



PITCHING

You will have to pitch your project every time you want someone to get involved, whether they're a potential backer or a potential actor. Before you start to talk to investors, actors or key crewmembers, you should perfect your pitch so as to present your project in the best possible light. You may have to alter the pitch for different audiences, just as you might tailor a resumé for a specific job.

SHORT ATTENTION SPAN THEATRE

Most people you will pitch your project to won't have time to read the whole script, even if it's not feature length. Therefore, your pitch should be a short and engaging written or verbal presentation that conveys both a sense of the story and the visual elements you will use to tell the story.

- **Verbal pitch:** Your energy and enthusiasm for the project are the keys to a successful verbal pitch. Practice on friends if you're feeling timid or insecure. Remember that you are not only trying to convey what a great project you're producing, you're also trying to convey your own dedication to the project.
- **One-liner:** You should have a catchy one-line description of your story for both verbal and written presentations. The short answer to the question "What's it about?" If your prospect seems interested, you can launch into your longer description. This is similar to a "grabber," the line used in publicity and advertising materials. See chapter 2 for more on grabbers and one-liners.
- **Written synopsis or treatment:** A synopsis should be one or two pages, a treatment 20-30 pages, depending, of course, on the length of your project. Both should cover the entire story and convey the mood or tone of the project.
- **Coverage:** Try to get your script covered by a professional reader. Hopefully the coverage will be positive and you can include it as part of your pitch. The more prestigious the letterhead on the coverage (i.e. a major studio), the better. This will show that even though your script isn't suited to be a major studio project, it's a good script.
- **Audio/Visual materials:** Some people go as far as shooting a trailer for their film before they actually shoot the movie, others create fake movie posters or newspaper ads for the project. There are a lot of options here and much will depend on the sort of project you are trying to finance .
- **Market research:** Any facts and figures on similar projects will be of interest to investors. For example, it's said that at present a gay-themed



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film can't earn more than \$3 million. However, if your budget is only \$300,000, making \$3 million is not such a bad thing. Also, having a "niche" market appeal, like in the case of a gay-themed movie, almost guarantees an audience, however limited.

- **A budget summary:** You can learn more about budget summaries here.
- **Resumés of key participants in the project.** These people combined with your script constitute your "package." Click here for more on packaging.

The Short Form

After finishing a screenplay for his big-budget, special effects-heavy feature "Starship Troopers" director Paul Verhoeven was having trouble convincing the studio that it was possible to create realistic giant bugs. To ease their minds, Verhoeven and effects supervisor Phil Tippett spent six months producing a 2-minute "bug test." The short, a simple scene of a futuristic soldier being chased and killed by two giant bugs, convinced the studio to green-light the picture.

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