

# “Pitching Research” ... to an academic expert – a difficult task made easier

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[http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2462059](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2462059)



**Question:** How can we help **NOVICE RESEARCHERS** overcome the despair of feeling totally clueless and utterly lost at the **beginning** of their research journey?

Or, alternatively ...

**Question:** How can we help time poor and heavily over-committed **RESEARCH MENTORS** overcome the despair of feeling totally confused and mentally swamped by excessive, random and disconnected ideas created by their junior research partners?

**Answer:** provide a simple **2-page template** tool, SO THAT a novice researcher can confidently and succinctly convey all the essential elements of a new research proposal to an academic expert.

The details can be found in “Pitching Research”, a paper downloadable from SSRN:<sup>1</sup>

[http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2462059](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2462059)

- The paper sets out a simple and methodical approach to pitching a new empirical research proposal.
- A 2-page pitching **template** is provided with general advice on how best to apply it.
- “Pitching Research” was recently showcased by **AACSB** as an “Innovation that Inspires”<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

Building on Faff’s (2015) pitching template, in the current paper I further explore a methodical approach to pitching a new research proposal. Emphasis is given to providing general advice to both “pitchers” and “pitchees”. Moreover, the current paper provides an update on an extensive array of supplementary online resources. Most notably, to demonstrate broad “proof of concept” and that the pitch template is readily adaptable to many fields, a library of completed examples currently spans **SEVENTY THREE** alternative research areas, including: (1) corporate finance; (2) accounting; (3) corporate sustainability; (4) inter-disciplinary; (5) qualitative; (6) management; (7) chemistry; (8) mechanical engineering; (9) computer science; (10) mathematics; (11) physics; (12) healthcare; (13) psychology; (14) strategy; (15) governance; (16) sport; (17) energy policy; (18) climate change; (19) research policy; (20) taxation; ... (30) multidisciplinary (climate science); ... (40) consumer marketing; ... (50) sociology. Other online materials and support include: web portal (PitchMyResearch.com); YouTube videos; themed pitch days; pitching competitions. The current paper is a companion to: Faff (2016a) “a year in review” of pitching<sup>3</sup> and Faff (2016b) mapping “Pitching Research” Tasks into the RSD7 Framework.<sup>4</sup> Also, this project has been identified as one of 30 Innovations that Inspire across the AACSB network worldwide Business Schools.<sup>5</sup>

Overleaf is the pitching template with “cued” advice on how to go about completing each part.

<sup>1</sup> NB: when on a university campus, download can be problematic due to firewall restrictions. Alternatively, downloading from off campus should work easily by using this link.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.aacsb.edu/about/awards/innovations-that-inspire/recipients/>

<sup>3</sup> Faff, Robert W., The “Pitching Research” Concept: 2015, a Year in Review (January 25, 2016a). Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2721528> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2721528>

<sup>4</sup> Faff, Robert W., Mapping ‘Pitching Research’ Tasks into the RSD7 Framework: A Pedagogic Perspective (January 29, 2016b). Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=2724451>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/pitching-research-recognised-aacsb-international-global-robert-faff>

## Faff (2015) Pitching Template with Cues

Pitcher's Name	Your name here	FoR category	Field of Research	Date Completed	Insert date here
<b>(A) Working Title</b>	Succinct/informative title here				
<b>(B) Basic Research Question</b>	IN one sentence, define the <b>key</b> features of the research question.				
<b>(C) Key paper(s)</b>	Identify the key paper(s) which most critically underpin the topic (just standard reference details). Ideally one paper, but at most 3 papers. Ideally, by “gurus” in the field, either recently published in Tier 1 journal(s) or recent working paper e.g. on SSRN.				
<b>(D) Motivation/Puzzle</b>	IN one short paragraph (say a max of 100 words) capture the core academic motivation – which may include identifying a “puzzle” that you hope to resolve.				
<b>THREE</b>	<b>Three</b> core aspects of any empirical research project i.e. the “ <b>IDioTs</b> ” guide				
<b>(E) Idea?</b>	Identify the “core” idea that drives the intellectual content of this research topic. If possible, articulate the central hypothesis(es). Identify the key dependent (“explained”) variable and the key test/independent (“explanatory”) variable(s). Is there any serious threat from endogeneity here? If so, what is the identification strategy? Is there a natural experiment or exogenous shock that can be exploited? Is there any theoretical “tension” that can be exploited?				
<b>(F) Data?</b>	<p>(1) What data do you propose to use? e.g. country/setting; Why? Unit of analysis? Individuals, firms, portfolios, industries, countries ...? sample period; sampling interval? Daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annual, ... Type of data: firm specific vs. industry vs. macro vs. ...?</p> <p>(2) What sample size do you expect? Cross-sectionally? In Time-series/longitudinal?</p> <p>(3) Is it a panel dataset?</p> <p>(4) Data Sources? Are the data commercially available? Any hand-collecting required? Are the data to be created based on your own survey instrument? Or by interviews? Timeframe? Research assistance needed? Funding/grants? Are they novel new data?</p> <p>(5) Will there be any problem with missing data/observations? Database merge issues? Data manipulation/“cleansing” issues?</p> <p>(6) Will your “test” variables exhibit adequate (“meaningful”) variation to give good power? Quality/reliability of data?</p> <p>(7) Other data obstacles? E.g. external validity? construct validity?</p>				
<b>(G) Tools?</b>	Basic empirical framework and research design? Is it a regression model approach? Survey instrument issues/design? Interview design? Econometric software needed/appropriate for job? Accessible through normal channels? Knowledge of implementation of appropriate or best statistical/econometric tests? Compatibility of data with planned empirical framework? Is statistical validity an issue?				
<b>TWO</b>	<b>Two</b> key questions				
<b>(H) What's New?</b>	Is the novelty in the idea/data/tools? Which is the “driver”, and are the “passengers” likely to pull their weight? Is this “Mickey Mouse” [i.e. can you draw a simple Venn diagram to depict the novelty in your proposal?]				
<b>(I) So What?</b>	Why is it important to know the answer? How will major decisions/behaviour/activity etc be influenced by the outcome of this research?				
<b>ONE</b>	<b>One</b> bottom line				
<b>(J) Contribution?</b>	What is the primary source of the contribution to the relevant research literature?				
<b>(K) Other Considerations</b>	<p>Is <b>Collaboration</b> needed/desirable? – idea/data/tools? (either internal or external to your institution)</p> <p><b>Target</b> Journal(s)? Realistic? Sufficiently ambitious?</p> <p>“<b>Risk</b>” assessment [“low” vs. “moderate” vs. “high”]: “no result” risk; “competitor” risk (ie being beaten by a competitor); risk of “obsolescence”; other risks?</p> <p>Are there any serious challenge(s) that you face in executing this plan? What are they? Are they related to the Idea? The Data? The Tools? Are there ethical considerations? Ethics clearance?</p> <p>Is the <b>scope</b> appropriate? Not too narrow, not too broad.</p>				