

PNV3392 Laboratório de Engenharia Naval 2

Coletânea de textos sobre Project Pitch

Sumário

<i>I.</i>	<i>How to Pitch a Project.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>II.</i>	<i>Pitching Your Project – Seven Tips for Engineers.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>III.</i>	<i>How To Pitch an Idea.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>IV.</i>	<i>How To Pitch Ideas: Q&A.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>V.</i>	<i>How to Effectively Pitch Business Ideas to Investors</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>VI.</i>	<i>12 Easy Steps to a Perfect Pitch</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>VII.</i>	<i>6 "Shark Tank" Lessons for Entrepreneurs</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>VIII.</i>	<i>One Shot: Don't Miss Your Chance to Blow Away Investors</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>IX.</i>	<i>10 Secrets to the Perfect Shark Tank Pitch</i>	<i>30</i>

I. How to Pitch a Project

[Mike Monteiro, Jan 20, 2016](#) · 7 min read

<https://deardesignstudent.com/how-to-pitch-a-project-4a391f7cf3b3>

Q: My partner and I just started our own firm and we're pitching our first big project in a few days. Do you have any tips?

Yes I do. I rock pitches. Everyone who pitches work should think they rock pitches. Otherwise, you're gonna make some weak-ass pitches. And no one wants to sit through those. Including your prospective client.

For those who don't know, a pitch is when you go talk to a prospective client and persuade them to work with you. There are usually several teams pitching the same project. Your first mistake is to believe you're pitching against *them*. You're not. You're pitching *your* ability to do the project right.

Also, I've promised never to lie to you so I'll tell you this: pitching work is nerve-wracking. It sucks. You'll start out being terrible at it, but with enough practice, you'll get better. Slowly. Like a turtle. You won't even notice it at first. Then one day you'll be in the middle of a pitch and realize you forgot to throw up that morning—progress isn't always pretty.

Pitches can be subjective as hell, too. There are too many variables. Some of which you have no control over. Like what did your client have for breakfast? Are they worried about something else? Is their brother-in-law in trouble again? Do they have a buddy at a competing agency? You can nail a pitch and still lose a job for a crazy-making reason. That said, we've also won jobs because we were the buddy at the competing agency. Or because the client got some good news right before we went in. And I've also walked out of pitches thinking I'd blown it only to get a phone call a few days later finding out we'd been awarded the job. So I figure it's all a wash.

That said, I got some tips to help you out. Does following these tips guarantee you'll get the job? Not by a longshot, but they improve your odds of walking out being able to say "I did everything I possibly could to improve my chances."

Go get 'em, tiger!

It's not about you

It's never about you. No one cares about you. (Except me. I love you dearly.) No one cares how many awards you've gotten. No one cares you won a Webby six years ago. No one cares if you wrote [the book on client services](#). People want to know if you understand and can fix their problems. Remember that these people have probably fought tooth and nail to get the budget for this project. They have a pain point and they're shopping around for the right person to help ease their pain. Show them you're that person.

No one wants an ER doctor who spends an hour showing you examples of their past work.

So tell them who you are. Spend no more than two minutes talking about yourself or your studio in a way that inspires confidence, and make the rest of the conversation about them.

“But Mike, they told us to bring examples of other projects!” That’s right. Because they’re looking for their new website in your portfolio. So go ahead and show them a couple of recent projects but tie them to problems they have. For example “Here’s Acme Novelty. Acme had a workflow issue very similar to the one you described. Here’s how we fixed it for them...” They’ll feel their pain point melting away.

Confidence Is Sexy

As much as pitching may make you uncomfortable, you only have to sit through one. The people on the other side of the table have to sit through a bunch. And it’s laborious. They’ll hear a lot of bad pitches this day. They’ll talk to a lot of nervous people. Have some empathy for what they’re going through as well. Don’t be boring. Be the pitch that doesn’t suck. Be the pitch that makes them think they don’t have to go through any more pitches. Be the pitch that makes them think they’ve found a lifelong partner and never have to go through this process again.

Your confidence is for *their* benefit. And it’s contagious.

Ask good questions

The key to every good pitch meeting is to get the client talking. They’ve waited a long time to get this project started. They’ve probably suffered under their current site for way too long. And this is the moment they’ve been waiting for. And not only do you absolutely need to hear what they have to tell you, they’ll feel great telling you. It’s like the burden is moving from them to you. And once you have it they won’t want it back so they might as well just hire you. So make sure you walk in with a bunch of good questions to ask.

“What kind of site do you want?” is not a good question.

“What impact do you see the new site having on quarterly earnings?” is a good question.

Don’t minimize their problem

Here’s a good story. We once took a red-eye across the country to pitch a project we were really excited about (Pro tip: never pitch after coming off a red eye). We knew going in they had a fairly complex editorial workflow issue. Fixing that was the main goal of the project. So we partnered with someone who was really fantastic at editorial workflows. During the pitch, they described their problem and we shot back that it would be a piece of cake to fix. And honestly, with the talent that we’d assembled it would have been. But we minimized their problem. They felt like they were pushing a ten-ton rock up a hill every day and we made them feel like it wasn’t a big deal. We didn’t get the job.

No matter how easy you might think it is to fix someone’s problem, remember that their pain is real. Acknowledge it. Then fix it.

Don’t bring spec work

This is one of the most stupid and selfish things you can do as a designer. Stupid because you don’t yet understand the problem you’re being asked to solve in any meaningful way. Selfish because the pitch meeting now becomes about this golden turd you just dragged in with you. It’s supposed to be about the client. But instead of having any meaningful discussion about what the client is trying to accomplish we have to discuss something that doesn’t have anything to do with anything. And now you’re being judged on guesswork instead of your problem-solving skills.

“But Mike! People ask for it.”

I've gone to plenty of pitch meetings where the client asked me to bring spec work. And I use it as an opportunity to tell them why I didn't bring it and how it would have been detrimental to what they're trying to do. The truth is that I have no idea how to solve their problem yet. That's going to come from having a lot of conversations with people. And from doing a lot of research. What I *do* have is a process I believe in, one that's worked time and time again. And I tell them that anyone who walks in telling them they already know how to solve the problem is lying to them.

And just like that, I screwed anyone else who might be coming in with spec work that day.

Make it a kickoff

The best way to show people what it's like to work with you is to start working. Forget that it's a pitch. Treat it like a kickoff. Let the conversation flow and gently guide it right into interviews. Make the pitch meeting the first step of the discovery process. Someone mentions Sam in engineering? Ask when you can speak to Sam in engineering.

Look, your client wants the pitch process to be over as much as you do. They want to get started. So show them what that looks like. And show them that you're able to take the project by the horns. Just don't overdo it, this technique takes a lot of nuances. It's an advanced skill.

Don't make a thing

For the love of god, don't make a special *thing* to give them. If your company has written a book, great. Give them a copy. Even better, give them a copy of *You're My Favorite Client!* (Always be selling.) If you have stickers, t-shirts, pens, give them some. But don't hand them a bespoke craft project to remember you by. They'll feel awkward as they throw it in the trash. And then they'll be too guilty to ever want to see you again.

Don't sweat the deck

If you've made it all the way through the deck you're not getting the project. The sooner you're not paying attention to the deck and just having a normal conversation the better your chances of landing the project. So put a few things together. A couple of slides about you. A couple of slides about them. A couple of slides of past work. But don't make the pitch meeting about the deck. The goal isn't to finish the deck. The goal is to get the work.

Oh, and for what it's worth, I don't show any tattoos until *after* the job is signed. You're gonna have to decide how important that nose ring is on your own.

Mike Monteiro is a nice guy or a total asshole depending on your opinion. He is also the Design Director at [Mule Design](#). And the author of [Design Is a Job](#) and [You're My Favorite Client](#).

II. Pitching Your Project – Seven Tips for Engineers

Mastering the art of the pitch is key to starting your own engineering company. If you can't communicate your ideas well, your engineering consulting firm startup may fail.

<https://academy.archistar.ai/pitching-your-project-seven-tips-for-engineers>

So you've started your own engineering firm and you're raring to go. You have your engineering business plan in place, and can't wait to show off your abilities.

There's only one problem. Engineers often aren't natural sellers.

Attracting new clients is one of the most difficult tasks you'll face as an engineering consulting firm startup. To do that, you need a great pitch.

Presenting your drawings isn't enough to attract new clients. Remember that most don't have the expertise that you've developed over the years. They'll look at your drawings and rely on you to explain what's going on. Your job is to ensure the drawings make sense to those who don't understand them.

Many engineers struggle with this task, especially when starting their own firms. Pitching may not have been an issue in their previous jobs. Others may have handled the pitches for them, while they got on with the engineering work.

You can't do that when starting your own engineering company. Becoming a jack of all trades is key. Engineering firm owners need to sell themselves, and their ideas, before they can find work.

As a result, a great pitch can make a huge difference to an engineering consulting firm startup. It sets you apart from the competition, and shows that you understand the needs of potential clients. Follow these tips to create great pitches.

Tip #1 – Focus on the Benefits

You may overlook the most important sales strategy when starting your own engineering company.

Every pitch must communicate the benefits of your ideas.

Your potential clients want to know about the ins and outs of your work. However, how your work benefits them is most important. The design details take a back seat to helping clients to understand why your solution helps them more than others.

There are plenty of things you can point to as benefits. Anything that saves money for your clients over the long-term helps. For example, you could note how using a lighter material allows you to save money in operating a design containing an engine. Alternatively, discuss how the materials you'll use can save on maintenance costs, or extend the structure's lifespan.

Look at your proposal and find the most direct benefits that come from it. Think about how it improves an aspect of your client's life, then zero in on that aspect of the structure.

If you need more help, think about every sales pitch that has ever worked on you. Did the salesperson open things by talking about the mechanical components of the product? Or did they tell you what the product can do to improve your life?

Odds are that it was the latter. Take a page out of their book when creating your pitches for your engineering consulting firm startup. You can expand on all of the exciting design stuff later on. The practical benefits come before your passion for the little things clients may not understand right away.

Tip #2 – Draw on What You See in the Media

Think back to everything you see on television, or on the web. Performers, presenters, and professional entertainers make up an enormous part of our daily intake. From political speeches to new reports, everybody who speaks in public has something to separate them. Take inspiration from that fact to create presentations that will wow your clients.

Remember that your clients consume the same media as you. They have certain expectations when it comes to the quality of your presentation. They'll also compare you to every other firm that pitches to them. If you come off as second-rate when pitching, you won't get any further than the initial meeting.

Do you need an example?. Compare the presentation levels of your local news shows and the national news. Or stack a television show up against an amateurish YouTube show. You'll soon find that you prefer the professional presentation to the amateur one. Now think about how your pitches compare to those of the major firms in your area. If you pale in comparison, you're not going to attract business.

Consider the vocal delivery and methods presenters and news reporters use to dissect complex issues. You can use all that to make your engineering consulting firm startup pitches accessible. Aim to inspire in the same way that your favourite entertainers inspire you.

Tip #3 – Don't Forget the Facts

The people you pitch to may not be aware that they need your work. A business proposal for civil engineers can't succeed if clients don't think they need to hear it. It's your job to show them why they need you, even if they don't know it. That's where the facts and figures come into play.

Look to third-party sources for any facts or figures you could use in your pitch. There's an important reason for this. Clients won't trust your engineering consulting firm startup figures if they can't verify them. Saying "our estimates show..." has far less power than using a respected third-party source to demonstrate the same point. Use the facts you collect to reinforce the benefits you discuss. They're not the focal point, but they are the glue that holds the rest of the presentation together.

It also helps to understand what your competition is doing. Talk about how their solutions fall down when compared to yours. Anything that sets your ideas apart on a factual basis improves your pitch. Try to bring it back to dollar savings, or some other benefit, keeping in mind that you need that third-party source to add credibility to your claim.

Finally, avoid spurious claims. Your prospective clients will compare your pitch to the others they receive. If your facts don't gel with everybody else's, you lose the trust that's so vital to creating new working relationships.

Tip #4 – Sell Yourself

What is your engineering consulting firm startup selling during its pitch? We've covered the benefits, but there's something else your clients want to see in your pitch. Successful pitches tell the stories of the people behind them. By selling yourself, as well as your product, you give clients a reason to care about you.

This serves two purposes. The first is that it builds trust. When your prospective client knows more about you and where you come from, they're more likely to trust the information in your pitch. This is particularly important for an engineering consulting firm startup. You may not have enough of a presence in the sector for your clients to conduct research on you. As a result, they'll look to you to provide the detail about who you are before they're willing to trust you.

The second is that it adds some variety to your pitch. Anybody can cycle through a set of slides while droning on at their listeners. Sure, they want to hear about your ideas. But you break things up when you tell them about yourself too. Craft a story, and present it in an interesting way. You'll engage your audience, making them more receptive to the dryer portions of your pitch.

Tip #5 – Know Your Client

Knowing who you are and what you can offer is just the start. That all comes from your engineering business plan.

Your clients want to see that you've done your research on them too. If you just launch into a pitch without addressing your client's business, you alienate them. They'll think you're giving them a boilerplate pitch that you've given to dozens of other potential clients before.

Research the business and the people behind it. The company's website should tell you about the company, and any projects they're working on. Social media sites, such as LinkedIn, teach you more about the people.

Importantly, try to find out who you'll pitch to. This helps you to tailor your delivery. For example, a chief of finance will want to know more about the facts and figures, whereas an in-house engineer can handle your technical jargon. Get a list of the key stakeholders and use LinkedIn to find out more about them.

Your engineering consulting firm startup makes a better impression when it displays respect for the client. Your research may also reveal issues that you can solve. Use this knowledge as the basis for your pitch.

Tip #6 – Avoid Jargon

Your clients don't know as much about engineering as you. Most aren't trained in the field. As a result, they won't understand your technical jargon.

Try to boil down the complexities into the essentials. Find the information hidden away in the jargon. That's what your client needs and wants to hear.

However, it's not just industry jargon that your engineering consulting firm startup must avoid. Be wary of corporate buzzwords too. You may think they make you sound more professional, but many clients will catch on quickly. They'll think that you're distracting them from the point.

Buzzwords don't communicate your knowledge effectively, and many people don't have patience for them anymore.

Avoid phrases like "paradigm-changing" or "consumer-centric". They don't really say anything. Instead, be concise and clear about what your pitch delivers. Keep it to the point, instead of trying to baffle your potential clients.

Tip #7 – Practice Constantly

Picture the scene. You've written a presentation that tells your story and showcases the benefits of your work. Everything is in place, so you step into the boardroom. All eyes are on you as you start delivering the pitch.

Then it happens. You freeze up, or you start mumbling and tripping over words. Every mistake makes you look less professional. In no time at all, you've ruined the pitch, despite having all of the information your clients need.

Few of us are natural presenters. It takes time and practice to develop the confidence to present to groups of people. A quick read-through of your pitch isn't enough. Constant practice is how you turn a good pitch into a great one.

Take every opportunity to practice, and focus on all aspects of the pitch. Stand in front of a mirror and watch yourself talk. Pick out bad body language and work on your timing. You want to convey confidence, but you can't do that if you're shuffling on your feet or rocketing through your pitch.

When you feel like you have it down, get in front of people. Ask your friends and family to watch your pitch. Get people in your engineering consulting firm startup to watch and criticise too. Their input will show you what others see when you present. As a result, you can touch up all the little things that may damage your pitch.

Conclusion

Starting your own engineering company means taking on a host of new responsibilities. You're responsible for creating the engineering business plan, and pitching to new clients. It's a lot to take on board, especially for those who've never needed to look beyond their engineering work before.

Unfortunately, pitching is a necessary evil of running an engineering consulting firm startup. In fact, it's one of the most effective tools for separating yourself from your competition. When clients see you face-to-face, they get a feel for who you are. That's something that a website can't deliver. If your pitch doesn't measure up, you'll lose the prospective client, no matter how talented you are.

Combine these tips to create great pitches. Understand who you are, who your clients are, and what you can deliver to them. Cut out all the jargon, and practice constantly. Finally, think of how you can make your pitch stand out. Tell your story, and look to experienced presenters and speechmakers for ideas.

Of course, a successful pitch is only the start. You need to deliver on what you promise. That's where ArchiStar Academy can help. We offer an array of courses in the digital design software packages you'll use to create your models. An ArchiStar Academy course can help you to create eye-catching visuals for your pitch, and ensure you have the skills needed to deliver complex models.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with Archistar Academy today if you have any questions.

<https://academy.archistar.ai>

III. How To Pitch an Idea

By [Scott Berkun](#), February 2005

<https://scottberkun.com/essays/38-how-to-pitch-an-idea/>

Coming up with good ideas is hard enough, but convincing others to do something with them is much harder. In many fields the task of bringing an idea to someone with the power to do something with it is called a pitch: software feature ideas, implementation strategies, movie screenplays, organizational changes, and business plans, are all pitched from one person to another. And although the fields or industries may differ, the basic skill of pitching ideas is largely the same. This essay provides a primer on idea pitches, and although most of my experience is in the tech-sector, I pitch to you that the advice here will be relevant to pitching business plans, yourself (e.g. job interviews), screenplays, or anything else.

The nature of ideas

Ideas demand change. By definition, the application of an idea means that something different will take place in the universe. Even if your idea is undeniably and wonderfully brilliant, it will force someone, somewhere to change how they do something. And since many people do not like change, and fear change, the qualities of your idea that you find so appealing may be precisely what make your idea so difficult for people to accept. Some individuals fear change so much that they structure their lives around avoiding it. (Know anyone exhibiting the curious behavior of being obviously miserable in their job, their city, their relationship, but still refusing to make changes?). So when your great idea comes into contact with a person who does not want change, you and your idea are at a disadvantage. Before you can begin the pitch, you have to make sure you're talking to someone that's interested in change, or has a clear need that your idea can satisfy.

Healthy and progressive organizations make change easier than stinky evil organizations do. Smart organizations (or managers) often depend on change. Leaders in these havens for smart people not only encourage positive change to happen, but expect people at all levels of their organization to push for it. It requires more work and maturity for these managers to make this kind of environment successful, but when they pull it off, smart people are systematically encouraged to be smart. Idea pitching happens all the time: in hallways, in the cafeteria, in meetings.

But since most of us don't work in these kinds of places, the burden of pitching ideas falls heavily on our shoulders.

Step 0: Create and refine the idea

The classic mistake of would be idea pitchers is to pitch the idea well before it's ready. When most people find an interesting idea, they're quickly seduced by their egos into doing silly and non productive things, like annoying the pants off of everyone they come into contact with by telling them how amazing their new idea is. The thrill of being clever is so strong that they forget the fact that there are 100 interesting ideas bouncing around for every single truly good idea. By (my) definition, an interesting idea takes a novel or creative approach to doing something, whereas a good idea is not just creative, but actually improves on a meaningful quality or attribute, in a way that can be practically applied to the world (or the project).

Good ideas include some thinking about execution and delivery. Saying "we should build cars that go 1000 mph and get 100mpg and easily fold to fit in your back pocket" or "We should make

a children's movie that is very funny and intelligent for parents and children, but also has a deep positive spiritual and moral message" count as interesting ideas. They're good starts. But they won't be good ideas, in the sense of pitch-work, until there's both some logic for how to make it real within reasonable limitations, and some level of detail in how to convert the abstract idea (build a breakthrough automobile) into tangible plans (the trans warp drive I've designed improves gasoline efficiency tenfold).

So until the concepts and hard parts are fleshed out enough to demonstrate that the spirit of an idea is matched with specifics, the idea doesn't have much of a foundation. People can dismiss it quickly just by asking 2 or 3 basic questions. Always remember that moving from an interesting but vague idea, to specific and actionable is the difficult part of creation and invention. (For example, there were lots of people with the idea for making light bulbs. Edison's success was not in being the first one to conceive the idea, but in having the persistence and cunning to be the first person to solve many of the practicalities involved in engineering the idea).

Most of the time it's not worth pitching an idea until you're able to answer some of the basic pragmatic questions about it, such as: What problem does this solve? What evidence is there that the problem is real, and important enough to solve (or in the corporate world, solve profitably?) What are the toughest logistical challenges implied by the idea, and how will (or would) you solve them? Do you have a prototype, sample or demonstration of an implementation of the idea (aka proof of concept)? Why are you the right person to solve it? Why should this problem be solved now? Why should our organization solve this problem? These are all the kinds of questions someone that gets pitched to on a daily basis are likely to ask, and therefore, a good pitch-person will have done more than superficial thinking on their answers.

Step 1: What is the scope of the idea

The bigger the idea, the more involved the pitch. Big ideas require more change to take place on someone's part, and all things being equal, this means the pitch must be more thorough (or your approach more bold & risky). The stakes are higher. To convince a CEO to start a new million dollar project will take more effort than convincing your best friend to loan you his pen. As a rough guide, here's how to assess the scope of an idea, from narrow to grand:

- Tiny tweak to something already in existence
- New feature or enhancement to existing product / website / company
- A major new area of an existing product / website / company
- An entirely new, but small and simple, project
- An entirely new, but large and possibly complex, project
- An organizational, directional, or philosophical, change to an existing organization
- A new organization
- A new nation, planet or dimension of the universe (Sorry. But for how to pitch to the omnipotent forces that run the universe, you'll have to look elsewhere).

When you've identified the scope of your idea, do some research on how others pitching ideas of similar scope went about it. You're probably not the first person to pitch something of the scope you're pitching, so go find out what other people did, and what kind of success they had. Learn from their mistakes. There are books on pitching business plans, movie scripts, and of course pitching yourself (job interviewing). Do your homework: know some of the basic strategies, or industry expectations for the kind of pitch you're doing. In the software

development world, talk to people who have pitched feature ideas in your organization, and see what you can learn.

Step 2: Who has the power to green light the idea

Make a list of the people that are potential recipients of your pitch. This could be your boss, your VP, another company, a bank, a publisher, who knows. Base this list on two criteria: who has the power needed to implement the idea, and who you might have access to. Here's a rough guide, ordered from fantastic to depressing.

- You have the power.
- A peer in your organization has the power.
- Your boss has the power.
- Someone above you in the organization.
- Someone you know in another organization.
- Someone you don't know and don't have easy access to.
- You have no idea.
- You are paralyzed on a cold wet basement floor, and your annoying younger brother keeps poking you in the ribs with the pointy end of pencil. (See, it can always be worse).

If you have no idea who to pitch your idea to, ask around. There's no sense developing your pitch if there's no one to catch. If you don't have access to the person with the power you need, make a list of who has access to them, working backwards until you can list people you actually know. You may need to work through this network of people, and make several pitches, to achieve the results you want. Just getting to the real pitch situation may take days, weeks or months or preparation and pitching to subordinates.

Step 3: Start with their perspective

Put your pitch aside. Imagine you have mind-melded with the person you are pitching to. How do they think about the world? What kinds of things are they probably interested in? What is their typical day like? How many unsolicited pitches do they receive a day? Consider how the person you're trying to pitch views the world, and keep it in mind while developing your pitch. The better your pitch fits into their needs, perspectives, and desires, the greater your odds of being successful (or even being listened to). This doesn't mean sell out, or only create ideas that you think a specific person will like. Instead this just means you have to be aware of how your perspective is different from theirs, and improve your ideas, and how you communicate them, based on that awareness. This may help you decide who to bring your pitch to: The most powerful person in the organization might share none of your philosophy, but the 3rd or 4th most powerful person might. The later is going to be a better place to start.

Step 4: The structure of the pitch

Always formulate 3 levels of depth to pitching your idea: 5 seconds, 30 seconds, 5 minutes (Credit to Ari Blenkhorn for this simple breakdown). The 5 second version, also known as the elevator pitch, is the most concise single sentence formulation of whatever your idea is. Refine, refine, refine your thinking until you can say something intelligent and interesting in a short sentence. "My idea? It's a way to make car engines twice as efficient, and 5 times as powerful." This can be done for any idea: never allow yourself to believe your thing is so complicated and amazing that it's impossible to explain in a sentence. If you were to use this excuse on me, I'd tell you it means you don't have enough perspective on how your idea fits into the world.

If you can get enough perspective of what you're really doing, have a half-decent command of whatever language you're using, and spend some time at it, you can develop a good 5 second pitch. Practice it on friends, peers, anyone, by doing the 5 second version, then answering their questions, and then asking them to help you refine the 5 second version again. (And if nothing else, the 5 second version comes in handy at parties, when you need to quickly explain what you're doing without boring people to tears). As proof that 5 second explanations are possible, here's some diverse and complex ideas, and some simple 5 second explanations of them.

Discovering DNA	"I'm researching how human cells reproduce"
Defragmenting hard drives	"It makes computers run more efficiently"
Inventing light bulbs	"It's a way to make light from electricity."
Writing a brilliant novel	"The story explores twenty something angst in the digital age"
Improving anti-lock brake algorithms	"It improves automobile safety"

The 30 second and 5 minute versions should grow naturally out of the 5 second version. In 30 seconds, there's enough time to talk about how you'll achieve what you described in 5 seconds, or provide specifics of the 2 or 3 most significant things about how the effect described in the 5 second pitch will be achieved. Provide the next level of detail down, adding in just enough interesting detail that the listener can get a clearer picture of your idea, and gain a deeper and more nuanced understanding of what you're proposing. If you can't distill down what you're doing in 5 and 30 second versions, don't worry too much about the 5 minute version: odds are you won't get many people to listen to you for that long.

However, since some people prefer written proposals for pitches, this gives you a chance to deliver the 5, 30 and 5 minute versions all at once. In this case it's often best to keep the same structure: start with your shortest pitch. Then provide the next level of detail down. And finally, the core of the paper or written proposal is a point by point detailing of how, giving the money & resources you need, you'll achieve what you described in the 5 second pitch.

Also, remember that you won't always have all of your materials with you when pitching ideas. At least briefly consider how you'd deal with the following different kinds of situations, and with the different asset limitations you'd have in each case.

- The elevator – you.
- The slow elevator – you, maybe something to show from your pockets.
- The lunch – (you , maybe something to show, napkins to draw on, alcohol)
- The conference room meeting – (laptop / slides / handout)
- The executive review – (laptop / slides / handout / yes-men / splunge-men)

Sometimes it can be to your advantage to pitch with partner. Instead of one person pitching, you'll be pitching as a team. If you can find a partner who compliments your skills, and who you can happily collaborate with, it's probably worth it (And though your ego may try to convince you you're better off alone, you probably aren't). It doubles your network of organizational connections, and changes the psychology you'll have when pitching. Instead of standing alone you'll be a small team, and may even outnumber the person you're pitching to.

Step 5: Test the pitch

The longer you spend with an idea, the more vulnerable you are to your own ego. Get out of your office / cubicle / apartment, and go find smart people you know to give you feedback. Ask

them to pretend they are whoever it is you plan to pitch to (This can be fun if you can be specific, as in asking them to behave like Bill Gates, Donald Trump, or your own caricaturization of your boss). Then go through your pitch, responding to their questions (or ignoring their laughter). You won't always get the feedback you want, but you'll sharpen both your idea, and the way you talk about it. If the idea is amazing and groundbreaking and you're afraid to run it by other people, find a close friend or parent and use them.

From your pitch tests, develop a list of questions you expect to be asked during the pitch, and be prepared to answer them.

Step 6: Deliver

Surprise – I don't think there is a ton to know about actually pitching. If you've prepared well, have a good idea that you truly believe in, and manage not to get too nervous, most of the work is in the hand of whoever is listening to you. Be calm, be direct, state your case, and then listen. Like any kind of public speaking type situation, the more often you do it, the more comfortable it will become. But there isn't much magic to the actual pitch. The only people that need to resort to tricks and manipulations are those that haven't worked to understand their audience well, or don't truly believe in what they are pitching.

The best delivery advice I can offer is to make sure you spend some time preparing for a positive response. What happens if they say "That's an interesting idea. What do you want from me?" Do you want money? Other resources? A change in the project plan? A feature added to the feature list? Know what the sequence of steps are after they agree you have a good idea and be ready to ask for them. If there are other people involved who's approval you'll need, ask them to set up a meeting for you. If there is a form that needs to be filled out, make sure you have one with you.

Step 7: What to do when the pitch fails

When things don't go well, your job is to harvest as much value from the attempt as possible. Always leave failed pitches with an understanding of what went wrong. Which points didn't they agree with? Which of your assumptions did they refute? In many cases, you might learn there are criteria for green lighting ideas in your organization that you didn't know about. It's also possible they objected to something about your approach: maybe they didn't appreciate that you accosted them outside their office, waving a stack of handouts in their face. If someone else in the room was there observing the pitch, ask for their feedback. In short, get as much learning out of completed pitches as you can. Recoup your investment in the failed pitch by mining any lessons out of it that you can apply next time.

From a tactical perspective: who else can you give this pitch to? Every organization has lots of people at peer levels of hierarchy. Would any of them be interested? Go back to your list from Step 2. Consider compromising on how much power is needed to make your idea happen, or how to split your idea into smaller ideas. Maybe focus on the first small piece of your larger idea, and revisit the rest after you've had some initial success.

Step 8: Do it yourself

In every creative industry you can find people rejected by the system who went off on their own, scrapped together their own resources, and made amazing things happen. Scrappy small budget films like [Napoleon Dynamite](#), [Clerks](#), [Pi](#), happened only because a small group of people believed enough in their ideas to make the sacrifices, and do it themselves. Books and novels can be self published. Business can be started on small business loans or second mortgages. There is always a way to do it if you are sufficiently compelled by your ideas to take on risks, and make use of your own (unpaid) time.

If your idea is related to web or software, it's entirely possible to make a prototype using Flash, HTML or other development tools. Go crack open some books, or if you have the money, go hire someone to make a demo out of your sketches and rough plans. Don't ever allow yourself to believe that there is only one way to make ideas real: if you're truly creative, you can apply the same talent used to come with your idea, to the problem of how to make your idea real.

References

- [Q&A from my pitching workshop](#)
- [Business plans that win](#), [Pitching Hollywood](#) – There are many books on developing business plans and pitching screenplays. I've yet to make any exceptional finds here, but these are decent places to start.
- [Changing Minds](#) – Howard Gardner provides a science based framework for how an individual changes the minds of others. More about general science and psychology than a practical guide.
- [Influence: the psychology of persuasion](#) – A classic book on the basic psychology of persuasion. More about advertising and environment than one on one pitch-work, this book offers a framework for how individuals are influenced by the context messages come in, and how the messages themselves are designed.

IV. How To Pitch Ideas: Q&A

Posted on [July 30, 2014](#) in [General](#)

Last night I ran a workshop on [How To Pitch Ideas](#), hosted by the wonderful folks (Llewyn Paine, Emilie Thaler and Cathie Toshach) at the [Seattle IXDA chapter](#). The topics covered were generated by the attendees themselves at the session and I promised I'd write up notes, which you are reading now.

References:

- My popular essay: [How To Pitch An Idea](#)
- [Checklist for great presentations](#)
- [How to get better feedback](#)
- [Getting Feedback on ideas without frustration](#) (idea critiques explained)
- [The Confessions of a Public Speaker](#)

The important advice most people don't want to hear

Pitching ideas is hard. Most of what we think we know about doing it well is inspired by TV shows and movies, where a charismatic, creative person magically convinces rooms full of recalcitrant people to follow their ideas. This rarely happens in real life. Most pitches fail to convince anyone. The reason most pitches fail to convince anyone is the person who is listening to the pitch often already has their own ideas for what they want to do, and even if they don't, they are listening to dozens of competing pitches for the same resources. By the time you pitch them you're often already too late. You can do everything right in your pitch and still fail.

It's a rarely discussed fact in creative circles, but the more powerful you are, the fewer pitches you need to do. Always remember this. If you are the CEO of the organization or the grand emperor of the planet Pitchus in the Andromeda galaxy, **people pitch you**. They pitch you because you have the power. Any job that demand you pitch all the time reflects the lack of true authority you have over creative decisions. This means persuasion is a central skill in what you do, and the sooner you treat it as a central skill the better (See [5 dangerous ideas](#)).

The best way to persuade people is in informal settings. You often earn this right only by cultivating a reputation for having good ideas, which takes time. And the best people to bother trying to persuade are decision makers (or people one step closer to decision makers than you are). Real influence is having the kind of relationship where you can go talk to powerful people about an idea informally, without the unavoidable theatrics that come in to play in big meetings. In a big meeting people in power can't speak honestly: they know that 5 or more people are listening, each of whom wants to hear different things. An executive, or client, is less open to ideas in big meetings than they would be in nearly any other setting (such as a private chat in their office or a conversation over coffee).

The goal then is to develop relationships and credibility with the important people in your world so that your formal pitches, in idea review meetings or grand product planning sessions, are not the first time decision makers have been pitched by you. You want big meetings to be closer to formalities, or at least situations where you understand who in the room are already your supporters, and what approach you need to take to try and convince those in the room who are naturally critical or have goals that don't match yours.

It matters who makes the pitch

We judge people heavily based on their reputation. Someone you trust could give the same pitch as someone you didn't, and you'd respond to "the pitch" differently. Reputation matters. How

much latitude and benefit of doubt you will get when you pitch something depends on what you've pitched before, what the outcome was and how much respect they generally have for you work. This means a few things. First, you might have an amazing idea that requires a far better reputation than you have (e.g. on your first day at work it'd be a mistake to pitch reorganizing the entire organization). Second, for any given idea there might be someone other than the person who came up with it who is the best person to pitch it. This might mean asking your boss to make the pitch or a coworker. You might need to decide if you care enough about the idea to let someone else make the pitch on its behalf.

Topics, situations and answers

I started the workshop with an option to use my slidedeck, or to build a list of situations from attendees and spend the time discussing them. They chose the later (I pitched them harder on this option, and I won!). Here's the list we worked from during the workshop, with my notes on the answers.

- **The decision maker already has an idea.** This means you are in a dog and pony show – the pitch meeting is theater. They've already had whatever brainstorming discussions they've wanted to have with the people they respect. You need to figure out how to get involved earlier in the process so you are pitching at a time when ideas are being considered. If the decision maker has an idea already, whose was it? When did that person talk to the decision maker? How can you time things earlier for the next project or next idea? Of course you can also try to pitch them on why your idea is even better than they one they already have.
- **What are counter-tactics for meetings where people delay and filibusters new ideas?** In any meeting ask the question: who is in charge here? Any meeting that is poorly run, or more precisely, is run in a way where most new ideas are shot down is not an accident. The person in charge is running it that way for a reason (one potential reason is they are incompetent, but for the hopes of a fair pitching landscape the negative effect is similar). Ask yourself: what is the reason? What do they have to gain from having a meeting that's so hostile, or so incompetent? This situation is similar to the first: it's likely the frustrating experience of the discussion is really about the fact that someone in power already has a plan. The meeting is just for show to make everyone feel like an honest discussion is happening.
- **How do I get better at pitching?** Pitching is a skill. It's a kind of performance. The only way to get better at any skill is to practice. When you find a new idea grab a coworker or friend and pitch them on the idea. Don't pick your warm and fuzzy friends – pick people who are smart and critical. Let them ask you question and pick your idea, and your pitch apart. Then do it again, and again, learning each time. The more important a particular idea/pitch is to you, the more practice you should have with it before you do the pitch to the person in power. Develop relationships with coworkers where you practice pitches on each other – not to stroke your ego but [to get thoughtful feedback](#) you need to hear to improve your pitch before you actually do it.
- **Does who I'm pitching to matter?** What good is a great pitch to the wrong person? Or more precisely, how can you know if your pitch is any good if it's not crafted for the person you want to influence? Understanding who you are pitching might be more important than the pitch itself. If you had a great idea, would you pitch it to Justin Bieber the same way you'd pitch it to the Pope? You should study who is going to be in the room when you give a pitch: what are each of their goals? their preferences? what was the last idea they supported? what was the last idea they rejected? What are their goals for this quarter or year? Who do you know that successfully pitched them and what

advice do they have? All of those things give you valuable data about how to tell your story differently, or possibly even to pick a different idea to pitch them on.

- **Is there a secret system for perfect pitches?** There is no secret system for anything. I recommend thinking about [5 / 30 / 300](#). You should be able to explain your idea in 5 second, 30 second and 300 second versions. Distill it down and down until it's a single sentence. If you do this well it will be interesting enough that the person you pitch will instinctively ask a question, leading to your 30 second version of the pitch. And if you do that well, they'll ask for more, and you'll be ready to give them the 4 or 5 minute version.
- **If I get access to the key decision maker, how should I pitch them?** Concision is the most important thing. Most creative people who have developed a good idea assume they have to explain the process for how they found the idea in the pitch. This is a big mistake. How you invented something has no impact on whether the thing you invented solves a problem for someone or not. Put your pride aside and focus on what the idea can do and who it can do it for. When you're famous you can explain how you did it, don't worry until then.
- **In my team meetings my ideas get ignored but are proven right later.** If this happens often I'd think about who in the room, if I convinced of I was wrongfully ignored, would do anything different in the next meeting to help me. I'd try to document my experience: perhaps by taking meeting notes that just happen to include my suggestion. Then when my ignored suggestion is shown later to have been right, I'd take that documentation and go talk, in private, to the person in the room who could have changed things. I'd tell them the story: "I pitched this idea last month and it was ignored, and look now. what could I do differently next time I have a good idea to get more support for it?" And see what they say. Odds are high they themselves will listen to you differently from now on.
- **How do you pitch people you don't know?** Pitching is similar to dating. The best advice is to listen first. Ask questions that help you figure out who you are talking to. What are your goals this year? What frustrations do you have? What problems are you trying to solve? In letting them talk first you give yourself the benefit of matching, in your mind, the ideas you have to the situation they are in.
- **My ideas always get shot down without a fair debate. Help?** Most organizations use phrases called idea killers that unfairly kill ideas. They include "We don't have time" or "We tried that already" or even "We don't do that here." These sound smart but they are substance free. Rhetorically they have no substance. [You should familiarize yourself with the common idea killers](#) in your world and practice responses that keep the conversation going. Expect to hear them and have a response you've already crafted. Healthy creative organizations have leaders who kill idea killers for you.
- **Can you use emotion to your advantage?** We are emotional creatures and pay great attention to how invested people seem to be in whatever they are telling us. Most people hide their emotions around even their own ideas. This is a mistake. All things equal you will be more convincing if you seem passionate and engaged as you talk about your idea. Showing that you've done your homework (preferably by your ability to answer questions rather than burying people in details) is another way to convey how committed you are to the idea you're talking about. Stories have emotional power that data does not – a pitch involving a single well told story of a real person with a real problem can have more impact than thousands of dollars worth of demographic research reports.

- **How to use data.** Data is only useful if it fits the goals of the people you are pitching to. Facts can help tell a story, but only in the fact has two qualities: **1)** it hits directly on a situation the people you are pitching care about **2)** your idea presents a solution to that problem. Data is a double-edged sword though. You can easily fall into the trap of arguing with someone about whether your data, or their data, is better, an argument that is very hard to win. Ideally data and research were a natural part of your process for how you developed your idea in the first place, in which case it will be natural for you to refer to it as part of your story. Searching for supporting data only to help sell something in a pitch is guaranteed to suffer from [confirmation bias](#) – something a wise audience will spot and question, hurting your credibility, so be careful.
- **How to find the right story to tell?** A story has three parts: a character, a narrative and a conclusion. Every person and every culture prefers different characters, narratives and conclusions. There is no single story that connects with everyone. I would study the goals of the organization or project to look for characters and narratives to use. Pitching a hospital? the main character is likely a patient, or a doctor, or a technician. The narrative might be: bills are hard to figure out. The conclusion is perhaps, if we follow the idea I'm proposing we can improve the readability of bills by significantly (or if you want have data to support it, XX%).
- **How to get people to fight your battles for you.** People are most likely to fight your battle for you if they don't think it's just your battle. If they see (perhaps because you tell them) that by supporting you they get what they want, it's natural for them to get involved. Any decent boss naturally shares your interests as they want you to succeed and will help you for that reason alone. Sadly not all bosses are decent, and even the decent ones aren't necessarily politically savvy. You may need to walk them through why supporting your pitch is in their interest and make specific requests for what you want them to do to ("Can you mention this at the next manager's meeting?" or "since you like this idea, can you support me when I pitch it to the team?")

How to prepare a checklist for great talks

<https://scottberkun.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/How-to-Prepare-checklist.pdf>

HOW TO PREPARE:

Checklist for Great Talks by Scott Berkun

1 BEFORE THE EVENT

- ☐ Ask yourself these questions:
Who is the audience? Why are they coming?
Can organizer provide demographics?
Can you look at last year's programs? Were there reviews of the event on blogs?
What are other speakers speaking about?
Will this be a keynote lecture (more scripted) or small (more interactive)?
- ☐ Create a list of questions audience will want answered in the talk
- ☐ Prioritize the list and sketch out stories / ideas / points
- ☐ Budget at least 10x time to prepare (1 hour talk will take roughly 10 hours of preparation)
- ☐ Develop ten minutes of rough draft material
- ☐ Practice the ten minutes. Do not procrastinate.
- ☐ Revise material when it doesn't work, then practice again from beginning. Repeat as necessary.
- ☐ Do a test run in front of people who will give honest feedback (Or videotape and watch)
- ☐ Practice with a clock with goal to end reliably with an extra 5 minutes
- ☐ Ask for emergency contact cell phone number, give organizer yours
- ☐ Get directions to the venue, including office-park insanity, and within building insanity
- ☐ If appropriate, post slides to web, include URL at end of talk

2 LEAVING FOR THE EVENT

- ☐ Get an hour of exercise that morning or night before
- ☐ Check laptop: do you have all cables? Is it working fine? Are slides on it? Battery charged?
- ☐ Bring backup slides on flash drive / Extra-backup online somewhere / Print back-up of slides
- ☐ Bring remote control: Check battery
- ☐ Shower, shave, prune, scrub, brush, deodorize
- ☐ Ensure you avoid all avoidable stress (get there early no matter what)

3 AT THE EVENT

- ☐ Register and let organizer know you've arrived
- ☐ Find your room and watch another speaker speak in it. Notice anything?
- ☐ If time allows, mingle and meet people who might be in your audience
- ☐ Return to room to catch (at least) tail end of last speaker before you – maximize time to set up.
- ☐ Get laptop hooked up to projector immediately. Most problems occur here.
- ☐ Find tech person, or call organizer. You'll need their help to get microphone set up or for tech issues.
- ☐ Test remote and fancy videos.
- ☐ Walk the stage and get comfortable. Ask someone to look at you and your slides to flag any issues.
- ☐ Make sure you have a glass of water or preferred beverage at the lectern.
- ☐ Sit in the back row and imagine yourself on stage. Check that the text on your slides is readable.
- ☐ Relax. You're prepared and all set. Nothing you do now will change anything. Enjoy the ride.
- ☐ If needed, distract yourself by going for a walk or other physical activity

4 AFTER THE EVENT

- ☐ If there is another scheduled speaker, get out of their way so they can get set up
- ☐ Make yourself visible so people can find you to ask questions about your talk
- ☐ Write questions from attendees on their business cards so you can answer in email later
- ☐ Post slides online or to Slideshare if appropriate
- ☐ Email people who gave you their cards, answering their questions
- ☐ Thank the organizer and ask for any feedback (positive/negative)
- ☐ If your talk was videotaped, ask for a copy so you can watch and improve.
- ☐ Have a beer

If this was useful, go buy the book:

CONFESSIONS OF A PUBLIC SPEAKER

at www.scottberkun.com

V. How to Effectively Pitch Business Ideas to Investors

[Sarath CP](#), Mar 28, 2018 · 4 min read

<https://medium.com/swlh/how-to-effectively-pitch-business-ideas-to-investors-dd76661b02f1>

Many new entrepreneurs have great ideas that will take the world by storm. But 99% of them do not get the proper business funding in the long run. This will end up leaving all these ideas to never develop into successful projects. This is because there is a huge gap between [having a great business idea](#) and fully implementing it. This gap can be filled by raising the proper funds.

Your pitch is the main thing that could either get your business off the ground or sink it. It all matters! Here are some of the amazing tips to get effective pitch ideas for your business.

Turn your pitch into a story

Storytelling is the best way to attract the audience. It is a scientifically proven way to capture listener's attention and hold them to remember what you say. Moreover, with storytelling, you can make your pitch unforgettable. Those difficult to understand valuations, spreadsheets and numbers do not attract investors anymore. When you are pitching your audience via your story, the investors get all the information that they want. What information you can offer them about your startup with your story, no sheet can convey the same. Everyone is attracted and loves a pitch that has a story involved; even the most data-driven investors. So, tell your story in a right way, gain the attention of the audience and the funding will follow.

Choose the Right Audience

Before sharing your idea with an investor, it is recommended to know about the interests of your investors. As an entrepreneur needing funding, what would be the use of pitching to investors who are not willing to invest in your product? Different investors can only [finance your business](#) when it is at a specific level. According to experts, it is good to start pitching your ideas to angel investors. Your business audience plays a vital role when it comes to getting an investor to help you financially. After recognizing your right audience, it is suitable to design your presentation in an appealing way. Set all your goals and objectives of your business and state the period as well.

Have a Simple yet Incisive Pitch

The presentation is an important aspect of pitching investors, and most entrepreneurs go wrong while presenting their pitches. Many entrepreneurs think that using a different language can benefit them, but this is a common misconception. The main purpose of the pitch is to exhibit the business objectives and check how funding would help to expand it. Also, keeping the pitch simple to understand helps. Hence, it is recommended to use a simple language while preparing your pitch. It should be in such way that even a kid can understand it. Craft your pitch so that it is neither too long nor anything important is left to tell. Keep it concise, simple and straight to the point.

Set Strict Timelines

Businesses are required to work on deadlines. So, it is necessary to add deadlines while pitching. Set some particular timelines that meet the specified period for your investors. It shows how serious you are about getting funds for your business. The more dedication you have for your business, the more satisfaction the potential investors will have in supporting you. Thus, it is suitable to set deadlines for yourself and make potential investors aware of them.

Speak Up About the Sales

If you are a [new entrepreneur](#) who has just started recording sales, make it a point to mention this while pitching to potential investors. State the sales graph and make sure that you explain them within a timeline. For instance, if you say that after only six months, you have already made \$100,000, it shows the investors that you are getting sales and investing in your business can benefit them.

After you have mentioned about the sales in your pitch, the next challenge is to get ready for questions such as “how are you going to maintain the sales”, among many others. When an investor puts their money into your business, it means that your business will grow. Thus, your pitch should state how the company will accelerate the sales when the company expands.

Be Courageous

The main aim for entrepreneurs these days is to pitch to investors to get the best. But how many of them do it effectively? To effectively pitch your unique idea to investors, you need to tell them about the part of the business that hasn't been discussed. Let them know that if the potential is unlocked, the business will flourish. You have to satisfy every investor that you meet about how the financing is going to shake up the industry and do things differently.

Pitching is all about convincing investors how the infusion of funds will help you in achieving the goals. You must take care of the capital deployment of the investor in your pitch as well. It is because every investor desires that the money they use to fund your business would earn those profits.

Conclusion

The purpose of a successful pitch is to have investors willing to invest in your company. So, when you successfully deliver what an investor wants, you will have a truly compelling pitch. Get started and create an appealing yet convincing pitch!

VI. 12 Easy Steps to a Perfect Pitch

Whether you're presenting to potential investors, clients or customers, ace your next pitch with these 12 tips.

Bruna Martinuzzi

Presentation Skills Training, Author, Columnist Business Trends & Insights, Clarion Enterprises Ltd.

<https://www.americanexpress.com/en-us/business/trends-and-insights/articles/12-easy-steps-to-a-perfect-pitch/>

Sociologist James Hughes said, "The art of communication is the language of leadership." Nowhere is this more crucial than for individuals [pitching an idea](#) whose success often depends less on what is said, than on how it is said. Every pitch is essentially an audition for leadership. Do you deliver your pitch in a way that instills confidence in you and your team? Are you able to communicate your idea, or your vision, with clarity? If you can't answer "yes" to these two questions, then your pitch may not be successful.

Pitching is not just for entrepreneurs seeking investor funding. We all have to pitch in one way or another, whether pitching a change initiative to your team or a proposal to the board. We all need to influence someone to adopt our ideas and give us the go-ahead. Pitching is the most nerve-wracking part of the idea creation process, and few excel at it, but it doesn't need to be so difficult. Follow these 12 pointers for the perfect pitch.

Get to the point fast.

It's a known fact that attention spans are getting shorter and shorter. Whether it's the length of books, blogs or broadcasts, everything is shrinking. Don't waste time with preambles. Give them an overview of your compelling proposition quickly, and succinctly, and you're more likely to capture and hold your listener's attention at the crucial start of your pitch. You can use the [Elevator Pitch Builder](#) from Harvard Business School, which gives you one minute to explain yourself, your business and your goals.

Don't use too many slides.

Just about every venture capital expert will tell you to minimize the number of slides you use. Recently, Leonhard Widrich and Joel Gascoigne, founders of Buffer, used [13 slides](#) to land \$500,000 in three months. In "How To Create An Enchanting Pitch," Guy Kawasaki, who was one of Buffer's advisors, provides a [ready-made slide deck](#) that you can download. This 10-slide deck will prevent you from going astray by adding too many slides. Mint.com also offers a [useful slide deck](#) template. For inspiration, you can also view a gallery of some of the best startup pitch decks at [Pitchenvy](#).

Establish the need.

One of the questions that goes through your listeners' minds when they set out to listen to you is, "What problem are you trying to solve?" Convince them that there is a need. Give them a definite, concise statement of the problem, with an example or two illustrating the need. Show

them the ramifications; i.e., how it affects people. Then follow up with your solution to address the need.

Use a message map.

This idea comes from author Carmine Gallo. As he puts it, "If you can't tell me what you do in 15 seconds, I'm not buying, I'm not investing and I'm not interested." The [message map](#) is a tool to help pitch a complex idea, simply and quickly. It helps you explain your idea visually—on one page—in 15 seconds. This involves creating a Twitter-friendly headline, followed by three key benefits to support the headline. It ends with a reinforcement of the three benefits through stories, statistics and examples.

RELATED: [*Don't Blow Your One Shot to Wow Investors*](#)

Use a multilevel structure to your pitch.

In [How To Pitch An Idea](#), Scott Berkun recommends creating three levels of depth in preparing your pitch: 5 seconds, 30 seconds and 5 minutes. The 5-second version is a concise, single sentence explanation of your idea. In the 30-second version, you explain how you plan to achieve your idea by providing just enough interesting detail to help the audience get a clearer understanding of what you are proposing. Once you are successful in scaling your idea down to 5 and 30 seconds, you can then broaden it to 5 minutes. Brevity is the key to the initial success of a pitch.

State who your competition is.

This is a crucial step. What is your competitive advantage? Show them how what you are pitching is better than what your competitors are offering—or at least, how it is different. Also show any potential entrants in that space. What is your shield against those?

Include a sound bite.

A sound bite is a short, catchy phrase. Most people don't remember data, but they will remember a sound bite. A sound bite is the Velcro that makes the message stick. We all remember Steve Jobs' famous sound bite, "The world's thinnest notebook" when he first introduced the MacBook Air. It pays to spend time to come up with just the right sound bite to catch your listeners' attention. If you need help in this area, consider Marcia Yudkin's ebook, [The Sound Bite Workbook: How to Generate Snappy Tag Lines, Scintillating Interview Quotes, Captivating Book or Article Titles, and Irresistible Marketing or Publicity Handles](#). This is a practical book for sound bite mastery. The book includes 17 brainstorming ideas that will help you create verbal gems.

Introduce the team.

Your listeners want to have the confidence that you have a solid team to back you up. Some recommend adding the team slide toward the beginning, like this one from [BrandBoard](#), while others prefer including this at the end, like [Cadee](#)'s pitch. It doesn't really matter, as long as it's there. Guard against derailing yourself by speaking at great length about every minutiae of the team's accomplishments. Keep it relevant and high level, and include photos.

Take "yes" for an answer.

As any seasoned salesperson will tell us, know when to stop selling your idea. Learn to read the signs that tell you your idea has hit home. The more you continue to talk beyond that point, the more you're likely to say something that can reverse the positive direction.

Know your next step.

Practice your follow-up steps as diligently as you practiced the pitch. People often enter the pitching situation with misgivings about their chances of success. A positive response catches them off guard and they sometimes react like a deer caught in the headlights. Come prepared for the next steps. What happens if you get a positive response? What do you want your audience to do? Preparation will help you move forward with confidence.

RELATED: [6 "Shark Tank" Lessons for Entrepreneurs](#)

Learn from others.

One way to hone your pitching skills is to simply watch how others do it. There are plenty of opportunities to do this online. Here are four examples from individuals with diverse styles. The [first](#) is Gilles Domartini, CEO of Cleeng and winner of the B2B StartUp award. The [second](#) is Waseem Daher, COO and co-founder of Ksplice, winner of the MIT \$100K Executive Summary Contest. (For a shot in the arm, as you prepare for your pitch, watch the [entire MIT pitching contest event](#).) The [third](#) example is Kasper Hulthin, CEO of Hoist, winner of the MIT Global Startup Workshop. Finally, the [fourth](#) example is Candace Suzanne Klein, CEO of SoMoLand, winner at Startup 2012.

Don't beg.

There's a fine line between showing intense passion for your idea, product or service, and showing nervous fear of losing out. While a little anxiety is understandable, letting it take hold of you will work against you. It can make you adopt an attitude of begging, which never serves us well. Remember, the ultimate power is the power to walk away. If you truly believe your idea has merit, go in as an equal. This is not advocating arrogance. It's simply asking you to be aware of emotional leakage that may derail you. Again, watch pitch shows like ABC's "Shark Tank" and "Dragon's Den," a Canadian TV program. Both show aspiring entrepreneurs pitch their business concepts and products to a panel of business moguls who have the cash to make it happen. It's easy to see [who pitches with confidence](#) and who doesn't.

Bruna Martinuzzi is the founder of [Clarion Enterprises Ltd.](#), and the author of two books: [Presenting with Credibility: Practical Tools and Techniques for Effective Presentations](#), and [The Leader as a Mensch: Become the Kind of Person Others Want to Follow](#).

VII. 6 "Shark Tank" Lessons for Entrepreneurs

Ready to pitch investors? You can learn valuable lessons from those who have braved the reality TV waters on "Shark Tank."

Angela Stringfellow

Chief Ideation Officer, CODA Concepts, LLC

<https://www.americanexpress.com/en-us/business/trends-and-insights/articles/6-lessons-sbos-can-learn-from-shark-tank/?intlink=us-openf-read-more?intlink=us-openf-read-more>

In its fourth season, the reality TV show *Shark Tank* serves a greater purpose beyond mere entertainment—it also offers some valuable lessons for business owners. Here are six key factors that differentiate a pitch that has the sharks swarming and one that has the entrepreneurs exiting the tank without a bite.

1. Shift your focus to attracting other owners. Bruce Bachenheimer, director of the [Entrepreneurship Lab](#) at Pace University, says too many entrepreneurs pitch their business with the mindset of getting investors to help them. But investors want to know what's in it for them, not what's in it for you. Your focus should be on attracting other owners "by demonstrating real value creation and an acceptable level of risk and return."
2. Don't be afraid to give up equity. Norm Bour, who works in media and PR for [OpisNetwork](#), is writing a book on *Shark Tank* and has auditioned for the show. Bour notes the number of entrepreneurs who are faced with giving up equity in their companies in exchange for an investment. Many entrepreneurs are hesitant to give up a stake of their enterprises, but it's not a bad thing. "The value of having a partner or mentor can be worth more than any dollar amount," Bour explains.
3. Leave your emotions at the door. Entrepreneurs tend to be passionate about their ventures. After all, they're pouring all their blood, sweat and tears into their dreams, along with their life savings and loans from family and friends in many cases. But that emotional factor isn't what sways potential investors. What does? Cold, hard facts—and lots of them.
4. Arm yourself with real data. Not only do you need to focus your pitch on facts, but you must be prepared with ample data and realistic projections. Never try to guesstimate your company's worth or future projections without having analyzed real-world numbers first. Walking into a pitch without knowing your profit margins, revenues, growth metrics, cost per acquisition and other figures is a big mistake.
5. Focus on what you're good at. Beyond learning how to pitch your venture to investors, there are valuable lessons to be gained from the way the Sharks handle their personal investment portfolios. Chris Miles, founder and cash flow expert of [Money Ripples](#), points out that Kevin O'Leary consistently invests in businesses in line with his own expertise. "Even he will pass on opportunities he doesn't understand," Miles says. As a small-business owner, you can take a cue

from O'Leary by focusing your efforts in what you're good at and what you know best. If you don't know much about the stock market, don't try to play in that playground. Instead, invest your time and money in your own company—it's what you know best.

6. Have a plan for scaling your company. You also need to know precisely how you'll grow your business—both for yourself and potential investors. If you're stuck running in a hamster wheel with no real way to move forward, your profit potential is limited. Some ventures are more scalable than others. If you're making a product from your garage, how will you handle increased demand? What resources do you need to make that happen? A larger-scale operation often means increased costs for facilities, labor and materials. In some cases, this cuts into your profit margins, making your business less viable for the long haul and less appealing to investors.

Angela Stringfellow is a freelance writer, social media strategist and complete content marketing junkie obsessed with all things Web, written word and marketing. Angela blogs via Contently.com.

VIII. One Shot: Don't Miss Your Chance to Blow Away Investors

A presentation to investors could determine the fate of your business—read these tips to ensure it's a good one.

Vivian Giang

Freelance writer/editor/producer, Various online and print publications

<https://www.americanexpress.com/en-us/business/trends-and-insights/articles/how-to-make-a-successful-presentation-to-investors/?intlink=us-openf-read-more?intlink=us-openf-read-more>

When you need financing for your ideas, convincing investors that your pitch is worth their time and money is essential.

The first thing you need to do is make sure you can demonstrate that whoever you're pitching your idea to—venture capital firm, bank or investment group—believes that he or she will eventually get something out of the deal. You need to research your audience, cater to their needs and make a connection between what your business does and why the firm should care.

"An audience you want funding from wants to understand the viability of your business—the potential market for what you're offering, why your value proposition exceeds that of the competition and your success thus far," says Bill Rosenthal, CEO of [Communispond](#), which provides employee training on how to communicate effectively. "Line up your numbers—but don't present them like an accountant would, with only a cold, hard recitation of the figures. You have to show your passion for the business."

Rosenthal shares some tips with us on making a successful presentation to investors. Whether you're a small startup or running a larger business, these tips can help you develop your best game plan.

1. Know your environment. Arrive at important meetings early so you can examine the atmosphere, and also so you can know what kind of room you'll be presenting in. For example, you need to know if the room will accommodate an AV presentation or whether you need to bring equipment. If you're going to use visuals, Rosenthal said you should keep them simple, using "no more than four lines of copy per slide and no more than four words per line."

2. Know how much time you have. Rosenthal told us you should plan a presentation that lasts 10 minutes, less than the time you're allotted, so you can use the extra time for questions and answers. "You should also prepare a presentation that's half as long—because it's common at venture capital firms in particular for the investment committee to be behind schedule and for the entrepreneur seeking funding to be asked to make the presentation shorter than planned."

Furthermore, you should anticipate questions that you think your audience will ask. "Prepare concise, persuasive answers to them," he said. "Rehearse the answers to questions, too. Use the answer to your last question to tie everything together."

3. Be confident in your idea. This is obvious, but is also essential. If you're trying to get someone to financially support your idea, they should be able to see that you really believe in it.

“Demonstrate your passion by being energetic. Walk in strong, move confidently to where you'll present, stand tall, balanced on both feet with hips wide, smile, survey the room and begin speaking with conviction,” Rosenthal says. “Don't sit. Stand. Don't lean on the table. Underscore your main points with authoritative hand and arm gestures, head turns and changing facial expressions. Rehearse your presentation—and keep rehearsing it — so you can present it without a script. You can't project passion if you're speaking from a script.”

4. Connect with your audience. Even though this is clearly a business meeting, you should make as much of a connection as you can. No one is going to hand you money unless they believe in you or feel like they can trust you. “Use changes in the volume or tone of your voice—and dramatic pauses—when you get to something important,” Rosenthal told us. “Use mostly short sentences, dynamic words, onomatopoeia (“bang!,” “boohoo!”) and active verbs.”

You should also look each person in the audience in the eyes at some point. Whatever you do, don't look at the floor or the opposite wall.

5. Don't forget that it's still a business meeting. On the other hand, even though you're trying to connect with your audience, you should still remember that they hold the finances you need. Therefore, pay close attention to the language you use. Rosenthal advised that you be familiar with the business language and stay away from buzzwords.

IX. 10 Secrets to the Perfect Shark Tank Pitch

What's the secret to the perfect Shark Tank pitch? At the Science of People, we decided to find out by analyzing all 495 [entrepreneurs](#) in Shark Tank episodes.

Of these 495 entrepreneurs—253 of these teams got deals and 242 did not.

What's the difference?

We analyzed each and every one of the 495 pitches looking for patterns. We found there were distinct—and learnable differences between successful and unsuccessful entrepreneurs. **This report outlines exactly what we can learn from the 'yes' deals and what we want to avoid from the 'no' deals to [make our own pitches more effective](#).**

Executive Summary:

What do the sharks look for in a pitch? [How about in an entrepreneur](#)? It turns out the success of your deal on Shark Tank isn't just about your idea.

We found that there are indicators of success for entrepreneurs who are more likely to get a 'yes' from the sharks. As a viewer, it's fun to watch for these cues. [As a pitcher, it's essential to know how to use these cues](#).

We discovered pitch deal makers that drastically increased an entrepreneurs success rate. We also found a deal breaker—a simple flub that destroyed an entrepreneur's chance of getting a yes. **We put these into 10 specific tactics successful entrepreneurs can use to get their own yes.** Successful pitches were more effective in 10 ways:

1. Credible
2. Agreeable
3. Interactive
4. Captivating
5. Relevant
6. Entertaining
7. Confident
8. Powerful
9. Funny
10. Inspirational

We break down exactly how each successful pitch showcased these characteristics and how you can use them too.

The Puzzle:

If you're like me, you watch Shark Tank and try to guess which entrepreneurs are going to land a deal. Sometimes you are shocked to see who gets turned down and other times you feel like you knew from the moment they walked through the door.

When I first started watching Shark Tank, I couldn't help but notice that there were very similar products, but some got deals and others didn't. Here are some examples:

- ZipZ (S6, Ep. 11) and Copa Di Vino (S2, Ep. 1) both pitched companies that produce single-serving cups of wine. ZipZ's founder made one of the biggest deals in Shark Tank history with Kevin O'Leary. Copa Di Vino pitched in the tank *twice* and never got a deal.
- Magic Moments (S5, Ep. 9) and Groove Book (S5, Ep. 13) are both services that turn your social media pictures into printed photos. Groove Book got multiple offers and made a deal with Mark Cuban and Kevin O'Leary—and was recently acquired by Shutterfly for 14.5 million! Magic Moments got no offers.
- Rufflebutts (S5, Ep. 5) and Squeeky Knees (S5, Ep. 19) are both children's clothing companies that were pitched by parents. Rufflebutts got offers from multiple sharks and made a deal with Lori. Squeeky Knees got no offers.
- Wicked Good Cupcakes (S4, Ep. 22) and Blondie's Cookies (S3, Ep. 11) are both baked goods companies run by women. Wicked Good Cupcakes got a deal, Blondie's Cookies didn't.

These products were all strikingly similar, but had very different results. This all boils down to the pitch. How does each entrepreneur frame their product for the sharks? We examined each pitch to find the patterns.

Myths Busted:

Our findings surprised us and busted some common myths about the tank.

Myth #1: Never Step Out of the Tank

Kevin O'Leary is famous for warning entrepreneurs not to step out of the pitch session to call a loved one or discuss a deal. He often says, "Bad things happen when you leave the Shark Tank." We found that O'Leary is wrong.

- 43 of the 253 total 'yes' deals stepped out of the tank (17%)
- Only 13 of the 242 total 'no' deals stepped out (5%)

Bottom Line: [More successful pitchers](#) stepped out of the tank—don't be afraid to ask for more time.

Myth #2: Don't Cry!

Most people think that crying makes you look weak or underprepared. Corcoran once told a sniffing female entrepreneur: "You got to give up this crying stuff, the minute a woman cries you are giving up your power." However, crying didn't seem to break a deal. A total of 29 entrepreneurs have cried in the tank. Surprisingly, more successful entrepreneurs have cried than unsuccessful ones.

- 19 out of 253 total successful entrepreneurs cried (8%)

- 10 out of 242 unsuccessful entrepreneurs cried (4%)

Bottom Line: While it is certainly not recommended, crying won't kill your deal.

Myth #3: Opposites Attract

We like to think that opposites attract, but actually the more similar an entrepreneur was to a shark, the more likely they were to get a deal. Some sharks would actually say something like "I see myself in you" or "You remind me of myself." When you hear this—it's a positive sign!

Now that we have busted some myths, let's look at the patterns we can learn from.

Note: We only see a small portion of an entire pitch on Shark Tank. So what we end up seeing in an episode is heavily edited. Obviously, we were only able to code what is actually shown on screen. Even though we were not able to see the entire pitch, we were still able to glean fascinating patterns—especially because every pitch shows the entrepreneur's grand entrance and the first 30-seconds of their pitch. We relied heavily upon that area since it was shown in almost every pitch.

10 Pitch Tips You Can Use From Shark Tank:

We found that the sharks were looking for specific cues from an entrepreneur to know if they wanted to take a bite out of the deal. Here's what they were looking for:

- Sharks invested in 22 people 'when they saw themselves'
- 9% of 'yes' deals had [this shark attraction](#), while only 2% of 'no' deals did

Bottom Line: Appeal to the person you are pitching by showcasing your similarities.

#1: Credibility

Many Shark Tank watchers believe that the [charisma of an entrepreneur](#) matters more than anything else. While charisma is essential, the actual deal breaker is:

Math Problems!

No matter how charismatic an entrepreneur was, if they didn't know their math, had fuzzy numbers or asked for an unreasonable equity split then the deal was almost twice as likely to fail.

- 64% of 'no' deals had some kind of math problem.
- Only 32% of 'yes' deals had some kind of math problem.

Bottom Line: Know your numbers!

Math problems were such a deal breaker that we could only use pitches that didn't have math problems for the rest of the data to see any patterns. If you don't make it past this first tip, nothing else seems to matter!

#2: Agreeableness

One thing that we analyzed was each entrepreneur's grand entrance—you know, that long walk down the aquarium-paneled hallway and their greeting to the sharks once they stepped on the carpet. We watched the [entrepreneurs' body language](#) and found that the most important thing an entrepreneur could do was:

Nod & Smile

The entrepreneurs who smiled broadly and then nodded at the sharks before starting their pitch were much more likely to have a successful interaction. In fact, the smile and nod almost doubled the chances of getting a 'yes' no matter the combination. This is because a smile and nod is a very polite way of [nonverbally signaling friend not foe](#). We like to work with friendly, agreeable people. This was an easy and immediate way an entrepreneur could show off warmth.

- 14% of 'yes' deals had the nod, while only 7% of 'no' deals had the nod.
- 45% of successful entrepreneurs smiled while walking in, only 21% of unsuccessful entrepreneurs did.
- The few entrepreneurs who both smiled and nodded were 9% more likely to get a deal.

Shark Robert Herjavec said that starting strong is incredibly important:

"If you don't get our attention, if you don't sell us on you at the beginning, it doesn't really matter what happens afterwards. I don't think there's ever been an investment where we're like, 'Man, hate that person. Really boring person. Well, let's give them money.' That's the first thing we look at."

Check out these photos of Lani Lazzari from Simple Sugars in Season 4, Episode 20 who nods and smiles right as she walks into the tank. Cuban is seen smiling back...and he was her investor in the end:



Bottom Line: [Boost your first impression](#) with a hello, smile and nod.

Special Note: We also rated entrepreneurs on their smiling throughout the entire pitch on a 1 to 5 scale. We did this based on frequency and broadness of smiles. For example, fake smiles

got a lower rating. Smiling throughout the pitch was only moderately helpful. ‘Yes’ deals had an average rating of 2.15 for their smile, while ‘no’ deals had an average rating of 1.75 for their smile—not a big enough difference to matter much, but still interesting!

#3: Interactive

Taste our sauce! Try our hat! Touch our fabric! Play our game! Another aspect we calculated was the amount of pitches that involved some kind of product interaction or entrepreneur and shark contact. We hypothesized that interaction would prove important because it got the sharks physically involved in the pitch. When you can touch an idea or taste a product, it becomes far more powerful. Some entrepreneurs even *created* an interaction when they didn’t have a tangible product by asking a shark to participate in the pitch or guess an answer. We calculated all of these differences:

- 81% of successful deals had some kind of interaction
- The top three kinds of interaction were examining the product (55%), consuming the product (21%) or participating in the pitch (13%)

Bottom Line: Involve people in your pitch.

Here is an example of how Kisstixx in Season 3, Episode 7 gave an interactive pitch. These entrepreneurs had O’Leary and Corcoran participate in their lip balm demo creating a humor moment as well:



Bottom Line: Get your investors to kiss. No, I am totally joking. Don’t do that. But do try to make your pitch interactive.

#4: Captivating

Every shark loves a good story! Most of the successful pitches had some kind of story—either the entrepreneur’s personal story or the story of how the product was invented. Stories captivate our imagination. [Research has found](#) that as we listen to a story our brain actually syncs up with the storyteller. So if an entrepreneur tells a story about eating ice cream, the

sharks' brains light up as if they are eating ice cream. It's a way that we bond with people. And successful pitchers wanted the sharks to feel bonded to their ideas so they would invest!

- 58% of successful deals had a story

Kevin O'Leary was asked about the secrets to a successful Shark Tank pitch. His #1 tip? Tell a great story:

"Each pitch must tell a story about money: the lack of it, the need for it and how it can be made. As a born marketer and salesman, I tell my employees all the time: if you cannot tell the story and put your prospective customer into the narrative of our financial products, you will fail. Good TV is no different from good storytelling...Oh and you better be able to get your story out in less than 90 seconds, or you can pack your bags because my money's already looking somewhere else."

Bottom Line: Share your story!

The perfect example of this is the Bottle Breacher pitch in Season 6, Episode 8. He came with a military background and family story behind the idea...the Sharks ate it up!

Speaking of being *captivating*, learn 14 more secrets to success in my latest book, [Captivate](#):

#5: Relevant

As we mentioned above, making yourself relatable can give you a helpful edge with a shark. The easiest way to do this was using your story to be captivating #4 and pointing out similarities with a shark. Some entrepreneurs actually said, "Like you Damon..." or "I did the same thing as you Mark..." This helped! Sharks like investing in people like them.

Mark Cuban called 16-year-old founder Benjamin Stern "Mini Me" when he pitched his bottle-less bath company Nohbo in Season 7, Episode 19. Cuban gave him \$100,000 in exchange for 25% equity.

- 9% of 'yes' deals had a shark who said they 'saw themselves' in the entrepreneur
- When you look at deals broken down by gender we see this:

Shark:	Males:	Females:
Kevin Harrington	8	5
Barbara Corcoran	20	31
Kevin O'Leary	25	12
Lori Greiner	30	25
Robert Herjavec	37	17
Damon John	36	21
Mark Cuban	45	31

- Mark Cuban and Barbara Corcoran have invested in exactly the same number of women: 31. However, Corcoran has a higher percentage—more of her deals are with women.
- Lori Greiner, despite saying she is the queen of investing in women actually invested in less women deals than Barbara. Additionally, the majority of her deals were with men.

Bottom Line: Make you and your pitch relevant.

Our Shark Tank research was covered in Entrepreneur! Watch the story here:

#6: Entertaining

The other aspect we wanted to examine was something called the Pique Technique. This is a principle in psychology that says humans prefer anything out of the ordinary. A team of clever researchers in the 1990s hired an actor to beg for money on the street. He had three different versions of his ask:

1. “Can you spare any change?” 44% effective
2. “Can you spare a quarter?” 64% effective
3. “Can you spare 37 cents?” **75% effective**

We wondered if this would work in the Tank. If an entrepreneur adds a unique request or does something bizarre in their pitch—does it catch the shark’s attention? First of all, many entrepreneurs tried something unique (I am sure at the push of the producers—the Pique Technique makes great television).

- 270 out of 495 deals used some kind of Pique Technique
- 63% successful pitches used the Pique Technique

The Cycloramic pitch in Season 5, Episode 16 had an inventor that created an app that used the vibrations of a phone to make it spin on its own in 360 degrees and capture a panorama:



Bottom Line: Try something different to capture attention in your pitch!

#7: Confident

We wanted to know if successful entrepreneurs used confidence cues more. We typically signal confidence as humans [with our posture and stance](#). So first, we rated each entrepreneur on their ‘power stance’ on a 1 to 5 scale. 1 was given to very low power posers—entrepreneurs who crossed their arms or stood in bad posture. 5 was given to entrepreneurs who took up a lot of space and who had a relaxed, upright posture.

High Power Example: Ryan the Cowboy from 'Lose 12 Inches in 12 Workouts' (S4, Ep. 19), Nate from 'The Mission Belt' (S4, Ep. 22), and Josh and Diane from 'The Red Dress Boutique' (S6, Ep. 5):



Low Power Example: Legal Grind (S1, Ep. 13), TriMi Tank (S3, Ep. 12), Fort Magic (S5, Ep. 25):



Bottom Line: Stand strong, stand calm.

#8: Powerful

Humans also signal their self-assurance [with their vocal power](#). We rated entrepreneur's vocal power on a 1 to 5 scale. Entrepreneurs who got a 1 had higher-pitched, monotone or squeaky voices—showing high anxiety. Entrepreneurs who got a 5 had a relaxed, consistent vocal tone without cracks or breaks.

Vocal power is one of the hardest techniques we recommend in this report. We [encourage our students](#) to use breath to keep their voice nice and steady. We noticed that when entrepreneurs got especially nervous in the tank, they ran out of air and their voice cracked. Before going into a pitch, practice it nice and slow with choreographed pauses—these pauses give you a chance to take a deep breath and slow down.

Bottom Line: Speak slow, speak low.

These are great examples of a high vocal power pitches:

- I Want to Draw A Cat for You (S3, Ep. 2)
- BeatBox Beverages (S6, Ep. 6)
- Scrub Daddy (S4, Ep. 7)

If you want to check out some great examples of some low vocal power pitch, look at:

- Ionic Ear (S1, Ep. 1)
- The Sullivan Generator (S3, Ep. 11)
- Sticky Note Holder (S1, Ep. 2)

#9: Funny

You will probably not be surprised to learn that using [humor pays off for entrepreneurs](#). We counted what we call 'humor moments' during each pitch. These were moments where either the entrepreneur told a joke, the group laughed or people smiled. Not all of these moments had flat out belly laughter—we counted the lighter moments where humor was attempted and got some response. These humor moments were more frequent in the successful pitches:

- Successful pitches had an average of 2.15 humor moments
- Unsuccessful pitches had an average of 1.93 humor moments

This is a great example of humor moments during:

- Broccoli Wad in Season 2, Episode 4 had celebrity spokesperson Vinny Pastore from the Sopranos who shared a flirtatious exchange with Corcoran. She eventually cut a deal with Vinny instead of the original founder of the idea. Corcoran had already stepped out but came back in after the deal was rearranged and a couple laughs were exchanged.



Bottom Line: Bring in the humor to lighten the mood and boost your pitch.

#10: Inspirational

The last thing we took note of was if an entrepreneur told a hero's journey. The hero's journey is a concept coined by American scholar Joseph Campbell. Campbell argued that we are drawn to a hero's struggle, call to adventure and success. Our most famous characters, novels and movies follow the hero's journey—think of Odysseus or Nancy Drew. Many entrepreneurs in the Tank also have this success story:

Step #1: Call to adventure to start a business

Step #2: Struggle to make ends meet, get the business off the ground

Step #3: Success point or breakthrough

We wondered if sharks would find this journey appealing and be drawn to invest in these entrepreneurs. We were right:

- 21% of successful entrepreneurs told a hero's journey tale in their pitch
- Only 5% of unsuccessful entrepreneurs did

Mr. Todd of Mr. Todd's Pie Factory in Season 1, Episode 1 is a great example of a hero's journey. You can also check out Aldo Orta Jewelry (S2, Ep. 9), Mee Ma's Louisiana Gumbo Brick (S4, Ep. 23) and the Tom + Chee (S4, Ep. 26) pitches.



Bottom Line: Take people on your journey.

The Top Deals of All Time:

What happens after an entrepreneur gets the deal? We looked at ten of the best businesses to come out of Shark Tank based on an analysis by [Forbes](#). We wanted to know if the best businesses long-term used similar strategies during their pitch as we've outlined in this report. Here's the list of the highest earning businesses facilitated by Shark Tank deals:

Rank	Business	Episode Number	2015 Revenue
1	Scrub Daddy	407	\$20M
2	Squatty Potty	609	\$18.7M
3	Tipsy Elves	512	\$10-15M
4	Breathometer	502	\$9-10M
5	Rugged Maniac	526	\$8.4M
6	Tower Paddle Boards	309	\$7.2M
7	Grace and Lace	510	\$6.4M
8	Lumio	615	\$6M
9	Tom + Chee	426	\$5.4M
10	Nuts 'n More	418	\$5M

The top ten businesses all pitched in Seasons 3-6, with the oldest idea pitched in 2012. Here's how they ranked on our tips:

1. Credibility – **70%** had no math problems

We know from our research that entrepreneurs with math problems in their pitch are far less likely to get the deal. This shows that the most successful businesses after Shark Tank had clear and accurate math in their pitches.

2. Agreeableness – **50%** smiles

Entrepreneurs who smiled during their pitch make up half of the most successful businesses. We know that when entrepreneurs smile upon entrance to the Tank, they are more likely to get the deal.

3. Interactive – **70%** had some kind of interaction

81% of all successful deals had some kind of interaction and the top businesses were no exception. The majority of these pitches included some kind of interaction with the sharks.

4. Captivating – **30%** told a captivating story

We found that most successful pitches included some kind of story—an experience or personal anecdote told by the entrepreneur. 30% of the best businesses told a captivating story in their pitch.

5. Relevant – **90%** had gender relevance

A huge majority of the top businesses saw gender relevance in their pitch meaning the entrepreneur and the shark who made the deal were the same gender.

6. Entertaining – **70%** used a pique technique

The Pique Technique is when an entrepreneur includes something bizarre, unusual or unique in their pitch. We found that when an entrepreneur included some sort of 'oddity,' he or she was

more likely to get the deal. And no exception for the top businesses—most used the Pique Technique in their original pitch.

7. Confident – **90%** had an above average power stance

To gain trust and respect from the sharks, you gotta' look the part! Almost every top business had a [strong power stance](#) during their pitch. Remember, to get the deal, stand strong.

8. Powerful – **80%** had an above average vocal power

Entrepreneurs with a low, calm voice tone were more likely to get deals than their high, nervous voice tone counterparts. The same is true for our top businesses—80% had [above average vocal power](#).

9. Funny – **40%** had above average funny moments

Incorporating humor in a pitch can definitely play to the entrepreneur's advantage. A little under half of the top businesses made sharks laugh during their initial pitch.

10. Inspirational – **20%** had a hero's journey

Entrepreneurs who shared their story of idea to failure to growth often sparked the ears (and wallets) of the sharks. 20% of the top businesses shared their own hero's journey during their pitch.

It's Not Just the Idea:

You are just as important as your idea. If you show up confident and powerful with an inspiring, entertaining story and make the people laugh and relate to you, then you are much more likely to succeed. Veteran shark Barbara Corcoran believes in the power of the entrepreneur:

"I always pick the jockey over the horse. Every successful investment I've made so far has a great entrepreneur pushing it. If the idea or model is wrong, I can fix it, but if the entrepreneur is a clunker, I lose money."

Daymond John also believes in the power of the pitch:

"I will always say it: You are never going to come up with anything new in the world. You're gonna only come up with a new form of delivery or a new angle. We invest in people, no matter what."

[Whether you are pitching a new business or sharing your elevator pitch](#), use the 10 pitch techniques we learned from Shark Tank to hook people in.

Coverage:

Our Shark Tank research has been featured by:

- [Entrepreneur Magazine](#)
- [Fox News](#)

*Be sure to read more about our coverage in these links!

Researchers:

[Vanessa Van Edwards](#) is a behavioral investigator and published author. She figures out the science of what makes people tick at her human behavior research lab, the Science of People. As a geeky, modern-day Dale Carnegie, her innovative work has been featured on NPR, Business Week and CNN.

[José Piña](#) is one of our Science of People researchers and a certified Body Language Trainer. He likes the idea of combining solid research with modern examples to give you fresh, up to date tips and skills. All experiments are executed with the ambition to find out how and why do humans function and how the results can benefit you.

Citations:

[Santos, Michael D., Craig Leve, and Anthony R. Pratkanis. "Hey Buddy, Can You Spare Seventeen Cents? Mindful Persuasion and the Pique Technique1." *J Appl Social Psychol Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 24.9 \(1994\): 755-64.](#)

[Barraza, Jorge A., and Paul J. Zak. "Empathy toward Strangers Triggers Oxytocin Release and Subsequent Generosity." *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1167.1 \(2009\): 182-89.](#)

[Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1972. Print.](#)

Nudelman, Richard Feloni and Mike. "The 'Shark Tank' Investors Reveal Their Investing Secrets and Most Profitable Deals." *Business Insider*. Business Insider, Inc, 16 Oct. 2015.

[Cuddy, Amy J.C., Caroline A. Wilmuth, and Dana R. Carney. "The Benefit of Power Posing Before a High-Stakes Social Evaluation." *Harvard Business School Working Paper*, No. 13-027, September 2012.](#)

[Love, Roger. *Roger Love's Vocal Power: Speaking with Authority, Clarity and Conviction*. Your Coach In A Box; Unabridged Edition, 2005. Print.](#)

10 SECRETS

TO THE PERFECT SHARK

TANK PITCH

1 CREDIBILITY

Get Your Numbers Right -- 64% of "no" deals had some kind of math problem.



2 AGREEABLENESS

Smile & Nod -- 45% of successful entrepreneurs smiled while walking in, only 21% of unsuccessful entrepreneur did.

3 INTERACTIVE

Involve People in Your Pitch -- 81% of successful deals had some kind of interaction.



4 CAPTIVATING

Share Your Story -- 58% of successful deals had a story.

5 RELEVANT

Make You and Your Pitch Relevant -- 9% of "yes" deals had a shark who said they "saw themselves" in the entrepreneur.

6 ENTERTAINING

Pique Technique -- 63% of successful pitches used the Pique Technique.

7 CONFIDENT

Stand Strong, Stand Calm -- Successful entrepreneurs had an average 3.98/5 rating for their power stance.



8 POWERFUL

Speak Slow, Speak Low -- Successful entrepreneurs had an average 4.23/5 rating for their vocal power.

9 FUNNY

Humor Moments -- Successful pitches had an average of 2.15 humor moments.

10 INSPIRATIONAL

Hero's Journey -- 21% of successful entrepreneurs told a hero's journey tale in their pitch.