

PRESENTING YOUR IDEA

I. WHY BOTHER?

So you've got a good idea? Something that will provide such a valuable benefit to someone, that they are willing to pay plenty to whoever can provide it to them. But since you don't have the talent of da Vinci & the resources of Gates, you're not going to do it all yourself, so you're going to have to convince others of the value of this idea to get them to bet on it, risk something for it, or put effort in. Or you could wait for the world to spontaneously discover their desperate need for your product & beat a path to your door. Um... well, if you really want your great idea to go anywhere, you're going to have to do this

II. WHO TO BOTHER?

Who are these people that you might have to convince?

1. Investors
2. Licensees
3. Lenders
4. Partners
5. Vendors
6. Employees
7. Customers
8. People you know who wonder what in the heck you're doing with your life, anyways.

III. WHAT TO GET ACROSS

What is it that you need to sell them? You might think that if they just realized what an outstanding invention you were carrying around in your head, they'd be on the bandwagon right now. Well, unless they just fell off a turnip truck (and those are getting harder to find), you might have to sell them quite a bit more than that:

A. Yourself.

You will have to convince them that you are:

1. **Honest, but able to be a salesperson**
2. **Realistic, with good judgment & estimating ability**
3. **Available, even if your family sometimes needs feeding**
4. **Persistent in the face of:**
 - a) *Setbacks & strong forces of discouragement*
 - b) *Endless urgent details*
 - c) *Numerous distractions*
5. **Capable, skilled in areas relevant to everything that needs to get done. Wait! You don't have every competency & credential needed yourself? Then you'll have to sell them on:**

B. Your Team.

I know you're thinking, "...grab an engineer from column A, a marketer from column B, & a turnip truck driver from column C." Ah... but can you make a solid case that they are:

1. **Available?**
2. **Reliable (& the rest, above)?**
3. **Together have all the skills and credentials you need for the next stage?**
4. **Can get along and work well together & be managed by, of all people, you? Now you got me thinking: you might want to consider recruiting a project manager.**

C. The market for your product.

Gosh. I think that info could be found somewhere in column B... Well, it had better say something about some key questions:

- 1. Who wants & needs what your product can do for them?**
- 2. How do you make them aware of what your product can do for them?**
- 3. How much can you convince them to pay for it & how are you going to do that convincing?**
- 4. Who all is already is selling something to these people to meet this need, & which of those could be a partner & which will be competitors?**
- 5. How does your product get to customers?**
- 6. How are you going to support your product: warranty, service, installation, accessories?**
- 7. Is there any special business model or approach that would give you some additional advantage?**

D. Your plan

Some of those turnip aficionados may be willing to bet on your flexibility & resourcefulness, but the rest of us want a good idea beforehand of how you're going to go about getting your good idea produced:

- 1. Steps you're going to take**
- 2. When you're going to take them**
- 3. What resource\$ you're going to need for each step**
- 4. How long each step will take & which have to be done before others can start**
- 5. What each step will produce: designs, document, data**
- 6. What you'll do if certain unexpected, but foreseeable things happen**

E. I thought there was something else... Oh, yeah. Your Product.

That great idea that got you into this whole thing in the first place. You may be ecstatic about how absolutely, amazingly perfect your product is, but others may wonder if:

- 1. It works**
- 2. It's safe**
- 3. It's durable**
- 4. It is appealing**
- 5. It can be manufactured reliably at a low enough cost**

I just hope it's not an automatic turnip peeler.