

# Guide to a Good Life: How to make a pitch in an elevator

By Eric Lam

Imagine you're in an elevator and your boss gets on. You've got a killer idea, but how do you pitch it without coming off as a creepy stalker? Business etiquette expert Linda Allan has a few ideas:

**Lay of the land** There will probably be other people in the elevator so watch your positioning. Jostling for attention is not cool. "I was once in an elevator with Jean Monty [former Chief Executive Officer with Bell Canada], and I was watching all the employees posturing and I was thinking, 'He must get this all the time,' " Ms. Allan said.

**The pitch** Flattery is fake and obvious. When you introduce yourself, try to sound sincere. "Instead of, 'Here's a great idea I had,' try to link it to something the person is interested in," she suggests. Also, keep it short, within two to three sentences. Remember, you're working against the clock and the person's patience.

**Now what?** If the idea doesn't get a reaction, thank them and drop it. "The worst is if people keep pushing," Ms. Allan said.

If you don't finish in time, suggest getting in touch later. Many high-powered executives are uncomfortable giving out their personal business cards, so try to give them an opening to ask for your contact information. If you've piqued their interest, they will want to hear the rest.

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