Tennessee Leadership Training Institute

“Tell Your Story”
Objective 1:
Define the purpose of a 30-second pitch, and discuss steps to create your own story.
First Impression= WOW Factor

- The people we remember are the ones who wow us from the very first word that leave their mouths.

- They’re the type who usually ask more questions than they answer, and they’re usually the type who, upon answering our first question, will provide such an engaging answer that we’ll have trouble not asking anything else.
Tell Me About Yourself

Easy, right?...**WRONG**!

- While not technically a difficult question, failing to take the time to craft your career story is a wasted opportunity.

- Even if you have a great résumé, it’s critical to think about how you bring this to life — particularly as more job opportunities come through referrals, conversations and social media.
Why are they asking me this?
What do they want to learn from this question?

- This is probably the most important answer you will give during your interview because it’s usually the first question, and people make judgements on first impressions.

- Some interviewers ask this question to see how you will react in an unstructured or relaxed environment.
The concept goes like this: you step into an elevator with a stranger you’ve been making small talk with while waiting in the lobby, push the 20th floor button and the stranger asks ‘what do you do?’

So what do you do? You’ve got 20-30 seconds to get it right. Most of us will say something vague, opting for modesty instead of telling it how it is.

Do we realize, though, that when we take this option we’re blowing a wonderful opportunity to confidently introduce ourselves and what our unique skills are, all in the space of a 30 second elevator ride?
The concept of the *elevator pitch* aims to briefly convey and deliver relevant information to all sorts of audiences, but its aim is also to have the listener want to know more.

It recognizes that we don’t always have a lot of time to sell ourselves, or an idea, but recognizes too that the delivery of such information can spark additional *interest* and *engagement*.

It can come in useful in a myriad of ways;

- You might be hopping into the elevator with the CEO before a meeting where you’ll be pitching a new idea;
- You could have a chance meeting with a prospective employer in a social setting where you’ve got the chance to sell your skills for a new job; or,
- You could simply be making small talk with a stranger at a party and want to make a good impression.
Questions to Ask Yourself as you Plan Your Story

- Who are you, what do you stand for, and can you clearly explain this?

- Do you have unique attributes or skill sets, and can you articulate them in a compelling manner?

- What value do you bring to the organization that the other candidates don’t?

- Can you demonstrate this value through telling a brief story?
Tips For Creating Your Story
Be Concise.

- Don’t tell your whole life story, or even the highlights. Instead, tell 1-3 things you want to emphasize about you and your ambitions.

- Instead of overwhelming listeners with your whole story, only include the parts of your story that are relevant to the specific situation.
Decide what kind of work you’re looking for

- What are YOU interested in? What kind of work do you want?

- Before you can write a story that will help you reach your goals, you need to know what those goals are. Once you know what you want, it’s easier to portray yourself in a way that makes sense.

- For example, if you really want to be a web designer, you should emphasize the web design work you already do rather than spending a lot of time on the dead-end job you want to ditch.
Figure out who you’re talking to

- In the same way you should cater your story to the specific situation, you should do as much as you can to craft your story based on the person you’re talking to.

- Your story is only valuable if the person you’re talking to understands it.

- **For example:** Don’t throw a ton of developer acronyms at someone outside the tech industry, and on the same token, don’t over-explain Facebook marketing to a social media marketing pro.
Ask yourself what problem you solve rather than what you “DO”

- So, instead of saying you’re a customer service specialist, say that you communicate with customers and keep them happy throughout their experience with your brand.

- Or, instead of saying you’re a copywriter, say that you help entrepreneurs and businesses create content that converts users into customers.
Real-World Examples

1. When You’re Multi-Passionate - Michael’s Story
2. When You Have a Break in Your Career or Stay-at-home Parent - Heather’s Story
3. When You’re Making a Career Change - John’s Story
4. When You’ve Never Had a “Career-Level” Job - Melinda’s Story
Share & Discuss Your Real-World Example
Objective 2:
Utilize the SkillsUSA Framework to develop your “Story”.
Frame Your Story with the SkillsUSA Framework

The SkillsUSA Framework actualizes how students fulfill the mission of the organization “to empower members to become world-class workers, leaders and responsible American citizens.”

PERSONAL SKILLS
- Integrity
- Work Ethic
- Professionalism
- Responsibility
- Adaptability/Flexibility
- Self-Motivation

TECHNICAL SKILLS
- Computer and Technology Literacy
- Job-Specific Skills
- Safety and Health
- Service Orientation
- Professional Development

WORKPLACE SKILLS
- Communication
- Decision Making
- Teamwork
- Multicultural Sensitivity and Awareness
- Planning, Organizing and Management
- Leadership

Frame Your Story with the SkillsUSA Framework
Personal Skills
Essential values, personality traits and personal characteristics for success in life

- Integrity
- Work Ethic
- Professionalism
- Responsibility
- Adaptability/Flexibility
- Self-Motivation

Which of these words MOST describe you?

How can you weave them into your STORY?
Workplace Skills

Essential attitudes and abilities for success in the workplace

• Communication
• Decision Making
• Teamwork
• Multicultural Sensitivity and Awareness
• Planning, Organizing and Management
• Leadership

Which of these words SUM UP your skill set?
How can you weave them into your STORY?
Technical Skills

Essential knowledge and competencies for success on the job

• Computer and Technical Literacy
• Job-Specific Skills
• Safety and Health
• Service Orientation
• Professional Development

What certifications or specific skills do you possess?

What is your goal for your future position/experience?
Meet Sean

I’m a welder who prides myself on my work ethic and self-motivation. I excel in my ability to communicate, problem-solve, and lead others. I am AWS certified and I am looking to connect with a team that values my skill set and supports continued professional development.
Meet Dawn

I am a responsible and organized professional who excels in my ability to communicate, foster teamwork, and lead others.

I use my experiences to navigate assorted operational systems, provide feedback in the development of educational resources, and ensure the team is fully supported.

My goal is to join an organization that appreciates my varied skill set, and encourages personal and professional growth.
Tell Your Story Planning Guide

Who are you?

What adjectives describe you?

What are your specific skills?

What unique value do you have that others may not?

What is your goal/purpose or what opportunity are you seeking?
Putting It All Together

- Combine your responses to the five questions, to create a 30-second or less story that you could give when asked “Tell Me About Yourself” or “What Do You Do?”

- Utilize the SkillsUSA Framework as a guide to address Personal, Workplace, and Technical Skills.
Practice Makes Perfect

Share your STORY with 3 people, and get their FEEDBACK!
Continual Refinement

- As you prepare for your future interviews (ex. SOAR Award, Internships, Job), continue practicing telling your STORY to your instructors, friends, family, even your personal mirror 😊

- The more you practice and refine, the more comfortable you will be when asked “Tell Me About Yourself”, or “Why are You the Best Person for the Job”?

- As you continue to gain skills in your education and career experiences, remember to refine your story to include those new pieces that make you unique from the other candidates!
Takeaways & Share Outs

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