Networking Sound Bite

When networking, drawing the listener’s attention to your uniqueness and viability as a potential employee is key to your success. A sound bite, infomercial and commercial are all powerful communication tools when introducing yourself to a new contact (a recruiter, human resources professional, a representative at a career fair, or someone in your field of interest). The following describes the slight differences between these scripts and where you can apply them.

**Sound Bite:** An abbreviated introduction of yourself best used when you do not have much time to talk. For instance, a lead-in for a telephone conversation. The sound bite usually consists of your name, degree and university, and the purpose of making the contact.

**Infomercial:** A longer version of the sound bite (20-30 seconds) which can be used in networking situations where you have more time to talk about yourself. This script can be considered a verbal business card which includes the information from your sound bite, followed by why you are at the networking event, what opportunities you are seeking, what experiences you have (work, classroom, volunteering), your major accomplishments to date, and knowledge of their organization.

**Commercial:** An extended infomercial script, describing in more details your background, qualifications and skill set. Most often, this is used in situations where the contact person is giving you their extended and undivided attention. For instance, a lunch meeting, when visiting an organization or in conducting an information interview with a professional in your desired field of work. Preparing a more detailed commercial of yourself requires the ability to answer questions the contact person may pose, depending on the circumstances of your meeting.

**Script Samples**

**Hello.** My name is ______ ______ and I am in my ____ (fourth) year of a ______  _____ (political science) degree, with a minor in ______ at McGill University. I noticed on your website you have openings for ______ and am interested in a position in this capacity. (**sound bite**)  
*continue with:*  
Last summer I had an internship with ______ where I was able to participate in ________. The most interesting project I worked on was ________. I have been following your company’s progress in New York and have read various pieces about it in the New York Times. Could you tell me more about the proposed expansions in Montreal and the new training program you are offering to new employees? (**infomercial**)  
*continue with:*  
I would be very excited to take part in this new training program for I have the skill set ______ you would be looking for and the ______ aspects of the job are a match with my future career goals. I am hoping to progress to a ______ position and eventually take on responsibilities in the area of _______. (**commercial**)  

**Tips**

- No one can be more informative than you in describing your assets, attributes, expertise and the career direction you are looking for. A passionate, confident and practiced presentation is what impresses.
- Successful networking is purposeful so you need to define your goal before preparing your scripts. Is your goal to explore career options or to target a specific company or to gain information about a certain position you are interested in?
- Make yourself stand out by delivering the information in an impressive fashion. Do not look at the ceiling, slouch or put your hands in your pockets. Practice in front of a mirror or with friends to ease your jitters.
- Try to avoid asking for a job directly, monopolizing their time, interrupting or sounding like you are complaining.
- To overcome uncertainty or fear, remember most people are willing to help and many love to talk about themselves and where they work.
- Smile, give a firm handshake and do not forget to say thank you!