



# **How To Win A Startup Pitch!**

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**First Edition**

# How Do I “WOW” My Judges?

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## Know your judges!

Before you even begin preparing your speech, make sure you thoroughly research your judges. Google them, check their LinkedIn profiles, and follow them on Twitter. Find out what matters to them. **Have they published any recent articles, interviews or books?** For example, if they have published a recent article on “*The Lean Startup*” methodology, then it might be wise for you to incorporate that into your pitch. Whatever you do, don’t get in front of the judges and talk about things that are contrary to their beliefs because it may not be well received.

## Know your Value Proposition

Be prepared to explain the value proposition of your product/service in a clear, **one line** pitch. Make sure you research your Top-3 competitors and know their strengths and weaknesses. Whatever you do, don’t tell judges that you have no competition, because this will sound unprofessional and naïve. **Why are customers going to leave your competitors and come to you?** Be prepared to expound on this.

## We Got Customers!

If you really want to “wow” the judges, you’re going to have to hustle. Show the judges that you have gone out into the market with surveys and potential customers have validated that they are interested in your product/service. **Provide the judges with the number of people** who pledge to buy or use your product/service.

## Take the judges on an “Apple Experience”

Take your judges and audience on an “Apple Experience” with your pitch! You only have the first 60 seconds to engage them and make sure they have a full understanding of your product/service and the problem it solves. When you visit the Apple store, they provide an experience that informs you of *exactly* what they are selling. While you’re in the store, you have a clear understanding of the product and how it meets your needs. Similarly, there should be absolutely no guessing about your product and what you’re trying to accomplish within the first 60 seconds.

## Have a Powerful Demo!

Please don’t put the judges to sleep with PowerPoints if you can help it. Definitely no boring slides with 50 bulletpoints that nobody can read. Instead, try **telling a story** with a product demo or video. Here are some excellent video examples.

- Usupplyme** Teaser Video
- Newbble** Teaser Video

If you *must* use PowerPoint slides, that’s okay! Consider using **Prezi** instead of PowerPoint! Use only a few slides and make sure you cover the topics below:

- Product/Service Market – need, size, outlook, and competition
- Customer Validation - proof that your product/service is needed
- Business Model – how will you make money
- Customer Acquisition – how will you acquire customers
- Your Team – proof that your team members have the skills to build the product/service

## We are Mobile!

There will likely be huge brownie points for the team that does not ignore the fact that mobile devices are our future! We all know that most internet use is via mobile phone right now. So, if you have a mobile app or your website is mobile-friendly, make sure to let the judges know!

## What Questions Can I Expect From Judges?

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It's completely normal to be concerned about questions you will be asked. No one likes being caught like a deer in headlights. Below are a few standard questions you should be prepared to answer:

- What's the problem you're solving?
- Who needs your product/service the most (early-adopters)?
- How are you going to make money?
- What's your go-to-market strategy?
- How are you going to scale?
- What is your unique value proposition?
- Do you have a patent or trademark?
- Can you deliver? How similar will the end product be to the one you're showing today?
- How big is your market?
- What makes your product/service different than... (Your competitor's name)?
- How many customers did you get so far (customer validation)?

Please get to the point with each answer. Answer each question in one breath. Longer answers can distract or confuse the judges about what you're saying. Be brief, concise and to the point!

One of the most certain questions you will be asked is, **“How will you make money?”** Judges will want to know your business model almost immediately. Please be wise with your answer. Stick to common business models that other companies have used. A few examples might be a “Premium Model” like LinkedIn, a “Subscription Model” like Dropbox or a “Transaction Fee Model” like Kickstarter—whichever makes most sense for your product/service.

# Anything I Should *Avoid* When I Pitch...???

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## Details Matter!

There are a few small things that you should avoid when pitching. Sometimes the small things matter and attention to detail can go a long way:

- ❑ Have you considered having T-shirts made? T-shirts give the impression of an organized team. There are some great, same day, cheap, t-shirt printing places you can contact! If you can't afford T-Shirts, make sure you and your team look uniform. Add a blazer to your jeans to dress it up a bit. Comb your hair and shine your shoes! This is **business** after all, and it's only courteous to stand before your judges in a professional manner.
- ❑ Don't try to be someone you're not. People can tell when you're not being genuine and this can be a distraction from your presentation. In fact, be exactly who you are—especially if you're a humorous person. If you're a naturally funny person, build this into your presentation where appropriate. Don't be afraid to engage the audience and make the judges laugh. More than likely they will appreciate it.
- ❑ Try not to sound like a car salesman. You don't want to “hard sell” your audience on your product/service. Sometimes teams will be overly enthusiastic and start appearing desperate to the audience.
- ❑ Practice Practice Practice! But don't paralyze yourself with memorization. Know your material, but don't memorize a monologue. This should be a relaxed, passionate conversation between you and the audience. If your pitch is too rehearsed, it loses its “magic”.
- ❑ Make a connection with your audience. Don't forget to smile and make eye contact as you speak.
- ❑ Get a second opinion on your presentation. Have someone who doesn't know a lot about your product/service listen. If they understand you, then your pitch is likely clear and easy to understand.

**Congratulations! Now that you know how to successfully pitch your startup, jump on [Newbble.com](https://www.newbble.com) and let's **Newbble** together!**

