

How to Create and Deliver a Winning Pitch

Introduction

- The good news is you want to pitch your idea to someone. The bad news is that most pitches _____.

"People aren't born as great pitchers, they're made." Guy Kawasaki

- Entrepreneurs are, by nature, _____. That ability to take risks is usually driven by a highly formed sense of self-confidence. While self-confidence is critical to success in so many areas, developing a pitch is not one of them. Pitching is one of those business activities where you should never let your natural inclination, "I can do this," take over.

"As the founder of an angel investment group, I've heard a lot of pitches – just over a 1,000 now by my estimate ... and 99% of them have been terrible." Jeff Loehr (business.com)

- If you don't believe me, just ask any investor what percentage of pitches they've heard that were great pitches ... and the smallness of that number will shock you.
- In light of that, my recommendation to you is that you want to have a great sense of self-confidence in the moment when you're presenting your pitch, but you want to have a great sense of _____ during the entire time you're creating your pitch. That will serve you well.
- A great pitch is all about telling a great _____ – a story which intrigues the person hearing it so much that they not only want more of your story, they also want to be a part of your story
- Note: This course that you're about to watch/listen to is a comprehensive course on creating a winning pitch. The reason I've designed it this way is to give you everything you might need to know about creating and delivering a winning pitch. However, I want to be clear, you should never cover everything we're going to go through in this course in any single pitch. I'm giving you the universe, it's your job to reduce your pitch down to the irreducible minimum that fits your specific situation.
- In addition, the reason why these notes are so detailed is because I want you to be able to easily come back to them each time after you've pitched an investor and then use them to figure out how you can improve your pitch for the next investor (or group of investors) at bat.

Step 1: Preparing a Winning Pitch

1. Know your _____
 - a. Since all great communication is based on the receiver of a message, knowing who your audience is, is critical to creating and delivering a winning pitch
 - b. So, who will you be pitching to? And what do you know about them? Are you pitching to ...
 - i. An individual investor (e.g. angel investor)
 - ii. An investment group
 - iii. An investment firm (i.e. VC, PE, etc.)
 - iv. A panel at a pitch event
 - c. If you know to whom you'll be pitching (i.e. the investors), online platforms like LinkedIn and any of their associated web properties, will usually give you enough insight to better understand your audience
 - i. Where did they get their education? How many degrees? In what fields?
 - ii. What has their work history been?

- iii. What kinds of investments have they made?
 - iv. Do they have any investment preferences (e.g. biotech, AI, SaaS, manufacturing, recurring revenue business models, etc.)
 - d. Knowing your audience will allow you to tailor your pitch slightly each time you pitch (i.e. every pitch should not sound the same)
- 2. Know your _____ inside out
 - a. This may surprise you, but there are a number of people who give pitches that don't really know their company's products inside out. That is a major turn-off for investors.
 - b. Avoid that and be more like Steve Jobs – someone who can actually run a demo or answer any question about your product(s)
- 3. Make sure you have _____ to back up your claims
 - a. Investors will frequently ask questions like, "What proof do you have of ____ [your claim]?"
 - b. In light of that, during your prep phase, you want to think through all of the claims you're going to make during your pitch
 - i. For example, you'll probably make a claim that the addressable market is X. How do you know that X is the right number?
 - ii. Or, you'll probably state that over the next 3-5 years, you plan to win over Y percent of the market. What can you use to substantiate that belief?
 - iii. Or, you'll claim that your competitor's solution can't do Z. How do you know that?
 - iv. In other words, you want to do as much research as possible so that if an investor asks a question, you readily have the answer to that question.
 - v. If they ask a proof question, you want to be able to say, "That's a great question. According to a study done by the XYZ Institute, the growth in our market, over the next five years, will grow by 237%. Since we prefer to be a little conservative on estimates, we've built our forecasts at 50 percentage points lower at 187%," vs. the pitcher who says, "That's a great question (awkward pause). Anything else?"
 - c. You can't anticipate every question, but you can anticipate a lot of them, especially those related to any claim you're making.
 - d. Note: most of the research you do in this phase won't go into your pitch deck or pitch. You simply want to have it easily accessible in case the question does come up.
- 4. Know your _____
 - a. If you've ever watched Shark Tank, you know this is where entrepreneurs get stuck all the time.
 - b. Know your financials, cash flow, and projections.
 - c. Note: while you might think this is the least interesting part of your business, your investors don't. They're making a financial commitment to your company in expectation for a financial reward. To them, this is the most important part.
 - d. Also, make sure you know what you're willing to give up in equity for different options they might propose (i.e. role play this out so you're not caught off guard during a pitch). Be clear on what your "walk away" number is.
- 5. Study your _____
 - a. Never ever say, "We don't have any competitors." Investor eyeballs will roll. Your prospects always have alternative ways to spend their money. And chances are, you do have several direct competitors (and plenty of indirect competitors). Even worse, if you say, "We don't have any competitors," but the investor you're trying to pitch knows of several, you're sunk. So, know your competitors.
 - b. You can't be clear on your differentiators if you don't know what your competitors are saying. So, write out what claims your competitors are making (on a spreadsheet/doc/yellow pad, etc.) that you can find on their website or other marketing materials. For example (see next page)

	Warranty	Turnaround Time	Target Location
Your Company			
Company A	30-Day	7-10 Days	Texas
Company B	12 Month	7-10 Days	South East
Company C	Lifetime	7-10 Days	North East

6. Get clear about your competitive _____
 - a. Look for the open space where you can claim something to be different
 - b. Note: if you haven't done so already, make sure you watch the course on competitive advantages on the BizScalers site for an entire training on this subject. But for now, start here. Where's the open space?

	Warranty	Turnaround Time	Target Location
Your Company	X	24 hours	National
Company A	30-Day	7-10 Days	Texas
Company B	12 Month	7-10 Days	South East
Company C	Lifetime	7-10 Days	North East

- c. What do you do better than your competitors? What do they do better than you?
 - d. Taking the time to do this now will also help you design some of the key content for your slide deck later on.
7. Discover what kind of _____ you'll be pitching in (it can make a huge difference in how you'll design and deliver your pitch). So, will you be presenting in a/an ...
 - a. Auditorium (with fixed seats)
 - b. Boardroom
 - c. Large room (like a hotel room, around tables or classroom style or horseshoe, etc.)
 - d. Dining room
 - e. Office
 - f. Coffee shop or restaurant
8. Discover what kind of _____ you'll have access to (i.e. never assume)
 - a. If you're a Mac person, and you have to use their PC, your slides won't look the same
 - b. What kind of format does your file need to be in?
 - c. Can you hook your own laptop in?
 - d. What kind of connections will they have (HDMI, USB-A or B or C, VGA, DVI, etc.)?
 - e. Will they have a projection system or not?
 - f. Where will the screen be placed? Will there be more than one screen?
 - g. Who will advance the slides? Will you have access to the RF device? Can you bring your own?
 - h. Will you have access to wifi? Note: Don't assume wifi will be great (i.e. it's actually better to not do a live demo. A video clip can save you a lot of stress)
 - i. In a small environment, an iPad or tablet (or even a laptop) might work perfect vs. a projector
9. Study pitching
 - a. Watch Shark Tank
 - b. Write down the questions the sharks ask
 - c. Prepare answers for them
 - d. Research pitch decks
 - e. Listen to other entrepreneurs pitch (what worked, what didn't, what would you do differently, what could they have done differently, etc.)

Step 2: Creating a Winning Pitch

1. General Principles

- a. A pitch is a narrative (a story) so make sure you're telling a _____ story and not just walking them through a series of slides
 - b. You want to think like a lawyer presenting a case (you want to go from slide A, which leads to B, which leads to C, which leads to D, therefore you must agree with me and choose _____). In essence, your pitch is one long argument (argument used in the positive sense, not the negative sense).
 - c. The shorter the time frame for your pitch, the harder you have to work (i.e. the reverse of what most people think). It actually takes less time to create a 15-minute pitch than it does to create a great five-minute pitch.
 - d. And as with all communication, the general rule is, "The Who always determines the What."
2. Think like an _____, not an entrepreneur. So, what kinds of questions might an investor be asking in their minds? The more you think like them, the better your pitch will be. Here are a few questions to help you get started.
- a. What problem are they trying to solve?
 - b. How big is that problem?
 - c. Is that problem big enough for me to want to get involved in this company with my money?
 - d. What differentiates their solution from everyone else in their market space (i.e. how are you unique)?
 - e. How are they going to get their message to market?
 - f. How are they going to make money for me?
 - g. What are their key milestones?
 - h. Why should I trust them (or them and their team)?
 - i. Do they have IP protection (patents, trademarks, etc.)?
 - j. How big can this company get?

Remember: an investor isn't buying your product/service; they're buying an investment opportunity. That difference is significant.

3. _____ and write out your pitch
- a. Stephen Covey's advice to "start with the end in mind," is perfect here. What do you want your investor to do by the time your presentation is over? Whatever that end is, your entire presentation should be designed to accomplish that task.
 - i. The way I do this when I'm preparing a presentation is I start with a yellow pad of paper. At the top, on the left-hand side I write a big X1. Then, on the right-hand side I write a big X2. And between the two, I draw an arrow between X1 > X2
 - ii. I then write down what I know about my audience (the X1). In this case, it would be the investor(s) or the panel judging the pitch competition.
 - iii. Next, I write out what the X2 is (i.e. where I want them to be at the end). For example, "I want them to invest X amount of money for Y share in my/our company." Or, "I want them to be so intrigued with this idea that they'll want to schedule a follow up conversation." Or, "I want the panel to be so convinced that our startup has the best chance for success among all the other entrants that we'll win this competition." Etc. Just be clear on the outcome you want.
 - iv. Then make sure everything you say in your pitch moves your audience from X1 to X2. If it doesn't, kill it.
 - v. Note: most pitches won't result in money given on day one. So, your goal in most pitches will be to get a second conversation (which means you have to design your pitch to create enough intrigue for them to want to invest more of their time with you in a second meeting)
 - b. Pare your pitch down to the essentials (your _____ minimum)
 - i. A pitch isn't about going through your entire business plan or telling someone everything about your company

- ii. A pitch is a concise summary of the most important points you need to convey in order to win someone over to an idea (i.e. it's not to give them lots of data/content)
 - iii. Just like in the movies, cutting out what's not essential is the secret to telling a great story. Prioritize what's most important. Cut out the rest. More "film" should be on the floor than in the "final cut."
 - c. Check your presentation for _____. Using the metaphor of a relay race, "Races are won or lost in the handoffs." Make sure all your handoffs (i.e. your transitions) work perfectly.
 - d. Feel free to add more detail in your notes. Just keep the bare minimum on the slides themselves.
- 4. Winning _____ often use slides like the following
 - a. *Company slide* (who you are, your vision and what you're asking for)
 - i. Think of your vision as a soundbite. A quick phrase about the length of a tweet. "Our vision is to be the premier online community for ..." Or, "We are the Netflix for ..."
 - b. _____ (what searing pain do you solve?)
 - i. Businesses exist to solve problems. If your business doesn't solve a real problem, it's not a real business.

"Nobody will pay you to solve a non-problem" Vinod Khosla
 - ii. So what problem do you solve and for whom?
 - iii. Note: the more urgent the pain, the better. You want to be in the aspirin business, not the vitamin business.
 - iv. This is the perfect time for a customer story (i.e. put a face on the problem). The more real an investor can see the problem, the more intrigued they'll be.
 - v. Customer testimonials work well here (i.e. a short pithy problem statement – not a positive statement, which goes on the solution or competitive advantage slide)
 - c. *Market Size* (How many people have this problem?)
 - i. Be careful about making this number too large. In general, investors prefer a smaller, more specific, more reachable market than a large "anyone who breathes and has money" kinds of market size.
 - ii. Make sure you know the difference between TAM and SOM.
 - 1. TAM = total addressable market (everyone who might want or need your product/solution)
 - 2. SOM = share of market (what percentage of TAM do you reasonably believe you can reach and capture over the next few years)
 - iii. Instead of thinking, "If we can get 1% of this market ..." figure out how you can reach customers using the strategies and tactics you plan to use and how many people that will be three to five years from now.
 - iv. If you can discover how much money people in your target market currently spend to solve this problem, all the better. The dollar size of a market can make a big difference for an investor.
 - v. For some companies, you might want to divide your target into segments and then describe how you'll target them (later in the marketing slide)
 - vi. Remember, your goal on this slide is to convince your potential investor that this is a good opportunity in a decent-sized market
 - d. *Competitors* (who's already offering a solution and why doesn't theirs solve this problem?)
 - i. See the discussion above about competitor research. Tables work well here, as do logos.
 - ii. Remember, saying you have no competitors will probably kill your pitch.

- iii. In essence, with this slide, you want to explain how your company fits into the competitive landscape in your market space.
 - iv.
- e. _____ (how do you solve this specific problem for this specific group of people?)
 - i. When you describe your solution, you want to focus mainly on benefits and results, not features.
 - ii. In general, most people who create something fall in love with the thing they've created. However, most customers don't care about the thing itself, they care about the result they get from using that thing.
 - iii. Whatever you create is really "the pain" someone has to go through to get relief from their current pain.
 - iv. Note: you don't want to spend too much time describing your solution/product at this point. Remember, your goal in a pitch isn't to close the deal today, it's simply to intrigue them enough to want a second conversation.
- f. *Competitive Advantages* (what makes your solution unique/different?)
 - i. See the preparation section above on competitive advantages. Insert your best CAs here.
 - ii. Note: if your competitive advantage(s) is/are difficult to replicate, you'll want to mention that here (i.e. having a competitive advantages that's sustainable is a huge plus in a pitch).
- g. *Demo* (if possible, show the thing and how it works)
 - i. If it's not built yet, show mock ups. A picture is still worth a thousand words.
 - ii. If it's a physical product, bring a sample. There's something powerful that happens when someone can hold and touch the idea you're pitching.
 - iii. If it's software, bring a video of someone using it for the pitch (live is better later). Note: When I mention using a movie in your pitch, I'm not recommending a video with sound but rather a video that you walk someone through live (i.e. audio hook ups to computers are often problematic)
- h. _____ *Model* (how will you make money? What's the cost? Profit? Etc.)
 - i. Make sure you know your key metrics (e.g. LTV, CAC, Churn, Conversion rate, # leads/month, etc.)
 - ii. Know your pricing (especially against your competitors). A price comparison grid often works well on this slide.
 - iii. Make sure this slide clearly communicates how you'll make money (i.e. profit) per unit or customer or user, etc.
- i. _____ *Validation* (how do you know this will work)
 - i. Traction shows proof of concept. So, talk about your first customers and their responses to your solution. How many customers? Growth in customers? Any press? Key testimonials?
 - ii. If this is a B2B company, logos of your first customers can usually help on this slide
 - iii. If you think like an investor, traction reduces their risk level (which is a good thing)
- j. *Sales and Marketing* (how will you get the word out?)
 - i. What are your primary marketing channels going to be (i.e. how will you gain attention?)
 - ii. How will you convert those prospects into customers?
 - iii. Note: keep all of this at a high level. You don't need to explain all of your tactics, just enough so your potential investors realize you have a good grasp on this aspect of growing a business.

iv. Note: if you're going to be taking a very different tact on marketing and/or sales than your competitors, make sure you highlight this.

k. *Forecast* (your big picture financials over X number of years)

- i. Most serious investors will want to see a forecast for at least the next three years
- ii. Make sure you lay out your assumptions (best if you do this on the first page of your spreadsheet).
- iii. Note: your pitch deck, shouldn't show your spreadsheet. It should simply highlight the high-level numbers from your spreadsheet. However, you want to know your assumptions and numbers by heart so you can answer any questions an investor might ask you on the spot. This will increase their confidence in you.
- iv. Make sure you know all of your key metrics like unit economics, your burn rate, your MRR (monthly recurring revenue, if you have any), your salaries total, monthly ad spend, etc.
- v. Graphs are appreciated in this slide. But be realistic. Most investors are skeptical of "hockey stick" graphs. If you're confident that you can attain "hockey stick" growth, you better have data to back that up or their eyes will roll and they'll cut your estimates in half (if not more).
- vi. If you're not profitable now, when you will be profitable?
- vii. You can't lose if you show three outcomes (best case, probable case and worst case). Most investors will trust you and your projections more because of it.

Note: Investors prefer low risk vs. high risk, which is why they prefer proven entrepreneurs/managers

l. *Our Team* (high-level not detailed descriptions)

- i. The basic question you want to answer here is, "Why you?" And "Why this team?" Why should anyone believe you and your team can actually deliver on your promise. And why are you and your team uniquely qualified to execute this plan?
- ii. Because a slide deck is a visual medium, you'll want to have pictures of each member, with their title and any relevant experience for your company.
- iii. Don't be afraid to toot your own horn or the horn of the people on your team if you and/or they have had some success that will help an investor believe in you and your team (and that you can scale this and make them a lot of money)
- iv. Note: if you have an advisory board, you may want to add an extra slide with them as well here (especially, if there are some heavy weights who could decrease their sense of risk and bolster their confidence in your success).

m. _____ (where are you now and what are the next few milestones, like first ship)

- i. Think about, "How are you going to scale (including your team) over the next 12 months?"
- ii. Depending on your context, you might want to talk about any other investments in the company here
- iii. Any media, initial PR you've received (or plan to get shortly)
- iv. Signed letters of intent to purchase and/or partner with you
- v. Pipeline/sales
- vi. Finally, make sure you keep updating your slide deck. As you can guess, most entrepreneurs have to pitch multiple times before finding the funding they're seeking (i.e. pitching is not a "one and done," activity. In light of that, few things look more amateurish than walking through a pitch deck, using old data. Nowhere is this more common than on the status and milestones slide.

n. *Other potential slides*

- i. In addition to the above, you might want to create one or more of the following slides to insert in your pitch deck or to act as a backup slide in case a question arises after your pitch

1. *Investment and use of funds (i.e. the ask)*
 - a. A lot of pitch decks with investors will end with an “Ask” slide. Less common if this pitch is for a pitch competition.
 - b. How much money are you seeking and what will you give them in exchange for that investment?
 - i. “We’re seeking an investment of \$2M in exchange for 30% equity”
 - c. If someone asks what you plan to use these funds for, you want to be able to say, “This is how we’ll use those funds.” So, have a clear answer for this question (e.g. new hires, marketing, product development, new tech, etc.).
 - d. Investors don’t invest simply because you have a great pitch. They want to know how their money will be spent to get a better return.
 - e. Note: You many want to list your existing investors, especially if you think it’ll help you secure more new investors.
 2. *Exit strategy*
 - a. Some pitches include this slide because investing in a startup or early stage company is a long-term investment where the investor really makes their money when a transaction occurs.
 - b. So, if you know you want to exit in X number of years and you know the kind of strategic buyer you’d want to sell to, you might want to add that slide.
 3. *Key Partnerships*
 - a. If you have some key vendor partners, a slide showing who they are can help reduce perceived risk and enhance perceived belief.
 4. *Advisory Board*
 - a. Mentioned above. If you have one, it never hurts to mention it.
 5. *The Technology*
 - a. If your solution is driven by tech, you might want to add a basic technology backbone overview slide
 - b. If you’ve secured any IP rights, mentioning them here helps
 - c. What makes your technology solution superior to any other option in your market space?
 6. *Equity and Financing*
 - a. How much money have you raised previously? In this round?
 - b. How much do you want to raise this round?
 - c. What is your cap structure/table?
 - d. How much stock is set aside for employees?
 - e. Will existing investors participate in this round?
5. Pitch best practices
- a. Use _____. Everyone loves stories.
 - i. The best stories are actual customer success stories. Use real names and real challenges. Talk about real people with real problems who are looking for a solution to a real problem that they haven’t been able to find a solution for yet (or one they like or one that fully solves their problem or solves that problem in a way that cheaper, faster, better, more effective, etc.)
 - ii. Feel free to share your story and why you’re so passionate about solving this problem

- b. Make it _____
 - i. Don't talk in generic terms. Talk about "You" or "Let's talk about Mary, a single-mother with three young kids who is wrestling with X ..."
- c. Talk about lofty goals
 - i. We want to revolutionize ...
 - ii. We want to democratize ...
 - iii. We want to disrupt a market that hasn't seen a significant change in over four decades ...
 - iv. We want to bring relief to the 23 million Americans who suffer from ...
- d. Keep asking the "So what?" question. Why? Because your potential investors are.
- e. Don't over-estimate (if anything, under-estimate). You'll lose points on over-estimating and win on under-estimating.
- f. Take off _____. You only have between 30 seconds to two minutes to pique someone's interest. Don't waste time with preambles. Get your elevator pitch idea out there ASAP.

"If you can't tell me what you do in 15 seconds, I'm not buying, I'm not investing, and I'm not interested." Carmine Gallo

Guy Kawasaki suggests that when you're preparing your pitch you should, "Think Tinder, not eHarmony." What he means by that is with eHarmony, you're trying to find a soul mate so you want to get to know the whole person and their background and psychological makeup, etc. In Tinder, you're simply swiping fast, "Interested, Not interested, Interested, Not interested."

- g. Don't use too many slides. Slides are meant to support your presentation, not dominate it or drive it. You want a simple and clear presentation. Believe it or not, in pitching, simple wins. (which means that one of your biggest challenges will be selecting what content to keep and what to cut so you can keep your pitch short and simple).
- h. You don't need to cover _____ in your pitch deck, just enough to get to the next conversation.
- i. Don't mock or minimize your competitors. Respect will win you points.
- j. Use _____ for investors to walk away with. Again, channel your inner Steve Jobs.
 - i. "World's thinnest notebook" Steve Jobs introducing the Macbook air
 - ii. "1000 songs in your pocket" Steve Jobs introducing the iPod
- k. Avoid acronyms and tech-speak. Don't assume everyone uses the same nomenclature. What seems obvious to you, may not be to them.
- l. Be careful about being _____ happy.
 - i. If you say, "We're bringing a disruptive, paradigm-shifting, curve-jumping technology to market ..." eyes will roll.
 - ii. Cut the adjectives and simply say, "We're bringing a disruptive technology to market ..."
- m. Send your slide deck to your potential investor in a pdf ahead of time (don't require them to download it or use PowerPoint or Keynote or ...). Make it easy on them.

Step 3: Designing Winning Slides

1. Slide backgrounds

- a. Most standard PPT slide backgrounds are _____. Search for something more graphically interesting. Remember, you don't want your presentation to look like anyone (or everyone) else's slides.
 - b. Search for PPT (or Keynote for Mac) slide backgrounds. It's worth spending a few dollars to get an investor to take notice or to have a designer improve.
 - c. Backgrounds should enhance your presentation, not compete with your text.
 - d. In general, it's usually best to pick one background slide and use that throughout your presentation. However, there's nothing wrong with throwing in a few different backgrounds (on slides where it makes sense) to arouse attention and create more interest.
2. Fonts
- a. Avoid using crazy/wild fonts (especially those that are hard to read quickly). Readability matters if you want to win.
 - b. Refuse to go font _____ and use five different fonts on a page. In general, you want two different fonts per presentation (or per slide). Typically, you'll want to use one font for the headline and one for the text.
3. Sizes
- a. The _____ the font size the better. On a wide slide, I wouldn't go below 44 pt. and on a regular slide, I would try to stay above 32 pt.
 - b. Whatever size font you pick, stay consistent. For example, I use 55pt. for text and 90 pt. for headers, 100 pt. for title slides on a wide slide.
 - c. If you have to go smaller, make it unusual (for example, a citation or to make some text in a table fit).
 - d. However, the reason people use the phrase, "Death by PowerPoint" is because of too much text crammed on a slide. Larger font sizes help avoid that.
4. _____
- a. White space refers to the amount of space on a slide that's not covered in text or graphics.
 - b. In general, having more white space is a good thing. It allows the slide to "breathe"
 - c. This applies to your margins as well. Don't go edge to edge. Leave some white space at the top, bottom and sides so each slide "breathes."
 - d. Refuse to put too many words on any one slide. Your investors will appreciate it.
5. Graphics
- a. Pictures and quotes are your friends. The old adage, "Show more than tell," is still as true today as when it was first spoken.
 - b. Make sure you have the _____ to any pictures you use (i.e. be careful of Google only searches)
 - c. If you're using a quote, attach a picture of the person to the quote, if at all possible
 - d. Don't be transition happy with lots of images and text flying in. Remember, simple wins. Plus, in the pdf printout your investor gets, there won't be any transitions. Personally, I like to use the simple "dissolve" transition at .10 seconds (i.e. fast).

Step 4: Practicing a Winning Pitch

1. You have to _____. All winners practice. Winning is almost always won in the training room, not on the playing field. So, practice, practice, practice until your pitch feels natural (and, if the power goes out and you have no technology to depend upon, you know you can deliver your pitch without a hitch).
 - a. Note: not practicing is where so many pitches go wrong. Don't wing it or think one or two run throughs is enough.
 - b. Steve Jobs would practice for days to get a pitch right (and he was one of the best at pitching).

- c. The reason practicing is so important (besides knowing the content and making the transitions fluid etc.) is that it trains your subconscious mind to know that you can do what your conscious mind wants to accomplish. When your conscious and your subconscious are in alignment, confidence soars, fear dwindles and performance increases. So, bottom line, put in the woodshedding time. You'll be glad you did. Remember, money (and possibly your company) are at stake here.
2. Practice with a _____.
 - a. Rule #1 of speaking in public is never go over your time limit. Whether you have four minutes or seven minutes or ten minutes or X number of minutes, practice until you know you can deliver a great pitch in that time framework.
 - b. The good news is, in general, you'll go faster when you're pitching live than in practice. However, finishing earlier is never a problem. Finishing late is.
 - c. Chances are you'll have to cut a lot of material during this practice phase (which is one of the other reasons why practice is so important) in order to reduce down your pitch to the irreducible minimum for the length of time you have for your pitch.
 - i. You may need to cut down phrases or sentences to hit your time mark.
 - ii. You may need to cut out some data or proof
 - iii. You may need to cut out some slides altogether
 - iv. You may need to cut out some stories or illustrations
 - d. Your timer will help you cut out anything that's not essential to your story. So, love your timer, don't hate it.
 3. Pitch to some people you know who love you and will give you some honest feedback before you go live (optional but highly recommended)
 - a. Note: In general, people who love you won't always share with you what they really think unless you press them. So, press them. Ask them questions like.
 - i. What worked?
 - ii. What didn't?
 - iii. What do you think I should change?
 - iv. What could be improved?
 - v. What felt weak or could use more support?
 - vi. What needs more research? Etc.
 - b. Keep asking them until they give you honest feedback. If all they're saying is, "Great job!" they're not helping you get better.

Step 5: Delivering a Winning Pitch

1. _____ matters (i.e. how you say what you say). These are all choices so choose wisely.
 - a. Note: your environment will determine a lot about the following choices (i.e. what's appropriate in an auditorium isn't across a boardroom table). The following are more important if you're pitching in an auditorium or large room.
 - b. Pitch (high, regular, low)
 - c. Speed (slow, regular, fast)
 - d. Body (arms, hands, shoulders, etc.)
 - e. Pacing (how fast you walk from side to side)
 - i. Don't walk fast from side to side. That makes the person watching you feel like they're watching a ping pong ball (plus it communicates nervousness).
 - ii. Confident people walk much more slowly, and with purpose
 - iii. They also pick spots and stand still for a few moments before moving again (this avoids the ping pong ball effect). In essence, in a larger room it's walk, stop, talk ... walk, stop, talk ... walk, stop, talk ... walk, stop, talk.
 - f. Passion matters. Investors want to invest in someone they believe cares deeply about solving the problem they're addressing for a specific group of people. If you don't bring energy to the presentation, they won't feel you really care.
 - g. In presentations to groups of people, you want to be an "edutainer." You're not just informing them, you'll also entertaining them. It's the combination that will make your

presentation more powerful.

2. _____ matter.
 - a. If you're unfamiliar with the phrase, "Clothes don't make the person, but they do make the message about that person," it's one you'll want to add to your arsenal.
 - b. Unless someone is visually challenged, they'll see you before they ever hear from you. And in those split seconds before you open your mouth, they'll already make judgments about you. You can spend time debating whether "people" should do that or not. But the wise money is on the way things really work vs. the way we think they should work.
 - c. In light of this, you'll want to chose your clothing intentionally, based on who you're pitching to (note: in general, it's better to dress up a step rather than down – if you're not sure of the dress code). You want your clothing to enhance your presentation, not detract from it.

3. _____ matters
 - a. The old marketing adage that people buy from people they know, like and trust, is absolutely true.
 - b. If you want to increase your likeability, the simple secret is ... smile. Even if you're a little nervous, don't let them know that. Just relax, smile and you'll win them over. Enjoy the moment.
 - c. Never forget, investors buy into a person BEFORE they buy into their idea.
 - d. Note: if you're in a smaller environment, your ability to be warm and engage in small talk will also greatly enhance your likeability score.

"We thought Airbnb was a bad idea. We funded it because we really liked the founders" Paul Graham, Y Combinator

4. _____ and mindset matters
 - a. Don't focus on what you can't control (i.e. how people will respond or whether you'll win). Instead, focus on what you can control (you, your mindset, the structure of your narrative, how you say what you say, what illustrations you're going to use, etc.) and then enjoy the moment.
 - b. Always be positive (i.e. expect them to want to move to the next step or invest or crown you the winner, etc.). Note: this is when your natural self-confidence should come into play.
 - c. Trust the work you've done. If you've worked this process from the prep work to the practice, from thinking like an investor to practicing with a timer, etc. you should be ready to win. Trust the work you've put in will allow you to cross the finish line first.
 - d. If something doesn't work (power, slides, demo, mic, etc.) don't get flustered. Just roll with it. If you've done the prep work, you should have this in the bag and should be able to flex with anything thrown your way

5. Answering questions
 - a. Never get _____. If someone questions or attacks you, let it go right past you. Focus on the part of the question you can answer. "Your question suggests that you're looking for some proof related to our claim about X ..."
 - b. Keep your answers short and to the point
 - c. The only reason to be afraid of a question is if you're afraid of the answer. So, do your prep work, trust yourself, and let go of the fear.
 - d. If someone makes a statement (often a long one) and doesn't clearly ask a question, simply ask them. "Thank you. But I'm not exactly clear what question you're asking?"
 - e. If someone asks a long question, restating what you believe the question is will help frame your answer, "As to whether or not we have any IP protection, the answer is ..."
 - f. If someone asks multiple questions, feel free to answer one or two of them and ask what the other one was if you can't remember

Resources and References

- <https://pitchdeckexamples.com>
- <http://www.Pitchenvy.com>
- <https://www.allbusiness.com/sample-investor-pitch-deck-startup-110753-1.html>
- www.SlideBean.com