

YOUTH POLICY PROJECT ELEVATOR PITCH



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You are probably wondering what an elevator pitch (or elevator speech) is, and why we are doing one in this class. Here is my (shorter than average) elevator pitch on elevator pitches:

A three-minute elevator pitch is a persuasive, accurate, and pithy (succinct, concise) assessment of an issue. The purpose is to get someone's attention long enough for them to want to hear more. Elevator pitches can help with a wide variety of "asks". An elevator pitch consists of:

1. An introduction that grabs the listener's attention
2. Three persuasive reasons why your proposal is a good idea
3. A close that suggests next steps

Learning how to give a good elevator pitch will help you talk to people about the policy and program issues that matter to you and your clients. In addition:

-  Practicing giving an elevator pitch also will help you in your career. Learning how to give an elevator pitch will help you articulate and communicate your strengths and the resources you bring to a prospective employer.
-  Elevator pitches also are fun, and . . . if you do one of the best five (5) elevator speeches in class (as evaluated by your classmates) you win a prize!

In sum, elevator pitches are a tool for communicating ideas quickly and effectively, so let's start now by practicing.

Resources for learning about Elevator Pitches

Below are some hints for creating an elevator pitch from the Skandalaris Center at Washington University, a center that promotes social entrepreneurship.**

The purpose of the elevator pitch is not to sell a product, convince investors, or show off brainpower – it is simply to present an idea to diverse audience members who may be able to help.

1. *Summary Sentence:* Start off with a concise introduction to your idea. This should only take 10 – 15 seconds to deliver.
2. *The Problem:* What is wrong with existing products or services? This is a good chance to personalize the presentation by telling a very brief story how you came to see and are affected by the problem.
3. *The Pain:* The consequences of the problem. The pain (psychological and/or physical) it causes. Be specific (e.g. money, time). Demonstrate sincerity. Communicate a sense of value, empathy, and urgency.
4. *The Solution:* What it is and how it is unique, NOT how it works. No technical jargon, no jargon, no acronyms. Simple English works best.
5. *The Benefits:* What will drive people to change and adopt your innovation? What will lead them to abandon the status quo?
6. *The Team:* Your qualifications to see The Problem and build The Solution. Be brief.
7. *Your Needs:* If you can't address all the areas above, that's okay. Just be sure to describe the skills you need and the level of involvement you are looking for (partner, mentor, investor, or advisor).

SOURCE: <http://sc.wustl.edu/Programs/Pages/IdeaBouncePointers.aspx>

** Definition of social entrepreneurship:

“We define social entrepreneurship as having the following three components:

1. identifying a stable but inherently unjust equilibrium that causes the exclusion, marginalization, or suffering of a segment of humanity that lacks the financial means or political clout to achieve any transformative benefit on its own;
2. identifying an opportunity in this unjust equilibrium, developing a social value proposition, and bringing to bear inspiration, creativity, direct action, courage, and fortitude, thereby challenging the stable state’s hegemony; and
3. forging a new, stable equilibrium that releases trapped potential or alleviates the suffering of the targeted group, and through imitation and the creation of a stable ecosystem around the new equilibrium ensuring a better future for the targeted group and even society at large.”

SOURCE: Martin, R. L., & Osberg, S. (2007). Social entrepreneurship: The case for definition. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. Retrieved from:

http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/social_entrepreneurship_the_case_for_definition/

Other resources on elevator pitches.

Keep in mind that this idea comes from the business world and typically are used for getting jobs and selling products. But in a way, we are trying to sell something: a policy idea, right? We can learn from their methods:

- Crafting an Elevator Pitch: <http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/elevator-pitch.htm>
- This is interesting -- more on the words that go into a pitch but helpful in thinking about constructing a pitch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XvxtC60V6kc>
- How values sell you and your idea: http://shorensteincenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/HO_HERMAN_Elevator-Policy-Pitch-Presentation-PDF.pdf
- An Elevator Pitch: <http://www.businessnewsdaily.com/3937-elevator-pitch.html>
- How to Land a Killer 60 second elevator pitch: <http://www.salisbury.edu/careerservices/students/Interviews/60secondElevator.html>
- A winning pitch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6O98o2FRHw&feature=related> (what do you think works – or doesn’t work – in this pitch?)
- How about this one? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ehDAP1OQ9Zw> (If he can do one, we can too?!)
- There are lots more out there if you google elevator pitches/speeches