

Elevator Talks – Definitely a Skill worth Working On!

The Scenario: You are waiting for the elevator in your office building. Just as the doors are about to shut, the Vice President, who has the power to fund or cancel your current project, jumps in. It is just the two of you. Recognizing you, she says “I hear your group has a very interesting project going on.” It is a 30-second ride to her floor. What do you do? You could:

1. Discuss the weather and the most recent OSU football game. (Go Beavs!)
2. Launch into a long-winded, mind-numbing, eye-glazing, exhaustively-detailed technical discussion of your project that would last 10-20 minutes if she were to let it go that long. (And she won't – she'll run screaming from the elevator...)
3. Take advantage of the situation within the elevator time allowed. But, how?

An “Elevator Talk”:

- Is around 30 seconds long
- Is *highly* targeted and focused
- Is designed to snag someone's interest so they will ask for more information.
- Is carefully crafted to send the message you want to send.
- Is specifically targeted to the recipient and his/her most important priorities.
- Is full of enthusiasm.
- Begins with a very grabbing first line.
- Ends in an invitation of some sort.

We will look at each poster in class on Tuesday, November 30 and Thursday, December 2. At that time, *each person* will also give a 30-second Elevator Talk. It's not easy to summarize your project in 30 seconds -- it takes *practice*. So, it is a good idea to work on these talks beforehand. Just-Wing-It elevator talks appear that way.

For the November 22, 29, and December 1 Elevator Talks, the scenario will be that I am a VP with the power to give your project continued funding – or cancel it immediately. I happen to run into you in the elevator. I say, “I hear that your group has a very interesting project going on.” You reply, “Yes we do, ...” I will bring a stopwatch to class that day so we know when your 30 seconds are up.

For your Winter and Spring Elevator Talks, we will use the “Engineering Expo Scenario”.