

# Creating a Pitch Deck

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## General

Pitch decks are specifically created to gain the interest of people who might be interested in investing in your business. There is a standard format to a pitch deck in terms of what should be included, although the order in which you deliver it is up to you. Pitching often happens to larger audiences, such as in pitching competitions, so presenting the pitch is also very important.

There are lots of activities in this section but we do not get you to share them as pitching is often a competitive activity and you won't want to share your competitive advantage, hence you are required to work with friends, colleagues, family and team members, rather than using the forums and wiki's we normally use. Because of this, you won't see the activities appearing as circles on the completion line at the bottom of the platform.

## Resources and Activities

### forum: Announcements

General news and announcements

Link: [Announcements](#)

# Pitching the Business Idea

The first part of every pitch deck is about the business idea. What is the business about? What problem are you solving, and why is your solution viable.

This first video looks at how to put together your picture deck, using Uber as an example amongst others, and looks at how they pitched their problem and solution slides.

Playing time: 12.47

[watch](#)

## Activity

One of the key points the video makes is to list benefits not features, so it doesn't matter how good the technology is that you're developing, what does it do for the customer. Make a list of features of your business idea/solution and what the benefits of this are for the customers.

Slidebean also offer a range of templates that you can use for your own pitchdeck by downloading and editing them. You can access these templates [here](#). Alternatively you can create your own pitchdeck using powerpoint or some other presentation package.

The important thing is to start your pitch in a way that holds their attention rather than loses their attention.

Playing time: 2.32

[watch](#)

## Activity

What is going to be your opening line that will mean you 'start with a bang'? Try to develop a couple of these and test them out with friends as to what impact they have.

This next video helps you break down the jargon and expertise you know about yourself and your product, to explain what you do to people who don't know you, don't know your industry, and don't know your product. The aim is to get people to want to know more.

Playing time: 3.05

[watch](#)

## Activity

Try rephrasing how you currently answer the question 'what do you do?' to 'how do you help people?'.

Practice with people who you don't know - but don't get arrested for scaring people by harassing them on the streets!

# Pitching the People

The second key point of a pitch deck is that the team are believable and the right team for the job. After all, it is the team that the investors will be investing in.

## WHO ARE YOU?

Not only do you need to present a strong, viable team in terms of having the expertise to support the business, but you need to present the personality and culture of the business. In this next video, Gary V talks about how he makes recruitment and investment decisions within a 7 minute conversation, based on whether he likes the person's style and personality and believes they will see it through.

Playing time: 3.29

[watch](#)

## Activity

What are the key personality points you want to convey in your pitch about you and the culture of your company. How are you going to do this?

This is not an easy activity. You might need to discuss this with friends and colleagues, and practice your delivery and choice of words to make sure they are making the impact you want them to.

## Activity

In the 'Pitching your Business Idea' section we looked at shifting from 'what you do' to 'how you help people'. You now need to do this for everyone in your team - how does each person in your team help others? This is what needs to go into your 'team' slide in your pitch deck.

## ROLES AND FUNCTIONAL AREAS

There are some roles that are anticipated to exist in every start-up, particularly tech start-ups. These roles are outlined in this next video:

Playing time: 6.59

[watch](#)

## Activity

Even if you don't call the roles by the names put out in the video, who do you have in your team doing these roles: the vision work (the visionary), the sales (the hustler), the marketing (the magician), the designer (interactive and experience designers), the hacker (the person who builds your product) and the enabler (who keeps things afloat and does all the operations). You may have someone who does more than one role, and

this is ok at the start - but you need to acknowledge this.

If you don't have a team yet, you can talk about how you are going to build your team once you have the investment funding and start to grow. This next video talks about key things to think about when building your team.

Playing time: 1.38

[watch](#)

## **Activity**

Create an organisation chart of the different roles and areas you envisage building in your company as it grows, and then note who does those roles at the moment. It doesn't matter if one person does 6 roles for now, because it demonstrates that you have the vision for growth and understand the functionality you will need in the future.

# Pitching the Numbers

Investors want to know that you've done your financial homework and that the numbers add up and the business can be profitable and return an investment of the magnitude that they want. To a degree these will all be fictitious numbers as you are predicting sales and income into the future, but you need to be able to justify them and present them in a way that shows you understand what you are talking about.

## Business Model

It is important to include an overview sentence or two about how your business makes its money, ie what is its revenue stream. For example, is it a subscription service, or do you sell products or services, or get a commission every time someone uses your service, or some other model?

This video gives you insight into how to cover the business model in your pitch by creating a story.

Playing time: 3.50

[watch](#)

If you're not sure where your revenue is going to come from, have a look at this short video which gives 8 or 9 revenue options and consider the ones that work best for your business proposition.

Playing time: 1.53

[watch](#)

## Activity

For each of the revenue opportunities, complete the Revenue Sources Template with the possibilities you could engage in if needed to generate new revenue streams. Note you don't need to start off by offering them all, and indeed you might only want to be following one, but consider what the others might be as means of diversifying or adding extra revenue streams to the business if your preferred avenue is proving too slow.

Column 1 notes the revenue sources; in column 2, note what you could offer in this revenue stream; in column 3, write down what you would anticipate the market would pay for this option, and the potential size of the market, and in column 4 note how competitive this element of the market is (highly being a market which is already saturated with a lot of competitors, mildly competitive is a market where there are perhaps one or two other players on the periphery).

## Traction

Traction is any evidence you have that demonstrates that your idea is working and business model are working. The best evidence is paying customers and the more you have the better! Customers who promise to pay you when you deliver is second best, and a letter of intent will do if it is all you can get.

If you have people testing the prototype for free, they can also show traction; as can website visits, survey



results and other types of proof, that demonstrate that what you are proposing has a chance to turn into the business you envision.

Dave McClure advises in his video that you need to start with traction.

Playing time: 3.39

[watch](#)

## Activity

Collage all the traction you get on a monthly basis in the [Traction Measurement Template](#) of all the traction you get month by month so you can demonstrate how your business is growing and gaining traction in the market over time. Complete the table as best you can for at least your first month (this month), or for earlier also if you have been working on your idea for longer. [Column 1 is for you to put the dates in for the month you are referring to. Column 2 is for you to note all non-sales traction items, such as website hits, etc. Column 3 is for non-paying customer feedback, so essentially “free trials” or testing of prototypes, which can move to include “promise to pay” customers. And Column 4 is for paying customers of one form or another, which can include those receiving some form of discount. Keep this for at least the first 6 months of your business development, and you can keep going for the first 2 years just to chart your progress against key traction metrics.](#)

An example of traction being used in an elevator pitch is in the attached video which is the winner of a university elevator business pitching competition. Note how he uses market research and pre-sales agreements for his traction rather than actual sales.

Playing time: 1.55

[watch](#)

He also says how the company is going to make its money “on a per cup basis” which gives insight into the business model. In terms of a pitch example, it has all the ingredients in there.

## Resources and Activities

### resource: Revenue Sources Template

**Resource file:** Revenue Source Template.docx

### resource: Traction Measurement Template

**Resource file:** Traction Revenue Template.docx

# Presenting the Pitch

Pitching is a specialist form of presentation. Even great presenters can get nervous pitching as it feels highly competitive and there is a very definite 'prize' that you are after. There are lots and lots of videos you can find on how to pitch, but for the purposes of this curriculum, I've decided to use Mike Moyer's work 'Pitch Ninja'. This has been chosen for a number of reasons. Firstly, when you watch the video's of Mike you will see that he is not a naturally charismatic, huge personality, like Tony Robbins, but is more of a thoughtful, quiet person, so his natural disposition is more of the 'ordinary person' than 'pitch winner' stereotype. Secondly, and probably because of this, he goes into great detail about the minutia of pitching and presenting, and the psychological barriers you will face and how to overcome them.

We take you through his ideas in this curriculum, but strongly recommend you buy his book so you can draw on the examples he uses and get more detail than is provided here.

## PRESENTATION VOICE

Let's start by focussing on your voice. Mike Moyer talks about having a front of room voice and back of room voice during a pitch presentation.

Playing time: 1.32

[watch](#)

The front of room voice is the voice you use most of the time, and the back of the room voice is the voice you use to talk to a huge crowd.

### Activity

Video yourself using your front of the room voice and back of the room voice. Use the same script for both videos and see how they differ. As well as the volume of voice changing, what else changed about you? Did your facial expressions change? Were your eyes wider open for one than the other? Was it easier to concentrate on talking to the camera in one voice or the other? All of these points are worth reflecting on so you are aware of how changing your volume can make a complete change to your pitch presentation, and you might want to consider changing voice during the presentation to change the impact.

### Voice

Make sure you adjust the volume of your voice to the size of the room and the number of people that you are addressing. If you're not sure if people can hear you, ask if people can hear you at the back of the room; they'll let you know if you need to increase the volume because there is nothing worse than half-hearing someone. Once you have set your general volume, you still need a front of room voice; and back of room voice, which vary within your volume parameters. The idea is that everyone can hear you all of the time, not just the front of the room literally when you use your front of room voice.

### Activity

Get a group of friends together and go somewhere relatively noisy, such as a café or a pub. Now try to command everyone's attention by saying something in your back of room voice. Check they all hear you, and also see how many other people roundabouts look

towards you because they heard you also. This is the trick of the good teacher in a school! Once you have their attention, drop to your [front of room](#); voice so that only your friends can hear you, and see how loud this needs to be also. Playing with volume to check you get the right pitch is important, so practice!

Melody is also important [you don't](#) want to talk in a single monotone because it's very boring to listen to. That said, most Australians have the habit of raising the inflection at the end of each sentence which effectively makes every sentence a question rather than a statement (something peculiarly Australian) and can make it sound like you [don't](#) know what you are talking about! Melody refers to the different notes that you use, and the high notes sound insincere and frivolous, while the low notes sound sincere and serious. Using melody helps communicate excitement and energy rather than sounding depressing [but you don't](#) want to sound condescending or like you telling a fairy story. Creating the right flow is important.

Jerry Seinfeld, in this hilarious video, talks about tone of voice in [marriage](#); and how his marriage is a musical! The lessons here translate directly to the pitching process:

Playing time: 5.29

[watch](#)

## Activity

Try out your pitch in a selfie video playing with the melody until you can play it back and are happy with it. Then try it out on friends and get their feedback. You cannot practice this enough.

## Avoiding [um](#);

When we get nervous we tend to forget what the next word is that we want to say, and our speech becomes dotted with the word [um](#); every few words.

This next video talks about how prevent nerves when public speaking [it's](#) a fun watch:

Playing time: 4.39

[watch](#)

[Um](#); isn't the only word you can overuse in an irritating manner. Some people throw in words like [actually](#);; [essentially](#); or [typically](#); at the end or beginning of every sentence. Really annoying is when people say [to be honest](#); as if the rest of the time they are lying! Or people who ask [ok?](#); at the end of each sentence. The audience starts to get hooked on looking for the overused word rather than the words in between.

## Activity

To see if you using unnecessary words, try doing a voice recording of yourself speaking. You can use your iPhone and do it without people realising when you are having a conversation, or you can simply record yourself trying your pitch to listen to what you do. This is a good lesson in self-awareness as you will probably find you sound completely different to how you hear yourself speak. You might find you are too quick or too slow in your speech, too monotonous or too melodious, or use the same words all of the time.

This next video offers a way of training yourself to pause instead of saying “um”, which may be worth trying if you say it a lot:

Playing time: 2.25

[watch](#)

## Pauses and silences

Pauses and silences occur when you shut your mouth “”; and can be exceptionally powerful in a presentation. A long pause can add drama and intrigue. People aren’t expecting it and presenters nerves usually mean they talk too fast. So throwing in pauses and slowing the pace down can be a very powerful disruptor for the audience.

Equally, you don’t want to pause for so long that it looks like you’ve forgotten what you want to say. And when you pause, decide what you are going to do with your eye contact during the pause. Look down and it loses all impact and is embarrassing. Hold the eye contact with the audience and it adds dramatic effect.

## Activity

Write down a speech that takes you about 30 seconds to say (probably 150-200 words). Now record yourself saying it in 30 seconds “”; just read it straight off. Now repeat the recording but take at least 45 seconds by adding pauses, and generally slowing down the pace of delivery. Practice different paces and pausing techniques, recording them as you go and watching them back, until you find the pace that works best for you in terms of the impact you want to make on your audience.

## Preparing your voice

When you need to present or speak in public, you need to prepare your voice so you can project it well without damaging it.

Read the attached document about effective voice techniques:

<https://www.voices.com/blog/6-preparations-great-vocal-performance/>

## Activity

Work out a short 2 minute warmup exercise you can do prior to any pitching or public speaking. Make it part of your routine so it becomes a ritual to help you settle your nerves prior to pitching or public speaking. Focus particularly on your breathing as this grounds you and makes you very aware of yourself and less aware of your surroundings.

## NINJA MOVES

In his book Pitch Ninja, Mike Moyer talks about “Ninja Moves”, of which the most important move is to smile. Smiling is the most important thing you can do to win over an audience. More important than the impact of smiling, is the impact of not smiling! Not smiling is a disaster!!!

## Magnetic South Pole

Think about it – if you’re telling someone about something and you can’t even muster a smile about it, then it must be really really bad.

Mike Moyer describes our natural inclination to be deadpan, or unhappy looking, as the magnetic south pole! It is like there is a magnet that is pulling down the sides of our mouths and it becomes very hard work to lift the sides of our mouth into a smile under the pull of the magnet.

The –magnetic south pole– only affects presenters, and only when they are in front of an audience! It suddenly appears as a massive magnet under your feet as you stand in front of an audience, holds you to the spot by the nails of your shoes, and draws your jowls down, forcing you to frown. Usually this spot is stuck to the right or left of the presentation screen and it gets you completely stuck and ruins your presentation – stuck in one spot, talking in a monotonous voice.

Mike talks about managing the monotone in this short video.

Playing time: 1.06

[watch](#)

And even worse, is when you find yourself weaving – swaying from side to side, but still unable to move your feet. If you’ve never experienced that, try it to see how it feels so you know to avoid it when you feel it happening! When horses weave it is considered a stable vice because it is very very annoying to watch.

Equally annoying is watching somebody pace backwards and forwards in a rhythm, effectively talking to themselves as they pace; or stepping forwards and backwards in the same monotonous movement over and over again.

And the absolute biggest cause of the magnetic south pole suddenly appearing in your presentation – the podium. This allows you to hide behind something instead of doing something interesting and should be avoided at all costs. Laserpointers should also be avoided as you can never hold them steady so they just become this wavering red dot that draws everyone’s attention rather than them focussing on what you are saying. Mike Moyer advocates that you throw your laserpointers down the toilet!

The magnetic south pole exists because most people have no idea what to do with their bodies when they are presenting.

This is one reason why telling a story is a good thing to do, because we naturally know what to do with our bodies when we tell a story.

The TEDx talk, or rather dialogue with himself, by Aminesh Gupta, considers how to get over the nerves of public speaking, and essentially help you get away from the magnetic south pole. It’s quite a long video but worth the watch.

Playing time 19.48

[watch](#)

Importantly, this video notes that you are going to feel nervous, the magnetic south pole is going to be there, but you need to channel your nervous energy away from the magnet and use it pull you up to the north. Aminesh talks about how to use Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) to help deal with nerves and move out of the short term escape of being stuck on the magnetic south pole.

## Activity

Map out your own NLP conversation to help you consider what is keeping you on the magnetic south pole, and how you are going to find the courage to move to the north. Think about what your inner voice is telling you and what is holding you stuck where you are.

## PERSUASIVE CHOREOGRAPHY

Part of the art of winning is knowing the winning moves. Mike Moyer, in his book *Pitch Ninja*, calls this persuasive choreography. Most people don't have a clue what to do with their bodies when they present. But there is an art of designing the sequence of movements that will inspire an audience to see things from your point of view. It is about putting on an amazing show specifically with the intent of persuading, rather than just entertaining. You can't entertain people into buying, and neither can you bore them into buying. Rather than people buying in spite of your presentation, you want them buying in spite of your product! That's not to say they should be buying a substandard product, but that your presentation is so awesome they love you and want to buy from you. Mike Moyer calls this the *Y factor*. Your idea is the *X factor*, and you are the *Y factor*.

## Activity

This is a difficult one for those of you who are humble and modest! Write a list of the characteristics and attributes that give you your *Y Factor*. You don't have to share it with anyone, but you do have to make the list. Why? Because if you don't know what makes you special and different, nobody else will ever be able to work it out.

## Smiling

Smiling alone can win over an audience. If you don't smile, it doesn't matter what you say *because* if you don't look positive and happy with what you are talking about, the audience won't either.

Magnetic South Pole is the enemy of the smile. It draws your face down, turns the corner of your mouth downwards, and pulls any hint of a smile away from your face. So, there are two components to smiling *and*; one is knowing how to smile; and the other is remembering to do it.

To understand how important smiling is, watch this TED talk by Ron Gutman on the power of smiling.

Playing time: 7.26

[watch](#)

A genuine smile includes your eyes as well as your mouth *and*; and it gives people a warm feeling to be on the receiving end. A fake smile is one that is the mouth only and is polite, but not genuine and doesn't convey the same warmth. However, a fake smile is better than no smile, but a genuine smile is best of all.

## Activity

Stand in front of the mirror and practice smiling *and*; even take some selfies of yourself so you can look back at them. See if you can manufacture the face smile and the genuine smile and how different they

look. Practice makes perfect!

Now you need to remember to smile.

One final thing about smiling – don't smile inappropriately! If you're talking about pain and suffering then don't smile. But do smile when you talk about the way out of this and how your VP will relieve these. Keep the smiles for the positive messages, not the somber subjects.

## Eye contact

The next ninja move is eye contact. Your eyes communicate so much that they can either help build trust or destroy it instantly. We can all probably think of someone who we don't trust because they don't look us in the eye when they talk to us. You don't want to be that person.

When pitching there are two types of eye contact to focus on: gentle eye contact and steady eye contact. Gentle eye contact is when your eyes focus on the other person and move between their eyes, nose and mouth, so your eyes wander a little but remain focussed on the person you are engaging with. Steady eye contact is when you look the other person in the eye and concentrate on the area between the eyebrows and the cheeks. You don't want to stare at them, but want to hold the gaze that little bit higher than with gentle eye contact. You want to let them know that what you are saying is important and that you need to know they understand what you are saying.

Timing is everything with eye contact. Hold it for too long and you will look creepy; too short and you'll look shifty and untrustworthy. As a guide, make eye contact with an individual long enough to complete one or two sentences or phrases and then move on to the next person. This allows you to finish a complete thought with one person, which is long enough to engage, but short enough to remain a natural interaction. If someone isn't paying attention, you might want to try looking at them for a little bit longer to try to reengage them, but don't make them feel uncomfortable – you want them to reengage rather than dislike you.

These points are exemplified well in this next video.

Playing time: 4.39

[watch](#)

Now, if you are answering someone's question, it is only natural to look at them for the whole of the time you are answering their question. Equally if someone is looking confused, you can look at them a little longer to make sure they are understanding you.

## Activity

Call a friend and ask them to come over for you to practice eye contact. Talk to them while looking at them in different ways (gentle, steady, staring them out). See how they react. Practice the right amount of time for them to physically change their body language in response to how you are looking at them and get comfortable with looking at them and looking away. Remember, practice makes perfect. A good friend will be helpful with this task and honest in their feedback.

## Hand and Arm Movements

Knowing what to do with your hands when you talk is difficult for many presenters. But our hands are so important for so many reasons. This spoken word poetry by Monika Kowalski will help you appreciate your



hands rather than find them a burden.

Playing time: 3.33

[watch](#)

## Activity

Stand in front of the mirror and try different arm movements to see how they look, and how exaggerated they need to be in order to be effective rather than detracting. Video yourself if need be. Try using outside the box arm movements with your friends and watch their reaction.

## Specific emotion gestures

Some emotions lend themselves to specific gestures. For example, if you are telling the audience you love something, put your hand over heart. If you are talking about something that pains you and/or them, crouch forwards slightly bending your knees, open your arms and clench your fists. If you are talking about something fearful, come inside the box and clench your fists. If you are counting something off, such as three reasons for something, use your fingers to count. Use an open hand sweeping gesture to point to your team rather than pointing a finger, and use gestures to simulate size, such as huge being open armed, and small being relatively boxed between two hands.

Walking from side to side across the stage emphasizes what you are saying – providing you are not pacing. Make a point, move to the side, make another point, move further to the side, and so forth.

Moving front back changes the relationship with the audience. The more you move to the front, the more personal you are being with them. Moving back bring the entire room into the picture and opens the floor to everyone.

## Activity

In front of a mirror, practice the various emotion stances until they become second nature and you are happy with how you present them. Then try them out with friends and see what sort of reaction you get.

## Preparations

You cannot over prepare for a presentation – as has been said many times in this unit, practice makes perfect!

When preparing generally for a presentation it can help to have a checklist to ensure you have considered everything you need to.

<http://webuser.bus.umich.edu/Organizations/umbstoastmasters/file/members/prepare/PlanningSpeech.pdf>

## Activity

Using this sheet as a base, develop your own checklist that you need to tick off prior to giving any form of presentation.



## EMOTIONAL TONE

It's not just what you say, it's how you say it.

### Caring

Particularly for start-ups, you need to believe in yourself, believe in your product or service, and believe it is going to benefit the customer by adding value to them. You need to make all of this clear in your presentation and most people don't. To do this effectively, the audience needs to understand that you care about what you are talking about. Because why should they care if you don't?

This video talks about how to be yourself and might help you find a way of expressing your passion. It's quite long, but has lots of insights, even if you watch it putting breaks in.

Playing time: 26.23

[watch](#)

While the presenter admits to being a card carrying feminist, the lessons are as applicable to men as to women, and the idea of the four different 'you's' is something to think about. In finding the real you, you will improve your confidence in presenting as you will more naturally be yourself.

Investors look for good teams who really believe in what they are doing, even if the business plan has some issues with it. If you have the energy and passion for your product, people will believe that you will iron out the problems and fill the gaps in time, and will invest in you because they believe in you. You should always be pitching outside of your league rather than playing safe; otherwise you won't grow. Every time you pitch you are selling yourself as much as you are selling your idea.

### Activity

Think about your value proposition and what sits behind it. See if you can work back from your VP to your core values. Start by stating your VP. Now say why that is important to you. Then say why that reason is important to you. Next is the reason that the reason is important to you. Try to go 5 or 6 levels, or until you hit the base, which could be something like 'because life's not fair and I want to make it fairer'. Once you have your core value and all the reasons supporting it, work each of these into a sentence that you can use in your various pitches; they might form the personal story you start your pitch with.

### The Authentic You

At this point it is probably time to put in this disclaimer. If you are working through these materials and are realising that you don't love your product, you don't love yourself in developing this product, and you don't think the value offered to buyers is worth it; you should look to do something else. You are going to fail because you need to love what you are doing in order to be worthy of being loved. And you can't fake love.

That is not to say that we don't all have doubts and fears on our paths to entrepreneurial success; but if you genuinely care about what you are doing you will rise above these feelings of doubt and exude confidence.

This video discusses how wrong a presentation can go when we get the body language wrong.

Playing time: 4.00

[watch](#)

Now, learning the choreography of pitching is not going to feel awkward, and hence at times you might question its authenticity. This is natural, but it is like any other form of choreography or dance. Until you learn how to do it, and master it, you feel like a lemon and like everyone is looking at you for the wrong reasons! It is much more authentic to be stuck to the Magnetic South Pole (see earlier session) where you don't want to move and hope the ground will open and swallow you up. But that is not going to get an audience to love you. So you are now going to have to replace the boring style with the energetic, bold, exciting style that eludes passion; and you have to do it with your body.

## Activity

Time to write your affirmation statement and post it on the wall in front of your desk. This is the statement that says who you are and what you believe in, and it will act as a reminder and anchor every time you have a wobbly moment going forwards.

## STORYTELLING

When training entrepreneurs to pitch, Mike Moyer recommends that Pitch Ninja's start their pitch with a story. He recommends you start with a story and then summarise the main points of your presentation. Having the right flow to a presentation is vital to the listener getting the message. Starting with a story sets the context and connection, and then you head into the main points of your presentation.

The story Mike recommends you start your pitch with is the story of why you are there, presenting to the people you are presenting to. The personal story that opens your presentation should take you close to the audience, and explain why you care about the topic about which you are going to discuss.

## Activity

Rehearse the presentation of your story in front of a mirror until you are confident you have the right tone, pace, body movements and pauses for dramatic effect to make the impact you want to achieve.

## NINJA SLIDES

One of the elements of communicating with an audience, when delivering a presentation or pitch, is your slides, handouts, images, etc; and this includes all the visual aids you use to support your communications. Mike Moyer, in his book Pitch Ninja; refers to these as Ninja Slides;.

There are three reasons to have a slide; as a backdrop, as a visual aid and/or prompt to you, or to give information.

## Backdrop slides

Lots of people start their presentation with a slide which has their name on it and the corporate logo of their employer. This does nothing to connect you to the audience or help them engage with you. In many ways, it depersonalises you as you don't usually have your picture up, and people end up looking at your name rather than at you.

Depending on the audience and the nature of the presentation, you might want to put up a picture of you in a certain place, or doing a certain activity or simply a good portrait photograph – rather than a selfie of you partying!

## Activity

Invent some background slides with you in them to use to open the following presentations (if you can, actually create the slides; if you can't actually take the picture needed, describe what the picture will contain):

1. You are presenting to your class group and tutors
2. You are at an informal gathering of start-ups in a shared office space venue (eg Fishburners)
3. You are presenting to a corporate client about one of their products/services
4. You are presenting to a group of school children (under 10)
5. You are presenting to a group of pensioners in an old people's home
6. You are presenting to a venture capital firm

Post your slides on your social media pages for feedback and comments from others.

Sometimes it doesn't feel right to put up an opening slide with you on it. For example, if you are going to present something controversial to a conservative group of people, you want your opening slide to have meaning to them to try to hook them into engaging with you, rather than making it about you. In these cases you might want to have a bank of backdrop slides you can draw from which represent others or places that have special meaning.

The key thing here is that the image has some emotional hook for the audience that is appropriate to the presentation content. Don't, for example, put up a cute picture of a kitten at a corporate presentation to get an "ahhhh" response!

The most important thing is that the image helps set the tone for your presentation, makes a personal connection and adds interest. Worry less about the quality of the image, and more about the content. Some pictures can have iconic images in them, such as the Statue of Liberty; others can have signage, such as a "Stop" sign; others can have landscapes that set a mood, such as waves crashing against rocks. It doesn't matter that the image is not a breathtaking image. Its purpose is to be a visual stimulation while you are talking – and you are more likely to be telling a story than talking about the image itself.

## Visual Aids

A visual aid slide helps clarify and reiterate what you are saying. The slide should be simple, bold and clear with an obvious flow. It does not need to tell the whole story – but rather be an aid to the listener to help them follow what you are saying. It is also an aid to you to keep you on track – and you are more likely to be telling a story than talking about the image itself.

Ideally you want them to be a visual cue rather than simply a list of bullet points, so some form of representative graphic in the form of an equation or the SmartArt options offered in Powerpoint can be useful.

## Activity

Design visual aids for the following communications:

1. Your USP or business value proposition
2. The top three benefits your business offers its customers
3. The notion that you have to appeal to both the heart and the head in order to secure a sale of a high value product
4. The growth opportunities for your business
5. Four predictions you hold for the future
6. A comparison of your business proposition against the closest competition (with pros and cons)

Compare your ideas with others to see how well you are managing to simplify ideas. Don't worry if everyone else's look better initially – this is a skill and an art, and you will get better at practice over time – particularly if you previously simply listed bullet points.

## Information Slides

The final type of visual aid you can use is an information slide, which can sometimes be better presented as a handout if it has a lot of detail on it and people will be struggling to read it. These slides hold the facts and figures that support your business pitch proposition, and how you are going to get there. You don't need to include every detail – just enough to convey the important parts and give confidence to the audience that you know what you are talking about and are able to answer questions if required.

Graphs, charts and infographics are even better than raw numbers but you do need to be able to explain and have the numbers to hand if people want to query them at all.

## Activity

Take your 5 year forecast for revenue for your business proposition and develop 3 different means of presenting it as an information slide. Compare with others as to which is the best way of presenting this type of information for clarity.

If you have a slide that builds as you present, it is safest to do this as multiple slides, but this then doesn't print well or transfer to others well, so you need to have a separate copy with only the final slide in the build inserted to give out as a copy of presentation.

Animations and other 'clever' presentation elements rarely work as anticipated in a pitch situation so it really is best to keep the presentation simple.

## THE Q&A SESSION

The Question and Answers session can be a killer at a pitch if you're not prepared for it, and it is absolutely crucial in debating. Often the discussion time or Q&A time is can last longer than the pitch time itself. It's critical to practice your answers to questions.

Moving into the Q&A session is very important.

Playing time: 4.25

[watch](#)

Managing the Q&A session is equally important.

Playing time: 2.23

[watch](#)

## Activity

Start by brainstorming with your friends to come up with 50 questions you might be asked. Start with the obvious ones such as 'why aren't your parents investing?' Mike Moyer suggests the following list to consider in 'pitch ninja':

- Customers
- Relationships
- Family background
- Value Proposition
- Sources of revenue
- Pricing model
- Differentiation
- Partnerships
- Investors
- Financing
- Marketing and sales channels
- Primary activities
- Key hires
- Team

- Â• Cost structures
- Â• Unit model
- Â• Personal work situation

Once you have your 50 questions, write out responses that cast your company in a positive light. Don't say your parents don't want the risk, for example, say that they are fully supportive and helping you with X, Y and Z but aren't in a position to be able to invest at this time.

But not everything can be prepared for.

Playing time: 3.04

[watch](#)

## Answering the question

A common mistake people make is not answering the question asked. In fact, it is extremely common for the presenter to talk about something completely unrelated to the question asked.

If you prepare for questions you can have more than one answer to hand and answer depending on how you think the audience will best respond. For example, if asked how much the product costs?

One answer might be '\$50'. Or another might be 'Our pricing starts at \$50 but we offer discounts for bulk purchases and repeat sales'. Or 'the price you pay depends on your volume, frequency and volume of your contract.'; But it is NOT 'our produce is well worth the investment' as this doesn't answer the question!

Equally bad is not shutting up when you answer a question and rambling on and on rather than shutting up. This can happen when you have too much information in your brain or unable to control your nervous energy. Effectively your Q&A becomes an extension of your presentation. But it is very hard to improve a presentation with an answer; it tends to derail the sale.

## Prepare for hostile questions

In your 50 questions list, make sure you have the responses ready for the hostile questions. There may well be someone in your audience who seeks to undermine you. Their questions might start 'just to play devil's advocate'; and then they ask you something that tries to undermine your whole position, or worst still, they are trying to make you angry.

The important thing is to not respond emotionally but to respond with facts and evidence.

You can always use the answer 'I don't know, but I'll find out and get back to you'; but you can't use this answer too often. It frees you from having to respond immediately, and is a great way to cut off a hostile member of the audience. However, you can only use this once or twice in a presentation before you start to look like you don't know what you are talking about.

In preparation, also have some "friends" in the audience that you have primed with some questions you have good answers to so if there is an awkward silence or a difficult question, you can counter it with a great response to the next question.

## Using the Q&A to wrap up your presentation

Rather than feeling out of control in the Q&A, you can take command of it by ensuring you get questions and putting the audience at ease in asking them.

This final video gives some tips on how to manage the session with an audience that might not want to ask anything so you end your session on a high.

Playing time: 3.02

[watch](#)

## Activity

Practice some of the techniques for managing the Q&A session with your friends and see which ones come naturally to you and which you are less comfortable with. Plan to use one you can work well with in your pitch session.

## ENDING WITH 'THE ASK'

When closing your pitch it is vitally important that you don't simply just stop talking. You need to end with an "ask" that draws the listener in and elicits the response you are seeking from your pitch.

For example, you might want to get some more time with the person so you can tell them about your idea more fully and present a fuller pitch; or you might want them to introduce you to someone else; or you might want their business card so you can send them some more information. Whatever it is, you need to ask for it or they will never guess!

This video by Jason Mance Gordon talks about how to end the pitch conversation, referring mainly to elevator pitches but the same principles apply here.. Interestingly, the presenter themselves does not sound that engaging, but the content is good.

Playing time: 3.03

[watch](#)

This final video by Jack Canfield talks about the fear of asking and why you need to overcome it. His premise is that you are creating the fear of asking and hence don't ask, but the fear is yours, not the persons that you are asking!

Playing time: 6.56

[watch](#)

## Activity

Scripting can be helpful because once you start down a scripted line that you have learned, you tend to stick to the script and don't deviate. So let's end this session with a bit of scripting of the ask.

For each of the scenarios in the template, write your ask ending line. Work with a few of these until you become really comfortable saying them.

Scenario 1: You start your elevator pitch with an astonishing fact/figure that is aimed to shock the audience into listening to you.

Ending ask: Come up with something that goes back to the initial shock figure in a way that asks the person you're pitching to commit to supporting some action.

Scenario 2: You start your elevator pitch with a personal statement about yourself and your particular value you have to offer.

Ending ask: Come up with a way of gaining the person's recommendation by asking them to give you the name of someone in the organisation that would be best for you to talk to further.

Scenario 3: You start your elevator pitch with something you have found out about that person's company that you are hoping they don't know, or will be surprised that you know.

Ending ask: Come up with a way of getting the person to invite you come and discuss the issue in more detail as a potential solution provider.

Scenario 4: You start your elevator pitch with a complete group of strangers with no idea how any of them might be interested in you.

Ending ask: Come up with a way of getting their details and business cards so you can explore opportunities with them further.

Scenario 5: You start your elevator pitch with your boss and others more senior to you in the organisation who have no idea you are interested in being an entrepreneur/intrapreneur.

Ending ask: Come up with a way of getting their commitment to putting you into at least one project team working on intrapreneurial ideas.



## Attachments

Revenue\_Source\_Template.docx

Traction\_Revenue\_Template.docx