



6 STEPS TO PERFECTING YOUR PITCH

If you feel like your pitches keep falling flat or are struggling to generate excitement, check out these tips and tweaks to take your pitch from ho-hum to irresistible.



#1 ADJUST FOR YOUR AUDIENCE

Who are you talking to? It's easy to have a one-size-fits-all pitch in your back pocket, but it isn't going to draw in the masses. Pivot to match who you're speaking to. While the venture capitalists might be most concerned with numbers, logistics, and hard data, others are going to need a more emotional component.

The goal isn't to explain every single nuanced detail of your business plan. Numbers don't always dazzle. Instead, tell a story. Your pitch should weave together pathos and logos in different measures depending on who your target is. Don't rely solely on one or the other.

Tell your story. Sometimes the person is more important than the idea (or, at least, it's more engaging!). Be ready and willing to tweak your pitch to match the audience. What do they care about? What gets them excited?

#2 AIM HIGH

You're going to encounter people who want to negotiate. That's just the nature of investing and raising capital. Because you might be eager to acquire funding or resources, you may be tempted to compromise – and end up in a less-than-ideal arrangement. Avoid this by aiming high. Demonstrate confidence in what you're trying to do by going for the gusto.

A conservative approach may feel safer, but it's not as thrilling and leaves little room for satisfying negotiations. Believe in what you're doing. Convey that confidence in how you pitch your partnerships.

#3 HAVE RESEARCH READY

The goal of a great pitch isn't to dispense every detail of your business plan. You're not trying to overload people with information, you're trying to sell them on your story and your idea. Inundating your pitch with facts and statistics can do more harm than good, so don't lean on them in the beginning.

With that said, you need to have that research ready to go! Your pitch doesn't have to contain everything, but you should be able to cover everything you might be asked about. Have key statistics ready, documentation prepared, and numbers that reflect the vast potential in your idea.

If you aren't prepared, it may seem as though you have a big dream with no hard facts to make it a reality.



#4 STOP RELYING ON THE SCRIPT

We hear about the “elevator pitch” all the time. The idea is that you should be able to pack your pitch into a 30-second window. This can be useful, as you do want your pitch to be concise. However, there's a danger in relying on a script. People don't act according to plan and you may find yourself faced with questions and criticisms you are unprepared to answer.

That will rattle not only your confidence, but that of the person you're pitching to.

Be prepared not to talk at someone, but with them. Make your pitch conversational.

#5 PRACTICE

Practice makes perfect. You're going to have times where your pitch falls flat. You're going to flub it. That's just part of the process! Practice goes a long way towards preventing these common pitch faux pas. Recruit a colleague or brutally honest friend to practice on. Allow them to critique your form, identify what would stop them from investing in your idea, and offer outside insights.

After a pitch, examine yourself. Don't obsess over every word but identify where you can be more effective and adjust accordingly.



#6 BE CLEAR, BE CONCISE

Simple language is key. When you deliver your pitch, the audience should know without a shadow of a doubt a) what your product or service is b) why it matters and c) how you're going to make it happen. You need a clear, concrete mission statement that works in tandem with a real, fact-based plan.

Again, all of the details aren't necessary unless your audience asks for them. Get in and get out unless there are indications that your audience wants more. You want your pitch to be easily understandable and digestible.

Too much at once can be overwhelming and confusing. While an elevator pitch isn't always the way to go, do try to pack your pitch into the smallest effective timeframe.