

# YALI ENTREPRENEURS

## Facilitation Guide: Hosting a Pitch Practice Session



Create. Innovate. Prosper.  
[YALI.STATE.GOV/ENTREPRENEURS](http://YALI.STATE.GOV/ENTREPRENEURS)  
[#YALIENTREPRENEURS](https://twitter.com/YALIENTREPRENEURS)



U.S. DEPARTMENT *of* STATE



You can lead a pitch practice session using the guide below to help you and your friends master the art of presenting your **elevator pitch**. Your elevator pitch is a shortened version of your full business pitch intended to convey your business's big idea in 30 seconds or less. These activities are designed to help you host an informal practice session for you and your friends to both discuss your business ideas and polish your presentations.

### **SUGGESTED AUDIENCE:**

We recommend inviting five to 10 people to your pitch practice session. They can be classmates, co-workers, or friends who either have a complete business idea in mind or are still considering one or two ideas but need some additional guidance.

When inviting people to your pitch practice session, be sure to provide them with a copy of [Workbook Three | Pitching Your Business Idea](#), a resource that will help them market their business by developing a pitch. Also mention that the discussion will be an informal one intended to help them learn how to present their business idea, no matter what stage it's in.

### **MATERIALS NEEDED:**

- One copy per participant of the **Developing an Elevator Pitch Worksheet** at the end of this Facilitation Guide.
- Paper and pens or pencils for participants to judge their peers' pitches.

**Total Time: 1 hour, 10 minutes**

### **INTRODUCE YOURSELF (5 MINUTES)**

- Thank your participants for joining and introduce yourself. Be sure to mention that you are an interested YALI Network member who wants to learn how to pitch a new business idea and help those present to do the same.
- Briefly share why you chose to organize a pitch session for yourself and your attendees. Explain that today new businesses need the support of investors to get off the ground, and that comes down to a simple, meaningful pitch.

## ICEBREAKER (5 MINUTES)

- Have session participants gather in a circle and, taking turns, introduce themselves by sharing their names and **one fact** about themselves that makes them unique.

## WATCH VIDEOS (10 MINUTES)

- Watch: [Perfecting Your Pitch: What Is a Pitch?](#) (3 minutes)
- Watch: [Perfecting Your Pitch: The Importance of Persuasive Language](#) (2 minutes)
- Watch: [Perfecting Your Pitch: Understanding Your Audience](#) (3 minutes)

## ACTIVITY 1: PREPARING YOUR PITCH (20 MINUTES)

- Ask participants to reflect on the videos.
- Pass out the worksheet included at the end of this facilitation guide. Make sure every participant has a sheet to fill out for this activity.
- Then give each participant 20 minutes to fill out their form and create an elevator pitch based on their own business idea, if they are comfortable sharing it, or on one of the three sample business ideas below.

### SAMPLE BUSINESS IDEAS:

The sample ideas below can be used in place of a participant's own business idea if he or she is uncomfortable sharing a new idea in front of the group:

1. *A new farm distribution app that would allow farmers to connect with sellers directly, saving time and money.*
2. *A clothing line that uses traditional African designs in modern clothing.*
3. *An online blogging platform that would allow young leaders to track a candidate's progress on his or her campaign promises over the course of the term.*

## ACTIVITY 2: DELIVERING YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH (20 MINUTES)

- Write on a whiteboard or present on a screen the criteria in the **Pitch Evaluation Rubric** at the end of this facilitation guide. For each presenter, ask participants to create their own rubric by writing down the presenter's name at the top of a blank sheet of paper, then scoring him or her on each of the criteria ("Storytelling," "Verbal Communication," etc.) on a scale of **1** to **3** (where **1** = "**Needs Improvement**" and **3** = "**Excellent**").
- For each presentation, ask attendees to fill out a new pitch evaluation rubric to give individual feedback to the "pitcher." Ask participants to take turns presenting their elevator pitch to the larger group.
- Give each participant **30 seconds** to deliver their elevator pitch. Remind them not to read their notes word for word, but rather summarize the main idea behind their business and why others should care in a coherent pitch.
- After all the participants have pitched, you can gather all of the rubrics from the session participants, tally up the scores, and announce which participant delivered the winning pitch.
- Then distribute all of their graded rubrics to participants for their review.

## WRAP-UP (10 MINUTES)

Give participants a few minutes to review their graded rubrics. Come together as a group and ask participants to answer the following questions:

- What new idea did you learn today about pitching a business?
- What action can you take today to make progress on your business pitch?

## NEXT STEPS:

- Encourage attendees to explore all the resources, including courses, podcasts, and blogs on the [YALIEntrepreneurs](#) page!

## PITCH EVALUATION RUBRIC:

**How to use the rubric:** When watching the pitch, determine if each element of the presenter’s pitch is OK, good or excellent, and write the corresponding number in the “Rating” box for that component. Once the pitch is done, add all the numbers to see how the presenter did.

PITCH COMPONENT	1 - NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	2 - AVERAGE	3 - EXCELLENT	RATING
<b>Storytelling</b>	Presenter’s thoughts were not very well organized, and the story was not easy to follow. There was no memorable statement.	Presenter’s story was organized and not too difficult to follow, but there was not a clear, memorable statement.	There was a clear, memorable statement and the presenter’s story was engaging, well-organized, and easy to follow.	
<b>Verbal Communication</b>	Presenter did not successfully engage the audience, the tone of the presenter’s voice never changed, and a lot of filler words like “umm” were used.	Presenter tried to engage the audience and use voice to emphasize key points of the presentation but could have done so more effectively.	Presenter was very engaging from the start and the story/key points were delivered very effectively.	
<b>Nonverbal Communication</b>	The presenter did not make eye contact, had bad posture, and did not really use his or her hands during the presentation.	Presenter made some eye contact and used his or her hands a little.	The presenter made eye contact, used hands, stood up straight, and overall appeared very confident during the presentation.	
<b>Pitch Effectiveness</b>	I am not sure what the goal of the pitch was (funding, partnership, etc); it was never made clear during the pitch.	I understand the goal of the pitch but am not fully convinced. I will have to consider it more.	The pitch had a clear goal and successfully convinced me that I should participate (partner with/fund business, etc).	
<b>SCORE CALCULATION:</b> 0 = NEEDS IMPROVEMENT 1 - 4 = AVERAGE 5 - 8 = GOOD 9 - 12 = EXCELLENT				<b>TOTAL:</b>

## FEEDBACK AND COMMENTS:

(You can include below any additional feedback on the presentation not covered in the rubric. What worked well? In what ways can the speaker improve?)

---



---



---



---

## WORKSHEET: DEVELOPING AN ELEVATOR PITCH

An elevator pitch is short, succinct summary of your entrepreneurial story. If someone remembers nothing else from your story but this elevator pitch, he or she would still have a clear understanding of your business and why it deserves support.

Before drafting your elevator pitch, take a few minutes to reflect on your entrepreneurial idea or business and answer the following questions. The goal for this exercise is to answer each question as concisely as possible, so take your time and challenge yourself to **limit your answers to a few sentences per section**:

### WHO ARE YOU?

*Example: My name is Kofi and I am from Tema, Ghana. As a young person I learned how to use agriculture to produce food for my family and community. I am a farmer and a chef at a local restaurant.*

### WHAT IS YOUR BUSINESS?

*Example: Kofi's Jollof Infusion is a catering and culinary business that sells culturally infused jollof rice, produced with ingredients sourced from student farmers.*

### WHEN WOULD SOMEONE NEED YOUR BUSINESS'S SERVICES?

*Example: Our clients approach Kofi's Jollof Infusion when they are looking for an affordable caterer for small to medium-sized events. We also sell our jollof in the marketplace during the week.*

### WHERE DO PEOPLE GO TO FIND YOUR BUSINESS?

*Example: We can be contacted directly via WhatsApp, found in the market, or via word-of-mouth. We have been reviewed by local news outlets that have awarded us best jollof in the region for the fourth year in a row.*

## WHY IS YOUR BUSINESS UNIQUE?

*Example: Kofi's Jollof Infusion isn't just the best jollof rice in all of Ghana. We source our ingredients ethically and support young agripreneurs while doing so. Our Jollof rice also brings together the diversity of several cultures, making our recipes unique.*

## HOW DOES YOUR BUSINESS DELIVER ITS GOODS/SERVICES?

*Example: Kofi's Jollof Infusion buys 80% of all ingredients directly from young local farmers. We sell our freshly made jollof rice directly to the customer and provide excellent and efficient catering services within 50 miles of Tema, Ghana.*

## DESCRIBE YOUR PASSION FOR YOUR BUSINESS.

*Example: Growing up I spent a tremendous amount of time farming with my father and learning the secrets of the kitchen with my mother. It was a challenge scaling the farm to be able to sell in the market and my mother didn't have the capacity to cater events. Out of my love for agriculture and cooking came Kofi's Jollof Infusion.*

Now it is time to create your pitch! Keep in mind that **the best elevator pitches:**

- **Are clear and concise.** Use no more than one to two sentences.
- **Separate your business from others.** What sets your business apart from the competition? Draw from your answer to the “Why is your business unique?” question above.
- **Detail the importance of your business.** Explain how your business can help others. Draw from your answer to the “Describe your passion for your business” question above.

**Here is a sample of what an elevator pitch might look like:**

*Malawi Foods is a mobile app designed to connect farmers with sellers.*

*With Malawi Foods, farmers can market and sell their crops in the click of a button.*

**Now it's your turn!** Craft your elevator pitch in the lines below:

---

---

---

---