

Pitch Decks

A BUS-217 Side Session

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10 simple points about pitch decks:

1. It's not really about slides.

It's about storytelling. Most people build slides and then try to figure out what the story is. I like to start by writing out the story first. If you create a solid narrative, then building some slides to go along with it is easy.

2. Resist the urge to use AI.

Authenticity matters, especially with regard to selling yourself as a startup founder.

3. You are auditioning for the role of CEO.

**Nobody invests in slides. Nobody invests in ideas.
They invest in impressive founders.**

4. Think about your desired outcome.

Usually it's for them to be so intrigued they want to have another meeting. You aren't going to sell the deal on the basis of one pitch.

5. Three minutes, ten slides.

Your base pitch deck should be around ten slides that you can present in around 3 minutes, giving an overview of the opportunity. Once you have that, you can create versions of different lengths for different purposes.

6. People will only remember 1-2 things.

Decide what you want the key takeaway to be. Remember that the person you are pitching to will tell someone else about it. What do you want them to remember?

7. Don't hire a designer.



Allison Byers @apbyers · Apr 13, 2022

I HATE it when investors tell founders to hire designers for their decks. Such a waste of time and money.

Focus on getting the right content, narrative flow, making slides easy to read, and confidently presenting. Hiring a graphic designer isn't getting you a check.

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8. Be able to pitch without slides.

If you don't have a story you can tell without slides, you don't have a story.

9. Relax and slow down.

**The best pitches don't seem like pitches.
They seem like really interesting conversations.**

Things that might be part of your story:

Why are you the exactly the right entrepreneur for this venture?

What problem are you solving?

What's your secret sauce?

How will your venture make money?

What does the current competitive landscape look like?

How big is the opportunity?

How are you going to efficiently acquire customers?

What are your initial capital needs, and what milestone will that initial capital get you to?

This is not a definitive list, of course. Every venture is different. But you should be able to, in about 3 minutes, tell an interesting story that incorporates most of these key points and leaves the recipient intrigued and wanting to hear more.