

URL: https://ecorner.stanford.edu/?post_type=video&p=63656

Learn a message structure that will take audiences on a journey toward your offering, so that they WANT to hear it.



Transcript

- When giving a business pitch, you have to put yourself in the audience's shoes.. They've heard it all, and they're likely to be skeptical when you start talking about your solution.. Therefore, your strategy should be to take them on a journey towards your solution, so that by the time you get there, they're primed for it.. Here's how you do it.. Use the same time-tested dramatic arc that has captivated audiences for centuries in literature, politics, pop culture, and even in business.. A dramatic arc has three parts: a problem or conflict to start, a buildup of tension to the point where any resolution seems impossible, and then a climactic resolution.. How does this translate into a pitch? Well, you use the why, what, how message framework, which I created years ago as part of the Apollo Method for market dominance.. You need to state why there's a problem, what needs to be done about it, and how you've solved the problem.. Why there's a problem.. This is your setup..

Note that you don't just say it's a problem, but you explain why it's a problem in a way that resonates with your audience.. For example, the problem with today's small business collaboration suites is that they can actually reduce productivity, because.. The right target audience will want to hear the rest of this sentence because you've baited and hooked them with dramatic tension.. Next, you bring up what needs to be done about it.. This is the buildup.. Here's where you start taking them down a path and priming them for your solution.. For example, what companies need instead are tools that.. Notice that up to this point, you're being informative, not self-serving.. You haven't been talking about yourself at all.. Instead, you're educating them with relevant, valuable information..

You're also building credibility and trust as an authority on the topic.. When possible, preempt objections and alternatives here by confronting them head-on.. For example, you might say, now, you might be thinking, don't cloud collaboration tools already do that? Well, not quite, because.. And so forth.. And last, the how.. How you've solved the problem.. This is your resolution, your unique approach.. It's your opportunity to talk about your secret sauce and differentiate your offering.. The key in this structure is the what.. This is what so many people leave out, yet when done well, your audience's almost begging for the how by the time you get to it and your solution makes perfect sense to them..

So use your what to reel them in.. If there is one thing you take away from this entire JOLT, it's this point.. Put the what before the how and make it good.. Present your solution only after they're fully primed for it.. Let's walk through a straightforward example, so that you can see how the buildup works using just three sentences.. First our why.. A billion people worldwide don't have access to clean drinking water, because their impoverished communities lack the necessary infrastructure.. Our what.. What's needed is an inexpensive way to purify the water these areas already have without needing electricity or the maintenance of moving parts.. Our how..

We have developed LifeStraw, an inexpensive straw that a person can use to safely drink from any water source for up to a year.. Now, most people are going to hear that and be surprised and intrigued and want to know more.. Mission accomplished.. You've gotten them emotionally invested and curious.. When building your own storyline, start with a sentence for each section, like I did.. Once you have that, play with it to adapt it to your venue, audience, or timeframe.. You can get it down to 30 seconds or even just a tweet, or if you have 20 minutes, you'll want to elaborate in areas that warrant it.. Ultimately, this why, what, how structure will help you bait them, hook them, and reel them in...