

How to Pitch: Persuade and Connect

The Practice of Pitching

Reasons to focus on pitching skills

- Life skill (everyone pitches!)
- Industry skill to launch projects.
- Team performance (helps lead, and contributing to, teams)
- Fun way to learn the art of storytelling (hone the art & find the heart of the story)

1. Lead with Genre

- Gives context.
- “Don’t say it can’t be defined, there is no Bookshop section for that!”

2. Talk about as few characters as possible

- Occupation/descriptor will do for all but key characters.
- But do show character!

3. Pitch frequently to identify patterns of feedback

- Work out your tag line (theme), log line (leads with character)
- What questions do people ask? Think about these, what are you failing to communicate, is there a recurrent issue to address.
- When do eyes glaze over? Remember the film business is a business - get buyer’s attention and interest, get them emotionally engaged, move them!
- This should let you know how well you are telling the story (not just hinting at ideas)

4. Don’t give positive opinion of your film

- Let listeners form opinion.

5. Make statements & offers that are real

- Only mention people with skin in the game.

- Always tell the truth, and don’t lie. If you don’t know, don’t pretend and don’t be afraid to say that.

6. Don’t argue

- When you want to stand your ground for artistic reasons, do so with respect to the critique you wanted to argue with

7. Do your research - you hit home runs not by chance but by preparation!

- What will sell in the marketplace?
- Prepare material – story
- Prepare audience – who are you going to see? What will they want?
- Prepare yourself – remember the warm up time. The chit chat, getting to know each other.

8. Don’t give up

- In the words of Galaxy Quest, “Never give up, Never surrender!”

9. Write something you know about, care about and above all something that is good

- One great way to start is to identify the area of life that interests you and to know yourself! You will naturally identify with and tell stories about those who display similar strengths and weaknesses to yourself.

10) Practice & be a learner!

- Review and reflect.
- Were you ready to change when you had to?
- Did you stand your ground at the right time?
- Did you know the difference between the two!
- What was your presentation like - Speed? - Style? - Pace?
- Make note of feedback.

In summary...

- Prepare
- Do all the research you can
- Practice
- If you are nervous then pitching for someone else can reduce the anxiety, and aid in overcoming any fear in pitching.
- Keep the end in mind.
- "The reaction you want from an executive is 'How come no one's ever done that movie before?!' or 'How come I didn't think of that?' " (Steve Kaire)

Why not join a Pitch In!

Practice your pitching skills online with The Pitch Film Fund

Book here for June sessions: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdw_DLjpHQLac-P2AZm9TJ_FKEEAJGhe3rtF4163GDTNS8qH-jg/viewform

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Introducing The Pitch Film Fund

- Founded in 2009, we offer experience, international network & expertise.
- We offer a level playing field to all.
- We have one annual award of a budget to fund a shortfilm, currently £30,000, with several other smaller awards.
- We offer additional development & production support.

How does it work?

- Pitch it, film it, take it to the world
- Our challenge: find and pitch an idea in just two minutes (online video)
- We have three rounds to select finalists
- Finalists attend a residential masterclass to develop and hone the ideas
- Pitch live to a panel of industry experts.
- Develop, Shoot, Post, enter film festivals worldwide.

Other funds to apply to...

- **BFI Network**

Fund: Up to £15,000

network.bfi.org.uk/funding-available

- **Pears Short Film Fund for UK Jewish Film**

Fund: Two annual grants of up to £13,500

ukjewishfilm.org/pears-short-film-fund/

- **Shore Script's Short Film Fund:**

Fund: £10,000 – 15,000 production budget

www.shorescripts.com/shortfilmfund/

Other materials:

- The Perfect Pitch by Ken Rotcop
- Good in a Room by Stephanie Palmer
- Commissioning Conversations: Podcasts Ep 7: Fatima Salaria, Head of Specialist Factual, Channel 4:
Listen here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-toRZDQndek&feature=youtu.be>

Next ScreenTalk Oxfordshire event - Wednesday 16th September - Animation

Join our mailing list on screentalkoxfordshire@gmail.com

www.screentalkoxfordshire.co.uk