Shameem Nilofar MAIDEEN

The pitch tank:  
ELLSSA LIBRARY LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

Table of Contents

[Exercise Overview 3](#_Toc199409528)

[Meet Your Academic Sharks 3](#_Toc199409529)

[The Provost Shark 3](#_Toc199409530)

[The CFO Shark 4](#_Toc199409531)

[The Tech Innovation Shark 4](#_Toc199409532)

[The Student Success Shark 4](#_Toc199409533)

[The Library Veteran Shark 4](#_Toc199409534)

[Pitch Structure (5 mins total) 5](#_Toc199409535)

[Problem Definition (1 min) 5](#_Toc199409536)

[Strategic Solution Framework (3 mins) 5](#_Toc199409537)

[Strategic Solution (2 mins) 5](#_Toc199409538)

[Impact Measurement (30 seconds) 5](#_Toc199409539)

[Change Implementation (30 seconds) 5](#_Toc199409540)

[Compelling Narrative (30 seconds) 5](#_Toc199409541)

[Call to Action (30 seconds) 5](#_Toc199409542)

[Pre-Pitch Strategic Questions 6](#_Toc199409543)

[Delivery Guidelines 6](#_Toc199409544)

[Presentation Tips 6](#_Toc199409545)

[Visual Support (if using slides) 6](#_Toc199409546)

[Timing Allocation 6](#_Toc199409547)

[Success Criteria 7](#_Toc199409548)

[Practice Framework 7](#_Toc199409549)

[30-Second Elevator Version 7](#_Toc199409550)

[Question Preparation 7](#_Toc199409551)

[Pitch Evaluation Rubric 7](#_Toc199409552)

[Evaluation Criteria (Total: 100 points) 7](#_Toc199409553)

[Problem Definition & Institutional Impact (20 points) 7](#_Toc199409554)

[Solution Development (35 points) 8](#_Toc199409555)

[Building Evidence (20 points) 9](#_Toc199409556)

[Driving Change (15 points) 10](#_Toc199409557)

[Presentation Quality & Call to Action (10 points) 10](#_Toc199409558)

[Scoring Interpretation 11](#_Toc199409559)

[Audience Participation Elements 11](#_Toc199409560)

[Winning Pitch Patterns: 12](#_Toc199409561)

[Common Pitch Failures: 12](#_Toc199409562)

# Exercise Overview

Welcome to the **Pitch Tank** - where emerging library leaders pitch their strategic solutions to a panel of seasoned digital transformation experts. Just like the entrepreneurs on Shark Tank, participants must convince our "Academic Sharks" to invest in their vision with compelling evidence, clear returns, and strategic thinking.

**The Stakes:** Your strategic leadership recognition, and a surprise prize money.

There will be 3 prizes, the 1st prize of S$500, 2nd prize of S$300 and 3rd prize of S$200.

**The Challenge:** You have 5 minutes to convince our academic sharks panel that your solution DESERVES the top prize.

**Program Details:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Day 5**  **Fri 11 Jul** | 10:30am – 12:30pm | **Seminar 12: The Pitch Tank (Part 1)**  Pitch Presentations |
|  | 12:30pm – 2pm | Lunch and Networking. |
| 2pm – 3:30pm | **Seminar 12: The Pitch Tank (Part 2)**  2 – 3:30 PM Pitch Presentations |
| 3:30pm – 4pm | Break. |
| 4pm – 4:30pm | **Programme Closure** |
|  |  |
| 6pm – 8pm | **Dinner & Closing Reception**  Announcement of Winners |
|  |  |
|  |  |

Time Per Participant: 5 mins pitch + 2 mins Sharks qns

# Meet Your Academic Sharks

## The Provost Shark

*"Show me the academic impact or swim away"*

* **Cares About:** Rankings, research output, student success metrics
* **Investment Style:** Data-driven, prestige-focused, ROI-obsessed
* **Common Questions:** "How does this move us up in the rankings?" "Where's your evidence?"

## The CFO Shark

*"Every dollar must deliver measurable value"*

* **Cares About:** Cost efficiency, budget sustainability, financial returns
* **Investment Style:** Conservative, evidence-based, scalability-focused
* **Common Questions:** "What's the total cost of ownership?" "How do we measure ROI?"

## The Tech Innovation Shark

*"Think bigger, scale faster, disrupt everything"*

* **Cares About:** Digital transformation, competitive advantage, futureproofing
* **Investment Style:** Bold, technology-focused, transformation-oriented
* **Common Questions:** "How does this position us as innovation leaders?" "What's the scalability potential?"

## The Student Success Shark

*"If it doesn't help students succeed, it's not worth doing"*

* **Cares About:** Learning outcomes, student satisfaction, graduate employment
* **Investment Style:** Impact-focused, human-centred, outcome-oriented
* **Common Questions:** "How do students benefit?" "What's the learning impact?"

## The Library Veteran Shark

*"Prove you understand libraries AND strategy"*

* **Cares About:** Professional excellence, sustainable change, institutional integration
* **Investment Style:** Wisdom-based, implementation-focused, sustainability-minded
* **Common Questions:** "Have you thought through the change management?" "Is this realistic?"

Shark Investment Psychology:

* **Provost Sharks** invest in competitive advantage and measurable academic impact
* **CFO Sharks** invest in proven ROI and sustainable financial models
* **Tech Sharks** invest in scalable innovation and future positioning
* **Student Success Sharks** invest in demonstrable learning outcomes
* **Library Veteran Sharks** invest in realistic, professionally sound strategies

# Pitch Structure (5 mins total)

## Problem Definition (1 min)

* Current State: What's happening now?
* Institutional Impact: How does this problem prevent your university from achieving its strategic goals?
* Stakeholder Pain: Which key stakeholders are affected and how?

## Strategic Solution Framework (3 mins)

### Strategic Solution (2 mins)

* Question: What is your solution and how will your solution address the problem?

### Impact Measurement (30 seconds)

* Question: How will you measure and communicate success?

### Change Implementation (30 seconds)

* Question: How will you lead this transformation?

## Compelling Narrative (30 seconds)

Use the Story Formula: Challenge + Action + Outcome + Impact

* Challenge: The problem with human impact
* Action: Your strategic intervention
* Outcome: Projected measurable results
* Impact: How this advances institutional priorities

Template: "When we implement this solution, [specific user group] will experience [measurable improvement], leading to [institutional outcome] and supporting our university's goal of [strategic priority]."

## Call to Action (30 seconds)

* Question: What specific support do you need to succeed?
* Next Steps: What will you do in the next 30 days?
* Template: "I'm seeking [specific support needed] to begin [immediate next step] and achieve [30-day milestone]."

# Pre-Pitch Strategic Questions

Before writing your pitch, answer these questions:

Translation Ladder Validation

* ✅ Does your solution directly support a stated institutional strategic priority?
* ✅ How would you validate this translation with stakeholders?

Impact Bridge Verification

* ✅ Do you have baseline data, or can you establish it quickly?
* ✅ Are your success metrics meaningful to institutional decision-makers?
* ✅ Can you quantify the financial or strategic value of solving this problem?

Stakeholder Lens Assessment

* ✅ Have you identified your key champion and what motivates them?
* ✅ Can you articulate your value proposition in the language of different stakeholders?
* ✅ Who might resist this change and how will you address their concerns?

# Delivery Guidelines

Presentation Tips

* Start Strong: Lead with impact, not process
* Be Specific: Use concrete numbers, names, and timelines
* Stay Human: Include the human element - who benefits and how?
* End with Action: Be clear about what you need and what you'll do next

Visual Support (if using slides)

* Maximum 3 slides
* Slide 1: Problem with quantified impact
* Slide 2: Solution framework diagram
* Slide 3: Timeline and support needed

Timing Allocation

* 1 min: Problem and impact
* 3 mins: Strategic solution using concepts learned
* 1 min: Call to action and next steps

# Success Criteria

Your pitch succeeds when the audience can answer:

1. What specific institutional problem are you solving?
2. What measurable impact will this create?
3. Why should stakeholders support this initiative?
4. What do you need to move forward?

Red Flags to Avoid:

* ❌ Starting with background instead of impact
* ❌ Generic solutions without institutional context
* ❌ Vague metrics or outcomes
* ❌ No clear call to action or next steps

# Practice Framework

30-Second Elevator Version

Can you explain your solution in 30 seconds? This helps ensure clarity and focus.

Question Preparation

Be ready for these likely follow-up questions:

* "What's your biggest implementation risk?"
* "How will you handle resistance?"
* "What if you don't get the resources you're requesting?"
* "How does this compare to other priorities?"

# Pitch Evaluation Rubric

Evaluation Criteria (Total: 100 points)

## Problem Definition & Institutional Impact (20 points)

**Exemplary (18-20 points)**

* Problem is clearly articulated with quantified institutional impact
* Directly connects to stated institutional strategic priorities
* Demonstrates understanding of stakeholder pain points
* Uses specific data/metrics to illustrate urgency

**Proficient (14-17 points)**

* Problem is well-defined with some institutional connection
* Makes general connection to institutional goals
* Shows awareness of stakeholder concerns
* Includes some quantitative or qualitative evidence

**Developing (10-13 points)**

* Problem is described but institutional impact is vague
* Limited connection to institutional priorities
* Basic stakeholder awareness
* Minimal supporting evidence

**Beginning (6-9 points)**

* Problem description lacks clarity or focus
* No clear institutional connection
* Limited stakeholder consideration
* No supporting evidence

**Evaluation Questions:**

* Is the problem scope appropriate and solvable?
* Does it clearly impact institutional strategic goals?
* Are stakeholder implications well understood?
* Is there compelling evidence of urgency?

## Solution Development (35 points)

**Stakeholder Lens**

**Exemplary (30-35 points)**

* Demonstrates ability to speak multiple stakeholder languages
* Tailors value proposition appropriately
* Shows deep understanding of stakeholder motivations

**Proficient (20 - 29 points)**

* Shows awareness of different stakeholder perspectives
* Makes some attempt at tailored messaging
* Basic understanding of stakeholder concerns

**Developing (10- 19 points)**

* Limited stakeholder awareness
* One-size-fits-all approach
* Shallow understanding of motivations

**Beginning (1- 9 points)**

* No stakeholder differentiation
* Generic messaging
* No understanding of different perspectives

## Building Evidence (20 points)

**Exemplary (18-20 points)**

* Clear connection between KPIs and institutional metrics
* Realistic baseline and reporting strategy
* Compelling narrative structure evident

**Proficient (14-17 points)**

* Some connection to institutional metrics
* Reasonable baseline and reporting plan
* Basic narrative structure

**Developing (10-13 points)**

* Limited institutional metric connection
* Vague baseline or reporting approach
* Weak narrative development

**Beginning (6-9 points)**

* No institutional metric connection
* No baseline or reporting strategy
* No clear narrative

**Evaluation Questions:**

* Are the proposed metrics meaningful to institutional stakeholders?
* Is the measurement plan realistic and sustainable?
* Does the narrative connect library action to institutional impact?

## Driving Change (15 points)

**Exemplary (14-15 points)**

* Realistic assessment of organizational readiness
* Clear implementation strategy

**Proficient (11-13 points)**

* Basic organizational assessment
* General implementation plan

**Developing (8-10 points)**

* Shallow organizational understanding
* Vague implementation ideas

**Beginning (5-7 points)**

* No organizational assessment
* No clear implementation plan

**Evaluation Questions:**

* Does the approach demonstrate understanding that change requires human buy-in?
* Is there a realistic pilot strategy?
* Are champions and stakeholders identified?

## Presentation Quality & Call to Action (10 points)

**Exemplary (9-10 points)**

* Compelling opening and clear call to action
* Excellent time management (within 3 minutes)
* Professional delivery with confidence
* Specific, actionable next steps requested

**Proficient (7-8 points)**

* Good opening and call to action
* Good time management
* Solid delivery
* Clear next steps

**Developing (5-6 points)**

* Adequate opening and conclusion
* Acceptable time management
* Basic delivery skills
* Somewhat clear next steps

**Beginning (3-4 points)**

* Weak opening or conclusion
* Poor time management
* Unclear delivery
* Vague or missing next steps

# Scoring Interpretation

90-100 points: Strategic Leadership Master

* Ready to lead transformational change
* Capable of driving institutional impact

75-89 points: Strategic Thinker

* Strong foundation in strategic leadership
* Needs minor refinement in integration or implementation

60-74 points: Emerging Leader

* Shows potential for growth
* Needs focused development in specific areas

Below 60 points: Developing Foundation

* Limited strategic thinking demonstrated
* Needs intensive coaching and practice

# Audience Participation Elements

After all presenters have completed their pitches, audience votes:

* Who made the strongest pitch?

Reflection round after the winners have been announced. All participants will be invited to offer their feedback on the presentations by their peers.

* What would you change to make it more compelling?

# Winning Pitch Patterns:

* Institutional Impact First: Started with compelling institutional stakes
* Evidence-Rich: Used specific data and quantified outcomes
* Strategic Integration: Showed how frameworks work together
* Clear Value Exchange: Specific asks with guaranteed returns
* Competitive Positioning: Understood broader strategic context

# Common Pitch Failures:

* Solution Before Problem: Led with what they wanted to do rather than institutional need
* Activity-Focused: Measured effort rather than impact
* Generic Benefits: Could apply to any institution anywhere
* Weak Framework Application: Mechanical rather than integrated use
* Vague Asks: Unclear what support was needed