Pitching 101
How to master your startup pitch
Me - Cheryl Mack
CEO at StartCon
(Australia’s largest startup conference)

Also run the largest pitch competition in Australia - I’ve seen 1000’s of pitches and helped 100’s of startups get on stage to pitch

This year... Pitch for $1 Million competition in partnership with Right Click Capital.

More info: www.startcon.com
Outline for Today

Agenda

1. The Basics of Pitching
2. The Pitch Deck
3. Building your slides

What you’ll learn

- How to pitch at the early stage
- Being concise & clear
- To create your first 5 slides
- Practice pitching

What you won’t learn

- Business models
- Valuations/Funding
- Financials in general
The Basics
5 things you need to know before you start pitching

1. Know your audience
2. Sell yourself
3. Communicate concrete details
4. Know your numbers
5. Don’t stop, regardless
1. Know your Audience

Put yourself in the shoes of the person receiving your pitch. They’re probably well-educated, savvy about startups/tech, and sharp about business.

Who are you pitching to?  
Investor, Customer, or Your friends mom

What are you pitching them for?  
Investment, Partnership or Buy my thing

Where are you (setting)?  
Pitch comp, boardroom, or park bench

Why should they care?  
Relevance, opportunity, or life & death
1. Know your Audience - WHO?

The investor is not your user, so pitching users and pitching investors are completely different.

**Investors**

The investor will almost always be less knowledgeable in every way about the problem, industry, solution, and jargon. They won’t know this field as well as you do. They have not breathed the problem space like you have. So…

- Explain your assumptions
- Help them connect the dots
- Make sure they retain one core idea about your startup

**Customers**

They may speak the same language and understand the problem, but it’s likely not the first time they’ve heard a solution. They’ll likely be skeptical and more critical. So…

- Focus on the outcomes of the solution
- Case studies are great
1. **Know your Audience**

Put yourself in the shoes of the person receiving your pitch.

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**What are you pitching them for?**
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**Why should they care?**
- Relevance, *opportunity*, or *life & death*

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You should assume that you aren’t the first pitch he/they have heard today, you are probably the 300’th person he’s talked to today. You probably only have a small amount of time. So what are somethings you should do here?

- Short pitch, 2 mins max
- Stand out, be different but not over the top
- Get your core idea to stick
1. Know your Audience

Put yourself in the shoes of the person receiving your pitch.

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What are you pitching them for? Investment, Partnership or Buy my thing

Where are you (setting)? Pitch comp, boardroom, or park bench

Why should they care? Relevance, opportunity, or life & death

What should you assume here? What are some things that would be appropriate?
- Be more casual, less formal tone of voice, more conversation
- Take time the time to explain things more, give examples or stories
- No need for slides
- Talk about how it relates to her situation personally
3. Sell Yourself

Most businesses are not impressive at conception. That is what early-stage means.

They’re buying into YOU

- Show your passion!
- Don’t be afraid to show off previous success
- Go the extra mile
- If you have a team, talk about them & sell them too!

Passion - Explain why you care so much about this problem/industry, if you have a personal story tell it

Show off - if you’ve done something impressive previously, say so, especially if it’s not conventional. even if not strictly professionally-related. If you can’t point to either an impressive project or sterling engineering credentials, aggressively sell your technical ability by pointing to specific evidence of it

Extra mile - googling the person works wonders. Something small can show a lot when done right. Call the secretary and find out everyone’s coffee orders. If it’s something that relates to you startup even better, but sometimes just showing you’ve done your research is enough.
3. Communicate concrete details

This should include a concise description of **exactly what you are building** and **who it is for**. If you can’t clearly describe what you are doing, you can’t expect people to believe you’ll be able to do it successfully.

Which one is better?

A. *MackBot* will help e-commerce stores sell more products using cutting-edge AI-enabled algorithms and machine learning.

OR

B. *MackBot* built Google’s typeahead search box as a Magento plugin. It boosts search-to-purchase conversion and AOV.
Not enough understanding of either machine learning or e-commerce

Doesn’t say what the product actually is

Doesn’t convey confidence that the person who wrote it could successfully build this product

Nothing concrete here, just a lot of popular themes

A. MackBot will help e-commerce stores sell more products using cutting-edge AI-enabled algorithms and machine learning.
B. *MackBot* built Google’s typeahead search box as a Magento plugin. It boosts search-to-purchase conversion and AOV.

- Let’s people visualise the product by comparing it to something familiar
- It conveys the product/mvp exists
- Shows an understanding of e-commerce as a business model
- Mentions the tech stack (magento) so we understand who might use it
- Avoids buzzwords & marketing fluff
- Makes the listener want to know more
4. Know your Numbers

This means both your own metrics as well as industry metrics.

**Internally**

1. Do you know what you should be tracking?
2. Are you actually tracking it?
3. Are your numbers exceptionally good relative to the amount of time you have been working OR to your competitors?

**Externally/Industry**

- Depends on your industry & product
  - Market size
  - Demographics
  - Average purchase amount
  - Search trends
  - Category growth

You should know the common metrics which startups in your industry or with the same business model are judged by. If you don't have reliable numbers yet, you should at least demonstrate understanding of the metrics to convey that you will make data-driven decisions in the future. The longer you've been working, the higher the bar is. Be truthful, but help them see your business in the best light. For industry stats make sure you have the data to back it up!
5. Keep going no matter what!
... But stop talking when you’re done.
The Pitch Deck

10 Standard Slides you can use as a template / starting point for building your pitch deck.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Company Purpose</th>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Solution</th>
<th>Why &amp; Why Now</th>
<th>Product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Why you exist in one sentence</td>
<td>What huge pain are you solving?</td>
<td>What is your unique value proposition (UVP)?</td>
<td>Why is this the best time &amp; place to succeed?</td>
<td>Explain the concrete details of your product</td>
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<td>02</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The Market</th>
<th>Competition</th>
<th>Business Model</th>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Financials</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>Prove that a market actually exists</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Be ambitious but realistic!</td>
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<td>07</td>
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<td>List your competitors in a chart</td>
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<td>08</td>
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<td>How are you going to make money?</td>
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<td>09</td>
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<td>Why are you the right people to do this?</td>
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Let’s build your deck!

We’ll do the first 5 together for practice :)
1. Company Purpose

Your vision! Your mission!

This should be your **one sentence pitch** to explain the reason your business exists and why it matters.

It’s not what your product does or how it works. It’s your first impression. How you introduce your company to the world.

Here are some examples:

“**Airbnb aims to connect millions of people in real life all over the world, through a community marketplace—so that you can Belong Anywhere.**"

“**Asana’s mission is to help humanity thrive by enabling all teams to work together effortlessly.**"

“**Amazon’s vision is to be earth’s most customer-centric company; to build a place where people can come to find and discover anything they might want to buy online.**"
2. The Problem

It’s a HUGE problem!!

Demonstrate you’re solving a big pain. You want to show it’s so big, customers are willing to give their credit card details to an unknown startup.

Show the pain you’re going to solve is both significant and monetizable.

Also explain how customers address the issue today and why it sucks. Use stats if you can.

Here is an example:

“There is a tremendous need for innovative and accessible home-based services for seniors. MackHelp has identified many growing communities such as x, y & z in NSW where 35% of the population is over the age of 65 and living on their own.

As the economy continues to decline and the state cuts services for seniors, the need for more cost effective and tech-based solutions deepens throughout the region.

- According to Report Y, 20% of seniors have serious concerns about finding affordable homecare services.
- Activities seniors rated as difficult or unable to complete included housework, shopping, preparing meals and accessing transportation.
- These services seem to be especially out of reach for single women.
3. The Solution

Now that they care about the problem... How do you solve it?

Make the case with your **Unique Value Proposition** - why is it going to make customers lives better. Highlight the differentiators.

Why is it feasible? Why are customer going to use it instead of whatever is currently available?

Why should I do business with you instead?

Here are some examples:

**Dominos**: You get fresh, hot pizza delivered to your door in 30 minutes or less or it's free.

**FedEx**: *When it absolutely, positively has to be there overnight.*

**TOMS**: With every pair you purchase, we’ll give a pair of new shoes to a child in need. One for One.

**Geico**: 15 Minutes Could Save You 15 Percent or More on Car Insurance.
4. Why, but more important, why now?

Timing is paramount to building a great startup.

There’s time and place for some companies to succeed.

List all the critical reasons to explain your ‘why now.’

Here are some examples:

“Google searches for ‘problem with MackWidget’ are growing exponentially.

“80% of millennials don’t have a credit card.

“50% of moms in the US cut their cable cords this year

“Google & Facebook are fighting over who’s going to provide free internet to 3rd world countries.
5. Product / Service

Explain the concrete details of your product.

Be specific, no fluff here. What’s the functionality, architecture, design, intellectual property?

What development stage you’re at. Highlight the benefits of some particular tech or design.

Be particularly explicit about what the end-user experience looks like.

Here are some examples:

“MackBot built Google’s typeahead search box as a Magento plugin. It boosts search-to-purchase conversion and AOV.

“Airbnb is a global online marketplace that connects travelers with hosts who are willing to rent out their home to these travelers.

“DriveMack is a SaaS platform for small businesses where they can manage their team, book a courier, or post a delivery job for last mile delivery.
Thank you!