# The Elevator Pitch

An elevator pitch is a short talk that explains an idea, a product or the speaker in the time of a short elevator ride, about thirty to sixty seconds. It is used at networking events, in job interviews and in quick meetings with managers or clients. A good pitch has five parts: hook, problem, value, proof and ask. Each part takes only a sentence or two, so every word must earn its place.

## 1. Hook

The hook is the opening line that makes the listener curious. It can be a surprising fact, a short question or a clear promise. It should be about the listener's world, not about the speaker's job title. A good hook is under ten seconds and leads straight into the problem.

**Example:** At a conference, a stranger starts with a short question: how many customers leave a shop without buying? With a hook, one clear question makes the listener curious. The listener says: I want to hear more.

**At work:** Youssef, a sales engineer, meets a shop owner in an elevator and has only a short ride. Using the hook, he asks: what if the shelves told the owner when to reorder? The owner turns and says: I want to hear more.

## 2. Problem

The second part is the problem: the pain the listener already feels. It should be specific, short and in the listener's own words. A real problem is more convincing than a general statement about the market. When the listener nods, the pitch is on the right track.

**Example:** A gardener tells a neighbour: the lawn turns brown every summer, doesn't it? With the problem, a familiar pain is named in one sentence. The neighbour nods and agrees.

**At work:** Youssef names the problem: small shops often run out of their best sellers and lose sales. With the problem, he uses plain words that the owner would say. The owner says: that happens to us every month.

## 3. Value

The third part is the value: how the idea solves the problem and what changes for the listener. It should describe the benefit, not a list of features. One clear sentence is better than three vague ones. A simple test is to complete the sentence: so that the listener can do this.



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**Example:** A bicycle repair shop wants new customers. With value, it says: we fix any bike in one hour, so the customer can ride to work tomorrow. The customer hears a benefit, not a list of tools.

**At work:** Youssef explains the value: the app counts stock automatically and sends an alert before an item runs out. With value, he completes the sentence: so that no sale is missed. The owner leans in.

## 4. Proof

The fourth part is proof: a small fact that makes the claim believable. It can be a short result, a customer story, a known client or a quick demonstration. One piece of proof is enough in a short pitch. Proof should be true and easy to check, because trust is lost quickly.

**Example:** A baker says her bread is the best in town, and then offers a free slice. With proof, the taste does the convincing. The customer buys a loaf.

**At work:** Youssef adds proof: a pilot shop stopped running out of its top products within one month. With proof, the claim becomes believable. The owner asks which shop it was.

## 5. Ask

The fifth part is the ask: the clear next step the speaker wants. The ask should be small and easy to say yes to, such as a short call or an email address. It should name a time or a way to continue. A pitch without an ask ends with a pleasant chat and no result.

**Example:** At the end of a talk, a speaker invites everyone to join the mailing list at the desk. With the ask, the next step is small and clear. Many listeners sign up.

**At work:** Youssef finishes with the ask: can I show a ten-minute demo on Thursday? With the ask, the owner has an easy way to say yes. The owner writes the time in the diary.

## Conclusion

In summary, an elevator pitch fits an idea into thirty to sixty seconds. The hook makes the listener curious, the problem names the pain and the value shows the benefit. Proof makes the claim believable, and the ask gives a clear next step. We write the pitch, say it aloud, and shorten it until every word earns its place. Practice makes it sound like a conversation, not a recitation.

### Sources


- Wikipedia: Elevator pitch – https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elevator_pitch
- Canada Post: How to write an effective elevator pitch (PDF guide) – https://canadapost-postescanada.ca/cpc/doc/en/n/how-to-write-an-effective-elevator-pitch.pdf
- Common business practice: the five-part structure (hook, problem, value, proof, ask) is a teaching framework written for this course, not a single published standard.




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