



Elevator Speech

Contributed by Astrid Baumgardner, USA

Networking is one of the key tools that can make the difference between a good career and a great career. Many people shy away from networking or fumble around when meeting new people because they do not know what to say about themselves. They are missing an opportunity to connect with the very people whom need them! The secret is in crafting a short and powerful “elevator speech”.

The most effective elevator speeches are succinct, carefully crafted messages that immediately tell someone why he or she needs to hire you. An elevator speech should tell the listener:

1. What you do;
2. Who your target audience is;
3. What need you fill for them; and
4. What result you would like from this encounter.

This type of elevator speech focuses on your target audience: what they lack, what they need and why you are the best person to solve their problems or fill that important need. This type of message is more likely to encourage your listener to talk to you, find out more about what you do, have another meeting and eventually hire you or refer you to someone who will hire you.

Here is my Elevator Speech:

“As a professional life and career coach and lawyer, I help professional musicians and artists to achieve the career success, financial security and life balance that they long to have.”

Depending on whom I am meeting or where I am, I will then add:

“How would you like to find out more about coaching?” Or:

“Let’s set up a meeting so that we can see how coaching might help you.”

To create your Elevator Speech, answer the following questions:

1. What do I do?

Consider what you do. Then think about how you distinguish yourself from the other people in your niche and what makes you unique and memorable.

2. Who is my target audience and what do they lack?

Visualize your ideal audience member. What is that person's occupation? What demographic does that person fall into? What does that person love to do? What is missing from that person's life? What challenges does he or she encounter? What would make that person's life better?

3. What need do I fill for my target audience?

Now that you have some better insights into your target audience what they are lacking, think about how you fill the need of that audience and what skills or talents you have that they need.

4. What would I like from this encounter?

The last part of the elevator speech helps you to take this contact to the next level. What are you looking for? A meeting? A name of someone who can help you? A resource? ASK!

Put these elements together using the following template:

As a _____ (describe yourself), I help _____ (your target audience) to _____ (describe the need that you fill for your target audience) so that they _____ (the benefits that they derive)

Here's what I would love for us to do: _____ (your goal from this encounter). (You may feel more comfortable saying something like: 'It would be great if we could think about/consider...)

Write your draft pitch here, then read the next page.

You can refine your Elevator Speech in a few ways:

- Change any long words or jargon into the language that your target audience will understand;
- Cut out unnecessary words;
- Finalize your speech by making sure it is no more than 90 words long (excluding the last sentence on your goal from this encounter); and
- Practice your speech in front of a mirror so that you are comfortable with the message and you feel authentic when saying it.

Now you are ready to connect with the people who need you most!

Challenge

Transform your pitch into a 100-word biography (using third person) and insert it into your CV.

Astrid Baumgardner, JD, PCC is a certified professional life coach and lawyer working with musicians and artists to help them achieve authentic professional, personal and creative success. She is also the newly appointed head of Career Strategies at the Yale School of Music and a lecturer teaching a course on Careers in Music. For more information, please visit <http://www.astridbaumgardner.com/> where you can sign up for her free blog and newsletter.

To see the document online as it appears on Astrid's website, please follow the link:

<http://astridbaumgardner.com/articles/56-create-your-elevator-speech>

TILE tools form part of an Australian Learning and Teaching Council Fellowship. The tools are available to all members for use in teaching and mentoring. Contributions, feedback and new network members are always welcome, as are research collaborations. For more information, please contact Professor Dawn Bennett at d.bennett@curtin.edu.au

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Plotting your preferences: Creating a high-achieving group

Original contributed by Janis Weller, McNally Smith College of Music, Minnesota;

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Instructions

‘Plotting Your Preferences’ is a simple activity that helps pinpoint strengths, identify possible future directions, and perhaps learn a bit more about ourselves. The activities listed in each square may be related to our field of study or they may be more general in nature. The original TILE tool was published in 2011 and we subsequently realised its value in helping people form effective groups. It works beautifully.

There are two handouts for this activity. On the first, for the lower right square titled *things I struggle to do and don’t like*, consider things you must do even if these are not an especially good fit (not just things you could avoid entirely).

For the writing project, please complete the activity as an individual and bring to the next meeting. We will use these to form effective writing teams and to ensure that each team has all that it needs to meet its writing goals.

If you employ this tool with students, start by asking them to call out something they would include in the bottom right quadrant, and ask who else might take those things on. Public speaking generally finds its way into all four quadrants for different students, and it is a

fairly safe bet to get the ball rolling. Have students work with the people who will be in their project teams, starting with an individual attempt to place three things in each quadrant before comparing responses with their teammates.

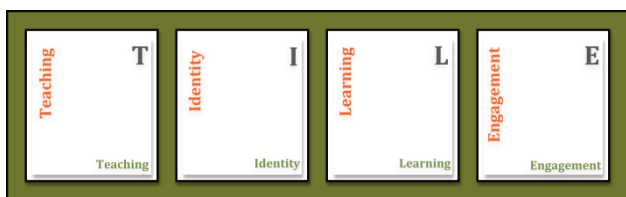
Ask students to think about the task set for their team and to think about some of the things they may need to know and do. Who will devise the timeline? Present for the group? Schedule the meetings? Edit or write a report? Take the lead on the stats?

The second handout, unaltered from the original TILE tool, enables us to analyse our responses. This may be something we take away as a personal reflection. I often ask people to target one or two things in the lower quadrants as personal development challenges they will tackle over the next semester. Keywords in the top quadrants have also been built into capacity statements.

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Creating a high-achieving group

Things I like and do well	Things I don't like but do well
Things I like but find difficult to do	Things I don't like and struggle to do

Things to think about:

1. Imagine the paper or papers.
 - a. What skills are required?
 - b. How can each person's academic expertise be brought to the fore?
 - c. Are more data required? If so, what, when and how?
2. How does this writing commitment fit within your current commitments?
3. In light of these, what roles can you each contribute?
4. Which things would you prefer not to do?
5. What, if any, skills are missing? Where in the larger group do these skills exist?

Analysing the results

The upper left quadrant, *things I like and do well*, obviously identifies activities that are a very good fit, and ideally could be the focus of your group role.

- Are these activities sufficient to sustain you as a publishing academic?
- How can you move in that direction and how will you fill in the gaps in the meantime?

The upper right, *things I don't like but do well*, is one of life's interesting conundrums. Perhaps you are very good at analysing data, just not that interested in doing so. Or perhaps you are a proficient editor, but are just not that intrigued by editing work. You could, however, consider items in this square when thinking about a possible 'day-job' to contribute to this and other teams. Activities at which you are adept tend not to be energy drains and may be tasks that others are willing to pay you to do. Bingo!

The lower left box can be more problematic. *Things I like, but find difficult to do* can present real challenges in our work and career. They can indicate something to strive toward and improve on, or perhaps something you just find frustrating. What will you do with the items in that box?

Finally, the lower right, *things I don't like and don't do well*. The activities in this box can take up considerable time and energy in our lives. There may be tasks on this list that you can hire others to do for you. It could be worthwhile to hire someone to do your references, conduct a close edit of your work, or crunch the figures. Some of those skills may land in another team member's upper right square, after all. You may even be able to trade or barter services, using your skills to help someone else.