Create an effective 30-second elevator pitch

As a real estate professional, you never know where you’ll find your next client. Sure, you represent friends, family, and colleagues, but how do you position yourself and showcase your business when you meet new people?

Whether you’re at a networking event, a friend’s party, dropping the kids off at day care, or chatting at the gym, it’s important to put your best foot forward. The most successful real estate agents have a 30-second pitch (often called an “elevator pitch”) that is rehearsed, yet conversational; factual, yet easily digestible; and well-timed, but not pushy.

There are two main components involved in a successful elevator pitch: content and delivery. One can’t exist without the other. A memorable and effective 30-second pitch delivers important information and conveys a feeling of connection, both because of your message itself, and the way it is presented.

First, consider these helpful tips for writing the nuts and bolts of your elevator pitch—the content itself.

Offer a specific story or example. Instead of just talking about yourself, offer your audience a short story about a client you guided through a tricky short sale, a tough listing that you marketed aggressively, or another big win you’ve had for a client in the last few years.

What makes you different or unique? People are easily turned off by pushy sales pitches. Don’t give them the same old story. What makes you stand out as a real estate professional? Maybe it’s your negotiating skills, your large network of potential buyers, or your local reputation and stellar sales record. Shine a spotlight on whatever makes you unique and memorable.

Include the important details. Don’t get carried away in your message and forget important details like your name, your brokerage’s name, your office location, and what you specialize in.

Be passionate about your business. Enthusiasm is contagious. Demonstrate that you are passionate about the real estate industry, your clients, and your career, and listeners will feel your authenticity.

It’s all about them. People don’t want to hear you talk about why you’re so great. They want to know what you can do for them. When you talk about your skills, tell them how those attributes can help make their buying or selling experience less stressful, more profitable, or more efficient.

Use vocabulary that is easy to understand. Don’t spend these valuable seconds using industry buzzwords and jargon. Craft a message that is approachable, easy to understand, and unintimidating to the general public.

Once you know what you’re going to talk about and the points you want to emphasize, spend some time on the how to best get your message across—its delivery.

Keep it short. It’s called an elevator pitch for a reason—you’re supposed to be able to get through the whole pitch while traveling up or down just a couple of floors on an elevator. Make sure your pitch is no longer than 30 seconds. People have short attention spans, are easily distracted, and want to cut through the fluff and get to the core of a message.

Make a connection and tailor your delivery. Although you should rehearse and perfect your elevator pitch, make sure you know your audience and that you finesse your message accordingly. A flat, generic pitch won’t appeal to anyone. Consider your audience and make small tweaks. For example, if you’re talking to a potential seller, tell a story about how quickly you sold a recent listing, even in a down economy. If your audience is someone who is looking for a buyer’s agent, talk about your interpersonal skills and tough negotiating tactics.

Know when to use it. Savvy networkers know a sales pitch when they see it, so make sure to use your elevator pitch only when it’s appropriate. It doesn’t need to be the leadoff in your conversation with a new acquaintance. Spend some time finding mutual interests and common ground before launching into your pitch when you have the luxury of time.

Practice makes perfect. An elevator pitch is absolutely a type of public speaking, and most people get at least a little nervous when speaking in public. Think back to a time when you rehearsed school presentations. Write out your pitch and practice in front of the mirror, with coworkers, and in front of willing family members.

Make a video. While you’re practicing, videotape yourself a few times. It will help you critique your delivery, body language, and approachability. And, once your elevator pitch is polished and ready for prime time, record yourself again and post it to your website’s “About” section or your blog. It’s a unique and easy way to introduce yourself to new visitors on your site.

When you focus on delivering a unique message, offering a standout value proposition, and conveying confidence and enthusiasm, your 30-second elevator pitch can become a powerful networking and lead generation tool. Go the extra mile to practice, tweak, and time your pitch correctly, and you’ll set yourself apart from less-prepared and unremarkable conversationalists.

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