

Tips: How to Make a Pitch

Know Your Audience

Do some research on the individuals you want to approach. Learn everything you can about their backgrounds, affiliations, and interests. If possible, learn about their styles. For example, will you be dealing with a direct, bottom-line type or someone who values getting to know you (and vice-versa) before talking business? Use your own resources to do this research.

Know What You Want to Ask For

Think about what you are looking for from this person. Someone who will be a full, engaged participant on your team? Someone you would like to have as a speaker at events or press conferences? Have a second, third and fourth participation option prepared if the person is not interested.

Think About the Connection Between Your Interests and Their Interests

When you prepare your talking points, think about how you can connect with this person. *“I noticed in your last newsletter... that’s an important issue to me too... here’s why...”* Try to get them to realize they have a connection to your issue.

When You Meet With Them, Follow These Steps:

1. Start by **TALKING** — but not too long! Just enough to introduce yourself and why you came. Ask open-ended questions to gauge their level of interest and energy. *“As you know, I am an active supporter of local programs that encourage kids not to smoke. How do you feel about youth smoking?”*
2. Then **LISTEN** to what the person has to say. This is your chance to get some important information about what interests them, what they may be willing to do to support your cause. *“Youth smoking worries me a lot. I have a son who just started middle school. But I’m so busy these days, I can’t come to a bunch of meetings.”*
3. Based on what they say, you may have to **ADJUST** your original request.
4. Then **TALK** some more ... *“I see you’re really busy. Would you be able to write one letter to the editor in support of a law to strengthen tobacco retailer-licensing requirements?”*
5. And **LISTEN** some more.
6. Repeat steps 3, 4 and 5.

Give Them Room to Say No

Don’t try to force someone to get involved — they won’t follow through. Remember, circumstances in that person’s life may change. You might be able to recruit them a year from now. If they say no, ask for suggestions of other people to talk with.

In Closing

Ask for advice and ask for suggestions of other people to talk with.