

YALI ENTREPRENEURS

Workbook Three: Pitching Your Business Idea



Create. Innovate. Prosper.

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WHAT IS YALI ENTREPRENEURS?

YALIEntrepreneurs is an initiative to help you take your business idea from thought to fruition. By completing each of the three YALIEntrepreneurs Workbooks, you will be able to identify the skills, interests, and big ideas you need to make your business a reality. You will walk through the business planning process, exploring key actions each business needs to launch and grow. You also will refine your business plan to help you pitch your idea to potential investors, partners, and other stakeholders.

YALI ENTREPRENEURS WORKBOOK THREE | PITCHING YOUR BUSINESS IDEA

Welcome to YALIEntrepreneurs Workbook Three | Pitching Your Business Idea, a resource designed to help you market your business by developing your own pitch! A pitch is a presentation used to educate others about what your business or entrepreneurial endeavor aims to accomplish, typically with the goal of forming a partnership or securing an investment. It can be informal or formal and can be presented to a variety of audiences. Have you already developed a pitch? Don't worry; this workbook will help you to refine the progress that you've already made and strengthen your pitch.

Complete the activities in this workbook to help you master the art of pitching your business to potential investors, partners, employees, or others. Share your experience on social media using the hashtag #YALIEntrepreneurs to let other YALI Network members know you are ready to harness your creativity!

TIP:

Review these YALI Network resources to learn more about pitching before completing this workbook:

- YALI Network Video Vignette series [Perfecting Your Pitch](#)
- YALI Network Online Course lesson [Pitching Your Business Ideas for Investment](#)

STEP ONE: TELLING YOUR ENTREPRENEURIAL STORY

The first step of a perfect pitch starts well before making a presentation, or even speaking to another person. First you must reflect on your goals, including identifying your story and deciding how to tell it. This section will help guide you on how to share your entrepreneurial story.

DETERMINE WHAT YOU HAVE TO TELL

Before you can tell your entrepreneurial story, you have to decide what you want people to know. The prompts below will help you identify the important information for your story. 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.

STEP TWO: CRAFTING YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH

Now that you have thought a bit more about your entrepreneurial story, it is time to create what may be the most important part of your story: your elevator pitch.

An elevator pitch is a short, succinct summary of your 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.

Reflect on your answers in the above section, focusing specifically on what sets your business apart from others. If you met a potential investor and had only 30 seconds to explain to him or her what your business is and why it matters, what would you say? That's your elevator 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.** Draw from the boxes entitled "Why is your business unique?" and "What is your business?".
- **Detail the importance of your business.** Draw from the box entitled "Describe your passion for your business." Explain how your business can help others.

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

Congratulations on drafting your first elevator pitch! What you've drafted above should explain clearly what your business does and why it matters. This elevator pitch will be the story you use to sell your idea to potential investors. Learn how you can best present your pitch in the next section!

STEP THREE: PERFECTING PUBLIC SPEAKING SKILLS

Once you understand your entrepreneurial story and have crafted your elevator pitch, you will want to make sure you deliver it effectively, which is where the importance of public speaking comes into play. This section will help you understand how to engage your audience and present your business.

TIP:

Learn more about public speaking in the YALI Network Online Course lesson ["The Art of Public Speaking."](#)

USE EFFECTIVE VERBAL AND NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES

Once your audience is engaged, much of the success of your public speaking is tied to effectively communicating verbally and nonverbally. The checklist below offers tips and techniques that you should practice when speaking. If you can check all the boxes when you speak, you give your story its best chance to resonate with your audience.

VERBAL COMMUNICATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> Avoid using filler words	<p>Using words like “umm” or “like” as filler words when you speak can make it harder to understand what you’re saying, and your audience may not listen.</p> <p>Try this: When you need to collect your thoughts, pause and take a breath. Pausing sounds better than “umm” or “like.”</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Vary the tone of your voice	<p>Staying at the same tone—the speed, pitch and excitement level of your voice—can be boring for your audience and may result in them not listening.</p> <p>Try this: Use the same kind of voice you would use if speaking to a parent or close friend. You want to be respectful, but it’s okay to be excited about your business.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Emphasize the important things	<p>Emphasizing important information, like your memorable statement, is a good way to ensure that your audience will remember it after you are done speaking.</p> <p>Try this: When saying your memorable statement, slow down and speak with passion—make your presentation dramatic, and it will leave an impact.</p>
NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> Stand up straight	<p>Posture is one of the most important parts of public speaking. People’s brains tend to interpret bad posture as a sign that the speaker is not confident.</p> <p>Try this: Speak from your chest—stand up straight and pretend your voice is coming from your chest. If you slouch, your chest will point to the ground and no one will hear you. Stand up straight and make sure people hear you!</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Use your hands	<p>When speaking, you want to be physically animated—walking around or using hand gestures—to keep your audience engaged with what you are saying.</p> <p>Try this: Don’t cross your arms or lock your hands together. These gestures are not welcoming to your audience. Instead, gesture with your hands and forearms open to your audience; it will invite them into what you are saying.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Make eye contact	<p>You want your speech or presentation to feel like a one-on-one conversation for each member of your audience. Making eye contact can help make this happen.</p> <p>Try this: As you speak, scan your audience and make eye contact with different people. Make eye contact for 4 to 5 seconds per person and move on.</p>

STEP FOUR: DELIVERING ELEVATOR PITCHES

Now that you understand your story and how to tell it, it is time to practice your elevator pitch in a quick or informal setting. An elevator pitch can happen anywhere and at any time, so it is important to always be prepared.

Your audience for an elevator pitch might be a potential investor at a coffee shop or a potential employee on an airplane. In this informal setting it is especially important to get your point across quickly, as the person you are speaking to is likely busy and does not have time to spare.

PRACTICE! Be sure to practice giving your elevator pitch in front of a mirror, and with friends, family, or colleagues. While having a written script is helpful for drafting what you wish to say, you won't always have a precise script in front of you, so you should be comfortable with your pitch and ready to deliver it at any time.

NEXT STEPS:

Congratulations on completing Workbook Three! We invite you to visit our [YALIEntrepreneurs page](#) to access additional workbooks, podcasts, blog posts, and more on taking your business to the next level!