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Discretionary Assignment 3

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1. What are the three types of “pitchers” mentioned in the article? What are the recognizable behavior traits of each one?

**Showrunners**: Showrunners combine creative inspiration with production know-how. They demonstrate charisma, wit, and technical expertise. They engage catchers by creating a level playing field, often by discussing shared memories and viewpoints. Showrunners are professionals who can see their concepts fully implemented.

**Artists**: Artists are characterized by their single-minded passion and enthusiasm for their ideas. They may appear less polished and conformist in their dress and demeanor. They are adept at conducting "thought experiments," inviting the audience into imaginary worlds. Artists completely command the catcher's imagination and lead them through detailed narratives of their ideas.

**Neophytes**: Neophytes are the opposite of showrunners. They plead ignorance and openly ask for help. They are eager learners and exploit the power differential between pitcher and catcher. Neophytes engage catchers by seeking guidance and collaborating as if they are learning from a mentor. They present themselves as inexperienced, but their enthusiasm and willingness to learn make them appealing.

2. What is a “person prototype,” and why does it often hinder a successful sales pitch?

A "person prototype" refers to a mental framework or stereotype that people use to categorize strangers based on their behavior, appearance, or other observable traits. In the context of the article, these prototypes are used by catchers (individuals evaluating pitches) to categorize pitchers (those presenting creative ideas) into specific types such as showrunners, artists, or neophytes.

Person prototypes often hinder a successful sales pitch because they lead to quick judgments and categorizations, limiting the catchers' ability to assess the actual quality and potential of the idea being presented. Catchers tend to rely on these stereotypes to assess the pitcher's creativity and competence. If a pitcher doesn't fit into a recognizable stereotype, they might be overlooked or misjudged. This reliance on stereotypes can prevent catchers from accurately evaluating the worth of the idea itself, as judgments about the pitcher's perceived creativity can overshadow the idea's inherent quality, leading to missed opportunities for innovative concepts to be recognized and accepted.

3. What is “practical intelligence,” and how can it be used in making an effective pitch?

"Practical intelligence" refers to the ability to apply knowledge and skills effectively to achieve practical goals and solve real-world problems. In the context of making an effective pitch, practical intelligence involves a keen understanding of which creative ideas are not only innovative but also feasible, implementable, and likely to contribute positively to the organization.

In making a pitch, practical intelligence can be used by showrunners, who combine creative thinking with practical intelligence to present ideas that are not only creative but also realistic and implementable within industry-standard practices and resource constraints. Showrunners possess a balance of creative inspiration and production know-how, allowing them to convince catchers that their ideas can be developed practically and effectively. By demonstrating practical intelligence, showrunners enhance the credibility of their ideas, making them more appealing and convincing to catchers.

4. What are the four negative stereotypes that are guaranteed to kill a good pitch? What are the recognizable behavior traits of each one?

**The Pushover**: The pushover is willing to compromise excessively, lacks confidence, and fails to defend the idea assertively. They may agree to any changes or suggestions without standing their ground.

**The Robot**: The robot presents the pitch in a formulaic and memorized manner, lacking genuine engagement or spontaneity. They respond to questions with rehearsed answers, making the interaction seem mechanical and lacking authenticity.

**The Used-Car Salesman**: The used-car salesman is overly aggressive, argumentative, and pushy. They insistently promote the idea without respecting feedback or engaging in a respectful dialogue. Their communication style can come across as insincere and manipulative.

**The Charity Case**: The charity case appears desperate and needy. They emphasize their personal needs and difficulties rather than focusing on the merits of the idea. This behavior can make catchers uncomfortable and skeptical about the pitcher's capabilities.

5. According to Elsbach, what is the best strategy to counter stereotypical thinking about “pitchers”?

According to Elsbach, the best strategy to counter stereotypical thinking about "pitchers" is to engage catchers in the creative process and make them feel like creative collaborators. By enrolling catchers in the development of the idea, pitchers can break free from stereotypical categorizations and establish a more meaningful connection. This strategy helps catchers view pitchers as likable collaborators rather than fitting them into predefined stereotypes, increasing the chances of selling the idea successfully.