



Connection Pros

Title – Delivering Your Elevator Speech

In my last column, I started to discuss the importance of having a well crafted elevator speech. Considering the amount of e-mails and phone calls I received, I obviously have struck a nerve with this topic. It amazes me that so many people I meet have never heard the term “elevator speech” before. Once I take the time to explain to them what an elevator speech is, people immediately know what I'm talking about. However, more often than not, very few people have an effective elevator speech that they can deliver at a moment's notice.

Traditionally, most people have two opportunities to deliver an elevator speech. The first one is when they meet people individually. This takes place at business meetings, social functions, trade shows, and many other places. The other opportunity takes place when they attend a networking function or leads club and they are allowed to deliver their elevator speech in front of a group. People sometimes call these types of elevator speeches “30 -second commercials.” It's this second opportunity that I want to focus on for this month's column.

I would like to give you four simple tips that will help you begin to develop an elevator speech that will not only be more comfortable for you to deliver, but will grab people's attention, engage them in conversation about your business, and encourage them to say the three most beautiful words in the world, “TELL ME MORE!”

- Know what you're going to say before you say it - I know this might sound like an obvious statement, but over 90% of the people that stand up to deliver an elevator speech have no idea what they're going to say until it's time to say it. As a professional speaker, if I stood up in front of an audience and had no idea what I was going to say, I would sound confused, unconfident, and unprepared. I would also be completely terrified. The same thing happens to people when they stand up in front of a group and just babble the first thing that comes to their minds. Take a few minutes before it's your turn to speak, and think about the clearest and easiest way for you to get your message across to this group of people.
- Don't start your elevator speech with your name - One of the most common ways to start an elevator speech is with your name, title, and company name. While this is valuable information, it's the last thing you want to say to help grab people's attention. Considering that most people start their elevator speech with these three items, people have a tendency of not listening because this information is meaningless to them at this time. Instead, start with some type of question, statement, or interesting comment about your business or your industry to create a higher level of interest faster.
- Only focus on the benefits of what your company offers – In the sales game, people are taught that it's all about features and benefits. When it comes to elevator speeches, it's all about benefits, benefits, benefits. People really don't care about the features that your company currently offers. All they care about is how these features are going to benefit them. One of the best ways to remember this idea is to remember that when people ask you the question “What do you do?” answer the question as if they asked you, “What do you do that will benefit me?”
- Only mention one of the features your company offers - Since I just covered the importance of talking about the benefits that your company offers, let's talk about how to mention the features that your company offers. When I am hired by an organization to evaluate the elevator speeches of its members, I often write down the letters TMO or TMRT. These acronyms stand for “too many options” and “too many random thoughts.” When most people stand up to deliver an elevator speech, they have no idea what they are going to say. What they end up doing is trying to tell people everything that their company offers. Unfortunately, people cannot comprehend that much information. It's better to focus on one or two of the features that your company offers so that at least people will understand some of what you do.

By the end of this month, I'll be releasing my third book titled *Elevating Your Elevator Speech-A Powerful Way to Answer the Question, “What Do You Do.”* It will contain about 50 easy-to-apply and simple to understand tips on how to create an elevator speech that will make people stop and take notice. If you would like to order a copy of your own, please go to my web site, www.ConnectionPros.com. See you next month.