

# THE EVOLUTION OF THE PITCH: BRAND MARKETING IN THE WORLD OF ENTREPRENEURS

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# White paper The Evolution of the Pitch: Brand Marketing in the World of Entrepreneurs

In today's environment anyone can start a company, whether by traditional means or a kick starter campaign, consumers and investors alike find themselves surrounded by constant pitches. Buy this. Fund this. How, in this crowded marketplace, can a brand stand out and rise to the top. Is the traditional pitch dead? This thought piece examines the evolution of the pitch, how brands can adapt their pitches, and when to pitch the brand over the entrepreneur.

## IS THE PITCH DEAD?

First, answer the question of who are you pitching to. When it comes to customers, the classic pitch is not dead, but thinking in the same terms, it may have a much shorter lifespan. One of the biggest changes technology and social media bring to our culture is speed and expectation. We have no time or patience for a slow build. In fact, we barely have the attention span of a few seconds, so even the elevator pitch (usually something that can be said and done in 30 seconds) takes too long to hold the attention of most consumers. Think in terms of a title for an article. If the title of the article or story doesn't grab their attention and give an idea of what's to follow, the potential audience has moved on in the blink of an eye. And just because you're in a business meeting doesn't mean you shouldn't use the lessons learned online and how to grab attention with content.

If your pitch centers on a well-loved topic, or you're pitching to a group particularly interested in the subject, you may get an extra second or two. But you want to grab their attention first and then hold it while you present your story. Shorter pitches can also translate to sound bites, allowing your customers to quickly and easily share information about your product in person, online, digitally, or mobilely.

If you pitch to bloggers, journalists, and other influencers in your industry, then prepare what you want published so it can be copied and pasted or linked to immediately. Also, be ready to answer any questions someone might have. The less the person on the other side of the pitch has to work, the better the possibility of your work showing up where intended.

And here's a great tip for you before you send any queries: read your pitch out loud. How does it sound? If it sounds too much like a pitch, revise it until it sounds more natural.

If your pitch focuses on investors or potential clients, go into any meetings prepared. Familiarize yourself with who you're dealing with and what



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they like. Learn the ins and outs of their business as best you can and show them you're ready to represent them immediately. In the social media age, it rarely takes long to learn about someone's interests, business, and lifestyle. Having this information allows you to quickly acknowledge your shared interests with customers and form a genuine bond – and people love doing business with others when they feel a positive connection.

## HOW DO YOU STAND OUT IN A CROWDED SPACE WHERE EVERYONE IS AN ENTREPRENEUR?

Before you step into that crowded space, there are a few things you should know about yourself and any product you offer. First, what is different about you and your product? Why would someone buy your product or service instead of another? To answer these questions, you need a complete understanding of what others offer that's



similar to you and your product, and what their customers would like to see changed. Having that information allows you to tweak your product so you can offer exactly what the customer wants and then present those upgrades.

For example, can openers have been around since there were cans – about 10 years ago, however, a new electric can opener hit the market. This new can opener cut below the lid and left the can edge dull so it wouldn't cut the handler. That's an example of knowing what customers don't like in a competitor's product – so you can pitch the ways in which your product is different.

Another example is [Sparkling Ice](#), an alternative to sparkling waters and soft drinks. Its marketing highlighted how the zero-calorie, great tasting, and refreshing drink mixed well with other healthy lifestyle choices. Presenting this value to a health-conscious market helped it stand out as a product to use, and brought it to a variety of stores, including Costco. It's also well-received by its million-plus fans on [Facebook](#).

## WHEN/WHY DOES A STUNT MAKE SENSE?

Stunts work best when you have a large gathering of people involved in your niche. Fashion Week, an event for clothing designers and those in other well-connected industries usually includes several stunts..

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One noteworthy stunt, presented by a men's underwear designer, involved a huge pair of their underwear on the bull of Wall Street. You can bet pictures of that event found their way onto social media from city tourists and natives alike, and of course, the press ran the story. That was a highly successful stunt, and its timing and creativity made perfect sense.

In October of 2015, [LycoRed](#) sponsored an event celebrating National Tomato Month. As a company dedicated to healthy lifestyle choices, they used this opportunity to mix their message with fun at Times Square. They brought in over 100 varieties of tomatoes for display, but they took it a step further by making a huge tomato salad, mixing several varieties. This won a spot in the Guinness Book of World Records for the largest tomato salad. Half was given to people passing by and half was donated to local homeless charities. Including charitable acts as part of a healthy lifestyle was another great PR move for a company that's all about healthy eating and habits. That stunt centered around Tomato Month and the Guinness Records. You can read about it at [national-tomato-month](#).

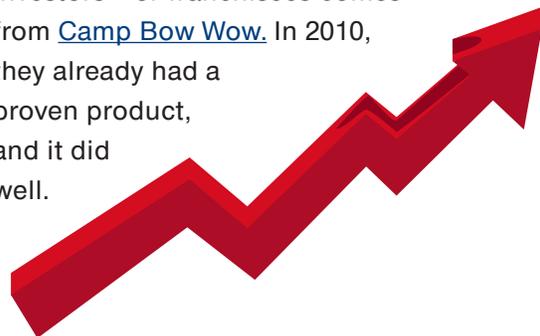
## HOW DO YOU PITCH A BUSINESS THAT HAS PROVEN RESULTS, BUT NEEDS TO GET TO THAT NEXT STEP (I.E. THE NEXT ROUND OF FUNDING FOR A START-UP)

When pitching to investors there are a couple

of great tips, like don't do a slow build – get right to the point. Most investors have heard lots of pitches and will appreciate your direct approach. Give them the information they want to know without making them sit through too much hype. Another tip: know as much as you can about the investors before going into a meeting. If they love sports, use some sports analogies. If they have a fondness for a music group, have a selection of their hits playing in the background before the pitch opens.

The person presenting should always be the head of the organization, not the marketing person or someone from an outside firm. When it comes to establishing a relationship with angel investors, direct contact with the company head is critical. They will still hear from the others as needed, but this way, they'll also know they are important enough to get the head of the company in the beginning. Before that meeting, it's important to increase brand awareness and create buzz in the financial world as well as with customers.

An example of setting things in motion for investors – or franchisees comes from [Camp Bow Wow](#). In 2010, they already had a proven product, and it did well.



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However, they wanted to increase the number of franchise holders and their brand at the same time. Placement of a story in a book by Marlo Thomas, *It Aint Over... Til it's Over* and interviews with the CEO, Heidi Ganahl in various magazines, e-zines and assorted outlets including The Wall Street Journal, Huffington Post, AOL, and Marketplace, increased awareness of the company. After that, many potential franchisees clamored for inclusion.

### PITCHING THE BRAND VS. THE ENTREPRENEUR (THE IMAGE OF THE PERSON, THE CREDIBILITY OF THE PERSON)

When it comes to deciding whether to pitch the brand/product or the entrepreneur, much of the decision is based on which brings the most positive attention. Of course, both will be pitched to some extent, but if you have a product like the [Sundance Catalog](#), which includes unique craft items often sold at the small store in Sundance – well, can Robert

Redford's name really be left out of anything Sundance-related? And even if it could, who would want to?

Robert Redford established Sundance as a place to foster nature and the arts. Since he established the colony in the 1970's, Robert Redford's efforts, multiplied and paid dividends toward bringing his vision to fruition. This was due in no small part to his celebrity status. That doesn't mean the items in the catalog come in second place by any means, so they are also pitched, but in a different way. The name may bring people there, but the product keeps them.

Alternatively, a product such as [Man Crates](#), offers unique products people love. Although extra information about the entrepreneur adds flavor to the mix, the real punch comes in getting word out about the product. This is exactly how it was pitched, and the company has grown 400% year over year. It's a fun gift to give men or yourself, and part of the fun is in uncrating the gift.

The pitch is not dead, but it has gone through some changes, and when it comes to doing it right, using a professional PR service with a proven track record of success is always a good idea.