

How To Construct A Great Elevator Pitch

What if you got on an elevator with someone that could make a difference in your career and the only time you had to talk to them was on this ride? An “Elevator Pitch” is built around this idea. It’s a focused 30-60 second “pitch” of what you have to offer. These can be done in-person, by phone, or email. It’s similar to a TV Commercial because it’s concise and focuses on only “positives” about the product (in this case: YOU!)



When do you use one?

Elevator Pitches are an incredible tool when **applying** for work. It will make you stand out from other applicants because you took the time to advocate for yourself versus what most people do: fill out an application and leave. To maximize the chances of securing a job interview, after you fill out a job application, ask to speak to the person who does the hiring for the position you are applying for. In many businesses (like retail, restaurants, independent companies, etc.) this is possible. Then, doing an elevator pitch shows you genuinely want to work for them.

You can use your Elevator Pitch as framework for **following-up** for a job: after you apply online, or when it’s not possible to speak to the person who does the hiring when you apply, either because they aren’t available or if the job posting says “no drop-ins”. You can also use it when you are **applying via email** (versus just attaching a resume) and for follow-up in general. It’s also handy for key points to include in **cover letters**.

When you have this framework of key points memorized, it will also help when answering **job interview** questions like “tell me about yourself” in a focused and positive manner.

Elevator Pitches are great to use at **Job Fairs**, when you are **networking**, and **when meeting someone new**. It’s estimated over half of all jobs attained in North America are by first networking and then applying for the job using that information and contact person. You likely encounter networking opportunities weekly, if not daily. When you have the framework of your Elevator Pitch memorized, you will find it easier to introduce yourself in any situation you find yourself in, and begin a conversation instead of engaging in small talk or no talk at all.

Approach This As “A Minute To Win It CHALLENGE”

Yes, it can be stressful to introduce yourself to someone new, tell them what you want, and what you bring to the table. However, what many people do not realize is that there is **positive stress**. If you want to shift an Elevator Pitch into positive stress easily, change your perception of this being a scary event (or problem) to it being a **challenge**. When people face challenges, they subconsciously frame them as a positive emotion and it’s easier for them to envision success. This will help step out of comfort zones, be in the moment and focus.

Tips

- You overcome challenges all the time! Have confidence in yourself and expect this will go great. Take a deep breath and see yourself already working at that company in your mind (this is known as “thinking from the end” which will help make this feel more like a formality for a job you already secured).
- When you anticipate using your elevator pitch for someone, write it out and practice it.
- Look at the job description and/or website for info on what they do and what is required for the job.
- Make eye contact, smile and approach. Follow their lead on shaking hands.
- Do your best to make this Elevator Pitch conversational and genuine (not rehearsed).
- Go with the flow and adapt to the person and the job you are interested in. Let them talk too!
- Ensure everything you say is positive (this is not the time to bring up problems or complaints).
- Keep these short but don’t rush yourself because you want this to sound natural.
- If you need help, YouTube has countless videos on doing a great Elevator Pitch when looking for a job.

Elevator Pitch ↑

Introduction 1

Your Passion 2

Align your skills to opportunity 3

Ask! 4

1: INTRODUCE YOURSELF

If there is something that you specialize in or if you just finished school or moved to Winnipeg, mention it here.

Examples:

- “Hi my name is Dave McGill. I’m a recent graduate from ___ with my ___ certification.”
- “Hello, it’s nice to meet you. My name is Julian, I’m a newcomer from Ukraine where I worked as an electrician. I’m looking for a job that I can grow with the company and eventually move into working as an electrician once I get my Canadian certification”.
- “Hi, thank you for coming out to meet me, my name is Kelly, my background is in warehouse work.”

Note: if the job you are applying for is unrelated to your experience or training, add “I’m looking for a change to start working in the ___ industry.” Then let them know why or what it is that interests you about their industry.

2: SHARE YOUR PASSION RELATED TO THIS BUSINESS

It’s important to not share your “real passion” for likely unrelated things like music, sports or acting because this may give them a perception that you have things in your personal life that will take you away from being available to work. You can, however, adapt the basic concept of those “real passions” and adjust them to “working with people”, “being creative” or “working in a team environment”. Ensure you back up your statements instead of just using generic terms like “I work well in a team” or “I give good customer service.”

Examples:

- “My passion is helping people by finding out what they are looking for and exceeding their expectations. This way they leave satisfied knowing they got value for their money and keep coming back.”
- “My passion is being a team player. I do my best to meet and exceed my job expectations. This way, I’m doing my part to make the business successful and it benefits everyone in the company & the customer.”
- “My passion is working with numbers. I have a great attention to detail and have excellent math skills.”

3: ALIGN YOUR SKILLS TO THE JOB DESCRIPTION

Keep everything you say positive with no mention of problems, finances, health issues, struggling, former employer issues or anything that may be interpreted as negative. Remember this is like a TV commercial.

Examples:

- “I looked on your website at the job posting and I have all the qualifications you are looking for.”
- “I have ___ years of experience as a ___ which I feel which would make me a great fit as your new _____. I am also available to work any shifts you have available and can come in at short notice.”

4: ASK! ASK! (Yes, “Ask” Twice)

Always have a **prepared question** when you do an elevator pitch and ensure you **ask for their business card**. Having a question prepared is an awesome way to further a conversation and/or get valuable information that can make the difference of you securing a job interview or not.

Examples:

- (When applying for a job) “When are you doing the interviews for this great opportunity?”
- (When networking) “Do you know of any jobs available that may align with my skills?”
- (At a Job Fair) “What would you recommend I do to have the best chance of securing a job interview?”
- (If they don’t have a business card) “What is the best way to follow-up with you?”

Here's a **detailed example** of an Elevator Pitch by Jamie who wants to work at Best Buy as a cashier. It starts at Jamie's understanding of what this job will require, and it builds from there. According to research: a cashier at Best Buy is expected to have basic math skills, good interpersonal skills, an attention to detail, basic math skills and understanding of technology.

Jamie applied online as per the instructions on the job posting and is now following-up in person.

Jamie approaches the Customer Service Desk and asks "Hello, may I please speak to the person who does the hiring for cashiers? I won't take more than a minute or two of their time."

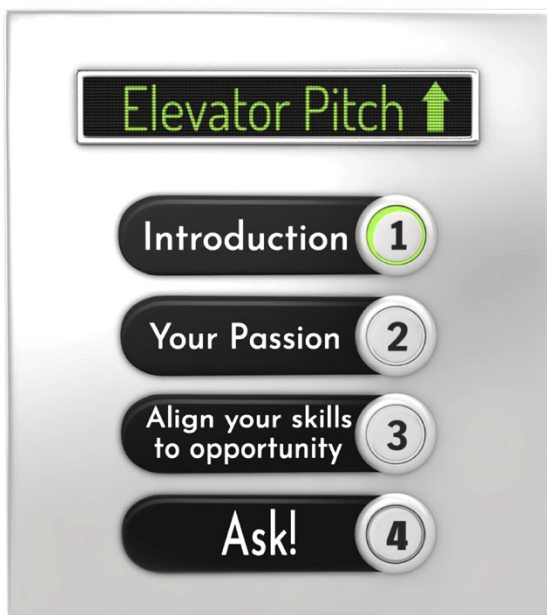
The person answers "Actually, I'm involved in the hiring of all positions here. I'm Chantal."

In a conversational manner, Jamie does an Elevator Pitch customized for a Best Buy cashier position: "Hi Chantal, it's nice to meet you. My name is Jamie Carrier. My background is working as a delivery driver. I'm looking to shift to a job working in retail, specifically Best Buy because my passion is technology and I'm a people person. I applied online for the cashier position and I wanted to follow-up with you in-person because I really want this job. I feel my experience as a delivery driver has given me the skills to be a great fit as your new cashier because I looked after both cash handling and credit card transactions. I have an attention to detail, I know how to meet deadlines, problem solve, and interact respectfully with customers, even challenging ones. I'm hoping to be chosen for an interview. When do you expect to be doing interviews for this position?"

Chantal: "We are planning to call people in early next week."

Jamie: "Great! I hope you consider me. Can I please get your business card so I can follow-up with you?"

TIP: If they don't have a business card, ask what's the best way to follow-up with them. If they give you another person's name to follow-up with, ensure you write down both of their names so when you follow-up you can say "I met with _____, they gave me your email address to follow-up regarding this great opportunity."



You can use your elevator pitch as the framework for many situations. There are four key points to include.

Example:

1. Name/newcomer/mechanic
2. Passion: exceeding customer expectations
3. Previous job experience to this job
4. When are interviews taking place? Ask for card/email

What are the four points you want to get across?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____



Elevator Pitch Exercise

It will help to customize your Elevator Pitch to the job you are applying for or situation you anticipate being in. On a separate sheet of paper or on your computer, write out your Elevator Pitch for the following scenarios:

- 1. At The Business Who Is Hiring:** You just filled out an application online and you are following up in person at the business. You ask the person at the front desk “Can I please speak to the person who does the hiring for _____ (job you applied for)?”, they answer “Actually, I’m the person who does the hiring for all positions.”
- 2. Job Fair:** You heard about a Job Fair and went their website to see what employers are participating. You then went to the websites of those employers. You applied for multiple job postings on their website Career Sections. When you arrive at the Job Fair, you see a booth of one of the employers that you applied at. You approach the recruiter at their booth with your custom Elevator Pitch.
- 3. Networking:** On the news you heard about an event at The Forks sponsored by Shaw Cable. This is a company you are interested in working at. You’ve applied online before with them but have never been called in for an interview. You attend so you can network because you know staff from Shaw will be there.
- 4. Email:** On Indeed, you found a job and applied online. The job description states “No Drop-Ins Please” so you know it’s best for you not to follow-up in person. Instead, you decide (as you always should) to write a short email to the email address on the job posting.
- 5. Meeting Someone New At An Employment Program:** You just started attending an employment program. You arrive early for a workshop. Across from you, there’s another person waiting. Since you know there are other participants actively looking for work, you wonder if they may know of someplace that is hiring that you are unaware of. You decide to introduce yourself and network with them using the framework of your Elevator Pitch. Remember, other participants are not your competition. *Perhaps you may even know of a job that isn’t your interest, but it could be a great fit for them.*
- 6. Job Interview:** You have an interview as a Customer Service Rep. You know you need to focus on the positive and align your skills to the job. You know you should leave the last part of an Elevator Pitch (Ask) for the end of the interview but can use the first three steps when answering questions like “Tell us about yourself”. At the interview, they say “Let’s start off by you telling us about yourself...” What’s your answer?

