



Big iDeas Pitch WORDS OF ADVICE

A Big iDea is an idea that combines your passion and value to society.

Words of advice - eight key points for every dreamer who has an idea that could grow something really big.

There could be friends and family, pitch contest judges, venture capitalists or angel investors in the audience.

1. **Accept that you will be judged first as a person, then by your idea.**

Think about your stage presence. Some entrepreneurs are doomed by their presence, almost before they start. Others with the right confidence and personality are able to garner funding, despite a weak business plan for that idea. Investors invest in people, more than ideas.

2. **Grab attention in the first couple of minutes.**

Skip the background story and customer pitch, which every potential investor has heard all too often. The judges and investors want to hear you describe the problem, and your Big iDea. Then tell them the opportunity size, competition, traction, your team's qualifications, or at least the type of talent you will bring together if your idea is chosen, how much money you need, and what equity you are willing to give.

3. **Know your audience.**

Smart presenters have done their homework on the judges, and customized their sample product or storytelling anecdotes to peak their interest.

In a more general sense, find out as much as you can about every group and person you address, and tune your pitch ahead of time to match.

4. **Know your iDea.**

Great presence, passion and emotion may work well for your pitch, but then there's the question and answer part. Know your idea, your customer, channels and/or other key data.

5. **Dress to impress and be credible to investors.**

A colorful costume may catch attention, but may hurt your image and turn off judges and/or investors. Remember that most business investors are from an era where sandals and frayed jeans were not associated with hard work and business success. Exceed the expectations of the investor.

6. **Keep calm, and carry on.**

Entrepreneurs who interrupt investor questions, get defensive or show a temper, will quickly lose investor respect and likely lose the deal. Smile. Pose your counterpoints as clarifications rather than disagreements. Agree to evaluate investor views, rather than just dismissing them.

7. **Embrace the fact that the value of an investor goes far beyond cash.**

Investor money is not just green. Investor knowledge and experience routinely have more value than the money.

8. **Know that the initial outcome is the beginning, not the end.**

All handshakes in investor forums are subject to due diligence reviews. As little as one-third of the deals made, happen. On the other hand, many who don't get an initial deal win later through good visibility and connections.

If you plan to pitch a big idea in the near term, practice with peers, family, advisors until you are ready to calmly face the bright lights. Big iDeas hosts CUBE Friday workshops for practicing pitching before every contest.