



The Winning Pitch Deck

Telling Your Story to Investors

Investors want to understand your story through many lenses.

Your pitch deck serves as the initial and crucial impression an investor will form about you and your business. It plays a pivotal role in their evaluation of your business's scalability potential and whether you and your team possess the right skills to make it happen. Ultimately, they make an investment based on their confidence in you and the idea's potential to yield returns exceeding their initial investment. Your deck essentially narrates the story of your business, providing insight into your thought process.

Investors seek a leader who can articulate the story in a comprehensible manner, demonstrating clarity on how they will not only recover the investment, but also generate additional returns. As the founding CEO, it is very important to show a thorough understanding of the topic, particularly the financial aspects. Effectively convincing the audience that your solution holds a unique advantage over others and positioning your business as a market winner is paramount.

The purpose of the investor deck is to spark interest, to get a discussion going and *to get the next meeting*. Essentially it is the onramp for you and your business to create a strong relationship with your investors.

What do investors want?

They are looking for unique ideas that address big potential markets. Why? They need to make enough money with their investment to make it worth their time. Investors like to put money into ideas that fit their own knowledge base or experience. Also, they want to be able to make a difference for your company beyond just supplying you with cash. If they can find synergies with what you are doing with other investments they have made, that is a big positive for them. If they can introduce you to potential customers, thought leaders or other industry players this is a good sign! Investors want to make sure they too can help your business to win.

HINT: YOUR PITCH IS GOING WELL IF THE INVESTORS ASK A LOT OF QUESTIONS. BEING ENGAGED WITH YOU WHILE YOU ARE PITCHING IS A SIGN OF INTEREST. DON'T WORRY IF THEY INTERRUPT, EXPECT IT IF THINGS ARE GOING WELL.

Investors want to be able to picture an 'end state' of your company. When might they get their investment (and then some) from your business? They are not looking to be *in* your business for the long haul, rather you need to be a 'good deal' to put their funds to work for a good return.

Don't overwhelm the discussion with insignificant details about your business.

Investors want the big picture and enough detail to show:

- You've done your homework on this subject. You are an expert in this field.
- You understand your market, and have spoken directly to a number of potential customers. (Proof of Concept)

- Your solution works and is better than what is out there today for customers.
- You have some traction (whatever that means to your business).
- You understand the priorities of the business over time and can show logical milestones for the business that you will manage to.

If you have a personal story, a compelling reason why you decided to start this business – it is always a good thing to give them that story as background. If it has an ‘emotional point’ this is even better.

There is a well-defined investor pitch deck flow that you will want to use as a guide (see below). **This pitch deck is your ‘story’ and it should be told in a manner to get and keep their interest throughout. In general:**

- **Don’t bury the lead! Get to the point!**
- **Don’t make them wait to hear the most compelling points about your business – get to it.**
- **Use emotional points to engage the audience, especially early in your pitch.**
- **Be able to tell your story from the ‘numbers’. Investors are looking for significant impact in a big market. How you think the business will emerge will come through in your financial forecast.**

Tips about your Pitch Deck

You may be surprised to hear: Your **pitch deck exists only to support your business story.** Therefore, keep your slides simple with a minimum amount of text. You want the investors to focus on **you** not on reading the slides.



MOST PITCH DECKS WILL BE VIEWED BY INVESTORS ON THEIR MOBILE PHONE. ANOTHER REASON TO KEEP IT SIMPLE.

Investors see 100’s of pitch decks each month.

They make decisions to meet with you to hear your pitch within 2 minutes or less of looking at your pitch deck.

Clearly define the problem, the solution and how you will make money. Avoid clutter and excessive text. Use visuals, charts, and graphs to convey complex information in a simple manner.

You may want to create 2 decks:

- 1) **The actual in-person pitch: keep it simple. Do not have slides with a lot of text! The slides should support your business story.**

- 2) **The 'leave behind' deck -which would have more detail. This is the deck they might share with other investors who were not present at your pitch. It will also help them to remember your business story.**

Slides Tips:

Keep text on slides to a minimum.

You don't want them reading your slides while you are talking! You can leave behind a more detailed deck if you wish so they remember the discussion, but do not use details on slides when you are presenting.

Don't overdo the animations.

They are watching and listening to you, anything else is a distraction.

One idea per slide

Humans ingest information better by keeping it simple. Your discussion of the topic will fill in any blanks.

Use impactful photos that make your point.

People respond to photo images emotionally. If it helps to make your point, the use of photos in your deck is a positive.

Mind the power of 3's.

People tend to remember things better when visually shown in 3's. Whether it's describing benefits or product features – 3's work well in design layout.

Consider the flow of your story.

As you move from slide to slide find a way to ensure they transition to each other as you are telling it. Remember you are telling the story of your company not just listing facts and features.

One more thing...

Ending powerfully will make a difference. Don't just ask for funds, but close with some interesting 'announcement': "we've just signed a contract with General Motors" or "we just met with a lead executive of Marriott", or "our product team will launch a week early". Ending memorably, with a surprise will help you to be unforgettable.

Here are the ESSENTIAL slides you need to pitch your company to Investors.

- **What problem exists (unmet need) – what is the problem you are solving for?**
 - Simply stated what is the problem that you are solving.
 - Are there current alternatives today that are lacking?
 - When pitching live, is there a personal story about why you know this problem exists? Did you have this problem? What made you learn about this problem?
- **Your solution and ‘unfair advantage’**
 - What are you doing that is truly special, what is unique about your solution? What is your value proposition?
- **Addressable market size (in \$\$) and Market segment targeted.**
 - If you could fulfill all the needs out there how much revenue is that?
 - For example, if there are 100 potential customers and you could sell every one of them at your price of \$10/piece...that is an addressable market of \$1000!
 - If you also know your Serviceable Addressable Market (SAM) and your Serviceable Obtainable Market (SOM) include these in your slide.
- **Business model / Revenue model (how do you make money?)**
 - Who pays you, what is that model - be specific. How often do they pay; how do they pay more than once overtime?
 - There are 3 basic types of business models: Direct to consumer (selling directly to the end user), Multi-Sided Market (intermediaries or channels between you and the end user), or Marketplace (think EBay or Etsy) Is the model Direct, a 2-sided market or a marketplace?
Investors want to make sure you know how this business will work and how the money flows!
- **Go to Market Strategy**
 - How do you get to the market? Based on your Business Model slide, how do you make that happen? Do you use channels or go direct? Prove to them that you understand how to enter this market and win.
 - Tell them about your unfair advantage of getting into the market fast and staying there longer than the competition.
- **Positioning vis a vi the competition**
 - Usually best done with an easy to understand graphic, 2X2 matrix (your business should be at the top right quadrant as the ‘winner’ of this race!) or features list across competitors, should be somewhat instant understand competition. viewer to understand YOUR business vs. the competition.
- **The Team**
 - Why us? Why is your team uniquely qualified to do this? This is a key slide to understand who you are and why the team’s background will give you an unfair advantage.

- It is often said that investors invest in teams, sometimes more so than a particular idea or market. Is your team strong enough to make this business go?
- **Timeline of Progress and Milestones**
 - Should be very real, very achievable. Should show where you have been AND most important, where you will get to with their funds in your company! Investors like to invest in helping you to achieve a 'next' milestone.
- **Financial Projections**
 - Should be 3–4-year projections (minimal)
- **The Ask**
 - How much are you raising now, Why? What does that buy us over the next year or until your next milestone. What exactly will we accomplish with this investment?