



Personal Branding: Developing an Elevator Speech

Selling yourself to a potential employer can be a daunting task, but it is a critical aspect of the job hunt. Being able to sum up unique aspects of your skills in a way that excites others is a fundamental skill. The best way to memorably introduce yourself and highlight your abilities to potential employers is through an elevator speech.

An elevator speech, so named because it should last no longer than the average elevator ride, is a short 30 second sound bite that describes who you are and what you want to accomplish professionally. And while it may be called an elevator speech, it can be used anywhere! Think of your elevator speech as your personal branding strategy rather than as a resume. Your goal is to show potential employers how you can help them.

An elevator speech is all about introducing yourself in a memorable fashion, so develop an opener that grabs the listener's attention and leaves him wanting to hear more. Once you have the listener's attention, focus on personal, unique reasons why you want a particular job. If you like a company's corporate culture, be sure to mention it. Then show the listener how you can contribute to the company. Avoid basic answers in favor of those that highlight your one-of-a-kind skills and attributes. You can do this by writing down the skills and abilities you have to offer as you address the "3 P's of Personal Marketing."

First, consider the skills you have learned through *personal experience and education*. For example, if you are looking for a marketing position, you might include your previous marketing knowledge, vendor management and computer skills. Next, cover your *portable skills* or skills that you bring with you to any job. For this you might touch on your writing and communication skills or your ability to manage a budget. Finally, address the things that make you who you are, your *personal traits/passions*. Let potential employers know that you are creative, independent and a quick learner.

After writing down the skills you possess, think of

them in terms of how they can benefit an employer. The people you talk to want to know how you can help them so emphasize the benefits you provide or the solutions you offer. Because you will be delivering your speech in a short time frame, make sure to only include the most relevant and interesting information.

Once you have developed a list of skills, write your speech down, rehearse it and hone it over months of delivery among friends. Ask your friends what they want to hear more of and what is too much information. Make changes to your elevator speech until you come up with something that sounds natural but will be memorable. An elevator speech is often someone's first impression of you, so use it as an opportunity to show them how passionate you are about their company or organization. Be prepared to answer any questions they may ask you during or after your elevator speech.

Now that you have an elevator speech, use it! Capitalizing on a chance encounter with a corporate executive or hiring manager could help you land your next job. Remember that your elevator speech can be used anywhere. Use it while you are standing in line at the grocery store, waiting for a meeting to start, attending a networking event, trade show or convention. You can even use it during an interview when an interviewer asks you to "tell me about yourself." Varying your elevator speech slightly each time you give it will allow you to adapt it to a specific situation and audience.

Searching for a job is often a difficult and tedious task, but being prepared with an elevator speech will help you make the most of every opportunity to tell potential employers about your career goals and unique qualifications. Your 30 second sound bite just might help you land the job of your dreams!

Q&A

Question: Where can I learn about summer job listings?

Answer: CES offers students a variety of ways to learn about job offerings year round.

The part-time jobs board located in the Union near the food court lists part-time jobs on-campus and off-campus.

Students can also find part-time positions offered on the K-state campus, as well as in Manhattan, Salina and the surrounding communities, by activating their free "My CES" account. This account also gives students access to full-time, intern and co-op job listings.

The CES website also features links to several top job listing sites offering short-term, summer, internship, co-op and full time positions throughout the U.S. and around the world.

Visit www.ksu.edu/ces to activate your "My CES" account or to view our job listing links.

CES Service of the Month

The Other Me

Find out what messages you are sending as a potential employee. Refine your online image on sites such as Facebook, Twitter and blogs and create a professional online profile via LinkedIn.

- Tues. April 12, 4 pm
- Union 207

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

April 6

- Walk-in Wednesday

April 12

- The Other Me

April 13

- Walk-in Wednesday

April 20

- Walk-in Wednesday

April 26

- Cool Treats Hot Jobs

April 27

- Walk-in Wednesday

May 4

- Walk-in Wednesday

****Career and Employment Services will be open during the summer Monday-Friday from 8 am-5 pm.****

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

For many students, mornings can be a zoo as they scramble to finish homework, eat breakfast and make it to class on time. One morning a week is literally a zoo for Alyssa Goehri, junior in Animal Science and Industry.

Every Thursday morning Goehri volunteers at the Sunset Zoo as part of the AM Zoo Crew. As a Zoo Crew volunteer, Goehri prepares the meals for the zoo's education animals. She takes care of about 25 animals, including a possum, rabbit, falcon and chinchillas. In addition to preparing the diets, she is also responsible for cleaning out the animals' cages and exercising them.

Goehri said there is so much food to chop up and prepare for the animal that it took her three hours the first few weeks. Now that she knows exactly how to do everything, it only takes about half the time. But for Goehri, all of the time is well worth it since she gets to spend time working with so many animals.

"It's been really fun being around the animals and learning the different personality of each animal," she said.

Goehri first learned about the opportunity to volunteer at the zoo through the Pre-Vet Club on campus. She then went to an information meeting for zoo volunteers last fall where she filled out a volunteer application. After going through about 20 hours of training to learn about the zoo and completing various worksheets, Goehri started her volunteering in January.

"I've developed a whole new respect for zoo keepers," said Goehri. "There are so many diets to prepare daily and a lot of food that has to be chopped up."

Since volunteering at the zoo, Goehri said her career path has definitely been influenced. Before she said she was considering exotic animal medicine as a career, but now she is not sure if it is something she wants to do in the future. Goehri said she is more interested in the research of animals rather than taking care of them daily.

Regardless of her career path, Goehri said she has learned a lot as a Zoo Crew volunteer. After graduating in May 2012, she plans to attend vet school.

Send a Better Email Cover Letter

As job searches are increasingly moving online, more and more employers are asking job seekers to send their cover letter via email. An email cover letter is often your one and only chance to make a positive impression on a potential employer. While some tips, such as using a professional tone and correct spelling and grammar, apply to paper and email cover letters, others apply only to email cover letters. Ignoring these guidelines could ruin your chances of getting a job.

Often overlooked by job seekers, the subject line of an email will determine whether your cover letter gets read. Experts say to never leave the subject line blank or to waste it by just inserting the job number. Instead, entice the reader by making sure the subject line is clear and specific to the job you are applying for. For example, you might put something like "Bilingual CPA seeks account manager position."

Job seekers should follow the same basic formatting rules that they would for a standard paper cover letter. Begin the letter with a standard salutation using the recipient's name if you know it. Write your cover letter as the body of the email, making sure to leave a blank line between each paragraph. Conclude your letter with an appropriate closing, such as "Sincerely" or "Warm regards." In addition to your name, include your physical mailing address, phone number and email below your signature line.

Potential employers do not have a lot of time, so it is important to keep your cover letter simple. Most experts recommend your cover letter be two or three paragraphs and about 150 words. Use the first paragraph to hook the reader and sell him your abilities. The following paragraphs should be used to give a brief bio on who you are and what you can do for the employer.

Since many companies use applicant tracking systems, using skill-oriented keywords or industry buzzwords will boost your chance of being discovered. Even if your skills are not right for a particular job, using strong keywords can improve the chance that your resume will be selected for a more appropriate job in the future.

If you wrote your cover letter in a word processing document, strip away all formatting and save it as plain text. Avoid using emoticons, abbreviations and wild fonts or colors. If your email program does not do word wrap automatically, use formatit.com to format your email for you. This will ensure that the recipient does not receive your email in fragments.

Additionally, make sure you take the time to learn all company guidelines for submitted email cover letters and follow them. Do not include attachments unless the company specifically requests them because many companies filter out emails with attachments.

Finally, make sure you thoroughly spell-check and proofread your cover letter several times. A simple misspelling could prevent you from being selected for an interview. Test your cover letter by emailing it to a friend or yourself to see how it will be viewed by employers and if any changes need to be made.

Following these tips for your email cover letter will help you get noticed by employers. The positive impression employers gain from your email cover letter will give you an additional chance to "wow" them again during your interview.

This information is based off of "Eight Tips for Better Email Cover Letters" found at <http://career-advice.monster.com>.

