Week 8

Telling and Selling Your Story

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Course Title	Presenters
✅ 1	May 28	Entrepreneurship 101 – What It Takes To Commercialize Your Tech	Felix Litvinsky, Abakama Allison Yacci, DataCicada
✅ 2	June 4	Discover Customer Discovery	Olga Petrova, University at Buffalo Kathryn Cherny, Binghamton University
✅ 3	June 11	Evaluation of the Opportunity – Patentability and Marketability Basics	Lance Reich, SUNY RF Joy Goswami, SUNY RF
✅ 4	June 18	How To Win Grants – Mastering Non-Dilutive Funding Sources	Kirk Macolini, InteliSpark
✅ 5	June 25	Mastering Startup Agreements & Exit Strategies	Rich Honen, Phillips Lytle
✅ 6	July 2	Team Chemistry – Leveling Up Your Company	Doug Benel, SUNY RF Ana-Maria Galeano, Galeano Law Firm
✅ 7	July 9	Strategies for Unstoppable Success	Arel Moodie, Reed Oak
📍 8	July 16	Telling and Selling Your Story	Maureen Ballatori, Agency 29 Michael Lightman, Hate Your Deck
9	July 21-July 25	1:1 Meeting With SUNY Venture Advisors	
10	July 30	Demo Day and Graduation	You!

S4 Leaderboard

Leaderboard Top 21

	First Name	Last Name	Points
1	Biswas	Rijal	22
2	Junaid	Zubairi	21
3	Bahram	Salehi	20
4	Aiman	Yaseen	18
5	Josh	Chen	18
6	Gurtej	Singh	17
7	Janet	Paluh	17
8	Lauren	Feist	17
9	Ridham	Varsani	17
10	Rommel	Trotman	17
11	Weiying	Dai	16
12	Ahmed	Alajlouni	15
13	Snehal	Tomar	15
14	Tsogt Erdene	Jamiyansuren	14
15	Yousef	Taghizadeh Ghaleh Jough	14
16	Chen	Lin	13
17	Emily	Carroll	13
18	Qingxiao	Zheng	13
19	Fang	Luo	12
20	Jinjun	Xiong	12
21	Zhi	Guo	12

Leaderboard By Campus

#	Campus	Points
1	University at Buffalo	252
2	Binghamton University	199
3	University at Albany	124
4	Stony Brook	117
5	SUNY Fredonia	34
6	ESF	29
7	Upstate Medical University	28
8	SUNY Empire State College	26
9	SUNY Poly	13
10	SUNY College of Optometry	8
11	SUNY New Paltz	7
12	NY-Creates	6
13	SUNY Old Westbury	6
14	SUNY Oswego	5
15	Downstate Health Sciences Univ	4
16	SUNY Brockport	2
17	UCAWD/SUNY ATTAIN	2
18	SUNY Oneonta	1
19	Buffalo State, SUNY	1
20	Mohawk Valley Community Colle	1
21	Monroe Community College, SU	0

Course Schedule & Announcements

1. You should have all received information on Demo Day and the pitch guidelines. If you have questions, send an email to s4@rfsuny.org.

2. You must sign up for office hours with Venture Advisors if you are selected to pitch for Demo Day. The Venture Advisors office hours will be held next week: July 21-July 25. **Spots will fill quickly.**

3. Mark your calendars for July 30! Demo Day starts promptly at 2:30 p.m. **Please register to attend.**

Meet the S4 Demo Day Judges

Olivia Goldstein
CEO, Upstate Venture Connect

Seth Mulligan
Chief Operating Officer, Griffiss Institute

Zachary Pecenak
Director, Innovation Capital Fund, NY Ventures

Patty Rechberger
Innovation Fund Manager, Fuzehub

Shelby Schneider
President and CEO, Upstate Capital

Sonya Smith
State Director, New York SBDC

SUNY Startup Summer School
Class of 2025

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

Awarded to

Name

Nicholas Querques
Vice President of Industry and
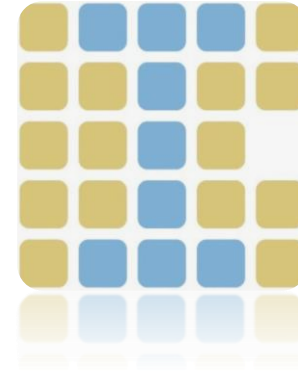External Affairs
SUNY Research Foundation

July 30, 2025

Date

If your team is pitching
on Demo Day

Participated in I-Corps teams

Joined the SUNY
Innovation & Entrepreneurship
Network LinkedIn Group

Perfect attendance to
all 8 instructional webinars

S⁴

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University at Buffalo
takes the win for highest
participation points

Top 4 leaderboard: individuals with
the highest participation points

2 teams win the $50k TAF
Catalyst Investment.

*Keep an eye out for your personalized certificates
in your inbox after Demo Day!*

Questions about S4?

Email us at S4@rfsuny.org   Let's jump into our session on Telling and Selling Your Story!

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- ▶ Please answer the Zoom poll question.

- ▶ Recording will be sent tomorrow.

- ▶ Don't forget to connect with us on LinkedIn.

- ▶ See you next week for

Next Week:

Office Hours with SUNY Venture Advisors

Telling & Selling Your Story

Maureen Ballatori, founder of Agency 29
Michael Lightman, founder of Hate Your Deck

Today's Entertainers

Maureen Ballatori

Strategy + Visual Story

Mike Lightman

Content, Content, Content

AGENCY 29 + HATE YOUR DECK!

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Who's this Guy?

➔ Marketing Degree

➔ Peace Corps

➔ MBA

➔ NYC Venture Capital

➔ World Bank

Ask me about…

➔ Cycling, running, climbing, sci-fi, parenthood, writing a kids book, or tell me about your nerdiest hobby

Mike Lightman
Founder + CEO, Hate Your Deck

AGENCY 29 + HATE YOUR DECK!

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Who's that Lady?

- ➜ Farming background
- ➜ Design Degree
- ➜ Focused on brand-building for food, beverage and agriculture
- ➜ Mom of 2
- ➜ Loves jigsaw puzzles and long walks through Target

Maureen Ballatori
Founder + CEO, Agency 29

AGENCY 29 + HATE YOUR DECK!

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TELLING YOUR STORY

Creating clarity.

Maureen Ballatori
Strategy + Visual Story

Who is it for?

Primary Audience	*Additional Audience*
Additional Audience	*Additional Audience*

What is the Goal?

What do I want to be known for?

Where's the opportunity to stand out?

How can I engage my target customer?

Research & Benchmarking

- Dive into your analytics
  - How are people finding you?
  - What kind of content do they engage with on social media?
  - What do they say to you at events?
- Look at competitors (at least 2) and aspirational brands (2)
  - What they do well
  - Room for improvement
  - Key takeaways
- Tools
  - SpyFu www.spyfu.com is great for keyword research and benchmarking
  - On-platform website and social media research

TELLING YOUR STORY

Building your strategy.

Maureen Ballatori
Strategy + Visual Story

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Who are you as a Brand?

What my product/service does for the customer	*How the customer would describe the product/service*
How the brand makes the customer look	*How the brand makes the customer feel*

Brand Ladder

Positioning Statement:

For <who/customer>

that needs <what>,

<company>

<offers this unique value>.

↑	**SOCIETAL BENEFIT** *How will <company> impact the community?*	
↑ ↑	**TRANSFORMATIONAL BENEFIT** *How will <company> impact my life and business?*	
↑ ↑	**EMOTIONAL BENEFITS** *What will I feel working with <company>?*	
↑ ↑	**FUNCTIONAL BENEFITS** *How will I benefit from working with <company>?*	
↑ ↑	**PRODUCT & SERVICE ATTRIBUTES** *What are the features of <company> products and services?*	

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Brand Ladder

Positioning Statement:

For contractors and constructors that need precast and specialty concrete forms, Zeiser Precast is the manufacturer that collaborates with you to create custom molds and quality products personalized to your project needs.

↑	**SOCIETAL BENEFIT** *How will Zeiser Precast impact the community?*	• Supports the local economy • Supports women-owned businesses • Safer and more effective construction sites with products suited to the job at hand
↑ ↑	**TRANSFORMATIONAL BENEFIT** *How will Zeiser Precast impact my life and business?*	• **Streamlined** processes and procurement • Customized products that **meet job needs**, instead of customizing the job to suit the product • A **collaborative relationship** to work through job site needs and potential challenges
↑ ↑	**EMOTIONAL BENEFITS** *What will I feel working with Zeiser Precast?*	• **Confident** that I am sourcing the right product for the project from a manufacturer committed to quality. • **Proud** to support a local, second generation woman-owned business.
↑	**FUNCTIONAL BENEFITS** *How will I benefit from working with Zeiser Precast?*	• **One-stop shop** for both precast concrete forms and specialty concrete products. • **Personalized** processes meet individual needs.
↑ ↑	**PRODUCT & SERVICE ATTRIBUTES** *What are the features of Zeiser Precast products and services?*	• Custom molds manufactured for specialty forms • Standard molds available for standard construction projects • Quality aggregate poured daily • Personalized approach to service and sales • Woman-owned business • NPCA certified • Over 77 years of business • Second generation business management

From the bitters in your cocktails to the splash of flavor in your coffee and every sip in between, Fee Brothers has been an industry favorite since 1864.

billsboro

For the laid-back yet discerning wine lover, Billsboro Winery crafts dry classic European varietal wines for large and small and everyday celebrations.

Who has built a deck?

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Investors don't actually know what they're looking for

Sometimes I'll start a sentence and I don't even know where it's going. I just hope I find it along the way.

Brilliant Founders.

Sh*t Stories.

© 2011 Ted Goff www.tedgoff.com

"Am I explaining this in too much detail?"

SELLING YOUR STORY

Inside the mind of the Investor

Mike Lightman
Content, Content, Content

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Investors need both information and story

"Fire good. All like fire. But sometimes fire not good. That why Og make exciting new product. Og call it 'Bucket of Water.'"

What we'll learn today:

1	**2**	**3**	**4**
Key information (strategy)	Storytelling Mistakes	A New Format	Examples

Important Content & Effective Storytelling

Everything you'll need:

Market Arbitrage

Trust + Credibility

Business Stuff

What's in it for me?

Market Arbitrage

ONE

TWO

THREE

FOUR

INDUSTRY

What does the world look like today?

PROBLEM

Describe what should be on this card

ROOT CAUSE

Why has nobody fixed it?

PAIN FELT

What is the pain users feel because of this?

SOLUTION PROPOSED

What are you doing differently?

WHAT'S NEXT

Where are you going from here?

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Trust + Credibility

ONE

TWO

THREE

FOUR

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Describe what should be on this card

TEAM*

Why is this the right team?

TECH VALIDATION

What have you built to date?

MARKET VALIDATION

Do customers want it?

STRATEGIC INVESTORS

Has any strategic validated this?

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*This normally isn't where the team slide goes, but it falls under Trust & Credibility

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Business Stuff

ONE

TWO

THREE

FOUR

NEW PRODUCT

If applicable, describe the new product you're launching

MARKET

How do you make money, who is your market, how big is your market, etc

COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

Who are you competing agsinst?

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

How will you beat them?

TEAM

This is where the team slide goes

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What's in it for me?

ONE

TWO

THREE

FOUR

PROJECTIONS

Historic & Future Revenue

ASK/USE OF FUNDS

How will you hit an inflection point in your company?

EXIT

How will get your investor 5-7X in 5-7 years?

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Here we go again with another buzzword

Even with the right content, you need a good story.

Here are some mistakes that will kill any story, (no matter how good it is).

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The Curse of Knowledge
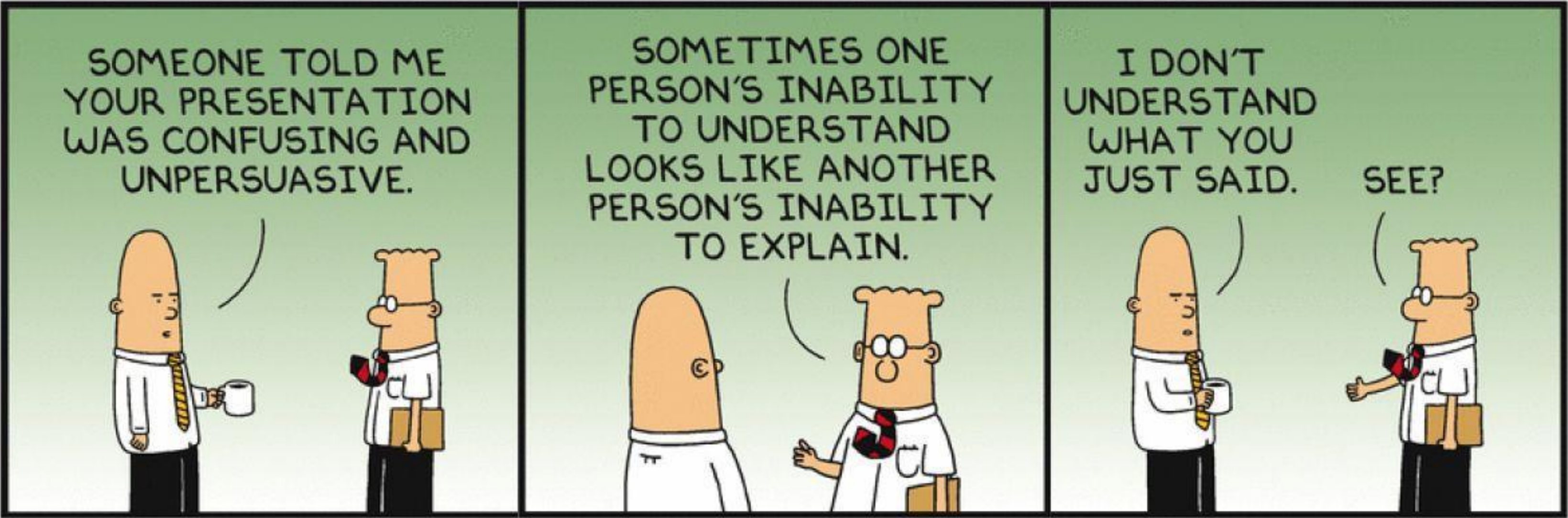
MISTAKE 1 MISTAKE 2 MISTAKE 3 MISTAKE 4

Brag the Right Way!

There's no such thing as bragging. You're either lying or telling the truth.

- Al Oliver

MISTAKE 1 **MISTAKE 2** **MISTAKE 3** **MISTAKE 4**

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MISTAKE 1   MISTAKE 2   MISTAKE 3   MISTAKE 4

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TELLING + SELLING YOUR STORY

Good design is critical.

Maureen Ballatori
Strategy + Visual Story

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Good Design Builds Trust

" If users find experiences familiar at a level of basic appearance and interaction, they will be able to use it without instruction, feel more confident and safe, be in control of their own experience and actions and therefore.. trust."

Great article!

Member-only story

14 ways that good design builds trust with users

What it is, why it matters, how to do it

H Locke · Follow
10 min read · Feb 4, 2021

▶ Listen   ⬆ Share   ••• More

Slide 1: ASCRIBE BIOSCIENCE — Revolutionizing Crop Protection by Empowering Plants — Jay Farmer, CEO | AscribeBio.com

Slide 2: Crop Disease is a Global Threat — nature food: Threats to global food security from emerging fungal and oomycete crop pathogens; The Economist: Understanding how crop diseases and climate change interact is vital; PNAS: The persistent threat of emerging plant disease pandemics to global food security

Slide 3: Ascribe Develops Natural Crop Protection Using Small Molecules From the Soil Microbiome

Slide 4: Phytalix is Like a Vaccine for Plants — Plants recognize Phytalix and respond systemically by priming multiple defense pathways. Phytalix is based on a small molecule produced by microbes in the soil. Once primed, crops can react more quickly to pathogens preventing infection at the earliest stages.

Slide 5: The Benefits are Real — Works on all plants tested so far and enhances resistance against a broad spectrum of pathogens — Fusarium Head Blight 10% yield increase; Asian Soybean Rust 40% decrease in lesions; Root-knot nematode 45% decrease; Late Blight 60% decrease in lesions

Slide 6: Phytalix Outperforms Conventional Chemistry — In 2021 wheat field trials, Phytalix treatment consistently performed as well as Prosaro® (a best-in-class chemical fungicide) in controlling *Fusarium* Head Blight and *Septoria* Leaf Blotch. — Fusarium Head Blight Disease Index — Untreated, Phytalix, Prosaro

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Children's Books

One sentence to make a point

Visuals to prove your point

(with emphasis)

on the majority of the page

That's all, folks! Thank You!

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Mike Lightman
mike@hateyourdeck.com

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