



Crafting an Elevator Speech

An elevator speech is a brief speech that outlines an idea for a product, service, or project. A good rule of thumb is that an elevator speech should be approximately 30 seconds long, with a maximum of 60 seconds.

An elevator speech for nonprofits can be broken down into three sections: the hook, the body, and the call to action. Then, you must bring all the content to life with your delivery.

The Hook

In a perfect world, your hook should only be about 10 to 15 seconds. You need to grab their attention, so don't waste time with small talk. Just dive right in.

The Body

After the hook comes the meat of your pitch, and it should only take up about 30 to 60 seconds. At this phase, you need to describe things like the specific impact you bring to the communities you serve. You've mentioned your value in the hook, now it's time to prove it.

The Call to Action

To wrap it all up, you only need 15 to 20 seconds. Bring everything home with a very specific ask. It's a good strategy to know exactly where your pitch is heading before you ever write it.

Hook:

Who do you serve? How do you help? What impact do you make?

Body:

What do you do for the people you serve and how can the person you're speaking to be a part of that work?

Call to Action:

Specifically, what are you asking of them? Some examples might be to join a coalition, attend an event, allow you to send them information on an issue, or set up a time to talk more. Keep this call to action in mind when creating the whole pitch and be sure to tailor it to your audience.

Example:

"Hi Mrs. Smith! I work for The Council on Alcohol and Drugs, and we are working to reduce access to alcohol among youth aged 12 to 20. Early onset of alcohol use can have several negative effects on youth and in your district, more than 30% of adolescents report having consumed alcohol in the past 5 days. I'd like to send you more information about the impacts of underage alcohol use and data specific to your district. What's the best way to get that to you?"

Tips:

Avoid jargon. Practice your pitch. Consider what questions someone might have. Be kind and polite.

TIPS ON TALKING WITH YOUR SENATOR AND REPRESENTATIVE IN PERSON

Talking to an elected official may seem intimidating at first, but it is important to remember that it is a normal part of their job. Especially if you live in their district, they want to know what you think and if they can help. Below are some tips on how you can increase your effectiveness in communicating with your senator and representative with the goal of establishing a long-term relationship.

In Person

Prior to the Meeting

- *Do Some Homework*
- Try to know the basics about the topic you are going to address. Be able to articulate what you are concerned about and why. Practice your “elevator speech” before you meet with your senator and representative or the staff member who works for them. Begin by thanking them for what they do. An “**elevator speech**” is a 1–2-minute speech that explains what you want and why you want it. It is called this because it needs to be very short. You may have more time to make your points, but you always need to be prepared to make your pitch quickly, especially if you are meeting them “at the ropes”.
- *Call your senator’s and representative’s offices and ask to speak to your legislator. Be sure to tell them you live in the legislator’s district. If they are not available than speak with their staff member who schedules the legislator’s time. Ask them to schedule an appointment for you with the legislator on February 20th between 11:15a.m. and 12:45pm.*
 - Don’t feel slighted if you don’t get to speak to the legislator. Legislative staff members work very closely with the legislator, and they are good allies to have.

What to Take with You

- Business Cards
- The Fact Sheet for Legislators handout on your topic provided by Voices for Prevention. This document provides the key information you want them to learn about. Give a copy to your legislator.

How to Address your Legislator:

When addressing a member of the state legislature use the following protocols:

- Senator: “Senator (last name)”
- Member of the House of Representatives: “Representative (last name)”
- Governor: “Governor (last name)”
- Lt. Governor: “Lt. Governor (last name)”
- Speaker of the House: “Mr. Speaker”
- Committee Chairman or Chairwoman “Chairman (last name), or Madam Chair “(last name)”



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Be Personal

- Tell them a little about yourself—where you live, what you do for a living, if you are representing yourself or an organization
- Be sure to tell them that you live and/or work in their district

Refer to Fact Sheet for Legislators handout

- If possible, refer to at least one piece of data that will support your perspective. Select one key piece of data that helps sell your perspective. Don't drown them in data; your handout can provide them with additional data.

Be Focused

- Remember they have only a few minutes to spend with you so stay on topic. Also, don't let the legislator change the subject either. Be polite but be firm.

Be Positive

- Don't be argumentative. You may not agree with the stand your legislator is taking on this particular issue, but it is important not to burn any bridges. Little is gained by arguing with your legislator. Mention how this issue affects children and families in their district.
- Don't be defensive. They may ask tough questions. They are probably asking the questions that will be asked of them. Give them solid information that will help them justify why they should support your issue. Always remember that you have the right to participate in the education of your legislators.
- Remember your goal is to have a long-term relationship. You won't always agree with your legislator. You are looking for common ground on the issues in which you are interested.

Make the Ask

- Don't leave without asking them to support your topic.
- Let them know you are always willing to help them with information any time. Ask them if they have any questions for you.

End the Meeting

- Don't stay too long
- Thank them for their time and attention

Follow-up

- Send a thank you note and anything else you promised them.
- Consider inviting them to your facility or to gather with children and/or parents and/or families you serve to let them see and hear first-hand what is needed for the community.



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SUBSTANCE ABUSE
PREVENTION DAY
at the GA Capitol

NOT SURE WHO YOUR STATE SENATOR OR REPRESENTATIVES IS?

STEP 1

[Click here](#) to get to openstates.org to find your legislator feature.

openstates
powered by CIVICAGLE

STEP 2

Enter your address

Find Your Legislators

Look your state legislators up by address or use your current location.

Enter Your Address:

Search by Address

Use Current Location

STEP 3

[Click here](#) to find your GA House Representative's contact information.

STEP 4

[Click here](#) to find your state GA Senator's contact information.



Georgia
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Behavioral Health
& Developmental
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BECOME A MEMBER



**SUBSTANCE ABUSE
PREVENTION DAY**
at the GA Capitol

Advocacy Script

Hello _____ . (name of
legislator you are visiting) My name is
_____ .

I live / work in _____ . (city
or county)

Thank you so much for all you are doing
for _____ (city or county).

I'd like to share about substance abuse
prevention in our communities.

Did you know . . . ?



**SUBSTANCE ABUSE
PREVENTION DAY**
at the GA Capitol

(Your First and Last Name)

(City, State)

(Chapter Name)

(Use this space to tell your story about why you decided to advocate for Substance Abuse prevention. Please limit your story to 75 words.)



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Dear **Senator/Representative [INSERT LAST NAME OF LEGISLATOR]**,

My name is **[FULL NAME]**. Thank you so much for all you are doing for (name of county you reside in). As a constituent of yours, I am writing as an advocate from **(name of your organization or Youth Action Team)**

I would like to set up a 10-15-minute phone (or other virtual) meeting with you to discuss critical information around substance abuse prevention that can inform your work as a member of the Georgia General Assembly.

During our meeting, I will provide an overview of the issue of **[ISSUE(S) OF CHOICE]** in your district/ our state, describe how it impacts your constituents, and share ideas for how we can work together to help save minds and lives.

A couple of preferred dates and times are listed below; however, I understand that your schedule is busy. If neither date nor time works for you, please suggest one that is convenient for you.

- **PREFERRED DATE/TIME 1**
- **PREFERRED DATE/TIME 2**

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]

[CITY, STATE]

[E-MAIL ADDRESS/PHONE NUMBER]



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