Elevator Pitch Alternative: Establish an “And, But, Therefore” Statement

Below is an excerpt from Science Communication Portfolio: A guide to creating communication materials that complement your science by Elisha M. Wood-Charlson and Melissa Varga

The term “ABT” was coined by Randy Olson, a scientist-turned-filmmaker and author on science communication. The ABT statement is designed to transform normal science communication, which tends to be a series of exposition statements linked by a silent “and”, into a story. The ABT statement reduces those “science does this and this and this…” statements into ~2 background sentences, and then introduces a “But” statement. A simple “But” introduces conflict, a sense of tension, and turns your science exposition into a story. The “But” statement is followed by a “Therefore,” which establishes a sense of resolution. An ABT statement is fantastic for those times when you have less than 60 seconds to communicate what you do to someone (e.g., a networking event or the end of a conference presentation).

For Example:

Two "And" Statements
Microbes are the most abundant organisms in the ocean AND they are responsible for the majority of the carbon cycling on the planet.

"But" Statement
BUT the rate of carbon dioxide removal from the atmosphere into the ocean is not well understood.

"Therefore" Statement
THEREFORE, we are following the diurnal cycles of important photosynthetic ocean microbes to understand their impact on this process.