

# PITCH PERFECT

## Norms:

- Hard on the content, soft on the people
- Be kind, helpful and specific
- Share the air (or “step up, step back”)

## Protocol (20 min total):

1. **Overview** (5 min) – Presenter gives an *overview of the pitch* and explains the overall *goals* for the project. It may be helpful for the presenter to put the project into the broader context of what is happening in the world. What inspired this project? How will the target audience benefit? Participants then may have an opportunity to *quietly look at “the work”* (e.g. project handout, examples of similar work, etc.). Finally, the presenter shares a dilemma by *framing a question* for the critical friends group to address during the discussion. What is the thing that most worries you about this project?
2. **Clarifying Questions** (2 min) – Critical friends ask *clarifying* questions of the presenter. Clarifying questions have brief, factual answers and are intended to help the person asking the question develop a deeper understanding of the dilemma. An example of a clarifying question is “How will groups be chosen for this activity?”
3. **Probing Questions** (3 min) – Critical friends ask *probing* questions of the presenter. Probing questions help the presenter expand his/her thinking about the dilemma. However, probing questions should not be “advice in disguise”, such as “Have you considered...?” An example of a probing question is “How can you adjust if things take longer than you expected?”
4. **Discussion** (5 min) – The presenter reframes the dilemma question if necessary and then physically steps back from the group. The group discusses the dilemma and attempts to provide insight on the question raised by the presenter.
  - **Positive feedback:** It is helpful to begin with positive feedback, such as “What strengths do we see in the project design?”
  - **Opportunities for growth:** Next, the group takes a more critical analysis of the pitch, using the question proposed by the presenter to frame the discussion. For example, “What isn’t the presenter considering?” or “I wonder what would happen if...”.

The presenter is not allowed to speak during the discussion, but should listen and take notes. It is a good idea for the presenter to physically sit outside of the circle and for the group to close in the circle without the presenter. *Resist the urge to speak directly to the presenter.*

5. **Response** (3 min) – The presenter has the opportunity to respond to the discussion. It is not necessary to respond point by point to what others said. The presenter may share what struck him/her and what next steps might be taken as a result of the ideas generated by the discussion.
6. **Debrief** (2 min) – The facilitator leads a conversation about the group’s observation of the project tuning process. One mark of a good facilitator is his or her ability to lead a good debrief. Questions posed to the group might include:
  - Did we have a good question? How well did we stick to the question?
  - To what extent was this process helpful for the presenter? Did our probing questions really push his/her thinking? Did our ideas from the discussion provide insight into possible next steps?
  - Was there a moment when the conversation made a turn for the better? Was there any point where we went off track?
  - How did we do embodying our norms? (e.g. “hard on the content, soft on the people”, “step up/step back”, etc.)

Resist the urge to turn the debrief back to a discussion of the dilemma.