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Pitching your project is the essential step to get investors, angels, partners or clients interested in your brilliant idea. No doubt that you are already masters at this, but it's always useful to have more insight from people who are used to listening at this as their jobs. Here are a few tips and tricks we gathered from top investors at the SME Instrument Innovators Summit to make your pitch worth the elevator ride.

1. What are investors really looking for?

Here's a list of must-haves to get investors' confidence:

- Ability to recruit

This means that you're managing your money well and that growth isn't just a wish but an actionable goal

- A skilled team

Possible investors will be asking you: "Are they good enough to become market leaders? Will this team's soft and hard skills be enough to take this startup to another level?" It's crucial to highlight your team's strengths as early and as well as possible.

- Underlying market growth

Is this SME a game changer? Is it going to enhance its market? If you answer "Yes" to both questions, make sure investors know that!

- A scalable business model

If your business has the potential to multiply revenue, expand to different markets or even travel to new locations, mention it and explain how!

- A solid financial plan

You might have a great idea, but that 's not enough. You need a plan that includes fixed and variable costs, projection of profitability, key resources, and all other financial details that are important for potential investors. A financial plan will help you describe concretely how you will implement your vision and goals.

- Long term value

Will the company's health and well-being last in time? Don't skip this step when talking to an investor and your company might just be the one they invest in

2. Prepare your pitch? Answer these 3 questions

The magic recipe to deliver a good pitch is to keep three questions in mind. Keep your answers short and simple so that the messages are clear to your audience.

1. What are you selling?

Whoever is listening to you needs to understand, in a few seconds, what is your business and what you are selling? Be straight forward and brief.

1. What are your customers?

Show that you have done proper research on your market. Who are you selling your product to? Why do they need this?

1. Why should they pay for it?

What need or problem are you solving by bringing your project on the market? If by now your audience is convinced...this will be the validation that your project is amazing. Again: keep it short and simple.

3. How to take your pitch from good to amazing

- If you're making money, you should mention it!

If you have investors among your audience, this is even more crucial! They need an answer to this question: is this worth investing in? Let the numbers speak by themselves. Use figures!

- Accept that scripting the presentation doesn't work for everyone.

Sometimes you should go with the flow and be genuine. Prepare yourself beforehand nevertheless (you can try practicing in front of other people before) and make sure you stick to your timeframe.

- Engage with the audience

You want your audience to give you all the attention. Look at them. Ask questions, note who is resisting and look for nods when presenting an idea.

- Use storytelling

If your product is too technical and there's a high probability of being completely unknown to 99% of your audience, just tell a story. Putting products in real life situations helps to keep the audience engaged.

- Prepare as much as you can for Q&A.

Prepare for trick questions and enquiries for more information. If you don't know the answer - don't give a blurry response. Just let the audience know that you haven't approached your work from that perspective.

- Be clear, positive and credible.

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