

Start > Search > Plan > Launch > Early Growth

PREP Pitch Guide

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™

What is this?

- This is a **guide** for creating an **Entry Presentation** for the VentureCatalyst program
- The Peer Review Entrepreneurship Panel (PREP) will review your presentation for acceptance.
- It should be molded to fit the type, state, and strategy of your business.
- **DO** feel free to use anything from this document
- **DON'T** just copy and paste slides.

Evaluation Criteria of Pitch

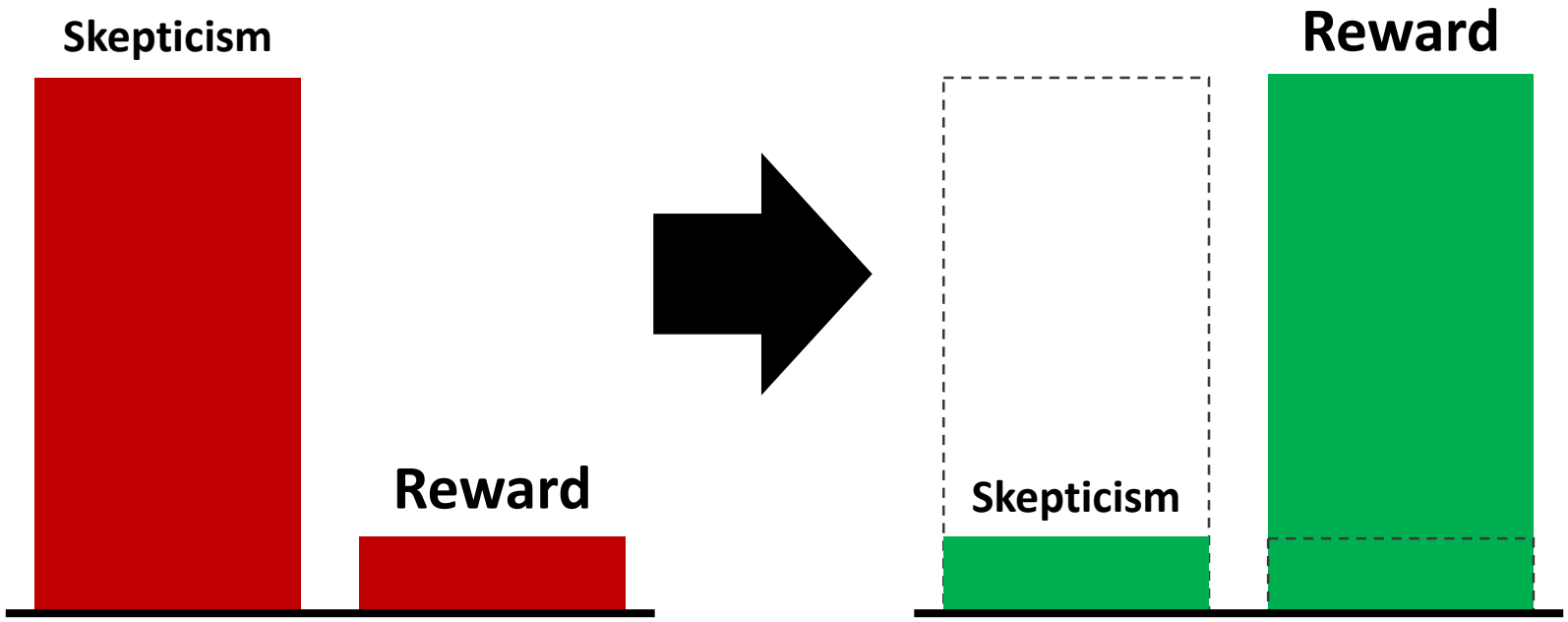
- **Does the entrepreneur have seriousness, dedication, & focus?**
  - Demonstrates initiative. Has put real work into idea
  - Conveys a sense of determination to push through walls
  - Shows ability to listen and flexibility to pivots
- **Are they on the right track as to developing a business model?**
  - Has loosely identified a paying customer
  - Has an idea of how to market it
  - Has thought through a business model, not just tech
- **Does this have potential to be a real, scalable business or trying to prop up a hobby?**
  - Has a relatively unique solution for target market
  - Has a general awareness of competitive landscape
  - Recognizes potential to scale beyond Starkville/MSU

You should be able to answer:

- What is the **problem** you are solving?
- What **product** or service are you providing?
- Who is the **customer**?
- How do you plan to **sell** to them?
- Who is the **competition** and how are you better?

Before and After a Good Pitch

- Your job is to **reduce skepticism**, and **show reward**.



Slide Rules

- **Five slide maximum** (not including title slide)
- Keep words on each slide to a minimum
  - **6x8 rule** – 6 bullets, eight words **or** 8 bullets, six words
- Pictures & diagrams say more than words
- Less is usually more with slides
- No reference slide – use footnotes

General Tips

- Wear business ***natural***
  - If suits make you up-tight, don't wear a suit!
- Rehearse presentation length to 5 minutes max
- **Don't rush to answer** questions. Listen.
  - Not every question is expected to be answered!
- Be a self-critic. What questions would **YOU** ask?
- Practice, Practice, **Practice**!

Logistics

- Your pitch must be less than **5 minutes**
- There will be **3 minutes** for questions by the PREP
- Bring your presentation on a **USB drive**
  - Only **Adobe PDF** or **MS PowerPoint 2013** are supported
  - We have internet access and sound, but **don't rely on it**!
- Be prepared to pitch in any order
- Bring a notepad or recorder to **jot down feedback**.

Getting Help

- Practice Pitches
  - The Center for Entrepreneurship & Outreach holds practice pitch sessions every **Friday from 3-5pm**
- By Appointment
  - Schedule online at http://ecenter.msstate.edu/book or call **(662) 325-3521**.
- Walk-in Help
  - Our office is in **McCool Hall, Suite 101**

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Name of Group

What you're doing in one sentence.

Team Members: John Doe, Jane Doe, and James Doe

Who's working to build this startup?
List how their skills contribute to success,
not just titles/resumes.

Problem / Opportunity

- Set the **context** for the picture
- What are you working to **solve?**
- Where is the **want** in the market?
  - *Think of the difference between pain pills vs. vitamins. Vitamins are nice for your health, but you **need** pain pills.*

e.g. Every year, more than 1 in 4 domestic traveler will miss his/her flight due to late arriving connections.

Solution

- Talk about your **product** or **service**
- Highest level – describe technology
  - Features
  - Feasibility or stage of development
  - Any IP considerations or work?

E.g. Our patent-pending software is designed to help airlines re-route passengers as soon as a missed connection is predicted.

Customer

- Who is the **target customer**?
  - Think about who is the:
    - **User** (e.g. Think Google: Customers are advertisers, but it requires an active user base. Users don't always pay.)
    - Influencer
    - Recommender
    - **Decision maker**
    - **Economic buyer** and
    - Saboteur.
- Which segment are you targeting first?
- Are you **business-to-business** or **business-to-consumer** sales? **Multi-sided** markets?

Sales & Marketing Strategy

- Just because you build it does **not** mean "they" will come…
- How do/will customers know about you?
- How do you plan to reach them?
  - And if it's brand new tech, educate them?
  - Distribution & channel strategy
    - i.e. direct web sales, sell through dealers, distributors…
- Strategic relationships?
- Current or potential customers?

Competitive Advantage

- Who is (or could be) working on the same thing?
- What makes you shine above them?
- Think about **functional** competition
  - e.g. Pens and pencils accomplish the same thing
- **Don't bash competitors**; talk about areas you're exceptional.