

# P X A R Pitch

## 6. The Pixar pitch

Four hundred miles north of Hollywood, in a small city along the eastern edge of San Francisco Bay, sits the headquarters of an unlikely entertainment colossus. Pixar Animation Studios, in Emeryville, California, opened in 1979 as the geeky computer graphics division of Lucasfilm. Thirty-five years later, it's one of the most successful studios in movie history. Starting with *Toy Story* in 1995, Pixar has produced thirteen feature films that together have grossed \$7.6 billion worldwide, an astonishing \$585 million per movie.<sup>23</sup> Six Pixar films—*Finding Nemo*, *The Incredibles*, *Ratatouille*, *WALL-E*, *Up*, and *Toy Story 3*—have won the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature, just a few of the twenty-six total Oscars the studio has taken home.

How does Pixar do it? Success has many parents—the foresight of Steve Jobs, who invested in the company early; the distribution and marketing muscle of the Walt Disney Company, which struck a development deal with the studio early on and acquired it in 2006; the meticulous attention to detail for which Pixar's army of technical and artistic talent is renowned. But an additional reason might be the stories themselves.

Emma Coats, a former story artist at the studio, has cracked the Pixar code—and, in the process, created a template for an irresistible new kind of pitch. Coats has argued that every Pixar film shares the same narrative DNA, a deep structure of storytelling that involves six sequential sentences:

## Finding Nemo - Pixar Pitch

**Once upon a time** there was a widowed fish named Marlin who was extremely protective of his only son, Nemo. **Every day**, Marlin warned Nemo of the ocean's dangers and implored him to not go far away. **One day** in an act of defiance, Nemo ignores his father's warnings and swims into the open water. **Because of that**, he is captured by a diver and ends up as a pet in a fish tank of a dentist in Sydney. **Because of that**, Marlin sets off on a journey to recover Nemo enlisting the help of other sea creatures along the way. **Until finally**, Marlin and Nemo find each other, reunite, and learn that love depends on trust.

Pink, Daniel H. *To Sell Is Human: The Surprising Truth About Moving Others*. New York, NY: Penguin Group, 2012. N. Print.

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Because of that,	
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Until finally,	