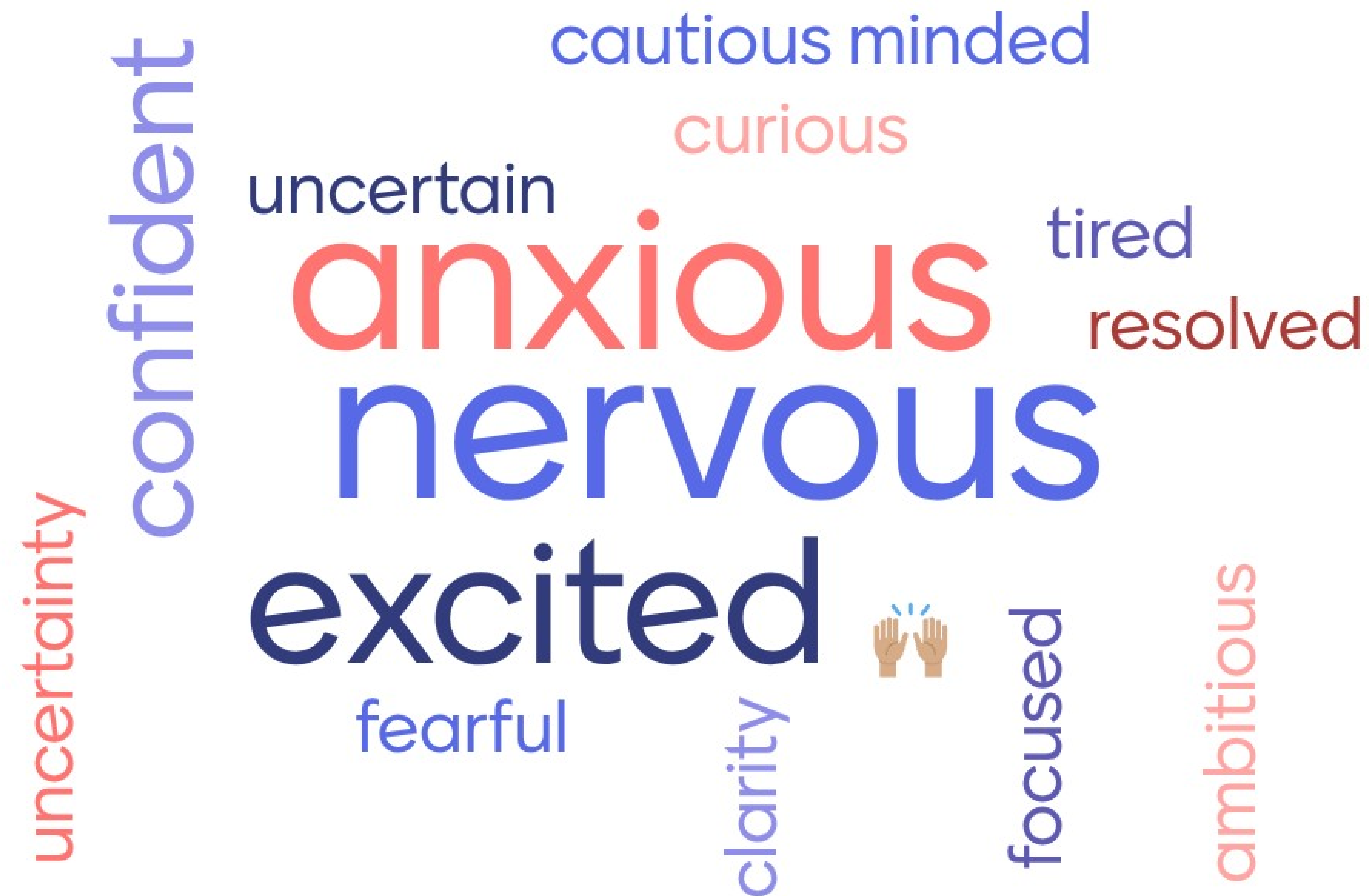


How do you feel about pitching?



The only people in the world who can change things are those who can sell ideas.

- Lois Wyse



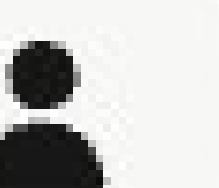
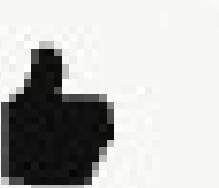
2025 Ascend : *Pitch Clinic**

September 22nd, 2025

Christy Johnson



**Clinics are for sick people. This should be more like a gym, where you work to get better and better over time.*



Agenda

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3:20– You/your team gives its pitch – no more than 60 seconds each

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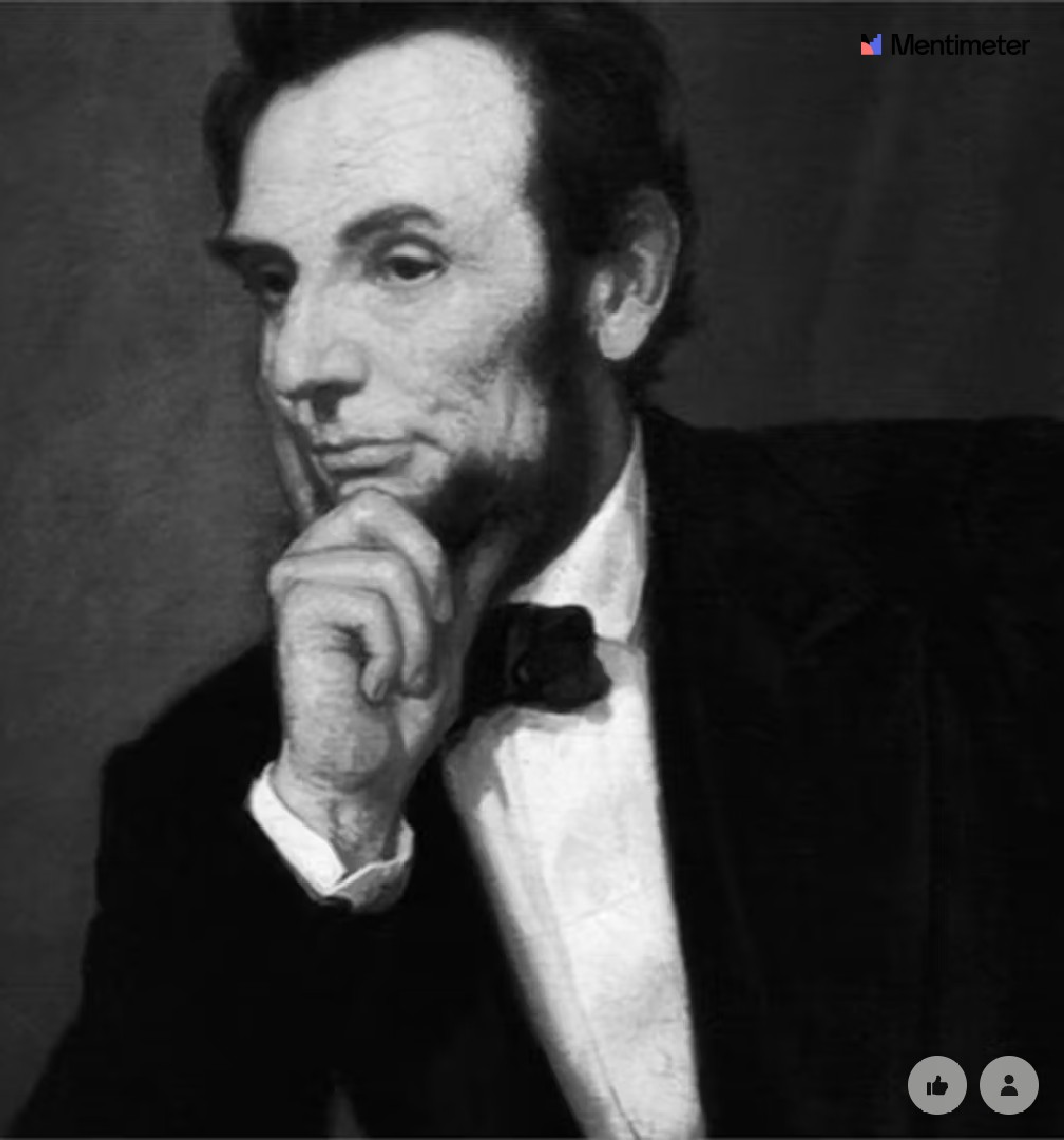
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PLANNING

Give me six hours to
chop down a tree and
I will spend the first four
sharpening the axe.

— Abraham Lincoln



How do you prep for your meetings?

Understand your client.

Research

Research!

Research LinkedIn and Google

Details

R&D - who are the players

Rehearse

LinkedIn In Review, Chat GPT Deep research, Social review,

How do you prep for your meetings?

Check recent company news

Interview mock-up;
questions and answers
prep;

Practice

Research

Extensive Information

Look at client history.

Research their bottom
line

Cyberstalking. Google.
LinkedIn. Other sources.

How do you prep for your meetings?

What are their celebratipns

Lots of research in the news and their specific websites (more specifically, their pipeline)

My EA does a dossier,

Inside Company Info/Jargon

Know and understand the clients forcasted needs.

Google

Research all participants, and when they got to their current role and how long they have been in it.

Research prospective client and research ways to achieve its goals.

How do you prep for your meetings?

Know your audience

Research networking
and linked in

I research and see what our
meeting is about to be
prepared and get a better
understanding of what
needs to get done.

Website, indeed,
industry news

Find out about who they
are, what their needs and
challenges that can be our
opportunity.

The work before the work

Prep for your meetings!

See example profile

Review social posts / comments

Watch any talks (check YouTube)

Tenure in role	7 years, 3 mos
Location	Washington DC
Previous Roles	• Job 1 ◦ Title 1, 2015 - 2018 ◦ Title 2, Intellectual Capital, 2013 - 2015 • Job 2 ◦ Board Member, 2022 - Present
Post-Grad Educ	• <u>xyz</u> University - degree (MBA)
Education	• 123 University (BA)
Role Detail	• 1 sentence summary of where <u>ie</u> works and company priorities • From bio: "He leads the organization and its key strategic priorities, including partnerships with other philanthropies and investors. He engages regularly with diverse actors, from venture capitalists to policymakers to researchers, to apply intentional societal guardrails to the digital revolution" • Bio touts his "deep economic lens" • Refer multiple times to "digital revolution": TBD has worked on many aspects of the digital revolution since the mid-1990s: from Web 1.0 and telecom deregulation to digital public infrastructure, generative AI, and present-day concerns ◦
Personal Notes	• <u>TBD</u> is a mutual LI connection • He has lived twice in South Africa, and worked extensively in India, Africa, and East Asia • He lives in Washington DC with his wife and golden retriever, where his two adult kids (both working journalists) occasionally visit • The current book he is reading is <u>xyz</u>.

Example bio (and you could have generative ai build this for you!)

PRACTICE

Practice means to perform, over and over again in the face of all obstacles, some act of vision, of faith, of desire.

Practice is a means of inviting the perfection desired.
- Martha Graham



LEARNING

*Being ignorant
is not so much
a shame, as
being
unwilling to
learn.*

- Ben Franklin



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Elevator pitch one

60 seconds each

Be sincere, be brief, be seated.

Franklin Roosevelt (FDR)



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From abject terror to calm, confident and compelling:

Three steps to effective pitches

Christy Johnson

3 steps to effective presentations: in a nutshell

1. Strategy

Answering “why, what and how” using the ABCs, XYXs and 123s

2. Presentation

Delivering your story with impact no matter the time or place

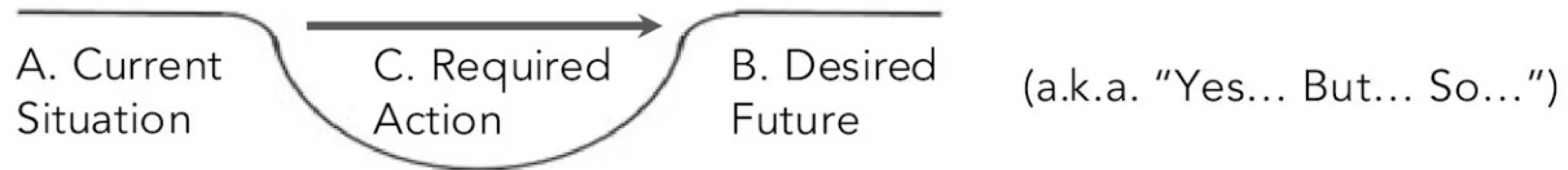
3. Response

Proving your mettle in the line of fire effectively addressing, learning from questions

Deciding on your content

1. Strategy

Why: ABCs of your inspiration – vision, mission



What: XYZs of your positioning – formula for success

It are the only X (category of solution)
that solves Y (target audience problem)
in Z unique way (differentiation what makes you special)

How: 123s of memorable messaging

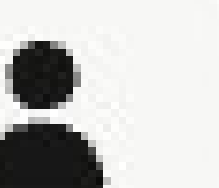
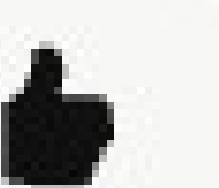
1 promise – “making it easier”

2 opposites – “tastes great, less filling” (rule of oxymoron)

3 support buckets – “awesome, awesome,
not screwed up”

*note: proof is the strongest
message (e.g. “customers told us”)*

How do you open up your pitch?



Delivering it effectively

The opening gambit - warming up audience before diving in
e.g. timely news, relevant anecdote, empathetic question

The outline – to navigate through

TITLE: Tell 'em what you're gonna tell 'em

AGENDA: Tell 'em how your gonna tell 'em

CONTENT: Tell 'em (in the order you said you'd tell 'em)

SUMMARY: Tell 'em what you told 'em

The template – breadcrumbs to stay on the path

The pattern you use consistently throughout
e.g. numbers, buttons, question/answer, claim/proof

AND DON'T FORGET PAGE NUMBERS

*details matter, errors
reflect poorly,
check with 2nd/3rd set
of eyes/ears*

2. Presentation

How many times do you practice before a big pitch?



Lasting impressions - questions and feedback

*remember: no shame in not knowing;
shame in defensiveness;
not listening = not learning, not growing*

Getting ready

Anticipate, toughest, "Rude Q&A"

Team-member assignments – by topic; rescue script

Soliciting and addressing questions

Repeat question (time to think)

Direct, concise answer; no BS; move on or defer if stumped

Responding and following up

Promise to take to heart/follow-up – do so

Debrief: what learned, what to change?

3.

Response

3 steps to a great presentation: summary

1. Strategy

Why: A current situation, B desired future, C required action (inspiration)

What: The only X that solves Y in Z unique way (positioning)

How: 1 promise, combining 2 opposites, supported by 3 pillars (messaging)

2. Organization

Tell 'em what you're gonna tell 'em

Tell 'em how your gonna tell 'em

Tell 'em (in the order you said you'd tell 'em)

Tell 'em what you told 'em

*also, don't forget a
template and page
numbers*

3. Response

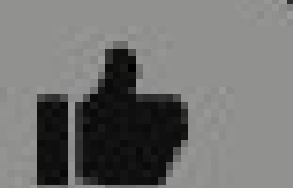
Rude Q&A prep

Repeat question, brief, direct answers

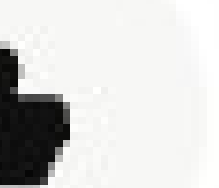
Follow up

*Keep it simple.
When you get too complex,
you forget the obvious.*

*- Al Maguire
(Coach, Marquette basketball)*



0 questions
0 upvotes



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Getting ready - summary

FIRST, FIGURE OUT THE REASON YOU ARE TALKING IN THE FIRST PLACE - WITH THE ABCs				
Purpose	Elements	Your story - explanation		
WHY Context/ Inspiration	A Situation	Yes, things are like A today...		
	B Destination	But, wouldn't it be great if they were B instead		
	C Required action to fill	So, let's do C to make this possible		
SECOND, FORMULATE THE LOGIC FOR YOUR SOLUTION/PROPOSAL - WITH THE XYZs				
WHAT Solution positioning/ explanation	X Category of solution	What we are doing/proposing is the only X		
	Y Audience problem	That solves Y problem		
	Z Differentiation	In Z unique (or special) way		
THIRD, CHOOSE THE VERY FEW THINGS YOU WANT PEOPLE TO REMEMBER				
HOW Simple, compelling messages	ONE Promise	Short form of B above		
	THREE Attributes	positive motivator	positive motivator	overcomes concerns
	ONE Call to Action	What you are offering your audience -asking them to do now		
FINALLY, PRACTICE YOUR DELIVERY - IN FRONT OF A MIRROR, WITH A TIMER				

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Thank you, and don't forget

1. Prepare simple answers to WHY, WHAT and HOW
2. Know the ONE thing you most need to say
3. Know the THREE things that best support it



"Everything is practice." Pele

