

Postdoc Academy, Module 5
Elevator Pitches: Developing strategic communication skills
for career advancement

Developing an Elevator Pitch Activity

Part 1: Develop a Scenario

You will be developing two elevator pitches in parallel, one to convey your research interests and/or experiences and the other to convey some other professional accomplishment or work. Each pitch will be 60-90 seconds long.

Research Pitch

For your first pitch, describe your current research or a topic you might like to tackle in the future. Choose to be broad, covering a full, big idea, or choose to be more narrow, describing a single aim or sub-section of a research topic.

1. Write 1 or 2 sentences below about your research pitch including what it is and why it is important to you.

Non-Research Pitch

To start the process, consider what you want to pitch for your non-research professional pitch.

Below are several questions you are likely to encounter professionally where you are asked to describe your non-research work. These might come during the process of interviewing for a position, networking, or interacting with colleagues or supervisors.

Pick one of the following questions:

1. Describe your teaching style and/or your teaching philosophy.
2. What do you think are your greatest strengths as an instructor?
3. What is your approach to advising and mentoring?
4. What are your career aspirations?
5. Describe how your background and experiences would be assets in a specific position that you are seeking..
6. Describe how our students will benefit from having you as a professor.

7. In what ways might you contribute to the broader community in our area?
 8. Describe your leadership style for working with all levels of employees.
 9. Tell me about a time you had a conflict with a colleague and how you resolved it.
 10. Resources you need to be successful in this position
 11. How would you fund your research program?
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2. Write 1-2 sentences below about your non-research pitch including what it is and why it is important to you.

Creating a Scenario

Next, we want you to create a scenario for each of your two pitches. In the space below, choose a specific context for both the non-research and research pitch below. When you do, consider:

- What is the context? Consider contexts such as at a conference during a coffee break, at a conference networking event, in an informal part of an interview day like a luncheon or with students, in the formal portion of an interview, or in an annual review with your PI/supervisor,
- Who is the audience? What are their expectations of hearing your pitch?
- What do you want the person you are talking to know about you and your work?
- What is your interview style and how might this impact your approach?

3. Describe the context of your non-research pitch:

4. Describe the context of your research pitch:

Part 2: List Major Talking Points

After watching the video *Introduction to Strategic Communication Skills* describing the PRES model, list 3-5 major talking points for each of your pitches.

Research Pitch major talking points:

Non-Research Pitch major talking points:

Part 3: Outline Your Pitches

After watching the video *Summary of Effective Narrative Structures (ABT)*, develop an outline for each of your pitches based on the And, But, Therefore. See link to Randy Olsen's examples [here](#).

Research Pitch

Non-Research Pitch

Part 4: Script Two Elevator Pitches

After watching the videos *Postdocs Reflect on Constructing and Delivering Pitches*, *Strategic Communications: Postdoc One Minute Talks*, and *Strategic Communications: PRES Model*, draft your two pitches, adapting your pitch based on audience, personality, scenario, and context with words that work for you. A 60-90 second pitch should be approximately 200 words long.

Research Pitch

Non-Research Pitch

Part 5: Record, reflect, and feedback

Record both elevator pitches. Watch your recording, while examining the rubric for presentations found [here](#). You can also use the complete communications rubric, which includes sections on content, etc. found [here](#).

1. How do you assess yourself based on the delivery rubric?
2. What else do you notice and reflect on? Consider positive reactions as well as things you might change.
3. What is one action item for you after watching your video?

If you'd like to get external feedback on your video, you're welcome to post the video . Please consider taking time to thoughtfully comment on 2 or 3 posted videos.