

How To Add Some Zing To Your Elevator Speech

By Ute Wieczorek-King, copyright August 2009



How often have you been to a networking event, where people have introduced themselves as “Hello, my name is XYZ and I am an accountant (or website designer, solicitor, coach)?”

Do you find yourself intrigued or interested in what they do? As a coach, I know I too may have been boring people in the past with my basic ‘I am/ I do kind of introduction’, certainly before I realised the power of a good elevator speech. I still get it wrong sometimes, but am always conscious of that strange glazed look on people’s faces when they just seem to think “Oh no, not another coach!”

Another low-impact introduction is holding a lengthy monologue that describes every nuance of someone’s service, product or business. Unfortunately not everyone in the room may want to hear (or be able to remember) literally everything about someone the first time they meet! **It is a good idea to save up some of the details for future conversations**, when people may be more interested in building a relationship and getting to know you better!

Sometimes people like me who are multi-skilled, with multiple income streams or what I call a ‘portfolio-type business’ find it easiest to use the following version: “I am an A, I also do B, and am currently involved in C’. Since we are often very passionate about the different things we do, we tell everyone in the hope that this helps attract people who may be interested in either A, B or C. Unfortunately though this kind of elevator speech can make some listeners switch off.

For those who run a portfolio-type business, a better solution is to have different elevator speeches, tailored to different audiences. The key to their success, however, lies in the preparation and the practice - to help you feel confident when it’s your turn to introduce yourself.

Apart from tailoring my introduction to the different groups of people I meet, I have also learnt that **people are not always interested in what I do or how I work, but would much rather hear about the results I help my clients to achieve.** Describing how the women I work with have achieved challenging goals for their businesses or turned their professional lives around, can have far greater impact!

Capturing people’s interest with a few good words is as important as taking care over your appearance when making business contacts: in other words, too good an opportunity to miss!

One excellent way to getting round the problem of explaining what you do is by **telling a story.** By this, I mean what a happy client would tell someone else about having worked with you.

Again this should include the results they achieved with your help and **if the story is told through their eyes, the audience finds it easier to relate to.** It becomes more real and interesting and can work on lots of different levels.

We demonstrated the power of storytelling at one of our networking meetings and everyone agreed that **storytelling** is a great technique that **conveys the essence of what you do with convincing impact.**

The basic 'Zing' here is that you avoid talking about 'you'! This is essentially how a compelling introduction differs from a traditional "I am, I do and I work with" kind of introduction!

Do you remember mini, midi, maxi length skirts? If a story was your maxi and most detailed version, then there are several key points you may want to include:

- **Your name and/ or name of business**
- **A strong hook or tagline that captures interest** (perhaps a question, a fact or something intriguing), either at the beginning or at the end.
- **A description of the problems that you have solved** for a client.
- Sometimes you may even be able **to include how the client benefited** 'emotionally' from your particular service or service.
- Also describe **how your service or product is different to a similar service or product** provided by others.

Sometimes we don't have enough time for storytelling and we may only have one minute to capture someone's interest. You can still use the same basic ingredients as above for the **midi length introduction.**

You won't go wrong, if you see yourself as a problem solver, you emphasize the benefits, and throw in a hook somewhere.

If you have even less time, then this is where the mini version of your elevator speech comes in! My own mini version might be something like this "I empower and support women to achieve professional success without the stress!"

What's yours?

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