Women Presidents Organization

WPO SPARK KIT: Elevate your Elevator Pitch
A curated facilitator kit for WPO Chairs and members

HOW TO USE THIS SPARK KIT

This kit offers you an easy way to engage in a group discussion on the topic of **Elevate your Elevator Pitch.** To get started, we recommend the following steps:

- Review the recommended reading list in the **Spark Resource Summary** chart below.

- Click through the links to see complete articles and videos in Spark, OR simply read the Executive Summary and Key Points section for quick reference.

- Prepare to facilitate your discussion using the prompting questions & tips suggested on page 3.

TOPIC OUTLINE

Pitch your business like a successful Hollywood screenwriter. Your authentic elevator pitch is a crucial tool for networking, sharing innovative concepts, and selling ideas to your target market, in any scenario - including an elevator!

SPARK RESOURCE SUMMARY

The chart below contains a carefully curated selection of Spark content to assist you in leading your discussion. You are encouraged to read the complete articles. However, for your convenience, we've also provided **Executive Summaries and Key Points** on the subsequent pages to simplify your preparation.

SPARK RESOURCE TITLE	TIME COMMITMENT
1. **Your Elevator Pitch Needs an Elevator Pitch**	**Article - 7 min read**
2. **The Art of the Elevator Pitch**	**Article - 4 min read**
3. **How to Make a Compelling Pitch**	**Article - 4 min read**
4. **Stop Networking, Start Connecting**	**Podcast - 25 min listen**
5. **Be Ready to Make a Pitch**	**Video - 3 min watch**

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PREPARATION FOR SPARK DISCUSSION

WPO Chairs: Share this entire document with your members ahead of your meeting and encourage them to review content.

WPO Members: You're welcome to distribute this within your organization to facilitate your own discussions on this subject. Please keep in mind that a paid Spark subscription is required for your team to access the complete articles; alternatively, they can utilize the provided Executive Summaries if a Subscription is not in place.

SCOPE FOR: ELEVATE YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH

Hone your story so that your audience will connect and want to know more. In essence, your elevator pitch is a dynamic asset, allowing you to showcase your business in a compelling and succinct manner, capturing attention and generating interest.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

- Why an authentic pitch is important.

- What scenarios require the ability to influence and persuade on the spot.

- Learn how Hollywood screenwriters craft winning pitches and the parallels in the business world.

- Appreciate the key tenants of a great pitch:

    i. What are 'Noddables'?

    ii. Ideal length?

    iii. What is a Logline?

- Practice with your peers to gain insight from people who know you and your business well.

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SPARK DISCUSSION ACTIVITY: 30 – 90 MINUTES

This kit is practical and 'hands-on'. It offers an opportunity for practice and feedback with peers. Use the suggested activity below to encourage your members to learn from each other.

ACTIVITY SUGGESTION:

2.   **Pre-work:** Strongly encourage everyone to arrive to the meeting prepared to share their elevator pitch. The resources shared in this kit will support them to refine their pitch.

3.   **Step One: Total time = approx. 20 min (set up expectations & allow practice)**

   a.   Pair people up for approximately 15 minutes to share their pitch with a partner, and explore these questions (approx 7.5 minutes each):

   i.   How long is the pitch? Are there opportunities to shorten it?

   ii.   What did the listener hear – summarize what they learned.

   iii.   How did it resonate with the listener? Did it sound authentic, or overly rehearsed?

   iv.   What is missing? How could it be improved?

4.   **Step Two: Total time = ranges from 30 – 60 min (depending on group size)**

   a.   Move them into groups of 4 for another round of practice, allowing approximately 5 min per person. OR open it up to the larger group for broader feedback. Allow 3 – 7 minutes per person and refer to the questions above for guidance.

   b.   You know your group best. Do what you think will work given the audience and time available.

Discussion Wrap-Up:

Be sure to wrap-up by sharing key insights and commitments from each participant regarding their plans for implementation. Ideally follow-up at the next meeting to check in on progress.

See the **note taking table** on the final page if you want to capture action items within this document.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & KEY POINTS FOR SPARK RESOURCES
(NOTED IN CHART ON PAGE 1)

Your Elevator Pitch Needs an Elevator Pitch

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The article, written by Tim David provides insights into crafting an effective elevator pitch for networking purposes. David argues against the common 20-second rule for elevator pitches, advocating for a more personalized and engaging approach. He shares his own elevator pitch, breaks down its components, and provides a step-by-step guide for creating an attention-grabbing introduction.

The key points include the importance of breaking expectations, posing problem questions, utilizing "noddables" for rapport-building, and concluding with a curiosity statement to prompt further inquiry. David emphasizes authenticity and warns against sounding phony or manipulative in delivering pitches.

KEY POINTS:

5. **Introduction to Elevator Pitch:**
   a. The elevator pitch is a crucial tool for networking.
   b. The 20-second rule is challenged, suggesting a more flexible and engaging approach.

6. **Crafting an Attention-Grabbing Introduction:**
   a. Break expectations with a unique and authentic opening.
   b. Pose a problem question to engage the listener and build rapport.

7. **Utilizing "Noddables" for Rapport:**
   a. Incorporate inspirational or wise quotes that resonate with the listener.
   b. Create moments of bonding by allowing the listener's brain to fill in the punchline.

8. **Curiosity Statement:**
   a. End with a curiosity statement that prompts further questions.
   b. Formula: "I help/teach _____ (ideal client) to _____ (feature) so they can _____ (benefit)."

9. **Length and Structure of Elevator Pitch:**

   a. Challenge the notion of a 20-second pitch; focus on engaging the listener.

   b. Share a longer pitch, emphasizing a results-based story, persuasive language, and hidden salesmanship.

   c. Specify the target market and pain points to connect with potential clients.

10. **Maintaining Authenticity:**

    a. Authenticity is crucial. People will pick up on disingenuous tone and it may come across more salesy than intended.

    b. Avoid adopting a pitch verbatim as it can sound like you are reading a script. Instead it should align with your personality to avoid sounding manipulative.

11. **Communication Dynamics:**

    a. Balance talking and listening, aiming for 15-20% talking during the interaction.

    b. Caution against turning the conversation into a commercial; prioritize a genuine conversation over a sales pitch.

12. **Final Caveat:**

    a. Authenticity is the cardinal rule in communication.

    b. While the model pitch can be used as inspiration, it should be tailored to fit one's personality to avoid coming across as artificial.

The Art of the Elevator Pitch

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this article, Carmine Gallo emphasizes the importance of crafting a compelling 'logline', drawing inspiration from Hollywood screenwriters who use succinct pitches to sell movie ideas. The logline - a one or two-sentence description of a concept - is crucial for innovators and business leaders to convey their ideas effectively.

Gallo provides insights on mastering the art of loglines, stressing the significance of simplicity, clarity, and memorability. He suggests keeping loglines short, focusing on one key idea, tailoring the message to the audience's needs, and ensuring consistency across the team. The ability to articulate a pitch in a concise and engaging manner, encapsulated in a logline, enhances the chances of gaining support and turning ideas into reality.

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KEY POINTS:

1. **Significance of Loglines:**

   a. In Hollywood, screenwriters use loglines (one or two sentences) to pitch movie ideas in around 45 seconds.

   b. A winning pitch often starts with a compelling logline that quickly communicates the essence of the idea.

2. **The Human Brain Craves Meaning:**

   a. According to John Medina, a molecular biologist, the human brain craves meaning before details.

   b. A logline helps paint the big picture, making it easier for the audience to understand and retain information.

3. **Elements of a Powerful Logline:**

   a. The logline for "Jaws" exemplifies key story elements: hero, weakness, conflict, and hurdles, all in one sentence.

   b. Business leaders can use loglines to explain complex ideas with clarity and engagement.

4. **Tips for Crafting Effective Loglines:**

   a. Keep it short (under 140 characters if possible) for easy memorability.

   b. Identify one key thing you want the audience to remember.

   c. Ensure consistency across the team by having everyone deliver the same logline.

5. **Examples of Successful Loglines:**

   a. Sergey Brin and Larry Page's logline for Google: "Google organizes the world's information and makes it universally accessible."

   b. Steve Jobs' strategy of focusing on "one thing" for product presentations, making it memorable for the audience.

6. **Team Alignment and Consistency:**

   a. Every person representing a company should deliver the same logline to ensure consistency.

   b. Consistent loglines are memorable, repeatable, and attract attention.

7. **Importance of Patience and Practice:**

   a. Crafting an effective logline may require practice and patience.

   b. Once mastered, a logline becomes a powerful tool for clarifying ideas and influencing the audience.

How to Make a Compelling Pitch

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This article emphasizes the ubiquity of pitching in various aspects of professional and personal life, stressing the importance of concise and spontaneous communication. This is a particularly good one to read fully (vs just this Summary) to get a better sense of the examples shared.

Recognizing the lack of guidance on spontaneous pitching, the author presents a simple and implementable structure consisting of four sentence starters:

WHAT IF YOU COULD... (PAINT A PICTURE OF POSSIBILITIES)

1. **So that...** (Connect to a meaningful goal for the listener)

2. **For example...** (Make things concrete with existing traction)

3. **And that's not all...** (Demonstrate potential future opportunities)

Two examples illustrate the application of this framework, one in a traditional sales scenario and another in a non-sales context. The key takeaway is that effective pitching doesn't have to be uncomfortable or lengthy; rather, using a strong framework can make it clear, succinct, and persuasive.

KEY POINTS:

1. **Pitching is ubiquitous:** Most jobs require the ability to influence and persuade, making effective pitching essential in various scenarios.

2. **Successful pitching is audience-centric:** A pitch should be understandable, relevant, and convincing without resorting to strong-arm tactics, gimmicks, or tricks.

3. **The challenge of spontaneous pitching:** While there is abundant advice on pitching skills, there is a scarcity of guidance on concise and spontaneous pitching.

4. **The four-sentence structure:** The author introduces a structure comprising four sentence starters to create a concrete and easily repeatable pitch:

    1. What if you could…

    2. So that…

    3. For example…

    4. And that's not all…

5. **Application in sales:** A hypothetical product pitch demonstrates the structure's application in a traditional sales situation, highlighting benefits and future opportunities.

6. **Application in non-sales:** An example of pitching an eco-friendly initiative for an office committee showcases the versatility of the structure beyond sales contexts.

7. **Pitching doesn't have to be uncomfortable:** Using a strong framework facilitates clear, concise, and persuasive communication, even in spontaneous situations.

8. **Closing pitch:** The article concludes by inviting readers to consider deploying the four-sentence structure to enhance their pitching skills, emphasizing its applicability in both planned and spontaneous situations.

Stop Networking, Start Connecting

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Hosts: Curt Nickisch, Susan McPherson. This podcast discusses the challenges of reconnecting with colleagues in person after a period of extended isolation during the pandemic, with an emphasis on the importance of building meaningful connections rather than traditional networking.

KEY POINTS:

1. **Current Challenges:**

    a. After years of isolation, people might be feeling rusty in interpersonal communication.

    b. The shift to virtual interactions has had both advantages (intentionality, democratization) and drawbacks (loss of serendipity) in building connections.

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2. **Gather, Ask, Do Method:**

   a. McPherson introduces her "Gather, Ask, Do" method for building meaningful business relationships.

      i. **Gather Phase:** Reflect on personal values, business goals, and identify ways to help others.

      ii. **Ask Phase:** Offer help by asking meaningful questions to understand others' goals, dreams, and challenges.

      iii. **Do Phase:** Follow through with actions that build confidence, trust, and deeper connections.

3. **Connecting vs. Networking:**

   a. McPherson distinguishes between connecting (building relationships based on reciprocity) and networking (transactional, work-focused).

   b. Deep, one-on-one connections are more feasible for introverts and lead to long-term benefits.

4. **Challenges of Virtual Interactions:**

   a. Virtual platforms lack serendipity but have democratized meetings.

   b. Chat functions enable intentional and meaningful interactions, fostering connections beyond geographical borders.

5. **Reconnecting Post-Pandemic:**

   a. People's readiness to network varies; some feel excited, while others are anxious about larger gatherings.

   b. McPherson suggests smaller, more meaningful connecting as an alternative to traditional networking.

6. **Gather Phase - Practical Tips:**

   a. Use the opportunity for a reset and do-over post-pandemic.

   b. Reflect on business goals, identify connections that can help, and break out of communication bubbles.

7. **Being Helpful:**

   a. Lead with the question, "How can I help?"

   b. Offering help builds compassion, humanity, and opens conversations in a more meaningful way.

8. **Listening and Follow-Through:**

    a. Listening is crucial; avoid anticipatory listening and take notes during conversations.

    b. Follow through promptly after gathering information to maintain the authenticity of the connection.

9. **Post-Pandemic Connection:**

    a. Shared vulnerability from the pandemic experience can make people more comfortable reaching out and connecting.

    b. The importance of building connections applies to all career stages, from recent graduates to C-suite leaders.

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CAPTURING COMMITMENTS & KEY LEARNINGS

Who	Commitment / Action	Insights / Learning
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