

## **ELEVATOR PITCH DEFINITION**

Now that I've given you a high-level overview -- or in other words an elevator pitch -- of what an elevator pitch is and why you need one, let me give you a definition...

*An elevator pitch is an overview of an idea, product, service, project, person, or other Solution and is designed to just get a conversation started.*

While that definition is fairly self-explanatory, let me take a moment to discuss exactly what the most important of those words mean.

### **Overview**

The point of an elevator pitch isn't to get into every detail of your Solution. Instead, all you want to do -- and all you have time to do -- is to make sure the audience understands what you are talking about and what's in it for them.

### **Idea, Service, Project, Person, or Other Solution**

While the term "Elevator Pitch" is generally used in the context of entrepreneurship, and in particular in selling ideas for new businesses to Venture Capitalists, the truth is that the idea can be used to help sell a wide variety of things.

### **Just Get a Conversation Started**

One reason why so many people deliver completely ineffective elevator pitches is they don't understand the purpose of an elevator pitch. They act like the purpose of an elevator pitch is to close the deal while in truth the purpose of an elevator pitch is to just interest the audience in continuing to talk.

## **THE NINE C'S OF AN EFFECTIVE ELEVATOR PITCH**

Now that you have a high-level sense of what an elevator pitch is, and what an elevator pitch is designed to do, let me drop down a level and discuss the characteristics of an effective elevator pitch.

After working with hundreds of would-be entrepreneurs, and studying hundreds of effective and ineffective elevator pitches, I have found that an effective elevator pitch is nine things.

1. Concise
2. Clear
3. Compelling
4. Credible
5. Conceptual
6. Concrete
7. Customized
8. Consistent
9. Conversational

I discuss each of The Nine C's at length elsewhere, but in the interests of repetition -- and one of the themes of this book is that repetition is good -- let me give you quick sense of what I mean.

### **1. Concise**

An effective elevator pitch contains as few words as possible, but no fewer.

### **2. Clear**

Rather than being filled with acronyms, MBA-speak, and ten-dollar words, an effective elevator pitch can be understood by your grandparents, your spouse, and your children.

**3. Compelling**

An effective elevator pitch explains the problem your Solution solves.

**4. Credible**

An effective elevator pitch explains why you are qualified to see the problem and to build your Solution.

**5. Conceptual**

An effective elevator pitch stays at a fairly high level and does not go into too much unnecessary detail.

**6. Concrete**

As much as is possible, an effective elevator pitch is also specific and tangible.

**7. Customized**

An effective elevator pitch addresses the specific interests and concerns of the audience.

**8. Consistent**

Every version of an effective elevator pitch conveys the same basic message.

**9. Conversational**

Rather than being to close the deal, the goal of an elevator pitch is to just set the hook; to start a conversation, or dialogue, with the audience.

**ABOUT ELEVATOR PITCH 101**

Elevator Pitch 101 is an excerpt from *Elevator Pitch Essentials*, a business book by Chris O'Leary that teaches entrepreneurs, salespeople, project champions, [job seekers](#), and others how to get their point across in two minutes or less. *Elevator Pitch Essentials* goes into much greater detail about each of The Nine C's and is full of real-life examples of effective and ineffective elevator pitches.