

# **DELIVERING** **WINNING PRESENTATIONS**

**DISRUPTOR'S HANDBOOK #52**

# INTRODUCTION

Pitching is an essential aspect of all business, but it is particularly important when developing innovation projects. Whether pitching for funding, for collaboration partners or for sales, a clearly articulated pitch is vital to the success of any initiative. There is an abundance of great ideas. But without an effective pitch, those great ideas never go anywhere.

In a digital-first, information-driven economy, businesses are dependent on continuous innovation as a means of ensuring competitive advantage. An essential part of that innovation process is getting buy-in from audiences including investors, budget managers and stakeholders, so that new products, processes and services get to market to drive sales. And getting buy-in will usually involve pitching an idea that resonates with the priorities of these often disparate groups.

*This handbook is designed to assist with all aspects of pitching, from preparation, to presentation, to follow up.*

- Clearly articulate a problem and a solution
- Communicate with your audience
- Demonstrate willingness to learn and to continue the conversation

# INTRODUCTION

But even if a project seems to meet the needs of all parties, a pitch can fail to excite the audience addressed, because they are hard-wired to be sceptical of the value of your project. And this can be disheartening when you have invested a great deal of time and effort into a project.

To be successful in pitching is a key component to continuous innovation.

In this handbook, we provide a guide on how to pitch in order to maximise understanding of the value of your ideas and projects, and to keep you innovating.

*This handbook is designed to assist with all aspects of pitching, from preparation, to presentation, to follow up.*

- Clearly articulate a problem and a solution
- Communicate with your audience
- Demonstrate willingness to learn and to continue the conversation

# **BEFORE YOU GET STARTED**

Pitching happens after you have an idea well in production. If you're getting ready to pitch, you should already have the basics all completed:

- **Lean canvas** – download our [Shared Value](#) or [Disruptor's Canvases](#)
- **Messaging** – download the [Key Themes and Messages](#) handbook
- **Idea development** – download the [Problems Worth Solving](#) handbook

You should also consult our Universal Pitch Deck template. This handbook acts as a guide to go with that deck template, and to help improve the effectiveness of the deck structure.

A winning pitch requires a well-prepared deck, but you also need to maximise your communication skills to engage an audience with your great idea. And you need to follow up with the people who have given you the time to pitch. Only then can you truly get buy-in on your innovation projects.

“

I was so sure that I knew what they needed and what I wanted to sell them that I never stopped long enough to find out what it was they wanted to buy.

**Chris Murray, The Extremely Successful Salesman's Club**

# **BEFORE YOU GET STARTED**

A pitch is more than a deck. It's more than a great idea. It's the single most important hurdle between having an idea and turning it into a reality.

Pitching is a skill that everyone should learn because it helps convince your varying audiences that your ideas and processes are worth supporting and realising.

And in a disruptive business environment, it's more important than ever to be able to pitch well.

While there are endless examples of great talks and pitches online, there are few clear guides to what makes a successful pitch.

Part of the reason for this is that there can be significant differences in the priorities of the audiences to which a pitch is presented.

The content and delivery of a pitch, as well as the openness to feedback of the presenter, are all vital elements of how audiences will perceive the trustworthiness of the idea, the business owner and the plan for action.

***A successful pitch will usually be characterised by well-structured content:***

- Clearly defined and observable problem
- Plainly stated solution
- Basic detail of resources (technology, infrastructure, personnel, partnership) that are to be used in executing the solution
- Details of the addressable market for the solution
- Competitors in the marketplace
- Team details
- Ask and offer for investors, collaborators or opportunity for customers



# GETTING STARTED WITH PITCHING

A good pitch will also be supported by effective communication of your content:

- An engaged presenter who makes eye contact with audiences
- An audible and clear presentation style
- A pitch delivered well within the allotted time
- A well-informed presenter who is humble, yet has clearly done their research
- Well-designed and edited deck
- Technically fluent production, avoiding compatibility, sound and vision, or loading issues

Too often, the content of pitch decks takes priority over the actual presentation of a pitch.

Yet a great pitch deck can be rendered useless by poor presentation. And a pitch deck which contains spelling errors or calculation errors can rob a presenter of any credence they may have built in a well-articulated solution to a common problem.

When you get started with developing a pitch, you need to think about both the content and the delivery simultaneously.

“

**I passionately believe that it's not just what you say that counts, it's also how you say it - that the success of your argument critically depends on your manner of presenting it.**

**Alain de Botton**

# HOW LONG SHOULD IT TAKE TO PREPARE?



You need to allocate enough time to the process of pitch development, even in rapid prototyping environments like hackathons and design jams.

Our Universal Pitch Deck is a short-cut to pitch development, but you should consider allocating **at least six hours of preparation and rehearsal** to any pitch. That six hours could be parcelled out to multiple players, but the total minimum time input should be observed.

## ***Division of labour for pitch preparation could be handled as follows:***

- **Presenter:** 1 hour content development, 1 hour presentation recording or rehearsal.
- **Designer:** 1 hour design of deck and all graphics
- **Researcher:** 1 hour to find and include all relevant research and support hypothesis
- **Technical Lead/Project Manager:** 1 hour to describe and visualise the architecture and resources of the solution

## → **Mentor/Audience sample:**

1 hour to view at least 2 iterations of the pitch and to provide feedback to the presenter.

**TOTAL = 6 hours**

While it is possible for one person to prepare a pitch deck with all the research, design and technical information required, it is still essential for a second person to act as a mentor or sample audience to ensure the ideas of the presenter are being communicated effectively.



## UNIVERSAL PITCH SLIDES

1. Introduction of the presenter and company
2. Description of a problem
3. Description of a solution
4. Opportunity facilitated by the solution - addressable market for the solution
5. Growth strategy
6. Competitor analysis
7. Differentiation from competitors
8. Team
9. Progress report - production/roll out strategy, production needs
10. Ask and offer

## WHAT'S IN YOUR DECK?

Our basic Universal Pitch Deck template is a useful place to start developing a pitch. It includes the elements most needed in the content of any deck used in the presentation of an innovation project.

It is useful to separate these ten items on different slides. It is possible to include both the opportunity and addressable market on a single slide, as well as the elements of the Progress Report on a single slide, but all other items should be treated separately.

This deck structure makes it simple for any audience to assess the value of an innovation.



## **CUSTOMER OR CLIENT DECK:**

If, however, you are pitching a product to customers or a program of work to a client, the slides should be varied slightly.

## **DISRUPTORS HANDBOOK**

*Download our Universal Pitch  
Deck to get started quickly.*

## **WHAT'S IN YOUR DECK?**

1. Introduction of the presenter and the company
2. Description of a problem
3. Description of a solution
4. How the solution will be accessed/executed
5. Opportunity facilitated by the solution for the customer or client
6. Opportunity costs of failing to support the solution
7. Competitors and differentiation
8. Team
9. Timeline and next steps
10. Pricing/Budget



# WHAT'S IN YOUR DECK?

For both investor and sales decks, each item should be on a separate slide.

While the details of all items can be spread over multiple slides, it is a useful discipline to limit the total number of slides for a presentation as much as possible.

Tech entrepreneur and communicator, Guy Kawasaki, came up with a **10/20/30 rule** that he recommends for all startup companies pitching to investors.

Kawasaki argues that any company should be able to present 10 slides in 20 minutes (or less) and the font on the deck should be 30 points (very large).

Kawasaki says that investors will frequently see dozens of decks from entrepreneurs, one after the other, and having large font and simple wording means that the investors are not straining their eyes to get the details they need, and they can better concentrate on the attributes of the team leaders.

Kawasaki's rule is useful because it emphasises the need for brevity and clarity of content in pitch decks. He notes that it is the presenter and the team that interests audiences, and as such the presentation style needs to draw out the vision as well as the execution capabilities of the presenter.

**“In the end, a vision without the ability to execute it is probably a hallucination.”**

**STEVE CASE, AOL Founder**



# PITCH DEVELOPMENT

One of the most common failures of a pitch presentation is when the presenter fails to develop a script to go with the deck they prepare. These should be prepared together, to ensure that important aspects of any slide can be highlighted, and that the presentation runs smoothly.

From the perspective of the audience, a pitch presentation should be as linear as a story. Each item covered should build naturally to the next item. This means a script should contain links between items so that the deck makes sense as a continuing story.

Script linking acts as a **prompt for the presenter**, and improves the **understanding** of the **value proposition** in the audience.



# PITCH DEVELOPMENT

Some examples of script linking:

## **Addressable Market:**

- 1.5 million 18-25 year olds with motor vehicle insurance in Australia
- 189 million in the US (2nd market)
- 28 million in the UK (3rd market)

## **Growth Strategy:**

- Partnerships with insurance agencies in Australia
- Global underwriter in the US and UK are target investors and we have in principle agreement to run a trial in these centres.

We intend to launch the product in Australia first because we have access to the 1.5 million 18-25 year olds who have car insurance. But we intend to grow to the US and UK markets once we've validated the market here. **The partnerships we've established with insurance agencies here in Australia also give us access to international underwriters.**

**And those underwriters are part of our growth strategy both in terms of investment and traction.** We now have commitment from local insurers to pilot the product and we have in principle agreement from international underwriters to run trial of the product in 2H 2019. And of course the volume of users in these markets will create economies of scale for operation.

Script linking acts as a **prompt for the presenter**, and improves the **understanding** of the **value proposition** in the audience.

# WHAT TECHNICAL FORMAT SHOULD YOU USE FOR LIVE PITCH DECKS?



While there are a range of presentation tools in common use for pitch presentations, including the ubiquitous PowerPoint, and the somewhat less popular Keynote and Prezi formats, ultimately the deck just needs to be visible and readable on the device used for the presentation. Even if you are presenting using your own laptop, or other device, you cannot guarantee that any projector or second monitor will act in exactly the same fashion as your own screen.

Consequently, the technical format for pitch presentations should always cover the widest possible array of devices and presentation engines.

## **DECK FORMATTING**

Decks should always be saved in .PPT (not .PPTX) format if possible, as this format can be read on both old and new versions of PowerPoint and Keynote.

## **ALWAYS HAVE A PLAN B**

You should always create a

backup version of the deck as a PDF file and store this on a USB you can carry into the presentation room.

## **USING PREZI?**

Prezi presentations should be saved as a PDF locally, in the case of online presentation not being available or visually pleasing. As with the standard presentation formats, this should be kept on a USB and be available in the presentation room.



# **TECHNICAL FORMATS FOR RECORDED OR HYBRID PRESENTATIONS**



If you are recording part of your presentation, or the entire presentation, then you need to ensure that you have taken into account the manner in which the recording is triggered, as well as the experience of the technology “in the room”.

## **RECORDINGS**

Where you decide to use a fully recorded pitch as your presentation, you can easily control the duration so it runs to time. However, what you gain in time control you lose in the thrill of live pitches .

To get the same buzz as a live pitch, recorded pitches should demonstrate good production values and strong solution demonstrations or product ‘walk-throughs’.

## **HYBRID**

You may choose just to record a product walk through, or a section of your presentation that demonstrates the value of your product. You could, for instance, record vox pops of people who validated your solution or who would invest in your product.

Where you are embedding a video into a presentation, you need to ensure the video autoplays and that you are sharing audio from a screen, You should also have backups available on a video server or local machine, cued and ready it run if a presentation falls over.

Further advice on recording videos are in the next slides.



# **SCRIPT WRITING**

Once you have prepared your deck, you will be ready to develop a script or guide for recording a narrative. We recommend developing a script and practising timing to deliver the script in a recording session.

Try to make the script as natural as if you were telling a story to an audience in a live pitch session. Write like you speak. And think about what needs to be emphasised in each slide.

Where you images and visual content, consider including a voice recording with the visual content so that the meaning of your visualisation is clear.

## **SCRIPT WRITING RESOURCES:**

[The Art Of Writing Great Voice Over Scripts](#)

[Sounding natural \(voiceover\)](#)

[How to Write Great Voice Over Scripts](#)

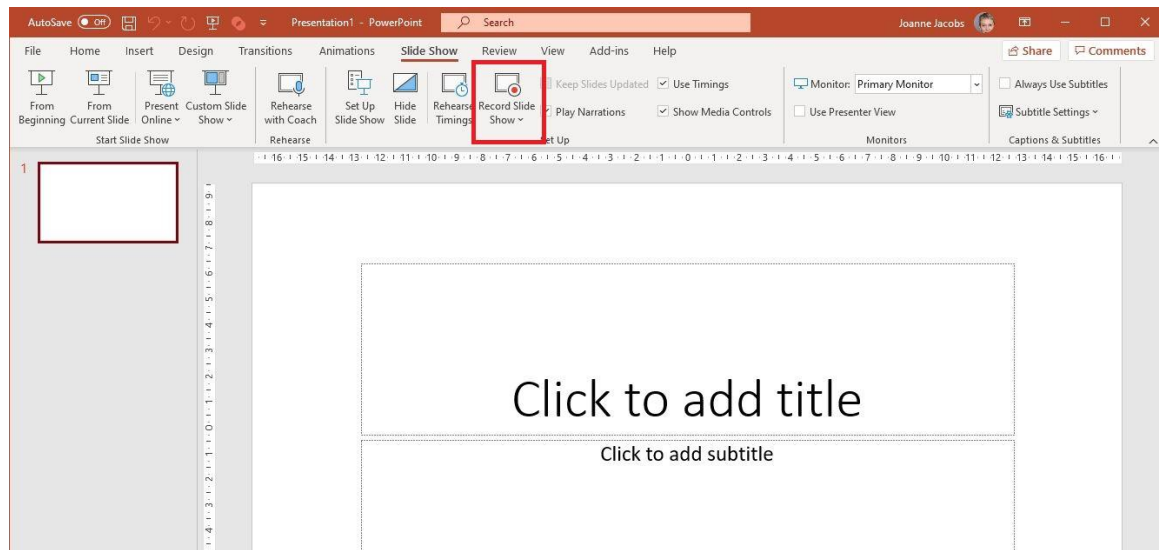
## **TIPS FOR SCRIPTS:**

- Short sentences
- Use pauses and change your voice intonation for emphasis
- Consider whether to time your voiceover with visual cues



# RECORDING VOICE-OVERS OR NARRATION OF SLIDES

To record a voiceover or in-slide video in PowerPoint, you can use the Record Slide Show function. Go to the Slide Show menu and choose Record Slide Show. You may need to set up your video and microphone to record.



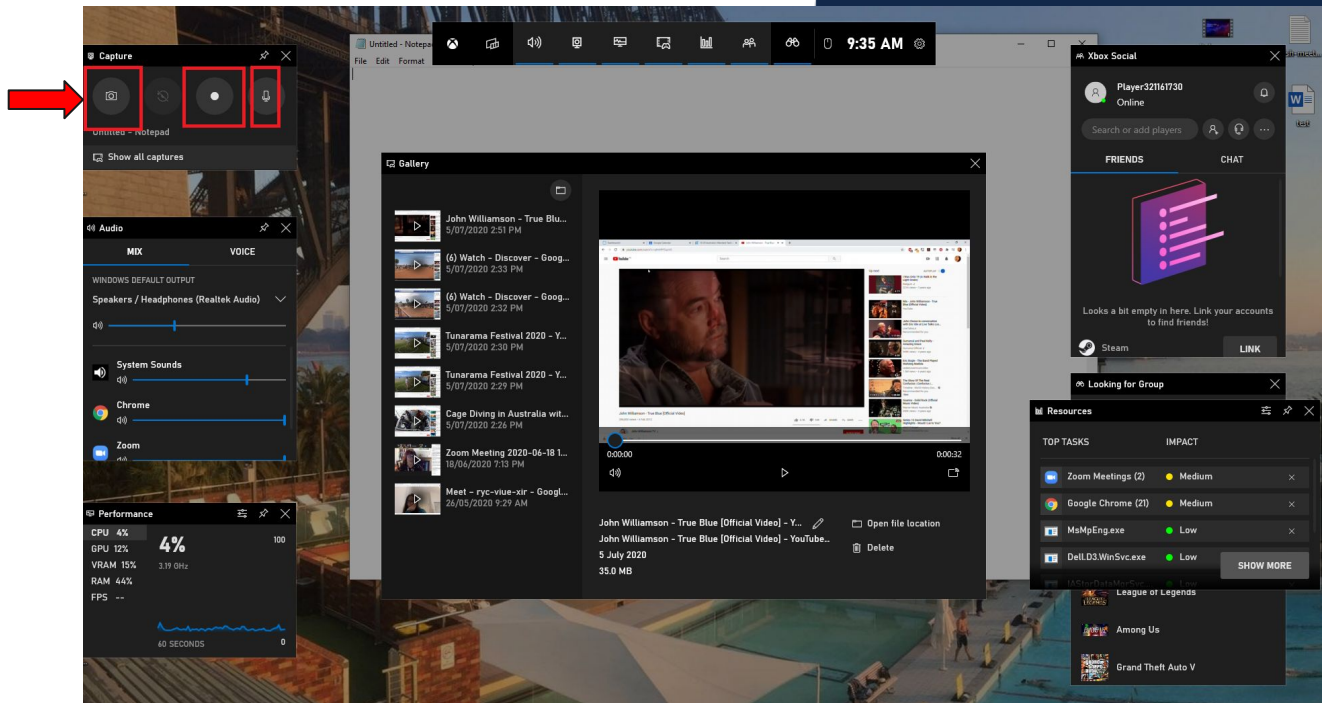
## NARRATIVE TIPS:

- Change your Slide Master to provide a consistent space for your video
- Each slide has a separate video insert, so re-record each slide if it doesn't look or sound right



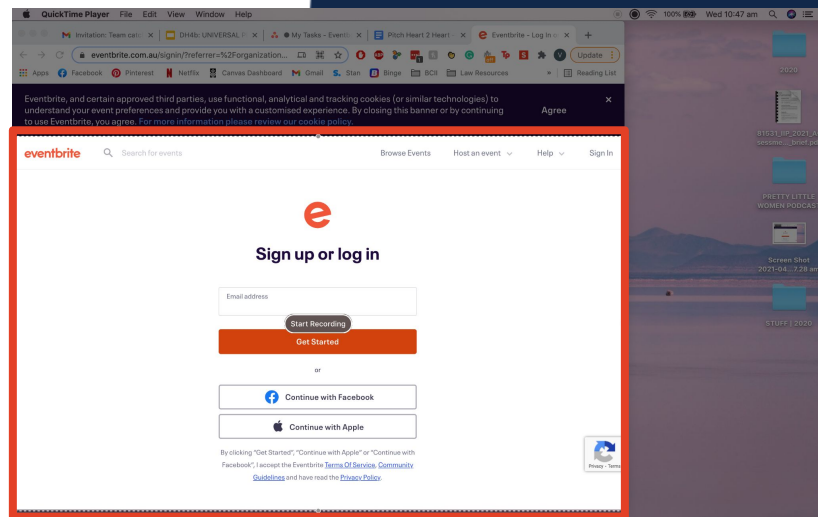
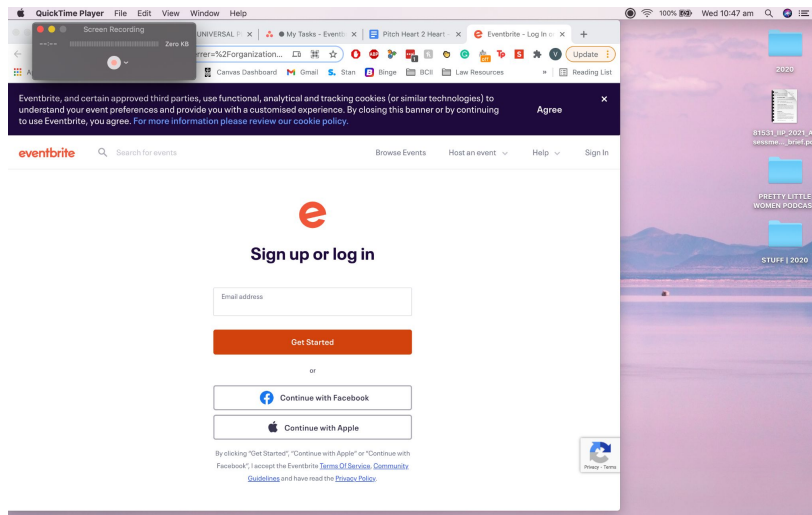
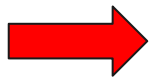
# RECORDING SCREEN CAPTURES (PC)

If you wish to take a video screen capture of an action on screen in Windows, you can use the Windows Xbox Game Bar application to record actions on screen. From the Start button, choose Apps and the Xbox Game Bar, or hold the Windows Logo button and press G. You can set up whether you want to record audio and what video sources to use in the Capture component of the application.



# RECORDING SCREEN CAPTURES (MAC)

If you have an Apple Mac device and wish to take a video screen capture, you can use QuickTime Player to record the actions on a screen, using the 'screen record' function. Use the search bar in the top right corner to search for the application. Once it is open, click File on the drop down menu on the left-side of your screen, then select New Screen Recording.



# MOBILE DEVICE SCREEN CAPTURE

A variety of screen capture applications are available for individual devices - check your device app store for available utilities. You can also use screen capture from casting devices like the Apple TV or Google Chromecast.



## MOBILE SCREEN CAPTURE TIPS:

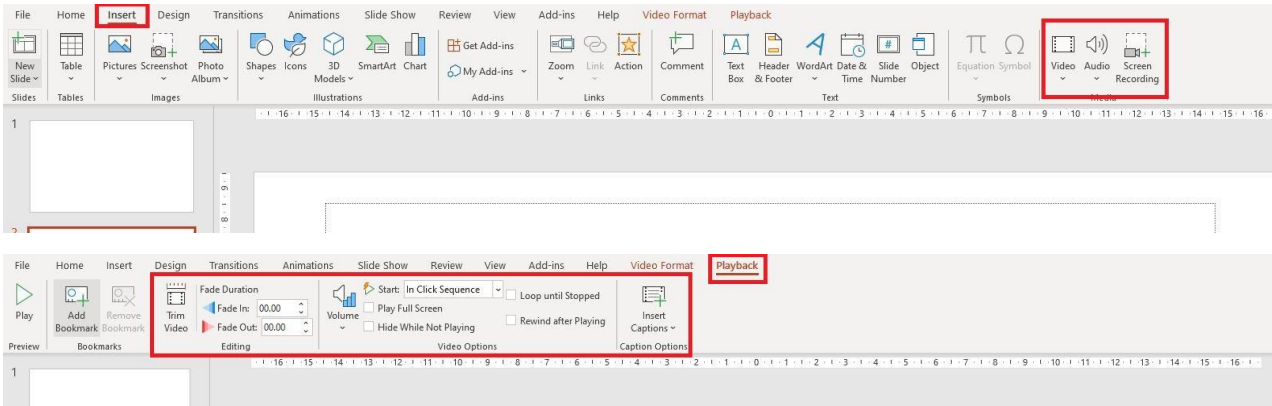
- You may wish to speed up the walk through of a mobile app screen cast before embedding into a presentation
- When embedding a mobile device capture, consider using a voiceover to explain your steps.

# EMBEDDING VIDEOS IN DECKS

To embed a video (or audio) into a slide in PowerPoint, go to the Insert menu and choose video or audio. Choose the file from your computer and while the video is selected, resize for your slide and then go into the Playback menu to choose whether the video fades in and out and whether the video starts automatically or part of a click sequence.

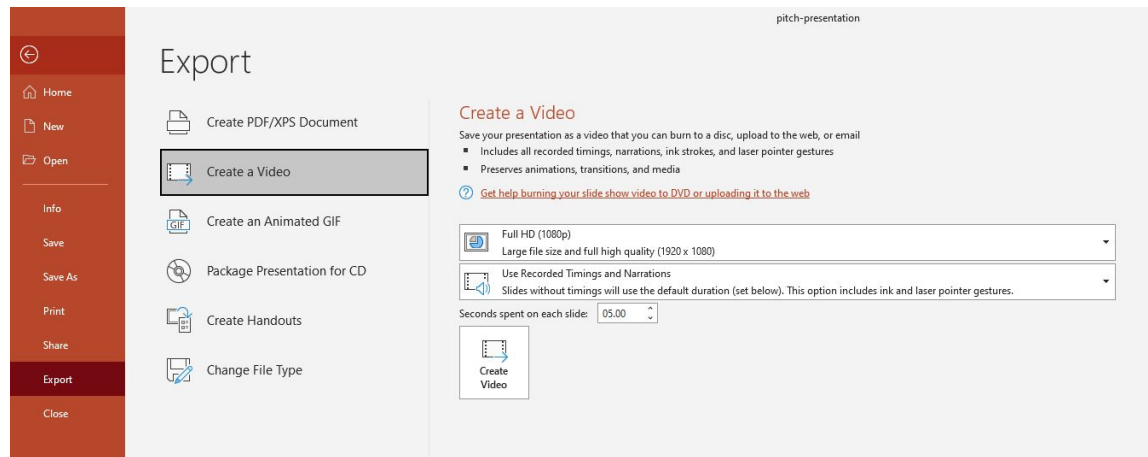
## EMBEDDING VIDEO TIPS:

- The Playback menu only appears when your video is selected
- Make sure your videos are well framed in a slide
- Always preview your slide in presentation mode after a video embed to see if it plays as you wish



# PACKAGING A PRESENTATION FOR VIDEO

Once you have embedded all your videos and screen captures and you are happy with the timing and content of your slides, you can export the entire presentation as a video from PowerPoint. Go to the File menu and click Export. From the Export menu, choose Create a Video and select options for resolution. Then select Use Recorded Timings and Narrations and click the Create Video button.



## VIDEO PACKAGING TIPS:

- The higher the resolution, the larger the video file, so select your resolution carefully
- You will need to keep PowerPoint open until the video is fully rendered

# IT'S ALL ABOUT THE FOLLOW-THROUGH



After a pitch, if you are asked questions from your audience, you should always answer truthfully. Investors and potential partners, in particular, are quick to identify any attempt to deceive or conceal.

Where you are unable to answer a question, it is always best to acknowledge that you do not have that information and that you are willing to send details after the pitch session.

Following up with all members of a small audience, or those who expressed interest or asked questions in a larger audience, is an essential component of pitching.

An email is usually sufficient as a follow-up instrument in the short term. But as time progresses, key audience members may also appreciate a phone call or personalised letter to trigger feedback or further interest.

It is important not to compromise a good pitch by being too cloying, or too persistent in following up, but it is equally important not to be forgotten. Personalised communication can improve trust in you as a presenter, and in your idea.

Most of all, don't rely on good luck. Pitching is a skill that is best practiced regularly, and good preparation will improve likely success. Pitch practice will improve confidence and help to refine your innovation vision. And the better the vision in your pitch, the higher the chances are of you executing successfully.

**“Don't be afraid to assert yourself, have confidence in your abilities and don't let the bastards get you down.”**

**MICHAEL BLOOMBERG**



# **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR LIVE PITCHES**



## **IMAGES**

Balance your resolution of images in the deck so that quality is maintained, but load time is not affected.

## **READABILITY**

High contrast colours usually work best for presentations, and in most cases, light text on a dark background is more readable than black text on a white background. Avoid image backgrounds where they interfere with content or they are not relevant to the

information presented. Avoid corporate colour palettes that have a low contrast with deck backgrounds.

## **USE STANDARD FONTS**

This will maximise the readability of your content on a presentation device.

## **DO NOT USE DISTRACTING SLIDE TRANSITIONS OR ANIMATIONS**

Anything that distracts the attention of the audience from the message you are

presenting will compromise success.

## **DO A RUN THROUGH**

As a general rule, it is preferable to load a deck up to a presentation device and to test any sound or video issues prior to the arrival of the audience for a pitch.

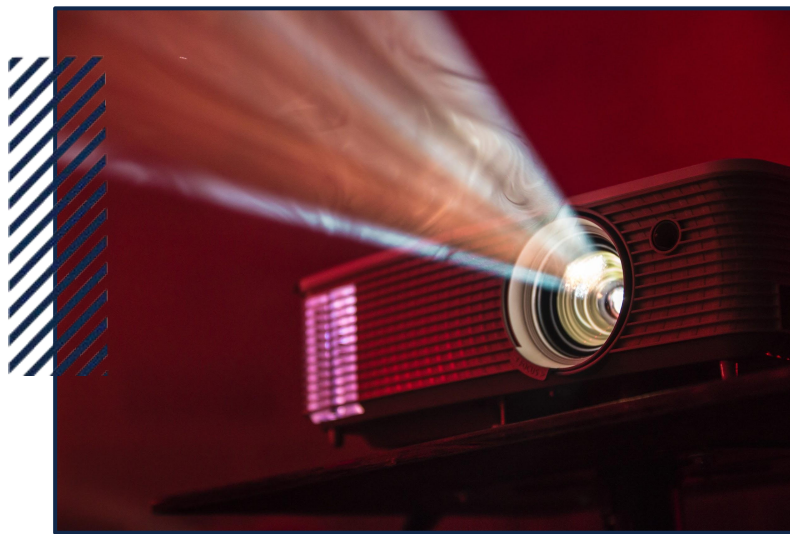
Where preloading is not possible, ensure that the presentation is accessible and can be quickly loaded on to the presentation device.



## **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR LIVE PITCHES**

It is best to have multiple copies of a presentation on both portable media (eg USB stick) and online (eg DropBox or Google Drive) to ensure widest possible accessibility. And it is recommended to use PDF format if you are unfamiliar with the program being used on the presentation device.

The best pitches will always have seamless technical flow. To maximise the chance of a successful pitch, technical flexibility, compatibility and readability are essential for your deck.





# **PITCHING ISN'T ABOUT SAYING EVERYTHING**

The reality is that when you have come up with a business plan, or have a great idea for an innovation, you will often be passionate, even obsessive about your concept.

Every little detail seems to count, and there is a temptation to bundle everything you know into a pitch so that others can become as obsessive as you are about the project.

Unfortunately, all that detail can actually hinder your chances of success. It might all be important for audiences to know all that detail once they have bought into your basic

idea. But unless you can articulate your value proposition clearly, while demonstrating empathy with your audience, you are not communicating the reliability of your idea at all. Instead you are overwhelming your audience, and the longer you pitch, the further you leave your audience behind.

This doesn't mean you have to 'dumb down' ideas to achieve a successful pitch, but it does mean that you should be as lean in your communication as you were with your business plan.

**For both the content of a deck slide, and for your pitch script, you need to ask yourself:**

- Who is in my audience?
- What are their priorities?
- How are the ideas I am presenting relevant to my audience?
- Am I using common language to communicate ideas?
- Can I say the same thing in fewer words?
- Are there any points I need to emphasise to improve understanding of an idea?



# HOW TO SAY IT



When presenting a pitch, it is always better not to read notes, as it draws the eye of the presenter away from the audience. This can negatively impact on perceived trustworthiness of the presenter, as well as reducing the presenter's sense of audience understanding.

If a presenter is so uncomfortable with public speaking that they cannot present without notes, cue cards can be a useful means of ensuring the pitch stays on track. These cue cards should not include the entire script, but

rather headline items that will allow the presenter to make eye-contact with the audience as much as possible. but with or without notes, it is essential that a pitch is delivered as though you are having a conversation with an audience. A stilted delivery of a memorised script is just as distracting as a presenter who reads from notes. Instead of memorising a full script, it is better to practice key messages, and to ensure that important words are emphasised.

Most novice presenters will be

nervous when before an unfamiliar audience, and this tends to increase both the speed and the vocal register of their presentation. If you have a high-pitched, high-speed voice, you will always appear stressed and this may well distract an audience from the value proposition you are communicating.

While it is particularly important for unseasoned speakers, it is important for all pitch presenters speakers to consciously slow down, and lower the register of their voice when pitching.



# HOW TO SAY IT

## VOCAL WARM UPS

Exercising the diaphragm prior to a pitch can help to improve the vocal range of a presenter, and reduce potential anxiety.

Exercise for 3-5 minutes before the arrival of your audience:

1. Stand on both legs, shoulders width apart
2. Place hands on the stomach and breath deeply, using the stomach and not the chest
3. Concentrate on allowing the stomach to fill with air, and for it to contract naturally

4. Repeat the exercise pretending to suck air in, and blow it out, through a straw
5. Repeat the breathing out exercises while humming a simple tune
6. Repeat the breathing exercises while pretending to chew gum (this loosens the jaw)
7. Roll your tongue around your mouth
8. Stand, opening the arms out wide and arching the upper back for 5 seconds, then hold both arms outstretched in front,

rounding the upper back for 5 seconds (repeat 3 times)

9. Recite tongue twisters in a low register voice

*'How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?  
He would chuck, he would, as much as he could, and chuck as much wood  
As a woodchuck would if a woodchuck could chuck wood.'*

*'She sells seashells by the seashore.'*



Warming up your diaphragm keeps your vocal range high and your anxiety low.

These exercises will help to prepare vocal chords for presentations, and will help to ensure diction is clear, whilst also reducing tension in the body.

Remember to pepper your presentation with memorable lines. After a week we only remember 10% of what we've heard.

Once you start presenting, try to be conscious of:

- Reducing the speed and register of your voice
- Speaking as though you are involved in conversation, rather than reading notes
- Making eye contact with the audience
- Enunciating consonants clearly
- Emphasising key words in your pitch that are relevant for your audience.



# **REHEARSING AND REFINING YOUR PITCH**

Once a pitch and script has been prepared, both need editing. Timing, content accuracy and communication style should be revised to ensure that messages are clear.

## **DECK EDITING**

Make sure that the pitch deck is free of all spelling errors and that the source of any data or research is correctly attributed. Do not rely on presentation programs to identify spelling errors. Have someone who hasn't read the deck conduct a thorough review.

## **SCRIPT EDITING**

Ensure your language is conversational, and that you avoid phrases that sound awkward when spoken. Edit your scripts to ensure you are communicating ideas effectively.

## **REHEARSING**

Rehearsals should be conducted both alone, before a mirror, and with another person who can provide feedback on your presentation content and style. Ideally, a second person should view at least two rehearsals of a pitch to be able to note differences in presentation style.

Pitch rehearsals should be conducted with a stopwatch to ensure presenters stick to the time allocated for pitching. It is best to prepare a presentation that only takes 75% of the allocated time. This allows some flexibility for errors, unplanned requests or audience questions.

## **NAILING THE ENDING**

The final line of a pitch should always be memorable, and should be reinforced by the message in the last slide. It should remind the audience of who you are and what you stand for, and it should make it clear your presentation is over, and you are open to questions.





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*“Helping you unlock  
innovation for changing  
times.”*

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