

Quality Improvement

Selling Your Change

In his book; *To sell is Human; The Surprising Truth About Moving Others* by Dan Pink (2012) shows that selling is part of your life, no matter what you do. **The ability to move others consider your view, ideas or project is a key skill for working the NHS.**



Pitching isn't just about selling – at least not directly. Our daily conversations during work, and personal matters all involve communicating. We try to influence others with our opinions, sentiments, and preferences every day. This means that delivering a pitch involves getting your message across to your listeners. In his book, **Daniel Pink introduced the six successors to the elevator**

pitch: the one-word pitch, the question pitch, the rhyming pitch, the subject line pitch, the Twitter pitch, and the Pixar pitch.

The One-word Pitch

The idea of one-word pitch or “one-word equity” was conceptualized by Maurice and Charles Saatchi, founders of Saatchi & Saatchi, one of the world's top advertising agencies. By condensing your brand in one word, it can help your audience remember what you're planning to convey.

Nowadays, people have limited attention spans. Microsoft's study explains that the human attention span has declined from twelve seconds to eight in 2013. Given this limited timespan, presentations become more effective when they're shorter. This means **every presenter's message needs to be clear and more direct**, if only because clients will have an easier time remembering your main points.



Some large firms incorporate this to their slogans to promote a more comprehensive way of presenting their brands to customers. For example, the word “search” is often associated with Google.

The Question Pitch



When facts are clearly on your side, pitching with questions is more effective than pitching with a statement. **There's nothing more effective than questions that'll motivate audiences to take action.** Pink's research suggests certain questions become more persuasive when they possess a strong argument. For example, when Ronald Reagan was running for president in 1980, he chose to ask: “Are you better off now than you were four years ago?”, instead of mentioning America's then-current economic recession and proving his point with numbers.

Rhetorical questions like these are used to compel the audience to resolve the point being discussed, while letting them absorb the message you want to deliver. Probing questions are also effective when convincing your listeners to share their stories and experiences, while voicing their concerns. Asking “Does this product interest you?” is way too open-ended from “Will this product provide convenience and solution to your concern?” The latter emphasizes the benefit and convinces your prospect to consider the offer.

Rhyming Pitch

Pink states that “**pitches that rhyme increase processing fluency.**” This makes the message easier to digest and internalize. Making things memorable and more likely to stick. Healthcare professionals are continually bombarded with new initiatives, posters and emails. Rhyming pitches can be useful as part of a wider campaign. A group of Speech and Language Therapist were rolling out swallow assessment training and as part of the wider campaign used the line “**No Joke if you choke**” making the campaign memorable.



Subject Line



This pitch technique is based on Carnegie Mellon research into emails- what gets opens and what doesn't. The researchers found that utility and curiosity were equally potent. Pink adds a third, specificity. The **most effective subject lines are either a promise or a benefit to the person opening the email**, drive curiosity, or include ultra-specific information. One example of utility and specificity is: 3 simple but proven ways to get your e-mail opened.

The Pixar Pitch

This technique is a way to **organise your pitch in story form**. According to Emma Coats, a former artist at Pixar Animation Studios, every Pixar film has the same narrative DNA:

Once upon a time _____ . Every day _____ . One day _____ . Because of that, _____ . Because of that, _____ . Until finally _____ .

Once Upon A Time there was a widowed fish named Marlin who was extremely protective of his only son, Nemo. Every Day Marlin warned Nemo of the ocean's dangers and implored him not to swim far away. One Day in an act of defiance, Nemo ignores his father's warnings and swims into open water. Because Of That he is captured by a diver and ends up as a pet in the fish tank of a dentist. Because Of That Marlin sets off on a journey to recover Nemo. Until Finally Marlin and Nemo find each other, reunite, and learn that love depends on trust.

The Twitter Pitch

According to Pink, the Twitter pitch isn't a replacement for a presentation, but rather an invitation to engage, to take the conversation further. **Putting what the reader cares about first is a good approach** for twitter pitches. Can you cut your pitch down to 140 characters?

Before using any of the 6 pitches it's worth reflecting and asking yourself the following questions:

- What do I want them to know?
- What do I want them to feel?
- What do I want them to do?



Using one of these pitches doesn't guarantee that the listeners will instantly adopt your ideas on the spot. The pitch is an opportunity to engage, collaborate, and participate in the development of your idea. In an age when we are bombarded by emails, ideas and initiatives the six pitches might just help your communications stand out from the crowd.