

# The Art of the (Investor) Pitch



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# Objectives for Today



- Provide a framework for effective pitching
  - Put the Investor Pitch in context
  - Walk through a proposed structure for the pitch
  - Provide some tips for effective pitching

- When I say Investor – who do I mean?
  - VC
  - Institutional investor
  - Angel Group
  - Angels

# Introduction



- **Des O'Connor**
  - Executive in Residence
  - CMU GSIA 1995
- **Innovation Works - Seed stage investor**
  - 8<sup>th</sup> most active in the US
  - 200+ active portfolio companies
  - \$54M invested
  - \$1.7 Billion in follow on funding
  - 30+ exits since 2008
  - \$100k - \$200k typically
  - Riverfront Ventures
  - Nationally ranked accelerators

# What is your objective with your pitch?

You walk up to the door of the fancy VC office with laptop in hand and freshly updated pitch loaded and ready to go.

**What are you hoping to accomplish?**

# Primary Objective: Get to the next Meeting



## Also:

- Provide enough information to get them interested
- Don't try to educate them
- Tell your story
- Leave them wanting more

# Furthermore....



- **Establish your credibility and competence**
- **Create the basis for a relationship**
- **Demonstrate coachability**

# Is the Investor Pitch a sales pitch?



- **Yes!**
  - but not a product sales pitch.....
- **Investors are interested in a return, a large return**
  - Product success is important, but the overall enterprise and its future success is what you are selling

# The Investor Pitch is not the only tool in your bag



- **Elevator Pitch**
  - 30 – 90 second verbal communication
- **1-2 Pager**
  - Brief overview that can be mailed / emailed
- **6 Page Executive Summary**
  - We have a plan – It's not all big ideas and hyperbole
- **The Business Plan**
  - Questionable whether you need it, but you definitely need to have done the thinking



# Communication Philosophies



- The slides support the narrative, not the other way round
  - Don't read it - Tell your story
- Don't try to educate – be the expert in the room
- Heavy text / Light text
  - The Pitch does not need to be a stand alone document ....
- Many different pitching scenarios
  - Large room / small room
  - 8 min.s – 60 min.s
  - Etc.

# Tactical Considerations



- Have a standard pitch – lots of variations
  - 25 Minutes talk time
  - 14 to 20 slides
- Not full sentences
- Use graphics / illustrations
- Use the slide real estate intelligently
  - Headers
  - Bullets <7

# The Pitch



# Suggested Structure - Generic



- Overview
- Problem
- Solution
- Technology / IP
- Market Size
- Commercial Traction
- Competition
- Business Model / Pricing
- Go to Market Strategy & Plan
- Operating Plan
- Raise & Uses
- Exit Strategy
- Financial Projections
- Team
- Wrap Up

# Company Name



**PRESENTER(S)**

**TITLE**

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

# Company Overview



- What business are you in
- What is the unique value proposition?
- What are the target markets?
- What have you accomplished thus far?
- What do you want to accomplish next?
- How much is your raise?

- Does not have to be a slide – probably better that it not be
- Tell them what you will tell them, tell them, tell them what you told them
- Hit the highlights / manage the story

# Make the problem real



- What commercial situation (“pain”) will you solve/exploit?
- If it’s not a problem specifically, then what’s the opportunity?
- Why does the situation exist?
- Demonstrate you know customer’s market.

- Your opportunity to set the stage
- Tee up the problem that you can address
- ID some specific problem areas that you will address

**Get Heads Nodding**

# Amazingly your Solution directly addresses the problem



- What are you specifically offering? To whom?
- What do you have/do that solves problem(s)?

- Describe the solution
- Make sure that all the problem areas identified on the previous page are addressed

**Get Heads Nodding**



# Technology / IP



- Describe the technology in your offering
- Describe any protections you have in place or anticipate having

- For a technical offering this is a huge differentiator
- Avoid acronyms
- Describe the technology in a way that makes sense to your audience
  - Business differentiators and benefits
- This is one slide for a reason – don't deep dive at this stage

# How big is the Market?



- How large is market and how fast is it growing?
- Size of your company's opportunity?
- Are there unique market dynamics/trends?

- Standard investment requirement (VC considerations)
- Market Dynamics / structure are particularly important
  - Can you legitimately contend that you could be a top three
- Different definitions that are relevant
  - Market size
  - Total addressable market

# Commercial Traction



- What progress has been made with entities (customers) who pay good money for the product or service

- Interested parties, Beta Testers, Co-developers, first customers etc.
- Key determinant of commercial success
- Independent verification of the value of your offering
- Might be the most important slide in the deck – doesn't need to be a slide.

# Competition



- Who are they?
- How are you better?
- Why will you win?

- **THERE ARE ALWAYS COMPETITORS!**
  - Even if the alternative is 'do nothing'
- Need to demonstrate a clear advantage (50%) that will allow you to differentiate from the established players.
- Can you be a leader (#1 or 2) in the market space

# Go to Market Strategy & Plan



- What is your strategy for customer acquisition?
- What is the plan to accomplish that strategy?
  - Approach
  - Timeline
  - Hires
  - Partners
  - Targets

- Short term more important than long term
- Where the rubber meets the road

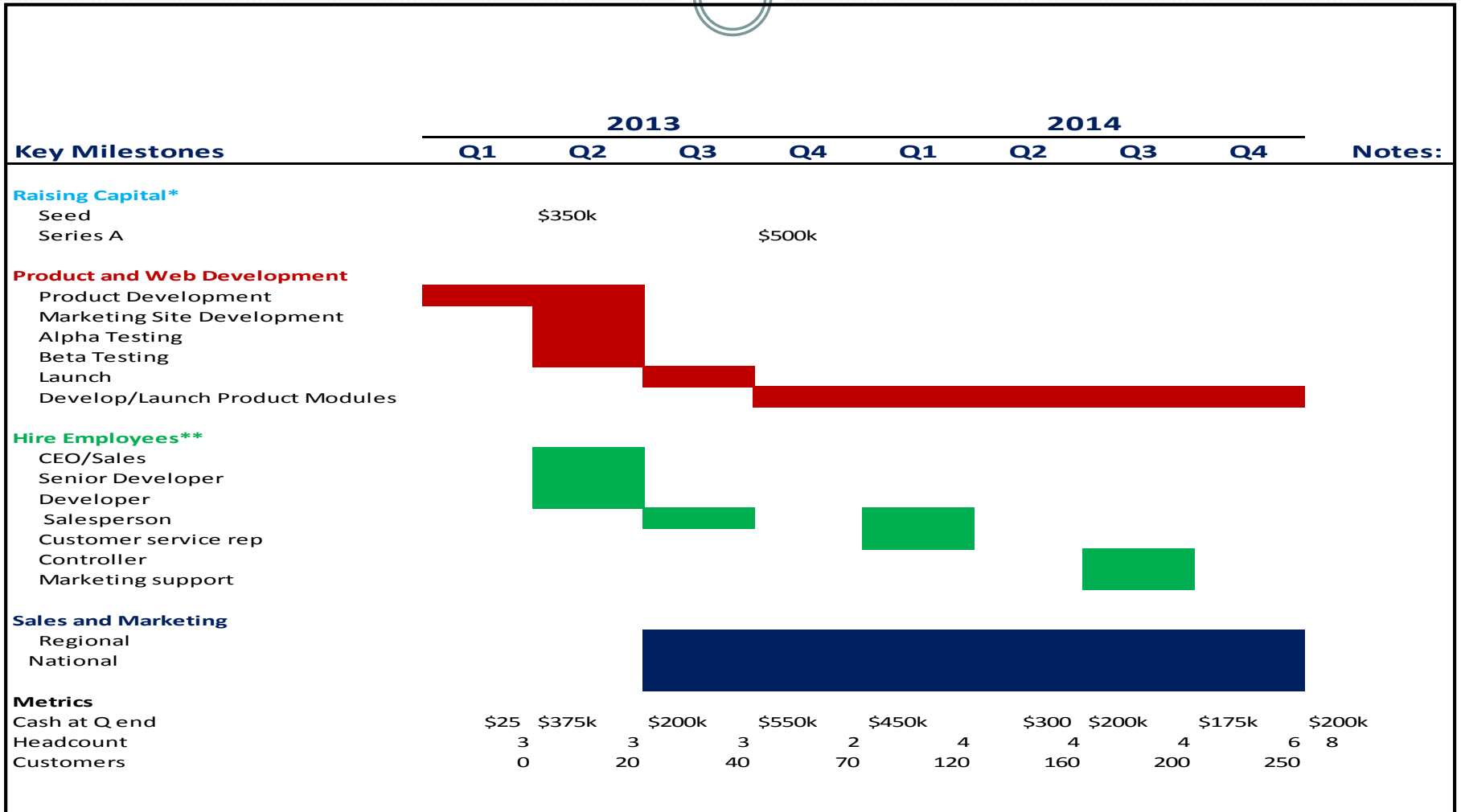
# Operating Plan



- Preferably a Gantt Chart with a short to mid term focus showing how all the relevant activities hang together

• Most early stage investments are made based on a credible plan – need to make sure that this works

# Operating Plan - sample



# Business Model & Pricing



- How do/will you make money?
- Why will you be profitable?
- What is sales cycle?
- Pricing
- Keep it simple. Examples?

- How is it all going to work
- Be Specific
- Revenue Recognition



# Raise & Uses of Funds



- How much and for how long?
- Preferred Investment vehicle
- What will you accomplish with that money?
- What will you look like? Will that picture make the next raise a slam dunk?
- Future raises?
- **JOBS Act!!!!**

- Key point – what will you look like at the end of the period that enables accomplishment of the next objective?
- Don't dictate the terms – rarely works, and sends the wrong message – Golden Rule

# Exit Scenarios



- Almost invariably acquisition
- Who's buying?
- Examples of recent acquisitions in the space with multiples

- No mathematical scenarios – not credible
- Give the investor confidence that there is an acquisition market, and therefore a pathway to a return for them.

# Financial Projections



- Provide projections for next 4 to 5 years
  - Annual Revenue, Expense, Profit / Earnings
  - Cash balance
  - # of customers and employees

- Yes, It's probably wrong and yes, nobody can foresee the future
- Keep it credible
- You need to look attractive as an investment but not to the point of being ridiculous
- VC Considerations
- Cash is King

# Projections - Simple



<b>000s</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>
<b>Revenue</b>	\$ 200	\$ 750	\$ 1,800	\$ 5,800	\$ 10,500
<b>Expenses</b>	\$ 450	\$ 800	\$ 1,350	\$ 2,500	\$ 5,500
<b>Earnings</b>	\$ (250)	\$ (50)	\$ 450	\$ 3,300	\$ 5,000
<b>Customers</b>	10	20	50	150	250
<b>Headcount</b>	6	10	20	40	50

# Team



- Who are the 3 or 4 key players in Company?
- Focus on significant, relevant accomplishments

- Why is this the team that is going to deliver and in which I should invest?
- 40 to 60% of the investment decision is based on the team – not a throw away slide
- Put the team here unless.....

# Summary Slide



- Reinforce your company's mantra.
- Solidify core value proposition and technology.
- What have been your key achievements?
- What does road ahead look like?
- Where does funding get you?
- Do not deviate from the story you just told.
- **MAKE THE ASK \***

- Tell them what you just told them
- Create the synopsis / assessment that you want them to leave with
- This is not a throw away slide!

# Other Considerations



# How to handle a Demo



- Best to not go live
- Live Demos can be risky
  - Confirm and test all the variables – internet, code availability, database availability etc.
  - Have a canned backup
  - Have a script and stick to it - get in, get out, move on.
    - Deviating will kill your time
    - You increase the risk of a failure / mis-step
- When do I do it? - Slot it in after you describe your solution



# How to handle Q and A



- Listen to the full question and make sure you answer the question asked
  - Then finish and move on
  - You can restate the question to suit your purposes
  - If the answer is not positive, lead with the bad news and then articulate the positive outcomes and next steps

# How to handle Interruptions



- If the answer is later in the presentation, then defer the question politely
- If the questioner is persistent, take the time and answer the question
  - But get back on track as soon as is polite

# JOBS Act Implications



- **Jumpstart Our Business StartUps (JOBS) 2012**
  - **General Solicitation**
    - ✦ Private vs Public / General
    - ✦ Once in the Gen Solicitation category you can't go back
  - **Accredited Investors**
    - ✦ You are responsible for confirming the status of everyone you present to
  - **In a general presentation do not reference raise, or financials etc.**
- **Disclaimers**
  - I am not an attorney. Check with your attorney!
  - This is actively and constantly evolving
  - Be afraid, be very afraid

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\* Drop or modify if in a setting that might get you in the General Solicitation category

# Investor Pitch FAQ



- **Should I provide additional information?**

*Absolutely.*

- **Do I have to use powerpoint?**

*No and yes. **No**, you may use other software products, but **yes**, you will eventually need to express your ideas in an electronic format (ppt, pdf, etc.) might as well start now*

- **Can my presentation have animation?**

*Yes, but it is not required. Investors want to know about you and your company – not whether you know how to make images shoot across the screen. If you choose to use animation or other media...make sure it will work. If there is any doubt, leave it out, and don't let it be a distraction.*

- **Should I provide hardcopies of my presentation?**

*Not necessary and definitely not before the presentation.*

- **Should I require NDA?**

*No – not going to happen. Too many presentations, too much exposure for an investor to ever keep it all straight. Anyway, would you want to present to a group you weren't sure you could trust. Better to not present if that's the case. Investors depend on their integrity. If there was an issue they would never see the good opportunities*

# Additional Advice



- **Rehearse, a lot.**
  - Get very comfortable with the material and the flow
  - Don't get jaded
- **Check the Room**
  - Make sure everything works
  - Confirm the internet connection, speaker volume etc. – do not leave anything to chance
  - Have a back up
    - Thumb drive
    - Canned demo etc.

# Good Luck!!



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