

Facilitation Guide: Pitch It!

Challenge

Students will pitch their innovative business idea in front of an audience of peers or from the local entrepreneurial community. Your students will develop and apply their business and marketing skills by creating and presenting a pitch to a panel of potential supporters. They will include elements such as their marketing plan, business model, pricing analysis, promotional materials, and product prototypes to convince the audience that the business has potential to be successful in the market and deserves their support.

This challenge is designed to be a capstone project for the Business Development and Entrepreneurship series. These challenges provide your students with an opportunity to apply and demonstrate their knowledge and skills from the [Business Management & Administration](#) and [Marketing](#) career clusters.

Rationale

[Mikey Knows Business](#), [Mo's Bows](#), and [Kangaroo Cup](#) are all successful businesses created by young entrepreneurs who saw a need in their community, developed solutions, and delivered quality products or services to their customers. It's often assumed successful business people are older with formal business degrees and lots of experience. However, with the rise of e-commerce platforms and social media marketing, young entrepreneurs are proving that age doesn't matter when it comes to launching a successful business.

Starting a business often begins with a simple idea, but it typically requires outside support in the form of mentorship or funding to succeed. In today's era of startups and *Shark Tank*, entrepreneurs often prepare pitches to showcase their business idea to potential supporters. A good pitch requires a combination of presentation and storytelling skills as well as an innovative product, business plan, and marketing strategy. The Pitch It! Capstone helps students connect with their local entrepreneurial community to showcase a business idea and gain valuable support.

Whether students leave the challenge with greater skills, a new mentor, a list of contacts, or even a financial investment, the Pitch It! Capstone will help them gain experience and develop a better understanding of business and marketing.

Regardless of which path within the Business Development or Entrepreneurship series they take, students will develop an array of highly valued skills. In the initial Explore and Ideate stages, students will research and think critically about products, plans, and pitches. As the challenge evolves, students will utilize collaboration, creativity, and project management skills to develop, create, and deliver their pitch.

Simultaneously, your class will plan, organize, and facilitate the pitch event. For some, this may mean reaching out to other people in the school community who can provide feedback. Or, it could look like an audience composed of local businesses, organizations, chambers of commerce, incubators, or small business grantors. An authentic audience can provide students support and make the experience feel more relevant. Encourage students to get creative with who they invite and how they gather feedback, which could include using [funny money](#) that they design on Glowforge.

Using digital tools allows for a more streamlined and efficient design and planning process, enabling students to experiment with different concepts and techniques more easily. Students can incorporate Glowforge creations as components of their products or marketing material. The use of Glowforge also provides students with 2D and 3D precision print technology that has become increasingly important in a variety of business fields. Students can apply existing skills or those learned in other challenges to meaningful, real-world experiences to strengthen their college and career readiness.

This challenge can incorporate all or a combination of pathways in the Business Development or Entrepreneurship challenge series through creating a product, developing a business and marketing plan, creating promotional materials, and presenting a dynamic pitch.

Standards

Common Career Technical Core Standards

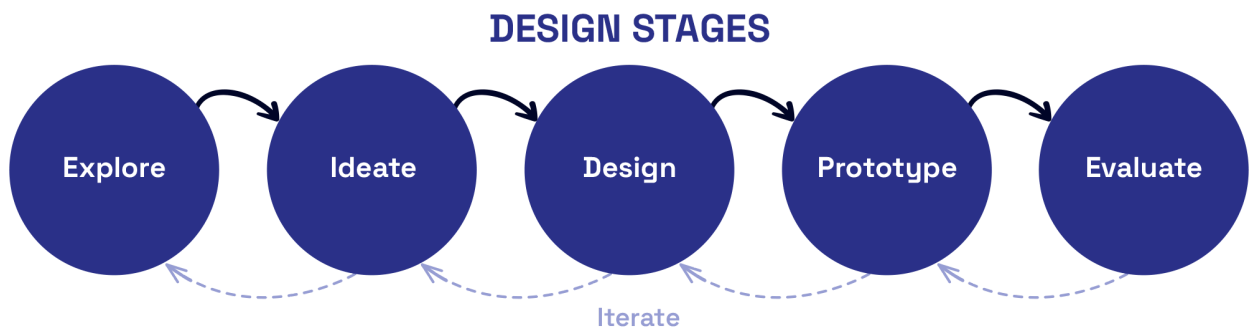
- BM 1 Utilize mathematical concepts, skills and problem solving to obtain necessary information for decision making in business.
- BM 3 Explore, develop and apply strategies for ensuring a successful business career.
- BM 6 Implement, monitor and evaluate business processes to ensure efficiency and quality results.
- MK 2 Implement marketing research to obtain and evaluate information for the creation of a marketing plan.
- MK 6 Select, monitor and manage sales and distribution channels.
- MK 7 Determine and adjust prices to maximize return while maintaining customer perception of value.

- MK 8 Obtain, develop, maintain and improve a product or service mix in response to market opportunities.
- MK 9 Communicate information about products, services, images and/or ideas to achieve a desired outcome.

ISTE Standards for Students

- 1.3 Students critically curate a variety of resources using digital tools to construct knowledge, produce creative artifacts and make meaningful learning experiences for themselves and others.
- 1.4 Students use a variety of technologies within a design process to identify and solve problems by creating new, useful or imaginative solutions.
- 1.6 Students communicate clearly and express themselves creatively for a variety of purposes using the platforms, tools, styles, formats and digital media appropriate to their goals.

Facilitation Steps



Explore

In this stage, students focus on researching and investigating the concept supporting new businesses and business pitches. To ensure that students have the knowledge and skills they need to complete this stage, use the following steps.

1. Explore how your community supports small or emerging businesses. Communities of all sizes offer programs, meet-ups, funding, mentoring, and incentives.
 - Consider identifying local entrepreneurs or commerce groups that could serve as potential supporters.
 - Provide guidance to students about how to reach out to these potential partners.
 - Encourage students to maintain ongoing communication to ensure the success of the project.
 - Use these real-world relationships to provide students with an authentic audience and feedback.

2. Consider different feedback formats for the pitches. As the students progress throughout the challenge, they will develop the parameters of the pitch. Offer guidance as they consider different formats for collecting feedback, which could include surveys, conversations, or even funny money.
 - Each audience member could receive a set amount of funny money that they could use to demonstrate their support for different pitches. Each audience member could have the same amount or it could be varied to demonstrate that supporters have different funds available.
 - Create personas for each audience member. This could take the form of past experiences, investment strategies, or other unique traits that could inform how they respond and react to pitches.
 - Consider how students could design the funny money using the [Glowforge App](#).
3. Provide students with question prompts from the Explore stage of the challenge to help inspire their research and consider how they can better understand pitches.
4. Help students locate resources and examples of pitches.
 - For overall suggestions for pitching, share the [How to Pitch: 14 Tips](#) article.
 - For a step-by-step video series on creating a pitch deck, watch the [Creating Your Pitch Deck](#) playlist.
 - For guidance about appealing to potential supporters, [watch this video](#) on what they wish startups knew before pitching.
5. Familiarize yourself with the other Business and Marketing design challenges. These challenges can help your students develop skills and prepare materials for the pitch.
 - **Business Development Series:**
 - [Swag-tastic Branding](#): Create unique marketing materials using Glowforge.
 - [Waste to Wealth](#): Reduce Glowforge production waste and create a profitable business plan.
 - [Pop Up Shop Showcase](#): Design a booth for a commerce event.
 - **Entrepreneurship Series:**
 - [Marketing Magic](#): Develop and implement a marketing plan for Glowforge products.
 - [Sold! Build e-Commerce Success](#): Optimize an e-commerce site to engage users and maximize sales.
 - [Socials for Success](#): Leverage social media for marketing.

At the end of this stage, students will reflect on the research they did to learn more about business and marketing plans and pitches. Encourage them to return to the materials and skills that they have developed in the other Business Management or Entrepreneurship challenges.

Before moving on, students should consider if there are any other resources or techniques that would be helpful to explore. Once they are finished, students continue to the Ideate stage where they will brainstorm the plan for their pitch.

Ideate

In this stage, students will take what they learned in the Explore stage to brainstorm and experiment with different ideas for their pitch. This stage allows students to explore as many ideas as possible without judgment. Remind students that there are many options for creating a pitch. Part of their goal should be creatively highlighting the unique characteristics of their product and business. To ensure that students have the knowledge and skills they need to complete this stage, use the following steps.

1. Provide students with question prompts from the Ideate stage of the challenge to help them brainstorm.
2. Provide support as students begin researching and contacting potential supporters. Consider figuring out details such as your school's visitor and video meeting policies. Encourage students to reach out to people who may be able to offer them insights and feedback on their pitch. Some ideas include:
 - Local or online entrepreneurs
 - Local business incubators
 - Civic commerce groups
 - Social media marketers
 - Local co-ops
 - Business professors at local universities or community colleges
 - School or district administrators
3. Provide students with examples of different ideation strategies to help them begin. Allow students to brainstorm individually or in small groups to utilize multiple perspectives.
 - Individually or in small groups, students can create [collages or mood boards](#) using images and colors that relate to their brand or product, and then use those visual references as inspiration for their pitch.
 - Students can engage in [mind mapping](#) where they write down the main theme or idea of their pitch in the center of a blank piece of paper, and then branch out from that center with related ideas and topics.
4. Inspire students to experiment with different products for demonstration or promotion purposes. Students can use digital tools, like the Glowforge App or other software to help them design and create these items.

At the end of this stage, students will have generated multiple ideas for their pitch. They may have identified areas that they intend to include but still need to develop. Additionally, they might have created a prospective list of potential supporters that they want to invite to the pitch.

Before moving on, students should consider which product or marketing decisions they still need to develop and how Glowforge could help them create these items. Once they are finished,

students will continue to the Design stage where they will develop their pitch deck and presentation plans further.

Design

In this stage, students will develop a comprehensive pitch using ideas from the Ideate stage. Students should focus on creating a pitch that is concise, thoroughly researched, and creative in order to spark interest from potential supporters. Encourage students to consider which techniques they will use to reach their audience and any areas where they will need to develop further. To ensure that students have the knowledge and skills they need to complete this stage, use the following steps.

1. Provide students guidance as they develop their presentations. Share resources to help address specific portions of the pitches.
 - Presentation and public speaking
 - Emphasize that first impressions are important. Students should try to develop an abbreviated version of the pitch, called an [elevator pitch](#). This shorter version should cover the problem their product addresses, how their product solves the problem, and the value that their product brings to customers. Consider sharing [this video](#) for additional ideas on how to start a pitch.
 - Encourage students to use storytelling. Suggest that they tell a compelling story that highlights their business or a specific customer use case.
 - Marketing plan materials
 - Share the [Marketing Magic](#) challenge for ideas on creating a marketing plan, which may include elements like conducting a competitor analysis, use of marketing platforms, developing a brand identity, or other strategies.
 - Suggest that students include a product demonstration or a promotional item for their supporters. Remind students that Glowforge is a perfect tool for creating innovative, thought-provoking marketing materials.
 - Business plan materials
 - Help students develop a business plan that projects their profitability. Consider having them complete the [Waste to Wealth](#) challenge to learn more about minimizing production waste and how to use the [Business Model Builder](#).
 - Help students select a [revenue model](#). The revenue model may be developed around individual purchases or subscription models that ensure continued sales from devoted customers.
 - If students are inviting their own potential supporters, assist them in narrowing down their specific support request. Remember that these can

vary based on the potential supporter that they're meeting with at the time. For instance, students may want mentorship from one supporter and an internship from another. Regardless, have students make specific requests about the support and purpose for each person.

2. Help students complete any logistical steps prior to the event. This may include reserving a space or special equipment, addressing the school visitor policy, setting up a virtual meeting link, contacting technical support personnel, or creating materials with Glowforge.
 - During the Design stage, the class is finalizing logistical decisions as well as the pitch and feedback formats. Make sure that students have time to print the event materials, which could include funny money as a format for feedback, so that it is ready before the event.

At the end of this stage, students will have a detailed plan for their pitch, including its marketing and business components, as well as any promotional materials that they may need to create on Glowforge.

Before moving on, students should consider if you would like to revisit their design further to change anything. Once they are finished, students continue to the Prototype stage where they will practice presenting their pitch to classmates and adjust their presentation based on feedback.

Prototype

In this stage, students will practice their pitch with classmates. To ensure that students have the knowledge and skills they need to complete this stage, use the following steps.

1. Provide students with question prompts from the Prototype stage of the challenge to help them develop their presentation.
2. Prepare students for public speaking success by sharing the ABCs of public speaking:
 - Audible: Make sure the audience can hear and understand.
 - Brief: Make sure you cover everything you need to but not too much.
 - If responding to a question, consider the advice given in [How to Handle Tough Questions](#) to be brief and then follow-up with "Did that answer your question?"
 - Confident: Have a belief that your business and product has value while also being knowledgeable and thoroughly prepared for the pitch.
3. Consider using the [Critical Friends Tuning Protocol](#) for students to give and receive feedback during the prototype stage. This can be used with peers in the class.
4. Prepare students to receive feedback from their potential supporters. Take some time to share the [Tips For Getting The Most Out Of Feedback For Your Startup](#) as well as watching [The Joy of Getting Feedback](#).

At the end of this stage, students will have already practiced their pitch with their peers and received feedback.

Before moving on, students should review the feedback and their pitch to ensure it is creative, persuasive, and thorough. Students may need to practice their pitch multiple times or return to earlier stages of the design process before moving on. Once they are finished, students continue to the Evaluate stage where they will present their pitch to the audience and receive feedback on their business or product.

Evaluate

In this stage, students will present their pitch and receive feedback from potential supporters. Encourage students to reflect on their process, the results, and audience feedback. To ensure that they have the knowledge and skills they need to complete this stage, use the following steps.

1. Provide students with question prompts from the Evaluate stage of the challenge to help them prepare for their pitch.
2. Help facilitate feedback as necessary. This could mean directing a short question and answer session or a funny money investment activity.
3. Provide students with guidance to help them reflect on the feedback that they received.

This might include:

- Ask clarifying questions to better understand what someone is saying.
- Avoid taking feedback personally.
- Prioritize the feedback. Consider if multiple people share the same suggestion as well as which area of growth may have the largest impact on the business, its development, and eventual success.
- Create a plan based on the most important feedback. Consider which stages of the design process to return to.
- Follow up with supporters. Start off by thanking them for their time and insights, and later update supporters on how their feedback was used, recent successes, and future milestones.

At the end of this stage, students have pitched their business or product to potential supporters and reflected on their feedback. Students should determine whether revisions are needed and return to the appropriate stage in the design process to adjust their business plan or pitch. Consider assessing student work using one of the Assessment Suggestions or extending the challenge using provided Extension Activities.

Supplemental Supports

- For students who want to see an amazing pitch, seek out additional videos from *Shark Tank* or show [Winner "Best Pitch" Competition - Willy Green](#).
- For students who want additional help with analyzing their business, review resources on how to develop a [SWOT Analysis](#).
- For students who struggle with public speaking, review [these strategies](#) from the Journal of Communication Pedagogy to help students build communication skills.
- For students who struggle with time management and organization, use your preferred learning management system to house graphic organizers and planning worksheets, share calendars, and manage deadlines.

Assessment Suggestions

Overall Learning Reflection

Learning reflections allow students to reflect on their learning experiences, identify key concepts, and explain how they have grown throughout the process of developing their business, a pitch, and presenting to their potential supporters. Ask students to write or record a video about what they learned throughout the challenge and how their learning will impact their future college and career plans or future entrepreneurship opportunities. Students can incorporate community and peer feedback elements from the Evaluate stage to describe their strengths and areas for improvement.

Self-Assessment

Self-assessments allow students to reflect on their learning through portfolios, presentations, or learning journals that involve evaluating their own progress, reviewing feedback from the audience, and identifying areas for improvement. Consider providing criteria to students prior to beginning the challenge that can be used by the student to reflect on their progress throughout their experience. The criteria may include:

- Creativity and Innovation: How well did you use your creativity to develop a unique and effective pitch?
- Marketing Strategy: How effectively did you develop a marketing strategy which may include social media, a branding identity, and promotional materials?
- Business Plan: How well did you develop a profitable business plan that includes your product(s), sales platforms, and other components?
- Presenting the Pitch: How well did you demonstrate public speaking and presentation skills while developing and delivering your pitch?

Educator or Peer Assessment

Educator or peer assessments allow educators or students to review the quality and effectiveness of the presentation. The assessment can be based on specific criteria, such as the feedback, surveys, or use a more open approach. Some criteria to consider may include:

- Marketing materials: Did the marketing plan and materials demonstrate solid knowledge of marketing principles? Was it cohesive?
- Business plan materials: Did the business plan and materials represent a product or service that has potential to meet a customer need and be profitable?
- Pitch presentation: Did you demonstrate presentation and public speaking skills that effectively shared your business or product idea to the audience?

Extension Activities

Design challenges often inspire students to think about what's next. For some, this could mean connecting with people or organizations dedicated to entrepreneurs or applying their skills in new ways or settings. Here are a few ideas for how you can help students extend this challenge:

- Connect to a youth entrepreneurship program. Organizations like [TiE Young Entrepreneurs](#) (TYE) are focused on providing students and educators with learning opportunities, resources, and experiences. The [TYE Global Final Competition](#) allows students to compete in entrepreneurial challenges with other students from around the world.
- Search out local or regional start-up [incubators](#) or accelerators. With over 7,000 incubators across the world, students can use their pitch skills and materials to get accepted into a program that could lead to additional funding, mentorship, and support.
- Inspire students to continue pitching their business and product at other entrepreneurial events. Many conferences and local entrepreneurial organizations offer pitch competitions. Get started by reviewing this [list of start-up competitions](#).