

## **How to make an unforgettable impression in a minute or less!**

(Amjambo Magazine's November issue, [IntWork](#) column by Stefanie Trice Gill)

A key element of networking is knowing what to say when you're standing next to a person who can change your life. You have 60 seconds.

It's called "elevator speech". Imagine you just stepped into an elevator with someone who just happened to be an employer who was hiring for a job of great interest to you.

In the 1 minute or less that it takes a person to travel from the first to the tenth floor, what would you say to catch and hold their interest in you as a professional?

### **Five elements to a great elevator speech**

- 1. Start with a surprise: say something intriguing and unique about yourself**

Example: *Hi, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I speak 7 languages and served 10 years as lead accountant for an international non-profit.*

- 2. Tell your professional story, in 2 sentences or less:**

*I came to the U.S. 5 years ago and got a job as a CNA. Nights, I earned an MBA and now am preparing for my CPA exam.*

- 3. Share your vision**

*I'm looking for an internship or job where I can work in accounting again.*

- 4. "The Ask" - be direct about what you want\***

*I'd love your ideas for how to get started in accounting in Maine. If you know anyone looking for an accountant, I'd appreciate an introduction.*

**\*Important:** Avoid asking for -- and telling -- too much.

I've met people who, moments after meeting them, discuss personal financial issues and ask their new acquaintance to cosign a lease. Even if you think this person might hire you, don't ask for a job in your elevator speech. Focus on making an impression and building this new relationship, rather than making a request that is too demanding.

- 5. Exchange contact information**

Say: *"Do you have a business card on you? I'd like to keep in touch."*

Follow up with them on LinkedIn and in an email, to remind them of your conversation and make it easy for them to contact you.

Hint: Avoid Facebook and What'sApp connections for now, unless your new contact suggests them. LinkedIn and email are more appropriate for building professional relationships.

## **How do I get started?**

Practice your “elevator speech” in front of a mirror with a stopwatch. Try adjusting it based on the person to whom you’ll be talking (coworker, boss, social connection).

If you need support, ask a teacher, a friend, or a mentor. Or join “[ToastMasters](#),” a club that helps people with public speaking, where you can practice this and get feedback from others.

The elevator speech isn’t just for elevators.

Use it to make an impression in any situation -- whether at a networking event, a webinar, or at a holiday party.