

the elevator pitch:
presenting your research in
conversation

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What is an *Elevator Pitch* or *Research Spiel*?

- a concise statement of your research interests and experience to be shared *informally* and *orally* in various professional contexts.
 - a brief encounter with a scholar in your field at a conference
 - introductions around a table at the beginning of meeting
 - introduction to a guest speaker in the hallway right before his/her talk
 - conversation at a reception for a speaker
 - an actual elevator ride with a search committee member

What is the *goal* of an elevator pitch?

- to create a memorable and positive impression
- to open the door to further conversation

Questions your elevator pitch should answer:

- What is the **topic** of your research?
- What is the **problem, issue, or question** that you are asking and addressing in your research?
- Why is that problem interesting and important? (i.e. **So what?**)
- How does your work connect with a **broader disciplinary conversation** about this topic/problem in your field, and what does it add to that conversation?

Crafting the elevator pitch:

- Language
 - **key nouns**
 - offer topical touchstones that are accessible to wide range of educated people
 - avoid jargon if possible or deliver specialized terms using appositives
 - **action verbs**
 - express relationships among these key nouns using action verbs
 - describe the *movement* of your work and the *activity* or *action* of your involvement

Crafting the elevator pitch:

- Delivery
 - Eye contact--read your listener
 - Enthusiasm
 - Practice, practice, practice!

The Cocktail Party Pitch

- Contexts
 - telling friends or family what you do
 - discussing your work at poster sessions with possible collaborators, peers, etc.
 - cocktail parties, receptions, lunch meetings, campus visit engagements
- Features
 - Conversational, more of an exchange, an actual dialogue
 - Listen very carefully, and respond!
 - Seek connections between your research interests and your interlocutor's interests
 - Ask questions

Additional Resources

- Harvard Business School's *Pitch Builder*:
<http://www.alumni.hbs.edu/careers/pitch/>
- Career Center
- Writing Center

GOING TO A CONFERENCE? HEADING FOR A JOB INTERVIEW?
WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?



COCKTAIL PARTY AND ELEVATOR PITCH ESSENTIALS

**NOVEMBER 8.&15. • 5:30-6:45 PM • LAFORTUNE BALLROOM
BUSINESS CASUAL ATTIRE REQUESTED FOR COCKTAIL PARTY**

An elevator pitch is a concise, well-prepared description about your research. Learn how to create it, rehearse it, and tailor it for a specific audience in a way that excites others. On **November 8**, leaders from the Graduate School, Career Center and Writing Center will teach you the skills that you will need to craft your elevator pitch. You will then have a chance to practice it among faculty and students on **November 15** at the cocktail party the Graduate School hosts in support of this event.

