

# Pitching Your Business Idea

Career Kickstart



# Effective Communication



**Communicating is something we all do each day but with some preparation and structure you can build your capability to master the art of effective communication on a daily basis.**

This will enable you to do so much more in both your personal and professional life including; resolving differences, expressing our emotions and opinions, building strong and trusted relationships, garnering support the list goes on... It's an important skill to practice and develop everyday.

**So how can you develop effective communication?**

They say you only get one chance to make a first impression and in this fast paced world, time is of the essence. So how do you make a big impression in a short space of time?

What if we could give you a technique that would make you better at presenting, better at influencing people, would you be interested?

**It's called pitching.**

Pitching is a discipline that we instil in our entrepreneurs from day one. It's not just for entrepreneurs though, you can use it too. It's a life skill to help you clearly and concisely communicate your ideas and garner support.

Today we're going to talk about a 60 second pitching but again this technique is adaptable and can be used for longer pitches and also written pitches/ presentations too.

So let's start at the beginning;

**What is a pitch?**

It simply a communication tool but it's most useful when you have a short amount of time to get your point across. Its action orientated so should always have a goal, a purpose.

It's a concept that originates from the states. We have all heard the term an elevator pitch. You get that one moment to make an impression on someone so make it count.

The technique of pitching is not only used for a 60 second pitch but the concept can be applied to everything from simply introductions, job interviews, networking, presenting projects, public speaking... the list goes on.

### **So what does a pitch look like?**

Following a simple structure and a few golden rules will help you to organise what you want to say, communicate your point concisely and ultimately give your message the desired impact.

So here's the structure that we use with entrepreneurs to help them communicate their idea/ business to an audience, ensuring that all the key information is covered and that there is a call to action:

- **Hook** – Start with an attention grabbing first sentence, designed to hook the audience
- **Pain Point** – Define the problem or the reason that you are pitching and be clear as to who it impacts
- **Solution** – Explain briefly what your solution is and how it solves the pain point
- **Market Opportunity** – How many people have the problem? I.e. what's the potential for this?
- **Advantages** – How is this better than it was before? What are the advantages?
- **Team** – Impress upon the listener, that you've got an A-Team who are the obvious people
- To crack this. Who are? What is their experience?
- **Ask** – Finally, what do you want from the listener. It's a call to action

It's important to remember that the pitch structure can be amended for different purposes for example change it to an introductory pitch, or a pitch for an interview if that's more relevant but as a rule follow the structure and don't use more than 150 words for a 60 second pitch or you'll struggle to fit it all in.

### **So what makes an ok pitch into an amazing pitch?**

A great pitch first of all need to be authentic, original and delivered with passion. The content can be engaging, funny, informative but make sure you are telling a story and the audience is brought along on that journey with you.

It shouldn't be packed full of jargon or information that only you understand. We have saying, make sure it passes the 'Granny test' and if you pitched it to your granny, would she understand it? If not, change it. Make it simple.

Don't use soft words like "Hope" and "hopefully" that may reduce the confidence that your audience are building in what you are saying.

Your pitch has to exude confidence and knowledge.....I'm maybe, possibly going to look to move into Europe next year, this immediately cast's doubt in the minds of an investor or any audience member for that matter.

Now that you have the structure and the content, what about the delivery?

This can often be the nerve wracking bit, actually delivering the pitch in front of an audience but there are a few things you can do to ensure that it comes across confidently and clearly:

- **Tell a story;** as we've already mentioned, forget that it's a pitch, just tell a story. Nobody knows what you were planning to say so don't worry if you go off track. You are the subject matter expert so just tell a story.
- **Breathe;** Take a deep breath before and during your pitch, and take your time.
- **Be yourself;** Audiences buy into people, so bring your personality out and be yourself
- **Smile;** A smiling face goes a long way so make sure you smile
- **Speak slowly;** just because you only have 60 seconds doesn't mean you need to speak 100 mph. Speak slowly and don't use more than 150 words so you can land each point clearly.
- **Body language;** be aware of what your body language is saying to the audience. Assume a confident pose, plant your feet on the ground and make sure your hands aren't fidgeting; this will go along way to making sure your message lands confidently with your audience.

Finally, it goes without saying but **practice makes perfect**. The more you practice your pitch the better it will become.