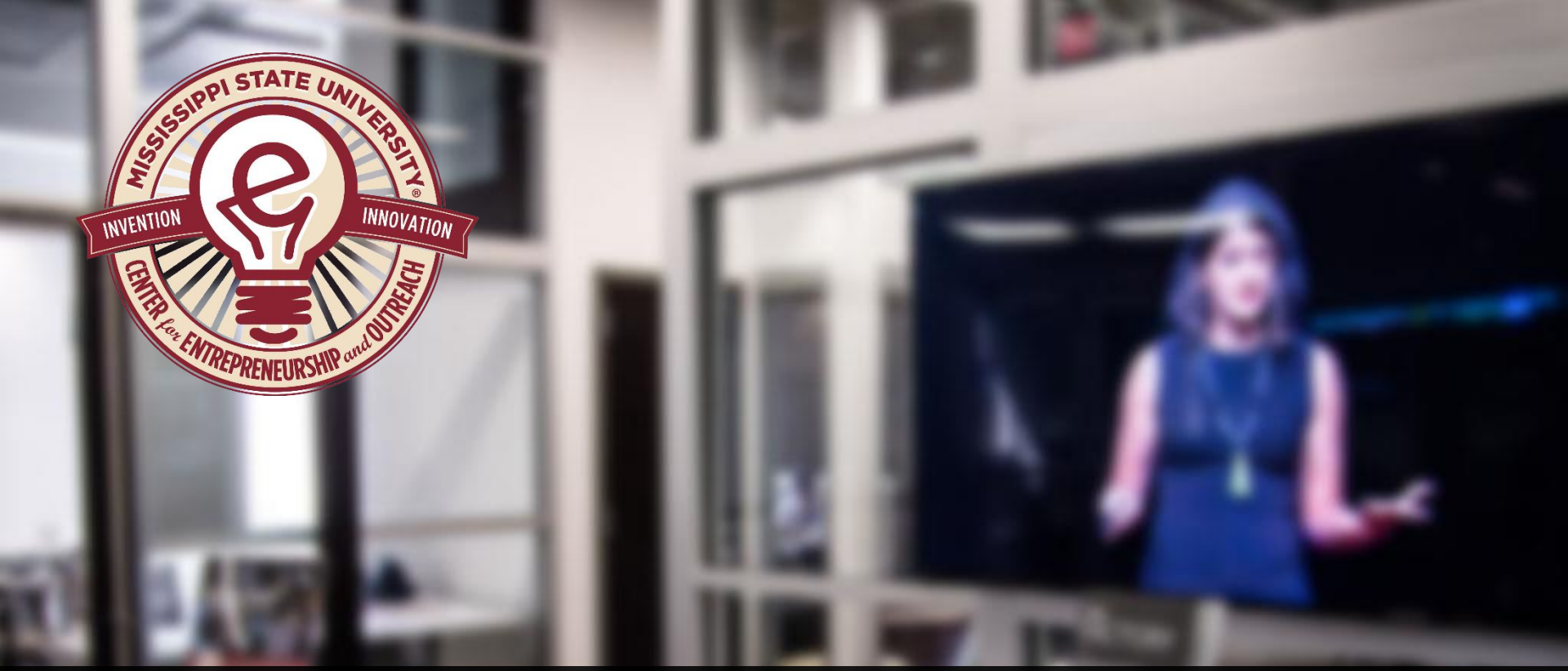


MSU Startup Summit

Pitch Guide

Rev: 01/2024

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

Overview

This is a guide for creating a presentation for MSU Startup Summit

- **FORMAT:** You will present to a **live panel** of judges.
- **TIME LIMIT:** **5-min** maximum; **3-min** Q&A
- **A/V:** Bring your presentation on a **USB drive**
  - Only **Adobe PDF** or **MS PowerPoint** are supported
  - We have internet access and sound, but **don't rely on it**!
- **PROTOTYPES:** Not evaluated, but encouraged.

Outline

- **Title** – Name of startup, one-sentence description, name of team members)
- **Problem** – What problem do you solve for a particular customer? How big is it? Illustrate it, make us relate.
- **Solution** – What is your product/service to address that problem? State of development?
- **How Does It Work** – What's unique about your solution? (Do not reveal unprotected IP)
- **Business Model & Financials** – How do you make money & how much could you make?
- **Sales and Marketing Strategy** – How do you sell it and make it better?
- **Competition and Competitive Advantage** – How are you better?

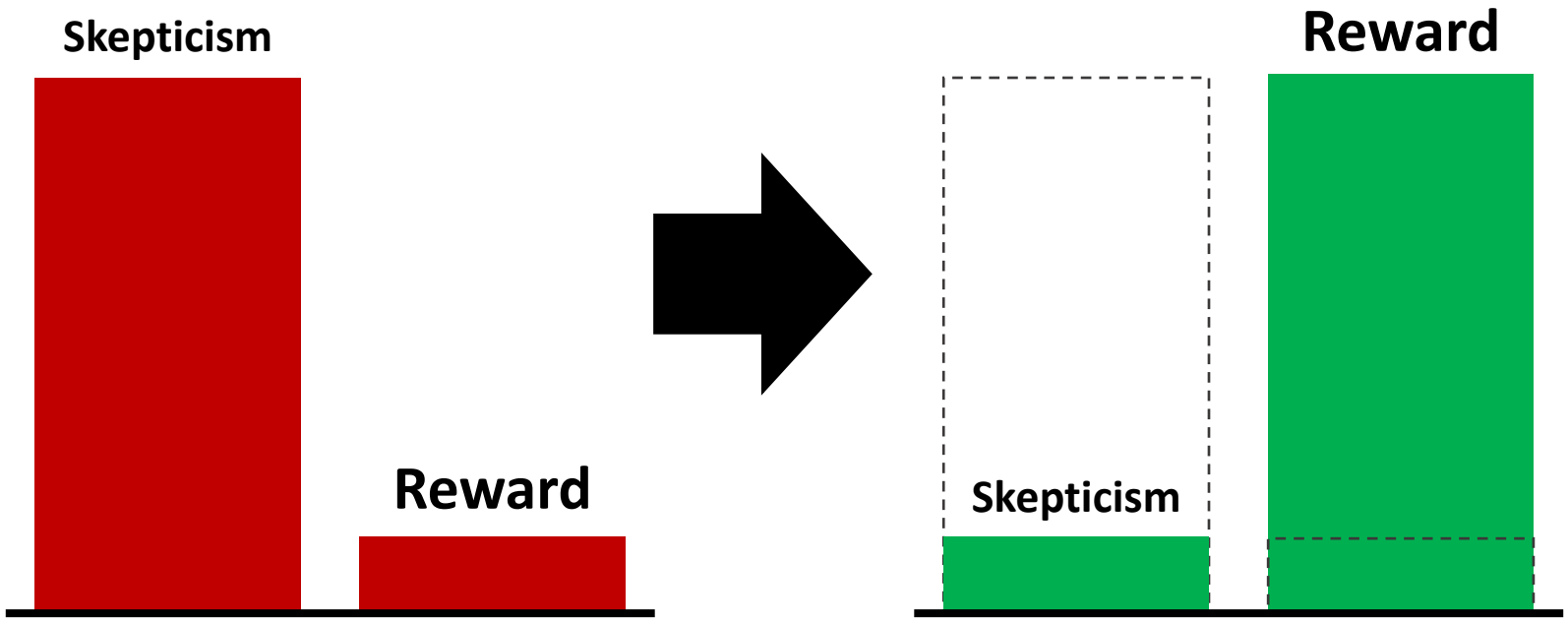
Evaluation Criteria of Pitch

The following dimensions are ranked from 1 to 5:

- **Product** – The entrepreneur clearly and succinctly conveys what he or she is trying to sell, how it is priced and makes you believe that it is possible.
- **Customer** – The presentation clarifies who will buy the product and why those identified individuals will be compelled to do so.
- **Marketing** – There is a well-developed plan on how to find, attract, and sell to new customers.
- **Competition** – The entrepreneur gives a clear identification of competitors and how they can win.
- **Finance** – The presentation conveys a clear sense of the economics of their product or service, and convinces you that it can be profitable.
- **CONVINCING & COMPELLING** – The idea is real, financially worthwhile, and the team convinced you it can "win".

Before and After a Good Pitch

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



Slide Rules

- 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

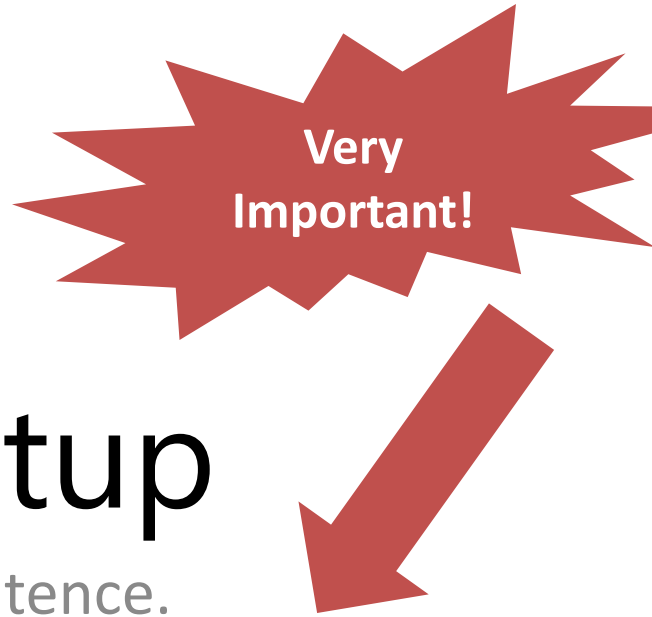
General Tips

- 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**!

Getting Help

- Practice Pitches
  - The Center for Entrepreneurship & Outreach is open every **Monday-Friday from 9-5pm**
- 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 Startup

What you're doing in one sentence.
(What you make/do, Who you sell to, why they would buy.)

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.

How it Works

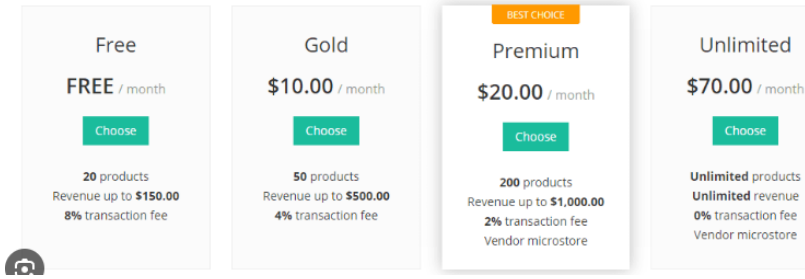
- You get one slide to talk technical details!
- Walk us through the **customer experience**.
- Don't bore with lingo
- The audience should think, "Oh I get it!"

E.g. We integrate directly with the airlines' API and passenger itinerary database to pull flight connections and overlay it with flight status data from multiple sources…

Financial Model

- How does the business make money?
  - Direct sales, user access, transactional fees?

Unit Economics	
Unit Revenue	**$100.00**
Costs	
Materials	($25.00)
Labor (1/2hr * $9/hr)	($4.50)
Commission/Discounts (2.5%)	($2.50)
Unit Gross Profit	**$68.00**
Gross Margin	*68%*



Sales & Marketing Strategy

- 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.
- 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.