**Master Pitch Template with Cues for Pitchee – Advice for starting the conversation**

Starting the “conversation” – which parts of the pitch do you: (a) agree with/like? => notionally, assign these a “**green** flag”; (b) disagree with/dislike? => “**red** flag; (c) confused by/ don’t understand? => “**brown** flag”. These “flags” characterise three different types of conversation that you might have with the pitcher.

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| **Pitcher’s Name** | We like to see pitchers take ownership! | **FoR category** | Does the broad area selected make sense? | **Date Completed** | allows you to track pitch “evolution” |
| **(A) Working Title (WT)** | Is the chosen title informative? Succinct? “Catchy”? How many “dimensions” are flagged? More than 3 key aspects => likely to reflect undue complexity or confusion. Does the working title “connect” with the answer to “FoR” above? | | | | |
| **(B) Basic Research Question (RQ)** | Does the RQ make (academic) sense? Is the RQ clear, succinct and uncomplicated? How many “dimensions” are flagged? More than 3 key aspects => likely to reflect undue complexity or confusion. Is the RQ an appropriate balance between the “broad” and the “specific”? Does the RQ nicely connect to the WT? Does the RQ extend the WT in a meaningful way? | | | | |
| **(C) Key paper(s) (KP)** | Are the number of KP a good choice for this area? If only ONE KP, why? Can the pitcher succinctly explain the reasons behind the choice of KP? Does the reasoning given (verbally), “map” into the key facets evident in (A) and (B)? Are the reasons sound and persuasive? If not, why not? Are there better choices of KP available? Collectively, are the KP persuasively: (i) recent enough?; (ii) written by “gurus”; (iii) published/publishable in leading journals? Are there good reasons for KP that fail on one or more of (i), (ii) or (iii)? Does KP adequately connect with [A&B]? | | | | |
| **(D) Motivation/Puzzle** | Does the stated motivation link clearly and persuasively to all the pieces above [ABC]? Is the motivation sound and academically persuasive? Is there a “real” puzzle identified? To what extent does the motivation link to real world considerations and issues? Will this give the work an added edge in terms of its “impact”? Does the motivation go beyond a “bland” set of general statements that amount to: “… I have got some data …lets go fishing …” In other words, does the motivation rebut the “too exploratory” critique? Is the motivation sufficiently specific to induce reader interest in this very piece of work, rather than a very generic “motherhood” motivation? In assessing all the elements below, cumulatively, assess the likelihood that the study would successfully “deliver” against the stated motivation, and relative to the showcase RQ. | | | | |
| **THREE** | **Three** core aspects of any empirical research project i.e. the “**ID**io**T**s” guide | | | | |
| **(E) Idea?** | Is the core Idea clear/concise/simple/compelling? Is the idea founded on robust relevant theory? Does the Idea have too many “moving parts”? Do(es) any stated hypothesis(es) make sense? If endogeneity is acknowledged, is the identification strategy persuasive? Is there a natural experiment or exogenous shock that can be exploited? Is there any theoretical “tension” that can be exploited? Does the Idea clearly connect to [ABCD]? Is there any aspect of the Idea that raises a BIG red flag in terms of a DEAL BREAKER? | | | | |
| **(F) Data?** | Are the proposed Data fit for purpose? Are all aspects of data/sampling decisions sensible, realistic, insightful and reflective of research design tradeoffs? Does the data/sampling design mimic the “gold standard” for academic research in this field? Is a representative and sufficiently powerful sample likely? Will the sample size be acceptable/comparable to that part of the academic literature aimed for? Do the data sources conform to the “usual suspects”? Are the data legally accessible? Are there likely to be any “validity” concerns: Construct validity? External validity? Internal validity? If “hand-collected” data are listed, are there any feasibility concerns? Should a small “pilot” collection of such data be executed to establish “time investment” required? What data quality assurance can be given? Is the “Signal/Noise” ratio of key data items persuasive? Does the pitcher fully appreciate the potential for missing data concerns, and the extent to which this is exacerbated when (i) standard sample filtering is implemented; (ii) different databases have to be merged? Will the “test” variables exhibit adequate (“meaningful”) variation to give good power? Is there any aspect of the Data that raises a BIG red flag in terms of a DEAL BREAKER? Do the Data clearly connect to [ABCDE]? | | | | |
| **(G) Tools?** | Are the proposed tools fit for purpose? Are the required software and other tools/equipment (legally) available? Is there a need for any skill development – eg application of econometrics/software? Are contemporary tools/methods to be used? Is statistical validity an issue? Is there any aspect of the Tools that raises a BIG red flag in terms of a DEAL BREAKER? Do the Tools clearly connect to [ABCDEF]? | | | | |

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| **TWO** | **Two** key questions |
| **(H) What’s New?** | Is the novelty in the idea/data/tools? Rate the novelty in the Idea: 1 weakest to 10 strongest. Rate the novelty in the Data: 1 weakest to 10 strongest. Rate the novelty in the Tools: 1 weakest to 10 strongest. Does the claimed Novelty clearly connect to [A to G]? |
| **(I) So What?** | Is it important to know the answer to the RQ? Will major decisions/behaviour/activity etc be influenced by the outcome of this research? Rate the importance of the Idea: 1 weakest to 10 strongest. Rate the importance of the Data: 1 weakest to 10 strongest. Rate the importance of the Tools: 1 weakest to 10 strongest. Does the claimed response to “so what” clearly connect to [A to H]? |
| **ONE** | **One** bottom line |
| **(J) Contribution?** | How persuasive is the claimed primary source of the contribution to the relevant research literature? Does the claimed contribution clearly connect to [A to I]? |
| **(K) Other Considerations** | Is the answer to the **Collaboration** issue sensible? Does a lack of collaboration severely inhibit the likely success of the project? Does it threaten its very viability?  IS the **Target** Journal(s)? Realistic? Sufficiently ambitious?  Is the “**Risk**” assessment realistic? Does the pitcher address “no result” risk; “competitor” risk; risk of “obsolescence”; other risks? Are there any serious challenge(s) in executing this plan? What are they? Are they related to the Idea? The Data? The Tools? Are there ethical considerations? Ethics clearance?  Is the **scope** appropriate? Not too narrow, not too broad. |