



How to Prepare for Your Next Pitch

EXPLORE WHAT'S OUT THERE!

Before you start putting together your pitch deck, it's worth reviewing funding pitches from other entrepreneurs. This will help you generate ideas and give you some good pointers to get started.

Below are links to a few successful pitch decks. Explore as many as you like. As you explore, take notes in the questionnaire below. You'll be able to use these notes when you prepare your pitch deck.

Tip: Although these pitches were successful, there is no such thing as a perfect pitch deck. Critique these decks from your point of view.

- [Castle's pitch deck](#)
- [Square's pitch deck](#)
- [Forbes best pitch decks](#)

NOW, EVALUATE IT

Write your answers in the space provided below each question.

What did you think were the strongest aspects in the pitches you reviewed?

What did you think were the weakest aspects in the pitches you reviewed?

What would you do to improve the aspects you thought were weak?

Based on what you reviewed, would you invest in any of the ideas? Why or why not?

YOUR PITCH DECK HELPER

To prepare your pitch deck, you'd want to use PowerPoint or another tool of your choice that reflects your company's branding.

There's so much you want to share about your product/service, but remember, you only get a few minutes (typically less than four minutes) to deliver your pitch and get potential investors excited about your business. So, what must you include and what can you leave out? This handy helper will guide you with just that!

In your pitch deck, create slides on each of the topics listed below. This simple 10-topic formula will keep your pitch deck to the point and short and sweet. The guiding questions for each topic will help you flesh out the slides for your pitch deck.

At the end of the topics list, there's a Do's and Don'ts section that applies to your entire pitch deck. Be sure to check that out!

1. Problem: Introduce the problem.

- What problem are you solving? If you used **design thinking** to discover the problem, it's worth mentioning here. You'll demonstrate empathy for your customers and the problems they face, and it will help set a meaningful theme for your pitch.
- Can you make this problem relatable to your audience (potential investors)? What is the story behind how you uncovered this problem?

2. Solution: Bring in the solution!

- Why is your solution the best solution? Describe your product or service.
- What are the other parties working on the same problem failing to consider in their solution?

3. Market Opportunity: Present your go-to market strategy.¹

- What business or industry are you in?
- What growth is this business/industry/market experiencing over time? Present facts and figures on market shares, growth rate, etc.
- What's the market size?
- Is the market reachable?

4. Customer: Present information about and from your customer.

- What's your primary customer base?
- What information can you share **about** your customer base?
- What glowing feedback from your customers can you share?
- What other information can you share **from** your customer base?
- Can you share evidence of customer interest based on market tests you conducted?

5. Business Model: What's the state of your business today?

- How does your product/service make money today?
- Who's paying the bills to run the show today?
- Are there other (high-profile) investors who've already invested?
- What is your pricing model—premium or budget offering?²

6. Competition: Set yourself apart!

- Have you identified your competitors in the market?
 - i. Who are they? Specifically. And NEVER say there is “no competition.”
- How are you ahead of your competitors?
 - i. List your advantages.
 - ii. Show what makes you unique—for example, intellectual property rights.

7. Traction/Key Milestones: Show that you’re ready to grow!

- What is your timeline?
 - i. Present your growth prospects with the investment you’re looking to raise.
- What are your milestones to date?
- Can you share your growth metrics?
- What has the market response been to your product or service?
 - i. Validate that your solution addresses the problem.

8. Team: Tout your team! Tout yourself!

- Who are the key team members?
- What are their roles?
- What makes them the best at supporting and owning your vision?
- How is each team member contributing to the success of the product/service—their prior experience in a similar market, their prior successes, their unique expertise?
- Why are you the person who can do this?

9. Financials: Prove your credibility with numbers.

- What’s your total revenue and total expenses for the past X years?
- How many customers have you sold your product/service to in the past X years?
- What are the assumptions in your financial model—expenses, market penetration rate, etc.?
- Can you include your financial projections for at least the next three years?
 - i. If you’re only able to provide estimates, that’s okay! It will still show potential investors where you’re headed.

10. The Ask: Go ahead, ask for what you want!

- How much money are you looking to raise?
- Why do you need that amount?
- How do you plan to use the money?

Tip: Consider preparing extra slides—for Q&A, for example.

DO's	DON'Ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a pitch deck that stands on its own, without you needing to present it.• Keep the slide count to 15–20 slides.• Tell a story—while keeping it short. Tip: Telling the story behind how you discovered a problem that people were facing and designed a product/service to solve that problem will make your pitch more engaging than listing and speaking to bullet points.• Use lots of meaningful and descriptive visuals—for example, images and graphs.• Use consistent formatting—font type, font size, font color.• Remember that you are pitching you and your company as much as your product or service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Display a lot of text/details on slides. You might be tempted to use a smaller font size to squeeze in as much information as possible, but hold that urge! Tip: Think ahead! When you're presenting a pitch to potential investors, you'd want them to connect with you and your idea and not be distracted by information-heavy slides.

YOUR PITCH DELIVERY HELPER

Once you've created your pitch deck, consider enrolling yourself in pitch competitions. Pitch competitions provide opportunities to practice your funding pitch and become more confident before you go to your funding source. You'll also be able to meet potential investors, make valuable connections, and promote your product/service at pitch competitions.

Here are a few guidelines to prepare for your pitch competition:

- Record video of your pitch and watch it. Keep practicing, recording, and watching until you're satisfied with your pitch presentation.
- Show your video recording to trusted friends and/or mentors. Refine your presentation based on the feedback you receive.
- If you can't record your presentation, practice in front of a mirror. This will help you observe your gestures and body language and fine-tune it as necessary.
- Have your product/service (or a prototype) ready to present at the competition.

But the most important thing you can do to deliver a great pitch is to relax and believe in your product/service. You've put in a lot of hard work to prepare a succinct and compelling pitch. Be confident and draw motivation from all of the hard work you've put in.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Creating Your Pitch

Explore the Springboard Enterprises [website](#) for more ideas around creating your pitch. Springboard Enterprises was originally founded through the National Women's Business Council.

Pitch Competitions

- To find upcoming pitch competitions near you, do a search. Use keywords such as "pitch competitions," "venture plan competitions," and "business plan competitions."
- Check if the [Dolphin Tank](#) is available near you, or look into bringing it to your area. Dolphin Tank is a program designed by Springboard Enterprises to provide women entrepreneurs with helpful feedback-driven pitch sessions.

¹ *crowdfunder, Investor Pitch Deck Template PowerPoint*, https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=2ahUKewjA_laOuYLgAhVJja0KHflmC5kQFjABegQICRAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.crowdfunder.com%2Fresources%2Ftemplates%2FInvestor%2520Pitch%2520Deck%2520Template.ppt&usg=AOvVaw3_UkZk-fXuYMVgYIFg-t3D (accessed May 3, 2019).

² Noah Parsons, *The 11 Slides You Need to Have in Your Pitch Deck* [Updated for 2019], Bplans, <https://articles.bplans.com/what-to-include-in-your-pitch-deck/> (accessed Sept. 27, 2019).