



Title of Presentation:

Making Your Elevator Pitch Work for You

Presented by:

Lauri Hennessey of Hennessey Communications

Description:

Lauri Hennessey is a public relations veteran who has helped nonprofits and elected officials develop messaging for 20 years. She will describe what makes a good elevator pitch, and help those attending develop their own..

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Full Workshop Description:

Lauri Hennessey is a public relations veteran who has helped nonprofits and elected officials develop messaging for 20 years. She will describe what makes a good elevator pitch, and help those attending break into small groups to work on their elevator pitch – in other words, the way they quickly and cohesively describe their mission.

After the groups develop these pitches together, Lauri will videotape a few people presenting their pitch and the class will critique and improve the product.

Answers:

1. **What sets you apart from other workshops?** The elevator pitch training is very helpful for Executive Directors, because it is about communications and about how to effectively describe your organization. This is real, on-the-ground information that can help EDs and others in talking about the work they do. It is not just media relations, but instead a workshop uniquely tailored for the nonprofit community and succinctly describing your mission.
2. **What benefit does this bring to the audience?** The audience will learn how to effectively and compellingly describe their nonprofit missions in a short amount of time. And, the small group breakout session allows folks to participate and not just listen.
3. **What will the audience walk away with?** They will leave with some helpful hand-outs, as well as a new elevator pitch for their use in describing their organization.
4. **What is the format of the presentation?** The format is 30 minutes of talking/description of elevator pitches and their goals, 15 minutes in a small group setting brainstorming, 15 minutes delivering and critiquing pitches in a large setting, and 10 minutes for q and a..
5. **Why do you want to present?** I work with nonprofit organizations and take every chance I can get to help them, get to know them, and spread the word about how I can work with them.

FACTS:

Experience:

Lauri Hennessey has been a frequent trainer over the years. She presented Elevator Pitch training last year in Olympia to an array of community leaders through the Communities Connect Network, training attendees in building pitches, interviewing and then critiquing their video presentations.

Workshop Format:

- 30 minutes of talking/description of elevator pitches and their goals
- 15 minutes in a small group setting brainstorming
- 15 minutes delivering and critiquing pitches
- 10 minutes q and a

RESUME FOR LAURI HENNESSEY

Lauri Hennessey: Hennessey has worked in the field of public relations for 20 years. Her experience runs from serving in the news media, to working as a Capitol Hill press secretary, to coordinating public affairs for federal environmental agencies. Hennessey worked for the largest radio station in Seattle as a reporter/editor, and for a radio station on the California Coast Hennessey left her job in 1989 to work as a press secretary for two Members of Congress in 1989. She has continued to work with the news media, both for elected officials and on behalf of federal agencies, for 15 years. She was sought after in the federal government as a media trainer, and has given national presentations on media relations, communicating with the public, and working with difficult constituencies.

Running Public Relations:

For the last seven years she has done PR, Communications Planning, web writing and more for nonprofit organizations across the Puget Sound area. Lauri Hennessey has promoted some very high profile Puget Sound area events, handling press before and after the events and serving as the primary media spokesperson. Among her recent clients was the tremendously successful Centennial Celebration of Pike Place Market, for which Hennessey did media relations.

Writing:

Hennessey specializes in writing, media training, public relations, and strategic communications, as well as all kinds of writing – from brochure copy to websites. She has worked in the online environment very frequently, writing curriculum for the Discovery Channel's website, writing and editing email marketing and fundraising pieces, and developing and editing website content. She has also written talking points, speeches, and communications plans. She writes freelance articles for Seattle-area and national parenting publications, and has written a newspaper column for the last nine years, dealing with parenting and children. It now runs in five Seattle-area newspapers. Lauri also coordinated all communications for a year for Communities Connect Network, a statewide network in Washington that addressed the need to "level the playing field" in the technological world.

Nonprofit Experience:

Hennessey has served as the Communications Director on an array of fundraising campaigns, and worked with everyone from Members of Congress to grassroots community campaigns. She has years of fundraising experience, and directed an auction in early 2008 that netted \$100,000 for Vashon schools. She also has coordinated public relations and communications for Treehouse, Camp Fire USA, DAWN, and Lifelong AIDS Alliance, working with the Seattle Academy of Arts and Sciences and many more. She has sat on five nonprofit boards in the last seven years, most recently joining the board of Southwest Youth and Family Services in West Seattle.

Materials for presentation:

This presentation will all be verbal with Lauri Hennessey speaking, small group breakout, and video recording and playback.

However, there is a wide assortment of materials out there about Elevator Pitches. I am attaching two to this proposal. They are a great example of the kind of takeaways I plan to have with me at the session.

How to Craft an Effective Elevator Speech

What exactly is an “elevator speech”? I believe the name was actually coined from the idea that we sometimes meet the important people in our lives in elevators. The odd situation we encounter in most elevators is that nobody speaks to or looks at anyone else, and yet we have a captive audience for that short period of time. Very few people are ready to interact in case someone does speak. The idea of an “elevator speech” is to have a prepared presentation that grabs attention and says a lot in a few words. What are you going to be saying? By telling your core message, you will be marketing yourself and/or your business, but in a way that rather than putting people off will make them want to know more about you and your business.

Why prepare an “elevator speech”? It is imperative to work on this two to three minute presentation until it is perfectly crafted. This is the one kind of speech that I do suggest memorizing. Make it such a part of you that if someone woke you up from a sound sleep in the middle of the night, and asked you what you do, you would smoothly and without hesitation tell them your “elevator speech.” This speech will serve as your introduction to others, so it has to be good!

Where and when do I use this “elevator speech”? Of course, if you meet someone who shows interest in the elevator, you can be literal and use it there. But usually it comes in handy when you attend an event, a conference, a convention, or some other type of meeting with networking opportunities. You will notice that one of the first questions people ask is, “And, what do you do?” “Oh, I’m a lawyer ... or an accountant ... or a consultant ... or an artist...” It doesn’t matter because they will often say, “Oh, that’s nice,” and immediately label you in their mind with all of the stereotypes they perceive those occupations carry with them. However, if you turn your message around and start with an answer like, “I work with small businesses that are grappling with computer problems,” right away — especially if they own a small business — their ears will perk up and they will want to know more. The reason I suggest working on this speech and memorizing it is that our natural reaction to the question, “What do you do?” is to answer with a label. Then, we continue to describe the process we go through instead of sharing the benefits they will get from working with us. Rather than thinking of ourselves as “solution providers” we picture ourselves as doing our occupation.

To whom do I present my “elevator speech”? The more often you give your short speech, the better it will become. You will have so much fun experiencing the unique reactions to what you are saying, you will easily be able to add enthusiasm and energy to the telling. I suggest taking advantage of a wide variety of gatherings and networking events. And, don't worry, if your “elevator speech” isn't smooth, easy, or natural in the beginning. If you stick with it, you will find that it gets better and better, and before long, you will be getting a surprising amount of business — or, at least a number of contacts who want your business card and to stay in touch. You will also be remembered.

How do I craft my elevator speech? To start your “elevator speech” determine your niche market, what problem(s) do they have that you can help solve and what solution is the outcome? What makes you unique? What short story illustrates a successful outcome that you have produced?

Tell your story!

How to Create a Great Elevator Pitch

In the world of **business** the constant thought of most business executives is this: “What’s in it for me?”. If you’re going to make a phone call, or have an off-chance meeting with these folks, you’d better be able to answer this question in 30 seconds or the executive will push the “Get Lost” button in their brain. Corporate types have been bred to “get to the point” and they expect the same from everyone they speak with.

This mindset is often counter-intuitive for the NPO professional, who loves to dialogue about the social issues they’re supporting. The best way to be prepared for these meetings is with a well-scripted Elevator Pitch.

- **Establish credibility.** Cite 1-2 examples of social proof like media or association with reputable companies/organizations. Do not speak quickly during an elevator pitch. Slow and calm.
- **Make it clear you are not looking for money** but have something of interest to discuss that would help his company (remember, WIIFM!), and then ask how you can follow up in a less hectic environment.
- **Here’s the cool part:** Mention something very, very hard to forget about you or your organization. Tim uses: “Just so you remember, as I know you’ll meet a million people today, I’m the world record holder in the tango. Happy to give you and Astrid a lesson sometime if the stars align.” Referring to this odd fact will be important when you follow up. Give them your card this odd fact about you or your organization handwritten on it.

If you meet them at an event or around other people, do not follow up within the next 3 days, as everyone else will. Give them at least one week and then cite the odd fact written on the business card when you call and schedule a meeting.