
Scientific Elevator Pitch

Talking science to build your network

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NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH



What is it?

- A 30 secs to 1 minute “intro” to who you are
- Three main parts: Who you are? What is your research on? Why do they care?
- Many different “types”
 - Generic/(Research, Personal, Professional)
 - Directed/(Research, Personal, Professional)
- Context determines content
- It’s the **START** to a professional conversation



Scientific Objectives of a Conversation

- Effectively communicate your science
- Demonstrate your expertise in your scientific area (or your growing expertise)
- Generate interest in your research
 - You should be excited about what you do
 - You want others to be excited about what you do
- Encourage potential collaborative opportunities



Professional Objectives of a Conversation

- Demonstrate your ability to communicate complex science to different types of audiences
- Establish your reputation as a scientist who understands the details as well as the big picture
- Promote career building & networking opportunities
 - Includes finding mentors
- Get invited or be able to encourage future conversations

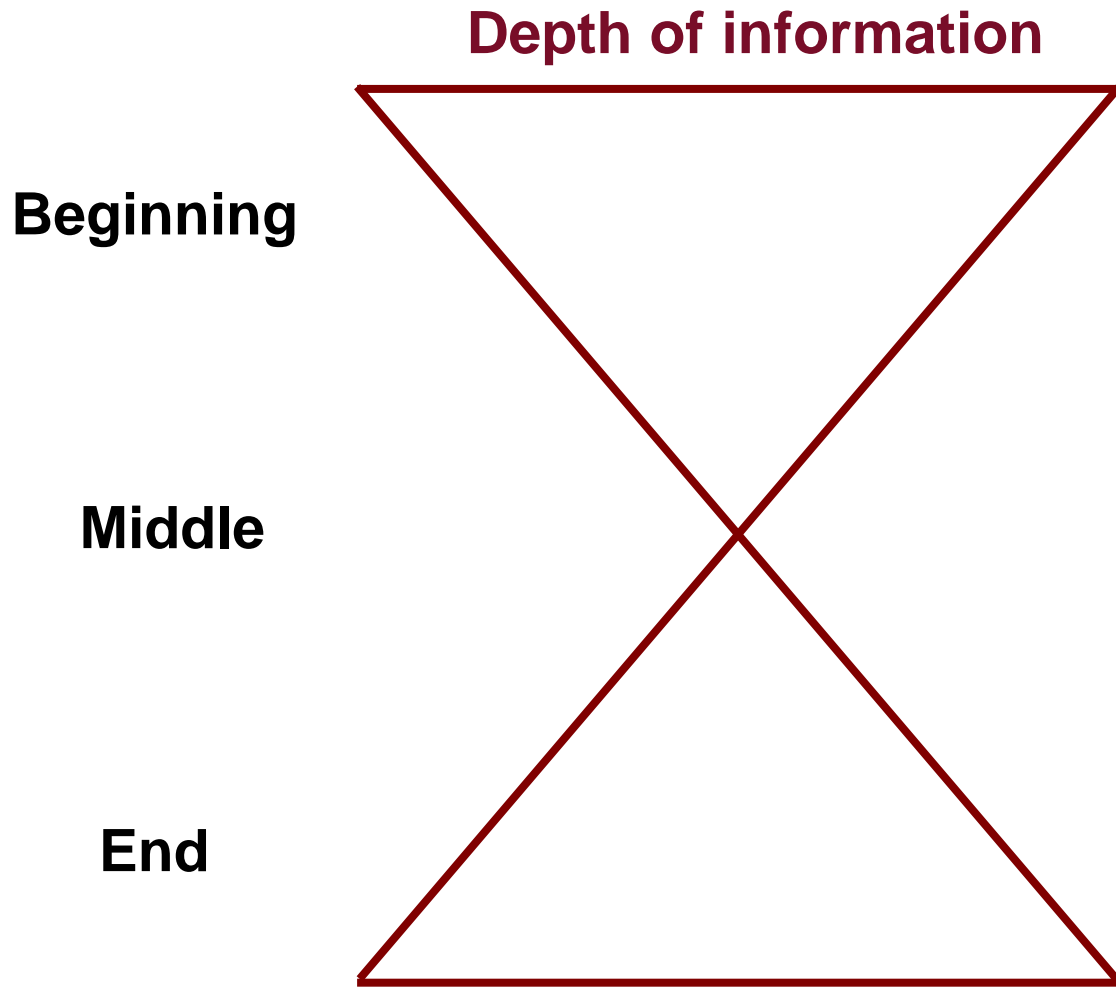


Factors in Creating an Effective Pitch

- ***Knowing your audience***
- ***Telling an interesting story***
- Defining take home message(s)
- Staying within a reasonable time limit
 - Its always better to have a conversation than to give a presentation...



Science stories have a unique structure





Elements for a successful delivery

- ***Practice is the key***
 - Close to audience type as possible
- **Tell a story**
 - You're not just sharing data, you want to make them care
- **Relax, breath and slow your pace**
- **Establish a steady audio level**
- **Use language appropriate for the audience**
 - Avoid shorthand, acronyms, jargon
- **Be engaging and personable**
 - Make eye contact
- **Be enthusiastic about you science!**



Things to consider

- No one speech fits all circumstances
 - You will need to think beyond your project!

- Know what you want them to know
 - Have three main things you want them to know about you and your work after you conversation
 - Not all three need to be in your elevator pitch, but its great if you can.

- Have a purpose
 - You need an ending that leads to what you want.



Example – Generic/Research

- Hi, I'm Phil Ryan. I am a postdoc at the National Institutes of Health working on identifying possible biomarkers and therapeutic targets in triple negative breast cancers. We utilize a number of genomic and proteomic tools to identify genes of interest and then utilize a cell based assay to validate the screenings. Eventually, we would like to partner with NCATS to further study the viability of these genes as biomarkers or targets for drugs. What do you do?



Practice – Generic/Research

- Take two minutes to think through what you will say
- Pair up and practice – One minute each person.



Example – Directed/Research

“Hi Dr. X. My name is Phil Ryan and I am a graduate student at the National Cancer Institute working with Dr. Y on the structure-function relationship of a RING-finger Ubiquitin ligase. I have followed your work over the years and your recent paper on E2-E3 binding dynamics really aided in my current project. I will be looking for a postdoc position in about a year and I would love the opportunity to speak with you about joining your lab. I feel that my experience with both protein expression and purification as well as my expertise in running in vitro assays would be a real benefit to your lab.



Practice – Directed/Research

- Take two minutes to think through what you will say
- Pair up and practice – One minute each person.



Example – Directed/Professional

“Hi Dr. X. My name is Phil Ryan and I am serve on a committee that organizes a series of talks given by scientists in different careers. Your current position as Senior Editor at Super Journal is such a fascinating combination of science and journalism. I was hoping that we could arrange for you to come speak at our seminar so you could share your experiences and your advice to our fellows. The seminar is a one hour time slot, that traditionally has a 30 minute talk followed up by a roundtable discussion. Would you be interested in speaking?”



Practice – Directed/Professional

- Take two minutes to think through what you will say
- Pair up and practice – One minute each person.



Key Points

■ ***Know your audience***

- ***What is their level of understanding, their field, their interest, etc.***

■ ***Tell a story***

- Your data is PART of a story. WHY do you do what you do and WHY does it matter?

■ **Define take home message(s)**

- What are the three things you want them to remember?

■ **Stay within a reasonable time limit**

- Its always better to have a conversation than to give a presentation...



More resources at www.training.nih.gov

- Watch previous OITE career workshops, including many on CVs, resumes and cover letters
- Connect with me on Linked-In and join the NIH Intramural Science Linked-In group
- Read the OITE Careers blog
- Join the OITE NIH Training Alumni database if you are/were a student or fellow here
- Email me at ryanp@mail.nih.gov



Preparing for the Three-minute talk

- Tell them what you want them to know
- Give them one data slide
- Wrap it up/Discussion

<https://science.nichd.nih.gov/confluence/display/new+letter/2014/03/04/Three-Minute-Talks+Workshop%3A+Part+I>



Tell what you want them to know

- Diagrams/Pictures are your friend
- What problem are you trying to solve



One data slide

- What data best represents the problem you are solving
- Slide should be clean and not too wordy
- Only show them data that adds to the story, nothing else



Wrap it up

- What is your conclusion
- Give them context (how does this add to the field)



TmT talks for postdocs here at NIH

- Senta: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9xGjYs0-l4o>
- Shurjo: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WalhQGqBihw>