



Presenting a Start Up to an Investor

FOCUS

Make sure that your strategy is a rifle shot, not a shotgun blast. Always keep in mind the market problem to be solved. Proprietary, sustainable technology is a necessity, but not a guarantee of success.

TELL A STORY

Investors are looking for a reason to believe. Create excitement around your plan and show energy, enthusiasm, and commitment when you present it. Think long-term, but spell out short-term implementation details.

UNDERSTAND YOUR AUDIENCE

Research and understand your target audience – both for your plan and your pitch. Understand your prospective investor's job history, areas of expertise, prior areas of investment, and hot buttons.

GET REFERRED

Nothing turns off a prospective investor more than something coming in over the transom. A reference will instantly give you credibility, and attention.

KEEP IT SHORT

Keep your plan succinct. Your plan should be no more than 25 pages and the executive summary no more than 2 pages.

PLAN YOUR PITCH AND PITCH YOUR PLAN

You get one shot, and less than an hour. Have backup for common questions. Efficiency in both plan and presentation creates an impression about how you will run the business.

RESEARCH THE COMPETITION

All startups have current and/or prospective competition. Thoroughly map out the competition, honestly assess your relative status, and disclose your projects strengths and weaknesses as compared to the competition.

REALISTIC FINANCIALS

Investors understand that financials for new businesses in undefined markets are very hard to estimate, much less verify, but be realistic. To the extent possible, build projections from the ground up, not the top down. There is no substitute for prospective customer purchase orders or at least endorsements.

VALUE FAIRLY

Equity valuation is very important. Don't be penny-wise and pound-foolish. You must give credit for the value added by the angel or professional investor.

PROJECT EXIT STRATEGIES

Although the investor's first thought is the excitement of getting into an investment, his next priority is how he's going to get out of it. Obvious paths are either a strategic buyer or an IPO.