

ELEVATOR PITCH TRAINING

2022 EDITION





ELEVATOR PITCH TRAINING

2022 EDITION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	5
What Is an Elevator Pitch?	6
Pitching as a Life Skill	6
Elements of a Pitch	7
What Makes A Good Pitch?	9
Knowing Your Audience	11
Preparation & Practice	12
Call to Action	14
Conclusion	14

Introduction

“You only get one chance to make a first impression.”

In this training you will learn the basics of pitching, which includes knowing how to introduce Students For Liberty and how to optimize your introduction according to your audience.

Pitching involves being able to summarize everything you do to its core and then putting it into a story people want to hear.

At Students For Liberty, our mission is to educate, develop and empower the next generation of leaders in order to have a global network of leaders advancing liberty in all aspects of society.

What Is an Elevator Pitch?

An Elevator Pitch is an exercise designed to help participants hone their pitching skills into a brief, concise, and impactful synopsis delivered in 2 minutes or less.

It is a prepared short speech to introduce yourself, an idea, organization or a person in a meaningful and impactful way, usually with the intention of getting something in return, such as a donation, a sign up, or some other call to action.

Elevator rides can take from ten seconds to two minutes. An elevator pitch prepares you to communicate the core of what you do in this short space of time.

Of course, reducing what you do or what your organization does to its essence in a meaningful way takes some time to practice and master. You need to be intentional about what you say and what you choose to omit. You also need to be flexible and be able to adjust your pitch based on your audience.

Thankfully, there are tips and techniques that you can easily learn to apply and adapt for any situation. In this training, we will focus on all these aspects and learn how to pitch like a pro.

Pitching as a Life Skill

Imagine you are attending an important job interview, or even that you are on a first date. You sit in a nice office or cafe and begin talking. The person across from you asks “so, tell me about yourself”.

What do you do?

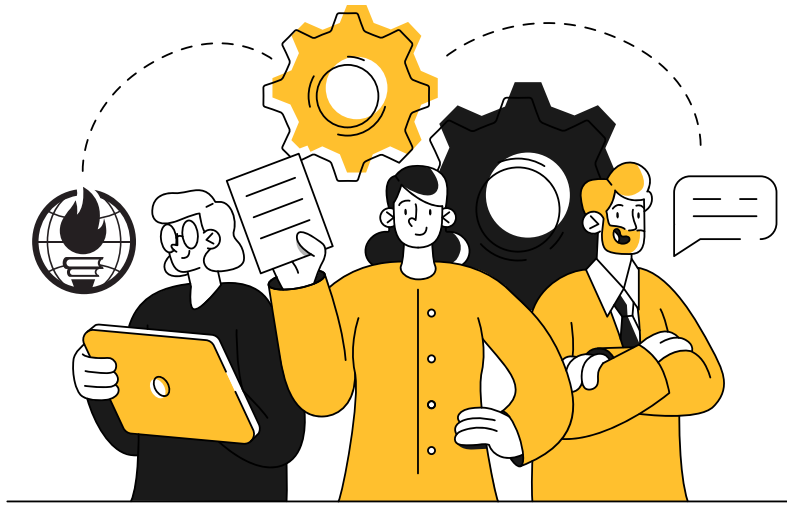
YOU PITCH!

Most people answer that question with their job title and their company, or maybe their academic qualification or some other role or title. Although this response lacks enthusiasm, it would still be considered pitching.

On a first date, we try to market ourselves to our best. Our likes and dislikes, preferences, and occupation become a part of our pitch. If the other party is interested, they will want to hear more.

First dates are great examples of pitching yourself and it is very similar to pitching in any other area of life.

- Do you want an internship? **You pitch.**
- Do you want to be a part of an international training program? **You pitch.**
- Do you want to get the gig? **You pitch.**
- Do you want to recruit new people to join Students For Liberty? **You pitch.**
- Do you want to raise funding for your new business venture? **You pitch.**



In an interview, even the most mundane thing we do becomes packaged in a way that it sounds incredibly intriguing and this is the art of pitching. We are not lying! Never. Honesty is the best policy. However, we are holding the light on what we do in a way that the audience can most identify with.

Essentially, for everything we want in life, we pitch ourselves in one way or another. However, an elevator pitch and pitching professionally has more to it than what we do in our daily lives. In an elevator pitch, you need to be able to summarize the core of what you do, and then communicate with your audience in a way that would peak their interest in the best possible way, while remaining professional. To sum up, Elevator pitch is giving people a value offer.

Learning how to do an elevator pitch might help you with other aspects of your life, but in order to do it successfully, there are several steps involved.

Elements of a Pitch

A pitch should answer three questions:

1. What Are You Doing?

What you are doing is what is the day-to-day operation of your business or NGO. Are you hosting events, creating training materials, reaching out to students? Tell people that. Don't overcomplicate it. Say it as you do.

Paint a picture but refrain from giving too many details, as it will make people focus more on details and overlook the bigger picture in play.

Throughout your life, you pitch to different people and even groups. Do you go on a first date the same way you go to an interview? NO.

You need to be able to communicate what you are doing with different audiences. Tailor your pitch to your audience. It could be that not everyone will be familiar with the field you are working in, therefore try to use a very simple language.

2. Start With Why

As Simon Sinek describes, there are two ways to influence people. Through manipulation or through inspiration. When you are inspired, you inspire others. This is the main motivation. You are doing what you are doing with a purpose. That purpose might be profit, it could be serving underprivileged communities or spreading awareness on a specific subject. Know your why, and know your why well. If yet, you are not sure about your why, or how to phrase it, then it might be a priority to focus on this first. Your why matters not just for pitching but also for creating a roadmap.

While explaining why you are doing this, it is your opportunity to speak to people's emotions rather than their reason. Give them a good reason why this makes you feel good and why it can make them feel good in return. Good storytelling will benefit talking about your why.

3. Why Should I care?

Before you pitch, you should always remember not everyone will be interested and that is a good thing. Your job is not to convince people who are completely opposed or disinterested in your cause but mainly to find people who would be immediately interested then later on people who could become interested with minimum effort.

Why do you care? People always look out for their own best interest, even when it seems like they aren't. While pitching, you need to give people what they want, otherwise no matter the importance of what you are doing, it won't matter to the audience. For most people, profit can be a good reason to care, however for non-profit organizations our causes are what matter. If you don't believe in your cause, and if it doesn't fire you up then you might be in the wrong place. You can fire people up with your own passion, because passion is contagious.

Now that we have covered the basics of an elevator pitch, let's see it in action.

Look at how SFL pitches itself as an organization:

"At Students For Liberty, we educate, develop and empower the next generation of leaders of liberty to create a global network of leaders advancing liberty in all aspects of society."

HOW DID WE ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS?

What Are You Doing?

We are educating, developing and empowering the next generation of leaders.

This would mean, we are organizing training and conferences in order to reach out to young people and help them develop their skills. It makes it clear that our day-to-day activities involve creating educational content for our volunteers and supporting them in their self-development.

Why Are You Doing it?

We are doing it to have a global network of leaders advancing liberty in all aspects of society.

A global network of classical liberals is a great way to symbolize



community. Being pro-liberty, we believe in connections between individuals, and the stronger these connections are the better our ideas will spread. Our why can become a symbol, it can become a feeling or it can become a story. In an ideal scenario, the why is all of these. It is a symbol that can tell your story.

When we say, “to have a global network of leaders advancing liberty in all aspects of society”, people begin to picture successful individuals who are working in different fields such as business, civil society, journalism, media, engineering all around the world, connected to advance pro-liberty ideas.

It may have caught your attention that we never used the term successful or diverse in our initial pitch. However, when we were talking about what we were doing, we spoke of education, development and empowerment. These naturally build toward success. It is a great example where you can see the mission and vision coming together to paint the full picture.

Why Should I care?

It promises a prosperous future for all, that includes YOU! It also gives you a community and access to hundreds if not thousands of people. Having access to thousands of qualified people is a very powerful thing.

We will talk more about how to make someone else care in the upcoming sections.

What Makes A Good Pitch?

A good pitch is directed towards emotions, is uncomplicated and straightforward. As classical liberals, we value reason, numbers and data but storytelling is about feelings. The perfect pitch influences emotions and backs it up with real data.

Clarity

Sometimes we want to be impressive, we use big words, a lot of data, visuals, and the whole package but we lack clarity. People might be impressed, or even overwhelmed but they won't understand what is being presented. Eventually this will become counterproductive.

Be clear on what you do and why you do it. Give direct information and use simple language that everyone can understand. Refrain from giving too much information with the intention of impressing others.

Make sure to cover the basics. When your pitch is done the audience should be able to picture what you do clearly. Use data in a meaningful way. Remember, most people aren't very interested in reading data. Carefully wrap your data with the proper narrative. In the end, make sure to have a call to action. Your audience should know what they can do to help you with your cause. Give their signature? Money? Time? Be clear about it.

Professionalism

Take ownership of what you say and be credible. Use data points if it solidifies the cause. Demonstrate expertise and credibility by addressing past accomplishments such as

previously raised funds, the number of people or locations reached, or whatever measurement you use for success.

Make sure this is reflected in your attitude as well. Don't look desperate, you are there to make an offer, not to beg. Realize the worth you bring to the table. If you are not certain of the value you are offering, then go back to studying the basics of your pitch.

When you are pitching, consider how you are adding value to the people you are pitching. Are you providing them with a product or service that they need? Focus on how you can provide value with what you are doing. If you are not yet sure about how you can add value, think and focus on what is left unsaid and undone. You can also take a new perspective or an approach to an old problem. You don't have to reinvent the wheel, you just need to polish it enough to make it look brilliant.

Storytelling

When you lead with reason and numbers you will speak to your audience's mind, when you lead with stories you will speak to their heart.

Start with a story then build your case with numbers and facts. Don't leave your data out there to be stranded. Data needs narratives to become meaningful to your audience. Connect the dots between the data for them. You can also use simple storytelling techniques. Start by explaining a problem or a difficulty and then pitch your solution.

A good story has to be human. We all go through ups and downs of life, and so should the characters in our stories. Tell relatable stories grounded in truth. Talk about hopes and dreams but also despair and loss. All humans experience a range of emotions, don't hesitate to incorporate different feelings to your story.

Make people root for the characters in your story. Make them relate. Talk about weaknesses, feelings, hopes and dreams. Use stories about family, school or pets. Bring everyone together by addressing common experiences.

We use data and facts to make our case, but wrap it up in a real world story and you will capture the attention and the imagination of your audience.

Differentiation - Your Value Offer

There might be other people who are trying to do the same thing. How do you stand out?

Identify your unique sales proposition. You really need to look at what you do or want to do. Examine thoroughly if it will add value in a way that will stand out and differ from the competition.

Before identifying how you stand out, you need to do some market research. Are there other people or organizations doing the same thing as you do? Will you collaborate or will you compete?

Sometimes, having competition is a good thing and the market is not yet saturated. If utilized properly, this may actually be a good thing. You don't need to be the first person to do a thing, but you need to do it bigger, better, stronger.

Do you know your competition and can you give a very good reason for people to choose your organization over other organizations?

Is there a specific group of people you focus on that other organizations aren't?

Do you have a very interesting methodology you use, or do you have big names on your team?

What makes you stand out from the competition?

How do you add value to people's lives that no other organization is doing?

Study these questions carefully, you might not be able to answer them all at once, but at least try to answer them as best as possible.

Pitching in Context

As we tend to overcrowd our pitch with good intentions, we might also miss the context sometimes. Certain skills, or projects may be versatile enough to sustain and fit into multiple contexts however, when you are pitching to a certain audience, you need to keep in mind that tailoring the information will yield better results.

Knowing Your Audience

When you are creating a Tik-Tok post, you are pitching your content to Tik-Tok users and mostly to people from a very young age group. While doing this, you perhaps use images, a very simple language and you are dressed casually. This is common sense. It would be ridiculous to wear a blacktie outfit and use academic language to create this short content. Same goes for pitching. Different groups of people have different values and different needs.

Studying Your Audience Checklist:

- Age Group
- Country
- The main problems in their country regarding the topic you are pitching
- What they have invested in previously
- What seems to be their values
- Do they have something they personally really care about

Adaptability

Adaptability **doesn't mean** your values or core of what you do will change. What you can do is, highlight the aspects of your organization or your project in order to show how compatible it is with the wants and needs of your audience.

If you were to pitch your product or service to an environmentalist group, leading with sustainability will get you closer to the result you want but this wouldn't work with a group who has priorities in regards to practicality. Therefore, before you pitch a project or an organization, it would be wise to study your audience and have variations of your elevator pitch, already prepared.

Reasons to Care

Give your audience a reason to care. To be able to do this, you need to understand the values of your audience. You need to keep in mind that it won't always be the case that your values perfectly align with the values of your audience. At times like these, focus on the mutual benefit that can be created, and focus on what you can offer to them, rather than what they can offer to you.

Think about it. Why would you care? What was the last place you donated your time and money to?

Everyone looks out for their best interest, and this is one of the basic understandings of classical liberalism. We do not market our ideas and ask for altruism, we market our ideas and projects by offering benefits for both parties involved.

If you want your audience to care, tailor your story to their interests and values.

Never try to guilt trip people into giving their time & money. This won't help you in the long run. interests and values.

Never try to guilt trip people into giving their time & money. This won't help you in the long run.

Preparation & Practice

People think a good pitch is a confident person standing in front of a crowd and giving an impressive speech.

While confidence might help you a lot with pitching, if you haven't done your homework, you can also make a fool of yourself. It is a great opportunity to have an audience listening to you. Don't take it for granted. Your time is precious as is theirs.

Most of the work regarding pitching is done in the background where there is no audience at all. If you work on preparing a really good pitch based on research, your pitch will become more impressive and naturally due to your preparation you will feel much more confident.

Remember: practice makes perfect.

PRE-PITCH

Before you actually pitch your project or organization in front of the crowd, sit down and write about your major activities and accomplishments. If it is a brand new idea, then study the market, competition and establish your value proposition.

After doing this, decide on the core of your idea and build on that idea with your why.

Pre-pitch Checklist

- Your Story
- "Why"
- Why Should They Care
- Values
- Numbers
- Market Competition
- Value Offer
- How Do You Differentiate

How to Prepare for your Pitch

It is normal to feel nervous before your pitch. To feel confident, make sure you've done your research. Having credible sources under your belt will help you. Keep in mind that, studying your audience and who you will meet or pitch to can also help you a lot with feeling comfortable.

While preparing for your pitch, you can try breathing exercises and going over your notes. Try to keep everything as simple as possible. Knowing your ground will help you build your confidence.

How to dress

Being event-appropriate is the key to how to dress. Of course, the rule of thumb is always to have clean and well ironed clothes but when dressing be mindful of the type of event you are attending. You can't go to a reception in flip-flops and it would be ridiculous to go to a pool party in a suit.

Tip: Try to wear an outfit which makes you feel confident.

How to Establish a Location

Conferences such as LibertyCon are great places to find people to pitch yourself to. Apart from this, remember you are pitching at all times.

Attending events, training, and getting together with other like minded people can also be a good opportunity for pitching your ideas.

POST-PITCH

You've done your pitch, and you are proud of yourself. Congratulations! Now, it is time to answer some questions, and sometimes the audience will likely make you sweat.

Don't panic.

If you are receiving a lot of questions and commentary, that's not a bad sign. It is a sign that your audience is interested in what you just presented.

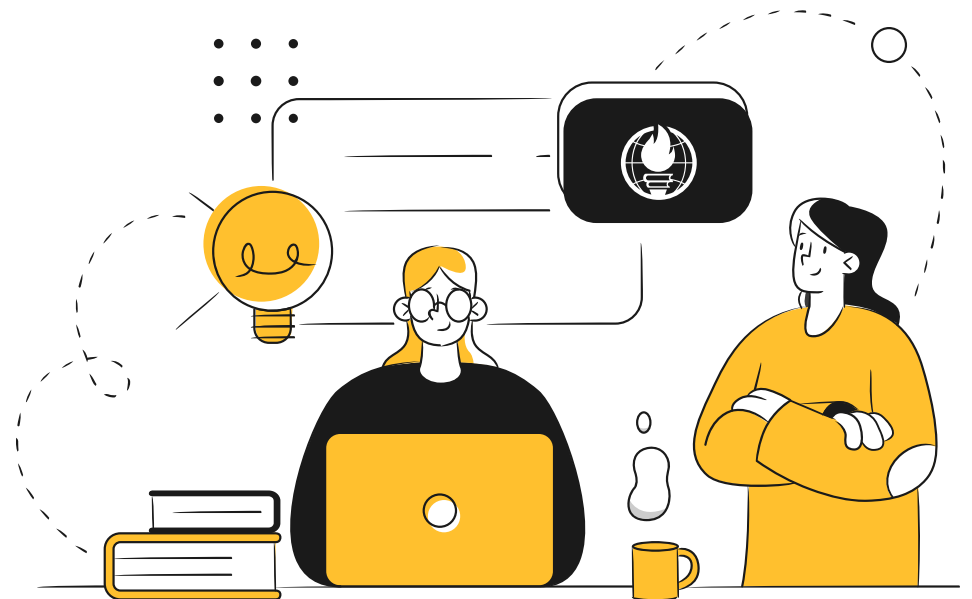
How to Respond to Questions

Like a good pitch, being ready to answer questions also derives its power from preparation.

If you've done your research and are confident in your knowledge regarding the market, the competition and your value proposition, you will have a smooth process answering questions. Go over the data. If the audience is missing something important, walk them through.

It is possible that sometimes you won't have the answer to the question. In that case: honesty is the best policy. You can always let them know you can get back to them with an answer at a later point.

Everytime you pitch, keep this in mind: Pitches are great opportunities to network, to get what you want, but also to learn.



Call to Action

A call to action is mobilizing people to do something whether as small as liking your video or as big as investing money. By providing a call to action, you can actually receive what you want from your audience.

Finish your pitches with a call to action. Make it as clear as it can be. A great example is Youtuber's, they always finish their videos by asking for likes and followers. You could never be uncertain of what they are requesting.

- Tell them how they can donate
- Present your social media channels and request follows
- Ask for a meeting
- Invite them to an event
- Get them to apply for SFL's Leadership Program



Conclusion

How can you create a call to action?

The Elevator Pitch is more than just an exercise you can practice to become better at selling, it is a mindset or a perspective that you can adopt in life.

By adopting the principles of the Elevator Pitch briefly outlined in this training, you can become a much better communicator and add great value to your own life and the lives of others.

Whether you writing a cover letter for a job application, trying to find supporters for your new project or campaign, defending your academic thesis, aiming to impress on a first date, or even when you are trying to convince others about the benefits of the free market and the philosophy of liberty, the elements of the Elevator Pitch can be employed to help you get the outcome you deserve.

Do not view this training and handbook as a comprehensive guide but merely an introduction to the idea that pitching is a life skill that needs to be practiced and developed.

Knowing your audience and being able to adapt your approach to different situations is the first step, but none of this matters unless you also give your audience a reason to care. Take account of the tips and best practices in this guide to help you prepare to approach any situation persuasively and effectively.

Now, what are you waiting for? Start pitching!



www.studentsforliberty.org