



How to Create a Great Pitch For Any Occasion

“It’s nice to meet you. What do you do?”

Sound familiar? It’s one of the first questions you’ll be asked at any networking event or when meeting someone new.

It is up to you to clearly, succinctly and accurately describe yourself so the people you meet will understand your value, goals and how they can help.

An important part of telling your story is creating a pitch; often known as an “elevator pitch.” (This term is based on the idea that if you were on an elevator with someone important, you could deliver your “speech” during the elevator ride.) Your pitch could be 15, 30 or 60 seconds, depending on the situation. Keep in mind, the average adult attention span today is only eight seconds.

You will use your pitch in many different circumstances. The pitch you use when meeting an alumni at a social event will be slightly different from the one you use when sitting down for an informational meeting with someone who works for a target company. You will also use a written version of your pitch to introduce yourself when requesting an informational meeting.

Use these nine steps to create a pitch to impress the people you meet in any networking situation.

1. What is Your Goal?

Before you can start writing your pitch, you want to define your immediate career goal. In other words, what role are you interested in? This becomes the focus of your pitch and determines the supporting information that will ultimately go into your pitch.

Can you answer these important questions: what skills, attributes and experience qualify you for the role?

You also want to include in your pitch the reason you are interested in the career or field you have chosen. Your motivation is unique to you and your ability to articulate your motivation can be a differentiator.

2. Industry Experience?

Your knowledge and familiarity with an industry makes it easier for you to transition within an industry. But outside industry experience can be of value if you will be working with clients in an industry you are familiar with. In some cases, experience in other industries brings new perspective. You must determine how you tie your past industry experience to your future goal.

3. What Skills Do You Use to Solve Problems?

Remember, every job represents a problem waiting for a solution. Think about the skills you enjoy using or want to use. Include both hard and soft skills, as well as technical skills and software you’re familiar with, especially if these are in-demand. If you are transferring to a new role, focus on transferrable skills. Transferrable skills are broader and apply across industries and roles. They include communication, leadership, problem-solving, organization, teamwork and more. ►



4. What Impact Do You Have? What Results Do You Create?

Identify your top professional accomplishments. You won't be able to address all your accomplishments in your pitch, but look for accomplishments with a reoccurring theme. Do you have a history of streamlining processes or organizing projects? Did you save money for your previous employer by negotiating a contract? You may even have a knack for synthesizing data and presenting it to senior management telling a story with meaning for the business. These are the types of things future employers want to know. When you identify the impact or results of your work, you distinguish yourself from others with the same basic skill-set.

5. End With a Question

When you reach the end of your pitch, it can feel awkward if you don't know how to conclude it. When delivering your pitch while networking, a good way to engage someone in a conversation is to ask a question. You may not always need to ask a question, but it is an option to consider given your networking situation.

6. Deliver Your Pitch With Style and Energy

Present your pitch with energy and emotion. Let your excitement show! It can be difficult to talk about yourself, but when you've outlined your key points, you have more energy to focus on your presentation style. Try smiling when you deliver your pitch. Instead of memorizing your pitch word for word, outline the bullet points you want to include. You don't want your pitch to sound robotic or get stuck because you've forgotten exactly what to say next.

7. What Does Your Future Employer Need

Your pitch should take into consideration the needs of a future employer so rather than focusing your pitch solely on what you WANT, consider emphasizing what you OFFER. Your pitch isn't all about you; it's about explaining the benefits to the employer of hiring you. How can you solve their problems? When you communicate verbally and in writing, use the word "you," more than the word "me."

To uncover the needs of your future employer, make sure you do your research. Identify what the company needs from someone in the role you are interested in. Review lots of job descriptions to ensure you reference the required skills and knowledge. Look for words that appear consistently across multiple job postings. For example, you may find that almost every Financial Analyst job posting requests quantitative analysis skills, financial modeling, advising with senior leadership and an MBA or MS. Emphasize the primary qualifications in your pitch to stimulate a "tell me more" response.

As you learn more about your targeted role and/or company, and as you develop new skills, refine your pitch accordingly.

8. Be Concise

You don't need to include every qualification and skill. Remember, your pitch is a summary of your most notable qualifications. You have the remainder of the conversation to reference additional information about your background.

Your pitch is a teaser to get someone interested in speaking with you and asking follow-up questions to learn more. But if you do not include enough information or present your qualifications coherently, it will be difficult for the person you are speaking with to engage in conversation.

9. Why an MBA?

You need to explain how your MBA qualifies you for your next role. If you are switching industries or functions, you'll need to explain how the skills and experiences you've acquired while getting your MBA prepare you for new opportunities. You can choose to offensively or defensively address the question, "why did you get an MBA?" An offensive approach would be to answer the question as a pitch strengthener. A defensive approach would require you to thoughtfully explain why you got an MBA when someone asks. If you can neatly package your answer to into your pitch, while keeping it the appropriate length, that's great. Otherwise, consider answering the question later in a conversation or meeting. ►



Your Pitch at a Networking Event

This version of your pitch needs to be about 15-20 seconds.

I'm Bernard Jones. I'm a big data consultant, and I help companies demystify big data and put one of their most important assets, their data, to use identifying and answering the questions that will dramatically improve their business' bottom line. My MBA from XYZ Business School gave me the opportunity to expand and apply my analytical abilities through a capstone project and coursework.

Your Pitch at an Informational Meeting

You have a little more time in a one-on-one informational meeting to share your qualifications. This version of your pitch may be up to a minute long.

Hello and thank you for agreeing to meet with me today. I have 4 years of experience working in retail operations and marketing. I've become very interested in the explosion in the use of social media and online content to build brand awareness for non-profit organizations. When I'm not in class or at work, I'm helping my organization enhance their social media presence. I'm an MBA candidate at XYZ Business School. My goal is to join a non-profit in marketing and communications specifically using social media and content to build awareness and grow donations. I am interested in learning more about how you ended up in the non-profit world and the differences from the private sector.

Your Pitch to Use With Alumni

Leverage the power of your mutual education to highlight academic or school achievements that the fellow schoolmate will appreciate and understand.

Hello my name is Christina Jones. I am pursuing my Masters in Finance at XYZ Business School and as you know from your experience there, the coursework and co-curricular opportunities have been invaluable. I'm interested in an analyst position within an asset management division. My passion lies in finance and I've already had two internships in the industry. My quantitative analytic skills along with my MBA have enhanced my ability to perform detailed research and communicate at all levels within a company.

More Sample Pitches

My name is Sam Smith and I deliver data for businesses that want to better understand their markets, customers, and competitors. I worked with one of the big four consulting firms analyzing the responses of executives from Fortune 1000 companies about how they viewed risk management and what they saw as the emerging risks. The final report made national headlines and is regularly cited as a benchmark for businesses. I want to apply my data analysis skills within one of the top 10 tech companies in Silicon Valley.

Hi, I'm Jane Smith, and my plan is to develop and lead the next-generation of supply chain innovations in emerging markets. I was fortunate to learn the potential through a consulting internship within Deloitte's supply chain practice. In June, I'll graduate with my MBA from XYZ Business School and I'll be pursuing opportunities with companies like Maersk, WalMart and Amazon, to name just a few.

Hello, I'm Jim Welsh. I troubleshoot Bank X's risk management applications during the global financial crisis. Post-MBA, I want to focus on developing new risk management strategies to avert such crises.

Hi, my name is Sue Smart. My background blends laboratory operations and accounting. I'm endlessly curious and my friends, family, and colleagues look to me for answers on everything from new medication research to budgeting. I've always been passionate about process improvement and making things run better. ►



I want to financially improve operations by streamlining the procurement process and my MBA has enhanced my ability to analyze operations more quantitatively.

Pitch Worksheet and Template

Goal	
Industry experience	
Skills offered	
Problems solved	
Relevant Education including why an MBA	

Now that you've identified the most important information to share, let's put the pieces together. Here's the template for your pitch.

I am pursuing a career as a ... [career goal]

My experience has been [industry, role or type of company]

This gave me the opportunity to [skills used or problem solved]

I've been successful [what problems you solve, what solutions you offer]

My [type of degree, concentration and name of school] further developed my skills for XYZ solutions to business problems and understanding of industry trends.