3 Steps to the Perfect Elevator Pitch

By Robert W. Bly

An elevator pitch is a 30-second answer to the question "What do you do?" Often asked by a complete stranger in casual circumstances (rather than at a time when you have a captive audience and PowerPoint sales presentation to offer support), this question can be quite intimidating—unless you've already got a clear, to-the-point answer in your back pocket and ready to use.

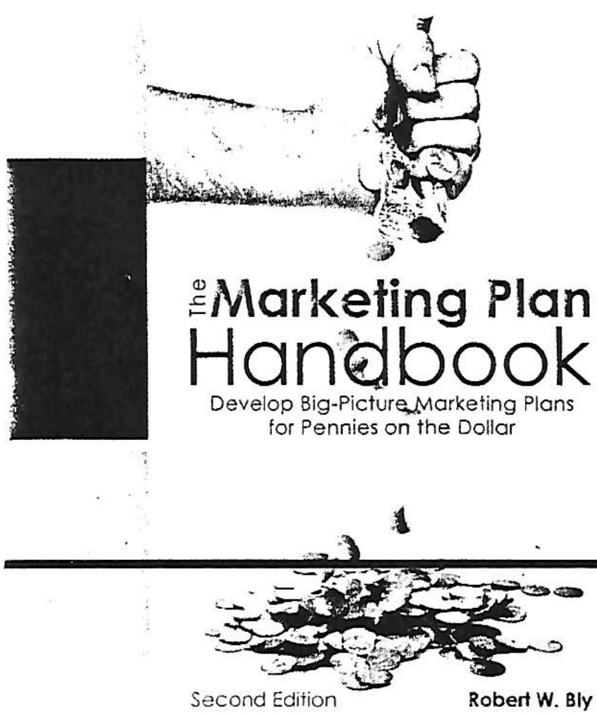
You should be able to clearly describe your business to someone in the time it takes to ride an elevator with them. When you're able to clearly define the business you want to be in, you can more easily plan a marketing campaign that helps you attain your goal. Not to mention, that you never know when the person you're speaking to is a potential customer or referral source.

Most elevator pitches, unfortunately, don't work—because they are straightforward descriptions of job functions and titles, generating not much else aside from disinterest and a few yawns. So, what's the formula?

First, begin with the words "Do you know?"
The question "Do you know?" identifies the pain point or need that your product or service addresses. For a financial planner who, say, works mostly with middle-aged women who are separated, divorced, or widowed and possibly re-entering the workplace, this question might be, "Do you know how, when women get divorced or re-enter the workforce after many years of depending on a spouse, they are overwhelmed by all the financial decisions they have to make?"

Second, use a statement that begins with the words "What I do" or "What we do"
The second part of the formula is a statement that begins with the words "What I do" or "What we do," followed by a clear description of the service you deliver. Continuing with our financial planner, she might say, "What we do is help women gain control of their finances and achieve their personal financial and investment goals."

Third, present a big benefit using the words "So that"
The third part of the formula presents a big benefit and begins "So that." Here's what the whole thing sounds like: "Do you know how when women get divorced or re-enter the workforce after many years of depending on a spouse, they are overwhelmed by all the financial decisions they have to make? What we do is help women gain control of their finances and achieve their personal financial and investment goals, so that they can stay in the houses they have lived in all their adult lives, have enough income to enjoy a comfortable lifestyle, and be free of money worries."



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