Tool 0.2: Sales Kit – CESP Elevator Speech Guidance

Take advantage of opportunities to encourage development of a CESP by having a well-crafted elevator speech. Think about how you would pitch CESP to someone during a 30-second elevator ride. A rehearsed approach will make a big impression in a small amount of time and can be the framework for larger discussions. Remember to state the importance of planning and the value of dedicating already limited time and resources toward your objective. Give examples of benefits experienced by other communities and conclude with one specific to your community. You know your audience best, so consider their challenges and concerns, and the types of messages that have been effective in the past.

Creating Your Speech

The following outline contains components you can use to develop your own elevator speech. Combine and customize components to create a speech that will effectively resonate with your audience.

1. **Start with an Overview**

Community Energy Strategic Planning could really benefit (insert community name) by saving energy and taxpayer dollars, while creating jobs and ensuring that we’re building smart and investing for the future.

1. **Add the Value Propositions (Choose the ones that best support your case.)**
* A Community Energy Strategic Plan, or CESP, is a business plan for reducing energy consumption.
* It is roadmap to meet short- and long-term energy-related goals.
* It will ensure that we have a plan to manage our energy resources and consumption, and will help us better coordinate efforts with businesses, utilities, and our community members.
* We can use the plan to gain valuable insight and buy-in from our stakeholders: industry, businesses, government agencies, community organizations, and residents.
* A clear community-level plan will reduce uncertainty and encourage businesses to invest in energy performance improvements.
* We’ll get help optimizing our energy savings now, and also in creating a plan to continue increasing our energy independence into the future.
* We can measure our progress against the plan and share our successes with our stakeholders.
1. **Provide Examples of How Other Communities Have Benefitted from CESP**
* In Arlington, Virginia, the steps in their plan helped reduce energy use in county operations by 8%, cutting energy costs by more than $450,000 per year.
* In Chicago, Illinois, they formed the Energy Action Network, which leveraged the community-based organizations interested in helping enact a Climate Action Plan to save residents more than $30 million in one year through utility bill assistance, and helped roughly 2,000 homes cut their energy usage by 20%.
* In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the city established a Green Trust Fund that grew to $250,000 with savings from green purchasing of electricity. The fund paid for solar equipment and administration of the city’s electricity aggregation program.
1. **Close with a Benefit or Two Specific to Your Community**
* A CESP will help us encourage economic growth in the green building industry.
* It will help us generate new jobs in our energy efficiency sector.
* A CESP will help in managing the stakeholder process to gain early buy-in from our partners and ensure that the final plan will be implemented with limited pushback.
* The CESP is a good investment of our time because it will save us money and make sure our work is recognized.

Sample Script

Hi, (NAME) , do you have a moment? I’d love to speak with you about how a Community Energy Strategic Plan could really pay off for (ENTITY) , now and in the future. If we develop a CESP, we’ll have a long-term plan for managing our energy resources and reducing consumption. The planning process will help us set goals and coordinate efforts with our key stakeholders—industry, businesses, government agencies, community organizations, and residents. In fact, in Arlington, Virginia, the CESP helped the county cut building energy use by more than 8%, saving $450,000 per year. Launching the planning process will take some time and resources, but it’s an investment that will ensure that we have an action plan to reduce our current energy costs, increase local energy-related jobs, and increase our energy independence.