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# INTRODUCTION

Pitching is a special kind of public speaking. It requires bravery to stand in front of powerful people and propose something new. Pitching is about stripping down your idea to its barest essentials; and then selling it with conviction, passion and commitment.

Executives at my old company required all young engineers to pitch their designs and plans—no exceptions—starting with the first year of their employment. The pressure was nerve-wracking, but I don't recall any loss of life. Hands down, it was the greatest lesson I learned in the world of business.

After 50 years in engineering, I have never seen an engineer dismissed for incompetence; but I have seen many careers ruined, because an engineer could not speak and write well. Pitching is a superb trial by fire—one to encourage engineers to recognize the incredible value of public speaking—to both themselves, and the companies they represent. Good corporate pitchers ascend the ladder to senior management, and become the leaders of tomorrow.

I hope this short volume provides some perspective and valuable insights into giving an effective “pitch.”

"Our greatest weakness lies in giving up.  
The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time."

*~Thomas Edison*

***~Harry T. Roman  
IEEE Life Senior Member***

# ORIGINS OF THE PITCH

For all practical purposes, we pitch new ideas all the time, as do others. We constantly strive to convince others of our thoughts and ideas. Just think about what goes on during political gatherings, and all the discussions centered around upcoming elections. People constantly present information that supports their political, social, or personal viewpoints and actions. They are pitching to folks around them. It's a basic human activity for which we are all equipped. Pitches are everywhere, if we pay attention.

Homespun stories vary about the genesis of the pitch. A favorite one is to use the limited free time of an executive (Often, the thirty seconds to two minutes one typically needs to ride an elevator) to pitch a new idea. Very short and to the point, this kind of pitch can be done almost anywhere inside a company. It could lead to a decision on-the-spot; or more likely, an executive's agreement to listen to a full-blown, more formal pitch.

Anyone who has listened to a door-to-door salesman knows what a pitch is; or who has answered a ringing phone—to discover they are the target of a cold marketing call. Somebody has a “spiel” they are going to tell you and others about. Watch out. Here comes the pitch.

At one point or another, we have been the pitcher and the receiver of this oral activity; but the pitch we discuss in this book is a more formal talk—one designed to make something significant happen. It requires skill, and plenty of practice, to make this kind of high-energy pitch successful.

By the way, for parents reading this e-book, think about how often you try to convince your children to do, or not to do, something. They are not likely to listen to lengthy explanations, any more than an executive waiting for you to make your point in a formal pitch session.

"Motivation will almost always beat mere talent."

*~Norman Ralph Augustine*