

Promoting Your Research using an Elevator Pitch

Bill Lindstaedt, MS

Executive Director

Career Advancement, International and Postdoctoral Services

University of California, San Francisco



Objectives:

- Meet fellow participants in a fun yet structured exercise
- Improve your ability to discuss your research with new people
- Improve your ability to tailor your message to your listening audience
- Seek advice and collaborative ideas that will benefit your research and your career
- “Warm up” for future discussions during the remaining time of this conference

Agenda:

- Introduction to elevator pitch concept and content**
- Time to draft your elevator pitch**
- Practice and improve elevator pitches in structured speed-discussions**

What is an Elevator Pitch?

- Origins in the business/start-up world
- For researchers: A brief statement (10 sec – 2 min) introducing you, your research, goals, needs
- Tailored to open further conversation
- Is not intended to explain all
- Should be written out and practiced

Why Create an Elevator Pitch?

- Establishing a reputation in your field/sub-field

 - Asking a question at a meeting

- Meeting other researchers

 - Poster presentation at a conference

- Finding collaborators

 - Networking events at meetings

- Introductions to funders

 - Talking to a program officer

- Career exploration

 - Meetings: dept chairs or sr faculty

- Job hunting

 - During the interview

- Explaining your research to lay audience

 - Relatives at Thanksgiving dinner

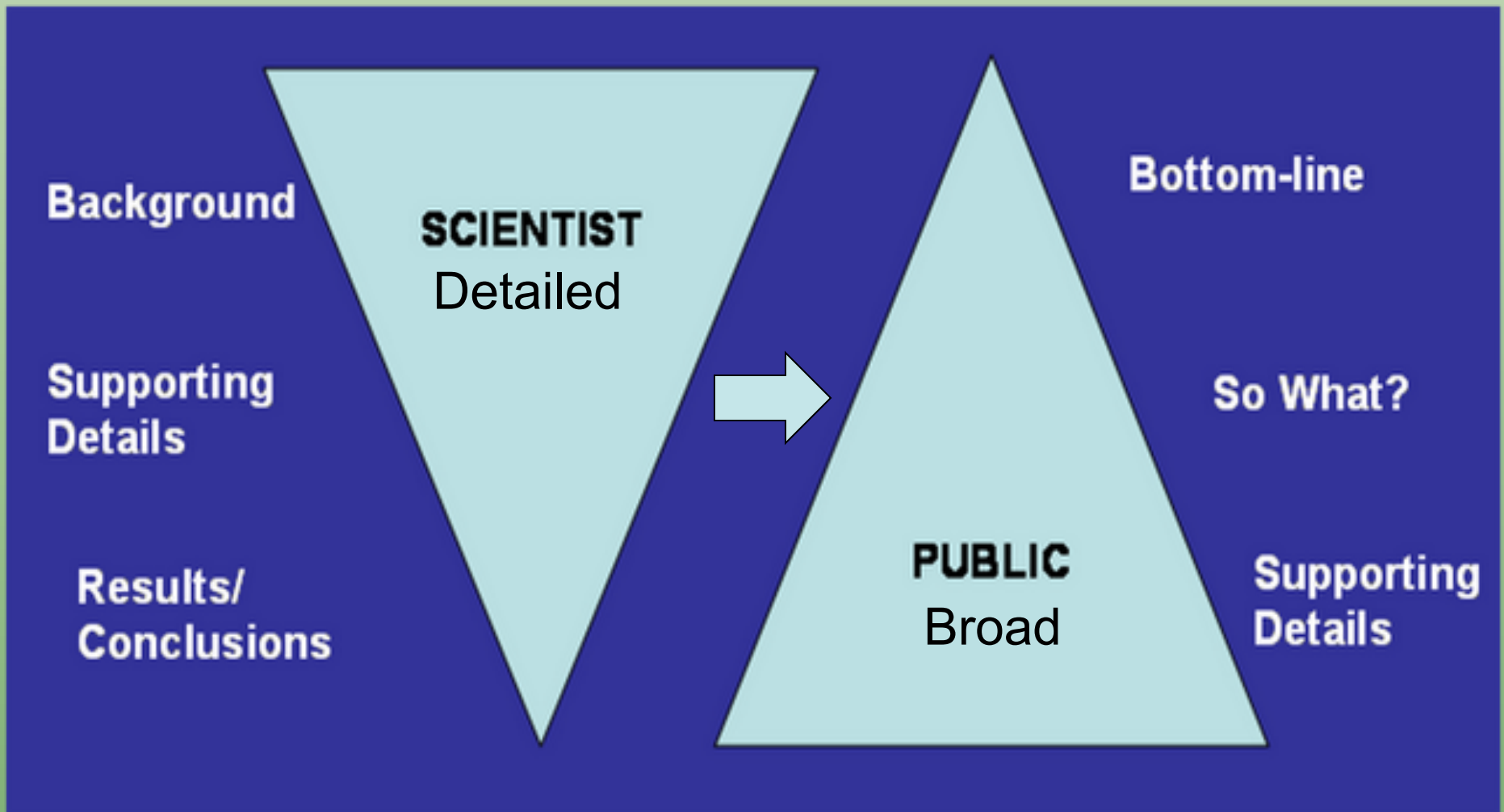
Why Create an Elevator Pitch?

Possible goals:

- Establishing a reputation in your field/sub-field
- Meeting other researchers
- Finding collaborators
- Introductions to funders
- Career exploration
- Job hunting
- Explaining your research to lay audience

Your content
depends on your
GOALS
&
AUDIENCE !

Your content depends on your
GOALS
&
AUDIENCE !



Most detailed: Outline for audience in your field

My name is

I am a _____

Nugget/research question

Approach

What you have found/hypothesis

Significance (floater)

Future, or challenges or what you need

- All segments optional
- Order of segments can change

| Outline | Example |
|--------------------------------|---|
| My name is | My name is Betty Smith... |
| I am a _____/ I study_____ | I study the mechanism of aging... |
| Nugget/research question | ...And in particular I'm interested in how environmental and genetic factors impact the aging process... |
| Approach | ...using <i>c elegans</i> as a model system. |
| What you have found/hypothesis | Interestingly, we've found that inhibiting insulin/IGF-1 extends lifespan and delays age related disease. |
| Significance (floater) | This finding is important because the rapid aging process of <i>c elegans</i> and the ease with which we can manipulate genetic mutations makes it an ideal system for further studies. |
| Future | In fact we are now working on nearly 50 additional genes in our lab to assess their effects on the aging process. |

A less formulaic example

Outline

My name is

I am a _____

Nugget/research question

Approach

What you have found/hypothesis

Significance (floater)

Future

Write your elevator speech to fit your purpose

Speed Networking: Meet your fellow attendees, discuss your research and your career

In pairs: decide who speaks first

2 minutes each; at the whistle it's your partner's turn

Move to the next partner at the next whistle; repeat

One side rotates; one stays put

Speed Discussions: Meet fellow attendees and practice your elevator pitches

Conversation flow:

- Exchange headline introductions
 - Re-iterate purpose/audience
 - Deliver your elevator speech
 - Solicit feedback
 - Discussion questions:
 - Dig deeper on research
- OR
- Dig deeper towards career

Digging deeper questions:

- Techniques/approaches used?
- Frustrating research problems
- Ideas about future directions
- Career issue you need to solve
- What are you looking for at this mtg?
- Who might be a good collaborator?
- Who might be good advisors?

Conclusion

- Know the purpose and goals of your elevator speech.
- Define your audience.
- Write out and practice several versions.
- It's worth the effort!