



How Much Elevator Do You Need?

Most sales people can talk forever about our product or service or company or features or whatever. I suspect some of us think if we talk long enough the prospect will buy just to get rid of us! You know that Sales Concepts is a big advocate of asking more questions and telling less about one's company. However, at some point, you do need to talk about your company.

The idea of an elevator pitch has been around for a while. An elevator pitch is the short version of why a prospect should do business with you and your company. The reference to elevator is based on the idea that you have to shorten things so they fit into the time taken to ride an elevator.

That's where the problem starts. Some of us need the elevator in the world's tallest building to have enough time to make our pitch. Boiling it down is a lot harder than you think.

But just being brief isn't enough. You need to focus and you need to be unique. You must find what *truly* makes your company special. Trotting out platitudes or advertising slogans won't cut it. Everybody has low prices, high quality, friendly personnel, wide selection, etc., etc., etc.

Here's a test. Write a statement about what makes your company unique. Then cut that in half. Then cut it in half again. Get it down so you can say it in 30 seconds or less. Think one or two floors as representing all the elevator you need.

Second part of the test. Take the name of your company out of the message and substitute your leading competitor's name. As long as you can put the competition's name in your message, it's not unique. Work until only your company can say that.

Oh, and it's hard to do this by yourself. Find some colleagues; kick it around; stay with it a long time past when you think you've got it. If you're lucky, you'll be in the neighborhood. It takes more than one session, but it is worth it. Good luck and good selling!

The next tip — On or about Oct. 3 — Over the phone, via email etc.

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