

CREATING AN ELEVATOR PITCH

In the time it takes to ride an elevator, what would you tell someone about your program? Please take 10-15 minutes to use each idea to write one short powerful sentence for each topic.

These five topics will help you to write a carefully planned and prepared message that grabs attention in a few words, which should only take 30-60 seconds to read.

The elevator speech in total is:

- Absolutely no longer than 30-60 seconds.
- Or, in words- approximately 80-90 words
- Or, in sentences- 8 to 10 sentences

1) **About you-** Open with a statement that grabs attention: a hook that prompts your listener to ask questions; Tell who you are: what is your role, include location.

Examples: I'm Mary Smith, Executive Director for Homes for the Homeless, a Detroit area non-profit that runs homeless shelters. OR I'm Robin Young and I am the Executive Director of Little Ones Stay and Play, a Brooks County owned and operation child care center.

2) **What do you offer-** Tell what problems you solve, offer a vivid example.

Examples: We help about 80 families in the Valdosta area with high quality child care so that the parents can go to work or school. OR We offer the only Quality Rated after school program in Colquitt County, so that children have a safe, supervised, and quality place to spend the hours after the instructional day.

3) **What are the benefits-** Tell what very special services, or solutions you can offer, what are the advantages of working with you, work your organization name in a 2nd time, include phrases that define or refine.

Examples: What makes our child care program different is that we are Quality Rated, which means that we have been certified by state credentialed early childhood education experts that we go above and beyond minimum health and safety standards to offer an early learning experience that prepares children for kindergarten. OR Because we are able to keep our rates low, working poor

families are able to remain employed or in school, which helps provide a PATH out of poverty. OR We are a minority, woman owned business that employs 35 local residents of Lowndes County

- 4) **How do you do it-** Give a concrete example or tell a short story, show your uniqueness, emotional appeals, real impact stories.

Examples: We have helped 700 individuals access Social Security benefits since we began our SOAR program in 2007. Our outcomes tell us that applicants access stable housing and healthcare in an average of 65 days from date of application. OR We serve 30 children who receive CAPS, which means their parents work, but don't make above 85% of the median income. Because we're Quality Rated, that means these children, who need our support the most, benefit from an environment with highly trained teachers, lower ratios,

- 5) **Include a specific call to action-** What is the most wanted response after your elevator speech? Do you want a business card, a referral or an appointment for a presentation after your elevator speech?

Examples: Can I contact you to see how we might work together? OR I see you are carrying a DSM-V, we are looking for medical providers to perform mental status exams. OR Can we use meeting space at your office to host our next staff development/training day?

Checklist for fine-tuning:

- ✓ First write down all that comes up in your mind.
- ✓ Then cut the jargon and details. Make strong short and powerful sentences. Eliminate unnecessary words.
- ✓ Connect the phrases to each other. Your elevator speech has to flow naturally and smoothly. Don't rush.
- ✓ Memorize key points and practice.
- ✓ Have you really answered the key question of your listener: **What's in it for me?**
- ✓ Create different versions for different audiences of your elevator speech.