

Lesson 3

Building a Sustainable Venture

How do I pitch, run, and grow my own business or initiative? What skills, support, and resources do I need?

Given what we know now about the business and entrepreneurial landscape, how can you set out to begin solving these problems on your own? This lesson will test your creativity and teamwork. Here we will take a deep dive into developing and pitching an innovative business venture. You will learn how to plan your business journey, how to anticipate the support you'll need to grow, and how to pitch your business. This lesson will be heavily practical whereas the previous two were a mix of theory and practice. This one is for all the marbles!

By completing this lesson, you will:

- Anticipate and plan next steps for testing the model of your venture.
- Build a plan to get the support your initiative needs to grow, including skills, connections, and funding.
- Practice pitching your business: iteratively craft a compelling pitch for investors, and get feedback along the way.

Pre-Reading

We'll start the lesson by considering what support you might need as you start to grow. [How to find a mentor for your startup](#) offers some practical tips on one of the most crucial pieces: finding great mentors.

Being able to create a compelling pitch to explain what your organization does, and get others on board, is an essential skill. For an introduction to pitching, explore:

- [Five top tips to create a compelling pitch deck](#)
- [How to Nail the Pitch: 17 Storytelling Tips for Startups](#)

Lesson Content

WARM-UP ACTIVITY Everyone's a superhero	This fun activity gets you to stretch your mind and imagine new business ventures or change existing industries to meet demands beyond the confines of reality.
VISUAL AID & DISCUSSION What support do you need to grow?	This will get you started thinking about what support you'll need in the early stages of a venture. While first-time entrepreneurs often focus heavily on funding, seasoned entrepreneurs know that the most valuable support for a startup is often mentorship, connections, and the team's skillset.
ACTIVITY Venture Roadmap	Visualizing your venture's one year outlook will help you articulate what your goals are, what resources you might need to achieve these, and potential speed bumps.
ACTIVITY Who will you pitch to?	Get a sense of where to start with getting support for your project, and consider what your pitch should look like from your investors' perspective as well as your own.
VIDEO The power of the eight-word mission statement	A concise mission statement allows you to clearly communicate what it is that your organization has set out to do. Kevin Starr has heard countless ventures pitch to him in his role as the CEO of the Mulago Foundation; he explains that although communicating your mission in eight words sounds simple, many early-stage ventures are unable to do this.
ACTIVITY Craft your mission statement	Summarizing in just a few words what your business or solution is all about will require you to pare down your message to the bare essentials for maximum understanding.
VIDEO Tips for pitching	Pitching your project may sound intimidating, but there's a pretty simple formula for crafting a clear and compelling pitch. This video offers tips and guidance on what goes into a great pitch.
VIDEOS & DISCUSSION Pitch Critique	Learn what it takes to make a great pitch by analyzing some short examples from other environmental entrepreneurs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SafetyNet Technologies Pitch• Aspire Food Group Pitch• Spark Charge Pitch (Watch 29:27 - 32:31) <p><i>As you watch, jot down: What was done well in this pitch, what might have been better? What did they choose to cover in their pitch, and what did they choose to leave out?</i></p>
ACTIVITY Storyboard your pitch	Create a first draft of your pitch by building a storyboard. Too often, when we make presentations we dive deep into crafting slides before really thinking about the story we want to tell. By starting with a story, you'll get to the core of what you want to

communicate, and make sure that your message resonates emotionally with your audience.

ASSIGNMENT

[Pitch!](#)

Refine the pitch you started in class, and practice delivering it to get feedback on the clarity of your vision.

Note: For delivering this assignment, it is recommended that professors set up a panel of judges to listen, question, and give feedback. Alternatively, students can pitch to each other, or record a short pitch video.

VIDEO

Parting Advice: [Inside Tips from Expert Entrepreneurs](#)

We close out this lesson with some words of wisdom from seasoned entrepreneurs. While there's always more to learn (see the "Next Steps" resources [below](#)) -- ultimately success comes from embracing failure, working iteratively with end users, and having the grit to keep trying.

Curious to learn more? There are additional resources in the [Explore More](#) Section.