

45 IDEAS: Elevate Your Pitch to Grow Your Business

MODERATOR

PAT TROWBRIDGE is English Group Publisher – Equine Network, LLC — Practical Horseman, Dressage Today, and In Stride. He began his publishing career in 1996. During his over 20 years, he has held many positions, including Advertising Sales Representative, Advertising Sales Manager, Advertising Director for Equine Group Publications, Director of Corporate Special Projects, Associate Publisher for Trade Titles, and Vice President/Group Publisher: Equine & Farm. Pat grew up riding horses on his family's small farm in Kansas. He resides in Southern California with his family.

PANELISTS

EMILY DULIN has experience in management, strategic planning, fundraising, marketing, advertising, public relations, community/corporate outreach, special events, and advocacy.

Emily is Chief Executive Officer of Brooke USA, the sister organization to Brooke, the global charity focused on alleviating the suffering of working equines and the people they serve in the developing world. During the eight years she has worked there, the organization has catapulted into the hearts and homes of equestrian lovers everywhere.

Prior to joining Brooke USA, Emily worked at the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) as Executive Director for Southern Florida & Puerto Rico, Executive Director of the Humane Society of Greater Miami, Jungle Island as Vice President of Sales & Marketing & Senior Vice President for The IAC Group.

Emily earned a Master of Arts in public relations and a Bachelor of Arts in foreign languages from the University of Miami. Procter & Gamble de Venezuela trained her in brand management, and she is certified in "The Art of Asking" by the Institute of Charitable Giving.

NICHOLE CHIRICO is the editor of Horse&Rider Magazine, co-host of The Ride Podcast, project manager and producer for Horse&Rider OnDemand, and an equine photographer. She has spent her entire life in the Western performance horse industry and enjoys riding reiners and cow horses in her free time.

JACKIE MCFARLAND: From hunter/jumper trainer to consultant to agency founder and partner, Jackie has committed her career to the equestrian industry. After a decade as a riding professional, in 1998, she founded Equestri to 'bridge' the gap between the horse world and the world wide web, offering education at various gatherings, such as AHP, website strategies, and development, and also connected equine buyers and sellers via web resources.

In 2006, Equestri transitioned from an individual consultancy to a boutique agency called EquestriSol, expanding offerings that complemented the web, including branding, print, new media, and merchandising for over 50 riders and trainers. With a focus on horse show happenings, results, news, clients, and original content, the EquestriSol Newsletter published over 100 issues online and in print.

In 2015, EquestriSol evolved its mission and rebranded to EqSol. With the agency's collective experience, they focused on content, strategic development, and special projects.

JENNIFER PAULSON is a lifelong Colorado horsewoman—except for the four years she spent at the University of Wyoming studying Agricultural Journalism and the three years she worked for *The Quarter Horse Journal* to kick off her career. She has an extensive history in publishing, media, and advertising. Paulson's editorial work includes *The American Quarter Horse Journal*, *Ride With Bob Avila*, *Western Horseman*, *Horse&Rider*, *NRHA Reiner*, *NRHA Pro Trainer*, and *Reined Cow Horse News*. In 2019, she started her own creative strategy business, [Jen Paulson Creative](#), to consult on projects for associations, brands, and publications.

RHIANNA RUSSELL is an Account Manager for Catapult Creative, an Equine Network company. She oversees client strategy, relationships, and Big Idea activations for some of the world's largest equestrian brands in consumer products, veterinarian, and event spaces. Rhianna has been working in marketing, specifically in equine, for nearly 10 years and holds incredible knowledge of the unique needs and challenges businesses face in this industry. Giving back to the equine industry has been a passion starting with her experience as Miss Rodeo Colorado in 2014 and continuing through various philanthropic efforts coaching and mentoring young adults looking to develop themselves as young horseman and horse industry professionals.

1. Be Concise and to the Point with a Great Elevator Story. Getting to the point will hook your audience into following your topic without losing interest. To achieve this, you must focus on crucial aspects of your business and summarize them in simple terms. To this end, prepare a brief business presentation delivered quickly to describe the nature of your business, what you do, and show why you are the best option. Include a sound bite, a short, catchy phrase your audience will remember. This will set you apart.

2. Introduce yourself. Pitching to an editor who isn't familiar with you requires a thoughtful introduction. Don't take too much time, but efficiently introduce yourself and what you bring to the table. Why are you a good fit to make their life more efficient?

3. Be Good at First Impressions - First impressions are formed quickly. From your first few seconds to be impressively you.

4. Don't Just Pitch Your Offering.

5. Practice, Edit, Practice, Refine, Practice. With a bit of practice, you can make your delivery more confident and be ready to answer questions when they come your way. Ask friends, colleagues, or family members to act as your dummy audience and run through your pitch with them, complete with slides. Have them time your pitch so you know how long each part takes, and ensure you stay within your target timeframe. Encourage your "practice audience" to ask questions, too – they'll probably come up with some angles you haven't considered and help you understand how to pitch better.

6. Know the Brand You Want to Work With. Make sure that you have taken the time to research the brand. That will show the individuals that you truly are interested in the brand. You can also reference where you obtained the information.

7. Believe in the Power of You - It's a competitive world, but everyone, including you, has a uniqueness. Know yours and believe in it. Believing in yourself is an innate pitch. <https://positivepsychology.com/ikigai>

8. Keep It Short and Relevant.

9. Tell a Story.

10. Don't Be Afraid to Branch Out of Your Comfort Zone. Look for new ideas outside your comfort zone and offer beyond the written story. Can you provide a few reels? Can you guest host a podcast for the brand with the expert whom you're pitching?

11. Find Inspiration - Find other pitches by searching online; what inspires you? Let inspiration fuel your pitch. Find your winning formula.

12. Consider the Format of the Numbers.

13. Avoid Pitches Where Only One Person Speaks. Audiences believe that a pitch team with good chemistry together is much more trustworthy than one senior person who does all the talking. Reconsider the wisdom of bringing people to a pitch who say nothing or have no clear expertise. Use your team to amplify your expertise on a pitch, not dilute it. Don't forget to practice together and in front of others.

14. Know What It Is You Want to Accomplish. What is the overall goal with the pitch? You want the editor to feel confident they are partnering with a solid person with a vision. Do you want them to see you as the expert in your field and the go-to person, or are you a conduit for another expert? Are you looking for a long-term relationship or a one-off piece?

15. Be Social - In today's media world, your niche is mobile. Find and frequent where those in your niche 'socialize,' and keep up with what they are doing on social media.

16. Incorporate Visual Representations to Leave a Lasting Impression.

17. Create a Winning Pitch Deck. Having an impressive deck is a key component in your pitch toolkit. A great pitch deck excites your audience and engages them in a conversation about your business, hopefully leading to a relationship. Remember, shorter is better, and don't read from your slides. You are there to illustrate your words, not act as a cue card. Also, try to add video, sound, and interactivity.

18. Add a personal touch to let the editor know who you are and how you're connected to the brand or the project. Let the editor know you are human. Talk about your horse and how you're connected to the subject matter. Morous?

19. Know the Pain Points - Be a pain reliever! Solve pain points with solutions.

20. Utilize Industry Buzzwords.

21. Be Passionate During the Pitch. Beyond experience and facts, passion for what you are selling is a trait that your audience will consider most important. They want to feel your energy for the pitch, and they want to see your mastery. The question is: *Is it really in your blood ... or just skin deep?*" If you love what you do, this should be easy!

22. Let People Know What Sets You Apart. What makes you different and special from others? Own your unique selling proposition.

23. Know your Competition - Spend some time researching who else is out there doing what you do. Maybe there's a chance for collaboration, or to learn, or to consider how you are uniquely different from a competitor.

24. Provide Purchasing Options.

25. Listen Closely and Respond Carefully. People want you to listen to them, ask questions, and understand their point of view on their issue before hearing your solution. Many times, your audience wants to have a conversation. They want to be heard and to

hear what you think of their challenge. This could throw your pitch plans off, but with preparation, you can handle anything.

26. Be Clear With What You're Talking

About. Do not talk in circles. Be straightforward. Know what you want to say. If you do not have an answer to a question, tell them you will find the answer and get back to them.

27. Network & Keep in Touch - Make an effort to meet people in your niche and then keep in touch. In today's world, that could be following an account, liking a post, sending a PM, or writing an email.

28. Appeal to the "Crock Brain."

29. Learn From Others. One way to hone your pitching skills is by watching others do it. How did the speaker relay the information to the audience? How did that presenter complement what was on each slide? Was it interactive? Break down the pitches you find most compelling and borrow what you liked most when shaping your approach. Watch *Ted Talks*, as those presenters are the best.

30. Show Enthusiasm in What You're Talking About. Enthusiasm can be contagious. Be very upbeat in making a pitch. Be passionate and believe in your pitch.

31. Highlight Your Skill Set - Show off your skill set by highlighting a selection of projects you are proud of. No project is too small if you feel good about your contribution.

32. Keep it Conversational.

33. Make Eye Contact. This is one of the most important pitch tips to connect with your audience. However intimidating that sea of faces might be, remember they're all just people. You can use eye contact strategically to develop a sense of connection with the audience. Choose a few faces in the audience and make brief eye contact during your pitch. Just a glance now and then will show that you're talking to them.

34. Be Confident in Yourself and Your Business. Confidence is so important. Always show them you know what you are talking about, and back it up with your resume and reputation.

35. Meet with Merit - The way we 'meet' has changed. Whether you are meeting on Zoom, in person, or via electronic communication, have a professional presence.

36. Use Social Proof in a Meaningful Way.

37. Use the WHAC Method. No matter what you are pitching, use the WHAC method when structuring your perfect business pitch. For this, you need to provide answers to the following: 1) What do you do and have to offer? 2) How does it work? 3) Are you sure? And 4) Can you do it? This is all about giving the audience the confidence that you are the right person for the job; it will help you rise above the others.

38. Know Your Audience and Speak to Them. Your pitch should represent the voice you'll use in the story. Is it instructional? Entertaining? Humorous? Show it in the pitch.

39. Go Above & Beyond - How can you exceed expectations? Show how you can bring more to the table than expected.

40. Don't Forget to Provide the "Secret Sauce."

41. Use Interactive Techniques. How do you make a pitch that holds people's attention? Get your audience thinking and responding during your pitch, and you're more likely to hold their attention. Try asking them to guess a figure or a result that you'll go on to display on the next slide. Or get them to vote on some different options for brand colors or logos. Or, add some trivia. This will make them feel more invested in what you're saying and get them into the mindset of making business decisions with you.

42. Highlight Previous Experiences. It is always good to have examples of previous experiences that relate to the brand.

43. Know Your W5+H1 Formula - Who, what, why, where, when, and how/how much. Answer that in your pitch.

44. End with a Powerful Conclusion.

45. Consider 11 Sentences - If you have 60 seconds to pitch yourself, your idea, or your business... can you do so in 11 succinct sentences?