



## The Greatest Product Pitch of all Time? The Reggae Reggae Sauce Story



### A) Warm up

1. Have you ever tried Jamaican cuisine before? What are your thoughts?
2. What do you think makes a good sales or business pitch?

### B) The Greatest Product Pitch of all Time? The Reggae Reggae Sauce Story

## The Greatest Product Pitch of all Time? The Reggae Reggae Sauce Story

Success stories often start in unexpected places, and Levi Roots is the perfect example. From cooking his Jamaican sauce in his home kitchen to **acquiring** a big investment, his fame shows that even the most unlikely entrepreneur can build an empire.

Arriving in the UK from Jamaica at just 11 years old with no money, Levi Roots is now worth approximately \$35 million, **overcoming** 16 years of rejection to reach the top.



In his early days, Roots became a reggae musician and was well-known in the community for his tasty homemade sauce. Despite the sauce's popularity, Roots could only produce so much from his small home kitchen, and he had no formal business knowledge. He approached several banks to invest in the product, but he was always rejected.



But in 2006, his luck changed. Roots was seen by a television producer at a food trade show, who invited him to appear on the BBC's "Dragons' Den", a UK television series where **aspiring** entrepreneurs pitch their business ideas to a group (or 'panel') of wealthy investors—known as "Dragons"—in hopes of **acquiring** funding.

This scary group of investors silently watches the **aspiring** entrepreneurs intensely as they demonstrate their ability to grow their business and provide a big return on investment. The Dragons often **dig deep** into the financial projections and business models, expecting entrepreneurs to have their figures **on point**. Negotiations can be very intensive, with deals made or lost in just a few minutes.

At any moment, a Dragon can say they are 'out', but if they are 'in', they negotiate against other interested Dragons to get the best deal for themselves.



were way **wide of the mark**. Roots also said he had an order for 2.5 million litres of the sauce, which in reality was only 2500 litres, even more **wide of the mark**.

Despite being **sceptical** at the start, two investors named Peter Jones and Richard Farleigh saw the potential in the product. Attracted by Levi's **compelling** personality and authenticity, they invested £50,000 in return for 40% of his company.

With new investment, Reggae Reggae Sauce became a viral household name, and demand increased rapidly across the UK. Roots **capitalized on** Peter Jones' **extensive** business experience and influential retail contacts to get a deal with a major UK supermarket, **gaining a foothold** in the UK food sector.



Roots then sold over a million bottles in his first year, but it didn't stop there. With the support of Peter Jones, the Reggae Reggae brand introduced over 50 Caribbean-inspired products. He then **capitalized on** his growing personal brand by publishing cookbooks, opening restaurants, and even making television appearances.

So apart from taking opportunities and getting out of your comfort zone, what else can **aspiring** entrepreneurs learn from Roots' story? Maybe the answer lies in authenticity. Staying true to his personality, and sharing his culture and story instead of following business norms was a **compelling** asset in building a brand that **resonated** with both investors and people.

*"I thought I was quite rubbish in the Dragons' Den, myself. But even if you are rubbish, you've got to be you, because people are invested in whoever you are. Perhaps if I had got all my numbers right and I was all business-like, I wouldn't have got the investment."*

### C) Key Words from Context

Based on the context of the article, can you match the words in the box to the definitions listed below? Then add the word into the example sentence. You may need to change the form of the word to fit the meaning of the sentence.

|             |             |             |                    |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------------|
| to acquire  | to overcome | to aspire   | to capitalize      |
| to dig deep | on point    | to resonate | wide of the mark   |
| sceptical   | compelling  | extensive   | to gain a foothold |

1. To take advantage of an opportunity: \_\_\_\_\_

*"We should \_\_\_\_\_ on the strong market situation."*

*"I want to discuss how we can \_\_\_\_\_ on current trends."*

2. Doubting or questioning the truth or value of something: \_\_\_\_\_

*"I'm a bit \_\_\_\_\_ about the results of the market research—they only asked 50 people in the survey. I think we need to make it more extensive."*

3. Accurate, appropriate, or exactly right: \_\_\_\_\_

*"Your pitch was completely \_\_\_\_\_—clear, confident, and short."*

*"The branding is really \_\_\_\_\_ for our target audience."*

4. To strongly desire to achieve something, especially long-term: \_\_\_\_\_

*"We \_\_\_\_\_ to become the leading name in our industry."*

*"Many junior team members \_\_\_\_\_ to acquire leadership roles—we should support that."*

5. Strongly persuasive, interesting, and emotionally engaging: \_\_\_\_\_

*"The presentation was really \_\_\_\_\_. I had so many questions at the end."*

*"We need a more \_\_\_\_\_ message if we want to get investment."*

6. To get something, such as knowledge, skills, resources or clients: \_\_\_\_\_

*"We want to \_\_\_\_\_ new customers in our region."*

*"Thanks to our hard work, we have successfully \_\_\_\_\_ new investment for the project."*

7. To get a starting position in an industry or market from which you can then grow: \_\_\_\_\_

*"We've finally \_\_\_\_\_ in the European market."*

*"This new feature should help us \_\_\_\_\_ among younger users."*

8. Inaccurate or not aligned with expectations or goals: \_\_\_\_\_

*"Their sales projections were \_\_\_\_\_. We achieved much lower sales than expected. Our targets for the next quarter need to be a bit more realistic."  
"Our targeting for the ad campaign was a bit \_\_\_\_\_. We need to focus on a slightly older audience."*

9. To be meaningful or appealing to someone: \_\_\_\_\_

*"Our message needs to \_\_\_\_\_ with a younger audience."*

10. To research something in a lot of detail, further than just the surface level:  
\_\_\_\_\_

*"We need to \_\_\_\_\_ into user behavior before finalizing the UX design."  
"In our interview with a potential client, we need to \_\_\_\_\_ into their needs, so that we can give them what they want."*

11. To successfully deal with or defeat a problem or challenge: \_\_\_\_\_

*"We \_\_\_\_\_ major tech issues, and the launch was successful."  
"We have lost a client, but I believe that we can \_\_\_\_\_ this setback."*

12. Large in amount or range: \_\_\_\_\_

*"The report includes \_\_\_\_\_ data on market behavior from the past 5 years."  
"We did \_\_\_\_\_ testing before the app went live."*

## D) Comprehension

**Can you answer the questions below about the text?**

1. Why was Levi Roots unable to capitalize on his sauce's popularity in the days before he went on Dragon's Den?

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2. List some reasons for which appearing on TV's Dragon's Den could make an aspiring entrepreneur nervous.

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3. **TRUE OR FALSE** - Aspiring entrepreneurs are expected to talk about the current state of their company's finances on Dragon's Den.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. **TRUE OR FALSE** - If a Dragon is interested in a pitch, they are guaranteed a stake in the company.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. **TRUE OR FALSE** - All Dragons liked Levi Roots' honesty in the den.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. **TRUE OR FALSE** - Levi Roots managed to change the opinions of some of the dragons in the den.  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What 3 lessons can entrepreneurs learn from Levi Roots' story?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Based on these lessons, what do you think the phrase 'stay true to' means?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What does Levi Roots think would have decreased his chances of acquiring investment in the den?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### E) Key Words in a New Context

Below you can find a paragraph. Can you fill in the gaps in the paragraph with the words and phrases from the box below? One of the words is used twice.

|              |             |          |                   |
|--------------|-------------|----------|-------------------|
| acquire (x2) | acquired    | aspired  | capitalize        |
| extensive    | extensively | resonate | wide of the mark  |
| sceptical    | compelling  | overcome | gained a foothold |

#### Starting my Own Business

After being rejected for an excellent job at the final stage of long interview process last year, I decided that it was finally time to start my own business. I had always \_\_\_\_\_ to start my own business, and I thought that this would be the best way to \_\_\_\_\_ the disappointment from the interview. Unfortunately, I had no financial support from family or friends, because they were all a little

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\_\_\_\_\_ about the idea, so I knew that I had to \_\_\_\_\_ all of the skills, knowledge and investment for myself.

I carried out \_\_\_\_\_ research into the best platforms for building my own site and posting \_\_\_\_\_ content for social media that would hold the attention of my target audience. At the beginning, my content didn't really \_\_\_\_\_ with my audience because my targeting was slightly \_\_\_\_\_. However, after testing my content \_\_\_\_\_ across different audiences and locations, I finally \_\_\_\_\_ my first clients.

After I had \_\_\_\_\_ in the market with my first few clients, I was able to \_\_\_\_\_ on my popularity by obtaining positive reviews to put onto my site. I then started to \_\_\_\_\_ clients very quickly, and I now make much more than I would have done if I had got the job I applied for 1 year earlier!