

The **Basic** Elevator Pitch – The Classic, Traditional, Time-honored Approach

[Iowa State University](#)

The Pitch (Elevator Speech)

This 20-40 second speech is expected from you as you approach a company representative at the career fair. It is aptly named because it should be possible to deliver it in the time span of an elevator ride. The goal is to introduce yourself, give the person a quick sense of who you are and what your interests are, and present your resume and highlight a few strengths that you have to offer employers.

At a minimum your Elevator Speech should include:

- *your name*
- *major*
- *year in school or graduation date if looking for full-time work*
- *type of position you are seeking (full-time or internship)*
- *when you are available to start and/or the time window of when you want to work if seeking an internship*
- *why you would like to work for the employer and/or why their position appeals to you*
- *a request for them to review your resume and consider you for an interview*

Additional items to include when possible:

- *any connection to the employer.* Perhaps you went to their information session or talked to them at a previous fair. Even mentioning that a relative/friend works for the employer can help make a connection. If you have a connection to the employer, highlight it!
- *special qualifications that you want to highlight.* Sometimes your classes, skills, and interest areas highly align with the company. For example, if you are talking to a chemical processor and you are in a class focused on fluid flow problems, you might mention that you are very excited about what you are learning in that class and how it would apply to their systems. Perhaps you are a member of an engineering club and you have done project management or technical work that aligns with their job descriptions. If you have a connection that you can make between the employer/position and your experiences, mention it!

Your Turn!

- name
- major
- year in school (graduation date if looking for full-time work)
- type of position you are seeking (full-time or internship)
- when you are available to start and/or the time window of when you want to work if seeking an internship
- why you would like to work for the employer and/or why their position appeals to you
- any connection to the employer (if you have it)
- special qualifications that you want to highlight
- a request for them to review your résumé and consider you for an interview



Hi, my name is Allie Gator, and I'm a 3rd year civil engineering major at the University of Florida. I'm looking for an internship with a company that I could begin next summer – although, I could be available as early as the Spring 2015 semester for the right offer!

I am particularly interested in projects that focus on pedestrian movement in congested, urban areas, and I've used the lab's GIS system together with vector analysis software to trial several different models, including some that have novel, curvy shapes.

URS's interest in both public and private projects fit nicely with my interests in transportation and safety. My experience with Autocad should be useful, and I've completed projects using a variety of computer tools, too.

I've brought my résumé with me for you to review – when would be a good time to set up an interview with your company?

The **Bazinga!** Elevator Pitch — a creative, contemporary spin emphasizing the nature of your work

[Speaking PowerPoint](#)

#1 Brian Walter

www.extrememeetings.com

Brian Walter is one of my favorite speaker coaches. And his elevator pitch method — the WOW, HOW, NOW approach — is the simplest and most fun.

1. **WOW.** Say something intriguing (even puzzling) that will make the other person want to hear more. A creative summary of what you do that demands some clarification. Ideally, the prospect's reaction will be to cock their head and ask "what does that mean?"

2. **HOW.** Answer the stated (or unspoken) question and explain exactly what you do.

3. **NOW.** Shift into storytelling mode, giving a concrete example of a current customer. The key phrase is "Now, for example..."

Example

Prospect: So, what do you do?

Me: I help build PowerPoint muscles.

Prospect: Huh?

Me: I teach people how to use PowerPoint more effectively in business. Now, for instance, I'm working with a global consulting firm to train all their senior consultants to give better sales presentations so they can close more business.

Wow: I help people become members of their own tribe.

How: Each academic discipline, every profession has its own language, its own way of communicating. I study those, then create materials that help newcomers to the field learn the speaking and writing routines of their professions.

Now: Yes, for example, I help young scientists learn to write science prose that gets them published. Or, for engineers, I help them craft and practice an elevator speech to get them through Career Showcase.

The Close: Here's my resume — I am available for interviews [] — what works for you?

Your Turn!

Name/Major

1. **WOW.** Say something intriguing (even puzzling) that will make the other person want to hear more. A creative summary of what you do that demands some clarification.
2. **HOW.** Answer the stated (or unspoken) question and explain exactly what you do.
3. **NOW.** Shift into storytelling mode, giving a concrete example of a current customer. The key phrase is "Now, for example..."

End with your availability, the position you're looking for, and request for interview

The **Blended** Elevator Pitch – a conversational introduction hat highlights motivation

Ladders: Fast on Your Feet

Answer these questions in a "real" voice. Like you're speaking to your mother, or your college buddies, or a couple of friends on the golf course. (You know, I might even recommend that you speak into a voice recorder, or just go ahead and call your own voicemail, and answer these questions out loud. That's the best way to get a conversational tone....)

- Say, why do you like your work?
- Why have you been doing this for 10, 15, 20 years?
- What is it that you find interesting about it?
- No, seriously, don't talk to me like I'm your boss, what do you really find interesting about it?
- Why do you want to stay in this field?
- What do you like about this industry?
- When you're in the shower in the morning, what types of challenges at work make you excited to get the heck to the office as soon as possible?
- When are you having the most fun?

And then take those bits and make a conversational elevator pitch that focuses on your motivations, not your accomplishments.

So instead of rehashing your resume and job titles and greatest hits, your elevator pitch will sound real, and human, and be deadly effective.

Your Turn!

- Name / Major
- Motivation/Interests – a “why I like or believe in doing this” or “why I think this is fun”, etc.
- “Now” – a “for example” that shows something you’re involved with or doing right now
- The kind of position you’re looking for/When you’re available
- Why you’d like to work for the company
- Special qualities you’d like to highlight
- Request to leave résumé and set up interview

Motivation: I study intersections – looking at things like pedestrian density, accident rates, and death. My goal right now is to help people get from point A to point B without being crushed by cars or confused by signage.

Now: For example, I’ve been working on how university students on foot and on scooters cross University Avenue. While I’d love to see a walk-way built over the road, that seems unlikely given the cost and various politics involved. But a simple solution that would increase safety? I’d suggest adding more traffic islands to give students safe havens when they cross and make scooters less likely to break traffic laws on their speedy little vehicles. The Botany departments adds their plantings, the road is more attractive, and the likelihood of student-car-scooter clashes goes down.

Position: I’m looking for a transportation internship at a company that has a similar outlook: taking a creative, inclusive approach to solving transportation situations. I know XYZ International works on such projects.

The Close: Here’s my résumé – I am available for interviews [] – what works for you?