

# Presenting Your Venture

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January 2024  
Nuts and Bolts  
of New Ventures

**Fundamentals of effective  
presentations**

# Agenda

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- Why I think you want this
- How you can do it well
- Your turn – volunteers to present to us

# Why are we talking about this?

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When is it important?  
If you get better at it, so what?  
Your thoughts?

# Where you will want this

- 1** Acquiring customers  
Acquiring partners
- 2** Hiring the best staff when they often have other offers
- 3** Keeping your staff motivated and focused, even during tough times
- 4** Raising capital  
Eventually: Selling your company

# What do people invest in?

*This includes customers, employees, & investors*

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A good idea isn't the same as a good product

A good product isn't the same as a good business

People want to work with promising businesses

- Great team
- Skilled at execution
- Understand their business

Can you describe it clearly and persuasively?

# My background

Founder & CEO – four healthcare startups – Harvard Med School faculty & staff

Mentor: Venture Mentoring Service, Pipeline

Author: The Start Up Starter Kit (Amazon)

CEO of Vitasoy USA (publicly traded, Hong Kong exchange – turnaround)

Executive positions at Baxter, Abbott, other companies

Princeton, MIT Sloan (MSM)

Performing musician

Volunteer – homeless shelters



The Blues Dogs



# So how do you do it?

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A crash course in the basics...

# What we're about to cover



- A few sales fundamentals; qualifying, WIIFM, benefits vs. RTB, and more
- Presentation fundamentals: understanding your audience, engaging them, and more
- Using a microphone properly
- Raising capital – some typical questions
- A template you might use



# Selling

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This might be a new concept  
for the technical founder

# I have to do “Sales?” (Eeek...)

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When you think, “Sales person,” do you think of this?



My view:

That's not quite accurate...

“Selling” is an essential skill

# My views: learning to sell

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**“Learning to sell” is like “learning to swim”**

It’s not natural or innate

It’s terrifying

It’s learnable: it just takes techniques and practice



## **Balancing act:**

Analyzing “where to sell” [e.g., Facebook ads] vs.

“learning how to sell” [when you’re face-to-face]

That can be like “analyzing where to swim” vs.

“learning how to swim”

Both are necessary, but they’re not the same

# Fundamentals you must know

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- Are you talking to the right person?
- What does that other person care about?
- “Benefits” first, then “reason to believe”
- The role of “trust”
- Ask for the order
- The role of “follow up”

# Qualifying and WIIFM

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- **Qualifying:**

- More people can say, “No” than “Yes”
- Which one should be your priority?
- Ask “Who will own this decision?”

- **What’s In It For Me?**

- People put this first, even if they don’t say it
- Addressing this may require some finesse
- You will soon give us relevant examples...

# Sell benefits, build trust

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## Benefits, followed by Reason To Believe

If they don't want the benefits, stop right there

Examples?

Why are people suspicious of overly technical explanations? Especially from MIT grads?

## Trust

More is required for more important decisions

What builds trust and credibility?

Doing what you say you'll do goes a long way

# Ask for the order; follow up

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- People rarely volunteer → you'd better ask
- Classic sequence:
  - How do you feel about this? (probe for objections)
  - That makes sense (I hear you). If we addressed those concerns, how would you feel? (trial close)
  - Address their concerns, then ask for the order (“I did what you asked me to do...”) When can we start?
- Follow up: probably 80% of selling
  - Builds your credibility, shows your interest
  - Keeps you “top of mind” with them

# Presentin g

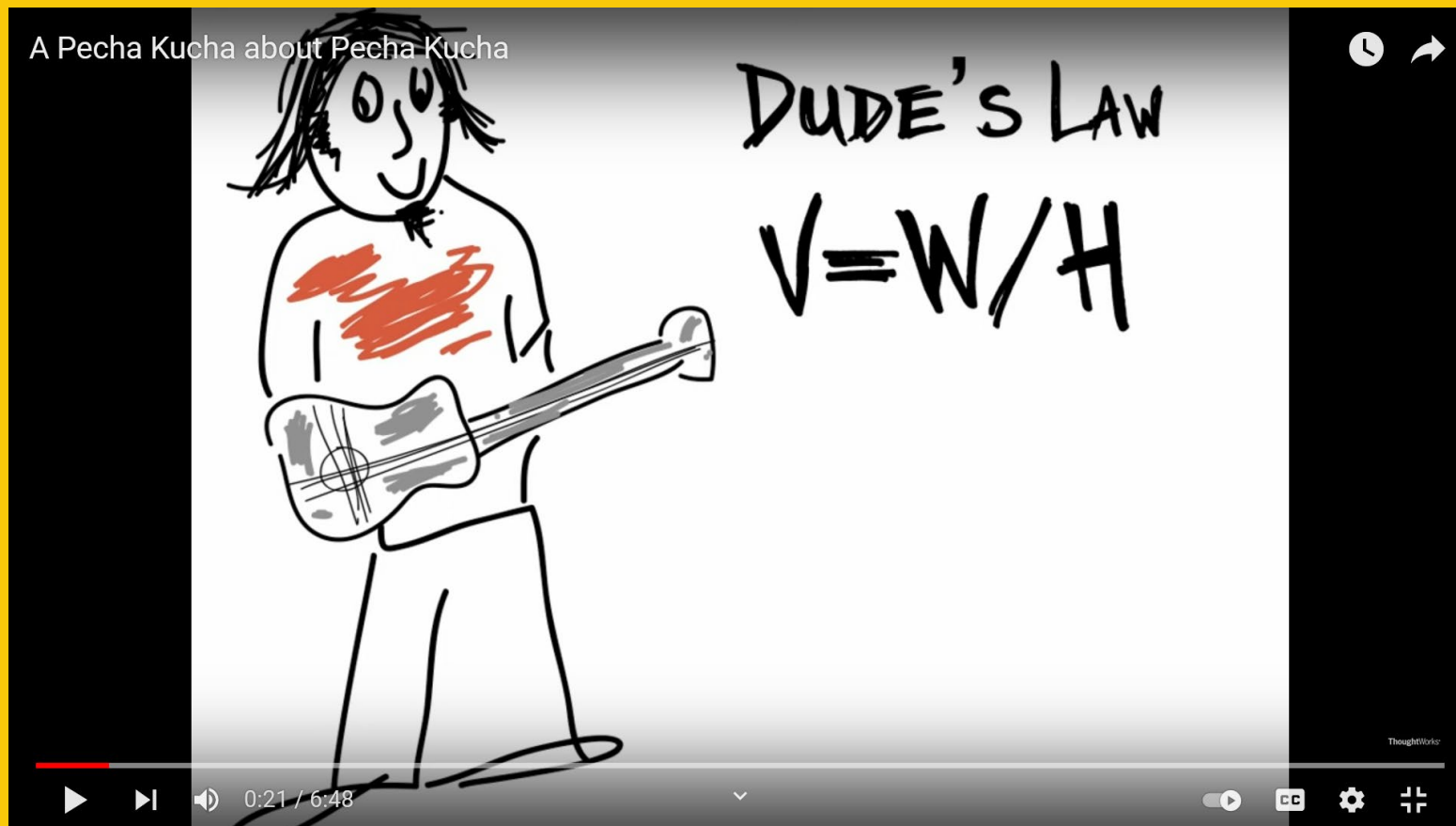
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A few basics that can  
make a big difference



# Watch this 6:48 video

From "A PechaKucha about PechaKucha"



# Two requirements for a successful presentation

## The idea is appealing to the audience

Examples: good fit

Examples: square peg, round hole

## They believe you

“Your description is true”

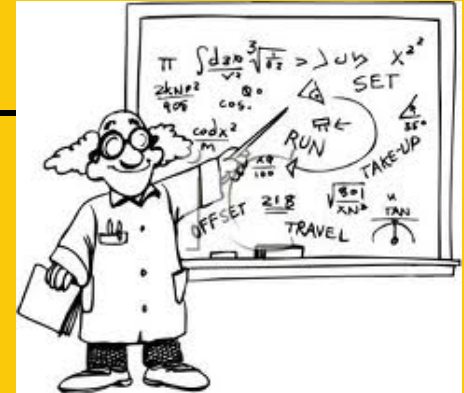
“You can do what you say you can do”



# Understanding your audience

*This takes thought and research*

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- Which do they care more about?
  - You?
  - Themselves?
- Should your goal be to persuade them that:
  - You're really smart?
  - Your technology is really awesome?
  - Your vision is really compelling?
- Answer: Maybe, but only if it is a Reason to Believe
- **Benefits first, then Reason to Believe**
- Remember: their 1<sup>st</sup> priority is:  
“How will this help me?”

# A few guidelines

## *Presenting to your audience*

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- Invest the time to understand what they want: research, ask, listen carefully
- I know it's corny, but it helps if you actually care about their needs
- A sequence that is often effective is:
  - Introduction
  - Ask them what they're looking for in a (job, service...), or confirm that you know what they're looking for [Nordstrom]
  - Tell them why this will be great for them: **BENEFITS**
  - Support: Reasons To Believe
  - Ask for feedback. "How do you feel about this?"



# A few more guidelines: *Presenting to an audience*

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## What helps you be believable?

Conviction/enthusiasm/passion  
(but not lunacy)

Supporting evidence

Brevity

- Be clear
- Be brief
- Stop talking



# How much information is right?

## *Should you tell them everything?*

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- What do you want them to remember?
  - Turn your computer off
  - Ask yourself what you want them to say when they describe your pitch to someone else
- Three points is all that most people retain
  - Probably the three that have the most relevance to them personally
  - Be ruthless in your editing...

# What's required to get this right?

## *Customer intimacy, tight prose*

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- Understanding what's broke that you fix
  - What's the unmet need?
  - What are the consequences?
  - For whom? Who's too small? Who's too big?
  - Why will they think your solution is better?
- Good structure and ruthless editing
  - Organize it tightly
  - Excluding some prospects makes it better



# A few words about style

Slow down:

Speak more slowly than usual; enunciate clearly. This gives your audience time to process your golden words.

Don't think fast talking overcomes bad editing

Deploy "Passion" wisely

Tell a story! Avoid a "fact dump!"



# Using a microphone

## *An often-overlooked detail*

- Some mics are “omnidirectional.” They amplify sounds from all sides.
- The mics you’ll use are usually unidirectional. They amplify what you point at them and ignore background sounds
- Therefore: speak down the barrel of the mic, not over the top, and within 2-4 inches of the microphone
- Speak more slowly than usual; enunciate clearly. Give your audience time to process your words of wisdom.



# The 8-letter word everyone hates

## • PRACTICE

- Sometimes you have to work very hard to make it look easy
- You're retraining yourself: these are new habits
- Give your talk to an empty room
  - Use a timer
  - For the brave: record it (Oh God...)
- See the first bullet on this page...

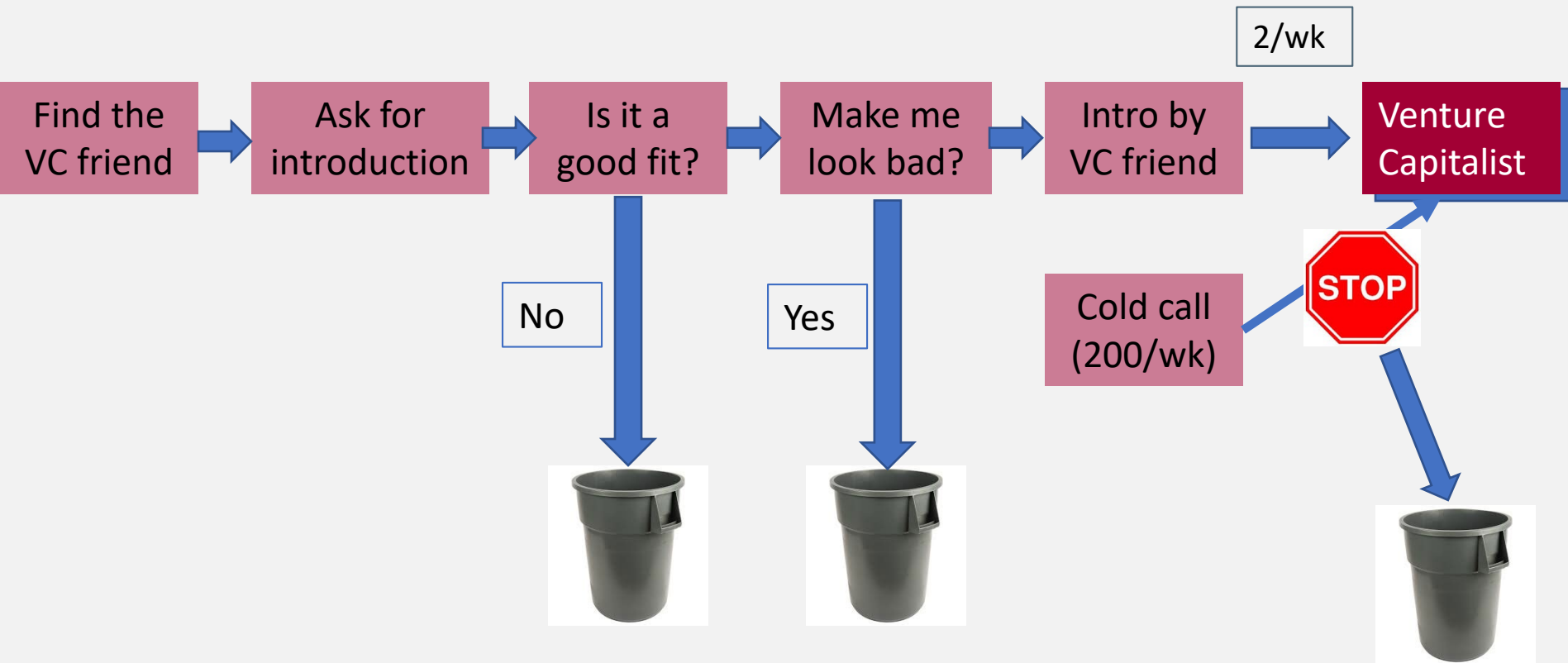


# Raising venture capital

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Just a few words:  
Not for the faint of heart...  
Be careful what you ask for...  
Abandon hope, all ye who enter...

# Getting to see a venture capitalist



# What do investors care about?

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- Your technology?
- Your academic credentials?
- Getting back more than they invested?
  - What's the unmet need? Who has it?
  - Why will they think your solution is better?
  - Why this? Why now? Why this team?
  - What could go wrong?

# Preparing for an investor pitch

## *Some of the questions they'll have*

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- What kind of capital are you looking for?
- How much?
- How far will that take you?
- How long before you've built a good business?
- How will our firm make money from our investment in your business? [WIIFM?]





# A few words about pitch decks



- 1** Many entrepreneurs overload their decks: too long, too technical, too much jargon
- 2** The best decks describe the problem and the opportunity in the first slide or two
- 3** Focus: the unmet need/how meeting it  
Show proof or support for their value
- 4** <https://piktochart.com/blog/startup-pitch-decks-what-you-can-learn/>

# A template you might use

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- Anecdote: a problem, its consequence
- We've identified customers like her who will happily pay to solve this problem
- They think our solution is better...
- Stage of the business: we have a prototype, or we have early revenue or...
- We're raising capital to [purpose, timeline]
- Your questions?



A dimly lit office scene with a person sitting at a desk, focused on their laptop. The person is wearing a light-colored long-sleeved shirt and has their hand to their head. The office has several computer monitors on desks in the background, and the overall atmosphere is quiet and professional.

# Your turn

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A star is born...

# Your turn: sample pitches

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Volunteers, please: three-minute presentation; our feedback

Audience: your responsibilities:  
Listen carefully  
Critique respectfully  
Apply to your own situation

# Summary

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- Great presentations take planning and practice
  - Who is your audience? Their greatest fears & interests?
  - If they do what you're asking, why will THEY be better off?
  - Remember: they're thinking "WIIFM?"
- Know the three things you want them to remember when you finish your presentation
- Build your presentation with that focus
- PRACTICE!
- Good luck

THANK YOU

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# Assess your audience

## Look the part

Hadzima. Joe Hadzima...

