INTRODUCING YOURSELF - ELEVATOR PITCH

An Elevator Pitch is a 90-second self-introduction. Sometimes you do not have the luxury to have a 20-minute conversation with a potential employer, which is why there is a need for you to practice your elevator pitch.

A place where elevator pitches are used are in gathering spaces like a job fair or conference. An elevator pitch comes in handy more than you think.

A great way to practice an elevator pitch is to, believe it or not, practice it in an elevator and say your pitch with enough time in-between floors.

Your elevator pitch can include who you are, where you saw the job opening, what are you interested in, what you can do for the company, a short story of your experiences in the field of interest, accomplishments, etc.

Just like in an interview, avoid chewing gum. You only have a short time to speak so you want the potential employer to listen to you fully, not be distracted by the gum in your mouth.

Practice your elevator pitch before using it. Have someone listen to you and give you critiques or practice your pitch in front of the mirror. Do not forget to time yourself to make sure you can do this in under 90-seconds.

Do not talk to fast! An elevator pitch is not a race to say everything about you at that moment. This is an introduction highlighting key factors about you so the potential employer can ask you to a later interview to find out more. If you have your resume with you, they can look at your information later.

You can follow the below example and fill in the blanks with your information.

"Hi, my name is _____ and I am a _____ (senior, junior, etc.) at Park Rapids Area Schools. I have experience in OR I am currently working at _____. My strongest skills/strengths are OR Some of my accomplishments are _____. I believe that my _____ makes me a great candidate and will bring value to your organization. My goal is _____."

After your conversation, thank them for their time. Do not be discouraged about not being offered a job right away, if they ask you to apply online or wishing they handed you an application. It is hard to do this with only meeting you for a few minutes and in a large gathering. When applying for the position, mention you met them at the job fair and what you spoke about, this will help them remember who you are. Each situation is different when introducing yourself. Take bits and pieces of your elevator pitch to adjust to each conversation. Then you will look confident when introducing yourself wherever you are and you will be less nervous.

INTRODUCING SOMEONE ELSE

Sometimes when you are talking with another friend, colleague or an employer, someone else may walk up to your conversation. You know them but the other person does not, this is where you must properly introduce them to each other.

You can start off by saying, “everyone, I would like to introduce you to Blank.” Then say the relation that person is to you. An example is “He/She is a friend of mine from high school.” Then you introduce everyone else in the conversation to the new individual. “Blank, this is Blank1, Blank2, and Blank3.” Then again, say the relation they are to you, “We all work together at Company.”

If you forget someone’s name, apologize, ask for them to say their name, and then apologize again. This is ok if you just met.

When telling the new individual everyone’s names, show who each one is by reaching out your hand to each one in their direction as you recite their names so the new individual can follow along. Handshakes may soon follow with each introduction between the new individual and the rest of the group.

If after the introductions, the conversation because quiet, start a new conversation about something all of you have in common or an activity you all enjoy.

ACCEPTING A BUSINESS CARD

When someone gives you their business card, they are trying to make a professional connection and to provide you their contact information.

Once the person has handed you their card, refrain from putting it into your pocket, wallet, or purse immediately as to not insult the gesture as it may imply you don’t care about the connection.

Instead, look at the card to review for a few seconds and continue to hang onto the card holding it in front of you for the duration of the conversation or for at least a minute before putting it away. This allows you to stay focused in the conversation with the other person.

If you also have a business card, this is a great time to hand yours to them.

SHAKING HANDS

Begin with a verbal introduction of yourself. Such as “Hi, my name is Blank. Nice to meet you.” And then extend your right hand. Be prepared to shake with your left hand if the situation merits it such as an injury to their right hand.

Make eye contact when you reach out your hand or accept the handshake. Handshake with confidence and with a purpose.

Pump your hand only 2-3 times or 3-4 seconds. Less than 2 pumps is way too quick and look like you do not care about the greeting. More than 3 pumps is too long and can make the other person feel uncomfortable.

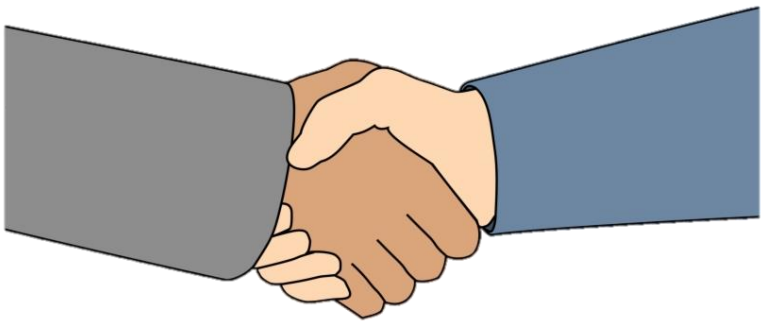
You want to clasp the whole hand, each hand connecting between the other persons thumb and pointer finder. You do not want to clasp only their fingers as it could be painful for the other person.

The proper handshake is not too strong or not too soft, it is right in the middle. Do not use a forceful grip. You do not want to crush the other persons hand during the handshake. Do not use a limp grip. You do not want to look like you want them to kiss your hand.

Shake from your elbow not your shoulder. Shaking your whole arm during a handshake can be too forceful. Shake with one hand and avoid trying to shake hands with two hands. You are offering a handshake, not a hug.

If you have sweaty hands, discreetly dry them off before shaking hands. If you know you are nervous prior to the potential handshake, keep your palms open and not clasped together to avoid sweat. If the person you shake hands with has sweaty hands, please do not embarrass them by wiping them off on your clothes right away. After the introduction, when appropriate, you can then walk away and wash them off.

At the end of the handshake, try to have conversation. If after the handshake it is silent between you and the other person, the situation becomes awkward. If you feel the introduction was awkward or you feel you made a mistake, do not panic. You can still save the day by changing the subject, offering a compliment or talk about a mutual point of interest.



CREATING YOUR LINKEDIN PROFILE

LinkedIn is a social media site and app with its purpose being to connect with people professionally. This is a great way to build your professional network, meet potential employers, and to follow organizations in your field of interest. It is recommended to create a LinkedIn profile during your job search.

LinkedIn acts as your online resume. So, when employers search for employees to hire in a certain field, your profile could come up and the recruiter has the option to message you to come in for an interview.

LinkedIn is also a search engine for available jobs in your area, school alumni, companies, and blogs you are interested in, groups to join, and much more.

When you chose a profile picture, make sure it is a professional picture, as you would want to look like in an interview. If your picture has you angled, have the picture showing you facing your profile and not your back to your profile. This may seem trivial, but showing you open to your profile provides better flow to the recruiter viewing.

NETWORKING ETIQUETTE

The point of networking is getting to know people. Maybe you want to work at a certain company, then you should get to know who does the hiring. Networking is basically the exchange of information and the development of professional relationships or social contacts that are mutually beneficial. Networking is also a great way to gain advice or earn a referral from others at a company.

Below are some networking tips to help you network successfully.

- Networking is like giving a first impression in an interview. Use proper introductions like shaking hands, good eye contact, and how you know of that person. An example of this is "I hear you are working for Company, how long have you been there." From there you have a mutually engaging conversation.
- You are looking for information, so you can ask the person, "Is Company doing any hiring, who should I talk to about that?" and that person could direct you to the proper way to go about that.
    - If later on you choose to apply for the position, you can now say "I was talking to Blank at the recent job fair and they said to reach out to you about the new position available at your company."
    - Even though you may think that you know to apply online, you have now made a personal connection within the company. That person could say, "I met Name and they were really nice. I think they would be a good fit for this Company." Referrals and good opinions always help.
    - If you do get hired, send that individual a thank you card or email thanking them for the connection.
- While talking to that person, try not to make it all about you or take up all their time. Remember, connections are about the two of you, not about taking. You must give them a chance to speak and engage in conversation.
- When the conversation starts to turn quiet and there is nothing more to talk about, thank them for their time, wish them a great day and you can appropriately leave the conversation.
- Do not forget to give your new contact your business card or ask if they are on LinkedIn.
- If you tell that person you will contact them on Monday, make sure you do. You want your word to mean something when making a new contact. When you reach out to them again, you can say "This is Blank, and I met you at the job fair last week. I am following up on our conversation about …"
- If you are at an event and are looking to network, make sure to not "work the room" to much. Meaning to be handing out business cards to everyone you meet and looking like you only want connections to benefit you and only you. Networking is about building professional relations because they also may be looking to connect and build their professional career network.

PHONE ETIQUETTE

Phone calls are never going away, and the world still communicates verbally by phone at some capacity. Sometimes you do not know who is calling. It could be your boss, a potential employer, a friend with a new number, or a parent. So, proper phone etiquette is a must.

Below are some tips to help you communicate via phone call successfully.

- Try to answer the call within three rings
- Immediately answer with "Hello." If the person says, "Hello, how are you?" Respond by saying, "I'm well," and ask them "How are you doing?" in return or "May I ask who is calling?" if you do not know who is calling you. Remember, phone calls are a two-sided conversation. If you are having a bad day, try not to show it over the phone call. For example, your boss does not need to know that you are angry over spilling your cereal on the floor when rushing to answer the phone.
- Speak clearly and talk directly into the phone. Try not to muffle your voice or yawn on the phone.
- Only use speakerphone when necessary and if you must, let the other person know in case they do not want to whole office to know what they are saying.
- Actively listen and engage in conversation if needed. There is nothing worse than calling someone and feeling ignored or like they are bothering you.
- Remain cheerful even when you are feeling down. Smiling shows through the phone because your voice changes and you sound friendlier.
- Ask before putting someone on hold so they do not keep talking even when you are not there. Try to not keep someone on hold for more than 30 seconds.
- If you are in a public place, try not to talk too loud as to bother other people around you. If you are in a quiet setting, stop the ringing, walk to a different room, and talk in a soft voice.
- Be sure to set up your voicemail right away and respond to voicemails promptly. The other person took the time to call you so show the same kindness by calling them back.

EMAIL ETIQUETTE

The world communicates by email. So, proper email etiquette is a must.

Below are some tips to help you communicate via email successfully.

- To start, use a professional email address. When creating an email address, picture yourself as an adult and you are sending your resume to an employer. You do not want it looking childish or immature. Using a combination of your first and last name is always a safe bet.
- Your subject line should be clear, direct, and concise. It lets the receiver know a quick idea of what the email is about.
- You should start your email with a proper introduction. Such as "Hello Name," or "Good afternoon,". Try to include the person's name if known. Keep your introduction professional. Meaning do not say "What's UP!!", "Yo,", or "I need…" to start the email.
- Your signature at the bottom should include a salutation, for example "Thank you," or "Have a great day," or "Take care,". After your salutation, you should include your full first and last name, followed by your title and company, then the company address, a phone number and email address. You can also add a website at the end if needed. You can set your email signature settings up to be able to change these quickly depending on who you are sending an email too.

Below is an example of a proper email signature:

> Thank you,
>
> **First and Last Name**
> Title at Company
> Name of Company
> Company Address
> City, State, Zip Code
> Phone Number: 218-000-0000
> Email: panther@parkrapids.k12mn.us
> Website: www.panther.k12.mn.us

- When replying to an email, check to see if you are hitting Reply or Reply All. Do you want everyone to see your response or just the sender?
- Communicating via email is not always the same as communicating verbally in person. Be careful not to use too many exclamation points, all capital letters, or jokes. Sometimes things are read differently than intended. Also keep your fonts and letter sizes simple. The art may look great on your computer, but it could look like a giant mess on the recipient's computer or phone.
- If you received an email that was not meant for you, and it is safe or appropriate to do so, reply saying, "Wrong Email Address" so the email can be sent to the right person.

EMAIL ETIQUETTE CONTINUED

- Make sure to proofread every email before sending. You do not want a spelling error or a poorly worded sentence to be sent when you could have easily proofread and corrected any errors.
- A word of advice is to add the recipient's email address last, so you do not accidently hit send before you are finished. Words to live by. After adding the recipients email address, double check you entered it correctly and it is truly the person you want this email to go too.
- Last but not least, in the digital world, nothing is confidential. You may have sent an email gossiping about a coworker, but the recipient could print it off and show the coworker. If you do not want it said in public, do not type it in an email.

DINING ETIQUETTE

At some point in your career life, you will attend a dinner party with your coworkers, your employer, or at a business conference. Some interviews also take place over a meal or coffee. Below are some helpful tips while at dinner to stay professional and pleasant at dinner.

- Avoid chewing gum. You do not want to have to spit out your gum or place it on your plate once the meal arrives. Some places offer cloth, not paper napkins so do not assume you can hide the gum in the napkin. To be safe, spit it out before you enter the building.
- Regardless if you are the host or guest, arrive at least 10 minutes early. Do not order food or beverages for yourself ahead of time.
- Wait for the host to pick a place to sit. Once everyone has ordered food and beverages, work talk is fair game, otherwise discuss pleasantries.
- Follow cues from your host. Such as placing your napkin on your lap shortly after your host and only begin eating after your host has started to eat. You should technically wait to eat till everyone has received their food at the table.
- Use your napkin appropriately. Blot your mouth with your napkin, not wipe. Do not dispose unpleasant food from your mouth into your napkin. Instead, use the napkin to hide your mouth while you take your thumb and index finder to remove the piece of food or bone and discreetly place it back onto your plate. Do not put chewed food back onto your plate, no one wants to see that. Also, do not blow your nose into your napkin, if you need to blow your nose, excuse yourself from the table and go to the bathroom.
- It is considered rude to reach across the table to get more water or the salt and pepper shakers. Instead ask “can you please pass the salt” to the person closest to the item and say “thank you” upon receiving.
- When someone else asks for you to pass the salt to them, do not use it quick before passing it to them. Once they have used the salt you can ask for it back.
- When passing items around the table, they pass to the right or counterclockwise.
- Keep your elbows off the table, forearms are acceptable. Elbows are only allowed when the food has been removed from the table.
- When the food is delicious, tell the cook, especially when it is the host. Do not express negativity if the food was terrible and never return food back to the kitchen. Only return food if there is a fly or hair in your food and when doing so, secretly tell the waiter or waitress as to keep it discrete and to not make a scene. Be nice to the waiter or waitress and keep the dinner pleasant.
- As always, do not talk with food in your mouth. It is also recommended to not chew ice as it is loud. If you need to clean your teeth with a toothpick, apply lipstick or freshen up, excuse yourself and do these in the restroom.
- If at any point you cause a mess or spill on another dinner guest, help clean up the mess and offer to pay to clean their clothes. More than likely, they will say that is not necessary and how it is all okay, but at least you offered and showed you were sorry.
- Once you have finished eating, place your napkin back onto the table to the left of your dinner plate and keep things neat. Do not pile everything into a pile for the waiter or waitress or push them into the center of the table.

FORMAL DINING PLACE SETTING

Below is an example of a Formal Dinning Place Set. Study the image below so you can be prepared for a dinner out.

Helpful Tips: Work from the Outside-In with eating utensils. Napkin goes on the same side as the Fork. Fork and Left each have four letters. Dinner knife blade side faces into the plate.