

Perfect Your Pitch

Become a
Motivated Networker

Elevator Pitch

With Kathy McAfee
America's Marketing Motivator

AMERICA'S MARKETING MOTIVATOR 



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What is networking and why is it important?

Networking is about relationships

Networking is fundamentally about relationship building. It's getting to know people and finding ways to help each other. It is collaboration and mutual support. It's doing business with people that you like and trust. It's helping other people and allowing others to help you achieve your goals and dreams. It's about friendship. You've been doing it all of your life; you just may not have called it networking.

Anyone can learn to network more effectively

Networking is not a skill reserved for extroverted personality types or sales/marketing professionals or deal-makers. Even the most shy and introverted person can learn to network effectively. You just need to push yourself out of your comfort zone now and then. With each networking success, your confidence and skill will grow. Keep on networking!

Exercise: Write down 1-2 examples of how networking has been helpful to you personally or to others.

Networking is good for your career

1. _____
2. _____

Networking is good for your organization

1. _____
2. _____

Networking is good for the world

1. _____
2. _____

Networking is the art of building and sustaining mutually beneficial relationships *before you need them.*

Inspired by Diane Darling, author of *The Networking Survival Guide*

What is an elevator pitch and why do you need one?

Your elevator pitch is more than just a foot in the door; it's a moment-in-time opportunity to connect with someone while reinforcing your personal brand and the value you have to offer. Each time you give your 30-second elevator pitch, your primary goal should be to elicit the response:

**“Tell me more...” or
“How do you do that?”**



You're not trying to tell your life story or to close a deal, but rather you're trying to invite someone to engage with you in a deeper conversation. If you're successful with your 30-second elevator pitch, you will find yourself attracting people who want to get to know you better. This is a great start to your business day. And you don't even have to be in an elevator!!

Most people spend their precious 30-seconds going on in boring detail about **what** they do. They forget to reveal some of **who** they are. Strong networkers are also proficient at communicating what is a good lead or connection for them and who they are looking to meet. The whole point of giving a 30-second introduction is to find out who you can help and who can help you. Remember, it's not a transaction or a close, but rather a beginning.

To create a great elevator pitch for yourself, you must focus on two critical factors:

1. Content – what you say, the words you choose to describe yourself and the value you bring;
2. Delivery – how you say it, including vocal and non-verbal body language

When and where can you use your elevator pitch?

There are many situations and opportunities in which you can use your elevator pitch. They may be formal or informal situations. They may involve just one other person or many people. How will you know when it's time to “pitch” yourself?

1. When someone asks you “So, what do you do?” or “what do you do for a living?”
2. When you want to position yourself for an opportunity:
3. When you just want to practice your pitch and get feedback;
4. Other reasons: _____

Myth: “Marketing myself is a dirty business”

When it comes to self-promotion and the act of marketing yourself, it's time to overcome any fears, hesitations or reluctance. To be successful in this competitive world, you must “*put yourself out there.*” **You must take an active role in personal marketing.** Self-promotion doesn't have to be uncomfortable. Here are some sage words from branding expert **Lynn Chamberlain**, the Executive Director of Marketing and Communications at Vermont College of Fine Arts.



Whether you are running your own business or navigating your own success up the corporate ladder, you must have a firm grasp on your individual brand identity, as well as a marketing plan for how to use it. This is not optional. **Ignore it at your own peril.** Like it or not, **perception is reality.** The good news is, **you can shape how you are perceived**—and that is what individual branding is all about. Successful personal branding means wearing labels such as “leading” and “expert,” “sought-after,” “popular” and “well-regarded”. It means creating a brand identity that is authentic, consistent, and memorable, one that you own and are proud of. Here are several simple steps you can take right now to bottle and market you:

1. Figure out **who you are**, what you stand for, and why you are different than anyone or anything else.
 - a. Begin by asking yourself: if I were a THING, what would I be?
 - b. Why would you be *that* thing?
 - c. Example: accounting firm/ aspirin
2. Create **a story** that communicates your value and your market differentiation.
 - a. Difference between a story and a testimonial
 - b. What case studies can you use that demonstrate your value? (problem/solution)
3. Pull out the **key words** that you have used to create that story and weave them into everything that you say, do and publish about yourself and your business.
4. Tell your story **relentlessly**, passionately, and unapologetically to anyone who will listen. You will refine and improve it as you go along, figuring out which parts work and which don't.

Source: excerpts from Lynn Chamberlain's talk to the Downtown Women's Club Brown Bag lunch , September 12, 2007 entitled: “YOUR PERSONAL BRAND MANIFESTO: HOW TO FIGHT YOUR PERSONAL BRAND DEMONS & WIN

How to perfect your elevator pitch

The effectiveness of your elevator pitch will be determined by both the *content* and the *delivery*. So ask yourself this question:

Does your :30 Networking Pitch
pass the MR. ABE test?



PERFECT YOUR PITCH

M = Memorable

R = Relatable

A = Authentic

B = Believable

E = Engaging

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Notes:

Perfect your pitch with MR ABE

Use these questions to help you craft a more compelling elevator pitch or networking introduction that starts more conversations.

M factor: “What one thing do I want people to remember about me? What one thing must “stick”? Is there a creative visual that you can use to illustrate your mission? How can I be more **memorable**?”

R factor: “Is my value proposition something that the other person can relate to and easily understand? What question could I open with that my audience could relate to? Where’s our common ground?” How can I be more relevant and **relatable**?”

A Factor: “What am I passionate about? What personal information could I share? Am I confident giving my pitch?” How can I be more **authentic** and comfortable in my own skin?”

B Factor: “What can I say or do to demonstrate my credibility and make myself more believable? Have I included my credentials? Do I look and act the part?” How am I using my voice? How can I be more **believable**?

E Factor: “Do I have energy in my body? Am I smiling? How’s my handshake? How’s my eye contact? How can I be more **engaging**?”

BONUS: “*Who specifically am I looking to meet? What do I need?*” Get specific and more people will be able to help you.

➔ For more insight on how to apply each of these factors (MR ABE) in your networking and business strategy, please [check out the articles and resources available](#).

Constructing your pitch

You will need several versions of your elevator pitch, to allow you to “pitch” yourself in various situations. The ultimate challenge is to state your pitch in 10 seconds or less. In some settings, you will have the gift of more time to position yourself more fully.

If you can discipline yourself to get the job done in the least amount of time, you will have mastered an important business skill: brevity and concise communication.

Remember to tailor your pitch to your audience, while still honoring your personal brand identity. You want to be consistent with your personal marketing.



1. **10-second elevator pitch** - a short statement about your value proposition, that is, the value that you create for other people through your work. The value proposition is similar to the unique selling proposition (USP) concept; however, the focus is more external than internal.

If you don't know what your value proposition is, ask a few people who know you well and have worked with you. Ask them the following questions:

- What value did I create for you?
- What's so great about that? (*WSGAT*)
- What four words or phrases would you use to describe me to someone who doesn't know me?
- What do you think I'm best at?

2. **30-second elevator pitch** - Straight forward style. Nothing fancy or clever, just good information, delivered with confidence.
3. **30-second elevator pitch** - Alternative #2. Establish relevance first by asking a question *before* giving your name. This will ensure that you capture their attention and engage them before you share your name.
4. **60-second elevator pitch** – a little more time to get into how you do what you do and what differentiates you from others. You also have time to ask for a connection or share what leads you are looking for. Note: the more specific you get, the more likely you are to get it!

Constructing your 10-second elevator pitch

On the pages to follow, you will find different ways in which you could construct your elevator pitch. You'll need to have a short version and a longer version, depending upon the situation. Remember to "book end" your name, so that people can remember you. Included in this workbook are examples from an MBA student looking to land a new position after graduation.



The 10-Second Elevator Pitch

(a short statement about your value proposition)

Example: My mission is to help impatient companies accelerate growth by reaching more customers through social media. John Smart, Social Media Strategist

Draft #1:

I help _____ (who) to _____ (realize what benefit)

(State your value proposition: What value you create for people?)

My name is _____ (title or your personal brand) _____

Draft #2: (reverse the order)

My name is

I help _____ (who) to _____ (realize what benefit)

Constructing your 30-second elevator pitch



30-second Elevator Pitch

(Straight forward style)

Example: My name is John Smart and I'm a Social Media Strategist. My mission is to help impatient companies accelerate their growth by reaching more customers through social media channels. Currently I am studying advanced marketing at the University of Connecticut School of Business and am scheduled to graduate in 2013. My intention is to land a position with a technology driven company like XYZ or ABC within business development or marketing. Do you know anyone at either of these companies or can you think of anyone that might make a good networking connection for me? John Smart, Social Media Strategist.

Draft #1

My name is _____
(Book end #1)

And I'm _____
(Consider sharing your company name, your personal brand, role or specialty)

I help _____
(Who/what kind of clients do you like to work with?)

to _____
(State Your value proposition: What value you create for people?
What kinds of problems do you help solve for them?)

I do this by _____
(If time permits, a little bit about HOW you help them)

I'm looking to meet: _____
(Specifically who would you like to connect with?)

(re-state your name) _____
(Book end #2)

Constructing an Alternative 30-second Elevator Pitch

30-second Elevator Pitch - Alternative #2

(Establish relevance first by asking a question *before* giving your name)



Example: *Have you ever wondered how companies could improve profitability without having to layoff so many people? Well, my name is John Smart and I'm a Social Media Strategist. My mission is to help organizations accelerate their growth by communicating and engaging more customers through social media and mobile marketing. Currently I am marketing advancement at the University of Connecticut School of Business and am scheduled to graduate in 2013. My intention is to land a position with a technology driven company like XYZ or ABC within business development or marketing. Do you know anyone at either of these companies or can you think of anyone that might make a good networking connection for me? John Smart, Social Media Strategist.*

(Ask a question to establish relevance – see options below)

- Have you ever had the experience where _____
- When was the last time you _____
- Have you ever wondered if _____

(Write down your opening question to establish relevance)

My name is _____

(Book end #1)

And I'm _____

(Consider sharing your company name, your personal brand, role or specialty)

I help _____

(Who/what kind of clients do you like to work with?)

to _____

(State Your value proposition: What value you create for people?)

I'm looking to meet: _____

(Specifically who would you like to connect with?)

(re-state your name) _____

Constructing your 60-second elevator pitch



60-Second Elevator Pitch

Example: Have you ever wondered if companies could improve profitability without having to layoff their workforce? Well, my name is John Smart and I'm a Social Media Strategist. My mission is to help organizations find smarter ways to strengthen their value chain and solidify customer loyalty. I do this by showing them how they can strategically communicate with internal and external shareholders through technology-driven media channels and new platforms. I am currently studying the advancements in digital marketing at the University of Connecticut School of Business and am scheduled to graduate in 2013. I'm specifically looking for an introduction to _____ of Company XYZ. Do you know her or know anyone who knows her. John Smart, Social Media Strategist.

(Your opening question to establish relevance)

My name is _____
(Book end #1)

And I'm _____
(Consider sharing your company name, your personal brand, role or specialty)

I help _____
(Who/what kind of clients do you like to work with?)

to _____
(State Your value proposition: What value you create for people?)

I do this by _____
(If time permits, a little bit about HOW you help them)

I'm looking to meet: _____
(Specifically who would you like to connect with?)

(re-state your name) _____

Perfect your elevator pitch

Now draft your elevator pitch or networking introduction

Exercise: Working with a partner, critique your elevator pitch using the MR ABE criteria.

MR.ABE criteria	Yes / No / Not Sure	How could you IMPROVE?
Memorable		
Relatable		
Authentic		
Believable		
Engaging		
Other Ideas		

What should you do next?

Your elevator pitch is never set in stone. It's a dynamic piece of communication that will change and evolve as you do. Here are five things you can do to continue to "perfect your pitch."

- Practice.** Practice until it feels natural and energizing to say out loud. Practice in front of a mirror or while you're driving in your car. You want it to be conversational, not canned. If you don't feel comfortable saying it, how do you think your audience will feel hearing it?
- Experiment.** Try different approaches to make it more relatable to different audiences. If you go to a regular networking meeting, don't be a broken record. Mix it up, but be sure to reinforce your main branding message every time.
- Ask for feedback.** Find out what sticks by asking people what they remember hearing. What did they find compelling? What piqued their interest? When did they "tune-out." Give others feedback too. We can all get better at this.
- Be confident.** What you have to say and to offer is valuable. Hold that belief as you stand and deliver. Let go of your fears and focus on your audience. By being confident and having a compelling pitch, you are more likely to engage with the people you desire to meet.
- Become a Motivated Networker.** Networking is a lifetime strategy, not just an event. If you value relationships, you will want and need to continue to invest some time and energy to maintain the current connections that you have, and acquire new contacts. On the next few pages, you will find more tips and resources to help you become a motivated networker.



Next *steps*

Become a motivated networker

Accelerate Your Future Growth

Your best investment is in building and strengthening your personal and professional network. Who you know and who knows you is vital to your short and long term career and business success. It's time that you become a more motivated networker!

Here are 10 tips for greater networking success

By incorporating networking into your daily routine, you will move from being a reluctant networker to a motivated networker to a “connector of people.” Great things can happen when you cultivate and leverage your personal and professional network.

1. Job #1 = build rapport.
2. Your fortune is in your follow-up *system*.
3. Aim higher. Get warmer. Give and receive facilitated introductions.
4. Talk to strangers.
5. Cultivate your Top 50 Contacts within your network. Invest in these relationships.
6. Leverage technology to grow your network.
7. Be visible. Be frequent. Show up. Speak up.
8. Help others. Ask for help.
9. Stand and walk, don't sit, at networking events (and turn off your cell phone).
10. Become a connector of people.

Get more career and business wisdom

Stay in touch with Kathy by [signing up to receive her motivating newsletter: Elevate](#). Each issue she includes motivating and instructive tips on networking, presenting, communicating, and personal branding. Kathy McAfee can help you take your talent to the next level. Check out past articles on [her blog roll](#).

Kathy McAfee,
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& Professional Speaker

AMERICA'S MARKETING MOTIVATOR

ELEVATE
Take your talent
to the **NEXT** level



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Additional resources

Books, audio and DVD programs

- ❑ [Networking Ahead for Business](#), audiobook sampler narrated by author Kathy McAfee
- ❑ [Perfect Your Pitch](#) audio training program with Kathy McAfee
- ❑ [Motivated Networking Follow-Up](#) with Kathy McAfee. Available in audio or DVD live presentation format
- ❑ [Your Branding Edge: How Personal Branding Can Turbocharge Your Career](#), by Rahna Barthelmess
- ❑ [Never Eat Alone and other secrets to success, one relationship at a time](#), by Keith Ferrazzi and Raz Tah
- ❑ [Who's Got Your Back: The Breakthrough Program to Build Deep, Trusting Relationships That Create Success - and Won't Let You Fail](#), by Keith Ferrazzi
- ❑ [The Ripple Effect: maximize the power of relationships in business and life](#), by Steve Harper
- ❑ [The Networking Survival Guide: Practical Advice to Help You Gain Confidence, Approach People, and Get the Success You Want](#), by Diane Darling
- ❑ [Book Yourself Solid: The Fastest, Easiest, and Most Reliable System for Getting More Clients Than You Can Handle Even if You Hate Marketing and Selling](#), by Michael Port
- ❑ [Endless Referrals: network your everyday contacts into sales](#), by Bob Burg

Web sites and recommended blogs

- ❑ [Blog](#) – share your ideas, reactions and comments on the weekly networking tip posted by Kathy McAfee
- ❑ [Open Vault](#) – access tons of free templates, tools and motivating articles to help you move forward in your career and business. From Kathy McAfee, America's Marketing Motivator
- ❑ [Motivating Cards](#) – on-line greeting card and gift system ideal for personalized networking follow-up using the SendOutCards system. Comes with an on-line contact management system and personalized handwriting fonts and signatures.

Instructor's Biography

Kathy McAfee is **America's Marketing Motivator**, a professional speaker and executive presentation coach and trainer whose mission is to help business and community leaders to more effectively use their talent, energy, and influence to create positive changes in the world. Her company, Kmc Brand Innovation, LLC, has helped thousands of motivated executives, professionals, and entrepreneurs to become the recognized leaders in their fields by mastering the arts of high engagement presentations and effective networking.

She is the author of the books, *Networking Ahead for Business* and *Stop Global Boring*,

In her role as **Executive Presentation Coach**, she helps clients to increase their confidence, credibility, and influence by reducing their PowerPoint clutter to better engage their audiences and move them to action. A certified Master Practitioner of Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP), Kathy helps her clients to clear their limiting beliefs and instill more effective strategies to realize their full leadership potential.



Over the past 20 years, Kathy has held numerous corporate leadership positions, bringing marketing success to companies such as Levi Strauss & Co., Maybelline, Southcorp Wines of Australia, and ADVO, where she served as Vice President of Marketing Services. Living and working in England for three years, she led European marketing initiatives for an international vision care company. Since 2005 she has pursued an entrepreneurial lifestyle, a path she recommends for anyone with a spirit of innovation and the stomach for uncertainty.

A graduate of Stanford University in Economics, Kathy is a member of the National Speakers Association, a past board member of YWCA Hartford Region, and an active member of Soroptimist International of the Americas. She is an ovarian cancer survivor, and holds a second degree black belt in the martial art of Tae Kwon Do. Kathy and her husband Byron reside in Connecticut.

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