

Building the perfect pitch deck

By Jeff Lehrer

You have a great idea, but to build the technology, you will need money...

You have tapped out friends and family, you have secured co-founders, you have done a market study, you have built a demo, and you have a story to tell.

It's time to visit with angels and seed-stage venture capital investors, and you have one shot at making a first impression. This article provides tips for helping you to make the most of that initial meeting.

What documents should I prepare for the meeting?

You will need three documents before seeking a meeting with an investor:

- An executive summary, short, one-page "teaser" that your contacts can use to seek introductions on your behalf
- An investor powerpoint presentation
- A business plan, showing how much you need to build your company over the lifespan of the investment that you will seek, and which shows achievement of benchmarks, see [a template business plan](#).

So, you drafted a one page executive summary. If your exec sum gets a bite from an investor, you will set a time for a call, or better yet, a face-to-face meeting. For template executive summaries to help get you started, see our sample [template](#) and [form](#).

You should be prepared to bring a "pitch deck". The perfect pitch is visually appealing and concise, with slides that include the following key points. For a pitch deck template, see our [pitch deck template handbook](#).

Cover page

Overview

- What is the inspiration for your company. Why did you decide to create this?
- This is where you can basically put your "elevator pitch" down in writing.
- A few sentences about what you do, what you do for the target consumer, and why the target consumer would be interested / why is it important.
- This would be a page you could put a picture of the product on

Team (can also be put at end of slides)

- Investors want to know what qualifies you to execute your idea successfully and better than the other companies in your space: work history, network, and skills are all key. Can you attract superstars? What have you done previously that has been a knockout success, business or technically? What is unique about your team's background that will

enable you to be successful?

- Your history is important: did you work together in a prior company or did you meet last week at a hackathon?
- At an early stage, the key driver of our investment is the people, particularly how hungry and coachable you are

Market

- What is the problem, why does it exist, and how big is the opportunity?
- What is the actual market you can capture. On your page with the market numbers you have \$98bn listed – investors will want to know what % is actually the real market.

Problem

- What problem does your product/technology solve, and why is your approach unique and defensible?
- What fundamental advance does your technology demonstrate?
- What are the technical barriers to entry based upon your proposal that will work in your favor?

Solution

- Your value proposition: how you solve this problem faster, cheaper, smarter.

Customer/user

- Who they are and how many?
- How will you reach/acquire them?

Competition

- Know every competitor and what are the current solutions to this problem, and why they aren't addressing your market adequately.
- List the major competitors, understand their processes and what your competitive advantage is.
- How well funded are your competitors? What do your current customers say appeals to them and why?

Demonstrated achievements/milestones

- If you are #1 in Google search, add it here
- Add press articles
- Screen shots of Amazon, or other retailers

Business Model

- How do you make money? Who pays, how much, from where?
- Do you have numbers/metrics that shows customer traction, retention, satisfaction, etc
- Talk about existing partnerships here

Financial Overview

- What are the expected revenues, expenses, and EBITDA three years out?
- How long will this round's cash last you?
- We typically fund companies sufficiently so that they can run 18 months until the next funding, if needed.

Funding. This is where you need to add in "the ask"

- How much are you raising and how are you going to use the money?
- To grow a team, to support overhead, to expand?
- How much have you raised thus far and from whom?
- Milestones. What is your vision for the future, measured in milestones for the next 3 years?

Contact details

- Make it easy to follow up by including your cell and your email
- Don't include social media links that contain extraneous content

Some entrepreneurs use shared file sites and send links to be able to track who opened their deck and when.

Following up is important. Make sure you have a working website, and offer a business card, then follow up with a list of customer references or letters of intent.

For more on raising capital, read our article on "[Tips for raising venture capital](#)."

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