How To Get On Shark Tank

Introduction: The Dream of Pitching to the Sharks

Since its debut in 2009, **Shark Tank** has become the gold standard for entrepreneurs seeking investment, mentorship, and exposure. Each week, millions of viewers watch as founders pitch their businesses to a panel of wealthy investors—the Sharks—hoping to walk away with a deal that could transform their company and their life. If you have a product or service you believe in, the question is natural: **how to get on Shark Tank**?

The application process is rigorous, competitive, and often misunderstood. Thousands of businesses apply each season, but only around 100 to 150 make it onto the show. The good news? The producers are actively looking for compelling founders with scalable ideas. With the right approach, you can significantly improve your chances of being selected. This guide will walk you through every step—from determining if your business is ready to crafting an application that stands out—so you can pitch with confidence when your opportunity arrives.

Is Your Business Ready for the Shark Tank?

Before you fill out a single form, take an honest look at your company. The Sharks and producers share a common goal: finding businesses that are investable, entertaining, and authentic. Not every great product belongs on television, and not every founder is prepared for the scrutiny that follows.

Financial Health and Traction

The Sharks invest their own money, which means they expect returns. While you don't need to be generating millions in revenue, you do need to demonstrate traction. Most successful applicants have at least **$100,000 to $500,000 in annual revenue**, though some have less if their story is extraordinary. You should also be able to show sales growth, repeat customers, or a clear path to profitability.

Scalability and Market Potential

Sharks are looking for businesses that can scale. A local bakery with one location is less attractive than a food product that can be sold nationwide. Ask yourself: Can this business grow 10x or 100x? Is there a large addressable market? Do you have a defensible advantage, such as a patent, proprietary formula, or unique distribution channel?

Storytelling and Authenticity

Shark Tank is entertainment as much as it is business. Your personal story—why you started the company, the struggles you've overcome, and your vision for the future—matters enormously. Producers look for founders who are passionate, articulate, and relatable. If you have a compelling backstory that connects to your product, that can be a major asset.

The Shark Tank Application Process

The official application process is straightforward, but competition is fierce. Here's how it works step by step.

Step 1: Submit the Online Application

Go to the official Shark Tank casting website (which is typically listed on the show's ABC page or via the casting partner site). The application asks for basic information about you and your business, including:

- Your name, location, and contact details
- Business name, description, and stage
- Revenue, profit margins, and pricing
- Funding history and current funding needs
- Patent or trademark information
- A brief video pitch (usually 60 to 90 seconds)

Be thorough and honest. Inflating numbers or exaggerating your story will be discovered during due diligence, and it can disqualify you permanently.

Step 2: The Video Pitch

Your video is your first impression. It should be shot in good lighting with clear audio, but it doesn't need to be professionally produced. Focus on these elements:

- Start with a hook that grabs attention within the first five seconds
- Explain the problem your product solves
- Show or demonstrate the product in use
- Share a key metric or customer testimonial
- End with a clear ask (how much money and what percentage of equity)

Keep it concise and energetic. The producers review thousands of videos, so yours must stand out quickly.

Step 3: Screening and Interviews

If your application passes the initial review, you'll be contacted for a phone or video interview with a casting producer. This conversation is designed to verify your business details, assess your personality, and gauge your readiness for the Tank. Be prepared to answer tough questions about your numbers, your competition, and your motivation. Stay enthusiastic but grounded.

Step 4: The In-Person Audition

A select group of applicants is invited to an in-person audition, often held in a major city like Los Angeles, New York, or Dallas. This is your chance to pitch to a panel of producers who simulate the Shark Tank experience. You'll have about five to ten minutes to present your business and respond to questions. Treat this as if you're pitching to the Sharks themselves. The producers are looking for founders who can handle pressure, think on their feet, and stay composed under scrutiny.

Step 5: The Final Approval

After the audition, the producers select their favorite candidates to present to the network and the Sharks. This stage involves background checks, financial verification, and legal paperwork. If you're approved, you'll receive a call inviting you to film your episode. Congratulations—you're going to the Tank.

Crafting a Winning Application

Your written application carries as much weight as your video. Here's how to make it compelling.

Lead with Your Unique Value Proposition

In the business description field, avoid generic language like "we make high-quality products." Instead, state exactly what makes you different. For example: "We created the first portable water filtration system that fits inside a standard water bottle and removes 99.99% of bacteria without chemicals or electricity." Specificity builds credibility.

Show, Don't Just Tell

Use numbers and evidence to support your claims. Instead of saying "customers love our product," say "we have a 4.8-star rating from 2,000 reviews and a 40% repeat purchase rate." Quantifiable results are more persuasive than superlatives.

Be Clear About Your Ask

Shark Tank is about negotiation. Know exactly how much money you need, what you'll use it for, and what percentage of equity you're willing to give up. Use the application to state your ask clearly: "We are seeking $200,000 for 10% equity, which will be used to expand our production capacity and launch a marketing campaign in three new states."

Preparing for the Video Pitch

Your video is often the difference between being passed over and being invited to audition. Here are practical tips to make it effective.

Keep It Short and Punchy

Shoot for 60 to 90 seconds. If you haven't captured attention in the first ten seconds, viewers may skip ahead or move on. Start with a bold statement, a surprising fact, or a visual demonstration. Avoid long introductions about your background—get straight to the business.

Demonstrate the Product

If your product is physical, show it in action. If it's a service or software, explain it with a clear analogy or a brief case study. The more tangible you can make your offering, the easier it is for producers (and later, Sharks) to understand its value.

Show Your Personality

Producers want to know if you'll be engaging on television. Smile, make eye contact with the camera, and speak with genuine enthusiasm. If you're nervous, practice until your pitch feels natural. Authenticity beats theatrical performance every time.

What Happens After You Apply

The waiting game can be frustrating, but understanding the timeline helps manage expectations.

Typical Response Times

You may hear back within a few weeks, or it could take several months. If you don't hear anything after three months, it's safe to assume your application was not selected for that season. However, some founders have been contacted a year after applying. The producers often revisit past applications when casting for new episodes.

Multiple Opportunities to Apply

You can apply for multiple seasons. Many successful Shark Tank contestants applied two or three times before being accepted. Use each rejection as feedback—improve your video, refine your pitch, and grow your business in the meantime. Persistence pays off.

What to Do While You Wait

Don't put your life on hold. Continue growing your business, gathering customer testimonials, and building your online presence. If you're eventually selected, a stronger business will only improve your negotiating position. If you're not selected, you'll still have made progress on your own terms.

Red Flags to Avoid

To maximize your chances, steer clear of these common mistakes.

Inflating Revenue or Traction

Producers and Sharks perform due diligence. If you claim $500,000 in sales but your bank statements show $50,000, you'll be eliminated immediately. Honesty is non-negotiable.

Being Vague About Your Ask

"We need funding to grow" is not enough. Be specific about the amount, the equity offered, and how the money will be used. Vagueness signals that you haven't thought through your financial needs.

Ignoring the Competition

When asked about competitors, don't say "we have no competition." Every business has competitors or substitutes. Acknowledge them and explain your differentiation. It shows you understand your market.

Being Unprepared for Tough Questions

Expect questions about your margins, customer acquisition cost, and long-term strategy. If you stumble on basic business fundamentals, producers will assume you're not ready for the Sharks.

Conclusion

The journey of **how to get on Shark Tank** is as much about building a strong, scalable business as it is about crafting a compelling pitch. The application process demands honesty, preparation, and a willingness to be vulnerable in front of millions of viewers. But for those who succeed, the rewards can be transformative—not just the investment, but the mentorship, credibility, and nationwide exposure that come with walking into the Tank.

If you believe your business has what it takes, start today. Polish your numbers, refine your story, and submit that application. And remember: even if you don't make it onto the show, the process of preparing will make you a better founder. The Sharks are looking for entrepreneurs who are ready to win. With the right mindset and strategy, that entrepreneur could be you.