



PITCH IT
PROVE IT
GET IT DONE.

The Art of Influence in STEMM

WHAT WE'LL COVER

- Real-life pitches that worked
- What to do pre and post pitch
- Mapping out your own process



WHO I AM

SARAH JEAN VANDAVEER

- Corporate Public Relations Lead with 10 years of communications experience in technical and manufacturing industries.
- Marketing and Comms Director for WiM Missouri
- Marketing and Comms Lead for Purina's WiSTEMM.
- I love to help tell the stories of our factories.
- Love tacos, EDM and almost drinking too much caffeine every day.



THIS IS A LIFELONG SKILL



THIS COULD BE THE
YEAR...

THE ART OF

INFLUENCE

PRE PITCH

This is where a great deal of work needs to be done! By the time you get to your pitch, you should already know where everyone in the room sits.



POST PITCH

This is the delicate time where your approved plan can either hit the back burner or burn bright--and it's up to you!

THE PITCH

There is SO MUCH content on successful pitching, so we won't spend a great deal of time here. BUT if you need more help--I work here and am happy to help.

THE COMMS CREW: A PURINA SUCCESS STORY



- Started year 1 with the company
- Most successful Comms Channel
- Led to 100% participation in Purple Leash Project and Purina Cares Day for the first time
- Nestlé USA, Global and other companies have duplicated our model as well

HAD A GREAT CORE IDEA

- Data driven
- Battle tested
- Met the business need
- I knew I could pull it off

I GOT AN AUDIENCE

I worked hard to get on calendars with each person that mattered. I was nice to the Executive Assistants and was as flexible and persistent as I needed to be.

MAPPED THE LANDSCAPE

Learned the system. What power dynamics were at play? What past efforts failed—and why? And who needed to be convinced?

GOT INSIDE THE MIND OF MY DECISION MAKERS

Why would they care about this? What would they need to understand to get on board and make this happen? Who needs to say yes in what order? Who is likely to say no?

WHAT DID I NEED FROM MY DECISION MAKERS?

What level of buy in do I need from each person/group?

WHAT I DID BEFORE THE PITCH

BUILT A TEAM

Instead of battling against groups, I made this a collaboration. A project we could all feel good about. Include people from the group you will be asking to do this! “Made by factory associates for factory associates.”



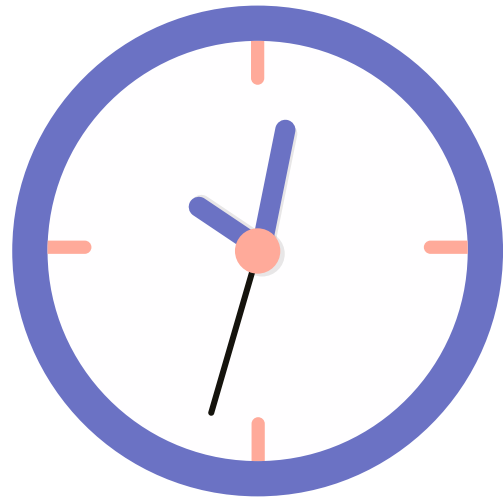
GET IT DONE!

Your turn!

What's your idea?

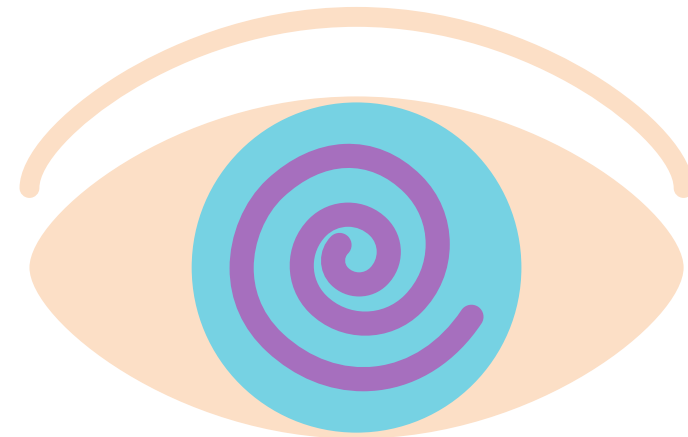
- What is my idea that deserves to be pitched?
- Who needs to be convinced?
- Why might they be for this?
- Why might they be against this?
- What decision do I need from them?
- How will I convince them?
- Who can be on my project team?

THE PITCH



Efficient

Get to the point. Take up as little time as you need on the pitch and leave room for debate. Think Shark Tank!



Engaging

Start with a story. Just like I did! Draw them in, then pitch them on your idea.



Essential

Make it clear that your idea is essential to each of the audiences you are pitching it to. That's how you get it done.

THE PITCH

Resources

- Branded materials
 - Find your company's comms team
 - WiM resources: <https://www.womeninmanufacturing.org/corporate-member-resource-hub>
- Make your own with other resources
 - CoPilot
 - Canva
 - ChatGPT etc.
- Learn!
 - TedTalks: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1sOgYNggq88E>

CAPTURE THE WIN BEFORE IT WANDERS

Send a clear summary while energy is still high (even if it's evolving). Follow up with anyone who wasn't clearly bought in.

KEEP TELLING THE STORY!

Make sure you keep your stakeholders engaged along the way, and always circle back to share success!

OWN THE ROLLOUT

Create a team to help roll this out with a project timeline and regular meeting cadence. Include key champions in the team.

CRAFT THE COMMS STRATEGY

Craft a strategy for how this idea is announced, explained and celebrated. More to come on this!

WHAT TO DO AFTER THE PITCH

THANK LOUD, THANK SMART

As you get help from people along the way, make sure to thank and encourage them. You will call in favors, don't forget to extend thanks!

ANTICIPATE THE DRAG

It's very likely you will face snags along the way. Make sure to practice patience, keep pushing AND ask for help.



CAPTURE THE WIN BEFORE IT WANDERS

FOLLOW UP WITH YOUR PITCH WHILE
THE MOMENTUM IS THERE. THIS IS A KEY
TIME WHERE THINGS CAN SHIFT.



Send a summary of what was
decided and who said what.



Follow up with anyone you
need to.



Answer any remaining questions.
Get approval on any outstanding
items.

DEFINE WHAT

HAPPENS NEXT

People need clarity after the pitch. Spell out the first actions, key milestones, and who's doing what. If you don't define the next steps, inertia will.

RALLY THE

RIGHT PLAYERS

Pull in your doers, champions, and make sure everyone knows their role in making it real—especially your allies behind the scenes.

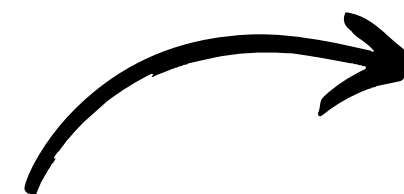
CLAIM THE DRIVER'S SEAT

Don't wait to be asked. Assume leadership of the implementation plan. Even if someone else owns the budget or headcount, you own the vision—and that means setting the tone from the start.

RUN THE ROOM (AND THE CALENDAR)

Schedule the first follow-up meeting. Set deadlines. Send the invites. You're not just the idea person anymore—you're the movement maker. Make it official.

OWN THE ROLLOUT



CRAFT THE COMMS STRATEGY

CRAFT A STRATEGY FOR HOW THIS IDEA IS ANNOUNCED, EXPLAINED AND CELEBRATED.

- Identify your audiences
- Key messages
- Channels, tactics, meetings
- Timeline
- Messengers
- Engagement strategy
- Measurement and feedback loop

RESOURCE: SIMPLIFIED COMMS PLAN TEMPLATE

ANTICIPATE THE DRAG

- Practice patience
- Push forward
- Please ask for help



THANK LOUD, THANK SMART

AS YOU GET HELP FROM PEOPLE ALONG THE WAY, MAKE SURE TO THANK AND ENCOURAGE THEM. YOU WILL CALL IN FAVORS, DON'T FORGET TO EXTEND THANKS!



Send thank you communications. Physical card, or even a Teams chat or email.



Publicly recognize individuals and groups. 5 Talls, Redzone High Five, Shout outs in meetings



Buy lunch or donuts for the group! Consider buying a project T-shirt or even a gift card.

KEEP TELLING THE STORY

- Present key wins at important meetings
- Send follow up communications to stakeholders
- Post on internal channels



GO GET IT DONE!



You've got this!

CONNECT WITH ME



LinkedIn: Sarah Jean Vandaveer