

Five essential tips for founders to pitch their vision



Pitching is an essential part of business. Getting in front of an investor is an important moment, so it's crucial that you are well prepared for when this moment comes. Successfully advancing to the next stage of your fundraising journey all hinges on the pitch deck.

If created effectively, decks convey information concisely, and help prepare for meetings or to summarise key takeaways. They are needed to capture your audience's attention – which becomes even more important during a globally challenging economic situation.

There are several reasons why a pitch deck can fall short, but a well-crafted pitch deck can be a powerful tool. I want to share the best tips I have to help ambitious startups elevate their story and create decks that resonate with their target audience.

Lead with why

Everyone enjoys a good story and that goes for investors, too. Many believe that a good story is all about WHAT happens, but that's only one ingredient and it's not the most important one. Stories that excite us focus first on the WHY because what interests people most is not necessarily what others do, but why they do it, and what their motivation and conviction are.

Don't start by explaining in detail what solution you are developing, what your route-to-market will be or how much investment you have raised. It doesn't matter that you've broken performance barriers with your offering if your audience doesn't understand why your solution matters in the first place. It's irrelevant that you've done a deal with a major distributor if we don't know why your product is changing the game. Your WHY is what will hook your audience and is what you should start with.

Embrace simplicity

Now that you've got your WHY in place, the next step is thinking about how to convey it most effectively to your audience. The key is to follow this rule: keep it short and simple.

A helpful tool could be to use infographics to break down complex concepts and simply explain them. This is particularly useful when trying to explain a problem in your industry that you're trying to solve with your business.

Another important aspect to keep in mind is to be consistent in your messaging. Define what your key messages are and focus on presenting those to your audience.

Messaging and pitch decks become powerful when reduced to an absolute minimum, so try to reduce them to their core, and focus on having short and precise statements which will make them more memorable for your audience.

Make it personal

Investors invest in people first. You should therefore make sure that the human aspect is not neglected in your pitch deck. Nobody just wants to see a clumsy presentation of attractive numbers. Your pitch should also appeal to investors on a personal level.

Tell your story and don't be afraid to tell it in a very personal way. It's your innovation and your story. Looking to other companies for ideas and inspiration can be helpful, but you must develop your own story. As mentioned, a good starting point is your WHY.

Another way to make it more personal is to use quotes. By reproducing direct speech, you can make the content of your slides even more personal and accessible. Make sure that the quotes you use are not too long, easy to understand and in a language that fits your company culture.

Finally, show humans. No matter how niche your offering may be, some people are passionate about it, otherwise, your company would not exist. Show these people. When you show people interacting with your innovation, it becomes much more accessible.

Crunch the numbers

Numbers equal trust and help prove the seriousness of your business to investors. For these reasons, it is important to incorporate them into your pitch deck. However, one common mistake is overloading it with numbers and figures, as having too many figures in your pitch deck will cause your readers to lose interest quickly.

Think carefully about which numbers will be most impactful. This will depend on the story you want to tell. Think of the data you have as elements of your story. Once you've identified the storyline and direction, decide which of your data is considered a crucial element for your audience to know.

A good method of illustrating your data is through diagrams, graphs, and charts. Or you could get more creative with it and show your figures in a visually exciting way, for example through Venn diagrams, bubble or pie charts, or pyramid graphs.

Avoid common pitfalls

Don't forget the wider story.

You need to set the scene to give your audience the chance to understand why your pitch matters to them. Jumping straight into your achievements will most likely mean that you will lose your audience's interest. Lead with the specific reason why your solution matters.

Avoid information overload.

You have to earn your audience's attention. Don't make them work too hard for this. This means you should reduce the amount of text on your slide decks and use clear headlines and accessible graphs.

Consistency is crucial.

You have developed your solution with a great eye for detail. Your pitch deck demands the same level of attention – it is your key communication tool with investors, customers and other stakeholders. Make sure you use a consistent set of slide layouts, fonts, text sizes, and spellings. A second pair of eyes, sometimes outside of your core team, is helpful to receive that feedback.

The task of creating a perfect pitch deck, which holds your audience's attention, conveys the importance of your solution and concisely summarises why you deserve investment, is certainly challenging. But if you use this advice, avoid these mistakes and truly believe in the solution you are offering, you are well on your way to delivering the perfect pitch.