

Top 10 Tips to Pitch your Startup to Investors

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1. Do your Homework

When you are invited to pitch to investors, prepare as much as you can including finding out how much time you have got, how many people you will meet and what their backgrounds are.

Make sure that you arrive at least 15 min early and never ever be late. Always take enough business cards with you. And be prepared, so that you know your presentation inside out – it should not be necessary to have any cue cards to help you talk about your business.

2. Tell a Story and show your passion

Start out by telling your story which made you come up with the idea for this business. Be passionate about your vision. Did you experience the problems first hand? Can you make the audience feel the pain? Then start to introduce your solution.

Examples:

- One insurtech company presented their insurance solution for AirBnB hosts to insure their property, starting out with a newspaper article of what can go wrong, including the pictures of the broken balcony where the tenants fell from. The host was not insured, and we all could feel the pain.
- Another startup company who helps people access loan solutions asked us to close our eyes and imagine that when we get home tonight we will get a call from our partner, stating that they had a car accident. Luckily they survived but their injuries won't allow them to work for at least 6 months. Our household's fixed costs are the same, but our household income just halved. This happened to a lawyer, but could happen to all of us. Again when we were told to open our eyes, the startup CEO had everybody's full attention.



3. Prepare a 10 min pitch

Assume that you have 10 minutes to pitch even if you get invited to a 30-60 minutes meeting. Prepare your top 10-12 slides for your main pitch and include other key slides in the appendix. If you need to refer to them during the Q&A, you can and it shows that you have prepared for all eventualities.

Examples of good slides structures are:

Sequoia Capital – [Slides structure for Pitch Decks](#)

Guy Kawasaki – [Top 10 Slides for Pitch Decks](#)

4. Keep it simple but don't use banalities

Depending on your audience, adjust your presentation. If you present to FINTECH Circle's investors, all of us are finance experts, so you don't have to explain what fintech is, what open banking means or why big data analytics is important for banks. Don't use banalities such as "millennials are mobile first" or "AI will change the future of banking". Don't state the obvious.

Be specific what you offer and what the benefits are. Always ask yourself "So what?" after each slide – what are the key messages you want the investors to take away.

But don't lose yourself in functional or technical details either, ie if you develop a new dashboard for prime brokerage clients, you don't need to explain what you show on the screen.

5. You need 2 Slide Decks

- When you raise money, you need at least 2 slide decks – one is used for verbal presentations where you are the main presenter and the slides are behind you supporting your pitch. These slides should have pictures, few words and a big font (ideally not below 16-18 font size). They need to support your message and should not distract from your presentation by having too many sentences which your audience will start to read and stop listen to you.
- The other pitch deck you need is when you email your presentation out to investors and they read it themselves. This deck can have much more text and needs to be self-explanatory. Also this investor deck should not be more than 10-12 pages to maximise your chances that it will actually be read.



6. Give them the reasons why to invest

Over the course of your pitch, you need to give your audience enough reasons why they should invest. If you have 10 minutes, you can't go into lots of details but you need to attract their interest so that they want to hear more and meet you again. Avoid buzzwords unless you have substance behind them. If you talk about your AI or blockchain technologies, you need to be able to

explain in detail why and how you use them if asked in your Q&A.

Summarize the 3 reasons why they should invest on your last slide which is behind you when you do your Q&A session so that investors are reminded.

7. Be clear about your target market and how to sell to them

Show that you fully understand your target market, its size, how to sell to your target customers and have a proper marketing and sales strategy. Be realistic how long it takes and how much it costs to find your clients. Investors will ask you what your client acquisition costs are versus the life time revenue of your customer.

If you are focused on B2B corporate sales to financial institutions, you need to explain how you manage your pipeline when sales can take 9 months plus to complete and explain the experience of your sales team that they have done these complex corporate sales negotiations before.

8. Neither have an attitude nor be shy or downplay yourself

Be likable, show confidence in your startup, your team but don't have an attitude. Don't downplay yourself or other team members. Don't apologize for the time with investors, their time is not more important than yours (ie don't say – I am sorry for taking your time ...).

Be friendly, smile and have eye contact with all attendees in the room. Show your unique insights into the market place but also be willing to learn from investors feedback.

9. Practise again and again

The more you practice your pitch, the better you get and the more you are in control of both content and time. If you have 10 minutes, stick to that time. Put your own timer on when you present. If your pitch takes longer, either you will be stopped or you are reducing your valuable Q&A time of discussion.

Don't look at the screen behind you when you present (which means that you will show your back to investors) – you need to be able to know your pitch by heart and your eyes have to be focused on your audience to also pick up their signals. Watch your body language, some people pull on their trousers, play with a pen in their hands etc – avoid anything which distracts from your main message.



10. Q&A tips: Listen, take notes and follow up

During FINTECH Circle selection days, you will have 10 minutes presentation time followed by 20 minutes Q&A. During the Q&A, listen to the questions and feedback well, take notes and show appreciation for valuable ideas and feedback from investors. You can have a proper conversation and also ask questions back to investors for their views.

If you don't know an answer, promise to follow up and actually do

follow up within a day. Send a thank you note post your presentation explaining why you want to work with the investor and why he/she/the company would be able to provide strategic value in addition to their money.

If you come to pitch with your team members, investors will observe the interaction between your team to get a feeling how you all get along. If investors feel that there is tension between the team, team members are not treated respectfully or that the team lacks diversity, that's always a negative sign.



About FINTECH Circle

FINTECH Circle is Europe's leading FinTech community of more than 120,000 people globally offering the following services:

- **FINTECH Circle's Angel Network**, providing “smart capital” to exceptional FinTech entrepreneurs.
- **FINTECH Circle Institute**, upskilling finance services professionals with in person and online FinTech and innovation courses across all areas of financial technology.
- **The bestselling FinTech Book Series published by Wiley:** The WealthTECH Book , The InsurTECH Book, and The FINTECH Book, the latter has already been translated into 10 languages across 107 countries.
- **Enterprise Innovation and Acceleration Programs** for FinTech Intrapreneurs and internal FinTech initiatives for leading financial institutions.
- **FINTECH Bridge Conference** dedicated to facilitating FinTech investments and business trade partnerships between the UK and the rest of the world.

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