

PentoPix Wins Best in Show and Entertainment Category at SXSW Pitch Awards 2023 for AI-assisted 3D Animation Platform

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PentoPix won the 2023 SXSW Pitch Awards in the “Entertainment, Media & Content” category. PentoPix also won the “Best In Show” award at this competition. PentoPix uses AI-assisted technology to transform text into 3D animations.

SXSW Pitch showcased innovators and tech industry pioneers, from “indie tech companies to trailblazing startups” (1). The event featured 40 interactive tech companies in 8 different categories. The startups pitched in front of a panel of judges.

I sat down with Volha Paulovich, Co-Founder & COO of PentoPix, to talk about her experience at the Pitch Awards. When asked for the shortest summary of her company, a demonstration of her freshly-honed pitching skills, she stated, “PentoPix is an AI-assisted platform that brings creativity and efficiency together by converting scripts into 3D animated videos for storyboarding and pre-production.”

She was very excited about winning the Best in Show Award at SXSW Pitch and said, “It’s surreal; I haven’t processed it. It’s the best outcome we could have expected. And in startups, you never expect the best outcome to happen.”

Paulovich found the SXSW Pitch awards to be a unique experience. She explained, “I pitch almost every day ...I didn’t really think about it much, and then coaching started, and we shook things up completely, and it was great because it kind of never happens, and I’m really glad that we did.”

The process of SXSW Pitch involved some hands-on training. Paulovich described the process “Every startup gets a coach we get to meet a few times.” There are a required number of meetings “we have a minimum bar of, I think, two times, but you can do more... I did more, for sure...probably four. The experience also included a coach who “can guide you through the process of what it’s like on the day or how to structure your pitch better, leave comments about slides, how to prepare for Q & A.



Paulovich compared the experience to that of an athlete and spoke highly of her coach, referring to them as “absolutely amazing” and the overall experience as “something new and different.”

The SXSW Pitch experience was unique in the startup world, according to Paulovich “And it’s a level of support that you rarely get in startups, especially when it comes to the pitch.” The pitch experience normally means pitching “to an audience of investors or potential users.” For these early-stage startups, “it’s kind of their job to find why your startup won’t work,” meaning that “you don’t really get to hear the honest feedback because everyone is so critical.” The SXSW experience means having a coach with “a completely fresh eye on you,” and Paulovich described this added value as “amazing.”

When asked more about what she learned from the SXSW Pitch experience, Paulovich described how she and her team “started tailoring things towards people we are meeting, and it just gave us this understanding.” She reflected, “Always there are people who are not a match, and it’s okay. We are not a gold coin so everyone loves you.”

She emphasized the value of targeting a pitch, stating that “there are funds that invest in specific categories, everyone has investment criteria, and it’s okay when you don’t match. It’s not the end of the world; we’ve got to keep pushing, and that’s great to understand.” This wisdom came from “the exposure to so many different walks of life and so many different startups, to so many different investors.”

Winning this award had a meaningful effect on Paulovich and her company. She says, “Now, since we won, we think bigger, like, a much bigger scale.” The SXSW Pitch award is, according to Paulovich, “the top of the top.” This award inspired her team with a vision that “we are onto something, we are doing great things, not that I didn’t believe it before, but now we have this external validation.”

The external validation led to some more immediate changes. Paulovich explains, “to be honest, I was going to take a holiday after South By, and now, I don’t feel like doing that anymore.” The encouragement from this experience inspired the feeling that “It’s time to push and get out there and continue all the conversations we started, connect to all the people we met, and do more.”

The motivation here came from more than just winning the award. Paulovich found being in Austin for SXSW to be uplifting in many ways, saying that “in general, just being here in Austin, it gives that level of motivation and inspiration.” It makes people believe that “we can do it. We will achieve all these great things and milestones in the future,” and this “kind of fights all the mental health issues and all the negativity that may be involved in building a startup.”

The SXSW experience seems to have inspired Volha Paulovich, Co-Founder and COO of PentoPix and winner of the Best in Show Award at SXSW Pitch, and perhaps this inspiration will be shared by others.