

# Pitching Prevention National Webinar Series

## Create Your Own Substance Abuse Prevention Pitch

Creating a “pitch” that will motivate key stakeholders to engage in, and support, your prevention efforts takes careful consideration and planning. This worksheet is designed to help you craft a pitch that is easy to understand, culturally and linguistically appropriate, and a good fit for your identified audience.

When developing your pitch, consider the following:

- **Goal: Why are you making the pitch?** Whether you're recruiting a new stakeholder to the table or increasing awareness of a particular substance abuse issue, defining the goal of your pitch focuses the scope of your message.
- **Audience: Who is most likely to help you reach your goal?** Practitioners often think that they need to engage everyone, but there are specific audiences who will have a greater impact on your goal. By clearly defining your audience and knowing what matters to them, you will be better positioned to craft a message that resonates and elicits the response you are looking for.
- **Action: What action do you want your audience to take?** Be concrete. People are more likely to say “yes” if they know exactly what they're signing on for or expected to do.
- **Benefits and Barriers: What are the benefits to your intended audience of engagement? What are the barriers?** When crafting a pitch, you will want to highlight the benefits and take steps to minimize the barriers. Keep in mind that different benefits and barriers will be more or less salient, depending on your audience.
- **Tone: What tone is most likely to elicit the response we want?** *How* you make your pitch is as important as *what* you say. Consider the language you use, the type of information you include, and the emotional response that you hope to elicit.

Drawing on your responses to the questions above, complete the table on the next page, using the example as a guide.

Consideration	Example	Your Response
<b>Goal</b>	<i>Build support for local prevention efforts</i>	
<b>Audience</b>	<i>Business leaders in the community</i>	
<b>Action</b>	<i>Provide meeting space and financial resources to support new workforce prevention initiative</i>	
<b>Benefits</b>	<i>Better job performance of employees</i>	
<b>Barriers</b>	<i>Financial cost; time</i>	
<b>Tone</b>	<i>Empowering and inspiring</i>	

Drawing on the information provided in the table above, write down three compelling arguments—or ‘pitch’ elements—that you could use to motivate your audience to action. Remember to tailor your arguments to what you know about your audience and what you want them to help you accomplish.

Example	Your Compelling Arguments
“When we work together to address substance abuse, business thrives and so do our communities.”	
“Dedicating time and resources to prevention will pay off in the long-run because it will improve employee performance and retention.”	
“Promoting health is the same as moving any product forward.”	

Finally, review and revise your pitch, considering the following questions:

- **Does your pitch contain jargon or words that are difficult to understand?** Jargon can be an immediate turn-off, so take time to consider alternative ways to get your point across.

- **Is your pitch sensitive to audience needs, values, and priorities?** For example, a strong, compelling pitch to involve students in prevention planning efforts is unlikely to be successful if planning meetings are held during school hours.
- **Does your pitch take into account recent political, social, or economic events?** Pitches are not made in a vacuum, so it's important to look at community context and climate, as these can affect how your pitch will be interpreted.

Congratulations! You've developed a quality pitch—now go out and use it!

