

8 Great tips for entrepreneurs to create a winning pitch

One of the richest men on earth, [Bill Gates](#), says [“half of Silicon Valley startups are silly.”](#) He’s right, though perhaps a bit blunt. According to [Microsoft](#)’s founder, plenty of great sounding one-line ideas won’t actually work.

Stay out of the “silly 50%” category by sharing your idea with a proper pitch. Whether your vision is a Facebook-size epic or a thriving brick and mortar business, it’s absolutely critical to get clear on your value proposition, competitive advantage and growth strategies. And do it early! How? Prepare a winning pitch.



“Pitching utterly focuses your mind to *discover* and *prove* the assumptions behind your idea,” says Roy Terry, a professional pitch coach based in the heart of Silicon Valley. Read on for his tips on how to pitch smarter, learn faster and build your dream.

1. Understand the goal of your pitch.

A pitch is a call to arms. You have a just cause to create a good result in the world and you’re asking others to share in your triumph. You want them to feel that it’s good for them to get involved. The goal is to motivate your audience to take action through logic plus emotion.

Emotion is more powerful than logic. Logic gets you in the door, but emotion gets you the business. The best starting point to generate emotion through your unique exciting idea. You want to pitch the “wow factor” of your idea. Ultimately it’s emotion that moves people to buy your product.

2. Use short colorful phrases to make your pitch stick.

It’s a common short-fall of many people to use long sentences. Punctuate your pitch with short sentences that carry your message. Mixing sentence styles and pace literally changes the listeners’ openness to receive your message. Remember to slow down and instead of giving explanations, make a crisp statement. Streamline your message to win converts.

3. Use a winning structure.

A pitch takes the audience from troubles to triumph. Start with a 15-second sound bite that captures the what of your company. Explain how you deliver value to specific customers. Then describe the problem.

Remember, the flip-side of every problem is an opportunity. Are there enough people who care enough about this issue? Incorporate a story to illustrate why this problem is important to a lot of people. Show how your solution solves the problem. Make it practical, unique and superior.

SAVVY TOONS



4. Incorporate story.

The most fertile ground for your pitch is a personal story. Tell people how you found the vision for your business. A problem is like a bear. You want them to feel the sense of an agitated bear in the room. Your solution calms the bear or makes him go away entirely. People have lots of bears in their lives, but they don't have the time or know-how to make them all go away.

The second fertile ground is the story of how you realized that your solution was the winner. Tell a story about how a customer expressed their enthusiasm or gratitude for your solution. Make sure each anecdote has a conflict and resolution.

5. Rehearse with adult supervision.

Your peers and best friends don't have the best perspective. Seek a friendly senior advisor and take their advice. Ask your expert if they would repeat your pitch to someone else. It's best to get advice from a number of people, but if you work with a pitch expert, he or she can help you quicker. As you develop the pitch, incorporate changes based on audience response.

The man in this video won the “worst ever pitch and product on [BBC Dragons’ Den.](#)”

Here are some of the common errors he made in his infamous pitch. He failed to do the following:

- provide an overview of his business hypothesis that could have demonstrated savvy or credibility
- convincingly demonstrate a large or serious problem
- convey unique value and defensible advantage of the technology
- respond flexibly to questions and criticism

6. Be approachable and willing to learn.

The purpose of your pitch is to motivate the audience, so be responsive to their viewpoint and willing to acknowledge and value their suggestions. When they view you as an expert collaborator who can help them solve their problem, calm their fears, they’re likely to engage.

7. Make your pitch a feel-good celebration.

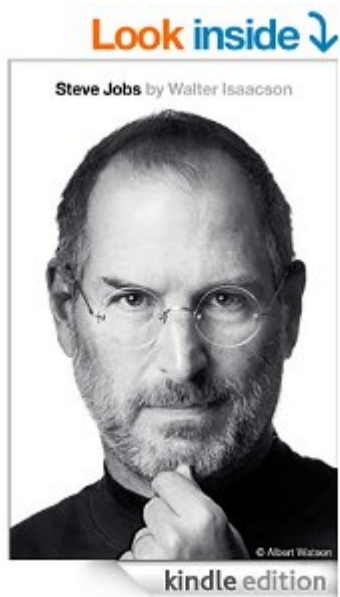
This point relates to both structure and story-telling. You start with a serious problem and in the end, you offer a great solution. A great pitch is the ultimate feel-good story where the good guy wins in the end. Make your feel-good story extend into future solutions for more and more people.

8. Make it easy to follow up.

Offer at least two ways for people to take action. A pitch without an invitation is flat. A pitch needs to be about the future. Let them know what you want them to do. In traditional advertising this is your call to action (CTA).

Check out this vintage pitch of [Steve Jobs](#) introducing the iPod. It’s an oldie, but a goody.

In this pitch, Jobs covers all the usual persuasive points. However, since he's speaking as a famous person with an iconic and legendary company, he can skip some steps. Nevertheless, here's what Jobs does well:



- **Overview:** It's [Apple](#) introducing a new product. He explains in simple and compelling terms how the retail music device business is ripe for disruption.
- **Problem:** All the existing devices have serious capacity, expense and convenience issues. There is no market leader.
- **Solution:** An easy-to-use Apple MP3 device with CD quality that gives you 1000 songs in your pocket.
- **Business Model:** In a consumer pitch, the business model consists of making adoption easy, addressing pragmatic questions such as: How fast will it charge up? Will it work with my computer? How much does it cost? Jobs provides smooth answers to all the basic questions.
- **Ask:** The CTA is omitted because we already know it's a sales pitch and the CTA is "buy one."

Just in case you're looking for a more current-day pitch, check out this winning startup pitch that Vurb did at [TechCrunch DISRUPT](#):

[How to accomplish a big goal: Get in the right position](#)



Roy Terry, The
Primal Pitch

[Roy Terry](#) is a professional pitch coach who has served numerous startups in Silicon Valley and San Francisco. He serves both local and visiting overseas companies. He offers pitch-coaching sessions from time to time at [Hanhai Investments](#). Roy's clients include [HP](#), [Oracle](#), [Talenttoday](#), [Pageyourself](#), [PriceMatch](#) and others. Roy is trained as a public speaker and NLP practitioner. He incorporates knowledge and practice from stage acting and hypnosis.

You probably already have a great value proposition. Now it's time to create a pitch that motivates people to choose you. A great pitch is logic plus emotion. Call or email Roy at [The Primal Pitch](#) to build your winning pitch together.

THE
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PITCH