

How to Create a Successful Elevator Pitch

with Shane Meeker, Author of StoryMythos and Storytelling

Keynote speaker



- Keep it short by using sound bites.
 - The biggest mistake people make is that they try to load too much into an elevator pitch. They think the listener needs to know as much as they do in order to get it. The trick to a strong elevator pitch is to selectively pull out sound bites: 1) Sets-up the challenge, 2) Provides a solution, 3) Gives a compelling anecdote. 4) Ends with a need or a question depending on the audience.
 - Example: I have this new idea for how we can generate more leads through a new marketing tool I discovered. This marketing tool allows you to set-up customized drip campaigns to a target we have had difficulty reaching. The company claims other businesses like ours have 10x'ed their leads in the first month. I am trying to secure \$5k to do a test-and-learn/Can I have \$5k for a test and learn?
 - Many will embellish with superfluous details that will come up in conversation once your listener is hooked. They give long sordid histories on what was tried before, they spend too much time setting up the context.
 - The objective here is to be concise so that the listener can engage. When they start asking questions, you create dialogue. Dialogue usually leads to an "interesting...keep me posted on that." Or, "I would like to know more, can we set up some time?" Or "What will that \$5k get us?"
 - What do you want them to take away? What one thing is it imperative for them to hear? Formulate your elevator pitch with this in mind.
- Know your audience and be intentional.
 - More pitches fall flat because people don't take the time to know who they are talking to. Since your elevator pitch needs to be short, you may need to make some assumptions about what your audience knows/doesn't know, cares about/doesn't care about, their tendencies, triggers, etc and then strategize as to how to best engage. The more you know, the more informed your sound bites will be. You can't BS your way through an elevator pitch.
 - This means you need to plan these encounters. Whether it is for yourself, your idea, your product, your business, you need to be ready to take advantage of these opportunities when they arise.
 - Audience is boss, you have to know who you are talking to and what their interests or concerns are. Test your pitches with colleagues and friends, get reactions, don't just wing it. Every audience has two key needs from a story, short or long, a need to think and a need to feel. That need to think could be about new ideas, puzzles, learning. While the need to feel is all about connection, relatability and empathy. The most precious thing given in a story is TIME. Every story requires that time be given up, short or long, time is the only non-renewable resource. Make whatever you share worth their time.
 - Tone def is the fastest way to end the pitch. Do your homework. It isn't about your agenda. It is about what is in it for them.
- Make sure the POD (point-of-difference) comes through.
 - This can be implied or explicit.
 - When you are elevator pitching an idea, product, brand, service, business, the POD is usually found in the solution or anecdote.
 - When we elevator pitch FRP, we talk about "coach-train-do". Not an explicit POD, but it is something people will say "hmm, I haven't heard that before." It captures attention and makes us memorable.
 - POD's tend to be more explicit in elevator pitches for products when it is common to compare against competitors, even if the competitor isn't explicitly stated.
 - When you are elevator pitching yourself, it is generally more implied. This generally requires a bit more style and tact.
 - How have you helped others define their POD? Think about what really sets you apart.
 - Too many people don't do the work to make this clear and compelling. It goes back to what is in it for them. What will they find impressive?
- Leave them wanting more.
 - You want to encourage further dialogue, inquiry, discovery, you need to leave them wanting more. We have talked about compelling anecdote, but what makes for one?
 - It feels new, novel or unexpected.
 - It stokes curiosity "how do they do that?" "I want to know more about that."
 - It has the potential to have meaningful impact on the business.
 - It creates demand.
 - Not every compelling anecdote has to have all of these. You will make yourself crazy trying to find the perfect one. Test-and-learn.