

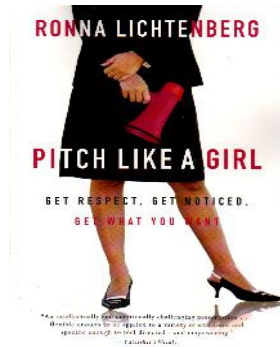
Pitch Like A Girl

How a Woman Can Be Herself and Still Succeed

About the Author



Ronna Lichtenberg, the author of *Work Would Be Great if it Weren't for the People*, is currently a contributing editor for *O* magazine and has been the business and career expert for Lifetime Television's *Lifetime Live*. She is CEO of Clear Peak Communications, a management consulting and training firm. A frequent contributor to NBC's *Weekend Today*, she has been featured on Bloomberg, CNBC, Fox, ABC, and in the pages of the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times*.



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■ The Big Idea

“You throw like a girl” used to be the ultimate in playground put-downs. As adults, however, women can learn how to pitch their ideas in a way that’s true to them and can ultimately score them what they’re after – be it a promotion, backing for a new venture, or securing that next big account.

Ronna Lichtenberg’s funny and candid know-how helps women understand the fundamental gender, hormonal, and cultural systems that affect their work and emotional lives every day. Her advice helps women improve their pitching, from warming up and preparation through execution and closing.

Learn to:

- Get in touch with what you really want.
- Find your natural “pitching” style.
- Discover what you need to know about other people to get them to support you.
- Package requests so that people will say yes.
- Talk about money with confidence and without selling yourself short.

“Close” on an agreement without feeling like you’ve put a good relationship at risk.

Why You Need This Book

This book can help any woman who's ever felt the bump of the glass ceiling against her forehead.

THE BASICS OF PINK AND BLUE

A person with a pink style is someone who wants to connect with you before doing business with you. A “pink” will first mention the weather, your bull dog, your handbag, your shoes, your vacation – something, anything, before getting down to the business at hand.

Now, blues, on the other hand, are the opposite of pinks. They place a high priority on what is called task – just getting the job done. Someone with a blue style either just isn't naturally a “people person” or wants to keep his or her emotional connections outside the office.

Here are some tips on how to tell who's who:

How to Spot a Pink

- First sentence after hello is, “I love your shoes!”
- Introduces herself by telling you something about herself, her family, or her pets.
- Has pictures of people in her life at work.
- Expresses discomfort with hierarchy, even when she's the boss.
- Makes a point of offering food/beverages whenever people meet.
- Seems to feel funny talking about money (other than talking about spending it!)
- Believes in win/win.

- Talks about creativity and passion.
- Starts meeting by asking for everyone's attention.
- Dresses to express herself.

How to Spot a Blue

- No greetings or sign-offs on e-mails.
- Introduces herself with credentials.
- Has awards on display.
- Proud of military service.
- Talks about wanting to make sure she is positioned properly.
- Talks about cost control and managing the balance sheet.
- Believes there are winners and losers.
- Very comfortable with hierarchy.
- Wants other people to "get to the point."
- Starts meetings by starting the meeting.
- Dresses conservatively, but with something that makes a statement (like big jewelry).

THE THREE THINGS THAT CAN HOLD YOU BACK, IN QUICK TIME

No. 1: Biology. Understanding biological differences, including the potential advantages of having a woman's brain, is the first step to becoming truly successful. It helps you understand how best to manage "them," but more important, how to manage yourself – your own reactions, emotions and desires.

No. 2: Stereotypes. These stereotypes, although much more subtle than they used to be, still exist: for example, the conflicting stereotypes about what makes a woman seem feminine and what makes someone seem authoritative.

No. 3: Negative self-beliefs. Recognizing those beliefs in ourselves, and learning how to manage them, helps us take charge of our lives. And, as we all know but as we all always forget, changing how we see the world, and how we behave in it, is the only way to get someone else to change how they behave toward us.

THE TOP EIGHT BRAIN SEX DIFFERENCES AND WHAT THEY MEAN FOR YOU

1. Women's brains are built to multitask.

Pitching advantages:

- ✓ Will consider more variables
- ✓ More likely to anticipate downsides
- ✓ Can offer more options
- ✓ Can appear to be more flexible

Pitching challenges:

- ✓ Can appear unfocused
- ✓ Discussion of options can be time-consuming

2. Talking is a great shared activity for women

Pitching advantages:

- ✓ Lots of verbal pitches (but not all)
- ✓ If pitching someone else who likes to talk, great opportunity for bonding
- ✓ Can find out a lot about prospects
- ✓ Potential for powerful networking, especially with other women

Pitching challenges:

- ✓ May be perceived as not getting to the point
- ✓ May overwhelm listener

- ✓ May not enjoy/may feel excluded from male bonding activities, like duck hunting and fishing, where talking is really not the point
- ✓ Easy to talk past the close

3. Women and men don't keep score the same way

Pitching advantages:

- ✓ Has appeal beyond the narrow bottom line
- ✓ Finds high value in relationships
- ✓ Can define success to include life outside work
- ✓ Ability to connect to others via shared interests and commitments (like the bond between working moms)

Pitching challenges:

- ✓ May not go after specific victories as aggressively
- ✓ Sends signals that are confusing to others who define achievement in classic male terms
- ✓ Relationship added-value (even with clients) is often not recognized by employers/companies

4. Women are bombarded with nonverbal cues

Pitching advantages:

- ✓ Easier to see how pitch is being received and modify as necessary
- ✓ More information about potential likes and dislikes
- ✓ Easier to read another person's style (learning and emotional) and make adjustments

Pitching challenges:

- ✓ Can be distracted by too many signals
- ✓ May overreact to signs of initial resistance: may see/hear them as "louder" than they are meant to be
- ✓ Can find it difficult to keep on course in the absence of signals (the impassive listener)

5. Women have an easier time accessing, processing, and talking about emotions

Pitching advantages:

- ✓ Bringing passion to a pitch
- ✓ Can establish emotional connection quickly

Pitching challenges:

- ✓ May press for emotional reactions from people who can't/won't give them
- ✓ Potential to be really hurt by lack of connection, even at a casual level (lack of a hello)

6. Women prefer people to symbols

Pitching advantages:

- ✓ See human side of issues; critical for further selling-in
- ✓ Grounded in reality and nitty-gritty of human concerns
- ✓ Less likely to speak/write in "code"
- ✓ Potential to effectively use power of stories

Pitching challenges:

- ✓ May still have some degree of discomfort with math
- ✓ Men we pitch to likely to be more impressed with models and code than with stories/human interest

7. Women are wired to choose from the sexual buffet

Pitching advantages:

- ✓ Attractive women sometimes have an edge
- ✓ Sex appeal is powerful and can be used effectively

Pitching challenges:

- ✓ Concerns about undesired attention
- ✓ Potential for criticism for use of sexual attractiveness, whether intentional or not
- ✓ Women who are "too" attractive may not be taken seriously

8. Relationship stressors have more impact on women

Pitching advantages:

- ✓ Motivates desire to deepen and strengthen existing relationships

- ✓ Indirect approaches to resolving conflict can leave door open to future exchanges

Pitching challenges:

- ✓ Can be problematic in closing, which often involves a brief relationship stressor
- ✓ One reason why money discussions can be so hard
- ✓ Creates potential for “victim head” (why does this *always* happen to me?)

PROSPECTING MISTAKES

Here are a few other no-nos to keep in mind while prospecting:

- Don't assume a senior-level woman will support you just because she's a woman. Maybe she will and she won't. Shared gender is not sufficient reason to expect a busy woman to help you.
- If you offer no benefit to the prospect, *stay away*. Go find someone else to play ball with you.
- If you must forge ahead anyway, at least acknowledge your debt. This is one that guys often get right: When asking a professional favor, they will say frankly, “I owe you one.”
- Don't automatically go for the easy prospect. Remember that the most approachable and accessible prospect is often not the best prospect because he is everybody else's prospect too.
- Don't forget your boss is a prospect too.
- Don't neglect the people who can say no.

PRICING THE PITCH

To add value to whatever you are promoting/selling/tooting, focus on these ABCs.

Appearance: People pay more for something that looks good.

- Dress/groom appropriately for the situation.
- Dress your idea appropriately (good grammar, typing, paper, handouts, copies, printing, etc.)
- Make the product, even a prototype, high quality.

Benefit: People value, and therefore pay more for, what fits their needs.

- Do your homework; learn all you can about the situation, people, and business you are approaching.
- Look for what in your experience is common to (not exactly the same as) the current situation.
- Focus on the other's needs, reactions, etc.

Clarity: People like you to be clear, concise, and specific about the value you add.

- Identify your strengths and be able to state them succinctly, with relevance.
- Don't volunteer your weaknesses, but know them and be prepared to share the least threatening if needed.
- Be selective in what you premium price.

DELIVERING THE PITCH

When You Pitch to a Blue

1. Cover one topic at a time.
2. Stay with logic.
3. Use numbers more than words.

4. When listening, keep your face still and avoid offering too many verbal affirmations.
5. If it's important that you have a longer talk with him, see if you can do it during an activity. If golf isn't your bag, at least give him a stress ball to squeeze, or meet somewhere he can pace around the room if need be.
6. Explain the advantage of your offering in competitive terms.
7. Limit the use of personal stories to illustrate points. If you do use them, make the connection for him in advance and after you've done it. Otherwise, use stories that refer to others who are successful.
8. Use visual illustrations, preferably charts and graphs, not pictures of people.
9. Defer to his rank if he is your superior.
10. Avoid excessive use of color or subtle shades he might not be able to see.

When You Pitch To A Pink

1. Make spatial and abstract concepts real. Use examples to get them off the page and into life.
2. Tie the benefit to people beyond her, people she cares about.
3. If she toggles between emotion and ideas, recognize it as a sign that she wants to connect with you.
4. Don't be surprised if she brings up an old emotional pain that is influencing her current decision. You don't need to fix it; just make it clear you've heard it.
5. Expect that she is going to want to talk about you and your offering to someone else she trusts and that their opinion will matter a lot.
6. Show her you are listening by giving her facial cues and verbal affirmations.
7. Make points by using personal stories, or stories about individuals.

8. Let her talk.
9. Use more than one color, as well as pictures of faces.
10. If there is a way you can appeal to more than one sense at the same time, do so.

TIPS FROM TV

Tip No. 1: Get in your “must airs”. Every pitcher should have her must airs – an agenda that you make sure you get across. Yes, you want to be responsive to your buyer and his agenda as well, but you have to be in control of your own game.

Tip No. 2: Sit up really straight. The way you carry yourself, particularly the way you sit, matters a lot to your prospects’ assessment of you. It also makes your thighs look slimmer.

Tip No. 3: Fake confidence. The way to physically fake confidence is to keep your shoulders down and back, your chest lifted, and your head up. And smile. Research shows that if you force yourself to smile, the very act of curving your lips will release hormones that will automatically make you feel better.

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