



Crafting your response to “So, tell me about yourself” (aka “elevator speech” or “30-second pitch”)

“So, tell me about yourself” is one of the most frequent openers at an informational interview, networking event, career fair, and employment interview – and one of the most difficult for most individuals to respond to. Ditto about knowing what to say if you have to introduce yourself first. Just what is the other person expecting?

One thing is certain: The listener isn’t looking for a summary of your entire life or résumé, just the highlights of it. How much you say and what highlights you include depends on your audience, the situation, and where you are in your career development. When you know exactly what you want to do, you should focus primarily on what’s relevant to your goal (this, of course, is what would be expected of you in a job or internship interview); when your goals are still under construction, your response can be broader (not usually good for an employment interview, but may be acceptable for an informational interview). For an employment or informational interview, your response can be 90 seconds to 2 minutes long; at a career fair or networking event it typically needs to be shorter. It can, but doesn’t have to, include:

- what you’re studying and why
- what you’re current career goals are
- one or two significant academic or extracurricular accomplishments from high school (if you’re only one or two years out) or college and/or strengths demonstrated by those accomplishments. Again, relevance of the accomplishments should be considered if you have a specific career goal or goals, but you don’t have to include only them.

Here are a couple of examples that would work at the Job & Internship Fair:

#1 – Student who is unsure of career goals and is at the Fair for information gathering purposes.

“Hello. I’m (your name) and I’m a freshman in the Individual Studies program here at Morrisville. I have many interests and this major gives me a lot of flexibility in the classes I can take. My favorites so far are psychology and sociology, so I’m starting to explore potential career options for those degrees. I’m here today to learn about the type of positions employers such as yours typically have for graduates with those educational backgrounds. I’d also be interested in learning how you decided on your college major and career path.”

#2 - Student who is clear on career goals and has the experience to support them:

“I’m Mychael Mustang and I’m a third-year Business Administration major with a strong interest in marketing. I’ve pursued my interest in several class projects, our recent Business Plan Competition, and as the marketing committee chair for LASO, our Latin American Student Association. Last summer, I interned at YNN in Syracuse and made strong contributions there, and am now exploring jobs that will let me continue building on my experience and skills. Can you tell me more about the Marketing Assistant position you’re offering?”

For assistance in crafting your response, pitch, speech, or whatever you call it, connect with Career Services by calling 315.684.6615 or stopping by 318-319 Crawford Hall.