



Preparing Your Elevator Speech

1. **Sharpen your bite:** Prepare a two-four sentence (from memory) overview of your work and have it ready to go at all times.
2. **Prepare for questions:** Audience members with varying degrees of familiarity with your work will have questions. Be ready for anything they can throw at you. If you don't know the answer, be prepared to ask for their information and offer a follow-up to their question via email later. Frame the response positively: "I've never considered that, but I look forward to investigating it further."
3. **Emphasize brevity:** The old saying that "less is more" applies here. If you need more time than thirty seconds to two minutes to give your elevator speech, you need to refine your pitch.
4. **Strive for smart but not rigid; academic but social:** Practice talking about your research in an informal setting. How would you describe your work briefly to a friend?
5. **Introduce the idea:** The elevator speech is not the opportunity to give a beginning to end overview.
6. **Establish credibility:** Why are you knowledgeable and how do we know you're knowledgeable without being overbearing?
7. **Invite conversation:** The elevator speech could be the beginning of a long-term collaboration or opportunity. It could lead to research, graduate school, or a larger extension of your project. Some of my major projects have come from spontaneous meetings that began with . . . "What are you working on?"
8. **Show your passion:** The elevator speech is an opportunity to show how passionate you are about your research. Make it visible. Impassioned teachers are often the most influential to students; impassioned researchers/scholars shift paradigms.
9. **Display confidence:** You've worked hard on your project or research. Have faith in the hard work that you've given it.