

you know everybody!

**A CAREER GIRL'S GUIDE TO
BUILDING A NETWORK THAT WORKS**

MARCY TWETE

MILL CITY PRESS

Copyright © 2013 by Marcy Twete.

Mill City Press, Inc.

212 3rd Avenue North, Suite 290

Minneapolis, MN 55401

612.455.2294

www.millcitypublishing.com

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

ISBN-13: 978-1-62652-189-6

LCCN: 2013908655

Cover Design by Megh Knappenberger

Printed in the United States of America



*This book is dedicated to Melanie Griffith,
Diane Keaton, and Dolly Parton. Thank you for showing
a little girl in North Dakota how to dream in big business.*

Table of Contents

Praise / ix

Introduction / xvii

Chapter 1 / 1

Pitching: Inside and Outside the Elevator

She Knows Everybody! with Robin Fisher Roffer, Big Fish Marketing

Chapter 2 / 31

Powerful Requests: Making “The Ask”

She Knows Everybody! with Cindy McLaughlin, Style for Hire

Chapter 3 / 57

The Who! Getting the Right People on Your Side

She Knows Everybody! with Mary Blegen, U.S. Bank

Chapter 4 / 89

You’re the Brand: Creating a Personal Marketing Plan

She Knows Everybody! with Julie Cottineau, BrandTwist

Chapter 5 / 119

Getting Your Foot in the Door

She Knows Everybody! with Aleen Bayard, MarketZing

Chapter 6 / 151

Nail the Meeting Without Wheeling and Dealing

She Knows Everybody! with Linda Descano, Citi Group

Chapter 7 / 193

Cocktails and Connections: Networking with Strategic Events
She Knows Everybody! with Archelle Georgiou, Georgiou Consulting

Chapter 8 / 221

“I Was Just Talking About You” –
Putting Your Name in the Wind
She Knows Everybody! with Dawn Jackson Blatner,
Author of *The Flexitarian Diet*

Chapter 9 / 245

New Networking Strategies for Innovative Thinkers
She Knows Everybody! with Elizabeth Ruske, Tiara Coaching

Chapter 10 / 275

The Fine Art of Following Up
She Knows Everybody! with Angela Elbert, Neal,
Gerber & Eisenberg, LLP

Epilogue / 305

Acknowledgements / 309

About the Author / 313

Introduction

My “*You Know Everybody!*” A-Ha Moment

It was October of 2009 when the idea for *You Know Everybody!* first came to me. I had been dating a man named Charlie for just a few weeks (he would eventually become my husband). We realized quickly we shared a number of commonalities—a love of music and theater, a dedication to our families, but namely, and most instrumental in the development of our relationship, a deep love of great food. It was that foodie sensibility that brought us on a crisp October evening to Minneapolis’ newest hot spot, Bar La Grassa. After opening just days before, a friend of a friend made some calls and got me a 7:00 p.m. seating, which thoroughly impressed my new not-quite boyfriend.

As the host escorted us to our table in the back corner of the bustling dining room, I scanned the faces of those around me. I smiled, nodded, waved here and there, and, upon sitting down, immediately turned to Charlie and said, “This place is like a who’s who of Minneapolis/St. Paul.” He laughed uncomfortably and asked, “How do you know?” For the next few minutes, I covertly drew my date’s attention to the man across the room to the left in the blue suit. That’s the CEO of one of the Twin Cities’ largest companies. Next, the group of girlfriends dressed to the nines—all members of families with what you’d call “old money” in Minnesota. Next to them, the family of one of the restaurant’s partners. And at the bar, hoping for a table, was one of the city’s

best event planners, sipping a martini with a *Star Tribune* editor and a fashion designer who was rumored to be cast on *Project Runway*. Those people weren't just faces to me. They were my friends, my colleagues, all of whom I could call in a moment's notice if I needed something.

After I gave Charlie the skinny on at least half the room, he turned to me and said the words that would shape the course of my life and, ultimately, inspire this book. He said, "Wow, Marcy. **You Know Everybody!**" He was right. As much as anyone possibly could, knowing that no one can truly know *everybody*, I had amassed a network in Minneapolis/St. Paul that included everyone from corporate CEOs to chefs, artists, actors, and those you might call socialites.

It surprised me at first to realize how strong my network had become. Like most women in their 20s, I was just trying to get ahead in my field. I wondered, had this *You Know Everybody!* Network been created accidentally or intentionally?

I didn't know that night, or in the months to come, that my networking abilities would soon be tested beyond any measure I could imagine. I had no idea that the appearance of the *You Know Everybody!* idea in my life would actually be an invitation to the universe to throw down the gauntlet: Less than a year later, Charlie and I would pick up our furniture and our cat and move to the Windy City of Chicago.

Fast forward to December 9, 2010. Around noon, I walked into the Union League Club in downtown Chicago, looked around the room, and experienced one of the most terrifying moments of my life. I scanned the faces of the 200 women gathered for the Professional Women's Club of Chicago luncheon, and my feelings were the exact opposite of those at Bar La Grassa the year before. Not a soul in the room was familiar to me. I knew nobody. Despite the fact that I would eventually look back on this PWCC luncheon as a success, that evening I sobbed

to Charlie. I asked him how would I ever make friends, how would I ever build the kind of network in Chicago I had in Minneapolis? “How,” I asked, “am I ever going to get through this?”

I won’t lie to you—there were many more evenings like that one. Evenings when I sobbed and shook and wondered how I would ever get through such a huge transition in my life. There were days filled with unanswered questions about which job to take and which to turn down, which events to go to and which ones seemed more like singles mixers than networking opportunities. But as I’ll show you step by step in the rest of this book, I embarked on a process to create the same kind of network in Chicago that I had in Minneapolis. And between the tears and the fear, I had to believe if I did it once, I could do it again.

Fast-forward again to November 16, 2011. That evening, I walked into a room filled with hundreds of Chicago women at the Step Up Women’s Network annual Stepping Up in the City event. Everything felt eerily familiar and unfamiliar at the same time. I closed my eyes and thought back to that evening in Bar La Grassa and then to that terrifying first luncheon at PWCC, and compared the two. I realized I felt more like the former than the latter. That night, after introducing some of my guests to Step Up members and networking with Board members, knowing I would be joining the Step Up Board in January, I once again felt invincible when it came to my network. And at one moment in the evening, I was standing next to a new friend who turned to me and exclaimed, “Wow, Marcy. *You Know Everybody!*”

I realized then that my network in Minneapolis wasn’t created accidentally and my new network in Chicago hadn’t been, either. When I moved to Chicago, I attacked networking intentionally, and with a clear, well-thought-out plan. In less than a year, I went from knowing nobody to knowing (again, as well as anyone can) everybody.

As moments often do, those three moments connected

to one another and produced what Oprah calls an “a-ha moment.” I knew when I heard those words a second time—*You Know Everybody!*—that I had to write this book. I knew that other women had no doubt experienced exactly what I had that day at PWCC. It was sheer terror, palpable anxiety, and staring out into the unknown asking myself, “Will anyone like me?” I never wanted to feel that feeling again and I don’t want you to feel it, either, which is why this book exists. Just like there’s no easy pill to take to lose 100 pounds, there’s no surefire, quick and easy way to build a network. It takes hard work and dedication, and it takes actual strategic networking. You can’t do it solely by connecting with people on LinkedIn, and you certainly can’t do it sitting on your couch or at your desk all the time.

I’ve created *You Know Everybody!* Networks for myself throughout my career—first in Minneapolis, then in Chicago, and now nationwide as the CEO of Career Girl Network. My mission, and that of my business, is to provide women with clear paths to career success and a large network of women to nurture, mentor, and support their goals. And just like every day on the Career Girl Network website, and through our events and services, this book is about fulfilling that mission. It’s about giving you the network you need to succeed.

I know what you’re thinking. Networking sucks, right? If I had a dime for every time a woman said to me, “I need a bigger network, but I hate networking,” I’d be a millionaire by now. I get it. No one wants to walk into a room full of strangers, drink bad wine, listen to some greasy guy’s pitch about his auto detailing business, and pass out countless business cards in the hope that one of the people you meet will ultimately help you get ahead. Even the best networkers in the world get a little nervous before a big event or an important networking meeting, not because they’re scared to fail, but because they’re scared it’s going to suck.

But even if you’re one of those people who hates

networking, I beg you to stay with me. Because if there's one thing I know for sure, it's that relationships aren't built in the ways we've always been taught to network. You won't bond with your potential new best friend over mini corn dogs passed out by a cheap catering company, and you won't meet your new boss in an icebreaker in which everyone shares their favorite movie. In this book, I'm going to teach you about *real* networking, not the kind we see on television and in movies. I'm going to teach you about *real* relationship building that will not only create your own *You Know Everybody!* moment, but will provide you with friendships, trusted mentors, and the advice of industry leaders you need to get everything you want in your career.

In the next ten chapters, I'll guide you step by step through the process of building a network that works for you. You'll learn how to clarify what you need and what you want, and how to build a wish list that keeps you on track in finding those resources. I'll also teach you how to perfect your pitch, speak honestly about who you are, and learn to make powerful requests of those in your network. In truth, the only thing that got me through that terrifying day at PWCC was my ability to sell myself and adequately articulate what I needed.

From there, we'll cover how to get the right folks on your side, and how to get your foot in what can seem like very heavy doors. Often the biggest challenge in networking, especially for women, that we assume someone "doesn't have time." They have time. You just have to learn how to get them to give it to you. I'll guide you through the art of nailing a meeting with someone you never thought would speak to you, and show you ways to continue relationships beyond first meetings to create mentorships and sponsorships.

Along the way, I'll weave in both my experience and the advice and experience of other powerful women whose networks and reputations are simply the best in the business. From TV

personalities to corporate CEOs, you'll find that you likely have more in common with these women than you think. They face the same struggles in networking, building relationships, and asking for what they want as you do.

I worked for years in nonprofit organizations that support women and girls. And whether I was working with a woman who had just donated \$10,000, or a woman who barely made \$10,000 last year and is trying to put food on the table for her family, I quickly realized we all have the same need to create success in our businesses, careers, and lives. We need information, we need resources, and above all else, we need a network. Women are social, caring creatures. We want to connect with other women. We want to build relationships that are both meaningful and mutually beneficial. And whether you're the softest, most sensitive person in the world or the hard-nosed tell-it-like-it-is diva, you need a network, too.

I've asked myself countless times during the process of writing this book, "Who is *You Know Everybody!* for?" Is it for the early 20s recent college graduate who has only her college friends and professors on her LinkedIn page and desperately needs to build a network? Is it for the successful 30-something woman whose calendar is overflowing with coffee, lunch, and drink meetings? Is it for the established executive who wants to be more strategic with the connections she already has? The answers: Yes, yes, and yes. I'm not so bold as to say that every woman in the world needs this book or will love it. No matter our profession, the level of our career, or the number of connections we have on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter, we all can get better at networking. We can all improve our strategy and add to our inner circles with individuals and ideas that are new, exciting, and beneficial to our already overly ambitious careers. This book was written so that those who don't know how to network can learn, and those who are experts at networking can sharpen. Consider

this both your workbook and your wakeup call. It's time to make the people who surround you just as important as the words on the page of your resume and the reputation you've worked so hard to build. If a tree falls in the forest but no one is there to hear it, does it make a sound? If a woman excels in her career but there's no network there to applaud her success, and no one to follow in her footsteps, is the glass ceiling ever really broken?

There's a reason I called this book *You Know Everybody!* It's not that I want you to add a lot of random connections to your contact list, although you certainly can take that approach. This book is called *You Know Everybody!* because my goal for every woman who reads it is simple: I want you to know everybody you need to in order to be as successful as you want to be. Not all of us will ascend to the C-suite, and not all of us want to. Your own *You Know Everybody!* moment has to come in building the network that works . . . not for everybody, but for you. This is your very own *Career Girl's Guide to Building a Network That Works*, and I know it can guide you and all of the women who read it. I want each of you, after following the steps I'm outlining here and implementing these networking strategies in your life, to have the kind of "a-ha" moment I did when someone turns to you in a crowd and says, "Wow! *You Know Everybody!*" The beauty in that moment isn't in the words being spoken, but in the feeling you'll have inside when you can say, "You bet your ass I do!"

one

Pitching: Inside and Outside the Elevator

*“Hi, my name is (what?)
My name is (who?)
My name is (wukka wukka) Slim Shady”*

—MARSHALL BRUCE MATHERS III

You have a glass of wine in one hand, your purse in the other, and a server shoves a tray in your face and says, “Meatball slider?” Simultaneously, the person you’ve been making small talk with over how much you hate chardonnay says, “Tell me about yourself.” Here it is. This is the time. You’re ready to shine, right? Probably not. Inevitably, you say something like, “Oh, I work in corporate marketing. What do you do?” You’ve just given yourself enough time to wolf down that meatball slider, slam that glass of bad champagne, and hopefully run out the door before ever actually having to introduce yourself properly. This is the plight of most people who attend networking events. Sure, you want to make good connections, but wouldn’t it be easier if you could do it without ever having to talk about yourself?

Introducing yourself properly requires the use of one of business' favorite buzz words—the elevator pitch. At one time or another, you've probably asked yourself, "What the hell is an elevator pitch? Does anyone really talk in elevators? I mostly look at the screen that displays today's temperatures and the president's approval rating." And you're right. Very few people talk to one another in elevators anymore. But here's where the idea of the elevator pitch came from: The average elevator ride is about 60 seconds (some say it's 90 seconds in New York City, but everything's bigger in New York, right?). The idea of an elevator pitch isn't about being uncomfortable in an elevator, though. It's about asking this question: Can you effectively sell yourself or your business in 60 seconds or less?

If you want to be successful as a networker and build your own *You Know Everybody!* Network, you can't do it without knowing exactly how to pitch yourself, your ideas, your business, and your potential to partners, connections, and yes, the woman standing next to you while you eat your meatball slider.

I started this chapter with a quote from a controversial artist from Detroit. His lyrics are often offensive and his influence widely discussed, but if I stopped most of you on the street and asked you, "Who is Marshall Mathers?" it's likely you wouldn't know the answer. But if I said to you, "Hi, my name is (what?) My name is (who?)" you would likely answer back "Slim Shady!" The vision, name, and persona surrounding Slim Shady are what put Eminem, a.k.a. Marshall Mathers III, on the map. It is as good an elevator pitch as any I've ever heard. Why? First, it's memorable. Anyone who has heard "My Name Is" once could repeat it to you months later. Second, it's unique. No one in the world will ever be mistaken for Eminem. With that song, he quickly and undeniably built his calling card, one that continues to follow him years into the future. This is both an incredible example of success in personal branding and a cautionary tale. Successful

because you'll likely remember Eminem decades into the future, but cautionary in the fact that he, as an artist, will never be able to divorce himself from the words "Hi, my name is."

Take another cue from Eminem and ask yourself this: Do you remember the cover of *The Slim Shady LP*? Can you recall the sequences of the music video for "My Name Is"? Did the song go gold? Or platinum? You likely don't know the answer to any of these questions. Because these questions aren't about Eminem and the elevator pitch that catapulted his personal brand into worldwide recognition: The album art was created by a graphic designer employed by his record company; the music video played on MTV and VH1 and you watched it in the background every now and again; and it's the music business that hands out those gold and platinum records. What you remember is the song's "hook." Because Eminem sold it to you. The record company didn't. The graphic designer didn't. Eminem did—in a way that only he could. And just like Eminem, your boss can't sell you, your spouse can't sell you, your company can't sell you. You are the best and the only sales person for you.

You are the only person who can develop and propagate your brand, and it is your responsibility to distribute your name and your brand in order to build your own *You Know Everybody!* Network. Your personal elevator pitch is the beginning.

Inevitably, there are still a few naysayers at this point in the process. Some of you are ready to put down this book thinking, "I don't need an elevator pitch. Isn't it enough to say 'I'm a lawyer'?" No, it's not. Though you might think an elevator pitch exists only for networking events, that's not its only use.

Imagine you're interviewing for a new job. You shake the hand of the hiring manager, sit down across the table, and the interviewer usually says something like, "Tell me about yourself." Trust me, the interviewer is not asking for your life story. This question is not about where you live, whether or not

you're married, or the complete rundown of every job you've ever had. Skilled hiring managers tell me that the most common answer to this question is a two- or three-minute response that essentially guides the hiring manager through the candidate's resume. Somehow in this moment, interviewees forget that the person sitting across from them has already read their resume. What they want to know, and what they're really asking for, is relevant information that isn't in the resume. Saying "Tell me about yourself" is actually asking for your elevator pitch.

Still not convinced? Try this. You're meeting a new client or important stakeholder in your company. This person knows what you do for the company, is connected to you on LinkedIn and likely knows a tiny bit about your background, and has spoken to you via phone regularly. During your first in-person meeting, you might hear something like, "We don't know each other very well. Tell me a little more about you." The same principle applies as above. This is a clear ask for your elevator pitch. All of these individuals want to hear an engaging but succinct description of who you are and why they should be interested.

So, whether you're meeting a potential boss, new client, or just a stranger you're hoping to impress at a networking event, the elevator pitch is crucial to making a great first impression. It shows that you know how to sell yourself and you're comfortable talking about both your background and your future. Hopefully you're still with me at this point and agree: Girl, you need an elevator pitch. Don't worry. I'm going to guide you straight through the process of creating one. So let's get it done!

To craft an elevator pitch, you must first be aware of its intentions. Sixty seconds of mumbo jumbo about your background and your goals does not make an elevator pitch. Clarifying your intentions will help you create a pitch that not only sells you but helps people to remember you, much like you remember Eminem. The tricky thing about intentions,

though, is you usually don't have just one. What does that mean? Unfortunately, you can't create a one-size-fits-all elevator pitch to use in every scenario in your life. If your intention is to look for, find, and land a new job, your elevator pitch will be tailored to highlight why you'd be a great investment to a potential employer. If you simply want to network to get ahead in your company or build your skill set, you'll need to be sure your elevator pitch is skill-based and points towards strong leadership development. If you're searching for a mentor, looking for new friends, or searching for that special someone, your elevator pitch will be different for every scenario you're in.

To clarify your intentions around your elevator pitch, you'll need to set some goals. Normally, I hate visioning exercises. However, one of the regular writers on Career Girl Network, Rebecca Niziol, pushes me outside my comfort zone regularly by asking me to close my eyes and envision something about the future. And just like she pushes me, I'm going to push you right now. Take a few minutes to think about where you see yourself in a year. Sit up straight, put your feet on the ground or crossed in a comfortable position, close your eyes, and create a vision. What would your life look like one year from now if everything you dreamed of creating in this year – every person you wanted to connect with, every moment you wanted to savor – happened in the blink of an eye? What would that day or that moment feel like to you? Do you look different? Are you in a different city? Are you in a different job? Really take the time to create your vision, look around within it, and note as many details as you can about your surroundings.

After you open your eyes and come back to reality, think back to your vision. In the left side of the chart below, list all of the specific things in your vision that were different from the way things are today. This might be a change in job, city, your looks, your attitude, or your spouse. If it was different in your vision, list it in the following chart:

First, note what was different.	Then, set the intention.
<i>Example: I'm living in a different city, specifically Washington, DC.</i>	<i>Example: In the next year, I will accept a position in and move permanently to Washington, DC.</i>

For the purpose of this exercise, try to keep the number of differences you're noticing to four or five. This will help you to clarify your goals and set the intentions that accompany the elevator pitches you're crafting.

Now that you've noted the differences in your vision, you have to set intentions around those differences. Take the example above. In your vision, if you're standing on the National Mall, wearing a suit and talking on the phone to an aide in a Senator's office about votes and commitments, chances are you need to move to Washington, DC. More importantly, you need to set a deadline and a plan for doing it. Therefore, your intention is clear if you declare, "In the next year, I will accept a position in and move permanently to Washington, DC." That's a clear intention if I ever heard one. While your elevator pitch may not necessarily include that exact intention in every case, it will always have your intentions incorporated into its meaning and goals. Next to your noted differences in the chart in the above, write out your clear intentions to accompany each difference you noted in your vision.

For a moment, now, let's set aside your intentions and focus on the reality of what you hear when you hear an elevator pitch. If you've recently attended a networking event or met someone new, you've heard versions of elevator pitches that are both good and bad, long and short. There's a guy trying to sell you his social media services, a woman looking for a job in technology, and many other individuals you've met and listened to as they describe themselves and their goals. And whether you know it or not, the questions going through your mind during their elevator pitches are the same questions going through the minds of the people to whom you're pitching. They're thinking:

- What's interesting about this person?
- Do I like her?
- Do I want to know more about her?
- Is she someone I could add to my network?
- If so, how? Will we be friends? Would I like to add her on LinkedIn?
- Whom could I introduce her to?
- Whom could she introduce me to?
- Will this person make me money in the future?

The list goes on and on, and the moral of the story is this: No one is really listening to you. They're hearing the words you're saying while simultaneously evaluating which category to put you in – someone I want to know, someone I like, someone I just want to stop talking to, or someone I don't like. Your job in that 60-second pitch is simple: Show that person what's interesting and likable about you, and why you'd be a valuable person to add to her network and to potentially help get ahead.

To combat the questions your listener is silently asking, you first have to be willing to ask yourself the hard questions as you develop your elevator pitch. Let's tackle them one by one.

- 1. Who are you?** Sure, this statement will include your name. It might even include your job. But it's much more than just the standard first name and company most people give when they introduce themselves. It's the opportunity to break the ice with the most important key messages of your personal brand, and it gives the listener a reason to keep listening. Who you are isn't just about where you work. It's about what you love, what you're passionate about, and the things that make you whole. Sure, your job is an important part of that equation, but it's not the only part. Examine the following examples:

Example A: *"Hi, I'm Sue. I'm an attorney."*

Example B: *"Great to meet you. I'm Sue. I'm a patent attorney with my own practice. I love my job, but my real passion is fulfilled in my volunteer work mentoring young women who are interested in science and math, just like me."*

It's easy to imagine the follow-up questions you'd ask Sue in Example B. You might wonder which organization she mentors with, what kinds of clients she has in her independent practice, or what made her interested in math and science growing up. She's given you the opportunity for a built-in conversation right off the bat.

In the space below, go ahead and answer that question: Who are you?

2. **What do you want? –or– Where are you going?** If you are 100% ecstatic about everything going on in your life right now, from your relationships to your work, from your weight to your bank account, you should congratulate yourself: You are the only person in the world who is. We all have something we want to change about their lives, and everyone is on a path to growth, new opportunities, and, hopefully, success. To reach that success, you have to know your path: What do you want? Or, if it's more suitable and easier for you to answer, where are you going? Consider again our attorney friend, Sue. Here are two examples of how she might answer this question:

Example A: *“I have my own practice, but I hope to join a large firm at some point.”*

Example B: *“Being a solo practitioner, I’m missing connections with colleagues and the opportunity to be a mentor to young attorneys. So, I’m actively pursuing opportunities to lend my skills to a larger law firm, preferably on the East Coast.”*

If you heard Sue say the words in Example A, you’d no doubt be left hanging. She’s making no commitment here of when she wants to join a firm, you have no idea why she is interested in firm life, and it may even give you the impression that she’s been unsuccessful as a solo practitioner. In Example B, you hear more about what Sue really is passionate about, and how her next move could make her a better lawyer and mentor.

In the space below, go ahead and answer the question that best applies here: What do you want? –or– Where are you going?

- 3. What skills are you using to get you there?** Once you've decided where you're going and what you want, the next step is to define your skill set. If you're a financial planner hoping to make the jump into nonprofit management, naturally the person you're speaking to is going to wonder what transferable skills you're going to use to get ahead in a brand new field. When you take Sue's example above, the skill set she wants to highlight may be more about culture than anything else. Consider these examples:

Example A: *"I'm good at working with people, so I'm sure I'll fit in fine in a firm."*

Example B: *"I started my career and spent a decade in a large firm before venturing out on my own. I'm so glad to have had the experience of managing my own company and client docket, and I know it will make me a huge asset to a firm."*

If you heard Sue talk through the three questions she's answered in Example B thus far, you'd probably think this woman has a good head on her shoulders, knows where she's going and why, and has a clear path to success. That's what this process can do for you, as well.

In the space below, answer the third question: What skills do you have that will get you to your goals?

4. What makes you uniquely qualified to achieve your goals?

You might think this question is similar to the last question, asking about your skills. It isn't. What makes you uniquely qualified is a very different question than what skills you bring to the table. Your unique qualification is the articulation of the answer to the question "Why you?" Why are you special? Why do you matter? Why would I hire you over someone who brings the exact same experience or qualification? If we were living in a Quentin Tarantino film, the answer to this question would be the "kill shot." Let's keep going with our friend Sue, the patent attorney, and answer this question with two examples below:

Example A: *"I'm hardworking and business savvy. I learn fast and have passion for what I do."*

Example B: *"I'm a great patent attorney because I truly love the science of patents. I have a relentless passion for the medical device industry. It's because I love this arena and understand it so well that I can relate to my clients—both those in lab coats and in business suits. I know that kind of mix is exactly what big firms need to guarantee their success."*

News flash, Career Girls: Everyone says “I’m hardworking” when asked why she should get hired. Everyone thinks she’s hardworking and savvy. Everyone thinks she’s the fastest learner and the best employee. But what puts you head and shoulders above your competition is what you bring to the business or relationship that no one else can. Sue is telling you in Example B that she’s the female version of Bill Nye the Science Guy. She loves science and people, and she’s going to dig her teeth in. That, combined with her ability to talk to the suits, means she’s a perfect candidate for the job she wants.

What is your unique value proposition? What makes you uniquely qualified to achieve your dreams? Answer that question in the space below:

The questions you just answered are tough. They make you really think about who you are and what you want, and they deeply question you about whether or not you have the mettle to get there. And once you’ve answered the four questions above, you have the first draft of what will be your overarching elevator pitch. The work doesn’t end here, but let’s go ahead and put it all together for Sue and see what her first draft elevator pitch really looks like.

Sue's Elevator Pitch

I'm Sue. I'm a patent attorney with my own practice. I love my job, but my real passion is fulfilled in my volunteer work mentoring young women who are interested in science and math, just like me. Being a solo practitioner, I'm missing connections with colleagues and the opportunity to be a mentor to young attorneys. So, I'm actively pursuing opportunities to lend my skills to a larger law firm, preferably on the East Coast.

I started my career and spent a decade in a large firm before venturing out on my own. I'm so glad to have had the experience of managing my own company and client docket, and I know it will make me a huge asset to a firm. I'm a great patent attorney because I truly love the science of patents. I have a relentless passion for the medical device industry. It's because I love this arena and understand it so well that I can relate to my clients—both those in lab coats and in business suits. I know that kind of mix is exactly what big firms need to guarantee their success.

Now that you've seen Sue's elevator pitch in full, take some time to put together all of your answers in sequence:

Your Elevator Pitch: The Whole SheBang

Who are you?

What do you want?

Your skills:

Your unique proposition:

If you read Sue's pitch out loud and time it, you'll find it takes about 60 seconds to read. Break out your timer on your phone and read out loud your full elevator pitch as you've written it above. If you're over 60 seconds, comb through it and look for places to cut time. A few places to start:

- Are you repeating yourself anywhere in the pitch?
- Is each thought succinct? Is it taking you more than one sentence to convey one concept?
- Will the information you're sharing help the person you're speaking with get to know you better?

Cut the elevator pitch above as much as you can until you get to 60 seconds. Then, rehearse it a few times. Become familiar with it. Make it as easy to roll off your tongue as it is to state your name and where you work. There's a reason you must become intimately engaged with your elevator pitch. It's not because I want you to memorize it and spout it everywhere you go – it's the opposite, actually. It's because I want you to be able to repeat it in countless ways and countless variations. You see, once you've developed and mastered your main elevator pitch, your work isn't done. Having a single elevator pitch just isn't enough. You're not going to give your "I'm looking for a job" elevator pitch to someone in your company. And you're not going to

give your “I’m a great catch. Please marry me.” elevator pitch at a professional networking event. Instead, you’ll need to tailor your pitch—and ultimately, your intentions—to each audience to get the best chance of success in all facets of your life.

When I told colleagues and friends I was writing a book about networking (a business book, if you will), I heard one universal request from them: no sports analogies. As women, we all know it’s commonplace in business to hear about moving the ball down the field and scoring the winning goal, with everything from teamwork to huddles to slaps on the ass as congratulations. And frankly, we’re all sick of it. But I hope in illustrating my point here, you’ll allow me one small sports analogy and an appropriately girly one at that.

They’re referred to as “America’s Sweethearts,” and every year hundreds of young women flock to Dallas to audition to become one of the lucky few who will call themselves Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders (DCC). And while, as a professional businesswoman, you might not see where you can relate to a Dallas Cowboys Cheerleader, you might be surprised. On the 2012-2013 DCC squad, you’ll find financial analysts, nurses, paralegals, and other women you’ll certainly be able to identify with—even if you can’t see yourself in white booty shorts and cowboy boots.

But it’s not the DCCs’ outfits I want you to think about. It’s the thinking-on-their-feet skills they develop throughout their training and practice on the field. Just like the players on the field, when game time comes, the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders don’t rest a moment. They dance during pre-game prep, on the sidelines during the game, at halftime, and more. In any given game, a member of the DCC will combine hundreds of dance elements, 10-15 full routines, game cheers, formations, and much more to appear flawless and prepared in front of an audience of 80,000 in Cowboy Stadium and millions on television. But

here comes the most impressive part: They don't know which elements and dance routines are coming. Somewhere far above the field, the music man in the booth decides which songs to play and when to play them. Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders are trained to recognize one of hundreds of musical elements in a split second and immediately begin the corresponding choreography to accompany that music, which could be any number of the 100 or more dances and combinations they regularly perform.

The same split-second decision-making applies to you and your elevator pitch. When a member of the DCC hears that music, their brains must know the choreography so well that they can simply rely on muscle memory to guide their way. You, too, have to know your elevator pitch so well that when you realize someone is a prospective boss, potential network connection, possible friend, or potential spouse, you'll be able to immediately tailor your pitch to meet the needs of the conversation. It's a thinking-on-your-feet, muscle memory challenge that you can only face if you know the answers to the questions listed above inside out, upside down, backwards, forwards, and sideways.

The changes you'll make to your pitch to accommodate different audiences won't always be drastic, and from day to day, no one but you will notice the nuances you're adding to sell yourself to the right people at the right times. Let's look at a few specific instances when you may want to adjust your elevator pitch to specifically meet the needs of the listener:

- 1. Meeting a potential employer before you apply for a job.** It happens all the time. You're at a networking event or hanging out with a friend and meet someone who says, "I'm hiring for (exactly the kind of job you're looking for)." At that moment, maybe you've introduced yourself, talked about the weather, etc., and upon hearing they're looking for someone just like you, you're ready to give them your pitch.

But you certainly can't start the pitch with "Hi, I'm Sue." You have to jump to the meat of your pitch. For a potential employer, you want to focus heavily on your background and what you're looking for in the future. Talk openly about transferable skills and the positions you've held. This is where your unique value proposition comes in handy.

2. Responding to "Tell me about yourself" at a job interview. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, some version of "Tell me about yourself" is usually the first request made in any interview. And while the interviewer is definitely asking about your elevator pitch, you may want to use a slightly different format here than you would when introducing yourself to someone you've never met. When preparing your interview pitch, recognize that the person you're speaking to has likely reviewed your cover letter and resume, and may have found you on LinkedIn, Twitter, and other social media channels. For this reason, continue to start your pitch with the answer to "Who you are?" then move to your unique value proposition. Think about adding a few sentences to answer two new questions:

- Why are you passionate about the work you'll be doing in this position specifically?
- What drew you to this company or industry?

Again, you'll want to be sure to keep this answer to 60 seconds or less. Rehearse it with your friends or family before the interview, recite it in the shower the morning of, and practice in the car on your way there. It's often the way you'll kick off the interview, and it's your first opportunity to convey both preparedness and excitement effectively.

3. Interacting with a person you might want to add to your social circle. Whether you know it or not, an enormous part of networking is making friends. As adults, many of us carry with us friends from childhood or college and often find it difficult to expand beyond these groups and create new social circles. But if you've ever moved to a new city or away from your core group of friends, you'll know how imperative it is to develop a skill set that addresses this issue. We'll talk more about innovative networking that focuses on building friendships in Chapter 9, but for now, let's tailor your elevator pitch to meet the needs of someone you'd love to add to your Happy Hour list. Here's the order of importance with the friendship pitch:

- Start the conversation with "Who are you?"
- Next, rather than tell where you're going, insert some information that answers the question, "What do you like to do?" You want to find commonality quickly, whether it's your love of yoga or penchant for the White Sox. Drop in some information about your fun passions.
- Finally, mention a specific example of something you've done recently that aligns with what you like to do. Perhaps you went to a fantastic yoga workshop last weekend or a concert last month. Engage in conversation about whether or not the person you're talking to has done something similar.

4. Meeting someone you might want to pursue a romantic relationship with. By no mean is *You Know Everybody!* a book about dating. But in a way, networking and dating are one and the same. You attend events, you connect online, you engage in small talk, and ultimately you decide whether a relationship will work or not, and on what level.

The trick here is to treat this kind of pitch the exact same way you would the pitch above for friendship. Don't ask about past relationships, engage in awkward political discussions, or be "that girl" who asks about marriage and kids in the first five minutes. Instead, look at the encounter as an opportunity to find a potential friend or networking connection, and you may discover a more romantic connection in time.

5. Talking to someone who may become a client or a potential business partner. If you're an entrepreneur or responsible for generating sales or business in your job, you'll naturally run into opportunities where you'll need to pitch your own services or the services of your company quickly after meeting someone. This scenario calls for only a slight tweak in your original elevator pitch in the form of Question 2. Rather than talking about "where you're going," you want to answer this question tactfully, with grace and ease: "What are you selling?" From there, you continue on with your skill set and unique value proposition and voilà, you've pitched your services without breaking a sweat.

Now that we've walked through a few of the most common scenarios in which you might use your elevator pitch, I want you to go back to the beginning of this chapter. Recall the visioning exercise you completed and the intentions you set for yourself in the next year. Does your elevator pitch as it exists now address these intentions? If it does, great. You've done your job and you're ready to get pitching, ladies. If it doesn't, take some time here to go back through those four questions and ask them again, keeping in mind your intentions for the next year. Think of them when you talk to potential employers, connections, and friends. Give them the opportunity to help you fulfill these goals and even become mentors on your journey, because the power of building

a network isn't in the elevator speech or the 60 seconds it takes to properly introduce yourself with it. The power of networking is in what happens after the elevator speech is over, which is exactly what we're going to talk about in the rest of *You Know Everybody!*

As we perfect your elevator pitch and move on to other key parts of the networking and relationship building process, I want to give you an image to pair with your elevator pitch—one that you'll take with you as you become accustomed to naturally introducing yourself and selling your unique proposition: Richard Gere in the movie *Pretty Woman*. It sounds strange, but stay with me here and you'll have a great reminder to take with you to every event from here on out.

Near the beginning of Vivian's relationship with Edward in the movie, she asks him, "What do you do, Edward? 'Cause I know you're not a lawyer." He answers, "I buy companies." She responds, "What do you do with the companies after you buy them?" His answer is critical in the elevator pitch process. He says, "I sell them. I don't sell the whole company; I break it up into pieces and then I sell that off. It's worth more than the whole."

Your elevator speech is exactly like the companies Richard Gere buys in *Pretty Woman*. On its own, in its 60-second packaged deal, it's whole, and you can bet it's incredibly valuable because you are incredibly valuable. But sometimes, when broken up into tiny pieces, it can become even more valuable. At times your elevator pitch will not be a 60-second speech. It will become a conversation: In one moment, you talk about your skills and ask about the skills of the person talking with you. In the next, you help each other understand and better convey your unique value propositions.

I told you early in this chapter that your elevator pitch is the beginning. You are the only person who can develop and propagate your brand, and you have the responsibility to distribute your name and your brand in order to build your own

You Know Everybody! Network. So from now on, every time you walk into a networking event, introduce yourself to a stranger at a party, or meet a new client or prospective employer, you should stand at the ready with your elevator pitch at your side. Know, without a doubt, that you're comfortable with it, confident in your ability to sell it, and are ready to use it either in its entirety or broken up into smaller valuable pieces, Richard Gere-style.

She Knows Everybody! Narrative: Chapter 1

Pitching: Inside and Outside the Elevator

Robin Fisher Roffer

Find Robin Online

Website and Blog: www.BigFishMarketing.com

Twitter: [@RobinRoffer](https://twitter.com/@RobinRoffer)

Facebook: facebook.com/RobinFisherRoffer

LinkedIn: linkedin.com/pub/robin-fisher-roffer/0/176/633

YouTube: youtube.com/user/robinfisheroffer

Here's the thing about women. We always use the word "know." Someone says, "Do you know Jenny Davis?" You respond, "Oh, sure, I know Jenny Davis. She works at Accenture!" Some of the time, you might really know Jenny Davis. Some of the time, the truth is you "know of" Jenny Davis, but you don't really *know* her. You know what, though? That's OK! Because in that moment you say you "know" someone, what you're really saying is you'd like to know that person. This is the beginning of the story of how I came to know (for real, though) Robin Fisher Roffer. In 2010, about to embark on a new life in Chicago, my husband and I took a week off between his job in Minneapolis and his new job in Chicago and went to Mexico, where we indulged in a week of beach reading and little else. In that week of beach reading, I read Robin's book *Make a Name for Yourself: Eight Steps Every Woman Needs to Create a Personal Brand Strategy for Success*. The book changed my life, and in many ways it began this journey of finding out what I really wanted (to start my own business) and my true goals (to write this book) in the journey.

For the next two years, I often told people about this “woman I know” Robin Fisher Roffer. I told everybody about her book. I even found myself saying, “You need to meet Robin Fisher Roffer. You need to read her book. She’s fabulous.” I followed her on Twitter and Facebook and slowly began to think I “knew” this woman. I didn’t. Until writing my own book brought me to interview her and finally be able to say I really do know her.

I tell this story of knowing and not knowing Robin, because it speaks volumes to the hallmark of a great brand. Having an incredible personal brand and phenomenal personal pitch means that it doesn’t work only when you’re telling it to someone face to face. It works in social media, it works in print, and it works on the phone. That’s why I thought I knew Robin so well. Because with everything she did, online and off, she allowed me to get to know her through her brand.

I’m Google! Robin Fisher Roffer’s Exercise That Will Change Your Life, Too

With experience building brand strategy for companies, Robin knew how to build a powerful and unforgettable brand. She knew how to craft an incredible marketing and sales strategy. At the time she wrote *Make a Name for Yourself*, it was a revolutionary idea that branding could extend beyond companies to individuals. She asked herself, “Could people flourish in the same way these companies did with real brand strategy behind them?” She started the process by testing the idea in her own life. When Robin began to portray her highest self, staying “on mission” and working every day to achieve her true purpose, she found the evolution of who she really is within her brand.

In her book, Robin takes women through a branding exercise where you first identify a company you are fiercely loyal

to (for me, on that beach in Mexico, it was Google) and list a number of that company's branding traits. Who are they, what do they do, and how do they do it? Robin's theory (it worked for me and countless others) is that the company you choose is likely one that also embodies your own brand traits. When you cross out the company's name and input your own, you might find the list rings true. As I sat on a beach in Mexico reading "innovative, fast moving, ever changing, forward thinking," I turned to my husband and said, "I'M GOOGLE!"

Robin says that by articulating your brand purpose by using a company as an example, you're beginning to answer clearly who you are, why you are here, what you do, and how you do it. This exercise forces you to consciously choose the traits you want to include in your brand. To be able to say you made that choice, and thought strategically about the way you're branding, marketing, and pitching yourself? Powerful.

Robin told me about this kind of "I'm Google" exercise, "Women are very logical. They understand, this is how corporate brands do it, and you can, too."

The Answer to "What Do You Do" Isn't "I'm a Lawyer"

I told you in Chapter 1 that the words "What do you do?" don't always mean what you think they do. Sometimes they're a time filler and other times they're truly asking for your pitch. No matter what the question means, the answer should never be "I'm a lawyer" or "I'm a CPA" or "I work for General Mills." Robin Fisher Roffer and I agreed when she said, "Women have a difficult time crisply and clearly articulating who they are and what they do in a way that speaks volumes about their personal values." Did you catch that? What Robin said there is the essence of what a pitch should be – something that speaks volumes about

your personal values. It's not about your job or your paycheck or your employer. It's about you and your values, and ultimately, Robin says, it's about your mission.

When someone asks, "What do you do?," don't tell them the name of your company and your title. When we talked about this, Robin said to me, "It's BORING!" I asked Robin what she says when someone asks her that question, and this was her response: "I inspire professionals to achieve their highest potential." Wow, right? If you were standing across from Robin and you heard her say that sentence, how would you react? You'd probably say, "How do you do that?" There, Robin might tell you about her consulting, her business, her clients, and more. She told me, "Put your mission first. When you do, you give the other person the chance to continue the conversation, and it allows you to continue to tell your 'greatest superhero story.'" Robin told me her own superhero story, and I want to tell it to you. She grew up learning business from her father, a single dad who taught her to write headlines and good design in the advertising business. She watched him win business and she learned how to close a deal. Robin told me about the many times she's told that story of her father in networking settings and, suddenly, rather than chomping a slider, the person across from her has heard, seen, and known who she is. The power of your story, and how you've come to be where you are, is much more powerful than the name of your company or your title.

Robin told me, "When you say your company name, you've branded yourself Quaker or Wonder Bread. But who are you after that? Now you're nobody because you never created a value for yourself. A corporation doesn't have arms and legs and a heart to hold you! What a terrible thing to hitch your brand to!"

So go ahead, Career Girls, stop saying "I work for..." or "I'm a..." What is your mission? What makes you tick? In Chapter 1, I gave you the example of our attorney friend, Sue. She led,

not with being an attorney, but with her passion for mentoring young women. When she gives her pitch, her audience will hear her passion. She has passion, and so do you. Lead with that and you'll never go wrong.

Robin said, "Your mission has to come first. Tell a great story about you that shows your true character. The 'what' comes last."

Finding Your "Moves Like Jagger"

As I perused Robin's website before our conversation, I noticed that in one section of it, she tells her potential clients she'll help them get "moves like Jagger." Something about it completely stood out to me, and it inspired me to ask Robin about an important part of the pitch process you all might need to hear – confidence! How can you get those moves in your own brand and in your pitch?

- **Get a coach, a mentor, or a guide.** When Robin wanted to up her game in the realm of public speaking, she found a body language coach, a voice coach, and a presentation coach, and enrolled in a 10-week class at UCLA about giving great presentations. When you really want to perfect something, you also need to look for the best coaches to help you. They don't always have to be people you pay—they can be people who are in your network already and will lend their expertise to your cause. Partnerships build confidence.
- **Do an "essence exercise."** This idea from Robin was revolutionary for me. An essence exercise is simple. Robin says, "Call ten people who know you well. Ask them this very simple question: 'When I walk into a

room, what shows up?’ Ask them to stay positive. Then, write down all of those adjectives and circle 3-5 of them that will get you into your Jagger (or J-Lo if that works better for you) state of mind.” Of course, I asked Robin for her “essence words” and I was inspired by them, as well. What is Robin’s essence? Power. Possibilities. Enthusiasm. Grace. Sparkle. Imagine how powerful Robin Fisher Roffer can be when she shows up at every event, every meeting, every encounter, and thinks “sparkle!”

The “Best of the Best” in Networking Advice

I ended each of the interviews completed for You Know Everybody! by asking each woman to provide to this book’s readers her best networking tips and advice. Here are Robin’s tips and tricks.

- **Dress beautifully!** Robin wants you to know that 65% of all communication is visual. Dressing the part you play is very important. If you don’t do this, then the moment you tell people your mission and your “what,” there will be an instant disconnect. Robin recommends wearing something that women can visually connect to. Women love to say, “I love those....” So go ahead, wear that great pair of shoes or an interesting pin, belt, or earrings. These can become what Robin calls “descriptor pieces.” If you’re creative, wear clothes that are creative. If you’re a vice president in a major corporation, you’re going to wear pieces that are more serious and that’s OK. Then, add those signature pieces that can give insights into who you really are.
- **Be intentional about your networking choices.** When attending an event, go in knowing who’s in the room

already (don't worry, we'll cover this in more detail in Chapter 7) and who you want to connect with. Go ahead and send them LinkedIn messages prior. Take the time to prescreen and find places you can connect strategically with the perfect people – at conferences, research the panelists. Find out where they went to school, the title of their latest books, etc. This kind of prescreening will allow you to have meaningful things to say when you meet them.

- **Follow up. Right away!** Don't be afraid to say something like, "I was the perky blonde in the red jacket." Jog people's memory with your key traits so you'll be memorable in your follow-up. If you loved a speaker at an event and follow up with her, say something to compliment her performance but do it in a very specific way. Never show up generic or you'll be what Robin says is "L.E.E.: Like Everyone Else!"
- **Be unforgettable.** Show up in your highest self every time. You have to be caring and excited, ready to show others respect. How would you want to be approached? Approach people that way. You don't want to be someone beating her chest, but you also don't want to be the shrinking violet. Your networking persona, the person who does your pitch, has to be you. If you're perky or funny or self-deprecating, then be those things all the time!

About the Author



Marcy Twete is the Founder and CEO of Career Girl Network, an initiative that began in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 2007 with the blog “Minneapolis Career Girl” and later in Chicago, Illinois with the “Chicago Career Girl” blog. After building blog readership in Minneapolis and Chicago, Career Girl Network went national, as Marcy left the comforts of a full-time paid position to pursue her dream of connecting women nationally and internationally and providing resources to women who want to excel in their careers.

Marcy spent her childhood and adolescence in rural North Dakota, the granddaughter of farmers, and daughter to parents who instilled a strong work ethic and dedication to excellence at a young age. She worked her way through high school and college, waiting tables, taking tickets, making coffee, and completing multiple internships during her time at the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph, Minnesota. Always the “Career Girl,” Ms. Twete graduated college in 3.5 years, eager to jump into the working world, quickly landing in the political realm in Washington, DC and later Minneapolis, Minnesota. Later, armed with a dedication to public service and the female electorate, she took the skills harnessed in politics and moved

to the nonprofit sector, working as Events and Sponsorships Manager for the women's economic development agency, WomenVenture in St. Paul, Minnesota. There, she executed one of the largest women's conferences in the country and developed more strongly her deep passion for helping women to succeed in business and in life.

Following her work at WomenVenture, Marcy held a leadership position at Pillsbury United Communities in Minneapolis and consulted full-time at Grenzebach Glier and Associates in Chicago, further harnessing her direct marketing and fundraising skills in organizations large and small. At both PUC and GG+A, Marcy steered her work towards programs and clients whose focus was women and girls. In 2011, Marcy became involved in Step Up Women's Network, and in 2012 joined the organization's Chicago Board of Directors, further enhancing her personal mission to inspire positive change for women and girls worldwide. She also serves on the Advisory Board of Girls on the Run, Twin Cities, an organization empowering young women through running and confidence curriculum.

Today, Twete is dedicated as CEO and Founder to the work of Career Girl Network and its mission to provide for women clear paths to career success and a large network of women to nurture, mentor, and support their goals. She is a proud downtowner, living in the Chicago Loop with her husband, Charlie.