Perfecting your pitch

A SKILLSETS Workshop
Introduce yourself

Learn something about your neighbour
WORKSHOP GOALS

1. Reviewing the elevator pitch and its use in networking
2. Understanding your audience
3. Practicing and honing your pitch
AGENDA

1. Introductions
2. Why Network?
3. What is an elevator pitch?
4. Communities of Practice
5. Practice
6. Audience
WHY NETWORK?

• Build connections
  • professional, personal, business, social
• Learn
• Help others and connect others

Why network at conferences?

• Meet academics and exchange ideas
• Join academic communities of practice
COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

• Connect with peers, academics in field
• Find job opportunities and funding options
• Collaborate with other academics
  • Research projects
  • Publishing
  • Presenting at conferences

DISCOVER PATHS THAT CAN LEAD YOU TO WHERE YOU WANT TO BE IN YOUR FUTURE

McGill
Approaching others

REMEMBER: 80% LISTENING

Verbal skills

• Have a purpose and hook
• Ask open-ended, relevant questions
• Contribute to the conversation
• Speak about topics that interest you
• Be clear, genuine and polite
NETWORKING STRATEGIES

BODY LANGUAGE

- Head movements
- Stance and posture
- Facial expressions
- Firm hand shake (not too long)
- Make eye contact
- Smile
I know we only met 30 seconds ago...

But I could tell right away we have synergy.

I think we could work well together; don't you?

I can introduce you to all these big international contacts.

What do you say... huh?... huh?
NETWORKING STRATEGIES

• 3-minute introduction
• Practice your **verbal skills**
• Use positive **body language**
• Ask open-ended questions
• Speak about your research
  • “My research focuses on...”
  • “I am interested in studying...”
(120 word pitch)
Providing feedback

First, consider your own introduction and pitch:
- Did you stumble on your words?
- Did you reword your pitch?
*Highlight.*

Second, tell your partner:
- What worked? (hook, content, clarity, eye contact)
- What worked less well? (lack of clarity, wording, speed, tone, no eye contact)
- Did any questions come up?
ELEVATOR PITCH

A short summary used to define a person, project, business... and contains a value statement. (120/30/15 words)

Value statement ensures value of the research, project, initiative.
- shows credibility and competency

Important: find a way to introduce yourself!
It should answer the following questions:

- What is the topic?
- What is the issue or question?
  this is the first sentence usually- bring in stats or evocative question
- What is the value
  ask yourself: so what?
- How can this connect to a broader conversation?
  think of adapting to your audience and purpose here.

Are you in there?
Writing style

Include:

Hook: Does your first sentence attract the attention of your audience?

Key nouns: Highlight the nouns in your pitch.
Are you using key terms (not jargon)?

Action verbs: Are you using active verbs/sentences?

For example: Youth are not getting sex education in schools.
Schools fail to provide youth with sex education.
Practice your pitch

- 1-minute introduction
- Body language and Verbal skills
- Networking purpose
- Identify the next steps
- Exit politely
Difference between pitches

-Audience
-Context
-Discourse

Imagine you are actually in an elevator and you have 30 seconds to pitch…

What changes?
The new, short pitch

What do you keep?

“This short 15 – 30 second sound bite concisely and memorably introduces you. It allows you to succinctly and positively position yourself in the mind of the listener.” (ubc.ca)

Sell yourself AND your main idea
Common mistakes

- Lack of confidence (e.g. I have no experience)
- Lack of focus or goals. - “I don’t want to limit myself.”
- Inability to articulate skills gained from one’s academic major. - “I know my major has nothing to do with my interest in starting my own business, but…”

((UCSB.edu))
FINAL NETWORKING TIPS

- Shy? Go with a friend.
- Sweaty palms? “Wipe and Shake”
- Wear comfortable and professional clothes
- Bring water- and mints!
- Bring business cards- and ask for them
- Stay in touch with your contacts

And remember....

80% listening and 20% speaking
THANK YOU!