

# The Elevator Speech

## 5 Steps to a successful pitch

1. **Develop your hook.** A hook is a catch phrase whose sole purpose is to catch someone's attention. For example, your Optimist Club is conducting a food drive. Is it more interesting to say, "We're collecting food for the less fortunate;" or "The New Meadows Optimist Club will feed 200 people." Both may be correct, but one makes you ask more.
2. **Explain who you are and what your activity will provide.** In the example of the New Meadows Optimist Club Food Drive, "The New Meadows Optimist Club is the newest service organization in the area dedicated to community development. During our Food Drive, we will collect more than 1,000 canned goods on Saturday, May 10 and deliver them to the Food Pantry."
3. **Explain why it is important and what the benefit is to your customer.** "According to the Food Pantry, this will cover the needs of 50 families during the month. Plus, knowing the need is met for the month, the Food Pantry will be able to focus on preparations for their fund raising efforts that kick off in June."
4. **Ask for something.** "Please include an article in your newspaper so that people know how to donate to this great cause."
5. **Pull it all together.** The New Meadows Optimist Club and the Food Pantry are conducting a special food drive on Saturday, May 10. We hope to fill the pantry for the month of May with this effort. You can donate by dropping off your canned items at the Library or calling 208.555.5515 to have them picked up.

### What is it?

An elevator speech is a concise, carefully planned, and well-practiced description about a topic that any listener should be able to understand in the time it would take to ride up an elevator.

Entrepreneurs seeking venture capital in the late 1990s coined the term. They knew the only chance they might have to sell themselves was on the elevator ride to the investor's office, so they learned to tell a compelling story about their unique business proposition in a brief amount of time.

Today, many use an elevator speech as a way to open doors to broader communication. If you like what you hear in thirty seconds, you might say, tell me more, paving the way for the spokesperson or salesman to elaborate.