

Andy Bounds

The two steps of creating an impactful Elevator Pitch, (neither of which people do)



“How you describe yourself – your Elevator Pitch – is critical. It’s the first impression you give. An exciting one turns people on, a poor one turns them off – and you’ve only said one sentence.”

If someone asks me at a networking event “What do you do?”, if I reply “I’m a consultant”, they’d respond: “Between jobs, are you?”

But when I say, “I help people communicate better”, they’re interested. They ask how I do it. They see me as useful. And all because I used a different opening sentence.

How you describe yourself – your *Elevator Pitch* – is critical. It’s the first impression you give. An exciting one turns people on, a poor one turns them off – and you’ve only said one sentence.

Here’s a quick question for you: What do the following Elevator Pitches have in common:

- I am an Accountant
- I work in IT
- I own a web design business
- I am a Health & Safety Specialist
- I am in charge of [X] division
- I work for company [Y]

I can think of quite a few common elements – none that are good. They are all:

- Boring

- Forgettable
- Non-value adding
- Unexciting – I certainly won’t be rushing to my contacts saying, “Hey, guess what? I spoke to someone who describes themselves as – get this - an *accountant!*”
- Conversation stoppers, not starters. The only response I can think to give to each of the above is “Oh. Are you?”

Also, Elevator Pitches like this trigger our preconceptions. If you and I were to play Word Association, what do you think when you hear the words “Accountant”, “IT Specialist”, “Web Designer”, “Health & Safety Specialist”...

Instead, here are the two steps for an impactful Elevator Pitch:

Step 1: Focus on the AFTERS

Introduce yourself by talking about why people are better off AFTER you’ve worked with them. For example, instead of “I’m an Accountant”, you might say, “I help my clients pay less tax”.

Or, if this feels a little too abrupt for you, merge them: “I’m an accountant, so help my clients pay less tax”.

Believe me: if you say that, *nobody* will say “Oh. Do you?”

Instead, they’ll say something like, “That sounds useful. How do you do that?” So...

Step 2: Reinforce the AFTERS with a story

When someone asks for more information, don’t respond by listing all your products and services. It’s boring. And they won’t care.

Instead, remember that “Facts tell, stories sell”. So, tell a *story* to illustrate the AFTERS you just mentioned – “I recently helped company X to reduce their tax by £Y. What happened was...” So, in two short steps, you’ve been the opposite of the bullet points above, in that you’ve been:

- Interesting
- Memorable
- Value-adding
- Exciting – people might talk about you to their contacts
- Conversation-starting, not conversation-stopping

I like being a consultant. But I prefer the AFTERS that I cause. As do others. They don’t want to hear about what I am, nor what I do. They want to hear about the impact I have.

So, how could you – in just two sentences – instantly portray yourself as more valuable?

Action point

Create your Elevator Pitch using these two steps. Test it out on colleagues, so you feel comfortable saying it. Then use it next time you're networking and see the improved response you get...

And, if you want more guidance on how to become a Networking Ninja, [have a look at my videos on networking here](#).

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About the Author

Andy Bounds is an expert at helping companies communicate and sell better. Author of two best-selling books and winner of the title Britain's Sales Trainer of the Year, Andy has shared his expertise with some of the world's largest companies, helping every one of them have more success. Marketing legend Drayton Bird said Andy had taught him '... more about effective communicating than a lady who'd taught two American Presidents'.

Are you following Andy on [twitter](#)?

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Co-ordinates

E-mail: andy@andybounds.com

Web: www.andybounds.com/tips



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