Pitch Deck "Cheat Sheet"
Structure, Considerations, Content & Design

WHAT IS A PITCH DECK? An engaging and compelling **story** that highlights the core elements of your business. It convinces the audience that you know what the future looks like and sells the big vision, not just the idea/product, confidently and **PASSIONATELY!**

WHY SHOULD I BUILD ONE? It organizes your ability to describe your idea and maximizes your chances for securing financing.

HOW DO I BUILD IT? With 10 to 13 slides presented in a professional, appealing, clean and consistent design; limited text; impactful images, numbers, statistics; bold, easy-to-read fonts (2 max); tasteful color palette; simple straightforward messaging that delivers rational and compelling arguments. Depending upon the type of investment you're looking to raise (Seed, Series A or beyond), the audience and the venue, the specific slides and content will vary to fit the situation. Following are general guidelines that will help you organize and tell your story. Know that everyone has a slightly different opinion about slide number, order, content and design. Visually tell your story in a clear, compelling way.

Slide 1: **Vision** (the big idea, today & tomorrow)	Design & Considerations
Logo / Company Name	big; bold; lots of whitespace
Tagline under logo/name	3 to 5 words that sell your business
The Big Idea: We are X for Y, assuming X is attractive and Y is a big enough opportunity	a great one-liner to tease and pique interest
Mission Statement (optional)	non-technical; impactful; short & succinct
Presenter's name / Title	don't date slides; number starting on page 2
Purpose of presentation	"UCI New Venture Competition"
Slide 2: Current Problem (narrow & focused)	
What's the problem or unmet need you're solving; convey how it's unfulfilled	the more targeted and specific the better
Current Solutions & inefficiencies? Biggest challenge: status quo? changing behavior?	a few bullets; reference credible sources
Solve your clients' #1 problem; what keeps them up at night or bothers them?	how do you know this? through surveying?
Slide 3: Your Solution (why you? why now?)	
Screenshots: no more than 3; simple as 1-2-3; or key parts of your business	Use image / screenshot / prototype / diagram
Show core value proposition to a client: better, faster, cheaper	tell anecdote of a current or future client
Show a live demo at your peril; market validation is more important at this stage	don't show a video (they often fail to play)
Why hasn't anybody done this before? IP? Patents pending? Defensible?	be prepared for this one, especially in Q&A!
What is it about your approach/tech that makes you capable/unique?	big TAM; conservative & realistic SOM
Slide 4: Market Size (how big is it? how big can you be, realistically?)	
Total Addressable Market (TAM)? Service Available Market (SAM, segment you're chasing)?	use declining or concentric circles
Identify your beachhead (SOM, Service Obtainable Market, portion of SAM you can capture)	units/revenu using pie charts
Define target client; key characteristics; demographics; B2B or B2C; unique needs?	again, cite credible sources/studies/surveys
Describe important market evolutions and/or inflection points -- why now?	It's all about timing
Slide 5: Product/Service (how it works - optional)	
Demo your solution understanding the inherent risks of equipment/network failure	no more than a 30-second demo
Show how it works using a simple sequence/diagram	wireframes for an app
If possible, demonstrate how it improves upon existing solutions	Keep everything very simple & visual
Slide 6: Business / Revenue Model (how do you make money?)	
How do you make money? Key revenue streams? Pricing? Flat fee/%/recurring?	100 clients x A units x B fee = $C revenue
Average length of the sales cycle: days, weeks, months?	Huge impact on cashflows & funding required
Sales channels: how to reach customers; how to convert; strategic partnerships	immediate, days, months, weeks?
Customer acquisition cost (CAC)? Conversion rate? Customer lifetime value (LTV)	How much does each sale cost; close rate %
How do you make money (revenue > expenses)? scale? become sustainable?	increase LTV & decrease CAC over time
Slide 7: Go-to-Market Strategy (how will you reach your target market?)	
How will you create initial awareness: website, blogs, influencers, in-bound, tradeshows?	use logos or graphic images
How will you sell: online, direct, through distributors/resellers?	simple diagram showing sales channels
How long is the sales cycle? What's the projected conversion rate?	compare it to something similar
What is the timing? Do you have launch/rollout phases?	use a simple timeline

Slide 8: Financial Projections (10X return within 3 years?)

3-to-5 year projections based upon key assumptions	assumptions are critical for credibility
Assumption 1: # of potential clients per year in target market	show growing market size
Assumption 2: # of total customers (free + paying)	show growing active/paying user base
Assumption 3: # net paying customers (after churn) & market penetration	1-5% market penetration is realistic in early years
Breakeven month & year? EDITDA margins? (10-40% typically depending on industry)	circle/bold/color key numbers in the financials
Are these numbers reasonable even if you're off by 2x?	be realistic or be shot down!

Slide 9: Traction & Validation (is it resonating?)

Timeline / key milestones: what have you accomplished to date?	use a simple timeline; show alpha/beta/MVP
Soft traction: accelerator programs; articles; awards; testimonials?	use logos
Hard traction: # of customers; revenue; big name clients/pilots/prospects/pipeline	Show growth/trends
Show: increasing customers/usage/revenue/rev per customer/decreasing CAC	KPIs > Goals > CAC > LTV

Slide 10: Competition / Market Fit / Advantages

How do you fit into the market landscape?	comparison matrix; X/Y charts; venn diagram
Key competitors (who, what, why, strengths/weaknesses); status quo is always #1!	why will they switch to you from incumbent?
Advantages: current; sustainable; unfair; key partnerships; barriers to entry?	money? time? expertise? relationships?
How much of a lead do you have on competitors? Why are you 10X better?	Do you have IP to slow/stop them?

Slide 11: The Team (who can execute; can be 2nd slide if highly experienced)

Core team & responsibilities: founders & chiefs (C-level); advisors & investors	their functional title (CEO, COO, CTO, CMO)
Photos: optional but it makes for a more personal presentation	an expanded AngelList profile
Relevant experiences / successes / exits / failures / war stories	use company or academic logos (limit words)
Education & leadership roles ("we are the right team to execute this plan because…")	don't write sentences; 1 key bullet per person

Slide 12: Funding & Use of Proceeds (how you will leverage investors' money)

The "Ask" - How much money are you looking to raise? How much raised to date?	($250K- $1M) Your own? Friends & Family?
Stage: seed round raising how much? (somewhere between $50k and $1M)	tell them what you need to make it happen
Investment terms: convertible note @ $X valuation cap; Y% discount into next round	Z% interest rate; X months to maturity
What is your projected burn rate per month? How long will the money last?	in months
Use of Proceeds: sales & marketing; hiring key employees; development; patents	use a pie chart with percentages
Key milestones you'll achieve with funding: 1st client? Breakeven? 3X revenue growth?	demonstrate how you'll measure traction

Slide 13: Closing Slide (re-selling your vision, emphasizing key points/metrics)

Your logo	large and centered
Contact info: name; email; phone; company website link	make it easy to reach you
"Thank You" & "Questions?"	always ask "what's the next step?"

Appendix: backup slides for Q&A (clarify; fill in the holes; continue selling)

Timeline: history, milestones, funding
Detailed value proposition to clients / users / partners
Additional product screen shots
Average revenue per user (ARPU)
Pipeline of potential customers; % likelihood of closing; revenue potential
Detailed financials
Cash flow analysis
Breakeven analysis
Headcount projections and hiring plan
Partnership arrangements
Patent filings