

Networking and Elevator Pitch Workbook

How will you introduce yourself to employers or professionals at career fairs or networking events? Here are some tips and strategies to help you get started and develop an elevator pitch, which is a short description of your background, skills and interests that can help generate conversation and make an excellent first impression.

1. Understand the purpose of preparing to network

Preparing will help you feel more confident in yourself and make great first impressions.

Your objective is to let professionals know...

- Who you are
- What you do or want to do
- Your skills and strengths
- Your experiences that relate to your skills and strengths
- Why you're contacting them
- Your interest in the organization, industry or role

2. Identify what you want to communicate

Here's an example of how to craft your elevator pitch.

- I am a ____ (level/program) student with experience in ____ (functions/capabilities). My strengths and interests include ____ (unique activities/professional qualities). I have worked with ____ (organizations/industries). I am seeking opportunities in ____ (industries/fields).

Then, end with a question to ask them about their organization, role or industry to keep the conversation going.



3. Prepare your outline and practice

Examples by situation

Here are some more examples to help you develop an elevator pitch for different situations.

Job fair

I will be graduating in the spring with a double major in Science and Economics, and I want to apply my knowledge of chemistry and business at work. Recently, I job shadowed a pharmaceutical sales rep, and I found that the role and industry were both a great fit with my experience and education. I know your organization is a leader in the area of respiratory diseases, which I studied extensively during my thesis research. Can you tell me a bit more about your firm's new graduate training program?

Talking to a professor

I love working with ideas, and I had planned to become a teacher. But, after volunteering in a classroom, I understand that I enjoy gathering information more than I enjoy teaching. I'm considering research options — either as a grad student or in the industry. So, I'm talking with people who do both to get a sense of what might make the most sense for me. Is there anyone you recommend that I connect with? I promise that I won't ask them for a job — just information to learn about what they do.



Company information or recruitment session

I graduated from McMaster in December with an Honours English degree, and I've been working as an agent for a local real estate firm since. I'm excited to learn more about your firm's expertise in real estate law and the need for new talent with solid communication and critical thinking skills. My recent experience and educational background seem to be a great fit for the role. Could you tell me a bit more about your planned expansion?

Talking to an employer who isn't hiring

I'm just about to complete my studies, and I know that you probably don't have opportunities in your organization right now. However, I'm wondering if you'd let me buy you a coffee in exchange for 10 minutes of brainstorming. I'm hoping your experience and knowledge of the field can help me generate some new ideas about employers who might benefit from someone with my skills.

Talking with an acquaintance or new contact

I'm in my second year of Kinesiology, and I'm thinking about training as a chiropractor after I graduate. At the moment, I'm researching other professions that allow a lot of one-on-one time with people. I want to work with people who are well, in addition to those who are injured. This summer, I'm hoping for paid or volunteer work to give me an idea of what's right for me. I'm wondering if you might have advice or ideas of anyone I can follow up with about potential opportunities.

At an informational interview

This is the first meeting of the Canadian Public Relations Society that I've attended, and I'm gaining so much relevant information. I'm still a student, and I haven't started working in the field yet — I want to make sure I'm a good fit for the industry. I enjoy establishing meaningful relationships with people, and I'm very involved in my community. Do you have 15 minutes to share some of your industry insights in the next few weeks? I would love to get an experienced professional's perspective on the industry's change and continuity over the past 10 years.

