



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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# Dear Stepping Stone: Raise Your Visibility

by John West Hadley

*Submit YOUR challenges for us to address in upcoming issues of The Stepping Stone to [SteppingStone@JHACareers.com](mailto:SteppingStone@JHACareers.com). (We will not include your name in the question or response without your permission.)*

**John:**

Thanks for the e-mail. The advice about the 30-second pitch was good; I had one six months ago for my full-time job search, but realize now that in my mental work recently about my mission (and how I might consult doing it) I've lost my focus on it. And my pitch would be a little different now, more focused (I hope) on what I can do for someone than "about myself". In working with Alfred and his partner, they would call this the 'elevator speech' and suggest expressing it sometimes as 'three things I've learned about myself.'

And in my 20-minute, overly-detailed rambling, I must have seemed really in need of one! I've definitely got to think more about this now ...

**Dear "Rambling":**

Yes, this is the 'elevator pitch', and the most effective ones follow the marketing maxim: *"Leave them wanting to know more."* Basically, you need to think about answering the **WIIFM** question - *"What's in it for me?"*, the OTHER person.

*"Three things I've learned about myself"* is an interesting approach, and might be effective in response to a more detailed question further along in the discussion or interview. As the 'ice-breaker', it would be less effective, because it's focused on you instead of what you can do for the other person.

Frankly, even **experienced business people aren't very good at this**. Case in point: I gave a workshop on the *"Killer Marketing Message"* at a business networking group I'm in. Everyone

there is a business owner or in a business development role. Every month they come and get a chance to make their 30-second pitch to the group. I asked at the workshop how many of the 50 elevator pitches they had just heard they found particularly engaging, that made them want to talk to the person more. The answer: Five.

**The mindset tends to be exactly the reverse of what's effective.** In fact, someone from that group once suggested my pitch was only the second-best that day, and not the best, because he had wanted to know more. As far as I was concerned, that meant I had hit the bulls-eye. □

For two other short articles on effective pitches, visit this link:  
<http://www.JHACareers.com/30SecondPitch.htm>



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