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Center for Advanced  
Energy Studies

# Elevator Pitch Template

VALUE CREATION TOOLKIT



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A guide to creating a compelling  
pitch to communicate effectively  
with your sponsors, customers,  
and collaborators

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CO★STAR provides a framework for innovators to crystallize their thinking, and is a vehicle for determining the full potential of their innovative ideas.

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**C**ustomer  
**O**ppportunity  
**S**olution  
**T**eam  
**A**dvantage  
**R**esults

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## ELEMENTS OF A CO★STAR VALUE PROPOSITION

A deep understanding of target **CUSTOMERS** is essential for developing an idea that they will be perceived as highly valuable. Bring your potential external (DOE funders, industry users, scientific community, etc.) or internal (lab staff, etc.) customers to life by capturing the nuances of their profile. Ask yourself, “Who are the customers for my idea and what are their relevant interests, motivations, and unmet needs? What is the problem I am solving for them and why is it important?”

What's the size and potential of the **OPPORTUNITY** presented by the customer problem? What is the addressable market/mission you are targeting? What technological, economic, environmental, etc. trends support your thinking? How might you capture a bolder and more inspired vision of what could be done?

What's your **SOLUTION** for satisfying the identified need and seizing the opportunity? How will your solution work? What are the key features and functions, inputs and outputs? What new technologies or intellectual property are incorporated in your solution?

Who needs to be on the **TEAM** to ensure your solution's success? Consider the eco-system in which you operate and look for partners (industry or universities), suppliers, influencers, other departments, customers, etc.. What domain skills do you need to address the technical, market, or business model aspects of your solution? Who is already signed up to be on the team and who should be added?

What is your “unfair” **ADVANTAGE** over the alternatives? How competitive is the space, and what are the available options to your solution (by name or type). How is your solution novel? How does it perform significantly better than alternatives? What's the “secret sauce”/IP that ensures your solution advances the field or compares favorably with the latest published work?

What **RESULTS** will be achieved from your solution? What are the quantifiable benefits to the customer (funder, users, etc.) and estimated returns to your lab. How do partners and key stakeholders benefit in tangible or intangible ways?

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## The Hook

*Begin with a compelling question, fact, or statement that generates curiosity*

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Who is the **customer** and what is their unmet need?

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O

What is the **opportunity**?

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S

What is your **solution**?

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T

Who needs to be on the **team**?

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A

What is your competitive **advantage**?

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R

What **results** will you achieve?

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## The Help

*Conclude with a specific request regarding next steps. A meeting? Resources?*

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# WHAT'S A CO★STAR PITCH?

A short (1-3 minute) persuasive, easy-to-repeat story or value proposition intended to generate interest and support for your idea.

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## INSTRUCTIONS

Use the template on the previous page to craft your three part pitch:

- 1. The Hook:** You want to get the attention of your listeners with a short, compelling summary statement that demonstrates to them that you have a unique solution to a big problem. A typical start is a question or statement such as: "What if...?" or "imagine..." or "80m. people today suffer from..." (numbers are always compelling), followed by a single sentence claim about what you have in mind to deal with the problem.
- 2. The Highlights:** Select the relevant elements from your CO-STAR Value Proposition. This is the summary of the problem and the opportunity, of the unique solution you can deliver, and of the results that can be expected from your solution that far surpass the alternatives.
- 3. The Help:** Conclude your pitch with a request, a next step: what support are you looking for? A meeting? A prototype? Some research? Money? Time? People? Introductions to others?

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## TIPS

Build your credibility, and the "stickiness" of your idea by:

- ★ Adapting your pitch to the given situation and your audience
- ★ Telling a brief story or anecdote
- ★ Using metaphors and analogies
- ★ Offering up facts and figures – quantitative information is *persuasive*. If you have no specific data yet, start with a "best guess"
- ★ Showing a diagram, displaying mock-ups or conduct a demonstration
- ★ Sharing your passion

Remember: When it comes to an elevator pitch, less is more. You are aiming to give just enough information to get people curious, get their feedback and get them to want more, to want to participate further.

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