

***“So, What Do You Do?”
Perfect Your Elevator Pitch!
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Introduction

- As a professional, you probably have experienced the dreaded question that people ask at networking events, cocktail parties and the like, many many times: “So, what do you do?” And if you found yourself stumbling over your words to deliver the answer, you are not alone!
- Talking about your work is one of those areas that a lot of professionals struggle with. Many professionals suffer from performance anxiety each time someone asks them what they do for a living.

Ice Breaker Exercise

- Choose someone in the room that you do not know well, introduce yourself, and then share your 30-second elevator pitch. The catch? You are not allowed to use your formal job title in your pitch!
- Why? Because your title doesn’t tell people what you do, the benefits you provide, or the results clients get from working with you.
- Also, the title may also conjure up images in the person’s mind that are far from what you actually do. Let’s face it, not every “lawyer,” “professional organizer,” and “higher education administrator” is the same. You have to paint the picture of what you provide, and what the experience of working with you is like.

Conveying What You Do

- Your elevator pitch is a short summary of your service, product, or company and how it adds value to customers.
- It’s also known as your Unique Selling Proposition Statement, Positioning Statement, or 30-Second Commercial.
- It’s a useful tool for communicating core information quickly that will hopefully yield you an invitation to have a longer conversation with potential clients down the road.
- A cleverly crafted, unique elevator pitch is an expression of who you are, what makes you stand out from your competition, and why people and companies will want to work with you. It grabs people’s attention.
- The problem with most elevator pitches is that they get crafted on paper but not adjusted to sound like how a real person speaks.
- The majority come across as synthetic as an infomercial, and often are really a tag line or slogan that should be used in a print ad. They tend to sound too sales-focused, especially if they rhyme.

Unique Selling Proposition (USP)

What makes you stand out from your competition?

- Figure out your USP so you can use it to craft a great elevator pitch.
- USP/brand touch points
 - Education/background, level of expertise, certification, personality, process/system of delivering services, credibility, brand, experience working with certain populations, etc.
- Sample 30 second elevator speech incorporating USP:
I work with busy professionals who struggle with feeling overwhelmed and would like to be more productive. What separates my service from the competition is how I tie in purpose and passion with productivity, which results in a creative, fun approach combined with nuts-and-bolts practicality. Because of this unique style, my clients are able to stay motivated, while learning organizing skills that they can implement to take back control of their work and life.

Elevator Pitch Basics

- How long do you really have to deliver an elevator pitch? You've got about 5 seconds.
- Every elevator pitch article claims you have about 30 seconds to answer the dreaded What Do You Do? question. But it's much shorter, as you almost never get to deliver your entire pitch unless you are at a networking event where they are going around the room asking for your 30 second introduction.
- Have a conversation. With elevator speeches, most professionals give a bumbling answer, or a much too rehearsed, slogan/tag line filled sales pitch. Don't sell to the other person, as that will shut him or her down.
- Deliver a series of smaller "pitches" that are progressive, engage the other person, and keep him or her in the conversation.

The "How, Now, Wow" Method

- Developed by my National Speakers Association colleague, Brian Walter.
- **How = Home/Core Message**
 - Home is the core elevator pitch that you know well and can always rely on.
 - Sample home/core elevator pitch:
I help busy professionals live more successful and passionate lives, and enjoy more productive and profitable careers and businesses by changing their mind set and behaviors.
 - Good to use if someone is very formal, or when you are unsure if the person you are speaking with can handle anything more clever or creative.
 - It is the basic formula of what you do without mentioning your title.
 - Brevity is key - do not be too wordy or you will lose the person.
 - The focus is on what you do, who you do it for, and the benefits provided or results received.
 - Your How Message:



Now = For Example

- Use this when the person seems genuinely interested (in other words, their eyes are not glazed over!) and/or asks for more information.
- This is your opportunity to provide him or her with examples of your work, the benefits you have provided, and the results that you have brought to your firm/company/students/clients.
- Have 4 examples at your disposal to choose from depending on situation.
Now, for example, I just finished a time management project with a client that has not been able to attend his son's soccer game in the last 2 seasons. Due to our intense work together to revamp his thinking and habits around time management, he has been able to attend 75% of his son's soccer games this season.
- You should try to tailor your Now examples to the person you are speaking with or the situation, so that they are relevant.
- In my example, if I am speaking to a busy lawyer or legal professional that is time-starved and craves more family time, this would be a perfect example. But maybe not the best example for someone that is a business owner and wants to become more productive in order to impact her bottom line and make more money.
- Your 4 “Now” Examples:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.

Wow = The X Factor

- This is the one you pull out only for people you think can handle it, for those you really want to impress with your creativity and cleverness.
- Don't waste it on someone that seems bored, is interrupting in order to tell you what he or she does, or you can tell is giving you their attention in a perfunctory manner. (For that person, let them talk, listen, ask a few questions to engage him or her, and then if all else fails, politely excuse yourself and walk away!)
- “Wow” line is almost never your title - that is part of your home/core message.
- The Wow line is that extra factor factor that sets you apart. It makes people interested because it makes you look cool, is memorable, and maybe a little punchy.
- Believe that it is cool to work with you and exude that. Share your passion - paint a picture for them of what their life, home, or work would be like or feel like while or after working with you.
- Brevity is key in the Wow line. If it is too lengthy, you will lose the person's attention.
- Some ways to deliver a Wow elevator pitch:



- Think of similes when people ask what you do. For example, *“I’m like a personal trainer for the disorganized brain.”*
- Describe what you do like a movie trailer with the person you are talking to as the star. Tell a short interesting snippet of the work, and then end with the results.
- Compare yourself to someone recognizable in popular culture, or even a cross between two people. For example, one I’ve used is: *“I am like a cross between Rachael Ray and Sandra Day O’Connor.”* Rachael Ray is warm, funny and sassy, and Sandra Day O’Connor is an extremely intelligent woman, having served as a Justice of the United States Supreme Court. Yes, I am trying to convey that as a coach, consultant and speaker, I have spunk and smarts!
- Your Wow Lines:

Elevator Pitch Tips

- **Don’t speak the way you write.** Write out your pitch, but make sure to practice saying it out loud. It may even help to substitute more common spoken words for ones that you used when writing. For example: “I help lawyers acclimate to a new work environment by providing professional development programs and a mentor that assists with growth and development” may read well, but may sound too stuffy when spoken out loud. When speaking, you might say “I help new lawyers get comfortable working at the firm and find their way through helpful programs and a mentor.”
- **Play off of the person you are talking to.** If person gives you blank stares or you can tell is not listening or is just being polite, stop talking, and take a different approach. Or better yet, just let him or her talk, as that is what causes most people to not listen.
- **Change your pitch for those that know you.** Use a slightly different pitch if the person knows you, as they may have already developed some assumptions about what they think you do.
- **Turn your pitch into a question.** If you’re a law school career services professional, ask “You know how law students need to find that all important first job when they graduate? I help them do just that.”
- **Practice saying your pitch out loud, with feedback.** Practice it until it sounds completely unrehearsed and natural, and then get feedback on how it sounds.
- **Be willing to forgo your pitch entirely.** If you’re already making a warm connection with someone and they ask you what you do, you may want to just play verbal ping pong. Just say what you do -- and more importantly, find out what the other person does and show genuine curiosity about them.

Practice Makes Perfect

- Crafting the most fundamental sentences takes time - practice makes perfect.
 - Find an elevator pitch buddy and practice together.
 - Record yourself using audio or video.
 - Start practicing at real events and see what type of response you get.
 - Remember, try not to use your job title!
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Lisa Montanaro

Purpose ~ Passion ~ Productivity



Lisa Montanaro traveled the path of a performer who didn't want to be a "starving actress" so said no to Broadway, worked as an instructor and interpreter at the NY School for the Deaf to put herself through law school, and then practiced law specializing in employment, labor, education, and disability law for 9 years in NY and Michigan. She then "defected" from the practice of law and started her own business on the heels of the 9-11 tragedy. Lisa has successfully created her purpose and very much lives her passion, and now makes it her mission to help others do the same!

Lisa is the CEO of Lisa Montanaro Global Enterprises, which is the umbrella organization under which she offers productivity consulting, success coaching, business strategizing, and speaking to individuals and organizations. Her professional organizing division, LM Organizing Solutions, was founded in 2002 and remains a thriving business in the NY metropolitan area and San Francisco Bay Area tended to lovingly by her hand-picked associates. Lisa is an inaugural Certified Professional Organizer® and a member of the Golden Circle of the National Association of Professional Organizers (NAPO).

In addition, Lisa is a member of the National Speakers Association (NSA), and is a frequent presenter for national and regional conferences, corporations and organizations, and teleclasses and webinars. Lisa's presentations focus on organizing and productivity, time management, career transitions, business, entrepreneurship, and life-work balance. Lisa's workshops are informative, interactive, and despite the sometimes weighty subject involved, entertaining! Her practical programs, enthusiasm, humor and energy inspire participants to take action and implement new techniques designed to improve their personal and professional effectiveness.

Lisa publishes a free e-newsletter for success-minded individuals. Subscribe today at <http://www.lisamontanaro.com/toolkit/>. Her book, *The Ultimate Life Organizer: An Interactive Guide to a Simpler, Less Stressful & More Organized Life*, was published by Peter Pauper Press in 2011. To find out more about Lisa's speaking, coaching and consulting programs, as well as her books and multi-media products, visit her website at LisaMontanaro.com.

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