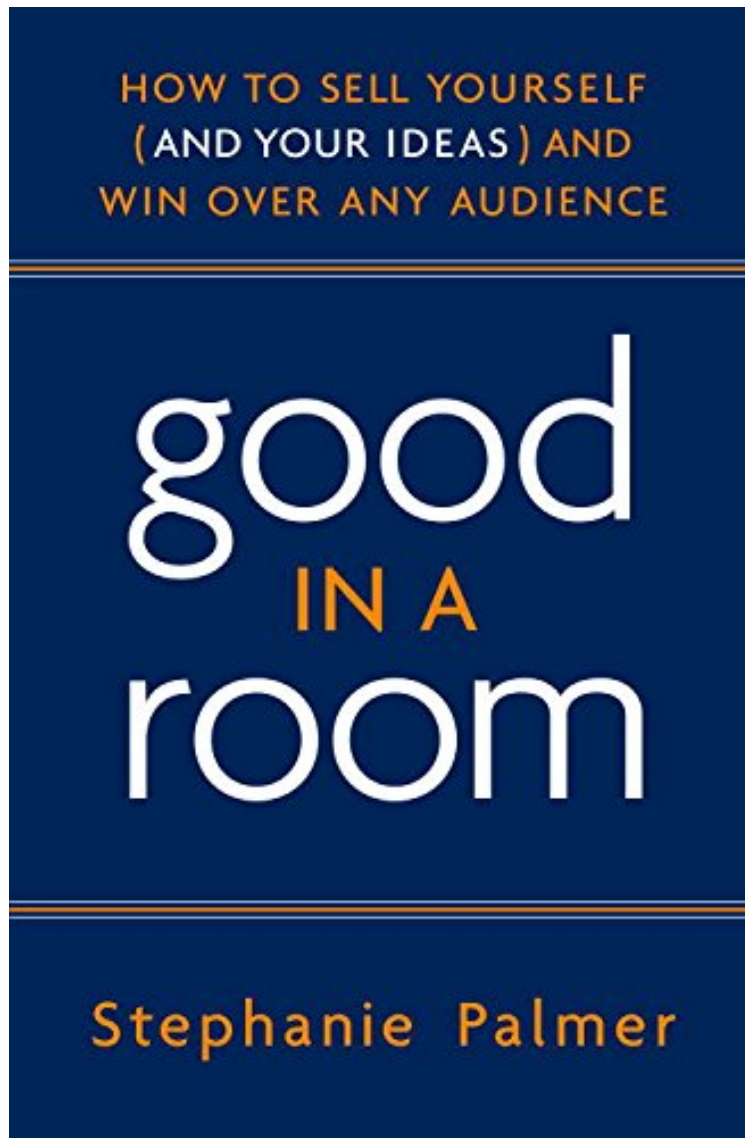


[Download] Good in a Room

## Good in a Room

*Stephanie Palmer*

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**Stephanie Palmer : Good in a Room** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Good in a Room:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great for business. Good for life too. By T. Mosley As a creative, I never learned pitching. I kind of leaned on my personality and that hasn't taken me that far (lol). This book made clear behind every great pitch is research, hard work, and a human. This book makes the process much less daunting. Good in a room made me realize there is a lot I do well. It also revealed what work I must continue to do. Prep is my big blind spot and the strategies in this book make prep much less daunting. She gives you all the ingredients and

instructions to a great pitch. The best part is all your interactions become practice for pitching. I highly suggest this book if your clueless about how to develop business relationships or need structure to share your ideas. Aside from business, many of the principals in the book work in other aspects of life. This book has me really considering the people I have around me and has given me guidance on how to pull around me people I need and who need me. Best of all it moves quickly while covering a ton of information and scenarios. I definitely haven't mastered the art of being good in a room but now there is a book I can always use to help me problem solve as I get better. Buy this book!

10 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good resource. By Hungry Camerman Great to get perspective from a former gate keeper via the world of studio movies. There are also some great take aways for non industry people as well. The greatest take away for me was to always stay courteous and professional as you build your relationships in your career. Seems like common sense but if that were the case, she would not have written the book and we wouldn't be reading it.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A great book and a must buy, but be prepared to put in the work. By Hachi Gatsu I've had the luck to have been taken under the wing of a Hollywood professional and this was one of the books he suggested I should read while I work to improve my screenwriting. I admit, I was skeptical. I had a short stint at a sales job a few years ago and I couldn't stand the stress. Plus I'm just naturally a nervous person in general. Every job interview I've ever had before reading this book I've always been a dry-mouthed, stuttering nervous wreck of a person. So how is one book going to help someone like me do better with important meetings? And so I read it from cover to cover, with it's simple to understand and almost common sense wisdom and incite. I was confident but still, no real world practice to really see if I had learned anything. Then my place of work at the time posted a higher position within the company. I had only been at that place of work a few months and I was pretty much the lowest of low in terms of job placement, however I did have some experience they were looking for. Finally, a place to test what I learned. Worse thing is they say no and I'm right back to my grunt job. I made jaws drop within my first minute of the initial interview. I was called back for a second interview, then another until it was all down to the last two candidates; me being one of them. Unfortunately they decided (which I felt was only fair) to go with the second candidate whom had worked with the company longer than I have (15 years as opposed to 4 months), however I was told that once another spot opened up I would be an easy walk-on. A few months later, a position outside of my place of work opened up which was double my wage and had phenomenal benefits. Once again, I used all I learned from this book in the subsequent interviews. So did my efforts pay off? I sign final paperwork for the job next week. Overall, this is a phenomenal book to have in your arsenal whether you are in sales, creative arts, starting your own business, looking to advance at your work place, or looking for something new. What you learn may not work all the time, like my first example, but you will certainly learn along the way. But you yourself have to make the effort as well. You won't just read it and suddenly everything is coming up roses. Plus the writer herself will respond to your e-mails (not just some genera-message either), often within hours of your message being sent. So don't be afraid to ask questions if you're stuck or have a unique situation, plus she's a pretty cool person too!

Whether you work in Hollywood or not, the fact is that selling ideas is really difficult to do. The reason the pitching secrets of the most successful writers and directors are relevant is because these people have evolved an advanced method for selling ideas. Whether yours is a screenwriter, a journalist with an idea for a story, an entrepreneur with a business plan, an inventor with a blueprint, or a manager with an innovative solution, if you want other people to invest their time, energy, and money in your idea, you face an uphill battle. When I was at MGM, the hardest part of my job was not cutthroat studio politics or grueling production schedules. The toughest part of my job was whenever I had to say "no" to an idea that was almost there. I had to say no a lot. Every buyer does. The buyer's work is to say yes to projects that are ready, not almost ready. And no matter how good the script is, if the seller can't pitch it in a compelling way, how can the buyer see the potential? How can he get his colleagues on board? How can he recommend the seller to his superiors? The fact is that poor pitches doom good projects. It happens all the time. The ideas, products and services that are pitched more effectively win. That's just how the game is played. No sense getting upset over it. Instead, let's accept the challenge and learn the strategies and tactics that will allow us (and our ideas) to succeed.

-From GOOD IN A ROOM Business consultant and former MGM Director of Creative Affairs Stephanie Palmer reveals the techniques used by Hollywood's top writers, producers, and directors to get financing for their projects - and explains how you can apply these techniques to be more successful in your own high-stakes meetings. Because, as Palmer has found, the strategies used to sell yourself and your ideas in Hollywood not only work in other businesses, they often work better.

Whether you are a manager or executive with an innovative proposal, a professional with a hot concept, a salesperson selling to a potential client or investor, or an entrepreneur with a business plan, GOOD IN A ROOM shows you how to:

- Master the five stages of the face-to-face meeting
- Avoid the secret dealbreakers of the first ninety seconds
- Be confident in high-pressure situations
- Present yourself better and more effectively than you ever have before

Whether you want to ask for a raise, grow your client list, launch a new business or find financing for a creative project, you must not only present your ideas in a compelling way - you must also sell yourself, as well. GOOD IN A ROOM shows you how to construct a winning presentation and deliver the kind of performance that will get your project

greenlighted, whatever industry you are in.

About the Author Stephanie Palmer coaches business leaders and creative professionals in a wide range of industries to help them get their ideas the attention and financing they deserve. As part of MGM's executive team for six years, she supervised twenty films with multimillion dollar budgets, including the international screen hit, *Legally Blonde*. She has been featured on NBC's *Today*, CBS's *Early Show*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Variety* and *NPR*. Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

### CHAPTER 1 Why You Should Read This Book

The reason you should read this book is because the strategies and tactics that people use to sell ideas in Hollywood work in the rest of the business world. I have worked with entrepreneurs, executives, and professionals in industries such as real estate, financial services, retail sales, law, advertising, marketing, video games, and more. The techniques used to sell ideas in Hollywood not only work in other industries, they often work better. As you already know, "good in a room" is a Hollywood term referring to creative people who excel at pitching in high-stakes meetings. I've had literally thousands of these meetings. During my time as a studio executive at MGM, I had over three thousand pitch meetings where writers, directors, stars, and producers would try to persuade me to buy their ideas. Most of the time, ideas are pitched poorly. However, there are some people who succeed all the time. Over a period of years, I paid attention to what worked and what didn't. I identified the techniques that were being used in all of the successful meetings regardless of who was pitching. I also found a considerable number of ways that the person pitching could break the deal, often without knowing it. Many studio executives, or "suits," have backgrounds in sales, marketing, or finance. My degree is in theatrical directing from Carnegie Mellon. So when I started hearing pitches, I wasn't just thinking about whether to say yes or no. I was seeing the meeting as a theatrical performance. Unfortunately, most writers, like most people, do not have a comprehensive strategy to deliver a great performance. When the time comes to pitch in a high-stakes situation, even someone experienced can stumble and ruin a golden opportunity without a solid meeting technique. When someone with a great idea doesn't present it effectively, it not only hurts them, but all of us as well. Why? Because mediocre ideas will get purchased and produced if superior ideas aren't pitched well enough. The fact is that when it comes to making a buying decision, buyers can more easily evaluate the information on the surface, i.e., the pitch. It's harder to evaluate what's inside. As you know, this is true beyond Hollywood. In a grocery aisle, success is determined more by the design and copywriting on the packaging than by the quality of the product. In job interviews, hiring decisions tend to look past differences in work experience and focus on how the candidates perform in the room. My point is not that pitching is everything. Rather, it's that good products deserve good packaging and great ideas deserve a great pitch. Even shy, awkward, introverted people can learn to pitch well. One of my highlights from MGM was when I found a new writer named Mike who was pitching a high school comedy with a unique angle. His script was great, but his pitch was a disaster. He didn't know how to handle the small talk, he pitched too soon and with way too much detail—he broke the deal in a dozen different ways. Ordinarily I would just pass on his project, but I was frustrated with the quality of the movies we were making and I didn't want to send this great script back to the slush pile. So I coached Mike on how to perform in each stage of the meeting and told him exactly what to say when my boss asked, "So, what's your project about?" The next day, Mike pitched his idea beautifully to my boss, and it sold right there in the meeting. Afterward, he told me that he'd been staying on his brother's couch for the last three months and was preparing to move back in with his parents. With this one sale, his career was on an entirely new trajectory. And for me, in a job where so much of my time was spent surviving cutthroat politics and producing mediocre ideas, helping Mike succeed was really gratifying. I realized then that I wanted to focus on pitching, not production. A year later, I left my executive job and started my own company, also called *Good in a Room*, to help writers and directors with quality ideas get the attention and financing they deserve. Then I did an interview with National Public Radio and I started getting some remarkable calls. A fashion designer wanted help bringing out his summer collection. A marketing exec wanted to get promoted to VP. A financial advisor wanted to find new clients and expand her business. Soon enough, my non-Hollywood clients were landing million-dollar accounts, doubling their client rosters, launching successful small businesses, increasing their revenue, and getting promoted. Sure, some of my clients were skeptical at first. William, for example, was a sixty-something financial advisor from Texas. We met at the Merrill Lynch campus in New Jersey. I was there to give the concluding presentation at the annual conference for top producers. William was already quite successful. He didn't need to change how he was doing business. As well, he was in a conservative business in a conservative part of the country, so anything that came out of a liberal place such as Hollywood was immediately suspect. Still, he wanted to take his business to the next level, and he was smart enough to realize that unless he wanted to simply put in more hours and work harder, he was going to have to try something new. I consulted with him the next morning before we went to the airport and suggested that he modify his standard approach in a few significant ways. He was doubtful, but he said he'd give it a shot when he got back to Texas. When I landed in LA, William had already left me a message. Turns out the guy sitting next to him on the plane had just sold his business and needed a financial advisor he could trust. Rather than trying to "sell" him, as so many financial advisors do, my client practiced the *Good in a*

Room techniques and signed him rather effortlessly. Meeting a client on a plane is practically a cliché; (though in reality, it doesn't happen very often), and all of the credit belongs to William. Still, the idea that a sixty-something financial advisor in conservative Texas could, with one consultation, master and successfully apply what works for thirty-something writers in liberal Los Angeles? Very cool. Whether you work in Hollywood or not, the fact is that selling ideas is really difficult to do. The reason the pitching secrets of the most successful writers and directors are relevant is that these people have evolved an advanced method for selling ideas. Whether you're a screenwriter, a journalist with an idea for a story, an entrepreneur with a business plan, an inventor with a blueprint, or a manager with an innovative solution, if you want other people to invest their time, energy, and money in your idea, you face an uphill battle. First, ideas aren't tangible; no one can kick the tires of your idea. Second, ideas aren't quantifiable; the decision maker can't reliably estimate the value of your idea in monetary terms. As my boss at MGM used to say, "If we knew which ideas would be hits, we would only make hits." Third, ideas are risky; there can be millions of dollars on the line and reputations at stake when a buyer says yes to an idea. Fourth, people who buy ideas hear so many pitches that getting their attention and actually convincing them is exceptionally difficult. Finally, the more original your idea is, the tougher it is to pitch effectively. Any groundbreaking idea will be harder to sell simply because there isn't a precedent to show it will work. As risks increase and buyers become more difficult to persuade, people who sell ideas must clear an even higher bar. We must get in the right rooms with the right people. We need a comprehensive strategy and the most advanced tactics. Then we can present ourselves and our ideas with confidence.