

International Entrepreneurship Educator's Programme

Entrepreneurial Learning - Pedagogical Note Series

42. Use of Sales Pitch

1. What is Use of Sales Pitch?

The sales pitch is an exercise in selling a proposition to a potential buyer. This might be a customer for a product or service or a stakeholder who may invest in, or support in kind, a venture.

2. How is the exercise constructed?

The aim of the exercise is to underline the importance of, and develop the capacity for, selling a proposition in a short snappy and attractive way. A group can be charged with preparing a sales pitch with one or two of their members to deliver. The customer can be a representative of another group playing a role or an external representing a 'real' client.

In the context of developing entrepreneurship education programmes it is important to recognise that there are a wide range of stakeholders who can support a programme in cash or in kind. These include Regional Development Agencies, Local Government, independent and corporate businesses, bankers, accountants and the legal professions and local Non Government Organisations (NGOs) such as Local Enterprise Agencies. All of these have an interest in developing graduate entrepreneurship. Their needs, and therefore their reasons for offering any support, may vary. A sales pitch needs to consider carefully the differential nature of stakeholder needs. The group working on the sales pitch will be given a short time to brainstorm on the client needs, how the 'offer' should be designed to meet these, and also why the client might not 'buy' The sales pitch has to present a Unique Selling Proposition (USP) offer to the client in an attractive manner.

An equal consideration is to recognise in preparing the pitch that the reaction will not only be to the argument but will also be conditioned by reaction to the person presenting and also will be a function of the clients views and prejudices as to the capacity of the organisation which the 'pitcher' represents. In the above example there may be a prejudice against educational institutions having enough practical experience to teach entrepreneurship. Such prejudices will have to be anticipated and taken into account in designing the pitch.

The pitch is then appraised by the client group or individual.

The exercise can be used in similar fashion in a wide variety of different contexts, for example selling a business idea.

3. Relevance to Entrepreneurial Learning

The focus is upon empathy with a clients needs. It is also about putting together a persuasive argument in a short time under pressure. It is also developing team-work to reach agreement on an issue very quickly.

4. Outcomes

A key Outcome is recognition of the need to identify different needs of different stakeholders and therefore to package an argument in different ways. The sales pitch is seen as a relationship development instrument as a means not only of selling something but as a vehicle for building trust.