

## PGR Tips on honing your elevator pitch

Do you ever get asked what you do and you're not sure what to answer? Do you try and convey your enthusiasm for your research? How would you sell your research in two minutes to say, the head of your faculty or the Vice-Chancellor? It is worthwhile to prepare for such occasions as it may influence the first impression you make (this ties in with the earlier PGR Tips on creating your own luck). It is called an elevator pitch to capture the idea that you have the time you are stuck in a lift together to capture someone's imagination. Although preparation is key, this is an interactive communication exercise, be aware of the level of interest you are generating (beware of any signs of eyes glazing over).

So how would you structure your 'elevator pitch'? What are the things to consider?

### Think of a starting point or 'hook'

Start with a really big picture and something to capture the attention. This can be a fun fact, a well known problem, a famous figure in your wider field, so that your listener(s) have an idea where you are coming from. An example of a start a sentence with might be 'You know how/when..'. Maybe you could summarise why it is important?

### Provide overview

Again, this will be a high level overview but focuses on how your research is involved. 'My contribution to this is..', 'the aspect that I focus on is..'. What motivates you may be of interest to people too. Again, this needs to be brief. Make sure it is free of jargon.

### Concentrate on the outcomes

Again, this will be in a nutshell. What have you found so far? What does this mean? Was there anything surprising? What are the potential applications?

### The future

What does the future hold? What are your next steps? Is there maybe anything you want them to do for you?

### Adapt to your audience

Your elevator pitch will need to vary depending on who you are giving it to. How wide do you need to start? What aspect will be of interest to them most? What constitutes jargon will also depend on the listener. So adapt it every time and as you go along. However well prepared you are, try not to make it sound rehearsed.

### Clarity

It is really important to be clear. If your listener doesn't understand something (such as jargon or an acronym) they are likely to spend time trying to figure it out or cast around for the meaning, Avoid jargon. What to consider jargon again depends on the person you are talking to. Remember to keep it really short, if someone is really interested in any aspect you can expand on it. Your elevator pitch is a starting point, but make sure it is a good one!