



## Creating an effective “elevator pitch”

### What is an elevator pitch?

It is a communication tool that allows you to provide a quick, succinct summation of an issue you would like to engage the listener on. In the context of advocating for healthy workplace environments in healthcare, the elevator pitch is a teaching tool that provides a high-level look at the issue. It can be paired with a call to action. Consider it a primer for the listener. As reflected in its name, the elevator pitch can be delivered in the time it takes to complete an average elevator ride, that is, about 30 seconds (or 150 words).

### Do I really need an elevator pitch?

You may find yourself in a situation where you are unexpectedly in contact with someone who could be very effective in raising awareness and providing support for improving the quality of worklife for healthcare providers. You have less than a minute to make a positive impression on this person. To make the most of this moment, you have prepared your pitch in advance.

### Possible places to use an elevator pitch:

- at a reception (or other social gathering)
- in the cafeteria (or buffet line)
- in an airport waiting room
- in line at the store
- at a conference
- walking down the street
- in the parking lot before or after work
- elevator – hey, it could happen!

### How to structure your elevator pitch.

1. Introduce yourself and quickly describe your role and expertise in healthcare.
2. State the case you wish to make, using high priority details that will hook your listener (e.g. improving safety, accountability, recruitment and retention, collaboration, etc.).
3. Mention what makes this issue compelling and worthy of attention among competing issues.
4. Back up your argument with credible data and research that supports your claims.



5. Suggest how this issue significantly impacts the listener. Follow up by suggesting an action that the listener could take to help support the issue or help resolve the challenge.
6. Identify a resource (e.g. individual, document, website) that could assist the listener in taking action and learning more about the need for improving the state of healthcare work environments and how this would improve healthcare providers' quality of worklife.
7. Just before "the elevator door closes", at the end of 30 seconds, conclude with an offer to provide more information and/or a call to action (like planning a future meeting or phone call). Exchange business cards. Be sure to thank the listener for taking the time to listen to what you had to say.

#### **Tips on delivering your elevator pitch:**

- **Avoid using jargon and acronyms.** If your listener is not familiar with your "insider" terms, you will spend much of your 30 seconds explaining the terms, and this could potentially lead you off track and result in your listener's loss of interest.
- **Be concise and succinct.** Every word counts. That being said, be sure to balance efficiency of getting your message across with important social norms such as a warm greeting, respect for social cues (e.g. speak, but be ready to listen as well), engaged interaction, and a sincere word of thanks.
- **Practice, practice, practice.** Once you have an elevator pitch down cold, your passion for and commitment to the topic you are advocating for will shine through when you speak.
- **Know your audience.** If you are going to suggest a way your listener can help address a particular issue, make sure that it is an issue the listener has some influence on. Adjust the pitch to the person listening. For example, if you have just learned that your listener sits on your organization's board, draw on what you know and start off with "This may interest you since the board has just made some key decisions regarding our quality improvement strategy."

#### **Consider creating two elevator pitches:**

**One for colleagues** aimed at building a person's awareness of and engagement with the healthcare work environment improvement issue.

**One for decision makers** aimed at suggesting particular actions from a person of influence that can impact decisions and implement initiatives that will increase the quality of worklife in healthcare settings.