



Social Enterprise Business Plan Contest

HELP Session

Presentation tips

OR, how to compress 6 months of hard work into a 15 minute story or 30 second pitch.



SE Business Plan Elements: Recap

- The problem
- Theory of change
- Your solution (strategy/business model)
- The team
- Measuring results
- Competition
- Risks
- Financial Plan



Presentation tactics

6 general tactics for telling the story persuasively*...

- Keep it simple – “clarity is the soul of persuasion”
- Share vivid stories – “it’s easier to argue about numbers than about symbols, which provides at least one reason to use symbols either alone or in conjunction with analyses”
- Know your audience – “different people have different agendas”. Refine your pitch for the audience of the moment.
- Repeat yourself – say the most important thing more than once
- Choose your words carefully – words can be value-laden
- Make your message real – your passion is powerful

*paraphrased from Professor Nitin Nohria, “Principles of Effective Persuasion,”
HBS Case No. 9-497-059



Specific tips for HBS Business Plan Contest

- You own the room. Introduce your team briefly by name to the judges and ask who they are and what organization they represent – this does count against your 15 minutes.
- Who presents? Okay to have one person do it, okay to switch off among team members, but it should seem natural.
- DON'T turn off the lights. If you are using power-point make sure the color scheme works with the lights on.
- Assume the judges know nothing about your plan prior to your presentation.
- If questions are raised it's because info was not clear – instead of repeating material, understand what is being asked, and respond directly to the question.
- REMEMBER: To get into their wallets, you must first get into their hearts and minds. Grab their attention with a story, a demo or an interactive q&a that makes your plan real.



HBS Business Plan Contest Common Mistakes

- Team not clear and concise on business model
- Team members don't say who they are and why they are pursuing this idea
- Team doesn't engage judges (reads from notes or stands by computer)
- Team runs out of time, without details on substance
- Team is defensive during Q+A/feedback



Pitch for Change – 30 Seconds

- It's even less time than you think.
- What's the goal? To advance to the next round, NOT to say everything about your plan in 30 seconds.
- You probably have 60 – 70 words, depending on pace.
- If you go too fast, you seem frantic, so be deliberate about how many words versus how fast you can possible say them.
- Watch out for difficult words or word combinations, even if it's your organization's name.
- Judges will be looking for: Innovativeness of idea; Expected magnitude of impact; Expected viability; Persuasiveness of presentation. (Will rank each on a 1-5 scale, so you can earn up to 20 points).



Pitch for Change – 30 Seconds

One way to structure the time:

- ✓ Give a compelling stat or fact about the problem and why it's important.
- ✓ Say what you will do about it.
- ✓ If your background/expertise is a key strength, try to find a clever way to work it in without using too many words.
- ✓ Paint a vision of the value your solution will create.