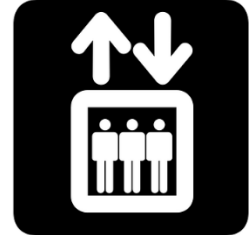


Write the Best Elevator Speech for Your Project

An Elevator Speech is not a silver bullet, but it is a very useful addition to your tool kit that supplements your other communication activities.

Here are the unique advantages of having an Elevator Speech:

- **It allows you to really focus your message.** Many communications ramble. If you want to get to just the most important things you want to say, writing an elevator speech is the best way.
- **It helps leaders remember what they have to say.** Let's face it, most executives are juggling multiple priorities, and will remember only the smallest number of key points.
- **It ensures consistency of messaging, and therefore builds trust in the project.** One way people try to get at the truth is through corroboration. If people hear one thing, they will ask other people to see whether they say the same thing. If they do, they gain trust. An Elevator Speech ensures all of your leaders are "on message".



Steps for creating the best elevator speech for your project:

Step 1: Work with your leaders to answer the following questions

1. **Why is the change necessary for the organization?** In other words, why do we have to do this, and why now?
2. **What opportunities will the change create for the organization?** This gets leaders to articulate a clear vision and benefits.
3. **In what specific ways will the organization be different as a result of the change?** Another way of asking this question is, what will people notice that's different in their work environment.
4. **What in the organization will remain the same?** This answer to this questions alleviates the anxiety people feel as a result of a change project, since often they feel their whole world is changing.
5. **How does the change support the company strategy?** Linking the project to strategy is key. Few people will challenge a company's strategy. Some may disagree with it, but by working there they have accepted it to a large degree.
6. **Why should people support the change?** This gets to heart of everyone's favorite radio station: WIFM (What's In it For Me?) This has to be more than about shareholder value and executive compensation. People need to feel they have skin in the game.



Step 2: Create Enterprise-level Themes

First ask, “What themes in your answers have the most significant impacts and implications for the organization and employees?” At the end of this exercise you should have 5-8 key themes. Then ask, “Are there any themes not covered in your answers that also have significant impacts and implications for the organization and employees?” This may yield one or two more themes.

Step 3: Plan for delivery

Here are questions to answer that will impact the tone, and therefore the persuasiveness, of your Elevator Speech message:

1. **Who is the key audience or stakeholder group?**
2. **In what style or tone should the message be delivered?** Should it be optimistic, cautious, upbeat, somber, or other?
3. **What is the desired response of your audience?** Do you want them to ask questions, offer suggestions, or take a specific action?
4. **What will you ask them for?** This is very important. Every verbalizing of the Elevator Speech is an opportunity to get stakeholders engaged. Don’t miss the sales opportunity!



Step 4: Write the Elevator Speech, edit, have it reviewed, revise, rinse and repeat

There are no shortcuts here, unfortunately. Now you’re down to the hard work of getting that one full page to maybe a quarter or third of a page. Practice reading out the speech in front of a mirror, slowly, calmly. It will take a long time to get to something that you can calmly articulate in less than 60 seconds.

Have fun and good luck!