

## Module 1: What Makes A Good Bison Pitch?

*[GRAPHIC DESCRIPTION: Gallaudet University | Office for Career Success logo, blue and gold colors on white background]*

*[GRAPHIC DESCRIPTION: What makes a Good Bison Pitch? Hosted by the Office for Career Success, in consultation with Gallaudet Innovation and Entrepreneurship Institute. GIEI logo with blue background.]*

*[IMAGE DESCRIPTION: Black bald male with black beard and round eyeglasses, maroon collar shirt and brown jacket; blue background]*

*[GRAPHIC: Astrid Jones, Career Educator, Office for Career Success]*

Welcome to the Office of Career Success!

My name is Astrid Jones and I am one of the Career Educators with OCS. In this module, we present you with “What makes a good Bison pitch?”. Wondering what that means? This is an elevator pitch. You may have seen this phrase pop up in many places.

An ‘elevator pitch’ is a short presentation that sells a specific idea. It could be about you. Or it could be about a product or a service you are trying to sell.

It can happen across any setting. It could be on an elevator, during an interview, during a first date, at a booth with an employer....anywhere!

The audience can also vary. It could be a customer looking to buy a product. It could be a potential employer looking to hire you. It could be an investor deciding whether to invest in your brilliant idea!

The common thread in all of this is what? TIME IS OF ESSENCE! You must convince your audience and get not only their attention but also their full buy-in!

Your language must be clear, concise... and captivating! A great elevator pitch will identify the problem, solution and end with a call to action. It should include:

*[ACCOMPANYING GRAPHIC]*

1. Name
2. Educational Background
3. Professional Experience
4. Important Skills

5. Be Yourself
6. Add Value
7. Avoid: Hobbies/Interests, Cliche Words, Anything Too Personal
8. Practice

If you can deliver a great elevator pitch, you increase your chances of gaining opportunities such as a new job, a new customer, a new investor, a new opportunity!

Let's take a look at this elevator pitch....

*[GRAPHIC; Perfect Elevator Pitch in white fonts and blue background]*

### **[PERFECT ELEVATOR PITCH]**

*[IMAGE DESCRIPTION] Brown male with curly black hair and black beard and in a white collar shirt with slim blue tie and blue jacket walks into a space with brick walls and runs into an Asian male with eyeglasses and black shirt with black jacket. The second male is holding a coffee cup.]*

Hi, you're Tim, right? *[Brown male approaches from right; graphic flashes on screen "Student"]*

Yes, I am. *[Taller male holding coffee cup]*

I had to stop to let you know, I saw a video on LinkedIn explaining about your business and start up experience. It was so fascinating.

Sorry to bother you. My name is Franco. I am a sophomore at Gallaudet University pursuing a degree in Business Administration.

I was really inspired by the story you shared on that video. Your background is amazing. You definitely have a wealth of knowledge.

I would love the opportunity to discuss more deeply about your background in business. Would you mind grabbing lunch together?

Sure! How can I get in contact with you? Here, I'll give you my business card.

Perfect! I'll be in touch. Thanks so much. [Tim] Yes, please do contact me.

It was nice to meet you. You too!

**[NARRATOR ASTRID JONES]**

*[IMAGE DESCRIPTION: Black bald male with black beard and round eyeglasses, maroon collar shirt and brown jacket; blue background]*

What did you think? Did they successfully sell themselves? YES!

Here is a visual to help you think about what goes into a perfect elevator pitch. A foolproof elevator pitch includes:

*[GRAPHIC: Two conversation bubbles]*

Introduce yourself. You want them to know who you are, and how your role relates to their position. For example, if you run into an employer, you are a job applicant. If you encounter a purchasing customer, you are a salesperson.

*[GRAPHIC: A puzzle piece]*

Present the problem. You want to quickly identify the reason you are doing this elevator pitch. Does the employer need somebody to hire?

*[GRAPHIC: A padlock with key]*

Present your solution. You want to explain that you (or your idea) is the solution to the problem!

*[GRAPHIC: A gift box]*

Share your value proposition. Why does your “solution” beat the competition? What makes you stand out from the rest of the solutions? How are you unique?

*[GRAPHIC: A white bullseye with teal dot in center]*

Add a call to action. Wrap up this whole 30-second pitch with the next action you assign the employer. For example, “Here is my business card, you can email me on Monday.” or “Let’s set up a time for

Let’s go back and think about the scene we watched together. We should evaluate each element.

*[GRAPHIC: Two conversation bubbles accompanied by a CHECKED box]*

[YouTube Link](#)

We saw the Gallaudet student (or name) introduce themselves? CHECK!

*[GRAPHIC: A puzzle piece accompanied by a CHECKED box]*

We saw the Gallaudet student (or name) present the challenge? CHECK!

*[GRAPHIC: A padlock and key accompanied by a CHECKED box]*

We saw the Gallaudet student (or name) present the solution? CHECK!

*[GRAPHIC: A gift box accompanied by a CHECKED box]*

We saw the Gallaudet student (or name) present the value proposition? CHECK!

*[GRAPHIC: A bullseye with teal center accompanied by a CHECKED box]*

We saw the Gallaudet student (or name) suggest a call to action? CHECK!

All of these elements must come together to make that perfect Bison pitch! (smile)

*[GRAPHIC: NACE Logo “National Association of Colleges and Employers” with Career Readiness: The NACE Competencies” flashes across blue background]*

One of the benefits of perfecting your Bison pitch is career readiness!

*[GRAPHIC: NACE Logo]*

Our Office for Career Success refers to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) to guide us. NACE - is a non-profit organization with over 14,000 members including colleges, universities and employers. We follow NACE for the latest information and best practices regarding career, employment and professional development for college students. They have eight different career readiness competencies. Through this module, you will see reference to some of these NACE competencies.

We are designing this as part of our office's mission to elevate the career education for all GU students as well as the community. We will include materials to support your learning journey.

Now that we know what goes into a perfect pitch, let's start looking at a few different elevator pitches and see what we can do to improve each one.

*[GRAPHIC: BISON PITCH: TAKE ONE]*

### **PITCH 1A: NOT PREPARED**

*[Image description] White female ("Student" graphic) with glasses and long wavy blonde hair and bright blue tank top approaches a busy-looking and older female ("CEO graphic) with brown hair and eyeglasses arranging items on a table. There are brick walls surrounding the females. A large company sign "Jackson Healthcare" is on the wall behind the CEO.]*

Hi, are you the CEO of the company?

Yes I am.

I love going there! What's the name...Jis something...

No, it's Jackson HealthCare. Here's the name.

Ohhhh, cool. I wouldn't mind joining to get some work experience.

**GU senior:** Hi! Are you the CEO of this company? I love your company so much!

**Amanda:** Yes, I am the CEO of this company.

**GU Senior:** I forgot your company's name. It is called (obviously fumbles spelling), right?

**Amanda:** No, this is xyz.

**GU Senior:** Oh that's right! My bad! Anyway, I really would love to work at your company and gain experience!

**Amanda:** Oh, really? Why don't you tell me about yourself?

**GU Senior:** Uhmm, I'm not sure what I can tell you about myself, hahaha! I guess maybe I am a Gallaudet student, obviously! And I love books! I buy your products all the time! Oh, uhmm...

Oh yes, once my grandfather broke his leg and we got fabulous care from Jackson!

**Amanda** (starts to look at her watch). It is nice to meet you, and your name is....?

**GU Senior:** Silly me! My name is Karina. I guess I will contact you next week?

**Amanda** (looks confused/bored). Sure, but do know I am very busy. Have a great day.

*[IMAGE DESCRIPTION: Black bald male with black beard and round eyeglasses, maroon collar shirt and brown jacket; blue background]*

What did you think of that? I was not impressed. Were you impressed? (shrug shoulders)

What if we could tell that GU senior to go back in time? What would we do differently? How can we help that GU senior prepare better for their elevator pitch?

Did you know that our staff in the Office for Career Success sometimes see students who may not take time to prepare. How do you prepare?

You want to **study who the employer is**. *[GRAPHIC “Study who the employer is”]* You want to know everything about them so that it comes to your mind quickly. A good way to study the employer is to Google them, look at their website, check their social media, become familiar with the history of the business and the products/services they sell. It is also very important to understand their mission as well as their values, and to embody this in your approach.

You also want to know **what your goal is**. *[GRAPHIC “what your goal is”]* This GU senior should have the goal of getting a job. That means they must know how to convince the employer to give them a job! A good way to approach this is to see if they have any positions currently available, and know what type of positions they currently have filled. Do you see yourself in one of those roles? Or can you think of a new way to support their business that they may have not yet recognized! Sometimes even if a position is not available, if you sell yourself well enough then they just may create a position for you!

Let us go back and try that pitch again. This time, the student has spent time **studying the employer** and **set a goal to be hired**.

## **PITCH 1B: PREPARED**

*[Image description] White female (“Student” graphic) with glasses and long wavy blonde hair and bright blue tank covered by a black blazer top approaches a busy-looking and older female (“CEO graphic) with brown hair and eyeglasses arranging items on a table. There are brick walls surrounding the females. A large company sign “Jackson Healthcare” is on the wall behind the CEO.]*

**GU senior:** Good morning, Dr. Jackson. My name is Karina Baker.

**CEO:** Nice to meet you. Welcome!

**GU Senior:** It's great to finally meet you! I watched your webinar last week and felt really moved. Your remarks about accessibility in the health care industry really applied to my senior project. Thank you for that lecture! It's great to finally meet you!

**CEO:** It's great to meet you too. Tell me more about yourself.

**GU Senior:** I've immersed myself in the topic of equality within health care. I grew up seeing my mom go through it and many real life experiences that apply to gender equality. So I decided to intern at Johns Hopkins Hospital last summer. I want to make this my career, hopefully with your organization.

**CEO:** Yes that would be great! Can you contact me?

**GU Senior:** Yes! I have your email. I can send you an electronic copy of my resume. I'll send it now.

**CEO:** Perfect! I will be in touch with you next week.

**GU Senior:** I will also follow up with you if that's alright?

**CEO:** (looks excited). That would be great! It was nice to meet you. Take care!

### **ASTRID JONES: Explaining pitch 1b**

*[IMAGE DESCRIPTION: Black bald male with black beard and round eyeglasses, maroon collar shirt and brown jacket; blue background]*

Wow, don't you think that went much better! Obviously this student spent time researching the business: learning who the owner is, what the business does, and current available opportunities, which allowed them to end by offering a solution that supports the goal of getting hired.

Remember this visual from before? Let's review it one by one.

Yes, name of GU senior introduced themselves! CHECK!

Yes, they identified the problem! xxx was searching for new talent to work with teenage population.

Yes, they presented themselves as the solution!

Yes, they explained why this was a good value proposition! They referred to their experience with teenagers and their unique fields of study and how that would make their employment more valuable.

Yes, they wrapped up their conversation with a call to action! xxx is looking forward to receiving GU senior's resume on Monday!

That was a wonderful elevator pitch! And before we forget, let's remember which NACE competencies would have been emphasized in that elevator pitch.

*[GRAPHIC: NACE Competency: Critical Thinking]*

*[GRAPHIC: NACE Competency: Professionalism]*

- Critical Thinking (“effectively communicate actions and rationale, recognizing the diverse perspectives and lived experiences of stakeholders”)
- Professionalism (“be present and prepared”)

Are we ready to watch another elevator pitch? (smile)

## **PITCH 2A: LACK CONFIDENCE**

*[IMAGE description] White female with short red hair wearing light brown sweatshirt and light blue jeans walks across a stage and turns around to face the student audience.]*

My name is Megan. (looks down or up, not making eye contact) I am running for the Vice President position of this organization, I forgot the full name, lolol. (keeps fiddling with hair or glasses). Pauses long time. Um, I would be good for this position. (repeats) Yeah, I would be good for this position. Moves around uncomfortably. That’s why you should vote for me, alright? Thank you and bye! Goes off stage without looking at audience.

## **NARRATOR ASTRID JONES**

*[IMAGE DESCRIPTION: Black bald male with black beard and round eyeglasses, maroon collar shirt and brown jacket; blue background]*

How did you feel about that speech? How did you think the audience felt? Could they connect with Megan? I could not. I bet you could not either.

What specifically caused the audience to not connect with her? Confidence. She was not making eye contact, looking down; messing with her hair; forgot the name of the organization; and didn’t explain why people should vote for her.

It’s natural to get nervous, and sometimes when presenting in front of a group you may get nervous and not want to make eye contact, or you may start fidgeting. You may be surprised to know that confidence is something you can “pretend to have” - and when you act the role well, you do come off very confident! We will give you some tips on how to pull this off.

Remember, any time you are pitching yourself eye contact is key! Eye contact shows confidence! And eye contact shows that you are engaged in the conversation. Rather than looking down, or messing with your hair/clothes, its best to maintain eye contact and keep refrain from fidgeting. Of course, this does not become effortless overnight. Keep practicing



these skills in a variety of settings (academic and personal life). It will get easier over time.

Sometimes when we get nervous we forget the information we spent time studying! Luckily there are things you can do to help! Try taking notes of important words, phrases, quotes, or questions you want to remember. You could use flashcards, paper, your phone, or a ppt depending on your setting. One specific tip you may want to consider is memorizing two or three top key phrases.

Another way to help you prepare is to practice ahead of time. Try practicing in front of a mirror first or take a video of yourself. Then, when you feel ready, you can ask a friend or family member to help you practice, so you can become comfortable and familiar with what you want to say.

What if we could go back in time and give Megan another chance to do a perfect elevator speech? Now that she's practiced with friends and worked on her confidence - let's see how she does!

## **PITCH 2B: CONFIDENT**

*[IMAGE description] White female with short red hair wearing light brown sweatshirt and light blue jeans walks across a stage and turns around to face the student audience.]*

My name is Megan. (Smiles, makes solid eye contact) I am psyched to be here! This position, Vice President, for this organization is what I hope you will consider voting me for.

My experience and enthusiasm gives you exactly what this organization needs! The past two years, our members have been saying they need someone who is a DOER. That is me and you may remember the very successful events I planned last year. I was the first person ever to bring in 3,000 attendees to that event.

As Vice President, I can help this organization go far and to new places! Raises arms in excitement/victory or shows very confident body language.

Tomorrow, please write my name on your ballot. You will not regret it!

## **ASTRID JONES**

*[IMAGE DESCRIPTION: Black bald male with black beard and round eyeglasses, maroon collar*

*shirt and brown jacket; blue background]*

Wow! That was a huge and amazing difference, right? Could you feel the energy jump off the screen! I could too!

Let's review what that student did well with her elevator speech.

The student did introduce herself.

The student did explain that the audience needed a new Vice President.

She presented herself as the solution.

She added value by explaining how she did a phenomenal job with her event planning the previous year. She suggested that she could give great success to the organization in the role of Vice President.

She called the audience to action by letting them know they should vote for her in tomorrow's ballot.

The student demonstrated:

*[GRAPHIC: NACE Competencies, Communication and Leadership]*

- Communication ("understand the importance of and demonstrate verbal, written, and non-verbal/body language, abilities")
- Leadership ("approach tasks with confidence and positive attitude")

Good job, Megan! Your confidence made all the difference! (smile)

We have been learning a lot about what goes into a good elevator pitch. Let's use what we've learned to analyze another scenario.

### **PITCH 3A: BAD FIT**

*[Image description: Tall white male with eyeglasses and black collared polo shirt and blue jeans stands outside on Gallaudet campus and approaches a shorter Asian female with black and brown hair wearing eyeglasses and a black blazer]*

Student: Hey! Hey! Is that you, Sachiko Flores?

Sachiko: Yes, that is me.

Student: Wow, I am so honored! I finally get to meet a wonderful role model!

Sachiko: That is kind of you. Who are you, can you introduce yourself?

Student: How silly of me! I should have done that! My name is Mandy (replace with any name you want). I know all about CorpsTHAT.

Sachiko: Oh, really? What do you know?

Student: Well, I guess it is something that you set up, for-profit and it is about connecting deaf children to trees... letting them, ummm... find their roots?

Sachiko: That is not exactly it...

Student: I thought it was perfect for me because I love outdoors.

Sachiko: What else do you like about this organization? What can I do for you?

Student: Oh right, right silly of me. I should have known to ask you. Can you give me a job? Sachiko: Uh?

Student: Yes, I already told you I love the outdoors and I know all about your organization! It is the perfect fit, right?

Sachiko: Well, I think you need to learn a little more about CorpsTHAT first...

## **NARRATOR**

*[IMAGE DESCRIPTION: Black bald male with black beard and round eyeglasses, maroon collar shirt and brown jacket; blue background]*

Uh-oh. What happened in this elevator pitch? It went awry for several reasons!

Did Student take the time to study their prospective employer (Sachiko and their CorpTHAT) and their expectations for this available role? No.

CorpTHAT is not a for-profit organization. It is a nonprofit focused on connecting the Deaf community to outdoors through recreation, education and careers. It is reasonable to expect that anyone working at this organization would enjoy the outdoors and care about underserved communities.

In a good elevator pitch, the student would be familiar with the employer and who they are, what they do. You do not want to see a person trying to convince Bill Gates that they are an expert on Macs, for example.

We also see that the student did not follow the basic model of a good elevator pitch. They did not come in with a clear picture of what the captivating pull-in was, or present a problem and solution.

Shall we go back and try to have the student redo this elevator pitch in a way that improves

their chance of getting this meeting with Sachiko?

**PITCH 3B: GOOD FIT**

*[Image description: Tall white male with eyeglasses and black collared polo shirt and blue jeans stands outside on Gallaudet campus and approaches a shorter Asian female with black and brown hair wearing eyeglasses and a black blazer]*

Student: Hey! Hey! Is that you, Sachiko Flores?

Sachiko: Yes, that is me.

Student: Wow, I am so honored! I finally get to meet a wonderful role model!

Sachiko: That is kind of you. Who are you, can you introduce yourself?

Student: My name is XXX, and I am currently a freshman at Gallaudet University. I have been watching your organization, CorpTHAT, for some time. It resonates strongly with me because I grew up outdoors and I came to GU hoping to find ways to start my career in the nonprofit world. The Deaf community thrives, however there continues to be many underserved groups within the Deaf community. That tugs at my heart deeply, and I also believe strongly in all the elements of the earth, and that they are very capable of giving healing nourishment in many ways. CorpTHAT is a wonderful model which connects many values that I hold dear to my heart. I must tell you a bit more about myself. I grew up on a kibbutz, which is a very unique way of life because you co-exist with other families and live off the land. The many lessons I incorporated from that experience could help my future career. That is where I was hoping you could help advise me.

Sachiko: That is so intriguing, and I appreciate how you approached me! What did you have in mind? Student: I am still exploring my major options here at Gallaudet. I want it to be strongly connected with outdoor recreation as well as studying how to start up non-profit organizations, very much like CorpTHAT. You are a tremendous role model for many in the Deaf community, and I would appreciate if we set up a meeting so you can share a bit about how you got here, as well as any thoughts you have about possible areas of studies for me at GU?

Sachiko: Let's plan on this!

**ASTRID JONES**

*[IMAGE DESCRIPTION: Black bald male with black beard and round eyeglasses, maroon collar shirt and brown jacket; blue background]*

Great job, Lee! Here we go back to the elevator pitch template.

Did the student introduce themselves? Yes, they did.

Did the student identify the problem? Yes, they did. They pointed out they are exploring major

choices.

Did the student present the solution? Yes, they did. The student identified Sachiko as a great role model and a possible resource to provide thoughts or suggestions.

Did the student add value? Yes, the student explained their unique experience growing up on a kibbutz and also shared what their values are, which aligns nicely with CorpTHAT. Did they leave with a call to action? Yes, they agreed to set up a meeting.

*[GRAPHIC: NACE Competences with Teamwork and Technology flash across the screen]*

Let's quickly review how this could apply to a couple of different NACE competencies.

- Teamwork: Collaborate with others to achieve common goals.
- Technology: Understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.

### **ASTRID JONES: CLOSING**

*[IMAGE DESCRIPTION: Black bald male with black beard and round eyeglasses, maroon collar shirt and brown jacket; blue background]*

Today, we reviewed what an elevator pitch means. We considered the different elements that go into a successful elevator pitch. We know that this versatile skill can apply to many different situations, not only job interviews but also across all kinds of situations. We also learned that it is important to prepare yourself well. It is important to present confidence. It is important to know and predict your audience and their needs.

The Office for Career Success hopes that you enjoyed watching this module. We appreciate Gallaudet Innovation and Entrepreneur Institute GIEI's support in the content of this module.