



Business Communication



# How to Make a Compelling Pitch

A simple formula to create a concise, memorable pitch on the spot.

by **Matt Abrahams**

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**You may not have “marketing” or “sales”** in your job title, but chances are, you’re still in the pitching business. That’s because most jobs require the ability to influence, persuade, and convince others. Whether you’re presenting an alternate approach to your team project during the morning scrum, lobbying for a promotion, or trying to convince your neighbors to support your idea to turn your cul-de-sac into a pickleball court, you’re pitching.

If you want to be an effective communicator, you're going to need to know how to pitch your ideas, concepts, and perspectives to others in both professional environments and day-to-day interactions.

Successful pitching is, first and foremost, about your audience. Your pitch must be understandable, relevant, and readily convincing — without any strong-arm tactics or perceived gimmicks and tricks. And in today's rapid-fire, short-attention-span world, it must also be concise.

There are literally hundreds of thousands of books and lifetimes' worth of training courses on pitching skills. But despite this plethora of content, I've found very little advice and guidance on how to pitch concisely and spontaneously. That's why I've put together a simple, easy-to-remember and easy-to-implement structure for a pithy pitch.

These four simple sentence starters allow you to create a concrete, concise, easily repeatable pitch on the spot if needed:

**What if you could...** [paints a picture of what is possible through your product, service, or idea]

**So that...** [connects to a meaningful, relevant goal for the listener]

**For example...** [makes things concrete and demonstrates existing traction]

**And that's not all...** [demonstrates potential, additional future opportunities]

Let's look at an example of how this structure might be used in a traditional sales situation.

Imagine you have a new product that helps users clip and organize meaningful moments from their favorite podcasts and videos. Once clipped, the product saves, sorts, and aggregates them in one place. You want to develop a pitch for your audience. Your pitch might be:

**What if you could** capture, collect, and categorize short-form audio and video content?

**So that** you can quickly access and combine content together to make your own meaningful playlists to help you learn, exercise, and be more productive.

**For example,** athletes are curating playlists that contain snippets of podcasts and video advice to help them with particular stretching exercises. Then, they can easily access the content they want, whether they're in the gym, at home, or getting ready for a track workout.

**And that's not all.** There is a social element to this product. You can share your personal playlists with friends and even build communities of people with similar interests.

Now, let's look at a non-sales example. Let's say you're part of a committee at work to suggest more eco-friendly initiatives for your entire office. You have an idea for hiring a local firm to create an organic garden in an unused portion of your roof area, and you want to pitch this concept for adoption by the committee. Here's what your pitch might look like:

**What if we could** have fresh produce available on-demand, onsite?

**So that** we can offer locally grown, organic fruits and vegetables to our employees and role model innovative sustainability ideas.

**For example,** we could have fresh strawberries, tomatoes, and cucumbers right from our own garden on our roof for snacking or for employees to take home.

**And that's not all.** The group that manages the garden hires at-risk youth and also encourages employees to take an active part in caring for the garden and serving as mentors for their workers. As a result, we'd be helping the larger community and establishing important relationships that benefit us all.

These two examples show that pitching your ideas, products, or services doesn't have to be uncomfortable or long-winded. The key is using a strong framework that can serve as a scaffolding to support your position.

So in closing...

**What if** you could deploy a useful, four-sentence structure that allows you to pitch your ideas clearly, succinctly, and persuasively?

**So that** you can pique your audience's interest and motivate them to listen.

**For example,** you can convincingly persuade readers to leverage this structure in their upcoming pitches.

**And that's not all.** You can use this structure not just in planned situations where you know you will have an opportunity to pitch, but in spontaneous, in-the-moment situations where a pitching opportunity arises organically.

By relying on this tested framework, you can be concise, relevant, and persuasive and actually enjoy sharing your perspectives and passions with others.

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