



**COLORADO
COLLEGE**

Career Center



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Elevator Pitch

The name “elevator pitch” comes from the idea that you should be able to sell your pitch in the span of an elevator ride—30 seconds or less. In this case, you’re selling yourself; your pitch should tell your story and leave an impression, all while being as concise as possible. Write and practice a great pitch, and you’ll always be ready for that “Tell me about yourself” question at networking events, career fairs, parties, and more.

What to Include in Your Pitch

Your name, plus a credential/connection: Share something that sets you apart from your peers (major, club involvement, athlete, etc.) and/or establishes a connection with the person you’re talking to (CC alumni, hometown, etc.).

Your career interests or goal: What are you interested in? What are you hoping to do?

How you’ve worked toward your goal/interests: Provide examples of internships, volunteer work, jobs, research, coursework, or anything else you’ve done in your field of interest.

Question or ask for assistance: This is a great moment to ask for an informational interview!

Do

- Practice out loud alone and with other people—you want your delivery to be natural, not rehearsed.
- Look people directly in the eyes.
- Smile!

Don't

- Don't offer weaknesses—it shows lack of confidence.
- Don't be vague or lack focus about your interests.
- Don't ask for too much—understand that the person you've approached can't answer all your questions right then. Close by asking to set up a meeting instead.

Writing Your Pitch

From Kathryn Minshew's "The 15-Minute Method to Writing an Unforgettable Elevator Speech."

■ Write Down Everything You Want to Say About Yourself (Minutes 1-5)

The first step here is to get everything on paper so you understand what you're working with. Take a blank sheet of paper, and write down every little thing you would want someone you're meeting to know about you. Don't feel the need to hold back here—you're going to significantly edit it down later.

If you're feeling stuck or aren't great at bragging about yourself, try asking yourself questions like: What makes you different in your interest area? How do you stand out? What benefit would you like to bring to the world? How do your current skills and experiences relate to where you want to be?

■ Now, Write it on a Sticky Note (Minutes 6-10)

Now, what if you had to do the same exercise—with only the space of a square sticky note to work with? What would you prioritize? What would you decide isn't that important for a first *professional* interaction? Look over your thoughts from the first five minutes and see where there are redundancies, what you want to keep, and what's really not that important.

If you're having a hard time paring it down, a good framework to use is to come up with a few sentences that answer these four questions (keep it professionally focused):

What do you do?

Why does it matter?

Why do you do it?

What's next?

"What's next?" is especially important as you approach graduation, if you're job searching, or if you're looking to gain something from the interaction.

■ Speak it Out Loud (Minutes 11-15)

Before you land on a final elevator speech, you need to actually test it—out loud. You want this to sound like something you would actually say in normal conversation, not like you're reciting something you carefully wrote.

This step will help weed out jargon. I'm guessing you don't say business catch phrases like "strategic insight" in your day-to-day conversations—and most people won't know what that really means. It's much more powerful to **find a simple, straightforward way to describe your role**. For instance, instead of "strategic insight" you might say, "help businesses identify new products they could create or customers they could serve." Now, that's much more natural, tangible, and understandable.

Once you have an elevator pitch you're happy with, put the sticky note somewhere accessible like on your desk or in your wallet, look it over every day, and then start integrating it into your conversations! You may tweak it from time to time—personalize it according to who you're talking to or based on new goals—but have a solid base to start from.

Example: Hello, my name is Simone Morris, and I'm a senior Environmental Policy major at Colorado College. As president of the Black Student Union and a student of environmental advocacy, I want to explore the intersections of racial and environmental justice. I have interned at several environmental policy organizations, including Environment Colorado and the Earth Policy Institute in Washington, D.C. I am currently writing my senior thesis on fracking and environmental racism in Colorado. I'll be in Seattle this summer and would love to connect with you to talk more about your work with Got Green. Would you have time to meet for a brief informational interview sometime in July?

Phrases to avoid

"I don't have a lot of work experience yet, but..."

"I have a lot of interests and don't want to limit myself yet."

"My major doesn't really have anything to do with my interests."