

Pitching the Perfect Project Description

Turning a complex idea into a simple concept is the goal of an elevator pitch. With thoughtful preparation and practice, you will learn to be selective and to condense your project proposal into a few key, and easily digestible points.

Use everyday language, tailored to your audience. Funders often say they get lost when reading proposals. Be clear and concise: tell the reader who you are, what your idea is, why it's important, whom it will benefit, and why they should care.

I. Why You? Introduce Yourself.

- Explain what you do and why you love it.
- Share how your organization is unique.
- Give a short, striking example of your value.

II. Grab Their Attention! State Your Idea.

- Imagine the funder is sitting in front of you. Start the conversation.
- Lead with a "hooking" statement, make them care about your idea from the start.

III. Establish a Compelling and Urgent Need.

- Tell how the project addresses an important problem or a critical barrier.
- Tell the story. Share the real-life stories, struggles of the people behind the project.

IV. How Will You Satisfy This Need?

- Present a logical solution to the problem. Continue the story of what will be better.
- Help the funder visualize the real-life consequences; make them see and feel it.
- Again, talk about the people who will benefit from the program.

V. Why People Should Trust You.

- Say who will be in charge of the project.
- Show that you know what you're doing!
- Describe the contributions you've made, and problems you've solved.
- List the ways people benefit from working with you.
- Will you be partnering or collaborating with others?

VI. How Innovative is Your Idea? Or Not.

- Do your homework as to which type of project the funder gravitates to.
- If your project is innovative, point to a model that may have worked in another field.
- If your project is building on an existing effort, explain how will it be enhanced.

VII. Close Your Pitch. What Will Success Look Like?

- Describe the overall impact your project will have. How will it look and feel?
- Are there ways to measure results?
- Tell a real-life story about someone who will benefit from this project.
- Let the funder know the difference their funding will make in the lives of people.

Remember that behind every funder and foundation are real people who will be reading your proposal. Many are receptive to helping applicants submit stronger proposals, so reach out to them for help. Best of luck!