

Branding: The Elevator Pitch

Picture this: You step into an elevator on the 7th floor and a woman introduces herself to you as a recruiter for [Insert Dream Company Here]. You know you have about 60 seconds before the doors open on the 1st floor and you both go your separate ways, never to speak again. This is unless you can say something to make an impression on her. How do you make that impression? What could you possibly come up with on the spot to say that would matter?

This is the same kind of situation that you will find yourself in at career fairs and internship fairs. You are essentially approaching a stranger with the hopes that there is something you can say that will stick in their memory when you walk away. The last thing you want to do is enter that conversation without a plan. Hence, the Elevator Pitch.

The Elevator Pitch is basically a prepared, 60 second or less autobiography. You want to be clear about who you are and what you want. You simply won't have time to give them your life story, all your accomplishments, and all your dreams. You have to boil it down and make every word count.

Here are the things to think about when building a solid Elevator Pitch:

- **What kind of relevant experience do you have?** *This can include previous jobs, leadership positions, your major, etc.*
- **What are your strongest skills?**
- **What are your strengths and passions, career-wise?**
- **What kinds of jobs, companies or industries are you pursuing now?**
- **What sets you apart from others? What would make you memorable compared to someone else wanting the same job?**

Remember, this is for brainstorming so just get some idea out on paper and don't worry about how they sound or how a recruiter might view them. This is like an unedited draft. You just want to get every possible idea down on paper before you start crossing things out.

Step two is getting all those things that you just came up with, picking out the stuff that says the most about who you are as a young professional, and crafting it into a concise, eloquent pitch. So how are you going to do that? Think of your pitch in three parts:

1. **Who are you?** *You're introducing yourself! Don't forget to include the basics: your name, where you go to school, what your major is, where you work, etc.*
2. **What are your major accomplishments/passions/skills?** *This is the narrowing down part. If you could only tell a perfect stranger two things, what would it be? Make these important; this will most likely be what someone will actually remember about you!*
3. **What do you want/Where are you going?** *This is what some call the "call to action". You're telling them what you want. Don't be overly aggressive or pushy here but don't assume they know what you want. Tell them you're looking for a job/internship. Be direct.*

"Hi! I'm Yosef Mountaineer and I will be earning my BSBA in Management at Appalachian State University in May 2015. I have always been a natural leader and at Appalachian I have developed leadership skills in my role as Vice President of my fraternity where I schedule and coordinate meetings for 80 members, manage an executive board of six, and design and oversee philanthropic activities. I am also a problem solver with a global perspective. In addition to my major, I am pursuing minors in Spanish and Supply Chain Management. I have had international experience in Costa Rica, where I became familiar with the coffee growing industry and was able to evaluate the entire supply chain process from coffee production to distribution. Last summer I had an internship with Delhaize America where I interacted with suppliers, created shipping reports and came up with ideas to improve company efficiency and reduce production costs. I am looking for an opportunity to combine my leadership experience with supply chain and am excited about the possibility of working with a team to increase productivity in a company like yours."