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Financing Your Dream

WHAT INVESTORS EXPECT FROM YOUR PITCH DECK

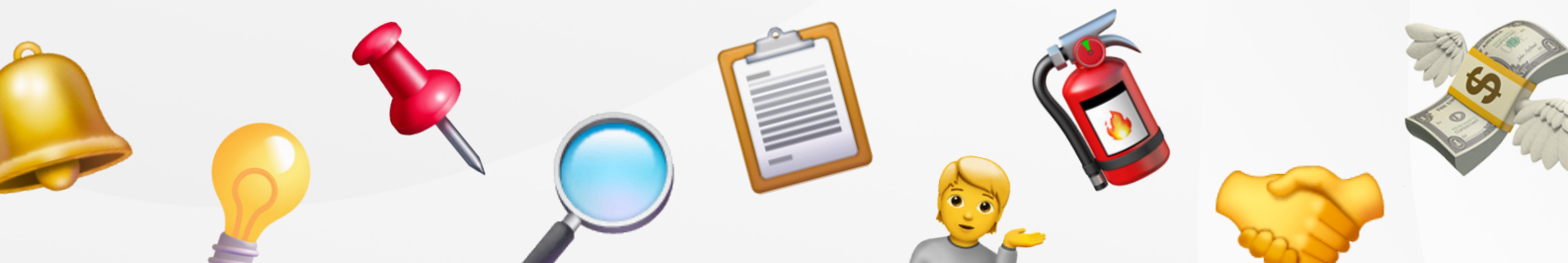


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7 DETAILS YOU MUST ADD TO YOUR PITCH DECK

I'm not here to walk you through the entire process of creating a pitch deck or what it should look like—that's what my free pitch deck template is for! which you can find attached at the last page of this book. Instead, let's focus on the seven most important slides your pitch deck absolutely needs before you step into the Shark's Tank or face the Dragons' Den

Chapter 1

FIRST IMPRESSION COUNTS

Understand everything you need to know about your pitch deck's opening slide and convey the right message from the get-go

Opening Slide

When presenting live to an audience and investors, your opening slide is the one they'll see the longest. It stays on screen while you're being introduced and as you walk to the stage, making it your first opportunity to make a strong impression.

Your opening slide should be clean, impactful, and centered around your brand identity. Here's how to get it right:

Focus on Your Logo and Identity

Display your brand's logo prominently, but keep it centered—not awkwardly tucked in the corner. Use your brand colors and fonts to reinforce your identity visually.

Include a Powerful One-Liner

Add a concise tagline or one-liner that summarizes your brand's value proposition. This brief statement should clearly communicate what your business is about.

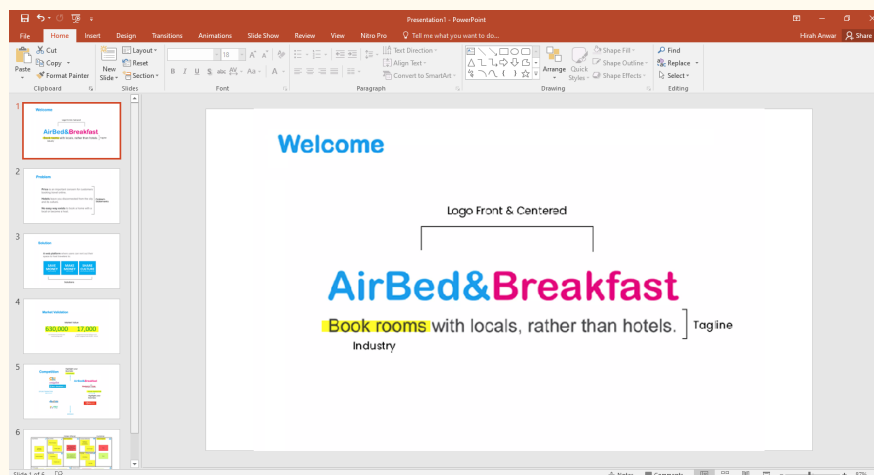
Keep It Simple

Avoid cluttering the slide with excessive text. Investors aren't going to read paragraphs while you're walking to the stage. Let your verbal pitch do the talking.

Mention Your Industry

Adding a subtle nod to your industry (e.g., "Innovating Healthcare" or "Sustainable Fashion") helps investors quickly identify if your business aligns with their interests. This ensures you capture the attention of those most relevant to your pitch.

Remember, your opening slide sets the tone. A well-designed, minimalistic slide not only looks professional but also primes investors to take your presentation seriously from the moment you step on stage.



Chapter 2

SELL THE PROBLEM

No-one wants to know your business solution. They want to know the problem you're solving.
That's where the market lies and brands convert.

SELL THE PROBLEM

You’ve probably heard this before, and it bears repeating: Sell the problem before pitching the solution. This approach is one of the most effective ways to capture an investor’s interest and prime them for your pitch.

Take this scenario: you’re seeking funding for a women’s office wear clothing brand in Pakistan. At first, it might seem like a niche idea—who would invest in this? But if you start by highlighting the number of working women in Pakistan and the glaring gap in fashion brands catering to formal, professional office wear, you immediately draw attention to an untapped market. This makes your pitch not just relevant but compelling.

HERE’S WHY THIS WORKS

Investors Are Problem-Solvers

Framing your business as a solution to a real, data-backed problem sets the stage for investors to see its potential impact.

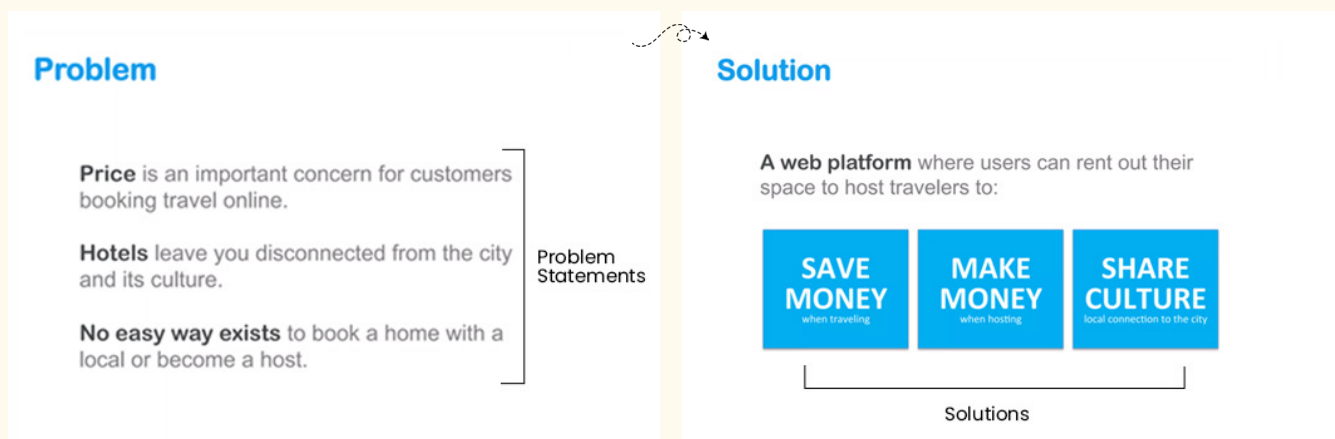
The Power of Data

Numbers don’t just validate your claims; they make the problem feel urgent. Whether it’s market size, demographic insights, or growth trends, hard data can turn even a niche issue into a significant opportunity.

Timing Matters

Start with the problem to grab attention, but don’t linger too long. Transition smoothly into your solution early in the pitch to maintain momentum and show how you’re uniquely positioned to address the gap.

No matter how small or underrated the problem might seem, you can make it sound significant with the right research and data. The better you articulate the issue, the easier it becomes to convince investors that your business is the solution they need to back.



You can take this model a step further and reverse-engineer it to captivate investors who aren't directly involved in your industry. How? By reframing your pitch to highlight the broader opportunity and making it relevant to anyone with an eye for growth.

For example, imagine you're pitching your untapped formal office wear clothing business to a room full of pharmaceutical and tech investors. On the surface, it might seem like a mismatch—they're not in fashion. But what if you told them that 22.6% of Pakistan's workforce is driven by women, which translates to over 54 million people? Now you've got their attention.

Numbers Speak Universally

Investors love scalable opportunities. By presenting data that shows the potential size of your market, you make your pitch relevant, regardless of the investor's industry expertise.

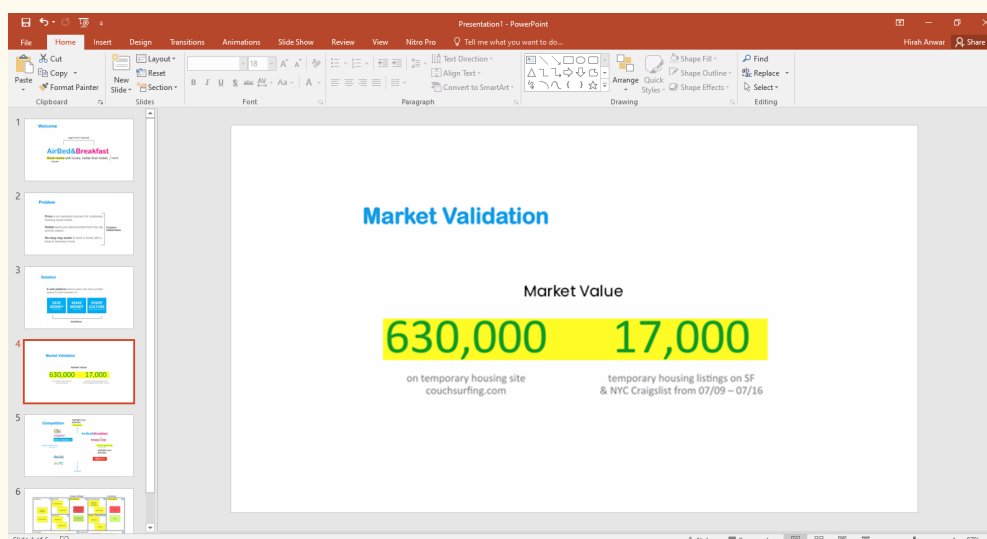
Show the Overlap

Highlight how your business taps into a growing demographic or social trend, such as the increasing participation of women in the workforce. These broader themes often resonate with investors looking to diversify their portfolios.

Position Your Business as a High-Growth Opportunity

When you focus on the untapped potential and the why now factor, you shift the conversation from niche to necessity, piquing the interest of investors across industries.

This approach ensures that even if your business doesn't align with an investor's usual interests, the sheer size and appeal of the opportunity will have them leaning in to learn more.



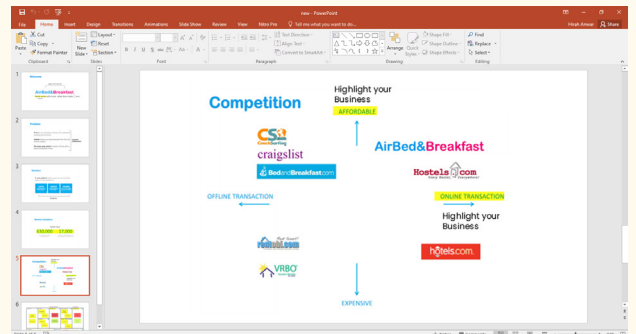
Chapter 3

COMPETITORS ANALYSIS

Know your competitors from head to toe and their every move in the market to stay on top of things. Show investors that you know your market

COMPETITORS ANALYSIS

If you're serious about creating a winning pitch deck to secure investor funding, thorough research is non-negotiable. The first step? Understand your competitors. This demonstrates to investors that you've done your homework and are ready to tackle the market. However, adding unnecessary information can backfire.



For example, if you overemphasize the market size your competitors have captured, the immediate question investors will ask is, “What’s your plan to take their market share?” Trust me, you don’t want to be caught off guard by this, as addressing such questions—especially when your competitors have significant resources and marketing budgets—can be challenging.

The key is to keep your presentation concise and focused. Highlight only the competitor points you’ve countered with actionable strategies. For instance, one highly effective approach on a competitor analysis slide is showing how your business improves on their shortcomings. This is the kind of insight investors are looking for because, in today’s market, entirely unique business ideas are rare.

Success lies in staying relevant and capturing market share, even in saturated markets. By addressing gaps in the competition and presenting a clear strategy, you’ll craft a pitch deck that inspires investor confidence and sets your business apart.

HERE'S WHY IT WORKS

Demonstrates Strategic Thinking

Highlighting competitor weaknesses and your solutions shows investors you’ve identified opportunities to gain an edge.

Keeps the Focus on You

Instead of getting bogged down by competitor achievements, you pivot to your strengths and strategies.

Addresses Investor Concerns Preemptively

By countering the competition, you reduce the risk of facing tough, unscripted questions.

Reinforces Realism

Acknowledging a saturated market and presenting actionable plans prove you understand the challenges and have a realistic growth approach.

This approach makes your pitch deck relevant, compelling, and aligned with investor priorities.

Chapter 4

MARKET OPPORTUNITY

Explain your product or services' market opportunity meaning how much you promise to sell within your time phase and how much you've sold so far

MARKET OPPORTUNITY

Now that your competitor analysis is complete, it's time to highlight the market opportunity for your business—a critical step in capturing investors' interest. This section of your pitch deck is where you show the potential for growth, scalability, and market penetration. The most compelling way to do this is through clear, visually engaging graphs and charts representing the three pillars of market opportunity:

Total Addressable Market (TAM)

TAM represents the total size of your target market—the maximum number of buyers who could potentially purchase your product or service. This includes not only your immediate audience but also third-tier customers who may need education on how your offering can improve their lives. For instance, if you're launching an innovative software product, your TAM might include not just direct end-users but also B2B segments that could benefit from licensing or integrations.



Serviceable Addressable Market (SAM)

SAM is a more refined subset of TAM—the portion of the market that you can realistically serve given your current resources, operational capacity, and geographic reach. Keeping your SAM realistic is crucial; overestimating it can raise red flags with investors about your understanding of market dynamics. SAM is where you can demonstrate that your business model is actionable today, ensuring investors that their funds are backing a feasible plan.

Serviceable Obtainable Market (SOM)

SOM focuses on the specific market share you aim to capture within the next few years. This projection must be realistic, data-driven, and supported by a detailed strategy. Investors will want to see a year-over-year growth plan showing how you'll achieve this, whether through marketing, sales, partnerships, or product differentiation. For example, if you plan to grow your SOM by 15% annually, explain the campaigns, tools, or partnerships that will drive this expansion.



Why These Metrics Matter

Including TAM, SAM, and SOM not only makes your pitch deck more credible but also more strategic. It demonstrates that you've thought through the market landscape in granular detail, identifying clear opportunities while acknowledging practical limitations. This structured approach can also reveal additional opportunities investors might explore, leveraging their networks or resources to expand your SOM further.

Chapter 5

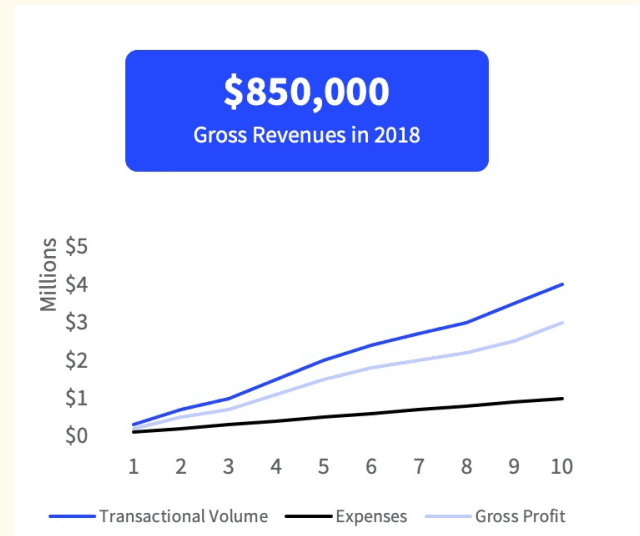
THE TRACTION

Explain your business previous growth numbers and win investors with your performance without technical mentorship. Only then investors will trust your vision and brand

THE TRACTION

After establishing your brand, explaining your industry, and presenting the problem along with your solution, it's time to captivate investors with 'The Traction.' This is your opportunity to showcase your business's growth to date and outline its future potential. If your business is in the prototype phase, you can pitch projected growth based on industry data.

Calculating traction is straightforward: take your current growth rate and add the percentage growth you anticipate for the coming years



But here's the tricky part—explaining that growth percentage convincingly. If an investor asks how you came up with that figure, you can't just say, "I felt like it." They'll want to know the logic behind those numbers.

HERE'S HOW TO HANDLE IT

Data Is King

I've said it before, and I'll say it again—data is everything. Investors don't want guesswork; they want solid, reliable numbers. Make sure you have accurate or near-accurate information about your current business performance. This could include monthly revenue growth, user acquisition rates, or other key performance indicators.

Industry Data for Startups

If you're still in the startup phase and haven't made any sales yet, use industry-backed data. Show how similar businesses in your sector are growing, or cite market trends that support your growth predictions. Don't just pull numbers out of thin air.

Don't Overstate Earnings

It's tempting to paint an overly optimistic picture, but be cautious. Investors are sharp, and they'll quickly spot discrepancies. If you haven't made profits yet, be transparent about it. Over-stating profits or earnings only leads to mistrust.

Remember, your opening slide sets the tone. A well-designed, minimalistic slide not only looks professional but also primes investors to take your presentation seriously from the moment you step on stage.

Chapter 6

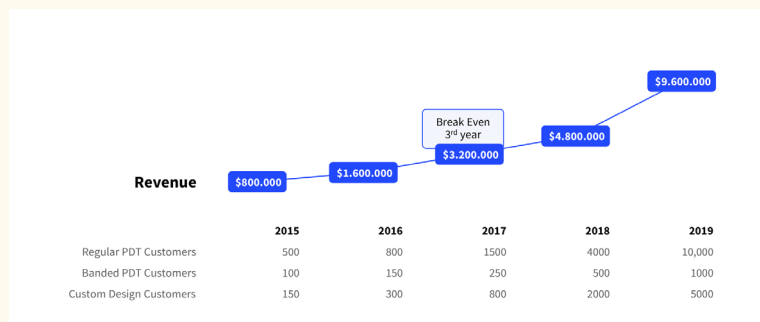
YOUR BUSINESS MODEL

Explain your business model and share how you plan to make money if investors put their capital. the simpler your business model, the easier for investors to understand

YOUR BUSINESS MODEL

Your business model is like the signature on a check—without it, no matter how impressive the amount you quote, it's meaningless. A strong, well-defined business model is the cornerstone of acquiring and convincing investors. But let me clarify: by "business model," I don't mean your financial projections. These are two entirely different entities.

In this context, neither I nor any other investor is particularly interested in scrutinizing your financial spreadsheets at this stage. What we care about is understanding how you'll generate revenue and the speed at which you can optimize cash flow.



A business model, in its essence, is your roadmap for turning your product or service into consistent income. It's the framework that explains the mechanics of profitability—how you'll attract customers, deliver value, and sustain growth. Nail this, and you've already secured a significant advantage, winning over 90% of investors.



Here's a critical tip

keep it simple and focused. A business model that's overly complicated or tries to cover too many bases can be a red flag. I once sat down with a promising startup team. Their idea was innovative, and their vision ambitious, but their business model was all over the place—fragmented across multiple revenue streams with no clear strategy to hit their projected targets. The result? An amazing concept lost in a sea of uncertainty.

YOUR BUSINESS MODEL SHOULD ANSWER KEY QUESTIONS

- Who are your customers?
- What problem are you solving for them?
- What value are you offering, and why will they pay for it?
- Which channels will you use to deliver that value?

If you can clearly articulate these elements concisely and compellingly, you're not just pitching your idea—you're showcasing a blueprint for success. Remember, investors don't just back ideas; they back strategies that inspire confidence in their execution.

Chapter 7

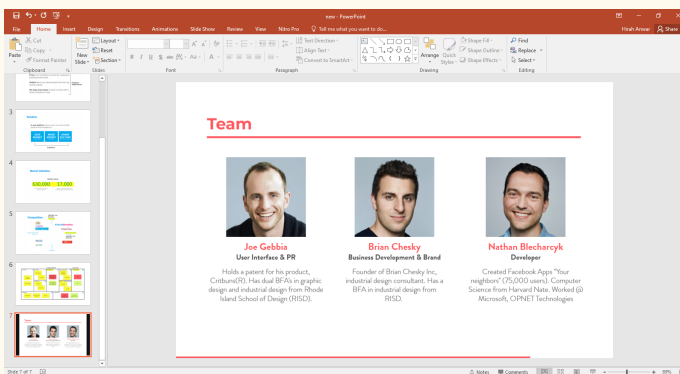
YOUR TEAM

There's no such thing as a lone wolf! start small but with a team. Grow your business and showcase your top performers to win investors

YOUR TEAM

This slide is the second most critical one after your business model. Once you've captured investors' attention with your market problem, solution, and business model, the next step is proving that your team is the absolute best to execute your company vision.

Let me emphasize this: building a business isn't a solo venture. You don't need to "lone-wolf" your way through everything. A strong, cohesive team is the backbone of any successful business. If your team isn't aligned with your company's mission and vision, achieving your business goals will be an uphill battle. And trust me, as investors, we can easily sense discord or a lack of unity within a team—it's one of the biggest red flags.



The ideal team is more than just a group of talented individuals; it's a synergized unit where each person's strengths complement the others' weaknesses. Diversity in skill sets, perspectives, and expertise isn't just an advantage; it's a necessity. Investors are drawn to teams that come across as entrepreneurs genuinely striving to make an impact in the market—not just those chasing a quick buck.

HERE'S WHAT MAKES A WINNING TEAM

Clear Roles and Responsibilities

Show us that everyone knows their lane and excels in it.

Aligned Vision

Your team's commitment to the same long-term goals and mission demonstrates stability.

Complementary Skills

A mix of technical expertise, business acumen, and creative problem-solving is invaluable.

Credibility and Experience

Highlight any relevant achievements or industry experience that sets your team apart.

When presenting your team slide, think of it as telling a story. Investors want to see more than just names and titles; they want to understand the chemistry, the collaboration, and the shared passion that will drive your business forward.

Chapter 8

RISK MITIGATION COUNTERMEASURE

Counter any potential risks and show investors you're prepared for the worst. Investors put their capital for the long run. Make sure they know you're a sustainable investment

RISK MITIGATION COUNTERMEASURE

When crafting your pitch deck, one essential slide often overlooked is the one addressing risk mitigation. After presenting your market opportunity, solution, and business model, it's crucial to show that you've considered the challenges and threats that could impact your success—and how you plan to overcome them.

Let me be clear: investors are not just looking for a great idea; they're looking for a safe bet. Without a clear plan to mitigate risks, even the most innovative business can appear fragile. Here's the reality: in Pakistan, there are numerous millionaires and established corporations with the resources to replicate and even improve your idea. If you're launching, say, an eco-friendly bottle straw business, what's stopping a giant like Nestle from starting their own division? With their brand equity and massive marketing budgets, they could dominate the market and leave you struggling to compete.

Risky ventures make investors wary. What builds trust is showing that you understand these risks and have strategies to mitigate them. That's where your Unique Selling Proposition (USP) comes in.



HERE'S WHAT TO FOCUS ON TO STRENGTHEN THIS PART OF YOUR PITCH

Differentiation

What makes your business truly unique? Is it a patented process, a niche target market, or an exclusive partnership? Highlight the aspects that competitors can't easily replicate.

Market Positioning

Show how you've carved out a defensible space in the market. Whether it's through branding, customer loyalty, or pricing strategies, make it clear that your business can stand its ground.

Agility

Prove that you're not just reactive but proactive. Share examples of how you plan to stay ahead of emerging threats or adapt to market shifts.

Barriers to Entry

Demonstrate that you've created hurdles for competitors, whether through cost advantages, network effects, or intellectual property.

When presenting risk mitigation, think of it as showcasing your business's resilience. Investors want confidence that you've considered the challenges and built a strategy to safeguard their investment. Do this well, and you'll inspire trust while setting your pitch apart.

MY PERSONAL TURN-OFFS

WHAT NOT TO SAY TO AN INVESTOR

One of the quickest ways to lose an investor's interest is by making statements that undermine trust, dismiss collaboration, or reduce the relationship to mere financial transactions. Here are a few personal deal-breakers for me.

NEVER SAY YOU DON'T NEED A TEAM 🙋

I think I speak for most investors when I say this, WE DON'T OFTEN INVEST IN SOLO ENTREPRENEURS. Sure it might sound like you're a lone wolf and you can do things on your own and that might impress investors. But trust me, I know it's impossible to do everything on your own. You'll need directors or partners on your side to take decisions and help you make decisions.

If you come off as a wise-guy who knows it all, it gives me the impression that you don't need me and you're only looking for a cheque. The best way to pitch yourself is by onboarding a partner or directors in your business to help with decision-making and then go to investors.

If you are in your early days and don't have the funds for it, please at least come off as someone that's easy to work or partner with. Most entrepreneurs would lock their personalities and come off as independent leaders and there's no such thing as that.

Case in point, if you don't have a team, tell the investors your looking for a partner with them and will definitely invest in a team once you have the funds.

NEVER SAY YOU JUST MET 🤝

Now that we've established how important it is to have a solid team and partners to convince investors you're on the path to success, let's talk about the heart of it all—the team. For me, nothing's more exciting than watching a group of people come together like an old-school band reuniting for one final show. It's that feeling you get when school friends who started something small, went their separate ways, and then came back together for a big mission. You can just feel the energy, like they're so in sync they could finish each other's sentences.

The best team I've ever seen? A group of four friends who sounded like they were plotting the perfect heist—each bringing their own unique skills that not only complemented each other but elevated the whole operation. Their pitch was like watching a Fast and the Furious movie, where Dom gathers the crew for one last ride. It wasn't just a pitch; it was a family coming together for something bigger.

That kind of bond between teammates, that synergy, gets me every time. It fuels my ambition. It's what makes me believe that with the right crew, anything is possible.

NEVER SAY THE COMPANY'S A QUICK FLIP 📋

Flipping businesses can be a quick way to make money, and I won't argue with that. But if that's your game plan, please—never approach investors. We can see it in your eyes, smell it from a mile away, and honestly, it's a major turnoff. I'm all about building something from the ground up and watching it grow. My investments hold personal value; I'm emotionally invested and would never want to sell or watch any of them crumble.

Here's the thing: if you're just in it for the money, it's hard for me to trust you. Because let's face it, your business won't last long if all you're after is a quick buck. You need to have passion and ambition, something you can pour your heart into. Run your company for the love of it, not just for the cash. If a quick flip is what you're after, try bootstrapping. Investors like me? We're not too keen on working with that kind of mindset. But hey, that's just my personal take—reality might look a bit different for others.

NEVER PUT PRESSURE ON INVESTORS

Don't bite the hand that feeds you" is a phrase we've all heard, but its deeper meaning is often overlooked. It's a reminder not to alienate or disrespect the very people who support your ambitions. Unfortunately, I've encountered entrepreneurs who misinterpret confidence for pressure, using tactics that jeopardize their relationships with investors.

Here's an example: some entrepreneurs, after making a compelling pitch, try to pressure investors by claiming they have others "waiting in line" and urging immediate action with a now-or-never ultimatum. This is one of the worst mistakes you can make—both for your personal reputation and your business credibility.

As an investor, I'd walk away the moment I hear such a statement, and I'm not alone. Here's why: investors rely on careful, data-driven, and calculated decisions. We evaluate the pros and cons meticulously, take our time, and weigh the opportunity against other potential investments. Threatening us with urgency only raises red flags and diminishes trust. Most investors would rather let an opportunity go than feel pressured into a hasty decision.

Instead of resorting to tactics like this, focus on building trust and fostering a collaborative relationship with potential investors.

HERE'S HOW

Show Respect for the Process

Understand that due diligence is key for investors. Patience demonstrates confidence in your idea.

Be Transparent

Honesty about your position and progress is more persuasive than creating artificial urgency.

Create Value, Not Pressure

Your pitch should naturally inspire interest, not force a decision.

Remember, the goal isn't just to secure funding—it's to build a lasting partnership. Investors aren't just writing checks; they're contributing to your vision. Treat them as collaborators, not just sources of capital, and you'll find greater success in both the short and long term.

NEVER SHOW LIKE YOU JUST NEED THEIR MONEY

Investors thrive on being resourceful, leveraging their networks to add value far beyond just providing capital. Take me, for instance—I primarily operate in the digital and IT industries, yet I maintain strong relationships with numerous clothing brands in Pakistan. Surprised? You shouldn't be. Successful investors often build social circles filled with business owners and leaders from diverse industries.

In fact, my connections are worth more than my net worth—they are my net worth. When I invest in a business, I don't just bring money to the table; I bring my network, expertise, and experience. That's why I prefer to be fully involved, offering my resources to help the business grow.

If your pitch begins and ends with a focus solely on money, you're missing the mark. Frankly, I'd lose interest and move on. Why? Because money is replaceable—you can get it from a bank or another investor.



WHAT MAKES AN INVESTOR TRULY VALUABLE IS THE UNIQUE PACKAGE WE BRING

Expertise

Decades of industry knowledge to guide you through challenges.

Connections

A web of relationships that can open doors, form partnerships and create opportunities.

Reputation

Our credibility can lend your business trust and visibility.

When crafting your pitch, don't just ask for funding—demonstrate how you plan to leverage everything an investor offers. Show us how we'll play a vital role in your journey, and we'll be much more inclined to take that journey with you. Investors want to be partners, not just financiers. So, make us feel like a crucial piece of your success story. That's how you earn not just our money, but our commitment.

WRAPPING IT UP

Pitching to investors is more than just presenting numbers and slides; it's about telling a compelling story that showcases your business's value, potential, and the people driving it. Investors look for more than innovative ideas—they seek clear strategies, credible teams, and a vision they can believe in.

By following these insights, you can transform your pitch deck into a powerful tool that not only grabs attention but also builds trust and excitement. Remember, the best pitches don't just secure funding—they create partnerships that fuel long-term growth.

So, whether you're stepping into a Shark Tank or presenting to seasoned venture capitalists, let your pitch reflect not just what your business does but the difference it can make.

HELLO!

My name is Burhan Mirza. Now that you've read my book on What Investors Expect from Your Pitch Deck, you might be interested in using the pitch deck I've created. You can download the pitch deck by clicking on the download link.

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