



## Selling Yourself in 30 Seconds-without fishnets Print

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Hollywood screenwriters do it. So do packaged goods companies, breweries, and perhaps your competition. They know how to pitch their product in 30 seconds or less-whether in an elevator, during the Superbowl or at a networking function-and leave a lasting impression.

If you think your business is too small for a commercial, think again. If you're promoting yourself in person or over the phone, you're already using one. Here are just a few that could have been overheard at any networking event:

"Hi, I'm Nancy. I'm a financial consultant with over two decades of experience. Let me help you prepare for retirement."

"Shirley here, how ya doin'? The real estate market is my passion and I can help you get the most value possible for your home or condo. I've been recognized seven years in a row for achieving diamond-level sales."

Odds are that you'd recall the quality of the food better than what these people were about after hearing similar introductions from 20 more attendees. But what if you had met Petra.

"Harvesting apples on my family's orchard taught me to know which ones were too green, which ones were ripe for the picking and which ones were rotten to the core. Now I do the same when choosing stocks and commodities for my clients."

Instead of presenting a laundry list of information, this broker created a story that captured the attention of everyone she met-and eventually clients and prospects referred to her as the "pick of the crop."

An engaging 30-second commercial is a necessary business tool and just as important as a business card, email address and plan for success.

Need more than 30 seconds? "If you can't boil it down to 30 seconds, you don't know the essence of what you're selling," says Tsufit of StepintotheSpotlight.com. She's a dynamo who specializes in coaching entrepreneurs to promote and publicize their dream business. Creating an effective (as she refers to it) infomercial is just one of the items she covers in her book Step into the Spotlight, which is due to be released this fall.

“We live in a sound-bite society,” adds Lynne O’Connor of [Advanced Career Coaching](#). As a 15-year veteran in career consulting, her expertise enables her to motivate, guide and inspire clients to break through the barriers that have been limiting their career opportunities. And she’s heard her share of overwhelming introductions. “If you bog people down with details, they won’t know what to remember.”

The goal is to keep your commercial simple, which, in this world of multitasking and being everything to everyone, is far from easy.

The power of three “Corporations pay advertising agencies millions of dollars to create a single ad,” says Tsufit, whose name means butterfly in Hebrew. “So you should really spend more than 30 seconds creating your own.” In her work she coaches business owners to write and perform dazzling infomercials for networking functions and to add sparkle to their longer presentations.

When it comes to creating your commercial, both O’Connor and Tsufit agree that memorable ones convey three elements:

- . a problem or need
- . a solution to that problem or need
- . the product name

Filtering down all that your business does into a problem and solution can be challenging, but it’s essential for getting noticed. This may be a step where you need to obtain help from a friend, a coach or even a client. Ask them to describe what you do, and be prepared for the answer. It may not be what you’re expecting- and might be what your current intro is missing.

Once you’ve chosen your elements, you need to channel your inner advertiser and use them to create a captivating story. One that hits home with your clients and paints a picture in their minds of why you’re the person they need to call.

### Tips on being heard

Before you start to put it all together, take everything you’ve learned about communicating in a corporate environment and toss it out the window. “Don’t be a victim of professionalitis, that’s using big words that really don’t mean anything, because people tune that out,” advises Tsufit.

Find the colour in what you do in order to distinguish it from a business world that deals mostly in black and white. Use metaphors, visuals and words that speak to a benefit people can connect with- as that’s what will bring anything you say to life.

Tsufit and [O’Connor](#), though working independently, provided the same guidelines for creating an effective commercial:

- . [Speak in visuals; don’t use words that you can’t see](#)
- . [Talk to people in payoff/impact terms, not task-oriented administrivia \(give them the “so what?” of what it is that you do\)](#)
- . [Work backwards: talk through your commercial and then write it down, as most people do not write and speak the same way](#)
- . [Leave the list for the groceries and remember your three elements](#)

. Don't rehearse it to death; if it's memorized instead of improvised, it will lose its spark

Most important, expect trial and error as you craft your words with care. But not using any commercial at all as you wait for perfection isn't recommended. "You have to try them on to see if they fit, just like items you want to add to a wardrobe," Tsufit laughs.

Leaving this tool sitting in your proverbial business toolkit means missed opportunities and little chance of generating buzz. O'Connor puts it this way: "When a commercial connects with people, they get it, remember it and pass it on. Without your 30-second speech, you do not have grassroots marketing, and you do not have word-of-mouth working for you."

### Your commercial wardrobe

Taking the same commercial from the boardroom to a luncheon and then a backyard barbecue is about as appropriate as wearing the same floor-length gown while you're saying it. As Tsufit mentioned earlier, having a commercial wardrobe at your disposal helps you focus on different facets of your business—such as prospecting or promoting an upcoming event—while still conveying your core message. Think of your core message as your signature item, like a favourite necklace or scarf that accessorizes whichever outfit you're wearing at the time.

It's also about conveying a message that's appropriate for your needs. "If you want to earn \$50K, \$75K, name your salary or price," says O'Connor, "and your next connection depended upon your 30-second commercial, is it a fifty-thousand-dollar sound bite?"

Whether you dress them up or down, consider your words as the outfit you wear to present yourself in the best possible light—even if you have a penchant for fishnets. In closing, Tsufit adds this simple advice: "Forget long-term relationships; the right commercial will connect you with potential clients immediately."

How's that for inspiration? Now do yourself a favour and get that commercial to air as soon as possible.

For more information on Lynne O'Connor, visit [www.advancedcareercoaching.com](http://www.advancedcareercoaching.com).

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<http://www.womencandoanything.com/content/view/149/71/1/1/>