



# WRITING AN 'ELEVATOR PITCH' TO LIFT YOUR ORGANIZATION TO NEW HEIGHTS

**Kelly May**

KEHA State Advisor

If a stranger were to ask you, “What is KEHA?” or “Why are you a Homemaker?” how would you respond? If you hadn’t considered the question before, it might be a challenge to respond with a brief answer. The Kentucky Extension Homemaker Association (KEHA) does so many things for so many people that it can be difficult to summarize quickly.

An elevator pitch, or elevator speech, is a way to connect with others in about a minute. It is a thought-out way to briefly introduce yourself and your organization to get across one or two key points. The concept gets its name from the idea that a well-prepared pitch could explain something quickly in the time an elevator travels between floors.

## WRITING AN ELEVATOR PITCH

Many entrepreneurship programs at universities, including the University of Kentucky, host elevator pitch competitions for students to win start-up funds for new business. University career centers encourage students to create a personal elevator pitch to use at job fairs or with potential employers. Local nonprofit organizations, such as KEHA clubs and county councils, also can benefit from having a prepared elevator pitch to share with those who don’t already know about what the group has to offer.



Morgan and Wright (2021) stated that there are three categories of elevator pitches: creating connection with your audience, encouraging collaboration, and generating awareness through education. A strong elevator pitch might use any of the three, but it is important to consider which is the focus before you start. Having a goal helps with finding the best way to persuade. Also be sure your pitch answers the question “why.” Thinking about what motivates you before you begin will help you write a more persuasive summary – a little story that others can connect with.

## THE 9 C'S FOR AN ELEVATOR PITCH

Chris O'Leary (2008) championed what he calls the 9 C's for an Elevator Pitch – rules of thumb for creating a truly excellent mini speech. They are:

1. Concise
2. Clear
3. Compelling
4. Credible
5. Conceptual
6. Concrete
7. Customized
8. Consistent
9. Conversational

Brevity is important because a minute or so is not much time to share a story. Clarity comes from keeping it simple – small, everyday words are better than acronyms and jargon. To make it compelling, tell how your organization solves a problem or offers a solution. Homemakers have the tools and knowledge to help “fix” community problems and that shows credibility.

Conceptual and concrete may sound at odds with each other at first, but they are both needed. The elevator pitch is so short it needs to stay fairly high level. One good statistic or detail may be enough to prove a quick point. This allows you to be specific as well. Customizing the elevator pitch means that you keep your “audience” in mind. Think about to whom you might be explaining KEHA, and tailor your message to suit.

If you have different versions of the elevator pitch, they should all keep to the same message. And finally, a good elevator pitch should be conversational. It's just the start! It's the hook to get people interested. If you spark their interest, they could follow up with you to learn more or to share in the opportunity.

## USING THE 6 P'S TO DOUBLE CHECK

The 6 P's approach can be used to double check the elevator speech once prepared. As you check against these suggested criteria, revise the statement as needed. The 6 P's are:

1. Presentation
2. Pain
3. Premise
4. People
5. Proof
6. Purpose

The presentation category suggests checking the format, length, and delivery. The elevator speech should be interesting, persuasive, and relatable to the audience who might be hearing it. Pain refers to the “problem” and premise refers to the “solution” for that problem. Again, this needs to be simple and should still make sense without the rest of the statement behind it.

The people behind KEHA are the heart of the organization. Something in the elevator pitch should appeal to the listener and answer the question “why you?” Proof is what you have to share. For a business, the proof is sales, and for a job candidate, the proof might be education or experience. What is the proof that Homemakers are worth someone's time?

Finally, consider KEHA's purpose. There are many clubs and councils across Kentucky. What makes your group unique? What are the benefits of joining this group? Making sure you've answered these questions will make your elevator pitch strong.

## SPEAKER TIPS

Once your speech is written, you still have the challenge of delivering it. Morgan and Wright (2021) offer further suggestions for those giving an elevator pitch. Stand straight with good posture and exude

confidence. Make eye contact and make sure to smile. This helps engage the audience. Practice what you plan to say. Communicate clearly so the main ideas come across well.

Once you have completed these steps, you will have an elevator speech that will represent your club or council well. Sharing this brief story will help you connect with others. It may be a tool to grow your organization, or it might simply clarify for others what Homemakers do and why. Either way, a well-crafted elevator pitch delivered by a confident Homemaker will benefit the overall organization.

## REFERENCES

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