

The Elevator Pitch

“The purpose of a pitch isn’t necessarily to move others immediately to adopt your idea. The purpose is to offer something so compelling that it begins a conversation, brings the other person in as a participant, and eventually arrives at an outcome that appeals to both of you.”

Daniel Pink

What, you may ask, is an elevator pitch? For those who are not familiar with the term, let me explain. An elevator pitch is simply a short, well-rehearsed statement about your book which you can use in social and business situations to promote you and your book.

So, why is it called an elevator pitch? The idea is that, if a reader gets into a lift (elevator) with you and you want to sell your book to them, you need to deliver your pitch before the elevator reaches their floor. In reality though, it’s a really useful tool for spreading the word about your book to friends, family, colleagues, acquaintances and people you just chat to as you wait in a queue (depending, of course, on your geographical location. Here, in Ireland, we could pitch to everyone we see!).

Crafting an effective elevator pitch is crucial for authors seeking to captivate potential readers, etc, in a short amount of time. What follows is a guide to help you perfect your own elevator pitch.

1. Understand your Audience

- identify who you are pitching to – read the person or room;
- tailor your pitch to resonate with the interests and needs of your audience; and
- research, where possible, the preferences and priorities of your target audience to tailor your pitch accordingly.

2. Define your Book

- summarise your book in one or two sentences, highlighting its genre, theme and unique selling points/points of interest;
- where the book is fiction, clearly articulate the central conflict, main characters and overarching plot without giving away too much detail;
- where the book is non-fiction, clearly articulate the core message of the book, and how it will help the reader;
- emphasise what sets your book apart from others in the same genre or category.

3. Focus on the Hook

- start with a compelling hook that grabs the listener's attention and piques their curiosity;
- use vivid language, intriguing questions or a surprising statement to engage your audience from the outset; and
- make sure the hook is relevant to your book and sets the stage for the rest of your pitch.

4. Highlight Benefits & Impact

- clearly communicate the value proposition of your book and how it benefits readers;
- highlight the emotional resonance or transformative potential of your story; and
- articulate the impact your book can have on readers' lives or on the broader cultural conversation.

5. Keep it Concise and Clear

- stick to the essentials and avoid overwhelming your audience with unnecessary details;
- aim for a pitch that can be delivered in 30-60 seconds, the length of an elevator ride; and
- practice delivering your pitch until it flows smoothly and confidently.

6. Include a Call to Action

- prompt your audience to take action, whether it's requesting more information, scheduling a meeting, or purchasing your book; and
- be prepared to provide additional materials or answer questions based on the listener's response.

7. Practise, Iterate and Refine

- practice your pitch regularly to become comfortable delivering it in various settings and to different audiences;
- solicit feedback from trusted friends, colleagues or mentors and incorporate their suggestions to improve your pitch; and
- experiment with different approaches, wording and emphasis to see what resonates best with your audience.

8. Be Authentic and Passionate

- let your enthusiasm for your book shine through in your pitch;
- speak with confidence and conviction, conveying your genuine belief in the value of your work; and
- remember that authenticity and passion are infectious and can leave a lasting impression on your audience.

Crafting a compelling elevator pitch takes time and practice, but mastering this skill can open doors and opportunities for your book. By understanding your audience, defining your book's essence and delivering your pitch with clarity and conviction, you can effectively capture interest and leave a lasting impression.