

## PITCH FOR GROWTH



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Dear Members, Dear Friends,

This toolkit on how to pitch is designed with you in mind.

From talents and leaders within large corporations to founders of startups, the aim of this document is to help women of all ages, career paths, and nationalities to reach their full potential. Pitching is one of the best ways today to achieve this goal. Whether you are a startup founder, an entrepreneur looking for corporate partners or venture capital investments, a woman working in a consultancy looking to win a new project, or simply aiming to develop your own skills, this guide is for you.

For example, you will find tips on social selling and branding for yourself and your company. When we explain how to build a successful presentation or to become a storyteller, we are talking to you both as a person and as a company. Take from this toolkit what is most useful and come back to it time and time again.

The tips, suggestions, best practices, and examples included in this document have been put together by the taskforce of the Women's Committee at AmCham France. AmCham has a long history of promoting diversity and we are proud of our achievements: we have a mentoring program spanning hundreds of companies, a free training program which helps transatlantic women access jobs in the tech sector, and we are now happy to offer you this toolkit accompanied by a series of workshops to provide you with hands-on experience.

This taskforce has always aimed at promoting women's growth within their companies. This toolkit on pitching in the professional world is at the heart of this mission. Thank you to our taskforce volunteers who made this publication possible:

**Audra Shallal**, Founder & Managing Director of Boss Consulting, who has been leading the project from start to end; **Milena Pejic**, Director of Finance and Business Development at Clenzics; **Nicole Gesret**, Marketing, Digital & Communications Director at AIG Europe; **Odile Carru**, Founder & Owner of Differentcoaching L.L.C.; **Shemin Nurmohamed**, Global Vice President Business Strategy SMB at Pitney Bowes; **Anastasiya Shapochkina**, R&D representative in Brussels at EDF R&D; **Claire Mazenod**, Global Leadership Curriculum Manager at ExxonMobil; **Colin Kramer**, Coach & Careers Advisor at ESCP Europe; **Laetitia Laborie**, Co-founder & CEO at SMG Agency; **Michelle Goldberger**, CEO, Social media learning and Social Selling Innovator, The Smartworking Company; **Yvonne Jouffraut**, COO at LiveMon.

If there is one thing I would like to leave you with it is this: believe in yourself and unlock your full potential.

We wish you luck in your future endeavors and hope that they will be enriched by this guide.

Best wishes,

Stéphanie Barreau  
President, AmCham France  
President, 3M France

## INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary business environment, pitching is considered as an essential factor of professional success. A decade ago, verbal constructions such as “elevator pitch”, “business pitch”, “successful business pitch” still sounded exotic and outlandish (especially in France), requiring detailed explanation. This is no longer the case today: the word has firmly integrated everyday parlance, whether in the office or in internet blogs. A proof of this growing popularity linked to a concern about pitching successfully, are the 350,000 results turned up by Google in early 2019 for “business pitch”, and the astonishing 6,390,000 for “elevator pitch”. Perhaps this is not very surprising in an information-saturated world where the word “startup” carries with it promises and expectations about the economy of tomorrow, and where the entrepreneur is the new cultural hero personifying autonomy, creativity and effort. Capital is both scarce and abundant, as investors are on the look for the new “gem”. The “Pitch culture” has also penetrated the world of traditional corporations. Clearly, in such an environment communication is crucial and additional efforts are needed to attract investors’ attention.

The AmCham *Pitch 4 Growth* has been designed precisely with the intention to provide entrepreneurs with an efficient and easy-to-handle tool to create and develop a successful business pitch. The authors consider that it is necessary to distinguish between different types of players in the business world: individuals, corporations, public institutions, etc. Thus, a catch-for-all formula for a successful pitch does not exist, since different players have different concerns and expectations. It is necessary to identify the most typical settings that impact the business pitch. In the following pages the reader will discover the great diversity of these pitching situations and environments. The entries are designed to be concise in introducing tools and techniques aimed to develop or to enhance a successful pitch, such as creating a PowerPoint presentation or the importance of body language.

The four chapters of the Toolkit are organized around the main “pillars” of contemporary business world: startups, corporations, digital and online business. Chapter 1 aims to offer orientation for an entrepreneur or a startup seeking for funds: the language of the major players in the financial chain, the main categories of investors, the way they operate and what can be expected from them. Pitching is viewed as a process that can be broken down into several stages. The importance of physical setting and different audience expectations that require different types of storytelling are also addressed in this chapter. It concludes with a detailed presentation of the pitfalls and opportunities of a central event of the pitching process, the PowerPoint presentation viewed here as “storytelling”. Chapter 2 addresses pitching process within the traditional corporation with its codes and rules. While the encounter between a startup and an investor can somehow be compared to a “love at first sight”, the corporate environment resembles more the “family” where everybody knows each other (or is supposed to do so!), and where there is a strict separation between “inside” and “outside”. Nevertheless, even in this setting pitching skills are required in order to promote and cultivate the professional image. In addition, it becomes clear that it is not the same thing to pitch in a large corporation or in a SME. Chapter 3 provides useful advice in order to become credible and ready for pitching. On the one hand, good pitching requires knowledge of the digital jungle, where the aim is to become “digital-ready” and capable to navigate between social networks. Being “present” does not mean the same thing in the digital world

as in a face-to-face encounter. Issues such as upcoming trends and cybersecurity are also addressed in this chapter. Pitch development thus involves knowing codes and intricacies of creating and developing a profile on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc. On the other hand, a traditional exercise such as the art of public speaking also remains a crucial component for a successful pitch. In chapter 4 the reader will find useful advice aimed to overcome the fear of public speaking, with a help from the famous tycoon Warren Buffett. The Appendix contains overviews of the workshops that will be offered by contributors of the toolkit throughout the year.

## CHAPTER 1: HOW DO YOU PITCH TO AN INVESTOR?

### I. WHAT DO YOU FIRST NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE DIFFERENT FINANCIAL CHAINS?

#### A. UNDERSTANDING THE LANGUAGE OF MAJOR PLAYERS

In today's world, more and more companies are created every day. Many of them need investment to grow, and the competition for funds and capital is fierce. No matter how confident the entrepreneur about the attractiveness of his business, she needs to pay a close attention to different stages of fundraising. Thankfully, fundraising opportunities are now also much more diverse than they were in the past. Business support networks, angel groups and VC associations exist now practically in every country. Some have emerged recently in the wake of the internet revolution (crowdfunding). Before asking for funds, the entrepreneur must evaluate her needs honestly and be aware that some investors will take some control within the company.

#### B. THE STAGES OF FUNDRAISING

##### 1. The first one to ask for funding? Yourself!

**Description:** Business founders have many possibilities to advance their own companies and to invest into them. Sometimes it means an opportunity to invest in their own company. However, any type of creative investment may prove useful: the hours an associate/partner/co-founder invests in the business also counts as an investment, or for that matter any other form of contribution such as workspace, machinery, supplies or business models.

**Why would I choose them?** the most obvious advantage is that the investor provides financing/investing at all stages of investment, beyond the usual and obvious start-up costs. The founder is free to invest as much as he/she wants, and his/her dedication to the newfound company can even be attractive to other investors.

##### 2. The “3F’s”: family, friends and fools

**Description:** It is the other most obvious choice for an entrepreneur who is not yet very familiar with the world of professional investment. It draws on the model of the “family business”. While “3F’s” don’t often have the eye or skills of a professional investor, it is likely that those who are close to the entrepreneur will also know much better about the business, motivation and character of the founder. They are more likely to provide the much-needed support and confidence in the early stage.

**Why would I choose them?** The “3F’s” are often sought during the initial stage of investment, in order to cover the initial costs needed to make the company attractive enough to be presented to a professional investor. They can also help to bridge the gap to a first round of seed funding. The most obvious advantage is that it provides a rapid and relatively less costly source of liquidity. They are as a rule also much easier to convince to invest. While the amounts invested may not be very high (it can take the form of a low-interest or interest-free loan, or a participation in the company), they provide an additional benefit: they build the entrepreneur’s confidence and make the company more attractive for professional investors.

### 3. Crowdfunding

**Description:** Crowdfunding literally means that funds are provided by a “crowd”, a multitude of people. The most common procedure today consists in registering on an online platform where entrepreneurs display and advertise their business project, and where large “crowds” invest (usually small amounts) to meet the entrepreneur’s investment need. Several types of crowdfunding exist, and the choice largely depends on the entrepreneur’s need: loans, pre-orders and convertible loans. A *loan* is usually sought when the project is considered as a too risky investment by banks. *Pre-orders* are usually sought in situations where a technological prototype is available but where finance to launch it is lacking. A *convertible loan* (a short-term debt that converts into equity) is sought when the entrepreneurs does not want to issue shares or to engage in valuation discussions. In exchange for contributions to support the project, entrepreneurs promise various types of rewards to backers.

**Why would I choose them?** Crowdfunding is sought because it is easy, fast, cheap and trendy. As with the “3Fs”, people that invest via crowdfunding platforms are rarely professional investors, even though specialized crowdfunding platforms also exist. In order to raise money through crowdfunding, a good pitch is necessary, targeted specifically towards a non-specialist public lacking technical knowledge. Don’t try to explain a complex chemical formula to a person who never studied chemistry! Successful crowdfunding involves a good understanding of crowd psychology: people are likely to accept a risky investment in a group or as “followers”, something they would not do on their own.

### 4. Business Angels

**Description:** Business angels are usually experienced private investors who look for opportunities and invest in unquoted small- and medium-sized businesses. They are often businessmen and businesswomen who have sold their business, and they are often members of various Business Angel Networks where they screen projects on a regular basis. They provide not only finance but also experience, business skills and advice. Business Angels invest in the early stage of business development and thus can partly fill the equity gap.

**Why would I choose them?** They are most often sought during the seed stage, when a prototype already exists, as well as clients. Business Angels usually expect a high investment return and will be very involved in the business. Business Angels provide many benefits also through filling the equity funding gap by catering to the financing requirements at an early stage of the business lifecycle as well as through knowledge sharing and complementing the managerial skills of young entrepreneurs. They can also help to attract other investors, introduce them to an investment community and provide higher deal flows - by pre-selecting potential deals for them.

### 5. Subsidies

**Description:** Subsidies and schemes are strategic investments aimed to stimulate and facilitate entrepreneurship, innovation/R&D or economic growth and job creation within a certain geographical/technological/business area. Every country or regional institutions such as the EU provide subsidies in selected areas.

**Why would I choose them?** The entrepreneur will discover that subsidies and grants can be a good alternative to more traditional loan institutions such as banks. In addition, a subsidy from a prestigious public institution can boost investor confidence during the next fundraising

stage. It shows that the company generates interest and attract private investment. Subsidies are relevant at any stage of investment. However, the entrepreneur must be patient and be prepared to do a lot of paperwork, respect administrative and reporting requirements, and provide precise evaluations of costs involved. Some institutions would even require a regular auditing. Be prepared for that!

## 6. Venture capital/private equity

**Description:** private equity and venture capital are professional fund providers, usually for medium and large firms. Venture capital (VC) often focuses on risky investments in early-stage companies. On the other hand, private equity is therefore usually sought when the company already exists for some time. Both usually employ strong governance to protect the large amount of capital deployed in each deal such as requisite board seats and complex deal terms including the ability to control subsequent financings.

**Why would I choose them?** The main advantage of VCs is that they can fund multiple rounds. Private equity/venture capital allow to raise a large amount of capital from institutional investors, to assemble a set of experienced partners who can provide hands-on expertise in building the product. They are usually beneficial for companies that have already passed the “seed stage” and are looking for the next stages of funding. It stimulates growth and access to new markets. VCs investments range from €500,000 to €20 million. As it is the case with the Business Angels, VCs often also have a specific sector focus and good knowledge/network within this sector.

## 7. Banks

**Description:** Banks are the most traditional source of capital. However, while they are often involved in venture capital, they are also much more risk-averse and require multiple guarantees in different forms. They are likely to be interested in SME-type companies. As a rule, they require important collateral and serious feasibility study. For this reason, the entrepreneur must be transparent and provide all required financial data and estimates, if he wants to convince a bank to provide him investment. Not all early-stage start-ups are able to provide such guarantees but the banks are willing to lend the funds on the future cash flow projections that guarantee income-generating capacity as in project financing when the loan repayment capacity is based on future projections. The good news here is that some banks have established and developed partnerships with crowdfunding platforms (see “crowdfunding”).

**Why would I choose them?** If the entrepreneur can provide enough guarantees and collateral, banks can be a good source of investment. Banks are reliable, their investments are regular, they do not require a part of the equity and can finance the requirements up to 100% however some capital is usually required. This offers a considerable advantage in the long-run, easing costs for the company.

*To get practical knowledge about the topic on “Accessing financial services –what do private investors offer and is it right for my business needs?”, please see the Appendix.*

## C. ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF FINANCE

### 1. Factoring

**Description:** Factors are the foundation of portfolios: the broad, persistent forces that have driven returns of stocks, bonds and other assets. They offer a way of financing working capital by lowering the size of accounts receivable via selling future account receivables at the discount rate. This is very useful for boosting working capital as a source of funding. Additionally, if you are to work with the big companies, you might want to consider reverse factoring (or supply chain factoring) via financing your obligations towards the supplier.

**Why would I choose them?** As a rule, factors require an established client base. Its advantages are obvious when the company struggles with long payment terms. With large corporate clients, payment on invoice can be very slow. Factoring can help to keep the company in a good financial shape “in between”.

### 2. Leasing

**Description:** While leasing cannot be strictly speaking considered as a source of finance, it needs nevertheless to be mentioned here, since it can help cutting costs on large investments in assets such as hardware, real estate, cars, machines and computers. The assets are not paid up front but payments are spread over a longer period. It is regarded as fixed payment over the certain period of time thus it helps to predict the future cash flow and match the income. Yet, it usually can be deductible from taxable income and it does not appear on the liability statement as leverage.

**Why would I choose them?** Only if the start-up requires an important investment in equipment and machines. Additionally, the risk of the equipment breaking down is on the leasing company thus it can be easily replaced by new.

### 3. Suppliers

**Description:** Suppliers are not really finance providers. However, it is possible to diminish costs by negotiating with them favorable payment terms or discounts, especially if the client payment terms are long. Yet, one should always think to avoid Key Supplier Risk thus have negotiations with several suppliers to have a back up plan to maintain steady supply of the Company's needs.

**Why would I choose them?** A good relationship between entrepreneur and supplier is always welcome, and it is an obvious advantage for both.

*To get practical knowledge about the topic on “Alternative Sources of Funding: Crowdfunding”, please see the Appendix.*

## II. HOW DO YOU DELIVER A PERSUASIVE PITCH?

## A. WHAT MAKES A GOOD STORY?

In an era when any one of us can create, publish and share anything we choose, great storytelling has become the differentiator. We've all consumed "content", yet what we continually respond to is stories.

Everything is a story. That doesn't mean, however, that everything is a *good* story. Just as many people can cook, there's a difference between making a grilled cheese sandwich and finessing a five-star meal. And like cooking, effective stories have recipes—or formulas.

Stories in general – when chosen wisely and told well – are powerful tools for persuasion, influence, affection and trust. Even short stories, or anecdotes, can pique an audience's interest and create emotion. They make us *feel* as well as *think*.

A great business story is memorable, persuasive, moving, engaging, immersive and surprising. And it's usually not just about entertainment. It may also educate and lead.

So what makes a *good* story? Here are a few elements I have noticed watching and reading great storytellers:

### 1. Simple

Good stories are easy to understand. They are also told in a language that matches the way the intended audience communicates, so the listeners don't need to spend time interpreting and then absorbing.

### 2. Emotional

Good storytelling requires an emotional component. Most memorable stories have humor, pain or joy (sometimes all three). If a story simply consists of facts stated, one after another, like bullet points, most of us wouldn't listen or remember any of it.

### 3. Truthful

This does not mean truth in the scientific sense, but truth in the fact that the teller *believes* in what she is saying, is honest with herself and the audience about it.

### 4. Real

Good stories are first-hand experiences the storyteller actually lived, witnessed or has heard of.

You need to set a goal before telling a story. Even before you consider the story you're going to tell, know the results you are driving to. There's no point in telling a story just to tell a story. That is worthless. Identify the points you want to make and then connect them with potential stories you can share.

## B. THE KEY ELEMENTS OF AN ELEVATOR PITCH

The elevator pitch is an essential component of a successful business strategy and an essential tool to attract investors. It owes its name to the practice of attracting the interest of an investor/executive by describing the product/service in the length of an elevator ride. Presumably, the perfect elevator pitch is a short, concise one-minute presentation describing the entrepreneur's business project, the benefit it provides and the problem it solves. While

length may vary with the situation (an actual elevator ride, a business presentation, a networking event, etc.), ideally, an “off the cuff” elevator pitch can be resumed in *one* sentence. The elevator pitch can be compared to a strike of lightning: it illuminates briefly an otherwise dark landscape. Presumably, life will never be the same for the potential investor afterwards...

The principal virtue of the elevator pitch is simplicity, the capacity to go directly to the point. Avoid any flowery rhetoric or bombastic sentences! Remember, time is the most valuable thing for the investor, and the entrepreneur must respect it. While the elevator pitch is delivered as a speech (essentials), it can also take written form. It would correspond then to the executive summary part of the Business Plan: it tells what the business is and why and how it can become successful. The elevator pitch must therefore be put together after the business plan is completed.

A good elevator pitch consists of three main parts: the problem, the solution and the way it will be solved.

### **1. The Problem**

The first step to define a good business pitch, after introducing oneself, is to identify the problem/pain the product/service will solve. The potential investor will be interested if the state of affair in the market is identified clearly and unambiguously. Of course, the project may also provide solutions to other problems, but these are appropriate for a more detailed presentation. Ideally, this description will consist of 3-5 sentences.

### **2. The solution**

The second step will describe the product/service that the entrepreneur will offer. It can be presented in a before/after mode. This description will be very concise, no more than two or three sentence long. It should not be too technical. It is a good idea to present it in a way that will induce the potential investor to want to know more. It is important to convey the reason why the product/service will solve a specific problem: is it new technology? Market/demographic evolution? A unique combination of talents/skills?

### **3. How to do it**

The third step will describe the target market, competition, team and will present the essential milestones (together with financials).

- Potential market**

The product/service will have a specific target and will have to face potential/actual competition. The target market are the customers who would be interested in the solution the entrepreneur is offering. While it is not possible to describe the market segmentation in less than one minute, the pitch should at least suggest the entrepreneur is well-informed about the potential market. Even if the product aims at a large public, it is always more fruitful to describe the specific group of people that will buy the product. Once the market segments are established, the size of this group will be quantified together with their average budget/income group.

- **Competition**

Even the most innovative products will have to face competition. If the entrepreneur's product solves a problem, it must be an improvement on someone else's offer. It is important to convey that the product provides a critical advantage in comparison with the competitor's one: why is it better?

- **Team**

In this final part, the entrepreneur will introduce the team and will describe how it will help develop the business/solve the problem described in the opening sentence. After all, the elevator pitch is not a sales pitch: the entrepreneur is not selling a product but a company. It must describe the team and state clearly why the entrepreneur and its partners are capable to implement the vision. What specific skill will enable the entrepreneur to solve the problem? What makes the team unique? The team's skills are not only crucial for the development of the product/idea, but also for the company's ability to survive and to grow.

- **Milestones**

The elevator pitch will also include information about its milestones: upcoming goals and a schedule about achieving them. An exit strategy could be included (acquisition, licensing, etc.).

#### **4. Final Step - Call for Action**

State what you want your target audience to do next. (Business Card, Investment, Partners, Royalty Relationships, etc).

A good elevator pitch succeeds in communicating the entrepreneur's vision with the potential investors. It also helps to reduce risk, since the potential investor will leave with a clear idea about how the company will become profitable.

### **C. HOW DO YOU PERFECT YOUR ONE-MINUTE ELEVATOR PITCH?**

Now that you have prepared your elevator pitch, you have repeated it in front of an audience that is friendly enough to give you honest advice. It is time to maximize the impact of your elevator pitch!

The point here is to take into account the differences between your culture and the one of the audience you target and their purpose in listening to you as well as the context of the meeting. It is a matter of "how" to:

- Think politically to ensure that you will have your strategic vision as an entrepreneur heard and understood;
- Posture yourself in a self-confident way to gain maximum support.

First of all, some simple questions could help you figure out the background context and the culture of the audience you target and adapt accordingly:

- International vs local: Are you talking to people from your own country with the same language or speaking to a more international audience? For cultures other than yours, get informed on their customs and habits to avoid any misunderstanding

- Corporate vs external: are you pitching as an “intrapreneur” within a big matrix organization or in front of external investors who have their own culture and aims?
- From the Investors’ pool: do they belong to funds, business angels, incubators, academics, crowdfunding, or friends/family (love money)?
- In case of a corporate audience: is your industry focusing on goods or services? Are you a start-up or traditional business unit? Are you dealing with c-suite or middle management and do you need to convince main stakeholders “behind the scenes”?

Some tips and examples related to these different types of audience:

- For instance, if you are pitching to an Anglo-Saxon audience, you have to go straight to the point: present an executive summary then illustrate.
- If you are pitching as a start-up, illustrate with POC, a prototype for the industrial sector.
- If you are pitching fintechs or insurtechs, use a POC of your digital platform and statistics, a virtual case on 360 video format.
- For a corporate internal audience, you have to think more broadly and raise some other KPIs: is there any benefit for other businesses of the Group? Is the proposal a part of a bigger project or a first step to a new phase for your organization (new segment, new country, new partners...)? Could your initiative bring on people engagement, crowdsourcing and collaborative innovation, or environmental enhancement, social sustainable innovation that would enhance the company’s reputation?

In all cases, some basics tips related to your behavior could be helpful:

- Positioning yourself: Show confidence, be consistent in your behavior. Do you stand or sit? If you stand, choose a position where your feet are firmly on the ground and where you can breath and develop your pitch with appropriate tone and body language...
- *And, of course, care about your personal digital brand.*

***To get practical knowledge about the topic on “Crafting a Killer Pitch”, please see the Appendix.***

## D. A FEW TIPS ON THE PRESENTATION

If you are giving a pitch with a slide deck, this is the basic slide/presentation outline to follow:

### 1. Opening

Usually a photo of your product or tagline/ one-sentence description

### 2. Problem

Explain the problem you are solving and for whom.

### 3. Solution

Describe how your product helps your user/customer solve their problem. If your audience is the target customer, then be specific about what it will do for them.

#### **4. Product**

What makes your offering/product special?

#### **5. Traction**

Highlight milestones and successes. Describe your progress so far - have you built the product, do you have users, customers, leads, how many, how much, etc. Graphs and charts are great to help show progress.

#### **6. Go to Market**

Explain how you will attract users/customers, how will you sell your product (direct/partners/etc.), and how you will reach your target customers.

#### **7. Business Model**

Describe how your product is sold/delivered and your revenue model (subscription, license, etc). Include pricing, margins, etc., whatever information is relevant to your audience.

#### **8. Financials**

(optional) Provide existing financials and project growth estimates for short or long term. Only include this if it is relevant to your audience. If you are asking for investment, explain what you will use the funds for.

#### **9. The Team**

Show pictures and brief background of key team members. Include any relevant information that ties directly to the chance of your being successful. Include any key advisors or board members.

#### **10. The Ask**

(optional) Ask for another meeting, ask for the sale, ask for investment, or ask for advice. This should be tailored to your audience and what you are trying to get out of the pitch.

- Don'ts**

A couple of things you shouldn't do that are easy mistakes:

1. **DON'T** waste a lot of time talking about yourself, your background, why you started the company or where the idea came from - unless this information is DIRECTLY relevant to why you will be successful. (ie. I am a doctor but I built this product to solve my problem so other doctors can benefit from it).
2. **DON'T** get too detailed about what your product entails or how it works. Remember, stick to the value proposition - how it benefits your users or customers. Most founders are in love with their product and that is OK but your audience only cares about why someone would use it. You want to make sure that anyone that hears your pitch can repeat to someone else why a user/customer would use your product.
3. **DON'T** be afraid to ask for something. If you are looking for an opportunity to partner or sell your product to a corporation, then don't be afraid to bring it up at the end of

your presentation. “Let me know how we can proceed to create a partnership” or “Let's talk about how you can start using my product”. While the pitch is meant to be an opener, not a closer, it's still good to be clear about your objectives.

- **Feedback Loop**

What is the most important part of the pitch? QUESTIONS! The questions that your audience asks immediately after hearing your pitch (whether its a 30-second elevator pitch or a full presentation) is the most important feedback you will get.

If you are pitching your idea to an audience that is also your customer, then the questions they ask are directly relevant to how you can improve your pitch and your product.

If you are pitching to a potential partner, the feedback will help you understand the weak points in your pitch or idea and understand how to improve. Always take questions seriously and never get defensive. It's always good to answer questions by saying “that's a great point” or “that's a good question” and “let me explain you how we've approached this”.

- **Startup as a Service**

If your startup is a service (and not a product) then there are a few differences.

- Your personal/professional story is more important since a big part of what you are selling is yourself and your skillset. So it's important to talk about why you are the best person to provide this service. Use specific examples and case studies to make this point (don't ramble). Point out that you did X for client Y and the result was Z.
- If you are trying to sell a service to a corporation and there are budgetary concerns, ask about their discretionary budget and find a smaller project that you can do sooner within that budget. Corporations are always keener to work with people they know and have worked with before so if you can get a quick/small project on the books, it will give you a huge advantage.

### **III. HOW DO YOU BUILD AN EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION?**

#### **A. HOW DO YOU BUILD A CONVINCING POWERPOINT PRESENTATION?**

- ❖ **Structure**

A successful PowerPoint for an Anglo-Saxon audience should start with your most important message, serving as a hook for the rest of the presentation. The first thirty seconds will lead the audience to decide whether they will follow you for the rest of the presentation. Start with your conclusion followed by an illustration of why it is important and how you got there: existing alternatives, risks and conclusions backed up with numbers, real-life examples followed by counter-examples. The first five minutes should summarize your most important points. If you have slides about theory and methodology, you may include them in an annex to use them if needed in the Q&A section. Every slide that goes into the presentation itself should support directly to your main message.

On the contrary, the European audience needs to know the method and the theory behind your reasoning before they can appreciate your argument. Brick by brick, you have to explain various stages that took you to your conclusion, including a detailed “how”, before crowning your presentation with the final argument to be convincing and give you credibility.

#### ❖ Content

A good PowerPoint presentation is a captivating storyline, a show of change, progress or transformation through action and a result or conclusion. You should illustrate opportunities, real risks and obstacles to reaching them, ways to overcome the risks, a variety of options and reasons for the best choice. Instead of a static conclusion, look for a creative ending on the last slide of your presentation which would send your audience imagining the next step or leap to action. A dynamic conclusion may take the form of business lessons, scenarios of outcomes, an action plan or a road map.

Whatever content you have, ask yourself: what are the most important things you want your audience to remember when walking out of the door? Leave your audience with few things. Less is more.

#### ❖ Form

##### **Three key things:**

1. One slide = one picture = one message.
2. Every slide must have these 4 elements:
  - o A self-explanatory title
  - o A short and clear message
  - o An added value: it must bring your audience one step closer to conclusion
  - o A slide number
3. Timing: talk 2 minutes maximum per each slide to keep your presentation short and crisp. In case you have many things to say, include them in an annex.

To keep your audience engaged and following your line of thinking, focus on most important points, use contrast for stronger effect, ask your audience questions to keep them engaged and do not be afraid to stir debate or controversy to make your presentation stand out.

#### ❖ Few rules for presenting data and numbers

- Keep it simple
- Three must-have elements are:
  1. Title
  2. Two marked axes with numbers and labels (volume, time, price...)
  3. Source: author, title, institution, date
- Make your own charts

#### ❖ Oral presentation and preparation

- Prepare = rehearse, use “Slide Show” to track time and immerse yourself. Check the room and equipment one day or half an hour before your presentation.

- Do not read your slides – look at audience members in the eyes.
- Turn your back to the slides – face your computer to keep facing the audience.
- Project using a distance pointer.
- Vary your voice throughout the presentation.
- Pause for effect.

## **B. WHAT IMPACTFUL MATERIALS SHOULD YOU USE TO SUPPORT YOUR PITCH?**

The way your presentation is built gives a lot of information on the way you will conduct your business.

Here are some tips to help presenting a perfect business plan to be persuasive enough:

- An executive summary – ideally one page: a clear vision and a clear path
- Develop the presentation in a story-telling mode – make your listeners dream and onboard them to your project – plus some appendixes with details and figures or relevant statistics, as well as bios and pictures
- Some alternatives to “just a PowerPoint”: to re-enforce your storytelling and showcase where you want to go, you can use videos, games, prototypes, testimonials, newsletters...
- Never forget the ultimate purpose of a company is to create value: don’t hesitate to refer to financial KPIs at any moment!

## CHAPTER 2: HOW DO YOU PITCH IN A CORPORATE ENVIRONMENT?

### I. HOW DO YOU PITCH YOURSELF?

#### A. CONTEXT

Every successful woman should be able to easily talk about herself and pitch her talent. In that matter, preparation is key. Without being prepared, many successful women can potentially sabotage their professional image because of their lack of communication skills.

Once you are prepared and clear on your achievements, skills, and ready to talk about yourself, not only you will be at ease to do it, but furthermore you be willing to do it, proactive in your communication, and proud about yourself. It is a virtuous circle.

Successful Communication <-> Confidence <-> Performance

**Test: are you ready to answer those questions with confidence and energy right now?**

- Who are you? Tell me about yourself and your job.
- What are you 3 biggest achievements?
- What are you 3 top skills?
- What are your plans for the future?
- Describe your current biggest project.

If the answer is “yes” to all above questions, you are ready to pitch!

No need to invest in a training or a communication workshop. Just reinforce your message and don’t forget the impact of the body language.

If your answer is “no”, continue your reading.

#### B. OBJECTIVES OF PITCHING INTO THE CORPORATE ENVIRONMENT

**Internal:** being recognized as a credible professional in your environment in order to grow and influence within your company

- Be able to easily communicate about your mission, main challenges, main objectives towards your colleagues, peers and managers at large.
- Clearly express your views on a specific topic with confidence and using appropriate communications skills for maximum impact and influence
- Apply to internal positions with a clear idea of your strengths, achievements, and why you think you can be the “right” candidate for that position

**External:** be identified as a credible professional by the outside world

- Be efficient in your networking at large
- Applying to outside positions and learning to market your talent

## C. METHODOLOGY

*Learn to say what you think, not what is expected from you!*

- One-minute elevator pitch: 3P's

### PERSONAL

I am Ann Grant, raise and born in the US, I have been living in Paris for 5 years. I like very much being in Europe because...

### PROFESSIONAL

I work in sales. I am a key account representative for L'Oreal. I have always been in sales. Sales is part of my DNA. What describes me best is my positive energy and attitude in life in general and my professional challenges.

### PLUS

My objective is to become manager in a larger team, that is why I am so interested in this position.

**Tips:** Depending on your objective, reverse the order of the 3P's. The Plus is something you want to share about yourself that is relevant to the situation.

More practical help is available during our workshop.

1- 5-7 minutes' presentation around the question "tell me about yourself": 3P's with more details

2- Preparing my key achievements: the PAR technique Problem - Action – Results

Example:

- I need to reorganize a process -> Problem
- I put together a team, I clearly set up responsibilities -> Action
- The company saves 20% in the shipment costs and -> Results

3- Knowing my key skills

- Technical skills

I am a CPA, I know QuickBooks and the XYZ software, I speak Mandarin and I am an expert in Chinese corporate taxes.

- Personal skills

I am detail-oriented, reliable and able to quickly understand the client's needs

#### 4- Use an appropriate body language

Remember that non-verbal is much more important than words.

Gesture 55%, words 7%

Keep eye contact, smile, sit in a relax and comfortable position.

#### 5- Repetition, repetition, repetition ... practice, practice, practice

With your mentor, your coach, your significant other, your good friend, and your mirror.

#### Suggested additional resources:

- TedTalk Amy Cuddy “Your body language may shape who you are” on [https://www.ted.com/talks/amy\\_cuddy\\_your\\_body\\_language\\_shapes\\_who\\_you\\_are?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_shapes_who_you_are?language=en)
- Read this great book “Presence” by Amy Cuddy

***To get practical knowledge about the topic on “Pitching in the Corporate Environment”, please see the appendix.***

## II. HOW DO YOU PITCH YOUR STARTUP TO A CORPORATE?

### A. OVERVIEW

When pitching your startup to a corporation (or anyone for that matter), the most important thing is what it can do for them and the problem that you are solving. Lead with the value proposition and focus on the problem you are solving. At the end of the day, successful startup ideas either save the time or make the money. Find a way to explain how you are doing one of those two things for your audience.

Do your homework, know your audience and speak to their pain point. Also, be clear about what you want to get out of the pitch - the point of a pitch is not to ‘close the deal’ but to get to another meeting where you can answer questions and provide more detailed information. So think of your pitch as the opening statement - high level. You want to get your audience excited about what you are doing and help them see the big picture. There is plenty of time to give background information and details about how you are doing to do it later. Right now, you want them to see your vision and understand how it will make their lives easier.

### B. PITCHING TO CORPORATE INVESTORS

Corporate investors and corporate venture capital represent an important source of financing and support for startups and entrepreneurs.

There still exists in some quarters a prejudice that startups and big corporations evolve in a different world, speak a different language and have mutually opposed interests. It states that they are afraid of each other: while large corporations “prey” on the business ideas and

innovative companies, afraid as they are of potential competitors, the startup on the other hand feel helpless in the face of a giant with massive human, technological, and legal resources. They would walk around them on tiptoes, fearing to attract their (unwanted) interest.

The truth is that corporate investors are in fact *very* interested in startups in a way that is beneficial to both. Empirical studies conducted in US and Canada demonstrates that startups and big companies can be considered as strategic allies rather than enemies. From 2011 to 2016, the number of global active corporate investors has tripled to 965, while 75 of the Fortune 100 are active in corporate venturing or have a special CVC Team[1]. Motivations of corporate investors are very diverse: cost saving strategy, the need to innovate that stimulates interest in new technology, customer base enlargement, absence of bureaucratic constraints and the advantages of a comparatively rapid decision-making characteristic of startups, a will to explore core, adjacent or future market, getting market knowledge, exposure to new market models, etc.[2]

Very often big companies invest in startups with the purpose of purchasing them. Admittedly, this already presupposes that the startup or entrepreneur has succeeded with the pitch. This is also true in the case where it is the company that makes the first move and contacts the startup. For “pitching to an investor” the stress on the importance of “prior relationships” between buyers and potential corporate acquirers, its impact on valuation, the price paid by the corporation for a startup in case of a purchase is particularly important.

According to *Forbes*, Corporate Venture arms look primarily for startups with high-growth potential, large addressable target markets, those that are synergistic with the big company, as well those with a high financial upside or future. More often than before, these Corporate Ventures often lead the financial round and do not necessarily require a lead institutional venture capital investor.

In addition, it is now common for the corporation to establish Venture capital funds or Corporate Venture Capital (CVC) for the intermediary purposes between the startup and the corporation, the “practice when a large firm takes an equity stake in a small but innovative or specialist firm, to which it may also provide management and marketing expertise; the objective is to gain a specific competitive advantage”[3]. The Venture Capital Funds are similar capitalists presented earlier, save that they had been set by the corporation themselves. They are particularly important for R&D, technologically oriented companies, and cost saving strategy is an important motivation for them. Venture Capital Funds are not only purveyors of capital, but they can also provide other types of support as well: logistics, supplies, technological assistance, etc. The potential interest to a startup or entrepreneur thus does not only derive from the potential investment the company can bring.

Corporations can be valuable for the startups in various ways other than capital. Some of these include:

- Providing resources such as workspace, access to materials and knowledge
- Strategic and tactical advice
- Operating support
- Credibility derived from the fact that an important player is interested in the startup

- Information and technological support, as well as expertise and know-how of the large corporation
- Access to new customers, etc.
  
- **Know where you stand and where you want to go.**

Pitching to Corporations and their Venture Capital Funds requires good preparation. An effective pitch backed by solid numbers is a requirement in all cases.

Corporations are usually doing early stage and middle stage investment. CVC firms provide capital during various phases of development. The relationship between the corporation and the startup will depend on whether the entrepreneur/startup offers a business idea, an idea with a prototype, or when an organization, a product and clients already exist. When a startup asks for support in the seed stage, it usually needs funds or technological assistance to create a prototype. In a later stage of finance, risks are considered less important, but financial return becomes more of an issue, as well as an eventual future expansion. Patent and copyright issues are important when the startup wants to sell a business idea or when it seeks technological support from the big corporation, market research and product development, hire/establish teams, etc. Entrepreneurs sometimes voice the preoccupation about the risk of losing control, but practice demonstrates that Corporate VC funds rarely ask for unusual rights and consider it counterproductive. The corporate venture firms will however expect information rights such as financial statements and budgets, registration rights, preemptive rights on future stock insurances, voting rights and eventually Board seat and observer rights[4].

- **What is specific about pitching to a Corporation or VC Capital Fund?**

The presentation guidelines that apply to Angel or VC investors are of course also important in this setting: the entrepreneur/startup must showcase his project persuasively, backed with good financial projections. It would include initial contact, business plan presentation/pitch, product demonstration, valuation, legal issues, etc. Does the company have a corporate venture arm? If not, who is responsible within the corporation about fund allocation? The entrepreneur must also investigate very closely the organization, its core business, its growth strategy and its past record in supporting startups. While preparing for the presentation, he/she must also gather information about the corporate culture of his company, its management style, its values, dress codes, etc.

Contrary to the VCs who look primarily for a return on capital, the CVC strives to advance both strategic and financial objectives. They are closely related with the sales and the profits of the corporation. The entrepreneur must therefore take this fact into account when designing the business Pitch. While the potential financial added value should not be forgotten in the presentation, it must also state clearly how the operations and objectives of the startup are connected to those of the company that provides CVC, and the potential synergies that the corporation will derive from the investment in the startup (new markets, new technologies or resources). Since the company that provides CVC often claims superior and in-depth knowledge of the market/new technologies, the presentation must demonstrate also that investment will be beneficial for the company in the medium and long term. Finally, the

startup would make its case stronger if it can demonstrate that there is a significant synergy between corporation and startup in terms of technology, manufacturing, distribution channels, etc., as well as reassure the company that it does not present a threat to its current activities. Good and thorough research is therefore the key for success. In all cases, mastering the language of the corporation allows to improve the pitch by explaining it in terms that will appeal to it.

- **Where do I go to find CVC?**

Some corporations organize events and competitions, including Pitch Competitions targeting specifically entrepreneurs and startups. Institutions representing the interest of a specific economic sector also organize events and provide information, such as Global Corporate Venturing, Strategic Venturing Association, etc. The startup seeking visibility must use all the available opportunities to make itself better known. The Venture capital funds often function very much like Venture Capitalists, since they attend and participate in VC and Angel Networks, and often collaborate with incubator and accelerator programs.

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[1] Sean Wise, "7 Ways Your Startup Can Work With Fortune 500 Companies (Besides Getting Funding)", *Inc.*, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018, available at: <https://www.inc.com/sean-wise/how-startups-can-turn-their-corporate-enemies-into-allies.html>

[2] Richard Harroch, "Startups Seeking Funding Should Consider Corporate Venture Capital Arms", *Forbes*, February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017, available at:  
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/allbusiness/2017/02/25/startups-seeking-funding-should-consider-corporate-venture-capital-arms/>

[3] « Corporate Venturing » *Business Dictionary*, available at:  
<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/corporate-venturing.html>

[4] *Ibid.*

## CHAPTER 3: HOW TO BECOME DIGITAL-READY?

### I. EXPLORING THE DIGITAL JUNGLE

#### A. ONLINE PRESENCE

- **How has it changed?**

The world is now in the digital space. We have reached a time where approximately 170 million active users log in to social media every day. Technology, marketplace, customers, and companies have never been more interlinked since the beginning of the business world as we know it.

If we ask how it has changed, the answers can be summed up in a few words: simplified, faster, sophisticated, demanding, and specialized. Yes, with technology, companies can easily find out who is visiting their online spaces, opening their email, clicking on their content, at what time, visiting their social media platforms and engaging, the subjects of their conversations, their needs and behaviors, and even detailed information about who they are. However, these tools have also made it much more complex for companies and service suppliers.

- **What it is and what it isn't**

Online presence means being “present” in several ways: physically on websites, social spaces and networks, but also “present” with the right content and message, at the right time and the right place. What it does not mean is “hard selling”. Today, being present means providing value and emotional connection through invitation to engagement. Today it's all about “soft and slow selling” and creating a conversation with our online ecosystem.

- **Why is it important ?**

Today a company and their managers who are not present online risk losing out. On what? Well, basically all aspects of their business: market intelligence, Google positioning, and, probably the most important of all, an opportunity to engage with and provide value for customers. It is also a way to be visible and attract potential customers/users and/or investors.

#### B. UP AND COMING TRENDS

- **GDPR**

The GDPR was approved and adopted by the EU Parliament in April 2016. The GDPR applies to ‘personal data’, meaning any information relating to an identifiable person who can be directly or indirectly identified. Amongst others, this includes name, identification number, location data or online identifier.

The GDPR not only applies to organizations located within the EU but also applies to organizations located outside of the EU if they offer goods or services to, or monitor the behavior of, EU data subjects. Organizations can be fined up to 4% of annual global turnover for breaching GDPR or €20 Million. This is the maximum fine that can be imposed.

Data plays a critical part in both digital and direct marketing strategies and therefore marketers must ensure they have demonstrated clear compliance and consent. CMOs (chief

marketing officers) and marketers must demonstrate how the data subject has consented to the processing of their personal data.

- **Cybersecurity**

Cybersecurity is the practice of protecting systems, networks, and programs from digital attacks. These attacks are usually aimed at accessing, changing, or destroying sensitive information; extorting money from users; or interrupting normal business processes. Implementing cybersecurity measures is particularly challenging today because there are more devices than people, and attackers are becoming more innovative.

- **Ransomware** is a type of malicious software designed to extort money by blocking access to files or the computer system until the ransom is paid.
- **Malware** is a type of software designed to gain unauthorized access or to cause damage to a computer.
- **Social engineering** is a tactic to trick you into revealing sensitive information. They can solicit a monetary payment or gain access to your confidential data.
- **Phishing** is the practice of sending fraudulent emails that resemble emails from reputable sources. The aim is to steal sensitive data like credit card numbers and login information. It is the most common type of cyber-attack.

A successful cybersecurity approach has **multiple layers of protection** spread across the computers, networks, programs, or data that one intends to keep safe. In an organization, the people, processes, and technology must all complement one another to create an effective defense from cyber-attacks.

## II. BE PRESENT ONLINE

### A. WHAT TYPES OF SOCIAL MEDIA CAN YOU USE?



- **LinkedIn**

It is a social network specifically designed for business professionals to connect and build and cultivate strategic relationships. For startups, being present on LinkedIn allows them to learn, grow, connect and develop a community, through all stages of their startup adventure. From the time they are starting out to raising money and visibility, LinkedIn presence is vital for the Entrepreneur and her company. As in most social media presence, it allows the Entrepreneur to connect with members of their ecosystem and build strategic relationships with partners, associates, potential investors, clients, and staff.

- **Twitter**

It is an online social networking (microblogging) tool in which individuals, associations, organizations, companies... post 280 character updates (tweets) to their followers ("following" being essentially what "friending" is on other sites). Since the Twitter feed evolves very fast, it has to be news but you need to know it won't be visible for long. You can play with the hashtags to gain visibility.

- **Social media best practices for Entrepreneurs and their startups**

Social media best practices for startups and their founders			
Platform			
Populations...	BtoB	BtoB/BtoC	BtoB/BtoC
Mains uses	Visibility, reaching out to prospects, clients, and recruiting/employer brand.	Visibility, reaching out to prospects, clients, recruitment/employer branding, and live events.	Visibility, recruitment/employer branding, live events, and BtoC communication.
Targets	Clients, prospects, partners, and future and current team members		
Why?	Build network visibility, and customer/prospect reach and insights.		
Content to be shared	Company, sector, field/job, recruitment ads, seasonal content, events...		
When to share	8-10am 10-12pm 4pm-7pm		12-3pm After 6pm weekends
KPI's/ROI	Engagement: Number of shares, likes, mentions, views, followers, comments and richness of conversation....		
Organic or paid content/advertising?	Definitely organic first: use platforms to build a follower base, improve client/consumer needs and behavior, test content, then decide where to spend your digital marketing budget... ;-)		
Should you as the startup founder be on it?	Definitely	It depends on your sector, targets, etc.	
Should your company have presence here...	It depends on your time, resources, objectives, sector, targets, etc.		

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## B. BLOG & WEBSITE

- **A blog**

It is constantly supplying potential customers and existing customers with interesting and useful content and enables them to interact with the blogger. Discussions can be ongoing and visitor can also ask questions that the blogger can answer. A blog is basically a web log that a blogger makes use of for **chronological listing of blog posts**. A blog can be easily started with services like WordPress, Blogger, etc., that provides you with the entire system including design templates to begin. A blog thrives on new content and the more regularly it is updated, the more attention it will get. the success of a blog depends on regular updates of quality material.

- **A website**

A good way to think about a website is in terms of it being a virtual store that sells products and/or services. A website is the perfect forum to self-promote and advertise. However, once a person has purchased something from you, there is no potential for interactivity, so the relationship will never have a chance to develop and grow. A website can be anything from a single page to hundreds and are usually presented in HTML/CSS or Java/Javascript/Python/Php, etc. (coding languages).

In conclusion, blogs and websites work in very different ways, serve very different purposes and produce different short-term results. However, they are both necessary to increase your online exposure and to strengthen your online business reputation. They function well together and undeniably, you will see positive results over the long term if they are a part of your business online.

## C. DIGITAL MARKETING

Digital marketing is defined by the use of numerous digital tactics and channels to connect with customers online. From the website itself to a business's online: digital advertising, email marketing, display and beyond -there's a spectrum of tactics. The best digital marketers have a clear picture of how each digital marketing campaign supports their overarching goals. Depending on the goals of their marketing strategy, marketers can support a larger campaign through the free and paid channels at their disposal to drive **brand awareness** and **lead generation**.

- **A content marketer**, for example, can create a series of blog posts that serve to generate leads from a new eBook the business recently created. The company's **social media marketer** might then help promote these blog posts through paid and organic posts on the business's social media accounts. The digital marketer usually focuses on a different key performance indicator (KPI) for each channel so they can properly measure the company's performance across each one.

- **B2B Digital Marketing**

If your company is business-to-business (B2B), your digital marketing efforts are likely to be centered around online lead generation, with the end goal being for someone to speak to a salesperson.

- **B2C Digital Marketing**

If your company is business-to-consumer (B2C), depending on the price point of your products, it's likely that the goal of your digital marketing efforts is to attract people to your website.

## D. CAMPAIGNING ON CROWDFUNDING PLATFORMS

- **Crowdfunding**

Crowdfunding is a way of raising finance by asking a large number of people each for a small amount of money.

- **Donation / Reward Crowdfunding**

People invest simply because they believe in the cause. Rewards can be offered such as acknowledgements on an album/book cover, tickets to an event, regular news updates, free gifts etc. Donors have a social or personal motivation for putting their money in and expect nothing back.

- **Debt Crowdfunding**

Investors receive their money back with interest. Also known as Peer-to-Peer lending (P2P) it bypasses the traditional banking system. Returns are financial, but investors also have the benefit of having contributed to the success of an idea they believe in.

- **Equity Crowdfunding**

People invest in an opportunity in exchange for equity. Money is exchanged for a share, or a small stake in the business, project. If it is successful, the value goes up. If not, the value goes down.

- **Examples of top platforms 2018.**

- **Kickstarter:** The most popular crowdfunding site. You don't get to keep the money pledged if the kickstarter goal is not reached.
- **Indiegogo:** It has flexible funding that lets you keep the funds you've raised, even when you have not been able to reach goals. In addition, one can buy funded products in the platform's marketplace
- **Patreon:** Is a subscription model that is more for providing ongoing financial support for a creative venture or artist.
- **GoFundMe:** More popular for individuals who need money right away, such as short-term projects and medical emergencies.
- **Crowdrise:** Gained attention for its focus on crowdfunding "real-world issues" such as funds for college scholarships
- Others exist such as: Ulule, PledgeMusic, Razoo, RocketHub, Crowdfunder, Give

*To get practical knowledge about the topic on “LinkedIn for Startups and Entrepreneurs”, please see the appendix.*

### **III. HOW DO YOU PITCH YOURSELF ONLINE?**

#### **A. PREPARATION**

Once the entrepreneur becomes aware of the diversity, function and operative rules of different social media and networks, once his/her priorities are established, time comes to develop a personal strategy for the marketing/crowdfunding campaign. Online crowdfunding campaigns are now an important source of financing for developing business. Of course, a good crowdfunding campaign does not by itself a guarantee of success.

Careful preparation is necessary in order to create an effective digital presence and use the social networks to the best advantage. It is first of all important to keep in mind that mobilizing social networks (such as Facebook or Twitter) for the need of attracting investment means constantly crossing the line between personal and professional, private and public. On the positive side, it will allow the potential investors to see the “bigger picture”, and to gain insight about your personality. The social media can be used to deliver a message of sincerity and authenticity that would enhance and support your business pitch. On the negative side, it means that all your posts will be scrutinized very carefully. You must take close attention to your online profile, private life, the tone and language of comments you make, the type of reposts that you do, etc. The online profile is key to gain investor confidence. All the marketing materials – about yourself and your project – must be personalized while at the same time remain strictly professional. On Facebook, settings enabling others to follow your social profile without having to accept them as a friend exist and should be used. The audience will thus grow without you being required to disclose your private life in public.

The first stage of preparation involves a careful research about rules and success strategies of crowdfunding, its rules and regulations.

The choice of the platform will determine the character of your business pitch. For example, a platform specific to a particular industry or niche will better accept the use of technical jargon than a general one. It is therefore very important to inquire into the nature of your target audience, its background and expectations. It is a good idea to start with a checklist of potential investors, their profile and expectations. It is important to plan carefully the potential rewards to investors (reward-based crowdfunding), as well as to decide in advance whether you will follow “all or nothing” rule (no funds if the target is not reached) or if you keep the funds even if the target is not reached (donation-type campaign).

The campaign must be specific and involve clear outcomes, time-limited with milestones set in advance. The potential investor must understand the nature and scope of the project. For this reason, it should be backed with appropriate financial statistics and data. It must be clear how much the entrepreneur asks, and how much money will be spent.

You must be aware that asking for financing online involves mutual trust. Transparency is key: your investors must be able to follow-up the various stages of your project. It is necessary to communicate with your investors throughout the entire process. Goals must be clearly announced, including the fund-raising goals. This means that you must be constantly updating and informing your investors while trying to attract new ones; crowdfunding is not about to take money and never to be heard of again. A project that pushes back its release indefinitely while promising important return on investment may be rightly suspected to be a fraud or a financial pyramid where an attractive “story” is only a disguise. Because fraud exists,

transparency about the business plan and financial projections must be readily available. In any case, it is important to build one's credibility and follow through on the promises.

## **B. SOCIAL PROFILES AND VIDEO PITCH**

A solid social profile and a video pitch are necessary for a successful crowdfunding campaign. For the profile pages, the photos will be carefully selected. The page will include a bio and contact information, the length depending on the nature of the social media in question (shorter for Twitter, longer for Facebook or LinkedIn).

As the need for personality and humanity is often emphasized, the page and video must avoid appearing faceless or impersonal. The tone of voice, language and humor are necessary to increase and keep followers. These must be regularly engaged through invitations to podcasts, video blogs, answer comments and questions, etc. Feedback is important as it helps to identify the project's or product's weaknesses or moot points.

The personal page must be regularly updated and must provide shared quality content in the area that would interest potential or actual follower/investor. Blogs, discussions, presentations, data, videos or podcasts etc., are all welcome. Aimless posting must be avoided. If you are involved in an entrepreneurship or angel network you can provide a link to their websites. Use key words and hashtags (for Twitter). All this will reinforce your integration in an investor's community. On Facebook, one can join professional groups frequented by potential investors. Links can also be added to your own social accounts, and links to those must be included in the email signatures. The diversity of social networks means that it is necessary to build and maintain bridges between them.

Timing and regularity of updates must be decided in advance. While situations may vary with sectors, posting must be neither too frequent nor too rare (once a week can be a good compromise). Your followers must know the regularity of the updates.

The project page must include a promotional video pitch that explains the project and states the amount needed.

If a prototype exists, it can be filmed and demonstrated to a potential investor. For a good video pitch, the script must be written in advance. Every word, every expression must be carefully studied. The setting must be coherent with the project/business idea and reinforce the main message. Clarity and concision are the key to success. While one will follow the general rules of the pitch/PowerPoint presentation, it is important to remember that creating a video allows a greater preparation time and involves consequently higher expectations on the behalf of the potential investors.

## **C. BUILD YOUR NETWORK IN CONCENTRIC CIRCLES**

For the entrepreneur looking for financial support, the personal page and video pitch are the necessary ingredients of a broader online marketing campaign. The potential investors are diverse, as well as ways to reach them. It is necessary to recall here the various types of investors discussed in chapter 1. Thus, personal networks include family and friends, Facebook friends, LinkedIn connections, etc. It may be worthwhile to design a specific video/pages for this type of audience. Even if members of your personal network are not investing in the

company, it is always possible to ask them for recommendations or feedback. In addition, they can provide you with advice or comments about your pitch/promotional campaign. At launching the online marketing campaign, it is possible to ask everyone to share the campaign with their own networks.

The larger circle includes followers and members of group in which you are a part, or members of an angel network that you attend. Platforms such as AngelList is specifically targeted at putting in contact investors and companies. All content posted with this audience in mind must be informative and carry value. Social media can be used to provide a view of the business through the “kitchen”, with engaging and lively and valuable content. This group of investors can also be reached through email marketing and are usually those who already know about your project or business. Email marketing must be informative and provide valuable updates. As a rule, it must not be too frequent but follow the main stages or milestones of your business development.

While looking for investors is not only done online. Any person-to-person meeting or event attended can be reported online. It is also possible to host one’s own events online, live podcasts, etc., an opportunity to answer to questions and attract potential investors.

Crowdfunding platforms allows to reach the largest circle of investors. They include angel investors, VCs, banks, etc. The project marketing materials, leaflets, social media posts, legal information and video pitch must be of the highest quality. If possible, pitching through crowdfunding platform can be supported through paid media campaigns as well.

## CHAPTER 4: HARNESS YOUR FEAR OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

While the previous sections have shown you the art of pitching, all these efforts to build your presentation, practice your pitch, your arguments, will be all for nothing if you encounter the common fear of public speaking. Find here tips on how to overcome your fears and become an amazing public speaker.

### I. HOW TO OVERCOME YOUR FEAR – LESSONS FROM WARREN BUFFET

**A great musician practices a symphony hundreds of times before playing it in front of an audience. A great speaker practices the words before they find themselves on the spot.**

Berkshire Hathaway's CEO Warren Buffett is known as the "Oracle of Omaha" for his shrewd investing acumen. His 2017 net worth of \$85 billion makes him the third richest person in the world. Buffett would later tell a class of business students that effective public-speaking raises a person's value by 50% instantly. However, early in his career, Buffett was "terrified" of public speaking and took specific steps to overcome his fear.

#### 1. Take small steps to improve

**Familiarity with a stressful situation alleviates the fear.**

Buffett took the Dale Carnegie Course and followed up by teaching an investment class at a local college. He realized that he needed to shore up his confidence by just doing it, over and over in front of small groups.

**Trained professionals rely on "exposure therapy" as one of the most effective techniques to treat anxiety.** Buffett was performing a form of exposure therapy on himself, putting himself in more frequent anxiety-providing situations, like speaking in front of a small group or teaching a class.

#### 2. Reinterpret nerves as something positive

**After you put yourself in a situation that produces anxiety, "If you can manage to interpret your body's response to the situation as positive, as a call to action, you are likely to thrive," Sian Beilock, psychology professor.**

If you tell yourself that you cannot deliver a speech or you cannot negotiate a business deal, your body will produce stress hormones that elevate heart rate and make your palms sweat. The remedy? Stop worrying and start enjoying the process. No matter how many times you have spoken in front of groups, we all get butterflies. When I begin to feel those butterflies, I tell myself it is a sign my energy and confidence are high, and that I am ready to inspire the audience. Do not eliminate your butterflies; let them fly in formation.

Buffett reinterpreted his fear. Instead of looking at public speaking as something negative, he re-framed it into an opportunity to gain a competitive advantage over his young peers in the industry.

#### 3. Practice like it's the real thing

**"Practicing under the types of pressures you will face on the big testing day is one of the best ways to combat choking", Beilock.**

Buffett may not have understood the psychology behind his actions at the time, but by standing up in front of a class day after day, he was building his confidence for bigger and bigger venues. A little stress in front of a small class would lead to a lot less stress when he spoke to larger audiences.

When I work with executives who are uncomfortable about speaking in public, I recommend adding "a little stress" to their practice presentations. You can add stress by delivering the presentation out loud in front of a small group of staff or peers.

## II. 4 PUBLIC SPEAKING LESSONS FROM THE CLASS THAT CHANGED WARREN BUFFETT'S LIFE

CNBC sat down with Joe Hart, president and CEO of Dale Carnegie, who announces the most important lessons from Carnegie for professionals in order to become better communicators like Buffett.

### 1. Learn as much as you can

"Talk about something that you know and know that you know. Don't spend ten minutes or ten hours preparing a talk: spend ten weeks or ten months. Better still, spend ten years".

According to Carnegie, the best speeches are given by people who know a topic very well. Thus, Hart recommends being an "active learner" like Buffett.

### 2. Talk about your own experiences

**Making a speech personal is the shortest route to winning people over.**

"Carry a sheet of paper with you for a few weeks and write down, as you think of them, all the subjects that you are prepared to talk about through experience".

These topics can include a big regret you have, your biggest ambition, or why you liked or disliked school.

### 3. Jot down notes, not a draft

**A good speech is never typed up beforehand.**

If you watch Buffett speak, you'll see that he rarely looks at a piece of paper, if ever.

"When you stand up to talk, you will probably find yourself trying to remember what you wrote," Carnegie wrote. "That will keep you from speaking naturally and with sparkle."

### 4. Get excited about the topic

Buffett became passionate about investing, money and achieving success at a young age. That enduring enthusiasm comes through in his speeches and interviews.

## III. 5 CHARACTERISTICS YOU NEED TO SUCCEED AS A PUBLIC SPEAKER

This is a guest post by Arman Sadeghi, an entrepreneur, professional speaker and founder of Titanium Success.

**Great public speakers are not born, they are made.** They are not perfect. It is the desire to advance their public speaking skills that draw them closer to perfection. The art of public speaking goes beyond reading from cue cards. Learn here about the 5 essential qualities to become a professional speaker.

### 1. Have confidence

**The key is to practice, practice and practice.** A public speaker who exudes confidence is viewed as being more confident, accurate, knowledgeable, intelligent and likable. To excel in public speaking, you have to overcome your nervous jitters. Engaging your audience in the presentation is one of the ways of overcoming fear.

## **2. Have passion**

**Without passion, your speech is meaningless.** If the subject cannot exhilarate you, chances are that it will not excite your audience. Passion elicits emotions and emotions move an audience and effectively convey the message. However, emotions cannot be faked. Raising your voice and using gestures cannot take the place of emotions. You need to radiate a level of sincerity that will belch the words out of your mouth in order to move your audience.

## **3. Introspection and self-awareness**

**To be a successful public speaker, you must first understand who you are and what your strongest qualities are.** Most successful speakers work to capitalize on their strengths. Is it humor that adds taste to your presentation? Or is it that storytelling talent?

Professional public speakers also find ways to improve on their weaknesses:

- Make a list of all your best traits that make you exceptional
- Make a list of those traits that you think are lacking in your presentations
- Devise ways of improving and incorporating the traits in a clear and concise manner that will make your presentation engaging.

## **4. Be Yourself**

**Always be yourself and not a duplicate of a “would be”.** No matter how much you have rehearsed for the speech, if you do not act like yourself, your audience may see you as insincere, like trying to copy a famous person or trying to take their place.

**Practice your speech but do not memorize it and speak with a natural voice.** Authenticity is very important and goes hand in hand with the perceived credibility of whatever you are marketing.

## **5. Engage with your audience**

**A good speech should be conversational in nature.** This helps to eliminate the element of boredom. It ensures that the audiences are not on phone or laptops searching the web as you speak. You can achieve this by painting a picture through storytelling, making fun or by conducting some regular body-relaxing activities.

## CONCLUSION

In order to fulfill the purpose for which this *Pitch 4 Growth toolkit* was developed – to offer a practical and useful guideline for any person confronted with the necessity of putting together a successful business pitch – the reader will now be asked to consider information and advice presented above as an incentive to evaluate his/her professional strengths and weaknesses. The toolkit does not pretend to be exhaustive and does not need to be so. Instead, the presentation of the three pillars was designed to offer a simple and straightforward map locating the major investment players whose very diversity may appear confusing. It is likely that one or several situations/players/settings will generate interest as it will correspond to the specific needs of the individual or company seeking investment. From the standpoint of the person looking for investment, Pitching is a process that begins with an honest and thorough self-auditing, and its successful execution requires a good amount of preparation.

Pitching is also an event taking place in a specific physical/institutional/digital setting. To develop and put together a pitching video destined to an investment online platform and to make an oral presentation before a parterre of investors does not offer the same difficulties and opportunities. Besides good storytelling, a successful business pitch requires a good knowledge of the rules, codes and norms within each of the settings corresponding to a specific “pillar”. The reverse is of course also true: to put together a good story about yourself/your company/your project requires a good knowledge of the expectations and dislikes of its targeted audience.

## **APPENDIX – POTENTIAL WORKSHOPS OFFERED BY THE TOOLKIT’S CONTRIBUTORS**

**Accessing financial services –what do private investors offer and is it right for my business needs?**

*Audra Shallal*

### **Workshop Overview**

Illustrates to entrepreneurs what informal investing is (and what it is not), what the potential advantages/disadvantages are, what important information is needed before deciding to get informals on board and tips for making it happen when this financing option is chosen.

### **Workshop Objectives**

Having completed this workshop, you will be able to:

- receive “first-hand” information about early stage investors’ expectations as well as their selection criteria for investment in start-up ventures
- learn about different options to finance a business
- familiarize yourself with the different providers of finance throughout the evolution of the entrepreneurial firm.

### **Workshop Summary**

Having completed this workshop, you are now able to:

- understand the difference and role of Angel Investors and Venture Capitalists
- assess whether your business is right for an Angel Group Investment
- know when is the ideal time to approach a Business Angel Network
- understand the typical Angel Investing Process when applying for funding.

**Alternative Sources of Funding:**

**Crowdfunding**

*Audra Shallal*

### **Workshop Overview**

What Crowdfunding is and how it can be used, how to assess if it is right for you and how to plan and evaluate an effective Crowdfunding campaign

### **Workshop Objectives**

Having completed this session, you will be able to:

- Discover what crowdfunding is and how it can help entrepreneurs
- Define and describe elements involved in crowdfunding
- Know how to use crowdfunding to attract investors for a new business, invention or other project.
- Assess if it is a proper alternative method of raising finance for a business, project or idea

## **Workshop Summary**

Here are the main take-aways from this session and things you should keep in mind when thinking about this topic:

- Apart from the obvious advantage of raising your own capital, the main benefit of crowdfunding is that it creates a strong network of support for your business.
- If you also offer equity as part of your package, your investors are likely to become ambassadors for your brand, promoting it among their networks, tracking your progress and becoming returning customers themselves.

If you promote your investment bid successfully, crowdfunding can also provide a powerful platform to raise awareness of your business. It gives you a newsworthy story to pitch to your local, and national, press (which may attract further new business). If you reach your target it also gives a clear message to potential clients, suppliers or future investors that you have the support of the public behind you.

### **Crafting a Killer Pitch**

*Audra Shallal*

## **Workshop Overview**

The process of raising money for a business venture begins with a great pitch. The « elevator pitch » is an extremely concise presentation of an entrepreneur's idea, business model, company solution, competitiveness and marketing strategy delivered to potential investors. The workshop, conducted by a seasoned entrepreneur and an expert in Pitch Coaching, will highlight some of the key steps involved in presenting an effective pitch and will provide attendees with inspiration, effective tools, and increased awareness of the challenge of entrepreneurship in today's highly competitive business environment.

## **Workshop Objectives**

Having completed this workshop, you will be able to:

- Construct a powerful one-minute elevator pitch.
- Enhance your Investor-Ready Skills to pitch to investors in the marketplace engaging them to want to know more about your project and the potential of being interested in possibly investing in your company.

## **Workshop Summary**

Having completed this Workshop, you are now able to:

- Construct a powerful one-minute elevator pitch.
- Identify Key Elements Investors require in a 10-minute presentation
- Fine-Tune your Investor-Ready Skills to pitch to investors in the marketplace engaging them to want to know more about your project and the potential of being interested in possibly investing in your company.

### **Pitching in the Corporate**

**Environment**

*Odile Carru*

## **Workshop Overview**

Have you ever been in the situation where someone asks you: “Tell me about yourself” or “so, what are you doing, and what are your objectives?”. Blank. You suddenly realize that of course you know *who* you are and *what* you are doing, but you just don’t know *how* to say it. And guess what? Because you are not ready! Being able to articulate a short presentation of yourself that you could deliver in various professional settings, with the appropriate language, and with confidence can actually open new doors to your career and image. Get ready now, the sooner, the better.

### **Workshop Objectives**

Having completed this workshop, you will be able to:

- Be recognized as a credible professional in your environment in order to grow and influence within your company
- Be identified as a credible professional by the outside world and succeed in your interviewing processes

### **Workshop Summary**

Having completed this Workshop, you are now able to:

- Build an elevator pitch that you can use in all circumstances.
- Get familiar with a very simple technique that will help you be smart on your feet in all the presentations you have to do.
- Use repetition and practice, and increase your level of confidence.
- Get to know your 3 top achievements, personal skills and strengths.

## **LinkedIn for Startups and**

### **Entrepreneurs**

*Michelle Goldberger*

### **Workshop Overview**

Very often when you ask Entrepreneurs if they’re using LinkedIn, they might tell you that their targets aren’t on LinkedIn. Or they might say that Facebook is better for their brand, or that they personally prefer Instagram.

While there is nothing at all wrong with using Facebook or Instagram (its actually quite smart! ), there is definitely something wrong with not benefitting from all of the rich resources available to Entrepreneurs on LinkedIn!

### **Workshop Objectives**

Having completed this workshop, you will be able to:

- Build an effective LinkedIn profile, no matter where you are on your Entrepreneurial journey.
- Understand how to use LinkedIn in a multi-channel and multi-network approach, whether you are a Solopreneur, on a small team, or building a mini startup empire!

### **Workshop Summary**

Having completed this Workshop, your takeaways will be how to :

- Understand how to use your LinkedIn profile as a tool for visibility, communication, networking, Social Selling, recruitment... even if you’re using it to help you get started on your Entrepreneurial path, your company, knowledge or team, or look for investors...
- Identify the main areas of your our short, mid, and long-term social media action plan.
- Know how to use and integrate LinkedIn into your everyday activities.

