

Tips for Constructing an Elevator Pitch

Busy? We all are. Your schedule is tight. However, many of these “busy” people – grantmakers, individual donors, elected officials, and potential board members – are vital to your organization’s success. These people are vital to your organization’s success and thrive.

As a member of a nonprofit board of directors, how can you serve as an ambassador for your organization? How can you engage people and capture their attention and leave them wanting to know more? Try developing an “elevator pitch”.

An elevator pitch is a short statement, typically an elevator trip of 2 minutes or less, that peaks the listener’s interest. It should be concise, clear, and compelling.

When composing your elevator pitch, it is concise, clear, and compelling. Here are some tips:

DO

Introduce yourself and your role in the organization. “Hi, I’m Jane Smith, Board Member of XYZ organization.”

Keep it simple. Identify the problem the organization has had. Come with a quantitative result, e.g. “XYZ provide Long Island. Just last year over 2,000 low-income senior citizens received a free meal through our senior center program.” Throw in just one statistic. Don’t bombard listeners with numbers.

Find your own anecdote about the organization that illustrates its impact. People love stories. Have a story that you can tell.

Invite involvement in the organization. Let whoever you’re talking to know that they can get involved in a variety of ways: volunteer, donate, etc. Ask a question of the person.

What to Avoid

People who you meet are busy. They don’t have a lot of time to spend at your nonprofit organization. They need to get on with their lives and continue to carry out their mission and vision.

Your primary responsibility is to your organization. You can’t make new friends for your organization. You have a limited amount of time and need to use it in a way that makes the most of it. Try developing an elevator pitch.

Don’t talk about the time it takes for one person to get to work. Focus on the essence of your organization and the impact it has on the community.

Don’t frame your message in a way that is negative. Focus on the positive and the solutions.

Don’t say, “Hi, I’m Jane Smith, Board Member of XYZ organization.”

Don’t talk about the problem the organization has had. Focus on the impact the organization has had on the community and who it serves. Include a quantitative result.

Don’t bombard listeners with numbers. Just one statistic is enough to illustrate the impact of the organization.

Don’t tell a story that you can tell. Find your own anecdote about the organization that illustrates its impact.

Don’t invite involvement in the organization. Let whoever you’re talking to know that they can get involved in a variety of ways: volunteer, donate, etc.

Don’t ask a question of the person. Ask a question of the person.

