

A S S E M B L Y

PITCHING +
COLLABORATION

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MINDSET WORK FOR PITCHING + COLLABORATION

Let's begin by getting our minds in the right space to look at these topics.

It's likely that what has stopped us from ever pitching for coverage or attention on our businesses or offerings or reaching out for collaboration opportunities is likely the fear of being seen or the fear of visibility. What will people think if I give my opinion on that? What will people think if I share my expertise on this? What will people think if I start to show my face more in my business or show up in a local media spread. What will people think if I put myself out there.

Becoming more visible in our work and desiring more attention can cause our brains to wander into old stories that we have been told about women and visibility.

- + *Attention seeking***
- + *Above her station***
- + *Pushy***
- + *Too forward***
- + *Thinks too much of herself.***

These are all common narratives that we have been fed our whole lives, and to stick our head above the parapet and admit that we would love more attention or reach within our work is scary - because we have all either been on the receiving end, have witnessed or have been party to believing or thinking those responses listed above.

This is problematic for us, because when we internalise those narratives about ourselves or each others we are limiting the amount of space that we believe women should take up.

We need women to be seen and heard in our culture because you cannot be what you cannot see.

It's so important that we show up and talk about our work, our knowledge and our expertise because there are other people, other women especially that will be mobilised by that. There are women of all ages who are just waiting to see someone do what you do to give them permission to do the same. When we courageously show up and talk about the value of our work we are opening doors for other people to see what is possible.

PITCHING + COLLABORATION

Getting brave with your visibility is also important because you have solutions! You have ideas and solutions to some of the problems that are facing the world - big and small. You, speaking up, being seen, doing your amazing work and offering out to other people to take part in or buy or work within gives people the opportunity to connect and grow and maybe even heal. Who does it serve or benefit if we hide and shrink with our talents and gifts?

Finally we need to be reminded that visibility and getting attention or more eyes on your work or offerings isn't about performance. It's about vulnerability and connection. And of course, with vulnerability comes risk. There's always the risk that someone won't like what you have to say or what you do. There's always the risk that it won't connect with someone - but the risk you take by not being visible, not sharing yourself, the person you are and what you have to offer is that no one will **ever** get to connect. And there are people out there that need to connect to your message, your ideas and thoughts.

What's key to understand about this is that getting comfortable with visibility doesn't mean that you won't care about what people think (impossible), but is about not letting what people think define us as being worthy to be seen or heard.

I hope that as you move through the questions in these worksheets that you will feel more free and feel more permission to let your light shine so that you can do your truest, most honest work and allow it to reach the people that need to hear and see it.

When we do this work together, we can rely on collective courage to keep us going - so let's commit to taking steps together and allowing each other to be brave with our visibility.

The next few pages on pitching have been contributed by Andrea Kennedy PR & Communications. Andrea is an Assembly Member and is a leading expert on PR for female-led businesses and we are so lucky to have her expertise!

I'll be back with some focus on collaboration towards the end...

PITCHING + COLLABORATION

We all have a story worth telling.

When it comes to publicity - the right exposure in the right publication or website can get your name or your work in front of thousands of potential customers and the media needs your stories! Every day, newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, podcasts and websites have lots of space to fill. There is enormous opportunity there if you understand how to pitch properly.

Journalists and media staff are very busy with lots of work to do and very little resource, so if you can make their job easy with a ready-made story that works for their audiences you're in with a great chance, but you have got to stand out in their inbox.

I'm going to take you through three areas of pitching that will give you a huge advantage to being seen and heard:

- 1) Finding that golden thread of a story.**
- 2) Getting ready for pitching.**
- 3) How to actually pitch.**

1) FINDING THAT GOLDEN THREAD OF A STORY

What is your story?

Why did you start your business or work?

Who can you help and how?

What is unique about what you do?

Why are you telling your story now?

What is that golden thread? The thing that makes you relatable, human and interesting? Those are the three key elements to figuring out what it is that sets your work apart that you can hone in on when it comes to pitching. What would make a reader want to find out more? What would pique their interest or nosiness?

Have a think about this in relation to your work or offerings. Write down all the things that brought you to where you are now. Explore what kind of angle might be interesting and relatable to readers/viewers/listeners.

PITCHING + COLLABORATION

2) GETTING THAT STORY READY FOR PITCHING

When it comes to pitching preparation is key. Do your research so you know where to target your efforts best:

- ***Make a list of outlets (newspapers, podcasts, online magazines etc) that you think might be interested in your story. Look closely at the kind of businesses they feature and how and think about what you can pitch that 'fits'***
- ***Find editors' and journalists' contact details and keep a little directory handy***
- ***Find out how the outlet likes to receive pitches – do they accept news releases or if it's more feature-based, do they prefer your pitch with a short media bio?***
- ***Have great images of you and your products/services to offer***
- ***Source a few good customer testimonials – media love case studies***

Spend some time doing this research during the month so you feel confident and clear about targeting an outlet you'd love to be featured in.

3) HOW TO ACTUALLY PITCH

Having worked in the PR industry for many years (and having been on the receiving end of pitches as a journalist before that!) I have some key advice for what to do and what not to do when it comes to pitching...

DO:

- *Have a subject line that succinctly says what you are contacting them about as many emails get deleted without ever being read!*
- *Remember that ultimately you are trying to persuade them politely to consider running a piece on you, so striking the right tone is vital.*
- *Get straight to the point and tell your story in a just a few sentences. Keep refining this to have the right "so what" impact!*
- *Say why the story matters to the outlet's audience if it's not obvious.*
- *Avoid using jargon or being salesy. It's about good content.*
- *Attach one great image (say if you have more) and add a link to your website or relevant social channels.*
- *Include your contact details and make yourself available!*

PITCHING + COLLABORATION

DON'T:

- *Don't assume that everyone you contact or pitch will take you up. Don't take it too personally. Be prepared for some no's, some not yet's and some radio silence!*
- *Don't become a stalker – yes, you should follow up but know when to try another avenue.*
- *Don't send pitches and then disappear as you may spoil your chances if they want to interview you.*
- *Don't forget to ask for permission from customers who give testimonials or are in images you want to use, especially if they are children.*
- *Don't promise an exclusive if you've pitched to several other media outlets.*
- *Don't say anything you don't want to see in print!*
- *Don't ask for sign off on the piece – if you want complete control it's best to pay for an ad.*

FINALLY...

Once you get some coverage from your pitching efforts (whoo!) it will feel GREAT! There are so many benefits that you can scoop up right away to maximise your coverage.

- *Make sure you share it widely yourself! Make some noise about your press coverage!*
- *Highlight the coverage on your website, socials and highlights. Take it to the next level!*
- *Look for new opportunities and keep going! Building a press portfolio can really set you apart as the expert or go-to person in your field which will then ripple into other opportunities for you.*

Most of all, remember that you absolutely have a story worth telling and value to give with what you do and offer. There are people out there that need to hear about your service or product and getting comfortable with pitching and sharing your unique story in the media is a great opportunity to reach them.

PITCHING + COLLABORATION

Now onto **COLLABORATION**...

Here's what we're going to look at:

- 1) When it's right to collaborate, the benefits of it and what collaboration really means.**
- 2) Setting clear expectations and standards when it comes to collaborating.**
- 3) Ideas for how to collaborate and the kinds of collaboration methods that can really bring mutual attention, community and connection within your offerings.**

1) WHEN IT'S RIGHT TO COLLABORATE

So many of us forget about collaboration. We are so busy trying to make our business work for us that we can forget to lean on others or build intentional connections to work collaboratively.

Collaborations are wonderful ways to:

- **Work with someone who will compliment your work.**
- **Get your work on a fresh set of eyes or new audience.**
- **Connect with someone who you might not usually have the opportunity to connect with.**
- **Build your own skills of communication and extend your creativity.**

There are some really significant times when collaborating with another brand or business might work best:

- **When you have something significant to launch and want to create some buzz.**
- **When you want to stretch your reach or feel like your customer pool needs a refresh.**
- **When there is a strong common cause to work together on.**

2) SETTING CLEAR EXPECTATIONS + STANDARDS FOR COLLABORATING

Choosing the right partner, brand or person to collaborate with is the key but having super clear expectations and standards about what you are doing is paramount.

- **Partner with people or brands you truly respect**
- **Keep your values in mind and communicate them from the outset.**
- **Ensure that whoever you choose to work with is clear about what roles you each play - create an agreement of work or responsibilities.**
- **Keep communication open and talk through what you would love to gain from the collaboration.**

PITCHING + COLLABORATION

3) IDEAS FOR HOW TO COLLABORATE

Not sure what to collaborate on? These five ideas can get you started:

- 1. Create a Webinar/Masterclass or Online Resource:** Any kind of virtual educational materials are ideally suited for collaborations. You can easily divide up the work based on topic and section and if you are offering something of real credible value, you will absolutely bolster credibility and broaden your reach!
- 2. Cross-promotions:** There are countless ways you can collaborate with others for a cross-promotion. You can mention each other on social media, create a joint hashtag, split a booth at a trade show or do take-overs on each other's platforms for a day.
- 3. Discounts and special offers:** Everybody loves a discount, so why not partner up for a special offer?
- 4. Run a contest or giveaway together:** This is one of the easiest and most fun collaborations you can do! The prizes can come from both businesses making the contest more attractive and bringing in plenty more people!
- 5. Create a co-branded product or service:** Create a new product or service that aligns well with both collaborating parties. This can be really effective when trying to bring together two different art forms or complimentary thinkers.

Now, write down your own collaboration ideas and who would you ideally love to partner with to extend your reach and make an impact.

Pitching and collaboration can be a really brilliant way to bring fresh eyes and ears to your work and give you the opportunity to showcase your offerings to new people and potential customers. I hope you find some inspiration and support in these worksheets to get your ideas swirling.!