Crafting Your Elevator Pitch (aka, Value Proposition)

Picture you in a suit running for the elevator to catch up with the CEO of one of your target companies: you shake hands, and then launch into a one-way sales pitch. By the end of the elevator ride, you will have shared the top three reasons why the CEO should hire you.

While this may seem over the top, we may have learned as a kid not to brag. As a student looking to meet and greet future employers, recruiters, and networking contacts, we need to rethink bragging.

Introducing yourself with confidence. It is a great opportunity to insert share a few words about your value, including some or all of the following:

- Where you are currently (aka, a junior at UNH, Paul College)
- A few words about an interesting current or recent project from class, internship, other
- A related result or accomplishment
- A future goal, general or specific

While a two-way conversation can be spontaneous and go many different ways, it is a good idea to prepare for potential ways to show your value in conversing at a networking event, Career Fair, or informational interview. Here are some helpful considerations when preparing words and approaches:

- *Tailor the value proposition* to the event and to the person with whom you are speaking. You can be more informal -- yet still professional -- with a peer or a family friend, and a bit more deferential with a company executive who may be hiring.
- While preparation is great, *do not memorize it*. Try scripting it, then remember key words you will discuss.
- *Practice it* with your roommates, friends, family members so that the words will come out differently and you will get the gist when you in a real conversation.
- *Share bits of it at one time*. Demonstrate interest in the other person through active listening. Find a natural way to introduce something you’re excited about or a result that your team achieved.

At a Career Fair, employers speak to hundreds of students. How do you make your introduction memorable?

- ✓ Dress and look your best as appropriate to the occasion
- ✓ Include a story demonstrating your interest and/or skill
- ✓ Share a related fun fact
- ✓ Relate a key point back to the conversation partner
- ✓ Ask a thoughtful question

For different situations and with different people, you’ll adapt your introduction, including the tone. The following are templates for your elevator pitch/value proposition that you can adapt in different conversations:
Templates for Your Elevator Pitch/Value Proposition

Problem-Solution Focus:
“You know the problem we have with the (name problem)? Well, in my internship as (title), my teammates and I solved that problem by (describe activities and connections).”

Public/Customer Welfare Focus
“I’m very excited about the (cite achievement) that my team worked so hard to accomplish, because we helped our volunteer organization to meet our vision of helping the public by (state the benefit gained by the public or customer).”

Goal Focus:
“You know the goal we have of (name the goal)? Well, in my part-time role as (title), my team and I addressed that target by (describe activities and connections).”

Challenge Focus:
“As you know, we’re facing the tremendous challenge of (cite challenge). As our (title), I informally led a team that addresses this challenge to make sure we (describe mission and connection to the challenge).”

Team Excitement Focus:
“We’re excited about the student organization’s chance to (cite the opportunity in vivid terms). My committee is helping us to capitalize on this opportunity by (describe the actions and how they relate).”

Benefit Statement Focus:
“As (title), I delivered (name the output, service, feature, or activity) which ensured (state the resulting general organization or customer advantage) which satisfies our need for/to (link the advantage to a company need).”

Empathy Focus:
If my understanding is correct, you’ve been concerned about (name an issue/concern). My (name the group) team helps by (describe the team’s activities & impact on the concern). My role is (give your title or function).

*Adapted from a worksheet developed by Brandon Partners; used with permission from the author.