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A GUIDE TO PITCHING

Pitch!



How to pitch perfect?

Let's start by saying that the 'perfect' pitch does not exist. The definition of a good pitch is different for everyone. However, there are some ground rules you can apply to prepare your pitch. This booklet is an introduction to get started after the workshop.

1. Tell a story

A pitch is **your** story about **your** business/project, no one knows it better than you. Make sure that it has the same characteristics as a story. Let us start with structure, always use the basic structure: **introduction – body – conclusion**. It sounds simple, but too many entrepreneurs neglect this ground rule. The most common errors are: dwelling too long on the introduction/mixing it up with the body which makes your story less coherent and giving a lot of new information in the conclusion of the pitch. Never bury your audience with a lot of new information at the end of a presentation, it will confuse them and make your story harder to process. A good conclusion consists merely of repeating the core message and a strong call to action. What do you want the audience to absolutely remember about your pitch? And what do you want them to do afterwards?

Another similarity between a pitch and a story is that you have to **tease** the audience. Think about any fairytale, most of them commence with 'Once upon a time a beautiful (fill in the blanks)...' and then the storyteller teases you by adding a new element. 'But there was an evil (fill in the blanks) who put a curse on (fill in the blanks).' Do the same (not literally) when you pitch in front of an audience to keep them engaged. If your story is all rainbows and butterflies, no one will be immersed in your story. Try adding conflict and show how you anticipated on, or handled this setback. This makes your pitch better and your image as an entrepreneur stronger. We even dare to say 'No conflict, no story'.

If you write your pitch as if you are writing a story, it will automatically be coherent and dynamic.

2. Context

Look at the setting in which you will pitch. Pitching for investors or an academic jury is two worlds apart. The same goes for pitching for different age groups. Thus, it should be approached differently. Try to match your pitch to the type of audience. Always ask yourself: 'What is in it for them?' If you know the individuals upfront, ask them about their expectations.

Looking at different contexts, we can distinguish three main types of pitches:

- ✓ A **recruitment pitch**, to recruit new employees and convince them your company is fun to work for.
- ✓ A **sales pitch**, to convince customers to buy your offerings.
- ✓ An **investor pitch**, to convince people to fund your project.

Here you see clearly that each type of pitch serves a specific goal. This can help you to finetune your message and call to action. Still, every setting is different and you need to be aware to adapt every pitch to your audience, even if it is within the same category. There are a lot of different contexts within the category of a sales pitch, so do not presume that you can use the same slides and explanation each time you have to do a sales pitch.

3. Entrepreneurial passion

Research has shown that entrepreneurs who are more passionate about what they do, pitch better. Now, why is that? When you are more passionate when you speak, the audience can tell because you are perceived as being more confident. So try to make sure that the jury feels the passion in your heart. For some, it comes natural to show this passion, choose them to pitch your business. Otherwise, practice, practice, practice... in front of the mirror and a test audience.

4. Body language

The most difficult thing about pitching is displaying good body language. The language your body sends is something you do unconsciously and therefore harder to train. It can only be done by practicing a lot. Nevertheless it is important that you do train as your body language can influence how people perceive you and your business. Three things to bear in mind are:

- ✓ Have an open posture, no crossed arms or legs, no hands in your pockets, but straighten your back and keep your hands and legs apart.
- ✓ Use hand gestures to support what you are saying. Do this in a subtle way, no need to scare people off.
- ✓ Smile and make eye contact to be more likable.
- ✓ Dress appropriately

BODY LANGUAGE

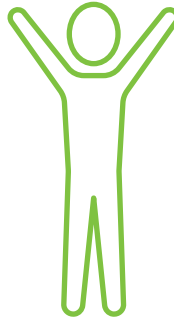
High power pose



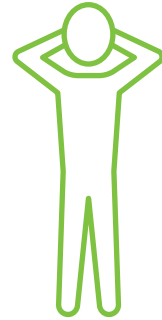
Standing,
wide stance



Hands on hips



Arms raised in a
'V' above the head



Arms crossed
behind the head,
sitting or standing

Low power pose



Hunching



Arms crossed
over the chest



One arm across the
body in a self hug

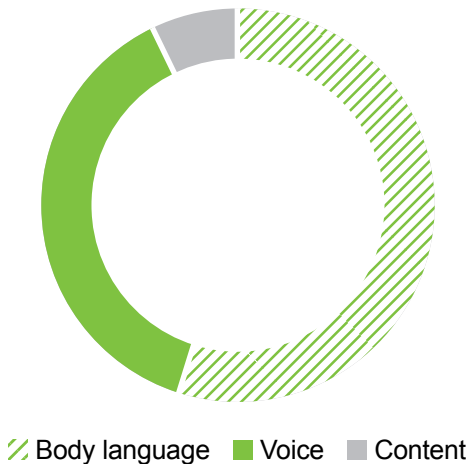


Hands together,
fidgeting

5. Do not say it, display it

If you want to convince people with a pitch, don't forget to display your project. You make a story much more solid if you can show the audience how it works, looks and whether your offering is validated by the market. Too often, entrepreneurs tell a lot and wave numbers without actual proof. Letters of intent, a prototype or an online mockup are ways to show the audience that you have something tangible. Do not hesitate to intertwine them in the slides or bring them with you.

Importance during a pitch (%)



6. The end is but the beginning

Most pitchers see the end of their presentation as the end of the pitch. Well, let me tell you, nothing is less true. Remember that your pitch is not over after the last slide, it is when you finish the Q&A. The way you answer questions and the way you interact with your audience is also part of your pitch and of equal importance as the presentation itself. While preparing your pitch, try to anticipate on the expectations and questions of your audience.

7. Tools

Use as much tools as possible to help you build a visually attractive presentation with the same company identity and tone of voice. Of course there are traditional tools like **PowerPoint**, **Keynote** and **Prezi**. But have you heard of **Ludus**? This presentation tool makes it way more interesting because of its fluid structure. Unlike the traditional PowerPoint, Ludus has building blocks, allowing you to work with a blank canvas instead of fixed slide templates. Moreover, they make it easy to drag and drop almost everything.

Want to make an Instagram-like presentation? Take a look at **Haiku Deck**. This tool makes it impossible to add a lot of text. Perfect for people who need to cut back on text. Last but not least, **Microsoft Sway** is the perfect option for entrepreneurs who like a more minimalist presentation.

Want to add a video? Take a look at **Moovly** and **Vyond**. These programs allow you to make animated video's for free. Want to make a professional looking flyer, poster or banner? Check out **Canva**, it is easy to use and you do not need Photoshop or InDesign experience.

Canva is also perfect for creating infographics, as is **Visme**, which has a large database of images. If you like engagement, consider working with a quiz. **Kahoot** is a tool with a wide range of possibilities and methods. To ask for opinions, **Mentimeter** is another great tool to implement in your slides.

When using these different tools, what matters most is that your lay-out looks neat without becoming too overwhelming. Look for tools that match your company and context. Only add tools with a purpose, not to make your pitch more spectacular. And most of all, bear in mind that less is more.

Now we wish you the best of luck writing your own pitch!

Possible pitchdeck

- Slide 1** Ice breaker/setting the scene
- Slide 2** The problem and your customer
- Slide 3** Solution
- Slide 4** Customer benefits (USP)
- Slide 5** Competition
- Slide 6** Potential and traction
- Slide 7** Financials
- Slide 8** Future
- Slide 9** Team
- Slide 10** **Call to action!**

