

FUTURE DOCS 2019 / GUIDE TO PITCHING

PITCH LENGTH

You will have 7 minutes to present. (That's around 1000 words.) Timing is important!

This will be followed by 8 minutes of feedback and discussion with the people in the room.

PITCH CONTENT

Focus on the information filmmakers need to decide if your story can inspire their documentary work.

Some information is important but won't fit into 7 minutes. This includes supporting data and background information about your activism. Prepare notes on this content and bring them to the pitch.

DOS & DON'TS

Do write what you will say, time yourself rehearsing, and get lots of practice.

Do use visuals and other non-verbal content to bring your pitch to life.

Do follow the framework below to select and organize your content, but structure your pitch in the sequence you think is best.

Do choose a memorable start and a persuasive ending.

Do prepare at-a-glance Q&A notes on your work, relevant data, and access to people and institutions.

Do remember that a pitch is most convincing when it relates to your personal experience.

Don't create an idea for a film. That's a filmmaker's job. Focus on your subject and experiences.

Don't analyze a human rights issue at length. Your goal is to share specific stories.

Don't read bullet points off of slides.

I. WHO ARE YOU?

Your very brief, relevant, and memorable bio. What kind of work do you do? What organization or organizations do you represent? Do you have an unusual interest or achievement? Try to establish credibility, lend expertise to your proposal, and make yourself and your pitch easy to remember.

II. WHAT STORY DO YOU WANT TO TELL?

Introduce your subject in a compelling way. Is this an urgent crisis or is it a long-standing injustice? How does it represent or affect a larger community? Concentrate on actual people, places, and events. Are there other subjects you considered that you want to mention?

III. WHO IS YOUR AUDIENCE?

You will be addressing your pitch to a group of documentary filmmakers with a wide range of styles and temperaments. Do you want to narrow your focus to someone who is especially empathetic, journalistic, or artistic?

VI. WHAT IS YOUR INSPIRATION?

What visuals, objects, or sounds will you show to help bring your subject to life? Remember that some non-verbal messages can speak louder and more clearly than words.

IV. HOW CAN A FILM MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Why does this story deserve to be told? How do you think a film can complement your activism?

V. HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Do you see a role for yourself behind the scenes? Can you help with access to people and institutions? Can you supply research? Can your NGO help with accommodations, translation, or funding?