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THE DIDACTIC MINE ^{OF} YOUTH WORK

For age 12-17

Pitching your business idea!

e-BOOK



Pitching your business idea!



Overview

The activity will bring participants to explore how to develop persuasive speeches that spark interest in what an organization/business does. It is an interactive and engaging activity through which they will learn how to craft an effective pitch that sails their business idea.



Learning objectives

- To be able to explain an idea creatively and concisely.
- To understand how to explain the start-up idea and leave the investor curious for more.
- How to better understand our audience and how to focus on mutual benefits to participants and their audience.
- To develop teamwork.
- To address communication skills and their importance in the different life spheres.
- To explore the meaning of enterprise – it is not only business.





Age

12-17 years old.



Time

60 minutes.

Group Size

10-20 participants.



Materials

- Spare paper.
- Pens, markers, crayons.
- Access to an elevator (if possible).
- 1 block of flipchart and a flipchart board. Video projector.
- Laptop.



Preparation

The pitching activity will need a bit of theatrical preparation in order to be funnier and more engaging, so think in advance how to present the investor(s). It can be someone aside from the group or it can be even one of the participants, who is assigned the role – this depends also on how many participants you have. To add a bit more theatrical aspect, you can use some additional elements - hat, beard, lots of fake money - to make the person more “investor looking”.



Description

1. Present the activity:

- They will have to reflect on a business idea and to create a short presentation (“pitch”) that will be catchy enough to convince the investors to put money on their idea.
- Explain that usually entrepreneurs need to explain their business idea to potential funders or customers to persuade them of the value of their idea.
- This activity will help them to be concise in presenting the main points of their idea.

2. Ask participants to close their eyes. Ask them to imagine the following:

- You are waiting for the elevator in a big building. Suddenly you see a person who represents a funding institution that often supports young entrepreneurs. When the elevator comes, the person goes in together with you. Both of you are going to the top floor of the building. This leaves you two minutes to explain your business idea and evoke their interest... What will you say?

3. Wait one minute and then ask participants to open their eyes again.

4. Explain that what they have just done in their mind is called an ‘elevator pitch’: a speech not longer than two minutes that only includes: about 150-225 words, lots of passion and a hook that catches your audience’s attention.

5. Ask the participants to form pairs or groups of three and prepare such an elevator pitch.



6. To facilitate the process, give the participants the handouts with additional information that will help them during the preparation of the pitch.

7. Tell them that the pitch should include information on:

- Who are you/ your venture?
- What is your product or service?
- Why should people buy this from you?
- What makes it special?
- To whom are you selling it?
- How do you expect to make money?
- They will have to measure the time when practicing. They will not be allowed to talk for more than 1 minute!

8. Give them 20 minutes to prepare the pitch.

9. Agree on an order by which the pitches will be presented.

10. The rest of the audience will have to be quite when the pitches will be presented.

11. After the designated time has passed, let the actual investor arrive.

12. Let the show start! Remember to keep timing and close the pitch exactly after 1 minute.

13. Ask the audience to take notes on each pitch. They will have to give their feedback at the end.

14. After all pitches are presented, make a short activity to help the presenters to go out of their role – it could be a simple breathing exercise that you play all together.



15. Start getting feedback from the audience, for each pitch ask:

- What did they learn about the idea?
- Was it good or there would be something they would change?
- Would they be interested in buying the product? Why (not)?
- Was there any missing information?



Tips for facilitators

- If you think that the group needs some encouragement in thinking about a business idea you can distribute the handout “existing problems in society” to participants, so they can use them or get inspired. It doesn’t matter if they choose the same topic, their pitch will differ anyway.
- If you opt for this option, remember to explain that the business ideas can be linked with one of the topics provided or it can be linked with some other problems that participants can imagine.
- If your group is advanced (age 16-17 for example) you can provide them with the handout “Additional tips for a good pitch” as a supplementary help for improving their future pitches.



Debriefing and Reflection

The debriefing has already started with the closing of the activity, so we recommend not to make it too long.

- How did it feel to do the pitch? Difficulties?
- Can they imagine doing this in real life?
- What do they feel they need to improve?



- Close the debriefing by underlying that presenting information shortly and appealingly is a very useful skill not only when it comes to a business idea, but also in personal life, when presenting yourself at a job interview, when presenting a proposal for any kind of action you want to propose even a trip to friends, or when you want to present multiple possibilities to choose from, when you want to present a concept in a way that is not misleading, even when you have to talk to a doctor to explain your health condition... In this way, they will have a deeper understanding of the importance of communication and will be stimulated to develop/improve this competence.

Variations

- The business idea can be developed in more specific areas of social business, like – tourism, green energy, sustainability.

References

- The activity is based on the well-known “Elevator Pitch” activity widely used in entrepreneurial education. This version is a remake inspired by several existing exercises encompassed in Erasmus Plus projects and in other educational activities that can be found on the web.

