

PITCH DECK FOR FICTION AND NONFICTION FEATURE FILMS

A written and visual presentation that introduces a project to potential partners by sharing the creative vision, filmmaking team, and risks and rewards of investing in the film.

Note: There is no one right way. Please use this outline as a guide only. Every film is different and every pitch deck will be different. The pitch deck is not a legal document, but rather an outline of the elements of your project geared towards potential collaborators (e.g. investors, organizations to partner with, cast or participants, key crew). The order of this information and overall design are up to you.

Questions to ask yourself as you create your deck:

- Who is your audience? You may have to create different versions of the deck for different audiences (e.g. an independent financier vs. a studio, a potential producer vs. a potential participant in your documentary)
- Is it consistent and cohesive? Make sure that your deck remains consistent with the creative vision for the project. As the project evolves, so must the deck
- Is it a lookbook or a pitch deck? A Director's lookbook may focus on the story and imagery, while a "pitch deck" is more holistic and most often will be geared towards potential investors or partners.

Narrative: Remember, narrative is paramount. Not only are you telling the story of your project, but you are telling a story through your pitch deck of how you want that project to be introduced. Your goal is to evoke the feelings and humanity of the people in your story. Through striking visuals and succinct text, you are guiding your audience. You control the narrative.

Design: Consider a consistent look across your materials. Simplicity and concision are recommended where possible. Keeping your written text brief, and emphasizing legibility in your design (read: font size!) will be crucial in holding the reader's attention. That's not to say that you shouldn't get creative or in-depth here—but make your most essential details pop and stand out.

Tools/Software: Consider using Keynote, PowerPoint, Google Slides, or Canva to create your deck and professional design software like Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, Sketch, or InDesign - or hiring a graphic designer - to elevate your materials.

Key pieces we recommend including in your pitch deck:

Cover page: Title of project, Project title, and director/producer names (+ company name and classification (LLC, S Corp, C Corp, etc), if relevant). Consider using a single image to sell your film idea and ground the reader.

Logline: One or two-sentence summary of your film.

Synopsis: A brief summary of the film's story. You don't have to include the entire story, from beginning to middle to end. Be selective. Make it compelling.

Director/Filmmaker Statement: The vision. What was the creative impetus or spark for the project? Why do you want to make this film, what inspires you, and what it means to you. Make it personal. Articulate why you love your film and why you believe it will be successful. Include any special elements that add value to the project such as secured cast or participants (nonfiction), whether the project is based on a book or article, or other details you want to highlight.

Artistic Approach: Describe the look, tone, and feel of the film. Articulate the cinematic approach such as camera/cinematography, lighting, sound, location/setting, and any other specific filmmaking tools and textures. Specify how these elements will enhance the storytelling experience. You might also include several creative references for the project (e.g. other films, photographers, or artists).

Timeline: Recognizing that this may not be within your control, it is still important for the project to feel urgent and that you have a plan to move it forward. Outline when production starts/ends, post-production starts/ends, estimated film completion date, and festival/distribution submission date goal. This may be challenging for a documentary, but some guideposts for production and post will be helpful to give an idea of the scope of the project.

Casting (fiction): Include headshots and credits for the cast attached to your project with brief character descriptions for the primary roles. If you do not yet have the cast attached, include your casting "wish list" - just be mindful that your appetite is appropriate for the budget and marketplace value of your project. If you include an actor who takes a \$10M fee per film and your budget is \$2M, you must be prepared to defend that choice otherwise it undermines your project as a realistic proposition.

Participants (nonfiction): Who is the story about? What is your connection to them? Your access?

Locations (fiction): Consider including images that convey the story landscape. If you know where the project will shoot, you can include photos of the actual environment: exteriors, interiors, etc. Otherwise, you can utilize images from elsewhere (eg. other films, google) that demonstrate the look and feel of the story world.

Budget Summary: Identify the total gross budget. While not required, sometimes filmmakers include the top page of the budget listing major budget categories (Development, Production, Administration, Post Production, Distribution, etc.) to show how funds will be allocated.

Financing Plan: List the amount raised to date (if any), the source of all funds raised to date, and the amount needed to complete the film. In your fundraising plan, include committed and

pending grants, donations, investment financing, pre-sales and tax incentives. Please also include your legal entity's classification (LLC, S Corp, C Corp, etc.).

Be realistic and make sure you state there is no guarantee of seeing a profit, but emphasize the investment opportunity, not the risk. Feel free to include other incentives as well, ie. "second bottom line" and "impact" considerations (see "Impact Plan" below).

Marketing & Distribution Approach: Who is the audience for this film, and how will you get to them? Address distribution goals, all potential revenue streams, and audience engagement. These strategies form the foundation for how you will be able to return investor capital and align goals in audience reach and future decisions tied to sales options.

Comparable Films ("Comps"): Offer comparable films in theme, tone, aesthetic, storytelling, subject, or scope to give the funders an idea of the finished film and a sense of where it may land in the marketplace. Unlike a financial comp which suggests the financial goals for your film, a creative comp shows audience interest for your film (no figures). If possible, keep references current (e.g. from the last 2-5 years) and be ready to answer additional questions from funders.

Separately, financial comps can be tricky. Given the volatile marketplace and increasing number of streamer acquisitions, it can be difficult to project your film's performance in the marketplace or get accurate numbers on potential comps. Be aware of how films like yours have fared (with theatrical, VOD or Streamer releases) but note that financial comps will most likely be anecdotal rather than a part of your deck.

Impact Plan: If applicable, list your outreach partners (committed and potential), such as NGOs, foundations, tastemakers, community partners, and other stakeholders that will help you build an audience and get the word out. If there is a social justice impact strategy, include that as well.

Creative Team Bios: Include your professional bio and describe your past success stories. Option to include a photo or headshot. Call out other key crew like the Executive Producer, DP, Editor, Casting Director—especially if they have notable credits. You may also consider linking to your earlier work.

Past Work: Include project posters and accolades, notable casting, and critical or financial success, especially if investors were made whole. You can also include a direct link to previous work (e.g. a proof of concept short or mood reel).

Grants and Support: Consider including a list of any grants, sponsorships, partnerships, or fellowships that have supported the project.

End Page: List the point of contact for the project, along with that person's email address, phone number, and LLC or fiscal sponsorship info on the last page of the deck. The point of contact can be the lead producer and the director or just the lead producer.

Addendum Insert to consider once you begin soliciting financing:

Credit Offerings:

Include your tiering of credits tied to levels of both investments and non-recoupable grants. If you have a fiscal sponsor, it is important to note that here as this will enable you to accept non-recoupable grant money.

Additional Optional Elements:

- Letters of interest
- Press coverage
- Feature stories on lead actors, director or subjects
- Background articles on the topic, story or issue
- Option agreements (if applicable)
- Distribution agreements (if applicable)
- Agreements relating to the film's music (if applicable)