

The Ten Second Elevator Pitch

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Perhaps it is due to my background in Public Relations, but I believe 10 seconds is more than enough time to tell someone what your business offers and how it can benefit them.

I look at the 10-second elevator pitch as a succinct, impactful message that delivers the “what” and “why” of your business to the customer/prospect.

Following is an example of an elevator pitch that only communicates the features of a product or service and not its value or benefit:

XYZ builds and installs custom, back-office financial software for small businesses.

From this statement it is easy to discern what this company does. However, it does not tell you how this business and its products and services can benefit you. The missing piece in this message is actually what compels individuals to purchase a business’s goods and services. Without the stated value to the customer, no true differentiation is communicated.

Here is an example of that same elevator pitch above, with the customer benefit incorporated into the statement:

XYZ builds and installs custom, back-office financial software for small businesses to help simplify and automate their invoicing and payroll processes in order to improve accounting accuracy and efficiency.

From this effectively constructed positioning statement, it is clear that ten seconds is enough time to deliver the sales pitch. If you want your sales associates to create interest for a prospect to learn more about your products and services, you need to keep your messages short

and impactful, incorporating both the “what” and the “why” of your offerings. Oftentimes, sales professionals have only seconds to engage a prospect on the other end of a cold call, between floors in an elevator, or during a brief encounter at an event.

It is, therefore, an essential business requirement that your customer-facing employees have concise, hard-hitting messages to communicate your business’s value, succinctly, to prospects and customers.

Some companies place their elevator pitch on a laminated card and put it in the hands of every employee in the company, just in case the employee comes face to face with a prospective sales opportunity. Isn’t this a fantastic idea? Why not? After all, every employee in your company, regardless of their primary role, can serve as an extension of your sales function. This includes the person answering the phone, your accounts receivable person, your delivery person and more.

Below is an example of a simple sales “cheat sheet”, containing a company’s positioning statement and top-line key messages. It can be laminated and kept in a wallet, purse, portfolio or even a pocket. This document is intended for internal use only.

Imagine one of your employees is in the elevator with a person who just happens to be looking for exactly what your company is selling. Now, let us assume this staff member is unprepared to deliver your killer sales message. The opportunity walks right out those doors when they open on the next floor.

Now, imagine that same opportunity arises, but this time the employee is armed with the proper sales pitch. When the opportunity presents itself, the employee introduces him/herself and delivers the message. Is it not possible that the message may peak the interest of the person sharing the elevator, so that he/she agrees to a follow-up discussion? Of course it is. Furthermore, that exceptional opportunity might just turn into a significant sale for your company.

An elevator pitch isn’t something magical that shakes money from the trees or is appropriate to use in every situation, but it should be

designed to deliver enough impact when used to help foster deeper discussion.