

JUNE 2019
Storieroad | Prologue



MODULE 1:

THE FIRST STAGE

Dos and Don'ts
Pitch Tips for Catalyst Content Festival

Written by: Sandra Lehner & Rosemond Perdue

ONCE UPON A TIME IN HOLLYWOOD

Have you ever taken an Uber or Lyft in Los Angeles? If so, you'll know that most drivers are (aspiring) actors/writers/producers.

To not become a Hollywood cliché, but a successful content creator who pays his/her bills by creating, writing, and producing (acting is a bit different) your own shows, you need to be business savvy, too. No offence to any Uber/Lyft drivers by the way as the first step is definitely being at a place where the TV business takes place. But to take the next step you'll need some business skills.

Being creative isn't enough, you need to understand the content business. You need to become a business(wo)man. Or if you lack business skills (i.e. you are not good at selling), partner with someone who has this skillset. The TV business is a people's business and partnering with someone early on, will actually improve your show/pitch. No one is great at everything!

The fact that you're here and reading this, shows, though, that you are serious about taking the next step. So let's get started on helping you selling your show!



THE ART OF PITCHING

Pitching is a skill and an art!

You'll need some pitching experience to become really good at it. And developing any skill takes time. But we'll provide you here with the basics, so you'll feel confident to achieve success at Catalyst Content Festival in October.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DEFINITELY, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE, FOR SURE DO!

Top Ten Pitching Dos!

1. Fully develop your Show

Before you even consider pitching your show, fully develop it. You need to know everything there's to know about your characters and the story world you've put them in. Be prepared for any question, that TV execs could ask you. You'll need to have all the answers. Keep in mind, you don't have a second chance to make a first impression.

2. Create a Pitchdeck

We'll provide you with everything there's to know about pitchdecks in Module 2. But for now, you'll need to know the pitchdeck essentials are a logline, synopsis, setting/location, character descriptions, episode breakdown/act structure etc.



3. Do your Homework

Before you start contacting any networks, agents or other TV execs, do your homework. Who is looking for what? Who is producing what? Which network/streamer/brand would benefit from your show?

We'll provide you with an extensive list of research sources in a later module, for now just stay informed by reading the usual suspects (industry news such as the Hollywood Reporter, Deadline Hollywood, Variety etc).

When you know a network or agent is looking for a show like yours or you believe that your show would perfectly fit, then show them how your content fits the network.

Also, research the person you pitch to. Try to find something to bond with them.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DEFINITELY, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE, FOR SURE DO!

Top Ten Pitching Dos!

4. Rehearse your Pitch

Speaking of preparing, rehearse your pitch. First, pitch to your parents/friend/spouse, who doesn't work in the TV industry to see if they understand your show. Then pitch to some industry peeps to get professional feedback on your pitch. As mentioned above, also prepare for any questions. Think of it like a press conference. What could be the questions they'll ask you?

5. Package your Project

This is a difficult one when you're just starting out in the TV industry. But it's highly unlikely that a broadcaster or streamer will greenlight a project from a "newbie". If you can attach an experienced show runner/exec producer/director with a proven



track record or even a famous actor, the doors of commissioning will open for you more likely. You might not have these relationships yet though, so definitely use the festival to build relationships with other attendees (commissioners, agents, exec producers, other creators etc).

6. Build Relationships

We've said this before, the TV biz is a people's business. People work with people they like and trust. Start building relationships with people and keep notes. Many, many successful content creators can tell you which commissioner is vegan/married with kids/loves sailing/used to be a pilot. Listen to people and remember the details, so when you follow up, you can be personal.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DEFINITELY, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE, FOR SURE DO!

Top Ten Pitching Dos!

7. Be open to Changes

The commissioner might suggest some changes to your show, so it would fit their channel/network. Obviously stick to the essentials that make your show unique, but be open for changes and always remember the commissioner or whoever you're pitching to, has to pitch your show to someone, too. Even if it's the CEO or the Head of Production. It's not very likely that one person can say YES. And they'll know how to get a green light from their colleagues, so listen to what they suggest!

8. Keep it to the knitty-gritty

For them to pitch it up, they'll need to know the knitty-gritty (the elevator pitch), we'll get back to the elevator pitch in a later module, but it's basically your logline.



9. Be great to hang

The "hang-factor" is very important. To produce a TV show takes a lot of time. So, be a person, people like to hang out with. Connect with people and show them that you're not only another creative, but that you have the necessary business skills, and are a great person to hang.

10. Leave something behind

Leave a postcard or one-sheet or a business card behind, so they remember you after dozens of people pitched to them.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DEFINITELY, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE, FOR SURE DO!

More Pitching Dos!

Well, we did say top ten pitching tips, didn't we?

But because we want to give you as much helpful information as possible, we upgrade this to actually 13 Top Tips and let three former participants give their main pitching tips, too.

Jason Tobias from Los Angeles, USA:



"Know your content in-and-out. Because there are gonna be questions right then and there that you have to be able to fire right back, if they're asking anything about it."

Dr. Yvette Lu from Vancouver, Canada:



"My main pitching tip is to be prepared. It's really important to be prepared. You wanna know what you wanna talk about, what are the top three points that you wanna get across to them."

Patrick Sanderson from New Orleans, USA:



"Make sure your pitch is concise. Short, quick, to the point- to give them time to talk, so it's a dialogue and not just you talking the entire time."

NEVER EVER DO THESE TEN THINGS WHEN PITCHING!

There are also a lot of No-Gos when it comes to pitching. In no particular order, here are the mistakes that came to our minds. Avoid them at all cost!

We'll give you more info on these no-gos throughout the course:

- Don't pitch via E-Mail
- Don't read your pitch, perform!
- Don't overwhelm them with too many ideas
- Don't ask for a NDA
- Don't harass the executives
- Don't oversell the project
- Don't be late and do leave the room when you feel like you're done. Don't linger
- Don't expect to sell your show in the first meeting
- Don't forget to say thank you
- Don't give up!



FINAL NOTE FROM PHILIP GILPIN JR.

"Have your project fully completed, know what type of network you want it to end up on or platform you want it to end up on, and be ready to pitch your show when you get there, and be open to having the show redeveloped."