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***Guidelines for Pitch Preparation***

**PERFECTING YOUR PITCH**

**Coaching Intensive**

**Silicon Valley Pitch Coach:**

***Beth Susanne***

***Visions In Focus***

**I. High Stakes Pitch Guidelines: \***

**Key to Delivering a Winning Pitch – Address all the issues investors/clients/partners are concerned with. The more you can preempt their questions, the more impressed they will be.**

**Number of Slides:** 10 to 13 slides for a 5 minute pitch

**Font Size: at least 30 point**

1. **Overview: (Elevator Pitch)**
* **Short, Simple, Memorable: “What, How, Why.”**

***“We’re X for Y”* is ok if 1) it’s true 2) X & Y are well-known**

* Name, role, relevant experience and achievements (intro. any team members in the same way)
* Define what your company does in a single sentence
* No jargon or lingo: make it easy for non-experts to understand
* SMILE: it’s o.k. to have fun when you pitch.
1. **Describe Problem/Opportunity:**

**- What is the problem? Make it Obvious!**

* Needs to be real, demonstrable and immediately recognizable as a problem.

“Ouch. Yeah, I have that too…”

* **Who** has it? How Many? How do you know?
* Show market segment knowledge: stats, examples, research, links.
* Painkiller NOT Vitamins.
1. **Your Solution:**

**- Great Companies do 1 of 3 things:**

* + **Get you money, power or pleasure**

**- Describe why your Solution:**

* + **Makes customers very happy**
	+ **Does it better, different than anyone else**
* What is your differentiator or competitive advantage?
* Do you have a prototype?
* How will you scale up?
* Do you have IP protection (patents?)

**DEMO:**

* **If you’re doing live demo: PRACTICE! PRACTICE! PRACTICE!**
* **Expect demo to FAIL – in multiple, interesting ways -- how will you handle it?**
* **Always have a backup (screenshots, local video, interpretive dance)**
* **Expect to be interrupted by VCs/partners/clients – multiple times.**
1. **The Market Size/Benefits:**

- How big is it? (Size of your market has a direct bearing on how much revenue your company can generate.)

- Talk about any trends or megatrends, supported by credible research**.**

**-** Quantify 3 or 4 key benefits

**-** Show who benefits – some earlier, some more than others, etc.

**5. Business Model:**

* How do you plan to make money?
* Describe Top 1-3 Revenue Sources

 Prioritize by Size, Growth, and/or Potential

Cite current market activity / customer behavior as proof

* Show How You Get to Break-even (or Profitable)

 Ideally, on the current round of funding you’re raising

- Common Revenue Models

* + **Direct**: ecommerce, subscription, digital goods, brands
	+ **Indirect**: advertising, lead gen, affiliate / CPA
* What if’s?: e.g. can’t sustain price, costs don’t decline, takes twice as long to

make each sale, etc.

1. **Competitive Advantage:**
* Competitors are an asset to your pitch. Summarize 3 or 4 key reasons why customers prefer you to other solutions (Suggestions: if showing a Competitive Advantage Matrix slide - show visually using a quadrant matrix or a Harvey Balls Chart, keep for Q & A)
1. **Go-To-Market Strategy/Traction:**
* Most compelling slide – Customers and partners that are already

Interested:

**3 Things That Matter / To Measure :**

* 1. Volume
	2. Cost
	3. Conversion

Choose a few channels:

* PR
* Contest
* Biz Dev
* Direct Marketing
* Radio / TV / Print
* Dedicated Sales
* Telemarketing
* Email
* SEO / SEM
* Blogs / Bloggers
* Viral / Referral
* Affiliate / CPA
* Widgets / Apps
* What critical hurdles have you jumped? How?
1. **Your Team/Hires**

**People that Get VCs/Partners Interested:**

* **Geeks** with deep technical background
* **Entrepreneurs** who have sold companies
* **Sales/Marketing** who Make it Rain

**Also Identify:**

* **Key Hires you Need but \*Don’t\* Have, and…**
* **…** you’ve got candidates lined up in those areas
* ... ready to hire as soon as you close funding
* … or at least job descriptions / est. salary
1. **Financial Projections:**
* Show metrics that drive revenues: customers, unit sales, new products/markets, expansion sales.
1. **Call to Action: What do you need?**
* Money? How much? Is it the right amount?
* How do you plan to take in funding?
* Key achievement dates?
* Partners? Clients?
* ASK
1. **SUMMARY:**
* Tagline or mantra
* Whole pitch in one slide
* Memorable/unique!

**II. 10 Pitch Deck Guidelines:**

1. **YOU are the focus of your pitch, not your visuals.**
2. **If they’re reading your slide….they’re not listening to you: less text is better and no text is best.**
3. **Use powerful visuals.**
4. **No animations or transitions: keep the focus on you.**
5. **One idea per slide.**
6. **Dodge the bullet (points): Distracts the listener and #2 makes them unnecessary.**
7. **Create drama with your Demo. (See Effective Demos)**
8. **A single quote or a “WOW” statistic carries a big impact (**from a credible source)
9. **Ask “So What?” for each slide: does it directly support your primary objective - securing funding, making the sale, etc. If not – DELETE IT!**
10. **KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE: What is important to them? DO THE RESEARCH!**

**III. Effective Demos:**

1. **Keep it short.**
2. **Keep it simple and easy to follow.**
3. **Show your hottest feature.**
4. **Make it fast-paced.**
5. **Make it appropriate: show how your product offers a solution to a real problem your audience faces.**
6. **Testimonials here!**
7. **In a 5 minute pitch…safer to use a video or visual representation, than an interactive live demo…but it’s up to you.**

**IV. Effective Pitch Stories:**

**Stories connect your audience to you and are the main emotional drivers to motivate them to take action. The story can be woven into your pitch, but doesn’t replace it. A short story, or part of a story may be enough to make your point and engage the audience.**

**Themes for Pitch Stories –**

1. **The hero:** You, your company, or your customer (e.g. a new company solving a big problem for ordinary people, or a start-up offering a service at a huge savings to market leaders…affordable to the masses, or the audience can be the hero)
2. **Overcoming adversity and challenge:** Show how you have overcome serious challenges, and are on the verge of success, or show how your customers struggled with a challenge until they discovered your product.
3. **David and Goliath:** Convey that your company (David) is entering a space full of deep-pocketed Goliaths, but your solution is better. With your audience’s (investors, clients, partners) support, David will beat Goliath.
4. **Your vision:** Powerful call to action, if you can inspire your audience with your vision of how things will be when you bring your product to market.
5. **You or your customer’s story:** Personal stories bring authenticity to your pitch, a very powerful catalyst for action. A story of how a customer used your product to solve their problem, provides a theme AND a validation.

*\*Based on: “Perfecting Your Pitch: by Bill Reichert, Garage Technology, 2006; “Here’s The Pitch: How to Pitch to Anyone, Get Funded and Win Clients”*

*Dave McClure, 500 StartUps*