

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

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The foundation of a great meeting with potential investors is the research that you do beforehand.

FIRST

learn what's important to your audience. You can get this information from the partner that is bringing you into the meeting by getting answers to the following questions:

- ▶ What are the three most important things you would like to learn about our organization?
 - ▶ What attracted you to our idea and convinced you to give us an opportunity to meet?
 - ▶ Are there any special issues, questions, or landmines I should be prepared for in the meeting?
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SECOND

Visit the venture-capital firm's website, use Google searches, read reports, and talk to industry buddies to gather more information. This is the kind of information you want to learn about the firm:

- ▶ **Organization background.** How did the firm start? Who were the original partners? What are its most successful investments?
 - ▶ **Partners.** Who works there? What organizations did they work for in their previous positions? Where did they go to school?
 - ▶ **Current portfolio.** What companies are currently in its portfolio? What were its big successes in the past? Are there conflicts or synergies with your startup?
In particular, LinkedIn is a great resource to prepare for the meeting. Here's how to use it:
 - ▶ Find out who the firm has invested in by visiting the portfolio section of its website.
 - ▶ Plug the names of those companies into LinkedIn to find people in your network who have worked for any of them.
 - ▶ Reach out to these people.
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THIRD

Third, brainstorm with your team to find connections, hooks, and angles to make the pitch powerful and meaningful. There are many possibilities but trying to figure them out while you're pitching is difficult. The key is to conduct this research in advance, when you're under less pressure.

While angel investors may not have a website, Google and LinkedIn will provide plenty of information about them. There's also [Angellist](#), an angel-capital marketplace. There you can search for angels as well as companies by name—making it a powerful resource for learning about angel investors.