



More from GrowCo.: How to Pitch Your Business to Investors

By Janine Popick | Mar 22, 2010

I was sitting in the "How to Finance Anything" session last week at GrowCo listening to Andy Craig, author of [Elevator Speech](#), talk about how to pitch your business to anyone, especially investors. Andy emphasized the importance of telling a story, and I couldn't agree more. How many times have you heard someone talk about what their company does and at the end of their speech you say to yourself, "I have no idea what it is or why someone would use it."

One of our first years at [VerticalResponse](#), we visited a real estate trade show where thousands of realtors attended to see how they could manage and grow their businesses. Our pitch was the following: "We have a self-service online tool where you can create HTML e-mails without being technical."

After watching one blank stare after another, we changed the story that day to: "We have an online tool where you can create e-mails in seconds without being technical. Imagine inserting pictures of your properties right inside your e-mail since attachments of pictures in e-mail might be seen as viruses and not get through." And each one of the realtors had a story to tell us where that happened to them.

Andy went on to emphasize the importance of three things: using **words**, **tools**, and **time** to tell your story.

Words -- You need to get across quickly what makes you different and what makes you shine. The only way to do this is to tell that story. Start sentences with words like "Imagine..." or "For instance...." Those will go a long way in starting to illustrate in their minds what you do.

Tools -- Using visuals to support your words is important, but Andy says you shouldn't start with Powerpoint before starting with your ideas. Powerpoint should only come in at the end. He also brought up a great rule that Guy Kawasaki, founder of [Garage Technology Ventures](#), has called the [10-20-30 rule](#).

10 slides

20 minutes

30 point font size

Time -- Andy emphasizes to come in under the time frame, especially when you're pitching investors. Get to the point because they're busy, but use the time you have to tell your story.

One idea I thought was great when it comes to getting a meeting with a potential investor was to get out a video camera, and film yourself telling your story. Then send your pitch to the investor to get the meeting. Keep it short and sweet.

Got any great ideas or tools you've used to get an investor on board?

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