

# COMMUNICATING YOUR RESEARCH EFFECTIVELY

HQP Training Series

Nancy Goucher

Allie Dusome

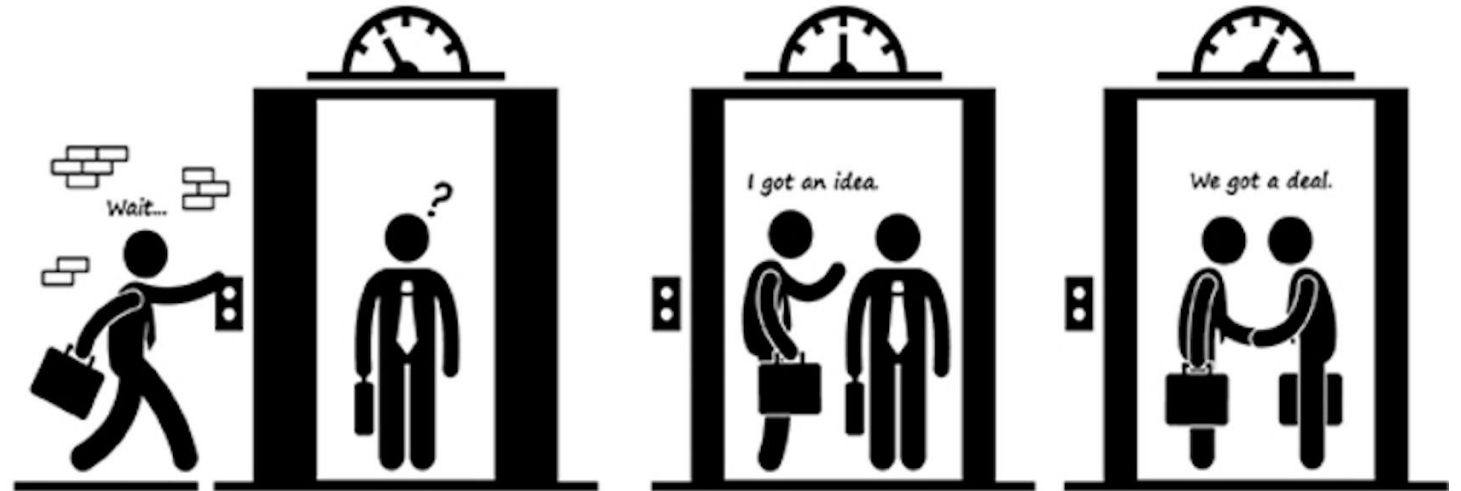


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# LET'S TALK ABOUT

- Elevator pitches
  - What are they?
  - Why should you have one?
  - How do you develop one?
- Lightning talks
  - What are they?
  - How to deliver one effectively?



# CREATING YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH

*This is not your whole life story, it isn't even the highlights*

- Elevator Pitch: A brief, persuasive speech that you use to spark interest in what you're researching/working on. Should last no longer than 20-30 seconds
  - Adjust your pitch to the situation you're in
    - Tip: Before delivering your pitch, find out more about who you are talking to
  - Focus on the problems you solve, not what you do
  - Be specific without using too much jargon



# CREATING YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH

## Step One: Answer key questions

- Name
- What you're studying
- What you're looking for/interested in
  - This should be something that differentiates you from your peers or establishes a relationship
  - *"I'm Allie Dusome, looking to collaborate on communications training workshops for grad students."*



# CREATING YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH

## Step Two: Spruce it up

This is your opportunity to add details into your generic pitch. This is why you're awesome. This is how you can tell them why your research matters!

- *“My name is Allie Dusome, I’m a Communications Officer at UWaterloo and I deliver interactive, hands-on workshops to graduate students looking to enhance their communication skills. My vision is to scale this program up, offering more workshops with a variety of topics, to a larger audience. I’m hoping to find someone who shares my enthusiasm to help graduate students succeed!”*



# **WORKSHOP**

Develop your elevator pitch

# CREATING YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH

## Step Three: Call to action

Every pitch needs a call-to-action for your listener. This will often take the shape of the question you ask. It should give your listener the opportunity to respond and drive the conversation forward:

- Are there current opportunities in your organization?
- Could we meet for coffee and discuss this more?
- What are the issues your organization is trying to solve?
- *“My name is Allie Dusome, I’m a Communications Officer at UWaterloo and I deliver interactive, hands-on workshops to graduate students looking to enhance their communication skills. My vision is to scale this program up, offering more workshops with a variety of topics, to a larger audience. I’m hoping to find someone who shares my enthusiasm to help graduate students succeed! Are you interested in meeting and discussing the possibilities of this program further?”*



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# CREATING YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH

## Step Four: PRACTICE

- You don't want to sound like a robot, but you should be comfortable enough with the words that you can speak confidently and clearly (loud, eye contact, firm handshake)
- Your pitch is part of your personal brand – people want to work with people they like, have confidence in and trust
- First opportunity to show potential collaborators or employers that you are all of these things!





# DEVELOPING A STRONG LIGHTNING TALK

## Have a strong hook

- Take the first 20 seconds to engage the audience
- Avoid: “Hi my name is Allie” as your opener
- Try: “Every year, the algal blooms in Lake Erie cause a myriad of problems that interfere with citizen’s enjoyment of the lake including: \_\_\_\_\_,\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. My name is Allie Dusome and I’m going to tell you what my research group is doing about this problem.”



# DEVELOPING A STRONG LIGHTNING TALK

## Avoid the details

- Don't get bogged down in the details of your research
- You only have time to present the core of your research and how it relates to the big picture
- You can always provide more information (website link, hand out, business card with your contact info, etc.) for those looking for more specific details



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# DEVELOPING A STRONG LIGHTNING TALK

## Create an outline or script

- Some people can “wing it” – others cannot
- Develop an outline:
  - Hook/problem
  - How your research is – or how you hope it will – contribute to solving this problem
  - Why are you qualified to do it
  - Close



# DEVELOPING A STRONG LIGHTNING TALK

**Be sparring with the text**

Use minimal text



# DEVELOPING A STRONG LIGHTNING TALK

## Know your audience

- You won't be able to cater to everyone, but you can target a specific group of people who you want to connect with
- Focus on this group rather than trying to be everything to everyone



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# DEVELOPING A STRONG LIGHTNING TALK

## Be confident

- What does confidence look like?
  - Speaking slowly, clearly, loudly
  - Eye contact
  - Walk around/use the stage



# DEVELOPING A STRONG LIGHTNING TALK

## Time yourself ahead of time

- Practice your lightning talk ahead of time
- Sometimes it has to be memorized
- Know the time markers in your speech (one minute in, 30 left, etc.)
  - Nothing worse than being cut-off mid talk!



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