are you?
- ▶ What do you do?
- ▶ What are you looking for?
(or, Where do you want to go?)
(or, How can you benefit a company or organization?)

Length of an elevator speech

- ▶ 25 to 30 *seconds*
- ▶ 80 to 90 *words*
- ▶ 8 to 10 *sentences*
- ▶ 6 to 10 *lines of text*

“Hi, my name is Pat Doe, and I’m a senior Environmental Sciences major. I’m looking for a position that will allow me to use my research and analysis skills. Over the past few years, I’ve been strengthening these skills through my work with a local watershed council on conservation strategies to support water quality and habitats. Eventually, I’d like to develop education programs on water conservation awareness. I read that your organization is involved in water quality projects. Can you tell me how someone with my experience may fit into your organization?”

Preparing an elevator speech

“Proper Planning and Preparation Prevents Poor Performance”¹

Steps:

1. Know exactly what you want
2. Write bullet points for what you want to include
3. Optional: include a story
4. Write the sentences
5. Rehearse

¹Stephen Keague, The Little Red Handbook of Public Speaking and Presenting

Writing the bullet points

First, write everything that comes to your mind.
Then, cut the jargon and details.

Tell the following:

- ▶ What you do
(think about how to show enthusiasm)
- ▶ What problems you solved or contributions you made
(offer a vivid example)
- ▶ Why you are interested in your listener
(e.g., recruiter for a company)
- ▶ What you can offer them
(or ask if there are any opportunities)

Writing the sentences

- ▶ Tell who you are: your name, major, year
- ▶ Open with a statement or question that grabs attention
- ▶ Make short and strong sentences
- ▶ Eliminate unnecessary words
- ▶ Make sure you really answered the key question of your listener:
What's in it for me?
- ▶ Create different versions for different situations
- ▶ End it in a way that invites further conversation

Rehearsal

- ▶ Time yourself and revise
- ▶ Record yourself on video
- ▶ Practice with friends, ask for feedback

Delivering an elevator speech

- ▶ Smile to your counterpart
- ▶ Be natural
- ▶ If you don't sound natural, rehearse until you are

Conclusion

- ▶ Remember that nobody knows you better than you
- ▶ Your task is to present yourself well and get what you want
- ▶ There is no way you can go wrong (permanently)
- ▶ Practice makes perfect

Sources for the slides (website last access: September 13, 2015)

- ▶ The 30 Second Elevator Speech,
University of California Davis (UC Davis),
<http://sfp.ucdavis.edu/files/163926.pdf>
- ▶ How to Sell Yourself In 30 Seconds and Leave People Wanting More,
Vivian Giang, Business Insider, Nov. 14, 2013,
<http://www.businessinsider.com/how-to-tell-your-story-in-30-seconds-2013-11>