

Deck.vc

Building Your Pitch Deck

HOW TO RAISE

Tell a compelling narrative about how you're building a **big business**.

Your pitch deck is one of the channels to deliver that narrative.

QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO ANSWER

- Why are you working on this problem?
- Why are you the team that will win?

Prerequisite: The market has to be BIG.

4 WAYS TO ANSWER

Product

Team

Traction

Social Proof

Pick 1 or combine a few.

SOME TIPS

- Your pitch deck will get passed around. It shouldn't contain your deepest, darkest secrets and plans.
- Send it as a pdf attachment.
- Don't use the speaker notes.
- Be concise. Don't send a wall of text.
- ~~We will.~~ We Are.

Credit where it's due:

Almost everything that follows is based on ***Pitching Hacks***, a free book by the founders of AngelList

[* I stole some of these tips from Mark Suster](#)

PITCH DECK FORMAT

CONTENTS OF A PITCH DECK (approx. 1 slide per)

1. Cover
2. Summary
3. Team
4. Problem
5. Solution
6. Tech/IP
7. Market / Customers
8. Business Model / Sales
9. Traction
10. Competition
11. Fundraise / Use of Proceeds
12. Conclusion / Blue Sky
13. Contacts

COVER SLIDE

- Company Logo
- Name, title
- Email address
- Techstars logo (optional)

SUMMARY SLIDE

Your elevator pitch. What you do, at a high level.

THE TEAM SLIDE

The Q: Why will *you* win?

1. How have you won before?
2. What is your secret advantage?

Good-to-Great Answers:

- We sold a company before.
- We raised money before.
- We were early employees at a successful company.
- We are experts at this problem from (a) previous job (b) school (c) hobby.
- We went through [notable accelerator].
- We've figured something out.

THE TEAM SLIDE (CONT)

Brag but don't embellish.

What to include:

- Your roles (not necessarily titles)
- Past jobs (if relevant or notable)
- Degrees (if relevant)
- Schools (if notable)
- Your (work) relationship history

What not to include:

- Adjectives

PROBLEM SLIDE

Describe the problem you are solving.

PRODUCT (SOLUTION) SLIDE

Describe how you're solving the problem. Feel free to include screenshots, diagrams, etc.

A warning:

Videos and demos are **really** hard to get right (because of pacing). Definitely don't waste time going through a sign up flow (unless that's the problem you're solving).

TECH / IP SLIDE

Investors will ask:

- “What keeps [big company] from building this and crushing you?”
- “Can’t someone else just copy exactly what you’re doing and sell it for less?”

They want your business to be **defensible**. Explain what you’ve built or created that can’t be copied.

MARKET SLIDE

Who are your customers? How many are there? How big is your market?

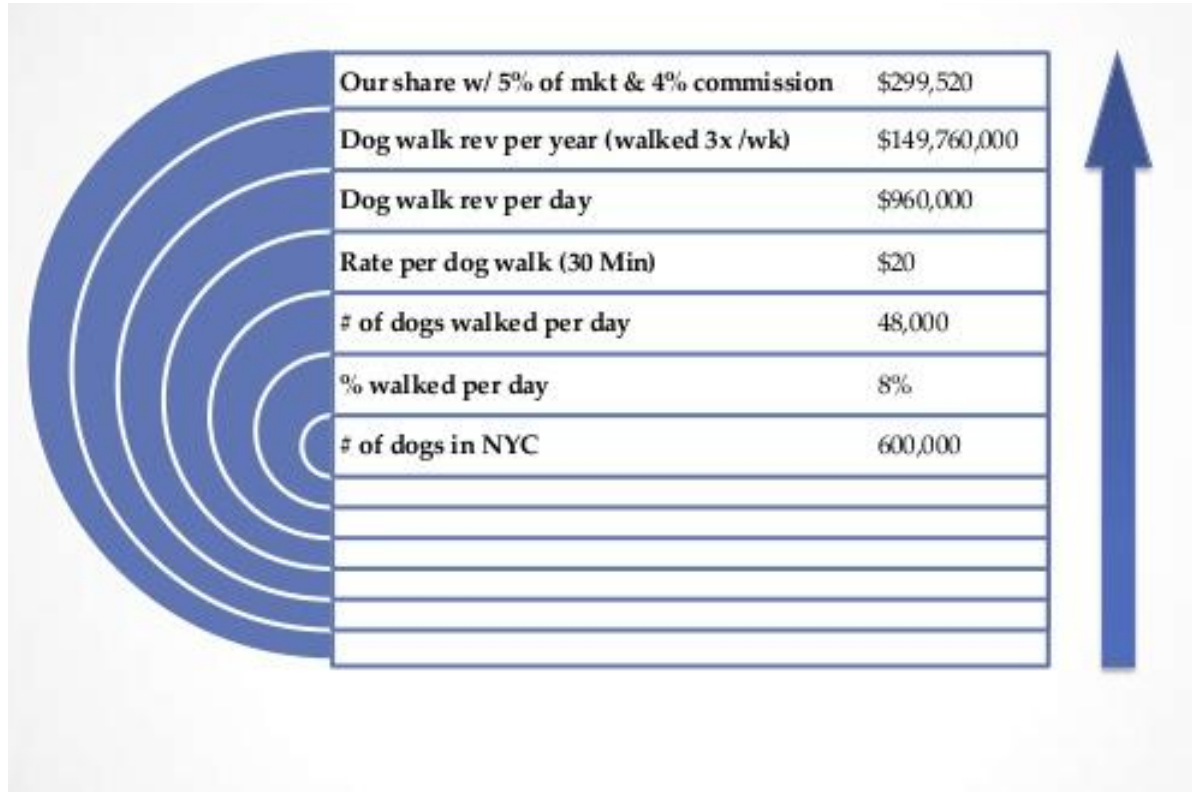
Microeconomics work better than macroeconomics.

“It’s a trillion dollar market, so we just need 1% to be...” Don’t do this.

Investors by default discount the numbers you put here. That’s not license to embellish.

If they’re drastically inflated, your credibility is gone.

MARKET SLIDE (EXAMPLE)



BUSINESS MODEL SLIDE

- How will you make money?
- Who are your customers?
- How do you get more of them?
- How much do they cost to acquire?
- What's your customer LTV?

TRACTION/STATUS SLIDE

- You get to pick one growing metric that supports your hypothesis.
- Pick something meaningful and show its growth rate.
- Distortion hurts your credibility (e.g., by showing cumulative numbers or projections)

If you're not in market yet:

Show what you've done so far or what you're currently doing that looks promising or supports the likelihood you'll succeed.

COMPETITION

- Describe your competitors. Direct, indirect, potential future, etc. Also, mention what your customers currently do to deal with the problem you solve.
- If you can't think of any, ask yourself "what would my customers have to take their money or attention away from to use my product?"

You get a show or a movie you're really dying to watch, and you end up staying up late at night, so we actually compete with sleep.

– Reed Hastings, CEO of Netflix

YOUR “ASK”

- How much are you raising?
- How much soft circled? (Omit if \$0)
 - This is social proof.
 - List any notable investors.
- “Use of proceeds” – what you’ll spend it on, where that gets you to, how long it lasts

CONCLUSION AND BLUE SKY

“This is a really big bet, and I think they just might do it” is a good reaction to shoot for.

Recap what you’re doing and why you’re going to be big.

Then, if you can do it without seeming delusional, hint at a bigger vision of the company you’ll be once you’ve achieved this set of goals.

CONTACTS

Put up your email again. Maybe say thanks.

You do you.

OK, NOW WHAT?

**YOU'RE NOT
FINISHED YET**

Iterate on this until it tells a cohesive narrative.

Hi, we're Jack and Jill and we really care about this problem that we got interested in because it's played this role in our lives and it turns out it's a huge problem that a lot of people have and we figured out this really surprising awesome solution for it that needed this special intuition and it's growing like crazy because it's better than this other thing and now we need a lot of money to hire all these awesome people so we can do it even better and a year from now we're going to be in a position to tackle this even bigger problem that is going to cha-

WAIT, HOW MUCH DO I ASK FOR?

How much do you need to achieve your goals? (Prove hypothesis, get to product-market-fit)

What milestones do you need to hit to raise **the next** round of funding?

Typically 12 months of runway + 6 month buffer. 24 months even better.

Why 12 months? Investors don't want you to have to raise again before you've had enough time to make real progress.

Then ask for a little less than what you really need. It's better to raise more than you ask for than to come up short.

**Done with your deck?
Have an expert review it at [Deck.vc](https://deck.vc)**

Deck.vc