

## Steps in pitching your trip

### Step 1 : Before you begin, know who you're pitching to

You probably have a very clear idea of why this trip matters, but this may not be the case for other stakeholders. Pitching a trip involves appealing to wide variety of needs. These needs vary considerably from one college to another and from one individual to another within a college, but our literature review, research findings, conversations with international offices, and personal experiences have revealed certain commonalities:

Understanding Needs from Different Perspectives					
You	Your students	Colleagues	Admin / International office	Funding agencies	Host country nationals
<p>Pedagogical objectives (e.g., I learned through immersion and so will my students)</p> <p>Personal objectives (e.g., job security; finding meaning in teaching)</p>	<p>Location, duration, and price (Garver &amp; Divine (2007)</p> <p>Promise of personal growth, career enhancement potential, whether graduation is delayed, and cost (Movassaghi, Unsal &amp; Göçer, 2014)</p>	<p>Added workload / being "voluntold" to aid in organizing / facilitating</p> <p>Lack of training for or comfort with teaching outside of the classroom</p> <p>Pedagogical concerns over trip's ability to meet objectives</p> <p>Fairness to students who are unable to participate</p> <p>Job security for themselves or others</p>	<p>Liability and the college's reputation</p> <p>Meeting goals in their strategic plan, such as student success and</p>	<p>Usually list goals on their websites</p> <p>Government funding agencies will usually want to see how FSA meets ministerial objectives (e.g., Visées de la formation collégiale / Visées de la formation Générale)</p>	<p>Reciprocity for their students and communities</p> <p>Pride in sharing their country, language and traditions</p> <p>Building international networks</p> <p>Income from tourism</p>

Once you know your audience's needs, think about how your trip will meet them. Daniel Pink (2012), author of *To Sell Is Human*, argues for a two-pronged approach: make it personal and make it purposeful. Making it personal means that, in addition to presenting the logical, factual arguments ([see the statistics on FSA](#)) to your audience, you must appeal to their human side: tell students that this is a way to make lifelong friendships; remind colleagues of how valuable contact with native speakers was in their own language-learning journey; explain to administrators how students will forever associate this transformative experience with your college. To make your pitch purposeful as well as emotional, appeal to your audience's better nature. People are more inclined to act when they feel called to a higher purpose. For example, Grant and Hofmann





(2011) found that bathroom signs that appealed to people's better nature (i.e., *Hand hygiene prevents patients from catching diseases*) were 10% more effective than those that appealed to people's self-interest (i.e., *Hand hygiene prevents you from catching diseases*). This logic also applies when pitching FSA. People know that it can be beneficial for personal and career growth, but what they often forget is that FSA is one of the basic building blocks of international cooperation. Solving today's toughest problems, like climate change, food insecurity, and human trafficking, requires a concerted, global effort, and young people need to be a part of the conversations. The tendency is to get caught up in the small picture – your pitch should remind people that FSA has a higher purpose than fun and school.

## Step 2: When you walk in the room or turn on your camera, consider how you're presenting yourself

Elsbach and Kramer (2003) studied Hollywood pitch meetings to identify commonalities among successful candidates. From their work, these researchers drew two conclusions. First, the Hollywood executives (the *catchers*) made snap judgments based on their initial perceptions of the pitchers. Second, successful pitchers found a way to team up with their catchers when presenting, so that, rather than a one-way pitch, it became a co-construction. To apply these findings to your pitch, think about who you are and how you can get buy-in. Are you an expert teacher with tons of experience? Are you a world traveller? Maybe you're a novice but are open to new ideas and have a track record for learning quickly. No matter who you are, remember to approach each pitch professionally and to take feedback as part of a learning process. If you can find the positive, constructive side in what your catchers are telling you, you can enlist their help in designing a better FSA program and win them over.

## Step 3: Begin your pitch by telling a story

Win both the hearts and the minds of your audience with a captivating story. Open your pitch with an anecdote to show how your idea will meet the catchers' needs and make a difference. Sources of stories include...

- Your experiences – If SA changed your life, this could be a great way to convey your enthusiasm and to show its lasting effects.
- Past students – Participants in our research argued that there couldn't be a more convincing sales pitch than testimonials from past students extolling the virtues of FSA.
- A made-up scenario – Present a scenario in which a fictitious student meets the FSA program objectives: or compare two students, one who completes the program and one who doesn't.
  - For example, imagine you're interviewing two students for a job. They have similar grades from the same program at the same college. The only difference is that one of them, in addition to meeting the requirements for the job, completed a two-week international internship during which she learned to interact, work, and communicate with people in another country. The choice is obvious.

A story can help to connect the dots and to show your catchers how FSA can meet real-life objectives.

## Step 4: Cover the details

A value proposition is an answer to the question "What does your trip do?" (Cote, 2020). At the end of your pitch, the catchers should know how your FSA differs from other programs and how it meets the needs of stakeholders. Is your trip unique because it includes an internship or volunteer work? Do you have access to funding to enable underprivileged students to participate? Is your FSA a reciprocal exchange that could lead to other collaborative ventures with an overseas partner? If so, make sure your catchers walk away with a clear sense of how that's going to happen. You may even want to have a tag line or slogan for your trip to encapsulate that idea and to use in promotional social media material.





## Step 5: Show them a road map

The key to a good pitch, according to Pink (2012), is ensuring that your catchers know the very next step. They should leave the meeting ready to pass on their approval to your administrators, or to sign off on the project, or to provide your international office with grant money. In the case of FSA, they should also see where this is leading in the long term. Will this trip eventually become the foundation for an entire curriculum? Will you be a leader in the college community and provide a model for others to emulate? Will this increase enrolment in your program? Will this lead to a lasting partnership overseas? Showing the long-term possibilities will help people to invest in your program for the future.

