Developing Your Personal Story Elevator Message Using the 27-9-3 Rule

Created by some Vermont lawmakers years ago, the 27-9-3 rule requires you to make your persuasive point in no more than 27 words within a time frame no longer than nine seconds with no more than three points discussed. These limitations help us focus on understanding how to connect to our listener and be compelling in a short amount of time. This message is not the place to share your whole story – just enough to hook the listener in wanting to hear more.

Before crafting your message, consider and answer the 4 questions below.

1. Who is the audience for this particular message?

2. What do you want your audience to think or understand as a result of hearing your story?

3. How do you want them to feel about what you have said?

4. What do you want your listener to do after they hear your message?

Write your 27-9-3 message on the reverse side. Practice saying it out loud to someone and invite their feedback. Your statement may sound very different than it reads and most of our messages will be spoken, so we want to make sure that our message rolls off our tongue easily; is not full of jargon; and that it actually sounds like something you would say out loud to another human being in person or leave on a voicemail! Revise your statement based on the feedback you receive. Remember the goal is to capture attention and curiosity!

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