



Is your elevator pitch taking your business up or down?

by Matt Amato

You feel like a tiger. The suit and smile ooze confidence, setting you apart from the rest in the networking game. Somewhere out there is that contact, the person who after hearing about your business will morph your brainchild into a money spinner.

The chance meeting occurs, but only lasts for 30 seconds, just enough time for a fumbled "hello, how are you; nice weather, my name's..." Then whoosh, it's gone. In just 30 seconds, says small-business consultant **Jeffri Epps**, the target contact could have learned what you do, how you do it and how you can help their lives.

In the business world it's called the "elevator pitch," a rehearsed tool for those impromptu and brief moments which unexpectedly bring people together—like in an elevator.

"It's geared toward a

networking perspective," said Epps, who has 20 years of brand-marketing experience with corporations such as Coca-Cola and WH Smith. "Riding between floors, there's very little time to communicate an idea." Doing so in a clear, confident and succinct way is essential. A little homework is required and, according to Epps, should resolve three elements.

"First, you really need to understand who your target is. It's possible to say your target is women aged 18-40. But, instead if you say it's for moms, that's going to resonate much stronger," she said. "Next, you really need to understand what you do and how your target perceives it. Can they explain it [what you have to offer] in three seconds instead of three minutes? The third element: [clarifying] how your client benefits. It could be that you provide hands-on service or a one-stop shop. What's the client's benefit?"

Epps recommends weaving these essentials into 15-, 30- and

90-second pitches. Keeping a pitch's content flexible is also important. "You often find yourself with a different audience and sub-target groups. I had a client recently whose target was women 18-40 but was addressing a male audience. So instead of saying "women," she referred to "daughters and wives."

Practice is the mother of a good elevator pitch. "That way when you have a short window, you're comfortable with it," said Epps.

Jeffri Epps is the founder of FourEyes, LLC, a company specializing in strategic planning, market research and executive coaching. For more information visit www.foureyesinsight.com or call 404-320-9240.

Seminar on establishing credit for business start-up or expansion scheduled

Ralph Concentine has announced that he will host a seminar for people looking to start or grow a business with a clean line of credit on Saturday, Jan. 7, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Lithonia Hilton Garden Inn Hotel, located next to the Mall at Stonecrest, at 7890 Mall Ring Road.

Concentine, who conducts business seminars across Southeastern U.S., said the seminar is to educate business owners on the two major facts of obtaining business credit.

"Many potential and existing business owners resist the inward calling of business ownership or expansion due to their false understanding that their personal credit files will be checked to open or maintain their financially healthy business. I want to educate people on the truth of the matter," said Concentine.

Attendees will also be taught how to organize and insure their business, how to obtain toll free phone numbers, employee ID and Dun & Bradstreet numbers, as well as how to open business bank accounts without providing personal banking history information or completing credit applications, according to the announcement.

Participants will receive a seminar workbook, links and Web sites. The cost to attend is \$50 per person or \$100 for three people listed under one company. Call (404) 419-6409 for more information or to RSVP.

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RECURRING EVENTS

First Monday Lunch - 1st Monday of the month - 11:30 am - 1:30 pm (except when First Monday falls on a holiday)

Network DeKalb - 1st & 3rd Wednesday of the month - 11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Business After-Hours - 3rd Thursday of the month - 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm

Brown Bag Series - Great Business Council - 1st Thursday of the month - 12:30 pm - 2:00 pm

Human Resource Council - 4th Tuesday of every other month - 8:30 am - 10:00 am

EVENTS

WEEK OF JAN. 5 - JAN. 12, 2006

January 5th - Brown Bag Series - Topic - Privacy in the Workplace: Are You Doing All You Can to Safeguard Your Business? - Maxwell Hotel Building Auditorium - 1300 Commerce Drive, Decatur, GA 30030. Bring your own lunch for this important workshop. 11:30 am - 2:00 pm. There is no cost to attend. RSVP at info@dekaltchamber.org.

January 12th - Government Affairs Council Meeting - Topic: Workforce Housing Ordinance - Location: DeKalb County Office - 1501 Peachtree Lake Avenue, Suite 400, Decatur, GA 30033. 8:30 am - 10:00 am. There is no cost to attend. RSVP at info@dekaltchamber.org.

January 19th - Business After-Hours - Legislative Reception for DeKalb County Officials. Location: DeKalb County Center - Old Courthouse on the Square - 301 East Court Square, Decatur, GA 30030. 7:00 pm. RSVP for this event by calling 404-378-6900 or emailing jeanette@dekaltchamber.org. Chamber Members - \$5.00 / General Members - \$15.00.

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