



Stanford eCorner

Make a Great Pitch

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Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/1177/Make-a-Great-Pitch>

Making pitches is a way of life for an entrepreneur. Kawasaki provides his tips for ensuring each pitch is better than the last. His 10/20/30 rule for PowerPoint slides is essential.



Transcript

The next thing is the art of pitching. Pitching is usually used to raise money. But pitching, more generically is about the process of seeking agreement. You can seek agreement for money. You can seek agreement to recruit. You can seek agreement for partnership. You can seek agreement for sales. Pitching. You know the Latin saying, or "I think, therefore I am."? For an entrepreneur, it is, "I pitch, therefore I am." An entrepreneur is always pitching. There is what I call the 10/20/30 rule.

The "10" part of the 10/20/30 rule is that the optimal number of slides for a PowerPoint pitch is 10. Maybe it is 15, but it is not the 50 that you think it is. If you can cover these 10 subjects very well, the next step will be due diligence. Many people think that if you put 50 slides together, the audience will be overcome with shock and awe. And all they can ask is, "How do I wire you the money?" I have never ever seen that happen, alright? The purpose of a pitch is to get to the next stage of due diligence. The purpose of a pitch is not to try to close the venture capital firm, the partner, or the customer in that meeting. The second is the "20." I think you should be able to use these 10 slides in 20 minutes. You may have a 60-minute meeting, but I guarantee you, it will start late. The partners from the firm will come in late. You are using a Windows laptop, you can not make it work with the projector.

Something will go wrong. And the third point is 30-point font. The smallest font you should use on a slide is 30 points. This single recommendation will prevent you from getting in trouble with most slides. Lots of people like to use 8, 10, or 12 point font. They like to write out the entire paragraph and then they read the paragraph. People can read faster than you can talk. So if you put all of the text that you want to say up on the slide, they will read it, if they could see it, and they will be done, before you have explained it. The ideal size font is 30. If you think this is too dogmatic, let me give you an algorithm.

The algorithm is, find out who the oldest person will be in the meeting, take that age and divide by two, OK? So unless you are presenting to 16-year-olds, do not use the 8-point font.