

The purpose of a pitch is to stimulate interest, not to cover every aspect of your startup and bludgeon your audience into submission. Your objective is to generate enough interest to get a second meeting.

Thus, the recommended number of slides for a pitch is ten. This impossibly low number forces you to concentrate on the absolute essentials. You can add a few more, but you should never exceed fifteen slides—the more slides you need, the less compelling your idea.

THE TEN SLIDES ARE:

1

TITLE

Provide company name, your name and title, address, email, and cell number.

2

PROBLEM/OPPORTUNITY

Describe the pain that you're alleviating or the pleasure you're providing.

3

VALUE PROPOSITION

Explain the value of the pain you alleviate or the value of the pleasure you provide.

4

UNDERLYING MAGIC

Describe the technology, secret sauce, or magic behind your product. The less text and the more diagrams, schematics, and flowcharts the better. If you have a prototype or demo, this is the time to transition to it. As Glen Shires of Google said, "If a picture is worth 1000 words, a prototype is worth 10,000 slides."

5

BUSINESS MODEL

Explain who has your money temporarily in his pocket and how you're going to get it into yours.

6

GO-TO-MARKET PLAN

Explain how you are going to reach your customer without breaking the bank.

7

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

Provide a complete view of the competitive landscape. Too much is better than too little.

8

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Describe the key players of your management team, board of directors, and board of advisors, as well as your major investors. It's okay if you have less than a perfect team. If your team was perfect, you wouldn't need to be pitching.

9

FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS AND KEY METRICS

Provide a three-year forecast containing not only dollars but also key metrics, such as number of customers and conversion rate. Do a bottom-up forecast, not top down.

10

CURRENT STATUS, ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE, TIMELINE, AND USE OF FUNDS

Explain the current status of your product, what the near future looks like, and how you'll use the money you're trying to raise.

A word about liquidity: no entrepreneur knows when, how, or if she will achieve liquidity, and yet many include a slide that says, "There are two liquidity options: an IPO or an acquisition." Duh. If an investor asks about your exit strategy, it means he's clueless. If you answer with these two options, you have a lot in common.