

# Creating a Powerful 30-Second Introduction

How to Grab and Keep Your Audience's Attention High

BY MARGIE FISHER

**H**ow many times have you had to stand up in front of a business group and introduce yourself? For most of you, the answer is probably, many. Yet there are probably very few, if any, times that you have felt sure that what you're saying is providing your audience with the right information. And being sure about what you're saying is important, since word of mouth is the most important part of your public relations efforts.

That's why it's critical to have a strong **30-second introduction**. The purpose of the introduction is not to make a sale — it's to get people interested in talking with you further. Thirty seconds is about how long most people have during a business meeting to introduce themselves. And it's about the most amount of time that people are willing to listen.

Here is the structure for a powerful 30-second introduction:

- *The benefits that you or your home-based company offers;*
- *A one or two-line summary of your product/service offerings; and*
- *Your name and company name.*

This model is probably a little different than the one you are currently using. Here are some reasons why it works so well:

## Benefit Statement

Most of you probably won't debate including a Benefit Statement. What you might find difficult is saying the benefit statement first, before your product/service offerings. It seems unnatural, and it is, because most of us are used to standing up in a group and saying our name, company name, and what our company does. But as you know, most people want to know what's in it for them. This immediately grabs their attention and shows that the focus is on them, not you.



With a strong 30-second introduction, you can stand out from the crowd and make a powerful statement about what you and your home-based company can offer clients.

## Product/Service Offerings

The key here is to not go overboard with the description. Remember, the goal of the 30-second introduction is not to make a sale — it's to get people interested enough to want to talk to you further. And the people listening will likely be hearing many introductions, so they don't want to be inundated with too many details.

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## Your Name and Company Name

Wondering why you say your name and company name at the end of the introduction instead of the beginning? There are two simple reasons. The first reason is that most people won't remember your name if you say it at the beginning — and they are more interested in what the benefit to them is. If you grab them with the benefit in the beginning, they are more likely to listen to and remember your name at the end. The second reason is that your name or your home-based company name may have a negative connotation for a listener —and if you say it up front, the listener may stop listening. But if you say it at the end, the listener has had a chance to hear your benefit statement, and may be more open-minded about you and your home-based business.

## A 30-Second Introduction Example

Here's one version of my 30-second introduction:

"My company helps individuals and businesses increase sales and decrease expenses through cost-effective public relations efforts. We offer hourly, project, and monthly services, both over the phone and in-person. Typical services include public relations plans and releases, speaking engagement bookings, award submissions, charity and sponsorship ideas, workshops, and teleseminars. My name is Margie Fisher, and my company is M. Fisher & Associates, Inc."

## Changing and Refining

You will probably change and refine your 30-second introduction often. You should also modify it depending on the group you are participating in. For instance, at a chamber meeting you may want to have a more general benefit statement and description of products and services; and at an industry meeting you may want to have a more specific benefit statement and product/service description (especially if you have niche products and services that others in your industry don't have, and therefore they might be willing to refer business to you).

By using this type of 30-second introduction, you can stand out from the crowd and make a powerful statement about what you and your home-based company can offer clients. Good luck — and good introductions! HOW

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**"The only real mistake is the one from which we learn nothing."**

— John Powell