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Elevator Pitch Tips



Can you clearly explain your organization's mission in 30 seconds or less? Why is this even important?

You often have a short window of opportunity to get your point across to a potential institutional funder or individual donor. Don't waste it fumbling for the right words on the spot — be prepared!

There are several key components of an effective "elevator pitch." However, there is often quite a bit of homework and research that goes into that 30-second spot. The bottom line is you must be clear on your work and goals, because the elevator speech is just the tip of the iceberg.

What to Keep in Mind

- **Keep it short!** The idea is not to tell people all the details but to leave them wanting to hear more.
- Remember the basic formula: **1) problem/ need, 2) solution** (what your organization plans to do about it), **3) call to action** (what you'd like the person you're talking about it to do, or what you'd like them to know about what can be done to support your solution/work).

Elevator Pitch Evaluation Criteria

When evaluating whether your (or anyone's) elevator pitch does the job, ask yourself the following:



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Elevator Pitch Example

1 The Problem

Nearly XX% of all children in foster care are never adopted or placed back with their birth parents. These kids have unique needs that are not being adequately addressed by the state or the nonprofit sector. One of the biggest problems these young adults have is a lack of support systems, both financially and emotionally. Studies show that XX% of youth who age out of foster care live below the federal poverty level, and XX% of these individuals continue to live in poverty into their thirties.

2 Our Solution

We aim to help these individuals lead more safe, comfortable, and productive lives by delivering wraparound services that include academic counseling, job training and support, and financial literacy training. We also organize regular social events to help these young people transition more effectively to life as independent adults.

3 Call to Action

For over 15 years, our team has been helping improve the lives of children in the foster care system. Support from the XXXXX Foundation will help enhance our model by adding a workforce development component to our program, providing one of the most critical self-sufficiency supports for youth transitioning out of the system.



Summary



The implication of the components listed above is you must have a clear, focused and well-articulated mission. You must know your target demographic, and you must define and understand the problem you are working to solve. In addition, you must be clear on what you want to achieve and how you will achieve it. These things — mission, demographic, problem statement (or statement of need), market analysis and goals — are the foundation for every grant proposal. And the framework for this information is very similar to what you see in most business plans. Practice your pitch. And be critical — don't get so comfortable with your chosen words that you fail to see a disconnect between your words and what you actually do or the problem you are working to solve.

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