



MARKETSHARE Through MINDSHARE™

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We see things differentlySM

Strategy for Proposals, Pitches and Presentations

Observations by **Jamie Stanco**

PMG's brand is strategic marketing, and it encompasses everything we do. Your brand should do the same. For example, when you prepare a proposal, pitch or presentation, always keep in mind that there are two major audiences that you must appeal to: Those who are present at the presentation...and those who are not.

The first group will no doubt be wowed by your dazzling personality and your modulated emphasis on key phrases, as much as the intricacies of the proposal. The latter will not get that benefit. They cannot hear the passion in your voice or view your team's aura or savoir-faire. That's why your written proposal or presentation must be tailored specifically to enfranchise those decision makers who are **not** in attendance. In order to do so, make sure you cover these bases:

① THINK STRATEGICALLY FROM SQUARE ONE

Before you start, itemize the reasons as to why you are making this effort. What is expected of you? What will you get out of this? How will you know it is a successful effort? What else can you do to ensure success?

Sounds simple, but most proposals, pitches and presentations fail because the goals are not codified. Think it through before you execute!

② ALWAYS HAVE BREAKFAST

Your presentation needs energy from the start. Make sure the unseen audience is able to sense your energy and passion. Make sure your written words convey every nuance you would normally express verbally.

③ LOOK GOOD

A well-designed, visibly professional proposal or presentation provides a psychological edge before the recipient ever opens it. Your proposal must be clean and well organized from the cover on inward. Contrast colors to keep people awake. Blending puts them to sleep. A good clean layout is superior to chockablock graphics. Don't crowd. Use functional white space always. Use graphics and charts only as needed for clarity, not for art's sake.

④ TELL IT LIKE IT IS

Should you include "Proposal" on the cover? Everybody in the decision making process knows what your proposal is about, right?

continued...



Proposals, Pitches and Presentations *continued*

Wrong! There may well be many others involved in the review and decision making processes who are not present. Always write for the total audience and assume that some readers are pass along. So if you're presenting a sales strategy proposal for XYZ Corporation, write "XYZ CORPORATION SALES PROPOSAL"...and write it big and bold. Leave nothing to the imagination.

5 COVER ALL THE BASES

Create a checklist of what items must be included in the proposal before you start it...and then check it...often! Make sure you have left nothing out. Then check it again.

6 BRAND YOURSELF

You know your brand. You know what makes you different...but does everyone else? Almost assuredly, not. So distill the big points, prioritize them in the way best suited for this audience and tell them how your brand gives them the real world advantages they are seeking.

7 YADDA YADDA

Content is vital. Make sure every word makes sense and is needed...or be a good surgeon and excise. Handle jargon and anecdotal industryspeak judiciously. If it is from your industry, lose it. If it is from your prospect's industry and it shows that you understand the machinations of that sector, keep it. But never inundate the reader.

8 SHORTER IS SWEETER

Break out your presentation into sections. Get to the point quickly, establish the rationale quickly and keep the pace moving. If you have to elucidate, footnotes and addenda will help streamline and keep readers focused, especially the post-presentation reviewer.

▶ **Jamie Stanco**, President of Progressive Marketing Group, Inc. is a recognized authority on strategic marketing and branding.

▶ The *ballerina linebacker* symbolizes PMG. We pride ourselves on the ability to provide strategic marketing services with the creative finesse of a ballerina and the tactical marketing power of a linebacker.

9 STAY ON TRACK

You are making the presentation for any of a litany of reasons. Make sure your reasons are clear from the potential client's viewpoint and not merely from your side. Tell them how much and how well you will... reduce costs...expand sales...streamline operations... improve relations, etc. That's the return on investment that must come across.

10 ASK AND RECEIVE

You want their business, so ask for it. Say it in person, codify it in your overview or cover letter, and include it in your mission statement for those readers who won't be there. Be natural, don't act as if you're doing them a favor. Just ask. When you walk out of the meeting make sure that they recognize that you're interested in their business. And make sure your written plea comes across as powerfully and as naturally as you say it in person.

Oh, and there's one more thing that you should always include.

TELL THEM WHO YOU ARE

Make sure you include IDENTITY in every written presentation...even if you think it makes your proposal clumsy, even if you think your prospect knows you. Include it for the benefit of the prospect who isn't there as well as the prospect you met who may not consider your proposal for a couple of weeks. Make sure everything you have written will be readily understood by all prospects...in this case, who you are and what you stand for. Include a company overview and a résumé/CV as it pertains to the proposal at hand.

AND GOOD LUCK!



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Is strategic market planning right for you?
Call us at 631-756-7160.

Or email us at news@pmgstrategic.com and let's discover the right answer for you.