THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO CREATING A WINNING HACKATHON PPT

Table of Contents

Complete Framework for 100% Selection Success

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

KEY FINDING: Most teams don't lose hackathons due to weak ideas. They lose because their PPT lacks structure, clarity, and storytelling. Judges often decide winners based 40-50% on presentation quality, not just technical execution.

The Winning Formula:

- Problem + Solution + Tech Stack + Demo + Team Credibility + Impact = 100% Selection
- Focus on simplicity over complexity
- Tell a compelling story from problem to solution
- Show working prototypes, not just concepts
- Practice your pitch ruthlessly

UNDERSTANDING HACKATHON EVALUATION CRITERIA

Standard Judging Metrics (Used by Most Hackathons)

Criteria	Weight	What Judges Look For
Creativity & Innovation	25-30%	Originality, uniqueness, novel approach
Technical Execution	20-25%	Code quality, right technologies, scalability
Feasibility & Viability	15-20%	Can it realistically work? Achievable?
Problem Solving	15-20%	Does it truly solve the problem? Real-world relevance?
Presentation & Pitch	10-15%	Clarity, storytelling, demo quality, confidence
Design & User Experience	5-10%	UI/UX quality, aesthetics, user-friendliness
Business Model/Impact	5-10%	Market value, social impact, scalability

Specific Criteria Examples from Past Hackathons

HackNY Model:

- Technical Achievement (40%)
- Creativity (30%)
- Practicality (30%)

HealthTech Hackathon Model:

- Significance/Impact (40%)
- Feasibility (30%)
- Innovation (20%)
- Technical Quality (10%)

TechCrunch Disrupt Model:

- Commercial Potential (40%)
- Execution (30%)
- Creativity (20%)
- Impact (10%)

CRITICAL: Read your specific hackathon's judging criteria FIRST. Tailor your PPT accordingly.

PRE-HACKATHON STRATEGY & TEAM FORMATION

Building Your Dream Team

The Ideal Team Composition (4-5 members):

1. **Frontend Developer** - UI/UX implementation, visual appeal
2. **Backend Developer** - Logic, algorithms, databases
3. **Designer/UI-UX Specialist** - Aesthetics, user experience, presentation design
4. **Strategic Thinker/Product Manager** - Idea validation, timeline management
5. **Presenter/Communications Specialist** - Storytelling, confident delivery

Team Selection Checklist:

- Choose people you can work with for 24-48 hours continuously
- Ensure complementary skills (not all coders!)
- Designate a clear team leader (decision-maker)
- Select someone with excellent presentation skills
- Practice at least one small project together before
- Ensure diverse technical backgrounds

Pre-Hackathon Preparation (1-2 Weeks Before)

Week 1 Activities:

- Research the hackathon theme and problem statements
- Study previous winning projects from the same hackathon
- Set up development environment and test all tools
- Create boilerplate code/templates to save time
- Research relevant APIs and libraries
- Backup internet connection plan (hotspot, mobile data)

Week of Hackathon:

- Finalize team and assign roles
- Prepare templates for quick setup
- Test all hardware (laptops, chargers, connectivity)
- Research winning ideas from similar hackathons
- Have mock brainstorming session
- Get rest before the event

PROBLEM STATEMENT & IDEATION

Selecting the Right Problem

Rule #1: Solve ONE Problem, Not Many

✕ DON'T choose:

- Solutions that try to solve 5+ problems
- Overly complex technical problems
- Problems requiring government/regulatory changes
- Problems that need 100+ hours of development

✓ DO choose:

- Clear, specific, single-focus problem
- Problem with real-world relevance and impact
- Problem achievable within 24-48 hours
- Problem aligned with hackathon theme

Hackathon Problem Statement Evaluation

Use This Framework to Filter Ideas:

1. Does it solve the stated problem? (Must answer YES)
2. Is it creative and innovative? (Must answer YES)
3. How much time does it need? (Must be ≤ 90% of available time)
4. Is it a "killer feature"? (Should make judges say "Wow!")
5. Is it sufficiently different from existing solutions? (Must differentiate)
6. Is it feasible with our team's skills? (Must answer YES)

Example Problem Statements (2025 Trending Domains)

Smart Cities & IoT:

- Build a real-time traffic optimization app that reduces congestion
- Create an IoT solution for water quality monitoring in urban areas

Healthcare & Wellness:

- Develop a telehealth platform connecting rural patients with doctors
- Build an AI-powered mental health support chatbot

EdTech:

- Create a placement readiness tracker for students
- Build a personalized learning recommendation system

Sustainability:

- Develop an image recognition waste sorting app
- Build a carbon footprint calculator for daily activities

FinTech:

- Create a smart budget management app for students

- Build a fraud detection system for UPI transactions

PPT STRUCTURE & SLIDE FRAMEWORK

The Gold Standard: 8-10 Slide Framework

This structure fits most hackathon requirements (10-15 minutes pitch time).

SLIDE SEQUENCE:

Slide 1: Title Slide

- Project Title (catchy, memorable)
- Team Name & Logo
- Team Members with Key Roles
- Hackathon Name/Date
- Problem Category/Theme

Slide 2: Problem Statement

- Clear description of the real-world problem
- Why it matters (statistics, real impact)
- Current gaps or inefficiencies
- Who is affected and how many people
- Keep text minimal (2-3 sentences max)

Slide 3: Motivation & Relevance

- Why your team cares about this problem
- How it aligns with the hackathon theme
- Real-world impact you want to create
- Connection to SDGs (if applicable)

Slide 4: Solution Overview

- What is your product/app/platform?
- How does it solve the problem? (high-level)
- Key differentiators from existing solutions
- One-line elevator pitch

Slide 5: System Architecture & Technical Approach

- High-level system architecture diagram
- Technology stack (frontend, backend, database)
- Key frameworks/libraries used
- Data flow visualization
- Why each technology was chosen

Slide 6: Implementation & Demo

- Screenshots or video demo
- Key features demonstrated

- User interface/experience highlights
- Live demo walkthrough (if presenting)

Slide 7: Results & Feasibility

- What you achieved during hackathon
- Metrics/performance data (if applicable)
- Proof of concept working
- Challenges overcome and solutions

Slide 8: Impact & Future Vision

- Potential real-world impact
- Scalability plan
- Next steps and roadmap
- Why judges should care

Slide 9: Team & Capabilities

- Team member names and roles
- Relevant experience/skills
- Why this team can execute
- LinkedIn profiles (if applicable)

Slide 10: Thank You & Q&A

- Thank judges
- Contact information
- Call to action
- GitHub/DevPost link

CONTENT GUIDELINES FOR EACH SLIDE

Slide 1: Title Slide - Make an Immediate Impact

What Works:

PROJECT TITLE (Large, Bold)
│
Tagline/Problem Statement (30 words max)
│
Team Name: [Name]
Members: Developer, Designer, PM, Speaker
│
[High-quality visual/logo]

Example:

EcoSort: AI-Powered Waste Classification
│
Reducing plastic contamination by 40% through intelligent image recognition
│
Team: GreenHackers
Members: Aisha (Backend), Raj (Frontend), Priya (Design), Arjun (PM)

Don't: Start with lengthy introductions
Do: Grab attention with problem + solution in 10 seconds

Slide 2: Problem Statement - Make Them Feel the Pain

Formula for Problem Slide:

1. Hook (1 sentence): Start with a shocking statistic or question
2. Context (2-3 sentences): Describe the current situation
3. Gap (1 sentence): What's missing or broken?
4. Scale (1 sentence): How many people affected?

Example:

THE PROBLEM

"40% of waste ends up in wrong recycling bins"

→ Urban areas generate 200 tons of waste daily
→ Recycling contamination reduces material quality
→ Current manual sorting is slow and error-prone
→ Affects 50+ million people in India alone

Quantify Everything:

- Instead of: "Many people have this problem"
- Say: "2.5 billion people lack access to clean water"

Slide 3: Motivation & Relevance

What to Include:

- Personal or team connection to problem
- Why this matters in 2025
- Alignment with SDGs
- Market opportunity or social impact

Example:

WHY THIS MATTERS

Team member Priya's hometown sees 500+ tons of waste daily, with 60% improperly sorted.

UNESCO: Climate action requires 90% waste reduction by 2030 in urban centers.

OUR COMMITMENT: Build a scalable solution that can impact 10+ million people globally.

ALIGNED WITH: SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption), SDG 13 (Climate Action)

Slide 4: Solution Overview

The "Elevator Pitch" Formula (30 seconds):

EcoSort is [WHAT] that [SOLVES PROBLEM] by [HOW/METHOD] making it [KEY BENEFIT]

Example: "EcoSort is a mobile app that helps citizens sort waste correctly by using AI image recognition to identify waste type in real-time, making recycling 90% more efficient."

What to Show:

- Product type (app, web, hardware, hybrid)
- Core functionality (3 points max)
- Key differentiator (#1 thing that makes it unique)
- Quick visual mockup or screenshot

Slide 5: System Architecture & Technical Approach

CRITICAL: Use a Clear Diagram

Architecture Slide Should Show:

USER INTERFACE (React, Flutter)
│
API SERVER (Node.js/Python/Java)
│
Database (Firebase) ← → ML Model (TensorFlow)

For Each Technology, Explain WHY:

- NOT: "We used React"
- SAY: "We used React for real-time state management"

Example Good Answer:

TECHNICAL STACK

Frontend: React + Tailwind CSS
→ Reason: Fast, responsive UI for mobile-first users

Backend: Node.js + Express
→ Reason: Handles 10,000+ concurrent requests

ML Model: YOLOv5 (Custom trained on 50,000 images)
→ Reason: 94% accuracy on waste classification

Database: Firebase (Realtime sync)
→ Reason: Enables sync when users reconnect

Hosting: AWS EC2 + S3
→ Reason: Scalable for 1 million+ users

Slide 6: Implementation & Demo

This is Your Most Important Slide

What to Include:

- Actual screenshot (2-3 screens max)
- Video demo OR live demo pointer
- Key features highlighted
- User flow visualization
- Working prototype proof

Demo Video Best Practices:

- Duration: 60-90 seconds max
- Start with hook: "See the problem solved in 30 seconds"

- Show 3-4 key features ONLY
- Avoid technical jargon
- Include: before/after comparison
- Quality: Clear audio, good lighting, steady camera
- Resolution: 1080p minimum

Slide 7: Results & Feasibility

What Judges Want to See:

- Working prototype (80%+ complete)
- Metrics showing it works
- Evidence you completed the hack
- Realistic assessment of challenges

Example:

WHAT WE BUILT

✓ Mobile app with 8 core features
✓ ML model with 94% accuracy
✓ 1000+ waste types trained
✓ Real-time database sync
✓ Complete user authentication

RESULTS & METRICS

• Waste classification speed: 0.8 seconds
• Model accuracy: 94% on test set
• App response time: <200ms
• Tested with 50 beta users (95% satisfaction)

Slide 8: Impact & Future Vision

Show:

- Potential user base
- Projected impact metrics
- Roadmap for next 6-12 months
- Why this could become a real product
- Alignment with UN SDGs

Example:

POTENTIAL IMPACT

YEAR 1: 100,000 users → 500 tons waste properly sorted
YEAR 2: 1,000,000 users → 50,000 tons waste properly sorted
YEAR 3: 10,000,000 users → 5 million tons waste properly sorted

= Equivalent to carbon offset for 1 million cars

ROADMAP

Q1 2026: Multi-language support
Q2 2026: Gamification features

Q3 2026: Municipal waste system integration
Q4 2026: Hardware IoT bin integration

Slide 9: Team

Show why THIS team can execute:

[Photo] Aisha - Backend Lead
• IIT Delhi Computer Science
• 2 years at TCS AI Lab
• Built 3 ML models in production
• Won HackIndia 2024

[Photo] Raj - Frontend Lead
• BITS Pilani Tech Lead
• Built App with 50K+ downloads
• Expert in React Native
• 3 hackathon wins

[Photo] Priya - Design & UX
• NIFT Delhi Design Graduate
• UI/UX intern at Google
• Award-winning app designer

[Photo] Arjun - Product & Strategy
• Startup founder (Series A funded)
• MBA from Kellogg
• Successfully scaled 2 products to 1M+ users

WHY WE WIN: Combined experience: 15+ years, 6+ hackathon wins

Slide 10: Thank You & Q&A

Include:

- Simple thank you message
- GitHub/DevPost link
- Contact email
- LinkedIn profiles
- "Questions?" or "Let's build together"

DESIGN & PRESENTATION TIPS

Slide Design Principles

Golden Rules of Hackathon PPT Design:

1. **Minimize Text**
    - NO paragraphs
    - Use bullet points (3-4 max per slide)
    - Maximum 30 words per slide
    - Large, readable fonts (36pt minimum)
2. **Use Visuals Effectively**

- Include 1-2 relevant images/diagrams per slide
- Use infographics for data
- Screenshots for product demo
- Avoid clipart or low-quality images

3. **Color Scheme**
   - Maximum 3 colors + black/white
   - High contrast (dark background with light text)
   - Consistent colors across all slides
   - Avoid rainbow of colors or neon
4. **Typography**
   - Use 2 fonts maximum (1 for headers, 1 for body)
   - Font size: Title (44-54pt), Body (28-36pt)
   - Sans-serif fonts (Helvetica, Arial, Roboto)
   - NO Comic Sans or decorative fonts
5. **Animations**
   - Minimal animations (entrance only)
   - NO distracting transitions or effects
   - Animations should serve a purpose

Modern Slide Layouts

Layout 1: Title + Visual (60% image, 40% text)

TITLE │ [IMAGE/DIAGRAM]
• Point 1 │
• Point 2 │
• Point 3 │

Layout 2: Split Screen (50% left, 50% right)

• Title │ Image/Visual
• Point 1 │ or Code Block
• Point 2 │ or Diagram
• Point 3 │

Layout 3: Full Image with Text Overlay

[FULL BACKGROUND IMAGE]
TITLE TEXT (white)
Subtitle text

Tools for Creating Professional PPTs

Recommended Platforms:

1. **Google Slides** ⭐ Most Popular
   - Free, collaborative, cloud-based
   - Share links easily with judges
   - Work simultaneously with team

2. **Canva** ⭐ Best for Beginners
    - Pre-designed templates
    - Drag-and-drop interface
    - Free version sufficient
3. **Figma** ⭐ Best for Design-Heavy
    - Professional quality
    - Prototype animations
    - Team collaboration
4. **Microsoft PowerPoint**
    - Offline + online versions
    - Most formal appearance
    - Compatible everywhere
5. **Pitch (**pitch.com**)**
    - Modern, startup-focused
    - Built-in animations
    - Presentation mode features

DEMO VIDEO & LIVE DEMONSTRATION

Demo Video Requirements

Video Requirements (Most Common):

- Duration: 2-3 minutes
- Format: MP4, MOV, or WebM
- Quality: 1080p minimum
- Audio: Clear, professional (no background noise)
- Platform: YouTube (best), Vimeo, or direct upload

10-Step Demo Video Checklist:

1. ✓ Script written and timed (for 2:45 duration)
2. ✓ Problem statement clear (first 20 seconds)
3. ✓ Solution overview (next 20 seconds)
4. ✓ Live demo walkthrough (1:30 minutes)
5. ✓ Results/impact shown (20 seconds)
6. ✓ Team intro (15 seconds)
7. ✓ Recording done with good audio/video
8. ✓ Edited professionally (transitions, subtitles if needed)
9. ✓ Uploaded to YouTube as "Not for Kids"
10. ✓ Link tested and working

Demo Video Script Template (2:45):

[0-15s] HOOK & PROBLEM
"Every day, 50 million people struggle with [problem]."

[15-35s] INTRODUCE YOUR SOLUTION
"We built EcoSort, an AI app that makes [problem-solving] automatic."

[35-40s] PRODUCT DEMO START
"Here's how it works:"

[40-90s] WALKTHROUGH (Show 3-4 key features)
Feature 1: Take photo
Feature 2: AI identifies
Feature 3: Get instructions
Feature 4: Track impact

[90-120s] REAL-WORLD IMPACT
"We tested with 50 users. Results:
• 94% classification accuracy
• 95% user satisfaction
• 10x faster than manual sorting"

[120-150s] FUTURE & VISION
"In 2026, we'll reach 1 million users."

[150-165s] CLOSING
"EcoSort: Making the world cleaner, one photo at a time."

PRESENTATION DELIVERY & PITCHING

The Perfect 3-Minute Pitch Structure

[0:00-0:20] HOOK (Grab Attention)

START WITH: Statistic, question, or relatable problem

EXAMPLE: "India produces 200 million tons of waste annually. Only 5% is properly sorted. Until now."

[0:20-0:40] PROBLEM (Make Them Feel It)

DESCRIBE: Who has the problem? How does it affect them?

EXAMPLE: "Families don't know how to sort waste correctly. Citizens are overwhelmed. Landfills are overflowing."

[0:40-1:10] SOLUTION (Show Innovation)

EXPLAIN: What's your innovation?
DEMO: Show 2-3 key features

EXAMPLE: "EcoSort uses AI image recognition to instantly tell you where waste goes. Watch: [SHOW DEMO CLIP]"

[1:10-1:50] TRACTION (Prove It Works)

SHARE: Metrics, tests, feedback

EXAMPLE: "94% accuracy. Tested with 50 users. 95% satisfaction rate. Already in talks with 2 municipalities."

[1:50-2:15] IMPACT (Make Them Dream)

EXPLAIN: Why does this matter at scale?

EXAMPLE: "1 million users = 5 million tons of waste properly sorted = Carbon offset for 100,000 cars annually."

[2:15-2:50] TEAM & CALL-TO-ACTION (Sell Execution)

INTRODUCE: Who are you? Why can you execute?

EXAMPLE: "I'm Aisha, IIT grad, built 2 ML models in production. Our team has won 3 hackathons. Let's build this together."

[2:50-3:00] FINISH STRONG

FINAL LINE: Something memorable

EXAMPLE: "EcoSort: Making recycling smart, one photo at a time."

Speaking Tips for Maximum Impact

Before You Speak:

1. ✓ Practice pitch minimum 10 times (out loud, not silent)
2. ✓ Time yourself (adjust content if over/under)
3. ✓ Record yourself and watch (check for "ums," "ahs")
4. ✓ Practice with background noise (simulate event environment)
5. ✓ Get feedback from friends/mentors
6. ✓ Sleep well night before

During Your Pitch:

1. ✓ Stand tall, project confidence
2. ✓ Make eye contact with judges (rotate between 3-4)
3. ✓ Speak clearly at normal pace (not rushed!)
4. ✓ Use hand gestures (shows enthusiasm)
5. ✓ Smile and show genuine passion
6. ✓ Avoid saying: "Um," "Uh," "Like," "Sort of"
7. ✓ Pause for effect (silence is powerful)
8. ✓ Adjust volume and tone (not monotone!)

Live Demo Tips:

- ✓ Have a backup (screenshot if tech fails)
- ✓ Practice demo 5+ times on the actual device
- ✓ Test internet connection beforehand
- ✓ Have demo pre-loaded (don't waste time logging in)
- ✓ Narrate what you're doing
- ✓ Show 1-2 key flows ONLY
- ✓ Have a second laptop/phone as backup

Handling Questions:

- ✓ Listen fully before answering
- ✓ Take 2-3 seconds to think
- ✓ Answer concisely (no long-winded explanations)
- ✓ If you don't know: "Great question. We're exploring that."
- ✓ Tie every answer back to your value proposition
- ✓ Stay positive and enthusiastic

COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID

THE TOP 10 HACKATHON PPT MISTAKES

#	Mistake	Why It Fails	How to Fix
1	Too many slides	Judges lose focus	Max 10 slides for 3-min pitch
2	Overloaded with text	Unreadable, boring	Max 30 words per slide
3	Weak opening	Judges zone out immediately	Start with hook
4	Vague problem statement	Judges don't care	Include specific numbers
5	No working demo	Looks like just an idea	Show actual prototype
6	Technical jargon overload	Non-technical judges confused	Use simple language
7	Weak team slide	Judges doubt execution	Show relevant experience
8	Rushed presentation	Sounds unprepared	Practice 10+ times
9	No clear impact/metrics	All talk, no proof	Show numbers
10	Boring design	Visually unengaging	Use colors, visuals

Common Content Mistakes

Problem Slide Mistakes:

- ✕ "There's a problem with efficiency"
- ✓ "Companies lose $50B annually to inefficient systems"

Solution Slide Mistakes:

- ✕ "We built an app"
- ✓ "We built an AI app that reduces resolution time to 2 minutes"

Team Slide Mistakes:

- ✕ "Alice - Developer, Bob - Designer, etc."
- ✓ "Alice - IIT grad, 2 years at TCS AI, 1 hackathon win"

TIMELINE & EXECUTION PLAN

The Perfect Hackathon Schedule

HOURS 0-2: IDEATION & PLANNING

- [ ] Brainstorm problem solutions (30 min)
- [ ] Evaluate ideas using framework (30 min)
- [ ] Final idea selection & validation (15 min)
- [ ] Assign roles and tasks (15 min)
- [ ] Start with boilerplate setup (mandatory!)

HOURS 2-20: DEVELOPMENT

- [ ] Core features building (backend + frontend)
- [ ] Database setup and testing
- [ ] ML model integration (if applicable)
- [ ] Feature testing and debugging
- [ ] UI/UX polish (continuous)

HOURS 20-22: FINAL PUSH

- [ ] Complete all critical features
- [ ] Comprehensive testing
- [ ] Bug fixes and optimizations
- [ ] Final UI/UX touches

HOURS 22-24: PRESENTATION PREP ⭐ CRITICAL

- [ ] Record demo video (45 min)
- [ ] Create/finalize PPT (45 min)
- [ ] Practice pitch (20 min)
- [ ] Team rest and mental prep (10 min)

Timeline Breakdown:
0-2h │ IDEATION
2-20h │ ████████████████████ DEVELOPMENT
20-22h │ ██ POLISH & TEST
22-24h │ ██ PRESENTATION PREP + REST

Red Flags - If You're Behind:

- Hour 18 and core features not done? → Simplify scope immediately
- Hour 21 and no working prototype? → Focus on MVP demo only
- Hour 23 and PPT not started? → Use template, fill in content fast

POST-HACKATHON SUCCESS

Even if You Don't Win Immediately

Leverage Your Hackathon Project:

1. **Portfolio Building**
   - Add project to portfolio
   - Write blog post about experience
   - Post code on GitHub with great README
   - Create video demo for LinkedIn
2. **Investor Outreach**
   - Document business model
   - Calculate addressable market
   - Prepare investor pitch (10 slides)
   - Attend startup networking events
3. **Community Building**

- Engage with judges' feedback
- Build user base (100-1000 initial users)
- Create social media presence
- Start a community channel (Discord/Slack)

4. **Skill Development**
   - Document lessons learned
   - Share knowledge with community
   - Mentor newer hackathon participants
   - Teach workshops on your solution
5. **Funding & Launch**
   - Apply to accelerators
   - Seek angel investors
   - Build MVP for market release
   - Plan go-to-market strategy

QUICK REFERENCE CHECKLIST

BEFORE HACKATHON

- [ ] Team finalized (4-5 members)
- [ ] Role assignments clear
- [ ] Development environment set up
- [ ] APIs/libraries researched
- [ ] Boilerplate code prepared
- [ ] Mock practice completed
- [ ] Internet backup arranged

DURING HACKATHON

- [ ] Problem statement finalized (Hour 1)
- [ ] Idea validated against framework (Hour 2)
- [ ] MVP planned (Hour 3)
- [ ] Core features developed (Hours 4-20)
- [ ] Testing & polish (Hours 20-22)
- [ ] Demo video recorded (Hour 22:45)
- [ ] PPT created (Hour 23:15)
- [ ] Pitch practiced (Hour 23:40)

PRESENTATION DAY

- [ ] All team members sleep well
- [ ] Arrive 30 minutes early
- [ ] Test all tech (projector, laptop, internet)
- [ ] Do vocal warm-up (5 min)

- [ ] Review pitch one final time (3 min)
- [ ] Breathe and stay confident!

YOUR WINNING EQUATION

Clarity + Working Demo + Confident Pitch + Strong Team + Real Impact = SELECTION

FINAL WORDS

Remember: Judges have seen 50+ pitches in a day. They're tired. Your job is to:

1. Grab attention in 10 seconds
2. Make them understand your solution in 20 seconds
3. Show it actually works in the demo
4. Remind them why it matters in closing

The team that wins isn't always the one with the smartest idea—it's the one that pitches the smartest idea with the clearest story and the most confident execution.

Go build something amazing. You've got this!

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Applicable to: All Indian & International Hackathons