

## How to create a Pitch Deck (From Sequoia's Michael Houck)

Storytelling is a commonly overlooked skill by founders. Your deck is a sales document. Its goal is to make investors interested in meeting you. DON'T overcomplicate it. Tell a story where every slide makes one main point.

1. **Company Purpose** - Every company needs a mission statement. And founders need to communicate it. Condense your mission statement into one sentence. What's the main benefit your company will bring to the world? Investors see tons of decks; stand out through the clarity of your purpose.
2. **Problem** - Every successful company solves a specific problem for a specific user. Use this slide to share: What common problem you are solving? Why is this a painful problem for users? How people are solving the problem today.
3. **Solution** - Companies grow when they solve a problem 10x better than anyone else. Your solution should be: easy to understand, actually address the problem you are solving and not be easy to replicate. If investors understand it quickly they'll believe customers will too.
4. **Why Now** - Timing is everything. And investors are trend-hunters. They form beliefs about the future and write checks when a company fits that narrative. Communicate that your company is going to ride waves to grow fast.
5. **Market Size** - A big market is the most important thing, but your market isn't "everyone." Show that you understand who your target user is, and that there are a lot of them. Investors also like to see clear "napkin math." This helps them trust your thinking.
6. **Competition** - Don't focus on your competition. Use this slide to show off what makes your products more useful for your target market. Create a matrix that positions your company against competitors on metrics or features that your users care about.
7. **Product** - What is your "secret-sauce?" Is there a technical advantage you have over everyone else? Use this slide to show why what you're building will be hard for others to replicate. And why it will have compounding advantages over time.
8. **Business Model** - How do you make money? Pick one path - having too many will confuse investors and customers. Consider breaking distribution out into its own slide.
9. **Team** - In the early stages, an investor is primarily making a bet on you and your co-founders. Show your credibility with logos of past schools, companies, etc.
10. **Financials** - It's easy to overcomplicate this slide. Detailed financial projections are a red flag in the early stages. Investors want to trust that you understand everything will change. Instead, show revenue generated over time, burn per month, and months of runway left.